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Iowa Connections



From Bishop Monnot

A few years ago I was on a road trip with my family. I was driving along a two-lane highway, heading toward that evening's destination. A long day of driving had gradually become a dark night, with no moon, and the only illumination was from the headlights of our minivan.

As I drove, concentrating intently on the road I could see in the headlights, I became aware of an intuitive sense in my body, something that I could actually feel. It was an awareness of my surroundings that was not directly connected my view of the road in front of me. This sensation of awareness had a physical component all the same, even detached as it was from my five senses.

This intuitive sense told me that I was driving in the dark on a remote, unlit road, with low snowbanks on either side where the plows had come through earlier. I could literally feel this in my body, with certainty.

Except that it wasn't true. I was driving across the desert in Utah. In July.

It was such a dark night that I had been focusing hard on the road in front of me. When I realized how insistently my intuition was lying to me, I tried glancing over at the sides of the road to dispel the illusion that there were snowbanks. Of course, there were no snowbanks, just the scrubby roadside, gleaming pale as it reflected the light from the headlights, an occasional tumbleweed or other vegetation visible as we passed.

As I returned my focus to the road ahead, which, in the darkness, required my full and concentrated attention, I noticed the sensation of driving between snowbanks return. It left me whenever I took a quick look over at the side of the road, and then immediately flooded back when I focused again on the road in front of me. I actually started to play around with it, trying to consciously correct my intuition, telling myself as I stared at the road ahead that there was desert, not snow, on either side of the road. As long as I kept that thought in my consciousness, the sensation of the snowbanks stayed away, only to return again as soon as I let my awareness fill with just the road ahead.

Eons of evolutionary development have formed us so that our brains filter out most of the information they receive through our five senses, bringing to our awareness only the facts that seem important for our survival and allowing the rest to remain on a subconscious level. In my case that night, survival meant staying on the road, and so my brain helpfully ignored incoming signals that were not



*Bishop Monnot preaching at Trinity Cathedral in Davenport.
Photo: M. Wagner*

directly connected to that effort. Instead, it offered up an assurance, based in my history as a driver in snowy New England, that the sides of the road as I saw them in my peripheral vision were no threat to me or my family. The only reasons I noticed the lies my brain was telling me were that I had very little other sensory input and the lies were so preposterous. I have to wonder: if I only noticed my brain's lies when they were so easy to refute by redirecting my gaze to the side of the road, how many times have I not noticed? How often has my brain lied to me about other situations, or people, and I still don't realize it?

Jesus, speaking to people who believed in him, told them, "If you continue in my word, you are truly my disciples; and you will know the truth, and the truth will make you free." (John 8:31b-32). Part of our walk together as followers of Jesus is just that: to continue in Jesus' word, seeking the truth that will set us free from sin (see John 8:33-38 for a fuller context). In order to continue in the word and to seek the truth, though, we each have to struggle with our own brain as it does its evolutionary job of protecting us from what it thinks is not necessary for our survival.

The fact is, we do not know what we do not know. Assuming that we already know the truth is an arrogance born of our brains doing their evolutionary jobs. Jesus calls us to move beyond the instincts dictated to us by evolution and to continually question our assumptions and seek the truth that he offers. Much as this sounds like an intellectual exercise, it is not.

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DIOCESAN CALENDAR

March

- 1 Reparations Task Force Meeting
- 5 Joint Chapter Meeting
- 6 Bishop Monnot's visitation with St. Luke's, Fort Madison
- 12 Board of Directors Meeting
- 13 Bishop Monnot's visitation with St. Michael's, Mount Pleasant
- 15-21 House of Bishops Meeting
- 25-27 Happening #48
- 27 Bishop Monnot's visitation with Grace Church, Cedar Rapids

April

- 1-2 Commission on Ministry
- 5 Reparations Task Force
- 10 Palm Sunday
- 11 Chrism Mass
- 16-17 Easter Vigil/Easter Sunday, Bishop Monnot at Trinity Cathedral, Davenport
- 22-24 New Beginnings
- 24 Bishop Monnot's visitation with St. John's, Shenandoah
- 29-30 Three Rivers Chapter Underground Railroad Pilgrimage

May

- 13-14 Commission on Ministry
- 15 Bishop Monnot's visitation with St. Paul's, Durant
GILEAD grant applications open
- 22 Bishop Monnot's visitation with Christ Church, Clinton

*The diocesan office will be closed April 15, and May 30.
Visit iowaepiscopal.org for all of the latest schedule information.*

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Iowa Connections: Spring 2022

The Rev. Meg Wagner, Editor
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A New Day

by Kathleen Milligan

On a sunny Saturday morning just a week before Christmas, Episcopalians from around the diocese, and indeed from around the nation and the world, saw the beginning of a new era in the Diocese of Iowa. On December 18th, the Right Reverend Elizabeth “Betsey” Lockwood Hawley Monnot became the Tenth Bishop of Iowa, in a service of worship and celebration that was composed of music, light and color. The service took place at the Lutheran Church of Hope in West Des Moines and included over a dozen Episcopal bishops led by the Most Reverend Michael Bruce Curry, Presiding Bishop. The bishops of all three Iowa Synods of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America were also present, and Bishop Amy Current of the Southeastern Synod was a co-consecrator.

The service was prefaced by music from St. Paul’s Indian Mission, an invitation to the Four Winds. The first of three processions was greeted by the people of Trinity Cush, our newest congregation, who offered a Dinka hymn accompanied by drums. Mr. Dawson Davenport, a member of the Meskwaki Nation, gave a Welcome to the Land, and the liturgy began. The theme of Baptismal Ministry was woven into lessons, sermon, music, and prayers. The preacher for the day was the Reverend Steven Godfrey, formerly of the Diocese of Iowa, but now Diocesan Minister for the Diocese of North Dakota. He and Bishop Betsey became friends



Mr. Dawson Davenport of the Meskwaki Nation welcomes attendees to the "land between two rivers." Photo: R. Mummy

a number of years ago, while attending the same church in Boston.

Following the sermon, Presiding Bishop Curry, along with the co-consecrators, conducted the Examination of the Candidate. At its conclusion, and following the singing of the Veni Creator, the bishops present, led by the Presiding Bishop, gathered around for the Prayer of Consecration and the Laying on of Hands. It was a powerful moment invoking the Spirit’s blessing on the new ministry beginning in and with the people of Iowa. Co-consecrators were Bishop Alan Scarfe, Ninth Bishop of Iowa; Bishop Lucinda Ashby, Diocese of El Camino Real; Bishop Amy Current, Southeastern Iowa

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From Bishop Monnot, *continued*

The truth of Jesus is found, not in researching facts, but in following in the footsteps of Jesus. The truth of God the Holy Trinity is found in relationship. Both following in Jesus’ footsteps and living in relationship with God and with those around us are active, ongoing, continually changing and challenging tasks. Where our brains may see a threat or offer us an unquestioned assumption, we are called to continual discovery of deeper truths, deeper relationships, deeper love of God or of neighbor.

Lent is, of course, a time of self-examination and repentance, a gift of the church in the form of a special time set aside for introspection for asking God’s help in seeing where we have missed the mark. Recognizing our own sinful ways, acknowledging the things that we have done and left undone, including assumptions that we have left unquestioned, can feel like a threat to our survival. Our brains, so well trained by evolution, rebel against it. But we are followers of Jesus, children of God who loves us. We can take this risk of real self-examination in sure and certain knowledge that repentance

leads to reconciliation, that confession leads to absolution, that recognition of what keeps us separate from God allows us to ask God to remove those barriers and to move into deeper relationship with God and with each other.

I invite you, therefore, in the name of the Church, to the observance of a holy Lent, by self-examination and repentance; by prayer, fasting, and self-denial; and by reading and meditating on God’s holy Word. (BCP, p. 266). Uncover your assumptions and the lies your brain tells you. Stay with it when it feels threatening. Seek to move beyond survival into the truth that Jesus promises. Know that, as you undertake this Lenten journey, you are deeply loved by the Love that holds us all. God’s blessing on you this Lent.

In the promised abundant life of Christ,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Betsey Monnot".

The Rt. Rev. Betsey Monnot, Bishop of Iowa

A New Day, *continued*

Synod, ELCA; Bishop Chilton Knudsen, Assisting Bishop, Diocese of Chicago; and the Most Reverend Melissa Skelton, Anglican Church of Canada and Assisting Bishop, Diocese of Olympia.

Following the Consecration, Bishop Monnot was presented with the signs and symbols of her office, including her ring, her pectoral cross, and other vestments. She was vested in a Red Festal Set consisting of stole, chasuble, cope and mitre. Bishop Monnot's husband Michael presented the ring, and her sons William, Robert and Thomas presented her with three mitres. These were variously gifts from the people of the Diocese of Iowa, the Diocese of Northern California, the two Iowa Cathedrals, and All Saints Church in Sacramento, the parish currently served by the bishop's husband. Other gifts, some of which were not presented at this service, included a goode from the Iowa chapter of the Daughters of the King, the traditional gift of a bedcovering from the Trinity Cush congregation, and a book of pictures and biographies of the deacons in the Diocese of Iowa. Bishop Scarfe then presented the diocesan crozier to the new Bishop. Bishop Curry introduced Bishop Betsey and her family to a rousing chorus

of welcome. The service concluded with the celebration of the Holy Eucharist led by Bishop Monnot.

The liturgy was accompanied throughout by glorious music, provided by choir and soloists from St. Paul's Episcopal Cathedral, along with a few visitors from other congregations in the diocese. Mr. Mark Babcock, Cathedral organist, accompanied the vocalists as well as the congregational singing.

An original artwork, entitled "Living Waters", was designed especially for this occasion, and created by the Reverend Abigail Livingood, deacon from St. Timothy's in West Des Moines, and Ms. Rebecca Kemble, a member of St. Andrew's Church in Des Moines. The inspiration for the piece came from Bishop Monnot's remarks at our Annual Convention in October. She invited us to climb out of the boat, and to dance upon the water. The work consists of layers of multihued fabric, overlapping each other in a pattern of waves. The main piece was hung behind the altar area; a smaller hanging adorned the lectern, and another piece covered the kneeling cushion. The large piece is suitable to be mounted for display and used on other occasions.



Members of Trinity Cush in Des Moines. Photo: R. Mummy



The Presentation. Photo: R. Mummy



Ms. Lexie Thiessen, litanist, chants the Litany for Ordinations. Photo: R. Mummy



The Rev. Steven Godfrey, preacher. Photo: R. Mummy

A New Day, *continued*

We are grateful for all the work of prayer, discernment and diligence that brought us to this glorious moment. To Kevin Sanders and to the Search and Nominating Committee, we are especially indebted. We know also that the Reverend Elaine Caldbeck and the Transitions Committee bore the brunt of preparations for this day, along with help from the Reverends Wendy Abrahamson and Marcus Haack, who served as liturgical leaders for the day. Ms. Traci Ruhland Petty and the Reverend Meg Wagner gave generously of their time attending to space arrangements and to communications support.

We are especially grateful to the clergy, staff, congregation, and volunteers from Lutheran Church of Hope. When we began to search for a venue that would be large enough to allow for safe space while still welcoming all who were able to come, we got down to the wire. Lutheran Church of Hope offered hospitality above and beyond in the midst of one of their busiest times. They welcomed us in every way possible, working us in around their own Christmas Cantata. They catered a substantial reception and a breakfast for our visiting bishops. And it was their staff and volunteers who worked to produce the live stream of the service. We are so grateful for the ecumenical support from one of our partners in ministry. Of course, most of all, we wish to thank all of you who supported this event by your prayers, by your monetary gifts for the bishop's vestments, and for your presence on the day.

The Rev. Cn. Kathleen Milligan, on behalf of the Standing Committee



Bishop Scarfe passes the diocesan crozier to his successor, Bishop Monnot. Photo: R. Mummey



The Right Reverend Betsey Monnot. Photo: R. Mummey



Bishop Monnot celebrates Eucharist. Photo: R. Mummey



The diocese and those watching online welcome Bishop Monnot and her family. Photo: R. Mummey

Episcopalians in Action on Climate Change

by Rob Hogg

In November, I had the opportunity to attend the world climate negotiations in Glasgow virtually as a member of the 24-person Episcopal delegation representing Presiding Bishop Michael Curry. It was a tremendous honor, and an eye-opening learning experience.

By attending virtually, we did not have any “chance” meetings with world leaders, but we were able to watch the full range of official public proceedings in the “Blue Zone,” official programs in the “Green Zone,” as well as many public events sponsored by governments, faith groups, farm groups, science organizations, nonprofits, businesses, and activists around the 26th “Conference of the Parties” to the U.N. Framework Convention on Climate Change (COP26).

Virtual participation allowed us to save money, reduce our carbon footprint, and include a much bigger and more diverse delegation. We were able to host an official side event, “Making Peace with Nature: Heeding the Call of Indigenous Peoples.” We also held a special “liturgy for planetary crisis” with Bishop Curry on November 6.

There were tangible results from COP26, including a new commitment from the United States government to cut climate pollution by 50-52% from 2005 levels by 2030 along with multi-national agreements to end deforestation, cut methane pollution, and advance “clean steel” technology.

There was also growing recognition that solving climate change will require broad participation by civil society – a “whole of society” approach. The faith community will be critical to that effort.

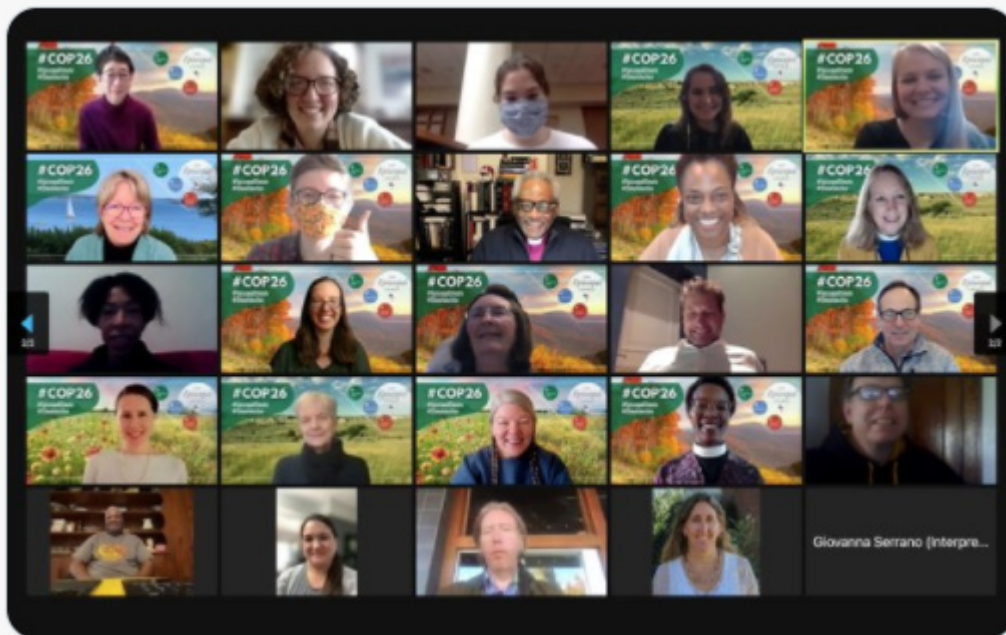
The Archbishop of Canterbury, Justin Welby, joined with Pope Francis and Ecumenical Patriarch Bartholomew to issue a joint statement before COP26 in which they decried “biodiversity loss, environmental degradation, and climate change” and challenged “everyone, whatever their belief or worldview, to endeavour to listen to the cry of the earth and of people who are poor, examining their behaviour and pledging meaningful sacrifices for the sake of the earth which God has given us.”

On October 20, the Young Christian Climate Network, whose members were walking across the U.K. on the road to Glasgow, met with Archbishop Welby at Lambeth Palace. He told the young people he has personally seen climate change in the rising seas that are eroding Pacific Islands, in violent conflict in Africa triggered by drought, and in the world’s growing refugee crisis that now has more refugees than at the end of World War II.

There were many interfaith efforts, too, showing remarkable unity. On October 31, Interfaith Glasgow sponsored a COP26 Vigil with speakers from nine different faiths (Christian, Buddhist, Jewish, Brahma Kumaris, Sikh, Bahai, Hindu, the Pagan Federation of Scotland, and Muslim) who all shared their faith’s vision for safeguarding vulnerable people and God’s Creation from the growing damage of climate change. As the Muslim speaker said, we all believe in “responsible stewardship...for our planet, for our children, and for our children’s children.”

A unique opportunity at COP26 was to hear voices from the Global South, such as a GreenFaith program on November 9 featuring women faith leaders from Venezuela, Kenya, and Indonesia.

One of the voices from the Global South was a Laudato Si Movement representative from the Philippines, Marinel Ubaldo, who identified herself at a Green Zone event as a “Typhoon Haiyan survivor.” That super typhoon killed over 6,000 people in November 2013 when she was 16 years old. She is now 24 years old, and she spoke about the psychological impact of repeat disasters, especially where people lack resources to rebuild safer and more secure.



Episcopal Delegation to the U.N. Framework Convention on Climate Change (COP26)

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Episcopalians in Action on Climate Change, *continued*

Tragically, the third most costly typhoon in history hit the Philippines one month after she spoke at COP26, on December 16, 2021, killing over 400 people and leaving another million people homeless. Ubaldo tweeted that she was “trying to respond to Super Typhoon Odette but every time I see posts about the typhoon’s destruction my heart pounds so fast and I quickly skip images.”

I reminded my fellow delegates and shared with the public that we have suffered from climate-related disasters in Iowa, too, like record-breaking floods and the derecho in 2020. But people around the world are suffering even more damage and have even fewer resources to rebuild.

Our delegation is working to act on what we learned. Here are five tips for faith communities to act on climate.

First, study climate and faith together. Episcopal delegates from our region are planning a book study by zoom on “Saving Us” by Texas Tech professor Katharine Hayhoe. Let me know if you would like to join us.

Second, do disaster relief together, both fundraising and direct service. We have Episcopal Relief and Development,

and there are many additional faith-based relief organizations. (I remember Baptist and Jewish disaster relief groups working side-by-side in Colfax, Iowa, after the flood of 2010.)

Third, assess your congregation’s buildings and grounds together, and then take action to demonstrate leadership and let the public know about it. There are dozens of possibilities, such as solar power, energy efficiency, Good News Gardens, and food waste composting. Let me know if you would like other suggestions.

Fourth, assess your investments. One program I saw in the Green Zone at COP26 emphasized that all investment has a social impact, so consider what impact your investments have.

Finally, do advocacy together. Connect with groups like Iowa Interfaith Power & Light and our church-wide Creation Care office. Government action is not sufficient by itself to solve climate change, but it is necessary to safeguard our neighbors here at home and around the world.

State Senator Rob Hogg is a member of Christ Episcopal Church in Cedar Rapids. Contact him at senatorrobhogg@gmail.com.

The Work of Truth, Repair, and Healing

by Aileen Chang-Matus and Nora Boerner

In October 2020, delegates to the Diocese of Iowa’s Annual Convention overwhelmingly passed Resolution 168A, “A Season of Truth and Healing,” which states, “that in order to continue the work of Racial Justice, Healing and Reconciliation, the Episcopal Diocese of Iowa commit to a ‘Season of Truth and Healing’ ... during which we will take tangible and enduring actions towards healing the sins of slavery, indigenous genocide and displacement, and racism through earnest and sacrificial actions.” Learn more about the resolution here: iowaepiscopal.org/s/168-RESOLUTIONS-with-actions.pdf.

A Reparations Task Force is charged by this resolution to work in close collaboration with the bishop and the Beloved Community Initiative Advisory Board to explore “the need for emotional, spiritual and psychological reparations for generations of injustice visited upon Black and Indigenous communities” and examine how the diocese could designate “specific funds for financial reparations.” As part of the ongoing work of this resolution, in addition to the work of the Task Force, all our congregations are invited to study and engage with their own local histories in relation to race. You can view the information they share, as well as other racial history in Iowa, in an interactive digital map in progress at: becomingbelovedcommunity.org/raceiniowa.

As we move forward with our commitment to reparations and antiracism, it helps to recall its purpose and its great importance.

Reparations are not some sort of personal, individual guilty plea for crimes knowingly and actively committed through our own direct action. We had no control over historical events, but we do make choices of great importance now about our responses to the structures of racism that have been built up over the centuries.

The slave trade, and the cotton and sugar trades totally dependent on it, generated a trans-Atlantic economy and contributed greatly to the current world-wide economy in which we now function. (Guns, rum, tobacco, and a few other commodities were involved too, but they didn’t improve that history much.) In establishing the United States, white conqueror-settlers destroyed or drove out existing nations through dishonest dealing, disrupting food sources, the (sometimes intentional) spread of disease, and successful assaults on their languages, faith traditions, and cultural ways. In the 20th and 21st centuries, Jim Crow, redlining, and lack of access to education, professional networks, and other resources have continued to create advantage for white people as a group at a crippling cost to African Americans and Native Americans. As a result, economic gains and many other gains were created for white Americans in every class and for many white-adjacent groups.

Yes, there are nuances. The definition of white has shifted over time. Some people of color who were not Indigenous or Black never had the full advantage and security of being white, but they still reaped at least some benefits in that devastatingly

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The Work of Truth, Repair, and Healing *continued*

unequal system. Many white households have suffered poverty or unjust treatment but have had opportunities to recover over time. Families—and churches—that did not have power simply to “delete” racism from society still derived benefits from it because the whole economy was heavily dependent on the displacement and impoverishment of Black and Indigenous people and their unfree, extremely cheap labor, with no viable options for many generations. Always the churches relied on contributors who earned their income on that unequal, racist playing field.

Only some of our ancestors may have traded slaves or cotton. Some of our ancestors may have been abolitionists or other fighters for justice. Some may have been oppressed as indentured servants or as workers in mines or in the garment industry or building the transcontinental railroad. They may have struggled as single mothers in a male-dominated world. Why do we, their descendants, make reparations? It is because in this age we are all partaking at some level in the nation’s resources that were built up across history largely at the expense of Native Americans and African Americans, while those groups are largely denied access to those very resources.

Reparation is not buying our way out of guilt nor paying a punitive fine. Reparation is action to help restore those who have been harmed to the wholeness and favorable condition that they should be enjoying without that injustice. It is necessary because grievous harm to innocent people has been done. Thus the metaphorical pot is tainted; it holds spoils of an unjust system that we have described above. All those who partake, even modestly, of those spoils of racism need to recognize what is not really ours, loosen our grasp, and give it back.

Indigenous people and Black people suffered deep personal losses as well as financial ones. Families have been separated

not only by the Native American boarding schools and the auction blocks of the past but through gross inequities in the current criminal justice and child welfare systems*. Their economic exploitation has been greatly facilitated by their dehumanization in news media, high art, and popular culture. School and neighborhood segregation—official and legally imposed, or de facto—produce humiliation and severely constrain opportunities for learning and intellectual growth.

Of course, reparations cannot adequately repay the full economic losses incurred, much less heal those deep personal and systemic injuries. But by fully examining our church histories and making reparations at the best level we can achieve, the Episcopal Diocese of Iowa can make a partial payment, and partial is far better than none. Further, reparations have spiritual significance because they honor human dignity. When people are ignored or told they should “just get over it” after a major injustice, this further tramples their dignity. A serious effort at reparations expresses the opposite: that we see the seriousness of the harms inflicted. It expresses our deep concern through concrete action, and it says, “You matter. You have dignity.” So reparation work is not only a necessary part of Resolution 168A. It is something we must do according to our fifth baptismal vow: “to strive for peace and justice among all people, and respect the dignity of every human being.”

*Family separation due to inequities in the child welfare system: pbs.org/wgbb/pages/frontline/shows/fostercare/caseworker/roberts.html

Ms. Aileen Chang-Matus and the Rev. Nora Boerner serve on the Beloved Community Diocesan Advisory Board.

Examples of reparations being made across The Episcopal Church

- Church-based "Greenlining Campaign" to counter the effects of redlining in Chicago.
- Payment of a yearly "land tax" to the Indigenous tribes who were removed from the land the church occupies.
- Address food insecurity and "food deserts" in areas hardest hit by urban renewal.
- Invest in funds that prioritize closing the racial wealth gap, have demonstrated racial equity hiring and compensation policies, and are owned and operated by people of color.
- The Diocese of Maryland has set aside 1 million dollars in a reparations fund that will be paid out in grants to any organization within the diocese that has a proven history of doing the

work of restoring African American and Black communities, as well as startups whose mission and goals are the same.

- Virginia Theological Seminary has begun paying identified descendants of Black people who labored on-campus during slavery, Reconstruction, and segregation under Jim Crow laws.
- Develop church-community partnerships to address health inequities, criminal justice reform, child welfare system reform, education equity, etc.
- Offer free community meeting space at no cost to Indigenous, Black and AAPI liberation-orientated organizations or community groups with whom you are in relationship.

Ski Trip 2022

by Amy Mellies

Ski Trip is usually the first event of the new year for youth ministry. It is a time for youth around the diocese to get together for a fun weekend outdoors with their community. Some of the participants are new and others have been around diocesan events for years. Either way, you always leave the weekend with more friends than you came with.

As with most things in the pandemic, ski trip looked a little different this year. Instead of a weekend event where we stay at Camp Sacajawea overnight, eat amazing food, watch movies and play games, we had a one day event at Seven Oaks Recreation Center outside of Boone. 25 youth participated from 10am to dusk! They slid down a hill in inflatable tubes, skied and snowboarded in some amazing weather. The temperature was in the 40's and the sun was shining! We couldn't have asked for a better day or better participants! There was a lot of fun, laughter, and a few spills on the slopes, but our community was together for a few hours and in the end that was all that mattered.

Ms. Amy Mellies, serves as the Diocesan Missioner for Children & Youth



Youth from St. Timothy's after one of their many runs on the tubing hill.



Two besties enjoying the beautiful weather at Seven Oaks.



Some youth from St. John's, Ames stopping only so Mom could take a photo.



Showing off some of their stellar moves at the bottom of the slopes! (Youth from St. John's, Ames and St. John's, Mason City).

Paying Attention to Mental Health

by Judith Crosssett

Psychiatry, which is what I've practiced for many years, deals with mental illness, because "mental illness" is easier to define than "mental health." Many of the people I've tried to help were clearly suffering serious mental illness, it didn't take a physician or other mental health professional to figure that out. I've been asked to contribute something about mental health from time to time, so I'll start with how I think of mental health and some ways I distinguish mental health from not-so-healthy.

First, an illness or disease is something that interferes with the function of the organism. If you have liver disease, your liver doesn't do its job; lung disease, you can't breathe. With a brain disease, or mental illness, you can't do the things that you'd normally do, or you can do them, only with exhausting effort. At worst, you can't face getting out of bed; you can't talk. More likely, you can't enjoy things; you muster more effort to do ordinary things; you are irritable when the "usual you" would brush things off; you aren't getting as much done at work, or your schoolwork is less well done than usual. You aren't bleeding, you can't point to a physical pain, you're not feverish nor chilled. You're just not right. And you may be able to get through most of what you usually do despite walking around with the extra weight of mental un-health.

Those examples may work for youth and adults. What about younger children? They may not be able to tell you "I'm scared," "I'm worried," "I'm sad," though there are so many things in the world (especially since COVID disrupted our

lives so much) that are scary, worrying, or sad. We need to look at how the child is interacting with others and with the world; a change to less interaction, less social engagement, less interest in new things, or repeated physical pain may be a clue to mental un-health.

Of course, there are bumps in all our roads; days our energy lags, our brains seem stuck in first gear, or something seems frightening and freezes us. If it resolves and doesn't settle in on a long-term lease, it is normal. Overall, over the course of the week, over the month, you're not perfect, but you're functioning or doing as well as ever; you're doing fine. That's mental health.

We need to know that person pretty well, we need to pay more attention to the person than to ourselves or our reactions to them. And we need to be willing to confront them, gently, empathetically, non-judgmentally, "Are you ok? It seems to me that you aren't doing X so much lately."

That's what Jesus showed us: attention to the people you're with, ask some questions, and really listen to their answers. It starts with your presence with the other person, and if you can give that presence, not only can you help someone else with their mental health, most likely you can improve your mental health too.

The Rev. Judith Crosssett serves as a deacon at Trinity Church in Iowa City and is a Clinical Professor Emeritus of Psychiatry at the University of Iowa Hospitals and Clinics.

National Suicide Prevention Hotline
1-800-273 TALK (8255)

Crisis Text Line
text 741741 to connect to a trained volunteer

RAINN - Sexual Abuse Hotline
1-800-656-HOPE (4673)

Trevor Project - LGBTQ+ Youth
1-866-488-7386, text TREVOR to 202-304-1200

Your Life Iowa
1-855-581-8111 Or Text 1-855-895-8398

Building Beloved Community: An Invitation into Relationship with Young Adults

by Gretchen Roeck

Over the last eighteen months, in the middle of the pandemic, 30 young adults, ages 18-24, gathered over 200 of their peers. In small groups, in person and online, they came together to talk about life and love and calling and discernment, God and faith, identity and belonging.

Young people today face a loneliness crisis, 75% of American adults experience moderate to severe loneliness – and this was before the pandemic. As followers of Jesus, we know that God’s dream for us is Beloved Community—not social isolation. All human beings deserve to flourish in a community where their individual giftedness can bless others.

The Small Groups Internship invites young people from across the 8 dioceses of Province VI—IA, MN, ND, SD, NE, WY, MT and CO—to create small group communities in their local contexts that combat the loneliness epidemic. We do this by empowering them to lead through listening, guide through questions, and build spaces where people can be their full, authentic selves. In short, we are empowering them to build the Kingdom of God and to be Jesus’ hands and feet in the world. We are empowering them to be the church without walls.

We need you to continue this work. We need you to invite the young adults in your life—those inside and especially

those outside the church—to join this movement. Young people can be hard to find in our churches. But it’s not that they don’t need the church, they just need the right invitation. Three young adults from Iowa have already participated, more are waiting to be asked. Together with empowerment, this internship is also about accompaniment. God calls us to walk alongside our young people—not to teach them, but to be with them—to listen and reflect and ask good questions. Our young people need us to show up for them, even if that’s just asking how they’re doing. So please, check in with the young people in your life, show them that they matter, and offer them the opportunity to do that for others. Life guided by faith is life lived in community. God’s love is found and experienced in relationships. As Kate Saunders, a young adult intern from Iowa reflects, “When everyone recognizes the beauty and importance of the beloved community you are creating, [we] will all reap the benefits!”

The Province VI Small Group Internship is led by the Rev. Gretchen Roeck and Mr. Steve Mullaney out of the Episcopal Church in Minnesota. For more information please contact Traci Rubland Petty at tpetty@iowaepiscopal.org or Amy Mellies at amellies@iowaepiscopal.org.

A Reflection on the Small Groups Internship

by Kate Saunders

Reflecting on my experience with the Province VI Small Group Internship, I am grateful for new perspective on gathering and creating community among young adults. As a diocese, and particularly within diocesan youth ministry, Iowa does “Church without walls” well. Since leaving for college, I have missed something about how we do ministry. God’s love moves when we create space to listen to and love others, something I first learned through Happening retreats. Creating and facilitating small group meetings with the guidance and support of Gretchen and my cohort of interns helped me to find and reimagine the Happening “Caritas” I so dearly missed.

Upon completing the internship in early January, my cohort was charged with continuing this work, however we chose to apply that call. For me, this experience began the process of discernment into the Episcopal Service Corps. I have recently accepted a position in the Corps where I will further discern, in intentional community, what God may be calling me to next. I would highly recommend this experience for other young adults in the Diocese looking to reconnect with the people around them, with the Church, with God, or those craving something they can’t quite name. I gathered more than I could have imagined from my internship experience.

Ms. Kate Saunders is a Senior Religious Studies major at DePauw University originally from Des Moines where she attended St. Timothy’s, West Des Moines.



Safe Church: How We Can Provide a Safe Community for All

by Amy Mellies

If you get the monthly diocesan e-newsletter, you have seen for the last several months a post about Safe Church, Safe Communities training. In 2018 a new Safe Church model policy came out of General Convention. A small group was tasked with taking that policy and making it work for the Diocese of Iowa. We spent over six months working on the policy in 2020 and the policy was adopted by the Diocesan Board of Directors in 2021. In the fall we released the policy to congregations and asked them to adopt or adapt the policy to fit their needs. This takes time.

The policy has been put in place to keep all of our members safe, not just children. We are a community and we need to take care of our community. We know that not all pieces of the policy will fit the needs of every congregation. That is why we are asking vestries to read through the policy and adapt the policy to fit your congregation. There is a lot of information in the policy, some is familiar and some is not. There is a large portion of our previous policy that was carried forward in this update because we felt that it covered topics that the new policy did not. We also kept many of the appendices that we know were well used, for example: Background Check information, Sample Application, Interview Questions.

Also in the fall of 2021 The Episcopal Church Safe Church Task Force released new training courses to coincide with the new diocesan policies. At the time we were told that all of the courses would be released by the end of 2021 and that the “old” courses would be taken off of the website. Fast forward to February 2022 and you can see that unfortunately, that is



not the case. Due to some unforeseen issues and the rise of COVID numbers, the courses did not get finished in time to release them in 2021. We have been informed that the remaining courses will be available by the end of February.

What does all of this mean for you? If you have a role within your congregation, you will need to take different parts of the new training. This means Altar Guild, Lectors, Vestry Members, Priests, Eucharistic Visitors, Key Holders, Small Group Leaders and staff. Why? To keep our community safe, and that includes everyone. The more information we know, and the more of us who share in that, the easier it is to take care of one another. Knowing the diocesan policy and engaging the trainings in Safe Church, Safe Communities are ways that we can help see that our neighbors are safe and taken care of.

The training courses range between 20-30 minutes each and you can take them online at your own pace. We may offer in-person training in the future, but there has been no communication yet from the Task Force as to when that may take place.

We know that this can seem like one more thing you have to do. But if we take a step back, take off our “have to” goggles and look at it as one more way we can take care of our neighbor, we can see this training is meant to show one another that we care and love each and every person who walks through our doors.

Ms. Amy Mellies serves as the Diocesan Missioner for Children & Youth and Safe Church, Safe Communities Coordinator

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- Rev. Holly Scherff
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For more information, visit:

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Questions? Contact Traci Ruhland Petty: tpetty@iowaepiscopal.org



2021 Stewardship Share Report

City	Church	Stewardship	2021	Received	(Over)
		Share	Pledge	to Date	Under
Algona	St. Thomas'	3,552	3,552	3,552	0
Ames	St. John's	52,629	52,629	52,629	0
Anamosa	St. Mark's	435	1,500	1,500	0
Ankeny	St. Anne's	10,100	5,250	6,250	(1,000)
Bettendorf	St. Peter's	15,775	15,775	15,775	0
Boone	Grace	1,430	1,430	1,437	(7)
Burlington	Christ	22,950	18,900	18,900	0
Carroll	Trinity	2,911	2,911	2,911	0
Cedar Falls	St. Luke's	37,590	37,590	37,590	0
Cedar Rapids	Christ	49,654	49,654	49,654	0
Cedar Rapids	Grace	8,861	8,861	8,143	718
Chariton	St. Andrew's	3,642	3,700	3,700	0
Charles City	Grace	1,305	1,305	1,305	0
Clinton	Christ	11,959	11,959	11,959	0
Coralville	New Song	17,600	17,600	17,600	0
Council Bluffs	St. Paul's	5,129	5,129	4,702	427
Davenport	St. Alban's	8,686	6,500	6,500	0
Davenport	Trinity	108,932	92,592	92,592	0
Decorah	Grace	4,199	4,199	4,199	0
Denison	Trinity	2,251	2,251	2,063	188
Des Moines	St. Andrew's	28,398	28,398	28,398	0
Des Moines	St. Luke's	28,730	13,918	13,918	0
Des Moines	St. Mark's	4,322	1,000	1,000	0
Des Moines	St. Paul's	76,748	60,000	59,865	135
Dubuque	St. John's	16,812	9,000	9,000	0
Durant	St. Paul's	3,049	3,049	3,049	0
Emmetsburg	Trinity	2,040	2,040	2,040	0
Fort Dodge	St. Mark's	37,511	37,511	37,511	0
Fort Madison	St. Luke's	2,672	2,100	2,100	0
Glenwood	St. John's	944	944	944	0
Grinnell	St. Paul's	10,608	8,000	8,667	(667)
Harlan	St. Paul's	1,287	1,287	1,287	0
Independence	St. James'	1,961	1,961	1,961	0
Indianola	All Saints	1,414	1,414	1,416	(2)
Iowa City	Trinity	79,435	79,435	79,435	0
Iowa Falls	St. Matthew's	2,264	2,264	1,887	377
Keokuk	St. John's	10,458	7,200	6,000	1,200
LeMars	St. George's	40	40	109	(69)
Maquoketa	St. Mark's	2,325	2,325	2,327	(2)
Marshalltown	St. Paul's	11,338	11,338	11,338	0
Mason City	St. John's	17,838	15,000	17,838	(2,838)
Mount Pleasant	St. Michael's	4,302	4,302	3,966	337
Muscatine	Trinity	21,398	21,398	21,398	0
Newton	St. Stephen's	12,035	8,000	8,000	0
Orange City	Savior	1,840	950	950	0
Oskaloosa	St. James'	7,519	7,519	7,519	0
Ottumwa	Trinity	4,574	4,574	4,574	0
Perry	St. Martin's	7,587	7,587	7,587	0
Shenandoah	St. John's	4,266	2,647	4,266	(1,619)
Sioux City	Calvary	1,693	1,740	1,740	0
Sioux City	St. Paul's	1,355	1,355	1,355	0
Sioux City	St. Thomas'	15,522	8,750	9,508	(758)
Spirit Lake	St. Alban's	8,764	8,764	8,764	0
Storm Lake	All Saints'	3,410	3,410	3,410	0
Waterloo	Trinity	15,786	10,750	10,750	0
Webster City	Good Shepherd	4,466	4,466	4,466	0
West Des Moines	St. Timothy's	62,099	50,000	50,000	0
TOTAL		886,400	777,723	781,304	(3,580)

Episcopal JOURNAL

QUARTERLY EDITION SPRING 2022

‘Ashes to Go’ brings Christ to the street corner

By Teresa K.M. Danieley



WHEN I SERVED as rector of St. John’s Episcopal Church in St. Louis (2004-2016), I belonged to an ecumenical Bible study made up of clergy in the Tower

Grove area of the city. In our group, there were clergy from the Presbyterian Church USA, Disciples of Christ, United Church of Christ, American Baptist, and Mennonite traditions.

St. Louis is a heavily Roman Catholic city. Whenever I officiate at a wedding, for example, no matter how many invitations I make during a service, Roman Catholics will not take communion from me.

One Tuesday in the winter of 2006 or 2007, those of us in the clergy Bible study were wondering aloud why it was that Roman Catholics would not take communion from any of us, but they would take ashes on Ash Wednesday from those of us who offer Ash Wednesday services.

Someone joked that we should offer “drive thru” ashes or something. The Rev. Jonathon “Jay” Edwards, a United Church of Christ minister, organized the first Ashes to Go. (Since he moved to California, the ecumenical clergy group has carried it on.)

We realized that offering a brief Ash Wednesday liturgy on the corner of the business district in our progressive



Photo/courtesy of the Rev. Teresa K.M. Danieleley

The Rev. Teresa K.M. Danieleley and the Rev. Andrew Benko stand behind one of the early signs marking outdoor Ash Wednesday ceremonies.

neighborhood during the lunch hour might actually be a good opportunity for evangelism and pastoral care, especially since all of the congregations involved are open and affirming to LGBT people.

We ordered two weighted A-frame signs with “Ashes to Go” printed in purple script on both sides. We talked to Maureen “Mo” Costello, the owner of MoKaBe’s Coffeehouse, which is located

at a major intersection in the Grand South Grand Business District, who agreed to put out a tent and free coffee to offer those who participated in Ashes to Go.

The Rev. Andrew Benko, then curate at St. John’s, crafted a shortened Episcopal-based liturgy for Ash Wednesday to use in our brochure/bulletin, and we included contact information about all the participating churches.

The first year — 2007, I believe — we shared the Ash Wednesday liturgy (or at the least the imposition of Ashes) with at least 100 passers-by, including people on bicycles, on foot, and even on public transportation!

Although the number of passers-by on South Grand depended on the weather on any given Ash Wednesday, every year, I saw the driver of at least one Metro bus pull over so that we might impose ashes on passengers on the bus!

Every year that I participated, I heard moving conversations with people; I even heard some confessions. Most years, more people attended Ashes to Go than attended the two Ash Wednesday services offered at St. John’s.

On the street corner, we encountered people who had been hurt by previous experiences with organized religion and who, through Ashes to Go, took a tentative step back towards participating in church.

What started as somewhat of a joke among a few of us clergy has become a **continued on page B**



NEWS
Convention committees to meet online



FEATURE
Art project highlights injustices



ARTS
‘Encanto’ shows how to discern spiritual gifts

Let Shrove Tuesday suppers revive in-person fellowship

By Solange De Santis



IN THE THIRD year of the pandemic, with the omicron variant fading, Episcopal churches are gauging the level of Shrove Tuesday/

Mardi Gras pancake suppers and celebrations that feel safe to their congregations.

However, this is not 2020, nor even 2021. Many states are lifting mask mandates, vaccinations are more widely spread and hospitals are less stressed.

While each church must judge the level of COVID safety in its own community, it looks hopeful that congregations can hold a pre-Ash Wednesday event with some kind of Fat Tuesday accessory — banners in purple, green and gold; a king cake; pancakes and

sausages.

Fellowship and fun events, such as Shrove Tuesday suppers, have taken a beating during COVID. In the worst of the pandemic during 2020, post-worship coffee hour went online along with Zoom church.

While the homemade coffee may have been fresher, it certainly wasn't the same. It's hard to chat while inhabiting little squares on a screen, not to mention the problem of having a one-on-one conversation with a friend when there are a dozen people attending.

In-person coffee hour should be making a comeback. It's been said that a church that skips coffee hour might as well cancel the Eucharist — it's that important.

Week in and week out, this lay-led ministry strengthens the community's bonds. Generations gather in the church hall, from the kids running around and told to behave, to the elders

lightly wearing decades of history on their shoulders.

There is a profound type of ministry in these sorts of conversations: "How is your mom doing?" "Is your boy enjoying college?" "I know, renovations are so stressful. Sure you can store things in my basement." "It's tough being a teacher these days. Thanks so much for what you do. How are you holding up?"

One year at coffee hour, a friend and I agreed upon a Lenten practice that addressed some of the day-to-day anxieties we thought were overwhelming. We both felt better as we headed for our homes.

While worship rightly occupies the center of church life, the pastoral importance of fellowship shouldn't be on the margins. ■

Solange De Santis is the editor of the Episcopal Journal.

ASHES continued from page A

meaningful, ecumenical, neighborhood event every Ash Wednesday.

Every year since 2007, an ecumenical group of clergy from the Tower Grove area has offered Ashes to Go on the corner of Grand and Arsenal. Every year, MoKaBe's graciously sets up a tent and free coffee. On years when it is cold outside, MoKaBe's sets up their fire pit, too. The tradition continues to this day.

The original clergy in the ecumenical Bible study are heartened to know that Ashes to Go has spread to the Diocese of Chicago, downtown St. Louis, California, New York City, and other places.

I am personally grateful to my friend, the Rev. Emily Mellott, for spreading the word about "Ashes to Go." (www.ashestogo.org) This ministry can be a powerful way for people to encounter Christ where they are, in the midst of their lives. ■

The Rev. Teresa K. M. Danielely, DMin, an Episcopal priest, serves as Champions Organizer with Missouri Jobs with Justice, and as priest associate at St. Mark's, St. Louis.



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For the first time, public may attend online legislative committee hearings

By David Paulsen
Episcopal News Service

The pandemic prompted dramatic changes in how the Episcopal Church will conduct its 80th General Convention — starting with its schedule.

After a one-year delay, bishops and deputies will meet in person July 7-14 in Baltimore, but there's no need to wait until July to offer input on resolutions. Committees are holding some of their hearings online for the first time, beginning Feb. 17.

Some committees already have met on Zoom to organize and to begin reviewing any resolutions already submitted.

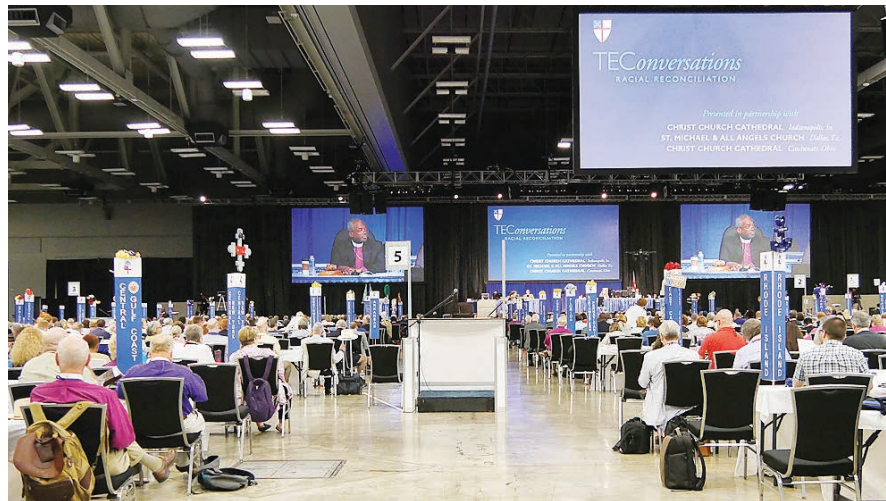
Episcopalians and other interested members of the public can sign up to observe those online meetings, and registration is now open to testify at online hearings, through a process set up by the General Convention Office.

"I believe the good work we are seeing now, and the extra hours our deputies and bishops are spending before we gather in Baltimore, will greatly enhance our ability to discuss issues important to the church's mission and ministry," the Rev. Michael Barlowe, the General Convention secretary, told ENS by email.

Holding hearings months in advance of General Convention is possible this year because the pandemic's forced postponement of 80th General Convention from 2021 to 2022 meant reports and proposed resolutions were ready for review much earlier in the process than normal.

"It is also an example of our church's ability to adapt to the needs of the Gospel — something the Episcopal Church has been doing since 1785," Barlowe said.

More than 120 bishops and 483 deputies have been assigned to legislative committees for the 80th General Convention. Committees officially began meeting last Nov. 1, and the designated period for online hearings will be Feb. 17 to May 21. The first day of hearings will take up resolutions in three committees: Agencies & Boards, Racial Justice & Reconciliation and Christian Formation & Discipleship.



Photo/Mary Frances Schjonberg/Episcopal News Service

At the 79th General Convention, held in July 2018, Presiding Bishop Michael Curry opens a conversation on racial reconciliation.

Each proposed resolution is assigned to parallel committees made up of members of the House of Deputies and House of Bishops and tasked with one of two dozen focus areas.

The deputies' and bishops' committees typically meet as one committee to review their assigned resolutions. If the committee recommends a resolution, it advances for consideration separately by the full House of Deputies and House of Bishops, both of which must approve for a resolution to be ratified.

"In general, it's a really good thing that we are trying this experiment to get things started early," Louisa McKellaston, a deputy from the Diocese of Chicago, told ENS by phone. She chairs the House of Deputies Governance & Structure Committee, which held its first meeting on Zoom on Jan. 5 with its corresponding bishop committee. "We've been in this pandemic for almost two years. Folks are pretty much familiar with how things work electronically."

The Agencies & Boards committee met Jan. 18 for introductions and to review the one resolution submitted so far for their consideration: D003, which advocates creation of a fund to help under-resourced churches pay their clergy pension contributions.

"There was a lot of energy generated

around that at this meeting," Jane Cislucyis of the Diocese of Northern Michigan told ENS by email. She chairs the deputies' committee on Agencies & Boards, which will receive public testimony Feb. 17. "We look forward to welcoming deputies, bishops and others who wish to speak to this resolution."

The new legislative committee process was outlined by House of Deputies Parliamentarian Bryan Krislock in a November article on the House of Deputies website. "The goal of this process is to balance the need for public input with the need to frontload the legislative calendar," Krislock wrote.

While interim bodies propose many of the resolutions, dioceses, bishops, deputies and other individuals also can propose resolutions, up to three each. They are encouraged to submit resolutions by Feb. 28 for consideration during the pre-convention period of legislative activity.

Testimony during legislative hearings is not limited to bishops, deputies or even Episcopalians, but rather is open to the public. All that is required is advance registration; a computer, tablet or a smart phone; and an internet connection. Though no prior knowledge of is required, those wishing to testify may benefit from learning the General Convention basics.

continued on page D

CONVENTION continued from page C

What is General Convention?

General Convention is both the church’s primary governing body and its largest churchwide gathering. It typically meets in a different city every three years and is a hub for legislative activity, networking and fellowship. As a bicameral governing body, it splits its authority between the House of Bishops and House of Deputies.

Among its responsibilities is approval of a churchwide budget, as well as hundreds of additional resolutions covering everything from liturgical revisions to the church’s positions on public policy issues, from food insecurity to paid family leave to comprehensive immigration reform. General Convention typically considers between 500 and 600 resolutions.

At the 80th General Convention, the House of Deputies also will elect a new president and vice president, roles that are limited to three consecutive terms. The Rev. Gay Clark Jennings is finishing her third term as president, and this is

the final term for outgoing Vice President Byron Rushing. Each is serving one additional year because the in-person gathering in Baltimore was postponed.

Because organizers anticipate online committee hearings will reduce the number of in-person hearings needed, church leaders were able to shorten the 80th General Convention from 10 to eight days, July 7-14, helping the church achieve its goal of reducing the triennial gathering’s duration.

Advance registration

No one will be allowed to join a committee meeting or hearing without filling out an online registration form, specifying the committee name, date and time. Registration must be received at least two business days before the meeting.

McKellaston, the Chicago deputy, said that although she regrets that her committee’s members won’t be able to get to know each other in person until July, she welcomed the online meetings as an unprecedented opportunity for

more people to observe and get involved in the legislative process.

“I’m enjoying being able to meet during times that hopefully more folks are available,” she said. “We hope to hear from a broader audience.”

The Governance & Structure committee will meet on Feb. 9 to create subcommittees to review their nine proposed resolutions. McKellaston said they also plan to determine then which resolutions will go to the hearing scheduled on Feb. 23.

One of the resolutions, A097, proposes conducting a thorough evaluation of this new online legislative process, “with the intent of creating a model for evaluation of future adaptive change experiments, recognizing that the Episcopal Church must continue to change and evolve in order to respond to God’s mission in all of its contexts.”

“Basically, [we are] looking at this as a wonderful experiment,” McKellaston said, “what works and what doesn’t and how to move forward.” ■



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Diocese of Alabama elevates diverse perspectives on racial injustice

By David Paulsen
Episcopal News Service

The Diocese of Alabama passed a resolution in February at its diocesan convention that seeks to bring a greater spirit of truth-telling to its racial reconciliation work by raising up “the stories, voices and experience of those who have been historically silenced.”

The diocese’s action follows a nationwide debate over how the racism and oppression present throughout American history should be taught in taxpayer-funded primary and secondary schools.

Alabama is among the states where state and local officials have passed measures prohibiting or restricting the teaching of concepts like critical race theory, an academic approach to examining the traces of racism still manifested in American systems and institutions. Critics of such prohibitions point out that critical race theory typically is discussed in college classes, not in K-12 schools.

The Diocese of Alabama resolution doesn’t mention critical race theory,



Photo/Douglas Sparks

A statue depicting enslaved Africans is on display at the National Memorial for Peace and Justice in Montgomery, Ala.

though its preface laments that “some in positions of power and influence,” acting in fear of the truth about racism, want to “prevent our schools from teaching this history now because it might make our children feel bad or ashamed.”

The resolution empowers the diocese’s Commission on Truth, Justice and Racial Reconciliation to serve as a resource for congregations, schools, Christian forma-



Photo/David Paulsen, ENS

Executive Council members walk slowly through the National Memorial for Peace and Justice in Montgomery, Ala., in October 2019.

tion groups and other Episcopal organizations as they invite racially diverse guests to share their stories and perspectives.

“The history that we have been taught is the history that has been brought down to us from the dominant culture, and many times it has very minimal, if any, voices outside of the white culture,” the Rev. Carolyn Foster, a co-chair of the commission, said in a phone interview with ENS.

Foster, who is Black, serves as a deacon at St. Mark’s Episcopal Church, a historically Black congregation in Birmingham. She told ENS she recently was invited to preach a guest sermon at another church in the diocese for Black History Month.

The diocesan resolution, proposed by her commission, encourages more of those kinds of interactions across racial differences, especially on holidays and church feast days that have special meaning for people of color, such as Martin Luther King Jr. Day, Juneteenth, Hispanic Heritage Month and Indigenous Peoples Day.

Some Alabama congregations already have been engaged in that kind of work, and the new resolution will allow the commission to “nudge just a little bit more,” Foster said, toward telling the truth about racist systems and the church’s past complicity in those systems. “If any diocese ought to be leading in this particular effort, it ought to be Alabama,” she said.

The state was the site of some of the most entrenched segregationist sentiment in the United States during the civil rights movement of the 1950s and 1960s, with Montgomery, Birmingham and Selma each being a flashpoint on the path toward eventual passage of the Civil Rights Act in 1964 and the Voting Rights Act in 1965.

Today, Alabama has become a frequent destination for racial justice pilgrimages, including one underway this week by a group of Episcopal bishops.

Stops in Montgomery often include the Equal Justice Initiative’s Legacy Museum, with exhibits spanning the full history of racial injustice toward African Americans, and its National Memorial for Peace and Justice, which remembers the hundreds of documented victims of race-based lynchings in the country.

The Diocese of Alabama includes all but the state’s southernmost coastal region, which is part of the Diocese of the Central Gulf Coast.

The preface to Alabama’s recently passed resolution on racial reconciliation mentions the death in late December of Archbishop Desmond Tutu, who organized the Truth and Reconciliation Commission in his country of South Africa after apartheid.

“Following in his footsteps, we, the Episcopal Diocese of Alabama, are compelled to recognize that the truth of our own history, as a church, as a state, and as a nation, has not been told,” the diocese said. “We were taught our history almost entirely from the viewpoint of a dominant race, with much omitted from the story. The history that we learned in schools omitted the realities of racial injustice on a massive scale, from slavery to lynching, to segregation, to mass incarceration.”

As co-chair of Alabama’s Commission on Truth, Justice and Racial Reconciliation, Foster has led numerous anti-racism trainings and workshops for diocesan and congregation leaders. Truth-telling is always an important component. ■

In Kansas, Lenten art project highlights little-known injustices

By Chad Senuta

In the summer of 2020, two Diocese of Kansas task forces proposed an art project intended to bring greater awareness of injustice and of the question, “Who is my neighbor?” that Jesus asks in the story of the Good Samaritan.

The Task Force for Justice and Racial Reconciliation along with the Task Force for Liturgy, Music, and the Arts invited churches, organized in regional “minsters,” to investigate the history of racial, political, and cultural injustices in their communities and seek out local art depicting anti-racism, social justice, political action, or protest.

During Lent 2021, the bishop asked each parish to engage with the art they had discovered, through worship, discussion, or prayerful meditation.

The churches then met with their minster teams throughout the liturgical season of Easter to share the artwork they had chosen. Each minster selected one

piece that would be presented at both the Gathering of Clergy and Diocesan Convention in 2021.

The Rev. Mary Donovan was appointed to lead the Arts Committee, which is a subgroup of the Liturgy, Music, and the Arts Task Force.

In her role she supported each minster as they completed their projects. She explained that “As each project came in, I realized how much I didn’t know about the state of Kansas; and how much the past was still around.”

One of the first projects to be submitted was a set of pictures from the Dockum Drug Store sit-in that took place in Wichita in July of 1958.

The Wichita River Minster chose to focus on this non-violent protest of

segregation led by young black student Carol Parks-Hahn, and her cousin Ron Walters. The students were joined by friends and sitting at the counter would politely ask to be served every day for nearly a month.

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Photo/Visitwichita.com

A sculpture of the Dockum Drugstore counter is seen in Chester I. Lewis Reflection Square Park, Wichita.

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Art exhibition focuses on life journeys

By Jerry Hames

The online group Episcopal Church & Visual Arts (www.ecva.org) has opened its first 2022 exhibit, “Stories from the Road.”

With the Epiphany journey of the Magi as inspiration, contributors were invited to offer reflections on how God’s grace is at work in people’s lives. Curated by Mel Alhborn, a fine artist, manuscript illuminator and gilder, the exhibition consists of 38 works by 25 artists.

“The Epiphany story is one of graces and of trials,” said Alhborn, a former ECVA president. “Stories of the stargazers and the Holy Family, their travels on the road and their willingness to listen with the ear of their hearts, can teach us something of how God’s grace is at work in our own lives.”

The artworks show that the story is seen and experienced in their own lives and creative practices. Some are color-drenched like Alisa Clark’s “From Where I Glean My Faith.” Others, like Sally Brower’s “Pilgrim Cross,” record moments of private pilgrimage.

Steven Schroeder visits Tibet and, in “Lhasa,” shares a miracle of the road in text and painting. Jack Pachuta visually retells the Nativity/Epiphany story in one of iconography’s classic presentations, “Romanesque Nativity.”

The exhibited art and reflections from five of the artists follow.

Zachary Roessemann. “All journeys end with one journey: when we at last go home,” he writes. “On that last journey, we have the ultimate protector, the Archangel Michael, to guide us safely to the Promised Land.”

His icon depicts Michael, “the mighty captain of the heavenly hosts, beautiful but strong, always listening for God’s commands and acting swiftly on what he hears. He is the great protector of God’s people, battling evil on a cosmic scale, and protecting and escorting souls on the great journey out of this life and into the presence of God.”



“Archangel Michael Icon” is tempera and 23-karat gold leaf on wood.



“Heading towards Home” is a oil painting.

Elizabeth de Sherbinin. We are all on a journey somewhere, she believes. “Most of us are heading toward a home like the Wise Men were after seeing the Christ Child, or home at the end of our earth-bound time. Each journey is different for each of us, yet most are full of challenges, hard climbs, dark places with little light, restful moments, sad times, and joyful celebrations. This painting is the suggestion of part of our journey home. The most wonderful part we understand as Christians is that we never journey alone.”



“Solidarity” is a photograph.

Frank Logue. In August 2020, Logue and his wife, Victoria, hit the road from Georgia to Arizona to visit their daughter, planning to make the journey as important as the visit.

“As we crossed into Memphis, we saw a sign for the Lorraine Motel and the National Civil Rights Museum and, though it was unplanned, felt that we needed to exit. As we pulled up, we saw another group making pilgrimage to the site of the Rev. Dr. Martin Luther King Jr.’s martyrdom. I heard some of the group speaking Kiswahili, which I know a little of from serving as an intern in the Anglican Church in Tanzania while in seminary.

“I learned the group was a mix of people from East Africa, and with others they met in the Bronx, drove from New York to visit the site. They asked me to photograph their visit and I felt doing so was keeping a divine appointment that [had drawn] us onto the exit ramp. Victoria and I felt a kinship with these fellow pilgrims and gratitude for being on a journey with them.” (Frank Logue is the bishop of the Episcopal Diocese of Georgia.)

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Lisa Thorpe. “A while back my husband and I were struggling with some hard decisions...about making an uprooting change that would not just affect us but our demi adult son and my aging mother living with us. We had a great deal of angst and lack of clarity that seemed to be affecting all layers of our lives” she recalled.

They decided on a 17-mile round trip beginning at the Pacific Ocean near their home in northern California. “The beginning was a chorus of gulls circling the small rocky beach with crashing white waves. We began our climb up through grassy cow grazing land, then into a wood land of oaks and bay trees [and after] a break for lunch a sign warned of the impending steep climb. The last two miles were a hard push. Near the peak a raven pair began to circle and call and cheer us on, ‘you can do it, you’re almost there’ they seemed to say. We made it! Proud of ourselves we soaked in the 360-degree view.”

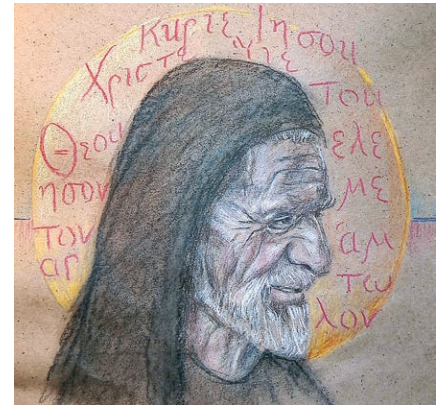
On the way down the raven gave them one more pass. That night they were exhausted but buoyed by their ac-



“Sea to Sky and Back Again” is hand printed and dyed fabric art, machine and hand stitched.

complishment, according to Thorpe. But what had they learned?

“We came off the hill that day with resolve that it was time to change our life. Make a bold move — we learned we are strong, together we could face the challenge. A day of letting our bodies take over the journey had taught us what our tangled heart and brains could not.” (The Thorpe family, who subsequently left California, now resides in Little Rock, Ark.)



“On The Pilgrims’ Way” is colored pencil on rough paper.

Tobias Haller. Not all pilgrimages take the form of physical journeys, believes this artist who is a life-professed member of the Order of St. Gregory. “Sometimes one is immobile, isolated, literally deserted by others, alone in a desert of solitude, yet still and constantly inwardly praying, ‘I call upon you from the ends of the earth’ (Psalm 61:2) For many of the desert monks the call took the form of the Jesus Prayer, ‘Lord Jesus Christ, Son of God, have mercy on me a sinner.’”

In his image, an elderly monk is surrounded by the words of an ancient prayer — “a halo not of his own righteousness or virtue, but a reminder of the One who has redeemed him, and who is with him and upholds him in all of his journeys and resting places, in a pilgrimage of the heart.”

The next exhibition for ECVA members, to be released in the spring, will be “Sacrament and Image,” with Mary Jane Miller as curator. “What is liturgy and what is ritual and why do we need them in our lives?” she asks. Artists are invited to submit work until March 18 to the curator at millericons@gmail.com ■

Jerry Hames is editor emeritus of Episcopal Journal.

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Stop teaching spiritual gifts; watch ‘Encanto’ instead

By Nathan Webb

Now you are the body of Christ and individually members of it. And God has appointed in the church first apostles, second prophets, third teachers; then deeds of power, then gifts of healing, forms of assistance, forms of leadership, various kinds of tongues. Are all apostles? Are all prophets? Are all teachers? Do all work miracles? Do all possess gifts of healing? Do all speak in tongues? Do all interpret? But strive for the greater gifts. And I will show you a still more excellent way. [1 Corinthians 12:27-31 (NRSV)]

There is not a shortage of material for discerning your purpose, calling or gifts for serving in the church; resources are released each year. But we can finally call it quits on developing the latest, greatest look at spiritual gifts in the church.

Step aside, Rick Warren — the Disney animated musical film “Encanto” has perfectly shown us how to live a purpose-driven life as the Body of Christ. It reveals how we can release harmful expectations and release our true gifts. Oh, “Encanto’s” got great songs, too.

Telling the story about the story

“Encanto” pitched itself pretty poorly as the story about the only non-magical family member who lives in a magical house with her magical family. What the trailer didn’t show was that “Encanto” was going to present one of the most approachable and relatable family dramas ever put on screen. Few of us have enough dollar bills to relate to HBO’s “Succession” and most families don’t have the comedic timing of [insert generic sitcom here].

But whether it’s by blood, bond, or Bible, I can’t imagine a more universal story of familial strife than in the family Madrigal of “Encanto.”

The movie introduces us to Mirabel (voiced by Stephanie Beatriz), the non-magical girl, as she figures out her place in the world. After a refugee situation leaves Abuela Alma (María Cecilia Botero) widowed with triplets, a miraculous candle (Pentecost anyone?) blasts away her pursuers and imbues her and her three children (and their home) with magical gifts. As the family grows, each of the grandchildren go through a downright religious ceremony where they vow to use their powers for good. They then step through the threshold of a door in the home and are gifted with incredible talents.

This goes fine until Mirabel is up for her ceremony and no power is given to her. Everyone, including Mirabel herself, wrap this moment up in time and move past it, pretending that everything is okay. Mirabel puts on a brave face and considers herself lucky to simply be in the family. But deep down she is harboring resentment and letting it fester. This growing doubt in her and in the family will eventually destroy their home and take away their powers with its divisive nature.

Unbalanced expectations

The more that I watched “Encanto” and heard the song lyrics, the more and more I saw echoes and reverberations of the local church. From the fact that the whole family doesn’t talk about outcast member Bruno to the controlling but errant matriarch Abuela Alma, this movie is simply the story of Christian community.

From the outside looking in, the family appears to be perfect. But the truth



Photo/Disney

Disney’s “Encanto” tells the story of the Madrigal family.

within the walls is that things are not well. Feelings have been bottled. Favorites have been chosen. Humanity has been made clear.

The film investigates how these things can affect people. Mirabel’s two sisters, Luisa (Jessica Darrow) and Isabela (Diane Guerrero), both have incredibly important songs that are worth their weight in gold. Ultimately the songs reveal the same thing: unbalanced expectations lead to destruction.

Luisa is physically strong and feels like she needs to work constantly to be valued by the family. In her song “Surface Pressure”, she laments, “I’m pretty sure I’m worthless if I can’t be of service” and “Who am I if I can’t carry it all?” Whoa. That’s some seriously heavy stuff to bear, no pun intended.

Isabela has the gift of making gorgeous flowers appear and feels that beauty is all that is permitted. She feels that she always has to be perfect and do what is expected of her in the most beautiful way. But when Mirabel forces her to make an ugly thorned vine appear, the truth is revealed that she doesn’t want to be perfect — she wants to be herself.

Even Mirabel is an example of unbalanced expectations. Powerless or not — the pressure of having a gift weighs on her

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ENCANTO continued from page I

shoulders and it ends up being a breaking point for her along with her sisters.

As a lifelong church-goer, I've seen more Luisas, Isabelas, and Mirabels than I can count. I've honestly been in each of their roles, too. Some of them live under that pressure until the day they pass on to the Church Triumphant. Some of them break under that pressure and hate the church with a fiery passion. So... what can we do about it?

A broken house

I'm not a very violent person, despite my affinity for video games. However, I think that the truth presented in "Encanto" is that sometimes the best thing to fix centuries of unbalanced expectations is destruction. In order for Abuela to come to her senses, the house had to be broken and crumble. In order for things to be fixed, they first had to be broken.

Wait — hang on... that sounds familiar. Wasn't there someone who told us that we would need to die to ourselves in order to follow Him? What if Paul's "more excellent way" in Scripture isn't about the spiritual gifts we've been given at all? Perhaps it's less important what our spiritual gift is and more important that we first take up our own cross and live in community with the Body of Christ.

It might be that the church has spent a lot of time building up practices, walls, and buildings, but not spent enough time reminding people of the gift that came before all the others: the community offered through Jesus Christ. Gifts are great — but the greatest gift is still and always will be Jesus. If we forget that, we're begging for our foundation to give in to the pressure and tick, tick, tick 'til it's ready to blow (whoa).

So maybe, just maybe, the house needed to break in "Encanto." And maybe some destruction is necessary in order for us to get back to building upon the only true foundation: a relationship founded in Jesus. We can figure out the spiritual gifts stuff later, let's break it down to the basics and remember whose we are first. ■

The Rev. Nathan Webb founded Checkpoint Church. (www.checkpointchurch.com) He is an ordained provisional elder in the United Methodist Church. This article originally appeared on www.umc.org and is reprinted with permission.

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They suffered various forms of derision and threats of violence, but eventually convinced the owner to serve them because he was "losing too much money." In 1998, the city of Wichita placed a life-size bronze sculpture representing the Dockum Drug Store lunch counter at the Chester I. Lewis Reflection Square Park. But the story has largely gone untold until recent years.

Members of Trinity Episcopal Church in Atchison shared another powerful story which had emerged in their community because of the research of Dr. Joshua Wolf, assistant professor of History at Benedictine College.

When asked by one of his students if there had ever been a lynching in the town, he was compelled to find out. He uncovered the story of George Johnson, who accidentally injured a white man in a hunting accident and turned himself in to the authorities. He was jailed for

over a year and later lynched by a mob of townspeople.

Wolf submitted his research to the Equal Justice Initiative (EJI), which is a non-profit organization that seeks to recognize the victims of lynching in the United States.

As part of Atchison's Juneteenth celebration, the city held a memorial walk and dedication service for a new historical marker to commemorate the site of Johnson's death. George's name was also added to the National Memorial for Peace and Justice in Montgomery, Ala., which memorializes lynching victims.

The Rev. John Huling of Trinity, Atchison noted that members of Trinity are also active with Atchison United, a local activist group that was instrumental in coordinating the memorial walk and dedication service in partnership with EJI and other local organizations. ■

Chad Senuta is director of young adult and communication ministries for the Diocese of Kansas. This article was originally published in The Harvest, the diocesan magazine.



Photo/Erin Wolf

The Rev. Jon Huling speaks at the dedication of the Reflections sculpture and George Johnson Lynching Memorial.



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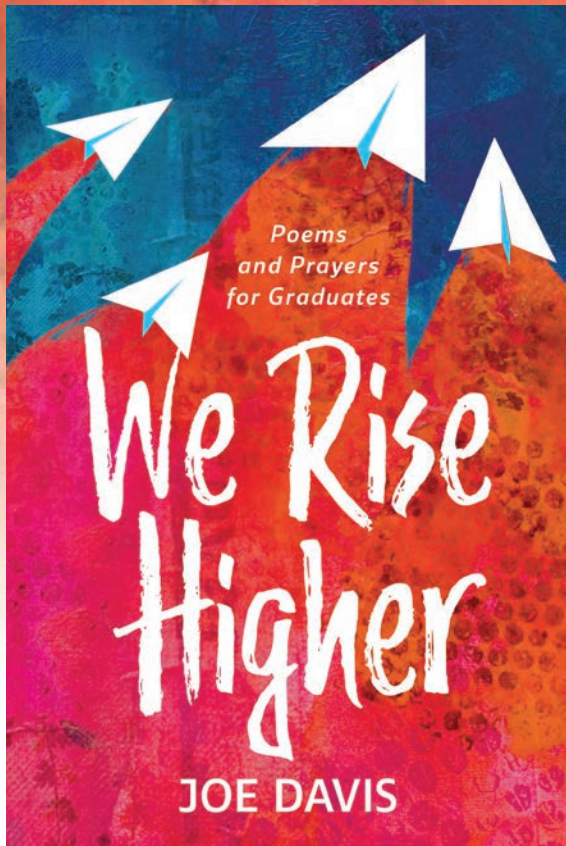
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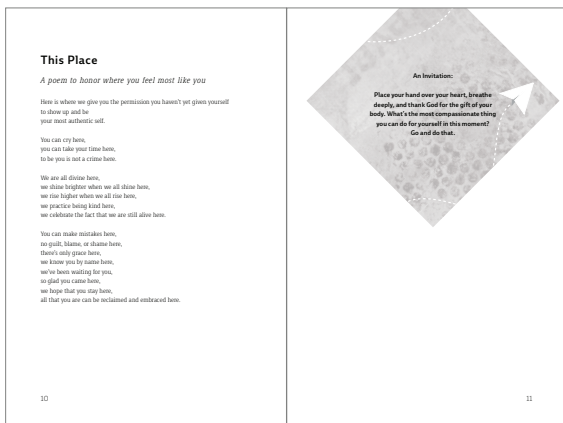
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Photos A-E: The Seating of Bishop Monnot at St. Paul's Episcopal Cathedral in Des Moines on December 19, 2021, by R. Mummy

Photos F-H: The Seating of Bishop Monnot at the historic Trinity Cathedral in Davenport on January 9, 2022, by M. Wagner

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