

Summer 2021



The North Carolina DISCIPLE

ROUNDTABLES
ON RACE

THE GIFT
OF GRANTS



FOOD, FAITH AND COMMUNITY IN A PANDEMIC



The North Carolina
DISCIPLE

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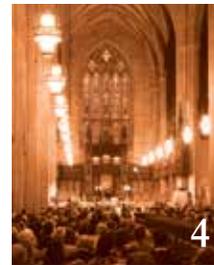
Episcopal campus ministries, including the Rev. Mary Cat Young and Episcopal Campus Ministry at UNC-Chapel Hill, bring the Way of Love to campuses as students return for the 2021-22 academic year (pg. 32).
Photos courtesy of the Rev. Mary Cat Young

table of contents

SUMMER 2021

features

- 4 Bringing Order Out of Chaos
- 12 Adding Voices
- 14 The 206th Annual Convention: It's Happening!
- 16 Roundtables on Race
- 18 Checking in with the Church
- 22 Why Doesn't He Move in Here?
- 26 The Gift of Grants
- 30 ONE THOUSAND DAYS OF LOVE: We Did It!
- 32 Walking Through Change
- 36 Food, Faith and Community in a Pandemic
- 38 A Lasting Legacy



departments & more

- 6-7 Around the Diocese
- 8-11 New, Notable & Newsworthy



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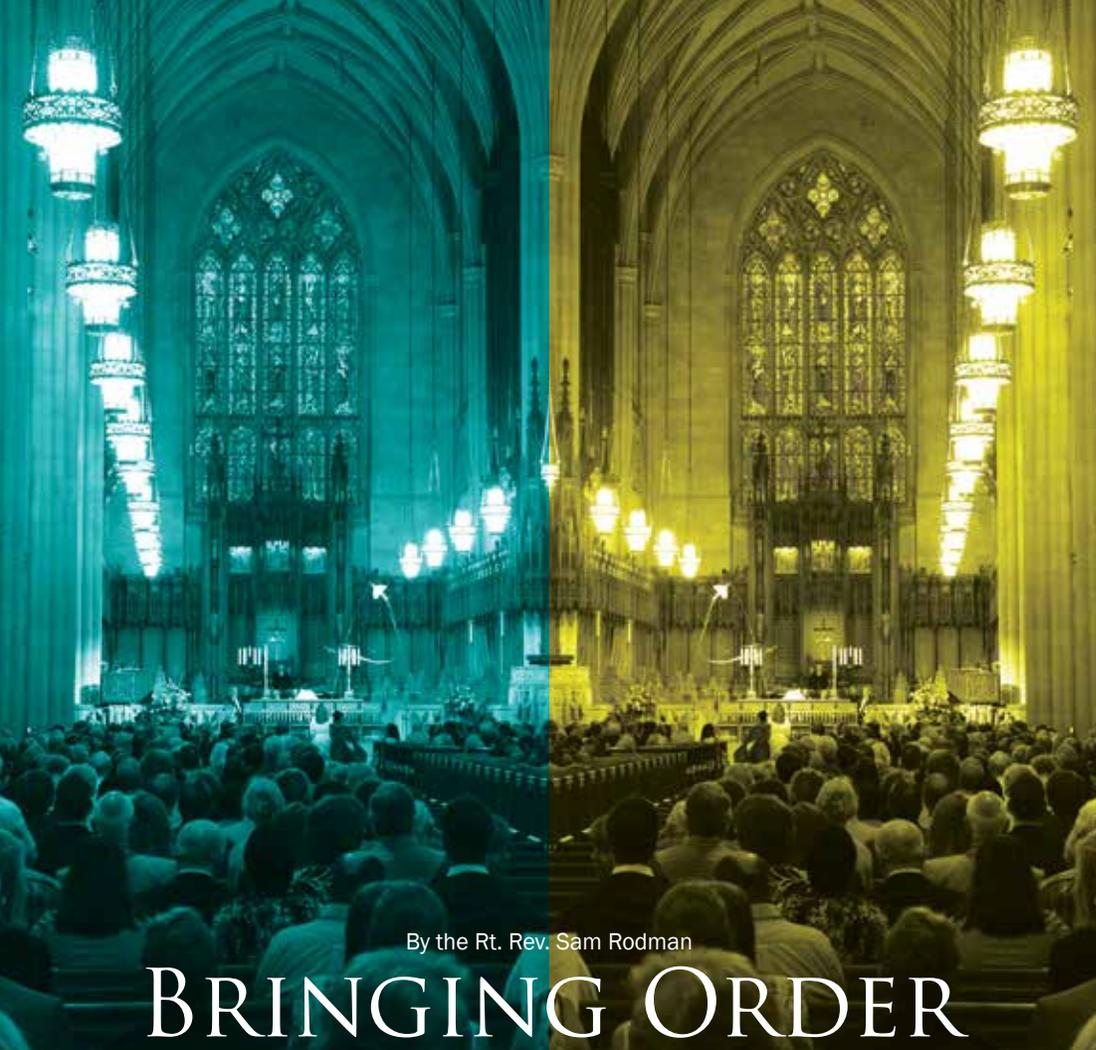


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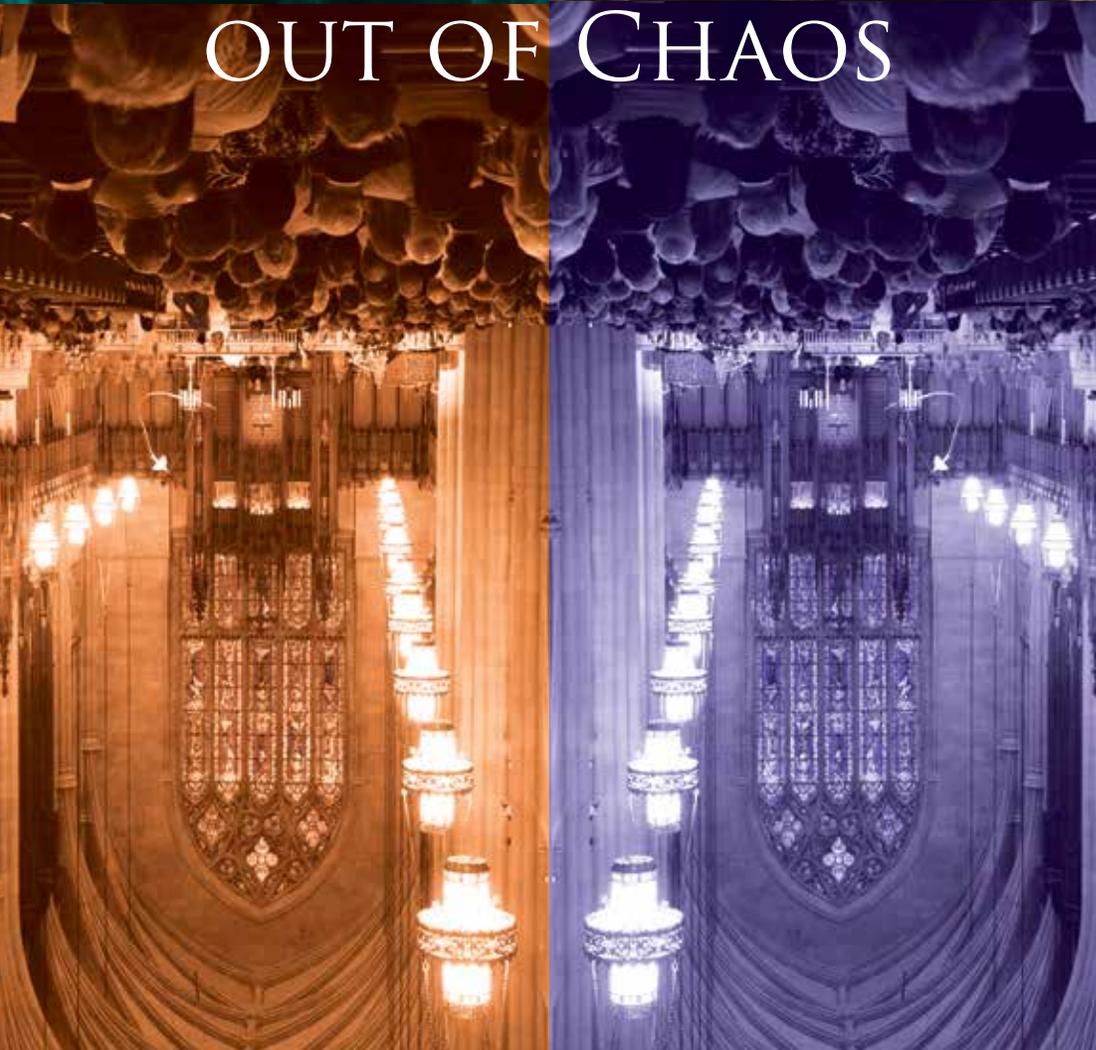
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By the Rt. Rev. Sam Rodman

BRINGING ORDER OUT OF CHAOS



There is a theme running through the biblical narrative that shows a pattern in the ways God brings order out of chaos. It is a theme that begins with the creation story, is included in the Exodus saga, extends to the period of judges and kings, and is prominent in the exile, as well. It is a theme near and dear to the hearts of most of us who call ourselves Episcopalian. We love order.

Back when I was studying at Virginia Theological Seminary in the mid-1980s, the message about Episcopal Church worship was that it should conform to the standard of being conducted “decently and in order.” The opposite was also considered to be true. Worship that was disorderly was considered indecent.

As we enter yet another phase or stage of the pandemic, one could say that our worship life has, over the past 18 months, felt, at times, chaotic and disordered. We have struggled with the challenges of combining online and in-person services. We have wandered in the wilderness of the hybrid landscape, and we have lamented and grieved our inability to gather in person, for periods of time, when the spread of the virus has been at its worst.

To say this has been disruptive would be an understatement. More accurately, this time has felt like a period of major upheaval of such proportions that we wonder sometimes if we will ever be able to recover.

A recent commentary in *The New York Times* noted that livestreaming worship had a tendency to benefit larger churches and denominations with deep technological resources and more “symbolic

views” on the sacraments, thus allowing online offerings to focus on areas that were more teaching- and music-based. The author noted, “[y]ou can’t program the body and blood of Christ in 1s and 0s of digital code.”¹

The writer goes on to argue that the church is not the church unless we gather in person, and that the very nature of our faith, as incarnational, demands that, in worship, we be face-to-face. As much as I feel deeply the sentiment of this argument, it leaves me wondering if there is not a both/and to be embraced here, instead of an either/or.

CONTINUING TO CONNECT AND EXPAND

At this stage in the pandemic, I hope and pray we do not ever have to return to services that are offered only online. That being said, I do think we can and should continue to develop this other way of connecting and expanding our common life.

Part of the gift of enhanced online worship is the opportunity for the church to expand its reach. We have heard throughout the pandemic anecdotes of regularly homebound worshipers able to join their worshiping communities. We have heard of family members spread across geographical locations able to gather online and worship together once more. We have heard of former parishioners able to worship once again with beloved congregations left behind when a necessary move to a new location took them away. We have even heard of congregations adding new members who have yet to visit in person because worship was found online and felt like home.

Why wouldn’t we explore the possibility of connecting online even as we return to in-person worship? The one is not a substitute for the other. I personally believe nothing will ever replace the compelling power of the community gathered in person. But many churches were broadcasting services online even before the pandemic. That is, in part, what enabled us to pivot when we needed to and offer services on the multitude of available platforms.

What we never anticipated was that this modality, for a time, would become our primary means of gathering and connecting. And here is where the challenge of bringing order out of chaos seems the greatest for hybrid worship because combining the two can feel strange, unfocused and even disorienting. We are unsure where to place our emphasis, how to include those who are joining us from remote locations, how to lead when we have a congregation in our space and another community gathered online for the same service.

The gymnast Simone Biles used a word to describe the cause for her withdrawal from some of her Olympic events that may be useful here. She said she had the “twisties.” It is not a term I had heard before, but I find it helpful as we

consider the challenge of navigating this hybrid world of worship where we now find ourselves.

For clergy who are leading worship, attending to both congregations at the same time can give us our own ecclesiastical version of the twisties. We can feel, in any given moment, that our leadership role is pulling us in one direction and yet another, simultaneously. This rapid worship whiplash can set our heads spinning and leave us wondering which end is up and how we can serve both constituencies effectively.

For people attending, either in person or online, they can feel disconnected, disengaged and even detached from one another. How do we find ways to weave the two congregations together, to bring these disparate communities onto common ground and to bring order out of the chaos created as these two worlds, in person and online, seem to collide?

FINDING THE COMMON GROUND

As a branch of the Body of Christ that places the sacraments at our center, conversations are beginning around the Church that raise the question: How can our liturgy, and, more specifically, the sacraments of Baptism and Holy Communion, help us to join the two congregations, to bridge the gap, to bring a new order out of this current chaos? This may be our incarnation of the new normal.

We are in the early stages of these conversations, but they are central to the life and future of our communities of faith. I have often said our comfort zone is defined by what is familiar. But the Church, when it is living into its missional identity, is responding to God’s call to move outside our comfort zone into areas that initially can feel confusing, chaotic and “twisty.” But it is in these spaces we begin to discover, or rediscover, as the familiar hymn puts it, that “new occasions teach new duties.”

It will be a time of exploration and a time of trial and error. It will be a time of experimenting with the new ways we welcome each other into our communities while upholding the traditions that bring us close together. It is a time we will navigate together, with open hearts ready to receive the unexpected gifts a new way can bestow.

And this process of bringing order out of chaos, of finding common ground, of building bridges, of seeing God making a way where there is no way—this is our sweet spot as the Church. This is at the heart of our mission. This is our call in this time and in this place. This is what it means to build and to become beloved community.

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

[1] “What We Lose When We Livestream Church” by Collin Hansen for *The New York Times*, August 8, 2021

AROUND THE

HUNTERSVILLE

At St. Mark's, Huntersville, the first two classes of the Flyin' Lion Transition to Work Program provided a faith-filled environment where people facing poverty, domestic violence and homelessness prepared for work in food service.

Photo by Linda Amidei



CHARLOTTE

St. Martin's, Charlotte, began hosting popsicles in the courtyard after church on June 27. It was so successful, the church continued the offering throughout the summer. Fudgsicles are especially popular with the kids, while pineapple wins with adults.

Photo by Vickie Traynum



DURHAM

Volunteers from St. Titus' and St. Luke's, Durham, harvest produce from the Saint Phocas Community Garden they tend together. This "Good News Garden" produces heirloom tomatoes, green and banana peppers, scallions, onions, leeks, cosmos, marigolds, sunflowers and radishes for the community.

Photos by the Rev. Sarah Woodard

THE DIOCESE



GREENSBORO

The clergy of the Diocese of North Carolina gathered at Holy Trinity, Greensboro, for Clergy Day on June 24, the first in-person diocesan gathering in more than a year.

Photo by Christine McTaggart

RALEIGH

St. Ambrose, Raleigh, hosted a voter drive and vaccination event on August 7, 2021.

Photo by Carl Harper



SALISBURY

Salisbury is now home to the first Equal Justice Initiative Historical Marker in North Carolina, dedicated August 6, 2021. St. Luke's was one of the community groups involved in a weekend-long event commemorating the installation of this marker, just steps from the church campus.

Photo by Caroline Stephenson



NEW, NOTABLE & NEWSWORTHY

DISMANTLING RACISM: COURSE DATES AVAILABLE FOR ALL AGES

In 2020, the diocesan Racial Justice and Reconciliation Committee updated, redesigned and renamed “Seeing the Face of God,” the previous diocesan anti-racism training program. A partnership among diocesan staff, the Racial Justice and Reconciliation Committee and notable consultants such as Dr. Catherine Meeks of the Absalom Jones Center in Atlanta, the new “Dismantling Racism: Reclaiming Our Baptismal Promise” 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.

There is currently no cost to register for the Zoom workshops. Available registration links can be found on the event calendar at episditionc.org/events.

Upcoming training dates include:

- September 24, 5-8 p.m., and September 25, 9 a.m.-1 p.m., via Zoom. Register: bit.ly/DismantlingRacismSept2021
- November 12, 5-8 p.m., and November 13, 9 a.m.-1 p.m., via Zoom. Register: bit.ly/DismantlingRacismNov2021
- January 29, 2022, 9 a.m.-5 p.m., via Zoom. Registration is not yet open.

Also in 2020, the diocesan youth department adapted Dismantling Racism for middle and high school-age youth and are offering a session November 5-7 at Haw River State Park. The cost is \$15 per participant. Details and registration will be shared soon in all diocesan communication channels and at episditionc.org/events and episditionc.org/youth-events.

FAITH & BLUE WEEKEND: OCTOBER 8-11, 2021

Faith and Blue is a nationwide invitation born of a collaboration between the United States Department of Justice Office of Community Oriented Policing Services (COPS Office) and MovementForward, Inc.’s OneCOP initiative. MovementForward is, per the Faith & Blue website, “a bridge-building, solutions-focused human and civil rights organization based in Atlanta, Georgia,” and OneCOP seeks to “pair together officers at the beat or precinct level with local houses of worship.” Faith and Blue Weekends aim to “recalibrate police-community relations through solutions-focused, in-person, socially distanced and/or virtual activities that are organized jointly by faith-based or other community groups and law enforcement agencies.” The weekends are celebrated across the United States with events spanning a wide range of offerings, including prayer services, special masses, com-

munity meals, service days and block parties.

The Diocese of North Carolina is answering the call to join the 2021 efforts to help build bridges between law enforcement and the communities they serve.

The hope is that congregations across the Diocese will host events, inviting parishioners, members of local law enforcement and residents in their surrounding communities. Events can be online or in person. A Faith and Blue Planning Toolkit is available, and a great many resources can be found at faithandblue.org. Additional information about hosting an event can be found at episditionc.org.

At the heart of Becoming Beloved Community is relationships. Please join us in this invitation to build, strengthen and reimagine the relationships that we hope, in time, will become new friendships and partnerships.



PRAYERS FOR THE SICK AND FAITHFUL DEPARTED

During this time of uncertainty and grief, we gather in prayer to intercede for the sick and to remember the faithful departed. If you would like to add an ill or recently deceased

loved one to our diocesan prayer list or request prayers for yourself, please fill out the form at bit.ly/DioNCPayerList. (Prayers offered during services will be first name only.)

THE REV. JEMONDE TAYLOR NOMINATED TO BISHOP SLATE IN UPPER SOUTH CAROLINA

The Rev. Jemonde Taylor, rector of St. Ambrose, Raleigh, and diocesan Standing Committee president, has been nominated to the bishop slate in the Episcopal Diocese of Upper South Carolina.

“The Rev. Jemonde Taylor is a leader of exceptional gifts and capacity,” said the Rt. Rev. Sam Rodman, bishop of the Diocese of North Carolina. “His voice in this diocese as rector of St. Ambrose, as president of the Standing Committee and as a member of the Mission Strategy Task Force has been invaluable as we chart a course that prioritizes the health of our congregations and justice for all God’s children, in seeking to become beloved community. We pray for him and his family in this exciting discernment with the people of the Diocese of Upper South Carolina.”

Taylor made diocesan history earlier this year when he

became the first Black person elected as president of the Standing Committee. His role on Standing Committee is not his first service to the Diocese of North Carolina, as

he previously served on Diocesan Council and the Pastoral Response Team Disciplinary Board and currently serves on the Mission Strategy Task Force.

The special Convention to elect the IX Bishop of Upper South Carolina will take place on September 25.



THE REV. CANON DR. SALLY FRENCH NAMED CANON FOR EAST REGIONAL MINISTRY AND COLLABORATIVE INNOVATION

The Rev. Canon Dr. Sally French, interim east regional canon, has been called to serve as the canon for east regional ministry and collaborative innovation. This new position provides continued care for the congregations and communities of our east region—the Durham, Raleigh and Rocky Mount convocations—with the goal of developing increased collaboration and engagement among clergy and laity. Additionally, French will work with the Rev. Canon David Sellery, canon for congregational mission, to develop strategies and initiatives to engage congregations and communities further, enhance vitality and expand leadership capacity at all levels.

“We are excited that Sally will continue to serve on our diocesan team, providing support and guidance to our congregations for an extended time, even as we continue to adapt and evolve in our understanding of Becoming Beloved Community,” said the Rt. Rev. Sam Rodman, bishop of the Diocese of North Carolina. “Her effective and responsive leadership has helped chart the course for our diocese as we develop our priorities for mission in the new normal of church in, through and beyond the pandemic.”

French has served as the interim east regional canon since November 2020. Since joining the diocesan staff, she has worked collaboratively with the team of canons and missionaries to enhance congregational vitality and secure additional funding for new initiatives. Working with Sellery, French co-authored three substantial grant proposals, securing support from Trinity Wall Street, the Episcopal Preaching Foundation

and the Roanridge Trust, all of which furthers our work to support congregations and communities within the Diocese of North Carolina.

The work of collaborative innovation will focus primarily on exploring new models of congregational support to increase the impact of congregational development initiatives at the local, convocational, regional and diocesan levels; support members in their lives of discipleship; encourage and strengthen ministry leadership with a focus on lay vocations; and engage congregations and faith communities in the work of Becoming Beloved Community.

“Leadership development work will enhance all areas of our diocesan priorities and is important as a way to engage disciples and support our common mission of Becoming Beloved Community,” Sellery noted. “It requires special focus, and Sally has demonstrated both gifts for caring for our congregations and communities and vision to support our missional priorities.”

French’s new position is effective immediately.



THE REV. CANON DR. RHONDA LEE STEPPING DOWN

The Diocese of North Carolina announced in August that the Rev. Canon Dr. Rhonda Lee is stepping away from her role as regional canon. She will remain on staff through the end of 2021, continuing her work with racial justice and restitution.

“I am deeply grateful to have had the opportunity to work with the clergy, laity and others with whom I have walked during my seven years as regional canon, and I hope to maintain those relationships after my departure from the staff,” said Lee.

Lee’s calling in the areas of racial and social justice is long-standing and runs deep. A native of Montreal, Quebec, one of her reasons for moving to the United States was to work in these very areas. Ordained in 2005, she also holds a doctorate in U.S. history from Duke University. Upon joining the diocesan staff in 2014 to serve as canon to the Charlotte and Sandhills convocations, she said, “I’ve long been a scholar of nonviolence, Christian spiritual practices and the struggle for racial justice.” Her ministry both before and since joining the diocesan staff successfully brings together these areas through her practices of prayer and hospitality.

“We are grateful to Canon Lee for her many gifts to, for and with our congregations as part of our staff team,” said the Rt. Rev. Sam Rodman, bishop of the Diocese of North Carolina. “Among them are her inspiring preaching, her prayerful encouragement of mission to the community and her deep engagement in developing strong and healthy partnership among clergy and lay leaders. We are thankful for her continuing leadership in our essential work around racial justice and reconciliation through the end of the year, as we continue to build beloved community here in the Diocese of North Carolina.”

Lee’s final day as regional canon will be September 25.



#ADVENTWORD 2021

It may seem early to think about Advent, but because the next issue of the *Disciple* will arrive after the start of that much-anticipated season, we wanted to be sure to start the planning now.

The Diocese of North Carolina will once again participate in #AdventWord, a global Advent calendar celebrating its eighth year in 2021. #AdventWord is a digital offering created to build an international community that together explores the mystery and wonder of Advent. This year marks an exciting next step, as #AdventWord is now part of the ministry offered by Forward Movement.

At adventword.org, participants can subscribe to daily email meditations, follow along on social media or join in the fun. 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!



HAPPENING: OCTOBER 22-24, 2021

Happening, a renewal weekend for high school youth, is taking place October 22-24 at Haw River State Park. The event, led by youth with clergy and lay adult support, allows young people to encounter Christ in an intentional Christian

community. Highlights of the weekend include talks, songs, worship and small groups. Look for gathering and registration details on the diocesan website at episditionc.org/events or episditionc.org/youth-events.

CONNECT WITH THE DIOCESE

The Disciple

Keep the *Disciple* coming in a couple of new ways! Download the new app (search “NC Disciple”) on Apple, Google Play or Amazon Kindle for your digital subscription, or subscribe for your ongoing print subscription at episdionc.org/disciple.

Please Note

The weekly diocesan newsletter is a great way to stay connected with everything happening throughout the Diocese of North Carolina. To have Please Note delivered to your inbox every Wednesday, subscribe at bit.ly/PleaseNote.

CAMINANDO WITH JESUS

“CAMINANDO WITH JESUS” (“Walking with Jesus”) is a weekly reflection series featuring voices from around the Diocese. Delivered to inboxes every Sunday morning, each reflection focuses on the Gospel readings for that Sunday, and the text is shared in both English and Spanish. Subscribe at bit.ly/CaminandoWithJesus.

Adult Formation Newsletter

Want more news on adult formation opportunities? Sign up for the adult formation newsletter at bit.ly/AdultFormationNewsletter.

Youth Ministry Newsletter

To stay in touch with the latest news and opportunities relating to youth ministries and its leaders, subscribe to the monthly offering from the diocesan youth department at bit.ly/YouthMinistryNewsletter.

STAY IN TOUCH

Keep up with our diocese and bishops!

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 vimeo.com/episcopalnc

 youtube.com/c/EpiscopalDioceseofNorthCarolina

Podcasts

“Roundtables on Race” is the new diocesan podcast that invites conversation around the effects of race on many facets of society, going deeper than traditional conversations usually allow. Hosted by the Rev. Kathy Walker, each season of the podcast focuses on one topic, allowing every episode to be an opportunity to discuss an aspect of that topic and explore the layers and nuance.

“And Also w/Y’all” is a podcast created for young adults—and enjoyed by all ages—hosted by the Rev. James Franklin, the Rev. Caleb Tabor and Eliza Brinkley. Episodes feature engaging conversations about faith, spirituality, discernment, doubt and everything in between. The hosts and their guests talk frankly about the serious and the ridiculous young adults encounter as they navigate their faith.

Both podcasts are easy to find—listen and subscribe via your favorite channel, including: the diocesan website, Apple podcasts, Google podcasts, Spotify, Stitcher and TuneIn.

ORDER YOUR 2021-2022 ‘GOSPEL-BASED DISCIPLESHIP’ BY SEPT. 30

Once again it’s time to help us be good stewards of both material and financial resources by ensuring we print and order the correct number of copies of the 2021-2022 *Gospel-Based Discipleship*.

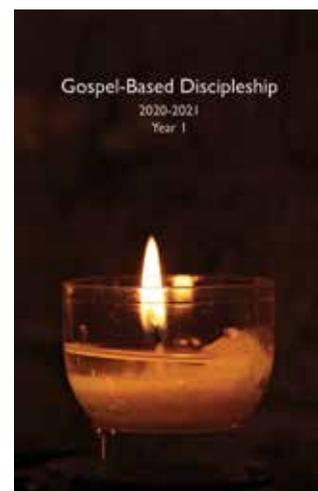
As we’ve done the last several years, there will be no automatic distribution of hard copies to churches or to those who have requested them in the past; however, we are happy to supply you with whatever you need.

If you would like copies for your church, or if you are an individual who would like a hard copy for your own use, please place your order with Diocesan House no later than September 30. There is no charge for the 2021-2022 *Gospel-Based Discipleship*; simply place your order.

Orders will be printed and shipped in early November.

The 2021-2022 *Gospel-Based Discipleship* will also be available in its entirety as a downloadable PDF on the diocesan website, and its daily offerings will continue to be offered on diocesan social media channels.

To order hard copies, please email communications@episdionc.org. Be sure to include the address to which you want your copy(ies) mailed.



ADDING VOICES

Mission Strategy Task Force provides preview and invites feedback

The last two issues of the *Disciple* (“Mission Possible,” Winter 2021; “Theological Foundations,” Spring 2021), shared the stories of how the Mission Strategy Task Force came to be and the theological foundations of the plan.

Following the time spent building a solid theological foundation, the task force went to work on five specific areas reflecting our diocesan priorities:

- Racial Reconciliation and Social Justice,
- Congregational Vitality,
- Collaboration and New Communities,
- Lifelong Christian Formation and
- Creation Care.

Working in subcommittees, they built upon the work that has come before and is already in progress, creating goals and examining the resources available to make them happen, potential obstacles, partners with whom to share the work and the strategies to make the goals a reality. They were guided by a desire to create a mission strategy that will provide a solid, clear framework while remaining fluid enough both to invite the gifts, creativity and energy of those who will answer its call and to adapt to whatever situations or scenarios we’ll encounter in the years ahead.

When the teams came back together to share their work, they knew they were on the right track. Again and again, the goals overlapped. One team’s goal clearly supported the work of another. It was not redundancy, but rather an affirmation that the call to our diocese is resonating, as the points of intersection are everywhere. They reach beyond a single group or priority, demonstrating the need for an openly inviting communal approach with space for everyone to take part.

It was time to share the mission strategy with the Diocese.

EXTENDING THE INVITATION

Throughout the month of August, the task force offered a preview of the work done to date and the proposed goals and strategies. A preview video was created and shared on the weekly clergy and lay leadership call. Six diocesan gatherings were offered to view and discuss the video, with deeper conversations around the plans for the specific priority areas. Members of Diocesan Council and Standing Committee stood by to answer any request for in-person or online congregational meetings. Congregations and small groups across the Diocese gathered to discuss the plan in progress before sharing their thoughts and suggestions.

The task force collected every piece of feedback, whether offered via email, phone call, conversation or casual

mention. Already they are hard at work incorporating the feedback into the developing plan to ensure as many voices as possible are part of the mission strategy that will launch at the 206th Annual Convention in November.

TAKE A LOOK: THE GOALS SO FAR

We offer the goals outlined in the preview here, though *we strongly recommend visiting the Mission Strategy (So Far) page on the diocesan website* (episdionc.org/mission-strategy). There you can view the video or download a summary of the goals and strategies for additional information and context that space prevents us from including here.

RACIAL RECONCILIATION AND SOCIAL JUSTICE

1. Support, resource and equip three or more historically white congregations in researching their history with race (e.g. political, economic, architectural); Timeline: 1-2 years
2. Preserve the essential story of the development of Black leadership in North Carolina and the history of justice intertwined with that. Continue the work with All Saints, Warrenton; Timeline: 1-2 years
3. Conversation and then action on restitution to redress historic injustice in our diocese toward historically Black congregations and African Americans; Timeline: 1-5 years
4. Dismantling Racism: spread the new training and associated opportunities, like pilgrimages; Timeline: 1-5 years
5. Look towards establishing two new communities gathering and serving in areas of our diocese where African American and Latino/Hispanic populations are growing; Timeline: 1-1.5 years
6. Increase and improve Spanish-English bilingual, bicultural communications, worship resources and important diocesan documents; Timeline: 1-2 years
7. Becoming Beloved Community by expanding inclusivity for African Americans and Hispanics who are differently abled physically and mentally; Timeline: 2 -3 years

• GET THE WHOLE STORY

• Learn more about the mission strategy, including the strategies and thoughts behind the goals, at episdionc.org/mission-strategy.

CONGREGATIONAL VITALITY

1. Unite congregations, worshiping communities, and formal and informal networks; Timeline: 1-2 years
2. Develop “Faithful Futures” resources for financially struggling congregations; convene and host gatherings to share ideas, build momentum and provide financial resourcing to communities throughout the Diocese; Timeline: 1-2 years
3. Increase collaboration between youth department and the wider diocesan team and increase connections among diocesan leaders and congregational leaders for the purposes of learning, community, mutual encouragement and growing youth ministry in the Diocese of North Carolina
4. Focus on development of Lay Ministry, Lay Professional Ministry and Lay Commission on Ministry; expand capabilities—with a particular focus on lay leadership—through the sacred practices of prayer, discernment, trying on new missional experiments, and growing as disciples (formed) and apostles (sent) to fully engage God’s mission; Timeline: 2-5 years
5. Develop guidelines and possible new canonical structure for “What constitutes a parish or worshiping community in the Diocese of North Carolina?” Consider establishment of a “third bucket” for officially recognizing communities to augment parish and mission structure; Timeline: 2-5 years

COLLABORATION AND NEW COMMUNITIES

1. Establish collaboration as a best practice for building beloved community and equip clergy, staff and congregations to collaborate effectively; Timeline: 1-3 years
2. Lay leadership development at the convocation levels; Timeline: 1-3 years
3. Create sustainability in new communities and sustainability for the existing new communities; Timeline: 1-3 years
4. Look for opportunities for new worshiping communities and missional initiatives, either traditional or alternative models, with particular focus on diversity and supporting historically disenfranchised communities; Timeline: 2-7 years.

FORMATION

1. To form disciples who understand the biblical and moral imperatives for seeking racial, environmental and social justice
2. To offer lifelong and multigenerational formation to support discipleship throughout the Diocese
3. To equip disciples who understand the biblical and moral imperatives of creation care and provide resources to enable disciple advocacy

4. To prepare Christian disciples to understand and appreciate other faith traditions while strengthening our own faith journey

CREATION CARE

1. Become Deeper Green Churches
2. Look at creation care through a racial equity lens
3. Commit to climate stabilization through emissions reductions
4. Restore the Earth using natural systems
5. Engage in environmental advocacy

WE'RE NOT DONE YET

Did you notice the intersection points? They’re everywhere. How many times did you read about developing and supporting lay leaders and ministry? Or making racial equity and creation care a part of everything we do? Or formation informing the health of our congregations and ourselves? Or how we must work together on every front, expanding our body to include and serve the neighbors in our communities?

The mission strategy of the Diocese of North Carolina belongs to us all. It has the potential to be our road map for Becoming (and building) Beloved Community. Like any map, it offers multiple ways to reach our destination. This plan is not set in stone. It leaves room to explore new roads, to make unexpected turns as opportunities develop and to adapt to the changing conditions one can encounter as one travels. It welcomes the work you are already doing and the ideas of where your congregation would like to go next.

It is an invitation for all, Episcopal and non-Episcopal alike, to take part, for each of us to find our place in this missional movement.

But the mission strategy is not yet done. It will not be done when it launches at Convention. That is because it is designed to be a living, growing set of guidelines. It is being developed with an intention of seeing it implemented from a grassroots approach—a bottom-up approach, rather than the top-down path we are used to traveling. It is something to be seen as organic growth, rather than the usual programmatic distribution.

The work already happening in your congregations has a place in the mission strategy. The ideas of what you want to do next has a place in the mission strategy. Your voice has a place. You have a place.

Because the mission strategy is intended to guide all of us on the journey we are taking together—our journey of Becoming Beloved Community.

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

THE 206TH ANNUAL CONVENTION: IT'S HAPPENING!

The 206th Annual Convention of the Diocese of North Carolina will take place November 19-20 at the M.C. Benton, Jr. Convention and Civic Center in Winston-Salem.

As of this early-September writing, planning is proceeding for Convention to take place in person with pandemic-related safety protocols in place. Should the situation change, the Convention Dispatch of Business committee is ready to pivot to an online option, as the parking lot 205th Annual Convention passed the necessary resolutions to allow diocesan business to take place via online gatherings.

The theme of this year's gathering is "Then Were We Like Those Who Dream." The focus of Convention will be the diocesan mission strategy, with interactive sessions taking the place of our usual keynote speakers.

THURSDAY NIGHT PROGRAM

Sorely missed when we were unable to gather in person last year, the Thursday Night Program will return to the 206th Annual Convention. This year's program will feature an enlightened conversation about faith and courage with Bree Newsome Bass and Gina Newsome Duncan, M.D. Bass is a Raleigh filmmaker, musician, activist and public speaker best known for her removal of the Confederate battle flag from the South Carolina Capitol in protest of systemic racism. Duncan, Bass' sister, is a writer, speaker and consultant who works as a psychiatrist and



Bree Newsome Bass speaks at the #StayWoke event hosted by Safe Coalition and the NAACP-Charlotte Chapter at Marshall Park in Charlotte on July 11, 2016. Photo by Grant Baldwin / Flickr CC BY-ND 2.0.

psychotherapist in Charlotte. She is a member of St. Michael and All Angels, Charlotte. The program will also be available via livestream.



PARTICIPATE IN CONVENTION - EVEN IF YOU'RE NOT ATTENDING

As mentioned above, the focus of Convention will be the diocesan mission strategy, developed by volunteers from across the Diocese (*Disciple*, Winter 2021 and Spring 2021) and incorporating feedback from all those who viewed the mission strategy preview and shared their thoughts and suggestions (page 12).

In place of the usual keynote speakers, this year's sessions will be interactive, dedicated to introducing the mission strategy and its related goals, resources and ideas.

Following the introduction of each priority area, those in attendance will have time to discuss how the work already happening in their congregations ties into the strategy and to develop ideas about how that work can be expanded and integrated into other priority areas.

In addition to what takes place within the halls of the Benton Convention Center, special gatherings will be held in each convocation of the Diocese. Every congregation is encouraged to create a "priority delegation," or a group of parishioners who are interested in or already involved in work relating to our diocesan priority areas but who are not elected delegates to Convention. The hope is these priority delegations will gather in each convocation to watch the livestream of Convention, then engage in the same work happening in Winston-Salem: examining existing work and dreaming about future possibilities. Those attending convocational gatherings will meet parishioners from other churches, exchange ideas, and perhaps even develop new friendships and potential partnerships.

GETTING DOWN TO BUSINESS

The window to submit resolutions and nominations is now open; the submission deadline is October 11. All resolutions and nominations submitted by the deadline will be available on the Convention app and in the pre-Convention materials on the Annual Convention page at episdionc.org. Note that all newly introduced amendments to the constitution require affirmative votes in consecutive conventions in order to pass.

In addition to hearing reports and voting on resolutions, the Convention will also elect members of

STAY CONNECTED

You can follow all of the activity leading up to Convention in several ways:

- The diocesan website: episdionc.org. Look for the Annual Convention link on the homepage.
- The Convention app (aka “the Yapp app”): All information shared on the diocesan website can also be found on the Convention app. See the “Get the App” section for instructions on adding it to your mobile device or desktop.
- Delegate updates: All delegates to Convention receive regular email updates on the details of Convention; these updates started in late August and continue right through the days prior to Convention’s start. If you are a delegate and have not yet received an update, contact communications@episdionc.org.
- Please Note: Highlights and announcements related to Annual Convention are regularly shared in Please Note, the weekly diocesan e-newsletter. Subscribe at bit.ly/PleaseNote to receive the newsletter every Wednesday.

Diocesan Council (two clergy, three lay), members of Standing Committee (two clergy, one lay), and trustees to Sewanee, The University of the South (one clergy, one lay).

Late resolutions and nominations are in order during the first legislative session of 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.

For the first time, voting will be conducted using a secure online system. In our ongoing efforts to reduce paper usage, there will be no ballot vouchers or paper ballots like those used at previous conventions. (Electronic voting will eliminate consumption of more than a foot-thick stack of paper at Convention.) Voting delegates will be able to vote from their personal devices (laptops, smart phones and tablets) or by visiting the polling room where equipment for voting will be provided. Voting on parliamentary motions will still be conducted by voice or by green and red cards when necessary.

THE BUDGET

The projected 2022 mission and ministry budget continues to reflect diocesan priorities the Rt. Rev. Sam Rodman

first outlined in 2019. These include 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 divide; support for congregational vitality; missional collaboratives and new communities; lifelong Christian formation and creation care.

The proposed 2022 budget will be shared during the fall budget webinars. The fair share for 2022 remains at 10.65%. This was adopted by Diocesan Council in October 2020 and affirmed by the 205th Annual Convention. These fair share assessments account for the majority of the diocesan budget.

Webinars providing an overview of the proposed budget will take place between September 20 and October 7. Information on the dates and times of the webinars, the proposed budget and ways to submit feedback can be found on the Annual Convention page of the diocesan website and on the Convention app (via Yapp).

DELEGATE PREPARATION

Secretary of Convention Chuck Till has updated last year’s delegate orientation video, which is available on the Annual Convention page. The Diocese is also revising a comprehensive delegate handbook first developed for the 204th Annual Convention, which is available on the Convention app and the website.

The in-person orientation will still take place on Friday, November 19, at 9:15 a.m. to answer any questions.

GET THE APP

The 206th Annual Convention has its own app on Yapp, and it has everything you’ll need to prepare for and navigate Convention, either on-site or from home.

On the app you’ll find schedules; nominations, resolutions, reports and more; menus, including options for those with dietary restrictions; maps; a list of things to do and places to eat; a place to share your pictures and a regularly updated news feed.

To get Yapp via mobile device, download the app from the App Store or Google Play. Click “Add an existing app” or “+” (depending on your device) to search, and type “DioNC206” when prompted to enter the Yapp ID. To access the app via desktop, go to <https://my.yapp.us/DIONC206> and follow the download instruction.

If you have questions or suggestions, please contact communications@episdionc.org.

FOLLOW LIVE

Convention will stream live on the diocesan homepage at episdionc.org, or you can follow Convention on Facebook, Twitter and Instagram with #DIONC206.

ROUNDTABLES ON RACE

New diocesan podcast explores race and society one facet at a time

The original idea came from a place of curiosity—and frustration, if we’re being honest. The frustration stemmed from conversations around race that seemed so often to involve only one viewpoint or, worse, a panel of intelligent and interesting people whose depths of knowledge were reduced to minute-long summaries or sound bites. Always there was a curiosity to know more when these conversations ended: What else did those experts have to say? What were the counter viewpoints to those offered? What were the roots of those differing viewpoints?

It was in wanting to answer those questions that the idea first formed.

“Roundtables on Race,” the new podcast from the Diocese of North Carolina, was originally envisioned as a video series. It was to be exactly what the name implied: people brought together around an actual table to discuss topics related to race in an expanded time frame and in a civil manner. Every episode would focus on a different topic, and voices that did not necessarily align would be invited to take part. Potential disagreement was not a deterrent; it was understood that even if minds were not changed, things could be learned, understandings deepened and respectful conversations modeled.

The problem was, the project wouldn’t come together.

Timing, equipment, availability, participants—the pieces simply wouldn’t gel in a cohesive way. It felt like it wasn’t meant to be. But the idea wouldn’t go away, and, though the obstacles remained in place, it was not abandoned.

It wasn’t until the pandemic last summer that a shift in thinking made all the difference. What if, instead of a video series, “Roundtables on Race” became a podcast?

AN IDEA BECOMES REALITY

With that one simple question, everything started to align. Equipment needs were minimal, and the distribution infrastructure was in place. Better yet, a podcast removed geographical barriers, allowing the possibility of inviting to the “virtual table” voices from across the country. There were no particular time restrictions on how long an episode had to be or even how many there had to be, and, best of all, each season could be structured so that the exploration of topics could go deep, very deep.

“Roundtables on Race” focuses on only one topic per season, allowing each episode to focus on a different facet of that topic. The format provides the space to invite multiple voices to provide different perspectives,

experiences and stories. The goal of every conversation is to get into the weeds to understand better both history and context, as well as opportunities for redirection.

“We are very excited to be providing a forum for deeper conversation around the layers and nuances relating to the intersection and impact of race and racism in our society,” said the Rt. Rev. Sam Rodman, bishop of the Diocese of North Carolina. “Our hope is that by inviting a multitude of voices, we are offering a chance to deepen our understanding not only of these layers, but of each other as well.”



The Rev. Kathy Walker

MEET THE REVEREND KATHY

Perhaps the greatest star to align for the podcast to come together was finding the right host, and it turned out the right host found us. “Roundtables on Race” is hosted by the Rev. Kathy Walker, missionary for Black ministries for the Diocese of North Carolina. Walker, or “Rev. Kathy” as she is affectionately called by many, is passionate about facilitating conversations that lead to greater understanding among racially diverse groups and racial healing. She joined the diocesan staff in February 2020; before that time, as a local chapter president for the Union of Black Episcopalians in South Florida, she hosted numerous events that gathered people together to tackle difficult issues involving relations between multiple ethnic groups. While a student at Virginia Theological Seminary, she also led discussions around racial disparities and the impact on people of color.

“The intention of ‘Roundtables on Race’ is to be able to have respectful discussions, even when there’s disagreement,” said Walker. “That’s how we’ll forge a

better understanding of race-related issues and the people affected on all sides. Because, whether they know it or not, every person is affected by racism and racial injustice, and addressing it and bringing it out in the open can ultimately lead to solutions and make things better for everyone.”

Walker has proven to be a natural podcast host. With a mix of warmth, wit, humor and insight, she brings to every episode her experience in facilitating potentially delicate conversations by making every guest feel welcome, comfortable and valued, creating an atmosphere that encourages candor and engagement.

THE FIRST SEASON

“Roundtables on Race” made its debut in July 2021. Its first season explored “Race and the News Media,” as that means of communication is a powerful influence on perceptions, opinions and conversations relating to race. The six-episode season delved into historical representations of race, journalist training, representation in the newsroom, the media’s role in setting the tone for societal conversation, the relationship between news organizations and the audience, and news outlets undertaking an examination of their past race-related coverage. Guests included journalists, news directors, publishers, professors, researchers, authors and more.

“It was unbelievable the guests who joined us on the podcast,” said Walker. “As we did our research on the various topics, we kept returning to the people behind the books and the news channels and the organizations and thought, ‘Why not invite them?’ So we did—and they kept saying yes!”

LISTEN AND SUBSCRIBE

“Roundtables on Race” can be found on many of your favorite podcast providers, including:

- Apple podcasts
- Google podcasts
- Spotify
- Stitcher
- TuneIn

Listeners can also follow the podcast on Twitter (@roundtablesrace).

You can find links to all these outlets at episditionc.org/roundtable-on-race.



No matter what the question, the conversations were open, candid, honest and hopeful. Whether discussing the challenges faced by news media outlets, the reality of trying to balance the desire to provide a service while meeting business needs, the way race has been covered in the past and is covered today, the effects of a changing landscape, shortcomings and points of pride, the nuances and layers the podcast set out to find were revealed.

“We are deeply grateful to each and every one of our guests for joining us this season,” said Walker. “They really took a leap of faith with us. We were so new, so inexperienced, and yet every one of them said yes because they believed in the concept and what we are trying to do. And because they did, we were given insight and information from true experts and leaders in their field from all parts of the country, and every one of them left us with a deeper understanding of what goes into the news we see each day in a way we could never have done short of working in the industry ourselves.”

SEASON TWO COMING SOON

Season two of “Roundtables on Race” is in development now. Premiering this fall, the new season will focus on race and education.

“Conversations around race are progressing in a way right now like they never have before,” said Walker. “There’s an honesty and willingness to address issues that feels different. And that’s what we want to do—give those conversations a safe space to happen and respect the dignity of everyone who comes to take part. Some conversations may be hard, but some have been a lot of fun, too. What they all have in common is that every one of them has been meaningful.”

“While this podcast is rooted in and guided by our faith,” said Rodman, “our sincere hope is that all listeners—in any city or town, Episcopalian or ‘none,’ new to conversations around race or deeply involved in the work of racial justice and reconciliation—will, by listening to these conversations, learn something they didn’t know, find a deeper understanding of an opinion that might differ from their own, and find space to engage in their own conversations, wherever they might be.”

Please join us at the table.

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

CHECKING IN WITH THE CHURCH

An interview with two Executive Council members from the Diocese of North Carolina

Executive Council is the national governing body of The Episcopal Church. Formally, it is the Board of Directors of the Domestic and Foreign Missionary Society, the legal name of the Church. Currently comprised of 38 members plus ex officio members, Executive Council includes 20 representatives elected by General Convention and 18 from across the nine provinces of the Episcopal Church.

Two of those representatives hail from the Diocese of North Carolina. The Rt. Rev. Anne Hodges-Copple, bishop suffragan of the Diocese, and Alice Freeman, representative of Province IV (the province of which the Diocese of North Carolina is a part), are both midway through their six-year terms. They were kind enough to sit down with us to share some of the work of Executive Council, their experiences being a part of it and their thoughts on the state of the Church.

What does Executive Council do?

Alice Freeman (AF): Executive Council is a governing body, and its members carry out the program and policies adopted by General Convention. There are 20 committees and commissions of Executive Council to do the work, four of which are standing committees: Finance, Governance and Operations, Mission Beyond the Episcopal Church and Mission Within the Episcopal Church. We meet about three or four times a year in different parts of the country, though we've been meeting virtually since the pandemic started.

How did you come to be elected?

AF: There are two ways to be elected. One is when the nominating committee puts out a call for those people interested in serving to apply. Applicants then go through a formal application process, which is followed by a committee that evaluates all of the applications and submits nominees to General Convention to stand for election.

The second way is that each of the nine provinces is allowed one clerical member and one lay person to represent that province. I chose to apply via both paths. I wanted to be a voice for people who may not have a voice. Someone once said, if you're not at the table, chances are you are on the menu. So I wanted to do this and be at the table, and I was elected through the Province IV path.

The Rt. Rev. Anne Hodges-Copple (AHC): I was approached through the House of Bishops and asked if I would be willing to apply and put my name forward. I naively said yes because I was a relatively new bishop when General Convention convened in 2018 and didn't

think people knew who I was. There are always more qualified, wonderful, good and faithful people running, and I was sure I'd never be elected. And then I was.

I kind of laugh and feel like the joke is on me in some ways, but I also feel that God's blessing is upon me because, even though it was something I had not anticipated being part of, I have been hugely blessed, hugely surprised and hugely delighted to work with the other members of Executive Council, who really, I think, represent some of the best and the brightest of leadership in the Episcopal Church.

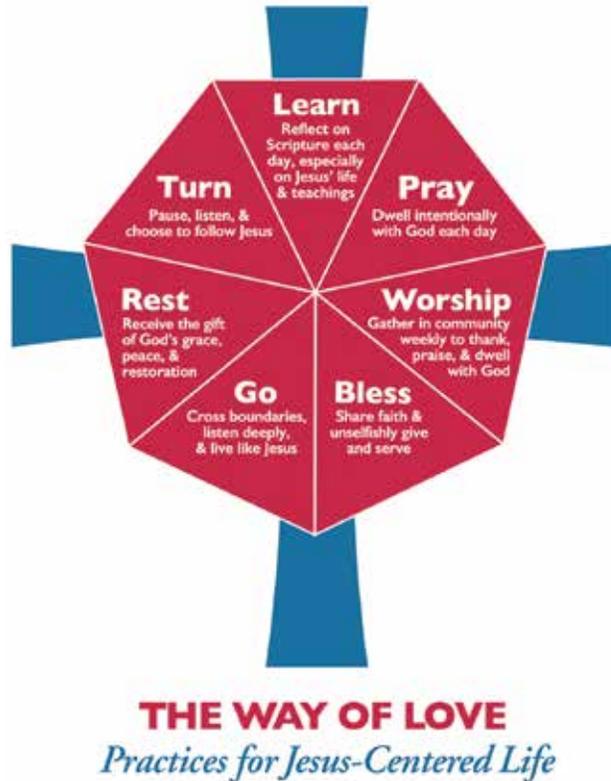
On what committees do you serve?

AF: I serve on the Mission Beyond the Episcopal Church committee. Our mandate is to highlight issues in the development of ministry beyond the Episcopal Church with special focus on global partnerships. We also tend to Anglican Communion covenant committees—we have covenants with several dioceses around the world and bilateral relationships, Episcopal Migration Ministries, inter-religious partnerships, domestic government policy through the Office of Government Relations, international policy, social international policy and social justice work, and Episcopal Relief & Development.

AHC: I serve on the Finance Committee, which, though it obviously entails looking at financial spreadsheets and budgets all the time, is really a very mission-oriented group. The finances are broken into two divisions: the Mission Beyond and the Mission Within. So I actually work closely with the committee on which Alice serves. We're working on the budget for the next triennium, and the committee looks very carefully and asks a lot of questions because that accountability actually raises the bar for knowing if we are being impactful, if we are living up to our priorities in our values, and if there are things we can learn and maybe let go if they worked in their day but are not working as well now.

One of the things we never want to do is cut money from something that's being impactful, and we don't want to spend money on things that aren't impactful, especially if we can redirect it to things that are impactful.

For instance, when we came up against COVID, we started meeting weekly because there were things we knew we would have to do and things we could do. We cut the travel budget and put a hiring freeze in place, and a freeze on most expenses because we didn't want to have



At the Executive Council meeting in February 2020, Alice Freeman (second from left) and the Rt. Rev. Anne Hodges-Copple (far right) posed with the Rev. Canon Michael Barlowe, secretary of General Convention; the Rt. Rev. Griselda Delgado del Carpio, bishop of the Episcopal Church in Cuba; and the Most Rev. Michael Curry, presiding bishop of The Episcopal Church. The Way of Love shapes Executive Council's work. *Photo courtesy of Alice Freeman*

to lay off anybody. Through such line-by-line cuts, we were able to save hundreds of thousands of dollars. With the impact of Payroll Protection, we kept people employed. With these combined efforts and by dipping into some reserves, we eventually were able to redirect hundreds of thousands of dollars into COVID relief grants for almost every diocese in the Episcopal Church, with a minimum of strings attached. We were able to provide relief to every single diocese that requested it, with very broad parameters so they could use the funds in whatever way they needed to in order to make the most impact in their dioceses.

How is the Episcopal Church doing as we move through a pandemic world?

AF: Executive Council is guided by how we follow the way of Jesus. Every day, there are seven things we can do to guide us: turn—pause, listen and choose to follow Jesus; learn—reflect on Scripture each day, especially Jesus' life and teachings; pray—dwell intentionally with God each day; worship—gather in community weekly to thank, praise and draw near God; bless—share faith and unselfishly give and serve; go—cross boundaries, listen deeply and live like Jesus; and rest—receive the gift of God's grace, peace and restoration.

That sounds an awful lot like the Way of Love!

AF: That is exactly the Way of Love, and that is exactly

what the Church is right now.

AHC: I agree with that. I think it's the message of the Episcopal Church—of what we stand for and what we're pursuing, and the values that guide us and the actions we take. In light of the values that guide us and the spiritual practices we're committed to, I think that is being presented beautifully across all kinds of interconnected communications channels. Certainly Presiding Bishop Curry is a huge part of that, but we are really, in some ways, singing out of the same song book with the Way of Love, with Becoming Beloved Community, with the Jesus Movement. I don't remember a time in the Episcopal Church when we've had a more unified message that is so compelling.

That said, we cannot deny or turn away from the fact that membership in the Episcopal Church continues to decline. When you look at the demographics and how they break out along age ranges, baby boomers make up the largest percentage. We're also still an overwhelmingly white church, although that is shifting some. The thing that alarms me most is that we're losing ground with millennials, though that is not at all unique to the Episcopal Church.

I think we have to recognize that there are a lot of ways the Church needs to change. There is much we love about it, but there's much that we are confronting within the Church, and probably the greatest work Executive Council has done to confront the work we need to do is the racial justice audit that's been conducted with lead-

ers across the Church. We have to make our own Body healthier, and we recognize that the sin of racism inhibits the health of the Body, so the Body can't grow the way it needs to. The Executive Council spends a lot of time in our meetings on topics related to racial reconciliation. Millennials and the generations coming behind them are very committed to racial and social justice, and they need to see that message coming from the Church.

AF: Young people I've spoken to have an aversion to formal religion, though they say they are spiritual. They don't think we've done so well as a religion. There are so many issues that are important to them that have not been addressed by religious faiths and practices, and they are disillusioned. And so we have to find ways to meet their needs because their questions are really about the institution, not about faith.

It is a tremendous commitment to serve on Executive Council and undertake the work you do. What about the work inspires you?

AF: Feeling like I can make a difference. A lot of people sometimes can't speak up because they have obligations or are afraid of retribution in some way. I'm in a place where I am not beholden to anyone, except to me and my

God. And I have to do what I feel like I have to do. And while that is painful sometimes, it is what I feel I'm called to do. No matter how I try to dismiss it.

AHC: What inspires me about this work are the other members of Executive Council. I am constantly inspired by the thoughtfulness of the debates and the conversations. I am inspired by the dedication that people have and the work that they do to have robust, honest, good debate.

I'm inspired because I know when I go to Executive Council, I'm going to see, hear and learn things that are going to deepen my commitment to Gospel-based living. It's the process of deeply engaged leadership reflecting, discerning, deciding and going forth in faith that inspires me to go back to my work of the Diocese and do the same thing. It gives me hope and encouragement that what's happening at the grassroots level in any one diocese is truly interesting and important and valued. It's tiring, and it also gives me energy, and I think that's the definition of inspiring.

AF: Not only is the current Executive Council the most ethnically and gender-diverse Council ever assembled, we also have a mix of conservatives, moderates and liberals. Which, I think, is representative of both our Church and our country. When you bring all of those factions together and they are able to debate civilly and congenially, that is important.

Though Becoming Beloved Community is defined in different ways between the Episcopal Church and the Diocese of North Carolina, what are some of the other ways the work of Becoming Beloved Community has manifested in the work of Executive Council, in addition to the work of racial justice you've described?

AHC: An example is the Rapid Response Becoming Beloved Community grants. There are two types of Becoming Beloved Community grants: there are the regular Becoming Beloved Community grants and then the Rapid Response Becoming Beloved Community grants. Executive Council and General Convention have been able to make available grants for some of our work around racial reconciliation, to take place in very local, grassroots ways that apply to contexts as diverse as Pittsburgh, Navajoland, Alaska, Honduras—you know it's going to look different according to where it's planted and in which part of the vineyard.

AF: The advisory group overseeing the Rapid Response Becoming Beloved Community grants of up to \$10,000 came up with implementation authorizing a special grant cycle to address systemic racism and racial violence in urgent areas. They might be applied



A session of Executive Council meets. Photo courtesy of Alice Freeman



The Rt. Rev. Anne Hodges-Copple and Alice Freeman celebrate Hodges-Copple's election to Executive Council during the 79th General Convention. Photo by Christine McTaggart

to the racial disparities laid bare by the coronavirus pandemic, which disproportionately affects people of color in terms of health outcomes. There's also the pandemic of ongoing violence directed against Black people and other people of color, especially at the hands of law enforcement personnel in communities in the Americas and beyond.

All proposed budgets and all proposed projects must demonstrate adherence to relevant local diocesan and state public health guidelines for gathering. Interaction programs address the health consequences of ongoing racism for communities of color, talking about things like depression, anxiety, substance abuse and trauma recovery. Community listening and learning sessions offer speakers series on racial reconciliation, workshops, facilitated training and other activities that promote the work of the law becoming the loving.

Let me give you an example. In the Diocese of South Carolina, All Saints and the local internet provider agreed to pay for the students who could not afford internet when the school shut down due to the COVID pandemic. They provided funds for 183 families through March and April 2020, but the provider wouldn't support it beyond that, so All Saints requested and was awarded a grant to pay for some of these high school students to continue having internet for the 2021 school year.

Another example: In Tucson, Arizona, COVID has caused severe economic impacts to the large immigrant and refugee communities whose poverty rate is 10 points above the national U.S. average. A parishioner at St. Philip's, a part-time teacher, recognized the opportunity created by the demand for face masks, created a pattern, sourced materials and created a program she called

THREAD (Together for Hope, Reconciliation, Empowerment and Development) that offers mothers of the immigrant students in the school where she works the chance to help make the masks, helping them earn income while remaining safe. A \$5,000 Rapid Response Becoming Beloved Community grant was part of that happening.

AHC: There's no way to list for an article all of the grant funds that have been distributed, the ministries they supported, the impact they've had or even all of the grants available. But part of our work going forward is making sure the opportunities and how to take advantage of them are clear so we can make sure applications are received and funds dispersed in an equitable way, so the variety of opportunities for building beloved community can be supported as broadly as possible.

How do you see the mission priorities of the Diocese of North Carolina reflected in the work happening in the Episcopal Church? Is it aligned well?

AHC: I think that, particularly in the mission strategy, our priorities and our focus are aligned very well with the Episcopal Church. Becoming Beloved Community, Christian formation, creation care, new communities—we haven't even had a chance to talk about those yet! The Episcopal Church is devoting a lot of time, energy and resources to planting and developing new communities, and that idea that we need to grow churches differently than we have in the past is very much aligned up and down with our own. It doesn't hurt that our presiding bishop was once the bishop of our own diocese and is now saying things we've been hearing for a long time on a wider platform.

AF: I think we're lining up pretty well. I think leadership is key. And I think the Diocese of North Carolina is ahead of the Episcopal Church in some ways, especially in our efforts around racial justice and reconciliation. I think the Executive Council is getting on board more and more with work that's been happening here for a while. I think the foresight of our diocese is ambitious. I'm very impressed with what I've seen of the developing mission strategy. With the leadership we have in place, we are poised to do some good things and to move some things forward.

Follow the work of Executive Council at bit.ly/InfoExecutive-Council or subscribe to Please Note for headlines from Executive Council meetings. Or keep reading the Disciple, as our conversation with Alice Freeman and the Rt. Rev. Anne Hodges-Copple only began to tell the story of the work happening. There's more to come!

WHY DOESN'T HE MOVE IN HERE?

How churches across the Diocese engage in ministry with their neighbors experiencing homelessness

Church of the Holy Family, Chapel Hill, has for many years engaged in ministry with men reentering society upon their release from Orange Correctional Center.

“I’ve always said reentry work is homelessness prevention because these guys leave jail with essentially nothing, and this is a bewildering world to enter,” said the Rev. Clarke French, rector of Holy Family.

Thomas, a 64-year-old man who had been incarcerated for 40 years, faced an especially challenging reentry. Without enough working years to draw Social Security and Medicare, and never having used a smartphone or an ATM, Thomas was entering a world unrecognizable from the one he left behind. Holy Family’s reconciliation and reentry team believed it would have eight months to prepare, but then Thomas was released six months early due to COVID-19. Without time to make detailed plans, the church needed to take action. Fortunately, the old Holy Family rectory, while it has been repurposed over time, still houses a small apartment.

“So I just said, ‘Why doesn’t he move in here?’” French explained. And Thomas did.

While most churches no longer have rectories on their properties, dozens of churches across our diocese engage in creative ministries with their neighbors experiencing homelessness. From donating homemade sleeping bags to retooling feeding ministries to maintaining long-standing relationships, congregations of all sizes and means find ways

to meet the specific needs in their communities. Some house dozens of neighbors during the winter months, while others, like Holy Family, do the resource- and time-intensive work of providing wraparound services for a single individual.

ADAPTING QUICKLY

Housing was only the beginning of Holy Family’s support for Thomas. A parishioner who owns a recycling company in Durham gave Thomas a job, and another loaned him a car. Several helped him acquire the necessary number of hours behind the wheel with a licensed driver to pass his driver’s test, and his new driver’s license allowed Thomas to open a bank account and more easily navigate a variety of other systems. The church also paid for Thomas to receive care from a private physician and a dentist after years of medical neglect. While he needed extensive support to rejoin society, Thomas is now on a sustainable path and working toward future goals.

During his time in prison, Thomas worked as a gardener, tending state-owned properties, including the governor’s mansion, and that is the work he would like to do in the future. Because the church does not charge him rent, Thomas has been able to save enough money to purchase a pickup truck and some landscaping equipment, and he now cares for the church property. Thomas is also searching for his own housing.

“I really think that, at the end of the day, we might have launched a human into the world who otherwise would have been ground under the teeth of this merciless world that he emerged into, completely unfamiliar with how far it had developed since the last time he saw a free day,” French said.

Thomas so captivated parishioners’ hearts that the church discerned a call to tear down the old rectory and build a new house so they can do this again.

Holy Family is not the only church that acted quickly to support neighbors experiencing homelessness during COVID-19. In April 2020, the then-rector at St. Mary’s, High Point, the Rev. David Umphlett, received a call from Open Door Ministries, a men’s shelter, about providing overflow shelter so the nonprofit could socially distance its residents by splitting them across two sites. Sheltering the men in hotel rooms had become unsustainable, but St. Mary’s parish life center made the perfect secondary site. From the second week of April until the first week of August, an average of 22 men lived full-time on St. Mary’s property. Volunteers



In an effort to make the parish life center feel more home-like, St. Mary’s, High Point, screened movies for the guests who lived there for several months during the COVID-19 pandemic. Photo courtesy of St. Mary’s

from Open Door Ministries staffed the shelter and provided food throughout the week, and parishioners provided meals from Friday lunch through Sunday dinner.

St. Mary's also strived to make the church feel like home. They installed picnic tables outside the parish life center, and parishioners frequently stopped by to drop off homemade baked goods, bottled water, hand sanitizer and, on one occasion, toys for a resident whose young daughter regularly came to visit him. Neighbors unaffiliated with the church who saw the men at the picnic tables volunteered to bring meals and help in other ways. All told, 150 volunteers worked together to support the church's guests.

"It was all God's work, totally God's work," said Audrey Congdon Harris, the parishioner who coordinated meals during St. Mary's time as a temporary shelter. "This is what I hope we take from this whole disaster: We can take care of each other, and that is why we're here on this earth, to love each other like Jesus loves us and to take care of each other."

LONG-TERM RELATIONSHIPS

St. Joseph's and St. Philip's, Durham, are two churches with long-standing relationships with their neighbors experiencing homelessness, and both needed to find new and creative ways to serve when the pandemic hit. St. Joseph's has invited its unhoused neighbors, some of whom once slept on church grounds, to gather in the parish hall with parishioners and volunteers for a hot breakfast each weekday since 2007. When COVID-19 struck, out of concern for the safety of the medically vulnerable population it served, the communal breakfast went on hiatus, and a drop-by feeding ministry—sausage and egg biscuits, coffee, grits when available and bagged lunches—took its place. The church also provided information about testing and vaccination sites and helped its neighbors get vaccinated.

As more people get vaccinated and restrictions lift, St. Joseph's has re-integrated the community aspect of its breakfast ministry. As of August 16, neighbors now gather in a socially distanced circle in the church's driveway to enjoy breakfast casserole, grits and coffee.

"It is something to behold," the Rev. Monnie Riggan, deacon at St. Joseph's and diocesan deacon for anti-racism and reconciliation, said. "We are a community of people who gather in fellowship, eating together, and building relationships and trust. We take care of each other."

St. Philip's ministry with its neighbors experiencing homelessness also started with food served in the church's parish hall. A former rector, the Rev. Gene Bolinger, used his discretionary fund to feed neighbors who knocked on the church door seeking help. His ministry evolved into a community kitchen serving two seatings of soup and sandwiches every day at noon. Eventually, capacity and accessibility concerns led St. Philip's to join with other local organizations to plan for something larger and more sustainable.



Volunteers at the City with Dwellings day center engage with the ministry's primary mission: providing a caring presence to help vulnerable people navigate complicated networks of social services. *Photo courtesy of Lea Thullbery*

The group first met in the fall of 1982 to consider building a facility with space to accommodate the community kitchen, Meals on Wheels, the Methodist clothing ministry, the Presbyterian food pantry, Women in Action for the Prevention of Violence and other nonprofits serving downtown Durham. Eventually, the partners decided to incorporate as a separate nonprofit, Urban Ministries Durham, and build a facility on a vacant lot St. Philip's had purchased during the 1970s after an urban renewal effort led to the destruction of homes next to the church. On January 19, 1983, St. Philip's parishioner and initial UMD board member Charlie Steel filed the articles of incorporation for UMD, and the people of St. Philip's and their partners set about raising the \$700,000 necessary to pay for the new facility. Now, UMD, which still sits on the lot St. Philip's leases to it for \$1 per year, feeds 200-250 people each day of the year, and its shelter—the result of a merger in 2002—is typically full.

St. Philip's continues to support UMD in a variety of ways. Most recently, from April 1, 2020, through May 27, 2021, the church formed a "Sandwich Brigade" of 75 parishioners, neighbors and relatives to assist UMD's bagged lunch program. The brigade met each Thursday in parishioner Susan Day Moore's driveway to collect more than 250 sandwiches made at home; Stephanie Johnson, the chair of the UMD outreach committee, estimates they made a total of 14,000 sandwiches, plus providing fruit, water and baked goods to complete the lunches.



A team of volunteers prepare dinner for guests at St. John's, Charlotte. Photo courtesy of St. John's

While the sandwich ministry has ended, St. Philip's is already looking toward its next outreach to the church's neighbors: a Wednesday morning shower and laundry ministry.

Like St. Philip's, St. Timothy's, Winston-Salem, also began with one ministry that expanded into something much larger. In 2013, St. Timothy's and ecumenical partners were invited to launch a winter overflow shelter to provide cold-weather emergency shelter for the City of Winston-Salem. With support from almost 100 churches and ecumenical groups, including Winston-Salem's other Episcopal churches, St. Timothy's hosts the city's women's overflow shelter from December 1 through March 31, while four other churches host men's overflow shelters as part of City with Dwellings. Because City with Dwellings is a no-barrier shelter, St. Timothy's houses people with a variety of challenges, including active alcohol and drug addictions and mental health crises.

Each night for four months, volunteers at a central intake location downtown help women find beds in the city's year-round shelters, if possible. If not enough beds are available, transportation takes guests to St. Timothy's by 7 p.m. Once there, guests' belongings are sanitized in a special warmer that kills bedbugs, while volunteers welcome the women to the church and help them through the check-in routine. Everyone then gathers to enjoy dinner provided by parishioners before lights out by 10 p.m. While guests sleep, the full-time overnight monitor and two overnight volunteers might wash linens and the women's laundry. The next morning, guests stow their belongings and bedding, then eat breakfast before volunteers transport them back downtown.

While St. Timothy's and other City with Dwelling churches offer compassion and care in a non-judgmental

environment to all who need it at night, it became clear guests needed additional support. In 2018, City with Dwellings incorporated as a 501(c)3 and, in 2020, opened a downtown Winston-Salem day center to assist the same people who need a place to sleep at night find resources and navigate often complicated social services during the day. While it never shut down and serves approximately 45 people per day, the day center has yet to operate under normal circumstances; according to Lea Thullbery, director of diversion and outreach for City with Dwellings, the organization received its occupancy permit an hour and a half before the mayor implemented COVID-19 restrictions. Just like the overnight emergency shelters, the day center is no barrier, requiring no paperwork or referrals before offering help to anyone who walks through the door. Ultimately, City with Dwellings works through relationships with volunteers who listen, don't judge and assist as they can.

PARTNERSHIPS IN CHARLOTTE

While a church is sometimes called to launch a new ministry in order to meet a specific need, many also partner with existing organizations to serve their unhoused neighbors. At St. John's, Charlotte, parishioners have volunteered with Room in the Inn, Charlotte's network of church-based emergency shelters during the winter; Roof Above, a comprehensive homeless service provider; and their precursors for decades. That service has included preparing and serving meals at the men's shelter and hosting neighbors at the church during the winter months through Room in the Inn. While many volunteer opportunities were suspended during the pandemic, volunteers at St. John's redirected their energy into donations, and the church currently is in discernment about how it will engage with the ministries in the future as their programs continue to evolve. Matt Williams, St. John's family minister, knows the 350 or so parishioners who volunteer with the two organizations each year will remain engaged somehow because, once they volunteer for the first time, "they fall in love with it and want to do it again."

"At its fundamental level, we are responding directly to the populations that Jesus has said to go out and help, in terms of the least of these—to use our blessings in direct ways that allow us to not just write a check but allow us to connect with the people. It doesn't take a whole lot for Christians who open themselves up to that kind of work to see how the Spirit moves."

Volunteers at Christ Church, Charlotte, feel that same sense of dedication as they serve Roof Above; Room in the Inn; Charlotte Family Housing, which works with families;

and Supportive Housing Communities, which provides permanent supportive housing. Housing and homelessness is one of the church's five pillars of outreach, and the goal is to provide support along the entire continuum of homeless services, from diversion to work with chronically homeless populations. This continuum includes two houses on the church property that Christ Church bought, converted to duplexes and maintains while Charlotte Family Housing provides wraparound services to the families living there.

In addition to soliciting financial donations and recruiting approximately 150 volunteers per year to work on homelessness in various ways, the Rev. Joan Kilian, associate rector for outreach and mission, and Laura Konitzer, director of outreach and mission, encourage parishioners to use their connections and social capital to advocate for affordable housing policies and serve on boards of local nonprofits.

"The parish is so generous; there isn't anything monetarily—or even supplies, resources—that we ask for, that we don't get tenfold," Konitzer said, "and, yet, social capital, in these types of situations, is as important."

"I think that's what we're about as Christians: seeing the needs of people and meeting those needs as best we're able, and, when we have the resources, using those to make lasting change as well as meet the acute needs of people," said Kilian.

Christ Church is not the only parish engaged in both direct service and advocacy. The mission board at St. Martin's, Charlotte, decided in 2019 to focus its efforts on two mission priorities: housing justice and the Galilee Center. The church had long participated in Room at the Inn, Roof Above and other initiatives aimed at serving people experiencing homelessness, but, like many churches, St. Martin's found its impact diluted by the variety of nonprofit partners to which it donated funds and volunteer hours. Inspired by Charlotte's growing housing crisis—some neighbors experiencing homelessness sleep in the church's courtyard—the mission board put together a five-year strategic plan to guide its commitment to housing justice and the Galilee Center. The plan also allows the church to commit funds to organizations year after year, which helps nonprofits budget well.

As a first step toward addressing the gaps the mission board identified, they partnered with Action NC TORC (Tenant Organizing Resource Center), which empowers tenants to organize and ensures their right to maintain safe, quality, affordable housing. Mission board members were trained to staff the organization's tenant organizing hotline, a decision made after consultation with TORC.

"We asked them, 'What do you need; what do you want?' instead of 'What can we do for you?'" Kay Miller, chair of St. Martin's mission board, explained. Those requests have also included assistance with setting up a chat bot on the organization's website, designing and printing door hangers and cards for use during neighborhood canvassing efforts,

LEARN MORE

If you are interested in learning more about ministry with people experiencing homelessness or about affordable housing and homelessness prevention, visit the Bishop's Committee on Affordable Housing on the diocesan website at episditionc.org/affordable-housing/.

and setting up an emergency response network of St. Martin's volunteers who can take specific action when TORC needs help with its advocacy work.

While advocacy, focused financial donations and strategic partnerships all have an enormous impact when tackling homelessness, sometimes a small, targeted ministry is what a community needs.

STARTING SMALL

Just before COVID-19 restrictions took effect in April 2020, St. Thomas', Sanford, had started a new ministry, My Brother's Keeper. The ministry began in the 1980s when its founder, a Pennsylvania woman moved by her interactions with people experiencing homelessness in New York City, gave a man she met on the street a homemade sleeping bag. Sue Bullwinkel, who ran a My Brother's Keeper program at her church in Pennsylvania for 15 years, brought the idea with her when she moved to Sanford and joined St. Thomas' five years ago. Before the pandemic, the group met once or twice per month to craft the sleeping bags, which, at 7 feet by 7 feet, are designed to be large enough to sleep a parent and child. They then packed small toiletries, socks, hats and other items in the sleeping bags before delivering them to the local police department for distribution to people experiencing chronic homelessness. Bullwinkel believes St. Thomas' My Brother's Keeper chapter is the first registered in North Carolina.

While the ministry has been on hold for more than a year, people are enthusiastic to begin again. It's not surprising, given the impact volunteering with unhoused neighbors has on people.

"People want us to go speak to Sunday school classes, and we'll say, 'Just come and see,'" said Thullbery of City with Dwellings in Winston-Salem. "Because no matter what we tell you, you're not going to have a transformation [during a presentation]. You're going to have transformation when you come and see."

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

THE GIFT OF GRANTS

Resources are one of the greatest challenges facing any ministry, collaboration or nonprofit, with financial considerations generally at the top of the list. Happily, there are countless grants available in for-profit, nonprofit, government and faith-based sectors that can help navigate financial challenges, turning what can be an obstacle into a gateway to making the work of ministry possible.

Because so many grants are available and many people do not have experience writing grant applications, we are here to help you get started. The Rev. Rebecca Yarbrough, deacon at Chapel of Christ the King, Charlotte, and diocesan Jesse Ball duPont Fund grants coordinator, has compiled her top 10 tips for grant writing, and in the following pages we share stories of grants awarded to ministries—both existing and new—across the Diocese of North Carolina. With a few additional resources added in to get you started, we hope you'll find both inspiration and guidance to take the first steps on your own path to making your ministry possible.

By the Rev. Rebecca Yarbrough

TEN STEPS TO SUCCESSFUL GRANT WRITING

Obtaining funding for the good you want to do in the world is sometimes difficult, but it's out there and easier to access if you follow these 10 steps:

1. Know your mission, have a vision, and have some strategies for how you want to go about achieving your vision and fulfilling your mission. This comes first, and the more clarity you have around it, the better.
2. Involve the people you hope to serve or engage, and the organizations with which you want to partner, especially in identifying the strategies and projects for which you'll seek funding. This will avoid "solutions in search of a problem," make your statements about project need stronger, and is more respectful and empowering for all.
3. Learn about grants available from the Diocese of North Carolina, The Episcopal Church and other sources. Google the websites of community foundations, and look at your town's largest employers and wealthiest families to see if they have corporate or family foundations. Even government grants can fund some direct service projects run by churches. Look for funders interested in your mission and vision. Don't just focus on big national grantors or big grants; often it's much easier to put together several smaller grants to fund a project, and less competitive. Read all application materials!
4. When the right grant opportunity comes along, assemble a project team to help with the application. This is a great time for collaboration, including with the folk who'll be impacted—funders love collaboration! Too, many hands make light work, so create a plan for putting the application together and share the workload.
5. Start by developing your project plan: everything that will need to be done to implement your project and reach your desired goals and outcomes. You can do this easily and cheaply by brainstorming it with your project team and putting your thoughts on cut strips of paper with painter's tape on a wall (sticky notes are good, too). Think also about how you'll demonstrate that you've done what you want to do, and capture lessons learned in the process. Don't forget to think about how the project will be managed. Budget time and resources for evaluation and management structure.
6. Once you have a rough project plan on which everyone agrees, you can refine it, nail down your costs more



The Flyin' Lion Transition to Work Program at St. Mark's, Huntersville, provides a faith-filled environment where people facing poverty, domestic violence and homelessness prepare for work in food service. The ministry is funded partially by a Mission Endowment Grant. *Photo by Linda Amidei*

accurately, establish a timeline and assign responsibilities (and confirm buy-in).

7. Finalize your budget. This means not only what you'll be asking for from a grantor, but what you will put into the project, either as cash or donated time, or goods and services (called "in-kind" match). Think how you'll document any in-kind donations. Get project partners to help you with their in-kind or cash donations. "Skin in the game" is huge to funders.
8. Now you're ready to start writing. Know who you're writing for—use some of the language your potential funders use on their website, be succinct, and don't use jargon. If the application form asks specific questions, always make the first one or two sentences of your response a clear and direct response to the question being asked. If space allows, you can then expand on your response to provide context and tell your story. Adhere to word and character limits, and read all the fine print on the application to be sure you've covered all the bases. You'll probably need to do several drafts before you have a final.
9. Get letters of endorsement/commitment from any organizations or individuals who are part of the team and who are putting up either cash or in-kind matches. You can usually include a couple of these unless the grant guidelines specifically prohibit it, and it will strengthen your application.
10. Get your proposal in on time. If you are submitting via an online form, write your proposal in Word or a similar program, and then copy and paste (don't cut and paste) it into the online form. Don't wait for the last minute!

For more information about grant writing, you can check out the diocesan website for a longer grants primer and information on the quick-and-easy project planning method. If you'd like a grant reviewed for comment, just let me know, and I'll be happy to help. Please be sure to allow plenty of time for the review, as it won't be helpful to try it right before the grant deadline.

The Rev. Rebecca Yarbrough is a deacon at Chapel of Christ the King, Charlotte, and diocesan Jesse Ball duPont Fund grants coordinator. Contact her at Rebecca.yarbrough@episdionc.org.

START YOUR SEARCH

Seeking available grants can feel overwhelming, but there are a few starting points to help you narrow the field:

- The Episcopal Church - There are a multitude of grants available through the Episcopal Church. Get to know them at episcopal-church.org/category/grants-scholarships.
- The Diocese of North Carolina - There are a dozen grants and scholarships available through the Diocese of North Carolina. Find them at episdionc.org/grants-scholarships.
- Use Google, and start with the websites of community foundations.
- Look at your town's largest employers and wealthiest families to see if they have corporate or family foundations.
- Government grants can fund some direct service projects run by churches.
- Look for funders interested in your mission and vision.
- Remember, don't focus only on big national grantors or big grants; often it's much easier and less competitive to put together several smaller grants to fund a project.

GRANT STORIES

Diocese of North Carolina Awarded Trinity Wall Street Philanthropies Grant for Congregational Support and Development

The Episcopal Diocese of North Carolina announced in July it is the recipient of a \$120,000 grant from Trinity Wall Street Philanthropies for its ongoing work helping congregations to thrive. The Diocese is one of 25 organizations to receive a grant, all of which are recognized for their dedication "to

advancing leadership development and building sustainable financial capacity in The Episcopal Church and the Anglican Communion and beyond."

The work this grant is intended to support plans for the development of a network for leadership development and congregational vitality to serve clergy and lay leaders in the Diocese of North Carolina and throughout the Episcopal Church. The idea for the grant proposal emerged from

conversations between members of the diocesan congregational support and development team and Trinity Wall Street Philanthropies leadership development staff. These conversations centered around the need to create a space and support for communities and networks of practitioners, congregations and leaders to explore and develop practices and responses to overcome challenges churches face today to sustain vital congregations and ministries.

“We are excited about this opportunity for church-wide leadership development and grateful to the team at Trinity Wall Street Philanthropies for their initiative in supporting the creation of this network of leaders,” said the Rt. Rev. Sam Rodman, bishop of the Diocese of North Carolina. “One of the lessons of the pandemic has been that the best adaptations come from conversations with others who are facing similar challenges. In the 21st-century church, peer-to-peer collaboration and relationship building are essential components in *Becoming Beloved Community*.”

The grant awards the Diocese of North Carolina \$120,000 over two years. This is the first multi-year initiative funded by Trinity Wall Street Philanthropies’ leadership development program. Through this grant, members of our diocese will be working with others to build relationships and create connections in meetings at regional and national levels, as well as hosting conferences and online gatherings. For the Diocese of North Carolina, this grant provides support for our work on new ways to engage our congregations and communities, including opportunities for leadership development for clergy, lay leaders and congregations, and access to resources and information about best practices and innovation to support congregational vitality.

“We’re in constant conversations with congregations about how to thrive in an ever-changing world,” said the Rev. Canon Dr. Sally French, regional canon and co-author of the grant. “This opportunity will help us build the resources and support within our denomination to explore and build best practices to help congregations be who they are called to be.”

The awarding of the grant is an acknowledgement of the work happening in the Diocese of North Carolina. Following the grant support to create Reimagining Curacies and selection to participate in the Episcopal Preaching Foundation’s Lay Preacher Teaching Initiative, this grant to support congregational vitality recognizes the diocesan priority to explore new paths on our journey to *Becoming Beloved Community*.

“Our hope is this work will strengthen our efforts to support congregations and leaders at all levels in our diocese,” said French. “We’re excited to see the directions in which this will take us and how it will support the growth of new initiatives and provide increased opportunities for collaboration in the areas of congregational vitality and leadership development throughout the Episcopal Church.”



The rain garden at St. Ambrose, Raleigh, was an initial step in the church’s efforts to promote ecojustice. *Photo courtesy of St. Ambrose*

St. Ambrose Awarded \$24,000 Creation Care Grant

Also in July, St. Ambrose, Raleigh, announced it was the recipient of a \$24,000 Creation Care Grant from the Episcopal Church to fund their proposed project, “The Healing Pod: Resilience and Resurrection Through Education, Spiritual Formation and Healing.” The Healing Pod is a three-phase project that will include education through podcasts about environmental racism; spiritual formation through the installation of a labyrinth; and spiritual and emotional healing through horticulture, which will be known as the Healing Pod. The phases of this project represent progression towards achieving resilience and resurrection.

As explained in the announcement by St. Ambrose, “the Task Force on Creation Care and Environmental Racism was charged with supporting and expanding the Episcopal Church’s loving, liberating, life-giving relationship with God, with each other and with Creation. The grant program sought to support long-term ministries that focused on the inequitable and systemic impacts of environmental racism, regional and local ecojustice concerns, and the pressing issues arising from the climate emergency. Grant awards ranged from \$15,000 to \$40,000, and 10 projects across the United States were funded. Grant proposals were expected to have an impact beyond the applicant’s organization/parish and include at least one partner in accomplishing the granted project. The proposed programs or efforts were also expected to serve as models for other communities in different contexts. A proposal had to show significant financial or in-kind support provided by the applying entity, partner organizations, diocese or other supporters.”

Mission Endowment Spring Cycle Grants Awarded

Mission Endowment grants are one of the grants available

from the Diocese of North Carolina. A permanent endowment created for the specific purpose of supporting the diocesan mission strategy of establishing “the Episcopal presence of Christ in communities in ways that brings the community to see Christ’s presence among them,” what makes the grant unique is expanded eligibility. 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. You can learn more at episdionc.org/mission-endowment-grants.

The Mission Endowment Board is pleased to announce the following Mission Endowment grants for the 2021 spring cycle.

- Galilee Ministries of East Charlotte
\$14,800 in 2021
Providing funding to create a coffee shop to foster relationships, make a community meeting space and generate income for the ministries of Galilee
- St. John’s, Wake Forest
\$18,000 in 2021 and 2022
Providing funding to support establishing the Wake Forest Community Table, which seeks to address food insecurity and racial inequity, as a 501(c)3 non-profit with a director’s salary.
- St. Luke’s, Tarboro
\$15,000 in 2021
Providing funding for the Give and Take community outreach project that has served many in need throughout the pandemic (“Give and Take,” *Disciple*, Spring 2021).
- St. Mark’s, Raleigh
\$25,000 in 2021
Providing funding for a visual arts program that is an extension and seeks to deepen relationships with the surrounding neighborhood. The exhibits will utilize the arts to further community connections, cultural exchanges and spiritual growth.

Johnson Service Corps Receives Two Grants from The Episcopal Church

The Johnson Service Corps was notified over the summer it is the recipient of two grants available through the Episcopal Church: a \$10,000 Becoming Beloved Community grant and a \$24,000 Constable Fund grant.

Becoming Beloved Community grants, per the Episcopal Church news release, “may be used for work in the following areas: telling the truth about our churches and race; proclaiming the dream of Beloved Community; practicing Jesus’ way of healing and reconciliation; and repairing the breach in institutions and society.” Becoming Beloved Community

UPCOMING GRANT DEADLINES

Find information on the grants listed below at episdionc.org/grants-scholarships, except where otherwise noted.

October 1

- Global Mission Grants
- Missionary Resource Support Team (MRST) Seed Grants
- St. Luke’s Episcopal Church Foundation Grants (stlukessalisbury.net/foundation)

October 31

- NC Episcopal Church Foundation Grants

November 1

- Green Grants

November 30

- Mission Endowment Grants

December 31

- Environmental Committee (Small) Green Grants

The Diocese of North Carolina has now made it easier to track grant deadlines with a dedicated calendar embedded on the diocesan website. All grants offered by the Diocese of North Carolina can be found at episdionc.org/grants-scholarships, and on that page you’ll see all the upcoming deadlines for grants offered by both the Diocese and The Episcopal Church. The upcoming deadlines can also be found on the main diocesan calendar.

Know of a grant that might help others with their ministry? Send it to communications@episdionc.org, and we’ll add it to the calendar.

grants “include seed grants up to \$10,000 and impact grants up to \$20,000. Seed grants are geared toward groups launching new projects—including educational training and exploratory work ahead of bigger projects—or growing existing projects. Impact grants are aimed primarily at increasing the capacity, impact and reach of communities and institutions already working to advance racial justice, healing and reconciliation.” Johnson Service Corps received an impact grant for its Proclaiming Beloved Community program.

The Constable Fund, also per the Episcopal Church, “provides grants to fund mission initiatives...with a stated preference for work in the area of religious education.”

ONE THOUSAND DAYS OF LOVE: WE DID IT!

Diocese of North Carolina raises more than \$215,000 for Episcopal Relief & Development

In November 2020, the Diocese of North Carolina embarked on a diocesan-wide fundraising campaign to support ONE THOUSAND DAYS OF LOVE, the campaign of Episcopal Relief & Development dedicated to expanding the organization's global programs and improving the lives of children in their critical first six years. As part of the \$3 million grassroots Church-wide fundraising campaign, the Diocese pledged to raise \$198,000, which represented a \$15 donation from each parishioner in our Diocese (based on the 2019 average Sunday attendance [ASA]).

Though it took a bit longer than the original six-week timeline, we did it! Not only did we reach our goal, we exceeded it, raising a total of \$215,686.07.

"Kudos to the Rev. Louise Anderson and the Steering Committee that helped lead this effort, and deep thanks to everyone who supported the campaign," said Josephine Hicks, vice president, Episcopal Church programs for Episcopal Relief & Development. "We are grateful for the Diocese of North Carolina's generosity. You make our tagline come true: Working together for lasting change."

The name of the ONE THOUSAND DAYS OF LOVE campaign reflects the critical first 1,000 days of a child's life. The ultimate goal of the campaign is to expand on the work and model of building relationships within communities, implementing community-led, holistic approaches to address the interrelated needs of families with young children: parenting, health, nutrition, food security and livelihoods. By ensuring children have what they need to thrive now, communities start on a path to be transformed, as 15-20 years from now, those children will be healthy, productive adults who contribute to those communities.

AND THE WINNER IS...

When the campaign launched, every church in the Diocese was issued a congregational fundraising challenge based on the church's 2019 ASA. Several churches met their goal quickly, and, as the campaign extended through the Easter season, the pot was sweetened with a little friendly convocational competition.

DONATE TODAY

It's never too late to donate to the ONE THOUSAND DAYS OF LOVE campaign, as the nationwide campaign continues. You can donate at support.episcopalrelief.org/1000DaysOfLove.



Churches were encouraged to meet their challenge as a contribution to a convocational total. The convocation that exceeded their goal by the greatest percentage would receive a prize of \$2,500 to donate to the local ministry or charity of their choice. By taking part, churches were not only helping children on a global scale, they were also working toward the chance of supporting a ministry in their local area.

Every convocation made a tremendous contribution toward the Diocese reaching its goal, with the Charlotte Convocation winning the challenge, having exceeded its goal by the greatest percentage. The \$2,500 prize will be awarded to the Rev. Amanda Stephenson, dean of the convocation, at the 206th Annual Convention.

THANK YOU

"I am grateful to Episcopal Relief & Development for inviting us into this opportunity and allowing us to support this important and life-changing effort," said the Rt. Rev. Sam Rodman, bishop of the Diocese of North Carolina. "I believe that being called to deepen our connection with our global sisters and brothers is a vital expression of beloved community, especially during these challenging times. I am grateful our diocese has responded so generously to this invitation and that, by the many gifts and the grace of the Holy Spirit, we have been able to exceed our goal."

Thank you so often seems inadequate when the occasion makes as deep an impact as the one made by you, the faithful of the Diocese of North Carolina. But it is with deep gratitude we thank you, for taking part, for your generosity, for coming together to make a difference. Because of you, more than 13,000 children and their communities will be nurtured and nourished in meaningful, sustainable and culturally respectful ways. That's a lot of love.



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WALKING THROUGH CHANGE

Campus ministries help launch faithful young adults into a tumultuous world

Campus ministry, young adult ministry, student ministry. Chaplains, campus ministers, young adult missionaries. Campus-based ministry—and those who minister on and around campuses—have gone by a variety of names during the last few decades. Just as the terminology has changed, so have the pressures young adults experience, the attitudes toward Christianity and the populations these ministries serve.

While all campus ministries are supported, in part, by the annual diocesan budget, the leader of each individual ministry makes decisions about how best to reach students, so each ministry is tailored to a specific context. The Rev. Mary Cat Young, chaplain at UNC-Chapel Hill, encapsulates the diversity of ministries: “One might be a solo chaplain with a leaky roof and their own copier contract to pay for. Others have a parish-based ministry that has eager (but aging) volunteers built in—with a need for fresh energy and ideas to offer. Others work with an ecumenical model that means applying for funds from and answering to several different denominational expectations of reporting, grant writing and the added work of bridging the needs of students across different traditions.”

What follows are excerpts from interviews with leaders at each of the 10 campus ministries, representing five clusters of colleges and universities, four single-campus ministries and Saint Mary’s School, a private all-girls Episcopal high school in Raleigh.

Episcopal Center at Duke - Dr. Sam Laurent

How does your ministry reach students and others?

We offer a Eucharist each Sunday (and a dinner, when not in a pandemic mode), as well as a Compline service on Tuesdays. Additionally, we do service work together, including mission trips. We typically go on two retreats per (non-pandemic) year. We reach out to students and young adults,



Students at Episcopal Student Fellowship at Wake. Photo courtesy of the Rev. James Franklin

offering a community that is Christ-centered, rooted in the Eucharist, and is a sanctuary where people can be honest and vulnerable in a high-pressure university environment.

Describe the population your ministry serves.

The ministry primarily serves college students, both graduate and undergraduate, but also young adults in Durham. Additionally, members of our sponsoring parishes (St. Luke’s, St. Philip’s, St. Titus’, St. Stephen’s and St. Joseph’s) embrace the ministry, providing an important intergenerationality.

How has campus ministry changed since you started?

The urgency of dismantling racism and of navigating climate change has gotten much more pressing in my time. Neither is regarded as a casual concern by the students I serve, and seriousness about these issues is a baseline requirement for many of them as they look for communities to join.

What do you wish people knew about the specific challenges and joys of your ministry?

Please stop reading media generalizations about younger generations. They do not reflect the reality of the incredible people we journey with. Come to a service sometime and meet people. Our young adults are incredible and inspiring. I gain hope from them, and I meet Christ in them all the time.

Episcopal Student Fellowship at Wake

The Rev. James Franklin

How does your ministry reach students and others?

ESF has a fantastic student vestry that leads, plans and ultimately are the ones to reach students and invite them to a community of belonging. Nearly every student you talk with has a story about who invited them. We have two student chaplains who are trained in basic pastoral care, function as peer-to-peer ministers on campus and help organize Bible studies. COVID-19 provided an opportunity to focus on small groups and Bible study in the absence of large group activities; now, with the return of campus gatherings, we want to keep this rhythm and structure.

What concerns and questions do you hear most often?

The first half of life is full of questions about identity, belief systems and vocation. Students ask the best questions, and we encourage it! To wrestle and doubt is faithful. (A student asked me this morning about consubstantiation!) Students often ask about how to read scripture, interpret it, and reconcile its many and perceived inconsistencies. They ask about suffering. They ask about sex and relationships. They ask about sin and hell. I have deeper conversations about faith and spirituality in two weeks on campus than I did in two years of parish ministry!

What do you wish people knew about the specific challenges and joys of your ministry?



Students from Davidson College campus ministry go on pilgrimage to Taizé, France. Photo courtesy of the Rev. Kevin Lloyd

Stop calling campus ministry “youth ministry;” it is not. They are not youths. They are young adults. Also, campus ministers work freaking hard. Most of us do not have admin support. We put in 50-to-70-hour weeks during the school year. We’re scrappy and missional, often showing up in shared spaces and “making space” for ministry wherever we can.

Episcopal Campus Ministry-Raleigh **The Rev. Caleb Tabor**

How does your ministry reach students and others?

We reach students through regular worship on Sundays, weekly Bible studies, an LGBTQ+ reflection group and a mindfulness/meditation class aimed at reducing stress.

What concerns and questions do you hear most often?

Apart from the usual small questions (like “What is God?” or “What happens when you die?”), we get a lot of concerns about the present and the future. How does one strive for a better world? What do spiritual practices do to inspire people to higher standards in their treatment of one another and the environment? How can my faith help me not be so anxious all the time?

What do you wish people knew about the specific challenges and joys of your ministry?

Folks are always rotating out, so maintaining a firm, constant community can be a bit of a challenge, especially in uncertain times. Students don’t often have a lot of money, so costs for our ministry have to come from outside of it. If you aren’t giving to a campus ministry in your area or at least the one nearest to you, please consider doing so! It is always a joy to watch a young adult find peace in our faith and inspiration in scripture, from Christ or from the example of the saints. Their questions keep us fresh and on our toes and are genuinely good for the Church.

Anything else you want to tell me?

It would be fantastic if folks in youth programs at congrega-

tions would speak about college spiritual life ahead of time. Presenting spiritual life as something that continues with campus ministry would help establish and maintain a good cycle for continual spiritual growth as our young people move into new phases of life.

Episcopal Campus Ministry at UNC-Chapel Hill

The Rev. Mary Cat Young

How does your ministry reach students and others?

Our ministry is housed at The Chapel of the Cross, Chapel Hill. Students attend worship services, acolyte, sing in the choir and volunteer in a variety of ways. Our student chaplains run programs for our weekly meetup on Tuesday nights, and parish volunteers provide meals and are dinner companions, conversationalists and great listeners for our attendees. This week on campus, we are passing out compostable utensils with an invitation to join us for dinner. We have a speaker series, and we invite different groups to partner with us. We also engage with our fellow campus ministry groups for service and learning opportunities.

What concerns and questions do you hear most often?

Is this a community I will be welcome in? Safe in? Will I be able to learn and grow and make mistakes, and not be judged? Will I be held to an impossible standard? Can I ask questions? Can you teach me how to pray?

How has campus ministry changed since you started?

There are many different contexts, dynamics and demands at work in our various settings. And yet, we navigate all of that so we can be faithful companions to students during a time of uncertainty, discerning and development into adulthood. With traditional students, we have the chance to walk with someone from age 18 to 22 and launch in their first career steps, embedding in them a faith practice and faithful witness to God at work in their lives, their calling, their budding relationships, their self-discovery. Some students we see once as a first year or in the last semester before they graduate. And some we will be a touchstone for as we hold a space they can walk into and out of in their times of need and availability.

Davidson College Campus Ministry

The Rev. Kevin Lloyd

How does your ministry reach students and others?

We gather on campus on Sunday afternoons at 4:30 p.m. for Holy Eucharist, followed by a home-cooked meal provided by members of Saint Alban’s, Davidson. We have Morning Prayer Monday-Thursday and centering prayer weekly. We have a monthly “Divinity on Draft” at a local coffee shop for topical discussions and participate in an ecumenical Bible study weekly. Every other year, we join an ecumenical pilgrimage to the Taizé community in France and do a mission project/trip in alternate years.

What concerns and questions do you hear most often?

Their primary needs are emotional/spiritual support in a high-stress academic environment, vocational discernment,

and questions about living one's faith in the college context and after college.

What do you wish people knew about the specific challenges and joys of your ministry?

Resources tend to be limited for campus ministry, but the context provides for some incredibly fruitful opportunities to engage with young adults at a critical stage of their journey. The current college generation is less religious in the traditional sense, but I find them to be very open to in-depth, meaningful conversations about faith and spirituality. We spend significant time in Bible study and topical conversations. They place a high value on authenticity. They tend to be very engaged and active on social justice and environmental issues. I am deeply grateful for the privilege of working with these remarkable young adults, and I believe that campus ministry is a critically important part of our mission as a diocese.

Niner United (UNC-Charlotte) - The Rev. Steve Cheyney
What concerns and questions do you hear most often?

So many college students feel very lonely and often hopeless. Our students endure enormous social, academic and mental health demands. They are often looking for secure places to belong since they feel lonely, especially on a large campus like ours. Our students face a lot of unnecessary family expectations and obligations, relationship difficulties and financial burdens. However, I believe one of the most prevalent problems is students spreading themselves too thin. They want to be a part of everything because they are afraid of missing out, and, as a result, they overcommit themselves.

How has campus ministry changed since you started?

I've been involved in campus ministry for more than 20 years. I've noticed more and more students want to live a genuine life, and they believe that includes having an authentic connection with God. Generation Z appears to be committed to long-term change for others and the planet. The majority of my students have a very sincere heart for God and concern for their neighbors.

What do you wish people knew about the specific challenges and joys of your ministry?

The most difficult obstacle we have is obtaining funds. Our parishioners are also our students, who rarely contribute financially to the ministry. The Diocese contributes to a portion of our work but not nearly all of it. However, getting finances for college ministry is difficult because many

JUST ONE THING

Help recent high school graduates connect with campus ministry by doing Just One Thing. Fill out the form at episditionc.org/just-one-thing/. If you plan to submit on behalf of someone else, make sure you receive their consent first.



contributors believe the financial needs of food and shelter ministries are more important. Without college ministry, however, there would be a vast emptiness and gap where students may be neglected and ignored, or where fundamentalist campus ministries could fill our gaps and provide damaging alternatives.

Saint Augustine's University Chapel
The Rev. Hershey Mallette Stephens

How does your ministry reach students and others?

The entire Saint Augustine's University campus is focused on wellness this year. Programming and worship at the chapel will be focused on supporting student, faculty and staff wellness, including Gospel Zumba in the chapel lawn at 5:15 p.m. on Mondays in August and September, Vespers at 5 p.m. on Sundays and Midweek Mass at noon on Wednesdays. We will also offer an evening wellness series led by our deacon and featuring the Living Compass curriculum.

Describe the population your ministry serves.

Saint Augustine's Chapel is the largest Black ministry in The Episcopal Church. We are a campus ministry, which means we are the spiritual resource for students, faculty, staff, alumni and their families. Saint Augustine's Chapel has a rich history of providing spiritual care and supporting the community surrounding the university. I am working to continue in that legacy by making our worship and programs open to all in the community. In addition, the dean of the chapel also serves as the chair for the religious studies program. As chair, I teach two classes and meet regularly with department instructors.

What concerns and questions do you hear most often?

Many of the students in the chapel program are international students who have a lot of material needs before we can address spiritual needs. For example, some students from the Bahamas have experienced hardships as their families lost almost everything in Hurricane Dorian. Unfortunately, many of the students who are not Episcopalians or taking religious studies classes interface with the chaplain when they experience trauma. It is school policy to inform the chaplain when a student has a death in the family or experiences a mental health crisis. We work well with university counseling services, which refer a lot of students.

Lutherans, Episcopalians and Friends (LEAF) at Elon
Julie Tonneson

Describe the population your ministry serves.

As LEAF has been an ecumenical ministry since its inception, we are home to a number of Lutheran and Episcopal students but are actually made up of more students from other mainline Protestant, non-denominational and ex-evangelical backgrounds. We're also home to a number of students who do not identify with a particular religious or spiritual identity but are trying to figure out what they believe. LEAF is also unique in that it was the first



Students at LEAF at Elon University walk a labyrinth. *Photo courtesy of Julie Tonneson*

LGBTQIA+ affirming ministry at Elon, so many of our students identify as LGBTQIA+. While the majority of our students are white, we have been intentional in discerning as a group why that is, what that means and how we better can reflect the beautiful diversity of the Kin-dom of God.

What concerns and questions do you hear most often?

The concerns I hear the most from students are related to stress, overwhelming feelings and anxiety. This had been particularly true since the onset of COVID-19. Students share concerns about how their faith and faith community can carry them through these tough times. They also frequently share concerns about matters of injustice on and off campus and ask big, hard questions about faith, the Bible, what it means to be a Christian and life in general.

How has campus ministry changed since you started?

This is my sixth year in campus ministry. I would say the greatest areas of change have been in the types of students who LEAF reaches. Originally, we consisted of almost entirely Lutheran and Episcopal students, but our demographics have largely expanded since then. In addition, our ministry has grown in terms of size. When I began, there were six to eight active students in the ministry, and now there are around 30 active students.

St. Mary's House - The Rev. Kevin Matthews

Describe the population your ministry serves.

St. Mary's House began a worshipping community in Greensboro back in the 1970s to serve a multigenerational community of people who found traditional church off-putting. They make up the bulk of our Sunday morning congregation, with students being the other part of that community.

They support the ministry—financially and otherwise—and recognize that the campus and young adult ministry is why we exist. Many of today's community began as students.

What concerns and questions do you hear most often?

Why is the Church so out of step on ____? (Most of my students are not Episcopalians—at first!) Do I really have to take ____ Bible story literally? There are also personal concerns about finances, especially college loans, and social concerns: racism, sexism, homophobia and, recently, the First Nations schools tragedies.

How has campus ministry changed since you started?

We've reached the period where it is the grandchildren (or even great-grandchildren) of the people who began dropping out of church in the 1960s. That means their only references to Christianity are what they see on television or the internet, and that's a pretty ugly picture. That means much more walking alongside them at their activities as opposed to inviting them to ours.

What do you wish people knew about the specific challenges and joys of your ministry?

Other denominations do a much better job of contacting their campus ministries than we do. And the large fundamentalist groups will be inviting them to join, too. We're so nice about letting our young people decide for themselves that we forget about all the other choices they are being offered. And a lot of them will make those choices in the first two weeks.

Saint Mary's School Chapel - The Rev. Maggie Stoddard

How does your ministry reach students?

Saint Mary's has two all-school chapel services each week in the late morning on Tuesdays and Fridays. There is also a Sunday evening Vespers service for boarding students and residential faculty, which is less formal than weekday chapel. Smaller group options include a Monday morning prayer group called SWIP (Start the Week In Prayer) and occasional Bible studies and seasonal events.

What concerns and questions do you hear most often?

The students at Saint Mary's tend to be high achievers, with eyes on their futures (both near and distant). Part of the transition to adulthood for them is learning how to negotiate lots of expectations, pressures and influences on a daily basis. Stress and anxiety, along with perfectionism and feelings of inadequacy, can prevent them from knowing themselves as beloved of God. They need assurance of God's unconditional love and mercy; they need to know that they are good and valuable not because of what they achieve, but because they are (and always will be) God's own children.

What do you wish people knew about the specific challenges and joys of your ministry?

I'd like them to know how illuminating it can be to talk about religion, theology, justice and the meaning of life with teenagers who aren't afraid to ask really hard questions or admit what they don't understand. I learn amazing things from the students I serve; they are fantastic spiritual teachers!

FOOD, FAITH AND COMMUNITY IN A PANDEMIC

The Friendship Table and Good News Garden at St. Mary's, High Point, feed body and soul

When St. Mary's, High Point, conceived of launching an intentional community program for young adults at the intersection of food and faith, the church did not anticipate the challenges the ministry would face in its inaugural year. The vision was clear: a small group of young adults committing to a year of communal living under a rule of life, practices of prayer and formation, and service to alleviate hunger and food insecurity in the community of High Point. With the onset of COVID-19 in early 2020, however, it became clear The Friendship Table would need to adapt creatively and prayerfully in order to make this vision a reality.

PARTNERSHIP, PRODUCE AND PRAYER

With the Spirit's help, in the fall of 2020 The Friendship Table was formed with five students from High Point University, Guilford College and the University of North Carolina Greensboro. Instead of living together under a full-time model, these young adults committed to a year of "hybrid community," including a blend of physical and digital opportunities for prayer, formation and service.

Students safely gathered in person, partnering alongside local organizations like Growing High Point to alleviate food insecurity in sustainable and ecologically conscious

ways. This partnership included taking on the Senior Produce Program, which provides a weekly box of fresh and local produce to residents in High Point who live in designated "food deserts," a term used to describe areas in which a significant portion of the population does not live within a walkable distance to a grocery store. Grown from nearby urban farms and community gardens, this produce provided a sustainable source of nutrition for a number of senior residents and their families throughout the pandemic.

"Members of The Friendship Table help with growing, harvesting and preparing the food for distribution before driving door to door to deliver," said Willa Mays, executive director of Growing High Point. In 2020, this program delivered more than 6,000 pounds of produce. In 2021, The Friendship Table played a supportive role in launching Growing High Point's Growdega Mobile Market, a grocery store on wheels that provides fresh and affordable produce to residents across the city.

"The Friendship Table has been a blessing," said Mays, "We are thrilled to partner with this amazing group that has helped us so much in numerous ways to feed our community." For members of The Friendship Table, these initiatives provided opportunities to get to know neighbors



As part of The Friendship Table at St. Mary's, High Point, members Louis Gozan and Daniel Doctor, Jr., (above, left to right) volunteer with Growing High Point's Growdega Mobile Market and Beeson Community Garden to grow, prepare and distribute local produce to residents in High Point. Opposite page: The Good News Garden on St. Mary's campus is ready to feed the community. Photos by the Rev. Jonathan Pucik

across socioeconomic lines, to meet people where they are with grace and compassion, and to seek and serve Christ among all people in High Point.

For community, prayer and faith formation, members of The Friendship Table engaged in a weekly rhythm of digital practices. Drawing from a broad range within the Christian tradition, students were exposed to a variety of prayer practices including Morning and Evening Prayer, Lectio Divina, centering prayer and small-group Bible study. Students also engaged in opportunities for formation through St. Mary's, attending digital classes on the poetry of Anglican women, the spirituality of Bishop Steven Charleston, and a seven-week introduction to centering prayer. Through digital gatherings, members of The Friendship Table found support in Christian community, praying for, challenging and encouraging each other in the midst of a tumultuous and ever-changing year. In May 2021, members concluded their program year with a greater awareness of the factors that contribute to food insecurity, a deeper knowledge of spiritual practices and a clearer sense of Christian vocation.

COMMUNITY, HOPE AND RENEWAL

In early 2021, it became clear to the community of St. Mary's that it could not leave the work of addressing food insecurity to members of The Friendship Table alone, that the Spirit was calling St. Mary's to think critically about how parishioners could positively contribute to a healthy and sustainable food system for all. As a result, a small group of St. Marians took to the soil to create a Good News Garden on the grounds of the church. The produce harvested from this garden will be donated to local food initiatives including the Senior Produce Program. The newly finished garden consists of six raised beds, each four feet wide and 12 feet long. Additionally, a number of fig and blueberry shrubs were planted creatively throughout the church grounds as edible landscaping, producing our first harvest.

In addition to its produce, the Good News Garden has served as a place where authentic Christian community is cultivated. "I am buoyed by the number and variety of St. Marians who have responded to the call to build this garden," said lifelong parishioner Paul Siceloff. "Four work sessions and behind-the-scenes planning have brought together new and long-time members previously unknown to one another. To date, we have sweated, strategized, laughed and smiled together in the hope and joy of producing a bountiful harvest to share."

"It always amazes me how our church family pulls together to help others in our community," parishioner Audrey Harris said. "The energy and excitement around our community Good News Garden has been so uplifting during these strained times."



Parishioner Katharine Hawks writes of the spiritual renewal found in the practice of creation care, "Even though the work is sometimes hard and there's so much to navigate in growing a garden or growing our faith, we know the fruits of work will produce everything we need. The garden is a place to go and renew the spirit through work. I am grateful for this and for being a living, moving piece of God's promise to us all, that the nurture and care we pour into the things we love will be watered well with God's peace, love and hope. While we do the heavy lifting of tending to creation, we are tending to all that God hopes for us and for the earth. Sometimes what we get from manual labor is a chance to work it out with the spirit. Work is the love of God made visible."

In the wake of many challenges, The Friendship Table and Good News Garden have served as signposts for St. Mary's, places to find the Holy Spirit at work calling the community to a deeper love of God and neighbor and bearing witness to the abundance and glory of God's creation. As these initiatives serve as opportunities to bless the wider community, parishioners and members of the Friendship Table alike are finding new hope as they serve as Christ's hands and feet in the community of High Point.

"While there have been more than a few obstacles in this journey for the parish, the passion and perseverance of St. Marians to make both The Friendship Table and the Good New Garden actually happen with the goal of assisting our neighbors who have no food security is one of the joys of my life," St. Mary's parishioner and The Friendship Table board member Sally Bulla said. In the midst of challenging times, these are the acts of joy and hope, a declaration of the Good News of God's love in Christ Jesus in both word and deed.

The Rev. Jonathan Pucik is the director of The Friendship Table, priest associate at St. Mary's, High Point, and vicar of Galloway Memorial, Elkin. Contact him at friendshiptable@stmarysepisc.org.



The new Togo D. West, Jr. and Evelyn West Memorial Pavilion at St. Stephen's, Winston-Salem, honors the legacy of the West family and serves as a resource for the church and community. *Photos courtesy of St. Stephen's, Winston-Salem*

By Summerlee Walter

A LASTING LEGACY

The new Togo D. West, Jr. and Evelyn West Memorial Pavilion serves St. Stephen's and the community

The West family—Togo Senior, Evelyn and Togo Junior—were giants at St. Stephen's, Winston-Salem, and in the wider Winston-Salem community. Evelyn West served as the organist and a powerful presence at the church for 40 years. She also taught at local Atkins High School, where Togo West, Sr., was the principal and from which their son, Togo Dennis West, Jr., graduated as valedictorian in 1959. From there, West went on to earn his Bachelor of Science and law degree from Howard University, where he also graduated first in his class and edited the law journal. An illustrious career in the military, law and government followed, including multiple positions in both the Ford and Carter administrations. His career culminated in service as the Secretary of the Army and, later, Secretary of Veterans Affairs under President Bill Clinton.

Despite his long, accomplished career in Washington,

D.C., West never forgot his roots at his mother's church. Upon his death in 2018, St. Stephen's received a call on behalf of West's estate informing the church he left them \$100,000, deferred earnings from his service on the board of Bristol Myers Squibb. With such a large donation backed by such a distinguished legacy of public service, the church had a serious decision to make.

Patrice Toney, St. Stephen's treasurer and, at the time, Winston-Salem's director of budget and evaluation, was the right person to discern how to use the bequest and to shepherd the project to completion. (By the time the project was completed, Toney had been promoted to assistant city manager.) She and West's wife, Gail, discussed his interests and values, seeking how best to honor his legacy and to serve the church and community. Their discussion included his beloved Boy Scouts; during his life, West served on

the organization's National Executive Board, was named a Distinguished Eagle Scout and received the Silver Buffalo Award for his contributions. Ultimately, St. Stephen's decided to use the funds to build a spacious pavilion on the grounds of the church. The Rt. Rev. Sam Rodman, bishop of the Diocese of North Carolina, presided over the dedication, and a local Boy Scout troop served as the color guard.

The finished pavilion will serve as a lasting legacy and a blessing to the church and community. Constructed of more durable materials than a traditional wood structure, the Togo D. West, Jr. and Evelyn West Memorial Pavilion is built to last. St. Stephen's made a conscious decision not to install picnic tables in order to allow the space to be as flexible as possible. At 30 feet by 60 feet, the pavilion can accommodate 80-90 people in auditorium-style seating or be configured with banquet tables or for a standing event. Despite some construction challenges posed by COVID-19—including the temporary shutdown of one of the construction companies involved in the project—the pavilion came in under budget. The church plans to invest some of the extra funds in landscaping and signage honoring West and sharing his legacy with the community, and the remainder will support other capital projects.

"This pavilion represents the legacy of Togo West and his mother, Evelyn West, and will exist for the entirety of the church," Toney explained. "It is a visible symbol in our community, in which they resided. Our church is in the eastern part of the community, what we call East Winston. It is a primarily African American part of the city, and we are a predominantly African American congregation. This is a place where he lived, this is a community where his parents worked, where he was educated. And so the physical location of this pavilion and what that represents—as people are driving by, seeing his name and what he accomplished in his life and his career—is a symbol of who he is, what he's done and a permanent fixture now in our community."

The timing of the pavilion could not have been more fortuitous; as the COVID-19 pandemic continues, St. Stephen's has used the structure for all of the church's worship services since its dedication on July 7. The vestry also meets under the shelter, and the church plans to use it to host its annual family and friends event, which raises funds for the church's capital campaign, and the Episcopal Church Women's fall bazaar.

Already St. Stephen's has received

inquiries about using the pavilion from outside community groups, including a local dance troupe, the Boy Scouts and individuals who wish to host private events. The church currently is determining policies surrounding volunteers and restroom use in the building.

"Our saying in The Episcopal Church is, 'All are welcome,' and so this is a symbol that we want people to walk up and feel welcome," Toney said. The pavilion is already accomplishing this goal. During a recent outdoor Sunday worship service, a woman who saw the service while driving by in her car stopped to join the congregation because she wanted to request prayers for her children. On another occasion, church members were eating in the pavilion when a man approached, and they immediately invited him to sit and share a meal.

While visitors enjoy the pavilion, Toney hopes they will take time to learn about Togo Dennis West, Jr.

"Having a new gathering place, outdoors, where people feel like there's not these walls, and this is not an exclusive place where you have to knock on the door to come in, people feel welcome. Having Togo's name on this building just has such positive imagery, of this man who came from this side of the community, made it to D.C., worked for President Bill Clinton—this symbolic piece for young people who don't know him, they will ask."

And what a story they will hear.

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



Lay leaders of St. Stephen's, Winston-Salem, pose with Patrice Toney (third from left); the Rev. Hector Sintim; Gail West; her daughter, Hillary; and the Rt. Rev. Sam Rodman during the dedication of the pavilion. Photos courtesy of St. Stephen's, Winston-Salem



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