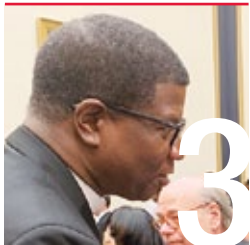


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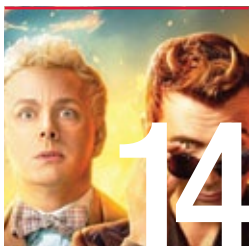
VOL. 9 NO. 7 | JULY/AUGUST 2019



NEWS Testimony supports bill to study reparations



FEATURE Florida chief works to connect communities



ARTS 'Good Omens' explores heaven, hell and humanity

Executive Council considers issues on pensions, racial reconciliation and vaccinations

By Mary Frances Schjonberg
Episcopal News Service

Acknowledging that true “benefit equivalence” is unlikely, the Episcopal Church’s Executive Council decided at its June meeting to take two concrete steps to get closer to parity in pension benefits for its lay and clergy employees.

The council met June 10-13 in Linthicum Heights, Md., near Baltimore.

The Domestic and Foreign Missionary Society, or DFMS (the church’s legal and corporate entity), will increase its base contribution to the Church Pension Fund’s defined contribution plan for lay employees from 5 percent of salary to 8 percent. If employees contribute the maximum 4 percent to receive the maximum matching employer contribution, the increase will essentially equal the 12.25 percent of salary contributed for clergy staff. The decision applies to approximately 114 lay employees.

The task force recommending the move found that, of the 18 percent contribution that Episcopal employers are canonically required to make for each clerical employee,



Photo/screenshot from video by Frank Logue

Members of Executive Council’s Joint Standing Committee on Finance sing a song they wrote to the tune of “There is a balm in Gilead.” The song, “Is there a pledge in Baltimore,” urged members to participate in the Annual Appeal.

12.4 percent goes toward the clergy defined benefit plan. Of the remainder, 3.3 percent covers disability, death and maternity benefits; 2 percent goes to retiree medical insurance costs; and 0.3 percent is for life insurance for active clergy. Clergy are not allowed to contribute to the plan.

Council also agreed to pay for the Medicare supplement insurance premium for spouses of retired lay employees with at least 10 years of service. That move will mirror the benefit provided for clergy retirees. Currently, 51 lay employees meet that threshold and 34 of them

have spouses, according to the report the task force sent to council.

The decision applies only to lay employees of the Domestic and Foreign Missionary Society; it does not pertain to diocesan or congregational lay employees.

The changes are effective July 1. For a full triennium, increasing the pension contribution will cost \$1 million and the Medicare supplement premium decision will cost \$500,000. The task force also considered but did not recom-

mend increasing the post-retirement death benefit for lay spouses from \$10,000 to match the \$50,000 provided to clergy spouses. That increase would have cost an additional \$550,000.

Money to cover the remainder of this triennium’s payment will be drawn from a \$2.6 million fund in the DFMS’s short-term reserves designated for lay employee benefit-related expenses. The \$1.5 million plus any inflation expense will need to be built into subsequent triennial budgets.

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Appalachian Trail inspires ‘Camino’ trek in Pennsylvania

By David Paulsen
Episcopal News Service

The United States may lack a pilgrimage path quite like Spain’s centuries-old Camino de Santiago, which draws hundreds of thousands of foot-powered Christian pilgrims each year, but American hikers have a worthy alternative: the Appalachian Trail.

At 2,190 miles from Georgia to Maine, the Appalachian Trail is the longest hiking-only footpath in the world, according to the Appalachian Trail Conservancy. It crosses peaks, dips into valleys and passes through or near communities along the way, step by step revealing the natural beauty of the Appalachian mountain range.

About 3,000 people attempt to hike the trail’s full length each year. The Rev. Dan Morrow is not one of them. Instead, Morrow and his wife set out on a day hike in spring 2018 on the part of the trail that passes a couple miles from their home in Mechanicsburg, Pennsylvania, and by the time they returned, Morrow had found inspiration.

“I thought, how cool would it be to have a pilgrimage on the trail, like the Camino in Spain?” Morrow, the Diocese of Central Pennsylvania’s canon

Central Pennsylvania Bishop Audrey Scanlan’s diocese leads a group hike on part of Pennsylvania’s segment of the Appalachian Trail.

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Photo/courtesy of Audrey Scanlan

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CONVERSATIONS

Fake good news makes for bad foreign policy

By John Harvey Taylor



WHEN WORD SPREAD THAT presidential candidate Pete Buttigieg was a practicing Episcopalian, adverse reaction from some evangelicals was swift. Some said he wasn't actually a Christian — not because he's a married gay man, mind you, but just because he's a practicing Episcopalian.

Most of us are used to it. Have you ever told a post-denominational friend that you're an Episcopalian only to have them reply, "I'm a Christian"? Like the faint echo of the Big Bang in the cosmos, the anti-Catholic, anti-sacramental suspicions of the 16th century Reformation still trouble the body of Christ. With thousands of denominations and sects, ours is a rich but fractured mosaic. It's vital to be tolerant of one another's styles of worship and interpretations of Holy Scripture.

But when idiosyncratic beliefs put people's lives at risk — when fake Good News ends up as bad foreign policy, as it has in the Trump administration — it's time for progressive denominational Christians speak up on behalf of one of the greatest gifts to people of faith: Enlightened biblical scholarship.

Many insist that the Bible, especially in the Revelation of John, predicts events such as the creation of the state of Israel and Russia's intervention in the Syrian civil war. The theories fall under the broad category of Dispensationalism. Because of the "Omen" movies and "Left Behind" novels, many in society and the media, whether believers or not, may think it's the only way to read the good book.

But we denizens of EfM Education for Ministry, weekly Bible study in our parishes and missions, and seminary know the real sacred story. The texts themselves say nothing about these or any historical event that occurred after they were written, edited, and accepted as sacred canon in the fourth century. We know this and more thanks to analytical tools that scholars, interpreters, and teachers have had at their disposal for a century and a half or more.

The techniques are taught at all mainline seminaries

and informed the preaching Buttigieg grew up hearing. They help us understand that Revelation was written late in the first century not to predict events in 2019 but to inspire and encourage churches in Asia Minor as the Roman Empire was persecuting Christians. Torah wasn't the work of one author, Moses, but of many writers and editors, finalized seven centuries after the

Many theologically conservative Christians read scripture with modern minds, plumbing its verses for life lessons instead of clues about the apocalypse.

events the texts recount. Isaiah comprises the work of a succession of prophetic witnesses working across 200 years or more.

This doesn't mean the Bible isn't the inspired word of God. A Christian can believe in the birth, teachings, and resurrection of Jesus Christ without insisting that the world was created in six days, as Genesis recounts, or that Jonah survived inside a big fish. With all my lay and ordained siblings in the church, I believe the Bible contains all things necessary for salvation. But it can take a lifetime of discerning study to appreciate fully its foundational values of righteousness, peace, justice, and, above all, love.

Many theologically conservative Christians read scripture with modern minds, plumbing its verses for life lessons instead of clues about the apocalypse. Denominational and evangelical Christians could discover some common ground by creating settings to study and debate the Bible together, perhaps someday healing centuries of schism and uniting behind Jesus's

commandment to love God and love one another as ourselves.

But Dispensationalist Bible interpretations are potentially deadly when politicians like Donald Trump permit them to inform their policy decisions. As recently documented in the riveting WGBH podcast "The End of Days," so-called Christian Zionists consider the emergence of Jerusalem as the undivided capital of Israel to be a pivotal step toward the end times. Evangelical preachers' and voters' demand that Trump move the U.S. embassy from Tel Aviv to Jerusalem was a classic self-fulfilling prophecy. It did considerable damage to what remains of the Israel-Palestine peace process, in which most experts agree the status of Jerusalem should be settled last.

It could get far worse if U.S. policymakers keep implementing Christian Zionist Bible study lessons. Many want Israel to annex the West Bank so its borders would match those of Bible times. The result could well be the disenfranchisement of millions of Palestinian Arabs, turning Israel into a true apartheid state.

They also favor building a third temple in Jerusalem, with animal sacrifices and all, which would require destruction of Muslim holy sites on the Temple Mount — again, to fulfill what they believe the Bible specifies on the way to the end of days. Should the U.S. ever encourage such steps, a catastrophic regional war could indeed result, all because politicians were in the thrall of those who claim that it's actually Pete Buttigieg who misreads the Bible and disrespects Jesus.

Trump's policies signal that it's long past time for progressive denominational Christians and our dialogue partners in other faith traditions to reclaim the ineffable, irreducible, love- and justice-infused richness of our shared scriptural inheritance — and then make some foreign policy demands of our own. Here's one for starters. Whoever replaces Trump should promise that they'll dial the doomsday clock back a few millennia, not to mention reinvigorate the peace process, by moving the U.S. embassy from Jerusalem back to Tel Aviv. You with me, Mayor Pete? ■

Bishop John Harvey Taylor is diocesan bishop of the Diocese of Los Angeles. This post originally appeared in the diocesan publication "The Episcopal News" and was re-published at the online Episcopal Café.

FROM THE EDITOR'S DESK



"SUMMER READING" HAS A delightful sound, but can be used in a pejorative sense to describe books that don't overly tax the brain and are therefore perfect for the beach or country cottage. The idea is that the fluffy romance or adventure stories can be enjoyed

but deservedly forgotten as soon as the last page is turned.

"Jabbok" and its sequel, "Beulah," by Kee Sloan are fine books for the summer, but the stories will linger in the reader's mind long after the beach umbrella is put away.

Sloan is also known, perhaps to his more intimate friends, as Bishop John McKee Sloan of the Diocese of Alabama. "Jabbok" and "Beulah" are Sloan's story from boyhood into adult life and the priesthood, as told by alter ego Buddy Hinton.

As "Jabbok" opens, eight-year-old Buddy is playing "in the simmering humid heat of a Mississippi afternoon" by a creek. In a marvelously-descriptive scene, a wounded deer crashes into his consciousness, followed shortly by a black man with a long knife who puts her out of the misery caused by a careless hunter.

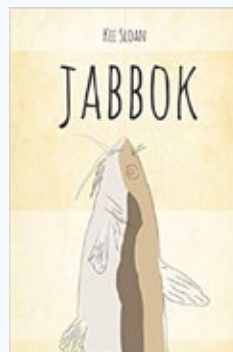
The man is Jake Jefferson, fisherman, ex-con and ex-tent preacher. He's a touchstone of inspiration

and wisdom for Buddy in his young years, but also a man who struggles with alcohol, racism and what it means to have faith in God.

Sloan writes as Buddy in a very beguiling voice — genuinely humble (a word often used hypocritically), aware of doubts and faults as he navigates his childhood, various jobs, seminary education and early years as a priest.

Sloan also excels at character, scene-setting and storytelling. He has more in common with Jesus' parables than with dense academic explanations of theology. His explanation of baptism by means of "The Wizard of Oz" is priceless — and earns him an F on his seminary paper.

Despite encountering depressing people and situations in the world of faith, Buddy keeps his sense of wonder, remembering Jake's words: "The mysteries is ever before us." ■



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NEWS

Episcopalians testify in support of slavery reparations bill

By Carrie Graves
Episcopal News Service

The House Judiciary Subcommittee on the Constitution, Civil Rights, and Civil Liberties held a hearing June 19 on H.R. 40, a bill introduced by Rep. Sheila Jackson Lee (D-Texas) that calls for the creation of a commission to study and develop reparation proposals for African Americans.

Among those serving on the panel of majority witnesses were Bishop Eugene Taylor Sutton of the Diocese of Maryland and Katrina Browne, documentary producer and consultant for the Episcopal Church as part of its racial justice and healing initiatives.

Also on the panel were actor Danny Glover, author Ta-Nehisi Coates, Columbia University undergraduate Coleman Hughes and former NFL player and author Burgess Owens. The hearing

took place on the date commemorated as “Juneteenth,” which marks the announcement of the abolition of slavery in Texas in 1865.

Sutton was the only religious leader invited to testify. Last month, the Diocese of Maryland unanimously passed a resolution on racial reconciliation, affirming a pastoral letter from Sutton to the diocese on what reparations really mean (repairing the breach) and how the diocese might move forward together through programs and initiatives to build a better world out of the wreckage of the past.

Sutton, who is black, and Browne, who is white, talked about the importance of reconciliation, truth telling and healing for the souls of all Americans. Sutton noted that he is often asked, “What do black people want?” His question, in return, is: “What do you want? If you are happy with the state of race



Photo/Carrie Graves

Diocese of Maryland Bishop Eugene Taylor Sutton greets Rep. Mary Gay Scanlon (D-Pa.) in the House Judiciary Subcommittee's hearing room.

relations in America, do nothing. If you are not happy, support the establishment of this commission for discussion and study.”

Browne's film, “Traces of the Trade,” tells the history of her slave-trading ancestors. Her closing words at the hearing were featured as the New York Times' quotation of the day: “It is good for the soul of a person, a people and of a nation to set things right.”

Other testimony focused on what were named as prejudicial government actions that have had deleterious effects on the well-being of the African American community. Practices such as redlining, predatory lending and mass incarceration were mentioned by witnesses as examples of modern oppression of African Americans. All of these issues, according to Coates, have to do with “the institution in the American mind that black people are necessarily inferior,” which was normalized by slavery.

Rep. Madeleine Dean (D-Pa.) and Rep. Mary Gay Scanlon (D-Pa.), who are not co-sponsors of the bill, cited their work on predatory lending and environmental injustice, both issues that they say embody current-day societal discrimination against African Americans. Dean quoted admissions from Wells Fargo bank of pushing subprime lending in black communities.

In his testimony opposing the bill, Owens contended that reparations victimize African Americans, implying that they do not have the power to be self-made people. Hughes argued that reparations would further divide the country

and distract from solving urgent problems facing African Americans today, such as inadequate schools and high rates of incarceration.

Other discussion centered on knowing the nation's past and its importance in guiding future action. Coates wondered why, if people really understood history, would there be statues and flags honoring the Confederacy, whose aim was to destroy the country. Glover quot-

ed James Baldwin, saying, “If we can't tell ourselves the truth about the past, we become trapped in it.”

The Episcopal Church has a more recent history of working to acknowledge the past and to discern how it can move forward. Subcommittee Chair Rep. Steve Cohen (D-Tenn.), in introducing Browne, thanked the Episcopal Church for being ahead of Congress in passing a 2006 apology for its role in the institution of slavery. (Cohen introduced an apology bill in the House of Representatives in 2007, which passed in 2008.)

General Convention has passed resolutions to Support Legislation for Reparations for Slavery (2006-C011), Endorse Restorative Justice and Anti-Racism (2006-A127), Study Economic Benefits Derived from Slavery (2006-A123), Reaffirm a Resolution on Truth, Reconciliation and Restorative Justice (2009-A144), and Recommit the Church to Anti-Racism and Request Annual Diocesan Reports (2009-A142).

H.R. 40 asks that the United States government do the same. “H.R. 40 calls for the establishment of a commission,” said Rep. Karen Bass (D-Calif.). “It does not call for [monetary] checks. To call for money trivializes reparations. Conversation is necessary, and it begins with a commission.”

Economics, however, were not left out of the discussion. Economist Julianne Malveaux closed her testimony by asking that any future legislation with economic implications be audited for racial justice. ■

Church marks anniversary of enslaved Africans' arrival

By David Paulsen
Episcopal News Service

A historically black Episcopal church in Washington, D.C., hosted a service June 9 marking 400 years since enslaved Africans first landed in North America at Jamestown in what is now Virginia.

The event at St. Luke's Episcopal Church, one of seven participating capital-area churches that were founded by slaves or former slaves, was led by Bread for the World's Pan-African Young Adult Network, and kicked off the annual Bread for the World Advocacy Summit, a large ecumenical gathering of anti-hunger advocates.

The service was framed as a time both of lament for past injustices against African Americans and of hope for a better future, Bread for the World's Angelique Walker-Smith told ENS. She said the commemoration also was a fitting start to a week of advocacy on Capitol Hill on issues related to food.

“We're bringing historic roots and a historic lens to our legislative agenda,” Walker-Smith said. Four hundred years ago, “people of African descent were basically fed the crumbs off the table.”

This year, services and events are marking the first transatlantic voyage of Africans in 1619 to the land that would become the United States and the Episcopal Church is planning its

own commemorations. The church is coordinating with the Diocese of Southern Virginia, which includes Jamestown.

“Staff of the presiding bishop's office are co-laboring with the people and staff of the Episcopal Diocese of Southern Virginia to plan a meaningful commemoration of the arrival of enslaved Africans to Jamestown,” the



Photo/Bread for the World

Participants and organizers of a service marking 400 years since enslaved Africans arrived in North America pose for a photo at St. Luke's Episcopal Church in Washington, D.C.

Rev. Charles Wynder Jr., staff officer for social justice and engagement, said by email. “The commemoration will afford the Episcopal Church a space, time and place to tell the truth and grapple deeply with the implications of its role in the transatlantic and domestic slave trade in North America.

Racial reconciliation was identified by the 2015 Episcopal Church General Convention as one of three priorities for the 2016-18 triennium and beyond, along with evangelism and care of creation. Resolutions dating back decades have helped guide the church as it responds to racism and atones for its own complicity in racial injustice and support for racist systems.

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AROUND THE CHURCH

Curry's Pride statement honors LGBTQ Episcopalians

Episcopal Church Public Affairs Office

Presiding Bishop Michael Curry on June 12 offered the following statement in honor of Pride Month:

"Jesus said: 'I give you a new commandment, that you love one another. Just as I have loved you, you also should love one another. By this everyone will know that you are my disciples, if you have love for one another.' (John 13:34-35)

"In my years of ministry, I have personally seen and been blessed by countless LGBTQ sisters, brothers and siblings. Dear friends, the church has in like manner been blessed by you. Together with many others you are faithful followers of Jesus of Nazareth and his way of love. You have helped the church to be truly catholic, universal, a house of prayer for all people. You have helped the church to truly be a reflection of the beloved commu-

nity of God. You have helped the church to authentically be a branch of the Jesus movement in our time.

"Your ministries to and with this church are innumerable. I could speak of how you often lead our vestries and other leadership bodies in the church. I could speak of how many of you organize our liturgies of worship, lift our voices in song, manage church funds, teach and form our children as followers of Jesus, lead congregations, ministries and dioceses. But through it all and above it all, you faithfully follow Jesus and his way of love. And in so doing you help the church, not to build a bigger church for church's sake, but to build a better world for God's sake.

"During June, Americans and people around the world observe Pride. As we mourn the 49 people who were murdered at the Pulse nightclub in Orlando three years

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Photo/Danielle Thomas

In this year's Washington, D.C. Pride parade, Washington National Cathedral's float featured a rainbow-colored model of a cathedral tower.

TRANSITIONS

Crist named indigenous theological education coordinator

The Rev. Canon Mary Crist has been appointed indigenous theological education coordinator for the Episcopal Church, a member of the Presiding Bishop's staff.



Crist

In this new position, Crist will work with the Rev. Brad Hauff, missionary for indigenous ministries, and within the Department of Ethnic Ministries. "I am looking forward to working with Mary as we begin the work of empowering our indigenous dioceses and congregations through theological education for formation and ministry," Hauff said. "She is well qualified for this position and besides that, has demonstrated her talents and abilities for decades as an educator in numerous settings."

This new position was approved by General Convention in 2018. Crist will work with clergy and lay leaders serving indigenous dioceses and congregations to equip them for congregational ministry and leadership, discernment and ordination processes, and continuing education programs. She will also assist with the development and implementation of indigenous curricula and the Doctrine of Discovery workshops that are a response to the General Convention Resolution.

Crist will begin her duties on August 1. She will be based in the Los Angeles area, where she has served as a priest in the Diocese of Los Angeles and as a university professor.

Crist is enrolled Blackfeet (Amskapi Pikuni) from the Douglas family in Babb on the reservation Montana. In Los Angeles, she serves at St. Michael's Riverside. She is married to the Rev. Will Crist, is the mother of an adult son

and a daughter, grandmother of five, and great grandmother of one.

She holds a Doctor of Education degree from Teachers College at Columbia University in New York, a Master of Divinity from the Episcopal Theological School/Claremont School of Theology, and a Bachelor of Arts from the University of California Berkeley.

She is the former Dean of the Metcalf School of Education and professor in the Online and Professional Studies Division at California Baptist University in Riverside. She has been active in indigenous ministry in the Episcopal Church for many years, as a member of the Executive Council's Committee on Indigenous Ministry, and is now a member of the Indigenous Missioner's Advisory Council.

— Episcopal Church Public Affairs Office

Archbishop Ernest of Mauritius appointed Director of the Anglican Center in Rome

Archbishop Ian Ernest, the Bishop of Mauritius and former primate of the Anglican Church of the Indian Ocean, is to become the Archbishop of Canterbury's next Personal Representative to the Holy See and Director of the Anglican Centre in Rome. He will take up his new role towards the end of the year following an official papal visit to Mauritius by Pope Francis in September.

"I look forward to working in close collaboration with the Archbishop of Canterbury and the Board of Governors of the Anglican Center," Ernest said.

In his current role, Ernest has worked closely with his Roman Catholic counterpart, the Bishop of Port Louis, Cardinal Maurice Piat. The two have written joint statements on environmental and social issues and have delivered joint Christmas messages for Mauritian television.

The two co-lead the ecumenical Rodrigues College on the Mauritian island of Rodrigues, which was formed in 1973 by the merger of a Roman Catholic and an Anglican school.



Photo/Diocese of Mauritius

Ernest

Archbishop of Canterbury Justin Welby said the appointment "comes at an exciting time in the growing and important relationship between the Anglican Communion and the Roman Catholic Church."

He added: "The Anglican Center in Rome was established just over 50 years ago at the time of the first public meeting between a pope and an archbishop of Canterbury since the Reformation. Over the past 50 years, the relationship between my predecessors and successive popes and the connections between people involved in official ecumenical dialogues has deepened that relationship. It is bearing much fruit — as the joint Anglican, Catholic and Presbyterian retreat at the Vatican last month for the political leaders in South Sudan demonstrates.

"Archbishop Ian will bring to his new role a wealth of experience in practical ecumenical engagement; and significant connections throughout the Anglican Communion. I look forward to working with him as we continue to develop our relationship with the Catholic Church."

— Anglican Communion News Service

House of Deputies awards medal to news service reporter Schjonberg

Mary Frances Schjonberg, longtime senior editor and reporter for Episcopal News Service, was awarded the House of Deputies medal on June 10 by the Rev. Gay Clark Jennings, president of the Episcopal Church's House of Depu-

ties. Schjonberg, a journalist with more than 40 years of experience, will retire on July 1.

In presenting the award during the Executive Council meeting in Linthicum Heights, Md., Jennings said that Schjonberg's journalistic standards and integrity "set a standard not only for all other journalists, both in and out of the church, but for all of us whose job it is to govern the church and to make that governance transparent.

"She has always — always — advocated for, and sometimes, when it was necessary, fought for, transparency in governance. Even when it was unpopular. Even when there was a cost for her. We all owe her considerable gratitude for her uncompromising standards."



Photo/Kirk Petersen/The Living Church

House of Deputies President Gay Clark Jennings, right, presents the House of Deputies Medal to Mary Frances Schjonberg.

Schjonberg, who was ordained a priest in 2001, joined Episcopal News Service in 2005. Her reporting has included the election and tenures of Presiding Bishop Katharine Jefferts Schori and Presiding Bishop Michael Curry, the story of Bishop Gene Robinson's election and episcopacy, and the church's move toward the full inclusion of LGBTQ people.

Jennings established the medal in 2012 to honor clergy and laypeople who have given distinguished service to the House of Deputies and the Episcopal Church.

— House of Deputies

AROUND THE CHURCH

Episcopal agency receives grant from Canada

Episcopal Relief & Development

Grand Challenges Canada (GCC) has awarded a grant of C\$500,000 (approximately US\$370,000) to Episcopal Relief & Development to support the expansion of Moments That Matter, an Africa-based early childhood development program partnership of Episcopal Relief & Development.

“Moments That Matter is distinctive because our program model focuses on strengthening access to critical information and services for the most vulnerable, such as small-holder farming families affected by HIV/AIDS and households headed by grandparents, adolescents or single parents,” said Melissa Crutchfield, Episcopal Relief & Development’s Director of Community Impact.

Episcopal Relief & Development’s program works directly with mothers, fathers and other primary caregivers to



improve the growth and development of children from birth to age three in marginalized communities. It links families with available health, nutrition and other services provided by government and other stakeholders and strengthens the community’s early childhood development capabilities. The program is sup-

ported in part by grants from the Conrad N. Hilton Foundation, the Episcopal Health Foundation and other donations to Episcopal Relief & Development.

Moments That Matter is active in Zambia and Kenya. Staff plan to broaden the program by starting new partnerships in Malawi, Ghana and Mozambique in 2019.

“It’s exciting to have this GCC investment to match the enthusiasm and energy of more communities mobilizing

the program and seeing their children thrive,” said Samuel Omondi Ochieng, Executive Director, the Anglican Church of Kenya Development Services-Nyanza.

The GCC Saving Brains Program focuses on supporting bold ideas to improve early brain and child development worldwide. Toronto-based Grand Challenges Canada is a nonprofit organization that seeks to fund solutions to critical health and development challenges in the developing world. ■

Presiding Bishop marks World Refugee Day

“When we welcome the stranger, we welcome the Lord God himself. We welcome Jesus,” commented Presiding Bishop Michael Curry in his 2019 World Refugee Day message.

The Presiding Bishop’s video message can be found at www.episcopalchurch.org/world-refugee-day.

World Refugee Day, June 20, honors the courage, strength, and resilience of refugees worldwide. The day is an opportunity to show support to the 68 million people around the world who are refugees or internally displaced because of conflict or persecution.



Episcopal Migration Ministries is a ministry of The Episcopal Church and is one of nine national agencies responsible for resettling refugees in the United States in partnership with the government. Episcopal Migration Ministries currently has 13 resettlement affiliates in 11 dioceses.

To join Episcopalians year round in the ministry of refugee resettlement:

- Download the World Refugee Day Advocacy Toolkit from Episcopal Migration Ministries and the Episcopal Church’s Office of Government Relations.
- Follow Episcopal Migration Ministries (@EMMRefugees) and Episcopal Public Policy Network (@THEEPPN) on Facebook and Twitter and watch for social media posts supporting #RefugeesWelcome, #SupportRefugees, and #WRD19 to support welcome and hospitality for refugees.
- Join the Episcopal Public Policy Network to learn more about how you can work with local and elected leaders to support refugees.
- Make a contribution to Episcopal Migration Ministries at www.episcopal-migrationministries.org/give.

— Episcopal Church Public Affairs Office

Migration ministries film recognized with international award

The Episcopal Migration Ministries’ #SupportRefugees film, produced by TeleStory Pictures and funded by the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-Day Saints, was recently recognized with an International Telly Award, winning bronze in the general-non-broadcast category.



Scene from #SupportRefugees film.

Founded in 1979, the Telly Awards honor excellence in video and television from advertising agencies, television stations, and production companies worldwide.



Episcopal Migration Ministries and its network of 13 affiliate partners are deeply grateful for the continued generosity and support of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints. With a gift of \$50,000 cash and \$145,000 in-kind donations, the Church of Jesus

Christ of Latter-day Saints has donated \$695,000 combined (cash and in-kind) to Episcopal Migration Ministries since 2016.

Episcopal Migration Ministries is a ministry of the Episcopal Church and is one of nine national agencies responsible for resettling refugees in the United States in partnership with the federal government. Episcopal Migration Ministries currently has 13 affiliate offices in 12 states.

— Episcopal Church Public Affairs Office

PRIDE continued from page 4

ago on June 12, I am mindful that Pride is both a celebration and a testament to sorrow and struggle that has not yet ended. Especially this month, I offer special thanks to God for the strength of the LGBTQ community and for all that you share with your spouses, partners and children, with your faith communities, and indeed with our entire nation.” ■

Diocese of New York Bishop Andrew M.L. Dietsche holds up a sign while riding a float during the 2013 Pride Parade in New York.



Photo/Sharon Sheridan/ENS

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NEWS

EXECUTIVE COUNCIL continued from page 1

The task force told council in its report that, while “benefit equivalence is unlikely to be achieved between a defined benefit (clergy) plan and a defined contribution (lay) plan,” it decided to focus on making pension contributions more equal. The Church Pension Fund board told General Convention in 2018 that most Episcopal Church employers have chosen to enroll their eligible lay employees in its Lay Defined Contribu-



Photo/Mary Frances Schjonberg/ENS

The Rev. Mally Lloyd, chair of the council's finance committee, describes the pension parity resolution.

tion Plan; only about 11.6 percent of eligible lay employees participate in the Lay Defined Benefit Plan.

“This is a good example for dioceses because while it does not mandate it for the dioceses, lots of dioceses will say, ‘Oh, well, the [DFMS] is only doing x percent, we only need to do that,’” said council member Diane Pollard. “This could be an incentive to places that are doing five percent.”

While no one spoke against the proposal during council's plenary session on June 13, some members of council's Joint Standing Committee on Finance expressed concern about the impact of such a model during the committee's discussion earlier in the meeting.

“If this is to be a model that we hope to perpetuate on the rest of the church, this is going to kill parishes,” warned the Rev. Mally Lloyd, council member from the Diocese of Massachusetts who chairs the committee and joined the group in unanimously agreeing to forward the proposal to the full council.

The Rev. Anne E. Kitch of the Diocese of Newark told her committee colleagues that if they want to support parishes they must acknowledge that the discussion is about parity and privilege, and “the way to fix it would be to lower what clergy get.”

Lloyd also warned that when the



Photos/Mary Frances Schjonberg/ENS

Diocese of North Carolina Bishop Suffragan Anne Hodges-Copple, an Executive Council member, breaks the bread during the Eucharist. The Rev. Lillian Davis-Wilson, a deacon and council member from Western New York, served with Hodges-Copple.



Executive Council member Julia Ayala Harris of the Diocese of Oklahoma preaches during a Eucharist at the council's June meeting.

2022-2024 budget is presented to the next meeting of General Convention in July 2021, the \$1.5 million decision “will have major impact on program or staffing, or something.” Convention might have to require dioceses to pay more money into the churchwide budget, she said. On the other hand, she added, the market might go up, which would increase the church's income.

Diocese of North Carolina Bishop Suffragan Anne Hodges-Copple said the pension decision is consistent with the values of equity implicit in the Jesus Movement. Presiding Bishop Michael Curry said during the committee discussion that he hoped the next budget process could remember the lens that Hodges-Copple described.

Also on the agenda of the final plenary session, Executive Council:

- heard from the Rev. Stephanie Spellers, canon to the presiding bishop for evangelism, reconciliation and stewardship of creation, that council members will soon be the first Episcopal Church leaders to receive a survey and thus engage in a new effort aimed at “speaking the truth about our church and face.” The online survey will look at the racial, cultural and ethnic makeup of vari-

ous leadership bodies in the Episcopal Church. Council members will be asked about their racial and cultural identities, as well as where they saw race playing a factor in their election and in their time on the council, she said.

The survey will eventually go to the members of the House of Bishops and the House of Deputies, as well as cathedral deans and the leadership in three dioceses in each of the church's nine provinces. The data collection, along with interviews with selected people who have answered the survey, will take a year, Spellers said.

“By the time we get to the next General Convention, we will truly have a comprehensive picture of race in our church, where we have fallen short, where we have moved forward,” she said.

- passed two resolutions setting vaccination standards for Episcopal institutions and events, and “recognizing no claim of theological or religious exemption from vaccination” for church members while reiterating the spirit of General Convention policies that “Episcopalians should seek the counsel of experienced medical professionals, scientific research, and epidemiological evidence” when making decisions about vaccinations.

A summary of all resolutions council passed at the meeting and complete ENS coverage of the meeting is at www.episcopalnewsservice.org.

The Executive Council carries out the programs and policies adopted by the General Convention. The council comprises 38 members — 20 elected by General Convention and 18 elected by the nine provincial synods, plus the presiding bishop and the president of the House of Deputies. The council's next meeting is scheduled for Oct. 18-21 in Montgomery, Ala. ■

Church develops digital invitation kits for back-to-school and back-to-ministry fall season

Episcopal Church Public Affairs Office

The Episcopal Church is developing free and downloadable resources for congregations, dioceses, and communities of faith tied to the back-to-school and back-to-ministry fall seasons. Coming this summer are a Back-2-School Digital Invitation Kit and the Back to Ministry Digital Invitation Kit.

The kits are tied to the church's “Way of Love, Practices for a Jesus-Centered Life.”

Each of these kits includes a customizable poster and postcard; a social media-ready graphic; and a Facebook cover image. Each kit also includes a video prayer message from Presiding Bishop Michael Curry which can be embedded on a church's website. These resources are themed both with and without Way of Love graphics. All evangelism resources will be available at the evangelism resources section of www.episcopalchurch.org.

“The kick-off of a school year or a new ministry year may not be liturgical seasons, but they are incarnational as they signify new beginnings and fresh starts — they represent the opportunity that we always have through

our baptismal identities to start again with God's help” said Jerusalem Greer, staff officer for evangelism for the Episcopal Church.

More than a program or curriculum, The Way of Love is an intentional commitment to a set of practices — Turn, Learn, Pray, Worship, Bless, Go, Rest — that form participants into the likeness of Jesus. Congregations have

engaged with Way of Love practices by organizing ministry fairs around the seven practices, setting up semi-public prayer stations with one station per practice, and organizing inquirers' classes around each topic.

“The Way of Love is one pattern of living an intentional baptized life no matter your age,” Greer said. “[It] is a great fit for celebrations such as Back-2-School and Back to Ministry. These events remind us that following Jesus is a daily practice, rooted in each person's unique story.”

Similar resources are planned for the seasons of Advent, Christmas, and Epiphany. A digital invitation kit was offered last Easter. They will be available in Spanish and English. If your ministry has developed a seasonal Way of Love offering, please share at wayoflove@episcopalchurch.org. ■



FEATURE

TRAIL continued from page 1

for congregational life and mission, told ENS. “If we truly believe that God is active here in our communities, then Central Pennsylvania is holy ground, too.”

That inspiration was the spark behind Appalachian Camino, a weeklong group hike organized by the Diocese of Central Pennsylvania that covered most of the trail segment through the diocese from June 23 to 30. Participants began and ended each day in worship, with churches near the route offering the hikers a place to camp for the night.

Morrow and other organizers of Appalachian Camino are following in the footsteps of nature-minded Episcopalians who have launched numerous outdoor pilgrimages and ministries in recent years. Holy Hikes, which originated in California’s San Francisco Bay area in 2010, has grown to more than a dozen chapters across the country that organize day hikes incorporating Holy Eucharist and creation care themes. In New England, the region’s Episcopal dioceses have collaborated on an annual paddling pilgrimage called River of Life that, since 2017, has turned the Connecticut River into a place of prayerful meditation and communion.

The River of Life pilgrimage influenced the planning for Appalachian Camino. Central Pennsylvania Bishop Audrey Scanlan, before becoming bishop in 2015, had served in the Diocese of Connecticut, and after welcoming Morrow’s idea for a hike, she conferred with Connecticut Bishop Ian Douglas about how he and his fellow paddlers approached their journey. The Connecticut River pilgrims, for example, typically start their mornings in silence to open their senses to the world around them.

“I’ve wondered what that would be like for us to begin our hike each morning with some great silence of our own,” Scanlan said in an interview with ENS. One of Scanlan’s goals as bishop has been to bring her diocesan staff members into the diocese’s communities so they can foster deeper relationships with Episcopalians on their home turf. She saw Morrow’s idea as a unique opportunity to further that mission.

“It’s connections between ourselves, among people of our diocese, as we continue to try to build unity across the diocese,” Scanlan said of Appalachian Camino’s purpose. “It’s connections with the Earth and initiatives around creation care, and actually being in creation and spending time appreciating and walking through God’s place.”

“The other piece is getting out and being among other fellow pilgrims who are hiking and being the church in the world.”

Scanlan isn’t the only Episcopal bish-

‘It’s connections with the Earth and initiatives around creation care, and actually being in creation and spending time appreciating and walking through God’s place.’

— Bishop Audrey Scanlan



Photo/courtesy of the Appalachian Trail Conservancy

About 3,000 people each year attempt to hike all 2,190 miles of the Appalachian Trail, which stretches from Georgia to Maine, including this segment in North Carolina.



Photo/Holy Hikes

The Rev. Justin Cannon presides at Holy Eucharist during one of the Holy Hikes outings of the original chapter in the San Francisco area.



Photo/Erik Karas

op with an eye for ministry possibilities on the Appalachian Trail. Western Massachusetts Bishop Douglas Fisher leads a diocese that includes the trail’s full 91-mile Massachusetts segment, and when the Rev. Erik Karas took over as rector of Christ Trinity Church in Sheffield two years ago, Fisher suggested he consider a trail-based ministry.

Christ Trinity Church, a joint Episcopal and Lutheran congregation, is just a few miles from a point where the Appalachian Trail crosses a sunny field. Karas hatched a plan to create “a corner of kindness” in the field for passing hikers.

His congregation bought shade canopies, chairs with backs, a grill and



Photo/Kairos Earth, via Facebook

Pilgrims launch from a dock in Essex, Conn., in July 2017, the final day of the River of Life pilgrimage.

Left, hikers on the Appalachian Trail pause for a break last July at the rest stop maintained by Christ Trinity Church in Sheffield, Mass.

a table and stocked the makeshift oasis with high-calorie snacks and lunches. Church volunteers staffed the rest stop midday on Wednesdays and Saturdays last July, when the thru-hikers were most likely to pass by.

“The hikers call it trail magic, and the people who give that kind of hospitality they call angels,” Karas said. His parishioners benefited from the experience, too.

“It’s an opportunity for the people in my church to practice hospitality and kindness to strangers,” he said. “It sort of embodies that gospel, that grace moment, unexpected and abundant.”

They are planning to bring the ministry back to the Appalachian Trail this July and to expand the number of days if more churches sign on to help.

Episcopalians in Central Pennsylvania have a long history of trail magic along their stretch of the Appalachian

Trail. Bishop James Henry Darlington, the diocese’s first bishop in the early 20th century, is remembered as an early booster for conservation efforts and trail development in the region. Darlington Shelter, named in his honor, is one of the landmarks the Appalachian Camino hikers will pass.

The Appalachian Trail covers 229 miles in Pennsylvania, though only part of that segment passes through the Diocese of Central Pennsylvania. The group hike kicked off June 23 near the Maryland state line at Calvary Episcopal Chapel in Beartown, Pa., and it is set to conclude on June 28 with an end-of-hike celebration at St. Andrew’s in the Valley Episcopal Church in Harrisburg.

About 15 people signed up to hike the full six days, Morrow said. Others were to join the hike for a day at a time. A support van was to shadow the group along the route, lightening the hikers’ loads and transporting them to and from the trailhead.

This stretch of the Appalachian Trail is known as “Rocksylvania” because it crosses some rough terrain, though much of it remains relatively flat, Morrow said. A mix of clergy and laity, as well as some young children, have signed up. The group hiked 13 to 20 miles a day, with options for shorter day hikes. ■

Two Michigan dioceses to share bishop

By David Paulsen
Episcopal News Service

The Diocese of Eastern Michigan is expected this year to finalize a partnership with the neighboring Diocese of Western Michigan in which they would share a bishop, increase collaboration and pool resources — a process of experimentation and dialogue that eventually could lead to a long-term commitment between the two dioceses.

The dioceses have not shied away from discussing the possibility of someday merging, a canonically governed process known as “juncture,” though that is just one of many options on the table as they consider the future of the Episcopal Church in Michigan. The state encompasses four dioceses, and all four have collaborated in the past in various ways, from joint formation programs to coordinated public statements on statewide issues.

In October, Eastern Michigan’s convention is scheduled to vote to elect Western Michigan Bishop Wayne Hougland Jr. as bishop provisional. If approved, Hougland would be following in the footsteps of other dual-diocese bishops, in particular Northwestern Pennsylvania Bishop Sean Rowe who also serves as bishop provisional of the Diocese of Western New York.

The transition underway in the Diocese of Eastern Michigan follows a spirit of innovation that dates back to its creation in 1994, when it was carved out of the Detroit-based Diocese of Michigan.

“The idea was local leadership. Grass-roots efforts would rise up from the local congregation and be shared,” said Katie Forsyth, who joined the diocese as director of communications and public engagement in 2013. “Very purposefully, the diocese was designed to be a little more flexible ... We are actually well-skilled to try something on and see how it goes.”

Bishop Edwin Leidel Jr. was consecrated as the diocese’s first bishop in 1996, and today he is remembered for encouraging Episcopalians in Eastern Michigan to be open to change.

“Bishop Leidel’s entrepreneurial spirit and tireless embrace of possibilities helped give shape to a diocese that blesses experimentation and gives permission to take bold steps without fear of failure,” the diocese says on its website.

Forsyth’s own career path is emblematic. In March 2018, she assumed her current role, serving both Eastern Michigan and Western Michigan as canon for networking and evangelism. The dioceses also work together on a congregational development program, youth ministries, a diversity task force, a



Photo/Diocese of Eastern Michigan

Clergy in the Diocese of Eastern Michigan and the Diocese of Western Michigan attend a joint clergy retreat last May.

disciplinary board and mission outreach to the Dominican Republic.

Future collaboration could include clergy retreats, diocesan publications, ministry workshops and joint Standing Committee meetings.

A key catalyst for the recent conversations was the resignation in June 2017 of Eastern Michigan Bishop Todd Ousley, who left to lead the Episcopal Church’s Office of Pastoral Development, a position on the presiding bishop’s staff that assists dioceses undergoing bishop transitions. In an interview with ENS, Ousley said that the church is working to move beyond organizational structures that date back to the 18th and 19th centuries.

“We’re getting better as a church on focusing on mission-driven priorities rather than trying to squeeze the mission into an existing structure,” he said.

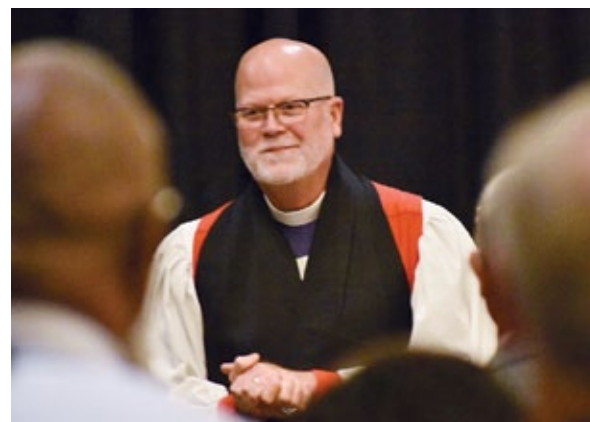
General Convention underscored the importance in a 2018 resolution that called on dioceses and congregations to engage periodically in missional review, to determine “what is God calling us to be and do at this time and in this place.”



Photo/Diocese of Eastern Michigan, via Facebook

The Diocese of Eastern Michigan facilitates table discussions of three resolutions outlining its options for a bishop transition at its October 2018 convention, held in Flint, Mich.

Ousley, who joined the Diocese of Eastern Michigan as canon to the ordinary in 2001, succeeded Leidel as bishop in 2007. He told ENS that, toward the end of his tenure, he sensed that Eastern Michigan and Western Michigan were ripe for a more substantive partnership, something he began discussing with



Photo/David Paulsen/ENS

Bishop Todd Ousley resigned from the Diocese of Eastern Michigan in June 2017 to lead the Episcopal Church’s Office of Pastoral Development.

Hougland.

“Both Eastern and Western were going to come to a point where they were facing questions of viability,” Ousley said.

Envisioning the future in Michigan

Those questions partly focused on regional demographics, Ousley said. The eastern half of Michigan was losing population — Flint, the diocese’s largest city, dropped from 125,000 residents in the 2000 census to about 102,000 in 2010 — and the statewide population has stagnated at about 10 million. Furthermore, Eastern Michigan mirrored churchwide declines in Sunday attendance, with baptized members down nearly 40 percent from 2007 to 2017.

Diocesan leaders also recognized that Eastern Michigan, based in Saginaw, and Western Michigan, based in the Grand Rapids area, had much in common theologically and culturally, with congregations spread across rural communities, summer resort areas and smaller cities. By contrast, the Diocese of Michigan in the southeast corner of the state includes more large cities and suburbs, including Detroit, the capital of Lansing and the college town of Ann Arbor. The Diocese of Northern Michigan encompasses the state’s sparsely pop-

ulated Upper Peninsula and is geographically separated from the rest of the state by Lake Michigan and Lake Huron.

The Rev. Dan Scheid had served in the Diocese of Western Michigan before moving to Eastern Michigan to become rector of St. Paul’s Episcopal Church in Flint in 2015. Back then, he recalled, Ousley at a clergy retreat talked about tough decisions ahead and the best use of Episcopal resources in the state.

“He had made it clear that certainly the bishops of the state had been in conversation about what the church in Michigan would look like,” said Scheid, who also serves as president of Eastern Michigan’s Standing Committee.

When Ousley left in 2017, rather than immediately launch a search for a new bishop diocesan, Eastern Michigan voted in October 2017 to elect Bishop Catherine Waynick as bishop provisional for at least a year. Waynick had retired in April of that year as bishop of Indianapolis.

“We saw that as a time to do some discernment,” Scheid told ENS, and early on, Eastern Michigan leaders invited Hougland and others from the Diocese of Western Michigan to be part of those

conversations.

That process picked up steam in early 2018 when Eastern Michigan held five gatherings around the diocese from January to March to hear what Episcopalians thought about the diocese’s strengths, needs and outlook for the future.

A follow-up meeting in May at St. Paul’s in Flint was attended by Waynick, Hougland and other leaders from both dioceses. The presentations included an outline of what Eastern Michigan had identified as its three options: start searching for Ousley’s permanent replacement, find a long-term provisional bishop or take a step closer to Western Michigan by electing Hougland as bishop provisional.

Learning from Western New York

A similar process underway hundreds of miles to the east was providing a potential model for Michigan Episcopalians.

After Western New York Bishop William Franklin announced in April 2017 that he intended to retire, his diocese began a discernment process that led to the decision to collaborate and experiment with the Diocese of Northwestern Pennsylvania, giving both dioceses time to try new approaches before figuring out what might come next. The two dioceses carefully avoided talk of possibly merging someday, focusing instead on their short-term work together.

Eastern Michigan’s third option was similar to the arrangement between Western New York and Northwestern Pennsylvania. “We’ve pointed them out

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NEWS

Convocation hears about signs of hope in Navajoland

By Dick Snyder

Navajoland gets by with a little help from its friends, Bishop David Bailey explained during the 43rd annual convocation held June 7-9 in Farmington, N.M.

"There are a lot of challenges, mostly economic," Bailey said in his address. He explained that most of the buildings in



Photos/Dick Snyder

Bishop David Bailey, left, and Bishop Michael Smith participate in the blessing of the Hozho Center.

Navajoland are old with outdated electrical service, galvanized pipes and leaky roofs. For instance, use of the St. Mary in the Moonlight church in Monument Valley has been suspended because the roof collapsed, he noted.

But there are signs of hope which include a grant from the Arthur Vining Davis Foundation to make major repairs at Good Shepherd Mission in Fort Defiance, Ariz., and partnerships with other dioceses, parishes and church organizations.

During the next year the diocese's

building needs will be analyzed and more attention paid to maintenance needs, the bishop said. The sparse budget has been centered on ministry needs, he said.

He noted that four Navajos have now completed their seminary education and are at work within Navajoland.

In an interview, he explained that Navajoland is working toward sustainability and eventual self-sustainability by developing indigenous ordained and lay leadership, and developing relationships with partners such as the Diocese of West Texas.

Bailey is also helping with episcopal duties in Rio Grande, West Texas and Colorado as part of those developing partnerships.

The next couple of years will also see the start of a strong endowment plan, and the appeal for that is being put together now, he said. "The Navajo want to be part of the Episcopal Church, and we now have hope that is going to work," Bailey said.

Navajoland has worked to find ways for the church to raise funds, such as renting its facilities to those who wish to use them for retreats.

The Episcopal Church in Navajoland (its formal name) is the church's only area mission. It functions similarly to a diocese but is under the general oversight of the presiding bishop. Its boundary is coterminous with that of the Navajo nation, where the unemployment rate is around 50 percent and more than a third of the population live in poverty.

ECN receives base budget support from the national church of approxi-



Indigenous Missioner Brad Hauff, left, and Bishop David Bailey address Navajoland's challenges.

At left, the Hozho Wellness Center occupies a former hospital.

mately \$1 million for the three years between General Conventions, an amount that has remained static for several years.

Bailey noted that ECN has just started receiving funding for the episcopate, including a canon to the ordinary through the actions of the Executive Council and Presiding Bishop Michael Curry. Bailey said that has been a "godsend" to Navajoland.

Part of the convocation's activities included a blessing of the Hozho Wellness Center, which was built in 1929 and served as a hospital for the Navajo on the grounds of what is now the ECN mission in Farmington.

The center will serve as the offices for the Cheii Web Development site shop, where the three partners are Navajo and Episcopalians, and as a place where well-

ness programs for women will take place. Hozho is a Navajo word that means balance, harmony and life.

Bailey joked that the recently remodeled building "is the only one in Navajoland that doesn't leak." Funding for its completion included a grant through the Native American Ministry office of the Episcopal Church.

Bishop Michael Smith, retired bishop of North Dakota and now assistant bishop in the Diocese of Dallas, participated in the blessing of the Hozho Center.

Delegates also approved creation of an education assistance fund which will provide funds to help Navajos pursuing education goals. Up to \$20,000 annually will be available through a bequest to establish the fund. ■

MICHIGAN continued from page 8

as kind of the most direct reflection of the work that we're considering," Forsyth told ENS.

Northwestern Pennsylvania's Rowe traveled to the Diocese of Eastern Michigan to offer his insight into the process at a gathering hosted by St. John's Episcopal Church in Midland, Michigan, on Sept. 16, 2018.

The next month, Western New York elected Rowe as its bishop provisional for five years.

Eastern Michigan took its own definitive step forward last October. At its convention that month, a majority threw its support behind the diocese's third option and voted to officially invite Houglund to be considered for election as the Diocese of Eastern Michigan's bishop provisional, leading both dioceses for three to five years.

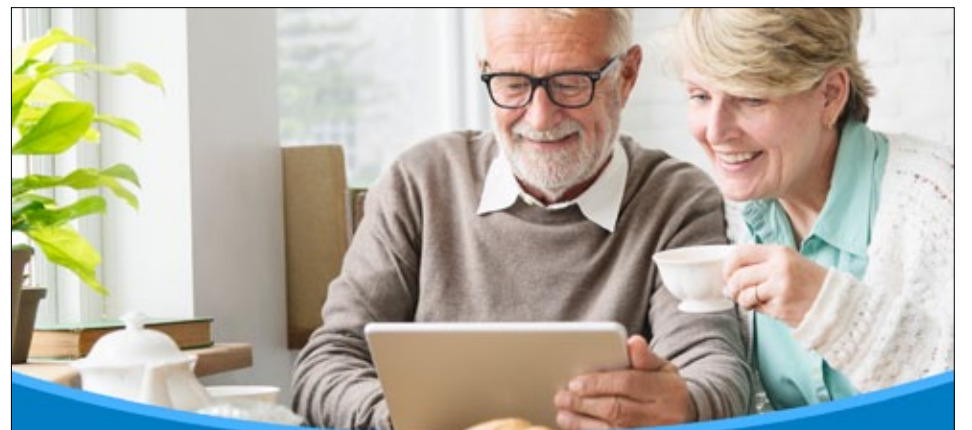
Houglund presented that proposal to his diocese at three listening sessions, two of which Scheid also attended. In April, after meeting with Western Mich-

igan's Standing Committee and Diocesan Council, Houglund announced in a video their unanimous approval of "the invitation to dance with our friends in Eastern Michigan."

The plan is expected to be finalized by Eastern Michigan in October.

Scheid noted that this process has taken place during a period of relative health in both dioceses, long before either had reached a panic moment that would have forced desperate measures. And with Presiding Bishop Michael Curry encouraging all dioceses to find new ways of spreading the Jesus Movement, Scheid said Eastern Michigan reached the conclusion that the most effective way to serve that purpose, at least in the short term, wasn't to continue devoting resources to the office of the bishop.

"It's a tremendous gift and opportunity, as I see it, really to do some creative thinking, some experimentation, to sort of help set some possible ways forward for other dioceses in the church too which might be exploring new models," Scheid said. ■



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FEATURE

In California, celebrating a new name and affirming authentic identity for transgender Episcopalians

By Pat McCaughan
Episcopal News Service

For Jennifer Gonzales, 49, participating in a June 7 Service of Renaming at Holy Trinity Episcopal Church in Covina, Calif., near Los Angeles, was claiming her authentic self.

“I knew I was transgender from a young age, even though I did all the boy stuff — biking, skateboarding,” Gonzales told ENS after the ceremony. “My mom didn’t know, really. One time I told her, ‘Mom, I’m transgender.’ She laughed at me.”

The ceremony is included in the Book of Occasional Services 2018, a liturgical resource of The Episcopal Church that was released in April and is available online. The Service of Renaming is intended for “when an event or experience leads a baptized person to take or be given a new name. ... This new beginning is distinct from the new life begun in Holy Baptism.”

The Book of Occasional Services is a companion to the Book of Common Prayer and offers ceremonies and rites for occasions that occur too infrequently to be included in the prayer book. Authorized by the General Convention of The Episcopal Church, it includes rites intended to aid congregations in celebrating specific occasions, such as the Blessing of a Pregnant Woman, St. Francis Day animal blessings, and the Way of the Cross, which typically is used during Holy Week and represents Christ’s journey to the cross.

Vicky Mitchell, 58, who attended the June 7 ceremony and identifies as a transgender woman, said the ceremony makes sacred what too often has been ridiculed and shamed.

The renaming service can help counter “dead-naming,” the practice of referring to transgender persons by the names they used before transitioning to their new identities.

“For trans people, identity is a really core thing,” Mitchell said. “It has to do with the divine image, with personal identity. Naming is just so special, having our name accepted, knowing that our name is lifted and that we have found the right one for us.”

Many transgender people, including Mitchell herself, “knew years and years ago that the outward image that all the rest of you saw did not match the image within our hearts,” she said. “We didn’t know how to communicate that to you for so long. But we kept looking, kept seeing this, and finally one day, it was either let it out or harm ourselves.”

“I knew I was female in spite of being the father of three children,” she added. “I tried for years to fit in with my male counterparts.”

The discontinuity between inner awareness and outer appearance can lead to heightened suicide rates compared to

the general population, she said.

A 2018 study by the American Academy of Pediatrics indicated that more than half of transgender male teens, 29.9% of transgender female teens and 41.8% of nonbinary teens, or youth whose gender identity may fluctuate, said they had attempted suicide at least once.

Additionally, a Human Rights Campaign online survey of 12,000 LGBTQ youth from all 50 states and Washington, D.C., revealed “heartbreaking levels of stress, anxiety and rejection” from family and others. It also indicated that all LGBTQ teenagers “overwhelmingly feel unsafe in their own school classrooms.”

The 2017 report indicated that transgender youth were twice as likely to be harassed and mocked by family members. About 51% reported they are barred from using school restrooms matching their gender identity.

‘I am a new creation, grateful to embody Christ’s image’

After the April release of the Book of Occasional Services 2018, “Jennifer and I read the service together and we both started crying,” recalled the Rev. Steven De Muth, Holy Trinity’s rector. “I asked her if doing it would be a blessing, and she said yes.”

Gonzales, who lives in Covina, said she felt nervous before the ceremony’s start, practicing again and again her one-line response: “I am a new creation, grateful to embody Christ’s image.”

“I’m trying to memorize it,” she told De Muth, who officiated. The ceremony recalled scriptural name changes, such as “Sarai, who became Sarah; Jacob, who became Israel; and Simon called Peter,” and included prayers for the LGBTQ community written by Rabbi Heather Miller of Temple Beth El of South Orange County, California.

“This isn’t my story to tell. I am simply a companion on the road,” De Muth told about 50 worshippers in a reflection during the ceremony.

Speaking directly to Gonzales, he said: “Along the way, you captured our hearts with your willingness to participate in our ministry of feeding those who are hungry.”

“You captured the imagination of The Episcopal Church who, until they met someone who was transgender, the beauty of experience and the challenge of experience were just on a written page. For us, you’ve brought that to life.

‘It is such a tiny thing for us, and yet for a trans person, it is everything.’

— Rev. Julie Kelly



Photo/Pat McCaughan

Jennifer Gonzales affirms her new name with “I am a new creation, grateful to embody Christ’s image” during the renaming ceremony at Holy Trinity Church in Covina, Calif., with the Rev. Steve De Muth, rector.

“It’s sometimes not until your heart is touched by someone you love that you begin to understand and to care.”

The service was co-sponsored by the Covina and Pomona chapters of GLEAM — Gathering LGBTQ Episcopalians in Advancing Ministry in the Diocese of Los Angeles. During a meal after the ceremony, they led a conversation about challenges specific to transgender persons.

“The Episcopal Church has been way ahead” in supporting LGBTQ persons, Robert Amore, coordinator for GLEAM’s Pomona chapter, told the gathering. He described “as groundbreaking” the General Convention 1976 Resolution A069, which affirmed the full and equal claim of homosexual persons as children of God deserving of the love, acceptance and pastoral concern of the church.

From the election of the Rt. Rev. Gene Robinson as the first gay bishop in 2003 to renaming ceremonies, “we just keep going,” he said. “Here I am, 64 years old, and things are opening up and I’m so grateful.” Speaking of his experience at the renaming service, he said, “I could just feel the joy in God’s spirit, and this is how we go forward — in joy.”

Accepting new names

When Gonzales first selected Jennifer as her new name, “the people I told laughed at me,” she told ENS.

Others dead-named her, “almost weaponizing my former name and calling me by it to make me feel bad. It makes me really mad,” Gonzales said.

“When I was a guy, I didn’t like myself. I was really self-conscious. I couldn’t

even go into a place or a building that had people in it, I hated myself so much. But I don’t care now. I go wherever I want, and if somebody’s hateful to me, I say to myself, ‘Just give it to God.’”

The Rev. Julie Kelly, pastor of Hope Lutheran Church, an Evangelical Lutheran Church in America congregation in Riverside, Calif., told the gathering she is “the proud mom of a young bisexual man, two straight young men and a nonbinary transgender transmasculine child as well” and that dead-naming is a very real and very damaging occurrence.

“Dead name’ sounds so powerful and hurtful for some people,” she said. “Some trans persons don’t use the word because they appreciate their history, their previous name, but they also know that is not representative of who they are now.”

As a member of several support groups for transgender parents and children, Kelly said parents often have difficulty with the new names chosen by their children.

“It doesn’t mean that we’re ever denying the love, the intentionality, the nurturing of that person. It’s just a name we picked before we knew the person, and now the right name has risen up and that is a sacred thing,” Kelly said.

“We rebirth our children over and over again. That’s what parenting is. We rebirth, we go through the pain and we watch them become a person on their own in the world. When we let the dead name go and we acknowledge how important that is, we give them that breath, just like the first one they take after they are pushed out of the womb.”

She said it is vital for communities to understand the importance of and to support the acceptance of transgender persons’ chosen names.

“It is such a tiny thing for us, and yet for a trans person, it is everything,” Kelly said. “It is lifesaving. It is breath. I invite you into that as a mom who has seen what happens to my kid every time they’re dead-named. ... I hear a little part of them die. I invite you into that practice because it’s lifesaving.”

Maria Guadalupe Sanchez, 61, a Holy Trinity parishioner who also attended the celebration, said both ceremony and conversation felt wonderful.

“I am very proud of my church,” Sanchez told ENS. “It is very open, very human. We really try to help everyone believe they are made in God’s image. We celebrate our diversity, and our dignity, that we are all God’s children.” ■

FEATURE

Two Florida communities search for common ground

By Bob Libby

Episcopalians are helping — for the seventh year — to set up a “Christmas in July” event to be held July 15 on the village green in Key Biscayne, Fla., an upscale island community east of Miami, for kids from Liberty City, an inner-city Miami neighborhood that was the scene of deadly riots nearly 40 years ago.

In 90-degree heat, Santa Claus will hand out toys and school supplies, but this Santa is usually played by an officer of the Key Biscayne Police Department. The event is a symbol of an unlikely, but growing, relationship between Liberty City and Key Biscayne, spearheaded by Key Biscayne Police Chief Charles Press, a member of St. Christopher’s Episcopal Church, Key Biscayne.

“This is not a church program, but a community wide venture, where many members of our congregation are leaders,” said the Rev. Susan Bruttell, rector of St. Christopher’s.

In 1980, Liberty City and other Miami neighborhoods were the scene of racial unrest following the acquittal of four police officers charged with the death of Arthur Mc Duffie after a motorcycle chase. The rioting resulted in 18 deaths,

served communities; and 2) provide opportunities for neighbors of different cultures and socioeconomic levels to learn and care about each other. What is most important here is to understand the dynamic of a very wealthy community partnering with one of South Florida’s most economically deprived areas.”

Another St. Christopher’s member, Pat Molinari, established a fresh vegetable co-op as part of an 18-block community space developed by MCI, where residents can access a food bank, a clothing closet, medical resources, tutoring and parenting classes.

Now retired, Molinari knows food, as she founded Parties-by-Pat, which catered social events on the Key. “I started with a large box of 50 to 60 dollars’ worth of fresh produce and sold them for no more than five dollars. Quite often, cooking lessons followed and in most cases fruit was a new experience,” Molinari said.

A signature moment occurred five years ago when Press led a “March for Peace” parade of Miami-Dade uniformed police officers around Liberty City with several hundred youngsters holding their hands. A barbecue and games followed.

In another example of the community’s development, Liberty City’s Charles H. Drew K-8 elementary school has moved from an “F” to a triple “B” rating and there are several charter schools being constructed to offer their services

to the area’s 2,800 kindergarten to grade 12 students.

John Devaney, a lifelong member of St. Christopher’s and the founder and CEO of United Capital Markets, was instrumental in securing initial funding for Press through the Key Biscayne Foundation, which Devaney helped to establish.

As word of the Liberty City venture got around, support from community groups such as Rotary International grew and in 2013 the relationship received the official endorsement of the Key Biscayne Village Council which declared Liberty City as the “Sister City of Key Biscayne.”

In 2018, Press took eight senior high school students to San Francisco to attend the “My Brother’s Keeper Conference,” designed to encourage young black males to take responsibility for their families and communities.

It was sponsored by the Barack Obama Foundation, and for the Liber-



Photo/Leo Quintana

At left, Key Biscayne police led a “March for Peace” in 2016 with children from the Miami neighborhood of Liberty City.

Below, Key Biscayne Police Chief Charles Press has led efforts to link affluent Key Biscayne with inner-city Liberty City.



Photo/Leo Quintana



Photo/Foncham, Warley and Marko

Key Biscayne Police Officer Gordon Spitzer plays Santa at “Christmas in July” for the youngsters of Liberty City.

more than 300 injuries, 600 arrests and \$100 million in property destruction.

Interviewed about the riots, the Rev. Ken Majors, who at the time was the rector of Liberty City’s Incarnation Episcopal Church, said, “Our community was in shambles. Blacks felt betrayed by the white establishment. We just didn’t trust one another, but thanks be to God things are better now.”

In 2004, Press established the Chief Press Foundation under the umbrella of the Key Biscayne Foundation “to improve the relationship of police to the children of Liberty City.”

The foundation’s website notes that, “building on Chief Press’ charitable work, in 2013 the Village of Key Biscayne partnered with the Miami Children’s Initiative (MCI) to create a sister city partnership with Liberty City.”

The object was two-fold: “1) provide better outcomes for children in under-

ty City delegation, it was the first time they had flown on a plane or been out of South Florida. “They came home,” Press said, “with a whole new hopeful vision of their future.”

Also in 2018, a new venture began on the education front when Bill and Toby Rohrer, who were married at St. Christopher’s 25 years ago, committed \$200,000 to establish a scholarship program for Liberty City students at Miami Dade Community College.

“There’s still a lot to be done,” reflected Press, “but I do believe we’re beginning to make a difference. In the meantime, Christmas in July is only days away.” ■

The Rev. Bob Libby, a published author and frequent contributor to Episcopal Journal lives with his wife Lynne on Key Biscayne, Fla.

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FAITH AND THE ARTS

Celebrating a new African American ecumenical hymnal

By Carl MaultsBy

I served on the core committee that prepared *One Lord, One Faith, One Baptism: An African American Ecumenical Hymnal*, at the kind invitation of its executive editor, James Abbington. Our work came to fruition in June 2018, when the hymnal was unveiled at the Hampton Ministerial and Musicians Conference.

In our first meeting, we reviewed existing African American hymnals, notably *African American Heritage Hymnal* and *Total Praise*. As recounted by the Rev. Lisa M. Weaver in the hymnal's foreword, we received a homework assignment from Robert Batastini of GIA Publications: "When you go back home, pick songs from your respective traditions that are beloved and that you can't imagine a hymnal without them."

We chose 202 of the hymns in *Lift Every Voice and Sing* in the first round of reviews. I wanted to focus on the material that was unique to Episcopal and eucharistic liturgical hymnody: responsorial simplified Anglican chant psalm settings as well as Mass settings. This required a bit of teaching of the core committee, just as I learned from my colleagues about their traditions.

Abbington told us he wanted the hymnal to honor the past, acknowledge the present, and engage for the future.

odists and the strict theology of the Presbyterians, the pioneering protests of the Lutherans and the defiant spirit of Richard Allen, the Kingdom keys of Saint Peter and the glorious liberty of the Non-conformists, the gorgeous liturgy of the Episcopalians and the intellectual honesty of the Unitarians, the spiritual fervor of the Pentecostals, and the marvelous freedom the folks called Baptists. ... I want it all because there is no place for narrowness and bigotry in the Church of Jesus Christ. We are all in one and we are one in all. ("All Things Are Yours" [1 Cor. 3:21-23], preached on Jan. 25, 1987)



MaultsBy

In honoring the past, I saw the future compendium as a way to introduce the larger Church to the works of black Episcopal composers such as Horace Clarence Boyer, Harry T. Burleigh, John Cooper, William B. Cooper, and J. Rosamund Johnson. In addition, I wanted to share the works of living black Episcopal composers David Hurd and Carl Haywood. Their hymns, like the other submissions, had to resonate musically and theologically with a majority of the other 11 members of the ecumenical committee. All of these composers are included in the final version of the hymnal, as well as hymn texts by Episcopalians the Rev. Harold Lewis, Michael McKee, and James Weldon Johnson.



Photo/courtesy of The Living Church

The hymnal's core committee included, front row from left, Birgitta Johnson, Lisa Weaver, Leo Davis, Ingrid Faniel and Bob Batastini. Second row, from left, Anthony Vinson, Judith McAllister, Carl MaultsBy, James Abbington, Brian Johnson and Jason Ferdinand.

One of my 11 items in the hymnal is the setting of Psalm 34 that I composed for the ordination and consecration of the Rt. Rev. Gregory H. Brewer as Bishop of Central Florida.

By the end of our work sessions, we had reviewed approximately 3,000 pieces of music and chose to include 741 in the hymnal. After the publisher secured licenses and permissions from copyright owners and administrators, the final volume netted 698 entries.

The hymnal content centers on five basic themes: The Assembly at Worship, The Celebration of the Gospel Story, The Gospel in the Christian Life, Historic Hymns and Songs in the African American Traditions, and Service Music. The Celebration of the Gospel Story has subcategories that conform to the liturgical year, Advent through Christ the King. Service Music has two large subcategories: first, General Service Music that includes Mass settings, psalms, and canticles; second, there is music for Baptism, Confirmation, Marriage, Ordination, and Holy Communion.

Perhaps *One Lord, One Faith, One Baptism* can be used as an example of how hymnal revision can proceed without depending on prayer book revision. The service music portions would

probably need to be a separate volume since some texts would be directly tied to worship language of a revised prayer book. In 2009, the Episcopal Church adopted the Revised Common Lectionary (RCL). Congregational song can easily be expanded to include diverse material that reinforces the RCL texts and themes.

The format of a future hymnal must also take advantage of current technology and not be limited by the binders of a traditional book. Such a proposed collection could easily be expanded as new liturgies evolve.

If representatives from 10 different denominations can produce a single viable worship hymnal, might the Episcopal Church produce a single hymnal suitable for use that reflects the Episcopal Church in its diversity, inclusivity, and tradition? After all, the Episcopal Church also embraces the pronouncement of Ephesians 4:4-5: "There is one body and one Spirit, just as you were called to the one hope of your calling, one Lord, one faith, one baptism." ■

Carl MaultsBy is director of music at St. Richard's Church in Winter Park, Fla. This story was first published in *The Living Church*.

Curry's podcast explores 'The Way of Love'

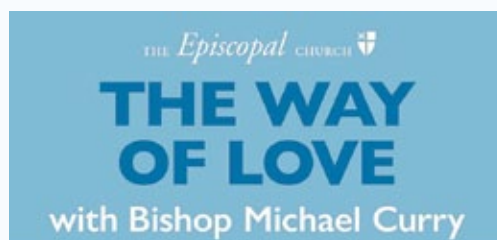
Episcopal Church Office of Public Affairs

"The way of Jesus is the way of love. And the way of love can change the world," Presiding Bishop Michael Curry says in his new podcast, "The Way of Love: with Bishop Michael Curry," which launched on Pentecost, June 9.

The weekly conversations, featuring Bishop Curry along with podcast hosts Kyle Oliver and Sandy Milien, explore living a life committed to living the way of God's unconditional, unselfish, sacrificial and redemptive love.

Each week in Season 1, Bishop Curry introduces one of the seven "Ways of Love, Practices for a Jesus-Centered Life" (www.episcopalchurch.org/way-of-love): Turn, Learn, Pray, Worship, Bless, Go, and Rest. Listeners are invited into deeper engagement with each practice as Kyle and Sandy share their insights and offer questions for reflection or small group discussion.

New episodes air Tuesdays through



July 30.

The Way of Love: with Bishop Michael Curry, is available on all podcast apps and at episcopalchurch.org (www.episcopalchurch.org/way-of-love/podcast). Visit the Way of Love podcast webpage to subscribe to the podcast through Apple iTunes, Google Play or Spotify and to sign up for notifications of new seasons and episodes as well as additional featured content. ■

SLAVERY continued from page 3

A 2006 resolution specifically apologized for the church's complicity, acknowledging that "the Episcopal Church lent the institution of slavery its support and justification based on Scripture." Three years later, General Convention voted to encourage each diocese to research the church's role in enabling or resisting slavery and segregation, as well as "the economic benefits derived by the Episcopal Church from the transatlantic slave trade and the institution of slavery."

The Episcopal Church also regularly partners with ecumenical organizations like Bread for the World in advocacy on

Capitol Hill. Bread for the World, for example, led planning for the "For Such a Time as This" fasting campaign, which the Episcopal Church supported, and its Advocacy Summit is expected to bring hundreds of participants to Washington this week.

St. Mark's Episcopal Church in Washington served as home base for much of Bread for the World's two-day Advocacy Summit. The congregation, near Capitol Hill, hosted a breakfast and worship service June 11 before participants left for their rounds at Senate and House office buildings to meet with lawmakers and their staffs in support of legislation that would prioritize global nutrition efforts. ■

FAITH AND THE ARTS

The dark uncertainty of Bach's B minor Mass

By Wesley Hill

A few weeks after a Lutheran theologian joined the faculty of the evangelical Anglican seminary where I teach, he said something to me about his experience of daily chapel that lingers in my memory. "It's strange not to be singing the liturgy," he said. "The words have a different quality somehow when they're said rather than sung."

"[N]obody sings like [Lutherans] do," writes Garrison Keillor. Singing with Lutherans is "one of the main joys of life, along with hot baths and fresh sweet corn." No doubt that indisputable fact partly explains my new colleague's nostalgia. But he was, I think, also trying to form a theological question, birthed out of his long experience of using the *Lutheran Book of Worship*. From his childhood, most of the collects he had prayed in church services had been sung or chanted. Now, in a low-church Anglican setting, saying the office had given him a slightly discomfiting occasion to reflect: *What am I missing? What does musical prayer mean?*

I thought of this little exchange recently after attending a magnificent performance of J.S. Bach's *B minor Mass*. For part of my sabbatical this year, I spent a few weeks in England, and when I saw that the New Cambridge Singers and the Cambridge Baroque Camerata would be performing Bach's last triumphant masterwork in the vast, dim, Oxford Movement-inspired chapel at St. John's College, I knew I would not miss it. Much as I have loved listening to John Eliot Gardiner and the late Sir Georg Solti's recordings over the years — solemnly authentic and brightly fleet, respectively — hearing this music performed live in a space where I had knelt for Evensong on previous days was a privilege not to be forgotten.

By far the most moving moment of the performance was at the very end of the *Symbolum Nicenum* (that is, the Nicene Creed — Bach the Lutheran takes as his libretto the text of the Latin Mass). There has been a light dance of choral layers for the part of the creed that declares belief in "one baptism," but as the rest of the phrase appears — "one baptism for the remission of sins" — the sunny polyphony grows dark. The choir no longer jumps nimbly from word to word. Now it broods at a much slower pace, elongating the word *peccatorum*, as if to stress the endless extent of our sins.

"Doubt has suddenly been cast over the very possibility of our sins being remitted." That's how John Eliot Gardiner, best known for his conducting of Bach performances with period instruments, glosses the "slow stretch of probing and unstable bars and ... series of murky

modulations" that precede the creed's final article: *Et exspecto resurrectionem mortuorum et vitam venturi saeculi* ("And I await the resurrection of the dead, and the life of the world to come").

At that point, when one might expect the minor keys to stop descending and the tempo to increase, they do not and it does not. As the words "I await the resurrection" appear, the music remains somber, unrelieved by any uplifting melodies or brightening chords. Gardiner calls this "the most precarious stage in Bach's Mass," speculating that Bach was perhaps setting to music his struggle with doubt in the possibility of life after death. "This could be one of the few times Bach felt Luther's terror of death and found a way, perhaps even a need, to express it in music."

Many Christians today might identify with Bach's refusal to express musical assurance at this point in his Mass. The poet Christian Wiman, who is devoted to the Christ of the cry of dereliction on the cross, is reticent when it comes to the resurrection. In his "meditation of a modern believer," *My Bright Abyss*, he circles around his ambivalence toward traditional notions of an afterlife. He worries that so-called conservative and liberal versions of heaven alike involve projecting what we love most about this life onto a cosmic screen, thus emptying heaven of its strangeness and challenge and filling it with our limited, often misguided fantasies. He quotes a passage from Marilynne Robinson's novel

Housekeeping that warns us away from any conception of heaven that would eclipse the life we are living now, drawing this conclusion: "If piety forbids one to imagine any afterlife that makes this life seem altogether inferior, then piety essentially forbids one from imagining any afterlife at all."

It is a fraught business to speculate about a possible eternal future, and it easily devolves into sheer escapism. After admitting his difficulty with accepting traditional Christian pictures of a future resurrection, Wiman concludes cryptically: "Life is not life without an afterlife, and there is no afterlife beyond the life we treasure and suffer and feel slipping from us moment by moment."

There is something recognizably human in this, which believers who are more traditionalist in their theological commitments than Wiman is should be able to identify with too. Even C.S. Lewis — no mainline liberal he — stressed the limited nature of all our conceptions of the resurrected state. "The scriptural picture of heaven," Lewis says in his 1942 sermon "The Weight of Glory," is "just as symbolical as the picture which our desire, unaided, invents for itself; heaven is not

really full of jewelry any more than it is really the beauty of Nature, or a fine piece of music." We bump up against the soaring wall of our ignorance every time we try to imagine what life beyond death might be like, and this limitation, in addition to inspiring humility, may also lead to profound uneasiness or terror.

Bach, in his *B minor Mass*, does not shy away from such thoughts. At what is, according to Gardiner, "the eschatological crossroads of the entire Mass," Bach plunges his listeners into the dark uncertainty of what it might mean to expect our own transformation at the end of history and eternal life with God. But nor does Bach stay there. With "frisky arpeggios," as Wilfrid Mellers calls them in his book *Bach and the Dance of God*, we hear in the *Et exspecto* "an extraversion as naïve as that depicted in the resurrection paintings of Stanley Spencer, or of the medieval painters who were his model." Bach's sonorous doubt has at last given way to unalloyed reveling in the hope of what N.T. Wright describes as "life after life after death": the deathless but embodied life with God that the Gospels depict with their stories of Jesus' empty tomb.

One feels here that — contrary to what skeptical believers might fear —



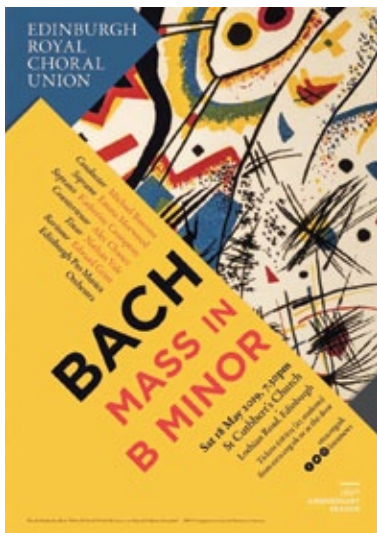
Bach

Bach is not simply effacing the ambiguities and trials of life as we now know it with a pacifying promise of something better to replace them. The galloping, buoyant music of the final moments of the *Symbolum Nicenum* in Bach's Mass emerges from its dark, languorous preceding movement; the confidence of the hope would not be fully itself without the honest pain of that prior

moment. One also feels that the converse is true as well, however: that that prior moment, the moment when the music keeps descending farther and farther into the depths of human sin and doubt, would have no redeeming quality were it not accompanied by — or, perhaps more precisely, overcome by — the radiant confidence of the music's crescendo at *resurrectionem mortuorum*.

There are depths of sorrow and assurance, it would seem, that cannot be reached without music. Take it from my Lutheran colleague. Take it too from the Lutheran Bach. ■

Wesley Hill is associate professor of biblical studies at Trinity School for Ministry. This story was first published in *The Living Church*.



Bach's *B minor Mass* is performed around the world, including this concert in Scotland.

Youth event in 2020 to be held in Washington, D.C.

Episcopal Church Office of Public Affairs

The Department of Faith Formation has announced that the 2020 Episcopal Youth Event (EYE20) will be held in partnership with Washington National Cathedral and the Diocese of Washington (D.C.) on the campus of Howard University, July 7-11, 2020.

"Howard University was chosen as the site for EYE20 after a thorough application and discernment process," said Wendy Johnson, event coordinator for EYE20. "We are grateful for every diocese, staff and bishop who worked with us over the past year and look forward to working on EYE20 with Howard University, the Diocese of Washington and the Washington National Cathedral."

"We in the Diocese of Washington are honored to partner in welcoming the 2020 Episcopal Youth Event to Washington, D.C., and pray that all involved in the planning process feel the Holy Spirit's power guiding them every step of the way," said the Right Rev. Mariann Edgar Budde, bishop diocesan.

"What a joy it will be to welcome these young people to Washington D.C.," said Dean Randolph Marshall Hollerith, dean of Washington National Cathedral. "We are excited to help host this event and so grateful to be working with Howard University."

Registration for EYE20 is coordinated through diocesan registrars who will be appointed by the diocesan bishop in the fall. Instructions for discerning a diocesan delegation will be sent directly to registrars.

Every Episcopal Youth Event is planned and implemented by volunteer youth and adult mentors who are selected through an application and discernment process.

"The Episcopal Youth Event is unique in the life of the church in that it is planned by a team populated by and for Episcopal youth," said Bronwyn Clark Skov, director of the Department of Faith Formation and officer for youth ministries.

Youth applicants from the following dioceses have accepted an invitation to serve on the EYE20 Planning Team: Massachusetts, Long Island, East Tennessee, Atlanta, Indianapolis, Michigan, Minnesota, North Dakota, Wyoming, Texas, Arkansas, West Texas, Northwest Texas, Northern California, and the Convocation of Episcopal Churches in Europe. The Youth Planning Team member from Province IX will be discerned this summer following Evento de Jóvenes Episcopales.

The application for young adults interested in serving on the pastoral care team will be available in June. Questions? Email eye@episcopalchurch.org. ■

TV REVIEWS

The priest in 'Fleabag' is not cool

By Thomas Reese
Religion News Service

Much ink has been spilled describing the priest in the BBC/Amazon Studios series "Fleabag" as cool. The hard-drinking, foulmouthed priest joined the show's second season as a foil for Fleabag, the main character, played magnificently by Phoebe Waller-Bridge, who created the series.

I loved both characters and the award-winning series, but rather than finding the priest cool, I ultimately got very angry at him. Perhaps that is another sign of how good the series is.

Spoiler alert. This column contains aspects of the plot, which could spoil the series for some viewers.

"Fleabag" is the name given to the lead character by her dysfunctional family. The priest (played by Andrew Scott) and many other characters don't even get names.

Fleabag as a person is both dysfunctional and hilarious. Her vulnerability is endearing but she is also self-destructive and cruel. You feel guilty laughing.

She is both victim and perpetrator.



She is surrounded by people, including one-night stands, who are unaware or don't care about the harm they are doing to her.

But she also is unthinkingly cruel. She sleeps with the boyfriend of her best friend, who then tries to win him back by staging an accident that goes wrong so she kills herself. Fleabag's guilt propels her into even more self-destructive behavior.

Her tongue has a viper's bite. At the same time, she is capable of generosity and kindness, especially toward her sister Claire, with whom she has a love-hate relationship.

Into this emotional maelstrom comes the priest, whom she does not recognize as clergy at a dinner party because he is in earth clothes, not cleric's.

He is not your plaster-of-Paris saint. He has many faults as well as doubts. Most importantly, he is not self-righteous or arrogant. He actually listens to her, as is shown by the fact that he is the only one who notices her asides to the audience. He treats Fleabag with honesty and respect, not pretending to have all the answers. He appears to be a wounded healer, but that does not last.

They, of course, hit it off and become friends. And since this is television, they end up in bed. She initiates it, but that does not excuse him.

My problem with the priest is not that he violated his promise of celibacy. My problem is that he let his own needs trump the needs of Fleabag. This is not an uncommon temptation of priests with parishioners, therapists with patients, counselors with clients and teachers with students.

His sin is not just a violation of celibacy; it is a professional violation. Better if he had picked up a stranger in a singles bar.

Professionals deal with vulnerable people and should not exploit them. Often, these professionals are the first persons to listen and show kindness to the person in need, who responds with infatuation or love.

If the professional allows the relationship to become sexual, it can be cata-



Photo/courtesy of Amazon
Phoebe Waller-Bridge, left, and Andrew Scott in "Fleabag."

strophic. True love means placing the other ahead of oneself. If you cannot keep your pants on, you should not be in this line of work.

What Fleabag needed was a priest, not a lover. She had had plenty of lovers. He knew she was vulnerable, but his own weakness destroyed the only chance of helping her. She needed forgiveness for betraying her friend and she would not find that in bed.

"The worst thing is that I f***ing love you," she tells him. "I love you."

All he can say is, "It'll pass." After her declaration of love, he abandons her and walks away, just another jerk in a long series of betrayals.

Sorry, not cool. ■

'Good Omens': Exploring the spaces between good and evil

By Linda Brooks

Television programs with religious themes or characters seem to be on the upswing. A new six-part mini-series from Amazon Studios and released on Amazon Prime has a pretty broad sweep. "Good Omens" takes on heaven vs. hell and the coming apocalypse as the basis for its story.

Based on the 1990 book "Good Omens: The Nice and Accurate Prophecies of Agnes Nutter, Witch," by Terry Pratchett and Neil Gaiman, "Good Omens" offers a wickedly funny satirical observation of the relationships of angels and demons to their human charges. In the process we learn something about ourselves as well.

The angel, Aziraphale (Michael Sheen), and the demon, Crowley (David Tennant), have spent the past 6,000 years on earth as representatives of their respective "home offices." Their only job is to keep track of the anti-Christ and inform the home office when the apocalypse starts. However, they have become comfortable living among people, enjoying indulgences frowned upon in heaven or hell. Nor can they tell their bosses they have become friends. So they are not looking forward to the "end times" that would not only

end earth, but their life on it, and their friendship. And it doesn't help that they have accidentally lost track of where and who is the anti-Christ, a child born of the devil but passed on to be raised on earth until he comes into his power.

They first meet as Adam and Eve are leaving the Garden of Eden as they dis-



cuss who is really responsible for causing their expulsion. It is at this starting point that the fantastical story can be pondered as something more serious. It is a study in contrasts of good and evil, love and hate, understanding and ignorance.

Over their centuries on earth, Aziraphale, in a fastidious white suit, becomes a book-loving foodie while Crowley prefers black punk starkness and drives an antique black Bentley. The two

are exact opposites in absolutely everything. They are reluctant to admit their friendship but doing so allows Crowley to become a little less evil, and Aziraphale learns to lighten up a bit and enjoy "life."

The theme of opposites is evident throughout the parade of quirky characters that are all heading to the apocalypse — Satanic nuns and good witches; a hell hound and a cute puppy; extraterrestrials with a message of peace and ferocious beasts from the sea; four good children and Four Horsemen of the Apocalypse. They lead us — along with God's narration (by Frances McDormand) and time stamps of years, days, hours left until the apocalypse — to question how much of our life is pre-ordained, whether we are in control of our destinies.

As the countdown to the apocalypse continues, it becomes clear that the angels in heaven and the demons in hell that don't interact with humans on earth have somehow missed the point of what being human is. They are so focused on the end times they have missed 6,000 years of human development. They are seemingly clueless and uninterested as to what Aziraphale and Crowley have or haven't achieved on earth.

But nothing is ever totally good or evil — black or white. Life is filled with overlapping grey areas. After centuries

on earth, Aziraphale and Crowley have learned that as well, agreeing that humans have often caused their own problems without angels or demons interfering.

The series is full of clever dialog and visually stunning computer-generated effects that enhance the fantasy, but at its core this story is about who we are as a species.

We live in a grey area of good mixed with bad. It is what helps us survive and thrive. It is imagination and hope that gets us through the worst of times. It is determination and love that keeps us from failing no matter how many times we fall into evil. No demons can hinder, nor angels help in our relentless journey through time.

Some have seen this satire as a negative and only see the extreme heaven and hell worlds, not the grey area in which the human characters inhabit. But in our real world, especially, life should be tempered with humor or we risk losing focus of who we are.

Watch this series. It will have you laughing but may also inspire you to reach beyond preconceived notions of good and evil with imagination. Life doesn't always have to be serious. That is too black and white. ■

Linda Brooks is the art director of Episcopal Journal.

FEATURE

Iraqi Christians rebuild chicken farms in the Nineveh Plains

By Lynette Wilson
Episcopal News Service

At a cost of \$5 each, chicks are helping Iraq's Christian chicken farmers rebuild their livelihoods in the Nineveh Plains, a region historically home to Jesus' followers.

With the cooperation of the farmers, Stand With Iraqi Christians and the nonpartisan, ecumenical International Christian Concern, the first of two chicken farms are up and running as part of an economic revitalization program aimed at reestablishing farmers in this area of Iraq known as "Chicken City" prior to its occupation and destruction by ISIS, or the Islamic State.

Base in Radnor, Pa., Stand With Iraqi Christians is a non-profit that supports the Christian community in Iraq.

"The SWIC initiative in chicken farming speaks to the need for sustainable economic development in a region devastated by violent conflict. The local commercial infrastructure, being destroyed during the fight to reclaim territory from ISIS, needs to be restored to its former levels for job creation and food production," said the Rev. Robert D. Edmunds, the Episcopal Church's Middle East partnership officer, in a press release. "This is a far-reaching effort to start to reclaim hope for a prosperous future for the people of the Nineveh Plain."

A U.S.-led coalition invaded Iraq in 2003 overthrowing Saddam Hussein's government and initiating an eight-year war. A dictator, Hussein ruled the country for a quarter century and was

convicted of crimes against humanity and hanged in 2006.

Throughout the Iraq War, insurgents targeted and terrorized Iraqi Christians, whose numbers fell from 1.4 million at the start of the war to less than 250,000 today. When the United States completed its troop withdrawal in 2011, the then-fledgling Islamic State began to take hold.

Still, some Christians have chosen to remain, including chicken farmers in the Nineveh Plains.

"In Iraq, 80 percent of Christians from some of the oldest Christian communities on earth were driven from their ancient communities by ISIS. Yet, those who remain are extraordinarily courageous, resilient, faithful, and are desperately in need our friendship and help," said the Rev. Christopher Bishop, founder and president of Stand With Iraqi Christians and rector of St. Martin's Episcopal Church in Radnor, Pa., a Philadelphia suburb.

"The Western Church and societies must understand that without our assistance, the impending loss of these communities would constitute a humanitarian, political, cultural and economic catastrophic for Iraq, and an irreparable wound to the world-wide body of Christ," Bishop said in an email to Episcopal News Service.

Before ISIS's invasion, the northern Iraq city of Qaraqosh, located about 20 miles southeast of Mosul, was home to Iraq's largest Christian community and had some 100 poultry farms. ISIS killed or displaced the city's residents and de-



Photos/courtesy of International Christian Concern and Stand With Iraqi Christians

Bassam (right) in his newly rebuilt chicken coop.

Left, Ghazwan holds chicks at a farm previously destroyed by ISIS.



July and another four by October. Each farm creates or supports 134 jobs, including farm laborers, chicken sellers, hatchery workers, butchers, grocers, feed sellers, veterinarians and truck drivers, and generates \$48,000 in income during each growing period, according to

Stand With Iraqi Christians.

"They're chicken farmers, they know what they are doing; they've been raising chickens for a long time, and what they want is to reestablish their chicken

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Archbishop's apology smooths LGBTQ discussion at council meeting
Oklahoma bishop leads weeklong effort toward compromise

ce bishop, now a 'poster child' for alcoholism, Heather Cook aims to make amends



information about the province's efforts to listen to people who have been marginalized due to their human sexuality within the church, society and their respective cultures." The members did not object to that work. However, a number of them refused to accept the resolution's preamble, which would have referred to the respect and dignity of persons as Children of God who have been marginalized due to their human sexuality and stated that they should be fully included in the life of the Anglican Communion. The fragile but polite debate over the resolution, the intense negotiations that took place during breaks in their debate, and the ending completely rewritten resolution proved that "in the end, the love of Christ should triumph," Koniczny told Shorter afterward. "We showed that we're able to have conversation and we're able to understand one another and that we're able to compromise." continued on page 6

inclusion of LGBTQ people in the life of the church. The conflict arose via Oklahoma Bishop Ed Koniczny's resolution calling on the communion's standing committee to gather information about the province's efforts to listen to people who have been marginalized due to their human sexuality within the church, society and their respective cultures." The members did not object to that work. However, a number of them refused to accept the resolution's preamble, which would have referred to the respect and dignity of persons as Children of God who have been marginalized due to their human sexuality and stated that they should be fully included in the life of the Anglican Communion. The fragile but polite debate over the resolution, the intense negotiations that took place during breaks in their debate, and the ending completely rewritten resolution proved that "in the end, the love of Christ should triumph," Koniczny told Shorter afterward. "We showed that we're able to have conversation and we're able to understand one another and that we're able to compromise." continued on page 6

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FEATURE

Philadelphia Episcopalians explore what happens when church is separated from Sunday

By Caroline Cunningham
Religion News Service

St. Stephen's, an Episcopal church in the Center City district of Philadelphia, isn't open on Easter. There are no sermons on Sundays. It doesn't have any members. And yet this castlelike Gothic Revival building on 10th Street is still a functioning, active church — just not in the ways you might expect.



Photo/Caroline Cunningham

St. Stephen's illuminated gravestones are located in the church's interior.

Rather than opening on Sundays, the church operates on a four-day schedule, with midday services Monday through Thursday. And rather than focusing on expanding the congregation, St. Stephen's is fully invested in being present for the community, practicing an open-door policy that makes it a place of support for anyone in need.

The church — an architectural landmark designed by William Strickland in 1823 — has long flourished in the active downtown neighborhood near Thomas Jefferson University Hospital. But the church hit a slump in the 1980s — not long after the Rev. Alfred W. Price, a particularly charismatic pastor, ended his nearly 30-year career in the pulpit. By 2016, fewer than a dozen worshippers might be found in the pews on a Sunday morning, and the Diocese of Pennsylvania made the difficult decision to shutter St. Stephen's.

But after Daniel G.P. Gutierrez was elected bishop of Pennsylvania in 2016, he visited St. Stephen's and soon called for the church to be reopened.

"It's at the center of the (sixth) largest city in the United States. It's next to a major hospital. It's a beautiful space in itself, a sacred space," Gutierrez told Religion News Service. "How many thousands of people walk through those doors?"

"If it's offering different things and reopening it and re-envisioning what it could be to meet the needs of those people," the bishop added, "that's what we have to do."

The Rev. Peter Kountz was brought

on to oversee this new version of St. Stephen's, which included being present, physically, in the building for more of the week than before. With the help of the church's digital content manager, Rebecca Harris, Kountz led an online outreach campaign that included launching a new website and advertising St. Stephen's new accessibility on Facebook, sharing tidbits about the church's history and info about arts programs. When the church reopened for an Ash Wednesday

service in March 2017, 117 people filled the sanctuary, a number of whom had never stepped foot in the church before.

"What we do is we practice a ministry of engagement and welcoming," said Kountz. "Because what we learned early on is that people walking by this place had no idea what it was for, in some cases, that it was a church. So it's primitive, but we opened the church."

St. Stephen's started a neighborhood outreach program, opening the sanctuary to all comers, from those experiencing homelessness to patients from the nearby hospital and curious tourists. The church made sure to welcome visitors of any faith who use the sanctuary to pray and meditate.

"We decided this is our home, we're going to make it available to you, we've got a set of basic rules, but that's all it is," said Kountz. "We can give you safety, we can give you heat. We can give you coffee and fruit and cookies. We can give you conversation. We can give you quiet if that's what you want. We can give you a place to plug in your phone. That's it."

Now, on a given weekday, 70 or so local residents will come by, taking advantage of St. Stephen's hospitality services — coffee and snacks and conversation — while others meditate or nap in the sanctuary. While most are not there for the services, Kountz leads the daily worship for anyone who cares to participate.

St. Stephen's doesn't have a grand vision for growth. It's not working to bring in new members or fill every service. "Some of the people say, 'You

mean you don't try to evangelize?' No, we don't try to evangelize," said Kountz, who normally assists or attends at other local churches on Sundays. "And we can invite them to the service, but the most some people will do is sit in the back and listen to the remarks I make about the gospel, but that's it."

The church planted itself more firmly in the community after Suzanne Glover Lindsay, an art historian who had visited the church to study its tombs, examined the gravestones laid into the floor of the church's single transept. Lindsay learned that the stones marked vaults that had been covered over when the parish extended the sanctuary in the 1870s. Over time, the family vaults of those church members — and in one elaborate tomb, the property's longtime caretaker — were forgotten, as well as the parishioners buried within them.

"To me, there's a big difference between intentionally having the burials in the church itself and covering a cemetery," said Lindsay, who has stayed on at the church as its historian. "Because the intent had been that this would be an outdoor space, that you could walk around, you could come up and touch your family's vault."

St. Stephen's brought in a professional team that included a structural engineer and a lighting designer to build

what became the Furness Burial Cloister, named for Frank Furness, the architect behind the addition. Today, visitors to the church can view the illuminated gravestones — some of which are set flush with the floor, others of which are laid a couple of feet below — through large glass overlays. The effect is that of a moving, museumlike monument to those who have passed.

"I think what we kept coming back to is, first of all, it's an ethical issue about honoring the dead, as well as amending for dishonoring," said Lindsay. "But more than anything, it was demonstrating in a very unusual way our commitment to inclusion."

Kountz said the graves also represent the church's focus on the ministry of hospitality, calling the burial cloister "an illumination of this effort."

Gutierrez said he sees churches as more than mortar and bricks — and he's not worried about the numbers.

"We can look at goals, or we can look at the impact in the community," said Gutierrez. "I'm of the belief that when you form a community based in Jesus and the love of Christ, then you will get resources, and then things will multiply. It's called faith — that it will grow, that people will come in, that they will become members."

"But that's not the end goal; it's to be a presence in the community." ■



Kountz

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businesses. What they lack is the startup capital to reestablish the infrastructure," said Buck Blanchard, a Stand With Iraqi Christians board member and the missionary for outreach and mission for the Episcopal Church in Colorado, in a telephone interview with ENS.

"Once they get their chicken farms back up and running, they're capable of running a successful business and supporting their families," he said.

Blanchard visited Iraq with Bishop in October 2018. Bishop launched Stand With Iraqi Christians in 2015 as a grassroots mission to address Iraqi Christians' struggles; through friendship and material aid, it supports the right of Christians and their communities in Iraq to survive and thrive.

A former filmmaker, Bishop documented his first trip to Iraq in a 36-minute video, "Where is Our Place?"

The Anglican Church in Iraq is one of 14 Christian communities under the Anglican Diocese of Cyprus and the Gulf. Regarding Stand With Iraqi Christians' economic revitalization efforts in the region, Bishop Michael Lewis, the diocese's bishop, said, "I think what you are doing is fantastic. So, the primary thing is 'thanks.' Another thing I'd like to add

is tell your friends, get more involved, spread in your state, spread across the country."

The Episcopal Church's 79th General Convention adopted a resolution in support of Iraq's Christians. In part, it resolved "that the General Convention encourages The Episcopal Church, working in partnership with the Anglican Diocese of Cyprus and the Gulf, to provide prayers, friendship, and material support as determined by the needs and aspirations of Iraq's Christians, as an expression of our love and recognition of their religious, cultural, and humanitarian inclusion in the sacred Body of Christ."

Bishop, on Stand With Iraqi Christians' behalf, drafted the initial resolution.

"The presiding bishop's staff and the Global Partnership Team at The Episcopal Church have been immensely helpful in raising up Iraq as a long neglected and extremely time-sensitive focus of The Episcopal Global Mission commitments," Bishop said in an email to ENS. "As Anglicans, Episcopalians are both free of the long-standing religious tensions and conflicts roiling Iraq and are known world-wide as honest and effective mission partners. As Americans, we have a special responsibility to extend the hand of friendship and support." ■