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NEWS Schools cope with closings due to virus



NEWS Chaplains work on front line of pandemic



FEATURE Food ministries continue with some changes

Episcopal churches and schools have closed temporarily and made numerous other changes in ministry and worship, responding to the new coronavirus illness, COVID-19, sweeping the world. Episcopal Journal presents a roundup of news to date; however, for immediate updates, check www.episcopalnewservice.org. For authoritative information on the pandemic, go to www.cdc.gov and www.who.int.

Pandemic restrictions affect worship, Holy Week, Easter

By David Paulsen
Episcopal News Service

Presiding Bishop Michael Curry issued a letter to the Episcopal Church on March 17 stating in his clearest language yet an unsettling truth that many Episcopalians already had begun to acknowledge: Lent, under the threat of global pandemic, will culminate in a Holy Week and Easter Sunday unlike any before — with churches closed and

pews empty.

“It is reasonable to assume that some form of recommendations restricting public gatherings will continue for some time,” Curry said. “Considering this changing landscape, I believe that suspension of in-person public worship is generally the most prudent course of action at this time, even during Holy Week and on Easter Day.”

COVID-19, the respiratory disease caused by a new coronavirus, as of March 21 had spread to 167 countries and caused more than 12,000 deaths, with 290,000 cases worldwide, the World Health Organization reported, including 20,000 cases in the United States. Curry, in his letter to the church, alluded to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention’s recommendation against gatherings of more than 50 people at least until May 16.

After voicing his support for bishops who move to cancel in-person worship services, Curry reaffirmed and strengthened that encouragement, as well as efforts

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Photo/Washington National Cathedral
Presiding Bishop Michael Curry preaches during a livestreamed Eucharist at Washington National Cathedral.

AN EASTER MOMENT

Photo/courtesy St. Thomas Episcopal Church

“Reach out your hand ...”
In the Book of John, the disciple Thomas doubts the other disciples’ account of Jesus’ resurrection. Thomas declares he will not believe unless he sees Jesus and puts his hands into the wounds from his crucifixion. As depicted in this stained-glass window at St. Thomas Church in Terrace Park, Ohio, Thomas encounters the risen Lord and exclaims, “My Lord and my God.”

Churches postpone funerals, weddings

By David Paulsen
Episcopal News Service

When Page Lea Sr. died late last month at age 69, funeral planners at Galilee Church in Virginia Beach, Va., knew to expect a big turnout. Lea had been an active and beloved member of the community and his Episcopal congregation, where he previously served as a warden and sang in the choir.

Normally, the Rev. Andrew Buchanan would have planned for an overflow crowd of about 600 people at Lea’s funeral on March 16. But days earlier, Southern Virginia Bishop Susan Haynes had called for suspension of worship services and other church activity in the diocese in response to public health efforts to slow the spread of COVID-19, the disease caused by a new coronavirus that has become a global pandemic.



Photo/The Rev. Bingham Powell
Personnel at St. Mary’s Church in Eugene, Ore., prepare to record a service for parishioners to view, after the church closed due to the COVID-19 pandemic.

Congregations like Galilee are rethinking nearly every aspect of parish life as the coronavirus spreads across the country and funerals are no exception. A majority of bishops joined Haynes in canceling in-person

worship services after public health authorities warned the virus could be transmitted at large gatherings, leaving congregations to make tough decisions about how to respond to grieving families.

For future funerals, Galilee likely will ask those families to wait if possible, but “we felt a pastoral responsibility to hold the funerals that we committed to hold,” Buchanan, Galilee’s rector, told ENS. So, for Lea’s funeral and a March 17 funeral for 96-year-old Mary “Perk” Brown, the church livestreamed the services on its Facebook page and encouraged mourners to take advantage of that alternative to in-person attendance.

Lea’s funeral still drew more than 100 people to the church, Buchanan said, but hundreds more watched the service online instead, with some commenting that they were grateful for that opportunity.

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CONVERSATIONS

Community in the time of coronavirus



By Sharon Sheridan

ON SUNDAY morning, March 15, I rode beside my husband in a rental van, listening to a live, sometimes-glitchy online broadcast of Holy Eucharist at the National Cathedral in Washington, D.C. We were en route to Oberlin, Ohio, on a hastily organized journey to retrieve my son and most of his belongings. The novel-coronavirus pandemic had triggered an early and extended spring break at his college, to be followed by weeks of online instruction to complete his sophomore year.

Listening to the broadcast, I rejoiced in the opportunity to worship on the road. I sang along with the hymns and anthems, recited familiar prayers. A warm glow of connection swelled within me as I read comments on my phone from other worshipers posting their locations — friends from my own diocese and across the wider church; strangers from places like South Africa and Italy — a virtual communion of the body of Christ.

But when we approached the Liturgy of the Table, I found myself longing to participate in an actual, physical Communion. Remembering accounts of other priests forced to improvise with non-traditional elements while presiding at Eucharists in nonchurch settings such as psychiatric wards, I rummaged through our travel supplies.

I spread a white tissue on my lap, laying a potato chip upon it. I poured some berry-flavored seltzer into a plastic cup. I prayed the eucharistic prayer, consecrated the elements, shared them with my husband (who kept his eyes on the road) and trusted that God would bless our sacramental intent.

I felt spiritually buoyed by our wor-

ship. But thinking of many others unable to attend public worship that Sunday, I wondered: Was it equally satisfying for those who only partook of a spiritual Eucharist? Would online worship sustain us if church closures extended beyond a few weeks? Could we truly celebrate Easter online, or would we feel perpetually trapped in Lent?

As churches move from in-person to online worship to help slow the spread of the virus, some clergy and laity are debating the meaning and value of spiritual Eucharists, and whether it is better instead to all fast from Communion until we all can commune together.

What's hard to ignore is that we are an incarnational people. We believe in a Word who became flesh and lived and died as one of us. That Word is present in the physical bread and wine that we physically share with one another. And, as members of the body of Christ, we are, as Teresa of Avila expressed it, the hands and feet of Christ in the world. When we love and serve our neighbors, we show Jesus' face to them and love and serve Christ in them.

Beyond this, we are communal animals, and human touch is a basic need. Researchers have demonstrated that babies deprived of physical touch lag in their development and can even die.

When I led music for monthly Eucharists at a nursing home, exchanging the peace may have been the most vital part of the service. I would take the hand of each worshiper, look in that congregant's eyes and offer an expression of peace, recognizing that this might be the only regular human touch some received outside of medical attention and routine

caregiving.

I recall how, when another natural disaster, Superstorm Sandy, struck New Jersey in 2012, my parish at the time, St. Peter's in Morristown, retained heat, water and electricity. It became a community hub, providing three meals a day, warmth and charging stations.

I set up a workstation in the offices above the parish hall, so I could report on the storm and its aftermath for local and churchwide publications, and a crafts station in the great hall downstairs to occupy visiting children. We maintained a regular worship schedule, including holding a funeral for a longtime parishioner.

The worst moment of the weeks-long ordeal came the night my husband told me that, if we couldn't find gas for our cars, I couldn't keep returning to church, located 15 miles from our house. The potential loss of community devastated me.

Another friend told me how her close-knit block of neighbors supported each other in Sandy's aftermath. She and her spouse ground 5 pounds of coffee before the electricity failed, and had a French press coffee maker. They caffeinated the neighborhood. Another neighbor was able to provide showers. Friends shared food and walked dogs. Community pulled them all through.

How will community pull us through now, when authorities are directing us to "shelter in place" and socialize at a distance to limit the spread of the novel coronavirus? What does it mean to be the church — which is, after all, not a physical building — when the church community cannot physically gather, let

alone hug or shake hands at the peace or share bread and a common cup?

While Superstorm Sandy temporarily limited many online and phone connections, it offered opportunities for sustaining ourselves and sharing Christ's love in community. We provided each other with food, shelter, water, showers, coffee, property clean-up assistance, hugs.

Today, I am incredibly grateful for online technologies that let me attend virtual worship and meetings and even extremely untraditional choir rehearsals. I'm grateful that my son can finish his semester online.

I am grateful every time I see a friend's face on a screen, especially when it happens in real time. I spend more time on the telephone, checking in on friends and family in these stressful days.

But I miss worshipping together. I miss my church's communal cooking ministry and weekly Bible studies and Lenten programs.

We live in the tension of the both/and. We are the church, called to serve others during this pandemic, whether that means reaching out through technology or buying takeout meals from restaurants trying to stay afloat or simply socializing at a distance and washing our hands a lot.

And — we miss being together. It's okay to grieve that loss and pray that it will end soon.

We do so secure in the knowledge that, no matter what, we remain part of the community of the faithful, struggling and loving and worshipping and grieving and serving together, and that, together, with God's help, we will celebrate the resurrection that will surely come. ■

The Rev. Sharon Sheridan Hausman is priest associate at Christ Episcopal Church, Newton, N.J.



Photo/istock.com

FROM THE EDITOR'S DESK



"THESE ARE THE TIMES that try men's souls." Thomas Paine wrote that in the context of the American Revolution, but the sentiment could not be more apt today as we battle a microscopic enemy, SARS-CoV-2, the new coronavirus that causes COVID-19 disease.

Note that Paine did not write "minds" or "hearts," but "souls," impressing upon his readers that the situation they faced required them to call upon the deepest reserves of human strength.

We are experiencing a Lent and looking toward an Easter reminiscent of wartime. The restrictions on movement, shortages of supplies and temporary closings — including of houses of worship — remind us of earlier periods of hardship.

Meeting this challenge demands much of us. We must follow the directives of civil and church authorities, yet seek to provide such services as food distribution while protecting ourselves and others from transmission of the virus. We must be flexible in seeking new ways to "be church," from online video worship, children's lessons and

fellowship to checking up on members of our parish family via telephone or social media

In this moment of crisis, the Easter image on page one of the Journal depicts "Doubting Thomas," the disciple who refused to believe in Jesus' resurrection until he saw proof. If we are tempted to rank Thomas' level of faith below that of the other disciples, we might recall that they believed because they actually had seen the risen Lord. "Blessed are those who have not seen and yet have believed," says Jesus when his appearance provides the evidence Thomas needs.

Blessed, indeed — and difficult to accomplish. Having faith isn't always easy. Some may travel the smooth road of certainty, but for many, faith is a bumpy path. It includes doubt and questioning and times when the spirit is failing. This may be one of those times.

As we remain cloistered in our homes some elements of this Easter will be heartbreaking. But perhaps we will be closer to a true Easter — a resurrection of faith that what we do "in Jesus' name" reveals the face of God. May we continue to show God's face to each other, even if our physical faces remain distant from one another. ■

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NEWS

Executive Council approves readmission of Cuba, selects Kentucky for 2024 General Convention

By Egan Millard
Episcopal News Service

The Episcopal Church's Executive Council, meeting Feb. 13-15 in Salt Lake City, formally approved readmission of the Episcopal Church of Cuba as an Episcopal diocese and selected Louisville, Ky., as the site of the 2024 General Convention.

The meeting opened with a presentation from several leaders in Native American communities on the deep and lasting impacts of the racist "Doctrine of Discovery."

Forrest S. Cuch and the Rev. Michael Carney of the Diocese of Utah, the Rev. Cornelia Eaton of Navajoland and the Rev. Angela Goodhouse-Mauai of North Dakota shared, through personal and historical narratives, how the church can be an instrument of oppression and erasure of native peoples or a source of strength and empowerment for them.

The council also heard a presentation from Kristine Stache, interim president of Wartburg Theological Seminary, an Evangelical Lutheran Church in America affiliate. Stache spoke about how to interpret and respond to the Episcopal Church's membership decline, as depicted in the most recent parochial report data.

The 2018 reports show a 17.5 percent decline in baptized members and a 24.9 percent decline in average Sunday attendance across the church between 2008 and 2018.

Stache said that if the rate of decline continues, the Episcopal Church will

have no Sunday attendance in 30 years and no baptized members in 47 years. The Evangelical Lutheran Church in America has experienced a similar decline, with 35 years left until it runs out of baptized members and 23 years until it runs out of Sunday worshipers, if current rates continue.

But, she argued, other signs show a church that is not dying but transforming.

"How is this measured? Through changed lives, which is not one of the questions, I believe, on the parochial re-



Photo/Egan Millard/Episcopal News Service
Presiding Bishop Michael Curry embraces Bishop Griselda Delgado del Carpio of Cuba after the formal readmission of her church into the Episcopal Church.

ports of the ELCA."

Stache encouraged council to see this difficult transformation as a sign of God's presence, not God's absence.

A shift was already apparent in a discussion of potential changes to the metrics of parochial reports. "We're trying to get data on — what are the actual markers of vitality?" said the Rev. Chris Rankin-

Williams, chair of the House of Deputies Committee on the State of the Church.

Rankin-Williams expressed a desire — shared by members of the Governance and Operations Committee — to move away from average Sunday attendance as the defining metric of a parish's health. Other metrics — like weekly service attendance, number of people involved in volunteer activities or the total reach of those activities — might provide a fuller picture, he said.

The committee also discussed having a section in which the parish can write its own narrative. The report could be a chance for a parish to do some valuable discernment and tell its own unique story.

The council approved Louisville as the site for the 81st General Convention in 2024. The Rev. Michael Barlowe, secretary of council, said Louisville and the two other finalists — Detroit and San Juan, Puerto Rico — were in the same range in terms of cost, but Louisville stood out for a few reasons.

The last time General Convention met in Province IV — which contains the Diocese of Kentucky — was in 1982 in New Orleans.

It's also Curry's home province, and this will be his last General Convention as Presiding Bishop.

Louisville is within a day's drive of 60 percent of the U.S. population, Barlowe said, and the convention center, several hotels, the Episcopal cathedral and an arena are all within a five-minute walk. The convention will also present a chance to highlight the city's "breathtak-

ing" work on racial reconciliation, Barlowe said.

Barlowe also formally certified that the Episcopal Church of Cuba had met the requirements for readmission as a diocese. At the 2018 General Convention in Austin, Texas, the House of Bishops and House of Deputies voted to readmit Cuba, which the House of Bishops had expelled from the church in 1966.

"Our friends from the Episcopal Church in Cuba have been exemplary," Barlowe told council, "not only in their extraordinary ministries undertaken in such difficult circumstances over the years, but in all of our conversations over the last five or six years as we've moved toward this moment."

Cuba Bishop Griselda Delgado del Carpio addressed council in Spanish through an interpreter.

"Each one of us has been living [through] a very emotional time in our life in the Diocese of Cuba," Delgado said, "because the church lived for more than 50 years all by itself."

"I want to express my gratitude to each one of you ... who has worked so ardently to achieve this moment. ... We will continue serving our people, our country — however, we will do it in your company."

Other resolutions adopted by council included a statement urging Episcopalians and political leaders to fight misinformation and enact election security measures in the United States and elsewhere, an assessment waiver for the Diocese of Alabama, and the adoption of a Covenant for Care of Creation.

The next council meeting is scheduled to take place June 8-11 in San Juan, Puerto Rico. ■

Diocese of Western Massachusetts holds 'Blessing of Journalists'

By Egan Millard
Episcopal News Service

In a time when journalists are singled out as the "enemy of the people" by the president of the United States and subjected to an "unprecedented" level of violence and intimidation, the Diocese of Western Massachusetts has made it a point to honor them.

The diocese held its third annual Blessing of Journalists at Christ Church Cathedral in Springfield on Feb. 25, a few days after the Episcopal Church's annual commemoration of Frederick Douglass. The timing is intentional: Douglass, a former slave who became one of the leaders of the abolitionist movement, was a journalist himself, establishing the anti-slavery newspaper *The North Star* in 1847.

The service included the presentation of the Bishop's Award, which is given to a local journalist "who demonstrates excellence in bringing local and national concerns to the people of Western Mas-

sachusetts." This year's recipient was Wayne Phaneuf, who recently retired from his position as the executive editor of *The Republican*, Springfield's daily newspaper. Phaneuf had worked for the paper since 1969.

"It is a joy to award excellence in journalism, especially at a time when the profession is under attack," said Bishop Douglas Fisher during the service, according to text of his remarks provided by the diocese. "It has never been more important, and the Episcopal Church cares. I am especially grateful to journalists who give the voice of faith a place in our public discourse. ... Over the past 50 years, Wayne Phaneuf's work has had a demonstrable impact on the life of our community."

Fisher presented Phaneuf with a framed page from *The North Star*, highlighting the connection to Frederick Douglass.

"Douglass understood the power of the free press to help our nation

listen to its better angels," Fisher said. "The Episcopal Church supports the work of journalists here and abroad as essential to our republic and to the work of peace and justice in our time."

The service included readings from



Photo/Diocese of Western Massachusetts
*Bishop's Award recipient Wayne Phaneuf, left, receives a page from *The North Star* from Bishop Douglas Fisher at the Blessing of Journalists at Christ Church Cathedral in Springfield, Mass.*

Scripture as well as excerpts from the writings of Douglass, Thomas Jefferson, Pope Francis, the U.S. Constitution and other sources on the importance of a free press. In the prayers of the people, special intentions were offered for journalists working in dangerous environments, the White House press corps, and "those whose news has been labeled 'fake' and whose stories and reporting have been dismissed and belittled."

In his final blessing, Fisher adapted the Prayer for Journalists by St. Francis de Sales, patron saint of writers and journalists:

"Strengthen and direct, we pray, the will of all whose work it is to write what many read, and to speak where many listen. May we be bold to confront evil and injustice. May we be understanding and compassionate of human weakness. May we reject the half-truth which deceives, and the slanted word which corrupts." ■

OBITUARIES

Bishop Barbara C. Harris, Anglican Communion's first female bishop, dies at 89

By Tracy Sukraw
Episcopal News Service

Bishop Barbara C. Harris, the first woman to be ordained and consecrated a bishop in the worldwide Anglican Communion, died on March 13 in Lincoln, Mass. at the age of 89. Bishop Alan Gates of the Diocese of Massachusetts announced her death.

Harris served as suffragan (assisting) bishop in the diocese for 13 years, from her historic consecration on Feb. 11, 1989, until her retirement in 2002. She was known as an outspoken advocate for, in her words, “the least, the lost and the left out.”

“Our hearts are truly heavy at the loss of one who has been a faithful and altogether irrepressible companion, pastor and inspiration to us in the Diocese of Massachusetts for 31 years. At the same time our hearts are truly buoyed by the hope which she preached and the conviction she embodied for us throughout all these years,” Gates said.

“Bishop Harris was not large of physical stature. In fact, the opposite,” Presid-

ing Bishop Michael Curry said. “But she was larger than life. She was larger than life because she lived it fully with her God and with us. She did it by actually living the love of God that Jesus taught is about. She did it walking the lonesome valley of leadership, paving a



Photo/David Zadig/Diocese of Massachusetts
Bishop Barbara C. Harris is seen at her consecration service on Feb. 11, 1989.

way for so many of us whose way had been blocked. She did it lifting her voice for those who had no voice. She did with a joke, a whispered word, a secret joy in spite of anything that got in her way, including death. No wonder she titled her

memoir, ‘Hallelujah, Anyhow!’”

“Barbara was always completely and totally Barbara,” said the Rev. Gay Clark Jennings, president of the House of Deputies. “She never pretended to be anyone other than who she was, and she told the truth no matter what the cost. Often that cost was paid with the comfort and dignity of institutional leaders who were, in her view, insufficiently interested in standing with the marginalized and the vulnerable. They learned quickly that her passion for justice was matched only by her wicked and fearless sense of humor.”

Arrangements were pending for a public funeral service to be held at Washington National Cathedral and a private graveside service in Philadelphia, followed by a memorial service at the Cathedral Church of St. Paul in Boston. Because of the coronavirus pandemic and restrictions on travel and group gatherings, service dates and details will be set at a later time.

Barbara Clementine Harris was born on June 12, 1930, in Philadelphia. She graduated from the Philadelphia High School for Girls and the Charles Morris Price School of Advertising and Journalism and in 1949 joined Joseph V. Baker Associates Inc., a national public relations firm headquartered in Philadelphia.

She was president of the firm in 1968 when she joined the Sun Company (formerly Sun Oil) as community relations consultant. She headed Sun’s public relations department from 1973 until becoming a senior staff consultant in 1977.

Harris was active in the Civil Rights Movement of the 1960s, through the Episcopal Society for Cultural and Racial Unity (ESCRU), and the National Council of Churches’ Delta ministry, traveling in 1965 to Greenville, Miss., to help register black voters and taking part in the Selma to Montgomery march.

She had an active lay ministry in the Episcopal Church, in Christian education, prison chaplaincy and leadership at parish, diocesan and churchwide levels, before discerning a call to ordained ministry. She was ordained a priest at age 50, in 1980 — when the ordination of women had been officially recognized in the Episcopal Church for only four years.

Harris was priest-in-charge of St. Augustine of Hippo Church in Norristown, Pa., from 1980 to 1984. She also served as chaplain to the Philadelphia County prisons, and as counsel to industrial corporations on public policy issues and social concerns. In 1984, she was named executive director of the Episcopal Church Publishing Company and publisher of the social justice magazine *The Witness*. In 1988, she was interim rector of the Church of the Advocate.

She was elected suffragan bishop of the Diocese of Massachusetts on Sept. 24, 1988 and consecrated on Feb. 11, 1989, before a congregation of 8,000 in Boston’s Hynes Auditorium, a ceremony

viewed on live television that received international media coverage.

She preached and worked continually for the eradication of racism, sexism and homophobia, and to help bring about the full inclusion of all people in the life and sacraments of the church.

Harris was a member of the Union of Black Episcopalians and a founding member and president of the Episcopal Urban Caucus. She represented the Episcopal Church on the board of the Prisoner Visitation and Support Committee and was a member of the church’s Standing Commission on Anglican and International Peace with Justice Concerns.

She was the recipient of at least 17 honorary degrees from colleges, universities and theological schools. In 2007 she received a Wisdom Award from the National Visionary Leadership Project.

After her retirement, she served from 2003 until 2007 as an assisting bishop in the Episcopal Diocese of Washington (D.C.). She continued to volunteer and preach at the Cathedral Church of St.



Photo/Mary Frances Schjonberg/ENS

The House of Bishops honors then-retired Bishop Barbara Harris in 2019 upon the 30th anniversary of her historic ordination and consecration.

Paul in Boston during her retirement, even while continuing to be in demand worldwide as a preacher.

In 2003 the Episcopal Diocese of Massachusetts dedicated its newly built Barbara C. Harris Camp and Conference Center in Greenfield, N.H., in her honor, and in November of 2019, the Absalom Jones Center for Racial Healing in the Episcopal Diocese of Atlanta launched the Bishop Barbara C. Harris Justice Project, aimed at strengthening the church’s efforts to address social injustice.

Harris published two books, the memoir “Hallelujah, Anyhow!” and the sermon collection “Parting Words: A Farewell Discourse.”

Harris is survived by her brother, Thomas Harris, and his wife, Jennifer, of Homestead, Fla., and their family, and friends, including Dorothy Cousins and goddaughter Pat Cousins Smith of Philadelphia and their families. ■

Bishop G.P. Mellick Belshaw

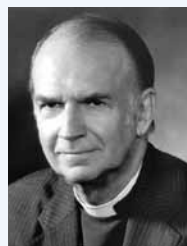
Bishop George Phelps Mellick Belshaw, who served as the ninth bishop of the Diocese of New Jersey, died at his home in Princeton, N.J., on Feb. 29. He was 91.

“I am deeply saddened by the death of Mellick Belshaw,” said Bishop William H. (Chip) Stokes, current bishop of New Jersey. “Mellick was old-school gracious and kind. He loved the people God called him to serve from Hawaii to New York to New Jersey. His leadership in the Diocese of New Jersey was strong and stable during the years he was bishop suffragan and later bishop diocesan ... I will miss his wise care and counsel and am eternally grateful for the legacy he left for those of us who have succeeded to the office he occupied so faithfully and well.”

Belshaw was born in Plainfield, N.J., in 1928. He earned a bachelor of arts degree from the University of the South in 1951 and followed that with both a bachelor of arts in 1954 and a master of arts in 1959 in sacred studies from General Theological Seminary.

After completing his studies, Belshaw served churches in Waimanalo, Hawaii; Dover, Del.; and Rumson, N.J., where he was rector of St. George’s-by-the-River for 10 years. He was elected suffragan bishop of New Jersey in 1975, and in 1983, diocesan bishop until his retirement in 1995.

Belshaw was awarded an honorary Doctor of Divinity from General Theological Seminary and the Uni-



Belshaw

versity of the South; he has also been the recipient of an honorary degree from Hamilton College. His service to General Theological Seminary includes 31 years on the board of trustees, as well as serving at various times as tutor, fellow, adjunct faculty member, chairman of the Board of Trustees, and acting dean of the seminary.

Belshaw has been a fellow of the College of Preachers, a member of the Commission on Peace of the Episcopal Church from 1979 to 1985, president of the Coalition of Religious Leaders of New Jersey in 1986–1987, president of the Episcopal Urban Caucus from 1986 to 1989, and a member of the Economic Justice Committee of the Episcopal Church from 1988 to 1995. In the late 1990s, he was chair of the Coalition for Peace Action, which advocates for the abolition of nuclear weapons, a peace economy and a halt to weapons trafficking.

He was the editor of the books, “Lent with Evelyn Underhill” and “Lent with William Temple,” as well as a number of articles and reviews.

He was married to Elizabeth Wheeler from 1954 until her death in 2014. The couple had three grown children and several grandchildren

— Diocese of New Jersey

AROUND THE CHURCH

Brigety named president of University of the South

Reuben E. Brigety II, dean of the Elliott School of International Affairs at George Washington University and former U.S. ambassador to the African Union, was elected vice-chancellor and president of the University of the South on Feb. 28.

He will begin his term as vice-chancellor on Aug. 1. Brigety succeeds John M. McCardell Jr., who will step down July 31, after serving 10 years.

"It is my honor and privilege to serve as the next vice-chancellor and president of the University of the South, an institution that holds a truly distinctive place in American higher education," said Brigety. "During the search process, I got a glimpse of what makes Sewanee so special—an intellectual rigor coupled with an unparalleled sense of community, and a strong sense of place that is inclusive of everybody who finds their way here."

"Reuben Brigety has spent his life in public service, as a naval officer, as a deputy assistant secretary of state, as an ambassador, and as an educator. Born as a child of the South, Reuben is now a man of the world," said Bishop Robert Skirving of the Diocese of East Carolina, chancellor of the university and chair of the board of trustees.

"His service to this nation has taken him to Iraq, Afghanistan, Haiti, the Middle East, and across Africa. Reuben will bring to Sewanee a rich global perspective and a strong record as a servant leader."



Brigety

Prior to becoming dean in 2015 at GWU, Brigety served as U.S. ambassador to the African Union for two years. In that role, he managed the strategic partnership between the United States and the African Union with an emphasis on democracy and governance, economic growth, and development. He also served as the permanent representative of the United States to the U.N. Economic Commission for Africa; and, earlier, as deputy assistant secretary of state in the Bureau of African Affairs, with responsibility for Southern African and regional security affairs.

Brigety was an assistant professor of government and politics at George Mason University and before that taught international relations at the School of International Service at American University. Before entering academia, he conducted research missions in Afghanistan and Iraq with the Arms Division of Human Rights Watch.

A native of Jacksonville, Fla., Brigety is a 1995 distinguished midshipman graduate of the U.S. Naval Academy, and holds a master's degree in philosophy and a Ph.D. in international relations from the University of Cambridge. Brigety is a member of the American Academy of Diplomacy, a life member of the Council on Foreign Relations, and a recipient of the council's International Affairs Fellowship.

Brigety and his wife, Leelie Selassie, M.D., have two sons.

— University of the South

Wright named board chair of General Theological Seminary

Bishop Robert C. Wright, of the Diocese of Atlanta, will serve as the next Chair of the Board of Trustees of The General Theological Seminary and the first African American appointed to the position, the seminary announced on Feb. 28.

"We are overjoyed to have Bishop Wright as the next chair of the board at General. His leadership in the Episcopal Church, fueled by love and commitment to Jesus and the Gospel, and particularly his progressive views of leadership as discipleship make him an ideal choice to lead us forward," said Dean and President Kurt H. Dunkle.

On the historic nature of this appointment, Dunkle cited the significance of developing an "exciting inclusion of folks from all backgrounds, particularly from those historically marginalized by the institutional church."

Wright succeeds Bishop Clifton "Dan" Daniels, whom Dunkle praised as "a tireless advocate with a big heart," and "a great friend to the seminary."

Wright became the tenth bishop of Atlanta in 2012, the first African American to become an Episcopal bishop in Georgia. Prior to his episcopacy, Wright served as the rector of St. Paul's Episcopal Church in Atlanta



Wright

for 10 years. Since becoming bishop, Wright addressed the Georgia state legislature about gun control, advocated for Medicaid expansion and has been a vocal and active opponent of the death penalty in Georgia. Wright delivered the 2016 Paddock Lectures at General Seminary on "The Leadership of Jesus."

Wright was born in a Roman Catholic orphanage in Pittsburgh, Pa., and at the age of nine months was adopted by Earl C. and Charlene Wright. After graduating from high school, he served five years as a U. S. Navy helicopter crew chief and search and rescue diver before entering Howard University in Washington, D.C.

Upon graduating from Howard in 1991 with a degree in history and political science, he worked as a child advocate for two mayors and for the Children's Defense Fund. He later earned a certificate in biblical studies at Ridley Hall, Cambridge University in England, and a master of divinity from VTS. He is married to Beth Sarah-Wright, an inspirational speaker and author. They have five children.

— General Theological Seminary

OBITUARY

The Rev. Robert M. G. Libby

By Episcopal Journal

The Rev. Robert M.G. "Bob" Libby, a communications professional, author and frequent contributor to Episcopal Journal, died on Feb. 26 at the age of 89.

In his wide-ranging career, Libby was a passionate and creative force in Episcopal communications on the churchwide and local levels.

His books include "The Forgiveness Book," "Grace Happens," "Coming to Faith," "Words, Words, Words," "What If It's True?," and a coming-of-age novel "A Summer Remembered."

A vigorous and graceful writer, his imagination led him to explore such areas of faith as how people journey toward forgiveness and the dimensions of Jesus' life as a real human boy.

Born on Long Island, N.Y., he was educated at Georgia Tech and Emory University, then served as an officer in the U.S. Marine Corps. He



Libby

then earned two graduate degrees from the School of Theology at the University of the South.

In the 1960s, he was director of radio and television on the national staff of the Episcopal Church in New York.

His parish ministry included congregations in Florida, the Episcopal High School in Jacksonville and Saint Christopher's Episcopal Parish and Montessori School on Key Biscayne.

In retirement he was an advocate and speaker for Food for the Poor, chaplain on the Queen Elizabeth 2 ocean liner, a guest preacher at St. Paul's Cathedral, London, and interim dean of Trinity Cathedral, Miami.

Libby is survived by his wife Lynne, five adult children, six grandchildren and three great grandchildren. ■



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NEWS

POSTPONE continued from page 1

smaller turnout of about 80 mourners attended Brown's funeral, and the live video again earned positive reviews from those who stayed home.

Episcopal congregations are taking similar approaches to weddings, often asking couples to postpone unless they can limit the services to just a few people. The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention issued guidelines on March 15 calling for the cancellation of gatherings of 50 or more people for at least eight weeks, and the White House followed up March 16 by advising an even lower threshold of 10 people.

Galilee is a large congregation, with Sunday attendance usually topping 500 people across three services, and it typically averages one or two weddings a month. All but one of the weddings it had scheduled for May have been rescheduled for the fall, Buchanan said, and the May wedding still on the calendar will be for only about 10 people. The couple will plan a larger wedding reception at a later date.

Like Galilee, Episcopal Church of the Ascension in Dallas doesn't have any weddings on its schedule until May. The rector, the Rev. Paul Klitzke, told ENS he is hopeful that Ascension will be able to keep those dates, if conditions improve in the coronavirus outbreak.

As for any funeral requests, "where possible, the hope is that those will be postponed," Klitzke said, but he is open to holding a small service just for the family if that is requested. A more public memorial service could be arranged for the future.

He also acknowledged the grim fact that the coronavirus will bring more requests for funerals since "the virus may claim some lives of those that we love. That's the much harder piece to account for."

Presiding Bishop Michael Curry issued a letter to the Episcopal Church on March 17 encouraging the cancellation of in-person worship services.

Diocesan bishops called for cancellations while emphasizing online streaming options for worship. Several of the bishops specifically addressed the question of funerals.

"No funerals may take place and must be postponed to a later date," Milwaukee Bishop Steven Miller told his southern Wisconsin diocese. "Clergy may officiate at graveside services, being cognizant of the number of attendees. When possible, interments should be postponed to a later date."

"Postpone funerals and weddings to a later date," said Bishop Russell Kendrick of the Diocese of the Central Gulf Coast, which includes the Florida Panhandle and southern Alabama.

Louisiana Bishop Morris Thompson also advised churches in his diocese, in and around New Orleans and Baton Rouge, not to hold memorial services and to postpone interment to a later date if possible. "However, we are the church and we will continue to bury our dead," he said. "So, if there is no other option, services should be limited in scope (graveside, for example) and size (immediate family only)."

The Diocese of Massachusetts cited the coronavirus in announcing that plans

were pending for the funeral of Bishop Barbara Harris, the trailblazing retired bishop suffragan who died March 13 at age 89. A service will be held at Washington National Cathedral in the nation's capital, but "details will be set at a later time" because of restrictions on travel and gathering size, the diocese said.

In Oklahoma, "exceptions for funerals is on a case-by-case basis in consultation with the bishop," Bishop Ed Konieczny said in a March 13 message.

And Virginia Bishop Susan Goff, who on March 11 was one of the first Episcopal bishops to order the congregations in her diocese to halt in-person worship, addressed funerals in a follow-up message: "Where possible, postpone. If that is not possible, do the service either without communion or with communion in one kind ... Be sure to talk with the family. The time around a funeral is a time of fear and anxiety, and you will need to exercise your best pastoral skills and make your best pastoral decisions."

In Connecticut, Bishop Ian Douglas did not mention funerals specifically in a March 13 letter that urged clergy and lay leaders in his diocese to cancel in-person worship services. The Rev. Gillian Barr, rector at Calvary Episcopal Church in Stonington, decided to proceed March 14 with the funeral of a 95-year-old



Photo/Matthew Cavanaugh/Diocese of Massachusetts

Suffragan Bishop Barbara Harris, shown here at the Diocese of Massachusetts 2014 electing convention, died March 13, but plans for her funeral are on hold due to the coronavirus pandemic.

priest, which drew about 50 people, but she expects to handle future requests for funerals differently — either with even smaller services or postponements.

"I think I would have to customize it to the family," Barr told ENS. And with the congregation no longer gathering in person for now, the funeral "was actually the last full-blown worship service we're going to have for a while."

Galilee Church in Virginia Beach has begun offering online Sunday worship services while in-person worship at the church remains suspended. Given the positive response to the live video of the recent funerals, Buchanan thinks the church will start offering that as a possible option if requested by families for future funerals.

"Now that we've gone to livestream for funerals, I don't think there's any going back," he said. ■

Drawing on faith during the pandemic as Episcopal schools close

By Heather Beasley Doyle
Episcopal News Service

When COVID-19 hit Portland, Ore., things happened "really fast," said Mo Copeland, head of school at Oregon Episcopal School, a K-12 school of some 890 students. The high school program has 320 students enrolled, 60 of whom board at the school.

The school's leaders had already been keeping tabs on school closures in Seattle, 175 miles to the north. On March 11, when Oregon's governor, Kate Brown, banned assemblies of 250 people or more, "that shut us down immediately," Copeland said. The school quickly assessed how best to configure online learning, and if boarders should stay onsite (they ultimately left).

Like most schools, Episcopal schools have been affected during the COVID-19 pandemic, said Ann Mellow, associate director of the National Association of Episcopal Schools. NAES supports and advocates for nearly 1,200 schools and programs nationwide.

At this point, "I would say many, many of our schools are closed," Mellow said. NAES member schools don't report to the organization, so it's unclear exactly



Photo/Nathan Hill

Children's Ministries Coordinator Natalee Hill leads an online faith-formation session with Kids Club and Junior Youth (grades K-5) from Trinity Church in Swarthmore, Pa.

how many Episcopal schools had closed as of mid-March. Nonetheless, "our schools have been out in front of this," she said. "Many are already instructing online," including Oregon Episcopal School.

As schools transition to distance learning and more people telecommute, families are living with deep-seated uncertainty and worry as they figure out how to share the same space all day together. The coronavirus pandemic is new, it's scary, and there's no great, granular model for how to adapt to such a constricted life.

The good news is that parents already

have many tools to help them, and their children, stay centered. "Faith practices, routines, [and] rituals that we engage in will provide a sense of assurance and comfort for people, reduce their anxiety," said the Rev. Jenifer Gamber, co-author of "Common Prayer for Children and Families" and chaplain at St. Patrick's Episcopal Day School in Washington, D.C. Gamber sees this time as "an invitation to draw near" as families.

Gamber suggests creating a family altar at home, where you can light a candle and tell family stories, read the Bible, read picture books, or look at family photos with your children. She also encourages having caring conversations, in which parents ask their kids about their feelings without judgment, and without rushing them to a resolution.

"We cannot have hope without also being able to name the pain," she said. Wendy Claire Barrie, author of "Faith at Home," frames it this way: "We comfort them, we assure them, we're with them. We make sure that they know that it's okay to feel whatever they're feeling. That goes for us, too," she said, cautioning parents not to project their own feelings onto their children.

During this time without in-person

church, prayer is a simple practice that everyone can try, even those "for whom prayer at home doesn't come easily," Barrie said. "It's also a time to get creative with prayer." Anything that can be done with intention, such as taking a walk, is an opportunity to pray.

Miriam McKenney, development director for Forward Movement and a writer for Grow Christians, suggests that people pray spontaneously if they're so moved. "If it feels awkward in the beginning, God is fine with that," she said.

For his part, the Rev. Nate Bostian, head chaplain at TMI Episcopal, a day and boarding school in San Antonio, Texas, recommends setting up regular times for prayer alone and as a family. The Book of Common Prayer is available, as is "Common Prayer for Children and Families."

Whatever approach feels right, "our prayer life is only going to get deeper as we continue on," McKenney said.

McKenney notes the power of writing things down and having them in plain sight. Recently, she wrote Psalm 31 on a 3x5 card, "just to have it on me," and also wrote it in a note on her computer. The passage "puts me in a spirit to talk to my children more calmly," she said. McKenney said she also uses the Way of Love's seven spiritual practices daily. "It's hard,"

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underway to offer Episcopalians ways of worshipping together online.

"It is important to emphasize that suspension of in-person gatherings is not a suspension of worship. I very much encourage and support online worship," Curry said.

The presiding bishop's latest statements, coupled with the myriad directives and pastoral letters issued over the past several days by bishops across the church's 111 dioceses and mission areas, underscore how the coronavirus outbreak and efforts to slow its spread have thoroughly upended normal parish life and the liturgical practices that Episcopalians previously took for granted.

Public health officials stress that until a vaccine is developed and available — possibly not for another 12 to 18 months — larger gatherings could accelerate transmission of the coronavirus at a pace that would overload hospitals, as has happened in Italy. Episcopal bishops across the church, starting in mid-March, asked congregations in their di-



Photo/Simon Mason

Equipment at St. Paul's Church in Chatham, N.J., is set up to stream a church service on Facebook Live.

oceses to cancel in-person worship.

Many churches in early March initially planned worship by asking parishioners to sit apart from each other, avoid contact at the Peace and refrain from intinction (the dipping of the bread in the wine).

However, as the pandemic's progress became apparent, Curry released his letter. Many churches moved to hold worship in empty churches, livestreaming to parishioners via such Internet video services as Zoom.

It's "like the ultimate Lent," said the Rev. Chris Arnold, rector of Trinity Episcopal Church in Oshkosh, Wisc. "What greater fast is there than a fast from the Eucharist?"

The thought of how to celebrate Holy Week and Easter, however, clearly troubled him.

"I have no idea what we can do as a church for Easter. I don't know what the answer to that is," Arnold said. "Somehow, the whole church will find a way to make this experience the Easter story."

The Rev. Gillian Barr has been of similar mind in considering what this moment means for her congregation at Calvary Episcopal Church in Stonington, Conn.

"I think that, this Lent, we will be walking the Way of the Cross and the way of the Holy Week more profoundly than we have in a long time, as the culture and as the congregations," Barr said in a phone interview.

The church broadcast worship on March 15 by conference call, to positive reactions. "A lovely surprise," parishioner Patty Copp said in an email that Barr shared with ENS. "I pictured myself in my favorite pew, had my old Prayer Book on my lap and joined in the service. ... I felt amazingly complete at the close of the service!"

But Barr also is bracing herself for a worst-case scenario, including the possibility that some of her parishioners may succumb to COVID-19 before the congregation is able to gather again in person.

"I think that will shape what Holy Week and Easter look like," Barr said. Even before then, "we're going to see some Good Fridays."

The Rev. Scott Gunn, executive director of Forward Movement, was scheduled to preach March 15 at Calvary Episcopal Church in Pittsburgh, but he decided to cancel his trip in response to the coronavirus' spread. Calvary, like many other congregations, cancelled its in-person worship services.

Gunn also coordinates Forward Movement's Lent Madness, featuring a bracket of saints, with the Rev. Tim Schenck, rector of St. John the Evangelist Episcopal Church in Hingham, Mass. While the NCAA's March Madness basketball tournament has been canceled, Lent Madness is still going strong. It offers a bit of mirth to take Episcopalians' minds off the bad news for a little while, said Gunn.

But there's no avoiding the fact that this Lent is like none other.

"I think it's going to be a very different Holy Week and Easter than probably any of us have ever experienced," Gunn said, noting the growing realization across the church that the biggest Sunday on the liturgical calendar likely will pass this year with empty pews.

"I think, if anything, there's an opportunity in this because, when you pare away all of the trappings and also all of the traditions and customs, maybe we're going to have no choice but to focus on what's really important about the celebration of Holy Week."

The soaring hymns? The flowers in bloom on the altar? The grand Easter Sunday processions? "I really hope we get to do that in 2021," Gunn said. But even without those trappings, "we still are left with the most amazing story in history, and nothing can take that away."

Arnold, the Oshkosh rector, also is trying to put this year's Holy Week and Easter in perspective. "The first Easter, Jesus slips out of the tomb, and it's not like there's a big crowd there celebrating. He rises from the dead almost unnoticed."

Whether gathered together or con-



Photo/Cynde Birmbi

Bishop Kevin Brown of the Episcopal Church in Delaware presides at an online Eucharist at St. Peter's Church in Lewes.

necting from a distance, Arnold is confident the church will find a way to celebrate the resurrection. Easter will happen.

"Emotionally, as a priest and as a Christian, as a pastor of a congregation

and as someone who loves the Eucharist, it's going to be really hard," Arnold said. "But I'm also a really strong believer that Christianity, it helps us to do hard things. ... Hopefully, it's meant to make us brave." ■

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FEATURE

Churches respond to public-health requirements for building closures, ‘physical distancing’



Photo/ Brandi Underwood

Praying online

Holy Eucharist services at St. Augustine of Canterbury in Augusta, Ga., are replaced with “Morning Prayer Online.”



Photo/Mary Thompson

The Rev. Edward Thompson provides drive-through Communion at Trinity Church, Swarthmore, Pa.



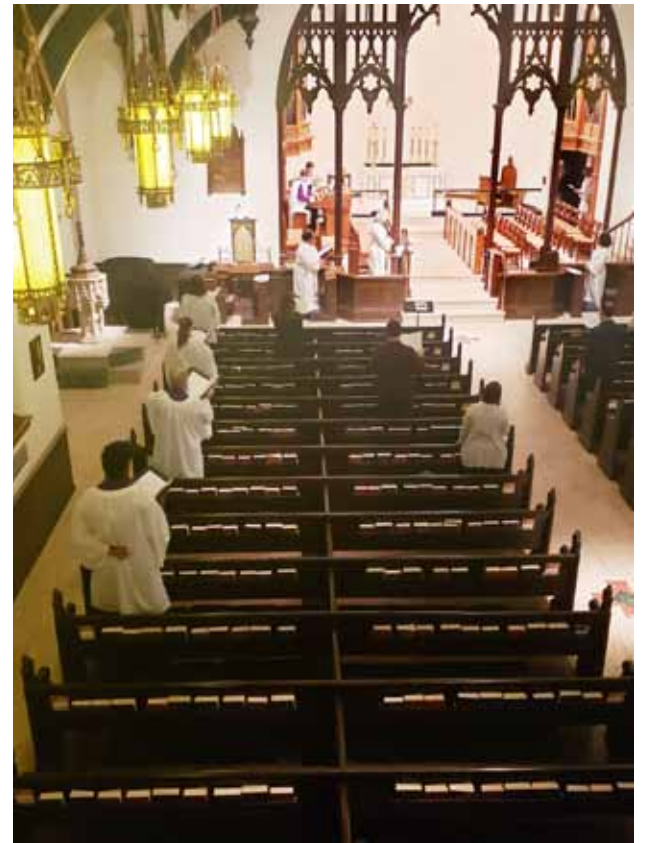
Photo/Jessica Umbach

Members of Trinity Cathedral, Columbia, S.C., with a reduced choir practicing physical distancing, prepare to livestream a service.



Photo/Solange De Santis

A sign on the door of St. Thomas Church in Mamaroneck, N.Y., informs parishioners of online resources.



Photo/Christ Church Cathedral

Before Christ Church Cathedral in Indianapolis closed on March 17, choir members practice physical distancing during a service.

Combining coffee hour with the service and engaging the youngest parishioners



Photo/Nina Nicholson

A parishioner of St. George’s, Maplewood, N.J., joins Sunday worship online from home.



Photo/Bradley Palmer

A young parishioner of St. Paul’s Church, Fayetteville, Ark., watches a service.



Photo/Rev. Bingham Powell

Children from St. Mary’s Church, Eugene, Ore., attend a broadcast worship.



Photo/M.T. Harmon

The Rev. Rob Merola broadcasts a Sunday service from St. Matthew’s Episcopal Church in Sterling, Va., via Facebook.



Photo/The Rev. Samuel Gregory Jones

Volunteer video team members Jeff McLamb, left, and Chris Carson record the Rev. James L. Pabl, Jr. of St. Michael’s Church in Raleigh, N.C., delivering his sermon. Lacking live-streaming capability, the team sent the video to church members, along with links to the bulletin.

NEWS

Chaplains in health-care facilities blend comfort and caution

By Egan Millard
Episcopal News Service

Hospitals and nursing homes are working intensely to slow the march of the COVID-19 pandemic, with doctors and nurses struggling to keep health care systems running amid a lack of equipment, space, tests and consistent policies. Through it all, health care chaplains are doing what they do best — consoling and comforting patients and staff alike — even as they risk becoming infected themselves.

The Rev. Janice Hicks, a vocational deacon, works in a facility that exclusively serves people at the higher end of the risk spectrum for COVID-19. She is an Episcopal chaplain on staff at Asbury Methodist Village in Gaithersburg, Md., a retirement and assisted living complex that is home to about 1,400 seniors in various states of health and ability. If the virus gets into the community, it could be disastrous, as it was for the Life Care Center nursing home in Kirkland, Wash., where 29 people had died of COVID-19 as of March 16 and most of the remaining residents have tested positive.

Hicks was not aware of any confirmed COVID-19 cases at Asbury, although in the absence of widespread testing, health experts say the virus is rapidly spreading undetected. For now, the most apparent challenges are social and emotional. Communal meals have been canceled, along with all group events, and visitor access is extremely restricted, eliminating most opportunities for socializing, she said.

“There is obviously anxiety on the

part of the seniors,” Hicks said. “The ones that are most affected are the ones who are very social and used to being in groups because we no longer have any activities scheduled. ... They’re lonely and discouraged. I’ve seen tears.”

In the assisted living and nursing sections of the facility, many patients have dementia, and having their routines interrupted can upset them and make it harder to care for them, Hicks said.

“That’s especially disruptive for them,” she told ENS.

Hicks and other staff members are getting training in COVID-19-related procedures “almost daily,” she said. Part of that is learning how to do other people’s jobs in case they get sick or have to stay home. So she now doubles as a food server — bringing meals to residents’ rooms — in addition to her role as chaplain, which gives her a chance to say grace with them. She’s also broadcasting worship services from the complex’s chapel over its TV network and helping residents FaceTime with their families.

“I do worry that, if we were to get the illness on campus, we’re going to lose some people,” she said. “I really worry about that. I worry about people going to the hospital, becoming isolated, not receiving any visitors and dying alone. Most of the hospitals around here are not allowing chaplains in, not even at the end of life.”

Staff are screened daily when they enter the facility, Hicks said; their temperature is taken and they are asked if they



Photo/David Paulsen/Episcopal News Service

The Rev. Carol Reese works as the chaplain at John H. Stroger Jr. Hospital of Cook County in Chicago.

are experiencing any symptoms associated with the virus. Hicks expects that if COVID-19 shows up in the facility, she will have to wear protective gear and eventually may not be allowed in. But until that happens, she is determined to do what she can.

“I became a chaplain late in life; it was a real call for me, after taking care of my mom for so many years and finding that I really liked the work,” said Hicks, who has been a chaplain for about a year. “I’ll go as long as they allow us to.”

Some chaplains have already been sidelined because of illness. The Rev. James Ransom has been a chaplain at the Dartmouth-Hitchcock Medical Center in Lebanon, N.H., for four years. The other Episcopal chaplain who works with him at the hospital is unable to work because her daughter is in quarantine for

COVID-19, and Ransom himself has been out with a different illness since early March, so the Episcopal chaplaincy program is shutting down for two weeks, however, the hospital has other chaplains on staff.

The hospital had the first documented case of COVID-19 in New Hampshire when an employee was confirmed to have the virus on March 2. At age 76, Ransom is at high risk for serious complications if he were to contract it.

“I don’t have any greater anxieties that anybody else,” Ransom told ENS. “No one wants to get the virus, but if you do, we’ll just have to cope our best. ... All the health care workers, including the chaplains, are being very brave. It’s their job to be there.”

The Rev. Susan Roberts, president of the Assembly of Episcopal Health-care Chaplains and director of spiritual wellness at St. Luke’s Hospital in Kansas City, Mo., is trying to prepare her staff for whatever comes next. She supervises four staff chaplains and five clinical pastoral education residents, who are training to be chaplains, clergy or other spiritual care providers.

As an administrator, she is planning for the possibility of a deluge of patients overwhelming the health care system, which has led to rationing care in places like Italy.

“We’re planning for that — I’m on an ethics subcommittee that’s planning for that — setting up policy and criteria,” said Roberts, who is also the co-chair of the hospital’s ethics committee.

With no confirmed COVID-19 patients in the hospital yet, Roberts’ staff is focusing on supporting the rest of the hospital’s workers, who are “anxious and tired,” she said.

“I’ve invited and encouraged my staff to do creative things like, you know, make some art and put it at the nurses’ station or to just drop some notes or messages to nurses, just checking in constantly, being really present to the staff as they are caring for people.”

When Roberts spoke to ENS, her hospital had just stopped allowing visitors in almost all circumstances, so patients are more in need of personal interaction than ever — but that’s increasingly happening through a technological barrier. If a patient who is suspected of having COVID-19 requests a chaplain, Roberts has told her staff to call the patient’s room and talk on the phone, not entering the room unless there’s “absolutely some need,” and wearing protective equipment if they do.

But even with protective measures, there is still so much health care workers don’t know about this pandemic, and chaplains must balance their responsibility to their patients and their own safety.

“How do I care for those patients and how do I protect myself?” Roberts said. “How do I protect my family when I go home?” ■

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she said. “The point is, we keep trying.” She suggests writing one practice on your home whiteboard each day, such as “turn” or “bless,” to keep the ideas alive.

Right now, “the hardest thing for teenagers is that they’re not allowed to be together,” noted Barrie, whose son is 17. Understanding where older kids find God and allowing them to explore those interests will provide comfort and foster connection. For Barrie, that means having her son, who finds God in music, create a playlist of songs. “And it’s not necessarily the music that I’d choose,” she said, adding that watching movies and TV shows together can bring up theological and existential questions in a more approachable way.

Drawing on her work as a youth ministries coordinator as well as a parent, McKenney noted the importance of humor and a light-hearted approach when dealing with adolescents.

“I just find when they feel they have permission to be themselves, they are



Photo/courtesy of Trinity Episcopal Cathedral

A young member of Trinity Cathedral, Sacramento, Calif., watches Interim Dean James Richardson conduct a live-streamed Liturgy of the Word service.

more open to the spirit,” she said.

If people can get outside during this time of isolation and anxiety, that’s critical, said Barrie. “It’s really good for our spirits to be in touch with nature,” Barrie said. Get outside at least once a day if you can, Gamber said, marvel at nature, and let your younger kids play.

Listening to kids is important, “but we’re also clear about where we’re coming from theologically; that God does not cause

people to get sick,” Barrie said. “That God does not pick and choose who lives and dies. That God is with us in all times, and especially in our fear and in our anxiety, God is there too.” Parents, she emphasized, are their kids’ first, and most influential, religious teachers.

Even schools that aren’t yet online may be in the weeks ahead. Chaplains are figuring out how best to re-create that experience virtually. Churches are streaming services, and youth groups are meeting via Zoom.

Families should use those resources,

and allow kids to do the same. It’s important for kids to remember that they’re part of a larger community of care, Gamber said. At the same time, people could think about how to help those who don’t live in the same household. When families have victories with spiritual practices, McKenney encourages them to share those on social media.

The rhythm of prayer and other spiritual practices can provide a foundation for a new routine. Bostian also encourages “a structure for the new normalcy,” with expected times for sleep, school and exercise. In addition to checking in emotionally, he suggests staying alert to nonverbal signs that your child or partner might be struggling, such as changes in hygiene or sleep.

If parents are praying at home, it’s important to withhold judgment, get outside, or create a sustaining routine, the experts said.

“I think we are all given a lot of grace by God right now to try and to make mistakes, and to know that we can turn again and try it again. As long as we are on this path together, following Jesus, it’s hard to mess this up as far as God sees it,” said McKenney. “We can see it as a mess-up, but God doesn’t see it that way.”

Barrie underscored this point, cautioning against perfectionism. She reminded parents that for children, “home is already holy.” ■

FEATURE

Episcopal churches, ministries continue food, shelter efforts

By Lynette Wilson
Episcopal News Service

Episcopal churches nationwide continued in mid-March to operate homeless shelters, soup kitchens, food pantries and other outreach ministries even as buildings begin to close to in-person worship and gatherings.

“One of the reasons I’m glad that we suspended [worship] services is that it allows our leaders who have these really important ministries to focus their energies there,” Diocese of Washington (D.C.) Bishop Mariann Budde told ENS. “And that’s what’s happening ... It was really important that we maintain those ministries, but also enter into them with wits about us in terms of how to serve people in environments in close proximity.”

The dioceses of Washington and Virginia were among the first to suspend in-person worship services for at least two weeks as a precaution aimed at stemming transmission of the new coronavirus, which the World Health Organization declared a global pandemic on March 11. The dioceses’ announcement affected more than 250 congregations in Washington, D.C., and suburban Maryland and Virginia. Other dioceses took similar measures.

Across the Diocese of Washington, groups of clergy and lay members self-organized to share ideas, practices and information from civic partners and public health officials regarding the continuation of services to the vulnerable populations that depend on them without putting those in need of services and those providing services at greater risk, Budde said.

Charlie’s Place is one such ministry in Washington, D.C., Budde said, that continued to provide meals and services to homeless people from its base at St.

Margaret’s Episcopal Church. Another, the Church of the Epiphany, serves people downtown and Church of the Ascension works with vulnerable populations in Lexington Park, Md.

In a March 12 message to clergy, Virginia Bishop Susan E. Goff included recommended best practices for food banks and food ministries, such as limiting the number of people allowed in at one time, documenting who is handling groceries, maintaining reserves and preparing quarantine boxes.

An estimated 550,000 people are homeless in the United States, and food insecurity poses a threat nationwide, where 11 percent of households suffered food shortages at some point in 2018, according to the most recent data from the U.S. Department of Agriculture.

“During these challenging times, we need to be especially aware of our neighbors in need. We have a responsibility to protect those who are most vulnerable through our collective actions, primarily through social distancing. But that means we must also find new ways to care for one another — financially supporting organizations that are continuing to provide services, calling our neighbors to see how they are faring and what they need and recognizing the disruption and hardship this pandemic is causing,” said Rebecca Linder Blachly, director of the Episcopal Church’s Washington, D.C.-based Office of Government Relations.

Her office, she said, is “pushing the U.S. government to put more protections in place, including family leave, paid sick leave, unemployment insur-

ance and a robust social safety net.”

On March 13, the Office of Government Relations released a Public Health and Policy Advocacy Document in response to the spread of the coronavirus.

It offers a reminder that Christians have the obligation to care for people who

ing setting up hand sanitizing stations and shifting volunteer duties. It usually serves meals restaurant-style, but that may change to single-serving meals to go, to avoid having hundreds of people gathered in the building. Bringing food trucks in has been discussed as a possibility, Demo said.

“We’re trying to figure out creatively what we’re going to need to do,” Demo told ENS. “You don’t want to pull the service away from people that are depending on us for their sustenance and nutrition. And on the other hand, we’ve got to be aware of the fact that people will be at risk.”

New York Mayor Bill de Blasio declared a state of emergency in the city on March 12, that same day Holy Apostles Soup Kitchen in Manhattan’s Chelsea neighborhood, one of the largest soup kitchens in the country,

announced it would modify its meal outreach and social services program in response to the coronavirus. Beginning March 16 and continuing at least through April 6, the soup kitchen has temporarily suspended its volunteer program and will distribute bagged meals instead of a daily cafeteria-style lunch, according to a press release.

“The soup kitchen is proud of its long-standing reputation as a cornerstone in the Chelsea community, and we do not take lightly the decision to modify our programming,” said the Rev. Anna S. Pearson, executive director of the Holy Apostles Soup Kitchen, in the release. “We are taking these precautions to protect all members of our community, while also recognizing many of our guests do not have the means to stock up on groceries. When your bank account is near zero or you don’t have your own place to call home, planning for a global pandemic is almost impossible, and the only food many of our guests eat is the meal they get here. We remain committed to our vital role in sustaining our neighbors who are struggling with hunger and poverty throughout this crisis.”

Holy Apostles also provides weekend meals through its Backpack Pantry Program serving senior citizens on fixed incomes and families of local public-school children who live in shelters. As of March 13, New York City public schools remained open, but Holy Apostles’ kitchen staff was planning its response should the schools close and families need additional meals.

Further downtown, the Rev. Phillip A. Jackson, priest-in-charge and vicar of Trinity Church Wall Street, announced on March 13 that Trinity suspended all public services and activities — including its Brown Bag Lunch Ministry — at Trinity Church and St. Paul’s Chapel, five blocks to the north. ■



Photo/Episcopal News Service

Holy Apostles Soup Kitchen in New York has changed from serving hot, plated lunches to grab-and-go bagged lunches to protect against infection during the novel coronavirus pandemic.

are poor, sick, imprisoned or strangers, as called for in Matthew 25:34-46. It also suggests that churches encourage everyone to adhere to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention’s recommended ways of reducing the spread of the coronavirus. The CDC also includes specific recommendations for faith communities.

President Donald Trump declared a national emergency in mid-March, allocating \$50 billion in funds to fight the epidemic in the United States and its territories — all areas where the Episcopal Church has a presence. Coronavirus-related restrictions varied widely at that time across rural, urban, suburban areas served by the church.

In Kansas City, Mo., a soup kitchen run by an Episcopal-affiliated nonprofit continued serving free meals every weekday, with a few potential changes. Kansas City Community Kitchen feeds 400 to 500 per day, many of whom have a higher risk of contracting the virus, according to the Rev. Gar Demo, board chair of the nonprofit.

“Since we’re serving a primarily homeless community ... this community is highly vulnerable to the [COVID-19] because most of them don’t have access to medical care or testing and are also already probably immune-suppressed and sick,” Demo told ENS by phone.

“So, on the one hand, our service is absolutely critical right now because it’s the [only] food that they’re going to get. But then, also, we have to be as wise as we can in how we’re doing it.”

In the Diocese of West Missouri, Kansas City Community Kitchen has its own location downtown. Kansas City’s mayor declared a state of emergency on March 12, banning all gatherings of more than 1,000 people, but the kitchen doesn’t cross that threshold.

Still, the kitchen is making changes to reduce the risk to its clients, includ-

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NEWS

Six conference attendees later found with COVID-19 attended same event

By David Paulsen
Episcopal News Service

At least seven people who attended the mid-February annual gathering of the Consortium of Endowed Episcopal Parishes (CEEP) have tested positive for COVID-19, the respiratory disease caused by the new coronavirus, and all six had participated in the same pre-conference event, the network said March 14 in an email update to attendees and on its website.

The conference was held Feb. 19-22 in Louisville, Ky. CEEP leaders have been working with Louisville public health officials, who are following up with other individuals who attended the pre-conference session with the six people who were infected with the virus. The session was intended for rectors and deans.

“They are conducting this outreach out of an abundance of caution,” CEEP Executive Director Joe Swimmer said in his email to conference attendees. “Since it has been more than 20 days since our conference ended, we are well outside the incubation period. The health officials believe that anyone who was likely to contract the virus at this session would have shown symptoms by now.”

Anyone experiencing symptoms of the virus, such as coughing, shortness

of breath and fever, are advised to contact a health care provider, Swimmer said.

“I know this is a trying time for all of us as we put our energies toward caring for our congregants and communities, who are experiencing the repercussions of the public health crisis,” Swimmer said in his update. “Know that we are here to support you as we get through this together.”

At least five Episcopal rectors were identified last week as among those to receive a COVID-19 diagnosis after attending the CEEP gathering, starting with the Rev. Timothy Cole, rector at Christ Church

Georgetown in Washington, D.C.

Cole informed his congregation March 8 that he had tested positive for the coronavirus, the first confirmed case in the nation’s capital, and the church canceled worship services. Hundreds of parishioners who recently had visited or attended services at the church were urged by city health officials to self-quarantine due to possible exposure there to the coronavirus.

Then on March 11, the dioceses of Fort Worth and Los Angeles announced additional priests had contracted the disease: the Rev. Robert Pace, rector at Trinity Episcopal Church in Fort Worth, Texas, and the Rev. Janet Broderick, rec-



Photo/CEEP via Facebook

Attendees gather for a session at the annual conference of the Consortium of Endowed Episcopal Parishes in Louisville, Ky.

tor at All Saints’ Episcopal Church in Beverly Hills, Calif. Both had attended the CEEP conference, and both congregations closed and canceled worship services after the priests were hospitalized for treatment.

And in New York, another CEEP attendee tested positive, the Rev. Roy Cole, interim rector at Manhattan’s Church of the Epiphany. The church advised anyone who came into contact with Cole since Feb. 23 to self-quarantine because they may have been exposed to the virus as well.

Additional reports followed. On March 13, the Rev. Brad Whitaker, rector of St. Paul’s Episcopal Church in Chattanooga, Tenn., announced he had received a COVID-19 diagnosis. The Louisville Courier-Journal reported

March 14 that a sixth person had tested positive but didn’t identify the person.

In Washington, the Rev. Timothy Cole “continues to receive good reports from his doctors,” church leaders said on March 14, while four more from the Christ Church Georgetown community had tested positive, including the organist. Parishioners were encouraged to view Washington National Cathedral’s live video service on March 15, including Presiding Bishop Michael Curry’s sermon, and the congregation is sharing updates on a blog titled “Grace Under Quarantine.” A blog post on March 16 including video of a “virtual Morning Prayer.”

Trinity Fort Worth said in an online update March 16 it made plans for its own online worship service on March 22. Fort Worth Bishop Scott Mayer ordered a suspension of all in-person worship services in the diocese.

“In times of chaos and times of calm, we are God’s church,” the Rev. Janet Waggoner, Diocese of Fort Worth’s canon to the ordinary, told the Texas Tribune after filling in for Pace in an online worship service for Trinity parishioners. CEEP is the largest group of well-resourced and endowment-supported parishes in the Episcopal Church. ■

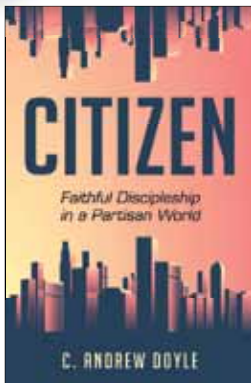
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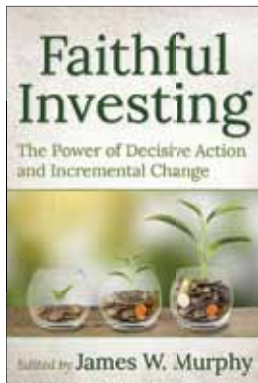
“The traditional Anglican term for the days and weeks of summer is ‘Ordinary Time,’ but this small but potent book is anything but. It is an extraordinary gift to all of us.”

—Jon Meacham

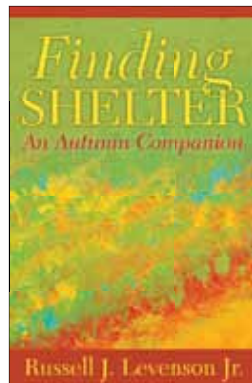
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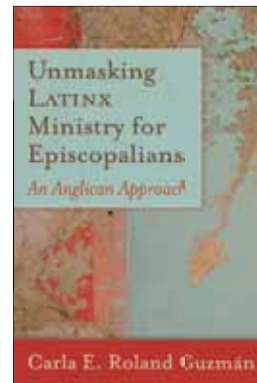
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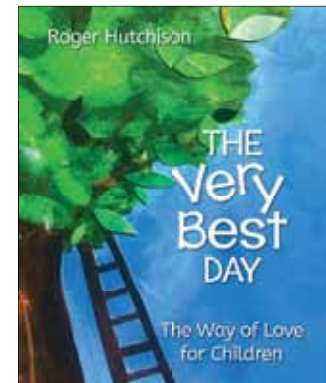
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FAITH AND THE ARTS

Episcopal clerical cartoonists find inspiration in church life

By David Paulsen
Episcopal News Service

In the Rev. Jay Sidebotham's hand-drawn world, "safe church" isn't a training. It's a parish encircled by a thick, crenellated concrete wall, which itself is surrounded by a moat filled with toothy beasts. The church's "Welcome" sign isn't visible to visitors who approach the outermost layer of defense, a ring of razor wire.

"I believe there are easier ways to keep your church safe," a man tells the rector, both dwarfed by the impenetrable fortress that is protecting the tiny church building within.

That's just one of the hundreds of Episcopal-themed cartoons Sidebotham has drawn, and it has a name: June 2020.

In addition to his main duties as director of RenewalWorks, Forward Movement's church vitality and spiritual growth ministry, this is Sidebotham's 20th year as featured cartoonist in the Church Pension Group's annual calendar. Every year since 2001, 12 of his illustrations have provided monthly occasions for faith-based humor in each of the 10,000 calendars that are distributed, mostly by mail, to every congregation in the Episcopal Church.

For Sidebotham and other Episcopal clergy with cartooning in their professional resumes — New York Bishop Andrew Dietsche is among them — their creations are part meditation, part divine inspiration and often just a lot of fun. And while some professional cartoonists produce work worthy of museum or gallery exhibits, Sidebotham, a former "Schoolhouse Rock!" animator, said fine art isn't his goal.

"The fewer lines I can use in a cartoon the better," he said in an interview with Episcopal News Service. "It's like preaching a good homily: Cut to the chase."

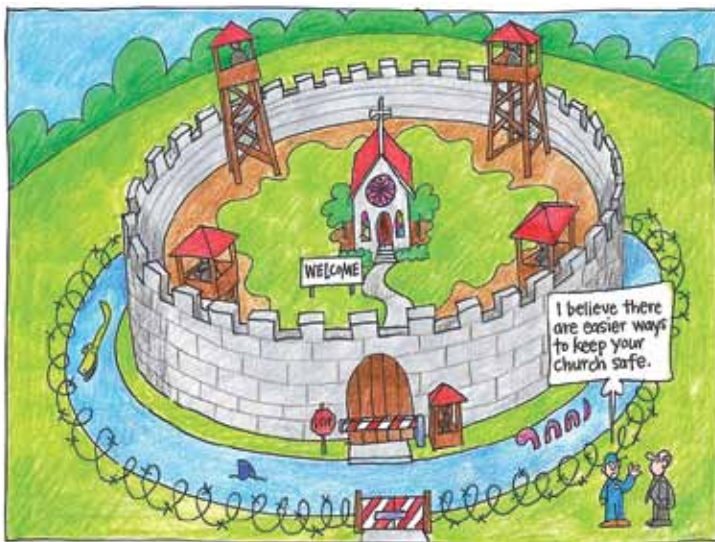
Church cartoonist is just one of the several hats worn by the 65-year-old Sidebotham, who left a career in advertising to become a priest in the 1980s. He serves part time as associate rector of St. James Episcopal Church in Wilmington, N.C., and as RenewalWorks director, he travels regularly to support congregations that are enriching their parishioners' spiritual journeys. However, his cartoons arguably have garnered him the most churchwide attention.

"Jay is an institution," Dietsche told ENS. "Jay is certainly the best known and best recognized cartoonist in The Episcopal Church."

Humor doesn't have to be edgy, but most humor is, Sidebotham said — including church humor. When a cartoonist makes a point with a joke and bit of loving-kindness, the audience may be more likely to hear the message, he said,

and to consider previously hidden truths. "You're able in those cartoons to highlight something that might otherwise be under the radar."

As an example, he described a cartoon he drew about the regulars at the 8 a.m. worship service. A young couple — newcomers — is sitting, waiting for the service to begin, and an older parishioner approaches them and welcomes them warmly to her church.



"By the way," she adds, "you're in my pew."

The cartoon was shared on an Episcopal Facebook group, and someone complained that Sidebotham was promoting an awful caricature. "Within a nanosecond, from around the globe, people were writing in saying, 'This happened to me last week.'"

He also loves to poke some fun at clergy, being a priest himself. "A lot of us get to be sort of more impressed with ourselves than we need to be," he said.

Church life is a bottomless source for inspiration in the Rev. Jay Sidebotham's cartoons.

Dietsche thinks the church is a legitimate and fertile subject for cartoons, though the cartoonist also must respect Episcopalians who are serious in their beliefs.

"There's plenty of room in the church to find absurdity or humor, not so much about the faith itself," he said.

When Dietsche was in his 20s working as a commercial illustrator in Southern California, cartoons were his specialty, until he felt called to the priesthood in his 30s. He suggested that the club of Episcopal clergy who cartoon might be rather small. A fellow seminarian of his was an avid cartoonist, though Dietsche, now 66, isn't sure if his former classmate continued cartooning as a priest.

The Rev. Nancy Hills, 63, sometimes preaches about her love of old cartoons at Christ Church Episcopal in Whitefish Bay, Wisc., where she is a deacon. Cartooning and church life are part of

PARISHIONERS SAY THE DARDEST THINGS...



Images/courtesy of Church Pension Group

The Rev. Jay Sidebotham has produced 12 cartoons a year for the Church Pension Group calendar since 2001.

Church Pension Group's 2020 calendar, featuring the cartoon at left, is the 20th to showcase Sidebotham's work.

her heritage: Her father, the Rev. Donald Hays, was a longtime parish rector, including at Christ Episcopal Church in Pittsburgh, and he would illustrate his sermons for children during Sunday morning services.

Like Sidebotham and Dietsche, Hays worked in advertising before giving up that work to attend seminary. He was ordained as a priest in 1966, and Hills said her father enjoyed illustrating scenes from the Bible for most of his adult life, until his death in December 2016.

Hills doesn't consider herself a cartoonist, though art has been a big part of her life. She recently retired after 25 years working as a graphic designer for the city of Milwaukee. Some of her most intricate art takes the form of colorful journal drawings.

"It's the way I meditate," she said. The process itself is spiritual, as are the subjects. "Everything I draw, I would say, has a spiritual base to it."

Dietsche agrees. "The act of creation is inherently spiritual," he said, "and very much fulfilling of that aspect of my life in Christ."

The future bishop started cartooning as a child. In college, Dietsche first studied architecture, then switched to art school and painting, but he never liked his own paintings all that much. "I said, 'You know, Andy, you're just not that good.' So I destroyed them all and put together a portfolio of cartooning work."

Dietsche found work as a graphic artist and illustrator at a small commercial art studio while freelancing for ad agencies in suburban Los Angeles and later San Diego. As a priest, he continued to find audiences for his cartoons in church publications, including the Diocese of New York's Episcopal New Yorker magazine.



Photo/RenewalWorks
Sidebotham

Church life offered an ample trove of punchlines. "Other people would have to tell you whether they were actually funny," he said.

As bishop, Dietsche still illustrates his annual Christmas card, sent to more than 1,500 clergy and lay leaders in the diocese. His list of influences and favorites runs long, from Mad magazine and underground cartoonists like Robert Crumb to modern comic classics like "Calvin and Hobbes." At home, "Barney Google," "Krazy Kat" and other vintage comic strips hang in

frames on his wall.

Sidebotham's influences start with the late "Peanuts" cartoonist Charles Schulz, a man of deep faith and a great observer of human nature, Sidebotham said. "He understood children often have great insight, and the adult world just generates noise."

Family was influential as well. Sidebotham's grandfather worked in advertising starting in the 1920s, as did his father starting in the 1940s, both of them on New York's Madison Avenue. In the suburban New York home where Sidebotham and his three siblings grew up, "there was a lot of white paper and magic markers around." Drawing was a natural childhood pastime.

"Schoolhouse Rock!" was his first job out of college in the late 1970s. Back then, before computer animation, the popular educational cartoon series was produced by hand, and many hands were needed. Sidebotham later worked for ad agencies, as graphic designer, illustrator, animator and art director, before enrolling at Union Theological Seminary in 1986.

"I found myself cartooning in my seminary classes, and people would cluster around to see what I was cartooning while taking notes," he said.

As a parish priest in Rhode Island, North Carolina and Washington, D.C., he often was enlisted to provide illustrations for various church communications, but it wasn't until he returned to New York to join the staff at St. Bartholomew's Episcopal Church in Manhattan in 1999 that he connected with Church Pension Group, or CPG.

The Rev. Clayton Crawley, CPG's chief information officer at the time, was assigned to parish work at St. Bart's, and he asked if Sidebotham wanted to create some cartoons for the calendar. Sidebotham has been doing so ever since.

"Jay's sense of humor is based on real life, which sometimes is funnier than anything you can think of," Crawley said, and whatever tense topic the church is grappling with, "Jay can turn it

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FAITH AND THE ARTS

Episcopal church transforms sanctuary into immigrant-focused art gallery

By Ryan Lessard
New Hampshire Union Leader

Editor's note: This article was written before Episcopal churches were directed to suspend in-person gatherings.

A new art exhibit showcasing the immigrant experience is on display at St. Peter's Episcopal Church in Londonderry, N.H.

"We're turning the church into an art gallery," said the Rev. Colin Chapman.



Art/courtesy of Segun Olorunfemi/www.segunofemi.com

Segun Olorunfemi, an artist from Ibadan, Nigeria, who now lives in Manchester, N.H., titled this oil painting "Dual Identity" to represent the blend of places and cultures that can shape a sense of self.

The exhibit, entitled "Our Neighbors, Ourselves," is part of a string of programs designed to draw attention to the state of immigration in New Hampshire and nationwide, Chapman said.

The spark for the idea came last summer from Chapman and seminarian Kathy Boss, who were inspired in part by some of the news stories about family separation at the southern border the year prior.

The hope was to showcase the daily lives of immigrants in the country and in the Granite State, and dispel the notion of immigrants being something "other," he said.

"That's the hope of that exhibit — that through the stories and the art, we're reminded of the humanity we share with our immigrant brothers and sisters," Chapman said.

The church is presenting the exhibit in partnership with the New Hampshire Council on Churches.

Segun Olorunfemi, a classically trained artist from Ibadan, Nigeria, who now lives in Manchester, N.H., told NHWeekend that he has worked for more than 25 years in styles including yarn and paintings, linoleum block print on fabric, batik on rice paper, oil painting and graphics.

One of his creations is "Dual Identity," which depicts two sides of a single person. It represents the blend of the places and cultures that can shape someone's sense of self.

"However we portray our



Photos/courtesy of Becky Field/www.differentrootsnh.com

Photographer Becky Field's "Faces of New Hampshire's Cultural Diversity" project includes portraits of a Somali girl, above, now living in the state, and, below, a Burmese woman inside her Nashua home.

identity, the old and the new will cohabit together to bring about a new culture," Olorunfemi told the Union Leader in an email response.

He is a teaching artist with a particular focus on sharing African arts and culture in schools, and using his craft to bridge a gap for those with disabilities.

The church gallery also will feature several photographs by photographer Becky Field, who created a series focusing on immigrants in New Hampshire and those who assist them.

Field focuses her lens on cultural, ethnic and religious diversity in New Hampshire. Her images have been shown at immigration conferences and at the University of New Hampshire, NHTI Community College, New Hampshire Institute of Art, New Hampshire Society of Photographic Artists and Southern New Hampshire University.

The Londonderry exhibit also features ten recreations from Uncaged Art, an initiative that collected drawings and paintings by detained children at the Tornillo Children's Detention Center in El Paso County, Texas, Chapman said.

"The thing I think that people are go-



ing to notice when they see it is the color that's used," Chapman said.

The children's art was made with vibrant and bright hues, a vitality that seems incongruous with their circumstances.

The Tornillo facility was created in June 2018, and at its peak housed up to about 4,000 children. It was closed in January 2019.

The exhibit also will feature work by the Rev. Sam Fuller, a sculptor, and Bishop A. Robert Hirschfeld, who is a painter.

There is no admission fee, but any donations will go toward the New Hampshire Bail and Bond Fund and the New Hampshire Council of Churches, which helped organize the event.

Chapman said this is the first time the church has been used as an art gallery.

"I've always thought it would be an amazing art space," Chapman said.

The exhibit is on display through April 11. ■

This story was first published in the New Hampshire Union Leader and is used with permission.

CARTOONISTS continued from page 12

into something we can laugh about and not get stressed about."

Sidebotham's process now is well established. He and a small team from CPG usually begin tossing around cartoon ideas in February or March, starting with leftover ideas that didn't make it into the previous calendar. They also make sure they aren't repeating a concept.

"In my limited cerebellum, I find I do an idea and I think it's absolutely brilliant — and then I find I did the same cartoon verbatim about 15 years ago," Sidebotham said.

Each calendar needs at least one cartoon for Lent and one for Advent. Other cartoons serve as friendly reminders about CPG products. In one cartoon, for example, a rector is in a rowboat

outside his half-flooded church, with phone in hand. (It might be a good time to call Church Insurance and ask about flood insurance.) By the end of summer, Sidebotham usually is ready to submit his final artwork.

"There's plenty of material," he said. "There's no shortage of topics to illuminate."

The cartoons are casual, engaging and funny, but Sidebotham never loses sight



Church life is a bottomless source for inspiration in the Rev. Jay Sidebotham's cartoons.

of the higher purpose, said Crawley, now CPG's chief church relations officer. "There's a kind of hope — we're working toward a common good. Sometimes we bumble it a little bit, but he can find humor in that. It's a very Christian perspective."

Sidebotham also is wrapping up another project for CPG in which he produced cartoons to illustrate every Gospel reading from the Book of Common Prayer's three-year lectionary cycle.

The cartoons and discussion guides in the books, "Drawn to the Gospels," will be available to churches for use in parish materials, such as bulletins, posters and coloring sheets for children.

"It's been a really powerful experience for me personally, in my spiritual journey," he said, "to walk through the liturgical year thinking about what Jesus has to say, that I can put in a cartoon." ■

FAITH AND THE ARTS

The Book of Ruth: medieval to modern

By Pamela Lewis

Editor's note: This review was written before the widespread closings of museums, including the Morgan Library in New York, during the COVID-19 pandemic. The images are available on the Morgan's website, www.themorgan.org.

While famine, emigration and immigration, the plight of displaced peoples, and notions of foreignness have beset recent world history, these themes are deeply imbedded in the Old and New Testaments, and the anonymous author of the Book of Ruth refers to them in the account of Naomi and her family, who are driven by hunger and social upheaval from their home.

Written after the 6th century BC, the Book of Ruth is set in the early Iron Age, the period before the Israelite monarchy. Ruth's opening verses — “And there was famine in the land” — present a landscape where, in addition to a famine, lawlessness and anarchy prevailed, and one where there was no king.

Instead, it was a time when the “judges judged” (referring to chieftains or military leaders). Unable to survive in these chaotic and violent conditions, Naomi and her family flee Beth-Lechem (literally “house of bread”) to Moab. Tragically, Naomi's husband Elimelech and two sons die unexpectedly, obliging Naomi to return to her people. But Ruth, her widowed daughter-in-law, refuses to abandon Naomi and emigrates with her. Despite suspicions over Ruth's foreignness, the story ends well when Boaz, a wealthy landowner and relative of Ruth's late husband, marries her, thereby removing her foreign status. The union also results in Ruth's becom-

ing a great-grandmother of King David, and, according to Christian tradition, an ancestor of Jesus Christ.

This exhibition celebrates the 2018 gift by Joanna S. Rose of the Rose Book of Ruth to the Morgan Library and Museum in New York. Designed and illuminated by New York artist Barbara Wolff, who worked on the project from 2015 to 2017, with calligraphy by Izzy Pludwinski, the work comprises the complete biblical text of the Book of Ruth written in Hebrew and in English over twenty-four pages of accordion-fold vellum.

Designed in codex form and measuring nine inches tall, the manuscript extends to an impressive 18 feet long, thus giving the feel of a scroll. The Hebrew and English texts (Mr. Pludwinski did the exquisite calligraphy for both languages) are back to back, with the Hebrew side featuring 20 colored illustrations united by a continuous landscape border along the topmost edge (signifying the geographic arc of Naomi and Ruth's story), with accents and lettering in silver, gold, and platinum; the English side offers forty images executed in black ink.

A modern “treasure binding,” a custom-designed box in silk, decorated with 24-karat gold lettering crafted by master silversmith Joshua Marrow, houses the manuscript. The box bears the Book of Ruth's most famous verse: “Your people shall be my people and your God shall be my God” in Hebrew.

The message conveyed is twofold. Known not only as the People of the Book, Jews are known *by* their books — ancient sagas, collected laws, prayers, poetry, and philosophy — all of which stand as chronicles of



Photo/Rudi Wolff

“Naomi and Ruth Embracing” is artwork in the “Joanna S. Rose Illuminated Book of Ruth”, designed and illuminated by Barbara Wolff.

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Faith traditions converge to share a centuries-old experience

By Jerry Hames

Fifteen people of different spiritual backgrounds traveled from six states to Delaware's eastern shore in mid-March for a week-long experience with an experienced Byzantine-style iconographer of 25 years from San Miguel, Mexico.

Mary Jane Miller returned to St. Peter's Episcopal Church in Lewes to offer instruction in how to create an expression of sacred art that dates back to ancient times, using paintbrush, egg tempera pigments and gold leaf on a wooden board panel.

“We will paint the famous image of Christ which dates back to the sixth century,” she told the class of 13 women and two men.

“The divine image is a spiritual transmission of Christ's incarnation

transferred to something as common and ordinary as a piece of cloth. During our time together it is my hope that we can unpack the importance of this image. What is the value of our belief in [such images] in this day and age?”

Each workday was structured to include morning and evening prayers. On the fifth day, St. Peter's rector, the Rev. Jeffrey Ross, blessed and anointed each artist's work.

Miller said icons are not seen as idols and not worshiped. “Rather, they are recognized as sacred objects, blessed with devotional energy generated by those reverent prayerful followers who have used them from generation to generation.”

“The first time I ever saw an icon I felt a strong spiritual connection,” said Deborah Gensch, a St. Peter's parishioner, who would create her first by the week's end. “Icons are so calming and



Photos/Jerry Hames

Above, class members gather around Mary Jane Miller as she shows how final touches can enhance an icon. Left, Sara Wasserman of Ohio participates in the class for the third consecutive year.



Both novice and experienced iconographers from as far away as Ohio and Alabama traveled to Delaware in March for a retreat and instruction led by Mary Jane Miller from San Miguel, Mexico. At the end of their weeklong experience, they gathered for a brief service in which their work was blessed.

beautiful, and each speaks to me about a different story. During Lent, God reminds us to focus on our Savior who suffered on the cross.”

Douglas Patterson of Baden, Pa., said his interest in icons was sparked 20 years ago during retreats at an Orthodox monastery and rekindled by travel to Russia where he discussed icons with Orthodox priests. Two years ago he contacted a Pittsburgh iconographer who agreed to serve as his private instructor and with her help created an icon of St. Thomas.

“The spirituality and heritage of icons is so totally foreign to Protestants. For me, personally, it literally opens a door to a more fulfilling growth. I call it embracing the mystery,” said Patterson, whose describes his main passion as designing and building guitars.

Sara L. Wasserman of South Euclid,

Ohio, returning to Miller's class for the third year, said she still considers herself an amateur and a student of iconography. “I'm attracted to the spiritual and meditative components that are central to icon writing — the concepts of the lights and veils and how this translates into, or reflects, the idea that we as humans are always moving towards the light from our personal and universal darkness or shadow.

“This week spent in Lewes writing an icon is always something I look forward to. The prayer, camaraderie and contemplation nurture some part of my soul.”

More information on icon writing/painting can be found at sanmiguelicons.com and millericons.com. ■

Jerry Hames is editor emeritus of *Episcopal Journal*.

FAITH AND THE ARTS

RUTH continued from page 14

their history and journey over time. The second message is that within this precious box is an even greater treasure, a story of a particular community whose life is deeply connected to and dependent on the natural world, a community built and sustained by women.

Positioned in the middle of the Morgan's Clare Eddy Thaw gallery, Wolff's Book of Ruth is surrounded by 12 illuminated manuscripts drawn from the Morgan's holdings, dating from the 12th to the 15th centuries, that illustrate the story of Ruth. These include Bibles in Latin and French; a *Speculum humanae salvationis* (Mirror of Human Salvation, a tract on typology); and three leaves from the Morgan's renowned Crusader Bible.

The juxtaposition of these medieval texts and Wolff's modern interpretation of the Ruth story constitute a deep iconographic, as well as textual conversation, through which visitors can discover how



"Ruth's Wedding Belt" by Barbara Wolff appears in the "Joanna S. Rose Illuminated Book of Ruth."

Wolff drew inspiration from the techniques of medieval illumination.

But whereas medieval illuminators highlighted key events in the biblical narrative by illustrating the people involved, such as Naomi and her family, Ruth, and Boaz, Wolff departs from this practice. Apart from a poignant image of Ruth and Naomi clinging to each other, there are few human figures on the Hebrew side of the manuscript.

Instead, Wolff has made illustrations of the landscape Naomi and Ruth could have passed through; there are depictions of the grains which would have been harvested and gleaned; and she has also painted plants and delicate flowers — almond, lavender, and jasmine, among others — which Ruth might have made into the perfume to anoint herself for her nighttime visit to Boaz. Ruth's ornate wedding girdle, sewn with hammered silver ornaments and bells, colored beads, and cowrie shell amulets, is the most beautiful and sensual of these images, referencing powerfully the vibrant festive clothing worn by ancient and modern Bedouin and Yemenite women.

The pen-and-ink drawings on the English side of the manuscript enlarge upon and supplement the lush colored illustrations accompanying the Hebrew text. Suggestive of an archeological dig, these represent the various tools and even fauna that would have been used and encountered in a small hill town in ancient Israel: a bone comb, a beer jug, a wooden threshing fork, a bird with unusual plumage. Each item is rendered with delicacy and attention to detail, evoking the culture and domestic lives of the inhabitants.

Wolff's selection of particular objects to illustrate her Book of Ruth text stands in contrast to the medieval tradition, which customarily devoted a single picture to the Ruth text, such as in the leaf in one of the Morgan's large folio-sized Bibles from the thirteenth century, where the initial letter *I* that begins the biblical text (*in diebus unius judicis*, "in the days of one of the judges") summa-

Right, "Ruth Threshing and Bringing Grain to Naomi;" "Naomi Counseling Ruth."



Below, "Boaz Asks Ruth's Identity;" "Ruth Gleaning;" "Ruth Dines with Boaz;" "Workers Stacking the Crop of Boaz." Illustrations are from the Crusader Bible, ca. 1250, purchased by J.P. Morgan in 1916.



"The Family of Naomi and Elimelech Departing Bethlehem" is seen in the French Bible illuminated by the Charlemagne Master and the Paris-Acre Master, purchased by J. Pierpont Morgan, 1912.

izes the story's entire narrative breadth. Naomi is shown at the top of that initial *I*, and Obed and Jesse, the fruit of Ruth's and Boaz' marriage, at its foot. The same is true of another Bible, in Latin, and dating from 1391, illuminated by the Samson Master, *et al.*, picturing Ruth and Boaz snugly covered in their marriage bed within a large initial *I*.

Not to be overlooked is the suite of 16 separate scenes over five folios from the magnificent Crusader Bible (French, 1250), which contains an extensive Ruth cycle. The rich palette and the figures' elegant and expressive lines are referenced in Wolff's manuscript illustrations.

With no Jewish tradition for illustrating the Book of Ruth, Barbara Wolff has filled that void with a culturally sensitive iconography that enlivens this ancient

story and deepens our understanding of it. In Wolff's hands, the themes of courage, devotion, and the concept of *hesed* (kindness, generosity, loyalty, responsibility for the poor) in the face of crisis and intra-tribal conflict are given greater importance, and the role of women in establishing and sustaining these qualities contribute to the beauty and strength of this story and of this fine exhibition. ■

Pamela Lewis writes about topics of faith. This story was first published in *The Living Church*.

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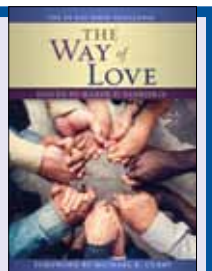
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BOOK REVIEW

Johnny Cash's rooted Gospel

Review by Jody Howard

“We are from Germany and we are looking for the grave of Johnny Cash.” I was bemused when the visitors outside our church office said these words to me, but it was not the last time I would hear them.

In 2010, I was called to serve St. Joseph of Arimathea in Hendersonville Tenn. on Route 31E, a road that has another name: Johnny Cash Parkway. Cash was a storied resident of the community and arguably his fame has spread—or at least deepened—since his death in 2003. By the time I moved to Hendersonville, his grave, which is six tenths of a mile from the church, had become a pilgrimage site for many people, including visitors from Germany and Eastern Europe.

I've been a fan of Cash since I picked up “American II: Unchained” in my senior year of high school. Over the years it's been intriguing to see the staying power of his music. I've observed younger people find their way to it, as I did, and then work their way backwards in his catalogue. You never know who'll say “I love Johnny Cash.”

In “Trains, Jesus, and Murder: The Gospel According to Johnny Cash,” Richard Beck reflects on what makes Cash's music enduring, but more specifically, how his music embodies and furthers a particular

understanding of the gospel. Beck, a professor of psychology at Abilene Christian University who also studies and writes theology, finds Cash's gospel faithful, attractive, and relevant for people today.

Beck's affinity for Cash is experiential. From the beginning of the book, it is clear that Beck and Cash are connected by their concern for and ministry to those in prison. Beck leads a weekly Bible study for inmates at a maximum-security prison. This prompted him to purchase his first Cash album, “At Folsom Prison,” “figuring it would be a great thing to listen to as [he] drove out of town on country roads toward the prison each week.”

“Trains, Jesus, and Murder” is divided into four parts, treating the themes of family and faith, sinners and solidarity, nation and nostalgia, and suffering and salvation. An epilogue, “The Gospel Road” closes out the book. The themes in the four sections are examined in 15 chapters, each titled with the name of a Cash song.

Songs introduce opportunities to reflect on Cash's personal history, the song origins, and the ways that Cash's writing was inspired by and reflected on his faith. Beck also offers interesting parallels between Cash's songs and Scripture. Beck unearths from Cash's music and life, a series of recurring themes, including a focus on regret, solidarity and compassion, the dangers of nostalgia, and most signifi-

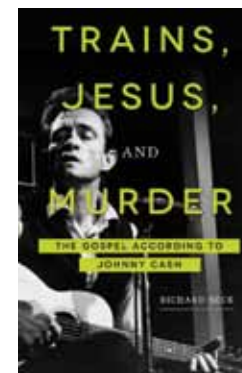
cantly, the deep hope of faith in Jesus.

One flaw in Beck's analysis is that he overestimates Cash's uniqueness in writing songs shaped both by Gospel hymns and murder ballads. I immediately thought about the recently released podcast “Dolly Parton's America,” in which this other legend of country music characterizes many of her early works as “sad ass songs.” Some of those, including murder ballads, were traditional, while others are original compositions.

I think that's a fair appellation for much of Cash's music as well. Indeed, “trains, Jesus, and murder” could summarize swaths of bluegrass, old time, folk and Americana music. And yet, Beck does have a point. Cash may not be the only artist to sing about these things, but as an artist, he's more fully defined by them than anyone else, distilling, and perhaps perfecting, this broader lyrical tradition.

Cash's association with these themes evokes a kind of nostalgia, but one shot through with solidarity, and pointing toward the Christian hope. Parton and Cash are different in this. Parton mostly left behind her “sad ass songs,” connecting with new audiences through a more jubilant vision of hope.

But as his life and career advanced, Cash seemed to double down on the tradition. He delved ever deeper, especially in his late career revival with “American



Trains, Jesus and Murder: The Gospel According to Johnny Cash

By Richard Beck
Fortress, 205 pp., \$13.99

Recordings,” plumbing his history, his identity, roots and place, and especially his faith, offering a sometimes apocalyptic hope from within that context.

In “Dolly Parton's America,” Parton is asked by the host Jan Abumrad where home is. Her answer (paraphrased) is that she lives all over — that the world is her home. It's hard to imagine Cash offering the same response. Both Parton's and Cash's work seems to pour forth like a spring from the rocks of the places where they're from, but the streams flow in different directions. And yet, Germans and Poles still show up in Hendersonville looking for Johnny Cash's grave. For all its rootedness, Cash's music clearly tapped into deep human experience. ■

The Rev. Jody Howard is canon to the ordinary of the diocese of Tennessee. This review was first published in The Living Church.

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