

FALL 2016



The North Carolina DISCIPLE

THE EPISCOPAL DIOCESE OF NORTH CAROLINA



WELCOME
TO THE 201ST
ANNUAL
CONVENTION
(IN RALEIGH)

ALSO IN THIS ISSUE
LIFT EVERY VOICE
RECONCILIATION
CONVERSATIONS
RACISTS ANONYMOUS



 **The North Carolina
DISCIPLE**

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COVER PHOTO

A statue of Sir Walter Raleigh will greet attendees at the 201st Annual Convention to be held at the Raleigh Convention Center November 18-19.

Photo by Summerlee Walter

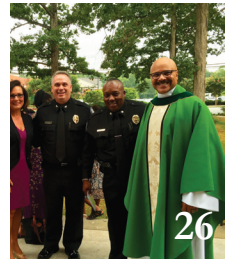
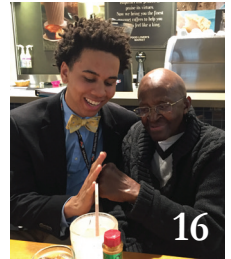


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ABOUT The North Carolina DISCIPLE

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.



At a Glance Facts: This Magazine...

- Is printed with soy inks, which are more environmentally friendly than traditional petroleum-based inks.
- Is printed on FSC® certified paper — paper certified by the Forestry Stewardship Council™, an independent, non-governmental, not-for-profit organization established to promote the responsible management of the world's forests.
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Delivery occurs during the first week of the following months:

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



This summer, more than 90 youth and young adult participants from Episcopal and Anglican dioceses across the United States, South Africa and Botswana gathered in South Africa for Lift Every Voice, a three-year program sponsored by the Diocese of North Carolina focused on bridging the racial divides left by apartheid and America's history of slavery and Jim Crow. Read more on pg. 16. Photo by Beth Crow.

MIND THE GAP

As a child growing up in the 1960s, I had a fascination with Europe of the 1930s and 40s. I remember hearing about children in Norway during World War II who hid gold in their sleds and flew past the Nazis to give support to the Resistance. I was inspired by both their courage as well as their imagination. *The Diary of Anne Frank* haunted my elementary school self.

Would my family have been one of those who risked everything to hide their Jewish neighbors? Or would we, like most households, have turned a blind eye and become, even reluctantly, caught up in an irresistible tide of compliance with forces we felt powerless to resist?

Now, many years later, I ask my more mature self how I am or am not facing systemic injustice in my own day. I play a game with imaginary grandchildren who ask me questions like, “Grandmother, did you really have all these empty bedrooms in your big house when local homeless shelters were full?” Or, “Did you see those children and their parents fleeing Aleppo? What did you do about that, Grandmother?”

Earlier this year, the Gospel Lesson was the parable of a rich leader who wore purple and feasted at sumptuous tables, all the while looking past the poor man, Lazarus, who longed to eat the crumbs that fell from the rich man’s table. The rich man dies and finds himself on the down-side, the wrong side, the Hades-side of a huge chasm. He begs Father Abraham to close the gap — to bring him higher or, at least, to send Lazarus back across the great chasm to offer him some small comfort, a thing the rich man had refused to do in life. But Father Abraham says “My son, that is not possible.”

As one who wears purple on a regular basis and is fed delicious homemade food most Sundays after church, I wonder: where am I blind? No, that’s not it. Where do I see, but look away? Who is languishing in poverty while I listen to a webinar on my defined benefit pension?

THE GREAT CHASM

Most of us have feelings of powerlessness in the face of overwhelming need. Most of us see and grieve that gap, the great chasm between what is needed and what can be done. Because these

divides seem so insurmountable, the temptation is to turn away, like turning from the front page news to the sports section of the morning paper.

What is the nature of this gap? Is it simply the gap between the rich and the poor? Is it the gap between the blessedly healthy and the chronically ill? The highly successful entrepreneur and the neighborhood ne’er do well? The rich man is not named as a notorious sinner. Lazarus is not noted for any particular virtues. Neither man is described as more righteous or more faithful than the other. In fact, Abraham calls the rich man “son.” Abraham is father to both of these sons of Israel.

In the parable, Jesus is setting up all kind of possibilities. This may be a lesson about heaven and hell: who is in and who is out in the afterlife. Biblical scholars suggest Jesus is telling a satirical parable about Pharisees and other religious leaders who were the people of privilege in their day. These socially, religiously privileged classes often received Jesus’ most vociferous condemnation not for their malfeasance but for their hypocrisy. These privileged folks were praying (and displaying!) for righteousness and doing quite another. As Jesus says in the Gospel of Luke’s version of the Beatitudes, “But woe to you who are rich, for you have already received your comfort.” (Luke 6:24)

The Gospel of Luke is all about reversals. All kinds of surprising reversals: the humble exalted, the mighty cast down. Sinners are accepted, self-righteous are rejected. The last shall be first. Jesus himself is the greatest reversal of all. Because of the Resurrection, the dead shall live, the blind shall see and the captives shall be freed. In this parable of the great divide, Jesus is suggesting — with all the Jewish mythological resonance he can muster — there is a special place in hell for those who are so blinded by their own senses of uprightness, of law abidingness, of propriety they fail to see the suffering, the injustice and the vulnerability of neighbors far and near. In the great reversal, the one Jesus anticipates in his parable, the privileged of this life may discover their own great role reversal with those who are captive, despised, rejected and ignored. It will be the poor, the neglected and the despised of this world who will one day be the privileged — the ones privileged to draw closest to the heart of God.

THE HOME GAP

The Diocese of North Carolina includes Charlotte, and our hearts are breaking for all the residents of the Queen City who have weathered a terrible recent outbreak of violence. Our hearts should ache especially for people of color who have little reason to believe in due process and good reason to fear the very civil servants who are called to protect and serve.

All residents want responsive, effective and fair community policing. But not all residents experience equal and unbiased treatment in the criminal justice system. To say “black lives matter” is not a contradiction of the obvious belief that all lives matter. It is a plea to see that the sacred dignity of all lives is not equally respected in our community institutions and public policies. It is not true that all lives matter equally in our school systems. It is not true that all lives matter equally in our health care systems. It is not true that all lives matter equally in the markets for affordable housing. It is not true that all lives matter equally when we site the locations of new stadiums and new highways.

.....

**“I wonder: where am I blind?
No, that’s not it. Where do I see,
but look away? Who is languishing
in poverty while I listen to a webinar
on my defined benefit pension?”
- The Rt. Rev. Anne E. Hodges-Copple**

.....

The gaps are real, and the gaps in understanding are perhaps more significant than the gaps in the empirical evidence about racial, gender, social and economic inequity. The gaps in how different communities see life, meaning and justice are persistent and, at times, seemingly impossible to bridge — just as impossible as that chasm between the rich man in Hades and Lazarus with Father Abraham.

But that’s just it. Someone did bridge the gap. Someone did come back from the dead. Someone did cross back over the great divide to tell us there is a different way, a better way. Someone did rise from the dead and preach the way to eternal life, and, guess what, the way to eternal life is not building walls between ourselves and those we fear. The way to eternal life is not to pile up treasure on earth. The way to eternal life is not creating a bunker to hide in and wait out the Armageddon. The way to eternal life is to live the virtues and the values of the kingdom of God now, in this life.

In baptism, we die to this life and rise to a new life


in Jesus. The Resurrection of Jesus Christ defeats death. Baptism into new life with the living Lord helps us cast out our fear of dying. “Whether we live or whether we die, we belong to the Lord.” (Romans 14:8) We belong to Jesus and, therefore, no longer need to fear death and instead are free to embrace the goodness of this life. Since we no longer need to fear dying, we are free to live life fully and courageously. As courageous, each in our own ways, as students who say no to gangs, as school teachers who will do anything to protect their students, as social workers who take on the impossible cases, and as first responders and protesters who seek truth and justice and accountability and reconciliation. We are free to be like those who will stand with Jesus and stand in the gaps, without violence, without malice, and with faith, hope and love.

On the second night of protests in Charlotte after the shooting of Keith Scott, a black assistant district attorney put on his coat and tie and went to the front lines of the protests. He carefully, but quite deliberately, made his way to the gap between the protesters and the police. He bravely stood in that literal gap and did his best to diminish the violence on both sides of that line.

The next day, two Episcopalian volunteers met at the Galilee Center in East Charlotte for their weekly rotation of working with refugees and immigrants. One white and one black, the two friends had a frank discussion about the gap between each woman’s understanding of the violence transpiring in Charlotte. The white woman expressed her surprise at the turn of the tide toward violence. The African-American woman expressed her dismay that her friend could be surprised at all. Even with their huge gap in experience and understanding, there they were: together, acknowledging and honoring the gap in their life experience. But, also, there they were: together, standing in the gap as companions with refugees fleeing sectarian violence in Syria and Afghanistan, gang violence in Honduras and political violence in Burma.

As the Body of Christ, we are called to stand in the gaps. We may not be able to close the gaps. But we can stand in them, because Jesus stands where the gaps are. Where Jesus would go is where we need to go: where there is pain, injustice, misunderstanding and fear. And where we stand together and stand with brothers and sisters of all walks of life and of every color; where we stand for justice and peace; where we stand for truth and reconciliation, then we stand with Jesus. And there we draw close — so very, very close — to the heart of God.

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



By the Rt. Rev. Peter James Lee

CHANGE IS A BLESSING

A prayer in many Anglican prayer books asks God that “we who are wearied by the changes and chances of this life may rest in your eternal changelessness.”

God’s love is eternal and unchanging. But change is characteristic of every life, every relationship and every institution.

We would like it to be different. Once married, we would like our youthful, romantic excitement to remain unchanged. But couples change and grow, and, if that is not recognized and celebrated, they are likely to grow apart. Our nation is changing. White Anglo-Saxons are likely to be a minority by the year 2050. The fear and hostility present in some of our communities in this election season is a reflection of the fear of change and inability to adapt.

I grew up in a parish where the Holy Communion (that’s what we called it then) was celebrated on the first Sunday of the month at the main service and Morning Prayer held on all other Sundays. That has changed as we recognize the Eucharist as the principal act of Christian worship.

Many people grew up in congregations with a full-time, male priest. That’s changed as fewer and fewer parishes can afford a full-time priest. Women in ordained ministry have changed the Church for the better. Most mainline Protestant denominations now include women. I anticipate that even the Roman Catholic Church will evolve one day to accept women in all orders of ministry.

When our General Convention moved in 1976 to change the canon law to approve women’s ordination, the vote was something like three-quarters in favor. A parishioner of mine at the time complained to a local Roman

Catholic priest that the vote was not overwhelming. The priest, a friend of mine, told my parishioner that when (not if) the Roman Catholic Church admits women to the priesthood, it will take one vote. Maybe not Pope Francis, but one day the change will come.

Change is difficult. I retired as Bishop of Virginia in 2009, some two years before I began to learn how to use email. I still do not have a smartphone. But change is coming.

Parishes, especially small ones accustomed to a full-time priest, are learning that through baptism all Christians have ministries, and much of what we formerly expected to be done by clergy can be done effectively by lay persons.

Change, then, can be a blessing. I still have much to learn about technology. Our churches have much to learn about the ministry of all the baptized. We can engage in those learnings.

Not all change is good, not all transitions are welcome. But all change and all transitions are part of human life, and therefore, God is present in them all.

As we deal with change and transitions, in our personal lives and in our common and church life, we should remember the serenity prayer of the 20th-century theologian Reinhold Niebuhr: “God grant me the serenity to accept the things I cannot change, courage to change the things I can, and the wisdom to know the difference....”

The Rt. Rev. Peter James Lee is the assisting bishop for the Diocese of North Carolina. Contact him at bishoplee@episdionc.org.

AROUND THE DIOCESE

Remember to send photos of happenings in the life of your congregation to communications@episdionc.org.

Photo by the Rev. Audra Abt



St. Andrew's, Greensboro, is one of several churches throughout the Diocese that have trained volunteers to register voters this fall.

Photo by the Rev. Canon Earnest Graham



Clergy of the Diocese gathered for Clergy Conference 2016 in Winston-Salem October 4-6.

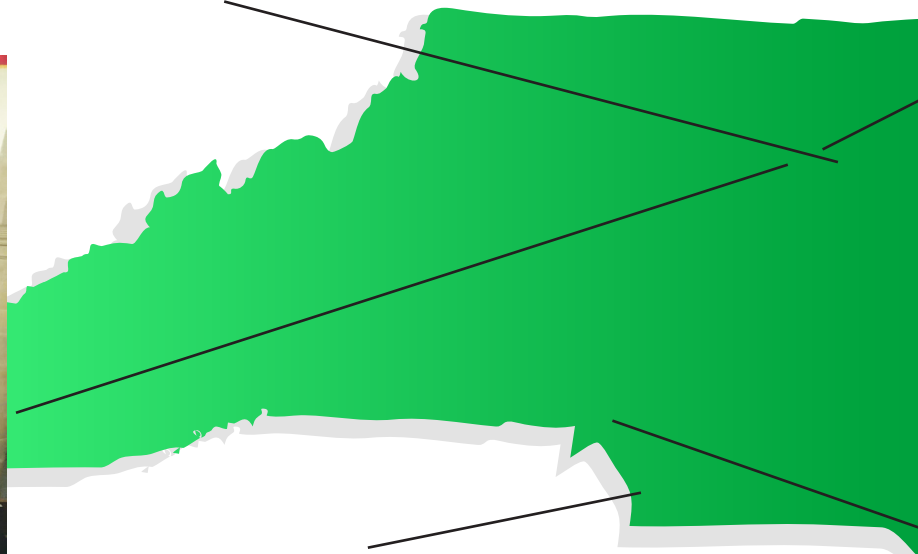


Photo by Joanie A. Cameron



Members of St. Margaret's, Waxhaw, raised more than their goal and walked as a team with their pups in Charlotte's September 17 Dogfest to support Canine Companions for Independence.

Photo courtesy of Rick Sigler



Parishioners from St. Matthew's, Kernersville, recently participated in a Crop Walk to help raise money and awareness for hunger in their community and globally.



Photo courtesy of the Rev. Lisa Fischbeck

Faith leaders in North Carolina gathered at the state capitol building in Raleigh to join peers in 32 states for the National Moral Day of Action on September 12. The Rev. Lisa Fischbeck, vicar of the Advocate, Chapel Hill, spoke.

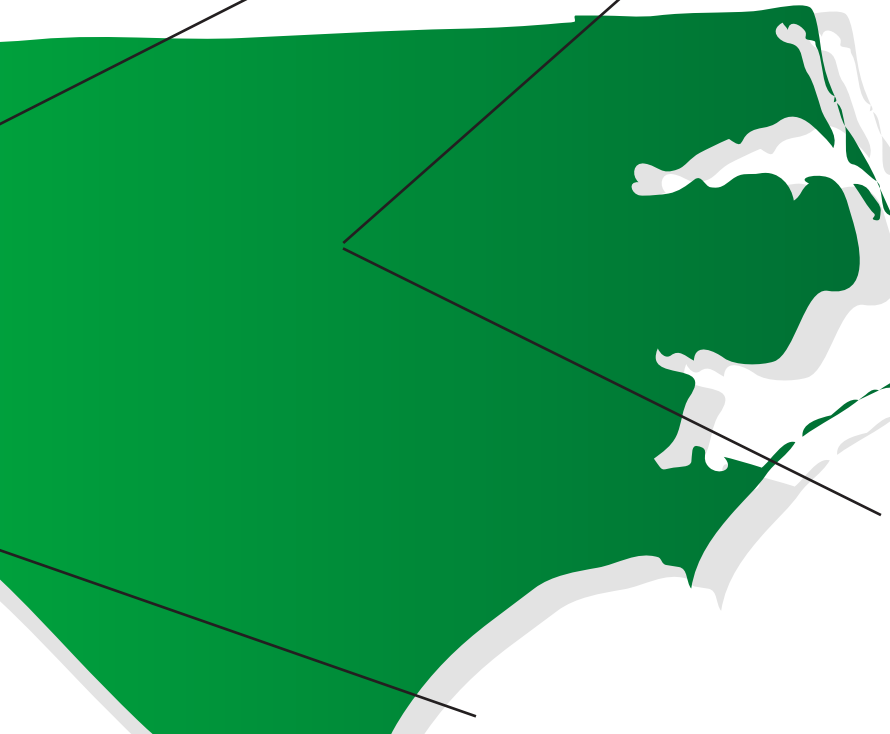


Photo by Summerlee Walter



Photo by Christine McTaggart

(Top) Episcopalians from across the Diocese filled the conference room in Diocesan House with donations for Hurricane Matthew relief. (Bottom) Bruce Weigert, husband of Canon Marlene Weigert, drives a moving truck packed with donations down to the Episcopal Farmworker Ministry in Newton Grove.

Photo by Trish Stukbauer



All of the sermons preached at Holy Comforter, Charlotte, are uplifting, but some soar just a tad higher. This is the Rev. Al Reiners' sermon, dated September 4, 1977, which was found in the eaves of the building.

NEW, NOTABLE & NEWSWORTHY

BISHOP SEARCH UPDATE

There is much to look forward to this fall, including the announcement of candidates in consideration to be the XII Bishop Diocesan of the Diocese of North Carolina. The Rev. Jane Wilson, president of the Standing Committee, recently released a statement regarding that announcement on behalf of the entire Standing Committee.

Dear People of God,

As the time draws near for the 201st Annual Convention, and as we await the announcement of the slate of candidates being considered as the XII Bishop Diocesan, the Standing Committee recognizes and thanks the Nominating Committee for the work they are doing, work that continues to be precisely on schedule.

In planning for the 201st Annual Convention, however, and for the timing of the slate announcement, the Standing Committee, which is overseeing the search process, determined that Convention is not the best time to make the announcement. The decision was made for two reasons.

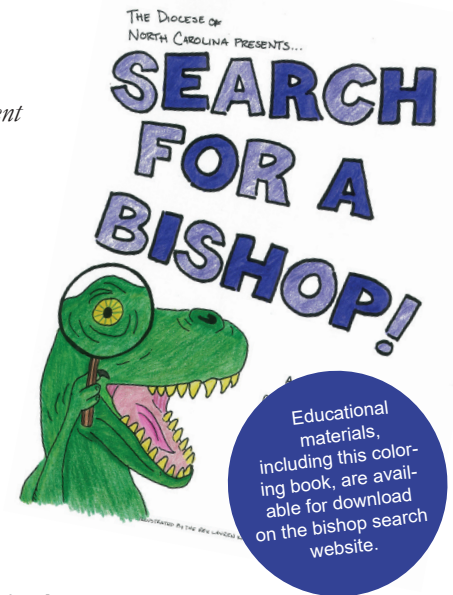
First, because the members of the Standing Committee have no knowledge of who will be on the slate, we wanted to be as fair as possible in the event the slate contains a mix of in-diocese and out-of-diocese candidates. Should that prove to be the case, the Standing Committee wants to avoid the possibility of having in-state candidates in the Convention Hall while out-of-state candidates are not.

Second, both the work of Convention and the announcement of the bishop-candidate slate are extremely important events in the life of our diocese in the coming year, and the Standing Committee determined that both events deserved proper spotlight and focus.

So, watch diocesan communications channels closely! It is the hope and plan that the announcement of the names on the slate for the XII Bishop Diocesan of North Carolina will be made in the days shortly following the 201st Annual Convention. (The specific day is still to be determined.) It is the wish of both the Nominating Committee and the Standing Committee that by sharing the announcement after our annual gathering, we will be able to celebrate fully and properly both the work of Convention and the candidates being considered as our next Bishop Diocesan.

*Faithfully,
The Rev. Jane Wilson*

Meanwhile, the Transition Committee is hard at work planning exciting events and opportunities that will allow every member of the Diocese the chance to get to know the candidates. We expect to share the full schedule in the Winter 2017 issue of the *Disciple* as well as all diocesan channels, so stay tuned, because you won't want to miss what's in store.



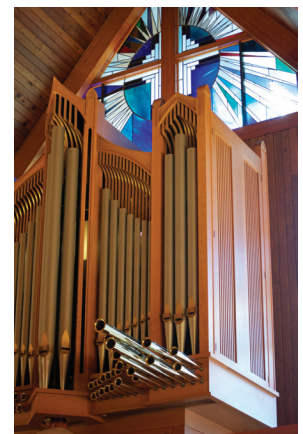
CALL FOR ORGANIST SUPPLY

Since its launch in 2015, the new system for requesting supply clergy has been a popular success. The approach is so well-liked that a request has come in to set up a similar system for supply organists!

Provided there is enough interest, the approach will be the same as that used to connect churches with supply clergy. The Diocese will include a request form on the diocesan website; when a church fills out that form and hits "submit," the request goes to all supply organists on the list, which will be maintained by the Diocese. Only organists willing and able to respond to the request need

do so, and the organist responds directly to the church making the request.

So we ask all organists in the audience: Would you like to see this happen, and would you like to be a part of it? If so, email communications@episdionc.org.



MISSION ENDOWMENT GRANT APPLICATION DEADLINE IS NOVEMBER 30

The application deadline for the 2017 Mission Endowment Grant cycle is November 30. Readers of the *Disciple* know what amazing ministries have come to life or are being helped by funding from this grant (see page 22 for this issue's spotlighted ministry), and that opportunity is available to you as well.

The Mission Endowment Grant is a permanent endowment created for the specific purpose of supporting the diocesan mission strategy of establishing "the Episcopal presence of Christ in communities in ways that brings the community to see Christ's presence among them."

While grant projects must relate to missionary initiatives located within the 38 counties of the Diocese,

the initiatives themselves do not have to be associated with diocesan entities. Only one participating member of the proposed project team is required to be associated with a diocesan entity; the rest of the team can build out from there.

Up to five grants in amounts ranging from \$5,000 to \$25,000 are awarded each year. One and two-year grants are available, and the next round of applications will be accepted until November 30, 2016.

Mission Endowment Grants are not the only the only grants with deadlines this fall. For more information on or to apply for Mission Endowment and other grants, visit "Grants and Scholarships" under the "Resources" tab at episdionc.org.



Previous winners of Mission Endowment Grants include Durham-based Beer and Hymns; Camp in the Camps, a multi-church effort to bring summer camp to children served by the Episcopal Forworker Ministry; and Galilee Ministries of East Charlotte.

2016-2017 'GOSPEL-BASED DISCIPLESHIP' AVAILABLE BY ORDER

Stewardship comes in many forms, and, in the last few years, we have discovered that more and more followers of the annual *Gospel-Based Discipleship* are receiving its information from digital diocesan channels instead of the original printed offering.

So in order to be good stewards of resources both material and financial, hard copies of the 2016-2017 *Gospel-Based Discipleship* will be available by order only. This means we will no longer automatically distribute a set number of copies to churches; instead, we ask that churches and individuals who wish to have paper copies please contact Diocesan House to order what they need. Copies will then be printed on demand and shipped to you. Orders placed by November 15 will be printed and shipped in by late November.

The 2016-2017 *Gospel-Based Discipleship* will also be available in its entirety as a downloadable and printable

PDF on the diocesan website, and its daily offerings will continue to be offered on diocesan social media channels, now including Instagram.

The *Gospel-Based Discipleship* remains as available to you as ever – you simply get to choose the way you prefer to follow it.

To order hard copies, please call Diocesan House at (919) 834-7474 or email communications@episdionc.org. Please be sure to include the address to which you want your copy(ies) mailed.

To download and/or print a PDF copy, visit episdionc.org and look for the link under "Worship" in the "What We Do" tab.

To receive the daily offerings online, find us on:

- Facebook ([facebook.com/EpiscopalDioceseNC](https://www.facebook.com/EpiscopalDioceseNC))
- Twitter (@episcopalnc)
- Instagram (@episdionc)

200 STORIES: A BICENTENNIAL CELEBRATION

It's hard to believe, but the Diocese of North Carolina will be 200 years old in 2017! The Rev. Dr. Brooks Graebner, diocesan historiographer, and Lynn Hoke, diocesan archivist, are leading a hardworking team to plan a multitude of activities to celebrate our bicentennial.

Among the plans are a traveling exhibit, a bicentennial celebration in New Bern and a special Convention program to kick it all off. We'll have a lot more information about it all as schedules, locations and details are set, but there is one very special project that needs you.

That project is called "200 Stories." The vision is to collect 200 vignettes, in writing and video, to spotlight the people, places and events that illustrate the range of North Carolina Episcopal history.

We want the stories to feature lay and clergy leaders as well as parishioners. We want the interesting and the

inspirational. We want the miraculous, the truly special, and the quiet (sometimes life-changing) everyday moment. We want the laughter and the tears, the memories and the hopes for the future — it will take all of this and more to reflect the deep and varied facets of the Episcopal Diocese of North Carolina.

We want to incorporate as many voices and perspectives as possible and truly share with the world the rich history of our diocesan life together.

As we collect the stories, we'll share them starting after the Annual Convention and continuing throughout 2017. If you have a story to share, we want to hear it. Please visit the diocesan homepage (episdionc.org) and look for "Bicentennial" in the Quick Links box for more detail and instructions regarding capturing and submitting stories in written and digital formats.

BOTSWANA PILGRIMAGE 2016

Twelve communicants from across the Diocese of North Carolina recently returned from a pilgrimage to our companion link, the Anglican Diocese of Botswana. Their intent was simple: to strengthen their own spiritual journeys by experiencing the life of the Church in Botswana. They took part in ecumenical thanksgiving services on the eve of Botswana's 50th Independence Day celebrations, travelled to the historic village of Serowe as guests of the local parish, and visited various ministries,

including hospice and orphan and vulnerable children programs. They followed a daily worship discipline and found varied occasions for fellowship with Botswana's Anglicans.

The pilgrims are available to speak about their experiences in our North Carolina parishes. Contact the co-leaders of the pilgrimage, the Rev. Miriam Saxon (miriamsaxon@gmail.com) and the Rev. Dr. Leon Spencer (lpspencer1984@gmail.com), for further information.



IN CASE YOU MISSED IT

As fall is in full swing, two familiar diocesan faces have taken up new roles:

Scott Welborn began his tenure as administrative assistant to the canons and accounting assistant. In his new role, he assists Canons Marlene Weigert (Canon to the Ordinary for Administration) and Canon Catherine Massey (Canon for Transition and Pastoral Ministries) while continuing to maintain the database and manage the office. Congratulations, Scott!



Margo Acomb returns! Yes, as Scott makes the move to his new desk, Margo returns to fill the seat at his old one. Margo will serve as the interim part-time receptionist, working from 10a.m. - 2p.m., Monday-Thursday. Welcome back, Margo!



Hurricane Matthew Relief

Diocesan staff has been overwhelmed by the generosity of individuals and churches across the Diocese who have dropped off donations for those affected by Hurricane Matthew. The need will continue to be great for months to come, but, as the initial emergency response phase winds down, those needs will change.

Stay up-to-date with volunteer opportunities and the latest donation requests from eastern North Carolina by visiting episditionc.org and clicking the Hurricane Matthew Relief link on the homepage.

Thank you for your continued support of our brothers and sisters affected by the storm.

DIOCESAN EVENTS

November

- 2 Raleigh Convocation Pre-Convention Meeting, 7 p.m., St. Christopher's, Garner
- 2 Sandhills Convocation Pre-Convention Meeting, 7 p.m., Emmanuel, Southern Pines
- 3 Rocky Mount Convocation Pre-Convention Meeting, 7 p.m., Calvary, Tarboro
- 17 Pre-Convention History Presentation, "The Times They Were A-changing: Equipping the Saints and Lifting Every Voice in the Turbulent 1960s"
- 18-19 201st Annual Convention, Raleigh Convention Center

December

- 11 Safe Church Training, Level II, 12:30 - 3:30 p.m., Trinity, Statesville
- 17 Ordination to the Sacred Order of Priests, 11 a.m., The Canterbury School, Greensboro

January

- 5 Celebration of New Ministry for the Rev. Elizabeth Marie Melchionna, 7 p.m., Chapel of the Cross, Chapel Hill
- 28 Ordination to the Sacred Order of Deacons, 11 a.m., The Canterbury School, Greensboro

Save the Date

- Mar. 4, 2017 Election of the XII Bishop Diocesan
- July 15, 2017 Consecration of XII Bishop Diocesan

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

STAY IN TOUCH

Keep up with our diocese through social media!

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www.twitter.com/EpiscopalNC

www.instagram.com/episditionc

www.vimeo.com/episcopalnc



EQUIPPING THE SAINTS

THE 201ST ANNUAL CONVENTION

The 201st Annual Convention of the Diocese of North Carolina will take place November 18-19 at the Raleigh Convention Center in downtown Raleigh. Aptly titled “Equipping the Saints,” this year’s gathering will focus on practical ideas and resources geared toward helping congregations and individuals embrace the diocesan priorities of evangelism and reconciliation.

This year’s Convention also kicks off our bicentennial year and will introduce two exciting projects to help us celebrate in collaboration with the Dioceses of Western North Carolina and East Carolina.

Other Convention highlights include the Rt. Rev. Anne Hodges-Copple’s Pastoral Address, panel discussions addressing ministries and reconciliation efforts throughout the Diocese, and a food drive hosted by A Movable Feast. It all kicks off with a special Thursday night history presentation, “The Times They Were A-changing: Equipping the Saints and Lifting Every Voice in the Turbulent 1960s.”

WHAT’S NEW?

The biggest change to this year’s Convention is a new approach to the conference theme. In lieu of a keynote speaker from outside the Diocese, this year’s presentations will draw on the collective wisdom held throughout our churches. Two panels will explore how the themes of evangelism and reconciliation are lived in different contexts. During the panel discussions, attendees will have time to discuss and brainstorm new approaches to ministry that draw on their own congregations’ strengths.

The other big change to this year’s Convention has to do with how we communicate information during the event. Attendees will be able to download the Yapp app from the Play

Store or iTunes and download the guide for the 201st Annual Convention. There they will be able to build custom schedules, receive reminders throughout the day and access up-to-date documents pertaining to the business of Convention.

MEET THE PANELISTS

The first panel, composed of young adults, will take place on Friday at 1:45 p.m.. The young adult panelists are listed below.

- Sam Laurent, moderator, is the campus minister to Duke University and the young adult missionary for Durham.
- Naomi Hill is a high school senior from Christ Church, Raleigh, who represents our diocesan youth programs at provincial meetings and has participated in Lift Every Voice and HUGS camp.
- Israel Jaimes grew up attending St. Mark’s, Wilson, and returns home each weekend to develop programs to benefit the wider community. He also serves on the Nominating Committee for the next bishop diocesan.

FOLLOW LIVE

Convention will stream live on the diocesan homepage at episditionc.org.

Follow Convention on Facebook, Twitter and Instagram with [#DioNC201](https://twitter.com/DioNC201).

- Cooper Morrison is a member of St. Peter's, Charlotte, where he leads the Congregational Development Team and is involved with the young adults group. He served on the vestry and as junior warden of his previous church.
- Schuyler Moss grew up in Good Shepherd, Rocky Mount, and has been involved with diocesan youth events, including Happening and Lift Every Voice.
- Melanie Rooks
- Fernanda Torres is an active member of Iglesia El Buen Pastor, Durham, who has worked with Lift Every Voice and A Movable Feast, among other programs within the church.

The second panel, God's Reconciling Presence: Exploring New Ministries, will take place on Saturday at 11 a.m. The panelists are involved in evangelism and reconciliation work throughout the Diocese.

- The Rev. Audra Abt, moderator, is a missionary in the Greensboro Convocation. She serves Comunidad Puerta Abierta/Open Door Community, a bilingual house church in Greensboro.
- Chip Carter is the hospitality coordinator for Galilee Ministries of East Charlotte.
- Betty Dillard is one of the founding members of Comunidad Amada/Christ's Beloved Community, a collaboration in Winston-Salem between the Lutheran Synod and the Episcopal Diocese of North Carolina.
- Mary Greene has embraced the spirit of going out to meet her neighbors around St. Andrew's, Haw River, in a ministry of relationship-building through door-to-door evangelism.
- Carol Phillips is involved in Comunidad Puerta Abierta, making the bread for the Misa services.
- Ted Sherburne, from Church of the Good Shepherd, Rocky Mount, is part of an ecumenical effort to provide financial and physical support for the Conetoe Family Life Center's Bee Hive Initiative for youth.

GETTING DOWN TO BUSINESS

The deadline to submit resolutions and nominations was October 10 at noon. All resolutions and nominations submitted by the deadline are available in the pre-Convention materials linked to the Annual Convention page at episdionc.org, and on the app. Late resolutions and nominations are in order during the first legislative session of the Convention. The Convention must agree to consider a late resolution by a two-thirds vote. Late resolutions amending the Constitution or Canons are not allowed. A late nomination must have a nominator and two seconders, all from different parishes or missions.

This year, the Convention will elect deputies to General Convention (4 clergy, 4 lay); members of Standing

PARTICIPATE IN CONVENTION... EVEN IF YOU'RE NOT ATTENDING

- Attend the Thursday night history program, "The Times They Were A-changing: Equipping the Saints and Lifting Every Voice in the Turbulent 1960s."
- Bring canned and dry goods to the Raleigh Convention Center for the A Movable Feast food drive.
- Attend a special Friday evening tour of notable Episcopalians in Oakwood Cemetery.

Committee (2 clergy, 1 lay); members of Diocesan Council (2 clergy, 3 lay); and trustees to Sewanee, The University of the South (1 clergy, 1 lay).

The resolutions before Convention are:

- **Resolution 201.1 On the Procedure for Nominating Candidates by Petition for Election as Bishop Diocesan**
Outlines the procedure for petition candidates
- **Resolution 201.2 On Nominations for Election by the Annual Convention**
Codifies practices for submitting nominations to the Annual Convention
- **Resolution 201.3 On Designating Alternate Deputies to the General Convention**
Codifies the practice that has been followed in recent elections for General Convention Deputies by a motion to suspend the rules
- **Resolution 201.4 On Electing Trustees of the University of the South**
- **Resolution 201.5 On Amending Canon 20 to Permit Missions to Adopt Bylaws for the Conduct of Mission Meetings and Mission Vestry Meetings**
Sets canonical provisions permitting missions to adopt bylaws for the conduct of mission meetings and mission vestry meetings.
- **Resolution 201.6 On Amending Canon 22 to Permit the Removal of Vestry Persons for Cause**
Sets both the grounds for removal and the due procedure for removal of a vestry person for cause
- **Resolution 201.7 On Voting Delegates for Youth**
Allows the seven youth representatives elected by convocations seat, voice and vote instead of only seat and voice

BISHOP SEARCH UPDATE

For an update on the announcement of the candidate slate in the search for the XII Bishop Diocesan, see pg. 10.

LIFT EVERY VOICE: SOUTH AFRICA 2016

This summer marked the second year of Lift Every Voice, a three-year multinational program for youth and young adults sponsored by the Diocese of North Carolina and funded by a Jesse Ball duPont grant. LEV, as it is known colloquially, revisits the historical truths of slavery and the Civil Rights movement in North Carolina and apartheid in South Africa while encouraging participants from across the United States, South Africa and Botswana to plan programs around reconciliation and social justice in their own dioceses.

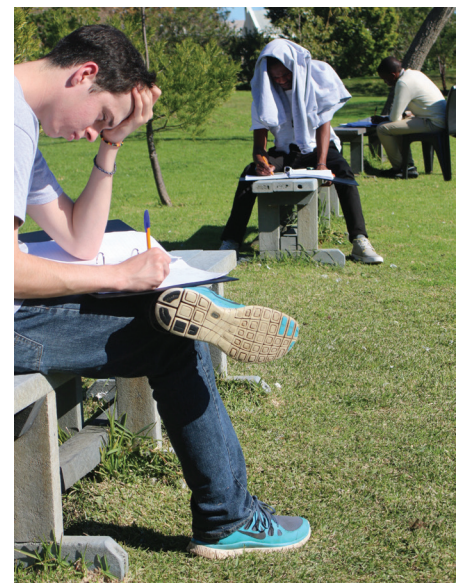
By Ashley Watson

MOVING TOWARD RECONCILIATION

Ashley Watson is a senior at the College of Charleston in Charleston, South Carolina. She is a member of St. Alban's, Lexington, South Carolina, who previously served on the Diocese of Upper South Carolina's Diocesan Youth Leadership Committee. The following is her account of LEV 2016.

Lift Every Voice 2016 (July 3-10, Cape Town) brought together youth and young adults from the United States, Botswana and South Africa to discuss issues of truth, reconciliation and peace. From July 3 through July 10, more than 90 Episcopalians and Anglicans gathered in South Africa as an international faith community to have dialogues about apartheid and the rising racial and social tensions in the United States and abroad. The experience proved to be alternately pivotal, humbling and world changing for participants.

During the week, we were blessed with chances to meet various influential people who shaped our understanding of the apartheid narrative. One of the most powerful experiences was our time spent with Archbishop Desmond Tutu. The opportunity to share Eucharist with one of the key figures in the apartheid resistance was absolutely incredible. Although frail, his laughter completely filled the space we were in, and he was patient enough to let our group take a large number of photos with him. During an interview with North Carolina participant Leighton Harrell, Tutu reflected on the activism he has seen in young people, like those participating in LEV 2016, noting that he has “been very taken by young people and their enthusiasm, their commitment, and they haven’t changed. They want to see a better world.”



(Left to right) Fr. Michael Lapsley kneels to speak to Lift Every Voice participants. The journey included ample time for introspection. Photos by Beth Crow and Jamey Graves

Our own LEV 2016 community began making strides to a better world through the powerful words of the speakers to whom we listened. Our speakers described experiences of abuse and imprisonment during the apartheid years, but they also spoke of the importance of things like interfaith communities, elections, youth activism, healing and forgiveness. Father Michael Lapsley, an Anglican priest who lost both arms to a letter bomb during apartheid, truly embodied the teachings of LEV 2016, reminding us: “Pain is transcendent. Pain is what can connect the human family; but that happens only when people are able to tell each other their stories — speaking of that which is the deepest within them.” This storytelling method not only unites us as a human family, but also is one way to begin the process of forgiveness and healing.

Although our road to forgiveness and healing began with Lapsley, it didn't stop there. We visited the Amy Biehl Foundation, which truly exemplifies principles of forgiveness, healing and restorative justice. In 1994, Biehl was on a Fulbright scholarship at the University of Western Cape Community Law Center working to

BREAKFAST WITH THE ARCHBISHOP

A little over a month ago, I met, received communion from and shared breakfast with Archbishop Desmond Tutu. I am still trying to take the experience in. I had never met a person who has had an impact on so many lives. It is amazing to me that such an extraordinary person was so real. It really felt as if he could be my Grandpa!

After the morning prayer he led, we walked across the street to a local cafe. Once there, we sat down and got ready to order. It was a Friday morning [for many a day to fast], so he jokingly scolded Beth Crow, Bishop Anne and me for ordering food to eat. The waitress saw him and knew immediately what to get him. First, he needed a glass of hot water to warm up his hands. Then, he got a chocolate shake and what looked to be a strawberry smoothie.

When we started to chat, I was mesmerized by his words. Beth, Bishop Anne and I were accompanied by a Ph.D. candidate from Vanderbilt studying the impact of religion on LGBT policy, as well as President Obama's advisor on LGBT policy. Their questions were incredibly thought-provoking and often complex, but Archbishop Tutu's answers reflected his lifetime of study and the depth of his wisdom. I am continuously reminded of this wisdom as I reflect on the experience. His words stirred within me a new passion to do everything I can to commit myself more to the Jesus Movement, as Bishop Curry calls it. Another way to think about it is as our responsibility as Christians to keep the faith through actively working against oppression.

I asked the Archbishop what he thought the role of the youth should be in movements for justice in the world today. He told me that the youth should continue to do what they have always done, to bring our unique energy and never stop, to hold our elders accountable and never settle for anything less than justice for all. It was incredibly validating to hear that from Archbishop Tutu, a personal hero of mine and someone who has fought for liberation for so many. To hear anyone acknowledge the importance of youth feels good, but to hear it from him was surreal.

I want to tie all of this back down to the message of love. To me, that is what this is all about. Without radical and undying love for people, any movement concerning liberation is doomed to fail. Archbishop Tutu loved his nation so much that he fought for what was right because he knew there was a better way for his people. Sometimes, there is nothing more radical than pure and radiant love. Love is the why. Love is why people of color sat in at lunch counters and marched in the streets of the American South. Love is why people rose up in South Africa to protest the curriculum being switched to Afrikaans only. Love is why we demand police officers be held accountable for killing unarmed black teenagers. Love is the why, and love is enough. It is this love that Archbishop Tutu has for the world, and it is this love he has inspired in me.



Leighton Harrell has breakfast with his hero, Desmond Tutu.

develop voter registration programs for women and black South Africans as the country's first race-inclusive election approached. She was volunteering in the township of Gugulethu, outside Cape Town, when she was murdered by a mob simply because she was white. Through the Truth and Reconciliation Commission, however, the men responsible were forgiven by her parents and granted amnesty. Even more remarkably, two of these men now work for the organization that bears Biehl's name. Her parents' ability to forgive in such a manner and work with the men responsible for their daughter's death is something that was difficult for participants to grasp.

Despite the difficulties involved in understanding the forgiveness shown through the Amy Biehl Foundation, we began our own journey of forgiveness and healing to try to make sense of it all. One path on our journey involved us watching playwright and actor Mike Wiley's one-man performance of *Dar He: The Lynching of Emmett Till*. His performance drew a strong visual parallel between the injustice faced in the United States and the injustices we were learning about in South Africa. As Masondo Nonduduzo, a participant from Botswana, pointed out, "The justice system had failed the Till family and the justice system continues to fail thousands of families, especially black people."

Wiley went further to connect Till's story to the stories of everyone involved in LEV 2016 through two

sessions of crafting and sharing "Where I'm From" poems. We were given opportunities to compose poems based on a series of questions Wiley posed about smells, sounds and events that shaped our lives in the past and continue to shape them in the present. We first composed poems based on the answers of our partners, and, later in the week, we wrote poems based on our own answers. About the experience, Mmipi Kgololo, also from Botswana, reflected, "For the first time in many years I was able to open up and share some of my life stories."

The storytelling continued through personal discussions on injustice and a panel on stereotypes that we experience in our daily lives. For South African participant Chiara Jeptha, these stories were disturbing because "many of these hurtful statements are still controlling us today and impacting the way we think about ourselves." One key moment really influenced our discussions: The Rev. Lawrence Womack, then of St. Anne's, Winston-Salem, told the group about Philando Castile, a black man who was killed by police in Minnesota during our time in South Africa. South African participant Adrian Gordon encapsulated the group's reaction when he said, "We were taught about all of the stories of forgiveness and restorative justice and the history of injustice in mostly South Africa which happened 20-plus years ago, and yet still today we are experiencing injustice." The news from America

By Beth Crow

COFFEE MUGS AND SEGREGATION

One of the focuses of Lift Every Voice is listening to understand and using what we learn about each other's cultural and racial perspectives to treat each other with respect and compassion. Even in an environment focused on practicing these skills, however, miscommunication and mistakes will happen. By keeping open the channels of honest communication, new understanding and deeper relationships can emerge, even from our missteps.

When the team arrived at the Christian Brothers' Center in Stellenbosch, South Africa in the middle of their winter, July, we quickly pulled out the winter clothes we had packed and began preparing several large urns for hot drinks. The center, as is true for most buildings in Cape Town, is not heated, and its thick walls insulate the rooms well from the outside temperatures, meaning the rooms stay chilly most of the day.

It wasn't long before the sinks filled with mugs, leading us to grab clean mugs several times throughout the day. Trying to be a good steward of the environment and of our time, I challenged the team to think of a way we could mark the mugs so we could reuse the same ones throughout day. Quietly, Cathy Arendse, one of the coordinators from Cape Town, said she didn't think that was a good idea. She proceeded to tell me that during apartheid, public places marked coffee mugs as those for "whites" and those for "coloreds." Cathy was concerned our marking the mugs might cause some painful memories to resurface.

My intent was to minimize the numbers of mugs used. The impact, had we followed through with my idea, could have been quite damaging. I thanked Cathy for her honesty with me and commented on how thankful I am that she trusted me enough to be able to tell me this. We washed LOTS of mugs during Lift Every Voice.

re-emphasized that there is still so much reconciliation-based work to be done outside of our group.

To begin this peace-making, South African participant Kurt Hartley plans “to go out in the community to be a disciple and share the message with others [...] to be a motivator to those who are weak in spirit and be an empowering tool to those stuck in history,” while Eden Segbefia of Durham, North Carolina, “will always remember the importance of being enlightened by new experiences, people and information.” Personally, I have taken away a better understanding of the various stereotypes, prejudices and injustices that are still abundant today, but that may not directly affect me. This is making me become a more active citizen and friend, and I hope to be more aware of these issues in my own community in the future.

Ultimately, LEV 2016 shaped young apostles who will change the way the church and the world look at issues of justice. My sentiments about this experience parallel that of Durham’s Michelle Lanier, one of the conference leaders:

“The journey was one I will never forget. I imagine that my time with LEV in South Africa will be with me, as an impactful and compelling memory, for life. The people I met, the landscape, the history, the music, the worship — will all live in me.”

(Left to right) A healing service comforted participants shaken by news of an officer-involved shooting in the United States. Participants visited Robben Island, where Nelson Mandela remained incarcerated as a political prisoner for 27 years.



WHERE I'M FROM

I am from freedom fighters and politicians
Locked in prison for many years
The struggle of freedom by the likes of
Mandela and Sobukwe.

I am from racism and oppression
People stoned to death in the street of Gugulethu
Indeed Amy was a remarkable person.

I am from people practising what Jesus
preached about
Walking in his footsteps
Like a solid rock they were
Not shaken by Satan
Forgiveness is what mattered to them
despite the pain they had
Surely God will bless them.

I will keep my memories in my mind
To always remember our beloved late legends
I will keep my memories in my phone
To always browse and see Lift Every Voice family
For we are one in God's eyes,
despite our skin, colour and language.

Observe, feel, establish a need and
make a request.

- Kelebogile Molamu, Botswana



FINDING A PATH FORWARD

Starting Conversations About Race

“Racial reconciliation is just the beginning for the hard and holy work of real reconciliation that realizes justice . . . across all borders and boundaries that divide the human family of God. This is difficult work. But we can do it. It’s about listening and sharing.”

- The Most Rev. Michael B. Curry,
Presiding Bishop of the Episcopal Church

Listening and sharing are essential practices in starting the spiritual work of racial reconciliation, yet the process requires understanding racism as a social reality, not simply a matter of individual bias.

A number of factors limit our ability to understand racism as something larger than mere prejudice. In conversations about race, some white participants enter the fray feeling on the defensive: feelings of guilt over possible culpability, whether acknowledged or not, are the elephant in the room, filling interactions with fear and clouding everyone’s ability to reach a common understanding. Many people of color, on the other hand, often find themselves having to justify their experiences without coming off as too upset, angry or emotional.

Bishop Curry is right. This is difficult work. But we can do it. Better yet, we can participate in the work God is doing in the world around us. We can make ourselves available to God’s reconciling work by the “renewing of [our] minds” (Romans 12:2), extending ourselves in holy reflection, friendship and action.

Similar to the sacrament of reconciliation, then, racial reconciliation must involve naming what has happened and what we have done, known and unknown, to cause rupture in our relationships with God and with each other. Naming the rupture, however, is only the first step in repairing the rupture. The journey continues as we create new ways of being with each other grounded in mutual accountability, not just as individuals, but as representatives of institutions such as the church.

Institutions are established to perpetuate themselves, and it should be no surprise that organizations originally set up to benefit the white majority continue to function as such in spite of individuals’ best intentions. Rome was not built in a day. The state of our racial relations wasn’t either. To recognize the divides that exist in our racialized world, then, requires us to engage in deep listening work over time.

THE DON'TS

As we seek to engage honestly in difficult conversations, it may be helpful to keep a few things in mind to avoid common pitfalls:

Don’t assume you’re not racially biased. Each of us may believe we are not prejudiced, but research on implicit bias shows that *everyone* in our society has absorbed racially biased messages from a young age. Facing up to our own biases requires deep humility, yet these biases are not the sum total of who we are. This is especially helpful for white participants in conversations about race to remember, as it enables them to listen with empathy rather than defensiveness.

Don’t assume others of a different race have had the same experiences. It may seem helpful to claim you are “colorblind,” but using this term ignores the



While the ideas on these pages are a great starting point for anti-racism and reconciliation work, there are also great programs happening at individual churches, including partnering with a local school for anti-racism dialogues at St. Mark’s, Huntersville (pg. 22); Racists Anonymous at Trinity United Church of Christ, Concord (pg. 24); and building relationships between the community and the police department at St. Francis, Greensboro (pg. 26).

fact that most people of color and white people in our society have had radically different lived experiences and access to power.

Don't assuming racism is an individual issue. Once again, it is easy to get bogged down by assuming the problem of racism has to do with a few 'bad apples,' and the only proper way to address it is by striving to be better individuals. It is likewise easy to attribute success or failure to individual life decisions without taking into account the whole host of circumstances that affect our lives. No person is an island, and people of color (as a group) face obstacles that white people (as a group) do not. Hundreds of years of systematic marginalization in every sphere of life cannot be undone overnight, and acknowledging that racism is a social reality — made up by a lack of access to resources and power over generations — can feel overwhelming. Yet it is imperative to try to gain a better understanding of these processes.

THE DO'S

While it's crucial to be sensitive about what not to do, there are many things we can and should do to help us get started on the path to reconciliation.

Do take a short Implicit Association Test such as the ones available through Project Implicit (<https://implicit.harvard.edu/implicit/>). Simply acknowledging that racial bias is present within us — and being open to discovering how it crops up in unexpected ways — opens up avenues for trust.

Do read recommended books and articles such as those listed on the Racial Justice and Reconciliation page of the diocesan website (episdionc.org/diocese/officers,committeeandcommissions). Finding a study partner or forming a group to discuss these resources in more depth not only increases our understanding of how racism impacts our daily lives, but it allows us to create new connections and alliances with our fellow travelers on this path.

Do commit to attending an in-depth, community-based racial equity workshop in order to learn more about the history and structural origin of racism. Taking the time to educate ourselves allows us to see more clearly how racism continues to impact systems in our society such as education, housing, finance, health and criminal justice.

There can be no *reconciliation* without *transformation*. Healing the wounds of racism, therefore, is a journey, not a destination, and though this journey is a deeply personal one, it cannot be travelled alone. It is our sincere hope we will endeavor together toward this goal, trusting that the

GET STARTED

COMMUNITY-BASED RACIAL EQUITY TRAINING WORKSHOPS:

- [Organizing Against Racism-NC](http://www.oarnc.org) (Chapel Hill, Durham, Raleigh)
<http://www.oarnc.org>
- [The Partnership Project](http://www.greensborohealth.org/partnership.html) (Greensboro)
<http://www.greensborohealth.org/partnership.html>
- [RMJJ-Race Matters for Juvenile Justice](http://www.rmjj.worg) (Charlotte)
<http://www.rmjj.worg>

RECOMMENDED READING:

- *America's Original Sin: Racism, White Privilege and the Bridge to a New America* (Jim Wallis, 2016)
- *Becoming an Anti-Racist Church: Journeying toward Wholeness* (Joseph Barndt, 2011)
- *Between the World and Me* (Ta-Nehisi Coates, 2015)
- *Dear White Christians: For Those Still Longing for Reconciliation* (Jennifer Harvey, 2014)
- *The New Jim Crow: Mass Incarceration in the Age of Colorblindness* (Michelle Alexander, 2010)
- *Radical Welcome: Embracing God, the Other, and the Spirit of Transformation* (Stephanie Spellers, 2006)

NEED ADVICE?

- [Bishop's Committee for Racial Justice and Reconciliation](http://episdionc.org/Ministries%20%26%20Mission/racial-justice-reconciliation.html)
[episdionc.org/Ministries & Mission/racial-justice-reconciliation.html](http://episdionc.org/Ministries%20%26%20Mission/racial-justice-reconciliation.html)
- [Episcopalians United Against Racism](http://EUARofNC.org)
EUARofNC.org

God who calls us to this work intends to bring together every branch of the human family at the heavenly feast that awaits us. Justice and reconciliation require sustained effort, the courage to take risks and a willingness to make ourselves vulnerable. Yet with God's help, we can do it, if we are willing.

The members of Episcopalians United Against Racism (EUAR) strive to understand the root causes of systemic racism while building a broad coalition of anti-racist Episcopalians. Visit euarofnc.org.

DEEPENING A RELATIONSHIP TO OPEN NEW DOORS

Why is all of the race-related violence we see on the news happening? Where is the anger coming from? Isn't racism over? What is white privilege? What does it really mean? Racism is clearly still a problem, but what do we do about it? How do we have conversations about it?

These were the questions being asked by parishioners of St. Mark's, Huntersville, in early 2016 when they decided to dedicate seven weeks of their adult formation classes to studying racism in America, including its history and current state. The offering drew more attendees than any other topic had, and, from the start, participants were on the edge of their seats, hearing things they'd never heard before and learning much they did not know. At the end of the seven weeks, there was a clear consensus among the class that they were hungry to know more, to have more discussions and truly to learn from a different perspective what it means to be black in America.

WANTING TO UNDERSTAND

"There is so much we don't understand about being part of America, yet feeling marginalized, disenfranchised and not being heard," said the Rev. Sarah Hollar, rector of St. Mark's. "But if we're going to be followers of Jesus Christ, we can no longer be deliberately oblivious to strife and misunderstanding and the divide over race in America."

St. Mark's is a predominantly white congregation, but it is active in its work with intercultural activities. It is the home of one of the area's La Escualita preschools, and the church also supports the Episcopal Farmworker Ministry. In wanting to know more about people of color and what their lives truly look like in this country, the congregation "understands that if you are going to follow Jesus, part of that is being connected and being an advocate," said Hollar. "It may not be comfortable, and sometimes we'll do it well, and sometimes we'll do it less well, but that's what we're going to do."

In discussing how to continue what was started in the formation series, it was suggested to Hollar there was funding available through the Mission Funding Consortium in the form of Mission Endowment Grants. Considering how that might be used to facilitate ongoing education and conversation, an idea formed that would not only deepen a long-standing relationship but might also afford the opportunity to learn about those already on church grounds.

DEEPENING A RELATIONSHIP

St. Mark's has been a faith partner of Ranson Middle School for 15 years. Parishioners have done backpack supplies drives and collected money for uniforms, and they continue to feed 15 students with weekend backpack meals and attend school events. In past years there have been Thanksgiving dinners, Angel trees and camp scholarships, a program that continues with the local YMCA today.

Ranson is a school whose student body is 95 percent children of color. With a long-standing relationship and level of trust in place, Hollar wondered if the school's parents, staff and faculty would be willing to deepen the relationship and take the journey of discussing racism together.

She called Erica Jordan-Thomas, principal of Ranson Middle School, and Jon Rochester, the school's social worker, to share her thoughts and extend an invitation to be a partner in it. They were immediately interested.

"The opportunity to do this aligned really well with my goals for the school," said Jordan-Thomas. "[Most of] our students are students of color, and they are very aware of the messages around them whether we agree with those messages or not. As educators, we have to be aware of the national conversation and be ready to leverage opportunities to have conversations with our kids to help them process what's going on and paint a new narrative."

"Educators and teachers are not exempt from having biases," she continued. "So an opportunity like this gives faculty a chance to explore their own journey of what this means for themselves — what their own personal experience and impact with race and socioeconomic class means to them, where they are in their journey in being a truly culturally competent leader, and how it's showing up in the classroom and supporting children and learning."

Jordan-Thomas knew Hollar's proposal wasn't simply talk. She attended one of St. Mark's formation sessions,



HAVE A GREAT IDEA?

The application deadline for 2017 Mission Endowment Grants is November 30, 2016. Learn more and apply at episdionc.org.



St. Mark's parishioner Marsha Phillips (left) and deacon the Rev. Ty Smithdeal (right) handed out "success bags" to Ranson students during a school open house. A piece of paper in each bag told students how each treat in the bag could make them successful, i.e. a Starburst for being shining stars. Photos by Sarah Milholland

and found herself the only person of color in the room. Yet as she sat and listened, she found her "heart filled with so much joy to be sitting in a room with folks I'd never met, who did not identify as people of color, and truly having a conversation around sharing their experience and wanting to grow and learn and understand what racism looks like from the perspectives of other people."

Jordan-Thomas and Rochester suggested hosting the meetings at the school. It is the central site of St. Mark's and Ranson's established relationship, and, as such, it offers a neutral, non-threatening environment. It was decided meetings would be held on Wednesday evenings and begin with a shared meal followed by discussions, each of which would be hosted by an outside facilitator with experience and knowledge in the area of race relations. Among those who have already agreed to take part are Mike Wiley, well-known to the Diocese through his work with the Lift Every Voice program, and Steve Crump, noted broadcast journalist with WBTV in Charlotte. The curator from the Museum of the New South will facilitate a discussion, and conversations are taking place to have a local chief of police share perspectives and answer questions.

The hope and goal of the series is to provide those who participate with opportunities to explore not only their own perspectives and beliefs, but also the chance to gain insight on what systemic racism really means.

"[This] starts from within," said Rochester. "If white folks have a better understanding of privilege and what it means in terms of what they might have in relation to people of color, they might be better able to understand the systematic oppression that occurs in our society."

"Systems are people," added Jordan-Thomas. "When you talk about institutional or systemic racism, those are people who create it and perpetuate it. You can't break a system without first doing the individual work within yourself."

REVISING THE PAST

With the \$8,000 Mission Endowment Grant awarded in the Spring 2016 cycle, the partnership series between St. Mark's and Ranson Middle School will begin in January 2017. Part of the funding will cover the cost of the series, but the rest will be put toward a very special project.

St. Mark's is the caretaker of a slave cemetery. Because of the lack of headstones and markers, only two of the 25 to 50 people buried there are known. In an act of respect and recognition of the benefit the church has had from wealth resulting from slavery, the hope of St. Mark's is to use some of the Mission Endowment funding to utilize thermal imaging to determine exactly how many people are buried on the grounds. Once determined, they then want to engage a genealogist to assist in determining the names of those buried and locating any living relatives.

"The dead deserve the dignity of having their name acknowledged at their burial site, and their relatives deserve the opportunity to know where their ancestors are buried," said Hollar.

YOU ARE INVITED

It is hoped that those who participate in the series will attend all seven weeks, but folks can certainly come to whatever sessions work for their schedules. All are welcome, as there is plenty of room for anyone wanting to take part in this eye-opening process.

None of the series organizers are sure where this offering will lead, though all agree the path will be discovered through the cycle of conversation. Said Hollar, "We know what's in the minds of those at St. Mark's, but we don't know what's in the minds of conversation partners. It will be revealed, and we will have to listen to find out."

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

RACISTS ANONYMOUS

One Charlotte-area church is part of a bold new approach to confronting racism

More and more people are becoming aware that, at its core, the end of racism is not just a matter of trying to treat people better or “be a better person.” As awareness grows, so does the understanding that racism is rooted in systemic traditions in which average, everyday, good people take part, in many cases without even realizing it’s the case. That can be a hard thing to realize, and many struggle with it.

Shying away from the knowledge will not solve the problem; more than ever, conversation is needed. Trinity United Church of Christ (TUCC) in Concord, North Carolina, is taking part in Racists Anonymous, a relatively new program based on other, more familiar 12-step programs. Racists Anonymous seeks to create a safe place to have these conversations and develop a new way of living.

The Rev. Nathan King, pastor of TUCC, spoke with us about the program.

Christine McTaggart: Tell me about the Racists Anonymous (RA) program. When and how did it get started?

Nathan King: It began back in January 2016, perhaps as early as December 2015, out on the west coast with the Rev. Ron Buford. Ron is a United Church of Christ minister with the Congregational Church of Sunnyvale, and he began the program out there. The idea was to try it for 90 days and see what interest there was. After 90 days, there was a lot of interest in continuing the program, so they did that and invited others to join them. Ron asked for 20 partner congregations to start RA meetings. We were one of the first churches to jump on board with that. Dr. Carol Stanley spotted Ron’s call on Facebook and asked me what I thought. I thought it was a great idea and we ran it by our social justice team, and they thought it was a great idea, too.

CMc: Did it come with guidelines?

NK: Yes. Ron has a kit that contains background materials, the statement of the problem, a statement of the solution and the 12 steps.

CMc: Tell me about Trinity United Church of Christ. Why did you think it would be a good fit for this?

NK: Our church has been evolving into a social action/social justice congregation for the last 10 to 15 years. We have become an open and affirming United Church of Christ and have done a lot of work for equality for the LGBTQ community.

For the last two years, we’ve been having a number of discussions about events that started in Ferguson and gun violence [in general]. As the police shootings continued and were particularly perpetrated toward black men, we began to look more closely at the causes and issues around racism as well as white privilege. Last year a group from our church took part in a white privilege conference in Chapel Hill that was based on a curriculum announced at last summer’s [UCC] General Synod. And we just began reading – articles, books. We’ve just become more aware, and, as a church, we aspire to be a socially active church as a part of our calling in the way we follow Jesus.

CMc: How often are the meetings held?

NK: Weekly. We meet on Wednesdays from 6 until 7 p.m.

CMc: How many generally attend?

NK: We average 12 or 13 people per meeting. Faces come in and out for a variety of reasons, but it seems like every week there are at least one or two new faces.

CMc: Who attends?

NK: We have a mix of people. It’s pretty diverse, and not just in terms of race. There’s a good diversity in terms of personal identity, and ages range from early 20s to 70s and 80s. It’s a pretty big mix of people.

CMc: Why do you think people feel compelled to attend?

NK: I think it’s partly because people are becoming more aware there’s a big problem in this country with how we treat people of color. Our actions are racist at times, we participate in systems of racial abuse, and with the stories in the last two years, particularly those involving police shootings of black men, there have been a lot more people tuned in to what’s going on, seeing the violence and beginning to ask questions about why this keeps happening and whether there isn’t something we can do about it.

Once people start educating themselves and start reading history from the perspective of people of color, it can create a place of uneasiness and turmoil, especially spiritually. That’s been a factor for a lot of people who come to our meetings.

RACISTS ANONYMOUS 12 STEPS OF RECOVERY

CMc: What do you think they hope to get out of it?

NK: I think most people are really hoping to change behavior and thought patterns, to broaden the conversation and become more aware of what the issues are and how people of color have been treated. By changing behavior and thought patterns, the hope is that the systems will start to change.

CMc: How does the individual nature of RA tie in with the ongoing conversations focusing on the systemic elements of racism? Why is it important?

NK: It's individuals that allow a system to perpetuate. If individuals were not racist, we would not participate in systems that are racist. Like any societal change, the [systemic walls] begin to chip when individuals start to make changes within themselves. RA meetings are not the end-all/be-all in and of themselves – they're a piece of the solution. For the systems to change, individuals have to live into the new reality, embrace the change and be the ones to perpetuate a new way of being in relationship.

CMc: How have recent events in Charlotte affected the conversations at meetings? Or have they reaffirmed what's already being discussed?

NK: I think it's a little bit of both. It's changed the feeling of the meetings; they feel even more important. It's also intensified the meetings to some degree, because people are able to see the problem much more closely than we did even a month ago. It's made us realize this is really important work going on, and it's made us realize that even more is needed. More of this work, more of these conversations. We need to hear about the experiences of people of color, recognize the pain and suffering that's been inflicted and respond in a way that feels like we're moving ourselves into a greater place.

CMc: What has surprised you most about these meetings?

NK: Probably the diversity present. I've been delighted to see 20- and 30-somethings in there as well as people of color that we so much need to be in the room with us. Otherwise we're just a bunch of white people sitting in a room talking in a vacuum. That's been so much of that problem already, that we haven't listened to the stories of our black brothers and sisters.

CMc: What advice would you offer anyone wanting to start meetings?

NK: Two things. One would be to do some research. Attend some seminars, read some books and articles. Gather some people and see if there's some support. Two, write to the Rev. Ron Buford (rlbuford@gmail.com), ask for a kit and follow the outline. He'll send you what you need.

Christine McTaggart is the communications director for the Diocese of North Carolina. Contact her at christine.mctaggart@episdionc.org. To reach the Rev. Nathan King to learn more about Racists Anonymous, contact him at rev.nathan@commachurch.com.

1. I have come to admit that I am powerless over my addiction to racism in ways I am unable to recognize fully, let alone manage.
2. I believe that only a power greater than me can restore me in my humanness to the non-racist creature as God designed me to be.
3. For my own good and the good of future generations, I have decided to turn my will and my life over to the care of God insofar as I understand God.
4. I've made a searching and fearless moral inventory of myself concerning my bias toward others on the basis of race, gender, sex, sexual orientation, religion or any external physical difference such as size, ability, or adornment and more.
5. I have admitted to God, to myself and to another human being the exact nature of my wrongful thoughts and actions.
6. I am entirely ready to have God remove all these defects of character.
7. I humbly asked God to remove my shortcomings.
8. I've made a list of all persons I have harmed and am willing to make amends insofar as this is possible.
9. I will make direct amends to such people wherever possible, except when to do so would injure them, others, or create more harm than good.
10. I will continue taking personal inventory, and when I behave wrongly, I will admit it promptly.
11. I will continually seek through prayer and meditation to improve my conscious contact with God insofar as I understand God, praying for knowledge of God's Will and Wisdom for my life along with the power I need to carry that out.
12. As I have spiritual awakenings as the result of these steps, I will share this message with other race addicts as I seek to practice these principles in all my affairs.

A MEANS TO A BEGINNING

By Mary Flinn

St. Francis and the Greensboro police chiefs share reconciliation worship



What do you get when you mix one priest and two police officers in a pulpit? A recipe for reconciliation and a heartfelt, yet transparent, discussion about race relations in Greensboro, North Carolina.

WELCOME TO ST. FRANCIS

Since interim rector the Rev. Milton C. Williams arrived at the predominantly white parish in 2015, he has been pushing the envelope. On any given Sunday at the church, known for its annual book sale whose proceeds fund numerous outreach projects, there are events like car blessings, blessings of the animals, a ministry fair where children of all ages (including Williams) can be found hula-hooping on the lawn. There are lots of visitors every Sunday, taking a peek to see what is going on at St. Francis.

Williams is familiar with first responders; in fact, he was one himself on September 11, 2001, when he served at Trinity Church in New York City. As God's first responder, he spent the day going back and forth from the

horrific scene outside to the inside of the church, trying to discern where he was needed. After living and serving in Chicago and Washington, D.C., as well, he may have thought taking an assignment in Greensboro might be a nice respite from his previous excitement. But not long after he arrived in the piedmont city, he saw an article on the front page of *The New York Times* about his new city.

"The Disproportionate Risks of Driving While Black" was an unflattering expose about the disparity in traffic stops that occur with black drivers as opposed to white drivers in Greensboro and other cities that collect traffic stop data. The article featured newly assigned Chief of Police Wayne Scott, who described the efforts the force was making to change the disparity. Also featured in the article was Mayor Nancy Vaughan, who asked, "Are we going to be the next Ferguson?" That was a thought echoed by Williams as well.

Fast forward to 2016 and reel off the names of towns and cities that have suffered police shootings and shootings of police: Ferguson, Missouri; Baltimore, Maryland;

Baton Rouge, Louisiana; St. Anthony, Minnesota; Dallas, Texas; Stoneville, North Carolina, a town just north of Greensboro. Add to that the Charleston, South Carolina church shooting, the name Freddie Gray, Black Lives Matter, and the mind can become numb to the seemingly every-other-day occurrences of racially charged violence. One might ask, “What’s going on here?”

Williams certainly did. “You should be *feeling* something because clearly, this is not right,” he said. He wondered about his congregation. He thought, *What are they feeling? And are we going to be the next Ferguson? The conversation about connecting our civic selves to our religious selves in a responsible way needs to start now, and here. And St. Francis needs to take the lead.*

STARTING THE CONVERSATION

On Sunday, August 7, 2016, Williams shared his pulpit with Scott and Deputy Chief James Hinson, Jr. as a means not to an end, but to a beginning. In a spring-board discussion that Williams likened in setting to famous interviewers like Phil Donohue or Charlie Rose, Scott quipped he was glad Williams hadn’t chosen Jerry Springer as the model for the day’s discussion, which got a chuckle from the congregation. Also invited to the worship service were the Rev. Stephen Smith and members of the congregation of the Holy Spirit, Greensboro, a more diverse parish in another area of town, and Vaughan, whose mother is a member of St. Francis.

positive attention nationally. The new protocol involves fewer stops over minor traffic infractions, which results in arrest statistics that appear to be more representative of the population. In order to build bridges, officers do more listening than talking. Scott shared that during a recent protest, “I said, ‘We are going to allow them to be heard.’ We could have gone in and starting arresting everybody. We operated with patience. Many walked away feeling very different about the police.”

The chief also explained the police presence continues to be in places where they are asked to be, where citizens are more often victimized, and those places tend to be in neighborhoods where people of color usually live. Scott mentioned that federal law allows vehicles to be searched for any reason, but he requires his officers to have a reason to search, which must be recorded in paperwork or through talking into the body cameras officers wear. “We believe it creates trust in our community,” he said.

FAITH PLAYS A PART

Being invited into a church to share their stories is not new to Scott and Hinson, who both say their faith, which is strongly rooted in the Baptist tradition, guides them daily in their jobs. They have been guest speakers in mosques, synagogues and other churches where they have had similar discussions with other congregations, something that resonated positively with St. Francis members. Parishioner Dick Battle thinks Scott’s department is on

“I tell [officers] each and every encounter should be like what we would want if it were one of our relatives being stopped.” - Greensboro Deputy Chief James Hinson, Jr.

The questions ranged from how officers must respond in making split-second decisions, to how citizens are treated equally and as a matter of police protocol. It all goes back to the greatest commandment: Love thy neighbor as thyself.

“I tell [officers] each and every encounter should be like what we would want if it were one of our relatives being stopped,” said Hinson, who oversees the city’s patrol division.

On the question of gun control, Scott deferred to lawmakers on that issue but mentioned the struggle citizens have between mental health issues and the availability of weapons.

Attendees learned the Greensboro police force has developed a new protocol for traffic stops in general as a way to reduce the disparity, which has garnered some

to something. He said, “You have a feeling that he cares, and that’s so important for people who want things to be better.”

Scott, who has started a faith advisory council, ended the conversation by asking for the congregation’s prayer — for himself, for Hinson, for the police force and for the city of Greensboro.

Mary Flinn is a parishioner at St. Francis, Greensboro. Contact her at outreach@stfrancisgreensboro.org.

Opposite page, from left to right: The Rev. Stephen Smith of Holy Spirit, Greensboro; Florence Barakat, St. Francis member and mother of Mayor Nancy Vaughan; Greensboro Mayor Nancy Vaughan; Greensboro Chief of Police Wayne Scott; Deputy Chief of Police James Hinson, Jr.; and interim rector the Rev. Milton Williams, St. Francis, Greensboro. *Photo courtesy of Mary Flinn*



(Right to left) Davidson students gather for a Sunday meal with A Movable Feast. Parishioners from Holy Comforter, Burlington, pass out refreshments to neighbors during the downtown St. Patrick's Day festival. A Movable Feast's trailer served many purposes on the campus of St. Stephen's, Durham.

By Summerlee Walter

A MOVABLE FEAST IS YOUR FEAST

It's not unusual for someone to approach Brittany Love after a presentation about A Movable Feast and tell her they like what she is doing with the ministry.

"I always think, 'No, it's not what I'm doing; it's what *you're* doing,'" the A Movable Feast director and young adult missionary said. A Movable Feast was originally conceived as a diocesan young adult ministry based out of a customized trailer that both holds a chapel and serves hot, home-cooked food. While the trailer still frequents college campuses and actively helps churches reach out to young adults in their communities, Love's vision is more flexible. She wants churches to take the idea behind A Movable Feast — gathering with people where they are, feeding them and inviting relationship — and see what connections form. Sometimes that looks like passing food through the trailer, and sometimes it looks quite different.

"Anytime that a church gets into the community and feeds people, it benefits the whole ministry of the diocese and The Episcopal Church," she said, "because we become known as the people who feed people."

RECLAIMING A SAINT

This March, Holy Comforter, Burlington, borrowed A Movable Feast's trailer to celebrate St. Patrick's Day during the city's annual downtown celebration. Vestry member Shannon McQueen knew some of the coordinators of the downtown event and approached the clergy with the idea that Holy Comforter should be present in some way. Knowing the festival included a food truck rally, assistant rector the Rev. Timothy McLeod immediately

thought of the trailer.

"My institutional knowledge was able to take advantage of and fill out what the town was already offering and capitalize on an inspired lay person's idea," he explained.

The event opened with an ecumenical gathering of Episcopalians, Catholics and Presbyterians celebrating a St. Patrick's Day evensong at Holy Comforter.

"What we wanted to do was use St. Patrick's Day — because it is inherently a religious observance — to model the idea that what we say and believe in worship compels us to go out into our community and take that message with us in tangible ways," McLeod explains.

Once downtown, volunteers served free food through the trailer's window, and the sides of the van (a convenient erasable writing surface) displayed information about Holy Comforter. Even though McLeod was not staffing the food truck, the mere fact he was still wearing his collar was enough for a few former Christians to approach him and ask what he was doing at the festival.

Holy Comforter's visible presence at the celebration did draw a few people to the church on Sunday morning, and their success in inviting people to worship through their presence in the community has inspired the church to think about how they welcome visitors once they've chosen to spend time at the church.

A MULTIPURPOSE MINISTRY

A Movable Feast's trailer is a large vehicle, and, sometimes once it parks somewhere, it lives there for awhile.



A MOVABLE FEAST AND YOU

To borrow A Movable Feast's trailer or to brainstorm ways to embrace the spirit of A Movable Feast in your church, email Brittany Love at brittany.love@episdioc.org. You can also find an event near you at amovablefeast.org.

The trailer's time at St. Stephen's, Durham, illustrates the ministry's versatility. From October, 2015, through August, 2016, the trailer served refreshments for people lined up outside of El Buen Pastor, Durham, waiting for food assistance; served water and lemonade to young people hunting Pokemon around St. Stephen's; and passed out hotdogs during Trunk or Treat.

Parishioner Megan Carlson started to think about additional ways to use the trailer during its time parked in the church's parking lot. She wanted to do something that appealed to young adults and decided to leverage the trailer's lowkey nature to provide an alternate worship opportunity.

Throughout the summer, Carlson opened the trailer on Wednesday evenings for outdoor compline.

"We literally opened the trailer," she said. "There was no Altar Guild. We played Bible Pictionary and Bible trivia on the side of the trailer as part of summer Bible study."

Food and worship are the key components of A Movable Feast, whether or not the trailer is present.

A EUCHARISTIC FEAST

Across the Diocese, on Saturday, September 17, members of St. Martin's, Charlotte, gathered at the Galilee Center to celebrate a Eucharist modeled after the very earliest Church services, when worshipers would set aside some of the bread and wine from their agape feast to use for the Eucharist.

The evening began with a potluck to which each person was invited to bring a dish "that meant something to them," leading to a rich mixture of Southern cuisine and beloved dishes from other countries.

"We separated some of the food, and told the story of Jesus," the Rev. Josh Bowron, rector of St. Martin's

and that evening's celebrant, explained. "I asked them to take a lot of bread and to drink a lot of wine. The theme of the night as we reflected on it afterward was we were stuffing our face on God. I wanted to have this notion that sacramental practice does not need to be rationed out — it can be an abundance of that symbol."

Just as happened in Burlington, the Eucharist at Galilee Center originated with an idea from a lay person.

"The conversation was going on for weeks and months before I even came in, so what I want to come out is that this was lay led," Bowron emphasized.

A MOVABLE FEAST ON CAMPUS

Harkening back to the original vision for the ministry, the Rev. Greg McIntyre, Episcopal chaplain at Davidson College, took inspiration from A Movable Feast to move the long-standing Canterbury Club dinner out of the chapel and into the campus's student union.

"That's what we're trying to get away from, that if you come to worship then you get a meal," he explained. "We just want to create space for good fellowship, Sabbath time, a moment of grace and good conversation that is not structured."

Knowing that Davidson students live in a competitive environment, McIntyre has worked hard to keep the dinners from becoming "programmed."

"The students appreciate the homecooking," he said. "They appreciate it when there are [St. Alban's, Davidson] families in the room. The idea is just to get the church on campus, to open that doorway."

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THE HUNGRY PET FOOD BANK

“These are God’s creatures, too.”

It’s the time of year when many churches celebrate pets and the love between them and the people they call family with Blessings of the Animals services.

At St. Timothy’s, Wilson, that love is blessed not just in honor of St. Francis’ feast day, but in the way it is supported all year round.

The Hungry Pet Food Bank began as a community project in November 2015 after ongoing conversations between local rescue groups and individuals recognized that the high unemployment and poverty levels in Wilson county were causing many people to struggle to provide even basic care for the animals in their families.

It was agreed that feeding alone would not be enough. Those in conversation knew that providing resources for family pets would help to solve only one facet of the long-term problem of hungry animals in the area; any program developed would have to include a component to ensure pets were spayed and neutered as well. Dawn Tucker of For the Love of Dogs, a no-kill shelter in Wilson dedicated to the humane treatment of dogs, was one of the founding members of the Hungry Pet Food Bank who helped move the conversations into action.

The organization had been active only a few months when a parishioner at St. Timothy’s, who was also a volunteer at the food bank, approached church leadership to see if St. Timothy’s might become involved in the project. The Rev. Marty Stebbins, rector at St. Timothy’s, veterinarian and adjunct assist professor at the North Carolina State College of Veterinary Medicine, was on board, so flyers were brought in to introduce the program and discern the congregation’s interest in supporting it. The interest was immediate, as it was revealed that several St. Timothy’s members had already had conversations about the food bank through the shelter communities with which they were involved.

A NATURAL FIT

Involvement in the Hungry Pet Food Bank was a natural fit for St. Timothy’s, and not just because of Stebbins’ background as a vet.

“St. Timothy’s really is about food and feeding, both physically and spiritually,” said Stebbins. “We were founders of the Community Soup Kitchen of Wilson County 35 years ago, and it was housed on our property until a year ago when it moved into a bigger space. We still offer a hot breakfast here on Sundays. Church activities like our Thanksgiving-week Bake Sale raise money to support various community projects, including the soup kitchen. Feeding people on all levels is part of who we are, and so the pet food collection bins just went right next to the other food collection bins.”

The old soup kitchen pantry was put back into service as the Hungry Pet Food Bank storage facility, where up to four weeks’ worth of food can be stored. Those donations are added once a month to the food collected in bins at other area locations, including PetSmart, Dollar Stores and For the Love of Dogs.



(Top) Jacob Aycock loads a donation of food into the truck of a pet owner picking up from The Hungry Pet Food Bank. (Bottom) The Rev. Marty Stebbins, rector of St. Timothy’s, Wilson, holds some puppies. Photos courtesy of St. Timothy’s, Wilson

SPECIAL SATURDAYS

Though food is collected every day, distribution happens on the third Saturday of every month at The SPOT (Sharing...Positive...Outcomes...Together), an after-school youth program sharing a former church property with several other ministries in a distressed neighborhood. Those who wish to utilize the food bank's offerings must call ahead to submit their request to ensure the food bank collects whatever is needed. If the requests exceed the food available, the supply is simply divided up so that everyone who needs assistance leaves with at least something. More than 60 pets are assisted each month.

Food is not the only thing distributed. Volunteers work with the pet owners to educate about and stress the need for spaying and neutering their animals, to help control the number of unplanned litters and reduce the number of stray – and often hungry – animals, many of whom end up in local shelters. Visitors are given three chances to have their animals spayed or neutered; if they refuse after the third request, they are no longer eligible for the Hungry Pet Food Bank.

"If folks are breeding their animals, we just can't feed them all," said Judy Aycock, food bank volunteer. "We do everything we can to help them get their animals spayed or neutered. We make them aware of the Wilson County Sheriff's subsidized spay/neuter program, which offers low-cost and no-cost spay and neuter services. If they can't afford the \$15 fee for spaying or basic care needs like shots, we try and help with financial assistance."

Each participant in the food bank is furnished with a ticket that keeps track of conversations about care, food requested and other assistance provided. The system allows the food bank to stay organized, amply stocked and ready to serve those who often line up an hour before the doors open. Walk-ins are welcome, and new visitors are asked to register with the food bank. When distribution starts, pet owners simply present their ticket, their food is packed up by one volunteer and then brought out by the runner, often volunteer Jacob Aycock.

Aycock is a teenager at St. Timothy's who got involved with the Hungry Pet Food Bank as part of his confirmation outreach project. He has volunteered since March and has no plans to stop.

"I like it," he said. "It's interesting, and it keeps me on my feet. Besides that, I'm very fond of animals."

Aycock envisions a day when St. Timothy's is not alone in providing this service to support struggling families trying to care for their pets. He thinks that if word about the ministry continues to be shared, folks won't be able to help but get involved.

"I'd like there to be food banks for pets as well as for people across the United States," he said. "There are people outside of North Carolina who can't afford to feed

their pets. I'd like to see the organization spread out over time."

IMMEASURABLE VALUE

For those who have ever shared their lives with a pet or animal companion, it is easy to understand what a gift the Hungry Pet Food Bank is to those who need it.

"The value of living with a dog or cat is something to be cherished and supported in the community," said Stebbins. "Even if you cannot care for the animal in a 'middle-class understanding,' if they have their rabies vaccinations, if they have food and water and love, everything else is commentary. It has a lot of energy, this understanding. Some might feel that if you cannot afford the basics for them, you shouldn't have a pet. But the spiritual and emotional value of having an animal share your life is greater than a to-do list."

Whether pet owners need the assistance of the Hungry Pet Food Bank because of chronic trouble or a sudden change in circumstance, for volunteers at St. Timothy, the reason to respond is simple.

"These are God's creatures, too," said Judy Aycock. "We're supposed to help take care of them."

"St. Timothy's has always been about feeding," said Stebbins. "We just expanded it from humans to a broader group."

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



YOU CAN HELP

If you want to get involved with or help support the Hungry Pet Food Bank, you can do so in a number of ways:

- Drop off food donations at St. Timothy's, Wilson.
- Purchase extra food when shopping at Wilson PetSmart and Dollar Store locations.
- Contact St. Timothy's to ask about volunteer opportunities.
- Donate – checks can be sent to St. Timothy's (P.O. Box 1527, Wilson, NC 27894-1527). Please be sure to note "Pet Food Bank" in the memo line.

Monetary donations will be used to purchase food and to provide pets with basic medical care, including necessary shots, spaying and neutering.



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Invite A Movable Feast to make a stop in your area! Contact brittany.love@episdionc.org.