

Fall 2017



The North Carolina DISCIPLE



LIFT EVERY VOICE

2016



2017



2015



 The North Carolina
DISCIPLE

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COVER PHOTOS

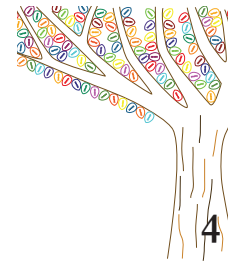
A healing service comforted participants shaken after receiving news of an officer-involved shooting in the United States while they were in South Africa for Lift Every Voice 2016. The tee-shirt for LEV 2017, featuring a map of the world, the flags of all three participating countries and a giraffe, the animal with the largest heart. Ty Stevenson, Diocese of Northern California, matches his fingerprint to the fingerprint of an enslaved person on a chimney brick at Stagville State Historic Site during LEV 2015. *This page:* All three years of LEV included ample time for reflection. *Photos by Beth Crow and Summerlee Walter*

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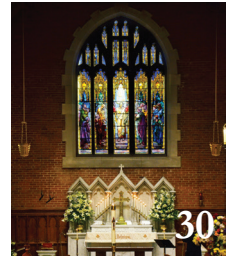
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The North Carolina DISCIPLE

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.
- Is printed and mailed in Morrisville, North Carolina. The printer has been using an internal paper recycling system for paper production since 1995.

Delivery occurs during the first week of the following months:

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

OUR PARTICULAR GIFTS

*“In Christ there is no East or West, in him no South or North,
But one great fellowship of love throughout the whole wide earth.”*

The familiar hymn has always been a favorite of mine. The simple vision of unity it conveys is at the center of what I understand the vocation of the Church to be. We are to be the unified body of Christ. Of course, in this we have struggled mightily, and some would argue we have failed miserably, particularly if we look through the lens of denominationalism. We see the lines of division that have undercut this vision of unified fellowship for centuries. Instead of a unified body, we have divided into factions of Catholic and Protestant, of orthodox and apostolic, of Baptists, Presbyterians, Methodists, Episcopalians, Lutherans, Congregationalists...the list goes on and on.

That is one way to view our history: as a series of splits and divisions that have left the Church fragmented and its witness to unity compromised. If that is true, then we are perhaps the least qualified, and likely the last, institution one would imagine being effective in healing the political, economic and racial divisions that plague our state and country.

But there is another way of looking at our history. Rather than seeing it as a study in fragmentation or a series of fractures, divisions and discord, imagine the Church instead as a large, majestic tree with a canopy of limbs and branches spreading in every direction, reaching out in a glorious diversity of shape, color and size from a common trunk. When I think of what it means to be the Episcopal branch of the Jesus Movement, it is this image of the tree that seems to capture a more hopeful vision for the life of the Church.

In this view, we are all organically connected to the same source of water and nutrition, passing from the roots through the trunk to each of the branches. Each branch and every leaf is a receptor of sunlight; the sugar that comes from the subsequent process of photosynthesis then strengthens the central core of the tree of which we are all a part.

There is a Biblical version of this image for the Church that comes from one of Jesus’ parables. In the gospel of Matthew, Jesus says, “The kingdom of heaven is like a mustard seed that someone took and sowed in his field; it is the smallest of all the seeds, but when it has grown it is the greatest of shrubs and becomes a

tree, so that the birds of the air come and make nests in its branches.” (Matthew 13:31-32)

UNITY IN DIVERSITY

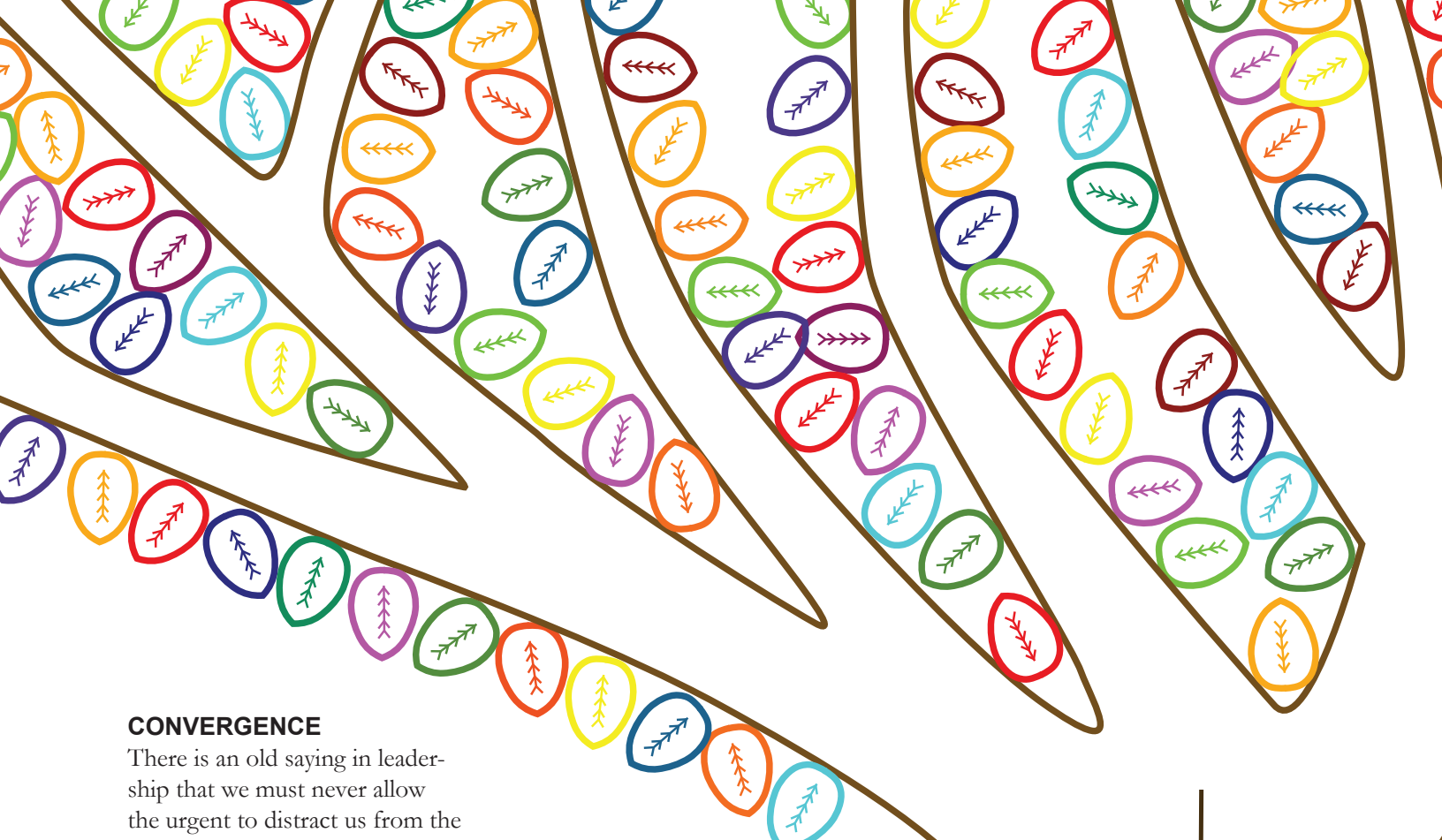
Living out this more hopeful vision of unity in diversity, of common roots with a variety of expression, holds more promise for our role as leaders of a movement that calls us to value the different expressions of faith and answers to the call of discipleship. In doing so, our witness as an organization with actual experience holding together different kinds of people across a spectrum of political beliefs, socio-economic strata and racial and ethnic heritage, begins to gain some credibility and traction.

This summer’s events in Charlottesville, Virginia, and Durham and Chapel Hill, North Carolina, brought our divisions more sharply into focus and, let’s face it, closer to home. We are shifting from the philosophical realm to a reality of pressing and immediate concern. The necessity of the Church to become a leading voice in the healing of these divisions has grown urgent. Perhaps we could we add a line to the hymn, “In Christ there is no Left or Right”?

The racial and class dynamics sometimes connected to our political divisions make the conversation more complicated. The recent movement to tear down or remove confederate monuments is an example of this and has heightened the tension for all of us.

I recently met with a seminarian, and we talked about some of the divisions that plague us within and outside of the Church. He said, “That is why the moment when people come forward for communion continues to be the most meaningful part of the service for me. I know the deep differences people carry as they make their way to the rail. I see people from opposite ends of the political and theological spectrum come forward to the same table, and as they kneel down, sometimes side by side, none of that matters. They are all here for the same things: to be close to Jesus, to feel the grace of his love and to be reminded how deeply connected we are to each other, in him.”





CONVERGENCE

There is an old saying in leadership that we must never allow the urgent to distract us from the necessary, but occasionally, the urgent and the necessary converge. This is one such moment. It is time to begin, again, these conversations about unity, about our dividedness, about the need for deeper understanding, about justice, and about what true reconciliation might look like. As a colleague pointed out to me, it is not one conversation; there are many conversations we need to have, and the work is complex and even risky. Yet the Church is not only called, it may have some unique gifts to offer in convening such conversations.

As I wrote this column, I received a text from my cousin in Indiana. She is much more conservative than I am, both politically and theologically, but everyday she texts me some verses from scripture. That day's verse was "But it is God who establishes us with you in Christ and has anointed us, by putting his seal on us and giving us his Spirit in our hearts as a first installment."

(2 Corinthians 1:21-22)

At our Diocesan Convention this fall and throughout the coming year, we will lean into these conversations with integrity, with openness, with vulnerability, with prayer and with a deep desire for healing. I hope you will be a part of these conversations. Please bring to them your own experience, your particular point of view, your deep commitment to Jesus and your hopes for our state, our nation and our world. Conversation alone will not bring about healing. But these conversations will begin a process of healing that calls us as members of one body back to the reality that we all are connected, we all share common roots, and we all have the gift of our particular experience and perspective to share.

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

AROUND THE DIOCESE

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

Photos by Kerry Nesbit

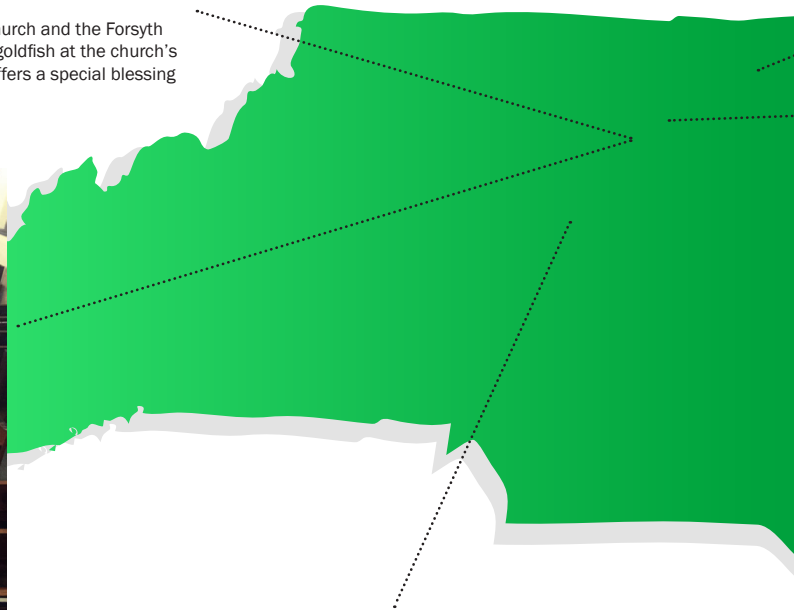


St. Paul's, Winston-Salem, blessed animals at two locations this year: the church and the Forsyth County Humane Society. The Rev. D. Dixon Kinser, rector, blesses a bowl of goldfish at the church's October 1 Blessing of the Animals service. The Rev. Sara C. Ardrey-Graves offers a special blessing to a shelter cat.

Photo by the Rev. Canon Earnest Graham



Clergy of the Diocese gathered at the Hawthorne Inn in Winston-Salem October 3-5 for the annual Clergy Conference. The attendees are pictured in the sanctuary at St. Paul's, Winston-Salem.



St. Andrew's, Woodleaf, celebrated its annual homecoming service on August 27.



Photo by Lynn Hoke



Photo courtesy of the Rt. Rev. Anne Hodges-Copple

The Rt. Rev. Anne Hodges-Copple celebrated the 120th anniversary of Church of the Messiah, Mayodan, during her October 8 visitation.



Photo courtesy of the Rt. Rev. Anne Hodges-Copple

An episcopal selfie from the Rt. Rev. Anne Hodges-Copple's October 1 visitation to St. Matthew's, Kernersville.



Photos by Beth Crow (right) and Jamey Graves (left)

This summer, participants in Lift Every Voice (page 14) joined the Province IV Youth Event in Lumberton, where the effects of Hurricane Matthew are still very much felt.

NEW, NOTABLE & NEWSWORTHY

BISHOP SAM BIBLE STUDY AND PODCAST

In December, Bishop Sam plans to experiment with a monthly online Bible study. He invites one and all to join him the second Wednesday of every month at noon (ET), when he and a guest will discuss a Bible passage. The sessions will be livestreamed via Facebook to invite comment and questions during the Bible study, and each session will be available both on Facebook and as a

downloadable podcast.

To watch or take part in Bishop Sam's Bible studies, simply like the Episcopal Diocese of North Carolina on Facebook.



MISSION ENDOWMENT GRANT DEADLINE IS NOVEMBER 30

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

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

To apply for a Mission Endowment Grant, visit episcionc.org and look for "Grants and Scholarships" under the "Resources" tab.



Former recipients of the Mission Endowment Grant include All Saints', Concord, which used its funds to support the Lockhart Early Learning Center, a public preschool serving low-income students in the church's building. MEGs encourage this type of innovative collaboration with partners outside of the church.

THE REV. JAN LAMB APPOINTED CHAPLAIN TO THE BISHOP SUFFRAGAN

The Rt. Rev. Anne E. Hodges-Copple has invited the Rev. Jan Lamb to become her chaplain for Sunday visitations. Lamb will provide assistance, including some driving, during the bishop's Sunday morning visitations to parishes and missions around the diocese.

Lamb will not replace the duties or responsibilities of regional deacons, local deacons or canons. She will augment the logistical and organization support for the bishop, including assistance with transportation, coordination of vestments, prayer books, certificates and other materials related to the day's visit. She will serve as bishop's scribe during the vestry meetings and make note of matters for the bishop suffragan's particular

follow-up attention.

Unless there is a regional deacon present, Lamb will assume the liturgical duties of the bishop's chaplain during worship. All other diaconal duties will remain with the local deacon. Where there is no ordained minister, lay minister or deacon otherwise assigned or present, Lamb is happy to assist in any other diaconal role.

Lamb begins her new role on Sunday, October 29.



RESTORING GOD'S EARTH: AN INVITATION FROM NATIVITY, RALEIGH

Nativity, Raleigh, is often found at the forefront of environmental stewardship, both in example and in developing new initiatives. On October 1, they launched a year-long, comprehensive program called Restoring God's Earth: A Year of Personal Action. It is not simply a Nativity project, however; they are inviting everyone who cares about the environment to join them.

For one year, Nativity will have monthly themes such as composting or the reduction of food waste, each with weekly actions.

The challenge begins with composting. It is part of a related Nativity initiative, Becoming the Good Soil, dedicated to addressing climate change and increasing food security.

The project is based on evidence that reducing emissions from burning fossil fuels will not be enough to avoid severe climate change. Carbon (as carbon dioxide, a greenhouse gas) must also be removed from the air and stored away. About one third of the carbon in the air today was once in the soil but it has been released through past and current agriculture.

Research has proven the application of compost to land significantly removes carbon from the air. In California, for example, extensive work showed that by covering just five percent of the degraded, grazed rangeland with one half of an inch of compost removes an amount of carbon roughly equal to the carbon released by the energy used by the state's homes and businesses in a year. This process, referred to as carbon farming, is

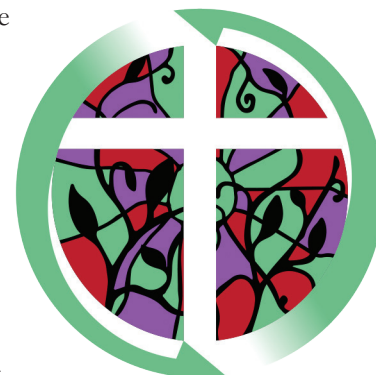
one of many regenerative agricultural approaches that increase soil organic matter. Carbon farming also increases soil fertility that leads to greater crop yields and food security.

While most of us are not likely to be active farmers, we can nevertheless help lower carbon pollution by composting food and yard waste at home and church. At Nativity, composting is one of the ways the congregation is working to achieve "zero waste" on their campus.

To participate in this project:

- Compost at church and at home.
- Arrange for a composting service to pick up your food waste.
- Take food waste to a solid waste container site in your county.
- Share information with Nativity about how you are Becoming the Good Soil.

For more information or help with taking part in either Restoring God's Earth or Becoming the Good Soil, visit nativityonline.org/faith/caring-for-creation, or contact Carl Sigel (cwsigel@aol.com) or the Rev. Stephanie Allen (sa@nativityonline.org).



BISHOP ESTILL'S NEW BOOK

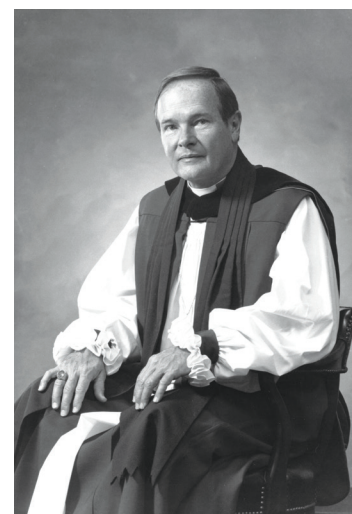
No bishop can complete a tenure in office without gaining wisdom, insight and a stockpile of stories – so many stories! The Rt. Rev. Robert Estill, IX Bishop of the Diocese of North Carolina, compiled more than a stockpile in his 14 years as bishop diocesan, and in his new book he shares all he learned not only as a bishop, but in more than 90 years of living.

The Sun Shines Bright is Estill's memoir and tells the story a bishop who is also a cartoonist, horseman, traveler, veteran, husband, father, grandfather and great-grandfather. His career included pastorates ranging from the coal fields of Kentucky to Washington, D.C.; Virginia Theological Seminary; Dallas, Texas and, of course, North Carolina. In *The Sun Shines Bright*, he writes about his life, celebrating what he calls "the great privilege of living."

The Sun Shines Bright is available for \$19.95 at Chapel

Hill Press (chapelhillpress.com); Quail Ridge Books in Raleigh (quailridgebooks.com); Christ Church, Raleigh; The Canterbury Shop at St. Michael's, Raleigh; and the Sacred Garden Bookstore at Holy Trinity, Greensboro.

You can also see Bishop Estill in person at the Sacred Garden Bookstore booth at the 202nd Annual Convention in Winston-Salem. He will attend and sign copies of his book on Friday, November 17.



ALETA PAYNE NEW EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR OF JOHNSON SERVICE CORPS

The Board of Directors of the Johnson Service Corps announced the appointment of Aleta Payne as executive director late this summer.

In her position, Payne is leading the Chapel Hill-based organization in implementing long-term strategy for the program that provides opportunities to young adults for community service and leadership training.

Payne came to the Johnson Service Corps from the NC Council of Churches (NCCC), where she was deputy executive director with responsibilities that included supervision of staff and interns, programming, communications and development.

“Aleta Payne is the ideal choice for the position of JSC executive director because of her focused social justice advocacy, her way of living firmly grounded in her own faith community, and her stated sense of call to nurture compassionate leaders who will be sent out into a world that deeply needs them,” said Ginny Runge, chair of the Johnson Service Corps Board of Directors.

In addition to her professional role at NCCC, Payne is an active leader in outreach and youth ministry at her church, St. Paul’s, Cary, having helped lead summer mission trips for the Appalachia Service Project since 2014.

Payne said she saw the new position as an opportunity to put into practice the social justice policy agenda she helped develop over 16 years at NCCC.

“I can only compare the appeal of this role to what my clergy friends describe as feeling called,” she said. “While I remain deeply committed to the policy and

education work done by the Council, I also recognize the need to help develop thoughtful, ethical servant leaders who will enact and sustain those policies and move us closer to the Beloved Community.”

Founded in 2000, Johnson Service Corps is a 501(c)3 serving the Triangle region of North Carolina. Its mission

is to develop young adult leaders through participation in a year of social justice engagement, intentional community living, servant leadership training and spiritual formation.

Since its founding, the JSC has sent more than 100 young adults out into the local, national and international community to serve in areas ranging from social work to ministry to law to medicine. The organization operates two residences, one in Chapel Hill and one in Durham, where corps members live together for a year and work for local community service organizations.

Payne assumed her duties at the end of August.



Photo by Kelly Hudgins Photography

HURRICANE AND EARTHQUAKE RELIEF

Though we pray the last of the storms have passed, it will be a long time before those affected by earthquakes in Mexico and Hurricanes Harvey, Jose, Irma and Maria are fully recovered. That recovery will require a long-term, dedicated effort from us all.

Episcopal Relief and Development continues to work with affected communities in all regions. To assist them in their work:

- **Donate.** Financial donations are more helpful than donated goods. Relief agencies know exactly what’s needed and can do more per dollar than individuals, so please support a trusted relief agency. Episcopal Relief & Development has started a general hurricane relief fund where your donated dollars will be used for hurricane relief at the organization’s discretion.

- **Organize and plan.** If you know you will want to be on site at some point, start making plans and getting organized. Please do not go to affected areas now. Heading to affected areas before they are ready for you puts undue strain on the situation and can actually use resources otherwise needed for recovery. Recovery will need you in the coming weeks and months, though, so please use Episcopal Relief and Development’s “Ready to Serve” link to offer your gifts when they’re needed.

To donate or complete Episcopal Relief and Development’s “Ready to Serve” link, please visit episcopalrelief.org.

IN CASE YOU MISSED IT

The Rev. Kevin Brown Elected XI Bishop of Delaware

The Episcopal Diocese of North Carolina offers congratulations and blessings to the Rev. Kevin Brown, rector of Holy Comforter, Charlotte, upon the announcement of his election as the XI Bishop of the Diocese of Delaware.

Brown was elected on the fifth ballot on July 15.

The Rt. Rev. Sam Rodman, bishop of the Diocese of North Carolina and consecrated the same day as Brown's election, said, "In the short time I have come to know Kevin, I have seen his deep commitment to the gospel and his innovative leadership in developing models for mission that connect and engage the community. Kevin has both the temperament of a pastor and the keen organizational perspective that can help lead the church into the 21st century.

"We will miss Kevin here as a colleague and friend, but we are glad he will be sharing his considerable gifts and prayerful presence with the Diocese of Delaware and the wider church.



"We will be keeping Kevin and his family, and the parish of the Holy Comforter in our prayers during this transition."

Brown will be ordained and consecrated December 9, 2017 at Dover State University in Dover, Delaware.

Bishop Sam's Sermons and Feast Day Meditations

If you haven't yet seen them, two offerings to help you continue to get to know Bishop Sam can be found online:

Feast Day Videos: As we follow the *Gospel-Based Discipleship*, Bishop Sam offers reflections on the feast days we celebrate. You can enjoy them as a collection on Vimeo, or you can find them on diocesan social media channels on the feast days themselves.

Sunday Sermons: As Bishop Sam has begun his church visitations, there's no need to wait for your church's turn. Each Sunday through the end of the year, his sermons are being shared via Facebook Live.

DIOCESAN EVENTS

November

- 3-4 Episcopal Church Women (ECW) Annual Meeting and Spiritual Retreat, St. Philip's, Durham
- 4 Seeing the Face of God in Each Other: Anti-racism Seminar, St. Matthew's, Hillsborough
- 6 Safe Church Training, Level II, 6-9 p.m., Christ Church, Raleigh
- 17-18 The 202nd Annual Convention, Benton Convention Center, Winston-Salem

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 and bishops!

-  Episcopal Diocese NC
-  @EpiscopalINC
-  @episditionc
-  www.vimeo.com/episcopalnc

Facebook – Sam Rodman

Twitter - @samuelrodman

Instagram - @bishoproductman

Facebook - Anne Hodges-Copple

Twitter - @bishopannehc

Instagram - @ahodgescopple

Becoming Beloved Community

The 202nd Annual Convention Preview

The 202nd Annual Convention of the Diocese of North Carolina will take place November 17-18 at its usual location at the M.C. Benton, Jr. Convention and Civic Center in Winston-Salem. Drawing from the ideas outlined in his first *Disciple* column as bishop (“Mutual Mission,” Summer 2017), this year’s gathering will continue to introduce the Rt. Rev. Sam Rodman’s vision for the Diocese. In lieu of a keynote speaker, we will again draw from the wisdom of those gathered in a panel discussion highlighting areas of deep disagreement and division we seek to bridge in Christ’s love.

Other Convention highlights include the opening Eucharist featuring Rodman’s first pastoral address; compline hosted by A Movable Feast; updates from Lift Every Voice, the Racial Justice and Reconciliation Committee, the campus ministers, the companion diocese committees for Botswana and Costa Rica, and collaborative ministries; and the Thursday night history program presented by the Rev. Dr. Brooks Graebner and the Rev. Jemonde Taylor.

GETTING DOWN TO BUSINESS

The deadline to submit resolutions and nominations was October 9 at noon. All resolutions and nominations submitted by the deadline are available through the Yapp app

PARTICIPATE IN CONVENTION

- Read the full text of the resolutions and share your perspective with your clergy and delegates.
- Learn more about Convention by watching the delegate orientation webinar.
- Attend the Thursday night history program (page 19).
- Watch the Convention livestream on the diocesan homepage.
- Find all the resources you need on the Annual Convention page located in the Quick Links box at episdionc.org.



and in the pre-Convention materials linked to the Annual Convention page at episdionc.org.

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

The resolutions before Convention are:

- **Resolution 202.1 On Clergy of Churches in Full Communion with The Episcopal Church**
Amends Article III, Section 3 of the Constitution to extend membership in the Clergy Order of Convention to clergy of denominations in full communion with The Episcopal Church who meet all other requirements
- **Resolution 202.2 On the Relationship between Saint Augustine’s University and Botswana**
Pledges support to the St. Augustine Theological School in Botswana in its bid to secure accreditation from the Botswana government’s Qualification Authority
- **Resolution 202.3 On the Legacy of the Rev. Thomas Droppers**
Honors Droppers’ dedication to environmental ministry
- **Resolution 202.4 On Reduced Enforcement of Immigration**
Calls for decreased federal funding of immigration enforcement and for the passage of legislation for a clean DREAM Act 2017
- **Resolution 202.5 On Openness to Immigrants**
Supports congregational welcome of immigrants, asylum seekers and those needing sanctuary
- **Resolution 202.6 On Supporting the Vitality of Historically Black Episcopal Congregations in the Diocese of North Carolina**
Calls on all ministries of this Diocese to find ways to help sustain Historically Black Episcopal Congregations

MEET THE NOMINEES

In addition to hearing reports and voting on resolutions, the Convention will also elect members of Standing Committee (one clergy, two lay), members of Diocesan Council (two clergy, three lay) and a clergy trustee to Sewanee, The University of the South.

The nominations received by the deadline are:

- Diocesan Council, Clergy Order: The Rev. Alicia Alexis
- Diocesan Council, Lay Order: Mary Long
- Standing Committee, Clergy Order: The Rev. Hector Sintim
- Standing Committee, Lay Order: Richard Taylor
- Board of Trustees, University of the South (Sewanee), Clergy Order: The Rev. Hector Sintim, the Rev. Jane Wilson

THE BUDGET

The projected 2018 budget has changed little from the

FOLLOW LIVE

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

Follow Convention on Facebook, Twitter and Instagram with #DioNC202

2017 budget. The fair share percentage remains at 11 percent for 2018, and the budget is set at \$4,848,827. The budget webinar, along with the narrative budget pictured here, are available on the Annual Convention page of the diocesan website.

NOT JUST FOR NEW DELEGATES

New Secretary of Convention Chuck Till knows what a challenge it can be for new delegates to absorb all the information needed to navigate and execute responsibilities at Annual Convention. So, rather than sticking with the traditional in-person pre-Convention orientation on the gathering's first day, he has recorded a new delegate orientation video now available on the Annual Convention page. Delegates can now take their time learning all they need to know. And it's not just for delegates - it's a great education for anyone interested in how the Annual Convention works.

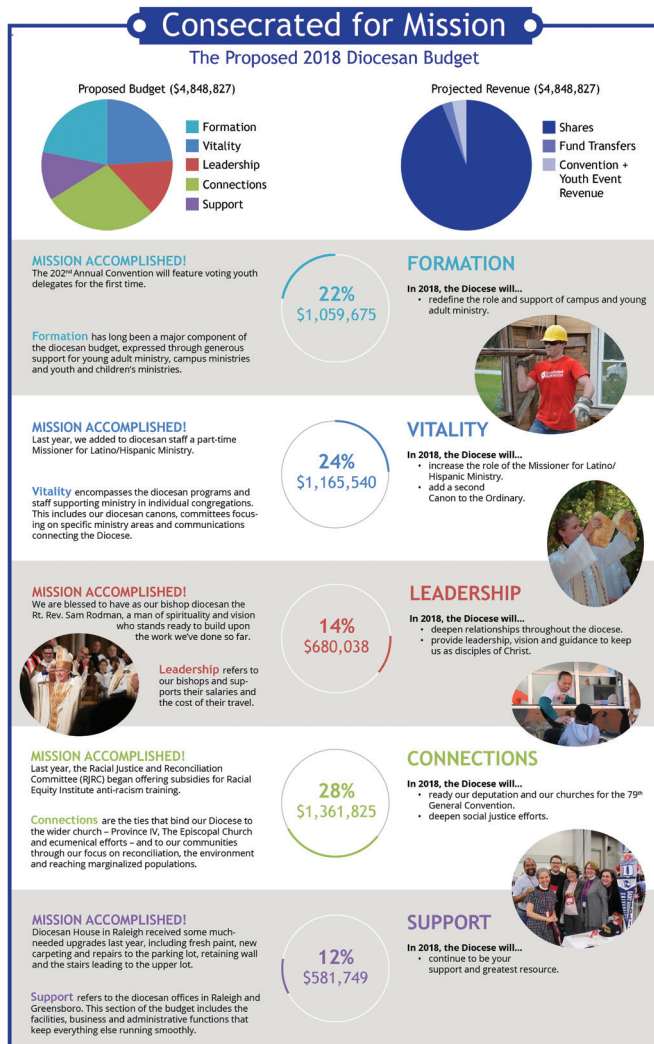
The in-person orientation will still take place on Friday, November 17 at 9:15 a.m. to answer any remaining questions so all delegates feel fully prepared.

GET THE APP

The 202nd Annual Convention has its own app on Yapp, and it has everything you'll need for Convention.

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

To get Yapp via mobile device, download the app from the App Store or Google Play. Click "Download an existing app" or "+" (depending on your device) to search, and type "DioNC202" when prompted to enter the Yapp ID. To access the app via desktop, go to <https://my.yapp.us/DIONC202> and follow the download instructions. If you have questions or suggestions, please contact communications@episditionc.org.



GROWING A MOVEMENT

Lift Every Voice completes its three-year grant and looks to the future

In 2010, Beth Crow had an idea: What if the Diocese of North Carolina leveraged its strong youth program to begin addressing issues of race, injustice and reconciliation? Inspired by the journeys throughout the South integrated groups of Civil Rights activists undertook beginning in 1961, the lead youth missionary rented a bus and recruited more than 40 youth from throughout North Carolina for a 9-day ride across the state. She called the program The Freedom Ride, a nod to the journeys that inspired her, and immersed participants in the racial history of North Carolina from the days of institutionalized slavery through the Civil Rights era to the efforts taking place today to address historic wrongs.

The Freedom Ride was a success, but Crow felt like the work was unfinished.

“Working in youth ministry, I witness the challenges our young people must deal with day to day, from subtle to blatant signs of racial discrimination, to coping with the stigma of being an undocumented child in the United States, to their own personal struggles with sexuality and acceptance,” Crow said in 2015. “Teen years are challenging enough, but with these added burdens our youth can often feel helpless and alone. We seek to provide a safe and honest space for conversation as well as help equip our youth with the tools for change in the

example Christ taught us.”

In 2014, Crow took the next step in the Diocese’s youth and young adult programming around race, social justice and reconciliation when she applied for and received a three-year, \$138,000 Jessie Ball duPont Fund grant to finance Lift Every Voice (LEV), a 2015-2017 program involving high school and college students from across The Episcopal Church, the Anglican Diocese of Botswana and the Anglican Diocese of Cape Town. The original grant proposal focused on the historical truths of slavery and the Civil Rights Movement in North Carolina and apartheid in South Africa with an eye toward producing youth ministry resources addressing race and reconciliation. By the time the initially funded program wrapped this summer, however, LEV had transformed into something much bigger.

DIFFERENT COUNTRIES, SAME INJUSTICES

For the first year of LEV, Crow stayed in familiar territory. For one week in July 2015, more than 70 young people and adults from the Dioceses of North Carolina, Upper South Carolina, Northern California, Western Massachusetts, Southwestern Virginia, Texas, Botswana and South Africa gathered in central North Carolina to explore the United States’ history of racial conflict



Marie Sintim, St. Ambrose, Raleigh, and Elisa Benitez, El Buen Pastor, Durham, worship in The Great Barn at Stagville State Historic Site in Durham during Lift Every Voice 2015. Photo by Summerlee Walter Fr. Michael Lapsley kneels to speak to Lift Every Voice participants in 2016. Photo by Beth Crow

while beginning to dream about how they could take what they'd learned back to their own dioceses. That summer's journey revisited some of the places from the 2010 Freedom Ride, like Stagville State Historic Site, a former Durham plantation, and the International Civil Rights Center & Museum in Greensboro, but the conversations were different because the voices involved had become more diverse.

Viewing the Hall of Shame at the International Civil Rights Center & Museum in downtown Greensboro had a particular effect on the group. Housed in the F.W. Woolworth's building where in 1960 four North Carolina A&T University students staged the lunch counter sit-ins that would galvanize a movement of peaceful protest, The Hall of Shame installation features photos of some of the thousands of individuals — some well known, most little known and many never identified — who died during the Civil Rights Movement.

"When the tour guide was telling us Emmett Till's story, that really spoke to me," Mandy Jantjies, a three-year LEV participant from the Diocese of Cape Town, said. "That was a perfect display of how cruel America was at the time. He was just a boy."

Jantjies and her fellow South African participants had the chance to share some of their own country's shameful past the next summer when LEV travelled to South Africa. Ninety youth and adults visited Nelson Mandela's cell on Robben Island, where he lived as a political prisoner for 27 years, and the Amy Biehl Foundation, started as a center for reconciliation by the parents of a young white woman murdered during apartheid by four

LEARN MORE

Articles recapping the first two years of Lift Every Voice are available in the Read All About It section of the diocesan website, episditionc.org, and in back issues of the *Disciple* ("Confronting Our History," Summer 2015, and "Lift Every Voice: South Africa 2016," Fall 2016). Several videos from the three years are available on the diocesan Vimeo channel, and resources are housed at lifteveryvoice.dionc.org.

black men, two of whom now work for the organization. They learned from Archbishop Desmond Tutu and Father Michael Lapsley, an Anglican priest who lost both hands and an eye when he was targeted with a letter bomb for his work during apartheid. The mutuality of reconciliation — the necessity for both parties to engage and actively seek amendment and forgiveness — was the common theme running through the summer.

"I learned through Lift Every Voice that reconciliation doesn't have to be this instantaneous, superhuman thing. I think that reconciliation is grounded in real feelings and real experiences, and that, if anything, that's what we should be striving for, that realness," Leighton Harrell, a three-year LEV participant and member of Nativity, Raleigh, explained.



Youth and young adult leadership is a hallmark of Lift Every Voice. Beth Crow and Michelle Kane, a youth from North Carolina, discuss an upcoming activity. Photo by Jamey Graves
Throughout the week, participants prayed constantly for the needs of their communities and the world, including writing prayers on a map of the world. Photo by Summerlee Walter



Members of the Diocese of Upper South Carolina present their ideas for future work in their diocese. *Photo by Summerlee Walter* As part of a conversation about the fallacy of thinking about race biologically instead of culturally, a small group works together on an activity illustrating how people from different races can have very similar features. *Photo by Jamey Graves*

Participants easily drew comparisons between the struggle for equality that happened in South Africa during apartheid and similar struggles throughout United States history. They also saw the parallels between the two societies today.

“I will always remember the importance of being enlightened by new experiences, people and information,” Eden Segbefia of Durham, North Carolina, said.

SHARING THE WISDOM

Throughout the first two summers of LEV, participants discussed how to carry forward the work of reconciliation during the 51 weeks of the year they were not together, but the focus of year three was work in diocesan groups to discern next steps for their communities. Gathering for a week in July 2017 at Haw River State Park in Browns Summit, North Carolina, participants spent time each day reviewing and sharpening their skills in nonviolent communication, exploring more deeply the racial and economic histories of their countries, considering examples of resistance and reconciliation in response to injustice, and learning from each other about the work already happening in each diocese. Diocesan groups also spent hours discussing their individual communities’ needs and brainstorming ways to impart to others the lessons and skills they learned during LEV.

All of the educational sessions were planned collaboratively by young adults and adult leaders and led by young adults, many of whom participated in all three years of the program or had experience leading conver-

sations around race, racism and reconciliation through their own diocesan programming or on their college campuses. Both the adult leaders of LEV and the young adult participants view young people as key to the future of reconciliation.

“It’s very common that it’s said that youth are the future of the Church, and we’re now seeing that the future of the Church is anti-racist and anti-sexist and anti-oppression,” Harrell said, “and so I think that, going forward, the Church is going to move in that direction because in my experience that’s the direction young people want to take.”

The truth of Harrell’s statement is apparent from the seeds of Lift Every Voice already taking root in other dioceses. The Diocese of Northern California, for example, started a program called Pathways in 2015 and held its second event this spring. Originally, the group wasn’t sure they could pull it off.

“[We said], ‘We don’t have too much history in California. What would we talk about?’” Elizabeth Potts, a youth who helped bring Pathways to life, explained. “Very soon after that...we realized that was absolutely not true.” During the first year of Pathways, participants visited Captain Jack’s Stronghold, where members of the Modoc tribe held their ground against the U.S. Army’s removal attempt, and a Japanese internment camp.

“It’s a completely different animal to say, ‘They have issues over there. They’re having racial issues. They’re having spiritual issues. They need to work harder on reconciliation,’ but instead saying, ‘We have this history,

and we still have work in reconciliation to do,” Potts explained.

The Diocese of Upper South Carolina is also in the early stages of planning a similar LEV-style experience, and the youth and adults of North Carolina and the Diocese of Southwestern Virginia are meeting via video call to discuss ways to bring what they’ve learned into their churches. Some youth in North Carolina are exploring the possibility of speaking at churches around the Diocese or conducting portions of the training they received throughout LEV. Both Nativity, Raleigh, and St. Paul’s, Cary, have already scheduled events featuring people and training used during LEV.

The work also continues in South Africa and Botswana. In Gaborone, the capital city of Botswana, Kgololo (Papi) Mmipi and Busiswa (Busie) McBrian-Mpungose have collaborated to bring a soup kitchen to the mall outside of the Anglican cathedral. They are now working with Pete Crow, a member of Nativity, Raleigh, and the Rev. Dr. Leon Spencer to secure the funding they need to launch an NGO focused on social development.

“Ever since I joined this movement, a lot of things became a lot clearer,” Mmipi explained.

In Cape Town, the young adults are planning a series of workshops with a focus on the most pressing issues facing their peers: HIV/AIDS, depression and teen pregnancy.

What’s striking about the initiatives growing out of LEV is their diversity. While some, like the work happening in Northern California, follow closely the Freedom Ride model adapted to a state’s unique history, others incorporate the ideas central to LEV in smaller chunks so more people can access them. Other work, like that happening in Gaborone and Cape Town, grows out of the heightened social awareness and sense of empowerment the young people feel after experiencing LEV. The feeling of empowerment has been especially important for youth in southern Africa, where young people assuming leadership among older adults is less socially acceptable than it is in the United States.

“One thing that I want out of the next year is that this ministry continues because there’s still so much to talk about,” Harrell explained. “It may feel good, I think, to leave here and know that we talked about race and we talked about these issues, but I think that it takes more than a couple of tough conversations to really make an impact in the Church and the world at large, and so I think that through more ministry and through more learning and teaching and healing and tough conversations, we can get to a place where we’re making a real difference.”

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

The participants in Lift Every Voice 2017 gather for one final group photo. Photo by Summerlee Walter



By Christine McTaggart

HISTORY AND THE HISTORIOGRAPHER

The Rev. Dr. Brooks Graebner brings history to life

Among the many traditions of the annual diocesan convention, perhaps none is so anticipated or so enriching as the Thursday night history presentation. Led by the Rev. Dr. Brooks Graebner, every session brings to life a slice of diocesan history, giving voice once more to those who played integral roles and weaving together events and lessons of the past with the realities and challenges of the present.

Graebner's ready smile and gentle demeanor often cloak the deep faith, passion for history and fierce intellect that combine to ensure the history of the Church and diocese Graebner holds so dear is ready and waiting to be shared with current and future generations. Added to that is his skill in teasing out how history can provide perspective and guidance while navigating today's tumultuous climate; one has to speak with him for only a few minutes to realize what a rare and gifted individual he is.

Graebner recently retired from St. Matthew's, Hillsborough, where he served as rector for 27 years. Happily for anyone who has ever learned from him, he has not retired from his role as diocesan historiographer; there he remains, where he'll continue to develop historical programs as well as research and write the second volume of *The Episcopal Church in North Carolina*, focusing on the years 1960-2015.

How did a love of history and a call to serve in The Episcopal Church converge to create the man we know today? As it happens, both were seeds deeply sown from his start,

and the story of their growth is as interesting a tale as any Graebner loves to relate.

DEEP ROOTS

Graebner is the child of professional historians. His father was a historian of American diplomatic relations, while his mother's focus was on Native American agricultural methods in Texas and Oklahoma.

"I grew up around the history profession, just around the dinner table," said Graebner. "I'm sure my interest in it can be traced to that." His parents encouraged not just his interest in history, they taught him to value it as well.

When Graebner entered the University of Virginia in 1970, it was no surprise he took history courses as part of his undergraduate study. One of his first courses was a study of African-American history; it was the university's first-ever course on the topic. "A lot of my interest in African-American history can be traced back to that course," said Graebner.

Some of his studies were guided by the influence of others. Graebner was drawn to professors he found "particularly inspiring and interesting and who encouraged me. Since I wanted to study with them, I learned to share their interest in their particular areas of study." It was the influence of one such professor that led Graebner to a crucial crossroad in his life's journey. The professor "directed my honors thesis,"

The Rev. Dr. Brooks Graebner settled into his office with his books, taken in December 1990, just a few months after the April 1990 start of his ministry at St. Matthew's. *From the St. Matthew's Parish Archives* Graebner leads a 2009 Rogation Day service. *Photo by Katherine Johnson* Graebner blesses Morgan the horse with the Rev. Carl Edwards in 2012. The Rt. Rev. Michael Curry and Graebner leave the church after the bishop's visitation and festive re-dedication of the church on September 21, 2008. *Photos by Laura Branan.*



remembered Graebner, “and since his field was American religious history, that’s what I studied.”

Even without the influence of a memorable and supportive professor, religious history was a natural path for Graebner to explore. He grew up in the Lutheran Church Missouri Synod, a denomination whose founding included involvement from Graebner’s great-great-grandfather. His great-grandfather was a seminary professor in the church, and his grandfather a pastor. “It sort of defined our family’s religious identity,” said Graebner. “So I was very interested in learning about and understanding that branch of Lutheranism more broadly. That was my initial interest in studying church history.”

Between the desire to explore his own roots and his professor’s influence, Graebner focused his undergraduate study with a major in religious studies with a concentration on American religious history.

CHANGE OF PLANS

About the time he was studying in Virginia, the Lutheran Church Missouri Synod underwent a rupture that stemmed from internal politics and discord on the direction the church would follow.

The split was painful for his family, and it left Graebner with the realization he would not be following in any footsteps by becoming a minister in that church.

Instead, he moved to North Carolina and entered Duke Divinity School in 1973. He charted a course toward becoming an academician instead of a parish minister. He hadn’t considered a career as a member of the clergy in any other church, but providence gently stepped in to nudge him in that direction.

While in college, Graebner had been asked to serve as the organist in the small church his family attended. Though trained as a pianist, he wasn’t trained as an organist, so he “took a few lessons, and then I subjected everyone to on-the-job-training for three years.” When word got out in Durham he had experience as an organist, Graebner made himself available to local churches when a substitute was needed. In the summer of 1979, it was St. Luke’s Episcopal

DON’T MISS THE HISTORY PROGRAM AT CONVENTION

Once again, the Rev. Dr. Brooks Graebner, diocesan historiographer, will present an insightful and intellectually illuminating look at a piece of diocesan history to start our annual convention. This year he is joined by the Rev. Jemonde Taylor, rector of St. Ambrose, Raleigh. The title of this year’s presentation is **“One great fellowship of love? Theological convictions and ecclesial realities in the racial history of the Diocese of North Carolina.”**

A tension runs through our racial history between core convictions expressing the essential unity of the Church on the one hand and the realities of slavery, segregation, and the continuing disparity of rights and resources on the other. We will trace how this tension has been manifest in our own diocesan history and seek to identify those who have worked as “apostles of unity” in our midst.

This year’s presentation will take place Thursday, November 16 at 8 p.m. at the Winston-Salem Marriott. The presentation will be livestreamed at episditionc.org.



Church in Durham that called.

He spent a few weeks filling in and “didn’t think much more about it,” until a few months later when St. Luke’s rector (and future bishop of the Diocese of North Carolina), the Rev. Bob Johnson, called and asked if he would serve as both interim organist and choir director for a couple of months. As so often happens, those few months turned into a much longer stay. “I agreed to do it,” said Graebner. “And the rest, as they say, is history.”

Over the course of three years at St. Luke’s, Graebner continued to serve on-and-off as organist and choir director, while his wife, Chris, also became active in the church, eventually holding lay leadership positions around children’s ministry and education. By 1982, he began conversations with Johnson about entering the ordination process in The Episcopal Church.

“Chris and I looked at our lives and saw they were being transformed for the better,” remembered Graebner. “I felt at home in the Episcopal Church, and I grew to love the liturgy. I found myself thinking Bob lived a very fulfilling life, and his sermons were thoughtful, constructive, intellectual and practical.” His leaning toward academia began to share space with something more spiritual. “I started to think I might really like my primary vocation to be a parish priest,” he said. “I didn’t jettison my interest in history, but I really wanted the range of experiences and engagement with people that you get in parish ministry.”

He pursued the path while continuing his studies at Duke Divinity, and by the time he was ordained, he also held a doctorate in American religious history.

A PERFECT FIT

Graebner served as assistant to the rector at St. Peter’s, Charlotte, before answering a call in 1990 to become rector of St. Matthew’s. He settled in to life in Hillsborough, returning often to Durham to teach courses in Anglican and Episcopal history at Duke Divinity School. But it wasn’t until 2000 that he again became invested in his own historical research and writing. That year, he took a sabbatical and spent 10 weeks immersed in the history of St. Matthew’s along with the Episcopal Church in North Carolina. It was also the year he was invited to join the board of directors of the Episcopal Church’s historical society, putting him in direct contact with the people writing Episcopal Church history for seminaries.

“From that year on,” he said, “my excitement and interest in the history of the Episcopal Church only continued to grow.”

In 2007, then-bishop the Rt. Rev. Michael Curry offered Graebner an appointment as diocesan historiographer. He happily accepted, and for the last decade, Graebner and Lynn Hoke, diocesan archivist, have preserved and integrated church history with contemporary life through programs like History Days and the Thursday night presentation at the annual convention.

“I am so grateful for the privilege of being the diocesan historiographer and to have had so many opportunities to share with the Church what I’ve learned,” said Graebner. “It is enormously rewarding and deeply satisfying, and I am sincerely grateful to be able to serve the Church this way.”

A KEY TO UNDERSTANDING

When asked why history is important, Graebner responded with a laugh. “Let me count the ways,” he said. “History is important because the present never exists in a vacuum. There is always a set of forces and decisions that brought us to any present moment, and understanding [that] process is enormously helpful for understanding where we go from here.”

Because, Graebner explained, history is not just about learning facts and dates. It’s about providing a framework for understanding the present. Beyond finding history intrinsically interesting, “I think for the life of the Church or society, the importance of historical study is to provide us – as fully as it possibly can – a reconstruction and understanding of how we got where we are now. Who are the people who shaped our identity? What is our inheritance? How can we be good stewards of that inheritance?” With some aspects of our history so clear and other parts somewhat obscure, Graebner believes “it’s helpful to look at it in its entirety and understand it as comprehensively and carefully as we can.”

History also provides context for the times in which we’re living now. As a church, we seek to bring reconciliation to social injustice, racial inequality and sociopolitical turmoil. We’re trying to do it in a time when everyone has a public voice, and they’re not afraid to use it. It makes the tasks all the more complex, and it can easily start to feel we’re in a world that is at an all-time low. But history tells us otherwise.

“There’s no such thing as a golden age in the history of the Church where everything was wonderful and perfect and uncontested,” said Graebner. “There’s never been a period when people lived smooth and uncomplicated lives. Even as we face difficult choices and challenges that for us are daunting, we’re not the first people to have difficult experiences. The Church has lived through crises, and that can give us confidence moving forward.”

Indeed, examining the past and understanding its context can shed light on our present and help to create strategies that will allow the Church to contribute to a positive impact on social change.

“The past does not give us a clear blueprint for the future,” said Graebner, “but it does provide signposts that can be very, very useful as we move forward.”

And it’s because of the Rev. Dr. Brooks Graebner that the Diocese of North Carolina has those signposts to follow.

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

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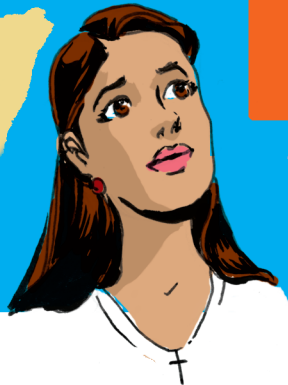
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By the Rev. Canon Earnest Graham

How Do We Find Our Voice? By Asking People To Give.

Charitable organizations and institutions call on us, again and again, to give. In all fairness, many of them address the needs of our community and the world. Some of them support matters that are close to our hearts. When there are so many voices calling for people to give, church leaders, clergy and members of stewardship committees sometimes feel reluctant to be one more voice asking.

And yet, the Church relies on the generosity of people who give of their time, their skills, their talents and their financial support. It cannot exist without asking people to give. Indeed, as followers of Jesus, giving is at the heart of our faith. The example Jesus gave us was to give: food to the hungry, drink to the thirsty, healing to the afflicted and fullness of life to those who were cast out. Giving from the heart is a spiritual act that can lead us to appreciate all that God has given us and invite us to deeper relationship with other human beings.

We as the Church are not in competition with charitable organizations. Many found their origins within the walls of local churches and took the mission of feeding, clothing, educating and healing out into the world in ways the Church could not do on its own. Charitable organizations have learned how to communicate in today's world in a way that many churches have not. It is possible to learn from their experience and find our own voice in the process.

PROJECT RESOURCE

Over the last year, the Diocese of North Carolina joined a network of other dioceses in The Episcopal Church focusing on stewardship and asking people to give: Project Resource. This program draws upon the experience of charitable organizations as well as our faith tradition to provide resources for churches to be bold in asking.

One of the things many charitable organizations do well is to make the case for why you should give to them. They do not take for granted that you know who they are, what they do, why they do it or why it even matters. They tell their story. They provide information and tell you how to participate.

MAKING THE CASE

This is especially important for the Church in this time. For generations, many churches have been able to rely on the assumption that members know the church, participate in it and give to it as a matter of practice. We no longer can take that for granted; in fact, we miss something vital if we do. Faithful stewardship is not about asking for money for ministry. Instead, it is about connecting our mission to the lives of people. It is an ongoing practice of sharing our story and inviting others to participate in it.

1. Listen

Making the case begins with listening: to God in prayer, through scripture and in community. The intent is to understand who you are, what you do and with whom you are communicating.

One way Project Resource recommends listening is to gather groups of people in the church, perhaps during a vestry meeting or in small groups or a forum, and ask these questions:

1. What do we do that Jesus would recognize and love?
2. What do we provide?
3. How do we change lives?
4. What results to society do we provide that make change?
5. How has one life been changed by our mission?
6. Why should a person invest in this work?

As you listen to people share, take note of the stories and examples they offer. You may wish to ask their permission to share them in your communications.

2. Gather Information

Working with the clergy, vestry and leaders of the church, identify the goals you are working on now and in the near future. How do these relate to the stories shared in the listening process?

Look at the history of giving in the church and the budget. What information do people need to be able to engage with the work you wish to do?

What practices of financial transparency and accountability does your church have in place to show you are good stewards of the gifts that are given?

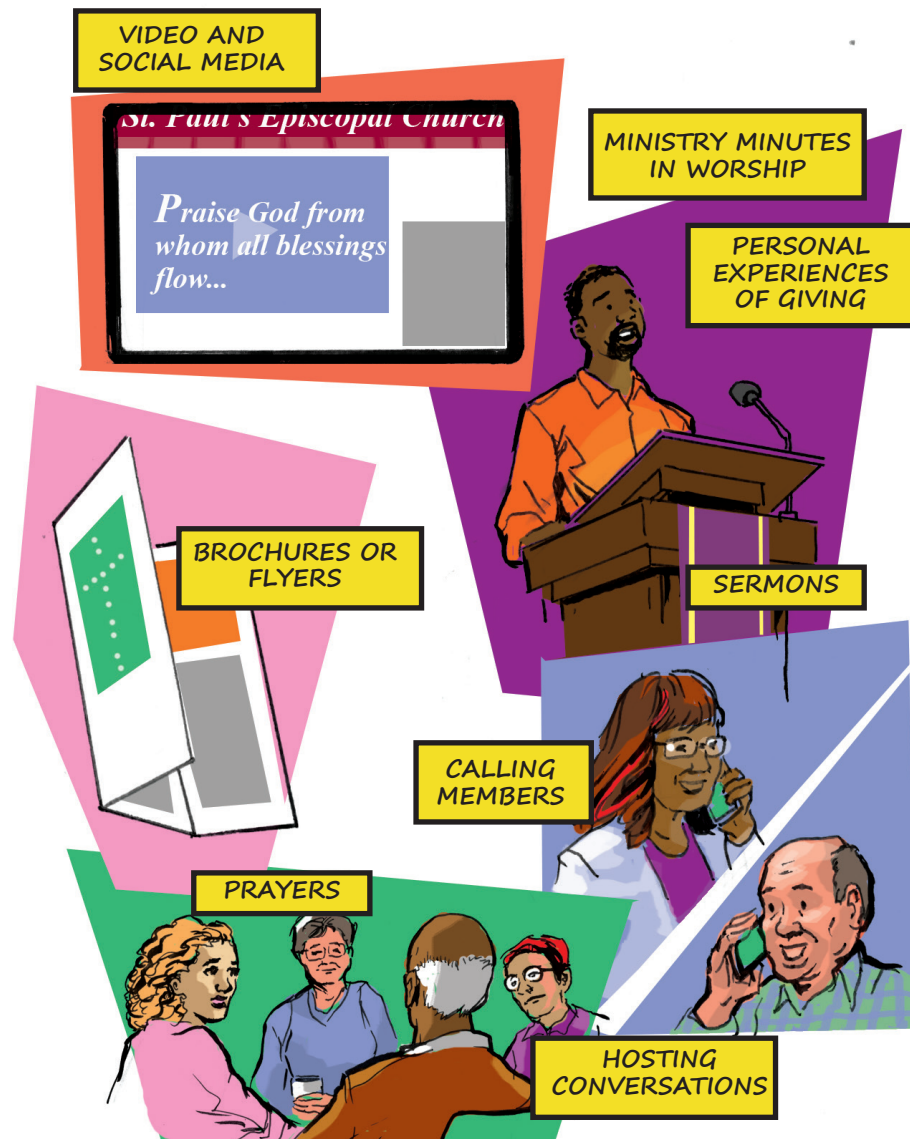
3. Theme

Having a theme for a stewardship season, or for the year, can be a creative way to invite people to join in giving to the church. You can use a theme to emphasize stories, express the vision of the church and the direction it is going, lead to spiritual truths or connect members with each other.

4. Share the Story

There are a variety of ways to share the story. You can use them during a stewardship season, or throughout the year.

1. **Prayers:** Include regularly in worship prayers that relate to stewardship.
2. **Brochures/website:** Make your case for support through stories, images, information, charts and graphs. They can be printed or digital.
3. **Video campaign:** Use a visual medium for sharing stories on screen and through social media. Enable members to share the videos.
4. **Ministry minute:** Invite church members to share personal stories of giving or how serving in the church has touched their lives and the lives of others.
5. **Sermons:** Highlight the many dimensions of stewardship throughout the year. If your stewardship campaign has a theme, you may wish to tie it in your sermons.
6. **Host meaningful conversations:** Gather small groups of members to express their hopes and fears for the church, to listen to their concerns and incorporate their feedback.



- 7. **Phone-a-thon:** Make calls, person-to-person, to invite people to give to the church.
- 8. **Letters:** Use them at different times of the stewardship season to invite participation in the campaign and to thank donors for giving.

Project Resource offers examples and tools for making the case. These are available on the diocesan website (episditionc.org). You also may have other ideas. Variety is good over time, and always do what works in your setting and ministry.

5. Give Thanks and Celebrate

An essential step in the process is giving thanks for the variety of ways that members give. Find ways to celebrate their contribution personally and in the life of the church.

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.....

STEWARDSHIP THROUGHOUT THE YEAR

This way of practicing stewardship moves beyond thinking of stewardship as something we talk about once a year. Rather, it is an ongoing process of prayer, listening, visioning ministry, sharing stories and asking people to participate.

When stewardship becomes an integral part of the life of the church, it can serve to focus ministries: calling for the goals and vision of the church to be communicated regularly, recounting the stories of what God is doing in our community and sharing what we value the most.

Yes, there are many voices in our world asking people to give. The joyful result of making our case is that we are in touch with what makes our church community special, why we keep coming back and how God is active in our lives. It opens our eyes to all we have to be thankful for in this community. We, as a church, find our voice by sharing our story and the story of God's redemptive love, and by asking others to share in it.

The Rev. Canon Earnest Graham is a regional canon for the Diocese of North Carolina. Contact him at earnest.graham@episditionc.org

STEWARDSHIP STORIES

Several churches have committed to using Project Resource in their stewardship processes this year.

St. Thomas, Reidsville, is excited and inspired by working with other churches in the area to learn about stewardship through Project Resource. They developed a theme of "Connecting the Dots," telling stories of different ministries every month in worship and writing about stewardship in newsletters. They also are working on a brochure. Each dot represents a ministry of the church and the ways members are connected to one another and to Christ.

St. Paul's, Winston-Salem, decided to tell their story through media: a video of what makes St. Paul's special. Their theme, "Praise God from whom all blessings flow," reminds us that all we have comes from God, and we give that back. They had a kickoff celebration for the campaign in September, to be followed by six weeks of ministry minutes.

St. Philip's, Durham, tried something new. They conducted an advanced campaign, with an open series of meaningful conversations with about 90 leaders in the church, who represented a wide range of people in the church and the different church services. The conversations were helpful in getting a read on how things are going in the church, listening to members' concerns and shaping the vision for ministry. The theme for their Fall Stewardship campaign is "Worship. Love. Action."

We look forward to hearing how other churches are using the resources you can find at episditionc.org. Click on "Equipping the Saints" in the Quick Links box, and you'll find Project Resource.

THE ART OF DISAGREEMENT

“Our lives begin to end the day we become silent about the things that matter.”

- Dr. Martin Luther King Jr.

“Never discuss religion or politics at the dinner table.” This age-old advice makes some sense because of the strong emotions and opinions that ensue. It recognizes the power of disagreement and perhaps our shortcomings in dealing with difference. It’s good advice to heed, as it seems this is a terrible time in history to have political conversations with anyone, stranger or friend. But such discussions are not only possible, they are becoming increasingly necessary in order to halt the fragmentation of our common life and feelings of isolation and alienation from one another.

The need to be able to disagree in conversation is not limited to the political realm. If one spends any time out in the world (or even online), you are going to disagree with someone about something. There is simply no way to avoid it. But rather than becoming sources of contention, anger, separation or worse, disagreements can enrich thought, increase understanding of another and expand one’s view on things, even if your opinion remains unchanged.

IT TAKES (AT LEAST) TWO

The most important prerequisite to conversation for people who disagree is this: that the parties are willing to have a conversation about a topic likely to arouse emotion and require much time and attention. It is possible to talk to other people of goodwill who have other opinions. It is *not* possible to have this type of conversation with someone who is not interested in listening as well as speaking.

If you were to say to a person, “Listen, I would like to have a conversation with you about (fill in the blank with any number of topics...immigration, politics, racism, global warming); on a scale of one to 10, how interested are you in this?” If the answer is less than eight, that is a clear indication this is not the time to have such a conversation with this person. It is legitimate to say no to a conversation with someone who has no interest in it, even though we might fear saying no is interpreted as refusing to engage in dialogue. It is also appropriate to decline if you observe the person who expressed interest in a conversation demonstrates behavior that says otherwise. You may discover your conversation partner is more interested in an argument, listening just enough to make the next point. Last but not least, it is always appropriate to say no to a conversa-

tion simply because you are not yet ready to have it.

If you do agree to engage in a conversation sure to include disagreement, take the pressure off. Challenging and intense conversations do not have to be completed the first time two people sit down together. Instead, you might agree to a series of three to five conversations, no longer than 20 minutes in length, with space between conversations of at least a day for reflection.

Other helpful guidelines include:

- Show respect: Avoid name-calling, labeling and stereotyping.
- Even two people of goodwill may embark on a discussion and find that after a time, one or the other (or both) may become too upset or too angry to continue. Take a break when needed, and pick up the work at another time.
- Treat the conversation as a beginning of understanding, not the solving of a problem or resolving of differences. There is significant variation in peoples’ ability to integrate new learnings.

Various techniques to enhance communication have been developed over the years. These methods can be useful tools as you begin a challenging communication experience.



ACTIVE LISTENING

Active listening's beginnings were in the counseling field and later used in conflict resolution. Its hallmark is attentiveness to what a person is saying with the goal of understanding the views and feelings of the other. While it can feel mechanical to speak, have the listener reflect back what was heard, and continue refining the communication, if the goal of understanding is primary, this approach can begin the work of true discernment.

REFLECTIVE LISTENING

This method of listening is a more specialized form of active listening. Reflective listening involves not only reflecting back what you heard the other say, but also attempting to decode emotional messages communicated in an effort to help the person clarify his or her thoughts and feelings. The hallmarks of reflective listening are that the listener does more listening than talking, responds to the personal rather than the abstract and restates what the other says rather than asking questions.

The basis of reflective listening is clarifying what the other person is saying. One questions the other in her own words, "Is this what you are saying?" Until the other person acknowledges you understand, you do not understand.

DIALOGIC LISTENING

This method holds the greatest relevance and promise for conversations between people with differences of opinion. Created by John Stewart and Milt Thomas, it was developed as an alternative to active listening and has sometimes been called relational listening because it stresses the importance of creating relationship while exchanging ideas. Its four characteristics are:

- Conversation is a shared activity. Rather than focusing attention on one or the other (listener or speaker), its attention is focused on what emerges from the conversation.
- There is an open-ended attitude toward conversation that counters the typical goals of "hard" thinking (certainty, closure, control) with creative, metaphoric thinking. This requires trust and humility, and sees each person as a choice-maker.
- The focus of the interaction is on what is happening *between* the two people rather than what is in the mind of one or the other. Stewart and Thomas say, "...when you are listening dialogically you join with the other person in the process of co-creating meaning between you."
- Dialogic listening focuses on the present rather than the future or the past. People must be fully present to the process and to each other.

While these techniques are effective, if they feel too clinical, there are others for people looking for a more creative way to begin a conversation with someone whose ideas are diametrically opposed to their own.

One example: In her popular TED-Ed talk, Elizabeth Lesser proposes taking an "Other" to lunch. Invite to share lunch with you one person from a group you have negatively stereotyped (Republican, Democrat, LG-BTQ, immigrant, ex-offender, etc.). The goal is to get to know them. Lesser and her lunch partner set up ground rules: Do not persuade, defend or interrupt; be curious, be conversational, be real; listen. Then the conversation was guided by the following questions:

- Share some of your life experiences.
- What issues deeply concern you?
- What have you always wanted to ask someone from the "other side"?

Lesser identifies the biggest obstacle to this type of conversation as the need to be right, and the need to convince the other they are wrong. She closes her presentation with the following quote from Rumi, the great Persian poet:

*Out beyond ideas of right-doing and wrong-doing there is a field.
I'll meet you there.*

Disagreements are not easy, but having them in an enriching way is possible. And you might just be surprised at the common ground you'll find where you least expect it.

FOR MORE INFORMATION

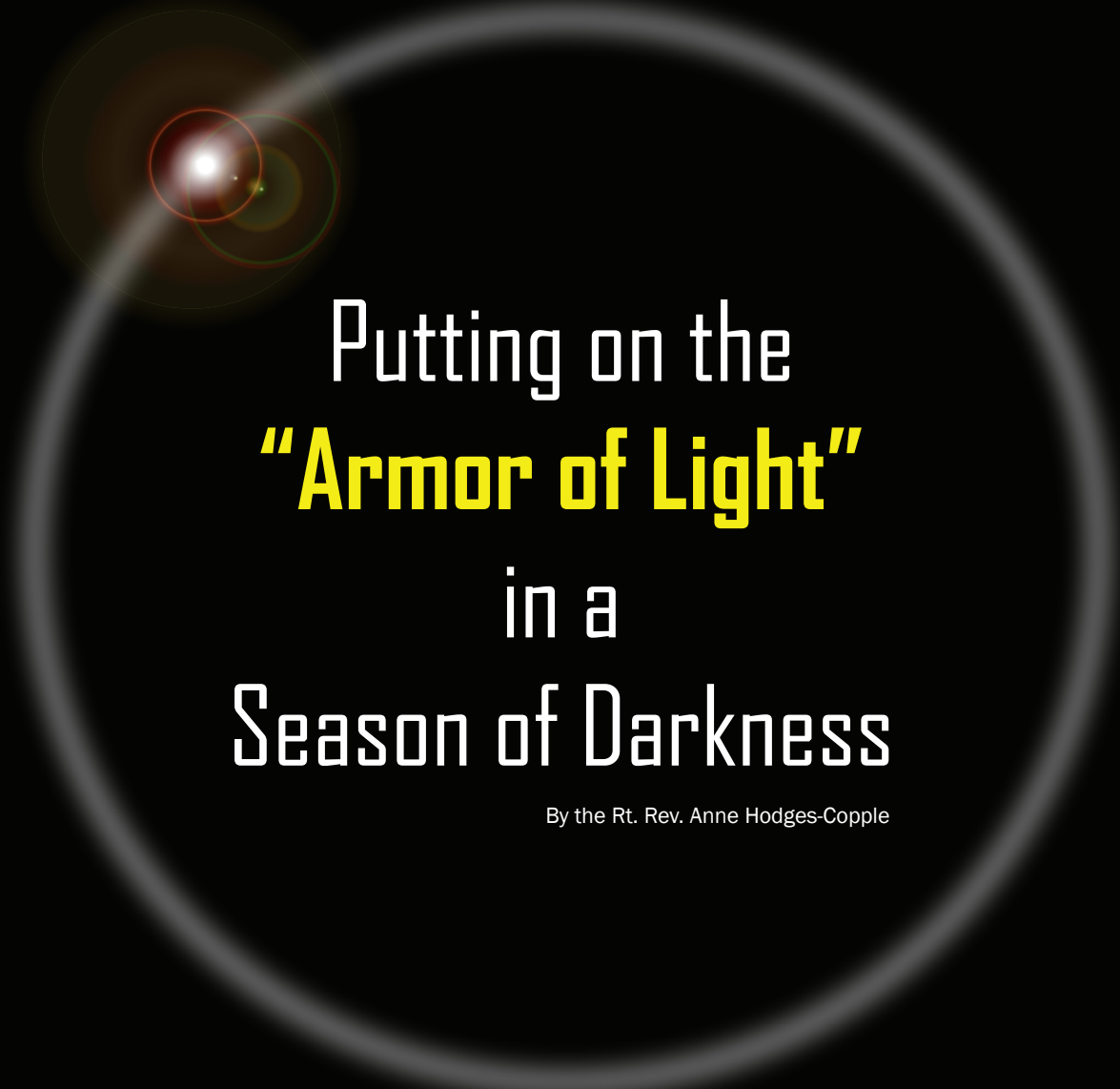
To read more about these techniques, we suggest the following resources:

Elizabeth Lesser, *Take "the Other" to lunch*, TED-Ed Lessons Worth Sharing, 9/15/2016

Pete Machalek, *How to Talk to Someone You Disagree With*, SagePresence.com, February 6, 2017.

John Stewart and Milt Thomas. "Dialogic Listening: Sculpting Mutual Meanings," in *Bridges Not Walls*, ed. John Stewart, 6th edition, (New York: McGraw-Hill, 1995), pp. 184-201.

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Putting on the
“Armor of Light”
in a
Season of Darkness

By the Rt. Rev. Anne Hodges-Copple

Autumn came early for me this year. Going to Alaska in September for the House of Bishops fall gathering plunged your bishops into a vast landscape of rivers, mountains and forests bespeckled with the shades of gold and orange that are only now beginning to fade from our North Carolina landscape. We were also quickly immersed into the beauty and fragility of the land and people of the interior of Alaska as we listened to stories of hope and fear at the complicated intersection of culture, race, environment and economics. In Fairbanks, where we centered our explorations in tandem with the remote villages we visited, Episcopalians whose ancestors have lived in Alaska for thousands of years spoke eloquently of their struggle to bear the Light of Christ as well as defend the dignity of their tribes and the integrity of their sacred land.

I was particularly struck by the sacrifices tribal communities make as a matter of faithfulness to protect the prosperity of the community as a whole and the fecundity of the land and its creatures for future generations. The part of the Northern Slope where the caribou migrate for calving season is so sacred to the Gwich'in tribe of the Athabasca people that travel to the territory is forbidden during that season. So it's not hard to appreciate their deep grief at the prospect of these same birthing grounds being opened for the extraction of oil and minerals.

AN INVITATION FROM BISHOP ANNE

On the evening of November 29, 2017, I will be at Christ Church, Charlotte, making an address open to the entire diocese. In the Christian calendar, the liturgical season of Advent gives us a welcome opportunity to examine the relationship between our confidence in the transcendent power of God's reconciling love and the uncertainties and hostilities causing division and dissension among neighbors near and far.

I invite you to join me for this presentation and conversation about what it might look like to be peacemakers, healers and agents of reconciliation. If you can't come in person, you can watch a livestream on the diocesan website (episdionc.org).

If you can attend, please register at christchurchcharlotte.org/bishops. The evening will begin at 6:30 p.m. with a brief Evening Prayer and dinner. After my talk, there will table discussions for reflection.



Bishop Anne Hodges-Copple (bottom left) joins other bishops and spouses in Nenanan for a potlatch prepared by St. Mark's congregation and the village's Native community. A potlatch is a Native Alaskan ceremonial meal featuring traditional food, drumming and dancing. Photo by David Paulsen/Episcopal News Service

When the fishing dependent people of the rivers in the interior noticed a precipitous decline in king salmon, they organized their own moratorium on harvesting during the salmon run even though commercial and sports fishers felt no similar compunction. This restraint, by a people who live almost entirely off the food they find close at hand, successfully caused a return of higher numbers in subsequent years. Now with the current rate of thaw in the permafrost, there is even more fear about how climate change will impact the health of their life-giving rivers.

One hundred and fourteen bishops (plus spouses) first listened, learned and reflected with the leadership of the Diocese of Alaska. Then we answered a call to action and joined in a diocesan-wide day of prayer for a blessing of the land. Many of us pushed past our discomfort with small planes and cold temperatures to fly out to worship in small wooden churches heated by wood stoves. We then spread throughout the community, going from house to house, family to family, blessing the young, the old, the sick and the joyous before gathering at the river to conclude with song and prayer. These were small acts of faith, hope and love, but they made a great and lasting impact upon the House of Bishops. As a result of our time in Alaska, the House of Bishops issued a Word to the Church about respecting the earth, defending those exploited for selfish gain and recognizing both our complicity as well our capacity to repent and amend our lives (page 29). All of this must, of course, be grounded in study and reflection upon Holy Scripture, guided by prayer discerned by the power of the Holy Spirit.

SLOW DOWN AND BEHOLD

This elongated change of season from summer to fall has been accompanied by unprecedented storms of all

kinds, from the meteorological to the sociopolitical. Hurricane season continues to haunt our thoughts and shape our prayers as we construct responses to all manner of natural and human-made disasters. As days shorten and nights lengthen, there are moments when a different kind of darkness casts its shadow upon our hopes and dreams. Holiday plans with loved ones are taking shape against a background of fear and anxiety from very personal concerns with health care to more global concerns about war, disease and famine.

Thankfully, the Church calendar understands the seasonal interplay of light and darkness. Advent is approaching with its strange, culture-defying invitation to slow down and behold the Light of Christ as the necessary illumination to confront and contemplate all that troubles our hearts. Contrary to the heresy of thinking we are masters of our own destiny, Advent advocates not just doing something; first sit in the stillness of prayer. Let your worldly eyes adjust to the Light of Christ. Prepare to see and greet the goodness of the Lord. Then, and only then, are we prepared to go and follow the example of Jesus by loving God and loving our neighbors as ourselves.

Advent invites us to carve out time away from frenetic activities and contemplate the transcendent power of God's reconciling love in contrast with the uncertainties and hostilities causing division and dissension among neighbors near and far. Advent also says not to let a temptation to despair eclipse the power of hope. "Put on the armor of light" as the collect for the first Sunday in Advent proclaims. (BCP, page 159) Remember that love casts out hate. That armor is the confidence and courage we find in following Jesus Christ.

ACTS OF FAITH

In Christian communities across our state, our country and the world, followers of Jesus are creating fresh expressions of what it means to be peacemakers, healers and agents of reconciliation in our own homes and local communities. And they are doing so in ways that change lives and even change the world. In our own diocese, peace and reconciliation takes many forms. Our work in racial justice and reconciliation has led hundreds of our members to take part in the trainings offered by the Racial Equity Institute. Many of our congregations are involved



Episcopal bishops and residents of Venetie, Alaska, gather at the bank of the Chandalar River to bless the water, land and people. Photo by David Paulsen/Episcopal News Service A stained glass window of Alaskan bishop the Rt. Rev. Bill Gordon, a native North Carolinian who learned to fly so he could visit congregations across the state. Bishop Anne Hodges-Copple intrepidly boards a small plane for her own Alaska journey.

in efforts of hospitality, sanctuary and empowerment on behalf of our neighbors who are immigrants and refugees. Others are implementing innovations in community gardens such as carbon farming as a way to slow the deleterious impacts of global warming (page 9). It is good to remember that the first jobs program in the history of the world was God's commandment in Genesis, chapter one, that humans are to care for the earth and all her creatures great and small.

These and so many others are outward and visible signs of our desire to be faithful disciples and participants in the Jesus movement. In a far less "sexy" way, our diocesan leaders are working to examine, deconstruct and reimagine the structures of our shared institutional life. We are fully engaged in making sure our structures and procedures serve mission and don't merely maintain a status quo.

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

A WORD TO THE CHURCH FROM THE EPISCOPAL CHURCH'S HOUSE OF BISHOPS

Gathered in Fairbanks, Alaska, September 21-26, 2017

*The Episcopal Church of Bishops, met in Fairbanks, Alaska
(Diocese of Alaska), approved and presented the following Word to
the Church:*

The bishops of The Episcopal Church came to Alaska to listen to the earth and its peoples as an act of prayer, solidarity and witness. We came because:

- “The earth is the Lord’s and all that is in it, the world, and those who live in it; for he hath founded it upon the seas, and established it upon the rivers” (Psalm 24: 1-2). God is the Lord of all the earth and of all people; we are one family, the family of God.
- “You are no longer strangers and aliens, but you are ... members of the household of God” (Ephesians 2:19). The residents of interior Alaska whom we met are not strangers; they are members of the same household of faith.
- People have “Become hard of hearing, and shut their eyes so that they will not see with their eyes or hear with their ears or understand with their minds, and change their hearts and lives that I may heal them” (Matthew 13: 14-15). We are blind and deaf to the groaning of the earth and its peoples; we are learning the art of prayerful listening.

What does listening to the earth and its people mean?

For us bishops, it meant:

- Getting out and walking the land, standing beside the rivers, sitting beside people whose livelihood depends on that land. We had to slow down and live at the pace of the stories we heard. We had to trust that listening to prayer.
- Recognizing that struggles for justice are connected. Racism, the economy, violence of every kind and the environment are interrelated. We have seen this reality not only in the Arctic, but also in Standing Rock in the Dakotas, in the recent hurricanes, in Flint, Michigan, Charlottesville, Virginia, and in the violence perpetuated against people of color and vulnerable populations anywhere.
- Understanding that listening is deeply connected to healing. In many healing stories in the gospels, Jesus asked, “What do you want me to do for you?” That is, I listened first and then acted.

What did we hear?

- “The weather is really different today,” one leader told us. “Now spring comes earlier, and fall lasts

longer. This is threatening our lives because the permafrost is melting and destabilizing the rivers. We depend on the rivers. “

- The land in the Arctic National Wildlife Refuge where the caribou birth their calves is called the “sacred place where life begins,” so sacred the Gwich’in People do not set foot there.” Drilling here,” people said, “is like digging beneath the National Cathedral.”
- After shopping together, the native Episcopalians told one of us how hard it is to secure food. “We cannot get good food here. We have to drive to Fairbanks. It’s a two-hour trip each way.”

What we bishops saw and heard in Alaska is playful, but it is not unique. Stories like these can be heard in each of the nations where the Episcopal Church is present. They can be heard in our own communities. We invite you to join us, your bishops, and those people already engaged in this work, in taking time to listen to people in your dioceses and neighborhoods. Look for the connections among race, violence of every kind, economic disparity and the environment. Then, after reflecting in prayer and engaging with scripture, partner with people in common commitment to the healing of God’s world.

God calls us to listen to each other with increased attention. It is only with unstopped ears and open eyes that our hearts and lives will be changed. It is through the reconciling love of God in Jesus and the power of the Holy Spirit that we and the earth itself will be healed.

Prayer for Our Time and for the Earth

*Dear God, Creator of the earth, this sacred home we share;
Give us new eyes to see the beauty all around and to protect the
wonders of creation.*

*Give us new arms to embrace the strangers among us and to know
them as family.*

*Give us new ears to hear and understand those who live off the
land*

and understand those who extract their resources.

*Give us new hearts to recognize the brokenness in our communities
and to heal the wounds we have inflicted.*

*Give us new hands to serve the earth and its people
and to shape beloved community.*

*For you are the One who seeks the lost,
binds our wounds and sets us free,*

and it is in the name of Jesus the Christ we pray.

Amen.



The Tiffany window behind the altar, La Escuelita Weekday School, dedicated volunteers, like those who set up for Room at the Inn, and a vibrant bilingual congregation are all part of what makes Holy Comforter a community cornerstone.



By Summerlee Walter

A COMMUNITY CORNERSTONE

Holy Comforter's 114 years of service to the Charlotte community

Holy Comforter is known for many things in the Charlotte community: La Escuelita Weekday School, the award-winning bilingual preschool serving an economically diverse population of students; the striking Tiffany window framing the altar, donated in 1919 by grieving widower E.A. Smith, who swore the rector to secrecy about the window's origins until after Smith's death; and, recently, the election of its former rector, the Rev. Kevin S. Brown, as the XI Bishop of Delaware. It is a church whose grounds are dedicated to the mission of worship and outreach, whether it's the magnificent image of Jesus and his disciples at the Last Supper overlooking worshippers, the entire building dedicated to high-quality bilingual education or the numerous organizations that find a home at Holy Comforter.

A HISTORY OF FIRSTS

Founded as a mission in 1903, Holy Comforter was initially named for the Rt. Rev. Thomas Atkinson, remembered as the first southern Episcopal bishop to attend a national church gathering in the aftermath of the Civil War. Atkinson's spirit of courageously reaching

out has permeated Holy Comforter since its beginnings, and a dedication to community remains a hallmark of the church.

In 1913, Boy Scout Troop 1, the first troop in North Carolina, was founded in the former church building on South Boulevard and remains active today. Four decades later, in 1955, Holy Comforter launched a weekday preschool in its newly constructed parish house at the church's current location on Park Road. At the time, offering childcare for the children of working parents was a desperately needed innovation. The school merged with La Escuelita in 2016 and continues today in the form of La Escuelita Weekday School, a preschool offering high-quality bilingual instruction to children ages one through five.

Another lasting Holy Comforter ministry began in 1975, when the church founded what became the Loaves & Fishes network of food pantries. Today, the Loaves & Fishes location at Holy Comforter is the only food pantry in the area open five days a week, serving 71,766 people in 2015.

MOVING FROM OUTREACH TO COMMUNITY

In response to Charlotte's growing Latino population, several years ago Holy Comforter began offering English as a Second Language classes with childcare and tutoring available for parents. The classes grew to serve 30 or so students each week. Soon, though, "there was a recognition there was more we might be able to offer," the Rev. Amanda Robertson explained in 2014. At the same time the church felt energy gathering around starting a Spanish-language worship service, Lauren Cavins, Holy Comforter's director of Hispanic ministries and director of children's ministries, was working on beginning La Escuelita, a bilingual preschool targeting low-income Latino students in the community, many of whom lagged far behind their Anglo peers in preschool readiness.

Begun in 2009, La Escuelita grew rapidly. In 2016, under Brown's leadership, the church entered a period of discernment resulting in La Escuelita merging with the Weekday School.

"One thing [Brown] is so good at is consensus building and making sure people feel like they've been heard," Cavins explains. "He invited us to think about [the merger] all together." Brown's idea to join the preschool programs proved a savvy one; La Escuelita Weekday School now serves 90 children in seven classes, and the number of parishioners with children enrolled in preschool at the church has tripled. Families pay on a sliding scale, so the preschool is able to continue La Escuelita's original mission while introducing children from a variety of backgrounds to each other.

"They realize some children speak Spanish at home, and some children speak English at home," Cavins explains.

As La Escuelita grew, so did attendance at la misa, Holy Comforter's weekly Spanish-language worship. The church's leadership was not content, however, simply to offer the Eucharist in Spanish. Instead, they recognized Holy Comforter as a church shared by those who worshiped in English and in Spanish, and they knew leadership needed to be shared, too. As a result, the church partnered with El Instituto de Liderazgo in 2014. El Instituto is a two-year leadership development program started by the Diocese of Los Angeles to train Spanish-speaking members of churches in pastoral care, evangelism, Christian formation and outreach so they are equipped to assume leadership roles.

FORMATION AND OUTREACH

In addition to its educational and feeding ministries, Holy Comforter also offers its building to shelter homeless men, women and families on Saturday evenings from November to March through Room in

the Inn. During the 2015-16 season, the church sheltered and fed 200 individuals. In addition, Holy Comforter shares its buildings with outside groups 30 times per month, on average.

The church also looks for ways to serve outside its campus. Starting with engagement around the sweet potato challenge offered a few years ago by the Diocese in support of the Episcopal Farmworker Ministry (EFwM), the people of Holy Comforter have continued to learn about and support the ministry. Last year, the congregation committed to "be mindful about the food we eat and the hands that have worked so hard to provide it," during the "Blessing the Hands that Feed Us" campaign. Members of the congregation pledged to learn more about the contributions of farmworkers and the collaboration between the Dioceses of North Carolina and East Carolina to support them through EFwM. They actively supported "Water in the Fields," an EFwM initiative to provide farmworkers with specialized water carriers so they can stay hydrated as they work long rows of crops.

While the list of outreach opportunities at Holy Comforter is extensive, the church is equally focused on formation through worship and study. With support from a John M. Belk Foundation grant that covers the cost of books, food and childcare, the people of Holy Comforter have engaged in a series of well-attended book studies since the summer of 2016. Participants have read and discussed *Our Kids: The American Dream in Crisis*, *Hillbilly Elegy: A Memoir of a Family and a Culture in Crisis*, and *Evicted: Poverty and Profit in the American City*. The series encourages participants to seek connections between the trends presented in the books and the realities facing the Charlotte community. During their study of *Evicted*, for example, readers also looked at local data on evictions and discussed ways individuals could engage the housing crisis low-income families face in growing cities like Charlotte.

For 114 years, the people of Holy Comforter have gotten to know their community, examined their resources and implemented innovative solutions to serve both their fellow parishioners and their neighbors. Whether creating a new model for others to follow or transforming a long-standing ministry as needs evolve, Holy Comforter has adapted to meet the needs of its community. No doubt the church and its people will adapt to Brown's new call, too, and carry on their work in whatever way the future requires.

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Until we read again...

Prepare for the 202nd Annual Convention: Watch the budget webinar and new delegate orientation, read the resolutions, meet the nominees and download the app. Find it all at episdionc.org (page 12).

Watch Convention via livestream at episdionc.org.

Help the victims of recent earthquakes and hurricanes. Visit episcopalrelief.org to donate to relief efforts or complete the “Ready to Serve” form for volunteering opportunities (page 10).

Join Bishop Sam for online Bible study on Facebook Live every second Wednesday at noon starting December 13. To watch or take part, like the Episcopal Diocese of North Carolina on Facebook (page 8).