Episcopal
JOURNAL

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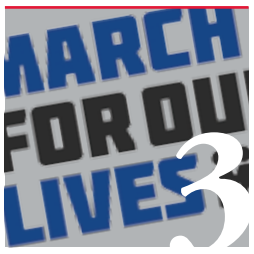

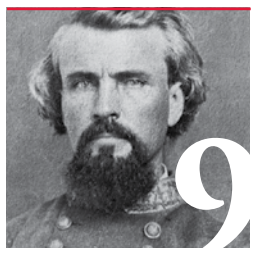

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Easter icon: He is risen!

Photo/Caroline Furlong

***Episcopal artist Caroline Furlong based this icon depicting the encounter between Mary Magdalene and Jesus shortly after his resurrection on the account in the 20th chapter of John's Gospel. "Mary Magdalene has historically been unjustly maligned as a sinful woman by the Western church," the Houston artist said. "In the Orthodox Church, she is known as 'the apostle to the apostles' because she was the first to carry the news of the Resurrection to Jesus' followers." More of Furlong's icon art can be seen at* carolinefurlong.com.**

Church events support students marching against gun violence

By David Paulsen and Mary Frances Schjonberg
Episcopal News Service

Episcopalians gathered in Springfield, Mass., outside the headquarters of Smith & Wesson Corp. to rally behind protest signs asking the gun manufacturer to "Stop Selling Assault Weapons." Episcopalians in Trenton, N.J., participated in a 12-hour "Day of Lamentation" over gun violence. Students of Episcopal schools from New York to Florida walked out of class to participate in a nationwide call to action on gun violence.

Student-led demonstrations around the country and the dozens of separate events at Episcopal cathedrals and churches coincided March 14 to mark one month since a deadly high school shooting in Parkland, Fla. Though independently organized, the varied events — on what was billed by youth organizers as National Walkout Day — underscored a common push for political action to address mass shootings in the United States.

"This is the only nation in the world that has a gun death problem at the rate we do," New Jersey Bishop Chip Stokes said in his sermon at Eucharist held at Trinity Episcopal Cathedral in Trenton. "Those of us who oppose it need to get in the face of the problem and cry out in the name of the Lord."

Such calls have been growing since 17 students and educators were shot and killed Feb. 14 at Marjory Stoneman Douglas High School in Parkland. A 19-year-old former student was charged in the massacre.

The series of Episcopal events on March 14, some coordinated by Bishops United Against Gun Violence, included services, prayers, the tolling of bells and, in some cases, a more direct form of advocacy.

An estimated hundred or more demonstrators, led by young people and interfaith leaders including the bishops of the dioceses of Western

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Immigrants' ally for 30 years, Jubilee minister helps more than 1,000 become citizens

By David Paulsen
Episcopal News Service

Linda Barber is not an immigration lawyer, but she knows one if you need one. She's not a priest or a deacon and doesn't prefer being called minister, either, though Jubilee minister is her official title at Trinity Episcopal Church in Aurora, Ill., west of Chicago.

What Barber has become over more than 30 years of service is an immigration-law expert and the one-woman team behind Trinity Amnesty Center, a ministry that has guided more than 1,000 newly minted U.S. citizens and helped an untold number of other immigrants and their families with everything from paperwork to preparing for their naturalization tests.

"If you need your fingerprints, I can do them right now," Barber, 75, said from behind her desk at the church office.

Federal immigration policy is a hot-button issue, with the Trump administration calling for greater immigration restrictions, but the heated political rhetoric in Washington, D.C., hasn't reached Barber's cramped but inviting 10-by-12-foot office. A depiction of Africa in wood and an animal carving from Macedonia, gifts from two of Barber's past clients, rest on a shelf next to a card that reads "Thou Shalt Not Hassle."

Photo/David Paulsen/ENS

Linda Barber has been helping people with their immigration paperwork for more than 30 years, providing a guiding hand to at least 1,084 newly minted U.S. citizens.

In her office, the only judgment clients are likely to face is on the merits of their immigration cases. Either they have a case, or they don't. And if they do, Barber is their devoted ally through every step of the process.

"Welcome the stranger" is how Barber describes the Christian purpose behind Trinity Amnesty Center.

"Jesus was an immigrant," she said. "I wonder if he had a visa to cross countries. I don't think so."

Immigration assistance is just one of the ministries Trinity Episcopal Church offers as a Jubilee Center of the Episcopal Church since 1987. Trinity recently received a $750 Jubilee Ministries grant to support those efforts, which include a weekly soup kitchen meal, opportunities for court-ordered community service and a work program for individuals with developmental disabilities.

That level of activity may surprise anyone who only visits Trinity on Sunday morning,

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ANGLICAN DIGEST

Anglican Digest is a column of news and features from churches in the Anglican Communion.

Rwanda shuts churches, alleging safety issues

A move by Rwanda to shut down more than 700 churches in its capital city, allegedly for building safety, hygiene and noise violations, is prompting accusations that the government of President Paul Kagame is trampling on religious freedom.

On March 6, police detained six pastors, accusing them of conspiring to rally other clergy in defiance of the government's shutdown orders.

Anastase Shyaka, the chief executive of the Rwanda Governance Board, which ordered the closures, said the action was about "honoring God."

"It means that if we are Christians, where we worship must meet standards showing respect for God," Shyaka told The New Times, a Rwandan English-language daily.

Most of the 714 shuttered sites were small Pentecostal churches, much like the ones that have multiplied across Africa in recent decades.

There are more than 1,300 churches in Kigali, Rwanda's capital, a city of nearly 1.2 million people.

David Himbara, a Rwandan international development advocate based in Canada, called the government's justification for the closures bogus and said the "real reason … is fear and paranoia."

"Kagame tightly controls the media, political parties and civil society at large," Himbara wrote on Medium. "The churches constituted the last open space. Kagame knows this. The localized community of churches offered a slight space for daring to imagine and talk about change."

Photo/Scott Chacon/Creative Commons

Pews in an empty church near Kigali, Rwanda.

Himbara argued that hygiene problems are widespread in Kigali, which does not have a sewage system or treatment plant.

— Religion News Service

Two primates elected

Tamihere

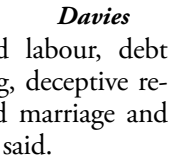
The two existing primates of the Anglican Church of Aotearoa, New Zealand and Polynesia (ANZP) have announced that the province's third primate will be Bishop Don Tamihere, currently bishop of Tairawhiti. The Church of ANZP is unique in the Anglican Communion in having three primates of the whole province, but with special responsibility for the three Tikangas, or geographical and cultural streams: Polynesia, Maori and *Pākehā* (people of European descent). Tamihere will succeed the late Archbishop Brown Turei, who died in January 2017 at the age of 92, two months ahead of his planned retirement.

Bishop Maimbo Mndolwa of the Diocese of Tanga has been elected as the next archbishop and primate of the Anglican Church of Tanzania. He will succeed Archbishop Jacob Erasto Chimeledya, who will retire in May. When he is enthroned on May 20, he will become the seventh primate of Tanzania.

— Anglican Communion News Service

Archbishop supports anti-trafficking bill

Archbishop of Sydney Glenn Davies welcomed draft legislation to make it easier for police and prosecution authorities to crack down on modern slavery in New South Wales. Davies was in the public gallery of the New South Wales Legislative Council March 8 as Paul Green introduced his Modern Slavery Bill.



Davies

"Human trafficking should be abolished in all its forms from our world, along with other practices of enslavement, such as servitude, forced labour, debt bondage, organ trafficking, deceptive recruiting, as well as forced marriage and childhood brides," Davies said.

Besides its overriding aim of combating modern slavery, the bill aims to provide assistance and support for victims, create an anti-slavery commissioner, mandate reporting risks of modern slavery occurring in the supply chains of some types of companies, make forced marriage of a child and certain slavery and slavery-like conduct legal offenses in New South Wales and making it an offense to "administer a digital platform for the purpose of child abuse material."

"Unfortunately," Green said, "the data does not reflect the true levels of modern slavery due to its very nature of being a clandestine activity that hides in the shadow of our communities on a daily basis. However, according to the Global Slavery Index 2016, it is estimated that 45.8 million people worldwide, and more than 4,000 people in Australia, are victims of some form of slavery. Drugs are sold once and used, but people can be sold time and time again."

"According to the United Nations 2016 Global Report on Trafficking in Persons, 79 percent of human trafficking is for sexual exploitation, and the victims are predominantly women and girls. Children account for 20 percent of trafficked victims worldwide. That is approximately 9.16 million children."

The debate on the bill was adjourned.

Human trafficking and modern slavery have been discussed at recent meetings of both the Anglican Consultative Council and the primates.

— Anglican Communion News Service

Violence rises in Congo

Three new military bases established by the United Nations' peace-keeping force in the democratic Republic of Congo in the Djugu territory of Ituri province have failed to stem the increasing tide of violence. At the end of February, 33 people were killed in an attack on the village of Maze.

"It is becoming difficult to understand the main reason of the killings in Djugu," said Bishop of Bogo Mugenyi William Bahemuka. "The situation appears to be beyond control as time goes on. The provincial and national governments keep assuring people that that situation will come to an end soon. Community leaders and politicians from the two communities claim to dissociate an ethnic conflict on what is happening in Djugu.

"The village of Maze and a few surrounding villages were attacked — and this is happening after the deployment of police, the army and United Nations' peace-keeping forces in the area."

Dozens of people have been killed in increasing levels of violence in the Ituri province since January. Homes have been burnt, many people have been forcibly displaced, and women and girls have been subjected to sexual violence.

Photo/Michael Ali / MONUSCO

U.N. peacekeepers in Congo partner with a local women's organization to provide hygiene and medical and nutritional care.

At the end of February, the Democratic Republic of Congo and South Sudan were the subject of an international ecumenical prayer focus, after a call for a day of prayer and fasting by Pope Francis was endorsed by leaders of other churches, including a number of senior Anglican bishops and archbishops.

— Anglican Communion News Service

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FROM THE EDITOR'S DESK

It's striking how many articles in this month's Journal relate to those marginalized in society, both historically and now. It's not too much of a stretch to see how this relates to the story of Easter.

Consider the word "marginalized" itself. Merriam Webster says it relates to "marginalia," notes made in the white borders around a main block of text. What a powerful visual metaphor — the solid words in the middle of a page are the power center and the notes surround it, hovering, commenting, even trying to get in.

The first use of "marginalized" in a social-justice context occurred in 1968 in a Los Angeles Times story: "[T]he Negro was kept aside, marginalized, thus composing in its large majority the chronically poor."

It's hard to conceive of a more marginalized population in the United States than African-American slaves. The Journal's center pages highlight two remarkable stories of Episcopal institutions attempting to tell the truth about their relationship to slavery and, in doing so, begin to make amends.

Fast forward to today. The movie "Black Panther" owes some of its huge popularity to black audiences' desire to see themselves — at long last — as superheroes: strong, complex, powerful characters at the center of a big-budget action film, not on the margins.

Immigrants, being newcomers, begin the next chapter of their lives negotiating their relationship with the main society. The measure of any society is how its most vulnerable citizens are treated. Episcopal artist Betsy Ashton turned to painting portraits of immigrants out of a passionate dismay at their demonization in the current political climate.

In another context, Jubilee minister Linda Barber at a Chicago Episcopal church for years has quietly made it her Christian business to help people new to America's shores.

How does all this relate to Easter? Jesus constantly ministered to society's outcasts. The story of Holy Week tells of a man who starts at the center of a triumphal procession, then finds himself cast to the margins. We know, however, the hope that lies at the end of that road, a hope offered to all who are marginalized — the victory of Easter. ■

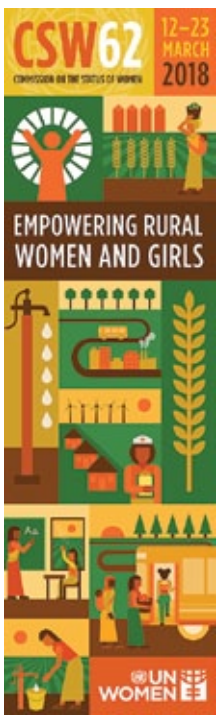
NEWS

Lead the leaders of the world, Curry tells attendees at U.N. women's meeting

By Mary Frances Schjonberg
Episcopal News Service

The Episcopal and Anglican women attending the 62nd session of the United Nations Commission on the Status of Women have some gospel work to do.

That was Presiding Bishop Michael Curry's message to a packed Eucharist on March 12 in the Chapel of Christ the Lord at the Episcopal Church Center in New York, a few blocks from the United Nations building. The service, held on the opening day of the session that was to last until March 23, was celebrated in thanksgiving for the gathering of women from all over the world.



The 17 Episcopal delegates came from Venezuela to Puerto Rico, Tennessee to Washington state. They were diverse in age, culture, geography, race and experience. They gathered with 20 women from 16 Anglican Communion provinces; the Mothers' Union sent seven women from five provinces.

"You have come here this week in the midst of what is the nightmare of our world," Curry said during his sermon. "You have come to the seat of the nations of the earth to encourage our leaders and to show them how to end the nightmare and realize the dream for all of us."

It is "gospel work" to help reconfigure the nightmare of the world into the dream that God intends for us, he said. It is work that began with Mary, "Jesus' mama, so follow her footsteps."

The meeting centered on the challenges and opportunities in achieving gender equality and the empowerment of rural women and girls.

Representatives of member states, U.N. entities and ECOSOC-accredited non-governmental organizations from all regions of the world, including the Anglican Communion and the Episcopal Church, attended. ECOSOC stands for the U.N. Economic and Social Council. Curry submitted a statement to the UNCSW, based on General Convention resolutions. Episcopal delegates looked to that statement and its priorities in shaping their advocacy as they shared their own stories, reflections and concerns that furthered the cause.

In his statement, the presiding bishop said many rural women and girls were leaders in their communities and that "evolving social norms, expanding human rights and increasing numbers of women working outside the home have enhanced their opportunities." Their leadership is based on "their knowledge of their land, environment, community and culture," he wrote. However, they still face "challenges, inequalities and beliefs that impede them from further empowering themselves."

Curry's statement called on the U.N. community and civil society to remedy this situation by:

- Prioritizing resources and programs for marginalized groups of rural women and girls;
- Extending access to basic resources and services to rural areas;
- Addressing environmental concerns and extending land rights; and
- Promoting gender-equality education and practices and eradicating gender-based violence.

Photo/Mary Frances Schjonberg/Episcopal News Service

Presiding Bishop Michael Curry stands with, from left, Lay Assistant Nadyne Duverseau, Montana Bishop for Native American Ministries Carol Gallagher and the Rev. Carey Connors of Fredericksburg, Va., amid the congregation celebrating the opening Eucharist on March 12 for the UNCSW gathering. Youth participating in the session wrote the prayers for the service.

The meeting included crafting a final version of "agreed conclusions" by the end of the session or soon thereafter. If the conclusions are approved, the U.N. General Assembly expects member states to bring those priorities home to implement them in the following years.

The Mothers' Union's attendance at the meeting "is important as we represent the voices of more than 4 million globally," Bev Julien, the organization's chief executive, said recently.

"Isolation and loneliness are challenges in both the global north and south, and the issues of women's economic empowerment are even more acute in rural than urban communities," she said. The Mothers' Union delegates "have direct experience of the issues and will be advocating nationally to urge these to be addressed."

At the end of his sermon, Curry called on the delegations to advocate for God's dream.

"My dear sisters, we believe that God has something better in store for this world," he said. "It is your job this week to help the leaders of the nations find out what it is and make this world better. So, go, go do your work. Don't get weary." ■

House of Bishops pledges advocacy to end gun violence, sexual violence

By Mary Frances Schjonberg
Episcopal News Service

The House of Bishops said March 7 that its members would support two major social movements, one to end gun violence and the other to end sexual harassment and violence and gender bias.

The bishops said they "wholeheartedly support and join" young people who survived the deadly Feb. 14 school shooting in Parkland, Fla., in their call for an end to gun violence.

In the other statement, they said they knew the "church has fallen short of our responsibility to listen and respond" to "the reality of sexual harassment, gender-based violence and the cultural stronghold of gender bias and inequity." The bishops "invite the church to a deeper examination of what God intends for our relationships," including at the July meeting of General Convention.

Both statements were "accepted" during their annual spring retreat, March 6-9 at Camp Allen in Navasota, Texas, according to the church's Office of Public Affairs.

Students are 'choosing life'

"At this critical moment, young people of our nation are inviting us to turn away from the nightmare of gun violence to the dream of choosing life," the bishops said in their statement on the aftermath of the Parkland shooting.

MARCH FOR OUR LIVES

The statement endorsed the goals of the student organizers of the March For Our Lives, scheduled for March 24 in Washington, D.C. Companion marches were planned in many U.S. cities and towns, and many Episcopal bishops voiced their support.

The bishops also pledged to observe "a day of Lament and Action" on March 14, one month after the shooting at Marjory Stoneman Douglas High School, which

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AROUND THE CHURCH

Diocese of Pittsburgh, Anglican parishes settle property disputes

The Episcopal Diocese of Pittsburgh and the congregations of the Anglican Diocese of Pittsburgh, collectively referred to as the "Parishes," announced that they had amicably reached an agreement resolving disputed questions over the ownership and use of the church property that have lingered since the congregations voted to leave the Episcopal Church in October 2008.

The comprehensive agreement was reached with the assistance of two mediators, David L. McClenahan of the law firm K&L Gates LLP, and Mark Nordenberg, chancellor emeritus of the University of Pittsburgh and former dean of its law school, following years of confidential negotiations and intense consideration by representatives of all parties.

The agreement defines the respective rights, obligations and expectations of the parties relative to the historic real and personal property of each of the Parishes.

"Even though the issues resolved here originated through division and were often the cause of great pain, we know that as Christians we are called to be ambassadors for Christ and ministers of reconciliation, first among ourselves, and then with the larger world," said Bishop Dorsey McConnell of the Episcopal diocese. "The Episcopal diocese and the Parishes have come to recognize that our mutual desire to live according to the gospel and to share with others the good news of Jesus Christ far outweighs any differences we have with each other, and this agreement frees us to carry out that mission as we believe God is calling us to do."

Bishop James Hobby of the Anglican Diocese of Pittsburgh issued a statement in support of the parishes entering into this agreement, saying, "I feel that the settlement is quite remarkable, given the litigious culture in which we live. Clearly, hard work and difficult conversations were part of the negotiations. But biblical principles and a shared commitment to follow Christ provided a healthy context for pursuing the discussions with mutual respect and understanding.

— Episcopal Diocese of Pittsburgh

Episcopal Japanese internment survivors' stories shown in videos

The Diocese of Olympia launched a video series that collects the first-person stories of Episcopalians who were among the Japanese-Americans sent to internment camps during a period of heightened xenophobia and racism at the start of World War II.

Photo/Diocese of Olympia

St. Peter's Episcopal Church in Seattle, founded in 1908 by a group of Japanese Anglicans, was forced to close in 1942 because of the Japanese internment during World War II.

The federal policy was enacted by President Franklin Roosevelt by executive order on Feb. 19, 1942, and it uprooted 117,000 people of Japanese descent, about two-thirds of them U.S. citizens. Men, women and children were relocated out of what the government defined as the Pacific military zone along the West Coast to inland "assembly centers" and eventually relocation camps.

The forced exodus from Seattle prompted the temporary closure of St. Peter's Episcopal Church, a historically Japanese-American congregation that 75 years later helped spearhead the video series, "Justice Interrupted." Diocesan videographers recorded hours of footage, interviewing 17 people, to produce five 10- to 15-minute videos, the first of which was released Feb. 22.

The Japanese internment camps are a significant part of the history of the Pacific Northwest because of its large Asian-American population, and the passage of time has not minimized the injustice, said Olympia Bishop Greg Rickel. "It's easy to sweep it under the rug and think that we've moved on," he said, but "we're living through a time where we're, I believe, making some of the same errors in judgment of people based on some of our fears."

He pointed to Trump administration policies seeking to curtail immigration and refugee resettlement. The Diocese of Olympia joined the American Civil Liberties Union in filing a lawsuit in February 2017 opposing President Donald Trump's ban on refugees from seven majority Muslim nations.

Such federal policies may not rise to the level of the Japanese internment, Rickel said, "but we're certainly headed down some of the same roads we went down." Some of the internment camp survivors expressed such fears in their interviews for "Justice Interrupted."

— Episcopal News Service

Women's caucus, but not its work, closes

The Episcopal Women's Caucus announced on March 8 that it would close as an organization, although the work of "justice for women — lay and ordained — can continue to be pursued in the Church in new ways with new goals." Its work will be acknowledged in a Eucharist, followed by a time of fellowship, at General Convention in July.

Founded in 1971, the caucus sought through political means "to gain for women the right and privilege to be ordained to the priesthood and consecrated to the episcopate," it said in a press release. "The Episcopal Women's Caucus has accomplished this.

"Obviously, the work of gaining equity and justice for women is far from complete," the release added, noting the need for more female clergy in leadership positions; issues of sexual harassment, misconduct and abuse in the church; and the vulnerability to violence and discrimination of gender nonconforming people.

"Now more than ever the church needs to continue to be a change agent within our congregations and out into our communities to 'strive for justice and peace and [respect for] the dignity of every human being,'" the caucus said. "This work — ranging from fighting for salary equity for women to ending sexual abuse and harassment to seeking racial reconciliation to caring for the most vulnerable among us — needs to be accomplished in new ways, ways which include the kinds of political gains made through the caucus, but achieved through other strategies and with voices of people throughout the whole church."

— Episcopal Women's Caucus

EPISCOPAL LIVES

Camp director honored for fire response

Katie Evenbeck, executive director of the Diocese of California's camp and retreat center, St. Dorothy's Rest, received the Presidential Service Award on Jan. 11 for her response to the community by welcoming and hosting disaster-relief staff during the fires in October in Sonoma County.

Evenbeck with Higbie

Carl Higbie, chief of external affairs director for the Corporation for National and Community Service, presented Evanbeck with the award, the highest civilian honor bestowed by the president of the United States. The President's Volunteer Service Award is a national volunteer awards program, encouraging citizens to live a life of service.

"This award really recognizes someone doing something great. And I've never seen one approved faster," Higbie said. "I saw what St. Dorothy's was doing. They were putting up and feeding close to one hundred [corporation service] members at times who were working on the fires, sometimes driving one to two hours to get back here covered in soot and were being fed and put up by Katie. And then they got up the next morning to go back and do this seven days a week."

— Diocese of California

Consortium names director

Joseph R. Swimmer, major gift officer at Washington National Cathedral in Washington, D.C., will become executive director of the Consortium of Endowed Episcopal Parishes starting on April 1.

Swimmer

Swimmer's most recent work has been renewing the Washington cathedral's congregation, while securing funding for earthquake repair. An active citizen and leader in the Cherokee Nation, he practiced law in San Francisco and spent many years in the corporate world. Eventually, he spearheaded fundraising for legal nonprofits in the Bay Area. In his new job, he will be based in Washington, D.C.

— Consortium of Endowed Episcopal Parishes

Dean appointed for Boston cathedral

Diocese of Massachusetts Bishop Alan M. Gates has appointed the Rev. Amy Ebeling McCreath dean of the Cathedral Church of St. Paul in downtown Boston.

Ebeling

McCreath will be the ninth dean of St. Paul, established as the cathedral church of the diocese in 1912. She succeeds former dean John P. Streit Jr., who retired last February after a 21-year tenure. McCreath is the first woman to serve as cathedral dean in the Diocese of Massachusetts. She begins in her new position on April 22.

McCreath is the rector of the Church of the Good Shepherd in Watertown, Mass., where she has served for eight years. Previously she was co-chaplain of the Lutheran Episcopal Ministry at the Massachusetts Institute of Technology in Cambridge and was coordinator of the Technology and Culture Forum there.

She has been a member of the diocesan standing committee and a co-convener of the 16-church Alewife Deanery. She is a member of the Council of Associated Parishes for Liturgy and Mission and has served the wider Episcopal Church on subcommittees of the Standing Commission on Liturgy and Music, the planning team for the 2013 GenX clergy gathering and as coordinator for ministry in higher education for the Episcopal Church's New England dioceses. She recently served as director of contextual education at Episcopal Divinity School in Cambridge.

— Diocese of Massachusetts

AROUND THE CHURCH

Deputies committee on sexual harassment appointed

House of Deputies President the Rev. Gay Clark Jennings has appointed a House of Deputies special committee to draft legislation on sexual harassment and exploitation for this summer's General Convention.

"In January, Presiding Bishop Curry and I called the church to examine its history and end the systemic sexism, misogyny and misuse of power that plague the church just as they corrupt our culture, institutions and governments," Jennings said. "We asked Episcopalians to consider what roles each of us is called to play in the church's collective repentance."

Since then, scores of women from across the church have contacted her. "On Facebook, via e-mail, by phone and in person, women have been in touch to share their stories and let me know that they want to be part of changing the church's culture on these issues," Jennings said. "I am delighted to harness their energy by appointing this committee."

The group, which Jennings will chair, is divided into five sub-committees that arose from ideas that women contributed to a Facebook discussion on the House of Deputies page in late January. One group will draft legislation concerning theology and language, while others will address issues of structural equity including pay and benefits, the Title IV disciplinary process and social justice for women. In response to the presiding officers' call for the church to examine its history, a sub-committee will draft legislation proposing the creation of a truth and reconciliation process.

A roster of the special committee, created under Article X of the House of Deputies Rules of Order, is available on the House of Deputies website.

Jennings says she was particularly pleased that so many younger women and women of color agreed to serve on the committees. Forty percent of the committee's members and four of its five sub-committee chairs are younger than 50, and more than 30 percent are women of color.

"Women of my generation were the first women to be ordained in the Episcopal Church, and both we and the laywomen in our congregations have experienced sexual exploitation and harassment for decades," said Jennings, who was ordained a priest in 1979. "Our younger sisters, both lay and ordained, have no shortage of #metoo stories, but they have come of age in a world and a church that are much more aware of the intersections of sexism and racism and much better educated about gender identity and expression. It's energizing to hear their ideas and perspectives, and their determination to change our church for the better is contagious."

Some of the committee members, along with other volunteers, are writing reflections on the #metoo movement that the House of Deputies website is publishing during Lent.

Jennings said she expected the committee to finish drafting legislation in early June.

— Episcopal Church Office of Public Affairs

Investment Committee adopts guidelines

The Executive Council Investment Committee (ECIC) recently adopted guidelines in response to a resolution from the 2015 General Convention, Call for Investing in Clean and Renewable Energy, regarding Episcopal Church investments in fossil fuels.

ECIC has agreed that the committee:

• Will no longer permit further direct purchases of fossil fuel holdings in the portfolio;

• Will work with its consultant to screen out all securities within separately managed accounts where there are fossil fuel reserves and where a company reports that more than 10 percent of its revenue is derived from oil and gas;

• Will convert any commingled/mutual fund holding to a socially responsible version, if available and financially prudent;

• Will monitor fund holdings for compliance with investment consulting firm Mercer Investment Consulting LLC's environmental, social and governance (ESG) ratings, allowing ESG1 and ESG2 without hesitation; ESG3 with approval; and ESG4 only if justifiable after thorough review; and

• Will continue to review investment managers that provide ESG and alternative energy themes.

ECIC noted that the $454 million portfolio on Dec. 31, 2017 had less than a 3.5 percent total exposure to fossil fuel reserves and had ESG criteria ratings superior to peer investors as confirmed by Mercer.

"We will endeavor to minimize the financial impact to the portfolio as we implement this work," said committee Chair Mark Kerr.

Margareth Crosnier de Bellaistre, director of banking and investment management, said, "Maintaining a modest exposure to fossil fuel companies will enable the church to continue its active role of corporate engagement and proxy voting along with the Executive Council Committee on Corporate Social Responsibility."

— Episcopal Church Office of Public Affairs

Scholarships available

Applications are being accepted for educational scholarships from the Episcopal Church for the 2018-2019 academic year.

The scholarships are derived from annual income of designated trust funds established by donors through bequests to the Episcopal Church. The scholarships mostly assist students who are enrolled in theological education and training. They are available for educational training for ethnic communities, children of missionaries, bishops and clergy, and other groups covering a wide range of eligibility. Amounts vary according to the availability of payouts from the funds. The maximum award is $10,000.

The lists of trust funds and scholarships as well as key information are available at **www.episcopalchurch.org/page/2018-2019-episcopal-church-education-scholarships**.

For information, contact Ann Hercules, associate for grants and scholarships, at ahercules@episcopalchurch.org.

— Episcopal Church Public Affairs Office

Presiding bishop announces churchwide appeal

Presiding Bishop Michael Curry announced via letter the launch of the Episcopal 2018 Annual Appeal, a new churchwide appeal to assist the costs of churchwide ministries, and called upon Episcopalians to participate.

"I write to share some of the ways we, together as the Episcopal Church, witness to the loving, liberating, and life-giving way of Jesus Christ, and to ask for your financial support through this first annual appeal," he wrote.

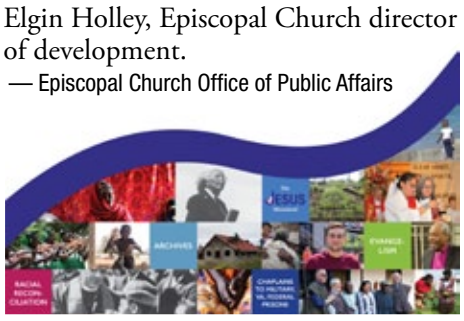
Ministries providing vital services to the churchwide membership include evangelism and reconciliation, and the Office of Armed Forces and Federal Ministries, Curry said. "These are all critical expressions of The Jesus Movement. Today I am asking that you also give or increase your support for ministries that serve the whole church."

This is the first Episcopal churchwide appeal. Donations can be made by calling 212-716-6002 or texting APPEAL to 51555.

"When we work together, we can better proclaim the gospel in communities across the church, support our chaplains in federal ministries and advocate in Washington. D.C., for justice and peace," House of Deputies President the Rev. Gay Clark Jennings said. "I invite all Episcopalians to join me in supporting this annual appeal that will make more ministry possible across the Episcopal Church."

For more information, contact Tara Elgin Holley, Episcopal Church director of development.

— Episcopal Church Office of Public Affairs



FEATURE

JUBILEE continued from page 1

when the average attendance at worship services barely tops 30 people, mostly skewing older Barber said. She is a lifelong member of the congregation who was baptized at the church.

"We do a lot, for the small group that we have," she said.

Pinned to a bulletin board above Barber's desk is a certificate of appreciation from the Diocese of Chicago in recognition of her immigration assistance. The certificate is from 1988, when Barber was still relatively new to this work. She jokingly curses the church's former rector for being absent one day in 1987, leaving Barber, as parish administrator at the time, to answer a knock at the door from the immigrant who would become her first client.

It was a Canadian woman who hadn't realized she wasn't a U.S. citizen until she needed to verify her status in order to apply to a college in Chicago. Or was it that the woman was about to get married? Barber struggled to summon a precise memory of that first case, but its legacy is clear. Three decades later, Barber gladly opens the door of the church offices to welcome anyone looking for help with his or her own immigration status or a relative's case.

Aurora is Illinois' second-largest city, with about 200,000 residents, about 50,000 of them foreign-born, mostly from Latin America and Asia. Its downtown suffered an economic decline toward the end of the last century, but there are signs of growth again, said the Rev. Denzil Luckritz, Trinity's rector since 2015. The Jubilee Center has helped in that rebound, thanks in large part to Barber's work, Luckritz said. "She's made a difference in people's lives."

On the day Episcopal News Service visited Barber's office, she had a 10 a.m. appointment with Charlie Whitney, a 30-year-old from the nearby city of Ottawa, Ill., who was applying to bring his fiancée to the United States from the Philippines.

"What have you got for me? Do you have the form?" Barber asked Whitney.

"I do," he said, handing her a stack of paperwork bound neatly together. This was a Form I-129F, a "petition for alien fiancée," and it provided information about how Whitney met 28-year-old Rhea Tago while vacationing in the Philippines in 2017, how they fell in love and kept in constant long-distance communication, and how he returned to the country and proposed to her in January.

Barber typically scans a form like this for potential red flags that she thinks immigration authorities, looking to identify marriage fraud, will use as reasons for denying legal residency. Whitney's documentation was thorough, including screenshots of some of his love-struck Facebook Messenger conversations with Tago.

"I'm impressed. You have done your homework," Barber said.

She told him his next step was to be patient. She also advised that money orders and cashier's checks were processed faster than personal checks. Whitney asked if security concerns had slowed down the process, but Barber said she wasn't aware of any that would affect this petition.

If all goes smoothly, Tago might be able to join Whitney in months, Barber said. The priest at Whitney's Roman Catholic parish already had agreed to marry the couple within three months of Tago's arrival, as required by immigration law.

"If we've got the rest of our lives together, what's another couple months, if needed?" Whitney asked. He gave Barber a $20 bill as a donation for her help.

> **"I've met so many people from all over the world, and from some countries I didn't even know existed."**
>
> **– Linda Barber**

Photo/David Paulsen/ENS

Macedonia natives Goran Petkoski, center, and his mother, Spasija Petkoska, right, meet with Linda Barber to ask for her help in applying for U.S. citizenship for Petkoska.

Dating from Reagan-era amnesty

Barber is a part-time paid employee of the church and typically works Wednesdays and Thursdays. Some weeks no one stops by needing immigration help. Other times, her clients visit after learning about her services while attending the free lunches she helps organize on Thursdays. She also gets referrals, as was the case with Whitney.

His grandmother had struck up a conversation with Barber while the two women were working together on floral arrangements for an Aurora flower shop on Valentine's Day. Add part-time florist to her resume.

She's also a bass-drum player in a local steel-drum band and officiates at swim and diving meets, activities that got her out of the house 25 years ago after her daughter left home for college. Her work with the Trinity Amnesty Center did the same.

The ministry's roots date back to the Reagan era, when passage of the bipartisan Immigration Reform and Control Act in 1986 created an amnesty program for millions of immigrants. That initially drove some of Barber's first clients to seek her help with paperwork. She responded by learning everything she could about immigration law and is still visibly energized by the work.

"I've met so many people from all over the world, and from some countries I didn't even know existed," she said.

Barber still regularly attends classes offered by the U.S. Citizenship and Immigration Services, or USCIS, office in Chicago to stay up to date on the latest changes in the law. Back in Aurora, she maintains a modest library of immigration resources in her office.

One cabinet in the corner is stocked with brochures on civics lessons for the naturalization test. She also has flash cards if clients want to practice. Lined up on a shelf behind her are copies of "Welcome to the United States: A Guide for New Immigrants." And if she needs to verify a detail, she'll either pull up the Department of Homeland Security website on her computer or grab a green binder with "USCIS" written on its spine and flip through page after page of forms, fee schedules and instructions.

Barber says she knows more about immigration law than some lawyers. But but if she can't answer a client's questions or thinks legal assistance is necessary, she hands the case off to an Aurora attorney, Patrick Kinnally, who has worked with Trinity Amnesty Center nearly from the start.

"She's committed to trying to help people," Kinnally told ENS. "The community and Trinity are lucky to have her doing what she does."

Most of the cases Barber sees involve Form N-400 (application for U.S. citizenship) or Form I-130 (green-card application for the direct relative of a U.S. citizen or legal resident). She has attended more than her share of citizenship ceremonies, and a quick check of her computer records shows at least 1,084 people are U.S. citizens today thanks partly to Trinity Amnesty Center.

Some stories stick with her, like the man with Down's syndrome who she taught to write "I want to be a U.S. citizen" over and over. She accompanied him on his trip to Chicago for his naturalization interview and remembers him pointing to the Statue of Liberty in a picture on the wall.

"It still chokes me up," she said.

He is now a citizen. Another client asked Barber to help bring her parents to the United States. When the parents became citizens, Barber helped them apply to bring their other children. And when one of those children got married, Barber was invited to the wedding.

"They're good, good people," Barber said. Despite sometimes having to wait a dozen or more years, they're "doing it the right way."

Her "right way" evokes a federal process, one that ensures immigrants maintain legal status. The wrong way, whatever it may be, has no corresponding form in the green binder.

Greater restrictions loom

Another legal path to citizenship is known as the diversity visa lottery, which encourages immigration from certain countries underrepresented among the 1 million or so people who legally move to the United States each year. President Donald Trump has targeted the program, saying in November, "We need to get rid of the lottery program as soon as possible."

Goran Petkoski, a native of Macedonia, came to the United States in 2002 with a diversity visa. His English is precise despite his lingering accent, and his enthusiasm for America was obvious during a visit to Barber's office.

"It's not just that you can accomplish all of your dreams, a better life. I learned the fact that we have the best education," said Petkoski, who earned a bachelor's degree in finance from Northern Illinois University in 2016 and is training to be a grocery-store manager.

Petkoski, 41, became a U.S. citizen in 2007 and later applied to bring his mother, Spasija Petkoska, to this country with him. She moved here in 2012 and now sat in the chair across from Barber's desk, her hands folded in her lap. Her grasp of English was minimal, but Petkoska, 61, has been a permanent resident for more than five years, making her eligible to apply for citizenship.

"Why do you want to become an American citizen?" Barber asked.

Petkoska's son translated for her. "She wants to be a citizen because she lives here, and she respects everything that the country does for her," he said.

Barber outlined what to expect: At her citizenship interview, Petkoska will need to explain in at least simple terms what it means to be a U.S. citizen. But before then, she will need to get two passport-style photos, and she will need money, because the government charges $725 for the application. During their next visit, Barber will help them fill out Form N-400.

"I've helped a lot of people from Macedonia," she said before sending mother and son on their way.

For adults who came to the United States illegally, Barber withholds condemnation. They simply aren't the clients she typically assists at Trinity Amnesty Center. Under current law, no amount of paperwork is likely to help, she said. "There's no way they can become legal at this point." ■

Artist Betsy Ashton is moving in a new direction as she paints a series of portraits of immigrants. Page 12.

NEWS

GUNS continued from page 1

Massachusetts and Massachusetts, stood for an hour outside the Smith & Wesson facility in Springfield. "Protect Children Not Guns," read one sign.

Smith & Wesson made the weapons used in mass shootings in recent years in Parkland, in Aurora, Colo., and in San Bernardino, Calif.

At the end of the hour, the student leaders delivered three demands to the guards at the Smith & Wesson visitor center. They said they hoped for a meeting with company leaders within the next 30 days. They are asking the manufacturer to stop selling military-grade weapons to the civilian population and to create a community-compensation fund to help bear the costs related to gun violence.

Photo/Palmer Trinity via Twitter

Students at Palmer Trinity in Miami, Fla., participate in the national protest.

Such events shared the spotlight with the day's widespread classroom walkouts and student-led demonstrations against gun violence. At the Episcopal-rooted Grace Church School in New York, students in grades 4 through 12 linked hands to surround the school. They placed flowers in memory of a school aide who was shot and killed near the school on Nov. 1 last year.

Students at Holy Trinity Episcopal Academy in Melbourne, Fla., gathered in the morning at the school's flagpole to pray for gun-violence victims and sign a banner of support for Marjory Stoneman Douglas High School.

A student demonstration also was held at Palmer Trinity School in Miami.

The events at Episcopal cathedrals and churches ranged from gatherings for silent reflection to full-day activities underscoring the call to action. Here are some examples:

Bell tolls: St. Paul's Episcopal Church in Grinnell, Iowa; Grace Church in Sheldon, Vt.; and Trinity Episcopal Cathedral in Portland, Ore., were among the churches tolling their bells 17 times, once for each of the Parkland victims.

Services of Lamentation: These services, encouraged by Bishops United Against Gun Violence, were scheduled in numerous dioceses throughout the day, both at cathedrals and in individual congregations. Bishops United posted information about some of the services. Participants included St. James Cathedral in Chicago; the Cathedral Church of St. Paul in Des Moines, Iowa; St. Luke's Cathedral in Portland, Me.; Trinity Cathedral in Sacramento, Calif.; Christ Church Cathedral, Springfield, Mass.; and All Saints' Cathedral in Milwaukee.

Photo/Art Chang, Chang.NYC

Students at Grace Church School participate in a demonstration outside the school in New York on March 14 as part of a nationwide day of student-led activities calling for action against gun violence. The flowers are in memory of a school aide who was shot and killed near the school last year.

Day of Lamentation: The Diocese of New Jersey's Day of Prayer, Lamentation, Fasting and Silence began at 6:30 a.m. at the cathedral in Trenton and lasted until 6:30 p.m. The service included reading the names of gunshot fatalities. The Diocese of Vermont began at 9 a.m. at the Cathedral Church of St. Paul in Burlington with a full schedule of activities, including music and readings, as well as public prayers offered each hour on the hour.

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.

The Diocese of Connecticut's schedule included Eucharist at Christ Church Cathedral in Hartford followed by a lunch where community leaders led conversations about gun violence. A vigil was held at the end of the day. ■

HOUSE OF BISHOPS continued from page 3

killed 17 students and adults.

The bishops said that, while they supported the students' efforts, "we acknowledge that black and brown youth have continuously challenged our country to address the gun violence that they and their communities are experiencing. We repent that, as bishops, we have failed to heed their call."

Some commentators have said that the media and the public in general have appeared to be more sympathetic to calls to end gun violence that have come from predominantly white communities. Others have expressed concern about potential racial bias among teachers who might be armed, as President Donald Trump and others have proposed.

The bishops said they "recommit to working for safe gun legislation as our church has called for in multiple General Convention resolutions."

The Episcopal Church bishops acted a day after receiving a letter from Episcopalians Philip and April Schentrup, the parents of 16-year-old Carmen Schentrup, who was killed in the Parkland shooting. The Schentrups attend St. Mary Magdalene Episcopal Church in nearby Coral Springs, Fla., where their daughter was a youth group leader. Southeast Florida Bishop Peter Eaton shared the letter with the bishops.

"In our attempt to heal from despair and grief, we are compelled to try and make the world a better place for our two remaining children and for all children," the parents told the bishops, imploring them, "as leaders of Christ's church, to address the issue of gun violence head-on.

"We ask that you make this a priority for the church and to leave little ambiguity as to 'what would Jesus do.' The scourge of gun violence on this nation, especially with military assault rifles, is a problem of our own creation and counter to God's desire for peace and love. As a nation we can solve this problem, and, as leaders of the church in our country, we ask that you help lead the way. In Christ's name, we beg you to take action."

They also asked the bishops to "to come with us to stand up for the lives of children and for the ministry of Christ's church" during the March 24 events.

"One can only imagine the example of leadership and solidarity that such a showing could make on our fractured and divided country," the Schentrups wrote.

Responding to the #MeToo movement

In their statement on sexual harassment and violence, the bishops noted that it was the first time they had met as a body since the #MeToo movement began last fall.

"Many of us have experienced sexual harassment and perhaps sexual violence," they wrote. "Bishops who are women know the 'me-too' experience. Some bishops who are men know it as well. We live with different experiences of the cultural endowment of power."

The house pledged to continue what it called "our own work of reconciliation within our branch of God's church, honoring what we have learned and accomplished, as well as acknowledging the distance we still must travel."

They said that the work "will take courage."

"As many women and men bravely come forward to speak the truth of their experience, courageous men and women will listen, where appropriate repent, and take an active role in repairing the brokenness, working to change the culture of our church," the bishops wrote.

The statement also announced what the bishops called a "listening process in an open meeting at General Convention to hear more fully the stories of those who have been victims of sexual harassment and violence in the church." That session will be July 4 from 5:15 to 7 p.m. in the House of Bishops convention meeting space.

The bishops' plan follows a Jan. 22 letter from Presiding Bishop Michael Curry and the Rev. Gay Clark Jennings, president of the House of Deputies, calling on Episcopalians to spend Lent and beyond examining how the church has handled or mishandled cases of sexual harassment, exploitation and abuse. The letter also said that they wanted General Convention to discuss these issues because they "want to hear the voice of the wider church as we determine how to proceed in both atoning for the church's past and shaping a more just future." ■

FEATURE

Sewanee seeks untold story of ties to slavery, segregation

By David Paulsen
Episcopal News Service

Sewanee: The University of the South in Tennessee sits atop a plateau, and students interested in viewing the expanse of valley to the west are invited to hike some of the more than 50 miles of trails across the campus, known as the Domain.

"The stretch of Perimeter Trail from Morgan's Steep to Armfield Bluff affords wonderful views to the valley and into deep coves," one professor wrote in a 2008 Sewanee Magazine article profiling the best day hikes on the university's 13,000 acres.

The names given these picturesque places, however, reveal an uglier history, reflecting a time when Sewanee's early leaders openly embraced white racial superiority. Oliver Morgan was a member of one of the most prominent slaveholding families in Louisiana, and John Armfield was part owner in a leading U.S. slave-trading operation.

Both men contributed to the founding of the university by dioceses of the Episcopal Church in 1857. Church leaders across the South who supported the new university saw it as their Christian duty to help maintain the slaveholding order, said Woody Register, a Sewanee history professor leading a six-year research project on the school's early ties to slavery and segregation.

"The University of the South was founded to be the slavers' university, to represent the interests of a slaveholding society," Register said. That mission was seen through a Christian lens that saw slavery as morally defensible, he said. "You can't separate its church purposes, its religious purposes, from the social purposes of the university."

That vision never materialized. By the time Sewanee opened its doors in 1868, the Civil War was over and slavery abolished. How the University of the South recalibrated its mission in that new order is one focus of the university-sponsored Project on Slavery, Race and Reconciliation.

"I like to think of this as there being two foundings," Vice Chancellor John McCardell Jr. told Episcopal News Service. "One, the founding that failed, and one that succeeded." The founding that succeeded, he added, was not driven by a desire to maintain slavery.

Even 150 years after that second founding, those who fought to maintain slavery are honored at Sewanee. Such public honors, especially those bestowed on Confederate army leaders, have faced increased scrutiny at Sewanee and institutions around the United States in the aftermath of deadly violence at a white supremacist, neo-Confederate rally in Charlottesville, Va., last summer.

Those events in August sparked a national debate over Confederate imagery in public spaces. Register's team at Sewanee, barely a month into its research, was asked to provide information supporting the university administrators' decision to relocate a prominent memorial honoring Confederate Gen. Edmund Kirby-Smith, who taught at Sewanee after the Civil War.

Re-examining Confederate symbols, though numerous on campus, is not the sole focus of Sewanee's project, part of a coalition of three dozen universities known as the Universities Studying Slavery. The project aims to expand the narrative of the university's founding and its first century beyond what can be told through Sewanee's archival documents.

Register's team is "casting our net much more broadly" for new details of that untold story by

Photo/Caroline Carson

examining records kept across the South in places where the university received its early financial support — including in some of the 28 Episcopal dioceses that own and govern the university today.

The project's work also is integrated into Sewanee's academic life, with several students serving on the project working group.

"If we can acknowledge the past, then we can progress, so I think this is a huge step," said Jonathan Brown, a senior in the project's group.

Brown, an American studies major, is black and grew up in Silver Spring, Md. He chose to attend Sewanee after receiving a scholarship, and he didn't know much about the university's history at first. In his four years there, he fell in love with Sewanee and its close-knit community while having the opportunity to learn more about its past, he said.

Brown has helped organize some of the project's public events while preparing the younger students on the team for the work they will do in years ahead.

"I've loved every moment of it," he said. "I'm really excited to see where it takes off."

Silver Spring is a suburb of Washington, D.C., and Brown recalls conversations with his parents about the research Georgetown University was conducting on its historical complicity with slavery, including its sale in 1838 of 272 slaves to keep the university running.

The Episcopal Church has taken similar steps to confront its past. Presiding Bishop Michael Curry has made racial reconciliation one of his top priorities, including through the "Becoming Beloved Community" initiative. General Convention has passed numerous resolutions on the subject, including a 2006 resolution about slavery.

Photo/courtesy of University Archives and Special Collections: The University of the South

The University of the South in Sewanee, Tenn., hosts a dedication ceremony on May 16, 1940, for a memorial to Confederate Gen. Edmund Kirby-Smith, who taught math at Sewanee after the Civil War.

Left, Edmund Kirby-Smith was a Confederate general who later taught mathematics at the University of the South at Sewanee, Tenn., where this monument to him is located. It was moved last year from this location to the university cemetery.

"The Episcopal Church acknowledges its history of participation in this sin and the deep and lasting injury which the institution of slavery and its aftermath have inflicted on society and on the Church," the resolution said, calling on each diocese to compile evidence of that complicity.

Racial reconciliation also is a goal of Sewanee's project, as it reaches beyond the campus to foster discussion in the community about these issues. One recent example was the Feb. 19 forum titled "Reading and Rereading History" featuring two Sewanee professors discussing symbols of racial injustice on campus. The event was held off campus to encourage a mix of students and residents to participate.

Research gains urgency

Sewanee has grappled for years with how to balance an appreciation for its history with a desire to confront and move beyond its past ties to racial oppression.

A 2005 New York Times story detailed changes Sewanee was making to appeal to a more geographically and racially diverse pool of potential students — changes some alumni dismissed as destructive or unnecessary. Despite the removal of some overtly racist symbols, administrators told the Times they had no intention of getting rid of other landmarks such as the Kirby-Smith memorial that had been fixtures on the campus for decades.

The university's 2012 strategic plan also emphasized a commitment to fostering a diverse campus community. In the 2015-2016 academic year, Sewanee created several task forces of students and faculty to study ways to fulfill that commitment.

That effort came just as the national conversation around Confederate symbols deepened after a June 2015 shooting in Charleston, S.C., in which a gunman with Confederate sympathies murdered nine people at Emanuel African Methodist Episcopal Church.

In fall 2015, Sewanee removed a portrait of Leonidas Polk from public display. Polk was the Episcopal bishop who led the drive to create the University of the South before joining the Confederate army as a general during the Civil War. (He was killed in battle.) A portrait known as "Sword Over the Gown" shows Polk vested as a bishop with his Confederate uniform draped over a chair and his military sword beside him.

The portrait, said to be a copy of the original, was moved from Convocation Hall to Sewanee's archives, sparking a mix of support and criticism.

The following year, Sewanee joined the Universities Studying Slavery. McCardell and other top administrators asked Register in August 2016 to lead the Sewanee Project on Slavery. Over the winter, Register and a graduate student, Tanner Potts, drafted a plan for the six-year project that launched in July 2017.

Register said he expected to spend two or three years researching the history of the campus's tributes to Kirby-Smith and other Confederate and slaveholding figures, inviting input from all sides before recommending any changes.

By fall 2017, however, the work had grown in urgency.

"We did not anticipate the way in which events would develop over the summer, and part of our mission all along was to evaluate and figure out what to do with the many, many memorials and monuments to the antebellum slaveholding order and the Confederacy on our campus," Register said. "The events of Charlottesville accelerated the schedule for doing that."

Other Episcopal institutions, too, have fought to keep pace with current events while assessing what to do about Confederate symbols. Washington National

continued on page 13

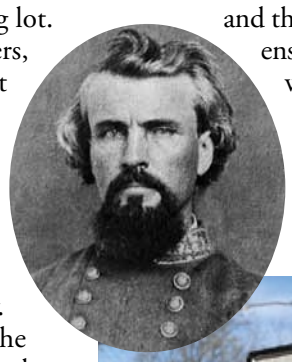
FEATURE

Memphis church discovers story of slave trading next door

By David Paulsen
Episcopal News Service

A previously little-known piece of history just outside the doors of Calvary Episcopal Church in Memphis, Tenn., is being brought to light as the church prepares to dedicate a historical marker at the pre-Civil War site of the Forrest Slave Mart.

An existing historical marker on Calvary's block notes that it once was the home of Nathan Bedford Forrest, a 19th-century businessman and Confederate general. But the marker fails to convey that Forrest was a slave trader and from 1854 to 1860 operated a slave market on property that the church now owns and uses as a parking lot.



The Rev. Scott Walters, rector at Calvary, called it "chilling" to think of the inhumanity that once occurred every day on land located just beyond the church wall behind him when he stands at the pulpit every Sunday. But the effort to research the full history of that block has been infused with a spirit of reconciliation as much as an interest in revealing ugly truths.

"We don't want it to be a divisive thing, but a truth that can be told that can lead to some healing," Walters told ENS.

The new historical marker, to be dedicated April 4 as Memphis marks 50 years since the assassination there of the Rev. Dr. Martin Luther King Jr., is the product of a research project led by history professor Timothy Huebner, a member of Calvary.

Photo/Robyn Banks/Calvary Episcopal Church

The historical marker in Memphis, Tenn., for Nathan Bedford Forrest references only "his business enterprises" without identifying him as a slave trader who operated a slave mart on property next to Calvary Episcopal Church.

"It's not that the existing marker isn't factually accurate … It just leaves out a lot," Huebner said.

An organization called Lynching Sites Project Memphis, whose mission is to accurately tell the history of racial violence in and around the city, first drew attention to the existing historical marker in 2015. Organizers held a prayer service calling for the sign to be changed to make clear that Forrest's "business enterprises" were selling humans.

At the same time, the Episcopal Church has made racial reconciliation one of its priorities. Some dioceses already have made efforts to confront hard truths about their complicity with slavery, segregation and lynchings. These include the Diocese of Atlanta and the Diocese of Tennessee, which encompasses the central third of the state but not Memphis.

In 2016, Huebner and others at Calvary formed a group to learn more about the church's block and surrounding properties. Their inquiries initially focused on blighted buildings and ways the congregation could help improve the neighborhood. But Huebner's preliminary research soon gravitated toward Forrest's historical activities on the block.

"We did not know at that point that he operated the slave mart at that actual site," Huebner said. "We didn't learn that until later."

He uncovered those details in newspaper advertisements and city directories from the 1850s. It also became obvious that the Tennessee Historical Commission would have looked through the same records and, therefore, been well aware of the Forrest slave mart when it drafted the text for its historical marker on the block, dedicated in 1955, he said.

Huebner, who teaches at Rhodes College, chose to make Forrest the subject of his historical methods course in fall 2017. His 15 students researched Forrest's life, as well as the history of that city block, and they determined that thousands of enslaved men, women and children were sold at the slave mart.

The students also found that Forrest, one of at least eight slave traders in Memphis during the 1850s, imported slaves from Africa, a practice that the United States had outlawed in 1808.

The church was built in 1843, meaning the slave trading and Christian ministry were conducted nearly side by side for several years. No evidence has been found that Forrest was a member or benefactor of the church.

His legacy in Memphis generated additional debate last year when a City Council vote led to the removal of a statue of Forrest from a city park in December. State legislators now are considering legislation that would punish local officials for such actions. Scrutiny of Confederate monuments intensified nationwide last August after a white supremacist rally in support of a Confederate statue in Charlottesville, Va., ended in deadly violence there.

In Memphis, Huebner's students drafted the text on the new historical marker about Forrest. A group of local scholars vetted their research. The National Park Service paid for the marker. The students also have identified dozens of the slaves who were sold at the slave mart. Some of those names will be read during the dedication ceremony.

"That's been poignant to me, realizing the names of real people and real lives and families are behind these statistics," Walters said.

The dedication is part of a full slate of events on April 4 in Memphis, where the National Civil Rights Museum is leading commemorations marking 50 years since King was shot and killed at the Lorraine Motel, about a mile from Calvary.

Photo/Robyn Banks/Calvary Episcopal Church

The slave mart operated by Nathan Bedford Forrest was located on a property now being used by Calvary Episcopal Church for a parking lot. The church will dedicate a new historical marker on April 4 telling the fuller story of Forrest's use of the property.

Calvary's ceremony is described as a "Service of Remembrance and Reconciliation." It will be led by Walters and the Rev. Dorothy Wells, rector at St. George's Episcopal Church in nearby Germantown and a 1982 graduate of Rhodes College who worshiped at Calvary when she was a student.

Wells, in an e-mail to ENS from a pilgrimage in Israel, said she was surprised that a slave mart once operated nearby "as well-heeled worshippers came and went past it, week after week, apparently never questioning the trading of human lives for the proverbial few pieces of silver."

Wells, who is black, said she wondered whether some of her ancestors might have among those Forrest sold.

"While it has been hard to process, I cannot dwell on that past — but only on the hope that the future holds," she said. "I still believe that reconciliation is possible – but only if we as a nation are committed to truth-telling." ■

The new text of the historical marker:

FORREST AND THE MEMPHIS SLAVE TRADE

From 1854 to 1860, Nathan Bedford Forrest operated a profitable slave-trading business at this site. In 1826, Tennessee had prohibited bringing enslaved people into the state for the purpose of selling them. As cotton and slavery grew in importance, the legislature repealed the ban in 1855. Starting that year, Memphis emerged as a regional hub for the slave trade. In addition to the more than 3,000 enslaved people who lived and worked in Memphis at the time, thousands more flowed into and out of the city, as traders and their agents brought a steady supply of human cargo into town via roads, river and rail. In 1854, Forrest purchased this property on Adams, between Second and Third, just east of an alley behind Calvary Episcopal Church. Most slaves were sold at lots like this one before ending up on plantations in the Mississippi Delta or further south. Horatio Eden, sold from Forrest's yard as a child, remembered the place as a "square stockade of high boards with two-room Negro houses around. … We were all kept in these rooms, but when an auction was held or buyers came, we were brought out and paraded two or three around a circular brick walk in the center of the stockade. The buyers would stand nearby and inspect us as we went by, stop us, and examine us."

Continued on back:

Much of the slave trade in Memphis occurred on Adams Avenue. Located in the heart of town and connecting the riverfront steamboat landing to the Memphis and Charleston Railroad line, the street offered easy access to buyers and sellers. In 1855, the city directory listed eight slave dealers, including Forrest, five of whom were located on Adams. While his business practices mostly resembled those of other traders in town, Forrest uniquely engaged in the buying and selling of Africans illegally smuggled into the United States, in violation of an 1808 congressional ban. Several sources confirm that in 1859 Forrest sold at least six newly arrived Africans "direct from the Congo" at his yard. Slave trading proved a growth industry, and by 1860 the number of slave dealers in Memphis had increased to 10, including six with addresses on Adams. In that year, Forrest sold this property and moved one block east, where he expanded his operations, while another group of slave dealers took ownership of this lot. Secession and war disrupted the slave-trading business, and in 1861 Forrest went off to fight for the Confederacy. In the decades after the Civil War, many white southerners chose to portray Forrest as a military hero, thus excusing or ignoring Forrest's buying and selling of human beings.

Sponsored by Calvary Episcopal Church, Rhodes College and the National Park Service. Dedicated 2018.

FAITH AND THE ARTS

Faces of Courage: Artist gives immigrants high profile on canvas

By Pamela A. Lewis

"Anger" is not the word that comes to mind when looking at Betsy Ashton's portraits, which include those of prominent figures such as actor Hal Holbrook and Philip Lader, former U.S. Ambassador to the United Kingdom. The walls of her sunlit New York studio are lined with her paintings, from which serene and pensive faces meet the viewer's gaze.

Yet Ashton asserts that anger inspired her to paint what eventually will become 18 lifesized portraits of immigrants. She has worked on the project, titled "Portraits of Immigrants: Unknown Faces, Untold Stories," since shortly after the 2016 presidential election.

"I was so angered by the maligning of immigrants and refugees … which continues to this day, that I felt compelled to seek out immigrants, paint them and tell their stories," she said. "They are not a threat to America, but an asset; they need to be seen and heard."

Once completed, the portraits will represent a cross-section of documented and undocumented immigrants of different ages, countries and cultures who presently live and work in New York. Ashton uses paint and brushes to tell the story of these latest arrivals to the city.

Proudly cradling a magnificent loaf of bread, Edilson "Eddie" Rigo, for example, smiles warmly from the canvas. Violent robberies forced him and his Italian parents from their native São Paulo, Brazil, and eventually from the country itself to seek better employment. Following a series of successes and failures, Rigo opened an espresso bar in a customer's building, where he makes, Ashton says, the the best coffee, soups, salads and sandwiches in Long Island City, Queens, N.Y. (where her studio is located). Rigo calls America "the best place in the world," citing its safety and vibrant cultural life.

Photo/Steven Speliotis

Betsy Ashton stands in her New York studio with several of her immigrant portraits.

Ashton's personal and professional journeys have been almost as circuitous as those of the immigrant men and women whose likenesses she has captured on canvas. Born in Wilkes-Barre, Pa., and reared in central New Jersey, from childhood she always "made up stories and drew pictures."

She studied art but quit three credits shy of a master of fine arts in painting. She gained experience as an illustrator and as an art teacher for three years in a tony school district in Fairfax, Va.

"I wanted to do my own art," she said. "But I soon became aware that the art world [of the late 1960s and early '70s] didn't like what I liked. It was interested in nonfigurative art, such as by Jean Davis [known for his masking tape-created stripes]. That didn't speak to me; I'm a story teller."

Nicholas Freeman, then-FCC Chairman, suggested Ashton assemble art-related projects that could be aired on television. She created a program for the show "Panorama," teaching art once a week for $50. She was later tapped to do radio reports on the burgeoning women's movement, for which she interviewed her subjects about equal pay for equal work and the emerging use of "Ms."

Ashton then moved to reporting and anchoring radio and television news, first in Washington, D.C., and later at CBS News in New York. In 1977, she returned to Washington and was assigned to cover the courts for WJLA-TV, becoming the only TV reporter to draw her own courtroom sketches while covering trials.

Twelve years ago, she resumed painting at the encouragement of painter Everett Raymond Kinstler, who became her mentor. She also studied with Sharon Sprung and Mary Beth McKenzie at the National Academy School in New York. After two years, she opened a studio and began painting portraits on commission.

Concerning her current project, Ashton, who is Episcopalian, said she had no doubt that God suggested she paint the portraits of these immigrants who can't afford to commission them. This is her way, she said, to "counter negativity and divisive thought."

"I am not motivated by money, but have been willing to give up the income to do something right. I lived in wealth but am happier now," she said. "I went to church but was not really 'there.' I was interested in the next big story. But I've gone back to the Lord."

Ashton has asked friends, fellow parishioners and immigrant-aid groups to help find immigrants willing to pose. Some declined out of fear of deportation, she said. "I've changed names and omitted details that could cause harm to the undocumented, and have offered to paint them in shadow."

Ashton sketches and photographs each person before painting. Her style reflects her favorite artists, "the brushy realists" such as John Singer Sargent, Diego Velázquez and Anthony van Dyck, she said. "Their deep beauty and humanity speak to me, because I want a human connection."

Among her subjects is Maria Salomé, whose erect bearing belies her harrowing story of leaving Guatemala after her husband abandoned her and their five children, ages 3 to 16. She had two choices: becoming a prostitute or hiring a "coyote" to sneak her into the United States.

Unwilling to do "indecent work," Salomé made a "very scary journey"

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Clockwise from upper left are portraits of Edie Rigo, John Lam, Diego Salazar and a woman who asked to be identified only as "Angel."

Portrait Photos/Betsy Ashton

BOOK REVIEWS

Tickle and Griswold: two pillars of the church

Review by Shelley Crook

Two faith leaders with deep vocations; one a learned layperson, one a clergyman at the pinnacle of the church hierarchy. Both were central to the story of LGBTQ acceptance within the Episcopal Church; both share a lifelong interest in meditation, prayer, and interfaith dialogue. The subjects of these books have much in common, and the books themselves have much to commend them.

"A Life" is an intimate and unflinching portrait of the beloved writer Phyllis Tickle, who died in 2015 at the age of 81. Jon M. Sweeney, Tickle's official biographer, illuminates Tickle's oftentimes painful personal story — including a faith-informing near-death experience, a difficult marriage with a secret at its heart, several miscarriages, and seven children — in a tone that is scholarly yet also unfailingly warm and compassionate.

In her professional life, Tickle wore many hats: she was a teacher, the founding editor of the religion department at Publishers Weekly, a popular writer and public speaker, an outspoken advocate for LGBTQ rights, and a leading proponent of the Emerging Church movement. Sweeney provides a comprehensive, even granular, recounting of Tickle's achievements.

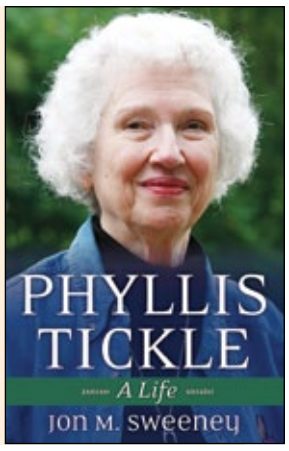
"Any woman who bears seven children to the same man doesn't get to call herself a feminist," Tickle joked, and indeed Tickle was criticized at various times of her life for being either too feminist, or not feminist enough. Still, the most cursory of glances over the chronology and list of publications at the start of "A Life" illuminates how groundbreaking Tickle was. When she died in 2015, the Episcopal Church lost a treasure and a constructive critic, feminism lost a trailblazer, and the world lost a compelling theologian. This beautiful biography is an exhaustive record of, and fitting tribute to, the life of an extraordinary woman.

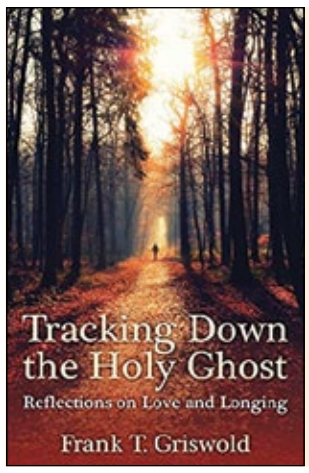
Tickle, excellent at pithy pronouncements, is useful for a segue: "The minute you own a piece of real estate, then you have to have somebody to clean it… then you have to get somebody to be sure that it's insured, and the next thing you know, you've got a bishop," she once said, always suspicious of church hierarchy. Surprisingly, Frank T. Griswold, the 25th Presiding Bishop of the Episcopal Church, would agree with her.

Phyllis Tickle: A Life

By Jon M. Sweeney

Church Publishing
288 pages, $26.95





Tracking Down the Holy Ghost: Reflections on Love and Longing

By Frank T. Griswold

Church Publishing
176 pages, $18.95

"How ironic it is that I, who have always sat somewhat loose to the church-as-institution, should have found myself its chief pastor and symbolic head," Griswold writes in "Tracking Down the Holy Ghost: Reflections on Love and Longing."

Griswold appears, if not a reluctant bishop, exactly, then reassuringly ambivalent about the positions he has held. Indeed, this book gives short shrift to those years; Griswold's true passion appears to lies somewhere other than church bureaucracy, in scripture, in prayer, and in an endless, curious engagement with world. Despite the lofty heights he's reached, Griswold comes off as self-effacing, always willing to make himself vulnerable. First and foremost, though, he presents as a natural born pastor.

The book is part memoir, part spiritual meditation, and Griswold is an excellent guide towards a more considered life. If you're a sucker for inspirational quotes, then this book is like hitting the motherlode. Griswold quotes from major thinkers in every tradition, from Teilhard de Chardin to T. S. Eliot to Tagore, but much of the book's wisdom comes from Griswold's own pen.

"Though many of us like things to be black or white … Love makes it possible to live with paradox," he says, a maxim I intend to cling to like a drowning woman to a life raft when I next view my Twitter feed. Indeed, many of Griswold's insights are relevant to our current climate, where tribalism and disrespect reign. Having led the church through a major conflict — the ordination of openly gay clergy, which brought the denomination to the point of schism — Griswold knows something about division (and, similar to Tickle, he was criticized at that time both for being both too progressive, and not progressive enough.)

This book is kind and unshakably moderate, in a world where kindness is underrated and moderation is … well, if not dead, then definitely on life support. If you need a rest from the news and the prevailing culture, some ideas on how to proceed in faith or how to pray, or you simply want to revel in the mystery — this book is wonderfully calm and meditative — then "Tracking Down the Holy Ghost" is for you.

Tickle and Griswold are modern pillars of the church. They remind us of the importance of strong voices, both lay and clerical, that are willing to challenge the institutional status quo while upholding those things — prayer, scripture, our baptismal covenants — that are *really* important. ■

Shelley Crook is a New York-based writer.

PORTRAITS continued from page 10

through Mexico until a bus picked up her group and brought them to New York, where, soon after, she was hired as a housekeeper. She sent home money to feed her children for 24 years before obtaining a green card, allowing her to return to Guatemala to visit them. "I have a good life here," she says. "This is a good country. This is my home."

Having just graduated high school, and speaking only Creole and French, Porez Luxama came here with his mother and siblings following a coup d'état in their native Haiti. He now teaches math and science in a New York junior high school and runs the Life of Hope Center in Brooklyn, which helps new immigrants learn language, literacy, job and leadership skills.

The 18 portraits (which Diego Salazar, himself an immigrant from a poor family in Bogatà, Colombia, and one of Ashton's subjects, has been framing) will be on exhibition at Saint Thomas Church, Fifth Avenue, New York, from Jan. 19 through Feb. 16, 2019. Other churches and secular venues have expressed interest in the series.

"I want people who see these portraits to empathize with the sitters and to appreciate how hard they work and how *grateful* they are," Ashton said. "I believe that viewers will discover kindred spirits' who are, in many ways, as 'American' as they are." ■

Betsy Ashton's portrait of Haitian immigrant Porez Luxama.

Pamela A. Lewis, who is based in NewYork, writes on topics of faith.

FAITH AND THE ARTS

‘A Wrinkle in Time’ author Madeleine L’Engle speaks on the power of storytelling

Episcopal News Service

The release of Ava DuVernay’s movie version of the classic — and controversial — children’s book “A Wrinkle in Time” has brought a new awareness of its author Madeleine L’Engle, a world-renowned lay Episcopal playwright, poet and author of fiction and nonfiction books.

L’Engle, who wrote more than 60 books ranging from children’s stories to theological reflection, died Sept. 6, 2007, in Litchfield, Conn. She was 88. In its obituary of L’Engle, the New York Times reported that “A Wrinkle in Time” was then in its 69th printing and had sold 8 million copies.

Photo/Square Fish Books

Author Madeleine L’Engle, who wrote more than 60 books ranging from children’s stories to theological reflections, is pictured here in 2005.

“A Wrinkle in Time” won the Newberry Award in 1963. L’Engle traveled widely from her home base in New York, leading retreats, lecturing at writers’ conferences and addressing church and student groups abroad. In 1965, she became a volunteer librarian at the Episcopal Cathedral Church of St. John the Divine in New York. She later served for many years as writer-in-residence at the cathedral.

L’Engle’s work expressed her Christian theology and has been compared to C. S. Lewis’. “A Wrinkle in Time” rankled some conservative Christians, and the book ranks 90th on the American Library Association’s list of the 100 most-banned/challenged books of the early 2000s. Critics said the book combined Christian themes and the occult, and they disputed L’Engle’s contention that science and religion can coexist.

The book contains echoes of the Gospel of John and 1 Corinthians. It tells the story of how, after the disappearance of her scientist father, three peculiar beings send Meg Murry, her brother and her friend to space to find him. The three mysterious astral travelers known as Mrs. Whatsit, Mrs. Who and Mrs. Which lead the children on a dangerous journey to a planet that possesses all the evil in the universe.

In 1995, L’Engle spoke with Episcopal News Service about the power of storytelling and her theology. She was interviewed by Neil M. Alexander, then-vice president and editorial director of the United Methodist Publishing House. He is now president and publisher emeritus. [He is not related to Bishop J. Neil Alexander.]

What are you seeking to discover and share through your writing?

I wrote my first story when I was 5 because I wanted to know why my father was coughing his lungs out from mustard gas he was exposed to in the First World War. Why is it that people hurt each other? Why don’t people love each other? I learned quickly that a story is the best place to explore these unanswerable questions. Facts are limited; they don’t carry us very far. Story is where we look for truth.

Which questions do you find yourself asking over and over again?

All the big ones. The questions that adolescents ask — and that we should never stop asking. Unless we continually bring questions to our faith, it will become sterile and cold. And so we ask: Why did God create the universe? Is there a purpose to it? Why did God take the incredible risk of making creatures with free will? And this leads us to ponder why, if God is good, do terrible things happen? Of course, there are no simple answers. If you have people with free will, they are going to make mistakes, and our actions do have consequences.

Is too much emphasis given to the importance of individual freedom? Would it be better if our communities provided more narrow boundaries?

I remember many years ago being in Russia with my husband. After a concert, we were walking back to our hotel late at night, with no fear whatsoever, through tunnels beneath Red Square. When we came up on the other side of the square, I turned to my husband and said, “The price for this sense of security is too high.” With freedom there also comes risk, but it is worth it.

Where do you find the resources to sustain your search, to help you struggle with the ambiguity of being human?

Reading the Bible has always been a part of my daily life. My parents were Bible-reading people, and I grew up reading the Bible as a great storybook, which indeed it is. It is remarkably comforting to me that of all the protagonists in scriptural stories, not one is qualified to do what God is asking. In a sense we are all unqualified. If you were going to start a great nation, would you pick a hundred-year-old man and a woman past menopause? That’s the kind of thing God does.

I also read in the area of quantum mechanics and particle physics, because these are disciplines where people are dealing with the nature of being. These writers describe a universe in which everything is totally interrelated, where nothing happens in isolation. They have discovered that nothing can be studied objectively — because to look at something is to change it and be changed by it. I find such discussions helpful in framing theological responses to questions about the nature of the universe.

You have an incredible ability to draw upon your memory, to discern truth from events in your own life. How might others be helped to develop this capacity?

One thing that is helpful is keeping an honest and unpublishable journal. What you write down you tend not to forget. I’ve been keeping journals since I was 8. It is a way of having a say in the telling of our own stories. The act of writing it down helps set it in our memory. For storytellers, memory is very important because we can’t write a story without drawing on our own experience.

How does that apply to our spiritual pilgrimage as Christians? Do you think the faith community has developed a good memory to draw upon?

I don’t. I think we have forgotten far too much. I am concerned, for example, that we take Jesus’ parables out of context. We treat them as isolated illustrations in and of themselves, but they make much more sense if you know when they were given in the course of Jesus’ ministry and to whom he was speaking.

I don’t believe you can be a Christian in isolation from the support and collective memory of the believing community. My church is very important to me, and so is the group of women I meet with every Monday for study and prayer. We are in this life together, not alone.

Some time back there were reports about folks speculating that you are a “new age” thinker. What was that all about?

I haven’t the faintest idea. I once asked someone what led people to say I was promoting “new age” concepts. The response was, “You mention the rainbow, and that’s a sign of new age thinking.” I said, “Hey, wait a minute. The rainbow is the sign of God’s covenant with his people. Don’t hand our symbols over to those promoting ‘new age’ spirituality. Don’t let faddish groups take away what God has given us.”

I was sent a newspaper clipping that cited my book “A Wrinkle in Time” as one of the 10 most censored books in the United States. When it first appeared in 1962, it was hailed by many as a Christian work. In the intervening years not one word of that book has changed. So, what has happened to cause people to want it banned?

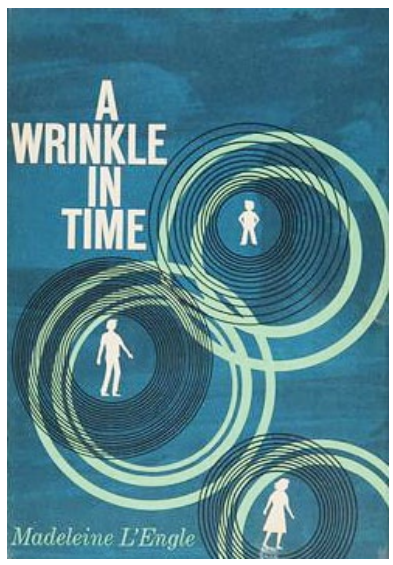
What do you think happened?

I think there are some people who are terribly afraid … afraid that they cannot control or manipulate God, that God might love people they don’t love, that God’s love is too all-embracing, and that we don’t have to earn it. All we have to do is say we are sorry, and God throws a big party.

That is frightening to some people. They seem to feel that they can’t be happy in heaven unless hell is heavily populated. I don’t really understand that.

continued on page 13

Photo/Walt Disney Pictures



Photo/Wikipedia

Above, Ava DuVernay’s movie version of the classic children’s book “A Wrinkle in Time” has renewed interest in the book and its author. It also has prompted a host of other books related to the story and the movie.

“A Wrinkle in Time,” whose original book jacket is show here, was rejected 26 times before it was published and won the Newberry Award in 1963.

FAITH AND THE ARTS

L'ENGLE continued from page 12

Do you worry that an overemphasis on unconditional grace might lead to giving license for the self-centered pursuit of personal comfort without accountability?

Unconditional grace is not the same as permissiveness, though I think it gets confused with that sometimes. We are creatures who sin. I don't think that makes God angry. On the contrary, I think that makes God incredibly sad.

I think we hurt God by our sinning and by manipulating the idea of unconditional grace into something that makes it easier for us to go on sinning. Grace does not give us permission to be destructive people. God's grace ought to give us the courage to try to give pleasure to God.

At night when I read my evening prayers, I ask myself, "What have I done that would have hurt God today?" and "What have I done to give pleasure to God?"

How do your books help people experience God's grace and grow in faithfulness?

I have had many letters from people who say that the loving God revealed in my books has changed their lives. They tell me that they have discovered that they no longer have to be afraid of God.

Photo/Walt Disney Pictures

"A Wrinkle in Time" Director Ava DuVernay, left, speaks with Storm Reid, who plays Meg Murry, between scenes.

"The Summer of the Great Grandmother" is about my mother's 90th and last summer. I was very angry about what was happening to her. I wrote about walking down the dirt road in front of the house shouting, "God, don't do this to my mother. You take her!"

I have received letters from readers who said, "I didn't know I was allowed to be angry." Well, of course we are allowed to be angry, but we are also called not to stay stuck in our anger.

In "The Irrational Season" you say that male and female will not be completely reconciled until Christ returns. Yet in "Two Part Invention" you describe the extraordinary harmony of your own marriage. We seem to be in a time of struggle over male and female roles and relationships. What are your current thoughts about this subject?

There is a lot of antagonism in the world between male and female. I think we are paying much too much attention to gender conflict. What I hear people asking is: Does God really love me? Will I continue as who I am after death? Will God continue to help me grow? Why is there so much pain? Why, if God is good, do we do so many wrong things? I wish the church would address itself to that.

We see violence, deprivation, suffering and hatefulness close to home and across the world. As you survey what is happening, how do you dare to be hopeful?

I am hopeful because I don't think God is going to fail with creation. I think somehow or other love is going to come through. Christ is with us.

After my husband died, I lived several years with my two granddaughters who were in college. They questioned things, and sometimes we didn't agree, but at least we were all struggling to find truth.

Because we are human and finite, and God is divine and infinite, we can never totally comprehend the living, wondrous God whom we adore. So, there are always unanswered questions as God pushes us along and helps us grow in love. But my granddaughters and the other young people I meet are willing to ask and struggle with the important questions. That gives me hope. ■

SEWANEE continued from page 8

Cathedral in Washington, D.C., had embarked on what it thought would be a two-year process of discerning whether to keep images of the Confederate flag in its stained-glass windows. After the violence in Charlottesville, the dean announced last fall that no further deliberation was needed, and the flags were removed.

The clashes between hate groups and counter-protesters in Charlottesville centered around the city's decision to take down a statue of Confederate Gen. Robert E. Lee. Soon after those clashes, McCardell said he was contacted by a descendant of Kirby-Smith asking that the memorial at Sewanee be moved to the campus cemetery, where it would be less likely to become a flashpoint for controversy.

McCardell moved forward with that plan in the fall, after consulting with Register's team about the history of the memorial. It had been proposed in the 1920s by the Daughters of the Confederacy, but, because fundraising was difficult during the Great Depression, it wasn't installed until 1940, Register said.

His team confirmed the memorial was on campus property, dispelling rumors that the land had been given away long ago. And research into the memorial's dedication ceremony, which bore a military motif and featured display of the Confederate battle flag, indicated that Kirby-Smith was honored more for his Civil War record than for his later career as a math professor.

The university moved the memorial to the cemetery with little fanfare.

"The idea is to understand things as best we can before we act," Register said.

Studying the past to shape Sewanee's future

Register, a native of Alabama, graduated from Sewanee in 1980 and has taught history at the university for 26 years. (He received his doctorate from Brown University, an early trailblazer among the Universities Studying Slavery.)

As Register expanded his understanding of Sewanee's ties to slavery and segregation, he gradually worked some of those details into his teaching and scholarly articles. About three years ago, he helped produce an exhibition on Sewanee manhood called "Founded to Make Men" that foreshadowed his present work with the Project on Slavery.

"It changed how I thought about the history of the university," Register said.

His research suggested that Sewanee originally was conceived as a place where Southern men would be taught to be leaders of the slaveholding order in the antebellum South. He disputes criticisms that learning more about that history and its representation in present-day landmarks is a step toward "destroying the past."

"It's quite the opposite," he said. "We're trying to better understand the past, and there's a lot here that we need to know more about."

As examples, Register noted that some dormitories were named for Confederate military figures, such as Charles Todd Quintard, a Confederate chaplain who later became the Diocese of Tennessee's first post-war bishop and served as Sewanee's vice chancellor. (Quintard is celebrated by the Episcopal Church every Feb. 16.) Another dormitory is named for Josiah Gorgas, a Confederate general who later served as president of the University of Alabama.

"I think Woody's approach to this has been quite sound and in the best tradition of academia," McCardell said. "Let's study the issue from all angles. … The perspective of time ought never to be underestimated. The decisions made in the heat of the moment are not necessary the wisest decisions."

The work of the Project on Slavery has revealed how many connections to Sewanee's antebellum roots are found scattered around the campus, sometimes in subtle ways, as with the various place names taken from the men who gave money for the university's founding.

"The Kirby-Smith memorial is an easy one to address, in a way," Register said. "There are others. Our campus is paved with monuments and memorials."

Will changing the names of places on campus help achieve that goal? Register's team is not yet ready to make recommendations, though there is a broad spectrum of options available, from changing names and moving monuments to creating digital resources that provide deeper historical context for landmarks that evoke an earlier era, he said.

"The most important thing first is that we make this history known and not make the argument that, that was long ago and it doesn't matter," Register said. ■

FAITH AND THE ARTS

African cosmologies: reflections on 'Black Panther'

By Yolanda Pierce
Religion News Service

Photo/courtesy Kwaku Alston/Marvel Studios

The primary cast members of "Black Panther."

Yes, Wakanda is a fictional place and "Black Panther" is "just" a film, but the spiritual imagination that undergirds the movie can be an opportunity for learning and even fostering faith in the idea that we can build a better world, if we are willing.

In a real world that has so maligned black peoples and the continent of Africa, and questioned if any good can ever come from this place, Director Ryan Coogler reminds his viewers both of the beauty that already exists on the continent and of what may yet be possible.

The film begins shortly after the death of Wakanda's King T'Chaka (John Kani). His son, T'Challa (Chadwick Boseman), returns to Wakanda to assume his father's mantle and the authority and responsibility of serving as both king and Black Panther, protector of Wakanda.

What follows is not simply a political process, the passing down of political authority from one monarch to the next, but a richly textured series of spiritual ceremonies.

T'Challa must undergo a rite of passage to assume the throne; he faces physical challenges that attest to his strength and takes part in religious rituals in which he encounters his ancestors and must seek their wisdom. The newly appointed King T'Challa must be buried; he must die to his old life; and he must be resurrected. This ritual is overseen by the elders, who function not only as moral authorities for the kingdom of Wakanda but also as spiritual midwives and griots for its people.

This pivotal early scene in the movie engages African cosmology and varieties of African spirituality on many levels. The viewer encounters a vibrant spiritual world from the earliest moments of the film, which draws from the cultural traditions of many real African nations by incorporating customs, clothing, languages, art, architecture, body-modification styles and combat techniques found across the continent.

It is a movie in which African peoples can see the rich diversity of their continent represented, whether in the lip plates worn by the Mursi and Surma peoples of Ethiopia (among others); cast members speaking the African languages of Xhosa and Hausa; the clothing of the Dora Milaje, the Black Panther's elite bodyguards, modeled after the Masai peoples in Kenya and Tanzania; or in the headdress worn by Queen Mother Ramonda (Angela Bassett), similar to what is worn by Zulu women in South Africa.

And like these other real-world cultural references, the spiritual allusions in "Black Panther" reflect a fictional approach to a real-life African cosmology — how one perceives, conceives and contemplates the universe. Cosmology is the lens, set of beliefs, and religious practices through which one understands reality.

Within most African religious worldviews, everything is a part of the spiritual world, so physical combat or clothing or body modification are infused with sacred resonance. "Black Panther" movie is rich in African cosmology. Here are but a few examples:

Ancestral veneration

King T'Chaka remains active in the life of his son T'Challa, as guide and touchstone. Even his nemesis, Killmonger (Michael B. Jordan), must seek ancestral wisdom as part of his spiritual journey. In traditional African worldviews, the ancestors have a functional role in present life and must be honored long after their deaths. The veneration of the ancestors in African cosmology rejects a hard wall of separation between the living and the dead.

Spirit world

In the film, the power of the Black Panther is referred to as the "Panther Spirit." It references the existence of a pantheon of spirits and deities in traditional African supernatural spirituality, which can endow a believer with certain characteristics, including strength. And while there is generally the affirmation of a singular Creator God, most African cosmology has space for other operative spirits in the lives of believers.

Traditional medicine

"Black Panther" references the importance of traditional medicine within African cultures. It is the heart-shaped plant that gives superhuman power to the Black Panther, and there is also traditional medicine that removes the Panther Spirit when T'Challa needs to engage in ritual combat without his special powers.

The continued existence of traditional medicine, alongside contemporary Western medicine, remains an important feature of African cosmology. Medicine and the caring for the physical body is spiritual and sacred work. Healing in Wakanda occurs in Princess Shuri's (Letitia Wright) futuristic lab, with all the latest scientific advances. But medicine is also practiced ritualistically by those who have passed down (and protect) the secret properties of plants and herbs throughout the generations, as is the case with the garden in the film's Hall of Kings.

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FAITH AND THE ARTS

From 'Downton' to Jerusalem, actor Hugh Bonneville searches for Jesus

By Kimberly Winston
Religion News Service

Of course an actor like Hugh Bonneville would be captivated by the drama of the last week of Jesus' life, with his triumphant entrance into Jerusalem, his challenging of the priests in the temple, his betrayal by Judas and his sentencing to crucifixion at the hands of a mob.

What will surprise many is that Bonneville, 54, whose biggest role to date has been as Lord Grantham in "Downton Abbey," has a theology degree from Cambridge University, where he was taught Christian history by Rowan Williams, formerly the archbishop of Canterbury.

After Cambridge, Bonneville went on to drama school, but last year he packed a suitcase full of his old Cambridge textbooks and headed for Jerusalem to research and retrace the last tumultuous days of Jesus' life. The result is a new hour-long documentary, "Jesus: Countdown to Calvary," which was set to air on most public-television stations before Easter.

Bonneville does not examine the merits or failings of Christianity. He does not get into questions of faith or supernatural belief or the divinity of Jesus. Instead, he and the documentary's makers (Raidió Teilifís Éireann, ARTE and American Public Television) look at the historical, economic and sociological factors that contributed to making Jerusalem a powder keg in the days before Jesus' crucifixion.

"This is a place where history and faith come together," Bonneville says in the opening section of the documentary, standing before the sunny, heat-kissed stones of the old city. "Whether you are a person of faith or of none, you cannot escape the fact that the last six days of this man's life, and his death, changed the world."

Photo/courtesy of American Public Television

Hugh Bonneville at the Church of the Holy Sepulchre in Jerusalem while filming "Jesus: Countdown to Calvary."

Bonneville sat down with Religion News Service to talk about the documentary and the events leading up to Easter Sunday. The following has been edited for length and clarity.

How did you come to host this documentary look at the final days of Jesus?

It was quite simply that the religion unit at RTE got in touch and said, "Look, I know you did theology — is this an area you would like to have a look at again?" And I said, "Sure." They knew the synoptic Gospels [Matthew, Mark and Luke, which tell different versions of the same events] were something I had been interested in, and the road to Calvary comes up over and over in them. The synoptic Gospels are something I have a detective forensic interest in. But, as I said in the documentary, I haven't touched those books in 35 years.

The film is decidedly secular in its approach. Why?

Let me put it this way. I went to university as an atheist, and I came out agnostic. I have a healthy respect for all religions, but being outside the leap of faith myself, I found historical objectivity a better methodology for me. I had fantastic tutors at Cambridge — Rowan Williams taught me early church history. They wear their faith and their scholarship with great balance. But I have always found myself standing back, not in an effort to deride belief, but because I just don't have that.

That is why I was very keen on this project to stop at the cross, to say Jesus wasn't a Christian — he was a Jew. And from what I can tell, he wanted to be the best Jew he could be, and that is really at the heart of what led to a potential riot in Jerusalem that could have gotten out of hand.

I think that had I gone into the program merely wanting to endorse or reaffirm my own religious position, that would have been a different angle. I hope to make the program more accessible to more people and that more people will understand this story, be they atheists or Christians or Jews or whatever. That is really a long way of saying I found it a more engaging way to tell the story and make it more accessible by not having a Christian predisposition.

What do you think is the overarching message of the last six days of Jesus' life?

What really struck me when I was in Jerusalem was really understanding, in a way I had not before, things in the Gospels like Jesus "went up to Jerusalem." When you are standing on the road from Jericho to Jerusalem, you see it is on an incline. Looking across the Mount of Olives, I understood for the first time that these are real stories and real places. They may be interpreted differently, but they are based on fact.

But what really came to me was the size of Jerusalem. In the last week of Jesus' life, 10 times the population of Jerusalem was suddenly sprawling over the city, and you realize what a tinderbox it must have been. And I think one thing I took away was the really overwhelming pressure on the different political forces in Jerusalem at that time — the flashpoint of the mob and the way crowds can turn quickly. And the understanding that it was the Romans who killed Jesus, not the Jews. That's not a very succinct answer, but what I would like people to take away is an understanding of the political forces at work when a maverick preacher like Jesus got out of line.

In the documentary, you discuss the motivations of Caiaphus, Pilate and Jesus with various scholars, and speculate with the Israeli author Amos Oz about why Judas would betray his friend. Which of these characters would you want to play in a movie or play?

Well, I played Pilate in a television version [of "Ben Hur"], and he was a very nasty piece of work. I think Caiaphus is very interesting because he is trying to keep together the running of the temple at the busiest time of year. He is trying to keep the law and order in the city so the Jews can get back to practicing their faith. When anyone like Jesus comes along to challenge the status quo, he is going to get nervous. I think that is almost an impossible position to be in and would be fascinating to play.

And I love Amos Oz's point of view that we should thank Judas because without him we wouldn't have Christianity. You have to understand his role, you cannot condemn him. I think that is a very interesting reassessment of Judas, that he was actually trying to help Jesus. If he hadn't betrayed Jesus, how would Jesus have gotten to the cross? The part he played in the inevitable road to Calvary is vital. ■

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The priesthood

Zuri (Forest Whitaker) serves as the holy man whose presence is needed for the legitimate transfer of power from King T'Chaka to King T'Challa, as the spiritual world is intertwined with the political world. The role of shaman, priest and conjurer, or healer, is critical in African cosmology as these persons also may function as chroniclers and griots — the keepers of history and communal memory. Likewise, Wakanda's Council of Elders advises on matters of national security, as well as matters of spiritual and moral significance.

Photo/courtesy Marvel Studios

Forest Whitaker as Zuri in "Black Panther."

Harmony and balance

The film highlights one of the key components of African cosmology: the value of balance and harmony. The ecological balance in Wakanda is maintained because everything is spiritually infused and necessary for harmony. Wakanda's agricultural practices balance its technological advances.

The high-tech manufacture of vibranium — Wakanda's powerful natural resource — co-exists with handwoven baskets and handicrafts sold at traditional market stalls. The age-old spear must be mastered by the warriors, along with the more futuristic weapons of war. The dream of Wakanda, a nation untouched by white colonization and white supremacy, is balance, where there is space for the keepers of sheep and the keepers of technology.

But African cosmology also leaves space for an engagement of the African-American religious experience, the faiths and traditions of those whose ancestors were brought to other nations in the holds of slave ships.

Photo/courtesy Matt Kennedy/Marvel Studios

Chadwick Boseman, left, and Michael B. Jordan fight in a scene from "Black Panther. "

Killmonger, the American-born character, maintains the revolutionary spirit of his ancestors, those who he argues would prefer death over bondage. This fictional character references a very real saga: The bones of Africans littered the bottom of the Atlantic Ocean, including those of Africans who died and whose bodies were tossed overboard and those who willingly jumped to escape their chains, some believing that they could fly back to Africa.

For Killmonger, there is an existential longing for a place of return, a place to belong, as an African-American who has known life only under the forces of white colonization. Killmonger embarks on a spiritual journey to Wakanda, a place to which he belongs by virtue of his royal blood, but also a place foreign to him. There is an otherworldliness to Wakanda for outsiders, not because it is perfect (which it is not), but simply because it exists at all despite almost impossible odds.

The Afrofuturism that underlies the entire film is deeply spiritual. It speaks to possible worlds, future worlds, like Wakanda, as places of profound hope, joy and possibility for black peoples throughout the African diaspora. ■

The Rev. Yolanda Pierce is professor and dean of the Howard University School of Divinity. She is a scholar of African-American religious history, womanist theology, and religion and literature.

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