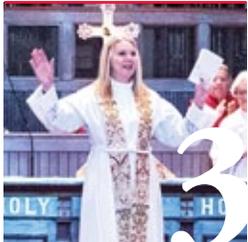


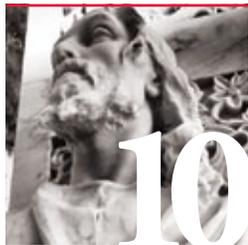
Episcopal JOURNAL

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NEWS California church reopens with spirit of hope



ARTS Interpreting the 'Jesus Movement' theme in art



FEATURE Church calls for end to Gaza violence

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Episcopalians join A.C.T. event to mark King assassination

By Mary Frances Schjonberg
Episcopal News Service

Looking back on the assassination 50 years ago of the Rev. Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. and looking forward to the end of racism, Episcopalians joined thousands of others on the National Mall in Washington, D.C., April 4 for an A.C.T. to End Racism Rally.

The day began cold and windy, and just before noon organizers delayed the rally for nearly 45 minutes out of concern for what one unidentified woman at the microphone called “a rapidly moving weather front” approaching the capital. She asked rally marshals to help attendees find cover in nearby museums, including the Smithsonian Institute.

That weather delay caused the organizers to reshuffle the lineup of more than 60 speakers. Both Presiding Bishop Michael Curry and Evangelical Lutheran Church in America Presiding Bishop Elizabeth Eaton were bumped from the list. Curry was scheduled to lead off the rally’s last

section, which formed a call to action and next steps.

Instead, as the rally went on, he recorded a video message for the National Council of Churches, organizer of the event, to use.

“We will act now, and we will act for our future, joining our brothers and sisters so that the future for our children will be a future worthy of them,” Curry said as he stood on the mall with the U.S. Capitol in the background.

Curry said people gathered for the rally to “act now to engage in the work of seeking to eradicate racism and its vestiges in our country, and in our world.

“We do so not simply to remember the past, but we do so to learn from the past in order that we might live and enter a transformed future.”

Pointing over his shoulder to the Capitol, Curry said the building symbolized “hope for our children — for generations of children yet to be born.”

It is a hope, he said, “that there is equal opportunity for education no matter who

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Photo/David J. Phillips/Pool via Reuters

Barbara Bush laid to rest
Some 1,500 mourners attend the April 21 funeral of Barbara Bush at St. Martin’s Episcopal Church in Houston, where she and her husband, former President George H. W. Bush, were parishioners for many years. The former first lady, who was 92, lay in repose at St. Martin’s the day before the service. Hundreds filed through the church to pay their respects.

General Convention again will address same-sex marriage questions

By Mary Frances Schjonberg
Episcopal News Service

On June 26, 2015, when a U.S. Supreme Court ruling legalized same-sex marriage nationwide, the 78th General Convention was in its second day.

A few days later, the convention authorized two new marriage rites for trial use by both same-sex and opposite-sex couples. The bishops and deputies also made the canonical definition of marriage gender-neutral.

Indie Pereira asked her priest, who was at the convention in Salt Lake City, if this meant she and her then-fiancée finally could get married at their parish in Tennessee.

It wasn’t until November 2015 that the answer to Pereira’s question became clear. Diocese of Tennessee Bishop John Bauerschmidt told the diocese that he would not allow the use of the rites and that only marriages between men and women could be performed in the diocese. He said that same-sex couples could work with Diocese of Kentucky clergy, whose bishops said they

could use the rites.

“From my perspective, I don’t really want to have a destination wedding in Kentucky, not to insult Kentucky,” Pereira told Episcopal News Service.

Thus, “almost three years later, we still haven’t had access to a church wedding, which we had been hoping for,” said Pereira, who attends St. Philip’s Episcopal Church in Nashville. She and her partner had a civil marriage. But, she said “I still hope that I can have my marriage blessed in my parish” — and blessed by the priest who, she said, “has walked with me through some of the most difficult moments of my life.”

When General Convention authorized the liturgies in 2015, bishops and deputies said individual diocesan bishops had to approve their use. And convention directed diocesan bishops to “make provision for all couples asking to be married in this church to have access to these liturgies.”

General Convention’s Task Force on the Study of Marriage since has monitored the use of the trial liturgies and is aware of concern about unequal access to them.

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Photo/Mary Frances Schjonberg/Episcopal News Service

At the 2015 General Convention, the Rev. Susan Russell, a longtime advocate for the full inclusion of gays and lesbians in the church, celebrates the U.S. Supreme Court ruling legalizing same-sex marriage.

ANGLICAN DIGEST

Anglican Digest is a column of news and features from churches in the Anglican Communion. The following were reported by Anglican Communion News Service.

Indian government 'a danger,' bishop says

The moderator of the United Church of South India, Bishop Thomas K Oommen, has called the Indian government "a danger to the very fabric" of the country.

In an open letter, he accused the government of adopting "Hindutva supremacist ideology" — an extreme form of Hindu nationalism — in a country whose constitution "declares liberty, equality and fraternity as its ideals; assures social, economic and political justice to the citizens of India; offers liberty of thought, expression, belief, faith and worship; provides equality of status and opportunity to all the people; and strives to promote fraternity among all the citizens."

The 4.5 million-member church prays every week for government leaders, he wrote. "This shows how deeply this church longs for a nation that is ruled in justice and peace. However ... especially during the last four years, we are extremely alarmed at the way our nation is being ruled ... As a citizen of India and as the head of an Indian church, which belongs to a minority religion, with the majority of its members belonging to the minority communities, I hereby share the fear my people have under the rule of a government that has become a nightmare to the poor and the minorities in India."

"The government is in the process of



Oommen

changing the school textbooks, inserting dogmatic and pseudo-scientific religious content, banning films, books, festivals of minorities, etc., which they claim ... 'offend' the Hindu nationalist sentiments," he said. "The demolishing of churches and mosques, vandalizing of statues and persecution of people belonging to Christianity and Islam show the true face of BJP [the ruling Bharatiya Janata Party] that subscribe to the Hindutva Ideology.

"While I consider Hindus as my own sisters and brothers, I believe Hindutva, which is totally against the values of Hinduism, is a danger to the age-old religious fraternity that this nation upholds," he said. The church demands that the government safeguard "the democratic and secular fabric of India, he said.

Kenyan church rejects suggested polygamy



Ole Saitit

The Anglican Church of Kenya will resist moves to promote polygamy in the country, Archbishop Jackson Ole Saitit said after Parliament member Gathoni Wamuchomba called for men to marry several women to ensure children in single-parent families have a father figure.

"We need to be honest, these children who are raised by single mothers, where are their fathers? And why do we want to pretend that this is not a problem?" she was reported as saying. "As much as we are talking about our church and culture, we need to go back to the drawing board to discuss this issue and come up with a solution."

Jackson, however, said that the church would not permit marriages involving multiple partners.

"The church is very clear through the teachings of the Bible, especially the New Testament, that one man and one woman make a family," he said.

New Zealand bans offshore permits

Bishop of Wellington Justin Duckworth welcomed New Zealand Prime Minister Jacinda Ardern's announce-

Archbishop opposes fracking

Canadian Archbishop Ron Cutler has given his support to a campaign against lifting a moratorium on fracking in Nova Scotia, adding his support to a letter signed by representatives of 40 different community groups opposing any lifting on the ban. Fracking is the extraction of oil or gas from subterranean rocks through the use of high-pressure liquid to force open fissures. Environmentalists because of the damage it can cause to the environment.

In January, Nova Scotia's Premier Stephen McNeil had been quoted as saying that, if "communities decide that they're going to give us social license for fracking to happen, we'd be happy to join them."

Energy Minister Geoff MacLellan, for his part, said he was "looking forward to the debate on fracking" following the publication of an onshore petroleum atlas for the province that identified 4.3 trillion cubic feet of shale gas.

Both McNeil and MacLellan later said the moratorium remained in place.

During a radio interview, Cutler said, after reading documents and material on both sides of the debate, he had concluded that there was "no way you can pump millions of litres of water, with toxins in it, under high pressure underground and then expect no consequences for that.

"There are bound to be levels of

ment of a ban on new permits for offshore oil and gas exploration.

Existing exploration and mining rights will be protected, but the new restriction is part of a "just transition to a clean energy future," Ardern said.

Anglicans from the Diocese of Wellington had been campaigning for such a move. In March, they took part in a demonstration outside a petroleum conference in the city. While Ardern's announcement only related to offshore permits, the diocese has been campaigning for a ban on new land and sea permits.



Photo/Joshua Doubek/Wikimedia

A fracking site on the Bakken Formation in North Dakota. Canadian Archbishop Ron Cutler is opposing similar fracking operations in his country's province of Nova Scotia.

pollution, both in ground water and ground-level air pollution, and I think the risks are simply too great," he said.

He said that the church's care for creation was linked to the Anglican Church of Canada's baptism vows, one of which is to "strive to safeguard the integrity of God's creation and respect, sustain and renew the life of the Earth."

He also defended the right of the church to speak out on political matters. "The church is involved in people's lives," he said, "or maybe I should say the people of the church are the ones involved in aspects of everything that affects their daily life. Faith is not a separate component of people's lives; it is woven through everything they do."

"Sometimes we don't raise our voices in what might be seen as political arenas, but ... We believe that God is involved in Creation. As a Christian, I believe that the world matters to God." ■



New Zealand Prime Minister Jacinda Ardern announces a ban on new permits for offshore oil exploration.

Photo/ABC News

"[The] announcement shows the government is listening," Duckworth said. "We thank them for that and encourage them to take further steps towards a clean economy, including ruling out new coal mines and ending subsidies for the fossil fuel sector" ■

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FROM THE EDITOR'S DESK

This month's editorial is written by Sharon Sheridan, a Diocese of Newark (N.J.) postulant for holy orders who engages in prison ministry.

The concerns and aspirations of incarcerated people often remind us of our common humanity — until a brutal crime jars our sensibilities.

Inmates working and waiting to re-enter society miss their children and pray for their families. They dream of finding true love. They anticipate beginning anew. Many became incarcerated following lives of poverty, abuse and violence. Surely the Jesus who blesses those who visit "the least of these" in prison weeps at their plight.

But then we read stories like that of the Rev. Canon Paul Wancura, who died

of injuries from a home invasion (see story, page 4). It's hard to feel pity for someone who would break into the house of an 87-year-old man and leave him tied up to be discovered two days later, dehydrated and injured so badly his hand had to be amputated. Surely Jesus weeps at the senseless death of this faithful, beloved priest, who practiced his vocation for 50 years and continued serving years past retiring as a church rector.

How do we reconcile compassion for those incarcerated with horror and anger at what some of them have done? What is a Christian response?

"What does the Lord require of you but to do justice, and to love kindness, and to walk humbly with your God?" says the prophet Micah.

We are called to live into a tension

and a mystery: to bring criminals to justice, yet to treat them with kindness, respecting, as our baptismal covenant proclaims, the dignity of every human being. We remember the Christ who condemns evil and calls sinners to repent — who also died a criminal's death, forgiving his killers and promising the man crucified beside him a place in heaven. We are commanded to love our neighbors — and our enemies.

Often, it just feels too hard; but we're not in this alone. We affirm our baptismal promises "with God's help," knowing God alone can help us achieve them. Our anger, even a desire for revenge, are natural but must be countered with compassion, "with God's help," knowing that God's love and tears encompass us all. ■

NEWS

Church reopens, heralds reconciliation efforts with Los Angeles diocese

By David Paulsen
Episcopal News Service

An Episcopal congregation in Southern California that had been barred from its church building for three years amid a property dispute with the diocese has returned with a spirit of reconciliation and hope.

Families are inundating the church with requests for baptisms and weddings, the congregation is ramping up its outreach ministries, and on April 8 worship services resumed at the Newport Beach church building. What was St. James the Great is now called St. James Episcopal Church.

"It's like a second startup, so we're scrambling. But it's a joyful scramble," said the Rev. Cindy Voorhees, who leads the congregation. "We feel like we're back home. It's just time to thrive again, and we're really just focusing on our mission and ministry of outreach."

She got the keys to the church a couple of weeks before the first worship service to inspect the structure for any maintenance requirements. In preparation for the April 8 Eucharist, 25 to 40 volunteers showed up for five straight days to wash windows, vacuum floors and scrub bathrooms.

Many described being back in the church as "surreal," while the mood among the 300 or so at the Eucharist was "extremely joyful," Voorhees said.

Diocese of Los Angeles Bishop John Taylor preached on April 8. He addressed the property dispute in the sermon, saying negotiations made it hard for him and other church leaders



Photos/Lissa Schairer

The Rev. Cindy Voorhees receives an ovation during announcements at the first Eucharist held inside St. James Episcopal Church in Newport Beach, Calif., since 2015.

to fulfill their roles as pastors.

"We are reclaiming our pastorship this morning," Taylor said, drawing a parallel between Jesus' resurrection and the congregation. He repeatedly invoked a theme of reconciliation.

"We are inviting everyone in our diocese to come home to a new sense of belonging, of being at home with one another in the diocesan family," he said. "Reconciliation, my friends, is for any herder who has squabbled with another one."

The property had been at the heart of disciplinary proceedings last year against Taylor's predecessor, Bishop J. Jon Bruno, for his attempts to sell the church building. Members of St. James the Great had been forced to worship

in a Newport Beach Civic Center community room while the property remained in dispute.

The Episcopal Church disciplinary hearing panel found Bruno guilty of the St. James complainants' allegations and said he should be suspended from ordained ministry for three years because of misconduct. Bruno retired at the end of November, and Taylor took over as diocesan bishop on Dec. 1.

In November, the diocese released a plan for future use of the church prop-

erty, including the eventual resumption of worship services there by the congregation. The diocese plans to use part of the facility for its Redeemer Center for Diocesan Ministries.

The diocese also committed to helping St. James regain mission status. For now, it is a mission station with Voorhees as vicar. She said she hoped the diocesan convention in December would consider granting mission status.

Until then, St. James has plenty to do. Although it had continued to pursue outreach ministries while worshipping at the civic center, it now can resume after-school programs and step up other initiatives serving children in the area.

And Voorhees said the church has a backlog of baptisms to schedule — her own 2-year-old granddaughter among them. Not many families wanted to hold baptisms in

the civic center, she said. St. James also is fielding a sudden barrage of calls about weddings. It is located next to a boutique hotel, which makes it something of a destination for engaged couples planning their ceremonies and receptions, Voorhees said.

This is a big change from just a couple of weeks earlier, when the congregation joined a local Baptist church for Good Friday and celebrated Easter at the civic center. Things are starting to return to normal, and the congregation remains

committed to reconciliation work with the diocese, Voorhees said. "There's rebuilding that has to go on, and I think that everyone is willing and wanting to do that." ■



Diocese of Los Angeles Bishop John Taylor preaches at St. James Episcopal Church in Newport Beach, Calif.

Texas Court of Appeals judgment favors Episcopal Church parties

Episcopal Diocese of Fort Worth

The Fort Worth Court of Appeals issued a 178-page opinion April 5 in favor of the loyal Episcopalians of the Episcopal Diocese of Fort Worth in Texas. In a decision authored by the chief justice, the court reversed the trial court's 2015 judgment in favor of the breakaway parties that left the diocese. It held that Episcopalians were entitled to control both the Episcopal Diocese of Fort Worth and its corporation.

The dispute stems from the decision by the former bishop of the diocese and some diocesan and parish leaders to sever ties with the Episcopal Church and claim the name and property of the Episcopal diocese for their new church.

Noting that the parties agreed that the corporation held legal title to all of the property in dispute, the Court of Appeals also analyzed two examples of the many deeds at issue. The court rendered judgment in favor of the Episcopalians on those two deeds, both of which relate to property occupied by All Saints Episcopal Church in Fort Worth. The court then remanded the many other, similar deeds to the trial court so it could rule on those deeds using the same analysis.

"We are very grateful for the care taken by the Fort Worth Court of Appeals in reaching its decision," said diocesan Bishop Scott Mayer. "As this unfolds, the people and clergy of our diocese will, as always, carry on our work as the Episcopal branch of the 'Jesus Movement.' We continue to hold all involved in our prayers." ■

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AROUND THE CHURCH

Missouri diocese opposes guns in church

Christian and other faith leaders across Missouri have united against a draft bill that would make it easier for gun owners to carry weapons in places of worship. Under current legislation in the state, people with permits to carry concealed weapons must obtain the permission from property owners before carrying the weapons on their property. But law makers in the Missouri House are considering a law that shift the onus onto property owners. Under the new law, people with concealed-carry permits would be entitled to carry weapons onto private property — including sacred spaces — unless the premises display signs to the contrary.

“We do want the legislators to take some action — just not on the bill that is before them at the moment,” Diocese of Missouri Bishop Wayne Smith said at a joint faith leaders press conference. “We urge the Missouri House to take new legislative priorities, such as banning bump stocks, limiting high-capacity magazines, better access and resources for mental health care, and the strengthening of background checks.”

One of the organizers of the press conference, the Rev. Mike Angell, is the rector of the Episcopal Church of the Holy Communion in University City. The gathering was not “an exhaustive list of the faith leaders that oppose the current legislation or that would be willing to work with our political leaders on

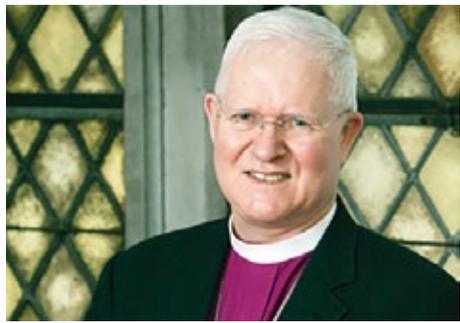
some sensible gun legislation,” he said.

In a letter to lawmakers in Missouri, Smith listed further concerns about the proposed law. “Current proposals to allow concealed weapons on university campuses and in bars — venues where alcohol use might well impair judgement — are incalculably dangerous and infringe on the rights of the majority of university students, faculty, administrators — and the general public who patronize bars.

“Furthermore, we do not accept the premise of ‘conceal and carry’ as normative for public life, to be tempered only by those organizations and facilities which post signage to prohibit these weapons,” he said. “For most houses of worship, long acknowledged as nonviolent sanctuaries, this default assumption is deeply offensive. Some faith communities may in fact welcome guns in their midst, but they are a distinct minority and, consequently, should bear the burden for posting signage to allow for concealed weapons.

“Hospitals, similarly, are havens for healing and safety, and they too often, and tragically, are places to treat victims of violence. Allowing more weapons into this place of refuge compounds the danger of violence and retribution. Such a law would put patients, staff and visitors at substantial and unnecessary risk.”

— Anglican Communion News Service



Photo/Diocese of Missouri

Bishop Wayne Smith of the Diocese of Missouri is one of a number of faith leaders in the state to oppose a proposed easing of restrictions on carrying concealed firearms.

Executive Council seeks input on anti-racism training plan

The Executive Council Committee on Anti-Racism (ECCAR) is seeking feedback on a draft of a comprehensive framework for anti-racism and racial-reconciliation training for use in congregations, dioceses, institutions and groups.

“The Framework for Anti-Racism and Racial Reconciliation Training was produced over the past year based on the experiences of ECCAR members with input of many people from across the church,” said James McKim, committee chair.

“The purpose of this document is to set the standard for capabilities we feel people should have to do this work on behalf of the church. The purpose of this release is to be an introduction to

the Framework and to obtain feedback before final publishing,” he said. “The expectation is that the final Framework description will be available on the Racial Reconciliation page of the Episcopal Church website.”

The framework includes: learning objectives; key concepts and components; and a rubric that describes the levels of knowledge and capabilities necessary for those the church certifies as prepared to participate in, lead, or teach.

The framework will be considered at General Convention 2018 in July.

Deadline for offering feedback to ECCAR@episcopalchurch.org is May 10.

For more information, contact McKim at hkim@episcopalchurch.org.

— Episcopal Church Public Affairs Office



OBITUARIES

Elderly priest dies after home invasion



Wancura

The Rev. Canon Paul Wancura, 87, died April 16 from injuries suffered during a home invasion. A \$10,000 reward has been offered for information leading to an arrest and conviction in the attack, which police are investigating as a homicide. A burglary was reported near Wancura's house on April 4, and police are trying to determine if the two crimes are connected.

A fellow priest found Wancura on March 19 tied up between a bed and a wall in his Shelter Island home. He had failed to show up as expected at a service March 18 at Episcopal Church of the Messiah in Central Islip, and church leaders asked the Rev. Charles McCarron, rector of Shelter Island's St. Mary's Episcopal Church, to check on him. The initial police investigation indicated the attacker or attackers may specifically have targeted Wancura, who had been tied up for at least two days, the Shelter Island Reporter reported. Wancura was flown in critical condition to Stony Brook University Hospital, where a hand was amputated because of his injuries from being tied up. “I feel like I lost a beloved uncle,” McCarron told Newsday, saying the cause of death was sepsis.

Wancura, a native of Queens, felt a calling to the priesthood while serving in the Army in Europe during the Korean War, Newsday reported. Wancura served the diocese as priest for more than 50 years, Bishop Lawrence Provenzano said in an April 17 message to the diocese. He was archdeacon of Suffolk County from 1966 to 1974, assisting parishes and missions and providing administrative oversight on behalf of the bishop's office. He served as rector of Caroline Church of Brookhaven from 1974 to 2000 and continued to assist churches in the area as needed. When Wancura died, he was the second oldest priest still serving on Long Island, including as a supply priest at Church of the Messiah, Provenzano said.

“Paul was an old-fashioned priest with the sensibility and spirit of a very forward-looking man,” he said. “He was spry and witty — the kind of person who would engage everyone in conversation and be interested in knowing about everything happening around him. ... Not only could he tell a story well, he was always interested in hearing the story of the people he met. His intellect and good humor were a delight to encounter.”

Wancura's wife died soon after he retired, and they had no children, friend and former parishioner Kevin Lockerbie told Newsday. “He was so human. He understood people's trials.”

McCarron remembered Wancura as a dedicated priest, a sharp dresser and a reserved man with a deadpan sense of humor.

“He would make a comment, pause and give you a look,” he told the Shelter Island Reporter. “There was a twinkle in his eye.”

— Episcopal News Service

Bishop Shannon Mallory

The Rt. Rev. Charles Shannon Mallory, 81, first bishop of the Diocese of El Camino Real, died peacefully in Monterey, Calif., on April 4.

Mallory, who led the diocese from its founding in 1980 through his retirement in 1990, was born in



Mallory

Dallas and grew up in Van Nuys, Calif. After being ordained to the diaconate in the Diocese of Los Angeles, he entered the mission field and, in 1961, was ordained priest in Africa. He served as a missionary in Namibia, South Africa and Uganda, and then as the first bishop of Botswana. In 1978, he returned to the United States and served as assistant bishop in the Diocese of Long Island.

He was elected bishop of El Camino Real in 1980. After retiring, Mallory served in the Diocese of Oklahoma and then lived and served in Indian Wells, Calif., as a member of St. Margaret's Episcopal Church. He wrote two books: “Blacklisted!,” his memoirs of 18 years of traveling throughout Africa, and “Other Roads Less Traveled,” a collection of sermons and meditations.

— Diocese of El Camino Real

Sister Ruth, OSH

Mary Juchter, known as Sister Ruth in the Order of Saint Helena, North Augusta, S.C., 92, died on April 8.

Born in Schenectady, N.Y., Sister Ruth taught French and English in the United States and abroad before entering the convent. She studied for a year in France, at the University of Grenoble and the Sorbonne, received her bachelor of arts from Barnard College and a master's degree from Columbia University in New York. She then taught for five years at the Holy Cross Mission School in Bolahun, Liberia.

She entered the Order of Saint Helena in 1959, making her life profession in 1965. She taught French and geometry at the Margaret Hall School for girls in Versailles, Ky.

In 1970, Sister Ruth began her “vocation within a vocation” of working closely with the order's associates, visiting them in Ghana and throughout the United States and welcoming visitors from the Bahamas, where members of the order had worked during 1975-82. She lived in convents around the country and served as the order's librarian and as secretary for the Episcopal Peace Fellowship.

— Order of Saint Helena



Sister Ruth

AROUND THE CHURCH

Curry joins church leaders in quest to 'reclaim Jesus'

By Episcopal News Service staff

A group of Protestant and Roman Catholic leaders, including Presiding Bishop Michael Curry, have begun what they call a campaign to "reclaim Jesus" from those who they say are using Christian theology for political gain.

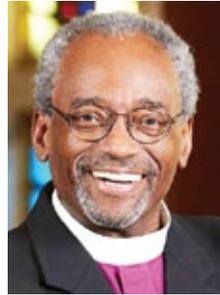
"We are living through perilous and polarizing times as a nation, with a dangerous crisis of moral and political leadership at the highest levels of our government and in our churches," the 23 signers said in the statement. "We believe the soul of the nation and the integrity of faith are now at stake."

The group says the church's role is to change the world through the life and love of Jesus Christ, while the government should serve the common good by protecting justice and peace, rewarding good behavior while restraining bad behavior. "When that role is undermined by political leadership, faith leaders must stand up and speak out," the signers say, citing the Rev. Martin Luther King Jr., who said the church is the conscience of the state, not its master or servant.

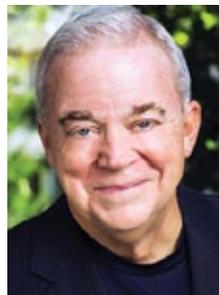
"Reclaiming Jesus: A Confession of

Faith in a Time of Crisis" offers six "affirmations" of what the group says it believes, "and the resulting rejections of practices and policies by political leaders which dangerously corrode the soul of the nation and deeply threaten the public integrity of our faith."

"We pray that we, as followers of Je-



Curry



Wallis

sus, will find the depth of faith to match the danger of our political crisis."

In summary, the signers, in their affirmations and rejections, say they believe:

- Each human being is made in God's image and likeness, and therefore, "we reject the resurgence of white nationalism and racism in our nation on many fronts, including the highest levels of political leadership."

- We are one body and, therefore, "we

reject misogyny; the mistreatment, violent abuse, sexual harassment and assault of women that has been further revealed in our culture and politics, including our churches; and the oppression of any other child of God."

- "How we treat the hungry, the thirsty, the naked, the stranger, the sick and the prisoner is how we treat Christ himself," and, therefore, "we reject the language and policies of political leaders who would debase and abandon the most vulnerable children of God."

- "Truth is morally central to our personal and public lives," and, therefore, "we reject the practice and pattern of lying that is invading our political and civil life."

- Christ's way of leadership is servanthood, not domination, and, therefore, "we reject any moves toward autocratic political leadership and authoritarian rule. ... They raise deeper concerns about political idolatry, accompanied by false and unconstitutional notions of authority."

- Jesus "tells us to go into all nations making disciples," and, therefore, "we reject 'America first' as a theological heresy for followers of Christ."

The statement concludes that "our urgent need, in a time of moral and political crisis, is to recover the power of confessing our faith. Lament, repent, and then repair."

The Rev. Jim Wallis, founder of Sojourners, and Curry began talking earlier

this year about the need for such a statement. The signers agreed to the wording at an Ash Wednesday retreat that Curry hosted at the Episcopal Church Center in New York.

"I joined with other Christian church leaders on this confession of what faith in times like these require," Curry said. "When faced with social issues, our church has not been silent, and we will continue to strive for justice and peace. Our role is one of moral leadership for our nation, for our church, for ourselves."

The "Reclaiming Jesus" message, Wallis said in a commentary on the Sojourners website, needed to be "something that would be much more than just another statement to sign and then file away."

"Rather, with a shared humble spirit, we felt called to act as elders for a time such as this and to commend our message to the churches for a process of prayer, study, reflection and action."

Wallis called his commentary "Reclaiming Jesus: How Confessing Faith Can Respond to a Moral and Constitutional Crisis."

The signers have set up a website, Reclaiming Jesus, where the statement and a one-page summary can be downloaded. Also planned are a collection of resources in addition to a five-week "civil discourse curriculum" that already has been released. ■

Sewanee revokes Rose's degree

Sewanee: The University of the South in Sewanee, Tenn., has revoked Charlie Rose's honorary degree after facing increasing pressure from all sides to act in response to the sexual-harassment scandal that derailed the broadcast journalist's career last fall.

The Sewanee Board of Regents made the decision in a March 20 meeting, the university said in a statement released March 21. This was the first time Sewanee had revoked an honorary degree, and the action required the creation of a new procedure for reconsidering such degrees, the statement said.

"In the new four-step process, a written request for the revocation of an honorary degree was submitted to the vice chancellor, who shared it with and received approval from the Joint Regent-Senate Committee on Honorary Degrees, the University Senate and the Board of Regents, in that order," the university said.

The Board of Regents initially had resisted requests to revoke the degree in February, but a month later it has reversed itself, joining the honorary-degree committee and the University Senate in

voting with at least two-thirds majorities to take action against Rose.

Sewanee, which is owned and governed by 28 Episcopal dioceses, presented Rose with an honorary degree when he delivered the university's commencement address in spring 2016.

Known for his work as host of "Charlie Rose" on PBS and Bloomberg and co-anchor on "CBS This Morning," Rose was dropped in November by all three broadcasters after the Washington Post reported on eight women's allegations that Rose had made unwanted sexual advances toward them, including lewd comments, groping and walking around naked in their presence.

Rose issued an apology for his "inappropriate behavior" and admitted he had "behaved insensitively at times," though he also disputed the accuracy of some of the allegations. He was one of a series of prominent men from the world of entertainment, media and politics to suddenly fall from grace last year amid allegations of sexual misconduct.

— Episcopal News Service

El Camino Real bishop announces retirement

Diocese of El Camino Real Bishop Mary Gray-Reeves recently called for the election of her successor and announced that she would resign in early 2020. That will be her 13th year of her episcopate.

"While a date for an electing convention is not yet set, the ordination and consecration of the next bishop will be held Jan. 11, 2020," she wrote to the diocese. "At that service, the transition from my episcopate to that of our new bishop



Gray-Reeves

will take place."

"Meanwhile, I am going to continue working as I have been, focusing on our Strategic Plan remix alongside diocesan leaders and staff," she said. "I will treasure this time of transition, knowing that God has yet more wonderful life ahead for us all."

— Episcopal News Service

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NEWS

ACT continued from page 1

they are, that there are voting rights for all citizens of this great country because all of us have been created in the image and likeness of God, as it says in the first chapter of Genesis, so that America will truly be America: a land of liberty, a land of justice, a land of equality.”

Curry pledged the Episcopal Church's commitment to making that hope a reality. “On this day and the days going forward, we as Episcopalians join with our fellow Christians and other people of goodwill and of all faiths and types who seek to make this world something that more closely resembles God's dream and not a human nightmare,” he said.

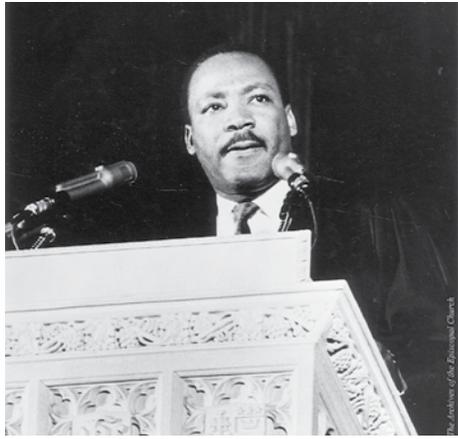
The rally's speakers, each of whom were given a short time at the microphone and many of whom ran over their time, included Christian, Hindu, Jewish, Islamic and Zoroastrian leaders. Secular activists spoke as well, including actors, singers, doctors and Ben Cohen and Jerry Greenfield, the founders of Ben & Jerry's.

Cohen told the crowd that, if he and Greenfield had been black, the ice cream company would not exist. “The deck would've been just too stacked against us,” he said.

The NCC, to which the Episcopal Church and nearly 40 other Christian traditions belong, vowed to “pick up the torch and carrying on with a multiyear effort to finish the work Dr. King began.” The effort also is endorsed by an

ecumenical group of religious organizations.

A.C.T. stands for awaken, confront and transform. The NCC says its goal is to remove racism from the nation's social fabric and bring the country together. The night before the rally, many participants met at Saint Sophia Greek Orthodox Cathedral in Washington, D.C., to pray for an end to racism. The service took place on the Greek Orthodox Church's Holy Tuesday, a day with a liturgy that is noted for its theme of repentance, according to the cathedral's website.



Photo/The Archives of the Episcopal Church

Four days before he was assassinated in Memphis, Tenn., the Rev. Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. preached his last Sunday sermon at Washington National Cathedral.

The rally and surrounding events were to be followed April 5 by a National Day of Advocacy & Action. The day was to include training in how to organize effective legislative visits and other aspects of such advocacy work, as well as actual visits to congressional offices.

Curry's planned participation in the Episcopal Church's larger pledge “to act faithfully on its long history of honorable General Convention and Executive Council intentions but imperfect and fragmentary practical actions in matters of poverty, racism, sexism and economic justice,” as the church's Executive Council said in a resolution it passed at its January meeting. That resolution called for the church to develop an official relationship with the 2018 Poor People's Campaign: A National Call for Moral Revival.

The Episcopal Church is in the midst of a season of justice engagement, the

Rev. Chuck Wynder, the church's officer for social justice and advocacy engagement, told Episcopal News Service. That season already has included Episcopalians' participation in the March 24 March for Our Lives.

“One of our goals is to be in the public square on this 50th anniversary of the assassination of Dr. King, and, as a member church of the NCC, to participate actively in this long-term initiative to end racism by engaging in work and ministries of racial justice, racial equity and racial reconciliation both inside the church and in our communities,” Wynder said.

By being involved in the A.C.T. rally, he said, the Episcopal Church can “be in the public square and ... state publicly on this very important day where we're going and where we hope to go.”

The church's involvement is also a way for Episcopalians to live into the Becoming Beloved Community effort that offers the Episcopal Church ways to organize its efforts to respond to racial injustice and grow a community of reconcilers, justice-makers and healers, Wynder said. Getting involved in the



Photo/Neva Rae Fox

The Rev. Stephanie Spellers, the presiding bishop's canon for evangelism, reconciliation and creation care, is interviewed in the media tent during the A.C.T. to End Racism Rally.

2018 Poor People's Campaign is a significant step in that direction, he said.

The 2018 campaign echoes King's plan in 1968 for a Poor People's Campaign, a plan he announced in a sermon on March 31, 1968, from the pulpit of Washington National Cathedral in Washington, D.C.

“There is nothing new about poverty. What is new is that we now have the techniques and the resources to get rid of poverty. The real question is whether we have the will,” King said in what would be his last Sunday sermon before his death.

“In a few weeks some of us are coming to Washington to see if the will is still alive or if it is alive in this nation. We are coming to Washington in a Poor People's Campaign.”

King assured the congregation that



Photo/Neva Rae Fox

Diocese of Milwaukee Bishop Steven Miller, right, and the Rev. Chuck Wynder, the Episcopal Church's officer for social justice and advocacy engagement, listen to speakers at the A.C.T. to End Racism Rally on the National Mall in Washington, D.C.

this would not be a “histrionic gesture” or one meant to cause violence. “We are coming to demand that the government address itself to the problem of poverty. We read one day, ‘We hold these truths to be self-evident, that all men are created equal, that they are endowed by their Creator with certain inalienable rights, that among these are life, liberty, and the pursuit of happiness.’ But if a man doesn't have a job or an income, he has neither life nor liberty nor the possibility for the pursuit of happiness. He merely exists,” he said.

“We are coming to ask America to be true to the huge promissory note that it signed years ago. And we are coming to engage in dramatic nonviolent action, to call attention to the gulf between promise and fulfillment, to make the invisible visible.”

King was invited to preach in the cathedral to “explain ‘to the white clergy and the people of Greater Washington’ that his planned Poor People's Campaign was intended to be ‘nonviolent’ and not ‘disruptive of life in Washington,’” the Very Rev. Randolph Marshall Hollerith, dean of the cathedral, said. “However, some Episcopalians protested the invitation. “It appears obvious that King's purposes are definitely racist (one group only) and whose goal is to stir up more racial tension and anxiety, which can only lead to disaster,” one woman wrote.

Those demonstrations had been tentatively set for June 15, 1968. King was gunned down on April 4 by an assassin in Memphis, Tenn., four days after his sermon at Washington National Cathedral. Thousands of people spilled out of the cathedral on April 5 to mourn his assassination.

The cathedral planned to commemorate King's last sermon with an Evensong on April 4 and by playing recorded excerpts along with music and prayers from the March 31, 1968, service during an April 8 Eucharist. It and other Episcopal churches also planned to participate in a worldwide tolling of church bells the evening of April 4.

In Memphis on April 7, St. Mary's Cathedral planned to host a commemoration of the April 5, 1968, Ministers March, during which about 300 clergy gathered at the cathedral the day after King was killed about two miles away. ■

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NEWS

Seminary announces black-scholars partnership

By David Paulsen
Episcopal News Service

The Seminary of the Southwest in Austin, Texas, is working with the Black Religious Scholars Group on a five-year partnership that will bring black scholars to the Episcopal seminary as visiting professors to improve racial diversity on the faculty and strengthen clergy formation on racial reconciliation.

The partnership creates the Crump visiting professor and black religious scholars group scholar-in-residence, with the Rev. Melanie Jones selected as the first visiting scholar. Jones, a Baptist minister, will teach at the seminary for a year starting this fall.

“This is a kind of direct initiative in order to not only bring black voices into this space but also to enable these voices to shape the curriculum and also to shape the theological development,” Jones said.

Jones grew up in the Chicago area and is associate minister of the South Suburban Missionary Baptist Church in Harvey, Ill. She studied economics and political science at Howard University in Washington, D.C., because she initially wanted to become a lawyer, but she grew to believe she could do more for social justice

by focusing on spiritual development and community involvement, she said.

While earning a Master of Divinity degree at Vanderbilt University in Nashville, Tenn., Jones worked with faith-based programs aimed at helping prison inmates successfully re-enter society. She also began teaching at the nearby American Baptist College, which has a history of engagement on social-justice issues.

The Episcopal Church’s emphasis on racial reconciliation is one of the reasons Jones said she was looking forward to teaching at Seminary of the Southwest.

“If we’re calling for an inclusive world, if we’re calling for black lives to matter, if we’re calling for there to be valuing of bodies, human beings, then we ought to have a multitude of voices at the table, in the room, at the lectern, and not only for moments, but for significant ways of shaping the development and the formation of its students and leaders,” Jones said.

Presiding Bishop Michael Curry has made racial reconciliation one of his top priorities, including through the “Be-

coming Beloved Community” initiative. General Convention has passed more than 30 resolutions on the subject since 1952, and some dioceses have taken up their own efforts to confront hard truths about their complicity with slavery, segregation and lynchings.

Seminary of the Southwest, in announcing the partnership with Black Religious Scholars Group, cited an increased sense of urgency in the wake of recent episodes of racial hostility around the country.



Photo/Seminary of the Southwest
Jones

‘If we’re calling for an inclusive world, if we’re calling for black lives to matter, if we’re calling for there to be valuing of bodies, human beings, then we ought to have a multitude of voices at the table.’

— The Rev. Melanie Jones

“This past year has shown how important the work of racial justice and reconciliation is in the United States,” the Very Rev. Cynthia Briggs Kittredge, seminary dean and president, said in a news release.

“Seminary of the Southwest believes that this work must include our own community of learning. It is our sincere hope that this partnership and what we learn from it will be a model for other seminaries to collaborate with aligned organizations to foster racial and ethnic diversity in their institutions, the church and the world,” she said.

Jones and subsequent visiting scholars will teach two courses each academic year at the seminary: one core course and a second course that each visiting scholar will develop. The visiting scholars also will have opportunities to preach during worship services at the seminary and to help shape and contribute to other aspects of campus life.

This is a new venture for Black Religious Scholars Group, which in the past has connected its scholars with congregations in the black-church tradition for symposiums that offer a mix of academic and spiritual enrichment. Stacey Floyd-Thomas, the organization’s executive director and co-founder, said he hoped the partnership with Seminary of the Southwest would serve “as a hopeful beacon of great promise and wonderful possibility to other likeminded institutions.”

“The Black Religious Scholars Group acknowledges this partnership as an exemplary way in which theological education and the church can live into the promises of our ideals during an era that may otherwise suggest that all hope is lost in a church and society in deep cri-

sis,” Floyd-Thomas said in the seminary’s news release. “The work that we are embarking upon is built on a steadfast belief that our shared Christian witness is far stronger than persistent economic insecurity, rising cultural intolerance, growing political divisions and increased anti-immigrant attitudes.”

Seminary of the Southwest has one black professor on its faculty, Awa Jangha. Most of its 18 full-time faculty members are white.

The visiting professor program “will increase the diversity of our faculty and enrich the conversation around theol-

ogy, race and the church,” Kittredge said in an e-mailed statement. “The partnership will be a learning opportunity for the members of our ongoing community, faculty and students alike, and for the visiting professor.”

The seminary looks forward to welcoming Jones in the fall, she said.

“Living fully into the promise of diversity is an opportunity not only for Seminary of the Southwest but for the Episcopal Church as a whole,” Kittredge said. “We hope that what we learn will be of benefit to the wider community of the academy and the church.” ■



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GENERAL CONVENTION

Marriage task force proposes rites for committed unmarried couples



By Mary Frances Schjonberg
Episcopal News Service

General Convention's Task Force on the Study of Marriage has made recommendations that would expand the Episcopal Church's decision to allow same-sex couples access to sacramental marriage, and it is asking convention to look beyond marriage.

In its Blue Book Report, the task force proposes to add to the "Enriching Our Worship" series two rites for blessing relationships. They are intended for couples that want to formalize their monogamous, unconditional and lifelong relationships but not get married.

"The Witnessing and Blessing of a Lifelong Covenant" would be for use in jurisdictions of the Episcopal Church in which the couple desiring marriage is of the same sex and when the civil jurisdiction in which the marriage would occur does not allow marriage of same-sex people, the task force said.

A second new rite, "The Blessing of a Lifelong Relationship," is intended for couples who desire to formalize their monogamous, unconditional and life-

long relationships that are "something different than a marriage in that [they do] not include the merging of property, finances or other legal encumbrances." It could also be used by couples for whom the requirement to furnish identification to obtain a marriage license could result in legal penalties, including deportation because of immigration status, the task force said.

The rite "shall not be used for mere convenience," according to the proposed resolution.

Diocesan bishops would have to approve use of the rites, and no member of the clergy would be required to officiate at such blessings.

A couple's desire to use the second rite might be prompted, the task force said, by the needs and rights of children of a former marriage; a need to maintain individuals' ability to uphold the financial obligations and commitments of their household; and a desire to maintain their ability to support themselves with shelter, food and health care, recognizing that a new marriage would cut off the benefits they receive from their former spouse

and that, if their subsequent marriage should end in death or divorce, they would be left without any pension or health care.

Younger members of the task force asked the group to consider how the

to aid individuals and couples in discerning their vocation to relationship, be it to singleness, celibacy, marriage and/or parenting," according to the resolution.

The resolution's explanation says that, in 2016, approximately 18 million U.S. adults were in cohabiting relationships, a 29 percent increase over a nine-year period. About 4.1 million of those people were age 50 and older.

When it comes to nuanced and sensitive guidance and teaching regarding sexual intimacy, many people feel largely alone, "having found the church's counsel to remain sexually abstinent outside of marriage insufficient and unreflective of their experience of the holy in relationship," the task force said in its report.

The resolution says that development of the resources would be guided by this statement: "Qualities of relationship that ground in faithfulness the expression of sexual intimacy include fidelity, monogamy, commitment, mutual affection, mutual respect, careful and honest communication,

continued on page 12



Photo/Mary Frances Schjonberg/ENS

General Convention's Task Force on the Study of Marriage is proposing several changes and additions to the Book of Common Prayer's marriage rites and definitions, as well as finding ways to minister to those who live in monogamous relationships outside of marriage.

church could develop pastoral resources that recognize the rising rate of U.S. adults who live in sexually intimate relationships other than marriage. The resources could include "spiritual practices,

Official Youth Presence members announced

The 16 members of the Official Youth Presence at the 79th General Convention, to be held July 5 to 13 in Austin, Texas, have been announced.

Established in 1982, the Official Youth Presence members are permitted seat and voice in the House of Deputies and will participate in committee hearings and floor debates.

"Each convention since 1997, the Official Youth Presence has had the privilege of seat and voice in the House of Deputies," House of Deputies President the Rev. Gay Clark Jennings said. "Our legislative deliberations and debates are enlivened and enriched by these impressive young people, and I look forward to welcoming this year's participants to our house."

"Members of the Official Youth Presence will participate in a General Convention orientation and training April 5-8 in Austin to ensure they are ready for General Convention when they arrive in Texas on July 2," said Bronwyn Clark Skov, Episcopal Church director for formation, youth and young adult ministries. "These young people will participate in every aspect of General Convention, from committee meetings to legislative deliberations on the floor of the House of Deputies."

The following youth, selected from 107 applicants, will be serving:

Province I

- Georgia Atkinson, Episcopal Church of New Hampshire
- James-Paul Forbes, Episcopal Church in Connecticut

Province II

- Anthony Baldeosingh, Diocese of Long Island
- Wentao Zhao, Diocese of Long Island

Province III

- Alexander Ward, Diocese of West Virginia
- Andrew K. Kasule, Diocese of Washington

Province IV

- Justin Mullis, Diocese of North Carolina
- Helena Upshaw, Episcopal Church in South Carolina

Province V

- Claire Parish, Diocese of Western Michigan
- Alexander Koponen, Diocese of Indianapolis

Province VI

- Emily Jetton, Diocese of Iowa
- Luisa Van Oss, Episcopal Church in Minnesota

Province VII

- Michaela Wilkins, Diocese of Texas
- Cecelia Riddle, Diocese of Kansas

Province VIII

- Angela Cainguitan, Diocese of Hawaii
- Maria Gonzalez, Diocese of Olympia

Province IX is currently discerning participants.

Adult mentors will be:

- Cookie Cantwell, Diocese of Upper South Carolina, Province IV
- The Rev. Randy Callender, Diocese of Maryland, Province III
- Karen Schlabach, Diocese of Kansas, Province VII
- The Rev. Israel Portilla Gomez, Diocese of Colombia, Province IX
- The Rev. Vincent Black, Diocese of Ohio, Province V, serving as chaplain.

Joining Skov will be Episcopal Church staff members Wendy Johnson, officer for digital formation and events, and Valerie Harris, associate for the formation department.

For more information, contact Skov at bskov@episcopalchurch.org ■

Registration open for children's program

Counselor applications sought

Registration is open for the Children's Program, and applications are being accepted for volunteer counselor and junior counselor opportunities at General Convention, to be held July 5-13 in Austin, Texas.

"The General Convention Children's Program is so much more than just a place for children to be while their parents do church work," said Caren Miles of the Diocese of California, Children's Program director for General Convention. "It is an opportunity that not only transforms the child, but can lower the average age of deputations by allowing parents/guardians of school-age children to serve as deputies."

General Convention will offer a daily program for children ranging in age from newborn to fifth grade. Volunteer opportunities are available for sixth grades and up.

"We are looking for youth who are willing to work hard and have fun," Miles said. "We are especially looking for individuals who are good working in teams, enjoy being able lead as well as follow, are good listeners and see working with children at convention as a ministry to the church."

The Children's Program will operate July 4 through July 13, 7:15 am through the close of the business session. An open house will be held on July 3.

The curriculum is grounded in the Episcopal Relief & Development's Abundant Life Garden Project, along with stories from Godly Play.

Cost is \$50 per day and includes lunch and snacks. The registration deadline is June 29.

Children of deputies, alternates, bishops, volunteers and others attending General Convention are eligible.

Scholarships may be available.

For more information, contact Miles at carenm@diocal.org.

— Episcopal Church Office of Public Affairs

GENERAL CONVENTION

MARRIAGE continued from page 1

Its Blue Book Report says it found that eight diocesan bishops in the church's 101 domestic dioceses have not authorized use of the trial liturgies.

The Episcopal Church includes 10 dioceses in civil legal jurisdictions that do not allow marriage for same-sex couples. Since church canons require compliance with both civil and canonical requirements for marriage, the convention did not authorize the trial liturgies for use in those dioceses.

The task force received a statement signed by five Province IX diocesan bishops and one retired bishop representing the dioceses of Ecuador Litoral, Ecuador Central, the Dominican Republic, Venezuela and Honduras. Their statement criticized the task force's recommendations and threatened that approval would "greatly deepen the breach, the division, and the Ninth Province will have to learn to walk alone." The bishops of Colombia and Puerto Rico did not sign the statement.

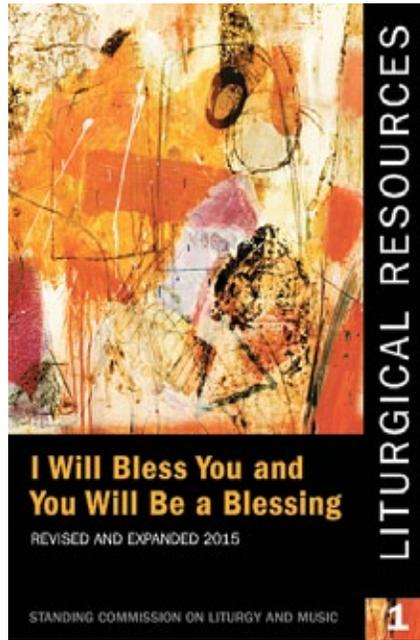
The task force is proposing that this year's convention require bishops in authority to "make provision for all couples asking to be married in this church to have reasonable and convenient access to these trial rites." It also would have the convention say that bishops will "continue the work of leading the church in comprehensive engagement with these materials and continue to provide gener-

ous pastoral response to meet the needs of members of this church." The reference to "generous pastoral response" echoes Resolution 2009-C056, which forms part of the history of the church's move toward marriage equality.

Essentially, the task force is saying that, in the words of the Rev. Susan Russell, a task force member who helped research the acceptance and use of the trial liturgies, "it shouldn't depend on your ZIP code to have access to the rites."

The eight bishops who have prohibited same-gender marriage in their dioceses are Albany Bishop William Love, Central Florida Bishop Greg Brewer, Dallas Bishop George Sumner, Florida Bishop John Howard, North Dakota Bishop Michael Smith, Springfield Bishop Dan Martins, Tennessee's Bauerschmidt and Virgin Islands Bishop Ambrose Gumbs, the task force said.

Love, Brewer, Sumner, Martins and Bauerschmidt prohibit clergy canonical-



Photo/Church Publishing Inc.

"Liturgical Resources 1: I Will Bless You and You Will Be a Blessing" was one of the rites General Convention authorized in 2015 for trial use.

told same-sex couples who wish to be married to go to a neighboring diocese, the report says. Smith has provided Delegated Episcopal Pastoral Oversight for a parish that asked to use the liturgies. The task force said it could not determine whether Gumbs had made provisions for Virgin Islands couples to access the liturgies.

"I was honestly quite surprised to find that the liturgies were being so overwhelmingly received and overwhelming-

ly resident in those dioceses from using the liturgies inside or outside of the diocese, the report says.

"At this point it's very unclear whether canonically resident clergy could actually use the liturgies [anywhere] without the permission of their own bishop," Bauerschmidt told ENS before the report was released. "So, that's not so much my idea, but I think it's implied by the 2015 resolution."

The bishops in Albany, Central Florida, Dallas, Florida and Tennessee have

ly authorized with so few restrictions," said Russell, a longtime advocate for the full inclusion of LGBTQI people in the life of the church. "I couldn't have imagined those numbers 10 years ago."

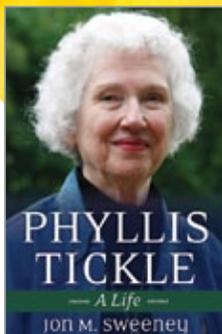
Task Force Chair Joan Geizler-Ludlum agreed. The group found that the restrictions some bishops have placed on their use are "fairly innocuous" and include such things as approval of both the rector and the vestry or use after a congregational discernment process, she said.

The overwhelming majority of task force members agreed to call for the whole church to have equal access to the rites, Geizler-Ludlum and Russell said.

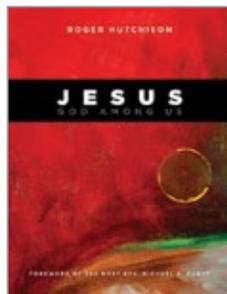
The proposed new requirement of "reasonable and convenient access" is not the only recommendation on marriage that the task force is making to General Convention. The group is calling for continued trial use of the liturgies as additions to the Book of Common Prayer, as well as amendments to the prayer book's other marriage rites, prefaces and sections of the catechism to make language gender-neutral.

The task force also would have convention authorize two liturgies for blessing the relationships of couples who choose not to marry for legal or financial reasons. It also recommends that the church ponder new ways to minister to the growing number of people who co-habitate in committed and monogamous relationships rather than marry. ■

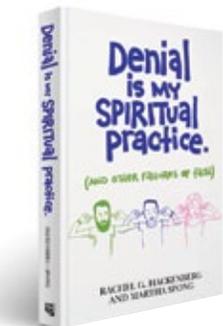
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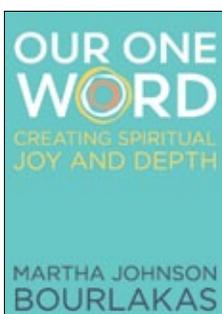
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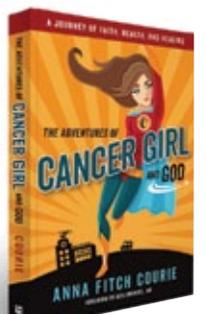
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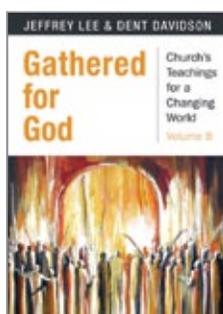
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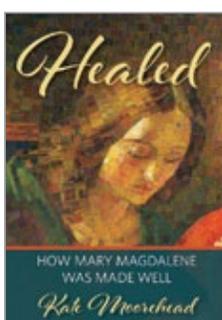
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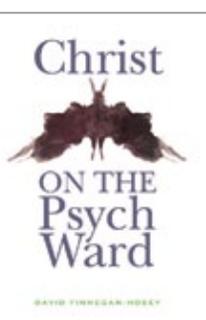
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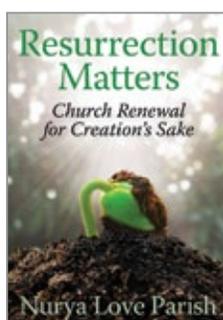
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FAITH AND THE ARTS

Visual artists reflect on 'Jesus Movement' theme

By Episcopal Journal

A broad range of visual art — paintings, fabric and textile work, photographs and sculpture — has been chosen for a new online exhibition by Episcopal Church & Visual Arts (www.ecva.org) focused on “The Jesus Movement: Loving, Liberating, Life-Giving.” The theme of the exhibition, launching on the website in mid-May, mirrors that of this summer’s General Convention. The 40 curated works by the artists also will be displayed digitally during the convention in Austin, Texas, from July 5-13.

“Presiding Bishop Michael Curry refers to our church as the ‘Episcopal branch of the Jesus Movement,’ making clear that we Episcopalians are part of the larger work of what God is doing in our world,” wrote Frank and Virginia Logue of Savannah, Ga., curators for the exhibition, in their draft call to artists earlier this year.

After choosing the art, they wrote in April that the artists whose works constitute the exhibition “worked beyond the limits of language to inspire, provoke and challenge us to see our world anew.

“All the art in this exhibition continues the vital contribution artists offer the church as they share afresh the ‘Loving, Liberating and Life-Giving’ gospel in which all are connected to their creator and none are left out.” ■



▲ “Lux Mundi” by Kerri Jones

Kerri Jones, a native of the Pacific Northwest, is a fabric mosaicist. Her interest in mosaic art, she said, began while visiting historic sites in Greece and Turkey. This later resulted in a creative collaboration of her interests in fabrics, apparel design and construction, historic costume, liturgical vestments and fine art.

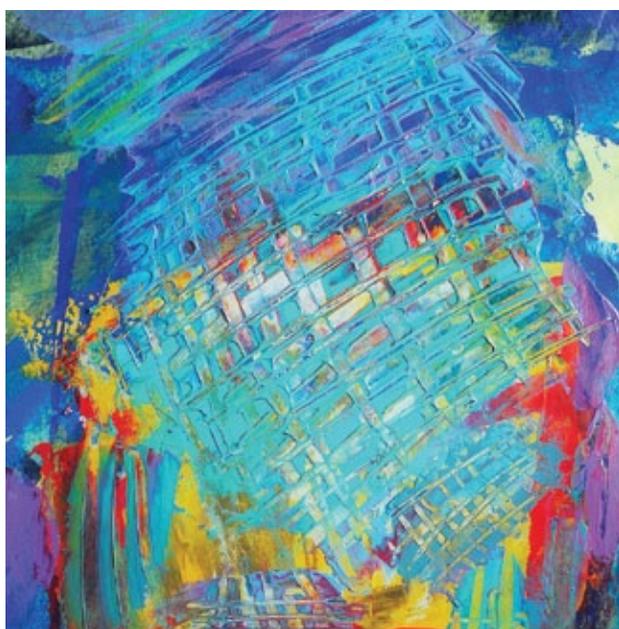
She wrote about her work: “As ‘Light of the World,’ this piece is symbolic of the triune God. Central in the image is Jesus the Son, Christ the King from whom all blessings flow, raising his hand in priestly benediction; behind the Son are rings of the eternal, immortal, invisible God the Father; emanating from the Father burn flames of unquenchable fire of the Holy Spirit.”



▲ “This Victorious Sign” by Tobias Stanislas Haller (Based upon a photo by Robert Hendrickson from Christ Church, New Haven, Ct.)

Tobias Stanislas Haller is a priest serving in the Diocese of Maryland. He is a member of the Brotherhood of Saint Gregory.

He wrote: “Worship is the beginning of the church’s mission. It is from the worship space that the worshiping people of God are sent out, empowered by the Spirit, to do the work of God in the world. They go forth under the banner of the cross, borne by ‘each newborn servant of the crucified.’”



▲ “Jesus” by Victoria Logue (the exhibition’s theme logo)

Victoria Logue is an author and photographer. She and her husband, Frank, wrote the Lenten series of meditations for Forward Movement’s book, “Are We There Yet? Pilgrimage in the Season of Lent.” She is a Tertiary in the Third Order, Society of Saint Francis.

She wrote: “When I saw this statue of Jesus with a flower in his hand, it evoked the image of his anticipation of my arrival in his kingdom — scanning the horizon as he awaits my homecoming, flower in hand, an offering of love. But I don’t have to die to receive this love, as his love for me is there any time I seek it, although the loving, liberating, and life-giving ‘Jesus Movement’ continues into the kingdom to come.”



◀ “Soul of the City” by Joy Jennings

Joy Jennings said she entered into the world of art through dance, taking what she learned from the study of dance and choreography and applying it to her paintings. She enjoys painting landscapes, especially scenes from France, where she once studied, and scenes from New Orleans, which is near her home. She has used her training as a spiritual director and as a diocesan worship leader to lead workshops and quiet days on art and spirituality. Painting in oils is another path to prayer for her, she said.

Of her painting, she wrote: “What can be more liberating and life-giving than to join a second line in the streets of New Orleans? The heartbeat of the city can be felt as you follow behind the jazz band and dance through the streets. My painting depicts the unique way that the people of St. Anna’s Episcopal Church in New Orleans celebrate being a part of the ‘Jesus Movement’ as they ‘second line’ [parade] through the streets of New Orleans on Palm Sunday.”

◀ “Knocking on Heaven’s Door” by C. Robin Janning

C. Robin Janning lives in northeast Georgia. “Art is my daily practice, my meditation, my yoga, and sometimes my prayer,” she said. About this artwork, she reflected “Liberated by love, we all stand at heaven’s door...”

FAITH AND THE ARTS

Jimmy Carter, 93, talks about his new book: 'Faith'

By Adelle M. Banks
Religion News Service

In his 32nd book, titled simply "Faith," Jimmy Carter looks at how belief in God and others has shaped his 93 years.

"To me, 'faith' is not just a noun but also a verb," the former president writes.

Carter talked about his new book and why he was scaling back on teaching his popular Sunday school class in Plains, Ga. The 39th U.S. president also explained why, after some consultation, he decided to speak at Liberty University's commencement this May.

The interview has been edited for length and clarity.

Of the 32 books you have written, more than half a dozen have focused on faith. Why did you decide to write one with just that word as its title?

My publishers felt that, with the world situation today, a lot of people have lost faith in basic principles that shouldn't be ever questioned: faith in democracy; faith in freedom; faith in equality; faith in the integrity of the truth; faith in the idea of education; faith in ourselves; quite often, faith in our fellow human beings.

And those losses of faith I think precipitated my using, you might say, 93 years of experience and trying to provide the answer of what does faith mean to us and how can we apply our existing faith or potential faith, if we don't have it yet, into answering these questions that face us in our daily life.

You write, as you enter the last stages of your life, that you still have faith that the world will not self-destruct from nuclear war or environmental degradation. Why do you feel that way, especially with current U.S. tensions over Syria and North Korea?

Well, we've had those tensions for a long time, and I think they've been kind of exacerbated lately by the rhetoric that exists between the United States and other countries, including North Korea and Russia and involving Syria and other places. But this is something that I learned when I was first elected president, before I was sworn in: that I had the ability with 15,000 or more nuclear weapons, along with those owned by the Soviet Union, to wipe out all living creatures on earth.

And so that still is a responsibility or a duty that addresses every president in office.

The next real challenge for us is to learn how to apply, I'd say, Christian and other religious principles in learning how to live with each other in harmony and mutual respect and even some elements of love with those with whom we disagree. And that's a major challenge that's very difficult to achieve, but I think it's the most important thing that we face today.

Why did you decide to speak at Liberty University's upcoming commencement, despite differences you've had with its leaders, political or otherwise, and can you give some hint of what you might say there?



Photo/Sara Sanders Mitchell

Carter

I haven't had any difference of opinion with the current president. I had difficulties sometimes with his father. But I got the invitation, which was something of a surprise to me, and I consulted with my, I say, more moderate Baptist friends. And overwhelmingly they advised me to take a chance as one more step in a longtime effort to provide some element of reconciliation among Christians, and particularly among Baptists, who disagree with each other.

I think we've come a long way, since I was in office as president, in overcoming that by applying the basic element of Christianity: that is, through the grace of God and our faith in Jesus Christ, we're the same, and there's no difference between us. And I think we have realized that the overwhelming things that bind us together are much more domineering and dominating in our lives than the differences that exist.

You write that "God is not my personal valet." What do you mean by that?

(Laughs) When I was younger I used to devote my prayers primarily to things that I wanted God to help me get or to do or to accomplish. As I've gotten older and older, I realized that my main prayers — I didn't make this decision in advance — but my main prayers are ones of thanksgiving. And I had this feeling in particular when I thought a couple of years ago that I was going to die in a couple of weeks from cancer. I had cancer in my liver and also four places in my brain. And so I thought my life was about over, and I realized at that time that I didn't have any fear of death. I was just grateful for the wonderful life that I had been granted.

You've announced plans to cut back on teaching Sunday school at your Plains, Ga., church, but I believe you still taught three out of the four Sundays in March. Why are you making this decision, and is it a hard one for you?

I did. I've cut back on my overseas travel already. I'm going on 94 years old, and my wife is 90 years old. She's been quite ill lately. And so we both decided just to cut back on our extracurricular activities. We have a wonderful teacher when I'm not there.

A lot of people in and around Plains, they come to our church; we only have about 30 members. I think we had 350 visitors this past Sunday, by the way,

when I taught. But we need to strengthen our own church so that, when I'm no longer there, it will continue to exist. And a lot of local Plains folks don't like to come to a church where we're overrun with visitors that don't have much communication and so forth with each other, fellowship. I'll be teaching twice in this month. So I'll continue to teach, but I'll give other teachers and other members of the church a chance to be in the forefront.

The nation just marked the 50th anniversary of the assassination of the Rev. Martin Luther King Jr. Why did you decide to serve as a mediator during a dispute with his children, and what difference do you think that made?

I think it all worked out quite well, luckily, not because of what I did but because they were willing to help me and others to help them. I just met with the three children of Martin Luther King Jr. on a number of occasions over a two-year period, and eventually they decided themselves to resolve their differences, which had existed only in court with lawsuits against each other. So they finally have been able to work it out together. I helped a little bit, but I was very glad to do it, and got to know them intimately and appreciate once again the great contribution that their father had made.

Your book "Faith" seems to sum up not only your thoughts on faith but also your accomplishments over 93 years. Do you think this is your last

book, or do you still have more to say and write?

Well, I thought the last book was my last book. I wasn't intending to write this, but my publishers felt — and I didn't disagree — that the general attitude around the world of disillusionment and a lack of faith in things that never change had become more of a problem.

People often describe you as the 39th president and as a Habitat for Humanity homebuilder —

We do still do that.

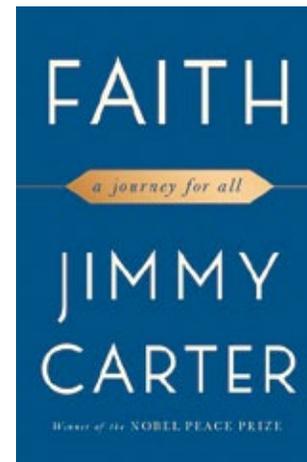
For what do you want to be remembered most?

Well, I wouldn't mind people remembering me as a Habitat Build volunteer. But also I would say in that White House and in The Carter Center we've tried to emphasize peace and human rights. And

I try to be a champion of peace. I was able, and fortunate enough, to keep my country at peace for four years, which is kind of a rare achievement, and also to be a champion of human rights. So that's what I'm proud of, among other things. I was blessed with a good wife and a good marriage.

Do you still have faith as you look at these challenging issues that you have faced toward the end of your life?

That's the main thrust of the book. Despite the challenges that we face, based on my past experience and the past achievements of my country and the world, I still have faith in the ability of human beings to survive and to overcome the transient problems that face us all. ■



Image/courtesy of Simon and Schuster

"Faith: A Journey for All" by Jimmy Carter.

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COMMENTARY

Church should lead journey toward civil discourse

By Kay Collier McLaughlin

“Talking Together” — the art of and willingness to enter into civil dialogue to end the polarization in our country — is the title of both my newest book and the seminars I lead across the country. This work has brought me into contact with other individuals and organizations that see lack of civility as a critical issue that must be addressed for our country to move forward.



Dr. Allan Boesak, a member of South Africa’s Truth and Reconciliation Commission and a visiting professor at Kentucky’s Berea College, said in a recent address that one of the strengths of reconciliation work had been the leadership of Archbishop Desmond Tutu, who was not only a spiritual leader but also a figure recognized by the government. About the United States, he said bluntly, “you do not have the presence of such a figure to lead the work in this country. It must come from the grassroots.”

His words underscored the importance of the 2018 Lansing Lee Conference on Civil Discourse, held March 16-18 at the Kanuga Conference Center

near Hendersonville, N.C. This was a call to the Episcopal Church to step up to leadership in the desperately needed work of educating people on the concept of civility in this country.

While some use the word “returning” in regard to civility, continuing experiences highlight the thin veneer of civil interaction that has covered long-held biases multiplied by current events. For one who teaches the “how to” rather than the “why to” of civil dialogue, it was heartening to serve as one of four workshop leaders at this conference.

Bishop Rob Wright of Atlanta based his opening sermon on 1 Corinthians. He urged listeners to “Put away childish things! Grow up! ... Purge contempt: polite hostility in the parking lot ... inconsistent with the teachings of Jesus.”

Kanuga President Michael Sullivan, naming civility as a core value, and Canon Chuck Robertson of the presiding bishop’s staff, said that the church can choose to model either contempt or civility in managing conflict. The importance of this call to the church to focus energy and the strength of shared leadership on a subject too often left unnamed and with untrained leaders motivated people to attend workshops offering

guidance on how to move forward.

Workshops included the experiential Talking Together session, with antiphonal reading and the opportunity to sign on to a “Covenant for Creating a Culture of Courtesy,” as a way of setting expecta-

“You do not have the presence of such a figure [Desmond Tutu] to lead the work in this country. It must come from the grassroots.”

— Dr. Allan Boesak

tions and boundaries for how a conversation can be conducted respectfully and helping people to hold themselves and others accountable to stated norms.

Participants looked at the differences among dialogue, discussion, debate and argument, and joined in an exercise to heighten awareness of perspectives and positions individuals bring into conversations. The workshop also included a behavior/impact exercise that identified dysfunctional behaviors and alternative constructive behaviors.

The “Advocacy in the Church” workshop with Alan Yarborough from the Office of Government Relations addressed how, in a time of political unrest, the church can be faithful to its mandate to speak out against injustice.

Workshops also were offered on the work of the Armed Services and federal ministries and of the Speaking and Listening Center at the University of the South at Sewanee.

A discussion panel included Rep. Suzan DelBene (D-Wash.); Rep. Bradley Byrne (R-Ala.); the Rev. Canon Jan Naylor Cope, provost of Washington National Cathedral, Washington, D.C.; Carl Wright, suffragan bishop for the Armed Forces; and Robertson.

The panel considered topics such as people in power setting the tone of conversation; whether civility can become a “limiting norm”; and who has the duty to call out and correct incivility. The interplay between the congressional representatives modeled differences of opinion with careful attention to remaining civil.

Some questions remained unanswered, despite the moderator “naming the elephant in the room” of ugly rheto-

ric by the president of the United States and other public figures. Some panelists deflected questions through humor and changing the topic, giving participants examples of ways people resist directness and tough conversations.

Byrne inferred that the media unfairly emphasizes incivility across congressional aisles while underreporting more civil interactions. DelBene spoke more favorably of the media, emphasizing the important role media plays in our democracy.

Burns advised the group against the immediate “calling out” of inappropriate behavior, suggesting “strategic” choices in the timing of interventions.

A strong conclusion to the conference was the opportunity for participants to meet with one of five action groups to look at next steps. The small group I led focused on the need for the church to provide training for people who wish to lead this important work in parishes, dioceses and communities. Other group recommendations included offering a curriculum for children, a Facebook page and other resources.

I left Kanuga with a sense of gratitude that a major arm of the institution had provided a strong beginning for what Wright called the “heart work” of transformation that the church must do so that we might live into radical hospitality rather than “polite Southern contempt” — a message echoed by presenters, panelists and workshop leaders. It is a challenge to the Episcopal Church to follow Tutu’s lead in assisting and lifting up grassroots efforts to be countercultural change agents who lead the way to a civility that includes tough conversations when necessary and an ongoing ability to live in diversity.

I left with hope that this is a true beginning of a lasting effort that will have an impact beyond our borders. ■

Kay Collier McLaughlin is an author and founder of Talking Together Seminars and Transformative Leadership Consulting who works across the Episcopal Church. She is the retired deputy for communications, leadership development and transition ministries for the Diocese of Lexington (Ky.).

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RITES continued from page 8

physical maturity, emotional maturity, mutual consent and the holy love which enables those in intimate relationships to see in each other the image of God.”

The Rev. Susan Russell, a task force member, told Episcopal News Service that passage of the resolution would be “a pretty radical step forward” but one that would acknowledge the couples who are involved in these sorts of relationships. “If the church has nothing to say to them, we’re increasingly irrelevant,” she said.

The presiding bishop and the presi-

dent of the House of Deputies would appoint a new task force to develop the resources.

Task Force Chair Joan Geiszler-Ludlum said both the new rites and this latter proposal would be the church’s way to help couples “elevate” their relationships “from just being casual or temporary.”

“It’s not marriage and it’s not going to be marriage, but we want to recognize it for what it is, and then say that the couples need to be discerning about what they’re doing with their relationship,” she said. “We want to help them do that discernment.” ■

NEWS

Diocese of Jerusalem tries to heal and teach all who seek help

By Mary Frances Schjonberg
Episcopal News Service

The Rev. Saleem Dawani, the vicar of St. Matthew's Episcopal Church in Zababdeh in the West Bank, describes his parish's ministry this way: "Here we work like Christ, healing and teaching."

That sentiment is echoed in all 10 medical missions and 17 educational ministries of the Episcopal Diocese of Jerusalem, Presiding Bishop Michael Curry and his group were told March 27 as they visited three of those locations.

The day began at the Jerusalem Princess Basma Center, on the Mount of Olives in East Jerusalem. It works to empower children with disabilities and their families and to help them integrate into the wider society. The center concentrates on physical rehabilitation but also works with those with certain mental disabilities and tries to empower mothers to aid in their children's rehabilitation. It is one of four major rehabilitation centers in Palestine.

Children from the West Bank and Gaza stay at the center with their mothers for two to three weeks of intensive therapy, while those from Jerusalem come for daily sessions. Mothers become "shadow therapists," learning how to help their children, and they leave the center with an individual care plan,



Ibrahim Faltas, general director of the Jerusalem Princess Basma Center, says the ministry of the Anglican diocese operates despite the political and financial challenges of the Israeli-Palestinian conflict.

said Ibrahim Faltas, general director. The United Thank Offering and the Islamic Development Bank paid for the renovation of the Child Rehabilitation Department.

"We keep them here as little time as possible," Faltas said, explaining that the center's goal is to help children return to their communities.

Of the 423 children treated last year, nine came from Gaza. Moreover, children in the West Bank cannot reach the center because of the Israeli government's separation barrier, as well as the lack of money to cover the travel costs. Thus, a multidisciplinary team from the center visits 15 day-care and smaller rehabilitation centers all over the West Bank about 60 times a year. More than 1,000 children are seen annually. The



Photos/Mary Frances/ENS

Some of the children enrolled in St. Matthew's kindergarten in Zababdeh in the West Bank gather around the altar at St. Matthew's Episcopal Church for a photo.

team also trains local practitioners.

The center also has an autism unit doing pioneering work in multisensory and musical therapy; an attention deficit hyperactivity disorder program; and vocational training for adults.

The center runs a school for Jerusalem children in kindergarten through grade 12 that includes both able-bodied students and those with disabilities. The center calls it an "inclusive school" because, while some children receive therapy due to their disabilities, most of the students attend academic classes together. Current enrollment stands at 469, with 151 of those students having some sort of physical, mental or learning disability.

"This is miracle work," Curry told staff members during his visit.

The center performs these miracles while constantly worrying about money. Treatment referrals come from both the Israeli and Palestinian government ministries, but neither government pays enough for the cost of the children's care, Faltas said. The center always

has an annual operating deficit before fundraising money comes in because government reimbursements cover only 70 to 75 percent of the costs, Faltas said. Some programs have been cut or eliminated. When people complain, Faltas said, he tells them to "go be upset with those decision-makers."

Not only are the reimbursement formulas not high enough, but the Palestinian Authority also does not have the money to make timely payments, in part because the United States has not made good on its promised money to the authority, so the center has a cash-flow deficit of about \$1.2 million, he said. That amounts to about four months of operating revenue. Over the years, the diocese has taken on what Faltas called the "heavy burden" of helping cover the

financial gap.

"They believe this is very important," he said. "It would be an ethical challenge to the church to neglect those children. We cannot refuse children for treatment."

There is a hope, he said, that the center can form enough new partnerships to reduce its annual fundraising needs to 15 percent of its budget instead of the current 30 percent.

Providing care to all who need it also is part of the mission of St. Luke's Hospital in Nablus, the largest city in the West Bank.

St. Luke's connects its original building dating from 1900 with a 53-bed, six-story hospital building with three operating rooms. Cardiac surgery is the only sort of medicine not practiced at the hospital because, according to public relations Director Salwa Khoury, a nearby hospital performs that work.

St. Luke's has a reputation as a major neurosurgery center, so much so that surgeons in 2015 managed to extract a bullet from the spine of a Palestinian man after hospitals in Jerusalem refused to perform the risky operation, she said. The man had been shot three times in the back during the Israeli-Palestinian conflict that erupted in late 2015.

The hospital, which has pre-1900 roots in two tents set up in the area by Church Mission Society members, also has a bustling emergency room and maternity ward. About 600 people come to the ER each month, said Medical Director Walid Kerry. Two hundred and eighty

babies are born in an average year.

Five babies were born that morning before the presiding bishop arrived, and more were expected that afternoon. As Curry and others gathered outside for a photo at the end of the visit, a group of men swung a car up to the front door and beckoned for workers to come help a pregnant woman.

While the hospital struggles with outdated equipment and other issues, no one is refused care because they cannot pay, officials said.

"We are the only hospital that never says no to any patient," Kerry told Curry. "Of course, we never say no because this is our mission."

Kerry, who serves on the diocesan standing committee, said he was proud to work at a religiously based institution like St. Luke's. "We feel that it is ours. It's our mission here to help people regardless of religion or ability to pay. We don't look for profit, but on the other hand, we must reach the break-even point."

Outreach to the surrounding countryside is also part of St. Luke's mission. It helps pay for the cost of running the Penman Clinic in the space underneath St. Matthew's in Zababdeh. The clinic draws patients from 14 surrounding villages. "They like to come to our clinic because they see a different kind of care," Dawani said.

The vicar hopes the clinic, which sees 400 to 500 patients a month, eventually will grow into a hospital. The clinic is part of a lively church that, with 275 members, is bursting at the seams. The diocese has bought land nearby, which could become the site of a bigger church and that longed-for hospital. There are many young families in the area and many babies being born. They are attracted to St. Matthew's, Dawani said, because of its ministry to children, teenagers and youth ages 17 to 22.

Zababdeh's 6,000 residents are roughly two-thirds Christians and a third Muslim. "We live together in peace," the vicar said. ■



Presiding Bishop Michael Curry prays with a patient at St. Luke's Hospital in Nablus in the West Bank.

FEATURE

Church joins call for measures to protect Palestinians and an end to Gaza violence

By Mary Frances Schjonberg
Episcopal News Service

Presiding Bishop Michael Curry, who visited Gaza City days before protests began along the fence separating the Gaza Strip from Israel, has added the Episcopal Church's name to a joint statement protesting Israel's deadly response to the violence.

The 15 denominations and Christian agencies say that they "cannot be silent" as Gazans have been killed or injured during the first two weeks of protests that are expected to occur until May 15. That is the day when Palestinians mark the "Nakba," which is Arabic for "catastrophe," and commemorates the estimated 700,000 Palestinians who fled or were forced off their land during the war that followed Israel's 1948 declaration of independence from the British mandate of Palestine. That day is expected to be particularly fraught this year because it falls near the day when President Donald Trump plans to move the U.S. Embassy from Tel Aviv to Jerusalem, a controversial shift in U.S. policy.

Israeli soldiers fired live ammunition into crowds of Palestinian protesters, killing 15 and injuring some 1,000 others during the first day of protests March 30, which was the eve of Passover. Some of those injured later died. Close to 30,000 Palestinians had gathered near the fence for what organizers call the "March of Return."

While most protestors were said not to have engaged in violence, some reportedly used slingshots to shoot stones at Israeli soldiers, lobbed Molotov cocktails over the fence line and sent burning tires rolling to the fence. Israeli Defense Force (IDF) spokesman Brig-Gen. Ronen Manelis said March 30 that Palestinians were attempting to cross or harm the fence, and "IDF troops returned precise fire." He added that live ammunition was used only against those attempting to harm the fence. The IDF has said Hamas, the militant group that controls Gaza, is exploiting the demonstrations as a cover to carry out terrorist attacks.

INDIGENOUS continued from page 14

ber of the Eastern Shoshone tribe, sat on a panel discussion on the Doctrine of Discovery. The Rev. Brandon Mauai, from the Standing Rock Sioux Reservation in South Dakota, spent part of April 18 attending a presentation about the federal response to Standing Rock's 2017 standoff in opposition to an oil pipeline across the Missouri River.

Mauai, through "his work with the tribal council there, as well as the church, has a direct link to a number of the issues being discussed here at the forum," Hauff said.

the Episcopal delegation participated in the forum session through April 19,

“We have worked in our own context in the cause of justice, peace and equality, and continue to do so even as we recognize we have too often fallen short in these efforts.”

— Joint Statement of Denomination

Violence broke out again on April 6. Seven Palestinians were killed and about 1,400 injured, including nearly 400 with gunshot wounds, the Gaza Health Ministry said.

The United Nations Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs has said it found that, in all, 26 people died, including three children, and 445 children were among the injured. OCHA said no Israeli casualties had been reported.

The churches and agencies said in their April 12 statement that they "support the Palestinian people as they courageously stand up for their rights."

"We have worked in our own context in the cause of justice, peace and equality, and continue to do so even as we recognize we have too often fallen short in these efforts. We reject the use of violence by individuals, groups or states," they said. "In the wake of demonstrations that have resulted in tragedy and death, and anticipating the continuation of Palestinian protests over the coming weeks, we cannot be silent."

The statement outlines a series of steps the groups would like to see taken:

An end to the use of deadly force by the Israeli military, and support for the

gathering experiences, information and lessons to bring back to their communities. In one instance, an indigenous woman from Latin America spotted the Rev. Michael Sells, a deacon from Navajoland Area Mission, and her attention appeared to be drawn to his clergy collar.

"She pointed at him and said, 'Colonista,' or 'colonialist' — a present-day reminder of the church's past association with colonial powers, Hauff said.

"We had a conversation about that in our group, what that experience meant," Hauff said. Sells, who is part Navajo and part Athabaskan, called it a powerful, uncomfortable moment, "but it was important for him to experience it, based on our history," Hauff said. ■



Photo/Sharon Jones

Presiding Bishop Michael Curry, left, and Anglican Archbishop in Jerusalem Suheil Dawani walk through the barren area between an Israel checkpoint and Gaza City.

call by B'tselem, an Israeli human-rights organization, to Israeli soldiers to refuse orders to shoot.

An investigation into deaths and injuries resulting from the use of force.

The United States, and particularly President Donald Trump and members of Congress, censuring "the violent and indiscriminate actions of the State of Israel" and holding Israel "appropriately accountable, ensuring that U.S. aid isn't used in ways that contravene established U.S. and international laws."

U.S. support for the rights of refugees, including Palestinian refugees, based on international law and conventions.

A resumption of full U.S. funding of the United Nations Relief and Works Agency (UNRWA), which supports schools, hospitals and other essential services for Palestinian refugees. The United States recently announced that it would provide \$60 million to UNRWA with no assurance of further funding for 2018, an 83 percent funding cut over the 2017 contribution of \$365 million.

A call for the international community, including the U.S. government, to insist on an end to the blockade of Gaza, "which has resulted in uninhabitable conditions for the people there, including poverty and lack of sufficient access to clean water, food, medicine and medical supplies, electricity, fuel and construction equipment."

The statement said the Palestinians' efforts to call the world's attention to their struggle to "recover, their rights — rights as refugees, to demonstrate and to live in dignity" — were met with "an immediate and tragic rejection of those rights." The denominations and agencies

declare themselves "people of hope" who in the Easter season believe that those rights ultimately will prevail.

"In this time, we pray fervently, speak clearly, and act diligently in support of peace, justice and equality," they conclude.

The signers include the Alliance of Baptists, American Friends Service Committee, Christian Church (Disciples of Christ), Evangelical Lutheran Church in America, Friends Committee on National Legislation, Maryknoll Office for Global Concerns, Mennonite Central Committee U.S., National Council of Churches, Pax Christi International, Pax Christi USA, Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.), Reformed Church in America, the Episcopal Church, the United Methodist Church's General Board of Church and Society, and the United Church of Christ.

After the first violence on March 30 and the day before the second round, Churches for Middle East Peace, or CMEP, a coalition of 27 U.S. denominations and organizations of which the Episcopal Church is a member, said, "we fully affirm the right of the Palestinian people to engage in nonviolent resistance."

"Resorting to live fire against unarmed demonstrators is a negligent and inexcusable response that failed to distinguish between those who came to protest peacefully and those with more malicious intentions," the organization said.

In a related move, Curry signed on to a CMEP letter to Trump calling on the administration to "protect the vulnerable Christian communities in the Holy Land" and oppose official Israeli efforts that it said would financially harm churches.

The letter refers to Jerusalem Municipality's plan to collect taxes on all church property not used exclusively as houses of worship. Including back taxes, the churches were told to pay approximately \$186 million, according to the letter. The Israeli Knesset is also considering legislation that would permit Israel to retroactively expropriate land sold by the Greek Orthodox and Roman Catholic churches since 2010.

The Times of Israel recently reported that the Episcopal Diocese of Jerusalem has been hit with a bill of the equivalent of nearly \$2 million. Curry learned during his Holy Week trip to the Holy Land that Muslim religious groups would owe \$120 million. Even though the controversial plan was put on hold early in March, the diocese's accounts remain frozen. ■

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