

Winter 2021



The North Carolina DISCIPLE

ABOUT
VACCINES

STANDING
AGAINST HATE

AFFORDABLE
HOUSING

THE 205TH
ANNUAL CONVENTION



The North Carolina
DISCIPLE

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

The Episcopal Diocese of North Carolina

Bishop Diocesan
The Rt. Rev. Samuel Sewall Rodman, III
sam.rodman@episdionc.org

Bishop Suffragan
The Rt. Rev. Anne E. Hodges-Copple
bishopanne@episdionc.org

PUBLISHER

Bishop Diocesan of North Carolina

EDITORIAL DIRECTOR

Christine McTaggart
christine.mctaggart@episdionc.org

MANAGING EDITOR / ART DIRECTOR

Summerlee Walter
summerlee.walter@episdionc.org

CONTRIBUTORS IN THIS ISSUE

The Rt. Rev. Sam Rodman
The Rt. Rev. Anne Hodges-Copple
Dr. Joseph L. Graves, Jr., and Chris Paul
Christine McTaggart
Summerlee Walter
The Rev. Rebecca Yarbrough

SUBSCRIPTIONS

<https://bit.ly/Disciple2Q2021>

CHANGE OF ADDRESS

communications@episdionc.org

SUBMISSIONS

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

LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

Send letters to the editor to communications@episdionc.org.

COVER PHOTO



The view of the dais from the Park & Ride Lot at the Friday Center in Chapel Hill during the 205th Annual Convention on March 6. *Inner cover:* It may look like a common parking lot, but it's Convention! *Photos by Christine McTaggart*

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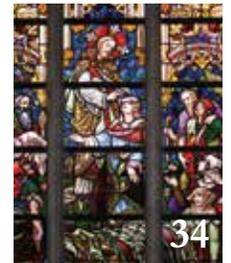
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The North Carolina Disciple is the quarterly magazine of the Episcopal Diocese of North Carolina. Other diocesan communication vehicles, including Please Note, a weekly e-newsletter, and the diocesan website, www.episdionc.org, are used for more time-sensitive,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

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

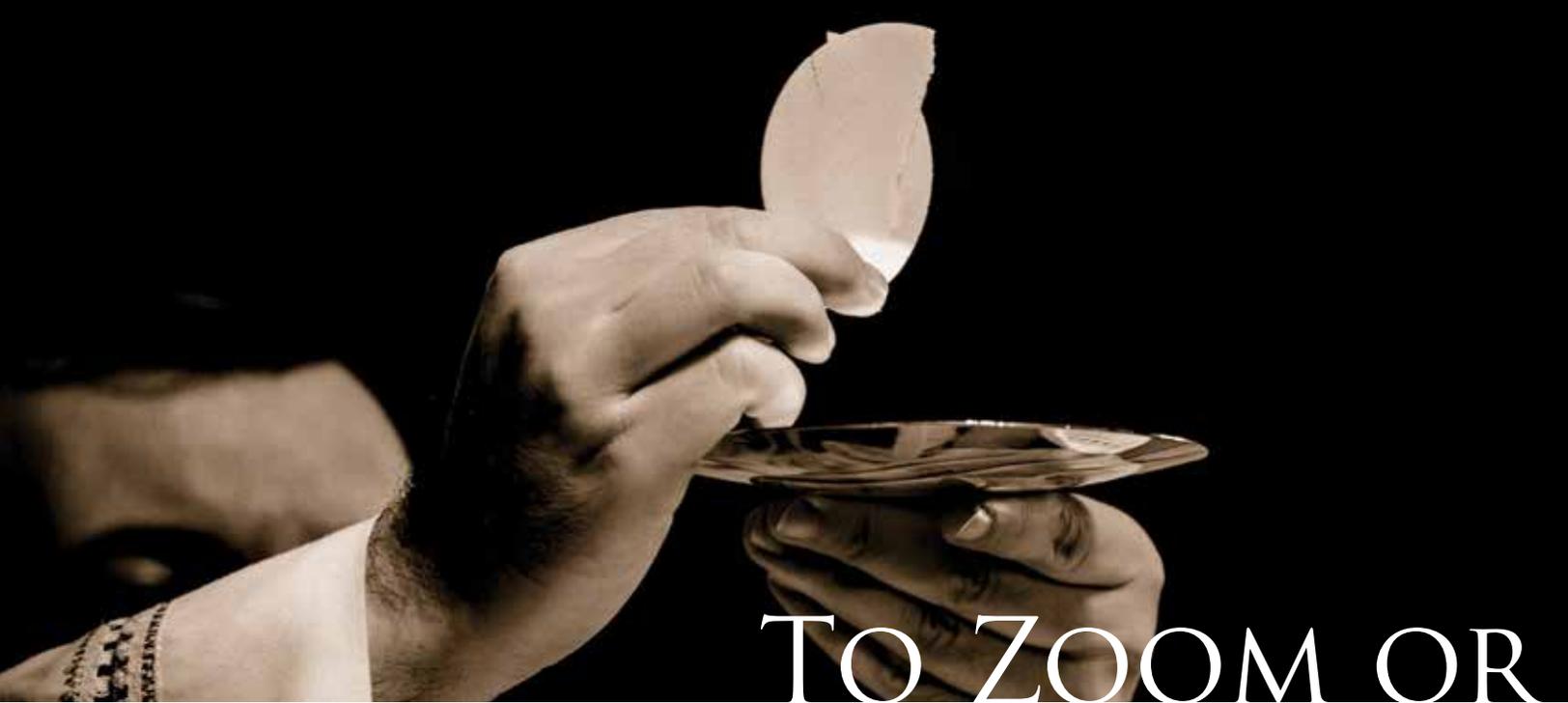


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TO ZOOM OR

One of the “side effects” of the coronavirus pandemic has been the discovery—or expansion—of our use of video conferencing as part of the new normal. Much ink already has been spilt about the pros and the cons of this new modality. As we look ahead to a time when we can begin to move about more freely and gather for worship and other opportunities for in-person fellowship and contact, I wonder what we are learning about this way of communicating that may come in handy even after we are able to meet again in person, and about how and when to continue using this tool.

EMBRACING THE DUAL MODALITY

I think we are all clear that going forward, our worship will embrace the dual modality of in-person and online gatherings to some degree. The hybrid approach, as we have come to call it, makes sense from a variety of perspectives. It can reach those who are not geographically proximate. It can connect us with those who are not able to leave their homes, for whatever reason. It can serve as a wider witness to the activity and life of our congregations and the communities we serve.

Zoom, of course, is a brand name. But if name recognition is any indicator of brand success, Zoom takes the prize, as its name has become synonymous with the activity of video conferencing no matter what brand you are using, much the way Band-Aids became identified with plastic bandages, Xerox with photocopying and Kleenex with tissues in an earlier generation. The brand itself has even been “verbed,” as Calvin and Hobbes might have put it. The word “Zoom” has become shorthand for the activity itself, of connecting a group of two or more people on a video conference. “How many

times have you Zoomed today?”

It may come as a surprise, but some of our churches have actually chosen this mode of communication over or in conjunction with Facebook, YouTube and other streaming channels because of its interactive dimension. And some of those congregations have actually grown during the pandemic. One of the big questions has been, how will that growth translate when we are no longer limited to remote contact?

And, of course, our use—or overuse—of this method of communicating has given rise to such terms as “Zoom-fatigue” and “Zoomed out,” or my personal favorite, “Zoombutt,” which is what happens when you have been sitting for too long in the same position, staring at the screen full of people in little boxes.

There are advantages, too. The cost savings in both gas and time by doing our business this way has been significant. The opportunities it creates for people to work remotely and/or from home create flexibility and savings in other ways. But how will it work for worship, or vestry meetings, or confirmation classes, or planning for the annual Christmas Fair?

These are the challenges that await us and are even now on the horizon. What will it look like to have people at church and people on Zoom as part of our Sunday morning liturgy?

AN INCARNATIONAL CONNECTION

The image that comes to mind when I ask this question is of sporting events where large screens have been set up and athletes approach the screen to celebrate after scoring a goal or a touchdown. Or shows where singers or dancers perform live and those at home are able to



The people of St. Mark's, Huntersville, gather online for a Seder meal. Photo by Kelly Pope

NOT TO ZOOM

join in real time by watching and affecting the outcome through voting and participating via social media. It is a way of bridging the gap when people are not attending the games or performances in person. But going forward, when we do have people worshipping together in our sacred spaces again, the challenge is a more significant one.

How do we connect the Body of Christ gathered in our sanctuary with the members of the Body dispersed throughout the wider community and joining us electronically?

Oddly enough, there are a couple of biblical precedents for this challenge. When the Jewish people were permitted, after decades in exile in Babylon, to return to their homeland of Israel, not everyone chose to return. One of the challenges for those who did return was to find a way to be connected to those who stayed, who later became known as the diaspora: faithful Jews living outside of Israel. It was the traditions and liturgies of their faith life that provided the connection.

Much later, in the early days of the Jesus movement, as Paul moved beyond Israel and began to share the Good News of the Gospel in Asia Minor and other parts of the Mediterranean, a similar challenge arose. What was the relationship between the Church centered in Jerusalem and the churches that had sprung up as a result of St. Paul's missionary journeys? This challenge was further complicated by the reality that many of the new converts were of gentile, not Jewish, descent.

Here again, the practice of worship played a vital and key role. Much of Paul's epistles, as well as the accounts in the Book of Acts, document these early Church challenges and struggles. Here again, the case can be made that ritual practice and customs of worship played

a major role in forging the connection.

This history suggests that, as Anglicans, we may have something particular to offer to the Church at this time as we seek ways to embody an incarnational connection between what happens in church and what is happening in our homes. In fact, it may be this connection between worship in church and worship at home is an unexpected and yet redemptive dimension of our response to the pandemic.

In the weeks and months ahead, I want to invite us, together, into this conversation. I am hopeful conversation will lead to experimentation, experimentation will lead to new models, and new models may lead us, as a Church, to create and embrace new ways of honoring the sacrament and promise of communion even as it extends to people who are not physically present in our sanctuaries.

There is a well-known hymn, the title of which is antiquated and uses language that we would not use today: "Once to Every Man and Nation." But it contains the line "[n]ew occasions teach new duties." This is such an occasion. The time is right to open up the conversation, to open our hearts to the movement of the Holy Spirit, and to reconsider the limits of our sacramental understanding in light of the limitlessness of God's grace. The time has come, the moment is now, to open up the Church to such possibilities and to consider the full potential of the gift we have been given that is at the heart of our identity as a sacramental and incarnational Church.

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

AROUND THE



The Lenten Cross outside Trinity, Mt. Airy, encourages people to stop, reflect and leave a symbol of their burdens at the foot of the cross. *Photo by the Rev. Ken Kroohs*



Puerta Abierta, a house church in Greensboro, has adapted its moveable altar to adhere to COVID-19 safety guidelines. *Photo by Jen Feather*



Online EYC at Holy Trinity, Greensboro, got super creative with Bible stories constructed in Minecraft. Youth minister Meredith Scott shared her screen on Zoom to watch and discuss a Minecraft Bible story from YouTube with her youth group, then solicited help from the youth to make her own scene. Youth then create their own stories, including Noah's Ark and the Parable of the Sower, throughout the week. *Screenshots by Meredith Scott*

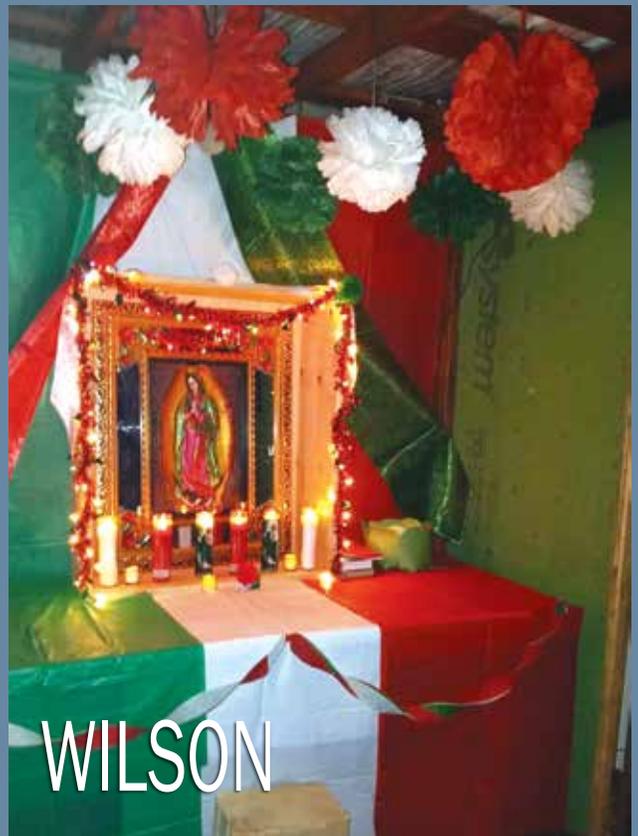
THE DIOCESE



The Rt. Rev. Anne Hodges-Copple joined the ranks of clergy leading by example and getting the COVID-19 vaccination. (See more on page 17.) *Photo courtesy of Bishop Hodges-Copple*



The 205th Annual Convention gathered in the Park & Ride Lot of the Friday Center in Chapel Hill on March 6 to conduct the business of the Diocese during our first—and hopefully only—drive-in Convention.



The people of Iglesia de la Guadalupe, Wilson, celebrated their patron saint, the Virgin of Guadalupe, on December 12, 2020, with altars like this one from a parishioner's home. *Photo courtesy of the Rev. Daniel Robayo*

NEW, NOTABLE & NEWSWORTHY

FALL 2020 CYCLE OF MISSION ENDOWMENT GRANTS AWARDED

Earlier this year, the Mission Endowment Grant Committee announced the following grant awards for the Fall 2020 Mission Endowment Grant cycle:

- **All Saints', Concord:** Scholarships for racial equity workshops. In particular, this grant covers both full and partial scholarships for trainings for people the church wants to serve on a fair housing committee in the community.
- **St. Mark's, Huntersville:** Two-year grant for the Flyin' Lion job training program. This program will teach culinary skills to people looking to enter that labor market.
- **Calvary, Wadesboro:** For renovations for an affordable housing unit as a part of the Anson County Homes of Hope.
- **La Guadalupeana, Wilson:** Two-year grant supporting a vicar to serve that congregation and wider Latino ministry in the region.

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

- strategic partnerships between diocesan and outside entities, including interfaith and secular entities,
- companion relationships, and
- partnership ministries of congregations, institutions and organizations of the Diocese.

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

DIOCESE PARTNERS WITH COMMUNITY PURCHASING ALLIANCE

In January 2021, the Diocese entered a partnership with the Community Purchasing Alliance (CPA), a cooperative network that focuses on working with companies owned by women and people of color. Among the many services available through this organization is the purchasing of PPE supplies at higher quantities and lower costs than might be found elsewhere. The cooperative works on the premise that the more is purchased, the lower the cost per unit.

The Diocese was invited to be a part of this opportunity, and the quantity costs are not dependent on what we, as a diocese, order alone. Rather, we have the opportunity each month to be part of a purchasing group, increasing the purchasing power of all.

The purchasing opportunities are available to churches as well as members of churches, whether as individuals or business owners. CPA offers one purchase window per month, and upcoming purchasing windows are:

- April 21-30
- May 19-28
- June 16-25

For more information, product availability and ordering information, visit episditionc.org/community-purchasing-alliance/.



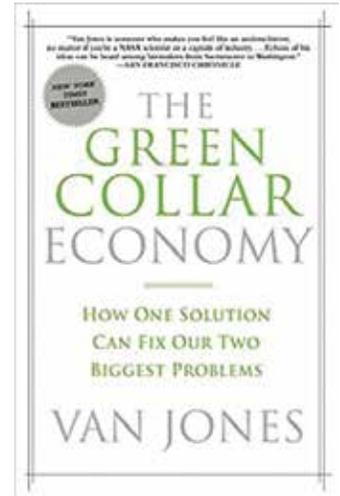
APRIL BOOK CLUB READ: 'THE GREEN COLLAR ECONOMY'

If you haven't yet checked out the new Diocese of NC Book Club Facebook group, now's a great time to do so! (Join at bit.ly/DioNCBookClub.) Every month, we discuss a title that focuses on a diocesan priority in our journey toward Becoming Beloved Community. The reading and discussion helps us go deeper with each priority, but as our time together progresses, we are gaining even greater clarity about just how intertwined our priorities are and how it takes making all of them, together, a part of our lives to build an everlasting beloved community.

To date, the book club has read and enjoyed *Love is the Way* by the Most Rev. Michael Curry, *The Color of Compromise* by Jemar Tisby and *Wearing God* by the Diocese's own the Rev. Dr. Lauren Winner. In April, we'll honor the month of Earth Day by reading *The Green Collar Economy* by Van Jones.

The Green Collar Economy looks at how both environmental and socioeconomic issues might be addressed in tandem to the benefit of all. As follows our usual pattern, the first half of the month will be dedicated to reading, and discussion questions, one per day, will begin on April 15.

We invite you to join us!



2021 DISMANTLING RACISM DATES ANNOUNCED

In 2020, the diocesan Racial Justice and Reconciliation Committee updated, redesigned and renamed "Seeing the Face of God," the previous diocesan anti-racism training program. A partnership among diocesan staff, the Racial Justice and Reconciliation Committee and notable consultants such as Dr. Catherine Meeks of the Absalom Jones Center in Atlanta, the new "Dismantling Racism: Reclaiming Our Baptismal Promise" is an interactive workshop designed to deepen spiritual commitment to dismantling racism as participants in the Jesus Movement. Through presentations, prayer, story sharing, videos and small group discussion, participants explore how the sin of racism impacts all lives.

There is no cost to register for the Zoom workshops. There is a \$15 charge for in-person workshops to cover the cost of lunch. Available registration links can be found on the individual event calendar listing at episditionc.org/events.

Upcoming training dates include:

- March 26, 5-8p.m., and March 27, 9a.m.-1p.m., via Zoom
- May 21, 9a.m.-5p.m. via Zoom
- July 31, 9a.m.-5p.m., location TBD
- September 24, 9a.m.-5p.m., location TBD
- November 12, 9a.m.-5p.m., location TBD
- January 29, 2022, 9a.m.-5p.m. location TBD

NEW FROM THE DIOCESE: ADULT CONFIRMATION CLASSES

In anticipation of outdoor confirmation services this summer, the Diocese of North Carolina is offering diocesan-wide adult confirmation preparation. The classes will take place via Zoom on Tuesdays, 7-7:45p.m. The eight-session offering begins April 6 and runs through May 25. Class materials and a Zoom link will be sent via email to

registrants a week before the class start date. Registration is open through March 26; register at bit.ly/DioNCSpring2021Confirmation.

For more information or to express interest in future dates, contact Jenny Beaumont, missioner for adult and lifelong formation, at jenny.beaumont@episditionc.org.

JENNY BEAUMONT NAMED MISSIONER FOR ADULT AND LIFELONG FORMATION

The Diocese welcomes Jenny Beaumont as the new missioner for adult and lifelong formation for the Diocese of North Carolina.

This is a new position created to affirm the diocesan commitment to our mission priority of lifelong formation. The missioner is envisioned to be a key leader in increasing the vitality and impact of Christian formation at the local, regional and diocesan levels with a focused intentionality to “make disciples who make a difference.” This position was first proposed for the 2020 budget year but postponed at the onset of the pandemic to allow the Diocese to review its priorities and make necessary adaptations to ensure long-term diocesan stability.

“Jenny Beaumont is already a highly experienced and greatly respected visionary in our diocesan leadership network for Christian formation,” said the Rt. Rev. Anne Hodges-Copple, bishop suffragan for the Diocese of North Carolina. “Not only does she come with an impressive resume of accomplishments in adult formation at the local level, she is familiar with what it takes to adapt proven materials to various contexts across our diocese.”

Beaumont’s responsibilities include reimagining Christian formation for a 21st-century context. She will draw upon and strengthen traditional platforms for in-person gatherings as well as create and utilize online models designed to expand offerings and networks across our diverse diocese. Beaumont will help coordinate efforts, strategies and approaches in adult learning, emphasizing our mission priorities.

This is not work Beaumont will do alone. She works closely with the diocesan youth missioners and other diocesan staff, the Chartered Commission for Lifelong Christian Formation, the Racial Justice and Reconciliation Committee, the Commission for the Diaconate and the Diocesan Council department for Christian formation, all of whom plan to work together to continue to build relationships and cooperative efforts with formation leaders across the diocese and the wider Church.

“We are very excited to welcome Jenny to our team and benefit from her extensive experience as an educator with a heart for mission,” said the Rt. Rev. Sam Rodman, bishop of the Diocese of North Carolina. “She brings

a depth of leadership in formation, building programs that inspire and strengthen beloved community. Her work at Christ Church, Charlotte, was grounded in the Episcopal tradition and also embraced the wider ecumenical connections she brings to her work.”

Beaumont is well-suited to lead the deepening of diocesan Christian formation, as she has spent 25 years as a skilled Christian formation leader. In her last position, she served as the director of adult spiritual formation at Christ Church, Charlotte, a position she held for 13 years after serving for 10 years as the church’s director of Christian education. In her time as the director of adult spiritual formation, she led initiatives as a digital and online facilitator/trainer, a Sacred Ground group facilitator, a race and reconciliation leader, and a national trainer for Education for Ministry (EfM) through Sewanee. She has presented at FORMA and was the lead author of *These Are Our Bodies: Talking Faith at Church and Home* and co-author of *These Are Our Bodies: Talking Faith at Church and Home: Foundation Book*, all while running a learning center created to “meet the needs of families and students [via] specific and expert support in learning.” She shared her considerable gifts with the Diocese in 2020, when she was instrumental in bringing Christian Essentials, a multi-session offering that invites participants to explore, grow and deepen their faith and life with God, to a diocesan-wide audience.

“The Christian Essentials program is an excellent example of how Jenny has already been part of our diocesan strategy as we move into a ‘new normal’ for Christian formation,” said Hodges-Copple.

Beaumont began her tenure with the Diocese on January 26.



PRAYERS FOR THE SICK AND FAITHFUL DEPARTED

During this time of uncertainty and grief, we gather in prayer to intercede for the sick and to remember the faithful departed. To add an ill or recently deceased loved one

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

NEW ROLES AND NEW FACES IN FINANCE

The Department of Finance and Administration saw a few changes during the last couple months, with two department members taking on new titles and roles while welcoming two new specialists.

Maria Gillespie, formerly the director of finance and administration, has the new title of chief financial officer of the Episcopal Diocese of North Carolina. Gillespie joined the staff of the Diocese in 2013.



A certified public accountant with a master's degree in business administration, she has been working closely with the bishops, council, trustees, investment committee and staff to support the work of furthering the missional strategies of the Diocese while maintaining its financial oversight. Her title has changed, but her goal of making sure the churches and missions of the diocese have the support they need in furthering their ministry has not. Her prior professional experience working in public accounting, coupled with her many years working in the finance department at the Diocese, is making for a wonderfully smooth transition to her new role.

Erin Sweeney has also taken on a new role, now serving as the full-time finance and benefits coordinator. She is responsible for benefits enrollments and changes, managing pension and Health Savings Account (HSA) records, and helping members with benefits questions or problems. Also responsible for overseeing the tasks related to both accounts payable and account receivable, Sweeney develops and maintains internal controls, plus oversight of accounts receivable, accounts payable and staff payroll, all while helping to maintain general ledgers,



providing assistance with the annual external audit and tending to daily office management.

Two new faces to get to know are Cathy Shearin, accounts payable specialist, and Susan Steel, accounts receivable specialist. Both are part-time staff members, working Tuesdays and Thursdays.

Shearin oversees the disbursements for the Diocese and some of its missions. She reconciles and maintains company disbursement posts and completes accounts payable-related reconciliations and audit work papers while assisting with data entry and office supply levels.



Susan Steel was born and raised in England, moving to the United States in 1989. In addition to her role of accounts receivable specialist at the Diocese, she also works part time at St. Ambrose, Raleigh, as their business manager. She has served churches in Pennsylvania, New Jersey and



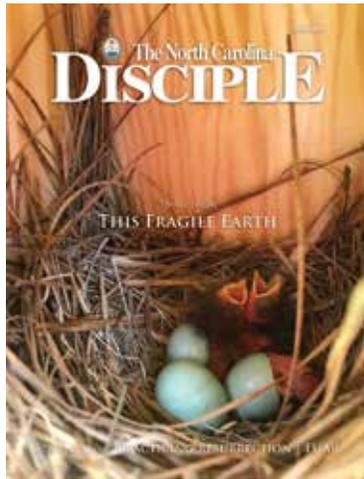
North Carolina as a bookkeeper and stewardship director. Steel oversees deposits for the Diocese and some of its missions. She reconciles and maintains company credit card receipts, posts assigned journal entries and completes accounts receivable-related reconciliations and audit work papers, all while assisting with data entry and maintaining office supply levels. Steel is an active member of Trinity, Fuquay-Varina, where she also serves as bookkeeper and supports the stewardship ministry.

The finance and administration department has always been invaluable to the Diocese, but never more so than during the last year as the team helped staff and churches alike navigate the maze of COVID-related financial matters. The team has only gotten stronger, and they look forward to continuing the diocesan mission of Becoming Beloved Community.

CONNECT WITH THE DIOCESE

The Disciple

Keep the *Disciple* coming in a couple of new ways! Download the new app (search “NC Disciple”) on Apple, Google Play or Amazon Kindle for your digital subscription, or subscribe for your ongoing print subscription at bit.ly/Disciple2Q2021.



Please Note

The weekly diocesan newsletter is a great way to stay connected with everything happening throughout the Diocese of North Carolina.

To have Please Note delivered to your inbox every Wednesday, subscribe at bit.ly/PleaseNote.



CAMINANDO WITH JESUS

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

Subscribe at bit.ly/CaminandoWithJesus.

NEW: Adult Formation Newsletter

Want more news on adult formation opportunities? Sign up for the newsletter in development—first issue coming soon!

Subscribe at bit.ly/AdultFormationNewsletter.

And Also with Y'all

If you haven't checked it out already, now is a great time to explore and become a fan of “And Also with Y'all,” the diocesan podcast created for young adults—and enjoyed by all ages—hosted by the Rev. James Franklin, the Rev. Caleb Tabor and Eliza Brinkley.



Episodes feature engaging conversations about faith, spirituality, discernment, doubt and everything in between. The hosts and their guests talk frankly about the serious and the ridiculous young adults encounter as they navigate their faith. Best of all, “And Also with Y'all” is easy to find, available on:

- the diocesan website,
- Apple podcasts,
- Google podcasts,
- Spotify and
- Stitcher.

STAY IN TOUCH

Keep up with our diocese and bishops!

 Episcopal Diocese NC
Sam Rodman Anne Hodges-Copple

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@samuelrodman @bishopanhehc

 @episdioc @bishoproductman

 www.vimeo.com/episcopalnc

REVAMPED GRANTS PAGE OFFERS ADDITIONAL RESOURCES

If your church or ministry is in need of funding for operating expenses or a new or expanded ministry, visit the Grants page on the diocesan website, episdionc.org/grants-scholarships/. There you will find an updated grants calendar that includes grants both from within the Diocese and from The Episcopal Church, as well as guidance about which grants cover what types of projects. The Common Application also has been updated, and the new, more user-friendly application is now available.

Of special note is a primer for first-time grant applicants written by the Rev. Rebecca Yarbrough, the Jesse Ball DuPont Funds grants coordinator for the Diocese. She shares her wealth of experience to guide applicants toward drafting the strongest possible case for giving when applying for funding.

DIOCESAN COUNCIL & STANDING COMMITTEE MEMBERS ELECTED

Because the 205th Annual Convention was delayed into 2021, the Standing Committee and Diocesan Council exercised their authority under the Constitution and Canons of the Diocese to elect replacements for their members whose terms ended December 31, 2020. Nominations were submitted in November, and the new members were elected and took office to serve full three-year terms as of January 1, 2021.

Elected to Diocesan Council:

- The Rev. Linda Nye (second term)
- The Rev. Jamie Pahl (second term)
- Chipper Long
- Jerry Price
- David Tamer

Elected to Standing Committee:

- The Rev. Nancy Cox
- Septina Florimonte
- Marcus Clarke

Thank you to all who offered themselves for service on diocesan governance teams.

DIOCESAN EVENTS

March

26-27 Dismantling Racism: Reclaiming Our Baptismal Promise

April

- 1 Global Mission Grants applications due
- 2 St. Luke's Episcopal Church Foundation Grant applications due
- 5 CCY Interest Meeting, 7-8p.m.
- 6 Adult Confirmation Class, weekly through May 25, 7-7:45p.m.
- 17 Dismantling Racism, Middle School Edition
- 18 Diocesan EYC, 7-8:30p.m.
- 19 Safe Church Training, Level II, 7-9p.m.
- 30 NC Episcopal Church Foundation Grant applications due

May

- 1 Green Grant applications due
- 1 CCY Senior Celebration, 10-11:30a.m.
- 16 Diocesan EYC, 7-8:30p.m.
- 21 Dismantling Racism: Reclaiming Our Baptismal Promise

June

- 15 Mission Resource Support (MRST) Clergy Salary Support Grant applications due

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



While most attendees did not have an up-close (or drone's eye) view of the proceedings, the 205th Annual Convention accomplished its goals.

THE 205TH ANNUAL CONVENTION

The 205th Annual Convention of the Episcopal Diocese of North Carolina took place on Saturday, March 6, 2021, at the Friday Center Park & Ride Lot in Chapel Hill. Using a drive-in format, attendees remained in their vehicles and listened to audio provided in English and Spanish on FM radio stations.

In addition to the business of addressing resolutions proposed to ensure the continuity of diocesan offices and the expansion of options for meetings and elections, the main order of business was the adoption of Resolution 205.5, which amended the canons to allow future diocesan conventions and annual parish meetings to incorporate teleconferencing technology as an official means of gathering.

The need for Resolution 205.5 arose as the 205th Annual Convention, originally scheduled to take place in November 2020, was postponed due to COVID-19. Before Convention took action on March 6, the canons required that diocesan conventions take place in person, something that was not possible to do safely during the pandemic. In order to accomplish the business of the Diocese, the Convention adopted Special Rules of Order,

which expired upon adjournment. In order to allow for feedback and questions from delegates, the Diocese got creative during the lead-up to Convention.

PRE-CONVENTION BUSINESS

Though the Convention itself lasted only 30 minutes, a great deal more time was dedicated to it before March 6 to ensure all who wished to follow the progress of Convention business had a chance to do so.

The 2021 budget was shared via three pre-Convention webinars, serving as the first round of the canonically required pre-Convention meetings and giving attendees the chance to ask questions and share comments. The budget presentation was also shared during a leadership call with diocesan-wide clergy and lay leaders. Lastly, an abbreviated version of the presentation was shared at the online November 21 diocesan gathering, “Behold, I am Doing a New Thing,” to ensure any delegates who had not previously seen it, did. The November gathering is also where the bishops’ traditional address took place.

Elections to positions on Standing Committee and Diocesan Council, which normally take place at

Convention, also took place during the fall. The then-current members of Standing Committee and Diocesan Council exercised their authority under the Constitution and Canons of the Diocese to elect replacements for their members whose terms ended December 31, 2020. The call for nominations went out, nominations were submitted in November, and the new members were elected and took office to serve full three-year terms as of January 1, 2021.

As the 205th Annual Convention approached, in addition to online second-round pre-Convention convocation meetings, a public meeting was offered to anyone who wished to review and discuss the proposed resolutions. That meeting was followed with a webinar conducted by Secretary of Convention Chuck Till to review the Special Rules of Order that would be in place on March 6, giving those who were to attend a chance to ask questions.

Last but not least, all delegates to Convention—clergy and lay—received regular updates since the new year with pertinent materials as they became available, as well as notices of the public meeting and webinar.

WORSHIP

Worship has always been a focal point of Convention, and this year was no different, though a creative approach was required. In the interest of keeping the gathering time as short as possible as attendees were required to stay in their vehicles, worship was offered in two pieces. First, a Liturgy of the Word with the Rt. Rev. Sam Rodman serving as preacher was pre-recorded and offered on the diocesan website, the Convention app and social media channels Saturday morning with a hope it could be enjoyed during the delegates' drive to the venue.

The Liturgy of the Table with Communion in one kind using individually wrapped wafers was celebrated at Convention itself as delegates listened to the second half of the pre-recorded liturgy, with Rodman serving as celebrant, playing over the radio. The Rt. Rev. Anne Hodges-Copple was unable to attend Convention due to a death in her family, and everyone in attendance kept her in their prayers.

THE BUSINESS OF CONVENTION

Though abbreviated, the business of Convention was conducted and completed. Voting took place via the honking of car horns, in lieu of the usual verbal or color-coded card voting systems.

In the business of Convention, the 2021 budget as adopted by Diocesan Council was affirmed.

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

- Resolution 205.1 On Amending the Constitution to Clarify the Qualifications for Standing Committee - passed on second reading
- Resolution 205.2 On Amending the Constitution for Continuation in Office by the Treasurer - passed on first reading
- Resolution 205.3 On Continuation in Office - passed
- Resolution 205.4 On the Conduct of Meetings and Voting by Remote Technology - passed
- Resolution 205.5 On Conduct of Annual or Special Conventions by Remote Technology - passed
- Resolution 205.6 On Voting in Vestry Elections at Mission Annual Meetings - passed
- Resolution 205.7 On Voting in Vestry Elections at Parish Annual Meetings - passed
- Resolution 205.8 On Adopting Supplemental Rules of Order for Use of Teleconferencing at a Convention - passed

Affirmation of elected positions went as follows:

Elected to Standing Committee (all began their terms on January 1, 2021):

- The Rev. Nancy Cox – clergy order
- Septina Florimonte – lay order
- Marcus Clarke – lay order

Elected to Diocesan Council (all began their terms on January 1, 2021):

- The Rev. Linda Nye (second term) – clergy order
- The Rev. Jamie Pahl (second term) – clergy order
- Chipper Long – lay order
- Jerry Price – lay order
- David Tamer – lay order

Before adjourning, the Convention voted to suspend the Special Rules of Order and passed a resolution of condolence for Hodges-Copple and her family.

The last order of business was to move and vote that the 206th Annual Convention will take place November 19-20, 2021.

And with that, the 205th Annual Convention was adjourned.

FINAL THOUGHTS

There is no doubt the 205th Annual Convention will always be remembered for the unique way in which it was carried out because of an extraordinary set of circumstances. But hopefully, it will also be remembered as an event that demonstrated the creativity, resiliency, dedication and faith of all involved, from the Dispatch of Business team, to diocesan staff, to, most important of all, the people of the Episcopal Diocese of North Carolina who stayed the course and made it all happen.

IN SUPPORT OF VACCINES

Vaccines are the best chance we have of stemming the COVID pandemic

Discussion around vaccines designed to protect us from COVID-19 has understandably dominated the news of late. Unfortunately, along with the promise and encouragement the vaccines hold has come a great deal of misinformation, some of which has made some people pause and consider whether or not to be vaccinated. Asking questions is a good thing, as one's health is precious and should be considered carefully. The danger lies in trying to make those decisions based on rumor or false information.

Enlisting the assistance of medical experts, the Diocese of North Carolina has worked to help parse fact from fiction and aggregate resources with the hope of helping everyone feel safe and confident about taking this most important step toward communal health. Too, we recognize the demonstrable and clear inequity of availability and distribution, so efforts have included helping everyone have access to the vaccine.

From the earliest days of the vaccine rollout, the Rt. Rev. Sam Rodman and the Rt. Rev. Anne Hodges-Copple, bishops of the Diocese of North Carolina, have been steadfast in their support of the vaccine, releasing their first public statement of support in January 2021.

A MESSAGE FROM THE BISHOPS (JAN. 2021)

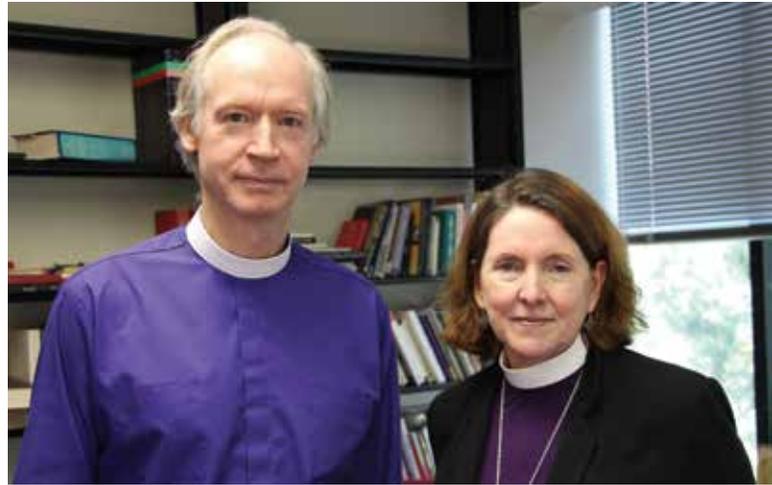
The last 10 months have been a trial for all of us, but the successful development of vaccines for COVID-19 and their approval through rigorous medical trials are reasons for hope.

With distribution of the vaccines underway, we as your bishops are committed to making reliable information available to all and to doing everything we can to ensure these life-saving vaccines' equitable and prompt distribution.

We now can move closer to a safer way of life and the opportunity eventually to gather together again. That requires action from all of us—vaccinations are what will prevent the spread of COVID-19. Until sufficient numbers of us have been vaccinated to achieve needed levels of immunity, we must remain vigilant about physical distancing, hand washing and mask wearing.

Understanding that some have concerns about the COVID-19 vaccines, we offer these reassurances:

- Vaccines are safe and effective. The Pfizer and Moderna vaccines have each been shown to be more than 90% effective.
- During the last 200 years, vaccination has controlled major communicable diseases, including polio, measles, mumps and rubella. With the exception of the provision of safe water supplies, vaccination has



The Rt. Rev. Sam Rodman and the Rt. Rev. Anne Hodges-Copple

potentially saved more lives than any other medical intervention, including antibiotics.

- Ongoing systemic racism, including in the fields of science and medicine, has left racially subordinated communities understandably concerned about new interventions. Every indication we have is that these vaccines are equally safe for all, and we join with those in health care—medical professionals from these same underserved communities among them—who are urging brown and Black people to be vaccinated as soon as possible.

We believe the church can provide significant leadership for communicating and educating about COVID-19 and vaccination. In that spirit, we formed the Diocesan Task Force on Vaccine Education, calling on experienced medical providers, scientists and educators in our diocese who will take the lead in identifying educational resources along with information about access to vaccines in all parts of our diocese. Task force members include:

- Maureen Flak, parish nurse, public health advocate and task force chair
- The Rev. Scott Balderson, deacon and physician assistant with the Duke Hospital Department of Surgery
- Ann Bauer, epidemiologist and assistant research professor at the UNC School of Medicine
- Dawn Beazer, parish nurse at Holy Spirit and Abundant Life Ministries, Greensboro; registered nurse; and retired nurse practitioner

- Dr. Joseph L. Graves, Jr., professor at NC A&T University; Ph.D. in evolutionary, environmental and systematic biology; and associate director, Triangle Center for Evolutionary Medicine
- Dr. James Horton, physician at Atrium in Charlotte and infectious diseases specialist
- Chris Paul, Ph.D., assistant professor of public administration at NC Central University, and director of the Masters of Public Administration program and health policy specialization
- The Rev. Sallie Simpson, deacon and campus minister at Saint Augustine’s University, and retired nurse

Other diocesan leaders support and supplement their work. We encourage clergy to organize town halls or other educational events to answer parishioners’ questions. For those who wish assistance, the task force has provided resources and access to medical and scientific professionals who are willing to participate in events to answer questions about vaccination.

Two resources currently available from the NC Department of Health and Human Services include a ready-made downloadable slideshow presentation about vaccines and a video library with various voices advocating taking the vaccine. (Diocesan videos with a similar message are also now available.) *The New England Journal of Medicine* has also compiled an excellent resource addressing frequently asked questions. In addition, a small step each parish can take is to share information about vaccination availability in their county.

We mourn with those in need of comfort, grieving the costs of this pandemic in the loss of more than 500,000 precious children of God, impacts to health that will not be resolved quickly or easily, and lives indefinitely disrupted. We also give thanks to the scientists and health care professionals, farmworkers and grocery store clerks, teachers and other essential workers who sacrificially continue to serve the welfare of us all even at the risk of their well-being.

Let us never forget that we are all in this together. St. Paul writes in the 12th chapter of his First Letter to the Corinthians:

“Just as a body, though one, has many parts, but all its many parts form one body, so it is with Christ. For we were all baptized by one Spirit so as to form one body—whether Jews or Gentiles, slave or free—and we were all given the one Spirit to drink. Even so the body is not made up of one part but of many.”

We may not all be of one mind about vaccination. That’s understandable. But let us be of the same Spirit in seeking not only the welfare of our individual selves,



The Rev. Sallie Simpson, Dr. Joseph L. Graves, Jr., the Rev. Daniel Robayo and the Rev. Lorraine Ljunggren shared their COVID-19 vaccination photos to demonstrate the safety of the vaccines.

or our own households, but also in seeking the welfare of our wider communities—in fact, the whole global community.

- The Rt. Rev. Sam Rodman and the Rt. Rev. Anne Hodges-Copple

ADDRESSING CONCERNS

The Diocesan Task Force on Vaccine Education offers answers and resources

The Diocesan Task Force on Vaccine Education spent the early days of its work in conversation with clergy and church leaders to identify the most pressing questions related to the vaccine. The overwhelming concern was availability, with questions about the vaccine itself falling into the broad categories of safety, effectiveness, viability of the collective effort, values and resources.

SAFETY

Vaccines have saved more lives than virtually every public health measure other than clean drinking water. The COVID-19 vaccines have been shown to be very safe.

RESOURCES

General Information Resources

NC Department of Health and Human Services (NCDHHS): nc.gov/covid19

Center for Disease Control:

cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/vaccines

Diocese of North Carolina:

episdionc.org/coronavirus-vaccine-resources

Find a Spot to Get Your Shot

yourspotyourshot.nc.gov | 1-888-675-4567

A great resource from NCDHHS is “Find a Spot to Get Your Shot.” With links on the most current information, groups eligible for the vaccine, assistance in finding a vaccination location and a COVID-19 Vaccine Help Center hotline (1-888-675-4567).

**Task Force Tip: If you are able to obtain a spot on a vaccination waitlist, take the spot! This is proving effective at obtaining an appointment.*

One-Stop Resources

If you find the amount of information relating to vaccines exhausting, the Diocese of North Carolina has a single link to provide you with general information videos to share with your congregation, access to other shareable materials for social media and bulletins, links to key information sources and more. Visit episdionc.org/coronavirus-vaccine-resources/.

The risk of dying from COVID is real and can become much, much worse if we don’t get people vaccinated as soon as possible.

- Vaccines, including the COVID-19 vaccines, are very safe, especially compared to the very serious danger of the disease.
- You cannot get COVID-19 from the vaccines.
- These vaccines are based on decades of research.
- The multiple phases of vaccine trials involved very large numbers (tens of thousands) of people in many countries, including the United States.
- Serious side effects from being vaccinated are very rare. Side effects that do occur generally are mild in the form of soreness and fatigue.
- Allergic reactions to the vaccine are rare and treatable.
- The Moderna and Pfizer vaccines use RNA technologies. These vaccines do not alter your DNA.
- The vaccines produce a protein that trains your immune system to recognize the spike protein of the virus.
- The vaccines contain only the RNA to produce the protein and do not contain any microchips or other means of “tracking” individuals.

EFFECTIVENESS

All of the COVID-19 vaccines have been shown to be very effective at reducing the risk of dying or serious disease (requiring hospitalization) resulting from the virus. You are about 60,000 times more likely to die from COVID-19 than you are to have a serious reaction to the COVID-19 vaccination.

Vaccines are important tools but they cannot end this pandemic by themselves. We must continue with the 3W’s—wear a mask, wash your hands and wait at a distance—to get the spread under control.

- All of the approved COVID-19 vaccines are very effective at reducing risks from COVID-19.
- When combined with distancing, masks and hygiene, vaccines are an extremely important tool in controlling the pandemic.
- The different approved “brands” of the vaccine all achieve a high level of effectiveness, including reducing incidence of the disease, the level of severity and the chance of hospitalization.

- Even though the variants of COVID present new risks, the vaccines retain some effectiveness against them.
- Scientists continue to sequence and develop revised vaccines to respond to the variants.

COLLECTIVE EFFORT

We beat the virus only by banding together. COVID-19 does not discriminate. It will make you sick or kill you regardless of your age, gender, religion or socially defined race. But acting together and deploying the vaccine (with the 3W's) we can control this pandemic.

- All of us who can get a vaccine help reduce the danger of COVID-19 to our entire community, and it gets us closer to being able to gather again.
- Herd immunity requires a supermajority of the population to be vaccinated.
- Mass immunization is part of the strategy to reach herd immunity, in addition to other efforts to reduce transmission.
- The focus of the vaccination effort is to control the pandemic and reduce death and severe disease.

PERSONAL CHOICE AND VALUES

We choose vaccination to protect our families, friends and folks we don't even know. As the Church, we have to pay special attention to those who cannot advocate for themselves. We must improve access to vaccination to the historically underserved. This is both a morally and a medically sound choice.

- Even once you are vaccinated, it is still possible to contract and transmit the disease, though much less likely.
- It is important to continue the three W's: Wear, Wait, Wash
 - o Wear a cloth mask over your nose and mouth.
 - o Wait six feet apart. Avoid close contact.
 - o Wash your hands or use hand sanitizer.

RESOURCES AND HELPING OTHERS

If you have specific questions about vaccination and your health, speak to your doctor. The NC Department of Health and Human Services (NCDHHS) has important resources to help answer your questions about health and access to care.

- It is important we and our churches support efforts to get vaccines to those most vulnerable.
- Your doctor and NCDHHS are important resources for specific questions about your health and access to care.
- The vaccine has been prioritized for the highest risk populations, aimed first at exposure to health care workers, reducing the high risk of death in

HOW CAN YOU HELP?

With the greatest challenges to mass vaccination being the ability to understand the facts about vaccines and to obtain appointments to receive one, there are several ways you can help both your church family and your community neighbors:

- **Share the information.** Post available videos, and supplement them with your own message.
- **Organize informational opportunities.** If your congregation or local community still has questions related to the vaccine, offer an online meeting and contact the Diocese to enlist a knowledgeable advocate to come and answer questions.
- **Offer to help with appointments.**
 - o If members of your congregation or neighbors do not have access to computers or the confidence to navigate the appointment system, enlist volunteers to take on the task. With just a bit of information, volunteers can make appointments on others' behalf. If you are serving a community member without an email address or phone number, consider creating a general email address you can monitor for notifications on their behalf. (Just be sure you can reach them if a notification arrives.)
 - o Similarly, hold times when making appointments by phone can be time some can't spare. Enlist volunteers to assist with this method of appointment-making as well.
- **Sign up to be a vaccination location (bit.ly/BeAVaccinationSite).**
- **Share your shot.** When you get your shot, take a photo and add it to the diocesan Instagram campaign, using the hashtag #GotMyShotNC.

older adults, and then frontline workers (including farmworkers, teachers and clergy).

- Special efforts are being made to make sure all populations, especially minorities, get equitable access to vaccines.

MISSION POSSIBLE

The Mission Priority Task Force works to define path to Becoming Beloved Community

It's fair to say the pandemic brought the best-laid plans for 2020 to a screeching halt last March. Work that began in earnest in January and February was placed on temporary hold as the world went into what we all thought was going to be a brief lockdown to bring under control the spread of the COVID-19 virus. As it quickly became apparent that a few short weeks wouldn't be nearly enough to accomplish the task, the scramble to adapt to a new way of life began.

It was no different for the Diocese of North Carolina. What started as a "time out" of sorts became a surreal realization we were now, for an indeterminate future, a remote work force. Momentum built in the early months of 2020 came to a halt as attention was turned to figuring out how to live an online life, stay connected with churches across the Diocese and process the overwhelming amount of changing information that flowed daily. Throughout

the spring and summer, diocesan staff and church leaders worked together to learn how to bring worship online, keep congregations connected and safe, navigate the often confusing maze of resources and financial assistance, and, always, live into loving our neighbors, even as the ways we could do that seemed to shift constantly.

The spring and summer months of 2020 required flexibility and adaptability on a scale many had not lived through before. But as we settled into pandemic life and the summer turned to fall, an intentional decision was made to shift away from the "reaction" mode in which we'd been living and return to the "proactive" approach with which we'd begun the year.

A RETURN TO OUR ORIGINAL PROGRAMMING

At the 204th Annual Convention of the Diocese of North Carolina in November 2019, the Rt. Rev. Sam Rodman outlined in his address the work that had happened over the preceding two years in our journey to Becoming Beloved Community, noting that only together would that work continue, for "you are our holy partners in this heavenly calling." During the course of that Convention, plans were outlined for taking the next steps in our mission priorities.

That work began in earnest at the start of 2020. Traditionally a time when several retreats are held for various bodies of diocesan leadership, the beginning of 2020 featured three: the diocesan Team of Teams (bishops, canons, missionaries, finance and communications); a joint retreat of the Diocesan Council and Standing Committee; and a full-day retreat with all diocesan staff.

The purpose of those meetings, among specific business relating to the groups, was to spend time with diocesan priority areas and discuss goals, approaches and more. The intent was to gather the input and wisdom of these three particular groups and use the conversations as the foundation for the diocesan mission strategy.

Each group received a presentation that included information and materials to start a conversation around the true definition of diversity and inclusivity as well as discussion around the difference between change and transformation, the latter being the long-term goal of moving toward Becoming Beloved Community.

Following the presentation, three areas of diocesan mission priorities were brought forward for discussion and goal-setting. The three areas receiving focus were racial justice and reconciliation, collaboration and new commu-

MEET THE TASK FORCE (TO DATE)

- The Rt. Rev. Sam Rodman (Bishop)
- The Rt. Rev. Anne Hodges-Copple (Bishop Suffragan)
- The Rev. Canon Earnest Graham (Diocesan Staff; Regional Canon)
- Sue Guptill (Diocesan Council; St. Philip's, Durham)
- Gwen High (St. Peter's, Charlotte)
- The Rev. Harrell Johnson (Episcopal Farmworkers Ministry)
- Kelli London (St. Matthias', Louisburg)
- The Rev. Sallie Simpson (Standing Committee; Saint Augustine's University, Raleigh)
- The Rev. Jemonde Taylor (Standing Committee; St. Ambrose, Raleigh)
- The Rev. Kathy Walker (Diocesan Staff; Missioner for Black Ministries)
- The Rev. Rebecca Yarbrough (Diocesan Council; Chapel of Christ the King, Charlotte)

ADDITIONAL CONTRIBUTORS

- The Rev. Canon David Sellery (Diocesan Staff; Canon for Congregational Mission)
- Christine McTaggart (Diocesan Staff; Communications Director)



nities, and congregations and vulnerable communities. It was made clear formation and creation care remain equally important, but the goals set forth for the three named priorities would inform the work of the other two.

During each retreat, participants broke into subgroups, with everyone choosing the area to which they felt most strongly called. From there, goals were proposed for that particular area, timelines put forward, existing resources identified and potential obstacles named.

The work of these retreats was then compiled and shared with all who had taken part. It was clear at the end of this process that great energy was in place, as well as a desire to set a clear path with tangible timelines and measurable goals. Last, but perhaps most important of all, there was a desire to ensure a broad spectrum of voices were a part of that path's creation, so the work was truly a collective diocesan effort and not a hierarchical directive.

The creation of the Mission Strategy Task Force was ready to begin.

INVITING VOICES

The Mission Strategy Task Force was imagined as a group comprised of two members each from diocesan staff, the Standing Committee and Diocesan Council, plus four at-large parishioners from across the Diocese. The hope was, with a broad range of voices and experience, the goals would reflect and include all in our roadmap toward Becoming Beloved Community.

“The process was designed from its inception to be a collective, grassroots effort of the Diocese, rather than a top-down approach,” said the Rt. Rev. Sam Rodman, bishop of the Diocese of North Carolina. “With that as our guiding principle, we needed as many voices included in that group as possible, while creating room to invite still more as the task force work developed.”

The assembly of the Mission Strategy Task Force began in the first days of March 2020 and understandably was halted when the pandemic came to the forefront of our lives and became the center of thoughts and attention for months. But as summer waned and fall approached, the momentum lost earlier in the year was restarted as conversation turned once again to leaning in to our planning and resuming the work of defining our next steps.

Those who expressed interest in serving early on quickly affirmed they were ready to go. Invitations were extended far and wide to fill additional spots, and, in the early meetings, it was clear that the first step was to share the work of the tri-diocesan retreats with the wider Diocese and invite deeper conversation. The venue selected was the online diocesan celebration on November 21, where members of the task force presented what was learned and discussed at the retreats, the questions that emerged, and the steps the task

force intended to take in the ensuing months. The several hundred attendees of the gathering were then invited into breakout rooms related to several topics around mission priorities, where room leaders gathered the feedback to take back to the task force.

CORE VALUES AND THEOLOGICAL FOUNDATION

When the task force began regular meetings following the November gathering, the first order of business was not to delve into cementing goals and timelines. Rather, the first several gatherings centered on conversation around our core values and theological foundation, discerning what they meant to those on the task force and the role they would play in the strategy to be created. The conversations were deep, rich, candid and faithful, proving to be an invaluable step in the development process.

Over the ensuing months, those conversations continued along with discussions about the actual process of strategic development, and almost exactly a year after the work was interrupted, the task force turned its focus to beginning the next-step, deeper work of the subgroups, every one of which focuses on a missional priority area:

- Racial Reconciliation and Social Justice,
- Congregational Support,
- Collaboration and New Communities,
- Formation and
- Creation Care.

The members of the subgroups will not do the work alone and expect to present opportunities to see the plan-building in progress and solicit feedback between now and the formal presentation at the 206th Annual Convention in November 2021. As it's been said all along, the journey to Becoming Beloved Community is one we are on together, and the process of developing our next strategic steps is one that invites all to add their voices to it.

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

A SAFE AND DIGNIFIED HOME FOR ALL GOD'S CHILDREN

Bishop's Committee on Affordable Housing engages in direct service and advocacy

During the 204th Annual Convention in November 2019, the Diocese of North Carolina passed a resolution establishing the Bishop's Committee on Affordable Housing "to support missions and parishes in following the Biblical call to become Beloved Community, which includes taking action to ensure that all of God's children have good, safe, and dignified places to live and thrive." To accomplish their goals, the committee has recruited a powerful team of volunteers (see sidebar) with expertise in a variety of housing program models. While members support and lead affordable housing ministries in their own communities, they also advocate for state and local policies to reduce the need for direct services by passing legislation to create and protect safe, affordable housing options for everyone. Their efforts have grown only more necessary since the advent of the COVID-19 pandemic and the resultant economic downturn.

According to the National Low Income Housing Coalition, to afford a modest, two-bedroom rental home in North Carolina, someone would need either to earn the two-bedroom housing wage of at least \$17.67 per hour or to work 97 hours per week at the current minimum wage of \$7.25 per hour. That is not a typo; for a minimum wage-earning employee—a single parent with children, for example—to afford a modest two-bedroom rental in North Carolina, that person would need to work 97 hours per week, more than double the customary 40-hour work week, to afford a safe place to live. Further, this scenario assumes the rental unit is listed at fair market rent, or \$919 per month for a two-bedroom apartment or single-family home. Anyone who has shopped for a rental in one of North Carolina's metro areas during the past few years recognizes how difficult it is to find such a unit.

There is, of course, regional variation throughout the state. In the Winston-Salem metro area, where Convention was gathered when it passed the 2019 affordable housing resolution, the housing wage for a two-bedroom home is \$14.67 per hour; in Raleigh, where Diocesan House is located, that housing wage is \$22.37. While the more rural parts of the state—Halifax County,

for example—have lower rents, the two-bedroom housing wage is still almost double the minimum wage: \$13.85 per hour.

These statistics, harrowing though they are, assume steady, full- or more-than-full-time employment. For the 6.1% of North Carolinians who are unemployed—or, put another way, the 37,000 people in the Raleigh area, the 19,000 people in Winston-Salem and the 2,403 people in Halifax County who, as of this writing, are unemployed—finding affordable housing is an even more daunting task.¹

The Bishop's Committee on Affordable Housing seeks to address the affordable housing crisis with an awareness of our diocesan journey toward Becoming Beloved Community, especially the diocesan priorities of racial equity and creation care. As the committee describes in the forthcoming publication, "Becoming Beloved Community: Good Homes for All God's Children: A Guidebook for Housing Ministries in the Diocese of North Carolina," "[r]edlining laws restricted lending in African American neighborhoods, covenants prohibited sales to people of color, 'blight' removal smashed proud communities, industrial contamination and 'dumps' created environmental hazards, predatory lending strips equity, gaps between housing costs and income result in evictions, deteriorating conditions are health risks." On the environmental front, new subdivisions destroy natural habitats, and suburbs placed far from commercial centers increase emissions from long daily commutes.

Another of our diocesan priorities—collaboration—offers a means of increasing the supply of affordable housing through partnerships with neighborhood associations and homeowners, other churches and nonprofits, local governments, health systems and schools. Members of the committee are already modeling collaboration both within the committee and in their own communities.

"It's really exciting. We've got tremendous energy and expertise, and it's just really, really gratifying to see how the members are inspiring each other, and advising each other, and learning from each other," the Rev. Beth

¹U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics, most recent date from December 2020, extracted March 4



The petite exterior of a 360-square foot PeeWee Home hides a surprisingly roomy interior, as demonstrated by the kitchen. Photos by the Rev. Lisa Fischbeck

McKee-Huger, co-chair of the committee, said. “We want to take that same learning and inspiration to the broader Church now that we’ve got a strong start with the members of the committee.”

One major initiative of the committee is the aforementioned handbook, which includes inspiring examples, concrete guidance and contact people for launching or supporting a variety of affordable housing ministries, as well as suggestions for advocacy. The guidebook is dedicated to late committee member and passionate advocate for justice in housing Angie Forde of St. Martin’s, Charlotte. It will become available on the diocesan website later in the spring, but, for those ready to engage in affordable housing ministry now, read on for stories of direct service and advocacy.

CREATING AFFORDABLE HOUSING

One of the most obvious ways to increase affordable housing opportunities in a community is to build more affordable housing. (This assumes, of course, that local policies allow for affordable housing, but more on that later.) Several churches in the Diocese have taken on this challenge.

The people of Church of the Advocate, Chapel Hill, literally invited neighbors to live on the church’s 15-acre property through a collaboration with PeeWee Homes Inc., which builds tiny homes (less than 360 square feet in area) and rents them to people with a history of homelessness. To help tenants build equity, rent is set on a sliding scale not to exceed one-third of tenants’ monthly income. The rent averages \$200-\$250 per month, which pays for a building manager, maintenance and upkeep, and a portion of each monthly payment is held in escrow for the renter as an emergency fund or to help them transition to their next home.

MEET THE COMMITTEE

- The Rev. Beth McKee-Huger, co-chair
- Mary Recca Todd, co-chair, St. Michael’s Raleigh
- Fritz Healy, Emmanuel, Southern Pines
- Stephen (Chipper) Long, Calvary, Wadesboro
- Blake Strayhorn, Christ Church, Raleigh; director of housing impact at Reinvestment Partners and former executive director of Habitat for Humanity of Durham
- Allison Kratt, St. John’s, Charlotte
- Bill Dowse, Durham; retired from the North Carolina Housing Finance Agency
- Pamela Haynes, Trinity, Statesville
- Robert Kucab, Raleigh; retired executive director of the North Carolina Housing Finance Agency
- The Rev. Rebecca Yarbrough
- Al Benschhoff, All Saints’, Concord
- Pat Patterson, St. Patrick’s, Mooresville; apartment property manager
- Andy Scott, Holy Trinity, Greensboro
- The Rev. Dr. Michael Bell, Presiding Elder, Wilson District, AME Zion Church
- The Rev. Emily Parker, Christ Church, Charlotte
- Mav Hankey, Southern Pines
- The late Angie Forde, St. Martin’s, Charlotte, to whom the new handbook is dedicated

“The Advocate neither spends nor received money on the project,” the Rev. Lisa Fischbeck, vicar of the Advocate, said. “The goal is sustainability.”

While another church interested in partnering with PeeWee Homes or a similar organization might opt to fund construction with a loan, the Advocate opted to raise the funds up front through a variety of sources, including the Town of Chapel Hill, a class from the Kenan Flagler Business at the University of North Carolina-Chapel Hill, a \$10,000 Mission Endowment Grant, foundations and individual donors.

In addition to building three tiny homes and leasing the buildings and land beneath them to PeeWee Homes, the people of the Advocate provide neighbors and friendship to the tenants. And the cluster of PeeWee homes is a true neighborhood, where residents fish the pond stocked with bass, brim and catfish or enjoy the vegetable garden and more than 1,000 native grasses and wildflowers planted around the pond and throughout five acres as part of the Piedmont Patch Project to transform the Advocate’s land into a food-producing natural habitat.

In Anson County, Calvary, Wadesboro, and other churches created Anson County Homes of Hope, an offshoot of Stanly County Homes of Hope, because so many applicants to the latter program lived in Anson

County. Led by board president and member of Calvary Chipper Long, the group incorporated with the state of North Carolina in March 2018 and has since purchased and refurbished a duplex. They are now converting a second building into three units. Anson County Homes of Hope takes a flexible approach to providing affordable housing solutions, offering transitional housing in addition to short- and long-term affordable housing, depending on a tenant’s needs.

The transitional housing program, for example, serves residents for six months, with rent and utilities covered in full for the first three months. During the last three months of their stay, residents pay \$50, \$75 and \$100, respectively, in rent. During that six-month stay, Homes of Hope also matches up to \$500 in a resident’s savings. Importantly, everyone Homes of Hope serves, whether through emergency shelter, transitional housing or affordable housing, meets regularly with a case manager who provides additional support in attaining and remaining in affordable housing.

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

Like PeeWee Homes, Anson County Homes of Hope is a collaboration among Episcopal, governmental and



The before and after of a kitchen refurbishment in the Anson County Homes of Hope duplex. *Photos by Chipper Long*

private groups. The project has received two diocesan Mission Endowment Grants: \$25,000 during the fall 2017 cycle to purchase the original duplex and a second grant during the fall 2020 cycle to renovate the triplex. Other community partners include the Sandhills Community Action Project (SCAB), Stanly County Homes of Hope, Sandhills Community Housing Project, the North Carolina Housing Finance Agency, Braswell Trust and Calvary, which applied for the Mission Endowment grants and provides free office space in the former domestic violence shelter occupying the lower level of the church.

While the Advocate and Calvary have increased affordable housing options in their respective communities through creative partnerships and novel housing models, many churches throughout the Diocese have long-standing partnerships with local Habitat for Humanity affiliates. The barrier to entry on these projects is low, as Habitat for Humanity provides a proven model, construction expertise and vetting for prospective homeowners. Congregations and other organizations help fund the cost of construction and provide volunteers to build homes alongside the homeowners (and under professional supervision). Volunteers as young as 16 are welcome on construction sites, making Habitat for Humanity an appealing option for youth groups as well as adult volunteers. Those who are not comfortable with a hammer and nails can instead raise funds or provide meals for builders.

Because building a home is a major undertaking, Habitat for Humanity builds typically require partnerships among churches and community groups. In 2015, the Diocese and St. Luke's, Durham, led the entire Durham Convocation, interfaith partners and local universities in constructing the Bishop Johnson Hospitality House a Durham Habitat Build to honor the memory of the Rt. Rev. Robert Johnson. Diocesan churches in other cities and convocations have engaged in similar partnerships throughout the years, building hundreds of affordable homes for lower-income homeowners throughout the Diocese.

KEEPING LONG-TIME RESIDENTS HOME

In the historically Black Optimist Park neighborhood of Charlotte, where rapid gentrification has spiked property values during the last decade, property taxes have more than tripled since many homeowners bought their homes. The result is many long-time homeowners being priced out of the community. The Chapel of Christ the King, Charlotte, is preserving homeownership for owners of Habitat for Humanity homes in the neighborhood. The church's Optimist



A Habitat for Humanity wall raising. Archival photo

GETTING STARTED

If you're interested in getting started with one of the ministry models described on these pages, the Bishop's Committee on Affordable Housing has identified ways to learn more:

- **PeeWee Homes:** Contact the Rev. Lisa Fischbeck at lisa.fischbeck@gmail.com, or learn more at peeweehomes.org.
- **Homes of Hope:** Contact Chipper Long at chipperlongnc@gmail.com.
- **Habitat for Humanity:** Contact Blake Strayhorn at blakestrayhorn@gmail.com, or find your local affiliate at habitat.org/volunteer/near-you/find-your-local-habitat.
- **Property Tax Relief:** Contact the Rev. Reggie Payne-Wiens at fatherreggie@chapelofchristtheking.org or the Rev. Rebecca Yarbrough at ryarb1@outlook.com.
- **Advocacy:** Contact the Rev. Beth McKee-Huger at bethmckeehuger@outlook.com.
- **Mattress Ministry:** Contact Traci Scott at connection@saintmargarets.net.
- **Circles of Support:** Contact Sharon Mitchell at Sharon.Mitchell@raldioc.org.



Members of St. Margaret's, Waxhaw, sort clothing at the Community Shelter of Union County. The church's relationship with the shelter led to the creation of their new mattress ministry. *Photo courtesy of St. Margaret's, Waxhaw*

Park Emergency Tax Relief Fund, steered by a committee composed of two members of the Chapel, the president of the Optimist Park Community Association and the fund's main fundraiser, covers a portion of property taxes for homeowners who cannot absorb the increase on their own. In its first year, the fund assisted 11 homeowners with their tax payments. The contributions are paid directly to the taxing authority, while homeowners receive education concerning how to negotiate if they are pressured to sell their property for redevelopment. Chapel of Christ the King offered one such training in February 2020 and plans to offer more in the future, along with Habitat for Humanity's financial literacy training.

"There's nothing like being able to call a homeowner who didn't know how in the world she was going to be able to pay her tax bill, and letting her know her application was approved, and being told that you just MADE her Christmas," the Rev. Rebecca Yarbrough, deacon at Chapel of Christ the King, said.

The church is aware the Tax Relief Fund, while significant, is only a temporary fix. To address the underlying need will require tax changes to provide greater relief to long-time residents of neighborhoods that are gentrifying. Such changes require advocacy.

ADVOCATING FOR CHANGE

St. Barnabas, Holy Spirit and All Saints', Greensboro,

have pushed back against local efforts to block proposals for nearby affordable housing developments and deny zoning requests to allow multifamily residential. (Zoning laws that limit housing density are a round-about way of limiting affordable housing by decreasing the efficiency of land use.) To address these housing inequities, the people of St. Barnabas discussed racial barriers to housing during adult formation. As a result, member Christine Merriman advocated for the housing proposal in her neighborhood association meeting,

the zoning commission and city council. The people of Holy Spirit saw a zoning notice sign next to the church and welcomed the affordable housing developer to the community. Members of All Saints and nearby Methodist, Presbyterian and Lutheran churches are planning ways to welcome new neighbors once a third proposed affordable housing development is completed, thus normalizing affordable housing in the neighborhood.

Welcoming residents of affordable housing is critical, especially when a community is hostile to affordable housing developments.

BEING GOOD NEIGHBORS

St. Margaret's, Waxhaw recently started a fund to buy beds for clients who are moving out of the Community Shelter of Union County and into permanent housing. As of the end of February, the church collected \$1,400 and, through a wholesale contact, purchased seven full-size bed sets. With the six mattresses previously purchased through outreach funds, the church has provided an essential piece of furniture to 13 people re-establishing themselves in permanent housing. This work is made possible due to a parishioner who connected Traci Scott, assistant to the rector for outreach and parish connection, to a wholesaler, with whom they were able to negotiate a discounted price on mattresses purchased as part of the program.

“When we join together, we are able to do great things in our community,” Scott said.

At St. Michael’s, Raleigh, Family Support Circles help families access an array of services to help them become self-sufficient. In partnership with Catholic Charities, a team of 8-12 parishioners works directly with a family for one year as they work toward permanent housing, access to a rental voucher, if necessary, and employment. The church provides one-third of the rent, plus encouragement and relationships.

The ministries highlighted in these pages represent only a fraction of the ways churches engage around the housing crisis in their communities. From church-based emergency shelter programs to rent assistance, food and clothing drives to formation programs about the ongoing effects of systemic racism across sectors, churches address both the causes and effects of the affordable housing crisis.

The Bishop’s Committee on Affordable Housing sums up the biblical call of this work as follows:

In the Baptismal Covenant, we renew our commitment to continue in the prayers and Apostles’ teaching of Jesus’ call. We persevere in resisting evil and return to God, confessing that, in thought, word, and deed, by what we have done, and by what we have left undone, we have not loved our neighbors as ourselves and have left some without housing. We proclaim in word and example the Good News of God’s love. We seek and serve Christ in all persons, loving all our neighbors as ourselves. And we strive for justice and peace among all people, respecting the dignity of every human being.

Despite the enormity of the challenge, the affordable housing crisis gives churches the opportunity to improve lives in real and tangible ways.

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

AREAS FOR ADVOCACY

Housing Trust Fund: North Carolina has a Housing Trust Fund to encourage creative development of affordable housing. It is distributed through the N.C. Housing Finance Agency (nchfa.com). The North Carolina General Assembly currently does not fund this as an ongoing budgetary priority, and it is frequently underfunded.

You can find contact information for your state senator or house member at ncleg.net.

Local Zoning Issues and Strategic Housing Plans:

Land is a substantial challenge for development, and it is increasingly difficult to find land that is affordable, suitable for development and located near employment, schools and medical care. Local zoning ordinances requiring larger lots per home or limiting multifamily construction curtail the possibility of affordable housing.

Learn more about advocating for progressive land use policies through the “Cost of Home” platform at habitat.org.

Predatory Lending: People with limited income or living in areas with a history of disinvestment face barriers to standard financing for mortgages, home equity loans or other lending. Borrowers may be offered loans with high interest rates, hidden fees or deceptive features. Subprime mortgages strip equity from homeowners who find they owe more than the property is worth.

Learn more about advocating for responsible lending at responsiblelending.org.

Fair Housing, Segregation and Gentrification:

Racial segregation and deteriorating housing conditions are some of the legacies of redlining. Foreclosed homes from subprime lending can create lower property values, which attract investors who flip homes so that they are no longer affordable or who rent the homes “as is.”

Learn more about fair housing issues at fairhousingnc.org.

To research additional federal or state housing issues, visit:

- National Low Income Housing Coalition | nlihc.org
- North Carolina Housing Coalition | nchc.org
- Habitat for Humanity | habitat.org
- NC Coalition to End Homelessness | nceh.org



A work group from St. Timothy's, Winston-Salem, served at Iglesia La Ascención a few years pre-pandemic. The congregation of Iglesia de Santiago worships per COVID protocols. Photos courtesy of the Rev. Rebecca Yarbrough

By the Rev. Rebecca Yarbrough

CONTINUING COMPANIONSHIP

Even in a time of COVID, our companion relationships continue

Since 1997, the Episcopal Diocese of North Carolina has had a companion relationship with Iglesia Episcopal Costarricense, the Diocese of Costa Rica. A major aim of the companionship has been to establish and maintain person-to-person, church-to-church and diocese-to-diocese relationships between the two. The resulting partnerships have enabled a large number of participants from each country to strengthen their own faith, form lasting friendships and learn about each other's cultures as they proclaim the Good News of Jesus Christ through their engagement in exchanges, education, construction and renovation projects, as well as worshiping and celebrating together.

PANDEMIC IMPACT

Over the past year, Costa Rica, like the United States, has been dealing with the coronavirus pandemic. Costa Rica's excellent health system and organized national response put it on a par with New Zealand as one of the best "managers" of early spread. However, like the U.S., Costa Rica saw spikes, as well as increased spread, of COVID-19 during the fall and winter. The Diocese of Costa Rica closed its churches for several months, and in only some cases, including Iglesia La Ascención in Desamparados, were congregations able to worship via Zoom or

livestreaming. San Marcos School in Limón operated with a skeleton crew of teachers and students. Fortunately, the Hogar Escuelas in Barrio Cuba and Heredia, were able to remain open with excellent sanitation protocols in place, so they have had very few cases of COVID-19 and been able to continue to serve their many students whose parents need day care, preschool and after-school care.

And like the U.S., Costa Rica experienced economic repercussions. Costa Rica was, pre-pandemic, a major tourist destination and retirement site, drawing travelers from around the globe to its beautiful beaches, volcanic parks, rainforests and ecological diversity. The pandemic brought the tourism industry to a screeching halt, resulting in layoffs and drastically reduced hours for most tourism industry workers. It also forced the cancellation of the 2020 Diocesan Pilgrimage to Costa Rica, as well as virtually all work pilgrimages—the last groups to go made their visits in February 2020. The trickle-down impacts of reduced family incomes were felt by individual congregations of Iglesia Episcopal Costarricense, as well as by the Diocese, which experienced significant financial stress.

STAYING CLOSE

However, the Dioceses of North Carolina and Texas, Costa Rica's other companion diocese, remained in close

contact with the Diocese of Costa Rica throughout the pandemic. Though our former companion diocese officer, (CDO) Allie Norman, had to return to the U.S. in June, she facilitated a number of calls with the Rt. Rev. Orlando Gómez, bishop of the Diocese of Costa Rica, that enabled our diocese and a number of congregations and individuals to stay abreast of what was happening there and to offer both prayers and financial support. Through our diocesan Costa Rica Companion Diocese Committee and Global Missions Committee, we were able to provide major assistance, as was the Diocese of Texas through their Global Missions Board. Additionally, we were able to stay in touch with our Costa Rican friends through Facebook, through Messenger, and through phone calls and regular meetings on Zoom. Throughout the pandemic, our Costa Rica compañeros prayed for us, and we for them; this has been important, as they have been suffering from isolation just as we have. The availability and distribution of COVID-19 vaccines in both our countries represent, perhaps, the light at the end of a very long, dark tunnel, through which, thanks be to God, we were able to stay in touch.

We hope that later in 2021 or early 2022, we will be able to return to the wonderful work pilgrimages that volunteer groups from our diocese have made to Costa Rica to work with churches, church-run schools and groups there on a variety of projects selected by Bishop Orlando. We hope that groups from Costa Rica will be able to return to North Carolina to visit various parishes as they have done in the past, to learn about our formation activities, church management techniques and governance practices, as well as experience English immersion. We hope a planned visit to North Carolina by a group of clergy and laity from the Diocese of Costa Rica can come together in October of this year; that decision will be made in April.

To that end, we have been working with Roger Pennant Grant, Costa Rica's new CDO and assistant to Bishop Orlando, to begin talking about post-pandemic life. Pennant is a native Costa Rican; you can read an interview with him on the next page. We are excited for this important development in the relationship, which assigns the CDO role to a Costa Rican and makes him integral to Bishop Orlando's staff. The companion relationship has been, intentionally, a reciprocal one, emphasizing that church members from each country have much to learn from one another while focusing on empowerment for the Diocese of Costa Rica. Appointing a native Costa Rican to the role of CDO is another step in that direction.

MOVING FORWARD

Like a factory production line which, when shut down for a time by a natural disaster, must build back slowly to resume its normal schedule, so must we take steps to

JOIN US!

If you ever wanted to meet your neighbors in Costa Rica, visit friends made there or forge a new relationship for yourself or your congregation, we invite you to join the new Companion Relationship of the Dioceses of Costa Rica and North Carolina Facebook Group (bit.ly/DioNCDioCR). The intent of the group is to have a place to gather, share stories, teach one another, share prayer and more. All are welcome!

rebuild our in-person relationships with the people of Iglesia Episcopal Costarricense. To accomplish this, the Costa Rica Companion Diocese Committee hopes to reacquaint the congregations in the Diocese of North Carolina with the purpose of our companion relationship and with some of the history of the relationship in order to ensure its future meaningfulness to the congregations in both countries. To that end, look for expanded news updates from Costa Rica, along with an invitation to share news from congregations in North Carolina, especially those with Costa Rican connections, with our Costa Rican friends. For those who wish to explore the companion relationship, the committee extends an open and standing invitation to get involved. Being part of a companion relationship is a beautiful way to experience the rich diversity of the Body of Christ.

To facilitate that, we'll share stories about what work pilgrimages are like and how to become part of one as an individual, a small group or a congregation. It's amazingly easy to do and incredibly rewarding. If you don't see travel in your near future, connect with us on the new Companion Relationship of the Dioceses of Costa Rica and North Carolina Facebook Group (see sidebar above). The brainstorming has only just begun on other ways we can engage to our mutual benefit.

We have, together, accomplished much, but there is more work to do, more relationships to build and more good times to be experienced with one another. Look for more information to come, and we invite you to be a part of it all!

The Rev. Rebecca Yarbrough is a deacon at Chapel of Christ the King, Charlotte, the diocesan Jesse Ball DuPont Funds Grants Coordinator and a member of the Diocesan Costa Rica Companion Diocese Committee. Contact her at rebecca.yarbrough@episdionc.org.

Q&A WITH ROGER PENNANT GRANT, COMPANION DIOCESE OFFICER

Roger Pennant Grant is the assistant to the Rt. Rev. Orlando Gómez, bishop of the Diocese of Costa Rica, and the first-ever native Costa Rican to be appointed as Companion Diocese Officer (CDO).

Rebecca Yarbrough: Tell us a little about yourself.

Roger Pennant Grant: I am a third-generation Anglican from Siquerres, a small city on the Caribbean side of Costa Rica; my home church is San Lucas in nearby Germania. Growing up, I was an altar boy and participated in several youth groups. I moved to San José to study at the university, majoring in business administration and accounting, and joined Good Shepherd Church (El Buen Pastor) there. I am married to Greta and have two sons, Reggie (age 18) and Jerry James (age 13).

I first joined the Diocese Office part time under the Rt. Rev. Cornelius Wilson, as diocesan treasurer during his last years as bishop. When the Rt. Rev. Hector Monterroso was elected as his replacement, I stayed on until early 2010 as the office's administrative director. During those years, we expanded the relationship with North Carolina. Part of my duties was making arrangements for the volunteer groups that came down. I made a lot of good friends and visited North Carolina. I am very honored and happy to be involved again with my brothers and sisters from the Diocese of North Carolina. Having had the opportunity to meet and share with so many of you previously was a great blessing for me.



RY: How has God called you to this work?

RPG: I returned to the private sector in San José after I left the Diocese, but, after his election to succeed Bishop Monterroso, Bishop Orlando Gómez asked me to return as a volunteer to chair a finance and planning committee that worked with our congregations to help them identify their priorities and develop plans to meet those priorities. I'm also working with them to assess their assets and think about how they can use them to benefit the community. San Lucas has a huge parish hall; how can that help the community of Germania? Can sharing it with the community help attract new members? When Bishop Orlando asked me to expand my duties to include Companion Diocese Officer, in order to continue to strengthen our companion relationships, I did not hesitate to say yes, because it was such a great experience doing this work before.

RY: What are your duties?

RPG: My first wish is to continue the extraordinary work that Allie Norman did in the recent past. Our idea is to enhance structures for doing work together and sharing together in those topics of mutual benefit. I'll continue helping congregations in Costa Rica establish their visions for how they can use their properties to be useful and helpful in their communities. Certainly, you support us a lot, and sometimes we cannot find words to show our gratitude, but we want to be of use to you as well. We are seeking mutuality and reciprocity in the relationship, and we know you are also. Teachers from Costa Rica once went to North Carolina to teach Spanish. It could happen again, or you could come here to learn Spanish, or we could do a clergy exchange!

RY: How does God figure into this companion relationship?

RPG: The simple fact of seeing your enthusiasm and desire to organize delegations to come and share with us is already a blessing for our lives. In the past, when groups came and saw the different ways they were to share their stay with us, it was cause for jubilation at both the host church and the diocesan office. More North Carolina churches contacted us to make mission trips, and more of our churches asked to be part of an exchange program. We have done this, and want to do this, not only on construction or remodeling projects, but also with Vacation Bible Schools, workshops for the clergy and other programs. We worship together, we eat together and we celebrate together! So I do not doubt the presence of God tightening our ties!

RY: What are your hopes and dreams for this relationship?

RPG: That we can grow together and be useful in our mutual growth and spiritual development, becoming better people, willing to reach out to those most in need, wherever they live. Sometimes the need is not for material goods but to feel the comfort and understanding of someone who listens. In that sense, I believe that this is achieved with exchange, with sharing. The simple fact of knowing that you are there to support and guide us gives us peace.

MORE DAYS OF LOVE

ONE THOUSAND DAYS OF LOVE campaign extended through Easter season

The ONE THOUSAND DAYS OF LOVE fundraising campaign (*Disciple*, Fall 2020) was launched during Advent 2020 with the diocesan goal of raising \$198,000 by Epiphany. The goal remains in place, and, to reach it, the diocesan campaign has been extended through the Easter season until Pentecost.

ONE THOUSAND DAYS OF LOVE is a global campaign of Episcopal Relief & Development, a “\$3 million grassroots Church-wide fundraising campaign dedicated to expanding the organization’s global programs, improving the lives of children up to age six.” These first years of a child’s life are critical, as Josephine Hicks, vice president of Episcopal Church programs for Episcopal Relief & Development, explained in the Fall 2020 issue of the *Disciple*.

“Research tells us the most important time to help children become all that they can be is during the first five years of life. If you can’t ensure healthy growth, appropriate nutrition, nurture, stimulation and education during those formative years, it is virtually impossible for those children to catch up. If we can help children thrive during that critical period, however, we give them a chance to become everything God dreams for them to be. We can also transform their communities, because 15-20 years from now, those children will be healthy, productive adults who contribute to those communities.”

MEETING THE CHALLENGE

The Diocese of North Carolina pledged to raise and contribute \$198,000 to the global campaign, a figure that reflects a \$15 donation on the part of every member of the Diocese.

WAYS TO DONATE

The easiest way to take part (and give credit to your church) is to donate \$15 directly to the campaign. You can do this in two ways:

- **Online:** Visit bit.ly/1000DaysofLove to make your contribution.
- **By check:** Send to
Episcopal Relief and Development
P.O. Box 7058
Merrifield, VA 22116-7058

On the memo line, write the name of your church and the city and state in which it is located so your church will receive credit for the donation.



That \$15 donation has the capacity to change the course of a child’s life in the form of mosquito nets, bicycles, nutrition and parenting programs for young families, economic assistance, and assistance with care for newborns and their mothers. It is a small cost for an incredibly large impact.

When the campaign launched, each church in the Diocese was issued a congregational fundraising challenge based on the church’s 2019 annual Sunday attendance. Already several churches have met their goal, but as we extend the campaign through the Easter season, the pot has been sweetened.

Churches are encouraged to meet their challenge as a contribution to a friendly convocational competition. The convocation that exceeds their goal by the greatest percentage will receive a prize of \$2,500 to donate to the local ministry or charity of their choice. So by taking part, churches are not only helping children on a global scale, but they also are working toward the chance of supporting ministry work in their local area.

RESOURCES AVAILABLE

There are a multitude of resources to help you share ONE THOUSAND DAYS OF LOVE and engage your congregations.

You can track the collective diocesan fundraising progress on the diocesan website at episdionc.org/1000-days-of-love. There you’ll see the fundraising thermometer rising, as well as find ways to donate and resources from Episcopal Relief & Development. (You can access those directly at episcopal-relief.org/1000daysoflove/share.)

It takes only a moment and a few dollars to change a child’s life. We hope you will be a part of this effort!



LOOKING FORWARD TO HUGS CAMP

Diocesan favorite to take place July 11-15

One of the highlights of any diocesan year is Helping Understand God through Sharing, affectionately known as HUGS Camp. A unique camp for unique people, HUGS Camp brings together young people of diverse abilities. They overcome barriers of real and imagined differences to build bridges of understanding. Many who take part describe it as a life-changing experience; indeed, as HUGS Camp looks back over its 35-plus years, stories abound of one-time helper campers choosing or changing courses of study to follow a career path that allows the gifts discovered at HUGS Camp to become a permanent part of their lives.

When the pandemic made it clear an in-person gathering was impossible in 2020, organizers started making plans to take the camp online. Cancelling it

was never an option. In July 2020, campers gathered in a special Facebook Group to enjoy crafts, music and worship together. Helper campers were there, as always, and the camp was extra special as it welcomed back past helper campers, now adults, who hadn't been able to take part in years. They and the campers rejoiced in seeing one another again, sharing pre-recorded worship and favorite songs usually sung around the campfire. The campers, too, kept tradition alive by recording videos in lieu of the camp-closing talent show, showcasing their talents, the things they love and glimpses into their lives.

With the ever-shifting information around vaccination timelines and the need to start planning early, organizers made the decision to hold HUGS Camp online once again in 2021. This year it will take place on Zoom



HUGS Camp group photos looked different in 2020 (far left, center right) than they did in 1999 or 2017 (center left). Crafts, the talent show, campfire time and activities all looked different than normal, too. 2020 photos by Leah Dail; all other photos archival.

instead of Facebook, so campers and helper campers can enjoy each other's company more fully. The dates are set for July 11-15, with the gatherings taking place every evening. Traditions will be celebrated through worship, crafts, songs and more.

Registration is open for all: campers, helper campers and staff (see sidebar). HUGS is about acknowledging the good creation in each of us and more fully knowing and loving our God through it. It is about all of us learning to appreciate and celebrate our diversity as we recognize our common ground. It is a celebration and tradition that has gone unbroken for more than three decades, and we look forward to it continuing for another year when HUGS Camp takes place in July.

JOIN US AT HUGS!

HUGS Camp is taking place via Zoom July 11-15, with the online gatherings happening every evening.

Applications for campers, helper campers and staff are now open.

- Staff/Planning Team: deadline is March 31; bit.ly/HUGS2021Staff
- Helper Campers: deadline is May 31; bit.ly/HUGS2021HelperCamper
- Campers: deadline is May 31; bit.ly/HUGS2021Campers

By the Rt. Rev.
Anne Hodges-Copple

CASTING OUT HATE

On January 6, 2021, the Feast of the Epiphany, the world watched a different sort of liturgy unfold in real time at our nation's capitol. Participants gathered in Washington, D.C., in a revival-like environment. They listened to a fiery sermon and then processed their banners and other ceremonial symbols into hallowed spaces in hopes of disrupting the way of the world and asserting their own definition of righteousness. No matter whether you saw protesters or insurrectionists, highly organized white supremacists or a manipulated and misdirected mob, a confrontation or a desecration, the true believers who burst through the entrances to the U.S. Capitol were aflame with a passionate spirit, fueled, at least in part, by hate of perceived enemies.

Public witnesses can be, and are, organized by a wide variety of views and values. They might be pro-life, pro-choice, pro-farmers, pro-ranchers. The liturgies of Holy Week



Jesus heals the sick stained glass window at St. Baavo Cathedral in Ghent.
Photo by Thomas Quine /Wikimedia Commons, CC-BY-2.0

depict the difference between a procession organized around hosannas and a mob of organized hate. Jesus understood the power of assembling support when he and his entourage processed into Jerusalem to proclaim his platform of Divine Love. We commemorate the same with our own public processions on Palm Sunday. Pilate and others manipulated the crowd into an entirely different reaction to the Jesus movement by the end of the same week.

We vicariously go from the words “Hosanna! Blessed is he who comes in the Name of the Lord” to the words “Crucify him! Crucify him!” Our natural proclivities are toward the latter, but Jesus calls us to the former and much harder way: the way of love.

CHRIST IS THE BRIDGE

Lent provides a time to discern if we will join a great movement of self-sacrificing love, a love that prioritizes and elevates the human dignity and worth of all people. Or, will we join (or acquiesce to) the forces that sow division and deceit? Easter provides the holy invitation to say “yes” to God’s love and “no” to politics of hate.

In *Jesus and the Disinherited*, Howard Thurman discusses the anatomy of hate. Hate generates the motivation and energy for those who perceive themselves to be aggrieved. “Hatred seems to service a creative purpose. It may be judged harshly by impersonal ethical standards, but as long as the weak see it as being inextricably involved in the complicated technique of survival with dignity, it cannot easily be dislodged.” Hate can be an accelerant, albeit a dangerous one, toward an end.

If we are not careful, it is easy to mock, disparage and demean those with whom we have fundamental disagreements. If our feelings are mired in a miasma of fear, doubt, anxiety and a sense of being wronged, hate is an alluring but toxic elixir. If we are not careful, hate can easily inhabit any heart. Hate will blow back more toxicity and harm on the hater than the one hated.

Many lines from National Youth Poet Laureate Amanda Gorman’s poem “The Hill We Climb” are a balm for a soul tempted by hate. A theology of reconciliation and hope permeates her creation. To me, it is an ode to love casting out hate and hope overcoming despair:

If we’re to live up to our own time
Then victory won’t lie in the blade
But in all the bridges we’ve made
That is the promise to glade
The hill we climb

When Jesus climbed the hill to Golgotha, the cross became our bridge to eternal life. The hate of the mob

did not have the last word. Forgiveness was among Jesus’ last words. Death did not have the last word. Absolution is the first word of the new life in Christ. We are forgiven *and* we are beloved. We are loved; therefore, we are forgiven. Christ is the bridge.

THE GREATER AUTHORITY

Gorman’s poem commands our attention in part because it is derived from an authority greater than herself. Even though so young, she spoke as one with authority, not unlike a young carpenter giving a sermon long ago in Capernaum. (Mark 1:21-28)

She spoke of truths we hold dear: a higher vision that guides our eyes to higher ground, to a light that liberates and unites. She spoke without holding back, speaking truth to the world’s powers. Speaking truth to the unclean spirits of our time.

She stood and spoke with an authority because she spoke with the power of reconciling love. She spoke of the power of redemption and transformation. She spoke with a love for humanity despite its capacity for depravity. Yes, she was speaking in a civil context, but wasn’t she voicing a sacred calling—love of neighbors?

Remind you of anybody?

When the young carpenter from Nazareth got up to speak at a synagogue in neighboring Capernaum, he was just a nobody from nowhere. Well, he was starting to generate some buzz around the Galilee area. Rumor was he had a way with words.

So someone invited him to speak to a larger audience. Someone gave this young man a platform. And when he spoke, his listeners were astonished: “For he taught as one having authority...” (Mark 1:21-28)

Authority? What kind of authority? Jesus certainly hadn’t been given any earthly authority. He didn’t have social status or political power.

He spoke from his knowledge—knowledge of holy scripture. Knowledge of tradition. His words resonated with his listeners in a way different from other authorities. Jesus addressed the conflict faced by the Jewish people under Roman occupation. He spoke to real grief, real struggles, real injustices, real alienation and the abiding belief that God was with them, even so.

In his words and actions, he was willing to address the political and religious controversies of the day. He spoke from that kind of authority that is not backed up by weapons that can destroy, but by instruments that can build, or at least reconstruct, even if, at first, something has to be deconstructed. Even if some long-existing structure of oppression needs to be dismantled.

THE MAN WITH AN UNCLEAN SPIRIT

“They went to Capernaum; and when the sabbath came, he entered the synagogue and taught. They were astounded at his teaching, for he taught them as one having authority, and not as the scribes. Just then there was in their synagogue a man with an unclean spirit, and he cried out, ‘What have you to do with us, Jesus of Nazareth? Have you come to destroy us? I know who you are, the Holy One of God.’ But Jesus rebuked him, saying, ‘Be silent, and come out of him!’ And the unclean spirit, convulsing him and crying with a loud voice, came out of him. They were all amazed, and they kept on asking one another, ‘What is this? A new teaching—with authority! He commands even the unclean spirits, and they obey him.’ At once his fame began to spread throughout the surrounding region of Galilee.”

- Mark 1:21-28

What emerged over time was that Jesus spoke with the authority of knowing and obeying the will of his Father in heaven. Jesus spoke by the power of the Holy Spirit. Jesus spoke and taught and challenged his listeners to follow in the way of love.

I’ll tell you what Jesus did not speak from: hate. He did not speak from a place of vengeance. He did not manipulate others to his own advantage. He did not speak from personal prejudice or a place of self-preservation. To the contrary, he embodied the spirit of sacrificial love. He spoke not to exalt one people over another people but to unite all people in a great fellowship of love.

THE POWER OF EXAMPLE

Let me tell you another line that stood out for me from Inauguration Day: “We will lead not merely with the example of our power, but by the power of our example.”

The power of our example. Now that is something to ponder. “[N]ot merely the example of our power, but

the power of our example.” Of course, President Joe Biden was referring to the United States and our witness to the world. But for those of us who follow Jesus, we can see both the examples of Christ’s power as well as the power of Christ’s example.

Jesus has the power to cast out unclean spirits. He has the power to heal the sick and give sight to the blind. All the miracles are a testament to Jesus’ power. Jesus has power greater than death and power to give new life. Jesus has power we cannot find in ourselves alone.

There is also the power of his example. Think about the example of Jesus when he stops the stoning of the woman caught in adultery. Think of the example of Jesus when he heals the child of the Roman centurion, a representative of the occupying army, reminding us that every child is a beloved child of God.

Think of the example of Jesus feeding the five thousand. He does not send the hungry away—the strategy suggested by his trusted advisors. He says let’s see what we have on hand and feed them ourselves.

Think of the example of Jesus loving his enemies. Think of the liberating power of Jesus’s example to warn us away from the temptation to hate our enemies. He knew that hate is a life-threatening poison that is most harmful to the one who thinks she is employing it upon another.

Friends, let us channel this power of love to cast out hate. Standing against hate does not mean dishonoring the opinions of those with whom you disagree. Our differences can make us stronger, deepen our thinking, and increase the awareness of our own positions as differing opinions make us examine and understand our own. Healthy discourse between a spectrum of perspectives is a good thing. There is room for difference in beloved community when we are brought together by the knowledge we are all children of God, and we are loved.

Let us channel this hope to overcome despair. Let us listen and follow the high calling that will pull us through these difficult and divided times. God has the authority to set the captives free and give sight to the blind. God has the authority to redeem and unite the many into one human family, bound together in light and love. This is the authority of the Gospel of Jesus Christ. Our calling is but to give honor and glory and obedience as well as our lifelong pledge of service.

The Rt. Rev. Anne Hodges-Copple is the bishop suffragan of the Diocese of North Carolina. Contact her at bishopanne@episdionc.org. This reflection was shared at St. Matthew’s, Hillsborough, on February 7.



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FROM SALISBURY TO ZIMBABWE

St. Luke's Episcopal Church Foundation funds projects locally and abroad

A senior memory care training program in the West Bank of the Palestinian territories. A reforestation program in Kenya led by a Catawba College student. A lunch program for students in Tanzania. The Rowan Literacy Council in Rowan County, North Carolina. These are just a handful of the projects funded by the St. Luke's Episcopal Church Foundation of St. Luke's, Salisbury, during 2020.

Founded in 1973 by the vestry of St. Luke's to help perpetuate the physical properties of the parish and to support foreign missions, the foundation awards grants twice annually to local, regional and international non-profit organizations engaged in work serving human needs through Christian service. While Fund A of the foundation is reserved for major maintenance and capital repairs of the church properties, Fund B supports international missions, and Fund C supports local outreach, with a preference for programs based in Salisbury-Rowan County. Both Funds B and C prioritize projects that "address social problems and provide opportunities for positive interactions across socio-economic and other demographic distinctions," "support and improve opportunities for at-risk youth and families," focus on education or the cultural arts, and "demonstrate attributes of leverage (where a grant

will attract matching gifts or other funding), as well as innovation, thoroughness, passion and commitment."

While applicants do not need to be affiliated with a church or faith-based organization, the mission and goals of the project must be consistent with the foundation's missional priorities, which are centered on supporting the work of Christ in our community and in the world.

GLOBAL IMPACT

During St. Luke's recent annual parish meeting, the Rev. Stephen Doma from the Anglican Diocese of Harare in Zimbabwe shared the story of the Anglican Wabvuwi Memorial Clinic. The clinic, located approximately 60 miles from Harare, was founded by members of the men's group Wabvuwi after five of their members died en route to the hospital from injuries sustained during a mission trip in the area where the clinic now stands. This critical medical infrastructure suffered the effects of ballooning inflation in Zimbabwe during the last several years. The Diocese of Harare applied for and received a \$30,000 grant from the foundation to cover the finishing touches on the clinic, including running electricity to the clinic and staff housing, securing refrigeration for medications and installing solar panels.

Autumn Jones from the GRACES ministry at St.

John's Lutheran Church, Salisbury, which supports La Escuela Integrada in Antigua, Guatemala, also shared how funding from the foundation helped children and families thrive during the COVID-19 pandemic.

"The Ministry of Education [in Guatemala] did not require the continuation of learning during the pandemic for a significant amount of time, so it was a decision of GRACES and La Escuela Integrada to continue the learning, which really sets those students up for a greater advantage in breaking the cycle of poverty because their learning never stopped," she explained. An important part of supporting distance learning was continuing the school's focus on holistic learning by providing weekly food bags to



The trustees of the St. Luke's Episcopal Church Foundation present a \$10,000 grant to Rowan Helping Ministries. *Photo courtesy of St. Luke's, Salisbury*



ST. LUKE'S EPISCOPAL CHURCH FOUNDATION

The logo of the St. Luke's Episcopal Church Foundation alludes to its mission of partnering with both local and international ministries.

families while students study at home. The foundation's \$12,000 donation supported this critical aspect of education for students and their families.

During the spring and fall 2020 grant cycles alone, the St. Luke's Episcopal Church Foundation donated to eight international organizations. In addition to the Anglican Wabvuwi Memorial and GRACES, the foundation funded:

- Two Mules for Haiti, a North Carolina-based 501(c), which links rural Haitian communities with partner organizations and individuals to improve education, healthcare, agriculture and reforestation;
- Bethlehem Senior Memory Care Training Program in the West Bank, Palestinian Territories, a ministry of St. John's Lutheran Church, Salisbury;
- The Explorer's Club of Kenya, led by Alberto Borges, a Catawba College student from Kenya, is involved in reforesting a large area around Marsabit, Kenya, to improve the lives of the nomadic people in the region;
- The Lunch Project based in Charlotte, which provides food for students attending Lengijave Primary School in Tanzania;
- Holy Cross Anglican School in San Pedro, Belize, via a grant to St. Luke's, Durham; and
- Sudan Rowan, which supports scholarships for students in Aliap, South Sudan, the area of the former Lost Boys of the Sudan.
- Episcopal Relief & Development's campaign, ONE THOUSAND DAYS OF LOVE (page 31).

LOCAL PARTNERSHIPS

While investing heavily across the globe, the foundation also supported a dozen local ministries in Salisbury-Rowan County:

- Rowan Helping Ministries

- Prevent Child Abuse Rowan
- Meals on Wheels Rowan
- The City of Salisbury Dixonville Memorial Project
- The Rowan Museum Recognizing Systemic Racism Project,
- The Bread Riot,
- The Rowan Literacy Council,
- Communities in Schools,
- Food for Thought and
- Racial Equity Rowan

"Though the last year has been a crazy one, it's also been a transformative one for our Foundation," the Rev. Robert Black, rector of St. Luke's, Salisbury, said in his sermon for the church's Foundation Sunday.

"The foundation is doing so much more than mailing checks, we are building relationships, we are seeing how the tradition of which we are part is manifest in other parts of our community and our world. St. Luke's, both the parish and the foundation, are growing in our call to become the beloved community which stands in the tradition of the prophets, apostles and all the faithful who have followed Jesus."

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

APPLY FOR A GRANT

Applications for the spring St. Luke's Episcopal Church Foundation grant cycle opened on February 15, and the application window closes on April 2 at 11:59 p.m. More information and the application are available at SLS.church/foundation.



The Episcopal Diocese of North Carolina
200 West Morgan Street, Suite 300
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GET YOUR VACCINE – Learn about the COVID-19 vaccine (page 16), dispel misinformation and access resources to get your appointment at yourspotyourshot.nc.gov or 1-888-675-4567. Share a photo of you getting a vaccination on the diocesan Instagram account (@episdionc) with the hashtag #GotMyShotNC.

SHOW SOME LOVE by donating to the ONE THOUSAND DAYS OF LOVE campaign (page 31). With only a \$15 donation, you can change the life of a child.

PRAY for the sick and faithful departed by sharing your request via the diocesan prayer list at bit.ly/DioNCPrayerList. Prayers offered during noonday prayer services will be first name only.