Episcopal
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Three Wisconsin dioceses to pursue reunion

By David Paulsen
Episcopal News Service

Leaders of Wisconsin's three Episcopal dioceses announced Oct. 5 that the dioceses will take steps to combine — a canonical process known as reunion — after a period of discernment that will seek input from clergy and the state's 13,000 Episcopalians.

The agreement to pursue a return to a single Diocese of Wisconsin was approved unanimously by the 11 clergy and lay representatives from the three dioceses who attended a "trialogue" meeting on Sept. 29 at a hotel in Wisconsin Dells.

Participants included Bishop Jeffrey Lee, bishop provisional of the Diocese of Milwaukee, and Diocese of Fond du Lac Bishop Matthew Gunter, who also serves as bishop provisional of the Diocese of Eau Claire.

In August, the dioceses had announced they were launching a formal process "to explore ways to deepen cooperation and coordination."

At the leaders' inaugural meeting last week, "conversation focused on congregations, specifically how the diocese might better equip them to share the Gospel and serve Christ in their communities," they said in a news release. "There was enthusiastic discussion seeking new ideas and dreams of what could be developed for the 21st century and beyond."

With the help of a consultant, the dioceses plan to expand their conversations from the small group of leaders to all church members as each assesses ministry priorities and capabilities. The structure of a unified diocese and logistics of forming one would be left for later discussions, the leaders said.

The diocesan leaders set no timeline for reunion, but conversations with broader groups of Episcopalians could begin in the coming months.

Photo/All Saints' Cathedral

All Saints' Cathedral in Milwaukee is one of 48 congregations in the Diocese of Milwaukee, one of three Episcopal dioceses in the state.

"My own sense is we need to take the time," Gunter said in an interview with ENS. "We need to do it well, to listen, pray, converse and consult, and I certainly want to have a lot of different kinds of voices in the mix."

Gunter and other leaders told ENS that, while they aren't ruling out other collaborative models, a return to a single statewide diocese offered opportunities for growth and partnership beyond what would be possible if the three dioceses remained separate.

"What became clear as we met was that one way or the other, change is happening around us in

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Indigenous leaders identify intergenerational trauma inflicted by boarding schools, some with Episcopal ties

By David Paulsen
Episcopal News Service

Pearl Chanar, an Alaska Native of Athabascan heritage, grew up in a small village surrounded by her immediate and large extended family. That changed when she became a teenager and was sent hundreds of miles away to a boarding school.

"I remember it took four different airplanes for me to get from my home to this small island far, far away," Chanar said Oct. 11 during an online panel discussion hosted by the Episcopal Church's Office of Indigenous Ministries. "What I remember most was that loneliness, missing my parents."

At the school, Chanar said she could communicate with her family through letters. She and other Alaska Native students were prohibited from using their Indigenous languages or enjoying cultural activities, like singing and dancing, she said.

Photos/ENS

The Rev. Bradley Hauff, missioner for Indigenous ministries, shows a picture of his father, Sylvan, at age 17. Hauff's father spent most of his childhood at a boarding school on the Pine Ridge Reservation in South Dakota.

They were among the generations of American Indians who endured family separation and forced assimilation into white society in a system that has been described as a kind of cultural genocide.

The panel discussion, "Native Voices: A Response to the Episcopal Church's History with Indian Boarding Schools," was held on Indigenous Peoples Day, a holiday that is increasingly being celebrated in place of Columbus Day.

It followed a July statement by Presiding Bishop Michael Curry and the Rev. Gay Clark Jennings, the House of Deputies president, acknowledging the church's past complicity in the boarding school system.

"Kill the Indian, save the man" was the rationale for that system offered in 1892 by Richard Pratt, founder of the Carlisle Indian Industrial School in Pennsylvania. Pratt's words were cited by some of the webinar's panelists as they lamented the legacy of the federal system of American Indian boarding schools, including some founded and operated by Episcopal churches.

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Due to U.S. Postal Service delays, Episcopal Journal subscribers may receive this issue later than usual. The situation is affecting many publications and the Journal is monitoring the situation. Mail subscriptions include digital subscriptions, available at **www.episcopaljournal.org.**

CONVERSATIONS

The Gospel according to a sitcom writer

By James Cary

If you can't see the jokes in the Bible, maybe you're not taking it seriously. "The Gospel According to a Sitcom Writer" by James Cary (who has written for several British TV shows) is a riotous but reverent examination of the Gospels.

WHAT'S THE FIRST joke in John's Gospel?

The joke passes by so quickly, most people miss it. It's understandable. Few people are expecting to find jokes in John's Gospel. At first glance, it doesn't promise many laughs. The "In the beginning" beginning makes it feel very austere, but once you get into the meat of the Gospel, especially the first 11 chapters, you find quite a lot of comic incidents.

Nathanael is a disciple of Jesus only mentioned in John's Gospel. Many Bible scholars believe that Nathanael was also known as Bartholomew, but maybe he went into obscurity precisely because he attempted a joke early in the Gospel.

So let's take a closer look at some material that may have been cut from the early versions of John's Gospel:

"On the next day, Jesus was determined to go out into Galilee, and he found Philip. Jesus said to him, 'Follow me.' Now Philip was from Bethsaida, of the city of Andrew and Peter. Philip found Nathanael, and said to him, 'We have found him, of whom Moses in the law, and the prophets, wrote: Jesus of Nazareth, the son of Joseph.'

Nathanael said to him, 'Can any good thing come out of Nazareth?'"

Early manuscripts do not include the following.

Philip said to him, "What's that supposed to mean?"

"Well, Nazareth?" said Nathanael. "This messianic figure comes from Nazareth? I don't think so."

Philip said to him, "What's wrong with Nazareth?"

Nathanael said to him, "What's right with Nazareth? Am I right?"

Nathanael raised a hand for Philip to high-five. But Philip high-fived him not.

"Don't leave me hanging," said Nathanael.

"I'm not seeing it. Seriously, Nate. What is wrong with Nazareth?"

"Oh, don't be like this," said Nathanael. "It's just a joke. Honestly, you can't say anything these days."

"Is this the place for jokes? I really don't think so. Especially about the people of Nazareth. During a time of political unrest? These stereotypes just aren't helpful. You wanna have a long, hard look at yourself, Nate."

"You wanna do this?" said Nathanael. "Fine. Answer me this. What happened in Nazareth hundreds of years ago which gives the place huge historical significance in the history of our people?"

"What?"

"NOTHING! That's what!" said Nathanael. "No thing. It's a backwater. A no place. A new town. It's the Milton Keynes [a town in England] of Israel."

"What's Milton Keynes?"

"I don't know. That must have been prophetic," said Nathanael. "Hey, maybe I'm a prophet. The beard needs work, but I could work on the wild-eyed stare."

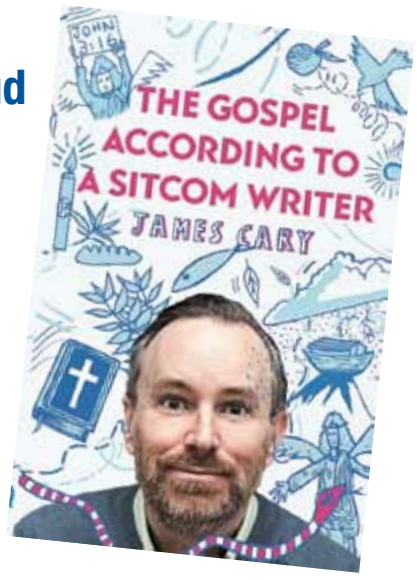
"Nate. You're not a prophet. You're just a bloke who's prejudiced about people from Nazare — Hey, wait a minute. You're from the town next door, aren't you? Cana?"

There was a long pause. Nathanael looked away.

"I might be," said Nathanael.

"Daaah!" said Philip. "Pathetic local rivalry. You can't bear the thought of your neighbor being home to the Lamb of God who takes away the sin of the world."

> **"He was taken up into a cloud while they were watching, and they could no longer see him. And Peter said, "Well, that was weird." And the disciples agreed. It was weird."**



"You what?" said Nathanael. "What does that mean?"

"No idea. Looks like I'm prophetic too."

Philip raised a hand for Nathanael to high-five. And Nathanael did not high-five him.

"I tell you one thing that's for sure," said Philip. "You know where the Messiah won't be from? Samaria."

"Ha!" Nathanael laughed. "Yeah, Samaritans are the WORST."

Philip raised a hand for Nathanael to high-five. And Nathanael did high-five him.

Why the Ascension is funny

Have you considered how odd it is that Jesus ascends into heaven? And don't you think the disciples at the time would have thought so? Sometimes, the Gospels record the reactions of the disciples to extraordinary events, but not here. So my version does. We begin at the end of the Gospel According to Matthew:

"But the eleven disciples went into Galilee, to the mountain where Jesus had sent them. When they saw him, they bowed down to him; but some doubted. Jesus came to them and spoke to them, saying, 'All authority has been given to me in heaven and on earth. Go and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, teaching them to observe all things that I commanded you. Behold, I am with you always, even to the end of the age.'"

Early manuscripts do not include the following:

After saying this, he was taken up into a cloud while they were watching, and they could no longer see him.

And Peter said, "Well, that was weird."

And the disciples agreed. It was weird.

But John said, "Did not our Lord say, 'I am ascending to my Father and your Father'?"

And Peter said, "Did he?"

And John said, "Yes. He did. And it's going into my book."

"Wow," said Peter. "Jesus has been

continued on page 3

FROM THE EDITOR'S DESK

NOV. 28 MARKS the beginning of Advent, a special time that doesn't involve buying gifts, making special foods, traveling or engaging in frantic activity.

In fact, Advent is just the opposite of those things. It's meant to be a time of reflection and meditation, of quiet anticipation, looking toward the coming of the Christ Child.

There are many inspirational church aids to support celebrating a holy Advent. A selection of resources is on pages 8 and 9, including a history of the Advent calendar.

I have obviously been living in a cave, since I thought there were only two kinds of Advent calendar — those with chocolate and those (no doubt for the more pious) without chocolate.

In the course of researching this issue, we came across the secular world's version of the Advent calendar — a marketing tool for selling products from cosmetics to toys.

One of the most remarkable hustles is the London department store Harrods' "Beauty Advent Calendar." (By the way, some marketers randomly capitalize "Advent" and some do not.)

Priced at a mere 250 British pounds (US$350), it contains, according to Harrods, US$1600 worth of beauty products, one in each of 25 small fabric-lined drawers, encased in a gift box that is hinged and opens like a book.

Harrods' website says that the calendar sold out in-store and online within minutes, adding, "but fear not, the countdown to Christmas will still be beauty-full — more stock is on the way."

It's almost too obvious to note that Advent — the real version — anticipates the coming of one who told a rich young man "if you want to be perfect, go and sell all your possessions and give the money to the poor, and you will have treasure in heaven. Then come, follow me."

It's fun to shop in department stores and buy cosmetics, and people who can afford Harrods-type extravagance also probably give to the poor (let's hope).

And let's not kid ourselves — the run-up to Christmas eventually does involve buying gifts, making special foods, traveling and engaging in frantic activity.

We might just ponder, at the same time, Jesus' radical notion of "love thy neighbor" and recognize the true nature of Advent. ■

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NEWS

Presiding Bishop, U.S. Rep. James Clyburn rally church support for historically Black colleges

By David Paulsen
Episcopal News Service

Photo/ENS

House Majority Whip James Clyburn, bottom right, speaks during a webinar about historically Black colleges and universities, with Saint Augustine's University President Christine Johnson McPhail, top left, and Voorhees College President Ronnie Hopkins, top center. Presiding Bishop Michael Curry also attended the webinar, which was moderated by Rebecca Blachly, top right, the church's director of government relations.

House Majority Whip James Clyburn of South Carolina joined Presiding Bishop Michael Curry and the presidents of Saint Augustine's University and Voorhees College in a Sept. 29 webinar promoting the role historically Black colleges and universities (HBCUs) have played in educating students to participate in and contribute to American society.

Saint Augustine's in Raleigh, N.C., and Voorhees in Denmark, S.C., are the two historically Black institutions that have deep ties to the Episcopal Church. Clyburn, the third-ranking Democrat in the House, has been a congressman since 1993 representing South Carolina's 6th District, which includes Voorhees.

"I'm a big champion of HBCUs," Clyburn said, noting that he is a graduate of an HBCU, South Carolina State University in Orangeburg, and has received honorary degrees from Saint Augustine's and Voorhees. "HBCUs are very important. They are historical treasures, and I commit myself to trying to restore every historic building on those campuses and help restore a sense of pride."

The webinar, which drew nearly 400 viewers, was promoted by the church's government relations and development offices, the latter of which oversees the Absalom Jones Fund and an annual donation campaign timed with the Feb. 13 feast day celebrating the first Black Episcopal priest. Director of Government Relations Rebecca Blachly moderated the discussion.

"This is a moment where we've seen HBCUs in the spotlight more," Blachly said, "and I think people are realizing the critical role these institutions play in our nation.

The schools have been in the news lately because of the debate over money for them included in the Biden administration's proposed federal spending plan and because Vice President Kamala Harris graduated from an HBCU, Howard University in Washington, D.C.

Curry's parents and extended family attended HBCUs, and as a parish priest in Baltimore, he said many of the young people he ministered to would have been left behind academically if not for the boost they received while attending a historically Black college.

"These universities are taking young people and molding them and forming them, not just academically, but forming them spiritually and in terms of character and the moral fiber that they will need in order to make it in this world," Curry said. "That's an incredible gift."

Historically Black colleges and universities were founded in the post-Civil War period to provide educational opportunities to Black men and women, many formerly enslaved, who were excluded from white institutions of higher learning because of segregation.

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

About 100 such schools are still open today across the United States, accepting students of all races.

Enrollment at HBCUs has been in decline since hitting a peak in 2010, when 327,000 students attended one of the colleges. That trend mirrors an overall decline at all degree-granting institutions in the past decade, according to the federal government's National Center for Education Statistics.

HBCUs still fill a "special niche" in the academic world, Clyburn said, but their importance often is overlooked by the wider society. "We've never just spent enough time getting people to understand what their role has been," he said. (Clyburn also participated in a Sept. 30 church webinar promoting his legislation to make "Lift Every Voice and Sing" the country's national hymn.)

The Episcopal Church's recent work with historically Black colleges and universities coincides with a greater emphasis on racial reconciliation under the leadership of Curry, who was elected in 2015 as the first African American bishop to head the church.

The church's last two triennial budgets included more than $1.6 million for Saint Augustine's and Voorhees, and the church is in its fourth year of raising additional money for the two schools through its Absalom Jones Fund. More information about the fund is available at **www.episcopalchurch.org/development/hbcu/.**

Saint Augustine's "was founded to train freed slaves and bring folks into the ministry as ordained ministers in the Episcopal Church," said Christine Johnson McPhail, the university's president. The university is "still here and thriving today," she said, though its mission has broadened as it prepares its students to enter the workforce and to contribute to society.

Voorhees encourages its students to volunteer in the local community, said Ronnie Hopkins, the college's president. Students benefit from the welcoming environment on campus, but they don't learn in isolation, he said. "We have a responsibility to reach out in the community."

HBCUs "have a special love in our hearts for students that are underachievers, for students that are struggling," Hopkins said, and the schools have a track record of responding to the needs of African American students. At the same time, he said, the schools are open to everyone and attract students who bring a variety of ability levels, talents and aspirations.

"HBCUs today, we are absolutely magnificent institutions. We are top institutions in the country," he said. "We work with these students, and we take them to the next level of excellence." ■

Photo/Wikimedia Commons

The Rev. Absalom Jones is seen in this 1810 portrait by Raphaelle Peale.

Fund provides college support

The Absalom Jones Fund for Episcopal Historically Black Colleges and Universities supports two institutions affiliated with the Episcopal Church since the 1800's: Saint Augustine's University in Raleigh, N.C., and Voorhees College in Denmark, S.C.

In 1804, Absalom Jones became the first African-American to be ordained a priest in the Episcopal Church, ministering at St. Thomas African Episcopal Church in Philadelphia. Born a slave in Sussex, Del., Jones eventually won his freedom, was a founding member of the Free African Society and helped to organize a school for black children.

More information about the fund is at **www.episcopalchurch.org.**

GOSPEL continued from page 2

gone ten seconds and you're already thinking about book deals."

And John said, "I will write it so anyone who reads it may believe that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God, and that by believing they may have life in his name."

And Peter said, "Urgh, well, if you put it like that, I suppose it's fine."

And the disciples remained on the Mount of Olives singing hymns and praising God.

Then Thomas said, "I doubted, but now I believe."

And Peter said, "Yes. You doubted. And now you believe."

Thomas said, "Do you think anyone will, you know, remember that 'incident'?"

"Incident?" said Peter.

"You know," said Thomas, "in the locked room?"

"No," said the disciples. "Hardly at all. Completely understandable. Jesus came back. You weren't there. You didn't believe us. Fingers in wounds. Perfectly natural."

"Oh good," said Thomas with great relief. "I'd hate for three years of exemplary service as a disciple and a possible future as an apostle to be completely ruined forever because of one week-long crisis of faith."

"Forget about it," said James. "It's not going to happen."

Then John spoke. "That said, it does provide a useful set-piece scene that helps with the overall resurrection narrative. It certainly adds credibility to the account."

"Oh great," said Thomas.

"I haven't decided whether to use it or not," said John.

"If I'm referred to as unbelieving Thomas, or faithless Thomas …" said Thomas.

"What about doubting Thomas?" said James.

"Ooh, that's good," said John.

Two men dressed in white stood beside them. They didn't like to interrupt. One said to the other, "Jesus wants them to make disciples of all nations? Good luck with that." They walked away, shaking their heads.

This is not the word of the Lord.

Thanks be to God. ■

AROUND THE CHURCH

National Cathedral commissions racial justice-themed windows to replace Confederate iconography

By David Paulsen
Episcopal News Service

Washington National Cathedral has commissioned a racial justice-themed replacement for its stained glass depicting two Confederate generals, windows that were removed four years ago amid a national reckoning with the white supremacist legacy of Civil War-era symbols.

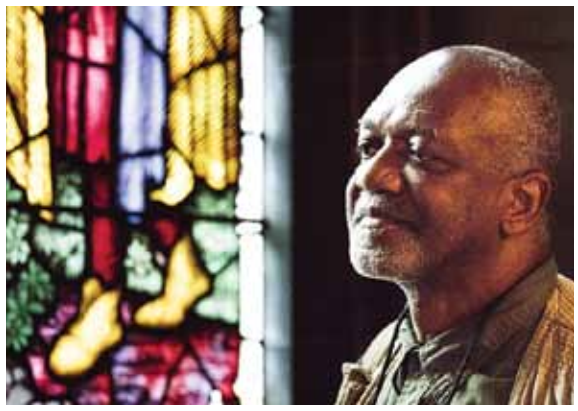
The stained glass depicting Robert E. Lee and Stonewall Jackson was installed in 1953 and removed in September 2017, after the deadly clashes between racist hate groups and counter-protesters in Charlottesville, Va. Now, the window honoring Lee is on loan to the Smithsonian Institution's National Museum of African American History and Culture, as part of "Make Good the Promises: Reconstruction and Its Legacies."

The exhibit of more than 175 post-Civil War objects and 300 photos will be on display at the Washington, D.C., museum through August 2022.

"We sincerely hope that an honest examination of the painful legacy represented in these windows will help all Americans forge a clearer understanding of our past," National Cathedral Dean Randy Hollerith said in a Sept. 22 news release. "Looking to our future, we are committed to working to help unite this country around a shared identity of inclusion, equality and true justice for all."

On Sept. 23, the cathedral said it commissioned new stained glass windows designed by Chicago-based artist Kerry James Marshall, known for his everyday depictions of African American life and culture. The stone next to the windows will be inscribed with a newly commissioned work by poet Elizabeth Alexander, whose writing explores history, and race and gender politics.

Photo/Danielle E. Thomas/Washington National Cathedral



Photo/courtesy Washington National Cathedral

Above, stained glass fabricator Dieter Goldkuhle, who worked with his late father to install many of the stained glass windows at Washington National Cathedral, replaces an image of the Confederate battle flag.

Left, artist Kerry James Marshall designed new windows for the cathedral.

"Cathedrals are never finished," Hollerith told the Washington Post. "It's a wonderful thing to be able to add beauty and meaning to this place when it's already full of so much beauty and meaning. We are excited to have these two artists with us and grateful for their willingness to undertake this project."

Marshall began designing the new windows this week and is expected to finish by 2023, according to the Post. The windows then will be made and installed on the southern wall of the main worship space.

Washington National Cathedral first began a period of discernment over its windows honoring Lee and Jackson in the wake of the June 2015 massacre of nine members of the Emanuel African Methodist Episcopal Church in Charleston, S.C. Gunman Dylann Roof's fondness for the Confederate flag sparked a broad reexamination of the flag as a controversial symbol of the South that had been co-opted by white supremacists. The cathedral responded by removing depictions of the Confederate flag from the Lee and Jackson windows.

Two years later, the August 2017 white nationalist rally in Charlottesville, Va., over removal of that city's statues of Lee and Jackson left one counter-protester dead and prompted renewed scrutiny of Confederate symbols in public places, including at Episcopal institutions. Washington National Cathedral chose to expedite its decision to remove its windows depicting the generals.

"Their association with racial oppression, human subjugation and white supremacy does not belong in the sacred fabric of this Cathedral," cathedral and diocesan leaders said at the time. ■

Presiding Bishop calls for church reformation 'in the way of Jesus' at House of Bishops meeting

By David Paulsen
Episcopal News Service

Presiding Bishop Michael Curry, in his Sept. 21 sermon during the opening day of the fall House of Bishops meeting, recalled a recent conversation with a fellow bishop about planning for the Episcopal Church's future.

Such conversations typically look to the coming years, Curry said, "but in pandemic time, we can barely think a month ahead of time."

This House of Bishops meeting is a prime example. The bishops' twice-a-year meetings have been held online since the start of the pandemic in March 2020, but with vaccines against COVID-19 now widely available, the bishops had planned to gather Sept. 21-23 in St. Louis, for their first in-person meeting in two years. Instead, the delta variant and the national surge in COVID-19 cases since July forced the bishops to cancel their face-to-face meeting and return to Zoom.

"So now we are here, not in St. Louis," Curry told the bishops. "The miracle of vaccination has arrived, even with some boosters, and yet some refuse and the pandemic goes on."

Curry wondered if diocesan conventions would be held in person this fall, and whether the delta variant could force further changes next year to the church's General Convention and the Anglican Communion's Lambeth Conference. "I don't have any answers yet," Curry said.

Photo/ENS

Presiding Bishop Michael Curry preaches during the opening worship service of the House of Bishops meeting.

Curry spent much of his 25-minute sermon invoking the term "narthex," the area of a church that people pass through to enter and exit, using it as a metaphor for this period of uncertainty and transition. "We are living in a narthex moment, between the world we knew and whatever is being born," he said.

That moment was to be the focus of the bishops' discussions with each other

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Episcopal Church 2020 data now available

Episcopalians can now access analysis of the 2020 Parochial Report data, including multi-year attendance and finance trends for individual churches and dioceses, as well as learn how COVID-19 affected congregations from a special narrative report of qualitative data.

Data from the Parochial Report — the oldest, continuous gathering of data by the Episcopal Church — has been compiled and published on the General Convention website.

Episcopalians can view a variety of metrics on the Research and Statistics pages, including a graph that shows trends over the past 10 years in Sunday worship attendance, finances, and baptized membership for any congregation in the church; data trends across the denomination, provinces, and dioceses; and demographic information of the neighborhood around any church.

While the report is often known for the quantitative metrics of average Sunday attendance (ASA) and "pledge and plate" (funds collected through offerings and pledges), the 2020 Parochial Report was changed due to the COVID-19 pandemic to include qualitative data. Congregations were asked narrative questions related to how their mission and ministry were impacted by the pandemic.

Responses to the narrative questions were incorporated into the summary of the 2020 Parochial Report Data and an in-depth analysis, "The Church is Not a Building: Observations and Insights from Narrative Responses to the 2020 Parochial Report."

In addition to congregational data, denominational, provincial, and diocesan trends are compiled in these nine reports:

- Fast Facts and Trends 2016-2020
- Baptized Members by Province and Diocese 2011-2020
- Average Sunday Attendance (ASA) by Province and Diocese 2011-2020
- Statistical Totals for The Episcopal Church by Province 2019-2020
- Statistical Totals for The Episcopal Church by Diocese 2019-2020
- USA Plate and Pledge Income Trends 2016-2020
- Average Pledge by Province and Diocese 2016-2020
- Financial and ASA Totals by Diocese 2020
- The Episcopal Church Plate and Pledge Income for 2020

The Parochial Report is developed by the House of Deputies Committee on the State of the Church, authorized by Executive Council, and overseen by the Executive Officer of the General Convention.

For more on the Parochial Report, please visit the General Convention website at **www.generalconvention.org** or contact pr@episcopalchurch.org.

— Office of Public Affairs

AROUND THE CHURCH

Curry names delegation to U.N. climate conference

Following a churchwide call for applications, Presiding Bishop Michael Curry has named 24 delegates — selected from among 70 applicants — to represent the presiding bishop's office at the United Nations 26th Conference of Parties to the U.N. Framework Convention on Climate Change, also known as COP26.

During the Oct. 31-Nov. 12 conference in Glasgow, Scotland, the Episcopal delegates will participate virtually in meetings, joining others — including delegates from the Anglican Communion and other faith-based partners — who will stand in solidarity with partner nations lacking access to COVID-19 vaccines.

Delegates will complete in-depth advocacy training prior to the official UN meetings, and will host public reports, discussions, and events throughout the process. They will seek to engage global leaders on The Episcopal Church's climate change commitments and policy priorities for COP26, which are based on General Convention resolutions and can be found online.

"The presiding bishop and the church will be represented by a stunningly diverse, dedicated, passionate, experienced, and creative group of Episcopalians," said Bishop Marc Andrus of the Diocese of California and head of the delegation.

"It's a complete blessing that such a delegation has come together for COP26—the stakes for the planet could not be higher nor the need for ambitious action more urgent. With this delegation I believe we will make our best contribution possible to the global effort to turn back the worst effects of climate change."

All Episcopalians are encouraged to find ways to participate in and promote global climate justice during and beyond COP26, as well as to join the delegates in intentional prayer prior to and during the conference. Find links to resources at **www.episcopalchurch.org** and follow the hashtag "#COP26" on social media outlets.

The delegates are:

- Rev. Richard Acosta and Bishop Francisco Duque, Diocese of Colombia
- Gabrie'l J. Atchison, Dioceses of Western New York & Northwestern Pennsylvania
- Canon Barbara Okamoto Bach, Diocese of New Jersey
- Dawn M. Baity and Stephen Squire, Convocation of Episcopal Churches in Europe
- Solveigh Barney, Diocese of North Dakota
- Bishop Cathleen Bascom, Diocese of Kansas
- Destinee Bates, Diocese of North Carolina
- Vickie Becker, Diocese of Arkansas
- Lola Brown, Diocese of Minnesota
- Susie Faria, Diocese of Massachusetts
- Rev. John C. George, Diocese of the Central Gulf Coast
- Lisa J. Graumlich and the Rev. Rachel Taber-Hamilton, Diocese of Olympia
- Rob Hogg, Diocese of Iowa
- Rev. Canon Martha Kirkpatrick, Episcopal Church in Delaware
- Rev. Canon Melissa McCarthy, Diocese of Los Angeles
- Cynthia McCarty, Diocese of West Tennessee
- Tom Poynor, Diocese of California
- Julia Rademacher-Wedd, Diocese of Chicago
- Bruno Reich, Diocese of Maryland
- Ellen Singer, Diocese of Texas
- Addie Tapp, Diocese of South Carolina

The presiding bishop's staff members and other leadership team members accompanying the delegation include Andrus; Lynnaia Main, Episcopal Church representative to the U.N.; the Rev. Melanie Mullen, director of Reconciliation, Justice, and Creation Care; Phoebe Chatfield, program associate for Creation Care and Justice; Rebecca Cotton, fellow for the Office of Government Relations; and Nick Gordon, Julia Chester Emery intern for the United Thank Offering.

For more information, email Phoebe Chatfield or Lynnaia Main.

— Episcopal Church Public Affairs Office

Border & Migration Ministry Summit postponed to 2022

The 4th Annual Border & Migration Ministry Summit, cohosted by Episcopal Migration Ministries and the Diocese of West Texas, has been postponed until March 2022.

In the midst of finalizing conference details for the 2021 summit, Episcopal Migration Ministries began working to assist arriving Afghan individuals and families through its network of affiliates across the country.

One challenge of migration ministry work is that situations demanding a response can change unpredictably and crucial opportunities to serve neighbors rarely arrive with much advance warning.

Around the same time, the Immigration & Refugee Ministries of the Diocese of West Texas began responding to the crisis in Del Rio and are providing humanitarian aid to the displaced Haitians traveling through their diocese to family and sponsors throughout the United States.

These humanitarian crises require significant staff attention and time, limiting the cohosts' ability to provide the conference originally planned for Oct. 21-23, 2021.

After much discussion and in order to honor keynote speakers, workshop leaders, panel members, and attendees with a fully developed conference, the 4th Annual Border & Migration Ministry Summit is scheduled to take place March 30-31, 2022.

For more information, email Kendall Martin, Senior Communications Manager, Episcopal Migration Ministries, at kmartin@episcopalchurch.org or call 212 716 6147.

— Episcopal Migration Ministries

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in the "table time" portion of the meeting's first day. The opening worship service was livestreamed on YouTube, but the rest of the meeting was closed to the public.

Before the bishops broke into smaller groups, Utah Bishop Scott Hayashi posed three questions for them to discuss: What five words describe your experience with the pandemic? Where has God been present in this time? Have your goals as a bishop changed because of this time of pandemic, racial unrest and political division?

"I've had to take it into my heart to consider what has been lost and what has been gained," said Hayashi, as he lamented that the bishops still could not have such conversations in person.

During his sermon, Curry described watching the 1953 movie "The Robe," set in biblical times, and hearing echoes of today's call for the church to reject the trappings of empire. He presented a vision of reformation in the church, away from the establishment and closer to Christianity's origins in small gatherings.

This, he said, is a "church before collusion with the empire, the church that looks something like Jesus, the church that lived into 'narthex,' to let go of the ways things were, to behold the way things could be."

Curry continued that such a church would be "not formed in the way of the world but formed in the way of Jesus and his love."

"A community of small gatherings and congregations of all stripes and types, a human tapestry, God's wondrous variety, the Kingdom, the reign of God, the beloved community, no longer centered on empire or establishment, no longer fixated on the preservation of institution, no longer propping up white supremacy or in collusion with anything that hurts or harms any child of God or God's creation — by God's grace, a church that looks and acts and lives like Jesus.

"Welcome to narthex, and welcome to behold a new heaven, a new Earth, a new you, a new me, a new we." ■

NEWS

WISCONSIN continued from page 1

the world, and we don't have much choice but to try to engage the change," Gunter said.

The three dioceses share roots in the original Diocese of Wisconsin, which was created in 1847, a year before Wisconsin became a state.

After the Diocese of Fond du Lac was established in 1875 in response to population growth in northeastern Wisconsin, the remaining diocese changed its name to the Diocese of Milwaukee in 1886.

Then, as more people moved into the northwest part of the state, the Diocese of Eau Claire was carved from parts of the other two dioceses in 1928.

Today, about 6 million people live in the state. Church membership has steadily declined in all three dioceses — down overall by nearly a third in the past decade.

Eau Claire, now with about 1,200 baptized members and 19 congregations, and Fond du Lac, with around 3,900 members and 35 congregations, are two of the Episcopal Church's least-populous dioceses. In the southern third of the state, the Diocese of Milwaukee includes six of the state's 10 largest cities and has about 7,800 members and 48 congregations.

Leadership transitions in two of the three Wisconsin dioceses helped open the door to reunion talks.

After the retirement of Eau Claire Bishop William Jay Lambert in November 2020, Fond du Lac and Eau Claire agreed to share a bishop, and Gunter began serving as Eau Claire's provisional bishop in January.

The Diocese of Milwaukee, facing its own bishop vacancy this year, chose to welcome Lee in April for a two-year stint as part-time provisional bishop. Lee had retired at the end of 2020 as bishop of the Diocese of Chicago.

Photo/Christ Church Cathedral, via Facebook

Christ Church Cathedral in Eau Claire, Wis., is one of only two congregations in the Diocese of Eau Claire that averages more than 80 worshippers on Sundays.

Looking to the future, it wasn't clear that three separate dioceses was a sustainable model for the church in Wisconsin, said the Rev. Jana Troutman-Miller, president of Milwaukee's standing committee. She serves as a chaplain at the diocese's St. John's On The Lake retirement community.

"Being able to start this conversation out of an opportunity rather than a necessity gives us that time and the space to first discern what the purpose of this is, what the mission of it is," she told ENS.

Tim Donahue, the junior warden at Christ Episcopal Church in La Crosse and vice president of the Diocese of Eau Claire's Executive Council, said he sees reunion as a way to bolster the small congregations in his diocese and around the state. "They need support, and we need to figure out the best way to give them that support," he told ENS.

Such support isn't solely financial, Donahue said. A unified diocese would be able to draw on the interests, skills and expertise of Episcopalians from across Wisconsin to help strengthen congregations and grow ministries.

Gunter echoed those hopes. A single diocese could be more effective at marshaling its broader pool of human resources to promote Christian formation and evangelism and to respond to the problems of racism and climate change, he said.

"I'm not persuaded that our main problem is structural," Gunter said, though there certainly would be cost savings in returning to a single Wisconsin diocese. "Our real challenges are more missional, and how do we form congregations that are lively and have a deep engagement with prayer and God?"

In 2011, the Diocese of Eau Claire, anticipating budget shortfalls, nearly merged with Fond du Lac, but the latter narrowly voted it down during its diocesan convention.

A lot has changed since that plan failed, said Gunter, who was consecrated bishop of Fond du Lac in 2014.

The three Wisconsin dioceses aren't pursuing reunion now "because we're all sinking," he said. "That said, the current trends suggest that sooner or later some kind of conversation along these lines might become more urgent."

Increasingly, dioceses across the Episcopal Church are experimenting with partnership models aimed at growing church ministries while sharing resources.

In July, the Diocese of Vermont revealed that a looming "financial cliff" was driving consideration of closer ties to the dioceses of New Hampshire and Maine.

Formal partnerships already are in place between the dioceses of Eastern and Western Michigan and between the dioceses of Northwestern Pennsylvania and Western New York. In the formal partnerships, the dioceses agreed to share a bishop and combine some administrative functions and ministries while maintaining separate diocesan identities.

The last time two or more dioceses combined was the reunion of the dioceses of Quincy and Chicago in 2013. To Wisconsin's west, the Diocese of Minnesota has encompassed the full state since 1944, when the state's two dioceses reunited. The Episcopal Church in Minnesota now counts about 17,600 baptized members. ■

SCHOOLS continued from page 1

The National Native American Boarding School Healing Coalition, a nonprofit based in Minneapolis, has identified at least 373 schools that were part of that system, many of them run by Christian denominations. At least nine were thought to have Episcopal Church connections, though the dearth of churchwide records has made it difficult to fully account for the church's role in the schools.

"This is a very large and complicated history that we have to unpack," said panelist Christine McCleave, chief executive officer of the Boarding School Healing Coalition.

She is an Ojibwe member from the Turtle Mountain Reservation in North Dakota, and her grandfather and great-grandfather attended Indigenous boarding schools. She explained that the trauma caused by the forced disengagement from family and culture has been passed from generation to generation.

"We're at a point where it's now critical to start having these conversations," McCleave said. The Native Americans who have reached out to her organization, she said, are sharing "a lot of deep spiritual pain and, in fact, a lot of anger that is being expressed toward the church."

The legacy of boarding schools made international headlines this year with the discovery of a mass grave containing the remains of 215 children at a former Indigenous boarding school in Canada.

Following the discovery, the U.S. Department of the Interior announced in June it was launching a comprehensive review of American boarding school policies dating to 1819, and some lawmakers are pushing for creation of a truth and healing commission to investigate further. The Episcopal Church supports those efforts.

"We condemn these practices and we mourn the intergenerational trauma that cascades from them. We have heard with sorrow stories of how this history has harmed the families of many Indigenous Episcopalians," Curry and Jennings said in their July statement. "While complete records are unavailable, we know that the Episcopal Church was associated with Indigenous schools during the 19th and 20th centuries. We must come to a full understanding of the legacies of these schools."

The Rev. Bradley Hauff, the church's missioner for Indigenous ministries, read from the presiding officers' statement at the open of the Oct. 11 webinar. Hauff, who is Lakota, also shared his own family's story, how both of his parents attended Indigenous boarding schools in South Dakota.

His mother, Margaret, attended an Episcopal boarding school as a child. His father, Sylvan, was taken at age 5 to a boarding school run by the federal government. For the first year, his father would go to the gate and wait for someone to come take him home, but no one came.

Students at St. Mary's, an Episcopal school for Indigenous girls on the Rosebud Reservation in South Dakota, are seen in an undated photo from the G.E.E. Lindquist Papers, held by the Burke Library Archives at Union Theological Seminary.

"And he got angry, and he realized he had to get tough in order to survive the boarding school experience. That's an awful thing to happen to someone that young," Hauff said. "I'm amazed that he made it through and did as well as he did, but that's the resiliency that Indigenous people have and that's why we are still here to this day."

Boarding school students endured a wide spectrum of experiences, as Hauff and other participants detailed.

Some students were forced to attend, while other families voluntarily sent their children to receive what often was the only education available. In some cases, they endured a nightmare of mistreatment, abuse and even death far from home.

Other survivors of the boarding schools recall no physical abuse but still trauma from the family separation and deprivation of their culture and identity.

Some of the webinar's panelists said they welcomed the statement this year by Curry and Jennings. It was "a good beginning," said Forrest Cuch, a mem-

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NEWS

Wyoming Episcopalians look to welcome Afghans in state with no history of refugee resettlement

By David Paulsen
Episcopal News Service

As churches across the United States consider ways to welcome Afghan families who fled the Taliban in their home country, Episcopalians in Wyoming are making headlines for countering the state's reputation as the only one in the nation never to have a formal refugee resettlement program.

The vestry at St. Mark's Episcopal Church in Casper voted unanimously on Sept. 20 to begin researching the process for sponsoring an Afghan family.

The church formed a committee to work with Episcopal Migration Ministries on a plan to provide for such needs as housing and job placements, as well as to offer fellowship and other support to these potential new neighbors.

Shumard

"Most Afghan families want to go where there's an Afghan community. There's no community here," said the Rev. Jim Shumard, rector at St. Mark's, but he told Episcopal News Service that he and his congregation hope to change that. "We pray other local churches will sponsor other families so that we can build community together."

Last week, St. Mark's efforts were profiled in a Washington Post article that highlighted residents' past reluctance to welcome refugees to this strongly conservative and mostly white state.

In 2020, 70% of Wyoming voters supported then-President Donald Trump, who made opposition to legal and illegal immigration a cornerstone of his campaigns and who, as president, reduced the number of refugees allowed into the United States to a historic low of 15,000.

On Oct. 8, President Joe Biden raised the refugee ceiling to 125,000 for the 2022 fiscal year.

All of these refugees will need to find places to live, and as they settle in new communities, many will receive help from one of the nine agencies that are part of the federal refugee resettlement program, including Episcopal Migration Ministries (EMM).

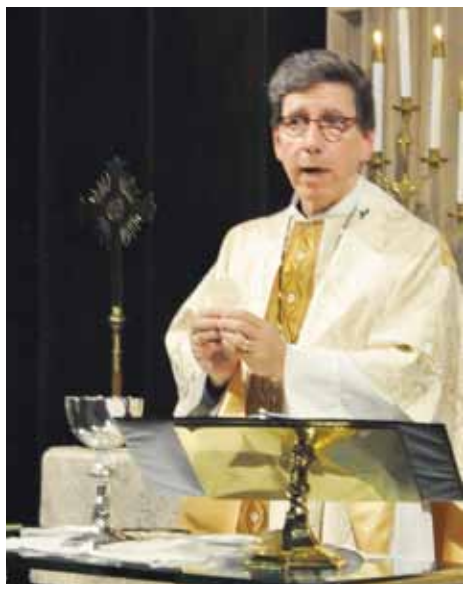
"EMM continues to work through our network of 11 affiliates to provide services to arriving Afghans," Kendall Martin, EMM's senior communications manager, told ENS by email. "The greatest need continues to be housing."

Donations can be made online to EMM's Neighbors Welcome: Afghan Allies Fund, and congregations and individuals interested in offering housing or volunteering can complete EMM's online form.

"We are aware that there are Episcopal congregations and leaders in Wyoming who care about this issue and wish for Wyoming to be a welcoming state," Martin added.

Wyoming Bishop Paul-Gordon Chandler would also like to see his state open its door to refugees.

"As the Episcopal Church in Wyoming, we desire to be a faith community that welcomes the stranger and embraces the 'other,' following the example of Abraham, who is not just our ancestor, but the ancestor of all Afghan refugees," Chandler said in an email message to ENS.



Photos/courtesy of Diocese of Wyoming

Bishop Paul-Gordon Chandler celebrates the Eucharist at St. Matthew's Cathedral in Laramie, Wyo.

"As Wyoming doesn't have a federally funded resettlement program, it will require extra creativity and commitment to make this happen. We are currently exploring together all that this will entail and look forward to what God may have in store as we journey down this road toward sacred hospitality," he wrote.

After the 20-year U.S. war in Afghanistan ended in August with the final withdrawal of American troops, an AP-NORC poll showed most Americans support welcoming Afghans who worked for the U.S. government and are open to welcoming others fleeing persecution.

St. Paul's Episcopal Church in Dixon, Wyo., created a "prayer fence" where visitors are encouraged to tie ribbons with prayers.

About 50,000 Afghans were allowed into the U.S. under what is known as humanitarian parole. Some may be able to apply for special immigrant visas, while others will apply for asylum.

Wyoming State Rep. Landon Brown, a Republican, told NPR this week that he supports welcoming Afghans but expects some resistance. "It's a very difficult conversation to have here in Wyoming, strictly because of our small population and the fear of what that influx of immigrants may look like to our small population," Brown said.

Wyoming, with 580,000 residents, is the least populous state. It is nearly 84% white, not including Hispanic residents, compared to 60% of the United States population, according to the U.S. census. Of all U.S. residents, 14% were born in another country; in Wyoming that number is 3.4%.

While several neighboring Western states have offered to receive Afghan families, a spokesman for Wyoming Gov. Mark Gordon said in August that he "has no interest" in doing the same. Gordon's office told the Washington Post more recently that the governor was open to developing a process for faith groups to host evacuees.

Shumard, the St. Mark's rector, said he has not received any negative response from parishioners or the local community to his congregation's interest in sponsoring an Afghan family. The only "hate mail" he said he received was an email from an anti-Muslim critic from out of state who reacted to the Post article.

Shumard's first experience with welcoming refugees dates back more than two decades to when he was serving at Grace Episcopal Church in Gainesville, Ga. That congregation helped settle and support families from Bosnia.

Shumard is confident that families from Afghanistan will feel just as welcomed by Wyoming residents. "I think there are enough voices that want it to happen, that it's a great opportunity," he said.

For Christians, that spirit of welcome is biblical, he said, citing Jesus' command in Matthew 25 to feed the hungry, clothe the naked and welcome the stranger.

"It's not only what Jesus would do," he added. "It's also a way to honor the work that our soldiers did. … They said they couldn't do their job without these [Afghan] interpreters and allies. So few of us fought in Afghanistan or worked in Afghanistan. I feel this is a way for us to do our part."

The committee at St. Mark's is working with members of a missionary community called the Table to recruit enough volunteers to establish a viable welcoming team. Some already have started looking into options for housing and jobs, if and when they are able to introduce an Afghan family to Casper, a city of about 58,000.

As the congregation takes the process one step at a time, "I'm just sort of trusting the Spirit is working in this," Shumard said. ■

SCHOOLS continued from page 6

ber of the Ute tribe and an Episcopalian from Utah. "But we have a long way to go, a long, long way."

Native Americans have suffered under oppressive European colonialism for hundreds of years, since the time of Christopher Columbus, Cuch said. The boarding school system only exacerbated that trauma.

"What troubles me the most is the horrific dysfunction that I've observed in our families and other families as a result," he said. "It has to be healed."

Hauff addressed the legacy of the boarding schools during committee discussions at the June meeting of Executive Council, and a more thorough discussion is expected at the governing body's October meeting.

Curry and Jennings also pledged to "make right relationships with our Indigenous siblings an important focus of the work of Executive Council and the 80th General Convention" in July 2022.

Some Indigenous boarding schools remain open today, though they no longer operate under former federal policies of forced assimilation.

The Ven. Paul Sneve, who is Rosebud Sioux and serves as archdeacon in the Diocese of South Dakota, said both of his parents worked at the Flandreau Indian School, as did Sneve himself for about 10 years.

Stripped of the 19th-century policies of "kill the Indian," the school now focuses on helping Indigenous students succeed academically while honoring their Native culture and identity.

Sneve also has heard the painful stories of earlier generations of American Indians who attended the boarding schools, including his mother, grandmother and great-grandparents. Their pain is perpetually passed on to their descendants unless they are able to heal that trauma, he said.

"We owe it to them to expose our hearts and begin to heal," Sneve said. "This discussion is going to take a very long time, and we have to be patient and listen very carefully and prayerfully."

Chanar, who now lives northwest of Fairbanks in Minto, Alaska, said the news this year of a mass grave at a former Canadian boarding school made her "angry all over again," but she is hopeful that the church will seize this moment to listen to the stories of survivors like her.

"This is the history of the church, and we have to go through the healing," she said. ■

ADVENT RESOURCES

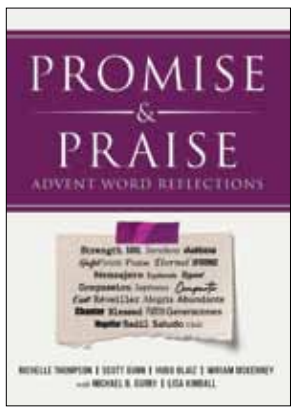
Digital, print materials available for a blessed Advent

Nov. 28 is the first Sunday of Advent, the Christian season of spiritual preparation before celebrating the birth of Jesus at Christmas. Episcopal Journal *presents some resources suitable for the season.*

Print and digital

Promise and Praise: Advent Word Reflections

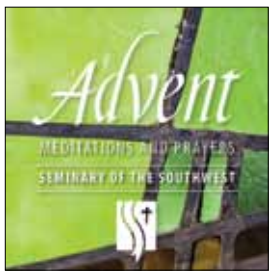
From Forward Movement, this devotional recommends slowing down to reflect on one word each day of Advent. The process offers a way to count down to Christmas with a focus on God's promise, in a posture of praise.



Contributors are Scott Gunn, Miriam McKenney, Hugo Olaiz, and Richelle Thompson, with Michael B. Curry and Lisa Kimball. Learn more at **www.forwardmovement.org**

The daily reflections are part of a larger initiative called AdventWord, a global community praying and walking together during the holy season.

AdventWord invites people to read and respond to a single word each day. The words are drawn from weekly scripture readings and prayerfully selected as a way to help ready hearts and lives for the coming of the Christ child. Learn more at **www.adventword.org**.



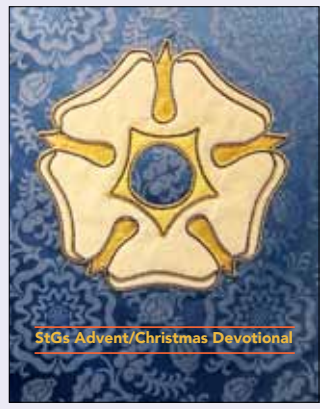
Meditations

Seminary of the Southwest in Austin, Texas is again producing daily Advent meditations. Last year, meditations were contributed by a different person each day. More information is available at **www.ssw.edu**.

Booklet

St. Gregory's Advent Reflections

St. Gregory's Episcopal Church in Deerfield, Ill., is producing a booklet and daily digital meditations again this year as an invitation to join the church's community in prayer during the seasons of Advent, Christmas and Epiphany. Each day has a brief excerpt from scripture, a reflection by someone in the worshipping community, an offering of art, and an offering of music. Each is designed to be done in five to seven minutes.



"The season of Advent is a season of preparation in which we prepare our hearts, minds, and souls to meet Jesus face to face. We are invited to build space into our private time of prayer and our corporate liturgy to examine the coming of Christ, and to make space in our hearts for the power of God among us," reads the introduction.

To create the booklet, the church created a spreadsheet for all the days of Advent and asked people to send reflections or artwork of what they thought of when reading the Scripture passages.

Other contributions included photographs, paintings, hymn titles and verses. More information is at **www.stgregoryschurch.org.**

Book

Contemplative Knitting

Julie Cicora gives practical advice and ideas for knitting through Advent. She includes the history of knitting as well as steps for setting up and sustaining a knitting prayer practice. The book has been described as "a master class in knitting and prayer" by Brother Aidan Owen, a knitter and writer, of Holy Cross Monastery. Available from **www.churchpublishing.org.**

Poster

Slow Down. Quiet. It's Advent.

The 2021 version of artist Jay Sidebotham's popular Advent calendar suggests ways to mark the days through the season.

Subtitled "Twenty-seven days to make room for Jesus in your heart," the calendar offers ideas for prayer, helping others, and being thoughtful about the true meaning of Christmas. It is sold in packs of 25. **www.forwardmovement.org**

A history of Advent calendars

Edited by Episcopal Journal

The first Advent calendars appeared in 19th-century Germany to count down the days between the start of Advent and Christmas Day.

There is some disagreement as to when the first printed Advent calendars appeared, although it is clear that they were first produced at some time in the 1900s. There are claims that a Christian bookshop in Hamburg produced a "Christmas Clock" in 1902, and a newspaper in Stuttgart is known to have included an Advent calendar in its pages in 1904.

The first mass producer of Advent calendars is thought to have been Gerhard Lang, who worked at the Reichhold & Lang printing office in Munich. He released his first Advent calendar in 1908 and had a steady business, producing more than 30 calendar patterns until the 1930s. The calendars would usually have 24 doors, but tended to be better-decorated than modern versions.

Soon, calendars were being designed with little doors or pouches which contained small religious pictures or Bible extracts. Some of the calendars also contained sweets in order to appeal to children.

The practice escalated up until World War II, when paper and cardboard were rationed and Advent-calendar production ground to a halt. Once the war ended, though, production began again, pioneered by Richard Sellmer in 1946.

The introduction of the Advent calendar to the U.S. was aided by President Dwight Eisenhower, whose grandchildren liked the idea.

Photo/Elena Mozhvilo/unsplash.com

The calendar was soon adopted in other countries and in the U.K., chocolates began to appear behind the little doors as soon as rationing would allow. By the end of the 1950s, chocolate Advent calendars began to be widespread. They still exist today, with hundreds of different varieties appearing across the globe.

The modern Advent calendar generally is made of cardboard, usually decorated in some popular cultural or chocolate-related theme which has been adjusted to look Christmassy, bearing at least 24 little doors.

Behind each door will be a molded Christmas-related shape, and there may also be small picture on the inside of the door or on the cardboard behind the chocolate. Advent calendar traditions include the 24th chocolate or door bearing a depiction of a Nativity scene, and the person opening the calendar guessing which Christmas-related item will be depicted behind each door.

Other types of calendar include the non-chocolate ones, which may contain only pictures, or may provide religious content. Others may contain a small toy or an instant scratch card each day, depending on the calendar's target audience.

Permanent calendars are also available, some consisting of decorative wooden structures which contain little drawers, one for each day. Others come in the shape of trees or are made to surround a Christmas tree, allowing for the star to be placed on top after the 24th door is opened.

German calendars still have 24 doors, although some which appear in English-speaking countries have a special 25th door or pocket for Christmas Day. Some modern calendars have up to 31 doors and also include the Jewish festival of Hanukkah and/or New Year's Eve, with the latter sometimes not containing a chocolate for New Year's Day due to the fact that everyone will be on a diet.

Some Advent calendars come in the form of books with 24 individual stories or chapters. In Scandinavia, it is also common to have a series of "Julekalender" programs on television, one for each day until Christmas.

With the advent of the internet came the online Advent calendar, with many different versions appearing with various web pages or cartoons hidden behind the "doors." ■

This article was published at the Hitchhiker's Guide to the Galaxy website, ***www.h2g2.com****.*

ADVENT RESOURCES

Advent: a season to prepare

By Nina Keck

"Advent is the season in the church year when we prepare for the coming of Jesus Christ, both His birth at Christmas and his second coming at the end of time," says the Rev. Brian Turner, vicar of Church of the Blessed Redeemer, Palm Bay, Fla.

The word "Advent," from Latin, means "the coming." For centuries, Advent has been a time of spiritual reflection as well as cheer and anticipation. During the Middle Ages, Advent became associated with preparation for the second coming of Christ, and many Christians still view it as a season to prepare for the second coming.

The lectionary readings during Advent often speak about judgment and provide visions of what the end of time will be like when the fullness of God's kingdom is consummated. Turner says, "So we are invited to prepare during Advent by listening to and reflecting on these readings and what they say about God's kingdom breaking into our lives."

The readings also help prepare us to celebrate Jesus Christ's birth and incarnation at Christmas, when the world was changed 2,000 years ago. "They help prepare us for what the end of time will be like when we will be judged regarding how well we've embodied Christ's incarnation through our own faith lives," he adds.

Christians celebrate Advent during the darkest part of the year. This darkness symbolizes the Israelites' dark world as they waited for the promised Messiah and reminds us that the church is in figurative darkness awaiting the second coming of Jesus.

All this makes light an important symbol during the season. Turner explains, "As we await the coming of Jesus Christ, who is the light of the world, so we light candles in preparation for this coming, and to brighten and enkindle our own hearts during this season."

The Advent wreath is a significant symbol and tradition of Advent. The circle of four candles represents each of the four Sundays of Advent plus a fifth one in the middle for Christmas Day. "The tradition is to light a new candle each week as we continue to wait and prepare for Christ's coming at Christmas," Turner says.

Each Sunday of Advent celebrates a different theme: hope, peace, joy and love. "In reflecting on a new sentiment each week during Advent, we not only brighten our lives but our spirits as well," Turner says. "And we are reminded to reflect and hold close to us the values that are close to God."

Photo/Colleen Dodson-Baker/All Saints'

Members of All Saints' Episcopal Church in Beverly Hills, Calif., light the Advent wreath during a 2017 service.

Celebrations may be online, and we will follow social distancing rules, but it will come. Turner says, "During this difficult year, as the pandemic and many other challenges have changed the lives we've been used to, I pray that our Advent preparations may help reorient us to the eternal God who is never-changing. May we be reminded that Christ's Advent is an opportunity to both grow closer to him and to follow more closely in his way of love. May Christ's judgment be one that reminds us where our priorities and wills should lie and bring us more deeply into his kingdom. May the candles we light remind us that even in dark times, Christ's light shines in the darkness, and the darkness cannot overcome it. And may the holy themes we lift up during this season remind us that our lives are only complete with the hope, joy, peace and love that Christ provides us." ■

This article was first published on Dec. 7, 2020 on the website of the Diocese of Central Florida.

FEATURE

Church's solidarity among Indigenous peoples in Minnesota shines light on history of exploitation

By Lynette Wilson
Episcopal News Service

In mid-August, Mike Kornezos and his longtime partner Thomas Jones were out on the lakes checking the readiness of wild rice. Harvested in early fall, wild rice — along with fish, wild berries, migratory ducks and garden-grown vegetables — has long sustained the Anishinaabe, as the Indigenous peoples of northern Minnesota are called.

Hot days, cold nights make for the best conditions, they said. In the following weeks, they would spend most mornings on the lakes in a canoe: Kornezos standing at the stern like a gondolier with long metal pole forked at the end to better use the muddy surface below as he propelled the boat along the water.

Jones would be kneeling using the "knockers," the smoothly carved sticks, one to hold the rice stalk steady, the other extended in one smooth, swift extension of the forearm from the elbow to thrush the rice kernel into the bottom of the boat.

A protein-rich plant, wild rice historically has grown in abundance in northern Minnesota, a region of pine forests, peatlands, rivers and lakes. It's a cultural and culinary mainstay of the Anishinaabe, who across the Upper Great Lakes region are also known as Chippewa and Ojibwe.

"We produce more rice here, naturally, than we do anywhere else in the states," said Elaine Fleming, an instructor at Leech Lake Tribal College, a Cass Lake community college where she teaches Anishinaabe studies and Leech Lake Nation history and nationhood, as well as survey courses on Indigenous peoples of the Americas.

"We are a nation, not a reservation," Fleming said in an interview with ENS from her home in Cass Lake on the Leech Lake reservation. "And a nation," she said, "has four elements: language and culture, history, a land base and its own governance. When I teach, I like to break things up like that so they [students] can understand themselves as a nation. In the fall, ricing is part of that. In the spring, it's sugarbush."

The ability to feed itself — to have food sovereignty — is part of being a nation, she said.

Beginning in 2016 with the Dakota Access Pipeline and the camp at Standing Rock, N.D., the Episcopal Church has joined interfaith solidarity actions as Indigenous peoples and other "water protectors" have stood up to multinational corporations' energy exploration, drilling and transportation infrastructure projects.

These non-violent actions have centered on water quality; they're also about human rights violations and the rights of sovereign nations. The church also has stood with Native Alaskans, the Gwich'in, in their struggle to protect the Arctic National Wildlife Refuge from oil exploration and development. Oil drilling in the refuge poses a threat to Porcupine caribou, animals the Gwich'in depend on for food and cultural survival.

General Convention sets the Episcopal Church's priorities. Its solidarity with the Anishinaabe is fixed in a 2018 resolution reaffirming the church's repudiation of the Doctrine of Discovery and support for Indigenous peoples' sovereignty over territorial resources.

Photos/Lynette Wilson/ENS

Mike Kornezos, a member of the Bois Forte Nation, and Thomas Jones, of Leech Lake, having been harvesting wild rice together on Minnesota's lakes and waterways for about a decade. Kornezos is junior warden at St. Peter's Episcopal Church in Cass Lake. Jones (seated) demonstrates how "knockers" are used to thresh wild rice from the stalk.

The resolution specifically noted the Leech Lake Band of Ojibwe's concerns regarding the Enbridge Line 3 pipeline. When the Anishinaabe ceded territory to the U.S. government in 1855, they did so with the understanding that they would maintain their rights to hunt, fish and gather wild rice on the land.

On Oct. 1, after a six-year legal and regulatory battle, the Enbridge Line 3 pipeline became operational. The $9.3 billion, 338-mile pipeline replacement and expansion project carries oil across northern Minnesota, where 85% of Minnesota's Indigenous population now lives on a patchwork of reservations.

The pipeline runs along reservations and ceded treaty lands. With more than 10,000 lakes, Minnesota and Lake Superior hold a fifth of the world's freshwater. The Minnesota Department of Natural Resources has given Enbridge permission to use 4.5 billion gallons of groundwater annually.

"When people like Enbridge come in, we will battle them," Fleming said. "We have a say about what they are doing with the land and what happens with the water, and it's not just about us. Everybody needs the water to be clean and useable, so we're not just fighting for Leech Lake or White Earth. We are fighting for the land and for the people."

When European settlers first arrived in North America, Indigenous peoples numbered in the millions. By the 1890s, warfare, disease and starvation had decimated the tribes, and some 249,000 remained in the United States.

Those who survived, lost territory when they signed treaties designed to open the land to logging, mining, homesteaders and farming. Forced from their land, Indigenous peoples began to lose access to the fish and game, plants and berries that sustained them. When the U.S. government began issuing rations to reservations, further disrupting Indigenous peoples' cultural and culinary traditions, the government used food and harvest season as a tactic.

"They would give us food, and a lot of times the food didn't come on time. Sometimes the food was rotten. They would be selling [us] the food so they could profit off of it," Fleming said.

"But the one thing we could always depend on was the rice … Rice is something you can keep. For at least 10 years, it'll be good. They understood that, and when they were treating with us, they would hold their treaty meetings in the fall purposely to influence us to sign treaties — like the Nelson Act — because they knew we wanted to get home, that we needed to be ricing."

The Nelson Act became law in January 1889. It attempted to relocate all the Anishinaabe in Minnesota to the White Earth Reservation in the western part of the state.

The expropriated land went to the timber industry and white settlers. The remaining Indigenous lands were further divided into family allotments that encouraged subsistence farming and commodity food consumption, undermining the Anishinaabe way of life.

The Anishinaabe's "stories, mythology and cosmology all centered on honor and respect — and to this day they are fighting for the federal government to honor treaties," the Rev. Matthew Cobb, a priest in the Episcopal Church in Minnesota, told ENS.

For the last four years, he has been based in Bemidji, a "border town," at the center of three nations' reservations extending like a wishbone with Red Lake due north, White Earth to the southwest, and Leech Lake to the southeast. He has learned to speak Ojibwe and serves three Indigenous congregations and one predominantly white, Scan-

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FEATURE

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dinavian-heritage congregation. Cobb wrote the 2018 resolution.

The first Episcopal missionary arrived in Minnesota in 1828. The diocese was founded in 1857 and two years later, in 1859, Bishop Henry B. Whipple was elected and moved his family from Chicago's South Side to Faribault, 50 miles south of Minneapolis.

Whipple quickly established himself as a force, a successful mediator between the warring Dakota and Ojibwe tribes. As he moved his ministry north, "he controlled the territory, the missionaries of any denomination that operated in the territory," Cobb told ENS.

"He wielded a lot of temporal and spiritual power … People recognized him as a holy man and someone they could trust. He was given an Ojibwe name meaning 'straight talk.' He was seen as an honest man who didn't talk out of both sides of his mouth," Cobb said.

Whipple saw the treaties as "covenants between the U.S. government and the Anishinaabe," Cobb explained, and he served as a negotiator between the two as settlers and the timber industry arrived in the state.

"[So] the treaties are signed and right from the beginning they were fraudulent. Right from the beginning, Whipple says in his autobiography, the whole process the Commission on Indian Affairs was involved in was fraudulent, and, of course, he was complicit … and that was the moral duress he was under at the end of his life," Cobb said.

Cobb expressed hope that Episcopalians can use their baptismal vows and the Eucharist, its common table, to help them confront the church's involvement in the exploitation of Indigenous peoples and their land.

The murals at St. Peter's Episcopal Church in Cass Lake on the Leech Lake Nation reflect Indigenous tradition and history.

"If we were to begin to face it, we would then be able to work through that shame and get to a place of courageously honoring the treaties and respecting the dignity of every human being like it says in the baptismal covenant," he said. "For me, the violation of that treaty rights is also a violation of our baptismal rites. And so right and rite are very closely linked."

Fleming, who is not an Episcopalian, when asked what Episcopalians can do to become better allies, said this: "They need to learn about us … That means learning about the treaties and their violation, learning the truth about what happened in the boarding schools, the man camps, Enbridge Line 3 — and how they've taken the water out. But it also means learning about the people and what they've accomplished.

"Like for our people, I think we're pretty spectacular. We're the 'shining people,' because traditionally, we had this philosophy and relationship with the Earth and the skies. And it was about respect," Fleming said.

The Episcopal Church repudiated the Doctrine of Discovery in 2009, joining a wider movement among Christian denominations at a time when few people understood its premise, said the Rev. Brad Hauff, the Episcopal Church's Indigenous missioner, who is a member of the Lakota Nation.

"How can you repudiate something when you don't even know what it is?" he said. For instance, he added, "life, liberty and the pursuit of happiness," the God-given unalienable rights given to all humans and upheld in the Declaration of Independence did not apply to "the merciless Indian savages," according to Thomas Jefferson.

"I think a lot of people have never read the Declaration of Independence," Hauff said. Its denigration of Indigenous peoples "has tended to be pushed aside or ignored. People don't talk about it. But recently, people have been talking about it, that Jefferson really was a proponent of these genocidal processes."

Examining history from the cultural perspective of Indigenous peoples requires people to be willing to look critically at American and Episcopal Church history, while at the same time having the integrity to examine themselves from within, Hauff said.

"In America today, even in the Episcopal Church, there are a number of people who are just fine with the traditional Columbus-discovery, Manifest Destiny-narrative. That's their narrative. They're proud of it, they don't want it to change. They want Columbus Day to stay Columbus Day, not to become Indigenous Peoples Day. And these people are very vocal and politically active right now."

Hauff noticed a shift take place nationally and in the church around 2018, around the same time General Convention called for education around the Doctrine of Discovery.

By 2019, some dioceses had begun adding Indigenous Peoples Day to their calendars. The Episcopal Church recently endorsed legislation supporting it as a federal holiday.

Last week, Presiding Bishop Michael Curry joined his Lutheran and Anglican counterparts in North America to designate Sept. 30 as a day of commemoration, truth and healing in solidarity with Indigenous peoples.

In a statement, the leaders recognized that the churches' repudiation of the Doctrine of Discovery begins with telling the truth; and that both U.S. and Canadian education systems perpetuate white supremacy by teaching narratives that glorify settlers' contributions to building societies and delete or ignore those of Native Americans and First Nations peoples.

Earlier this year in July following the discovery of unmarked graves at a Canadian boarding school, Curry and House of Deputies President the Rev. Gay Clark Jennings condemned the schools, describing instances of forcible removal of children from their homes, forced assimilation and physical abuse as a "cultural genocide" that sought to erase their identity.

They acknowledged that the Episcopal Church was associated with residential schools in the United States during the 19th and 20th centuries, and said the church needs to understand the legacy and commit to truth and reconciliation.

The church also supported federal legislation that would establish a formal commission to investigate, document and acknowledge past injustices of the federal government's Indian boarding school policies.

Like Fleming, Hauff stressed that American history and Indigenous peoples' place in it include historic contributions. For instance, Fleming said, 75% of the vegetables grown today were first cultivated by Indigenous peoples in North and South America.

The murals at St. Peter's Episcopal Church in Cass Lake on the Leech Lake Nation reflect Indigenous tradition and history.

"We had cities," she said. "You cannot feed yourselves by hunting and gathering when you have a city of 40,000 people. So in summer, we garden."

Hauff stressed how Indigenous and European-American worldviews differ.

"Indigenous people do not teach human dominance. We see humankind as having a place in the ecosystem of the universe. But it's not a place of dominance, we do not have the right and we are not free to change the order of things as has been set by the Great Spirit.

The Euro-American worldviews differ from that," he said. "I believe that is why we're seeing what is happening

Mike Kornezos, a member of the Bois Forte Nation, talks about how wild rice is a source of protein and a mainstay of the Anishinaabe diet.

to our planet, and to our climate… the consequences of what happens when you teach and practice human dominance. Indigenous people have a lot to teach the dominant society about that if the dominant society would only listen. I don't believe that we'd be in the situation that we're in right now, with regard to the planet and the climate, if human dominance were not taught."

Though General Convention sets the church's priorities, much of the work happens locally.

Minnesota Bishop Craig Loya joined the solidarity action in June and then, in mid-August, spent a week in residence in the state's northwest, including Bemidji, Brainerd, Rice Lake, Cass Lake, Red Lake and Leech Lake.

He visited congregations and met with tribal leaders to learn about Anishinaabe history and culture, to connect more deeply with the Episcopal Church in Minnesota's Indigenous faith communities, and to listen and learn about both the beauty and challenges of those communities today.

"It has been such a gift to spend time with these communities, hearing stories from the past and from today. Our indigenous congregations are particularly gifted at sharing Christian life together, from baptisms to funerals and from harvest time to the dinner table. I have felt welcomed not just into worship services, but into full, rich, communal lives. I can't wait to share that story more widely around the diocese," Loya told ENS during a conversation in Bemidji.

As part of his residence, the bishop spent a day with a tribal conservation officer learning about the wild rice harvest and features of the land, and how they connect to Anishinaabe history and culture. They talked about Enbridge Line 3's threat to wild rice, the way of life centered around the rice harvest and its role, past and present, in sustaining both life and culture.

"It's not just about the land itself but about the peoples' generations-long relationship to the land, and to the plants and animals that populate it. That profound recognition of our interconnectedness with creation is another story I'm excited to tell," Loya said. ■

FAITH AND THE ARTS

What did Jesus really look like?

By Joan Taylor

Photo composite/Wikimedia Commons

The ethnicity of Jesus in art has changed over the centuries, influenced by cultural settings.

Everyone knows how to recognize Jesus. He is portrayed in art, film and literature in much the same way. His image is found repeatedly in countless churches and Christian buildings.

He is usually somewhat European: a man with nut-brown hair (sometimes blond) and light brown or blue eyes. He has a long face and nose, and long hair and a beard. His clothes are also long: a tunic down to the ground, with wide baggy sleeves, and a large mantle. He is fairly well-tended (combed hair, good teeth, clean) and his clothes look newly washed.

But what did Jesus look like really, as a Jew in 1st-century Judaea? What color was his skin? How tall was he? What did he wear?

These are questions I grappled with as I wrote my book, "What did Jesus look like?" It is a subject that has interested me for a long time. I wanted to see Jesus clearly.

In the Gospels, he is not described, either as tall or short, good-looking or plain, muscular or frail. We are told his age, as "about 30 years of age," but there is nothing that dramatically distinguishes him, at least at first sight.

We "know" what he looked like

We do not notice this omission of any description of Jesus, because we "know" what he looked like thanks to all the images we have.

But the Jesus we recognize so easily is the result of cultural history. The early depictions of Jesus that set the template for the way he continues to be depicted today were based on the image of an enthroned emperor and influenced by presentations of pagan gods.

Photo/J. Paul Getty Museum/Wikimedia Commons

European artists often depicted Christ with Caucasian features, such as "Head of Christ" by Antonio da Correggio, circa 1530.

The long hair and beard are imported specifically from the iconography of the Graeco-Roman world. Some of the oldest surviving depictions of Jesus portray him as essentially a younger version of Jupiter, Neptune or Serapis. As time went on the halo from the sun god Apollo was added to Jesus's head to show his heavenly nature. In early Christian art, he often had the big, curly hair of Dionysus.

The point of these images was never to show Jesus as a man, but to make theological points about who Jesus was as Christ (King, Judge) and divine Son. They have evolved over time to the standard "Jesus" we recognize.

So can we imagine Jesus appropriately in terms of the evidence of the 1st century?

I have wondered about the fact that Jews were known in antiquity as a "nation of philosophers." Was that partly because of their appearance? A male "philosopher" in antiquity was thought to have shortish hair and a rough beard.

The idea is that such men did not bother to visit barbers very often, as they were concentrating on more important things. But their hair would not have been very long.

Photo/Classical Numismatic Group/Wikimedia Creative Commons

Jewish men with the "philosopher" look are portrayed on Roman coins issued by emperors such as Vespasian.

The acceptable style in the Roman world was to be clean shaven and short-haired. As Paul says in his letter to the Corinthian church, "Does not even nature tell you that for a man to have long hair is dishonorable to him?"

The only exception to that for Jews was if you undertook a Nazirite vow. For this vow, you let your hair grow, and didn't drink wine, among other things. John the Baptist was a lifelong Nazirite, dedicated by his parents to God, as the Gospel of Luke indicates, but Jesus was not, because he is often found drinking wine.

There are indeed portrayals of Jewish men with the "philosopher" look on Roman coins issued by the emperors Vespasian and Titus. These show captive Jewish fighters (partially stripped), after they revolted against Rome in the years 66-70 AD. It would be reasonable to think then that at least some Jewish men in Judaea looked like this, even if there is stereotyping.

As for Jesus's body, I've consulted experts on ancient skeletons in Israel. What I have learned is that Judaeans of this time were closest biologically to Iraqi Jews of the contemporary world.

In terms of a color palette then, think dark-brown to black hair, deep brown eyes, olive-brown skin. Jesus would have been a man of Middle Eastern appearance. In terms of height, an average man of this time stood 5 ft. 5 in. tall.

Our overall appearance, though, is not just about our bodies. Much depends on what we do with our bodies. There are some incidental details in the Gospels that tell us what Jesus wore.

Clothing

He wore a tunic, called a chiton in Greek. Often you would have two: an outer one and a thinner inner one, sometimes called a sindon.

An outer tunic in Judaea was invariably made of two pieces of material, one front and one back, joined at the shoulders and sides, with stripes running from shoulder to hem. The inner tunic could be made of one piece.

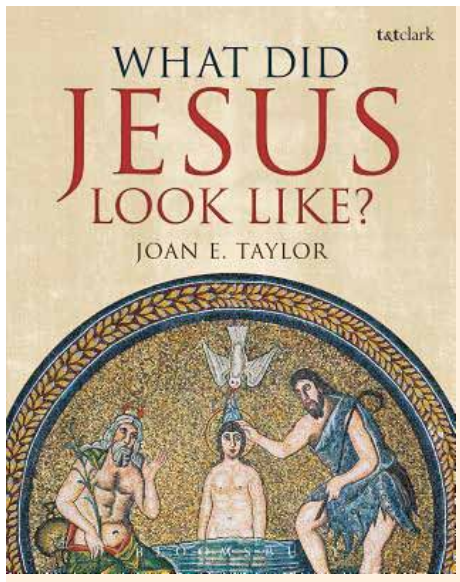
This is a detail of interest to me, because Jesus is said in the Gospel of John to have worn a one-piece tunic. John the Baptist asked people to give away their second tunic. Wouldn't Jesus have done so? In wearing only an inner tunic, he would have been dressed in very basic clothing.

Photo/Joan Taylor

This drawing shows Jesus in a typical short tunic of the times, called a "chiton" in the original Greek text of the gospels.

Men's tunics were usually knee-length. Long tunics (stolai) were worn by women or occasionally by wealthy men in high-honor positions. But Jesus states: "Beware of the scribes who desire to walk in long tunics (stolai), and to have salutations in the marketplaces, and have the most important seats in the synagogues and the places of honor at banquets." Clearly he is not one of them.

Over a tunic, a man would wear a mantle. This was a large piece of woollen material. Power and prestige were indicated by the quality and color: purple and certain types of blue and red.



What Did Jesus Look Like?

By Joan E. Taylor

T&T Clark/Bloomsbury
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Jesus's disciples see his clothing (mantle and tunic) transform into a bright white hue at the Transfiguration, which means these were not colored or bright white as a rule. In terms of the "before" and "after" of a laundry detergent advertisement, Jesus' clothing was the "before."

Thus in the end we see him as a man of Middle Eastern appearance, with scruffy, shortish hair and beard, wearing very basic clothing: a knee-length, thin, one-piece tunic and an undyed mantle.

With a close reading of the Gospels, it turns out that Jesus' appearance coheres perfectly with his teaching. In advocating his disciples give away all but their essentials to the needy, he practiced what he preached. I wonder if we would recognize him, as he really looked, if we met him on the way. ■

Joan E. Taylor is Professor of Christian Origins and Second Temple Judaism, King's College London. This article was first published in the Irish Times.

FAITH AND THE ARTS

Musician Joe Troop releases song, video inspired by Episcopal-supported migrant shelter

By Egan Millard
Episcopal News Service

For folk musician Joe Troop, a 2019 visit to the U.S.-Mexico borderlands opened his eyes to the suffering experienced by migrants trying to enter the United States.

Two years later, he returned to Nogales, a border city straddling Arizona and the Mexican state of Sonora, to volunteer at an Episcopal-supported migrant shelter, an experience that inspired him to write a song.

"Mercy for Migrants" — recently featured in Rolling Stone — bears witness to migrants' suffering and implores listeners to empathize with them.

Troop hopes the song, which features banjo virtuosos Béla Fleck and Abigail Washburn and an accompanying video filmed partly at the shelter, will inspire people to learn about the plight migrants face and support the shelter through donations.

Photo/David Chavez

Joe Troop plays banjo during an outdoor Eucharist service at la Casa de la Misericordia y de Todas las Naciones in Nogales, Mexico.

Photo/via YouTube

Joe Troop performs "Mercy for Mexico" with children in a YouTube video to benefit La Casa de la Misericordia y de Todas las Naciones.

La Casa de la Misericordia y de Todas las Naciones, on the Mexican side of Nogales, provides basic short-term housing, food and other services for migrants through an ecumenical partnership of the Episcopal Diocese of Arizona, the local Evangelical Lutheran Church in America diocese and the Southwest Conference of the United Church of Christ, along with the Anglican Church of Mexico's Diocese of Western Mexico.

"This little migrant shelter is a peaceful link in a very violent chain," Troop told ENS, "and it offers people a moment of gathering their thoughts, processing what they've been through."

Troop, founder of the Grammy-nominated Argentinian-American string band Che Apalache, was first invited to the borderlands by UCC pastor Randy Mayer, whom he met while teaching at an arts camp.

Troop and his bandmates walked with Mayer into the Sonoran Desert, where they were deeply moved by the sight of small crosses marking places where migrants had died, he said. The story Troop was told about one cross in particular stuck with him.

"The remains of a 16-year-old kid were found in the desert, right over the hill from this ostentatious American McMansion kind of place, with a swimming pool with water pumped from the Colorado River, 'Don't Tread on Me' iconography, just this horrible juxtaposition," Troop said.

That image was the initial inspiration for "Mercy for Migrants," Troop explained. He vowed to return, and did earlier this year with a film crew, capturing footage that would be featured in the song's music video.

Troop stayed at La Casa for a month, volunteering and getting to know the migrants. He was struck by the difficult conditions at the shelter: the intense heat, scorpions and unreliable access to clean water. But he was also impressed by the care that the shelter offered the migrants.

The shelter typically hosts migrants for periods of several months to a year as legal partners help them apply for asylum and find sponsors in the U.S. Many are fleeing widespread violence in other Latin American countries or seeking a livelihood for their families.

In July, the U.S. Border Patrol reported almost 200,000 encounters with migrants along the U.S.-Mexico border, the highest monthly total in 21 years.

"It's a very safe space," said the Rev. David Chavez, the Diocese of Arizona's missioner for border ministries. "There's a lot of conviviality."

During the day, the children have school lessons and playtime, while adults perform tasks suited to their abilities and talents, like cooking or gardening. There are medical and psychological services available, and caseworkers from legal aid partners meet with migrants to help them enter the U.S. legally.

Below, while touring in Chicago last September, Joe Troop reconnected with a migrant family he had met at the shelter in Mexico. The family had obtained asylum in the U.S. and came to Troop's show in Chicago.

Photo/courtesy of Joe Troop

"There's something important to a rhythm that restores, because of the chaotic stories that we've heard of the disconnection," Chavez told ENS.

By the time migrants arrive at the borderlands, many have endured long and dangerous journeys already, with their lives threatened by the harsh conditions and violent gangs.

"Migrants are preyed upon," Troop said. "There's tons of human trafficking, there's tons of rape, there's tons of violence, sexual violence, extortion, everything you can imagine under the sun.

"It's really that bad," he added. "No one leaves home unless home is the mouth of the shark. And home for these people is the mouth of a shark. They literally have to leave to survive."

Troop saw how La Casa managed to provide comprehensive services with limited resources and wanted to help by lending his voice.

The video for "Mercy for Migrants" (which is on his new album "Borrowed Time") directs viewers to a page on his website that explains what La Casa does and encourages people to donate to the ecumenical ministry that supports it.

"It's one thing to be moved; it's another thing to open your wallet and give a little bit of money," Troop said.

"When you donate to a lot of organizations, it's not vetted, so you don't know whether they're going to help, but in this case, I can guarantee it. I know everyone involved in this process. … I see the chain of money, and I know what it's going to be used for, and I know how much it's going to mean in people's lives."

Chavez said he expects migrants will be staying longer at La Casa because of the "Remain in Mexico" policy instituted by the Trump administration, which forces asylum-seekers to stay in Mexico while their cases progress through the system.

The Biden administration has tried to end the policy, but in August the Supreme Court prevented it from doing so.

Chavez is grateful that Troop is drawing attention to the strife that migrants face and the humanitarian mission of protecting them.

"As Joe expressed, we're hoping to find that space within the larger world so that this story can [help people] think through the plight but also the presence, the giftedness and embrace of our migrant neighbors," Chavez said. ■

FAITH AND THE ARTS

‘My Name Is Pauli Murray’ brings trailblazing Episcopal saint’s story to a wider audience

By Egan Millard
Episcopal News Service

In the new documentary “My Name Is Pauli Murray,” filmmakers Betsy West and Julie Cohen paint a picture of an unsung trailblazer who remains relatively unknown despite her lasting influence on American society. Episcopalians know her as the first African American woman to be ordained a priest and as a pioneer in the struggles for racial and gender equality. But many may not know about other important aspects of her life, such as her struggle to come to terms with her gender identity in an era long before transgender people were accepted in mainstream society.

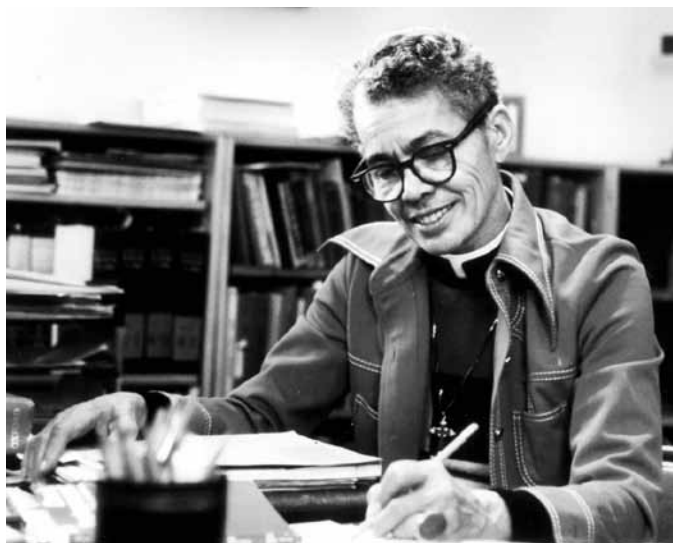
When West and Cohen came across Murray’s story while working on their previous film (“RBG,” the Ruth Bader Ginsburg biopic), they wondered why such a pivotal figure wasn’t a household name.

“‘Why didn’t we know this person?’ was the first question everybody asked,” West told Episcopal News Service, “and could we do something about it?”

The result, “My Name Is Pauli Murray,” premiered online in January at the Sundance Film Festival. Washington National Cathedral screened the documentary for an in-person audience on Sept. 30.

It was also shown online the same day through the Church of the Heavenly Rest in New York, followed by a discussion with West and Presiding Bishop Michael Curry.

The film, which incorporates excerpts from Murray’s diaries and memoirs, shows how she laid the groundwork for future achievementsandfor racial and gender equality. It is available on Amazon Prime.



Photo/Carolina Digital Library and Archives/University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill

The Rev. Pauli Murray, the first Black woman ordained an Episcopal priest, is the subject of a new film.

Murray is celebrated on July 1 in the Episcopal Church’s “Holy Women, Holy Men” calendar of saints, and an increasing number Episcopal leaders — especially Black and LGBTQ+ people — cite her as an influence.

Trinity Church Wall Street and the Diocese of North Carolina are supporting partners of the Pauli Murray Center for History and Social Justice at Murray’s childhood home in Durham, N.C.

Murray was undaunted by the fact that she was often the first and/or only Black woman in the positions she held. Fifteen years before Rosa Parks was arrested for refusing to move out of a whites-only section on a bus, Murray and a friend did the same in Virginia, though their case did not gain momentum the way Parks’ did.

In her legal career, she was among the first to argue the unconstitutionality of “separate but equal” laws, an argument cited 10 years later in Brown v. Board of Education by Supreme Court Justice Thurgood Marshall, who called her book on segregation laws “the bible of the civil rights movement.”

Ginsburg used Murray’s arguments in a brief she wrote — listing her as a co-author — while arguing Reed v. Reed, the 1971 Supreme Court case that banned gender discrimination based on the 14th Amendment’s equal protection clause.

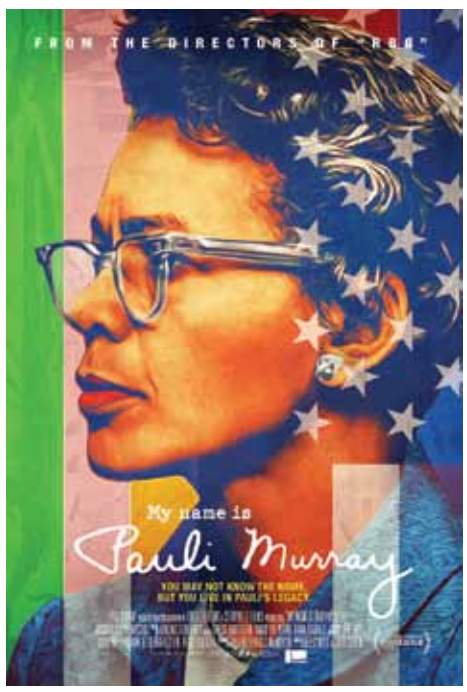
Part of what makes Murray significant today was her commitment to intersectionality: the idea that social justice movements for different groups should support each other rather than work alone. As a Black woman experiencing discrimination based on both her race and her gender — a situation she described as “Jane Crow” — Murray supported the civil rights and feminist movements. But intersectionality was not as common then as it is today, and Murray’s penchant for crossing boundaries is one reason she didn’t achieve wider renown, West said.

“The civil rights movement was not as open to acknowledging the contributions of women as it should have been, and the women’s movement was pretty dense at times about recognizing the needs and the contributions of African American women,” West told ENS. “The concept of Jane Crow really is intersectionalism. It’s a brilliant way to express the double bind that African American women find themselves in, and it was certainly true for Pauli.”

Another factor was Murray’s sexuality and gender identity. In her diaries, Murray described having relationships with women but feeling that she was not a lesbian but a man living in a female body.

This experience would today be classified as gender dysphoria and might have led Murray to live as a transgender man or a nonbinary person, the film suggests.

The film also considers what pronouns should be used to describe Murray, who used she/her pronouns to describe herself, though some today speculate that Murray would have preferred they/them or he/him. In any case, Murray did not have those options in the mid-20th century.



The poster for “My Name Is Pauli Murray.”

“The difficulty of living a somewhat secret life — the problem of feeling so strongly of having a male identity in what everybody says is a female body and not being able to express that — plus having what would be considered lesbian relationships at a time when that was not accepted as well — may have caused Pauli to be a little bit less up front in taking leadership roles,” West speculates. “It didn’t stop Pauli, certainly, from speaking out, having contact with lots of very powerful, important people, but Pauli didn’t stick around to take the credit for a lot of the ideas.”

The Episcopal Church is one place, West said, where Murray received due recognition.

“A lot of people say, ‘Why didn’t I know about Pauli Murray?’ There are a lot of Episcopalians who know about Pauli Murray,” West told ENS. “The church has been one place that has lifted up Pauli’s name.” ■

FILM REVIEW

Pauli Murray in her own words

By Linda Brooks

Today’s world is so full of obstacles — pandemic and politics, war and disasters — it may seem hopeless to think there is way to make the world a better place. But inspiration can be found in a new documentary, “My Name is Pauli Murray.”

As a writer, activist, lawyer, and later an Episcopal minister, Murray did not start out to become a trailblazer in civil rights. She was not seeking fame, but simply wanted to have the same rights that the majority of Americans took for granted, and was determined enough to make that happen. When she encountered an obstacle that blocked her way or a door that was shut, she would push at until it opened or she would find a way around it.

The 90-minute film is as subtle, and bold, as Murray herself. Told in her life’s chronological order, it is filmed in the Ken Burns style of documentary. Quotes visually tapped out on a typewriter and photos that transform into black and white imagery act as chapter dividers in her history.

Her life unfolds through interviews of people that knew her and/or were inspired by her, as well as her own interviews and recordings. She kept everything she ever wrote — dissertations, legal papers, personal letters.

Her life was challenging since her beginnings as an orphan raised by her grandmother in the Jim Crow south. She was a Black woman who struggled with her sense of gender identity in a time when there was little understanding of those feelings.

The stresses of her life are etched on her face in many photos. The only photos where she appears truly content were taken at her ordination. She had come full circle in her life’s quest for acceptance by others and finally accepted herself.

It was not until late in life did she fully realize the impact of her trailblazing activism when writing her memoirs.

“In not a single one of these little campaigns was I victorious. In other words, in each case, I personally failed, but I have lived to see the thesis upon which I was operating vindicated. And what I very often say is that I’ve lived to see my lost causes found,” she wrote.

A tribute to this remarkable woman’s legacy, this film should be shared so her voice can continue to be heard. Eleanor Roosevelt, Ruth Bader Ginsburg and Betty Friedan were inspired by her.

The film is the perfect antidote to our present difficult times and reminds us that our world is not a lost cause. It is worth fighting for. Writing and speaking out can make a difference. If the quiet writings of Pauli Murray could inspire later, more-famous activists, think how loudly a just and determined voice can speak today with our modern communications. This film should be shown in schools to reach those future voices.

“My Name is Pauli Murray” is available on Amazon Prime. ■

NEWS

Movement grows to honor Bishop Barbara Harris with a feast day

By David Paulsen
Episcopal News Service

Dioceses and Episcopal leaders are joining a growing movement to add Bishop Barbara Harris to the Episcopal Church's calendar of Lesser Feasts and Fasts. They are lining up diocesan resolutions that will ask the 80th General Convention to advance her elevation to the status of a church saint at its meeting in July 2022, just two years after her death.

Harris was consecrated in 1989 as bishop suffragan of the Diocese of Massachusetts, becoming the first female bishop in the Anglican Communion. She retired in 2002 but remained an active and prominent figure in the Episcopal Church and a role model for younger generations of Episcopal leaders. She died on March 13, 2020, at age 89.

Photo/David Zadig/Diocese of Massachusetts

Bishop Barbara Harris is seen at her historic consecration service on Feb. 11, 1989.

Harris also is remembered for her support of social justice causes and was part of the first wave of women to be ordained as Episcopal priests.

"Bishop Barbara Harris's life and ministry called out to us to strive for justice and truth as manifested in Scripture in our church and world," Bishop Gayle Harris, the Diocese of Massachusetts' current suffragan, said in an email statement to ENS. "Her voice was an uncompromised clarion call for full inclusion and equality in our corporate life as the Body of Christ from the beginning of her ministry as a lay leader and throughout her episcopacy."

In February 2021, she and Massachusetts Bishop Alan Gates issued an invitation to congregations and dioceses across the church to celebrate the life of the late bishop on the first anniversary of her death. Gates and Harris then asked for brief descriptions of those commemorations, because "such accounts may become part of the testimony for subsequent consideration of churchwide observation."

In November, Massachusetts will vote on a resolution at its diocesan convention endorsing the push to create a churchwide feast day on March 13 honoring Harris, echoing a resolution approved in July by the Union of Black Episcopalians. Other dioceses are considering similar resolutions, including California, Los Angeles, Missouri and New York.

Proponents plan to cite examples of local commemorations in making their case for adding Harris to the liturgical calendar as one of its optional observances, alongside the church's principal feasts and holy days that are listed in the Book of Common Prayer. The church's Standing Commission on Liturgy and Music, or SCLM, has emphasized such a record of "local, organic observance" as part of the "Principles of Revision" for Lesser Feasts and Fasts that the commission submitted to the 80th General Convention for consideration.

"There should be a history of people having celebrations of someone they want on the calendar. It shouldn't be top down," Byron Rushing, vice president of the House of Deputies, told ENS in an interview. He thinks that qualification has been met by the widespread enthusiasm for Harris commemorations since her death.

The pandemic forced church leaders to temporarily shelve plans for large-scale, in-person memorial services honoring Harris. While such memorials are still pending, numerous virtual services were held to mark a year after her death.

Rushing and other advocates of a Harris feast day also are in favor of expediting her inclusion in the church calendar. Although The Episcopal Church's Canons don't specify a timeline for conferring sainthood, individuals traditionally aren't considered until 50 years after their deaths.

"The passage of time permits the testing and flowering of their Christian witness," SCLM says in its guidelines.

Exceptions, however, can be made with approval of General Convention. In 2018, for example the 50-year precedent was waived when the 79th General Convention approved the addition of Thurgood Marshal, Pauli Murray and Florence Li Tim-Oi.

Because the liturgical calendar is part of the Book of Common Prayer, additions must be approved by two successive General Conventions. If approved, a trial-use liturgy for a Harris feast day would return to General Convention for final approval in 2024.

A feast day honoring Harris already has a leading contender for its liturgical propers. Missouri Bishop Deon Johnson wrote a prayer to be used as a collect honoring Harris, and he selected accompanying biblical readings, in consultation with one of Harris' close friends, the Rev. Sandye Wilson. Those propers now are being used in his St. Louis-based diocese and were recommended by the Massachusetts bishops for use there and in other dioceses.

Johnson told ENS that Harris served as his mentor while he was attending General Theological Seminary in New York, and "she's always been a role model figure for me throughout her ministry."

She congratulated him when he was elected bishop in November 2019, but she died before his consecration in June 2020. For that ceremony, Johnson chose to honor her with the propers he had written.

The collect calls on God to "defend us in our own day to make no peace with oppression; that boldly following the example of your servant Barbara Clementine Harris, chosen bishop in your church, we may strive not for ease or fame but gladly toil and walk with you all along our pilgrim journey."

Missouri is drafting its own resolution calling for a churchwide feast day on March 13, which Johnson said is deserved because of "her example in being Christ's hands and heart for social justice and welcome in The Episcopal Church."

Even before being elected bishop, Harris "was an outstanding minister for social justice in the Episcopal Church," Rushing said, citing her work in the civil rights movement, her advocacy for women's equality and her ministry to prison inmates.

"She had a deep history of social justice work," Rushing said. "That of course is one of the reasons why Massachusetts elected her." ■

NEWS

Presiding Bishop among faith leaders in White House meeting on support for families, workers

By David Paulsen
Episcopal News Service

Presiding Bishop Michael Curry joined 11 faith leaders representing the ecumenical advocacy group Circle of Protection during a Sept. 22 visit to the White House to advocate for passage of legislation supporting families, workers and citizens.

Circle of Protection includes leaders from a wide range of denominations, including Episcopal, Roman Catholic, Lutheran, African Methodist Episcopal, Baptist, Disciples of Christ and Quaker.

Curry was one of 20 leaders who signed the group's letter to President Joe Biden and members of Congress specifically urging passage of three bills focused on investing in infrastructure, supporting families and strengthening voting rights.

"If passed and signed into law they would strengthen the physical and social infrastructure of our society, cut family and child poverty more than any time in our lives, and ensure the precious right to vote for all people made in God's image," the Circle of Protection letter says.

The dozen faith leaders who visited the White House met with Melissa Rogers, Josh Dickson and Trey Baker, who run the administration's Office of Faith-Based and Neighborhood Partnerships, and Cedric Richmond, director of the Office of Public Engagement.

"There's a moral high ground that these bills have an opportunity to meet," Curry said after the meeting in a news conference outside the White House. "That moral high ground is to make sure that the people most in need are cared for, and the symbol of our deepest need is our children. … That's we stand for regardless of our religion, and that's what this country stands for at our very best."

Photo/William Nunnally/ELCA

Presiding Bishop Michael Curry joins other faith leaders for a meeting Sept. 22 with White House staff members organized by the ecumenical advocacy group Circle of Protection.

The meeting follows Circle of Protection's show of support for increases in the federal child tax credit and earned income tax credit. The group's letter urges greater spending on housing vouchers "because a place to live for families draws us all together."

"We believe that our nation is called to reduce poverty, expand opportunity, and address racial disparities — and that everyone, especially wealthy individuals and corporations, should pay their fair share," Circle of Protection said in its letter.

"The Bible is clear in its opposition to the concentration of wealth amid neglected human need. Those who have benefited the most should contribute to the common good of society and invest in the most vulnerable."

The Senate passed a $550 billion infrastructure bill in August, but some Democrats in the House have pushed to link its passage to the passage of a broader $3.5 trillion budget plan that would address many of the Biden administration's domestic priorities.

The larger bill contains the support for families backed by the Circle of Protection leaders. Democratic leaders also are rallying party lawmakers behind the For the People Act and the John Lewis Voting Rights Advancement Act. The two voting rights bills, however, face uphill battles in winning over enough Senate Republicans to become law.

As the faith leaders advocate for the bills' passage, their letter also calls on members of their denominations to join in the effort.

"At this moment of historic decision, we are urging the people in our churches and organizations to pay attention to what the President and Congress are doing and be active in advocacy that reflects biblical priorities," the Circle of Protection letter says.

Curry has been vocal recently on the issue of children's health and well-being. He argued in August in an opinion article for USA Today that all adults should get vaccinated against COVID-19 to help protect children under 12 who still are not eligible for the shots.

He also issued a statement in June raising concerns about the U.S. Supreme Court ruling in Fulton v. Philadelphia, a decision that allowed foster care agencies to cite religious beliefs in refusing to place children with LGBTQ+ foster parents.

Curry's Sept. 22 visit with White House staff members builds on the work of the Episcopal Church's Washington-based Office of Government Relations, which regularly advocates in the capital for policies the church supports.

"We are grateful for the chance to meet with senior White House officials to ensure that protections for the most vulnerable are part of the legislative packages that are moving forward," Office of Government Relations Director Rebecca Blachly told ENS in an email. "We regularly work with the Circle of Protection — a broad coalition of Christian traditions — to push for domestic and international anti-poverty programs." ■

Episcopal bishop recalls actor Michael K. Williams' charity work and life in the church

By Egan Millard
Episcopal News Service

When actor Michael K. Williams' funeral was held on Sept. 14, it wasn't in his hometown of New York but at St. Stephen's Episcopal Cathedral in Harrisburg, Pa., which had become a spiritual home for him. Former Central Pennsylvania Bishop Nathan Baxter, a close friend of Williams' and his family, gave the sermon, in which he remembered Williams' generosity and "his affection for the Episcopal Church."

Photo/Jay Williams II/Lynn A. Collins Photography

Michael K. Williams, second to right, accepts the Community Courage Award at the Union of Black Episcopalians' 2015 Annual Conference and Meeting in Baltimore.

Williams, who was found dead at his Brooklyn home on Sept. 6 at age 54, grew up attending St. Augustine's Episcopal Church in East Flatbush before gaining fame and acclaim for his role on HBO's "The Wire."

His nuanced performance as Omar Little, an openly gay Black robber who targeted street-level drug dealers in Baltimore, made him one of the most admired actors on television and led to further high-profile roles on "Boardwalk Empire" and "Lovecraft Country."

Baxter, however, remembered him most for his commitment to helping others. Baxter got to know Williams' mother after she moved to Harrisburg around 2007, he said, and started attending services at the cathedral. Williams would often come to visit and come to church with her. Williams, who struggled with drug addiction throughout his life, found comfort in the church, Baxter said.

"During those years, at times when he was having some real struggles in his life, he would come by my office right next to the cathedral. He would come and we would sit and talk," Baxter said, adding that Williams would be there every Christmas Eve with his family.

Williams was a keynote speaker at the Union of Black Episcopalians' 2015 Annual Conference and Meeting in Baltimore, during which he also received the UBE Community Courage Award for his work with at-risk children.

Baxter recalled how young attendees reacted with awe as Williams talked about his Episcopal upbringing, the struggles he had faced, "and how having a spiritual life can really give you an anchor, even if you stray."

Much of Williams' charitable work was done in Harrisburg, which he had "adopted as his home," Baxter said, including supporting basketball camps for poor children, distributing food to those in need, and speaking at Black Lives Matter events and at conferences on solving social problems.

Describing Williams as "a wounded healer" in his funeral sermon, Baxter said Williams' challenges gave him the empathy and drive to help others.

"Michael was open about his own struggles with addiction and the problems that he faced and mistakes that he made," Baxter said. "The scar that you see on his face that he got in a bar fight in his late teens — he never had that fixed, and a part of it [was because it was] useful in casting him. But another part of it, for Michael, was he thought it was important that people see that life has not always been successful for him."

That empathy was also what made him a great actor, Baxter said. Though his funeral attracted some celebrities, it also drew old friends from Williams' childhood in the housing projects of East Flatbush.

"'We didn't make it out of the projects, but Michael always came back and encouraged us,'" Baxter recalls one friend saying. "'We call him the prophet of the projects because Michael was never an actor playing a character. He was a human being playing a human being.'" ■