

# Episcopal JOURNAL

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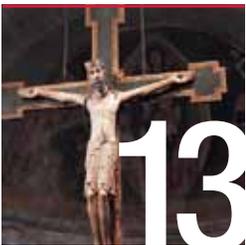
VOL. 11 NO. 11 | DECEMBER 2021



**NEWS** Clergy lead prayer ministry at Arbery trial



**FEATURE** Episcopal stores offer a variety of Christmas gifts



**ARTS** Three traditions gave religious art to medieval Spain

## Executive Council approves 2022 budget, increases assistance to Latin American dioceses

By Egan Millard  
Episcopal News Service

At its first meeting with in-person attendance since the start of the COVID-19 pandemic, the Episcopal Church Executive Council approved a 2022 churchwide budget relatively unaffected by the pandemic, staying the course while acknowledging that the coming years may bring significant changes to the church, culturally and financially.

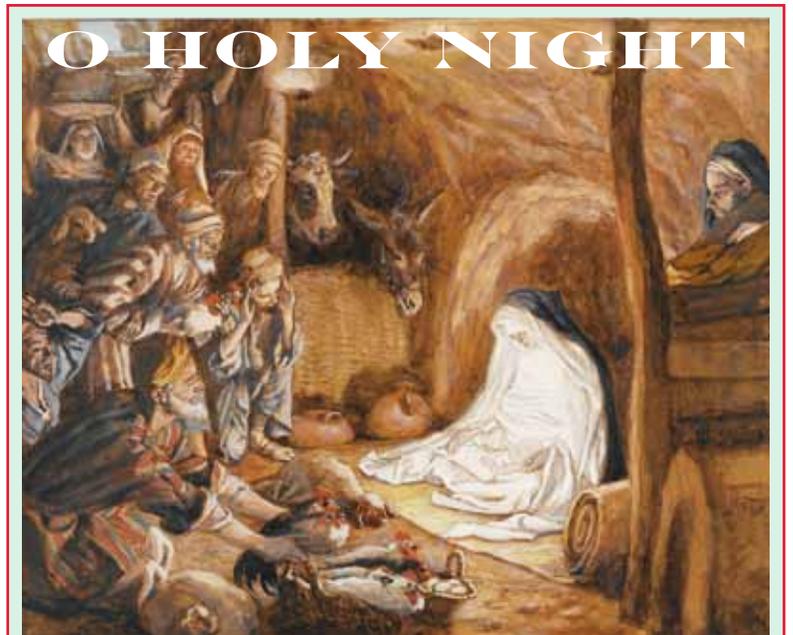
Executive Council, which met Oct. 25-28 in Linthicum Heights, Md., with some members joining online, celebrated the perseverance of the church during the trials of the past year and a half, while acknowledging the disparities and disconnects exacerbated by the pandemic within the church.

Dioceses in the United States have been affected differently from non-U.S. dioceses, and the finances of churchwide and parish budgets have gone in opposite directions in many cases, council members said.

For the 2019-2021 triennium, there is a projected surplus of \$15.9 million. This reflects a number of factors unique to the COVID-19 pandemic, including less staff travel, the receipt of \$3 million in federal Paycheck Protection Program funds, and postponement of General Convention.

Deducting the expected \$2.5 million cost of next year's 80th General Convention from this surplus, the remaining \$13.4 million will be put into investments and short-term reserves, Finance Committee Chair the Rev. Mally Lloyd said.

Presiding Bishop Michael Curry cautioned that calling it a "surplus" could be misleading, though it does create an "opportunity to do



Photo/Courtesy Brooklyn Museum of Art

### The first Christmas

In "The Adoration of the Shepherds," James Tissot (1836-1902) paints Mary and the baby Jesus in expressive, luminous white clothing, reflecting light on Joseph and the shepherds and on the browns of the grotto, the earth and Mary's simple bed roll. While some of these working men register their wonder with their hands upraised, others proffer modest gifts of livestock and loaded baskets.

something both creative and helpful for the church." If a "surplus" exists, it isn't because the church is "flush" with cash but because it reduced expenses during the pandemic, he said.

"That may be the wrong word," Curry said. "We tightened our belt. Actually, we lost weight, institutionally. We did everything we could to squeeze everything out of every dollar we had."

Income from dioceses, trusts, investments and other sources has remained in line with expectations, but the full impact of the pandemic on the coming year remains uncertain. The Finance Committee recommended a 2022 budget with

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## Bishop, blacksmithing crew melt guns for garden tools in Swords to Plowshares demonstration

By David Paulsen  
Episcopal News Service



Photo/David Deutsch

Bishop Jim Curry, right, retired bishop suffragan of the Diocese of Connecticut, guides Washington Bishop Mariann Budde in hammering and shaping the metal of a former gun into a garden tool on Capitol Hill.

gardening tools. The nonprofit he co-founded in 2017, Swords to Plowshares Northeast, is centered on the process.

The organization takes its name from a passage from Isaiah 2:4 — "They shall beat their swords into plowshares, and their spears into pruning hooks." Swords to Plowshares promotes gun safety with a visual, tangible ministry that Curry said is both practical and symbolic.

"When we started evangelizing and talking to police departments and communities around the country and we could show them the actual transformation,

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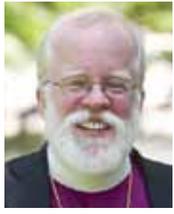
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## CONVERSATIONS

## Make space to let the children lead us

By Andrew ML Dietsche



I THINK THAT MOST Episcopalians in the Diocese of New York are aware of the long association of the writer Madeleine L'Engle with our diocesan Cathedral of St. John the Divine.

For some 40 years, she was the librarian of the cathedral library in Diocesan House, and after her death in 2007, the library was designated a National Literary Landmark, and there is a plaque on the wall of the building to declare it.

Now she is buried in the columbarium in the Chapel of Saint Ansgar in the cathedral, and when I am wandering or pacing in the church, thinking about the things I have to think about, I will often go into the columbarium and lay my hand on the stone behind which she and her husband rest, and marvel at the mind and spirit which touched so many young minds and spirits.

I didn't grow up with Madeleine's books. No one told me about her. But my wife Margaret knew. "A Wrinkle in Time" and "The Arm of the Starfish," and so many others of her books, were favorites of Margaret's when she was growing up, as they were both written for children and at the same time so profoundly intelligent.

Through imaginative stories, Madeleine introduced children, whether they were aware of it or not, both to the deep currents of the Christian faith and to the miracles and wonders of science.

When Margaret and I had our own daughters, Margaret introduced them to these wonderful books on which she had been raised and watched as their minds and imaginations were so brilliantly opened, which is the power of really

good books.

On the morning that Madeleine died, Don Lundquist, who was on the cathedral staff at that time, sent an email to the cathedral and bishop's staffs, to inform us of her passing, and attached a photograph of Madeleine, from long ago, working at her desk in the cathedral library.

By then, my daughter Meghan had become the buyer of children's books at BookPeople, an independent bookstore in Austin, Texas, so I forwarded the message and picture on to her. Within 30 minutes, Meghan had enlarged and printed the picture, and gathered all Madeleine's books from the shelves, and erected a commemorative display — really, a shrine — in the bookstore. You could do no less.

The ideas and stories to which we introduce our children — both our own children, if we have them, and the children in our congregations — will shape them and move them and teach them what to care about and what not to care about. If those ideas and stories are smart and sacred and funny and moving and troubling and challenging, our children will become smart and sacred and funny and moving and troubling and challenging, too. They will grow up to become interesting people we will want to know. And then they will teach their children too,

and this is how the world goes on and remains more and more a place worth the trouble. I think that the longer we live the harder it is to remember what our minds were like when we were children, or how we thought about the things we thought about. We will certainly remember things we did and things which were done to us or for us. But any remembrance of the desires and hopes and fears and confusions of our own childhoods will necessarily be now so encumbered by our growing up, that it may be impossible for us to see again, even in glimpses, through our own younger eyes and with our own younger spirits. And this is a terrible loss.

I look through old drawers and find the shells and rocks and bones and pinecones and feathers, and also the bottle caps and random nuts and bolts and discarded shards of colored glass, that I picked up and carried home in my pockets when I was little and wonder now what talismans these things had been for me. I take up children's books I read 60 years ago and try to read them again, but the thread that tied me to these stories has been broken. So, thanks be to God for those few, like Madeleine L'Engle, who never forgot, and who could write to and for children

in their very best selves. And who shows us, when we re-read her books, the magic and mystery and wonder, and the possibility of the impossible, and "the substance of things hoped for and the evidence of things not seen," that make up the fabric of children's spirituality. C.S. Lewis could write about the other, amazing world behind the back of the closet — which children always suspected was there anyway — and take them there, to the land of Narnia and Aslan the Lion, and talk to them of God in language they already instinctively knew and then bring them back different and better. The Harry Potter books unfold a world in which magic is real and anything can happen at any time, and the world is both wonderful and tragic, very good but sometimes evil, and that is part of childhood too, and it is how children come to the stories of the Bible. I think that it is precisely this capacity for amazement, and longing for adventure, and desire to see the never-before-seen and yearning to do the never-before-done, and also the broken-heartedness and the fears, and the wide, shining eyes of laughter and sorrow, which are already present in every kid — these are their spiritual riches. I think it is our call and responsibility as Christian educators to make a space in the thicket of the world and let them lead us there, where the Holy Spirit may come and be among us to gather all that up and slowly reveal to all the little ones the Christ they already incredibly, wonderfully intuit. And walk alongside them forever. ■

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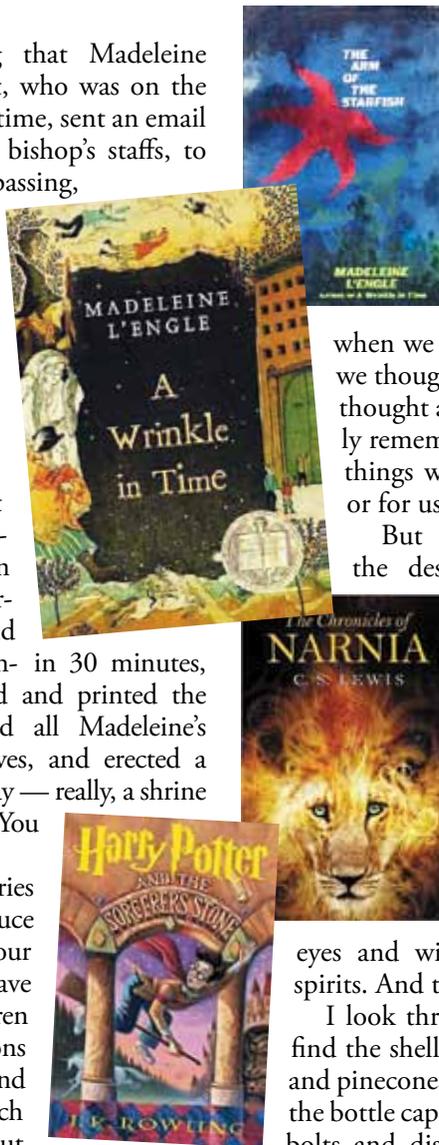
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*Andrew ML Dietsche is the diocesan bishop of the Diocese of New York. This article was originally published in the Episcopal New Yorker ([www.episcopalnewyorker.org](http://www.episcopalnewyorker.org)).*



## FROM THE EDITOR'S DESK



BISHOP ANDREW Dietsche's reflection, above, on childhood, the magic of reading and the passage of time, inspires thoughts of how differently we celebrate Christmas as we age.

People say "Christmas is for children" with genuine affection over an adorable church Nativity pageant or the kids' cries of delight over the presents Santa brought.

Dietsche doesn't come right out and say it in his essay, but there is surely this takeaway — in the midst of presents made of electronics or plastic, give a child a book for Christmas. In my house, my brother and I would often be lost in our gift books well before our aunt and grandparents arrived and the roast turkey and sides were on the table.

Christmas changes as we move into adulthood and might direct that Nativity pageant or sing in the adult choir. At home, we are now hosting the dinner and exchanging grownup-to-grownup gifts in addition to wrapping toys.

As our children grow, they graduate from

the 4 p.m. Christmas Eve service to the evening service and eventually clamor to stay up for midnight mass (which in today's church could take place anywhere from 9 p.m. on).

Christmas in the middle ages (ours, not the Renaissance) sees another shift in holiday commemorations. Perhaps the young adult couples are hosting now, with children of their own, equally excited over seeing baby Jesus in the crèche and imagining Santa on the roof.

In the older years, we may say "Christmas is for children" with a rueful sense that Christmas joy has become muted, perhaps more hassle and less festive. Perhaps staying for that late service doesn't seem so attractive and who has the ability or will to put up all those lights and decorations? A small tree on a window sill or mantel will do.

At every age, however, the true magic of Christmas lies in the unquenchable expression of hope, in the story of a baby being born in very humble circumstances who is destined to change the world. So celebrate Christmas quietly or raucously, with a smile or a sigh — but remember to give someone a book. ■

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## NEWS

# Georgia clergy lead ministry of prayer, witness during Ahmaud Arbery trial

By David Paulsen  
Episcopal News Service

Episcopal clergy and other local faith leaders led a daily ministry of peaceful witness and prayer outside the Glynn County Courthouse in Brunswick, Ga., during the trial of three white men charged in the Feb. 23, 2020, killing of Black jogger Ahmaud Arbery.

About 75 clergy members are connected to the interfaith group, Glynn Clergy for Equity, which began forming last year amid the initial public outcry over Arbery's killing.

They began regularly appearing outside the courthouse when jury selection commenced on Oct. 18. About 15 members came to pray Nov. 5 before lawyers delivered their opening statements, and continued to gather throughout the trial.

"We want to be able to provide a presence at the courthouse, showing a sense of solidarity and unity," the Rev. DeWayne Cope, rector of St. Athanasius' Episcopal Church in downtown Brunswick, said in an interview with ENS.

The national outrage over Arbery's killing became part of a broader reckoning in 2020 with racial injustice, especially the killings of unarmed African Americans by police officers and white vigilantes.

Much of the scrutiny on Glynn County focused on how long it took authorities to charge the suspects. Gregory McMichael, a former investigator for the local prosecutor's office, and his son, Travis McMichael, told investigators that they had chased Arbery, 25, in a pickup truck and shot him after suspecting him of being tied to recent break-ins



Photo/South Georgia Conference of The UMC

Glynn Clergy for Equity posted this sign at the Ahmaud Arbery trial.

in the area. They weren't arrested until early May, after cellphone video surfaced that appeared to show Travis McMichael shoot Arbery with a shotgun.

The McMichaels now are standing trial on murder charges, along with a neighbor, William Bryan, who had joined the McMichaels in confronting Arbery and recorded the shooting with his phone camera. The trial is expected to last two weeks.

The Rev. Willetta McGowen, a deacon at St. Mark's Episcopal Church in Brunswick, is among the members of Glynn Clergy for Equity who have regularly gathered outside the courthouse for the past three weeks during jury selection. She told ENS she wants to show her support for Arbery's family. "It's really been a roller coaster for them," McGowen said.

"One of his aunts, she's really angry, and I really can't blame her. She doesn't understand how this could have happened, especially in Brunswick. Her family has just been so painfully impacted, and she just couldn't understand why

these three men would have wanted to kill their nephew. He's just jogging in the neighborhood."

Glynn County clergy members united in responding to the case nearly from the beginning. On the day of the arrests in May 2020, 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."

Cope was not a part of the group at the time, as he was serving at St. Paul's Rock Creek Episcopal Church in Washington, D.C. He took over as rector as St. Athanasius' in July 2020. In an interview with ENS, he acknowledged

initially feeling apprehensive about facing a potentially tumultuous atmosphere in Brunswick, but the community's solidarity reassured him.

"Everybody was really trying to come together and say that hopefully nothing like this should have to happen again and changes need to be made here in Brunswick, Georgia," Cope said.

Since the murder, voters have replaced the district attorney who faced criticism for her handling of the Arbery case. She was defeated in the November 2020 election. And in July 2021, Glynn County hired its first Black police chief.

Churches and synagogues can play an important role in engaging the community in difficult conversations on race, McGowen said, but faith leaders first had to expand their own awareness of the racial divide. "First we had to understand each other," she said.

The clergy members took steps toward

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## Western bishop speaks out on Rittenhouse verdict

Diocese of Olympia

The bishop of the Diocese of Olympia (Wash.), Greg Rickel, posted a statement on the diocesan website ([www.ecwww.org](http://www.ecwww.org)) after Kyle Rittenhouse on Nov. 19 was found not guilty by reason of self-defense, stemming from his killing of two persons and wounding a third at a demonstration last year in Kenosha, Wisc. These are excerpts from Rickel's statement:



Rickel

the trial of the ambush of Ahmaud Arbery, a Black man, in Brunswick, Ga. And even with all the accused admitting that Arbery was unarmed and ultimately not threatening them, and all evidence pointing to Arbery trying to flee the scene unarmed, this case hangs in this unjust balance as well.

In both cases, we see self-appointed vigilantes taking justice into their own hands. If it can happen to these folks, it can just as easily happen to any of us.

But, the point is, mostly it doesn't — especially if we are white, if we are privileged, if we have enough money to defend ourselves.

We know that incarceration rates for Black Americans is five times the rate of white Americans, and for Latin Americans it is 1.3 times higher. According to the ACLU, women who kill their abusers will spend an average of 15 years in prison, while men who kill their spouses spend two to six years in prison. Men from Indigenous communities are four times more likely to be incarcerated than white men, while Indigenous women are six times more likely.

Justice is supposed to be blind, but time and time again, our justice system has been proven to favor white men. It is severely out of balance.

I pray for all involved in this case, including Kyle Rittenhouse. I pray for all the victims of gun violence. I pray for our country and for our justice system. There is so much that needs to change.

Let's engage and act so that we may see a more just system going forward. To get involved in making our criminal justice system equitable, you can see what steps the Episcopal Church's Office of Government Relations recommends at [www.episcopalchurch.org/ogr](http://www.episcopalchurch.org/ogr).

Blessings,  
+Greg

In these same days we are witnessing

## New York bishop calls for election of coadjutor, announces retirement

In his Nov. 13 address to the 245th Convention of the Diocese of New York, Bishop Andrew M.L. Dietsche, 16th bishop of New York, called for the election of a bishop coadjutor to replace him and become the diocese's 17th bishop.



Dietsche

"Four days ago, I turned 68 ... And last month I passed the 20th anniversary of my coming ... to serve the Diocese of New York, initially as canon pastor. And six days from today will mark 10 years since you elected me bishop," said Dietsche in his convention address delivered at the Cathedral of St. John the Divine.

"These are significant milestones for me, and they necessarily invite reflection and introspection. The writer of the Book of Ecclesiastes wrote, 'I have seen the business that God has given to everyone to be busy with. He has made everything suitable for its time; moreover he has put a sense of past and future into

their minds.' Past and future have come to me at midnight and awakened with me in the morning, and I have learned from those nighttime meditations how to pay attention to the times and the changes, and to be at peace."

His retirement, Dietsche said, is not related to the COVID-19 pandemic. And he said, he will be 70 years old and will have served 12 years as bishop by the time of his successor's installation.

"This timing seems right. It will be a blessing for Margaret (his wife) and me, and, also, I believe honors the trust which you put in me when you called me to this ministry. But be sure that I have no intention of becoming a lame duck. I will continue to be the bishop of New York as long as I am the bishop of New York, and I very much hope to hand over as healthy a diocese as I can to my successor."

The bishop coadjutor election is scheduled for Dec. 3, 2022. The consecration is scheduled for May 20, 2023. The installation of the 17th bishop of New York is planned for March 16, 2024.

— Episcopal News Service

## AROUND THE CHURCH

## Gathering of Leaders receives leadership grant

**G**athering of Leaders (GOL) has been awarded a two-year, \$200,000 grant from Trinity Church Wall Street for the Network of Networks: Same Mission, New Methods growth and impact plan.

The vision of Network of Networks is a vibrant community of creative, entrepreneurial, hope-filled, and proven faith leaders from all areas of ministry sharing and collaborating on mission and evangelism both relationally and digitally, while providing resources and inspiration for individuals and communities outside the networks.

GOL has connected clergy leaders since 2006, and as their ministries move and change, so does GOL's impact on the wider church. Currently GOL has participants in 43 states, Canada, France, Italy, and the United Kingdom, as well as participants actively deployed as chaplains in the US military.

Initial use of the Network of Networks grant will recruit for and pilot a lay leader gathering in partnership with the Episcopal

Church Foundation and a bivocational clergy gathering in coordination with the Iona Collaborative. The first lay leader gathering will take place in June 2022 with the bivocational gathering later that year.

To properly facilitate the addition of these new networks, GOL will engage Learning ForTE in a discovery process to find or build an online community platform that will allow for discussion threads, resource sharing, and virtual meet up capabilities. As the networks grow and hold in-person events that are crucial to making the connections of hope-filled leadership thrive, the digital platform will allow for conversation and connections to be maintained in between these events and across the different networks.

This platform will also allow for shared ideas and resources to be curated and made publicly available for individuals and congregations in the wider church who may not be in a GOL network, spreading the missional impact of the innovative leadership and ideas being generated by those in the networks.

— Episcopal News Service



## Migration ministry receives major grants for Afghan work

**E**piscopal Migration Ministries (EMM), the refugee resettlement and migration ministry of the Episcopal Church, has been awarded two major grants to support its work helping resettle Afghan refugees and other asylum seekers.

EMM is one of 15 new grantees awarded a total of \$1.2 million by Community Sponsorship Hub and a coalition of private resettlement agencies awarded a total of \$2.5 million by the Welcome Fund.

"We are grateful to Community Sponsorship Hub and the Welcome Fund for their generous contributions to help in this vital humanitarian work," said Kendall Martin, senior communications manager for EMM. "Donations from these agencies, as well as the many individuals and churches that support EMM, help us better serve arriving Afghans and those seeking asylum."

The Welcome Fund grant will go to support housing for the Afghans that EMM helps resettle. EMM works in public partnership with the U.S. government to help with resettlement and other direct services through a network of 11 affiliates around the U.S.

The Welcome Fund was created by the non-profit Welcome.US to ensure Afghans and others fleeing their homelands are supported and connected to welcoming communities across the United States.

Funding from Community Sponsorship

Hub will support Neighbor to Neighbor, an EMM program that connects asylum seekers with an Episcopal congregation or other faith group that serves as a community sponsor.

Established in 2021 and based in New York, Community Sponsorship Hub is a non-profit dedicated to developing the role of communities in the protection, resettlement, and integration of refugees and other forcibly displaced people

"For more than 80 years, long before the United States established the formal refugee resettlement program, Episcopalians, congregations, and dioceses have been welcoming those seeking safety and protection," said Allison Duvall, senior manager for church relations and engagement.

"The legal process to be granted asylum is long and arduous, and while these neighbors of ours await a legal resolution to their request for protection, they have no access to public benefits, and oftentimes wait months before they receive work authorization," Duvall said.

"This is where Episcopalians step up to respond, answering the question at the end of Jesus' parable of the Good Samaritan: 'Which of these was a neighbor?' Episcopalians show mercy and loving-kindness by being neighbors to our siblings seeking asylum," she said.

More information about EMM can be found at [www.episcopalmigrationministries.org](http://www.episcopalmigrationministries.org).

— Office of Public Affairs



## OBITUARIES

By Kirk Petersen  
*The Living Church*

## Bishop William Sanders

William Evan Sanders, the eighth bishop of Tennessee and first bishop of East Tennessee, died in Nashville on Nov. 18 at the age of 101. At the time of his death, he was the church's senior bishop in terms of length of service.

Shortly before his 98th birthday, Sanders attended, vested, and processed at the consecration of the fifth and current bishop of East Tennessee, Brian Cole.

"He loomed large in the story of the Episcopal witness in this state and in this region," Cole said. "I think in ways he didn't realize, he has blessed this generation simply by his presence that day."

Until the 1980s, the Diocese of Tennessee encompassed the entire state. As bishop of Tennessee from 1977 to 1985, Sanders oversaw the partition into three dioceses.

West Tennessee was created in 1983 and East Tennessee in 1985. Sanders chose to become the first bishop in Knoxville-based East Tennessee, resigning as bishop of the continuing Diocese of Tennessee. He continued as bishop of East Tennessee until retiring in 1992.

Sanders established two major programs during his episcopacy. Venture in Mission supported church growth, urban ministries and companionship funding for the Anglican and Episcopal churches in Costa Rica, Haiti and Central Africa. The Opportunity Fund program provided funds for a new diocesan center, congregational development and social ministry.

Sanders was born Dec. 25, 1919, in Natchez, Miss. He grew up in Nashville, obtaining his master's of divinity at Sewanee: The University of the South. He



Photo/via The Living Church

**Bishop Sanders, 97, at the consecration of Bishop Brian Cole, his successor's successor's successor's successor.**

was ordained as priest in 1946. He served as a deacon at St. Paul's in Chattanooga, and from 1946 to 1962 he was assistant, and later dean, at the Cathedral of St. Mary in Memphis. Sanders also earned a master's of sacred theology from Union Seminary.

He was consecrated bishop coadjutor in 1962, serving in that role for 15 years before becoming bishop of Tennessee upon the retirement of Bishop John Vander Horst in 1977.

Sanders married Kathryn Cowan Schaffer in 1951, and they had four children. She predeceased him in 1999, and in 2005 Sanders married Marlin Jones Phythyon, who has three daughters.

## Bishop Alex D. Dickson, Jr.

Alex D. Dickson, Jr., the first bishop of West Tennessee who after retirement left the Episcopal Church to join the Anglican Church in North America (ACNA), died Nov. 14 at the age of 95.

At the time of his death, Dickson was bishop in residence at St. Michael's Church, an ACNA diocese in Charleston, S.C.

The Episcopal Diocese of West Tennessee was created in 1982 as the first step of a plan to split the state

into three dioceses. Dickson was elected on the 33rd ballot from a slate of 13 candidates at the first diocesan convention in January 1983.

At the time of his election, he was rector and headmaster of All Saints Episcopal School in Vicksburg, Miss., and had served parishes in Mississippi for 10 years before joining the school in 1968.

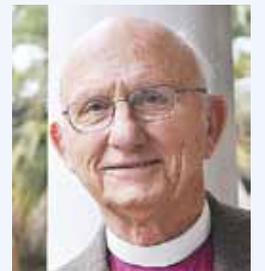
He served on the churchwide Executive Council, as a deputy to three General Conventions, and in a variety of diocesan and churchwide roles before his consecration in West Tennessee.

As bishop, he oversaw the early years of St. Columba Episcopal Camp and Retreat Center in Memphis. He helped found the Shelby County Interfaith Association, a social activism group.

He was opposed to the ordination of gay people. At the 1991 General Convention, he helped defeat a resolution that would have provided that "all members shall have equal access to the selection process for ordination in this church." He retired as bishop of West Tennessee in 1995.

After serving in World War II, he received a bachelor's degree from the University of Mississippi, and a master's of divinity degree from the University of the South in Sewanee, Tenn. He was ordained as deacon and priest in 1958.

He is survived by his second wife, Jane Graham Carter, whom he married in 1999. He was predeceased in 1995 by his first wife, Charnelle, with whom he had three sons, six grandchildren, and 13 great-grandchildren. He also was predeceased by his son Alex III. ■



Photo/Diocese of South Carolina

**Dickson**

## AROUND THE CHURCH

## North Texas congregation files for bankruptcy protection

By David Paulsen  
Episcopal News Service

All Saints' Episcopal Church in Fort Worth, Texas, has filed for bankruptcy protection, partly citing the "bad faith and scorched-earth tactics" of the Anglican Church in North America's Fort Worth diocese, which in April took possession of the Episcopal congregation's church and rectory.

All Saints', with about 1,500 members and annual plate and pledge revenue of \$1.5 million, is the largest and best-resourced congregation in the diocese now known as the Episcopal Church in North Texas, formerly the Diocese of Fort Worth.

On Oct. 15, officials from the Anglican Church in North America, or ACNA, sent a letter to Frost Bank requesting possession of All Saints' accounts with the bank. The bank declined that request but responded by freezing the accounts, the Rev. Christopher Jambor, All Saints' rector, said in an Oct. 22 declaration filed in bankruptcy court.

ACNA "has refused to withdraw its demand on Frost Bank, and Frost Bank has refused to unfreeze" the accounts, Jambor said in his written declaration, filed in the U.S. Bankruptcy Court for the Northern District of Texas. His congregation now "is unable to collect and remit funds or pay its employees."

In an interview with Episcopal News Service, Jambor said his church's bankruptcy case is not an indication of long-term insolvency. Rather, All Saints' is seeking some "breathing space" as it, as the debtor, asks the court's help in determining what personal and financial property rightfully must be turned over

to its creditors.

"Our biggest creditor, so to speak, the guy knocking on the door demanding payment, is the ACNA group, and the payment is 'everything you've got,'" he said. "This gives us a bit of respite, so we can work out the details in federal bankruptcy court."

Most of All Saints' financial resources and several additional real estate properties are held by a non-profit corporation that was not a party to the lawsuit won by ACNA. The ACNA diocese is seeking some of those holdings as well, Jambor said, in addition to the vacated church and rectory, which had been held in trust by the Episcopal diocese.

All Saints' was one of six Episcopal congregations evicted from their worship spaces in April after the Fort Worth-based diocese lost its 12-year legal battle to ACNA this February.

In 2008, a majority of clergy and lay leaders in the former Episcopal Diocese of Fort Worth voted to leave the Episcopal Church over disagreements about the ordination of women and LGBTQ+ people.

Most congregations that remained in the Episcopal Church found new places to worship after the split, but six congregations in Fort Worth, Hillsboro and

in a series of online discussions on identifying the roots of oppression, understanding power dynamics, recognizing racial micro-aggressions and fostering dialogue in the community to promote racial healing.

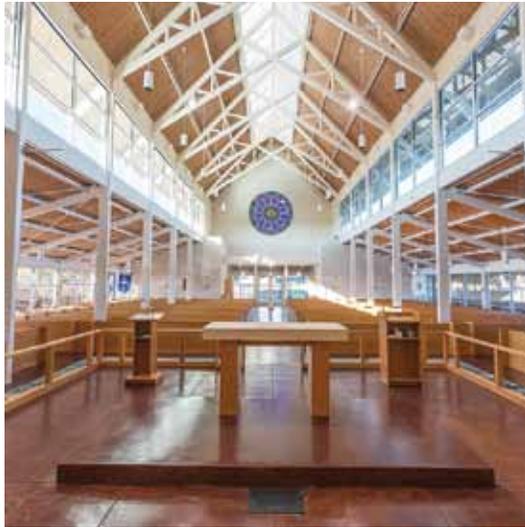
Though the Zoom sessions were limited to clergy members, the goal was to follow up with a plan to "bring this down to the congregation level," Purdy said. Inspired by the trainings, the group held three "equity dinners" this year, at which clergy and members of their congregations were encouraged to discuss their experiences with racism and inequality.

The first was held in person on June 24 at Temple Beth Tefilloh, a Jewish synagogue in Brunswick. Some white participants said they had not been fully aware of the racism and discrimination that continue to affect African Americans, said Cope, whose church is predominantly Black.

"You don't know how bad it is until you hear some of these stories that are still happening," Cope said. "What happened to Ahmaud was not a blip on the radar." Though not always violent or deadly, instances of racial injustice "are happening to people on a daily basis." ■

Wichita Falls, Texas, remained in their buildings.

After those six were evicted this year, all but one found temporary homes and resumed worship. All Saints' began worshipping in the chapel at All Saints' Episcopal School, which is on a separate



Photo/All Saints' Facebook page

All Saints' Episcopal Church in Fort Worth is now worshipping at its school.

campus from the congregation's former church property. The school was not part of the lawsuit. An ACNA congregation moved into the church building and has begun worshipping there.

The Episcopal Church's diocese lost more than \$100 million in diocesan property to ACNA, which

prevailed in the Texas Supreme Court in May 2020. The U.S. Supreme Court declined to take up the case in February.

In August, the Episcopal Church agreed to pay the ACNA diocese \$4.5 million, covering legal costs accrued by ACNA in the court case. Since then, Episcopal congregations and ACNA congregations have continued to argue

in a lower court over what other property needs to be turned over to ACNA.

"We've been trying to work with them for literally months," Suzanne Gill, the ACNA diocese's communication director, said in an interview with ENS. "At a certain point we need to ask authorities to take steps so this will be brought to a conclusion. We've been at this a very long time."

The Episcopal Church in North Texas counters that it is following court orders, which specify that ACNA is only entitled to property — including bank account balances — from the date that the Episcopal Church filed its lawsuit, April 14, 2009.

"As far as we know, we have complied with everything we have been told to do. We have given them everything we have been told to give them related to that initial [Texas] Supreme Court judgment," Katie Sherrod, the North Texas communication director, told ENS.

North Texas filed a court motion on Oct. 20 on behalf of four of the six congregations evicted this year, estimating they had \$274,000 in financial assets in April 2009. Most of that money was in a reserve account for maintenance of St. Luke's in the Meadow in Fort Worth. The diocese said it can turn that amount over to ACNA if the court accepts that figure as what is owed.

The All Saints' bankruptcy proceedings will be handled separately. ■

GEORGIA continued from page 3

establishing a more formal coalition in fall 2020, under the working name Glynn Clergy for Equity, and decided to seek help in fostering conversations within their congregations and the community.

"We needed to do a better job of building relationships across some of the things that divide us, namely race," the Rev. Tom Purdy, rector of Christ Church Frederica, told ENS. Christ Church is a mostly white Episcopal congregation that worships just east of Brunswick on St. Simon's Island.

The Diocese of Georgia gave \$10,000 to the effort, out of the \$75,000 approved in July 2020 by the Episcopal Church Executive Council to support the diocese's racial reconciliation efforts. "This has permitted us to not only further the work in Glynn County, but to more broadly engage the diocese in the work of racial reconciliation and justice," Georgia Bishop Frank Logue said in a written statement to ENS.

The diocesan money helped the clergy group hire Dietra Hawkins, an Atlanta-based racial equity consultant, who in October 2020 began leading the group



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## FEATURE

PLOWSHARES continued from page 1

these weapons of death into instruments of life, it's just been an amazing process," Curry told Episcopal News Service. "People really get it."

Curry retired in 2014 as bishop suffragan in the Diocese of Connecticut. He now serves as chief blacksmith for Swords to Plowshares, demonstrating his skills with a hammer and anvil at gun buy-back events across the Northeast and helping the nonprofit destroy about 800 guns in four years.

More were melted down Nov. 16 when Curry and the blacksmithing crew fired up the forge during the noon hour outside the Lutheran Church of the Reformation, about a block and a half from the U.S. Capitol.

Sen. Richard Blumenthal and Rep. Rosa DeLauro, both Democrats from Connecticut, attended the demonstration and participated in part of the process of melting and reshaping the former weapons. Washington Bishop Marianne Budde also joined them.

The organization's ministry is deeply rooted in Connecticut, where lawmakers and Episcopal

leaders were moved to action on gun reforms by the December 2012 massacre at Sandy Hook Elementary School in Newtown, which left 20 children and six educators dead. Curry recalls responding to the scene of the shooting that day with Connecticut Bishop Ian Douglas and Bishop Suffragan Laura Ahrens.

"Quite frankly, you don't live through that without your lives changing," Curry said.

In the aftermath of the Newtown tragedy, the Connecticut bishops joined with bishops in other dioceses that were grieving mass shootings and formed Bishops United Against Gun Violence. The net-

work, with more than 100 member bishops, now is a leading churchwide voice of advocacy for gun safety legislation and common sense precautions, like gun locks and safes. The bishops also memorialize the victims of gun violence and offer prayers and pastoral care to survivors.

In Washington, the Episcopal Church's advocacy is led by the Office of Government Relations, which has advocated this year for passage of legislation



Photo/David Deutsch

**Bishop Jim Curry heats the metal of a former gun in the mobile forge used by the nonprofit Swords to Plowshares Northeast in its demonstrations.**

that would strengthen and expand background checks for gun purchases.

The House passed two such bills this year, but they have since stalled in the Senate. "A majority of Americans recognize the urgent need for gun reform," the Office of Government Relations said in an action alert to its Episcopal Public Policy Network.

The agency's advocacy follows Episcopal policy positions established by General Convention in resolutions dating to 1976 that call for legislation to address the problem of gun violence.

Raising awareness of those positions is one goal of Swords to Plowshares, and

the demonstration on Nov. 16 in Washington was arranged to draw the attention of lawmakers, news outlets and passersby on Capitol Hill.

"The biblical promise of swords being turned into plowshares was reenacted today. Our hope is that we can all help to build a more peaceful world," Lindsey Warburton, a policy analyst with the Office of Government Relations, said in an emailed statement to ENS. "We are glad to support Swords to Plowshares, the work of Bishops United against Gun Violence, and advocacy to the U.S. government to ensure our communities do not suffer any more from gun violence."

The mobile blacksmithing forge that Curry and his team used is fired by propane, and their blacksmithing tools include hammers, tongs, chisels and anvils. They take the barrels of rifles, pistols and shotguns, heat them in the forge and then reshape the malleable metal into hand tools.

Trowels, shaped from shotgun barrels, are relatively easy, Curry told ENS. It takes 10 to 15 minutes to get the rough shape. Revolvers and rifles typically are made from heavier metals, which take more time to shape, he said. The blacksmiths then grind the metal to complete the tool.

The idea for Swords to Plowshares was inspired by a Mennonite blacksmithing ministry in Colorado called RAWtools. Its motto: "Disarm hearts. Forge peace. Cultivate justice." After hearing about RAWtools' efforts to collect surrendered weapons and melt them down, Curry went to apprentice with them.

Taking what he learned, Swords to Plowshares now partners with police agencies and other local organizations to organize gun buybacks, where guns can be surrendered with no questions asked in

exchange for cash or other compensation. After the weapons are transformed into gardening tools, Swords to Plowshares donates them to community gardens.

The method and the message are closely intertwined, Curry said, and this transformation that ends the guns' existence can be emotionally powerful for observers. At a recent session in Massachusetts, "as the gardeners saw us making tools and received tools from us, they were just in tears," Curry said. "The larger message is, as a society we don't have to be bound by violence."

Curry acknowledged that the organization can only melt down guns that are surrendered, leaving plenty of guns out of the organization's reach in a country where 40% of adults live in a household with a gun.

He emphasized that 60% of the 40,000 gun deaths each year in the United States are not homicides but suicides. "Those suicides are because unsecured guns are available to people at moments of crisis. Buybacks get those guns out of homes," Curry said.

He also lamented the hundreds of people wounded or killed in the U.S. annually in accidental shootings by children; guns also are prime targets for thefts from homes, especially in suburban communities. In response, Swords to Plowshares works with its community partners to encourage gun owners to obtain locks and safes to secure their guns.

"If people can rethink their need to have unsecured guns in their house, then we're really changing the understanding of the place of guns in our lives," he said.

Destroying guns is the most direct way Swords to Plowshares fulfills its mission. The garden tools that were created on Capitol Hill mostly came from metal obtained in gun buybacks held in the Connecticut communities of New Haven, Guilford and Hamden, Curry said. ■

## What Americans hear about social justice at church

By Ronald Brown and R. Khari Brown  
*The Conversation*

On June 5, 2020, it had been just over a week since a white Minneapolis police officer, Derek Chauvin, killed George Floyd, an unarmed, African American man. Protests were underway outside Central United Methodist Church, an interracial church in downtown Detroit with a long history of activism on civil rights, peace, immigrant rights and poverty issues.

In response to the COVID-19 pandemic, the church was no longer holding in-person worship services. But anyone walking into its sanctuary that day would have seen long red flags behind the pastor's lectern, displaying the words "peace" and "love."

A banner reading "Michigan Says No! To War" hung alongside pictures of civil rights icons Fannie Lou Hamer and the Rev. Martin Luther King, Jr., as well as labor-rights activist Cesar Chavez. In line with her church's activist tradition, senior pastor Jill Hardt Zundell stood

outside the building and preached about her church's commitment to eradicating anti-Black racism to her congregants and all that passed by.

In our sociology and political science research, we have both studied how race, religion and politics are intimately connected in the United States. Our recent book, "Race and the Power of Sermons on American Politics" — written with psychologist James S. Jackson — uses 44 national and regional surveys conducted between 1941 and 2019 to examine racial differences among those who hear messages about social justice at church.

We also examined how hearing those types of sermons correlates with support for policies aimed at reducing social inequality and with political activism.

For centuries, many Americans have envisioned that their country has a special relationship with God — that their nation is "a city on a hill" with special blessings and responsibilities. Beliefs that America

is exceptional have inspired views across the political spectrum.

Many congregations that emphasize social justice embrace this idea of a "covenant" between the United States and the creator. They interpret it to mean Americans must create opportunity and inclusion for all — based in the belief that all people are equally valued by God.



Photo/Courtesy Diocese of New Jersey

**A huge "Black Lives Matter" sign hangs from a building next to St. John's Episcopal Church in Washington, D.C.**

### Politics in the pews

In our book, we find that, depending upon the issue, between one-half and two-thirds of Americans support religious leaders taking public positions on racism, poverty, war and immigration. Roughly one-third report attending worship settings where their clergy or friends discuss these issues and the importance of politically acting on one's beliefs.

African Americans and Hispanic Americans tend to be more supportive of religious leaders speaking out against racism and attempting to influence poverty and immigration policy. On the whole, African Americans are the most likely to support religious leaders expressing political views on specific issues, from poverty and homelessness to peace, as we examine in our book.

Black Americans are also more likely to attend worship settings where clergy and other members encourage them to connect their faith to social justice work.

For example, according to a July

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## NEWS

EXECUTIVE COUNCIL continued from page 1

“no major changes” and “no surprises,” Lloyd said, which council approved. Staffing is expected to remain relatively constant with 150 members receiving 3% cost-of-living salary increases. (For comparison, the 2022 cost of living adjustment for Social Security payments is 5.9%.)

Looking to the future, the Finance Committee sought input on priorities for the 2023-2024 budget from council, asking members to discuss how it could be used to bridge the gap between churchwide programs and needs at the parish level.

This discussion was brought on in part by an opinion essay in *The Atlantic* written by the Rev. Elizabeth Felicetti, rector of St. David's Episcopal Church in Richmond, Va. Titled “My Church Doesn't Know What to Do Anymore,” the essay conveys the exhaustion and isolation felt by many parish clergy as the pandemic drags on.

Several council members brought up the possibility of restructuring assessment payments to help parishes and dioceses.

“In terms of going from the individual parishes through the national church, there's increasing amounts of skepticism as to the parish assessment and then diocesan assessment to the national church,” said council member Sarah Stonesifer Boylan of the Diocese of Washington (D.C.).

To that end, North Carolina Bishop Suffragan Anne Hodges-Copple asked: “What does it matter if we have great endowments and a balanced budget and we're still closing churches?”

The Finance Committee will take council's input into consideration while drafting a 2023-2024 budget to present to the 80th General Convention in July. The committee also reviewed requests from the dioceses in Province IX and Cuba for financial relief and assessment waivers, having met with representatives from the dioceses over the past few months.

Province IX is comprised of seven di-



Photo/Angela Goodhouse-Mauai

*From left, the Rev. Lillian Davis-Wilson, the Rev. Charles Graves IV, Russell Randle and Alice Freeman take part in the Executive Council meeting in Linthicum Heights, Md.*

oceses in Latin America and the Caribbean: Colombia, the Dominican Republic, Central Ecuador, Littoral Ecuador, Honduras, Venezuela and Puerto Rico. Puerto Rico has voted to switch to Province II, pending General Convention approval.

In committee meetings, members went over the unique circumstances and hardships that each of the six remaining Province IX dioceses have endured over the past two years, from political crises to financial instability to natural disasters, on top of the pandemic.

Based on the dioceses' requests for assistance and their specific circumstances, the Finance Committee increased the preexisting block grants to Province IX dioceses by varying amounts in the 2022 budget that council approved, but the topic introduced a larger discussion about the future of Province IX.

Church leadership has been working with Province IX dioceses since 2013 to get them on a path toward financial self-sustainability, but council members reconsidered the feasibility of that goal during the meeting. Some dioceses reported that they would need short-term financial assistance to get back on the path toward self-sustainability.

“The Province IX self-sustainability program is temporarily on hold until we can get better insights as to how to move forward,” the Rev. David Copley, the

Episcopal Church's director for global partnerships and mission personnel, told Episcopal News Service. “With COVID-19 affecting Province IX dioceses in different ways, we need to reassess before we decide on next steps.”

Honduras Bishop Lloyd Allen, a council member, thanked the governing body “on behalf of the six dioceses with which the Finance Committee met,” adding they felt heard.

“I want to express our gratitude for this situation, for the support,” Allen said. “It's a sad feeling to know that we have to go back on what we had planned for the future and how we were doing things. ... But we're just asking for some time to get ourselves back together and to continue making a difference and sharing the word of God.”

The Episcopal Church in Cuba — which is in Province II — also requested assistance. After over a half-century apart, the Episcopal Church in Cuba officially returned to the Episcopal Church as a diocese in March 2020, just before pandemic lockdowns came into effect. It, too, has been hit hard by the pandemic and social upheaval.

Discussions about financial assistance for the Diocese of Haiti, also in Province II, are in their early stages, Lloyd said. The country has been beset by cascading political, health and social crises over the past year, including another devastating

earthquake.

Council adopted a resolution expressing support for the people of Haiti and the newly created Commission for Haitian Solution to the Crisis, which includes the Rev. Frantz Joseph Casseus, a priest in the Diocese of Haiti, the largest Episcopal diocese by membership.

In other business, council also approved a resolution condemning the House of Bishops of the Anglican Church in Ghana's endorsement of a proposed “draconian” anti-LGBTQ+ law. The proposal would impose a penalty of up to five years in prison for identifying as LGBTQ+ and up to 10 years for advocating for the rights of LGBTQ+ people, according to Reuters.

The resolution “reaffirms the Episcopal Church's commitment to people of all genders and sexual orientations and invites the House of Bishops in Ghana to reconsider their endorsement of this anti-LGBTQ+ legislation,” the Rev. Lillian Davis-Wilson said.

Council also adopted a resolution expressing a message of support for the people of Sudan, where military leaders overthrew the government in a coup on Oct. 25.

Earlier in the meeting, continuing the church's efforts to educate Episcopalians further about the Doctrine of Discovery and the harms perpetrated on Indigenous peoples by the government and institutions including the Episcopal Church, council heard from the Indigenous Boarding Schools Ad Hoc Committee.

The committee is working to address the Episcopal Church's involvement with residential schools that separated Native American children from their families and, in many cases, attempted to eradicate their culture and language. Indigenous leaders discussed the diversity of the residential school experience and a recent effort assisted by Episcopalians to repatriate the remains of residential school students from school grounds to their tribal homelands.

Executive Council's next meeting is scheduled for Jan. 24-27, 2022, in Cleveland. ■

JUSTICE continued from page 6

2020 Pew Research Center poll, 67% of African American worshippers reported hearing sermons in support of Black Lives Matter, relative to 47% of Hispanics and 36% of whites.

Race also affects the relationship between hearing such sermons and supporting related policies. When statistically accounting for religious affiliation, political party and demographic characteristics, attending these types of congregations more strongly associates with white Americans supporting progressive policy positions than it does for Black Americans and Hispanics.

White worshippers who hear sermons about race and poverty, for example, are more likely to oppose spending cuts to welfare programs than those who hear no such messages at their place of worship.

This is not the case for African Americans and Hispanics, however, who are

as likely to oppose social welfare spending cuts regardless of where they worship. In other words, while hearing sermons about social justice issues informs or at least aligns with white progressive policy attitudes, this alignment is not as strong for Blacks and Hispanics.

Clergy of predominantly white worship spaces are often more politically liberal than their congregants. Historically, this has translated into members pushing back when clergy take public positions that are more progressive than their congregation's.

This may explain why white parishioners who chose to attend congregations where they hear social justice-themed sermons tend to be more politically progressive, or more open to sermons challenging previous views, than are other white parishioners.

#### From words to action

However, when it comes to the connection between hearing sermons and

taking political action, race doesn't matter as much. That is, when taking into account religious affiliation, party affiliation and social demographics, people who hear social justice-themed sermons in their places of worship are more likely than other Americans to engage in political activism, regardless of their race.

For example, during the months following Floyd's murder, Black, white and Hispanic congregants who heard sermons about race and policing were more likely than others to have protested for any purpose in the past 12 months, according to data from the 2020 National Politics Study.

More specifically, white Americans who attended houses of worship where they heard those types of sermons were more than twice as likely to participate in a protest as other white worshippers. Black and Hispanic attendees were almost twice as likely to protest, compared to those attending houses of worship where they did not hear sermons

about race and policing.

The difference between people who attend houses of worship with a social-justice focus and people who did not attend religious services at all is even more striking. White Americans who heard such messages at religious services were almost four times more likely to protest than white Americans who did not attend services; Black and Hispanic Americans were almost three times as likely.

Today, many Americans are pessimistic about inequality, political divisions and ethnic conflict. Yet, as these surveys show, social justice-minded congregations inspire members to work for policies that support their vision of the public good. ■

*Ronald Brown is associate professor of political science and R. Khari Brown, his son, is associate professor, department of sociology, both at Wayne State University. This article was first published at The Conversation ([www.theconversation.com](http://www.theconversation.com)).*

## ADVENT AND CHRISTMAS RESOURCES

## Episcopal stores offer gifts for Christmas

By Mike Patterson  
The Living Church

Looking toward Christmas, Episcopal gift and book shops across the country have stocked an array of specialty gifts, locally hand-made arts and crafts and books by clergy and lay members.

"Bibles and prayer books are traditional Christmas gifts," said Lucy Chambers, manager of the Christ Church Cathedral Book Store in Houston and president of the Episcopal Booksellers Association.

Episcopal shops also carry gifts and books that may be outside the realm of those traditional gift items.

For example, you can find dog leashes and collars emblazoned with the Episcopal insignia. "They fly out of here," said Cory Lites, manager of the Cathedral Book Store in Atlanta ([www.cathedralbookstore.org](http://www.cathedralbookstore.org)).

The internet makes it possible for shoppers to browse the cathedral's merchandise as well as other Episcopal stores to their heart's content, no matter where they live. From the comfort of your home, you can hop from shop to shop and coast to coast to find unusual, unique, and creative gift items, some with an Episcopal motif, whether for the holidays or not, or things that seem a little wild, like the men's Halloween socks decorated with tiny skeletons at Trinity Church's Trinity Treasures in New Orleans.

Online Episcopal shops carry face masks with the Episcopal insignia, water bottles, iPad cases, angel door knockers, silver alligators, carved gourd ornaments with a Nativity scene inside, bud vases,

teddy bears, a Noah's ark, towel sets, pottery, candles, towels, notecards and stuffed unicorns.

Those shopping for Christmas and holiday gifts and interested in patronizing Episcopal stores will find many listed at the Episcopal Booksellers Association's website ([www.episcopalbooksellers.org](http://www.episcopalbooksellers.org)), a community of more than 50 Episcopal gift and booksellers.

The association maintains an interactive map of member stores to make it easy for shoppers to scan the virtual store shelves via their websites.

What is apparent in virtually strolling through the shops is the diversity of books and products offered that are special to their area. For example, store managers agree that some of their most popular items are books by local authors as well as products crafted by local artisans.

"We sell a whole variety of fair trade and social enterprise products," said Kathryn Bissette, manager of St. John's Cathedral Bookstore and Gift Shop in Jacksonville, Fla. and executive director of the Episcopal Booksellers Association. "We also try to support local vendors," she said, including Bee Hill Farms, Drema Farmer Jewelry, and The Oaken Bowl.

Lites said her shop finds local jewelers and artisans are popular with customers. Among favorites is jewelry crafted by Andrea Barnett utilizing a mix



*Intertwined Candles are scented and handcrafted in Clarkston, Ga., by refugee women using all-natural soy wax and repurposed wine bottles. Available from the Cathedral Bookstore in Atlanta.*



*This handcrafted cross made by an Atlanta woodcarver is made of dogwood and suitable for hanging upon a wall. Available from the Cathedral Bookstore in Atlanta.*

of vintage chains, rosaries, and semi-precious stones, and necklaces, earrings, and bracelets by Erin Gray (the artisan's preferred spelling), who uses proceeds to support cancer organizations.

"We also carry a line of Gracewear [jewelry]," Lites said. Another popular item are hand-crafted dogwood crosses made by a local Atlanta wood carver and Intertwined candles, handcrafted in Clarkston, Ga., by refugee women.

Books are always popular. Store managers report that titles by local clergy and lay members are always in demand.

In the Episcopal Diocese of Atlanta, Lites said books by Beth-Sarah Wright on depression, faith, the stigma of mental health, and the role of personal storytelling plays in healing are popular. She is married to Bishop Robert C. Wright of the Diocese of Atlanta.

At St. John's Cathedral bookstore, the seven books by cathedral dean Kate Moorehead are among the top sellers, Bissette said.

"The other book that has been our top seller this year has been 'With Gladness: Answering God's Call in Our Everyday Lives' by Christopher H. Martin," she added.

Like retail stores across the country, the COVID-19 pandemic has hurt Episcopal bookstores and gift shops. "I think COVID definitely affected everybody," Chambers said.

However, online shopping enabled many stores to expand their reach and offset some losses from in-store shopping.

"What we have found during COVID is that we have had a surprising number of people finding us," Bissette said, crediting Moorehead's morning devotions as "particularly helpful in expanding the reach of the cathedral and the bookstore."

St. John's and other bookstores have also joined the [www.bookshop.org](http://www.bookshop.org)

network. With the advent of internet shopping, local authors once known only locally or regionally have found a wider audience.

Knowing that stores would not be able to offer in-person speakers during the pandemic, in October 2020 the association launched a series of monthly Zoom presentations featuring prominent authors and providing participants an opportunity to engage in conversations with writers.

Presiding Bishop Michael Curry kicked off the series with his new book, "Love Is the Way: Holding on to Hope in Troubling Times." Following Curry were other prominent authors, including Marilynne Robinson, James Martin, Anne Lamott, and Kate Bowler.

"Anne Lamott was a big deal for us to have," Bissette said, adding that Curry's book was a big seller last year.

It's uncertain whether the author series will continue after its concluding speaker in December. "We're trying of thinking of what we can do next," Chambers said. "People are burned out on Zoom."

At St. Mark's Bookstore in San Antonio, Texas, manager Carla Pineda said "we're totally online right now," but not because of COVID. The in-person shop was closed for remodeling. "We're waiting to move back into a new space," she said.

She said online shopping "turned out to be a really nice bonus" and enabled the store to "stay even remotely in front of people's faces."

The store does a good trade in prayer books, hymnals, Advent and Lent studies, children's books, and "a lot of good, solid spirituality books. We tend to do a good bit of Celtic," such as books by John O'Donohue, Pineda said.

Other local favorites are "Wild Woman: A Footnote," "The Desert," and "My Quest for an Elusive Saint" by Colorado author Amy Frykholm and books by San Antonio author Mary C. Earle, a retired Episcopal priest.

Chambers said website traffic is dropping as more people are vaccinated and returning to in-person shopping. One advantage of in-person shopping, she said, is that when shoppers "come into an Episcopal bookstore, they are looking for a curated selection."

At Christ Church, for example, Chambers said "we think about our audience, not only our church but our community." She said she wants to be a "resource and haven for anybody who might walk through the doors, not just church members."

They even offer customers a cup of tea, "because book lovers tend to like tea," she said.

Being in the Southwest, Chambers said they "have a lot of crèches from Mexico. We have access to lots of pretty products from Mexico and things with a Southwestern feeling." ■

*This article was originally published in The Living Church.*

## Advent calendar features the Holy Land

## American Friends of the Episcopal Diocese of Jerusalem

What better way to learn about the Christian witness of the current-day followers of Jesus in the place where he was born, lived, and ministered than a daily journey across the Holy Land?

The American Friends of the Episcopal Diocese of Jerusalem (AFEDJ) are offering an online Holy Land Advent calendar to offer a daily glimpse into the lives of Holy Land Christians and the humanitarian ministries of the Episcopal Diocese of Jerusalem in Palestine, Israel, Jordan, and Lebanon.

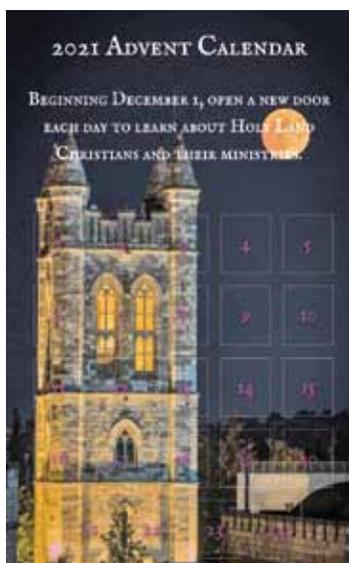
Users might open a door to a brief video or story that features a Christian leader serving their neighbors at a diocesan hospital or school. On other days, one might encounter a friend of

these remarkable ministries sharing the moment when their heart was transformed by the witness of the indigenous Christians — the living stones — of the Holy Land.

During this unsettled time, the AFEDJ Holy Land Advent calendar offers a way for individuals and families to participate in a meaningful daily Advent devotion.

Check out the calendar at [www.afedj.org/advent](http://www.afedj.org/advent). Visit the calendar each day or sign up to join American friends from across the Episcopal Church who receive a daily email alert.

*AFEDJ is a nonpolitical, nonsectarian 501(c)(3) organization dedicated to transforming lives of the vulnerable and displaced in the Middle East through support of the schools, hospitals, and centers for children with disabilities that are owned and operated by the Episcopal Diocese of Jerusalem in Palestine, Jordan, Israel, Syria and Lebanon. Learn more at [www.afedj.org](http://www.afedj.org).*



## ADVENT AND CHRISTMAS RESOURCES

## A podcast selection to help keep a blessed Advent

By Victoria Emily Jones  
Art and Theology

I am publishing short daily posts that pair a visual artwork with a piece of music, most accompanied by brief commentary. The primary purpose is to invite spiritual contemplation on the season's themes, allowing artists to be our guide.

The daily posts in this format will extend through the twelve days of Christmas as well.

Contemporary singer-songwriters are heavily represented in the music selections, but there is also a Shaker hymn, an Appalachian spiritual, a Renaissance motet, a Byzantine troparion, a South African freedom song, sixties electronica, and a Victorian carol from Sussex.

Many of these songs can be found on the Advent playlist I compiled. For the artworks, in addition to paintings there are a few installations, photographs, collages, a lithograph, a serigraph, a paper-cut, a quilt, and a mosaic.

The recurring theme throughout, sometimes inherent to the artwork and in other cases brought about by a particular reading of it, is looking forward with hope and readiness to the coming of Christ, to the Light who will dispel darkness and bring justice and peace. "A new world is coming, and it's just around the bend," sings Nina Simone. May we welcome it with eager longing.

Art credits: In the poster above, clockwise from top left, are Sun Tunnels by Nancy Holt, a detail of Night Travelers by Delita Martin, Christmas Tree by Shirazeh Houshiary, and a fresco from the Monastery of Saint John the Theologian in Chora on the island of Patmos.

## Podcast episodes

"On Journeying: Travel, Traditions, and Turning to the Psalms with Tsh Ox-

enreider," Sacred Ordinary Days, Dec. 22, 2020: Host Jenn Giles Kemper interviews author, travel guide, and fellow podcaster Tsh Oxenreider about her book *Shadow and Light: A Journey into Advent*.

The liturgical calendar is a gift, not a burden, Oxenreider says; it provides scaffolding for our year and connects Christians to one another across time and place, in addition, of course, to promoting encounters with God and God's story. Oxenreider provides book and music recommendations for the Advent season and shares one of her family's favorite simple Advent traditions.

"The Annunciation and Art with Victoria Emily Jones," Old Books with Grace, Nov. 17, 2021: Old Books with Grace, hosted by Dr. Grace Hamman [previously], a specialist in medieval literature, is one of my favorite podcasts, so I was beyond excited to be invited on as a guest! In this conversation, Grace and I discuss four paintings and three poems that respond to the momentous event known as the Annunciation, where Gabriel tells Mary that she has been chosen to bear God's Son. While the feast of the Annunciation is celebrated on March 25, we thought it nonetheless appropriate at this time just before Advent to consider how Mary welcomes Jesus, since we are preparing to welcome him ourselves. Available on YouTube and on all podcast streaming platforms.

Grace just wrapped up a fascinating series on Sir Gawain and the Green Knight, and for the four weeks of Advent she will be taking a closer look at four familiar Christmas carols from different eras, examining their history, theology, and language and recommending an Advent practice inspired by each carol. Follow Old Books with Grace on Instagram or Twitter.

## Music for Advent

"O Come, O Come, Emmanuel": This is the quintessential Advent hymn. Here are two renditions from by two of my favorite musical artists/groups: Wilder Adkins's recording is on the Advent Sessions EP from Redeemer Community Church, and the Good Shepherd Collective recording, featuring Liz Vice and Charles Jones, is available as a single.

"Advent Songs by the Porter's Gate": A collection of ten original songs for Advent. The contributing songwriters are Nicholas Chambers, Paul Zach, Kate Bluett, Isaac Wardell, Liz Vice, Latifah Alattas (Page CXVI), and Teneille Neda. My favorites: "The Reign of Mercy," "Mary's Lullaby (Black Haired Boy)," "Simeon's Song."

## Visual arts

Painting and short film: In 2017 Holy Family HTX, a church in Houston, commissioned artist-in-residence Lanecia Rouse Tinsley to create nine liturgical paintings, one for each major season of the church year. Called the Parament Collection, these six-by-six-foot pieces rotate throughout the year, signaling the change of season and inviting the congregation into a space of contemplation around seasonal themes.

The first painting in the cycle, "Advent," is a minimalist composition predominantly in ultramarine, evoking Yves Klein's blue monochromes; Tinsley says that, like Klein, she wants to "impregnate" the viewer with blue, which for her signifies hope.

Blue (or alternatively, purple) is the primary color of Advent, but pink and white (for Gaudete Sunday and Christmas Eve, respectively) are also associated with it, which Tinsley makes reference to in her painting.

At the white bar at the top, you can see a faint mark left by Hurricane Harvey; her studio flooded when the storm



In Lanecia Rouse Tinsley's video, the artist is seated as her painting "Advent" is moved into position by staff. It is one of nine liturgical artworks meant to rotate throughout the year.

hit in August 2017, and this then-blank canvas suffered some water damage, but Tinsley made the conscious decision to use it to further press into the Advent theme of suffering. She lined the canvas in black, inspired by a line from Andy Warhol's film *Sunset*: "Black means infinity." All our longings, Tinsley says, are held within infinity.

There are nine films on Vimeo by Chap Edmonson, titled "Decoded," in which Tinsley discusses her Parament Collection piece by piece. ([www.vimeo.com/showcase/holyfamilyhtxdecoded](http://www.vimeo.com/showcase/holyfamilyhtxdecoded))

I've compiled an Advent playlist on Spotify. Here are some of the songs, in addition to the ones mentioned above:

- "Wonder" by MaMuse
- "Better Days" by Chrisinti
- "Peace Train" by Cat Stevens
- "Peace" by Peter Bruun (a setting of a Gerard Manley Hopkins poem)
- "Magnificat primi toni" by Palestrina ■

Victoria Emily Jones is a blogger and freelance copy editor and proofreader. She lives in the Baltimore area. This article was originally published at *Art & Theology* ([www.artandtheology.org](http://www.artandtheology.org)).

## BOOKS

Mr. Nicholas:  
A magical  
Christmas tale

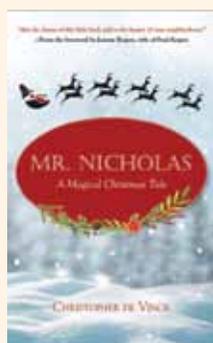
By Christopher de Vinck  
Paraclete Press, 157 pp

## Review by Kristine Morris

In Christopher de Vinck's novel "Mr. Nicholas," a hardened newspaperman's life is rocked by a small boy's love and an encounter with a mysterious old man.

On his way to interview a beekeeper, Jim sees Anna's car clinging to the edge of the road. He stops to help, and they connect. But once married, their differences open a gap between them. Anna suggests that a baby could bridge that gap.

But when JB is born with Down syndrome, Jim's rejection of his son leads Anna to file for separation. Jim feels disappointed in his career; he faces a sad and lonely Christmas. Gradually, though, the time he spends with his son



opens his eyes to a world in which magic is real and everyone is worth loving.

Anna cannot see the changes in Jim, and when JB goes missing, she blames him. She suspects that JB's friend, Mr. Nicholas, a scavenger and owner of a hardware store that hides a mystery, is responsible, too.

Told in Jim's voice, this is a story about the power of a boy's relentless love. Tense and stressful at first, it makes the changes in Jim palpable through his inner reflections, his conversations with others, and through small actions that reveal his growing love for his son.

Suspense grows as Mr. Nicholas comes under investigation for JB's disappearance. In the book's satisfying conclusion, Jim realizes the importance and beauty of the ordinariness that makes life worth living and gives Christmas its true meaning. Sensitive and heartwarming, "Mr. Nicholas" is a magical Christmas story in which lives

and hearts are changed by a small boy's unconditional love.

This review was published at *Foreword Reviews* ([www.forewordreviews.com](http://www.forewordreviews.com)).

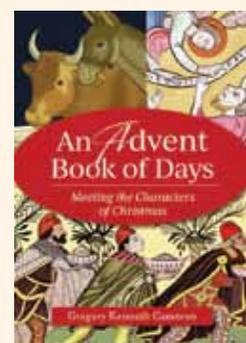
An Advent Book of Days:  
Meeting the Characters of  
Christmas

By Gregory Kenneth Cameron  
Paraclete Press, 102 pp

## Review by Episcopal Journal

From Dec. 1 to Dec. 25, Gregory Kenneth Cameron invites the reader to partake in a daily feast for the eyes and the spirit. The reflections in this book draw upon Scripture, history, and legend about the character of the day — Gabriel, the Virgin Mary, the Star, the Magi, and of course the Christ Child, paired with gorgeous illustrations from the author, adapted from famous works of art, paired with illustrations from the author adapted from famous works of art.

The book draws on the tradition of



*visio divina*, inspired by the medieval tradition of the illuminated book of hours, and celebrates the many aspects and persons of the Christmas story through

the centuries.

The author has written that it is his hope "that these reflections, whenever they are read, will help us to discover new depths in the Christmas story, to deepen our faith, and perhaps even to learn something new or unexpected; because over 2,000 years, the story of Christmas has become filled with unexpected delights arising from Scripture, history, legend and faith."

Cameron is the Anglican bishop of St. Asaph in Wales. Besides being an author and artist, he has gained recognition as a coin designer, creating three designs for the Royal Mint. ■

## FEATURE

# Atlanta-area Episcopalians, Ismaili Muslims forge relationship through community service

By Shireen Korkzan  
Episcopal News Service

Last February, when the Rev. Nicole Lambelet invited nearby faith leaders to participate in a virtual tour of Decatur, Ga., through the lens of displaced Black and Jewish communities, she didn't expect her Episcopal church to form a new relationship with Decatur's Ismaili Muslim community.

"Probably five faith leaders responded to the mass email I sent, and 150 people came to our event, but Behnoosh Momin's response was different," said Lambelet, associate rector for family ministry and outreach at the Episcopal Church of the Epiphany in Atlanta.

Momin, a communications and outreach volunteer for the Ismaili Council for the Southeastern USA, declined Lambelet's initial invitation and instead offered to start an interfaith dialogue centered on shared religious values and ethics.

Now, Epiphany parishioners in northeastern Atlanta and Ismaili community members in nearby Decatur are coming together around what they already share, to learn from each other and to look for ways to partner on projects designed to improve their shared region.

"Both of our communities believe in generosity and helping the poor and other humanitarian services," Momin said. "Pluralism and voluntary service are important in the Ismaili Muslim faith ... We

share that commonality with the Episcopal community."

For their first joint service project, the two groups focused on environmental stewardship and partnered with Decatur-based Georgia Interfaith Power and Light, or GIPL, and Clyde Shepherd Nature Preserve. On Sept. 26, over 50 volunteers cleaned up a portion of South Fork Peachtree Creek. That date was chosen because it was both World Rivers Day and the Global Ismaili CIVIC Day.

"We're so excited about our new Episcopalian friends and relationships, and it's already been an incredible journey," Momin said. "Environmental stewardship is a core ethic of the Ismaili community, and that shared value with The Episcopal Church fits very naturally to us."

In a co-written blog post for GIPL's website highlighting their faith communities' joint creek cleanup service project, Lambelet and Momin mention water's significance in both Christianity and Islam. In Christianity, for example, new members are initiated into the church through baptism by water. In Islam, water is considered a human right and symbolizes purity.

Hannah Shultz, a program associate for GIPL, a nonprofit dedicated to protecting the Earth's ecosystems and fight-



Photo/Aziz Ajaney

Members of the Episcopal Church of the Epiphany, Atlanta, and the Atlanta-area Ismaili community volunteer together at South Fork Peachtree Creek in Decatur.

ing environmental injustices, said the cleanup event at Clyde Shepherd Nature Preserve represented a "beautiful example" of the many commonalities shared by faith traditions yet often overshadowed by differences.

"There's a lot we can learn from each other," said Shultz, who handled the cleanup event's logistics for the Episcopal Church of the Epiphany and the Ismaili community. "I think we have our own theology and perspectives, but there's a lot to learn from and inspire by learning about common issues. We're learning different ideas to care for creation, but our goal is ultimately the same. Emphasis on justice really runs deep in both communities."

Ismaili is the second-largest sect of Shia Islam, which is the second-largest branch of Islam. Like all Shia Muslims,

Ismailis recognize the Prophet Muhammad's cousin and son-in-law Ali ibn Abi Talib as his bloodline successor.

Unlike the much larger Sunni branch of Islam, Shias believe that Muhammad's successor needs to be in his bloodline. The Ismaili sect earned its name from Isma'il ibn Jafar, whom its members appointed as the true Imam, unlike the much larger Twelver Shia sect, which appointed Musa al-Kadhim instead.

Today, Ismaili is the only Shia sect to have a living, ancestral Imam, formally titled Aga Khan, under the leadership of Prince Karim Al Hussein Aga Khan. Approximately 15 million Ismailis live in more than 25 countries.

Lambelet said she toured a nearby Ismaili Jamatkhana (private gathering space) and took a class on Islam while

continued on page 11

## Small Western Kansas congregation selling church to cut costs, maintain community outreach

By David Paulsen  
Episcopal News Service

St. John's Episcopal Church in Great Bend, Kan., about 120 miles northwest of Wichita, has welcomed Sunday worshippers into its current building for 70 years, but it has been a long time since they came close to filling the pews.

The Rev. Teresa Lahar, St. John's vicar, estimated turnout was as high as 35 two decades ago. It has since dwindled to about a dozen on a good Sunday.

"We're kind of an aging congregation," Lahar told Episcopal News Service. In the past couple years, three members have died and another moved into a nursing home. Plate and pledge revenue from the remaining active members, she said, isn't keeping pace with expenses — about \$1,000 a month — including building maintenance, utility bills and Lahar's part-time pay. The congregation's reserves would only last so long making up the difference.

In July, the congregation agreed to sell its church building. Once it's sold, Sunday services will move to the First Congregational United Church of Christ, where St. John's will rent the chapel and meeting space. By saving on building costs, the Episcopal congregation is hop-

ing to secure its future while continuing to support ministries that serve its community, Lahar said.

"Financially, we have some money, but not enough to keep going," she said. "It's been a very hard decision, but the reality is, we can't afford to stay there."

The congregation listed the red brick church built in 1950 in August at \$170,000. After initially receiving minimal interest, the price was lowered to \$150,000 in October, and the congregation now has at least three prospective buyers, though no confirmed sale yet. The building is nearly 5,000 square feet and includes office space, two bathrooms, a kitchen and a meeting room.

The building could be converted to a new use, such as offices or a home. If the buyer is another congregation, St. John's would include its furniture and furnishings in the sale, Lahar said.

Lahar has attended St. John's off and on since 1996 and regularly for the past 16 years. For most of that time, the congregation had been served by supply priests. A few years ago, a previous priest encouraged Lahar to consider ordination, to serve St. John's as a bi-vocational priest.

"She kept telling me I needed to be doing this. She thought I was suited for it," Lahar said. At first, she was skeptical, but then, "God just spoke to me." In 2016,

she enrolled in the Bishop Kemper School for Ministry in Topeka. She was ordained as a priest in December 2019 and began serving at St. John's shortly after retiring from the hair salon she had owned.

She, like the members of her congregation, feel an attachment to the old building, but they are ready to start the next chapter in the life of their church.

"It's hard on all of us. None of us want to see the church close," she said. They spent two years discussing their options for the building, including renting space at St. John's to community groups, before deciding to sell.

Lahar visited other churches in Great



Photo/St. John's

Senior warden Rose Kelly, left, and the Rev. Teresa Lahar, vicar of St. John's Episcopal Church, Great Bend, Kan., stand outside the church building, which the congregation is selling.

Bend, a city of about 15,000 people, in search of a suitable chapel for St. John's to rent. First Congregational was welcoming and its rent reasonable, she said, and St. John's would be able to use other rooms at the church for Bible studies and coffee hour.

For now, St. John's will continue worshipping in its old building, until it is sold. The proceeds will be held by the Diocese of Western Kansas and available to St. John's in the future if the congregation considers a return to a more permanent building.

The congregation may be small, but its active members are committed to volunteering in the community, Lahar said.

They recently began helping a local organization, Central Kansas Dream Center, organize free meals for low-income families and homeless residents on Sundays, to supplement the usual weekday meals.

St. John's also supports an organization called the Global Orphan Project, and in recent years, church members have filled backpacks with food for children attending a local elementary school.

"The reality is, we need to help in the community," Lahar said. "And we can't do that if we're just spending money on trying to keep the building for a few people on Sunday." ■

## NEWS

# Episcopal volunteers form airport welcome teams for Afghans arriving in Oklahoma City

By David Paulsen  
Episcopal News Service

Volunteer teams of Oklahoma Episcopalians are providing a ministry of welcome at the airport in Oklahoma City to their newest neighbors. For their nightly appointments, they greet some of the 1,800 Afghans who are arriving to make new homes in the state after fleeing their home country when the Taliban took control there in August.

The ministry is simple but essential: The Episcopal volunteers help the newly arrived Afghans collect their luggage and then drive them to the hotels where they will stay until permanent housing is secured. From there, the Afghan evacuees will be assisted by case workers from the Oklahoma City branch of Catholic Charities.

“The Holy Spirit arrives in that moment,” Jennifer Hund told ENS as she described the scenes at the airport and hotels. Hund is coordinating the Episcopal diocese’s team of volunteers, who began welcoming Afghan individuals and families in early November.

They often arrive weary from travel but grateful for the show of hospitality from their new neighbors, she said. “I can see in the eyes of the folks that we’re assisting just the relief of being taken care of, being in a safe place.”

After the 20-year U.S. war in Afghanistan ended in August with the final withdrawal of American troops, about 50,000 Afghans were allowed into the U.S. under what is known as humanitarian parole. Some may be able to apply for special immigrant visas, while others will apply for asylum. All will need to find places to live.

As they settle in new communities like Oklahoma City, many will receive help from one of the nine agencies that are part of the federal refugee resettlement program, including Episcopal Migration Ministries, or EMM.

EMM has invited Episcopalians and their congregations and dioceses to support that work by making donations online to the Neighbors Welcome: Afghan Allies Fund and by volunteering in other ways, which they can do through an online form.

**“I can see in the eyes of the folks that we’re assisting just the relief of being taken care of, being in a safe place.”**

— Jennifer Hund, Diocese of Oklahoma volunteers coordinator

As the Episcopal agency coordinates with its network of 11 affiliates around the country, Episcopalians in cities without an EMM affiliate still can lend a hand by connecting with one of the other resettlement agencies.

Catholic Charities is the agency leading those efforts in Oklahoma, in partnership with the local chapter of the Council on American-Islamic Relations. When the federal government announced how many Afghans would be moving to Oklahoma — more than in all but two other states, California and Texas — the Episcopal Diocese of Oklahoma reached out to Catholic Charities to offer assistance.

“Sometimes there are these opportunities for real Gospel ministry that show up at your doorstep,” Bishop Poulson Reed told ENS. The diocese learned that welcoming Afghans at the airport would help ease the burden on Catholic Charities case workers, who already were working long hours.

“We’ve pivoted to what we really see as a Gospel ministry of hospitality and welcome,” Reed said. “As we seek to follow Jesus and offer that hospitality, these are our neighbors who have arrived, and we’re called to help them and welcome them.”

The humanitarian parole program is separate from the refugee resettlement

program that EMM, Catholic Charities and the other seven agencies facilitate on behalf of the State Department, though the agencies plan to provide services to these Afghans similar to the services they have provided since 1980 through the refugee resettlement program. Those servic-

es include English language and cultural orientation classes, employment services, school enrollment, and initial assistance with housing and transportation.

The Episcopal Church’s Office of Government Relations this week issued an action alert advocating additional congressional action to support the Afghan arrivals. The proposed Afghan Adjustment Act “would create a specific program allowing all Afghan arrivals to directly apply for a green card without needing to go through alternate channels such as the asylum system.”

In Oklahoma, about 1,000 Afghans are expected in Oklahoma City and 800 in Tulsa. The first of these families landed at Oklahoma City’s Will Rogers World Airport in late September, and more are arriving in the city every day, usually in the evenings.

The teams of Episcopal volunteers started by training with Catholic Charities case workers and shadowing them at the airport, and eventually, the volunteers will take full responsibility for welcoming the arriving Afghans.

The diocese’s goal is to recruit and train enough volunteers to fill about six teams, each with six to eight members, that will be on call to go to the airport,

as needed, to welcome arriving Afghans. About 20 volunteers attended an orientation in early November at St. Paul’s Episcopal Cathedral in Oklahoma City.

Cathedral Dean Katie Churchwell is among the volunteers who have participated. She told ENS that the Afghans’ flights usually start landing after 5 p.m. and sometimes arrive as late as midnight. “It all changes day by day,” she said.

Sometimes the volunteers have a sole individual to welcome, while other flights arrive with a dozen or more Afghans. The volunteers have practiced greeting the new arrivals with the traditional Arabic phrase “salaam alaikum,” or “peace be to you.”

Some members of the welcoming team escort these new neighbors to the baggage claim area, while other volunteers wait in their own vehicles or in larger vehicles provided by Catholic Charities to take them to nearby hotels. If no one in the arriving group speaks English, the Episcopal volunteers can call an interpreter to assist in translating Dari or Pashto.

“It’s been really touching and moving,” Churchwell said, “not just in the work that we get to do, but as you learn about and know about the circumstances that people are coming from and really get to see what it’s like being in their shoes, you’re really able to see the trauma that people have experienced and continue to experience in being displaced.” Many of the people were allowed to come to the U.S. because they fear persecution in Afghanistan for their work in support of the U.S. government.

Diocesan leaders said they are open to offering other forms of support as needed, but for now, their work will focus on providing an initial warm welcome to the Afghans, who are expected to continue arriving through early next year. “The response has been amazing, of people who want to be engaged in this work,” Churchwell said. ■

ATLANTA continued from page 10

a seminarian at the Candler School of Theology at Emory University in Atlanta, but other than that, she knew little about the Ismaili community prior to meeting Momin.

She also said she hopes that interfaith events between the Epiphany congregation and the Ismaili community, including visiting each other’s places of worship, will educate members from both sides and foster ongoing dialogue addressing social justice issues in and around Decatur. So far, Epiphany members have visited the Jamatkhana; Ismaili community members were scheduled to visit the church later in the year.

“There are lots of similarities and differences between the Episcopalian and Islamic faiths, and we’re very excited about the similarities and learning how

we can grow from each other through our differences,” Lambelet said.

Momin said, “There’s also commonality with faith communities’ level of understanding theological concepts around social justice and eliminating inequities. If we educate each other about faith and ethics and values and commonality and connection, we can work towards that.”

The women said they plan on making future joint service projects bigger than the first one. They also hope their new partnership will not only help the greater Decatur community and their shared ecosystem, but also lead to individual growth in faith. ■

*Shireen Korkzan is a Midwest-based freelance reporter who primarily writes about religion, race, ethnicity and social justice issues. Follow her on Twitter and Instagram @smkrm.*

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## FAITH AND THE ARTS

## Art at the Frontiers of Faith: Spain, 1000-1200

By Pamela A. Lewis

“Frontier” usually denotes separation and limitation, a boundary betwixt “here” and “there,” and even “us” and “them.” Whether wrought by nature or by human hands, a frontier at once divides and defines.

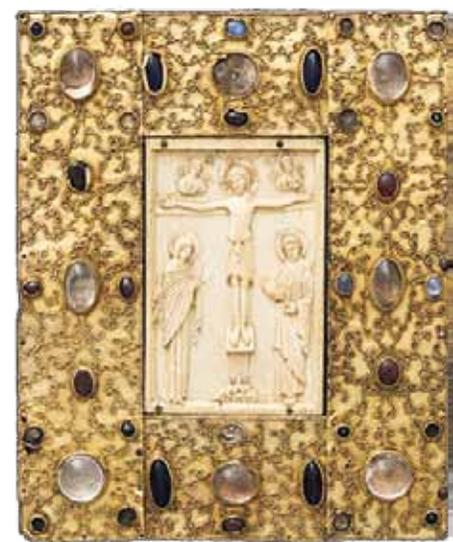
According to Julia Perratore, curator of the Metropolitan Museum of Art’s Cloisters exhibition in New York, “Spain, 1000-1200,” open until Jan. 30, the borderlands of medieval Spain were understood as places that “simultaneously separated and connected different territories.”

Medieval Spanish art embodies this concept, as different faith communities maintained their distinct beliefs while also cultivating shared interests and tastes, thereby “navigating the tension between separation and connection.”

Christian, Muslim and Jewish communities coexisted in medieval Spain for centuries, and, despite religious differences, shared their respective and vibrant artistic traditions. Artists and patrons of the Christian-ruled northern peninsula interacted with the cosmopolitan arts of southern, Muslim-ruled Spain (al-Andalus) as dramatic shifts in the balance of power between Christian and Muslim rulers resulted in the Muslims’ losing territory to the Christian kingdoms of the northern peninsula.

Yet this was not entirely a divisive age, as the 46 religious and secular objects at test, which are displayed in the austere Fuentidueña Chapel — itself an object in the exhibition — and which is focused on Christian iconography. The years encompassed by this show reflect the impressive diversity of Spanish art that resulted from a cultural intersection that transcended the frontier’s moving line.

The exhibition’s works (many of which are drawn from the Met’s collection, with some loans from other institutions), include silk textiles, monumental sculptures, illuminated manuscripts and



Panel with Byzantine Ivory Carving of the Crucifixion, 10th century (ivory); late 11th century (setting), Silver-gilt with pseudo-filigree, glass, crystal, and sapphire cabochons; ivory on wood support, Made in Constantinople (ivory); Made in Aragon, Spain (?) (setting), Byzantine (ivory); Spanish (setting).

fine metalwork. They range in size from the 30-foot-tall Fuentidueña Apse itself to a tiny carved ivory chess piece.

Whereas cultural adaptation and appropriation are often met with criticism and hostility in our own time, these actions were accepted and cultivated. For example, Muslims incorporated in their own artwork the Romanesque style of Christian Western Europe.

The monastery church of San Baudelio de Berlanga, Spain, built in the late 11th century after the Christian-ruled kingdom of León and Castile seized the city of Toledo, stands as a compelling example of an area where different traditions met. Its architecture, reflecting the



Above, Crucifix, ca. 1150-1200, Castile-León, Spain; white oak with paint, gold leaf, and tin leaf (corpus), softwood with paint and tin leaf (cross).

Left, Leaf from a Beatus Manuscript: the Lamb at the Foot of the Cross, Flanked by Two Angels, ca. 1180; Tempera, gold, and ink on parchment.

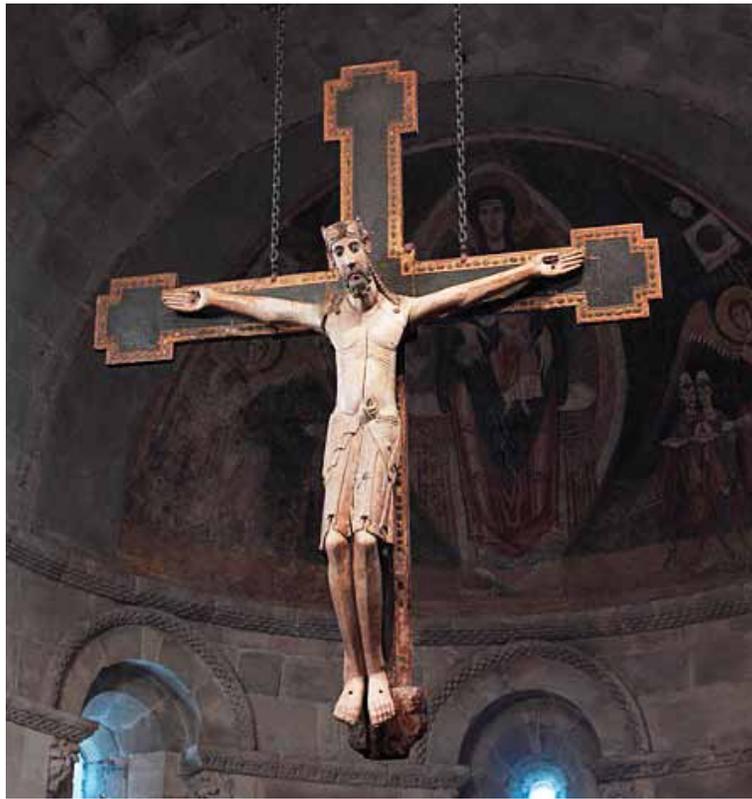
Below, Bifolium from the Andalusian Pink Qur’an, ca. 13th century, Spain; Ink, gold, silver, and opaque watercolor on paper.

Great Mosque of Córdoba, was inspired by northern Christian church-building practices coupled with the Islamic architecture of al-Andalus.

But the Christian-Muslim intersection is equally evident in one-dimensional works that were produced when San Baudelio underwent a makeover in the early 12th century by painters from northeastern Spain who covered the monastery’s walls with frescoes. These images bear the distinctive traits of Romanesque and Byzantine art and also reveal their acquaintance with Islamic art.

From among these Baudelio frescoes (later transferred to canvas and part of the Met collection), dating from the first half of the 12th century, are a pair of paintings depicting two miracles from Jesus’ adult life: the Healing of the Blind Man and the Raising of Lazarus, and the Temptation of Christ by the Devil.

While Islamic pictorial features are largely absent from these paintings, the Romanesque style is evident both in the treatment of the figures and their garments, and the almost cartoonlike, side-by-side scenes are at once presented with directness and restraint. These events



work, dating from the first half of the 12th century, faint yet distinctly Islamic motifs along the picture’s edges, all of which testify to Christian-Muslim mutual awareness and contact.

Islamic architectural elements, such as stepped crenellations, vegetal motifs, and the horseshoe arch, are strongly discernible in a hefty marble gravestone from Almeria, dating from the 12th century.

These embellishments recall the exterior façade of the Great Mosque of Córdoba (the spiritual heart of al-Andalus) and include inscriptions professing the faith on the stele’s outer border. Inside the horseshoe-shaped arch (an indigenous form which would be embraced by all faiths), an inscription praises God.

An ornate, leather-bound Hebrew Bible (which Jews in medieval Spain referred to as the “Sanctuary of God”) dating before 1366, is one of the exhibition’s several precious, religious texts. It bears decorative elements found in both Islamic and Christian manuscripts, which demonstrate how medieval patrons and artists alternated between visual languages.

Almost perfectly intact and splendid-



do not occur sequentially in St. John’s Gospel; however, the artist has chosen to communicate the overarching themes of rebirth, redemption, and resistance to evil suasion.

Also from San Baudelio monastery is a fresco (later transferred to canvas) of a one-hump camel, a delightful example of the meeting of cultures showing that the monks, living in Christian territory, came into contact with travelers riding on animals that were brought into Muslim Spain from faraway lands, notably North Africa.

In addition to the creature’s deeply dipping neck, saucily upturned hooves, and gentle expression, there are on this

ly adorned, the Bible is quiet yet powerful evidence of shared artistic tastes that transcend cultural and religious biases. There is the exquisite Bifolium from the Andalusian Pink Qur’an, dating from the 13th century, referring to the paper’s hue, and believed to have come from the town of Javita in southwest Valencia, reportedly the site of the earliest paper mill in Spain.

The crisply executed calligraphy and extensive use of gold suggest that the Pink Qur’an was made for a royal or a noble patron, and it stands as a superb example of Islamic work within a Spanish manuscript.

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## FAITH AND THE ARTS

## Botticelli's "Nativity": an elusive mystery of time

By Linda Brooks

Christian Biblical stories have been presented visually in numerous ways — from early symbolic scratches on hidden walls, to incredibly realistic detailed paintings, and then a return to symbolism in modern abstract paintings. But rarely does a painting transcend time in all of these genres. Such is the uniqueness of the masterpiece known as “The Mystical Nativity” by Sandro Botticelli completed in 1501.

At first glance, it is a classic Nativity scene — Mary and the infant Jesus resting in a grotto with a stylized roof signifying a manger. Joseph rests close by. There is a donkey and an ox, shepherds to the right and the wise men on the left. It would be a calm serene setting — if not for the strange angels.

There is tension in their movement, everywhere in the painting. On the manger roof, three angels read from the Bible. They are dressed in white, red and green, the colors of faith, hope and charity. Above them, 12 similarly-dressed angels circle, holding branches and ribbons suspended with crowns. Below in the foreground, another three angels embrace men rising from the ground, holding scrolls which proclaim in Latin, “peace on earth to men of goodwill.” At their feet, seven devils flee to the underworld.

What is going on with this imagery? It is joy and celebration, but also fear and sorrow. This painting is showing not just Christ's birth but his entire life and resurrection. The cloth loosely wrapped around the Christ child's body is symbolic of his resurrection. He is not looking up to his mother but to the cross that is

marked on the donkey's shoulder, perhaps indicating his future arrival in Jerusalem. Botticelli is asking the viewer to think of Jesus's birth *and* his resurrection.

This is the only known signed work by Botticelli. Along the top there is an inscription in Greek that reads, ‘This picture, at the end of the year 1500, in the troubles of Italy, I, Alessandro, in the half-time after the time, painted, according to the eleventh [chapter] of Saint John, in the second woe of the Apocalypse, during the release of the devil for three and a half years; then he shall be bound in the twelfth [chapter] and we shall see [him buried] as in this picture’.

The quote reflects the fact that the late 1490s to early 1500s was a time of great turmoil in Italy. Botticelli, as well as much of the population, thought it was the end of days. The city of Florence feared war with France was imminent and the opulent Renaissance was transformed into the restrictive Reformation period.

The fanatical conservative preacher Girolamo Savonarola had urged people to repent for their extravagant lifestyles. There was no mass communications to compare voices, only the fear given by one voice.

We can look at this painting today and see the cycle of our own times — fear, war, death — are as continuous as birth and resurrection. Perhaps we can contemplate the beauty Botticelli has given us and be inspired by it. This is a season of great joy. Whatever troubled times Botticelli experienced have passed, as will our own difficulties in time. ■

With material from Wikipedia and Gareth Leaney's Art Blog.



Sandro Botticelli, “Nativity of Jesus,” 1500-1501, National Gallery, London

SPAIN continued from page 12

Three illuminated manuscript leaves from the Beatus (of the town of Liébana) manuscripts depicting the visions of Saint John the Divine (Book of Revelation) are beautiful testaments to the artistry and strong intellectual milieu of monastic culture there.

The 10th and 11th century panels featuring a carved ivory Crucifixion scene surrounded by glass, stone cabochons, and other media, are *tours-de-force* of medieval Spanish panel work, one of which contains a sapphire seal inscribed in Arabic with four of the 99 “Beautiful Names” of God.

On the other side of this deeply religious era was an equally lively secular life, and there are a variety of small objects, many for private use, which enlarge our understanding and appreciation of medieval Spain's creativity and practicality. An elephant ivory pyxis (box), lavishly adorned with diverse animals, is a splendid melding of European and Islamic carving technique.

Whether a bronze 11th-century incense burner was meant for secular or religious use is unknown, but its imaginative design seems to outweigh such considerations. The image of battling soldiers on the boldly-colored *coffret* (box) showing the Legend of Guilhem, Count of Toulouse, on its lid and sides, almost come to life, and an otherwise quotidian object serves as a means to



Healing of the Blind Man and the Raising of Lazarus, first half of the 12th century (possibly 1129-34), Castile-León, Spain, Fresco transferred to canvas.

Hebrew Bible, Before 1366, Castile, Spain; Ink, tempera, and gold on parchment; leather binding.



commemorate a legendary figure.

“Spain, 1000-1200” offers a number of carved stone, monumental objects. The exhibition's most architecturally dramatic and spiritually moving object may well be the imposing apse (the rounded eastern end of a church), dismantled stone by stone in 1957 from the ruined Romanesque church of San Martin in the Spanish village of Fuentidueña. It was reconstructed in 1961 at the Cloisters as a permanent loan from

the Spanish government. (The exhibition includes a 28-minute documentary video chronicling this process.)

Its thick, yellow jasper walls, opened up by horseshoe arched, slit windows, rise to a barrel vault and culminate in a half dome, engendering a solemn worship space. Subtle and softening Islamic patterning can be noted in the stonework around the window arches, which are also supported by columns surmounted by decorated capitals.

In the dome is a fresco from the apse

of another Spanish church, San Juan de Tredós, in the Catalan Pyrenees, illustrating the Virgin and Child. This image of the enthroned Mother of God - majestic, remote, transcendent - embodies all that is understood by the Romanesque spirit and style.

The large Spanish crucifix hanging from the vault directly in front of the Virgin and Child complements the fresco and dates from the second half of the 12th century. The figure of Christ, one of the finest surviving examples of Romanesque sculpture, wears the golden crown of the King of Heaven rather than the crown of thorns, and exudes a resigned and dignified acceptance of his suffering, while heightening the chapel's mystic ambience.

The Met Cloisters exhibition has brought together an array of diverse works that speak to the complexity and beauty of Spanish art during a dynamic period when religious and cultural differences were exciting rather than frightening, and when art knew no boundaries. ■

Based in New York, Pamela A. Lewis writes about topics of faith. This article first appeared in *The Living Church*.

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## NEWS

# Presiding bishop officiates at Colin Powell's funeral at National Cathedral

By Episcopal Journal

Presiding Bishop Michael Curry officiated at the funeral of Gen. Colin Powell, former U.S. secretary of state, at Washington National Cathedral on Nov. 5, in a ceremony attended by a host of dignitaries. Powell, a lifelong Episcopalian, died on Oct. 18 at age 84 of complications from COVID-19.

Curry was joined by Washington Bishop Mariann Edgar Budde; cathedral dean Randolph Hollerith and the Rev. Joshua Walters, rector of St. John's Episcopal Church in McLean, Va., Powell's home parish.

The Rev. Stuart Kenworthy, former interim vicar at the cathedral and long-

time rector of Christ Church Georgetown in Washington, gave the sermon.

Powell served in the administrations of several presidents, including President Ronald Reagan, who appointed him national security adviser in 1987. He was the first African American in that role, and in 1989, he became the first Black chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff under President George H.W. Bush. When Bush's son George W. Bush became president in 2001, he picked Powell as his secretary of state, another first for an African American.

President Joe Biden and former presidents Barack Obama and George W. Bush, as well as former secretaries of state Hillary Clinton, Condoleezza Rice and Madeleine Albright attended the funeral. Albright gave a eulogy, along with former Deputy Secretary of State Richard Armitage and Powell's son Michael.

"As I grew to know him, I came to view Colin Powell as a figure who almost transcended time — for his virtues were Homeric honesty, dignity, loyalty and an unshakable commitment to his calling and word," Albright said.

Armitage recalled how their regular 7 a.m. morning calls shifted to 9:30 on Sunday mornings, after his supervisor had returned from church.



Photo/ENS

Presiding Bishop Michael Curry officiates at the funeral of Colin Powell at Washington National Cathedral.

"Colin loved the church: He loved the ceremony. He loved the liturgy. He loved the high hymns, which made him extremely happy," said Armitage, who served with Powell in the State Department during the George W. Bush administration, during the private ceremony that was livestreamed on YouTube.

"And he would answer the same way every Sunday. He said, 'Oh yes, I was at church. And I want you to know I'm in the state of grace.' And I would answer the same way every Sunday: 'Colin, if you're not in the state of grace, who among us is?' And that was every day for almost 40 years, the same opening remarks."

Powell, the son of Jamaican immigrants, grew up in New York's South Bronx neighborhood, where his family attended St. Margaret's Episcopal

Church. He served as an acolyte, and his father was senior warden.

"I'll never forget when I was confirmed, the bishop laying his hands on my head and intoning, 'Defend, O Lord, this thy child with thy heavenly grace, that he may continue thine forever,'" Powell wrote in 1991 for *Guideposts* magazine. "Those words gave me a deep assurance, and every year thereafter when I heard this supplication, that feeling of God watching over me was reaffirmed. Along with it was a sense of needing to live up to his expectations."

Powell wrote in his memoir, "My American Journey," that he and his family attended another St. Margaret's when they lived in Dale City, Va. He was elected senior warden ("following in my father's footsteps"), his wife Alma was a member of the altar guild and son Michael and daughter Linda assisted at Mass. "The tradition had been passed to the next generation, from one St. Margaret's to another, like an endless stream," he wrote.

Curry, in a statement after Powell's death, recalled meeting with him over breakfast a few years ago. "He became energized and passionate about his work with the Colin Powell School for Civic and Global Leadership, which is part of his alma mater, the City College of New York. He cared about people deeply. He served his country and humanity nobly. He loved his family and his God unswervingly. As Jesus says in the New Testament, 'Well done, good and faithful servant.'" ■

With files from Episcopal News Service and wire services.



Photo/via Facebook

The Rev. Theodora N. Brooks, of St. Margaret's, New York, walks with Colin Powell and others toward the church after dedication of the nearby General Colin Powell Apartment Complex in 2010.

## Diocese of Albany (N.Y.) opens door to same-sex marriages

By Egan Millard  
Episcopal News Service

The standing committee of the Diocese of Albany (N.Y.), the last remaining U.S.-based diocese in the Episcopal Church to prohibit same-sex marriage, announced on Nov. 1 that the ceremonies may proceed in the diocese, bringing it into compliance with General Convention's mandate to make marriage rites available to all couples.

"We seek the renewing and rebuilding of our diocesan community," the standing committee wrote in its announcement, which quoted the 79th General Convention's Resolution B012 and other church documents in explaining the committee's decision. "We pledge ourselves to work with one another in a spirit of mutual respect in the midst of theological diversity in regard to matters of human sexuality."

The status of same-sex marriage in the northern New York diocese has been a point of contention ever since former Bishop William Love refused to implement Resolution B012, the 2018 General Convention measure aimed at ensuring marriage equality in all dioceses where same-sex marriage is legal.

Seven other bishops who, like Love, were theologically opposed to same-sex marriage agreed to end restrictions on the ceremonies in their dioceses, through a process under B012 in which another bishop assumes any pastoral oversight that might be needed for

the wedding.

Love was the only bishop who refused to implement B012, and a disciplinary panel determined in October 2020 that his refusal violated church canon law and his ordination vows. Love resigned rather than face further disciplinary action and joined the Anglican Church in North America.

Since Love's resignation, the diocese's standing committee has been the ecclesiastical authority while a search for the next diocesan bishop is underway.

In its Nov. 1 announcement, the standing committee — which has some new members as a result of elections at the Oct. 23 diocesan convention — said that "as a body" it is theologically opposed to same-sex marriage.

However, in order to comply with B012 in the interim period until the election of the next diocesan bishop, the committee directed clergy who plan to celebrate same-sex marriages to consult with Assisting Bishop Michael Smith, whom the committee called in August to serve during the leadership transition.

Smith, previously bishop of the Diocese of North Dakota, was one of eight bishops who refused to allow same-sex couples to marry using trial rites approved in 2015 by the 78th General Convention. In 2018, he agreed to implement B012 in North Dakota



Love



Smith

by designating pastoral oversight to another bishop. Smith retired as diocesan bishop in May 2019.

The Albany standing committee, in directing clergy to "work out on our behalf the details of a Letter of Agreement for supplemental episcopal pastoral support," is working within B012's provision for another bishop to provide oversight for same-sex marriages, though it was not immediately clear what bishop would fill that role.

The diocese had been scheduled to vote at its Oct. 23 convention on whether to amend its canons that still prohibit clergy from officiating same-sex weddings (and the use of diocesan property for such weddings) and restrict ordination to people who are in heterosexual marriages or celibate.

However, rather than debating the change, lay and clergy delegates voted 126 to 116 for a procedural amendment that said no canonical changes would be made at the online convention. The next time the diocese will be able to consider the resolutions is at its next in-person diocesan convention, scheduled for June.

Until then, the canons remain on the books. Some other dioceses — such as Dallas — also have similar bans on the books even though their bishops allow same-sex marriages. ■

## NEWS

# Episcopal delegates to COP26 climate conference share lessons of hope and struggle with the church

By Egan Millard  
Episcopal News Service

Delegates representing Presiding Bishop Michael Curry and the Episcopal Church at the COP26 United Nations Climate Change Conference presented a summary of their work to the church on Nov. 12, saying they felt empowered by their presence even though the ultimate outcome of the conference remained uncertain at that date.

Delegates said they were frustrated to witness political leaders' ongoing obstructionism, but proud of the voices and religious conviction that they brought to the table.

"You are making the creation glad," California Bishop Marc Andrus told the

ence of the Parties to the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change, took place in Glasgow, Scotland, and online from Oct. 31 through Nov. 12.

Andrus led the Episcopal delegation alongside Lynnaia Main, the Episcopal Church's representative to the United Nations. They were joined by 24 clergy and lay delegates from across the church, as well as staff members the Rev. Melanie Mullen, director of reconciliation, justice, and creation care; Phoebe Chatfield, program associate for creation care and justice; Rebecca Cotton, a fellow in the church's Washington, D.C.-based Office of Government Relations; and Nick Gordon, intern for the United Thank Offering.

Part of the delegates' mission was to learn about the state of the climate crisis and efforts to address it, and to bring what they learned back to the wider church.

"The church is here to do this work not just for the 24 folks who were selected as delegates, but as a whole — as a body of Christ," Mullen said.

The conference ended with an agreement that calls on 197 countries to report their progress on mitigating climate change next year at COP27 in Egypt, but little consensus on concrete actions. U.N. Secretary-General António Guterres said the agreement "is an important step but is not enough."

Current greenhouse gas emission commitments still fail to meet the 2015



church's Creation Care team.

As negotiators moved toward a final agreement, they were "mired in disputes over the rules for carbon markets, financial support for vulnerable nations and provisions calling for the phase out of coal and fossil fuel subsidies," the Washington Post reported.

"We have seen very clearly these past two weeks that the U.N. is an imperfect system for dialogue and diplomacy," Main said. "But it's the only forum we have at the moment to address the magnitude and immediacy of the climate emergency."

During COP26, the Episcopal delegates (as well as their Anglican counterparts) communicated their priorities to U.N. member states, participated in meetings and discussion forums, shared updates on social media and hosted events, including a "Liturgy for Planetary Crisis" and morning and evening prayer services. Episcopalians participated virtually from the United States, Europe and South America.

Though the lack of in-person interaction was disappointing to some, overall, the virtual format was "actually an advantage," Andrus said. "We've been lighter on the Earth than if we'd been traveling there in person. But we've also been able to move from one meeting to another."

Episcopal leaders have noted in their advocacy that the impacts of the climate crisis are not being felt evenly.

"The most impacted [are] Indigenous peoples, people who are tied to the land, poor people," Curry said in a Nov. 12

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Photo/screen shot

Bishop Marc Andrus, head of the Episcopal delegation at COP26, opens the Episcopal Creation Care online discussion.

delegates during the presentation. "The groaning of the creation is being turned into the good news and the rejoicing of the creation by your work. There's so much more to do."

COP26, officially the 26th Confer-

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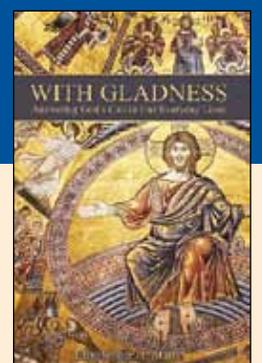
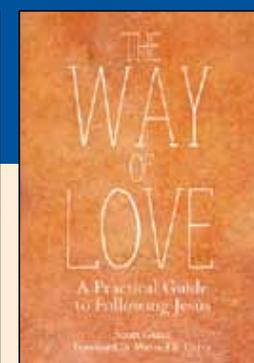
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## NEWS

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ABC News interview. “We will see more mass migrations of people looking for food. ... These will have an impact on the poorest of the poor.”

In the efforts toward climate change action, the value of our religious traditions and the knowledge of our scientific traditions “come together in common cause,” the presiding bishop said.

The Episcopal delegation’s four policy priorities were to accelerate ambition, increase support for communities experiencing loss and damage, protect human rights and affirm climate and eco-justice in addressing adaptation and mitigation, and boost climate finance and mechanisms. Each delegate focused on one of those areas.

Delegate Destinee Bates from the Diocese in North Carolina expressed frustration at the failure of the biggest polluters to pay for the damage they have caused, which often disproportionately affects countries that pollute less. She summarized the loss and damage segment succinctly by saying, “When you make a mess, you should probably clean it up.”

“The U.S. is responsible for an overwhelming majority of carbon dioxide in the world. Our carelessness is at the expense of the lives of vulnerable communities, and now we owe a debt. This COP saw many leaders dodging financial liability. But the people of the world deserve more than useless platitudes. It’s time to pay what we owe.”



Photo/screen shot

*Bishop Curry being interviewed on ABC News about why church is involved with climate crisis advocacy.*

The Episcopal delegation’s policy priorities aligned with an overarching theme of the conference: the past, present and future role of Indigenous peoples in caring for the Earth. Though Indigenous activists were highly visible at COP26, Episcopal leaders pushed for deeper inclusion of their voices at negotiations.

“Effective environmental justice advocacy anywhere in the world requires meaningful and useful partnerships with the Indigenous communities who have lived in those environments for millennia,” said the Rev. Rachel Taber-Hamilton, a delegate from the Diocese of Olympia and a member of the Shackan First Nation people. “We inhabit and steward 40% of vulnerable biodiversity environments on the planet, yet directly

received only 1% of the international funds for climate mitigation projects.”

The presentation ended with a discussion on translating the experience of COP26 into actions that Episcopalians can take.

“The end of COP, like so many people have said, is really just the beginning of climate action,” said Cotton, the Office of Government Relations fellow. Cotton said that for U.S. Episcopalians, the Episcopal Public Policy Network keeps people informed about opportunities to advocate for the kind of legislation that is needed to stem the climate crisis. She pointed specifically to the Build Back Better budget reconciliation bill currently being debated in Congress.

“If it passes, it will be the largest in-

vestment from the United States on climate change and will be a method of making substantial progress towards the U.S.’s stated commitment of reducing our greenhouse gas emissions 50% by 2030,” Cotton said.

Creation care has been one of the Episcopal Church’s three top priorities during Curry’s primacy, in addition to racial reconciliation and evangelism. General Convention has passed numerous resolutions on the issue, whether supporting federal climate action or pledging to mitigate the church’s own impact on the environment. Through the Office of Governmental Relations and the Episcopal Public Policy Network, the church has advocated for government policies in line with General Convention stances on climate change.

Throughout COP26, Episcopal delegates and leaders have emphasized that protecting the Earth and preventing human suffering are not merely political talking points but central tenets of the Episcopal faith — a message that Taber-Hamilton encouraged participants to take home to their churches.

“The faith of re-greening the world must become as central to our theology, and to our worship, as crucifixion and resurrection,” she said. “We must give nothing less than all we have and all we are in order to assure new life if generations are to follow us at all. The world to come that we pray for in our Sunday worship is ours to entomb or to liberate.” ■

