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# Iowa Connections



The 169th Annual Convention of  
the Episcopal Diocese of Iowa

# Bishop Scarfe's Convention Sermon

Well, I wonder—are you ready for the end of the world?

Let me ask that again—are you ready for the end of the world? That's what Jesus wants to know. "Truly I tell you, this generation will not pass away until all these things have taken place." Those are his exact words from the Gospel this evening.

And what were all "these things" that have to take place? You find them described in the verses that precede. Jesus tells of wars and rumors of wars; that nations will rise against nations; and there will be natural disasters and cosmic terrors. You'd have thought he was going to the COP 26 gathering, or was sitting on the United Nations Security Council!

And there's more. He hasn't finished yet. For He promises that in the middle of all the chaos, his followers would find courage to preach the good news: news that God has come among us in Jesus as a human servant, as Paul wrote to the Philippians; that He has given Himself up to death that we might lose our fear of death, and that as death could not hold Him, nor can it hold us; that He is risen and those who believe in Him will rise and be exalted.

Furthermore, He wants us to know that the Spirit of God now lives within us and bears the fruit of joy and hope, love and compassion. And as the prophet Isaiah promised, that same Spirit makes us capable of fulfilling the kind of fast God desires—lives of self-denial, which brings the homeless into their homes, that feeds the hungry and clothes the naked; that works for liberation, freedom for the prisoner and the relief of the oppressed. Our belief system is an opportunity to us give ourselves away, rather than serve as a crutch or as a vehicle of promoting self-justification. We become a people who no longer point the finger! And our light shall shine!!

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And yes, the proclaiming of such good news and the living of such bold and good lives would so aggravate everyone else caught up in the middle of the chaos that people would find scapegoats in the Christians, and drag them before religious and political institutions.

Jesus says—don't worry. We yell hope when catastrophes fall around us, because our hearts are grounded in God alone and in God's promise of a new world and new life!

That is how Jesus sees it; and it is how His disciples saw it when it all happened around them for real; when Jerusalem their holy city was destroyed, and the cruelty of an Empire confronted them.

So, I ask you a third time—are you ready for the end of the world?

The answer is—"always!" You see, to Jesus the ticking of the time (*chronos*) bomb is also a time (*Kairos*) of opportunity for the beloved people of God. This is when we come alive. It has always been so—whether we watch FOX or CNN or MSNBC or OAN to see how everything is going to hell in a handbasket!!

Jesus is describing us and everyone who belongs to this generation of faith of which He speaks that will not pass away until the Son of man appears.

Now, let me say, that I had no idea that I would go down this road tonight. It is my last convention sermon, and yes it might be a bit longer than usual even for me. My intention was to reflect on the three passages I chose from the consecration eighteen years ago. After all I didn't get to preach on them. Some may remember that Isaiah 58 and Philippians 2:5-11 were used that day. And as for Luke—well that should have been Luke 22. But my eye slipped above on the page and fell on chapter 21! That's where the path diverged.

On April 5, 2003 the focus was servanthood, and the challenge of leadership through which Satan would challenge one's mettle. It was about overcoming such resistance and when converted or fortified—strengthening the community. It was all in Luke 22: 24-35. But as I say, my eye was caught by the chapter before it—our Gospel passage for tonight.

*Convention sermon continued on page 10*

## DIOCESAN CALENDAR

### December

- 2 Regathering Task Force Meeting
- 3 Commission on Ministry
- 4 Ordination to the transitional diaconate of Nora Boerner, Michael Kugler, and Abigail Livingood, St. Paul's Cathedral, Des Moines, 1:00pm
- 5 Bishop Scarfe's visitation with St. Paul's Episcopal Cathedral
- 7 Reparations Task Force Meeting
- 12 Bishop Scarfe's visitation with St. Alban's, Davenport
- 18 Ordination and Consecration of the Tenth Bishop of Iowa, Lutheran Church of Hope, West Des Moines, 11:00am
- 19 Seating of the Tenth Bishop of Iowa, St. Paul's Episcopal Cathedral, Des Moines, 10:00am
- 25 The Nativity of our Lord Jesus Christ

### January

- 4-6 Ski Trip
- 9 Seating of the Tenth Bishop of Iowa, Trinity Cathedral, Davenport, 10:00am
- 12 Ways and Means
- 15 Board of Directors meeting
- 16 Bishop Monnot's visitation with St. John's, Glenwood
- 21-22 Commission on Ministry
- 23 Bishop Monnot's visitation with St. Mark's, Fort Dodge
- 30 Bishop Monnot's visitation with St. Paul's Marshalltown

*The diocesan office will be closed December 26-31, January 17.  
Visit [iowaepiscopal.org](http://iowaepiscopal.org) for all of the latest schedule information.*

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The Rev. Meg Wagner, Editor

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# Thanksgiving

by Alan and Donna Scarfe

“The steadfast love of the Lord never ceases, His mercies never come to an end; they are new every morning, new every morning. Great is thy faithfulness, O Lord; Great is thy faithfulness.”

Throughout our lives as a family, this has been the family song; and they remain appropriate words for us to express as we come to the end of this wonderful experience as co-workers with you in the Diocese of Iowa. Your call almost two decades ago asked for a shared episcopacy with a total ministry bishop. We probably didn't know what that really meant, but we have sought to live into it, finding no better way of expressing it than in the statement of being “In Mission with Christ through each and all.” That's how we have sought to live our lives as a married couple, when our pastor gave a sermon in which he offered a “word from the Lord” which simply stated: “Tell them they shall serve me.” Now we knew and expected Alan to be the “pastor,” but the message was clear “they’ shall serve me.” And we have tried to be faithful to that charge over these past forty six years of marriage, and the thirty five years of ordained ministry, with eighteen years as your Bishop.

We cannot express sufficiently our gratitude for your love over these years; and especially in these moments for the kind and

generous outpourings of gifts, notes, cards, and pledges to the GILEAD Campaign. We have grown in our love for you and for Iowa, recognized in our decision to stay in our Des Moines home for the immediate future. Traveling for us during retirement simply

means going to see our scattered children and grandchildren. We hope to see Iowa friends now dispersed across the country along the way, as well as those we have from this glorious journey of ministry to which God honored to call us. Jesus keeps his promise that when we are willing to give up homes, friends and even families for His sake, He returns them to us many folds. It remains for us to give thanks to God for each and every one of you; and be assured of our ongoing prayers for as many days as we remember that God's holy name be glorified by you and in you.

+Alan and Donna Scarfe



*Bishop Alan Scarfe and Donna Scarfe in Eswatini*

## Bishop Scarfe's Convention Address

from the 169th Annual Convention of the Episcopal Diocese of Iowa held October 30th, 2021

The Apostle Paul says farewell to the Church in Philippi with these words: “Rejoice in the Lord always, and again, I say, Rejoice. Let your gentleness be known to everyone. The Lord is near. Do not worry about anything, but in everything by prayer and supplication, with thanksgiving, let your requests be known unto God. And the peace of God that surpasses all understanding will guard your hearts and your minds in Christ Jesus.”

He then goes on to offer how we help God guard our hearts and minds by thinking on those things that are true, honorable, just, pure, pleasing, commendable. He asks that we consider what is excellent and praise worthy. All of these are good directives for a convention address, and especially for a farewell address as I attempt it again, knowing “third time is a charm”! Paul's words may also help balance out my apocalyptic thoughts from last night's Eucharist!

For there is, in fact, much positive to bring to mind.

First and foremost, as we think on these things, our minds turn to our newly elected Tenth Bishop Betsey Monnot. It's

a great shame that we cannot welcome you, Betsey, as we ought, with a resounding chorus of “Pigs and Corn.” At my first convention that's what greeted me. We send greetings too to Michael and the children and look forward to seeing them in person in December.

Plans for the consecration continue at a pace, and I am grateful to the Transitions Committee, the diocesan staff, and notably these individuals with special responsibilities—Elaine Caldbeck, Eve Mahr, Wendy Abrahamson, Marcus Haack, Traci Petty, John Doherty, Mark Babcock, Becky Kemble, Abigail Livingood, Julianne Allaway and Meg Wagner.

Recently Donna and I attended a conference for retiring bishops, and we were asked when we intended to retire. I said December 18th at around 11:45 am depending on the length of a procession and a sermon! That is when this crozier will pass hands.

And in turn, Betsey, you could not be in better hands yourself than in those of the people of this diocese. They have loved

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## Bishop Scarfe's Address, *continued*

and cared for Donna and me more than we deserve, and often more acutely than they knew. For sometimes not even being a bishop can stop life from happening, and you face sorrow and loss as a family or on a personal level, and yet keep on at your duties, sometimes not able to share what is going on. These are the times you experience the true power of the prayers of God's people, faithfully lifting up their bishop, knowing that with God all things are possible. These are things worthy of praise, and for which Donna and I give thanks.

We might all hear a lot of gratitude today. How else can we sum up eighteen years together except with thanksgiving? I received from St. Andrew's, Chariton a framed article from the Iowa Connection entitled: "Decoding Bishop Scarfe—what the British say; what the British mean; and What others understand!" It was a reminder of your gentle patience in that work of decoding over the years. It does work both ways, and I had to learn Iowa-speak, or rather non-speak over time.

These have been enjoyable years—no, fun years. I think of the support for me running from Cathedral to Cathedral or tackling the New York Marathon; the days with the bishop where the young people got to dunk me in a tank of water, or to shoot at me in goal at frighteningly short range. I managed to get my revenge by taking them out at second base in a softball game, or elbowing them into a wall during an EYE indoor soccer game, or by making illegal tackles during a frisbee match.

It's been fun to worship, to learn together at the Summer Ministry School and Retreat, and to see the discerning of vocations come into reality in so many who are now leaders among us, and I speak here of all the baptized. Of course, I have been particularly privileged to witness up close the Spirit at work in many of our current clergy in whose ordination I have shared. I have found in this ministry the ability to ask the question my pastor used to ask all of us young people—"What will God do with this one?"



*Bishop Scarfe at Summer Ministry School and Retreat and at the ordination of Rev. Tom Early.*

These are all things the apostle Paul might call pleasing, commendable, worthy of praise. We watch the Spirit at work and aim not to mess it up. We see the hunger of God's people for the action of the Spirit—as we did many years ago in the amazing Healing Mission across the state, and in the Revivals and their follow up years through GILEAD.

There is the joy too of embracing companion relationships inherited from many decades ago, as with Brechin and Eswatini. And there has been room to widen the embrace as when a friend of the diocese became bishop of a new diocese, as Archbishop Peni did in Nzara, and invited us to share in his work. That relationship has flourished more deeply as we were embraced by their second bishop, Bishop Richard. These companionships also take us into the hardships and sorrows of another people, struggling to proclaim Christ amidst war as in South Sudan, or crying for freedom from across the globe as in Eswatini even as we speak.

As we pray during Evening Prayer—"O God, you manifest in your servants, the signs of your presence: Send forth upon us the Spirit of love, that in companionship with one another your abounding grace may increase among us; through Jesus Christ our Lord." It is from such witnessing of the Spirit's life in our companions that we started out on the road for revival among ourselves. We are moved too by their prayers for us as we face our own national struggles.

Pursuing what is true, honorable, just, and pure is not always fun. This is where we promise to resist evil. It is where when we fail, we turn to the Lord and repent. It is where our faith is tested by fire; and where we grow in that faith and in a hope founded on God alone. One of the unexpected gifts of archiving documents collected over the years, as I have been doing on return to the office since September, is the automatic "review of the years" which the activity offers. Let me simply read the content list for just one box of now archived documents: Immigration, Gun Safety, Prison Reform, Human trafficking, Climate justice, Economic Justice, Racial justice, Clean Water, the Church and Farm issues, the Farm Bill, Rural Iowa and the Church.

These are but a snapshot in time of struggles which continue to face society and therefore the diocese. They are issues that will continue to occupy our days as disciples of Jesus Christ, whether retired or not, for they are all part of proclaiming the Kingdom of God, which ultimately comes into being in the power of the Spirit and in the Name of Jesus.

I say that it is "part of the proclaiming" for they represent the outer work of the Church, which we can only engage by paying attention to the inner struggle that goes on for the hearts and minds of all of us. Our baptismal covenant is an equally balanced directive.

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## Bishop Scarfe's Address, *continued*

Some of us might find a strong identity with respecting the dignity of every human being, and serving others as serving Christ, promoting peace and truth. Others notice that the baptismal covenant also reminds us that we must also spend time and energy keeping the apostles' teaching, fellowship and prayers, as well as to be a contrite people in our resistance to evil and promotion of the good. And we are to proclaim Christ in word as well as deed, and not shy from His Name.

We need to see how the covenant helps us wrestle with our inner growth, while refusing to leave us comforted within ourselves, and calls from that strength in the Spirit for us to wrestle with the principalities and powers—often corporate and institutional—that seek to oppress and resist the appearance of God's Beloved Community of mutual affection, respect, and love. As such we are all "works in progress."

So, I say, keep up "Faith in Action"; strengthen "Care of Creation"; build "Sacred Spaces" and "Beloved Communities"; work your "Just Faith"; and learn to love God, your neighbor and yourself as God loves you. Also, be "Dwellers in the Word," Faithful Innovators in mission. Practice centering in prayer, be ministry developers of your life in Christ, desiring the purity that sees God.

We are never too old to begin this work, nor are we too young. The young people of Iowa have always been one of the great attractions and riches of this diocese, and certainly

have sustained me over the years. I have watched them grow up, and confirmed quite a number of them, and they have watched me grow old. Yet they have also inspired a new life text for me, found in Psalm 71:18: "And now that I am old and grey-headed, O God, do not forsake me, til I make known your strength to this generation and your power to all who are to come."

It may seem a strange verse to latch onto heading into retirement, but it is a rising prayer in my life, and one I wish to be faithful to. I cannot say that I understand all the pressures you as young people feel navigating your way in a world of confusing messages, of conflicting information, of adults behaving badly, and of a planet crying out for our attention. Be assured, however, of this, you are called to walk the same way of love that followers of Christ have done over the centuries, as they were scapegoated in Rome, mocked in Assisi, burned in Oxford, persecuted in Communist lands, and assassinated for daring to suggest there was a better way, a beloved community, here in the United States. So many of those who suffered for their faith were your age, and even other young people continue to do so today – seeking peace in South Sudan, or democracy in Eswatini, and climate justice around the world. And Jesus says, "I am with you always, even unto the end of the world." I heard that call at 15, and am blessed to be still following almost 60 years later.

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*Bishop Scarfe with young people across the diocese through the years.*

## Bishop Scarfe's Address, *continued*

Our young people are as blessed as they have blessed leaders. And during this time, the diocese has had some terrific Youth Missioners, and Amy Mellies stands in that great tradition. What a challenge it has been to be nurturing the faith of our young people in a time of continued lockdown. When school was virtual, this was an already Zoom fatigued community at the end of the day. Yet as we have heard, Amy created monthly packages to keep people connected and knowing that they are being thought of and loved. Traci Petty joined in this work. The young people guided our Lenten devotions this year, providing a Calendar of Kindness which surrounded a weekly zoom gathering at which young people led our reflections. And they were the first to venture out to host an in person diocesan event in the shape of the summer camp in Newton.

In reviewing the year for this convention, I found myself unclear as to what we did in 2021 and what was done in the year before. For example, it was a surprise that it was this Epiphany in 2021 that we held the Zoom conversations on “We shall be changed: the Church after the pandemic”, led by Tom Early, Kathleen Milligan and Lizzie Gillman. We had the follow up May 1 zoom gathering to reflect on what we thought would be “After COVID Telling Stories” of the Spirit, or ACTS, designed by members of the Small Church Core Group who also put on Saturday mini-retreats around HOPE and LOVE. We harvested our experience of the previous year—what we found we could do without, and what was essential to our life of common prayer and witness. We shared our technological learnings and experiments, and we rediscovered the power of our Prayer Book and its call to daily prayers. Congregations met each other online, and began to share worship and bible studies. Those who had moved away found a way to reconnect.

We enjoyed the best turn out by far at a diocesan meeting which was not a convention or the Summer Ministry School and Retreat in the Joint Chapter Meetings held virtually in February and August. We continued to meet as ordained and non ordained leadership groups each Tuesday until the summer. And I added an extra planning meeting before every visitation as part of a mutual assessment of our COVID readiness for in person or virtual visitation.

Holy Week and Easter 2021, not 2020, became the occasion for us to come back together locally even if with limited capacity. Since returning from my summer vacation, we have held visitations in person in a return to a more customary practice. And who can forget the virtual Revival which we

put together when it was clear that we could not bring the Presiding Bishop to whatever version of the Field of Dreams we had in mind? The Presiding Bishop spent the weekend with us online, bringing a powerful sermon on Friday night, and holding a challenging live conversation on the Saturday morning, exploring the three-ways he sees God as Loving, Liberating and Life-Giving. Companions and friends from across the seas were able to tune in, and contribute, like the Bishop of Brechin and a Bishop from South Sudan who was the bishop of one of our newly arrived deacons from his diocese.

We have been using some of the music provided by our international cast of choirs and singing groups from the Revival to open these convention sessions. People served as call-in chaplains for those who sought prayers throughout the night, and we were bold to extend our language offerings to Spanish, Dinka and Arabic, as well as English. Elizabeth

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**"God is in the neighborhood,  
and we must join the mission  
God is on. In this day and age  
that is as much about knowing  
Jesus and following where He  
likes to go as being with the  
people He enjoys being with."**

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Popplewell and Kathleen Milligan—from the Standing Committee and Executive of the Board respectively – set out the “story board” for the Revival, and Meg Wagner became a TV producer extraordinaire overnight! Thank you to everyone who made that penultimate weekend in July so special. It had been intended as a revival of our spirits heading into the Episcopal consecration in September, and of course, it became our spiritual preparation for the postponed election on July 31st.

The Task Force on Regathering has held a disciplined line in their guidance to us as we have been dealing with the pandemic. It has not been an easy task by any means. They deserve our thanks. There will be a lot of second guessing, I am sure, as we reflect back on our decisions, not just as a diocese, but as a Church during this time. Politicization of behavior during a health crisis has added to the crazy making, and deepened the fissures currently in our society and nation.

I have spent all my life crossing boundaries, and rarely has it felt to be of my choosing. Recently, however, I heard the statement that our lives are not so much autobiographies but decision-graphies. We make decisions on the unpredicted things that present themselves. I wish I could say that the boundary crossings have made me a more open person, and that this is not a time for pulling inwards in self-protection. God is in the neighborhood, and we must join the mission God is on. In this day and age that is as much about knowing Jesus and following where He likes to go as being with the people He enjoys being with.

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## Bishop Scarfe's Address, *continued*

After eighteen years as a bishop, I am aware that I may have some remedial work to do as a disciple. And that says something about the institution we inherit as a Church, and the role we ask of our bishops. Am I as at home among the poor and the youth as I was when your delegation first visited me in Los Angeles and interviewed the local homeless, the youth group and parents of my cross-country team as my references for the diocese of Iowa? Will I still find the courage to follow new yearnings for justice and frontline witness, as I had when playing a part in the sustaining of faith of the persecuted under communism, and in the eventual collapse of that well-meaning but distorted way of governance? Will I still hear the voice of Jesus say, come unto Me and rest, and be obedient to the next call? Will I be faithful to all the truths you as the people of God have taught me over the years, and to the abundant examples of living life in Christ you have shown?

And will we have common fruit to bear from our efforts together? Donna and I have often noticed in our moves that we leave communities of faith that then burst into new life as we drive away. We see our prayers fulfilled not fully in our presence but in the rear-view mirror. In the archiving, I came across a few emerging ministries that never quite found their time but are still great possibilities.

Do you remember the Poverty Summit in April 2011? The three ELCA Synods and the Episcopal Diocese came together with all four bishops in attendance and discussed our mutual response to poverty. The Lutherans each brought representatives from five congregations within their synods, and we were allowed fifteen from across the whole state.

And what about Jacob's Ladder—a concept of creating a Ministry Development Team made up of those who were disabled? I even found flyers introducing the work.

And remember when the clergy of central Iowa met from The Episcopal Church and the United Methodist Church in an exploration of mutual understanding, and a search for a common mission?

I wondered where the follow up went; and though it is no excuse, I saw the dates—2010, 2011—years in the very middle of family tragedy and personal ill health. Together we have not stopped seeking out ways to come alongside those economically in need. I see our deacons gaining new energy as a ministry developing agency and am grateful to Judith Crossett for coordinating this. Deacons are the conscience of the Church. Their pivoting stance on the threshold of the Church—bringing the Gospel to the world and the world's needs to the Church—is essential to our faithfulness to God's mission. They are called to see the gaps between word and

action, and to guide us to where we need to carry God's voice in the human struggle of being one. It is notable that we are hearing from at least three deacons from different parts of the diocese right now asking about our response to the needs of refugees from Afghanistan.

Nor is our opportunity lost with the Methodists to pursue Christ's prayer for our oneness. It won't happen at this coming General Convention, as we may have hoped, but there is promise by 2024 that we will find full communion with some elements of the Methodist community. Just as with communication systems in developing countries—where landlines have been jumped over by digital services, I suspect that ecumenical relations will take a leap forward in the near future as we skip steps in dialogues and simply get on with the task Jesus has set us of being His reconciling presence in a world with far greater needs than that the Churches can't work out how to be one.

Foundations have been laid too for moving forward again with the Older Adult Ministry Development Team. That was an idea born of the Spirit as I drove north on I-35 after the convention which decided to launch the Young Adult Ministry Development Team under a dedicated Missioner. “And so, what about the older generation?” the voice said! I hear that interest now in our Bishop-elect's statements. Similarly, we are growing more engaged in the diversification of Iowa people. That representatives of Trinity Cush Episcopal Church now sit in this Diocesan Convention is one element of that. And there is the quiet tireless work being done by the Rev. Sherri Hughes-Empke among Latinx communities to let people know that we are here for them.

As part of the site search for the upcoming consecration, I came across a group renting out a large room in one of the facilities we were looking at. As I introduced myself, I learned of the work of Zuli Garcia and her food program for Latinx people who could not get food during the pandemic from the city food pantries because they did not have proper IDs. So, she started her own food pantry. People are finding ways to do what once was the initiatives of Churches. She said that she had no partners, but she would always like support. Then while at St Luke's in Des Moines, just two weeks ago, I bumped into another mission—of food delivery for challenged communities like the South Sudanese community nested at St. Luke's. A young African American woman was loading up a large truck and spending her Sunday mornings bringing food to hungry people. People will always respond to loving action and I wondered if this was not a Spirit nudging us to grow out of ourselves, especially as we are working on getting beyond the limits of the pandemic.

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## Bishop Scarfe's Address, *continued*

I had thought, of course, that the 168th Convention would be my last; and there I thanked so many who have made my task possible by the way they exemplify Christian values and focus on their diocesan responsibilities. I could just say ditto, but let me name them again.

“Across the diocese there are many levels of people who give their time and expertise to God’s work, from the serving members of the Standing Committee, the Bishop Search and Nominating Committee, the Board, the Commission on Ministry, One World One Church, the Youth Ministry Development Team, and the Episcopal Transition Committee. I think too of the chairs and members of the committees that make up this convention, especially this year the Tech Team that has been answering your chat inquiries throughout this session. Then there is the Chancellor, the Treasurer, the Historiographer, the Altar Guild Director, the Registrar, all the people whom you elect, or I appoint and you confirm. And being somewhat of a fractal organism, as the Body of Christ Universal and local, I know that we all have similar officers, missionaries, committees and mission groups in our local communities of faith. It’s all mirrored in that vision of John in Revelation—of the crowd that no one can number, yet with a single focus of adoration of the Lamb of God.”

I remember early in my time as bishop, I returned to Los Angeles, and was asked how it was being a bishop. As you may have heard me say, I first said, “I wished I had paid attention when I was a priest!” But then I said that I was struck by the faithfulness and devotion of the clergy; that somehow, I had been overwhelmed by it: how you truly love God and seek God’s fullness to be within the people you serve alongside. That observation stands fast to this day. Doesn’t mean we haven’t had conflicting or even disciplining words; but our intentions are good. And there is little of the competitiveness that can happen among peers. Cooperation, collaboration, mutual ministry—not only among clergy but with all the baptized—these are the qualities you show. It is what has made it possible to call my time as your bishop a joy, if not “fun” always, and forever an immense privilege.

This is another inheritance that Betsey receives. I hope, like in the parable of talents, I hand over to you a multiplication of what was received.

Normally at this juncture in my address, it is time to move forward and explore the future together. That is no longer my task. It is my honor to hand that over to the Bishop-elect this afternoon. What remains is an embracing of an incredible group of people with whom I have shared this episcopacy for many years. Over eighteen years, you would expect that staffs have come and gone. From the days of Bob, Kesha, Willa, Warren, Jim and Tom, supported by Nancy, Connie and Connie-Lee, to those of Diane, Sue and Caroline, and then Lydia, Lacey, David, Torey, Ellen and Steve – each were a chapter in our common life, bringing a particular emphasis or framing for God’s mission. Margaret Weiner and Jeanne Roland brought support, along with John and Beth who continue to do so to this day, while we stand more recently on the timely groundwork of Traci, Amy, Tina and Meg. Throughout the whole time, Anne and Julianne have been our mainstays, both covering more than twenty-five years of ministry. I imagine, during the election so many years ago, God knew their quality and their ability, and said to the angels—well, how could Scarfe go wrong with such support? Let’s see them give him a try.

What a blessing this experience has been. And I thank God for each and everyone of you.

In looking forward to what is growing of the Spirit among us, I invite you to look further in one particular direction—to the GILEAD campaign. That its roots were embedded in the Revival makes its fruitfulness, therefore, no surprise. Growing Iowa Leaders, Engaging All Disciples was the intended outgrowth of the Revival, and the campaign called GILEAD was intended as a means of financially supporting such productive ministry.

As I have said, one of the greatest joys of any bishop is to witness and companion the calls of God on the lives of individuals. This is especially with the Spirit’s making of new priests and deacons. This year I ordained Lizzie Gillman and  
*continued on page 10*



To make an offering in thanksgiving for Bishop Scarfe to benefit the Diocese of Iowa GILEAD Campaign, visit: [iowaepiscopal.org/scarfe](http://iowaepiscopal.org/scarfe)

To make an offering towards the purchase of diocesan gifts to welcome the Tenth Bishop of Iowa, the Reverend Betsey Monnot visit: [iowaepiscopal.org/monnot](http://iowaepiscopal.org/monnot)



## Bishop Scarfe's Address, *continued*

Eric Rucker to the priesthood, Susan Forshey to both the transitional diaconate and to the priesthood, and Eve Mahr and Jean Davis to the diaconate. Three of those ordained – Lizzie, Eric and Eve, are from St. Andrew's, Des Moines, where the vestry has launched a team ministry approach to their congregational leadership, inspired by their former Rector Steve Godfrey who this year moved to North Dakota to be their Diocesan Minister. I have always seen Ministry Development as a vehicle for leadership of congregations of every size, and am grateful to see such a way emerging in my rear-view mirror. In her retirement, Georgia Humphrey sowed the seeds of ministry development in St. Andrew's, and Steve built upon it and now their work is being taken to a new level. As I enter the world of the retired, and accept the limitation of contact that will imply, I think it is good for us to recognize the ministry of the retired among us often providing supply, and pastoral care when called upon. I think particularly of the trio of Jean McCarthy, Bob Kem and Mary Jane Oakland who as a team are serving Grace, Boone and Church of the Good Shepherd, Webster City.

All of our ministry is built on the foundation others have laid, and this year has seemed particularly heavy in the honoring of wonderful men and women who served Christ among us, and who now have earned their heavenly reward. This year, somewhat delayed by COVID restrictions, we celebrated the lives of Ron Osborne and Jack Kilby who both died in 2020. In 2021, we gave thanks to God for the lives of service of Suzanne Peterson, Glenn Rankin, Artis Ferrel, John Hedger, Robert Gamble, Thomas Putnam, George

Rogerson, Muffy Harmon, Leon Pfothenhauer, Al Kramer, and most recently Peter Sanderson. We also lost to COVID itself our dear and blessed friend and companion Bishop Ellinah Wamukoya. As is my custom, I finish offering thanks to God for these faithful servants. They are joined in memorial with diocesan lay servants: Jeanne Roland, John Wetherell and Chuck Hawtrey.

We wrap their memory into that greater cloud of witnesses which we honored yesterday during the necrology. And we remember as the Prayer Book says: "For none of us has life in oneself, and none becomes their own master when they die. For if we have life, we are alive in the Lord, and if we die, we die in the Lord. So then whether we live or die, we are the Lord's possession."

Throughout the year the Board offers memorial resolutions for clergy and diocesan leaders who die between conventions. At convention, we remember others who have died, some since the last Board meeting. And so we take time to recognize the following individuals: Peter Sanderson, Jeanne Roland, John Wetherell, and Chuck Hawtrey.

To return to the words of St. Paul to the Philippians: "If then there is any encouragement in Christ, any consolation from love, any sharing in the Spirit, any compassion and sympathy, make my joy complete: be of the same mind, having the same love, being in full accord and of one mind. And have the mind in you which was in Jesus Christ, who ..." (I hope by now, you know how it continues). This is my final blessing upon you in this my final convention address.

## Bishop Scarfe's Convention Sermon, *continued*

You see, for a while now, we've been trying to make sense of this peculiar time we are living through. What's this COVID time about? At first, we said that it was an opportunity to set God's table in the wilderness, as the children of Israel did at the Exodus. Let's have a picnic with the Eucharist, now that we're locked out of our buildings. And so, we got energized by the idea, even buying picnic sets of bread and wine, ready wrapped to go. The American drive-through had finally reached the Church.

As the pandemic continued, however, other scriptural images came to mind. Maybe this is not the Exodus with a promised land ahead of us, maybe this is the Exile. After all that was the birthing station of Hebrew Scripture and the restoration of the faith that Jesus embraced. Such is a time of great suffering and grief when God sifts through what is precious and what is vile; and invites us to discern what to save and what to cast off, and what to put back into order in a new way.

Then, I thought, isn't there a third imagining? Exodus—Exile and how about Eschaton or the End, the Apocalypse? What if—would we not say—God forbid, but what if we are in the apocalypse; that the Eschaton, the end is where we are!

The reality is that Jesus always had End times in His playbook. These were among his final words before his journey to Calvary, for it had to be testified before this generation, the generation of faith that stretches over all generations, passes away. And, he adds, "my words will not pass away." I can hear you now, "well, Bishop, thanks a lot for that one!" I am saying it to myself even as I preach it.

Yet how else could Jesus have sat down on the right hand of His Father satisfied that His work was complete—if He had not said these things? If He had not added End or apocalypse to Exodus and Exile?

## Bishop Scarfe's Convention Sermon, *continued*

How else do we know how to cast our faith wide enough and deep enough to encompass all the possibilities of human history? And many find themselves in apocalyptic times. In what category would you have put the holocaust, or other horrific actions of genocides and terrorism; and what about the warring madness of the human race; and our compulsive cruelty to one another and our stubborn self-destructive behaviors? What of our insatiable greed; our building a way of living that by its very character has to keep growing and consuming just to survive?

"Heaven and earth do pass away," my friends, "But my words will not," says Jesus. And there's the point.

Just prior to where our Gospel passage begins, Jesus further connects human activity with creation itself. Fred Craddock commenting on this statement in Luke sees the reality that the coming of the Son of Man cannot be properly described only in terms of private experience. "The human heart," he writes, "is too small a screen on which to cast so grand a scene," referencing Jesus' appearance among us as the Son of man.

The whole cosmos participates in Jesus' apocalyptic warning, and we are too limited as a species to handle it alone. So "be on your guard," Jesus says, "that your hearts are not weighed down with dissipation or drunkenness and the worries of this life." What a thing to say. How can we not worry on such a day or in such times?

"And be aware, that the day—of the great reveal or apocalypse—does not catch you unexpectedly, like a trap. Be alert at all times, praying to have strength to escape all these things and to stand before the Son of Man." This is where Jesus wants to take us, and indulge me in quoting Craddock's beautiful commentary a little farther:

Such thinking should keep our souls athletic and trim, free of the weight of the excessive and useless. Such thinking should aid in keeping gains and losses in perspective. Such thinking should chase away the demons of dulling dissipation, and cheer us with the news not only that today is a gift, but tomorrow we stand in the presence of the Son of Man.

A bishop always hands over the crozier to their successor from one historical phase into another. And in each time we will know wilderness and exile and apocalypse. And I think this is also true for each and every one of us, personally and communally. In all circumstances, we can always have the knowledge that we will stand before Jesus, as Son of Man, and, that in the strength that He gives us, we can fulfill the further hope of Isaiah that we become "repairers of the breach and restorers of streets to dwell in." For every generation faces its Exodus, its Exile and Eschaton, and God's making of all things new.

And yes, one of those ends will be The End! We are not to know which one. But what is important is to notice the real essence of Jesus' words and His timing; that we recognize even in the starkness of his apocalyptic descriptions He shows His profound care for His disciples and for all in His hearing. He wants them to be saved, and He wants them to be strong, to flourish, to keep proclaiming the goodness of God. That is why He calls for them to be on guard and to be prayerful souls.

Let me be presumptuous to see reflected in those words, my own heart for you, people of this beloved diocese. For what other parting words could I offer or can we offer one another than—take care, be prayerful, and keep safe! Especially take care and keep safe the precious gift of God's Spirit placed within you from baptism when you were "sealed by the Holy Spirit and marked as Christ's own forever," and stirred up in confirmation or at the many occasions of reaffirmation of those baptismal vows. This is our treasure. This is us standing before the Son of Man in our eschaton moment.

As a final blessing, I ask that God bless you and God keep you, now and always.

"Now to the One who by his power working in us is able to do far more than we can ask or imagine, to Him be glory in the Church and in Christ Jesus from generation to generation. Amen."

*Sermon given by the Rt. Rev. Alan Scarfe at St. Paul's Episcopal Cathedral in Des Moines on October 29, 2021.*

## 2022 Youth Ministry Events

**Ski Trip - February 4-6**

**Camp Sacajawea/Seven**

**Oaks, Boone**

**for grades 4-12**

**Happening #48**

**March 25-27**

**Christ Church, Cedar Rapids**

**for grades 9-12**

**New Beginnings #24**

**April 22-24**

**St. Andrew's, Des Moines**

**for grades 6-9**

**For more information and registration: [iowaepiscopal.org/children-youth](http://iowaepiscopal.org/children-youth)**

## Bishop-elect Monnot's Convention Address

from the 169th Annual Convention of the Episcopal Diocese of Iowa held October 30th, 2021

Imagine this scene with me. We, the disciples of Jesus, are in the boat traveling across the water to the other side. It was late afternoon when we got into the boat, and we have been traveling all night long. The wind has come up, the waves are hitting the boat and knocking us this way and that, and we are still far from land. We are exhausted.

As it begins to get light, we strain our eyes to look for a safe shore to bring our boat to. And as we look, we suddenly see a figure, walking across the water. Our first thought is that it must be a ghost, and we are terrified—but then we hear the beloved voice of Jesus soothing us: “Take heart, it is I; do not be afraid.”

Peter, in the boat with us, looks out at Jesus. We can tell he’s still scared, but even so he says “Lord, if it is you, command me to come to you on the water.” And Jesus says to him, “come.” And then Peter grips the side of the boat as tightly as you can imagine, and tentatively puts one foot out onto the water. He eases his weight onto that foot, then steps out of the boat with his other foot, and the water holds him up! He is walking on the water, walking toward Jesus! The look on his face is ecstatic.

And then, just as you are thinking that you might try stepping out of the boat yourself, a gust of wind comes up and knocks Peter back, a little off his balance. Suddenly instead of looking ecstatic he looks scared, and he starts to sink into the water. He cries out to Jesus, “Lord, save me!” and Jesus reaches out his hand to him and pulls him up again and says, “You of little faith, why did you doubt?” And Peter and Jesus get into the boat.

I think that maybe right now all of us are Peter. Jesus is calling us, each one of us, to step out of the boat. Now, remember, Jesus only called Peter to step out of the boat after Peter asked him to, and just look at us—a new bishop-elect, a diocese in transition in the middle of a church that is in transition and a world that is in transition—we have asked Jesus to call us to him. We have asked Jesus to call us out of the place where, if we weren’t exactly comfortable in this wind- and wave-tossed boat, at least we knew where we were, and we have asked Jesus to call us to step out onto the water and to do something we have never done before—something we have never even thought was possible, to walk on that water, just as though it were dry land.

That is our call, yours and mine, together here in the Episcopal Church in Iowa, starting right now in 2021. We are called together for this time in history, to do God’s work here and now.

As the Presiding Bishop said in his sermon to the House of Bishops a few weeks ago, we in the church are in a narthex moment. And of course I just love that “narthex” is such a churchy word that most English speakers have no idea what it means. A narthex is basically the vestibule of a church. It’s a foyer, a lobby, an entrance hall—in New England where I grew up some of the houses had a mudroom where you could take off your muddy or snowy boots and hang up your coat and then go inside. As the Presiding Bishop said, the narthex is an in-between room.

A narthex is an in-between room, and we are in an in-between time. We, you and I, here in the Diocese of Iowa, are in an in-between time, an episcopal transition, a moment when one bishop departs and another bishop arrives. We as a nation and as a world are in an in-between time, as we continue to live in the transition between the world as it was before COVID and the world with COVID. And our church is in an in-between time as we transition from the era of Christendom when the church was at the center of culture and power to a far more secular age, where the church has the opportunity to express itself more as salt and yeast, those small additions to a recipe that make enormous differences.

And there’s something else, which is why this is a narthex moment rather than just a vestibule moment or a foyer moment or a mudroom moment. The narthex is the in-between room that links the world and the church. The narthex is the room that welcomes the world into the sacred space and then sends them out to do God’s work in the world. The narthex can be seen symbolically as the in-between room where we actually live much of our lives: in the world but not of it, carrying the church into the world in our work, families, and civic life.

This narthex moment carries its own challenges. As in any time of transition, the way things were before is no longer how they are, and the way they will be has not yet come into focus. That can be so frustrating, and we can see it most clearly right now as the COVID-19 pandemic continues to play out, with new guidance coming out regularly about



*Bishop-elect Monnot*

## Bishop-elect Monnot's Address *continued*

vaccines, masks, gatherings, and what we need to do to keep ourselves and others as safe as possible. As we continue to move forward through the pandemic, we will regularly be reassessing our guidelines and requirements. In addition, we will need to reflect on the lessons that we have learned and the practices we have begun during COVID that will help to strengthen our mission even during non-pandemic times. We will do well to spend time in discernment about what we have discovered to be truly essential to being church, and what things that we may have had to let go during the pandemic have turned out not to be as essential as we thought they were.

One of the gifts of the pandemic is that so many well-meaning white people like me were stuck at home without very much to occupy our time when George Floyd was murdered by a Minneapolis police officer. This murder, captured on video by the incredibly brave young woman, Darnella Frazier, brought into sharp focus the racist violence and oppression that has pervaded our society for centuries. Those of us who may have, before COVID, known that the work of antiracism was important but also were distracted by many things, suddenly came to a new awareness of the priority that dismantling white supremacy and engaging in racial reconciliation really needs to take. This is especially true in the church, where we are called to love our neighbor as ourselves. Many of us who are white are still discovering that the world that our black and brown neighbors live in is a very different world from the one we live in.

As a diocese, you were already doing good work in the area of antiracism before George Floyd was murdered, and that work has continued and has been strengthened. It will continue to be a priority for me and for us as we move forward, seeking to create the beloved community that Jesus calls us to, both for the church and for the world.

That beloved community includes all of God's children, of all races, ethnicities, ages, sexual orientations, genders and gender identities, abilities, socioeconomic statuses, everything. All means all. And when we as a church stand up for the rights of our neighbors, we are living out the promises we make in our baptismal covenant, to strive for justice and peace among all people, and respect the dignity of every human being.

One of the many reasons that I am excited about becoming your next bishop is that you take seriously the Ministry of

All the Baptized. You recognize that being church is not, at its root, about maintaining a building, but rather about journeying together as we follow Jesus, formed by loving God and loving neighbor, guided by the promises we make in the baptismal covenant. And this church, the one grounded in the never-ceasing dance of the Holy Trinity, this church, will thrive.

I'm not being naive about this. I know, both from reading the profile that began the process that led to me being with you today, and from my conversations with many of you around the diocese, that there are questions about whether the church can survive. Even before COVID, congregations everywhere were experiencing decline in numbers, and COVID appears to have accelerated that trend. In terms of the church as we know it today, I won't pretend that there isn't cause for concern.

But the thing is, Jesus did not come in order to create the church that we know today, or the church as it has existed in each of our consciousnesses during our lifetimes. This is our own human response to Jesus' call, built up through the centuries, exported from one culture to another to another, across historical eras and diverse societies. This particular expression of our human response to God's call, with the real-world trappings that it involves, such as a dedicated building that is used for a few hours each week, a property that needs to be maintained, a particular position in a local community, sometimes one or more people who are paid to tend to the needs

of the community that gathers for worship—this expression may change as time goes on. The time may come when our institution cannot sustain itself in the manner to which we have long been accustomed.

But you know what? If that happens, it won't mean that the church goes away. The true church, the community of people who gather to follow Christ and to live as Christ's body in the world; the community that is faithful in loving God and loving neighbor, in living the values of the gospel in the local community and in the world; the community that deepens its spiritual practices and experiences joy in being the people of God—that community, that church, will survive and will thrive. And we will be together, figuring out the practicalities of exactly what that looks like, and how we can best maintain our local communities and live as Christ's body in the world.

Right about now might be the place in this address where you are wondering: when is she going to give us her vision

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**"That beloved community includes all of God's children, of all races, ethnicities, ages, sexual orientations, genders and gender identities, abilities, socioeconomic statuses, everything. All means all."**

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## Bishop-elect Monnot's Address *continued*

for moving forward? When will she tell us her vision for the diocese? And I'll tell you what. Right now, in the midst of the uncertainty of the world we are living in, when I am just beginning my time with you—I'm not even the bishop yet!—is not the time for me to articulate a big vision for moving forward. That will come when the time is right, and we will work on it together. But for now, it's not a vision so much as a strategy for strengthening and preparing ourselves for whatever is coming next.

So I want to start by telling you what I've seen so far. I have already mentioned the fact that your work on antiracism and the Beloved Community Initiative created foundations, the structures, and the environment that allowed this diocese to respond as it did after George Floyd was killed in 2020.

Likewise, before anyone heard the word COVID or thought about the realities of a global pandemic, you began a rollout of technology across the diocese. That preparation, those resources, and the experiences you gained during that time made it possible to pivot to online worship, meetings, formation, and connection much more rapidly and gracefully than otherwise would have been possible.

So how do we prepare for the things we don't know are coming? We work on our own resilience, our flexibility, our ability to adapt and learn and grow. We get in shape for whatever it is that comes next for us on our journey as we continue to follow Jesus together. We strengthen ourselves and strengthen our congregations so that when love ignites us and calls us forward we are prepared to respond. I believe that each and every one of us can grow deeper in our walk with Christ, and I believe that each and every one of our congregations, no matter the size, location, or condition, can become more faithful, healthy, and effective.

As I enter into my first year with you, a year in which I will be getting to know you and your congregations and contexts, your joys and challenges, I will be introducing you to some of the tools from the College for Congregational Development. Together we can discern how to best utilize the tools that the College offers us.

In addition, we will spend time working with what I call the Baptismal Ministry Cycle. In this cycle, the exercise of our baptismal ministry provides the context in which we listen for God's call and engage in discernment. That discernment leads us into the formation that we need in order to respond to God's call. As we are formed for and engage in ministry, we find ourselves again in the context in which we continue to listen and discern. Our baptismal ministries and calls change and grow throughout our lives, and the church's job is to support that discernment, that formation, and those ministries.

We might find it useful as we move forward together to create some expectations and norms about how we are together as a diocesan community. For example, I deeply value truth-telling, clear communication, and the recognition that we all make mistakes and can all learn from them. I value authenticity, willingness to be vulnerable and open, and the ability to listen in order to understand. I will want to hear about your deeply held beliefs and how they impact your life.

I hope that we will be able to set ourselves up for the adaptive work that is necessary in the world we live in, where so many of the old ways we used to do things don't work any more. Together we can learn to face difficulties with an attitude of curiosity, of wondering, of willingness to learn, and of openness to whatever new thing God might be doing in this liminal time.

This diocese has done such amazing work in the past, and I intend to do what I can to continue all that God continues to call us to do. In particular, I am looking forward to learning more about the ways that Ministry Development Teams have been discerned, formed, and supported. I am looking forward to learning more about how the Ministry of All the Baptized has been present in the diocese and how it might mesh with the work of the Baptismal Ministry Cycle I described earlier.

In addition, there are some areas of ministry that I would personally like to see renewed and supported, in particular right now I am thinking of ministry with Spanish-speaking people and ministry with older adults. I am looking forward to learning more about how these ministries have been supported in the past and how God might be calling us to move forward with them now.

I know that I, like every new bishop, have a very steep learning curve ahead of me. And one of the things that I love to do is to learn, and so I am looking forward to it. I ask for your understanding and patience as we all share together the practicalities of a new bishop getting to know the diocese and the people, and I hope you will support me with your prayers, with answering questions when I ask them, and even with answering questions that I haven't yet thought to ask!

I also ask you to join me in doing three things as we embark on this journey together as bishop and diocese. They are:

Love each other.

Tell the truth.

Make your home in the heart of Christ.

We are disciples of Jesus, together in the boat, the wind has come up and we are exhausted from working so hard just to keep the boat upright. We know that we need to do something

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# Bishop-elect Monnot's Convention Sermon

given at St. Paul's Episcopal Cathedral, Des Moines on Sunday, October 31, 2021

I am a person who functions well within structure. I like to know what needs to be done and how to do it, and when there are guidelines or rules, I am happy to learn them. This is, actually, one of the reasons that I am an Episcopalian: our worship has structure. You can come into church, receive a bulletin, and have a pretty good idea of what your worship experience is going to look like. Our polity also has structure—we have just experienced that in convention together. The structures that have been created over the years, both for worship and for business, help us do the things we need to do in order to become closer and closer to the kingdom of God.

And, for all that I like structure and understanding the rules and all that, I grew up in the seventies. I had one of those buttons, if you are old enough you might remember, the red one that says “Question Authority.” I always want to know what is behind the structure, what is the purpose of the rule, why exactly it is that we do things this way and not a different way. And when the reason behind the rule or the structure doesn't match up with what the rule or the structure actually does, I figure that something needs to change. And when our rules or our structures actually wind up working against our deeper values and our goals, well, then I figure it needs to change fast.

This is where Jesus was coming from in today's gospel. Now, this gospel story is set in the temple, and in Mark's narrative before the reading that we heard today, Jesus has all these different people come at him, one after the other, with niggling little questions, trying to trap him or to score rhetorical points off him. The chief priests, scribes, and elders question his authority. The Pharisees and Herodians question him about paying taxes to the emperor. The Saducees question him about the resurrection as it intersects with the traditional levirate marriage laws of the Torah. And each time Jesus' answer points to a larger truth, a deeper reality of God; each time, he reminds the people questioning him of the reasons behind the laws and rules that they are quibbling about.

## Bishop-elect Monnot's Address *continued*

new, something different, something we have never done before, in order to continue our faithful journey as followers of Christ. And so, like Peter, we, together, have asked Jesus to call us to him, even though that means stepping out of the relative comfort and safety of this boat and onto the water.

And you know what? Jesus is calling. And friends, we are going to him. We are going to get out of the boat and discover



*Bishop-elect Monnot*

And in today's reading, we get a change in that pattern: this time it is a scribe who has been listening to Jesus and who believes that he has been answering well. And this scribe asks a question, not to score points off of Jesus or to try to demonstrate that Jesus doesn't know what he's talking about—this scribe asks a question that he actually wants to hear Jesus' answer for. He asks, “Which commandment is the first of all?”

Remember the context. Jesus is in the temple. He is fielding questions about all kinds of things, including questions that intersect with some of the 613 commandments of the Torah. So he has a lot of commandments to choose from when the scribe asks which one is the first. And Jesus gives the summary of the law that we know so well: “The first is, ‘Hear, O Israel: the Lord our God, the Lord is one; you shall love the Lord your God with all your heart, and with all your soul, and with all your mind, and with all your strength.’ The second is this, ‘You shall love your neighbor as yourself.’ There is no other commandment greater than these.”

That, right there—love God, love neighbor—that is what is central. That is what Jesus taught. And the scribe in this reading recognized it, and replied saying, “You are right, Teacher; you have truly said that ‘he is one, and besides him

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that, not only can we walk on water, but we can dance. We can dance for joy, in celebration of God's love. Called by Jesus, we will dance, together, on the water.

Thank you.

*Bishop-elect Monnot will become the 10th Bishop of Iowa on December 18, 2021.*

## Bishop-elect Monnot's Sermon *continued*

there is no other'; and 'to love him with all the heart, and with all the understanding, and with all the strength,' and 'to love one's neighbor as oneself,'—this is much more important than all whole burnt offerings and sacrifices."

So I want you to notice something here. When we hear the scribe affirming that loving God and loving neighbor is more important than "all whole burnt offerings and sacrifices," we hear it with our modern ears that only ever hear the concepts of burnt offerings and sacrifices as ancient practices that we have long since moved away from—it is quite possible that none of us here today, and no one watching this livestream, has ever experienced a burnt offering and a sacrifice as an act of religious devotion. We hear the scribe's response and some part of us just says, "Duh, thank you Captain Obvious!"

But when Jesus was teaching in the temple, burnt offerings and sacrifices were a regular part of temple worship. Remember when Jesus' parents presented their baby at the temple—they brought the required offering of two turtledoves. Those turtledoves didn't just fly away after being offered. They were part of the burnt offerings and sacrifices that we are talking about. This was an every day occurrence at the temple. It was how you could be right with God. And Jesus was saying that loving God and loving neighbor was more important even than that.

We see the same set of values in our reading from Ruth today. Ruth, a Moabite, so a Gentile and not a Jew, is the daughter-in-law of Naomi, who is the widow of Elimelech, who came with Naomi and their two sons from Bethlehem in Judah to Moab because there was famine in Judah. Naomi and Elimelech's two sons married Moabite wives, seeing as they were in Moab, and then when they died, Naomi was left with two daughters-in-law and no men. Remember, of course, that a woman alone at that time had very few options: she could beg, or she could be a prostitute, unless she could find some male family member to take her into his household. Now we have three women alone, with no men to protect them.

Now, theoretically, and Naomi refers to this, the law of levirate marriage could apply here: since Naomi's sons died and left their widows, the law of levirate marriage says that any other sons of Naomi would be obliged to marry their brothers' widows. But, as Naomi says to her daughters-in-law, this is silly: there are no more brothers living, Naomi has no husband, and even if she married and immediately produced sons it would be years before they were old enough to marry these daughters-in-law. The best thing, says Naomi, is for the daughters-in-law to go home to their mother's house, in the hopes that they may marry again and have a husband to protect them.

So, following the letter of the law is not going to work in this case. Naomi then does what she thinks will be best for her daughters-in-law, and tells them to go back to their families and hope to marry again—this is Naomi's way of taking care of them in the best way she can, not binding them to her fate as an unattached widow, but encouraging them to take a chance at marrying again.

But Ruth is having none of it. It turns out that Ruth, a Moabite, insists on loving God and loving her neighbor, in this case, Naomi, and she does this by refusing to go home and instead pledging herself to follow Naomi and to stay with her. In fact, her words are so beautiful that they are sometimes used as the vows in marriage ceremonies: "Where you go, I will go; where you lodge, I will lodge; your people shall be my people, and your God my God. Where you die, I will die—there I will be buried. May the Lord do thus and so to me, and more as well, if even death parts me from you!"

Beautiful words. Ruth pledges her love and faithfulness to Naomi and also to Naomi's God, and in carrying out this pledge Ruth earns her place in the genealogy of Jesus as told in the gospel of Matthew, which names Ruth as the grandmother of David.

Ruth was faced with a situation that the available laws, rules, governing structures did not work for, and so she acted on the deeper laws, the first commandments, loving God and loving neighbor. Jesus and the scribe were in a place and at a time when many of the accepted and practiced laws conflicted with the deeper laws, the first commandments, loving God and loving neighbor.

Many of us and many of our neighbors, both our physical neighbors in our own communities and our neighbors around the world, are living with the results of current or former laws, governing structures, rules, and practices that conflict with the deeper laws, the first commandments, of loving God and loving our neighbor. In fact, yesterday's Convention addressed some of these issues when we as a diocese expressed our support for the continuation of the work of Becoming Beloved Community that The Episcopal Church has undertaken. We did this through asking the General Convention to continue funding of that work on a churchwide level, and through asking the General Convention to encourage usage of the excellent Sacred Ground curriculum, and through asking the General Convention to include Juneteenth as a Feast Day in Lesser Feasts and Fasts.

We also did it in a more personal way through our resolution yesterday supporting our companion diocese of Swaziland, in particular as they are currently experiencing tremendous social and political upheaval and insecurity. Our prayers as well as our more tangible

*continued on page 17*



## Bishop-elect Monnot's Sermon *continued*

support—and here is a moment to remind you that your financial offering this morning will go to the diocese of Swaziland to support their work during this difficult time—our prayers and our financial contributions are ways that we extend our love of God and love of neighbor in a place where the current laws, structures, and practices are not aligned with God's first commandments.

And what about the rest of the world around us, here in our own state, our own country, as well as elsewhere? What rules, laws, policies, customs are in place that are contrary to the first commandments, loving God and loving neighbor? What

do we need to see clearly, as the scribe who spoke with Jesus saw clearly that burnt offerings and sacrifices were not as important as loving God and loving neighbor? How is Jesus calling us, today—each one of us, each of our congregations, all of us together as a diocese—to leave behind structures, guidelines, rules, policies, laws, or customs, that effectively work against loving God and loving our neighbor? What do we need to do to hear Jesus say to us, as Jesus said to the scribe, “You are not far from the kingdom of God”?

*Sermon given by the Bishop-elect Betsy Monnot at St. Paul's Episcopal Cathedral in Des Moines on October 31, 2021.*

## The Ordination and Consecration of a Bishop

by Ruth Ratliff

A bishop-elect's ordination and consecration service is filled with symbolism and long-standing traditions. It is a time of celebration for the new ministry of a person called to serve God and God's Church as a bishop. It also is a time of celebration and joy for the diocese, as the people welcome their new bishop.

### Ordination into the apostolic succession:

At the service, the Presiding Bishop, presently the Most Rev. Michael B. Curry, or a bishop appointed by him/her presides. At least two other bishops serve as co-consecrators. The bishops participate in the ordination to continue the apostolic succession, the belief that bishops are the successors to Jesus's twelve apostles and that bishops derive their authority from the apostles by an unbroken succession in the ministry. Bishop Scarfe was the 983rd bishop and Bishop-elect Monnot will become the 1139th bishop in The Episcopal Church.

### Presenting the bishop-elect and affirming the will of the people:

At the consecration, clergy and lay representatives of the diocese present the bishop-elect for consecration. The Presiding Bishop then calls for the reading of testimonials to the election, after which the bishop-elect declares his/her belief in the Bible, promises to conform to the doctrine, discipline, and worship of The Episcopal Church, and signs a document stating these beliefs and promises. The Presiding Bishop then asks all the people, “Is it your will that we ordain [name] as a bishop? To which they respond loudly, “That is our will.”

**Examining the bishop-elect:** After the lectionary readings and sermon, the Presiding Bishop conducts the examination of the bishop-elect. This begins with a statement of a bishop's duties, which include guarding the faith of the



*The consecration of the Rt. Rev. Carlye J. Hughes as Bishop of Newark in 2018. Photo: Nina Nicholson*

church; celebrating the sacraments; ordaining priests and deacons; and being a faithful pastor and wholesome example. Then Presiding Bishop asks the bishop-elect whether he/she will guard the unity of the church, boldly proclaim the Gospel, and encourage and support all baptized people in their gifts and ministries. The bishop-elect responds that he/she will with the power of the Spirit, for the love of God, and for the sake of Christ Jesus.

**Laying on hands:** Following the Nicene Creed, the Presiding Bishop begins the Prayer of Consecration. He/she and the other bishops present lay their hands on the bishop-elect's head and shoulders. This is an ancient practice, observed by the early Church, which conveys the spiritual gifts of one person (often a priest) to the other.

**Vesting and presenting gifts:** The newly ordained bishop is then vested with signs of his/her new office—a ring, crozier, mitre, and other vestments—and presented with a Bible and other gifts.

**The Eucharist:** After the Peace and the Offertory, the new bishop celebrates the Eucharist. Traditionally, members of his/her family bring the bread and wine to the altar. At the Great Thanksgiving, the other bishops present stand with the new bishop at the altar.

The service closes with a blessing given by the new bishop, the dismissal spoken by a deacon, and the joyful response of the people: “Thanks be to God.”

*The Rev. Ruth Ratliff serves as a deacon at St. Luke's, Cedar Falls and is a member of the Bishop Transition Committee.*



The Episcopal Diocese of Iowa  
invites you to the  
Seating of the Tenth Bishop  
*The Right Reverend Elizabeth  
Lockwood Hawley Monnot*

St. Paul's Episcopal Cathedral, Des Moines  
Sunday, December 19  
at 10:00 in the morning

*Masking required. A light reception follows.*

Trinity Episcopal Cathedral, Davenport  
*the historic cathedral of the diocese*  
Sunday, January 9  
at 10:00 in the morning

*Masking encouraged. A light reception follows.*

## Love Ignites with the Behavioral Health Ministries Team

by Kris Leaman

After having a discussion with a priest regarding a youth in their congregation who was receiving mental health care, the Missioner for Children and Youth, Amy Mellies, wondered how many families in the diocese may be in need of some financial help in making a co-pay for a mental health appointments. This prompted a conversation with Rev. John Greve and me. Together we wrote a request for a GILEAD Grant to assist children, youth, and families with funding for co-pays. This conversation with the grant committee, prompted another conversation and grant application, for what has become the Behavioral Health Ministries Team (BHMT).

The BHMT is in its infancy. We are building from the ground up. We imagine this ministry team to be an umbrella which oversees funding for child/youth/family co-pays, depression and suicide information and referral, information and support materials for clergy to assist families and individuals who come to them with mental health issues.

In addition to referral and reference materials, this team will also support clergy. We hope to offer on-going educational programs including mental health first aid, depression and suicide assessment, boundary training for clergy and lay parishioners as well as updates on resources available in your area.

We have formed a steering committee and have met twice. This committee has been brainstorming ideas which have been identified as areas they see as good mental health support, not only to the congregation but to clergy as well.

The BHMT is an evolving work in process. We have identified that mental health support for people and their families is urgently and seriously needed. We as the church have felt called to respond to this need. We ask for your prayers and support as this team continues in its discernment and action.

*The Rev. Kris Leaman serves as the rector of St. Mark's in Fort Dodge and is the chairperson of the BHMT.*

# Simpson Youth Academy

by Eric Rucker

On a spring Saturday afternoon in small town Iowa, one-hundred people from the community were flocking into the church building. For some, this was the first time in a long time they'd entered a church. They chatted with one another, flowing into the sanctuary to take their seats. The group quieted as a sixteen-year-old woman named Maddie—who'd grown up in the church—stood at the front with a microphone to welcome them. This young woman had planned and organized this remarkable event, in partnership with the National Alliance on Mental Illness. The event provided space to have open conversation about mental health, to de-stigmatize the subject, and to educate the public about resources to treat such issues. This young person – when given the tools to lead—had brought a large, intergenerational community into the church, thus embodying God's love and justice through addressing a key community issue.

How did this kind of thing happen? It happened through a long, intentional process of adults noticing youths' gifts, creating containers to nurture those gifts, and inviting them into real leadership in the church.

In this instance, it was the culmination of Maddie's year-long participation in the Simpson Youth Academy program at Simpson College. Children who grow up in the church have great opportunities like Sunday school, mission trips, and camps that nurture them in early adolescence. But we continue to see how young people are falling through the cracks between high school and college. They need strong, supportive ministries to help them transition into young-adult faith as they complete high school. The Youth Academy was created for this exact purpose: to serve as a resource for local churches that can help high school youth blossom into young adult faith leaders.

The Youth Academy's success in this mission begins with you—yes you, the one reading this! It begins with you nominating high school sophomores and juniors for the Academy this winter. We then gather 25-30 youth nominees into a cohort to attend a nine-day summer residency on Simpson's campus. Here they participate in college-level courses in religion. They take immersion trips to churches and non-profits to see how Christians are living out their faith in response to homelessness, poverty, racism, climate change, and other pressing public issues. They learn prayer practices and are trained to plan and lead worship. And they are supported in asking the question of vocation: Where does my deep joy meet the world's deep pain?



*Simpson Youth Academy Scholars*

Following the summer residency, each youth partners with a local mentor to apply for a grant through the Academy. And they utilize this money to plan and implement a project to generate social change in their own community.

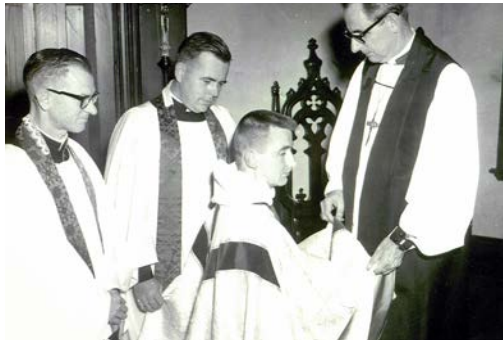
That brings us back to Maddie, and her community project. Her local clergy recognized her gifts and nominated her for the Youth Academy program. Here she was nurtured with peers and mentors in a challenging and supportive environment. And up from this seedbed of love and support sprang Christian leadership for social change, from a sixteen-year-old.

There is a story in the gospel of John where the crowds run out of food, and the adult disciples don't know what to do. But then a teenager offers a gift—a few loaves and fishes. And when Jesus honors the youth's gift and collaborates with him, God multiplies the gift and feeds the whole community.

We can passively bemoan the decline in youth attendance in church. Or we can get to work identifying and raising up a new generation of Christian leaders. I'm committed to the latter, as I know you are too! Please take some time to consider the youth in your community, and the gifts that they might be hiding, right below the surface. And please reach out to me if you'd like to explore nominating youth for the Youth Academy program!

*The Rev. Eric Rucker serves as the Campus Minister at Simpson College and as an assisting priest at St. Andrew's in Des Moines. Email: [eric.rucker@simpson.edu](mailto:eric.rucker@simpson.edu)*

## 60th Ordination Anniversary Celebration in Durant



*The ordination of the Rev. Richard J. Anderson at St. Paul's Church, Durant, by the Rt. Rev. Gordon V Smith, December 21, 1961*

On Sunday, December 19, 2021 St. Paul's, Durant will celebrate the 60th anniversary of the Rev. Richard J. Anderson's ordination. Anderson arrived in Durant in June, 1961, after having graduated from the Church Divinity School of the Pacific in Berkeley, CA. In 2020 he began living at Legacy Ridge Senior Care in Iowa City and drives to Durant often to worship where he once served as vicar.

After 4 years at Durant, Anderson was elected rector of St. John's, Dubuque, where his ministry had a strong ecumenical dimension. He earned a Masters in Sacred Theology degree from the Dubuque Theological Seminary. In 1970 he became rector of an inner city parish in Buffalo, NY, served as Canon to the Ordinary for the Diocese of Western New York and was the first editor of a diocesan newspaper he founded. He served 11 years at the Episcopal Church Center in New York, first as executive assistant to the Presiding Bishop and later as executive for Communication. In 1972 Anderson was one of the 11 founders of Episcopal Communicators. He edited the daily newspaper at the 1973 General Convention in Louisville, KY. He retired in 1974 while rector of St. Mark's in Mt. Kisco, NY, and served in interim ministry until 2006.

Anderson enjoys being close to Durant again. He has his car serviced at the Ford dealership there, often attends community events and is able to enjoy his favorite German Potato Salad once again.

### STEWARDSHIP SHARE - 3rd Quarter 2021 As of 9/30/2021

City	Church	Stewardship Share	2021 Pledge	Due to Date	Received to Date	(Over) Under
Algona	St. Thomas'	3,552	3,552	2,664	2,664	0
Ames	St. John's	52,629	52,629	39,472	35,086	4,386
Anamosa	St. Mark's	435	1,500	1,125	1,500	(375)
Ankeny	St. Anne's	10,100	5,250	3,938	3,938	0
Bettendorf	St. Peter's	15,775	15,775	11,831	11,831	0
Boone	Grace	1,430	1,430	1,073	1,082	(9)
Burlington	Christ	22,950	18,900	14,175	14,175	0
Carroll	Trinity	2,911	2,911	2,183	2,911	(728)
Cedar Falls	St. Luke's	37,590	37,590	28,193	28,193	0
Cedar Rapids	Christ	49,654	49,654	37,240	37,240	0
Cedar Rapids	Grace	8,861	8,861	6,646	5,169	1,477
Chariton	St. Andrew's	3,642	3,700	2,775	3,700	(925)
Charles City	Grace	1,305	1,305	979	870	109
Clinton	Christ	11,959	11,959	8,969	8,969	0
Coralville	New Song	17,600	17,600	13,200	16,133	(2,933)
Council Bluffs	St. Paul's	5,129	5,129	3,847	3,419	427
Davenport	St. Alban's	8,686	6,500	4,875	4,875	0
Davenport	Trinity	108,932	92,592	69,444	61,728	7,716
Decorah	Grace	4,199	4,199	3,149	3,149	0
Denison	Trinity	2,251	2,251	1,688	1,501	187
Des Moines	St. Andrew's	28,398	28,398	21,299	21,299	0
Des Moines	St. Luke's	28,730	13,918	10,438	9,279	1,160
Des Moines	St. Mark's	4,322	1,000	750	0	750
Des Moines	St. Paul's	76,748	60,000	45,000	35,202	9,798
Dubuque	St. John's	16,812	9,000	6,750	9,000	(2,250)
Durant	St. Paul's	3,049	3,049	2,287	2,287	0
Emmetsburg	Trinity	2,040	2,040	1,530	1,700	(170)
Fort Dodge	St. Mark's	37,511	37,511	28,133	25,007	3,126
Fort Madison	St. Luke's	2,672	2,100	1,575	1,575	0
Glenwood	St. John's	944	944	708	708	0
Grinnell	St. Paul's	10,608	8,000	6,000	6,000	0
Harlan	St. Paul's	1,287	1,287	965	858	107
Independence	St. James'	1,961	1,961	1,471	981	490
Indianola	All Saints	1,414	1,414	1,060	1,062	(2)
Iowa City	Trinity	79,435	79,435	59,576	59,576	0
Iowa Falls	St. Matthew's	2,264	2,264	1,698	943	755
Keokuk	St. John's	10,458	7,200	5,400	4,200	1,200
LeMars	St. George's	40	40	30	109	(79)
Maquoketa	St. Mark's	2,325	2,325	1,744	1,746	(2)
Marshalltown	St. Paul's	11,338	11,338	8,503	7,558	945
Mason City	St. John's	17,838	15,000	11,250	11,892	(642)
Mount Pleasant	St. Michael's	4,302	4,302	3,227	2,890	337
Muscatine	Trinity	21,398	21,398	16,049	16,049	0
Newton	St. Stephen's	12,035	8,000	6,000	5,333	667
Orange City	Savior	1,840	950	713	950	(238)
Oskaloosa	St. James'	7,519	7,519	5,639	5,639	0
Ottumwa	Trinity	4,574	4,574	3,431	3,431	0
Perry	St. Martin's	7,587	7,587	5,690	7,587	(1,897)
Shenandoah	St. John's	4,266	2,647	1,985	4,266	(2,281)
Sioux City	Calvary	1,693	1,740	1,305	1,305	0
Sioux City	St. Paul's	1,355	1,355	1,016	1,355	(339)
Sioux City	St. Thomas'	15,522	8,750	6,563	4,801	1,762
Spirit Lake	St. Alban's	8,764	8,764	6,573	5,112	1,461
Storm Lake	All Saints'	3,410	3,410	2,558	2,273	284
Waterloo	Trinity	15,786	10,750	8,062	7,167	896
Webster City	Good Shepherd	4,466	4,466	3,350	3,722	(372)
West Des Moines	St. Timothy's	62,099	50,000	37,500	37,500	0
<b>TOTAL</b>		<b>886,400</b>	<b>777,723</b>	<b>388,862</b>	<b>376,264</b>	<b>12,598</b>

# Episcopal JOURNAL

QUARTERLY EDITION WINTER 2021

## Bishop, blacksmithing crew melt guns for tools in Swords to Plowshares demonstration

By David Paulsen  
Episcopal News Service

**B**ishop Jim Curry was driving his Toyota Highlander south down Interstate 95 on Nov. 15 toward Washington, D.C., with two colleagues on board. The vehicle was towing a trailer loaded with their essential cargo: a traditional blacksmithing forge.

Curry, a founding member of Bishops United Against Gun Violence, and his Connecticut-based crew were on their way to appear the next day on Capitol Hill to demonstrate how they melt down guns and turn them into gardening tools. The nonprofit he co-founded in 2017, Swords to Plowshares Northeast, is centered on the process.

The organization takes its name from a passage from Isaiah 2:4 — “They shall beat their swords into plowshares, and their spears into pruning hooks.” Swords to Plowshares promotes gun safety with a visual, tangible ministry that Curry said is both practical and symbolic.

“When we started evangelizing and talking to police departments and communities around the country and we could show them the actual transformation, these weapons of death into instruments of life, it’s just been an amazing process,” Curry told Episcopal News Service. “People really get it.”

Curry retired in 2014 as bishop suffragan in the Diocese of Connecticut. He



Photo/David Deutsch

*Bishop Jim Curry, right, retired bishop suffragan of the Diocese of Connecticut, guides Washington Bishop Mariann Budde in hammering and shaping the metal of a former gun into a garden tool on Capitol Hill.*

now serves as chief blacksmith for Swords to Plowshares, demonstrating his skills with a hammer and anvil at gun buyback events across the Northeast and helping the nonprofit destroy about 800 guns in four years.

More were melted down Nov. 16 when Curry and the blacksmithing crew fired up the forge during the noon hour outside the Lutheran Church of the Reformation, about a block and a half from the U.S. Capitol.

Sen. Richard Blumenthal and Rep. Rosa DeLauro, both Democrats from Connecticut, attended the demonstration and participated in part of the process of melting and reshaping the former weapons. Washington Bishop Marianne Budde also joined them.

The organization’s ministry is deeply rooted in Connecticut, where lawmakers and Episcopal leaders were moved to action on gun reforms by the December

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**NEWS**  
Clergy lead prayer ministry at Arbery trial



**FEATURE**  
Episcopal stores offer a variety of Christmas gifts



**NEWS**  
Episcopal voices raised at COP26 climate meeting

# Georgia clergy lead ministry of prayer, witness during Ahmaud Arbery trial

By David Paulsen  
Episcopal News Service

Episcopal clergy and other local faith leaders led a daily ministry of peaceful witness and prayer outside the Glynn County Courthouse in Brunswick, Ga., during the trial of three white men charged in the Feb. 23, 2020, killing of Black jogger Ahmaud Arbery.

About 75 clergy members are connected to the interfaith group, Glynn Clergy for Equity, which began forming last year amid the initial public outcry over Arbery's killing.

They began regularly appearing outside the courthouse when jury selection commenced on Oct. 18. About 15 members came to pray Nov. 5 before lawyers delivered their opening statements, and continued to gather throughout the trial.

"We want to be able to provide a presence at the courthouse, showing a sense of solidarity and unity," the Rev. DeWayne Cope, rector of St. Athanasius' Episcopal Church in downtown Brunswick, said in an interview with ENS.

The national outrage over Arbery's killing became part of a broader reckoning in 2020 with racial injustice, especially the killings of unarmed African Americans by police officers and white vigilantes.

Much of the scrutiny on Glynn County focused on how long it took authorities to charge the suspects. Gregory McMichael, a former investigator for the local prosecutor's office, and his son, Travis McMichael, told investigators that they had chased Arbery, 25, in a pickup truck and shot him after suspecting him of being tied to recent break-ins in the area. They weren't arrested until early May, after cellphone video surfaced that appeared to show Travis McMichael shoot Arbery with a shotgun.

The McMichaels now are standing trial on murder charges, along with a neighbor, William Bryan, who had joined the McMichaels in confronting Arbery and recorded the shooting with his phone camera. The trial is expected to last two weeks.

The Rev. Willetta McGowen, a deacon at St. Mark's Episcopal Church in

Brunswick, is among the members of Glynn Clergy for Equity who have regularly gathered outside the courthouse for the past three weeks during jury selection. She told ENS she wants to show her support for Arbery's family. "It's really been a roller coaster for them," McGowen said.

"One of his aunts, she's really angry, and I really can't blame her. She doesn't understand how this could have happened, especially in Brunswick. Her family has just been so painfully impacted, and she just couldn't understand why these three men would have wanted to kill their nephew. He's just jogging in the neighborhood."



Photo/South Georgia Conference of The UMC

**Glynn Clergy for Equity posted this sign at the Ahmaud Arbery trial.**

Glynn County clergy members united in responding to the case nearly from the beginning. On the day of the arrests in May 2020, 29 local religious and civic leaders, including six Episcopal priests, issued a statement lamenting "the tragic and senseless loss of a precious human life."

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

Cope was not a part of the group at the time, as he was serving at St. Paul's Rock Creek Episcopal Church in Washington, D.C. He took over as rector at St. Athanasius' in July 2020. In an interview with ENS, he acknowledged initially feeling apprehensive about facing a potentially tumultuous atmosphere in

Brunswick, but the community's solidarity reassured him.

"Everybody was really trying to come together and say that hopefully nothing like this should have to happen again and changes need to be made here in Brunswick, Georgia," Cope said.

Since the murder, voters have replaced the district attorney who faced criticism for her handling of the Arbery case. She was defeated in the November 2020 election. And in July 2021, Glynn County hired its first Black police chief.

Churches and synagogues can play an important role in engaging the community in difficult conversations on race, McGowen said, but faith leaders first had to expand their own awareness of the racial divide. "First we had to understand each other," she said.

The clergy members took steps toward establishing a more formal coalition in fall 2020, under the working name Glynn Clergy for Equity, and decided to seek help in fostering conversations within their congregations and the community.

"We needed to do a better job of building relationships across some of the things that divide us, namely race," the Rev. Tom Purdy, rector of Christ Church Frederica, told ENS. Christ Church is a mostly white Episcopal congregation that worships just east of Brunswick on St. Simon's Island.

The Diocese of Georgia gave \$10,000 to the effort, out of the \$75,000 approved in July 2020 by the Episcopal Church Executive Council to support the diocese's racial reconciliation efforts. "This has permitted us to not only further the work in Glynn County, but to more broadly engage the diocese in the work of racial reconciliation and justice," Georgia Bishop Frank Logue said in a written statement to ENS.

The diocesan money helped the clergy group hire Dietra Hawkins, an Atlanta-based racial equity consultant, who in October 2020 began leading the group in a series of online discussions on identifying the roots of oppression, understanding power dynamics, recognizing racial microaggressions and fostering dialogue in the community to promote racial healing.

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**PLOWSHARES continued from page A**

2012 massacre at Sandy Hook Elementary School in Newtown, which left 20 children and six educators dead. Curry recalls responding to the scene of the shooting that day with Connecticut Bishop Ian Douglas and Bishop Suffragan Laura Ahrens.

“Quite frankly, you don’t live through that without your lives changing,” Curry said.

In the aftermath of the Newtown tragedy, the Connecticut bishops joined with bishops in other dioceses that were grieving mass shootings and formed Bishops United Against Gun Violence. The network, with more than 100 member bishops, now is a leading church-wide voice of advocacy for gun safety legislation and common sense precautions, like gun locks and safes. The bishops also memorialize the victims of gun violence and offer prayers and pastoral care to survivors.

In Washington, the Episcopal Church’s advocacy is led by the Office of Government Relations, which has advocated this year for passage of legislation that would strengthen and expand background checks for gun purchases.

The House passed two such bills this year, but they have since stalled in the Senate. “A majority of Americans recognize the urgent need for gun reform,” the Office of Government Relations said in an action alert to its Episcopal Public Policy Network.

The agency’s advocacy follows Episcopal policy positions established by General Convention in resolutions dating to 1976 that call for legislation to address the problem of gun violence.

Raising awareness of those positions is one goal of Swords to Plowshares, and the demonstration on Nov. 16 in Washington was arranged to draw the attention of lawmakers, news outlets and passersby on Capitol Hill.

“The biblical promise of swords being turned into plowshares was reenacted today. Our hope is that we can all help to build a more peaceful world,” Lindsey Warburton, a policy analyst with the Office of Government Relations, said in an emailed statement to ENS. “We are glad to support Swords to Plowshares, the

work of Bishops United against Gun Violence, and advocacy to the U.S. government to ensure our communities do not suffer any more from gun violence.”

The mobile blacksmithing forge that Curry and his team used is fired by pro-



Photo/David Deutsch

*Bishop Jim Curry heats the metal of a former gun in the mobile forge used by the nonprofit Swords to Plowshares Northeast in its demonstrations.*

pane, and their blacksmithing tools include hammers, tongs, chisels and anvils. They take the barrels of rifles, pistols and shotguns, heat them in the forge and then reshape the malleable metal into hand tools.

Trowels, shaped from shotgun barrels, are relatively easy, Curry told ENS. It takes 10 to 15 minutes to get the rough shape. Revolvers and rifles typically are made from heavier metals, which take more time to shape, he said. The blacksmiths then grind the metal to complete the tool.

The idea for Swords to Plowshares was inspired by a Mennonite blacksmithing ministry in Colorado called RAWtools. Its motto: “Disarm hearts. Forge peace. Cultivate justice.” After hearing about RAWtools’ efforts to collect surrendered weapons and melt them down, Curry went to apprentice with them.

Taking what he learned, Swords to Plowshares now partners with police agencies and other local organizations to organize gun buybacks, where guns can be surrendered with no questions asked in exchange for cash or other compensation. After the weapons are transformed into gardening tools, Swords to Plowshares donates them to community gardens.

The method and the message are closely intertwined, Curry said, and this transformation that ends the guns’ existence can be emotionally powerful for observers. At a recent session in Massachusetts, “as the gardeners saw us making tools and received tools from us, they were just in tears,” Curry said. “The larger message is, as a society we don’t have to be bound by violence.”

Curry acknowledged that the organization can only melt down guns that are surrendered, leaving plenty of guns out of the organization’s reach in a country where 40% of adults live in a household with a gun.

He emphasized that 60% of the 40,000 gun deaths each year in the United States are not homicides but suicides. “Those suicides are because unsecured guns are available to people at moments of crisis. Buybacks get those guns out of homes,” Curry said.

He also lamented the hundreds of people wounded or killed in the U.S. annually in accidental shootings by children; guns also are prime targets for thefts from homes, especially in suburban communities. In response, Swords to Plowshares works with its community partners to encourage gun owners to obtain locks and safes to secure their guns.

“If people can rethink their need to have unsecured guns in their house, then we’re really changing the understanding of the place of guns in our lives,” he said.

Destroying guns is the most direct way Swords to Plowshares fulfills its mission. The garden tools that were created on Capitol Hill mostly came from metal obtained in gun buybacks held in the Connecticut communities of New Haven, Guilford and Hamden, Curry said. ■

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## Executive Council approves 2022 budget, increases assistance to Latin American dioceses

By Egan Millard  
*Episcopal News Service*

At its first meeting with in-person attendance since the start of the COVID-19 pandemic, the Episcopal Church Executive Council approved a 2022 churchwide budget relatively unaffected by the pandemic, staying the course while acknowledging that the coming years may bring significant changes to the church, culturally and financially.

Executive Council, which met Oct. 25-28 in Linthicum Heights, Md., with some members joining online, celebrated the perseverance of the church during the trials of the past year and a half, while acknowledging the disparities and disconnects exacerbated by the pandemic within the church.

Dioceses in the United States have been affected differently from non-U.S. dioceses, and the finances of churchwide and parish budgets have gone in opposite directions in many cases, council members said.

For the 2019-2021 triennium, there is a projected surplus of \$15.9 million. This reflects a number of factors unique to the COVID-19 pandemic, including less staff travel, the receipt of \$3 million in federal Paycheck Protection Program funds, and postponement of General Convention.

Deducting the expected \$2.5 million cost of next year's 80th General Convention from this surplus, the remaining \$13.4 million will be put into investments and short-term reserves, Finance Committee Chair the Rev. Mally Lloyd said.

Presiding Bishop Michael Curry cautioned that calling it a "surplus" could be misleading, though it does create an "opportunity to do something both creative and helpful for the church." If a "surplus" exists, it isn't because the church is "flush" with cash but because it reduced expenses during the pandemic, he said.

"That may be the wrong word," Curry said. "We tightened our belt. Actually, we lost weight, institutionally. We did everything we could to squeeze everything out of every dollar we had."

Income from dioceses, trusts,

investments and other sources has remained in line with expectations, but the full impact of the pandemic on the coming year remains uncertain. The Finance Committee recommended a 2022 budget with "no major changes" and "no surprises," Lloyd said, which council approved. Staffing is expected

said council member Sarah Stonesifer Boylan of the Diocese of Washington (D.C.).

To that end, North Carolina Bishop Suffragan Anne Hodges-Copple asked: "What does it matter if we have great endowments and a balanced budget and we're still closing churches?"



Photo/Angela Goodhouse-Mauai

*From left, the Rev. Lillian Davis-Wilson, the Rev. Charles Graves IV, Russell Randle and Alice Freeman take part in the Executive Council meeting in Linthicum Heights, Md.*

to remain relatively constant with 150 members receiving 3% cost-of-living salary increases. (For comparison, the 2022 cost of living adjustment for Social Security payments is 5.9%.)

Looking to the future, the Finance Committee sought input on priorities for the 2023-2024 budget from council, asking members to discuss how it could be used to bridge the gap between churchwide programs and needs at the parish level.

This discussion was brought on in part by an opinion essay in *The Atlantic* written by the Rev. Elizabeth Felicetti, rector of St. David's Episcopal Church in Richmond, Va. Titled "My Church Doesn't Know What to Do Anymore," the essay conveys the exhaustion and isolation felt by many parish clergy as the pandemic drags on.

Several council members brought up the possibility of restructuring assessment payments to help parishes and dioceses.

"In terms of going from the individual parishes through the national church, there's increasing amounts of skepticism as to the parish assessment and then diocesan assessment to the national church,"

The Finance Committee will take council's input into consideration while drafting a 2023-2024 budget to present to the 80th General Convention in July. The committee also reviewed requests from the dioceses in Province IX and Cuba for financial relief and assessment waivers, having met with representatives from the dioceses over the past few months.

Province IX is comprised of seven dioceses in Latin America and the Caribbean: Colombia, the Dominican Republic, Central Ecuador, Littoral Ecuador, Honduras, Venezuela and Puerto Rico. Puerto Rico has voted to switch to Province II, pending General Convention approval.

In committee meetings, members went over the unique circumstances and hardships that each of the six remaining Province IX dioceses have endured over the past two years, from political crises to financial instability to natural disasters, on top of the pandemic.

Based on the dioceses' requests for assistance and their specific circumstances, the Finance Committee increased the preexisting block grants to Province IX

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**EXECUTIVE COUNCIL continued from page D**

dioceses by varying amounts in the 2022 budget that council approved, but the topic introduced a larger discussion about the future of Province IX.

Church leadership has been working with Province IX dioceses since 2013 to get them on a path toward financial self-sustainability, but council members reconsidered the feasibility of that goal during the meeting. Some dioceses reported that they would need short-term financial assistance to get back on the path toward self-sustainability.

“The Province IX self-sustainability program is temporarily on hold until we can get better insights as to how to move forward,” the Rev. David Copley, the Episcopal Church’s director for global partnerships and mission personnel, told Episcopal News Service. “With COVID-19 affecting Province IX dioceses in different ways, we need to reassess before we decide on next steps.”

Honduras Bishop Lloyd Allen, a council member, thanked the governing body “on behalf of the six dioceses with which the Finance Committee met,” adding they felt heard.

“I want to express our gratitude for this situation, for the support,” Allen said. “It’s a sad feeling to know that we have to

**ARBERY continued from page B**

Though the Zoom sessions were limited to clergy members, the goal was to follow up with a plan to “bring this down to the congregation level,” Purdy said. Inspired by the trainings, the group held three “equity dinners” this year, at which clergy and members of their congregations were encouraged to discuss their experiences with racism and inequality.

The first was held in person on June 24 at Temple Beth Tefilloh, a Jewish synagogue in Brunswick. Some white participants said they had not been fully aware of the racism and discrimination that continue to affect African Americans, said Cope, whose church is predominantly Black.

“You don’t know how bad it is until you hear some of these stories that are still happening,” Cope said. “What happened to Ahmaud was not a blip on the radar.” Though not always violent or deadly, instances of racial injustice “are happening to people on a daily basis.” ■

go back on what we had planned for the future and how we were doing things. ... But we’re just asking for some time to get ourselves back together and to continue making a difference and sharing the word of God.”

The Episcopal Church in Cuba — which is in Province II — also requested assistance. After over a half-century apart, the Episcopal Church in Cuba officially returned to the Episcopal Church as a diocese in March 2020, just before pandemic lockdowns came into effect. It, too, has been hit hard by the pandemic and social upheaval.

Discussions about financial assistance for the Diocese of Haiti, also in Province II, are in their early stages, Lloyd said. The country has been beset by cascading political, health and social crises over the past year, including another devastating earthquake.

Council adopted a resolution expressing support for the people of Haiti and the newly created Commission for Haitian Solution to the Crisis, which includes the Rev. Frantz Joseph Casseus, a priest in the Diocese of Haiti, the largest Episcopal diocese by membership.

In other business, council also approved a resolution condemning the House of Bishops of the Anglican Church in Ghana’s endorsement of a proposed “draconian” anti-LGBTQ+ law. The proposal would impose a penalty of up to five years in prison for identifying as LGBTQ+ and up to 10 years for advocating

for the rights of LGBTQ+ people, according to Reuters.

The resolution “reaffirms the Episcopal Church’s commitment to people of all genders and sexual orientations and invites the House of Bishops in Ghana to reconsider their endorsement of this anti-LGBTQ legislation,” the Rev. Lillian Davis-Wilson said.

Council also adopted a resolution expressing a message of support for the people of Sudan, where military leaders overthrew the government in a coup on Oct. 25.

Earlier in the meeting, continuing the church’s efforts to educate Episcopalians further about the Doctrine of Discovery and the harms perpetrated on Indigenous peoples by the government and institutions including the Episcopal Church, council heard from the Indigenous Boarding Schools Ad Hoc Committee.

The committee is working to address the Episcopal Church’s involvement with residential schools that separated Native American children from their families and, in many cases, attempted to eradicate their culture and language. Indigenous leaders discussed the diversity of the residential school experience and a recent effort assisted by Episcopalians to repatriate the remains of residential school students from school grounds to their tribal homelands.

Executive Council’s next meeting is scheduled for Jan. 24-27, 2022, in Cleveland. ■



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## Episcopal volunteers form airport welcome teams for Afghans arriving in Oklahoma City

By David Paulsen  
*Episcopal News Service*

Volunteer teams of Oklahoma Episcopalians are providing a ministry of welcome at the airport in Oklahoma City to their newest neighbors. For their nightly appointments, they greet some of the 1,800 Afghans who are arriving to make new homes in the state after fleeing their home country when the Taliban took control there in August.

The ministry is simple but essential: The Episcopal volunteers help the newly arrived Afghans collect their luggage and then drive them to the hotels where they will stay until permanent housing is secured. From there, the Afghan evacuees will be assisted by case workers from the Oklahoma City branch of Catholic Charities.

“The Holy Spirit arrives in that moment,” Jennifer Hund told ENS as she described the scenes at the airport and hotels. Hund is coordinating the Episcopal diocese’s team of volunteers, who began welcoming Afghan individuals and families in early November.

They often arrive weary from travel but grateful for the show of hospitality from their new neighbors, she said. “I can see in the eyes of the folks that we’re assisting just the relief of being taken care of, being in a safe place.”

After the 20-year U.S. war in Afghanistan ended in August with the final withdrawal of American troops, about 50,000 Afghans were allowed into the U.S. under what is known as humanitarian parole. Some may be able to apply for special immigrant visas, while others will apply for asylum. All will need to find places to live.

As they settle in new communities like Oklahoma City, many will receive help from one of the nine agencies that are part of the federal refugee resettlement program, including Episcopal Migration Ministries, or EMM.

EMM has invited Episcopalians and their congregations and dioceses to support that work by making donations online to the Neighbors Welcome: Afghan Allies Fund and by volunteering in other ways, which they can do through an online form.

As the Episcopal agency coordinates with its network of 11 affiliates around the country, Episcopalians in cities without an EMM affiliate still can lend a hand by connecting with one of the other resettlement agencies.

Catholic Charities is the agency leading those efforts in Oklahoma, in partnership with the local chapter of the Council on American-Islamic Relations. When the federal government announced how

ernment Relations this week issued an action alert advocating additional congressional action to support the Afghan arrivals. The proposed Afghan Adjustment Act “would create a specific program allowing all Afghan arrivals to directly apply for a green card without needing to go through alternate channels such as the asylum system.”

In Oklahoma, about 1,000 Afghans are expected in Oklahoma City and 800

**‘I can see in the eyes of the folks that we’re assisting just the relief of being taken care of, being in a safe place.’**

— Jennifer Hund, Diocese of Oklahoma volunteers coordinator

many Afghans would be moving to Oklahoma — more than in all but two other states, California and Texas — the Episcopal Diocese of Oklahoma reached out to Catholic Charities to offer assistance.

“Sometimes there are these opportunities for real Gospel ministry that show up at your doorstep,” Bishop Poulson Reed told ENS. The diocese learned that welcoming Afghans at the airport would help ease the burden on Catholic Charities case workers, who already were working long hours.

“We’ve pivoted to what we really see as a Gospel ministry of hospitality and welcome,” Reed said. “As we seek to follow Jesus and offer that hospitality, these are our neighbors who have arrived, and we’re called to help them and welcome them.”

The humanitarian parole program is separate from the refugee resettlement program that EMM, Catholic Charities and the other seven agencies facilitate on behalf of the State Department, though the agencies plan to provide services to these Afghans similar to the services they have provided since 1980 through the refugee resettlement program. Those services include English language and cultural orientation classes, employment services, school enrollment, and initial assistance with housing and transportation.

The Episcopal Church’s Office of Gov-

in Tulsa. The first of these families landed at Oklahoma City’s Will Rogers World Airport in late September, and more are arriving in the city every day, usually in the evenings.

The teams of Episcopal volunteers started by training with Catholic Charities case workers and shadowing them at the airport, and eventually, the volunteers will take full responsibility for welcoming the arriving Afghans.

The diocese’s goal is to recruit and train enough volunteers to fill about six teams, each with six to eight members, that will be on call to go to the airport, as needed, to welcome arriving Afghans. About 20 volunteers attended an orientation in early November at St. Paul’s Episcopal Cathedral in Oklahoma City.

Cathedral Dean Katie Churchwell is among the volunteers who have participated. She told ENS that the Afghans’ flights usually start landing after 5 p.m. and sometimes arrive as late as midnight. “It all changes day by day,” she said.

Sometimes the volunteers have a sole individual to welcome, while other flights arrive with a dozen or more Afghans. The volunteers have practiced greeting the new arrivals with the traditional Arabic phrase “salaam alaikum,” or “peace be to you.”

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# Atlanta-area Episcopalians, Ismaili Muslims forge relationship through community service

By Shireen Korkzan  
*Episcopal News Service*

Last February, when the Rev. Nicole Lambelet invited nearby faith leaders to participate in a virtual tour of Decatur, Ga., through the lens of displaced Black and Jewish communities, she didn't expect her Episcopal church to form a new relationship with Decatur's Ismaili Muslim community.

"Probably five faith leaders responded to the mass email I sent, and 150 people came to our event, but Behnoosh Momin's response was different," said Lambelet, associate rector for family ministry and outreach at the Episcopal Church of the Epiphany in Atlanta.

Momin, a communications and outreach volunteer for the Ismaili Council for the Southeastern USA, declined Lambelet's initial invitation and instead offered to start an interfaith dialogue centered on shared religious values and ethics.

Now, Epiphany parishioners in north-eastern Atlanta and Ismaili community members in nearby Decatur are coming together around what they already share, to learn from each other and to look for ways to partner on projects designed to improve their shared region.

"Both of our communities believe in generosity and helping the poor and other humanitarian services," Momin said. "Pluralism and voluntary service are important in the Ismaili Muslim faith ... We share that commonality with the Episcopal community."

For their first joint service project, the two groups focused on environmental stewardship and partnered with Decatur-based Georgia Interfaith Power and Light, or GIPL, and Clyde Shepherd Nature Preserve. On Sept. 26, over 50 volunteers cleaned up a portion of South Fork Peachtree Creek. That date was chosen because it was both World Rivers Day and the Global Ismaili CIVIC Day.

"We're so excited about our new Episcopalian friends and relationships, and it's already been an incredible journey," Momin said. "Environmental stewardship is a core ethic of the Ismaili community, and that shared value with The Episcopal Church fits very naturally to us."



Photo/Aziz Ajaney

*Members of the Episcopal Church of the Epiphany, Atlanta, and the Atlanta-area Ismaili community volunteer together at South Fork Peachtree Creek in Decatur.*

In a co-written blog post for GIPL's website highlighting their faith communities' joint creek cleanup service project, Lambelet and Momin mention water's significance in both Christianity and Islam. In Christianity, for example, new members are initiated into the church through baptism by water. In Islam, water is considered a human right and symbolizes purity.

Hannah Shultz, a program associate for GIPL, a nonprofit dedicated to protecting the Earth's ecosystems and fighting environmental injustices, said the cleanup event at Clyde Shepherd Nature Preserve represented a "beautiful example" of the many commonalities shared by faith traditions yet often overshadowed by differences.

"There's a lot we can learn from each other," said Shultz, who handled the cleanup event's logistics for the Episcopal Church of the Epiphany and the Ismaili community. "I think we have our own theology and perspectives, but there's a lot to learn from and inspire by learning about common issues. We're learning different ideas to care for creation, but our goal is ultimately the same. Emphasis on justice really runs deep in both communities."

Ismaili is the second-largest sect of Shia Islam, which is the second-largest branch of Islam. Like all Shia Muslims, Ismailis recognize the Prophet Muhammad's cousin and son-in-law Ali ibn Abi Talib as his bloodline successor.

Unlike the much larger Sunni branch of Islam, Shias believe that Muhammad's successor needs to be in his bloodline. The Ismaili sect earned its name from Isma'il ibn Jafar, whom its members appointed as the true Imam, unlike the much larger Twelver Shia sect, which appointed Musa

al-Kadhim instead.

Today, Ismaili is the only Shia sect to have a living, ancestral Imam, formally titled Aga Khan, under the leadership of Prince Karim Al Husseini Aga Khan. Approximately 15 million Ismailis live in more than 25 countries.

Lambelet said she toured a nearby Ismaili Jamatkhana (private gathering space) and took a class on Islam while a seminarian at the Candler School of Theology at Emory University in Atlanta, but other than that, she knew little about the Ismaili community prior to meeting Momin.

She also said she hopes that interfaith events between the Epiphany congregation and the Ismaili community, including visiting each other's places of worship, will educate members from both sides and foster ongoing dialogue addressing social justice issues in and around Decatur. So far, Epiphany members have visited the Jamatkhana; Ismaili community members were scheduled to visit the church later in the year.

"There are lots of similarities and differences between the Episcopalian and Islamic faiths, and we're very excited about the similarities and learning how we can grow from each other through our differences," Lambelet said.

Momin said, "There's also commonality with faith communities' level of understanding theological concepts around social justice and eliminating inequities. If we educate each other about faith and ethics and values and commonality and connection, we can work towards that." ■

*Shireen Korkzan is a Midwest-based freelance reporter who primarily writes about religion, race, ethnicity and social justice issues.*

# Episcopal stores offer gifts for Christmas

By Mike Patterson  
*The Living Church*

Looking toward Christmas, Episcopal gift and book shops across the country have stocked an array of specialty gifts, locally handmade arts and crafts and books by clergy and lay members.

"Bibles and prayer books are traditional Christmas gifts," said Lucy Chambers, manager of the Christ Church Cathedral Book Store in Houston and president of the Episcopal Booksellers Association.

Episcopal shops also carry gifts and books that may be outside the realm of those traditional gift items.

For example, you can find dog leashes and collars emblazoned with the Episcopal insignia. "They fly out of here," said Cory Lites, manager of the Cathedral Book Store in Atlanta ([www.cathedralbookstore.org](http://www.cathedralbookstore.org)).

The internet makes it possible for shoppers to browse the cathedral's merchandise as well as other Episcopal stores to their heart's content, no matter where they live. From the comfort of your home, you can hop from shop to shop and coast to coast to find unusual, unique, and creative gift items, some with an Episcopal motif, whether for the holidays or not, or things that seem a little wild, like the men's Halloween socks decorated with tiny skeletons at Trinity Church's Trinity Treasures in New Orleans.

Online Episcopal shops carry face masks with the Episcopal insignia, water bottles, iPad cases, angel door knockers, silver alligators, carved gourd ornaments with a Nativity scene inside, bud vases, teddy bears, a Noah's ark, towel sets, pottery, candles, towels, notecards and stuffed unicorns.

Those shopping for Christmas and holiday gifts and interested in patronizing Episcopal stores will find many listed at the Episcopal Booksellers Association's website ([www.episcopalbooksellers.org](http://www.episcopalbooksellers.org)), a community of more than 50 Episcopal gift and booksellers.

The association maintains an interactive map of member stores to make it easy for shoppers to scan the virtual store shelves via their websites.

What is apparent in virtually strolling through the shops is the diversity of

books and products offered that are special to their area. For example, store managers agree that some of their most popular items are books by local authors as well as products crafted by local artisans.

"We sell a whole variety of fair trade and social enterprise products," said Kathryn Bissette, manager of St. John's Cathedral Bookstore and Gift Shop in Jacksonville, Fla. and executive director of the Episcopal Booksellers Association. "We also try to support local vendors," she said, including Bee Hill Farms, Drema Farmer Jewelry, and The Oaken Bowl.

Lites said her shop finds local jewelers and artisans are popular with customers. Among favorites is jewelry crafted by Andrea Barnett utilizing a mix of vintage chains, rosaries, and semi-precious stones, and necklaces, earrings, and bracelets by erin gray (the artisan's preferred spelling), who uses proceeds to support cancer organizations.

"We also carry a line of Gracewear [jewelry]," Lites said. Another popular item are hand-crafted dogwood crosses made by a local Atlanta wood carver and Intertwined candles, handcrafted in Clarkston, Ga., by refugee women.

Books are always popular. Store managers report that titles by local clergy and lay members are always in demand.

In the Episcopal Diocese of Atlanta, Lites said books by Beth-Sarah Wright on depression, faith, the stigma of mental health, and the role of personal storytelling plays in healing are popular. She is married to Bishop Robert C. Wright of the Diocese of Atlanta.

At St. John's Cathedral bookstore, the seven books by cathedral dean Kate Moorehead are among the top sellers, Bissette said.

"The other book that has been our top seller this year has been 'With Gladness: Answering God's Call in Our Everyday Lives' by Christopher H. Martin," she added.



*This handcrafted cross made by an Atlanta woodcarver is made of dogwood and suitable for hanging upon a wall. Intertwined Candles are scented and handcrafted in Clarkston, Ga., by refugee women using all-natural soy wax and repurposed wine bottles. Both available from the Cathedral Bookstore in Atlanta.*

Like retail stores across the country, the COVID-19 pandemic has hurt Episcopal bookstores and gift shops. "I think COVID definitely affected everybody," Chambers said.

However, online shopping enabled many stores to expand their reach and offset some losses from in-store shopping.

"What we have found during COVID is that we have had a surprising number of people finding us," Bissette said, crediting Moorehead's morning devotions as "particularly helpful in expanding the reach of the cathedral and the bookstore."

St. John's and other bookstores have also joined the [www.bookshop.org](http://www.bookshop.org) network. With the advent of internet shopping, local authors once known only locally or regionally have found a wider audience.

Knowing that stores would not be able to offer in-person speakers during the pandemic, in October 2020 the association launched a series of monthly Zoom presentations featuring prominent authors and providing participants an opportunity to engage in conversations with writers.

Presiding Bishop Michael Curry kicked off the series with his new book, "Love Is the Way: Holding on to Hope in Troubling Times." Following Curry were other prominent authors, including Marilynne Robinson, James Martin, Anne Lamott, and Kate Bowler.

"Anne Lamott was a big deal for us to have," Bissette said, adding that Curry's book was a big seller last year.

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## Advent calendar features the Holy Land

American Friends of the Episcopal Diocese of Jerusalem

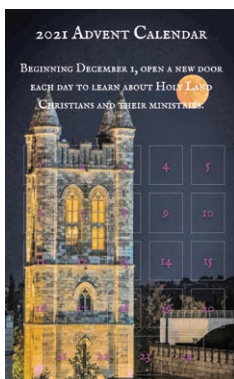
What better way to learn about the Christian witness of the current-day followers of Jesus in the place where he was born, lived, and ministered than a daily journey across the Holy Land?

The American Friends of the Episcopal Diocese of Jerusalem (AFEDJ) are offering an online Holy Land Advent calendar to offer a daily glimpse into the lives of Holy Land Christians and the humanitarian ministries of the Episcopal Diocese of Jerusalem in Palestine, Israel, Jordan, and Lebanon.

Users might open a door to a brief video or story that features a Christian leader serving their neighbors at a diocesan hospital or school. On other days, one might encounter a friend of these remarkable ministries sharing the moment when their heart was transformed by the witness of the indigenous Christians — the living stones — of the Holy Land.

During this unsettled time, the AFEDJ Holy Land Advent calendar offers a way for individuals and families to participate in a meaningful daily Advent devotion.

Check out the calendar at [www.afedj.org/advent](http://www.afedj.org/advent). Visit the calendar each day or sign up to join American friends from across the Episcopal Church who receive a daily email alert.

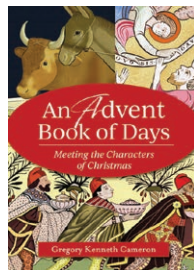


## An Advent Book of Days: Meeting the Characters of Christmas

By Gregory Kenneth Cameron  
Paraclete Press, 102 pp

Review by Episcopal Journal

From Dec. 1 to Dec. 25, Gregory Kenneth Cameron invites the reader to partake in a daily feast for the eyes and the spirit. The reflections in this book draw upon Scripture, history, and legend about the character of the day — Gabriel, the Virgin Mary, the Star, the Magi, and of course the Christ Child, paired with gorgeous illustrations from the author, adapted from famous works of art, paired with illustrations from the author adapted from famous works of art.



The book draws on the tradition of *visio divina*, inspired by the medieval tradition of the illuminated book of hours, and celebrates the many aspects and persons of the Christmas story through the centuries.

The author has written that it is his hope “that these reflections, whenever they are read, will help us to discover new depths in the Christmas story, to deepen our faith, and perhaps even to learn something new or unexpected; because over 2,000 years, the story of Christmas has become filled with unexpected delights arising from Scripture, history, legend and faith.” ■



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# Episcopal delegates to COP26 climate conference share lessons of hope and struggle with the church

By Egan Millard

*Episcopal News Service*

**D**elegates representing Presiding Bishop Michael Curry and the Episcopal Church at the COP26 United Nations Climate Change Conference presented a summary of their work to the church on Nov. 12, saying they felt empowered by their presence even though the ultimate outcome of the conference remained uncertain at that date.

Delegates said they were frustrated to witness political leaders' ongoing obstructionism, but proud of the voices and religious conviction that they brought to the table.

"You are making the creation glad," California Bishop Marc Andrus told the delegates during the presentation. "The groaning of the creation is being turned into the good news and the rejoicing of the creation by your work. There's so much more to do."

COP26, officially the 26th Conference of the Parties to the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change, took place in Glasgow, Scotland, and online from Oct. 31 through Nov. 12.

Andrus led the Episcopal delegation alongside Lynnaia Main, the Episcopal Church's representative to the United Nations. They were joined by 24 clergy and lay delegates from across the church, as well as staff members the Rev. Melanie Mullen, director of reconciliation, justice, and creation care; Phoebe Chatfield, program associate for creation care and justice; Rebecca Cotton, a fellow in the church's Washington, D.C.-based Office of Government Relations; and Nick Gordon,



intern for the United Thank Offering.

Part of the delegates' mission was to learn about the state of the climate crisis and efforts to address it, and to bring what they learned back to the wider church.

"The church is here to do this work not just for the 24 folks who were selected as delegates, but as a whole — as a body of Christ," Mullen said.

The conference ended with an agreement that calls on 197 countries to report their progress on mitigating climate change next year at COP27 in Egypt, but little consensus on concrete actions. U.N. Secretary-General António Guterres said the agreement "is an important step but is not enough."

Current greenhouse gas emission commitments still fail to meet the 2015 Paris Agreement, in which almost 200 countries set voluntary goals aimed at limiting global warming to less than 2 degrees Celsius above pre-industrial levels, settling on a 1.5-degree target.

At the time, the goal was meant to mitigate the catastrophic effects of rising temperatures on the Earth's surface, which causes melting glaciers; rising sea levels; and more frequent and extreme hurricanes, droughts, snowstorms and wildfires. Since then, climate scientists

have warned that climate change's threat to humanity is at a "code red," as warming is close to the 1.5-degree threshold already.

If current greenhouse gas emission commitments continue as they are now, it would lead to warming by 2.7 degrees by the end of the century, according to a U.N. report. A 30% cut is needed to limit warming to 2 degrees, and a 55% cut is needed to limit it to 1.5.

As a delegate, Colombia Bishop Francisco Duque said he was interested in learning about scientific advances and the national and international policies aimed at addressing climate change.

"Our commitment to the care of creation is fundamental as stewards of it," he said, in a daily email digest sent by the church's Creation Care team.

As negotiators moved toward a final agreement, they were "mired in disputes over the rules for carbon markets, financial support for vulnerable nations and provisions calling for the phase out of coal and fossil fuel subsidies," the Washington Post reported.

"We have seen very clearly these past two weeks that the U.N. is an imperfect system for dialogue and diplomacy," Main said. "But it's the only forum we have at the moment to address the magnitude and immediacy of the climate emergency."

During COP26, the Episcopal delegates (as well as their Anglican counterparts) communicated their priorities to U.N. member states, participated in meetings and discussion forums, shared updates on social media and hosted events, including a "Liturgy for Planetary Crisis" and morning and evening prayer services. Episcopalians participated virtually from the United States, Europe and South America.

Though the lack of in-person interaction was disappointing to some, overall, the virtual format was "actually an advantage," Andrus said. "We've been lighter on the Earth than if we'd been traveling there in person. But we've also been able to move from one meeting to another."

Episcopal leaders have noted in their advocacy that the impacts of the climate

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crisis are not being felt evenly.

“The most impacted [are] Indigenous peoples, people who are tied to the land, poor people,” Curry said in a Nov. 12 ABC News interview. “We will see more mass migrations of people looking for food. . . . These will have an impact on the poorest of the poor.”

In the efforts toward climate change action, the value of our religious traditions and the knowledge of our scientific

pay what we owe.”

The Episcopal delegation’s policy priorities aligned with an overarching theme of the conference: the past, present and future role of Indigenous peoples in caring for the Earth. Though Indigenous activists were highly visible at COP26, Episcopal leaders pushed for deeper inclusion of their voices at negotiations.

“Effective environmental justice advocacy anywhere in the world requires meaningful and useful partnerships with the Indigenous communities who

have lived in those environments for millennia,” said the Rev. Rachel Taber-Hamilton, a delegate from the Diocese of Olympia and a member of the Shackan First Nation people. “We inhabit and steward 40% of vulnerable biodiversity environments on the planet, yet directly received only 1% of the international funds for climate mitigation projects.”

on the issue, whether supporting federal climate action or pledging to mitigate the church’s own impact on the environment. Through the Office of Governmental Relations and the Episcopal Public Policy Network, the church has advocated for government policies in line with General Convention stances on climate change.

Throughout COP26, Episcopal delegates and leaders have emphasized that protecting the Earth and preventing human suffering are not merely political talking points but central tenets of the Episcopal faith — a message that Taber-Hamilton encouraged participants to take home to their churches.

“The faith of re-greening the world must become as central to our theology, and to our worship, as crucifixion and resurrection,” she said. “We must give nothing less than all we have and all we are in order to assure new life if generations are to follow us at all. The world to come that we pray for in our Sunday worship is ours to entomb or to liberate.” ■

**AFGHANS continued from page F**

Some members of the welcoming team escort these new neighbors to the baggage claim area, while other volunteers wait in their own vehicles or in larger vehicles provided by Catholic Charities to take them to nearby hotels. If no one in the arriving group speaks English, the Episcopal volunteers can call an interpreter to assist in translating Dari or Pashto.

“It’s been really touching and moving,” Churchwell said, “not just in the work that we get to do, but as you learn about and know about the circumstances that people are coming from and really get to see what it’s like being in their shoes, you’re really able to see the trauma that people have experienced and continue to experience in being displaced.” Many of the people were allowed to come to the U.S. because they fear persecution in Afghanistan for their work in support of the U.S. government.

Diocesan leaders said they are open to offering other forms of support as needed, but for now, their work will focus on providing an initial warm welcome to the Afghans, who are expected to continue arriving through early next year. “The response has been amazing, of people who want to be engaged in this work,” Churchwell said. ■



Photo/screen shot

**Bishop Marc Andrus, head of the Episcopal delegation at COP26, opens the Episcopal Creation Care online discussion.**

traditions “come together in common cause,” the presiding bishop said.

The Episcopal delegation’s four policy priorities were to accelerate ambition, increase support for communities experiencing loss and damage, protect human rights and affirm climate and eco-justice in addressing adaptation and mitigation, and boost climate finance and mechanisms. Each delegate focused on one of those areas.

Delegate Destinee Bates from the Diocese in North Carolina expressed frustration at the failure of the biggest polluters to pay for the damage they have caused, which often disproportionately affects countries that pollute less. She summarized the loss and damage segment succinctly by saying, “When you make a mess, you should probably clean it up.”

“The U.S. is responsible for an overwhelming majority of carbon dioxide in the world. Our carelessness is at the expense of the lives of vulnerable communities, and now we owe a debt. This COP saw many leaders dodging financial liability. But the people of the world deserve more than useless platitudes. It’s time to

The presentation ended with a discussion on translating the experience of COP26 into actions that Episcopalians can take.

“The end of COP, like so many people have said, is really just the beginning of climate action,” said Cotton, the Office of Government Relations fellow. Cotton said that for U.S. Episcopalians, the Episcopal Public Policy Network keeps people informed about opportunities to advocate for the kind of legislation that is needed to stem the climate crisis. She pointed specifically to the Build Back Better budget reconciliation bill currently being debated in Congress.

“If it passes, it will be the largest investment from the United States on climate change and will be a method of making substantial progress towards the U.S.’s stated commitment of reducing our greenhouse gas emissions 50% by 2030,” Cotton said.

Creation care has been one of the Episcopal Church’s three top priorities during Curry’s primacy, in addition to racial reconciliation and evangelism. General Convention has passed numerous resolutions

## RESOURCES continued from page H

It's uncertain whether the author series will continue after its concluding speaker in December. "We're trying of thinking of what we can do next," Chambers said. "People are burned out on Zoom."

At St. Mark's Bookstore in San Antonio, Texas, manager Carla Pineda said "we're totally online right now," but not because of COVID. The in-person shop was closed for remodeling. "We're waiting to move back into a new space," she said.

She said online shopping "turned out to be a really nice bonus" and enabled the store to "stay even remotely in front of people's faces."

The store does a good trade in prayer

books, hymnals, Advent and Lent studies, children's books, and "a lot of good, solid spirituality books. We tend to do a good bit of Celtic," such as books by John O'Donohue, Pineda said.

Other local favorites are "Wild Woman: A Footnote," "The Desert," and "My Quest for an Elusive Saint" by Colorado author Amy Frykholm and books by San Antonio author Mary C. Earle, a retired Episcopal priest.

Chambers said website traffic is dropping as more people are vaccinated and returning to in-person shopping. One advantage of in-person shopping, she said, is that when shoppers "come into an Episcopal bookstore, they are looking for a curated selection."

At Christ Church, for example, Chambers said "we think about our audience, not only our church but our community." She said she wants to be a "resource and haven for anybody who might walk through the doors, not just church members."

They even offer customers a cup of tea, "because book lovers tend to like tea," she said.

Being in the Southwest, Chambers said they "have a lot of crèches from Mexico. We have access to lots of pretty products from Mexico and things with a Southwestern feeling." ■

*This article was originally published in The Living Church.*

## Diocese of Albany (N.Y.) opens door to same-sex marriages

By Egan Millard  
Episcopal News Service

The standing committee of the Diocese of Albany (N.Y.), the last remaining U.S.-based diocese in the Episcopal Church to prohibit same-sex marriage, announced on Nov. 1 that the ceremonies may proceed in the diocese, bringing it into compliance with General Convention's mandate to make marriage rites available to all couples.

"We seek the renewing and rebuilding of our diocesan community," the standing committee wrote in its announcement, which quoted the 79th General Convention's Resolution B012 and other church documents in explaining the committee's decision. "We pledge ourselves to work with one another in a spirit of mutual respect in the midst of theological diversity in regard to matters of human sexuality."

The status of same-sex marriage in the northern New York diocese has been a point of contention ever since former Bishop William Love refused to implement Resolution B012, the 2018 General Convention measure aimed at ensuring marriage equality in all dioceses where same-sex marriage is legal.

Seven other bishops who, like Love, were theologically opposed to same-sex marriage agreed to end restrictions on the ceremonies in their dioceses, through a process under B012 in which another bishop assumes any pastoral

oversight that might be needed for the wedding.

Love was the only bishop who refused to implement B012, and a disciplinary panel determined in October 2020 that his refusal violated church canon law and his ordination vows. Love resigned rather than face further disciplinary action and joined the Anglican Church in North America.

Since Love's resignation, the diocese's standing committee has been the ecclesiastical authority while a search for the next diocesan bishop is underway.

In its Nov. 1 announcement, the standing committee — which has some new members as a result of elections at the Oct. 23 diocesan convention — said that "as a body" it is theologically opposed to same-sex marriage.

However, in order to comply with B012 in the interim period until the election of the next diocesan bishop, the committee directed clergy who plan to celebrate same-sex marriages to consult with Assisting Bishop Michael Smith, whom the committee called in August to serve during the leadership transition.

Smith, previously bishop of the Diocese of North Dakota, was one of eight bishops who refused to allow same-sex couples to marry using trial rites approved in 2015 by the 78th General Convention. In 2018, he agreed to



Love



Smith

implement B012 in North Dakota by designating pastoral oversight to another bishop. Smith retired as diocesan bishop in May 2019.

The Albany standing committee, in directing clergy to "work out on our behalf the details of a Letter of Agreement for supplemental episcopal pastoral support," is working within B012's provision for another bishop to provide oversight for same-sex marriages, though it was not immediately clear what bishop would fill that role.

The diocese had been scheduled to vote at its Oct. 23 convention on whether to amend its canons that still prohibit clergy from officiating same-sex weddings (and the use of diocesan property for such weddings) and restrict ordination to people who are in heterosexual marriages or celibate.

However, rather than debating the change, lay and clergy delegates voted 126 to 116 for a procedural amendment that said no canonical changes would be made at the online convention. The next time the diocese will be able to consider the resolutions is at its next in-person diocesan convention, scheduled for June.

Until then, the canons remain on the books. Some other dioceses — such as Dallas — also have similar bans on the books even though their bishops allow same-sex marriages. ■





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## Presiding bishop officiates at Colin Powell's funeral at National Cathedral

By Episcopal Journal

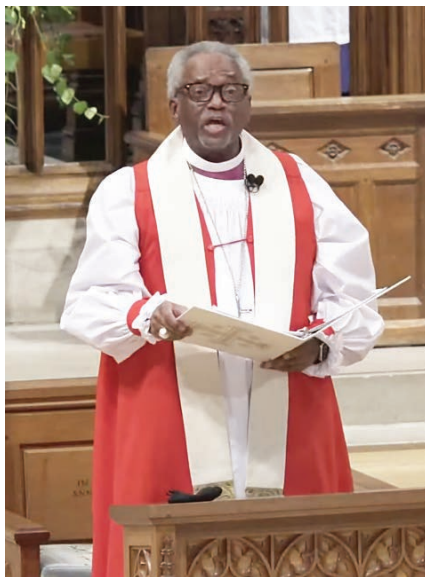
**P**residing Bishop Michael Curry officiated at the funeral of Gen. Colin Powell, former U.S. secretary of state, at Washington National Cathedral on Nov. 5, in a ceremony attended by a host of dignitaries. Powell, a lifelong Episcopalian, died on Oct. 18 at age 84 of complications from COVID-19.

Curry was joined by Washington Bishop Mariann Edgar Budde; cathedral dean Randolph Hollerith and the Rev. Joshua Walters, rector of St. John's Episcopal Church in McLean, Va., Powell's home parish.

The Rev. Stuart Kenworthy, former interim vicar at the cathedral and longtime rector of Christ Church Georgetown in Washington, gave the sermon.

Powell served in the administrations of several presidents, including President Ronald Reagan, who appointed him national security adviser in 1987. He was the first African American in that role, and in 1989, he became the first Black chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff under President George H.W. Bush. When Bush's son George W. Bush became president in 2001, he picked Powell as his secretary of state, another first for an African American.

President Joe Biden and former presi-



Photo/ENS

*Presiding Bishop Michael Curry officiates at the funeral of Colin Powell at Washington National Cathedral.*

dents Barack Obama and George W. Bush, as well as former secretaries of state Hillary Clinton, Condoleezza Rice and Madeleine Albright attended the funeral. Albright gave a eulogy, along with former Deputy Secretary of State Richard Armitage and Powell's son Michael.

"As I grew to know him, I came to view Colin Powell as a figure who almost transcended time — for his virtues were Homeric honesty, dignity, loyalty and an unshakable commitment to his calling and word," Albright said.

Armitage recalled how their regular 7 a.m. morning calls shifted to 9:30 on Sunday mornings, after his supervisor had returned from church.

"Colin loved the church: He loved the ceremony. He loved the liturgy. He loved the high hymns, which made him extremely happy," said Armitage, who served with Powell in the State Department during the George W.

Bush administration, during the private ceremony that was livestreamed on YouTube.

"And he would answer the same way every Sunday. He said, 'Oh yes, I was at church. And I want you to know I'm in the state of grace.' And I would answer the same way every Sunday: 'Colin, if you're not in the state of grace, who among us is?' And that was every day for almost 40 years, the same opening remarks."

Powell, the son of Jamaican immigrants, grew up in New York's South Bronx neighborhood, where his family attended St. Margaret's Episcopal Church. He served as an acolyte, and his father was senior warden.

"I'll never forget when I was confirmed, the bishop laying his hands on my head and intoning, 'Defend, O Lord, this thy child with thy heavenly grace, that he may continue thine forever,'" Powell wrote in 1991 for Guideposts magazine. "Those words gave me a deep assurance, and every year thereafter when I heard this supplication, that feeling of God watching over me was reaffirmed. Along with it was a sense of needing to live up to his expectations."

Powell wrote in his memoir, "My American Journey," that he and his family attended another St. Margaret's when they lived in Dale City, Va. He was elected senior warden ("following in my father's footsteps"), his wife Alma was a member of the altar guild and son Michael and daughter Linda assisted at Mass. "The tradition had been passed to the next generation, from one St. Margaret's to another, like an endless stream," he wrote.

Curry, in a statement after Powell's death, recalled meeting with him over breakfast a few years ago. "He became energized and passionate about his work with the Colin Powell School for Civic and Global Leadership, which is part of his alma mater, the City College of New York. He cared about people deeply. He served his country and humanity nobly. He loved his family and his God unswervingly. As Jesus says in the New Testament, 'Well done, good and faithful servant.'" ■

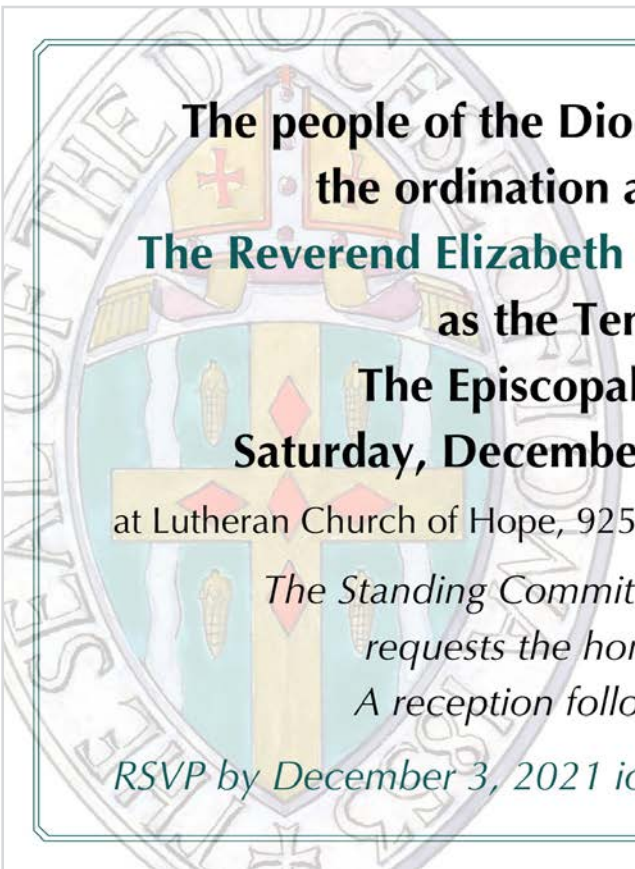
*With files from Episcopal News Service and wire services.*



Photo/Via Facebook

*The Rev. Theodora N. Brooks, of St. Margaret's, New York, walks with Colin Powell and others toward the dedication of the nearby General Colin Powell Apartment Complex in 2010.*



The seal of the Episcopal Diocese of Iowa is visible in the background, featuring a shield with a cross, a chalice, and a book, surrounded by the text "SEAL OF THE EPISCOPAL DIOCESE OF IOWA".

**The people of the Diocese of Iowa invite you to  
the ordination and consecration of  
The Reverend Elizabeth Lockwood Hawley Monnot  
as the Tenth Bishop of  
The Episcopal Diocese of Iowa**

**Saturday, December 18, 2021, at 11:00am**

at Lutheran Church of Hope, 925 Jordan Creek Pkwy, West Des Moines

*The Standing Committee of the Diocese of Iowa  
requests the honor of your presence*

*A reception follows the consecration*

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