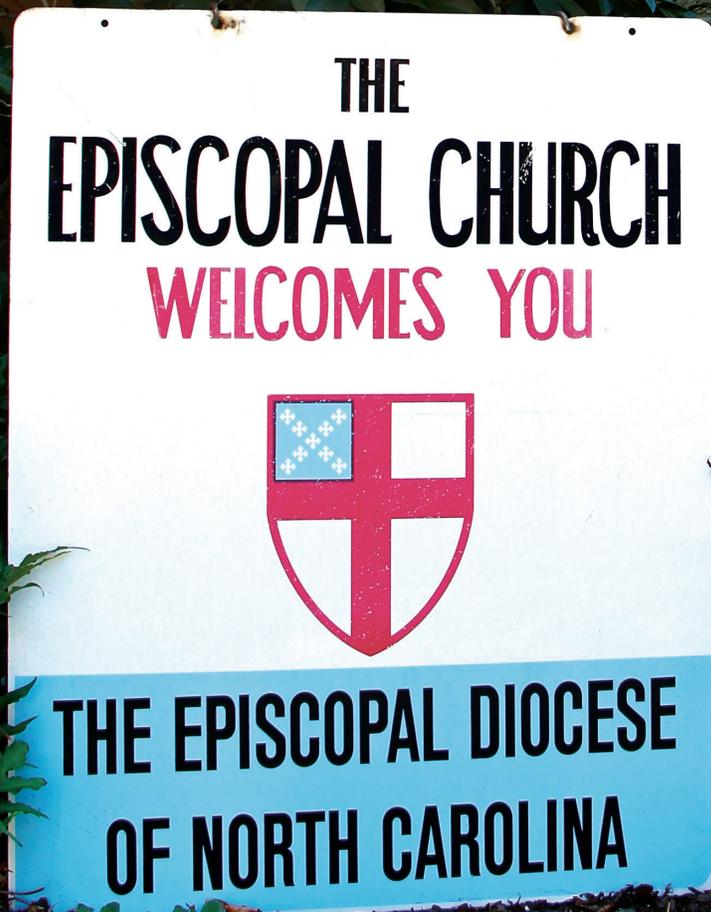


Fall 2019



The North Carolina DISCIPLE

THE ART OF
THE WELCOME



RESOURCES
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ANNUAL
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PREVIEW



The North Carolina DISCIPLE

Diocesan House
200 West Morgan Street, Suite 300
Raleigh, NC 27601-1338
PHONE: 919.834.7474
TOLL FREE: 800.448.8775
FAX: 919.834.8775
WEBSITE: www.episdionc.org

The Episcopal Diocese of North Carolina

Bishop Diocesan

The Rt. Rev. Samuel Sewall Rodman, III
sam.rodman@episdionc.org
Diocesan House: 919.834.7474

Bishop Suffragan

The Rt. Rev. Anne E. Hodges-Copple
bishopanne@episdionc.org
Office of the Bishop Suffragan: 336.273.5770

PUBLISHER

Bishop Diocesan of North Carolina

EDITORIAL DIRECTOR

Christine McTaggart
christine.mctaggart@episdionc.org

MANAGING EDITOR / ART DIRECTOR

Summerlee Walter
summerlee.walter@episdionc.org

CONTRIBUTORS IN THIS ISSUE

The Rt. Rev. Sam Rodman
Christine McTaggart
The Rt. Rev. Anne Hodges-Copple
Summerlee Walter

SUBSCRIPTIONS / CHANGE OF ADDRESS

Erin Sweeney: erin.sweeney@episdionc.org

SUBMISSIONS

All submission ideas are welcome and considered for publication. Email submission ideas to communications@episdionc.org.

LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

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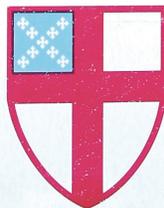
COVER PHOTO



Usually displayed in the conference room at Diocesan House, the Diocese of North Carolina sign temporarily welcomed visitors to the building one day this fall.
Photo by Summerlee Walter



THE
EPISCOPAL CHURCH
WELCOMES YOU



THE EPISCOPAL DIOCESE
OF NORTH CAROLINA

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Contact the communications staff at communications@episdionc.org with any questions or feedback regarding these communications, or to submit ideas, articles and photos.



WHAT DO WE REALLY MEAN?

Beloved Community is a focus of our mission in the Diocese of North Carolina. It is a priority of The Episcopal Church. It has a rich tradition in the writings of Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr., and it has its roots in the gospel stories of Jesus' life and teaching. While the Beloved Community in biblical times is often associated with John and the community that grew up around the writer of the fourth gospel, I suggest the writer of the third gospel, Luke, has quite a bit to say about Beloved Community as well.

This is helpful because the question I get asked often these days is this: "What do we really mean when we talk about Becoming Beloved Community?" In other words, we talk about it all the time, but what does it look like?

I suggest that Luke, in the parables and pictures he paints in his gospel, is giving us images of Beloved Community. In fact, there are four marks of Beloved Community that seem almost to leap off the page when we look again at some of the stories.

JUSTICE

The first is justice. Beloved Community is a community of justice, fairness and inclusion. Everyone has a place in the Beloved Community, because each one of us is a beloved child of God. This is especially true in Luke's account of the people who followed Jesus. Luke includes all the people who often are left out of the story. The women who followed Jesus are not only named in Luke, they have a vital role to play in Jesus' mission.

But Luke doesn't stop there. Luke includes others who were marginalized in Jesus' time. Luke lifts up, in

no particular order, outcasts, sinners, tax collectors, lepers, Samaritans and the poor. Luke understands that Beloved Community prioritizes the most vulnerable and those who have been

cut out. I recently spoke at Founder's Day at Canterbury School. It is a K-8 Episcopal private school, and I asked the students gathered there, "How many of you have ever felt left out?" Nearly every hand went up. We all know what it feels like to be excluded. Beloved Community says you have a place, and you belong.

The story of the poor man, Lazarus, cradled in the arms of Abraham is a powerful image of what Beloved Community looks like. The promise, of course, is that this image of a loving embrace is extended to and is intended for each of us, especially those who are overlooked, unseen or discounted. The resounding message of the justice of Beloved Community is that we all belong and that each of us has a place in God's heart.

GRATITUDE

A second mark of Beloved Community is one that is celebrated with the story of the 10 lepers: gratitude. Jesus heals these 10 who have been afflicted with the horrible disease. Ten are healed, but only one returns to thank Jesus. I learned from a colleague who researched this, Adam Thomas, that the story of the leper who returned to thank Jesus is, in fact, the only account of anyone thanking Jesus in the whole biblical record.

I find that astounding. Maybe the ubiquitous yellow signs I see dotting the North Carolina countryside with the message "Thank You Jesus" are our contemporary attempt to make up for that. But the reality, for Luke, is that gratitude is at the center of Beloved Community. Thanking and praising God are essential. Thanksgiving is at the heart of our worship. Eucharist is the Greek word for thanksgiving. The reason thanksgiving is at the center is gratitude feeds us. It strengthens us. It is part of the fuel, along with passion, that gives us the energy to love one another as Christ loves us. Sharing our gratitude with one another is one of the ways we build each other up. A grateful heart is one of the most powerful expressions of Beloved Community.

FAITHFULNESS

The third mark of Beloved Community is faithfulness. We get a wonderful and vibrant picture of what faithfulness looks like in the parable of the widow, who patiently, persistently, even relentlessly pleads her case to the unjust judge. The judge ignores her for the longest time, but finally she wears him down, and he gives her a just settlement because of her persistence. What a powerful image of faithfulness, especially to us, who live in an



The ubiquitous "Thank You Jesus" signs are the brainchild of teenager Lucas Hunt of Asheboro. Proceeds from sales are donated to Christian organizations.

age of instant gratification, entitlement and privilege. What a commentary on our culture. But also, what an inspiration to see this woman who is so clear and consistent in her message that nothing will deter her from making her case.

Last year at the 203rd Annual Convention, one of the congregations that shared their story was St. Titus', Durham. St. Titus' is a historically black congregation that began as a mission of St. Philips, Durham. Over the years they grew and became a parish, but about 10 years ago, after a period of decline, they were made a mission again.

When they shared their story last year, they were honest about their ups and downs, and about the struggles they faced in their community and in the Church. They also shared some of the ways they have had an impact in the community they serve, including a partnership with the local elementary school and their ministry at North Carolina Central University, the campus of which is a block away. At the end of their presentation, the Rev. Stephanie Yancy, their vicar, said to the assembled body, "And we're not going anywhere." Which was her way of saying, "yes we have our struggles, but don't pity us. We know who we are. We know why God has placed us here. We know what it means to be faithful, and we are here for the long haul."

Fast forward one year. At the 204th Annual Convention on November 22-23, because of the growth they continue to experience as a congregation, St. Titus' will become a parish once again. Their persistence and faithfulness is bearing fruit. They now have more than 100 members and their part-time vicar will become their full-time rector.

SERVICE

Faithfulness was also a theme in the parable of the mustard seed, seen clearly in the request the disciples made of Jesus at the beginning of that passage: "Increase our faith."

But the second part of that passage is all about service and the importance of serving one another. Serving one another is the fourth mark of Becoming Beloved Community. It is worth noting that Jesus, in talking again about service, is actually still responding to the disciple's request to "increase our faith." Jesus is saying, "If you want your faith to grow, immerse yourself in serving others." And it is in Luke's gospel that Jesus himself makes the statement, "I am among you as one who serves." (Luke 22:27)

Jesus models for us that service is the highest form of leadership. It is another in a series of gospel paradoxes.



The people of St. Titus', Durham, told their church's story as part of "Truth Telling and Resilience in a Time of Injustice and Inequality" during the 203rd Annual Convention. Photo by Christine McTaggart

Jesus also says the first shall be last, and the last shall be first; God has made foolish, the wisdom of this world; that which was old, is being made new; the lost will be found; strength is in weakness; the greatest will be the least; things cast down are being raised up; and if you want to increase your faith, serve others.

In Jesus' seemingly upside-down world, the most vulnerable people are the most valuable. So this is our gospel standard. How do we treat those who are caught in the cycle of poverty? How do we care for those who are ill and have no insurance? How do we provide education and opportunity for those who have risked their lives to come here for refuge? Jesus says often, "as you did it to the least of these, you did it to me." (Matthew 25:40) In following the heart of that statement, we find a world not upside-down, but very much right-side up, as loving our neighbors is the way it should be.

The best definition I heard of Beloved Community was from a young adult being confirmed at one of our Charlotte churches. We were sitting together at breakfast, and he said he had been attending the church for about a year. And then he added, "The spirit moved me to come to this church, the people moved me to stay."

WE ARE BELOVED COMMUNITY

The collaboration between the Holy Spirit and the people of the Diocese of North Carolina can be seen every day. The work toward Becoming Beloved Community manifests itself in an incredible variety of ways, all of which show the marks of Beloved Community.



English as a Second language classes are one of the many services offered by Galilee Ministries of East Charlotte. *Photo by Summerlee Walter*

We just shared the vision of faithfulness and service St. Titus' presents us in their upcoming return to parish status, but what a gift of gratitude they have given us to know such a dedicated and steadfast congregation kept going, regardless of church status or resources. Wherever their journey took them, the people of St. Titus' never lost their faith, they never stopped serving, and they never doubted their place in Jesus' Beloved Community.

You'll see the marks in the stories within these pages. Galilee Ministries of East Charlotte (page 28) is an exemplary model of service to others, but as we share their story of using asset-based community development to build the ministry, you'll see how faithfulness and gratitude play just as large a role.

You'll see all four marks not only in the work

happening around the Diocese, but as the foundation of the resources available and in development from diocesan offices (page 18). They are all there to support the work you, the Diocese of North Carolina, are doing out in the world.

And perhaps most timely, we see the marks alive in the world in the wonderful season approaching, starting with Thanksgiving, an entire holiday based on the concept of gratitude. With Advent following close behind it (page 24), we are given the gifts and excitement of expectation and preparation to see and reflect on what parts justice, faithfulness, gratitude and service play in our lives.

So what do we really mean when we talk about Becoming Beloved Community? We mean all of this, because all of this together is what Beloved Community looks like. This is who we are called to become. It is not a single thing, and building it is not a one-time event or finite span of time. It is a lifelong journey. We will never fully arrive until Jesus returns, but we can continue to move toward it. And we can see how we are Becoming Beloved Community whenever we seek justice for our neighbor, whenever we feel that deep sense of gratitude filling our hearts to overflowing, wherever faithfulness is making a mark through persistent loving attention and intention, and whenever we find ourselves serving our brothers and sisters, not for recognition or satisfaction, but out of a deep sense of solidarity, connection and the recognition that we are all beloved children of God.

The Rt. Rev. Sam Rodman is the XII Bishop of the Diocese of North Carolina. Contact him at sam.rodman@episdionc.org.

“

But the end is reconciliation; the end is redemption; the end is the creation of the beloved community. It is this type of spirit and this type of love that can transform opposers into friends. The type of love that I stress here is not eros, a sort of esthetic or romantic love; not philia, a sort of reciprocal love between personal friends; but it is agape which is understanding goodwill for all men. It is an overflowing love which seeks nothing in return. It is the love of God working in the lives of men. This is the love that may well be the salvation of our civilization.

- The Rev. Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr., from "The Role of the Church in Facing the Nation's Chief Moral Dilemma," 1957

”

REMEMBERING BISHOP ROBERT ESTILL

The Rt. Rev. Robert Whitridge Estill passed into eternal glory on October 9, 2019, in Raleigh, North Carolina. He was surrounded by family.

Born September 7, 1927, in Lexington, Kentucky, to parents Robert and Elizabeth, Estill witnessed nine decades of history. He put his time to excellent use and was a talented raconteur, always ready with a story about one of his adventures to regale friends and strangers alike. An advocate for those marginalized by the Church, Estill served his beloved Episcopal Church with vision and warmth.

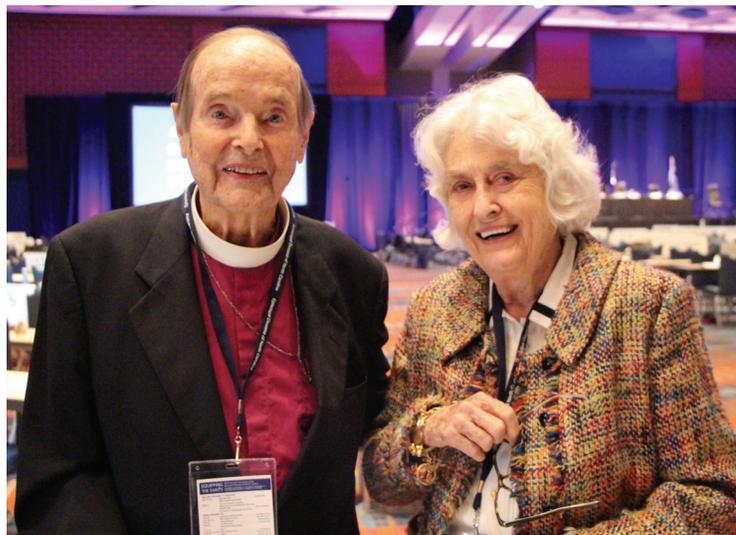
“Bishop Estill was an exemplary leader who always lived fully and faithfully into his vocation as a servant of God and of God’s people,” the Rt. Rev. Sam Rodman, bishop of the Diocese of North Carolina, said. “He was a man of character who also had a gift for caricature. His cartoons captured the human foibles we all share, as well as a delight in the ways we live and love imperfectly, as agents of God’s grace. Bishop Estill’s humor was never more disarming than when he turned it on himself, which he often did.”

“Bob Estill has the strength of prophetic leadership wrapped in the old fashioned charms of a Southern gentleman,” the Rt. Rev. Anne Hodges-Copple, bishop suffragan of the Diocese of North Carolina, said. “He took his role as defender of the faith seriously while also taking himself and the politics of the church lightly.”

After receiving his Bachelor of Arts at the University of Kentucky in 1949, Estill went on to earn his Bachelor of Divinity at Episcopal Divinity School in 1952 and later in life his Master of Sacred Theology (1960), Doctor of Ministry (1979) and Doctor of Divinity (1984) from Sewanee, the University of the South. He was ordained to the diaconate and the priesthood in 1952 by the Rt. Rev. William R. Moody, bishop of Lexington. On June 17, 1950, Estill wed Joyce Haynes, with whom he would share a 69-year marriage.

Estill’s service to the church began in his native Kentucky, where he served churches from 1952 until 1963. He then served in the D.C. area for several years as a rector and a faculty member at Virginia Theological Seminary before moving to Dallas, Texas, in 1976 to serve as the rector of St. Michael’s and All Angels. From there he was elected bishop coadjutor of the Diocese of North Carolina in 1980. He succeeded the Rt. Rev. Thomas Fraser as the IX Bishop of North Carolina on January 27, 1983, when he was consecrated by the Most Rev. John M. Allen. He served as bishop until his retirement in 1994.

As bishop, Estill sought to deepen and extend the ordained ministry of the Church through a commitment to clergy continuing education, active encouragement of aspirants for Holy Orders, support for the ordination of women and the revival of the diaconate in this Diocese.



The Rt. Rev. Robert Estill and his wife, Joyce, at the 201st Annual Convention. Photo by Christine McTaggart

At the time of his retirement in 1994, he could look with justifiable satisfaction at the growth during his episcopate in the number of clergy resident in the Diocese, including an additional 50 women clergy and 22 deacons.

“When Estill was still a priest in the Diocese of Dallas, he was an early and often lonely voice in support of women in lay and ordained ministry,” Hodges-Copple said. “He licensed my mother to be a lay chalice bearer at the Episcopal School of Dallas, a bold move in the early eighties that caused some to resign from the board of trustees. I chose to do my discernment process in the Diocese of North Carolina because I knew under Bishop Estill’s leadership I could just be my full and honest self without needing to defend women’s equality in general.”

Estill also sought to strengthen diocesan institutions and to honor long-standing mission commitments. He was a strong proponent of youth, campus and social ministries.

“There was a graciousness to him that made one feel as though there was room to be yourself in his presence, a generous spirit that always left me feeling more sure of God’s love,” Rodman said. “In addition to our occasional visits, it was a great gift, recently, to be invited to celebrate with him a Sunday service that he offered faithfully once a month to the residents of Cypress Residential Community, where he and Joyce made their home. His devotion to God and to God’s people was his constant focus, and in this he embodied what it means to be faithful.”

Estill is survived by his wife, Joyce, their three children, Helen Estill Foote (Joe), Robert W. Estill, Jr. and Elizabeth Estill Robertson (Joe), six grandchildren and five great-grandchildren.

NEW, NOTABLE & NEWSWORTHY

THE REV. MARTY STEBBINS ELECTED 10TH BISHOP OF MONTANA

The Diocese of North Carolina offers congratulations and blessings to the Rev. Marty Stebbins, rector of St. Timothy's, Wilson, on her election as the 10th Bishop of the Episcopal Diocese of Montana.

Stebbins, the first woman to hold the office of bishop of the Diocese of Montana, was elected on the third ballot during the diocesan election on Friday, July 26, 2019.

The Rt. Rev. Sam Rodman, bishop of the Diocese of North Carolina, offered his heartfelt congratulations. "This is a happy day for the dioceses in both North Carolina and Montana. Marty brings a unique combination of preaching, teaching, administration, and building leadership capacity to this call."

The Rt. Rev. Anne Hodges-Copple, bishop suffragan of the Diocese of North Carolina, added her confidence in the bishop-elect in her new role. "Marty's wide open heart for the Gospel of Jesus Christ will be a great match for the wide open spaces of Montana," she said. "She is a 'have mission will travel' kind of person."

Rodman noted Stebbins' time at St. Timothy's has been

marked from the start by strong collaboration throughout the parish and the community of Wilson. Stebbins has contributed much on the diocesan level as well, serving as a member of the Trustees of the Diocese as well as on the Commission on Ministry for the Diaconate.

"We will miss her leadership here in North Carolina," said Rodman, "but we are grateful her gifts will now serve the Diocese of Montana and the wider church. Blessings and grace, Bishop-elect Stebbins!"

Stebbins' last Sunday at St. Timothy's was October 6, and she will be consecrated and ordained December 7 in Helena, Montana.



GREENSBORO OFFICE CLOSING AT END OF 2019

The diocesan office in Greensboro, North Carolina will close at the end of the year. If this news causes sadness or worry that you will be seeing less of the bishops and canons in your region, fear not! The office is being closed because the bishops and canons all spend so much time on the road and in our churches already. Added to that is the fact that technology such as Zoom, a video conferencing service widely used by diocesan staff, allows us to con-

nect no matter where we are. Considered together, it was decided it made responsible fiscal sense to consolidate administrative staff and other office needs under one roof so that funds might be spent elsewhere and support our mission priority work. As the Diocese of North Carolina owns the building in downtown Raleigh, bringing those diocesan office needs under that roof was—again—the most fiscally prudent choice.



HOST CHURCHES NEEDED FOR SAFE CHURCH TRAINING

As planning continues for the spring season of Safe Church Training, we

are extending an invitation to become a host church for sessions across the diocese. Hosting is a great way to get your own folks up to date. Remember, in-person training is good for three years. If you're interested in hosting, or if you have questions about your training status, please contact Amy Campbell, diocesan children and family missioner, at amy.campbell@episdionc.org.

CONVENTION'S THURSDAY NIGHT PROGRAM OPEN TO ALL

The Thursday Night Program preceding the first day of the Annual Convention is an event traditionally attended by those arriving early for Convention. This year's program focuses on an event of deep emotion and impact, and we hope all who have an interest in racial justice and healing will come and be a part of it.

Join us for a special showing of the film, "Emanuel: The Untold Story of The Victims and Survivors of The Charleston Church Shooting" on Thursday, November 21, at 7:15p.m. at the Benton Convention Center, Winston-Salem. Produced by Stephen Curry and Viola Davis, this heartbreaking and inspiring documentary powerfully weaves together the history of race relations in Charleston, the significance and impact of the mass shooting at Mother Emanuel Church, and the hope and forgiveness that emerge in the aftermath. The film will be followed by a panel discussion featuring Polly Sheppard, a survivor of the shooting. Due to its difficult content, the film contains disturbing images and is designed for mature



A still from the film "Emanuel: The Untold Story of The Victims and Survivors of The Charleston Church Shooting" featuring the church.

audiences only.

Registration at Convention is not required, nor is there a cost to attend this event. Admission will be on a first-come, first-served basis until the room reaches capacity. For more information, contact the Rev. Ginny Inman at ginny.inman@episdionc.org. Due to licensing restrictions, this event will not be livestreamed, nor will there be a recording offered following the event.

FALL CYCLE MISSION ENDOWMENT GRANT APPLICATIONS DUE NOV. 30

The November 30 deadline for the fall cycle of Mission Endowment Grant applications is fast approaching. Mission Endowment grants are diocesan grants that encourage collaboration and partnerships. While grant projects must relate to missionary initiatives located within the 38 counties of the Diocese, the initiatives themselves do not have to be associated with diocesan entities. Only one participating member of the proposed project team is required to be associated with a diocesan entity; the rest of the team can build out from there. This opens the door to greater

eligibility, including:

- Strategic partnerships between diocesan and outside entities, including interfaith and secular entities
- Companion relationships
- Partnership ministries of congregations, institutions and organizations of the Diocese.

For more information or to apply for a Mission Endowment Grant, visit episdionc.org and look for "Grants and Scholarships" under the "Resources" tab.

#ADVENTWORD 2019

The Diocese of North Carolina will once again participate in #AdventWord, a global advent calendar celebrating its sixth year in 2019. #AdventWord is a digital offering created to build an international community that together explores the mystery and wonder of Advent.

At adventword.org, participants can subscribe to daily email meditations or follow along with or join in the fun on social media. Every day a word is assigned, and participants from around the world share photos, meditations, prayers and thoughts about what that word means to them

or where they see that word at play during the holy pre-Christmas season.

The Diocese will participate in and celebrate #AdventWord on our Facebook page as well as our Twitter and Instagram accounts. We hope you will join us!



ARE YOU EXPLORING SACRED GROUND?

Since the announcement of Sacred Ground, a film- and reading-based dialogue series on race and faith from The Episcopal Church, the Diocese has been exploring ways to offer it in an alternative structure for those whose schedules might restrict participation. An online approach was beta tested this summer, but before a final decision is made on the feasibility of offering an alternative, the Chartered Committee on Lifelong Christian Formation is interested

in hearing how this program is being implemented in churches and communities.

If you are offering Sacred Ground in your congregation or community, or if you are interested in learning more about this series, please contact the Rev. Ginny Inman, acting officer for adult formation and lifelong learning, at ginny.inman@episdionc.org.

IN CASE YOU MISSED IT

Over the last several months and following the retirement of two longtime diocesan employees, the Diocese has announced several changes to the staff. In case you missed them, here's the latest.

Shelley Kappauf Announces Retirement

Shelley Kappauf, diocesan executive assistant to the Rt. Rev. Anne Hodges-Copple, announced her plans to retire from the Diocese of North Carolina at the end of 2019 after 15 years of service.

Kappauf joined the diocesan staff as a key member of the then-new Greensboro office near St. Andrew's, providing support for the Rt. Rev. Chip Marble, assisting bishop, and the Rev. Dr. Leon Spencer, dean of the School of Ministry, as well as hospitality for all. Her years of raising a blended family of a husband and six children prepared her well for the variety of assistance she provided as formation materials were developed, bishops' schedules were juggled, and offices were moved downtown. It all culminated when she became the full-time executive assistant to the bishop suffragan upon the election of Hodges-Copple in 2013. Whatever came her way, she was ready to handle it, and her skills were both noticed and appreciated.

"The entire diocese has been blessed by Shelley's presence among us for 15 years," said Hodges-Copple. "With her mixture of humor, wisdom and hard



work, she has amplified so many ministries of the Diocese it would be hard to name them all."

Among those ministries were the work of diocesan committees, including the Chartered Committee on Campus and Young Adult Ministry, the Commission on Ministry for the Diaconate, and the Chaplains for the Retired Clergy. She served for 10 years as coordinator of Education for Ministry (EfM) for the Diocese, and as an EfM mentor in her parish.

"Shelley loves to work behind the scenes," said Hodges-Copple. "But the rest of us always feel better when she is on the scene, whether registering people for a conference, helping with logistics at an ordination or providing hospitality at a ministry event."

The gifts Kappauf had to offer were noticed outside the Diocese as well. A member of B+E+S+T (Bishops' Executive Secretaries Together), she was elected as treasurer of the organization, a position in which she served for five years.

"It has been my privilege to work for this diocese for the past 15 years, first for Bishop Chip Marble and then for Bishop Anne Hodges-Copple," said Kappauf. "I've been fortunate to be able to help them in their respective ministries."

Said Hodges-Copple, "Shelley is her own unique bright light who shines most when she helps the rest of us shine with the light of Christ."

Upon her retirement, Kappauf looks forward with her husband, Charles, to traveling, settling into their new home, spending time at their beach condo and having more time with their children and grandchildren, though not necessarily in that order.

"Retirement is something we've thought about for a while," said Kappauf. "It feels a bit surreal to realize it's finally happening. I am grateful for my years with the Diocese of North Carolina, and I deeply value the many friendships I hope will continue. I'm also very grateful to my husband, who has been retired for two years and patiently waiting for me to join him."

Kappauf's last day will be December 31, 2019.

Update on the Youth Department

Beth Crow, former diocesan lead youth missionary, was another tenured employee who retired this summer, providing the youth department, too, the opportunity to review and restructure their approach to ministry. Lisa Aycock, also a longtime diocesan youth missionary, has assumed the mantle of lead youth missionary, Amy Campbell, former youth missionary, is refining her focus to as the children's and family missionary. Leah Dail joined the staff as an assistant youth missionary.

Finance Department Welcomes Two New Staff Members

Following the retirement of Canon Marlene Weigert over the summer, the responsibilities of her position were restructured. The majority of them have been absorbed by Maria Gillespie, longtime diocesan accountant and new director of finance and administration.

Also joining the finance department are Dan Pelliccia as office coordinator and personnel administrator; Blanca Petrillo in a part-time position as administrative assistant and bookkeeper; and Erin Sweeney, former administrative assistant and bookkeeper and now full-time finance assistant and event coordinator.



Clockwise from top left: Leah Dail, Lisa Aycock, Maria Gillespie, Blanca Petrillo, Dan Pelliccia and Amy Campbell

DIOCESAN EVENTS

November

- 17 Safe Church Training, All Saints', Concord
- 21 "Emanuel: The Untold Story of The Victims and Survivors of The Charleston Church Shooting,"
Benton Convention Center, Winston-Salem
- 22-23 204th Annual Convention, Benton Convention Center, Winston-Salem

December

- 10 Celebration of New Ministry for the Rev. Imogen Rhodenhiser, Good Shepherd, Raleigh
- 17 Celebration of New Ministry for the Rev. Robert Fruehwirth, St. Matthew's, Hillsborough

Look for additional events and more detailed event information online at episdionc.org, or contact the Diocese at (919) 834-7474, toll-free at (800) 448-8775. Upcoming diocesan events and events from around the Diocese are also featured in Please Note, the weekly diocesan e-newsletter. Sign up on our homepage.

STAY IN TOUCH

Keep up with our diocese and bishops!



Episcopal Diocese NC
Sam Rodman Anne Hodges-Cople



@EpiscopalNC
@samuelrodman @bishoppannehc

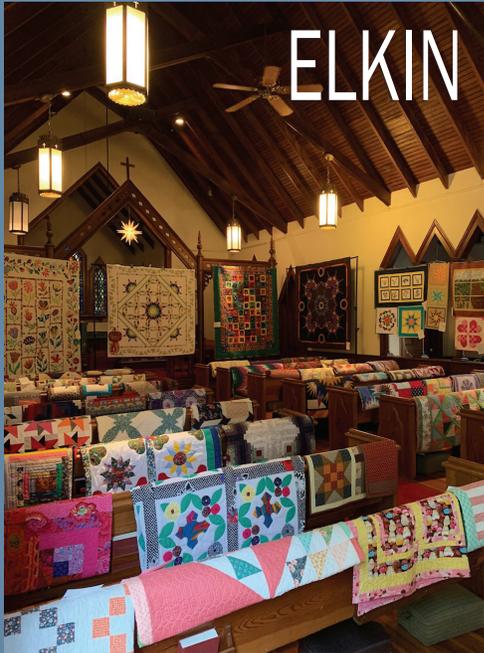


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www.vimeo.com/episcopalnc

AROUND THE



Nearly 70 quilts were on display during the 13th Annual Foothills Quilters of Elkin quilt show at Galloway Memorial, Elkin. *Photo by Vicki Whelan*

The Johnson Service Corps hosted the annual meeting of Episcopal Service Corps directors from around the country during the week of October 14. The Rt. Rev. Sam Rodman and the Rt. Rev. José McLoughlin, bishop of Western North Carolina, celebrated a Eucharist at Chapel of the Cross, Chapel Hill. *Photo by Day Pritchatt*



More than 100 visitors, including these from North Carolina Pet Partners, turned out for the Blessing of the Animals service at St. Francis Greensboro on October 6. *Photo by the Rev. Milton Williams*



Amelia James and her bearded dragon, Spike, attended the Blessing of the Animals service held by St. Mark's, Huntersville; Lake Forest Church and La Escuelita San Marcos. *Photo by the Rev. Sarah Milholland*



The Rev. Greg McIntyre blessed a cat during the St. Patrick's, Mooresville, Blessing of the Animals service. *Photo by Beth Dyess*



The Rt. Rev. Hector Monterosso, formerly bishop of Costa Rica, helped Holy Comforter, Charlotte, celebrate the 10th anniversary of its Spanish-language La Misa service on October 13. *Photo by the Rev. Greg Brown*

THE DIOCESE

Episcopalians from St. Philip's, St. Joseph's, St. Luke's, St. Stephen's and St. Titus', Durham; Holy Family, Chapel of the Cross and Advocate, Chapel Hill; and St. Cyprian's, Oxford, marched in this year's Durham Pride Parade.



St. Paul's, Cary, hosted its annual LobsterFest on October 5, raising money for local nonprofits and the church's ministries. Photo by Poppy Mathew



During the church's annual Yam Jam on October 5, parishioners of St. Michael's, Raleigh, gleaned sweet potatoes at First Fruits Farm in Franklin County. Photo by Susan Rountree



The Rt. Rev. Anne Hodges-Copple visited Good Shepherd, Ridgeway, for the church's homecoming service on October 3. Photo by Donald Johnson



Participants from St. Martin's, Charlotte, marched in this August's Charlotte Pride Parade on August 18 after celebrating a Pride Mass earlier in the week. Photo by Tony Ponsnby



St. Luke's, Salisbury, packed more than 20,000 meals for Rise Against Hunger with the help of more than 70 volunteers. Photo by the Rev. Robert Black

THE 204TH ANNUAL CONVENTION PREVIEW

The 204th Annual Convention of the Diocese of North Carolina will take place November 22-23 at the M.C. Benton, Jr. Convention and Civic Center in Winston-Salem.

The theme of this year's gathering is *Becoming Beloved Community: Holy Partners in a Heavenly Calling*. Sessions will allow us to explore together what it means, practically, to work toward *Becoming Beloved Community*. We also are excited to welcome two mission churches to Convention as parishes: Trinity, Fuquay-Varina, and St. Titus', Durham.

Another highlight of Convention will be the Thursday night program, a screening of the film "Emanuel: The Untold Story of The Victims and Survivors of The Charleston Church Shooting" on November 21 at 7:15 p.m. in the main convention hall at the Benton Convention Center. The film will be followed by a panel discussion featuring Polly Sheppard, a survivor of the shooting. All are welcome to attend; however, due to its difficult content and disturbing images, the film is designed for mature audiences only.

GETTING DOWN TO BUSINESS

The deadline to submit resolutions and nominations was October 14 at noon. All resolutions and nominations submitted by the deadline are available on the Yapp app and in the pre-Convention materials linked to the Annual Convention page at episdionc.org.

All newly introduced amendments to the constitution require affirmative votes in consecutive conventions in order to pass. Resolution 204.1 is a constitutional amendment passed on first reading in 2018 on which Convention will vote for the second time this year.

Late resolutions and nominations are in order during the first legislative session of the Convention. The Convention must agree to consider a late resolution by a two-thirds vote. Late resolutions amending the constitution or canons are not allowed. A late nomination must have a nominator and two seconders, all from different parishes or missions.

The following are brief descriptions of each resolution; the full texts of resolutions and comments are available on the Convention page and the app. The resolutions before Convention are:

- **Resolution 204.1 On Amending the Constitution to Comply with the Canons of General Convention Pertaining to Voting Privileges for Clergy Without Canonical Residence** (*second reading*)

Amends Article III, Section 3 to align with the canons of The Episcopal Church in allowing only clergy who are canonically resident in the Diocese of North Carolina to vote during the Annual Convention.

- **Resolution 204.2 On Churches that Fail to File Timely Reports or Audits**

Rule III currently requires churches failing to file a timely parochial report or audit to seek the right to vote on the floor of Convention. This resolution would instead require churches to seek the right to vote from Diocesan Council in October.

- **Resolution 204.3 On Amending the Constitution to Clarify the Qualifications for Standing Committee** (*first reading*)

Makes explicit that there is a two-year gap between terms for those seeking re-election to the Standing Committee, as per our Constitution.

- **Resolution 204.4 On Spousal and Partner Activities at Convention**

Encourages the Diocese to provide delegate spouse and partner activities during the course of Convention.

- **Resolution 204.5 On Affordable Housing**

Calls for the appointment of a Bishop's Committee on Affordable Housing.

- **Resolution 204.6 On the Commemoration of Cecilia Foster Lawrence**

Recommends that the 80th General Convention of The Episcopal Church add a commemoration on or about January 21 of each year for Cecilia Foster Lawrence.

- **Resolution 204.7 On Resources and Advocacy for Mental Health**

Asks all congregations to become more supportive places for those living with mental health diagnoses; for the Committee on Children's Mental Health to equip congregations and leaders; and for the Diocese and congregations to advocate mental health care reform.



By Christine McTaggart

THE ART OF THE WELCOME

At the heart of welcome is the ability to make a person feel at ease and at home. Though in The Episcopal Church our motto is “all are welcome,” despite the best of intentions, there can still be an onus on visitors to search for information or negotiate over-enthusiastic conversations—or a lack of them altogether.

Churches across the Diocese of North Carolina are working to change that. Three in the Charlotte Convocation alone have created dedicated, physical welcome centers to create a point of reference for visitors, while others in the Diocese are incorporating alternate methods to provide an atmosphere that’s warm and inviting, letting newcomers know the congregation is glad they’ve come to visit and ready to make their visit more enjoyable.

In short, the approaches are all about putting the needs and comfort of the visitors—not the church—at the center of the efforts.

CREATING THE SPACE

St. Margaret’s, Waxhaw, built a dedicated and permanent welcome and information center in their narthex in January 2019. The space is intended to be easily recognizable to visitors as a source of information, and it is kept free of congestion before and after services so the path to it is clear and easy to negotiate. Well-defined and clearly marked, the welcome center is tended every Sunday by the “Vestry Member on Duty,” who greets the visitor and provides them with a folder of information on St. Margaret’s and the Episcopal Church, and a prayer square from St. Margaret’s Knots of Love ministry. The offer is also extended for the guest to complete a Visitors’ Card and ask any questions that might be on their mind.

St. Patrick’s, Mooresville, also offers a dedicated welcome center for those new to the church. Built by a St. Patrick’s parishioner, the welcome center is actually on wheels, allowing it to be brought out front and center on Sundays and kept closer to the wall during the week to save space. Visitors are given gifts of homemade bread and handmade dish cloths, and all are invited to a special, once-per-month “Newcomer Cookie Party,” which follows the main Sunday service and creates the space for newcomers



The welcome center at St. Margaret’s, Waxhaw. Photo courtesy of St. Margaret’s

to meet the Rev. Greg McIntyre, rector of St. Patrick’s, and ask any questions about the church.

St. John’s, Charlotte, provides yet another example of the same idea but with a slightly different approach. Instead of one dedicated space, St. John’s created welcome kiosks that are placed at three high-traffic areas around the church. Above every kiosk is a screen with a calendar of upcoming church events and photos of life at St. John’s. Information about the church, outreach opportunities, Bible studies, connection points, meeting groups, and a directory and map are all for the taking by anyone interested. Starting November 2019, St. John’s is also offering a monthly “Newcomers 101” gathering during their regular education hour, so those new to the church can gain a better understanding of the worship services, formation offerings, youth programs, finances, outreach and anything else they want to know.

THE HUMAN WELCOME CENTER

What all three examples have in common is the intentionality of creating a space that makes it easy on their guests to find information and a human connection. For those reading this and picturing common spaces at their own church that might prove a bit too tight to accommodate a kiosk or booth, the wonderful thing about

welcome centers is they don't *have* to be physical spaces. As lovely as they are, what the physical spaces offer can be accomplished by adjusting the approach to offering welcome and hospitality in any space. What matters most is not the format in which it is offered but rather the mindset behind the welcome, which is to let guests know you are glad to see them, and you want them to enjoy their time at your church without them feeling overwhelmed or put on the spot.

St. Stephen's, Oxford, reconfigured how they welcomed visitors when they decided to adapt the tenets of Invite Welcome Connect, a program introduced to the Diocese at the 200th Annual Convention in 2015 (*Disciple*, Summer 2016). Rooted in an intentional approach with a focus on relationship building, visitors are greeted at the door with a warm welcome and an offer of accompaniment if the visitor would like company or is new to the Episcopal Church. They are invited to the post-service coffee hour, still accompanied by a greeter who ensures introductions are made with an abundance of welcome but without it becoming too much.

It all comes down to finding a way to make a visitor feel at home instead of singled-out, and doing it in a way that requires little effort on their part. It doesn't take much to make the change. For example, it's not uncommon for congregations during the Sunday service to invite visitors to stand up and be recognized. It's a well-established approach. But what if instead of (or in addition to) asking the newcomer to stand for the congregation to see, you asked a pre-designated welcome team to stand for the visitors to see? Perhaps the team could wear an easy-to-identify nametag, scarf or other item simple to spot in an after-service crowd? Or maybe you designate a spot near the coffee hour where the team promises to congregate just to answer questions and talk with those exploring the church? In this scenario, few material resources are needed. You are creating the space, extending the welcome and

offering the warmth of your church home.

YOU ARE THE GIFT

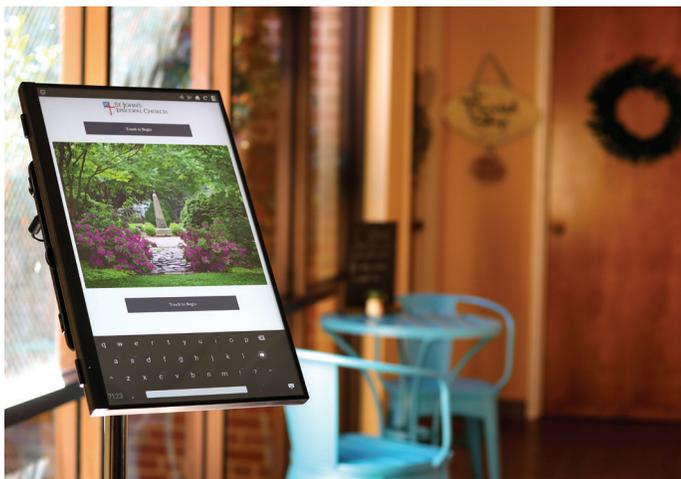
There is no one right way to offer welcome. The congregations of the Diocese of North Carolina illustrate every day how many ways a visitor or guest can be given a warm reception. But all share a common understanding of the gift that matters most. Whatever other approaches your church implements, the greatest gift a visitor can receive is one given by you—a genuine welcome, a true happiness to share your church home, sincerity and being entirely present in the moments you interact. Whether you await to offer those gifts in a dedicated space, as part of a designated welcome team, as a greeter or simply as a person with a knack for hospitality and conversation, the art of the welcome is all about putting guests and newcomers at ease, giving them more than you're getting, and leaving them looking forward to their next visit.

Christine McTaggart is the communications director for the Diocese of North Carolina. Contact her at christine.mctaggart@episdionc.org.



INVITE WELCOME CONNECT

Are you looking for ideas on ways you can adapt your welcome practices to focus more on your guests? Check out Invite Welcome Connect, a program developed in the Diocese of Texas, presented to (and embraced by) the Diocese of North Carolina and now a ministry at the Beecken Center of the School of Theology, University of the South, Sewanee. Learn more at invitewelcomeconnect.com (the website comes complete with toolkit and resources!).



The welcome center at St. John's, Charlotte. *Photos by Rebekah Rode*



HERE FOR YOU

The work of Becoming Beloved Community is not work you do alone

Since the introduction of our path to Becoming Beloved Community, the mission priorities of the Diocese of North Carolina have been clear:

1. Engaging in deeper dialogue and multi-layered conversations around the dynamics of difference with particular attention to race, political tensions between left and right, and the economic implications of these divisions
2. Support for vulnerable congregations
3. Regionally cultivated missional collaboratives
4. Lifelong formation
5. Reconnecting to the land (Creation Care)

It is a great deal of work we are being asked to do, and it's important to remember it is work we do together. The Diocese of North Carolina is not an office, it is not a staff, and it is not a step on The Episcopal Church hierarchy. It is almost 120 worshiping communities and multiple ministries and partnerships; it is not an "it" or a "them"—the Diocese of North Carolina is a "we."

Because we are a team, the team members who comprise the diocesan staff work hard to ensure the diocesan offices provide support and resources for the work of Becoming Beloved Community happening in every congregation and ministry.

Since we discuss the priorities and the work so often, it seems only right to check in and ensure you know of the resources you have at your disposal every day.

STAFF

One of the greatest resources you have at your side is the diocesan staff, every one of whom is dedicated to provid-

ing resources and support to every congregation. Space prevents us from introducing you to every staffer individually, but rest assured every one of us stands ready to support the work you and your congregations are doing in any way we can.

Of course, that support begins with our bishops, the Rt. Rev. Sam Rodman and the Rt. Rev. Anne Hodges-Copple. They continue to lead with a strong and dynamic partnership and a sharp focus on our mission priorities, and they remain dedicated to developing the leadership and resources within our churches. Whether from diocesan offices or as they travel across the Diocese, Bishop Sam and Bishop Anne provide their leadership, vision and guidance to keep us mindful of our journeys as disciples and apostles of Christ.

Joining the bishops across the Diocese are our canons and missionaries, ready to meet and work with church leadership to identify areas of need and success to help create a plan that allows every church's gifts to be shared with their communities.

The communications team continues to work with parish communicators and do individual consultations with churches to help build tools to deepen internal relationships and share the news of your work in the wider world.

Diocesan support staff is here to help with financial questions, benefits questions, administrative needs and so much more.

All of these efforts help create the solid foundations from which congregations can go out into the world and do the work of Becoming Beloved Community. And yet these efforts are only just the start, as there are even more resources waiting to assist in the work of our priority areas.



More than 70 lay people and clergy from across the Diocese attended New Camino in September. *Photo by Summerlee Walter*

DIFFICULT CONVERSATIONS / RACIAL RECONCILIATION

This is a priority for which it is not always easy to encompass the work that is happening. Primarily that's because the work related to racial reconciliation is happening across every priority area, and that will continue to be true. However, there are a few programs and offerings coming in 2020 developed specifically with a goal of expanding knowledge of racial injustice and beginning the difficult task of engaging in painful conversation.

- "Dismantling Racism: Reclaiming our Baptismal Promise": Formerly

“Seeing the Face of God,” the diocesan anti-racism training program was updated, redesigned and renamed. Done in partnership among diocesan staff, the Racial Justice and Reconciliation Committee and notable consultants such as Dr. Catherine Meeks of the Absalom Jones Episcopal Center for Racial Healing in Atlanta, “Dismantling Racism” is an interactive workshop designed to deepen spiritual commitment to dismantling racism as participants in the Jesus Movement. Through presentations, prayer, story sharing, videos and small group discussion, participants explore how the sin of racism impacts all lives.

Look for 2020 dates and locations in diocesan communications.

- “Becoming an Anti-Racist Church” is a new mini-course designed to give participants a chance to review and unpack the concepts and vocabulary introduced in the two-day Racial Equity Institute (REI) Phase I anti-racism workshop. It has also been modified to allow participation from those who have not attended the REI training. The curriculum was developed and is offered by Episcopalians United Against Racism, a collaborative partnership that includes the Racial Justice and Reconciliation Committee. Look for course materials on the diocesan website in early 2020.
- In the planning for spring 2020 is a diocesan-wide read of a widely acclaimed book on racial understanding and conversations with the book’s author. (Stay tuned for the announcement of the title and author tour details.)
- Pilgrimage to Alabama (March 18-21, 2020): The path forward cannot be determined without understanding the history that came before. In March 2020, a diocesan pilgrimage will travel to Selma and Montgomery, Alabama, to study the legacy of racism in two of the most pivotal locations of the civil rights movement. Registration is now open on the diocesan website. (Visit “Upcoming Events” under the “News & Events” tab.)

Great people to contact for support in this area include:

- the Rev. Canon David Sellery, canon for congregational mission (david.sellery@episdionc.org),
- the Rev. Ginny Inman, acting officer for adult formation and lifelong learning (

Diocesan youth events, like the Genesis event for middle school students, provide critical formation and connections across churches. Photo by Lisa Aycock

dionc.org), and

- the Rev. Javier Almindárez Bautista, co-chair, Racial Justice and Reconciliation Committee (Javier@stpaulscary.org).

VULNERABLE CONGREGATIONS (A.K.A. CONGREGATIONAL VITALITY)

Our vision and dream is for every church in the Diocese to feel it is working from a place of strength and confidence about who they are and what they offer their communities. Some churches have found this place, while others struggle to find it in a world and times that are moving and changing at breakneck speed, and can use some help with discerning clearly who they are, who they want to be and how to get there.

This mission priority was originally developed with those churches specifically in mind. And while the focus of supporting congregations that feel vulnerable is as important to us as ever, it’s also become apparent this is not the only work of this mission focus. Because we want *all* of our churches to feel confident, and because we want to see all of our churches flourish, when taken to its essence, this priority is really about congregational vitality.

After all, those who dedicate their time and efforts to this priority encompasses so many areas that contribute to congregational vitality, including:

- clergy support,
- deacon formation,
- vestry support and transition ministry,
- Latino/Hispanic ministry,
- black ministry and
- mission church assistance.

It’s also important to know support is there when a

congregation feels strong overall but can use guidance in specific areas, like the transition process when searching to fill a clergy position, how to proceed with pastoral care or ways to strengthen a stewardship program.

Recognizing the expanding population of neighbors of Latino and Hispanic descent, in recent years several churches have expressed interest in being better able to welcome and connect with these neighbors. In 2018, the Diocese welcomed the Rev. Daniel Robayo, missionary for Latino/Hispanic ministry, to assist with making that wish a reality. Already he has developed relationships with individual congregations and developed programming to help any congregation interested in starting or deepening their Latino/Hispanic ministries. These include a workshop, developed in partnership with the Diocese of East Carolina, for clergy and lay leaders interested in learning how to celebrate the Holy Eucharist in Spanish. Watch for 2020 dates and locations in diocesan communication channels.

2019 also saw the organization and presentation of *New Camino: A New Vision for Latino/Hispanic Ministry*, a program of The Episcopal Church that explored with attendees the myths and misconceptions surrounding Latino/Hispanic ministry, plus great ways to invite and welcome these vibrant communities.

It's worth noting that according to the Episcopal Church, the Diocese of North Carolina is one of only six dioceses nationwide that have full-time missionaries for Latino/Hispanic ministry, with 11 more working part-time.

In development for 2020:

- Robayo is currently working closely with the communications department on ways to increase our Spanish-language offerings as well as Spanish-language tutorials for celebrating the Eucharist.
- The Diocese plans to hire a full-time missionary for black ministry. The 2019 budget provided for a part-time consulting missionary position to help

introduce New Visions programming, an ongoing congregational renewal program for historically black congregations, and to help discern what is needed in the full-time missionary position. This consulting position proved invaluable in providing insight to the work of black ministry. The resulting full-time job description is the work of many voices, including those with whom the missionary will be working most closely.

- Also under discussion for 2020 is the introduction of roadshows, a series of gatherings across the Diocese bringing together bishops, diocesan staff, clergy and church leaders to discuss and share new and innovative community-focused missional initiatives as well as facilitate regional conversations as may be helpful.

Great people to contact for support in this area include:

- the Rev. Canon David Sellery, canon for congregational mission (david.sellery@episdionc.org),
- Canon Catherine Massey, canon for transition and pastoral ministries (catherine.massey@episdionc.org),
- the Rev. Canon Earnest Graham, regional canon (earnest.graham@episdionc.org),
- The Rev. Canon Rhonda Lee, regional canon (rhonda.lee@episdionc.org), and
- The Rev. Daniel Robayo, missionary for Latino/Hispanic ministry (daniel.robayo@episdionc.org).

Grant assistance is also available. (See “Grants & Scholarships” under the “Resources” tab at episdionc.org)

- The Mission Resource Support Team (MRST) grant helps fund clergy salaries in some mission congregations.
- NC Episcopal Church Foundation grants assist with church buildings, including renovation and repair.

LIFELONG FORMATION

This area of mission focus encompasses the work of guiding Christian spiritual development across the generations. Formation is the heart of Becoming Beloved Community, and the work supporting it spans every age:

- youth programming and ministry,
- children and family ministry,
- campus ministries and young adult ministry, and
- adult formation programming.

The youth, children and family ministry programs provide opportunities for young people to come together in fellowship with other youth to grow in spiritual formation practices and develop leadership within the church. These opportunities come throughout the year at gatherings such as HUGS Camp, Genesis, Bishops’ Ball and Happening. The goals of those who focus on youth



Recording the videos for Wholehearted Parenting with Dr. Susan Campbell. Photo by the Rev. Matt Holcombe



Lifelong formation begins early, with programs like Godly Play, and extends into adulthood. *File photo*

and family ministry include supporting youth leaders and congregations in their own youth ministries, and providing through programs like Godly Play and Safe Church Training ways churches can build safe and enriching environments in which their congregational youth can thrive.

Campus and young adult ministry works to provide an opportunity to create connection and community for young adults who may be away from home for the first time, or for those finished with higher education yet still very much in the process of forming who they are. Currently, there are eight Episcopal and two ecumenical campus ministries that provide support, fellowship, worship, reconciliation, spiritual formation and outreach opportunities for students on college campuses and young adults in surrounding communities throughout the Diocese.

Adult formation is just as important because, for all the effort to build lifelong spiritual practices for youth and young adults, it's just as important to remember it's never too late to begin, deepen or renew our individual practices at any age. The Chartered Committee on Lifelong Christian Formation has worked closely with diocesan staff throughout 2019 to reimagine formation offerings and curate resources to find those most helpful to individuals of all ages as well as congregations. Of course, spiritual practice resources that have become popular in the last few years will remain steadfast in 2020, including:

- *Gospel-Based Discipleship*, the daily gospel and diocesan prayer, is available as a downloadable PDF on the diocesan website or as daily offerings on the diocesan social media channels (Facebook, Twitter and Instagram). Note: Those who ordered hard copies of the 2019-2020 *Gospel-Based*

Discipleship will receive them by the start of Advent.

- **Feast Day videos:** For the last two years, Bishop Sam Rodman has shared meditations on the saints in whose honor feast days are celebrated. Each year, the reflections go a bit deeper, with the upcoming third cycle helping us connect the history of these saints and the lives they led to our own lives and work toward Becoming Beloved Community. The feast day videos are shared on Facebook and Twitter on the feast days themselves, and the collection can be found on the diocesan Vimeo channel.
- **Bible Study with Bishop Sam:** Once a month, Bishop Sam Rodman hosts an online Bible study on Facebook Live, where he and an invited guest discuss a gospel passage for the week. Those who watch live can interact with questions and comments, and those who can't join live can still access the video recordings on the diocesan Facebook page or Vimeo channel.
- **"Caminando with Jesus"** is a weekly reflection series written by contributors from around the Diocese and based on the weekly gospel text. Delivered directly to inboxes in both English and Spanish every Wednesday morning, you can subscribe at bit.ly/CAMINANDOWITHJESUS.

For those going even deeper, Education for Ministry (EfM) is a four-year course of study that strives to help every baptized person fulfill their baptismal vows. EfM provides a theological education program that familiarizes individuals with the foundation of the Christian faith and teaches them how to interpret and express that faith in daily life. As the emphasis on lay ministry has grown, the EfM program has played a crucial role in developing theologically informed, knowledgeable lay leaders.

In development for 2020:

- The work that took place in 2019—a continuation and expansion of the work founded in the preceding years—strongly reinforced the need to dedicate



Bishop Sam's monthly online Bible studies feature lots of familiar faces, including Archdeacon the Ven. Jan Lamb.

the resource of a full-time officer for adult formation and lifelong learning. We expect to be able to share more about the plans for this position in the new year

- New young adult podcast: With a planned debut in January, this podcast hosted by the Rev. James Franklin, young adult missionary, will engage young adults from every walk of life in conversation about the topics and ideas that interest them and rest most heavily on their hearts; questions around faith and spirituality; and more.
- “Wholehearted Parenting,” a new formation program that focuses on personal and caregiving practices informed by research on courage, shame and resilience that enhance the ability to live into the tenets of our Baptismal Covenant, will be available in January 2020.
- An acolyte festival to take place within our diocesan borders on October 3.
- Diocesan-wide Epiphany Retreat: This Epiphany season the Episcopal Diocese of North Carolina is joining with the Living Compass Spirituality and Wellness Initiative to offer a half-day workshop and online daily devotional and wellness retreat, “Living Well with All Heart, Soul, Strength, and Mind.” For anyone in the Charlotte area that day, there will be a half-day workshop on January 11 at Christ Church. On January 12, the Diocese will offer a 28-day online daily devotional and wellness retreat that will include daily emails and options to engage in online conversation or adaptations for group settings.

Watch diocesan communications for more details.

Great people to contact in this area include:

- the Rev. Ginny Inman, acting officer for adult formation and lifelong learning (ginny.inman@episdionc.org),
- Lisa Aycock, lead youth missionary (lisa.aycock@episdionc.org), and
- Amy Campbell, children and family missionary (amy.campbell@episdionc.org)

Grant assistance is available through:

- Continuing Theological Education Grants for Clergy & Laity,
- Seminarian Scholarships and
- Youth Scholarships.

MISSIONAL COLLABORATION

This priority represents the ministries that are not necessarily ours alone, but instead are the joint efforts of the Diocese and others. The Episcopal Farmworker Ministry



The Costa Rica pilgrims practice evangelism at Iglesia El Buen Pastor, San Jose, during Puertas Abiertas with Padre Eduardo Chinchilla, visiting from Iglesia La Ascension, Desamparados. Photo courtesy of the Rev. Rebecca Yarbrough

and Galilee Ministries of East Charlotte are great examples of missional collaboration in action, and we hope to be able to bring their models of collaborative ministry to bear on other projects in development.

Our collaborations are not restricted to North Carolina, though, as they also encompass our companion relationships with the Diocese of Costa Rica and the Diocese of Botswana. Both of these relationships have deepened in the past two years, with pilgrimages led to both countries and reciprocating the welcome when pilgrims from Botswana traveled to North Carolina this past summer.

In development for 2020:

- Second Annual Diocesan Pilgrimage to Costa Rica (March 23-April 2, 2020). With relationships deepened during the inaugural pilgrimage to Costa Rica in 2019 (*Disciple*, Summer 2019), the return establishes what is hoped to become an annual tradition.

Grant assistance is available through:

- Mission Endowment Grants, a fantastic collaboration resource encouraging partnerships both within and outside of Episcopal communities, and
- International Mission Grants, which support international missions that contribute to the sustainability of the communities served.

CREATION CARE

Reconnecting with the land, also widely referred to as Creation Care, has been about implementing steps that are within reach for all, regardless of socioeconomic or resource situations. The work of the Chartered Committee on Environmental Ministry has blazed the trails for us to follow,

and their work is dedicated and constant. The committee has focused on developing and providing resources any and every individual or congregation can use and implement, including weekly green tips, monthly reflections, presentations to churches, finding grants and other resources congregations can utilize, and building collaborative relationships with organizations doing work in similar areas. All of this work is expected to continue in 2020 with the full support of the Diocese, and we're eager to share news and resources while taking part in the work right alongside all of you.

A great person to contact in this area is:

- David McDuffie, chair, Chartered Committee on Environmental Ministry (dcmcduffie@gmail.com).

Grant assistance is available through:

- Green Grants – NOT the small green grants offered by the Chartered Committee for Environmental Ministry (*Disciple*, Summer 2019), these green grants support the initiatives of churches wishing to make facility improvements to reduce the consumption of energy or other natural resources required to operate church facilities.

At the heart of our mission and goal is community, which means none of us can do this alone. We are in this together, each with gifts to offer and share. It's a good thing, too, because even with all the space dedicated in this issue to sharing the work being done, it's still covering only a fraction of it and the collaboration possible between the Diocese and diocesan congregations. And it doesn't even begin to address all of the fantastic, life-changing, mission-focused work happening in our parishes, missions and ministries. There just aren't enough pages to contain it all. What matters most is knowing when all of those contributions, resources and collaborations come together, we build our beloved community, and we are truly disciples practicing the Way of Love.



After an inspiring conversation about their countries' approaches to HIV treatment and prevention, this June's pilgrims from Botswana gathered with new friends from Higher Ground and the Triad Health Project. *File photo*

CONNECTIONS

Several times over the last several pages, we mentioned keeping an eye on diocesan communication channels for more and future information. Happily, there are several channels to keep you informed, and it's easy to get connected with them all!

The *Disciple*: We hope you enjoy reading the *Disciple*, and if you're not reading your own copy and would like to subscribe, simply visit episditionc.org and click on "Subscribe to the Disciple" in the Featured Media box at the bottom of the homepage.

Please Note: One of the best ways to stay up-to-date on timely information, "Please Note" is our weekly e-newsletter sharing interesting stories, news, opportunities and more. To have it delivered to your inbox every Wednesday, visit episditionc.org and click the "Subscribe to Please Note" link in the Featured Media box.

Social Media: You can find the Diocese of North Carolina on several social media channels:

- **Facebook:** Daily *Gospel-Based Discipleship* postings, special announcements, conversations, feast day videos, Bishop Sam's Bible Study, reflections, green tips and more await you. Find us at facebook.com/Episcopal-DioceseNC.
- **Twitter:** When you've got only a moment, you'll find all the news and nuggets you need on our Twitter feed. Find us at twitter.com/episcopalnc.
- **Instagram:** A picture is worth a thousand words, and you'll find millions' worth at [@episditionc](https://www.instagram.com/episditionc) on the Instagram app. What's more, you'll find lots of ways to join with the rest of the Diocese to paint pictures of life in NC.

By the Rt. Rev. Anne Hodges-Copple

GREAT EXPECTATIONS

What's on your Christmas wish list? Are there things you want for yourself? Indulgent things? Frivolous things? Amazing gizmos? Or are you more the practical type, hoping Santa will notice that you need more toothpaste or a new vacuum cleaner? Perhaps you are more of an "Oh, I don't want anything for myself" type: "I have everything I need. Nothing for me, please." (No one ever believes this is true, and it only makes it harder to shop for you.)

Maybe you operate under the tyranny of wishing to find the perfect gift for a certain someone. Perhaps you go in for the more altruistic wishing: world peace, and health and happiness for family and friends. Maybe, if you are like me, you would like to join the "let's renounce consumerism as the root of all evil" party.

There's also another kind of Christmas wish list. The less-talked-about wish list of those who *wish* just to get through December and past New Year's Day. Those who find the approach of Christmas conjures up more stress than joy. Those who *wish* they didn't have to try so hard to put on a happy Christmas face to disguise their seasonal despair disorder.

It is normal to have wish lists for silly things, helpful things and impossible things. But we also need to be careful what we wish for, because wish lists can be a setup for disappointment.

Wishes can be tricky things. There can be a dangerous side to wishing, a kind of wishing that is just a disguise for dissatisfaction.

"I wish she wasn't my boss. I wish I had a different

nose. I wish you would behave differently." Wishes can be gift-wrapped criticisms of others or a passive form of low self-esteem. Such wishing can create ruts of disappointment, guiding us along paths of futility.

But enough about Christmas wish lists. Proceed with them at your own risk.

WHAT DO WE EXPECT?

Let me pose a different question: How is your Advent expectations list going? Advent is not, after all, created for the sake of preparing your Christmas shopping but preparing for the end of time and the return of the King. Taken correctly, Advent can be an antidote to pre-Christmas fever. Forget the Christmas wish list of cologne, pajamas and a cashmere sweater. Advent anticipates the return of the King of Heaven in glory and in final judgment. Ready or not, God is coming back.

Of course, adjusting our expectations also can be a tricky business.

We are expecting the return of the King in glory, but what does that mean exactly? Will the Light of Christ break through the heavens or come to your front door? Are you expecting a heavenly chorus to invite you to the party? Are you expecting joy in this life and peace in the next?

Advent is the season of great expectations: our great expectations of God and, this is the somewhat scary part, God's great expectations of us. The gift of the presence of God is free, but it is not without consequences.



“Prepare the Way, O Zion, your Lord is drawing near” the hymn reminds us. The Messiah is coming! The Messiah is coming? Theologically, that is unquestionably good news! But in our very real and human lives I think it is challenging news. Am I ready? How do I know if I’m ready? And ready for what? What exactly am I expecting?

I wonder if the biggest problem in making the transition from Advent to Christmas is the sometimes oppressive weight of expectations. We don’t know what to expect, and we can’t control the time or the place of the coming of God. I’m not even sure if we would recognize his presence. I’m not sure he would want to recognize us! Most people like to have a plan and a time schedule, with things that need to go in the day planner and on the calendar. The second coming is having none of that.

Anticipating the return of Jesus is confusing. If Jesus is coming at the end of time, and we don’t know when the end is coming, we have to be ready at all times. There is no estimated time of arrival. There is no app to check if the flight is on schedule. We’ve been told to keep the table set and the food warm because the world’s most important guest may arrive at any hour or time.

Expectations can have a tyranny of their own. The problems and fallacies of expectation around the holidays are obvious, timeless and, face it, unavoidable. Whenever company is coming, no matter how much we love it or dread it, there will be some measure of anxiety. I say accept it, and move on.

We are constantly victims of our expectations. We will always have expectations of our spouse, our children, our government and religious officials. We have expectations of ourselves and even our pets. And, depending upon how great our expectations are, we can set ourselves up for great disappointments. So the question becomes whether we are focused upon the things that matter. The invitation of Advent is to reorient our focus on the practices that keep us ready to welcome Jesus daily, and will keep us ready to welcome Christ of the Cosmos, whenever and wherever that may be.

READY FOR COMPANY

The good news is that preparing for Christ the King is not like preparing to host the Queen of England. Preparing for Jesus begins with humility—our own. Preparing for Jesus means remembering it is Jesus who invites us to come to his table. It’s paradoxical: We prepare to receive Jesus into our lives through prayers, studying scripture and mindfulness about abundant grace in the everyday, but he is also inviting us into his kingdom, offering to give us the daily bread and daily grace to see the extraordinary in the ordinary encounters of daily life.

Jesus is good company. Advent says, “Company is

coming.” Holy company in the Lord Jesus Christ. Holy company in the family, friends, neighbors and strangers who will cross our paths of hospitality this Christmas season and all the year long.

Advent sets before us the challenge of being ready to welcome company no matter when they choose to show up. In fact, the challenge is in not knowing when they will show up, while still being ready to welcome them by discerning what they need—and how that is more important than our own need to impress. Our most creative, innovative, thriving new missions are discovering the blessings of being ready for company, both expected and unexpected.

SIGNS, MYSTERY AND GIFTS

Here in North Carolina we see signs of the Kingdom of Heaven breaking into earthly life all over the landscape. We see this particularly in the partnerships and collaborations forming to show hospitality and hope even in a sin-sick world.

It is interesting how much hospitality and food are integral to our mission and ministries all over our diocese. There’s the community lunch in Pittsboro, started by members St. Bartholomew’s more than 10 years ago, where elected officials and the housing insecure all sit down together for a weekly meal and conversation. There’s the new Abundant Life wellness ministry in East Greensboro, started by a collaboration of Greensboro churches, where folks gather for a good meal as well as health screenings once a week. The Wednesday lunches in East Charlotte at the Galilee Center set the table for longtime residents of Charlotte to meet and greet their newest neighbors, refugees from around the world, and to build the new relationship necessary to create a Charlotte that brings prosperity to all neighborhoods. (Read more about Galilee Ministries on page 28.) In all of these ministries, food and fellowship are served with a primary emphasis upon just being with our neighbors. There is no greater gift than to give the gift of our full presence to another human being and receive the same in return.

The mystery of Advent is this: We have to learn to expect the unexpected. If we keep our hearts open and our minds curious and inquiring, God will surprise and delight us in ways beyond imagination and anticipation. My favorite gifts are often the ones I never thought to ask for, and they have brought me more joy than I ever could have imagined. And I don’t mean gifts under a Christmas tree. God is placing before you and me all kinds of possibilities and potential. Sometimes the gift is recognizing blessings can come disguised as burdens and inconveniences: a person in need, or a wrong to right, that demands we set aside business as usual and embark on a



The lunch line during a March 2018 community lunch hosted by St. Bartholomew's, Pittsboro. *Photo by Summerle Walter* A member of the community receives a health screening during a June 2018 community health fair at Holy Spirit, Greensboro, part of the Abundant Life wellness ministry. *Photo by Rachel Virginia Hester*

great journey of discovery.

If we look, wait and listen, we will be given gifts of the real presence of God in our lives in surprising places. We can expect and depend upon it.

But what does God expect from us? I can think of at least three things: humility, hospitality and hope.

For those who practice the art of humility, God will come to abide with them in great humility. God comes to us not because we are important or successful or especially talented, but because (and when) we offer up gentleness and the openness of our hearts. Humility is like the powerless, terrifying feeling when someone first puts a tiny baby in your arms." I am not worthy. I am not fit. I can't do this," is our first response. And yet God entrusts himself to us, places himself in our arms, and we carry his body to the world. It's humbling. We must take this gift with great humility.

God also expects us to practice the art of hospitality, in our homes, at work, in churches and in our hearts. Those who have no time for neighbors, have no need of community, are too busy to slow down and form deeper relationships, have no room to welcome God into the midst of their lives. It would be just too inconvenient. Hospitality means throwing open the doors and welcoming in Jesus, ready or not.

Finally, I think God wants us to practice hope. Hope

is believing and trusting that God is as anxious to love us and heal us as we are anxious to serve and love him. Practicing hope means that despite the chaos of our world, we daily seek justice, love mercy and love the neighbors we can.

People who practice such hopeful and grateful living really don't have much time for wishful thinking; they are too busy with hopeful actions.

Wishful thinking can't hold a candle to eager, expectant and hopeful living. Now, don't hesitate to wish someone a Merry Christmas. But every time, or at least as often as you can, pray that person will receive God's message of hopeful living. Say a silent prayer of eager expectation, that God will come to her and to you in some unexpected, yet perfectly timed way to rekindle hope and bestow peace.

Pray that God will shower you both with joy in life and the faith that casts out darkness. Just like our Advent wreath with the Christ candle in the middle, the center of hope, peace, joy and love is Jesus. It is the Christ who is born directly into the smelly stable of our all-too-human lives and placed directly into our all-too-weak and yet perfectly suited arms. It is a gift beyond all expectations.

The Rt. Rev. Anne Hodges-Copple is the bishop suffragan of the Diocese of North Carolina. Contact her at bishopanne@episdionc.org.

HOW ARE YOU CELEBRATING ADVENT?

Advent is a truly beautiful season in the liturgical year, and we in the diocesan offices love seeing all the ways the season is celebrated and brought to life.

How are you planning to celebrate the season? The Diocese has some plans of our own, and we invite you to join in the fun or simply enjoy the offerings.

#ADVENTWORD

#AdventWord (page 9) has become a tradition in the Diocese of North Carolina, and we will once again be participating via our social media channels. If you'd like to participate in this global Advent calendar and want to start planning ahead, the calendar is now available. (See graphic below.)

Encourage the members of your congregation to help find the photos—the more the merrier! And take a look at Dec. 15-21—do you sense a familiar theme? How is the Way of Love shining during your season of Advent (or on any other day of the year)? Share your stories with communications@episdionc.org—we'd love our #AdventWord offerings to be illustrated with actual stories from our diocesan churches bringing those words to life.

#TRIVIATUESDAY

We all know the familiar images and traditions associated with Advent and Christmas, but do you know the his-

tory and trivia behind them? Come find out on #Triviatuesdays on the diocesan Facebook page. Test your knowledge and share your own traditions.

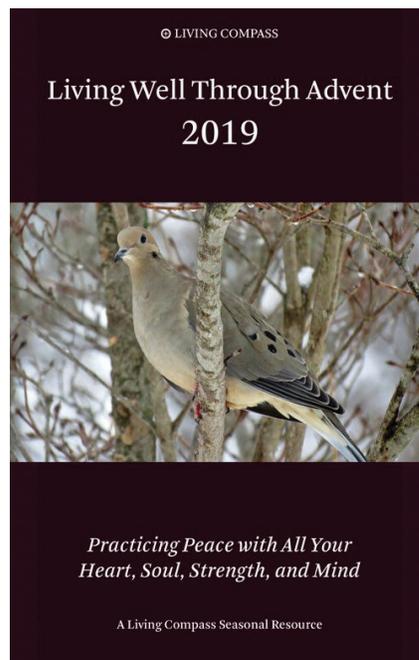
And those are just the things on the calendar so far. There may be more to come! Keep your eye on diocesan communication channels

to stay connected not only to our diocesan Advent offerings, but also—most importantly—to each other.

ADVENT RESOURCES FOR YOU

Are you looking for ideas on how to celebrate Advent? Do you want some resources to deepen Advent in your own home? Happily, there are many, and they are all available to you. Here are a few to get you started:

- **The Episcopal Church:** Curriculums, calendars, sermons, webinars and more. Available at episcopalchurch.org/advent-and-christmas-resources.
- **The Living Compass:** Daily devotional, Facebook discussion group with the Rev. Dr. Scott Stoner & The Rev. Jan Kwiatkowski, downloadable PDFs and more. Dr. Stoner will be our Epiphany workshop facilitator in January (page 22). Available at livingcompass.org/advent.
- **Society of St. Andrew:** Daily devotionals delivered via email. Subscribe at endhunger.org/advent/.
- **Episcopal Relief & Development:** Resources, planning guides, activities and prayers. Available at episcopalrelief.org/church-in-action/church-campaigns/advent-toolkit/.



YOU ARE THE RESOURCE

Asset-based community development can reveal the gifts you already possess

Often when congregations are considering the start of a new ministry, thoughts turn to how it might be resourced. They want to meet a need in their local community, and conversations turn to what outside resources might be accessed.

It's a natural thing to do; the ministry is often a desire to reach *out*, and it is not unusual for thought patterns to follow that outward trajectory. But what is easily missed when this happens is what is all around them: the assets a congregation already possesses and has within reach just outside their door.

SIMPLE AS ABCD

It is a concept called asset-based community development (ABCD), and its basic premise is the recognition and development of assets within a community, bringing together partners and pieces to utilize and maximize the strengths at hand.

"Anything [can be] an asset," said the Rev. Rebecca Yarbrough, chair of Galilee Ministries of East Charlotte. "It can be a person, a community organization, neighbors or a location. There's no proscribed list."

Yarbrough knows a thing or two about recognizing assets. Galilee Ministries is an exemplary model of asset-based community development, a process that has been in place since its inception.

RESURRECTION

Galilee Ministries occupies the property once home to St. Andrew's Episcopal Church. When St. Andrew's was closed in the spring of 2013, there was a great deal of discussion about what to do with the property. It was easy to see there were many needs a ministry on the property could meet, but which ones? Over a period of two years, a growing discernment group got to know the neighborhood, met the members of the community, listened to their stories and realized several things. The surrounding neighborhood was far more diverse than originally expected. The community missed the services formerly provided by the St. Andrew's congregation, including a food pantry, a community garden and English as a Second Language classes. Those services had gone with the closing of the church and not been replaced. The deeper they discerned, the more choices the discernment group seemed to have.

Some were easy to rule out. Replacing the worshiping community was not an option out of respect for those who called St. Andrew's home. Trying to establish a ministry with

a single focus was unlikely to make much difference, and as they were so new to the neighborhood, it was difficult to choose just one service anyway. The start of a new ministry or nonprofit was likely to require resources that were not available, and then the answer came. The assets needed to make a community difference had been there all along, and the decision was made to connect with those who used to provide the much-missed services and ask if they'd like to come back. They did.

Galilee Ministries opened its doors in spring 2015, and it has been going full speed ever since. As Toni Hagerman, executive director, so eloquently summarizes in her website welcome, "The Galilee Center serves as a meeting place for refugees, immigrants and other residents of the city... [w]e offer commercial kitchen space, a community garden, and space for special events. We are able to host a variety of nonprofits who work together to provide vital services, including English classes, citizenship classes, life skills classes, after-school programs, a food pantry, cross-cultural counseling services, gleaned fresh vegetables and mentoring for new food-based businesses." It has become, indeed, the "welcoming place of learning, service, and fellowship" it set out to be.

THE KEYS ARE IN THE COMMUNITY

The success of Galilee Ministries is due, in no small part, to recognizing the assets of those involved with the ministry and in the surrounding community. And community is



One asset identified early on was gleaned food, including truckloads of fresh fish, for neighborhood distribution. Photo by Toni Hagerman

a great place to start when approaching an asset-based discernment process.

“Knowing where you are is important,” said Yarbrough. “Figure out who and what is really around you.”

Demographic information is helpful, and it can be obtained from resources available through the U.S. Census Bureau and The Episcopal Church (see sidebar). But the statistics are not enough. “You still have to get out there,” said Yarbrough. “If we hadn’t gone out and really paid attention to what was in front of us, we would have missed the Vietnamese population all around us. They represent a very small percentage on the census data, but they are a substantial part of the community population.”

RECOGNIZING THE ASSET

“I think one mistake people make is thinking assets are only tangible things like money,” said Hagerman. “You hear ‘asset’ and think ‘balance sheet.’ But people—even just showing up—can be an asset. People come to Galilee all the time and are surprised at some of the people who are volunteering, but they are assets.”

Assets can come in all shapes and sizes, whether in the form of a person with a gift for hospitality or an empty room that can be put to use on weekdays. “Lots of times it helps for congregations to take stock of their own assets,”

LEARN MORE AND GET STARTED

If you’re ready to get started exploring the asset-based resources in your congregation and community, there are a lot of great resources available through The Episcopal Church and its partners.

Called to Transformation: An Asset-Based Approach to Engaging Church and Community: website dedicated to program developed in partnership between the Episcopal Church and Episcopal Relief & Development. bit.ly/CTT-ABCD

The Episcopal Church - Asset-Based Community Development: videos, articles and links. bit.ly/TEC-ABCD

Episcopal Relief & Development - Asset-Based Community Development: approaches, stories, resources and more. bit.ly/ERD-ABCD

For demographic information about your community:

U.S. Census Bureau: www.census.gov

The Episcopal Church – Research and statistics: bit.ly/TEC-STATS

Learn more about Galilee Ministries at galilee.dionc.org.

added Yarbrough. “Think of it in terms of the gifts they bring, and not just the tangible gifts. Who speaks a second language? Who has a day job as a contractor? Who has a day job as a meeting facilitator? Those are things that can help you figure out how you might connect with the neighborhood and match your assets to needs.”

Partnerships are also an incredible asset. Galilee Ministries does not exist alone; it is, at its heart, a network of partnerships comprised of churches, organizations, nonprofits and people that still work together to provide the wide variety of resources to the population it serves. The more the organizers expanded the group interested in developing the ministry, the more skills and potential connections were brought into the conversation.

“It always works better with a team,” said Yarbrough. “Asset-based community development is not a solo-practitioner thing, and it’s not necessarily even just a church thing. It’s almost always better with community partners who are assets.”

Though the process often starts with a desire to answer a need, that can be a hindrance to recognizing assets. “Start with the assets you see,” said Yarbrough. “If you start with the needs you see, they will quickly get so huge and overwhelming, you’ll never get anywhere. If you know at the start the assets you have to offer and what you have to share, you’ll think more positively about what you bring to the table, and it’s much more empowering.”

Once the assets are identified, using them becomes a calling in itself. “It’s stewardship,” said Hagerman. “You have an asset, so how do you best use it? Take one step at a time. The path doesn’t have to be straight. Offer your gifts and see what God does with it.”

PUTTING PIECES TOGETHER

In matching an asset in answer to a need, the next steps often reveal themselves. “One need meets another need,” said Hagerman. “[Using assets to] satisfy needs of those around you can turn into future assets. The attendee of an AA meeting one day may become a valued volunteer another day.

“[The pieces] come together,” she said. “Our assumption is that God is way ahead of us at work, and if we step into that space, faithfully, it happens. The pieces find each other. There is a lot that feels like serendipity, but it looks different when looked at through eyes of faith.”

“Asset-based community development really helps build gratitude,” said Yarbrough. “It puts you in a different place, mentally, spiritually and emotionally. It can help make clear the work God is doing in your community and how you can join in. You always have assets to offer.”

Christine McTaggart is the communications director for the Diocese of North Carolina. Contact her at christine.mctaggart@episdionc.org.

THE LEAST OF THESE

How Anson County Homes of Hope addresses housing insecurity

Several times per week, Steven “Chipper” Long, an aspirant for the priesthood, drives by seemingly abandoned homes along a rural side road as he heads to his internship at Christ Church, Albemarle. The buildings’ exteriors are sagging, wood is rotting away, roofs are collapsing in on the structures. Like most drivers, Long assumed the houses were abandoned, but he was shocked to discover the ramshackle buildings are actually inhabited by some of Anson County’s poorest residents, who live without running water, cook over wood fires because they have no electricity, and patch their homes with scraps of wood, cardboard and plastic to provide insulation.

While the housing Long observes along his route is an extreme case, homelessness and a lack of dignified affordable housing in Anson County is not. The county had a 22.2% poverty rate in 2018, and its median household income is nearly 30% lower than the North Carolina average. The county has no family shelter or shelter for women with children. Complicating the situation is the diversity of needs among the housing insecure population, which includes single adults, families with children, young people and older adults. People experiencing homelessness need different levels of housing support, too; some can afford to pay rent every month but cannot find anywhere to live within their price range, others need time to get back on their feet after a traumatic event, like leaving an abusive partner. To address the immense need, Long; Christ Church; and an array of local groups, with the support of a

diocesan Mission Endowment Grant and other generous community funders, have taken steps to ameliorate the situation for some homeless Anson County residents by founding Homes of Hope, a housing nonprofit providing emergency shelter, transitional housing and affordable housing units on a case-by-case basis to neighbors in need.

A FAMILY LEGACY OF SERVICE

It is a Holy Spirit thing that Long was interning at Christ Church when the opportunity to collaborate on Homes of Hope arose. He grew up hearing the story of his grandfather’s arrival at Ellis Island as an immigrant from Lebanon. After missing his connection in New York City, Long’s grandfather—who spoke no English and had no money—walked the streets looking for something to eat. He found a dropped nickel and was able to buy some bread, but the baker sold him a moldy loaf. A local saw what happened and intervened, helping Long’s grandfather acquire a fresh bread. Long’s grandfather eventually connected with his contacts and went on to run a store in Charlotte. Remembering the man who helped him when he had nothing, Long’s grandfather spent the rest of his life feeding people who came into his store needing help.

“When I see someone hungry, I will feed them because God helped me when I was hungry,” Long quoted his grandfather.

He followed his grandfather’s advice. During the 1980’s, Long attended St. Peter’s Catholic Church in Charlotte when his priest recruited him—or perhaps more

accurately tricked him into—helping to start a homeless shelter. Father Eugene McCreesh told Long he needed someone who knew how to navigate the Charlotte streets to help him run an errand. That night Long found himself in a panel van, driving through underpasses as McCreesh called through a megaphone to the men camped out above, inviting them to spend the night in the shelter. Moved by the experience, Long later drove the route alone, hopping out to help people climb down the banks. Later, as the owner of a 24/7 diner called Dunk ‘n Dine in the Buckhead neighborhood of Atlanta during the early 2000’s, Long fed hundreds of people who could not afford to pay for their meals from the same kitchen that



Calvary, Wadesboro, received a Mission Endowment Grant for Anson County Homes of Hope and donates office space to the nonprofit.

served the famous guests who also frequented the diner.

AN INVITATION TO PARTNERSHIP

Long's involvement with Homes of Hope also began with an invitation, albeit one more direct than Father McCreesh's "errand." Skeet Ayscue, the executive director of Homes of Hope in neighboring Stanly County reached out to local community leader Harvey Leavitt about the possibility of starting an Anson County Homes of Hope because so many residents sought entry into the Stanly County program. Leavitt reached out to the Rev. Timothy Hushion, rector of Calvary, Wadesboro, who knew Long was the person for the job.

In May 2017, Long, who currently serves as board president, and other concerned citizens began meeting with Stanly County Homes of Hope to plan for the Anson County affiliate. Less than a year later, in March 2018, Anson County Homes of Hope incorporated with the State of North Carolina, becoming a 501(c)3 in November 2018. Their first order of business was finding a place to house those they planned to serve. A duplex in need of refurbishment served their purposes, and a \$25,000 Mission Endowment Grant awarded to Calvary, Wadesboro in fall 2017 helped them purchase it. Other community partners include the Sandhills Community Action Project (SCAB), Stanly County County Homes of Hope, Sandhills Community Housing Project, the North Carolina Housing Finance Agency and the Braswell Trust. In addition to applying for the Mission Endowment Grant, Calvary has also offered free office space in the church.

One side of the duplex is receiving the final touches of exterior paint, landscaping and parking lot repairs, and Homes of Hope's first resident, a young man referred by the Wadesboro Housing Authority, moved in in November. His side of the duplex is affordable housing, and Homes of Hope is now tackling the other side of the duplex, which will serve as transitional housing.

"We've created a home with dignity and pride which will hopefully translate into hope for people who live there," Long said.

The fact two different housing solutions will be contained within the same duplex speaks to Homes of Hope's flexibility and willingness to find the solution that is best for each individual or family. The affordable housing program will serve residents long term, while the transitional housing program is designed to serve residents for six months, with rent and utilities covered in full for the first three months. During the last three months of their stay, residents will pay \$50, \$75 and \$100, respectively, in rent. During that six-month stay, Homes of Hope will also match up to \$500 in residents' savings. The emergency shelter program will serve residents on a

APPLY FOR A MEG

The Mission Endowment Grant is a permanent endowment created for the specific purpose of establishing "the Episcopal presence of Christ in communities in ways that bring the community to see Christ's presence among them." Only one participating member of the proposed project team is required to be associated with a diocesan entity.

To apply for a Mission Endowment Grant, complete the Common Application found at episditionc.org in "Grants and Scholarships" under the "Resources" tab. The fall 2019 application deadline is November 30.

case-by-case basis as the need arises. Someone escaping a domestic violence situation, for example, could stay in emergency shelter. Importantly, everyone Homes of Hope serves, whether through emergency shelter, transitional housing or affordable housing, meets regularly with a case manager to address the additional factors surrounding homelessness.

Homes for Hope also plans to furnish laptops to residents who do not already own them and require them to complete a financial literacy course. These supports, along with case management services, will help residents find employment or pursue further education.

Now that the original duplex is partially occupied and additional work is underway, Anson County Homes of Hope is looking to the future. Because the nonprofit will not qualify for federal funding from the Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD) until 2021, the board must be exceptionally good stewards of the organization's funds. Long is currently donating his time but plans to rotate off the board and serve as operations manager in the future. Homes of Hope has partnered with SCAB to buy a three-story house near the current duplex and convert it into five units. SCAB will carry the mortgage for a few years before signing it over to Homes of Hope after federal funding becomes available. Further into the future, Long dreams of expanding the emergency shelter program and converting one of the abandoned mill buildings in town into housing units. For Long, serving neighbors living in homelessness is a calling.

"This was a revelation to me, God saying this is my bivocational ministry."

Summerlee Walter is the communications coordinator for the Diocese of North Carolina. Contact her at summerlee.walter@episditionc.org.



The Episcopal Diocese of North Carolina
200 West Morgan Street, Suite 300
Raleigh, NC 27601-1338
919.834.7474 | 800.448.8775

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Until we read again...

WATCH the 204th Annual Convention via livestream at episdionc.org or follow on social media with #DioNC204 (page 14).

JOIN us for #AdventWord, the global Advent calendar, or implement another spiritual practice into your Advent season (page 27).

KNOW the diocesan resources available to you (page 18), and make a plan to put them to use in 2020.

APPLY for a Mission Endowment Grant by Nov. 30 (page 30).