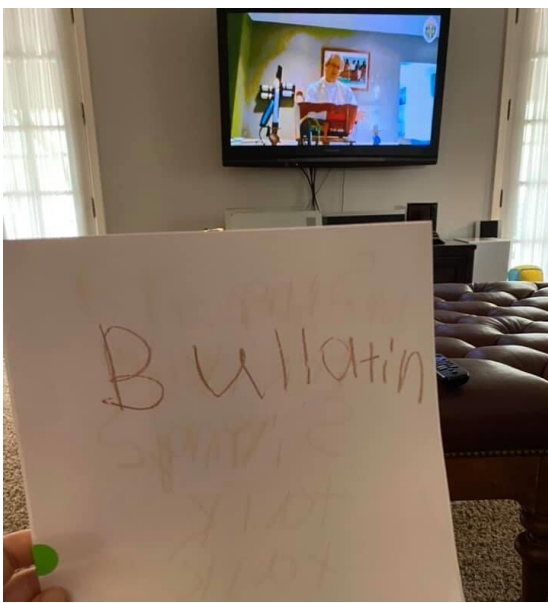
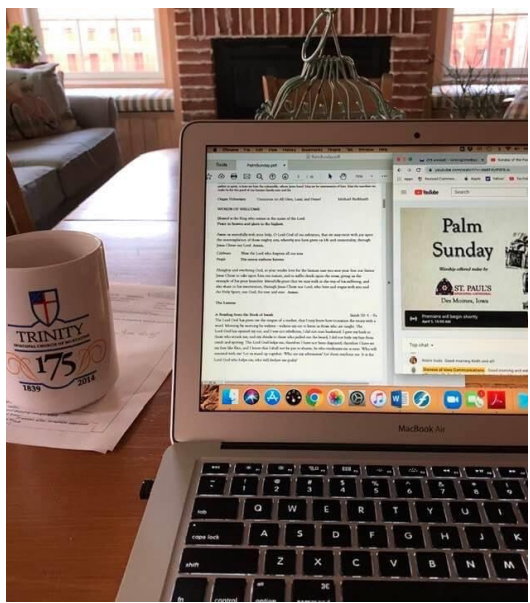




SUMMER 2020
VOLUME 7, NUMBER 2



Iowa Connections



Being the Church when we can't be at church

From the Bishop

You never know what a day might bring; or a few months. Just two months ago I was writing in this magazine how we were about to embark on the “big farewell” and begin a diocesan-wide schedule of visitations which would take us through the election of a new Bishop and into a General Convention and a September 2021 consecration of my successor. The road was clear and it was full. As it was then, I anticipated that during the summer of 2020, we would be holding a Small Church Summit as part of the Summer Ministry School and Retreat; there would be a gathering of Anglican Bishops at the Lambeth Conference, and an August pilgrimage to Iowa of young adults from our tri-companionship with Brechin and Swaziland.

That was before the world was closed down! Since St Patrick’s Day we have been in a form of lockdown across Iowa. I have not authorized gatherings for worship in our Church buildings, and overnight we became, in large part, a “virtual” Church. We have pushed the events highlighted for 2020 into 2021, for the small churches and the pilgrimage, and Lambeth joined the Olympic Games as a 2020 event now scheduled for 2021. New patterns of communication and connection have materialized; and we have been learning how to use Zoom and other video-conferencing platforms. Congregations have found morning and evening prayer or compline as daily public offerings for worship; and we have gathered as a diocese for weekly worship on Sunday mornings in services led by and featuring congregations from across the diocese.

Bishop Ellinah from our companion diocese sent me a cartoon which depicted God and the devil standing around a globe. “Through the coronavirus I have closed all your Churches,” the devil boasted; “And yes,” replied God, “I have opened one in every home.”

The COVID-19 pandemic, however, is also an enormous challenge to our faith. It has devastated many families with more than three hundred thousand deaths world-wide, and growing, with about thirty percent of the mortalities within the United States. The economic and social impact of what we had to do collectively to restrain that deadliness has been equally, if not more, telling. The disproportionate suffering of people of color and those already underserved in our society has been further exposed. We have been thrust down a pathway unseen since the Great Depression.

In the midst of all of this a new understanding of heroism has emerged as we have seen the photographs of the extraordinary efforts of our health workers and emergency crews. Creative artists have generously showered the world with music adaptations, poetic encouragement, and a myriad of ingenious ways of keeping in touch and inspiring care and offering love. Indigenous peoples have broadcast dances of prayer for the earth and all of creation. At least for a fleeting glimpse we have

seen a refreshment of the planet with clearing air and waterways, and its amazing capacity for catching its breath if permitted. It has been a time when the global community has called for partnership that reaches beyond self-interest, either as specific nations, corporations and yes, even as Church.



Where do we go from here? **Bishop Scarfe preaching.** Where have we seen God appearing in the quiet and silence of our interrupted lives? Russian Orthodox prelate, Archbishop Anthony Bloom once spoke of faith as that sudden fleeting glimpse of the opening gates of Paradise which as soon as you see the beauty beyond them, close just as quickly before you. And you spend your life animated by that vision, working to behold it again to make it a reality. I don’t think the vision is only of glory. We follow a God who also endured the pain before being glorified. This is a central message of our faith. Paul once wrote to the Corinthians that “death was at work in him (as an apostle) that life be within them” (the Corinthians). He could list his sufferings alongside his sense of blessing because one led to the other. Ultimately, he would say that he has learned to be content whether in scarcity or in abundance. Contentment in Christ was his life’s platform for everything else that gave him meaning. I offer this as a lens to look through all these past few months have brought before us and impacted upon us.

We are preparing to enter a re-gathering phase, and I invite a conversation. Plans for re-gathering will necessarily be flexible to the local conditions we find ourselves in as communities of faith. I want us to share the phase as one, even in the diversity of our timing and circumstance, ever mindful of those continuing to suffer and who are grieving. For this is a lengthy passage of history the world is moving through. Not here today and gone tomorrow. The implications have been so powerful that we can’t afford to go back but to move forward—discerning what is precious in this human experience, as society and as Church, and what is worthless or even detrimental as we go forward. We can choose to leave behind what doesn’t reflect our best selves; and build on that gift of the Spirit that has created the gracious outpourings we have been experiencing. It’s not in every age of human history that things stop, and at this time then, we incline our hearts as the God who makes all things new, leans towards us and says: “Now then! What shall we do together?”

In the peace and love of Christ,

The Rt. Rev. Alan Scarfe, Bishop of Iowa



The Simple Way

DIOCESAN CALENDAR

As we enter the summer, online worship for the diocese will continue to be offered by a different church across the diocese each week on Sunday at 10:00am. The service will be found on the diocesan Facebook page, the diocesan YouTube channel, and will be available on the diocesan website.

Call-in option for members who only have access to phones (participants on the phone will NOT be able to be heard but will be able to hear the service): 312 626 6799 and enter the Meeting ID as prompted: 365 765 527#

June

- 7 Diocesan worship offered by New Song, Coralville
- 13 Commission on Ministry (online, no interviews)
- 14 Diocesan worship offered by St. John's, Mason City
- 21 Diocesan worship offered by Calvary, Sioux City and St. George's, LeMars
- 27 Diocesan Board of Directors (online) 10:00am
- 28 Diocesan worship offered by Grace, Boone and Good Shepherd, Webster City

July

- 5 Diocesan worship offered by St. Paul's, Marshalltown
- 12 Diocesan worship offered by Trinity, Ottumwa
- 19 Diocesan worship offered by St. Paul's, Grinnell
- 26 Diocesan worship offered by St. Luke's, Cedar Falls

Changes, Cancellations and Postponements

Summer Ministry School and Retreat will not happen this year. Due to COVID-19 quarantine and safety concerns, Grinnell College will not be hosting events in June. Both SMSR and the Small Church Summit that was to be at the same place and time have been re-scheduled for June 25-27, 2021.

EPIC Summer Camp is changing to online.

Visit iowaepiscopal.org for all of the latest schedule information.

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Front cover: (left to right, top to bottom) Iowa clergy leading congregations gather weekly with the bishop via Zoom, youth and families across the diocese lead Stations of the Cross through Zoom, Holy Week from home in Muscatine (photo: Lori Carroll), hand-made bulletin for diocesan online worship (photo: Lizzie Gillman), safety precautions in place for St. Luke's food pantry ministry in Cedar Falls, masks sewn by the Rev. Wendy Abrahamson, online Chrism Mass and Renewal of Vows meant that clergy ordained in Iowa and now serving in other places could join in (photo: Hannah Cornthwaite).

Iowa Connections

Summer 2020

The Rev. Meg Wagner, Editor

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A Season of Imagination

by Stephanie Moncrieff

While snacking on parmesan fries at Newton's Cafe in Waterloo, the Liturgy Committee planned Holy Week and Easter. We walked through each service as people entered and exited around us. We briefly mentioned coronavirus and decided that we could always postpone Holy Week services and Easter. A week later, we were closing our building.

Flexibility is one of Trinity's spiritual gifts, and one of the many reasons I love serving alongside this group of people. Last summer, we experimented with worshipping on the front lawn. When my daughter asked me to open her crackers during the middle of my sermon, we all shared a laugh. Trinity seeks to reflect the love and acceptance of God in our lives and in the larger community through worship, prayer, education, and service. During our visioning conversations, we realized that we like to gather for worship and service. So as we closed the doors we asked, how do we worship during this season? How do we continue to reach out to our ministry partners?

In the frenzy of the first weeks, Trinity's leadership focused on making the next right decision from staffing to finances. Then the palms were delivered by UPS,

and a crazy idea developed. How might we safely "gather" for Palm Sunday? I started talking to my husband, a Family Medicine doctor and life-long Episcopalian, about the safest way to worship and we made a plan.

On a crisp Palm Sunday morning, I stood fully vested in the parking lot armed with a basket full of palm crosses, a bucket of bleach, and tape. As each car entered the lot, I taped a freshly sanitized palm cross to the driver's window. We gathered via Zoom for the Liturgy of the Palms waving through windows. Walking around I could see the joy of connection on each face. Then we drove through Waterloo with delight, honking and waving at people on the street. Although I didn't realize when we planned it, the Holy Spirit was moving in a powerful way through our community energizing us and spurring our imaginations.

From Holy Week worship bags to handmade cards, our community has reached out to one another using the resources at hand. When our monthly meal at Catholic Worker House came around, we divided the meal and families volunteered. Barbequed pork sandwiches, casseroles, and brownies, as well as personal hygiene products, were

delivered to care for the people lined up around the block.

On Easter, we held another parking lot service with a chorus of honks following each Alleluia! To mark the celebration, our junior warden suggested that we bring an Easter tradition outside and flower our cross. So he wrapped it in chicken wire and we invited people to stop by throughout the weekend with flowers or greenery to transform the cross into a beautiful symbol of resurrection. On Mother's Day, we planted flowers in our flowerbeds, marking each new bud with a stick honoring or remembering a mothering figure in our lives. The once bare beds are now full of color!

A week after Easter, the reality of our extended sabbatical set in. Feeling overwhelmed with the abundance of online resources, we asked, what could we provide that no one else could?

The Vestry and Liturgy Committee settled on a weekly rhythm of Morning Prayer and coffee hour on Sundays. From the sanctuary, I lead the prayers and preach. Our organist leads us in song via Zoom, and readers lead us from their homes. We gather, we create worship, and we check in with one another. We also continue to learn and grow closer to each other and God.



Delivering palm crosses in the parking lot.



Flowering the cross outside for Easter.

A Season of Imagination, *continued*



In line delivering food to the Catholic Worker House.



Planting flowers for Mother's Day (photos above and below).


On Thursday nights, we talk theology with our beverage of choice. In this ecumenical setting, all are welcome and it's fun to engage in deep conversation, even at a distance. I check in with the Youth on Sunday evenings via Zoom. Last week, we shared our talents. From tight-rope walking to jazz music to drawing, I marveled at the creativity of the group.

Although none of us would have chosen to leave our building, this physically distant season has encouraged a rekindling of our imagination. We

have learned to talk about what's really important to us and why. We have learned that the building does not contain the Body of Christ, we do. We have come to understand more deeply the gift of "Emmanuel," God with us. I wonder what others have seen? What are your community's spiritual gifts? How has this season highlighted your gifts?

The Rev. Stephanie Moncrieff serves as the Priest in Charge at Trinity in Waterloo through June 21, 2020.





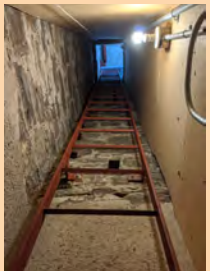
Carillon Concerts Bring Cheer to the City and Beyond

Each Sunday in Eastertide, Mark Babcock (pictured left), the choirmaster and organist at St. Paul's Episcopal Cathedral in Des Moines, has been treating the city (and Facebook) to a concert on the Cathedral's carillon.

Cars stop to listen along the streets, people pause on the sidewalks, and the Cathedral's Facebook stream spreads the music even farther. They have named the series, "Carillon in your car (or from afar)." The 30-minute concerts have thousands of views online.

There are only three carillons in the state—one each on the campuses of University of Northern Iowa and Iowa State University, and the one at St. Paul's in Des Moines. St. Paul's carillon was first installed in 1896 and additional bells were added in 1988 and 1997.

To get to the carillon, the carillonneur must climb up a long ladder in the bell tower.



Mask Ministry

by Wendy Abrahamson

When the shortage of face masks became a serious issue, and when the CDC began to recommend that wearing masks was good practice for everyone (not only those on the frontline), many people began sewing them across the diocese, including me. The impetus to make masks arose because my brother Peter, head chef at the University of Chicago Medical Center, and his staff of around 150, had no protective equipment even though they were essential employees and the U of C Medical Center had the highest number of COVID-19 patients in Illinois at the time. Two of Peter's staff contracted the virus and 50 were quarantined, and ultimately one of his colleagues died from a stroke caused by COVID-19.

I had been given two home-sewn masks by Mary Emge, wife of the Rev. Kevin Emge, deacon at St. Paul's, and so I asked my brother if home-made masks would work for his staff; Peter said yes and that he needed 200. So, being a big sister, I began a mission to buy masks or find people who would donate them for my brother and his staff as fast as possible. But gathering 200 masks with speed proved a steep hill, so I borrowed a sewing machine and began making masks myself with donated fabric, along with loving inspiration and support people gave me. Many were members of St. Paul's.

St. Paul's member Cynthia Hansen gave me a great pep talk, plus some masks. Judi Barber gave fabric and masks. Kirsten Koester donated fabric. Judy Hunter and Joyce Wubbels both donated masks, as did Mary Emge. Between these and 20 that were purchased, Peter was given the masks he needed. Gifts came from others as well; Jan Willeke from St. John's in Mason City sent me a large donation of fabric and Allison Smith, a friend of the

Rev. Lizzie Gillman, contributed masks she made.

After this I continued to make masks, moved by having someone in my own family who needed them so seriously. As of now I have made over 300. They have gone to parishioners, friends of St. Paul's, friends, family, colleagues, nursing homes, army medics, meat processors in Columbus Junction (a tip that came to me from the Rev. Meg Wagner) and meat processors in Marshalltown, local stores who want them for staff when they reopen (Saints Rest coffee shop, known to Iowa Episcopalians who have had coffee there during the Summer Ministry School and Retreat), and the Navajo Nation in Arizona. The demand is so great that masks are claimed before they are finished.

I always give the masks away for free; some who have gotten them have made donations in order to support further mask making. I have a system worked out so I am able on average to make 25 in a day—mask sewing over coffee, over lunch, and at the end of the day. I pray over each mask as I sew it—for the person who will wear it, for those working on front lines, for those who risk their lives on behalf of others, for those who have died, and for those who have been touched in the countless ways this virus has changed lives. I also give thanks to God for my 7th grade Home Economics class, in which I was taught how to use a sewing machine. That was the last time I had sewed until now—over 45 years ago.

Ultimately, I would like to be able to build an inventory of face masks for St. Paul's to be a source for them in the community.

Resources for Mask Making

Masks for the Frontlines Iowa Facebook

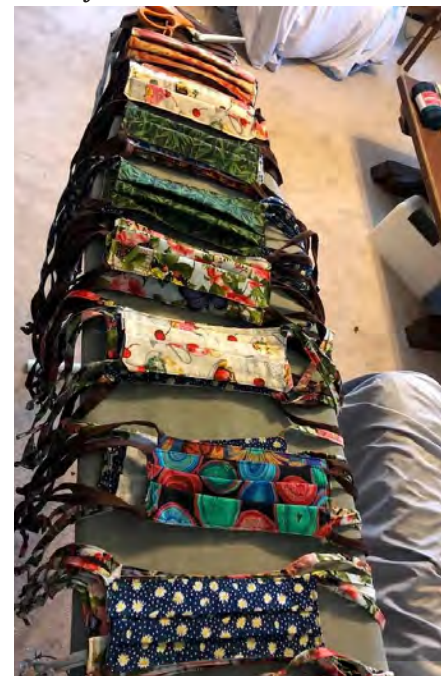
group has close to 4,000 members. There are lists of organizations and businesses requesting masks, donations of fabric, people who volunteer to deliver or pick up items. There are also many patterns available of different mask styles, scrub caps and surgical gowns (which are also in short supply). <https://www.facebook.com/groups/2949947068394904/>

CDC Mask Recommendations and Guidelines, plus information on how to make and care for face masks can be found here: <https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/prevent-getting-sick/diy-cloth-face-coverings.html>

Unity Point Health in Cedar Rapids information about face masks including patterns and how to donate them: <https://www.unitypoint.org/cedarrapids/sewing-surgical-masks.aspx>

Most Iowa hospitals are accepting donations of masks, scrub caps, and in some cases surgical gowns.

The Rev. Wendy Abrahamson serves as the rector of St. Paul's, Grinnell.



Some of the masks made by Abrahamson.

The Neighbor-to-Neighbor Food Pantry: A Mission Unfolding

by Elizabeth Duff Popplewell

After months of planning, St. Luke's Episcopal Church in Cedar Falls opened its Neighbor-to-Neighbor food pantry. "It is a ministry that grew out of our Third Sunday Community Meal and a way for our congregation to more deeply connect with our neighbors," explains Patty Achey-Cutts, one of the ministry's developers. For almost eight years prior to the pantry's opening, the church held a once a month community dinner at which guests were welcomed at the door by a greeter and shown to a table set with decorations, real plates and silverware. Dinner was a home cooked meal followed by a dessert tray for the diner's choosing.

As word spread about the warm hospitality, delicious food, and genuine camaraderie among diners and servers, the number of guests at the meal increased over the years. At its inception, St. Luke's was the only community meal offered on Sundays in the Cedar Valley. To great delight, meals were offered on Easter, Mother's Day, Father's Day, and other special occasions. Over time, however, other churches also began serving meals on Sundays and the number of guests at St. Luke's slowly started to decline. At the same time, the folks at St. Luke's were discerning another ministry: a food pantry.

"Diners at the community meals received a bag of groceries each Sunday, but there was no practical way that we could offer them the option to select their own food items," says Greg Hankins, another of the ministry's developers. "We wanted to be able to stock a variety of items and have people choose what was most appealing to their households," offers Ken Cutts, another pantry initiator. There was a

lot of conversation as to how the two ministries would collaborate; in the end the ministry leaders opted to stop serving dinner, which would free up resources for the pantry to be open twice a month. "It was a difficult decision to close our Sunday meal because we had developed close relationships with most of our diners, but it was clear that the Spirit was leading us in a different, yet still connected way," explain Diane Lyman and Sharon Kelleher, community meal coordinators.



Ken Cutts and Dennis Popplewell ready to load food into guests' vehicles.

Congregants began converting one of the formation rooms in the undercroft to house the pantry. Walls were painted and shelves were built to mirror a grocery store, which allow food items to be attractively displayed for selection by guests. With the help of a grant awarded to the church by the Northeast Iowa Food Bank (NEIFB), St. Luke's purchased a commercial-size refrigerator and freezer in order to provide fresh produce, milk, eggs, and meat.

It didn't take long for the number of neighbors utilizing the pantry to increase. "People appreciate being able to choose their food, they like that it's fresh, and they like how they're treated here," comments Noël Neff. When the pantry received items that were unfamiliar to guests, they developed easy-to-prepare meals made from

ingredients offered that week. "It's fun to think of creative ways to use certain ingredients," says Karen Franczyk, a pantry worker and meal creator. Guests enjoy sampling and discovering that they like different foods.

When the quarantine started closing businesses and people began losing their jobs or having their hours cut, the demand for food naturally increased. But how to safely serve guests was the question. Within days the leaders gathered to discuss how they could continue providing food while maintaining the safety of guests and workers. With the help of the Spirit, they devised a plan to deliver pre-packaged grocery bags directly into guests' vehicles while avoiding physical contact.

A new work crew has been added to pick up the pre-ordered food (usually 3,000 lbs.) from the NEIFB. They then restock the pantry and assemble between 40 and 60 bags of food. On pantry days, the group gathers for prayer before masked workers bring the boxes of food to the parking lot for distribution, rain or shine. Perishable items are kept in coolers and distributed as cars enter the loading space. Toilet paper and hygiene items are provided, and most recently the pantry has offered children's books and hand-made masks. "An additional blessing has been the number of people from the neighborhood who now show up to work at the pantry alongside the St. Luke's community," says Achey-Cutts.

This pandemic has forced many of us to cast a new vision of what church can be. The Neighbor-to-Neighbor food pantry is providing this community one way of engaging our neighbors beyond the walls of the church.

The Rev. Elizabeth Popplewell serves as the rector of St. Paul's, Cedar Falls.

WE DID IT: A Small Church's Foray Into Online Worship During a Pandemic!

by Ann McLaughlin

We did it! I've said that A LOT during this COVID-19 pandemic.

Early on after my return from California, I was identified as a "techy" person, not just at Good Shepherd, but around town. And then, more recently as a Zoom expert because I'd been using it ever since we received our television, computer stick and internet through the diocesan GILEAD Communications grant. (It's a great tool for Vestry meetings when a portion of the members don't live in town.) In the last seven weeks or so, I've helped a lot of folks learn to use the video conferencing software, the oldest being 90 years old.

Good Shepherd's journey toward online worship started innocently enough. Someone had the idea to have a Zoom coffee hour to see each other face-to-face; to make sure we're all doing well. After a couple of weeks, one of our supply clergy, Rev. Mary Jane Oakland, came to me and said, "What do you think about doing Compline via Zoom, with the folks at Grace in Boone?" Before I could even think about it, I said, "You bet, I'm sure we can do that!" Mary Jane put together a bulletin and assigned parts, and Good Shepherd and Grace sent out the invitations, and we worked with those in the two congregations that needed a little help getting on board the first time. That first night we had 18 different computers logged in from Boone, Webster City, Ames, Des Moines, Iowa Falls and even Memphis, Tennessee. In later weeks we added Ann Arbor, Michigan. We realized a couple of things that night; it's really, really great to have the face-to-face interaction and with face-to-face interaction comes the need for the mute button, especially if it has been a while since you've seen each other. We did it!

We have successfully done Compline in the weeks since.

While we were on our weekly call with Bishop Scarfe right after Easter, Catherine Schroeder (the Senior Warden at Grace Church and my willing technological accomplice) and I began scheming about how we might advance from Compline to Eucharist. This time we added the rest of our supply clergy, Rev. Jean McCarthy and Rev. Bob Kem, to the worship team. We had a couple of meetings for assigning parts and other preparation, a rehearsal and then we went live on Zoom for the third Sunday of Easter. We did it! We've successfully added Holy Eucharist with the Act of Spiritual Communion to our weekly online services.

Finally, if you're thinking about starting online services at your own church, do it! It's an amazing way to keep in touch with your church family while we can't be with our church family. Start with the lessons we've learned so far and go. We did it! So can you.

Lessons We've Learned So Far:

1. Don't be afraid! If you have an idea, and it fits within the diocesan guidelines, put a worship team together, plan it and then put it into action.
2. Be as flexible as possible, you don't know what monkey wrench might

get thrown into the gears at any time.

3. Add more voices to the service to keep attendees engaged, including one person designated as the responder.
4. The MUTE button is your friend!
5. Some type of personal interaction during or after the service is good. If you want to pre-record the service, make sure to have a Zoom coffee hour afterwards to get the personal touch.
6. Practice doesn't always make perfect, but it does make everyone involved more comfortable.
7. This isn't a make-or-break business presentation, mistakes happen and we're all human. You'll get it more right the next time.
8. Accept all the feedback you can get, whether you requested it or not. Everyone does have an opinion and you'll find most of them are helpful, even the negative feedback can be turned into a positive.
9. Make sure your team has time to digest, wrap-up and CELEBRATE each week with the worship team. You're all going through it together!

Ms. Ann McLaughlin serves as the senior warden at Church of the Good Shepherd in Webster City,



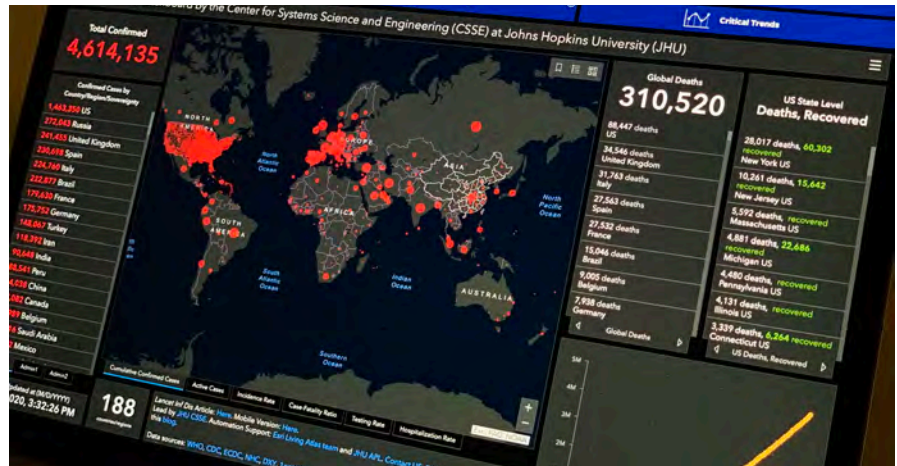
Grace, Boone and Church of the Good Shepherd, Webster City gathering together.

An Emergency That Forms Connections Across Space and Time

by Lauren Lyon

Sometime in the last few weeks I recall looking at an article that began with the admonition “When you can’t go to Church, be the Church.” Apart from offering good advice about social distancing as a way of pastoral care, it was a reminder that in easier times it was not unusual for our understanding of church to become superficial—an opportunity to pray and socialize with like-minded people whose company we enjoy on Sunday morning. Worshiping via livestream or some variant of is a frustrating substitute for sharing the sacraments in person. It excludes anyone who does not have the device, the signal or the know how to connect with it, and constraints on in-person contact make it nearly impossible to share equipment or expertise that might be helpful. Forced isolation and the loss of worship in person were especially difficult to bear, coming as they did, just before Holy Week and Easter. But our losses may ultimately lead us to be the Church in a way we might never have experienced otherwise.

The four canonical gospels tell the story of Jesus’ life and ministry, his crucifixion and resurrection. Christians in our era are in the habit of thinking of them and talking about them as if they relate events that were recorded in real time. Stories about Jesus circulated early on among his followers, but decades passed between Jesus’ public ministry and the creation of the gospel narrative as we read it in the New Testament. Jesus’ followers told his story from a viewpoint many decades into the future. They interpreted Jesus’ story through the experience of a disastrous loss in their own time, the destruction of Jerusalem and the Temple in the year 70. The disastrous loss experienced by people



A snapshot in time of the Johns Hopkins COVID-19 tracker on May 16, 2020. <https://coronavirus.jhu.edu/map.html>

who witnessed Jesus’ public ministry was described by those who came after them, who were experiencing another fearsome loss. Both groups of Jesus’ followers were profoundly changed by the losses they experienced and forced to consider who they were and what their mission and purpose would be thereafter. Our own losses in the COVID-19 emergency, the loneliness and isolation, economic insecurity, upended plans for work, education and rites of passage, pressures on physical and mental well-being and the threat it poses to life itself, offer us a visceral and emotional connection to the experience of Jesus’ earliest followers, the people who gave us the gospels, that we might not otherwise have had. We may have missed the fullness of Easter this year, but in easier times, our knowledge of the empty tomb and the inclination to race toward it often distract us from the more challenging aspects of the story that come before it. In the midst of our Easter celebration, we don’t always take into account the patient work of faithful vision by which the church grew from it.

Crucifixion was a form of execution intended to erase the memory of the one who died. Terror and shame were the means by which remembrance was

obliterated. Crucifixion’s purpose was to make even the most beloved and devoted friends and family members flinch from the memory of what had befallen the victim. In the face of this fearsome threat, Jesus’ followers turned to traditions of the past, the apocalyptic writings of the last two centuries before the Common Era, stories that posed the question: When the righteous suffer and die, what is God’s response? In those stories they found the answer, God vindicates the righteous who endure suffering.

Do the losses we have experienced in the last few weeks and those we anticipate in the coming months compare directly with those of our forebears in the faith? It’s difficult to answer that question across vast differences in time and culture. But the unprecedented nature of the emergency we’re in now and likely to remain in for quite some time offers the way into a relationship with those who came before us. Our response to our own losses can be as thoughtful and profound an expression of faith as theirs was.

Many of us are suffering personal hardship and our congregations will struggle as a result of the financial impact of COVID-19. We may mourn the loss

Emergency, *continued*

of friends and family members who die in lonely and frightening circumstances. We may be caught between the fear of working or not working weighing exposure to disease against financial hardship. Our congregations may struggle as community unemployment and increased costs for health care and emergency response limit the ability of parishioners to support the church. Those experiences can guide our future just as the struggles of Jesus' earliest followers led them to act in remembrance of Him. Despite our own sense of loss, we will be most true to

Jesus by continuing to look outward toward those in need, rather than inward toward our own struggles.

The sense of pervasive fear and unrelenting hazard that COVID-19 poses are unprecedented for the vast majority of Americans. We have not had to live moment to moment, hour to hour with an uncontrolled threat to life and well-being that never goes away. There are people in the world for whom our newfound sense of dread is nothing new, people who have not felt safe a day in their lives. Climate change, poverty and warfare have pursued

them endlessly. Our experience in this emergency that will one day pass is a window into their lives also, a path toward the divine compassion of Jesus that we might not otherwise have felt so deeply.

As we look forward to a return to whatever our new normal may become, let's look back and connect with our past and those around us to be the church deeply interconnected.

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

Interfaith Effort to Plant Trees Led by a Teenager

by Elaine Caldbeck

A 13-year-old started a local campaign to plant 1,000 trees in the Quad Cities for his bar mitzvah project. This arose out of his sense that Noah wasn't a righteous Jew, if he had been, he would have argued God out of destroying the world with a flood.

Asher Schroeder goes to Temple Emanuel in Davenport, which partnered with Quad Cities Interfaith to make his goal a reality.

"We will slowly have an effect on the world making it a better place," Schroeder told KWQC, who reported on his project at the sign-up party at the Temple. He reached out to the Living Lands & Waters MillionTrees Project to donate 1,000 tree saplings for his campaign.

"The 1,000 trees originally came from the MillionTrees Project who donated 1,000 trees to many different places," he said. "We decided to use those in the Quad Cities to help make the environment here better."

His proud rabbi, Linda Bertenthal, is helping him with this project, bringing

Quad Cities Interfaith (QCI) on board. The Faith Leaders Caucus members of QCI organized a sign-up and pick-up locations for the trees. The sign-ups were in February before the virus arrived in Iowa.

But the challenges posed by new realities of COVID-19 did not stop the project from moving forward. Red Oaks, Swamp White Oaks, and Persimmon trees were delivered on April 21-22 to the various locations. Each location posted signs and handed out planting and growing instructions. Most of the trees found proud owners to plant them in a couple of days.

St. Peter's Episcopal Church in Bettendorf was one of many sites where people could pick up trees to plant. Other locations included: (in Davenport) Temple Emanuel, Metropolitan Community Church of the Quad Cities, Roman Catholic Diocese of Davenport, Unitarian Universalist Congregation of the Quad Cities, St. Mark Evangelical Lutheran Church, (in Bettendorf), Muslim Community of the Quad Cities, (in

Moline) Christ the King Catholic Church, and Hope United Church of Christ.

The Rev. Elaine Caldbeck serves as the rector of St. Peter's, Bettendorf.



Trees for pickup at St. Peter's Episcopal Church in Bettendorf. The public was reminded to wear masks and use safe physical distancing when picking up the saplings.

BSNC Activities

by Kevin Sanders

The Standing Committee charged the Bishop Search and Nominating Committee (BSNC) with its work during a retreat with transition consultant Conrad Selnick in early March. Since then, the fifteen members of the BSNC have been gathering information about the diocese through an intentional listening process. It has been an enlightening and uplifting experience to listen to the stories and perspectives of people from around the diocese. We feel that we have gained insight into the diverse ways God has been working in and through communities spread across our state.

Pandemic containment practices have prevented us from speaking with people in person in most cases. Instead, we have conducted listening sessions via Zoom with small groups (in congregations or chapters); we have interviewed people one-on-one by telephone; and we have received responses entered into our on-line survey or the paper version of that survey. We have organized and conducted special listening sessions aimed at hearing from youth and from those involved with ministries of the diocese. The link to the on-line

version of the survey was distributed in the monthly diocesan email communication on May 1. Thank you to all those who have taken the time to offer your thoughts and stories.

Now as we move into summer, the committee's focus will shift from collecting information to understanding it. We will be reading, discussing and praying over the information that we have collected. And we will begin work on our diocesan profile: a document that will tell potential candidates about our diocese to help them in their discernment. We want the diocesan profile to reflect who we are, what we

value, and how our recent history has shaped us. We want it to communicate frankly our challenges and our ambitions and what we can see of where God may be leading in the future. We expect work on the profile to continue through August. Please keep the Bishop Search and Nominating Committee and our work in your prayers.

Mr. Kevin Sanders serves as the chairperson of the Bishop Search and Nominating Committee and is a member of St. Luke's, Cedar Falls

Updates on the search process will be available at:
iowaepiscopal.org/bishop-search



BSNC members at their organizing retreat. Front row (left to right): Holly Scherff, Bonnie Wilkerson, Sara Early, Fred Steinbach, Paula Sanchini, Jeanne Smith, CJ Petersen Back row (left to right): Steve Halstad, Deb Leksell, Andrew Petersen, John Horn, Vincent Bete, Hannah Landgraf, Jane Stewart, Kevin Sanders

Continuing to Support the Work of the Church

Even as we cannot gather in person in our buildings, the mission and ministry of the Church continues. Now is a great time for vestries to explore adding other ways to give. Different online donation services are available (Tithe.ly, Vanco, Giving Tools, PayPal, etc). If you have questions about beginning online giving, contact Anne Wagner at awagner@iowaepiscopal.org.



Christopher French, the treasurer at St. Paul's in Grinnell shared his thoughts about continuing to support the church in this time, "In our present crisis, my thoughts have lately turned to Jeremiah 32. In the midst of hopelessness, with king Nebuchadnezzar besieging Jerusalem, Jeremiah purchases land from his uncle for seventeen shekels of silver—land that would surely be worthless in the space of a few months, for God had told Jeremiah that there was no escape from the Chaldeans. But Jeremiah made the investment anyway. He gave the deed to Baruch, instructing him in the name of the Lord to put the deed in an earthenware jar, so that it would last. "For thus says the Lord of hosts, the God of Israel; Houses and fields and vineyards shall again be bought in this land." While we are often told to live in the present, Jeremiah's act tells a story about faith for tomorrow. If we can, let us continue to make gifts to the church, and let us contribute with greater zeal to fight hunger and homelessness and to alleviate suffering. Like Jeremiah's shekels of silver, I like to think of any contribution we can make as an investment for that time when, metaphorically speaking, houses and fields and vineyards shall again be bought in this land."

GILEAD Grants Now Available

by Traci Ruhland Petty

In the midst of these uncertain times, we're excited to announce that the GILEAD Grant process is able to proceed, and grants are available starting this year. As we navigate physical distancing and think about what it means to be a community, to "be church", perhaps you've seen some new ideas spark or innovation happening, and you could use some funding to help those ideas or projects move forward—we hope you'll consider applying for a GILEAD Grant.



Questions to consider as you think about potential grant projects:

What are we noticing?

What questions are emerging?

What might God be up to or nudging us toward?

GILEAD GRANT CATEGORIES

- **Beginning a New Worshipping Community**
- **Beginning a New Ministry or Strengthening an Existing One**
- **Liturgical Space Renewal**
- **Support for Recently Ordained Clergy**
- **Formation for Youth or Young Adults**
- **Leadership Development**
- **Evangelism**
- **Expanding Tools and Technology**

Who can apply?

Congregations, worshipping communities, chapters, or individual members of the Diocese of Iowa may apply for GILEAD funds. Partnerships with non-Episcopal entities are welcome and encouraged, but an Episcopal entity must serve as the reporting agent and the project leader must be an Episcopalian who is a resident in the Diocese of Iowa.

When & Where Can I Apply?

The grant application and supporting documents are available on our website: <https://www.iowaepiscopal.org/gilead-grants>, and applications will be received May 15 - July 15, 2020.

Before you submit your application, review the GILEAD Grants page on our website, and set up a time to meet with the GILEAD Grant Review Committee online via Zoom to discuss your project or idea. Contact Traci Ruhland Petty: tpetty@iowaepiscopal.org with questions or to set up a time to meet with the Committee.

Ms. Traci Ruhland Petty serves as Diocesan Administrative Missioner for Growing Iowa Leaders and Engaging All Disciples

The Engaging All Disciples Cohort Experience

by Ellen Bruckner

The idea of forming cohorts to work in developing and supporting learning communities, each focused on a particular ministry topic, surfaced during the Engaging All Disciples (EAD) gatherings across the diocese in 2018-2019. What if we gathered people sharing like ministry passions, offering them some extended opportunities to dig deeper into the topic and work on building skills and celebrated their deepening ministry responses?

A vision emerged and took shape as we listened in the EAD gatherings. Seven cohorts were identified from the requested topics discussed during the EAD gatherings. Eight coaches were enlisted to help guide the cohorts, collectively and individually throughout the 2019-2020 program year.

The cohorts formed at the Summer Ministry School and Retreat (SMSR) 2019 weekend gathering and launched into meeting at least monthly until Spring 2020. Since SMSR 2019, 57 people, including the eight coaches, have been participating in the seven Engaging All Disciples Cohorts. The cohort experience was sponsored financially by an anonymous donation to the Engaging All Disciples effort.

As churches across the diocese came together in the EAD gatherings in 2018-2019 to engage with each other around the topics of shared interest, the seven cohort topics became more and more evident. These seven topics seemed of interest to many:

Engaging Our Stories

Engaging Next Generations of Faith

Engaging Creative Worship

Engaging Our Resources

Engaging Our Neighbors

Engaging Discipleship

Engaging Justice through Public Policy

Using the Summer Ministry School and Retreat as a place for forming cohorts, each of these identified topics became a track at SMSR 2019 with the enlisted coaches as leaders and resource people. SMSR was the time to define and outline what the year's work would look like for each participant. Some people identified a specific project to engage throughout the year. Some chose to reflect and deepen an understanding of existing ministries. Some chose to explore a sense of calling. The individualities of each "project" were held together in a cohort learning community. Cohort communities were formed. The weekend provided a foundation for the cohorts who dug deeper into the ministry topic as the year progressed.

Following the face-to-face SMSR weekend, cohorts met via Zoom. Each cohort developed its own identity—not just different topics but also in the way each group of people gathered and learned together. Each developed its own rhythm and routine. Some cohorts held a monthly check in type meeting as a group. Some cohorts also found time to offer individual meetings between coach and participant as well as the group check in session.

Coaches were enlisted from all over The Episcopal Church. All had experience in directing and resourcing work in the ministry topic and some had formal coaching training and experience. The role of the coach was to help people define and clarify their goals in the particular ministry topic, to help people reflect and self-discover new learnings, to help people define strategies to achieve goals, to encourage people to take responsibility for their chosen actions and to recognize and help celebrate progress and success.

This cohort/coach structure was new to most of us and asked us to take the risk to try something new in the diocesan discipleship journey. If one measures by numbers, this program may look like it had limited reach and for those involved, the growth seemed to range from not much to beyond comprehension. In a larger sense, the growth for people in the cohorts will continue to manifest wherever they are and we will continue to experience effects from the cohorts' work. Transformational change has happened. This kind of formation asks participants to actively take responsibility for their own learning which does not stop at



Two of the Engaging All Disciples Cohort Coaches, Heidi Kim and Alan Yarborough at the 2019 Summer Ministry School and Retreat.

Cohort Experience, *continued*

year's end. The coach/cohort relationship is also fairly new to our programming in the diocese. This type of relationship seems to be important to participants' growth. There is not just one person who challenges and celebrates, but, as it turns out, there is a group of people sharing ministry passions who challenge and celebrate each other.

Since cohorts were organized around ministry passions, cohort members were from all parts of the diocese. Many did not know each other before joining their cohort and these cohort gatherings provided the community building and a deepening of ministry passions.

The gift in this for me, is in recognizing the intensity and commitment it takes for an individual to participate in this kind of experience—an experience that urges one to continually step out of a comfort zone and into the unknown. People who took this step gave time and energy to some idea that took shape and emerged in the midst of all the other life going on. This is not easy work and it requires a discipline of action that is often an addition to an already full life. This work is not just about accomplishing a task, it is also about making some adaptive changes in the way one acts in one's daily life.

Coaches recognize the hard work, encourage the risks and celebrate the steps each person takes. Learning communities/cohorts offer participants the precious gift of listening and sharing. Creating and holding that safe space in which to share one's thoughts with others who understand the passion is the privilege and responsibility of the group, not just the coach. The community grows because of the commitment to listening and sharing; not just because of new ideas, but because the new ideas have a space to be offered and heard. Cohort participants recognize the hard work of continually deepening discipleship each one of us is asked to live.

The Engaging All Disciples Cohort experience has provided the Diocese of Iowa with another gift. This first-time process showed us one way to help encourage and strengthen discipleship in this place. It modeled a way that hopefully will be used to empower more networks of people sharing a passion for a ministry.

The Diocese of Iowa is much the richer for this year-long lived discipleship building process.

Thanks be!!

Ms. Ellen Bruckner serves as Diocesan Ministry Developer.

“There have been many side benefits of self-care and understandings, but the main core of ministry that has happened for me through the cohort coaching is taking the initiative to launch small group formation and events...”—Melody Rockwell

“Working with the cohort has broadened my concept of neighbor to include a much wider view of what ‘neighbor’ means, and helped me to understand how central the idea of neighbor is to my faith and to Christianity.”—Jim Conger

“Being part of a small group has been important over time in giving me a stronger, clearer voice to engage others in ministry.”—Jim Conger

“The changing partnership with God and my voice is beginning to show up in conversations and writing. The seedlings are out of the ground. I am engaged and energized for what the next four months will produce. I thank the Episcopal Diocese of Iowa profusely for this astonishing opportunity.” —Nancy Morton

“I really like the discipline of checking in each month as it helps set deadlines and provides clarity of purpose. I think the small group format fosters a growing sense of community and provides a safe space for sharing.”—Jean Davis

“I am experiencing a greater awareness of and appreciation for the good work being done by others across Iowa; growth in ecumenical relationships as I work to gather interest and participation in the pop-up art project, and an appreciation for the Diocesan commitment to growing disciples through public policy advocacy.”—Jean Davis

Stewardship Share January-March 2020

City	Church	Stewardship Share	2020 Pledge	Due to Date	Received to Date	(Over) Under
Algona	St. Thomas'	\$ 3,371	4,008	1,002	1,002	0
Ames	St. John's	52,361	36,000 *	9,000 *	6,000	3,000
Anamosa	St. Mark's	273	1,500	375	1,500	(1,125)
Ankeny	St. Anne's	9,074	6,000 *	1,500 *	1,500	0
Bettendorf	St. Peter's	16,796	15,000 *	3,750 *	3,750	0
Boone	Grace	1,993	720 *	180 *	112	68
Burlington	Christ	28,959	21,000 *	5,250 *	5,250	0
Carroll	Trinity	2,585	2,600	650	2,600	(1,950)
Cedar Falls	St. Luke's	37,855	37,855	9,464	6,309	3,155
Cedar Rapids	Christ	50,503	50,503	12,626	8,417	4,209
Cedar Rapids	Grace	8,244	8,244	2,061	2,061	0
Chariton	St. Andrew's	3,390	3,500	875	1,167	(292)
Charles City	Grace	1,305	1,305	326	327	(1)
Clermont	Saviour	2,785				
Clinton	Christ	12,334	12,334	3,083	3,084	0
Coralville	New Song	16,820	16,820	4,205	4,203	2
Council Bluffs	St. Paul's	6,809	5,462	1,366	1,365	0
Davenport	St. Alban's	9,271	6,953 *	1,738 *	1,738	0
Davenport	Trinity	102,673	97,796	24,449	24,449	0
Decorah	Grace	4,016	4,016	1,004	1,004	0
Denison	Trinity	1,307	1,307	327	327	0
Des Moines	St. Andrew's	30,765	30,765	7,691	2,564	5,128
Des Moines	St. Luke's	30,403	15,764 *	3,941 *	2,627	1,314
Des Moines	St. Mark's	3,313	3,313	828	927	(99)
Des Moines	St. Paul's	72,729	35,000 *	8,750 *	12,500	(3,750)
Dubuque	St. John's	13,135	9,102 *	2,276 *	0	2,276
Durant	St. Paul's	3,570	3,570	893	893	0
Emmetsburg	Trinity	2,931	2,931	733	733	0
Fort Dodge	St. Mark's	35,648	35,648	8,912	5,941	2,971
Fort Madison	St. Luke's	2,442	2,460	615	615	0
Glenwood	St. John's	754	754	188	188	0
Grinnell	St. Paul's	11,895	6,200	1,550	1,167	383
Harlan	St. Paul's	1,269	350 *	88 *	0	88
Independence	St. James	1,898	1,898	475	475	0
Indianola	All Saints	1,858	1,858	464	467	(2)
Iowa City	Trinity	83,426	83,426	20,857	20,857	0
Iowa Falls	St. Matthew's	2,149	2,149	537	358	179
Keokuk	St. John's	10,219	7,200 *	1,800 *	1,800	0
LeMars	St. George's	37	37	9	101	(92)
Maquoketa	St. Mark's	2,151	1,000 *	250 *	308	(58)
Marshalltown	St. Paul's	10,173	10,173	2,543	1,696	848
Mason City	St. John's	16,943	14,085	3,521	3,521	0
Mount Pleasant	St. Michael's	4,540	4,540	1,135	1,135	0
Muscatine	Trinity	15,792	15,792	3,948	3,948	0
Newton	St. Stephen's	16,253	8,000 *	2,000 *	1,265	735
Orange City	Savior	1,576	750	188	750	
Oskaloosa	St. James'	7,466	7,466	1,867	1,867	0
Ottumwa	Trinity	7,281	5,000 *	1,250 *	1,250	0
Perry	St. Martin's	7,656	6,500	1,625	0	1,625
Shenandoah	St. John's	6,216	2,647 *	662 *	0	662
Sioux City	Calvary	1,655	1,656	414	414	0
Sioux City	St. Paul's	1,857	500 *	125 *	0	125
Sioux City	St. Thomas'	13,851	10,305	2,576	875	1,701
Spirit Lake	St. Alban's	12,066	12,066	3,017	3,017	0
Storm Lake	All Saints'	3,119	3,119	780	520	260
Waterloo	Trinity	7,938	9,600	2,400	2,400	0
Waverly	St. Andrew's	543	543	136	543	(407)
Webster City	Good Shepherd	4,400	4,400	1,100	1,107	(7)
West Des Moines	St. Timothy's	60,136	51,450 *	12,863 *	12,863	0
TOTAL		\$ 882,777	744,940	186,235	165,854	20,946

* Appeal in process

Episcopal JOURNAL

QUARTERLY EDITION SUMMER 2020

Pandemic to reshape how congregations worship

By David Paulsen
Episcopal News Service

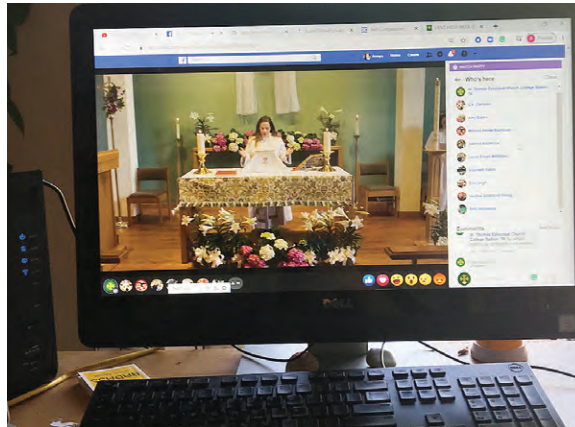
Get ready. The pandemic could change everything that Episcopalians once took for granted about attending church.

A reservation could be required to worship in person. Services might not even take place in the church, if the parish hall or an outdoor area can better accommodate social distancing. “No” to handshakes at the peace. “Yes” to wearing masks. Singing is a conflicted “maybe.” Communion — if offered at all — could be received as wafers dropped from above into cupped hands, with hand sanitizer always close by. And don’t expect coffee at coffee hour.

Another option: Keep watching the livestream at home and continue to forego attending church in person, while the coronavirus is still spreading.

As the pandemic was still develop-

Episcopal churches and schools have closed temporarily and made numerous other changes in ministry and worship, responding to the new coronavirus illness, COVID-19, sweeping the world. Episcopal Journal presents a roundup of news to date; however, for immediate updates, check www.episcopalnewsservice.org. For authoritative information on the pandemic, go to www.cdc.gov and www.who.int.



Photo/the Rev. Angela Cortiñas

The Rev. Angela Cortiñas is seen in a Facebook video of a recent online service at St. Thomas Episcopal Church in College Station, Texas.

ing in the U.S. in mid-May, Episcopal dioceses were proceeding cautiously, even in states that eased their stay-at-home orders to restart their economies. At the same time, church leaders began discussing and planning for the day they reopen, with tight limits on attendance.

“Government officials have different standards than we do. Their metrics are keeping the health care system from getting overwhelmed and keeping the economy going,” the Rev. Alex Dyer, canon to the ordinary for the Episcopal Church in Colorado, told ENS.

In Colorado, one of the states partially reopening, the diocese won’t resume any in-person services until certain public health criteria are met, such as a sustained reduction in COVID-19

cases, sufficient capacity in the health care system to test and treat all patients, and the ability to track patients’ contacts. Church leaders there, as elsewhere, say their caution is partly fueled by demographics: Older Americans are more vulnerable to severe coronavirus symptoms, and more than a third of all Episcopalians are 65 or older, according to the Pew Research Center’s most recent Religious Landscape Study.

“Our standards are different,” Dyer told ENS. His diocese’s actions are based in love, not fear, he said, and following that Christian framework, “the number of acceptable deaths as a result of our actions is zero.”

Most Episcopal congregations across the United States haven’t gathered publicly in their churches since mid-March, when governors and health officials began urging residents to stay mostly at home and to take other precautions, such as social distancing and wearing face masks in public. Such efforts were meant to help slow the spread of COVID-19, the disease caused by the coronavirus.

Many congregations now only come together online, but that hasn’t meant a loss of liturgy. At St. Thomas Episcopal Church in College Station, Texas, the schedule actually has expanded during the pandemic: Every weekday morning, Morning Prayer. Every weekday evening,

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FEATURE
Church pantries help diocesan food mission



NEWS
Black jogger’s killing spurs calls for justice



ARTS
Walker film bio concerns a ‘cheerful giver’

Churches plan for a Pentecost without gatherings

By Episcopal Journal

As dioceses and churches consider how and when to re-open their buildings for worship services, many are making alternate arrangements for Pentecost Sunday (May 31), given COVID-19 pandemic restrictions.

Pentecost, which is celebrated 50 days after Easter Sunday, commemorates the descent of the Holy Spirit upon the Apostles and other followers of Jesus while they were in Jerusalem celebrating the Jewish Festival of Shavuot, as described in the Acts of the Apostles.

The traditional color for Pentecost is red, symbolizing the tongues of flame that appeared over the heads of the Apostles. Readings at worship services are often in several languages, since the Bible refers to the Apostles being filled with the Holy Spirit and inspired to give witness in different languages. Scripture also says the Holy Spirit appeared as a dove.

A number of Facebook posts gave details of this year's unique Pentecost services.

The Rev. Kate Wesch of St. John the Baptist in Seattle noted that the congregation is still doing virtual worship. For Pentecost, "various parishioners are pre-recording verses of a reading in different languages while wearing red and it will be edited together into a single video. Parishioners have also been asked to send in photos of themselves wearing red that we can show during the prelude and postlude."

The Diocese of Fort Worth has invited people to create processions-at-home and to make doves to decorate the church in which diocesan clergy will be recording the online worship service, noted Communications Director Katie Sherrod. "We also have people reading the lesson from Acts in different languages at home that we will edit into one reading. The bishop will record his sermon from his home in Abilene (Texas)," she wrote.

The Diocese of Maine is planning "a diocese-wide virtual service with clergy and lay leaders from across the state ... and we'll do readings in multiple languages," wrote Communications Director Katie Clark.

The Convocation of Episcopal Churches in Europe's Youth Commission is sponsoring Pentecost Project 2020, calling for videos, drawings, claymation, Legos, origami, papier-mâché, and anything else that will illustrate the feast. Suggestions include tongues of fire, rushing wind, and different languages.

The Rev. Jim Friedrich posted that St. Barnabas, Bainbridge

Island, Wash., is pre-recording the Pentecost liturgy to allow more creativity in the construction of visuals (different angles, close-ups, overlay of art and other imagery). "We will begin with a virtual choir singing "Veni Sancte Spiritus" (Taize) over a montage of submitted photos of parishioners' hands expressing "Come Holy Spirit" in their own particular way. This will segue into a fugal arrangement of Acts 2:1-11 for three voices, recorded by the readers and edited together with an ambient soundtrack. And there will be multiple languages for 'peace be with you' in the gospel."

Pentecost also marks the beginning of the Christian church, and St. Mary's in Cypress, Texas is planning to make a "birthday of the church" video featuring smiling faces of parishioners, according to a post by Jennifer LeClercq.

At Holy Innocents in Beach Haven, N.J., the Rev. Caroline Carson is "collecting selfies that either say alleluia or things for which our folks are grateful. I'll make a big collage for an online image, a wall poster for when we return, and 2-3-minute iMovie for our weekly online services."

The dioceses of Milwaukee and Southern Ohio are organizing virtual choirs and the Diocese of Vermont's online worship will feature participants wearing red or orange and holding a candle. The service will include a video montage of submitted images depicting places or things of joy. ■

This article includes material reported by Neva Rae Fox for The Living Church and is used with permission.



Photo/courtesy St. John's Norwood

Last year, St. John's Norwood in Chevy Chase, Md., celebrated Pentecost with a traditional procession and the liturgical red color. This year, churches are finding imaginative ways to celebrate Pentecost Sunday (May 31) online due to the COVID-19 pandemic.

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PANDEMIC continued from page A

Compline. Every Sunday morning, the Liturgy of the Word, sometimes followed by Communion.

What parishioners have lost is the experience of worshipping side by side. They miss each other's physical presence, said the Rev. Angela Cortiñas, rector of St. Thomas, but they know it's best to wait. "The majority of them, as much as they long to get back together, they understand the seriousness of what's going on," she told ENS.

Cortiñas understands as well. She is a survivor. After returning on March 14 from a group trip to Scotland, she fell ill and tested positive for COVID-19. "It hit me pretty hard," she said. "I was down and out for almost two weeks with all the symptoms, but another two weeks before I felt normal again."

She has fully recovered, but the experience shapes her thinking about how St. Thomas will resume in-person worship. "It makes me even more cautious because I got it," she said.

As of May 17, more than 1.4 million Americans were reported to have contracted the virus, and more than 89,000 had died. The country's early surge in overall coronavirus cases has plateaued, according to The New York Times database, but local outbreaks continue to raise alarm.

"The hard truth is that we will not be able to welcome all people into our places of worship for the foreseeable future," the bishops of Maryland, Virginia and Washington said in a joint statement released May 4. Instead, they and other bishops around the country are urging their congregations to think now about what it would look like, possibly in the near future, to hold smaller in-person services during the pandemic.

More and more state governments — some under pressure by citizens — have begun to resume some social and economic activities in recent weeks, and those developments have provided the backdrop for the cascade of documents issued by dioceses to provide guidance for gradually reopening churches.

The Episcopal Church in Colorado describes its phases as "seasons." Kansas Bishop Cathleen Bascom invoked John 14:2 as she envisioned the "dwell-

ing places" that congregations will move through as they reopen.

All guidance, however, comes with the caveat that plans are subject to change, especially as coronavirus outbreaks flare up, so with every step forward, bishops caution, prepare to take a step backward.

"If the coronavirus resurges, we may again have to shelter-in-place," Bascom said in her May 2 letter to the diocese.



Photo/courtesy St. James Church

St. James Episcopal Church in South Pasadena, Calif. posts a lawn sign during the COVID-19 pandemic.

Dallas Bishop George Sumner's guidance allows congregations to move to Step B — gatherings of up to 10 people — by May 17 except in Dallas, Denton and Collin counties, where higher numbers of coronavirus cases have been reported. Bascom said churches in her diocese, which encompasses the eastern half of Kansas, may resume in-person worship on May 24.

The Diocese of Texas has asked congregations that wish to resume some form of in-person worship to develop and submit plans to their regional bishop for approval. A case-by-case approach is being considered in the Diocese of Oklahoma as well.

"It's not a one-size-fits-all," Oklahoma Bishop Ed Konieczny told ENS. Some rural congregations in Oklahoma are just 10 people, all of whom may be family members, he said, while several of the diocese's largest congregations top 1,000 members.

Oklahoma Gov. Kevin Stitt allowed churches to reopen starting May 1, but doing so safely is a challenge for Episcopal congregations. "Inherently, as a Eucharistic body, we have physical contact, whether it's through exchange of the peace or distribution of Communion," Konieczny said.

The challenge of reopening is evident in the guidelines being issued by dioceses and in the deliberations underway by

their congregations, starting with distancing requirements. To ensure individual worshippers or family groups sit at least 6 feet apart, church leaders will need to mark their worship spaces.

"You must figure this out in advance by measuring your church space with tape measure in hand before taking this step," Sumner said in his message.

Worshippers likely will be asked to wear masks to lessen the risk of transmitting infection. The Diocese of Maine's guidelines recommend providing masks, as needed, to people when they arrive. The traditional Sunday morning greeting won't be the same as before either.

"Worship leaders cannot greet people at the back of the nave with hand-shaking and hugging," according to Maine's guidelines. "Consider what this means and how connections can still occur."

Passing offertory plates is another practice that may disappear during the pandemic. The Diocese of Maine suggests finding an alternative that minimizes contact, such as a central basket where offerings can be dropped.

"The world around us has changed. We are changed. If we think of the next couple months as simply resuming what we did earlier this year, we will be disappointed. God calls us to give thanks for what was and to move forward in trust and gentleness," Maine Bishop Thomas Brown said.

Church leaders also are rethinking their bulletins and how they are distributed. For example, printing a comprehensive bulletin could allow congregations to remove prayer books and hymnals from the pews during the pandemic.

The threat from the coronavirus initially could prevent choirs from returning as well, and churches may need to advise worshippers not to sing along with the hymns, due to concerns that singing could spread the virus farther than 6 feet. Cortiñas, the Texas rector, may limit music to one or two strong singers, without the congregation's participation.

Some dioceses are asking congregations to develop plans for recording the names of people who attend church, for use in contact tracing if a worshipper becomes sick with COVID-19. Church leaders also must clean and sanitize facilities after services. ■

Episcopal ministries respond to domestic abuse, mental health and gun violence concerns associated with COVID-19

By Paula Schaap
Episcopal News Service

As states and cities continue to ask citizens to shelter in place to slow the spread of the new coronavirus, Episcopal-affiliated ministries that serve victims of domestic violence are finding new approaches to caring for the vulnerable in their communities.

As COVID-19 cases and deaths in the U.S. continued to rise, incidents of reported domestic abuse have increased. Ministering to those most at risk can be hard, as victims and survivors could be sheltering in place with their abusers.

The Rev. Becca Stevens, founder and president of Thistle Farms — a non-profit based in Nashville, Tenn., that aids female survivors of prostitution, trafficking and addiction — told Episcopal News Service that COVID-19 has made it harder to respond to the special needs of the community.

“So we’re asking, ‘How can we respond in a way that’s life-giving and respectful?’” she said.

Thistle Farms runs a two-year residential program for women that focuses on recovering from addiction and becoming self-sufficient. Part of the program provides education and group therapy to women in prison who are expected to go into the residential program once they are released. Even after women graduate from Thistle Farms, they’re still considered part of the community.

For women who are a part of the community but no longer in residence at Thistle Farms, the COVID-19 quarantine can pose added stress. Even before the pandemic, there was always a chance that residents would go back into abusive relationships once they left the support of the shelter residence, Stevens said.

“Women will graduate and go back into dangerous relationships even after doing heroic work and recovering and getting off the streets,” she said. “This has been a concern of ours for a long time.”

Plus, people in recovery have a fear of relapse even under the best of cir-



Photo/Gillian Flaccus/AP

Police caution tape surrounds a playground in Lake Oswego, Ore. Gov. Kate Brown issued a statewide stay-at-home order that closed all playgrounds and sports facilities.

cumstances, let alone during a terribly disruptive public health crisis, she added.

Since the pandemic began, Thistle Farms staff and volunteers have included a card in their “porch-to-porch” delivery service that brings food and other necessities to people in the Thistle Farms community who are no longer in residence. The card says: “This is for you. Love, your community. Please let us know if you need anything.”

In Texas, an Episcopal church-based behavioral health ministry serving low-income Hispanic communities has moved its counseling services online because of COVID-19 but acknowledges that asking women to shelter at home with abusers potentially increases the danger.

“We are telling people, ‘Stay home to stay safe,’ but not all homes are safe,” said Marisol Salgado, a bilingual counselor who runs the behavioral health ministry at St. Paul’s/San Pablo Episcopal Church in Houston.

“I have clients who I cannot call because it’s a safety issue,” she said. “It’s not safe to talk to me in their homes.”

The Rev. Ed Gómez, vicar at St. Paul’s, set up the program with help from Episcopal Relief and Development in response to the visible increase in anxiety, depression, isolation, sexual violence and assault associated with Hurricane Harvey and its devastating aftereffects on Spanish-speaking communities served by Episcopal churches across Houston.

Harvey-related unemployment and

financial problems increased the risk of family violence, according to a study by the Texas Council on Family Violence. Plus, a perceived stigma associated with seeking mental health counseling in Latino communities creates an additional barrier to providing services, said Gómez.

“People will go for everything to their clergy, but I’m not a therapist,” he said. “How you relate to Jesus is one thing. How [a situation] affects your drinking, your domestic relations, is another thing.”

Job losses in low-income communities where undocumented

workers cannot access unemployment benefits put additional stress on families, which worries Gómez. “After San Pablo had 700 people come for a food distribution event, someone left a voicemail message with the church to say thank you, and they started to cry,” Gómez said.

“This person was really in need, rally in pain, really in fear,” he said. “That kind of thank you — it’s depressing.”

Texas began a phased-in, limited opening of certain businesses on May 1. Though Gómez said it would be a relief for some people to get back to work, his church community members often are viewed as cheap labor.

“It is highly doubtful that [employers] will provide a safe work environment by providing masks and gloves,” he said in an email.

Salgado’s concern about how to contact people still in abusive home situations was echoed by the Rev. Paul Feuerstein, a social worker and priest. Feuerstein is the founder and CEO of Barrier Free Living, which operates an emergency domestic violence shelter for people with disabilities in New York City.

Feuerstein estimated that about 50% of the people who are in touch with Barrier Free Living counselors — now only via phone or video — are living with their abusers.

“That’s a real challenge because being in touch with folks can be dangerous,” he

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Church pantries help Diocese of Indianapolis step up food ministries during pandemic

Diocese of Indianapolis

In 2016, parishioners at St. Mary's Church in Martinsville, Ind., built a tiny wooden pantry in a lighted alcove just outside the front door and hung out a sign saying, "Take what you need. Donate what you can." And so the Little Free Pantry was born.

Four years later, the pantry is one of several feeding ministries affiliated with Diocese of Indianapolis churches that are still functioning in the midst of the COVID-19 pandemic.

"I have encountered multiple people making withdrawals and seen the desperation in their faces and heard it in their voices," Steve Speth, who runs the pantry, wrote in a recent letter to supporters.

Others food ministries fighting hunger in the diocese include The Storehouse Food Pantry, a sizable ecumenical ministry operating at the former site of St. John's, Speedway; the Mid-North Food Pantry, an ecumenical venture housed in the outreach center at Trinity, Indianapolis; Sister Joanna's Table at St. Paul's in Evansville; and the virtual shelf-stocking work of parishioners at St. Matthew's, Indianapolis.

The economic dislocation caused by the pandemic has intensified the need for feeding ministries, even as necessary safety precautions have made such ministries harder to conduct.

Rich Hoerger, who manages the Storehouse Food Pantry, said last Saturday's distribution to 273 families, totaling some 1,165 people, was the largest in

the pantry's history, easily eclipsing the 190 families with 928 members served last Thanksgiving.

The pantry was ready for the influx, however, largely because Hoerger watches the news. "I'd go home, turn on the TV, and then I'd call up the volunteers and say, maybe we should pack another 40 boxes."

He did that twice, and the pantry had almost exactly the right number of boxes ready when cars began to roll, just a few at a time, into the former church building's parking lot on Saturday.

"We had our regulars and then some," he said. "There were a lot of people we'd never seen before."

St. Matthew's in Indianapolis is in the unique position of having a commercial kitchen, but no on-site food pantry. The parish is home to We Run This, a culinary entrepreneurship program that helps young people learn culinary and business skills. The program, which St. Matthew's helps sustain through a partnership with the Kheprw Institute, an Indianapolis community empowerment organization, has maintained enough customers to keep its doors open during the pandemic.

"The kitchen has various vendors it works with — a food truck, ice cream guy, a guy who runs a hot dog stand, a new caterer — and they are going in and filling those orders," says the Rev. Frank Impicciche, rector at St. Matthew's. "They cook, they package, and then people who ordered it come to the door."

The parish has had to be more creative in helping to supply two local food



Photo/Peggy Miller

Donations from Martinsville, Ind., residents help restock the Little Free Pantry at St. Mary's Church.

pantries on the east side, Community Outreach Ministry East Side (COME) at Cumberland First Baptist Church and Irvington Community Advocacy Network (ICAN).

"We didn't want to have people driving around, buying things and dropping them off," Impicciche said, so parishioners went online. Through Amazon, Walmart and other merchants, they supplied COME with paper products, laundry detergent and toiletries and ICAN with canned goods, fruits and vegetables.

Sister Joanna's Table, a Saturday community meal at St. Paul's, Evansville, has converted its sit-down dinner to a bag lunch program since the pandemic took hold.

"For the past five Saturdays, while the halls remained empty, devoid of the tables filled with guests, congregations have been providing to-go meals, sometimes hot in takeout boxes, other times bag lunches," said the Rev. Holly Rankin Zaher, rector at St. Paul's. "Instead of serving teams of 10 to 15 people, congregations work to minimize exposure

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THE EPISCOPAL CHURCH

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said. “So we have to let the women take the lead — because oftentimes they are waiting for the abuser to leave the house.”

Calls and text messages to Barrier Free Living’s office phone and hotline dropped significantly during the first couple of weeks after New York Gov. Andrew Cuomo issued a stay-at-home order on March 22, Feuerstein said.

“I think it was the phenomenon of being at home with abusers and not knowing how to reach out for help,” he said.

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and work with a skeleton crew. Instead of a food service line, guests are served through the door with staff running a to-go meal and some bread out to people or cars as they stop by to discourage people congregating.”

Sister Joanna’s Table has been in the area for over 25 years, Zaher said, and it is still feeding people. “Volunteers masked and gloved are making it all work.”

The Mid-North Food Pantry is one of the few feeding ministries that is still able to offer clients some element of choice. The pantry has moved its operations from the basement of the Trinity Outreach Center into the rear parking lot for shifts on Monday, Wednesday and Friday. Clients receive tickets for time entrance and have a chance to consult with volunteer staff about the contents of the bags they receive.

The Rev. Julia Whitworth, rector at Trinity, Indianapolis, said the parish has shifted resources once devoted to its temporarily discontinued Sunday hot meal program to the food pantry, which is now the only in-person, on-site ministry occurring at Trinity.

“We believe more people can get more sustaining assistance through groceries than through one hot meal on Sundays,” she said. The pantry, which usually serves 150 to 200 clients a month, served 600 clients in March. Most clients arrive on foot, Whitworth said.

The pinch created by food shortages is being felt in cities big and small. Before the pandemic, the Little Food Pantry used to get stocked three or four times a week. Now, thanks in part to a grant from the Morgan County Community Foundation, it is being stocked twice a day. ■

But the calls have picked up since then.

New York City has been hit especially hard by COVID-19, with more than 190,000 cases and over 19,500 deaths.

Barrier Free Living’s shelter was slightly under capacity before COVID-19 arrived. Now it is at capacity. The shelter does have separate apartments for residents — a boon in a time when group living situations can hasten viral spread.

Nevertheless, group activities have come to a halt, which can be especially hard on children who live with a parent in the shelter. Housing parents and children escaping abusive homes requires extra precautions, even for something as straightforward as getting children online for school.

Feuerstein himself had to take iPads to the children at the shelter instead of having them delivered because the shelter location is confidential.

Episcopal Church members also have stepped up advocacy against gun violence as weapon sales rise during the pandemic. A gun in the home is an added risk for domestic violence and suicide.

“Sadly, for some people, staying home does not mean staying safe, particularly where there is a history or risk of domestic violence,” Connecticut Bishop Ian

Douglas, co-convenor of Bishops United Against Gun Violence, told ENS, “or where there is a history or risk of matters of depression or other forms of mental illness.”

At a time when all eyes are trained on COVID-19 and its effects on communities and businesses, Douglas says he doesn’t want the issue of guns to be “lost in the mix,” as he believes the pressures of isolation and lost employment could exacerbate gun violence.

He pointed out that many bishops have access to their elected officials, so Bishops United Against Gun Violence is encouraging them to contact their representatives and advocate for sensible gun legislation.

“Then we ask bishops to speak with their clergy to keep a watchful eye out in situations where there might be an increased risk for suicide or domestic violence,” Douglas said, “or if they know parishioners who suffer from depression, or domestic violence — and not be afraid to ask the question: Is there a gun in the home?” ■

Paula Schaap is an Episcopalian and a writer and editor who covers religion, science and finance.



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A Pentecost Story



By Thea Chimento

IT'S GETTING INTO Pentecost season, which for many of our congregations means a Baptism Sunday is on the horizon. Since we can't be together to worship right now, I wanted to share one of my favorite memories from happier times, about a baptism that went hilariously sideways. Some identifying details have been obscured, but the story itself is true.

It was about 10-ish years ago at a Church That Shall Remain Nameless. I had not long been sojourning with the Episcopal Church, and in my tradition of origin we didn't do baptisms on specified feast days and we certainly didn't do them in public. So I was surprised that anyone would subject themselves to a public dunking.

There were about 10 kids getting bap-

tized, and the families were all lined up in order in front of the font. Bringing up the rear was a three- or four-year-old little guy in seersucker short pants and suit jacket and one of those bowl cuts that looks vaguely adorable on very young children but totally obnoxious by the time they hit five. All the other kids were infants, which is to say that some of them slept through the whole thing and some of them were protesting loudly.

Our hero watched the ceremony with the somewhat amused, contemptuous air appropriate to one who has graduated to the privileges attendant on wearing Pull-Ups and independent locomotion and knows it. This, he seemed to say, is what happens to you when you are small and weak and

potato-like. Your parents stuff you into a stupid white dress, and cheerfully hand you over to a person in funny clothes, who gives you a bath in front of a bunch of people. Doubtless this is how they select the passive sheep suitable for adult manipulation, whereas I, he thought proudly to himself, would choose death before such dishonorable treatment.

The deductive reasoning skills of this small child being apparently above average, it eventually dawned on him that it was a little odd that he was in the same line as all the larval humans receiving this undignified treatment, while the kids his own age were all hanging out in the pews. Surely, if he were being honored in a

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manner commensurate with his status as One Who Is Toilet-Trained, he would be with his peers, watching the gladiatorial contest from the seats of the Colosseum, as it were, rather than the piste.

He began to saunter over towards the pews with the other kids, hands in pockets. His fate, however, was sealed. His mother bent swiftly, snatched him by the suit collar and tugged him back to her side.

What first could perhaps be excused as natural if contemptible maternal anxiety quickly assumed more sinister proportions. Again our young hero sauntered over towards where his peers were congregated, and again he was swiftly recalled. He shook off his mother's hand and yet again made for the pews, his mother yet again abruptly arresting his progress. Like Isaac on Mt. Moriah, the scales fell from our hero's eyes as he realized the sacrifice he assumed had been prepared was, in fact, himself.

Some children might have collapsed in a wailing temper tantrum. But our hero was made of sterner stuff. If he had to go, by God! he would not go quietly. He threw one calculating, withering glance at his mother and took off running as fast as his fat little legs would carry him, yelling "NOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOO!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!" at the top of his lungs.

He streaked down the aisle like Usain Bolt setting a new world record for the 100-metre sprint, legs flashing in the light from the stained-glass windows. His mother, who was marking the occasion by wearing fabulous 5-inch heels, was not in any shape to catch him, and the congregation was too shocked to stop him. On he ran, down the main aisle, out the narthex doors and into the sunlight.

His one tactical mistake was in not hanging a right past the font and heading for one of the side doors where there was no usher. For a brief, shining moment, the sun lit him up as he made his way out into the courtyard. But Fate is cruel. The usher standing outside the main doors, a tall and muscled young man with a vaguely military bearing, swiftly stuck out a foot, and our hero went sprawling.

The usher tried to pick up the child; our hero, being well-schooled in guerilla toddler resistance, instantly went limp in the classic dead weight technique. The usher's Military Occupational Specialty

had apparently been toddler counter-insurgency tactics, because he calmly grabbed the child by his shoulder and opposite hip and carried him football-style back to the font, with our hero kicking, flailing, and screaming "NO! NO! NO! NO! NO! NO! NO! NO! NO! NO!"

Our hero was flailing so hard that the priest could not hold him; instead, the (very patient) usher lifted the child up to the font, still screaming. The priest faced up to his duty, gently pushing the child's head down towards the font. Our hero began shaking his head, bobbing and weaving in an effort to avoid the priest's hand. Not for him the lamb-like submission. He howled defiance in the face of certain death. They would kill him; but the world would bear witness to his fate.

"Chester Damien ("NO! NO! NO!"), I baptize thee ("NO!") in the name of the Father ("NO!"), and of the Son ("NON-ONONONO!!!"), and of the Holy Spirit. Amen." ("NOOOOOOOOOO!!!") In one final indignity, his parents held his head still while the priest applied the chrism. "Chester Damien, thou art sealed by the Holy Spirit ("NO! NO! NO! NO! NO! NO!") and marked as Christ's own forever. ("NOHOOOOOO!") Amen."

It was done. He had suffered the deepest betrayal yet known to him; he stood unsupported by kith or kin; the world had been revealed as a dark, devouring place where the best are cut down in their prime because little minds cannot bear to see them succeed. And yet his head was bloody but unbowed. His body had been subdued; but his soul was unconquered. His valiant doomed struggle would be long remembered.

That kid is probably now in high school, and I bet the story of his baptism is one that gets brought up at family gatherings, and will be forever, world without end, amen. And I'm sure that by now "the Holy Spirit, who [began] a good work in him, continue[s] to direct and uphold [him] in the service of Christ and his kingdom." But I hope that somewhere in his heart, there is a secret sense of pride that all the forces of the Church Militant could not conquer such a one. ■

Thea Chimento is a public servant and a member of St. Anne's Episcopal Church in Annapolis, Md. This story was originally published on the Episcopal Café website, www.episcopalcafe.com.



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Episcopalians call for justice in Georgia after killing of black jogger by white attackers

By David Paulsen
Episcopal News Service

Episcopalians in Georgia are adding their voices to the growing calls for justice in Glynn County after a white father and son were accused of killing an unarmed black man while he was out jogging on Feb. 23.

Authorities didn't make arrests in the killing of Ahmaud Arbery until May 7, after cellphone video surfaced appearing to show Arbery's death. On the day of the arrests, 29 local religious and civic leaders, including six Episcopal priests, issued a statement lamenting "the tragic and senseless loss of a precious human life."

"We know of no explanation for this lack of justice," they wrote. "The failure of leadership within the Glynn County Police Department to immediately refer this case to the Georgia Bureau of Investigation is a stain on our community. Our elected officials must not accept the status quo. It is time for positive change."

The case has drawn intense national interest in the past week amid questions



Photo/ENS

The Rev. Tom Purdy leads a group of Episcopalians walking to the Glynn County courthouse in Brunswick, Ga., for a demonstration over the killing of Ahmaud Arbery.

about why it took so long to file murder and assault charges against Gregory McMichael, 64, a former investigator for the local prosecutor's office, and his 34-year-old son, Travis McMichael. The pair originally told investigators that they had chased Arbery in a pickup truck and shot him after suspecting him of being tied to recent break-ins in the area.

Many expressed outrage at the killing, saying Arbery's only offense appeared to be a willingness to go "running while black" in the McMichaels' neighborhood

on the Atlantic Coast in south Georgia near Brunswick. On May 8, runners around the world dedicated 2.23 miles — representing Feb. 23, the day he died — in honor of Arbery on what would have been his 26th birthday and posted on social media with the hashtag #irunwithmaud.

"There is no place for vigilantism and racism in our tight-knit and loving community," the local leaders said in their May 7 statement, which was shared on Facebook by the Brunswick branch of the NAACP. "We have a proud history of rejecting hate which

we must now all draw on. Because this happened to one of ours, it happened to all of us."

Georgia Bishop Scott Benhase blogged about the killing on the diocese's website: "Ahmaud Arbery should still be alive and with his family."

Georgia Bishop-elect Frank Logue, who serves the diocese as canon to the ordinary, thanked Glynn County priests for speaking out and amplified their message on Facebook. "I join with so many others in praying for his family and praying for those who chased and shot him and their families as well in my prayers each morning and evening," said Logue, who is scheduled to be consecrated as bishop on May 30. He also expects to preach at a liturgy from Glynn County on June 7 that will be livestreamed by the diocese.

Among the religious leaders who added their names to the joint statement was the Rev. Tom Purdy, rector at Christ Church, Frederica in Brunswick. On May 8, Purdy took to the streets of Brunswick to lead a group of Episcopalians — all wearing face masks as a precaution during the COVID-19 pandemic — as they walked from St. Mark's Episcopal Church to the nearby Glynn County courthouse a few blocks away.

At the courthouse, they joined a large crowd for a morning demonstration "to stand for justice in our community," Purdy said on Facebook. ■



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Netflix series about Madam C.J. Walker should have cited her generosity

By Tyrone McKinley Freeman

The Netflix series “Self Made: Inspired by the Life of Madam C.J. Walker” brings to life part of a fascinating rags-to-riches tale I’ve been researching for the past 10 years.

Walker, widely documented to have been America’s first self-made female millionaire, made her fortune building an Indianapolis-based beauty products company that served black women across the U.S. and overseas. Today it offers a product line through Sephora.

Oscar-winner Octavia Spencer stars in the miniseries about the African American entrepreneur originally named Sarah Breedlove. Born shortly after emancipation in 1867 on a cotton plantation in Louisiana to a formerly enslaved family, she later adapted the initials and last name of her third husband — played by Blair Underwood in the series. The show imagines Walker’s struggles and successes in a dramatic reinterpretation of the historical record.

I’ve been studying Walker’s archival collections for my upcoming book “Madam C.J. Walker’s Gospel of Giving: Black Women’s Philanthropy during Jim Crow” and speaking about her to audiences around the country for years. I screened the series with great anticipation of how her lifelong generosity and activism would be portrayed in this account that “Indianapolis Monthly” described as having “fictional characters, invented moments, and a few surreal sequences.”

Her philanthropic legacy didn’t make the cut — aside from a few visual footnotes just before final credits roll. Those footnotes touch on her charitable giving to black colleges, social services and activism with the NAACP.

While viewers will enjoy the series, I want them to learn that Walker didn’t just live a life of hard-won opulence. She exemplified black women’s generosity. Her philanthropy and activism imbued every aspect of her daily life. “I am not and never have been ‘close-fisted,’ for all who know me will tell you that I am a liberal hearted woman,” Walker told the audience of the 1913 National Negro League

Business meeting sponsored by prominent black leader Booker T. Washington.

Walker distinguished herself on a philanthropic landscape dominated by white people. Men like John D. Rockefeller and Andrew Carnegie turned to large-scale philanthropy after spending their lives accumulating wealth. In contrast, Walker’s giving began in earnest when she was a poor young widowed mother struggling in St. Louis. She gave along the way from what she had, rather than waiting.

She had much in common with other black churchwomen, club women, educators and activists. Like Mary McLeod Bethune, Nannie Helen Burroughs and Ida B. Wells-Barnett — and tens of thousands of other working and middle class black women — Walker embodied a versatile generosity that sought to meet communal needs and topple widespread discrimination.

The African Methodist Episcopal (AME) Church figured largely in her generosity. Its teachings on charity, activism on social and political issues, building of schools across the South, and missions work at home and abroad shaped Walker’s understanding of Christianity. In the 1890s while in her twenties, she was mentored by AME church women, and eventually served alongside them in the community helping the poor, while



Photo/Amanda Matlovich/Netflix

Octavia Spencer, left, stars in “Self Made,” along with Blair Underwood.

still struggling herself. Later, in a 1914 interview with the Indianapolis Freeman newspaper, Walker invoked the “cheerful giver” cited in II Corinthians 9:7 as a fundamental Scripture in her life.

Walker was a highly prized donor in the black community. Constantly solicited, she gave money to black-serving organizations across the Midwest and the South.

The Netflix miniseries briefly references her gifts to social services. She supported organizations like Flanner House in Indianapolis, which helped African Americans get jobs, an education and childcare. She made sure that poor families could eat at Christmastime.

The Indianapolis Freeman, a black newspaper, reported in 1915 how her company’s office resembled a grocery store due to all the gift baskets that were filled with food. In 1918, she gave

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US\$500 to support the National Association of Colored Women’s campaign to purchase and preserve Cedar Hill, home of abolitionist Frederick Douglass, which still stands today in Washington, D.C.

Walker lacked formal education but she was a lifelong learner who donated thousands of dollars to the Tuskegee Institute in Alabama and other black schools.

She also patronized the arts, supporting Indianapolis painters such as William Edouard Scott and John Wesley Hardrick, whom she wanted to help gain national stature as an artist.

In addition, Walker belonged to important networks of women that were advancing the cause of freedom from the Jim Crow era’s racism and sexism.

She helped the poor through the Mite Missionary Society of St. Paul’s African Methodist Episcopal Church in St. Louis. She supported the National Association of Colored Women, which provided educational and social services to black communities around the country, and advocated for changing public policies.

Walker also expressed her generosity

by using her voice to speak out against the injustices of Jim Crow discrimination and oppression. She drew attention to sick and injured black soldiers during World War I by visiting and entertaining them at military camps in the Midwest. To black and white audiences, she spoke out publicly about black soldiers’ patriotic sacrifice overseas for freedoms denied them at home, and her full expectation that such freedoms be granted upon their return.

At her first national convention of her sales agents held in Philadelphia, she and her agents collectively raised their voices through a telegram against lynching sent to President Woodrow Wilson. She wanted the government to make lynching a federal crime.

Walker also advocated for temperance, women’s suffrage, female empowerment and civil rights. She secured a pardon for a black man jailed for an alleged murder in Mississippi. And she shared her own encouraging story of success with audiences around the country as an affirmative testimony of the value and dignity of black life amid pervasive hateful and hurtful Jim Crow stereotypes.

I hope that many viewers who see

“Self Made” and feel inspired by Walker’s story consider a new way to binge on TV: “Netflix and Engage.”

Learn more about Madam Walker’s story by reading the biographical account written by her great-great-granddaughter — the journalist, A’Lelia Bundles — which inspired the series. Explore other chapters in black women’s history.

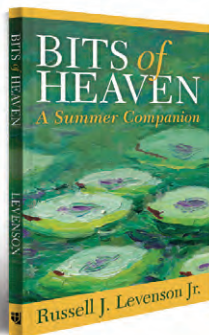
Surf Madam Walker’s electronic archive of 40,000 items at the Indiana Historical Society. Consider her influence on the musical and fashion icon Rihanna and today’s beauty culture industry. Visit her company’s former headquarters in Indianapolis. Admire the architecture of her New York mansion where women of color will be trained to become entrepreneurs.

Give to charity. March for a cause.

Like Walker, you may make a difference in someone’s life. ■

Tyrone McKinley Freeman is assistant professor of philanthropic studies and director of undergraduate programs at the Lilly Family School of Philanthropy, Indiana University–Purdue University Indianapolis. This article was first published at www.theconversation.com.

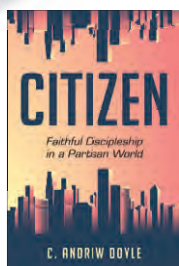
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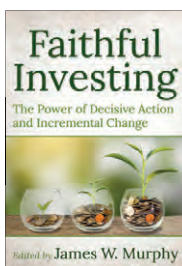
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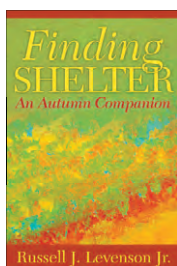
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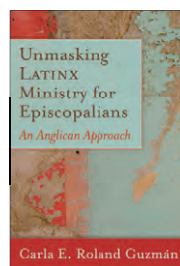
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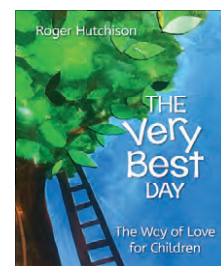
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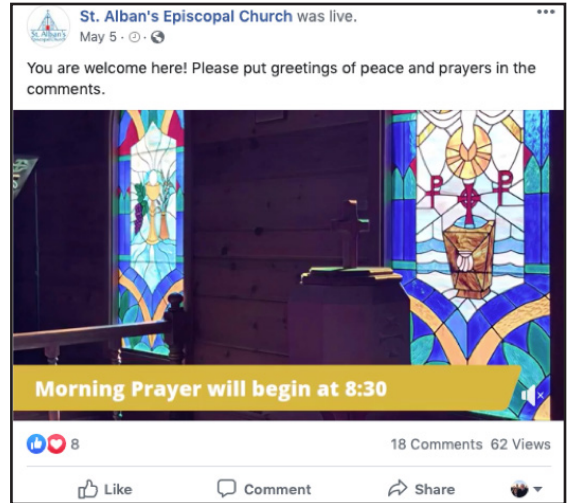
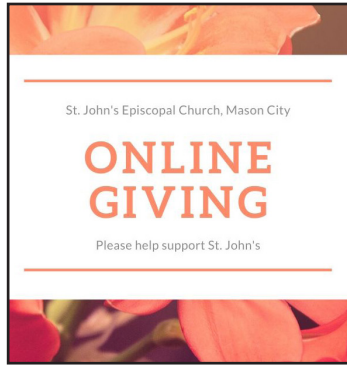
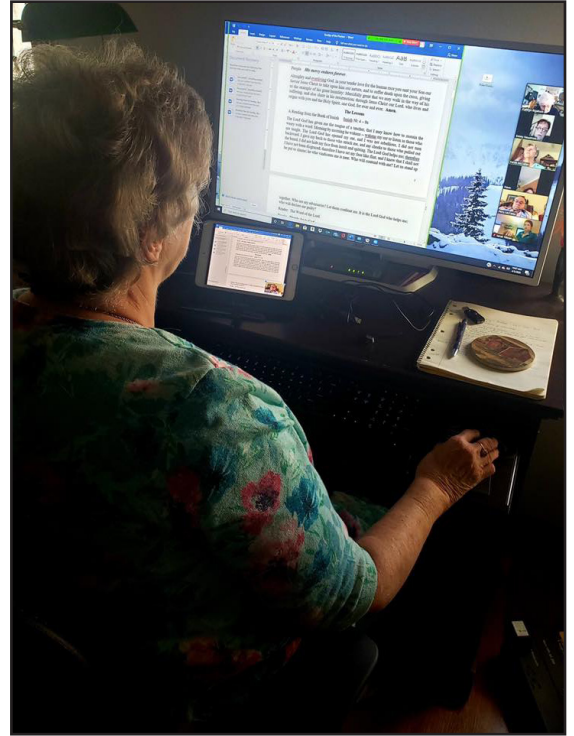


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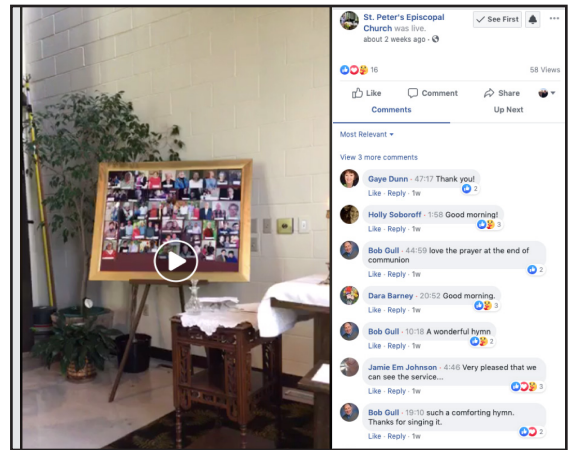


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Photos (from left to right, top to bottom): members of Trinity Cathedral in Davenport gathered by Zoom, St. John's in Glenwood worshipping by Zoom, Mark Babcock from St. Paul's Cathedral in Des Moines waves to cars after one of his weekly Eastertide carillon concerts that are also live on Facebook, St. John's in Mason City encourages online giving, the Rev. Kevin Goodrich, O.P. leads noonday prayer through Facebook Live, Trinity in Iowa City continues Church School using Zoom, St. Alban's in Spirit Lake offers Morning Prayer on Facebook Live, Trinity in Waterloo makes palm crosses available for pick up in a safe way on Palm Sunday, St. Peter's in Bettendorf includes photos of the members as part of their worship via Facebook Live





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