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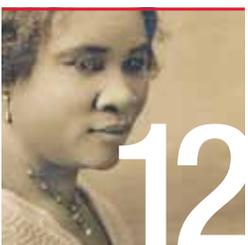
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NEWS Black jogger's killing spurs calls for justice



ARTS Walker film bio concerns a 'cheerful giver'

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Episcopal churches and schools have closed temporarily and made numerous other changes in ministry and worship, responding to the new coronavirus illness, COVID-19, sweeping the world. Episcopal Journal presents a roundup of news to date, however, for immediate updates check www.episcopalnewsservice.org. For authoritative information on the pandemic, go to www.cdc.gov and www.who.int.

Pandemic to reshape how congregations worship as dioceses prepare to resume in-person gatherings

By David Paulsen
Episcopal News Service

Get ready. The pandemic could change everything that Episcopalians once took for granted about attending church.

A reservation could be required to worship in person. Services might not even take place in the church, if the parish hall or an outdoor area can better accommodate social distancing. “No” to handshakes at the peace. “Yes” to

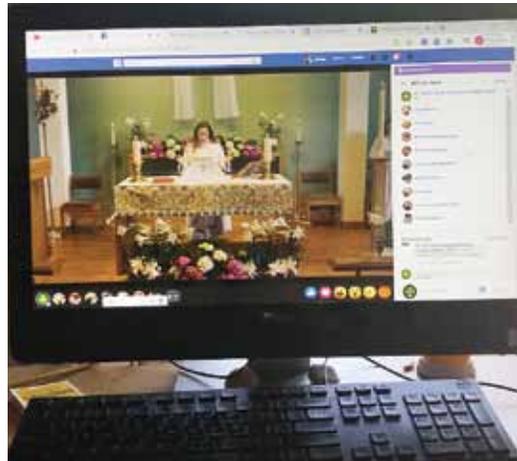
wearing masks. Singing is a conflicted “maybe.” Communion — if offered at all— could be received as wafers dropped from above into cupped hands, with hand sanitizer always close by. And don’t expect coffee at coffee hour.

Another option: Keep watching the livestream at home and continue to forego attending church in person, while the coronavirus is still spreading.

As the pandemic was still developing in the U.S. in mid-May, Episcopal dioceses were proceeding cautiously, even in states that eased their stay-at-home orders to restart their economies. At the same time, church leaders began discussing and planning for the day they reopen, with tight limits on attendance.

“Government officials have different standards than we do. Their metrics are keeping the health care system from getting overwhelmed and keeping the economy going,” the Rev. Alex Dyer, canon to the ordinary for the Episcopal Church in Colorado, told ENS.

In Colorado, one of the states partially reopening, the diocese won’t resume any in-person services until certain public health criteria are met, such as a sustained reduction in COVID-19 cases, sufficient capacity in the health care system to test and treat all patients, and the ability to track patients’ contacts. Church leaders there, as elsewhere, say their caution is partly fueled by demographics:



Photo/the Rev. Angela Cortiñas

The Rev. Angela Cortiñas is seen in a Facebook video of a recent online service at St. Thomas Episcopal Church in College Station, Texas.

PENTECOST



Photo/Wikimedia Commons

This image of the Holy Spirit descending like a dove upon the Apostles at Pentecost is the work of an unknown manuscript illuminator, created in 1386. The work of black ink and watercolors on paper is in the collection of the Getty Center in Los Angeles.

Older Americans are more vulnerable to severe coronavirus symptoms, and more than a third of all Episcopalians are 65 or older, according to the Pew Research Center’s most recent Religious Landscape Study.

“Our standards are different,” Dyer told
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In Massachusetts’ COVID-19 hot spot, St. Luke’s-San Lucas seeks to fill desperate need for food

By Heather Beasley Doyle
Episcopal News Service

Every Wednesday, trucks from the Chelsea, Mass., Department of Public Works pull up to St. Luke’s-San Lucas Episcopal Church filled with food. When they do, Monica Elias Orellana and her team of 10 volunteers stand ready. “We’re waiting for them,” Elias recently told Episcopal News Service.

Since the week of March 23, when the 25-year-old Chelsea resident stepped in as the church’s volunteer coordinator, public works trucks have carried food from the Greater Boston Food Bank to the St. Luke’s, known also as San Lucas in the predominantly Hispanic community it serves. Her first

week, the church received 6,000 pounds of groceries, Elias said. By the first Wednesday in May, that had grown to 17,000 pounds, propelled by the rapid spread of the coronavirus in Chelsea. “It’s just increasing week by week,” Elias said.

Massachusetts has been hit hard by the coronavirus and Chelsea is a hot spot within a hot spot. A city across the Mystic River from Boston, its roughly 40,000 residents live within 1.8 square miles. On May 11, the city reported 2,342 confirmed COVID-19 cases and 132 deaths.

The highly contagious coronavirus thrives where people live and work in close quarters — places like Chelsea. Eighty percent of the city’s residents have jobs now considered essential, such as delivery drivers, cashiers



Photo/Egan Millard/ENS

Volunteers bring donated food from the Greater Boston Food Bank into St. Luke’s-San Lucas Episcopal Church in Chelsea, Mass.

and manufacturing and health care workers. As the virus spread, they couldn’t wait out the pandemic at home. Even if they could, housing is particularly crowded here, thanks in large part to Boston’s worsening housing

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CONVERSATIONS

A Pentecost Story



By Thea Chimento

IT'S GETTING INTO Pentecost season, which for many of our congregations means a Baptism Sunday is on the horizon.

Since we can't be together to worship right now, I wanted to share one of my favorite memories from happier times, about a baptism that went hilariously sideways. Some identifying details have been obscured, but the story itself is true.

It was about 10-ish years ago at a Church That Shall Remain Nameless. I had not long been sojourning with the Episcopal Church, and in my tradition of origin we didn't do baptisms on specified feast days and we certainly didn't do them in public. So I was surprised that anyone would subject themselves to a public dunking.

There were about 10 kids getting baptized, and the families were all lined up in order in front of the font. Bringing up the rear was a three- or four-year-old little guy in seersucker short pants and suit jacket and one of those bowl cuts that looks vaguely adorable on very young children but totally obnoxious by the time they hit five. All the other kids were infants, which is to say that some of them slept through the whole thing and some of them were protesting loudly.

Our hero watched the ceremony with the somewhat amused, contemptuous air appropriate to one who has graduated to the privileges attendant on wearing Pull-Ups and independent locomotion and knows it. This, he seemed to say, is what happens to you when you are small and weak and potato-like. Your parents stuff you into a stupid white dress, and cheerfully hand you over to a person in funny clothes, who gives you a bath in front of a bunch of people. Doubtless this is how they select the passive sheep

suitable for adult manipulation, whereas I, he thought proudly to himself, would choose death before such dishonorable treatment.

The deductive reasoning skills of this small child being apparently above average, it eventually dawned on him that it was a little odd that he was in the same line as all the larval humans receiving this undignified treatment, while the kids his own age were all hanging out in the pews. Surely, if he were being honored in a manner commensurate with his status as One Who Is Toilet-Trained, he would be with his peers, watching the gladiatorial contest from the seats of the Colosseum, as it were, rather than the pews.

He began to saunter over towards the pews with the other kids, hands in pockets. His fate, however, was sealed. His mother bent swiftly, snatched him by the suit collar and tugged him back to her side.

What first could perhaps be excused as natural if contemptible maternal anxiety quickly assumed more sinister proportions. Again our young hero sauntered over towards where his peers were congregated, and again he was swiftly recalled. He shook off his mother's hand and yet again made for the pews, his mother yet again abruptly arresting his progress. Like Isaac on Mt. Moriah, the scales fell from our hero's eyes as he realized the sacrifice he assumed had been prepared was, in fact, himself.

Some children might have collapsed in a wailing temper tantrum. But our hero was made of sterner stuff. If he had to go, by God! he would not go quietly. He threw one calculating, withering glance at his mother and took off running as fast

as his fat little legs would carry him, yelling "NOOOOOOOOOOOOOO!!!!!!!" at the top of his lungs.

He streaked down the aisle like Usain Bolt setting a new world record for the 100-metre sprint, legs flashing in the light from the stained-glass windows. His mother, who was marking the occasion by wearing fabulous 5-inch heels, was not in any shape to catch him, and the congregation was too shocked to stop him. On he ran, down the main aisle, out the narthex doors and into the sunlight.

His one tactical mistake was in not hanging a right past the font and heading for one of the side doors where there was no usher. For a brief, shining moment, the sun lit him up as he made his way out into the courtyard. But Fate is cruel. The usher standing outside the main doors, a tall and muscled young man with a vaguely military bearing, swiftly stuck out a foot, and our hero went sprawling.

The usher tried to pick up the child; our hero, being well-schooled in guerilla toddler resistance, instantly went limp in the classic dead weight technique. The usher's Military Occupational Specialty had apparently been toddler counter-insurgency tactics, because he calmly grabbed the child by his shoulder and opposite hip and carried him football-style back to the font, with our hero kicking, flailing, and screaming "NO! NO! NO! NO! NO!"

Our hero was flailing so hard that the priest could not hold him; instead, the (very patient) usher lifted the child up to the font, still screaming. The priest faced up to his duty, gently pushing the child's head down towards the font. Our hero

began shaking his head, bobbing and weaving in an effort to avoid the priest's hand. Not for him the lamb-like submission. He howled defiance in the face of certain death. They would kill him; but the world would bear witness to his fate.

"Chester Damien ("NO! NO! NO!"), I baptize thee ("NO!") in the name of the Father ("NO!"), and of the Son ("NON-ONONONO!!"), and of the Holy Spirit. Amen." ("NOOOOOOOOOO!!!!") In one final indignity, his parents held his head still while the priest applied the chrism. "Chester Damien, thou art sealed by the Holy Spirit ("NO! NO! NO! NO! NO!") and marked as Christ's own forever. ("NOHOOOOOO!") Amen."

It was done. He had suffered the deepest betrayal yet known to him; he stood unsupported by kith or kin; the world had been revealed as a dark, devouring place where the best are cut down in their prime because little minds cannot bear to see them succeed. And yet his head was bloody but unbowed. His body had been subdued; but his soul was unconquered. His valiant doomed struggle would be long remembered.

That kid is probably now in high school, and I bet the story of his baptism is one that gets brought up at family gatherings, and will be forever, world without end, amen. And I'm sure that by now "the Holy Spirit, who [began] a good work in him, continue[s] to direct and uphold [him] in the service of Christ and his kingdom." But I hope that somewhere in his heart, there is a secret sense of pride that all the forces of the Church Militant could not conquer such a one. ■

Thea Chimento is a public servant and a member of St. Anne's Episcopal Church in Annapolis, Md. This story was originally published on the Episcopal Café website, www.episcopalcafe.com.



FROM THE EDITOR'S DESK



EVERY DAY, THE restrictions on church gatherings prompted by the COVID-19 pandemic reveal one irony after another.

As we are about to celebrate Pentecost Sunday on May 31, we recall that the story begins in the second chapter of the Acts of

the Apostles: "When the day of Pentecost came, they were all together in one place."

The Apostles and other colleagues had gathered in Jerusalem, in "an upper room," for the Jewish festival of Shavuot, which marks the wheat harvest time in Israel. Pentecost is the Greek name for Shavuot.

Festivals and meetings in upper rooms are things of the past right now, and tinged with fear for the future.

As I write this in New York, the dioceses of New York (which covers the boroughs of the

Bronx, Manhattan and Staten Island) and Long Island (which includes Brooklyn and Queens) have directed that churches continue to suspend in-person worship until at least July 1. Other Episcopal dioceses are carefully examining how and when congregations will return to church buildings.

Although we are now in "one place" only online, we might remember that the attendees at that first Christian Pentecost were armed with spirits burning with faith, thoughts strong as the wind and calm sensibilities, symbolized in the text as tongues of flame, a sound like the wind and the Holy Spirit descending as a dove.

Our computers are cooler than tongues of flame, but as detailed on page 3, Episcopalians are finding imaginative ways to gather and celebrate the expressions of their faith and the birth of the church. Sometimes it takes a crisis to push our boundaries further. ■

For the "Conversations" page, Episcopal Journal seeks a range of thought and opinion from throughout the church. We welcome your letters and ideas for opinion columns! Please email editorial@episcopaljournal.org.

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Churches plan for a Pentecost without gatherings

By Episcopal Journal

As dioceses and churches consider how and when to re-open their buildings for worship services, many are making alternate arrangements for Pentecost Sunday (May 31), given COVID-19 pandemic restrictions.

Pentecost, which is celebrated 50 days after Easter Sunday, commemorates the descent of the Holy Spirit upon the Apostles and other followers of Jesus while they were in Jerusalem celebrating the Jewish Festival of Shavuot, as described in the Acts of the Apostles.

The traditional color for Pentecost is red, symbolizing the tongues of flame that appeared over the heads of the Apostles. Readings at worship services are often in several languages, since the Bible refers to the Apostles being filled with the Holy Spirit and inspired to give witness in different languages. Scripture also says the Holy Spirit appeared as a dove.

A number of Facebook posts gave details of this year's unique Pentecost services.

The Rev. Kate Wesch of St. John the Baptist in Seattle noted that the congregation is still doing virtual worship. For Pentecost, "various parishioners are pre-recording verses of a reading in dif-



Photo/courtesy St. John's Norwood

Last year, St. John's Norwood in Chevy Chase, Md., celebrated Pentecost with a traditional procession and the liturgical red color. This year, churches are finding imaginative ways to celebrate Pentecost Sunday (May 31) online due to the COVID-19 pandemic.

ferent languages while wearing red and it will be edited together into a single video. Parishioners have also been asked to send in photos of themselves wearing red that we can show during the prelude and postlude."

The Diocese of Fort Worth has invited people to create processions-at-home and

to make doves to decorate the church in which diocesan clergy will be recording the online worship service, noted Communications Director Katie Sherrod. "We also have people reading the lesson from Acts in different languages at home that we will edit into one reading. The bishop will record his sermon from his home in Abilene (Texas)," she wrote.

The Diocese of Maine is planning "a diocese-wide virtual service with clergy and lay leaders from across the state ... and we'll do readings in multiple languages," wrote Communications Director Katie Clark.

The Convocation of Episcopal Churches in Europe's Youth Commission is sponsoring Pentecost Project 2020, calling for videos, drawings, claymation, Legos, origami, papier-mâché, and anything else that will illustrate the feast. Suggestions include tongues of fire, rushing wind, and different languages.

The Rev. Jim Friedrich posted that St. Barnabas, Bainbridge Island, Wash., is pre-recording the Pentecost liturgy to allow more creativity in the construction of visuals (different angles, close-ups, overlay of art and other imagery). "We will begin with a virtual choir singing 'Veni Sancte Spiritus' (Taize) over a montage of submitted photos of parishioners' hands expressing 'Come Holy

Spirit' in their own particular way. This will segue into a fugal arrangement of Acts 2:1-11 for three voices, recorded by the readers and edited together with an ambient soundtrack. And there will be multiple languages for 'peace be with you' in the gospel."

Pentecost also marks the beginning of the Christian church, and St. Mary's in Cypress, Texas is planning to make a "birthday of the church" video featuring smiling faces of parishioners, according to a post by Jennifer LeClercq.

At Holy Innocents in Beach Haven, N.J., the Rev. Caroline Carson is "collecting selfies that either say alleluia or things for which our folks are grateful. I'll make a big collage for an online image, a wall poster for when we return, and 2-3-minute iMovie for our weekly online services."

The dioceses of Milwaukee and Southern Ohio are organizing virtual choirs and the Diocese of Vermont's online worship will feature participants wearing red or orange and holding a candle. The service will include a video montage of submitted images depicting places or things of joy. ■

This article includes material reported by Neva Rae Fox for The Living Church and is used with permission.

Sunday school has left the building

By Egan Millard
Episcopal News Service

Adapting church services to a virtual format is hard enough, but how do you do the same for Sunday school programs that are typically hands-on, interactive classes? Christian formation teachers across the Episcopal Church have found success with a variety of high-tech and low-tech methods. As Zoom and Facebook Live have become the new sanctuary, they've also become the new Sunday school classroom in the span of just a few weeks.

"One Sunday in March, I am in the hallway with other parents waiting for our children to finish Sunday school. The next week, I am trying to learn how to have a watch party [for] the Facebook Live Morning Prayer being done by Father Andrew, standing alone in the small chapel of Good Shepherd Episcopal Church," said Jana Auchterlonie, a Sunday school teacher at the Wichita, Kan., church.

Two days later, she'd created a private Facebook group for the Sunday school families, and they've since fallen into a routine. A family will volunteer to make a short video about the day's readings, paired with activity ideas, like sing-alongs, and craft projects, like resurrection gardens.

"I have been so heartened by the amazing things our families have done and how the lessons have felt connected and relevant to our current experiences," Auchterlonie told Episcopal News Service.

"One of my favorites so far is a middle-schooler and her mom, who read

and discussed [the story of] doubting Thomas, and the child mentioned how the disciples were stuck in a room for fear of the Jewish leaders and we are stuck at home for fear of the virus. They then shared how to say 'peace be with you' in different languages, even sign language."

Craft projects, a staple of traditional Sunday school activities, can be a welcome resource for parents juggling work, school and other household responsibilities as they try to keep their kids occupied. At the Church of the Holy Spirit in Lebanon, N.J., Lindsay Wyglendowski and Michelle Marlow produced a series of "virtual formation" videos during Lent telling the stories of the Stations of the Cross and pairing them with simple art projects that kids can do with materials they probably already have at home. Families could then upload their photos to a shared Google Drive folder to share their creations.

Parents who have run out of craft supplies need not run out to the store to find something church-related for their kids to do. For some, all you need is a printer, paper and crayons. Washington National Cathedral has released a series of printable coloring sheets featuring some of the cathedral's famous gargoyles and stained-



Photos/via Facebook

The Rev. Jacqueline (Jack) Clark, associate rector at the Episcopal Parish of St. John the Evangelist in Hingham, Mass., tells the story of Palm Sunday in Jerusalem in a virtual Holy Week prayer walk video.

Emily Tanis-Likkel, family life minister at St. John the Baptist Episcopal Church in Seattle, produces a new video every Sunday.



glass windows.

"With D.C. children home from school and parents working to provide child care around the clock, the cathedral decided to offer these as a way to help families stay engaged from afar, and in a way that taps into kids' creativity," cathedral spokesman Tony Franquiz told ENS.

And as busy parents try to limit their kids' screen time, the combination of video lessons and simple crafts offers something more wholesome for them to watch — like the videos Emily Tanis-Likkel, family life minister at St. John the Baptist in Seattle, produces every Sunday. In a slow, calming format reminiscent of

"Mister Rogers' Neighborhood," Tanis-Likkel tells biblical stories like the road to Emmaus and the resurrection using figurines and dioramas. Tanis-Likkel then meets with the kids on Zoom to check in and talk about the story.

Some even venture into the realm of virtual reality. The Rev. Jacqueline (Jack) Clark, associate rector at St. John the Evangelist in Hingham, Mass., recorded a video telling the story of Holy Week using a mix of real and virtual backgrounds with help from parishioner Dan Fickes, who works in video production. Using a script adapted from Gretchen Wolff Pritchard's "Prayer Walk of the Passion," Clark takes the viewers to a hillside in Jerusalem, the Last Supper, the Garden of Gethsemane, and Jesus' tomb.

And some churches are experimenting with new interactive experiences that probably wouldn't have happened if not for COVID-19. In Oklahoma City, St. Augustine of Canterbury organized a weeklong "photo scavenger hunt" for Holy Week and Easter. Each day, a different prompt was posted on the church's Facebook page, corresponding with a theme or a moment from the life of Jesus, such as water to represent baptism and flowers to represent the Garden of Gethsemane. Families could find the object of the day and take photos of themselves with it, which they could then share on the Facebook post. ■

AROUND THE CHURCH

Episcopal ministries respond to domestic abuse, mental health and gun violence concerns associated with COVID-19

By Paula Schaap
Episcopal News Service

As states and cities continue to ask citizens to shelter in place to slow the spread of the new coronavirus, Episcopal-affiliated ministries that serve victims of domestic violence are finding new approaches to caring for the vulnerable in their communities.

As COVID-19 cases and deaths in the U.S. continued to rise, incidents of reported domestic abuse have increased. Ministering to those most at risk can be hard, as victims and survivors could be sheltering in place with their abusers.

The Rev. Becca Stevens, founder and president of Thistle Farms — a nonprofit based in Nashville, Tenn., that aids female survivors of prostitution, trafficking and addiction — told Episcopal News Service that COVID-19 has made it harder to respond to the special needs of the community.

“So we’re asking, ‘How can we respond in a way that’s life-giving and respectful?’” she said.

Thistle Farms runs a two-year residential program for women that focuses on recovering from addiction and becoming



Photo/Gillian Flaccus/AP

Police caution tape surrounds a playground in Lake Oswego, Ore. Gov. Kate Brown issued a statewide stay-at-home order that closed all playgrounds and sports facilities.

ing self-sufficient. Part of the program provides education and group therapy to women in prison who are expected to go into the residential program once they are released. Even after women graduate from Thistle Farms, they’re still considered part of the community.

For women who are a part of the community but no longer in residence at Thistle Farms, the COVID-19 quarantine can pose added stress. Even before the pandemic, there was always a chance that residents would go back into abusive relationships once they left the support of the shelter residence, Stevens said.

“Women will graduate and go back into dangerous relationships even after doing heroic work and recovering and getting off the streets,” she said. “This has been a concern of ours for a long time.”

Plus, people in recovery have a fear of relapse even under the best of circumstances, let alone during a terribly disruptive public health crisis, she added.

Since the pandemic began, Thistle Farms staff and volunteers have included a card in their “porch-to-porch” delivery service that brings food and other necessities to people in the Thistle Farms community who are no longer in residence. The card says: “This is for you. Love, your community. Please let us know if you need anything.”

In Texas, an Episcopal church-based behavioral health ministry serving low-income Hispanic communities has moved its counseling services online because of COVID-19 but acknowledges that asking women to shelter at home with abusers potentially increases the danger.

“We are telling people, ‘Stay home to stay safe,’ but not all homes are safe,” said Marisol Salgado, a bilingual counselor who runs the behavioral health ministry

at St. Paul’s/San Pablo Episcopal Church in Houston.

“I have clients who I cannot call because it’s a safety issue,” she said. “It’s not safe to talk to me in their homes.”

The Rev. Ed Gómez, vicar at St. Paul’s, set up the program with help from Episcopal Relief and Development in response to the visible increase in anxiety, depression, isolation, sexual violence and assault associated with Hurricane Harvey and its devastating aftereffects on Spanish-speaking communities served by Episcopal churches across Houston.

Harvey-related unemployment and financial problems increased the risk of family violence, according to a study by the Texas Council on Family Violence. Plus, a perceived stigma associated with seeking mental health counseling in Latino communities creates an additional barrier to providing services, said Gómez.

“People will go for everything to their clergy, but I’m not a therapist,” he said. “How you relate to Jesus is one thing. How [a situation] affects your drinking, your domestic relations, is another thing.”

Job losses in low-income communities where undocumented workers cannot access unemployment benefits put additional stress on families, which worries Gómez. “After San Pablo had

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Episcopalians call for justice in Georgia after killing of black jogger by white attackers

By David Paulsen
Episcopal News Service

Episcopalians in Georgia are adding their voices to the growing calls for justice in Glynn County after a white father and son were accused of killing an unarmed black man while he was out jogging on Feb. 23.

Authorities didn’t make arrests in the killing of Ahmaud Arbery until May 7, after cellphone video surfaced appearing to show Arbery’s death. On the day of the arrests, 29 local religious and civic leaders, including six Episcopal priests, issued a statement lamenting “the tragic and senseless loss of a precious human life.”

“We know of no explanation for this lack of justice,” they wrote. “The failure of leadership within the Glynn County Police Department to immediately refer this case to the Georgia Bureau of Investigation is a stain on our community. Our elected officials must not accept the status quo. It is time for positive change.”

The case has drawn intense national interest in the past week amid questions about why it took so long to file murder and assault charges against Gregory McMichael, 64, a former investigator for the local prosecutor’s office, and his 34-year-old son, Travis McMichael.

The pair originally told investigators that they had chased Arbery in a pickup truck and shot him after suspecting him of being tied to recent break-ins in the area.

Many expressed outrage at the killing, saying Arbery’s only offense appeared to be a willingness to go “running while black” in the McMichaels’ neighborhood on the Atlantic Coast in south Georgia near Brunswick. On May 8, runners around the world dedicated 2.23 miles — representing Feb. 23, the day he died — in honor of Arbery on what would have been his 26th birthday and posted on social media with the hashtag #irun-withmaud.

“There is no place for vigilantism and racism in our tight-knit and loving community,” the local leaders said in their May 7 statement, which was shared on Facebook by the Brunswick branch of the NAACP. “We have a proud history of rejecting hate which we must now all draw on. Because this happened to one of ours, it happened to all of us.”

Georgia Bishop Scott Benhase blogged about the killing on the di-



Photo/ENS

The Rev. Tom Purdy leads a group of Episcopalians walking to the Glynn County courthouse in Brunswick, Ga., for a demonstration over the killing of Ahmaud Arbery.

ocese’s website: “Ahmaud Arbery should still be alive and with his family.”

Georgia Bishop-elect Frank Logue, who serves the diocese as canon to the ordinary, thanked Glynn County priests for speaking out and amplified their message on Facebook. “I join with so many others in praying for his family and praying for those who chased and shot him and their families as well in my prayers each morning and evening,” said Logue, who is scheduled to be consecrated as bishop on May 30. He also expects to preach at a liturgy

from Glynn County on June 7 that will be livestreamed by the diocese.

Among the religious leaders who added their names to the joint statement was the Rev. Tom Purdy, rector at Christ Church, Frederica in Brunswick. On May 8, Purdy took to the streets of Brunswick to lead a group of Episcopalians — all wearing face masks as a precaution during the COVID-19 pandemic — as they walked from St. Mark’s Episcopal Church to the nearby Glynn County courthouse a few blocks away.

At the courthouse, they joined a larger crowd for a morning demonstration “to stand for justice in our community,” Purdy said on Facebook.

“The shooting death of Ahmaud Arbery has been a terrible occurrence in our community of Glynn County. It does not represent what this community is about,” Purdy said in another post.

“Pray for Ahmaud and his family; pray for the shooters and their family; pray for law enforcement and judicial officials; pray for our community, that the way of love would guide us all in the days and weeks to come.” ■

AROUND THE CHURCH

Pandemic puts some bishop retirements on hold, delays elections, alters dioceses' consecration plans

By David Paulsen
Episcopal News Service

Calling a new bishop isn't a simple task under normal conditions. Add a global pandemic to the timetable, and most Episcopal dioceses have had no choice but to adjust or freeze even their best-laid plans for leadership transitions.

"We didn't want to stop the timeline if we could possibly do it," said the Rev. Linda Anderson, who co-chairs the Diocese of Wyoming committee that is reviewing candidates to replace Bishop John Smylie, who is retiring in early 2021. The search committee had scheduled a retreat last week with the semifinalists, and "there were some panicky moments when we thought, this can't possibly happen," Anderson told ENS.

Despite the COVID-19 pandemic, the committee's retreat proceeded mostly as planned — not in person, but as a two-day online video conference. For now, the Diocese of Wyoming remains on track to announce its slate of nominees this month in anticipation of an election at the diocesan convention in September.

That may be the best scenario any diocese can hope for this year.

With 17 domestic dioceses now in various stages of transition — from the sitting bishop's initial retirement announcement to the incoming bishop's pending consecration — all have had to shift gears to some degree. The typical process of discernment, applications, face-to-face interviews, elections and consecrations has been thwarted by governors' stay-at-home orders, travel restrictions and social-distancing precautions intended to slow the coronavirus' spread.

Chicago Bishop Jeffrey Lee and Pittsburgh Bishop Dorsey McConnell each announced they would postpone their retirements to help their dioceses navigate the developing crisis. Other dioceses, including Milwaukee, South Carolina and Springfield, have put their searches on hold for now in response to the pandemic.

Five dioceses have consecrations pending: Georgia, Oklahoma, Minnesota, Missouri and Alabama. Oklahoma's and Missouri's had been scheduled for April but were delayed. Now, the five dioceses have ceremonies scheduled from end of May to the end of June. All are being scaled down nearly to the minimum number of participants to reduce risk of transmitting infections. Backup plans are in place, in case the chosen consecrating bishops can't make it.

The Diocese of Oklahoma had been

planning for about 4,000 people to gather April 18 in the Oklahoma City University field house for the consecration of the Rev. Poulson Reed as bishop coadjutor, a transitional role that puts him in line to take over when Oklahoma Bishop Ed Konieczny retires at the end of the year.

Instead, only about 10 people are now expected to participate May 30 in the service, to be held at St. Paul's Cathedral in Oklahoma City. "The consecrating bishops will be sitting six feet apart," Konieczny said in an interview with ENS. Before and after the ceremonial laying of hands on the new bishop, everyone will engage in a round of hand-washing.

Consecrations typically are attended by more than enough bishops to meet the three-bishop minimum, but this ceremony requires contingency plans. Konieczny said he has at least two bishops on call if needed. Konieczny is scheduled to be one of the consecrators, along with Bishop Peter Eaton of the Diocese of Southeast Florida.

Presiding Bishop Michael Curry was to serve as Reed's chief consecrator, but the church issued a scheduling update on May 5 that indicated Arkansas Bishop Larry Benfield, president of the Episcopal Church's Province VII, has been assigned to take Curry's place.

A news release specified that Georgia Bishop Scott Benhase will be chief consecrator on May 30 in Savannah for the consecration of Bishop-elect Frank Logue, and in Minnesota, Bishop Brian Prior will be chief consecrator on June 6 when the Very Rev. Craig Loya is consecrated as Prior's successor.

Retiring bishops commonly serve as consecrators for their successors. In most cases, the presiding bishop is chief consecrator, though Episcopal Church canons say that role can be delegated to other bishops as necessary.

"In the midst of this COVID-19 pandemic, we are now at one of those threshold moments when important and significant decisions must be made on

all levels of our global community for the good and the well-being of the entire human family," Curry said in the news release announcing the updates. "Federal, state, and local authorities continue to issue new guidelines on travel and in-person gatherings. I ask your prayers for the church, our suffering world and all dioceses awaiting consecration of their



Reed



Logue

next bishop."

The release also repeated the Episcopal Church's earlier recommendations for consecration planning, including smaller venues, limited in-person attendance, no social events and expanded livestream options.

If not for the pandemic, the Diocese of Georgia would have planned for about 1,500 people at Logue's consecration. As of late last week, the diocese still hadn't finalized a location, though attendance will be limited: three consecrating bishops, two priests, two laypersons, a registrar, and the bishop elect.

Add a person to run the livestream, and that's 10 people, Logue said in a phone interview. With Georgia starting to ease its stay-at-home guidelines, Logue's consecration might grow to about 20 people, while still emphasizing social distancing.

Standing committees across the church, meanwhile, have been forced to make tough decisions about how to proceed with their bishop searches.

Oregon is the only diocese that is looking ahead to an election after announcing a slate of nominees. The diocese announced April 7 that it would delay the election from June 27 to Aug. 29, and nominees will be invited to meet in person with members of the diocese Aug. 9-14.

"Our hope is that there will be a window of opportunity from a health and safety perspective, allowing us to meet our candidates and for them to come to know Oregon," the Standing Committee said.

The Diocese of Iowa, on the other hand, isn't scheduled to elect a new bishop to take over for retiring Bishop Alan Scarfe until May 2021. Iowa's Bishop Search and Nominating Committee formed recently, and though it had to shift its in-person listening sessions to online conferences, the process hasn't slowed down so far, according to the Rev. Meg Wagner, missioner for communications.

In the Diocese of Pittsburgh, McConnell announced April 16 that he would postpone his retirement until September 2021, allowing for the Standing Committee to delay election of his successor. It is now scheduled for a special convention in April 2021.

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NEWS

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ENS. His diocese's actions are based in love, not fear, he said, and following that Christian framework, "the number of acceptable deaths as a result of our actions is zero."

Most Episcopal congregations across the United States haven't gathered publicly in their churches since mid-March, when governors and health officials began urging residents to stay mostly at home and to take other precautions, such as social distancing and wearing face masks in public. Such efforts were meant to help slow the spread of COVID-19, the disease caused by the coronavirus.

Many congregations now only come together online, but that hasn't meant a loss of liturgy. At St. Thomas Episcopal Church in College Station, Texas, the schedule actually has expanded during the pandemic: Every weekday morning, Morning Prayer. Every weekday evening, Compline. Every Sunday morning, the Liturgy of the Word, sometimes followed by Communion.

What parishioners have lost is the experience of worshipping side by side. They miss each other's physical presence, said the Rev. Angela Cortiñas, rector of St. Thomas, but they know it's best to wait. "The majority of them, as much as they long to get back together, they understand the seriousness of what's going on," she told ENS.

Cortiñas understands as well. She is a survivor. After returning on March 14 from a group trip to Scotland, she fell ill and tested positive for COVID-19. "It hit me pretty hard," she said. "I was down and out for almost two weeks with all the symptoms, but another two weeks before I felt normal again."

She has fully recovered, but the experience shapes her thinking about how St. Thomas will resume in-person worship. "It makes me even more cautious because I got it," she said.

As of May 17, more than 1.4 million Americans were reported to have contracted the virus, and more than 89,000 had died. The country's early surge in overall coronavirus cases has plateaued, according to The New York Times database, but local outbreaks continue to raise alarm.

"The hard truth is that we will not be able to welcome all people into our places of worship for the foreseeable future," the bishops of Maryland, Virginia and Washington said in a joint statement released May 4. Instead, they and other bishops around the country are urging their congregations to think now about what it would look like, possibly in the near future, to hold smaller in-person services during the pandemic.

More and more state governments — some under pressure by citizens — have begun to resume some social and economic activities in recent weeks, and those developments have provided the backdrop for the cascade of documents issued by dioceses to provide guidance for gradually reopening churches.

The Episcopal Church in Colorado describes its phases as "seasons." Kansas Bishop Cathleen Bascom invoked

John 14:2 as she envisioned the "dwelling places" that congregations will move through as they reopen.

All guidance, however, comes with the caveat that plans are subject to change, especially as coronavirus outbreaks flare up, so with every step forward, bishops caution, prepare to take a step backward.

"If the coronavirus resurges, we may again have to shelter-in-place," Bascom said in her May 2 letter to the diocese.

Dallas Bishop George Sumner's guidance allows congregations to move to Step B — gatherings of up to 10 people — by May 17 except in Dallas, Denton and Collin counties, where higher numbers of coronavirus cases have been reported. Bascom said churches in her diocese, which encompasses the eastern half of Kansas, may resume in-person worship on May 24.

The Diocese of Texas has asked congregations that wish to resume some form of in-person worship to develop and submit plans to their regional bishop for approval. A case-by-case approach is being considered in the Diocese of Oklahoma as well.

"It's not a one-size-fits-all," Oklahoma Bishop Ed Konieczny told ENS. Some rural congregations in Oklahoma are just 10 people, all of whom may be family members, he said, while several of the diocese's largest congregations top 1,000 members.

Oklahoma Gov. Kevin Stitt allowed churches to reopen starting May 1, but doing so safely is a challenge for Episcopal congregations. "Inherently, as a Eucharistic body, we have physical contact, whether it's through exchange of the peace or distribution of Communion," Konieczny said.

The challenge of reopening is evident in the guidelines being issued by dioceses and in the deliberations underway by their congregations, starting with distancing requirements. To ensure individual worshippers or family groups sit at least 6 feet apart, church leaders will need to mark their worship spaces.

"You must figure this out in advance by measuring your church space with tape measure in hand before taking this step," Sumner said in his message.

Worshippers likely will be asked to wear masks to lessen the risk of transmitting infection. The Diocese of Maine's guidelines recommend providing masks, as needed, to people when they arrive. The traditional Sunday morning greeting won't be the same as before either.

"Worship leaders cannot greet people at the back of the nave with hand-shaking and hugging," according to Maine's guidelines. "Consider what this means and how connections can still occur."

Passing offertory plates is another practice that may disappear during the pandemic. The Diocese of Maine suggests finding an alternative that minimizes contact, such as a central basket where offerings can be dropped.

"The world around us has changed. We are changed. If we think of the next couple months as simply resuming what we did earlier this year, we will be disappointed. God calls us to give thanks for what was and to move forward in trust and gentleness," Maine Bishop Thomas Brown said.

Church leaders also are rethinking their bulletins and how they are distributed. For example, printing a comprehensive bulletin could allow congregations to remove prayer books and hymnals from the pews during the pandemic.



Photo/courtesy St. James Church

St. James Episcopal Church in South Pasadena, Calif. posts a lawn sign during the COVID-19 pandemic.

The threat from the coronavirus initially could prevent choirs from returning as well, and churches may need to advise worshippers not to sing along with the hymns, due to concerns that singing could spread the virus farther than 6 feet. Cortiñas, the Texas rector, may limit music to one or two strong singers, without the congregation's participation.

Some dioceses are asking congregations to develop plans for recording the names of people who attend church, for use in contact tracing if a worshipper becomes sick with COVID-19. Church leaders also must clean and sanitize facilities after services.

Good Shepherd Church in Wichita, Kan., is considering resuming in-person worship in its fellowship hall rather than the church because it would be easier there to arrange plastic chairs 6 feet apart and clean them afterward. The Rev. Andrew O'Connor, rector at Good Shepherd, told ENS that a socially distanced setup in the hall might allow 30 to 50 people to attend services — much fewer than the 150 or more who typically attended.

"People want us to make sure that we are doing this in a safe and a proper and appropriate kind of way," he said.

The proper way likely will involve some sort of sign-up system. That raises the possibility that people could be turned away on a Sunday if the service reaches capacity, O'Connor said, "but how do you manage that conversation?"

Cortiñas isn't sure when St. Thomas will resume in-person worship, but when it does, she thinks the congregation will limit attendance and implement a reservation system for attendance.

Other dioceses and congregations have continued to stress the need for online options during the pandemic be-

cause not all Episcopalians will feel comfortable attending church in person.

"Virtual worship will still be necessary in all congregations to accommodate vulnerable populations and larger worshipping communities," Maryland Bishop Eugene Sutton, Virginia Bishop Suffragan Susan Goff and Washington (D.C.) Bishop Mariann Budde said in their guidance on reopening.

Kansas priests may decide it simply isn't safe for them to reopen at this time. "No church is required to resume worship in their building, and I will support whatever a church decides is in the best interest of its members," Bascom said.

In some dioceses hit hard by COVID-19, resuming in-person worship is still far in the future. In the New York area, seen as the epicenter of the virus' spread in the United States, the dioceses of New York and Long Island issued parallel statements May 1 announcing that gradual resumption of public gatherings wouldn't begin earlier than July 1.

The Diocese of Los Angeles, too, faces uncertainty about when it will be ready to gather in person again. Bishop John Harvey Taylor said in a May 4 newsletter that he and the heads of the diocese's 10 deaneries are deliberating on that question, following the lead of state policymakers.

When churches reopen, Communion will be "our biggest challenge," Taylor said. "We don't want people to fear the sacrament or their neighbor," he said.

Other dioceses are making a point to "fast" from Communion at this time. In dioceses where the full Holy Eucharist continues to be celebrated, guidelines typically specify that only the bread will be offered and Eucharistic ministers must sanitize their hands before and after distributing Communion.

In Wisconsin, Fond du Lac Bishop Matthew Gunter issued a statement April 29 saying in-person worship was not resuming, but he offered guidelines for ways congregations could celebrate Holy Eucharist "with a small community gathering in-person to represent the congregation."

In the Diocese of Southwest Florida, Bishop Dabney Smith never fully suspended in-person worship but told his congregations they must limit gatherings to 10 or fewer.

At Holy Innocents' Episcopal Church in Valrico, Fla., the Rev. Bryan O'Carroll, the church's rector, has led an "isolation group" of six church members who have committed to limiting their personal contact only to each other so they can gather every Sunday in the church to livestream services on Facebook, including Communion.

Florida Gov. Ron DeSantis began reopening the state on May 4, allowing the public back into some businesses with reduced capacity. "I see that society around us has a much bigger urgency for this return," O'Carroll said, while parishioners at his church aren't in such a hurry. ■

FEATURE

Navy chaplain managed logistics in New York field hospital

By Egan Millard
Episcopal News Service

At 58, Captain David Thames, a senior chaplain in the U.S. Navy, has seen and done more than most people do in their entire lives. He spent six years as an armored cavalry officer in the Army before being ordained to the priesthood and serving a parish in Texas for nine years. After Sept. 11, 2001, he became a Navy chaplain, which has taken him around the world. During the destructive 2017 hurricane season, he organized relief efforts in Texas, Florida and the Caribbean.

But nothing quite prepared him for a recent assignment: coordinating the movement of COVID-19 patients in and out of the military's temporary field hospital at a New York City convention center and its hospital ship, the USNS Comfort.

"I could not have scripted this scenario," Thames told Episcopal News Service. "This is by far the most complex and most directly involved I've ever been" in a relief operation.

Thames, a captain in the Navy's Second Fleet, worked 20-hour days at the Javits Center during April, leading a team of Navy and Coast Guard officers in the logistical choreography of patient transfers.

The Comfort and the Javits Center field hospital were brought in to take some of the pressure off the city's hospitals as they faced a deluge of COVID-19 patients.

"We screen and identify patients, we facilitate the physician-to-physician conversation that has to happen before a patient is transferred, and then work through the logistics of

actually having the ambulance pick up the patient in the sending hospital, get the transfer processed to bring the patient to Comfort, get the patient embarked and so forth," Thames explained.

"We also work the other direction — we facilitate the discharge process, which is actually even more challenging in many cases because a number of the patients that we have come from other-than-ordinary circumstances, so we work very closely with New York City social service agencies in order to get the patients, when they're ready for discharge, placed in the right environment for their ongoing recovery."

Thames' past experience in coordinating relief efforts wasn't the only thing that made him the right person for the job. Dealing with lots of people in difficult situations is something chaplains are accustomed to.

The fleet commander "realized that we were going to have to have some sort of a coordinating team here at the Javits Center," Thames told ENS. "And he said, basically, 'Thames, this is a relationship deal. This is not about figuring out how to drop bombs and launching missiles. I need you to go up there and take lead

on that.' And it was not lost on him that it was actually the church that invented the [concept of the] hospital to begin with. So it's really not as far out of our lane as it might look."

The plans were developed quickly and underwent frequent changes; the Comfort and the Javits Center, originally intended to treat non-COVID-19 patients, started accepting them when that became necessary.

"The hardest part about this mission is that none of us showed up with a cut-and-paste template of how to do this," Thames said. "This hasn't happened since 1918, so there was no pocket reference on how to mount a relief mission in the middle of a pandemic. We've literally had to — the term we use in the Navy is 'building the airplane while we're flying it.'"

And all of that logistical work happened as the team tried to avoid contracting and spreading a highly contagious virus. While Thames planned complex movements of patients around the city, he's simultaneously calculated "how close I can get to another person to look at the same flow chart at the same time."

Another unique challenge of this mission was the anxiety much of the team feels for faraway family members who



Photo/Barry Riley/U.S. Navy

Medical providers assigned to Javits New York Medical Station rush a critically-ill patient to an intensive care room.

are scared or at risk.

"Our natural tendency is to keep our loved ones close at hand and try and take care of ourselves," Thames said. "There has been an enormous underlying sense of strain that, A: 'I'm up here taking care of these people and I feel like I should be home taking care of my people,' and B: 'My [family is] flat terrified and there's not much I can do about it.'"

Thames took some comfort in connecting with his family in his few spare moments, watching videos his grandchildren in Texas have made for him and FaceTiming with his wife in Virginia most nights.

"Most of us that are military are used to going to some other part of the world under stressful and often destructive circumstances, doing our thing, but being aware that, by and large, our families are safe back at home," he said. "And this one is a whole different dynamic."

When he's not engaged in complex planning efforts, Thames returns to his roots as a priest and chaplain, counseling members of his team.

"They want to sit down and say, 'Hey, am I seeing this clearly? I'm experiencing these things; can I get a reality check? And



Photo/Kleynia R. McKnight/U.S. Navy

Captain David Thames stands at the field hospital inside the Javits Center in New York.

there are a lot of God-sized questions that have arisen in the course of all this."

Thames, who is not working directly with patients, led services for the staff at the Javits Center and celebrated the Eucharist with a group of Marines who are providing security for the Comfort. In such exhausting circumstances, he's found that the staff's spiritual needs are similar to his own: "simple and basic."

"This has not been a setting for a lot of theological sophistry," Thames told ENS. Instead, it's "things like, 'I'm too tired to remember how to say the Lord's Prayer. Can you remind me?'"

During his time in New York, Thames realized he "didn't have the bandwidth"

to keep up the prayer routines he'd had for so long, like reading Scripture and praying the Anglican rosary. Those daily prayers have become concentrated into one psalm that's become his mantra for the past month: Psalm 51, which contains the famous verse, "Create in me a clean heart, O God."

"That psalm has been my mental narrative in this thing, as I walk between the hotel that I'm staying in and the Javits Center and back, or as I have an opportunity to get away from noise and crowds for a little bit. That literally has been my spiritual discipline in this thing. ... It's made a huge difference. I felt like I could stay connected to the sacred under

circumstances that didn't really commend themselves to a lot of sacredness."

Although the virus' toll on New York has been devastating, the worst projections — of hospitals so overwhelmed that care would have to be rationed — have not come to pass, and the Comfort and the Javits Center never approached their full capacity. Thames made discharge arrangements for the patients so the Comfort could return to Norfolk, Va.

The Sept. 11 terrorist attacks and the COVID-19 pandemic are, "in a way, bookending my career as a Navy chaplain with major centenary-type incidences," Thames told ENS. "So I think this is my signal to retire — I'm not sure." ■



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FEATURE

FOOD continued from page 1

crisis, which disproportionately affects communities of color.

Those familiar with and living in Chelsea, like Mimi Graney, the city's downtown coordinator, know just how hard the virus is hitting, and why. "The ground was laid long before [COVID-19] ... for this community to suffer, between the environmental factors, the marginalization of immigrants and non-English speakers, poverty," said Graney, who is currently helping to coordinate the city's pandemic response out of the city manager's office. "It wasn't a failure of isolating specific people with the virus that caused our challenges today."

It's also a diverse city, said the Rev. Edgar A. Gutiérrez-Duarte, vicar of St. Luke's-San Lucas. He estimates that 60% to 75% of Chelsea residents are Hispanic, from different parts of Latin America. The foreign-born population accounts for 45.5%, and a good number of them are undocumented, he said. At \$53,280, the city's median household income is notably lower than Massachusetts' median of \$77,378.

Gutiérrez-Duarte, known locally as Father Edgar, emigrated to the United States from Colombia in 1981. Since arriving at St. Luke's-San Lucas 12 years ago, the 66-year-old has gotten to know the community. He's addressed some of its needs by initiating a church-based thrift shop, soup kitchen, food pantry, immigration clinic and clothing ministry.



Gutiérrez-Duarte

He noted that as the coronavirus initially spread in Chelsea, people were too fearful to seek testing, treatment and help, and those who didn't speak English or Spanish might not have gotten pandemic-related information. As the weeks have gone on, the city has stepped up its efforts to communicate consistently and multilingually, he said, and to make sure that those who are undocumented can access food, testing, health care and whatever else they might need during the crisis without fear of deportation.

As the coronavirus spread, Massachusetts Bishop Alan Gates visited in early March to talk about social distancing during church services. Around that time, Gutiérrez-Duarte realized the food pantry and Community Dining Room at St. Luke's-San Lucas had to adapt. Each Saturday, volunteers from four suburban Episcopal churches (St. Paul's Episcopal Church in Lynnfield, Grace Episcopal Church in Medford, Trinity Episcopal Church in Melrose and Parish of the Epiphany in Winchester), cook and serve a hot breakfast and lunch for the Community Dining Room.

"There was a sense that we needed to do things differently," Gutiérrez-Duarte said. It didn't feel safe to have people seated around tables together, and importantly, "ninety percent of the volunteers from our partners are older than 60," he said, a demographic vulnerable to the coronavirus.

From there, things happened fast. Gutiérrez-Duarte halted the Community Dining Room program, and church services became virtual a week later. He planned to continue the food pantry as usual, having residents drop by to make an appointment and then return to pick up their groceries one or two weeks later. It continued like this — switching to outdoor grocery and bag lunch pick-up — for two weeks.

Then, "the food pantry coordinator ... he told me, 'You know, we have waiting lists already that go to July.' I said, 'That doesn't make any sense,'" Gutiérrez-Duarte recalled. "And at the same time, the news about Chelsea becoming a hot spot for COVID [was] already coming out."

They got rid of appointments and bagged lunches and focused on offering emergency groceries each Saturday. The need, as they had already seen, was there; as more people became ill or lost their jobs, an already-precarious local situation intensified. That same month, the food pantry coordinator's family grew ill, and Elias stepped in as volunteer coordinator.

Though she'd grown less involved over the years, she's been a member of the church since her teens, and her father is a warden. Plus, the nonprofit where she works, the Neighborhood Developers, agreed to reallocate some of her time to St. Luke's-San Lucas. The changes sidelined suburban volunteers from helping at the food pantry, too. But as Chelsea's pandemic has deepened, "I haven't had any problem in getting volunteers," Gutiérrez-Duarte said. "They show up, and they're from Chelsea."

From early on, Chelsea's community and government leaders sought to take care of their own. The week of March 11, Chelsea-based environmental nonprofit GreenRoots organized a conference call to strategize around housing, elders, food assistance, financial impacts, activities, supplies, faith communities and other key issues. "And by Friday, it became clear that city staff would be the glue for a broad community approach," said Graney, the city's downtown coordinator.

From there, roughly 70 city employees, clergy, medical officials, representatives from nonprofits such as Chelsea Collaborative, and others met daily on a conference call to lead a 160-member core team and 250 volunteers, according to Graney. Gutiérrez-Duarte and Elias are on those calls as part of the food assistance subcommittee. Gutiérrez-Duarte sometimes leads the call's closing prayer and provides pastoral care for those who then stay on the line. The calls have sustained a community-wide response. "The same thing that I'm doing, everybody is doing," Gutiérrez-Duarte said.

Before the pandemic, the biggest food pantry expense was transporting the food



A volunteer brings a pallet of cabbages into the church.

Photo/Egan Millard/ENS

from the Greater Boston Food Bank to the church. A local nonprofit was doing the work, charging by weight. When the city asked Gutiérrez-Duarte if St. Luke's-San Lucas was prepared to bring in more food, he said yes, except for the delivery cost; increasing supply would mean higher delivery fees. At that point, the city offered to have the Department of Public Works deliver the food at no cost to the church.

The pandemic response team also initiated pop-up pantries in the city and has begun delivering food — including some provided by St. Luke's-San Lucas — to residents who are too ill, or too afraid of becoming ill, to pick up in person. Hunger makes sense amid illness and rising unemployment, and especially so here: "Before the pandemic, 60 [percent] of our residents reported being food insecure — meaning they ran out of food before the end of the month," Graney said.

Chelsea resident Zaida Ismatul Oliva, whose mother is an active member of St. Luke's-San Lucas, hadn't experienced food insecurity until recently. A senior special programs coordinator at Bunker Hill Community College, she's now working from home, but her partner, a contract livery driver, is out of work. Recently moving in with the couple and their 1-year-old daughter was Ismatul's 74-year-old mother, who normally lives in an income-based co-op. "There's a lot more people there," Ismatul said of the co-op, adding that their small town house has become "a controlled environment," making it potentially safer.

Their family feels the strain of losing one income, so Ismatul's mother suggested that they go to St. Luke's-San Lucas for emergency food. "It's scary times for everyone," Ismatul said, "I'd rather someone else take the food." She didn't feel comfortable with the idea of getting food for free, but her mother suggested the emergency food more than once. On May 1, Ismatul picked up three bags of groceries for the first time. "I struggle with this, to be honest," she said, but the produce, lentils, canned food and cereal helped. "You can definitely make a few meals from that," she said. "I don't think I'll be there every week to pick up food, but it's really good to know that help is there."

Ismatul knows she's not alone. Driving to pick up groceries or to CVS, she notices less street traffic, but with the new pop-up pantries, "We see lines

everywhere," she said.

From 10 miles away in Winchester, the Chelsea church's partners at Parish of the Epiphany wanted to find new ways to help. Not only did they miss being at St. Luke's-San Lucas, but they also worried for the people they'd gotten to know at the Community Dining Room. "It's a pretty stable population," said Claudia Bell, Epiphany's coordinator for partnership in the Mystic Valley Deanery.

So they reached out to Gutiérrez-Duarte about safely making bag lunches and have been doing so for the past few weeks. In early May, volunteers made more than 300 lunches in their homes one week, following strict protocols. Wanting to do more, Betsy Walsh, another Epiphany organizer, coordinated with Gutiérrez-Duarte and Rosalvete Baez, who owns Chelsea's Bella Isla Cafe, to have the Winchester church pay the restaurant for meals.

Then, vouchers for those meals are placed in 100 of the food pantry's grocery bags at random, to be redeemed, helping a local restaurant as well as feeding people. Bell noted that they're still tweaking the program, hoping next to print the vouchers in Spanish instead of English and to start a GoFundMe page to support, and possibly grow, the initiative. "We are open to seeing where this goes," Bell said. "We just want to be effective."

With food coming into Chelsea, hunger is one problem that can be mitigated, if not solved, during the coronavirus crisis. The first Friday in May, Elias, the volunteer coordinator, led a team of 10 as they put food donations into 2,100 bags. "We're always wearing masks," she said. They've moved food pantry operations from the back of the church to the front, where there's more space in the parish hall.

The next day, residents began lining up at 6 a.m., waiting for the pantry to open at 7. Marks on the ground indicate where to stand to maintain social distancing. Another volunteer team distributed the bags, some containing the bag lunches and vouchers, to 700 individuals or families, according to Elias. Some in line received diapers, baby food or pet food. Volunteers handed out the last bag six hours later, at 1 p.m.

New confirmed COVID-19 cases and deaths in Massachusetts seem to be on a decline, perhaps signaling that its pandemic peak may soon end. On May 11, Gov. Charlie Baker announced a phased reopening plan tentatively scheduled to begin May 18. In Chelsea, Gutiérrez-Duarte plans to continue trying to meet deepening needs as unemployment grows not only here, but across the state. ■

Heather Beasley Doyle is a freelance journalist, writer and editor based in Massachusetts. She has previously written about education and racial reconciliation for Episcopal News Service.

FEATURE

Church pantries help Diocese of Indianapolis step up food ministries during pandemic

Diocese of Indianapolis

In 2016, parishioners at St. Mary's Church in Martinsville, Ind., built a tiny wooden pantry in a lighted alcove just outside the front door and hung out a sign saying, "Take what you need. Donate what you can." And so the Little Free Pantry was born.

Four years later, the pantry is one of several feeding ministries affiliated with Diocese of Indianapolis churches that are still functioning in the midst of the COVID-19 pandemic.

"I have encountered multiple people making withdrawals and seen the desperation in their faces and heard it in their voices," Steve Speth, who runs the pantry, wrote in a recent letter to supporters.



Photo/Peggy Miller

Donations from Martinsville, Ind., residents help restock the Little Free Pantry at St. Mary's Church.

Others food ministries fighting hunger in the diocese include The Storehouse Food Pantry, a sizable ecumenical ministry operating at the former site of St. John's, Speedway; the Mid-North Food Pantry, an ecumenical venture housed in the outreach center at Trinity, Indianapolis; Sister Joanna's Table at St. Paul's in Evansville; and the virtual shelf-stocking work of parishioners at St. Matthew's, Indianapolis.

The economic dislocation caused by the pandemic has intensified the need for feeding ministries, even as necessary safety precautions have made such ministries harder to conduct.

Rich Hoerger, who manages the Storehouse Food Pantry, said last Saturday's distribution to 273 families, totaling some 1,165 people, was the largest in the pantry's history, easily eclipsing the 190 families with 928 members served last Thanksgiving.

The pantry was ready for the influx, however, largely because Hoerger watches the news. "I'd go home, turn on the TV, and then I'd call up the volunteers and say, maybe we should pack another 40 boxes."

He did that twice, and the pantry had almost exactly the right number of boxes ready when cars began to roll, just a few at a time, into the former church building's parking lot on Saturday.

"We had our regulars and then some," he said. "There were a lot of people we'd never seen before."

St. Matthew's in Indianapolis is in the unique position of having a commercial kitchen, but no on-site food pantry. The parish is home to We Run This, a culinary entrepreneurship program that helps young people learn culinary and business skills. The program, which St. Matthew's helps sustain through a partnership with the Kheprw Institute, an Indianapolis community empowerment organization, has maintained enough customers to keep its doors open during the pandemic.

"The kitchen has various vendors it works with — a food truck, ice cream guy, a guy who runs a hot dog stand, a new caterer — and they are going in and filling those orders," says the Rev. Frank Impicicche, rector at St. Matthew's. "They cook, they package, and then people who ordered it come to the door."

The parish has had to be more creative in helping to supply two local food pantries on the east side, Community Outreach Ministry East Side (COME) at Cumberland First Baptist Church and Irvington Community Advocacy Network (ICAN).

"We didn't want to have people driving around, buying things and dropping them off," Impicicche said, so parishioners went online. Through Amazon, Walmart and other merchants, they supplied COME with paper products, laundry detergent and toiletries and ICAN with canned goods, fruits and vegetables.

Sister Joanna's Table, a Saturday community meal at St. Paul's, Evansville, has converted its sit-down dinner to a bag lunch program since the pandemic took hold.

"For the past five Saturdays, while the halls remained empty, devoid of the tables filled with guests, congregations have been providing to-go meals, sometimes hot in takeout boxes, other times bag lunches," said the Rev. Holly Rankin Zaher, rector at St. Paul's. "Instead of serving teams of 10 to 15 people, congregations work to minimize exposure and work with a skeleton crew. Instead of a food service line, guests are served through the door with staff running a to-go meal and some bread out to people or cars as they stop by to discourage people congregating."

Sister Joanna's Table has been in the area for over 25 years, Zaher said, and it is still feeding people. "Volunteers masked and gloved are making it all work."

The Mid-North Food Pantry is one of the few feeding ministries that is still able to offer clients some element of choice.

The pantry has moved its operations from the basement of the Trinity Outreach Center into the rear parking lot for shifts on Monday, Wednesday and Friday. Clients receive tickets for time entrance and have a chance to consult with volunteer staff about the contents of the bags they receive.

The Rev. Julia Whitworth, rector at Trinity, Indianapolis, said the parish has shifted resources once devoted to its temporarily discontinued Sunday hot meal program to the food pantry, which is now the only in-person, on-site ministry occurring at Trinity.

"We believe more people can get more sustaining assistance through groceries than through one hot meal on Sundays," she said. The pantry, which usually serves 150 to 200 clients a month, served 600 clients in March. Most clients arrive on foot, Whitworth said.

The pinch created by food shortages is being felt in cities big and small. Before the pandemic, the Little Food Pantry used to get stocked three or four times a week. Now, thanks in part to a grant from the Morgan County Community Foundation, it is being stocked twice a day. ■

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NEWS

Episcopal Asian and Pacific Americans cite threats due to COVID-19

By Pat McCaughan
Episcopal News Service

When Sharon Matsushige Crandall coughed in a Los Angeles-area store a few months ago, another customer challenged her, asking “whether I had been out of the country recently. It didn’t even dawn on me, really, until afterward, what she meant by that,” Crandall said.

In the racially charged COVID-19 climate, Crandall and other Americans of Asian and Pacific islands’ descent say simply coughing evokes fears of being targeted and scapegoated — and has been used as a weapon of aggression against them.

“A good friend of mine who’s Chinese American was walking in his Oakland [Calif.] neighborhood when someone snuck up behind him and coughed on him,” the Rev. Peter Huang, Asian American missionary in the Diocese of Los Angeles told ENS. “The person was angry and tried to confront him. My friend chose to just run away. He was two houses away from his home in his own neighborhood.”

Huang is a team leader for the Gathering, a Diocese of Los Angeles ministry that provides space for Asian Pacific Americans to gather in storytelling and shared experience, with a focus on spirituality and social justice. In late April, The Gathering hosted a webinar to talk about what it means to be of Asian and Pacific islands’ descent in the age of COVID-19 and to raise awareness of the blame and hate directed at Asian Pacific Americans for their perceived spreading of the coronavirus.

In just one month, 1,500 incidents of verbal harassment, workplace and other discrimination, and hate crimes were documented against Asian and Pacific Islander Americans, Russell Jeung told webinar participants.

Jeung, chair and professor of Asian American Studies at San Francisco State University, a webinar speaker, helped launch a website, “Stop Asian American Pacific Islander Hate” in March 2020 to document COVID-19 associated attacks. He believes the incidents are just the tip of the iceberg.

“We had reports from 45 states, of Asian Americans sharing their own personal experiences,” Jeung said. “Being coughed and spat upon is unique to this pandemic. People see us as being disease-carriers,” he said.

“The hatred is virulent, palpable and disturbing, very dehumanizing. It is just a matter of time before an Asian American dies because of it.”

The Rev. Fred Vergara, the Episcopal Church’s missionary for Asiamerica Ministries, said the situation is also heartbreaking because Asian Americans are on the front lines fighting the virus.

“Asian Americans compose 15% of health care professionals and health care providers ... saving lives and risking being exposed to the virus while working in hospitals” yet are also exposed to racial insults and violent threats because of it, Vergara told ENS.

The novel coronavirus that causes the disease COVID-19, was first detected in Wuhan, China, in December. It has since spread worldwide. President Donald Trump has repeatedly referred to the coronavirus as the “Chinese virus” in efforts to deflect blame for his administration’s handling of the outbreak. Trump’s political rhetoric and the United States’ history of racism and discrimination against Asian Americans and Asian-born Americans have led to a rise in hate speech and hate crimes against Americans

of Asian descent, Asian Americans said.

“Every time a national or local politician says it’s the Chinese virus — knowing full well that there are not many people who are going to distinguish the Chinese government from all Chinese people — then thousands of people

still support the president. It creates a lot of uncertainty.”

For the Rev. Peggy Lo, assistant rector of St. Chrysostom’s Episcopal Church in Chicago, the coronavirus and resultant stay-at-home orders have engendered a keen sense of vulnerability.

“When I’m out, I’m really self-conscious because I know the history of reactions against Asian Americans, especially when things happen in Asian countries,” Lo, 40, told ENS.

As an example, she cited a recent social media post that referred to U.S. Rep. Ted Lieu of California, a Taiwanese-born American and U.S. military veteran, as “an agent of China.”

“I really feel defensive when I’m out in public and turn more inward, trying not to engage,” Lo said. “I have my hood on, my earphones,

I just don’t want to leave myself open to the things I read about.”

In a March 10 statement, Presiding Bishop Michael Curry called on Episcopalians to remember, “We are in this together.”

“We are all part of a big family. Bigger than our biological families, bigger than our immediate families, bigger than our congregations, bigger than our dioceses, bigger than our cities, our states, our nation,” Curry said. “We are part of the human family of God. Jesus came to show us that his way of love is the way of life. It’s God’s human family.”

Similarly, the Episcopal Church’s Washington, D.C.-based Office of Government Relations issued a statement on March 20, both calling on the federal government to aid the vulnerable of all nations and decrying political rhetoric leading to attacks on Asian Americans.

“Many of our brothers and sisters of Asian descent, including immigrants from Asia, have been harassed or attacked since COVID-19 broke out. President Trump’s description of the coronavirus as a ‘foreign virus’ during his [March 11] Oval Office address only exacerbates the perception that ‘foreigners’ are responsible for the outbreak. We denounce all displays of racism and stigmatization and encourage everyone to practice welcome and inclusion,” the statement read.

The Rev. Erin Betz Shank, 35, vicar of Trinity Episcopal Church, in New Castle, Pa., in the Diocese of Northwestern Pennsylvania, told ENS that she has felt a responsibility as a church leader to call out the president’s racist remarks as well as his anti-immigration policies.

Calling COVID-19 the “Chinese virus” was personally very offensive,” she said. Shank was born in Seoul, South Korea, and adopted by an American family when she was 7 months old. “I’m not Chinese ... but as a person of Asian descent, I just don’t think it is necessary



Photo/Eduardo Munoz/REUTERS

A woman wears a face mask as she walks in New York’s Chinatown, during the height of the city’s COVID-19 outbreak.

across the country have to look over their shoulders when they get out of their cars,” Brant Lee, assistant dean of diversity and social justice initiatives at the University of Akron School of Law in Ohio, told ENS.

The issue is further complicated by a long history of racism against Asian Americans. With the Chinese Exclusion Act of 1882, the U.S. Congress passed the first restrictive immigration law at a time when Americans on the West Coast were concerned about white racial purity and blamed Asians and Asian Americans — who represented about 2% of the population — for a faltering economy and declining wages. That history continues to foster a perception that Asian Americans identify with Asian countries and not the United States, Lee said.

“I am a fifth-generation American. My great-great-grandparents on my mom’s side came to the United States in the 1850s. Yet, I still take pains to pronounce my words, knowing there will always be people wondering if they will be able to understand my accent,” said Lee, 58, who is a member of Cleveland’s Trinity Cathedral and the General Convention Task Force on the Theology of Social Justice Advocacy, and serves as an antiracism trainer for the Diocese of Ohio.

Racial profiling and ethnic stereotypes are insidious and create both hypervigilance and self-doubt, he said.

“I’m trying to do the right thing, so I’m going to wear a mask. An Asian guy wearing a mask in Ohio — I cannot not be self-aware of that,” Lee said. “It’s not like I think about it every second, but I think about it several times. Every trip I make to get out of my car at the supermarket, I wonder, what is that person thinking?”

“You just can’t calculate it,” he added. “You don’t know if you’re being paranoid. You blame yourself. Then you read about something that did happen. You wonder if it’s just a few crazy people. Then you read that 42% of the people

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THE EPISCOPAL CHURCH

NEWS

THREATS continued from page 10

to make that distinction.”

“Leadership requires you to think carefully about the words you are using and the ramifications that your words as a leader have on other people, negatively or positively,” Shank said. “Unfortunately, we are seeing the ramifications of his words throughout the country.”

During the panel, Jeung said the church’s responsibility is to resist the world’s labels and to raise awareness of their resultant hurt and damage — especially to Asian American youth — who are encouraged “to shun their Asian-ness, the way others shun us.”

Dr. Joseph Lee, a psychiatrist from Redondo Beach, Calif., also served as a panelist during the April 24 webinar. Developing empathy, exercising compassion and building alliances are ways to address the challenges, using the core Christian tenet of “making an unjust world more just,” he said. “Theology is not just talking about personal salvation, but also about empowering the principles of a loving, justice-oriented God ... in a very grounded way here and now, a kingdom-on-earth kind of way as opposed to an esoteric in heaven kind of way.”



‘Leadership requires you to think carefully about the words you are using and the ramifications that your words as a leader have on other people, negatively or positively.’

— the Rev. Erin Betz Shank

Such efforts could begin with collective advocacy to address the higher death rate from COVID-19 among African Americans and unemployment disparities among Latinos, he said.

Jeung said education and advocacy are crucial, especially since “China-bashing and the state of U.S.-China relations will continue and be used as a campaign issue” in the upcoming presidential election.

“The issue is, how do we distinguish between criticizing the Chinese government yet not attacking Chinese people and Asian Americans in the United States? If the Chinese government becomes the enemy, then Asians in America become the enemy — that’s the threat. As Christians, how do you flip the narrative?”

Creating awareness begins by promoting a multiplicity of voices, Lee said. “People of color have an understand-

ing of racism, not on an intellectual level but through a lived experience,” he said. “If it’s something you take seriously, you have to let people of color lead. Racial dynamics are also about power differentials. It’s a big ask, but it’s the right answer.”

Jeung added that all Christians must stand up for justice. “A lot of white people hear more racist stuff about Asians than I would. That’s the occasion to stand up.”

Other ways, he said, include collectively holding local and federal governments and politicians accountable for investigating hate crimes and guaranteeing the public safety and civil rights of all citizens, and voting for those who embody “the Christian values of justice, dignity and reconciliation.”

Ultimately, Jeung said, each Christian must ask, “How is God using this time, and each of us, to respond well?” ■

The Gathering
a space for Asian American Spirituality

The Gathering was among 34 ministries funded by Executive Council at its October 2019 meeting. The grants were for new church starts and Mission Enterprise Zones. The Gathering’s \$20,000 grant was one of 11 seed grants. Further information is available at www.thegatheringedla.org.

Churches help Navajoland feed families impacted by COVID-19 outbreak

By David Paulsen
Episcopal News Service

Support from around the country has enabled the Episcopal Church in Navajoland to deliver emergency food and supplies to more than 100 families on the Navajo Nation reservation, which has one of the highest concentrations of COVID-19 cases in the United States.

The Navajo Nation tribal government reported as of May 14 that 119 people have died after contracting the coronavirus, and the Navajo Nation’s number of confirmed cases has grown to about 3,400. That reportedly places the reservation’s per capita rate of infection higher than that of any state.

About 175,000 people live on the reservation, which covers more than 27,000 square miles in the Four Corners region of Arizona, New Mexico and Utah. More than 30% of households lack running water and many residents live below the poverty line in isolated villages far from the nearest grocery store. Tribal curfews intended to slow the coronavirus’ spread have made it even more difficult for families to access food and clean water.

“The need has always been there. ... The pandemic has just exacerbated the problem,” Navajoland Bishop David Bailey said in a phone interview with ENS.

Navajoland’s clergy and lay leaders got a big boost from a national fundraising effort launched by the Diocese of Northern Michigan, which raised \$40,000. A diverse group of church leaders and businesses nationwide offered logistical and



Photo/Bishop David Bailey

Deacon Paula Henson, left, and Juliet Young get ready to distribute food in part of the Utah region.

delivery assistance, and volunteers in recent days have traveled village to village to distribute the food.

Northern Michigan also is organizing an online benefit concert June 11, called Indigi-Aid, to raise money to support indigenous ministries across the Episcopal Church during the pandemic.

“It kind of was just this grassroots, scrappy idea that has grown into to something that people feel excited about,” the Rev. Lydia Kelsey Bucklin, Northern Michigan’s canon to the ordinary for discipleship and vitality, told ENS.

Indigenous communities are particularly vulnerable to coronavirus outbreaks due to a range of factors, including high poverty rates, frequent underlying health conditions and limited access to clean water for handwashing. And although population density is low across the Navajo reservation, extended families typical live close together in villages, sometimes with several people in one house, making

it difficult to practice the physical distancing that is one of the most effective ways of slowing transmission of the virus.

Tribal governments and councils have issued lockdown orders on reservations in the U.S. mainland and in isolated villages home to Alaska natives to try to slow the spread of the coronavirus. Those measures sometimes have run counter to state policies, notably in South Dakota, where Gov. Kristi Noem has objected to two tribes’ precautionary checkpoints on state and U.S. highways. So far, no coronavirus outbreaks have been reported on those two reservations, Pine Ridge and Cheyenne River — a marked contrast to the ongoing crisis on the Navajo reservation.

In 1978, the Episcopal Church carved out sections of the dioceses of Rio Grande, Arizona and Utah to create the Navajoland Area Mission, an effort toward unification of language, culture and families.

The Diocese of Northern Michigan is active in indigenous ministries as well. Of the 12 federally recognized Native American tribes based in Michigan, five are in the state’s sparsely populated Upper Peninsula. Bishop Rayford Ray, Bucklin and other officials keep in touch with a network of indigenous clergy and other ministry leaders serving American Indian communities.

In late March, they started participating in weekly calls organized by the Rev. Bradley Hauff, the Episcopal Church’s missionary for indigenous ministries, discussing the worsening COVID-19 crisis on the Navajo reservation.

By mid-April, those conversations grew into a fundraising campaign based in Northern Michigan but extending across the country, with the initial goal of \$40,000.

The campaign received key support from Wyoming Bishop John Smylie, Alaska Bishop Mark Lattime and Utah Bishop Scott Hayashi. Through calls for matching donations from Episcopalians across the church and through direct online donations to Navajoland, the campaign met its goal.

Efforts to support Navajoland continue to gain momentum. An individual in Austin, Texas, donated a freezer to store food until it could be distributed.

In the Diocese of the Rio Grande, which includes New Mexico, the Bosque Conference and Retreat Center was closed because of the pandemic. However, its head chef, Jerry Gallegos, told Bishop Michael Hunn that the center still had an open account with food wholesaler Sysco. Hunn suggested that Bailey work with Gallegos to put in an order for food from Sysco, which made its first delivery on May 5.

Spirits were high as the food was unloaded at All Saints Episcopal Church in Farmington, N. M. “Thank you all for your support and prayers for helping us to serve the Diné as ‘beloved community,’” the Rev. Cornelia Eaton, Navajoland canon to the ordinary for ministry, said on Facebook.

On May 6, another truck arrived, this time with food and supplies donated by Giving Children Hope, a nonprofit based in Buena Park, Calif., a Los Angeles suburb, spurred by the Rev. Mary Crist, the Episcopal Church’s coordinator for indigenous theological education. ■

FAITH AND THE ARTS

Netflix series about Madam C.J. Walker should have cited her generosity

By Tyrone McKinley Freeman

The Netflix series “Self Made: Inspired by the Life of Madam C.J. Walker” brings to life part of a fascinating rags-to-riches tale I’ve been researching for the past 10 years.

Walker, widely documented to have been America’s first self-made female millionaire, made her fortune building an Indianapolis-based beauty products company that served black women across the U.S. and overseas. Today it offers a product line through Sephora.

Oscar-winner Octavia Spencer stars in the miniseries about the African American entrepreneur originally named Sarah Breedlove. Born shortly after emancipation in 1867 on a cotton plantation in Louisiana to a formerly enslaved family, she later adapted the initials and last name of her third husband — played by Blair Underwood in the series. The show imagines Walker’s struggles and successes in a dramatic reinterpretation of the historical record.

I’ve been studying Walker’s archival collections for my upcoming book “Madam C.J. Walker’s Gospel of Giving: Black Women’s Philanthropy during Jim Crow” and speaking about her to audiences around the country for years. I screened the series with great anticipation of how her lifelong generosity and activism would be portrayed in this account that “Indianapolis Monthly” described as having “fictional characters, invented moments, and a few surreal sequences.”

Her philanthropic legacy didn’t make the cut — aside from a few visual footnotes just before final credits roll. Those footnotes touch on her charitable giving to black colleges, social services and activism with the NAACP.

While viewers will enjoy the series, I want them to learn that Walker didn’t just live a life of hard-won opulence. She exemplified black women’s generosity. Her philanthropy and activism imbued every aspect of her daily life. “I am not and never have been ‘close-fisted,’ for all who know me will tell you that I am a liberal hearted woman,” Walker told the audience of the 1913 National Negro League Business meeting sponsored by prominent black leader Booker T. Washington.

More than money

Walker distinguished herself on a philanthropic landscape dominated by white people. Men like John D. Rockefeller and Andrew Carnegie turned to large-scale philanthropy after spending their lives accumulating wealth. In contrast, Walker’s giving began in earnest when she was a poor young widowed



Photo/Amanda Matlovich/Netflix

Octavia Spencer, left, stars in “Self Made,” along with Blair Underwood.

mother struggling in St. Louis. She gave along the way from what she had, rather than waiting.

She had much in common with other black churchwomen, club women, educators and activists. Like Mary McLeod Bethune, Nannie Helen Burroughs and Ida B. Wells-Barnett — and tens of thousands of other working and middle class black women — Walker embodied a versatile generosity that sought to meet communal needs and topple widespread discrimination.

The African Methodist Episcopal (AME) Church figured largely in her generosity. Its teachings on charity, activism on social and political issues, building of schools across the South, and missions work at home and abroad shaped Walker’s understanding of Christianity. In the 1890s while in her twenties, she was mentored by AME church

women, and eventually served alongside them in the community helping the poor, while still struggling herself. Later, in a 1914 interview with the Indianapolis Freeman newspaper, Walker invoked the “cheerful giver” cited in II Corinthians 9:7 as a fundamental Scripture in her life.

Walker was a highly prized donor in the black community. Constantly solicited, she gave money to black-serving organizations across the Midwest and the South.

The Netflix miniseries briefly references her gifts to social services. She supported organizations like Flanner House in Indianapolis, which helped African Americans get jobs, an education and childcare. She made sure that poor families could eat at Christmastime.

The Indianapolis Freeman, a black newspaper, reported in 1915 how her



Photo/Wikimedia Commons

Madam C. J. Walker was the nation’s first self-made female millionaire.



Photo/Madam C. J. Walker Collection, Indiana Historical Society

Walker, second from left, and Booker T. Washington (holding his hat) at the opening of a black YMCA in Indianapolis that she supported with her own money and fundraising efforts.

company’s office resembled a grocery store due to all the gift baskets that were filled with food. In 1918, she gave US\$500 to support the National Association of Colored Women’s campaign to purchase and preserve Cedar Hill, home of abolitionist Frederick Douglass, which still stands today in Washington, D.C.

Walker lacked formal education but she was a lifelong learner who donated thousands of dollars to the Tuskegee Institute in Alabama and other black schools.

She also patronized the arts, supporting Indianapolis painters such as William Edouard Scott and John Wesley Hardrick, whom she wanted to help gain national stature as an artist.

Time and talent

In addition, Walker belonged to important networks of women that were advancing the cause of freedom from the Jim Crow era’s racism and sexism.

She helped the poor through the Mite Missionary Society of St. Paul’s African Methodist Episcopal Church in St. Louis. She supported the National Association of Colored Women, which provided educational and social services to black communities around the country, and advocated for changing public policies.

Testimony

Walker also expressed her generosity by using her voice to speak out against the injustices of Jim Crow discrimination and oppression. She drew attention to sick and injured black soldiers during World War I by visiting and entertaining them at military camps in the Midwest. To black and white audiences, she spoke out publicly about black soldiers’ patriotic sacrifice overseas for freedoms denied them at home, and her full expectation that such freedoms be granted upon their return.

At her first national convention of her sales agents held in Philadelphia, she and her agents collectively raised their voices through a telegram against lynching sent to President Woodrow Wilson. She wanted the government to make lynching a federal crime.

Walker also advocated for temperance, women’s suffrage, female empowerment and civil rights. She secured a pardon for a black man jailed for an alleged murder in Mississippi. And she shared her own encouraging story of success with audiences around the country as an affirmative testimony of the value and dignity of black life amid pervasive hateful and hurtful Jim Crow stereotypes.

‘Netflix and engage’

I hope that many viewers who see “Self Made” and feel inspired by Walker’s story consider a new way to binge on TV: “Netflix and Engage.”

Learn more about Madam Walker’s story by reading the biographical account written by her great-great-granddaughter — the journalist, A’Lelia Bundles — which inspired the series. Explore other chapters in black women’s history.

Surf Madam Walker’s electronic archive of 40,000 items at the Indiana Historical Society. Consider her influence on the musical and fashion icon Rihanna and today’s beauty culture industry. Visit her company’s former headquarters in Indianapolis. Admire the architecture of her New York mansion where women of color will be trained to become entrepreneurs.

Give to charity. March for a cause.

Like Walker, you may make a difference in someone’s life. ■

Tyrone McKinley Freeman is assistant professor of philanthropic studies and director of undergraduate programs at the Lilly Family School of Philanthropy, Indiana University–Purdue University Indianapolis. This article was first published at www.theconversation.com.

FAITH AND THE ARTS

‘Upload’: Life can be messy; so can the afterlife

By Linda Brooks

If you die and buy your way into your own customized heaven, would it be better or worse than living? If you can still contact your real-life friends and family, how will that change you — or them? Does it bring you closer to them or is there resentment that life is somehow on hold?

That is the premise behind “Upload,” a new Amazon Prime series that premiered May 1. Described as a comedy-drama-satire-science fiction, it falls into the latest genre of series giving us different views of what heaven or the afterlife might be like. But unlike the “The Good Place” or “Forever,” this is an artificial afterlife — with a dark side.

When Nathan (played by Robbie Amell), a 27 year old software developer, is near death after his self-driving car rear-ends a garbage truck, his wealthy, controlling girlfriend Ingrid (Allegra Edwards) convinces him to “upload” his consciousness into a digital afterlife program, which she will pay for so they can be together for eternity, give or take 50 or 60 years (the span of her life).

The Horizen corporation that runs the programs offers various levels of “heaven” based on how much you can pay and for how long. The recently deceased have their virtual avatars designed to look like them (or better) then uploaded to the program by customer service representa-

tives called “angels.” Angels are available to answer any questions or problems the Uploads might have in their afterlives. When called, they appear to the Upload as an avatar using virtual reality headsets.

As Nathan begins adjusting to his afterlife, he explores the Lake View Hotel program Ingrid has chosen for him. Its amenities vary between charming and annoying, like a permanent vacation with computer glitches and in-room charges. Fellow residents he meets vary from contented to frustrated. The beautiful hotel is not as heavenly as it appears to be.

But for Nathan, and others whose lives ended abruptly at a young age, this new afterlife is difficult and overwhelming. Nathan’s attempt at “virtucide” (suicide) is stopped by his angel Nora (Andy Allo). Against the rules of the company, she begins a friendship with him. Nora is taking care of her dying father and can’t afford to lose her job.

The fast-paced story line offers a cliff hanger after each 30-minute episode so it is not surprising that viewers binge watch this series, but it is not for all tastes. The characters’ more comic interactions lean towards a raw sexual nature but it does show the difference between sexual desire and true love, while the satire focuses on the vanity, corporate greed and economic disparity of our present culture brought to its extreme in the not-too-distant future of 2033.

Though production of this series start-

ed two years ago, well before our COVID-inspired social distancing, there is an eerie similarity to our own Zoom get togethers as the living and the dead converse with iPhones and computer screens. They also interact via virtual reality imaging and other odd (thankfully) not-as-yet invented sci-fi imaginings.

But like our new reality, conversing by video screen is not the same as being there in person. Life gets complicated, and as this series shows, so does death. The multiple story lines overlap with fast-paced dialogue, quirky humor, special effects and shallow characters, but the deeper message is overlooked. What is love, friendship, honesty and how does that affect our lives? If we die, but not die, are we in purgatory, or heaven?

The distances that stand between the real and the virtual worlds reflect the characters’ desire to hold on to people and things that are constantly changing as they do in our own lives. There is a fear of loss and what will happen if we let go. Ingrid struggles to control Nathan even though the “long-distance” has strained their relationship. Nora is having an honest relationship with Nathan but has unfulfilling human relationships.

Nora is trying to desperately hold on to her father who is dying, fearing she will be alone. He wishes to die peacefully



Photo/Amazon Studios

Nathan (Robbie Amell) and Ingrid (Allegra Edwards) attend a digital funeral in “Upload.”

and be reunited with his wife, who passed away years ago. Nora is struggling to afford to upload him even as he refuses, and is annoyed that he still believes in an actual heaven. Her father’s faith is a strong contrast with the many self-involved characters, but it makes an important point. If someone we love dies, the loss is with those left behind, not with those who die. If we have the opportunity to place them in some in-between purgatory that is not quite life or death and they are not at peace, then is it for their benefit or ours?

There is no mention of God or faith in this series, but it looms large. Believing in ourselves, trusting our own feelings and respecting those that we love is our meaning for life. Love and faith allows us to be our best selves. In our own 2020 coronavirus real-life reality, that is the best we can hope for. Computer lives have too many glitches. ■

A Hymn for Today: A Tiny Thing We Cannot See

By Neva Rae Fox

*A tiny thing we cannot see
or taste or feel or hear,
has shut down nearly half our world
and brought distress and fear.
We’ve read about the plagues of old:
now a virus gone astray
has caused much sickness, death and grief,
with new reports each day.*

Poet Rae E. Whitney boasts an extensive and impressive career as a writer of Anglican hymns and texts. Her most recent contribution reflects today’s world and goes to the heart of the common thread currently weaving through humanity. “A Tiny Thing We Cannot See” directly addresses the coronavirus.

While her topics are usually “a Bible story, personal faith,” she quickly pointed out “but there is no ‘usually.’”

“In the 500+ plus texts I have written, I have covered almost all areas I have been interested in,” she explained. “But I felt this was a text that HAD to be written. How could such a tiny thing have such an impact on the world?”

The 93-year-old Whitney wrote “A Tiny Thing We Cannot See” while sheltering in place in her Nebraska retirement community home. She conceded that while life goes on, life is, indeed, different. In an email exchange, she wrote: “We are

doing much the same as most other people. Some residents drive to the store, etc. (I got rid of my 1985 car a couple of years ago!) We help each other. We have a Care Center attached to our main building and residents there are very much confined, no visitors, and we can’t enter there either.”

Nonetheless, this current confinement did not stifle her creativity or the time required to write her text. “I never think of time because a text goes on working in one’s head until one knows ‘that’s it!’”

She didn’t set out to use “A Tiny Thing We Cannot See” as a way of memorializing the people affected. “I hadn’t thought about it that way, but it is obviously speaking to people,” she said.

*But many helpers brave this plague
and serve those most in need,
and offer comfort, help and care
through many a word and deed.
We thank our true and gallant ones
who risk their lives to bring
relief and help to sickened folk
touched by that tiny thing.*

Whitney also doesn’t see “A Tiny Thing We Cannot See” as different from her other works. “I try and use simple language, avoid adjectives and adverbs unless really necessary, and make sure it’s singable to a familiar tune,” she said.

Born and educated in England, she was a schoolteacher and co-secretary of The Fellowship of St Alban and St Ser-

gius, an organization devoted to dialogue between Anglican and Eastern Orthodox Christians. She moved to Nebraska when she married the late Rev. Clyde E. Whitney, and they served together for decades at St. Andrew’s Church in Scottsbluff, Neb., and in other churches across Western Nebraska and Eastern Wyoming.

Whitney’s hymn text writings can be found in The Hymnal 1982 (Episcopal), The Presbyterian Hymnal (1990), and The Baptist Hymnal, as well as others. Her best known hymns include “Myrrh-bearing Mary from Magdala Came,” “Sunday’s Palms are Wednesday’s Ashes,” and a paraphrase of the Nunc Dimittis, “Lord God, You Now Have Set Your Servant Free.” Several collections of her hymn texts have been published, titled Under the Fig Tree: More Hymns and a Few Poems; Fear Not, Little Flock:

Hymns of Rae E. Whitney, Vol. I and Vol. II; and With Joy Our Spirits Sing: The Hymns of Rae E. Whitney.

Her conclusion speaks to the world with a confident hope.

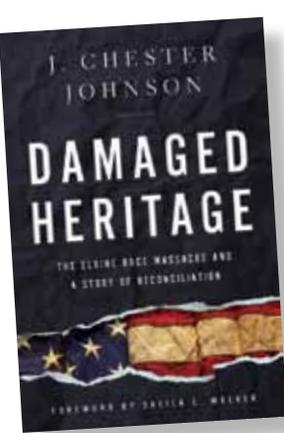
*Yet there are other tiny things
to cheer each anxious heart,
a smile, a wave, a caring note,
though we must stay apart;
a phone call, email, Facebook, skype,
can curb anxiety,
while faith and hope and love abound
to keep our spirits free.*

Rae E Whitney © 2020 selahpub.com
Suggested tune: ST LOUIS #79, “O Little Town of Bethlehem” ■

Neva Rae Fox writes about topics of faith. This article was first published in The Living Church.



Rae E. Whitney



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NEWS

Slowly and cautiously, some Episcopal churches in Europe start to reopen

By Egan Millard
Episcopal News Service

As the COVID-19 pandemic ravaged Europe in early March, the Episcopal parishes there were some of the first in the Episcopal Church to close. Now, some congregations of the Convocation of Episcopal Churches in Europe are resuming in-person worship.

Of the seven countries in which the convocation has a presence, Germany is the furthest along in the process of reopening churches — apart from the Republic of Georgia, which did not order churches to close, though many have done so anyway. In Italy, which suffered some of the worst (and earliest) devastation from the pandemic, churches were allowed to hold worship services again starting May 18, while other countries like France and Switzerland are expected to keep them closed into June.

Germany has begun allowing churches to reopen with various restrictions by region, including limits on the number of people who can be in the building at once and the kinds of worship activities that can happen. The convocation has more churches in Germany than any other country: three of its nine parishes and four of its 12 missions are there. At least one of the German churches resumed in-person worship on May 10: the Church of St. Augustine of Canterbury in Wiesbaden, according to Bishop Mark Edington, bishop of the convocation.

Edington was stuck in Massachusetts since March, unable to return to Europe because of travel restrictions, but he told Episcopal News Service that the clarity of stringent government orders in Europe has prevented the confusion and mixed messaging many American bishops are dealing with.

“My role has, in many ways, been a much easier one than bishops in the United States because, in our context, the choice is not left to me or to leaders of churches as to whether or not a house of worship may remain open or must remain closed. We [were] simply closed by state order,” Edington said.

“So I’m very aware that my colleagues in the House of Bishops who are responsible for making the decisions in places where governors and mayors have been kind of all over the map — they have a really tough decision to make and they often have to just make [it] on their own, and I am not in that position.”

Edington’s office developed a set of guidelines and a questionnaire that churches in countries that are relaxing restrictions must complete before he allows them to reopen. In addition

to observing all local requirements, Edington has issued church-specific directions, for example, the passing of the peace is to be done without physical contact, and all coffee hours and other fellowship events must remain virtual. The Eucharist may be celebrated, but only the bread may be shared, and those distributing it must sanitize



Photo/courtesy of Church of St. Augustine of Canterbury

The Church of St. Augustine of Canterbury in Wiesbaden, Germany, prepares to open its doors again.



Photo/Christopher Easthill

The Rev. Christopher Easthill (right) and parishioners of the Church of St. Augustine of Canterbury clean the church, preparing to re-open.

their hands immediately before doing so.

The convocation has shared its guidelines with the Church of England’s Diocese in Europe, which operates Anglican churches in some of the same cities and has adapted the guidelines for its own churches. Some of its German churches reopened on May 10, while churches in England are still weeks away from doing so. The United Kingdom now leads Europe in recorded COVID-19 deaths, surpassing Italy.

Edington is leaving other issues — like the practicality of using masks during services and questions about singing, which has been restricted in some cases because of concerns over increased transmission of the virus — to church leaders to decide in accordance with their local laws.

St. Augustine’s in Wiesbaden, a city just west of Frankfurt, has directed ushers to seat parishioners at least 5 feet apart, in keeping with local rules. Normally, about 110 people come to a Sunday service at St. Augustine’s, but with the distancing requirements, only about 50 will be able to fit in the church.

The Rev. Christopher Easthill, the rector, initially considered adding a Saturday evening service to accommodate everyone, but after surveying his parishioners, he found that only about 50 planned to attend in person on the May 10 reopening date. Many are staying home for now, including those at high

risk. Easthill knows of two congregants who have had COVID-19; both have recovered. Members of the U.S. military stationed nearby, whose activities are still strictly regulated, may not return for a while either.

Anyone who wants to attend in person will be asked to wear a mask and sanitize their hands upon entering the building. There will be no handshakes and no passing of the collection plate, and single-use service programs will be used instead of prayer books. The Eucharist will be celebrated with ushers directing people to come up and receive the bread one by one. There will be singing, but not by the congregation or a full



Photo/courtesy of Church of St. Augustine of Canterbury

The Church of St. Boniface in Augsburg, Germany, meets in a Lutheran church.

choir; a few singers in the choir loft will accompany the organist.

“I’m excited to be back,” Easthill told ENS. “The Zoom services we’ve done have been nice because I have seen the people but, nevertheless, only the little

‘Brady Bunch’ boxes on the screen.”

St. Augustine’s virtual gatherings have evolved from a bare-bones recording of Morning Prayer to include weekday services, Bible studies, coffee hours and trivia nights. Those have provided vital social connections for parishioners, and Easthill stressed that virtual programming will continue so that those who can’t come back yet — and those who might never come back — don’t feel left out.

“What we ought to do is make sure that we include these people — our normal congregation who can’t come. The second group we want to include ... is all the other people who’ve popped up and started watching our online services, those ex-members who’ve moved back to the States, back to the U.K., and have enjoyed watching it, and people who haven’t been members before but have found us,” Easthill said. “So we’re going to have a hybrid service. What we do on Sunday will also be broadcast live.”

The Church of St. Boniface in Augsburg, near Munich in southern Germany, meets in a Lutheran church, said the vicar, the Rev. Lutz Ackermann.

About 15 people would come on a typical Sunday “during normal times — if you can remember, there once were normal times! It seems so far away,” he told ENS.

Ackermann is “trying to meander through this labyrinth” of regulations, developing a plan that will abide by convocation guidelines, government restrictions and the policies of the host church. The church has been approved by Edington to resume in-person worship, but “we still need to think about it and work through the question [of] what works for us, in practical terms, in liturgical terms, in terms of the community.”

“To me, it’s not entirely clear that this will mean that we come back to something that feels very normal very soon. I would doubt it, actually.”

For now, Ackermann will not celebrate the Eucharist and there will be no singing. Like Easthill, he is committed to continuing virtual worship regardless of reopening the church — partly because he has so few congregants that he isn’t sure any of them will be willing or able to return to church at the moment. Holding services on Zoom has been “actually quite a nice way [to gather] because it helps to make the service rather interactive with such a small group of people,” Ackermann said. “It feels very intimate.”

While Ackermann and Easthill are under no illusions of a return to normalcy anytime soon, they look forward to simply being able to share the same space with their parishioners.

“It’s very strange when you’re preaching just into a microphone, into an empty building,” Easthill said. “So I’m excited and looking forward to having some people back there in church with us again.” ■

FEATURE

Maine congregation keeps local lobster industry afloat

By Egan Millard
Episcopal News Service

With little help from the federal government, small businesses across the United States are struggling to survive. In Maine, where the economy is heavily dependent on the now-decimated industries of tourism, restaurants and fishing, one particular type of very small business is caught in the eye of the economic storm: the lobsterman.

About 5,000 lobstermen in the state, along with about 10,000 other workers in the industry, land more than 80% of the national catch and generate an economic impact of about \$1.5 billion per year. Over the last decade, the industry has been booming, mostly thanks to China's growing appetite for lobster; exports to China increased nearly 2,000% from 2010 to 2018. However, the boom ended abruptly in 2018 during President Donald Trump's trade war with China, which resulted in heavy tariffs on U.S. lobster exports. Now, with sales to restaurants virtually gone, some lobstermen are selling directly to consumers to get by.

One congregation is using a strength-in-numbers approach to support one of their local lobstermen. St. Francis by the Sea Episcopal Church in Blue Hill has organized a bulk-buying effort, purchasing sizable amounts from a lobsterman who is a friend of several members and encouraging parishioners to buy and freeze what they won't eat right away. Along with the church's volunteer-run

grocery delivery service, the "community-supported lobster" program also means parishioners — many of whom are elderly — can stay safe and healthy at home. And it's a chance to indulge in something often reserved for special occasions.

"I think that we have the moral fortitude to do our part to eat lobster for a good cause," said the Rev. Brent Was, rector of the church in Maine's bucolic Mid-Coast region, a rocky stretch along the Atlantic between Portland and Acadia National Park dotted with small towns.



The Rev. Brent Was stands on a beach at Penobscot Bay in Harborside, Me.

In early April, Was took orders from parishioners and bought 90 lobsters — about a quarter of the lobsterman's catch — which he and a few volunteers divided up and delivered. It was such a success that Was decided to make it a weekly effort. Word spread quickly, and for the second round, about a third of the orders were from locals who aren't members of the church. Was and the volunteers delivered 295 lobsters to 43 households on April 16 — about three-quarters of the

lobsterman's catch.

Some lobstermen have been selling their catch on roadsides and in supermarket parking lots, which takes up a lot of time and vastly increases their risk of exposure to COVID-19. Bulk purchases like the St. Francis program prevent that. It also gives Was a chance to do some pastoral care by having check-ins with parishioners from a safe distance and to introduce himself to others in the community.

Although the program was born out of a time of crisis, Was hopes it can be part of a larger movement to revitalize local food systems when the pandemic passes. Sustainable agriculture has long been Was' passion. He once ran a small community-supported agriculture operation (in which farms sell directly to consumers, much like the lobster program) and has a doctorate in the theology of sustainable agriculture from Episcopal Divinity School. While serving in his previous parish in Eugene, Oregon, he was a vocal activist for local food programs, and Maine's vibrant farm-to-table culture is part of what attracted him to Blue Hill.

"Sustainable agriculture at a small scale is something that's very important to me, and it's huge in Maine," Was told Episcopal News Service. "Blue Hill in particular is one of the centers of the back-to-the-land movement. ... So how we as a congregation will continue to work with local food systems, I'm not



Lobsters await delivery to parishioners of St. Francis by the Sea and other residents of Blue Hill, Me.

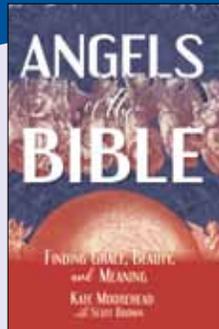
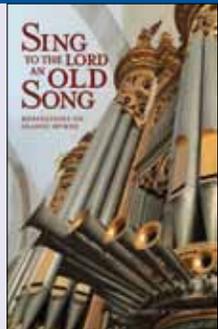
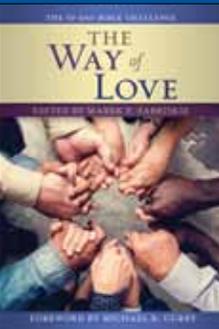
sure how that will look, but it certainly will."

The disruption of a global pandemic has exposed the fragility of America's food supply chain, Was said.

"I think local food systems are going to be essential for our long-term resilience, particularly for small rural communities. We're at the end of supply chains, and so being able to support ourselves, at least somewhat, is going to be very important. And so I think this will just be a good entrance for us into that world. ... When the vegetable growers start producing again, we will hopefully be connecting with them somehow." ■

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NEWS

RESPOND continued from page 4

700 people come for a food distribution event, someone left a voicemail message with the church to say thank you, and they started to cry," Gómez said.

"This person was really in need, rally in pain, really in fear," he said. "That kind of thank you — it's depressing."

Texas began a phased-in, limited opening of certain businesses on May 1. Though Gómez said it would be a relief for some people to get back to work, his church community members often are viewed as cheap labor.

"It is highly doubtful that [employers] will provide a safe work environment by providing masks and gloves," he said in an email.

Salgado's concern about how to contact people still in abusive home situations was echoed by the Rev. Paul Feuerstein, a social worker and priest. Feuerstein is the founder and CEO of Barrier Free Living, which operates an emergency domestic violence shelter for people with disabilities in New York City.

Feuerstein estimated that about 50% of the people who are in touch with Barrier Free Living counselors — now only via phone or video — are living with their abusers.

"That's a real challenge because being in touch with folks can be dangerous," he said. "So we have to let the women take the lead — because oftentimes they

are waiting for the abuser to leave the house."

Calls and text messages to Barrier Free Living's office phone and hotline dropped significantly during the first couple of weeks after New York Gov. Andrew Cuomo issued a stay-at-home order on March 22, Feuerstein said.

"I think it was the phenomenon of being at home with abusers and not knowing how to reach out for help," he said. But the calls have picked up since then.

New York City has been hit especially hard by COVID-19, with more than 190,000 cases and over 19,500 deaths.

Barrier Free Living's shelter was slightly under capacity before COVID-19 arrived. Now it is at capacity. The shelter does have separate apartments for residents — a boon in a time when group living situations can hasten viral spread.

Nevertheless, group activities have come to a halt, which can be especially hard on children who live with a parent in the shelter. Housing parents and children escaping abusive homes requires extra precautions, even for something as straightforward as getting children on-line for school.

Feuerstein himself had to take iPads to the children at the shelter instead of having them delivered because the shelter location is confidential.

Episcopal Church members also have stepped up advocacy against gun violence as weapon sales rise during the pandem-

ic. A gun in the home is an added risk for domestic violence and suicide.

"Sadly, for some people, staying home does not mean staying safe, particularly where there is a history or risk of domestic violence," Connecticut Bishop Ian Douglas, co-convenor of Bishops United Against Gun Violence, told ENS, "or where there is a history or risk of matters of depression or other forms of mental illness."

At a time when all eyes are trained on COVID-19 and its effects on communities and businesses, Douglas says he doesn't want the issue of guns to be "lost in the mix," as he believes the pressures of isolation and lost employment could exacerbate gun violence.

He pointed out that many bishops have access to their elected officials, so Bishops United Against Gun Violence is encouraging them to contact their representatives and advocate for sensible gun legislation.

"Then we ask bishops to speak with their clergy to keep a watchful eye out in situations where there might be an increased risk for suicide or domestic violence," Douglas said, "or if they know parishioners who suffer from depression, or domestic violence — and not be afraid to ask the question: Is there a gun in the home?" ■

Paula Schaap is an Episcopalian and a writer and editor who covers religion, science and finance.

BISHOPS continued from page 5

Lee, the Chicago bishop, said he is reluctant to specify new dates for the transition process, given the prevailing uncertainty while COVID-19 cases continue to rise. The diocese initially had planned an election on June 20. It may be able to reschedule the election to take place at the diocesan convention in November, though even plans for that large gathering are now tentative at best.

In the Diocese of Milwaukee, which encompasses the southern third of Wisconsin, the Standing Committee announced that COVID-19 will not change Bishop Steven Miller's plans to retire at the end of 2020, but the diocese is abandoning its former timeline for electing Miller's permanent replacement.

Instead, Milwaukee is working with Bishop Todd Ousley, who leads the Episcopal Church's Office of Pastoral Development, on a more gradual plan — appointing an assistant bishop for a year, with the expectation that the bishop would be elected bishop provisional for an additional three years.

The Diocese of South Carolina, which covers the southeast half of the state along the Atlantic coast, has been led since 2012 by provisional bishops, most recently Bishop Skip Adams, who retired in December 2019. The diocese had hoped to elect a new bishop at its convention in November 2020, but on April 22 it announced a "pause" in the search. ■



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