

Episcopal JOURNAL & Café

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General Convention budget debated



Artists interpret power of Sacrament



Episcopal Church responds to Ukraine crisis

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Presiding officers endorse plan to shorten General Convention to four days, limit attendance

By Egan Millard
Episcopal News Service

The 80th General Convention will now be held July 8-11 in Baltimore, Maryland, shortened from eight to four days under a recommendation from the design group charged with planning a “shorter, smaller, safer” gathering, according to a letter to the church sent May 17 by Presiding Bishop Michael Curry and the Rev. Gay Clark Jennings, president of the House of Deputies.

In addition to the shortened duration, the Presiding Officers’ General Convention

Design Group recommended that attendance be restricted to bishops, deputies, essential staff and volunteers, and a limited media presence, with visitors generally not allowed. Dioceses would be asked to send only two alternate deputies (one lay and one clergy) and inactive bishops would be asked to stay home. There would be no exhibit hall and all church-affiliated organizations would be asked not to hold events and receptions in Baltimore during July 8-11.

“Like many of you, we continue to grieve our inability to gather as a whole church this summer,” Curry and Jennings wrote, acknowledging they endorsed the design group’s recommendations. “But even since last week, when we first made the decision to reduce the scale of the meeting, COVID-19 cases and hospitalizations in the United States have continued to rise steeply. Although we regret that need to make this decision, we are confident that we have chosen the right path.”

General Convention is the governing body of the Episcopal Church. It typically meets every three years as a bicameral legislature

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Presiding Bishop Michael Curry, the Rev. Gay Clark Jennings, president of the House of Deputies, and Maryland Bishop Eugene Sutton, all speaking on May 11.



Art/Sr. Claire Joy, Community of the Holy Spirit

Pentecost: Alleluia

The Spirit of the Lord renews the face of the earth. Come let us adore him. Alleluia.

—Book of Common Prayer, pg 81

“Pentecost,” digital artwork by Sr. Claire Joy, a sister in the Community of the Holy Spirit, N.Y. Prior to joining the Community she worked as a graphic designer and artist. Another of her works appears on page 13.

Check for updated General Convention info

Keep up-to-date with breaking news and plans for the 80th General Convention

General Convention: <https://www.generalconvention.org/>
Guiding Principles: <https://extranet.generalconvention.org/staff/files/download/31739>

Health and Safety: <https://www.generalconvention.org/announcements/2022/4/27/health-and-safety-at-the-80th-general-convention>

Episcopal News Service: <https://www.episcopalnewservice.org/>

The Living Church: <https://livingchurch.org/80th-general-convention/>

Episcopal leaders join outcry over racist rampage in Buffalo

By David Paulsen
Episcopal News Service

Episcopal leaders are condemning a deadly, racist rampage at a Buffalo, New York, supermarket and joining in prayers for the victims and their families as hate-crime charges loom for the 18-year-old suspect in the shooting.

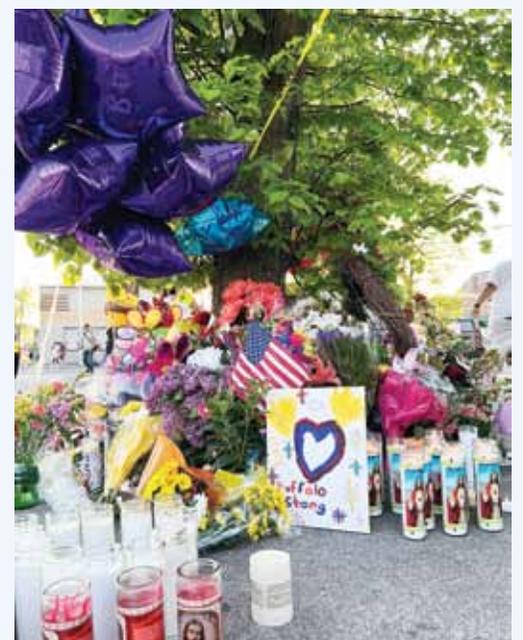
Payton S. Gendron, who lives 200 miles from Buffalo near the central New York city of Binghamton, is accused of opening fire at a Tops store in a largely Black neighborhood of Buffalo, killing 10 and injuring three people, all but two of them Black. Law enforcement officials have called it “straight up, a racially motivated hate crime,” and a 180-page manifesto attributed to Gendron alludes to the false, racist conspiracy theory that a coordinated “replacement” of white Americans by people of color is underway.

“While we wait to learn more about this unthinkable situation, I ask you to join me

in praying for those who have died, for those who are injured and suffering, and for the families and loved ones whose lives will never be the same,” Bishop Sean Rowe said in a written statement after the massacre. “Please pray, too, for the man who committed this horrific act, and for everyone whose mind and soul is twisted toward the evil of gun violence by racism.”

Rowe, the bishop diocesan of Northwestern Pennsylvania, also serves as bishop provisional of the Buffalo-based Diocese of Western New York through a partnership between the two dioceses. “Racial hatred has no place in our churches or our communities,” Rowe said. “Here in the dioceses of Northwestern Pennsylvania and Western New York, we are committed to dismantling white supremacy and systemic racism, and we stand in solidarity with the Black community, which today has once again paid an unthinkable price for the twin evils of racism and gun violence.”

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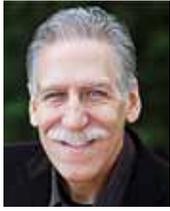


Photo/Michael Schwartz via Twitter

A memorial is set up in front of the Tops store in Buffalo, N.Y.

CONVERSATIONS

Is Roe v. Wade about to be overturned? And if so, what are the implications?



By Dr. Michael Brown
Religion Unplugged

ACCORDING TO an exclusive story on *Politico*, the Supreme Court is poised to overturn

Roe v. Wade when ruling on the *Dobbs v. Jackson* in June.

An alleged draft of the majority opinion, written by Justice Samuel Alito and leaked to *Politico*, states, “Roe was egregiously wrong from the start,” because of which, “We hold that Roe and Casey must be overruled.”

Indeed, the opinion continues, “It is time to heed the Constitution and return the issue of abortion to the people’s elected representatives.”

According to *Politico*, which linked the full text of the opinion in its article, “A person familiar with the court’s deliberations said that four of the other Republican-appointed justices — Clarence Thomas, Neil Gorsuch, Brett Kavanaugh and Amy Coney Barrett — had

voted with Alito in the conference held among the justices after hearing oral arguments in December, and that lineup remains unchanged as of this week.

“The three Democratic-appointed justices — Stephen Breyer, Sonia Sotomayor and Elena Kagan — are working on one or more dissents, according to the person. How Chief Justice John Roberts will ultimately vote, and whether he will join an already written opinion or draft his own, is unclear.”

The 98-page opinion, which is described as a first draft and appears to be genuine, was reportedly circulated on Feb. 10 among the other justices. This means that, if the reporting in *Politico* is accurate, the majority has remained solid for nearly three months, if not longer, which is a very positive sign.

On the other hand, now that this has been leaked in what *Politico* describes as “a rare breach of Supreme Court secrecy and tradition around its deliberations,” the obvious question is who leaked this document, and why?

Would a pro-life conservative leak this opinion to the public? That is highly unlikely, since releasing it in advance only gives the opposition more time to pressure one or more of the justices to



Pro-abortion rights protesters hold a rally in Washington, D.C., in 2017.

change his or her views. And would a pro-life conservative leak this to *Politico*, which is more left-leaning than right-leaning? That is questionable as well.

In any case, the opinion is now out, along with a list of the justices who allegedly supported it. Note that three of those attorneys were appointed by former President Trump.

That means that much prayer is needed for each of them, since they are about to experience the most intense battle of their lives, with an all-out assault the likes of which we can hardly imagine.

There will be the private appeals from colleagues, the attacks of the media, the threats to their families, the spiritual bombardment, the pressure of D.C. and more.

And let’s remember that back in 1992, when Roe should have been overturned

in the Casey ruling, a preliminary vote showed Justice Kennedy ready to vote against Roe.

But, as reported already in 1992 by the *The Washington Post*, “The Supreme Court on June 29 affirmed, instead of overturning, the Roe v. Wade abortion standard because Justice Anthony Kennedy changed his vote — a flip attributed in court circles to liberal constitutional scholar Laurence H. Tribe’s pulling strings backstage:

Two months later, it is clear Kennedy flipped not only his long-held abortion position but also his vote in the secret conference on the Planned Parenthood of Southeastern Pennsylvania v. Casey decision last fall. That extraordinary antiabortion forces and soured the internal atmosphere among the brethren as the court’s new term begins.

This shows how exotic politics inside the Supreme Court can override the designs of presidents. Despite more than 25 years without a justice being nominated by a Democratic president, the court has been pulled leftward by a brilliant law professor utilizing persuasion, flattery and law clerks.

Did Tribe really have that much of a role in flipping Kennedy? That is a matter of debate.

But what is certain is that Justice Antonin Scalia had spent an hour discussing the case with Kennedy after becoming concerned about where he stood. After their talk, Scalia felt confident that Kennedy was solidly with the anti-Roe majority, only for him to flip shortly thereafter.

In short, just as people can be fickle, Supreme Court justices can be fickle, because Supreme Court justices are people too.

And what happens if Roe is overturned? Then we will walk straight into an impassioned, even frenzied, potentially violent ideological civil war, one

that could quickly divide America into pro-life states vs. pro-abortion states. For the record, if there will be violence as a result of this hoped-for overturning of Roe, I expect it to come from the left.

But that kind of separation, not one that physically divides America but that one that spiritually and ideologically separates us, might not be a bad thing at all.

In fact, we already see that happening with some states passing anti-abortion legislation that the Supreme Court has not yet overturned and other states passing their most extreme pro-abortion rights laws.

We also see this with states dividing over transgender issues. The separation is getting clearer by the day.

Perhaps God Himself will weigh in on the matter, bringing evident blessing to those states that honor life — and I don’t just mean material blessing — and withholding that blessing from those states which exalt the “right” to abortion. Or should we say the “rite” of abortion?

For the moment, though, we are getting ahead of ourselves with this discussion. What is needed right now is prayer for the Supreme Court to do what is right and overturn Roe. May God give the justices deep conviction, righteous judgment and backbones of steel.

And may we are who pro-life keep bringing a persuasive argument to change hearts and minds. Overturning Roe is only part of the battle. The battle in the court of public opinion must be won as well. ■

Michael L. Brown, who has a doctorate from New York University, is founder and president of AskDrBrown Ministries and host of the nationally syndicated daily talk radio show “The Line of Fire,” and has served as a visiting or adjunct professor at seven leading seminaries. He is the author of more than 40 books.

FROM THE EDITOR’S DESK



AS I PEN THIS piece, Episcopal Journal Editor Solange De Santis has just embarked on a monthlong vacation/sabbatical. Here’s hoping she will enjoy a safe, memorable, and exciting respite. And many thanks for

this opportunity to assist.

I have been a news junky since my early teen years. Even now, my day starts quite early, checking the headlines of local, statewide, national, world, and church reports. The news of the day always remains at the forefront of my interests.

Perusing the news, and in reviewing the headlines and content of this issue, it is evident that there are three topics high on the minds of Episcopalians: the 80th General Convention, the war in Ukraine, and another shooting, this time in Buffalo, N.Y.

At press time, we were still awaiting final arrangements on what the 80th General Convention will look like this coming summer in Baltimore. But we have been given a hint: shortened days, limited attendees, no exhibit hall, and no events (that’s the request). As we look forward to

further announcements, there’s a box on Page 1 directing to websites for the most up-to-date GC info — be sure to check it!

While the world watches the situation in Ukraine from afar, the Episcopal Church in Europe is squarely on the front line of witnessing and offering aid to refugees. Their ongoing efforts and reports from overseas provide a closer connection for all of us in the church.

We were shattered by the events in Buffalo. Touching on violence and racism, Episcopalians joined others in asking two main questions: Why? When will this violence end?

Despite the dark clouds, we share in the great news about the mission and ministry throughout the Episcopal Church, from gun buy backs to updates on Asian American and Ingenious ministries.

While both upbeat and woeful headlines confront us daily, I applaud the solid discourse, engaging conversations, and Christian witness prompted by all these topics. Mix these actions with prayer and hope, and I have a more optimistic view of the world and our future.

— Neva Rae Fox, guest editor

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SPEAKING TO THE SOUL: INSPIRATION FROM EPISCOPAL CAFÉ

To the Good Shepherd

by Laurie Gudim

My sheep hear my voice. I know them, and they follow me. I give them eternal life, and they will never perish. No one will snatch them out of my hand. What my Father has given me is greater than all else, and no one can snatch it out of the Father's hand. The Father and I are one. — John 10:27-30

Like so many of us, I've had some bad experiences when it comes to belonging. My family moved around a lot when I was growing up, and I'd often be the stranger in a community that knew one another pretty well. I was not outgoing, and I didn't make friends easily, a fact my extrovert mother couldn't understand. "Smile more," she would tell me. "Make jokes with the kids. Get them to play with you." But nothing she suggested was in my wheelhouse. As often as not, I'd become the brunt of jokes and bullying and then eventually be forgotten as the lives of my peers went on without me.

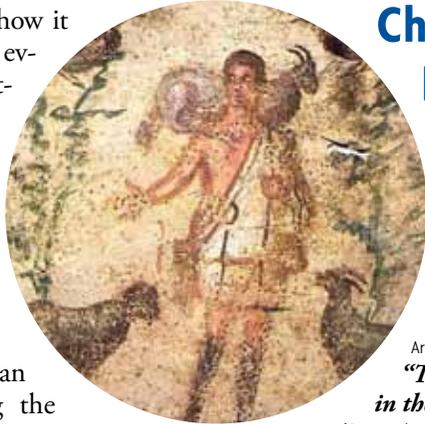
I was baptized when I was six months old and confirmed in some innocuous Protestant church when I was twelve. Because I was the stranger there too, my confirmation teachers forgot to include me in the ceremony until they saw me

weeping at my mother's side in one of the front pews. I'd participated in the classes and done all the work preparatory to making my commitment to the congregation — and I had still been left out. I don't know how it happened; it's probably every good teacher's nightmare. They hastened to bring me up front with the other kids as soon as they realized what was going on. But of course what it confirmed in me was that I didn't belong.

My journey as an adult has been along the twisty, narrow road between my head and my soul. In the course of my healing, I have swept up the reins of my life and become one who loves rather than one who desperately seeks love. It has meant fully embracing my awkwardness and social failures, and using all of me as a tool in the service of love.

The language of my soul is Christian. I have always known I belong to Christ, even when my head has told me differently. God has taken many shapes: grandmother, diamond, witch, sage, ocean, light, and utter darkness and

I cannot be snatched out of Christ's hand. No matter what I do or don't do.



Art/Wikimedia Commons
"The Good Shepherd" fresco in the Catacombs of Priscilla (Rome) and dated to c. 225 CE.

emptiness, to name a few. But always there is that incarnating, dying and resurrecting aspect, that Christ.

That dying and resurrecting being, that Christ, dwells in me and knows me completely. And even if I don't understand the words, I know his voice. I know the path through pain and utter hopelessness into emptiness and then into the new light. I belong to this path, to him.

I cannot be snatched out of Christ's

hand. No matter what I do or don't do — no matter what my behavior or belief — I belong to Christ. It's just so. I can get skeptical and renounce my faith; I can get on my high-horse and think I know everything; I can ignore the important tasks and embrace trivia; I can hurt somebody terribly or wrong them grievously; and yet I still belong to Christ. He is the shepherd whose voice I follow. He is the Way.

This understanding doesn't by itself make me brave. Dwelling in the awareness of what is in my soul is what makes a difference in my day-to-day life. Knowing that death cannot hurt me, that no ostracization really matters, that I am a sheep who has been given the gift of eternal life — that's what changes my behavior.

So, may I find ways of reminding myself of my belonging. May I ask for forgiveness when I forget. And may you do the same. That is my prayer to the Good Shepherd today. Amen. ■

Laurie Gudim writes religious icons and is author of the novel Loving the Six-toed Jesus. On Thursdays, she presents a reflection for Speaking to the Soul at the Episcopal Cafe. An Episcopal lay leader, she resides in Colorado.

Worrying about worrying

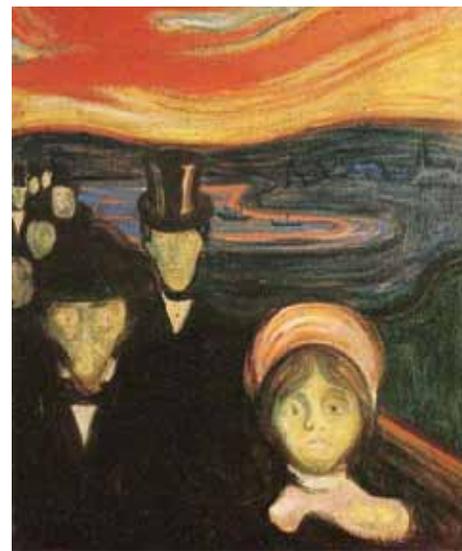
By Linda Ryan

When I look back on all these worries, I remember the story of the old man who said on his deathbed that he had had a lot of trouble in his life, most of which had never happened. — Winston Churchill

I've been told many times throughout my life not to worry. Worrying was a waste of time, and with worry came frowning, which left indelible tracks on my forehead. All the advice to the contrary, I still found myself a pretty addicted worrier. If it were a sunny day, I'd worry about rain, even in places where rain was a relatively rare occurrence. Honest to Pete, if there were even the remotest possibility that there was something that could/would go wrong, no matter how insignificant the thing or remote the possibility, I would work up a good worry about it. Sometimes the concern paid off, which is probably why I continued to do it for so long. Still, usually, whatever it was either didn't become the disaster I'd imagined or was not, as Mama would say, worth the powder to blow it to heck (ok, she said another word, but Mama was often a very plain speaker).

It seems like worries multiply as we grow up. There doesn't seem to be a worry that doesn't seem to resolve itself. Where should I go to college? What job should I try to find that fits our interests and desired lifestyle? Where should I buy a house? How are the schools around where I want to live? Prices are going up;

what if I get laid off or fired? Do I have enough savings to get me through retirement? Do I have enough insurance? How about Medicare? How much are my medications and possible hospitalizations going to cost? Who will pay my funeral costs? What kind of funeral do I want? Where do I want my final resting



Art/Wikimedia Commons
"Anxiety," by Edvard Munch, 1893

place to be? The list could go on forever.

Like Churchill recounted, many of our worries will never happen. Our bills get paid every month; the house doesn't need significant repairs. All the appliances work satisfactorily. The car is good for a few more years yet, the kids are grown and settled, and our health is reasonably good for our age. Still, we will worry that it will rain on the day of our outdoor barbecue (or palace garden

party). The government will cut Social Security. The party currently in power will pass some lame bill that will trespass on our particular religious, political views, or desires, and the country will go to hell in a handbasket. Sound familiar?

Currently, we worry (or maybe not) about abortion rights, rising inflation, increasing shortages of necessary goods, racial or cultural issues and perceptions, where does one religion's rights begin, and where does an opposing group's rights end.

We worry about our safety, whether from neighborhood gangs, radical groups, foreign disputes that could escalate to wars that involve more than just two opposing sides, and so on. Not watching the news on TV or immersing myself in talk radio or media does help keep the worries somewhat at bay. Still, there are things I (and others) really need to know about, so where does that info come from? The church? The neighbors? The local news or TV station? What I overhear in passing at the mall, water cooler, or grocery checkout line?

For me, avoiding the news has helped, restricting myself to a few resources I find online. Another thing is using the Serenity Prayer ("God, grant me the serenity to accept the things I cannot change...") is vital. Remembering what I can do something about, like voting, supporting causes I believe in, or being a bit pickier about what I share with others. I read books (generally lovely British cozies, mysteries, or occasionally religious books that challenge my

thinking), knit a lot (with prayers woven into the piece I'm making), and try to anticipate what my fur babies will yell at me about next. I'm careful where I put my feet (remembering breaking an ankle twice by stepping off the doorstep and onto a stray tennis ball), promptly wiping up messes on the floor, and taking my medications on time. I often sit in my chair and rock, which I find soothing and worry-releasing. Even when the wind blows, I can enjoy the sound of my wind chimes. It's all part of de-stressing and unpacking worries from my mind.

I remember Jesus's words about not worrying because if God takes care of the sparrow, God will surely take care of me. I may still break a hip, or something else may go wrong. Still, if I try to live as if I were the only living example of God's presence on earth, I would want to be believable. I don't worry about whether I will go to heaven (or the other direction) or pass my final Christianity exam. I simply trust that Jesus told the truth about God's watchfulness.

Life is a lot easier without worrying about a lot of things. I trust in God, do my best, and try to work for freedom, justice, and equality for all. That's what Jesus would do. ■

Linda Ryan is a co-mentor for an Education for Ministry group, an avid reader, lover of Baroque and Renaissance music, and retired. She keeps the blog Jericho's Daughter. She lives with her three cats near Phoenix, Arizona.

AROUND THE CHURCH

Madeleine Albright honored at Washington National Cathedral funeral

By Episcopal News Service

President Joe Biden, as well as former President Bill Clinton and former Secretary of State Hillary Clinton, were among those who paid tribute to Madeleine Albright, the former secretary of state, during her funeral held April 27 at Washington National Cathedral in the nation's capital.



Albright

Albright, who first served in the Clinton administration as U.S. ambassador to the United Nations in the Clinton administration before later becoming the first female secretary of state in 1997, died of cancer on March 23 at age 84. She regularly attended St. John's Episcopal Church in Washington's Georgetown neighborhood and was serving on Washington National Cathedral's governing body at the time of her death.

"She was loved and admired by all who knew her," Washington National Cathedral Dean Randy Hollerith said in welcoming the funeral's invitation-only guests. "We say goodbye today to a remarkable human being. Madeleine was a leader, mentor, trailblazer, reconciler and patriot. She was a person of deep faith who always held firm to the highest ideals of her faith and her country."

Albright joined The Episcopal Church as a young adult when she married Joseph Medill Patterson Albright in 1959. She had been born into a Jewish family in Czechoslovakia in 1937 but said she was never told about her Jewish heritage until a Washington Post reporter uncovered it in 1997.

After concluding her time as secretary of state in 2001, Albright remained active in the church, including by participating in various cathedral events focused on religion and politics. In November 2021, she gave

the eulogy there at the funeral of Colin Powell, one of her successors as secretary of state and a fellow Episcopalian.

Biden described how his mention of Albright elicited cheers during his visit to Poland in late March after Russia's invasion of neighboring Ukraine. "Her name is still synonymous with America as a force for good in the world," Biden said in his eulogy. "Madeleine never minced words or wasted time when she saw something that needed fixing or someone who needed helping. She just got to work."

Clinton said he last spoke with Albright two weeks before her death. He asked her how she was feeling as she received treatment for cancer, and she rebuffed the question.

"Let's don't waste any time on that," Clinton recalled her saying. "The only thing that really matters is what kind of world are we going to leave to our grandchildren."

"I will never forget that conversation as long as I live. It was so perfectly Madeleine," Clinton said. "The thing that really matters is what's going to happen to our grandchildren's generation. ... And so, Madeleine made a decision that, with her last breath, she would go out with her boots on, in this case supporting President Biden and all of America's efforts to help Ukraine."

A month before her death, Albright wrote an opinion essay for the New York Times. It described Russian President Vladimir Putin's then-impending attack on Ukraine as a "historic error."

"Ukraine is entitled to its sovereignty, no matter who its neighbors happen to be," Albright wrote. "In the modern era, great countries accept that, and so must Mr. Putin. That is the message undergirding recent Western diplomacy. It defines the difference between a world governed by the rule of law and one answerable to no rules at all."

Former President Barack Obama and former First

Lady Michelle Obama and former Vice President Al Gore also attended Albright's funeral. Other past and present lawmakers and government officials who reportedly were present included Secretary of State Anthony Blinken, former secretaries Condoleezza Rice and John Kerry, House Speaker Nancy Pelosi and Senate Minority Leader Mitch McConnell.

Former Secretary of State Hillary Clinton filled her eulogy with personal anecdotes of time she spent with



Photo/courtesy of Washington Cathedral video

Madeleine Albright's funeral was held April 27 at Washington National Cathedral, as seen in cathedral video of the service.

Albright before concluding by calling on Americans to follow in Albright's principled footsteps.

"The Bible tells us that, 'to everything, there is a season and a time and purpose under heaven, a time to weep and a time to laugh.'" Clinton said, quoting from Ecclesiastes. "If Madeleine were here with us today, she would also remind us this must be a season of action. And yes, once again we must heed the wisdom of her life and the cause of her public service. ... Defend democracy at home just as vigorously as we do abroad." ■

TRANSITIONS

Phyllis Spiegel elected 12th bishop of Utah

The Rev. Phyllis Spiegel has been elected the 12th bishop of the Episcopal Diocese of Utah after a two-year search process. She currently serves as the rector of St. Anne Episcopal Church in West Chester, Ohio. She was elected on the first ballot at the diocesan convention at St. Mark's Cathedral in Salt Lake City. The diocese plans to consecrate the bishop-elect on Sept. 17 in the historic Capitol Theater in Salt Lake City with Presiding Bishop Michael Curry.



Spiegel

Shannon Rogers Duckworth elected 12th bishop of Louisiana

The Rev. Canon Shannon Rogers Duckworth was chosen XII Bishop of the Episcopal Diocese of Louisiana during a special convention on May 14 at Christ Church Cathedral, New Orleans. She was elected on the first ballot after attaining a majority of both clergy and



Duckworth

lay votes. The election concludes the year-long process of seeking a successor for Bishop Morris King Thompson, Jr. who began his service in the diocese in 2010 and will retire in October 2022.

Duckworth is the first woman to be elected bishop in the Episcopal Diocese of Louisiana.

A native of Mississippi, Duckworth, is currently serving as the canon to the ordinary of the Episcopal Diocese of Louisiana. She was ordained a priest in 2001 after graduating from The General Theological Seminary. She is married to James Duckworth and has two sons, Nicholas and Tucker.

Charlie Holt elected to become 9th bishop of Florida

The Diocese of Florida selected the Rev. Charlie Holt as its bishop coadjutor-elect during its 2022 Special Electing Convention on May 14 at St. John's Cathedral in Jacksonville, Florida. Holt will ultimately succeed the diocese's current bishop, Bishop Samuel Johnson Howard, upon his retirement in late 2023 to serve as the ninth bishop in the diocese's 184-year history.



Holt

Holt was born in Gainesville and raised in Jacksonville, graduating from the Episcopal School of Jacksonville and the University of Florida. He has served the Episcopal Church for almost 25 years and currently serves as associate rector of teaching and formation at The Church of St. John the Divine, Houston, Texas.

Southwest Florida Bishop Dabney Smith announces retirement



Smith

The Rt. Rev. Dabney T. Smith, the fifth bishop of the Diocese of Southwest Florida, has announced that he plans to retire at the end of 2022 due to the difficulty of living with multiple myeloma. Smith, who has served as diocesan bishop since 2007, made the announcement in an email to the diocese on May 11.

Smith called an election for a bishop coadjutor in 2020, anticipating his own retirement. On April 2, 2022, the Very Rev. Douglas F. Scharf was elected. He is scheduled to begin work in the diocese on July 1, be consecrated bishop coadjutor on Sept. 24 and will become diocesan bishop upon Smith's retirement.

Lisa Kimball appointed vice president at VTS

Virginia Theological Seminary (VTS) announced the appointment of Elisabeth "Lisa" Kimball, Ph.D. as vice president for Lifelong Learning, beginning July 1.

"Dr. Kimball is an extraordinary asset to the Seminary," said the Very Rev. Ian S. Markham, Ph.D., dean and president of VTS. "She has attracted significant grant income that supports lay people, smaller congregations, and now, potentially, parenting and home formation. She oversees a vital part of the Seminary which engages with the cyber world and weaves together everything from the TryTank to Christian Formation. Literally, thousands of people are impacted by her hard work. We are deeply grateful for her witness and presence at Virginia Theological Seminary."

Joining the VTS faculty in 2009, Kimball is currently associate dean of Lifelong Learning, the James Maxwell Professor Chair of Lifelong Christian Formation, and faculty liaison for the Baptized for Life and Mutual Ministry initiatives.

— Episcopal News Service



Kimball

AROUND THE CHURCH

'Sacred Ground' releases report, updated curriculum, new resources

By Egan Millard
Episcopal News Service

After more than three years of growth in Sacred Ground, the Episcopal Church's small group curriculum for exploring the impacts of racism, the team that developed it has released an evaluation of how the program has worked so far. The report also includes updates to the curriculum and offers expanded licensing that allows people outside the Episcopal Church to start their own Sacred Ground "circles," or small groups.

The program, developed by filmmaker Katrina Browne as part of the Episcopal Church's Becoming Beloved Community initiative on racial reconciliation, has reached more than 20,000 participants so far. The 10-part film- and readings-based discussion series traces the history of systemic racism in America, from its roots to its present realities. From 2019 through

2021, over 2,100 circles were registered in dioceses across the United States.

"Everywhere I travel, people are bursting to tell me about the transformational impact Sacred Ground has had in their lives," said Presiding Bishop Michael Curry in a press release announcing the report. "The Lord is building Beloved Community through this movement, and in its updated and expanded form, Sacred Ground will help many thousands more take the next steps in the lifelong work of racial healing."

Christina Pacheco of Indígena Consulting, in partnership with the Union of Black Episcopalians, conducted surveys and focus groups with more than 2,900 participants, facilitators and organizers in 2021. The research is presented in a 63-page report intended to inform facilitators and organizers about who is participating and what their experiences have been.

The original curriculum was "written by a white Episcopalian for white Episco-



Photo/courtesy of Jenny Fife

Jenny Fife introduces Sacred Ground to the discussion circle that Fife formed in Roanoke, Virginia, to take up the 10-part, film-based curriculum in Jan. 2020.

palians," an acknowledgement that most Episcopalians are white and that people of color should not be expected to do all the work of anti-racism training. However, people of color have always been welcome to participate, and the report includes findings on how their participation affected them and the group as a whole.

• Among the report's most significant findings:

• 94% of participants said they learned history that they had never been taught before.

• 61% of people of color and 66% of white people indicated that they were "very" or "extremely" transformed by the experience.

• 88% of participants and 85% of facilitators identified as white.

• Over 90% of participants took at

least one action step in response to the course, and nearly 70% took one to five action steps.

Informed by input from the surveys and focus groups, the Sacred Ground organizers added new resources to the program, including a list of best practices for organizing and facilitating Sacred Ground circles.

They revised guides for the last sessions in the curriculum that focus on moving from education to action. They added material on the history of Indigenous boarding schools and provided a "Deeper Dive" list of further videos and readings for those who want to learn more about certain topics.

"If you are an organizer or a facilitator, this report will help you to discover what you can do to create the best outcomes at the internal and external levels," Browne and the Rev. Stephanie Spellers, the presiding bishop's canon for evangelism, reconciliation and creation care, wrote in their introduction. "We are humbled and grateful for your feedback about Sacred Ground and its impact, and pray that the report proves beneficial to you and the people you serve." ■

New nonprofit, The Partner's Path, to support Episcopal clergy spouses

The Partner's Path, an organization that offers connection and interfaith soul care for spouses of Episcopal clergy, supports the spiritual, personal, and professional nourishment of spouses of Episcopal clergy through local-level and churchwide services.

Laura Jackson, founder of Holy Ground Coaching and a D.Min. candidate in Spirituality, serves as The Partner's Path's Executive Director. Jackson has previously worked as a chaplain, crisis counselor, trauma therapist, and spiritual director.

"In 20 years as a clergy spouse, I've had a front row seat on several seminary communities, as well as parishes, dioceses and provinces," said Jackson. "I've experienced strong community among spouses. I've seen how powerfully supportive it can be, and I want that for spouses across the church."

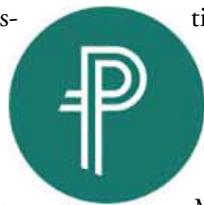
Ardelle Walters, a licensed professional counselor, is the founder of The Partner's Path and will serve as director of donor relations.

It is not uncommon for clergy and

their spouses to find it difficult to navigate their own life challenges while living a curiously public life. Although the need for pastoral care for clergy is addressed across many religious traditions, the pastoral needs of their spouses are often less well recognized.

Initially conceived in 2019 by Walters with support from Calvary Episcopal Church in Memphis, TN, and the Diocese of Western North Carolina, The Partner's Path provides members with the support they need to flourish and bring the diversity of gifts they possess more fully to the world. Its comprehensive services aim to facilitate a sustainable community and relieve unpaid labor expectations through workshops, retreats, training, consulting, and succession planning. The Partner's Path supports clergy spouses in a wide range of issues, such as navigating the church benefits system, finding support for family members on vulnerable topics, and maintaining a healthy balance between public and private life.

— Partner's Path



Maine, New Hampshire and Vermont bishops to assist each other's dioceses

By Egan Millard
Episcopal News Service

The bishops of the dioceses of Maine, New Hampshire and Vermont announced they will serve as assisting bishops in each other's dioceses as part of an effort to increase collaboration in the region.

Maine Bishop Thomas J. Brown, New Hampshire Bishop A. Robert Hirschfeld and Vermont Bishop Shannon MacVean-Brown will continue to serve as diocesan bishops — and therefore ecclesiastical authorities — in their respective dioceses. However, starting in September, each will be able to "preach and teach and provide sacramental rites ... but not to exercise governance authority" in the other dioceses.

"Assisting bishops serve at the invitation of the ecclesiastical authority — in this case, bishops inviting other bishops," the three bishops wrote in an email to their dioceses. "Through preaching, teaching and presiding, we look forward to exercising our ministry in ways that will allow us to get to know each other's dioceses, learn more about the Episcopal Church across our region, and discern how we might learn to collaborate with one another for the sake of God's mission."

The three bishops have been meet-



Photo/Courtesy of the dioceses

Maine Bishop Thomas J. Brown, New Hampshire Bishop A. Robert Hirschfeld and Vermont Bishop Shannon MacVean-Brown.

ing regularly over the past year to consider options for collaboration. The dioceses are relatively small and Vermont faces serious financial challenges. Due to declines in membership and giving, the diocese has an unsustainable long-term budget deficit, with a financial consultant predicting that "diocesan expenses will far exceed revenues" by the first quarter of 2023.

MacVean-Brown told Episcopal News Service last year that there were no plans to merge the northern New England dioceses, but they were exploring the possibility of sharing staff. Currently, Katie Clark is the communications director for New Hampshire and Maine, but no further staffing changes have been announced. The bishops' announcement said the move will not affect their full-time diocesan ministries or their diocesan budgets. ■

The O'Driscoll Forum begins summer curriculum

Beginning next year, the O'Driscoll Forum, "A Celebration of Preaching, Teaching and the Liturgical Arts," a multi-day program, will be an annual highlight of the summer curriculum at Vancouver School of Theology (VTS).

The Forum is named in honor of Herbert and Paula O'Driscoll. O'Driscoll is a former parish priest and cathedral dean, internationally renowned conference and pilgrimage leader, hymnodist and storyteller, and author of more than 50 books, who continues to write and speak prolifically and eloquently at age 93.

Each summer's O'Driscoll Forum will have visits by globally distinguished teachers and practitioners of preaching, teaching and the liturgical arts. They will be invited to give public lectures, and to spend a few days on the VST campus sharing their experience with a group of aspiring young practitioners of these skills, in a collegial "master class" format.

An online launch event was broadcast on May 31 with Driscoll speaking and reading from his recent book of memoirs.

For more details about the Forum see <https://vst.edu/odriscollforum/>

GENERAL CONVENTION

General Convention budget committee debates funding for proposed anti-racism coalition



By David Paulsen
Episcopal News Service

Questions about the financial details of a proposed new churchwide anti-racism coalition commanded much of the discussion at a two-day meeting of General Convention's Joint Standing Committee on Program, Budget and Finance.

Meeting in person near Baltimore — the site of the 80th General Convention in July — the members of the budgetary committee generally focused their discussion of the coalition on a few main points of concern: the \$2 million in funding every three years that has been suggested for the coalition; the budgetary mechanisms that would be needed to yield that funding; the church's methods for ensuring financial accountability, and the risk that the coalition's work will overlap with existing church offices and programs.

Despite raising such concerns and seeking greater details on the plans for the new coalition, members of the General Convention budgetary committee appeared to agree with the coalition proposers' central point — that a long-term approach is needed to confront the church's historic complicity with racist systems and the ways that legacy is still embedded in the governance and culture of today's Episcopal Church.

"Our church and its ecclesiology and its structures are part and parcel of white supremacy," Connecticut Bishop Ian Douglas, a member of Presiding Officers' Working Group on Truth-Telling, Reckoning and Healing, said via zoom in a presentation to the budgetary committee on May 18. He was joined on zoom by the Rev. John Kitagawa of the Diocese of Arizona, a co-chair of the working group.

"We've been caught up in the racist project of white supremacy, which is at the heart of our nation and at the heart of our church," Douglas said.

The proposed Episcopal Coalition



Photo/David Paulsen/Episcopal News Service

The Rev. John Kitagawa of Arizona, top on screen, and Connecticut Bishop Ian Douglas, below, present the recommendations of the Presiding Officers' Working Group on Truth-Telling, Reckoning and Healing to the Joint Standing Committee on Program, Budget and Finance on May 18.

for Racial Equity and Justice would be a voluntary network of dioceses, parishes, church institutions and individuals operating outside of the Domestic and Foreign Missionary Society, the Episcopal Church's corporate entity. The coalition would be dedicated to improving the church's uneven track record of prioritizing racial reconciliation and addressing the harm of colonialism and imperialism, at the denominational level and across its more than 100 dioceses.

Resolution A125, which would establish the coalition, doesn't include a precise funding request, though it suggests a symbolic tithe on the Episcopal Church's financial holdings, which the proposers estimate would yield \$2 million for the coalition each triennium. The coalition would be able to supplement that amount with its own fundraising.

"I support the initiative, and I think it's the beginning of important work and real work," Rhode Island Bishop Nicholas Knisely said, echoing other members of Planning, Budget and Finance. "But I'm concerned that the unintended consequence will be to reduce monies available for aid to dioceses, for overseas partnerships. ... I'm worried that by do-

ing this work, we would undercut other work that's helping communities that have suffered from colonialism and imperialism."

"This is exactly the hard choices that General Convention will have to make," Douglas responded.

The Joint Standing Committee on Budget, Program and Finance's meeting was held at the Maritime Institute Conference Center. More than two dozen members, legislative liaisons and church staff members filled a conference room for the morning plenary sessions, all wearing face masks, while about 10 more people joining via Zoom appeared on a large screen at the front of the room.

It was the committee's first in-person session of this legislative cycle, after holding several meetings and a May 5 hearing on zoom. This and other General Convention committees have been meeting online since November as part of an extended preparatory period made possible and necessary by pandemic-fueled changes to the 80th General Convention.

The upcoming convention initially was to take place in 2021 but was postponed a year in the hopes that pandemic conditions would improve enough by

July 2022 for an in-person meeting. Conditions have improved, but the presiding officers announced last week that they intended to scale down the 80th General Convention due to the continued threat of COVID-19 outbreaks despite public health precautions and the widespread availability of vaccinations.

On May 17, Presiding Bishop Michael Curry and the Rev. Gay Clark Jennings, president of the House of Deputies, issued a follow-up message saying the convention would be reduced from eight days to four days, July 8-11. More planning updates took place later in May, with the final plan expected to be completed by the first week in June.

The Rev. Mike Ehmer, the Program, Budget and Finance committee chair, alluding to the presiding officers' announcement on May 16, said he couldn't offer any more details yet. "What we know is in the announcement," he said. The decision could have profound impacts on this and other committees' work. Church leaders are working out the legislative logistics of a shorter, smaller meeting, which likely will leave little time for budget amendments in person.

Ehmer's committee is required by General Convention's Joint Rules of Order to present its budget three days before the end of the convention, though bishops and deputies could vote to move that presentation a day later to accommodate the new timeframe. The committee, facing a sudden time crunch, plans to meet online again before convention.

The Rev. John Floberg, a committee member and priest from the Diocese of North Dakota, noted that General Convention has strived to make its budget process more open and transparent in recent triennia. "This really, really challenges that process of becoming more transparent," Floberg said. "How do we not appear to backtrack on all that we gained?"

Program, Budget and Finance's 27 members are appointed by the presiding bishop, who serves as president of the

continued on page 10

CONVENTION continued from page 1

that includes the House of Deputies and the House of Bishops, composed of deputies and bishops from each diocese. It is also the largest churchwide gathering, drawing together upwards of 5,000 attendees. The 80th General Convention was originally scheduled for July 2021 but was postponed a year because of the COVID-19 pandemic.

Curry and Jennings first discussed their preliminary plan for a modified General Convention at a special meeting of Executive Council held on May 11. At the time, they said that neither cancellation nor another postponement of General Convention was a viable option and appointed the design group to reduce the size and duration of the con-

vention and limit it to essential functions.

The design group, led by Bishop Sean Rowe and Deputy Bryan Krislock, parliamentarians in each of the respective houses, held its first of three scheduled meetings May 17. In the following week, the design group met to develop recommendations on COVID-19 protocols and arrangements for worship and other large events. It also planned to develop recommendations on the legislative process, working with legislative committee chairs to prioritize the resolutions assigned to them. In the meantime, two-dozen bishops' and deputies' committees are holding hearings together online in advance of convention.



Photo/Sharon Tillman/Episcopal News Service

The Rev. Gay Clark Jennings and Presiding Bishop Michael appear at the 79th General Convention in 2019 in Austin, Texas.

The design group planned to finish its work by May 31. During the first week of June, both the Joint Standing Committee on Planning and Arrangements and Executive Council will meet, allow-

ing the presiding officers to formalize the new plan for General Convention.

"While these plans will not be official until the first week in June, we have every confidence that our colleagues in leadership will receive them well," Curry and Jennings wrote. "We give thanks for those who are working tirelessly to make this General Convention safer for everyone who will attend and everyone who will receive us in Baltimore. As the United States marks the grim milestone of 1 million deaths from COVID-19, we ask you to pray for all those whose lives have been lost and all those whose lives will never be the same." ■

GENERAL CONVENTION

Proposal to consider end Communion baptism requirement, other resolutions

By David Paulsen
Episcopal News Service

General Convention's committees on Prayer Book, Liturgy and Music heard testimony May 3 on a diverse selection of resolutions, from proposals to add the late Bishop Barbara Harris to the church's calendar of feasts to a measure "addressing antisemitic, anti-Jewish and/or supersessionist interpretations of our lectionaries."

The resolution that generated the most discussion, and some of the strongest opinions, was a measure proposed by the Diocese of Northern California that would repeal the Episcopal canon that requires worshipers to be baptized before receiving Communion in Episcopal churches.

Martin Heatlie testified on behalf of Episcopalians in Northern California who researched the issue. "We could not find anything in the Bible or the Book of Common Prayer that required baptism as a prerequisite for receiving Communion," Heatlie said. When priests say "the gifts of God for the people of God" before distributing the bread and wine, that means everyone, the diocese concluded.

"We all believe that all people are God's people, so it's not just the gifts of God for just baptized people," Heatlie said.

Heatlie was one of eight people who testified on Resolution C028 at the online hearing held by the bishops' and deputies' committees on Prayer Book, Liturgy and Music. (The two committees, though distinct, typically meet together to consider resolutions.)

The Episcopal Church's Canon I.17.7 states: "No unbaptized person shall be eligible to receive Holy Communion in this Church."

The Rev. James Richardson, alternate clergy deputy in the Diocese of Northern California, noted that the diocese's laity voted overwhelmingly in support of repealing that canon, while clergy approved it by a narrower margin.

"I think that bespeaks that this canon is about control and gatekeeping rather than an invitation to baptism," Richardson said.

The rest of the testimony on the resolution, however, was opposed to severing the connection between the sacraments of baptism and Communion. Nathan Brown, a lay deputy in the Diocese of Washington, asserted that the two sacraments "are intrinsically linked," while the Rev. Lee Singleton, Diocese of Florida, called the proposal "a bridge too far."

The Rev. Bertie Pearson, Diocese of Texas, said that the lack of examples in the Bible is not itself justification for ending the Episcopal Church's practice of welcoming only baptized Christians to receive Eucharist.

"I think we sometimes forget that the Bible is not a rule book for how we do church," Pearson said. In other Christian texts going back to the early centuries of the church, baptism and Communion are clearly linked, he said. "It is always

the baptized and the baptized alone who is really emphasized."

The resolution "contradicts 2,000 years of church teaching and practice," Kevin Miller, a Massachusetts alternate deputy, testified. "The church universal, which we claim to be a part of, has taught that baptism is the entranceway into the church."

Miller and others opposed to the resolution underscored that the Episcopal Church can welcome all worshippers while still tying communion to baptism. It can be an opportunity to teach about the importance of baptism in deepening a person's Christian faith.

Information on proposed resolutions can be found in the online Virtual Binder, and all are invited to register to observe or testify at the remaining online hearings.

Of the 18 resolutions that the Prayer Book, Liturgy and Music, 10 recommended creating a churchwide feast day to celebrate the life of Harris, the first female bishop in the Episcopal Church and the Anglican Communion when she was consecration as bishop suffragan of the Diocese of Massachusetts in 1989.

Harris died on March 13, 2020. That date would become the day of her feast if it is approved for addition to the calendar.

House of Deputies Vice President Byron Rushing, a deputy from Massachusetts, testified in favor of his diocese's resolution, emphasizing in particular that General Convention need not wait the customary 50 years after Harris' death to add her to the calendar.

Harris is remembered for her support of social justice causes and her part in the first wave of women to be ordained as Episcopal priests. Miller, the Massachusetts alternate deputy, praised her in his testimony, saying her service to the church and to the communities it serves justify the feast day.

"I believe that even if she weren't the first woman consecrated bishop, her Christian witness, her Christian life would be enough for her to be on the calendar," Miller said.

Others testified in support of Resolution C019, which would create a feast day celebrating the late civil rights icon John Lewis, who was a longtime congressman from Georgia when he died in 2020.

The Rev. Lewis Powell, a deputy and deacon in Northern California, called Lewis an "icon of love, faith, justice, strength, courage, wisdom and a yearning to leave the world and the church a better place than they found it."

Another resolution, C020, would add renowned theologian Howard Thurman to the church's calendar of feasts, an addition that Richardson testified was "long, long long overdue." Though not



Photo/Mary Frances Schjonberg/Episcopal News Service

Two chalice bearers and San Joaquin Bishop David Rice administer communion after Rice's 2017 investiture in St. James Episcopal Cathedral in Fresno, California.

an Episcopalian, Thurman "crossed so many denominational lines," Richardson said, adding that Thurman's book "Jesus and the Disinherited" is commonly read by Episcopal study groups and a central text of the Episcopal Church's Sacred Ground curriculum on the roots of racism in the United States.

Resolution C018 would begin the process of allowing trial use of what is known as the "Expanded Revised Common Lectionary Daily Readings," a measure proposed by the Diocese of Virginia. This revised lectionary would, in part, expand the selection of readings for

weekday services, creating new opportunities for celebrating Holy Eucharist, Charlotte Meyer testified.

"A lectionary such as this is not only useful but highly effective in forming community," said Meyer, a lay deputy from the Diocese of Easton.

The resolution addressing antisemitism and anti-Jewish lectionary interpretations, C030, was proposed by the Diocese of New York. It mirrors similar resolutions under consideration by this General Convention and continues the ongoing efforts of the Episcopal Church to respond to concerns that biblical readings, especially during Holy Week, could fuel hatred against Jews.

The committees also heard testimony on Resolution A126, which was proposed by the Presiding Officers' Working Group on Truth-Telling, Reckoning and Healing. The resolution calls for "a comprehensive review" of the church's prayer book, hymnal and other liturgical materials "in regard to the colonialist, racist and white supremacist, imperialist and nationalistic language."

The working group included the resolution in its final report, released in March. Rushing, who served on the working group, testified in favor of the resolution and spoke of "the importance of liturgy and the words of liturgy" in confronting and remedying the church's past complicity with injustice. ■



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GENERAL CONVENTION

House of Deputies president, church reaffirm commitment to reproductive rights as Supreme Court poised to overturn Roe v. Wade

By Episcopal News Service

One of the Episcopal Church's presiding officers and its Office of Government Relations affirmed the church's commitment to equal access to reproductive health care on May 3, after a leaked draft of a pending U.S. Supreme Court ruling indicated the court was poised to overturn the landmark 1973 decision in *Roe v. Wade* that ensured for women nationwide the right to obtain an abortion.

The Rev. Gay Clark Jennings, president of the House of Deputies, responded with a written statement that cited decades of General Convention resolutions in support of women's access to birth control and abortion. In particular, Jennings said, The Episcopal Church's governing body passed a 1976 resolution that expressed "unequivocal opposition to any legislation on the part of the national or state governments which would abridge or deny the right of individuals to reach informed decisions in this matter and to act upon them."

"And yet, for half a century, the promise of equal access to reproductive health care has never been fully realized," said Jennings, who is 71. "For nearly my entire adult life, Christian extremists have fought to restrict access to abortion with invasive laws, demeaning patient requirements and clinic regulations that go far beyond what is required for patient safety. ... Now, these extremists are on the verge of making good on a half-century of threats."

Jennings' statement was in response to Politico's May 2 report on a leaked document it obtained showing at least five

Supreme Court justices willing to uphold a Mississippi law that outlaws abortions after 15 weeks of pregnancy. The draft decision, written by Justice Samuel Alito, would go further and overrule the court's previous decisions in *Roe v. Wade* and the related *Planned Parenthood v. Casey* from 1992. "It is time to heed the Constitution and return the issue of abortion to the people's elected representatives," Alito says in the draft decision.

Chief Justice John Roberts on May 3 confirmed that the leaked draft was real but not final, and the court would investigate it as an unprecedented breach of protocol and a "betrayal of the confidences of the court."

The U.S. Constitution supersedes state law, however, "powers not delegated to the United States by the Constitution, nor prohibited by it to the states, are reserved to the states respectively, or to the people." In 1973, the Supreme Court ruled that the "due process" clause of the 14th Amendment prohibited states from denying women access to abortion. Overturning *Roe v. Wade* effectively would return the matter of abortion's legality to the states.

The procedure is now legal in all 50 states, but abortion rights groups predict that about half of all states will severely limit or outright ban abortion if allowed to do so. By another estimate, the resulting abortion clinic closures would reduce the number of legal abortions in the United States by 14%, while abortion rights advocates warn that new restrictions will have the effect of driving



Abortion rights protestors gather in Foley Square, New York City in May 2022.

Photo/Wikimedia

up the number of life-threatening illegal abortions carried out through dangerous alternatives to professional care.

Public opinion on abortion has been narrowly divided for years, though a consistent majority of American have said they do not want to see the Supreme Court overturn *Roe v. Wade*, according to Gallup.

The Episcopal Church's positions on abortion generally have sought to balance a pastoral approach to supporting women who face unwanted pregnancies with the church's stance on political responses — that governments must ensure women have control over their medical care and are free to make decisions based on their own consciences.

"All human life is sacred, it is sacred from its inception until death," the 69th General Convention said in a resolution that it passed in 1988. "We regard all abortion as having a tragic dimension, calling for the concern and compassion of all the Christian community."

That resolution, however, concludes by questioning the effectiveness of legislative

solutions, and it calls on state and federal governments to "take special care to see that individual conscience is respected, and that the responsibility of individuals to reach informed decisions in this matter is acknowledged and honored."

The church's Washington-based Office of Government Relations released a brief statement on May 3 in response to the pending decision in the case known as *Dobbs v. Jackson Women's Health*. "The Episcopal Church reaffirms our commitment to 'equitable access to women's health care, including women's reproductive health care,' which we view as 'an integral part of a woman's struggle to assert her dignity and worth as a human being,'" the office said, citing a resolution passed by the 79th General Convention in 2018.

"The Office of Government Relations will continue to advocate at the federal level to protect reproductive rights," it said, and it shared its previously assembled overview of church positions on abortion and women's reproductive health.

Jennings also underscored the language of the 2018 resolution in her statement on May 3.

"As Episcopalians, we have a particular obligation to stand against Christians who seek to destroy our multicultural democracy and recast the United States as an idol to the cruel and distorted Christianity they advocate," Jennings said. "Now — before this outrageous opinion becomes law — we must make our Christian witness to the dignity of every human being by insisting that we support the right to safe and legal reproductive health care because our faith in a compassionate God requires us to do so." ■

General Convention committees consider Safe Church training resolutions

By Melodie Woerman
Episcopal News Service

During an April 30 online hearing, the bishops' and deputies' Legislative Committees on Sexual Harassment, Sexual Exploitation, & Safeguarding heard testimony on two resolutions about the need to make more people aware of Safe Church training and to make it available to non-English speakers.

Resolution A064 would allocate \$15,000 to the Episcopal Church's Office of Communication and Office of Formation to promote the new online Safe Church training modules that many people in the church are required to take. The new training sessions conform to the 2018 updated Model Policies for the Protection of Children and Youth and for the Protection of Vulnerable Adults.

Eric Travis, a member of the Task Force to Develop Model Sexual Harassment Policies and Safe Church Training — the body that proposed A064 — said the group worked hard to create new training materials that closely followed the model

policies, and more people need to know about it. "In the work that we've done in the last three years we've discovered a great number of dioceses didn't even know that there was a new model policy available to them, and what that meant for them in their diocese, in their churches," he said.

Paul Ambos, deputy and chancellor of the Diocese of New Jersey, also supported the resolution, saying he recently learned that the senior warden of a major parish in his diocese had never heard of Safe Church training, "which I found to be shocking."

Another resolution, A065, calls for translating the new Safe Church training materials into Spanish, French and Haitian Creole so that members of the Episcopal Church for whom those are primary languages can participate in the training. It would provide \$300,000 for this, along with \$50,000 for an ongoing task force to create and implement these materials.

Travis testified in support of this resolution, too, noting that it takes more than Google Translate to create training in new languages. "There is a need for contextual and appropriate translations

of materials, especially as we deal with issues of Safe Church matters," he said.

The committee noted that Spanish, along with French and Haitian Creole, is named in the resolution because they affect the largest groups of non-native English speakers in the Episcopal Church. In the Diocese of Haiti, numerically the largest in the Episcopal Church, members may read French but speak Creole, the committee said. And according to committee member the Rev. Anna Carmichael of the Diocese of San Joaquin, "the Latino Hispanic community is the fastest-growing community in the Episcopal Church right now."

In addition to the committees' deliberation on languages beyond English, the Rev. Valerie Webster of the Diocese of Montana asked whether training materials can be used by those who are hard of hearing, and by blind or partially sighted people. The Rev. Shannon Kelly, Episcopal Church officer for young adult and campus ministries, who participated as an expert witness, noted that audio materials always are accompanied by text, and all videos are

closed-captioned. Developers are working on ways to make the material available to those who are blind, she said.

New Hampshire Bishop Rob Hirschfeld wondered whether the named languages are enough. "What about Korean, Japanese and other Asian languages?" he asked. Kelly said that being able to translate materials comes down to two things, no matter which languages are involved. The first is "capacity of the personnel we have," Kelly said, noting that a volunteer task force has been working on this, aided by a relatively new half-time staff person. "But budget for translation is the biggest hurdle," she said, "because it costs money to have human beings who are good at this translation do this work."

For Central Pennsylvania Bishop Audrey Scanlan, having appropriate translations is a justice issue for the church. "It's a real problem for us in continuing to identify ourselves as a white, English-speaking church," she said. "It should be a no-brainer that materials are always translated into every language in which the Episcopal Church has representation." ■

GENERAL CONVENTION

Committees hear testimony on extending Beloved Community, healing intergenerational trauma and use of 'people of color'

By Pat McCaughan
Episcopal News Service

General Convention's committees on Racial Justice and Reconciliation received testimony about resolutions to further and extend Beloved Community and the healing of intergenerational trauma resulting from the destructive effects of racism and white supremacy during a May 11 online hearing. The committees also engaged in discussion about appropriate inclusive language to refer to People of Color.

For the first time, two-dozen bishops' and deputies' committees are holding hearings together online in advance of the upcoming 80th General Convention. The triennial convention is the church's governing body, where final resolutions are considered and voted on by both the House of Bishops and the House of Deputies.

Julia Ayala Harris, chair of the Episcopal Church's Standing Committee on Mission and a candidate for the president of the House of Deputies, told committee members that the "time is right to make a reality" Resolution A125, which would establish a voluntary Episcopal Coalition for Racial Equity and Justice among dioceses and congregations.

The proposed coalition was first unveiled in March in a report produced by the Presiding Officers' Working Group on Truth-Telling, Reckoning and Healing. Presiding Bishop Michael Curry and the Rev. Gay Clark Jennings, president of the House of Deputies, created the working group last year to sharpen the church's focus on confronting its past complicity with racist systems and the lingering legacy of white supremacy embedded in institutions like the church. The coalition also is seen as a remedy to the church's uneven track record of prioritizing racial reconciliation, at the churchwide level and across its more than 100 dioceses. The proposal also calls on the church to set aside \$2 million annually to carry out the work.

The Rev. Cornelia Eaton, canon to the ordinary in the Navajoland Area Mission and part of its General Convention deputation and a member of Executive Council, described her mother's terror at being sent to a New Mexico boarding school when supporting Resolutions A127 and A128. The resolutions call for "a comprehensive investigation of the church's ownership and operation of Episcopal-run Indigenous boarding schools" and would also facilitate healing from their effects, respectively.

Eaton said A127, which also calls for the hiring of one or more research fellows to work with the Archives of the Episcopal Church to assist the investigation, would help Native people "move toward healing and reconciliation which, for many, will take time. This is another beginning for the church to respond to reparations and restore healing justice in

God's kingdom."

Eaton's mother was told she could not speak the Navajo language at the school. "She said, 'I did not understand a word of English. I did not know how to re-



The Rev. Cornelia Eaton described her mother's terror at being sent to a New Mexico boarding school during the May 11 hearing.

spond to the teachers. Because I did not know how to speak English, I would just start crying."

If they did speak in Navajo, they were whipped. Her mother often cried herself to sleep at night, Eaton said. "I remember asking my mother how she continued to carry on the Navajo language and culture. At the boarding school, when she cried underneath the covers, she would speak to God in our Navajo language. She said that's how she kept the Navajo language in her heart. To this day, she still speaks to us in the Navajo language. And I am grateful to her that she spoke to us in this language in a way that I am continuing today to speak it fluently."

In July 2021, Curry and Jennings issued a statement lamenting the church's involvement in operating Indigenous boarding schools and called Executive Council to deliver a comprehensive proposal for addressing the legacy of Indigenous schools at the 80th General Convention. The presiding officers called for earmarking resources for independent research in the archives of the Episcopal Church, options for developing culturally appropriate liturgical materials and plans for educating Episcopalians across the church about this history, among other initiatives.

Resolution A127 would allocate \$125,000 and Resolution A128, would allocate \$300,000 to invest in community-based spiritual healing centers to address intergenerational trauma through mental health and substance abuse counseling, traditional forms of healing and other services desired by the local community.

Eaton, program director for the Hozho Wellness Center, a ministry of the Navajoland Area Mission, noted that native people are at greater risk of dying by suicide than other Americans. Both resolutions, proposed by the Presiding Officers' Working Group on Truth Telling, Reckoning and Healing, speak to the need for healing from intergenerational trauma. "I understand that healing won't be easy," she said. "However,

we need to go through it in order for us to come back into harmony with one another."

When testifying in support of Resolution C036 which proposes \$2 million to extend the work of the Beloved Community, Miriam Casey, said the funding has assisted the Diocese of Northern California in three important efforts over the past three years: the creation of racial reconciliation workshops; funding basic instructional needs of an underfunded elementary school serving primarily Latino, immigrant and undocumented children; and hiring an Indigenous-led consulting firm to lead congregations through the process of developing land acknowledgments that build on meaningful relationships with the local Native communities.

"This process will be a model for other churches in our diocese," said Casey, representing the diocesan Commission for Intercultural Ministries. "These projects were about telling the truth about racial inequities in our communities, imagining what it would be like if those inequities were not present, growing in our capacity to love and taking action to address inequities created by racism," said Casey, noting that the efforts would not have been possible without funding from the Becoming Beloved Community grants.

Discussion of Resolution A131, proposed by the Presiding Officers' Working Group on Truth Telling, Reckoning and Healing would establish the phrase "people of color" when referring to communities in the church, that do not exclusively identify as white.

The Rev. Nina Salmon, Southwest

Virginia deputy and committee secretary, sparked lively discussion when she asked if the term "BIPOC" or Black, Indigenous and people of color was a preferable term.

The Rev. Leon Sampson, a deputy from Navajoland Area Mission, and others told the meeting that BIPOC leaves out references to Latino and Asian Americans and is considered offensive. "I feel like it takes away from the uniqueness of our history. It takes away from the historical racial ideology that has happened."

New York Deputy Diane Pollard, a member of Executive Council, said she found the acronym offensive and exclusionary. "So many of us, who do this work have been working so long to be inclusive. Reducing everyone to five letters for the convenience of society to me,

there is something very wrong about that."

South Dakota Deputy Claire Hussey, the assistant committee secretary, said: "As a young adult, an Asian American, I don't really appreciate the term BIPOC. That makes it seem like if you are Black, or if you

are Indigenous, you are somehow separate from people of color. Then you're lumping in people like Latina, Latinx, Asian American, anyone else that is not identifying themselves as white into the separate category that's not as important to recognize as Black or Indigenous. If we switch over to 'people of color' ... that makes it sound like we're all people that are not in that racial majority. And I think that inclusivity is important because it puts all of those ethnicities and a sort of united understanding that no, none of us, are truly in that racial majority." ■



South Dakota Deputy Claire Hussey testified to her dislike of the acronym BIPOC.

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FEATURE

Episcopalians help launch national gun buybacks to turn weapons into garden tools

By David Paulsen
Episcopal News Service

Episcopalians in Connecticut, Ohio and California are helping to launch a national ecumenical initiative called Guns to Gardens that will stage numerous gun buyback events on June 11 and turn the weapons into garden tools.

Retired Connecticut Bishop Suffragan James Curry spearheaded the initiative, which builds on his work with Swords to Plowshares Northeast and similar anti-gun violence blacksmithing ministries. Curry and other organizers hope this inaugural Guns to Gardens day will become a catalyst for annual buyback events that draw attention to the problem of gun violence and promote gun safety while supporting families and communities that have been affected by gun-related deaths.

"This is just one strategy, one prong in a multipronged approach toward changing the attitude toward gun violence in our community," Curry told Episcopal News Service. In a nation where Americans are estimated to own nearly 400 million guns, starting conversations about gun safety is as much the goal as getting guns off the street, he said.

On June 11, Curry will bring his blacksmithing forge to a Guns to Gardens buyback in New Haven. The initiative's other participants include Church of the Epiphany in Euclid, Ohio, and St. Paul's Episcopal Church in Oakland, California. They are among the 13 participant sites confirmed as of this week, and Curry said others likely will be added to the official list soon.

The Rev. Rosalind Hughes is leading the effort at Church of the Epiphany, where she serves as rector. The suburban Cleveland congregation will host its gun buyback in the church parking lot from 11 a.m. to 1 p.m., offering gift cards in exchange for the relinquished weapons. Euclid police will be present to help volunteers safely receive the guns, which will be disassembled on the spot. Hughes then plans to begin turning the metal into trowels, using her rudimentary blacksmithing training and a small forge she purchased.

Hughes said her congregation's lay leaders and

members are excited to be a part of the new Guns to Gardens initiative alongside other faith-based organizations across the United States. "The hope is that this will be the first national event and that it will build on itself from here," she told ENS.

After the buyback, Epiphany is working with the local group God Before Guns to host an interfaith prayer vigil at 2:30 p.m. to lament the problem of gun

violence and recommit to ending it. "We have seen firsthand in Euclid the trend in gun violence that's going the wrong way in the country right now, and so it's something that's on people's minds locally," Hughes said.

More than 45,000 people in the United States died from gun-related injuries in 2020 — more than any other year on record, according to data tracked by Pew Research Center. More than half of those deaths were from suicide.

Paula Hawthorn, a longtime parishioner at St. Paul's in Oakland, is a lead organizer of the Guns to Gardens event in the city. She told ENS she first got involved in local efforts to stop gun violence after a series of shootings in 2011 killed three small children. After those tragedies, she said she prayed for guidance and heard God calling on her to do something. "For me, it's very spiritually directed."

She first heard about blacksmithing ministries like Curry's last year and was eager to coordinate a similar gun buyback in Oakland. St. Paul's is

continued on page 14



Photo/David Deutsch

From left, Bishop Jim Curry, Steve Yanovsky and Pina Violano, co-founders of Swords to Plowshares Northeast, hold up some of the garden tools they created from former guns, during a demonstration of the process on Capitol Hill in Washington, D.C. in Nov. 2021.

BUDGET continued from page 6

House of Bishops, and the president of the House of Deputies, with one bishop and two deputies chosen from each of the church's nine provinces.

The Rev. Patty Downing, the committee secretary from the Diocese of Delaware who also serves on Executive Council, presented an overview of the proposed \$100.7 million churchwide budget plan for 2023-24. A two-year plan will mark a one-time but significant change from the church's typical three-year plans, she said. She also outlined several distinct considerations in this budget, including the flexibility afforded by past surpluses produced largely because of pandemic-related income and expenses. Executive Council, which drafted the budget plan now being considered by Program, Budget and Finance, proposed setting aside \$6.5 million in surplus for use either in the 2023-24 budget or the following triennium.

The pandemic also will shape how the church plans for the future, both the potential for financial turmoil and the appreciation of the loss and pain felt by so many in the church, with the death toll from the coronavirus now reaching 1 million people in the United States. "We need to hear that. We need to absorb that. And then we need to take it into the future with us," Downing said.

Another major consideration, Downing said, is the budgetary impact of the seven General Convention resolutions proposed by the Presiding Officers' Working Group on Truth-Telling, Reckoning

and Healing in its March 23 report.

Most of those resolutions were assigned to General Convention's committees on Racial Justice & Reconciliation, which held a hearing on them May 11. Program, Budget and Finance doesn't consider the merits of such resolutions, only the ability of the church to incorporate their financial implications into its budget.

Byron Rushing, vice president of the House of Deputies and a member of the presiding officers' working group, said most Episcopalians agree that the church should work to root out racism in its structures. "We are suggesting the most expeditious way to get that done," he said. One key characteristic of the coalition, he added, would be that it would be accountable to General Convention every three years, not to Executive Council, which is the church's governing body between meetings of General Convention.

Newark Bishop Carlye Hughes raised concerns that the scope of the coalition's work could overlap with the church's existing staff-led Becoming Beloved Community initiative. The Rev. Stephanie Spellers, the presiding bishop's canon for evangelism, reconciliation and creation care, was asked to respond and said that her staff was not consulted before the working group drafted its report.

"There would likely be redundancy in the system once the coalition is up and running," she said, though she also suggested that such redundancy could be alleviated as the coalition takes shape and that the church may find benefit in "the kind of independence that this organization is proposing."

Several members of the budgetary committee raised other concerns that the financial implications of Resolution A125 remain unclear.

In the concluding plenary session on May 19, Bishop Suffragan Jeff Fisher of the Diocese of Texas, vice chair of the committee, summarized those concerns in a proposed resolution. The committee "desires to support the establishment" of the coalition, the resolution said, but it "cannot fully support" that plan without more clarity on the following details:

How would the "financial holdings" of the church be defined for the purpose of calculating the triennial funding of the coalition?

How would coalition funding affect the 5% draw from investment income that already supports the churchwide budget?

Will the coalition require start-up financing in 2023-24 up to or equal to the suggested \$2 million?

What effect will this have on future churchwide budgets?

Does the 80th General Convention have the ability to commit funds in budgets that will be considered by future General Conventions?

"This might not be an all-exhaustive list to some of the questions you might have," Fisher said.

The committee approved an amendment to the resolution Knisely proposed that committed the body to working with the presiding officers' working group and General Convention's Racial Justice and Reconciliation on figuring out an acceptable financial plan for creating the coalition.

The budgetary committee also approved an amendment proposed by Bill Fleener of Western Michigan that would address the potential for redundancy between the new work of the coalition and the continuing work of Spellers' Racial Reconciliation Office staff.

With those amendments, the committee passed the resolution in a unanimous voice vote.

Douglas spoke to the point of the latter amendment, amount redundancies, in his presentation a day earlier.

"There was huge and deep appreciation for the work that the church is already doing in our commitments to dismantle racism, white supremacy and anti-Black bias," Douglas said. The coalition's mission would be "building on, extending and advancing that incredible, good work. ... This is not in any way seen as competition for and/or an alternative to that good work."

The budgetary committee on May 19 also narrowly approved a resolution, in an 11-10 vote, that would hold the church's investment draw for the 2023-24 budget to 5% or less, despite some members arguing the current percentage rate could limit the church's budgetary flexibility.

The Rev. Mally Lloyd, the chair of Executive Council's Finance Committee who also serves as the House of Deputies presidents' liaison to Program, Budget and Finance, reminded the committee that if the anti-racism coalition or other General Convention actions require additional funds, the \$6.5 million surplus would be available if the investment draw can't be raised. ■

NEWS

BUFFALO continued from page 1

Presiding Bishop Michael Curry, who grew up in Buffalo and whose father was rector of St. Philip's Episcopal Church, a historically black congregation in the city, released a statement May 16 saying his "heart is heavy" at the news of the attack near where he and his childhood friends once rode their bikes. He offered prayers for the victims' families and gratitude for the police officers who stopped further carnage.

"The loss of any human life is tragic, but there was deep racial hatred driving this shooting, and we have got to turn from the deadly path our nation has walked for much too long," Curry said. "Bigotry-based violence — any bigotry at all — against our siblings who are people of color, Jewish, Sikh, Asian, trans, or any other group, is fundamentally wrong. As baptized followers of Jesus of Nazareth, we are called to uphold and protect the dignity of every human child of God, and to actively uproot the white supremacy and racism deep in the heart of our shared life."

On May 15, Rowe led a short prayer service with Denise Clarke-Merriweather, a member of St. Philip's. The prayer service, livestreamed on Zoom and Facebook, incorporated the Litany in the Wake of a Mass Shooting, which was developed by Bishops United Against Gun Violence after six people were killed at a Sikh temple in Wisconsin in 2012. It is updated regularly with additional prayers for the victims of new

‘We need to say as clearly as we can that the ideology of white supremacy has no place in America ... Silence is complicity. We cannot remain silent.’

— President Joe Biden

mass shootings in the United States.

On May 16, the two partner dioceses' Commission to Dismantle Racism and Discrimination issued a statement lamenting the Buffalo attack, calling it "another reminder of the forces of evil that plague our country requiring the acknowledgement of ongoing traumatization due to racism and discrimination."

"While we extend our deepest condolences, we know that a commitment to faith-based action is needed now, more than ever," the commission said. "Please join us in the concerted effort to promote justice, peace, and love within every aspect of our lives in dedication to our deceased and injured neighbors, as well as all individuals who have been victimized as a result of racial discrimination."

Gendron has been charged locally with first-degree murder, and the FBI is investigating the attack as a possible hate crime. Gendron, dressed in tactical gear and carrying an assault weapon, is accused of arriving at the Buffalo supermarket midafternoon May 14 and shooting four people in the parking lot before continuing into the store and fir-

ing on shoppers and employees. A security guard who returned fire was among those shot and killed.

Officials said Gendron livestreamed the attack on the website Twitch before Buffalo police responded and persuaded Gendron to surrender.

The attack, by a gunman reportedly driven by white supremacist ideology, has drawn comparisons to other racially and ethnically motivated massacres, including the 2015 shooting at Mother Emanuel African Episcopal Church in Charleston, South Carolina, that killed nine Black church members; the 2018 shooting at Tree of Life Synagogue in Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania, that killed 11 worshipers, and the 2019 shooting at a Walmart in El Paso, Texas, that killed 23 people, most of them Latino.

One of the 10 fatal victims in Buffalo, 86-year-old Ruth Whitfield, had stopped at Tops for groceries while on her way home from visiting her husband, who lives in a nursing home. "That day was like any other day for my mom," son Garnell Whitfield said at a family news conference May 16. "She encountered

this evil, hateful — she didn't deserve that. She didn't deserve that. Nobody deserves that."

Whitfield, a former Buffalo police commissioner, issued an emotional, impassioned plea for solutions to the continued threat of racist violence like the attack that killed his mother. "What are we going to do to change it?" he said. "This is our mother; this is our lives! We need help. We're asking you to help us. Help us change this. This can't keep happening."

The Rev. Steve Lane, priest-in-charge at St. Philip's, serves as a chaplain for Buffalo police officers and responded to the shooting site later in the day May 14. About half of the department was on the scene by then, but the victims' families had left, Lane told Episcopal News Service. He praised the officers for their ability to "provide a calm presence in the middle of a crazy crisis."

Lane also acknowledged his unusual role as a white priest of a historically Black congregation. Since the attack, he has reached out to members of St. Philip's. "I have some parishioners who shop there, and we have parishioners who knew people who were shot there," Lane said, but no one from the congregation was at Tops when the shooting happened.

Lane said the reaction of many St. Philip's parishioners, in addition to grief for the victims, has been a solemn weariness at yet another case of racist violence targeting Black victims. "This has happened before, and it has happened again," he said. ■



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FAITH AND THE ARTS

In music, film, art, prayer and words, Asian American Episcopalians celebrate their faith, roots and history

By Pat McCaughan
Diocese of Los Angeles

Since musical artist Larissa Lam directed the award-winning film “Far East Deep South,” about her in-laws’ Mississippi roots, she has “made it my mission to help others discover more Asian American/Pacific Islander history,” she told those attending the May 7 celebration of AAPI Heritage Month on the rooftop of St. Paul’s Commons.

Hosted by The Gathering — A Space for AAPI Spirituality, a ministry of the Diocese of Los Angeles, the event featured music, art, food, spoken word poetry and prayer. In addition, seminarian Mel Soriano interviewed contributors to The Gathering’s “AAPI Alive!” Eastertide Devotional, which features a new offering every day between Easter Day and Pentecost.

Lam, whose “I Feel Alive” Eastertide Devotional vocal contribution debuted May 8, said she and her husband, Baldwin Chiu, were surprised when tracing his roots “that we ended up, not in China, but in the deep south of Mississippi.

“We uncovered the kind of unknown history that most people don’t realize; that there was a significant population in the deep south, especially the Mississippi Delta, of Chinese over generations. It was an amazing testimony.”

Chiu was attending a screening of the film in Washington, D.C., she said, adding that celebrating AAPI heritage should occur throughout the year, “because AAPI history, just like Black history, is American history.”

Lam and other interviewees also expressed their struggle for recognition, identity, and authenticity within the nation’s ongoing, often mostly Black-white racial conversation. “As somebody that’s American-born who’s Chinese, I never really felt like I fit into any box,” she said.

“I joke that, when I was growing up, as one of the only Asians in my class in elementary school, I wanted to be blond-haired and blue-eyed, because all the popular kids looked like that. And then I got older and got into music, and all my favorite artists were Black. I was into R&B and jazz. My own style is more akin to that. And then, I’m Asian. So, where do I fit into this? I wasn’t Black. I wasn’t white.”

The Rev. Peter Huang, a leader of The Gathering, echoed Lam’s sentiment, that AAPI history is American history, and as such should be recognized throughout the year. The heritage celebration, however, represented “a wonderful mix of AAPI’s from all walks of life, age, gender, ethnicity, acculturation level, sexuality, gathered together,” he said. “The true diversity of this group, to be able to come together and to celebrate, is quite phenomenal.”

The Eastertide Devotional and the rooftop celebration were both filled with joy, he added — joy “from coming together, and that includes with allies and advocates in our midst, representing a sense of home, as a place where you can tell your story and feel understood and don’t have to footnote and explain everything.”



Photos/Pat McCaughan

Mel Soriano, above right, interviews musician and film director, above left, Larissa Lam about her experience discovering Asian American history. Left, Ravi Verma describes his contribution to the Eastertide Devotional: a meditation based on the Indian lotus flower. Below, Dustin Seo, cellist, of Laós Chamber Music and Street Symphony.



Drawing by Joshua Wong



The celebration also included musical performances by Grupo Arroyo, a ministry of All Saints Church in Pasadena, and spoken-word prayer and poem performances.

Dustin Nguyen offered a trilingual prayer, in English, Spanish and Vietnamese:

“Almighty God who blesses us with the power of art, exalt the voices of artists from historically

marginalized communities, cast down the barriers that keep us excluded, multiply the solidarity to our cause, that our stories dignified may transfigure our imaginations and conversations and that we rise together as Beloved Community. Amen.”

Ravi Verma, program director for the Stillpoint Center for Christian Spirituality, an institution of the diocese, told the gathering that he explored the paradox of finding beauty in the midst of life’s challenges through the metaphor of an Indian lotus flower. His reflections will be published in an upcoming devotional entry.

Within the context of Eastertide, the events leading up to Jesus’ death were distressing, yet were followed by Easter, new life. Similarly, the lotus exists in muddy waters, he said, yet opens, revealing its beauty, that is always available. “Beauty is not separate from the field. We need to make time to cultivate beauty.”

Despite pain and suffering “there is still a call to recognize the beauty around us, which is what gives us strength,” he said. Looking out at Echo Park Lake, he

added: “I see the flowers, I see the ducks and I see the wind in the trees. No matter what I am going through, they are there at the same time.”

Dustin Seo is a cellist with Laós Chamber Music, a Los Angeles-based group of classical musicians supported by the Church of Our Saviour in San Gabriel, and is also associate artistic director of Street Symphony, a group dedicated to building bridges between the music and Skid Row communities.

“I find a lot of my joy and artistic passion in what is perhaps not my heritage,” said Seo, who grew up in South Pasadena and described the cello as a “very white, Western instrument. And yet, I believe that that’s part of the Asian American experience and even more, as an offshoot of that, like my experience as a Christian.

“I’ve been really wrestling with my faith and how a big part of my identity as a Christian was a big part of how I assimilated as a child of an immigrant family,” he told the gathering. “I had all those thoughts like, have my relationship with a Christian God and my faith in Christianity actually kept me away from my Asian-ness?”

He added: “I’ve found that it’s OK to say that I like to play the classical cello and that I go to church and worship a Western religion. And it’s okay to say that that is, authentically who I am. I feel like my artistry is my identity and who I am as a person, and that has an intersection with faith and a lot of complicated things.

In “Resurrection,” an April 21 devotional entry, Seo performs a set of gavottes from Johann Sebastian Bach’s D Major Suite for Solo Cello because “it captures the feeling of childish and innocent wonderment,” a sense he feels about the resurrection of Jesus Christ.

“Every year I find myself filled with just, such joy and awe for how amazing our Lord is and the kind of incredible mercy and love that he has for us,” he says in the entry. “It’s really cool we get to celebrate it every single year and honestly every single day. Nothing about it gets old. Every day, I get to wake up as an innocent child and experience love and feel this immense feeling of gratitude and think that this is, perhaps, one of the greatest gifts we receive as his children. I hope you feel this sense of childish jubilation and wonderment for our Lord.”

Performing the Bach piece also represents the complicated issues of identity, Seo said. “It’s so complicated, so nuanced, ... you can get so stuck in the trenches of trying to learn how to play the piece or learn how to grapple with your relationship with your faith. And if you zoom out a little bit, it really is just a dance.”

“When I think about the cross, I think about wonderment, and how simple it is. That we get to celebrate Jesus dying on the cross for us every day. And it’s simple, it’s beautiful. Like watching the sunrise every day. For a long time, I tried to think about God from the way I would think as a cellist ... these chords are too hard, I can’t do this — (but) it’s a simple pastoral dance, just like how the cross is a simple testament of his love.”

Joshua Wong, a former advertising art director and shoe designer, a Bloy House student and postulant for holy orders, offered a monochromatic drawing of a person standing with pigeons nestled on his head and shoulders. This drawing, he said, reminds him of the Trinity and identity.

“It represents the path that bicultural people go through, and how we transition from being an American to being Chinese to being an American to being Chinese. And in my case, also as a gay person. So, it means a lot to me that this trinity also represents my life in those three areas, three identities that I have. And it’s the three identities that God feels and brings together. Not only for myself, but anybody who finds themselves in a dilemma of whether God loves them or not.”

The Eastertide Devotional will continue through Pentecost, Sunday, June 5. ■

FAITH AND THE ARTS

Artists interpret sacrament and nature

By Linda Brooks

The Episcopal Church & Visual Arts (ECVA) online artists exhibit space (www.ecva.org) has opened its second curated show for 2022 on “Sacrament and Image.” Guest curator Mary Jane Miller, iconographer and author, stated, “Sacraments reflect church community and how we see ourselves through song, praise, image, prayer, and liturgy. Art is an artist’s testament to our care for one another, our communion with Mother Earth, and our stewardship of the planet. The art and artist commentaries are diverse, as they each illustrate versions and aspects of how we think about the seven sacraments and our mother Earth.”

The show includes 38 images from 21 artists and divided into Eucharist, Baptism, Unction, Marriage, Priesthood, Confession, and Confirmation, and how these sacraments are viewed through the artist’s perception of the world around them.

Miller said, “Our artist membership at ECVA is growing. We are diverse in nature and style. It is exciting to see such a diverse interpretation of ancient sacrament. It revived my spirit to see in the work variations that call to mind the seven sacraments in new ways. Let there be peace on the planet and every walk of life.”

Here is a sample of some of the many beautiful pieces exhibited and the artists’ reflections and inspirations.

Photos/courtesy of the artists

Claudia Smith

Christ’s presence, although not outwardly visible, is inwardly and spiritually felt and acknowledged through the Holy Spirit. The love and joy that the event and His “felt” presence produces, reveals itself when it transforms us from within.

This wondrous sacrament and transformation is our guide, showing our hearts and souls the way. It is imperative that we listen and follow!

The sacrament of Holy Baptism is visible to us as it occurs. We welcome it, participate in it, embrace and rejoice in it. Its outwardly visible sign is water. Christ’s presence, although not outwardly visible, is inwardly and spiritually felt and acknowledged. The love and joy that the event and His “felt” presence produces, reveals itself when it transforms us from within.



“Baptism” Oil painting 24" x 48"

Michael Prettyman

We wake up together. Even if what we wake up to is on fire, remember that in some important ways we chose this, and each other. It is better to be awake than asleep, especially if the hillside is on fire, and when things go sideways it’s better to not be all alone.

In this painting there are two sequoias on fire, two red giants, intertwined. They grew up from seeds together, and today they are going out together. The fire that consumes their trunks is the fire that will roughen the rough coating protecting their seeds and, in a few months, create new sequoias.

How do we understand our participation in this? We have used the resilience of the natural world toward our own ends for too long now. Enough already. We must turn and see, we must change our lives or have them changed for us. My wife once said to me, “What’s really burning down is your selfishness.” If only!

What’s real here though is this: catastrophes, whether personal or environmental, are worsened by selfishness and fear. If we set it burning then we can put it out.



“Bride of Christ Save the Planet,” Mixed media painting

Anne Cameron Cutri

I created this multi-paneled painting in response to friends and my mother undergoing cancer treatment. And now my younger sister recently passed from stage 4 pancreatic cancer, she was only 51. To me it is symptomatic to the dis-ease of our global health. Loving someone with this horrible disease, one feels helpless. All I could do is create a visual prayer. I took images of cancer cells and collaged them on the center panel and then painted over them while praying for healing of all who have cancer. On the side panels are legions of choiring angels.

The Bride of Christ is also in reference to Revelation 21:1 — Then I saw a new heaven and a new earth; for the first heaven and the first earth had passed away, and the sea was no more. 2 And I saw the holy city, the new Jerusalem, coming down out of heaven from God, prepared as a bride adorned for her husband. 3 And I heard a loud voice from the throne saying, “See, the home of God is among mortals. He will dwell with them; they will be his peoples, and God himself will be with them; 4 he will wipe every tear from their eyes. Death will be no more; mourning and crying and pain will be no more, for the first things have passed away.” 5 And the one who was seated on the throne said, “See, I am making all things new.”



“Sandy Eyed We Slept,” Oil on canvas, 2021, 40" x 30"



“By Your Altars, O Lord,” Photograph

Sally Brower

One of my favorite bible verses is Psalm 84:3, “Even the sparrow has found a home, and the swallow a nest for herself, where she may have her young — a place near your altar, Lord Almighty, my King and my God.” When I discovered the stork nests on the many church towers of Spain and Portugal, I was reminded of this verse. In early Christianity, the stork symbolizes innocence, modesty, kindness and loyalty. In early Catholic understanding, it was associated with the image of the Virgin Mary, no doubt related to its being a symbol of motherly love. Storks fiercely guard their nests, the largest of all birds’ nests. Storks are also a symbol of birth and new life. In the Orient, the stork symbolizes immortality and in ancient Egypt storks were revered as a symbol of the soul. I did not know all that it symbolized when I first encountered the beautiful storks and their nests, but I took photographs of nests in church tower after church tower, and as I approached one, a stork feather dropped down to me, reminding me that my heart always seeks a place beside the Lord’s altar.



“Reconciliation of a Penitent,” Digital image, 6" x 6"

Sr. Claire Joy

The rite of Reconciliation takes utter surrender. Not enough to be sorry, although that is important. In the words of the Psalmist: “I sinned against you alone.” In other words, this is nobody’s fault but mine. For me, the sacrament of Reconciliation is one of the most powerful of all the sacraments. It binds the sinner and the forgiver in a beautiful way, and often both are moved to tears.

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NEWS

Episcopal leaders step up advocacy of Indigenous issues, including at United Nations forum

By David Paulsen
Episcopal News Service

Episcopal leaders have been increasingly focused this spring on highlighting Indigenous issues, particularly the Episcopal Church's past involvement in the federal Indigenous boarding schools system, as the church prepares to consider acting on those issues in July at the 80th General Convention.

Episcopal engagement with Indigenous issues is occurring both within the church and with ecumenical and global partners, including at the recently concluded United Nations Permanent Forum on Indigenous Issues. A small Episcopal delegation attended the annual forum in New York and online April 25 to May 6. The theme of this year's forum was "Indigenous peoples, business, autonomy and the human rights principles of due diligence including free, prior and informed consent."

The Rev. Bradley Hauff, the Episcopal Church's missionary for Indigenous ministries, told Episcopal News Service that the U.N. forum's emphasis on "free, prior and informed consent" resonated with him and the other Episcopalians who participated. It underscored for them the importance of tribal autonomy and self-determination, both of which European settlers and later the United States government so often took from Native Americans.

Nowhere was the violation of free, prior and informed consent more apparent, Hauff said, than in the forced assimilation at boarding schools — "when you have children taken from their homes and forced into an educational process where they don't know what they're getting into ... when they have everything about them that's Indigenous taken away."

Hauff, a member of the Oglala Sioux tribe, was joined at the U.N. forum by

Ronald Braman from the Diocese of Idaho, who is Shoshone, as well as Lynnaia Main, the church's U.N. representative. The Rev. Tina Campbell, Cherokee from Northern California, and Melissa Skinner, Standing Rock Sioux from South Dakota, participated in some of the online discussions.

The Permanent Forum on Indigenous Issues was formed by U.N. resolution in 2000 to focus on Indigenous issues related to economic and social development, culture, the environment, education, health and human rights. Its first meeting was held in 2002. It has continued to offer opportunities each year for Indigenous peoples to provide expert advice to global leaders through the U.N.'s Economic and Social Council, or ECOSOC, and to inform U.N. agencies working on a variety of international issues, from human rights to the environment.

Because the Episcopal Church is an ECOSOC-accredited nongovernmental organization, the Episcopal delegation was able to submit two official statements to this year's Permanent Forum. One called attention to the problem of missing and murdered Indigenous women as a human rights crisis. The other stressed the importance of preserving Indigenous languages, including through liturgies and songs at Episcopal worship services.

The delegation also helped organize a faith-based conversation on Indigenous issues in the United Nations' chapel on May 4, followed by an interfaith worship service led by Hauff.

"There is a hunger and desire within the faith-based community to organize,

to talk to each other about these issues," Main said in an interview with ENS. Many religious denominations that participate in the U.N. forum have Indigenous members, maintain ministries that work with Indigenous peoples or advocate for policy reforms that affect them.



The Rev. Bradley Hauff, The Episcopal Church's missionary for Indigenous ministries, left, and Ronald Braman from the Diocese of Idaho pose for a photo inside the United Nations building in New York during the Permanent Forum on Indigenous Issues from April 25 to May 6.

Main added that it was "enormously important" to return to an in-person gathering, even though the U.N. only allowed each organization three registered participants. "If we want to try and engage with member states who are the decision-makers, we're not going to get anywhere with them just by sending emails or asking them to set up a Zoom meeting," she said.

The issue of Indigenous boarding schools provided some context for the discussions but wasn't addressed directly as part of the U.N. forum, Hauff said. Five days after the forum ended, however, the Department of Interior shined a new spotlight on schools when it released its May 11 report from the first part of a federal investigation into the system.

In the report investigators said they

had identified 408 such schools across 37 states or territories from 1819 to 1969. Marked or unmarked burial sites have been found at 53 of the schools so far.

"The consequences of federal Indian boarding school policies — including the intergenerational trauma caused by the family separation and cultural eradication inflicted upon generations of children as young as 4 years old — are heartbreaking and undeniable," Secretary Deb Haaland said in announcing the report. "We continue to see the evidence of this attempt to forcibly assimilate Indigenous people in the disparities that communities face."

Although the report doesn't go into details about the schools run by The Episcopal Church and other religious denominations, Hauff told ENS that it sheds new light on the coordination between churches and the

federal government.

The report "did an excellent job of explaining how Indigenous boarding schools fit into the whole systematic agenda of assimilating Indigenous people into America culture," Hauff said. "And it's a history that unfortunately a lot of Americans are unfamiliar with."

At least eight schools were thought to have Episcopal Church connections, though the dearth of churchwide records has made it difficult to fully account for the church's role.

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

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GUNS continued from page 10

one of numerous sponsors of the June 11 event, which will be held from 10 a.m. to 2 p.m. in the parking lot of another Oakland church, At Thy Word Ministry.

Hawthorn recruited a local blacksmith to handle the shaping of the guns into garden tools. Oakland police, who will be on hand during the buyback, donated 50 previously confiscated guns, which will be converted to tools in advance and distributed at the buyback to the first 50 people who relinquish their guns. All who give up their guns also will receive donated gift cards.

"This is not 'one and done.' It is a ministry which we're hoping will continue," Hawthorn said. "We're trying to turn around the attitude toward guns."

The guns people relinquish in buybacks are just a tiny fraction of the privately owned guns in the United States, Curry acknowledged, but "every gun off

the street is one less gun that can harm somebody." And for gun owners who keep their guns, Curry uses the buybacks to distribute information on safe gun storage, as well as free gun locks and discounted gun safes.

Curry, a founding member of Bishops United Against Gun Violence, started Swords to Plowshares Northeast in 2017. Since then, he has turned more than 800 weapons into garden tools, art, jewelry and other items. The nonprofit'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 students and six educators dead.

Swords to Plowshares takes its name from a passage from Isaiah 2:4 — "They shall beat their swords into plowshares, and their spears into pruning hooks." The verse's prophesy is one of physical transformation, though Curry also sees an op-

portunity for anti-violence evangelism.

"There's an invitation in that prophecy to really look at the specificities of violence in our culture and our time in history, and for most of the United States, the focus is gun violence," he said.

In November, Swords to Plowshares organized a demonstration on Capitol Hill in Washington, D.C. The Episcopal Church's gun-safety advocacy in the nation's capital is led by the Office of Government Relations. It follows Episcopal policy positions established by General Convention in resolutions dating to 1976 that call for legislation to address the problem of gun violence. The office recently has pushed for passage of legislation 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.

Curry's nonprofit was inspired by a Mennonite blacksmithing ministry in Colorado called RAWtools, which also

is participating in the Guns to Gardens initiative. Curry said he reached out to the leaders of RAWtools with the idea of broadening such efforts to a nationwide campaign, and they helped promote the new initiative to their loosely affiliated network of anti-violence advocates.

June 11 was chosen for the buybacks because the date follows closely after National Gun Violence Awareness Day on June 3. That day initially was created to honor Hadiya Pendleton, a 15-year-old who was shot and killed in Chicago, Illinois, in 2013.

As Guns to Gardens gains momentum, other dates could be added, possibly in December around commemorations of the Sandy Hook massacre, Curry said. This would serve to highlight the range of threats from gun violence that communities face.

"The tears of friends and family are the same, even if the circumstances of the death by gun is different," he said. ■

FEATURE

Deaf Episcopalian create ministry uniting deaf worshippers around the world with hearing congregation in Texas

By Egan Millard
Episcopal News Service

In the Diocese of Texas, Deaf Missioner Amy Waltz-Reasonover has created a new community by bringing together groups that had never been connected before, introducing Deaf and LGBTQ+ Christians with different forms of communication to Episcopal congregations in the Houston area. What started out as a small online prayer group earlier in the pandemic has grown into an international ministry dedicated to giving Deaf people an accepting place to worship.

With few worshiping options for Deaf people who use American Sign Language, Waltz-Reasonover created the St. Gallaudet Deaf Prayer Group, which holds its own Daily Office services in ASL and English. The group also virtually joins a different congregation one Sunday every month, giving hearing churches a chance to experience Deaf culture and worship styles.

“There’s been this convergence of [different] people ending up in the same spaces and it’s just been really exciting to see where the Holy Spirit is going,” Waltz-Reasonover told Episcopal News Service. “And to know that I get to be a little piece of that, that’s exciting too. But just to see what’s happening for our larger community — it’s almost like The Episcopal Church is getting its Deaf vision back and that’s a great thing to see.”

Waltz-Reasonover was born hearing in a musical family; her mother was an organist and her grandmother was an opera singer.

“I grew up surrounded by classical music and church music,” she told ENS. “That was all I ever knew. And I started reading music before I started reading English.”

Raised in a variety of Christian denominations, Waltz-Reasonover happened to learn American Sign Language as a girl, before she started losing her hearing, because her Baptist congregation had a Deaf ministry.

“I was the only kid and I just thought it looked fun and I wanted to do it,” she said.

She became a professional harpist and pianist, playing with symphonies and teaching lessons, but started to lose her hearing in her early twenties due to a genetic condition. Waltz-Reasonover has other Deaf relatives, but they are oral Deaf, meaning they communicate verbally and not through sign language.

She continued her musical career despite her hearing loss and was even able to keep it a secret for years. But about five years ago, she decided she couldn’t continue and sold her harp.

“When I left, I told my conductor, ‘What you don’t know is that I’m virtually Deaf and I have been for a long time,’ and nobody believed me.”



Amy Waltz-Reasonover, left, signs the words “offer up” during the Easter Vigil Eucharist at Grace Episcopal Church in Houston, Texas.

Having grown up with music as her literal first language, “it took me a long time to wrap my brain around [it]; if I’m not a musician, who am I?”

Waltz-Reasonover relied on lip-reading (which she still does when communicating with hearing people) for years, but it wasn’t until the pandemic that she developed an identity as a Deaf person. With everyone wearing masks, she could no longer lip-read and had to use ASL more.

“I basically came out to everybody as a Deaf person,” she said.

She started immersing herself in the tight-knit Deaf community and discovered the Episcopal Conference of the Deaf, a network of Episcopalians that assists in the development of Deaf ministries. Waltz-Reasonover had discovered The Episcopal Church a year and a half earlier, converting from Methodism because The Episcopal Church is LGBTQ-affirming and it offered her more freedom to explore spiritual questions.

“I fell in love with the mystery,” she said. “I came to The Episcopal Church and just discovered that it was OK to [talk about] the mystery of God and that we in fact enshrine that in our sacrament, that we celebrate the mystery of faith and that it’s OK not to understand God. It’s OK not to understand every little piece.”

Her identity as a Deaf person and as an Episcopalian grew simultaneously, she said, as she attended online ASL worship services hosted by the Episcopal Conference of the Deaf. Discovering that community “saved my life,” she said.

The Episcopal Church has a deep historical connection to Deaf ministry. In 1852, the Rev. Thomas Gallaudet began sign language services at St. Ann’s Church for the Deaf in New York City, possibly the first organized Deaf congregation in the United States, which is still an active congregation. Other Deaf congregations around the country grew out of the ministry of Gallaudet and St. Ann’s, and The Episcopal Church ordained the first Deaf clergyman in the United States, the Rev. Henry Winter Syle, in 1876. Today, Gallaudet and Syle are commemorated in the church lectionary calendar on Aug. 27. Gallaudet’s son founded Gallaudet University in Washington, D.C., the first and only institute of higher education for Deaf people in the world.

But with the growing popularity of audism and oralism — methods that discourage sign language in favor of teaching Deaf people to adapt to verbal communication — “Deaf people who worshiped in ASL found themselves on the decline,” Waltz-Reasonover said, “and Deaf folks found themselves in hearing churches and either not enjoying worship or trying their best to be oral but relegated to a standard hearing person.”

“The Episcopal Church lost its vision somewhere along the line,” Waltz-Reasonover said. “And who picked that up is the evangelical churches and the Baptist churches.”

In the Houston area, where Waltz-Reasonover lives, the only Deaf congregations were evangelical or Baptist, and none were LGBTQ-affirming, she said.

“So if you’re a queer Deaf person, you pretty much worship at a hearing church, or you just don’t worship at all,” she told ENS.

Being a queer person in Christian communities has been hard to navigate,

she said, but so is being a person who uses both spoken English and ASL in the Deaf community, where people who were not born Deaf are sometimes not fully accepted, she said.

“I straddle both worlds,” she said, “but I’ve found in that a blessing.”

Using what she had learned from the Episcopal Conference of the Deaf, Waltz-Reasonover saw an opportunity to unite Deaf worshippers — who often live in an “insular world” — with the wider church.

“Finding a way to advocate for Deaf churches in a hearing environment takes a Deaf-hearing person,” she said.

Waltz-Reasonover was worshiping with ECD on Sunday mornings, but also wanted to pray Daily Office services like Compline. She started a small virtual ASL prayer group of queer Deaf people, but it expanded rapidly, and she started offering simultaneous English voicing so that Deaf people could worship together with hearing relatives. As the St. Gallaudet Deaf Prayer Group continued to evolve, Waltz-Reasonover consulted with a friend who was then a priest in the Diocese of Texas, who suggested she connect the ministry with hearing parishes in the Houston area, bringing the Deaf worshippers into different congregations virtually. ■

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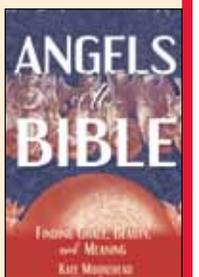
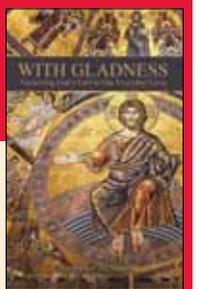
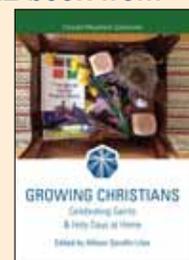
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NEWS

Bishop in Europe describes Ukrainian ‘catastrophe’

By Neva Rae Fox
The Living Church

“This is a catastrophe in a humanitarian way,” said Bishop Mark Edington, describing the current Ukrainian refugee situation. “We are the front line of what is becoming a really difficult humanitarian situation in Europe.”

Edington, bishop of the Convocation of Episcopal Churches in Europe, said people are also leaving Russia and moving into such places as Georgia, the home of a Convocation church in Tbilisi. “Georgia is afraid that they may be next” to be invaded, he said.

Presenting to the Province II Synod on May 5, Edington cited stats from the United Nations High Commission on Refugees (UNHCR) that from February 24, when the Russian invasion of Ukraine started, to May 1, the adjoining countries have sheltered more than 5.5 million refugees, with more fleeing every day. His presentation is available online as part of the recording of the online synod meeting, starting at 1:42:07.

Edington presented an impassioned overview of the Russian invasion. “What’s happening in Ukraine is not really about Ukraine, at least it’s not only about Ukraine,” he explained. “It is really about the objective of Russia and its government to change the map of the post-Cold War settlement in Europe.”

He continued, “Russia would prefer to see Europe return to a sort of 19th-century era of spheres of influence, where America is sort of stuck to its home and Russia had much more influence on the continent of Europe.”



Photo/screen capture from video

Bishop Mark Edington addresses the Province II Synod on May 5.

Expanding on the major concern, he said, “What we’re very worried about is that Russia is trying to drive this conflict into what we speak of as an Article 5 confrontation” which calls for an attack

on one NATO member to be treated as an attack on all members.

“Russia is trying to drive our country into a very difficult choice about whether we would risk a nuclear confrontation with the government of Russia over an attack on, say, Estonia, or Latvia, or a country in the Baltics, or even maybe Poland.” He said a failure to respond would destroy NATO.

Edington spoke of the longtime ministry to refugee work in Europe. As home to the Joel Nafuma Refugee Center in Rome, which serves 10,000 refugees a year, “The convocation has a historic commitment to ministry with refugees and migrants.” Edington said that plans call for expansion of the center.

Assistance can be offered through

Episcopal Relief & Development as the convocation partners with them.

He concluded, “This is a very, very dangerous moment in history. It is a difficult moment in the church.”

Edington grew up in Michigan, and before entering ministry pursued a career in international relations. He is a life member of the Council on Foreign Relations. He was consecrated in 2019 as the 26th Bishop of the Convocation of Episcopal Churches in Europe, but only the second elected bishop.

With 20 churches in seven European countries, the convocation is one of 12 dioceses in Province II, which also includes two New Jersey dioceses and six in New York, and the Virgin Islands, Cuba, and Haiti. ■

Supporting humanitarian response to the crisis in Ukraine

Episcopal Relief & Development (ER&D) is partnering with the Convocation of Episcopal Churches in Europe to help local congregations throughout Europe provide assistance to Ukrainian refugees.

The Convocation of Episcopal Churches in Europe, the European presence of the Episcopal Church, has a long history of ministry to refugees dating back to before World War I. Since the late 1980s, the Joel Nafuma Refugee Center (JNRC) — based at Saint Paul’s Within the Walls in Rome — has provided direct service to refugees from countless countries, helping them rebuild shattered lives.

ER&D is working with the Convocation to strengthen and expand the

capacity of all Episcopal congregations across Europe to respond to the refugee emergency caused by the violence in Ukraine. The Convocation is creating a fund to support local congregations’ refugee response and will pair those grants with training from JNRC staff. This assistance will vary depending on the needs of the specific refugee groups but will likely include food, shelter, emergency supplies and trauma counseling. Additionally, JNRC plans to increase its staffing levels, allowing it to provide aid to more people.

“The Convocation of Episcopal Churches in Europe is reporting refugees in their congregations throughout Europe,” said Nagulan Nesiiah, ER&D senior program officer. “Through this



Photo/Courtesy of the Convocation of Episcopal Churches in Europe

Episcopal Relief & Development is partnering with the Convocation of Episcopal Churches in Europe to help local congregations to assist to Ukrainian refugee.

partnership, we are taking steps to equip congregations to welcome these refugees and connect them to ongoing humanitarian initiatives.”

— Episcopal Relief & Development

ARTISTS continued from page 13

Alisa E. Clark

I have a confession to make. I fear I have turned away. I have walked away from organized religion. I believe in the Bible but not Biblical inerrancy. Christian music often sounds trite when it once always moved me. Politics mixed with religion has driven me away from the traditions I once embraced. I’m not “clicking” with the people in my church: there is a disconnect. I feel lost. Then, I look at myself in this painting, and I am less afraid. She is beautiful. She glows. She is what’s left of me, and she’s doing her best to find her way back. I know I am making mistakes that grieve God. Still, there’s something beautiful in it all that I am reaching for.

“I Have a Confession,” acrylic, alcohol ink, permanent marker, and gold film on illustration board



“Eucharist,” painting

Jack Pachuta

I composed this painting of “The Last Supper” in 2020. I put in a host instead of a loaf of bread and a radiating cup of wine. People asked me which Apostle was Judas. He’s the one in the upper right corner with the fading halo, I said. The gospels say Judas was present for the Passover meal but it’s not clear if he left before the distribution of the Eucharist. Many believe Jesus offered it to him. Many believe his suicide was not despair but a sign of his repentance. ■

INDIGENOUS continued from page 14

In a joint statement last year, they acknowledged the church’s past complicity in the federal boarding school system.

Executive Council, in a vote at its April 2022 meeting, affirmed the church’s commitment to researching and confronting that history, and it ordered the creation of a Committee for Indigenous Boarding Schools and Advocacy. The 15-member committee will be asked to gather information on boarding schools with Episcopal ties, to tell the story of the schools’ impact and legacy and to develop a plan for storytelling and advocacy centered on unequal treatment of Native Americans in the past and present.

Questions asked by the committee will include how many boarding schools had Episcopal ties, how many students attended, how many were sick or died there far from their homes, which church institutions founded and funded the schools and what is the current status of the schools?

Hauff said Executive Council’s action lays the foundation for additional discussion and response by General Convention. To further minimize the risk of COVID-19 transmission the dates,

duration and scope of the July meeting of the church’s triennial governing body are still being finalized, though church leaders have identified Indigenous boarding schools a priority as they determine what gets taken up at the meeting in Baltimore, Maryland, and which issues will be put on hold until the 81st General Convention in 2024.

Dioceses also are engaging in Indigenous issues in new ways this year. The Diocese of Northern Michigan, for example, announced on May 17 that it had named Miskopwaaganikwe Leora Tadgerson as director of diversity, equity and inclusion, with responsibilities that include promoting the diocese’s truth-telling and racial reconciliation efforts.

And on May 5, at an online budget hearing held by General Convention’s Joint Standing Committee on Program, Budget and Finance, the bishops in Alaska, Navajoland, North Dakota and South Dakota urged church leaders to renew and even increase the block grants the dioceses receive to support their growing Indigenous ministries.

“Without the help of the General Convention budget, we just would not be able to do what we do,” Alaska Bishop Mark Lattime told the committee. ■