Episcopal
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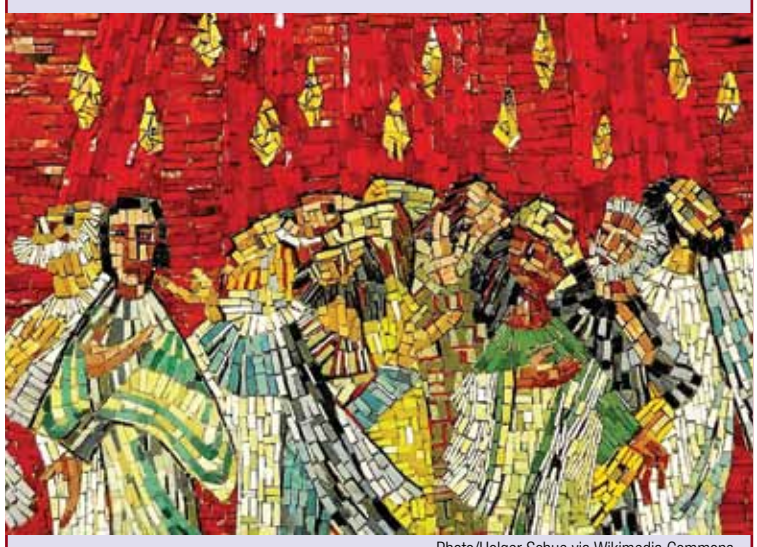

Photo/Holger Schue via Wikimedia Commons

This mosaic depicting the Holy Spirit descending upon the Apostles as tongues of fire is by German artist Eugen Keller (1904-1995). It is one of three hung on the square frame of the pulpit in the Constantine Basilica - Evangelical Church of the Savior in Trier, Germany. Keller created other sacred works, such as a mosaic and stained-glass window designs for the Church of the Holy Cross in Amersfoort, the Netherlands. Pentecost is celebrated this year on May 23, the seventh Sunday after Easter Sunday. It commemorates the descent of the Holy Spirit upon the Apostles and other followers of Jesus Christ while they were in Jerusalem celebrating the Feast of Weeks, as described in the Acts of the Apostles.

Episcopal Church joins national effort to encourage vaccinations

By Egan Millard
Episcopal News Service

The Episcopal Church has joined the United States government's new program to encourage Americans to get COVID-19 vaccines and build confidence in their safety and efficacy. The church is one of over 275 founding members of the Department of Health and Human Services' COVID-19 Community Corps — a nationwide network of trusted voices that will help get the word out to their communities.

Recognizing that people are most likely to follow the advice of a person or organization that they already trust, the corps has enlisted a wide variety of partners, including dozens of religious groups. Along with the Episcopal Church, the Diocese of Washington and Washington

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Photo/Facebook

Washington (D.C.) Bishop Mariann Budde, left, meets with Vice President Kamala Harris, right, to talk about the COVID-19 vaccination program.

Meet the Episcopal priest moonlighting as a Mars rover mission scientist

Photo/courtesy of Pamela Conrad

Pamela Conrad tests rover technology.

By Egan Millard
Episcopal News Service

When Episcopal News Service recently spoke to the Rev. Pamela Conrad, rector of St. Alban's Episcopal Church in Glen Burnie, Md., she was exhausted — but not only from the liturgical marathon of Holy Week or the weary slog of daily life during the COVID-19 pandemic.

Conrad is also a member of the tactical operations team for NASA's Mars rover mission, often working through the night, analyzing feedback from the Perseverance rover as it searches for signs of potential life.

From her living room in Maryland, Conrad connects virtually with scientists around the country and at NASA's Jet Propulsion Laboratory in Southern California for several shifts a week, monitoring sensors that she helped design as they transmit data about the Martian environment.

Among the instruments she works with are the cameras that have sent back over 25,000 photos, including Perseverance's first selfie, which shows the rover and the small helicopter that is expected to take the first-ever powered flight on another planet later this week.

"Every time we get new images, it is such an amazing sense of awe," Conrad said.

Conrad, 68, has been working for the National Aeronautics and Space Administration since 1999 on projects including the Curiosity rover, which landed on Mars in 2012. Priesthood is a more recent vocation; she was ordained in 2017 and has continued her scientific work on the side since becoming a rector.

"My full-time job — and I'm very clear about this — is as a priest. And my second thing that I do is the science because the science informs my ministry as a priest," Conrad said.

She told ENS that the scientific and spiritual worlds have always been intertwined for her,

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CONVERSATIONS

A reflection on anti-Asian violence

By Allen K. Shin

Suffragan Bishop Allen K. Shin of the Diocese of New York wrote this message on March 18 to the people of the diocese after a number of violent incidents, including the March 16 mass shooting in Atlanta that included eight Asian-Americans.

My Brothers and Sisters,

The pandemic this past year has brought many challenges in our lives both personally and collectively.

One thing it has brought to light is the virus of white supremacy and racism which has infected the soul of America for centuries.

It has played out in racial inequalities with a devastating effect on the lives of the people of color in marginalized and underprivileged communities, in terms of COVID infections and deaths, of economic hardship, and even of the vaccine rollouts.

The killings of Breonna Taylor, George Floyd, and many other African Americans have revealed the insidious nature of the racist structures and systems and of white supremacy in our society.

During the pandemic, we have also seen a dramatic surge of hate crimes against Asians across the country, particularly against the elderly and women. An 86-year-old man from Thailand died after being shoved to the ground in San Francisco. A Filipino man was slashed with a box cutter on the subway in New York City.

Just a couple of weeks ago, a 56-year-old Malaysian man was pushed to the ground and punched in the face on a subway station. Most recently, eight Asians were murdered by a gunman in Atlanta, six of whom were women.

While the overall crime rate has declined from 2019 to 2020, hate crimes against Asians have increased 150%. Since March last year, 3,800 anti-Asian hate crimes have been reported, with 68% of the victims being women.

Violence against Asians is not new. We have seen this before in this country.

The "yellow peril" sentiment of the 19th century fueled many violent incidents against Chinese communities. The Chinese massacre of 1871 resulted in the Chinatown of Los Angeles being ransacked and 20 Chinese men being lynched and hanged.

Those who attended the 2019 Diocesan convention saw the play "Red Altar," which told the story of the massacre of the Chinese fishing village in Monterey Bay. The village was burned down, and the Chinese people were lynched or driven out.

When the bubonic plague broke out in 1900, the Chinatown in Honolulu was burned down by a mob and the Chinatown in San Francisco was quarantined off so that no Chinese were allowed to leave but were left to die while the white residents were allowed to leave.

The U.S. government also played a role with the enactment of anti-Asian policies such as the Chinese Exclusionary Act of 1882, the Asiatic Barred Zone Act of 1917, and the Japanese Internment of 1942.

As an Asian-American bishop, I am mindful of bringing too much attention to Asian concerns and issues lest people see me as a bishop only for Asians. But I can no longer remain silent. I feel compelled to speak up against the rising anti-Asian hate crimes in our communities.

It has been conveyed to me that the members of the Church of Our Savior in Chinatown (New York), many of whom are elderly, are feeling anxious and living in fear. I cannot express how deeply it hurts and saddens me.

In the fall 2020 edition of the Episcopal New Yorker, I shared a personal experience of being harassed and called "China virus" by a biker as my wife and I were taking walks in the nearby park. I have been called by racist epithets and told to "go home" many times before. Never have I felt so fearful for my life as I have felt this past year.

Despite the fear and anxiety, however, one thing I have learned in this pandemic is to be grateful for life and not take it for granted. I have learned the joy of being alive through simple things.

Easter this year feels so much more meaningful because of that. I have learned the power of gratitude, compassion, and justice.

So I ask for your prayers of solidarity and of compassion and justice for the Asian brothers and sisters in your communities. I ask you to reach out to them with a word of encouragement and comfort.

I ask you to stand up against all forms of racial violence and hatred in our society as I and many other Asians stand with African American brothers and sisters in their continued struggle against the systemic racism and the culture of white supremacy just as the Asian leaders marched alongside the African American leaders in the Civil Rights movement.

Racial justice and healing will be the unavoidable focus of the Church's mission in the post COVID time. I refuse to let fear take over my life and hatred destroy my faith in the goodness of humanity.

At the heart of the Christian faith is the life-giving power of the crucified Christ. Love is the way of the Cross, and love will win over all hatred. Won't you join me and stand up against the racist and xenophobic violence that is destroying our common life and humanity?

The Bishop of New York, Andrew M.L. Dietsche, and Assistant Bishop Mary D. Glasspool issued this statement of support.

Our dear brothers and sisters,

Over the last year Bishop Shin, our brother Allen, has shared with us some of the incidents of Anti-Asian bias, discrimination, and hatred with which he and Clara have lived during the pandemic. He has shared with us the fear they sometimes have had to feel just by being in public.

These private, intimate narratives have revealed to us the pain which they both have felt in a time when Asians have been scapegoated for a global pandemic which far transcends in scope the blaming or assigning of fault to anyone.

What is clear is that the pandemic has served as a kind of license for racists to give voice to, or to express violently, other, ongoing currents of anti-Asian sentiment, or even hatred, which remain alive and continue in our culture.

The "Red Altar" presentation at our Diocesan Convention of 2019 put before us again the long legacy of discrimination against Asian immigrants, the internment of Japanese, the lynching of Chinese, and the myriad ways in which Asian people have faced the degradations and humiliations of American racism.

We grieve that that racism is still alive in our country. We condemn the violence against Asian people.

We condemn and repudiate the racism against our Asian brothers and sisters. And we are proud to lend our support and love to Allen, and our gratitude for the powerful, personal reflection and testimony he has written as a prophetic word and gift to the Diocese of New York, and to join him in this communication. ■

FROM THE EDITOR'S DESK

AS A FORMER British colony, the United States is said to have a "special relationship" with the United Kingdom. The same could be said for the Episcopal Church and the Church of England.

In fact, the ecclesiastical relationship might be even closer, since the United States is certainly not a member of the Commonwealth group that includes former colonies, but the Episcopal Church is definitely a member of the Anglican Communion.

The Archbishop of Canterbury fulfills the role of neither king nor pope, with no practical or legislative power over member churches. The role is called "first among equals," but leads the communion nonetheless.

As a writer with a Mayflower ancestor, I am a committed Anglophile with a keen interest in the British royal family. It's a natural progression through a love of British history, literature (including the King James Bible and Book of Common Prayer) and theater.

All these elements — history, literature, theater and idiosyncratic expressions of faith — converged in the April 17 funeral of Prince Philip, the Duke of Edinburgh, as detailed on page 3.

The service he designed reflected his restless mind and love of both tradition and modernity. For instance, he chose a Land Rover modified to his specifications to carry his coffin, rather than the traditional horse-drawn caisson.

The coverage was occasionally breathless — how will the Queen go on? Are William and Harry reconciling? — but millions of people were moved by the simple, dignified ceremony. The Queen became every elderly widow mourning a husband of decades; the rest of the family became every adult losing a father or grandfather, every child losing a great-grandfather.

The Duke was 99 when he died. Perhaps I felt moved since my father passed away at age 97.

For both the royal family and the church, human connection is at the heart of the special relationships they have with subjects, interested people or congregants.

We can only care about an "institution" for so long; it's the personal expressions of that institution that light up the imagination and touch deep emotions of loyalty and faith.

May the custodians of both institutions always maintain and strengthen the human connection. ■

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NEWS

Prince Philip's funeral service expresses deep faith

By Solange De Santis
Episcopal Journal

Britain's Prince Philip, the Duke of Edinburgh, was laid to rest on April 17 in a funeral service that reflected his wide-ranging faith with both modern and traditional accents, influenced by his connections with Britain's military and his service in the Royal Navy.

Due to COVID-19 pandemic restrictions, only 30 members of the royal family attended the service, including Queen Elizabeth II, who bade farewell to her husband of 73 years. Philip died April 9 at age 99. At the time, Archbishop of Canterbury Justin Welby paid tribute to their marriage, saying that it was "grounded in friendship and mutual respect and sustained by shared faith in Christ."

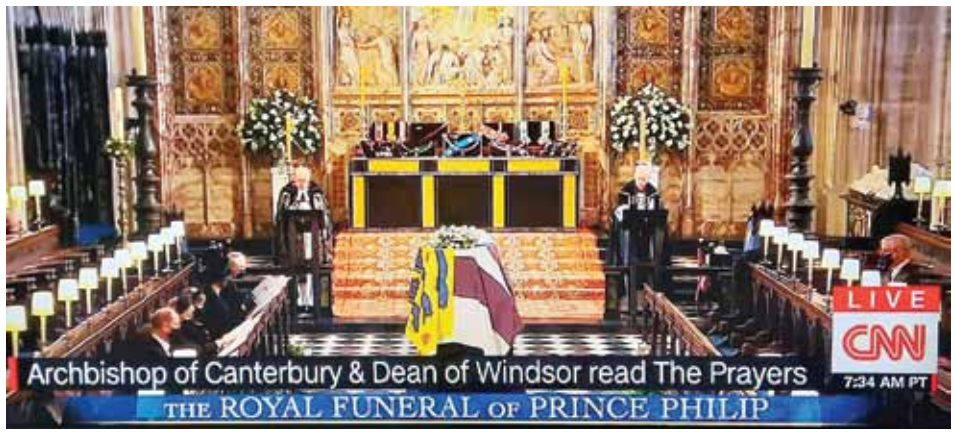
Photo/Allan Warren/Wikimedia Commons
Prince Philip

The service was conducted by Dean of Windsor David Conner with Welby at St. George's Chapel in Windsor Castle and televised globally.

There was no formal eulogy, but Conner spoke of "the many ways in which [Philip's] long life has been a blessing to us. We have been inspired by his unwavering loyalty to our queen, by his service to the nation and the Commonwealth, by his courage, fortitude and faith. Our lives have been enriched through the challenges that he has set us, the encouragement that he has given us, his kindness, humor and humanity."

As the funeral service began, four choir members, standing several feet apart and outside the sanctuary to observe COVID-19 safety protocols, sang "Eternal Father, Strong to Save," the traditional Navy hymn that seeks God's protection "for those in peril on the sea."

Conner read from Ecclesiasticus 43: 11-26, which surveys the works of nature, including the dangers experienced by "those who sail the sea," yet concludes that, by God's word, "all things are held together."



Photo/CNN broadcast
Prince Philip's funeral at St. George's Chapel, Windsor Castle, is broadcast globally.

Ecclesiasticus, a different book than Ecclesiastes in the Old Testament, was omitted from the Bible by the Protestant church in the 1800s and is included in the collection of additional books of the Bible called the Apocrypha.

Welby read from the Gospel of John, chapter 11: 21-27, which includes the well-known verse, "I am the resurrection and the life; he who believes in me, though he die, yet shall he live, and whoever lives and believes in me shall never die."

Representing the 20th century, the choir sang two works commissioned by Philip: "Jubilate in C" by Benjamin Britten and a musical setting of Psalm 104 by William Lovelady, arranged for choir and organ by the service's music director, James Vivian.

Reflecting Philip's baptism as an infant into the Greek Orthodox Church and his descent from the Russian royal family, the anthem toward the end of the service was the Russian "Kontakion of the Departed," a hymn sung to mark death in Eastern Catholic traditions. It ends with the words, "All we go down to the dust; and, weeping, o'er the grave/ we make our song: Alleluia, Alleluia, Alleluia."

As Philip's coffin was lowered into the royal vault at the chapel, which took place off-camera, the dean of Windsor pronounced the commendation: "Go forth upon thy journey from this world, O Christian soul." ■

Diocese of Egypt's Deaf Unit continues to provide care despite COVID restrictions

Anglican Communion News Service

The Diocese of Egypt's Deaf Unit in Cairo, part of the Episcopal/ Anglican Province of Alexandria, has continued to serve their community throughout the past year despite setbacks caused by Covid-19. The Deaf Unit's efforts have been picked up by the Voice of America media organisation, which showcased their work in a recent report.

The Deaf Unit's goal is to improve the quality of life for deaf and hard of hearing children, youth and families through education, vocational training, community awareness programs and spiritual guidance to give them a chance for employment, financial independence and successful integration into society in Egypt.

The Unit includes a school and boarding house, training, an audiology clinic, a vocational training centre and a deaf club. During 2020, the school was forced to close the boarding section because of Covid-19.

Speaking to Voice of America, the Archbishop of Alexandria and Bishop of Egypt, Mouneer Anis, said: "we used to provide the accommodation for these children who come from far away and who cannot afford transportation every day. But now, because of the pandemic, we are not able to bring them close to each other because this increases the risk of being infected with the virus."

Despite these challenges, the school remains open to prepare young students for the world. They will learn the basic skills they will need to communicate with other people, overcome prejudice in society, and contribute to their communities.

Many of Egypt's five million deaf people come from poor and rural areas, where parents are unable to speak to their deaf children. Speaking to Voice of America, Claire Malik, the founder of the Deaf Unit, said: "we teach the parents how to use sign language, and that's good and enables the parents to communicate with their children."

Photo/Voice of America
The Deaf Unit in Cairo serves a vulnerable community.

The Deaf Unit has also been able to make useful online educational and awareness videos shared via WhatsApp for children and parents to use when they are unable to get to school. During Covid-19, the school has also provided food parcels for those students and families who are in need of extra support.

Voice of America's video feature on the Deaf Unit may be found at **www.voanews.com**. ■

AROUND THE CHURCH

Bishop transitions

By Kirk Petersen
The Living Church

Southern Ohio to seek new bishop


Price

The Diocese of Southern Ohio has announced that it will not renew its contract with Bishop Kenneth L. Price, who has been serving as an assisting bishop since Bishop Thomas Breidenthal resigned for health reasons in late 2020.

"We want to be clear that this decision is not a reflection of the fine work Bishop Price has done to this point. In fact, we are deeply grateful for his pastoral care, his wisdom, and his love of the diocese," the Standing Committee said in a letter to the diocese.

"At the same time, we believe strongly that for us to move forward to a place where we are ready to call a new diocesan bishop, Southern Ohio needs an outside leadership perspective," the letter said.

When asked how he felt about the announcement, Price told TLC "I've been in this diocese for 27 years and I've been in a lot of different positions. It's a great diocese, I enjoyed what I was doing, and I'm looking forward to the next chapter."

Price, 77, served as suffragan bishop of the diocese from 1994 to 2012. He will remain on duty until his six-month contract expires on May 1 and will continue to be available to the diocese for duties that can only be performed by a bishop.

Bishop Douglas of Connecticut to retire

Bishop Ian T. Douglas of the Diocese of Connecticut, has announced that he will retire on October 8, 2022, in the 13th year of his episcopacy, also the target date for consecrating the next bishop of Connecticut.


Douglas

"My reasons for retiring are twofold," Douglas, 62, wrote in a letter to the diocese. "First, by the fall of 2022 it will be time for you to have a new bishop with fresh ideas and vision to lead you forward in the 21st century. Second, while I have loved every minute of being your Bishop Diocesan, the work of a bishop is an arduous and nonstop vocation. I look forward to retiring with energy and in good health."

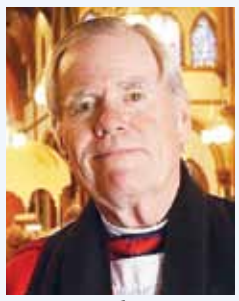
Douglas has been active in the wider church. In the Episcopal Church, he has served as a member of Executive Council, chair of the Standing Commission on World Mission, founder of Episcopalians for Global Reconciliation, and Bishops United Against Gun Violence. In the Anglican Communion, he has served on the Anglican Consultative Council. ■

OBITUARIES

Charles Jenkins, Louisiana bishop broken and transformed by Katrina, dies at 69

By Bruce Nolan
New Orleans Times-Picayune

Bishop Charles Jenkins, who was both broken and transformed by the ordeal of Hurricane Katrina and who subsequently retooled the work of the Diocese of Louisiana to remedy the social injustices exposed by the storm, died on April 9, the diocese said. Jenkins, who had pancreatic cancer and lived in St. Francisville after retirement, was 69.


Jenkins

A native of north Louisiana cotton country, Jenkins left a boyhood in the Southern Baptist Convention to become an Episcopal priest in several parishes before being elected to shepherd 54 Episcopal churches in southeast Louisiana in 1997.

The global Anglican Communion was then in an acute phase of an internal struggle over the theology of homosexuality. The tensions threatened to split the U.S. branch from the global communion, even as the U.S. church threatened to unravel internally.

As pressure mounted over several years before and after Hurricane Katrina, Jenkins was among a handful of U.S. bishops who urged national and global unity despite rising calls for schism.

Jenkins was deeply involved in that issue when, seven years into his episcopacy, Hurricane Katrina almost destroyed New Orleans in 2005. Safely evacuated but alone in Baton Rouge, he saw televised images of thousands of suffering New Orleanians, mostly Black people, stranded for the better part of a week at the city's convention center.

The sight of their misery almost broke him, he said later. It compelled Jenkins, a White man in a majority-White church, to face systemic racial and economic inequities that he had seen in New Orleans but not appreciated. As national relief money poured in, Jenkins launched ministries that put the Louisiana diocese into new work such as building houses, running medical clinics and forging new relationships with African American neighborhoods and ministries.

Jenkins said he wanted to institutionalize in his church the "reckless generosity" that prevailed in the first months after the storm.

He described Katrina as "the death of many things that I took for granted." After the storm he actively sought the company of Black pastors and community leaders to see the city through their eyes. As New Orleans crafted its hotly contested rebuilding agenda, he supported Black residents who feared they were being deliberately marginalized.

All of it triggered a wrenching personal transformation.

"You have a man [who] was deeply shaken at time of Katrina, to the depths of his soul," said the Rev. Canon Mark Stevenson, a Jenkins top aide who now works at church headquarters in New York. "He had to come to grips with his own history, with his own complicity as a White man in a city filled with racism and classism and all sorts of other -isms.'"

Jenkins was a candidate for presiding bishop in 2006 but was not elected.

In 2007, then-Archbishop of Canterbury Rowan Williams and other Anglican leaders attended a regularly scheduled meeting in New Orleans of the U.S. church's House of Bishops.

Jenkins used the ordeal of New Orleans to display the consequences of poverty and social injustice. And in a series of internal meetings, Jenkins was among a few bishops who fashioned a compromise that staved off schism in the global union.

In time, however, Katrina, the stress of rebuilding and especially the systemic inequities that it laid bare to him ultimately proved disabling to Jenkins. He was diagnosed with depression and worsening post-traumatic stress disorder. He continued working under medical care, but after almost five years of post-storm leadership, took early retirement at the end of 2009.

"I think Charles really understood the Jesus ministry after Katrina. It's hard. And it can break your heart," said Bishop Morris Thompson, who succeeded him.

More than 15 years after the storm, one of the Jenkins ministries born from Katrina, a homebuilding project called Jericho Road, survives. The others directly linked to the diocese eventually closed as funds dried up, Thompson said.

Jenkins retired to St. Francisville. At times he presided over services at St. John's, Laurel Hill, the chapel of Grace Church.

"I hope they remember Charles as a bishop who came terms with his own racism, and desired to understand it and be changed," Thompson said. "And I hope that would be the goal for all of us White people with privilege, to make a difference."

Jenkins is survived by his wife, Louise; sons Benjamin and Edward; and two granddaughters. A funeral service is tentatively scheduled for May 8 at Grace Church in St. Francisville. ■

This article was originally published by the New Orleans Times-Picayune and on www.nola.com and is used with permission.

The Rev. Brian Scott Kelley, civil rights activist

The Rev. Brian Scott Kelley, a poet, civil rights activist and advocate for the marginalized and vulnerable, died in Concord, Mass. on April 6, age 92.

"Brian's central belief was that God calls us out of our pews and into partnerships to respond to the needs of the world," said Dean Emeritus Jep Streit of Boston's St. Paul Cathedral, where Kelley was a member of the clergy and Cathedral Canon of Social Action.

Kelley was born in Quebec City. He earned a B.A. from Bishop's University in Sherbrooke, Quebec, and a master's in education from Montreal's McGill University. He graduated from Episcopal Divinity School in Cambridge, Mass. in 1957 and was ordained in the Diocese of Quebec.

He and his wife, Sara, returned to Massachusetts where he served as rector at Saint John's Church, Charlestown.

While at Episcopal Divinity School, Kelley had become involved with efforts to challenge the conscience of the church with respect to social and racial inequality. He became active in the civil rights movement and joined the Episcopal Society for Cultural and Racial Unity.

In 1962, Kelley traveled to Albany, Ga. to join the "Albany Movement," marching with protesters and attending the trial of the Rev. Martin Luther King, Jr. and Ralph Abernathy. In the ensuing years, he attended the funeral of civil rights activist Medgar Evers, participated in the March on Washington and in civil rights activist James Meredith's March Against Fear.

Kelley wrote and preached about social and economic justice, including injustices he saw in his adopted city of Boston. After earning a doctor of education degree from Harvard University in the early 1970s, Brian served as assistant headmaster of one of the first pilot schools in Boston.


Kelley

The Massachusetts Experimental School System focused on creating opportunities for student learning through experience and group relationships.

Troubled by the plight of Boston's population of homeless and disenfranchised individuals, Kelley, resuming his ministry at the cathedral, created Social Action Ministries, now known as the Massachusetts Housing and Shelter Alliance (MHSA).

Today, MHSA draws upon the expertise of nearly 100 member agencies statewide to develop and advocate for innovative housing and support services. MHSA established the Canon Brian S. Kelley Public Servant Award, which honors those who work to end homelessness.

A lifelong poet, Kelley's work is published in several collections. In addition to his wife, Kelley is survived by a son and two daughters, and seven grandchildren.

— Episcopal News Service

AROUND THE CHURCH

Executive Council approves relief grants for every diocese

By David Paulsen
Episcopal News Service

The Episcopal Church's Executive Council, meeting online April 16, approved a resolution allocating up to $40,000 in pandemic relief for each diocese that requests it — no formal application necessary, no strings attached.

The emergency relief will total more than $4 million if all 109 dioceses and mission areas request the money. The vote at the one-day meeting signaled the culmination of a yearlong deliberation among church leaders about how best to help dioceses and congregations weather the disruptions caused by the COVID-19 pandemic, at a time when the Episcopal Church remains on solid financial ground.

Though no formal application is necessary, the council invited dioceses to engage in discernment about how the money they receive can best serve the mission of the church.

Presiding Bishop Michael Curry, in his opening remarks, emphasized there was more at stake for the church than providing direct financial assistance. "What began as a problem of financial relief emerged as a possibility of churchwide revival in the midst of a pandemic," he said.

The money, to be drawn from the church's financial reserves, will be available starting May 1, and dioceses can request the one-time grants through November 2022.

Executive Council settled on up to $40,000 per diocese because it was "substantial enough to provide relief in various different forms to various different programs of the dioceses," said the Rev. Mally Lloyd, Finance Committee chair. "The need for relief was not universal, and yet our charge was to provide relief to every diocese."

The church's ongoing reconciliation work also figured prominently during the meeting of Executive Council, which serves as the church's governing body between meetings of General Convention. Council members approved a resolution affirming Episcopal support for LGBTQ equality and inclusion in the church, and a separate resolution condemned recent incidents of violence and hatred against people of Asian descent and Pacific Islanders. [See New York Suffragan Bishop Allen K. Shin's reflection on anti-Asian racism, page 2.]

"This is a very timely and somewhat overdue resolution," said Warren Wong, a member from the Diocese of California, who was the primary author of the anti-hate resolution. "We're experiencing a heightened amount of hate crimes against Asian-Americans and Pacific Islanders, and especially targeting women and the elderly."

Photo/ENS

Presiding Bishop Michael Curry welcomes Executive Council to its April 16 online meeting.

The LGBTQ+ resolution alludes to the church's shift over more than 40 years toward welcoming gay and lesbian Christians more fully into the life of the church, and it grieves the harm done by the church against members of the LGBTQ+ community.

"Executive Council is committed," the resolution says, "to ensuring that the Episcopal Church truly and authentically reflect the 'full and equal claim' that LGBTQ+ people have upon the 'love, acceptance, and pastoral concern and care of the Church,' by focusing on, honoring, and recognizing LGBTQ+ voices, experiences and leadership, proclaiming that we support LGBTQ+ equality not in spite of our faith, but because of it."

Executive Council typically meets three times a year in person, but during the pandemic, all of its meetings have been held online via Zoom. The April 16 session was held in plenary, with no committee meetings, and it was livestreamed on YouTube.

The church governing body has 40 voting members, including the presiding bishop and House of Deputies president. Twenty of the voting members — four bishops, four priests or deacons, and 12 laypeople — are elected by General Convention to six-year terms, with half of those members elected every three years. The other 18 are elected to six-year terms by The Episcopal Church's nine provinces, with each province sending one ordained member and one lay member.

In January, at its last meeting, Executive Council reviewed a request from the Province IV bishops to allow dioceses to exempt federal pandemic aid from the diocesan income that the Episcopal Church will count when it calculates the next round of annual assessments. Loans from federal Paycheck Protection Program, or PPP, can be converted to grants if recipients meet certain conditions. The Episcopal Church also received $3 million in PPP assistance.

Lloyd, in her presentation, walked members through her committee's deliberations over how the church should treat diocesan PPP revenue. She noted that PPP "was not distributed evenly or even justly." Not all dioceses and congregations requested and received that assistance, and since it was a U.S. program, dioceses in other countries were excluded.

Ultimately, the committee concluded that the PPP assistance met the church's definition of income and must be reported as such, Lloyd said.

But Executive Council members expressed a consensus on the need to provide some form of financial relief to dioceses, especially given the sound position of denomination-level finances. The Episcopal Church ended 2020 with $10 million more in revenue than expenses, according to a report from Kurt Barnes, the church's treasurer and chief financial officer. Those results were partly due to the spending cuts church leaders made after the pandemic hit in March 2020, as well as pandemic-related restrictions on staff travel.

Church leaders and their diocesan counterparts, however, remain uncertain about the long-term financial impact of the pandemic, and "2021 might not be the worst year ahead of us," Lloyd said in her presentation. The pandemic relief grants, then, will be available for the next 19 months, if and when dioceses need them.

The committee also drafted guidance for diocesan discernment. In some cases, that guidance suggests, using the money to offset shortfalls in diocesan or congregational budgets will be the best way to maintain the church's mission in the community. Other dioceses may invest the money in ongoing social justice and racial reconciliation work or use it to support vulnerable and marginalized members of the community. Some dioceses may choose to pass the money on to non-Episcopal organizations that are engaged in that work. They also can choose not to request a grant and leave the money for Executive Council to determine how it should be used. ■

Former Albany bishops leave Episcopal Church

By Episcopal News Service

Former Diocese of Albany (N.Y.) bishops William Love and Daniel Herzog in March relinquished their orders in the Episcopal Church and joined the Anglican Church in North America (ACNA).

Herzog

Love

ACNA, which is not a province of the Anglican Communion, was created in 2009 by former members of the Episcopal Church and the Anglican Church of Canada who primarily disagreed with the churches' positions on the ordination of LGBTQ people and women.

After accepting Love's request to be released and removed from ordained ministry in the Episcopal Church, Presiding Bishop Michael Curry said that the work of ministry "is not easy." He added, "the road can be rough. This path is not painless. The work of love is hard, but it is both the hard work of healing and the harbinger of hope."

Love, who disagreed with the Episcopal Church's stance on LGBTQ issues, resigned as bishop effective Feb. 1 after a disciplinary panel ruled last October that he violated church law by prohibiting clergy from using the same-sex marriage rite approved for churchwide use by General Convention in 2018. Herzog was his predecessor in the diocese.

Love said he celebrated his final service in the diocese on Feb. 27 and thanked the clergy and members of the diocese for their prayers and support. He added that he plans to stay in the area but does not consider it appropriate to serve in an ACNA parish within the geographic boundaries of the Diocese of Albany.

Since Feb. 1, the diocese has had no active bishops. Under church canon law, the diocese's standing committee assumes ecclesiastical authority when there is no bishop. The standing committee will oversee the election of the next bishop, although the diocese has not announced when that might happen. ■

NEWS

Anglican, Episcopal leaders call for equitable access to COVID-19 vaccines

By Egan Millard
Episcopal News Service

Anglican Communion leaders discussed the challenges of global access to COVID-19 vaccines and urged churches and governments to work beyond their borders during a virtual panel discussion hosted by the Episcopal Church's Office of Government Relations on April 14.

The discussion, moderated by the Rev. Charles Robertson, canon to the presiding bishop for ministry beyond the Episcopal Church, brought together a diverse group of voices, each with a different perspective on the pandemic and the vaccine rollout: Archbishop Thabo Makgoba, primate of the Anglican Church of Southern Africa; Archbishop Linda Nicholls, primate of the Anglican Church of Canada; Bishop Michael Beasley of Hertford in the Church of England; and Rebecca Linder Blachly, director of the Episcopal Church's Office of Government Relations.

The discussion centered on unequal access to COVID-19 vaccines caused by "vaccine nationalism," which occurs when wealthier countries hoard vaccines that often have been purchased at lower costs. This presents problems from moral and epidemiological perspectives, panelists said; not only does it worsen existing inequality in health care around the world, but it also threatens to delay global herd immunity and risks the emergence of variants that could evade vaccines.

Makgoba contrasted the state of the vaccination campaign in South Africa — which has about 59 million people — with that of the United States and other Western nations.

"To date, we are thinking about accessing vaccines one day," he said. "Only 260,000 medical professionals have been vaccinated. … South Africa is still dreaming about vaccination of its citizens."

Photo/via Facebook

Anglican leaders discuss worldwide access to COVID-19 vaccines. From upper left, clockwise: Rebecca Linder Blachly, director of the Episcopal Church's Office of Government Relations the Rev. Charles Robertson of the Episcopal Church, Bishop Michael Beasley of the Church of England, Archbishop Linda Nicholls of Canada and Archbishop Thabo Makgoba of Southern Africa.

Part of the problem, he said, is that wealthier countries like the U.S. have bought up huge amounts of vaccine supplies, and patents prevent companies in other countries from producing vaccines on their own.

"The patent laws, the licensing and the hoarding is hitting us hard," he said.

Beasley, who is also an epidemiologist, said the global approach to vaccines has been fundamentally flawed and needs to be more holistic in order to stamp out the coronavirus.

"I just don't think we've got our heads around it as a world yet that we have to ensure that every adult across the planet gets access to vaccination," Beasley said. "Vaccination for everybody is not something we'd like to have or would be preferable or possible. It's vital."

He noted that while the vaccine rollout in the United Kingdom has so far been swift and successful, as long as there are unvaccinated populations, that progress could be undone by variants.

"We've heard from the World Health Organization that none of us are safe and protected until we're all safe and protected," he said. "Even where populations have been vaccinated, such as they have been in Britain, they will be vulnerable to different variants, springing up in different parts of the world."

Some of the barriers to reaching global vaccination of adults are related to government policies and funding. Blachly said that even though the United States and other Western countries invested massive amounts of money into vaccine development, it is "time to realize that not only is there a moral obligation to look globally … and that the inequity we're already seeing is unjust, but also that it's actually not in anyone's national interest to just vaccinate their own population."

Churches can respond to these problems by calling on their governments to make vaccines more easily accessible to other countries, particularly in the Global South. There are existing international campaigns to increase vaccine access — like the WHO's COVAX program — but panelists agreed that much more needs to be done. The Episcopal Church, for example, has signed on to a letter encouraging the Biden administration to waive vaccine patents, making it easier for other countries to produce vaccines.

Churches can also use their position as sources of trustworthy information to encourage vaccination for those who do have access to it, since vaccine hesitancy is another barrier to reaching global herd immunity.

The Episcopal Church has joined the U.S. government's new COVID-19 Community Corps program to encourage Americans to get COVID-19

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NEWS

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vaccines and build confidence in their safety and efficacy, and the Office of Government Relations has developed a toolkit for individuals, congregations and ministries to facilitate and promote COVID-19 vaccination.

"We are seeing now how our voices as partners for the common good are still essential and powerful," said Nicholls, adding that the Canadian government has enlisted the Anglican Church of Canada's help and advice in encouraging vaccinations — an unusual step for a very secular nation, she said.

Nicholls said she was doing her part by getting her vaccine later today, and "now we must engage in ensuring that others have the same [access]. As Christians, it is no less than a mandate of our baptism."

Makgoba challenged the other Anglican Communion member provinces to live up to their status as a family of churches. Families, he said, look out for each other.

"There is some degree of anxiety [in] the whole family if one family member is worried about the crumbs that fall from the table that are too small and another family member is really eating loaves and loaves of bread," he said. "We need to advocate that all of us should get the bread and not the crumbs." ■

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National Cathedral are members in their own right.

On March 31, Washington Bishop Mariann Budde met with Vice President Kamala Harris to talk about the program.

"Along with seven other faith leaders, I was invited to meet with the vice president to discuss coordinated efforts for COVID vaccination distribution, the lasting effects of the pandemic on children and, as faith communities, [how] we can help our people heal," Budde said. Representatives of the Episcopal Church also participated in a call with Harris, Surgeon General Vivek Murthy and the other members of the program on April 1.

The program will provide corps members with fact sheets and social media messages to spread to their communities, as well as regular updates on vaccine information and other resources.

The Episcopal Church has encouraged church members to get the vaccine when they become eligible. The church's Office of Government Relations has developed a toolkit for individuals, congregations and ministries to facilitate and promote COVID-19 vaccination and Presiding Bishop Michael Curry has recorded a video statement about the personal and collective importance of getting vaccinated.

In addition, dioceses are undertaking their own efforts, like the vaccination clinic the Diocese of Pennsylvania held in March for its clergy and essential church workers. ■

MARS continued from page 1

united by a sense of wonder. From an early age, she remembers "being very in touch with the general concept of nature and God."

"I think that the evolution of me as an explorer with respect to this world as well as other worlds, and also as an explorer of the vast spiritual landscape that's internal, have both been present, always," she said.

Conrad traces her interest in space exploration back to the night when she was a toddler and her father pointed out Sputnik — the first satellite launched into orbit — passing overhead, but she took a roundabout route through other professions before arriving at NASA.

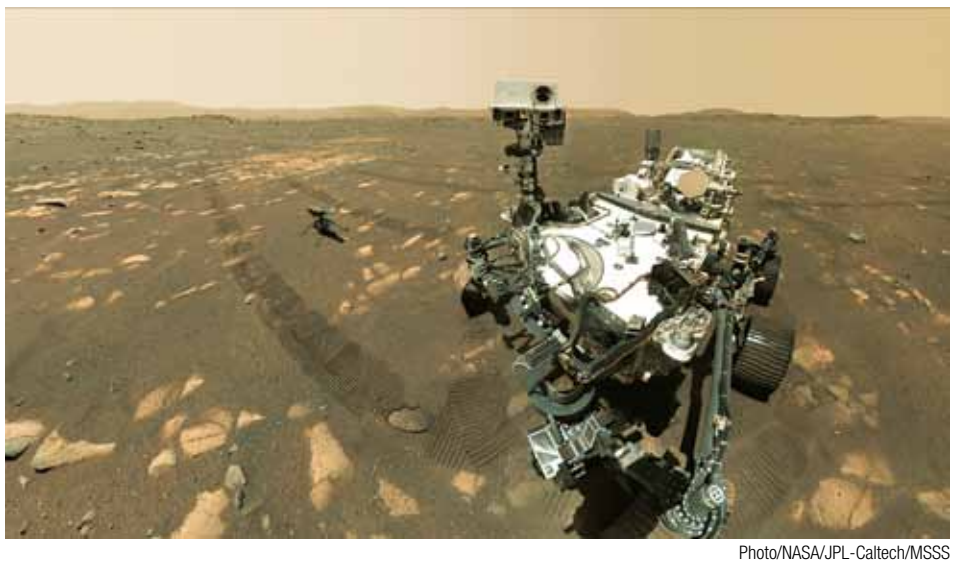
After training as a musician and working as a video producer, she pursued a graduate degree in geology, focusing on geobiology — the study of how life arises from planetary landscapes. That led to a job at the Jet Propulsion Laboratory, where she applied her knowledge of geobiology to the search for life on Mars.

"[It] was an obvious choice to become involved with Mars right away," Conrad said, "being our closest planetary neighbor and one that I could reasonably explore in my lifetime with robots."

But all the while, Conrad was experiencing a parallel calling to return to the

Photo/ NASA

Pamela Conrad poses with the Mars Curiosity rover.



Photo/NASA/JPL-Caltech/MSSS

The Perseverance rover took these photos of itself and the Ingenuity helicopter on April 6.

Episcopal Church, from which she had "run in horror" as a young woman. In the 1970s, when Conrad was in college and women's ordination was a disputed issue, the rector of her church in was disciplined for allowing an irregularly ordained woman to celebrate the Eucharist.

"I just said, 'You know, Jesus would never approve of business this way; I'm just going to go be a free agent.' And that didn't work because I kept getting this subtle call back to community, but I didn't know how that should be manifest," she recalled.

Two moments of epiphany gave her some clarity. On a trip to Antarctica, she stood and stared at a distant mountain range as the wind pounded her face and "felt all the anger that I had about the church just blow out of me. … It was a road-to-Damascus moment." Then, at a rally against Proposition 8 — the 2008 California ballot initiative that banned same-sex marriage in the state — she was saddened by an encounter with anti-gay Christian protesters who were screaming in anger, along with their children.

"I remember thinking, 'If I had stayed in the church, perhaps I could have been a voice of kindness and love and there wouldn't be little children yelling,'" she told ENS. "That's when I thought, 'I'm going back to church, and I'm going to stay until I can develop my own leadership within the church.'"

At first, she worried what her scientific colleagues would think about her entering the ordination process, but it ended up confirming her call to ministry.

"I was afraid to tell them," she said. "As it turns out, no one thought it was weird. In fact, they began to come to me in a pastoral sense. And I was surprised. That was a good lesson — that I should not prejudge people, and that we all have the need to connect in community, no matter how nerdy we are. … I think you always deal with people on a pastoral basis, whether you're relating to them on a science project or you're relating to them in a congregation."

Now, with her role as a full-time rector, she must balance her participation in the Perseverance mission with the responsibilities of a parish priest. She only takes night shifts if she knows she can sleep in the next day, and she finds a substitute if something comes up, like the recent death of a parishioner.

"It's difficult to draw the line sometimes … but I have to be disciplined about that, because the pastoral needs of the people in my congregation are my highest priority."

Conrad is a firm believer in the harmony of science and faith — which she advocates through her leadership role in the North American province of the Society of Ordained Scientists — and sees the search for life on Mars as an affirmation of a God who exceeds human understanding.

"People often regard humans as the pinnacle of creation. We don't want to consider the possibility that Mom doesn't like us best," she told ENS. "As Christians, what we have to ask ourselves is, If God can create life here, is God big enough to create life elsewhere? Of course, the answer is yes."

Conrad also sees a role for the Episcopal Church in dispelling the myth that science and religion are incompatible, given its roots in the Anglican concept of faith informed by reason.

"In a time when people are discarding reason in favor of conspiracy theories, or suspicion of science, we can help," she said. "And I believe that we are called to this moment to help reconcile those two perspectives so that we can ask ourselves, Why wouldn't we use all the gifts in our disposal, all the processes of learning and knowing? And science is one of those processes."

She also thinks the church is called to take a proactive approach to the ethics of interplanetary travel and colonization. Given the tragedies brought about by exploration and colonization on Earth, Conrad wants Christians to start thinking carefully about how the human race can ethically expand beyond Earth.

"How can we as a culture do a respectful job of exploring so that we can explore without exploiting?" she asked. "As we become poised to be an interplanetary species — and we will, because exploration is a biological imperative — will we take our Christian selves into that exploration? … And we as beloved community can play a role in that by articulating it now before we lift off for Mars." ■

FEATURE

Michigan Episcopalians lean on Scripture, leverage power to build a more just world

By Lynette Wilson
Episcopal News Service

Michigan Bishop Bonnie Perry's leadership follows two frameworks: Scripture and community organizing principles. She employs this mix of theological and secular tools within the diocese and the communities and region it serves.

"I long for a church that is dynamic, or relevant, deeply involved with the issues of the world and continually calling people back to what nurtures our souls, what gives us life, and then using that sustenance to then create change, to create a more just world. A world that some people may think is beyond our reach, a world that may be naive for me to think about, but I think our communities of faith are sometimes not audacious enough in our hopes," Perry told Episcopal News Service in an interview when asked about her vision for the diocese.

Perry was consecrated bishop of the Diocese of Michigan on Feb. 8, 2020, just over a month before the COVID-19 pandemic forced churches to suspend in-person worship. The diocese covers southeast Michigan, including Detroit and its suburbs, and extends 90 miles west through Ann Arbor to the state capital, Lansing.

Prior to her consecration as bishop, Perry served as rector of All Saints' Episcopal Church in the Ravenswood section of Chicago for 27 years. In Chicago, she was known inside and outside the church for inspiring community engagement, most notably for an affordable housing campaign aimed at redressing redlining and other racist and discriminatory lending and housing policies that historically targeted African Americans.

Less than six months after Perry's arrival in Michigan, at her direction the diocese began offering community organizer trainings that were facilitated by Michael Gecan, senior adviser and longtime organizer at the Industrial Areas Foundation, and Keisha Krumm, executive director and lead organizer of Greater Cleveland Congregations.

Leaders in the Diocese of Michigan "want to rebuild and improve their institutions. And they're looking for tools and ways to think about it, get it started, engage their own staffs, clergy and lay leaders," Gecan told ENS. "And that's where it all starts: It starts with talented leaders who understand their mission, understand the challenges, understand the context, and then want to begin testing, experimenting and trying different ways to revitalize their institutions."

The diocese offered trainings in June 2020 and again in February. "After the first training, there was a lot of buzz and we were able to get 70 more [participants], and now it's buzzing again," said Jo Ann Hardy, the diocese's canon to the ordinary and chief operating officer and a native Detroiter. "Folks do see the value; they see the value for their community and they also see the value in their local congregations….

"What we're doing right now through the community organizing training efforts is trying to identify leaders, so that when we see a big problem in our communities abroad in the diocese, we can galvanize people who can lead those efforts and also already have established relationships with community leaders and folks in municipalities that can help us get big things done."

Building on participants' enthusiasm, the diocese is offering further leadership training to develop the one-on-one relationship-building tools. These skills are necessary for "galvanizing" power to address such issues as lack of affordable housing, food insecurity, police brutality and systemic racism, environmental injustice and gentrification, and to support efforts including criminal record expungement, which helps formerly incarcerated individuals reintegrate into society and the workforce.

Screenshot/Diocese of Michigan

Episcopalians in the Diocese of Michigan participate in a two-day, online community organizing training in February. Since June 2020, more than 140 Michigan Episcopalians have completed the introductory training.

Episcopalians engage in public life as individuals, groups, networks and coalitions; organizing emphasizes the strength of citizens' consolidated power. Perry was first introduced to community organizing in 1989, around the time of her ordination to the priesthood while working in the Diocese of Newark alongside the Rev. Mark Beckwith, who would later become the diocesan bishop.

"What I'm looking for and longing for, praying for and working for is I want our communities of faith to be people who have the ability to enact Gospel values. You're only able to put the values in place that you have the power to make happen. And for me, power is morally neutral; it's what you do with it," Perry said.

Participation in public life is not the same as partisanship, or party fealty. Afterall, as Gecan pointed out during the February training, political parties regularly swap governing power, and to affiliate with any one party would be ineffective. In his book, "Going Public: An Organizer's Guide to Citizen Action," Gecan presents case studies where citizens collectively shifted the power dynamics with elected and government officials, landlords and corporate leaders to advocate for everything from affordable housing to pubic pools to cleaner, better-stocked supermarkets.

"'You only get the justice that you have the power to compel,'" Hardy told ENS, sharing what she called her favorite "Mike Gecan quote."

During the second day of the two-day online training, participants observed Gecan and former House of Deputies President Bonnie Anderson, who is a member of All Saints' Episcopal Church in Pontiac, have a one-on-one conversation during which they got a sense for one another as people — who they are, what drives them and what issues are important to them. Then the group paired off in private Zoom rooms for 20 minutes to practice having an initial meeting, during which they worked on making contact and establishing rapport, coming together ahead of a need or crisis, or to divert a crisis.

Vivian Asztalos, a member of Trinity Episcopal Church in Belleville, a 4,000-person community located halfway between Detroit and Ann Arbor, found the conversation practice instructive.

"The way he [Gecan] structured one-on-one meetings was really helpful for me," said Asztalos, who has worked as a professional activist on political campaigns, mostly recruiting and motivating others to participate. "It was helpful because most of my one-on-one experience is more traditional, like interview mindset: Can you do this job? Are you interested? That kind of stuff."

Perry views having conversations with community leaders and elected officials as part of her job. "If we're going to be effective in shifting the culture of our country to that where we are more connected rather than polarized, then you know, we need to have relationships with each other. And then you can make common calls, and then you can move on an issue," she said.

The Rev. Nikki Seger, who leads St. Michael's Episcopal Church on Lansing's southeast side, was a lay member and warden at All Saints' Episcopal Church in Chicago while Perry was rector there, and Seger served on Michigan's diocesan bishop search committee, which prioritized racial reconciliation work in its profile.

"I have known for a long time that Bishop Perry has, you know, this, this call for organizing as a way to be effective church in the world," Seger said.

Seger's parish is looking to couple its work around Sacred Ground, The Episcopal Church's film-based dialogue series on race and faith, with organizing, and it has both an advocacy and an outreach team. "It took us a little while to differentiate what advocacy was versus outreach," she said.

Outreach is addressing the immediate problem, while "advocacy is looking upstream and seeing what's causing it," Seger said, paraphrasing the famous Archbishop Desmond Tutu quotation: "There comes a point when we need to stop just pulling people out of the river. We need to go upstream and find out why they are falling in."

Though not inherently bad, service absent a broader vision can create or reinforce dependence, as Gecan pointed out during the training. Part of the challenge is that "it's endless and doesn't get to the root" of the problem, while also diverting from mutuality, which turns recipients into beneficiaries.

Some years ago, members of All Saints Episcopal Church in East Lansing began to turn their attention to the reasons people were metaphorically falling into the river.

"When I came to All Saints in like '91, I was the director of Christian education, and at that time, we did a lot of outreach, which would be service," Janet Chegwidden told ENS. The social justice piece began to come together about 10 years later, when All Saints members began to read and learn about engaging politically and influencing public policy. "Then we kind of segued into Action of Greater Lansing and really tried to do both, separating outreach as a service and immediate help for those in need, as opposed to effecting change, which is what I consider social justice."

Through Action of Greater Lansing, a faith-based, nonpartisan coalition that works to hold elected officials accountable to the needs of their constituents, Chegwidden has led a campaign to provide local specialty health care services to chronically ill children insured by Medicaid, which is work that requires a long-term commitment.

After taking part in the organizer training, Chegwidden said she also appreciated the one-on-one conversation exercise, since oftentimes interactions, particularly with officials, can feel stilted, with one person doing most of the listening. "I would like to be a bit more confident in how to build power relationships with decision-makers."

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FEATURE

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For the Rev. Anthony Estes, associate rector at Christ Church Detroit, it's the Scripture.

"My own sense of priesthood, personhood doesn't get real energized around activism; I wouldn't describe myself as an activist priest," Estes, who was ordained in 2019, told ENS. As a new curate, he met with Perry and they discussed his passions and energy when she suggested he take the introductory organizer training, which he did last month.

"I didn't know what to expect. What I got was another way to think about what it means for the kingdom of God to have come near to us, not only initially in Jesus, but what it means to continue to proclaim and promulgate that today," said Estes, whose church is located near the Detroit River in the city's historic Bricktown section. "It is a way of, of using and aggregating the institution's power, the local church's power to make our little corner of Rivard and [East] Jefferson, wherever our local church is, to make that look more like an annex of the kingdom of God on the Earth."

"We need to make this zip code look a little bit more like the kingdom of God, where the eyes of the blind are open and the hungry are fed," he said. "Community organizing is just another way to do that very work by essentially making disciples and getting leaders together to work also for that same kind of change. … When they come home from a long day of being in the world and confronting the powers and speaking truth to power, I want to make sure that they have water to bathe their feet in, and bread and wine to eat and drink." ■

Lynette Wilson, managing editor of Episcopal News Service, attended the February 2021 organizer training along with participants from the Diocese of Michigan.

Pension fund to support housing units

The Church Pension Fund (CPF) announced on April 14 that it invested $20 million in Turner Multifamily Impact Fund II, a $357 million workforce housing fund managed by Turner Impact Capital, one of the nation's largest real estate investment firms dedicated to social impact investing.

The fund, together with the first Turner Multifamily Impact Fund, will enable Turner to acquire and manage up to 20,000 housing units across the country and keep them at rent levels that are affordable to residents earning less than the area median income.

"Turner Impact Capital has a long-tenured team with deep expertise investing in the affordable workforce housing market. We look forward to building our relationship with Turner Impact Capital as we continue to explore future positive impact investments that offer attractive risk-adjusted returns while also addressing key societal issues," said CPF Executive Vice President and Chief Investment Officer Roger Sayler.

Turner also offers residents a wide range of free enrichment services tailored to each community, such as after-school homework help, employment assistance, community health services, and neighborhood watch programs.

CPF's socially responsible investments around the world focus on economically targeted initiatives (urban redevelopment, affordable housing, sustainable agriculture, and microfinance) and environmentally responsible programs (sustainable forestry, clean technology, and green buildings).

This transaction follows CPF's prior socially responsible investments, which include investments with New Energy Capital Partners, Avanath Capital Management, Bridges Fund Management, Cheyne Capital Management, Developing World Markets, Social Investment Managers & Advisors, and SilverStreet Capital.

CPF also seeks to convene people and connect investors with socially responsible investing (SRI) fund managers and opportunities through its Insights & Ideas series of conversations. Earlier this year, it hosted a discussion on investing in economically disadvantaged communities, which follows other conversations focused on faith-ful investing, shareholder engagement, positive impact investing, and sustainable investing.

Photo/Courtesy Church Pension Fund

Above, Turner Impact Capitol helps fund multifamily housing communities such as the 312-unit Bridgeport Apartments in Irving, Texas

At left, an after-school program is one of the free enrichment services tailored to each community.

Turner Impact Capital, based in Santa Monica, Calif., is one of the nation's largest private equity real estate firms exclusively dedicated to social impact, with more than $5 billion in investment potential.

The Church Pension Fund and its affiliated companies, collectively referred to as the Church Pension Group (CPG), provide retirement, health, life insurance, and related benefits for clergy and lay employees of the Episcopal Church, as well as property and casualty insurance, and book and music publishing, including the official worship materials of the church.

— Church Pension Fund

FEATURE

Fewer women in high-profile, high-paying positions partly explains clergy gender pay gap

By Egan Millard
Episcopal News Service

In 2001, when the Church Pension Group first started publishing differences in average compensation between male and female full-time Episcopal clergy, men earned 18% more than women. Five years later, CPG, the financial services corporation that also tracks clergy demographics, reported that the clergy gender pay gap had only narrowed by half a percentage point, to 17.5%.

"Hence the progress towards compensation equity is slow," the 2006 report concluded.

Nearly 20 years after CPG published its first report, the gender pay gap has inched closer to parity. The median compensation for male clergy is now 13.5% higher than it is for female clergy, according to the most recent report.

The primary factor in the lingering clergy gender pay gap is the imbalance of women in higher-paying senior positions, according to the data and the observations of diocesan leaders who say it's one of the areas they're targeting as they work to close the gap.

"If you look at it from a simple mathematical standpoint," the Rev. Mary Brennan Thorpe, canon to the ordinary in the Diocese of Virginia, told Episcopal News Service, "the biggest lifter of average compensation, the fastest way to get there, would be for female clergy to be called to large churches, to be rectors of large churches which compensate more highly. And yet, there's still some resistance on the part of some parishes."

The 2019 report covers 5,344 clergy members, 4,677 of them in full-time positions, in the domestic dioceses (those within the 50 states and the District of Columbia). The report separately covers 248 clergy members in United States territories and other countries. The current makeup of domestic clergy is 60% men, 40% women. The vast majority are priests; 1% of male clergy are deacons, while 4% of women are. Bishops' salaries were not reported.

While previous annual reports broke down compensation by gender and province, the 2019 report also breaks it down by gender and diocese (for domestic dioceses).

The 2019 median compensation for all domestic clergy was $76,734; for men, it was $80,994, while for women it was $70,772.

Like the clergy pay gap, the gender pay gap among all American workers has narrowed over time, but it persists. In 2019, the median pay for women working full time in the United States was 18.5% less than it was for male workers, according to the U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics.

Sexism remains a major factor and often manifests in unconscious or implicit bias that favors men over women in hiring and compensation levels. Women also occupy fewer high-paying positions than men in most industries, further widening the gender pay gap.

"The wage gap, which exists in our larger culture and in our church, points, to me, to a place of real brokenness in how we value the work of women," said the Rev. Elizabeth Easton, canon to the ordinary in the Diocese of Nebraska.

The Episcopal Church has identified closing the clergy gender pay gap as a priority and has devoted resources to that end for over a decade. In 2009, the church, Executive Council and the Church Pension Fund commissioned "Called to Serve," an extensive report on the differences in compensation and vocational well-being between male and female clergy. In 2018, General Convention passed a resolution that removed references to gender and current compensation from clergy files in the Episcopal Church's Office of Transition Ministry — which facilitates clergy searches and calls — as a way to ameliorate discrimination in the first phase of search processes, when parishes are just beginning to browse for a priest with the right qualifications. Another resolution passed that same year, D016, established a task force to examine sexism in the church, including its effect on clergy compensation.

Photo/Carolyn Aniba/Diocesan Press Service via the Archives of the Episcopal Church

Conferring before an ordination service in Washington, D.C., on Sept. 7, 1975, are (left to right) the Rev. Lee McGee, Bishop George W. Barrett, the Rev. Alison Palmer, the Rev. Diane Tickell, and the Rev. Betty Rosenberg.

Building on churchwide studies and legislation, some dioceses have initiated local efforts to close the gender pay gap, including identifying points in the search and hiring process that are vulnerable to discrepancies and establishing clarity, transparency and consistency — and then following up with congregations to ensure female clergy are paid the same as their male counterparts.

"I think these things are making a difference in our church, and we're seeing it. … It's just agonizingly slow," said Georgia Bishop Frank Logue, one of three diocesan leaders interviewed for this story.

Another reason the clergy gender pay gap persists rests with women themselves and the positions they apply for. Women tend to underestimate their own abilities and qualifications, compared to men, Thorpe has observed.

"There's a sense, I think, among some female clergy, and this is something that's pretty well documented in the literature, that women will assume that they don't have the gifts to do the job, so they don't apply for those kinds of [higher-paid] positions," Thorpe told ENS. "And men will apply for them even if they know they don't have the skill set. And those of us who work as women clergy and with women clergy are continually encouraging people, 'Stretch beyond what you think you can do because you probably have the gifts. They just are not as patently obvious to you as they really are.'"

The makeup of parish vestries and search committees that make hiring decisions can also introduce bias. Although women have served as Episcopal priests since 1974, many people who serve on vestries and search committees grew up in a time when female priests were rare.

"What we see often is that the folks at the parish level who have the greatest influence on compensation level and on who gets selected for what kind of position tend to be, shall we say, the more senior members, who have a particular cultural and historical angle of view," Thorpe said.

It's a phenomenon dating back almost a half-century that Logue has noticed as well.

"I do believe that probably all churches, but certainly the Episcopal Church, has an ingrained model of what a priest looks like, and that model is male," he said, adding that dioceses should make sure search committees are seeking out and interviewing female candidates. While no search committee would explicitly seek a male rector, some members' implicit bias may limit whom they call for an interview. One way to address this is to have a gender-blind application, in which the committee initially reviews applications without knowing the gender of the applicant.

"If a church is not considering women candidates, they are missing out on what God may be trying to do in our midst," Logue said.

Male clergy are more likely than female clergy to serve larger, wealthier congregations and hold higher positions to begin with. Parishes with annual operating revenues of over $350,000 are served by 1,329 men but only 780 women. Even when comparing clergy who work in similar roles or comparably sized congregations, or who have the same amount of experience, men still earn more across the board, according to the 2019 CPG report.

Data for clergy who do not identify as male or female was not reported, although CPG is collecting more detailed demographic data from clergy — including race, ethnicity, gender identity and sexual orientation — to include in future reports. The voluntary campaign, part of the Becoming Beloved Community initiative on racial equality and justice, could reveal whether similar pay gaps — including disparities in deployment and stipendiary status — exist along other demographic lines.

Those larger parishes tend to have less turnover in senior positions, which means fewer opportunities for women to advance, Logue said. And since there are relatively few of them — 4% of Episcopal churches have an average Sunday attendance of 300 or more — that influences the overall trend.

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FEATURE

PAY GAP continued from page 10

"When you get up to a $750,000 or $1 million [parish] budget, all the priests who are serving as rectors [in the Diocese of Georgia] are men, still, largely because of longevity," he said. "We have churches that I think would call a female priest, no problem … but we just haven't had a call there yet. That's the agonizingly slow part that can't be changed by policy alone. And it's frustrating."

And while men who have advanced over long careers to senior positions in large churches have markedly high compensation packages, women often encounter a glass ceiling as their careers progress, said Easton, the canon to the ordinary in Nebraska.

"For entry-level positions like curacy and first-time associate positions where you set the experience meter down lower, people are more likely to set a [salary] and stick to it. It's over time in our ministries that the experience of men and women is valued differently," she told ENS.

One factor is the "motherhood wage penalty." As shown in studies cited by the "Called to Serve" report, women who are working while raising children are paid less than childless women, while men raising children earn more than childless men.

"Research demonstrates that this is at least partly due to discrimination against mothers among employers," the report states. "Studies demonstrate that this is because the birth of a child creates a more unequal gender division of labor, freeing up fathers to spend more time at work, as well as cultural expectations regarding masculinity and breadwinning that cause employers to prefer fathers to men without children."

An interactive timeline of the history of women's ordination is available at www.episcopalnewsservice.org.

One way to address this, Easton said, is having solid parental leave policies guaranteed from the outset. That way, women are less likely to feel they have to choose between having children and taking a job.

"If you're in the Church Pension Fund, you have a great parental leave benefit, and I would like to see every parish just have that automatically incorporated into every letter of agreement," she said. "And that's one way that you can preserve full-time employment [for women] in a way that you might not be able to do otherwise."

Easton also identified salary negotiation as a crucial point in addressing the pay gap.

"We've learned through studies in the secular world that compensation negotiation is a lot of where this wage gap comes from. And that negotiation is just a bias minefield. How we negotiate as women, and also how our negotiation is interpreted by people — it's sort of a lose-lose situation."

Her solution: a diocesan policy that sets a compensation package for every position as soon as the position is posted. By setting that standard from the beginning, "we tend to have more equitable compensation across our diocese for a full-time position," Easton said.

Using specific, objective figures — "the language of commerce" — with search committees helps ground them in determining appropriate compensation ranges, Thorpe, the canon to the ordinary in Virginia, added.

It's important "to give search committees clarity about, if you will, what the marketplace is right now," she said. "That for a position for a church in this diocese, with this Sunday attendance, this revenue level, this is what people are getting paid for those positions."

While the hiring process is determined more at the parish level, proactive diocesan policies can push churches toward equitable pay. When he was canon to the ordinary in the Diocese of Georgia, Logue made closing the gap a priority, along with then-Bishop Scott Benhase. The diocese started by updating the outdated minimum compensation for full-time priests, replacing it with a system that increased compensation with congregational size and years of experience. It later specified how to apply these minimums to clergy who worked part time.

The diocese also began publishing an annual survey of compensation for priests, listing them not by name but by congregational size and budget and years of experience. Logue then identified priests who were paid much less than their peers and either worked with their vestries to establish a plan for more appropriate pay or helped the priests move to a parish that could pay them appropriately. Within four years, the median pay for male priests increased 8%, while the median pay for female priests increased 20%, adjusted for inflation, according to Logue.

"You just really have to go on and address the outliers, and we found it was helpful to congregations, and we still do it every year," Logue told ENS. "We were able to, by force of policy, make some changes so that if you're at the same size church, similar budget, similar Sunday attendance, that you'll be paid the same."

Other dioceses, like California, have followed this lead, publishing annual reports of all clergy salaries — including details on the kind of work they do and the kind of churches they serve, but not names or genders. The Diocese of Los Angeles has also been a leader in establishing consistency in clergy salaries, gathering information about compensation packages from its parishes as a result of a 2006 diocesan convention resolution and Suffragan Bishop Diane Jardine Bruce's push for transparency in church budgeting.

There are cultural factors that can help, too, like having a female bishop or more diverse search committees.

In Virginia, "we're blessed with a woman [Bishop Suffragan Susan Goff] who is our ecclesiastical authority," said Thorpe, "and an assistant bishop [the Rt. Rev. Jennifer Brooke-Davidson] who is a woman. That model of leadership, of strong and clear and graceful leadership, it has an effect on folks. And as vestries and search committees have more diverse and, frankly, younger people in leadership, and having more women in those groups, it does make a difference."

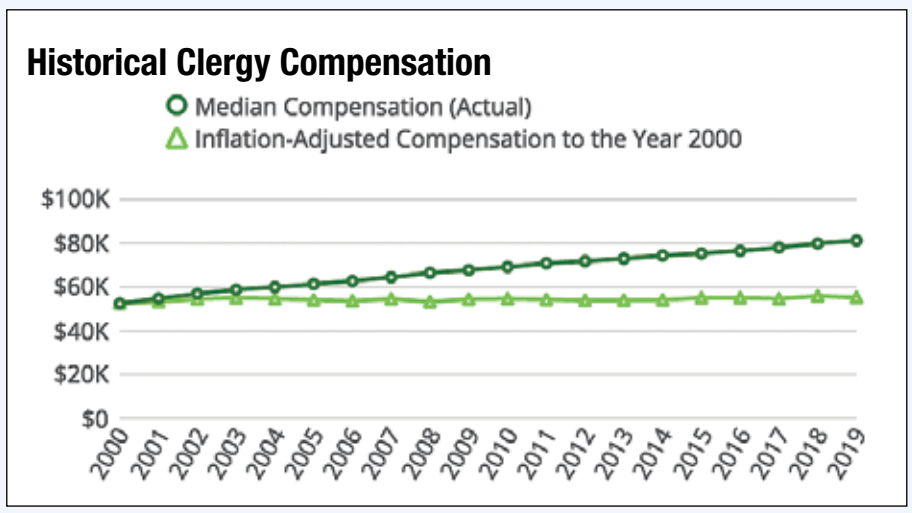
Even so, Thorpe said, seeing the effects of those changes takes time — and a lot of patience.

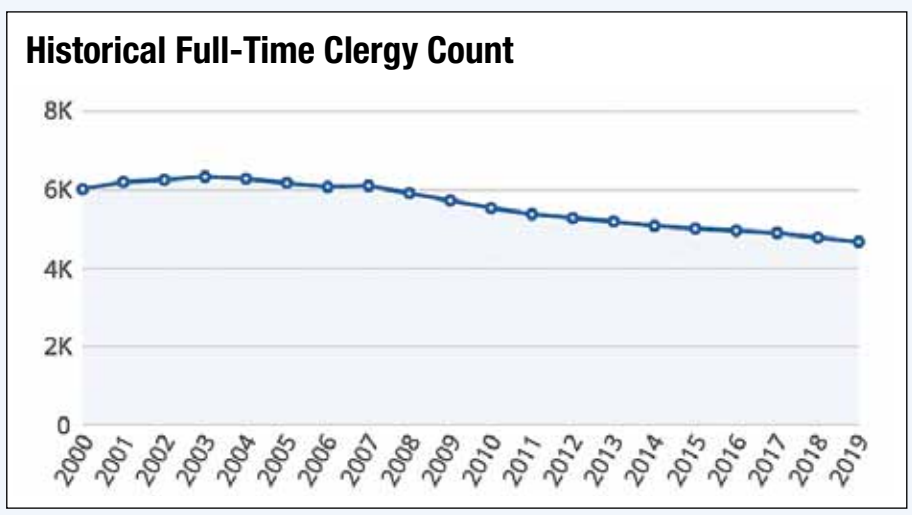
"It's improving slightly, but we are a large battleship, so moving the ship takes a little time. We are seeing more willingness and actually enthusiasm about female candidates for positions in larger churches, and that's a lovely thing," she told ENS.

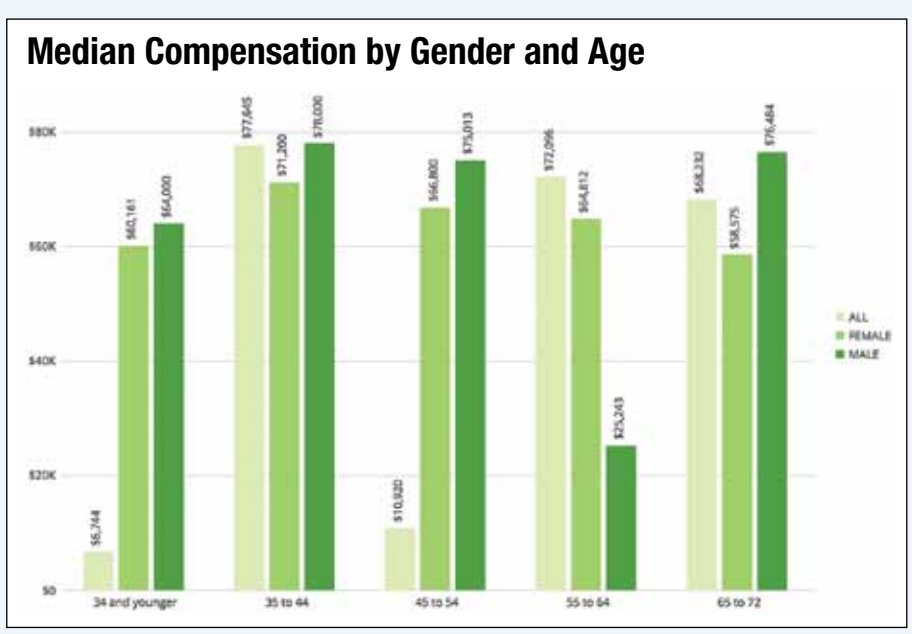
"It seems like in 2021, we shouldn't have to be fighting this battle. But we still have to be fighting this battle." ■

From the report

Since 2000, median compensation (which includes salary, housing and employer retirement contributions) for clergy has steadily increased, though it has remained flat when adjusted for inflation. While previous reports included breakdowns of full- and part-time clergy, the 2019 report does not make those distinctions because the definitions of full- and part-time work vary significantly by region, Curt Ritter, senior vice president and head of corporate communications at CPG, told ENS.







FAITH AND THE ARTS

London artists explore 'The Wilderness'

By Amber Noel
The Livng Church

The Haven+ London is the only charity of its kind in the United Kingdom. It focuses on the mental and emotional well-being of artists, with special concerns for mental health and spiritual care. The story of how it came about starts with a 5-year-old in Brazil.

When he was a little boy, the Rev. Peterson Feital — now known as "the Showbiz Rev" or just "the Rev" — received a prophetic word at his church in Rio de Janeiro that he would someday go to England. So he set about becoming an Anglophile: reading English literature, watching British TV shows, learning the language and slang.

In childhood, an artistic vocation — and a very energetic personality — emerged, which became an effective way to deal with a complicated life. Already, Feital was the only churchgoer in an anti-Christian family and a survivor of emotional and sexual trauma.

But artistic energy, he found, is not always so easy to bring to the church. The energy and the practical needs of a creative person often manifest a life of intensity, deep exploration, and unpredictable spiritual, emotional, and financial needs.

As a young man, he became disturbed by the inability (or awkwardness?) of the churches he knew to deal with artists among them — including himself as a budding minister — to understand their temperaments and vocations, not to drive them away when they became a handful, or shut down their ideas.

It was also difficult for parishes not to overuse the artists among them for free work, like Christmas plays, Easter cantatas, and beautification projects. Much less could he find congregations that knew how to nurture, welcome, shelter, or disciple creatives. Feital even developed an eating disorder for a time, under the stress of stifling his gifts while serving God's people.

This tension is precisely where his current ministry as missioner to the creative industries and founder of The Haven+ began to take root. He'd found the good news of Jesus embodied in the institutional Church, but also found there a lack of understanding. What passes for "artistic temperament" may be often enough a lack of self-discipline or a need for attention. But what about when it is someone's calling?

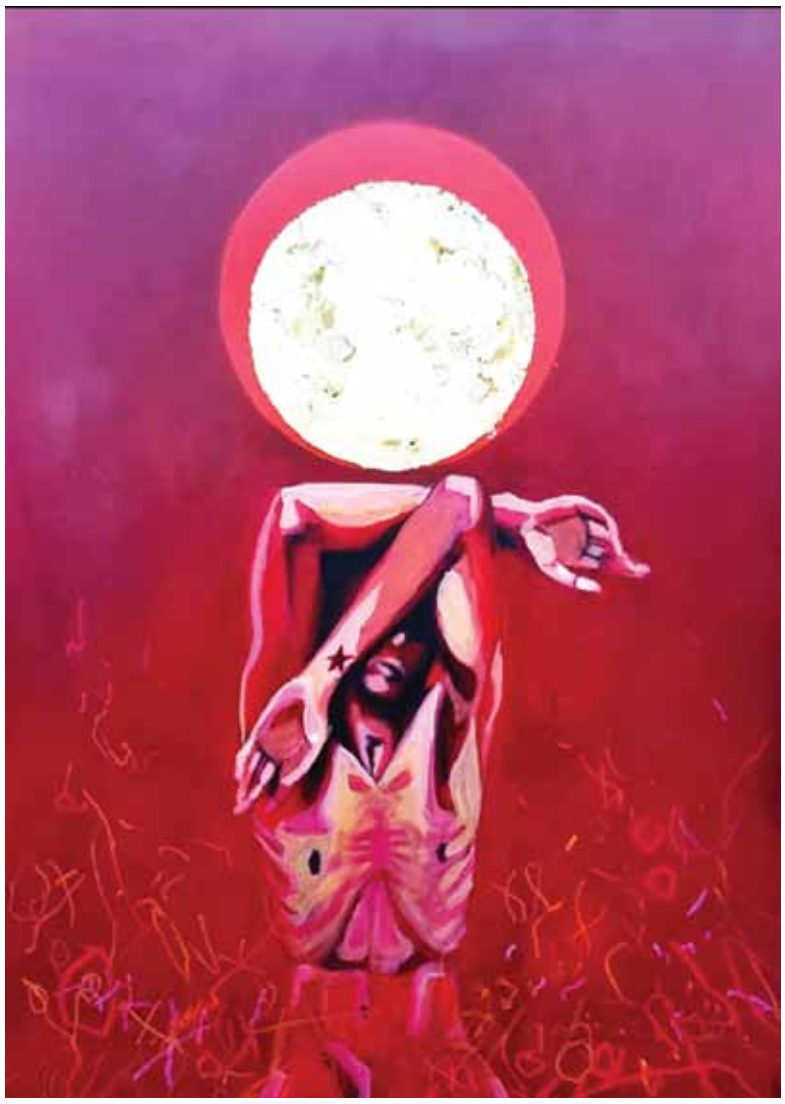
The "Showbiz" Rev. Peterson Feital

Discerning real vocation and nurturing unique callings, whether inside or outside the church, with an eye to spiritual transformation for everyone involved — that's what "the Showbiz Rev" is passionate about. But it's also vital for the church to bring not just more stress for creative people, or more requests for free art, but gifts of healing and hope — for everyone from Tony Award-winning actors to graphic designers struggling to pay rent.

This is what lies at the root of the particular work of The Haven+. It is a community run by a network of artists, counselors, clergy, and other professionals, through a website, and serves as a kind of clearinghouse for mental/emotional health resources and spiritual care.

It provides safe spaces like discussion and support groups, mental health resources and pastoral connections, and opportunities like exhibits and performances to any artist who gets in touch, but especially to creatives working in and around London. It is currently raising funds to launch an emergency mental health hotline.

The Haven+ does not proselytize, and is undergirded by a language and mission of care intentionally applicable to those of any religion or none. Peterson is not shy, however, about using Scripture and Christian language in encouraging artists to deeper exploration of their creative crafts, as well as their experiences and souls. Their latest project is a case in point.



Above, "Azul" is acrylic, oil bar and mixed media on canvas, by Abi Moffat.

Left, "Icon of a Resurrection" is acrylic and gold leaf on board, by Ric Stott.

Below, "Fire & Ice" is acrylic, oil bar and mixed media on canvas, by Abi Moffat.

At Easter, The Haven+ curated an exhibition featuring visual and performing art reflecting on experiences of 2020 and the COVID-19 pandemic, through the lens of Jesus' 40 days in the wilderness. This exhibit, The Wilderness Project, is installed at St. Pancras New Church in London and is meant to be an immersive experience for visitors as well as a spiritual exercise for those contributing work.

With a financial aim to raise £150,000 for the charity this year, it's also a practical opportunity. Anything on display may be bought, with 30 percent of the royalties supporting The Haven+ and the rest going to the artist, from March 28 to May 10, the beginning of Mental Health Awareness Week.

Ric Stott, a London-based visual artist and writer and a contributor to the exhibit, is also its curator. When asked what excites him about this work, he said it is partly the practical aspect.

"At a time when opportunities for artists are sparse, it is good to offer space to showcase new work, and creatives come to life when they have something to work towards. So much of the art world can be elitist and uncaring, and The Haven+ offers a safe space for artists [who] feel vulnerable — seeking excellence in creativity, for sure, but also having a pastorally sensitive ear," he said.

He also hopes, he said, that the exhibit will be good, not just for London, but for the entire United Kingdom, and for the communities of all who have contributed globally.

"The theme of the exhibition itself is also important at this moment in our collective experience. The last 12 months have been a wilderness year for most of us: social frameworks and patterns of life that we have been used to have broken down, fear and uncertainty abounds, and even our identities and sense of self become fragile. All these experiences resonate with the story of Jesus in the wilderness, and inviting artists to make work that reflects on this enables both the artists and the viewers of the work to consider how this year of pandemic has impacted on our own lives and souls," Stott said.

One of the advantages that art has in enabling this exploration is that rather than presenting straightforward and easy answers, art can hold the ambiguities, questions, and pain without bypassing the difficult feelings that lead to healing. There is no shortcut from Lent to Easter Day without undergoing the desolation of Good Friday, and artists can serve by helping us to understand that complicated and painful journey.

And what happens when Christians provide artists with a safe environment in the name of Jesus? "They're coming to Jesus," Feital said. ■

NEWS

Baltimore church to auction historic silver to help create scholarship fund

By David Paulsen
Episcopal News Service

St. Paul's Episcopal Church, founded in 1692, is the oldest church in Baltimore. It owns an offering plate that is itself more valuable than any offering the congregation might collect on a typical Sunday. Made of silver and encrusted with gems, the offering plate bears an inscription dating it to "Easter 1876." A similar inscription is found on another historic item, one of the church's silver chalices, which features clusters of diamonds.

Neither item is in regular use. Both have been stored in a safe for the past decade, the Rev. Mark Stanley told Episcopal News Service. "You'd almost need an armed guard to bring them out and use them. They're too valuable," he said.

Too valuable to use on Sunday — but possibly just valuable enough to help the congregation endow an educational scholarship. Church leaders are working with an auction house to sell 15 silver items at St. Paul's, including communion sets and a baptismal font bowl. The proceeds are estimated to reach $75,000. The gem-encrusted plate and chalice alone could be worth up to $60,000 at auction.

"Why are they sitting in a safe? Let's invest them in the children of Baltimore City," said Stanley, who has served St. Paul's as rector for 17 years.

The downtown church, commonly known as Old St. Paul's, established and still maintains ties to the St. Paul's Schools in suburban Brooklandville. It began as a school for girls in 1799, initially serving orphans. In 1849, a second school opened for boys. The schools, which merged in 2018, have roots in the church's historic mission of service to financially disadvantaged children, Stanley said.

This year, he and other clergy and lay leaders, looking for a way to "stay in touch with that mission," developed the scholarship plan. The congregation's anti-racism council also supported the effort to assist students, specifically African Americans, who otherwise might not have the opportunity to attend the pre-K through 12th grade day school. The congregation had researched some of the church's historic complicity in white supremacy and racist institutions, particularly how it benefited in its early years from the slave-dependent tobacco industry.

Photo/Alex Cooper Auctioneers

The gem-encrusted silver offering plate and chalice up for auction were given to St. Paul's Episcopal Church in Baltimore on Easter 1876 according to the items' inscriptions.

"We have some rights to wrong here," Stanley said. "We want to make a difference, to address systemic racism."

In February, Stanley proposed to the St. Paul's vestry that the church sell some of the historic items that had been locked away in the church's safe. The vestry agreed to combine proceeds from that sale with money from the church's endowment to raise the initial $300,000 to establish the scholarship fund.

The church plans to work with the nonprofit Baltimore Educational Scholarship Trust, or BEST, which will identify students in the community who would be appropriate candidates for the scholarship. Stanley said the church hopes this fall to provide its first scholarship of $15,000 to help one student attend the St. Paul's Schools where high school tuition is $32,800. The school is offering financial aid to offset the remaining costs for the student.

The church expects its first scholarship recipient to be entering the ninth grade, and the annual scholarship will allow that student to complete high school at the private school. After that student graduates, another student will be chosen for the next scholarship.

St. Paul's Episcopal Church has an average Sunday attendance of about 180. Some of its 500 members raised concerns about letting go of valuable items connected to the church's history, but in general, the church's goal of creating the scholarship has generated support and excitement within the congregation, Stanley said. "To me, there's a time to do bold action," he said, and he emphasized that the church isn't selling everything, only items that haven't been used in years. ■

Lebanon's Anglican archdeacon's sons arrive in Maine, thanks to diocese's efforts

By Egan Millard
Episcopal News Service

The two teenage sons of an Anglican archdeacon in Lebanon arrived safely in late March in the United States to study at a boarding school, thanks to an effort by the Diocese of Maine.

Photo/courtesy of Heidi Shott

Heidi Shott and Maine Bishop Thomas Brown greet Marc and Ralph Zoorob at the airport in Portland, Me.

Ralph and Marc Zoorob, ages 15 and 16, are the sons of the Ven. Imad Zoorob, archdeacon of Lebanon and Syria in the Episcopal Church in Jerusalem and The Middle East. The Diocese of Maine and a group of determined Episcopalians organized a campaign last year to bring the boys to Lincoln Academy in Newcastle after hearing firsthand from the archdeacon about the deterioration of living conditions in Beirut due to the Aug. 4, 2020, explosion and the country's economic crisis.

After months of fundraising and wrangling with immigration logistics, the final step in the process — obtaining visas — happened on March 5, said Heidi Shott, communications director of the American Friends of the Episcopal Diocese of Jerusalem, who initially launched the effort.

On March 27, Ralph and Marc landed in Portland, Me., where they were greeted by Shott, her husband Scott and Bishop Thomas Brown with whoopie pies — a Maine delicacy of two chocolate cake-like cookies separated by creamy white filling.

"To see Marc and Ralph walk down the escalator at Portland's Jetport was a little bit like seeing a dream come true," Brown told Episcopal News Service. "Of course, they were exhausted — it had been a 23-hour trip — but they were also excited. And so are we!"

The Zoorobs, who were in post-travel COVID-19 quarantine until April 6, virtually attended Easter Sunday service at St. Andrew's Episcopal Church in Newcastle. St. Andrew's — the Shotts' home parish — is close to the boarding school, and parishioners have been participating in fundraising and anticipating their arrival for months.

"Lincoln Academy is their primary community in Maine, that's true, but it's totally inspiring to hear them speak about their faith, their desire to remain connected to God, and to be part of St. Andrew's," Brown told ENS.

Having met members of St. Andrew's by Zoom over the past few months, the Zoorobs have a built-in community to support them as they settle into their new life. In an email to the diocese, Ralph Zoorob wrote, "I want to stay close with God, so I want to go to church whenever I can." ■

FEATURE

Jesus, Paul and the border debate — why cherry-picking Bible passages misses the immigrant experience in ancient Rome

By Rodolfo Galvan Estrada III
The Conversation

Immigration reform is back on the agenda, with Congress taking up major legislation that could usher in a pathway to citizenship for millions of people living in the U.S. without legal status.

This, and an increase in migrants crossing the southern border to the U.S., has seen many people retreat to two common positions on the issue. Advocates for reform generally emphasize the history of America as a nation of immigrants. Meanwhile, opponents draw to the identity of America as a nation based on the rule of law, with a sovereign right to protect its borders.

Photo/Metropolitan Museum of Art/Wikimedia

Eugène Delacroix painted "Ovid among the Scythians." Exile was a common Roman punishment, as the poet Ovid found out.

Given the role that Christianity plays in many Americans' lives and in politics in general, it shouldn't be surprising that people from the religious right and left draw from the Bible to support their immigration perspectives.

Biblical stories

Former U.S. Attorney General Jeff Sessions, for example, drew upon the Apostle Paul's view of the government to back his support for child separation immigration policies at the border.

"I would cite you to the Apostle Paul and his clear and wise command in Romans 13, to obey the laws of the government because God has ordained them for the purpose of order," he stated. For those in favor of a more progressive policy on immigration, there are numerous passages in the Bible that indicate a willingness to welcome strangers and foreigners.

The truth is, the Bible has many stories of migration, beginning in the book of Genesis with Adam and Eve migrating from the Garden of Eden and concluding with the book of Revelation, where John, traditionally known as the apostle, lives as a deported criminal on Patmos, an island located west of Turkey.

As a New Testament scholar, my research on how foreigners are portrayed during the first century has led me to recognize that selecting a few texts from Jesus' teaching on welcoming the foreigner or the Apostle Paul's teachings on the government does not provide the full story on the immigrant experience.

In reality, their experience was politically and culturally complex. Immigrants in Rome during the time of Jesus and Paul encountered suspicion and hostility from the imperial authorities and Roman natives.

Unfriendly Romans and non-countrymen

Many foreigners in the capital of Rome were immigrants. David Noy, a scholar of classical literature, finds that they came to the empire either as captured slaves or voluntarily migrated in search of better opportunities.

Some ancient Roman writers during the time of Jesus viewed the presence of immigrants negatively. Nostalgia for a time when Rome was less influenced by outsiders emerged among Roman elites. Ancient Roman writers Pliny and Seneca believed that as the empire extended, the foreigners culturally conquered the Romans by negatively influencing the Roman way of life.

There was a "strong sense that Rome was losing vigor and vitality through its luxuries and a fear of being undermined by foreign immigrants from among the subjugated people," according to classical literature scholar Benjamin Isaac.

To counter this immigrant threat and presence in Italy, the Romans enacted the imperial power of expulsion. The Roman historian Livy remarks that those who introduced foreign religions were frequently expelled for failing to adopt to "the Roman way."

Suetonius, another Roman historian, records that emperor Claudius, who ruled in the decades following Jesus' death, banned foreigners from using a Roman name and expelled the Jews from the city of Rome. Interestingly, this Jewish expulsion also shows up in the New Testament with the expulsion of the Christian missionary couple Priscilla and Aquila from Rome in A.D. 49.

Expulsions were not always permanent or reserved for foreigners. Most famously, the Roman poet Ovid was expelled for writing controversial erotic literature. He was deported to the land of Tomis, current Romania.

Welcoming strangers

Understanding the reality of immigrants and their status during the birth of Christianity shapes how Jesus' teachings are understood.

At the time when Jesus tells his disciples about the necessity of "welcoming the stranger," this was the righteous response to the political tragedy of a fellow human being. To deny them hospitality would be a death sentence. Not all immigrants migrated for economic reasons — for some it was their only life option

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New York cathedral's art exhibit is a meditation on 'sanctuary'

By Episcopal Journal

An art exhibit at the Cathedral of St. John the Divine in New York examines ideas of welcome and refuge.

On billboards facing the street, artists Eric Gottesman, Ronald Rael and Virginia San Fratelo, and Paola Mendoza and Kisha Bari comment upon concepts of borders, immigration, family separation and the vulnerability of youth.

The works were exhibited in "The Value of Sanctuary," an indoor and outdoor event that was open from Feb. 14 to June 30, 2019. The outdoor billboards, however, are still on view and will be indefinitely.

The original exhibit featured more than 30 artworks displayed both inside the cathedral building and hung on the outer walls of its grounds.

They illuminated "the intersections between spiritual and social identity, and the ways in which personhood and community cohesion speak to and are formed by notions of dignity, inclusion, and exclusion," according to a description on the cathedral website.

St. John's founding document in 1873 described it as a "house of prayer for the use of all people." The description of the exhibit noted that since then, "notions of community, of inclusion, of sanctuary have persisted as frequent topics of discussion and dissent. The current political discourse about national borders and identity, about human rights and their application in an often unpredictable world, has only made these discussions more urgent."

The exhibit asks: "What does it mean to be a house of welcome and of refuge, to offer sanctuary to those in need? What are the threads connecting us, as individuals and as communities? And where do we draw the line?"

"The Value of Sanctuary" invited visitors to reflect on the interconnected stories—of refugees, of immigrants, of human beings of all backgrounds coming together and drawing apart—that created the foundations of the cathedral as an American house of prayer and of America itself. ■

Photos/Courtesy of St. John the Divine Cathedral

Top, Eric Gottesman, "Where Do We Go From Here?," 2018; far left, Ronald Rael and Virginia San Fratelo, "Reunite"; left, Paola Mendoza and Kisha Bari, "I Am A Child," 2018.

FEATURE

Episcopal priest goes viral for wearing the same dress for 100 days

By Egan Millard
Episcopal News Service

For many who have worked from home during the pandemic, wearing the same clothes for more than a day has become a normal occurrence. But one Episcopal priest is doing it to the extreme, on purpose.

In 2020, the Rev. Sarah Robbins-Cole, rector of St. Michael's Episcopal Church in Holliston, Mass., and chaplain at Wellesley College, wore the same dress for 100 days in a row as a challenge to counter "fast fashion" — the now-ubiquitous practice of buying cheap, mass-produced clothing and throwing it away or donating it to charity when it's no longer fashionable.

The challenge is intended to change people's perceptions of how much clothing they need, and to bring awareness to the fashion industry's unsustainable and environmentally harmful practices.

"I've always been concerned about fast fashion anyway and the impact on the planet," Robbins-Cole told Episcopal News Service.

She wore a breathable black merino wool dress from Sept. 6 to Christmas — except to sleep and work out — and it only needed to be washed about a dozen times. She enjoyed the challenge so much, she said, that she's now more than halfway into yet another 100-day dress challenge, which she started on Jan. 29 with a different dress.

Robbins-Cole got the idea for the 100-day dress challenge from a social media post several months into the pandemic.

"I thought, 'Well, this seems like something that would be an interesting challenge to do during a pandemic,'" she said. "It just kind of suited my moral compass and … I usually wear a dress to work anyway."

Among the environmental impact statistics that stick with her are the approximately 700-800 gallons of water that go into producing one cotton T-shirt and the 81 pounds of clothing that end up in landfills for each American every year. Americans now buy five times as much clothing as they did in 1980, according to textile recycling company USAgain; when it's no longer wanted, 85% of that clothing gets thrown away, and even the remaining 15% that gets donated often ends up in landfills anyway.

Photos/Sarah Robbins-Cole

The Rev. Sarah Robbins-Cole has made headlines around the world for her 100-day dress challenge, a response to the environmental damage caused by unsustainable "fast fashion."

For Robbins-Cole the project started as more of a personal challenge — a way to get creative with putting together a new look each day with the same dress as a base.

"I chose the first dress because it seemed the most versatile," she said, "so I thought I could probably get 100 different looks out of it."

Since she wasn't seeing people in person as much, not many people noticed initially, especially since she often wears black clerical clothes anyway, but she did tell the students she was working with at Wellesley College that it was intentional.

"I thought, 'If anyone's going to notice I'm wearing the same dress, it's going to be my students,'" she said. "I told, like, one friend, two friends maybe, but really didn't share it with a lot of people."

She made an Instagram account to document all the different looks she got out of the dress, posting a picture of her outfit every day along with some brief reflections, and accumulated a few followers until it started getting picked up by media outlets — from local TV stations to news sites from as far away as England and India. She now has over 5,300 followers.

Since Robbins-Cole did not come up with the idea of the 100-day challenge, she's not sure why her particular story has gotten so much traction. Maybe it's because she's a priest. Maybe it's the surprising versatility of the outfits she's put together. Maybe it's the thoughtfulness of the reflective captions she writes — the stories behind the other articles of clothing she wears, the slice-of-life observations. Or maybe this simple, daily ritual is just the kind of thing that helped people stay grounded during a chaotic time.

"I'm surprised that there would be so many people interested in my story, because it's just one middle-aged woman wearing the same dress for 100 days," she told ENS, "but I think that we like getting glimpses into other people's lives."

To her surprise, her Instagram account has even turned into a tight-knit "community" of people from around the world.

"I love checking in with them and seeing what they're doing every day," she said. "There's a lot of things that are bad about social media, but they're also some really wonderful aspects. And in this particular platform, people are really supportive."

She gets comments and questions about the challenge and about her life "all the time" and has come to view it as a kind of ministry.

"That was one of the reasons why I kept going," she told ENS. "I'm on sabbatical right now for my church, so it's, in some ways, kind of pastoral care. Some of it is just advice. Some people ask me for styling advice, which is really funny, because it's not really my thing."

A common reaction she gets is disbelief — "That's so great you can do that; I could never do it." But it turned out to be easier than she expected, and "it's just seriously not a big deal," she said. As of April 8, she's 68 days into the second 100-day challenge, this time using a different dress — also made from breathable black merino wool — that she received as a gift. Because her followers asked her to keep posting her daily outfits, she's kept up the routine every day.

But is this just a Zoom-era challenge? When it's safe enough to gather in person regularly, will she switch it up more often?

"I don't know — I'll probably go back to my clothes at some point," she said. Until then, she's enjoying making connections and educating people. "I don't know how long I'll do it into the future, but it's working." ■

FEATURE

The U.S. has never had much of a pilgrimage tradition — perhaps now is the opportunity

By James Mills
The Conversation

One feature of the pandemic has been the curtailment of a practice that for millennia has provided an outlet for healing in times of crisis: pilgrimage.

From restrictions on the Hajj for Muslims to the Catholic pilgrimage to Lourdes going virtual, people of faith have been unable to embark on journeys that would in other times provide solace and community.

As a scholar of religion and geography who has written about the role of pilgrimage, I know the U.S. has never had a strong tradition of pilgrimage. But I believe that could change and give Americans new ways to heal in the post-pandemic era.

The progress of pilgrimages

Pilgrims have embarked on journeys in search of healing for at least 10,000 years and in virtually all religious traditions including Christianity, Islam, Hinduism and Buddhism. In earlier times, the healing pilgrims sought was often to be cured of disease or some physical ailment. Some still do. Crutches that cover the walls of pilgrimage destinations such as the Chimayo chapel in New Mexico attest to those who hobbled to these sites and then, it is said, walked away cured.

Nowadays the healing most pilgrims seek is more psychological and spiritual in nature. Pilgrims often undertake their journeys to grieve and heal after the death of loved ones or after experiencing other traumas in their own lives.

Pilgrimage is common and even increasing in most parts of the world. The Camino de Santiago in Spain has seen an extraordinary increase in the number of pilgrims in the past 30 years, and scores of new pilgrimage routes have recently opened in the U.K.

A Protestant objection

The U.S., however, has few destinations and even fewer designated routes for pilgrims to use. The reasons for this are varied, but historically the majority of U.S. citizens and almost all those in power identified as Protestants. Even today, close to half of all Americans identify as Protestant.

Protestantism has had less of a tradition of church-sanctioned pilgrimage than other religions. In fact, Protestantism emerged in the 1500s in no small part as a reaction to the licentious behavior of some pilgrims and priests, the selling of indulgences to enrich the church or various members of the clergy, and the corruption that was associated with many pilgrimages of the time.

Martin Luther, the founder of Protestantism, said all pilgrimages should be stopped because they only gave people opportunities to sin. He wrote that there is no biblical basis for the practice.

Most Protestants over the past few centuries followed Luther's lead and continued to avoid or denounce pilgrimage. Protestants denied the significance of saints, so they didn't go on pilgrimages to shrines commemorating them. They focused more on doctrine and have generally been wary of embodied rituals, such as dancing or pilgrimages.

A secondary reason that the U.S. never developed a pilgrimage tradition is that religious pilgrims tend to be attracted to places where key figures in their faith — such as Jesus, Muhammad, the Buddha, or various saints — lived out their lives.

Jerusalem, as well as Mecca in Saudi Arabia, India's Bodh Gaya and other places associated with the birth of religions or major moments in their development, are all in Asia. As a result, Americans seeking such pilgrimage have felt the need to travel overseas, which limits who can go and how often pilgrimages can be undertaken.

There are some pilgrimage sites in the U.S. Mormons have a number of American destinations — such as the Hill Cumorah in Palmyra, N.Y., and Temple Square in Salt Lake City — because the U.S. is where the religion started and grew. Catholics have U.S. pilgrimage destinations as well, such as the Basilica of the National Shrine of Mary, Help of Christians, at Holy Hill in Wisconsin. These places are typically associated with miraculous events or dedicated to saints such as the Virgin Mary.

Pathways to healing

Times are changing, however. Evidence suggests that more and more Americans would like to go on a pilgrimage or have more ways to engage in spiritual tourism. This growing desire to go on a spiritual journey provides a great opportunity to meet the demand by creating domestic pilgrimages not only for personal healing, but also to construct walking pathways that could, I believe, help heal entire communities or even the country.

Imagine a network of local pilgrimages that focuses on the route rather than any singular destination. These paths could interconnect to form regional networks.

Such pathways could be much more than simple thoroughfares. They could be designed to provide rich spiritual experiences for people of all faiths and those of no formal affiliation. Nondenominational meditation spots, gardens and liminal components such as gateways, bridges and shorelines could all be incorporated.

These routes could be open to all and provide an opportunity to encourage interfaith and intergroup communication. Pilgrims might choose to walk with others of different backgrounds or there might be side trips that bring pilgrims to a variety of denominational destinations.

U.S. cities are deeply segregated by class, ethnicity and race. Urban pilgrimages could help break down barriers by providing opportunities for residents to experience neighborhoods other than their own.

This isn't just a pipe dream. In the U.K. there is an organization dedicated to renewing the idea of pilgrimage "as a form of cultural heritage that promotes holistic well being." There is no reason such a movement cannot develop in the U.S. too.

Photo/Thomas A. Ferrara/Newsday RM via Getty Images

Sites of pilgrimages are few and far between in the U.S.

Photo/Robert Alexander/Getty Images

A tourist takes a photo of the Catholic chapel El Santuario de Chimayo in Chimayo, New Mexico.

In fact, the Adirondack to Algonquin (A2A) Initiative is already creating a 400-mile wildlife corridor that the planners hope will double as a pilgrimage route for humans.

After the hardships caused by the pandemic, 2021 and beyond could be a time for healing — both of oneself and the wider community. Pursuing development of a network of pilgrimage pathways across the U.S. would, I believe, be a positive and creative way for Americans to work toward that goal. ■

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because of the imperial act of expulsion.

Knowing that immigrants could be expelled for negatively influencing the Roman culture must also shape our understanding of Paul's teaching to "submit" to Roman authorities.

Since Paul was a Roman citizen, it would have been instinctive to instruct other Christians living in Rome to maintain political peace with the empire. As with Ovid, being a Roman citizen did not exempt them from being treated like foreigners. The empire was indiscriminate in its deportation power, and citizens like Paul who introduced non-Roman religions were not exempt.

The U.S. immigration debate continues to be controversial. Whenever the writings of Paul or teachings of Jesus are introduced into the debate, we need to understand the context of the time. The Roman imperial power of deportation had life-and-death implications for immigrants and citizens.

Furthermore, during the time of Jesus and Paul, both Roman citizens and noncitizens could be deported from Rome. But foreigners who introduced non-Roman cultures in Rome were more likely to be expelled for being perceived as threats.

Kristin Kobes Du Mez, professor of history at Calvin University, notes that White evangelical Christians appear "more opposed to immigration reform, and have more negative views about immigrants, than any other religious demographic." Perhaps for some evangelicals, discomfort and suspicion with outsiders lies at the root of anti-immigrant policies as it did during the time of Romans. ■

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