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# JOURNAL

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# Omicron surge has churches feeling pandemic whiplash

**By David Paulsen**
***Episcopal News Service***

Like many Episcopal congregations, Church of the Holy Family in Chapel Hill, N.C., was slowly returning to familiar worship routines, including in-person services, after nearly two years of pandemic-fueled cautiousness. And then an unwanted visitor arrived: Omicron.

The omicron variant swept across the United States in December to become the dominant strain of the coronavirus, and in January drove the number of new COVID-19 cases to record highs. The country was averaging more than a half million cases a day, according to data tracked by The New York Times, and though there are indications that infections from this variant aren't as severe, hospitalizations from the surge again strained health care systems.

"I think it spooked a lot of people," the Rev. Clarke French, Holy Family's rector, told Episcopal News Service. The Diocese of North Carolina has recommended moving services online. Holy Family continued with its hybrid model, offering both in-person and livestream options, but attendance at the church dropped.

"In December, I'd say things were really humming along," French said, citing the resumption of Sunday school and youth group meetings. About 200 people attended Sunday services during Advent — about two-thirds of the congregation's pre-pandemic norm — and 250 came for Christmas Eve. Turnout on Jan. 2, however, barely topped 70.

Photo/courtesy of Clarke French

*Worshippers gather outside for a Christmas Eve service at Church of the Holy Family in Chapel Hill, N.C.*

It's enough to give clergy and lay leaders whiplash. In-person worship, which was suspended nearly churchwide in March 2020, had resumed in many congregations by mid-2021.

Vaccinations were ant and now from the even more infectious omicron variant.

The new threats prompted many dioceses and congregations to resume or re-emphasize past public health precautions, like mask-wearing and physical distancing when attending worship services. Since the rise of omicron, some have gone as far as to halt congregational singing or suspend in-person gathering altogether to decrease the risk of virus transmission.

The Diocese of Southern Virginia issued an update to its churches on Jan. 4 that called for suspension of all public worship, though

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Photo/Indianapolis Museum of Art

**Excess vs. piety**

***In "The Battle Between Carnival and Lent" (1633-34), Dutch artist Jan Miense Molenaer depicts a brawl between rowdy peasants, representing Carnival, and a group of monks, representing Lent. Their comical weapons include a peasant with a beer tankard battling a monk armed with fish. This theme also was dramatized by Dutch masters Bosch and Bruegel the Elder.***

# Tribes repatriate remains of children who died at boarding school

**By David Paulsen And Egan Millard**
***Episcopal News Service***

Kirby Metoxen had long heard the stories of Pennsylvania's Carlisle Indian Industrial School from his parents, grandparents and other elders on the Oneida Reservation in Wisconsin, just west of Green Bay.

He knew that attendance at boarding schools such as Carlisle had devastated earlier generations of Native Americans who were separated from their families, sometimes against their will. The U.S. government-backed education system's intent was to force them to assimilate into white culture, at the expense of their own cultural identities.

But it wasn't until a few years ago, thanks to a detour on a road trip, that Metoxen confronted the tragic depths of that history. In the four decades the school was open, from 1879 to 1918, nearly 200 students died and were buried at Carlisle, far from home.

Metoxen, an Oneida tribal councilman and member of Church of the Holy Apostles on the reservation, first visited the former site of the government-run boarding school in 2017, while he and a group of friends were driving through Pennsylvania.

They walked through the cemetery that still exists on the grounds, an experience Metoxen described Jan. 15 during the Episcopal Church's annual Winter Talk gathering of Native American church leaders.

Some of the cemetery's headstones indicated the deceased were Oneida. "I came

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Photo/Lauren Stanley

***Family members lay flowers at the grave of White Thunder at the Old St. James Cemetery near the Rosebud Indian Reservation in South Dakota.***

*—— Due to U.S. Postal Service delays, Episcopal Journal subscribers may have received previous issues, and this issue, later than usual. ——*

## CONVERSATIONS

# The voice message I will never delete

By David Fleenor

I HAVE A VOICE message saved on my phone that I will never delete. I still get choked up when I listen to it. I received it mid-afternoon on April 7, 2020, as I walked from my office in the Spiritual Care Department at Mount Sinai Hospital in New York to the cafeteria.

I was exhausted, frazzled, and hungry. I can still feel the tension I was holding in my body that day, mostly in my face and throat, as I held back tears. New York City was under siege by the coronavirus. Eight hundred people in New York State per day were dying. Twenty-five per cent of the nation's COVID-19 cases were concentrated in the city.

The city was eerily quiet except for the near-constant wail of sirens as ambulances transported the sick and dying to overwhelmed hospitals.

We feared there were not enough hospital beds. A tent was erected in Central Park to create more. A Navy ship with an additional 1,000 beds was docked in the Hudson River with military personnel standing by to provide emergency medical care. It was a strange and stressful time.

I've been a hospital chaplain and educator for over 15 years. My job is to provide spiritual and emotional support to patients and their families during periods of hospitalization. I teach aspiring chaplains how to enter a hospital room, initiate a conversation with a stranger about sacred matters in their lives, and respond with words of comfort tailored to their spiritual and cultural worldviews.

None of this — teaching spiritual care or providing it — is easy under the best of circumstances. I've been through several natural disasters, mostly hurricanes, but never anything like this. I didn't know how or if we would make it through, and I was scared.

My wife, Amy, the director of spiritual care at the same hospital where I work, was battling COVID-19 herself. Our daughter, Dorothy, was with her biological father and his family in rural Massachusetts for an indefinite period.

I was trying to do my job while at the same time serving as the interim director of spiritual care while Amy recuperated. It wasn't clear to us how Amy contracted COVID-19. Amy, Dorothy, and I had taken our annual vacation in February to Istanbul.

We devoured delicious Turkish and Yemeni food and allowed ourselves to be awestruck by the history and beauty of the Hagia Sophia. We had the bizarre experience of a traditional Turkish bath, and we danced the night away on an international dinner cruise down the Bosphorus.

A while after we returned to New York, Dorothy had what seemed like a bad cold. Amy hugged and kissed her like any good mom would do to help her feel better. And like most stepdads, I kept my distance, trying to keep from catching whatever she had. I didn't see any sense in all of us getting sick. But that's what happened.

Soon, Amy had similar symptoms as Dorothy. She called Employee Health and was advised to quarantine, hydrate, and rest. Covid tests were scarce at that time, and the assumption was that if you had symptoms, then you probably had COVID-19.

Dorothy recovered and went to Massachusetts. Meanwhile, Amy and I tried to keep our distance from one another, which only lasted about four hours.

Public health officials advised anyone with symptoms to go to separate parts of their homes and use separate bathrooms. All of that assumes you live in a large enough home to create distance from each other, which was laughable in our — and most New Yorkers' — situation.

The average NYC apartment is roughly 800 square feet with one bathroom. How were we going to socially distance? But we tried. Amy went to the bedroom, and I stayed in the living room. After about an hour we were both bored and missed each other. We got creative and tried to use our smart speakers' "drop-in" feature to talk to each other from separate rooms. Before long, we gave up and decided to share the living room while wearing masks and sitting six feet apart. None of it worked, and I soon got sick, too.

> "Some people cover their sadness with anger while others cover their anger with sadness."

My bout with Covid was relatively short, at least in comparison to my wife's. We both continued to work from home as much as we were physically able. I soon returned to work onsite and found myself angry. Every little thing annoyed me.

A teacher once told me that some people cover their sadness with anger while others cover their anger with sadness. I knew in which group I belonged. I was grieving.

It was in that context that I received the voice message. As I walked through the hospital and the phone rang, I lamented how everything had changed. Workers had constructed new, makeshift hospital rooms in the atrium.

I was stunned out of my thoughts when I felt my phone buzz. I pulled it out of my pocket, saw my friend's name, and wanted to answer but just didn't have it in me. With that realization, tears began to well up behind my eyes. I let it go to voicemail and continued walking angrily, tearfully to my destination.

A couple of hours later, I pulled out my phone and saw I had a voice message to listen to from my friend in Alabama. I had met Malcolm Marler two decades ago when I was training to be a hospital chaplain. Already a chaplain himself, he was someone I looked up to because of his boundless compassion and creativity.

One of America's first chaplains to serve in an outpatient clinic, Malcolm's ministry at that time was with Alabamans with HIV/AIDs. Realizing how few patients he could reasonably care for on his own, he developed a support team program focused on providing spiritual, emotional, and practical support to patients who needed it. The program caught on, and soon he was a nationally sought-after speaker.

Years later, he would become the director of spiritual care at Alabama's top hospital. I've looked up to Malcolm for a long time and consider him a professional role model and a friend. I pressed play and heard these words:

"Hey David, it's Malcolm and I'm just giving you a call to let you know I am thinking about you, my friend. A lot. You and Amy both. I just wanted you to know that. If you do not have time to return this call, I understand it and it's not a problem.

"Just wanted you to know you're loved and that you're not alone ... and I just want to give you some encouragement. Take good care. Bye-bye."

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## FROM THE EDITOR'S DESK

IN SOME YEARS, Black History Month coincides with a slice of Lent, if Ash Wednesday is early and falls in February. This year, Ash Wednesday is March 2, but the proximity of the month set aside to celebrate African-American achievement, along with the season of repentance, inspires a range of reflection.

"The imposition of ashes at Lent's beginning asks us for a radical realism about ourselves," wrote Robert L. Foster, a lecturer in religion at the University of Georgia, in The Christian Century under the title "Lent as a white Christian during Black History Month."

Speaking as another white Christian, it should be fairly obvious that repentance is only the starting gate for white people who might have even the smallest amount of awareness of how unfairly America has treated its black citizens.

It would be equally wrong, however, to regard black people as only victims, since Black History Month specifically exists to hold up the many, many times, black women and men persevered against longer odds than they deserved.

The month also tells stories that were too-often overlooked when history was exclusively written by white people, including the long story of African-American participation in the church.

The Episcopal Church's Sacred Ground program — which was held at my local church — was aimed at telling the full story of America's black, Asian, native, white racial history. Part of the mission was to break through white denial such as "my people didn't come over until the 1920s so I have no relationship with slavery," to open eyes to the ongoing legacy of white privilege.

I can't even make such an excuse as I'm a Mayflower descendant. "My people" arrived in 1620, but the first enslaved people in Virginia arrived in 1619. How different were the two paths followed by these two sets of North Americans and their generations of offspring!

It's certainly worthy of Lenten meditation and repentance to consider the vastly unequal opportunities and capacity for wealth generation that have benefited me, and to think about what practical actions I might take in response, now that I'm gaining a sense of the whole story. ■

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NEWS

# Gay, lesbian bishops meet with archbishop of Canterbury ahead of Lambeth Conference

**By David Paulsen**
***Episcopal News Service***

Four gay and lesbian Episcopal bishops, along with two from Anglican dioceses in Canada and Wales, spoke with Archbishop of Canterbury Justin Welby on Jan. 11 in what they described afterward as "a very Christ-centered meeting," as bishops across the global Anglican Communion prepare to attend the Lambeth Conference in late July and early August.

After the bishops' Zoom meeting with Welby, Missouri Bishop Deon Johnson posted a screengrab of the meeting to his Facebook page. The participating bishops declined to comment further when Episcopal News Service inquired with their dioceses. The Diocese of Missouri later told ENS that the LGBTQ bishops had initiated the meeting.

The archbishop of Canterbury convenes the Lambeth Conference of bishops about every 10 years.

Tensions over LGBTQ bishops' attendance at this year's conference has focused on Welby's decision to invite those bishops but not their spouses. Within the Episcopal Church, criticism of that decision came to a head at the September 2019 meeting of the House of Bishops, which issued a message of solidarity with the bishops and their excluded spouses.

The controversy was not addressed the Facebook post by Johnson. He was joined in the meeting by New York Assistant Bishop Mary Glasspool, Maine Bishop Thomas Brown and Michigan Bishop Bonnie Perry. Bishop Kevin Robertson of Canada's Diocese of Toronto and Bishop Cherry Vann of Wales' Diocese of Monmouth also participated.


***Several LGBTQ bishops within the Anglican Communion meet with Archbishop of Canterbury Justin Welby to discuss the 2022 Lambeth Conference.***

"On Tuesday, January 11, 2022, some of the LGBTQ Bishops within the Anglican Communion had a very Christ-centered meeting with the Archbishop of Canterbury, the Most Reverend Justin Welby, which was very fruitful as we make our way towards the Lambeth Conference 2022," Johnson's post said. "In our meeting, we had an opportunity to hear and share stories that allow us to continue to walk in love. We are grateful to the Archbishop and his staff for their time and compassionate listening."

In the screengrab of the meeting, Welby was joined by Bishop Anthony Poggo, his adviser on Anglican Communion affairs, and Philippa Park, the Anglican Communion program coordinator.

ENS sought a comment from Welby but had not received a response from his communications team by the time this story was posted.

The Lambeth Conference, originally scheduled for 2020, was postponed to this year because of the coronavirus pandemic. It now is scheduled for July 27 to Aug. 8 in England at the University of Kent, Canterbury Cathedral and Lambeth Palace. Its stated purpose is to bring together bishops from the 41 Anglican provinces to discuss "church and world affairs and the global mission of the Anglican Communion for the decade ahead."

In 2008, at the last Lambeth Conference, then-New Hampshire Bishop Gene Robinson, the first openly gay and partnered bishop in the Anglican Communion, was denied an invitation by then-Archbishop of Canterbury Rowan Williams.

Amid planning for the upcoming Lambeth Conference, news broke in early 2019 that Welby had excluded same-sex spouses in his invitations to all bishops. He later defended the decision by saying he saw it as a way to balance the divisions in the communion. Some of the more conservative Anglican provinces maintain objections to The Episcopal Church's widespread acceptance of LGBTQ clergy and same-sex marriage.

The Episcopal Church House of Bishops issued an initial statement in March 2019, saying it was "aggrieved and distressed" by Welby's decision, though a majority of the bishops still planned to attend the Lambeth Conference. The bishops' follow-up message in September 2019 said each will engage in "faithful soul-searching" on how they will respond. ■

## AROUND THE CHURCH

# Seminary of the Southwest to develop program to address racial trauma

The Seminary of the Southwest, an Episcopal seminary located in Austin, Texas, received a grant from the Moody Foundation to develop a continuing education program designed for equipping mental health providers and clergy with professional counseling strategies that address the devastating impact of racial trauma among clients and congregations they serve.

The first of its kind in Central Texas, the Racial Trauma Initiative will seek to address a mental health crisis arising from compounding factors of social injustice, televised police brutality, and the disproportionate impact of COVID on Black and Brown communities. The $135,000 grant will cover the scope of development and implementation of the program through September of 2023.

"Seminary of the Southwest is uniquely positioned to create resources for those in vocations of healing who must confront these difficult issues on a regular basis," said Dean Cynthia Briggs Kittredge, dean and president. "Our blended faculty of counselors, scholars, and priests enables us to create a curriculum of continuing education that integrates science and faith to address the ongoing destructive issue of racial trauma."

Dr. Marlon Johnson, assistant professor in counselor education, will lead the project. His research centers on understanding the experiences of recruiting African American men into counseling programs, the intersectionality between LGBTQ identity and faith orientation, and continuing multicultural counselor education.

*Johnson*

"The Racial Trauma Initiative is an exciting new opportunity for our seminary to connect to the Central Texas region," said Johnson, "As we endeavor to unearth the history of racial trauma and injustice in our area, this program will support the healers within our community to learn and engage personally and professionally with Austin's communities of color. Though I have been charged to lead this work at our institution, I am excited to collaborate with the leaders and community members who engage in the healing of racism and discrimination across the county and state."

The goal of the program is to ease the impact of racial trauma on African American children and families in Central Texas by increasing the number of providers in Central Texas trained in evidence-based best practices.

It will provide new and effective methods for assessing and treating racial trauma for African American children and families in the era of COVID-19, as well as providing inexpensive, specialized, and virtual training on racial trauma and racial healing for mental health counselors and clergy to become certified in racial trauma/healing.

Johnson, with support from the Clinical Mental Health Counseling program faculty and staff, will develop the curriculum throughout the spring of 2022 with a goal of beginning to present the continuing education resources by fall of 2022. The resources will be included in continuing education opportunities that Southwest presents throughout the year and on a regular basis.

— Seminary of the Southwest

## Prior to serve as assisting bishop in Alabama

Bishop Brian N. Prior has been appointed assisting bishop in the Diocese of Alabama, announced Alabama Bishop Glenda Curry in a Jan. 13 news release.

*Prior*

Prior, who previously served as diocesan bishop of the Episcopal Church in Minnesota from 2010-20, began his duties, which will include making visitations, working with individual parishes, and providing leadership development across the diocese, on Jan. 1. He also will play a role in planning for Camp McDowell's future and the search for its next executive director.

Prior will serve the diocese part time and will continue his work as chair of the program committee for the House of Bishops and as a consultant for the Episcopal Church Foundation.

He also serves on a limited basis as an assisting bishop in the Diocese of Olympia, as vice-chair of the Church Pension Group Board of Trustees, chair of the Episcopal Camp and Conference Center's Visionary & Advocacy Council, and as a board member of the Absalom Jones Center for Racial Healing.

— Diocese of Alabama

## Church suspends in-person meetings amid omicron surge

The executive leadership team of the Episcopal Church announced on Jan. 18 that all in-person meetings sponsored by the Domestic and Foreign Missionary Society (the corporate name for the Episcopal Church) would be suspended through Feb. 28 due to the impact of the omicron COVID-19 variant throughout the globe and on the healthcare system particularly.

Staff travel was also suspended, with exceptions allowed for essential purposes only, approved by an officer or canon and after consultation with the leadership team.

— Episcopal Church Public Affairs Office

## OBITUARY

# Charles V. Willie, first African American House of Deputies vice president, dies at 94

Charles Vert Willie, a sociologist and desegregation leader who served as the first African American vice president of the Episcopal Church House of Deputies, died Jan. 11 at age 94.

Willie, who also supported the ordination of the first female Episcopal priests, was most recently a resident of Boston.

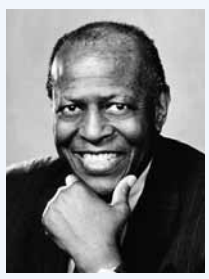
House of Deputies President the Rev. Gay Clark Jennings remembered Willie as "a giant in the Episcopal Church's long and incomplete journey toward justice," in a statement posted on the House of Deputies website.

Born in Dallas, Willie was a grandson of enslaved people. He earned a B.A. in 1948 from Morehouse College, where his class included fellow sociology major Martin Luther King Jr.

After earning a master's degree at Atlanta University in 1949, Willie was awarded a doctorate in sociology in 1957 from Syracuse University's Maxwell School of Citizenship and Public Affairs.

In 1968, he was elected to the Episcopal Church's Executive Council, and was elected vice president of the House of Deputies in 1973. He was the first African American elected to this office.

"I presented Dr. Willie with the House of Deputies Medal for his distinguished service to the church at the 78th General Convention in Salt Lake City, and the house responded with a standing ovation that was much deserved and too-long delayed," Jennings recalled in her statement. "He will not be forgotten."



*Willie*

He preached the sermon for the ordination of the first female Episcopal priests at the Church of the Advocate in Philadelphia on July 29, 1974. Although Willie anticipated becoming the first Black president of the House of Deputies, he resigned his position in protest when the House of Bishops refused to recognize the ordination of women.

Willie taught at Syracuse University from 1950 to 1974, rising to chair of the sociology department and eventually vice president for student affairs. He was Syracuse's first Black tenured faculty member.

Willie took a leave of absence from Syracuse at the invitation of Robert F. Kennedy to direct the research arm of Washington Action for Youth, a crime prevention and youth intervention program sponsored by President John F. Kennedy's Committee on Juvenile Delinquency and Youth Crime.

Willie returned to Syracuse in the mid-1960s, during which time he twice brought King to speak at the university. In 1966-67, Willie took another leave from Syracuse at the invitation of Harvard Medical School, where he taught and conducted research in its department of psychiatry as part of the Laboratory of Community Psychiatry, and at Episcopal Divinity School.

In 1974, Willie left Syracuse to accept a tenured position as professor of education and urban studies at Harvard University's Graduate School of Education.

When Willie and his family moved to Massachusetts in the early 1970s, Boston was wracked by

tension and violence over white residents' resistance to school desegregation. The judge overseeing the case asked Willie to serve as one of four court-appointed masters to bring Boston's landmark school desegregation case to a just conclusion.

Several years later, Boston Mayor Raymond Flynn, a former student of Willie's, invited him to develop a desegregation plan for the city. The plan, which Willie co-created with Michael Alves, became known as "Controlled Choice" and was used in Boston and Cambridge for decades.

Subsequently, President Jimmy Carter appointed Willie to the President's Commission on Mental Health. An applied sociologist, Willie not only taught and conducted research but also applied what he learned in his work with others.

He strove to bring the ideals of justice, equity, empathy, and reconciliation to every conflict he faced. He uncovered the best in everyone, understanding that no matter how intransigent the conflict, resolution required neither the annihilation nor the humiliation of opposing sides.

Following those principles allowed Willie to build strong professional and personal bonds; he leaves behind a broad and diverse community of those who were touched by his grace.

He is survived by his wife of 59 years, Mary Sue (Conklin) Willie, daughter Sarah Willie-LeBreton, son Martin Willie and son James Willie.

— Episcopal News Service

# AROUND THE CHURCH

## Curry invites gifts to Absalom Jones Fund for Episcopal HBCUs

Episcopal Church Presiding Bishop Michael Curry invites people of all backgrounds and faiths to support the hope-filled, life-impacting work of two historically Black institutions of higher education through donations and dedicated offerings on the Feast of Absalom Jones — the first Black priest ordained by the church — observed Feb. 13.

*Jones*

Saint Augustine's University in Raleigh, N.C., and Voorhees College in Denmark, S.C., were founded after the Civil War to create educational opportunities for formerly enslaved people. They provide a liberal arts education to thousands of students, as well as offer robust campus ministries to help form young adults as followers of Jesus and his way of love.

"Historically Black colleges and universities (HBCUs) are essential engines of justice, equity, and social mobility," Curry said. "They provide high-quality education to students whose backgrounds and experiences may not have prepared them well for college success. They nurture talent that may have otherwise been discouraged by obstacles."

Donations to the HBCUs (divided equally between the two) help support scholarships and financial aid for students in need as well as funding for quality facilities, faculty recruitment and retention, and the development of religious life on campus.

Voorhees and Saint Augustine's are seeking to build strong programs in STEM fields and the health sciences as they overcome the financial pressures created by COVID-19.

Supporting HBCUs is an investment in the ministry of reconciliation and building a better future for all, Curry said. "As much as we give to these institutions, they give back to our world many times over," he said.

— Office of Public Affairs

## Black History Month event focuses on black students

Dean Kelly Brown Douglas in conversation with Bishop Nathan Baxter discusses "The Gift of Black Students to Graduate Theological Education" in a Black History Month virtual event Feb. 17 at 4 p.m. EST.

To receive the Zoom link, register at **https://moravian.edu/baxter-forum** by Monday, Feb. 14.

*Douglas*

Douglas is the Dean of the Episcopal Divinity School at Union Theological Seminary in New York where she is the Bill and Judith Moyers Chair of Theology. She also serves as dean of Washington National Cathedral.

Baxter, retired bishop of the Central Pennsylvania Episcopal Diocese, is senior adjunct professor at Lancaster Theological Seminary and former dean of Washington National Cathedral.

The free event is sponsored by the Rt. Rev. Nathan D. Baxter Fund for African American Studies at Lancaster Theological Seminary.

— Lancaster Theological Seminary

## Church of England plans for a more diverse House of Bishops

A Church of England bishops' committee has agreed upon a plan aimed at making church leadership more diverse.

The plan calls for at least 10 clergy of United Kingdom minority ethnic or "global majority heritage" backgrounds to participate in House of Bishops' meetings, either as existing members or new "participant observers."

The House of Bishops — which is both part of the General Synod and a body in its own right — is made up of the most senior bishops in the church, including all diocesan bishops and some elected suffragans.

At present there are four racial/ethnic minority bishops in the group out of 53 places. Under the plan, the House will ensure that at least 10 can be present, either as members as of right; as suffragan bishops appointed as participant observers, or as priests elected as participant observers.

In addition to the four existing minority members of the House, the plan will involve three further suffragans (two of whom were recently nominated as bishops) being invited to join the House as participant observers. There would also be three priests elected by serving minority clergy. It is expected that the process will be complete by May.

The idea of participant observers in the House of Bishops was recommended in "From Lament to Action," the report of the Archbishops' Anti-Racism Taskforce, published last year.

— The Church of England

# NEWS

**REPATRIATION continued from page 1**

across the name Jemima Metoxen, and that's my last name," he said in his Winter Talk presentation. "It kind of took me aback a little bit."

The name on another headstone was Sophia Coulon, a common Oneida last name. Further along was the grave of Ophelia Powless. "My grandmother is a Powless," Metoxen said.

Overcome with emotion, Metoxen struggled to continue his presentation. "I think it affected me, walking through that cemetery, that this is our own," he said. "These children didn't ask to be here. How come nobody came to get these kids? It's forever changed me."

Photo/Oneida Nation

***Kirby Metoxen is a member of Church of the Holy Apostles and a tribal councilman in the Oneida Nation just west of Green Bay, Wis.***

Ophelia Powless died in 1891 of pneumonia, and Jemima Metoxen died in 1904 of meningitis, according to school records. Both were 16. Sophia Coulon, 18, died in 1893 of tuberculosis. In 2019, all three were returned home. Their remains were disinterred from Pennsylvania and brought to the Oneida Reservation as part of an ongoing federal repatriation effort.

Photo/Rosebud Sioux Tribe via Facebook

***A Facebook page dedicated to the repatriation of the remains of Rosebud Sioux children from the school posted this photo with this comment: "Our relatives Ernest, Maud, Lucy, Friend, Warren, Alvan, Dora, Dennis, and Rose are leaving the Carlisle Barracks after 142 years. We are bringing them home."***

A funeral service for the three girls was held in June 2019 at Holy Apostles. Powless is now buried at the church's cemetery, while Oneida tribal burial grounds hold the graves of the other two girls.

"It was done right for our children, here at Oneida," Metoxen said.

Discussions of the Oneida repatriation and a parallel repatriation effort on the Rosebud Sioux Reservation in South Dakota formed the emotional core of the weekend's Winter Talk.

Holy Apostles Episcopal Church hosted the two-day conference, which had been planned as an in-person meeting but was moved online because of the latest surge in COVID-19 cases.

The wide-ranging sessions on Jan. 15 and 16 included Native American music, a church-produced documentary about the colonial-era Doctrine of Discovery and a presentation on Indigenous theological education.

The Rev. Bradley Hauff, the Episcopal Church's missioner for Indigenous ministries, shared highlights from the past year, and Indigenous deputies reviewed some of the issues they hope to raise in July at the church's 80th General Convention in Baltimore.

Presiding Bishop Michael Curry and the Rev. Gay Clark Jennings, president of the House of Deputies, have pledged to "make right relationships with our Indigenous siblings an important focus" of General Convention's upcoming work.

In their joint statement last year, they acknowledged church's past complicity in the federal boarding school system. Many schools were run by Christian denominations, and at least nine were thought to have Episcopal Church connections. The dearth of churchwide records has made it difficult to fully account for the church's role.

Curry and Jennings joined other attendees at the online Winter Talk conference and thanked the presenters on Jan. 15. "President Jennings and I are here not to speak, but to hear and to learn and to humbly be present with you," Curry said.

Some Indigenous boarding schools remain open today, though they no longer operate under former federal policies of forced assimilation. The U.S. Department of Interior announced in June 2021 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 former Carlisle school site is now part of the Army War College campus. Kirby Metoxen and other tribal and church leaders worked with the U.S. Army to arrange for the repatriation of the Oneida girls' remains from the Carlisle cemetery, and other tribes with children buried there have pursued similar efforts, with costs covered by the Army.

The Rev. Rodger Patience, vicar at Holy Apostles, traveled to Carlisle in 2019 with Metoxen and some of the girls' relatives to consult with the forensics experts who oversaw the disinterment and examination of the remains.

Photo/Rodger Patience

***Oneida family members traveled in 2019 to the cemetery at the former Carlisle Indian School in Pennsylvania to claim the remains of three students who were buried there more than 100 years ago.***

Though not directly related to the girls, Metoxon said he was overwhelmed by emotion at seeing the bones belonging to the girls. "It was like my own child," he said. "And the thought they were all by themselves, I couldn't get over thinking of a young child getting ready to go to the next world, alone, with no family."

Patience, the Holy Apostles vicar, said it is likely but not certain that Ophelia and her family were members of the church. In 2021, the congregation unveiled a new headstone for Ophelia's grave in the church cemetery. It identifies her as the daughter of Peter and Sarah and says she "arrived home June 30, 2019."

Jennings said she was deeply moved by Metoxen's story, adding that it evoked memories of her own grief over the death of her daughter 11 years ago.

"In the deepest times of grief, early on, I would just say 'come back!'" Jennings recalled. "In my grief, 'Come back to me!' And so, I imagine Peter and Sarah Powless [saying], 'Please come back! Come back, Ophelia!' And you brought her back — her parents' deepest desire, to have her back."

The Rev. Lauren Stanley, canon to the ordinary in the Diocese of South Dakota, presented information at Winter Talk about the efforts to repatriate students' remains to the Rosebud Sioux Reservation.

The Rosebud effort began when teenagers from the tribe's Sicangu Youth Council visited Carlisle during a 2015 trip to attend a Washington, D.C., summit for Indigenous youth — a trip for which the Rosebud Episcopal Mission had donated funds.


Photo/Rodger Patience

***Ophelia Powless, who died in 1891 at age 16 in Carlisle, Pa., is now buried in the cemetery at Church of the Holy Apostles on the Oneida Reservation in Wisconsin.***

When they saw the graves on the grounds of the former school, "they recognized [the names of] a bunch of their relatives — of children who died there," Stanley told Episcopal News Service in a previous interview.

"They said, 'We need to bring these children home.' They were very upset, very distraught to see these gravesites, including a bunch that are marked 'unknown,' which is just a ridiculous travesty."

The teens asked the Rosebud Sioux Tribal Council to help bring the remains back to Lakota land. In May 2016, the tribe hosted a meeting with lawyers from the Army, during which Stanley and others testified in support of repatriation and the Army agreed to fund the exhumation of the remains.

The Army transferred the remains of nine children to the tribe in a ceremony at Carlisle in July 2021. Tribal members drove the remains over 1,400 miles to the Rosebud reservation in a caravan that grew to about 400 vehicles, with people lining roadsides to salute them.

Six of the children were buried in the Rosebud Sioux Tribe Veterans Cemetery on July 17. Three received private family burials, including one — Ernest Knocks Off (White Thunder) — who was buried in the Old St. James Episcopal Cemetery. The family, who are Episcopalians, invited Stanley to offer prayers at the burial.

Jennings said such stories underscore the need for the church to face the truth of its own historic complicity in the boarding school system.

"I know some of the history but hearing it in the way that all of you presented it today hits in a deeper level, and to come to grips with our own church's participation in that will take perseverance and tenacity on our part," Jennings said. "And I think I can speak for the presiding bishop that both of us are deeply, deeply committed to doing what needs to be done." ■

# NEWS

**OMICRON continued from page 1**

individual parishes can request exemptions. "As the pace of coronavirus transmission accelerates, driven by the omicron and delta variants, safeguarding public health and mitigating the risk of COVID transmission becomes a Christian imperative," the diocese said.

In the Diocese of Central New York, Bishop DeDe Duncan-Probe has urged all congregations to arrange for hybrid worship options, and she is suspending her scheduled pastoral visitations for January in response to the omicron spike.

Everyone is required to wear masks at all in-person church gatherings, though "parish leaders exercise local discretion in terms of holding in-person services and other events," the Rev. Meredith Kadet Sanderson, communications director, told ENS.

Other dioceses issued updates last month encouraging renewed vigilance to reduce virus transmission as congregations prepared for Christmas services.

"We urge in the strongest possible terms renewed attention and strict adherence to the most recent COVID guidelines," Massachusetts Bishop Alan Gates and Bishop Suffragan Gayle Harris said. "This includes mandatory maskwearing by all worshippers; physical distancing between individuals or family units; restrictions on administration of the sacrament; and extreme caution at any fellowship gathering."

The Diocese of Louisiana chose to reinstate a mask mandate at its worship services. "Once again we find ourselves at a crossroad. COVID cases are climbing at dangerous rates," Louisiana Bishop Morris Thompson said in a message to his New Orleans-based diocese before Christmas.

Some Episcopal congregations have responded by canceling in-person services. St. Stephen's Episcopal Church in Smith's Station, Ala., announced on its Facebook page that there would be no worship at the church on Jan. 2, and alternatives are under consideration for the rest of the month.

"As your priest, if I am going to err, I want to do so on the side of caution," said the Rev. Larry Williams, the church's rector.

Another congregation, St. Paul's Episcopal Church in Kankakee, Ill., canceled its Jan. 2 services because of COVID-19 exposure at its Christmas weekend services. "This decision has come after much reflection and consultation with other church leaders. Please understand that this is not permanent, it is only for this Sunday," the rector, the Rev. Shane Spellmeyer, said in a Facebook update.

Emmanuel Episcopal Church in Orlando, Fla., continued to worship in person but suspended wine distribution and limited Holy Eucharist to the bread alone.

St. Stephen's Episcopal Church in Houston kept in-person attendance to no more than 30 people.

Abingdon Episcopal Church in White Marsh, Va., put its coffee hour and adult formation meetings on hold "until the rate of infections gets under control."

"People continue to die from this disease, and many hospital systems are again overwhelmed by the number of cases," Virginia Bishop Suffragan Susan Goff said in a Dec. 30 letter to the diocese. "The most vulnerable among us are more vulnerable than ever as people let down their guard out of exhaustion or false assumptions. Our responsibilities for each other in this human family remain, and the small sacrifices we make for the sake of others are blessed by God."

Last month, when Washington, D.C., was recording some of the highest rates of infection in the country, Washington National Cathedral made a last-minute decision to move its Christmas service all online, and closed its building to worshippers and visitors until Jan. 9. More than 4,000 people watched the online Jan. 2 service, according to the cathedral.

"Time and time again, this pandemic has required us to pivot quickly in order to keep our people safe, and the spike in omicron infections in D.C. forced us to change our Christmas plans in less than 24 hours," Dean Randy Hollerith told ENS in an emailed statement. "Yet despite the whiplash, this pandemic has taught us how to be nimble and responsive, and enabled us to extend our ministry far beyond our walls."

Photo/Courtesy Church of the Good Shepherd

***Congregants wear masks during a service at Church of the Good Shepherd, Ogden, Utah.***

Online worship has become a mainstay of many congregations, even when pandemic conditions have improved.

"We encourage all our churches to offer some form of online worship every Sunday, so that individuals always have the option of worshipping from home if they don't want to take the risk of an in-person gathering, or if they feel unwell and need to isolate," Nina Nicholson, communications director of the Diocese of Newark, told ENS.

Newark's continuing guidelines for congregations are synced with the public health risk level from COVID-19 in each county in its northern New Jersey diocese. All counties in the diocese are now classified as "severe risk," which has prompted some congregations to suspend in-person worship and shift online.

The Diocese of Maryland put heightened precautions in place when the delta variant began driving case counts higher. Churches continue to emphasize mask mandates and hold coffee hours without food or beverages. "We're not shutting down indoor worship, because we trust mask use and our high vaccination rate," the Rev. Scott Slater, Maryland's canon to the ordinary, told ENS this week.

The Diocese of Iowa issued updated regathering guidance in December in preparation for Christmas and the consecration of Bishop Betsey Monnot on Dec. 18. The consecration was attended by more than 400 people in a space large enough for 2,800, and the diocese has no evidence of COVID transmission tied to the gathering. the Rev. Meg Wagner, the diocese's communications missioner, told ENS.

Iowa's COVID-19 trends haven't been as alarming as most other states' outbreaks during the omicron surge, but residents and congregations are on guard, Wagner said. The diocese allows indoor worship with mandates masks and physical distancing, and singing is allowed if it meets certain conditions.

"We expect a disruptive wave of COVID infections in Iowa in January and that business operations across the state are likely to be interrupted due to staffing shortages and absences," she said.

Holy Family, the Episcopal congregation in Chapel Hill, was eager to resume in-person worship as soon as it could back in 2020, said French, the rector. It began holding outdoor services that summer, and though it later moved services back into the church, Holy Family returned to an outdoor service last month for Christmas eve, to accommodate a larger crowd.

Even though he expects omicron to dampen turnout this month, he has been encouraged by the number of new worshippers who have found the church during the pandemic. They and the longtime parishioners who have returned to services understand the risks, French said.

"They still need to gather," he said. "They still need to have the Eucharist." ■

**VOICE MESSAGE continued from page 2**

The voice message ended, and I wept. Those were precisely the words I needed to hear that day. He didn't burden me with a request. He didn't want anything. He just called to offer a word of encouragement, and it made all the difference. As I wept, I could feel weeks of fear, anguish, and rage release from my body.

This experience reminded me of an essential life lesson: that small acts of kindness make a huge difference. I don't know how long it took Malcolm to decide to call me. I just know that that voice message was 37 seconds long. In not even one minute, he lifted my spirits and helped me drop some of my burdens.

It is unclear when this pandemic will end, if ever. We seem to go through periods of near-normalcy followed by spikes and surges that send us back to our isolation and grief. Whether it abates or not, there will always be another tragedy: a new cancer diagnosis, a natural disaster, a senseless act of violence, or a divorce. In all these cases, there will always be people who need to hear a word of encouragement.

If you have an extra 37 seconds to spare, call someone today. If they don't pick up, leave a message. Let them know you are thinking of them, that they are loved and not alone. And that they don't even need to call you back. ■

*The Rev. David Fleenor is a priest in the Diocese of New York, director of education for the Center for Spirituality and Health at Mount Sinai Health System and assistant professor of medical education at the Icahn School of Medicine. This article originally appeared in the Episcopal New Yorker.*

# LENT RESOURCES

*Ash Wednesday, March 2, marks the beginning of Lent, the season of repentance and reflection that leads to Easter on April 17. Here is a selection of resources intended to enrich congregational or individual prayer and meditation during Lent.*

## Virginia Theological Seminary

### Lenten planning

VTS offers "An Asynchronous Lent Planning Workshop" online. The Rev. Mark Jefferson, assistant professor of homiletics at Virginia Theological Seminary, provides a reflection on the season of Lent to start the workshop.

*Jefferson*

*Allred*

Sarah Bentley Allred, editor of Building Faith, facilitates the rest of the workshop in which participants receive a planning template to use during the session and a list of resources that might be helpful. We hope this space will inspire intentional, creative planning for Lent 2022 in your context.

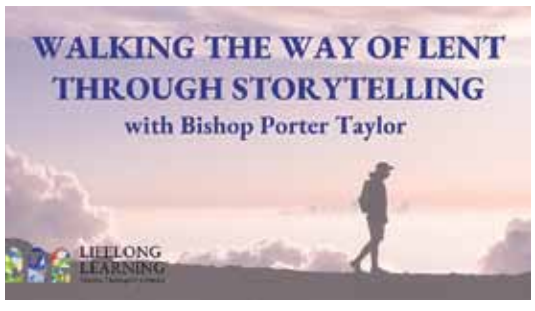
An offered Lent Planning Document helps users to reflect on the season of Lent in their specific context and consider what fits for this year. It includes the lectionary readings for the season and is formatted into a fillable PDF that users can download.

### Storytelling series

A five-week evening series on storytelling with Bishop Porter Taylor of the Diocese of Virginia, "Walk the Way of Lent," connects the viewer's story to lectionary readings that offer a road map for the journey. The series is sponsored by the Department of Lifelong Learning at VTS.

This class will meet online every Thursday evening starting on March 10 and ending on April 7.

The description notes that Lent is less a season to observe and more a walk to walk. As the days get longer and the light more accessible, so are we invited to cast aside all that gets between us and resurrection.



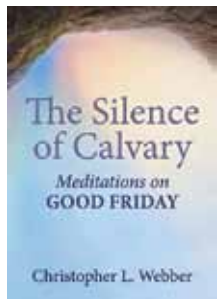

One theologian commented, "Everything that happens to Christ happens to us." In that sense, the Bible is a road map for us to follow indicating the terrain of our journey with Christ and in Christ and to Christ.

Therefore, these sessions are intended to help discover how we can consciously walk the way of Lent.

## Church Publishing

### The Silence of Calvary: Meditations on Good Friday

*By Christopher L. Webber*



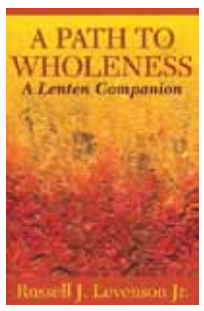

On one of the holiest days of the year, these brief meditations are designed to call us into the silence that still speaks more loudly than words. Seven chapters in this unique book consider the event, and the meaning, of the Crucifixion to our lives today, including the various ways in which silence plays a role in our daily lives.

"The Silence of Calvary is an evocative and contemplative book that explores and exposes the story of the crucifixion in a new way … Here, by moving into silence instead of words, Christopher Webber offers rich and challenging insights. This book is the perfect companion for Lent and Holy Week."

– Sheryl A. Kujawa-Holbrook, Claremont School of Theology, Bloy House, the Episcopal School of Theology at Los Angeles

### A Path to Wholeness: A Lenten Companion

*By Russell J. Levenson Jr.*




The ache of the human heart has always been to be made whole. The thrust of the Christian hope is that it can only come to that wholeness by way of a personal relationship with God, through Christ. This book is intentionally written as an avenue towards deepening, strengthening, and for some, beginning such a relationship during the 40 days of Lent.

This thoughtful book, focusing on Jesus' life, death, and resurrection, is part of a four-part series on seasonal observances and devotions.

"Russ Levenson's Lenten devotions breathe with the air of a seasoned pastor and preacher. With his characteristic wit and Southern charm — and many, many good stories — Levenson brings the gospel to life. Above all, he shows what it looks like to devote one's life to the only one who deserves our allegiance, Christ Jesus our Savior. One could look for no better path to wholeness." – The Rev. Christopher A. Beeley, Duke University Divinity School

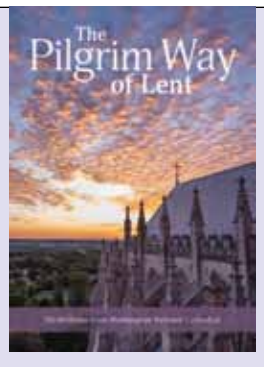

## Episcopal Relief & Development

The international relief and development agency's Lenten reflections are organized into its priorities: Women, Children and Climate, with a focus on the organization's disaster resilience and response work.

Download the 2022 Lenten Meditations in English and Spanish at **www.episcopalrelief.org/Lent**.

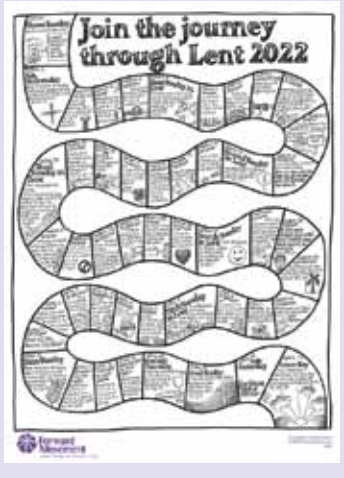
In addition, Episcopalians are invited to observe Episcopal Relief & Development Sunday on the first Sunday in Lent or on another convenient Sunday.

## Forward Movement

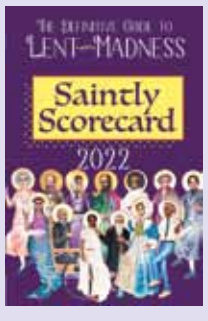



"The Pilgrim Way of Lent" is a collaboration between Forward Movement and Washington National Cathedral. Join faith leaders from Washington National Cathedral with daily Scripture, meditations, and prayers, as we make our way from the solemnity of Lent to the drama of Holy Week to the glory of Easter Sunday. The path from ashes to alleluia is one that we walk together, in community.

Forward Movement also offers its yearly Lenten calendar, "Join the Journey Through Lent." Illustrated by award-winning cartoonist Jay Sidebotham, this calendar invites spiritual reflection and is a wonderful companion for the Lenten season.




For a playful yet informative path through the season, play along with Lent Madness – a basketball-inspired, bracket-style holy competition to see which of 32 saints earns the coveted Golden Halo. By the time Holy Week comes along, you'll see how God works in the lives of ordinary people to shine the light of Christ's love in a world in need of hope.

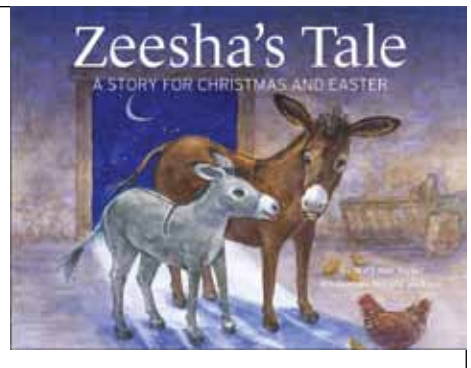



For more information about all these resources, visit **www.forwardmovement.org**.

## AK Classics

### Zeesha's Tale

*By Mary Ann Archer*




Zeesha's Tale is a children's story about three of the donkeys in the Bible.

Zeesha is a young donkey who has never yet been ridden by a human and learns from his mother that he will be asked to carry someone very important.

In response to his misgivings and curiosity, his mother tells him about two other times when donkeys also had important roles.

Zeesha's great-great-great grandmother saw danger and actually talked to her owner, Balaam, about it in the book of Numbers, and Zeesha's own mother carried Mary on the journey to Bethlehem, where Jesus would be born.

Zeesha would be the donkey Jesus would ride into Jerusalem. He learns from his wise mother to trust in God through good times and bad.

Mary Ann Archer is a spiritual director, retreat leader, and professional flutist/piccoloist. She received her master of arts degree in spiritual direction from General Theological Seminary in New York.

"This is the perfect story to encourage kids to get in touch with God, understand how God works in their own lives and acknowledge that God has a special purpose for each of us. It is a timeless reminder to keep listening for God's voice that is within all of us." – Amy Hanzal Kashi

## LENT RESOURCES

# Lenten food traditions began in medieval times

**By Kathryn McGowan**

It's difficult to eat seasonally in the northeastern U.S. or northern Europe in winter. You must cultivate a love for root vegetables and make the acquaintance of farmers with large green houses. But just imagine if your religion required you to give up most animal products during that same time. For medieval Christians, that's exactly what was expected during the season of Lent.

During Lent, Christians traditionally practice fasting and prayer and give alms to the poor. It begins on Ash Wednesday (March 2 this year) and lasts for a season of 40 days leading up to Easter Sunday.

I love learning about history through food, so a few years ago I did some reading about this tradition. It turns out that fasting in late-winter/early-spring is actually a pre-Christian activity. If you think about the way subsistence farming of that era worked, it makes a lot of sense.

Lent is derived from the Anglo-Saxon word "lencten," which means "spring," and begins about one month before the vernal equinox. This is a time when even if you were forward-thinking like the Ant who stores food in one of Aesop's Fables, you might have been starting to run low on the provisions you dried, salted and pickled during the abundance of harvest time.

Photo/Janne Hellsten

***Seafood is a traditional food eaten during Lent.***

The English call this time "hungry gap" — the new crops aren't growing yet; the ewes haven't given birth; the cow, if you didn't slaughter her for meat in the autumn, might be dry; the hens are laying less frequently due to the weak winter sun; and the community still needs to eat.

I would imagine that ancient religious and political leaders quickly realized that if they didn't do something to help their people get through this thin time, they would have food riots on their hands. So, they encouraged sacrifice for the greater good of the community. If people ate fewer animal products at the end of winter, there would be enough to go around until the asparagus was up and the lambs were dropped.

Nowadays of course, many of us (in the First World) don't have to worry about not having enough food. On the one hand that's wonderful because subsistence farming is back-breaking work, but on the other, our new abundance seems to have led to an epidemic of obesity in affluent countries. For the last few years, I've been keeping the medieval rules of Lent as a way of reminding myself that more is not always better.

The original rules of Lent, with which observant Christians had to comply on pain of mortal sin, forbade the consumption of meat (including poultry), animal fats, milk, or eggs from Ash Wednesday to Easter except Sundays. Yes, you read that right, except Sundays.

The church considers Sundays feast days so fasting or abstinence is not allowed. Leaving out Sundays is also how you get the figure of 40 days, if they are included then it adds up to 46.

The modern church has eased these rules encouraging instead voluntary fasting and abstinence which it defines as eating one full meal per day and omitting meat and poultry on Ash Wednesday and all Fridays.

The first year we tried this in our house it was a little difficult to adjust. The ancients were wise to have it begin on a Wednesday, so you've only got four days to go before Sunday in that first week.

After a while it becomes easier; it's basically a vegan diet plus fish. Most cultures that are traditionally Christian have Lenten recipes; if you look in Italian, Greek and Spanish cookbooks you'll find things that either fit the rules or can be easily adapted. Most Asian cuisines are terrific too because they don't use dairy. Some might see coconut milk as cheating, but boy is it tasty.

On the upside, you always remember to celebrate Mardi Gras or Shrove Tuesday; you really appreciate the meat, eggs, cheese, and butter you get to have on Sundays; and you might even lose a little weight.

I find Lent a welcome respite from the Christmas holiday season, which while it technically runs from about Thanksgiving to New Year's seems to stretch ever further with rich roasts and braises to combat the winter weather. By the end of Lent, I'm dreaming of asparagus and fresh spring flowers. ■

*This article was originally published at Kathryn McGowan's blog, "Comestibles," **https://blog.kathrynmcgowan.com/**.*

# Getting ready for Lent

**Trinity Episcopal Church**

Lent serves to prepare us for Easter. That magic number is biblical, but also practical. Changing habits, healing wounds — these things take six weeks, or one Lenten season. So Lent is meant to be a new habit of faith. Here are some of the traditional ways that's done.

**Lenten Habit #1:** Fasting and self-denial

What are you giving up for Lent?

There are many reasons to embrace this Lenten habit:

• Get rid of the clutter and find space — spiritual, physical, mental.

• To remember those who don't have the luxury to give something up.

• Because it's tough! Christ meets us in our weakness. Lent is a good time to remember that.

• Give up: luxuries, excuses, habits, stuff — whatever gets in your way as you follow Christ.

**Lenten Habit #2:** Prayer and meditating on God's holy word

Lent is the perfect time to set up a spiritual discipline of prayer.

• Set a time. First or last thing in the day — there's no time in the day for prayer unless we make it.

• Set a structure. Use a Lenten devotional, Forward Day by Day, the Daily Office, or other sources, to get some new ideas.

• Speak and listen. Writing in a journal, meditating on the written word — these can help you keep your focus.

• Practice. The six weeks of Lent can help you build the prayer habit.

**Lenten Habit #3:** Self-examination and repentance

What are you learning through these habits? Lenten practices invite us to think: What am I learning about myself? Closely tied to that question: repentance in choosing new ways and priorities. Write insights. Talk.

**Lenten Habit #4:** Study

On your own: Read a spiritual book; read the Bible, Google a topic of interest, follow some blogs.

In a group: Do you dare to try a Bible study?

**Lenten Habit #5:** Generosity

Closely related to self-denial, giving helps us confront our inner selfishness and recognize our blessings.

• Give up a treat and donate the money saved.

• Have a simple meal regularly, and donate the money saved.

• Offer your time for a good cause.

• Save and donate your change.

These traditional Lenten activities are called habits because it takes six weeks for a new behavior to become a habit. At the end of Lent, you may have a new habit. So what's your Lenten plan? ■

*This article was first published by Trinity Episcopal Church, Escondido, Calif. at **www.trinityescondido.org.***

NEWS

# Church renews push to close Guantanamo as panelists cite continuing human rights 'disaster'

**By David Paulsen**
***Episcopal News Service***

Twenty years ago this week, the first detainees arrived at the U.S. detention facility at Guantanamo Bay, Cuba, as part of the Bush administration's war on terror, launched in 2001 in response to the Sept. 11 terrorist attacks. Since then, 780 people suspected of terrorist connections have been held at Guantanamo, but few were ever tried or even charged.

"They called them the 'worst of the worst,' but ultimately many of the people who were sent there were innocent, swept up in our war on terror," Matt Hawthorne, of the National Religious Campaign Against Torture, said Jan. 11 in a webinar hosted by the Episcopal Church's Office of Government Relations.

Today, 39 detainees remain at Guantanamo, and only nine have been charged or convicted of crimes.

About 15 have been cleared for transfer once the U.S. government can arrange for other countries to accept them. The Episcopal Church is among the faith organizations that continue to pressure the federal government to transfer the rest of the men and to close the detention facility.

Even now, the webinar's panelists argued, Guantanamo is associated globally with inhumane treatment of detainees, human rights violations and an indiscriminate anti-terrorism campaign that almost exclusively targeted Muslims.

"Guantanamo is fundamentally a prison for Muslim men, and that really, to me, underscores the importance of faith-based advocacy to force closure," said J. Wells Dixon, an attorney with the Center for Constitutional Rights who has represented Guantanamo detainees in their uphill battles to win transfer or release from the facility.

Photo/ENS

***Office of Government Relations director Rebecca Blachly, top left, moderates a discussion about the Guantanamo detention facility with, clockwise, detainee attorney J. Wells Dixon, former State Department official Shaun Casey and Matt Hawthorne, of the National Religious Campaign Against Torture. Presiding Bishop Michael Curry also participated.***

Hawthorne and Dixon were joined in the church webinar by Shaun Casey, a Georgetown University professor who formerly served in the U.S. State Department as special representative for religion and global affairs. The hourlong panel discussion was moderated by Office of Government Relations Director Rebecca Blachly.

Guantanamo "is still the human rights and rule-of-law disaster that it's always been," Dixon said.

Casey concurred. "It continues to be a moral stain on our country," he said. He described some of the challenges the Obama administration faced in its failed attempt to close the facility and noted that such efforts date back to the final years of George W. Bush's presidency.

Officials at the Pentagon, State Department, National Security Council and White House often clash on how and whether to close Guantanamo, Casey said, and political pressure from Democrats and Republicans in Congress can pull in both directions.

Even so, by the time Bush left office in 2009, more than 500 detainees had been transferred out of Guantanamo. Hawthorne said Bush had concluded it was an inefficient prison and not worth the financial cost or the cost to the United States' image abroad.


Photo/Kathleen T. Rhem/Wikimedia Commons

***The entrance to Camp 1 in Guantanamo Bay's Camp Delta. The base's detention camps are numbered based on the order in which they were built, not their order of precedence or level of security.***

During President Barack Obama's presidency, nearly 200 more detainees were transferred out of the facility.

Only one prisoner was transferred from Guantanamo under President Donald Trump, and one prisoner so far under President Joe Biden. "President Biden has all the authority under current law to transfer all of those men and close Guantanamo," Dixon said. "I think what remains to be seen is if he has the political will."

The Episcopal Church Executive Council called for Guantanamo's closure in 2007, and that goal continues to be part of the church's nonpartisan advocacy on Capitol Hill. The Episcopal Public Policy Network, overseen by the Washington, D.C.-based Office of Government Relations, issued an action alert in January encouraging Episcopalians to apply renewed pressure on Congress to remove existing legislative hurdles to closing Guantanamo.

"Many of the detainees were subjected to torture and harsh interrogation techniques, and few have been charged. The military commissions are ongoing, but they have not been able to secure justice for the detainees or for the families of the victims of terrorism," the action alert says. "The detention facility at Guantanamo undermines the rule of law, disregards human rights and tarnishes the reputation of the U.S."

Casey suggested that sending personalized letters to members of Congress can have a powerful impact on the public policy debate around Guantanamo. Elected officials on both sides of the aisle have questioned the prudence of keeping the facility open. One challenge is "the status quo has prevailed."

"It's just part of the facts of the world now. It's not seen as active negotiable issue," Casey said. "So what do we do to try and move that?" He said that in addition to lobbying members of Congress, people of faith can work through affiliated international bodies, such as the Anglican Communion, to apply leverage.

Presiding Bishop Michael Curry opened the webinar with a prayer and followed the discussion with brief final remarks.

"I would close with thanks to each of you and thanks to those who continue to lift the torch of human dignity, equality and liberty," Curry said. ■



## Trinity center offers retreat on core "integrity" value


Trinity Retreat Center in West Cornwall, Conn., is offering a retreat from May 6-8 on exploring the value of integrity, with award-winning author and commentator of contemporary spirituality Diana Butler Bass.

The retreat is entitled "Freeing Jesus: Rediscovering Jesus as Friend, Teacher, Savior, Lord, Way, and Presence."

Using Butler Bass' newest book, "Freeing Jesus," as a starting point, the weekend retreat will show how the value of integrity calls us to pay attention to our life experience, as we grow in self-understanding and in our relationship with Jesus.

Since we know Jesus through our life experience, and since this knowledge grows and changes along the lifespan, it is good to take a spiritual wellness check to examine our understanding of Jesus at work in our lives, as we mature spiritually. As it turns out, when we free Jesus, we free ourselves.

— Trinity Retreat Center

FEATURE

# Remembering an Episcopalian as a 'symbol of voting rights,' while working to preserve those rights

**By Mary Frances Schjonberg**
***Episcopal News Service***

As Americans consider issues of voting rights, a historic Episcopal parish points to a long-ago member as a symbol of the struggle.

Thomas Mundy Peterson was 36 years old on March 31, 1870, when he became the first African American to vote in a U.S. election under the provisions of the 15th Amendment, which prohibits denying or abridging of the right to vote "on account of race, color, or previous condition of servitude."

The election at City Hall in Perth Amboy, N.J., was the first held anywhere in the United States the day after the ratification of the 15th Amendment was certified. It asked voters to decide whether to revise the city's charter or change to a township form of government.

Peterson's participation in the election "was a symbol of voting rights," said Ralph Richardson, senior warden of St. Peter's Episcopal Church in Perth Amboy.

Peterson, who died in 1904, was a member of St. Peter's and is buried in the churchyard along with his wife, Daphne. St. Peter's was founded in 1685, two years after Scottish colonists settled in the area, making it New Jersey's oldest Episcopal congregation.

Peterson's historic vote came in a city that had once been both a major slave importation port and a major stop on the Underground Railroad. Peterson, New Jersey born and raised, was the grandson of slaves and the son of a woman who was freed before he was born. Slavery had been legal in the state until January 1866.

Peterson reportedly liked to describe how one white man, upon seeing him vote that day, ripped up his own ballot and declared that the franchise was worthless if a Black man was allowed to vote.

By the late 1870s, states, mainly in the South, began to enact laws discriminating against Black voters.

Those barriers were eliminated by the Voting Rights Act of 1965 until 2013 when the U.S. Supreme Court struck down a key provision of the law that required federal approval before some states and other jurisdictions could change their voting regulations.

Divided along ideological lines, with the core of the disagreement whether racial minorities continue to face barriers to voting in states with a history of discrimination, the court's conservative majority said that protection was no longer needed.

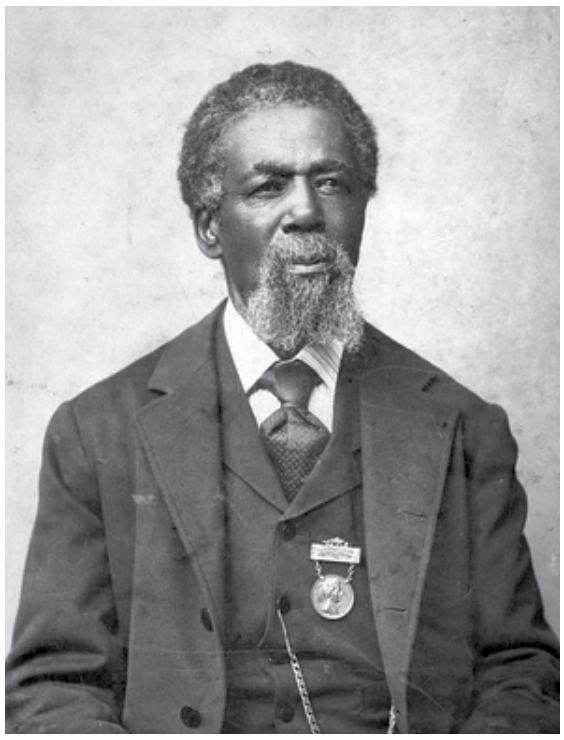
States immediately began rewriting their laws to effectively restrict voting access. In 2021, states passed 52 restrictive voter laws. In addition to making voting harder and taking away some powers of local election officials, the new laws are also said to have fueled widespread doubts about the integrity of American elections and politicized parts of the democratic process once seen as inviolate.


Photo/Wikipedia

***Perth Amboy residents raised $70 in 1884 (more than $1,900 in today's dollars) to give Peterson a gold medallion featuring Abraham Lincoln to commemorate his historic participation in the city election.***

The Episcopal Church has long advocated for voting rights and protested attempts to make it harder for people to vote.

The Executive Council in October reaffirmed that stance, decrying the efforts of state legislatures to restrict voting access and urged all dioceses, particularly those dioceses in states whose legislatures are actively pursuing legislation that is specifically designed to restrict access to voting, to advocate for equal access to vote. It urged individual Episcopalians to work for voting rights legislation.



Photo/Wikipedia

***Left, Thomas Mundy Peterson cast his ballot at City Hall in Perth Amboy, N.J., on March 31, 1870, making him the first African American to vote in a U.S. election under the provisions of the 15th Amendment, whose ratification was certified the day before.***

In later life, Peterson credited his employer, T. L. Kearny, for encouraging him to go vote that day in 1870. Peterson recalled that he "did not think of voting until [Kearny] came out to the stable where I was attending to the horses and advised me to go to the polls and exercise a citizen's privilege."

He said that as he arrived to vote "one man offered me a ticket bearing the words 'revised charter' and another one marked, 'no charter.' I thought I would not vote to give up our charter after holding it so long: so, I chose a revised charter ballot."

The proposed revision passed 230-63. When the revision later had to be tweaked, Peterson was one of seven men appointed to a committee to do the work.

Kearny's conversation with Peterson that day exemplifies the sort of voter engagement the church's Washington, D.C.-based Office of Government Relations encourages.

"The Office of Government Relations and Episcopalians joining us across the United States continue to advocate for voting rights for all eligible Americans. We support the Freedom to Vote Act, the John Lewis Voting Rights Advancement Act, and all efforts to ensure that Americans are able to cast their ballot," Rebecca Linder Blachly, the office's director, told ENS.

"We also recognize that voter engagement is essential, and so to add to our existing efforts to get out the vote, we recently launched the Episcopal Election Activator program, which offers a chance for local Episcopalians to mobilize their communities to participate in our elections."

Presiding Bishop Michael Curry has encouraged Americans to vote.


Photo/St. Peter's Episcopal Church via Facebook

***Peterson, who was a member of St. Peter's Episcopal Church in Perth Amboy, N.J., died in 1904 and is buried in the churchyard along with his wife, Daphne.***

The program seeks volunteers to help promote non-partisan voter engagement efforts for the 2022 U.S. midterm elections and beyond.

"The Election Activator program is an exciting opportunity for Episcopalians to volunteer with our office and network across the country to, as Bishop Curry has said, get souls to the polls," said Alan Yarborough, church relations officer for the Office of Government Relations. "I would ask two things of Episcopalians — first to write their members of Congress using our action alert to urge passage of effective voting rights legislation. Second, if you want to do more to increase voter participation, sign up as an Election Activator."

Richardson, who portrays Peterson during the annual Halloween graveyard tour at St. Peter's, would agree. "I think he would be surprised that we're going backward," he said.

"He would probably say that we cannot let this happen; that you've got to let your congressman know that this is not the way this country should be going — not backwards." ■

*The Rev. Mary Frances Schjonberg retired in 2019 as senior editor and reporter for Episcopal News Service.*

## Congress debates voting rights

The House of Representatives on Jan. 13 passed a combination of the Freedom to Vote Act and the John Lewis Voting Rights Advancement Act and sent the new bill to the Senate. All 50 Democratic senators say they favor passing voting rights legislation, but their 50 Republican counterparts do not. The filibuster rule requires 60 votes to pass most legislation, making passage of a voting rights bill difficult.

On Jan. 11, President Joe Biden called for a change to the filibuster rule as it pertains to elections legislation. However, two Democratic senators who held the keys to that change — Joe Manchin of West Virginia and Kyrsten Sinema of Arizona said on Jan. 13 they would not support the move.

The Office of Government Relations recently noted that it cannot advocate on the filibuster debate because the Episcopal Church has not taken a stance on the rule. "But we can continue to underscore the importance of voting and the need for federal legislation to counteract recent bills in many statehouses that have sought to restrict or limit the right to vote," the office wrote in its December 2021 advocacy newsletter.

— Episcopal News Service

## FAITH AND THE ARTS

# Faith informed Pop art icon Warhol's work

By Pamela A. Lewis

Even those who rarely, if ever, set foot into a museum or art gallery, probably know who Andy Warhol was. His pallid, high cheekboned face, topped by a thatch of white hair, and his deep-set penetrating eyes have been as recognizable to the don't-know-nothin'-'bout-art set as they were to the sophisticated aficionados who flocked to the artist's exhibitions and avant-garde films. Warhol's soup cans, dollar signs and celebrity portraits not only defined his body of work, but became the attributes of one of the twentieth century's Pop art saints.

Of course, Warhol was no saint. His life — and by extension, his art — reflected the restlessness of the 1960s, where challenges to socio-politico structures and conventional sexuality roiled American culture. Warhol's full engagement with these movements engendered a persona that was part social critic, part filmmaker, and part promoter of emerging artists such as Jean-Michel Basquiat.

However, the Brooklyn Museum's "Andy Warhol: Revelation, exhibition, open through June 19, explores the artist's little-known but also lifelong engagement with religious belief and to what extent his Catholic faith informed his art, while the institutional church was also subjected to his criticism.

*"Self-portrait" 1986, acrylic and silkscreen on linen, 40x40 in.*

As art historian John Richardson, who eulogized Warhol at his memorial service at St. Patrick's Cathedral in 1987, observed, his spiritual side may have come as a surprise to many, but it did exist and was key to understanding the artist's psyche.

Organized by José Carlos Diaz, chief curator of the Andy Warhol Museum in Pittsburgh, and overseen by the Brooklyn's Associate Curator for Feminist Art Carmen Hermo, the show, as its title suggests, reveals an artist for whom religious belief was at once a source of inspiration and of anxiety.

Born Andrew Warhola in 1928 in Pittsburgh to parents who emigrated from what is now Slovakia, Warhol grew up in the city's Ruska Dolina neighborhood and attended St. John Chrysostom, the Byzantine Catholic church that was the center of the Carpatho-Rusyn working-class community where Warhol spent his childhood and early youth.

It was at St. John's, which he attended every weekend with his mother Julia, that the young Warhol absorbed the church's rituals and saw the richly painted icons of Christ and of the saints that lined its walls.

St. John's elaborate and powerful iconography would remain Warhol's frame of reference for much of his future artwork, and within the show's seven sections it is the religious and cultural point of departure for Warhol's journey of faith and art.

In the section called "Immigrant Roots and Religion," religious ephemera from his early life — prayer books, crucifixes, his certificate of baptism, and brightly-colored pysansky Easter eggs — are on display in the cases that introduce the exhibition. (Even Julia's whimsical doodles of angels and cats share wall space with her son's early artistic forays.)

These personal and, in some cases devotional, items are the context that informed Warhol's religiously-referential works, such as an exquisite gold-leaf collage of a Nativity scene, in all likelihood influenced by the gold-ground icons he would have seen in St. John's, and which would culminate in the series of paintings *The Last Supper*.

Warhol's personal religious fervency is still a subject of debate, considering his more familiar sex-drugs-and-rock-and-roll image. But his representations of religious figures and symbols were purposely irreverent.

A series of paintings from the section "Guns, Knives, and Crosses" (1981-82), which Warhol did for an exhibition in Madrid of the same title, presents the troubling connection between redemption and violence.



Photos/Courtesy of Brooklyn Museum

***Above, "Christ-$9.98," 1985-86, acrylic and silkscreen on linen.***

***Left, "Raphael Madonna-$6.99," 1985, acrylic and silkscreen on linen.***

Canvases depicting screen-print crosses reference what he called "the Catholic thing," given the religion's dominance in Spain from 1492 through Generalissimo Franco's fascist dictatorship (1936-75), while the guns and knives recall the Spanish Civil War.

The use of bright colors and of repetition downplays the religious symbol's universality. Warhol's "Raphael Madonna-$6.99" (1985) is an acrylic and silkscreen ink re-interpretation of Raphael's Renaissance masterpiece, "The Sistine Madonna."

Warhol puts aside his affection for religious iconography by appropriating this beloved composition to take aim at American consumer culture, where even religion is commoditized, as suggested by the work's looming $6.99 price tag in the background.

He makes this point again in the painting "Christ, $9.98", based on a newspaper ad for a night light shaped like Jesus.

In the 1980s, Warhol collaborated with Jean-Michel Basquiat — who was also raised Catholic — to create "Ten Punching Bags (Last Supper)." The work comprises white punching bags, each bearing Warhol's hand-painted face of Christ, lifted from "The Last Supper," on each of which Basquiat wrote the word "JUDGE."

Whether to be understood as a reference to Christ's being scorned and judged before his crucifixion, an allusion to the artists' critical hits from the press and wider art market, or the Catholic church's vilification of their nonconforming sexuality, "Punching Bags" pulls no punches.

"The Catholic Body," which focuses on the tension between Warhol's Catholic upbringing and his identity as an out gay man, is the show's strongest section. Here, works such as "The Last Supper (Be a Somebody with a Body)," where a blowup image of a beefy bodybuilder is superimposed over Warhol's hand-painted face of da Vinci's Christ from "The Last Supper," intertwine carnality and sanctity.

They point as well to the artist's fascination with the body, yet to his conflicted feelings regarding his own in the context of commercial images of conventional physical attractiveness and strength (which he obsessively tried to attain).

They also explore his fears of vulnerability and disease, in the face of the then-worsening AIDS crisis and the Catholic church's condemnation of homosexuality.

His fears of victimization were realized when, in 1968, radical feminist Valerie Solanas shot and severely wounded him.

continued on page 14


***Right, Julia Warhola "Angel Holding Cross" (detail), between 1952 and 1970, on paper.***

***Below, "The Last Supper," 1986, acrylic and silkscreen on linen.***

## FAITH AND THE ARTS

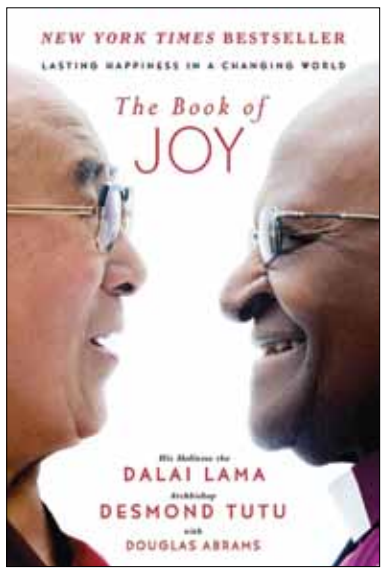
# Tutu wrote about joy, prayer, the Bible, community

*South African Anglican Archbishop Desmond Tutu, known for his work as an anti-apartheid and human rights activist, died on Dec. 26, 2021. He chaired South Africa's Truth and Reconciliation Commission to investigate human rights abuses during the apartheid era and was awarded the Nobel Peace Prize.*

*To mark the passing of Archbishop Desmond Tutu, Episcopal Journal offers a selection of his most popular writings.*

### The Book of Joy: Lasting happiness in a changing world

*By Dalai Lama, Desmond Tutu and Douglas Carlton Abrams*
*Cornerstone Publishers, 384 pages, $26.00*




Two spiritual giants. Five days. One timeless question.

Nobel Peace Prize laureates His Holiness the Dalai Lama and Archbishop Desmond Tutu have survived more than 50 years of exile and the soul-crushing violence of oppression. Despite their hardships — or, as they would say, because of them — they are two of the most joyful people on the planet.

In 2015, Tutu traveled to the Dalai Lama's home in Dharamsala, India, to celebrate the Tibetan spiritual leader's eightieth birthday and to create what they hoped would be a gift for others.

They looked back on their long lives to answer a single burning question: How do we find joy in the face of life's inevitable suffering?

They traded intimate stories, teased each other continually, and shared their spiritual practices. By the end of a week filled with laughter and punctuated with tears, these two global heroes had stared into the abyss and despair of our time and revealed how to live a life brimming with joy.

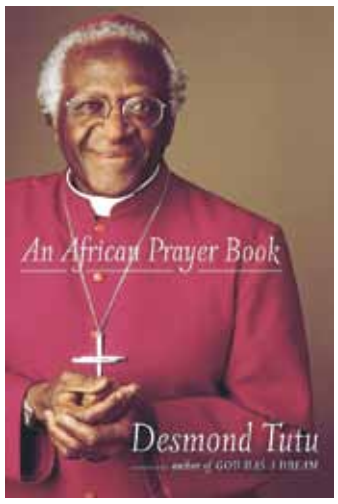
This book offers a rare opportunity to experience their astonishing and unprecedented week together, from the first embrace to the final good-bye.

They explore the "nature of true joy" and confront each of the "obstacles of joy" — from fear, stress, and anger to grief, illness, and death. They then offer us the "eight pillars of joy," which provide the foundation for lasting happiness. Throughout, they include stories, wisdom, and science. Finally, they share their daily joy practices that anchor their own emotional and spiritual lives.

In this unique collaboration, they offer the reflection of real lives filled with pain and turmoil during which they have been able to discover a level of peace, of courage, and of joy to which all can aspire.

### An African Prayer Book

*By Desmond Tutu*
*Doubleday, 160 pages, $12.00*




Prayer, our conversation with God, needs no set formulas or flowery phrases. It often needs no words at all. But for most believers, the words of others can be a wonderful aid to devotion, especially when these words come from faithful fellow pilgrims.

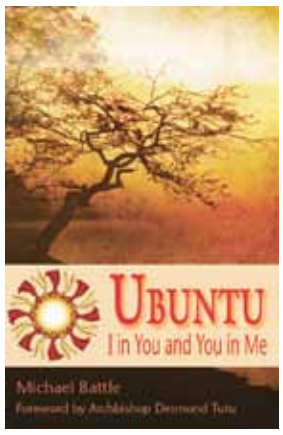
"An African Prayer Book" is just such an aid, for in this collection all the spiritual riches of the vast and varied continent of Africa are bravely set forth.

Here we overhear the simple prayer of the penniless Bushman, the words of some of the greatest church fathers (Augustine and Athanasius), petitioning and jubilant voices from South Africa's struggle for freedom, and even prayers from the Africa diasporas of North America and the Caribbean.

Here are Jesus's own encounters with Africa, which provided him refuge at the beginning of his life (from the murderous King Herod) and aid at its end (in the person of Simon of Cyrene, who helped Jesus carry his cross). From thunderous multi-invocation litanies to quiet meditations, here are prayers every heart can speak with strength and confidence.

### Ubuntu: I in You and You in Me

*By Michael Battle, foreword by Desmond Tutu*
*Seabury Books, 176 Pages, $19.99*




As Tutu defines it, a person with "ubuntu" is open and available to others, affirming of others, does not feel threatened that others are able and good, for he or she has a proper self-assurance that comes from knowing that he or she belongs in a greater whole and is diminished when others are humiliated or diminished, when others are tortured or oppressed.

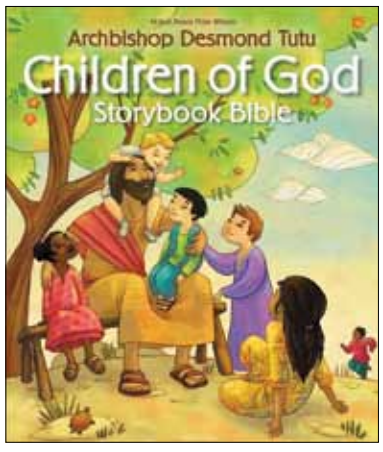
As described in this book, the African spiritual principle of ubuntu offers believers a new and radical way of reading the Gospel and understanding the heart of the Christian faith. The book explores the meaning and utility of ubuntu as applied to Western philosophies, faith, and lifestyles.

This African way of seeing self-identity formed through community may be a difficult worldview for many Western people, who understand self as over, against, or in competition with others. In the Western viewpoint, ubuntu becomes something to avoid — a kind of codependency.

As a Christian leader who understands the need, intricacies, and delicate workings of global interdependency, Battle offers here both a refreshing worldview and a new perspective of self-identity for people across cultures, and of all faiths.

### Children Of God Storybook Bible

*By Desmond Tutu*
*Zondervan, 128 pages, $19.99*



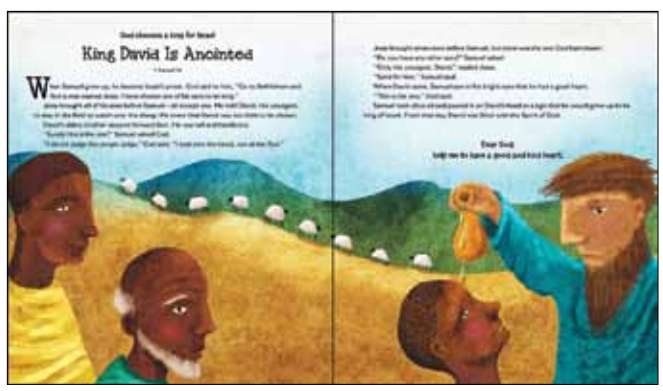

The Children of God Storybook Bible is a collection of beloved Bible stories that presents the idea of God's forgiveness and reconciliation to children. Each of the stories emphasizes God's desire for all people to live in community.

Creating the first truly global Bible for children of all nationalities, Tutu retells more than 50 of his most beloved Bible stories. Many of the finest artists from around the world — including Jago, E.B. Lewis, Javaka Steptoe, and Xiao Xin — illustrated these stories, connecting Scripture with the multitude of ethnicities across the globe.

The book shows how God works through history, ending each biblical story with a short prayer, personalizing the message for each reader's own life. The book includes a presentation page for gifting at birthdays, Christmas, baptisms, or anytime.

Through the illustrations and Tutu's delightful words, readers will experience the Bible stories as if they were there, with Adam and Eve in the garden, with Noah on the ark, with Abraham in the desert, and with Jesus on the mountaintop.

"Desmond Tutu speaks to children and their elders in an inspiring and beautiful retelling of many of the central stories of the Bible. The artwork is a strong partner to the stories and supports the challenge of the prayer that closes each one," wrote former Episcopal Church Presiding Bishop Katharine Jefferts Schori. ■

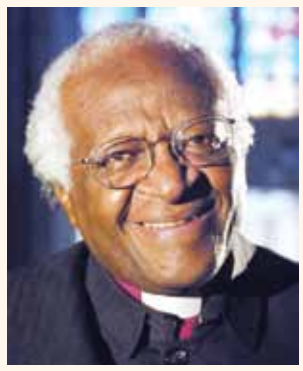



## Desmond Tutu – An Appreciation

*Episcopal Church Presiding Bishop Michael Curry wrote this appreciation upon Tutu's passing.*

With the passing of Archbishop Desmond Tutu, a true friend, colleague, and mentor — and a genuinely humble, great soul — has gone before us. He has passed through the gate of death into the arms of the God who gave him life.

While on this earth, he sought to follow Jesus of Nazareth in God's way of love and life. In so doing, he showed us how to live God's dream as children of the one God and creator of all.


***Tutu***

So, even in our sorrow that he is no longer walking among us, we can thank God that he did.

Perhaps we best give thanks by honoring his legacy — not merely with lip service to racial justice and reconciliation, but with lives dedicated to this work.

We do this by learning to live together as the children and family of God, no longer hurting each other or God's creation, but together living the dream God intended. For in God's dream, as the Hebrew prophet Isaiah said, "they will not hurt or destroy on all my holy mountain; for the earth will be full of the knowledge of the Lord as the waters cover the sea."

To borrow from a friend who texted me on Archbishop Tutu's passing, may the knowledge of his life and heart keep us all strong, good, kind, and loving. ■

FEATURE

# As COVID-19 continues, Diocese of Chicago launches mini-sabbatical program to address clergy burnout

**By Egan Millard**
***Episcopal News Service***

The Diocese of Chicago is launching a mini-sabbatical program for its clergy and lay employees, encouraging them to take a week of paid time off to rest in an effort to address pandemic-related exhaustion and prevent burnout.

Recognizing that priests, deacons and church workers have borne the heavy emotional loads of others throughout the pandemic, a mini-sabbatical might give them time to care for themselves, said Assisting Bishop Chilton Knudsen, who devised the plan.

"The motive for this is largely pastoral," Knudsen told ENS. "So many clergy and church workers have been under significant stress during this pandemic time. They have been trying hard to offer pastoral care to distressed, grieving and frightened people, but at the same time have also experienced the impact of the pandemic on their own lives and families. Because this is happening to all of us, it is not like the usual ups and downs in congregational life."

With the pandemic about to enter its third year, the United States reported record numbers of cases as the omicron variant spread; 1.08 million were reported on Jan. 18. The number of patients hospitalized with COVID-19 is also at its highest ever.

Knudsen is asking each congregation or other ministry setting to choose a week between now and Holy Week when meetings, office hours and nonessential activities are canceled. Pastoral emergencies will still be attended to.

Each ministry can choose when and how it will implement the mini-sabbatical, including how Sunday services are handled. Possible options include canceling services, encouraging parishioners to tune into Washington National Cathedral's virtual services or arranging for another parish in the local deanery to offer services for the whole deanery.

The weeklong break does not count against existing balances of vacation time, sick time or continuing education time, and pay and benefits will continue as usual.

Clergy in other denominations have taken similar initiatives, articulating a need for something in between a vacation and a traditional sabbatical, which

***Knudsen***

is usually longer and planned well in advance.

Though she had read some of the recent news coverage of clergy burnout, Knudsen got the idea for the mini-sabbatical program during a clergy conference in the fall.

"I offered clergy an opportunity to report on their well-being," Knudsen told ENS. "At one point, a deacon said, 'If only we could all just stop for a bit of respite.' That comment stayed with me. And I know he was speaking for many others."

What that respite looks like is up to each clergy person or lay employee to decide, Knudsen said, acknowledging that "rest means different things to different people." But whatever it consists of, she explained, it is truly meant to be a time of rest – a concept grounded in Christian tradition and the source of the word "sabbatical," derived from "sabbath," the Biblical day of rest.

"The story of creation, as God rested on the seventh day, is intended to enshrine the Sabbath rest into the fabric of our faith," said Knudsen, who is taking her own mini-sabbatical, along with the diocesan staff. "It is one of the Ten Commandments and is the basis for weekly worship in whatever part of the Judeo-Christian tradition we inhabit."

Clergy, Knudsen noted, have been reporting particularly high levels of stress during the pandemic. In a Barna Group study conducted in October, 38% of Protestant pastors — including 51% of mainline pastors — said they'd considered quitting full-time ministry in the past year, up 9% from when the same survey was administered in January 2021.

Many report that they are experiencing mental health challenges and more of them are reaching out for help. But, as Knudsen notes, they still may not be able to get it.

"I salute those who are accessing mental health services in record numbers, but not every location offers handy access to needed services," she said. "And waiting lists are often daunting, as providers cope with heavy caseloads."

Reasons cited for the high levels of clergy burnout have to do with their place at the center of overlapping social crises. On top of the physical and mental health challenges COVID-19 has imposed on their own lives, they are often immersed in the challenges of their parishioners, comforting the sick, counseling the lonely and grieving, presiding at funerals.

They are faced with a constant stream of decisions on how to keep their communities connected safely as the pandemic's unpredictable course drags on, teaching themselves new technological skills along the way. Many work long hours and take little time off.

Then there are the cultural clashes that have intensified over the course of the pandemic, especially around some parishioners' refusal to wear masks or get vaccinated, or their opposition to clergy speaking out on social issues.

In an opinion essay for The Atlantic that was discussed at the October 2021 session of Executive Council, the Rev. Elizabeth Felicetti, rector of St. David's Episcopal Church in Richmond, Va., wrote that she is "struggling to find a way forward" as the fabric of her congregation is being torn apart from all sides.

"We've weathered the controversy over gay marriage and the political divisions wrought by the 2016 election, but I worry that we won't be able to make it through the rest of the pandemic with our differing risk tolerances and approaches to masks. I can't find a middle way in these times," Felicetti wrote.

Knudsen said the well-being of the clergy in her diocese weighed on her, especially as the diocese's own Bishop-elect Paula Clark has suffered from health and personal crises over the past year, postponing her consecration. Clark, still recovering from a cerebral bleed she suffered in April 2021 and "long COVID," lost her husband to multiple myeloma in November.

"The concern about Bishop-elect Paula's health and progress has also been a unique additional burden in our diocesan life," Knudsen said. "The suffering of clergy is not unique, I know — I think of health care workers, schoolteachers and so many others. But I understand my ministry as a bishop is to support and care for the clergy and congregations of whatever diocese I am serving, so that is the focus of my concern."

So far, the response to the mini-sabbatical program has been "largely positive" — aside from "a few pieces of negative feedback," she said, "but rarely does anything a bishop proposes have 100% support."

That said, she told ENS: "When presented with the plan for mini-sabbaticals, many clergy and lay employees broke down in tears. One priest said to me, 'I don't know how to make this work for my complicated parish, but I appreciate the thought, and we will work to figure it out.'" ■

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**WARHOL continued from page 12**

With a nod again to Catholic iconography, Richard Avedon's now-famous 1969 photo shows Warhol displaying his surgery-scarred bare torso and posing in the manner of Saint Sebastian, who was martyred by being shot with arrows, as he is depicted in countless paintings in Western art. The artist also extends his hands in a resurrected-Christ pose, suggestive of having been restored to new life through the miracle of medicine.

In his well-known "Jackie" series (1964), which presents four somber blue and black acrylic and screenprint images of the widowed First Lady attending her husband John F. Kennedy's funeral, Warhol highlights his — and society's — complex attitude toward women (especially celebrities).

Taking stylistic cues from Eastern Catholic icons, Warhol elevated the elegant, Catholic, and culturally astute young woman to a secular saint, whose face of eternal sorrow would inspire quasi-national veneration.

In "Marilyn Monroe: Marilyn," (1978) Warhol passes judgment on American culture's treatment of this movie star's and all female celebrities' bodies. Using a palette ranging from dark to vivid to manipulate and abstract Monroe's recognizable features, he draws attention to the darker realities of America's worship of fame and wealth and to the erotic objectification of the female body.

Since childhood, Warhol was familiar with Leonardo's 15th century fresco "The Last Supper," and he did several versions of the work prior to the last series from 1986 displayed in this show.

The pink-hued "Last Supper," despite expressing the kitsch usually associated with his work, demonstrates Warhol's deep reverence for da Vinci's mural, and also evinces a subtle plea for grace and healing of the suffering which the gay community was experiencing during that time.

***"Crosses" 1981-82, acrylic and silkscreen on linen, 20x16 in.***

Warhol once instructed an interviewer to look at the surface of his paintings and films and himself to find the real Warhol, because there was nothing behind that surface.

While his art is for some an acquired taste, its explorations of cultural ambiguity, of the role and representation of women, and of his appropriations of Renaissance masterpieces, "Revelation" takes us behind the surface and acquaints us with Warhol's creative process.

Uppermost in this show is the acknowledgement that faith occupied a more central place in this artist's life and work than we knew. ■

*Based in New York, Pamela A. Lewis writes about topics of faith.*

NEWS

# Trinity Wall Street funds housing for homeless community college students

**By Egan Millard**
***Episcopal News Service***

Trinity Church Wall Street, the Lower Manhattan parish that financially supports nonprofits and churches in New York City and around the world, is now funding an urgent need in its neighborhood: student housing.

The church announced in December that it is granting $2 million to provide housing for homeless students enrolled at Borough of Manhattan Community College.

The grant will allow BMCC, a branch of the City University of New York system with a campus in Lower Manhattan, to open a dorm-like space that is easily accessible to the campus, housing up to 50 students for three years.

BMCC has narrowed it down to two locations and expects to begin housing students in the spring, said Bea de la Torre, managing director for housing and homelessness at Trinity.

All the students will be housed together with a residential adviser, de la Torre told ENS.

"They won't be scattered around. The idea is also that sense of community that they can build could be really helpful," de la Torre said. "Any additional supports that they need … are going to be in close proximity to where they're living, and they can then tap into that."

Photo/BMCC

***People walk near the main entrance to Borough of Manhattan Community College in New York.***

A 2018 survey by The Hope Center of 22,000 students across the CUNY system found that 14% had experienced homelessness in the previous year – most of them staying with friends or family temporarily, with 2% in hotels, 1% living outdoors and 1% in shelters. In the same survey, 55% of students reported experiencing housing insecurity in the previous year – defined as "a broad set of challenges such as the inability to pay rent or utilities, or the need to move frequently."

Those statistics reflect a national problem, fueled by a widespread lack of affordable housing, skyrocketing tuition and stagnant wages. The same Hope Center survey administered to over 195,000 students around the country in 2020 also showed 14% of two-year students reporting homelessness in the past year, and 52% reporting housing insecurity.

De la Torre remembers reading a news story about the 2018 CUNY survey and being "shocked" by the numbers.

"I had been working in the field for over a decade and it was something that I hadn't really thought about," she said. "So I sort of became a little bit obsessed with the idea of — we need to do something about this. The problem is so huge."

This past summer, Trinity gave a planning grant to the nonprofit Neighborhood Coalition for Shelter for a pilot student housing program.

"They're really looking at a long-term solution," de la Torre told ENS, "but in the meantime, all these students are homeless or housing-unstable. And we could do something … right in Trinity's neighborhood."

When de la Torre reached out to BMCC, "they could not have been more excited about the opportunity," she said.

BMCC will determine the eligibility criteria because "they're really the ones who know how to figure it out," de la Torre said, adding that meeting the students' housing needs will hopefully allow them to focus on their studies, making them more likely to graduate. She also hopes that the partnership can serve as a model for other institutions.

"One of the amazing things about working at Trinity is that we can do things like this and then show other funders, 'Come and join us.' It's always really hard to get that first funder," she told ENS.

The $2 million grant is part of a record-high giving year for Trinity, which gave out $46 million in grants in 2021, up from $33.6 million in 2020. As of 2020, it had a $6.5 billion endowment of real estate and investments, thanks to a gift of 215 acres in Manhattan from Queen Anne in 1705. ■

## Trinity Church Wall Street calls Jackson as rector

***Jackson***

Historic Trinity Church Wall Street in New York said it called the Rev. Phillip A. Jackson, who currently serves as priest-in-charge, as its next rector.

"Over the past two years, under Phil's faithful leadership, Trinity has deepened our commitment to our missional work, expanding our outreach to those in need, awarding nearly $80 million in grants, and creating new ways to be in community, serving our neighbor and God," said John G. Talty, church-warden.

Jackson came to Trinity in 2015 as vicar and was appointed priest-in-charge in January 2020. He had previous served as rector of Christ Church of the Ascension in Paradise Valley, Ariz.

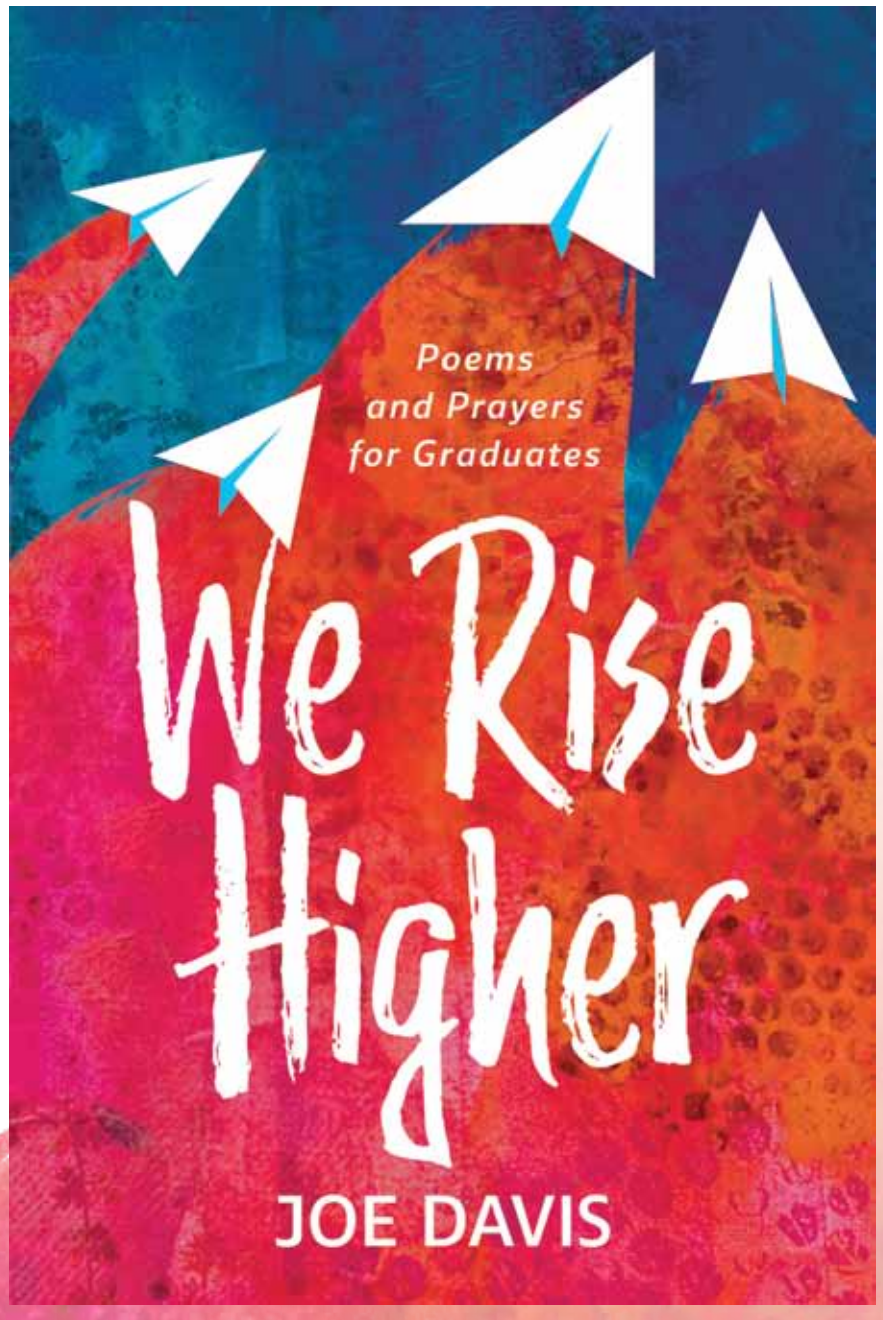
Jackson also has served parishes in Houston and Detroit, and before being ordained as a priest, he practiced law in Hawaii.

Jackson earned a B.A. from Amherst College; a J.D. from Yale Law School; and an M.Div. from the Church Divinity School of the Pacific. He is married to Page Underwood, an attorney.

Founded in 1697, Trinity Church Wall Street is a growing and inclusive Episcopal parish of more than 1,200 members.

— Trinity Church Wall Street

# A perfect gift for high school grads!

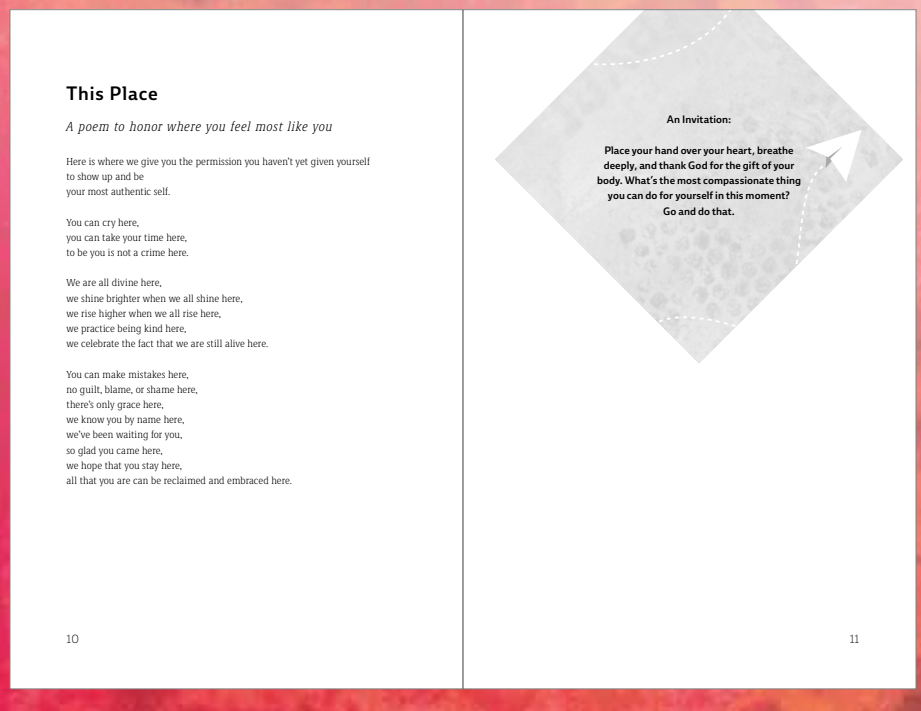



Poet, artist, and educator Joe Davis combines poetry and prayer to support and encourage new high school graduates. This collection includes:

- Poems of joy and celebration
- Poems of praise and affirmation
- Poems for heavy emotions
- Poems for growth and new beginnings

The book features interactive content to allow for creative responses and reflection by the graduate.

**Joe Davis** is a nationally touring artist, educator, and speaker based in Minneapolis, Minnesota. His work employs poetry, music, theater and dance to shape culture. Connecting with audiences as a keynote speaker, facilitator, and teaching artist, Joe also heads a multimedia production company, a soul funk band, and a racial justice education program. He holds a Master's degree in Theology of the Arts.



**This Place**

*A poem to honor where you feel most like you*

Here is where we give you the permission you haven't yet given yourself
to show up and be
your most authentic self.

You can cry here,
you can take your time here,
to be you is not a crime here.

We are all divine here,
we shine brighter when we all shine here,
we rise higher when we all rise here,
we practice being kind here,
we celebrate the fact that we are still alive here.

You can make mistakes here,
no guilt, blame, or shame here,
there's only grace here,
we know you by name here,
we've been waiting for you,
so glad you came here,
we hope that you stay here,
all that you are can be reclaimed and embraced here.

10

**An Invitation:**

**Place your hand over your heart, breathe deeply, and thank God for the gift of your body. What's the most compassionate thing you can do for yourself in this moment? Go and do that.**

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