

Winter 2020



# The North Carolina DISCIPLE

THE BECOMING BELOVED  
COMMUNITY PROJECT

HOLY  
DISRUPTION

FROM THE  
204<sup>TH</sup> ANNUAL  
CONVENTION



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DISCIPLE**

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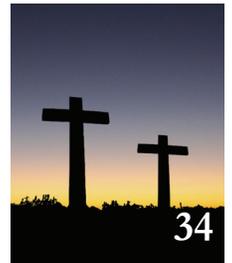
**COVER PHOTO**  
Dr. Catherine Meeks presents during the Becoming Beloved Community events hosted by St. Luke's, Salisbury. *Photo courtesy of St. Luke's*

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**The North Carolina Disciple** is the quarterly magazine of the Episcopal Diocese of North Carolina. Other diocesan communication vehicles, including Please Note, a weekly e-newsletter, and the diocesan website, [www.episdionc.org](http://www.episdionc.org), are used for more time-sensitive, day-to-day news.

Contact the communications staff at [communications@episdionc.org](mailto:communications@episdionc.org) with any questions or feedback regarding these communications, or to submit ideas, articles and photos.



### At a Glance Facts: This Magazine...

- Is printed with environmentally friendly inks.
- Is printed on FSC® certified paper—paper certified by the Forestry Stewardship Council™, an independent, non-governmental, not-for-profit organization established to promote the responsible management of the world's forests.
- Is printed and mailed in Lynchburg, Virginia.

**Delivery occurs during the following months:**

October/ Fall Issue  
January / Winter Issue  
April / Spring Issue  
July / Summer Issue

# TWO GOLDEN RULES

There are two versions of the Golden Rule. You know them both: “Do unto others as you would have them do unto you,” which is Jesus’ version. And the other version: “The one who has the most gold makes the rules.” I am not sure who this latter version is attributed to, but all too often it feels like this version of the Golden Rule has the upper hand.

The parable of the rich man and Lazarus is said by some to be an extension of the parables of the lost and found, like the lost sheep, the lost coin and the lost son. In this instance, a man’s fixation on wealth, to the exclusion of his neighbor, causes him to lose his way and, ultimately, to lose his soul. Not a pretty picture.

In Jesus’ parable, the rich man is not named. Lazarus is. But in the wider Christian tradition, the rich man has been given a name. He is called Dives, which is actually not a name, but the Latin translation of “a rich man.” We have a tendency to want to ascribe a name to this man to personalize him but also to distance ourselves from him. We want to persuade ourselves that we are not the person in the story, because we don’t want to end up the way he does.

But the point of the parable is to ask ourselves the harder question: In what way might I be like the rich man in this story? The parable is a parable of privilege, and it is a parable about power. It is a story of systemic injustice, not just the story of two individuals. If we dig deeper, it is also a story of the intersectionality between poverty, discrimination and oppression.

## THE HARD QUESTIONS

So what do we do with this story? We might start by asking ourselves the hard questions. In what way have I used certain advantages and privileges to ignore the pain of others and insulate myself from the great divide between the rich and the poor? Who have I ignored? Who have I not seen? How have I oppressed my brother or sister?

The parable invites us to face these harder questions, even as we recognize the problem is larger than a broken relationship between two children of God. This parable is about a gap between the rich and the poor, a divide that can seem impossible to cross.

When I was serving in another diocese, the bishop asked several of us to recommend a book for the whole diocese to read during Lent. He wanted the subject of the book to address a challenging topic. We chose poverty, and the book we invited people to read and study was a book called *The Rich and the Rest of Us* by Cornel West and Tavis Smiley.

The book traced the widening gap in our country

between the haves and the have nots, and it outlined and underscored the connections between poverty and racial discrimination. It was a fairly direct and eye-opening analysis of the growing gap and increasing tensions between what we have come to call the 99% and the 1%.

The book was not well received. Some people took exception to its title. Some people of privilege felt threatened by the analysis and by the fact the authors were not afraid to call out the systemic patterns that have led to this historic gap, one we might call a great chasm.

The image, in the parable, of the afterlife and the gap between heaven and hell mirrors the image of the gap we have created between those with advantages and privilege and those who have been placed at a distinct disadvantage. Historically, we have tried to compensate for this reality by a myth we have called the American Dream, the possibility that anyone, under any circumstances, could rise above their disadvantage and through perseverance and hard work overcome this gap and beat the system.

In reality, this myth has perpetuated oppression. The truth of our context is more accurately captured in the words of Billie Holiday in her song “God Bless the Child.” “Them that’s got gets more, while the weak ones fade, empty pockets don’t ever make the grade ...”

## FACING THE GREAT CHASM

The parable of the rich man and Lazarus calls us out, not just individually, but as a community. This is our problem, this is our challenge, and this is our great chasm.

And Jesus is our hope. We cannot cross this divide, but he already has. We cannot heal this division, but he is showing us the way. We cannot dismantle the systems of oppression without the liberating power of the gospel, but this is Jesus’ mission, his movement, and we are part of it. It is a movement of reconciliation, and we are part of it.

Consider the request the rich man makes to Father Abraham: “Send Lazarus to my brothers, to warn them.” The reality is that Jesus himself was raised from the dead to help us understand, believe and trust that with God, even the impossible becomes possible.

The Rev. Tyrone Fowlkes is rector of St. Mark’s, Raleigh, and he introduced me to a device when reading the gospel stories. He said it can sometimes be instructive to reverse the order, to read them backwards. In this parable, that would mean starting with the heavenly scene from the afterlife and then moving back to what happens here on earth. This reversal is the path that Jesus follows. He leaves heaven to come to earth, to walk among us, to show us the way of love,

## THE RICH MAN AND LAZARUS

“There was a rich man who was dressed in purple and fine linen and who feasted sumptuously every day. And at his gate lay a poor man named Lazarus, covered with sores, who longed to satisfy his hunger with what fell from the rich man’s table; even the dogs would come and lick his sores. The poor man died and was carried away by the angels to be with Abraham. The rich man also died and was buried. In Hades, where he was being tormented, he looked up and saw Abraham far away with Lazarus by his side. He called out, ‘Father Abraham, have mercy on me, and send Lazarus to dip the tip of his finger in water and cool my tongue; for I am in agony in these flames.’ But Abraham said, ‘Child, remember that during your lifetime you received your good things, and Lazarus in like manner evil things; but now he is comforted here, and you are in agony. Besides all this, between you and us a great chasm has been fixed, so that those who might want to pass from here to you cannot do so, and no one can cross from there to us.’ He said, ‘Then, father, I beg you to send him to my father’s house—for I have five brothers—that he may warn them, so that they will not also come into this place of torment.’ Abraham replied, ‘They have Moses and the prophets; they should listen to them.’ He said, ‘No, father Abraham; but if someone goes to them from the dead, they will repent.’ He said to him, ‘If they do not listen to Moses and the prophets, neither will they be convinced even if someone rises from the dead.’” *Luke 16:19-31*



The Parable of Lazarus and the Rich Man by Domenico Fetti. In the public domain

of radical welcome, of deep connection, of reconciliation and of beloved community.

We might call this parable a story of the failure to become beloved community. But what if Jesus' words are not just of judgment but of invitation? What if the parable is opening our eyes to see our neighbor in need? What if the story is the first step in exposing and then dismantling privilege?

The intersection of poverty and race shows us that white supremacy and white power are the systemic evils that have created this gap. It is not enough just to change individual behaviors. But changing our own behaviors can begin to bring about beloved community. And Becoming Beloved Community is the healthy systemic alternative to the great chasm. Becoming Beloved Community is what reconciliation can look like.

Jesus is the one who invites us to Become Beloved Community. We are all invited to become apostles in this movement and to commit ourselves to be the change, to bring about the change and to become the change we need to see in the world.

I came across this prayer on Facebook, of all places. It is a powerful adaptation of the Serenity Prayer:

“God grant me the patience to accept the systems I cannot change, today. The courage to strategically enact progress when I know I can, and the wisdom to know that despite structural oppression, I can make a difference.”

Becoming Beloved Community is making a difference. Seeing the Lazarus at our gate is making a difference. Our call is to see the ways in which we have helped, actively or

passively, to oppress another person and vowing to change our pattern. These changes are the precursors of true reconciliation.

Jesus is with us on this journey. Jesus is still telling parables that open our eyes. Jesus is still giving us hearts to hope and hands to heal.

Last fall, I was at a Bible study with members of the Moravian Church. We were meeting to try and deepen the connection between our two communions. This is also part of our work of collaboration and reconciliation. The verse we read together was from Jeremiah 24:7. We were asked to share the word that spoke to us from the passage, and instead of a word, I shared the numbers from the citation 24:7. Jesus is with us 24:7 in this mission of systemic change. It is the power of his love that energizes and animates us to be creative strategists for change.

Jesus is the one who finds the lost and brings them back into the fold. Building beloved community is one way we can walk with Jesus, work alongside him and be agents for change. All of these are steps on the journey of reconciliation. It can feel, at times, like crossing a great chasm, but Jesus invites us to remember the way of love is stronger than death; it can bridge the widest gap, and it can lead us not only to find what we have lost but to find one another, to reconcile and reunite as one beloved community.

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*The Rt. Rev. Sam Rodman is the XII Bishop of the Diocese of North Carolina. Contact him at [sam.rodman@episdionc.org](mailto:sam.rodman@episdionc.org).*



Closing the chasm of white supremacy as part of Becoming Beloved Community is lifelong work. In our diocese, that work includes Racial Equity Institute trainings, like those funded by Racial Equity Cabarrus, a group cofounded by All Saints', Concord, and youth initiatives, like the recent Journey to Wilmington pilgrimage, which included a visit and prayer service at the 1898 memorial. *File photos*

By the Rev. Robert Fruehwirth

# LISTENING FOR TRUTH, PRAYING FOR HEALING

*New listening circles offering opens door to addressing #MeToo experiences*

Following the bold work of the House of Bishops and the 79<sup>th</sup> General Convention in 2018, both responding to the #MeToo movement, the Rt. Rev. Sam Rodman, bishop of the Diocese of North Carolina, and the Rt. Rev. Anne Hodges-Copple, bishop suffragan of the Diocese of North Carolina, have charged the diocesan Pastoral Response Team to create a process to reckon with the reality of sexual harassment, misconduct and assault in The Episcopal Church. As the bishops wrote in a recent pastoral letter:

*As the bishops of the Diocese of North Carolina, we are charged to guard the faith and guide the church in the light of God's reconciling love. We believe the metaphor of shepherd associated with [the] ordination of bishops indicates we have a call to protect and defend those in our care from all evil, including the misuse of power....*

*Despite all efforts to the contrary, at times members of our One Body have been wounded by word and deed in body and in spirit by other members of the One Body. Among us are victims of sexual abuse, harassment and misconduct.... Harassment of any magnitude, abuse of any kind, leaves wounds, and how such wounds are tended matters to the health of the entire body.*

Our diocesan initiative has two distinct processes. First, the bishops have invited the lay leadership and clergy of the diocese to a series of listening circles for those who have suffered from sexual abuse, harassment or misconduct in the Church. Designed with great care and with professional consultation, these listening circles are making space for our church leaders, both lay and clerical, who want to share how their own experience of sexual abuse, harassment or misconduct has impacted their lives.

Second, the Pastoral Response Team is inviting any member of the Church within the Diocese of North Carolina to write a letter describing how their experiences of sexual misconduct in the Church has impacted their lives. As the bishops explained:

*These letters will be kept in confidence, shared within a small circle of pastoral care providers, and shared with the bishops, with or without names according to the wishes of the submitter. We will respond pastorally to each letter, which we will begin receiving during Lent.*



The Rt. Rev. Anne Hodges-Copple and the Rt. Rev. Sam Rodman take seriously their charge to shepherd the Body of Christ. Watch the video at [bit.ly/dionlisteningcircles](http://bit.ly/dionlisteningcircles). Video still

*The objective of receiving such letters is threefold. First, it is important your bishops apprehend and appreciate narratives that describe the impact of abuse and misconduct both at the time and over time. Second, just as was designed at the [79<sup>th</sup>] General Convention, we will ask some of the letter writers if they would like to have their letters read at the Liturgy of Repentance and Reconciliation. When such letters are read, it will be without names or reference to any particulars that might reveal specific people, places or occasions. Finally, it is our hope that the act of sharing such accounts provides the narrator some small amount of balm that the bishops of the Diocese have heard and share the enduring impact of these wounds.*

For more information about this process and how to submit a letter to be read by the bishops and pastoral care providers, please visit <http://bit.ly/dionlisteningcircles>.

This effort, to have both listening circles and a letter-writing process leading to a Liturgy of Repentance and Healing, is only the start of a process to understand and work pastorally with the wounds in our Church resulting from sexual abuse, misconduct and harassment. We ask for your prayers.

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The Rev. Robert Fruehwirth is the rector of St. Matthew's, Hillsborough, and a member of the diocesan Pastoral Response Team. Contact him at [robert@stmatthewshillsborough.org](mailto:robert@stmatthewshillsborough.org).

# NEW, NOTABLE & NEWSWORTHY

## THE REV. KATHLEEN WALKER NAMED MISSIONER FOR BLACK MINISTRIES

The Diocese welcomes the Rev. Kathleen Walker as the missioner for black ministries for the Diocese of North Carolina.

Walker's is a new position created following a desire of diocesan leadership to support more fully our congregations of color and work collaboratively to implement programs for congregational vitality. The scope of work for the new missioner is the result of many voices, including an advisory council and those with whom Walker will be working most closely.

"Kathleen's experience in leading organizations through change and transformation, both outside the church and within the church, as a lay leader for many years, and now as an ordained leader, will bring additional strength to our staff team," said Rodman. "Her enthusiasm for our congregations and for the work of Becoming Beloved Community is inspiring."

Walker's responsibilities will focus on the vitality of historically black congregations by helping to weave their diversity into a closer bond of inclusion with other parishes and the Diocese. The goal is to ensure all predominantly black congregations have the best opportunity to make the fullest use of the resources of their parishes, partnerships and the Diocese.

"Our diocese has been blessed by the leadership of people of color from the time of the Rt. Rev. Henry Beard Delany in the late 19<sup>th</sup> and early 20<sup>th</sup> centuries to that of our own presiding bishop, the Most Rev. Michael Curry, today," said the Rev. Canon David Sellery, diocesan canon for congregational mission. "We are very excited for Kathleen to build on that legacy of leadership in inspiring profound faith, hope and charity in this important work and ministry."

Walker currently serves as the associate rector for pastoral care and parish life at St. John's Episcopal Church in Tallahassee, Florida, though her call to church leadership and ministry is one she has answered her entire life.

Prior to becoming a member of the clergy, over her lifetime she has served as a licensed lay reader, a lay Eucharistic minister, vestry member and church officer. She was instrumental in the founding of the David Henry Brooks chapter of the Union of Black Episcopalians in the Diocese of Florida, and while serving as its president organized multiple forums about the future of black churches.

She believes strongly in the honoring and continuity of black churches and hopes in her new role to help as many as possible not only survive, but flourish. She also wants to work with congregations to deepen their churches' roots in the communities they already serve so well, and build leadership opportunities in the Church for future generations.

"Kathleen's enthusiasm for our congregations and for the work of Becoming Beloved Community is inspiring," said Rodman.

Walker begins her tenure in early February.



## THE REV. MONNIE RIGGIN APPOINTED DEACON FOR ANTIRACISM AND RECONCILIATION

The Rev. Monnie Riggan has been appointed to the new role of deacon for antiracism and reconciliation. Though not a diocesan staff position, she will work closely with diocesan staff, including and especially the new missioner for black ministries, the Bishop's Committee for Racial Justice and Reconciliation and diocesan partners to continue the development and

implementation of antiracism resources. Since her ordination, Riggan has served as a deacon at St. Andrew's, Haw River, and has worked at St. Titus', Durham.





## “AND ALSO WITH Y’ALL” TO DEBUT IN JANUARY

The first-ever diocesan podcast is ready to go! “And Also With Y’all” is the new young adult podcast hosted by the Rev. James Franklin, young adult missionary for Winston-Salem. Listen

to conversations that engage young adults from every walk of life about the topics and ideas that interest them and rest most heavily on their hearts; questions around faith and spirituality; and more. Franklin memorably (and colorfully) recorded episode one during the 204<sup>th</sup> Annual Convention.

That episode and others can be found at [episditionc.org](http://episditionc.org), and future episodes of the podcast will be available on your favorite podcasting service in February.

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## REGISTER FOR THREE FANTASTIC DIOCESAN YOUTH EVENTS

Diocesan youth and children’s ministries encompass so much—weekend events, spiritual and leadership formation, support for parish ministries and formation, and resources for adult leaders. Involvement in youth ministry makes a crucial difference in the formation of the next generation, so don’t miss three fantastic events coming up in early 2020:

### **Bishops’ Ball: Leap for Joy (February 28 – March 1)**

Take a leap and join a weekend where participants will dive deeper into their faith. Those attending will learn to live their lives with more joy and greater intention, and will acquire knowledge and tips on how to leave behind things weighing them down spiritually, emotionally and physically. Learn together how to move forward and become the best version of yourselves by reclaiming the joy of being a child of God.

Bishops’ Ball is for both middle and high school youth. Follow the event on social media using #Episcojoy. Learn more at [bit.ly/BishopsBall2020](http://bit.ly/BishopsBall2020); registration is now open.

### **Happening #66 (March 27-29)**

Happening is a renewal weekend for high school youth. The event allows young people to encounter Christ in an intentional Christian community. The event is led by youth with clergy and lay adult support. Highlights of the weekend include talks, songs, worship and small groups. Happening is a youth event under the authority of the diocesan bishop. Learn more at [bit.ly/Happening66](http://bit.ly/Happening66); registration is now open.

### **Genesis (March 27-29)**

Genesis is a middle school event during which young people grades 6-8 are encouraged to learn more and grow deeper in their faith through talks and the leadership of high school age youth. The theme for 2020 is relationships with God and relationships with ourselves. Join us for a youth-led weekend with talks, music, small groups, friends and fun. Learn more at [bit.ly/DioNCCGenesis2020](http://bit.ly/DioNCCGenesis2020); registration is now open.

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## JOIN THE 2<sup>ND</sup> ANNUAL PILGRIMAGE TO COSTA RICA (MAR. 23-APR. 2)

After a game-changing pilgrimage to Costa Rica in 2019, the Diocese of North Carolina is returning to deepen even further our relationships with our companion diocese. It will be another cross-country pilgrimage, with many opportunities for time with our Costa Rican brothers and sisters, a work day or two, and time to enjoy the beauty of the country. Save the dates now, and watch diocesan communications for more information on registration. Learn more at [bit.ly/DioNCCCostaRica2020](http://bit.ly/DioNCCCostaRica2020). To stay in direct touch with developments, contact the Rev. Rebecca Yarbrough at [rebecca.yarbrough@episditionc.org](mailto:rebecca.yarbrough@episditionc.org).



## THE REV. CALEB TABOR NAMED YOUNG ADULT MISSIONER OF EPISCOPAL CAMPUS MINISTRY-RALEIGH

The Diocese welcomes the Rev. Caleb Tabor as the new young adult missioner for Episcopal Campus Ministry-Raleigh.

Tabor has served as the vicar of St. Cyprian's, Oxford, since 2015. His new position is a return to the environment where his own call to the priesthood began to emerge. Tabor discovered the Episcopal branch of the Jesus Movement during his involvement with campus ministry at Elon University, first as a student and later while working in the student affairs department.

As the young adult missioner for Episcopal Campus Ministry-Raleigh, Tabor will build on the legacy of the late Rev. Deborah Fox and continue the excellent work of the Rev. Adrienne Koch, Tabor's predecessor in the position. Though based in Raleigh, Episcopal Campus Ministry-Raleigh actually extends beyond the campus and into the local community, bringing together collegiate and non-collegiate young adults through the Young Episcopal Adult Hub (YEAH) app, a resource that encourages them to come

together and "invest in their spiritual lives and engage in social action following the footsteps of Jesus." While YEAH is based in Raleigh, Hub Groups are expected to be created throughout 2020.

"Caleb understands how to reach young adults beyond the Raleigh campuses," said the Rt. Rev. Anne Hodges-Copple, bishop suffragan for the Diocese of North Carolina and the bishop who oversees diocesan campus ministry. "He has a great capacity to expand the Raleigh area network of support for young adults seeking deeper spiritual fulfillment opportunities for faith-based activism."

Tabor began his tenure with the Diocese on January 15.



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## NEW ANTIRACISM PROGRAMS NOW AVAILABLE

As part of its ongoing work toward racial justice and reconciliation, the Diocese of North Carolina now offers two new resources for congregations and individuals.

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

the sin of racism impacts all lives. The first of the 2020 sessions is taking place February 22 at Nativity, Raleigh, and registration is open at [episditionc.org](http://episditionc.org).

- "Becoming an Anti-Racist Church" is a new mini-course designed to give participants a chance to review and unpack the concepts and vocabulary introduced in the two-day Racial Equity Institute (REI) Phase I antiracism workshop. It has also been modified to allow participation from those who have not attended the REI training. The curriculum was developed and is offered by Episcopalians United Against Racism, a collaborative partnership that includes members of the diocesan Bishop's Committee for Racial Justice and Reconciliation. Look for course materials at [episditionc.org](http://episditionc.org).

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## DIOCESAN 2020 PILGRIMAGE TO BOTSWANA ANNOUNCED (SEPT. 17-28)

The diocesan Botswana Companion Link Committee announced its next pilgrimage to Botswana September 17-28.

The pilgrimage is an opportunity to experience the life of The Episcopal Church in Botswana with fellow communicants from the Diocese of North Carolina. Not only will participants learn of various ministries of the Anglican Diocese of Botswana, they will have multiple occasions to

be with people of faith in Botswana—youth, women and men, clergy and laity—to worship together, to be in fellowship and to engage in focused discussions about our journeys from our differing contexts.

Applications to take part in the pilgrimage are now being accepted; the deadline is April 1. Learn more at [bit.ly/BotswanaPilgrimage2020](http://bit.ly/BotswanaPilgrimage2020)

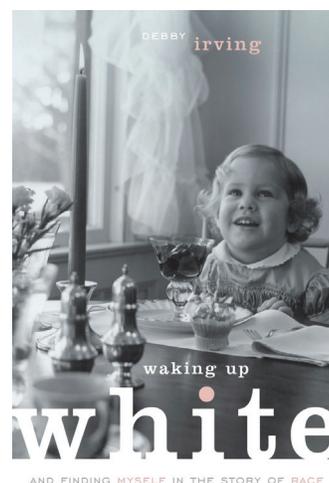
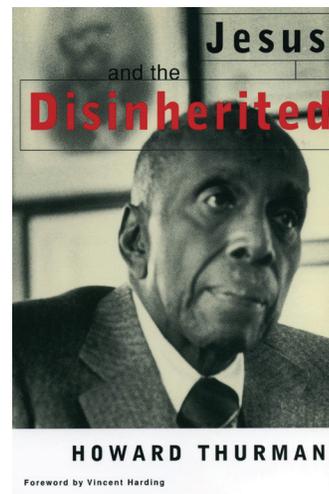
## DIOCESAN-WIDE BOOK READ TO TAKE PLACE DURING LENT

As part of our ongoing commitment towards Becoming Beloved Community, we invite all people and communities of our diocese to read Howard Thurman's *Jesus and the Disinherited* or Debby Irving's *Waking Up White: And Finding Myself in the Story of Race* during the season of Lent. Both books invite self-examination and reflection about how racism continues to work against the dream of God and our call to love others while striving for justice and peace among all people. There are study and discussion guides available for both books to create an easy-to-plan, meaningful Lenten series. We hope that reading these books will spark conversations within churches and local communities while creating a catalyst for building deeper relationships around racial healing and reconciliation during this season of repentance.

The Rev. Howard Thurman (1899-1981) was a minister, educator, theologian and civil rights leader, whose counsel and witness served as a spiritual foundation for the non-violent civil rights movements and whose writings continue to inspire. He connected with prophetic clarity how the inward journey of faith shapes our concerns for social justice. In *Jesus and the Disinherited*, Thurman's seminal work, he wrote about the chains of oppression and how Jesus embodies liberation and transformation for all. Alongside the book, participants are encouraged to watch *Backs Against the Wall: The Howard Thurman Story*, a film exploring the extraordinary life and legacy of Thurman. There are a number of helpful study guides for both the book and film available at [journeyfilms.com/Thurman-resources/](http://journeyfilms.com/Thurman-resources/).

In *Waking Up White: And Finding Myself in the Story of Race*, Debby Irving recounts her experience of being a white American woman and coming to terms with the complexity of race in the United States. With candor, Irving unpacks long-standing beliefs about colorblindness, being a good person and her desire to "help" people of color. The book contains conversation and reflection prompts at the end of each chapter. Study guides for Irving's book are also available at [debby.irving.com/study-facilitation-guides/](http://debby.irving.com/study-facilitation-guides/).

An engaging and thoughtful speaker, Debby Irving will speak at churches throughout our diocese April 21-26 as part of the Race Matters Tour.



## ROADSHOWS 2020

As first shared in the last issue of the *Disciple* ("Here for You," Fall 2019), the Diocese of North Carolina is holding a series of regional "roadshow" events across the Diocese throughout 2020. The roadshows will bring together bishops, diocesan staff, clergy and church leaders to discuss and share new and innovative community-focused missional initiatives as well as facilitate regional conversations as may be helpful. Locations and details will be shared in diocesan communication channels as the dates draw closer, but save the dates now in your brand-new 2020 calendars:

- February 11 – Greensboro region
- April 30 – Charlotte region
- June 23 – Raleigh region
- September 29 – Sandhills region
- Fall 2020 – Rocky Mount region

Please watch for updates, as we hope to see you there!

### STAY IN TOUCH

Keep up with our diocese and bishops!

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 @EpiscopalNC  
@samuelrodman @bishopannehc

 @episditionc @bishoproddman @ahodgescopple

 [www.vimeo.com/episcopalnc](http://www.vimeo.com/episcopalnc)

## PATRICIA HAMILTON NAMED NEW EXECUTIVE ASSISTANT TO THE BISHOP SUFFRAGAN

The Diocese welcomes Patricia Hamilton as the new executive assistant to the bishop suffragan.

A cradle Episcopalian, Hamilton served for many years in the Dioceses of Massachusetts, Northern Indiana and, most recently, North Carolina. For the past two years, she worked as the administrative assistant for spiritual growth and adult formation at Christ Church, Charlotte. There she was involved in creating and supporting transformative programming including Christian Essentials, Sacred Ground, The Good Book Beginning to End, and The Space Between Us, to name a few.

“I could not be more thrilled to welcome Patricia as my executive assistant and as a new colleague within our diocesan staff,” the Rt. Rev. Anne Hodges-Copple said. “Given her love of God, her fantastic organizational skills and her decades-long service in Episcopal church ministries around the country, she will be a blessing to the entire Diocese.”

As a graduate of Duke University, Hamilton is an avid

Blue Devils fan and looks forward to March Madness and cheering on the team. Her other interests include music, reading, travel and spending time with her family. One of her favorite things is going to church, especially visiting different churches and experiencing the Eucharist in unique and inviting ways.

Hamilton succeeds Shelley Kappauf, who served for five of her 14 years with the Diocese as the executive assistant to the bishop suffragan before retiring at the end of 2019.

Hamilton begins her tenure with the Diocese on February 1.



## DIOCESAN EVENTS

### February

- 5 Safe Church Training, Level II
- 12 Safe Church Training, Level II
- 22 Dismantling Racism: Reclaiming Our Baptismal Promise
- Feb. 28-
- Mar. 1 Bishops' Ball: Leap for Joy

### March

- 5 Lenten Quiet Day for Clergy
- 18-21 Montgomery and Selma Alabama Justice Pilgrimage
- 19-21 Education for Ministry (EfM) Mentor Training
- Mar. 23-
- Apr. 2 Diocesan Pilgrimage to Costa Rica
- 27-29 Happening #66
- 27-29 Genesis

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

## FOLLOW THE HOLY LAND PILGRIMAGE

The Diocese of North Carolina is taking another pilgrimage to the Holy Land January 27-February 7, 2020. Led once again by the Rt. Rev. Anne Hodges-Copple, the Rev. Sally French (St. Philip's, Durham) and the Rev. David Umphlett (St. Mary's, High Point), the journey will include visits to Jerusalem, Bethlehem and Galilee.

Even if you are not traveling with the pilgrims, you can still take the journey with them. There are several ways you can follow the trip:

- Visit the page dedicated to the Holy Land pilgrimage on the diocesan website. There you'll find insights shared by the travelers and links to photos and videos.
- Like the Diocese on Facebook and enjoy videos and photos from the pilgrims as they're happening ([Facebook.com/EpiscopalDioceseNC](https://www.facebook.com/EpiscopalDioceseNC)).
- Join the trip's Facebook Group (Episcopal Diocese of NC Holy Land Pilgrimage) to enjoy even more as you interact with the pilgrims as they travel.
- Follow the trip on Twitter and Instagram using #EDNCHolyLand.
- Follow Bishop Anne on social media:
  - o Facebook - Anne Hodges-Copple
  - o Twitter - @bishopannehc
  - o Instagram - @ahodgescopple

## FALL 2019 MISSION ENDOWMENT GRANTS AWARDED

The Mission Endowment Grant board has announced six recipients in the Fall 2019 grant cycle.

- **Abundant Life Greensboro, \$25,000 in 2020 and 2021**  
Abundant Life Greensboro seeks to nurture a worshiping community through service, discipleship and mission. Funding will provide for programs to build and support the spiritual and physical needs of an underserved population.
- **Calvary, Wadesboro, \$15,000 in 2020**  
This grant will support programs to assist homeless families in Anson County. Funding will support a case manager and upgrade a duplex for housing.
- **Christ's Beloved Community, \$25,000 in 2020 and 2021**  
This grant will support meals at the church's mid-week program, which allows for fellowship and discipleship formation, and salary support for less than full-time ministers.
- **City With Dwellings, \$12,500 in 2020 and 2021**  
Funding will support shelter monitors to keep the environment safe at this low-barrier emergency shelter in Winston-Salem.

- **Episcopalians United Against Racism, \$15,000 in 2020**

Funding will support work around racial healing trainings through Racial Equity Institute, providing scholarships and salary support for a coordinator.

- **Galilee Ministries of East Charlotte, \$15,000 in 2020**

This grant will fund various building upgrades sorely needed as the ministry strives to become financially self-supporting.

The Mission Endowment Grant is 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 bring the community to see Christ’s presence among them.” 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 next application deadline is April 30. To apply, complete the Common Application found at [episdionc.org](http://episdionc.org) in “Grants and Scholarships” under the “Resources” tab.

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## IN CASE YOU MISSED IT

### *The Rt. Rev. Anne Hodges-Copple Now Based in Raleigh*

The Rt. Rev. Anne Hodges-Copple, bishop suffragan of the Diocese of North Carolina, is now working out of Diocesan House in Raleigh following the closing of the Greensboro office in December 2019.

The Diocese announced the closing of the office last fall, as the bishops and canons who primarily used it spend so much time on the road and in our churches, it made responsible fiscal sense to consolidate administrative staff under one roof so that funds might be spent elsewhere supporting our mission priority work. As the Diocese of North Carolina owns the Diocesan House building in downtown Raleigh, bringing those diocesan office needs under that roof was the most fiscally prudent choice.

All of Bishop Hodges-Copple’s contact information remains the same. The only thing that’s changed is the address where she looks forward to seeing you!

### *Two Diocesan Programs Recipients of Grants from The Episcopal Church*

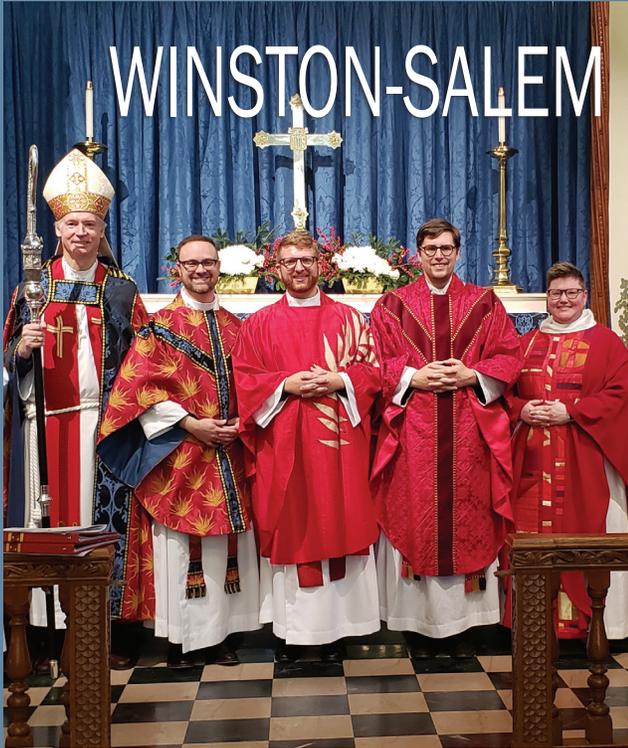
A diocesan worship community and an outreach

program recently received grant awards from The Episcopal Church as part of its support for new church plants and Mission Enterprise Zones.

Christ’s Beloved Community, Winston-Salem, received a \$40,000 Harvest Grant, a resource for initiatives at least two years into their project. These initiatives have gone through project discernment, including assessment and coaching and have demonstrated real progress in completing the process set forth in their Ministry Plan and have a plan towards sustainability. Christ’s Beloved Community has not only proved itself to be sustainable, but it is flourishing and was recently profiled in an Episcopal News Service article (read it at [bit.ly/CBC-ENS](http://bit.ly/CBC-ENS)). Learn more about Christ’s Beloved Community at [belovedws.org](http://belovedws.org).

Abundant Life Health & Wellness is an initiative of East Greensboro started by a collaboration of Greensboro churches who gather for a good meal as well as health screenings once a week. The \$30,000 Seed Grant from the Episcopal Church will help the seed planted by this ministry to grow and become a resource for its local community.

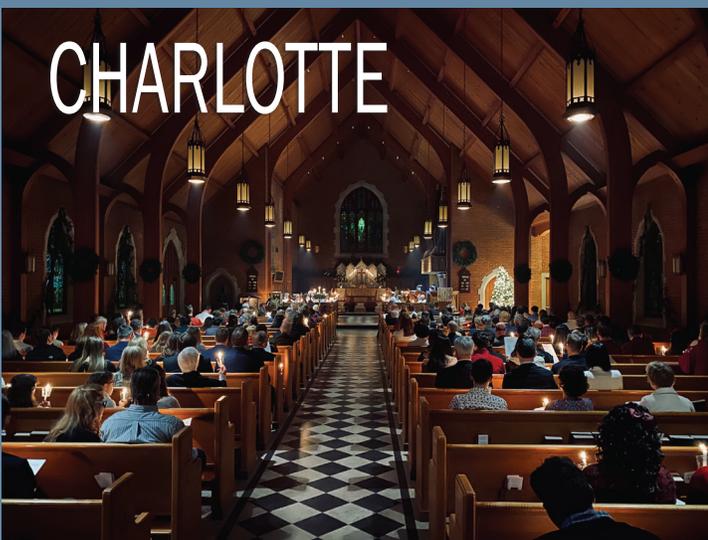
# AROUND THE



The Rt. Rev. Sam Rodman ordained the Rev. Nicholas VanHorn, the Rev. Jonathan McManus-Dail, the Rev. Eric Grubb and the Rev. Marion Sprott-Goldson to the Sacred Order of Priests at St. Paul's, Winston-Salem. *Photo by Christine McTaggart*



The Rt. Rev. Marty Stebbins, former rector of St. Timothy's, Wilson, was ordained bishop of the Diocese of Montana on December 7, 2019. The Rt. Rev. Anne Hodges-Copple, the Rt. Rev. Sam Rodman and the Most Rev. Michael Curry were all there. *Photo by Kurt Keller Photography*

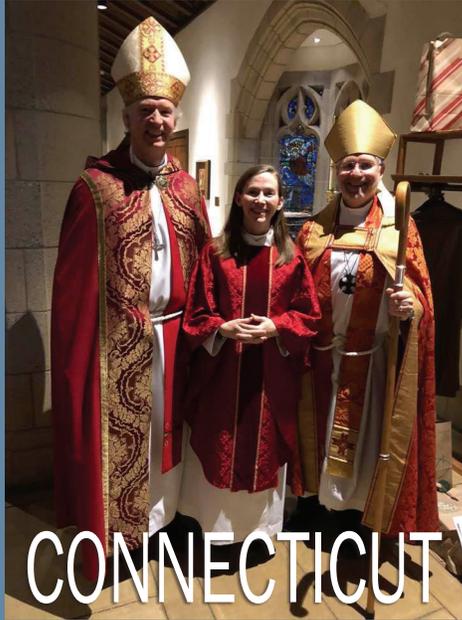


The midnight Christmas Eve service at Holy Comforter, Charlotte, concluded in candlelight. *Photo by Beth Hardin*



The Rt. Rev. Anne Hodges-Copple ordained the Rev. Wendy Merrill and the Rev. Emily Parker to the Sacred Order of Deacons on January 4 at Holy Comforter, Charlotte. *Photo by Christine McTaggart*

# THE DIOCESE



The Rt. Rev. Sam Rodman and the Rt. Rev. Ian Douglas (bishop, Diocese of Connecticut) ordained the Rev. Margie Baker to the Sacred Order of Priests on January 4 in Hartford, Connecticut. *Photo courtesy of Rodman*



Parishioners from Holy Innocents', Henderson, celebrate the Feast of Our Lady of Guadalupe on December 15 with members of the Ballet Folklorico group performing traditional Mexican dances. *Photo by Marsha Nelson*



Dr. Catherine Meeks, director of the Absalom Jones Center for Racial Justice in Atlanta, was a featured speaker during the Becoming Beloved Community event hosted by St. Luke's, Salisbury, November 8-10. She's pictured here with the Rev. Robert Black, rector of St. Luke's. *Photo by Caroline Stephenson*



The Rev. Eric Grubb shares the story of St. Nicholas during the Annual St. Nicholas Festival at St. Margaret's, Waxhaw. *Photo by Joanie Cameron*

# OUTSIDE THE DIOCESE

*In this new section of the Disciple, we aim to take a look at work in the areas we call our mission priorities, yet happening outside our diocesan borders. We do not work alone, and our local efforts are connected to a much wider world.*

By Alice Freeman

## AS A CHRISTIAN PEOPLE

The Executive Council of The Episcopal Church is one of the interim governing bodies charged with accomplishing the ongoing work and tasks set forth at the triennial gatherings of General Convention, the main governing body of the Church. Comprised of 20 members elected at General Convention, 18 members elected by the Provincial Synods, and ex-officio members, including the presiding bishop, the president and vice president of the House of Deputies, the secretary and the treasurer, Executive Council members serve six-year terms. In addition to financial due diligence and addressing resolutions from General Convention, every meeting of Executive Council encompasses some aspect of the Church's commitment to priority areas, including Beloved Community; The Way of Love; and the ministries of creation care, evangelism and racial reconciliation.

Executive Council meets three times a year in varying locations. The October 2019 meeting took place in the form of a pilgrimage to Montgomery, Alabama. This was not a random selection; though we would give time and attention to a multitude of areas, including the Anglican Consultative Council, Episcopal Migration Ministries, Navajoland mission support, corporate social responsibility, support for Historically Black Colleges and Universities (Saint Augustine's and Voorhees), Episcopal Relief & Development, the 2020 revised budget, church plantings and grants, and nearly 50 resolutions from General Convention, the primary focus of the gathering was to further the discussion on Beloved Community and racial reconciliation. It is a discussion that must be addressed, and it must begin with truth-telling and acknowledgement. Most of all, this work must be done at every level of the Church, from its main governing body to every diocese, church and parishioner.

### THE PAST AND PRESENT

The pilgrimage focused primarily on two museums in Montgomery: The Legacy Museum and the National Memorial for Peace and Justice.

Realizing the possible impact such a pilgrimage might have on participants, all members of Executive Council were asked to read *Just Mercy* by Bryan Stevenson and participate in two webinars to prepare. Stevenson is an attorney, and the

founder and director of the Equal Justice Initiative, responsible for creating the National Memorial for Peace and Justice, commonly referred to as "The Lynching Museum." The Equal Justice Initiative has documented more than 4,000 lynchings in 800 counties across 12 southern states, as well as several hundred more in other states that occurred from 1877 to 1950.

The Legacy Museum chronicles the 400-year history of America's racial violence and terrorism. Through video, hologram and audio, the cries of an enslaved people are so poignant and painful they seem to pierce the soul causing one to wonder, where was the soul of those who chose to commit such atrocities on God's creation of man?

The answer was partially answered at the National Memorial for Peace and Justice when I read through tears the words of Mississippi Governor William McWillie in his 1857 appeal to perpetuate slavery, "[a]s a Christian People... it is the duty of the South to keep them in the present position, at any cost and at every peril." Think about that: As a Christian people...

This is why this work is so important, and this is why your Executive Council, and your diocesan councils and committees, and your church leaders consider reconciliation an urgent priority. Racism is not a thing of the past; its legacy continues to resonate. As Christians—especially as Christians—we must willingly and honestly confront it, or be complicit in its perpetuation.



At the National Memorial for Peace and Justice, the lynchings of each county are individually engraved on a dense metal slab that appropriately hangs from the ceiling. There was no shortage of North Carolina representation. Photo by Alice Freeman

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*Alice Freeman is a member of St. Mark's, Wilson, and an elected Province IV representative to Executive Council from the Diocese of North Carolina. Contact her via [communications@episdionc.org](mailto:communications@episdionc.org).*

By Traci Picard

# A SPACE FOR TRUTH

The Center for Reconciliation (CFR) is a small, grassroots nonprofit based in the Cathedral of St. John in Providence, Rhode Island. The Episcopal Diocese of Rhode Island founded the CFR in 2013 as a response to many factors, including local and national Episcopal resolutions acknowledging the role of the slave trade in founding and funding the early Church. The colony of Rhode Island was a major player in the trans-Atlantic slave trade, and the majority of participants were Episcopalian. This legacy is evident in the Cathedral of St. John itself, built on the site of 1722 King’s Church and with multiple specific links to the slave trade. Both enslavers and enslaved were baptized at St. John and buried in the adjacent grounds, while many early donors, members and leaders participated directly in the trade. In light of this, the Diocese decided to create a space for dialogue and truth-telling around this history and how we grapple with this difficult story today.

Funded by grants and donations and staffed largely by volunteers, the CFR focuses our programs around three guiding actions: educating people about the history of the slave trade, racism, systemic injustice and their current implications; working to equip the public with the tools to process and constructively discuss race and racial history; and engaging in the practice of racial reconciliation toward building a more just society. We make the naming and memory amplification of enslaved people often left out of history a priority. These goals are not achieved by employees or board members working alone to define or enact an opaque process of reconciliation. Rather, we invite our many local communities to participate in, co-define and co-create remembrance and reconciliation, letting it unfold as we go through the process together. We respond to each other and to the moment as it happens.

## LEARN MORE

To learn more about the Center for Reconciliation, visit [CFRRI.org](http://CFRRI.org).

To view the resolutions that helped inspire the CFR, visit [bit.ly/78thResolutions](http://bit.ly/78thResolutions) and search for

- Resolution A123: Slavery and Racial Reconciliation
- Resolution A127: Restorative Justice
- Resolution CO11: Church Responsibility in Reparations



The CFR offers public programs and exhibitions about the history and legacy of slavery, the slave trade, and the construction of race and racial identities in America so together we can build a more just and equitable

future. Programs include themed, guided walking tours through historic neighborhoods that cover both the individual stories of enslaved people in and around Providence and the systemic factors that created and upheld slavery; a monthly program called The Art of Race that tackles thorny conversations about racially charged objects in the RISD Museum’s collection; and regular book clubs that engage with texts on slavery and its aftermath. In an exhibit space inside the cathedral, artworks and exhibits created by the CFR or partner organizations are displayed. This space is also used for performance, films, trainings, contemplation and more. Future plans include more themed tours, work with local youth and a museum space.

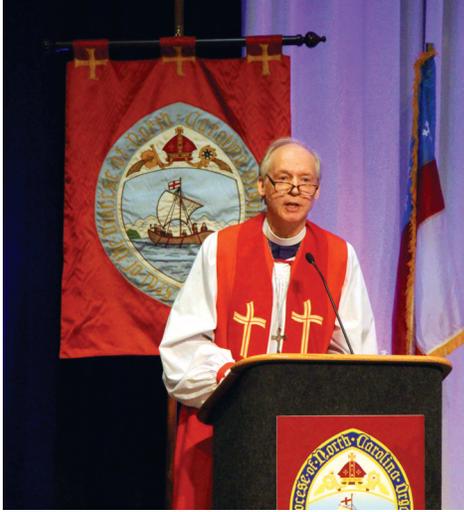
In undertaking the work of racial justice and reconciliation, the CFR seeks to be a catalyst, collaborator and convener of churches, schools, nonprofits and other partner organizations within our community and beyond. We aim to tell the truth about the past to practice reconciliation actively, helping to move toward transformative justice to repair and restore the bonds of humanity damaged through participation in slavery. The work is a great challenge and may never be completed. We invite you to join us on the path toward justice for everyone.



One of the headstones that inspired the work of the Center for Reconciliation. Photo courtesy of the CFR

Traci Picard is the program and research associate for the Center for Reconciliation. Contact her at [info@cfrii.org](mailto:info@cfrii.org).

# THE 204<sup>TH</sup> ANNUAL CONVENTION



From top: Bishop Sam Rodman delivered his annual pastoral address during the Opening Eucharist. Bishop Anne Hodges-Copple delivered her pastoral address on Saturday morning. Keynote speaker Tod Bolsinger spoke on both days of Convention. Throughout: photos by Christine McTaggart and Summerlee Walter

The 204<sup>th</sup> Annual Convention officially convened on Friday, November 22, 2019, at the Benton Convention Center in Winston-Salem. The diocesan commitment to Becoming Beloved Community remained a constant thread throughout, providing a foundation for this year's theme of "Holy Partners in a Heavenly Calling," an examination of collaborations happening in and around our communities, as well as a challenge to expand our willingness and vision when it comes to creating new collaborations and partnerships.

Other highlights included an emotional screening of *Emanuel—The Untold Story of the Victims and Survivors of the Charleston Church Shooting*, the Rt. Rev. Sam Rodman's opening Eucharist sermon and Convention address, the Rt. Rev. Anne Hodges-Copple's Saturday address, a keynote presentation by the author of *Canoeing the Mountains*, changes in status for two congregations and more.

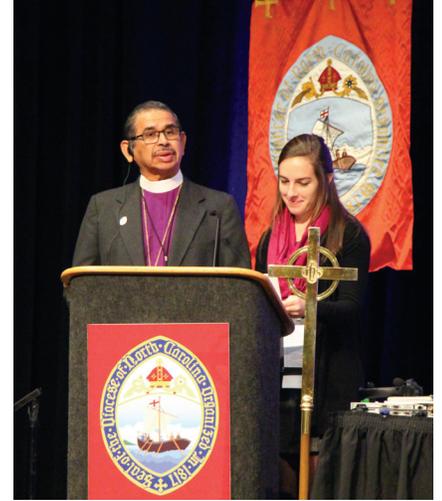
## BISHOPS' ADDRESSES

As always, worship was the foundation of Convention. Both Bishop Rodman and Bishop Hodges-Copple gave inspiring addresses, offering insights on work happening throughout the Diocese, guidance on the triumphs and challenges of Becoming Beloved Community, and reminders of the need for holy partners in our heavenly calling.

Bishop Rodman delivered his address during his sermon at the Opening Eucharist on Friday. He began by speaking of St. Cecelia, the 5<sup>th</sup>-century saint whose feast day was celebrated on the first day of Convention. He told the story of her faith, strong in the face of persecution as she led pagan followers, including her husband and family, to God. She was described as an early builder of beloved community, one who understood "the constant in an ever-changing and often confusing and dangerous age is the love of God incarnated in Jesus." As Bishop Rodman explained, "Holy partners are those who are part of God's mission to redeem and reconcile the world. Saints are our holy partners. Those who have gone before stand as witnesses [and] models of faithfulness. But other holy partners join with us, here and now, to accomplish the work God has called us to bring about: the work of Becoming Beloved Community."

He went on to explain how "Becoming Beloved Community is all about accepting that we are all beloved children of God. God's love for us isn't based upon performance. It's based upon belonging. We belong to God. We are beloved children of God. And we are meant to mirror the loving image of God in our lives, and in our relationships. This is beloved community." He encouraged all to trust in that relationship to deepen bonds with our neighbors, and he challenged listeners to think of things in new ways and reach beyond comfort zones. He extolled the work happening already in diocesan congregations, noting "our congregations tell the story of who we are as a church, of what our mission looks like, of how we become holy partners in the heavenly calling of Becoming Beloved Community." He added, "collaboration is not optional in the Body of Christ."

Bishop Hodges-Copple delivered her address Saturday morning, building on the collaboration, adaptive change and work happening in churches throughout the Diocese of North Carolina. "[O]ur worship communities are learning and



The Thursday night panel discussion following a screening of *Emanuel—The Untold Story of the Victims and Survivors of the Charleston Church Shooting* featured moderator the Rev. Ginny Inman and panelists Dr. Joseph Graves, Bishop Anne Hodges-Copple, the Rev. Daran Mitchell and the Rev. Dixon Kinser. Bishop Orlando Gomez of Costa Rica addressed the convention with translation help from companion diocesan officer Allie Norman.

relearning how to meet people where they are, build partnerships and create the space for real conversation [and] real vulnerability with the real presence of Jesus Christ,” she said, noting it was Jesus who “helped his friends move beyond ‘that’s how we’ve always done it’ to ‘what does the Lord require of us for these times [and] these places?’” Through anecdotes, stories and examples of ministries she sees in action every day, she shared “what Jesus calls abundant life: seeing life, feeling love and seeing possibilities where the world sees scarcity.”

She extolled the power of partnerships, especially those formed when bread was broken together. “People who break bread together over time and across differences are also people who know how to pull together when crisis hits,” she said. She likened the sharing of meals to stories of feeding God’s beloved, noting “stories of feeding God’s beloved abound across our diocese, told in probably 120 different ways from the Sandhills to Rocky Mount, from Winston-Salem to Waxhaw.”

Working together, “I know that by the grace of God all things are possible,” she said. “I don’t have to understand how miracles happen, I just know they do because as I move around this diocese I see how you are moved to say ‘yes’ when Jesus says, ‘Come follow me.’”

### EMANUEL: THE UNTOLD STORY

As has become tradition, Thursday night featured a program to inspire thought and conversation. This year, attendees screened the film *Emanuel—The Untold Story of the Victims and Survivors of the Charleston Church Shooting*. Produced by Stephen Curry and Viola Davis, the emotional, heartbreaking and inspiring documentary wove the history of Charleston race relations with the events and impact of the fateful shooting at Mother Emanuel Church. A panel discussion on race relations moderated by the Rev. Ginny Inman and featuring the Rev. Dixon

Kinser, Dr. Joseph Graves, Bishop Anne Hodges-Copple and the Rev. Daran Mitchell followed the screening. Among the topics discussed were the themes of hope and forgiveness related in the film as well as the state of race relations today and concrete steps needed to move them forward in an honest direction. More than 200 people attended the event, and discussion continued long after the gathering officially ended.

### CANOEING THE MOUNTAINS

The keynote addresses were delivered by the Rev. Tod Bolsinger, author of *Canoeing the Mountains*, a guide to affecting change set against the backdrop of the Lewis and Clark expedition. Over the course of two presentations, he shared the trials of the expedition and how the unexpected—like finding mountains where they expected rivers—required them to adapt and approach problems in unprecedented ways. He used the tale to illustrate the similarities in adapting church to the “uncharted waters” of the 21<sup>st</sup>-century, not only detailing the ways in which to approach it but the obstacles we assuredly will encounter. He provided tools for what he called “adaptive leadership,” a concept that is crucial to all aspects of Becoming Beloved Community because the way church has always “been done” and for which most leaders were trained is changing quickly and unlikely to return any time soon. But rather than lament times past, attendees were infused with energy and ideas, taking from the keynote presentations a desire to put the theories into practice, approaching ministry in new ways and ready to forge new relationships through collaborations with holy partners.

### MEMORABLE MOMENTS

Among the business and presentations of Convention, there were several memorable moments:

- The first order of business as Bishop Rodman called the Convention to order was to acknowledge the ancestors of the Catawba and Carolina Siouan nations who once called the land on which Convention took place home.
- The Rev. James Franklin recorded the first episode of the first-ever diocesan podcast, “And Also With Y’all,” debuting this month (page 9)!
- During the Opening Eucharist, the Rev. Jan Lamb was commissioned as the new diocesan archdeacon (*Disciple*, Winter 2019), and Maria Gillespie was commissioned as the new diocesan director of administration and finance.
- Also commissioned at the Opening Eucharist were the 11 Johnson Service Corp interns serving in the coming year and the eight new members of the Vergers Guild of North Carolina.
- The offering for the Eucharist was dedicated to our companion diocese in Costa Rica. Relationships within our dioceses were strengthened in 2019 with a pilgrimage to Costa Rica; pilgrims from North Carolina will travel there again in 2020 (page 9). The Rt. Rev. Orlando Gomez, bishop of the Diocese of Costa Rica, was in attendance at Convention and, among other activities, led Morning Prayer on Saturday.
- Two mission congregations were granted changes in status to parishes in two unique and moving celebrations. Read about the journeys of St. Titus’, Durham and Trinity, Fuquay-Varina, on page 37.
- Bishop Rodman presented the first of the Bishops’ Awards to Marlene Weigert, former diocesan

canon to the ordinary for administration. Weigert retired from the Diocese in 2019 after 14 years of service (*Disciple*, Summer 2019).

- Bishop Hodges-Copple bestowed the second Bishops’ Award to Shelley Kappauf, former executive assistant to the bishop suffragan. Kappauf retired at the end of 2019 after 15 years of service, the last five of which were as Hodges-Copple executive assistant, making the presentation of the award especially emotional and poignant.

## THE BUSINESS OF CONVENTION

In the business of Convention, the 2020 budget passed as submitted.

Voting on resolutions went as follows. Certified copies of all resolutions are available on the diocesan website.

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

*Note: This second reading and passing constitutes a Constitutional Amendment.*

- Resolution 204.2 On Churches that Fail to File Timely Reports or Audits—passed as amended
- Resolution 204.3 On Amending the Constitution to Clarify the Qualifications for Standing Committee—passed (first reading)
- Substitute Resolution 204.4 On Spousal and Partner Activities at Convention—passed
- Substitute Resolution 204.5 On Affordable Housing—passed as amended



Hearings on resolutions, like this one by Administration of the Diocese, are a critical part of the work of Convention. The Global Missions Committee sponsored an interactive map of the world on which Convention attendees marked the nations and churches with which their congregations have relationships.



Clockwise from top left: The Diocese welcomed Trinity, Fuquay-Varina, and St. Titus', Durham, to parish status. Green and red cards made an appearance during the legislative business of Convention when voice votes were too close to call.

- Resolution 204.6 On the Commemoration of Cecelia Foster Lawrence—passed
- Substitute Resolution 204.7 On Resources and Advocacy for Mental Health—passed as amended
- Substitute Resolution 204.8 On the Historic Properties Commission—passed
- Substitute Resolution 204.9 On Education about Reform of Pre-trial Release and Money Bond—passed

Voting on elected positions went as follows:

- **Standing Committee – Clergy Order (2)**  
The Rev. Cathy Deats – non-parochial  
*There was no second person nominated; the open position will be filled by Standing Committee per canon.*
- **Standing Committee – Lay Order (1)**  
Carolyn Beranek – St. David's, Laurinburg
- **Diocesan Council – Clergy Order (2)**  
The Rev. Ginny Wilder – St. Anne's, Winston-Salem  
The Rev. Rebecca Yarbrough – Chapel of Christ the King, Charlotte
- **Diocesan Council – Lay Order (3)**  
Sue Guptill – St. Philip's, Durham  
Al Ragland – St. Ambrose, Raleigh  
Sherry Owens – St. Stephen's, Oxford
- **Deputies to General Convention – Clergy Order (4)**  
The Rev. Kevin Matthews – St. Mary's House, Greensboro

The Rev. Jamie Edwards – St. Clement's, Clemmons

The Rev. Daniel Robayo – Diocese of North Carolina

The Rev. Sarah Ardrey-Graves – St. Paul's, Winston-Salem

- **Deputies to General Convention – Lay Order (4)**

Martha Alexander – Christ Church, Charlotte

Alice Freeman – St. Mark's, Wilson

Delois Ward – Christ Church, Raleigh

Megan Carlson – St. Stephen's, Durham

- **Board of Trustees, University of the South – Lay Order (1)**

Liz Dalrymple – Emmanuel, Southern Pines

If you want to enjoy even more, a full recap of the 204<sup>th</sup> Annual Convention, including videos of the bishops' addresses and the keynote addresses, is available at [episdionc.org](http://episdionc.org).

- **THE 205<sup>TH</sup> ANNUAL CONVENTION**

The 205<sup>th</sup> Annual Convention will be held November 20-21, 2020, at the Benton Convention Center in Winston-Salem. We'll see you there!

# REIMAGINING CURACIES: AN UPDATE

In Fall 2018, the Diocese of North Carolina shared the news it had received a nearly \$1 million Lilly Endowment grant to help establish Reimagining Curacies, a program designed to form newly ordained clergy into community-conscious leaders dedicated to the values of Becoming Beloved Community through authentic community and racial reconciliation. It was part of Lilly Endowment Inc.'s Thriving in Ministry, an initiative to support a variety of religious organizations across the nation as they create or strengthen programs to help pastors build relationships with experienced clergy who can serve as mentors and guide them through key leadership challenges in congregational ministry.

Over the ensuing 12 months, a great deal of work has occurred to put in place the first stage of the project: the participating congregations. These congregations, St. Titus', Durham; Chapel of the Cross, Chapel Hill; and St. John's, Wake Forest, are now in place and ready to proceed with the next phase.

## ABOUT THE PROJECT

The Diocese is one of 78 organizations located in 29 states taking part in the nearly \$70 million Thriving in Ministry initiative. The organizations reflect diverse Christian traditions: mainline and evangelical Protestant, Roman Catholic and Orthodox. Thriving in Ministry is part of Lilly Endowment's grant-making to strengthen pastoral leadership in Christian congregations in the United States, a grant-making priority at Lilly Endowment for nearly 25 years.

Reimagining Curacies focuses on developing clergy into transformative leaders during their initial placements in congregations after they graduate from seminary. While

traditional curacies place new priests in one congregation for two or three years, this new model will assign cohorts of three priests to three vibrant congregations near each other for three years, with each priest serving one year in each congregation. These placements are geographically proximate to one another but differ in size, liturgical preference, racial and ethnic composition, community context and specialized ministries. North Carolina's rich mixture of urban, suburban and rural communities in close proximity to each other provides a unique opportunity for priests to experience the range of challenges and gifts the state's communities have to offer.

These new priests will also benefit from spiritual direction, mentoring, coaching and leadership development experiences with their peers and colleagues. It is the Diocese's hope that supervising and mentoring clergy will continue to develop their own sense of vocational identity for the future church and experience the gift of real relationship with peers and partners in ministry. At the same time, the congregations involved in this initiative will develop a broader sense of their own gifts, as well as their own missional identity.

## THE CHURCHES

A great deal of discernment took place even before conversations took place with interested churches. Though the long-term goal is to offer the opportunity to any congregation that wishes to host a cohort, it was decided to proceed in this pilot round with churches in the geographical area proximate to Raleigh and Diocesan House. Several churches responded to an invitation to take part in a discernment day, a full-day workshop hosted by the project's executive committee, where they learned about the project, what was

Chapel of the Cross, Chapel Hill; St. Titus', Durham; and St. John's, Wake Forest, are the three pilot churches for Reimagining Curacies.



expected in terms of supporting and developing the curates in the cohort, and had the chance to ask candid questions before returning to their church homes to continue discerning this call with congregational leaders and vestries.

At the 204<sup>th</sup> Annual Convention in November 2019, the Rt. Rev. Sam Rodman announced the churches comprising the first-round of Reimagining Curacies are St. Titus', Durham; Chapel of the Cross, Chapel Hill; and St. John's, Wake Forest.

"After more than two years of dreaming and planning this project, it is exciting to see real progress happening," said the Rev. Nathan Kirkpatrick, member of the executive committee. "The three congregations chosen as our first-round churches will be great places for new priests to learn who they are as priests and how they are called to inhabit this ministry."

St. Titus' is a historically black congregation whose roots reach back to 1887, when St. Philip's, Durham, reached out to the residents of the then-Hayti district. Some early records have been lost to history, but it was in 1909 that then-Archdeacon Henry Beard Delaney formalized and renamed the mission team St. Titus'. The church has weathered ups and downs in the last century, but they have persevered, never losing sight of their commitment to the community, to God or to each other. Today, St. Titus' is a thriving parish that continues to reach out to its neighbors, developing relationships that expand the ways St. Titus' contributes and celebrates unity in Christ.

Chapel of the Cross is located in the heart of Chapel Hill with roots that date back to the mid-19<sup>th</sup> century. The church's location provides a unique cross-section of congregants, as they are deeply involved with the University of North Carolina, though as their website proclaims, Duke fans are every bit as welcome. Though one will find congregants of every age in the pews when they visit,

## LEARN MORE

Learn more about the participating churches:

- St. Titus', Durham:  
[sttitusdurham.dionc.org](http://sttitusdurham.dionc.org)
- Chapel of the Cross, Chapel Hill:  
[thechapelofthecross.org](http://thechapelofthecross.org)
- St. John's, Wake Forest:  
[stjohnswf.org](http://stjohnswf.org)

Follow the progress of the project at [reimaginingcuracies.org](http://reimaginingcuracies.org).

Chapel of the Cross has a strong commitment to youth and young adult ministry, offering regular opportunities for conversation around faith and issues of the day, and, like their fellow project churches, sharing a love of community outreach.

St. John's, Wake Forest, is an active and growing parish. Like many congregations, St. John's spent many of their early years as worshiping nomads, gathering in private homes, a funeral parlor and a college classroom. They finally found a permanent home in 1962 and consecrated their current home in 1984. The diverse congregation enjoys a vibrant parish life, including the Sophia Sisters, comprised of all St. John's church women and dedicated to "woman wisdom." This wisdom is by no means confined to the women, as all of St. John's is involved in the community outreach programs supported by the church.

## NEXT STEPS

Now that the churches are in place, the next phase of the project is the selection of the participating curates. The call is expected to go out in the early part of 2020, with the hope the curates will be in place by summer.

As the first round gets underway, the plan is to continue generating cohorts to allow the opportunity for other congregations to participate. "We are looking forward to expanding the program this autumn to involve clergy and congregations beyond the initial three sites," said Kirkpatrick, "so that this will truly be a diocesan-wide commitment to the future church."

The hope for this project and what is learned from it is to offer a model to other dioceses and to The Episcopal Church as a whole. As seminaries—and the church—change, additional models for clergy formation are needed that take seriously the challenges and opportunities of ministry in this age. By reimagining curacy for the future church, we hope to enable new clergy, longer-tenured clergy and congregations to thrive in ministry together.

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# DISCOVERING HISTORY

*One congregation explores history as a step to Becoming Beloved Community*

Long before St. Luke's, Salisbury, applied for a Mission Endowment Grant in fall 2018, they entered a discernment process. They wanted a clearer sense of mission, and so they started asking questions about who their neighbors were, and to what did they, as a congregation, need to be paying attention.

Taking note St. Luke's is located within a square bordered by the county jail on one side, the county courthouse on another and lawyers' offices all around, it was quickly clear St. Luke's neighbors were members of the criminal justice system. They started exploring what that meant and how the congregation might develop relationships with those within the system. They were rebuffed outright.

"We ran into a lot of red tape and resistance to doing any sort of prison ministry," said the Rev. Robert Black, rector of St. Luke's. "So with the front door closed, we started searching for what other doors might be there." The congregation continued with their focus on the criminal justice system, reading the work of people like Michelle Alexander, author of *The New Jim Crow*, and learning about the racism embedded in the system.

The more they learned, the more St. Luke's interest expanded to wonder about the history of racism in their own church and the surrounding Salisbury community. Conversations began, and before long, the idea for the grant proposal took shape.

## THE BECOMING BELOVED COMMUNITY PROJECT

The grant was not a single idea, but rather an integrated series designed to reveal, understand and process the history of racism in Salisbury. The discernment process happened to be taking place at the time of the Most Rev. Michael Curry's call to begin the work of Becoming Beloved Community, and so it was an absolute the history would start with racism within and around St. Luke's itself.

"We have a wonderful history," said Black. "But several chapters of our history have been lost or left out, and we wanted to fill in those gaps." The first goal of the grant was to hire a historian to do just that.

The second facet of the grant was to look at racism from a systemic perspective to help understand how the microcosm of the local Salisbury community fit into the bigger picture. It was decided a series of presentations and discussions with speakers from across the nation was needed to help provide that perspective.

The third goal of the grant project was to give voice to those who lived during the Jim Crow era and experienced racism first hand. It was decided to do this through a series of interviews to be developed into a documentary film.

The grant proposal was completed and submitted in fall 2018, and the church was notified it had been awarded the Mission Endowment Grant in January 2019. The foundation for what would be the Becoming Beloved Community project was in place.

## AN INCOMPLETE HISTORY

Salisbury, North Carolina, is known to many as the home of Cheerwine, the popular soft drink. At one time, though, it stood as the last outpost on the western frontier. It was one of the last stops on the railroad before braving the wilds of "the West," and though that fact is celebrated in many of the area's histories, its involvement with the slave trade is often not even acknowledged.

"The narrative Salisbury has told itself about the history of slavery and race is that it wasn't a problem here, we didn't do that," said Black. "But in his research, our historian found hard evidence that not only is that narrative untrue, but Salisbury was a kind of a pioneer in the slave trade, and not in a good way. There were some really ruthless practices around the leasing of slaves that happened here, and it'll be interesting to see the reaction to his findings."

It's understood that parishioners of St. Luke's played a part in that history. All of Salisbury's history "relates to the church," said the Rev. Bonnie Duckworth, deacon at St. Luke's. "There are roots we need to examine."

"There was a [long ago] vestry member here who was partially responsible for the Confederate statue here in town," said Black. "He was a deputy to General Convention, too, and in the records of General Convention and his correspondence, we know he argues vociferously against African American clergy. So the history of the town is part of the history of our church."

St. Luke's wanted to know whether the church itself, first built in 1828, had been built by slaves. The research indicates it was not, though evidence suggests the bricks used to build it were made by slaves, and there is no doubt the money used was money made with slave labor.

It's in the asking and answering of these kinds of questions that St. Luke's recognizes that pastoral care is an integral part of the project. "There's been some concern that the unknown is out there," said Duckworth.

“Committee members worried about something coming up about someone whose family still has connections to the church, or something that would be especially hard to hear. We reassured them that if that came to pass, it will be okay. We will deal with it.”

## PREPARING FOR DISCOMFORT

While waiting to hear the result of their grant application, the church began to prepare for the work ahead. To get ready to receive the stories, the history and the conversations that were sure to be painful and uncomfortable, members of the church began to get comfortable with that discomfort. They started having dinner together or gathering in the afternoons to watch TED Talks about race. Then they would discuss what they saw.

“It’s a great resource,” said Black. “You can watch amazing speakers like Michelle Alexander and Bryan Stevenson [author of *Just Mercy*], all for free on the TED Talk website (ted.com).”

The conversations quickly grew beyond St. Luke’s. The church partnered with the local AME Zion congregation to expand the voices involved, and soon they invited members of the wider community, including the mayor, who did, in fact, take part.

“More and more people in the community have been attending these events,” said Duckworth. “It has been encouraging that we’re reaching beyond the church walls.”

The conversations proved to be good preparation for the interviews conducted for the film. Finding willing participants in itself provided an education on the long-term effects of racism, as several of those approached supported the project but simply did not feel as though they could participate.

“Either it was too painful, or there was fear of the effect on relationships with both black and white friends,” said Duckworth. “They didn’t want stories told that might affect current relationships. That was heart wrenching to hear.”

Of those who did agree to participate, some were members of St. Luke’s, one a member of the AME Zion church and one a retired Episcopal deacon, and they all lived in Salisbury during the Jim Crow era. The stories they shared were not all pleasant, and “some were hard to hear,” said Duckworth. “But it’s important they be told.”

“I grew up in a time well past the legal era of Jim Crow, about 20 years after the Civil Rights Act was passed,” said Black. “So many of the things that people talk about and experienced, I saw only in textbooks. I never saw a segregated water fountain or legalized discrimination. I think a lot of people have never seen those things. The temptation is to think racism is solved because I’ve never



Methodist Bishop Will Willimon lectured as part of a series of Becoming Beloved Community events hosted by St. Luke’s, Salisbury. Photos courtesy of St. Luke’s

seen those things,’ but we know that’s not true. This is hearing the stories of people who have lived [with racism]. It’s why it’s so important we capture these stories in the first person for all of history to maintain.”

## THE POWER OF STORIES

That collection of stories, the “Becoming Beloved Community” video, premiered October 20, 2019, to a standing-room only crowd who participated in a post-screening panel discussion with several of the film’s participants. Following the screening, the film was made available to the public on YouTube ([bit.ly/StLukesYouTube](https://bit.ly/StLukesYouTube)).

Over the weekend of November 8-10, 2019, Methodist Bishop Will Willimon and Dr. Catherine Meeks of the Absalom Jones Center for Racial Justice presented to—again—packed crowds, giving lectures and taking part in a lunch with community leaders. The last event, the presentation of historical findings, took place January 19, 2020.

Across the board, the response has been overwhelmingly positive, and the effect of the project is visible far beyond the walls of St. Luke’s. The community leaders who took part in the lunch and conversation with Willimon and Meeks now meet every month to talk about local issues of race and poverty.

Black was named one of Rowan County’s “10 to Watch in 2020” because of the work happening at St. Luke’s, and he has been invited to speak to community groups and to give the benediction at this year’s breakfast honoring the Rev. Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. The community was invited to be a part of the Becoming Beloved Community, and they not only accepted, they have remained engaged.

Part of the reason, according to Duckworth, is simply because of the power of the stories. These are “people we see all the time in this town,” she said. “It’s not something we’re reading in a magazine, it’s not something we’re seeing



It was a packed house for the premiere of the “Becoming Beloved Community” video created by St. Luke’s, Salisbury.

on television—this is someone I know and love, someone I see every week, and they have a painful story they need to tell. Offering them that opportunity is one of the biggest things we can do. Jim Crow is not over, it’s still going on. To a different degree, but there are still those things that are holding the black community back.”

The church’s involvement also played a part. “The Church can lead these conversations in a much healthier way than other institutions can,” said Black. “Church has embedded in our core a sense of sin and forgiveness, so we have a language to talk about these things in a way other institutions can’t.”

And they will keep talking. Other churches in town have already started to follow St. Luke’s lead and engage in similar conversations within their own spaces, and St. Luke’s is now working with several of them to bring training by the Racial Equity Institute to Rowan County. The first session is being offered by invitation only so that community leaders, including business people, law enforcement, medical teams, educators and more have the chance to take the training together. Subsequent training sessions will have seats more widely available.

### **TAKE THE FIRST STEP**

Salisbury is a small, Southern town, and Black is often asked why he took the risk to develop this project. To him, the answer is clear. “I buy into the metaphor of the Body of Christ,” he said. “And like any body, if there is a part of that Body that is wounded or suffering from an old hurt, we have to take the bandage off, look at it and deal with what’s there so we can heal the entire Body. I really believe

we are only as healthy as the entire Body is, and if there’s suffering in any part of it for whatever reason, those are our brothers and sisters in Christ, and we must respond in love to them.”

“Our hope is to encourage people to look into their situations in their own communities,” said Duckworth. “It’s about opening the doors so others can do this work. [In our case], some of this was bubbling up in the community. Conversations were going on about the past, and it just seemed like everywhere we looked, the doors were opening for us. It felt organic, and as the doors kept opening, we kept walking through them.”

Whether with grant funding or not, everyone has the capacity to do the work St. Luke’s has modeled. The TED Talk resources at the heart of their first conversations are available to all. The *Becoming Beloved Community* film and related materials are offered online to everyone who can use them. Diocesan resources to help start and guide conversations are numerous and ready to assist. And every congregation has the ability to walk outside their door and invite their community in to deepen relationships and engage in the work of truth telling and discovering history. Every congregation is filled with people with stories to tell, and those stories are powerful.

Even if the first door you approach is closed, keep looking. Another is open and waiting for you to walk through it.

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# HOLY DISRUPTION: WORSHIP, LITURGY AND RACE

Though many would like to think otherwise, sometimes Christian practices can do more to reinscribe racism than disrupt racism. The images in the stained-glass windows and Sunday school lessons, the hymns sung and types of music played, the sermons preached and scripture read, and other liturgical practices can all be, and have been, vehicles advancing a theology of white supremacy, the belief that one race is superior to another. Theologian Dr. Jay Kameron Carter believes Western Christianity is the suturing of white supremacy and Christianity. Saint Ambrose, Raleigh, a historically black Episcopal congregation, is committed to the “un-suturing” of white supremacy from Christianity through worship and educational practices.

The hope is to ensure all see themselves as beloved children of God. Worship spaces should be uplifting and community-centered, where one feels connected to the divine. The truth is many beloved Christian traditions do not grant that to people of color. In examining the traditions of Christian practice from the point of view of those who have rarely seen themselves reflected in imagery, vocabulary or music, the goal is not to choose one over the other—or to condemn the practices themselves—but rather to show how powerful it can be, and how much deeper the meaning of those traditions go, when what surrounds Christian practices opens to embrace and reflect every child of God.

## ICONIC IMAGES

*Jesus is the icon of the invisible God. Colossians 1:15*

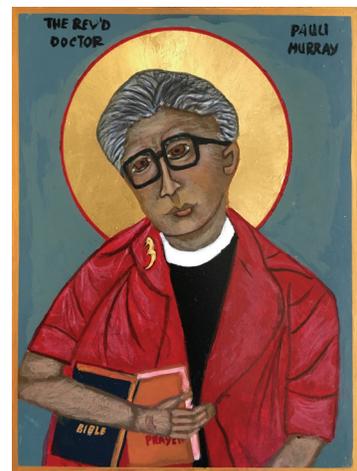
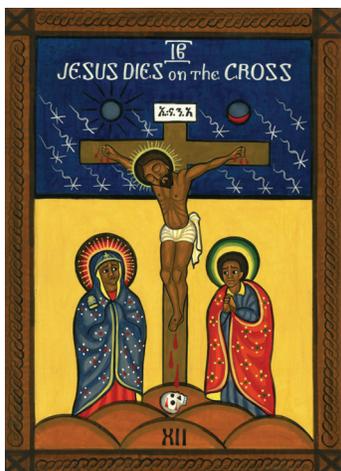
The passing of the peace at Saint Ambrose is an extrasensory experience of smiles, laughter, hugs and handshakes. One Sunday, I observed an eight-year-old

member taking the hand of another eight-year-old boy visiting Saint Ambrose, leading him to the newly installed XII Station of the Cross written in the Ethiopian iconographic tradition depicting all characters as Africans. Pointing to the icon, the young church member said, “See? Jesus looks just like you!” Both boys were African Americans. The eight-year-old made a profound theological statement. He did not say, “You look like Jesus,” meaning the human looked like the divine. He said, “Jesus looks just like you,” meaning the divine imprint was on this young African boy.

That XII Station of the Cross in the Ethiopian Orthodox Christian tradition hung as the only station in that tradition at that time. The other 13 stations were 30 years old and lithographs of stations originally painted by the Italian artist Giuseppe Vicentini, born in 1895. Jesus, in those Italian paintings, had pale skin and blond hair. That Sunday, both eight-year-olds passed four other Italian Stations of the Cross to get to the one Ethiopian Station. It was in that Station both boys saw the divine in themselves, not Jesus in the Vicentini paintings.

The journey to the Ethiopian Stations of the Cross took nearly three years. After one year of searching unsuccessfully online and in stores for ethnically diverse stations, I commissioned D.C. Christopher Gosey, an African-American icon writer, to write the stations in the Ethiopian tradition. They took two years to complete, and according to Gosey, Saint Ambrose may be the only church in the world with Stations of the Cross in the Ethiopian iconographic tradition since stations are not a part of Ethiopian spirituality. Ethiopia is an example of what I term Indigenous African Christianity, which is Christianity in Africa before European

The XII Station of the Cross in the Ethiopian Orthodox Christian tradition was long the only station in that tradition to hang in Saint Ambrose. The Most Rev. Michael Curry blessed the icons of three African American Episcopal saints, including Blessed Pauli Murray, at the church’s sesquicentennial celebration in December 2018.



colonialists and slave traders. The goal is to infuse this into the religious experience of Christians of African ancestry in the diaspora.

In addition to the Ethiopian Stations, Saint Ambrose received the gift from the Rev. Canon David W. Holland, TSSF, of three icons of three African American Episcopal saints with connections to Saint Ambrose: Blessed Anna Julia Cooper, Blessed Henry Beard Delany and Blessed Pauli Murray. Saint Ambrose celebrates two of the feast days by processing the icons to the burial sites of Blessed Cooper and Blessed Delany to offer prayers. Along with the icons, the Saint Ambrose needlepoint ministry, sponsored by the Episcopal Church Women, is making kneelers and pillows highlighting black saints such as Saint Augustine of Hippo; his mother, Saint Monnica; Blessed Henry Delany; Blessed Anna Julia Cooper and Blessed Pauli Murray. Last but not least, Christian formation examined the Sunday school materials used to educate Saint Ambrose youth, opting to abandon a long-held curriculum in order to embrace one with more diverse images.

## THE BREAKING OF BREAD

*We who are many are one body, for we all partake of the one bread.*  
*I Corinthians 10:17*

My friend is a professor at an Episcopal seminary. She once told a group, “One day in the chapel, the celebrant used baked Communion bread, having many shades of brown and black. I realized it was the first time I saw myself in the breaking of the bread.” Her comment made a profound impact on me. In 2017, I spoke with our altar guild about using whole wheat Communion bread instead of bleached white hosts. I felt disconnected placing bleached white bread into black hands.

## THE POWER OF WORDS

*The word is very near you. Deuteronomy 30:14*

Words are extremely important for what they communicate explicitly and implicitly. A scene from Spike Lee’s 1992 movie *Malcolm X* powerfully illustrates this. Brother Baines takes Malcolm to the library to look at compound words using black and white. All of the words containing black are negative: black sheep, blackmail, blackball and blackguard. The words associated with white are positive: whitewash, white magic, white knight and white lie.

Biblical dualistic language of light and dark was a convenient vehicle for mapping race. Light is white is European is good. Dark is black is African is bad. Even though there are positive images of darkness in scripture, rarely do parishioners hear them. The Ten Commandments found in Exodus 20 are read twice in the three-year lectionary cycle. Though nearly every other verse is read, both readings exclude Exodus 20:21: “Then the people stood at a distance, while Moses drew near to the thick darkness where God

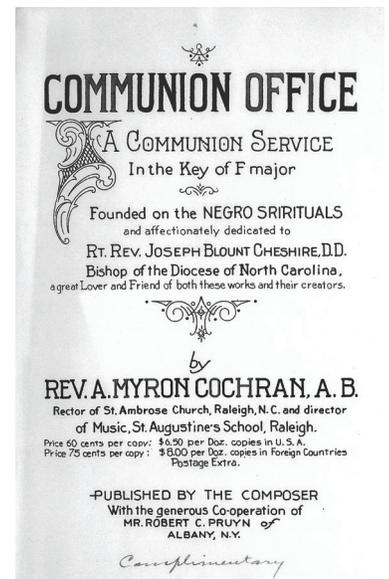
was.” Someone who faithfully attends worship will never hear that scripture giving a positive image of darkness, so I preach sermons using positive images of darkness found in the prayer book, such as the Collect for Christmas Day, and writings by Eastern Orthodox theologians that have positive images of God and darkness.

## LIFT EVERY VOICE AND SING

*Sing to the Lord a new song. Psalm 96:1*

The Rev. Arthur Myron Cochran was both rector at Saint Ambrose and director of music at Saint Augustine’s University from 1919-1928. I call him the “Quincy Jones of the early 1900s.” In 1925, he composed an Episcopal service music setting based on Negro Spirituals titled, “A Communion Service in the Key of F.” Music historians credit him with helping revitalize the worship experience for African Americans. In 2018, Saint Ambrose commissioned the Rev. William Bradley Roberts, music professor at Virginia Theological Seminary, to update the text to language consistent with the 1979 Prayer Book while maintaining the spirit of the music. Saint Ambrose uses this as the principal service music setting. In addition to the Cochran Mass, Saint Ambrose historically has the Jazz Mass, a service infusing jazz with hymns and songs in the worship context.

Saint Ambrose also critically examines hymns, and the congregation has a banned hymn list. First on that list is a hymn beloved in Episcopal congregations, “I Want to Walk as a Child of the Light,” #490 in the Hymnal 1982, with the refrain, “In him there is no darkness at all.” The refrain comes directly from I John 1:5. However, the unintended consequence is the refrain plays into the language of biblical imagery of light and dark mapping to white and black for race. It is not possible to square that hymn with Exodus 20:21 describing God dwelling in darkness. Another song on the list is popular in African American churches, “What Can Wash Away My Sin?” The refrain has the line, “O precious is that flow, that makes me white as snow.” Imagine what is it like for a church of worshiping black people to sing about being made “white as snow.” Instead of the aforementioned hymn, Saint Ambrose explores singing hymns that affirm darkness, such as #702 in the Hymnal 1982 based on Psalm 139.



Another affirming hymn is by Brian Wren, “Joyful is the Dark.”

## BAPTISM

*Marked as Christ’s own for ever. Amen.  
Baptism Service from Prayer Book, 308*

I baptized my first black person after arriving at Saint Ambrose, three years into my ordained ministry. I remember baptizing him on All Saints’ Sunday in 2012. I held this dark brown infant in my arms, wearing the baptism gown his great grandmother made. After pouring water three times over him, I placed my thumb on his forehead with chrismation oil, saying, “You are sealed by the Holy Spirit in Baptism, and marked as Christ’s own forever. Amen.”

The word “marked” carries heavy baggage for persons of African ancestry in the Western Hemisphere. During slavery, slave owners marked or branded enslaved Africans, showing ownership. Some American religious leaders in the 19<sup>th</sup> century, including Episcopal bishops, pointed that Africans bore the “Curse or Mark of Ham.” This mark was the “dark skin and wide nose.” Those espousing that doctrine used Genesis 9 as the basis for their belief, and others as the justification of racism and the enslavement of Africans. Even today, black people in the American context are marked subjects, victims of racial profiling and gun violence. In the black person’s psyche, marked is a loaded term.

Yet in the context of baptism and chrismation, death and destruction are brought into new life. The word “marked,” which in prior and current times meant slavery, cursed, without soul and death, in the context of baptism becomes the promise that God marks us as God’s own.

In order to punctuate signs of God’s abundant grace and love, the clergy baptize babies naked, submerging them in a 22-gallon baptismal font. For chrismation, the clergy anoints the infant with at least four cups of holy oil. The parents rub the oil over the infant’s entire body for all to see holy oil on black bodies. The aroma of the oil fills the worship space.

## WORSHIP

*Worship the LORD in the beauty of holiness. Psalm 96:6*

Worship is central to the Christian’s life, and liturgical practices can be disrupters to the legacy of white supremacy, instead reaffirming our connection to the divine. Sunday of the Passion: Palm Sunday launches Holy Week at Saint Ambrose with a procession through the neighborhood with a mammoth donkey, Ethiopian umbrellas covering someone holding the Blessed Sacrament, procession of an Ethiopian icon of the Triumphal Entry, Ethiopian processional crosses and a New Orleans big band playing “Ride on King Jesus.” The Wednesday night Tenebrae service is an invitation into the darkness. The Good Friday Stations of the Cross



The Palm Sunday processional at Saint Ambrose includes Ethiopian umbrellas covering someone holding the Blessed Sacrament, procession of an Ethiopian icon of the Triumphal Entry and Ethiopian processional crosses. Photos courtesy of Saint Ambrose, Raleigh

integrates the singing of Negro Spirituals between the Stations. Throughout the rest of the liturgical year, Saint Ambrose has an Epiphany service of Lessons and Spirituals, an Ethiopian Evensong, and Blessed Martin Luther King, Jr. and Blessed Absalom Jones Sundays, and we have an active liturgical dance ministry.

The congregation worships outside on several occasions. One is a Holy Eucharist at Pullen Park under an oak tree, acknowledging the fact that many African American churches began outside, worshiping under hush harbors and brush arbors. We worship annually on North Topsail Beach, the location of the former Episcopal Colored Retreat Camp, one of the few beaches where African Americans could own property during segregation. Other worship services throughout the year honor our church’s members, contributions and legacy.

One parishioner recently said, “The way Jesus is depicted at Saint Ambrose makes Jesus relatable to me as a black woman and deepens my personal relationship with God.”

Saint Ambrose strives to disrupt the legacy of racism and white supremacy present when churches gather to worship, and it is something every congregation can do. Unexamined and misunderstood church practices can do more to reinforce racism than disrupt it. We need disruptive preaching, teaching, hymns, images and liturgical practices. We are all God’s children, and in ensuring Christian practices reflect every one of us, the goal is to help lead all Christians into a deeper and more authentic experience of God through Jesus Christ.

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*The Rev. Jemonde Taylor is the rector of Saint Ambrose, Raleigh, and a member of a five-person group recently awarded a \$400,000 grant from the Henry Luce Foundation to do a film and multimedia project on gentrification, race and theological education and practice. Contact him at [jtaylor@stambroserraleigh.org](mailto:jtaylor@stambroserraleigh.org).*

By Carol Ann Krebs

# CHANGING THE FACE OF JESUS

*Christ's Beloved Community (CBC) is a dual-denominational, bilingual, multiethnic worshiping community in Winston-Salem. Those who visit see all the wonderful diversity of its congregation reflected in a huge mural completed in 2019 by artist Carol Ann Krebs. An intentional statement about and tribute to the beauty to be found in every one of God's children, the mural has sparked a surprising range of emotion and reaction while opening channels of communication for conversations long overdue. Here the artist shares some of the thought process that went into her creation along with the life the mural has taken on since its completion.*

The mural embodies my own spiritual transformation and racial awakening over the last several years. I'd wanted to use visual arts to challenge racism and promote dialog about racial issues in the Church by depicting people of color as holy and divine, and when Christ's Beloved Community (CBC) approached me about the mural, I had an opportunity to do so.

When the offer first came in 2017, we were talking about simply helping a newly formed Episcopal [and Lutheran] community renovate an older building. But when CBC received a grant, the scope of the project grew. At approximately 14 feet long and 7 ½ feet high, the mural

is by far the largest painting I have ever attempted. Early conversations with church leadership led to the decision to compose the mural around several biblical themes rather than a single scene. I asked church members for their favorite Bible stories and images of God, then presented a draft to the Rev. Chantal McKinney for approval. I started actual work on the wall in August 2018 and finished painting February 2019. From its conception, I had a number of goals for the mural that became increasingly complex as I progressed.

## MAKING A STATEMENT

I wanted the mural to be a visual Bible study. I intentionally referenced more than 50 verses or passages with a hope viewers will see even more. I meant interpretations to be fluid, so I deliberately created ambiguity between many figures, such as who is giving and who is receiving. I wanted people to get what they needed in the moment or see different meanings at different times as the church and individuals in it grew and changed.

Even more, I wanted people who never see themselves on the walls or windows of a church to see themselves shown as holy and beautiful. The mural intentionally reaches



beyond the typical white representations included in church art. For example, for the angels, I consciously chose models with very different body types and ethnic backgrounds, and of varying ages. I wanted to affirm people of color by featuring them prominently in the mural and to encourage white people to stop and think because, too often, we don't. People of color are conspicuously absent from religious art.

I designed the mural to address this and elevate some of the very people still marginalized or seen as a threat in this country: blacks, Hispanics, Middle Eastern men, multiracial individuals and interracial couples. I wanted viewers to see themselves in and relate to the images, even if the image and the viewer didn't look alike.

The mural is literally the community that surrounds CBC. Every figure is drawn from a real person. Using real people as models had incredible symbolic value. If we understand the holy people of God are the people all around us, perhaps we will see each other differently. Often, I think we don't really see each other at all. But if people know my paintings are based on actual people in the community, maybe they will look around them and think, "Is that Jesus?" or "Could she be an angel?"

## BLACK JESUS

Of course, Jesus is the focal point, and I gave a great deal of thought to my depiction of him. I wanted a joyful Jesus. Jesus told us he came to set us free and bring us abundant life, yet in most pictures I've seen, Jesus looks solemn at best, often stern or sorrowful. I also knew from the start I wanted to portray Jesus as black.

I don't know if Jesus was, in fact, black, but I know he was not white. Historically, he couldn't have been; he was a Jew in Palestine 2,000 years ago. There is nothing wrong with portraying Jesus as white or any other color in order to relate better to him as our Lord and savior, but the problem is that over the course of hundreds of years, he has been depicted as white to the exclusion of just about everyone else. As conversations about racism continue, it's impossible not to see how depictions of Jesus as exclusively white sent a dangerous, racist message and opened the door for white supremacy to take hold in the Church.

We need a black Jesus. Especially in the United States, the Church needs a black Jesus. We need to see a black Jesus as an equal portrayal of the Son of God in all his glory and as the source of salvation. We need a black Jesus to acknowledge 400 years of depictions of white as the standard and the myth of white divinity. We need a black Jesus to reaffirm the dignity and worth of every one of God's children as a good and perfect creation.

Representing people of color as holy and divine in religious art is a good way for the Church to begin eradicating racism in our midst. If a viewer can look at the mural and understand that, it can alter their perspective

everywhere. Being able to see Jesus in a different depiction, seeing him in the face of every person on the street—that is a step that must be taken for true racial reconciliation to be possible, and it is a key step toward Becoming Beloved Community.



In this scene from Krebs's mural, it is ambiguous who is giving and who is receiving. Photos by Reggie Hall

## MIXED REACTIONS

Some might read this and think I am wrong, that racism no longer exists or there is no need for this conversation. But reactions to the mural reveal how deep racism runs, and how great our need to confront it. I have received complaints that white people "didn't feel represented" in the mural, though there are white figures alongside figures of every other ethnicity. I knew making Jesus black would offend some people, but I was surprised how they expressed it. Most white people refuse to mention the racial aspect of Jesus; they discuss the mural as art, commenting on the colors or how realistic the sand looks. Strange as it sounds, I am actually more comfortable with more blatantly racist remarks. When a woman cautiously asked, "Are the people going to stay dark?," we could talk openly about it. What do you say about sand?

Black people see the mural as a social justice statement, which was my intent. Their reaction to a black Jesus has been dramatic, and I realized I'd touched on something beyond my ability to understand as a white person, or even as the artist. One minister explained the mural offered a positive "alternative vision of how things could be." Black friends encourage me to advocate on their behalf, believing white people are more likely to listen to another white person than a black person speaking the same message. They express hope my art will change the existing narrative.

Even if white people shy away from conversation about race entirely, once they've seen the image of a black Jesus, they can't un-see it. The mural plants a seed I hope will grow, and if white people allow themselves to be uncomfortable for a while, I think it will. The end of one's comfort zone offers a place for great personal growth. Hopefully, the mural creates space within people where all races can flourish.

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# AN EFFORT TO MAKE A DIFFERENCE

*Standing Committee commits to eradicating white supremacy from the power structures of our diocese*

White supremacy has infected even the holiest moments of my life. I was converted and baptized as an undergraduate at Sewanee, known more often in those days as “The University of the South.” The beauty of the neo-gothic architecture of All Saints’, the cathedral-sized, stone university chapel in the middle of campus, called to me. The gorgeous sculpture and stained glass, the first-rate organ and choir, and the beautifully executed, transcendent liturgy drew me in. I learned the riches of the Christian faith and its prayer practices through the Catechumenate class, and wise, articulate clergy became key mentors in my life. I first discerned a call to ordained ministry while standing in the back of that chapel as a sacristan, and I was baptized at the Great Vigil of Easter in its font.

This all took place approximately 75 yards south of Rebel’s Rest, an 1866 building named by a founding bishop of the university; 150 yards south of a large stone memorial to a slave-owning Confederate general and university benefactor; and within view of a stained glass Confederate seal and a plaque honoring a slave-owning bishop and benefactor. In other words, my conversion, baptism and call to ordained ministry, while the work of the Holy Spirit of the living God, were all significantly sponsored and funded by white supremacy and its legacy. I share this not with guilt as a white person, but with a deep, crushing sadness as a Christian.

## INNER AUDIT

Such was the story I shared with fellow members of the Standing Committee as we began our antiracism workshop in November 2019. Earlier that year, the Standing Committee discerned a need to examine the effects of white supremacy on the work of our committee. The canonical duties of Standing Committee include interviewing postulants and candidates for Holy Orders and approving (or denying) the real estate



The members of the Standing Committee, circa 2019: Richard Taylor, Kim Dockery, the Rev. David Frazelle, the Rev. Sally French, Reid Joyner (on screen), the Rev. Sallie Simpson (on screen), Meg McCann, the Rt. Rev. Sam Rodman, the Rev. Jemonde Taylor, Carolyn Beranek (term started 2020). Not pictured: the Rev. Hector Sintim. Photo by Summerlee Walter

transactions of our congregations. We became aware of our diocesan history of barriers to ordination faced by non-white postulants, as well as the barriers to real estate transactions requested by historically black congregations. We learned about the closure of three of our historically black congregations in the past 12 years. We became suspicious of our own work, wary of unconscious bias and the possibility we might be complicit in perpetuating systemic racism in the power structures of our diocese. We needed help.

With the support of the Rt. Rev. Sam Rodman, we engaged the Rev. Jabriel Ballentine, an Episcopal priest with long and rich experience in teaching, preaching and leading workshops on the eradication of white supremacy from the Church. His, and our, point of departure was white supremacy exists and has been deeply woven into western Christianity for centuries, especially since Pope Alexander VI’s *Inter Caetera*, issued in 1493. (This papal bull articulated the Doctrine of Discovery, which justified and sanctioned the seizure of the land, property and bodies of black and brown people as part of the official doctrine of the Church in the West.) So we spent no time or energy trying to convince anyone that white supremacy

exists and that it might, possibly, affect us. Rather, we began with a common understanding that white supremacy does exist, and it is incredibly sinful, heretical and destructive. This starting point was key because it allowed us to devote our time to naming the worst ways white supremacy affects us now and plotting how we will repent and address its most pernicious effects.

Over the course of the workshop, we shared stories, many of which echoed my own in terms of trying to understand the legacy of racism in our spiritual roots. We worshiped at Chapel of the Cross, Chapel Hill, a moving and relevant site for this work, as it contains much of the paradox of The Episcopal Church's history of race relations. Built by the slaves of the founding rector, the Rev. Willam Mercer Green, it is also the chapel in which Blessed Pauli Murray—granddaughter of a slave who used to sit in its segregated gallery, civil rights activist and attorney, skilled author, the first black female Episcopal priest and the first woman of any race to celebrate communion in North Carolina—celebrated her first Eucharist. During the workshop we also worked to identify the primary ways we see white supremacy at work in our diocese. After lengthy discussion, we narrowed the list to three chief problems on which we would agree to work, generating ideas and action steps on how to repent and make amends.

## THE CONVERSATIONS

We approached the conversation in groups, each focusing on one of the three identified areas. The first of them focused on opening access to the power structures at the center of our diocese, especially our own: the Standing Committee. We examined shifting the meeting schedule and format to increase accessibility to people who cannot take a day off work every month. We asked how we could make sure potential candidates for Standing Committee know they can be reimbursed for travel and even lodging for face-to-face meetings. We discussed generally how to create a committee culture that provides the flexibility to overcome some of the obstacles that prevent interested people from participating.

In a second group, we deliberated possible corrections to the unequal distribution of money and human resources in the diocese. The Diocese of New York, Virginia Theological Seminary and Princeton Theological Seminary have all dedicated a portion of their endowments to reparations for slavery. We pondered if we could do something similar. Could we modify the fair share formula for our diocesan asking to make reparations for historic inequities? When a historically black congregation closes, could we use the proceeds from the property to develop black clergy and congregations or to

address the shocking pay gap between clergy positions in majority-white and historically black congregations?

The third group tackled white supremacy at the very heart of what we do as a Church: our worship. We discussed how we can disrupt or add counterpoints to images of Arian Jesus and his Nordic disciples in our stained glass, sculpture and other artwork. We asked how we can make sure children of all races see themselves reflected in our educational materials. We discussed how to remove bias from language of light and darkness in our liturgy and in our lectionary. We wondered whether people of color would see themselves more easily in the Eucharist if we stopped using bleached white hosts. Overall, we asked how can we, as a diocese and as a church, subvert the imagery and trappings of white supremacy in our worship and in our houses of worship?

The discussion was rich, deep, honest and sometimes painful. But it was also sincere. We didn't find answers to the questions we asked and discussed, but the work is only beginning. The sin of white supremacy infects even the holiest spaces and moments of our ecclesial life. Looking at that truth and trying to do something about it is hard, holy work. The Standing Committee is committed to continuing to do this work at the heart of our diocesan structures, and in 2020 we plan to invite other diocesan leadership bodies to join us. We have received funding to pursue two more workshops, one in late spring and one in early fall, and we hope to work with folks from the Racial Justice and Reconciliation Committee and Diocesan Council to plan and build them. We ask your prayers. We ask you to join this work in the way that is right for you in your communities, using the excellent resources our diocese supports. And we ask that when you see white supremacy corroding the Church we all love, you speak up for the sake of the unity that is ours in Christ through the Spirit.



Carolyn Beranek and the Rev. Cathy Deats were elected to the Standing Committee during the 204<sup>th</sup> Annual Convention.

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By the Rt. Rev. Anne Hodges-Copple

## THE PARADOXICAL NATURE OF LIGHT

For many years I gathered with students, faculty and staff in Duke Chapel for Morning Prayer. It was rarely a large group, but we could count on a regular five to eight people, often more. We welcomed the light of the candles in the darkness of the side chapel, even as the morning light increased in the stained-glass windows. One of the blessings of our corporate prayer was singing the canticles. The acoustics of Duke Chapel nicely enhanced and amplified our froggy early morning voices. Though we used setting from several sources, mostly we used the Hymnal 1982, which included one of my favorite canticles: S-223, The Third Song of Isaiah.

*Arise, shine; for your light has come, and the glory of the LORD has dawned upon you. For behold, darkness covers the land; deep gloom enshrouds the peoples. But over you the Lord will rise, and his glory appear upon you. (Isaiah 60:1-2)*

In the early morning hours, I welcomed the image of God's "dawning" upon us. The musical setting provided a lovely and gentle two notes for the final word of each phrase, allowing it to be drawn out just a bit more. The tune is not mournful or melancholy, but there is a yearning spirit to it, a hopefulness that doesn't deny the presence of trouble. Singing the canticle for years allowed me to ponder how light and glory and darkness can exist all at once. I could see around me how "deep gloom enshrouds

the peoples," and yet, against all odds, the glory of God rises as a beacon of hope and promise, guiding all nations and people to wholeness. I could see around me the people who kept walking toward the light of Christ by the light of Christ. These same folks, however, never walked away from those who sat in darkness. Oh, the paradoxes of light and dark and the mystery of God's presence.

### SEASONAL SHIFT

We are currently in between the Feast of Epiphany and the start of Lent. As we shift from one season to the other, it is a good time to think about how the journey of the wise ones, illuminated by a star, changes into the Way of the Cross, illuminated by the light of Christ.

In addition to being the introduction to The Third Song of Isaiah, Isaiah 60:1-6 is the first reading for the Feast of Epiphany. It speaks of kings "streaming" to the light of God, bringing gold and frankincense. Regrettably, the Feast of Epiphany gets lost in the club sandwich of feast days that starts with Christmas Day and continues to the Baptism of Our Lord on the first Sunday after Epiphany. Fortunately, songs about the arrival of the wise visitors from the East bearing gifts for the newborn king are sprinkled into late Christmas celebrations. Epiphany builds upon Advent's prophetic theme: the light of Christ has come into the world, making God's love for all nations



and people manifest or visible to every power of the world.

The incarnation of God's love in Jesus of Nazareth changes everything. Wise kings and long-suffering people of the nations "get it." Despots of the world like King Herod the Great or, later, King Herod Agrippa, don't. God issues the invitation to all but without taking away individual agency. The choice is ours: collaborate with the creator of all things or resist. And, yes, resistance is an option, but there is no stopping what God has set in motion: a salvation intended for all creation. We either can participate in ways that bring us (and others!) life, or we can pretend there is some way other than the Way of Love.

Epiphany is one kind of call to action: "Arise, shine, for your light has come!" It's not enough to behold the light; it's time to walk *in* the light. Epiphany also anticipates that even as the light of Christ moves out across the world, there is still a shadow side to life. How do we navigate our way through the cycles of light and dark, sin and grace, comfort and heartbreak? The light of Christ enlightens our minds, cures our blindness and illuminates our path, yet the presence of the darkness in hunger, prisons, violence, depravity and depression persists.

The natural, terrestrial movement of light itself reflects the paradox. As the northern-hemisphere winter light gives way to spring light, the reverse will be true in the southern hemisphere. When my own life seems to be going well, I

won't separate myself from the suffering of others. When I suffer, though, I want the Lord to "shield the joyous." I know that my Christian companions keep faith with me in prayer and the empathy of solidarity in the Cross.

### **A DIFFERENT ROAD**

The Epiphany reading from Matthew concludes this way: "And having been warned in a dream not to return to Herod, [the wise men] left for their own country by another road." (Matthew 2:12) As the celebration of Epiphany wanes, we start to prepare for a different liturgical season: the Lenten journey of the Way of the Cross. It is a very different road, yet it, too, continues to illuminate the paradoxes we found during Epiphany. We know there are mountains to climb ahead, like the transfiguration at Mount Tabor, betrayal on the Mount of Olives and death upon the Mount of Calvary. The Word became flesh and brought joy to the world, but Lent reminds us the Body of Christ exerts its power in the lives of disciples who understand the joy of humbly following Jesus into hard places of great testing.

Walking in love does not mean walking away from human suffering. As the collect for Good Friday puts it, *Almighty God, whose most dear Son went not up to joy but first he suffered pain, and entered not into glory before he was crucified: Mercifully grant that we, walking in the*

*way of the cross, may find it none other than the way of life and peace...*" (BCP p. 272)

Joy and pain, glory and ignoble death, an instrument of death becoming the sign of eternal life; each season of the Church calendar shows us the paradoxical nature of God's being in the world. The light of Christ reaches both its nadir and its zenith in the cross. All of this helps us to keep putting one foot in front of the other as we walk through social and political divisions that threaten to drive us toward our worst, rather than our best, selves.

## RECLAIMING THE PARADOX

As we embrace the way the seemingly paradoxical natures of Epiphany and Lent are in reality two parts of the same journey, we should address and reclaim another apparent paradox that is also, in reality, one. Specifically, the use of "light" and "dark" in our theological and liturgical vocabulary.

Profound conversations around race with my fellow clergy revealed how the metaphors of light and dark, when used as referents for good and evil, have been used both intentionally and unintentionally to cast a sinister veil over people of color. As we examine how racism is systemic in our institutions and embedded in our hidden bias, the language of light and dark deserves scrutiny. If "light" is viewed as representing "good" and dark is viewed as representing "bad," we risk some people not feeling truly welcomed and affirmed in our liturgies.

The truth is neither light nor dark is all good or all bad. They are inherently neither, and both are necessary for full illumination. Sometimes too much light makes it hard to see, and sometimes turning down other forms of light, actually sitting in darkness, such as in a theater, helps us to see better what is most important: the main act. Both are needed to see all, and both are needed within every one of us to complete the journey God has set before us.

## LIVING OUT THE PROPHECY

Our diocesan priority to become beloved community is the living out of the prophetic voice of Isaiah to arise and address today's challenges in the light of the Gospel of Jesus Christ.

I see this priority manifest in disciples carrying the light of Christ as they enter into some of the most complicated and pain-filled areas of the human condition. Whether walking with those affected by the crisis of human migration across the world or the outright hostility rained upon immigrants, it helps to recall Isaiah: "Violence will no more be heard in your land, ruin or destruction within your borders. You will call your walls Salvation and your gates Praise." (Isaiah 60:18)

This narrative of non-violence with walls of salvation

and portals of sanctuary offers safe harbor and gives no quarter to hate. It is a narrative counter to the prevailing norms of our world today.

Despite the increase in raised voices around the world, I am grateful to be accompanying another group of pilgrims to the Holy Land (afedj.org) this winter. As our country continues to wrestle with the enduring legacy of slavery—America's original sin—it is heartening to see so many of our churches planning pilgrimages to the National Memorial for Peace and Justice in Montgomery, Alabama (museumandmemorial.eji.org).

As we continue to be shocked by the inequities of our criminal justice system, I am grateful for the many good works of those involved in prison ministries like the Yokefellows and the Bishop's Committee on Prison Ministry and their advocacy for pretrial release reforms (*Disciple*, Summer 2019).

## MAKING ALL THINGS NEW

Here is one final thought about the paradoxical nature of light in our Church seasons. For those of us in the northern hemisphere, Lent starts in mid-to-late winter. We sometimes associate Lent with a kind of spiritual heaviness; in reality, the days are getting longer and the nights shorter. Almost imperceptibly, more "light" is coming into our world, and bare limbs are making ready to bring forth new signs of life.

We need to be careful about drawing too close a parallel between the natural course of the earthly life and the miraculous nature of God's power to overcome death. But I can't help feeling that as winter gives way to spring, God is making all things new. God is doing new things, in sometimes imperceptible ways. Just as a new life gestates in the divine darkness of a mother's womb, and just as a leafless tree in winter is actively preparing new buds of new life, so is God at work in us and in our world.

Lent 2020 will not be a repeat of spring 2019 or any other spring. God is calling us anew to lift up our heads, hearts and voices in recognition that salvation is at hand. Lent is a different way of contemplating the good news that belonging to the Body of Christ prepares us for all the challenges ahead. For in God's great plan of salvation,

*The sun shall no longer be your light by day, nor for brightness shall the moon give light to you by night; but the LORD will be your everlasting light and your God will be your glory. Your sun shall no more go down, or your moon withdraw itself; for the LORD will be your everlasting light, and your days of mourning shall be ended.*  
(Isaiah 60:19-20)

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By Summerlee Walter

# WELCOME TO PARISH STATUS, ST. TITUS' AND TRINITY!





Scenes in the lives of St. Titus', Durham (next page and top of previous page) and Trinity, Fuquay-Varina (above and bottom of previous page). Photos courtesy of St. Titus', Durham, and Trinity, Fuquay-Varina

During the 204<sup>th</sup> Annual Convention, the Diocese of North Carolina welcomed two mission congregations to parish status. St. Titus', Durham, and Trinity, Fuquay-Varina, both met the constitutional and canonical requirements to gather signatures from 100 or more confirmed adult communicants in good standing and written testimonials from the rectors or vicars of local congregations; they were received by the Convention with raucous applause.

On the Saturday morning of Convention, in two distinct ceremonies reflective of their respective churches, dozens of members of each congregation processed into the convention hall to standing ovations. The people of Trinity entered to the hymn “Joyful, Joyful (We Adore Thee)” and the people of St. Titus’ to “We’ve Come This Far by Faith.” Representatives of each congregation then took a few minutes to share their churches’ stories, which we’ve included below, as slideshows highlighting their ministries played on the convention hall’s screens.

### TRINITY, FUQUAY-VARINA

The congregation of Trinity, Fuquay-Varina, is about as tenacious as congregations get. From the church’s founding until today, strong lay leadership maintained the

congregation during both lean times—including nearly 25 years of supply clergy from 1959 until the mid-80s—and times of growth. At the time of the church’s founding in 1956, the 19 confirmed Episcopalians gathered in Fuquay-Varina were undeterred by the Diocese’s requirement that they acquire 20 signatures; one member simply called his son home from college to sign the petition. An even smaller group of 11 members fought to keep Trinity alive when 10 years ago their priest left with the majority of the congregation to start an Anglican Church down the street.

One decade and 900% membership growth later, Trinity attracts new visitors every week. Located in a rapidly growing area on the south side of Fuquay-Varina with new neighborhoods springing up regularly, Trinity has capitalized on the opportunity to welcome new families and visitors from other religious traditions. The church has done so through an active outreach ministry.

Now Trinity is making plans for additional seating, more space for an expanding Christian education program and a new youth group that began this year. They have done all this with a part-time interim priest, the Rev. Susan Keedy. The church is also rightfully proud that every building and land purchase has been paid before purchase or construction, and the congregation intends to continue



that legacy as Trinity grows into the next phase of its mission and ministry.

### ST. TITUS', DURHAM

The Rev. Stephanie Yancy got one of Convention's biggest rounds of applause when she introduced herself as the rector of St. Titus'—"for all of 24 hours," in recognition the congregation, which became a parish in 1972 and returned to mission status in 2012, had come full circle. Everyone who attended the 203<sup>rd</sup> Annual Convention in 2018 or watched it via livestream heard a portion of St. Titus' story of contending with the obstacles presented by institutional racism in The Episcopal Church. St. Titus' started as a Sunday school in the 1880s, and the congregation worked hard to attain parish status decades later.

When Yancy arrived in 2015, she found a dedicated core of members who were determined to continue the congregation's good work, regardless of their mission status. With the help of Yancy and the church's deacon, the Rev. Sarah Woodard, St. Titus' formed long-sought relationships with North Carolina Central University and C. C. Spaulding Elementary, located next door to the church. The church has also drawn in young families and children, recently starting a Catechesis of the Good

Shepherd program.

As the congregation grew, Yancy was able to increase her commitment from half time to three-quarter time to full time. She echoed a sentiment shared by the people of Trinity, that the Holy Spirit had moved the church into position to do the work they had been given to do.

### EXAMPLES FOR THE ENTIRE DIOCESE

Despite serious challenges and occasional disappointments throughout the years, St. Titus' and Trinity remind us that the Spirit moves everywhere, and through God all things are indeed possible. While reaching parish status is cause for celebration, it is not the finish line; both churches still have plenty of good work to do in their congregations and communities. Having done so much with, at times, so few resources, Trinity and St. Titus' both are poised to accomplish even more good as they continue to grow and thrive, walking by faith with the knowledge the entire Diocese is praying for them and cheering them into the future.

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## Until we read again...

**REGISTER** your youth for Bishops' Ball, Happening #66 and Genesis (page 9).

**LISTEN** to the Diocese of North Carolina's first-ever podcast, "And Also With Y'all" hosted by the Rev. James Franklin (page 9).

**JOIN** a diocesan pilgrimage to Costa Rica March 23-April 2 or Botswana September 17-28 (pages 9-10).

**READ** *Jesus and the Disinherited* or *Waking Up White: And Finding Myself in the Story of Race* as part of a diocesan-wide book read during Lent (page 30).