

Fall 2019  
VOLUME 6, NUMBER 3



# Iowa Connections



**A Week at EPIC: Our Journey with Jesus p.7**

# From the Bishop

“This parish discourages the homeless from attending its functions.” This was a proposed resolution, at a fall meeting, that circulated around the vestry of St. Barnabas’ Episcopal Church, Eagle Rock, where I was rector. No one except the proposer wanted to engage it, but one of the elders seconded it for discussion purposes. I suggested that we table the resolution for two months, and invite the congregation into conversation with vestry members. It was Year C in the lectionary, and Luke was the Gospel. Halfway through the discussion period, the resolution proposer accused me of “cooking the books” on the Scriptures we were hearing week after week. I insisted that the lectionary predated me. Eventually we took up the discussion formally as vestry, shared our almost unanimous stories of opposition to such a concept, and still voted eight to one against.

Such experiences stick with you. I remember having my resignation letter in the back of my notebook, just in case I had misread the congregation. At the heart of the controversy was a weekly meal that we had started for anyone in the community, which was particularly welcomed by those who were without homes or regular indoor shelter. At Thanksgiving, we held a special service of thanks at which members from the meal community came, and shared their gratitude to God even in the midst of their situations. We buried a number from that community, experienced romances from a distance, visited people in hospital and even, when Iowa’s bishop election group came out to interview local leaders, held one reference session just with the homeless. The meal lasted way beyond my time celebrating more than 25 years. Eventually, the very same person who raised the disturbing resolution so many years ago, got her way. And after an incident with the community, managed to get a vestry to close the meal down. The parish itself lasted only one more year after that decision!

This is stuff of the prophets. I had believed that the Luke readings were the main source of discomfort for the person who accused me of “cooking the books,” but as we re-enter that lectionary stretch, I see the power of the prophets in the lectionary much more clearly. I see it also because their light is shining in a particularly dark period of our national life. Commercial success is not new to the Scriptures. It is almost a constant backdrop to the message of the prophets. It is precisely how we treat the poor during such economic prosperity that counts in God’s eyes. Let’s sample some of their utterances.

Isaiah (August 11th) as we mourn the dead from the double mass shooting, and face the impasse of enacting sensible gun safety reform—“even though you make many prayers, I will not listen; your hands are full of blood.

Wash yourselves; make yourselves clean; remove evil of your doings from before my eyes; cease to do evil; learn to do good; seek justice; rescue the oppressed; defend the orphan; plead for the widow. Come now let us argue it out, says the Lord. Though your sins are like scarlet; they shall be like snow...” To refuse God’s intervention is “to be devoured by the sword.” (Is 1:16-20)

Jeremiah (August 18th) “Let the prophet who has a dream tell the dream, but let the one who has my word speak the word faithfully. What has straw in common with wheat? Is not my word like fire, says the Lord, and like a hammer that breaks a rock in pieces.” (Jer 23:28-29)

Isaiah once more (August 24th) from a significant scripture for me, one which I asked the diocese to study in preparation for our time together as Bishop and people —“If you remove the yoke from among you, the pointing of the finger, the speaking of evil, if you offer your food to the hungry and satisfy the needs of the afflicted, then your light shall rise in the darkness and your gloom be like the noonday.” (Is 58:9-10)

And finally, Amos (September 28th) “Alas to those who are at ease in Zion, and for those who feel secure on Mount Samaria...but are not grieved over the ruin of Joseph. Therefore, they shall now be the first to go into exile, and the revelry of the loungers shall pass away.” (Am 6:1,6-7)

The prophets didn’t know anything about Republicans and Democrats; or about Second Amendment rights; or even about developed economic systems. They learned the heart of God at great cost to themselves, and they boldly proclaimed it, as it pertained to the realities of their day. Those realities have not changed very much. The heart of God is still about compassion and justice, the sharing of resources, the looking out for the poor, the stranger, the orphan and widow—those without familial or communal support. Their prophecies proved true in the end, just like the closure of a congregation more than dear to my heart.

On the feast of the Transfiguration, we saw Jesus in conversation with Moses and Elijah. The law and the prophets had reached their destiny, and the grace of sacrificial love incarnated in Jesus would take over. And the



*Bishop Scarfe preaching. Photo courtesy of Thad Allton.*



**ENGAGING ALL DISCIPLES  
CALLED, FED, AND SENT  
DIOCESAN CALENDAR**

**September**

- 2 Renewal of Ministry and Welcoming of New Rector, the Rev. Tom Early, St. Alban's, Spirit Lake 4:00pm
- 5 Stewardship Systems Webinar 7:00pm
- 7 ENGAGING ALL DISCIPLES 3:00-7:00pm at St. Matthew's-by-the-Bridge, Iowa Falls with St. John's, Mason City and Grace, Charles City
- 8 Bishop's Visitation with St. Matthew's-by-the-Bridge, Iowa Falls  
Southwest Chapter Meeting, 2:00pm at St. Paul's, Harlan  
Renewal of Ministry and Welcoming of New Rector, the Rev. John Greve, Grace Church, Cedar Rapids, 3:30pm
- 12 PINTS (Priests in New/Transitional Situations) 12:00-4:00pm at St. Andrew's, Des Moines
- 13-14 Commission on Ministry
- 14 Board of Directors Meeting
- 15 Bishop's visitation with Church of the Savior, Orange City  
ENGAGING ALL DISCIPLES 11:30-3:30pm at Church of the Savior, Orange City
- 20 Early Bird discount deadline for Diocesan Convention Registration/Certification
- 21 North Central Chapter Meeting at St. John's, Mason City 9:00-10:00am  
Dismantling Racism: Training for Church Leaders at St. John's, Mason City 10:00-4:30pm
- 22 Bishop's Visitation with St. Paul's Indian Mission, Sioux City  
ENGAGING ALL DISCIPLES 10:00-4:00pm at St. Paul's Indian Mission, Sioux City with St. Thomas', Calvary, and St. George's, LeMars
- 29 Bishop visits St. Mark's, Fort Dodge  
ENGAGING ALL DISCIPLES 11:30-3:30pm at St. Mark's, Fort Dodge with Church of the Good Shepherd, Webster City and St. Thomas', Algona

**October**

- 5 ENGAGING ALL DISCIPLES 12:00-6:00pm at St. Timothy's, West Des Moines with St. Andrew's, Des Moines and All Saints', Indianola
- 12 ENGAGING ALL DISCIPLES 3:00-7:00pm at St. Paul's Cathedral with St. Mark's, Des Moines
- 13 Bishop's Visitation with St. Paul's Cathedral, Des Moines
- 19 ENGAGING ALL DISCIPLES 3:00-7:00pm at St. John's by the Campus, Ames with Grace, Boone and St. Martin's, Perry
- 20 Bishop's visitation with St. John's, Ames
- 25 Clergy Gathering 2:00-5:00 pm, public session with Shane Claiborne 7:45-8:45pm
- 26-27 167th Annual Diocesan Convention, Des Moines

*Schedule subject to change. Visit [iowaepiscopal.org](http://iowaepiscopal.org) for all of the latest schedule information.*

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# You're a delegate to diocesan convention—now what?

by Lauren Lyon

**Y**ou're a delegate to diocesan convention this year? Congratulations!

Elections are an important part of the work of convention. Every year delegates elect members of the diocesan Board of Directors, the Standing Committee and the Disciplinary Board. Every third year the convention also elects deputies and alternates to represent the Diocese of Iowa at the next General Convention. Candidate photos and bios are posted with convention materials on the diocesan web site. Reviewing those before elections will give you an idea of the qualifications and experience of the person on the ballot. But what about the positions for which they are running? How can you tell how good a fit the candidate's experience is for the work to be done? Here are the basics of the leadership positions for which we will elect at convention.

## Standing Committee

The election and work of a diocesan Standing Committee is required by the canons of The Episcopal Church. The Standing Committee acts as a council of advice to the diocesan bishop. When a diocese is between bishops, the Standing Committee becomes the "Ecclesiastical Authority" for that diocese, charged with the authority and responsibility for the administrative tasks of the bishop. Standing Committees have responsibility also for some aspects of the church's ministry. A candidate for Holy Orders must meet with them before he/she can be ordained. Standing Committees approve the appropriate order and validity of episcopal elections in other dioceses. Diocesan congregations contemplating major building renovations or the relocation or sale of church property, are required to get approval of the Standing Committee.

## Board of Directors

The Board of Directors acts as a corporate board for the Episcopal Corporation of the Diocese of Iowa. Its responsibilities are described in detail in the diocesan canons. It operates according to a set of by-laws in addition to fulfilling canonical responsibilities. The diocesan bishop is the president of the Board of Directors. The board's work is similar in many ways to the work of a parish vestry. It is responsible for the temporal affairs of the diocese: resource development, budget, investments and other financial matters, legal matters, health insurance for employees of diocesan organizations and clergy compensation. The board also makes decisions and receives reports concerning diocesan ministry initiatives such as work with companion dioceses, youth ministry, creation care and other extra-parochial or collaborative ministries. The composition of the board includes a representative from each Chapter. Another six members are elected at large. Elected board members are divided equally between the lay and clergy orders.

## Disciplinary Board

Members of the Disciplinary Board are elected for two-year terms. Five members of the board are clergy members and four are lay persons. Members of the board review and make decisions about the disposition of charges of clergy misconduct according to Title IV of the Episcopal Church canons and Canon 35 of the diocesan canons. The board meets as needed.

## General Convention Deputies

Two years prior to each General Convention the diocesan convention elects deputies and alternates. At this year's diocesan convention we

elect deputies and alternates for the 2021 General Convention that will be held in Baltimore June 30–July 9. We elect four clergy delegates, four lay delegates and four alternates from each order. General Convention is an exciting opportunity to see the entire Episcopal Church come together in mission and worship. It is also a 10-day interval of long work days spent in committee hearings, legislative sessions and after hours committee work. General Convention deputies are responsible for communicating about their work with Iowa Episcopalians in addition to attending the convention. Deputies are expected to study and understand large amounts of material pertaining to proposed actions of the convention. They need to have the time and ability to prepare before it begins. They need also to be available for the 10-day meeting. Deputies receive funds from the diocese to help cover the cost of travel, lodgings and meals. One alternate of each order also receives funding for attendance. Alternates are rank ordered according to the number of votes they receive at diocesan convention. Although the first alternate is expected to attend convention, the nearly two-year gap between election and the meeting itself raises the possibility that one or more delegates must drop out, in which case they are replaced by alternates, who then become deputies, in rank order.

Are you called to run for diocesan office? If so, the nominating committee awaits your phone call or e-mail message. Are you a delegate to the 2019 Diocesan Convention? Congratulations and happy voting!

*The Rev. Lauren Lyon serves as the rector of Trinity Episcopal Church in Iowa City.*

# Volunteers needed for worship at diocesan convention

**A**re you an acolyte or a singer? You're invited to serve or sing at worship during our upcoming diocesan convention, October 25-27 in Des Moines.

Convention worship begins with Evensong at St. Paul's Episcopal Cathedral in Des Moines at 7:00 on the evening of Friday, October 25. The convention concludes with the Eucharist at 11:00 a.m. on Sunday, October 27 in the 2nd floor ballroom of the Des Moines Marriott Downtown.

Acolytes and singers from across the diocese are invited to volunteer for these two services.

Singers should contact Choirmaster Mark Babcock by phone or e-mail, [babcockm@central.edu](mailto:babcockm@central.edu) or 515-577-5138. Indicate the service(s) at which you are available to sing. Music will be scanned and distributed in advance by e-mail. Rehearsal information and additional instructions will be sent to participants at a later date.

Acolyte volunteers should contact the

Rev. Lauren Lyon by e-mail or phone at [llyon@trinityic.org](mailto:llyon@trinityic.org) or 319-337-3333. Indicate the service for which you are available. Additional instructions about practice for services will be sent at a later date.

Please plan to send your expression of interest no later than October 7 to allow worship organizers sufficient time to prepare. We hope to have representatives from all ten of our diocesan chapters singing and serving at convention worship.

## Diocesan Convention Guest:

# Shane Claiborne

<p><b>Friday, October 25</b> Pre-convention session with Shane Claiborne, "Follow Me to Freedom - the Irresistible Revolution." Open to all 7:45pm</p> <p><b>Saturday, October 26</b> Convention Address, open to all 2:30pm</p>	<p>Shane Claiborne is a prominent speaker, activist, and best-selling author. Shane founded The Simple Way in Philadelphia and heads up Red Letter Christians, a movement of folks who are committed to living "as if Jesus meant the things he said." Shane is a champion for grace which has led him to jail advocating for the homeless, and to places like Iraq and Afghanistan to stand against war.</p>	
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## From the Bishop, *continued*

Spirit of Jesus would become accessible by all humanity—yes, that very Way of Love we speak about these days. The Spirit pleads with us to put away all hindrances to bringing the peace of God into this broken world. The Spirit also pleads with us to offer up our temporary attachments that might be equal obstructions to the same end. That may mean giving up our attachments to our partisan politics (Jesus frees us to move with the flow of justice at any given time—sometimes to the right and sometimes to the left). It may mean giving up our attachments to our gun rights (if they blind us to what is best for us all, or it is something we

cannot handle as a society, as fire-power has developed). It may mean giving up our attachment to our economic or racial or gender privilege (for, are we not newly made and cared for as children of God?).

My question is—how could we do otherwise in the light of a Body given for us and Blood shed for us? How can we do otherwise as we live forgiven lives, and are called God's beloved? For I don't know about you but I find that, "I do not understand my own actions. I do not do what I want to do, but I do the very thing that I hate... Who can deliver me from this body of death? Thanks be

to God through our Lord Jesus Christ" (Rm 7:14, 24-25). Paul's life was eventually given for that freedom. The following of Jesus is as essential as ever, and as costly, but I know that we can live it, with God's help. The alternative is barely conceivable and will catch up to us all.

In the peace and love of Christ,



The Rt. Rev. Alan Scarfe  
Bishop of Iowa

# Becoming Beloved Community

by Susanne Watson Epting, Meg Wagner, and Lisa Covington

The young African American woman stood confidently before a crowd of over 200 to introduce Dr. Jeanette Epps, one of two African American astronauts with NASA. “I had the privilege of meeting Dr. Epps a few years ago,” she said. “Dr. Epps gave me good advice about what courses to take, including some Russian language. I did what she suggested, and today I am an engineer at Collins Aerospace.”

The crowd erupted spontaneously, springing to their feet to affirm both Dr. Epps and the young woman who is following her dream.

It’s a little different way of being church—and yet with the ongoing assistance of a Genesis grant from The Episcopal Church, we continue our mission toward racial justice, healing and reconciliation. On behalf of the Diocese of Iowa, the Beloved Community Initiative continues to serve as a resource for dismantling racism both in our own churches, as well as in the local community.

In February, the co-sponsorship of a program to bring Dr. Epps to Iowa City was representative of so much of what we do. Working with the Iowa City School District, Fastrac (a program to help teens overcome

barriers to their education), and FilmScene, we hosted over 200 people at a soul food dinner and movie screening of “Hidden Figures.”

In March, we worked with Iowa Mennonite School and many community partners, as we hosted high school students for a week-long immersion program. Students met and learned from a member of the Meskwaki Tribal Council, the local Rabbi, a community of Sudanese immigrants, and others. They stayed overnight at Old Brick, had the opportunity to volunteer at the Agape Café, and participated in a workshop with Jamel Nelson on envisioning and creating equitable communities.

The same month, we hosted over 50 people of faith as they explored with Dr. Jennifer Harvey, “Which Way to Justice? Dismantling Racism as a Spiritual Practice.” It is our hope that, over time, more and more people of faith will realize that this work toward racial justice is life-long work.

It has been a joy to welcome Lisa Covington, with the help of an Episcopal Church United Thank Offering grant, as our program coordinator this year. With her

connections to both the University of Iowa and the community, she has introduced and incorporated new people into our work. She has also participated in working with our diocesan trainers and has done some consulting around a civil rights pilgrimage. In fact, the Beloved Community Initiative hosted a pilgrimage to an Underground Railroad site during Palm Sunday weekend. Participants were able to reflect theologically on this history and consider the meaning of risk-taking then and now.

Lisa also connected us with The AfroHouse at the University of Iowa and the Black Leadership Institute. In May, over 200 people came to celebrate the annual graduation ceremony specifically for African American students at The University of Iowa. The AfroHouse, the Black Leadership Institute and Beloved Community Initiative planned and hosted the celebration of the 2019 graduates. Graduation ceremonies for students of color at predominantly white institutions allow students to be able to hold space as a community without judgement or micro-aggressions from a campus community that is often isolating.



*Members of G!World, a girl's empowerment and leadership group, with astronaut Dr. Jeanette Epps. Photo by: David Greedy*



*Students from Iowa Mennonite School with community organizer Rafael Morataya at the Center for Worker Justice. Students spent an immersive week with Beloved Community Initiative to learn more about racial justice. Photo by: Meg Wagner*

## Becoming Beloved Community *continued*



*2019 celebration for graduating African American students from the University of Iowa, hosted by The AfroHouse, the Black Leadership Institute, and Beloved Community Initiative. Photo by: University of Iowa Center for Diversity and Enrichment*



*"Humanize my Hoodie" workshop for allies co-hosted by Moms Demand Action for Gun Sense in America. Photo by: Lisa Covington*

Space prohibits a full discussion of all the events and relationships that have taken place over this last year, but additional highlights include:

- Offering dinner and fellowship called "Soul Tending for Change-Makers"
- Regular hosting of the Johnson County Interfaith Coalition and Native American AA group
- Periodic hosting of other meditation and community planning groups
- Ongoing training for our congregations in dismantling racism
- Co-hosting (with Moms Demand Action for Gun Sense in America) a "Humanize my Hoodie" training for white allies and accomplices

In addition, our thoughts have turned toward sustainability, and especially bringing additional people into our work in a systematic way. Two new advisory groups have been established, one a diocesan group, and the other a community group. We're excited at the new ideas and energy that are being generated, including exploring what Beloved Community might look like behind prison walls, and establishing a reading camp or camps to work toward improving literacy rates. We'll also explore the idea of a regular worship community and an interfaith book group.

We are grateful to the people of the Diocese of Iowa for supporting our work, and for the ongoing commitment to work toward racial justice, healing and reconciliation

Thanks, too, to our Advisory Council Members:

Diocesan: The Rev. Kim Turner-Baker, Ms. Ellen Bruckner, Ms. Donna Wong-Gibbons, Ms. Aileen Chang Matus, Ms. Donna Prime, the Rev. Ruth Ratliff, the Rev. Melody Rockwell, Dr. John Stewart

Community: Mr. Dawson Davenport, Ms. LaTasha DeLoach, Ms. RaQuishia Harrington, Ms. Amy Kraber, Ms. Karen Nichols, the Rev. Anthony Smith, Ms. Barb Stanerson, the Rev. Jane Stewart, Ms. Gabriella Tobias

*The Rev. Susanne Watson Epting and the Rev. Meg Wagner are the co-founders of Beloved Community Initiative and Ms. Lisa Covington serves as the Program Coordinator.*

## A week at EPIC: Our journey with Jesus

by Kristina Kofoot

Our campers and staff are safely at home and settled back into their lives, getting ready for school, back in the office, and off to new adventures. Although we only get to spend one week of our summer together at EPIC it is a week that leaves a lasting impact on our campers, staff, and myself. EPIC is the highlight of my summer and I am honored to spend one week each

year guiding our campers and staff through an EPIC week of learning and adventure.

If you've had the opportunity to talk with some of our campers or staff you'll know that at EPIC this year we focused on the themes of a familiar children's book about the places you'll go in life and how it relates to our journey with Jesus. Each day we focused on different scripture

that paired with different parts of the book. At the beginning of the week we gave each of our campers a tie-dyed bag that we called a "Faith Survival Kit" or FSK. Throughout the week we encouraged our campers to think about how they could take what they were learning home with them. We encouraged them to keep the crafts they made as well as caritas (signs of God's love through

## A week at EPIC, *continued*

letters, messages, and small tokens) they were given in their FSK. These bags were a way for campers to keep camp with them as they came down from the hill-top of camp back into their “real” lives. We hope that each of them has taken away at least one small nugget from their week.

Along with their program time, our campers were able to choose their own adventures and participate in activities. EPIC was a place that our campers could come to try new things in a supportive environment. The activities included rock wall climbing, zip-lining, caving, archery, campfires, gaga ball, arts and crafts, swimming, tubing, hiking, giant slip-'n-slide, and a talent show. These activities allowed our campers to experience the joys of nature, try new things, and bond as a group through their experiences.

If you haven't had the chance to talk to one of our campers or staff I encourage you to seek them out and ask them about their week. Reach out to them and ask about their time at camp, engage them in your church communities and consider helping them to find a mentor within your congregation to help them ‘unpack’ after camp. Our hope is that each of the amazing campers we have is able to go back home, connect with their church and take that spark from camp

back into their communities. Our EPIC journey with Jesus at summer camp has just ended but that doesn't mean our journeys are over.

As we prepare for another EPIC summer in 2020 please help us think about how we can continue to support our campers through scholarships and prayer. In 2019 over half of EPIC campers would not have been able to experience camp without the support of their churches and more specifically, scholarships. These scholarships allow youth, who would otherwise be unable to attend, the opportunity to connect with their faith, their peers and with nature. Without scholarship money to support our youth, EPIC would not be the amazing camp that it is. In addition to scholarships please consider praying for EPIC as we enter the unknown in finding a new location for camp. We have had a wonderful relationship with Pictured Rocks UMC in Monticello, Iowa. PR was recently sold to Camp Courageous and we do not know if we will be able to use the camp facilities into the future. We are now on the hunt to find a new location for EPIC so that we can continue to provide our campers with an EPIC summer camp.

*Ms. Kristina Kofoot serves as EPIC Camp Director.*



*Morning hikes are a great way to start the day! Photo: Dale Schirmer*



*EPIC is also a place where friends meet up again after other youth events. Photo: Dale Schirmer*



*61 campers and 24 staff pose after a week of sun, fun, adventure, worship, and fellowship.*



# Grand Avenue Community Outreach

by Kevin Brown



*Dr. Terry Shively and his wife, Stevie, St. Alban's, Spirit Lake parishioners, in the dental clinic they oversee in Grand Avenue Community Outreach. Photos: Meg Wagner*

Grand Avenue Community Outreach (GACO) is a faith based (ecumenical), volunteer-driven non-profit organization that provides space for social services and outreach programs designed to meet physical, spiritual, and long-term needs of the people of Northwest Iowa and beyond. Everything we do is housed in a century old five-story building in the heart of historic downtown Spencer.

The first floor is home to Terrazzo Coffeehouse + Café which proudly serves Caribou Coffee drinks and features a full menu of delicious breakfast, lunch, and dinner items provided by McCreary's Creative Catering—housed in our on-site commercial kitchen between Terrazzo and the event space/dining rooms that overlook beautiful Grand Avenue.

Services on the second floor include free medical and dental care for those who otherwise do not have access. The Dental Clinic Director is Dr. TR Shively; he and his wife Stevie (both of Spencer, IA) oversee the clinic operations, and are parishioners of St. Alban's Episcopal Church in Spirit Lake, IA. We also partner with other agencies in the area to provide access to mental health and substance abuse counseling as needed. The second floor is also home to Birthright of Spencer, which offers support to women who are pregnant or think they may be pregnant. You will also find offices for

the Red Cross as well as Family Crisis Centers on this floor. Another outreach housed on the second floor is known as 'His Hands Extended' which provides 2 tons of food and approximately 2000 articles of clothing each month to those in need—at no cost to the people receiving these items.

Our third floor is in the process of becoming transitional housing for individuals dealing with substance abuse issues that are looking to change their life for the better. We have partnered with a new agency in Spencer called 'Life Changes Sober Living' which will assist these men in several different ways as they work to change their lives. Services include: employment guidance, 12-step meetings, fellowship opportunities, life skills classes, safe play environments for child visits, and classes in a variety of industries.

Emergency housing is available on the fourth floor in the form of recently renovated rooms that are available by referral for people needing a place to stay for a few nights while they get their affairs in order. The only requirement is that they be under the care of an outside agency during their stay, as we do not have staffing available to oversee these guests. However, this floor is home to our (husband & wife) residential managers—which are on-site 24/7 in case of emergency. They are former guests of GACO that have managed to get back on their feet and were looking

for an opportunity to "give back" to our organization. In addition to night-watch, they handle the majority of our maintenance and housekeeping tasks, as well as offer spiritual guidance and fellowship to all residents and staff within our facility.

This leaves two wide open spaces on the top and bottom of our building. The fifth floor is an open canvas for opportunity, as the walls and infrastructure have all been removed. Our board has been prayerfully considering options for this space, and as with everything we do—it will depend entirely on what the greatest need is within the community! The basement is a similar situation and we have been focused on filling this space as soon as possible, with the idea of offering youth programming in some form. The space is setup for various activities that are appealing to young people in the area. We have been working diligently with several other groups in Spencer that work with children in hopes that we don't duplicate any services that are already being offered. Once we are able to pin-point which demographic of youth is being under-served, we will put out the call for volunteers so that we can open up this "Underground" to the community and continue to fulfill our vision of providing a positive environment to those in need.

*Mr. Kevin Brown serves as the Executive Director of Grand Avenue Community Outreach.*

# Our Civil Rights Pilgrimage

by Elizabeth Poplewell and Wendy Floss

In June, three rising high school seniors and two adults from St. Luke's Episcopal Church, Cedar Falls made a pilgrimage through the American South to learn about the Civil Rights Movement and explore the ongoing work of racial reconciliation.

To prepare, we spent time studying the roots of slavery and some of the significant legislative decisions surrounding the movement. In addition, we met with Lisa Covington, from the Beloved Community Initiative, who introduced us to the stories of several less widely known heroes in the fight for freedom. Lisa also provided us with pertinent questions for our journals. Collectively we watched the film, "I Am Not Your Negro" and individually viewed other films, "The Hate You Give," "Selma," and "Green Book."

Our travels took us through St. Louis, Memphis, Atlanta, Montgomery, Selma, and Birmingham, which enabled us to be in many of the spaces where ordinary men, women, and children stood boldly against oppression and injustice, and to work for freedom. We began at the Old Courthouse in St. Louis, the site of the Dred and Harriett Scott case.

In Memphis we visited the National Civil Rights Museum, which includes the Lorraine Motel, the site of Dr.

Martin Luther King, Jr.'s assassination. We took in stories about the courageous and defiant actions of men and women who sought to break the chains of slavery, the oppression of Jim Crow laws, the hypocrisy of "separate but equal" legislation, and the incessant attempts to dehumanize, humiliate, and terrorize American citizens of color. We were inspired by the stories of courage and overwhelmed by the idea that the statement, "I AM A MAN," sported by the Memphis sanitation strikers, could ever be contested.

In Atlanta, members of the Absalom Jones Episcopal Center for Racial Healing graciously spent the entire morning answering our questions and sharing their stories and hopes as agents in the modern human rights movement. We took heed of their advice on how to engage in the work of reconciliation, steps that every one of us can take: create relationships, step out of our comfort zones, and open our hearts and minds to learning from different perspectives. While in Atlanta we also toured the Center for Civil and Human Rights and The King Center.

In Montgomery we visited The National Memorial for Peace and Justice, which honors the thousands of victims of lynching. The names of those murdered

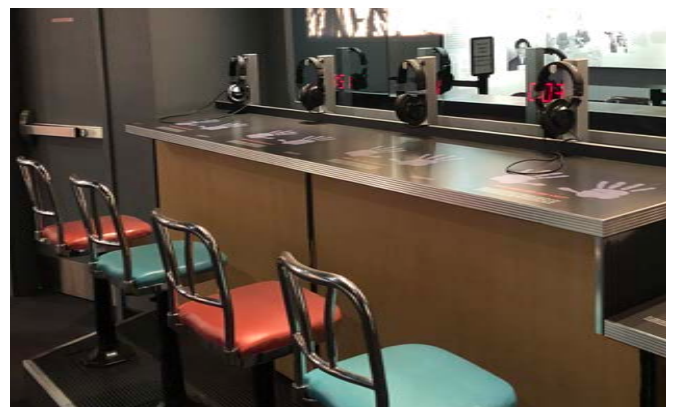
are engraved on six-foot monuments and are identified by county and state. It's a somber yet sacred site. At the Legacy Museum, located on the site where enslaved Africans were warehoused, we learned the narratives of the domestic slave trade, racial terrorism, the Jim Crow South, and the world's largest prison system. Through the exhibits, we were able to connect the history of enslavement to incarceration practices today.

Once in Selma, we stopped first at the Lowndes Interpretive Center, which is dedicated to the peaceful marchers from Selma to Montgomery and which features some of the county's significant events related to the march. We walked across the Edmund Pettus Bridge and had wonderful conversations with two men, one a Korean War vet who was on the bridge and injured during the first march on that bloody Sunday and the other who is committed to teaching people about the events of the marches.

As we traveled, it was overwhelmingly clear that the struggle for equality and recognition of full citizenship was often met with violence and terror, a fact lived out in Birmingham. The Birmingham Civil Rights Institute, Sixteenth Street Baptist Church, and Kelly Ingram Park sit on three corners at the intersection



*Photo of Marchers, National Civil Rights Museum, Memphis, TN.*



*Lunch counter simulation exhibit at the National Center for Civil and Human Rights, Atlanta, GA. With the aid of individual head phones visitors can listen to the abusive shouts from the crowds surrounding them and feel the escalating intensity of the crowd's taunting as the chairs shake as if they are being kicked by the violent crowd.*

# Our Civil Rights Pilgrimage, *continued*

of N. 16th Street and 5th Avenue. At one corner of the park is a beautiful statue commemorating Carole Robertson, Cynthia Wesley, Denise McNair, and Addie Mae Collins, the four young girls killed in the bombing of the church. Inside the park sit chilling statues depicting scenes of the struggle against hatred and oppression. The Institute houses oral histories, archival documents, and exhibits from a segregated city. Our docent was a well-versed high school student who was pleased to meet other students also interested in civil rights.

Our days were full, rich in learning, troubling in acknowledging the atrocities inflicted on human beings simply because of the color of their skin, and hope-filled by the conversations had as a group and with the people we met along the way. Our pilgrimage impacted us in both expected and surprising ways. We are changed. How we see is changed. We are aware of the powerful transformation that comes when we listen and learn to understand. Our journey is just beginning in many ways.

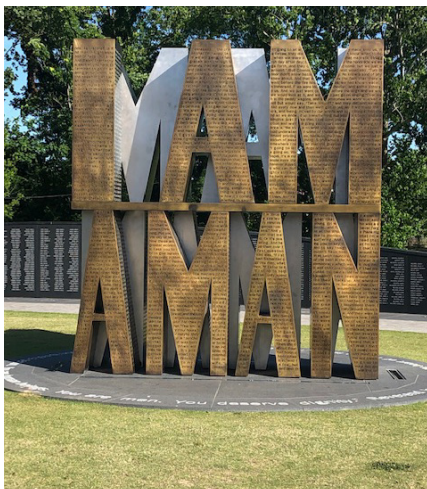
*The Rev. Elizabeth Popplewell serves as the rector and Ms. Wendy Floss serves as the parish administrator at St. Luke's, Cedar Falls.*



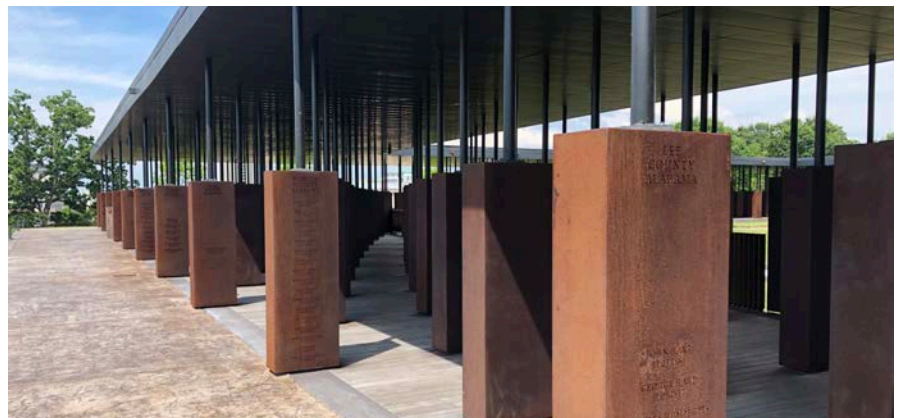
*Our group along with Sondra Tarva and LaFawn Gilliam standing next to the monument honoring the 600 known lynching victims in Georgia. Absalom Jones Episcopal Center, Atlanta, GA. From L to R: Rev. Elizabeth Popplewell, Alayna Ritter, Sondra Tarva, Sophia Schillinger, Maddy Doeden, LaFawn Gilliam, Wendy Floss.*



*Soil gathered from every county in Alabama where a known lynching occurred, Peace and Justice Memorial Center, Montgomery, AL.*



*I AM A MAN sculpture, on the grounds of the Clayborn Temple, Memphis, TN. "I AM A MAN" was the rallying cry of the striking sanitation workers in 1968.*



*Hanging coffins engraved with the names of the victims of terror lynchings. Each cylinder represents a county where the murders took place. Some have just a single name, others have more than 20. There are more than 4,000 victims honored here. Peace and Justice Memorial Center, Montgomery, AL.*

## Because I love Jesus

by Mark Holmer

It was in the early 1980s when I chose to do a pie and ice cream stewardship event at my parish in Davenport. As we all are aware, with new budgets to be created for the coming fiscal year, we need to ask again for our members to increase their giving. It is a great time to look ahead to the congregation's ministry and programming and lay out how it can be supported.

I wanted a member of the church to share her story of faithful giving. Her name was Evelyn. Evelyn worshiped every Sunday and since I knew what all families contribute, I knew Evelyn was the person to share her testimony with the 100 plus people that were expected to attend. She was very reluctant at first.

Evelyn was a retired school matron. She had done custodial work in a grade school to make ends meet. Evelyn's husband was retired by this time too. Unfortunately, he never worked long enough in one of the implement plants in the Quad Cities to have a retirement program. Evelyn, fortunately, received a minimum pension from the Davenport schools. Everybody loved Evelyn and her humble, quiet and unassuming ways.

I think that the people at the stewardship pie and ice cream event were surprised that she came up to the podium when I asked her to share her story of giving. At that time, she was putting \$10 a week in the offering plate. My wife and I were among the leaders in giving at \$45 per week. I often thought, "How can she afford to be so generous?" We all soon learned. As Evelyn ended her somewhat halting and brief remarks, it was what she said last that I still member 40 years later. Evelyn said "I give, because I love Jesus."

*The Rev. Mark Holmer serves as the pastor at St. Thomas', Algona.*

## 2019 Stewardship Share

### April-June 2019

City	Church	Stewardship Share	2019 Pledge	Due to Date	Received to Date	(Over) Under
Algona	St. Thomas	\$ 3,237	4,008	2,004	2,004	0
Ames	St. John's	53,965	53,965	26,982	17,988	8,994
Anamosa	St. Mark's	500	1,500	750	1,500	(750)
Ankeny	St. Anne's	16,487	5,733	2,867	2,867	0
Bettendorf	St. Peter's	17,935	14,206	7,103	7,103	0
Boone	Grace	550	550	275	275	0
Burlington	Christ	22,449	20,408	10,204	10,204	0
Carrroll	Trinity	550	550	275	550	(275)
Cedar Falls	St. Luke's	34,009	34,009	17,004	17,004	0
Cedar Rapids	Christ	47,715	47,715	23,858	23,858	0
Cedar Rapids	Grace	8,177	8,177	4,089	4,770	(681)
Chariton	St. Andrew's	3,731	4,000	2,000	4,000	(2,000)
Charles City	Grace	2,388	2,388	1,194	1,194	0
Clermont	Saviour	1,971	<i>Pledge not received</i>			
Clinton	Christ	867	12,581	6,291	5,242	1,048
Coralville	New Song	22,545	22,545	11,273	9,394	1,879
Council Bluffs	St. Paul's	4,058	4,058	2,029	2,029	0
Davenport	St. Alban's	7,921	7,417	3,709	3,709	0
Davenport	Trinity	122,246	97,796	48,898	48,898	0
Decorah	Grace	6,970	5,500	2,750	2,750	0
Denison	Trinity	605	605	303	252	50
Des Moines	St. Andrew's	31,515	31,515	15,758	13,131	2,626
Des Moines	St. Luke's	32,199	15,903	7,952	7,952	0
Des Moines	St. Mark's	5,965	3,520	1,760	1,466	294
Des Moines	St. Paul's	74,213	74,213	37,107	37,107	0
Dubuque	St. John's	9,007	9,007	4,503	4,504	0
Durant	St. Paul's	6,375	6,375	3,188	3,188	(1)
Emmetsburg	Trinity	2,739	2,739	1,370	1,370	0
Fort Dodge	St. Mark's	30,711	30,711	15,356	12,796	2,559
Fort Madison	St. Luke's	4,388	4,560	2,280	2,280	0
Glenwood	St. John's	724	724	362	306	56
Grinnell	St. Paul's	5,155	5,200	2,600	2,600	0
Harlan	St. Paul's	605	300	150	300	(150)
Independence	St. James	2,885	2,885	1,443	1,443	0
Indianola	All Saints'	2,167	2,167	1,083	1,083	0
Iowa City	Trinity	92,415	74,061	37,031	37,062	(32)
Iowa Falls	St. Matthew's	4,175	4,175	2,088	2,063	24
Keokuk	St. John's	11,921	7,200	3,600	3,000	600
LeMars	St. George's	500	300	150	67	83
Maquoketa	St. Mark's	3,208	1,200	600	600	0
Marshalltown	St. Paul's	13,822	13,822	6,911	6,911	0
Mason City	St. John's	12,164	12,164	6,082	6,082	0
Mount Pleasant	St. Michael's	5,639	4,200	2,100	2,100	0
Muscatine	Trinity	18,072	18,072	9,036	9,036	0
Newton	St. Stephen's	6,764	6,764	3,382	3,434	(52)
Orange City	Savior	500	500	250	500	(250)
Oskaloosa	St. James'	10,900	10,900	5,450	5,450	0
Ottumwa	Trinity	11,826	5,000	2,500	2,500	0
Perry	St. Martin's	8,332	5,500	2,750	0	2,750
Shenandoah	St. John's	605	605	303	715	(413)
Sioux City	Calvary	1,323	1,325	663	552	110
Sioux City	St. Paul's	3,126	500	250	500	(250)
Sioux City	St. Thomas'	15,246	9,500	4,750	3,259	1,491
Spirit Lake	St. Alban's	8,366	8,366	4,183	3,486	697
Storm Lake	All Saints'	1,588	1,588	794	662	132
Waterloo	Trinity	14,480	14,480	7,240	6,033	1,207
Waverly	St. Andrew's	5,592	1,000	500	1,000	(500)
Webster City	Good Shepherd	6,579	6,579	3,290	3,290	0
West Des Moines	St. Timothy's	61,357	49,000	24,500	16,333	8,167
<b>TOTAL</b>		<b>\$ 906,024</b>	<b>794,331</b>	<b>397,166</b>	<b>369,750</b>	<b>27,413</b>

# Episcopal JOURNAL

QUARTERLY EDITION

FALL 2019

## Commemorating 400 years of African American history and culture

### Episcopal Church Public Affairs Office

This year marks the 400<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the year that the first enslaved Africans landed in English North America. Events are being held at Fort Monroe National Monument in Hampton, Va., the site of the ship's arrival, including a national church bell ringing on August 25.

**1619-2019**  
**COMMEMORATION**  
**FIRST AFRICAN LANDING**  
AT FORT MONROE AUGUST 23-25 HAMPTON, VA

Presiding Bishop Michael Curry and Diocese of Southern Virginia Bishop James B. Magness invited Episcopal churches to take part in the bell ringing.

"The National Park Service is commissioning, and asking, churches and people from around this country to commemorate and remember that landing and the bringing of those first enslaved Africans to this country by ringing bells," said Curry.

"I'm inviting us as the Episcopal Church to join in this commemoration as part of our continued work of racial

healing and reconciliation ... We can join together with people of other Christian faiths and people of all faiths to remember those who came as enslaved, who came to a country that one day would proclaim liberty. And so we remember them and pray for a new future for us all."

Magness said that "the 2019 commemoration of the arrival of the first enslaved Africans to North America is for me a highly personal occasion." He continued, "as a descendent of slaveholders, and as a white male who came of age in the racially polarized south during the 1950s and 1960s, I am painfully aware of my own complicity in furthering and perpetuating the subjugation of my African American brothers and sisters. At a time when the racial divide in this country seems to be growing rather than diminishing, we are in dire need of a moment, an event when we can stop and take stock of our responsibilities to bring the races together, perhaps in a new manner that truly is an embrace of what it means to be a follower of Jesus Christ."

"Let's unite as one on this day and show our appreciation for 400 years of African American history," said Terry E. Brown, Fort Monroe National Monu-



Photo/Library of Congress

*Detail of 1624 map of Virginia showing the location of Point Comfort (now Fort Monroe National Monument) and Jamestown.*

ment superintendent. "We must embrace the West African concept of Sankofa, which teaches us we must go back to our roots in order to move forward."

Susan Goff, bishop suffragan of the Diocese of Virginia, said "the first African people were brought to this continent in harrowing and dehumanizing circumstances. As we remember the 400th anniversary of their arrival, I pray that we will do the hard work of reconciliation that God longs for us to do."

As recorded by English colonist John Rolfe, the arrival of "20 and odd" African men and women at Point Comfort in late August 1619, was a pivotal moment

continued on page F



### NEWS

Strive for peace, say leaders after massacres

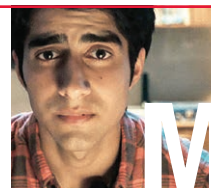
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### NEWS

N.Y. group analyzes bills to legalize sex trade

U



### ARTS

Pakistani teen seeks faith in Springsteen

M

# Leaders urge Episcopalians to strive for peace in wake of massacres in Texas, Ohio

By David Paulsen  
Episcopal News Service

Episcopal bishops spoke out in the aftermath of back-to-back mass shootings in Texas and Ohio, offering prayers, conveying the grief of their dioceses and hoping for a future when American life will no longer be plagued by such sudden bursts of deadly gun violence.

“Jesus said blessed are the peacemakers, and we in the church are called to make peace in our neighborhoods and with our young people,” Diocese of the Rio Grande Bishop Michael Hunn said in an online video reacting to the Aug. 3 massacre of 20 people at a Walmart in El Paso, Texas.

A 21-year-old man was been arrested in the killings and was suspected of posting a racist, anti-immigrant manifesto online before opening fire.

“My heart is heavy this morning with the tragic shootings yesterday in El Paso and last night in Dayton,” Southern Ohio Bishop Tom Breidenthal said in a Facebook post on Aug. 4, hours after a gunman opened fire in an entertainment district in Dayton. Police shot and killed the gunman, a 25-year-old man.

Breidenthal, while offering prayers for the victims and those affected by the shootings, lamented that this was the second time in a year that his diocese was in mourning after a mass shooting in one of its cities. An attack in September left three victims dead and two others wounded in Cincinnati.

“Please join me in praying for an end to the epidemic of hate and violence that is sweeping our country,” he said.

Hunn and Breidenthal are part of

Bishops United Against Gun Violence, a network of nearly 100 Episcopal bishops that formed in the wake of two high-profile mass shootings in 2012, at a Sikh temple in Wisconsin and at Sandy Hook Elementary School in Connecticut. The bishops’ mission has taken on a greater sense of urgency amid the growing na-

America, and he enumerated four potential policy responses — their focuses included violent video games and mental illness — that could reduce the “barbaric slaughters” he said were carried out by “mentally ill monsters.”

Trump avoided calling for any substantial gun safety reforms, and it remains to be seen whether the shock of the recent violence will push the needle in Washington further toward such legislation. As the list of mass shootings has increased, legislative remedies have gone nowhere in Congress.

The Episcopal Church’s General Convention has passed numerous resolutions over the years calling for tighter gun laws. A resolution passed in 2015 included calls for universal criminal background checks for gun purchases, a ban on military-style assault weapons and high-capacity magazines, tougher enforcement against gun trafficking

and requirements that gun owners be trained in gun safety. In 2018, bishops and deputies passed a new resolution recognizing gun violence as a public health issue.

With the recent focus on tragedies in El Paso and Dayton, Episcopalians churchwide have joined in mourning the victims of the recent shootings.

Chicago Bishop Jeffrey Lee issued a statement on Facebook in which he prayed “for the strength and commitment to stand up against the corrosive power of hateful speech and the insanity of all too available guns.”

Bishop Sean Rowe, who leads the dioceses of Northwestern Pennsylvania and Western New York, sent a letter to both urging Episcopalians not to give up hope. “I invite you to pray in response to these evil acts — not as a substitute for action, but as a precursor



Photo/Reuters

*Mourners take part in a vigil at El Paso High School after a mass shooting at a Walmart in El Paso, Texas.*

tional alarm at subsequent tragedies.

The Bishops United’s Litany in the Wake of a Mass Shooting was updated on Aug. 4 and now remembers the victims of 43 shootings since 2012.

Connecticut Bishop Ian Douglas read the litany in a Facebook video after the El Paso and Dayton shootings, noting that Aug. 5 marks seven years since the Sikh temple shooting.

“This litany is a prayer offered for all the mass shootings, all the victims of mass shootings since Bishops United Against Gun Violence has come together,” Douglas said.

President Donald Trump read a statement on Aug. 5 from the White House.

“We ask God in heaven to ease the anguish of those who suffer, and we vow to act with urgent resolve,” Trump said in his 10-minute remarks.

The president also denounced racism and hatred, saying neither has a place in

# Episcopal bishops repudiate Christian nationalism, systemic racism

## Bishops United Against Gun Violence

The advocacy group Bishops United Against Gun Violence released a statement after the El Paso and Dayton mass shootings in early August. The group is a network of nearly 100 Episcopal Church bishops working to curtail the epidemic of gun violence in the United States.

The statement follows:

“Since last weekend [Aug. 3-4], three young white men — all American citizens, all in legal possession of assault rifles — have murdered more than

30 people in cold blood. Most of the precious children of God who are dead and injured are people of color.

“When gun violence makes headlines, politicians supported by the National Rifle Association are quick to call white shooters “mentally ill,” while characterizing black and brown shooters as “criminals” and insisting that guns are not the problem. They choose to remain loyal to the gun lobby and its campaign contributions while denying the incontrovertible evidence that more guns mean more deaths.

“Common sense measures like universal background checks, assault weapons bans, handgun purchaser licensing, and restrictions on gun ownership by domestic abusers point the way toward sane gun policy that is well within any sensible interpretation of the Second Amendment. They are necessary and long overdue, but they are not sufficient.

“This latest sickening cluster of mass shootings has thrust into the headlines the deadly mix of white supremacy and gun violence that is coming to define our era of American history. Anti-immigrant sentiment is on the rise and our government holds asylum-seekers on our southern border in inhumane conditions.

“The president of the United States uses racist tropes and inflammatory lan-

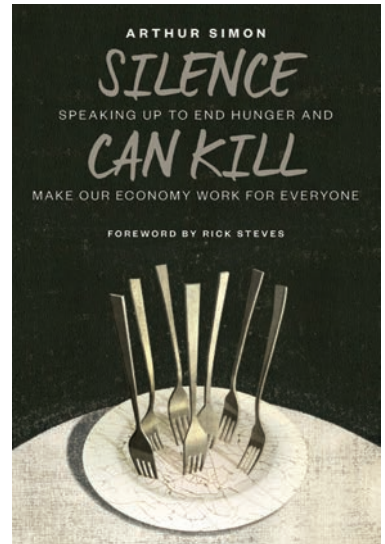
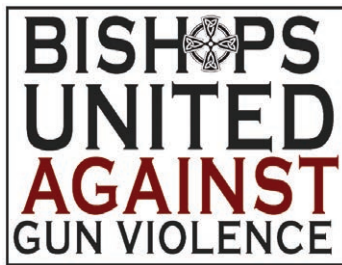
guage to incite crowds against people of color, refugees and immigrants; and hate crime reports have increased for three consecutive years. The hatred and fury that drives mass shootings can also be turned inward, where it fuels the invisible and growing death toll of gun suicides.

“As Christians, we must work actively to dismantle the systemic racism that is part of our country’s founding narrative and that continues to fuel mass shootings and urban gun violence today. We must insist that both our fellow Christians and our elected

leaders repudiate white supremacy and white nationalism and embrace humane immigration policies that follow God’s command and the Biblical imperative to welcome the stranger in our midst. And we must refuse to participate in scapegoating people with mental illness, a ploy too often used to distract from the urgent yet simple need to enact common sense gun safety measures.

“Seven years ago yesterday, six people were murdered by a white supremacist at the Sikh Temple in Oak Creek, Wisc. That massacre, one of two events that galvanized the creation of Bishops United Against Gun Violence, (the other was the shooting at Sandy Hook [elementary school] in Connecticut) brought us together across our differences to demonstrate that we believe in a God of life in the face of death. Today we are weary of witnessing the slaughter gripping our country. But we are no less determined to continue speaking, even when it seems our words make no difference; to continue praying in order to gather our strength to act; and to follow Jesus in speaking truth, especially when it seems that truth is out of season.”

More about the group may be found at [www.bishopsagainstgunviolence.org](http://www.bishopsagainstgunviolence.org) and the group Episcopalians United Against Gun Violence is on Facebook. ■



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# Episcopal diocese joins Mississippi churches offering support for families affected by raids

By David Paulsen  
Episcopal News Service

The Diocese of Mississippi mobilized Episcopalians in the state to assist families affected by federal immigration raids in early August as Bishop Brian Seage joined other religious leaders in condemning the raids, in which nearly 700 workers were taken into custody at seven Mississippi chicken processing plants.

A joint statement signed by Seage and four Catholic, Methodist and Lutheran bishops in Mississippi called on the Trump administration to end immigration enforcement tactics that they say are spreading fear in local communities and threatening to cause “unacceptable suffering” for families and children.

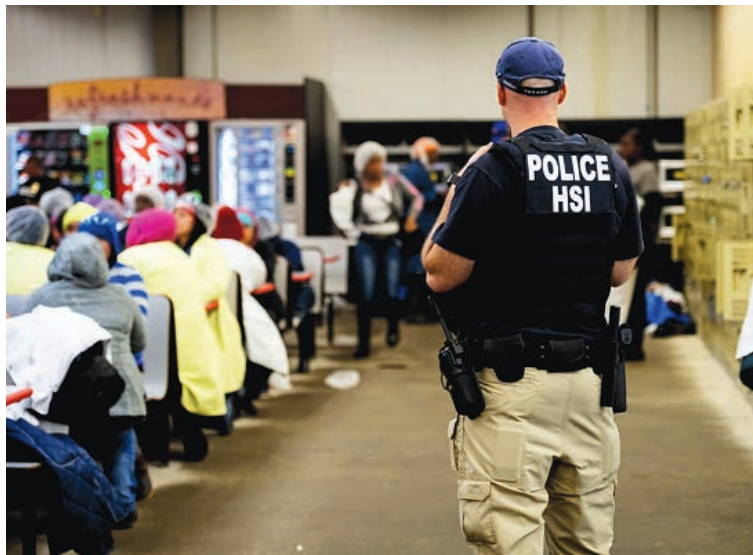
“Within any [political] disagreement we should all be held together by our baptismal promises,” the bishops said. As followers of Christ, “we are his body and, therefore, called to act in love as a unified community for our churches, and for the common good of our local communities and nation. ... Of course, we are committed to a just and compassionate reform to our nation’s immigration system, but there is an urgent and critical need at this time to avoid a worsening crisis.”

Seage also spoke briefly at an immigrant rights rally Aug. 8 in Jackson and issued a written statement that raised specific concerns about the effects of the raids on families living in Mississippi.

“We don’t know how many children have been affected at this time, but I am asking for churches and individuals willing to help with caring for the children to contact local officials,” Seage said in his online statement. “Likewise, we are exploring avenues through which support, financial and otherwise, may be

extended.”

Agents from U.S. Immigration and Customs Enforcement targeted several plants in central Mississippi that were suspected of employing workers who lacked proper immigration documentation. The raids were said to be the largest



Photo/Immigration and Customs Enforcement

*Federal authorities conduct a U.S. Immigration and Customs Enforcement worksite enforcement operation in Canton, Miss.*

conducted so far under President Donald Trump, whose hardline approach to immigration has been a cornerstone of his campaign and presidency.

The Department of Justice announced the day after the raids that 300 of those detained already had been released.

“That’s not enough,” Seage said at the rally in Jackson. “And it won’t be enough until all those families are reunited — and likewise, [until] others who dare to have the American dream and dare to go to work can go to work and not worry whether or not they will be coming home at night.”

Seage told the crowd he was horrified by the news of the raids. “Horrified to imagine children being separated from their parents,” he said. “And children coming home to an empty house.”

Federal authorities said they took precautions so children were not left without a parent’s care due to the raids. A Justice Department statement said those de-

tained “were asked when they arrived at the processing center whether they had any children who were at school or child care and needed to be picked up,” and cell-phones were provided to help them make arrangements for child care as needed, according to the Justice Department. The department said some parents were released to ensure “all children were with at least one of the parents.”

But some of the families were “traumatized,” Bishop Joseph Kopacz of the Roman Catholic Diocese of Jackson told the Jesuit magazine *America*. His diocese’s Catholic Charities is among the agencies reaching out to those families now to offer assistance.

“This is a man-made disaster,” Kopacz said, noting also that the raids happened on the first day of school in these communities.

“These folks are our neighbors. They’re not criminals, the vast majority of them. They’re hardworking people.”

Family separations under the Trump administration’s “zero tolerance” immigration policies sparked intense controversy last year, prompting federal officials to back down from those measures, though conditions at detention facilities on the southern border remain a contentious issue.

The Episcopal Church, at its General Convention in July 2018, passed a resolution decrying and urging a halt to “the implementation and intensification of inhumane and unjust immigration policies and practices such as detaining and separating children from parents.” It was adopted after more than 1,000 bishops, deputies and other Episcopalians participated in a prayer vigil held outside an immigrant detention facility near the convention center in

continued on page E



**RAIDS continued from page D**

Austin, Texas.

Another resolution approved last year affirmed the church's support for "respecting the dignity of immigrants" through immigration policies and reforms.

More recently, church leaders expressed alarm in June when the Trump administration threatened a large-scale roundup of immigrants facing deportation orders in 10 cities. Those threats mostly fizzled.

"We are called as people of faith to strive for justice and peace among all people and respect the dignity of every human being," Seage said at the rally in Jackson.

Seage, in his follow-up statement, asked members of his diocese to contact the Mississippi Department of Child Protective Services if

they know of a child affected by the raid who is in need of care. That agency put out its own statement saying it was ready to assist children whose parents were detained.

Federal authorities did not alert the state to any child care needs, but the state agency began preparing an emergency response after learning about the raids through local news reports.

"We have foster homes that have been carefully inspected and licensed, and foster caregivers who have been well trained and have passed criminal background checks," Child Protective Services spokeswoman Lea Anne Brandon said in a news release. "We know we can provide safe and secure placements and trauma-informed temporary care for these children — but we have not been asked to do so." ■

**MASSACRES continued from page B**

to it," Rowe said.

Arizona Bishop Jennifer Reddall was among the speakers Aug. 4 at a vigil for gun violence victims in Phoenix. "You cannot be a white supremacist and be a Christian," Reddall said, accord-

ing to the Arizona Republic's coverage. "You cannot love Jesus and hate your neighbor. And if you say you do, you're wrong."

And while people of faith pray, Reddall called on politicians to do more than pray. "I want you to do your job, which is to act," she said. ■



AP Photo/John Locher, File

*Mourners visit a makeshift memorial at the scene of a mass shooting at a shopping complex in El Paso, Texas.*

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# Churches urged to join in day of prayer for creation

By Rachel Farmer

Anglican Communion News Service

Environmentally-active Anglicans are urging churches to join the World Creation Day of Prayer on Sunday, Sept. 1. The day marks the start of an annual celebration of prayer and action to protect creation called the “Season of Creation.”

The season, which begins on Sept. 1 and ends on the Feast Day of St. Francis on Oct. 4, is set to be celebrated by tens of thousands of Christians around the world. Volunteers organize a range of events and activities in their communities from prayer services to litter cleanups or advocacy actions.

“This is a wonderful opportunity to celebrate the World Day of Prayer for Creation as it falls on a Sunday this year. This year’s materials are following the readings for the lectionary and there are a whole range of resources available to download,” said Canon Rachel Mash, Environmental Coordinator for the Anglican Church of Southern Africa.

This year’s theme is the “web of life” and resources, available now on the Anglican Communion website, are de-

signed to help churches reflect on the destruction of the web of life and pray for those who suffer most because of that loss.

“We were called to be stewards of creation, and we have failed. The younger generation are rising up now and calling for the earth to be healed. Let us join



## SEASON OF CREATION

them and work together to protect the web of life which sustains us all,” wrote Mash in the Anglican resource material.

Along with a whole variety of events listed on the Season of Creation website ([www.seasonofcreation.org](http://www.seasonofcreation.org)), there will be global action during the month, which churches and individuals are invited to join.

Events include:

- A webinar in Manila on Sept. 16 with international contributors on biodiversity and Christian spirituality.

- A Global Climate Strike on Sept. 20 when young people from around the world will invite others to stand with them as they take part in a day of strikes from school to demand urgent action on the climate crisis. The climate strikes were galvanized by Swedish teenager Greta Thunberg, with each strike sending more than a million people into the streets.

- An International Coastal Cleanup Day on Sept. 21 to remove garbage from coastlines and waterways including ponds, lakes, and rivers.

- United Nations Climate Action Summit on Sept. 23, hosted by the U.N. Secretary General, who will be calling the world’s attention to the urgent need to implement the Paris Agreement, to keep global warming below 2 degrees celsius.

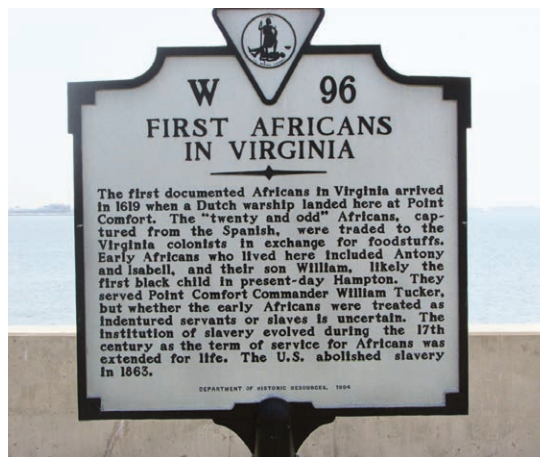
- An international conference on Sept. 23 on ecological theology and environmental ethics, on the island of Crete in Greece.

On Oct. 4, faith leaders from around the world are to reflect on how St. Francis has informed their spiritual journey and to celebrate the month-long journey of the Season of Creation. ■

### COMMEMORATION continued from page A

in the nation’s history. Stolen by English privateers from a Spanish slave ship and brought to Point Comfort on a ship called the White Lion, these natives of west central Africa are believed to have been traded for food and supplies. They were the first Africans to be brought to English North America.

“With bells tolling across America, we pause to lament the centuries of suffering and wrenching grief of slavery and racism in our land,” said Bishop Mariann Edgar Budde of the Diocese of Washington (D.C.). “The first slave trade ship to land 400 years ago planted the seed of sin that spread through the active participation and complicit passivity of nearly every American institution. As we grieve, may we dedicate ourselves to addressing systemic racism and the multi-generational impact of enslavement and



Photo/Wikimedia Commons

*This historical marker located at Point Comfort/ Fort Monroe, marks the location where the first Africans arrived in the English colonies that would later become the United States.*

discrimination faced by all of the African diaspora.”

As the landing point for the first enslaved Africans in the English colonies

in 1619 and the site of the first emancipation policy decision during the Civil War, Fort Monroe marks both the beginning and the end of slavery in the United States.

The majority of the Fort Monroe peninsula was designated a National Historic Landmark in 1960 and is also listed in the National Register of Historic Places. Fort Monroe National Monument was proclaimed by President Barack Obama in 2011. In 2018 President Donald Trump signed into law the 400 years of African American History Commission Act. A special federal commission was formed to commemorate and educate the American public about the 1619 arrival of the first enslaved Africans to the English colonies at Port Comfort, Virginia.

Visit [www.nps.gov/fomr](http://www.nps.gov/fomr) and [www.facebook.com/FortMonroeNPS](https://www.facebook.com/FortMonroeNPS) for more information. ■

# Public education advocacy group ceasing operations

## All Our Children National Network

All Our Children National Network [AOC] announced on July 10 that it is ceasing all programming and operations after seven years serving as a nexus for Episcopalians and other Christians dedicated to building the movement for education justice and having a meaningful impact on public schools.

In conjunction with their closure, All Our Children announced a one-time-only Advancement Grant initiative for Episcopal congregations, dioceses, and Episcopal-affiliated programs working toward education equity and quality public education for all. Eligible applicants were engaged in an active church-school community partnership or participating in an education advocacy initiative that has been operating at least two years. The grants provide up to 15 awards of \$5,000 to \$10,000 in unrestricted funds.

Founded by Lallie Lloyd in 2012 with support from Trinity Wall Street, AOC produced regional and national conferences, sponsored resolution B005: Quality Public Education for All, at the 78th General Convention of the Episcopal Church, published All Our Children: The Church's Role in Education Equity (Church Publishing) telling the stories of congregations and dioceses that are affecting change in their local public schools, and provided resources, leadership training, networking, and moral support for Christian leaders pursuing education equity.

"All Our Children emerged from God's dream of a world where every child grows into the fullness of all they were created to be. High quality public education is an essential component of that dream," says AOC Director, Lallie Lloyd. "These seven years have been an amazing journey of learning alongside many other faith leaders who have also been called to this work. Our decision to close comes as we face several stark realities, the most important of which is an understanding that our previously unexamined and unconscious racial bias limits our ability to build the coalitions necessary to mend what is broken in our public schools. Addressing that error is

not a quick fix and cannot be accomplished in our current structure by our current leaders. We know this work is not ours alone, and we hope our Advancement Grants will support the leaders who will carry this movement forward and help it continue to grow and transform."

AOC will keep all their resources online for free at [allourchildren.org](http://allourchildren.org). These include how-to guides, recorded webinars, and 2018 national conference content — developed with the help of experts and leaders — to help congregations and their members create church-school partnerships and other education advocacy and justice initiatives.

"We are grateful to so many who have shared their wisdom, wealth, time, and talent with our staff and across our network," Lloyd said. "Our greatest power



Photo/St. Stephen's Episcopal Church

*St. Stephen's Episcopal Church in Boston worked with suburban churches to create a library at Blackstone Elementary School.*

has always been the hundreds of dedicated faith leaders, ally organizations, and educators willing to engage with us and our vision for a future where every school has everything every child needs to thrive. It has been our privilege to serve local leaders and foster critical conversations about how working for equity in public education directly responds to the Gospel call for justice." ■



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# Sewanee workshop to guide priests grappling with Confederate symbols

By David Paulsen  
Episcopal News Service

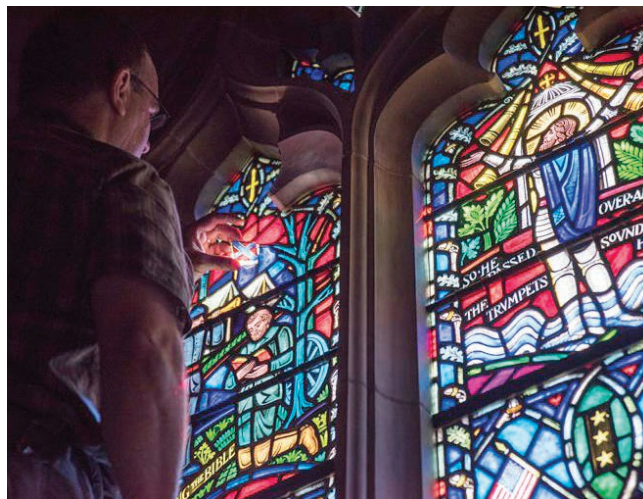
**A** Confederate battle flag depicted in stained glass. A pew labeled as the one where the president of the Confederacy once worshipped.

A cathedral plaque honoring an Episcopal bishop who fought for the South in the Civil War.

Should such symbols remain on display at a time when the nation is increasingly alert to violence fueled by white supremacists who see the Confederacy as a validation of their racist hatred? With statues, plaques, artwork and other representations of Confederate figures found in Episcopal churches across the country, how should a parish priest respond?

“This is not just a historical question or a question of the political moment, but these are questions of theological issues that all Episcopal churches face in one way or another,” said Woody Register, a history professor at Sewanee: University of the South who is leading a six-year project intended to tell the full story of the Tennessee university’s ties to slavery and segregation.

The answers to those questions are the focus of a pilot workshop at Sewanee in



Photo/Danielle E. Thomas/Washington National Cathedral

At left, Stained glass fabricator Andrew Goldkuble replaces an image of the Confederate battle flag at Washington National Cathedral.

Below, A plaque honoring Leonidas Polk, an Episcopal bishop and Confederate general, was removed in 2018 from Christ Church Cathedral in Cincinnati.

November that was developed by two Sewanee seminary graduates, the Rev. Hannah Pommersheim and the Rev. Kellan Day. Pommersheim and Day have assisted Register with Sewanee’s Project on Slavery, Race and Reconciliation.

The workshop Nov. 5-7 will provide “tools for leading change,” guiding Episcopal priests in discernment about the Confederate symbols in their parishes. The workshop’s three parts will examine the theological underpinnings of such symbols, equip the priests with context for understanding art and symbols, and provide best practices for local action.

One core theological issue is the sin of racism. Some early Episcopal leaders, including the founders of Sewanee, promoted the myth that slavery was morally defensible and defended the myth even after slavery was abolished. It was a “story built on the subjugation of a lot of human beings,” Day told Episcopal News Service.

“I think the legacy of that racism is widespread and rampant, and one of the ways we can repent is by naming the story and sort of naming the ways it affects our built structures and sanctuaries,” she said.

Day is now a transitional



Photo/Sarah Hartwig/Christ Church Cathedral

deacon serving at the Episcopal Church of the Incarnation in Highlands, North Carolina. Pommersheim has signed on for another year with Register’s project team as a research associate. The two developed the workshop because they sensed that, while the nation debated Confederate symbols in public spaces, “these symbols have different meanings in a church space,” Pommersheim said.

For example, Day said a Confederate figure might be seen as sanctified when depicted in stained glass, such as the Confederate generals in windows that were removed two years ago at Washington National Cathedral. The cathedral’s decision was hastened by the national uproar over a deadly standoff in Charlottesville, Virginia, between white supremacists and counter-protesters. The hate groups had gathered there for a rally

continued on page 1



Photo/Caroline Carson

A monument to Edmund Kirby-Smith, a Confederate general and mathematics teacher, was moved in 2017 to the cemetery at the University of the South in Sewanee, Tenn.

WORKSHOP continued from page H

in support of a Confederate statue that was the focus of a legal battle.

Sewanee and Washington National Cathedral were among the Episcopal institutions that reassessed their own Confederate symbols in the wake of the Charlottesville clashes. Christ Church Cathedral in Cincinnati, Ohio, removed a plaque honoring Bishop Leonidas Polk, a Sewanee founder who served as a Confederate general in the Civil War. In Lexington, Virginia, an Episcopal church that had been named for Robert E. Lee dropped the Confederate general from its name.

In deciding what to do about those symbols, it is critical to understand what motivated communities — and churches — to erect tributes to Confederate history decades after the end of the Civil War, Register said. Often their motivation had less to do with preserving history than with promoting the myth of the Lost Cause, which claimed the Confederacy was a failed but noble campaign.

“These memorials and monuments tend to say as much or more about the moment in which they were installed than they do about the period or persons they memorialize,” he said.

The so-called Jefferson Davis pew was a longtime icon at St. John’s Episcopal Church in Montgomery, Ala., until its removal last year. Church leaders researched the pew’s history and found that its ties to Davis were false and that a dedication ceremony in 1925 was a political act steeped in racism.

The Rev. Jamie Osborne, associate rector at St. John’s, was one of 13 bishops and clergy members whom Pommersheim and Day interviewed to build a curriculum for their workshop. Osborne will be leading one of the workshop’s sessions, along with Sewanee art professor Shelly MacLaren and the Rev. Molly Bosscher, who spent four years as associate rector at Richmond, Va.’s St. Paul’s Episcopal Church, once known as the Cathedral of the Confederacy.

This initial workshop received a \$5,000 grant from the Jessie Ball duPont Fund and is open to Episcopal clergy grappling with Confederate symbols at their churches. Pommersheim and Day hope to recruit up to 15 participants, and afterward, they will assess what worked and what changes would make



Photo/Sewanee Black History via Facebook

*The Sewanee Black History Facebook page is covering the progress of the black history project.*

the curriculum stronger.

Gathering face to face has the advantage of creating a support network of clergy members grappling with the same questions, they said. One of the intended lessons of the workshop is that it is helpful first to create a space for the parish to talk openly and respectfully about these issues.

“How can you pastorally make the best decision but also bring people along with you while you’re making that decision?” Pommersheim said.

The workshop also serves as a milepost for the work of Register’s project team, which already has completed substantial research into the history of the university and the 28 Episcopal dioceses that still own and govern it today. Some of

that research is informing how Sewanee’s administrators handle Confederate symbols on campus, such as the decision two years ago to relocate a monument honoring Edmund Kirby-Smith, a 19th-century Sewanee professor who previously served as a Confederate general.

As part of the Slavery, Race and Reconciliation project, the team has spent the last six months launching an oral history campaign to record old stories

of African American life in the community of Sewanee. The university received \$12,000 from the National Endowment for the Humanities to purchase electronic equipment to scan historic photos and produce audio recordings.

The team is considering how to maintain such collections and research after the project winds down in three years. Whatever the outcome, Register says, the research is about more than local history.

“Sewanee’s story is not just a mountaintop story, and it’s not just an Episcopal story, though it certainly is that,” Register said. “Its history is the history of race and religion and higher education throughout the United States.” ■

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# Episcopal task force examines what's at stake in decriminalizing prostitution

By Lynette Wilson  
Episcopal News Service

At least three U.S. states and the District of Columbia have introduced legislation that would decriminalize the buying and selling of sex, forcing a long-simmering debate on prostitution into the national dialogue.

Legalization proponents, religious or not, often cite biblical references to prostitution dating back to ancient Israel, telling the Genesis story of Judah and Tamar, and falling back on the well-worn phrase, the “world’s oldest profession.” Opponents tend to argue the “profession” leads to an increase in violence against women and girls and reflects men’s power over women.

“I consider prostitution not the oldest profession, but the oldest oppression,” said the Rev. Adrian Dannhauser, a long-time sex and labor trafficking victims’ rights advocate who leads the Episcopal Diocese of New York’s Task Force Against Human Trafficking. “I think this decriminalization issue is a backlash against women’s rights and progress we’ve made in terms of equality. It’s a power issue and an entitlement issue.”

In late June, at the close of the New York State General Assembly’s 2019 legislative session, three New York City lawmakers introduced a bill that would decriminalize prostitution and legalize the sale of consensual sex. Massachusetts, Maine and Washington, D.C., have introduced similar bills.

During Lent, the Episcopal Diocese of New York Task Force Against Human Trafficking led a Stations of the Cross for Sex Trafficking Survivors event in New York City.

Writing in the summer 2019 issue of the Episcopal New Yorker, Dannhauser said: “Sex workers’ rights organizations claim that consenting adults should be allowed to do whatever they want with their own bodies — ‘my body, my choice.’ But in most cases, prostitution is more aptly described as ‘my body, his choice.’ It’s not sexual liberation but sexual exploitation. According to Sanc-

tuary for Families, New York’s leading service provider and advocate for survivors of gender violence, 90% of people in prostitution in the U.S. are trafficking victims. This means that only 10% of prostituted people have any real choice in what happens to their bodies in the sex trade.”

Both sides find common ground in calling for the decriminalization of people bought and sold in the com-

mercial sex industry and for the ability of trafficking survivors to vacate their convictions. Opponents of the decriminalization of prostitution typically favor an “equality” model that focuses more on decreasing demand and preventing exploitation, similar to those adopted in Nordic countries, where cultural attitudes have shifted and it’s becoming no longer socially acceptable to purchase people for sex and it’s seen as a barrier to gender equality.



Photo/Episcopal News Service

*The Diocese of New York’s Task Force Against Human Trafficking holds a Station of the Cross for Sex Trafficking Survivors at the city’s bus terminal last April.*

mercial sex industry and for the ability of trafficking survivors to vacate their convictions. Opponents of the decriminalization of prostitution typically favor an “equality” model that focuses more on decreasing demand and preventing exploitation, similar to those adopted in Nordic countries, where cultural attitudes have shifted and it’s becoming no longer socially acceptable to purchase people for sex and it’s seen as a barrier to gender equality.

In the United States, the decriminalization conversation has shifted in the context of the #MeToo movement; alongside an awareness of sexual violence on college campuses; and amid the backdrop of high-profile sex crime cases, like those involving New England Patriots owner Robert Kraft, who allegedly paid for sexual services at a Florida massage parlor, and financier and convicted sex offender Jeffrey Epstein, who died in

prison on August 10.

“It’s not about legislating morality, it’s about social context,” said Dannhauser, in an interview with Episcopal News Service in her office at the Church of the Incarnation on Madison Avenue in Manhattan. “It’s a backlash against women’s rights, and it’s an empowerment and entitlement issue ... the whole idea of rape culture on college campuses. “It’s finally coming into the light.”

In late July, the Church of the Incarnation, where Dannhauser serves as associate rector, hosted a Tuesday evening panel discussion to educate the public on the bill. As the Episcopal church’s sanctuary filled with some men but mostly women from diverse backgrounds, a small group of bill supporters gathered in protest on the sidewalk outside, as police officers stood watch nearby.

The four-person panel of opponents — two sex trafficking survivors, an activist and educator, and an activist lawyer — shared personal stories and talked about the bill’s specifics. New York Assembly Member Richard N. Gottfried, a bill co-sponsor whose district includes Incarnation, had agreed to participate but later rescinded saying the venue wasn’t “neutral.” Toward the end of the event, the protesters from outside entered the sanctuary and disrupted the gathering.

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# Episcopal Church video shows support for immigrants

In a new video, “The Episcopal Church: Walking with Immigrants,” Presiding Bishop Michael Curry introduces five bishops whose dioceses are actively engaged in immigrant welcome. Each bishop shares ways individuals or groups can support this work. Their intent is to inspire action and to highlight the many ways people can engage with and deepen their understanding of immigration issues.

The video ends with an overview of the advocacy and refugee resettlement work done at the national level. The Rev. Canon Charles K. Robertson, Canon to the Presiding Bishop for Ministry Beyond the Episcopal Church, speaks to the church’s 80-year commitment to immigrants and displaced persons. This support continues today through Episcopal Migration Ministries and the Episcopal Church’s Office of Govern-

ment Relations.

The Episcopal Church response to the complex array of challenges facing immigrants includes supporting children and other people seeking asylum at the U.S. southern border, assisting immigrants who are undocumented, advocating for comprehensive immigration reform, and resettling refugees through Episcopal Migration Ministries.

The video may be seen at [www.episcopalchurch.org/OGR](http://www.episcopalchurch.org/OGR), Migration, Refugees and Immigration page.

“Many Episcopalians have asked, ‘what is The Episcopal Church doing?’ And maybe the deeper question behind that has been the question, ‘what can I do?’” said Curry. “This video is intended to address those questions and to provide some ways that we, as followers of Jesus of Nazareth, can respond to this humanitarian crisis.”

The featured bishops represent the four U.S. dioceses geographically located along the border with Mexico and the Diocese of Maine, serving as one example of the many ways other Episcopal dioceses are engaged with people seeking asylum.

Bishops appearing in the video include Thomas J. Brown, Diocese of Maine; Susan Brown Snook, Diocese of San Diego; Jennifer A. Reddall, Diocese of Arizona; Michael Hunn, Diocese of the Rio Grande; and David Reed, Diocese of West Texas.

The Episcopal Church, through the Office of Government Relations (OGR) and Episcopal Migration Ministries (EMM), has compiled a list of resources, bishop statements, and information in response to the ongoing humanitarian situation at the southern border.

— Episcopal Church Public Affairs Office

## TRAFFICKING continued from page J

Legalization advocates say that decriminalization would protect people who “do sexual labor by choice, circumstance, coercion,” and they call for legislation that would protect people in the sex trade from economic exploitation and interpersonal violence. They also call for people imprisoned on sex-trade related offenses to be freed and for the de-stigmatization of the sex trade.

Bill opponents, however, say it would thwart prosecution of sex and child traffickers, pimps who prostitute children and pimping in general; permit pimping of anyone 18 years of age or older; allow traffickers to vacate convictions; inhibit prosecutors’ trafficking investigations; and make it harder for law enforcement to identify victims. They are also concerned that the bill would legalize the purchase of sex, brothels and commercial sex establishments, and encourage sex tourism.

“We [New York residents] have to ask ourselves, Why do we need people buying sex? What is that all about?” said Yvonne O’Neal, a task force member. “Personally — and it does keep me up at night sometimes — I’m wondering when I go to church on Sunday, as a person of faith, as an Episcopalian, and I look around in the congregation, my question is, Who are these men that are

buying sex? And obviously, they have to be some of them sitting in the pews. Who are they? We don’t know, and why is that necessary?”

Proponents of decriminalization say that “if we need to,” people should be able to sell their bodies, and that legalization will lead to safer working conditions and industry regulations. Opponents say it will lead to higher demand and an increase in child sex trafficking as men look to purchase sex from younger and younger girls.

“There are some people in the trade who say, ‘Well, you, know, this is what I choose,’ and I don’t doubt that, but the vast majority of women who have to sell their bodies, I don’t think they are doing it voluntarily,” said O’Neal, who

also represents the Episcopal Church at the United Nations as a member of the NGO Committee to Stop Trafficking in Persons. “We should be able to find ways to help them to make a different kind of living and not have to subject their bodies to this.”

During the panel discussion at Incarnation, Iryna Makaruk, a sex trafficking survivor challenged the theory that sex work is work.

“It’s not work; you’re not selling yourself, you’re sold,” she said.

“There are girls being sold all over in run-down apartments, and they are being raped like I was,” said Makaruk, who was 19 and living in Brooklyn when a trafficker lured her in. “Shame on us if that’s how our girls are making money.” ■

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# The Hudson River School romantics and the theology of landscape

By Dennis Raverty

“We are still in Eden; the wall that shuts us out is our own ignorance and folly”  
—Thomas Cole

Art history as it is currently practiced in both Europe and the United States is a very secularized field of study — and this is true even among those scholars who specialize in the European old masters, like Michelangelo or Rembrandt, artists who openly deal with sacred or biblical content directly.

Nineteenth-century painters are said to have secularized Western art but it is perhaps more sacralization than secularization in the case of landscape. A minor, formerly profane genre, landscape became elevated and sacralized by the Romantics, taking on lofty themes with a high moral tone and a transcendent gravitas formerly reserved for religious painting alone. In the United States, these Romantic landscapists are often referred to as the “Hudson River School,” a Romantic tendency evident over the course of two or three generations of artists. After falling out of fa-

vor for a while, appreciation for Hudson River School painting increased dramatically during the postwar period, when the alienated, Romantic abstractions of artists like Pollock and DeKooning cre-

tion based on religious narrative may seem quaint and even strange, but it is how the artists themselves thought and wrote about their work. My discussion of the following pieces will enter into the spirit of this type of Romantic, Protestant interpretive strategy.

*The Oxbow*, by Hudson River School founder Thomas Cole, is a sublime landscape fraught with Romantic, narrative conflict. On the right of this very large, magisterial painting, is the quirky natural, looping turn in the Hudson River in upstate New York, and a cultivated, verdant landscape with roads and farms, and even Hebrew letters in the patterns of green and tan in the distant hills, signifying the blessings of Providence, according to art historian Matthew Baigell.

By contrast, on the left side of the painting, the landscape becomes wild and overgrown and a menacing storm approaches. This represents not only the literal Western frontier, but also the spiritual and psychological frontiers of the “wildness” within each of us, what Freud would have called the “id,” but conceived of during Victorian times as an animalistic tendency, a “vice” that especially afflicted males, and at least partly understood at that time to be a result of Adam’s original sin (women were widely considered to be morally superior to men at that time).

Just to the left of the center of the painting the artist represents himself (a detail easily missed, even in the original). He has a portable easel and a canvas but is dressed rather formally for an artist working outdoors, with a long-tailed coat, a stovepipe hat, and what appears to be a bright red ascot. This representation as a fashionable gentleman may be to compensate for the fact that despite his central placement, the artist is on the west bank, the left-hand, “wild side” of the river.

Among the second generation of Hudson River artists is Sanford Robinson Gifford, usually classified with the Luminists,



Photo/Metropolitan Museum of Art

“*The Oxbow*” by Thomas Cole

ated a new appetite for the sublime.

Although their paintings are now largely appreciated for their abstract beauty, if we examine the writings of the Hudson River artists themselves, it will be seen that they conceive of their work in moral and even mystical terms, as interpreters of divine revelation through nature. As painter Asher B. Durand put it, “The external appearance of this our dwelling place, is fraught with lessons of high and holy meaning, only surpassed by the light of Revelation.”

To many early nineteenth-century Protestants, revelation was not restricted to scripture alone — revelation was seen even in private experiences of God’s presence in nature, as in the thought of the later Transcendentalists. Ralph Waldo Emerson muses, “We distinguish the announcements of the soul by the term, *Revelation*. These are always attended by the emotion of the sublime.”

Landscape painting was to be “read,” in a narrative manner, as both a personal revelation to the artist and potentially, the embodiment of God’s divine will for humankind. From a 21<sup>st</sup>-century perspective, from the other side of modernism with its emphasis on formal design, the overt literary quality of interpreta-



Photo/Los Angeles County Museum of Art

“*October in the Catskills*” by Sanford Robinson Gifford

continued on page N



# ‘Blinded by the Light’ makes a savior of Springsteen

By **Simran Jeet Singh**  
*Religion News Service*

The year is 1987. The town is Luton, then known for its auto manufacturing in the desultory out-years of Margaret Thatcher’s Britain.

Javed (Viveik Kalra) is a British Pakistani teenager whose father (Kulvinder Ghir) has been laid off from making auto parts and whose mother (Meera Ganatra) helps make ends meet by working as a seamstress out of the family’s home.

Javed’s social life would be non-existent if it were not for Matt, his neighbor and childhood best friend, and even this relationship causes Javed envy. Unlike Matt, whose father allows him to party, make music and find his own girlfriends, Javed’s parents run a socially conservative household. When he’s not working or volunteering to help people from the mosque, Javed’s strict father is reminding his children to focus on their studies, work in their free time to help support the family and not spend time with anyone of the opposite sex.

Meantime, outside their home, Javed and his family endure the routine verbal abuse and threats aimed at “Pakis.” White supremacists — the National Front and neo-Nazi movements were burgeoning — hang a pig’s head from the minaret of the local mosque, and Javed’s father is accosted during a National Front march. Woven throughout the film, these scenes capture the political climate three decades ago but resonate with today’s resurgent racism.

To add to Javed’s sense of dislocation, more than once his father reminds his teenage son that he is Pakistani, not British.

The family’s financial struggles, the racism they endure and Javed’s lackluster social life all put the audience securely in Javed’s rooting section, and Director Gurinder Chadha, known best for 2003’s “Bend It Like Beckham,” capitalizes on our sympathies with a pivot into the unlikely: An unhappy Javed runs into a Sikh classmate named Roops (Aaron Phagur) who introduces him to “The Boss”: Bruce Springsteen.

The distant American icon comes alive for a Sikh and a Muslim in a British

factory town and changes their lives forever.

Encountering Springsteen’s music is a kind of religious experience for Javed. Bruce is a prophet whose words help guide Javed through moments of immense discomfort. He’s a guru whose image gets plastered all over Javed’s cozy bedroom. He’s a refuge to which Javed escapes when he’s unhappy. And he’s a savior who ultimately helps Javed transcend his own conditionality and discover himself — “The Promised Land,” as Springsteen calls it.

“Blinded by the Light” is more than a feel-good story: It’s a feel-everything story. It’s a brilliant blending of Hollywood and Bollywood aesthetics, as Roops, Javed and his girlfriend Eliza (Nell Williams) run through the streets and dance in fields while belting out Springsteen.

Chadha brings the two forms together brilliantly. Conscious of its own corniness, the movie taps into the bubbly Bollywood over-the-top style in a fashion that allows the audience to laugh at



Photo/courtesy of Warner Bros. Pictures

*Kulvinder Ghir, left, as Malik and Viveik Kalra as Javed in New Line Cinema’s “Blinded by the Light.”*

the unfamiliar aesthetic, grapple with the joyousness and then grow right into it as the film continues.

As much as it is an immigrant’s story, “Blinded by the Light” is a tale of the father-son struggle. When Javed clandestinely buys tickets for an upcoming Springsteen concert, his father discovers them and rips them up, berating Javed in front of the entire family for being selfish. The rift between them only widens when Javed learns he has won an essay competition that earns him a free trip to — of all places — New Jersey, the home of “The Boss.”


On his pilgrimage to the sacred sites of Springsteen’s youth and early career, Javed

**continued on page N**

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**BLINDED** continued from page M

undergoes a transformation, finding the space he needs to grow into himself and find reconciliation with his father. Most of all, he finds joy in what had been an otherwise unhappy life.

One need not be a Springsteen scholar to enjoy the movie. Javed's journey from a despondent, disconnected child to a boy whose life spans boundaries — generations, races, religions, nationalities, even musical tastes — transforms us, too, with its exuberance. Chadha does a magnificent job of translating, in a sweetly celebratory film, her sophisticated ideas about how all of us transcend our own challenges.

But for Bruce fans, there's an extra pleasure in knowing that the story is based

on fact. As Javed's coming-of-age story climaxes into pure joy at the end of the film, Chadha reminds us that this story is inspired by a memoir by journalist Sarfraz Manzoor, "Greetings from Bury Park: Race, Religion and Rock N' Roll."

Manzoor, we learn at the end of "Blinded by the Light," has been to more than 150 Springsteen concerts from around the world, and, as with Javed, "The Boss" was instrumental in his own formation and survival as a teenager. ■



Photo/Dave Allocca/StarPix

*From left, actor Aaron Phagura, journalist Sarfraz Manzoor, Patti Scialfa, Bruce Springsteen, director Gurinder Chadha and actor Vivek Kalra at the premiere of "Blinded by the Light" on Aug. 7, in Asbury Park, N.J.*

**HUDSON** continued from page L

a subgroup among the Hudson River School who share an interest in the effects of light. In contrast to the clear, crystalline lucidity of the other Luminists, however, Gifford's treatment of light is often filtered through hazy veils of moisture, which helps establish an overall tonal unity in the picture and at the same time, because of the sheer palpability of the illuminated atmosphere, creates a romantic evocation of light as a metaphor for the divine presence in nature.

Even later in the century, Thomas Moran, among the last generation of the Hudson River School Romantics, was sacralizing the landscape in an engraved version of one of his paintings published in 1877 in the lavishly-illustrated volume, *Picturesque America*. In the lower left stands a single figure that helps establish scale and situates the viewer before the grand and rugged terrain; he represents us.

A creek cascades down the mountain in a rushing waterway strewn with broken trees and giant boulders. By visually following its zigzagging path upwards, the creek leads us back into deep space towards the towering mountaintop, whose lofty precipice is glimpsed in the far distance, like a vision arising above the clouds, the cross of snow clearly visible at the very top and center of the composition, the ultimate goal of the pilgrim in the foreground.

If taken as a metaphor for the spiritual journey of the Christian and interpreted according to the conventions of contemporary Protestant discourse, the way upwards towards the salvation indicated by the cross on the mountaintop is a so-to-speak, perilous journey, beset with natural encumbrances and fraught with danger. The road to redemption is represented here as a difficult and arduous task the ultimate goal of which might never actually be attainable (which is not

to say that the true Romantic in search of the sublime shouldn't continue to strive toward it despite all odds against it).

In certain respects, Moran's many versions of Holy Cross mountain represent perhaps the culmination in nineteenth-century American landscape of the highest aspirations of the (somewhat misguided) idea of Manifest Destiny as not only the civilization and taming of the wilderness, not only the spread of agriculture, industrialization and technology, not only the Christianization of the native peoples, but the active, "natural" benediction of God himself, manifest in this "natural wonder."

The moral message of the engraving taken as a whole, seems to be that the life-giving and redemptive waters of salvation flow downwards freely from God above, but that the way upwards toward the divine is a very challenging if not grueling task, requiring the pilgrim to be a sort of frontiersman of the spiritual wilderness, in search of a mystical Christ within. But this subjective, imminent God can also be found in nature, perceivable as an ambient presence, a "hidden" image of the divine encountered as the sublime in the natural world — the landscape then becomes a Romantic metaphor for the pilgrim's earthly journey. ■

*Dennis Raverty is an associate professor of art history at New Jersey City University, specializing in art of the 19th and 20th centuries. This article first appeared in The Living Church.*

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*Finding the Simple Way*

Friday, October 25

2:00pm Pre-convention clergy meeting with Shane Claiborne  
5:00pm Dinner available  
7:00pm Evensong  
7:45pm Pre-convention session with Shane Claiborne, "Follow Me to Freedom—the Irresistible Revolution."  
Open to all.

Saturday, October 26

7:30am Registration Opens  
8:00am Exhibit Hall Opens  
8:00am Breakfast Available  
8:30am Morning Prayer  
9:00am PLENARY ONE  
11:00am PLENARY TWO  
1:00pm Lunch Available  
2:00pm PLENARY THREE  
4:30pm Evening Prayer  
6:15pm Social Time  
7:00pm Banquet Buffet

Sunday, October 27

7:00am Registration Reopens  
7:00am Breakfast Available  
7:30am Morning Prayer  
8:30am PLENARY FOUR  
11:00am Convention Eucharist  
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