Episcopal
JOURNAL

MONTHLY EDITION | $3.75 PER COPY VOL. 9 NO. 1 | JANUARY 2019

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Feast of the Epiphany

Traditionally celebrated on Jan. 6, Epiphany celebrates the revelation of God incarnate as Jesus Christ and marks the visit of the Magi (or wise men) to the Christ child. This representation of the three kings' visit is a Byzantine mosaic, c. 565, in the Basilica of Sant'Apollinare Nuovo, Ravenna, Italy and restored during the 18th century. Byzantine art usually depicts the Magi in Persian clothing which includes breeches, capes and Phrygian caps.

Photo/Nina Aldin Thune via Wikimedia Commons

National Cathedral marks Apollo 8's 'in the beginning' message and mission

By Mary Frances Schjonberg
Episcopal News Service

In the heyday of America's space program, the Apollo 8 mission that went aloft 50 years ago in December 1968 was a first in all of human exploration, not just that of space.

Humans left Earth's orbit for the first time and headed to the moon nearly a quarter-million miles away. Just shy of three days later, on Christmas Eve, William A. Anders, Frank Borman and James A. Lovell Jr. put their spacecraft into lunar orbit and became the first people to see the far side of the moon. Later that day, they became the first to see the Earth rise over the lunar horizon.

The astronauts did not keep secret their discoveries. They conveyed them from space to the people on Earth who were following their mission and changed the way humans viewed their place in the universe.

As they came around the moon, the astronauts had a new vision of Earth, Presiding Bishop Michael Curry told a large crowd gathered at Washington National Cathedral on Dec. 11. "I wonder if, at some level, God whispered in their ears and said, 'Behold. Behold the world of which you are a part. Look at it. Look at its symmetry, look at its beauty. Look at its wonder,'" Curry said.

In addition to Curry, The Spirit of Apollo program at the cathedral featured Lovell, who also flew on Apollo 13, Gemini 7 and Gemini 12; Jim Bridenstine, NASA administrator; Ellen R. Stofan, director of the Smithsonian's National Air and Space Museum; and the Very Rev. Randy Hollerith, dean of the cathedral. The five were invited to explore the spiritual meaning of exploration and the unity created by the mission's Christmas Eve broadcast and the iconic "Earthrise" photo taken by Anders.

Photo/NASA

Astronaut William Anders took one of the most iconic images of the Space Age: "Earthrise."

The program at the cathedral is one of a series of "Apollo 50" events leading up to a five-day celebration, July 16–20, 2019, at the National Air and Space Museum and on the National Mall to commemorate Apollo 11 and the first moon landing. The museum received $2 million from the Boeing Corp. to help pay for the cathedral event and all of the commemorations.

Hollerith suggested that Apollo 8 was "a holy journey not only for what it accomplished, but for what it revealed to us about our place in God's grand creation."

Curry mentioned that some believe "that moment changed human consciousness forever," and he added that the view of Earth from space showed "we are a part of it, not the sum total of it."

Lovell agreed, describing how he realized that his thumb could cover up the entire Earth as he saw it through the space capsule's window. "In this cathedral, my world exists within these walls, but seeing the Earth at 240,000

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Episcopal delegation advocates for climate action at UN gathering

By David Paulsen
Episcopal News Service

An Episcopal delegation in Poland advocated on behalf of Presiding Bishop Michael Curry at the United Nations climate conference known as COP24, which met Dec. 2-14 in Katowice, Poland.

The Episcopal delegation followed a range of "work streams" related to climate change: loss and damage, mitigation, adaptation, finance and ambition. The group also met with representatives from member nations to share details of the church's positions as set by General Convention.

COP24's official title is the 24th Conference of the Parties to the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change.

"Our hope is to not only learn about these important areas, but to help the church connect with them," California Bishop Marc Andrus, who is leading the Episcopal delegation, told ENS in a written summary of his team's activities. He added that the Episcopal team members will produce reports on those activities afterward that will be shared with the wider church.

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CONVERSATIONS

'The gift of a God who shows up'

By William G. Cliff

THE TWO-THOUSAND-YEAR-OLD birth of a refugee child in Bethlehem should make no difference at all. There was no one expecting this child to be born except his mother and embarrassed father. Israel is entirely the wrong end of the Roman empire to be truly important. It was the sort of province one was sent to as a form of punishment. Rome, the center of things, is far away, and the powerful and rich sleep comfortably in their beds confident that nothing will upset the empire they have worked hard to build. In a conquered Israel, the birth of this baby should make no difference at all. There may be grandiose claims about his ancestry, but his mother, who found herself pregnant before she should have been, is a nobody. His father too, was a nobody. A carpenter and a generation older than he should have been.

They had come from a village that no one cared about and they had travelled to a city whose glory had departed in spite of once being the home of King David. Babies do not wait for auspicious times or places to be born — they arrive when they arrive — and this one is born in an even more insignificant place than usual: a barn, because as it usually happens, the powerful make edicts, and the poor are moved about against their will and at someone else's convenience. In the crush of people obeying an order about tax from the most powerful, there was no room for a proper place to be born. They made do with what they had. This birth should have made no difference at all; but it has made all the difference in the world.

Even the announcement of the birth was wrong. Foreigners and poor folks are the wrong people in the wrong places. Foreign astrologers were not the kind of respectable people good folk usually received on the birth of a child. The rabble of shepherds who crowded the door and craned their necks to see the baby were an unusual group to be heralds of a new kingdom — but there they were. Jostling and whispering and telling stories of angels and choirs, mangers and signs, the shepherds made the whole thing that much more absurd.

We believe that the Roman world which was dark and cold suddenly became warmer because the least and the lost of the Roman Empire were sent a message that night. The message was delivered in entirely the wrong place to make an impression on the powerful, but instead it came as the very best of news to those who had very little good news in life. The poor and the disenfranchised heard this message, and it came as a message of light and hope in a dark and uncertain time. The birth of this child on this particular night would eventually become a message to the whole world: that in the midst of the fear and alienation; the poverty and indifference of the powerful; hunger and the yearning for better things; that God showed up in a manger in Bethlehem.

> **"Hunger and plenty, war and peace, rich and poor, oppression and ambivalence, slavery and indulgence are all still part of the world 20 centuries after this little boy was born."**

The prophets of old often spoke of light breaking out in darkness and salvation appearing when and where it was unexpected. Christmas is the story of when and how God showed up. The light was kindled in the darkness and the message from the highest (the angels) to the lowest (the shepherds) announced God's gracious turn to the creatures fashioned from clay.

The God who had walked with humankind in the garden would now walk again with them in the person of Jesus. The world is still dark and uncertain, and it would seem that it is more so now than it was then. The rich and powerful still sleep comfortably in their beds, confident that nothing will challenge their empire. The poor and dispossessed are still migrating across deserts seeking safety from murderous tyrants. The contradictions of the ancient Roman Empire have only been amplified. Hunger and plenty, war and peace, rich and poor, oppression and ambivalence, slavery and indulgence are all still part of the world 20 centuries after this little boy was born. Women who find themselves homeless and worried about the future still seek a place to lay their children down that is safe. Fathers still dream about finding a way to a promised land.

These are the contradictions that need to be faced. We believe that this birth long ago has changed everything. It seems however that so little has in fact changed. The message of the angels still contains hope for us, because in the midst of the terrible mess humans have made, God shows up. The fact that God showed up and has never deserted us since is the reason we can begin to once again address those contradictions. Jesus walks with us still, proclaiming a message of good news to the world through us — that God is not distant or ambivalent about the creation or the terrible darkness we have manufactured for ourselves with our greed and our hatred and our indifference to the suffering of one another. Rather, those contradictions are why God shows up. We are the reason why Christ came. That is the greatest gift, to celebrate the tremendous gift of a God who shows up. We may be the wrong people, in the wrong place. We may even be nobodies — but that is who the good news is for. Christ was born in the wrong place, to the wrong people at the wrong time — and that has made all the difference. ■

William G. Cliff is the bishop of the Diocese of Brandon (Manitoba, Canada). This column was first published in the Anglican Journal.

Correction: Episcopal Journal's story in the December issue about the Litany in the Wake of a Mass Shooting offered by Bishops United Against Gun Violence misrepresented the location of Marysville Pilchuck High School. It is in Washington state.

FROM THE EDITOR'S DESK

AS WE LOOK TOWARD THE beginning of a new year, it would seem appropriate that the dominant theme in this edition is journeys.

The three wise men travel to Bethlehem and Apollo 8 heads for the moon. An Episcopal group seeks to address climate change and a researcher sets off on a journey among California missions, looking for sun signs.

A former president makes his last journey from the national cathedral and a bishop and a priest from New York travel to the Mexican border. The presiding bishop heads for North Carolina to listen to people shaken by disaster.

Most people heading out the door on a trip make some careful plans, but perhaps the most challenging aspect of a journey — or pilgrimage — is to be open to what God may reveal.

The Apollo 8 astronauts thought they were going to explore the moon, but gained a divine perspective on the Earth as they were the first humans to regard our planet from another orbit.

In the classic story "The Other Wise Man," written by Henry Van Dyke in 1895, a fourth wise man, Artaban, sets out to see the Christ child, bearing three gifts — a sapphire, a ruby and a pearl.

He stops to help a dying man and misses the caravan, so spends one of his treasures on camels and supplies. Arriving in Bethlehem too late, he saves the life of a child at the price of the second treasure. At the end of his life, he finds himself at the Crucifixion, where he gives up the last treasure to save a young woman from slavery.

He sees his life as a failure — he has never found Jesus, much less presented his gifts. As he is dying, he is reassured by a voice, saying, "Inasmuch as thou has done it unto one of the least of these my brethren, thou hast done it unto me."

Artaban found what he was looking for — it just wasn't in the place he thought it would be. As we embark on our life's journeys, may we recognize God's grace, even in the unlikeliest of places. ■

Episcopal JOURNAL

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Subcriptions: To change subscription addresses, contact: Episcopal Journal Circulation Department, PO Box 937, Bellmawr NJ 08099-0937 ejournal@egpp.com or call 800-691-9846. Individual subscriptions are $36 per year, available through **www.episcopaljournal.org**.

Episcopal Journal is an independent publication, produced by and for members of the Episcopal Church in the United States and abroad. Episcopal Journal is a 501(c)(3) tax-exempt charitable corporation, registered in the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania. **Episcopal Journal** is published monthly by the Episcopal Journal, Inc. Episcopal Journal is published monthly and quarterly in partnership with dioceses and individual churches and is distributed to individual subscribers. Postage paid at Bryn Mawr, Pa. **Postmaster:** Send address changes to: Episcopal Journal, P.O. Box 937, Bellmawr, NJ 08099-0937. **ISSN:** 2159-6824

NEWS

Country says farewell to George H.W. Bush at Washington National Cathedral

By Mary Frances Schjonberg
Episcopal News Service

With a combination of military precision, Episcopal Church liturgy and fond, sometimes humorous, remembrances from his family and friends, the United States on Dec. 5 bid farewell to former President George H.W. Bush.

"When death comes, as it does to us all, life is changed, not ended," the Rev. Russell Levenson Jr., rector of Bush's Houston congregation, said during his state funeral sermon. "The way we live our lives, the decisions we make, the service we render matter. They matter to our fellow human beings, to this world that God has given us, and they matter to God. Few people had understood this as well or lived their lives as accordingly as President George Herbert Walker Bush.

"Now hear what I said: lived it. Not earned it or strived to achieve it. It was as natural to him as breathing is to each of us."

Recalling Barbara Bush's frequent comment to him of "good sermon, too long," Levenson preached for just more than 12 minutes during the service at Washington National Cathedral, which ran nearly two and one-half hours.

The service drew a capacity, invitation-only crowd of nearly 3,000, including family members, all five living U.S. presidents, senators, representatives, Supreme Court justices, Trump administration officials, diplomats and foreign dignitaries, including German Chancellor Angela Merkel and Britain's Prince Charles.

Photo/Danielle E. Thomas/Washington National Cathedral

Members of the U.S. armed forces depart after having borne Bush's casket into Washington National Cathedral.

The last funeral at Washington National Cathedral to approach such significance was the service for U.S. Sen. John McCain on Sept. 1. But a state funeral is an honor reserved for presidents, part of the series of tributes coordinated by the U.S. Army Military District of Washington.

Bush's casket arrived by hearse at the cathedral accompanied by the Bush family. Presiding Bishop Michael Curry, Washington (D.C.) Bishop Mariann Budde, the cathedral's Dean Randy Hollerith and Levenson, of St. Martin's Episcopal Church in Houston, waited on the cathedral's steps with the Rev. Rosemarie Logan Duncan, the cathedral's canon for worship.

Photo/Danielle E. Thomas/Washington National Cathedral

From left, the Rev. Rosemarie Logan Duncan, Washington National Cathedral Dean Randy Hollerith, Presiding Bishop Michael Curry, the Rev. Charles Robertson and the Rev. Russell Levenson Jr., participate in the commendation near the end of former President George H.W. Bush's funeral.

The military pallbearers carried the casket up the steps to where Curry and Budde recited the traditional "reception of the body" prayers. "With faith in Jesus Christ, we receive the body of our brother George for burial," Curry said at the door.

The Bush family was escorted into the church and, at the front pew, the president's son, former President George W. Bush, greeted President Donald Trump and former Presidents Barack Obama, Bill Clinton and Jimmy Carter, and their wives, who sat together in the front pew across the aisle from the Bush family.

Then, the cathedral's bells began to toll 41 times to mark the elder Bush's rank among U.S. presidents, as acolytes and clergy, including those from other faiths, slowly led the pallbearers carrying the casket up the cathedral's long aisle. Hollerith and Levenson recited the anthems from the Book of Common Prayer's Burial Office.

During the service, four eulogists, George W. Bush, former Canadian Prime Minister Brian Mulroney (whose term overlapped Bush's), former U.S. Sen. Alan Simpson of Wyoming and Bush's biographer, Jon Meacham, remembered the elder Bush.

Meacham began the tributes, telling the congregation that Bush was "an imperfect man" who "left us a more perfect union." Bush, Meacham said, knew that politics could not be completely pure if you wanted to win, and you had to win if you wanted to lead.

"His heart was steadfast. His life code, as he said, was, 'Tell the truth. Don't blame people. Be strong. Do your best. Try hard. Forgive. Stay the course,'" Meacham recalled. "That was and is the most American of creeds."

Mulroney, standing at a podium very near Trump, praised Bush's efforts to preserve and strengthen the North Atlantic Treaty Organization after the disintegration of the Soviet Union and the Iron Curtain. He also praised Bush's work to achieve the original NAFTA agreement (North American Free Trade Agreement), which he said had been "modernized and improved by recent administrations." Trump has been critical of both NATO and NAFTA and recently announced he would withdraw from the latter, apparently in an effort to force Congress to approve a new version of the trade pact with Canada and Mexico.

During Simpson's humorous eulogy, he recalled a time when he said he had fallen from Washington's A list to what he called the Z list because of his political choices. Bush invited him and his wife to join the Bushes for a weekend. The four had a highly visible departure from the White House. Simpson remembered Bush saying his staff told him not to issue the invitation, but he overruled them, citing friendship over politics.

Bush never hated anyone, Simpson said, recalling that both men had strong mothers who taught them that "hatred corrodes the container it is carried in."

Bush understood the choices that leaders had to make, the former senator said. Bush was once presented with a bipartisan bill on the budget process, health care, Social Security solvency and other policy issues. To fund the bill, taxes would have to be increased and that would require the president to go against his well-known promise of "Read my lips: No new taxes." The bill passed in the Senate, but Bush's fellow Republicans in the House defeated it and, Simpson suggested, Bush's willingness to break his no-taxes vow for the sake of the bill led to his failure to be elected to a second term.

Simpson said Bush told him that when faced with tough choices, he chose "the country that I fought for," rather than his party or his legacy.

"Those who travel the high road of humility in Washington, D.C., are not bothered by heavy traffic," Simpson said.

During his eulogy, George W. Bush said his father almost died of a staph infection during his teenage years. That and his World War II experience "made him cherish the gift of life, and he vowed to live every day to the fullest," the 43rd president said of his father, the 41st.

"To his very last days, dad's life was instructive," Bush said. "As he aged, he taught us how to grow with dignity, humor and kindness, and when the good Lord finally called, how to meet him with courage and with the joy of the promise of what lies ahead."

Bush said his father "taught us that public service is noble and necessary, that one can serve with integrity and hold true to the important values, like faith and family."

Bush said he learned years later about how his parents' faith sustained them when his sister, Robin, was dying of leukemia at age 3. "Dad always believed that one day he would hug his precious Robin again," he said.

Bush became emotional as he ended his reflection, saying, "And in our grief, let us smile, knowing that dad is hugging Robin and holding mom's hand again."

During his sermon, Levenson said Bush's life showed that "faith means

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AROUND THE CHURCH

Seattle cathedral to honor civil rights leader

St. Mark's Cathedral in Seattle will honor the legacy of civil rights leader Edwin T. Pratt at an event to be held on Feb. 2.

The event will feature speakers from the community and special guests, including Michelle Merriweather of the Urban League of Metropolitan Seattle; the Rev. Phyllis Beaumonte; King County Council member Larry Gossett and Pratt's daughter, Miriam Pratt Glover.

Pratt was assassinated at the door of his home almost 50 years ago. Throughout the 1960's, he was the Executive Director of the Urban League of Metropolitan Seattle, establishing new programs and initiatives to confront housing discrimination, school segregation, employment bias and police brutality.

"Ed Pratt was one of the most responsible and able people in the whole area of civil rights. He was one of the most highly principled people I've ever worked with. He took a lot of heat at times from both whites and blacks, but he always maintained a perfect balance, perspective and sensitivity on human rights. He was an outstanding human being. I can't possibly imagine a motive for such a terrible thing," said Joseph L. McGavick, chairman of the Washington State Board Against Discrimination, as quoted in the Seattle Post-Intelligencer in January 1969.

An Episcopalian, Pratt was a personal friend of St. Mark's dean at the time, John Leffler. Following Pratt's murder, Acting Mayor Floyd Miller declared a day of mourning. Pratt's memorial service drew over 2,000 people, the largest funeral ever held at St. Mark's. His remains rest in St. Mark's columbarium in the Chapel of the Resurrection.

Photo/courtesy of St. Mark's Cathedral

Edwin Pratt with the Rev. John Leffler, then-dean of St. Mark's Cathedral, Seattle.

When he awarded Pratt the Bishop's Cross in 1966, then-Bishop Ivol Curtis said that he was a man of "outstanding insight and understanding," working for the "devoted and faithful alleviation of racial tensions" and the "building of better relations."

— St. Mark's Cathedral

EPISCOPAL MINISTRIES ANNOUNCEMENTS

U.S. renews contract with Episcopal Migration Ministries

The State Department announced Episcopal Migration Ministries, along with the other eight national agencies responsible for resettling refugees in the U.S., has been awarded a contract to participate in the Reception and Placement Program for fiscal year 2019. Last September, the Trump administration said it was reducing the number of refugees allowed to resettle in the U.S. "We still face the challenge of transitioning to a much smaller resettlement program," said the Rev. Charles Robertson, canon to the presiding bishop for ministry beyond the Episcopal Church. Since the 1980s, Episcopal Migration Ministries has resettled over 90,000 refugees through a network of local partners, volunteers and supporters.

— Episcopal Church Public Affairs Office

Applications accepted for Episcopal Service Corps

Applications are accepted for young adults (21-32 years old) for the 2019-2020 Episcopal Service Corps, a U.S.- based network of local programs designed to serve others, promote justice, and discern vocation. Deadline is Jan. 15. More information is available at **https://episcopalservicecorps.org/**

— Episcopal Church Public Affairs Office

Agency is supporting migrants in Mexico

Episcopal Relief & Development is supporting the work of the Anglican Church in Mexico to provide shelter, food, water and other basic needs to migrants from Central America seeking asylum in the United States. Funded by several Anglican Alliance agencies, the efforts help meet immediate and long-term needs, beginning with a ministry to provide food, clothing and hygiene supplies through San Esteban Anglican Church in Rio Bravo, Tamaulipas, Mexico, across the border from Donna, Texas.

— Episcopal Relief & Development

United Thank Offering to award grants

The United Thank Offering (UTO)is accepting applications for its 2019 grants. The focus for the 2019 UTO grants is *Go: Crossing boundaries created by race, culture, and economics to create communities that listen deeply and learn to live like Jesus.*

The deadline is March 1 at 5 p.m. Eastern time. The UTO Grant Committee will offer webinars to answer any questions and go over the application on Tuesday, Jan. 15 and Wednesday, Feb. 13 at noon and 8 p.m. Eastern. More information is available at **www.episcopalchurch.org/united-thank-offering**.

— Episcopal Church Public Affairs Office

EPISCOPAL LIVES

Anti-gun violence group chooses leaders

Douglas

Miller

Gutiérrez

Bishops United Against Gun Violence has chosen **Bishop Daniel G.P. Gutiérrez** of the Diocese of Pennsylvania and **Bishop Steven Miller** of the Diocese of Milwaukee as new co-conveners. They join **Bishop Ian Douglas** of the Diocese of Connecticut, who has served as a co-convener since the group's beginning in 2013. Founded after the 2012 Oak Creek Sikh Temple shooting in Milwaukee and the Sandy Hook Elementary School shooting in Newtown, Conn., Bishops United offers public liturgy to commemorate victims of gun violence, spiritual support to survivors and their loved ones, teaching on the Christian ethics of gun violence issues, and advocacy for common sense gun safety measures.

— Bishops United Against Gun Violence

Washington appoints Knudsen

Knudsen

Diocese of Washington (D.C) Bishop Mariann Edgar Budde has appointed **Bishop Chilton Knudsen** assisting bishop in the diocese. Knudsen served as bishop of the Diocese of Maine (1997-2008) and has since served as a missionary in Haiti and as an assistant bishop in four dioceses. She most recently served in the Diocese of Maryland and completed her ministry there at the end of 2018.

— Diocese of Washington (D.C.)

Haiti ordination postponed

Delicat

Presiding Bishop Michael Curry has postponed the scheduled ordination and consecration of the **Venerable Joseph Kerwin Delicat** as the bishop coadjutor of Haiti since a majority of bishops with jurisdiction in the Episcopal Church have not yet consented. The deadline for consents is Jan. 3. A consecration date will be determined later. Delicat was elected June 2. Clergy and lay delegates filed objections to election, prompting a review by Province II, which includes Haiti.

— Episcopal Church Public Affairs Office

Goff to lead Virginia

Goff

The Standing Committee of the Diocese of Virginia announced it has ended the search for a provisional bishop and that suffragan **Bishop Susan E. Goff** will lead the diocese as the Ecclesiastical Authority until the election and consecration of a diocesan bishop. She has served as suffragan bishop in the diocese since 2012. Last August, the diocese announced it would seek a provisional bishop to replace diocesan Bishop Shannon Johnston, who retired in November.

— Diocese of Virginia

Oklahoma bishop retiring

Konieczny

Bishop Edward J. Konieczny, of the Diocese of Oklahoma, has announced he plans to retire on Jan. 1, 2021. Konieczny was elected in 2007. "We are healthy spiritually, financially, and prepared to grow and develop in new and emerging ways. It is time to discern the next bishop who will lead the Diocese of Oklahoma into this new season of ministry," Konieczny said in a letter to the diocese. He said he intends to call for the election of a bishop coadjutor (who is elected to succeed a diocesan bishop) to be consecrated on April 18, 2020.

— Diocese of Oklahoma

NEWS

Church eyes investing in gun manufacturers to press for gun safety

By David Paulsen
Episcopal News Service

Shareholder advocacy is nothing new for the Episcopal Church. With an investment portfolio worth about $400 million, the church has long used some of those investments to influence companies based on Christian principles and General Convention resolutions that set church policies and priorities.

What's new is one of the investment tactics the church plans to implement in the new year to address gun violence.

General Convention passed a resolution last July that calls on Executive Council's Committee on Corporate Social Responsibility to research investing in gun manufacturers to give the church a new voice in how those companies do business. The goal: "to minimize lethal and criminal uses of their products."

"We've never purposely gone out and bought [shares in] what we'd consider a bad actor in order to press the company to change behavior," said Brian Grieves, the outgoing chair of the committee, which oversees the church's shareholder advocacy.

Resolution B007 was proposed by Western Massachusetts Bishop Douglas Fisher, a member of Bishops United Against Gun Violence, who takes over for Grieves as committee chair in January. Fisher's diocese is home to the headquarters of Smith & Wesson in Springfield, and in March he participated in a rally outside the gun manufacturer led by high school students in the wake of a deadly high school shooting in Parkland, Fla.

Fisher acknowledged a "sense of frustration" among anti-gun violence advocates in response to Congress' inaction. "The federal government is doing nothing about the public health crisis of gun violence," he said. "So where can the church engage this big issue?"

Shareholder advocacy already has produced results on the issue, such as the decision by Dick's Sporting Goods in February to stop selling assault rifles at its Field & Stream stores and to stop selling any guns to customers under 21. The Episcopal Church, as a shareholder, was involved in the effort to pressure the chain based on the Sandy Hook Principles, named after the school in Newtown, Conn., where 20 children and six educators were gunned down on Dec. 14, 2012.

The Dick's Sporting Goods shareholder effort was aided by a coalition called Interfaith Center for Corporate Responsibility, or ICCR, an organization to which the Episcopal Church belongs that helps religious organizations pool their shareholder power. The group has recently worked with other of its members to do what General Convention urged: buy stock in a gun manufacturing company to influence corporate behavior. Eleven Roman Catholics organizations invested in Sturm, Ruger & Co. and in May were able to pass a shareholder resolution requiring the company to produce a report documenting how it is mitigating the harmful effects of its products.

Fisher said the Episcopal Church intends to take its cue from ICCR and base its advocacy with gun manufacturers on principles developed by an anti-gun violence campaign called Do Not Stand Idly By.

Such efforts aren't opposed to gun ownership or the Second Amendment, Fisher said. "We're really taking the approach of, why can't gun companies act like car companies? Car companies are already trying to make their cars safer … That's good business practice. Why can't gun companies go down the same path?"

Photo/Victoria Ix/Diocese of Western Massachusetts

Episcopalians join an interfaith group of demonstrators outside a Smith & Wesson facility in Springfield, Mass., on March 14.

> **"It's a strategic decision, and we're going to have to look at how we arrive at those particular positions."**
>
> **— Brian Grieves**

That's a worthwhile case to make, said the Rev. Rosalind Hughes, a Cleveland-area priest who has been vocal and active in the fight against gun violence, but she isn't sure investments are the best way to make that case.

"My personal feeling is that I would prefer that we were not investing in the manufacture of guns in the first place," said Hughes, rector at Church of the Epiphany in Euclid, Ohio. She favors stepping up lobbying efforts to pass stricter background checks, an end to gun-show loopholes and other reform measures. Bishops United Against Gun Violence has backed such measures as well.

"The fact that we're talking about this on the anniversary of the Sandy Hook shooting doesn't escape my notice," Hughes told Episcopal News Service. "And the idea that the best that we can do is to invest in the manufacture of more guns in order to influence the landscape of guns in this country — that doesn't sit well with me."

Grieves, who will remain on the Committee on Corporate Social Responsibility after stepping down as chair, describes actively investing in such companies as just one of the alternatives available to the church as it pursues a range of policy goals.

"One size does not fit all," he said. "It's a strategic decision, and we're going to have to look at how we arrive at those particular positions."

Even if this approach gets results on gun safety, it may not be the best approach toward one of the church's other priorities, which include climate change, the Israeli-Palestinian conflict, indigenous people's rights, corporate board diversity and ending human trafficking.

The church already owns shares in Caterpillar and Motorola, for example, and for years has been pressing those two companies to address human rights concerns related to their contracts with Israel in the occupied territories.

"The purpose is to engage in dialogue and try to get the company to move toward making a change in its behavior," Grieves said.

General Convention, however, stopped short of approving a blanket divestment in Israel, which some critics of Israel's occupation of Palestinian territories have called for. Instead, bishops and deputies passed a resolution that calls on Executive Council to establish a "human rights screen" to determine the criteria that would justify divesting from specific companies based on their track records on human rights.

The church also maintains so-called no-buy lists against investing in tobacco companies, for-profit prison companies and companies that earn more than a specific percentage of their business as military contractors.

Fisher noted that affirmative investing is another approach the Episcopal Church takes, such as its support for companies doing good work in the Palestinian territories. The Bank of Palestine is one example.

On climate change, the church seeks out investments aligned with its interest in caring for God's creation. Fisher's diocese took the additional step in 2015 divesting from companies that profit from fossil fuels.

It's one thing to divest from oil to invest that money in alternative fuels, Fisher said, but that approach doesn't work well in addressing gun violence. "What would you invest in that would impact the public health crisis of gun violence?"

By investing in gun manufacturers, then, the church and its partners may be able to persuade those companies take steps that will reduce the number of gun deaths. One example would be to adopt technology such as fingerprint recognition, familiar to any iPhone user, that would lock guns for everyone except the owner.

"Even if you don't get shareholder resolutions passed, if you stay with it long enough … people start to take notice," Fisher said. "It's not something that gets ignored. It gets addressed." ■

NEWS

Long Island diocese assesses needs at Mexican border

By Episcopal Journal

A mission trip from the Diocese of Long Island (N.Y.) to evaluate the needs of refugees at the southern border found – among other things – a shelter in San Diego that could use some help, according to the Rev. Marie Tatro, the diocesan vicar for community justice.

Tatro and diocesan Bishop Lawrence Provenzano traveled to communities at the border from Dec. 5 to 8, visiting a men's shelter in Tijuana, Mexico and the San Diego shelter, "a Catholic retreat facility where hundreds of families pass through each week," Tatro wrote in an update posted on the diocesan website.

The Diocese of Long Island covers the New York state counties of Brooklyn and Queens (also within the city of New York), Nassau and Suffolk, with a total population of nearly 8 million.

Upon his return, Provenzano said, "Having experienced both sides of the border, listening to the stories and witnessing the absolute desperation of asylum seekers, I am convinced that it is our obligation to provide support — material, emotional and spiritual — to these sisters and brothers in need. The U.S. is not being invaded. That language and attitude is fearful, sinful, non-truth being used for selfish political ends."

Announcing the trip in mid-November, Provenzano noted that the "gospel thing to do" is to stand with "these vulnerable people."

In Tijuana, Tatro and Provenzano listened to migrants' stories. "When [we] were in Tijuana last week listening to the testimonies of the young mothers about their perilous journeys, and the dangers that they faced in their countries, I was overcome with emotion. The whole time, the Spirit kept whispering this phrase into my ear: 'I am looking into the face of the Living God,'" Tatro wrote.

While they were in San Diego, Tatro wrote, she and Provenzano spoke with a number of local faith leaders "in order to get a clearer idea of how we in New York, and here in the [diocese of Long Island] in particular, can best support them."

The shelter is overseen primarily by the San Diego Organizing Project, a 40-year-old multi-faith organization, and staff from Jewish Family Services, the ACLU, the Salvation Army and a few other groups. It could use some "people-power," Tatro wrote.

"The faith leaders and volunteers drive around the city and find refugees — mostly women with young children — who have been dropped off by I.C.E. [Immigration and Customs Enforcement] at bus stops (at all hours), with no money, no food, no change of clothes, and wearing an ankle bracelet that needs to be charged every eight hours. The volunteers bring them to the shelter where they can get a shower, food, clean clothes, and some TLC. Then, in 24-48 hours, they get on transportation (usually a bus) to their final destination. They give them a few things to travel with — box lunches, some cash, diapers, a change of clothes, toiletries — all of which are provided through donations made to local organizations," Tatro wrote.

Photos/Jonny Guapo

From left, Diocese of Long Island Bishop Lawrence Provenzano and the Rev. Marie Tatro speak at a meeting in San Diego with local organizers responding to the needs of asylum seekers.

A temporary shelter set up for asylum seekers in San Diego.

Many of the people put on buses and trains are headed all over the U.S., including New York, Tatro said in a video posted on the diocesan website. Provenzano, in the video, emphasized "welcoming the stranger" and finding ways to do that in the diocese.

Provenzano and Tatro, in their update from the trip, noted that those wishing to make a mission trip to San Diego should prepare for a two-week commitment. "A shorter time than that is not as helpful, since it takes a few days to acclimate to the tasks needed, develop relationships with those on the ground, etc.," wrote Tatro.

The ability to speak Spanish is an advantage, although being monolingual in English is not a barrier to participation. Special skills such as medical training/nursing and legal knowledge are also helpful. Accommodations are available at the Roman Catholic diocese's residence house.

More information is available from Tatro at communityjustice@dioceseli.org and on the Long Island website, **www.dioceseli.org**. ■

CLIMATE continued from page 1

One of COP24's main goals is to hammer out a framework for implementing the Paris Agreement, which was reached in 2015 at the 21st conference.

The Episcopal Church began attending the conference that year, making this the fourth Episcopal delegation. Joining Andrus for both weeks was Lynnaia Main, the Episcopal Church's representative to the U.N., and Andrus' wife, Sheila Andrus, an ecological entomologist representing the Diocese of California.

The rest of the delegation is split between the conference's two weeks, with the first week including the Rev. Lester Mackenzie of Laguna Beach, Calif.; Alan Yarborough, Office of Government Relations communications officer; and the Rev. Melanie Mullen, Episcopal Church's director of reconciliation, evangelism and creation care. For the second week, they handed off to Andrew Thompson, an environmental ethicist at Sewanee: University of the South, and Jack Cobb, Office of Government Relations' domestic and environmental policy adviser.

Photo/Lynnaia Main

California Bishop Marc Andrus, center, leads an Episcopal delegation to the United Nations' COP24 climate conference in Katowice, Poland. The delegation also includes Alan Yarborough, left, Office of Government Relations communications officer, and the Rev. Lester Mackenzie, center right.

Each member of the Episcopal delegation tracked one of the COP24 work streams as the team promoted keeping global temperature rise within 1.5 degrees Celsius, a more ambitious target than the Paris Agreement's 2 degrees Celsius, which scientists predict would be necessary to prevent a spiraling catastrophe of melting glaciers, rising sea levels and related weather extremes.

"We delegates carry in our hearts the many ways that Episcopalians are already suffering from the early effects of climate change and feel the responsibility to represent those most vulnerable of our brothers and sisters," Andrus said.

In addition to making that case directly to member nations, the Episcopalians at COP24 participated in panel discussions, conferred with ecumenical partners and joined worship and prayer services.

On Dec. 7, Andrus served on a panel discussion of the We Are Still In movement. "I was able to talk about our historic commitments around climate and environment at the 79th General Convention, and our movement to reduce the carbon footprint of the Episcopal Church by supporting individual and community sustainability choices," Andrus said.

Environmental justice is one of the church's three main priorities, along with racial reconciliation and evangelism. Over the years, General Convention has passed numerous resolutions on the issue, whether supporting federal climate action or pledging to mitigate the church's own impact on the environment.

We Are Still In brings together the Episcopal Church and many of its faith partners, as well as governments, nongovernmental organizations and companies, in committing to uphold the Paris Agreement despite the Trump administration's vow to withdraw the U.S. from the agreement.

One of the Episcopal delegation's tasks at COP24 was to draft a response to the U.S. delegation's effort to block "welcoming" a report by the U.N.'s Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change.

In 2016, the Episcopal Church was granted U.N. observer status, which allows members of the delegation to brief U.N. representatives on the Episcopal Church's General Convention climate resolutions and to attend meetings in the official zone.

On Dec. 8, the Episcopal delegation participated in a prayer vigil in support of the Gwich'in, indigenous people in Alaska whose traditional way of life faces threats from oil exploration and rising temperatures in the Arctic. The Episcopal Church has rallied behind the cause of the Gwich'in, first through its House of Bishops and then at General Convention in July, when Gwich'in activist Bernadette Demientieff spoke at a joint session on care of creation.

Andrus and his COP24 team also attended an ecumenical worship service in the Roman Catholic cathedral in Katowice, and the first week included a reception hosted by the Brahma Kumaris Hindu order and an interfaith Talanoa Dialog, a tradition that originates in Pacific island nations.

The Episcopal delegation hosted an event Dec. 12 to show video of a sermon that Curry delivered Dec. 11 at Washington National Cathedral commemorating the 50th anniversary of the Apollo 8 space flight.

As the event was being planned, Andrus said, "After watching the video, we will be discussing what it means to see the Earth as a whole from outside of itself. I feel that those splendid, tender images have changed our minds and souls and contributed to our sense that life is deeply interconnected, and that all of life is mutually responsible." ■

NEWS

Presiding Bishop listens to stories of Hurricane Florence's aftermath

By Lindsey Harts
Episcopal News Service

Three months after Hurricane Florence made landfall along the coast of North Carolina, many are living in what feels like a transitional space. The initial chaos of the storm has passed, but the state of disorientation and uprootedness has become the "new normal."

During his pastoral visit Dec. 8-9 in the Diocese of East Carolina, Presiding Bishop Michael Curry emphasized that he had come primarily to listen to the stories of those who had been impacted, to bear witness to the recovery work being done and to call members of the wider Episcopal Church to remember that their siblings in East Carolina are still in need.

The diocese includes the coastal third of North Carolina. Over the course of his two-day visit, Curry preached at a Sunday Eucharist and attended two additional gatherings that provided opportunities for community members to share their stories and time for Curry to respond pastorally.

The first gathering was held at St. Anne's Episcopal Church in Jacksonville, N.C. Three individuals from around the diocese shared their experiences prior to, during and in the aftermath of Florence. The thread that was woven through each of these stories was the importance of connection and caring for one another.

The Rev. Cortney Dale from Christ Episcopal Church in New Bern spoke about how her partners in ministry were invaluable during this time and allowed her to supply the essential needs of those in her community. Shirley Guion of St. Cyprian's Episcopal Church in New Bern shared the history of her parish, highlighting what a rock it had been for so many people, and how heartbreaking it had been to evacuate and return to major damages in her church.

Pam Banta, director of the St. Anne's Parish Day School in Jacksonville, explained how she had been unable to evacuate, but she was grateful that she had been there amid the storm because it allowed her to begin the process of providing temporary fixes for leaks in school before others were able to return.

Hurricane Florence made landfall near Wilmington on Sept. 14 with 90 mph winds, part of a particularly active hurricane season that left a path of destruction from the Gulf Coast to coastal Virginia. Florence was blamed for the deaths of 50 people.

Hurricane Michael made landfall a month later in the Florida Panhandle as an even more powerful storm with 155 mph winds, killing at least 40 people. Curry has scheduled a pastoral visit to the Diocese of the Central Gulf Coast in January.

On Sunday Dec. 9, Curry celebrated the Eucharist with the congregation of St. Philip's Episcopal Church in Southport. Due to damage to the congregation's three main buildings, St. Philip's is currently worshiping every Sunday in a converted bingo hall at the nearby Oak Island Moose Lodge.

In his sermon, the presiding bishop emphasized the importance of remaining hopeful and continuing to dream, even if those dreams feel out of reach during times when everything around us is in disrepair.

Photo/John Bauerlein

Presiding Bishop Michael Curry shares a hug during his pastoral visit to the Diocese of East Carolina.

> **"It's been really interesting. We expected that we'd have a pretty big decrease in attendance, and in fact it's not. It's been growing."**
>
> **— The Rev. Jim Hanisian**

Some members of the congregation were hoping to return to worshipping in the St. Philip's sanctuary by Christmas. The Rev. Jim Hanisian, priest-in-charge, said Easter would be a more likely timeline, but even that is uncertain.

"It's kind of an adventure," Hanisian said, telling the story of someone accidentally turning on the disco ball in the hall and initially struggling to figure out how to turn it off.

"It's been really interesting," he said. "We expected that we'd have a pretty big decrease in attendance, and in fact it's not. It's been growing."

The final gathering was another storytelling session, held at St. James Parish, the oldest church in Wilmington.

The Rev. Jody Greenwood of Church of the Servant Episcopal Church, Wilmington, shared what it has looked like to organize relief and recovery work in the Lower Cape Fear Deanery. Like Dale in New Bern, the relationships Greenwood has built with ministries and relief organizations has helped her connect those with time and resources with those who have needs.

Photo/St. Philip's Episcopal Church

The 175-year-old chapel at St. Philip's Episcopal Church in Southport, N.C., was one of three of the congregation's buildings severely damaged by Hurricane Florence. The congregation is worshipping at a local Moose lodge until repairs are completed.

Lisa Richey, dean of the Lower Cape Fear Deanery, shared some of her personal story and emphasized that there are many people in the deanery who have not yet recovered from Hurricane Matthew in 2016. Two years later, they faced destruction once again during Florence.

The two storms left a path of destruction from the Gulf Coast to coastal Virginia. Episcopal dioceses across the region coordinated their emergency response and relief efforts before, during and immediately after the storms with help from Episcopal Relief & Development.

The Diocese of East Carolina, which covers the coastal third of North Carolina, received a $20,000 emergency grant from Episcopal Relief & Development, and the money was distributed through microgrants to 13 different ministries in the diocese.

Some used their microgrants to purchase gift cards, which enabled families to buy groceries and fill their cars with gas. Others used their grant money to rent U-Hauls so they could more easily distribute food, cleaning products, and other necessities to those in need.

Christ Church in New Bern used a $2,500 grant for emergency housing. The church used a second grant to host a children's program for students initially unable to return to classes while their schools were closed.

The diocese also received support from Episcopalians across the country. It maintained an online "hurricane hub" with emergency information during the storm, and continues to update its relief and recovery page. Bishop Robert Skirving sent a letter to the diocese on Oct. 4 applauding the work of neighbors helping neighbors and urging church members to continue supporting all those affected by Florence.

The letter also noted that, at that time, 24 parishes in the diocese had filed insurance claims due to damage on church properties. ■

Lindsey Harts is communications coordinator for the Diocese of East Carolina. Episcopal News Service Reporter David Paulsen contributed to this report.

NEWS

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miles, my world suddenly expanded to infinity," he said.

"Just think: over 3 billion people, mountains, oceans, deserts, everything I ever knew was behind my thumb," he said. "As I observed the Earth, I realized my home was a small planet. It is just a mere speck in our Milky Way galaxy and lost to oblivion in the universe."

Lovell, who received sustained applause and a standing ovation, said he began to question his own existence, asking, "How do I fit into what I see?"

As a near-capacity crowd gathered in the cathedral, the same waxing crescent moon hung in the sky that people on Earth saw on that Christmas Eve, and he recited verses 1-4 of the first chapter of Genesis, using the King James Version, Lovell read verses 5-8 and Borman read verses 9-10, ending with "and God saw that it was good."

Borman concluded the broadcast by saying, "And from the crew of Apollo 8, we close, with good night, good luck, a Merry Christmas, and God bless all of you, all of you on the good Earth." It lasted just more than three minutes and was heard by an estimated 1 billion people around the world.

The mission commander, Borman, had been scheduled as a lector for the Christmas Day service at his parish, St. Christopher's Episcopal Church in League City, Texas, until NASA moved up the launch date. "We kidded Frank about going to such lengths — all the way to the moon — to get out of … services," the Rev. James Buckner told NBC News in 1999.

Photo/Danielle E. Thomas/Washington National Cathedral

Presiding Bishop Michael Curry speaks about Apollo 8's impact on the world.

Photo/National Air and Space Museum via Twitter

Apollo 8 astronaut James Lovell tells the audience, "to me this would be a mini Lewis and Clark expedition; exploring new territory on the moon's far side."

"Apollo 8 was full of surprises. We knew we were going to the moon. But hearing the story of creation beaming down to us on Christmas Eve, even the steely-eyed flight directors in Mission Control wept," said Stofan. "Some of our bravest pilots and sailors, riding atop repurposed weapons of war, delivered a message of peace for all humankind."

During the cathedral program, images of stars were projected on the vaulted ceiling of the nave and celestial images covered the building's exterior. The Cathedral Choir performed "The Firmament," which matched singing with a recording of the historic broadcast.

An iconic photo

"Earthrise" has been credited for inspiring the beginning of the environmental movement. It was included in Life magazine's 100 Photographs That Changed the World issue. Anders once told NASA that the crew was just starting to go behind the moon when he looked out of his window and "saw all these stars, more stars than you could pick out constellations from." Suddenly, "I don't know who said it, maybe all of us said, 'Oh my God. Look at that!'" as they saw the Earth rise.

The vision set off a scramble to record the scene as the astronauts searched for a color film camera for Anders. The transcript relays the fear of any photographer of missing the shot.

"We came all this way to explore the Moon," Anders once said, "and the most important thing is that we discovered the International Space Station passed overhead during the Dec. 11 event, Stofan noted.

On Christmas Eve 1968, the crew spoke to Earth's inhabitants in what was then the most-watched TV broadcast. Anders began by describing the moon as "a rather foreboding horizon, a rather dark and unappetizing-looking place."

"We are now approaching lunar sunrise," he then said. "And, for all the people back on Earth, the crew of Apollo 8 have a message that we would like to send to you."

Anders began to read the biblical story of creation: "In the beginning, God created the heaven and the earth." After the Earth."

Curry mused on God's reaction to Apollo 8. "I wonder if when they saw it, and then later we saw it, and when they read from Genesis, if God kind of gave a cosmic smile," Curry said. "And I wonder if God said, 'Now y'all see what I see.' God says 'y'all. It's in the King James Version of the Bible."

Curry urged those gathered to rededicate themselves to exploration, and to the preservation of Earth.

"My brothers, my sisters, my siblings, may this commemoration be a moment of re-consecration and dedication to mount on eagles' wings and fly, to explore new worlds, to seek out vast knowledge, and then to mobilize the great knowledge of science and technology and the wisdom of humans to save this oasis, our island home," he said.

Curry then began to sing "He's Got the Whole World in His Hands," the song that had been his refrain during his remarks. The Cathedral choir slowly joined in, and at Curry's urging, many in the gathering began to softly sing along.

Photo/Washington National Cathedral

Artist Rodney Winfield's design for the cathedral's Space Window symbolizes the macrocosm and microcosm of space and shows the minuteness of humanity in God's universe.

Images from space transform the exterior of Washington National Cathedral as hundreds gather to honor the 50th anniversary of the Apollo 8 mission.

Photo/Mary Frances Schjonberg/ENS

A mission with many dimensions

The mission and the Christmas Eve broadcast came at the end of a very trying year for a country that was "shaken by division and civil unrest," Stofan said.

The Tet Offensive in Vietnam at the end of January had shown the falsity of official claims that the war's end was in sight. In April, the Rev. Martin Luther King Jr. was assassinated and riots broke out in more than 100 U.S. cities. Sen. Robert Kennedy was assassinated in June after a presidential campaign appearance. Anti-war protests roiled cities and college campuses.

Officially, the mission was designed to test the Apollo command module systems and evaluate crew performance on a lunar orbiting mission. The crew photographed the lunar surface, obtaining information on topography and landmarks, as well as other scientific information necessary for future Apollo landings.

It also aimed to give the U.S. a huge lead in the space race with the Soviet Union. The desire to beat the Soviets to the moon was precisely what made NASA decide, based on intelligence it received in mid-1968, that the USSR might be able to send astronauts to orbit the moon by the end of that year. In August, NASA turned Apollo 8 from an Earth-orbit test flight into a lunar mission. It was dangerous, and the three astronauts were, among other things, "Cold War warriors," Bridenstine said in a press briefing before the event.

"Their Christmas Eve broadcast reached not just almost all of America, but tens of millions of people behind the Iron Curtain where Christmas was still illegal — and they reached them with a Christmas message," Bridenstine said during the program. "That is an amazing tool of national power, of soft power. The idea that we can change the perception of people all around the world towards the United States with space exploration and discovery and science, and that's what NASA did in the Christmas of 1968."

The NASA administrator said the cathedral program was also about the

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future of America's role in space exploration. He noted that President Donald Trump has told the country it is going back to the moon. "I want to be clear," Bridenstine said. "We're going forward to the moon. We're doing it in a way that has never been done before. This time when we go, we're going to stay."

He described "sustainable, reusable architecture" that will utilize the resources present on the moon, including "hundreds of billions of tons of water ice at the poles of the moon." Astronauts will repeatedly go to the moon with commercial and international partners, he predicted, because that water can sustain them and can be used to produce the rocket fuel needed to get home.

Rather than the "contest of ideas" that marked the first race to the moon, Bridenstine said this future effort's technology will be open-sourced and available to any nation, as well as to companies or private individuals "that also want to plug into that architecture in a commercial way." He also predicted that the moon effort would be replicated "in our journey to Mars."

Photo/NASA

The Apollo 8 astronauts, left to right, James Lovell, William Anders and Frank Borman, stand beside the Apollo Mission Simulator at the Kennedy Space Center.

Cathedral's cosmic connection

The cathedral has long honored space travel. Its so-called "Space Window" contains a 7.18-gram basalt lunar rock from the Sea of Tranquility, donated to the cathedral by the crew of Apollo 11 (Neil Armstrong, Edwin "Buzz" Aldrin and Michael Collins). The window was dedicated on the fifth anniversary of Armstrong and Aldrin's lunar landing, July 21, 1974.

Hollerith, during his opening remarks, said the cathedral is "blessed to be stewards" of the 3.6-billion-year-old rock.

In January 1986, hundreds of mourners spontaneously came to the cathedral and laid wreaths of flowers beneath the window as a memorial to the scientists and technicians that it was designed to honor after the space shuttle Challenger exploded on liftoff. Then, 17 years later, the cathedral hosted the national memorial service for the seven-member crew of space shuttle Columbia, which disintegrated upon re-entry to Earth's atmosphere on Feb. 1, 2003.

Armstrong, the first human to walk on the moon, was honored after his death in 2012 at a public service in the cathedral. ■

OPINION

A sacred light in the darkness

By Rubén G. Mendoza
Religion News Service

On Friday, Dec. 21, nations in the Northern Hemisphere will mark the winter solstice — the shortest day and longest night of the year. For thousands of years people have marked this event with rituals and celebrations to signal the rebirth of the sun and its victory over darkness.

At hundreds, and perhaps thousands, of missions stretching from northern California to Peru, the winter solstice sun triggers an extraordinarily rare and fascinating event — something that I discovered by accident and first documented in one California church nearly 20 years ago.

At dawn, a sunbeam enters each of these churches and bathes an important religious object, altar, crucifix or saint's statue in brilliant light. On the darkest day of the year, these illuminations conveyed to native converts the rebirth of light, life and hope in the coming of the Messiah. Largely unknown for centuries, this recent discovery has sparked international interest in both religious and scientific circles. At missions that are documented illumination sites, congregants and Amerindian descendants now gather to honor the sun in the church on the holiest days of the Catholic liturgy with songs, chants and drumming.

I have since trekked vast stretches of the U.S. Southwest, Mexico and Central America to document astronomically and liturgically significant solar illuminations in mission churches. These events offer us insights into archaeology, cosmology and Spanish colonial history. As our own December holidays approach, they demonstrate the power of our instincts to guide us through the darkness toward the light.

Spreading the Catholic faith

The 21 California missions were established between 1769 and 1823 by Spanish Franciscans, based in Mexico City, to convert Native Americans to Catholicism. Each mission was a self-sufficient settlement with multiple buildings, including living quarters, storerooms, kitchens, workshops and a church. Native converts provided the labor to build each mission complex, supervised by Spanish friars. The friars then conducted masses at the churches for indigenous communities, sometimes in their native languages.

Photo/Rubén G. Mendoza/Ancient Editions/Creative Commons

The 2007 midwinter solstice illumination of the main altar tabernacle of Old Mission San Juan Bautista, Calif.

Spanish friars like Fray Gerónimo Boscana also

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FEATURE

Church's support for historically black universities cited in Saint Augustine's turnaround

By David Paulsen
Episcopal News Service

The Episcopal Church's longtime support for historically black colleges and universities (HBCUs) was credited in a major success story in Raleigh, N.C. Saint Augustine's University, a school the church helped establish more than 150 years ago, announced that its accrediting agency had taken the institution off probation, indicating that it finally had turned the corner on its financial struggles and enrollment decline.

Saint Augustine's President Everett Ward announced the news on Dec. 11.

"By God's grace, I am here today and can report to you that we have saved Saint Augustine's University," Ward said at a news conference, according to the News & Observer newspaper. In a subsequent news release, Ward touted a "turnaround strategy" that drew support from alumni, faculty students and community partners.

Photo/Saint Augustine's via YouTube

Saint Augustine's University President Everett Ward announces that the university has received a 10-year accreditation.

"I would like to especially highlight and thank the Episcopal Church for its unwavering support," Ward said in the news release. "From Presiding Bishop Michael Curry's letters and encouragement, to the church's HBCU committee and their consultants' foundational, administrative, and advisory support, and to all who offered gifts of prayer as well as financial contributions."

The Episcopal Church at one point supported 11 HBCUs in Louisiana, Mississippi, North Carolina, South Carolina, Tennessee, Texas and Virginia. By 1976, only three remained, and in 2013, one of those three, Saint Paul's College in Lawrenceville, Va., also folded.

The two survivors are Saint Augustine's and the much smaller Voorhees College in Denmark, S.C. The Episcopal Church has invested millions of dollars in the two schools in recent years while also providing administrative guidance and fundraising support. Voorhees' accreditation was not in doubt, but in 2016, the Southern Association of Colleges and Schools' accrediting board placed Saint Augustine's on probation because of concerns about its financial security.

When the board met last weekend, the stakes were high for Saint Augustine's. Losing accreditation could have dealt a devastating and potentially fatal blow to the school. Instead, the board decided to renew Saint Augustine's accreditation for 10 years.

"It's really a wonderful time, not only for Saint Aug's, but the church can be very proud that one of its institutions will continue to provide quality education for students and support for their families and continue to exist for the years to come," the Rev. Martini Shaw told ENS after the announcement.

Shaw, who is rector at the African Episcopal Church of St. Thomas in Philadelphia, serves as chair of the HBCU committee of the Episcopal Church's Executive Council. The council established the HBCU committee in 2017 to continue work begun by a task force that formed in 2015.

The church's recent work with HBCUs coincides with an emphasis on racial reconciliation under Curry's leadership, though Episcopal ties to these academic institutions dates back further to the post-Civil War period. Colleges and universities like Saint Augustine's and Voorhees were founded to provide educational opportunities to black men and women who were excluded from white institutions of higher learning because of segregation.

Saint Augustine's was established in 1867 by the Episcopal Church and opened the following January. The school that later would become Voorhees College was founded in 1897, and the Episcopal Church has supported it since 1924.

About 100 such schools are still open today across the United States, accepting students of all races, and some of the financial and enrollment challenges faced by Saint Augustine's and Voorhees are common among other historically black colleges and universities.

The demographics of those colleges' student bodies are changing as well. Pew Research Center reported last year that less than 9 percent of black students attended a historically black college in 2015, down from 17 percent in 1980. Over the same period, historically black colleges and universities have become more racially diverse, with the number of students who aren't black rising from 13 to 17 percent.

Overall enrollment at HBCUs also has been in decline since hitting a peak in 2010, when 327,000 students attended one of the colleges, according to the federal government's National Center for Education Statistics.

The agency's Digest of Education Statistics shows that Voorhees increased its fall enrollment that year, to 752 students, but Saint Augustine's was already beginning its downward trend, falling from the 1,529 students it had enrolled in 2009 to 1,508 students.

The decline at Saint Augustine's gained speed in the first half of this decade, with enrollment dropping to just 810 students by fall 2015. Ward was named president that year, after taking the reins as interim president a year earlier.

In 2016, Saint Augustine's logged its first enrollment increase in seven years, welcoming 944 students that fall. The number grew to 974 in 2017 but dropped sharply to 767 this fall, which the university blames on a negative article on HBCUDigest.com suggesting the university was near closure. By easing the uncertainty around its accreditation, Ward and other university officials see further opportunities to expand enrollment and academic programs.

"The relevancy of any intellectual community has got to be that you grow and advance with the changing society, because we're producing the leaders of society here at Saint Augustine's and subsequently you have to embrace diversity," Ward, a graduate of Saint Augustine's, told ENS in 2017 for a Q&A during the university's 150th anniversary year.

The Episcopal Church's financial support has helped stabilize the two schools and, in Saint Augustine's case, bring it back from the brink of losing accreditation. General Convention has approved about $2 million to support HBCUs with Episcopal ties for the past several triennia. After Saint Paul's closed in 2013, the money was split between the remaining two colleges.

The 2016-2018 budget included $1.1 million for each college, and the same amount has been approved in the 2019-2021 budget. Separately, the church's Development Office has worked to increase awareness of the schools within the church and to help with fundraising.

Saint Augustine's also points to improved internal controls and an increase in alumni giving in allowing the institution to end its 2018 financial year with a surplus. As they build on these successes, university officials will continue to have the support of the Episcopal Church.

"We as the church are going to continue to work very closely with them to assure that they succeed," Shaw said. "We don't want to lose another one of our Episcopal schools." ■

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more than words," adding that Bush's faith was "a deep faith, a generous faith, a simple faith in the best sense of the word.

"He knew and lived Jesus' two greatest commandments, to love God and to love your neighbor," Levenson said. "The president served not just some, but all that God sent his way."

On the day Bush died at age 94, Levenson said the president's friend James Baker stood at the foot of Bush's bed, rubbing his feet for about 30 minutes, causing Bush to smile. Levenson said he had the sense of Jesus' service on Maundy Thursday, washing his friends' feet.

Later, all those who were with Bush knelt and placed their hands on the president and prayed "and then we were silent for a full long measure as this man who changed all of our lives, who changed our nation, who changed our world, left this life for the next," he said.

"It was a beautiful end; it was a beautiful beginning."

The funeral then continued in the traditional structure of the Burial Office, and after Curry, Budde, Hollerith and Levenson performed the commendation, the military pomp began once again. The pallbearers moved into place and lifted Bush's casket as the organ began to play the hymn "For all the saints." The sharp sounds of military commands could be heard over the music as the clergy led the casket from the church.

Bush was buried at the George H.W. Bush Presidential Library in College Station, Texas, next to his wife, who died in April, and their daughter Robin. ■

Photo/ENS screengrab from pool feed

Presiding Bishop Michael Curry, visible in the foreground to the right of the flag, and the Rev. Russell Levenson Jr., rector of President George H.W. Bush's Houston congregation, to the left of the flag, were among those who led President George H.W. Bush's casket out of Washington National Cathedral.

NEWS

As one historically black Episcopal church closes, others face strong headwinds

By Yonat Shimron
Religion News Service

On a chilly December morning, 100 years and one week after its sanctuary opened, All Saints' Episcopal Church in Warrenton, N.C., an African-American congregation with a proud history, was formally closed.

Bishop Samuel Rodman presided over the Eucharistic service in an elementary school a block away from the church, where weekly services ended more than three years ago. Several longtime members returned to read Scriptures and sing hymns. Afterward, the group of 100, including history buffs and well-wishers from North Carolina and Virginia, shared a meal of fried chicken and baked beans.

All Saints is hardly alone among mainline Protestant and Catholic congregations. Faced with dwindling members, crumbling infrastructure and costly maintenance, some 6,000 to 10,000 churches shutter each year, according to one estimate. More closures may be in the offing as surveys point to a decline in church attendance across the country.

But All Saints is an example of an even sharper decline.

Historically African-American churches across the South are fast disappearing. Some were created after the Civil War when slavery was abolished; others in the crucible of Jim Crow, when whites who had long relegated blacks to the church balcony no longer tolerated them at all.

The Episcopal Diocese of North Carolina once boasted 60 such churches. Today, a mere dozen are left and, of those, only three have full-time clergy. Epiphany Episcopal Church in Rocky Mount, N.C., closed two years ago; at least one other is in danger of shuttering next year.

Of course, African-Americans have been welcome in all Episcopal churches for years — and the presiding bishop of the Episcopal Church, Michael Curry, who served as bishop of the North Carolina diocese before leading the 1.7 million-member denomination, is black.

At the Dec. 8 closing service, there was a recognition that it was in part progress in race relations that has doomed African-American congregations. But there was as much tribute paid to the sacrificial work of so many pioneering black Episcopalians.

"Jesus provided those saints with the fortitude … to say, 'We belong to the house of God,'" said the Rev. Nita Byrd, chaplain at St. Augustine's University in Raleigh, who delivered the closing service sermon. "We are not aliens in the Christian family. We are not second-class citizens in the Episcopal Church."

As North Carolina wrestles with the aftermath of Jim Crow — the University of North Carolina's trustees have recommended that a racially motivated Confederate statue torn down by protesters in August be housed in a $5.3 million museum to be built on campus — there is a sense that these churches slowly fading from view also have a story to tell about the racial history of the region.

Photo/Yonat Shimron/RNS

Acolytes and a crucifer from St. Ambrose Episcopal Church stand outside All Saints' Episcopal Church in Warrenton, N.C., during a closing service on Dec. 8, 2018.

Members of All Saints hope that story is preserved.

"Not only was All Saints important to us, but to the community and the nation," said Wilhelmina Ratliff, a middle school teacher who is one of the last six remaining members.

The church was formed in 1892 — about five years before Jim Crow made it nearly impossible for blacks to remain in white churches. It was not the first black Episcopal church in North Carolina. That honor belongs to St. Cyprian's in New Bern, which got its start in 1866 and remains open.

Photo/Yonat Shimron/RNS

Bishop Samuel Rodman of the Episcopal Diocese of North Carolina stands outside All Saints' Episcopal Church in Warrenton, N.C., at the start of a closing service on Dec. 8, 2018.

But All Saints in particular benefited from, and nourished, a succession of notable black priests. Among them was Henry Beard Delany, who would become one of the first two black bishops consecrated in the Episcopal Church, in 1918. (His daughters, Sarah and A. Elizabeth Delany, told about their civil rights struggles in their 1993 best-selling book, "Having Our Say.")

Henry Delany, who was born into slavery in Georgia, preached at All Saints for more than two decades, traveling an hour by train from Raleigh one Sunday a month.

His daughter Sarah recalled: "When Papa became a bishop, he occasionally was encouraged by a friendly conductor to take the Pullman instead of the Jim Crow car. But Papa would say no. He would be amiable about it, though. He would say to the conductor, 'That's OK. I want to ride with my people, see how they're doing.' And he'd go sit in the Jim Crow car."

Delany helped establish a parochial school at All Saints where young African-Americans were educated. Later he worked to raise money for a new church building. Delany wanted the new building, which eventually rose on the corner of West Franklin and Front streets, to honor a late black Episcopal priest with roots in Warren County.

That priest, Thomas White Cain, was the first black Episcopalian to serve alongside white priests with equal voice and vote in the national legislative body of the Episcopal Church, the General Conference. (He died in the 1900 hurricane that destroyed Galveston Island, Texas.)

Delany was able to raise $1,500 for the All Saints building, which would also be known as the Thomas White Cain Memorial. Of that, $500 was pledged from among black Episcopalians across the country.

Delany and Cain are only two of a dozen trailblazing black Episcopal priests who came through All Saints or the larger Warren County, whose population to this day is estimated to be 51 percent African-American.

"These were people of remarkable achievement working under very difficult circumstances, underpaid, underresourced, willing to travel great distances to minister to far-flung congregations," said the Rev. Brooks Graebner, the diocesan historian.

Though never large, the congregation was a vital part of the community. In later years, it operated a center for special-needs children in its basement. Scholarships from the church sent local students to college. The rectory next door was used as a shelter for victims of domestic violence.

"It was a vibrant place, full of energy and enthusiasm," said Robin Williams, a retired juvenile court counselor who attended the church for 25 years.

The Rev. Jemonde Taylor, rector of St. Ambrose Episcopal Church in Raleigh, another historically black church, worries about what the decline of churches like All Saints might mean for recruiting black clergy.

"More than 75 percent of black priests come out of historically black congregations," said Taylor. "Those black churches lift people up for ministry. So if we don't have black churches, will we no longer have black priests?"

The Episcopal Church does not keep records on race, but a Pew Research survey found that about 4 percent of Episcopal Church members identify as black.

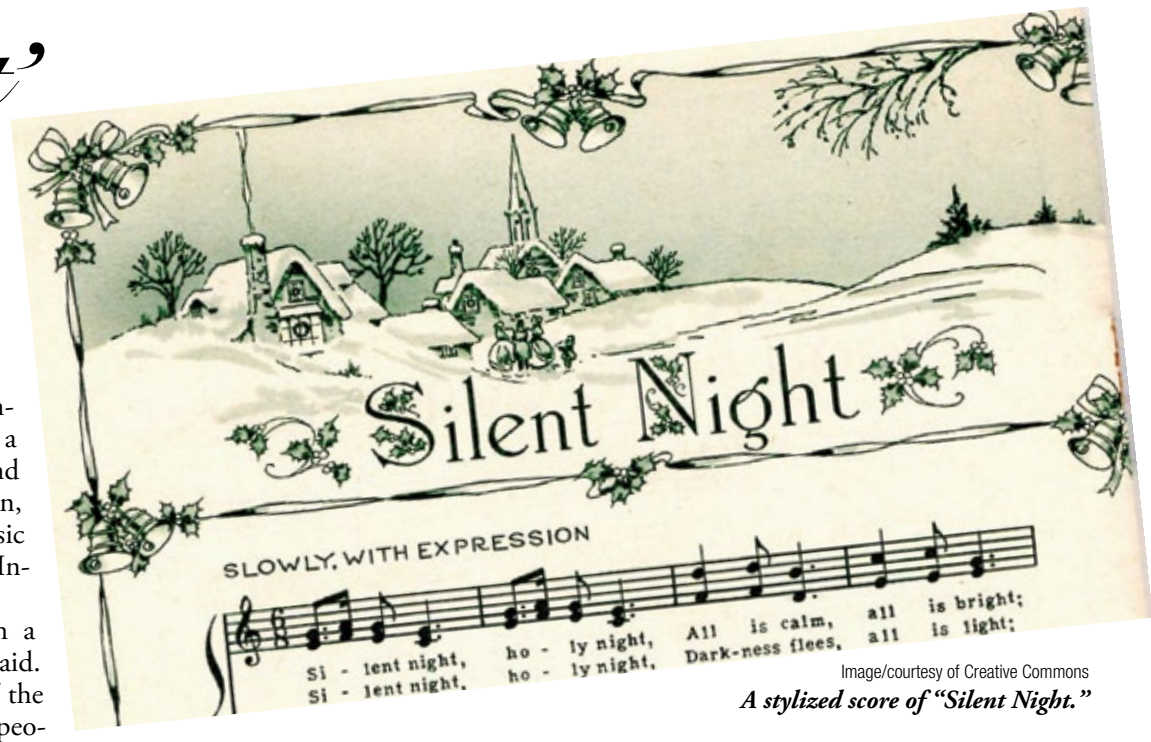
The remaining members of All Saints now attend other Episcopal churches nearby. But they are not quite ready to abandon their old home. A group is exploring the possibility of reopening the closed structure to house some kind of ministry for the community, perhaps in partnership with another group. First, it needs some repairs, which is why the closing service was held at the elementary school.

"We have hope," said Ratliff. "We know this is not it. Everybody's coming together on the same page. What will the rest of the story be? We don't know yet." ■

National reporter Adelle M. Banks contributed to this story.

FAITH AND THE ARTS

Why 'Silent Night' endures 200 years later



Image/courtesy of Creative Commons

A stylized score of "Silent Night."

By Emily McFarlan Miller
Religion News Service

It was the night before Christmas, and not a creature was stirring.

Except for the mice at St. Nicholas Church in Oberndorf, Austria, who were busy chewing through the bellows of the organ.

Their handiwork left the church's priest, the Rev. Joseph Mohr, scrambling to find music for a Christmas Eve service. So he dashed off a few lines about the night Jesus was born and asked composer Franz Xaver Gruber to set the lyrics to a simple tune, played on guitar.

Image/courtesy of Creative Commons

Franz Gruber, the composer of "Silent Night," in a portrait by Sebastian Stief.

On that night 200 years ago, the two stood in front of the church's nativity set and performed a song that began with words "Stille Nacht, heilige Nacht."

Better known as "Silent Night," the song would go on to become one of the season's most beloved Christmas carols, translated into more than 300 languages and sung all over the world by artists from Bing Crosby to Beyoncé.

At least, that's how the story goes.

Legends aside, the song endures in part because it brings a sense of calm to the hustle and bustle of the Christmas season, said Brian Lee, head of the music department at Moody Bible Institute in Chicago.

"We seem to live in such a noisy chapter in history," Lee said. "I think even just the title of the song in and of itself speaks to people."

In Austria, where "Silent Night" has been declared part of the nation's cultural heritage, the country's tourism office has planned a number of events to mark the 200th anniversary, including concerts and exhibits. The events included a concert late last month at Trinity Church, a historic Episcopal church in New York, where it is believed the song first was performed in the United States.

The Moody institute also planned its annual Candlelight Carols program around the song — linking it to the famed Christmas Eve truce during World War I. During that brief respite from fighting, British and German troops set down their weapons and sang "Silent Night," among other carols.

And modern hymn writers Keith and Kristyn Getty are making the song part of their Irish Christmas Tour, with stops at Carnegie Hall in New York and the Kennedy Center in Washington D.C.

Singing carols is as old as Christmas itself, Keith Getty noted in an email to Religion News Service. The story of Christmas and the birth of Jesus, he said, begins with Mary, Zechariah, Simeon and angelic choirs all bursting into songs.

But "Silent Night" is unique, he said.

Photo/courtesy of Creative Commons

A stained-glass window of Joseph Mohr, the author of the "Silent Night" poem, at the Silent Night Chapel in Oberndorf, Austria.

"Its simplicity makes it easily accessible even for kids — both lyric and melody are haunting, unique and yet painfully simple," Getty said. "If only we had the potion to reinvent that!"

Part of the song's genius is its simplicity, said Michael Hawn, a global hymnologist and professor emeritus of church music at Perkins School of Theology in Dallas. The lyrics and music paint a scene, and it "doesn't try to do too much," he said.

Most of the story about its origins is true. But the details don't quite match the legend.

While "Silent Night" may have been performed for the first time 200 years ago, Mohr had penned the poem a bit earlier, amid a trying time in Austria's history at the end of the Napoleonic wars.

It's true the church's organ wasn't working properly, though Hawn called the tale about the mice "a little bit over the top." Using a guitar to accompany the song turned out to be "providential," he said.

On the guitar, "Silent Night" sounds like a lullaby, according to the hymnologist. Its gentle 6/8 time signature mimics a mother rocking her child — appropriate alongside lyrics about the baby Jesus sleeping in heavenly peace.

After its debut, it spread as a folk song, said Paul Westermeyer, professor emeritus of church music at Luther Seminary in St. Paul, Minn. The Rainer family singers, a traveling singing group from Austria, then brought it to America, performing the song in 1839 at Trinity Church.

Twenty years later, a priest at Trinity, John Freeman Young, published the first English translation of three verses of "Silent Night." Young had been ordained at St. John's Episcopal Church in Tallahassee, Fla., and later became bishop of Florida.

Betsy Calhoun, director of music at St. John's, said the church wasn't aware of its ties to the origins of "Silent Night" until this past year, when a musicologist researching the 200th anniversary of the song reached out to the church. The church also has ties to another famed Christmas carol: it's home to the organ on which James L. Pierpont composed "Jingle Bells."

St. John's, like many other churches, has ended its Christmas Eve services for years with "Silent Night," sung *a cappella* by candlelight.

For countless churchgoers, that moment of quiet reflection captures what Christmas is all about — a moment amid the noise of the holidays when all is calm and bright. It's a moment to gather with family and friends to remember a holy infant so tender and mild.

"It's just a very hushed, calm, just unified spirit that kind of takes over, and it is very moving," Calhoun said. ■

Photo/Dmitri Lovetsky/AP

A festal glow

Young women sing carols as they hold candles to celebrate St. Lucia's Day in the Evangelical Lutheran Church of Saint Katarina in St. Petersburg, Russia, on Dec. 13. The church was built in the 19th century by and for Swedish expatriates in St. Petersburg, and it is usually called the Swedish church. During the Soviet era the church was used as a sports hall.

FAITH AND THE ARTS

An organ crescendo 10 years in the making

By Kirk Petersen
The Living Church

After more than a decade of planning, fundraising and construction, a prominent New York parish has introduced a pipe organ for the ages.

More than 1,100 people packed the pews at St. Thomas Church Fifth Ave. for the Oct. 5 dedication recital of the new $11 million Miller-Scott organ. They heard more than 90 minutes of organ works from an instrument that combines an ancient invention with sophisticated modern electronics.

St. Thomas occupies a unique spot among places for Anglican sacred music. In addition to a large church community, the parish also is home to the St. Thomas Choir School, America's only church-affiliated choir boarding school, which the New York Times likened to Westminster Abbey in London. St. Thomas was founded in 1823, and the current building opened in 1913.

Each year, 25 to 30 boys in grades 3 through 8 study, work and live at the school. They perform in the St. Thomas Choir of Men and Boys, which periodically tours in Europe and throughout the United States.

With the new organ, "we now have the instrument to match the quality of the music and the world-class choir we have here," said Ben Sheen, associate organist.

The church voted in 2006 to launch a capital campaign to restore stained-glass windows and acquire a new organ. The midtown church had not conducted a capital campaign since the 1930s, said Ann Kaplan, the church's director of development. More than 1200 donors contributed close to $9 million toward the $11 million project.

The instrument is designated as the Irene D. and William R. Miller Chancel Organ in Memory of John Scott. Miller is a former vestry member and retired pharmaceutical executive; Scott, at one time the organist at St. Paul's Cathedral, London, was the church's organist from 2004 until his sudden death in 2015, at the age of 59.

Scott was succeeded by Daniel Hyde, a Cambridge-trained Briton. The church recently announced that Jeremy Filsell will succeed Hyde in the spring of 2019, when Hyde returns to King's College in Cambridge.

The organ is large but its 7069 pipes are not record-breaking. The Boardwalk Hall Auditorium in Atlantic City has more than 33,000 pipes, but most of them have been out of commission for decades. The Wanamaker Grand Court Organ in Philadelphia is the largest functioning organ, with 28,750 pipes.

More than 100 draw knobs control the various ranks of pipes on the Miller-Scott organ console.

"You have string stops, which are the softer stops on the organ, and the flutey stops, the reed stops, and then there's one entire division of the organ that is dedicated to orchestral sounds," Sheen said. "So we have an oboe, a *cor anglais*, a clarinet, a French horn, so it can replicate the full symphony orchestra just from one person playing it."

Sophisticated electronics enable one musician to control all those stops while also playing multiple keyboards. Sheen said that many combinations of stops are programmed to respond at the touch of a button. He likened the organist's console to an airline pilot's cockpit. "You essentially control the entire orchestra from that one seat."

Photo/Benjamin K. Hoskins

The new Miller-Scott organ at St. Thomas Church Fifth Avenue, New York.

Pipe organs have inspired the phrase "pulling out all the stops," meaning to use every available resource. Sheen said that as a practical matter organists never pull out all the stops.

The organ was built by Dobson Pipe Organ Builders of Lake City, Iowa. The $11 million paid for more than the organ — a variety of factors drove the rest of the cost, starting with structural work to the church. Steel girders had to be installed to support the weight of the instrument and acoustical changes were made to accommodate the new pipes.

The former organ had all its pipes on one side of the chancel, but the new organ required a new case on the other side. An ornately carved wooden case was designed and built to complement the existing one and the interior of the church.

"This is an instrument that will, hopefully, last without needing any renovations for 50 to 100 years," Sheen said in explaining the total cost.

To appreciate the quality of the instrument, there's no substitute for hearing it under the 95-foot vaulted ceiling of the Fifth Ave. church. But the church website offers an audio webcast of the dedication recital, and even the tinny speakers of a computer can provide an aural glimpse of the range and complexity of the organ's sound.

Kaplan said the New York location also added to the expense. Dobson workers from Iowa typically were housed in the choir school, which helped with the cost, but travel costs were significant.

Hyde, who played at the dedication in October, will play the second of six recitals in the church's Grand Organ series on Dec. 22. Sheen and three other award-winning organists will play at the remaining recitals, which run through May. ■

Photos/Ira Lippke

Ornate carvings on the organ cabinet include a dedication to John Scott, far left, a reminder to silence cell phones, left, and a tribute to the four writers of the gospels, below.

FEATURE

St. Jude's known as 'the little church with the big heart' on Hawaii's Big Island

By Lynette Wilson
Episcopal News Service

The lay leadership at St. Jude's Episcopal Church in Ocean View, Hawaii, has turned the small church in the rural, underserved district of Ka'u on the island of Hawaii, or the Big Island, into a beacon of light and hope; it lives up to its reputation as "the little church with the big heart."

Under the leadership of bishop's warden Cordelia Burt and a small group of lay members serving on the bishop's committee, St. Jude's is more than a congregation. It's a family, they say, attracting people from all walks of life, from the richest to the poorest, from those living on estates to those living in tents.

Photos/Lynette Wilson/ENS

From left, Cindy Cutts, Cordelia Burt and Karen Pucci are three of St. Jude's lay leaders.

"Everybody comes in, everybody comes in. Until you do something completely stupid, you are in," said Karen Pucci, a member of St. Jude's.

"And there are those that do stupid things," said Cindy Cutts, who handles the congregation's communications.

"But it takes quite a bit," added Pucci, the women bursting into laughter. "You really do need to get the red flag out there and chase the bull."

"Me being the bull," said Burt.

Hawaii's Big Island covers just more than 5,000 square miles and is home to some 200,000 people, many of them veterans and many of them living well below the poverty line, according to U.S. census data. The island is home to full- and part-time residents, and others living off the grid in substandard housing or even tents, St. Jude's leaders said.

It's the off-the-grid folks and the hungry, homeless, technologically underserved, lost, lonely and forgotten who've inspired much of the congregation's social outreach, including its shower ministry, named for a now-deceased transsexual member of the parish, Shiela, who suddenly stopped attending Sunday services.

"She wasn't coming to church for a while and we knew she was sick, and her partner said she's not coming to church because she doesn't have any way to take a shower," said Burt. "We'd been looking into building showers and doing this, and so I found out that they [Shiela and her partner] had no way of getting water. Their landlord didn't give them a hose. The landlord said if they didn't buy cigarettes, they'd have enough money for a hose.

"Long story short, when we learned that Shiela wasn't coming to church because she couldn't take a shower, we went and bought a hose, and I took a bar of soap over and gave it to them. And for as long as Shiela could make it, she came to church every Sunday, and the sad part of the story is we didn't get the shower up and running until after Shiela died."

"We decided that we would name the showers 'Shiela's Showers' because she would have loved to have had hot water," added Cutts.

Here's how it works. On Saturday mornings, volunteers arrive at 8 a.m. and put on the coffee and the soup. At 9 a.m., shower patrons beginning signing up to use one of the two showers. Sign-up ends at 12:30 p.m., and the volunteers stay until the last patron showers. Before St. Jude's installed a second shower, it might be 4 p.m. by the time the last patron showered. Now, with two showers, it's more like 12:30 p.m. or 1 p.m., the leaders said.

"One of our first patrons that used the showers, when she came out of the shower, we have two people — male and female — sitting out there dispensing the shampoo, the conditioner, the body wash, fresh towels, we supply all of that, and she was crying and Beverly [the volunteer] thought, 'Oh my God, was the water too hot?' And she said, 'No, this is the first time in six months that I've had hot water on my head.'"

Additional social services St. Jude's provides to the community include hosting the county's senior nutrition program, a food pantry, free veterinary services, free Wi-Fi and electronics charging stations, a computer lab, and space for 12-step addiction recovery programs and for community organizations.

St. Jude's is one of five Episcopal parishes on the Big Island, the largest of the archipelago's eight main islands. In May, Kilauea volcano's eruption and the lava river that followed destroyed hundreds of homes and displaced many other families on the Big Island. Holy Apostles in Hilo, the island's largest and only incorporated city, continues its long-term response to the eruption. ■

Bishop's warden Cordelia Burt opens the door to one of Shiela's Showers at St. Jude's Episcopal Church in Ocean View, Hawaii.

Church suspends statute of limitations for sexual misconduct allegations

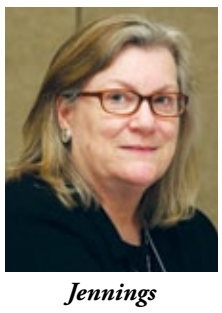
Office of Public Affairs

Presiding Bishop Michael Curry and President of the House of Deputies the Rev. Gay Clark Jennings issued a letter to the church concerning allegations of clergy sexual misconduct. The letter is here in full:

Dear People of God in the Episcopal Church:

Nearly a year ago, we issued a call for the church to examine its history and come to a fuller understanding of how we have handled or mishandled cases of sexual harassment, exploitation and abuse through the years. In particular, we asked to hear voices from the wider church at General Convention so that deputies and bishops might consider both how to atone for the church's past and shape a more just future. As followers of Jesus of Nazareth, as children of God with all people, we could do no less, and we must do more.

Curry



Jennings

In July, General Convention considered 26 resolutions and one memorial addressing issues the #MeToo movement has brought to light, many of them developed by the House of Deputies Special Committee on Sexual Harassment and Exploitation. One of these resolutions, Resolution D034, suspends for three years the canon (church law) that places a time limit on initiating proceedings in cases of clergy sexual misconduct against adults. There is no time limit on reporting clergy sexual misconduct against children and youth under age 21.

As a result of this resolution, from January 1, 2019 until December 31, 2021, those who wish to bring a case of sexual misconduct against a member of the clergy will be able to do so, regardless of how long ago the alleged misconduct occurred. Allegations of misconduct can be made to the intake officer in the diocese where the alleged misconduct occurred, or, if the allegation is against a bishop, to the Office of Pastoral Development. You can learn how to reach the intake officer in a diocese by checking its website or calling the bishop's office.

We hope that this temporary suspension of the statute of limitations will be one way for the church to come to terms with cases of sexual misconduct in our collective past. Between now and General Convention in 2021, laypeople, clergy and bishops appointed to several task forces created by the 2018 General Convention will be working on other ways of addressing these issues, including a process to help the church engage in truth-telling, confession, and reconciliation regarding our history of gender-based discrimination, harassment and violence.

We are grateful to the many deputies, bishops and other volunteers across the church whose careful work before, during, and after General Convention is helping our church move closer to the day when, having repented of our sins and amended our common life, we may be restored in love, grace and trust with each other through our Savior Jesus Christ.

Faithfully,

The Most Rev. Michael B. Curry
Presiding Bishop and Primate

The Rev. Gay Clark Jennings
President, House of Deputies

OPINION

SOLSTICE continued from page 9

documented indigenous cosmologies and beliefs. Boscana's account of his time as a friar describes California Indians' belief in a supreme deity who was known to the peoples of Mission San Juan Capistrano as Chinigchinich or Quaoar.

As a culture hero, Indian converts identified Chinigchinich with Jesus during the Mission period. His appearance among Takic-speaking peoples coincides with the death of Wiyot, the primeval tyrant of the first peoples, whose murder introduced death into the world. And it was the creator of night who conjured the first tribes and languages, and in so doing, gave birth to the world of light and life.

Hunting and gathering peoples and farmers throughout the Americas recorded the transit of the solstice sun in both rock art and legend. California Indians counted the phases of the moon and the dawning of both the equinox and solstice suns in order to anticipate seasonally available wild plants and animals. For agricultural peoples, counting days between the solstice and equinox was all-important to scheduling the planting and harvesting of crops. In this way, the light of the sun was identified with plant growth, the creator and thereby the giver of life.

Discovering illuminations

I first witnessed an illumination in the church at Mission San Juan Bautista, which straddles the great San Andreas Fault and was founded in 1797. The mission is also located a half-hour drive from the high-tech centers of San Jose and the Silicon Valley. Fittingly, visiting the Old Mission on a fourth grade field trip many years earlier sparked my interest in archaeology and the history and heritage of my American Indian forebears.

On Dec. 12, 1997, the parish priest at San Juan Bautista informed me that he had observed a spectacular solar illumination of a portion of the main altar in the mission church. A group of pilgrims observing the Feast Day of Our Lady of Guadalupe had asked to be admitted to the church early that morning. When the pastor entered the sanctuary, he saw an intense shaft of light traversing the length of the church and illuminating the east half of the altar. I was intrigued, but at the time I was studying the mission's architectural history and assumed that this episode was unrelated to my work. After all, I thought, windows project light into the darkened sanctuaries of the church throughout the year.

Photo/Rubén G. Mendoza/Creative Commons

Schematic of the four successive solar illuminations of the saints of the main altar screen of Mission San Miguel Arcángel, Calif. The illumination begins at the left with the Oct. 4 illumination of Saint Francis on his feast day.

One year later, I returned to San Juan Bautista on the same day, again early in the morning. An intensely brilliant shaft of light entered the church through a window at the center of the facade and reached to the altar, illuminating a banner depicting the Virgin of Guadalupe on her feast day in an unusual rectangle of light. As I stood in the shaft of light and looked back at the sun framed at the epicenter of the window, I couldn't help but feel what many describe when, in the course of a near death experience, they see the light of the great beyond.

Only afterward did I connect this experience to the church's unusual orientation, on a bearing of 122 degrees east of north — three degrees offset from the mission quadrangle's otherwise square footprint. Documentation in subsequent years made it clear that the building's positioning was not random. The Mutsun Indians of the mission had once revered and feared the dawning of the winter solstice sun. At this time, they and other groups held ceremonies that were intended to make possible the resurrection of the dying winter sun.

Several years later, while I was working on an archaeological investigation at Mission San Carlos Borromeo in Carmel, I realized that the church at this site also was skewed off kilter from the square quadrangle around it — in this case, about 12 degrees. I eventually confirmed that the church was aligned to illuminate during the midsummer solstice, which occurs on June 21.

Next I initiated a statewide survey of the California mission sites. The first steps were to review the floor plans of the latest church structures on record, analyze historic maps and conduct field surveys of all 21 missions to identify trajectories of light at each site. Next we established the azimuth so as to determine whether each church building was oriented toward astronomically significant events, using sunrise and sunset data.

This process revealed that 14 of the 21 California missions were sited to produce illuminations on solstices or equinoxes. We also showed that the missions of San Miguel Arcángel and San José were oriented to illuminate on the Catholic feast days of Saint Francis of Assisi (Oct. 4) and Saint Joseph (March 19), respectively.

Soon thereafter, I found that 18 of the 22 mission churches of New Mexico were oriented to the all-important

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NEWS

Curry named religion newsmaker of the year

By *Episcopal Journal*

Episcopal Presiding Bishop Michael Curry was chosen Religion Newsmaker of the Year by members of the Religion News Association in its annual Top 10 Religion Stories and Newsmaker of the Year poll.

Curry's riveting sermon at this year's British royal wedding "stole the show," according to the British press, and raised his profile as a progressive religious voice. Following Curry in second and third place on the newsmaker list were evangelist Billy Graham, who died at age 99, and Pittsburgh Rabbi Jeffrey Myers, who emerged as a voice of lament and peace after the Tree of Life synagogue shooting.

Religion News Association (RNA) members have voted in the annual poll for decades. RNA is an international journalism association for journalists who write about religion in the news media. It offers training and tools to help reporters cover religion with balance, accuracy and insight.

Top five religion stories of the year

1. A Pennsylvania grand jury reports 301 Catholic priests were accused of sexually abusing at least 1,000 minors. Other state & U.S. probes begin.

2. In the deadliest anti-Semitic attack in U.S history, a gunman kills 11 worshipers at Tree of Life synagogue in Pittsburgh, home to three congregations. The attack comes amid surveys showing growing anti-Semitism in West and decreasing awareness of Holocaust.

3. The Rev. Billy Graham, the globe-trotting evangelist who preached to hundreds of millions, shaped modern evangelicalism and served as unofficial chaplain to presidents and the nation, dies at 99.

4. Religious leaders oppose the Trump administration on immigrant family-separation policies and decision to turn away asylum seekers at the border.

5. The Supreme Court rules in favor of Jack Phillips, a Colorado baker who refused — on religious grounds — to bake a cake for a same-sex wedding. A new legal case against Phillips is pending. ■

SOLSTICE continued from page 15

vernal or autumnal equinox, used by the Pueblo Indians to signal the agricultural season. My research now spans the American hemisphere, and recent findings by associates have extended the count of confirmed sites as far south as Lima, Peru. To date, I have identified some 60 illumination sites throughout the western United States, Mexico and South America.

Melding light with faith

It is striking to see how Franciscans were able to site and design structures that would produce illuminations, but an even more interesting question is why they did so. Amerindians, who previously worshiped the sun, identified Jesus with the sun. The friars reinforced this idea via teachings about the cristo helios, or "solar Christ" of early Roman Christianity.

Anthropologist Louise Burkhart's studies affirm the presence of the "Solar Christ" in indigenous understandings of Franciscan teachings. This conflation of indigenous cosmologies with the teachings of the early Church readily enabled the Franciscans to convert followers across the Americas. Moreover, calibrations of the movable feast days of Easter and Holy Week were anchored to the Hebrew Passover, or the crescent new moon closest to the vernal equinox. Proper observance of Easter and Christ's martyrdom therefore depended on the Hebrew count of days, which was identified with both the vernal equinox and the solstice calendar.

Orienting mission churches to produce illuminations on the holiest days of the Catholic calendar gave native converts the sense that Jesus was manifest in the divine light. When the sun was positioned to shine on the church altar, neophytes saw its rays illuminate the ornately gilded tabernacle container, where Catholics believe that bread and wine are transformed into the body and blood of Christ. In effect, they beheld the apparition of the Solar Christ.

The winter solstice, coinciding with both the ancient Roman festival of Sol Invictus (unconquered sun) and the Christian birth of Christ, heralded the shortest and darkest time of the year. For the California Indian, it presaged fears of the impending death of the sun. At no time was the sun in the church more powerful than on that day each year, when the birth of Christ signaled the birth of hope and the coming of new light into the world. ■

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