

# Episcopal JOURNAL

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**NEWS** Mothers' Union marks 140th anniversary



**NEWS** Small churches find different keys to survival



**ARTS** Bowie's music grappled with life and death

## Majority of primates call for temporary Episcopal Church sanctions

*Curry says primates' statement will be painful for many Episcopalians*

By Matthew Davies  
Episcopal News Service

A majority of Anglican primates on Jan. 14 asked that the Episcopal Church, for three years, “no longer represent us on ecumenical and interfaith bodies, should not be appointed or elected to an internal standing committee and that, while participating in the internal bodies of the Anglican Communion, they will not take part in decision making on any issues pertaining to doctrine or polity.”

Expressing their unanimous desire to walk together, the primates said that their call came in response to the decision by the Episcopal Church's General Convention last July to change canonical language that defines marriage as being between a man and a woman (Resolution A036) and authorize two new marriage rites with language allowing them to be used by same-sex or opposite-sex couples (Resolution A054).

Primates are the senior archbishops and presiding bishops elected or appointed to lead each of the 38 autonomous provinces of the Anglican Communion. They are invited to the Primates' Meetings by the archbishop of Canterbury to consult on theological, social and international issues.

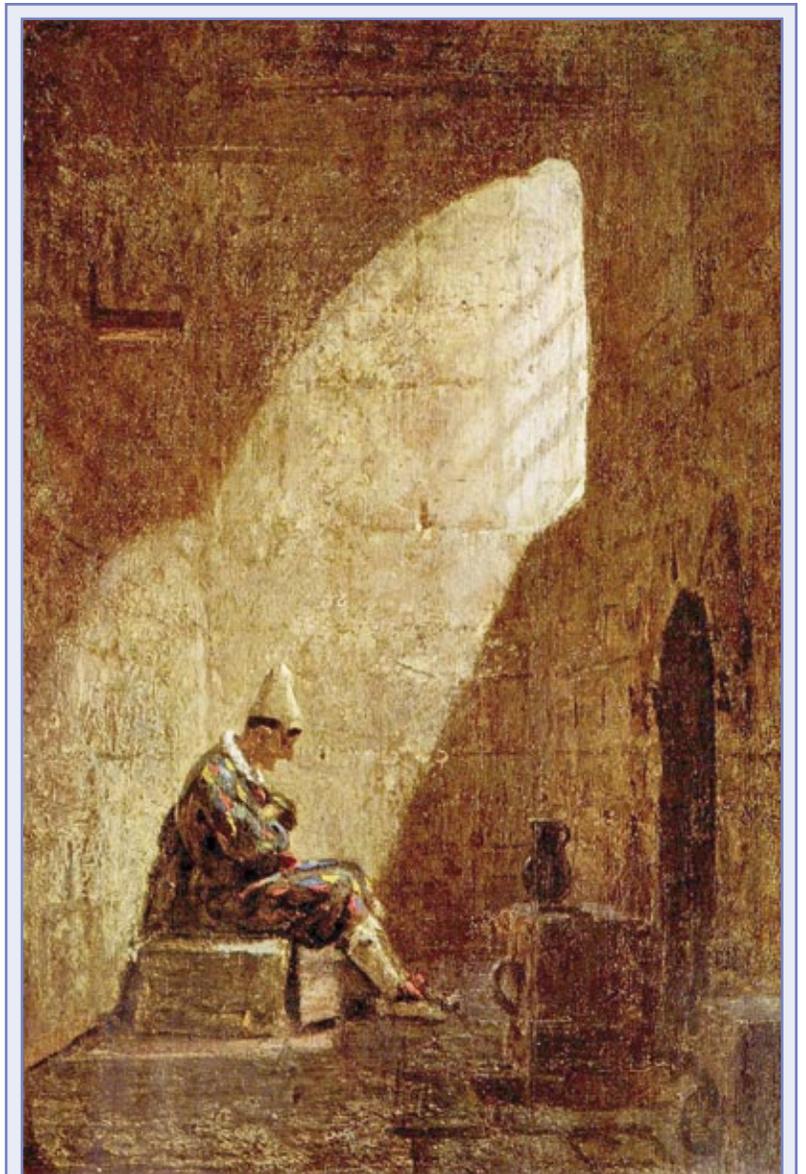
An announcement posted on the Primates 2016 meeting website ([www.primates2016.org](http://www.primates2016.org)) said that “the primates agreed [on] how they would walk together in the grace and love of Christ.”

“This agreement acknowledges the significant distance that remains but confirms their unanimous commitment to walk together,” said the announcement, which includes the full text of the primates' call. The agreement “demonstrates the commitment of all the primates to continue the life of the communion with neither victor nor vanquished,” the announcement said.

Before the Jan. 14 vote, Presiding Bishop Michael Curry told the primates gathering Jan. 11-15 in Canterbury, England, that the



Presiding Bishop Michael Curry speaking outside the gates to Canterbury Cathedral, England.



Photo/Wikimedia Commons

### The Lenten season

“Ash Wednesday,” completed in 1860 by the German artist Carl Spitzweg (1808-1885), refers to the carnival season that precedes the beginning of Lent in many cultures and locations. The painting juxtaposes the idea of excess, represented by the harlequin, and penitence. The clown appears to have landed in prison, with only a jug of water for sustenance, echoing the custom of fasting or self-denial during the Lenten season. His expression seems to indicate that Lent is a period of self-reflection and examination of the individual's relationship with God.

statement calling for the sanction would be painful for many in the Episcopal Church to receive.

“Many of us have committed ourselves and our church to being ‘a house of prayer for all people,’ as the Bible says, when all are truly welcome,” Curry said.

“Our commitment to be an inclusive church is not based on a social theory or capitulation to the ways of the culture, but on our belief that the outstretched arms of Jesus on the cross are a sign of the very love of God reaching out to us all. While I understand that many disagree with us, our decision regarding marriage is based on the belief that the words of the Apostle Paul to the Galatians are true for the church today: All who have been baptized into Christ have put on Christ. There is no longer Jew or Gentile, slave or free, male or female, for all are one in Christ.”

“For so many who are committed to following Jesus in the way of love and being a church that lives that love, this decision will bring real pain,” he said. “For fellow disciples of Jesus in our church who are gay or lesbian, this will bring more pain. For many who have felt and been rejected by the church

continued on page 6

## ANGLICAN DIGEST

Anglican Digest is a column of news and features from churches in the Anglican Communion.

### Inmates embrace evangelism course

An evangelism course produced by an Anglican church in London has proved a hit with prisoners, as more than 20,000 inmates completed the course over the past 12 months.

"*The Prisoners Journey*" is based on "*Christianity Explored*" — an evangelism course produced by the Rev. Rico Tice, associate minister for evangelism at All Souls', Langham Place, and writer Barry Cooper. Since being launched by All Souls in 2002, *Christianity Explored* has been translated into 20 languages. More than 5,000 courses a year are run in more than 80 countries.

Last January, Christianity Explored Ministries (CEM) linked with Prison Fellowship International (PFI) to develop "*The Prisoners Journey*" for use in prisons. It has been used in 103 prisons in 11 countries, including Nigeria, Australia, Singapore, Spain and Brazil. Nine more countries will join the program in 2016.

"Testimonies from those prisoners who have completed the course are eloquent and powerful," CEM said. "One example is Daniel, from South Africa, who said, 'A lot of people who are not believers are taking part in it, especially in my cell. Even inmates that I used to invite to church and [were] not accepting my invitation, joined this program.'"

PFI was founded in 1979 and has a network of 45,000 volunteers carrying

## Muslims shield Christians in Kenyan bus attack

Christian leaders in Kenya have hailed as an act of bravery and selflessness the shielding of some Christians by Muslims after suspected al-Shabab gunmen in Mandera County ambushed a passenger bus in late December.



Photo courtesy of REUTERS/Goran Tomasevic  
**Men look out the windows of a bus as it travels to Nairobi, in Mandera town at the Kenya-Somalia border.**

The gunmen sprayed the bus with bullets, killing two. But when they asked the 62 Muslim passengers to help identify the Christian passengers, the Muslims refused and told the militants to kill everyone or leave.

Defeated, the militants left hurriedly, according to witnesses.

The gesture has since united Christians and Muslims in the county, which lies in the country's north along the border with Somalia.

"I think it's an act of bravery for the Muslims who risked their lives to protect the Christians," said Anglican Bishop Julius Kalu of Mombasa. "This is the true meaning of religion, and we congratulate them."

Kalu said true religion protects neighbors and defends the weak and the poor. He attributed the development to the recent campaigns around peaceful religious coexistence.

Roman Catholic Bishop Joseph Alessandro of Garissa said it was a very positive gesture from the Muslims. "It shows that even the local Muslims do not support the Islamists' violence. Now al-Shabab knows they have no support."

Ali Roba, Mandera's county governor, praised the Muslims' reaction and said some were injured when they refused to be separated from the Christians.

Al-Shabab has launched a series of attacks in Kenya since 2011, when the country's army entered Somalia to fight the militants. The biggest attack was in April 2015, when the group killed 148 mostly Christian students at Garissa University College. ■

out prison ministry with two million inmates in 3,700 prisons in more than 120 countries.

### South Sudan seminary relocates back home

Amid a year of turbulence in South Sudan, there was some good news. After decades of displacement in Uganda, Bishop Allison Theological College (BATC) was relocated to Yei diocese — where it was meant to be.

BATC is now in its second semester of equipping Christian leaders for South Sudan. Church Mission Society mission partners Derek and Jane Waller have been teaching at BATC since it reopened in February 2015.

BATC, named after the last British (and CMS) bishop of Sudan — Oliver Allison — was the vision of Seme Solomon, the first bishop of Yei. In the 1980s, he saw the need for better-trained pastors to lead the church and began plans to build a training college.

The Sudanese civil war forced staff and students to take refuge in northern Uganda. "It was literally tested by fire as hostile Ugandans burnt the college down," said Derek Waller. "BATC

moved to a more secure site in Arua, Uganda, where it flourished for a time and trained some of the pastors who are working in South Sudan today."

The Ugandan site closed in 2011.

At the new site, the school has 21 students. Four live in Yei, the others on the compound. Some classes meet under a mango tree while staff and students pitch in to make existing buildings usable.

The Wallers say funding the college, feeding the students and providing water are ongoing challenges that staff and students share.

"But we are kept going by the warmth and enthusiasm of the students. Their insights into Scripture, their desire to apply their learning to serving their people ... is a delight," Jane Waller said.

### New Zealand cathedral rebuilding discussed

A mediator reported that restoration work could leave a rebuilt Christchurch Cathedral in New Zealand "indistinguishable" from the one that was all-but destroyed by the 2011 earthquake — an option allowing the cathedral's reinstatement. But the report said that the "costly and risky project" would be significantly

more expensive and take much longer to build than a contemporary replacement.

Following an impasse about which of the two options should be followed, the New Zealand government appointed lawyer Miriam Dean QC to mediate. Following the publication of her report, the Diocese of Christchurch said it would look again at the cost and feasibility of reinstating the cathedral. Further announcements are expected in April.

The report by Miriam Dean stops short of endorsing either option but, Anglican Taonga reported, "crucially brings to the negotiating table parties that have been at loggerheads over the cathedral's fate for more than three years."

The cost of reinstatement has been estimated at \$105 million New Zealand dollars, and the work could be completed by 2022. In contrast, the cost of building a completely new cathedral has been estimated at costing up to \$66 million New Zealand dollars.

In August 2013, a transitional "cardboard cathedral" was opened to serve the community of Christchurch. ■

Sources: *Anglican Communion News Service, Religion News Service, Church Mission Society.*

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## FROM THE EDITOR'S DESK

Two subjects received worldwide attention in the first month of the year — a meeting of clergymen and the death of an artist.

The Anglican Communion's latest Primates' Meeting ended with a paradox — a commitment to "walk together" and also a request that the Episcopal Church stand down from various commissions for three years because it approved same-gender marriage last year.

As Yogi Berra supposedly said, it seemed like déjà vu all over again. After Gene Robinson was elected in 2003 in New Hampshire as the first openly gay bishop in the Episcopal Church, the church was allowed to attend but not

vote at the 2005 meeting of the Anglican Consultative Council, the communion's coordinating body. The Anglican Church of Canada also was restricted at that meeting. After that, the U.S. and Canadian churches returned to the ACC. Something like that will probably happen this time.

The primates' actions were disappointing, and Presiding Bishop Michael Curry made a strong statement reaffirming the church's commitment to love and inclusion as the way of Jesus. It is a concern, however, that the primates' actions may influence the Canadian church when it considers same-gender marriage at its General Synod in July.

If the primates' request to our church

is a bump in the long road of faith, we found grace in an unexpected place: the death of artist David Bowie.

It's not often that an Anglican bishop (see page 13), as well as the archbishop of Canterbury and Roman Catholic Cardinal Gianfranco Ravasi comment on a rock star's death, but Bowie was a serious artist whose meditations on the eternal questions — life, death and the nature of existence — resonated with millions.

Throughout his career, his work referenced prayer and the Bible, but always questioning and challenging the true nature of faith. In that respect, his passing had more profound impact and spiritual depth than what may turn out to be an action of the moment. ■

## NEWS

# Mothers' Union celebrates 140th anniversary

## Anglican Communion News Service

The Anglican mission agency Mothers' Union is celebrating its 140th anniversary in 2016. Throughout the year, it will hold events to mark 14 decades of "faithful outreach to families of all faiths and none."

The Mothers' Union was formed in 1876, when Mary Sumner brought together parents in her own Hampshire parish in England to build their confidence in bringing up their children. Since then it has grown to an organization of more than four million women — and men — in more than 80 countries. It continues to encourage parents in looking after children physically,

mentally and spiritually.

From the outset, the Mothers' Union recognized that strong relationships and the role of family, however defined, were crucial in building healthy communities.

"Whilst the ways in which we operate to fulfill that need may be different from that of the world of the 19th century, our vision today is still of a world where God's love is shown through loving, respectful and flourishing relationships. This is the essence of our work," the agency says on its website. "We aim to show our Christian faith by the transformation of communities worldwide. We can do this through the promotion of stable marriage, family life and the protection of children. This is our mission. It is what we aim to achieve."

## Agreement troubles Scottish Episcopal Church

The Church of England and the (Presbyterian) Church of Scotland reached "an historic agreement that recognizes their longstanding ecumenical partnership and lays the groundwork for future joint projects," the two churches announced. But the (Anglican) Scottish Episcopal Church called for a reconsideration, citing concerns about shared worship and the exchange of ministers.

The churches reaching the agreement, *the Columba Declaration*, have national church status in the United Kingdom, although the Church of Scotland is independent of the state. The Church of England's General Synod will discuss the report in February and the Church of Scotland's General Assembly in May.

The report sets out the history of partnership between the two churches, the shared beliefs that allow for close cooperation between them and an exploration of how the partnership could grow. The two already work jointly on public-policy issues and last year established the Churches' Mutual Credit Union in response to concerns that low-income families needed access to low-cost banking and loans.

The report emphasises that joint ecumenical work should include other churches, especially the Scottish Episcopal Church and the United Reformed Church.

In a statement, the Scottish Episcopal Church welcomed "the opportunity for . . . further ecumenical discussion" but said that "certain aspects of the report which appear to go beyond the relationship of the two churches as national institutions cause us concern."

Primus of Scotland David Chillingworth elaborated in a series of blog posts, highlighting two particular areas of concern.

"The first is the commitment that the Church of Scotland and the Church of England will 'welcome one another's members to each other's worship as guests and receive one another's members into the congregational life of each other's churches where that is their desire,'" he said. "The second — and far more serious — provision is that the partners will 'enable ordained ministers from one of our churches to exercise ministry in the other church, in accordance with the discipline of each church.' This is in the context of an earlier acknowledgement that the partners 'look forward to a time when growth in communion can be expressed in fuller unity that makes possible the interchangeability of ministers.'"

"The Scottish Episcopal Church now seems to be faced with the possibility that Church of England clergy will minister in Scotland under the authorization of the Church of Scotland and without reference to the Scottish Episcopal Church," he said. "Yet the Church of England and the Scottish Episcopal Church are partner members of the Anglican Communion. The Anglican Communion in Scotland is expressed in the life of the Scottish Episcopal Church.

"The Church of Scotland and the Church of England seem to have decided that their commonality as national churches justifies them in setting aside other ecumenical relationships and etiquette. What would really help this . . . would be for the two churches to decide to delay publication of the full document to allow time for consultation."

A Church of Scotland spokesman told the *Independent* newspaper that the Scottish Episcopal Church had been part of the discussions, first as an active member and subsequently as an observer. ■

## Mothers' UNION

Christian care for families

"In the first book of Samuel," a spokesman said, "he marks an unlooked for victory against the mighty Philistines by erecting a stone, naming it 'Ebenezer' — meaning 'stone of help' — as a permanent reminder of the leading and guidance of God: 'Thus far has the Lord helped us.' Over the past 140 years, Mothers' Union has faced, and will continue to face, many challenges. Family life is under increasing pressure, and the call on charitable resources is higher today than ever before. But we can look at how we are meeting these challenges and say, like Samuel, 'Thus far has the Lord helped us.'"

A special anniversary service will be held Sept. 22 at Winchester Cathedral, England, — where the Mothers' Union was founded. Service resources are being made available to help local churches hold their own anniversary services on Mothering Sunday (March 6), Lady Day (April 4) and Mary Sumner Day (Aug. 9).

The Mothers' Union also has set fundraising challenge of £1.4 million (US\$2.034 million) to support its work providing practical action to support

500,000 throughout the year.

The Mothers' Union engaged in daily prayer for the Primates' Meeting, scheduled for Jan. 11-16 in Canterbury, England. "Whilst Mothers' Union is an autonomous organization, our close fellowship and shared mission in many parts of the world mean that the meeting of the Primates of the Communion . . . [is] held in the hearts of all Mothers' Unions around the world," The agency said on its website.

The Mothers' Union published prayers and linked to the litany for the meeting prepared by the Anglican Communion secretary general, Archbishop Josiah Idowu-Fearon.

Locally, parishioners can join or start Mothers' Union groups, often known as "branches." Mothers' Union branches meet together regularly to pray and worship as well as look at how they can support families within their churches and local communities.

To find out more about Mothers' Union, contact the London office at 020 7222 5533 or e-mail [communications@mothersunion.org](mailto:communications@mothersunion.org) or visit [www.mothersunion.org](http://www.mothersunion.org). ■



Photo/Wikimedia Commons

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## EPISCOPAL LIVES

### S.C. bishop to retire

Episcopal Church in South Carolina Provisional Bishop Charles G. vonRosenberg has announced that he will retire this summer after more than three years leading Episcopalians in eastern South Carolina.

In a Jan. 14 letter to the people of the diocese, the bishop said he had officially notified the diocesan standing committee of his intention to retire after June 26, when he completes his schedule of official visits to the 30 parishes and missions of the diocese.



vonRosenberg

"It has been my great privilege to serve in this capacity with the good and faithful people who chose to continue your faith journey as part of the Episcopal Church. These times have been exciting and challenging, and I assure you that I will never forget them or you," he said.

VonRosenberg was elected as provisional bishop in January 2013 at a special diocesan convention, called to reorganize the diocese after a breakaway group announced it had left the Episcopal Church. Provisional bishops in the Episcopal Church have all the authority and responsibility of other bishops, but they usually serve for a limited period of time.

Under vonRosenberg, 22 churches remained part of the Episcopal Church, and eight new mission churches formed.

A blue-ribbon Committee on the Future of the Diocese was formed last fall to make a recommendation to the diocesan convention sometime this year about what administrative model will best serve the diocese moving forward. Under church canons, the standing committee serves as the ecclesiastical authority when a diocese is without a bishop.

This will be vonRosenberg's second retirement as a bishop. He moved to the Daniel Island community of Charleston with his wife Annie in 2011 after having served for 12 years as bishop of the Diocese of East Tennessee.

Under his leadership, the South Carolina diocese has grown to include a staff of five part-time employees plus a wide range of volunteer positions, boards and commissions organized to serve the needs of 30 congregations and an estimated 7,000 Episcopalians in the region.

Four annual conventions have been held under the bishop. A major achievement of those meetings was a major update to the constitution and canons of the diocese, restoring provisions that accede to its governance within the Episcopal Church.

### Development director named for Episcopal Church

Tara Elgin Holley is the new director of development for the Episcopal Church. She will lead the Development Office on all projects, including cultivating major prospects. These include the rebuilding of churches and institutions of the Diocese of Haiti, securing the ministry of Navajoland and completing construction for a new space for the church archives.

Previously, Holley had served as the

## Oklahoma bishop receives human rights award

Diocese of Oklahoma Bishop Edward J. Konieczny recently was recognized by the Oklahoma Universal Human Rights Alliance for his outstanding human rights achievement.

The alliance's mission is to be "a guardian of liberty, working daily in courts, legislatures and communities to defend and preserve the individual rights and liberties that the constitution and laws of the United States guarantees everyone in this country."

Konieczny was among local community leaders honored on the floor of the Capitol Building House Chamber at the Oklahoma State Capitol on Dec. 10, Human Rights Day, which commemorates the adoption of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights.

Konieczny was honored for his support of the Latino community, specifically Santa Maria Virgen Episcopal Church in Oklahoma City. With Konieczny's support and encouragement, Santa Maria's community outreach programs have thrived. Santa Maria offers after-school care and English as a Second Language courses and serves as a Red Cross Partner Shelter. During the 2015 tornados, Santa Maria sheltered, fed and supported nearly 70 people.

After receiving his award, Konieczny spoke briefly on the importance of honoring the dignity of all people, ensuring that all are allowed the same rights, responsibilities and privileges as children of God. He highlighted a few of the programs in the diocese that

strive to uphold these truths in their everyday ministry and mission in their communities. ■



Photo/Oklahoma State Capitol Legislative Photographer

Konieczny

vice president for institutional advancement at the Seminary of the Southwest in Austin, Texas, since 2009. Before that she was the senior campaign counsel for



Holley

Custom Development Solutions; director of corporate/foundation relations at George Washington University Washington, D.C.; and director of development/public relations for the Harry Ransom Humanities Research Center at the University of Texas at Austin, Texas.

Among her other activities, she was a fundraising consultant for the Applesseed Foundation, Washington, D.C., and is a member of the Association of Fundraising Professionals and the Partnership for Philanthropic Planning and serves on the planning committee for the Consortium of Endowed Episcopal Parishes. She holds a Certified Fundraising Executive Certification and wrote "My Mother's Keeper."

Holley holds a master of music degree in musicology (ethnomusicology) and a bachelor of fine arts in music, both from the University of Texas, Austin.

### Spellers named canon for evangelism, reconciliation



Spellers

The Rev. Stephanie Spellers began work Jan. 1 as the Episcopal Church's canon to the presiding bishop for evangelism and reconciliation. She will support the ministry of Presiding Bishop Michael Curry related to evangelism and reconciliation efforts at the local, congregational, diocesan and churchwide levels.

"Her work will involve helping to spread the good news of Jesus to the church and through the church to the world," Curry said.

"There's no better time than this to be in the Episcopal branch of the Jesus movement," Spellers said. "So many of us are ready to partner, risk, heal and

celebrate the good news in our neighborhoods. So many of us are hungry to fall more deeply in love with Jesus and to create spaces where different people can grow in that love, too. So many of us are yearning to follow Jesus beyond fear, beyond comfort and beyond the walls keeping us from each other and from our neighbors. I can't wait to commit my whole heart and energy to this Spirit-work with our whole church."

Spellers comes to the job as a faculty member and director of mission and reconciliation at the General Theological Seminary in New York, where she resides. She is also the senior consultant and director of new ministry development at the Center for Progressive Renewal. She serves as a consultant for various church organizations and as an editor at Church Publishing.

Previously she was the canon for mission vitality for the Episcopal Diocese of

Long Island and a member of the chaplain team for the House of Bishops. She served as the co-chair of the Standing Commission on Mission and Evangelism (2009-2012). Spellers was the founding priest of The Crossing @ The Cathedral Church of St. Paul-Boston and before ordination worked at Harvard Divinity School and as a religion reporter.

She is the author of several books, articles and resources focused on embracing emerging cultures and Episcopal traditions, including "Radical Welcome and The Episcopal Way" (with Eric Law). She is a former Episcopal Church Foundation fellow.

Spellers graduated from Episcopal Divinity School in Cambridge, Mass., with a master of divinity degree; Harvard Divinity School with a master of theological studies degree; and Wake Forest University with a bachelor's degree in religion. ■

## OBITUARY

### Sally Bucklee, advocate for women in the church

Sally Bucklee, a longtime advocate for women in the Episcopal Church, died Jan. 8 at age 85 after a long illness.

Bucklee was "a giant" locally and in the wider church, said the Rev. Sheila McJilton, rector of St. Philip's Episcopal Church in Laurel, Md., where Bucklee was a longtime member, in an e-mail announcing Bucklee's death. "Along with Marge Christie and other women pioneers, Sally is one of the people who worked long and hard on behalf of women's ordination."

She was "one of the most amazing laywomen in our church," the Rev. Elizabeth Kaeton, former Episcopal Women's Caucus president, wrote in an announcement to members of an e-mail list in the Diocese of Newark, where she is canonically resident. "She was called 'The Dean of Women in The Episcopal Church' by former Presiding Bishop Frank Griswold."

"She, like our own Marge Christie with whom she worked, was a former President of the Episcopal Women's Caucus and helped to establish the Commission on the Status of Women," Kaeton said. Bucklee also was elected four times by the Diocese of Washington (D.C.) to serve as deputy to General Convention.

"Sally was a strong advocate for IntegrityUSA, was very active in the D.C. chapter and [was] a frequent volunteer at the Integrity Booth at the Integrity

General Convention," Kaeton wrote. "Sally was also a very early proponent of EfM (Education for Ministry) and worked to develop curriculum as well as a mentor and trainer of mentors for years. She and Jane Holmes Dixon, then her rector at St. Phillip's in Laurel, Md., who became the second woman elected to the episcopacy, made EfM mandatory for anyone seeking elected office in that congregation." ■



Bucklee

Sources: Episcopal Church Office of Public Affairs, House of Bishops and Deputies listserv, Diocese of Oklahoma and Episcopal Church in South Carolina.

## NEWS

# Presiding Bishop marks Haiti quake anniversary

On Jan. 12, 2010, a massive earthquake struck Haiti, a diocese of the Episcopal Church, killing more than 300,000 people, seriously injuring more than 250,000 and leaving 1.3 million homeless. An extensive number of private and public buildings were destroyed, including Holy Trinity Cathedral and the affiliated Episcopal institutions in the cathedral complex.

On the sixth anniversary of the quake, Presiding Bishop Michael issued the following message:

“Six years ago, a tremendous earthquake of historic magnitude shattered

the lives of Haitian mothers, fathers, sisters and brothers. Their cries of lamentation echoed across Haiti even as the aftershocks continued to rock Port-au-Prince and the surrounding countryside.

“Haiti, the poorest state in the Western Hemisphere, is also the island home of a branch of the Episcopal Church. More Episcopal souls live and breathe in the Diocese of Haiti than in any other diocese in the world, and, on this day, we stand in solidarity and solemn remembrance with Haitians everywhere.

“We continue to grieve with families who lost their loved ones in the earthquake and with those who were affected



Photo/Dave Drachlis/Diocese of Alabama

Casera Bazile's "Baptism of Our Lord" mural, which he painted inside Holy Trinity Cathedral in Port-au-Prince in 1951, was among three of 14 original murals that, in part, survived the Jan. 12, 2010, earthquake that leveled the cathedral. Since this photo was taken, about five weeks after the quake, the murals have been removed and stored.

## United Thank Offering accepting grant applications

Applications forms for the 2016 United Thank Offering (UTO) grants are available at [www.episcopalchurch.org/page/uto-grants](http://www.episcopalchurch.org/page/uto-grants). The deadline for applying is 5 p.m. EST March 4.



UTO grants are awarded for projects that address human needs and help alleviate poverty domestically and internationally in the Episcopal Church.

The focus for the grants is startup money for new projects focusing on Mark Five of the Anglican Marks of Mission: "To strive to safeguard the integrity of creation and sustain and renew the life of the earth."

The funds are not permitted for the continuation of ongoing ministries.

The United Thank Offering will accept:

- one grant application per diocese within the Episcopal Church;
- one additional application for a companion grant from a diocese.

This relationship may be formed with an aided Episcopal diocese or with a diocese from the Anglican Communion. The sponsoring bishop with jurisdiction will be responsible for the accounting of the grant.

For more information about guidelines and applications, contact the Rev. Heather Melton, missionary for UTO, at [hmelton@episcopalchurch.org](mailto:hmelton@episcopalchurch.org).

UTO materials are available in Spanish and are available for download at [www.episcopalchurch.org](http://www.episcopalchurch.org).

### The Five Marks of Mission are:

- To proclaim the good news of the kingdom.
- To teach, baptize and nurture new believers.
- To respond to human need by loving service.
- To seek to transform unjust structures of society, to challenge violence of every kind and to pursue peace and reconciliation.
- To strive to safeguard the integrity of creation and sustain and renew the life of the earth. ■



Photo/Logan Abassi/UNDP Global - United Nations Development Program

The Haitian National Palace (Presidential Palace), located in Port-au-Prince, was heavily damaged after the earthquake of Jan. 12, 2010. Originally a two-story structure, the building's second story completely collapsed.

by the cholera epidemic that still ravages the Haitian community. We express gratitude for the lives salvaged from the ruins, for the creative resiliency of the Haitian people and for new dreams imagined and realized as the rebuilding effort continues, including in the Holy Trinity Cathedral in Port-au-Prince. Finally, we recognize that there is still tremendous work ahead of us to heal, transform and sustain the country of Haiti.

"Tens of thousands of Haitians remain displaced from their homes, subsisting in the dangerous and unsanitary conditions of tent camps. The Haitian cholera epidemic has sickened hundreds of thousands of Haitians and ended over 9,000 lives to date.

"Faced with these enormous challenges, we find hope and strength in our faith. The Haitians have a proverb: "Bondye di ou: fè pa M" or "God says to you: 'Do your part, and I'll do

mine.'" God is at work in Haiti, moving with doctors and engineers, teachers and farmers, and reminding and encouraging us to continue our good work. Indeed, as Episcopalians, we have a crucial part to play.

"We can hold our governments accountable for ensuring that development aid is distributed fairly and transparently, and we can call on policymakers to adequately fund the Cholera Elimination Plan that delivers much-needed supplies and vaccinations to at-risk Haitians. We can give our time, our expertise and our funds to the ongoing effort of restoring Haiti and promoting sustainable development therein.

"And, last, we can remember that the Haitian people are our family, our brothers and sisters in Christ, and by working together with them and with our God, we can fulfill the holy task of healing Haiti." ■

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## NEWS

PRIMATES continued from page 1

because of who they are, for many who have felt and been rejected by families and communities, our church opening itself in love was a sign of hope. And this will add pain on top of pain.”

Curry told the primates that he was in no sense comparing his own pain to theirs. But, he said, “I stand before you as your brother. I stand before you as a descendant of African slaves, stolen from their native land, enslaved in a bitter bondage and then, even after emancipation, segregated and excluded in church and society. And this conjures that up again, and brings pain.

“The pain for many will be real. But God is greater than anything. I love Jesus and I love the church. I am a Christian in the Anglican way. And, like you, as we have said in this meeting, I am committed to ‘walking together’ with you as fellow primates in the Anglican family.”

The primates’ statement also asks Archbishop of Canterbury Justin Welby to appoint a task group “to maintain conversation among ourselves with the intention of restoration of relationship, the rebuilding of mutual trust, healing the legacy of hurt, recognizing the extent of our commonality and exploring our deep differences, ensuring they are held between us in the love and grace of Christ.”

The first two days of the gathering were given solely to setting the agenda for the week and focusing on whether the primates could reach an agreement on how to move forward despite their differences of opinion concerning theological interpretation and human-sexuality issues.

A widely anticipated exodus of some conservative African archbishops did not occur, and all but one primate remained at the table during the meeting. Archbishop Stanley Ntagali of the Anglican Church of Uganda quietly left the meeting on Jan. 12. He had said in a statement before the gathering that he would leave unless “discipline and godly order” were restored in the Anglican Communion. In a Jan. 13 letter to his church, Ntagali said he left because the Ugandan provincial assembly had resolved to not participate in any official communion meetings until that order was restored.

ENS learned from one archbishop that, on Jan. 13, the primates took a vote that would have asked the Episcopal Church to withdraw voluntarily from the Anglican Communion for three years. The vote failed by 15 to 20. Such a withdrawal is not in keeping with the processes of provincial membership as outlined in the constitution of the Anglican Consultative Council, the communion’s main policy-making body. The ACC is scheduled to meet April 8-20 in Lusaka, Zambia.

On Jan. 13, the agenda moved onto other pressing issues affecting the Anglican Communion, such as relief-and-development work and its response to war and conflict.

This was the first Primates’ Meeting for Curry, installed as the Episcopal Church’s presiding bishop and primate



The primates of the Anglican Communion meet in Canterbury, England.

Photo/courtesy of the Primates’ Meeting

last November. Following his election in June 2015, Curry said the Anglican Communion was as much about relationships and partnerships as about structure and organization. “We’ve got some work to do; we’ve got some Jesus work to do,” he said. “This world is crying out for us and it needs us, and the Anglican Communion is one way that God uses us together to really make this a better world.”

The Primates’ Meeting is one of the three “instruments of communion,” the other two being the Lambeth Conference of bishops and the Anglican Consultative Council, the communion’s main policy-making body. The Archbishop of Canterbury, as primus inter pares, or “first among equals,” is recognized as the focus of unity for the Anglican Communion.

Each province relates to other provinces within the Anglican Communion by being in full communion with the See of Canterbury. The archbishop of Canterbury calls the Lambeth Conference, chairs the meeting of primates and is president of the ACC.

In some Anglican provinces, the primate is called archbishop and/or metropolitan, while in others the term presiding bishop — or as in Scotland, primus — is used.

The archbishop of Canterbury also invites to the Primates’ Meetings the moderators who lead the united ecumenical churches of North India, South India and Pakistan.

In 1978, Archbishop Donald Coggan established the Primates’ Meeting as an opportunity for “leisurely thought, prayer and deep consultation.” ■

## Vatican relics sent to Anglican cathedral before summit

By Trevor Grundy  
Religion News Service

Relics of British Christianity now in the hands of the Vatican were flown to England just before the Primates’ Meeting for display at Canterbury Cathedral.

The first item to arrive was an ivory handle of a staff, or crozier, used by St. Gregory, the pope who helped establish Christianity in England in the sixth century. Gregory sent St. Augustine to England to help convert the Anglo-Saxons.

Valued at \$365,505, the handle was on view to the public and the 38 Anglican prelates. The idea of the two Christian churches temporarily exchanging relics came after a cricket match between Catholic and Anglican priests in 2014.

“At a time of intense crisis in the Anglican Communion, the handle is a sign of prayer and a support from our fellow Christians,” a Church of England source told *The Times* on Jan. 6.

The crozier handle was displayed in the cathedral crypt from Jan. 9-17.

In December, a much more eye-catching relic will be flown in from



Photo/courtesy of Canterbury Cathedral

The ancient crozier head, a relic traditionally associated with sixth-century Pope Gregory, is displayed at Canterbury Cathedral.

Rome — the bloodied vestment worn by St. Thomas Becket when he was murdered at the high altar of Canterbury Cathedral by four armed knights loyal to King Henry II, after a quarrel between the king and his archbishop. ■

## Anglicans gather at Myanmar meeting

Anglican Communion News Service

Archbishop Philip Richardson, one of the primates of the Anglican Church in Aotearoa, New Zealand and Polynesia, called in at the third “Anglican Family Gathering” of the Church of the Province of Myanmar on his way to the January Primates Meeting, Anglican Taonga reported.

Several thousand Anglicans from across Myanmar gathered for the once-every-five year gathering, along with a few other Anglican leaders, most from the Asia Pacific region.

Myanmar, the poorest country in Southeast Asia, is leaving 64 years of military dictatorship. November’s landslide election victory by Aung San Suu Kyi’s National League for Democracy has left the people he mingled with cautiously optimistic, Richardson said. The military are still powerful and ever-present in Myanmar society, he said, “but there’s real hope among the people that they’ve gone so far down the road to democracy that those gains won’t be turned back.

“There is also tremendous pride in what Aung San Suu Kyi has achieved,” he says, “and a conviction that her leadership

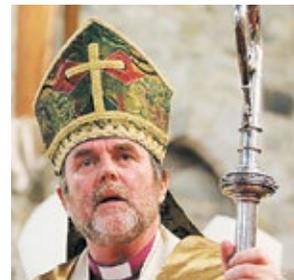
will finally bring equitable development.”

But there is recognition, too, of serious impediments to development: the effects of land confiscations, for example, and the social upheavals caused by the movement of people driven from their traditional lands. Myanmar has more than 100 different ethnic groups, and during the military dictatorship years, the country was embroiled in a rumbling civil war.

In a country (population 51 million) where Buddhism is the state religion, where the military junta

forced foreign missionaries to leave and where questions about religious freedom still remain — the Muslim Rohingya minority culture is oppressed — the Anglican church is a small, stable, ethnically diverse and welcoming presence. “You get the sense of a community that is in very good heart,” Richardson said. “There are significant numbers of vocations, a noticeable group of young leaders, and a growing number of women asking about the role of women in leadership in the church.”

The archbishop left the gathering impressed by the “grace, kindness and humor of the people” — and their keenness to end their isolation, he said. ■



Richardson

## NEWS

# Welby apologizes for persecution on the grounds of sexuality

By Matthew Davies and  
Mary Frances Schjonberg  
Episcopal News Service

Archbishop of Canterbury Justin Welby apologized on Jan. 15 to lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender people for the hurt and pain they have experienced by the Anglican Communion over the years.

Speaking at a news conference following a five-day meeting of Anglican primates in Canterbury, England, Welby referred to a group of some 40 gay and lesbian Africans who had gathered outside Canterbury Cathedral to protest the actions of the primates in calling for the exclusion of the Episcopal Church from Anglican dialogues and committees.

The protestors, many of whom spoke with the media about the persecution they have faced, challenged the so-called “consequences” asked for by the primates as homophobic because they were a direct response to the decision by the Episcopal Church’s General Convention last July to change canonical language that defines marriage as being between a man and a woman. That convention also authorized two new marriage rites with language allowing them to be used by same-sex or opposite-sex couples.

“The group outside ... reminds us of the pain and suffering of many LGBTI people around the world and the extreme suffering in some countries where they are criminalized,” Welby said. “It is for me a constant source of deep sadness that people are persecuted for their sexuality ... I want to take this opportunity personally to say how sorry I am for the hurt and pain in the past and present



Photo/Matthew Davies/Episcopal News Service

Archbishop of Canterbury Justin Welby, second from right, makes a point during a news conference held after the Primates’ Meeting at Canterbury Cathedral in England.

that the church has caused.”

Meanwhile, some African provinces continue to support the criminalization of homosexuals in countries such as Nigeria and Uganda.

On two occasions, in response to media questions, Archbishop Josiah Idowu-Fearon, secretary general of the Anglican Communion, talked of the frustration in some African provinces of Western cultural understandings of sexuality being “imposed” on their communities.

“There are gays and lesbians in Africa, of course there are, and we have always had them,” said Idowu-Fearon. “But generally on the continent of Africa our culture does not support the promotion of this type of lifestyle ... If the Western world would just leave Africans within our various cultures, we know how to live together with our various differences ... The primates have made it very clear that we have always made room for pastoral care and concern for those who have different sexual orientation. When

we begin to make everybody, irrespective of their sexual orientation, feel a part of the family we will have some respite.”

In their communiqué, titled “Walking Together in the Service of God in the World,” the primates said they condemn “homophobic prejudice and violence and resolved to work together to offer pastoral care and loving service irrespective of sexual orientation. This conviction arises out of our discipleship of Jesus Christ.

“The primates reaffirmed their rejection of criminal sanctions against same-sex attracted people.”

They also said that the Christian church and the Anglican Communion have “caused deep hurt” by the way they have treated people based on their sexual orientation. The primates said they “ex-

press their profound sorrow and affirm again that God’s love for every human being is the same, regardless of their sexuality, and that the church should never by its actions give any other impression.”

The primates said in their communiqué that their first item of business during their Jan. 11-15 gathering was to discuss “the differences among us in regard to our teaching on matters of human sexuality.”

They said they had to look at what it meant “in practical terms” to live out their desire “to walk together, however painful this is, and despite our differences, as a deep expression of our unity in the body of Christ.” The communiqué said a working group of primates developed the series of actions imposed on the Episcopal Church as a consequence of its actions at General Convention.

While some participants and some observers referred to the primates’ request as “sanctions,” the communiqué calls them “consequences” for the actions of the Episcopal Church. At the post-meeting news conference, Welby insisted on the consequences terminology.

Presiding Bishop Michael Curry said in a video statement recorded outside Canterbury Cathedral that “this has been a disappointing time for many, and there will be heartache and pain for many, but it’s important to remember that we are still part of the Anglican Communion.

“We are the Episcopal Church, and we are part of the Jesus movement, and that movement goes on, and our work goes on. And the truth is, **continued on page 14**

## Also in the communiqué, the primates said they:

- supported Welby’s proposal to call a Lambeth Conference gathering of all of the communion’s bishops, in 2020. The last meeting was in 2008 and the conference has traditionally happened every 10 years. However, Welby had already said the bishops would not meet in 2018.

- agreed to meet again in 2017 and 2019.

- heard about a petition of almost two million signatures co-coordinated by the Anglican Environment Network, reports about moves to divest from fossil fuels, the expansion of deserts in Africa and “the struggle for survival of the peoples of the Pacific as island life is threatened in many places by the rise of sea levels.”

- “discussed the reality of religiously motivated violence and its impact on people and communities throughout the world. Primates living in places where such violence is a daily reality spoke movingly and passionately about their circumstances and the effect on their members.”

- “repudiated any religiously moti-

ated violence and expressed solidarity with all who suffer from this evil in the world today.”

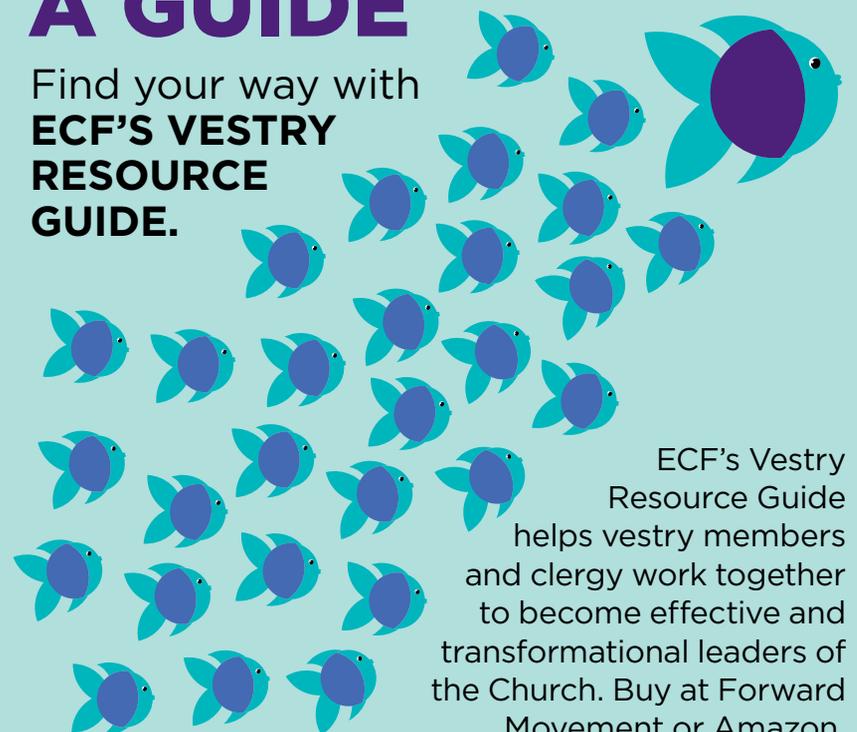
- said they look forward to a proposal coming to the ACC for “comprehensive child protection measures to be available throughout all the churches of the Communion.”

- were “energized by the opportunity to share experiences of evangelism and motivated to evangelize with their people,” and said they “joyfully commit themselves and the Anglican Church, to proclaim throughout the world the person and work of Jesus Christ, unceasingly and authentically, inviting all to embrace the beauty and joy of the Gospel.”

- discussed what they called “tribalism, ethnicity, nationalism and patronage networks, and the deep evil of corruption” and “reflected that these issues become inextricably connected to war and violence, and derive from poverty.” They agreed to ask the secretary general of the Anglican Communion to commission a study for the next Primates’ Meeting. ■

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## LENTEN RESOURCES

# Sustenance for the journey

*Lent, the 40-day season of repentance and reflection, begins on Feb. 10, Ash Wednesday, leading to Easter Sunday on March 27. Here is a selection of resources intended to enrich congregational or individual prayer and meditation during Lent.*

### Episcopal Relief & Development

The agency invites supporters to “Walk the Path of Lent” with this year’s Lenten Meditations series, featuring reflections on spiritual practices written by staff, disaster-response volunteers, partners and friends from around the Episcopal Church and Anglican Communion.

To receive printed booklets in English or Spanish by Ash Wednesday, one’s orders must be received by Episcopal Marketplace by Feb. 1. Digital versions of the English and Spanish booklets are available online at [episcopalrelief.org/Lent](http://episcopalrelief.org/Lent), and all are invited to sign up for daily e-mail meditations.

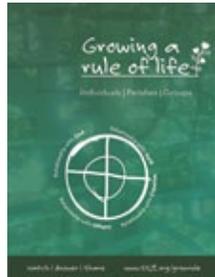
During the 2009 General Convention, Lent was designated as a time for remembering Episcopal Relief & Development’s work. Many congregations will observe Episcopal Relief & Development Sunday on the first Sunday in Lent, Feb. 14. A Lenten toolkit is available at the website for congregations wishing to participate in that observance or to make the organization a focus during the season. The toolkit features downloadable resources, including bulletin inserts in English and Spanish, as well as links to items available through Episcopal Marketplace such as pew envelopes and prayer bookmarks.

To order resources from Episcopal Marketplace, visit [episcopalmarketplace.org](http://episcopalmarketplace.org), call 1866-937-2772 or e-mail [sales@episcopalmarketplace.org](mailto:sales@episcopalmarketplace.org).

### Society of Saint John the Evangelist

The Boston-based Society of Saint John the Evangelist’s Lent 2016 videos and workbook bear the theme “Growing a Rule of Life.” The series focuses on God as the “chief gardener” of souls.

“Just as stakes and lattices nurture the growth of young plants, so too can spiritual disciplines support the flourishing of



our whole being. This series uses a tool from monastic spirituality called a ‘Rule of Life’ to explore and cultivate our relationships with God, self, others and Creation. This is an exciting opportunity to dig deep and dream big about ways to live into a more abundant life with Christ,” the society said on its website.

This series is designed for individuals and small groups. For small groups, facilitators can guide the growing process as participants discuss and learn together. For individuals, daily videos and reflections will lead them through the same process. Ultimately, each participant will create a unique Rule of Life or “Garden Plot” to sustain and expand beyond the class.

SSJE’s Lenten series may be accessed by visiting [www.ssje.org/ssje/growrule/](http://www.ssje.org/ssje/growrule/).

### Forward Movement

“Meeting Jesus on the Margins”  
Meditations on Matthew 25

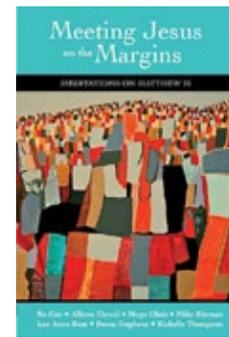
By various authors

ISBN 978-0-880-28414-1

Paperback, 120 pages, \$5

Available at [www.forwardmovement.com](http://www.forwardmovement.com)

Where do you meet Jesus? In the Gospel of Matthew, Jesus urges us to feed the hungry, clothe the naked, welcome the stranger and visit the prisoners – and, in doing so, to encounter Jesus. These daily reflections for Lent, offered by faith leaders, provide boots-on-the-ground stories



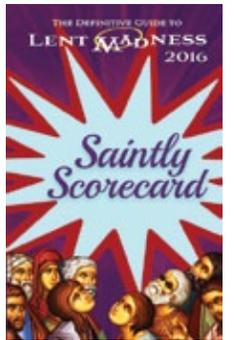
of serving and being served by “the least of these.” The meditations also explore our own hunger, our vulnerabilities, and the times we are imprisoned, either self-imposed or by circumstance.

Contributors include Mike Kinman, Becca Stevens, Allison Duvall, Bo Cox and Richelle Thompson.

### Lent Madness

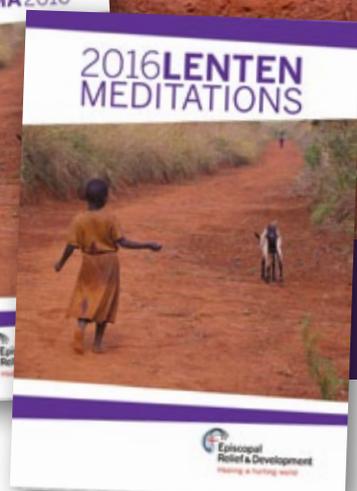
The popular contest to pick a “winning” saint, inspired by college basketball’s “March Madness” competition, returns for the seventh year. Managed by the Rev.

Tim Schenck of St. John the Evangelist church in Hingham, Mass., and the Rev. Scott Gunn, executive director of the Forward Movement publishing company, Lent Madness may be played by individuals or groups. Resources, including a book of profiles of this year’s saints, scorecard and a bracket to keep track of the advancing saints, are available at [www.forwardmovement.com](http://www.forwardmovement.com). ■



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## NEWS

# Faith groups should raise awareness of climate change, say activists

By Solange De Santis

People of faith have much to contribute to the discourse on climate change, and communications is an essential part of that mission, according to a panel convened on Jan. 12 by the Religion Communicators Council.

Meeting at the Episcopal Church Center in New York, the Rev. Pat Watkins and the Rev. Kathleen Stone, both of the United Methodist Church (UMC), spoke of recent experiences at the Paris climate summit and in creating communications resources. [See the January issue of Episcopal Journal for an Episcopal News Service report on the Episcopal Church's representation in Paris.]

"The faith presence does put a human face on [the issue]. You can do great work as a scientist without even considering the fact that people are involved,"

said Watkins, missionary for the care of God's creation for the UMC Board of Global Ministries. He led a five-person creation-care team, representing six global regions, to Paris for the U.N. Conference of Parties (COP21) conference, held from Nov. 30 to Dec. 11.

Stone, who oversees the climate-justice mission priority for the United Methodist Women, said some groups were dissatisfied with the agreement that emerged from the Paris conference. The agreement is aimed at holding global warming to less than 2 degrees Celsius (3.6 degrees Fahrenheit).

Those groups included indigenous people who wanted the issue of land rights included. Also, "some gender issues were not there," said Watkins, noting that most of the subsistence farmers around the world are women and changes in agricultural cycles affect them.

Among those groups are nations so



Photo/Solange De Santis

*The Rev. Pat Watkins, left, and the Rev. Kathleen Stone, both of the United Methodist Church, speak about how faith groups can communicate the importance of creation care.*

vulnerable to climate change that they will "go into refugee status if a natural disaster occurs," Stone said. She said she wondered, "Who are we as religions? Are we down on the ground with the people getting hurt right now? If not, what are we doing?"

Global faith leaders stressed the critical role churches and faith-based organizations played in the process leading up to Paris. They urged churches to push global leaders to implement the agreement.

Stone noted that communication and accountability can take place on two levels. "We all live somewhere. I have a neighbor who wants me to cut down a big tree. But it helps me breathe, and I'm not going to cut down that tree. The protection of our own little space is critical," she said.

Internationally, Stone noted, communities such as faith groups can hold corporations accountable as well as reframe the dominant narrative of an us-versus-them, environmentalists-versus-corporations. "Governments have allowed

corporations to have power over governments. We need to build our willingness to live in a different way than advertisers and manufacturers tell us," she said.

Watkins said that an indigenous woman told him at one of the climate conferences that "you can take your government back." In other words, he said, she meant that "corporations own you." Maybe, he added, "we can do that as a faith community; collectively we can figure that out."

United Methodist Women has produced several communications resources that address climate change and creation care, Stone said. These include tools for environmental advocacy and "13 Steps to Sustainability," a guide to having sustainable meetings and a sustainability measurement tool. "Raising voices is critical now," she said.

The Syrian civil war started with a terrible drought, she noted. Faith groups, Watkins added, should ask, "Why are there refugees to start with?" It is the job of faith groups "to ask some of those hard and difficult questions," he said. ■

## Seminary residences demonstrate energy efficiency

Episcopal Journal

Virginia Theological Seminary's (VTS) newest residences are delivering measurable energy savings, said the Alexandria, Va., school.

The adjoining semi-detached homes were completed in 2010 and are the campus' first single-family residences with LEED (Leadership in Energy and Environment Design) certification, a designation awarded by the U.S. Green Building Council.

Estimated energy savings for utility, gas and water use in 2014-15 are about 11 percent over usage at two homes built in 2005, Dave Mutscheller, VTS physical plant director, said in a news release. "While results vary annually, we factor in occupant habits concerning their comfort levels, as this also has measurable effects on utility consumption."

Designed by Alexandria-based Cole & Denny Architects and built by Harry Braswell Inc., the residences share a common wall which reduces the foundational footprint. They also feature high-efficiency heating-ventilation-air conditioning (HVAC) units and light-emitting diode lighting. Other LEED features include water-saving plumbing fixtures, low-volatile organic-compound paints and sealants, roof and wall insulation, and drought-tolerant landscaping and driveway pavement.

"The seminary is dedicated to being responsible stewards of our natural environment. With finite resources, we view sustainability as environmental conservation for future generations. For us, LEED has become not only economical, but theological as well," said the VTS dean and president, the Very Rev. Ian S. Markham. ■



Photo/Greg Hadley

*Residences at Virginia Theological Seminary are energy-efficient buildings.*

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NEWS

# Two congregations celebrate interfaith cooperation

By Molly Gordy

An Episcopal parish and its Reform Jewish neighbor on Manhattan's Upper West Side were scheduled in January to celebrate a half-century of interfaith friendship that had an unlikely beginning – a devastating fire.

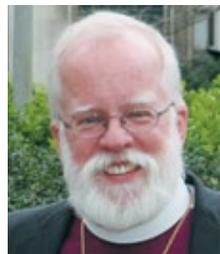
The Church of St. Matthew and St. Timothy and Congregation Rodeph Sholom, separated by a city block, planned a weekend of worship, learning and fellowship Jan. 22-24 in the Jewish tradition of Shabbaton – a weekend focusing on the Sabbath. The two also were to announce a new partnership for community service.

On Dec. 1, 1965, a five-alarm blaze destroyed St. Matthew and St. Timothy's gothic building. Rodeph Sholom's then-rabbi, Gunter Hirschberg, contacted the church's then-rector, the Rev. James A. Gussweiler, and offered him free worship space at the synagogue for as long as it was needed.

The sight of Episcopalians celebrating Communion in a Reform Jewish synagogue's auditorium was rare enough to merit an article in *The New York Times*. Though few of the parishioners ever had

been inside a Jewish house of worship before, one told the paper the welcome was so warm that it felt "almost like home."

However, each congregation was experiencing difficult times. The area was considered a dangerous neighborhood. Many of the church's 400 congregants spoke little English, risked unemployment



Dietsche



Levine

and eviction, and fought to keep their children away from hookers and drug dealers.

Around the corner, many of Rodeph Sholom's 900 members refused to brave the crime-ridden neighborhood to attend services.

When the rebuilt church and new community center opened two years later, Hirschberg was invited to help lay the cornerstone. Over the years, the relationship became reciprocal. Rodeph borrowed

space at the church for worship services when its sanctuary was undergoing construction, and Rodeph's current senior rabbi, Robert N. Levine, was invited to teach a class on Israel as the parish prepared for a trip to the Holy Land.

But as the decades passed, and the neighborhood became more prosperous, the congregations intersected less frequently.

Both are hoping that will change.

During the Shabbaton weekend, Bishop Andrew Dietsche of the Diocese of New York was scheduled to inaugurate the festivities by speaking at Friday night Sabbath services at Rodeph Sholom, followed by a joint reception at St. Matthew and St. Timothy.

The church's current rector, the Rev. Carla E. Roland Guzmán, was to give a teaching on Exodus in the synagogue's chapel on Saturday, Jan. 23, followed by a celebratory luncheon. Levine was to be the featured speaker at the church's Sunday service.

"On Friday, it's about hospitality at Rodeph. On Saturday it's about teaching and learning. On Sunday, it's an opportunity for us to thank Rodeph and show the fullness of our being a bilingual, multilingual congregation with longstanding roots in the neighborhood," Roland Guzmán said.

"Hopefully, people who walk by each other's buildings on a regular basis will say, 'Hey, I can also do community service at this other place.'"

Roland Guzmán and Levine each said they wanted to use the occasion of the fire's 50th anniversary as impetus to rekindle an interfaith relationship that was far older than their tenures.

"We have been there for each other a number of times," Levine said. "That's the definition of family. So it's definitely a reciprocal relationship. We know we are all serving God, and what unites us is far greater than what divides us."

In 2015, the two houses of worship began new cooperation on public-service projects. Rodeph now provides 20 backpacks filled with food each week to at-risk youth in the church's Angels basketball program. St. Matthew and St. Timothy solicits volunteers for the synagogue's men's shelter. Rodeph members tutor at the literacy center housed in the church. Members of both congregations



Rabbi Gunter Hirschberg, right, welcomes the Rev. James A. Gussweiler, the rector of the burned Episcopal Church of St. Matthew and St. Timothy, to Temple Rodeph Sholom.

**RÓDEPH SHOLOM CHRONICLE** Page Five

**OF THE COMMONER**  
*(Published Hasidic manuscript)*  
Groze once left his own com-  
distant town where his mission  
le for him to don the rough  
it. After he had completed his  
the local Shuhl and took his  
worshippers. Though the con-  
call in number, no one greeted  
se or when he left. Neither the  
worshippers paid any attention  
im as a stranger or guest in

ices the Zaddik of Groze walked  
huhl, somewhat forlorn in mood.  
he met an ill-dressed, uncouth  
an *am-harefetz*. As the villager  
the Zaddik-peasant was certain  
r, about to ask him for a dona-  
lager bowed his head in respect,  
d by, his face alight, exclaimed  
lom, Rebbe, Shalom!"

the Zaddik received a greeting that  
urt more.

to his own community, he nar-

**OUR NEIGHBORS**  
Congregation Rodeph Sholom, through our  
President, Mr. Walter W. Weismann, has ex-  
tended hospitality for Sunday Morning Services  
to St. Matthew's and St. Timothy's Episcopal  
Church of 26 West 84th Street, the Sanctuary  
of which was destroyed by a disastrous fire on  
Wednesday, December 1st. The Rev. James A.  
Gussweiler is Minister of the Church, and with  
his Staff conducted Services Sunday Morning,  
December 5th, in the Marcus Loew Auditorium  
of the Temple House, from 8 to 12:30 o'clock.  
In the spirit of neighborly cooperation, Congre-  
gation Rodeph Sholom has pledged a gift to the  
Church for the rebuilding of its Sanctuary.

**ACKNOWLEDGMENTS**  
We gratefully acknowledge the following gen-  
erous donations:  
CONGREGATION RÓDEPH SHOLOM  
The Misses Essie and Sarah Mitchell in loving  
memory of their father, Louis M. Mitchell;  
Mrs. Selma Joseph in loving memory of her  
husband, Robert Joseph;  
Mrs. Herbert H. Adler in memory of Leo Weil;  
Mrs. Charles Abraham in memory of her beloved

Photos/courtesy of Congregation Rodeph Sholom

Top, *The New York Times* notes the cooperation between Congregation Rodeph Sholom and the Episcopal Church of St. Matthew and St. Timothy after a disastrous fire at the church.

Below, Congregation Rodeph Sholom, in its newsletter, acknowledges cooperation with its Episcopal neighbor after a devastating fire.

meet monthly to knit and sew for people with medical needs.

The joint ventures are renewing a relationship forged in fire.

"Whether we call this a ministry or a mitzvah, this is a long-term partnership that aims to overcome our parallel worlds and serve one community," Dietsche said. "The relationship between the church and the synagogue is a model of what it is to live in a community of believers and people of faith." ■

Molly Gordy is a New York-based freelance journalist and a member of Congregation Rodeph Sholom.

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## FEATURE

# Tiny churches, big hopes: Why some thrive despite the odds

By Cathy Lynn Grossman  
Religion News Service

**H**ope, by nature, is defiant, counterintuitive and lodged in surprising places.

So a new report detailing the spiritual, demographic and financial challenges faced by small religious congregations meant little to the Rev. Robin Bartlett.

She plants her hopes for First Church in Sterling, Mass., on firmer ground.

“This does not look like a dying and sad church. It looks like a vibrant and active church on a Sunday morning,” said Bartlett, who usually sees 130 people on Sundays, even though the sanctuary was built for the days when more than 300 came to worship.

Just this year, 30 new members have joined, including young adults such as Ann Taft, 28, who delighted in the warm welcome at First Church: “Everyone was just so excited that I was there.”

More people in the pews, more energy for programs, more funds to maintain the roof — these are all keys to survival for such small congregations, according to the latest Faith Communities Today report, released Jan. 4 by the Hartford Institute for Religion Research.

It finds that congregations with fewer than 100 in weekend attendance — the most vulnerable to collapse — rose to 58 percent in 2015, up from 49 percent five years ago.

Yet the report is optimistically titled “American Congregations 2015: Thriving and Surviving.”

David Roozen, author of the report and retired director of the institute, wanted to highlight signs of hope in the research by asking about innovation, growth and positive change, particularly in those very small churches.

He analyzed data from clergy and senior church leaders at 4,436 U.S. congregations. Although congregations serving Jews, Muslims, Buddhists and other religions were represented, they were too few for analysis. Ninety percent of U.S. congregations are Protestant (22 percent mainline and 68 percent white evangelical or historically black congregations)

and 6.5 percent are Catholic, said Roozen.

Survival is relatively easy to measure.

When the Rev. Jonathan Iguina arrived at Iglesia Cantico Nuevo (New Song Church) three years ago, the Pentecostal congregation in a commercial plaza in Longwood, Fla., was on the verge of shutting its doors. The last 19 people in the congregation welcomed the new pastor the first Sunday — and never came back.

Iguina dug in. He cold-called former members. He found musicians to play the instruments left behind. He cut “unfruitful” programs such as “a visiting ministry that wasn’t visiting anyone” and boosted outreach to families with children.

As he concentrated on “nurturing the people I found, setting a focus on drawing closer to God,” Iguina said, attendance inched up to 90 on Sunday mornings, and the church’s debt has been replaced by a surplus.

Cantico Nuevo is an exception, according to the study’s grim overall findings for congregations of fewer than 100 in weekend worship: Only about 18 percent say they’re thriving, and 29 percent declare themselves OK.

Meanwhile, two mainline churches in Northern Virginia are selling their grounds to nonprofit groups that will build affordable housing. And at the Southern Baptist Convention, a report showed an average of 1,000 churches a year disappeared from the denomination’s database.

Roozen found that congregations willing to “change to meet new challenges” fell to 62 percent in 2015, down from 74 percent a decade ago.

“Thriving,” however, is a more subjective term.

“It comes down to being all you can be in a religious setting,” he said. “These congregations feel they are energetically living

**‘It comes down to being all you can be in a religious setting.’**  
— David Roozen



Photo/Matt Lucarelli, courtesy of First Church

Pastor Robin Bartlett, far right, conducts a new-member ceremony at First Church in Sterling, Mass.

out their understanding of their call.”

Hope thrives where change is welcome, Roozen said. “Thriving congregations are nearly 10 times more likely to have changed themselves than are struggling congregations.”

“That’s critical,” said Nancy Ammerman, professor of sociology of religion at Boston University. Aging congregations slipping toward insolvency “can take a long time to die because a handful of really determined folks will keep it going,” she said. “That works — if they are willing to revolutionize themselves.”

“People haven’t lost the urge to congregate together spiritually. But how they do it is being expressed differently, and the churches that do well are reshaping constantly,” she said.

The Rev. Jon Brown left a denominational headquarters job to lead a congregation of 45 participants at Old Bergen Church in Jersey City, N.J. Five years later, Old Bergen, a multiethnic, multi-racial congregation, averages 100 people in the pews on Sundays — and tries new things constantly.

To him, this congregation is “a treasure hidden in a field,” he said, echoing a parable in the Gospel of Matthew.

“If we are only concerned with the numbers, that becomes discouraging and a trap,” he said. “It could be that we have just a small faithful group of people continue to be the membership but there is a ministry to the community that is a powerful witness of God’s love and grace.”

Even as they streamlined the programs inside the congregation, members ventured outside, with simple, low-cost activities such as making empanadas to hand out at Pentecost or taking an occasional prayer walk through the city, asking strangers, “How can we pray for

you today?”

Old Bergen Church has two advantages over many small, old, urban churches. It has an endowment to support the facilities, and its downtown location is proving to be a blessing. Six new housing towers, designed for urban professionals commuting to Manhattan, are being built within four blocks of the church.

These advantages “take the anxiety and pressure off me as a pastor. We aren’t absolutely living on the edge. It’s very possible that our best days are still ahead of us,” said Brown.

In Roozen’s study, the percentage of congregations that reported more than 2 percent growth in worship attendance was at 45 percent, down from 57 percent in 2005.

Congregations that beat the 2 percent growth rate were:

- located in new suburbs (59 percent)
- offered “very innovative worship” (53 percent)
- served fewer than a third seniors (47 percent).

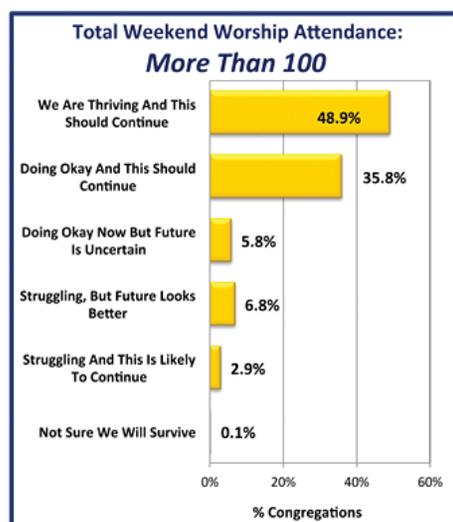
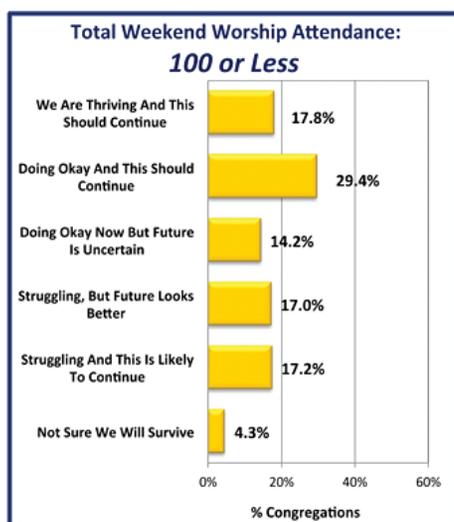
Bethany Lutheran Church, an evangelical congregation in Bigfork, Mont., has none of those advantages.

It’s even smaller than it was when the Rev. Christopher Miller arrived nearly five years ago — down to 92 people at Sunday worship. A contentious split with the more liberal Evangelical Lutheran Church in America prompted young families to leave — and leave behind the debt incurred when the congregation expanded the sanctuary and built new facilities for the youth.

Still, Miller looks up: “I don’t know what Bethany will look like on quantitative terms, but by qualitative ones, God is showing himself faithful.”

## American Congregations 2015: Thriving and Surviving

David Roozen Hartford Institute for Religion Research Roozen@hartsem.edu 12/20/15



Graphic courtesy/Hartford Institute for Religion Research

continued on page 12

## FAITH AND THE ARTS

# Artist expresses American liberation story

**Exhibition Review: “Let My People Go,” by Aaron Douglas  
The Metropolitan Museum of Art,  
Gallery 900, New York**

Reviewed by Pamela A. Lewis

Before it acquired its loftier name, “The Harlem Renaissance” — the cultural, social, and artistic flowering that spanned from about 1918 until the mid-1930s — was known as the “New Negro Movement,” named after the 1925 anthology by Alain Locke (1885-1954), the African-American writer, philosopher, educator and patron of the arts who was considered its “dean.”

The movement also included the new African-American cultural expressions that emerged across the Northeastern and Midwestern urban areas that had been affected by the Great Migration (the exodus of African Americans from the rural South to large Northern cities), of which Harlem was the largest and most significant. Included also were many francophone black writers and artists from African and Caribbean colonies who lived in Paris and were influenced by the movement’s ideas and activities. The apogee of this period was between 1924 and 1929, when the stock market crashed and the Great Depression began.

Although ostensibly a literary movement, the Harlem Renaissance produced a number of notable artists, such as Jacob Lawrence, Augusta Savage, Romare Bearden, Richmond Barthé and Aaron Douglas, whose distinctive aesthetic would make his paintings immediately recognizable.

Born in Topeka, Kansas, to parents who had participated in the Great Migration, Douglas (1878-1979) earned an art degree at the University of Nebraska and went on to teaching in Kansas City, Mo. Drawn by its vibrant cultural life and artistic developments, Douglas came to New York, where he rapidly distinguished himself as one of the most gifted

artists of the Harlem Renaissance, first through illustrating journals and books. There, his individual graphic style, which synthesized contemporary design and ancient Egyptian sources, emerged.

Eventually, Douglas became best known for his murals representing the untold saga of African-American history. The most famous example, “Aspects of Negro Life,” graces the walls of the reading room at the Schomburg Center for Research in Black Culture in the Malcolm X Boulevard branch of the New York Public Library.

In 2014, the Metropolitan Museum of Art acquired “Let My People Go” (1934-1939), a rare example of an easel painting by Douglas. It was one of a series of eight compositions based on smaller designs for a 1927 collaborative project with the author James Wheldon Johnson titled “God’s Trombones: Seven Negro Sermons in Verse,” which is considered one of the Harlem Renaissance’s greatest literary achievements. (The Met’s Thomas J. Watson Library acquired a 1929 edition of this work for its special collections.)

Executed in the artist’s typically flat, silhouetted style with lavender and yellow-gold hues, “Let My People Go” depicts the Old Testament scene of God’s order to Moses to lead the Israelites out of captivity in Egypt. Light beaming from the upper left of the painting, symbolizing both God’s command and enlightenment, envelops the kneeling figure of Moses, whose upturned face engages with the powerful shaft, while Pyramids in the background and the headdresses worn by figures surrounding Moses suggest the Egyptian context. Despite the limited palette, this is a dy-

namic composition in which the light, spears and gesturing figures thrust into the scene from all corners, imparting a pronounced angularity.

From the 19th century to the Civil Rights era, clergy, abolitionists and politicians related the story of Moses and the Israelites to the story of the persecution of African-Americans, who were neither

told an oppressed people that they were part of God’s creation and refuted the claims of bigotry

In conceiving and developing his version of modernism, Douglas intentionally looked to the great empires of Africa, linking their art with that of Egypt and simplifying forms to their essential outlines. Inasmuch as the painting’s frame of reference is primarily Egyptian, it relates as well to the Negro spiritual of the same name, the lyrics of which speak of defiance in the face of injustice. And while it is in no regard a devotional painting, its figures and atmosphere exude a deep soulfulness.

The Met has given “Let My People Go” a pride of place, displaying it on the wall that visitors meet head-on when entering Gallery 900. It shares the same rarefied space with works by Georgia O’Keeffe, Edward Hopper and Grant Wood, contemporaries of Douglas, yet whose interpretations of the American experience diverged markedly from his own.

The Met is to be commended for adding this painting to its American Art collection, filling in what some critics have seen as a lack of works by African-American artists. At the same time, the inclusion of “Let My People Go” asserts that art by African-Americans is also American art, whose content, themes and subjects are informed by and reflect the ethos and events

of this nation. In that regard, “Let My People Go” is right where it belongs. ■

*Pamela A. Lewis is a member of St. Thomas Church, Fifth Avenue, New York. This review originally appeared in the Episcopal New Yorker and is reprinted with permission.*



Photo/© Heirs of Aaron Douglas, Licensed by VAGA, New York

*“Let My People Go” by Aaron Douglas relates the story of the Israelites enslaved in Egypt to African-American liberation struggles.*

seen as, nor even saw themselves as part of the godhead. With its central figure of Moses presented as a black man, “Let My People Go” was understood, therefore, as a powerful allegory of liberation and of the struggle for freedom against the pharaoh of oppression and unjust laws, and as a work that simultaneously

## SMALL CHURCHES continued from page 11

His motto is from the Little Mermaid’s song in the Disney film: “I want to be where the people are ...”

That means building relationships, weaving young people into the life of the church and the church into the community and beyond. The Bethany congregation has built six churches in Honduras with funds raised washing cars and selling huckleberry pies. Next up is installing a free library stand in downtown Bigfork where people who pause to browse can drop a prayer request in a mail slot below the books. The idea, said Miller, is to “show people what is important to them is important to us.”

Attracting young adults and families is a challenge in any location at a time when restless “church shoppers” move amid competing congregations, said Roozen.

While more than 20 percent of the U.S.

population is 18-34, that age group represented 10 percent of U.S. congregations in 2015, down from 15 percent in 2010, the congregations study finds. More alarming, Roozen said, is that fewer churches were making this age group a priority.

The latest Pew Research Landscape study to examine American’s beliefs and practices, released in November, found slow but steady decline from 2007 in the percentages of U.S. adults who say they believe in God, pray daily and regularly go to church or other religious services. The chief reason: The rise of people, particularly millennials, who identify with no religion.

Doug Davis, who grew up attending First Church in Sterling and at age 50 is the youngest deacon, said church elders looked around and saw few young adults in the pews. “We realized we were falling behind in energy, and that was no way to be vibrant.”

But Bartlett, the 39-year-old pastor, says membership is 285 people — “They just don’t all attend at the same time.”

When Bartlett started a “pub theology” night aimed at millennials, it was such a hit that older congregants complained, “We like beer! We want this, too!” So she’s added a second night, open to all ages.

Ann Taft is part of the young adult group and looks forward to discussion nights, dubbed “Eat, Pray, Learn.” Her husband, Andrew, once a “militant atheist,” is now on the operations committee. She serves on a task force investigating how the church can be more open to gays and lesbians.

Taft recalls when they were new in town and church-

shopping. She soon found that “there’s no time to search out and explore every theology.” Ultimately, she took Bartlett’s advice: “Choose one and go with it and let that be the way God is revealed to you.” ■



Photo/Matt Lucarelli, courtesy of First Church

*Pastor Robin Bartlett hugs a member of the First Church congregation in Sterling, Mass.*

## FAITH AND THE ARTS

## David Bowie, Lazarus and resurrection

By Steven Croft  
Anglican Communion News Service

Along with thousands of others around the world, I was moved by news of the death of David Bowie on Jan. 10. My condolences and prayers go to his family and his close friends.

As many others have said, his songs are part of the soundtrack of my life and my generation, especially those from the 1970s and 1980s. I was 15 when “Ziggy Stardust” was released: “The Jean Genie,” “Rebel Rebel,” “Suffragette City,” “Life on Mars,” “Drive-in Saturday” and many others run around in my mind without invitation.

The many tributes in the media helped me to realize the breadth and power of Bowie’s contribution to the world. He helped us grapple with the mysteries of life and love and joy.

I was drawn by “Lazarus,” the title of the song he released on Jan. 8. It’s not the first time that death has featured in his songs. One of the things that makes “Space Oddity” a great song is what happens to Major Tom. “Ashes to Ashes” takes its title from the funeral service. “Ziggy Stardust” ends with death as a consequence of fame: “When the kids had killed the man I had



Bowie

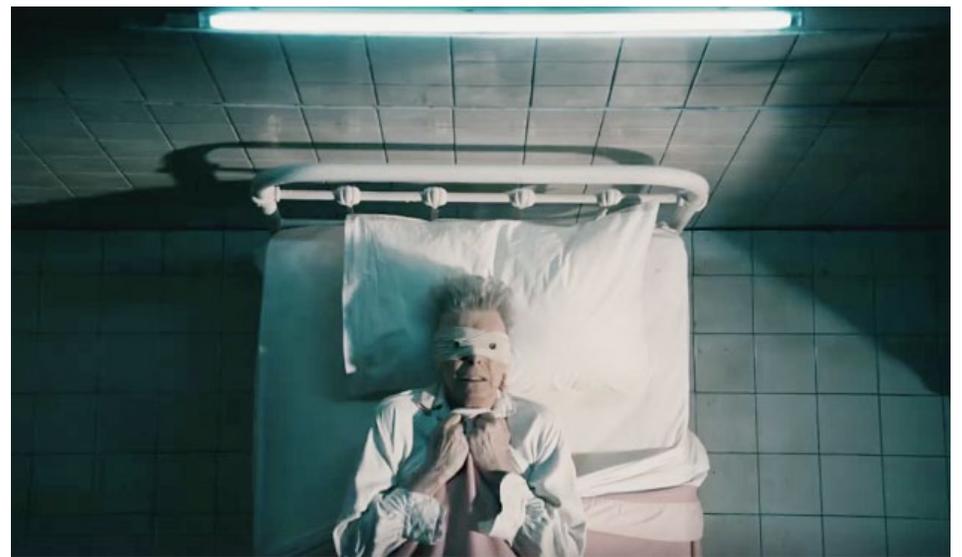
to break up the band.”

But “Lazarus” is different. Tony Visconti describes the “Blackstar” album as a parting gift. The song’s theme is death and dying. I hear it first as a reminder to everyone of mortality. Death is one of the last great taboos of the modern age. Hundreds of years ago, people would keep a human skull in the hearth to remind them of the precious gift of life and the reality of death. “Lazarus” is David Bowie’s *momento mori*: a reminder that we will all die.

The song and the film are about wrestling and struggling with death: a raging against the dying of the light. Bowie seems to be reaching out for something beyond but not quite able to grasp it. “Look up here I’m in heaven” he begins. “I’m so high it makes my brain whirl.” In one scene we see him dancing, celebrating still the joy of life on the threshold of eternity.

“Lazarus” reminds me of the frustration with death in the Old Testament. This life is so good and textured. Surely there is something more. The prophet Isaiah speaks of the shroud of death cast over all peoples. Ecclesiastes talks about God putting a sense of eternity into human minds — we reach for something but can’t grasp it.

In the video, David Bowie seems to be reaching out for life on the very



Photo/David Bowie VEVO

David Bowie’s last music video, “Lazarus,” captured a premonition of death.

threshold of death. Lazarus is the name of a man in the Gospel of John. He dies in the prime of life. Then he is set free by Jesus when he has been in the tomb for three days.

In John’s Gospel the raising of Lazarus is part of a bigger and greater story: the story of the gift of Jesus Christ to the world to bring life. Jesus died, but he was raised from death on the third day. In Christ, God offers resurrection, a new beginning and new life to everyone.

I hope that David Bowie’s final song, “Lazarus,” will help many people think afresh about mortality — about the reality of death, the struggle and the joy.

I hope that those who hear it will ponder the story of the original Lazarus, the resurrection of Jesus and all that the life of Jesus Christ means for the life of the world.

Everything changes with the belief that Jesus Christ rose from the dead. Because of that belief, I look at my own death and the deaths of those close to me in a different way. The whole of my perspective on life is transformed.

Thank you, David, for the music and for this final song. Rest in peace. ■

Steven Croft is the bishop of Sheffield, England.

## Oregon cathedral hosting series of art exhibits

Episcopal Journal

The arts tradition at Trinity Cathedral in Portland, Ore., continues this year with a series of fine art exhibits called “Diocesan Artists 2016: A gathering of artistic expressions from the Episcopal

churches of Western Oregon.”

“Our exhibits feature a variety of art styles and media from selected artists or small groups of artists. We encourage your presence at the openings ... and invite you to meet the artists and hear them speak about their creative vision at the Sunday forums. The Trinity community shares these creative paths of ministry that enable us to enjoy art in our lives and nurture our spirits,” according to a statement on the cathedral’s website.

Paintings by Joanne Radmilovich Kollman are featured in “Northwest Neighbors” from Jan. 10 to Feb. 28 in the cathedral’s Kempton Hall.

A native Oregonian, Kollman creates representational oil paintings of the figure, landscape and still life earmarked by a lyrical style and unique eye for design, according to the website. The exhibit is a series of oil paintings portraying friends, acquaintances and strangers. The subjects are depicted in their “in-between moments” in life, where personality is expressed through gesture,

style and culture. By using broad gesture and simplification, Kollman explores the ephemeral moment conveying a thought or emotion. These fleeting gestures have a way of capturing universal qualities of humanity, the website says.

Talya Johnson and Karen Whitworth are the artists in an exhibit running from March 13 to May 1. Johnson and Whitworth are outdoor, or “plein air,” painters. The setting allows them to experiment with luminosity and color. “There’s no better challenge than to paint from real life,” Whitworth said.

Each year, the cathedral’s major art event takes place in May, designated Creativity Month. In 2016, Cathedral Arts will present the Diocese of Oregon Art

Show, gathering artistic expressions in all media from the parishes of western Oregon and enabling a shared experience of creativity and spirituality. There will be a gala opening reception on May 13, with special events scheduled throughout the weekend of May 13-15.

Last year, subtitled “A Wrinkle in Time,” the arts festival took place from May 15 to 17. On the final day, Ascension Day was celebrated during the 10 a.m. Sunday service as Emily Ginsburg’s multi-media installation “If You Felt the Same” was projected on the pipes of Trinity’s Rosales Organ accompanied by Interim Canon for Cathedral Music Bruce Neswick playing Olivier Messiaen’s “Ascension” for the postlude. ■

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Photo/courtesy Trinity Cathedral

Trinity Cathedral in Portland, Ore., is calling for works of art to represent the Episcopal Churches of Western Oregon.

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NEWS

# 'I would talk with Boko Haram': Anglican Communion secretary general

Anglican Communion News Service

The secretary general of the Anglican Communion, Archbishop Josiah Idowu-Fearon, said he would talk with the extremist group Boko Haram if its leadership could be identified.

Speaking in a HARDtalk interview in December with BBC journalist Stephen Sackur, Idowu-Fearon warned that it was "not helpful" to talk of a "fundamental struggle between Christians and Islam" or use language suggesting "a form of genocide" against Christians.

Talking of his own experiences in Nigeria, Idowu-Fearon said:

"The Boko Haram crisis we are facing does not discriminate. They come under the guise of Islam, but we all know ... that this is not the Islam we are used to.

"For example, in that northeastern part of Nigeria it is predominantly Muslim — Shia and Sunni Islam. Who are they trying to convert there? So it isn't religion per se that's the point."

Idowu-Fearon didn't criticize Pope Francis, who had spoken of "a form of genocide," saying that the pope had made his statement based on the infor-

mation available to him. But, he added, "The information that I have, what I lived with in my country, I wouldn't use the term 'religious genocide' because, with Boko Haram, more Muslims have been killed than Christians."

He laughed off criticisms from some quarters that he was a "Muslim bishop" because of his lengthy studies of Islam and dialogue with Islamic leaders.



Idowu-Fearon

"I didn't choose this ministry," he said. "God called me. And I believe God has done that for a specific purpose.

"I come from the northern parts of Nigeria where religion is being used, and has been

used, to divide us along Christian-Muslim lines. In the southwest we have a significant huge number of Muslims and Christians. They don't fight. Why are we fighting in the north?

"I believe my calling is to help the Muslim to see me as a fellow-Nigerian who comes from the northern part of the country."

Idowu-Fearon acknowledged that there "would always be room for conflict" between Islam and Christianity because both religions were missiologically. But, he said, **continued on page 15**

WELBY continued from page 7

it may be part of our vocation to help the communion and to help many others to grow in a direction where we can realize and live the love that God has for all of us, and we can one day be a church and a communion where all of God's children are fully welcomed, where this is truly a house of prayer for all people."

The Rev. Gay Clark Jennings, president of the House of Deputies, sent a letter Jan. 15 to deputies and alternate deputies concerning the actions taken by the Primates' Meeting. Many Episcopal bishops to their dioceses about the primates' action. Episcopal News Service has collected those statements, available at [www.episcopaldigitalnetwork.com](http://www.episcopaldigitalnetwork.com).

The primates also asked Welby to appoint a task group "to maintain conversation among ourselves with the intention of restoration of relationship, the rebuilding of mutual trust, healing the legacy of hurt, recognizing the extent of our commonality, and exploring our deep differences, ensuring they are held between us in the love and grace of Christ."

In their communiqué, they said they will "develop this process so that it can also be applied when any unilateral decisions on matters of doctrine and polity are taken that threaten our unity."

Archbishop Foley Beach, the leader of the Anglican Church in North America (ACNA), met with the primates throughout the week. Beach was invited by Welby in an effort to avert a boycott from conservative African archbishops such as the one that occurred at the last Primates' Meeting in 2011. ACNA is composed largely of former Episcopalians who chose to break away from the Episcopal Church. Some African primates have declared their affiliation to ACNA.

Meeting in 2011. ACNA is composed largely of former Episcopalians who chose to break away from the Episcopal Church. Some African primates have declared their affiliation to ACNA.

Foley told ACNA members that the consequences imposed on the Episcopal Church "are strong, but they are not strong enough." He said he was "deeply disappointed" that the Anglican Church of Canada had not had the same consequences imposed on it as those set the Episcopal Church. The Anglican Church of Canada allows its clergy to bless same-sex couples and is considering changes to its canons that would allow for same-sex marriage.

He told ACNA that he "participated fully in the meeting." There have been reports that Foley was given both voice and vote in the meeting, and declined to vote on imposing consequences on the Episcopal Church.

The primates said in their communiqué that they cannot recognize ACNA as a member of the communion because that decision properly belongs to the Anglican Consultative Council. The primates said they "recognize that such an application, were it to come forward, would raise significant questions of polity and jurisdiction."

The ACC has detailed the steps necessary for the amendments of existing provincial constitutions and the creation of new provinces. In 1996, it set its most extensive description of the process in Resolution 12 passed at its meeting in Panama City, Panama.

The ACC is scheduled to meet April 8-20 in Lusaka, Zambia. ■

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NEWS Church officers suspended pending investigation

## Churches take a stand on gun violence

Ten days after a mass shooting in San Bernardino, Calif., Episcopal churches marked the annual Gun Violence Prevention Sabbath on the weekend of Dec. 12-13, calling attention to recent shooting deaths in the United States and abroad.

The weekend also now coincides with the Dec. 14, 2012, shooting at Sandy Hook Elementary School in Newtown, Conn., where 20 children and six adults were killed. It is a project of Faiths United to Prevent Gun Violence and the Episcopal Washington National Cathedral. Hundreds of churches, synagogues and mosques participated ([www.marchsabbath.org](http://www.marchsabbath.org)).

Newtown, Conn. In Newtown, an annual interfaith community service at Trinity Episcopal Church marked the shooting's anniversary, which fell on a school day for the first time since 2012. Before the service, the Rev. Matthew Crebbin, pastor of Newtown Congregational Church and coordinator of the Newtown Interfaith Clergy Association, told the Associated Press that it would include prayers, music and time for lighting candles, but not a lot of speeches.

"It's more a day of reading the sacred text, prayers. People can light candles," Crebbin was quoted as **continued on page 6**



NEWS Curry recovering at home after surgery



ARTS Contemporary illuminated Bible dazzles the eye



Three Kings' Day Commemorating Epiphany, or Three Kings' Day, on Jan. 6, St. Peter's Episcopal Church in Delaware, Ohio, hosted an exhibit featuring the visit of the Magi to the Christ Child. The 32-piece show contained interpretations by different nationalities. Above is an oil-drum sculpture by Haitian artists. For more examples of the artwork in the show, see page 9.

## Episcopal delegates pursue climate-change advocacy

### Negotiators reach historic agreement to limit warming

Negotiators meeting in Paris Nov. 30-Dec. 11 at the 21st annual Conference of the Parties (COP21) reached a historic agreement aimed at reducing carbon emissions and holding global warming to below 2 degrees Celsius (3.6 degrees Fahrenheit), a move that represents a potential shift in how countries

will meet their energy needs. More than 40,000 people gathered at the event, including heads of state, delegates, business leaders, activists and representatives of nongovernmental and civil society organizations, including a delegation representing the Episcopal Church.

The agreement is the first binding, international treaty in 20 years of United Nations climate talks, and all 196 parties present ratified it. It now goes back to each country for final ratification.

The 31-page agreement calls on the countries of the world to limit carbon emissions, which will require a decrease in dependence on fossil fuels in favor of renewable energy sources; and for developed countries to commit to \$100 billion in development aid annually by 2020 to include a goal of net-zero carbon emissions by mid-century.

"We can rejoice together that ... the leadership of 195 countries were able to reach a strong and solid climate change agreement," said Lynnaia Matin, global relations officer for the Episcopal Church and its liaison to the United Nations. "This is a historic zero work



The Episcopal Church hosted a pop-up worship at noon each day during the climate-change talks. **Photo: Lynnaia Matin/Episcopal News Service**

## NEWS

## The President's Devotional: What Obama 'did in secret' in Newtown

President Barack Obama on Jan. 5 announced several executive actions aimed at curbing gun violence in the United States. They included enhancing background check requirements and communication between various federal and state agencies.

People affected by gun violence attended the announcement, including families affected by the school shooting in 2012 in Newtown, Conn. The following was posted online in 2013; however, Obama never has referred to it publicly.

By Joshua DuBois

The White House is not supposed to be a place for brokenness. Sheer, shattered, brokenness. But that's what we experienced on the weekend of Dec. 14, 2012.

I was sitting at my desk around midday on Friday the 14th when I saw the images flash on CNN. A school. A gunman. Children fleeing, crying.

It's sad that we've grown so accustomed to these types of scenes that my first thought was, "I hope there are no deaths, just injuries." I thought, "Maybe it's your run-of-the-mill scare."

And then the news from Sandy Hook Elementary School, a small school in the tiny hamlet of Newtown, Conn., began pouring in. The public details were horrific enough: Twenty children murdered. Six staff. Parents searching a gymnasium for signs of their kids.

But the private facts we received in

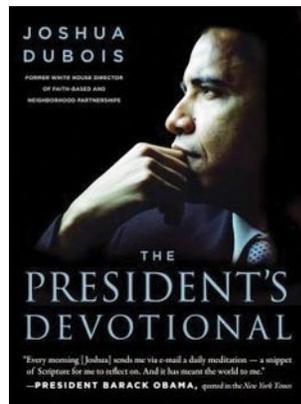
the White House from the FBI were even worse: How the gunman treated the children like criminals, lining them up to shoot them down. How so many bullets penetrated them that many were left unrecognizable. How the killer went from one classroom to another and would have gone farther if his rifle would've let him.

That news began a weekend of prayer and numbness, which I awoke from on Saturday only to receive the word that the president would like me to accompany him to Newtown. He wanted to meet with the families of the victims and then offer words of comfort to the country at an interfaith memorial service.

I left early to help the advance team — the hardworking folks who handle logistics for every event — set things up, and I arrived at the local high school where the meetings and memorial service would take place. We prepared seven or eight classrooms for the families of the slain children and teachers, two or three families to a classroom, placing water and tissues and snacks in each one. Honestly, we didn't know how to prepare; it was the best we could think of.



DuBois



The families came in and gathered together, room by room. Many struggled to offer a weak smile when we whispered, "The president will be here soon." A few were visibly angry — so understandable that it barely needs to be said — and were looking for someone, anyone, to blame. Mostly

they sat in silence.

I went downstairs to greet President Obama when he arrived, and I provided an overview of the situation. "Two families per classroom ... The first is ... and their child was ... The second is ... and their child was ... We'll tell you the rest as you go."

The president took a deep breath and steeled himself, and went into the first classroom. And what happened next I'll never forget.

Person after person received an engulfing hug from our commander in chief. He'd say, "Tell me about your son. ... Tell me about your daughter," and then hold pictures of the lost beloved as their parents described favorite foods, television shows and the sound of their laughter. For the younger siblings of those who had passed away — many of them 2, 3 or 4 years old, too young to understand it all — the president would grab them and toss them, laughing, up into the air, and then hand them a box of White House M&Ms, which were always kept close at hand. In each room, I saw his eyes water, but he did not break.

And then the entire scene would repeat — for hours. Over and over and over again, through well over a hundred relatives of the fallen, each one equally broken, wrecked by the loss. After each classroom, we would go back into those fluorescent hallways and walk through the names of the coming families, and then the president would dive back in, like a soldier returning to a tour of duty in a worthy but wearing war.

We spent what felt like a lifetime in those classrooms, and every single person received the same tender treatment. The same hugs. The same looks, directly in their eyes. The same sincere offer of support and prayer.

The staff did the preparation work, but the comfort and healing were all on President Obama. I remember worrying about the toll it was taking on him. And,

### Peace group affirms Obama action on guns

The Episcopal Peace Fellowship (EPF) on Jan. 5 said it "heartily affirms" President Barack Obama's executive action to expand background checks for purchasers of weapons throughout the country.

"President Obama's heartfelt call to close important background-check loopholes that have allowed dangerous persons to purchase weapons at gun shows and online without being checked out is very welcome. We agree with him that gun reform is the last great civil rights challenge of his generation," said the

Rev. Allison Sandlin Liles, EPF executive director.

"We also affirm the president's call on Congress to authorize extra spending on mental health and enforcement agents as well as new research into technology that can prevent unauthorized use of weapons by children and thieves. EPF agrees that a background check is comparable to going through metal detectors before boarding an airplane," Liles said.

EPF has championed peace, nonviolence and social-justice issues since its founding on Armistice Day in 1939. ■



BOKO HARAM continued from page 14

"our job, my job, is to help the Muslim and the Christian to understand each other."

Asked whether his bridge-building work could extend to dialogue with Boko Haram, Idowu-Fearon said: "If we can actually identify who the true leadership is ... why not? ... Dialogue is the beginning of the solution ... if they are willing."

"We must all understand one thing: These are all God's children, whether they are criminals or not. They are all

God's children, and God love us equally. These have chosen to behave the way they are behaving, and the responsibility is on those of us who believe there is a better way to help them to find it.

"That's why I am a Christian. That's why I am involved in bridge-building."

During the 25-minute interview, Sackur touched on a range of issues, including conflicts within the Anglican Communion. Idowu-Fearon told him that Anglicans were working on a range of "kingdom things," including Islamic extremism, corruption, poverty and bad governance. ■

of course, even a president's comfort was woefully inadequate for these families in the face of this particularly unspeakable loss. But it became some small measure of love, on a weekend when evil reigned.

And the funny thing is — President Obama has never spoken about these meetings. Yes, he addressed the shooting in Newtown and gun violence in general in a subsequent speech, but he did not speak of those private gatherings. In fact, he was nearly silent on Air Force One as we rode back to Washington, and has said very little about his time with these families since. It must have been one of the defining moments of his presidency, quiet hours in solemn classrooms, extending as much healing as was in his power to extend. But he kept it to himself — never seeking to teach a lesson based on those mournful conversations, or opening them up to public view.

Jesus teaches us that some things — the holiest things, the most painful and important and cherished things—we are to do in secret. Not for public consumption and display, but as acts of service to others, and worship to God. For then, "your Father, who sees what is done in secret, will reward you," perhaps not now, but certainly in eternity.

We learned many lessons in Newtown that day; this is one I've kept closely at heart. ■

*In 2012, Joshua DuBois was the director of the White House Office of Faith-Based and Neighborhood Partnerships. This is excerpted from his book, "The President's Devotional: The Daily Readings That Inspired President Obama", published by HarperOne, an imprint of HarperCollins. It was first posted in October, 2013, on the Huffington Post. DuBois is now a consultant and writer.*

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## NEWS

# Dial back Christianity in British official life, make room for secularism, says new report

By Trevor Grundy  
Religion News Service

Almost 1,500 years after St. Augustine of Canterbury founded England's first Christian church in 597, the British people have been told in no uncertain terms that they're no longer living in a Christian country.

A report released in early December by the Commission on Religion and Belief in British Public Life challenges the country's time-tested moral and public values system. In language that is raising eyebrows — and tempers — the report says the United Kingdom should cut back the Christian tone of major state occasions and shift toward a “pluralist character.”

Events such as coronations should be changed to be more inclusive, it says, while the number of bishops in the House of Lords should be cut to make way for leaders of other religions.

The recommendations from the commission, chaired by the former High Court judge Baroness Elizabeth Butler-Sloss, highlight major changes in British society, such as the decline in people who say they are Anglicans, down from 40 percent in 1983 to less than 20 percent in 2013.

Although membership in the commission included leaders and academics from every major religious tradition, a spokesman for the Church of England

blasted the findings as “dominated by the old-fashioned view that traditional religion is declining in importance and that nonadherence to a religion is the same as humanism or secularism.”

That may be referring to the commission's call for a new policy on religion and belief in the United Kingdom that would “provide space and a role for all within society, regardless of their beliefs or absence of them.”

Royal sources say that Prince Charles, 67, would have considerable sympathy with some of the report's recommendations. The heir to the throne often has spoken of wanting to be, when king, defender of faiths and not just “the faith.”

Key recommendations include:

- The creation of a Magna Carta-style secular statement of values governing public life as an alternative to the much-proclaimed but little-understood adherence to “British values.”

- The scrapping of religious assemblies for schoolchildren, along with ending the segregation of children by faith at schools throughout the land.

- An end to the dominance of 26 Anglican male bishops in the House of Lords (the British Parliament's upper house) and the replacement of some of them with rabbis, imams and other non-Christian clerics.

- The complete overhaul of the coronation service for the next monarch so that leaders of faiths other than Christianity play major roles.



photo/Trevor Grundy/RNS

*Church of England leaders are displeased with a new report calling for more official recognition of other religions and secularism in U.K. public life. Pictured here is Canterbury Cathedral.*

- A major rethinking of the British government's anti-terror policy so that radical views can be expressed at universities and institutions of higher learning by preachers and teachers who currently are damned as extremists by security and intelligence networks.

Two years in the making, the report was set up by the Woolf Institute, established at Cambridge University in 1998. It is this country's leading think tank

studying relations between Christian, Jewish and Muslim communities.

While gathering evidence, the report's commissioners met with Justin Welby, the archbishop of Canterbury, who is spiritual leader of the world's 800 million Anglicans; Ephraim Mirvis, the South African-born chief rabbi (Orthodox) of the Commonwealth; and leaders of Britain's fast-growing Muslim community (estimated at 2.8 million).

Even so, some Christians are furious. They say humanists and secularists are the brains behind this controversial report, which has been damned as “seriously misguided” by the Church of England, the country's established church since the 16th century. Its supreme governor is Queen Elizabeth II, who holds the title “defender of the faith.”

At her coronation in 1953, Queen Elizabeth swore “to uphold the laws of God and the true profession of the gospel, maintain the Protestant reformed religion established by law and preserve the settlement of the Church of England.”

There is not a single reference in the coronation service to a religion other than Christianity or a denomination apart from the Church of England.

But that was more than 60 years ago, when most Britons who were asked to fill in forms asking their affiliation simply put “C of E” (Church of England), whether they went to church on Sundays or not. ■

## Church of England weekly attendance dips below one million

Anglican Communion News Service

Some 2.4 million people attended a Church of England service at Christmas in 2014, a slight increase from the previous year; but overall, the latest attendance figures released by the church show that the number of people attending church services weekly has dipped below one million people for the first time, continuing a gradual year-on-year decrease of about 1 percent.

The figures are based on an annual survey of churches that looks at attendance over four weeks in October. The results show that 980,000 people attended church each week: 830,000 adults and 150,000 children.

The survey also shows that some 1.3 million people attended a service at Easter, 2.2 million people attended special Advent services for the congregation and local community, and 2.6 million attended special Advent services for civic organizations and schools.

“The statistics also highlight the other services carried out by the Church of England on a regular basis,” a church spokesman said. “In 2014, the church carried out just under 1,000 weddings,

2,000 baptisms and almost 3,000 funerals every week of the year.

“Some 12 percent of births during 2014 [in England] were marked by a C of E infant baptism or thanksgiving service whilst 31 percent of deaths were marked by a C of E funeral.”

The figures represent “a continuing trend which has shown a 12 per cent decrease in attendance over the past de-

**‘In 2007, the average adult age in Church of England parishes was 61 years. In 2014, this was about the same overall but slightly older in rural areas (64 years) and slightly younger in urban areas (57 years).’**

— Everyone Counts 2014, Statistics for Mission Report

cade, with an average decline of just over 1 percent a year,” the spokesman said.

“The 2014 figures are not in any way a surprise,” said Bishop of Norwich Graham James. “Whilst the recent trend of the past decade continues, it has been anticipated and is being acted on radically.”

“As part of a prayerful and considered response to these trends, the church is embarking upon the biggest renewal and reform process in over 150 years, focusing our resources on prayer, evangelism, discipleship, vocations, leadership and training.

“We do not expect that trend to change imminently or immediately over the next few years due to demographics,” he said. “We lose approximately 1 percent of our churchgoers to death each year. Given the age profile of the C of E, the next few years will continue to have downward pressure as people die or become housebound and unable to attend church.”

“As a church,” he said, “we are unashamedly committed to following the teachings of Jesus Christ in our worship of God, discipleship and service to the poor and the marginalized. Our confidence, resilience and service is rooted in Jesus.

“The story is not one of inevitable decline. During 2013-14, some dioceses continued to increase their attendance. In the past 12 months alone there are examples of growth and new churches across the country.”

St. Thomas' Church in Norwich grew from 50 to 450 people in the past two years, while St. Swithin's Church in Bournemouth, which began in 2014, attracts a congregation of 500 people every week, he said. Another new church, St. Luke's in Birmingham “is already attracting hundreds of young people since its beginning in 2015,” Graham said. “There are many others like these, and each is a sign of hope.

“Attendance statistics do not tell the whole story. There are many things that churches do that are not included in these data, from running homelessness services and hosting food banks to educating a million children a day in our schools to providing welcome and accompaniment to the least, the last and the lost in our society.”

The Church of England publishes its “Statistics for Mission” each January, giving figures for the year before last. The full figures for 2014 can be downloaded at [www.churchofengland.org](http://www.churchofengland.org). ■