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Iowa Connections

Finding the Simple Way

Bishop Scarfe's address to convention

This year through Engaging All Disciples, we have been giving thanks to God and celebrating one another as we are sent out in ministry. And my thoughts first went to the examples of discipleship recognized not only by our congregations but by our communities.

For example, we celebrate with the people of St. Timothy's the recognition of both their priests, Mary and Milton Cole-Duvall as citizens of the year by the West Des Moines City Council. They are joined by Cynthia Danielson of St. Michael's, Mount Pleasant and Fred Steinbach of St. Andrew's, Chariton who were acknowledged in their local newspapers for their outstanding contributions as local citizens. And later this month Mary Jane Oakland is to be recognized with the Heartland Global Health Advocate award for her work in Ghana, eSwatini (formerly Swaziland), Pakistan, and elsewhere around the world. Jesus said that we would be known as His disciples by our love, and when society at large is noting what's going on in their local Christian people, that is a good sign.

These are just the references that have come to the surface in outstanding ways, and you know others equally noteworthy whose names may not have risen to that level of attention. In the small church gatherings in quadrants across the diocese held this year, we called together members of all our smaller congregations in four regional venues.

The focus was celebrating each other and what God was doing in their midst. The quadrants provided an opportunity for each congregation (typically under 25 in average Sunday attendance) to share their experiences and their challenges. There was a scarcity of whining and complaining, and an abundance of declaring the excitement of God at work and the advantages that they felt about being small. At the first quadrant in Emmetsburg, we invited congregations

from the Diocese of Brechin to Zoom into the conversation along with their Bishop. We hope to follow up with an international summit on rural and small churches. A Small Church Core Group has been formed to design this as well as to find ways to keep the encouragement and conversation going.



Bishop Scarfe addresses Convention

You will remember several years ago that Kim Gee and Holly Scherff surveyed the small churches across the diocese which is 50% of us. They reported their findings to the board and to convention; and so I am glad to see how their challenge has been taken up across the diocese, as we hear how God is stirring up Episcopalians in our rural and small towns. It has to be said that three of our small churches are actually our fastest growing congregations. St. Mark's, Maquoketa, with Fr. Bob North, boasts of a 47% increase in average Sunday attendance this year; St. Michael's, Mount Pleasant and St. Andrew's, Chariton along with their priests, Ken Messer and Fred Steinbach respectively, have also seen considerable increase in vitality. St. Andrew's actually can trace a direct line of influence from their Revival in 2017, where its seven members met for a Saturday afternoon revival assisted by the organist from Trinity, Ottumwa. In walked three members of the community—all self-professed lapsed charismatics and hungry for the Spirit. One returned rejoicing to her Methodist Church, and the other two joined St. Andrew's. At my visitation this year, I heard the testimony of a 74 year-old's baptism with his wife. "What triggered that?" I asked. They had been invited by the couple who had found their new home at St. Andrew's during the Revival. Later a family whom I couldn't remember seeing there before, walked in with two strapping high schoolers—clearly acolytes, and so they were; and gladly. "How did you find St. Andrew's?" I asked. "Oh, we live next to those two" pointing to the older couple. From seven they are now twenty-four, and wondering if they will still fit the small church classification for much longer.

I know that we are growing in several places. Our overall statistics tell us so for 2018, as we are one of 20 dioceses in The Episcopal Church who can say that. Thanks to our Presiding Bishop's increasing profile, and the hunger people have for inclusive churches, God is helping us find our voice. At St. Mark's, Fort Dodge, sixteen people, mostly adults, were prepared for confirmation, reception and re-affirmation. And

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Alfred the Great, 26 October 2019

Dear sisters and brothers in Christ,

Today, at the Diocesan Convention, I announced that “I believe that it is time to draw a finishing line across our time together as Bishop and People. And though this will be my penultimate Convention, 2019 is the last Convention when you won’t be obsessed with the search for the next Bishop of Iowa”.

Therefore, I have called for the election of the tenth Bishop of Iowa, sometime in Spring 2021, with a tentative date for the consecration of September 18th, 2021. It is my intention to retire officially on that date, as I look to hand over the Diocesan crozier to my successor.

Nothing concentrates the mind like a deadline, and we have reached it. At the November Board retreat, Bishop Todd Ousley, Bishop for Pastoral Development of The Episcopal Church, will be present and he will advise on the schedule for the search, election and transition periods. The Standing Committee, and members of the Diocesan staff will also be present at the gathering.

That an English King, Alfred the Great, is honored on this particular day is, on the surface, about as relevant to us as his statue standing in its prominent place in the middle of the road in downtown Winchester. And yet, there are two elements of the collect for Alfred that echo something of our common life over these past decades. “Awake in us a keen desire to increase our understanding while we are in this world, and an eager longing to reach that endless life where all will be made clear”.

Together we have seen ourselves “In mission with Christ through each and all”. Ministry resides across the whole body of Christ, regardless of status and background. We have sought to express ourselves as One Church with many locations, and like Alfred have been very conscious that God’s call to us to express and live the Gospel has been “for a time like this”. Alfred rose in a time of conflict, and we too have lived through the conflict of human sexual identity, and the struggle of the Church to stretch out its arms of love to embrace all God’s creation. We have been called, fed and sent through Revival and the subsequent years of growing Iowa leaders, and engaging each other in discipleship. My prayer is to leave you walking your neighborhoods and building relationships of love with all around you, satisfied more to fulfill the actions of Christ, rather than settle with mere Christ-like thoughts and feelings.

Your gracious, patient and generous spirit has made me your Bishop, always humbled and proud to be “the Bishop of Iowa” and never merely “from Iowa”. To stand before General Convention in 2018 and describe your Revivals was one of the greatest honors of my life. God only knows the sparks we have set alight through that witness. I am sure that some are saying, “Well, if Iowa can do it, so can we”.

I know also that the Spirit softly whispers the words she put into the writing of the apostle Paul: “Consider your own call, brothers and sisters: not many of you were wise by human standards, not many of noble birth. But God chose what is foolish in the world to confound the wise; God chose what is weak in the world to shame the strong; God chose what is low and despised in the world, things that are not, to reduce to nothing things that are, so that no one might boast in the presence of God. God is the source of your life in Jesus Christ, who became for us wisdom from God, righteousness and sanctification and redemption, in order that, as it is written, “Let the one who boasts, boast in the Lord”.

In the love and peace of Christ,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Alan Scarfe". The signature is fluid and cursive, with a small cross symbol at the beginning.

The Rt. Rev. Alan Scarfe, Bishop of Iowa



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

December

- 1 Bishop's Visitation with Trinity Cathedral, Davenport
- 6-8 Young Adults Advent Retreat, Rock River Retreat Center
- 12 Priests in New/Transitional Situations (PINTS)
- 13-14 Commission on Ministry
- 14 Ordinations to the diaconate, St. Paul's Episcopal Cathedral, Des Moines 2:00pm
- 15 Bishop's Visitation with Grace Church, Boone
- 22 Bishop's Visitation with Grace Church, Cedar Rapids
- 24-24 Bishop at St. Paul's Cathedral Christmas services
- 29 Bishop's Visitation with Trinity Church, Denison

Diocesan offices will be closed December 24-January 1

January

- 17-19 Diocesan Ski Trip
- 19 Bishop's visit to St. Andrew's, Des Moines
- 24-25 Commission on Ministry
- 26 Bishop's Visitation with St. Thomas', Sioux City

February

- 1 Diocesan Board of Directors
- 2 Bishop's Visitation with St. Paul's, Durant
- 8 Faithful Innovations gathering with the Bishop at St. Paul's, Grinnell with St. Paul's, Marshalltown and St. Stephen's, Newton, 11:00-3:00pm
- 9 Bishop's Visitation with St. Paul's, Grinnell
- 16 Bishop's Visitation with St. Luke's, Fort Madison
- 23 Bishop's Vistation with Grace Church, Decorah

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

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Front cover: A crisp winter day illustrates many intricate details of nature. Taken at Iowa State University, Ames, Iowa. Photographer: Aaron Eckley, member at Grace, Cedar Rapids

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Winter 2019

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Bishop Scarfe's address to convention, *continued*

this was during a transition period of a rector search. A local Catholic couple who loved their gay son had had enough “pulpit gay bashing” and heard that The Episcopal Church was different. They found a genuine welcome, and then invited two of their closest couple friends with whom they had grown up from kindergarten through the local Catholic school system. Other couples that made up the confirmation class included a Methodist and her Baptist wife, a gay couple engaged and seeking a place to be married, and some other young people. What at one time motivated some people to exodus from the church—our efforts to be more open to the LGBTQ+ community—is now becoming a vehicle of attraction for people, previously dismissed by the church, to find that God loves them and so do we.

At Fort Dodge people found God with us because we were the ones who would embrace their children, celebrate and applaud their marriages, and rejoice in God's ongoing and always surprising work of salvation in Jesus Christ. Rectors at St. John's, Mason City and St. Luke's, Cedar Falls have also recorded that they are seeing a growing intrigue about faith and The Episcopal Church among people for whom church is a new or forgotten experience. This is inspiring us to grow in courage to share our faith and witness, and to extend our excitement.



We are no longer God's chosen frozen; and if this is not happening around you, I lovingly and humbly invite you to pay attention, and get on board with what God is doing through us. I believe people are increasingly finding the courage of which the apostle Paul spoke to Timothy, when he said “God has not given us a Spirit of fear but of courage, love and a sound mind.” He invited his young disciple to “stir up the gift that is in you.” As God resurrects this Church, I recall the words of a famous Iowan revivalist, Billy Sunday, (also from Fort Dodge) who famously said “if The Episcopal Church wakes up, then, Devil, watch out!”

This year, we have taken a leaf out of our companion diocese of Brechin's play book. Each year they ask each congregation to give a summary of their ministry and challenges from the passing year. We invited you to take stock of your own vitality as congregations and many of you sent in a profile of the year. Please look for the published results in the Congregational Vitality Report. We have given a copy to your congregational leader, or resident clergy person; and there should be one copy for the delegation to share with the congregation. Assessing diocesan vitality is a key element coming from 2018 General Convention and can be expected to be resumed as an item in Baltimore in 2021.

So I come into this Convention with a great sense that we are alive and well, thanks be to God. As we read in the Gospel passage which we have been using for the Engaging All Disciples days' worship, from Luke 10—Jesus declares, on hearing the report of the disciples as they return from mission, having found that even the demons were subject to them in Christ's Name—“I saw Satan falling like lightning from the heavens;” yet he warned them not to rejoice in this but that their names were written in heaven. In other words—rejoice that God knows who you

are and, as Archbishop Tutu would say “loves you terribly!” At every small action of kindness during this divided national climate of ours, every bringing of hope to a despairing person, every sign of companionship to persons fearful of losing everything including their minds, every help offered to someone to come home to God from their lost wandering, Satan falls from heaven. “If it's of God, it's love; and if it's not of love, it's not God.” Whatever our size, to paraphrase C.S. Lewis in *The Screwtape Letters* “God really enjoys people's praises” and we can find imaginative ways to witness to God's grace.

The people of St. John's, Glenwood suffered a tree loss during a severe storm. A huge branch broke off and was headed through the Church roof, only to be stopped by the cross on the top of the Church. Bent over and twisted but not broken, the small cross held up that branch from doing incredible damage. Afterwards they had to cut down the branch and the tree. An eight-foot stump remained. The congregation of six invited a local wood sculptor to “do something holy” with the stump. He shaped it into the Praying Hands. On Engaging All Disciples day, St. John's invited other Episcopal neighbors, as well as the community, for an afternoon of celebrating the power of prayer during which eighteen people came forward for the laying on of hands and anointing. And testimonies were offered to God's grace in responding to our prayers, including that of a young man, now a quadriplegic due to car crash, whose mother brought him to give thanks to God for the power of prayer which they experience together. The broadness of his smile after receiving the laying on of hands was unforgettable.

All of us could do worse than invite ourselves and our neighbors “to do something holy.” This is the kind of thing that brings us hope and energy. We can't ever say how we will survive, but

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Convention address, *continued*

we are to flourish while we exist, and in all things to be the instruments of God's way. The world needs us. And we need to find the joy that comes from being engaged as disciples of Jesus. A group of us experienced such joy recently in a trip to the Synod of the Diocese of Swaziland in eSwatini (Swaziland's new name). Grace, gratitude and generosity were the three elements we observed as key to such a joy filled life in Christ.

And so, after last year's convention, the question arose—how do you follow the Presiding Bishop? One simple answer is that you don't. And you don't try. But where do we go from there? Well, my first inclination was to go global. Invite Rowan Williams or an international

"...what would it mean for us as a diocesan community to find the simple way?"

writer like Francis Spufford, the author of *Unapologetic* with his infamous reference to THHTFTU. And then through a video clip as part of the Ascension Day to Pentecost series "Thy Kingdom Come," I was re-introduced to Shane Claiborne, someone whose message and journey in discipleship I have admired for some time. God has given him a message I pray that we will benefit from hearing, and which is prophetic for our times. In line with his community's desire to seek a simple way of living, it is intriguing to raise the question—what would it mean for us as a diocesan community to find the simple way? That is the banner under which we lay out our plans for this coming year, as we enter into a third year of Revival follow-up.

Talk of finding the simple way seems

**WE ARE CHURCH.
WE CONFESS.
WE BEAR
WITNESS.**



incongruous. The Episcopal Church holds the largest gathering of any legislative body in the world when it meets at General Convention. Our elaborate canons and Prayer Book rubrics dictate how we are to be and we embrace change in increments of every three years. How can we be a simple Church that finds the nimbleness or agility that can take, not just preserve, the Gospel to an ever changing or even increasingly impenetrable or indifferent culture? That means standing with members of We are Church Confessing here in Des Moines; or standing alongside folk at an immigration rally outside a local jail; or marking the anniversary of the Pulse shooting tragedy wearing my collar even while acknowledging that for some that is an unwanted symbol because we have not always been there when discrimination, hatred and oppression has been the experience of those with whom I was seeking to stand. It means circling in solidarity our local Mosques or Synagogues against acts of religious hatred and racial violence.

And even now we continue to play games as a Church with people's relationships—inviting all Bishops to Lambeth but only the spouses of heterosexual couples. I know that some of us are having our boundaries pushed at this convention just by the offering of a defining pronoun on your registry nametag. Someone challenged me as to what that had to do with the Gospel, and my answer is this "how can one believe who has never heard; and how can anyone hear unless someone talks to them?" You have to earn a listening and first that requires a seeing; and we've not

always been very good about that.

And we want to learn how to do that better. This has been the second year of follow up from the Revival (2017). Engaging All Disciples is an effort to allow God to send us out. For some that has meant learning how to welcome, invite and connect, and take courage to share the Good News of God in Christ. For others, as in the Quad Cities for example, it has meant first mapping out the residences of the three Episcopal congregations across the Iowa side of the Quad Cities; and seeing where they overlap and where there are areas with no Episcopal presence, and so, where mission could happen jointly. For yet others Engaging All Disciples has given the opportunity to come together as Episcopalians from separate congregations in the same town, and intentionally getting to know one another, as they sought to do in Iowa City, Cedar Rapids and the Siouxlands.

As you have heard, Engaging All Disciples has two parts. At Summer Ministry School and Retreat this year, we invited coaches in the seven most popular areas of learning identified during the Growing Iowa Leaders year to lead interested parties in cohorts. After the weekend of face to face learning, the cohorts have been meeting via video conference to encourage each other in applying what they are hearing to their local context. I am signed up for a group on "Next Generations of Faith,"



*Mapping exercise at the Engaging All Disciples event at St. Peter's, Bettendorf.
Photo: Meg Wagner*

Convention address, *continued*

mostly about finding a hearing among Millennials and Gen Z populations, but learning ways common to developing relationships with any mission targeted population, including my own “where do we still fit in” wandering Boomers. It is a sad comment on the state of the episcopacy, or perhaps just mine, that I am hard pressed to have meaningful conversations with folk outside of church circles, but I am trying. Let me remind you of the seven topics of the Engaging All Disciples cohorts. They are: Evangelism; Stewardship; Public Advocacy; Liturgical Renewal in worship and worship space; Engaging the Neighborhood; Christian Formation and Discipleship; and Engaging New Generations or New Populations.

This is an operation in the sowing of the seed. There are endless ways of going beyond our church walls; and becoming more faithful to Jesus’ commission to “Go and preach the Gospel.” I anticipate the growth of new initiatives from these efforts, many of which will surprise us, as the Holy Spirit helps us surprise ourselves.

The 2020 Vision for Becoming Beloved Community program is the first of its kind across The Episcopal Church seeking to develop the Beloved Community Initiative diocesan-wide. I am grateful to Meg Wagner and Susanne Watson Epting for their bold founding of The Beloved Community Initiative, which as you have heard is not only our way of fulfilling the

General Convention and House of Bishops mandates on dismantling racism, but has also become a source of partnership with Native Peoples, African American initiatives in the state, and other agencies seeking to work for a new and harmoniously diverse society. We should express our appreciation to Donna Prime, a major contributor to the 2020 Vision curriculum, and to the advisory committees of BCI that come from the local community and from the diocese. It is a spectacular venture which fulfils the Presiding Bishop’s desire to see our evangelistic efforts linked with social reconciliation.

Revival 2017 was the year of inviting the Holy Spirit to call us to our first love. We have followed this up with a year of Growing Iowa Leaders, or being fed with knowledge and more broadened perspectives. As we have shared, this second post-Revival follow up year has sought to engage us as disciples, and to have us see ourselves as sent out by the Spirit to see what God is already doing in our neighborhoods.

This coming year, we will build on that concept of being sent out, and consider what it means to live with Gospel values in our communities.

To further that end, in July of this year, I invited a small team—Elizabeth Popplewell, Stephen Benitz and Traci Ruhland Petty to join me in being trained in the “**Faithful Innovations**” process of **congregational redevelopment**

being created out of Luther Theological Seminary by Dwight Zscheile and Michael Binder. Both of these individuals respectively have visited the Diocese of Iowa as part of our Baptismal Living Days, and more recently at the Growing Iowa Leaders day at St. Andrew’s in Des Moines in 2018. As I say, their goal is to help us discover God at work in our neighborhood, and through such fresh encounters, to recover our zeal for mission. This is a missionary age—a new age of the Spirit and our heroes are the saints who have dared to cover new ground out of their love for God and for the people God loves. In recent days I have recovered for myself the concept of the lost—which is not about proselytism—as much as it is about loving others just as Jesus did as in his parable of leaving the ninety-nine safely in the fold while going out to find the lost sheep. **During the next round of visitations, I will continue to invite you to gather in Revival clusters—but spread out over eighteen months—and will walk with you through some parts of the process we are learning. It will be a practical time together including a literal walk around the neighborhood.**

In addition, the Faithful Innovations Diocesan Team will hold three in-depth trainings for congregations who want to send teams (of 3-8 persons) to help bring the concepts closer to home. We are planning such trainings at the end of April, in the Summer, and in September, all in 2020, with intention to train trainers for subsequent years, as well as congregational teams to scout the neighborhood and ask what God is inviting you to partner in and do.

Faithful Innovations and 2020 Vision are avenues for stretching our presence and spiritual awareness in the community. It’s a way of saying to God “Here I am. Send me.” God makes all things new.

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Convention address, *continued*

That is God's joy. The ancient prayer that we offer at ordinations rings true about that sacred mystery, the Church, through which God is raising up things cast down, and making new things that had grown old.

It had been 30 years since the diocese had held a capital campaign. This year we launched GILEAD—Growing Iowa Leaders, Engaging All Disciples. My hope was that the funds raised for local as well as diocesan-wide use would be the financial underpinning for our new ideas in mission and renewal. Initially I envisioned it as a campaign with a single launching point, on the Day of Pentecost 2019. It is however a campaign which will remain open through the next three years; with intentional askings taking place around the next Pentecost 2020 and 2021, as well as at the next three annual conventions.

It is not too late to make your pledge as we seek to move as close to a hundred percent participation as possible. I am glad to announce that the diocesan staff has committed at one hundred percent. People have made generous pledges for three years, with a percentage of their donations designated to their congregation's fund, and the remainder available to all our congregations through a Diocesan Board approved granting process. Please look out for announcement early next year, for applications to open around Eastertide and Pentecost.

We are delighted to introduce two people to the staff who have intimate workings with GILEAD—Traci Ruhland Petty, the GILEAD grant process administrating missioner, and Tina Austin, Anne's assistant for handling the accounting element of your generosity. We have been working with Denis Green and Church Development who are staying alongside us over the three-year period offering assistance in developing our congregational level annual giving



Ms. Tina Austin



Ms. Traci Ruhland Petty

processes as well as coaching in stewardship in general.

God caught my attention when I was fifteen years of age. You may remember the story—how I came home from an evangelistic service where I had decided to commit to following Jesus. My parents were in the living room watching TV. I burst enthusiastically through the door and announced “You won't believe what I just did tonight?” “What, lad?” My dad replied barely turning away from his program. “I gave my life to Jesus Christ,” I said. “Never mind, lad,” my dad said back, “We all do silly things sometimes!”

There's no age too young to have God take you on. Our youth programs have been a hallmark of our Diocesan life

As important as catching faith in our teens, is the ability to let it guide us and shape us as adults. Bishop Ellinah noted at her Synod a couple of weeks ago that the Synod delegates noticed the hair color of most of us who made up the Iowa delegation. She was saying this to remark how much we are willing and able to do at our older age, and was encouraging her own younger population of Church leaders to increase their commitment. I don't believe that she meant anything offensive about this. But it remains true that we lose the middle generations and I am convinced that it's because we do not engage younger people in leadership. When

Lydia Bucklin left for Michigan, some worried that we were going to lose her emphasis on young adult ministry. But the proof of the ministry's effectiveness is whether young adults are stepping into leadership under their own steam. And after five years, I believe that is happening and Traci Ruhland Petty is the diocesan staff liaison for young adult leadership development.

Real vitality in the Church comes when we let ourselves boldly care for people's lives beyond ourselves. The Church was always created to be a means, an agency, for God's ends; and never an end in itself. God continues to seek to reconcile humanity to God's self and to one another. Our companions know this. Among the risk-takers in South Sudan working for peace are our brothers and sisters in Christ. We have shared through prayer and support the peacemaking efforts of our friend Archbishop Samuel Peni. It is a joy to celebrate his election to Archbishop which carries with it a new diocesan responsibility as Bishop of Yambio. Now we welcome a new bishop for our companion diocese of Nzara in Bishop Richard Aquilla, whom we greet along with his wife. We hoped also to have with us his diocesan social development and education officer, Emmanuel Ramadan, but the U.S. visa process was unwilling to gamble on his youthfulness not becoming too enamored with the American way!

Convention address, *continued*



Bishop Alan Scarfe in Swaziland (right) with Bishops Swift and Mabuza. Photo: Amy Mellies

One of my task forces for the Church-wide body is one that seeks to develop conversation with South Sudanese Anglicans across The Episcopal Church. We have such groups here in Iowa and we hope at next Convention to be admitting our first South Sudanese congregation as a member of this Diocese. Several leaders in the South Sudanese diaspora in Iowa are beginning to be discerned for ordained callings. We look forward to hearing from Bishop Aquilla tomorrow.

My other current Church-wide responsibility in The Episcopal Church is to serve on the Task Force for Church Planting and Congregational Redevelopment. It is a group which is responsible for distributing grants across the Church for new initiatives, and for inviting congregations to seek their own redevelopment. We have a few places that could benefit from the wisdom of the Task Force. It is humbling to work with some very imaginative and creative people, who want God's mission to expand. We have such people in this diocese. It is my prayer that every leader in our congregations burn with such a passion. I know that the diocesan staff share such a prayerful desire for your growth and development. And if you don't know that, again I ask you to get to know one another better.

I was struck in the Synod of the Swaziland Diocese how much the clergy and congregational leaders saw themselves as the diocese. I was intrigued how the Bishop's address became owned by the Synod through resolutions supporting the main ideas of her charge, even when she spoke sadly about her perception of lethargy and indifference to the common causes of the diocese. Immediately a resolution entitled Unity and Renewal of Spirit was carved and presented; and people committed to a change of heart. I would like to think we would do the same.

I started out in faith as an evangelical, brought to a personal relationship with God in a Methodist Church. That church itself was pretty independent. Our goal was to share our faith and sometimes we would go door to door; or stand on street corners and preach. The key was to engage our friends. I would hold pizza-type parties at my home, where I'd invite my school friends to sit in the living room and listen to a recording of a Billy Graham sermon. All I wanted was for them to bring Jesus into their lives and walk into the future in His shoes. In time I realized that the life of faith, and its historical community was much broader than this. I found contemplative prayer groups, and Eastern Orthodox ritual. I searched out the side altars of many local Anglican churches and Cathedrals to lay out my life for God's direction and blessing. And at college I came face to face with the power of sacraments, and later, through confirmation, with the holy lineage of the saints. Wesley was still a great inspiration; but so became men like Thomas Merton, and Trevor Huddleston. Our youth group would hold evangelistic campaigns along with VBSes in run down, abandoned housing projects; and we would travel to encourage other youth groups from other churches, across denominational lines. Through prayer for Christians being persecuted in Communist lands, I was led to join their struggle for religious

freedom and this is how God bridged my zeal as a teenager with a maturing faith as a young adult. Eventually there was no turning back; and ordination beckoned but not where I expected to be serving. I came to America to teach church history and train missionaries to serve in Communist countries on a two-year contract. Ten years later that calling came to an end. And the road opened to the priesthood within the Episcopal Church. By the time I took up my call as a new Rector in Eagle Rock, the Berlin Wall had fallen, and the people I had served in Romania were looking at life freed from the dictatorship of President Ceausescu.

The deacon who served with me at Eagle Rock for ten years was one of the principle early voices of Ministry Development, and I found in that vision of seeing every follower of Christ as a minister through baptism echoes of the early influence of my Methodist beginning. We bring our experiences and growing predilections into whom God shapes us to be in our relationship and calling in Jesus Christ.

And so it is not strange nor a surprise that all of these things have influenced ministry as your bishop. Everything that you have experienced in life is equally as determinative for how you are being formed as a follower of Jesus Christ and as His minister. My constant prayer for you is for God's gifts presented through your lives to be quickened by the Holy Spirit, "stirred up" as the apostle Paul says; and made relevant for the mission we have to carry out for this time and place. We are a people—one Church in many locations—brought together by the power of God for a time like this. And God works through each and all. I don't think it was a coincidence that our Revival preaching theme was a call to our first love; nor that we are this year invited to rejoice that our names are written in heaven.

Continued on page 9

Convention address, *continued*

I mentioned how I wondered how we follow the Presiding Bishop at our Convention. Well, let me let you into a secret—he feels the same way about you. “They really know how to praise Jesus in Iowa,” he has volunteered. On several occasions I have had it reported to me how much the Presiding Bishop was blown away by your faith and your enthusiasm for God. “Is it heaven; no it’s Iowa” but it just might as well be! I thank God for the gift of your faith and for the honor of be among you as your Bishop.

Reminding oneself of how we have arrived at where we are is an important step in spiritual development. The Psalms are full of liturgical reminders, as is the Eucharist. It is important to reappraise, reflect and re-assess the way we have come, and the decisions we have made. I have thrown myself into such a mode because I believe that it is time to draw a finishing line across our time together as Bishop and People. This is my last Convention when you won’t be obsessed with finding the next Bishop of Iowa.

I am calling for an election for the tenth Bishop of Iowa in Spring 2021, with a consecration date of September 18th, 2021. I will officially retire on that date as I look forward to handing over the diocesan crozier to my successor.

Nothing concentrates the mind like a deadline, and we have reached it. At the November Board retreat, Bishop Todd Ousley, Bishop for Pastoral Development of The Episcopal Church, will be present and lay out the estimated schedule for the election and transition process. I have asked the Standing Committee to be present at that gathering, as well as the staff. In Advent I will begin my final round of visitations, while completing the third gatherings of Revival clusters over that eighteen month period to explore “Faithful Innovations” and what it means to discover what God is asking us to partner with in our neighborhoods.

As I have said, God called me on June 27th 1965. And I hope I have sought to be faithful to that calling. Of course, I have my doubts. We are all tempted to make the Christian life about us, and not always about Christ and Christ crucified. My reaction to being elected Bishop was a cynical voice in my head that whispered “You have your reward”. We always have to ask Satan to get behind us!

This time next year, I will probably offer a full reflection of where I believe God has led us together. Sufficient right now to see a couple of phases. I was elected during the Gene Robinson era. The Church was getting to grips with the Spirit’s work among us drawing members of the LGBTQ community into leadership in the Church. That impacted ministry heavily for six years. I sought to work with you on the stated goal of becoming a Total Ministry Bishop, seeking to develop a Ministry Development Team approach to congregational development as well as Diocesan Commissions and Agencies. And for the past six years, since the trip to Nzara in 2013, we have worked together on finding a renewed vitality through Revival, and the subsequent follow up years. And we are in the process of building a Capital Fund in GILEAD to support your ministry options coming out of God’s stirring of us up.

In the meantime, ordination demographics have grown younger, and we continue to work at providing for sacramental ministry at all of our congregations, no matter what size. We are focusing on young adult leadership, with some success as we see younger wardens in congregations, and we have begun to work with the dynamics for vitality of small congregations. Gathering in Revival clusters have helped us work together regionally a little better; and though we experience our own steep numerical decline among mainline denominations, we have halted its progress. The soil for ministry

has been turned over, fertilized and made ready for new plantings.

And what about the four years or so in between 2009 and 2013? Well, those were years of personal tragedy – of loss of a best friend, a brother, and a father; years in which I give thanks to God for your prayers that helped keep one foot in front of another. We all experience such phases in our lives. We still moved forward, and God kept sending us new leaders and calling new vocations, settling us as an inclusive Diocese, and sending us good companions from the Communion with whom we could grow.

I am and have been a “Who’d have thunk it bishop?” That was what a friend said shortly after my election when we met up in New York. Your gracious and generous spirit have made me your Bishop. I am always humbled and grateful even in my travels, always to be the Bishop of Iowa and never the Bishop from Iowa. To stand before General Convention in 2018 and describe your Revivals was a great and terrifying moment. We won’t know how many sparks we have set in motion elsewhere as other diocese think—well, if Iowa can do it, we can do it. And the Spirit whispers the words she put into the writing of the apostle Paul:

“Consider your own call, brothers and sisters: not many of you were wise by human standards, not many of noble birth. But God chose what is foolish in the world to shame the wise; God chose what is weak in the world to shame the strong; God chose what is low and despised in the world, things that are not, to reduce to nothing things that are, so that no one might boast in the presence of God. He is the source of your life in Jesus Christ, who became for us wisdom from God, and righteousness and sanctification and redemption. In order that, as it is written, “Let the one who boasts, boast in the Lord”. (1 Cor. 1: 26-31)

Thank you; and God bless you.

Conversations at the 167th Annual Convention

In *Irresistible Revolution* Shane Claiborne says: “Mother Teresa always said, ‘Calcuttas are everywhere if only we have eyes to see. Find your Calcutta.’”

Where is your Calcutta?

- In prison
- In feeding programs
- At the Agape Cafe
- In the people who seek things from our Blessing Box
- The rich neighborhood full of lonely people
- Mission work in Guatemala
- Learning Spanish to read the Gospel in Spanish
- Nzara
- Schools
- Small town Iowa
- Hunger
- Pine Ridge Indian Reservation
- Environmental degradation
- Low-income neighborhoods
- Fort Dodge
- Scott County Jail
- Mental Health
- Distributing food to immigrants
- Under the bridges
- Health care
- People who are food insecure
- The university community
- Racism
- Disaffected Christians
- Des Moines
- Wherever God moves you to
- People in care facilities
- Expanding the definition of "who is my neighbor"
- Believing myself to be a child of God
- Big Brothers Big Sisters
- Housing on the West side of Davenport
- People in need
- Working with correctional clients
- People who are poor
- Grief support group
- My neighborhood
- The education system
- Is it where I am or where I am going? So much disparity in the United States - there is an urgency in our ministry to find our Calcuttas. How can we get back to finding a leading role for the church in our neighborhood?
- People who are ill or dying
- People in recovery
- Helping families in the process of helping their children who are trans
- Prison re-entry
- People with signs by the road
- The gap between the homeless and the resources
- Those left behind by a broken healthcare system
- Becoming less dependent on technology
- Working with homeless populations and working with them on barriers
- Bullying in the school system
- Substance abuse among family and friends
- Children and families of people in prison
- Veterans experiencing homelessness, food insecurity, PTSD, MST
- Connecting new people into the community
- Bias in the criminal justice system
- Border detention facilities
- Family members that don't believe in God
- People with intellectual disabilities and their staff

- Going where the need is—focus on relationship over programming. Listen to their stories
- Supporting personal family in crisis, physical and emotional
- Working with art as a way to work through issues
- Ministering to youth through music and choir
- Opening our space to the community
- Mental health of students

How can we live into “going beyond charity” and move to building relationships?

- Serving meals and becoming friends in the course of it
- Building relationships with people in care facilities. Our church is also looking to our neighborhood with potlucks. Now I'm thinking of doing a child care program in our neighborhood.
- Finding out that time is needed often more than things
- To move into a low-income neighborhood—but it's much more difficult than it sounds. To live in community.
- Pay attention and get outside of yourself—courage to introduce yourself
- Having more socioeconomic diversity on vestrys
- Knock on doors and talk to our neighbors
- Gun violence prevention—building relationships with affected communities

Continued on page 11

Conversations, *continued*

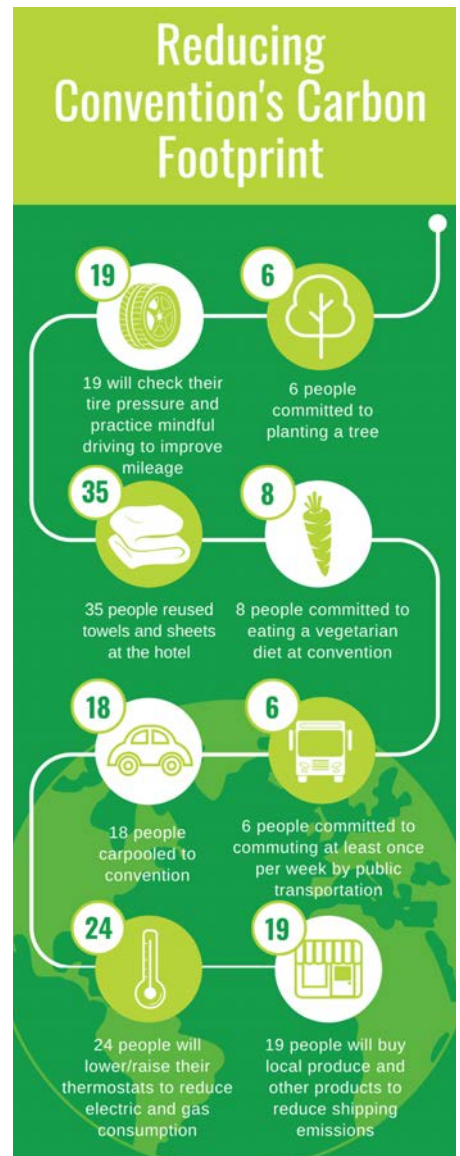
- Have to get over the differences that people have. Difference between community and church can be difficult and intimidating
 - Having an attitude of non-judgment that makes people feel safe
 - San Juan—helping poor students both physically and with school work
 - Taking the time to meet those in need, and forming that relationship
 - Walk with the people that you're trying to serve. Outreach of communication to understand others
 - Coming into contact with The Stranger often
 - Understanding that those without material/financial wealth still have much to offer
 - Not in collecting, but in going out
 - Better means of human conversation, maybe not always via social media
 - Educational environments such as schools
 - Becoming less dependent on technology. We have become more isolated in the physical sense. Providing services for the homeless and being more connected to the people we serve
 - Build relationships with continuity ...getting to really know people & how we can work together
 - Forming partnerships with agencies/organizations meet those specific needs.
 - To understand that the arrow goes both ways, both parties receive. It is more than our "doing charity" for others. To allow others to give to me.
 - Start with a connection with one person
 - Talking to people who are coming to any outreach program. Listening to their stories, not judging, and hearing what they are saying and hearing their needs. Taking the time to listen and sharing prayer
 - Learn to see things from inside out
 - I do what I can for our food pantry
- but during the summer when I'm off work I could go to talk with people who come into the food pantry and find out more about them.
- Listening to the neighborhood to learn what is actually needed
 - Give the invitation - you don't have to live into a person's circumstances, but the start is an invitation.
 - Treat new people with warmth regardless of complicated situation
 - Be less dependent on technology.
 - Hot dog Fridays—building relationships through shared meals. Not just with the people who come for the meals but with other community partners
 - There are ways to address the needs of community. Need to do more than just "writing the check." Go and talk to people. Walk alongside them
 - Approaching people, especially those in need without judgement, without condemnation, without pity. Asking the people you're serving to help you as the feeling of being needed is valuable. By establishing relationships by simple interactions
 - When people stop by for assistance at the church, take time to form a relationship, find out what is going on that they needed to stop in for assistance for.
 - You don't assume you know the answers
 - Community Food Pantry open in the evening. That creates a location in which people can gather and make connections (neighbor to neighbor rather than just the Church giving out food)
 - Going forth to minister and being physically present
 - Embracing what we can by getting our feet out there, being brave to travel uncharted waters.
 - Trying to be in the moment and not on the outside looking in
 - Actions speak louder than words!
- Helping/teaching others to be self-sustaining. Understanding the "history" of "our Calcutta." Being committed."
- Partner with agency and have them use the church facilities
 - To be "with folks" as opposed to "do for"
 - Find something you already have a connection with, that you are driven to seek more info about
 - Taking homeless person for meal and being shown how he spends the day and finds place to sleep
 - Stopping to learn about the people that we see around
 - Have to understand and see poverty before you can serve. Need to do ministry with people instead of for people
 - Treat everyone with dignity
 - Fully engaging our parishioners who are experiencing homelessness
 - Connect with the people who come to House of Compassion
 - Need to get away from labels. See each other as the church of God. It starts from within
 - Keeping people who are home bound feeling as though they are still involved; that even their prayers for themselves and others keeps them involved
 - Look for ways to involve them in the community, and make an opportunity for them to get involved
 - Listening deeply and humbly
 - Pantry for the alternative high school in our community—barrel in our church that receives donations for the students there. Open to every student that wants to come in (food, snacks, toiletries, pencils, diapers)
 - Building a community similar to Rotary
 - Trying to connect on a personal level, get to know people as humans, not just the recipients of our charity

Conversations, *continued*

- Establish relationship by learning
- Reaching out to other people and asking what you can do for them and not what they can do for you
- Connect to who someone is beyond what help you might give
- Not only give funds, but engage in conversation with who you are serving
- Just talk to someone. Be someone who listens
- Conversation with a homeless person who told me she chose that lifestyle
- Investing time
- Remembering the names and stories of people you serve, when serving regularly. Asking how people are, remembering their stories and referring by name
- Welcome without judgement
- Feeding all people like family
- Host a neighborhood block party
- Food! Hospitality in the sense of sharing and receiving with "the other." Being open to the gifts and understanding of those who are different from us
- Listen and talk to people. That's the first step. Treat them like they're humans
- Meet people where they are at, and not require them to meet where we are
- Not thinking of it as charity, but rather getting help from a friend
- Listening to what the needs are and walking with them
- Availability of interpreters to include non-English speakers in community
- Entering into conversation
- Don't assume someone needs to be fixed, maybe they just need a listening ear and then eventually come to a point where they feel comfortable telling you what they really need.
- Find common ground
- Our church is confronting this problem as well. Best thing we have

- come up with is to listen to people on the margins. Find out what they need and want
- Balance valuing gifts of insight and talent with other ones
 - Inviting those we serve into our homes
 - Neighbor to Neighbor meals—invite neighbors to join for a meal and get to know each other
 - Helping to prepare meals for those in need
 - We are continuing to evolve, continuing to be open to each other's values without judgement
 - Take time to listen, and not just hand out assistance
 - Share stories, and allow the spirit to drive action
 - Laundry love—people not only give money, but also come help to fold clothes. People who no longer need the service come back and help the new people. Creates a community
 - Working to include all cultures in community efforts. Getting to know each other
 - Get to know your neighbor. Start by doing small gestures
 - Do what you are passionate about & join others
 - Holding a funeral for a homeless person and having church members attend the service. Letting those living on the street know that they are seen
 - Thinking outside the box
 - It's the art of the invitation
 - Find the mutuality you have with others
 - Start small, take the risk
 - Put yourself in a position to be blessed by those you serve
 - Share facilities with other agencies
 - Be someone who listens
 - Be willing to devote time
 - Leave your bubble

- Keep the doors open
- Open our eyes to human suffering
- Write letters
- Pray—begin by asking for God's guidance and gift of awareness to those we encounter
- Don't be afraid to start a conversation with a stranger. Sometimes "hello" and a smile are enough
- Get out of your comfort zone. Be courageous! Build bridges
- Being aware of people and genuinely connecting with them



Of the election of a bishop

by Elizabeth Duff Popplewell

With the announcement from Bishop Alan concerning his resignation in 2021, our diocese now enters the process of selecting a new bishop. It is a task that we have not had to do for more than 17 years, but just as The Episcopal Church loves liturgy and order (both second to loving Jesus, of course) we also appreciate process. At our convention last month, the diocese passed Resolution 167C which lays out the procedure for electing a new bishop, now known as Canon 38.

What follows is a brief summary of this new Canon: **“In accordance with this Canon and the provisions of the Constitution of this Diocese and the Constitutions and Canons of the General Convention of The Episcopal Church, the Standing Committee shall have oversight and responsibility for the process of electing the successor bishop.”** The Standing Committee, along with members of the diocesan staff and Board of Directors, will meet with the Rt. Rev. Todd Ousley, of the Presiding Bishop’s Office, in late November to learn more about the episcopal transition.

One of the Standing Committee’s first tasks will be to **appoint a 15-member Nominating Committee**. Ten of those

members will be selected from the pool of candidates put forward by our Mission Chapters. (Each chapter has been asked to nominate two people for consideration.) Five additional members will be selected by the Standing Committee to ensure a broad representation from our varied diocesan ministries and demographics. **The Nominating Committee will be in place within the next 120 days.**

The Nominating Committee is tasked with **creating and publishing a Diocesan Profile and establishing policies and procedures for conducting the search for candidates.** Per directives from General Convention, these policies and procedures should foster diversity in the consideration and selection of bishop candidates. Before the slate of nominees is publicly submitted, the Nominating Committee is to conduct background checks, including financial information and interviews of bishops and transition officers having knowledge of the person under consideration for each nominee. **Within 10 days after publication of the slate of nominees, Petition Nominees may be submitted to the Standing Committee.** Such nominees must be supported by signatures of at least 100 adult communicants of the diocese representing not fewer than 5 parishes of this diocese.

The Standing Committee is charged with establishing rules of order for the Electing Convention and with conducting the Election. Once our diocese has elected a bishop, the election then must receive consent from a majority of the House of Bishops and a majority of the Standing Committees of the 110 other dioceses of The Episcopal Church. Upon the successful completion of the canonical consent process, the bishop-elect can be ordained and consecrated. The Presiding Bishop has set a tentative date for the consecration of September 18, 2021.

Please know the Standing Committee is committed to keep everyone informed along the way and to be as clear and transparent as possible throughout the process.

The full Canon can be found on the Diocesan website: iowaepiscopal.org/Convention/diocesan-convention.html

Your Standing Committee asks that prayers begin for all involved in this process.

The Rev. Elizabeth Popplewell is the rector of St. Luke’s, Cedar Falls and serves as President of the Standing Committee.

Youth at convention

by Amy Mellies

During convention weekend there are three youth events going on simultaneously. We have childcare for children from birth to 3rd grade, a lock-in at St. Paul’s for youth 4th-9th grade, and the opportunity to be a delegates or visitor for youth 9th-12th grade. Our little ones in childcare got to spend time at the pool, playing games and had a birthday party for Jesus. Our youth helped out around St. Paul’s cleaning up around the outside of the building, making crafts and playing

games. Your youth at the hotel sat in on all of the convention plenaries, listened to amazing speakers and had some fun as well. The youth from the lock-in and at the hotel were able to spend some one-on-one time with speaker Shane Claiborne on Saturday evening. Shane spoke to the group about how they can be disciples of Jesus right in their own towns, his time in Calcutta with Mother Teresa and the work his community is doing with guns that have been turned over. Overall it was a great weekend full



Diocesan youth meet with Shane Claiborne. Photo: Amy Mellies

of learning and a lot of fun. Thank you to all of the volunteers who helped put on all of these events!

Ms. Amy Mellies serves as the Missioner for Children and Youth.

Our Nzara companions

by Abigail Livingood

We just celebrated at the Diocesan Convention, the granting of United Thank Offering (UTO) funds for the Nzara Pre-Natal and Birthing Clinic with the new Bishop of Nzara, Bishop Richard Aquilla. So many people have been involved and drawn into this circle of blessing over the last year I wanted to share the story of this project with you.

I traveled with Bishop Scarfe, Rev. Mel Schlachter, and Marcie Luft to Nzara, South Sudan in February 2019. My primary purpose was to meet with the Mothers' Union and teach and help with their sewing project. Ray Gaebler, the diocesan liaison for South Sudan, asked me to try to meet with the Midwives while I was there. He asked me to find out who they were and what, exactly, they did. He was aware of their presence but did not know any details about their work and how they operated. Mama Aida arranged for Marcie and I to meet, almost all, the Midwives and Trained Birthing Assistants (TBAs) one afternoon. She said she wouldn't join the meeting—she felt that without her presence the women would talk more freely about their work, clinic conditions, dreams, and frustrations.

We gathered in a circle under one of the mango trees in the compound and

after getting their names I asked about their training and what it was they did. The Good Samaritan Clinic in Nzara is a central location that pregnant women and mothers come to for pre-natal checks, for delivering their babies and for baby well-checks after birth. These Midwives and TBAs also go out into the surrounding villages to teach the importance of pre-natal checks and to perform those checks as “house-calls.” Infant mortality in South Sudan is one of the highest in the world. The women in South Sudan want healthy, happy children and are highly motivated to get help beyond their families. Each month the Midwives and TBAs see 500 or more women and children.

None of this staff is currently paid so all of the burden of care is on their shoulders. It is time consuming to walk to the outlying villages or to come from where they live to the Clinic in Nzara. They are hungry for more training—again this involves time and travel in order to train more and they have no money to support this goal. When the clinic is open the Midwives and TBAs see women and children in three almost closet-sized rooms with no electrical lighting, a leaky roof and windows that have to be shut when the rain comes. The sum total of their medical equipment is one stethoscope and one blood pressure cuff. And yet their

boldness of faith and persistent love in caring for and companionship this population is clearly blessed by God. I could barely write fast enough once they got rolling in dreaming of how to do better and be better at their work.

The next evening after supper I met with Bishop Peni and Mama Aida to share the pain and joy in what I'd heard the previous day. They sat quietly and listened to every concern and idea the women described to me. My only addition was to wonder if Bishop Peni could make sure the Birthing Clinic's needs were prominent in the next diocesan 5-year plan and whether the Birthing Clinic could be shifted into another space in the overall clinic building so they could have larger rooms in which to see patients.

As I talked with Marcie and Bishop Scarfe on the way home I said it was hard to know where to begin in the face of such staggering need. The bishop responded with “Why don't you write a UTO grant application? You have time” (a week). Yikes. Ray Gaebler called Bishop Peni and asked exactly what kind of a project would they be interested in and able to oversee in a year. With blessings and direction, Ray and Julianne Allaway composed a grant that would renovate a larger

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Meeting midwives and Trained Birthing Assistants under the mango tree in the compound. Photos by Abigail Livingood.



The check-in space in the birthing clinic.

Our Nzara companions, *continued*



Walking to the Good Samaritan Clinic.



Bicycles purchased for travel to the villages.

portion of the Good Samaritan Clinic for Pre-natal, Birthing, and baby well-check services. We requested proper birthing tables, portable fetal monitors, more stethoscopes and blood pressure cuffs, forceps, clamps, scalpels, suture training kits, instrument trays, maternity gowns, lab coats, and surgical aprons. The new space would be larger, have overhead lighting, portable task lighting, cupboards for equipment and supplies, a stove to boil water, an indoor tank for water, linens, towels, blankets, buckets with lids for medical waste and soiled linens, and comfortable chairs for mothers and staff. To aid them, as well, when they go out into the villages we requested funds for mobile phones to use for remote consultations on difficult cases, weatherproof kit bags and bicycles. The grant will provide a base salary for

three midwives and compensation for 15 Birthing Assistants for one year. The Mother's Union is developing sewing work as an income stream to contribute to the pay for this staff after the first year that the grant is covering.

At the time you are reading almost all the supplies and equipment have been purchased and are in Nzara. Construction inside the clinic building has started, and the bicycles are already in use. What's left? We continue now with prayers of protection for mothers and children, for staff and for the renovation work. Every e-mail we receive from Rev. Emmanuel Ramadan, who oversees the details there, is cause for celebration and we give thanks for the generosity of this UTO Grant.

Ms. Abigail Livingood is a member at St. Timothy's, West Des Moines.



The equipment shelves in the Birthing Clinic.

United Thank Offering Grants Awarded

Nzara Pre-Natal Birth Clinic \$28,520.00

Faith and Grace Garden (St. Timothy's, West Des Moines) \$10,604.67

International Development Mini-Grants Awarded

Piggery Expansion (Diocese of Swaziland) \$3,500.00

Birthing Center (Diocese of Nzara) \$3,000.00

Bahamas Dorian Relief (in care of the Diocese of Southeast Florida) \$1,658.00

Nzara has a new bishop

by Elizabeth Poppellwell



Bishops of the internal province of Western Equatoria after the consecration of the Rt. Rev. Richard M. Aquilla, Second Bishop of Nzara Diocese. Photos: Elizabeth Poppellwell

On Sunday, August 11, 2019, Archbishop Samuel Peni and six other bishops laid hands on The Very Rev. Richard Aquilla, making him the second bishop of the Diocese of Nzara in South Sudan.

It was spectacular day; one filled with beautiful worship, inspiring preaching, singing, and dancing. The congregation gathered outside All Saints Cathedral easily outnumbered the congregation inside the cathedral on the beautiful and very warm day. Clergy from all of the dioceses within the Internal Province of Western Equatoria were present as were more than 20 youth choirs. Most of the wives of the diocesan bishops had also made the arduous trip to Nzara, and joined other members of the Mothers Union in their blue and white dresses to celebrate. The governor of Western Equatoria State and several of his ministry leaders sat in the front rows of the church; the town commissioner and members of the press joined them. A number of armed guards were also in attendance. And by the grace of God, and our bishop, so were my husband Dennis and I.

The Spirit quickly descended on all gathered. The joy became contagious, especially as the service ended (after 6.5 hours!) and everyone moved out into the Cathedral yard eager to greet their new bishop and his wife Yodita.

Having worked closely with then diocesan bishop Samuel as Dean of the Cathedral since the diocese's inception, Bishop Richard is clearly loved and admired by the people of Nzara. An enormous village feast followed the consecration and enthronement where the singing and dancing went on well into the evening.

It remains humbling to realize how all of this came together. In a place where getting a drink of water requires more effort than most of us can imagine, bringing together thousands of people is no small effort. But the people of the Nzara Diocese are not easily discouraged.

Each day we witnessed great determination in the people who with only pick axes work to clear the land so that they can plant gardens that will feed their families. We saw the dedication of the teachers at St. Timothy's Primary School work diligently with their young students despite the lack of books and desks in their overcrowded classrooms. We were invited to pray with and for those engaging in the ministries of evangelism and healthcare. We prayed at sunrise and sundown, before every meeting, every meal, and every time we got into a vehicle. It's sobering to pray for your daily bread in a place where the next meal is not guaranteed. Praying

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The Rt. Rev. Richard Aquilla and his wife Mama Yodita at the village feast.



The crowds outside All Saints Cathedral.



One of the 20+ youth choirs celebrating the consecration of their new bishop.

Nzara has a new bishop, *continued*

for protection through the night, for provision, and for peace ground Nzara Christians in deep trust in the character and power of God to enact change and illustrate their whole and humble dependence of living in community and in harmony with God.

We follow a growing list of people who have traveled to Nzara. A delegation, including Bishop Scarfe, traveled there earlier this year, and Bob North followed soon after Dennis and I left.

It was a tremendous honor to have been invited to represent Bishop Scarfe and the Diocese of Iowa at Bishop Richard's consecration. I am confident that our companion relationship will be enriched and strengthened through his episcopacy.

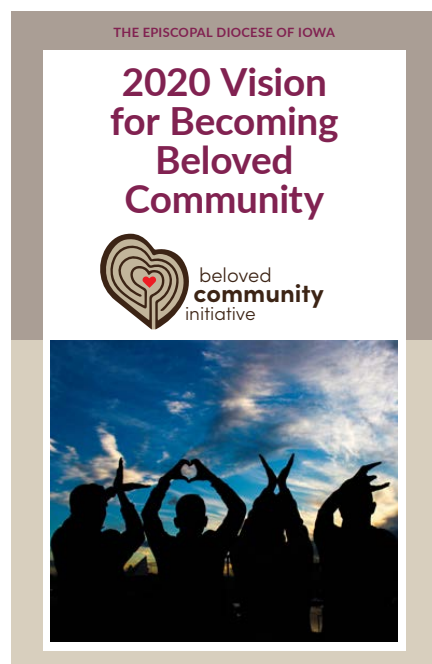
The Rev. Elizabeth Popplewell is the rector of St. Luke's, Cedar Falls and President of the Standing Committee.



Mama Yodita and members of the Mothers Union.

2020 Vision for Becoming Beloved Community

by Meg Wagner



At the 167th Convention, Beloved Community Initiative introduced *2020 Vision for Becoming Beloved Community*—a year of resources to build on the diocesan Dismantling Racism training. It can be used by individuals, with a partner or two, or with a larger group.

Engaging with *2020 Vision for Becoming Beloved Community* is an invitation to address racism in our communities. We hope that you will help build our next steps in this journey through sharing your honest thoughts and opinions with us in our on-line community.

Each month you will find materials that focus on a central theme introduced with a theological reflection, followed by suggestions in five areas: **Learn, Notice, Engage, Reflect, Pray.***

The **Learn** section will provide you with opportunities to read materials, listen to podcasts or speeches, and watch videos to continually build your understanding

of difference in the United States. The **Notice** section will encourage you to take notice of your surroundings and everyday interactions and experiences. The **Engage** section will give you suggestions for taking what you are learning into a more public arena and/or to seek out others to connect with as you learn more. The **Reflect** section invites you to journal about what you are learning, feeling, and how you might invite others into what you are learning. The **Prayer** and a theological reflection ground all of the work as part of our ongoing spiritual formation.

2020 Vision for Becoming Beloved Community is available online at becomingbelovedcommunity.org as an interactive website or as a printable PDF, with hyperlinks to all the resources.

The Rev. Meg Wagner one of the co-founders of Beloved Community Initiative and serves as the Missioner for Communications, Reconciliation, and New Initiatives.

Oakland receives Global Health Advocate Award

by Nora Kelly Tobin

The Rev. Dr. Mary Jane Oakland of Ames has been named the inaugural recipient of the Heartland Global Health Advocate Award for her heartfelt service to improve the lives of people in Iowa, Ghana, Nicaragua, China, Pakistan, and Eswatini (formerly Swaziland).

The award recognizes an Iowa-based global health researcher, practitioner, and/or advocate who has made a significant impact on global health research, practice or policy during their career. It is presented by the Heartland Global Health Consortium.

Oakland was nominated by colleagues who have worked with her to build capacity among global health practitioners and improve the lives of the most vulnerable around the world. The award ceremony honoring Oakland took place during the Heartland Global Health Consortium Annual Conference on Friday, Nov. 15,

Oakland has served on Self-Help International's Board of Directors since 2005, working to advance human nutrition for programs serving rural communities in Nicaragua in Central America and in Ghana in West Africa. She designed and actively monitors implementation of Self-Help International's "Growing Healthy Food, Growing Healthy Children" intervention which combines agriculture and women's empowerment with nutrition education and support to prevent stunting in the first 1,000 days of life for more than 150 babies living in rural villages in the Ashanti Region of Ghana. More than one in three children born in the villages suffers from stunting by the age of five and every expectant and new mother in the villages was food insecure. Self-Help International's nutritional intervention designed by Oakland has more than doubled the number of mothers who practice exclusive breast-feeding of their children until they are six months old, an increase from 39% to 85%, and has halved the rates of malnutrition



The Rev. Dr. Mary Jane Oakland teaching. Photo courtesy of Self-Help International.

among children who were born into the intervention. Children are now getting regular vaccinations and healthcare and their mothers are learning how to incorporate nutrient-rich foods into their regular diets, as well as how to increase household income.

Prof. Matina Zia, Dean of the Food and Nutrition Department at the University of Home Economics in Lahore, Pakistan, nominated Dr. Oakland for her compassion, her efforts to help people in need without any hesitation, and for her courage, determination, and commitment to complete the job she undertakes. The two professors met in August 1998 when Prof. Zia visited Iowa State University through the faculty exchange program. There was no formal training program for dietitians in Pakistan at the time, so the two women worked together to develop the courses to launch Pakistan's first dietetics program.

The Rev. Dr. Oakland flew to Lahore, Pakistan, in late October 1999 just two weeks after the military coup. Zia recalls, "There was a travel advisory for Pakistan. Dr. Oakland braved the journey to visit us in Pakistan and stayed in Lahore for six weeks training our first batch of students and teachers in hospitals. During her stay, she visited urban and rural slums

around Lahore and met with non-governmental organization workers, giving them valuable suggestions. She talked with hospital administrators and doctors to emphasize the importance of building the dietetics program. She visited again to follow up the program in the end of 2001 just after 9/11 with subsequent visits in 2005 and 2011. She continues to help us with running the program. Without her help it would not have been possible. Now dietitians are being trained all over Pakistan and our dietitians are working in hospitals and communities and contributing in improving the health of people." Her husband and children joke that she doesn't like to travel if there isn't a state department warning against it.

Oakland spent her career as a nutrition and dietetics faculty member of the Department of Food Science and Human Nutrition at Iowa State University from 1979 to 2006. She supervised the ISU dietetics program—including teaching, advising, managing accreditation, and keeping a capable faculty. Nominators also cited the Rev. Dr. Oakland's contributions domestically, including helping to shepherd the state licensing of dietitians in Iowa through the legislature and Gov.

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Hazelnut Connection

by Kathryn Campbell

The Hazelnut Connection (hazelnutconnection.org) welcomes new online visitors and members. It is a platform for people who want to study world religions, spirituality and general matters of faith with companions. Although it is open to people who want to study their own faith more deeply, it especially encourages ecumenical and interfaith conversations and seeks to create a community of learners.

The Public Square page offers several activities without charge. A calendar of world religions and a compilation of five well known RSS feeds from religious news sources are open to anyone. Readers can find resources for major Christian traditions and world religions, while readers suggest resources they find especially helpful or interesting. The Chatroom and forums at Speakers Corner allow Visitors to respond to ongoing chats and



forums, while Members are able to begin new ones.

The activities on Community page are conversations and courses by and for members. Conversations are informal and collegial gatherings for lifelong learning led by a moderator. Courses are formally structured classes for continuing education which are organized and led by instructors with expertise in their fields. Hazelnut helps

moderators and instructors develop their projects. Hazelnut keeps a record of everyone's activities so they can use it to claim credit for continuing education or attest to their work in a course of study.

Anyone who participates in Public Square activities becomes a Visitor by signing up on the Join page. The annual subscription for Members is \$120, but the early bird subscription is \$60 (half-price) until January 1, 2020. To use Hazelnut for their own educational program, organizations can become Affiliates.

The Alleluia Fund of the Diocese of Iowa supported Hazelnut Connection's development. The Rt. Rev. Alan Scarfe supports the effort. Hazelnut is in need of people with public relations skills and interfaith expertise, and suggestions are more than welcome.

The Rev. Kathryn S. Campbell designed and heads the Hazelnut Connection.



In November, the Burlington HawkEye published their annual list of "The Best of Southeast Iowa" which included the reader's choice in various categories in the individual towns in SE Iowa. St. Michael's Episcopal Church won Best Area House of Worship in Mt. Pleasant.

Oakland, *continued*

Terry Branstad's office. Dr. Oakland held license #001. She has served many communities in Iowa through her research on community nutrition including WIC (Women Infants, & Children) and on food deserts in Iowa.

Oakland is an ordained priest in The Episcopal Church and most recently served at St. Paul's in Marshalltown before retiring in 2015. In 2008 she made her first trip to Swaziland where the Anglican Church is a companion

of the Episcopal Diocese of Iowa. At that time she saw the significant malnutrition of children—primarily as a result of the devastation of AIDS in that country. She returned in 2011 to run workshops for the volunteers at the church-sponsored neighborhood feeding programs that serve primarily AIDS orphans and other vulnerable children. In 2012 she was able to revisit some of those programs. She and her husband, David Oakland, spent two

months in Swaziland in 2016 working with the Diocese of Swaziland to develop more sustainable plans for continuing the feeding programs.

Ms. Nora Kelly Tobin serves as the Executive Director of Self-Help International in Waverly, Iowa. Contributions to fund feeding at Neighborhood Care Points in eSwatini may be sent to Diocese of Iowa, 225-37th St., Des Moines IA 50312

Love Advent? It's one time of year when more is better.

by Lauren Lyon



You don't have to do anything more than listen carefully or look around you next time you enter a store to realize that there's a big difference between the way the Church and the culture that surrounds us observe the days leading up to Christmas. There's no harm in enjoying "secret Santas" or the annual cookie exchange at work during the month of December, but when the "Christmas season" competes with Halloween, it can feel anticlimactic when the actual twelve days finally roll around. The purpose of the liturgical calendar is not simply to mark the passage of time, but to celebrate and understand more fully the entire mystery of Jesus Christ.

We don't need to reinvent Advent. We just need to rediscover it—and begin it a few weeks earlier.

The season of Advent looks back, to a time before the birth of Jesus, to show us how the people of God learned hope in ancient times. It looks forward also,

far beyond the birth of Jesus, to the true object of our faith, the Anointed One who comes to conquer the darkness, restore creation, and establish justice forever.

The four Sundays preceding December 25 are the familiar time of the season of Advent but that hasn't always been true. The first clear written record of a season of preparation before Christmas describes a 40-day interval first observed around the year 480. In 1073 Gregory VII reduced it to four weeks but Christians in Milan and Toledo, Spain continued the 40-day observance.

To this day, Orthodox and Byzantine Catholic Christians observe a Nativity Fast for 40 days before Christmas. The time frame is similar to that of Lent, as is the pattern of abstinence. The faithful avoid meat, fish and other animal products, oil and wine. But the purpose of the Nativity Fast is different from that of Lent. It isn't meant to signify penitence, but to be a season of

getting ready. Taking part in this fast of preparation is meant to focus attention on what's really important.

In many places the start of the 40-day time interval of these pre-Christmas seasons began just after All Saints Day, around the feast day of St. Martin of Tours, November 11. If you read historical fiction you may have come across the terms Martinmas or St. Martin's Lent, informal name for this time of getting ready for the Christmas celebration. As with many of the Church's seasons and festivals, this religious season has common elements with agricultural practice and aspects of the natural world that coincide with it in time, at least in the northern hemisphere. The growing season has ended. Days are shorter. Harsh wind and cold temperatures bring to mind the finite nature of our lives and their small place in the grand scheme of creation. Lectionary texts for the

Continued on page 21

Love Advent, *continued*

Sundays in November focus on themes of the end time as the church year draws to an end. Competing with what might be a natural inclination to slow down and take notice is the insistent pressure to decorate, celebrate and buy.

One answer to the Christmas rush of unrealistic expectations is to start Advent early. “Extended Advent” is the new name for that 40 day interval of getting ready for Christmas that begins right after All Saints Day. The

calendar has already moved on this year, but plan now for next year. Resources are available online for individuals and families to help with slowing down, focusing attention and getting ready.

Church Next, an online source for video presentations about the church offers a presentation about extended Advent churchnext.tv/library/a-7-week-advent/40146/about/. Next year, instead of buying your family an Advent calendar, make your own. Seven weeks

of daily surprises could include simple ways to help people in need, take notice of the natural world, read the Bible and pray together. Ideas for individual and family prayers for an extended Advent are here georgiaepiscopal.org/docs/advent_in_the_home-7weeks.pdf. And this year, enter deeply into the four weeks before Christmas. Blessed Advent to all!

The Rev. Lauren Lyon serves at the rector of Trinity, Iowa City.



Photo: Annie Spratt on Unsplash

Have you made your pledge to the GILEAD campaign yet? We ask that you prayerfully consider making a generous pledge to the GILEAD Campaign through Pentecost 2022, towards our goal of \$5 million. Gifts of any amount make a difference.



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BEHOLD!



Photo/via Wikimedia Commons

Young mother, holy babe

Caravaggio's "Adoration of the Shepherds" (1609), broke with typical Renaissance depictions of the Nativity. There are no angels, no beams of heavenly light. "This painting exemplifies a faith that God became man as one of the poor ... mother and child exemplify humility as they lie on the earth," wrote art critic Tom McCarthy in the Portsmouth Point blog.

Iconic Boston church reckons with its links to slavery

By Egan Millard
Episcopal News Service

Boston's Old North Church is a living witness to one of the most significant chapters in American history. Immortalized in Henry Wadsworth Longfellow's poem "Paul Revere's Ride," the white spire rising above the North End's narrow streets is where two lanterns were hung to signal the approach of British troops at the start of the Revolutionary War.

But while Old North has been known as a symbol of the American fight for liberty and justice, its story is also intertwined with the saga of slavery.

In October, the leadership of the 296-year-old church — which is Boston's oldest standing church, the city's most-visited historical site and an active Episcopal congregation — held a panel discussion on Old North's links to slavery. New research had revealed that some of its most prominent early members were slave traders and they had donated large sums of money to pay for the construction of the original steeple in 1740.

One name in particular — Newark Jackson — is still familiar to the Old North community. In an adjacent building, the historic site runs a recreation of an 18th-century chocolate shop named for Jackson, who owned and operated a chocolate shop elsewhere in the North End in the 1740s. Since 2013, Captain Jackson's Historic Chocolate Shop has offered visitors the chance to watch the process of Colonial-era chocolate making and taste (and buy) the results. In the church,

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Photo/Egan Millard/Episcopal News Service

Old North Church, built in 1723, is the site of the lantern signal — "one if by land, two if by sea" — that set Paul Revere off on his famous ride.



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UTO grants helped the Spanish Reformed Episcopal Church survive, rebuild

By Lynette Wilson
Episcopal News Service

At one point in the mid-19th century, almost all the residents of Villaescusa, a tiny village in the north of Spain near Santander, were Episcopalians.

It started with one villager who traveled 200 miles to the town of Fuentesauco, where he bought a Bible, carried it home and began reading it. Then he brought the Bible to his Roman Catholic priest. “The priest said, ‘This is a Protestant Bible; you cannot have this,’” said Bishop Carlos López Lozano of the Spanish Reformed Episcopal Church, during a visit with 12 U.S. Episcopalians to Holy Spirit Church in Villaescusa.

The man, Melquíades Andrés, didn’t know anything about being a Protestant; he just wanted to read the Bible. But the priest said, “Give me this Bible. I’ll put it in the fire.” The man did not surrender the Bible and, instead, traveled 222 miles to Salamanca, where he attended his first Episcopal service at the Church of the Redeemer. “He went, he liked the service and then he saw the school,” López explained.

In October, 31 Episcopalians traveled to Spain for a 10-day pilgrimage organized by the United Thank Offering (UTO) in coordination with the Episcopal Diocese of Northern Indiana. The pilgrimage began with Mass at the Anglican Cathedral of the Redeemer in Madrid. The following day, the pilgrims boarded a bus and drove to the 11th-century walled city of Avila.

In Avila, the group went in two different directions. A dozen people traveled by small bus to Salamanca, where

they visited the first of three UTO grant sites; the larger group departed for Sarria, where the next day they began the 62-mile walk along the Camino de Santiago de Compostela. The two groups would later converge in Arzúa for a pilgrims’ Mass the night before the walking pilgrims completed the journey’s final 12 miles and the groups reunited in Santiago de Compostela.

The “grant-site pilgrims” made stops



Photos/Lynette Wilson/Episcopal News Service

Above, The United Thank Offering pilgrims pose outside Holy Spirit Episcopal Church in Villaescusa, Spain.

Left, Sherri Dietrich, UTO board president, admires the pantry of St. Eulalia, a storefront church serving low-income Spaniards and immigrants in a public housing development in Oviedo.



in Salamanca, where they visited the Atilano Coco Center, an international student center named for an Episcopal priest and a professor at the University of Salamanca who was assassinated by the Franco regime in December 1936. From there, they visited the rectory that serves as Holy Spirit Church in Villaescusa, and later, they stopped by St. Eulalia, a storefront church serving low-income Spaniards and immigrants in a public housing development on the outskirts of Oviedo.

The grant-site pilgrims, who heard the history of the Spanish Reformed Episcopal Church, were surprised to learn of

the critical impact UTO grants have had on churches and ministries across Spain.

“I knew that we had this long relationship with the Spanish church, but I didn’t realize how [the church was] nearly exterminated and how deliberate that extermination had been,” said Sherri Dietrich, UTO board president, who attends St. Andrew’s Episcopal Church in Newcastle, Me.

The Spanish Reformed Episcopal Church celebrated its 150th anniversary in 2018. In the years following the Spanish Civil War when the country was under the dictatorial rule of Francisco Franco, the government confiscated the church’s property, with the exception of the cathedral in Madrid, forcing the church underground.

“Twenty-six buildings and 14 schools were taken by Franco,” said López, who led the pilgrims’ tour. “The church was almost entirely destroyed. People met in a private home with a Bible and the Book of Common Prayer.”

In 1936, when Holy Spirit Church in Villaescusa was forced out of its building, the congregation moved down the hill to the rectory, where they worshiped until 2008, when

the roof collapsed and they moved to the city hall. A \$20,000 UTO grant allowed the small congregation to fix the rectory’s roof.

“Seeing where our money went to repair a roof with a congregation that had only 15 people — they would have never been able to do that; they would have had to close again,” said Dee Dugger, a UTO coordinator for the Diocese of Florida and also her parish, Holy Trinity in Gainesville.

In the 1950s, the U.S.-based Episcopal Church became aware of the Spanish

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BOSTON continued from page A

there was also a memorial sign in the private pew Jackson occupied when he attended services.

When Old North started the chocolate shop, Jackson's name was "picked somewhat out of a hat," without knowing much about him other than his ownership of an Old North pew and a chocolate shop, said the Rev. Stephen Ayres, the vicar at Old North and executive director of the Old North Foundation.

"Jackson' just sounded good, so we picked that without knowing a lot about him," Ayres told Episcopal News Service.

The deeper research started after Ayres happened upon a book called "Unfreedom: Slavery and Dependence in Eighteenth-Century Boston" by Jared



The Rev. Stephen Ayres, vicar of Boston's Old North Church, stands next to Newark Jackson's old pew.

Ross Hardesty, which mentions Newark Jackson — not as a chocolatier but as a slave owner. Old North asked Hardesty to do additional research, and the results were informative but upsetting.

"Jared eventually found the ship manifests, and that's when he called me and said, 'I've got bad news for you,'" Ayres said.

The news was that Jackson and several other Old North members were participants in a slave-smuggling ring. Defying British law, they transported slaves from Barbados to Suriname, outside the British Empire. In 1744, Jackson and fellow Old North parishioner George Ledain were killed in a mutiny shortly after leaving Suriname, according to Hardesty's research. On the ship, Dutch authorities found 15 slaves who had not been sold: 2 adults and 13 children. Jackson himself owned three slaves at the time of his death, according to Hardesty.

Hardesty's research had "given us



Photos/Egan Millard/Episcopal News Service

Old North Church is Boston's oldest standing church, and it still houses an active Episcopal congregation.

some work to do to figure out how to go from where we are to where we should be," Ayres said.

The first step was to present the findings to the community at that panel discussion in October, which included Hardesty, another historian, a lawyer and the Rt. Rev. Gayle Harris, bishop suffragan of the Diocese of Massachusetts. The commemorative sign in Jackson's pew has been removed and may be replaced with a new one. Further changes are in the works, Ayres said.

"We have a board meeting next week and on their agenda is to talk about de-branding the [chocolate] shop, which would be to stop calling it 'Captain Jackson's.' We still want to do the chocolate program, but we don't want to be honoring somebody who by our standards is not honorable," Ayres told ENS.

The discoveries about Jackson and the other parishioners could be just the tip of the iceberg. Even in a region not typically associated with slavery (Massachusetts abolished it in 1783), almost 10 percent of Boston's population in the 1740s was enslaved.

"There was probably enslaved labor working on the construction of church; we haven't really done the deep dive into our archives to see if we can find any information about that, but that's for future research. We know the first two rectors of the church were slave owners," Ayres said.

Slaves and free black citizens attended Old North, and there are multiple records of a particular free black family, Ayres said. But all people of color had to sit up in the mezzanine, which was the least comfortable part of the church — cold in the winter and hot in the summer.

"Because of the nature of slavery, black people did not have much of an opportunity to get together and socialize. So this was a real source of community to them. I also think about how they're sitting up there looking down on all their owners," Ayres said. ■

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Diocese of New York establishes reparations fund, adopts anti-slavery resolutions from 1860

By Egan Millard
Episcopal News Service

At its annual convention on Nov. 8 and 9, the Diocese of New York established a task force to examine how it can make meaningful reparations for its participation in the slave trade and committed \$1.1 million from its endowment to fund the efforts the task force recommends.

It also passed four resolutions condemning slavery, which had first been introduced by John Clarkson Jay — grandson of founding father John Jay, governor of New York and first chief justice of the Supreme Court — in 1860. At the time, the resolutions were met with fierce opposition from the clergy and laity, many of whom were still profiting from the slave trade, and they had been tabled indefinitely until now, according to the diocese.

New York Bishop Andrew M.L. Dietsche has made racial reconciliation a priority in his diocese, which designated 2017-18 a Year of Lamentations, 2018-19 a Year of Repentance/Apology and 2019-20 a Year of Reparation.

“The legacy, the shadow, of white supremacy which flows from our slave past and continues to poison the common life of the American people ... continues to impose extraordinary burdens, costs, hardships and degradation upon people of African descent in our country,” Dietsche said in his address to the convention. “The Diocese of New York played a significant, and genuinely evil, part in American slavery, so we must make, where we can, repair.”

Dietsche noted in his address that in the 18th century, a high proportion of New Yorkers were slave owners, and according to diocesan records, some churches owned slaves as parish servants or “property assets.”

“We have a great deal to answer for,” Dietsche said. “We are complicit.”

At the 1860 convention, Jay, an ardent abolitionist, introduced four resolutions urging the leadership and laity

of the diocese to publicly renounce and oppose slavery and slave trading. Importing slaves had been illegal in the United States since 1808, and the last remaining slaves in New York were freed in 1827. However, the Port of New York was still considered “the largest slave market in the world” as late as 1859, being the home port for ships that sailed across the Atlantic to abduct Africans and generate profits for New York merchants.

Jay wanted his diocese to take a firm stand against the human trafficking that

and final chapter to this movement, which begins now with this convention, and that is the Year of Reparation.”

In his address, Dietsche called for a previously unannounced resolution “to set aside \$1.1 million from the diocesan endowment for the purpose of reparations for slavery.”

Citing Virginia Theological Seminary and Princeton Theological Seminary as examples — VTS pledged 1.1 percent of its endowment and Princeton 2.25 percent — Dietsche considered 2.5 percent of the diocesan endowment an appropriate amount, which came to \$1.1 million.

“Much smaller, and the resources for significant reparation would be insufficient; much larger, and it might not be something we could do,” Dietsche said. “When I ask that we remove this much money from our modest endowment, I know that this is not a small thing. However, I am sure that any honest process of reparation must require sacrifice and a commitment, not only from our surplus but from our seed corn.”

The resolution included the creation of a task force that will determine how best to structure the reparations effort and make recommendations at the next diocesan convention. Dietsche emphasized that the effort is about more than simply spending money, but he brought up several specific possibilities.

“This money could produce five \$10,000 college or seminary scholarships every year in perpetuity,” Dietsche said. “This money could establish and fund an education and advocacy library and resource center in this diocese dedicated to racial justice and reconciliation. This money could support a first-step program in this diocese to invite, nurture and prepare black young people, and men and women, to explore the possibility of ordained ministry. \$1.1 million isn’t so much money, but it’s not nothing either, and I look forward with anticipation to the creative possibilities that might come from this initiative.” ■



Photo/Diocese of New York

Wayne Kempton, archivist and historiographer for the Diocese of New York, displays the journal of the 1860 diocesan convention.

continued “in violation of the statutes of the Republics, of the teachings of the Church, of the rights of man, and the laws of God.”

The reaction?

“Enough people rose and left the floor of the convention to deny the action even the possibility of a quorum,” Dietsche said.

Diane Pollard of the diocesan Reparations Committee said it was decided to bring back the resolutions at this convention in part because “it is so painful” to have them still sitting on the table, an unfinished chapter of an ugly history.

“It is painful to people who have family that were slaves,” Pollard said in a video produced by the diocese about the resolutions.

Dietsche referred to the passing of the resolutions as “the fruit of the Year of Apology” but noted that “there is a third

Atlanta center to launch project named for Barbara Harris

By David Paulsen
Episcopal News Service

The Absalom Jones Center for Racial Healing in Atlanta is expanding its scope in the name of one of the church's most heralded bishops. The center is an initiative of the Diocese of Atlanta that has served the past two years as an educational center supporting the Episcopal Church's racial reconciliation work.

On Nov. 16, the center launched the Bishop Barbara C. Harris Justice Project to strengthen the church's efforts to address environmental injustice, health inequities, mass incarceration, the death penalty, inhumane immigration policies and other social justice issues.

Harris became the first female bishop in the Anglican Communion when she was consecrated as bishop suffragan of the Diocese of Massachusetts in 1989.

Now retired at age 89, she continues to be an inspiration to Episcopalians and an example of faithful commitment to justice work, making her a natural choice for this honor, Atlanta Bishop Robert Wright said.

Harris is able to "thread the needle" of being both kind and candid, Wright told Episcopal News Service, exemplifying "how to talk in terms of inequity and to talk in terms of justice and where we've missed building relationships of Christian affection." She has spoken forcefully on issues of race, gender and sexual orientation while remaining personable and affable, Wright said, "and you just don't see that every day."

Harris is scheduled to join the ceremo-



Retired Bishop Suffragan Barbara Harris of the Diocese of Massachusetts.

nies next week in Atlanta, which will include a forum discussion, a commemorative dinner and a worship service, with Wright preaching, at St. Luke's Episcopal Church.

The day was a celebration of Harris' life and the starting point for the new justice project named for her.

"She totally embodies what this work is about, in her own journey and the way she has been living her life in the world as an advocate for

justice and her courageousness and her trailblazing spirit," said Catherine Meeks, executive director of the center, which is located across the street from Morehouse College, a historically black men's college.

Meeks analogizes the Harris Justice Project as the center "spreading its wings."

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Digital Advent materials available

Dec. 1 is the first Sunday of Advent, the Christian season of spiritual preparation before celebrating the birth of Jesus at Christmas. Episcopal Journal presents some resources suitable for the season.

By Cara Modisett
Episcopal Cafe

New and updated Advent resources for congregations, dioceses, and communities of faith are now available from the Episcopal Church at www.episcopalchurch.org. Digital Christmas Eve services are also being offered.

Digital Invitation Kit for Advent

(available in English, Spanish, & French)

Continuing the invitation to connect Presiding Bishop Michael Curry's "Way of Love, Practices for a Jesus-Centered Life" more deeply to the seasons of the year, the church has developed additional free and downloadable resources for congregations, dioceses, and communities of faith. An Advent Digital Invitation Kit is available now to help congregations invite people to enter into this season of preparation.

The theme of the kit is inspired by Mark 1:3 and Isaiah 40:3 "the voice of one crying out in the wilderness: 'Prepare the way of the Lord, make his paths straight,'" and includes a customizable poster, post-



card, and flyer; a social media-ready graphic; and a Facebook cover image.

The Way of Love (www.episcopalchurch.org/way-of-love) is a journey that begins by saying "yes" to God's call to birth new life into our lives and the world.

Journeying the Way of Love Advent curriculum and Advent calendar

(available in English & Spanish; calendar available in French also)

A four-week Advent curriculum and Advent calendar pegged to readings and themes from the first two chapters of the Gospel of Luke that incorporates Way of Love practices and the Nativity/infancy narrative of Jesus to enable participants to grow spiritually during this season of preparation.

#AdventWord (available in English, Spanish & Haitian Creole)

This popular Advent practice returns in 2019. Sign up to receive a daily word, visual and short written meditation. Each

day during Advent, meditations will be available in English, Spanish and Haitian Creole, with ASL videos. This global effort asks participants to post a reflection of where they find the #AdventWord as part of their spiritual journey. Find #AdventWord at www.adventword.org.

Sermons for Advent and Christmas

Advent can be an important time to slow down and anticipate the joy of Christmas. This is a compilation of Advent and Christmas sermons from some of the best preachers in the Episcopal Church. Whether you use this book for private devotionals and inspiration, small group study, or reading from the pulpit, we pray that you will find this holy season brightened by the Everlasting Light himself.

Find sermons at www.episcopalchurch.org/advent-and-christmas-resources.

Bulletin inserts

(available in English & Spanish)

Bulletin inserts for each Sunday in Advent are designed to complement the revised Advent calendar and Journeying the Way of Love Advent curriculum. Available in full page, one-sided and half page, double-sided formats.

Advent reflections

Episcopal Migration Ministries will offer weekly advent reflections on the EMM blog www.episcopalmigrationministries.org/blog/ and on the Hometown podcast. Hometown episodes can be found on SoundCloud, Stitcher, Google Play and iTunes.

Christmas Eve programs

The Episcopal Church is offering digital Christmas Eve services on December 24, making Christmas Eve worship accessible to those not attending a service or program at a local church. More information on the digital Christmas Eve programs will be available at www.episcopalchurch.org. ■

Cara Modisett lives in Roanoke, Va., where she serves as music director at St. Elizabeth's Episcopal Church and staff collaborative pianist at Radford University. This article was published on the Episcopal Cafe website, www.episcopalcafe.com.



Five ways to ‘prepare ye’

By Linda Buskirk

Already stores urge us to “prepare for the holidays” — as if the whole season depends on us choosing a new color scheme for our Christmas decorations. Right now.

Episcopal sensibilities resist this, of course. We are too busy getting back into the swing of Sunday School, reviving outreach ministries, and conducting annual giving campaigns. Before we know it, the last pot will be scrubbed after the annual community Thanksgiving meal. Dry your hands, sit down, take a breath. Welcome Advent.

Here are five ways to get ready to experience a meaningful Advent.

1) Be intentional about Advent. Give Advent a fighting chance to be part of the mix of your life in December with intentionality. Author Cynthia Bourgeault in “The Wisdom Jesus,” advises that an approach to centering prayer can be applied to Advent, with the urging that it is “important to be as clear as you can be” about how willing you are to give yourself to a practice:

“To the extent that your intention is clear and strong, your practice will be also. If your intention gets muddled and consumed, so will your practice. You are simply asked to attend, to give yourself

completely into that deeper, mysterious presence,” she writes.

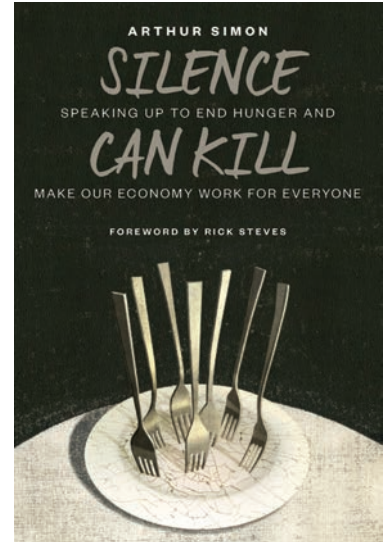
2) Prepare ye. There are wonderful resources for personal, group, congregational and children’s observances of a meaningful Advent. Episcopal Church Publishing, Inc. offers a variety of daily meditation and reflection books for adults, children and families at www.churchpublishing.org. Forward Movement publishes a variety of pamphlets helpful for engaging groups of adults or children in preparing for the coming of Christ at www.forwardmovement.org. Now is a great time to peruse the offerings and order publications so ye are prepared to jump in on the first Sunday of Advent, Dec. 1.

3) Make a place. We all know where our Christmas tree stands. Where is your spot for contemplating Jesus’ birth? In the delightful children’s booklet “Love Life, Live Advent,” found at Church Publishing, authors Paula Gooder and Peter Babington advise families to “make a place in your home where you will think about Advent. Make it special by putting your Advent calendar, candle, crib-set or wreath there.”

4) Invite. The wealth of our liturgical year holds value for all seekers of God’s light. Even if your Advent reflections are done solo, you can share your experience with others, just as you might tell them about a good book you are reading. When party guests arrive, mention the beauty that the Advent wreath is adding to the season. The light you are finding will shine brighter when shared with others.

5) Expect. Jesus promises that when we seek God, we will find God. Hold your Advent journey lightly in your hand, joyously experiencing where it may lead. Advent anticipates more than a celebration of what we know already happened 2,000+ years ago. Expect transformation and your own rebirth in the manger of your heart. ■

Linda Buskirk is a capital campaign and strategic planning consultant for the Episcopal Church Foundation (ECF). This article was originally posted on ECF’s “Vital Practices for Leading Congregations” website, www.ecfvp.org.



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Created by Susan Elliott with drawings and text by Jay Sidebotham, this 2019 calendar poster suggests ways to mark the days through the Advent season. The calendar offers ideas for prayer, helping others, and being thoughtful about the true meaning of Christmas. It is available at www.forwardmovement.org.

Confederate symbols workshop re-examines the past

By David Paulsen
Episcopal News Service

When the Rev. Hannah Hooker traveled in early November to the University of the South in Sewanee, Tenn., she brought along her thoughts of a specific stained-glass window back home in Little Rock, Ark., where she serves as associate rector of Christ Episcopal Church. The window depicts Bishop Leonidas Polk preaching at the church's dedication in 1839.

It's not a conspicuous window — located to one side of the nave, overlooking a breezeway where little light reaches its panes. Only after a longtime parishioner pointed it out did Hooker examine it closely and consider what Polk's legacy means for her congregation at a time when The Episcopal Church has called on its dioceses and congregations to research and tell the full stories of their historic complicity with slavery, segregation and other systems of racial oppression.

Polk, as missionary bishop to the Southwest and later bishop of Louisiana, was a key figure in the founding of Sewanee in the 1860s, but he died before the opening of the Tennessee seminary, killed in battle during the Civil War while serving as a general for the Confederacy. Today, he has become a problematic figure in the churchwide reexamination of Confederate symbols and memorials in worship spaces.

"I sort of am of the opinion that all churches, whether they have Confederate symbols or history, have the opportunity to investigate their own history and sort of own whatever grossness is in their past," Hooker told Episcopal News Ser-



Photo/Sewanee

Participants in the workshop on Confederate symbols visit All Saints' Chapel at Sewanee: The University of the South in Sewanee, Tenn.

vice by phone this week after returning from a three-day Sewanee workshop on those topics.

Hooker and 10 other priests attended the university's inaugural Confederate Symbols and Episcopal Churches Workshop Nov. 5-7. Each priest came from a Southern parish with historical connections to the Confederacy. Some of the priests lead worship services in churches where Confederate symbols are present. Their congregations generally have not yet engaged in full-throated discussions of those symbols' meanings.

At Calvary Episcopal Church in Fletcher, N.C., Confederate President Jefferson Davis and Confederate Gen. Robert E. Lee are two of the Southern historical figures remembered in stone monuments, more than a dozen in all, arranged in a roadside display outside the church. The rector, the Rev. J. Clarkson, attended the Sewanee workshop on Confederate symbols and described the monuments at his church as "a little bit unusual."

"Figuring out what the church might want to do with them at this point is ... a more complicated discussion," Clarkson said in an interview with ENS.

The Rev. Rusty McCown brought to the workshop a different example from St. Paul's Episcopal Church in Franklin, Tenn., where he is rector. In the parish hall of the 200-year-old church hangs a portrait honoring a prominent early parishioner, but a darker part of the man's past is hardly acknowledged — that he was a major slaveholder.

"I'm kind of a belief we shouldn't have any portraits at all," McCown said, though no changes have been discussed yet at his church. He attended the Sewanee workshop looking for guidance in how to approach such conversations in a congregation where some parishioners may be resistant to change.

He said he came away from the experience better equipped to lead the planning of his congregation's upcoming 200th anniversary commemorations, knowing that it is important for a church to "own the history and remember that history, but at the same time, how do we go forward with this?"

The Sewanee workshop was a pilot program developed by two seminary graduates, the Rev. Hannah Pommerheim and the Rev. Kellan Day, through the university's six-year Roberson Project on Slavery, Race, and Reconciliation. The research project, named for late history professor Bryan Roberson, aims to tell the fuller story of the university's founding and first 100 years within so-

continued on page 1

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CONFEDERATE continued from page H

cial and economic systems built upon racial injustice.

This initial workshop received a \$5,000 grant from the Jessie Ball duPont Fund and was only open to Episcopal clergy who are dealing with Confederate symbols at their churches. The workshop's three parts examined the theological underpinnings of Confederate symbols in worship spaces, provided context for understanding art and symbols and steered participants toward best practices for local action.

Pommersheim and Day, working with Sewanee history professor Woody Register, will review feedback from participants and consider future options, such as offering the in-person workshop for a broader pool of ordained and lay Episcopalians or hosting it online. Another option would be to develop a curriculum that dioceses and congregations can follow on their own.

"These conversations, we want them to be happening in more churches. We want folks to have tools to have these conversations," Pommersheim told ENS.

The 11 priests who participated in last week's workshop weren't expected to return to their congregations and immediately start removing objects connected to the Confederacy, Pommersheim said, though congregations might decide to take such steps after changing and deepening how they engage with their history. "Something actually changing was the goal."

The Sewanee seminary was among the Episcopal institutions that reassessed their own Confederate symbols in the wake of a deadly August 2017 standoff in Charlottesville, Va., between white supremacist groups and counterprotesters, who converged in the city amid a legal dispute over its Confederate statutes.

In September 2017, Sewanee relocated a monument honoring Edmund Kirby-Smith, a 19th-century professor who previously served as a Confederate general, though even before Charlottesville, the debate over Confederate symbols had divided the campus community. Some of the contention centered around how best to represent Polk's role in the founding of the university without glorifying his Confederate service.

Another focal point for debate has been All Saints' Chapel. Confederate



Photo/Sarah Hartwig/Christ Church Cathedral

This plaque honoring Leonidas Polk, an Episcopal bishop and Confederate general, was displayed in Christ Church Cathedral in Cincinnati, until its removal in 2018.

battle flags were removed from the chapel years ago, but just last year, remaining references to the Confederacy in the chapel's stained-glass windows generated renewed scrutiny. The university responded in October 2018 by removing a pane from the window that had featured the seal of the Confederacy.

Participants in last week's workshop on Confederate symbols visited All Saints' Chapel, turning it into a classroom for lessons on the meaning of art and the assessment of art theologically. Sewanee art professor Shelley MacLaren led one of those discussions. Another session, on best practices for congrega-

tions, was led by the Rev. Molly Bosscher, who spent four years as associate rector at Richmond, Va.'s St. Paul's Episcopal Church, once known as the Cathedral of the Confederacy.

The Rev. Jamie Osborne led a session on the theological underpinnings of Confederate symbols in churches. Such symbols are given added spiritual importance when placed in a church, elevating them to "a higher level, a God level" alongside the baptismal font and altar.

Osborne brought to the workshop his own experience in Montgomery, Ala., where he serves as associate rector at St. John's Episcopal Church. The St. John's vestry decided in February to remove a plaque and pew that had been known as the "Jefferson Davis pew" because church leaders determined its connection to the Confederate president was tenuous at best and its 1925 dedication had been steeped in racism.

"The removal of the plaque and the pew is good for the long-term future of the church," Osborne told ENS. "But there's also the deeper conversation of 'How was it that pew and plaque got there?'"

Those conversations are happening at Episcopal congregations in all regions of the United States, not just the South. ■



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Arizona churches honor ‘people of the land,’ add Indigenous Peoples Day to diocese’s calendar

By David Paulsen
Episcopal News Service

The Diocese of Arizona is stepping up its efforts to give recognition to the “People of the Land,” including by creating an Indigenous Peoples of Arizona Day, which churches in the diocese can celebrate in future years on the second Monday of October — the Columbus Day federal holiday.

The diocese’s 59th convention was held on the weekend after the most recent Columbus Day. An Indigenous Peoples Day was one of two resolutions approved to encourage greater acknowledgement of the 22 federally recognized Native American tribes in the state. The other resolution offered congregations specific language that can be incorporated into their services.

Across the diocese, “we don’t have a church that isn’t directly on or very close to traditional native land,” the Rev. Debbie Royals told Episcopal News Service in an interview. “We are pretty much guests on that land.”

Royals, the diocese’s canon for Native American ministry, is a member of the Pascua Yaqui, whose tribal land is in the Tucson area. She helped draft and submit the two resolutions that were approved Oct. 19, expanding on a commitment the diocese made in 2016 to acknowledge the “traditional custodians” of church land.

Royals’ voice wavered as she grew emotional describing the joy she felt when her diocese wholeheartedly backed both resolutions, signifying what she saw as “a big step” toward increasing the visibility of Native American members and their culture in the church.

“I sat with such a feeling of, for the first time in my life ... that I’d been seen, that I was no longer in the shadows,” she said.

The resolution adopting Indigenous

Peoples of Arizona Day doesn’t mention Columbus Day specifically, though the date is the same. It will be set aside as “a day of prayer and reflection to understand our shared history and continue along a path of reconciliation.”

Congregations wishing to offer worship services on Indigenous Peoples of Arizona Day are invited to use the reso-

would welcome efforts to organize similar commemorations in other dioceses or churchwide. “It is readily transferable to any other diocese.”

Royals on Oct. 30 discussed the two resolutions with the Episcopal Church’s Indigenous Ministries Advisory Council. The Rev. Brad Hauff, the church’s missioner for indigenous ministries, told ENS by email that he found the Diocese of Arizona’s example encouraging.

“We as a church need to do all we can to promote awareness of indigenous people, our presence, our painful history and our hopes for a renewed and empowered future,” said Hauff, who is Lakota. “There are still many people, within the church and the general population of our country, who do not know us other than through the distorted lenses of the Columbus myth and Manifest Destiny, and this needs to change.”

In fact, an increasing number of states, cities and churches in the United States are choosing to celebrate Indigenous Peoples Day, often in place of Columbus Day as part of a growing re-examination of the legacy of Christopher Columbus’ journeys to North America.

The Italian explorer, hired by the king and queen of Spain in the late 15th century, often receives credit for “discovering” America in 1492, even though he never set foot on mainland North America, and the continent already was home to millions of people whose ancestral history dates back around 15,000 years. Historians also note Columbus’ record of brutal mistreatment and enslavement of many of the land’s indigenous inhabitants.

“Columbus was a hired gun. The Spanish crown needed someone to advance its interests. Like a gun, Columbus, as a representative of power, quickly became an agent of violence,” the Ojibwe author David Treuer writes in “The Heartbeat of Wounded Knee,” a history of Native America published earlier this year. ■



Photo/David Schacher via Diocese of Arizona

Native American church leaders offer a traditional blessing during the consecration of Arizona Bishop Jennifer Reddall.

lution’s suggested collect and propers — Isaiah 40:25-31, Psalm 19, Philippians 4:4-9 and John 1:1-18 — which also are the collect and propers used by the Anglican Church of Canada for its Indigenous Peoples Day, celebrated on June 21.

“We wanted to have this as a resource for the diocese,” said the Rev. Ben Garren, the Episcopal chaplain at the University of Arizona in Tucson who drafted the resolution with Royals. Both serve on the diocese’s Council for Native American Ministries.

The resolution invokes the words of the 26th Presiding Bishop Katharine Jefferts Schori, who during her 2006-2015 tenure urged the church to take up the work of healing and reconciliation after generations of injustice and oppression toward Native communities.

The Diocese of Arizona, by inviting congregations to commemorate indigenous history and correct the historical narrative, is fulfilling “the work that General Convention already called us to do along these lines,” Garren said, and he

Native American Heritage Month Episcopal Profiles

In 1990, President George H. W. Bush declared November as National American Indian Heritage Month, thereafter commonly referred to as Native American Heritage Month. The month aims to provide a platform for native people to share their culture, traditions, music, crafts, dance, and ways and concepts of life. Episcopalian Sandra T. Montes is posting profiles of native Episcopalians on her Facebook page throughout November.

Bishop Steven Charleston

My role in spiritual life is to pray for others. I also write books to help people in their own spiritual search. To help me do that I practice deep meditation, participate in traditional ceremonies and learn from the medicine people. Chahta sia: I am a Choctaw. I am proud of my resiliency and creativity of my people. I try to honor the wisdom within all indigenous cultures. I hope women and men from all walks of life discover a spiritual



resource in our Native American story for their own lives. Sv hochifo aivlhpe-sa yat ish ikhana kiyo, my traditional name is personal but it speaks to the healing of all people.

Elsie Dennis

My role is to be guided by and live out The Baptismal Covenant as follower of Christ. I have served on vestry, been a chalice bearer, lay reader, taught Sunday School, been active in Episcopal Church Women. In my diocese I have worked as interim communications coordinator and [on various committees such as Multicultural Ministries and First Nations Committee]. My tribal affiliation is Seewepeme and Cherokee. Our diocese has been supportive to incorporating Native spirituality and practices into events. My mother taught me that everything has feelings and to be sensitive and respectful to all. I appreciate being connected to the land and people.



The Rev. Isaiah Brokenleg

I am a vicar at Trinity Episcopal Church, Watertown, S.D. I also serve on the Task Force for Communion Across Difference. My tribal affiliation is Rosebud Sioux Tribe (Sicangu Lakota). I love that we sing in Lakota from our Dakota Hymnals and that we gather annually at Niobrara Convocation. I greatly appreciate the unique cultural perspective indigenous people bring to the table. The idea that we are all related (Mitakuye Oyasin) and that we are all called to be good relatives to one another. I appreciate that traditionally as a winkté (Lakota two-spirit) we have always held a sacred social/spiritual role in society. Too often, our non-native LGBT siblings have experienced shame for who they are. However, in our Lakota history our two-spiritedness was viewed as a sacred thing. It allowed us to walk between the worlds of the masculine and feminine, the natural and supernatural. ■



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Joanne Rogers: On her husband Fred Rogers' commitment to prayer, church, children

By Adelle M. Banks
Religion News Service

At “91 and a half,” Joanne Rogers remains a devoted advocate for the legacy of her late husband, the iconic star of the long-running children’s show “Mister Rogers’ Neighborhood.”

Fred Rogers’ widow shared churchgoing traditions and a love for music with her husband, whose story is depicted in the new movie, “A Beautiful Day in the Neighborhood.”

The film, released Nov. 22, stars Tom Hanks and depicts the friendship that developed between Fred Rogers and Tom Junod, a journalist who profiled the TV luminary in *Esquire* magazine.

Joanne Rogers continues to attend Pittsburgh’s Sixth Avenue Presbyterian Church, the congregation where she worshipped with her husband, who was ordained by the Presbyterian Church (USA) in 1963 and died in 2003. The former longtime professional pianist recalls that beyond making TV his mission, her husband — who majored in music before attending seminary — was “a very fine pianist” who shared his talent with her at home.

“I had a lot of two-piano literature, and so, when Fred and I would have a chance, we’d sit down and sometimes I’d make him play the other part,” she said,



Photo/Lacey Terrell

Maryann Plunkett, left, plays Joanne Rogers, right, on the set of TriStar Pictures’ “A Beautiful Day In The Neighborhood.”

“so that I could practice a little, and he would do that. Had a good time at two pianos.”

The interview has been edited for length and clarity.

You have said that your husband used to say the space between the television and the person watching it was “holy ground.” Did you see his show as a form of ministry?

Absolutely. That’s a yes. It was what he was ordained to do. That was the command from the ordination, to be ordained as an evangelist and continue his work in television and the media with families and children.

But he never mentioned his faith explicitly, that I’m aware of, on the show. If so, why not?

He wanted to be inclusive, and there are many, many people you would ex-

clude if you start mentioning one God, one faith. That was the reason for it. I think that he acted his faith, always, as much as he possibly could. He worked very hard at doing that. He worked very hard at being the person that he was, and he could act his values and his faith.

In the movie, Maryann Plunkett, the actress depicting you, said, “We don’t call him ‘Mr. Rogers’ at home” and Tom Hanks, playing your husband, mentioned that at least one of his sons was reluctant to tell his friends who his father was. Was it hard for you sometimes

to be the other parent of the children of Fred Rogers?

I was used to it. (laughs) I got a lot of practice doing that and I hope I was understanding of it, probably never as understanding as I might have been. But the fact was that my oldest son went to college and never said what Rogers he was until his dad came to visit him. But he just is a type who doesn’t like to bring attention to himself that much. He likes to have his privacy, yet he’s still very outgoing.

The movie depicts Fred Rogers reading Scripture and praying for people by name. Did these practices develop because of his church experience or in some other way?

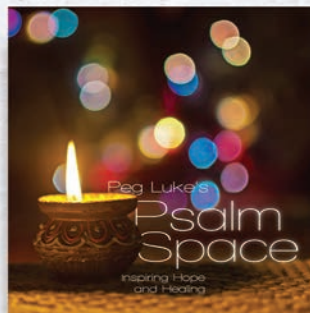
I don’t know how they developed. I suspect because he was a churchgoer from early childhood, I think. His parents were, and they all went to church, and he was very much a Presbyterian growing up.

But the praying for people by name and reading Scripture were things he did?

He did that every morning. He was a person who really liked schedules. He liked to know what he was going to be doing, and he wrote a song for the program called “I Like to Be Told.” And he really liked that. So first thing in the morning — and that means maybe about 5:15 or so — he prayed in his

continued on page M

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ROGERS continued from page L

room. And he had a legal pad with all the names on it that he wanted to remember.

Can you talk a little bit more about his church experience? Did he go to service regularly and if so, where?

He went to church regularly, and it changed around somewhat. He would go, maybe if a friend was gonna be at a church. He didn't have to go to the same church, but he did go most regularly to the Sixth Presbyterian Church in Pittsburgh.

Your character in the movie notes that Mr. Rogers is not a living saint, and he's not a perfect person. Is that what you would actually say about him? How would you describe him?

I would describe him as a loving, hard-working person.

He talked about how people deal with death and that's something that can be uncomfortable. But he talked about if it's human, it should be mentionable. If it's mentionable it should be manageable. Could you speak to whether the way he approached death



Photo/Lacey Terrell



Photo/John Beale

Left, Tom Hanks as Mister Rogers in TriStar Pictures' "A Beautiful Day In The Neighborhood." Right, Fred Rogers with Daniel Tiger from his show "Mr. Rogers' Neighborhood."

may be something that is helpful to you even to this day?

I think you can admire the way somebody handles something, and Fred did a wonderful job of handling death as part of life.

What do you think of Tom Hanks playing your husband?

First, what I think of Tom Hanks doing the part: superb. I think someone said Tom Hanks just disappears into the person he's trying to present. And I think that he's amazing. I say, thank you God, they got him.

The movie depicts your husband as someone who asked for prayer for himself. Did he ask you to pray for him?

It's more complex than that. He would ask people who were very disabled, challenged. He would ask those people to pray for him. And, Tom Junod, who was the real journalist in the story, asked him: "Oh, are you doing that just because you want to make them feel good?" And he said, "Oh, oh, not at all. Not at all. I just feel that people who have gone through as much as they have are very close to God." ■

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Museum of the Bible displays medieval Hebrew Pentateuch

By Yonat Shimron
Religion News Service

A rare medieval Pentateuch manuscript that had been in private collections for years is on display at the Museum of the Bible in Washington, D.C.

The volume, which dates to around the year 1000, was acquired two years ago by the Green Collection, headed by billionaire Steve Green of the Hobby Lobby arts and crafts chain.

The Pentateuch, consisting of the five biblical books of Genesis, Exodus, Leviticus, Numbers and Deuteronomy, forms the first part of the 24-volume Hebrew Bible. It was written by scholars of the Masoretic tradition who codified the Hebrew Bible and added diacritical marks above and below the Hebrew letters to enable correct pronunciation.

Before the appearance of books, Jews read the Pentateuch from the Torah, a scroll made of parchment or animal skins. Torah scrolls are still read in synagogues, but because they do not contain vowels, readers sometimes consult Pentateuch collections such as the one on display at the Museum of the Bible for

the authoritative pronunciation.

There are several other extant volumes of the Pentateuch from the 11th century or earlier in Russia and Israel, said Herschel A. Hepler, associate curator at the muse-



Photos/Alejandro Matos/Museum of the Bible



This Pentateuch was written around the year 1000 and will be displayed at the Museum of the Bible.

um. The Museum of the Bible named this one the Washington Pentateuch.

The 15-by-24-inch volume, bound in leather with metal bosses, contains two sections. The main section (nearly 500 pages) was written around the year 1000.

Another section (20 pages) was written in 1141 by Joseph ben Jacob in Alexandria, Egypt. This section originally belonged to a different manuscript. Centuries later, it was added to the original manuscript.

According to the museum, the book made its way to a Karaite Jewish community in the Crimean city of Yevpatoriya. That community gave it as a gift to the archbishop of Kherson (Ukraine) in 1835. Later, it was owned by the Moscow Theological Academy before several Israeli collectors bought it.

The Green Collection acquired it from Israeli financier David Sofer, who lives in London and collects ancient manuscripts. Sofer was recently in the news because he and his partners bought prime Jerusalem land from the Greek Orthodox Church. They had initially intended to build luxury apartments on the site believed by Christians to be the original Hill of Evil Counsel, where, according to the New Testament, the Jewish high priest Caiaphas and his advisers decided to betray Jesus to the Romans. Last year, those plans were withdrawn.

The exhibit at the museum is titled “A Fence Around the Torah.” ■

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With interfaith exhibit, Boston's Abrahamic faith groups revisit their shared roots

By Aysha Khan
Religion News Service

Just over a year ago, the day after the deadly mass shooting at Pittsburgh's Tree of Life Synagogue, more than a thousand locals gathered together on the Boston Common to mourn and pray.

As the Rev. Amy McCreath, dean of the historic St. Paul Cathedral that overlooks America's oldest park, watched people of various faiths unite once again to mourn another national tragedy, she was hit with an emotional realization.

"I looked out over the crowds of people, and it was so clear that all of them really want a peaceful future," she remembered. "We want to work together against violence, but we don't even know each other. Unfortunately, the odds are good that something like that will happen again, and we need to be prepared to support one another and defend one another."

That's part of the reason the Episcopal cathedral agreed to host a new interfaith art exhibit that explores the faith and life of Abraham, the shared spiritual forefather of the world's three largest monotheistic religions — and launched an accompanying interfaith book study to spotlight Abraham's wives, Sarah and Hagar.

The two-year touring exhibition "Abraham: Out of One, Many," is curated by the Rev. Paul-Gordon Chandler of Caravan, an international art non-profit affiliated with the Episcopal Church. After premiering in Rome in May, the show began a 20-month U.S. tour at Nebraska's Tri-Faith Initiative this fall.

Late last month, St. Paul received the 15 paintings, which are arranged in sets of three to illustrate Abraham's journey through the eyes of Middle Eastern artists from Muslim, Christian and Jewish backgrounds. The art will be displayed there through Dec. 6.

"Abraham is a complicated figure, and his legacy in human history is very complex. It's not all flowers and roses," McCreath told RNS. "Many people who



Photo/Aysha Khan/RNS

Visitors from Trinity Episcopal Cathedral in Little Rock, Ark, view art in the "Abraham: Out of One, Many" exhibition at St. Paul Cathedral in Boston.

Left, "Welcoming the Stranger," 2019, oil and collage on canvas, by Qais Al Sindy.



come to the exhibit are familiar with the basic stories from Scripture, and each piece of art invites them to think more deeply about each story, interrogate it, see more in it."

Local Iraqi Muslim surrealist Sinan Hussein, California-based Chaldean abstract exhibitionist Qais al Sindy and Jewish Jerusalem-based painter Shai Azoulay each offer their own depictions of five themes within Abraham's spiritual journey: "Living as a Pilgrim," "Welcoming the Stranger," "Sacrificial Love," "The Compassionate" and "A Friend of God."

The exhibition is a response to the new wave of anti-Semitic and anti-Muslim hate, as well as the "general climate of growing prejudice and stereotyping" and "tribalism," that have enveloped the country, Caravan president and exhibition curator Rev. Paul-Gordon Chandler said.

"In these three faith traditions, whose followers are referred to as 'children of Abraham,' Abraham is seen as a model of hospitality — of welcoming the 'stranger' and embracing the 'other,'" Chandler, who was recently appointed rector of The Anglican Centre in Qatar, said. "The exhibition attempts to artistically answer the question, 'What can Abraham teach us today about freeing our world from sectarian strife?'"

In Al Sindy's interpretation of "Welcoming the Stranger," the artist reimagines the iconic image of three men visiting Abraham — sometimes interpreted as the three parts of the Christian Trinity — as representatives of the three

continued on page P

INTERFAITH continued from page 0

Abrahamic faiths. Hussein depicts Abraham's son Ishmael as the stranger, noting that Ishmael is often sidelined as a character outside of Islam's telling of the story, while Azoulay's painting shows the continuous nature of Abraham's welcome of the three strangers in the desert.

"This cathedral was really founded with a vision of being a place where people of all faiths could come together and deepen their appreciation for one another," McCreath said.

Indeed, for the past two decades hundreds of local Muslims have been holding their weekly Jummah prayers there. The church's tagline, "A House of Prayer for All People," pulled from Isaiah 56:7, is embossed over the foot baths installed to make performing ablutions easier.

Church leaders partnered with a handful of local Jewish and Muslim congregations — including Central Reform Temple, Emmanuel Church and the Dar Al-Islam Jummah gathering — both to present the artwork and to develop a series of accompanying events to deepen the impact of Caravan's exhibition.

On Nov. 23, the cathedral was to host a concert by local choir et al. incorporating music from the three faith traditions. And every Sunday until Dec. 8, members of the public are invited to join

St. Paul leaders in an interfaith dialogue on the 2006 book "Hagar, Sarah, and Their Children: Jewish, Christian, and Muslim Perspectives."

When book study organizer Jane Redmont, co-chair of the Episcopal Diocese of Massachusetts' Bishops' Commission for Ecumenical and Interreligious Relations, raised her hand during early exhibit planning meetings to bring up representation of Sarah and Hagar, members were immediately supportive.

"We wanted to bring in the stories and the realities of the women and

children in the Abraham story, because they're an integral part of it," Redmont said. "This is not an either-or situation. It's a both-and."

The book, edited by feminist biblical scholars Phyllis Trible and Letty Russell, includes essays by three women scholars from each faith tradition. With each reading group session, a local woman scholar or faith leader of that tradition leads a facilitated discussion on a chapter of the book and what the figures of Sarah and Hagar mean for different communities.

"Abraham is not a lone figure," Redmont said. "He certainly must have felt alone when he left his home and followed a divine call that nobody else was hearing, but he did that with his family and his servants and his animals."

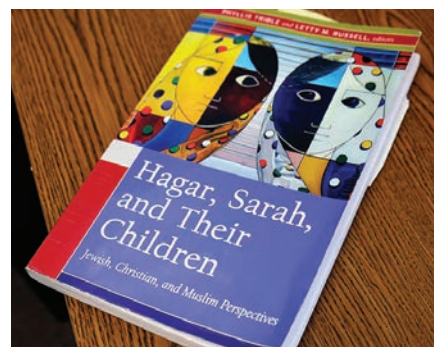
When that family expanded with his wife Sarah gifting her slave, Hagar, to Abraham in the hopes that Hagar would bear children, the situation became complex, Redmont said. Various traditions detail serious conflicts between Abraham and Sarah as well as between Sarah and Hagar.

"People who want to just keep the focus on Abraham might say, 'Oh, you're complicating the story, but, well, the story is complicated,' she said. "Some of the relationships are conflictual, some of them are loving, some of them are both. And that's how we exist as hu-

man beings, within a web of complicated family relationships. They're a healing balm for our troubles and they're a source of our troubles."

The reading group is also a chance for locals to enhance their religious literacy, including re-examining elements of their own faith tradition, Redmont said.

"You're going to learn about Hagar's importance in the Muslim hajj," she said. "You're going to learn about Hagar's laughter. You're going to learn that Christianity throughout history appropriated Hagar and Sarah in negative ways some-



Photo/Aysha Khan/RNS

An interfaith book about Abraham's wives, Sarah and Hagar.

times, and in ways that were also anti-Jewish, using Hagar as the symbol of the old Jewish law and Sarah as a symbol of the new Christian faith."

The figure of Hagar, especially, has undergone a "sort of rediscovery," as Redmont put it, among scholars and faith leaders over the past few decades. That trend is evident in Nyasha Junior's new book "Reimagining Hagar," Mohja Kahf's 2016 anthology "Hagar Poems" and a recent push among Muslim women scholars for imams to deliver Eid al-Adha sermons focused on Hagar's sacrifices and strength, among other initiatives.

Redmont said many people are particularly unaware of Hagar's prominence in Islam. For Muslims, Hagar is believed to be the mother of all Arab people and the matriarch from whom the Prophet Muhammad eventually descends. She figures prominently in hajj rituals, with many elements of the pilgrimage coming from stories of her efforts to survive in the wilderness outside Mecca with Ishmael. Many Muslims also believe she and Ishmael are buried at the Kaaba, which Abraham is believed to have built.

Both Sarah and Hagar, along with their children Isaac and Ishmael, are often taken as symbols of the Israeli and Palestinian conflict, Redmont also noted, because they are seen as the ancestors of Jewish and Muslim people, respectively.

That modern context makes a "very live backdrop" for the exhibit and for the reading group, she said.

"We're not going to solve these problems with an exhibit or a book group, and nobody's under any illusion that we are," she added. "But we have to start somewhere. And what art can do is it can open people's hearts and put them in a contemplative space." ■



Photo/Aysha Khan/RNS

Foot baths for Muslim Jummah prayers at St. Paul Cathedral in Boston.

HARRIS continued from page E

So far, the center has assembled online resources, organized events, developed curricula, and led classes and a pilgrimage intended to help Episcopalians and Episcopal clergy members reckon with their own racial biases and need for healing, in the context of the Episcopal Church's Becoming Beloved Community framework. Meeks sees the next step as connecting that spiritual journey to the outside world.

Much of the center's ongoing racial healing work will build on the example of an inaugural pilgrimage that brought 20 Episcopal priests and deacons to Atlanta in May. The participants were selected from all 20 dioceses in the church's Province IV, which encompasses all or part of nine states in the Southeast. Future pilgrimages will draw from a broader pool of participants, and the center hopes clergy members will return to their dioceses and parishes and mobilize Episcopalians to start their own journeys toward racial healing.

They also will be encouraged to consider how their faith calls them to work

for justice on a range of social issues, Meeks said, because she thinks "racism is at the core of all those issues."

Starting with a focus on the environment, the Harris Justice Project is developing a course curriculum that will debut in the new year. The curriculum will highlight ways that environmental risks tend to disproportionately affect minority communities and people of color, especially in less-affluent neighborhoods, Meeks said.

The Episcopal Church has endorsed such work through its General Convention, which in 2015 passed a resolution opposing environmental racism, "expressed in such ways as the locating of extraction, production, and disposal industries where they disproportionately harm neighborhoods inhabited by people of color and low income communities." That resolution echoed a similar measure passed in 2000 that raised concerns about "the practice of locating polluting industries disproportionately near neighborhoods inhabited by people of color or the poor."

Racist roots of unjust environmental policies stem from "the ways in which



Photo/Matthew Cavanaugh/Diocese of Massachusetts

Retired Bishop Suffragan Barbara Harris leads the Diocese of Massachusetts in singing hymns during its 2014 electing convention.

we've constructed this country on ideas of supremacy, on ideas of some people are better than others," Meeks said.

She also knows that the people who come to the center's classes bring a wide range of attitudes about race and society. Sometimes, it's important for diverse groups first to unite around the basic Christian principle that "everybody on the planet is an equal person," Meeks said. "That's a starting place." ■







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'Yes in God's Backyard' to use church land for affordable housing

By **Alejandra Molina**
Religion News Service

Faith congregations across California are responding to the state's housing crisis by sharing their parking lots with people living in their cars, providing mobile showers for the homeless and joining their neighbors in calling for rent control in their communities.

But another form of housing advocacy has been taking place among spaces of faith.

A number of churches are exploring ways to build affordable housing on their own land. It's what pastors and other leaders are referring to as YIGBY, or "Yes in God's Backyard."

The acronym is a play off of the term NIMBY — short for "Not in My Backyard" — a term of-

ten used to describe community push-back against affordable housing or other similar projects.

"Jesus very clearly tells us to keep our eyes open to those who are in need," said Clairemont Lutheran Church pastor Jonathan Doolittle.

California is home to the 10 least-affordable major markets in the nation and is near the top in cost-burdened households — second among homeowners and fourth among renters, according to a January 2019 report from the Public Policy Institute of California. The median home price in California is \$549,000. The median rent price is \$2,800.

About four years ago, Clairemont Lutheran Church members in San Diego decided they needed to do something about the housing crisis affecting their community.

The church was part of an interfaith shelter network in which congregations open their spaces for a certain length of time to house families in crisis. During

this time, churches host families for two weeks while they get back on their feet.

The families rotate to other churches in the network, but once that cycle runs out, they may have nowhere else to seek shelter, Doolittle said.



Image/courtesy of Resources for Community Development

An artistic rendering of the future St. Paul's Commons in Northern California. St. Paul's Episcopal Church in Walnut Creek would like to open its affordable housing complex in December or January. It's called St. Paul's Commons, and it will be a mixed-use development with community spaces operated by St. Paul's Episcopal Church. It will include 45 affordable apartments.

As the church made plans to redevelop its fellowship hall, Doolittle said they sought to include affordable housing as part of that project. The church proposed building a number of affordable apartments on part of their current parking lot.

Church leaders thought the affordable housing component could also speed up the approval process for the project. Instead, they encountered more roadblocks including parking restrictions and costly environmental impact reports.

In San Diego, city code makes it a requirement for churches to have a certain number of parking spaces based on the number of people who can fit in the sanctuary.

The renovation of the church's fellowship hall is underway, but the housing element is on hold for now.

However, that could soon change.

On Nov. 6, a subcommittee of the San Diego City Council voted in favor on an item that would make it easier

for faith communities to get approval to build housing on their parking lots. Under this plan, excess parking spaces could be used as a location for housing. The City Council will consider the item at a future meeting.

Clairemont Lutheran Church plans to jump-start its housing efforts next year, hoping to put between 16 and 21 apartments on its parking lot.

To housing advocate Tom Theisen, the city's move is a step in the right direction.

Theisen — a retired attorney and former chair of the Regional Task Force on the Homeless — is part of the San Diego YIGBY working group that helps activate under-utilized faith community properties suitable for residential units.

He says the YIGBY group shows how an abundance of church

land across the county can help address the region's housing shortage. Theisen said that in the past, individual churches were going to the government proposing small projects of 15 to 20 units.

"It's hard to create any change when you're talking about individual small projects," Theisen said.

Theisen said the YIGBY group emerged when San Diego County tax collector Dan McAllister identified about 1,100 faith community properties on more than 2,000 acres of land. Theisen said a substantial portion of that land is available for housing.

"If we look at this from the perspective of, 'how do we help the churches help the needy in their community and look at it county wide,' we're talking hundreds of potential housing units, possibly thousands," Theisen said.

Theisen estimates construction costs could be "primarily if not exclusively" paid through income coming in from the housing. ■

Bishop joins Wisconsin rally for gun safety bills

By David Paulsen
Episcopal News Service

Milwaukee Bishop Steven Miller was among a group of Wisconsin gun safety advocates who spoke Nov. 7 at the state Capitol in Madison in favor of pending legislation — two bills that state Republican leaders ignored before closing the day’s brief legislative sessions without debate.

Gov. Tony Evers, a Democrat, had called the special legislative session for the Senate and Assembly, both controlled by Republicans, to consider measures that would implement universal background checks for gun purchases and a “red flag” system allowing judges to approve the temporary seizure of guns from individuals suspected of posing threats to the public.

Miller, a founding convener of Bishops United Against Gun Violence, spoke before the legislative session at a news conference organized by a coalition of groups, including the Wisconsin Council of Churches, Mothers Against Gun Violence, March for Our Lives and Forward Latino.

“We are here, as Episcopalians, because we believe in the dignity of every human being. And the dignity of every human being includes keeping people safe,” Miller said, describing Evers’ legislation as “common sense” measures that have Wisconsin citizens’ widespread support.

He and other advocates of the bills point to the results of an August poll by the Marquette University Law School that found 80 percent of voters in the state support background checks for private gun purchases and gun show sales, and 81 percent back red flag laws.

“This government must take a vote. We deserve to know where our legislators stand on this issue since 80 percent of us support it,” Miller said. He spoke for about two minutes at the beginning of the 25-minute news conference, which was streamed online by WisconsinEye.

Republican leaders were required by law to convene a session on the legislation based on Evers’ request, but they

were not required to act on it. Instead, the Assembly and the Senate each met Nov. 7 for less than a minute before adjourning.

“There’s just not any momentum in the caucus to take up either one of the bills that the governor has offered,” Senate Majority Leader Scott Fitzgerald told reporters, according to the Milwaukee Journal Sentinel.

they were on Capitol Hill, the Democrat-led House passed a background check bill that has since languished in the Republican-controlled Senate.

Miller did not participate in those lawmaker visits earlier this year, but he has been active in Bishops United since the network was created in the wake of the December 2012 massacre of 26 children and educators at Sandy Hook Elementary School in Newtown, Conn. Two other deadly shootings had occurred months earlier in suburban Milwaukee, at the Sikh Temple of Wisconsin in Oak Creek and at the Azana Salon & Spa in Brookfield.

In a radio interview Nov. 7 before the news conference, Miller cited the salon shooting in October 2012 as a grim example of the need for a more comprehensive background check law. In that attack, the shooter killed his wife, two of her coworkers and himself with a gun he had purchased in an online sale after being turned away by a gun store.

Miller also highlighted the rising problem of suicide by firearm, especially in rural Wisconsin. The proposed legislation, he said, promises to help alleviate that strain of gun violence, which claims hundreds of lives in the state each year.

“This is an opportunity to care for one another, I think, in a significant way,” Miller told the *Between the Lines* show. “We know that these laws will save lives, and I don’t know why an elected representative would not want to save the lives of his or her citizens.” ■



Photo/WisconsinEye via video

Milwaukee Bishop Steven Miller speaks at a rally at Wisconsin’s Capitol in Madison in favor of two gun safety bills.

The Episcopal Church has for decades advocated stricter regulations on gun ownership and improved gun safety. General Convention’s most recent actions, in 2018, included a call for greater study of gun violence as a public health crisis. Another resolution paved the way for the church to buy stocks in gun manufacturers to implement new shareholder advocacy strategies.

Bishops United, a network of about 80 Episcopal bishops, also has pressed for federal legislation. Some of the bishops traveled to Washington, D.C., in February to meet with lawmakers on the issue. While

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church's challenges, among them having no bishop. So in 1956, two American bishops — Minnesota Bishop Stephen Keeler and Northern Indiana Bishop Reginald Mallett — along with a bishop from the Church of Ireland, which had oversight of the Spanish Episcopal Church at the time, entered the country and in secret consecrated Bishop Santos M. Molina in his home in Sevilla.

Mallett and his wife had vacationed in Spain previously and returned under the pretense of tourism, said Northern Indiana Bishop Douglas Sparks, who walked the Camino with the UTO pilgrims.

“The Episcopal Church in Northern Indiana, our diocese, they're grateful for the risks that Bishop Mallett took and the other bishops to come and to make it possible for the church to be sustained in the midst of some pretty challenging and life-threatening experiences,” Sparks said.

Then, UTO took notice. “From 1956 until now, UTO has helped us to survive,” said López. To date, the Spanish church's properties have not been returned, nor has it received compensation, though it formally requested the latter a decade ago.

After Franco's death in 1975, the church began to rebuild with the continued support of UTO and others. Today, it operates 55 parishes in all major cities and towns in Spain with bi-vocational clergy. Last year, to help celebrate its anniversary, the Spanish church invited the Rev. Heather Melton, UTO's staff officer, to speak during its kickoff event, and

it was from there that she imagined the pilgrimage.

“During that trip, I heard countless stories of how congregations or ministries would not have existed were it not for the funding provided through UTO grants,” Melton told Episcopal News Service.

When Melquíades Andrés saw the school at the Church of the Redeemer in Salamanca, he set out to establish an Episcopal church and a school in Villaes-



Photo/Lynette Wilson/Episcopal News Service

Each day of the pilgrimage, the UTO visitors would stop and reflect and read one verse of Psalm 103:1-5. Leo Dugger reads the verse.

cosa, where only the children of wealthy families who could hire tutors received an education. From that one church, another five were established in the region.

“Four hundred people, almost all the villagers, became Episcopalians,” said López.

Today, Villaescusa has only 150 to 200 year-round inhabitants, and the 15 to 20 Episcopalians who attend Holy Spirit Church continue to worship in the former rectory, while up the street at 41 Calle Derecha, a Swiss company owns the actual church building, whose front gate stays locked. Still, it's an active congregation engaged in the community.

“You cannot imagine how important

it is to us to have you here and to thank you,” said López, as the pilgrims toured Holy Spirit.

Thank offerings collected during a calendar year are granted the following year. UTO has set aside \$60,000 in matching funds for the 2020 grant cycle to help to establish an Anglican Pilgrim Centre in Santiago de Compostela. To date, \$23,594 has been raised.

The Anglican Pilgrim Centre would follow those in Jerusalem and Rome, the

two other cities most often visited by Christian pilgrims. Like Israel and Italy, Spain has a rich religious history, from the time the Apostle St. James brought Christianity to the Iberian Peninsula just after Jesus' death to its history as part of the Roman Empire to the Muslim conquest that began in 711 and continued until 1492. Then in 1880, the Reformed Episcopal Church of Spain was established by former Roman Catholic priests who began to question the

popé's infallibility and dogma in what was truly a Spanish-led — not an Anglican-led — movement.

Still, the Roman Catholic Church, which aligned itself with the Franco regime, continues to be the state-sanctioned church, receiving \$900 million from the Spanish government yearly, and its history is told throughout the country in its many Gothic and Romanesque cathedrals, as the grant site pilgrims would discover. Yet, it was the Episcopal churches and ministries that most impressed the group and brought tears to their eyes.

“It's just very touching, spiritual and sacred. ... It's holy work, and it feels like holy ground,” said Dugger. “You know, the cathedrals that we've been in have been awesome, but these little, tiny, simple churches are more magnificent than the biggest cathedral with all the silver and gold.”

The United Thank Offering was founded in 1890 to support innovative mission and ministry in the Episcopal Church and to promote thankfulness and mission throughout the Episcopal and Anglican churches worldwide. To date, UTO has collected and granted \$138.6 million in thank offerings through 5,257 grants. ■

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Photos from the 167th Annual Diocesan Convention



Photos: (top left) Guest speaker Shane Claiborne talks with youth at convention, (top right) Bishop Alan presents Bishop Richard (Nzara) half of a geode as a symbol of our connectedness, (bottom left) table discussions using Mentimeter, (middle left) Grace Fleming gives part of the youth ministries report to convention, (middle right) Rev. Elizabeth Popplewell talks about her visit to Nzara, (bottom right) UTO grant recipients with UTO Coordinator, the Rev. Richard Graves

Ski Trip 2020

Ski Trip is an annual winter-fun weekend! This year's Ski Trip will take place Friday, January 17 through Sunday, January 19 at Boone's Camp Sacajawea and Seven Oaks. We hope that youth (grades 4-12) and adults from your congregation will join us! Find registration information on our website, Facebook and Instagram.

January 17-19

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