



Iowa Connections

Winter 2017

VOLUME 4, NUMBER 4



Living the Jesus Movement:
Highlights from the 165th Diocesan Convention

From the Bishop: Sermon at Convention

During this year of Revivals we witnessed God at work in the people of Iowa, and we have seen the faithful devotion of Iowans to God. These prayers of intention cry out with resolve—for the world, for the church, for ourselves. I hope we can catch them in some kind of narrative in the days to come. There's a story here worth telling.

I believe that Stephanie [Spellers, the Rev. Canon, special guest at convention] wants to reflect some of that back to us this evening.

Two clergy comments come to my Eeyore mind. One retired priest said, "Well you stuck with it." Yes, we really did, and my only regret is that we could not return to those of you who received the Revival early on and bring you the confidence and lessons of the latter Revivals. Yet without your willingness to learn with us, we would never have adapted and progressed. But yes, we stuck with it—a consistent rhythm of gathering, and with a public Revival right in the center of our schedule at the Iowa State Fair!

The second comment came as we were loading up the Revival gear in my car. "I'm glad that is over," the priest said. "Why? Was it so terrible?" I asked in reply. "No, not at all. But it was so stressful. The people were stressed, I was stressed."

We, in fact, made apologies for about one-third of the time as we went around. The combining of revival and Anglican spirituality seemed to be a strange mixture. Then gradually we began to grow in confidence and the excuses dropped away. We puffed out our chests and showed our pride. I was glad we did not yield to the pressure to go with another name than Revival, though you saw the alternatives on the Revival banner—renew, rekindle, recharge!

The commission of every Revival was to be found in the five great dares:

- Dare you walk into God's future, trusting God to be your guide?
- Dare you embrace each other and grow together in love?
- Dare you share your riches in common and minister to each other in need?
- Dare you pray for each other until your hearts beat with the longings of God?
- Dare you carry the light of Christ into the world's darkest places?

Each one preaches by itself, but all together they lead us to the great dare of being clothed in the Spirit of Christ.

One of my favorite prayers from Morning Prayer comes in the mission section of the final collects. It reads, "Lord Jesus Christ, you stretched out your arms of love on the hard wood of the cross that everyone might come within the reach of your saving embrace. So clothe us in your Spirit that we, reaching forth our hands in love, may bring those

who do not know you to the knowledge and love of you; for the honor of your Name" (*Book of Common Prayer*, 101).

I admit that it is generally the first section of the prayer that catches my attention. It is such a graphic invitation. However, the prayer comes in the second part and we are its subject. "So clothe us in your Spirit that we, reaching out our hands in love, may bring those who do not know you to the love and knowledge of you."



Bishop Alan Scarfe

And we do it for the honor of God's name, for as Rowan Williams reminds us in *Tokens of Trust*—we make God credible. So when everything points to the absence of God—hurricanes upon hurricanes, wildfires, wars upon wars, political hegemony and corruption, the horrors of neglect and abuse, the inequality of nations and the increase of reckless violence, hatred and polarization—where must people look to find God? Not just in the sunsets, or in our friends, as we might like to think, but at the place where God's loving embrace stretches out—from the Cross. For where was God as Jesus died but where Paul says that God was, "In Christ reconciling Himself to the world."

Elizabeth Popplewell chose the story of the Road to Emmaus as her Gospel story for the Revivals when she preached. She would tell the story in a dramatic way.

She has Jesus coming alongside the two disciples as they trudge back to their hometown from Jerusalem. "Why so glum?" Jesus asks. "What's going on?" "Where have you been," they reply, "under a rock?"

Jesus could have replied, "Well, yes actually, for about three days! And I had a pretty good vantage point at that crucifixion you refer to."

Instead, he gently took them through the law and the prophets, highlighting how God was at work even in such a tragedy. This is how from darkness comes light, and how from death comes life.

God is never nearer than in the storm, or the conflict or the tragedy or the erupting violence. God is there as victim, and God is there even with the perpetrator. God is the Love that brings the possible out of the impossible, hope out of the despair, joy out of the sorrow.

In the breaking of bread and the pouring of wine, in Jesus' body broken and blood spilled, God is present—with loving, life-giving, liberating gifts.

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**GROWING IOWA LEADERS
CALLED, FED, AND SENT
BISHOP'S SCHEDULE**

December

- 3 Trinity, Iowa City
- 10 Cathedral Church of St. Paul's, Des Moines
- 10 Interfaith Service of Remembrance and Silent Walk to Brownell's, Grinnell UCC, 2 p.m.
- 16 Ordinations to the Transitional Diaconate, Cathedral Church of St. Paul, Des Moines, 2 p.m.
- 17 Leave-taking of Rector, the Rev. Cn. Al Aiton, St. John's, Ames

January

- 7 Cathedral Church of St. Paul, Des Moines
- 20, 21 GROWING IOWA LEADERS at Grace, Cedar Rapids with Christ, Cedar Rapids and St. Mark's, Anamosa
- 27-28 GROWING IOWA LEADERS St. Paul's, Durant with Trinity, Muscatine

February

- 10 Absalom Jones Day, Dismantling Racism: Training for Church Leaders, Old Brick, Iowa City, 10 a.m-4 p.m.
- 17, 18 GROWING IOWA LEADERS at St. Alban's, Davenport with Trinity Cathedral, Davenport and St. Peter's, Bettendorf
- 24, 25 GROWING IOWA LEADERS at Calvary, Sioux City with St. Paul's and St. Thomas, Sioux City, St. George's, Le Mars

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

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Cover photo: 165th Diocesan Convention of the Diocese of Iowa held October 27-28, 2017 at the Des Moines Marriott Downtown. Photo credit: The Rev. Meg Wagner

Iowa Connections

Winter 2017 The Rev. Meg Wagner, Editor

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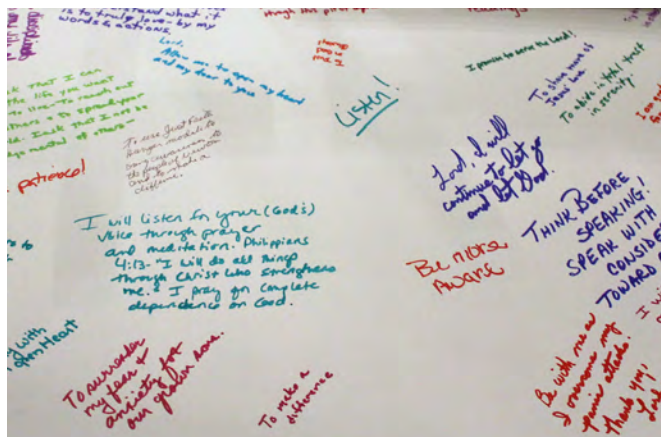
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165th Convention of the Episcopal Diocese of Iowa

Bishop Scarfe's Address

When we started out to devote an entire year seeking revival, we did not intend to create a brand—Revival 2017. That idea came from our communications coordinator genius, Meg Wagner, who said, “if we’re going to devote all our energy in that one direction then let’s design everything around it.” And so out flowed stationary, signs, and t-shirts. And as each Revival 2017 passed through your neighborhood, also out flowed the prayers and the commitments, the promises and appeals to God which you see stacked all around you.



Prayers of intention were captured on canvas-covered boards.

Captured on artists’ canvas boards, we literally carried the prayers of the Church from one scene of Revival 2017 to another, the first one in Durant to the fortieth this weekend. Over time they became weighty objects, the burdens of your prayers.

What a true joy it is to have experienced Revival 2017 with you this past year. More than a thousand of us gathered across the Diocese, and I remember the comment of one of my bishop colleagues as we were starting out who on hearing our plans said “Well, I hope the first one goes well!”

As I rolled over laughing like a young kid in the Bouncy House at the Council Bluffs Revival, I could only thank God for this past year—for God’s faithfulness, for the joy in believing prompted many times these past nine months, and for your willingness to indulge this fool for Christ in so many creative and imaginative ways. May God grant each and every one of you the answers to your prayers and the longings of your hearts.

Why seek revival and why now? Really, it could not have been better timed. This is not an easy period in our nation’s history. We are in the midst of culture wars; and are daily on a new edge of international warring madness. Some of us who voted for a change in political approach as a nation may be questioning what we have unleashed; we may also be

happy with what has been released. Others of us (and there are plenty of us if the requests for prayer to overcome negative reactivity sought during the Revival are to be believed) are struggling with what that change is unleashing in us as we face our anger and frustration. This is a time for prayer, holy conversation, a coming together rather than a perpetuation of division. All in all, a chance to experience a listening to each other. Together, however, we are called by God in Jesus Christ to vigilant prayerfulness for “whatever is true and honorable, whatever is just, whatever is pure, whatever is pleasing, whatever is commendable, [and] if there is any excellence and if there is anything worthy of praise [we are to] think on these things” (Phil. 4:8). The Apostle Paul writes these things from jail, reflecting on the Gospel values for good times and for bad, which form the basis of our decision-making as dual citizens of heaven and earth, as people who identify themselves, along with every other human being, as the beloved of God.

Five hundred years ago, Martin Luther nailed his understanding of God’s provision for human freedom on the door of Castle Church in Wittenberg. He was not politically motivated. Nor did he calculate that he would be forming a movement which would create a marker in all history books to be known as The Reformation. Our own tradition—the roots of this Episcopal branch of the Jesus movement—was influenced by his action; and our understanding was born of that freedom that comes from justification by faith in the Crucified One. Luther believed that he was recovering the essential faith of the first followers of Jesus. His identification with freedom inspired the desire for freedom of all kinds and motivated an African American Baptist pastor from Alabama almost four hundred and fifty years later to change his name and that of his son to Martin Luther King Sr. and Jr. And to seek to incarnate that freedom for an oppressed and discriminated people.

You see, revivals produce leaders and leaders engage change, and change brings new life. God is always looking for the Isaiahs of our time to whom God can call and say “And who shall I send?” And God wants to hear us say with the prophet: “Here I am, Lord. Send me”.

**“..revivals produce
leaders and leaders
engage change, and
change brings new life.”**

So with this Revival 2017, I look for what has grown in the Diocese of Iowa this year alongside it and I anticipate with gratitude what fruits of God’s Spirit from it all will catch our attention.

For the first time in a formal way, Episcopalians gathered on Capitol Hill with our Lutheran brothers and sisters as

they have done for many years. Later we met by ourselves as we also hope to do for years to come. Wendy Abrahamson created Faith in Action and has sought to take our vigilance into the day-to-day struggle of local and state legislation.

Young people from Church of Our Savior, Orange City, and the Cathedral of St Paul, together with Calvary, Sioux City, asked how the Church can be a safe place for those who have come informally, impulsively, out of desperation and without process into this country for sanctuary and respite. Their urgency prompted a thoughtful statement of support from the Diocesan Board.

Representatives from the Diocese of Iowa attended the Conference on the Unholy Trinity of race, poverty, and gun violence, while many of us began the difficult journey of facing our white privilege and the question of racial reparation.

Others are asking how we might shift the culture to a more sensible approach to providing gun safety and seeing the public health aspect of gun violence.

And all along we remain protective of the full inclusion in society and the Church of LGBT children of God. And in recent weeks, women of this diocese including courageous clergy have been willing to confront sexual harassment and say #Metoo.

Brothers and sisters in Christ of this diocese who are native people of these lands urge us to acknowledge stewardship over ownership when it comes to the privilege of living on this earth, along with the peoples of Standing Rock and White Earth, and of the Alaska Interior fighting for the preservation of the Arctic Wild Life Refuge and the birthing regions of the Caribou.

The Creation Stewards led by Cathleen Bascom also keep us mindful of the earth as they encourage the recovery of the prairie around us. We may simply be giving over a small plot of church land to carve out a garden or a piece of restored prairie, but it acts as an icon that in Christ we can articulate a theology of abundance and a principle of enough or sufficiency.

This was a year in which the Diocesan staff set out to be guided by three principles—relationship, leadership development and technology. Relationship has been a major part of the Revival set up; leadership development is a central focus of its follow up; and technology has grown to support both. This year we have revamped IowaShare, helped five congregations create new websites, and built a website for Breaking Bread. The shift to the ZOOM video-conferencing tool has made possible conversation across the state, including a remarkable conversation on sanctuary in which fifty people participated via video.

Martin Luther would speak of himself as a beggar before God. He saw his life as dependent upon God's grace in Jesus Christ, and he begged God for his every need. For we are never only dealing with flesh and blood but with principalities and powers in high places which always seek the undoing of God's creation. From Celtic Christianity we learn of thin spaces where God's presence is tantalizingly close; we have also to add the experience which I was familiar with in Communist Romania of "thick spaces," when you wonder where God is, and at such times your praying becomes more like begging. Some say that deconstruction is happening at all levels of human life, and, yes, that God is deconstructing the Church. All I know is that God certainly uses all situations (personal, communal, national, and global) to challenge us to know ourselves better as followers of Jesus Christ. So this is both a time to give more than a little time, energy, and attention to intercession and holy reflection, and engage ourselves in active fruits to which they lead.

In this urging of God, and in the dreaming for the Kingdom to come, we are blessed in the companions God has given to us over the years. It is always tempting to question the time, financial resources, and energy given to cultivating Companions in Brechin, Swaziland, and South Sudan. And each year, nevertheless, I voice support for the companionships. You also have numerous other links across the world at parish and personal levels. The companions are special in that as a Diocese we covenant to walk together as brothers and sisters in Christ along a shared mission path. We get to understand each other's mission environment and to pray for each other and work with each other in responding to our common needs.



The Rev. Cn. Cathleen Bascom leads Creation Stewards events.

In South Sudan, much of our attention circles around Bishop Peni and his work for peace in a violent and dangerous part of the world. So when we hear of violence breaking out in that part of the country, it's not remote to us. We are thinking of our friends and colleagues. At the same time, we share in the creative work of the people of Nzara to provide for the education of their children and the health of their families. We participate a little in their agricultural efforts, which put food directly on their tables, and we support them in developing their additional capacity to create a micro-economy for the Diocese.

In Swaziland we are invited to contribute to their daily care for orphans and widows. Diocesan life is also about water harvesting, and food production, and growing their economic capacity to become self-sufficient as a diocese. It is about fighting for gender equality and caring for creation; all the while as they seek to prepare their next generation of leaders for Christ.

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Bishop's Address, *continued*

In Brechin that next generation of leaders includes right now their bishop search, but more seriously is the work of forming young disciples and keeping the claims of Christ before a secularized society, while continuing to see Christian mission to be more about Christ in the public sphere than being only about congregational development. In turn we see a mirror effect because we too begin to ask who are our orphans, how do we become more self-sufficient as a diocese and as congregations through deploying our own economic capacities, and we notice where we encounter secularization. We ask if we are taking for granted the rising up of our children and young people to be leaders. How are we older members getting in their way?

And who knows where our relationship with the Diocese of Phulbani in North India will go? This is not a formal companionship. None of us however should underestimate the impact of their monthly prayer and fasting gathering every first Friday, when more than a thousand people meet, designating ten minutes to pray specifically for the Diocese of Iowa. How many of you have noted the Facebook page of the Diocese of Iowa and the Diocese of Phulbani? The Bishop faithfully sends a written report of their prayer service to me each month, often accompanied with extensive photographs of people in fervent prayer.



A prayer service in the Diocese of Phulbani.

Understanding all of these varied goals and gifts as Christian people across the thousands of miles that separates us is to have a check and balance upon our own purposes as the people of God. It is not to be in competition with each other over limited resources, but to help one another breathe in the Spirit, and enjoy new imaginings into our own possibilities in the Spirit of God. It helps break into our formality and calls us to what freedom in Christ means. And that is not to mention the fervor and joy in prayer and worship that always has the most immediate impact on visitors in their midst. I am grateful for the visit of Pat Millar from the diocese of Brechin, and her report yesterday. Our prayers go with her for her husband as she travels home.

Please continue to use the Companion Intercessory Prayer Lists that are developed annually by each Companion

Diocese. As you pray for them, they are praying for you, and they know very much that this year we have sought God to revive us.

Most Revivals that last the test of time produce new leadership and direction and an environment out of which they can grow. Empowered by the Spirit we grow confident in our own abilities and opportunities. And this is the vision that drives Revival 2017 forward. The question of *what next?* has its answer in our readiness to take advantage of God's gift of the Spirit. We want to gather Iowa leaders out of this Revival year, and help one another grow in our discovery of God's leadership, as well as engage each and every one of us as disciples in God's mission.

So I am excited to unveil the next two-year phase of Revival 2017—Growing Iowa Leaders (in 2018) and Engaging All Disciples (in 2019). The clergy have received a packet with some introductory remarks and a participatory action card in their delegate materials. And every congregation has such a packet waiting for them to be picked up. If you don't have clergy representation, please look for it on behalf of your congregation before you leave.

Growing Iowa Leaders/Engaging All Disciples is a hope-filled endeavor in planning a great future for us as followers of Jesus, as we engage each congregation in joint intentional planning for mission and spiritual vitality.

Funding for the next two-year Revival follow-up is being underwritten by an anonymous benefactor to the tune of \$100,000 each year. In addition, the donor is giving an additional \$100,000 to revamp our communications system across the Diocese. A further \$200,000 is being set aside as a GILEAD, or Diocesan Campaign, down payment for the future to invite others to follow suit. This same person also funded the costs of the Revival core team travels and expenses in 2017. This wonderful generosity frees us and inspires us to build on the anticipated success of Growing Iowa Leaders and Engaging All Disciples and the invitation will be to pay your blessings forward to the future generations in supporting the revived Diocesan Campaign, GILEAD. The Campaign aims to provide resources for formation and leadership into the future. It will be a fifty/fifty campaign in which you keep half of what you raise for your own congregational need, and you share half with the rest of the Diocese to fund future leadership development projects. Your campaigns will be helped by professional campaign managers. The Board has hired Denis Green to coordinate the campaign, and I am pleased to welcome Denis here this morning.

We ask: where will and can God take us from here? Here is what I have in mind. As I have said, revivals produce leaders and leaders engage change, and change brings new life. Growing Iowa Leaders will equip people for such leadership and make complete the joy and vitality which we saw grow out of the Revival.

So what can you expect in practical terms the coming two-year plan? And how will it link with the Diocesan Campaign?

- 1) We are creating a diocesan core team as we did for Revival 2017 for initial planning. This is already in process and initially includes the Revival 2017 core team plus other Diocesan staff.
- 2) We are seeking to harvest the outcomes of Revival 2017 which was part of our discussions over Friday lunch.
- 3) We will gather the leadership offerings across the Diocese. Please note the card placed in your name tag. We have made suggestions under the three categories of “Called, Fed, and Sent” of potential areas to offer.
- 4) Then we will expand the core team according to identified gifts and ministry passions. (For example, if a congregation is brilliant at strategic mission planning, with an efficient mission-inspired focus, maybe others would say “I want a bit of that.” And we could invite that congregational team to do a workshop at the requesting congregation cluster.)
- 5) We have established and published a schedule for Growing Iowa Leaders and Engaging All Disciples taking us through 2018 and 2019. (This of course only strikes panic in me in having to be so disciplined over such a long period of time!)
- 6) Shortly we will begin setting up consultation appointments with Revival 2017 clusters about shared opportunities for learnings and mission. In these consults we hope you will tell us who you are and where you would like support in going as an agency of God’s mission. The clusters will generally remain the same as for Revival 2017, but there may be some changes for clearer shared mission sense—i.e. it makes more sense to have all three Quad Cities congregations in one Saturday event, and let Durant meet with Muscatine.
- 7) We will make consultation site visits about two to three months ahead of the Saturday event.
- 8) We will carry out Growing Iowa Leaders (2018) and Engaging All Disciples (2019)
- 9) A few weeks or so after the Growing Iowa Leaders weekend, you will be contacted by the Diocesan Campaign team—GILEAD—and be invited to consider the Diocesan Campaign which will provide funds for ongoing leadership formation resources, for 2020 and beyond, and to benefit future generations. It will also assist you to think of what your capital campaign project might be locally, with the fifty percent share of what you raise.

The aim is to create tailor-made sessions that focus on a few things that each congregation really wants to explore and learn. What those things are we don’t know ahead of time, but will come from the consultation. I particularly look for us to consider the three areas highlighted in Revival 2017—of being a baptized people—Called, Fed, and Sent. Vocation, Vitality and Discipleship are three over-arching themes I see in what it means to be Called, Fed, and Sent. Success will release an incredible gift of the Spirit among us.

I believe we have reached the *through Each and All* emphasis of the over-arching diocesan mission statement *Being In Mission with Christ through Each and All*, that has been our guiding principle throughout my episcopacy.

I actually inherited *through Each and All* when I came to Iowa. I also brought it with me because that was how we discerned ministry in my parish. The Ministry of All the Baptized runs the danger of becoming a hackneyed phrase. We have sought to use other language to express the same idea—such as Collaborative Ministry. It is always about the same thing—to be in ministry as one as the body of Christ—Jesus working His ongoing ministry through us. We are interdependent on each other to discover and play our parts. Over the years we have embraced a broader interpretation of this than what is deemed traditional.

Only a third of our congregations provide for a full-time ordained leader. Yet ideally that ordained person is a ministry developer and sees their work as interdependent with the whole baptized membership. About a third of congregations offer up to half-time employment, and the remaining third work out their ministry leadership through a local ministry development team or through lay leadership nurtured in the word and sacrament by itinerant or supply clergy. There has been a renewed interest in the local formation of leadership through Ministry Development Teams. This year, members of St. Alban’s, Davenport, and the congregations of Sioux City (who have combined their identity and call themselves “the Siouxland Episcopalians”) have nominated an MDT; and St. Paul’s, Council Bluffs along with All Saints, Storm Lake are showing intentional interest in the configuration, even while hiring a part-time ordained leader. St. Alban’s and the Siouxland Episcopalians join Trinity, Emmetsburg who are also in process as an MDT now beginning their third year of formation.

I am grateful to Ellen Bruckner for her attentive coordination and mentoring of the MDT congregations as well as her excellent work in developing a revised version of our local formation curriculum for use with Ministry Development Teams. This curriculum is available on IowaShare.org for any congregation’s formation needs, and is a local resource alongside the time-tested Education For Ministry (EfM) program.

All these varieties of congregational situations require flexibility on the part of our Transitions and Deployment Officer, Steve Godfrey, as well as on the Commission on Ministry and Standing Committee who share responsibility on how we tackle discernment and formation for ordination.



Steve, in particular, is a man of great order who is willing to deal with the chaos, and I can only imagine this drives him crazy, but Steve, thank you for what you do.

Generally, we now have three or four paths to ordination—there is full time seminary residency program and also what is called a "low residency" seminary program that both offer an M.Div. The low residency allows for the candidate to be at home studying online while attending the Seminary twice a year or on occasional weekends throughout the year. The process takes three to four years. Most of our ordinands pursue an M.Div. through this program. Others take online courses for Anglican diploma or through the TEEM (Theological Education for Emerging Ministries) program of the Lutheran Theological Schools such as Wartburg in Dubuque. And finally, we have the communal formation approach of the Ministry Development Teams in which a nominated group of people in a given parish form a learning community with the congregation, and are formed in leadership together discerning specific ordained and non-ordained ministry foci as they proceed according to the congregation's perceived ministry and mission demands

I am happy to announce that the list of ordinands is getting younger, which I believe is a direct by-product of our intentional focus on the ministry development of younger adults led by Lydia Bucklin. God continues to call unusual suspects to ordained ministry, and my sense is that many are being called and formed for ministry contexts which we cannot as yet fully understand and foresee.

Before I leave the subject of ministry, I want to thank all those who offer themselves for supply around the Diocese. These are wise and experienced individuals, mostly retired from positions in the Church but never from ministering the Gospel of Jesus Christ. We began an effort in 2017 to gather the supply clergy together for conversation about how their work can be more strategically targeted for the specific mission and ministry development of the congregations they serve. Some supply clergy are substitutes for a vacationing or away Rector, but increasingly others are forming regular clergy teams and finding ways to pursue consistent ministry strategies with the congregation—an important goal. I ask supply clergy to stand.

So in the coming year, alongside with Growing Iowa Leaders, what do I ask you to watch out for?

The Stewardship Commission has undertaken a survey of stewardship needs and resources across the Diocese. You can expect a positive and proactive response from them in the coming year. This is not a closed group of people, and Tyler Schleicher, the Chair, is always looking for people with a passion for stewardship to serve on the Commission.

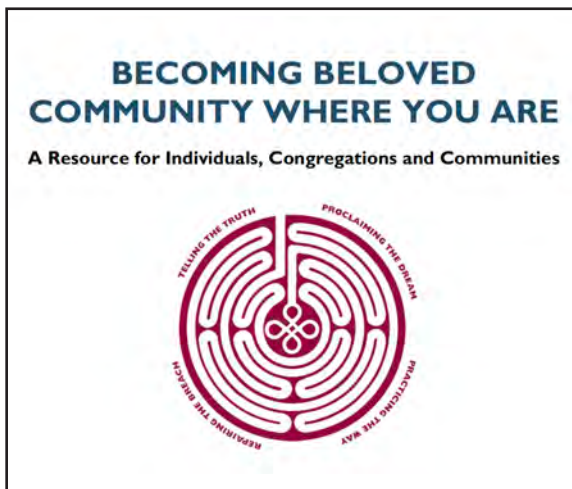
The Commission members, by the way, have agreed to be available as part of the Growing Iowa Leaders core team if congregations identify a wish for Stewardship learning opportunities. Denis will also assist local annual stewardship efforts.

The Older Adult Ministry Development Team put on a powerful retreat for deacons as part of the Summer Ministries School and Retreat. They are poised to engage congregations on issues of faith development after fifty-five, pastoral elements of ageing, on retirement and post-retirement ministry, making appropriate end-of-life plans. Again I expect the Team to be available to any Growing Iowa Leaders requests, and they also offer their services to congregations or to chapters. Warren Frelund has pioneered this ministry focus over the past couple of years, bringing work he started with the church-wide body of The Episcopal Church to the diocesan level. I invite OAMDT members present to stand.

Thirdly, in 2015, The Episcopal Church turned a corner in its approach to racial relationships. Our Presiding Bishop, Michael Curry, made a significant shift in considering race relations when he tied evangelism and reconciliation together. The good news of Jesus not only reconciles us to God, it reconciles us to one another; and in many parts of our lives that reconciliation encounters challenges across racial and class lines. Racial awareness has

developed to address relationships between the races not only through the spectrum of reconciliation, but also through the lens of reparation. We sought to address this last year in resolutions, and I think we were not ready to grasp its full implications. Over this past year we have heard from Katrina Brown and watched "Traces of the Trade" at Ministries Retreat, and we have continued to read up on the subject of white privilege and how all white people must confront our link with white supremacy, in its white collar form. And Susanne Watson-Epting and Meg Wagner have sown seeds of discernment as to how we can build a center for healing and reconciliation, a local Beloved Community, framed around a concept imagined by The Episcopal Church Center staff, led by our keynote speaker, Stephanie Spellers. I am also delighted to announce that Meg and Susanne's concept of a Beloved Community has just received a \$75,000 grant from The Episcopal Church for its implementation.

This is also a year for evangelism training and engagement, and we will begin later on this morning. Evangelism Matters sparked a zeal in a handful of Iowans who attended in Dallas. We almost turned up with our entire Board who were on retreat at the time. We did however use the satellite segments of the Conference as part of our retreat, and actually held our own version of the sharing exercise that was offered at the Conference.



This past year several congregations have celebrated important markers. Trinity Cathedral in Davenport rededicated its space to the glory of God celebrating 175 years as a parish and 165 years as a Cathedral. Their forward-looking spirit was evidenced in their inviting of Miroslav Volf as a guest lecturer to mark the event. Dr. Volf challenged us under the title of his lecture, “Can we save the world?”

Another flagship church of the Diocese, Christ Church, Cedar Rapids celebrates tomorrow its 20th anniversary as a merged congregation. They seek to offer a homecoming for all its clergy and members past and present as they reach an exciting stage in their search for a new Rector. I will be blessing the altar space renovated this past year.

In other moves of renovation, the Cathedral of St. Paul, Des Moines, St. Thomas, Sioux City, and St. Timothy’s, West Des Moines, have upgraded their kitchens and their fellowship space so as to anticipate growing feeding and catering ministries that stretch beyond their walls, and to increase their multi-faceted mission and worship options. St. Paul’s, Grinnell has refurbished their fellowship and education space; and we have already seen the new work done at Trinity, Emmetsburg in the new initiatives video shown earlier in the Convention. I am sure that there are others, too, who have done such work but have not come to our attention.

It is also a time to let people explore efforts to encourage new initiatives in faith sharing and faith-community building. This too is a natural development of our focus on young adults as they find their calling within the Body of Christ, and lead the way in reaching out to new generations where they are and create new ways of building communities of faith that may be beyond church walls.

I am so grateful for the privilege of working with incredibly talented and self-giving individuals who make up your Diocesan staff. Recently I saw a photo in Time magazine which caught my attention. It was of a portion of the Google staff—all intently involved in solving some problem or other. Everyone’s gifts were being engaged, and thrust toward a common problem. It reminds me of the scene in the movie Apollo 13, where the group throw everything on the table to respond to the alarm, “Houston, we have a problem.” They try and solve it in the here-and-now, even adding sneakers to the mix. It made me wonder if we really see our life in Christ this way. Is there mutual self-surrender to the Holy Spirit to work together as one entity to bring the good news of God’s love to society around us?

If Google can do that for their purpose, what about us in reaching our common goal in Jesus Christ. If we lament that no one wants to come to our church, maybe it is not enough to stop there in the complaining. We have to stop what we are doing and ask the question—why is that so? Let us throw



Miroslav Volf speaking at Trinity Cathedral in Davenport.

everything we have on the table and find ourselves trying this or trying that; or asking the question—who else has this problem? What are they saying? What can we learn together?

Earlier this month I commissioned the Ministry Development Team for Siouxlands—not for a specific congregation but for the area of Sioux City. Another outcome of the Revival 2017 is the small clustering in which you were invited to gather. We are keeping that going in the new visitation schedule. The clusters are much more local than the Chapters, and my hope is that they provide a closer sense of solidarity in being the Episcopal Branch of the Jesus Movement where you live.

Look for other Episcopalians where you are. You know we are 3,000 Episcopalians in worship at best on a Sunday morning, out of 3 million Iowans. If you saw

another Episcopalian in the grocery store next week—how thrilled, you would be. I get upset when I go to the Civic Center to a musical show with Donna, not because I have to go the musical, but because I haven’t come across an Episcopalian in the audience of several thousand. And when I do see one, I get excited and then I discover—“Oh! That’s so-and-so, who walked away because of my position on something!”

In Iowa some of those clusters still incorporate towns 30 miles apart. The point is that we are to help each other. It’s what we promise at every baptism, confirmation, ordination, and celebration of new ministry. “Will you support these persons in their life in Christ?” By God’s power we answer, “We will.”

I pray that the growing together and the engaging together will continue. I am so grateful for those of you who shut down Sunday church to share in services at a hosting church during the Revival, and particularly where the larger church visited and spent Sunday in a smaller church. You have no idea how much that bolsters the smaller church in its sense of self.

Finally, let me return to the 500th anniversary of the Reformation. I am an ecumaniac—a passionate advocate for unity of the Church. This time last year I was invited to Marshalltown for their annual joint worship of Episcopalians and Lutherans. I preached about the way we manage to let overgrowth of preoccupation with our own systems of governance and order build over time and create divisions between denominations. They also blind us to the essential simplicity of the Gospel as God’s loving invitation to faith; just as indulgences did in the mind of Martin Luther as he understood the meaning of “justification by faith.” I was going back over my sermon in preparation as to what I wanted to say at the pre-Convention workshop on Ecumenism. It dawned on me that we had unity work to do within our own diocese.

continued on page 10

Bishop's Address, *continued*

I am not referring to local conflicts caused by personality differences or even differing ways of doing things, but to the challenge of support for each other in our local ministries, and not feeling any more that we are doing all this alone.

The economics of ministry create separation and competition more than division. We work within our local units often isolated from each other and preoccupied with our own endeavors, sometimes in overlapping communities with other Episcopal churches. We tend to be vying for the same thing. Siouxland Episcopalians is one bold effort to break this down. I would like to hear of Cedar Rapids Episcopalians, or Quad Cities Episcopalians, or Greater Des Moines Episcopalians, or even regional Episcopalians, like in the southwest.

My prayer is that if we can continue organizing together within the Revival clusters, we might continue to grow in appreciation of one another as a common culture seeking a common goal—to be followers of Jesus, Episcopal Branch. For the Revival you came together to plan. It may have been fear that drove you together to plan, but that's alright. You came together for a common task, and in the process you found one another doing something in common.

Eventually, of course, we will be invited to drop the branch element. For a day will come when shared ordained ministers, now with Lutherans and soon with Methodists or with whomever, will morph into shared congregations, and within generations people will not remember where one denominational influence ends and another begins. Luther did not want to start a new Church. He simply wanted to honor the sacrifice of God in Jesus Christ that opened the way to right living for all who would put their trust in Him. God offers a new heart that is received through faith and the truth of that faith sets us free eventually, in time. This, Luther called “freedom from the struggle to be saved,” and that freedom was God's opportunity for us to serve our neighbors in love.

I suspect the circumstances in our globe will force our hands in these things. Increasingly we face such human need that

we have to think now of how to combine our resources of love and life-giving liberty. We begin this among ourselves as we grow in daring to encourage it across denomination and faith lines.

I want to end asking as I did at the end of every Revival, and in my Convention sermon and as I will do again at our close:

- Dare you walk into God's future, trusting God to be your guide?
- Dare you embrace each other and grow together in love?
- Dare you share your riches in common and minister to each other in need?
- Dare you pray for each other until your hearts beat with the longings of God?
- Dare you carry the light of Christ into the world's darkest places?

May the Spirit who set the Church on fire on the day of Pentecost bring the world alive with the love of the Risen Christ, and the Blessing of God—Father, Son and Holy Spirit, bless you now and for evermore. Amen.

Address given by the Rt. Rev. Alan Scarfe at the 165th Diocesan Convention.

**GROWING
IOWA
LEADERS**
CALLED, FED, AND SENT
THE EPISCOPAL DIOCESE OF IOWA



From the Bishop: Sermon at Convention *continued*

And on this assurance we stand. It is how we comfort ourselves. Yet it is not enough. It also has to be how we comfort others.

Our cry goes up with all the saints—including Simon and Jude, two relatively unknown apostles who therefore can be called every one, and be iconic for ourselves. They are the saints of the also-rans, the saints of the quiet, the saints of those getting on with their business. And with them we pray—*so clothe us in your Spirit, let our arms reach out with love.*

Jesus had His day as God Incarnate among us. We live in the era of the Spirit gift. And the Spirit inspires us to love. And thus Jesus lives through us—still stretching out His arms on the hard wood of that cross, and yet as you look more closely, those are your hands and your arms stretched out.

As Teresa of Avila said, “Christ has no body now on earth, no hands but yours, no feet but yours. Yours are the eyes through which Christ's compassion is to look out to the world. Yours are the feet with which Christ is to go about doing good.” It is your heart that is loving and your welcome embrace that is offered.

That is a post Revival prayer for us all. Dare you offer it? Do we not want everyone to be brought to the knowledge and love of the God we know and love? Of course we do. God is already there bringing light into darkness, love against hatred and hope in the most depressing of times. And God is doing it through you. Dare you believe it? Amen.

Sermon preached by the Rt. Rev. Alan Scarfe at the Revival Convention Eucharist.

Alleluia Fund Grants

The Alleluia Fund is an annual campaign which begins during the Easter season to raise funds for the growth and support of ministries that are beyond the reach of any one congregation and that lie outside our annual diocesan budget. Grants are awarded during the annual diocesan convention just a few months after the Alleluia season's fund raising efforts. The following ministries and projects were awarded Alleluia Fund grants at the 2017 Diocesan Convention.



Bishop Alan Scarfe presented award checks to representatives from each of the ministries that were awarded Alleluia Fund grants.

Grace Episcopal Church, Cedar Rapids \$2,800

The Outreach Commission at Grace is beginning a Laundry Love ministry in collaboration with some neighborhood partners. Beginning in February they plan to provide laundry supplies and quarters for community members doing laundry at a local laundromat, and bring board games and books to help entertain children while parents do laundry.

Justice, Healing, and Reconciliation Center, Old Brick, Iowa City \$5,000

The Justice, Healing, and Reconciliation Center hopes to make space for the work of healing and justice within the community and within the diocese. The grant will help purchase and develop resources for the emerging work of the Center to help the diocese engage the work of Becoming Beloved Community.

Friends of the Family, NE Iowa Shelter Service, St. Andrew's, Waverly \$2,500

With this grant, St. Andrew's will be able to help people through Friends of the Family to find housing, have access to education, and access to counseling for those who have been the victims of violence and abuse, or are homeless.

Messy Church, St. Mark's, Des Moines \$200

Funds will be used to purchase materials to establish a "Messy Church" ministry at St. Mark's. They plan for this ministry to serve families with special needs and it hopes to focus on sharing the love of God in Jesus in an accessible way for families.

Hazelnut Connection, Charles City \$1,500

The Hazelnut Connection is a community-developing website for people interested in learning about world religions, spirituality, and faith issues without pressure to convert. It offers many tools on a public site which allow people to organize conversation groups at any level of interest. At a later date it will offer formal courses.

Election Results

Standing Committee

- Elizabeth Duff Popplewell (C)
- Gregory Jones (L)

Directors of the Episcopal Corporation— At Large

- Kathleen Milligan (C)
- Ed Gillott (L)

Directors of the Episcopal Corporation— Chapter Representatives

- Vincent Bete, Metro (C)
- Lauren Lyon, Three Rivers (C)
- Bill Early, Southwest (L)

Disciplinary Board

- Anne Williams (C)
- Diana Wright (C)
- Lauren Lyon (C)
- Cyndy Danielson (L)
- Jane Hoffman (L)

Ministry To Go

by Lacey Howard

On Saturday morning, October 28, those gathered at the Marriott for Diocesan Convention were listening to the presentations on the 2018 budget and the Bishop's address. The youth attending the lock-in at nearby St. Paul's Cathedral, however, were serving the community as the hands and feet



Youth attending the Convention Lock-In for grades four through nine packed sack lunches that will help provide Des Moines' homeless with a mid-day meal.

of Christ. These youth, in grades four through nine, accepted an invitation from Jim McLallen of St. Luke's, Des Moines, to pack sack lunches that are provided for Central Iowa Shelter & Services (CISS) in downtown Des Moines, where approximately 2,000 women and men experiencing homelessness receive emergency shelter and supportive services to help them move beyond homelessness each year.

After years of participating in the Back Pack Buddies program to send elementary students home with snacks each weekend, "St. Luke's recognized how important those snacks were and morphed into providing sack lunches for CISS in spring 2016," McLallen

said. Each day, the kitchen staff at CISS adds a fresh sandwich to each sack, and hands out the lunches to the homeless clients who request them. "For the past year and a half, we have averaged about 300 lunches delivered to CISS monthly. However, in fall 2017, we received a call from CISS that they had used up all the lunches after just two weeks," McLallen said. "According to Melissa O'Neil, the CEO at CISS, many of the homeless are camping near the shelter, and CISS provides them with a lunch as well. This has caused a significant uptick in need; they may use as many as 500-600 lunches per month."

This is where the youth were able to assist. When McLallen arrived with all the fixings, the youth assembled for the work. "We worked together and made a chain, an assembly line," youth Leah Dillon said. "And we packed granola bars, water bottles, Hershey's kisses, and nuts," youth Eleanor Dillon added. "I put peanuts in, that was my station," youth Ella Bruzek said. "It was really neat to help the homeless." Youth



The youth arranged themselves in two lines, down either side of a large table, and placed all the items in the center of the table. Each youth had a specific job in the assembly line: open the bag, add an item, load packed sack in a tote.



The twelve youth packed about 350 lunch bags in 30 minutes!

Morgan Ford agreed, "I thought it was cool because we were helping people. It makes me happy to serve them." Youth Ryder Fleming admits to being a bit skeptical when he heard about the project. "I thought it would be two or three hours of boring," he said. But, in reality, the many helping hands made quick work.

"The youth packed about 350 lunches," McLallen said. "They worked quickly and the lunches were packed and stored in the totes in about 30 minutes. Those who had filled lunches last year remembered exactly what to do and helped set things up quickly."

Each month, St. Luke's provides as many lunches as CISS projects they will need for the coming month. The cost to fill 300 lunch sacks is about \$150, McLallen says. Although several grants have been awarded to the program and fund raising is perennial at St. Luke's, McLallen says, "Seeking ongoing funding to support our Sack Lunch Project is a perpetual effort!"

Ms. Lacey Howard serves as the Missioner for Children and Youth in the Diocese of Iowa. Photos by Jim McLallen.

Youth at General Convention

The Episcopal Diocese of Iowa is offering a trip to General Convention 2018 in Austin, Texas, July 4-8, to up to five youth currently in grades 8 through 12. Participation as a guest of General Convention is a way for youth to become educated about how our church government works and how decisions are made. It is a place to experience the church as a national and international body and will give youth the chance to meet other youth and adults from all across the country and around the world. We hope that being a guest of General Convention will empower youth to be members of decision-making bodies in their congregations and in our diocese. Most of the expenses, including General Convention registration, lodging, transportation, and meals, are subsidized by the diocesan youth budget, but each youth (with help from family/congregation) is asked to contribute \$400. Youth are encouraged to apply to be one of the chosen GC18 guests. Applications are due by March 1, 2018. Find application and more information at iowaepiscopal.org/Ministries/children-youth



Swaziland 2017

by Stacey Gerhart

“The world got a little smaller while our hearts got a little bigger.” That’s how Iowan Greg Vitale described the experience of the three companion dioceses—Iowa, Brechin (Scotland), and Swaziland working together for 10 days this fall. As has been true of every diocesan-sponsored Swaziland trip, the travelers named Swazi worship as one of the highlights. Whether celebrating a Season of Creation Eucharist under a tree by the bank of the Mbabane River after picking up trash or participating in a women’s all-night prayer vigil in a standing-room-only church praying to end violence against women and children or joining in the lively Sunday morning Eucharists with jubilant singing and spontaneous dancing, “The joy of the Swazis is contagious,” beamed Linda Davenport. Their love for the Lord is expressed with all of their being.



Bishop Wamukoya celebrates Eucharist following a morning clean-up on the Mbabane River. Photo by Brad Gipple.

drought that wiped out half the cattle and devastated crops and with the long-term impact of climate change being less rainfall, this will be no easy feat. Yet, Bishop Ellinah’s faith is unwavering. She reminds her people of God’s miraculous work through Noah, Moses, Sarah, and Abraham, emphasizing that God was with God’s people then and God is with us now. “Our God is great. Our God is incredible. Our God is awesome. Never underestimate what God can do.”

The Swaziland diocesan plan for sustainability begins with water. Since many of the wells dried up in the drought, alternative reliable water sources are needed. Thanks to a United Thank Offering (UTO) grant, Bishop Ellinah has been able to promote water harvesting in several communities around the diocese which we had the opportunity to visit. Grant money has been used to purchase water tanks, corrugated metal for roofs, gutters and PVC piping to drain rainwater into the large tanks. Mbava in the poorest area of the country is one such small community where leaders have taken the initiative to implement water harvesting and have cleared the rocky land to establish a large garden. In addition to the materials for water harvesting, grant money was used to buy hand tools and fencing for the perimeter of the garden to keep animals out and demark ownership of the property.

Jerry and Linda Davenport shared a treat of oranges for all of the young children in Mbava. The jury is still out on whether eating the juicy oranges or watching Jerry on all fours mooing for the kids was the bigger treat! Bishop Ellinah got to work mixing up cement and laying the first brick of the new cooking area that was being built for the Neighborhood Care Point (NCP). The plan is for the produce grown in the garden to supplement the NCP meals for improved nutrition. Excess

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Volunteers sorted, catalogued, and shelved more than 1,000 books in the diocesan library that will support the training and formation of people in the Diocese of Swaziland. Photo by Meg Wagner.

A huge thank you goes to the many people across our diocese who contributed books and money, including a \$1,000 gift from the Rev. Mel Schlachter in memory of the Rev. Barbara Schlachter, for the establishment of a library at the office of the Diocese of Swaziland. Under the leadership of IT gurus Meg Wagner, Mary Jo Lee, and Marilyn Van Duffelen, and with the help of all on the work team, more than 1,000 books were catalogued in a data base and shelved appropriately in four days’ time! The new library will enhance the training being offered to those in the formation process.

Sustainability is the focus and plumb line of the Diocese of Swaziland so another highlight was traveling around the country seeing how the Diocese of Swaziland integrates its care for the environment with sustainable practices. Bishop Ellinah’s vision is for every parish to become self-sustaining. In this extremely poor country just coming out of a three-year



Linda Davenport (Christ Church, Cedar Rapids) distributes oranges to the children at Mbava. Photo by Jerry Davenport.

Swaziland 2017, *continued*

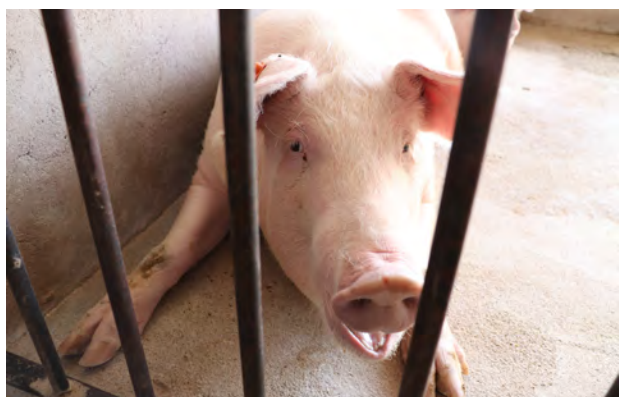
produce will be sold in the market with the profits reinvested in the garden. The children were overjoyed with the gift of soccer balls from Elliott Scarfe and Fiona McDade.



The Brechin and Iowa companions were treated to a wonderful meal in Maphungwane, prepared by women in the community. Photo by Meg Wagner.

Swazi hospitality was humbling. In Maphungwane, a remote community in the east in the process of building water harvesting capability, we were treated to a royal meal, a typical Christmas dinner —broth with a bit of meat, rice, lentils, and a beet-and-cabbage salad along with orange or ginger Fanta to drink. The women cooked and served the meal in pots and dishes that they carry back and forth from their homes daily in order to be able to feed the 60+ orphans who rely on the NCP as their only food source. Bishop Ellinah surprised the women with a gift of two large three-legged cast iron pots and a tote filled with plastic bowls for serving the children. The women sprung into the air whooping with delight and dancing as if they had just won the lottery! A little bit goes so very far.

When asked by the Swazi people what Iowa is like, we stunned them with the fact that our state has more pigs than people! It was only natural that we were interested in traveling to Luve to check on the progress of their new piggery. Although the cement building went up months ago, troubles with the new bore hole and more governmental red tape than anticipated



Visiting the piggery project in Luve. Photo by Meg Wagner.

meant that only recently was the diocese able to purchase an initial four sows and receive the gift of a boar. While adhering to strict Department of Agriculture rules, the competent manager is eager to begin a top-notch breeding operation. The hope is that this piggery can be a model of sustainability to be emulated by other communities in the diocese.

Additional initiatives we visited or worked with were a reforestation project at Usuthu Mission, a home-based care team sponsored by the Cathedral in Mbabane, and Rev. Orma's Ezulwini women's craft group that makes and sells its own bleach, fabric softener, hand cream, candles, jewelry, and sweaters. Brad Gipple, Bill Witt, Jerry, Elliott, and Greg got a workout assisting parishioners in Ezulwini clearing a plot of ground for a garden. Kate Campbell, Bill Kupersmith, and Marilyn assisted in two trainings for deacons. The five priests on the trip, the Revs. Suzanne Peterson, Stacey Gerhart, Kate, Meg, and Marilyn, preached, presided, and assisted at a number of Eucharists. Bill Witt commented, "They wore us out, but in a great way!"



The women's craft group at Ezulwini prepare hand cream. Photo by Meg Wagner.

It wasn't all work and no play. We took a day to visit Hlane Royal National Game Park where we saw rhinos, elephants, lions, wildebeests, impalas, kudus, hippos and an abundance of colorful birds in their native habitat. Our "official" photographers on the trip, Meg, Brad, Jerry, and Bill Witt, were in seventh heaven capturing nature at its finest. We also squeezed in shopping for unique handmade items such as Ngwenga glass, woven baskets and mats, carved wooden animals (ask Brad about traveling with his large giraffe), batiks, Swazi candles, and so much more.

Reflecting on the trip, all participants agreed that building relationships is the lasting gift. Learning about and experiencing first-hand the life of our Swazi companions, has expanded our world views and we have a personal stake in their wellbeing. As we share their rich stories of overcoming hardships and placing their complete trust in God, we are inspired and our priorities come into clearer focus. "Oh the joy of it all!" exclaimed Jerry.

The Rev. Stacey Gerhart serves as the priest at Calvary in Sioux City and as priest-in-charge at All Saints' in Spirit Lake.

#MeToo

by Lauren Lyon

In chapter 3 of Galatians, Paul argues that all who have been baptized are one with Christ. It's a bold claim on its face, but its implications for the identity of those who have received this extraordinary gift are even more audacious. Their new life in Christ does away with essential characteristics of self. Baptism erases distinctions of tribe, nation, and ethnic origin and characteristics of economic and social status as profound as the difference between birth in bondage or freedom. It removes traditional gender distinctions also: "there is no longer male and female; for all of you are one in Christ Jesus."^{1,2} It seems odd that the Church, having heard these words, would enshrine discrimination against women in doctrine, and yet it did and continues to do so. Paul's track record on women is perceived as being inconsistent, contributing to the confusion, but his letters express high regard for women leaders in the churches he founded. Paul's opinions aside, the Church still carries with it much of the cultural baggage of its ancient origins.

The recent revelations of rampant sexual misconduct by prominent public figures in entertainment and journalism has stirred emotions and memories in those of us who have been on the receiving end of unwanted sexual attention. Such instances of misconduct in the Episcopal Church have been addressed in the last two decades by increased training, regulation, and canonical safeguards. The situation has improved, but the problems have not ended. I experienced sexual harassment in the process of discerning my vocation for the priesthood nearly three decades ago. The unwanted attention came from men who had decision making authority over my vocational future. I reported it to a mentor who informed me kindly but definitively that if I complained further it was likely that I would never be ordained. I believe he thought he was doing his best to help me. While I wouldn't say that nothing has changed, the problem still exists. Outright harassment continues, and less traumatic sexist attitudes and behavior remain normative.

In the last year a number of publications have referenced research from multiple sources indicating that the likability of women declines and they face penalties for behavior that goes against gender stereotypes.³ Church tradition is loaded with those stereotypes. Our iconic women tend to be receptive, maternal, agreeable, and unlikely to exercise

authority. Compare what you know about the Marys (of Bethany, Magdala, and Nazareth) with what you know about Deborah or Lydia. Although the Church has made strides in the last several decades in supporting women's calls to lead, we have a long way to go. Women in leadership roles still experience discrimination in finding work, having their ideas heard and exercising rightful authority. Unfortunately, they experience harassment and abuse also. Along with the power differential that discourages women in secular organizations

“There is an unwritten assumption that women who experience mistreatment in the course of their work in the Church should bear it with equanimity as a positive demonstration of their faithfulness.”

from reporting and seeking justice, women in the Church face the additional pressure of the Christian teaching to love enemies and pray for persecutors. There is an unwritten assumption that women who experience mistreatment in the course of their work in the Church should bear it with equanimity as a positive demonstration of their faithfulness.

In a brief article, I've addressed a continuum of behavior that ranges from simple rudeness to criminal

activity. Among the memories and emotions stirred by recent revelations of sexual harassment and assault complaints the question arises: is this a watershed moment that will bring about real change, or will it all have been forgotten in six months? Actress Ashley Judd, who has shown great courage in speaking about her own experience remarked, "Learning to let women speak up, and being open and teachable, is crucial... These micro interpersonal interactions have transformative power." Anyone can follow this advice in a setting as ordinary as a parish committee or vestry meeting. When you hear a woman being interrupted or having her ideas being brushed aside, stop the conversation and set things right. Everyone is responsible.

Galatians 3.28 concludes with the words, "you are one in Christ Jesus." The baptismal covenant reinforces this oneness of spirit and mission with the words, "Will you seek and serve Christ in all persons, loving your neighbor as yourself?" and we answer, "I will, with God's help."

The Rev. Lauren Lyon serves as Rector of Trinity, Iowa City.



#MeToo is a social media movement to raise awareness about sexual assault. Photo by Mihai Surdu.

¹ New Revised Standard Edition

² The author is aware and respectful of the existence of non-binary gender identity. This topic is not addressed in Galatians and is beyond the scope of this article.

³ Marianne Cooper, "For Women Leaders Likability and Success Hardly Go Hand in Hand," *Harvard Business Review*, April 30, 2013.

Be a Messenger of Peace

by Sharon Strohmaier

During these contentious times, will you be a messenger of peace in your community? Iowa Religious Media Services (IRMS) offers a meaningful way to share the Light of Bethlehem here in Iowa. For the seventh year, IRMS is hosting the Peace Light from the Grotto of the Nativity in Bethlehem. While many congregations routinely collect the Light to share in worship, there have been other unique Peace Light experiences since IRMS first brought the Light:

- A child took the Light to the nursing home where his grandfather lives.
- A mental health worker took a day off work to drive to Des Moines to pick up the Light to take back to her workplace to encourage her co-workers.
- An elderly woman came to IRMS to get the Light as a surprise birthday gift for her sister who had suffered a stroke. Sitting together with the Light, both women cried.
- A farmer in his bib overalls brought his barn lantern to collect the Light to surprise his congregation on Christmas Eve. The local newspaper did a photo spread sharing the delight of the congregation.
- A disabled man who lives independently comes every year to carry the Light to a retirement home. He has never told us why.
- A woman brought her two children to get the Light. They do not go to church, but she thought her children needed to see the contrast between a simple Light and the secularized messages of the season.



So how did these individuals obtain this Light of Peace? Let's follow its journey as it has evolved over the past 31 years, spreading the Light from Bethlehem to Europe, parts of Asia, and North and South America. Messengers of Peace kindle a flame from the one that has burned continuously in the Grotto of the Nativity for more than 2000 years. The Light is then flown to Austria and then on to Kennedy Airport in New York by the head of Security for Austrian Airlines. This year the Light arrives in New York on November 25 and will be met by several dozen individuals who will disperse the Light across the United States, Canada, and Mexico. IRMS will receive the light in Columbia, Missouri on November 28

and will share it in Nebraska, South Dakota, and Minnesota before bringing it to Iowa, where it will burn brightly at IRMS, 2400 86th Street, Suite 15, Urbandale. You may transfer the flame to your own lantern or long burning devotional candle at IRMS from 9:30 am to 4:00 pm Monday through Thursday, December 4 through December 21 or by special arrangements on December 22 through 24. For more information, go to www.irms.org or call 515.277.2920.

Each of the individuals above was seeking a special way to share the message of peace in a personal way. You, too, can be a messenger of peace in your own special way. You are limited only by your imagination. Come, receive the Light of Peace to illuminate this season of waiting.

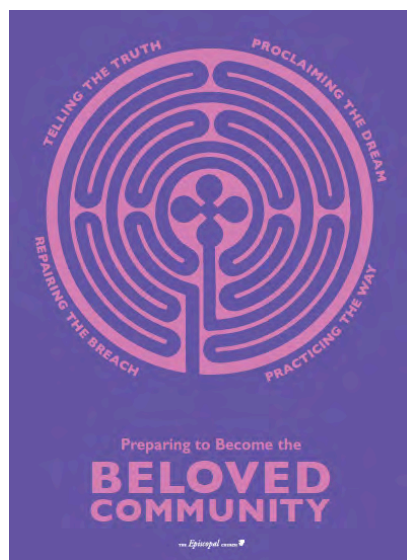
Ms. Sharon Strohmaier serves as the Executive Director of Iowa Religious Media Services.

Advent Resources for Becoming Beloved Community

A newly developed Advent resource is now available to help Episcopalians everywhere to take up Jesus' ministry of reconciliation and healing. Every congregation will receive in the mail *Preparing to Become the Beloved Community*, a multi-fold poster and resource pack with prayer, reflections, and activities for each week of Advent. The resources can also be downloaded: https://www.episcopalchurch.org/files/documents/preparing_to_become_beloved_community_advent_resource_for_print.pdf

Preparing builds on the Becoming Beloved Community vision document and resources, which Presiding Bishop Michael Curry and President of the House of Deputies the Rev. Gay Clark Jennings and their supporting officers introduced earlier this year. The document lays out the Episcopal Church's long-term commitment to racial healing, reconciliation and justice.

Throughout Advent, an Episcopal Church social media campaign will also stir hope, reflection and action around racial reconciliation; join or follow on Facebook and Twitter using the hashtag #adventbeloved.



Tuning the Spirit to God

by Jane Dedina

My choir director in high school, Mr. Gahnz, had a poster in the classroom that has stuck with me throughout the years. It read, “Where words fail, music speaks” (Hans Christian Andersen). I remember feeling incredibly affirmed the first time I read that quote; it seemed as if the words written on my heart had been copied directly onto the paper in front of me. Since then, I’ve come to assign music a much more important role in my spiritual practice, and I attribute that quote with helping my faith grow exponentially.

Growing up, I was allowed to find my own faith. Church was not mandatory aside from Christmas and Easter, but in those instances where I attended church, I was fascinated and enamored with the words the priest would use when praying. The words and the way they were laid out were beautiful, and I knew I wanted to someday have mastery over language like Father José. Yet, being so young and not having a thoroughly solid idea of who God was or would be to me, and with misconceptions about the “rules” of my high-church-styled worship, I didn’t think I was allowed to pray unless it sounded as ornate as The Lord’s Prayer. As an eight-year-old, I certainly didn’t have that capacity.

One day I broached this concern to my mom: “There are things I want to pray about, but I don’t know how to pray right.”

My poor mother certainly wasn’t expecting a theological discussion at 7:35 a.m. on the way to elementary school, but she went along with it, and gave me advice that would shape my faith for years to come.

She allayed my concerns and told me, “Sometimes, when I don’t have the right words to pray, I’ll choose a song that reminds me of whatever problem I’m having, and I’ll use that song as my prayer. It can be just a sentence or two from the song, or it can be the whole thing. I think music is the closest we get to speaking God’s language while still on Earth.”

Immediately, prayer began to seem like something I could take part in. I began to see all instances of singing as me personally communicating to God my deepest wants, fears, concerns, and hopes. Singing became for me a holy activity, and over the years, my high school choir class became like a chapel.

I’ve been surprised in this journey of understanding music as a way to pray. Call me old-fashioned, but I’m a big fan of traditional hymns accompanied by the organ; I used to look down my nose at the new-age Christian pop songs which feature electric guitars and drums. But as they say, God works in mysterious and surprising ways. In the midst of a terrible bout of illness, I felt unable to pray—I didn’t know how or where to start. However, I knew that I could communicate



Ms. Jane Dedina with her choir director, Mr. Gahnz.

with God through song, and in the moment, the only spiritual song I could recall was one I’d heard hours previously at a student-led worship event. A new-age Christian pop song was the only thing I could string together in my memory, so the small refrain was on my tongue: “Spirit lead me where my trust is without borders/ Let me walk upon the waters/ Wherever you would call me.” At the time, I didn’t know who the artist was, or even any more words than the ones I was singing, but I held onto that melody like a lifeline. I repeated those few lines for several hours, and no one could’ve been more surprised than I that a “Hillsong United”

song was the thing that drew me safely to my faith in a difficult time.

My understanding of music as a way of praying has also taught me that there isn’t any “right” way to sing. I’ll be the first to admit that, despite music being at the forefront of my life and spiritual journey, I know next to nothing about the technicalities of music. My ability to read sheet music is best summed up as, “Oh, yes, I see this dot is on a line above that one, so that means the pitch is getting higher to some degree.” My struggle to read sheet music, and my complete inability to play an instrument have both been moderate personal disappointments, but what I lack in technicality I make up for in passion—and I think God’s just fine with that. I’m a firm believer that all songs are acceptable to God, and that it doesn’t matter how “well” you sing. To this day, one of my favorite things to witness in church are the people who self-proclaim that they “can’t carry a tune in a bucket” singing loudly to God. For me, that’s a witness to something holy.

I’ve been surprised in this journey with music because I have found God where I never would have expected—even including pop songs on the radio. When I hear a song with a phrase that tugs my heart or spirit, I save it for future prayers. Through music, I’ve found faith in the most unlikely of places. So now, when someone shares a favorite song with me, I listen hard and ask myself, “Where is God in this for them?”

Ms. Jane Dedina is a member of St. James Episcopal Church in Independence and a student at Luther College in Decorah.



Ms. Jane Dedina singing with her high school choir; she says, “My high school choir became like a chapel.”

2017 Stewardship Share

January-September 2017

City	Church	Stewardship Share	2017 Pledge	Due to Date	Received to Date	(Over) Under
Algona	St. Thomas	4,422	4,500	3,375	3,375	-
Ames	St. John's	51,644	36,644	27,483	24,429	3,054
Anamosa	St. Mark's	500	1,500	1,125	1,500	(375)
Ankeny	St Anne's	16,820	10,000	7,500	7,240	260
Bettendorf	St Peter's	20,800	20,800	15,600	15,600	-
Boone	Grace	500	500	375	375	0
Burlington	Christ	18,553	18,553	13,915	13,915	-
Carroll	Trinity	1,119	1,119	839	1,119	(280)
Cedar Falls	St. Luke's	32,721	32,721	24,541	24,541	-
Cedar Rapids	Christ	59,455	59,455	44,591	39,637	4,955
Cedar Rapids	Grace	6,758	6,758	5,069	5,069	-
Chariton	St Andrew's	3,084	3,084	2,313	3,084	(771)
Charles City	Grace	2,346	2,346	1,760	1,760	-
Clermont	Saviour	1,629	1,680	1,260	1,260	-
Clinton	Christ	15,376	13,900	10,425	9,267	1,158
Coralville	New Song	19,152	19,152	14,364	14,364	-
Council Bluffs	St Paul's	3,354	3,354	2,516	2,236	279
Davenport	St Alban's	6,546	6,546	4,910	4,910	-
Davenport	Trinity	103,645	80,000	60,000	60,000	-
Decorah	Grace	6,508	6,508	4,881	4,881	-
Denison	Trinity	500	660	495	-	495
Des Moines	St. Andrew's	29,624	29,624	22,218	17,281	4,937
Des Moines	St Luke's	28,183	14,301	10,726	10,726	-
Des Moines	St. Mark's	7,250	3,500	2,625	2,625	0
Des Moines	St. Paul's	70,781	70,781	53,086	47,187	5,898
<i>* Dubuque</i>	<i>St John's</i>	<i>15,476</i>	<i>15,000</i>	<i>11,250</i>	-	<i>11,250</i>
Durant	St Paul's	6,630	6,069	4,552	3,175	1,377
Emmetsburg	Trinity	3,425	3,425	2,569	2,569	-
Fort Dodge	St. Mark's	25,381	25,381	19,036	19,036	-
Fort Madison	St Luke's	5,098	5,000	3,750	3,753	(3)
Glenwood	St John's	1,035	1,035	776	776	-
Grinnell	St. Paul's	4,260	4,260	3,195	1,065	2,130
Harlan	St Paul's	500	200	150	200	(50)
Independence	St James	2,785	2,400	1,800	1,800	-
Indianola	All Saints'	1,791	1,791	1,343	1,791	(448)
Iowa City	Trinity	95,597	81,474	61,106	61,106	-
Iowa Falls	St. Matthew's	3,532	3,532	2,649	2,649	(0)
Keokuk	St. John's	11,107	6,000	4,500	4,500	-
<i>* LeMars</i>	<i>St George's</i>	<i>500</i>	<i>250</i>	<i>187</i>	<i>65</i>	<i>122</i>
Maquoketa	St Mark's	3,880	1,200	900	925	(25)
Marshalltown	St Paul's	11,423	11,423	8,567	7,615	952
Mason City	St John's	15,683	15,683	11,762	11,762	-
Mount Pleasant	St Michael's	5,800	4,200	3,150	3,150	-
Muscatine	Trinity	14,935	15,000	11,250	11,250	-
Newton	St Stephen's	5,590	5,590	4,192	4,185	8
Orange City	Savior	1,381	650	488	650	(162)
Oskaloosa	St James'	9,008	9,008	6,756	6,756	-
Ottumwa	Trinity	9,774	2,500	1,875	1,875	-
<i>* Perry</i>	<i>St. Martin's</i>	<i>7,346</i>	<i>6,000</i>	<i>4,500</i>	<i>5,500</i>	<i>(1,000)</i>
Shenandoah	St John's	500	500	375	500	(125)
Sioux City	Calvary	1,949	1,980	1,485	1,485	-
Sioux City	St Paul's	2,584	2,584	1,938	2,584	(646)
Sioux City	St Thomas'	26,664	9,470	7,103	4,805	2,297
Spirit Lake	St Alban's	15,584	15,584	11,688	7,792	3,896
Storm Lake	All Saints'	2,080	2,080	1,560	1,387	173
Waterloo	Trinity	11,967	11,967	8,975	8,975	-
Waverly	St Andrew's	5,029	5,029	3,772	3,772	-
Webster City	Good Shepherd	6,964	6,964	5,223	5,223	-
West Des Moines	St Timothy's	60,955	45,000	33,750	33,750	-
TOTAL		907,483	776,215	582,161	542,804	39,357

* 2017 pledge not received; estimate is used

Episcopal JOURNAL

QUARTERLY EDITION WINTER 2017

Food and Faith: Episcopalians invoke values in range of anti-hunger efforts

By David Paulsen
Episcopal News Service

In Christianity, food is inseparable from faith. It underlies a wide spectrum of the Bible's teachings and Christian traditions, from individual fasting to Jesus' Last Supper and the celebration of the Eucharist. The faith journey can be seen as a path from hunger to fullness.

"Blessed are you who are hungry now, for you will be filled," Jesus says in Luke 6:21.

But Jesus' followers also were called to give to the poor, providing physical food along with Jesus' spiritual food. Churches and believers long have wrestled with how best to address the problem of hunger. Today, physical hunger remains a persistent scourge around the world, including in countries of great wealth like the United States.

Hope remains, too. Episcopal News Service found it in a homeless-outreach program in Seattle, in a food-truck ministry in Houston and in a soup kitchen in New York. Those and other examples of faith-based solutions to the problem of hunger form the heart of the "Food and Faith" series, in which ENS tells the stories of anti-hunger efforts underway in all corners of the Episcopal Church.



Photo/Sara Bates/St. Luke's

St. Luke's Episcopal Church in Seattle, where a daily free breakfast is served to hundreds of people each week, has seen a rise in homelessness in its Ballard neighborhood.

More than 41.2 million Americans and 12 percent of households are deemed food insecure because they lack access to enough food to maintain active and healthy lives, according to Feeding America's most recent "Poverty and Hunger Fact Sheet." More than half of all food-insecure Americans live in households above the poverty line.

"For a lot of people that live below or close to the poverty line, they're left wondering where their next meal is going to come from," said Catherine Davis, chief marketing and communication officer for Feeding America, which distributes food through its member food banks to faith-based and secular food pantries across the country.

The Episcopal Church emphasizes anti-hunger efforts at all levels. Congregations everywhere operate food pantries and meal ministries. Grace Food Pantry in Madison, Wisc., for example, has been distributing food to needy guests for 38 years. Abundant Harvest, a relatively new Episcopal food-truck ministry in the Houston area, is part of a congregation aimed at finding communion around the dinner table.

For ministries like these, the goal is to do more than put food in needy mouths.

"It's a witness to our community and our neighborhood of what it means to live a Christian life," said Sara Bates, coordinator of the Edible Hope Kitchen at St. Luke's Episcopal Church in Seattle, which serves free breakfast every weekday to hundreds of homeless residents in its Ballard neighborhood.

The fight against hunger isn't just local. Money donated to Episcopal Relief & Development supports programs fighting famine overseas in places like South Sudan. Through the Episcopal Church's Office of Government Relations, church-wide advocacy campaigns seek to influence U.S. policy on hunger relief in ways that reflect Christian values.

In May, Presiding Bishop Michael
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NEWS

Storm-tossed Virgin Islands still need aid



OPINION

What are we anticipating at Christmas?



ARTS

Facets of C.S. Lewis onstage

HUNGER from page A

Curry joined “For Such a Time as This,” an ecumenical campaign of prayer, advocacy and fasting, timed to the 21st of each month during the current Congress to highlight the difference government programs like Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program, also known as SNAP or food stamps, can make in the lives of people struggling with hunger. The 21st is the day of the month when 90 percent of SNAP recipients’ benefits run out, according to Bread for the World.

Curry told Episcopal News Service the church was following in Jesus’ footsteps by feeding both the body and soul.

“Jesus fed 5,000 people with physical, tangible bread because they were hungry. At the same time, he fed their souls by teaching them the gospel way,” Curry said. “Sacraments, the word of God, worship, Bible study, prayer groups feed the soul. Soup kitchens, food pantries, ecumenical and interfaith food shuttles, community gardens feed the body. In these ways, we seek to end hunger ... hunger of the body and hunger of the soul.”

Biblical roots

Jesus also alludes to this duality in the Beatitudes: “Blessed are those who hunger and thirst for righteousness, for they will be filled,” he says in Matthew 5:1-12.

The Greek word for righteousness was the same as the word for justice, said the Rev. Jane Patterson, associate professor of New Testament at Seminary of the South-west in Austin, Texas.

How the ancient world understood hunger and fasting, though, was different from how we understand it today, she said. “Most people in the ancient world were hungry most of the time,” and the prophets made the moral case for feeding the hungry, Patterson said.

The idea of Jesus as the “good shepherd” has roots in Ezekiel 34, she said. God asks the shepherds why they feed themselves but don’t care for the flock. God pledges to tend to his sheep, the Israelites, and “provide for them a land renowned for its crops, and they will no longer be victims of famine in the land or bear the scorn of the nations.”

References to abundance and scarcity continue through the New Testament. The words “hunger” and “hungry” are found 19 times in the Gospels. “Eat” appears several dozen more times. In Mark



Photo/Sara Bates/St. Luke's

Volunteers Clare Manthey and John Mitchell prepare to serve St. Luke's Episcopal Church's daily free breakfast through the Edible Hope Kitchen ministry in Seattle.

11:12-14, Jesus is hungry but finds no figs on a fig tree, so he condemns the tree to wither. The prodigal son in Luke 15 is so hungry he covets the pigs’ food, “but no one gave him anything.” And in Matthew 6:25, Jesus says, “Do not worry about your life, what you will eat or drink. ... Is not life more than food?”

For the disciples, Jesus shared his Last Supper in a time of uncertainty and with a great injustice about to happen, Patter-

son said. It is recounted today before every Eucharist because of how Jesus joined the meal to his coming sacrifice, offering himself as bread and wine, she said.

“Food is so basic to life,” but spiritual needs are just as essential, Patterson said, noting that there often is little distinction between the two in the Bible. “People who are hungry need real food, and they also need spiritual sustenance.”

One of the best-known Gospel stories involving food is the one cited by Curry, the feeding of the 5,000 with just five loaves of bread and two fish, as recounted in all four Gospels. That miracle is followed by Jesus’ teaching about “the bread of life.”

“Whoever comes to me will never go hungry, and whoever believes in me will never be thirsty,” he says in John 6:35.

Jesus’ disciples “needed to be taught as much as they needed the bread,” Patterson said. She also emphasizes the communal nature of the miracle. Jesus is not said to have multiplied the loaves and fish. The miracle is that all who gathered are fed from what little food was available, and no one lacks food for giving to those in need, she said. “In God’s economy, it’s never zero sum.”

Giving much, lacking nothing

The Rev. Melanie Mullen, the Episcopal Church’s director of reconciliation, justice and creation care, looks to Proverbs 28 for inspiration in the fight against hunger: “Whoever gives to the poor will lack nothing.”

Mullen oversees Jubilee Ministries and the United Thank Offering (UTO), two programs in which the Episcopal Church provides substantial financial support for antipoverty efforts. Jubilee Ministries focuses specifically on poverty through its network of 600 Jubilee Centers, which provide a range of services, including food, shelter and health care.

UTO collects donations from individuals across the Episcopal Church and distributes the money to a wide variety of ministries, many of them feeding programs.

More than \$1.2 million in UTO grants was awarded this year. Recipients included a farm run by the Diocese of Ohio, a church garden in Connecticut and food ministries in central California. Food ministries regularly benefit from UTO grants, such as the \$12,500 given in 2016 to support this garden at St. James Episcopal Church in Kent, Wash.

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HUNGER from page B

The Episcopal Church can lead from a position of moral clarity based on Jesus' teachings, Mullen said. "When we help the poor we're not just doing charity work, we're living as Jesus did."

The Episcopal Church, through the Anglican Communion, also can leverage a worldwide network of believers willing to give money to support strangers who need help putting meals on the table. Episcopal Relief & Development plays a leading role in those efforts on behalf of the Episcopal Church.

Alleviating hunger is a core area of Episcopal Relief & Development's work, with an emphasis on community-based programs. "These locally developed programs address the specific context of hunger and have a wider impact on the health and economic well-being of the community," the agency's website says. "Working with church partners and local organizations, we empower people to live healthier and more productive lives."

Episcopal Relief & Development spent \$6.9 million on food security in

2015 and nearly \$4 million in 2016, according to its annual reports.

At the local level, one can find many examples of Episcopalians working in their communities to help neighbors put food on the table.

The food ministry at St. Luke's in Seattle started about 30 years ago as a weekly community lunch, launched by the church's Bible study group. More recently, it also has helped save the congregation, which was struggling after a major split over the ordination of gay and lesbian people, said the program's coordinator.

In 2011, the church lost an estimated 80 percent of its members in the split, leaving attendance at worship services as low as a dozen people some Sundays, Bates said. Among those who stayed were the older women who hosted the church's food ministry, and they were determined to keep it going.

By that time, the meal had become a breakfast served five days a week, as the group noticed more and more homeless people in the neighborhood but with no feeding programs in the morning, Bates said. As the meals became more and more



Photo/Sara Bates/St. Luke's

Guests and volunteers pray together during one of the free breakfasts offered by St. Luke's Episcopal Church in Seattle, one of a range of anti-hunger ministries involving the Episcopal Church at all levels.

popular, they took on the name Edible Hope Kitchen a couple years ago, based on the suggestion of one of their regular guests.

"He said, 'You guys don't just serve food here. You serve edible hope,'" Bates recalled. ■

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Virgin Islands still recovering from hurricanes

By Amy Sowder
Episcopal News Service

When Bishop Carl Wright's plane landed on St. Thomas in the U.S. Virgin Islands, he saw an airport full of frantic travelers. The luggage conveyor belt was jammed with generators, batteries and flashlights.

"We planned to visit two parishes to celebrate Holy Eucharist, but we were barred from both by torrents of water. The water was too deep to get through. Although it was more than a month later, it looked as if the hurricane happened yesterday," said Wright, suffragan bishop for armed services and federal ministries, after his October trip.

Both hurricanes Maria and Irma were Category 5 storms when they devastated the Caribbean two weeks apart. Slamming the islands on Sept. 6, Irma was one of the worst storms to come from the Atlantic in the last century, causing catastrophic wind damage and rising water.

After the outcry that Puerto Rico was being overlooked in favor of the places on the continental United States by the White House, that American territory earned more attention and help.

But what about the U.S. territories of the Virgin Islands, as well as the British Virgin Islands? The Episcopal Diocese of the Virgin Islands covers 14 congregations across both the U.S. and



Photo/Bishop Carl Wright

Almost a month after Hurricane Irma, the driveways to St. George's school and church on Tortola, British Virgin Islands, remain flooded.

British islands.

"I felt like the diocese, although this is a feeling and not an observation, is a forgotten diocese," Wright said.

Bishop E. Ambrose Gumbs, bishop of the Diocese of the Virgin Islands, picked up Wright at the airport and immediately gave him a tour of the damage on St. Thomas. That island, plus St. John, took the brunt of Irma. Then, on Sept. 20, St. Croix, the largest major American island that was supporting relief efforts for the first two, took the brunt of Maria.

By Oct. 11 — 21 days after Maria and 35 days after Irma — 78 percent of the homes and businesses on the Virgin Islands remained without power, according to Episcopal Relief & Development.

Wright met with diocesan leaders and learned that all 14 churches sustained damage from the storms. He commended Episcopal Relief & Development and adjusters from Church Insurance for their assessments, money and other resources.

"So much more is needed," Wright said. "These various leaders, more than 20 leaders of the diocese, are all rolling up their sleeves and doing things in their churches and communities with little or no outside assistance. These folks are working hard."

To Wright, it looked like every roof was damaged, although official reports say some were spared. The Federal Emergency Management Agency approved more than \$35 million in public assistance grants and more than \$8 million for individual Virgin Islanders affected by the hurricanes. Those totals are likely to increase as more requests for help are processed.

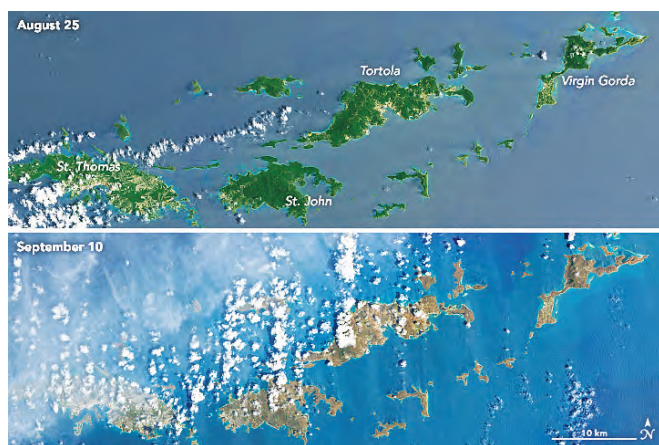
Six weeks after Hurricane Maria hit the Virgin Islands, thousands of people still had no power and were stuck with cold and canned food, if they could find it, according to a Nov. 1 report by The Weather Channel. The few grocery stores that had reopened were accepting cash only.

Because of the damage, school activities were being held in the nave of St. George's Church on the British island of Tortola, which has the largest kindergarten- through sixth-grade school in the diocese.

The rector and a relief coordinator were distributing water, flashlights, beans and fruit to everybody in their community.

At St. George's, school had fully resumed despite extensive damage and power outages. The same

continued on page G



Photo/Joshua Stevens/NASA

NASA satellite images of the Virgin Islands taken on Aug. 25 and Sept. 10 illustrate the damage done by Hurricane Irma to the vegetation of the islands, turning it brown.

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Food and Faith: Episcopal food pantries part of nationwide network

By David Paulsen
Episcopal News Service

Poverty and hunger are all too easy to overlook in Madison, Wisconsin's capital city, where public discourse is dominated by the parallel and relatively affluent spheres of state government and the state's flagship public university.

But wander east from the University of Wisconsin-Madison campus or head southwest down the steps of the Capitol, and you'll find at Grace Episcopal Church a ministry of nourishment that Willetta Randle, for one, relies on to put dinner on the table for her two young children.

The volunteers at Grace Food Pantry are friendly and helpful, Randle said while picking up bags of food on a summer afternoon. She visits "once in a while," when she needs help filling her cabinets and refrigerator with food. "It comes in handy, especially when you're on a tight budget," she said.

Despite the city's median household income of \$55,000, tight budgets are common in Madison. Census data show 19 percent of residents live below the poverty level, and dozens of food pantries across Dane County help provide for some of their most basic needs. Many of the pantries are part of a national network of faith-based and community partners with a shared goal: to make sure no one goes hungry — in the country, in Wisconsin, in Madison or in the neighborhood around Capitol Square that Grace Episcopal calls home.

Congregations across the country feed the hungry through food pantries of all sizes, making this one of the most common and visible outreach ministries of the Episcopal Church and other faith communities in the United States.

"The way the Episcopal Church wants to approach people in our country who are poor is not ... with a sense of helping those who are other than us," said the Rev. Melanie Mullen, the Episcopal Church's director of reconciliation, justice and creation care. Building "a full community of change" means seeing our neighbors

as like us — and, sometimes, in need of help, she said. "We can have confidence to enter this arena boldly and talk about what's right and what's wrong and the fact that no one should be hungry among us."

Congregations' food ministries, no matter the denomination, are on the front lines of a multilayered response to food insecurity in America. The federal government defines food insecurity as lack of access to enough food to maintain an active and healthy life. Nationally, 41.2 million

ing to the most recent data kept by Feeding America. Grace Food Pantry was created in 1979 to serve those residents. Now, 38 years later, it operates as an independent nonprofit with a paid coordinator.

The Episcopal Church's Asset Map, which is still under development, shows more than 300 congregations offering food pantries, meal programs or both. Since the map's participation rate so far is at about 20 percent, the actual number of feeding ministries likely is much greater.

Pantry sizes range widely. Grace Food Pantry is open four days a week and serves 450 to 950 people a month. In a typical month, it distributes about 10,000 pounds of food. The pantry operates on a \$22,000 annual budget largely funded by the congregation.

"It's been a core part of our work and our ministry, and it receives a lot of financial support from the members of the church," said the Rev. Jonathan Grieser, Grace's rector. "It's part of the gospel mission to feed the hungry."

The fruits (and vegetables) of that gospel mission awaited Randle, 35, and the handful of other guests who were first in line when the food pantry opened at 1 p.m. on a Tuesday in August. A handwritten list was stuck to a wall next to the counter: zucchini, tomatoes, cucumbers, star fruit, green beans, broccoli, onions, rutabaga, plums, kiwi, peaches, cauliflower.

That was only a partial list. Each guest who meets income qualifications can get a weekly allotment of food in amounts that vary with the size of the household. Randle received some eggs along with her produce. Meat also is included, and the variety of food can change week to week.

"You don't get the same thing all the time," Raymond Scott, a 67-year-old Air Force veteran, said as he waited his turn, his suitcase ready to be filled with food from the pantry.

The source for much of the pantry's food is a large warehouse seven miles away in the southeast corner of Madison.

Second Harvest's facility on Dairy Drive boasts some impressive numbers. At



Photo/David Paulsen/Episcopal News Service

Second Harvest is one of 200 food banks across the country affiliated with Feeding America, which has made "Solve Hunger" one of its defining goals. The food banks partner with food pantries like the one run by Grace Episcopal Church in Madison, Wisc.

people, including 12.9 million children, were said to be food insecure in 2016, according to the nonprofit Feeding America.

Episcopal News Service visited Madison's Grace Episcopal Church in August to see how one successful food pantry works and how it collaborates with other institutions working on the issue at all levels.

Feeding America works at the national level to support its 200 affiliated regional food banks, which form the backbone of local efforts. Those affiliates, like Second Harvest Foodbank of Southern Wisconsin, collect large amounts of food and distribute it to where it is most needed.

That includes food pantries like the one at Grace Episcopal Church in Madison.

Nearly 58,000 of the 510,000 residents of the city and surrounding Dane County, or 11.3 percent, are food insecure, accord-

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PANTRIES continued from page E

47,000 square feet, the warehouse houses offices, sorting and packing rooms, three coolers, several loading docks and row after row of stock shelves that typically hold about 1 million pounds of food, with a capacity for up to 1.7 million pounds.

Hundreds of people volunteer there each month, and a staff of eight drivers steer the agency's six semi-tractor trailer trucks and three straight trucks across 16 counties in southwest Wisconsin, delivering enough food in 2016 for 14.3 million meals.

Feeding America assigns Second Harvest and other member food banks to serve distinct regions that include every county in the United States without overlapping. The food banks collect food and distribute it across their regions, over and over. Often the Feeding America affiliate is the only food bank serving its communities, though some regions are served by additional food banks unaffiliated with Feeding America.

As they feed the hungry, these agencies also function like laboratories for new anti-hunger initiatives.

"There's no magic formula how to run your food bank. Everyone offers differ-



Photo/David Paulsen/Episcopal News Service

Grace Food Pantry coordinator Vikki Enwright, right, helps volunteers Audrey Shomos and Jim Murphy as they fill grocery bags with food for the pantry's guests in Madison, Wisc.

ent programs and different ways to attack this problem," Second Harvest Executive Director Dan Stein said. "We all are each other's best cheerleaders. We freely share each other's best practices. We share things that were unsuccessful, so we don't waste resources."

Stein's agency, for example, has found success working directly with farmers to grow crops that can be distributed by Second Harvest's partner food pantries. In addition, Second Harvest sends its trucks

more than 20 times a month to distribute food to people in places not already served by food pantries. It also has developed partnerships with health-care providers and schools to promote nutrition.

Pantries like the one at Grace Episcopal, though, are still the indispensable "feet on the streets" in the communities Second Harvest serves, Stein said. They know their clients' needs, he said.

The pantries can place orders online, paying Second Harvest a fee for the food. Certain items are offered to the pantries at a reduced rate or for free. Then the food bank's transportation supervisor dispatches drivers to make the requested deliveries.

Being part of a large network also offers economies of scale. Nationally, Feeding America solicits large corporate donations and develops relationships with national retailers like Walmart, Kroger and Target to donate their excess food to the regional food banks. Feeding America also is active on public policy, supporting federal programs that help feed low-income Americans, such the program commonly known as food stamps. The Episcopal Church shares those concerns and advocates for those programs through its Office of Government Relations.

Feeding America traces the organization's history to what it credits as the first food pantry, started in 1967 by a Roman Catholic church in Phoenix, Ariz. In a domino effect, churches around the country began forming their own pantries, and, in 1979, the national organization was created to leverage the coordinated work of member pantries. Many, but not all, of the food pantries run by Episcopal churches are affiliated with Feeding America.

"Solve hunger" is the mantra of today's Feeding America. "I can think of nothing better than a society where we have a hunger-free America," Catherine Davis, Feeding America's chief marketing and communication officer, said in a phone interview. "And that's actually our mission, to help create a hunger-free America. But the majority of our work goes to feeding people."

That work continues seemingly without end. Hunger is better understood as a chronic social problem rather than a sudden individual emergency, Davis said. There always will be people seeking food assistance who are driven by unforeseen circumstances — a lost job, a car repair, a medical bill. At the same time, most of the people who visit food pantries have steady jobs. Those jobs just don't pay enough to make ends meet. ■

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HURRICANE continued from page D

was true at All Saints Cathedral School on St. Thomas.

St. Mary's in Virgin Gorda, a British territory, is a small, remote parish that Wright described as "damaged and very stark."

The islanders are working together because they feel there's not enough outside or government help yet, he said. Left to their own devices, they're trying to find their own resources and are cooperating with an admirable sense of community spirit, he said. "In that diocese, none of the parishes are separate from the community. All are an integral part of the community, almost indistinguishable from one another."

When Annette Buchanan, canon and national president of the Union of Black Episcopalians, heard from Wright that the islanders were in dire need of solar flashlights, she wanted to use her organization to help in this specific way. Battery-powered flashlights run out fast, and there's hardly anywhere on the islands to buy new batteries, she learned.

"It's a small thing, but we wanted to give them something they wanted," Buchanan told ENS.

Many UBE members have relatives on the Virgin Islands, and some members are from the territories themselves, so the UBE has had a close relationship with that diocese over the years, she said.

The UBE already had a more general fundraising drive for hurricane relief, which goes directly to Episcopal Relief & Development. But Buchanan is leading a second fundraiser to fund an initial shipment of \$1,000 worth of solar flashlights to the Virgin Islands by the end of November. The UBE was coordinating the effort with Wright and Gumbs to ensure the donation was shipped the right way and to the best location.

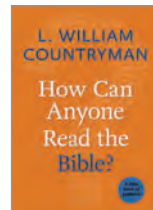
"We just want to draw to the larger church's attention that this diocese is in such dire straits, that they're still in hurricane-recovery mode," Buchanan said. "We are concerned about them, and there hasn't been much publicity about the Virgin Islands after the hurricanes."

Donations of supplies can go directly to parishes or the diocese with proper communication about specific needs and locations, Wright said. Monetary donations can go to Episcopal Relief & Development, which will place assistance in the proper hands, he said. ■

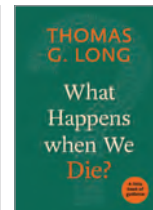


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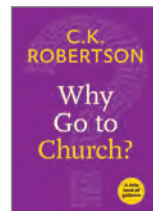
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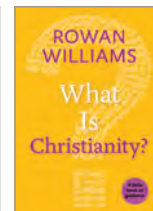
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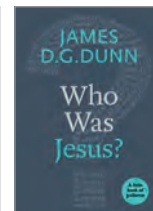
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What are we really anticipating at Christmas?

By Elsa Worth

From number 1 to 24, each window on the Advent calendar brings Christmas closer. I remember eagerly anticipating Christmas when I was little. It was a truly magical holiday.



I loved the electric candles in my bedroom windows, which cast such a special soft light as I fell asleep in the weeks heading up to Christmas. I loved the many wooden Christmas horses and trolls that began appearing all around the house. I loved the smell of balsam; of my mom's paperwhite narcissus bulbs that inevitably came into bloom right about this time; of Christmas cookies baking; and of the delicious Swedish rye bread, which would be

eaten smeared with butter and eaten with a chunk of cheese.

And, of course, I loved the Christmas tree, all lit up with tiny white lights. I'd sit and gaze at it in the dark room, squinting my eyes to watch the lights go in and out of soft focus. I remember how often I'd say, "I can't wait until Christmas!" The feelings of anticipation and expectation were so, so strong, it seemed like it took forever for Christmas to arrive.

These days, more often than not, I find myself wondering how Christmas got here so fast. And instead of anticipation, I sometimes fall prey to an anxious sense of dread that I still have

so much left to do.

What is it about adulthood that can turn a magical holiday into just another pile of looming chores in an overflowing inbox? How did the gift that is Christmas become overshadowed by burdensome should's and have-to's? When did I stop perceiving Christmas as an exciting movement of the spirit and start feeling the weight of holding it up as an institution? Is there some way to reclaim the magical gift of anticipation at this time of year?

While gifts are a big part of a child's excitement about Christmas, the total-body, tail-wagging-puppy excitement that came over me at this time of year as a little girl was about much more than the presents. I anticipated renewing connections with family, friends and neighbors as we enjoyed a big smorgasbord at our house every Christmas Eve.

I knew everyone would comment on my mom's delicious ham, beans and potato salad and that we'd get to taste once again the foods that only showed up once a year (like pickled herring). I knew that we'd sing carols around the piano and that my rather tone-deaf Uncle Roy would be singing the loudest of all. I knew one young reader in the family would get to read "The Night Before Christmas" out loud to the whole gathering before we'd all bundle up and head to church in the dark to hold little burning candles while we sang "Silent Night."

I knew I'd be the first to get up and go downstairs on Christmas morning to check that Santa had eaten his cookies and milk. I'd deliver the full stockings to my parents' bed, where they'd pretend to be excited and happy to have been awakened at 5 a.m. I knew my parents and I would spend a relaxed Christmas Day together, building a fire in the fireplace, playing board games, watching football and eating the smorgasbord leftovers that had been laid out again for the day.

Christmas was, for me, not just any one of these things. It was all of them together. It was a package of love and togetherness and church and music. And it all happened each year like clockwork. I could count on it. And, Lord, don't we all love — and need — things we can count on.

Looking back, I can see now that my parents put a boatload of work into Christmas each year. That smorgasbord. The baking. The presents. The window candles, the tree, the wreaths, the decorations.

I have to admit that, despite my holiday stress, I don't do nearly as much. Then again, my mom was not a full-time priest. In my own family, church has taken far more of a central role in our Christmas rituals, and our traditions at home are relatively simple. For example, we always have a quick-to-cook ravioli dinner on Christmas.

But I've come to realize that it's not what we do that matters. It's that we are creating and enjoying family rituals together. My big anticipation each year always was — and still is — knowing that the light of love will be made manifest once again among the people I love at Christmas.

The Grinch was surprised that Christmas came to the people of Whoville without ribbons or tags. It came without packages, boxes or bags. The Whos knew what counted most was gratefully being together.

When we make time and room to express our love for God and our love for each other, the true light is manifested among us. Whether our Christmas celebrations are traditional or depart from tradition by choice or by circumstance, we

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How genuinely to keep Christ in Christmas

By George Clifford

Few people today know that the Nazis tried to remove Christ from Christmas.

For the perfect Nazi Christmas, you had to hang glittering swastikas and toy grenades from the pine tree in the living room and, in your freshly pressed uniform, belt out carols urging German women to make babies for the Führer rather than worship the Jewish Baby Jesus. Then came the moment to light the pagan candleholders — handmade by laborers at Dachau, wrote journalist Roger Boyes in *The Times* of London.



More surprisingly, significant manifestations of the Nazi efforts to remove

Christ from Christmas remained embedded in German culture throughout much of the latter half of the 20th century. Germans continued to sing carols and hymns, revised by the Nazis to excise references to Jesus and the Christian story, often unaware of how the Nazis had altered the lyrics. For example, “Unto Us a Time Has Come” became a hymn of praise about snowy fields instead of lauding God’s gift of the Christ-child.

Unlike what happened in Germany with Hitler’s propagandists centrally directing the effort to transform Christmas from a celebration of Jesus’ birth into adulation of the Führer and the Third Reich, today’s growing disconnection between Christ and Christmas is more insidious and operates without any central authority.

Unfortunately, two strawmen are often lightning rods for Christian efforts to keep Christ at the heart of Christmas. These strawmen are irrelevant distractions.

First, the growing disconnect between Christ and Christmas has nothing to do with removing Christian symbols, including Christmas decorations and Nativity scenes, from public property. Using state resources to promote a particular religion in a secular, multi-cultural democracy inappropriately demeans non-Christians and their freedom to practice their own (or no) religion. In short, Christian displays on public property reflect a lack of love for our non-Christian neighbor. Christian displays belong on Christian-owned or leased property.

Second, complaints about substituting the now seemingly ubiquitous Xmas for Christmas reflect an inappropriate desire to control the speech of others and a lack of understanding of Christian history. The Greek letter chi, written in Greek as X, was one of the first Christian symbols. Rightly interpreted, Xmas denotes Christ’s mass, a Eucharistic thanksgiving or season of commemoration for God’s gift of the Christ child, which is what the word Christmas itself means.

The real threat to keeping Christ in Christmas in 21st-century developed countries is the commercialization of the holiday, transforming a spiritual event into a season generally filled with widely extravagant expectations of partying, decorations and unaffordable gift giving. This is a battle that Christians fought once before and won.

As John Buchanan, the editor of the *Christian Century*, has observed, “One of the most memorable sermons I ever heard — one of the very few I actually remember — was a Christmas Day sermon preached by Charles Leber. At the time, he and Ulysses Blake were co-pastors of First Presbyterian Church on Chicago’s

South Side. Leber’s sermon was titled ‘Another Roman Holiday.’

“He explained that the early church chose Dec. 25 to celebrate Jesus’ birth even though everyone knew the birth had happened sometime in the spring. Dec. 25 was the beginning of the Romans’ year-end holiday, which Leber said was quite a bash: seven straight days of eating, drinking and reveling. The Christians did not participate in these revels. They decided to draw attention to themselves by rejecting the celebration. And so, to provide an alternative and to help them resist the sensual temptations of the Roman holiday, they came up with Christmas.”

Christians still constitute a sizable and influential percentage of the U.S. population and a sufficiently substantial minority of 10 percent or more to be able to exert considerable influence in most other developed nations. We need not lose the current battle to keep Christ in Christmas.

To keep Christ in Christmas, live into the story of Christmas, which is a synopsis of the gospel, by intentionally cultivating practices such as these:

Becoming spiritual leaven instead of becoming co-opted by the holiday’s secular, commercial ethos.

Giving alternative gifts congruent with Jesus’ love, e.g., a gift of a goat to a hungry family in the name of the person to whom one wishes to give a gift.

Focusing, as did Jesus, on relationships and people instead of things and fleeting pleasures.

Developing countercultural Christmas observances that tell the story of the birth of the Christ child and that invite people to explore that story’s meaning in ways appropriate to a biblically illiterate society.

Whether we in the 21st century succeed in keeping Christ in Christmas may well hinge upon our answer to this poignant and memorable question that Marcus Borg and John Dominic Crossan have posed in “The First Christmas”:

“Christmas is not about tinsel and mistletoe or even ornaments and presents, but about what means **continued on page K**



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Christian unity has been achieved

By David W. T. Brattston

There is no further need for efforts toward Christian unity. The major churches have already attained a sufficient degree of harmony and mutual acceptance to fulfill Jesus's call for unity among Christians in John 10.16 and in his oft-cited prayer in John 17.

Look at mainline denominations, such as the Episcopal Church. It has intercommunion agreements, fellowship and joint ventures with other church bodies, and cooperation in local, national and world councils of churches. Any disunity is largely illusory, with the differences being only in nonessentials that other major church bodies are willing to tolerate.

What solidifies denominational separation in place are the specific rules of trust funds for seminaries and local meeting places, incorporation requirements about

confessions of faith and the secular rules regarding corporate status and property-holding arrangements, some of which date back centuries ago. In short, it is ownership of material possessions that keeps us from coming together more closely, which were not a consideration before Christianity was legalized in the fourth century.

I looked for the meaning of Christian unity as contemplated in the Scriptures and in the writings of Christians so early they could recall what the Jesus and his first disciples actually did. I aimed to ascertain the meaning of such unity in the practice of the apostles and their first successors and how "unity" was understood in the next few overlapping generations.

Examining Christian sources to the middle of the third century A.D., I discovered that "unity" meant attitudes, qualities of character or modes of relating to people with whom one is in personal contact. In the biblical sense, it is a pattern of conducting one-to-one interpersonal relations among Christians that fosters peace, love and harmony at the neighborhood level.

For confirmation of this view as to

what the ancients meant by Christian unity, let us look at what the above authors classed it with as desirable Christian traits: peace, love, gentleness, compassion, courtesy, meekness, lowliness, longsuffering, forbearance, hospitality and recognition of the spiritual gifts of other Christians.

According to the same authors, Christian unity is incompatible with strife, jealousy, dissimulation, arrogance, overthrowing congregational leaders, wisdom in one's own conceits, repaying evil for evil and thinking too highly of oneself.

All these are attitudes, qualities of character or modes of interacting with people or conditions of relating to people with whom one is in personal contact. In the biblical sense, unity is thus a pattern of mind and behavior, a method for conducting interpersonal relations among Christians with who come into frequent contact, and which fosters Christian peace, love and harmony at the neighborhood level.

The Scriptures and church fathers never mentioned merger of organizations or bureaucracies.

The results of my research contradicted allegations that the Christian churches today are too fragmented to fulfill Christ's will. Indeed, there already is — or easily could be at a moment's notice — Christian unity among major denominations, especially at the local and person-to-person level, in the sense that it was understood by Christ's first followers.

If we substitute the phrase "Christian unity" in its biblical sense for the "organizational unity" or "structural unity" that many church members mistake it for, believers of every denomination can practice John 17 now, in their daily lives. Even when we narrow down the meaning of Christian unity to structural or bureaucratic arrangements, there is no longer any sense to regard disunity as a problem, for there exist far too many avenues for churches to cooperate with each other, such as intercommunion agreements, open Communion, unhindered mutual acceptance, joint ventures with other church bodies and cooperation in local, national and world councils of churches.

True, some church leaders allege that disunity remains, but this may be a mere public-relations gesture by some of them. They usually mention it as if it were the only sin of which they are guilty and



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WORTH continued from page H

can treasure and joyfully put our energy toward the priorities that matter most.

Not everyone grew up with the rich Christmas traditions that my family had. And I also know all too well that people are suffering all kinds of difficulties this and every Christmas. Yet I trust that God's light, the light that enlightens the world, is still coming into the world, especially for those who need it most. Hopefully those of us with plenty to share will find new ways to share it with others as part of our own evolving Christmas rituals.

So I'm working on discerning new ways to keep that long to-do list of "shoulds" steal my anticipation this year. At Christmas, as in church, simple is good. If you find you've gotten a little lost in tasks and have forgotten the real reason you're doing them, I give you full permission to take a look at your to-do list right now and just draw a line right through anything that doesn't directly support more time and room in your life for God and your loved ones.

Perhaps by letting go of a few of the "heavier lifts" you will discover new room and energy to add a few new traditions to bring a renewed sense of joy and anticipation into your holiday preparations. I'm pretty sure that focusing on the true light will help us rediscover a more child-like sense of anticipation and will make the Christmas season shine more brightly for all. ■

The Rev. Elsa Worth is rector of St. James Episcopal Church in Keene, N.H. This column first appeared on the church's website and is reprinted with permission.

CLIFFORD continued from page I

will we use toward the end of a peace from heaven upon our earth. Or is 'peace on earth' but a Christmas ornament taken each year from attic or basement and returned there as soon as possible?" ■

The Rev. George Clifford, a priest in the Diocese of Hawaii, served as a Navy chaplain for 24 years, has taught ethics and the philosophy of religion, and now blogs at Ethical Musings (<http://blog.ethicalmusings.com>). This column originally appeared online at The Episcopal Café (www.episcopalcafe.com) and is reprinted with permission.

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Becoming C.S. Lewis

By Retta Blaney

A woman in her early 20s came up to Max McLean after a performance of his latest one-man play, “C.S. Lewis Onstage: The Most Reluctant Convert,” and said she could not possibly be a Christian.

Sensing her anxiety, McLean told her, “God has you in his net, and he’s not going to let you go.” Her response surprised him: “What should I do?” He recommended that she read the Gospel of John, and he gave her his card, and they arranged a time to talk further.

Such is the intensity of the story McLean has written. One production took place last spring off-Broadway in New York. “People [make] associations that get in the way, and they can’t get past them. Theater and art have a way of breaking through stigmas,” he said, quoting Lewis’s notion of “stealing past the watchful dragons.”

“His conversion is a roadmap for people who have given up.”

Lewis has been important to McLean’s life since he, too, was in his early 20s. He grew up Roman Catholic in a military fam-

ily. First Communion and confirmation were meaningful to him, but as a teenager he stopped attending church and “fell into atheism, more by anger than anything else.”

He experimented with Eastern religions in college, in keeping with the trend of the 1970s. Then he met the woman who would become his wife. She took him to church and introduced him to other Christians, one of whom described Jesus as having been a historical person just like George Washington. This triggered in McLean a sense that Jesus was something more than the “fairy-tale character” he had grown up imagining.

The first thing he did was read the Gospel of John. His second choice was Lewis’ “Surprised by Joy,” which he described as “over my head,” followed by “The Screwtape Letters,” which he “got immediately.”

McLean continues to respect the way Lewis opens his readers to the supernatural world, something he thinks the modern church, in its desire to simplify and demystify, misses.

“Lewis is my spiritual guide,” McLean said in a telephone interview. “He helps me understand reality in a way I wouldn’t



Photo/Jeremy Daniel

Playwright and actor Max McLean on C.S. Lewis: “His conversion is a roadmap for people who have given up.”

see or understand. He believed so strongly in how the supernatural world interacts with ours. He triggers my imagination in a way almost no other writer does.”

Deciding to portray that spiritual guide onstage was a natural progression for the actor and playwright. He had previously adapted and performed “The Screwtape Letters” and “The Great Divorce” for the stage. In doing so, he read extensively among works by and about Lewis.

“In 2011, the idea came to me to attempt to tell his own story,” McLean said.

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Celebrating Christ's birth with crèches from around the world

By Jerry Hames

As many have for the past 26 years, thousands of people will take part in a cherished Christmas tradition when they view a display of nativity scenes from Washington National Cathedral's extensive crèche collection.

"We will have between 80 and 100 sets out this year," said Lori Amos, the cathedral's crèche director, days before the collection was placed on public view Nov. 20. "We're still in progress, and decisions are being made as we speak."

Many people come to the cathedral specifically to see the crèche exhibit, while others happen upon it during a tour or while attending a service or event. "Our goal is that, whether they look at everything we've displayed or simply stop to glimpse one set, that they'll find something that blesses them," she said.

Lori and her husband Chip are solely responsible for setting up the crèche exhibit each year. "He serves as my technical director and works on lighting, moving the crèches and supplies out of storage and into our workroom, formatting and printing labels, photography and major construction projects, while I unpack, set up and decorate each set and write the labels," she said.

The crèches are displayed in two areas in the cathedral's crypt — the first room



Photos/Danielle E. Thomas/Washington National Cathedral

The cathedral's crèche director, Lori Amos, adjusts figures in a nativity set so that it reflects the customs of the country where it was made.

in the north crypt aisle, just west of Bethlehem Chapel -- and the Visitors' Lounge, just outside the Museum Shop entrance.

"The advantage of these locations is that they give an untold number of people the opportunity to view the collection throughout the holiday season," Amos said.

Each nativity is "set dressed" to emphasize its particular attributes, as well as to suggest the culture in which it was created. "Our goal is never to set a crèche the same way twice," she said, "as we have visitors who have come every year to see those sets many times in a new way."

The late Beulah Sommer's collection of more than 600 nativity sets — first loaned to the cathedral for eight years, then donated in 1998 — forms the core of the cathedral's collection. About 100 more sets have come into the collection since then.

All nativity scenes are dis-

played in a three-year rotation so that as many as possible can be viewed. The sets vary dramatically in size and height. This year, the smallest set is a tiny resin nativity built on the head of a pin, while the largest is about 11 inches tall: a carved wooden Holy Family from Finland that includes one black sheep among the animals.

This year's exhibit contains crèches made of wood, leather, stone, pottery, stained glass, cast iron, lignite coal, a mixture of mud and animal dung, and even ash from the explosion of Mount St. Helens.

In an international city such as Washington, Amos said, it is gratifying to see visitors' reactions when they see a small representation

of their home country or heritage represented in the cathedral's collection. "Our goal is for everyone to stop, look, learn and be blessed by these incredibly varied representations of Christ's birth," she said. "It is perhaps even more gratifying when people literally see this great story of God's love in a new way and are moved again by a story they know so well."

The cathedral's visitors' book is filled with comments from adults and many children responding to the question: "Which is your favorite crèche and why?"

"We have received answers that are funny, moving, profound, passionate and silly, which is why we do this exhibit every year," Amos said. "We want people to engage with the story of Christ's birth, to feel its wonder and power, to see themselves represented at the manger, to see this ancient, great story in a new light and, most importantly, to feel included in the great mystery of God's love." ■



A serene pottery nativity set made in Maryland reflects the artist's Asian heritage.

A bright and joyous "pesebre" from Brazil comes complete with a gray "cave," topped with a sparkling silver Star of Bethlehem.



The exhibit can be seen through Jan. 16. It is open to the public whenever the cathedral's crypt level is open, usually during general visiting hours. Due to the busy holiday schedule, visitors are encouraged to visit the website, cathedral.org, to check on availability.

Spiritual leaders bring joy to the world

Review by Sharon Hausman

Two things surprised me when now-retired Archbishop Desmond Tutu, a Godly and outspoken activist against the still-reigning evils of apartheid in his South Africa homeland, visited my New Jersey church in the late 1980s. First, his physical height was much shorter than his moral stature had led me to assume. Second, despite the seriousness of his message and cause, the Nobel Prize winner exuded joy and a sense of mischief. I vividly remember him hopping sideways, grinning widely, to stand beside our choir children when someone aimed a camera at him so the photo would include the youngsters. Hardships did not harden this man, then or now.

The Dalai Lama likewise exhibits a sense of peace and contentment that belies his years in exile. “The Book of Joy” explores how these two religious leaders remain so joyful despite the challenges and sadnesses of their lives — and how we, too, can live lives of joy.

The book records a series of dialogues moderated by Douglas Abrams between the two friends during a weeklong visit

Tutu made to the Dalai Lama’s home in India to celebrate the latter’s 80th birthday in April 2015. Their interactions are in turn gracious, respectful, thoughtful, playful, poignant and, yes, joyous.

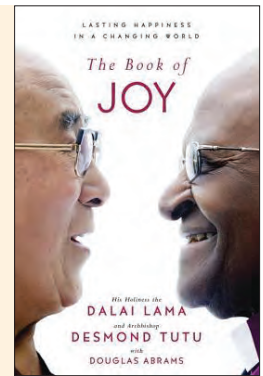
“Lasting happiness cannot be found in pursuit of any goal or achievement,” the two spiritual leaders write in their introduction. “It resides only in the human mind and heart, and it is here that we hope you will find it. ... We are sharing what two friends, from very different worlds, have witnessed and learned in our long lives. We hope you will discover whether what is included here is true by applying it in your own life.”

The book includes scientific research findings about happiness, discussions of the leaders’ different theological outlooks, descriptions of their spiritual practices and stories from their lives. Chapters explore their beliefs and advice concerning the obstacles to joy (fear, stress and anxiety; frustration and anger; sadness and grief; despair; loneliness; envy; suffering and adversity; illness and fear of death)

The Book of Joy: Lasting Happiness in a Changing World

By the Dalai Lama and Desmond Tutu with Douglas Abrams

Avery
384 pages, \$18.20



and the “eight pillars of joy” (perspective, humility, humor, acceptance, forgiveness, gratitude, compassion, generosity). It concludes with a selection of “joy practices.”

During the so-called season of joy, when so much and so many around the world struggle to cope with pain and hardship at many levels, this book provides wisdom, inspiration and an entertaining glimpse into the friendship of two men who tease each other like schoolboys and call each other a “mischievous spiritual brother.” It would make a lovely Christmas gift, to yourself or a loved one, to sustain and guide you into the new year. ■

BECOMING LEWIS continued from page L

He spent two or three months working on a first draft, then put it away for about four years. Then he began working on it through “a hefty development process” that included labs and workshops before the show premiered in April 2016 in Washington, D.C. It then played Chicago and had a brief Midwestern tour before the New York show.

About 90 percent of the 80-minute script consists of Lewis’s words.

“I’m not as smart as he was,” McLean says. “My confidence comes from knowing what an extraordinary writer he was.”

The play, performed without an intermission, is set in Lewis’s study at Magdalen College, Oxford, England, in 1950 and tells the story of his life, from the time of his mother’s death from cancer when he was 10, through his estranged relationship with his father, his fighting in World War I, his avowed atheism and his conversion to Christianity.

“Conversion stories are inherently dramatic,” McLean says. “It’s something you fight against. The tension is almost like an

invasion. In Christian language, we’re all rebels. The Incarnation is a kind of invasion, taking back enemy territory.”

He said the play’s title helps attract more than just Lewis fans because it is intriguing. “Convert means to change, and *reluctant* means to avoid. That was the guiding principle to the piece.” He said he needed to set up why Lewis was an atheist: his mother’s death, his relationship with his father and his being wounded in the war.

“That gave him an extremely pessimistic view of reality. To turn from that was very challenging.” McLean identified the fulcrum of the play as the tension between atheism and theism. “Once I knew how I wanted to go, I knew what to take out and what to put in.”

With the help of a three-piece suit, pipe and a wig of thinning, combed-back hair, McLean transforms into Lewis and tells his story to the audience. In preparation for the “forest of words to navigate,” he listened to three audio clips he found online. In one, Lewis sounds “almost Alfred Hitchcockish.” In the others, he is more relaxed. “He was Irish but he took on an Oxford don pronunciation that was

very erudite and educated.”

In preparing for and portraying Lewis, McLean says the “number-one thing” he has learned was about the author’s “generosity of spirit.”

“He was a strange mixture of being incredibly self-reflective and not taking himself too seriously. He had self-deprecating humor. His basic nature was to be very proud and arrogant, and he buried that.

“I feel like I know him. I feel like he’s my buddy. With so many writers, you get to the bottom of them quickly. You don’t get to the bottom of Lewis.”

McLean attributes this to deep insight.

“He read everything from the Greeks to the moderns, and he could remember everything. He was a chronicler of literature who was able to see how the Christian view of the world best absorbed all the worldviews he read.” ■

Retta Blaney is an award-winning journalist and author of “Working on the Inside: The Spiritual Life Through the Eyes of Actors.” This story originally was published in The Living Church and is reprinted with permission.

Harriet Tubman's Canadian church seeks help for repairs

By Adelle M. Banks
Religion News Service

A century and a half ago, a new Canadian church gave fleeing slaves a place to worship. Now the sanctuary that welcomed Underground Railroad conductor Harriet Tubman and other escapees needs help itself.

The dwindling membership of Salem Chapel, a British Methodist Episcopal church just north of Niagara Falls, has started a crowdsourcing campaign in hopes of raising C\$100,000 (about US\$79,000).

The congregation wants to shore up the building, which is in an area where heavy traffic has contributed to its shifting foundation.

Dedicated in 1855 by runaway slaves and free blacks, the church needs cable wires to secure the log frame of the building ahead of expected nearby construction and wants to replace parts of the building that are deteriorating or damaged.

Salem Chapel is in St. Catharines, Ontario, a spot known as an end point of the Underground Railroad, the multipronged clandestine route through which slaves escaped to freedom. Some of the people Tubman helped escape became members of the church.

Rochelle Bush, one of the 11 remaining members who launched the campaign, is the great-great-grand-

daughter of the Rev. James Harper, who was the minister in charge of the congregation when Tubman attended and when it changed its affiliation from the African Methodist Episcopal Church to BME.

"We became British Methodist Episcopal in 1856 because nobody wanted to go back for conference [in the United States] because of the fugitive slave laws," Bush said, adding that about 10 churches in Ontario remain British Methodist Episcopal and consider the AME Church their parent organization.

After the Civil War, the church, which began with 195 members, began to dwindle as members returned across the border, decreasing to about 40 in 1970. Most of its members now are age 80 and older.

The congregation, which continues to meet for worship each Sunday with a



Photo/courtesy Salem Chapel British Methodist Episcopal Church

The church Harriet Tubman attended when she lived in St. Catharines, Ontario.

pastor and a pianist, has been sustained by tourists, who increased from about 2,500 annually to 4,000 this year, Bush said. Visitors

pay a \$5 admission to learn about "the who's who in the abolitionist movement" — including Frederick Douglass and John Brown — who have visited the church.

"That's what helps us keep the church doors open, and it pays the bills throughout the winter season," she said.

But now, the church's members say they need more assistance to keep their building available for future generations.

"[W]e want to ensure that it continues to serve as a religious institution and because it is an important treasure in North American history," they said. ■

BRATTSTON continued from page J

hasten to add that they are working hard to overcome it.

In the last hundred years, the tireless efforts of many leaders of major churches and the goodwill of local laity towards their counterparts in other communions have achieved a real, viable and practical unity through many branches of Christianity, which answers Christ's prayer. We should pray that this good work continues and expands, especially through us in our own local setting. ■

David W. T. Brattston is the author of the four-volume Traditional Christian Ethics. His articles on early and contemporary Christianity have been published by multiple denominations. He lives in Lunenburg, Nova Scotia, Canada.

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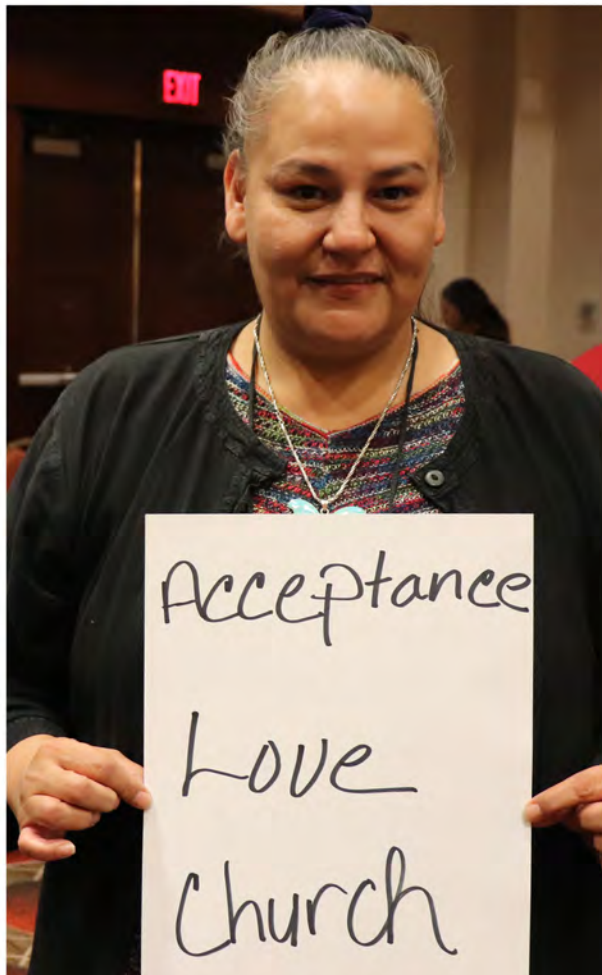
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