

SPRING 2015



The North Carolina DISCIPLE

THE EPISCOPAL DIOCESE OF NORTH CAROLINA

PLAIN OR WITH THE LITTLE MAN?

NEON-SIGN CHRISTIANITY

CREATION CARE

THE TOUGH TALKS
WHAT TO SAY WHEN BAD
THINGS HAPPEN TO GOOD PEOPLE



The North Carolina
DISCIPLE

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

The Episcopal Diocese of North Carolina

Bishop

The Rt. Rev. Michael B. Curry
michael.curry@episdionc.org
Diocesan House: 919.834.7474

Bishop Suffragan

The Rt. Rev. Anne E. Hodges-Copple
bishopanne@episdionc.org
Office of the Bishop Suffragan: 336.273.5770

PUBLISHER

Bishop of North Carolina

EDITORIAL DIRECTOR

Christine McTaggart
christine.mctaggart@episdionc.org

MANAGING EDITOR / ART DIRECTOR

Summerlee Walter
summerlee.walter@episdionc.org

CONTRIBUTORS IN THIS ISSUE

The Rt. Rev. Michael B. Curry
Summerlee Walter
The Rev. Don Lowery
Canon Marlene Weigert
The Rev. Dr. Cathy L. Deats
Christine McTaggart
Chartered Committee for Environmental Ministry
Habitat for Humanity of Durham

SUBSCRIPTIONS / CHANGE OF ADDRESS

Scott Welborn: scott.welborn@episdionc.org

SUBMISSIONS

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

LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

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

COVER PHOTO

Photo by Leon Brooks/Wikimedia Commons. Edited. Public domain.

INSIDE COVER PHOTO

"Resurrection Sunday." Photo by Luz Adriana Villa/Flickr. Edited. CC BY 2.0

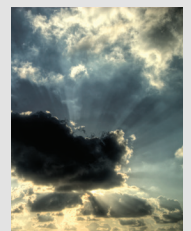


table of contents

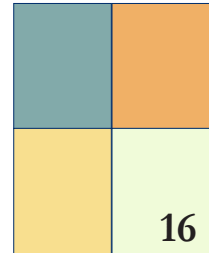
SPRING 2015

features

- 4 Good News in a Bad News Cycle: A resurrection reflection
- 12 Welcome to General Convention
- 14 Plain or with the Little Man?
- 15 Neon-Sign Christianity
- 16 What to Say When Bad Things Happen to Good People
- 22 Creation Care: Saving the world one step at a time
- 26 The Kids Are Alright: Youth rally behind farmworkers
- 28 Faithful Roots: Habitat for Humanity and the Church
- 30 Feeding Body and Soul



12



16



22



30

departments & more

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

ABOUT



The North Carolina

DISCIPLE

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

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



At a Glance Facts: This Magazine...

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

GOOD NEWS IN A BAD NEWS CYCLE

A resurrection reflection

Let me start with the bad news and then, the good news — the real good news.

Organized religion in North America of virtually all types is in trouble: mega and mainline, traditional and contemporary, church, synagogue and temple. If misery loves company, then there is plenty of company for this misery.

While interest in things spiritual is high, religionless living is increasingly the norm for more and more people. It's harder to be church in this climate. Many old ways of doing things simply don't work any longer. People don't pledge like they used to. They don't attend like they used to. They don't give like they used to. Sunday School is losing the match with soccer. But all is not bleak. Actually, this could be, if I may borrow from Winston Churchill, "our finest hour." But let's not kid ourselves. The challenges are real, complex and deeply cultural, and they are not going away.

That's the bad news. But that's not *all* the news.

THE GOOD NEWS

There really is a God. And God is not finished with us yet. Jesus of Nazareth has been raised from the dead — for real. Jesus lives! And if that is true, as I believe it is, then the resurrection of Jesus may portend a pattern of creative possibility that seems to be the way of God, a way not even death can defeat or destroy. And that really is good news.

In the ancient world, the dead were often buried in caves on the sides of hills, and a large stone or boulder was rolled before the entrance of the cave, mainly to keep wild animals from desecrating the grave. This was done with the body of Jesus. The Bible says that a wealthy man named Joseph of Arimathea provided the tomb. He, Nicodemus and a few others buried Jesus in the tomb on the side of a hill and rolled a huge stone in front of the opening. All of that was quite normal and according to custom.

Matthew's Gospel adds a provocative side note, however. After Jesus had been buried, the chief priests and the Pharisees got together with Pontius Pilate. This was the same gang that conspired to kill Jesus in the first place. You would have thought Friday was enough. They knew he was dead. It wasn't that they even remotely expected Jesus to be raised from the dead. Rather, they wanted to



eclipse even the possibility his disciples might claim that he had been raised. They meant not only to keep wild animals out but also to keep wild hopes in. It was Dante who in his depiction of the gates of hell had inscribed the words, “Abandon hope all ye who enter here.”

The intent was to impose the limitations of the possible and to eclipse any hope of new possibility. But by early that Sunday morning, the guards who had been posted were out of the picture, the great stone had been rolled away by what appeared to have been an earthquake, and Jesus was alive.

While it is a part of W.H. Auden’s Christmas Oratorio in *For the Time Being*, these words speak the truth of the Resurrection.

We who must die demand a miracle!
Nothing can save us that is possible.
How could the infinite become a finite fact,
the Eternal become a temporal act.
Nothing can save us that is possible.
We who must die demand a miracle!

THE GATEWAY TO HOPE

The possible is frequently the problem, because possibility is frequently the gateway to hope. The resurrection of Jesus is a sign that with God, there is always another possibility. Theologian Paul Tillich once said that the providence of God means “there is a creative and saving possibility in every situation.”

With God there is always another possibility.

You can see this in the Bible. The poem in the first chapter of Genesis suggests that before creation, before there was a world at all, there was nothing, only God. The language of the earth being “a formless void” with “darkness” covering the deep is a poetic way of speaking of what theologian Karl Barth once called *das Nichtige*, nothingness.

“Then God said, ‘Let there be light’, and there was light.” (Genesis 1:3) The act of creation on God’s part was calling forth something when there was nothing, summoning up possibility from the limitations of the possible. For with God, there’s always another possibility.

The Book of Exodus tells the story of Moses and the freedom struggle of the Hebrew slaves in Egypt. Slavery is by definition life without God-given freedom, life without hope. All exits to hope have been blocked. That’s what any kind of slavery is: the eclipse of hope. But with God there is always another possibility. Exodus tells the story of how God, after a long and protracted struggle, after negotiations and plagues, created a new possibility by parting the Red Sea and setting the Hebrew captives free. With God there is always another possibility.

I don’t think it’s an accident that the creation story from Genesis and the Exodus story are both assigned

readings for the Great Vigil of Easter. In the creation of the world and the liberation of Hebrew slaves we see the way of God in the world. And that way is what neutralized the guards, rolled away the stone and created a new possibility: the resurrection of Jesus from the dead. So how does that apply to us as disciples in the community called church in 21st-century Galilee?

CREATIVE POSSIBILITY

In Mark’s Gospel, Mary Magdalene and several of the women disciples went to the place where Jesus was buried. Mark reports that as they went, they said to one another, “Who will roll away the stone for us?” They knew the stone was there. They knew, presumably, that the stone had been sealed. They knew, therefore, they had no way to roll the stone away. And yet, they went anyway.

Whether they were fully aware of it or not, just going to the tomb of their loved one, just doing what love does, just living the liturgy of their faith led them beyond what was possible into the realm of divine possibility. Living deeply into the tradition of their ancient faith led them into the new creative possibility of God.

I suspect that may well be a definition of faith. Faith is not about living by what the world declares possible but by God’s new possibility. A disciple is one who goes anyway. It has nothing to do with being a wide-eyed optimist or a closed-minded pessimist. It’s about being a Gospel realist. The resurrection is God’s victorious declaration that there’s always another possibility.

That is a truth by which we, who are the church of Jesus in this 21st-century Galilee, can live. A complex time like ours is a challenge not to become trendy and to find short cuts to get more members, but, like those women that resurrection morning, to go deeper into the rich soil of the faith. Following the Risen Lord Jesus is about living into not simply what is possible, but living in God, and, therefore, living into the creative possibilities of God.

And that means following our Risen Lord may mean seeking out, discerning, working to find and being open to the creative possibilities that take what was old and transform it, reimagine it and reinvent it until new creation emerges out of the old. That’s in part what it means to “practice resurrection,” as the poet Wendell Berry teaches us. The resurrection of Jesus holds the key to following faithfully and effectively being the Church of Jesus in this complex and challenging Galilee of the 21st century.

And as the old spiritual says: Ain’t that good news!

Keep the faith,
+Michael

The Rt. Rev. Michael B. Curry was elected the 11th Bishop of the Episcopal Diocese of North Carolina in 2000. Contact him at michael.curry@episdionc.org.

AROUND THE DIOCESE

This “Around the Diocese” really shows off the diversity of activities happening around the Diocese: service, performance, retreat, ritual, formation...and gingerbread-making.

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

Trinity, Mount Airy, held its first Godly Play Sunday School on January 11. These three enthralled children watched the story of Exodus, dramatically acted out in a bag of sand with little wooden figures representing God's people in the desert. Strips of blue felt unfolded as Moses parted the Red Sea, then folded over again to stop the pharaoh's armies from reaching the people — much to the relief of the captivated onlookers.



Photo by Lisa Wallace

Photo by Beth Crow



Juniors and seniors from churches across the Diocese gathered March 21-22 at Camp Walter Johnson in Denton for an overnight retreat sponsored by the Youth Ministry Department.

Photo by Beth Hardin



We know: Wrong liturgical season. Sometimes, though, production calendars and event calendars don't play together nicely, so you get things like gingerbread houses in April because this one was just too fun not to print. Approximately 100 kids and adults attended Holy Comforter's Annual Gingerbread House Building Party in December, creating two-story mansions, castles, mobile homes, a bus and more.



Photo by the Rev. Helen Svoboda-Barber

St. Luke's, Durham, recently raised more than \$4,500 for outreach at their Spring Fling indoor yard sale. Here, co-chair John Wyman investigates donations with volunteers Joyce Avery and Jean Willard.



Photo by Vickie Hammie

Danza Ortiz dancers perform during the Our Lady of Guadalupe celebration held in the parish hall at St. Cyprian's, Oxford, after the December 12 service.



Photo courtesy of the Rt. Rev. Michael Curry

St. Mary's School, Raleigh, celebrated its largest Confirmation in two decades on January 27 when 13 young women choose to reaffirm their faith.



Photos by Susan Rountree

Scenes from The Gathering, a women's conference held at St. Michael's, Raleigh. This year's event, which featured author Kelly Corrigan, took place February 20-21. The next Gathering will take place February 24-25, 2017. From top: The Rev. Mary Davila offers healing prayers to Bonnie Woodruff and her daughter, Molly Painter. Many mothers and daughters shared the weekend, including Rose Hunnicutt Bauerlain, Jessica Bauerlain Widener and Valerie Bauerlain Jackson.

NEW, NOTABLE & NEWSWORTHY

GO SPEAK: SHARING OUR FAITH IS BACK!

On May 15, 2014, small groups of 8-10 Episcopalians – more than 800 people total – gathered in homes and other informal settings across the Diocese. Under the direction of a trained moderator, participants practiced sharing personal stories of how God has moved in their lives.

These gatherings, part of Go Speak: Sharing Our Faith, were inspired by the challenge to go deep, go speak and go do Bishop Curry issued during the 198th Annual Convention of the Diocese of North Carolina. As a diocese and in communion with five other dioceses, we took up his challenge to go speak – to share our faith.

We will continue to meet Bishop Curry's challenge this year. On May 21, 2015, parishes are encouraged to gather in small groups to share both a meal and their stories of faith and questioning, struggle and peace, fellowship and loneliness. Question cards guide the sharing, so there's no pressure to craft a tale beforehand. Participants listen to

each other without questioning or feedback, so the listening becomes as active a process as the telling.

While churches are welcome to host a Go Speak event at any time, those who participate on May 21 will join members of other dioceses across the country in sharing their stories. May 21 is also a significant date because it lands during the final week of the Harvest for Hospitality campaign - the "go do" part of Bishop Curry's challenge. Over the meal they share, participants are encouraged to reflect on the farmworkers who put food on our tables. Suggestions



for doing so are included in the Go Speak "Resources" section at episdionc.org.

For those who participated in last year's event, no new cards are needed. If you need additional decks or have questions, please contact either Ayliffe Mumford at ayliffe.mumford@episdionc.org or Shelley Kappauf at shelley.kappauf@episdionc.org.

SHORT SKETCHES OF HISTORICALLY BLACK CHURCHES

"Short Sketches of Historically Black Churches Across North Carolina" is a weekly series that debuted in February in honor of Black History Month and will continue throughout 2015. Each 100-word sketch features historical highlights of a historically black congregation and its church building(s). A collection of more in-depth congregational histories is underway in conjunction with

History Day 2015: "A Calculated Leap: Black Episcopal Missions, Schools and Bishops, 1865-1918," which took place April 18, 2015. To read the short sketches, visit episdionc.org; to share information about any of the historically black churches in North Carolina, please contact Project Archivist Lynn Hoke at lynn.hoke@episdionc.org.

SUMMER ISSUE OF DISCIPLE COMING LATE JULY

The Summer 2015 issue of the *Disciple* will arrive a few weeks later than usual this year, not because the communications team is taking a summer break, but because we want to be able to bring you news, photos and highlights from the 78th General Convention taking place June 25 through July 3.

Rather than enjoying the Summer issue over the July

Fourth holiday, expect it in your mailbox later in the month. For real-time information and stories from Convention, follow us on Facebook, Twitter and the diocesan website.



MISSION ENDOWMENT GRANTS AWARDED

The first-ever Mission Endowment Grants have been awarded. More than two dozen applications were received, making difficult the job of the Mission Endowment Grant Board as they could choose only five grant recipients.

The recipients and purposes of the grant funding are:

- Galilee Ministries of East Charlotte: Grant will assist with start-up funding for a ministry of service, community building and worship in the diverse east side of Charlotte.
- Las Escuelitas: Grant will assist in the creation of a Program Coordinator position to help with the organization of programs at Holy Comforter, Charlotte; St. Mark's, Huntersville; and St. Alban's, Davidson.
- St. Andrew's, Greensboro: Grant will assist in the funding of a Greensboro-based missionary who will help to expand the worship of a multicultural, bilingual house church community known as Iglesia Puerta Abierta.
- St. Stephen's, Winston-Salem: Grant will create a bilingual Episcopal missionary among the multicultural population on the east side of Winston-Salem.
- Trinity, Fuquay-Varina: In collaboration with Grace Episcopal Church, Clayton, and El Buen Pastor, Durham, this grant will work to reach children and parents at the Episcopal Farmworker Ministry to operate a summer program called "Camp in the Camps."

We were very impressed by the energy and innovation around the Diocese.

- *The Rev. Robert Black*

"Overall, we received 27 outstanding applications and were very impressed by the energy and innovation around the Diocese," said the Rev. Robert Black, chair of the Mission Endowment Grant Board.

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

located within the 38 counties of the Diocese, but they do not have to be exclusively associated with diocesan entities. Only one person or part of the project must have an association with a diocesan entity. This means the door is wide open for strategic partnerships, including interfaith and secular entities, companion relationships, and partnership ministries of congregations, institutions and organizations of the Diocese.

Up to five grants in amounts ranging from \$5,000 to \$25,000 are awarded each year. One and two-year grants are available.

For more information, visit episdionc.org.

DIOCESAN EVENTS

May

- 16 Seeing the Face of God in Each Other: Anti-Racism Retreat, 9 a.m.-4:30 p.m., St. Andrew's, Haw River

June

- 12 Deacons Retreat, Haw River State Park, Browns Summit
25- The 78th General Convention, Salt Lake City.
July 3 View resources and coverage at episdionc.org.

July

- 9-12 Provincial Youth Event-Middle School (PYEMS) and Summer Focus at the Summit (SF@S), Haw River State Park, Browns Summit. Registration still open.
20-25 HUGS Camp, Haw River State Park, Browns Summit. Registration for helpers and campers still open.

Look for additional events and more detailed event information online at www.episdionc.org, or contact the Diocese at (919) 834-7474, toll-free at (800) 448-8775. Upcoming diocesan events and events from around the Diocese are featured in Please Note, Bishop Curry's weekly e-newsletter.

STAY IN TOUCH

Keep up with our diocese through social media!

www.facebook.com/EpiscopalDioceseNC

www.twitter.com/EpiscopalINC

www.instagram.com/episdionc

www.vimeo.com/episcopalnc



Episcopal Diocese of North Carolina
Feb 25 at 8:00am Edited

The Rev. Sarah Ball-Damberg, assistant to the rector at Holy Family, Chapel Hill, is here to host our second "Question of Faith." Here's her question:

We typically associate Lent with austerity, fasting and restraint, all of which are indeed part of the season. But since Lent is also an invitation to deepen our relationship with God, it must also be about joy. So I'm wondering, are there things about Lent and your Lenten observance that bring you joy? Might you be willing to share some of those?



1099 people saw this post [Boost Post](#)

7 likes 9 comments

[Like](#) [Comment](#) [Share](#)

[Sarah Herr and 6 others like this.](#)

Amy Campbell
Our family has been crazy for Lent Madness and we are also using a Lenten booklet prepared by **Laurie Huberth Holden** at Emmanuel Southern Pines. My joy has come in my 7 year old asking when we are voting and asking to read the Lenten booklet instead of The Magic Treehouse. It is joyful to see just how little it takes to foster a spiritual discipline in a young heart.
Feb 25 at 8:19 AM • Like • 7 • Reply

Laurie Huberth Holden
Amy, I am so glad that the booklet has become a part of your Lent!
Feb 25 at 9:56 AM • Like • 1

A QUESTION OF FAITH

Have you ever wanted to discuss matters of faith with folks outside your usual circle? Have you ever had a question you wanted to throw out to the masses? In other words, have you ever had “A Question of Faith?”

“A Question of Faith” is a series of discussions taking place on the diocesan Facebook page (facebook.com/EpiscopalDioceseNC). Each Wednesday morning at 8 a.m., a question is posted that invites discussion to follow throughout the day.

The twist? Diocesan House is only posting the question - the question itself originates with a weekly guest host, who, in turn, is the moderator of the discussion. He or she moderates as himself/herself, contributing, guiding and assisting as necessary. Because of how this is structured, the guest host could be anyone and can host from anywhere.

As for the participants? The discussion goes on all day, so everyone is welcome to pop in and out as his or her schedule allows.

The hope is that this initiative presents a forum where folks can come from anywhere to engage in honest discussion about matters pertaining to their faith. Episcopalians, non-Episcopalians, clergy, lay - everyone is truly welcome.

How can you take part?

- Make sure you've liked the diocesan Facebook page (facebook.com/EpiscopalDioceseNC) and join the discussion!
- Take to your own social media and communication channels to let folks know this is happening. (We ask, though, you please direct people to the discussion on the diocesan page instead of reposting the conversation to your own. We want everyone to join in together at the same place!)
- Email the communications team at communications@episdioc.org if you would like to host a future discussion or know of someone you think would be great. (Remember, it's open to anyone and everyone!)
- Continue to encourage others to take part - this is not a one-shot deal, but rather an ongoing initiative.

Join us each Wednesday as we discuss “A Question of Faith!”

PREACH-IN ON GLOBAL WARMING EXTENDED TO EARTH DAY

Interfaith Power & Light's 5th annual Preach-In, a campaign for climate healing and action over Valentine's Day weekend, sent an unprecedented number of prayers to God and postcards to senators. It is estimated that 500,000 people participated, many of them joining Saturday's synchronized climate prayer, others giving sermons and talks, and still more holding discussions and gathering signatures on Love Creation climate action postcards to send to senators.

“There was something very powerful about knowing that people across the country were praying about this issue at the same time,” said Interfaith Power & Light

founder the Rev. Canon Sally G. Bingham. “It was truly an interfaith, nationwide climate prayer to remind us to take seriously our responsibility to protect Creation.”



So the beat goes on. Interfaith Power & Light is extending Preach-In activities until Earth Day, April 22. Even if you are not planning to take part in preaching on climate change on the designated weekend, you are welcome to use the materials to plan an event at any time. Preach-In kits include fact sheets on climate change, bulletin inserts, postcards to senators, educational materials and more.

For more information or to download Preach-In kits, visit preachin.org.

TWO FROM ST. MARY'S HONORED FOR SERVICE

Two members of St. Mary's, High Point, have recently received recognition for their community service.

Dorothy Darr received the Governor's Award for Volunteer Service in March 2015. In addition to founding and establishing the vision for Southwest Renewal Foundation, throughout 2014 she has been instrumental in bringing goats and pin oaks, stream reclamation and public sculpture, greenways and bike paths, an arts and antiques festival, and preservation-minded businesses to High Point through her work with West High Street Historic District, High Point Historical Society and St. Mary's.

Margarita Kerkado received the Humanitarian of the Year award from the Human Relation City Commissioner on January 18. According to the City Commissioner, the vote to honor Kerkado, "the first immigrant ever to receive this outstanding award," was unanimous. Kerkado is the director of the High Point Latino Family Center and is also a member of the International Advisory Committee with the Human Relations Department of the City of High Point and a collaborator with the Social Justice Committee of the YWCA. She works tirelessly to improve the lives of Latinos in High Point by providing programs that guide, educate and form leaders.

LIFT EVERY VOICE LIFTS OFF

"Lift Every Voice: A Youth and Young Adult Focus on Truth, Reconciliation and Peace," a three-year diocesan program that examines and reimagines how we negotiate our history of race relations and conflict, is getting ready to hit the road.

On July 12, 2015, the youth and young adults selected to take part in the program will spend a week traveling throughout North Carolina as part of the program's first phase. They will visit

sites that focus on the historical truths of slavery and the Civil Rights movement in North Carolina and the current realities of migrant farmworkers in the state. Stops will include the International Civil Rights Center and Museum in Greensboro and Stagville in Durham.

"Lift Every Voice" is designed as a three-year progression, and its ultimate goal is to help youth and young adults build an understanding of social injustice that will help them develop a vision and skills to lead their dioceses' programming around race and inclusivity. Participants in the program include applicants from both the United States and South Africa.

Even if you are not among the participants, there are still ways to take part in "Lift Every Voice." Resources and curricula can be found on the diocesan website, and you can follow the travelers in real time on Twitter and Instagram by searching #levNC.



IN CASE YOU MISSED IT

Going to Galilee with Bishop Anne

"Going to Galilee with Bishop Anne," a special video series featuring churches that have stepped up to make Christ known by being really and truly present to those in need, made its debut in January 2015. "St. Andrew's and the Kids Next Door" introduced us to St. Andrew's, Haw River, a small rural church making a big difference in the lives of the neighborhood children. All videos in the series can be found in the "Featured Media" section at episonc.org.

The Rt. Rev. Michael B. Curry Named Chair of Episcopal Relief & Development Board

The Rt. Rev. Michael B. Curry was appointed as Chair of Episcopal Relief & Development's Board of Directors. The

appointment was made by the board's Honorary Chair, the Most Rev. Katharine Jefferts Schori, Presiding Bishop and Primate of The Episcopal Church.

Bishop Curry assumes Board leadership at an exciting time in the organization's history, as it celebrates 75 years of healing a hurting world. The 75th Anniversary Celebration brings together Episcopalians and friends to commemorate and engage more deeply with its work.



More than 300 bishops and 800 clergy and lay deputies will gather on June 25 in Salt Lake City, Utah, when the 78th General Convention of The Episcopal Church convenes. During the nine-day gathering, the House of Bishops and House of Deputies will elect the next Presiding Bishop, pass an operating budget for the coming triennium, and consider the recommendations made by the Task Force on the Study of Marriage and the Task Force for Reimagining The Episcopal Church (TREC), among other resolutions. Educational resources regarding the major topics facing the General Convention are available at episdionc.org/general-convention.

ELECTING A PRESIDING BISHOP

Current Presiding Bishop Katharine Jefferts Schori’s September 2014 announcement she would not consider a second nine-year term as Primate of The Episcopal Church guarantees that the General Convention will elect a new presiding bishop this summer. The current draft schedule indicates the election will occur on June 27, with the installation happening sometime in the fall before the new presiding bishop’s official November 1 start date.

The Joint Nominating Committee for the Election of the Presiding Bishop (JNCPB) will announce the slate of nominees in early May. Bishops on the slate will be drawn from those whose names were submitted to the JNCPB by any member of the Episcopal Church before the September 30 nomination deadline.

TREC WRAPS UP

The Task Force for Reimagining The Episcopal Church (TREC), which included our own bishop diocesan, the Right Reverend Michael Curry, and young adult Jonathan York, will present its findings during Convention.

In June 2012, TREC was charged by the 77th General Convention with creating a plan to reform the Church’s structures, governance and administration. According to a December 15, 2014, statement released by the task force, their report and proposed resolutions include discernment surrounding “reimagination of dioceses, clergy preparation, the use of our sacred buildings” and other topics. Members of the task force outlined some of their findings in a recent panel discussion available through

the General Convention resource page housed on the diocesan website.



THINKING ABOUT MARRIAGE

The 77th General Convention in passed a resolution creating the Task Force on the Study of Marriage to “to identify and explore biblical, theological, historical, liturgical and canonical dimensions of marriage;” to address pastoral issues surrounding clergy ministering in states that recognize civil marriage for same-sex couples; and to consider Resolution 2012-D091, which suggested replacing “man and woman” and “husband and wife” language in the marriage canons of the Episcopal Church with the language of “two people.”

In a Please Note interview with Bishop Curry, the Right Reverend Andrew Waldo, bishop of the Diocese of Upper South Carolina and a member of the task force, described how the group discerned that it had been asked to answer two questions: “What

LEARN MORE

Educational resources regarding the 78th General Convention are available at episdionc.org/general-convention. The page also contains links to:

- Bishop Waldo’s Please Note interview
- Task force reports, and
- The General Convention portal.

makes a marriage holy? What makes a marriage Christian?”

The task force released its report on February 3. It includes a series of seven essays addressing the biblical and theological issues surrounding marriage, its history, relevant canon law, marriage as vocation and the changing norms surrounding marriage. The task force also submitted two resolutions, one to amend the current marriage canon and the second to extend its work into the next triennium.

The proposed revision to The Episcopal Church’s marriage canon, Canon 18.1, directs the focus of the canon away from the general purposes of marriage and toward

the vows made in the marriage rite contained within *The Book of Common Prayer*. The proposed text also uses gender-neutral language.

Several additional educational resources are available at episdionc.org/general-convention. Follow all of this summer’s General Convention happenings on the diocesan website and on social media with #GC78.

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

MEET THE DEPUTIES

The deputies to General Convention represent the people of the Diocese who elected them during the 198th Annual Convention in November 2013. Contact them with any questions or concerns.



THE REV. JAMIE L'ENFANT EDWARDS
motherjamie@me.com



MARTHA B. ALEXANDER
(Head of Deputation)
marthaebalexander@hotmail.com



THE REV. SARAH BALL-DAMBERG
sballdamberg@chfnc.net



ALICE FREEMAN
alicefreeman@hughes.net



THE REV. KEVIN MATTHEWS
chaplain@stmaryshouse.org



JOSEPH S. FERRELL
jferrel@email.unc.edu



THE REV. KEVIN BROWN
kevinb@holycomfortercharlotte.org



MARGARET (MEG) McCANN
margaretmccann@att.net

ALTERNATES

The Rev. Deb Blackwood | The Rev. David Umphlett | The Rev. Adam Shoemaker
Josephine Hicks | Athena Hahn | Wade Chestnut | Robert (Bob) Holtzclaw

PLAIN OR WITH THE LITTLE MAN?

Cross or crucifix?

Some years ago, a friend was shopping for a cross for his goddaughter. In an effort to help narrow down the selection, the sales clerk asked, “Do you want a plain one or one with the little man hanging on it?”

That is a true story, and as startling (or chuckle inducing) as the clerk’s question might be, it provides a simple definition for a sometimes complex question. What is the difference between a cross and a crucifix? At the heart of it, a cross is the bare, “plain” symbol, while the crucifix has the image or corpus of Jesus hanging on the cross.

“TAKE UP YOUR CROSS”

Though the sign of the cross appears early, until the reign of Constantine the Great from 306-337 A.D., Christians rarely used depictions of crosses or crucifixes. The reason was stark: Until Constantine made Christianity legal, the Roman government crucified believers. To “take up one’s cross” was not a metaphor for embracing suffering; it was a literal, real and likely possibility in times of persecution, and no one wanted to be reminded of that reality.

But then Constantine outlawed crucifixion, and Christians began to use both cross and crucifix to decorate their churches, houses and burial places. The original crucifixes did not depict the suffering of the Lord in a graphic manner. Jesus was generally represented reigning serenely from the cross, reflecting the theology of the Gospel of John. As years progressed and the world fell apart with the various plagues and invasions that afflicted the failing Roman Empire and its medieval successor states, the crucifixes became more realistic to show Jesus’ solidarity with his suffering people. As the Reformation dawned, there was tendency amongst some reformers (though not Luther) to associate both the cross and crucifix with the Eucharistic

theology of the Roman Catholic Church, and for this reason many of the reformers rejected both. It was not until the 19th and 20th centuries that there was a renewal of interest in the cross and the crucifix as symbols of faith for all Christians.

WHICH ONE IS FOR YOU?

So which one is for you? Like many, I was taught the cross was used by Protestants, who rejoiced in a Risen Savior, while the crucifix was Roman Catholic and fixated on Jesus’ sufferings.

Of course, the actual truth is more complex. Other

non-Roman Catholic denominations use the crucifix. One can find them in High Episcopal parishes, in many Lutheran churches and in various Orthodox communions. In these ecumenical times, one of the most conservative Southern Baptist churches in Henderson, North Carolina, recently erected a magnificent, life-size crucifix on its front lawn. It is not a matter of some Christians rejoicing in the Risen Lord while others fixate on earthly sufferings. It is not even a matter of one versus the other, as the depiction of Jesus on the cross changed over time in response to events and politics of the day.

What matters is this: The Romans crucified tens of

thousands of people before the practice was outlawed, but only one is remembered with both cross and crucifix, and that is because God raised him from the dead.

Which one should you choose? As long as it is worn as a sign of allegiance to the Crucified and Risen Lord Jesus, choose whichever symbol most appeals to you.



The Rev. Donald Lowery is the rector of Holy Innocents, Henderson. Contact him at donalddlowery@hotmail.com.

Neon-Sign Christianity

I AM A NEON-SIGN CHRISTIAN.

Like most of us, I need my direction from God in big, blinking neon letters. My motto is, “I am happy to follow, Lord, just show me what to do.”

So when I found several recent conversations and a discussion forum each following similar questions and themes, I thought perhaps it was God firing up the neon and telling me, “Here’s your sign.”

SIGNS AND SYMBOLS

My first “sign” came when a friend, who is an atheist, asked me why I wear a cross. My first response was to say I wear it so people know I am a Christian.

Easy enough and true, but as I thought about it, I realized I had more to say. I also realized I had questions, too, about outward, visible symbols of faith. What does the necklace I wear really symbolize to the world? Does it – or anything – really show the world how Christians love, and are loved by, Christ? Do lay folk have it harder than clergy and others whose collars and vestments identify them to the world?

My second “sign” came later that week when I had a chance to explore my last question. While in a meeting with a group of clergy, I asked what their collars and vestments meant to them. They indicated their collars were outward and visible signs they are called to be disciples who make disciples; the collars and vestments are the “uniform” or “signifiers” of their call to the ordained ministry.

It was a good answer, but not really a resolution on who has it harder. In a later hallway conversation with office staff, Bishop Curry revealed anecdotal experience that shed an interesting light: When people see his collar, they more often than not approach him with pastoral issues. It’s when they see him reading the Bible (with or without a collar) that they approach him to discuss faith.

So what does that mean? Clergy can actively display

and apply their faith in ways that lay people may not, but do they really have more opportunities to share faith than we all do? Perhaps the answer lies in our comfort level as evangelists. We welcome, but we do not necessarily invite. We show, but we’re slow to share. And aren’t invitation and sharing key elements of evangelism?

I’M NOT ALONE

As I continued to wrestle with this question, I had the chance to ask it of others when I hosted a discussion on the weekly diocesan “A Question of Faith” forum on Facebook. (See page 10.) I asked how we, as Christians, show the world we are followers of Jesus. I was surprised to see a variety of responses, and they all served to reinforce what I had begun to suspect: There are no easy answers to this question. Several people referenced John 13:35 where Christ says “By this everyone will know that you are my disciples, if you love one another.” Many of the responses focused on our actions of love, peace, kindness and prayer, but, as these are also markers for other faith traditions, what truly distinguishes us as Christian?

What distinguishes us has nothing to do with signs and symbols. Being Christian is the bringing of people to God through Christ. It is a Gospel proclaiming the fact I am forgiven by the sacrifice of God’s only son. It is as simple (or as complex) as believing in the resurrection and knowing it is my salvation.

No cross or collar can express all that. And at the end of the day, that’s what I learned. Showing the world we’re Christians isn’t about showing at all – it’s about sharing. It starts by being willing to share and be vulnerable to a world that needs us, even if it is not yet ready to know us.

And God said, “Here’s your sign.”

Canon Marlene Weigert is the canon to the ordinary for administration for the Episcopal Diocese of North Carolina. Contact her at marlene.weigert@episdionc.org.

By the Rev. Dr. Cathy L. Deats

WHAT {to} SAY
{when}
BAD THINGS HAPPEN
{to} GOOD PEOPLE
{starting the difficult conversations}

All of us have faced times when we felt at a loss for words. Many of these encounters might be described as “difficult conversations.” There are difficult conversations in close relationships, such as clearing up a misunderstanding or discussing with whose family you will spend the holidays. These conversations are important to pursue in order to maintain or deepen the relationship. Other difficult conversations involve traditionally “taboo” subjects, such as sex, politics and religion. Still other situations problematic for communication include all types of bad news: a friend is getting a divorce, a friend or family member is facing a struggle, there has been a death in the family, or someone at work has been diagnosed with cancer.

What these three types of difficult conversations have in common is that they are potentially emotionally charged. This is to be expected as we finally talk about the things we traditionally have not been supposed to talk about or the things that make us uncomfortable. Sometimes even if we want to have the conversations we have no idea how to get them started. But there are ways to approach these talks and steps that can be taken to help facilitate the process and get the tough conversations underway.

SET UP SOME GROUND RULES. This is a technique used in many applications of conflict resolution, and it may seem a bit mechanical when used in a personal, one-on-one conversation. However, it is well worth the effort and can, in fact, act to reduce the level of any emotional charge we may bring to conversations about topics such as race or religion. An example: “We may not agree, but I want to gain an understanding of what you have to say/believe, and I want you to understand what I am trying to say/believe.” It is the Western equivalent of agreeing to check one’s guns at the door.

IF YOU HAVE NO WORDS, SAY NO WORDS.

Silence is an acceptable response. It is also fine to admit “There are no words for this,” or “I don’t know what to say.” Listening is a valuable response, whether it is listening to words, tears or the other’s silence.

INVITE THE OTHER PERSON INTO THE CONVERSATION.

The person with whom you’re speaking may be as unsure of how to begin as you are; let them in and give them a chance to be part of the solution: “I am not sure how to start this conversation; do you have a sense of how we can begin?” You can also invite God into the conversation: “Let’s just pray for a moment together in silence and ask God to guide us in this conversation and help us get to a good end.”

IDENTIFY THE “ELEPHANT IN THE ROOM.”

This term is helpful because it reminds us to consider what is unsaid. Often voicing the unsaid reduces the anxiety that arises in a difficult conversation. “I am really nervous about having this conversation, and I think it is important enough to have it despite how anxious I feel.”

WHAT NOT TO SAY:

- “I know how you feel.” (You do not.)
- “You must feel sad/relieved/angry.” (Almost always wrong.)
- “My sister/brother/aunt had colon cancer/breast cancer/a stroke and they are doing fine.” (Irrelevant.)
- “God never gives anyone more than they can handle.” (Even if you believe this, do not say it. Many people have had to deal with more than they can handle.)
- See: **Be sincere.**

WHAT YOU CAN SAY:

- “I will pray for you.”
- “Whatever is going on, I care for you.”
- “I am so sorry to hear that.”

- “How are you doing with that?”
- “How can I help you?”
- “I care for you.”
- “I love you.”

Any statement that expresses empathy and desire to be present in any useful way possible will usually be welcomed.

WHAT IF YOU KNOW SOMETHING YOU SHOULD NOT KNOW?

Bad news travels fast. Suppose you have heard someone has been diagnosed with cancer, but she did not inform you herself. While you may have a deep desire to express your support, the information is the individual’s to share or not. Your desire to help is secondary to the individual’s right to share with you if she chooses. There is also the possibility that what you have heard is not accurate. Respect the person’s right to manage her own privacy, and hold her in prayer.

JUST SAY NO.

Often people in trouble or grief do not have the emotional energy to refuse offers of help, visits or the like. You may wish to offer them the following permission: “You know that social convention is to say ‘come in,’ when someone shows up at your door. I am giving you a ‘Social Get Out of Jail Free Card.’ This means if I show up and you don’t feel like entertaining my visit, you may tell me you do not wish to have company right now.” The interesting part of this tongue-in-cheek offer is that even if the person never says no to anyone who comes to the door, the permission itself can provide a comfort.

IF THE CONVERSATION GOES “BAD,”

you need space; if a difficult conversation deteriorates, you can call for a temporary stop or a break. It is okay to say, “Oh my gosh, just a minute! We made a left turn into a place I did not plan. Can you help me get oriented to what is happening?” If there is hostility, name it. “Whoa! Apparently I just stepped on something I did not mean to step on; I want to understand what you are saying, but when you talk to me with that language, the only thing it does is make me defensive.” People cannot always stop the spiral of hostility. A shouting match is not productive; you can call it quits: “I will not have a shouting match, I will stop now, and I hope we can come back to this.” The message is the conversation is over for now, not forever.

A CONVERSATION MAY REVEAL A PROBLEM REQUIRING PROFESSIONAL HELP.

It is conceivable that these types of conversations reveal problems that require intervention in order for a person to be safe: domestic abuse, alcohol, drug or other substance abuse, or health issues that require immediate care. You can act responsibly by suggesting a referral: “I don’t know much

about this issue, but I do know it requires professional help.” Be straightforward and ready for objection. Repeat your care for the person and his need to be safe and healthy. You can offer to help the person find a resource and continue to be a supportive presence, while doing all you can for the health and safety of the person.

Note: Someone who threatens suicide must be taken seriously. Call 911 or your local mental health emergency services immediately.

BE SINCERE. This is actually the first rule and the last. If you are as honest and sincere as you can be, it is unlikely you will say the “wrong” thing or find whatever you say held permanently against you. Do not offer to do anything you are not willing to do. If you promise to call or visit, take extra pains to be sure you follow through. If you need a moment to respond, say so: “Give me a moment to think this over;”

“What you said is too important for me to respond off the top of my head;” “Hearing about your sister is shocking; I don’t know what to say.”

Reaching out and being sensitive to others in the midst of difficult conversations can be challenging, but it is well worth the effort. If we listen to what people say, how they say it, and always listen attentively for subtext, our conversations will be graced.

The Rev. Dr. Cathy L. Deats is an associate rector at St. Paul’s, Cary, and a NC Licensed Clinical Social Worker (LCSW).

**In developing this article, several folks throughout the Diocese agreed to share their own experiences with tough conversations relating to issues they faced; they shared this in the hope their stories and advice will help others who may be faced with similar situations. We are truly grateful and give thanks to them all.*

When you’re frustrated

As a priest, I was asked to officiate at the funeral of a young man. A conference call to discuss the arrangements was set up between the family and me. I am legally blind, and so I take extra time to be sure I have the proper codes in a format I can manage.

On this particular day, the code was not working, and it took more than ten minutes to be connected to a human person [in customer service] to get assistance with the connection.

When I was finally connected, I apologized for my lateness but was so agitated that I knew I would

not be able to be as attentive as I needed to be to the needs of this family. So I said, “I am so sorry, but I need a minute to calm down from being so irritated with the phone difficulty. Since it will not be good to have this conversation while I am irritated, can we please pray in silence for a minute?”

Of course, the family was most gracious, and we took that minute of silence. It made all the difference in our conversation, and, I would venture to say, in the funeral as well.

-Jim W.

So I said, “I am so sorry, but I need a minute to calm down from being so irritated.... It made all the difference in our conversation.”

Additional resources

If your conversation reaches a place where expert help is needed, or you simply need some guidance on how to help, there are many resources available.

Alcoholics Anonymous (NC) | aanorthcarolina.org

Al-Anon | al-anon.org

Gamblers Anonymous | gamblersanonymous.org

When your friend is going through a divorce

When I was going through my separation and divorce in 2012, I felt so amazingly blessed, even though I was walking through one of the most difficult and disorienting times of my life.

As a Christian, and as a priest, I had taken and kept my marriage vows with such care and seriousness, and to have them come apart left me sad, confused and adrift. So many people reached out to me – in person and online, with cards and letters and phone calls. Because I shared this news on social media, even people I did not know took time to offer me condolences and prayers, and even more importantly, to share their own stories. I found it profoundly comforting to have others, those I knew and those I did not know, confide in me their own marital troubles, past divorces or other intimacies they may not have ventured into unless they knew my circumstance. This reminded me I was not alone, and also how even in the worst of times, we can be a healing presence to one another.

Another crucially important help to me was the matter of sin. I believe that divorce is a sin, and therefore I had to grapple with spiritual complexities as well as the emotional ones during my own

divorce. Some people – though very few – seemed to be uncomfortable with this language, and I know there are so many ways that the word “sin” in the context of divorce has been used to judge and ostracize, especially women. Yet my faithful friends, lay and ordained, understood that for me, acknowledging my brokenness and the brokenness of my vows included acknowledging the wrong I did in the breaking of them, as well as my path back to right relationship with my former husband, my community and God. They walked beside me and prayed with me as I journeyed through not just sin and confession, but also through forgiveness, reconciliation and redemption. I am grateful beyond words to those who upheld me, and continue to uphold me, in Christian community.

Today I am recently remarried, and I carry with me a renewed sense of walking faithfully in God’s love. I continue to be grateful to walk beside so many also on this journey, the Christian journey, of being lost and then found, again and again, by a God, and a church, that never lets us go.

- Cathie C.

I found it profoundly comforting to have others, those I knew and those I did not know, confide in me their own marital troubles, past divorces or other intimacies they may not have ventured into unless they knew my circumstance.

National Domestic Abuse Hotline | thehotline.org
(800) 799-7233

Narcotics Anonymous (NC) | ncregion-na.com

National Alliance on Mental Illness (NC) | naminc.org

Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services
Administration | samhsa.gov

Talk It Out NC | talkitoutnc.org

When you suspect your child is abusing drugs or alcohol

How much a family is affected by substance abuse depends on how long they have lived with it, how advanced it is, how much shame and secrecy surrounds it, and the roles and responsibilities of the person with the disorder. If the problem is left untreated, family members will also develop destructive behaviors, such as denial, enabling and co-dependency.

We've traveled this painful road for more than five years with my daughter. She is now 19 years old. She has been taken from our home via a crisis interventionist at age 16 to a Wilderness Program, lived in a \$400-a-day Residential Treatment Center, and spent time in countless rehabs, psych wards and hospitals.

Starting the conversation is tricky. Some kids will admit if confronted, but most won't. If you think they're using, they probably are; therefore, the sooner intervention takes place, the sooner they can get treatment. A non-confrontational approach may be more successful. Possibly something like this: "While you know that I don't want you using drugs, it's ultimately your decision whether or not you choose to use them." "What kinds of things are important to you? How could using drugs keep you from doing those things or being who you want to be?"

Being afraid, judgmental, angry or punishing will only result in the ending of the conversation. Answers aren't as important as the fact that parents and children are forging trust as a bond. Parents' values do influence their kids.

Usually this is a progression of a series of conversations over time, time to embrace the feelings and emotions you have endured due to specific "addictive" behavior such as: avoiding eye contact, hiding conversations, being vague, sleeping too much or too little, a loss of interest in things they used to love, grades dropping, "situations" occurring, changes in friends, appearance and attitude.

We have learned over time that until a child struggling with substance abuse is ready to change, we as parents are powerless. Addiction is an illness. It is a physical, mental and spiritual disease that affects every area of life, and we are powerless over it. All the money, love, help, work, sacrifice, therapy, treatment or pain won't stop anything until that child wants to make the change to stop.

However, at the end of every day, we keep the faith. We let go and let God.

- Lisa S.

However, at the end of every day, we keep the faith. We let go and let God.

When someone has lost a loved one

My husband died suddenly at the age of 43, leaving me with two young children. Of course, there were people who seemed to know instinctively what to do, and others who said things that were so unhelpful it was hard to believe. One person actually told me it was a blessing my husband did not suffer. All I could think was that I was suffering and my children were suffering, but it was as if she did not even see me or the kids. I wished she had said nothing.

The angel I remember to this day is the one who

called over the following weeks and months and said things like, “I made some beef stew today, and wondered if you would like some?” or “I am free on Saturday if you would like me to come by and stay with the kids for awhile while you run errands, or do what you need to do.”

I think lots of people said to me, “If you need anything, just call,” but frankly, I did not have the energy to call or even to think what I might need.

- Sarah K.

I think lots of people said to me, “If you need anything, just call,” but frankly, I did not have the energy to call or even to think what I might need.

When everyone knows, but no one's talking about it


Our son was in his late teens when he was arrested on a DUI. We came to find out he had been abusing alcohol for more than a year, and we did not know it. We were so embarrassed because not only did we not yet understand the disease of alcoholism, but his arrest made the local papers. Some of our friends avoided us, or at least avoided talking about it, but we knew that they knew. We were just getting our bearings with our son's addiction, and we were hurt by this.

About a month after the DUI had become

public, an older woman from our congregation came up to us and told us that she had something to share with us. Her husband (now deceased) had been an alcoholic, and she had spent many years struggling with dealing with his disease. Then she said, “I found the Al-Anon program to be a big help to me. I know about your son's arrest and am very sorry for your trouble. If you ever want to try a meeting, I will go with you the first time.”

- Michael A.

Some of our friends avoided us, or at least avoided talking about it, but we knew that they knew.



By Christine McTaggart and
the Chartered Committee on Environmental Ministry

CREATION CARE

Saving the world one step at a time

“This is the appointed time for all God’s children to work for the common goal of renewing the earth as a hospitable abode for the flourishing of all life. We are called to speak and act on behalf of God’s good creation.”

- House of Bishops, “Pastoral Teaching on the Environment,” September 2011

Climate change. Global warming. Environmental impact.

These are terms used with increasing urgency with each passing year, as environmental advocates and educators work to raise awareness of how every person’s actions impact the world around them.

As Episcopalians, we are called to creation care in many ways, from the call to stewardship of the earth in Genesis and the Psalms, to the *Book of Common Prayer*, to the designation of environmental stewardship as the Fifth Mark of Mission of the Anglican Consultative Council. Our own diocesan bishops, the Rt. Rev. Michael Curry and the Rt. Rev. Anne E. Hodges-Copple, have repeatedly urged us all to respond to our duties as environmental stewards and to the impending climate crisis.

But sometimes answering that call isn’t easy. The prospect of making a difference against the rising tide of climate change can be daunting, overwhelming to the point where well-meaning people become mired in complicated and confusing data that ultimately keeps them frozen in inaction rather than helping them to take any action that might make a positive difference.

CREATION CARE

The Chartered Committee on Environmental Ministry for the Diocese of North Carolina is changing all of that. The members of the committee have long realized that, while action is needed, the scope of the issues combined with an increasing urgency has created a logjam preventing any forward movement. So they have created a plan to help congregations not only get a handle on what needs to be done, but also utilize new resources, infrastructure, guidelines and defined goals to put their plans into action.

Creation Care is a multiphase, multiyear plan that focuses on three areas: energy, water and food. The first



Scenes from an energy assessment at Church of the Nativity, Raleigh (from left): Participants discuss setting up an HVAC maintenance plan for the church's heating and cooling system. The assessor recommends adding weather stripping to the rector's office.

phase of the project concentrates on energy: specifically, energy efficiency in parish facilities. The use and management of energy resources is a key issue as it has a major and inescapable environmental impact. As every parish uses precious and, at times, costly energy resources in their facilities, it is a natural place to start. Encouraging stewardship of energy resources through sound energy management, including the use of renewable resources wherever feasible, not only allows each of us to answer the spiritual stewardship call but also helps us take advantage of practical benefits as well.

Dr. Bruce Hunn, Ph.D., has been working for the last several years with churches in the Raleigh area, studying their energy usage, conducting efficiency assessments, creating and implementing action plans and assessing the impact of those plans. What he has discovered is that by tightening up systems that are naturally susceptible to fluctuations of seasons, such as electricity and gas, churches can and usually do see a significant cost savings.

“Though the size and activity of the parishes varied widely, we did see churches spending a significant part of their budgets on energy,” says Hunn. “There is significant potential for energy cost savings, potentially in the thousands, after completing an energy assessment and implementing an action plan. Seeing the potential of these tangible benefits certainly doesn’t measure a church’s total environmental impact, but it does reinforce the [Creation Care] program and how it is providing a realistic, doable and vital step in the development of an environmental stewardship program in every parish.”

CONVOCATION ENVIRONMENTAL COORDINATORS

As congregations progress through energy assessments and the action items they produce, each convocation has an environment coordinator standing ready to provide resources and support.

Charlotte

Mike Shinn | shinn813@aol.com

Durham

Graham Swift | grahamswift@aol.com

Greensboro

Tom Droppers | tdrops@triad.rr.com

Raleigh

Carl Sigel | cwsigel@aol.com

Rocky Mount

George Anderson | andersong@edgecombe.edu

Sandhills

David McDuffie | dcmcduffie@gmail.com

Winston-Salem

Stephen McCollum | mccollumsm47@gmail.com

QUICK FACTS

50 percent of all energy consumed in the U.S. is used to heat and cool buildings and heat water.



54
billion
kWh

20
million
tons

Annual energy use by congregations in the U.S. and the total resulting greenhouse gases produced.



5 CFL lamps cost \$5.00, yet can save more than \$150/yr in electrical costs.



= **\$27,000**
in savings

Upgrading lighting systems from halogen to LED bulbs in North Carolina congregations has saved as much as \$171/month in utility bills, adding up to a predicted \$27,000 in savings throughout the life span of the bulbs (an average of 15 years).

Data courtesy of North Carolina Interfaith Power and Light. Learn more at ncipl.org.

GETTING STARTED

For the next 12-18 months, the committee is inviting every diocesan worshipping community to focus on two energy-related goals.

First, complete an energy efficiency analysis and retrofit. This involves four steps:

1. Conduct an analysis of two or three years of monthly utility data (electric and gas bills, along with any other fuel usage as appropriate). From these monthly bills, an annual Energy Use Index (per square foot of floor area) and Energy Cost Index can be calculated. The diocesan environmental ministry committee can assist in conducting these analyses.
2. Conduct an energy assessment of your facility. North Carolina Interfaith Power & Light and Waste Reduction Partners provide assessors to complete the audits free of charge.
3. Based on the recommendations of the energy assessment, develop a plan of changes that need to be made.
4. Implement that plan within the resources and time table established by the parish.

The second of the two goals is to establish an Environmental Stewardship Committee in your congregation (assuming you don't already have one). This step provides a forum for educating the congregation in environmental stewardship issues and for coordinating the implementation of plans relating to the energy, water and food focuses.

"We would like to see parishes move Creation Care from the periphery to a more central place in their worship and individual spiritual lives," says Dr. Carl Sigel, a member of the chartered committee.

"The work of environmental ministry is not a special interest or a peripheral issue but is grounded in who we are as Episcopalians," adds David McDuffie, co-chair of the chartered committee. "Our individual and congregational relationships with the natural environment are connected to the core of our religious faith and practice. We are appealing to the foundations of our faith with this diocesan-wide initiative. It is our hope that it will help foster recognition of the ways we are intimately connected to our natural environments and awareness of the loving grace that binds all of life together in relationship with God."

YOU ARE NOT ALONE

If talk of assessments, analyses and energy use indexes seems daunting, take heart. What sets this initiative



Scenes from energy assessments at Fairmont United Methodist Church and St. Thomas More (from left): Inspecting vents for possible energy loss. Installing energy-saving LED light bulbs. Kitchens appliances, like refrigerators and ovens, can be sources of energy inefficiency.

apart from those of the past is an infrastructure and resource bank on which churches can lean and draw.

Each diocesan convocation has an assigned Environmental Coordinator, a person on whom a parish can call to ask questions, seek guidance, brainstorm ideas and request additional information. They stand ready to assist in helping to set up assessments, develop stewardship committees and programs, and generally serve as a connection point to help navigate and keep manageable the sometimes-overwhelming issues related to climate change.

Diocesan House is also supporting the program. Information, resources and updates can be found on the diocesan website, and the staff stands ready to share the stories, tales and experiences of churches who participate in Creation Care.

Finally, environmental stewardship awards will be presented to each congregation as it completes each of the four steps in its energy analysis and retrofit as well as the establishment of an environmental stewardship committee.

LET'S SAVE THE WORLD

The two goals outlined for 2015-2016 are only the start. As we, as a diocese, work through them, the Chartered Committee on Environmental Ministry will share the steps and goals relating to food and water in the years that follow.

“We think this initiative will be spiritually and financially rewarding for all congregations involved,” says McDuffie. “Paying close attention to the ways we relate to the natural environments in which we live will not only help us save money, but it will also help to promote a deeper awareness of our roles as members of God’s ongoing Creation.”

CHAMPIONS NEEDED!

One great way to keep your Creation Care program on track and moving forward is to designate an Environmental Champion for your congregation. Your champion will serve as the point person to spearhead your church’s initiative. Champions do not have to be clergy or vestry – it’s a great opportunity to get new volunteers involved!

If you’d like to know more about what it entails, please contact your convocation coordinator. Contact your convocation coordinator, too, once your champion has stepped forward so they can stay in touch.

You can also learn more about creation care at the following websites:

Chartered Committee on Environmental Ministry | episdionc.org

Includes information on the Creation Care Program as well as the Green Grant Program, a diocesan grant awarded to churches within the diocese looking to make facility improvements to reduce the consumption of energy or other natural resources required to operate church facilities.

NC Interfaith Power & Light | ncipl.org

Information and checklists and other resources for energy audits and myriad other topics relating to climate change and environmental justice.

Waste Reduction Partners | wastereductionpartners.org

GreenFaith | greenfaith.org

THE KIDS ARE ALRIGHT

Youth rally behind Episcopal Farmworker Ministry

Noah Showalter likes to come here on Saturdays.

On this grey, rainy day, the fourteen year old is busy: stabilizing pallets full of food as the truck's hydraulic lift lowers them to the ground, hefting boxes off of the concrete floor and onto tables, unpacking their contents. Periodically, Noah stops to chat with the rest of the crew. Normally, when it's not raining, he breaks for pick-up soccer games with the people who have arrived both to volunteer and to pick up the food that will allow their families to get through the coming week.

Noah's father, Jon, is with him today, but his mother, Becky, and his little sister, Kylie, also volunteer regularly. It's a family affair, really, this regular commitment to serve.

The family's dedication to this ministry started in 2005, long before Noah was strong enough to move heavy boxes, when his parents agreed to drive the Inter-Faith Food Shuttle from its warehouse in Raleigh down Interstate 40 to the Episcopal Farmworker Ministry in Newton Grove on behalf of their parish, Church of the Nativity, Raleigh. The whole family doesn't make the journey together anymore, but Noah still accompanies his parents whenever he can.

"Helping out doesn't have to be boring; it can be really

fun, too," Noah said. "It's really cool to see these people you start knowing if you do this every single month."

As the Harvest for Hospitality campaign to support the Episcopal Farmworker Ministry (EFwM) winds down with 50 in 50 (see sidebar), it's time to take a moment to recognize some of the campaign's most dedicated supporters: the youth of the Diocese of North Carolina. Whether visiting the camps with their youth group, engaging in parish fundraising activities or letting their inspiration guide them to support the ministry in other ways, the diocese's young people have participated fully in Harvest for Hospitality.

A LESSON IN DETERMINATION

When it came time for Justin Padmos to choose his Eagle Scout project, a visit to the Episcopal Farmworker Ministry made his choice easy. While dropping off a collection of clothing, he realized the ministry's outdoor worship area, which on Sundays serves as the sanctuary for one of the largest Episcopal congregations in the state, was devoid of seating. At the time, Justin didn't know Harvest for Hospitality had increased the Diocese's focus on the ministry — he just saw a way he



From top: Noah Showalter and his father, Jon, load boxes of food onto the Inter-Faith Food Shuttle.



From left: Justin and the Rev. Tony Rojas embrace after the bench installation. Justin unloads his handcrafted benches.





Kennon Later and the Rev. Tony Rojas pose with the 5,000 tubes of toothpaste and 5,000 toothbrushes Kennon collected.



could make farmworkers' lives easier.

Justin found a few bench designs online and picked the one that seemed easiest to build, but it turned out to be a bit more complicated than he thought.

"[It] actually was quite challenging given the level of woodworking skills and tools required," he said.

Unexpected challenges became the theme of Justin's project as a serious knee injury sidelined the lacrosse player before he could cut a single board. Reconstructive surgery led to six months of additional hospitalizations and intravenous antibiotics after he developed a post-operative infection.

When he was finally able to return to his Eagle Scout project, Justin found willing helpers. His youth group at Holy Comforter, Burlington, hosted a bake sale to raise funds, other parishioners chipped in to sponsor benches, his local Lowe's gave him a generous discount on supplies, and friends helped him cut frames and assemble benches.

Justin's hard work culminated with the delivery of 12 handcrafted benches on August 9, the day after his 17th birthday. The Rev. Tony "Father Tony" Rojas, EFwM's sacramental minister, was so thankful for the benches that he was brought nearly to tears.

"I am truly humbled by this experience and am proud to have made a small difference in the lives of the people who work so hard to help pick our crops," Justin said.

FIVE THOUSAND TUBES OF TOOTHPASTE

If you've wondered what 5,000 tubes of toothpaste looks like, Kennon Later can tell you.

Kennon, a student at Saint Mary's School in Raleigh, and a member of Emmanuel, Southern Pines, was inspired to do more after a summer mission trip to the Episcopal Farmworker Ministry with her youth group. Like many groups visiting the ministry, Emmanuel's youth sorted boxes of clothing and toiletries into care packages for the farmworkers. It was distributing the bags in a camp, however, that started Kennon on her mission.

"I was inspired by seeing where the farmworkers live and seeing the terrible conditions," Kennon said. "They still had such a positive attitude. I thought they deserve a lot more than they're given."

After returning home, Kennon wrote a letter, printed on church letterhead, to the Colgate Company requesting 5,000 tubes of toothpaste and 5,000 toothbrushes. What happened next is pretty unusual: Kennon got what she requested.

"I spoke with a former employee of the UNC Dental School [after learning of Kennon's donation], and she informed me that it is quite difficult to obtain product donations from manufacturers like Colgate," Patti Trainor, development coordinator at EFwM, explained.

When asked why she thought her letter was so well-received, Kennon zeroes in on the heart of what makes all of these youth successful in their respective ministries.

"My letter was really heartfelt and truthful. I told it like it was and spoke from my heart. I think that came through."

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

50 in 50

One dollar per household per day will change lives.

The Dioceses of North Carolina and East Carolina invite households to donate \$50 - one for each day of the Easter season - to 50 in 50, the final push in the 18-month-long Harvest for Hospitality campaign. If your household would like to participate, mite boxes are available through all church offices.

FAITHFUL ROOTS

Habitat for Humanity has a long-standing relationship with people of faith

Habitat for Humanity is an organization rooted in faith, founded on Christian principles and a concept centered on those in need of adequate shelter working side by side with volunteers to build simple, decent houses. Called “partnership housing,” it is the cornerstone of Habitat’s working model, and in the 40-plus years since the first home was built, more than 1 million houses have been built or repaired, helping to shelter more than 5 million people worldwide.

CHURCHES GIVING SHELTER

From the beginning, churches have been strong supporters of Habitat’s mission. They support Habitat in a number of ways, from volunteering to financial support to offering prayer. Some churches work with Habitat projects as a way of bringing congregations together, while others see it as way to reach out to their community. Still others get involved as a way to break down barriers through one of Habitat’s many interfaith projects.

It’s almost impossible to pinpoint at any given time how many churches and faith-based organizations are

involved with Habitat for Humanity. Each Habitat affiliate operates independently, responsible for its own budgets and projects. In North Carolina alone, there are more than 80. Collectively, those 80 affiliates build or repair more than 400 homes each year, making North Carolina the third most productive state in the United States.

HOW IT WORKS

Founded in Americus, Georgia, in 1976, it was decided at the start that Habitat for Humanity’s financial foundation would rest on “The Fund for Humanity.” The fund’s money would come from dollars earned by fundraising, no-interest loans from supporters and payments made on those loans by new homeowners. Houses would be built at no profit, and as one house was completed, its place in the financial structure would support the start of another. As additional funds were raised and more support was gathered, more builds were supported.

Habitat homes are simple, decent and affordable. They are large enough for the homeowner family’s needs, but small enough to keep construction and maintenance costs



Photos courtesy of Habitat for Humanity of Durham

to a minimum. They're built of quality, locally-available materials and reflect local climates and cultures. When possible and as needed, Habitat houses incorporate basic accessible design features, such as zero-step entrances and wide passage doors and hallways. Houses built in partnership with families with disabilities include additional accessibility features. At least half of the North Carolina Habitat affiliates build System Vision, making them energy-efficient certified homes.

Habitat homeowners are selected through an application process, whereby prospective owners apply to their local Habitat affiliate and are evaluated by a selection committee based on three criteria: the family's level of need; the family's willingness to become partners in the program; and the family's ability to repay the loan. Though Habitat is a faith-based organization, it maintains a nondiscriminatory selection process, and all are welcome to apply.

Once a family is selected, work does not begin immediately on their new home. Homeowners must first

put in hundreds of hours of "sweat equity" on other houses before work begins on their own home.

THE THEOLOGY OF THE HAMMER

At the end of the day, Habitat is "a partnership founded on common ground, bridging theological difference by putting them into action." Habitat's late founder, Millard Fuller, called the concept "the theology of the hammer." As he said, "The Bible teaches that God is the God of the whole crowd, God's love leaves nobody out, and my love should not either. This understanding drives 'the theology of the hammer' around the world, steadily building more and more houses in more and more countries."

With more than 16 percent of its residents living below the poverty level, North Carolinians – and the churches within the Diocese of North Carolina – will continue to answer Habitat's call, reaching out and building bridges by contributing labor, materials, money, love and prayer.

To find your local affiliate and to learn how to get involved, visit habitat.org.

HOSPITALITY HOUSE: DONATE TODAY!

Founded on Christian ideals in 1985, Durham Habitat partners with those who share our values of love, respect, compassion and justice for all. We welcome those of any faith – or no faith – to join us building homes, hope and community in Durham!

- Faith statement, Habitat for Humanity of Durham

In the Winter 2015 *Disciple*, we introduced you to a very special project undertaken in honor of the late Rt. Rev. Robert Johnson, the beloved 10th bishop of the Episcopal Diocese of North Carolina.

"Hospitality House" is a Habitat residential build in partnership with Habitat for Humanity of Durham and sponsored by those who share Johnson's vision for a hospitable diocese, one where everyone is truly welcome and, in his words, "not just tolerated but recruited and embraced."

The build will feature traditional Habitat elements, including the house, the volunteer teamwork to build it, and the homeowner commitment to participate in the building of the house and the paying of the mortgage. But what will set it apart from traditional builds is a conscious and deliberate effort to answer Johnson's call to "recruit and embrace" by increasing efforts to deepen the pool of homeowner applicants, hopefully including those who might not have been involved with Habitat before. The intentional effort will also seek to include and embrace new and returning volunteers.

In the coming months, plans for volunteers, build teams and more will be announced. But first, funds must be raised to lay the foundation of this project.

The goal of the Hospitality House sponsorship committee is to raise \$50,000 toward the cost of the project. We are just over the halfway mark to that goal. Fundraising continues, and the hope is to break ground on this legacy home by August 2015.

To donate to the building of Hospitality House:

- **By credit card.** Visit events.durhamhabitat.org/hospitalityhouse.
- **By check.** Please make checks payable to Habitat for Humanity of Durham and include "Hospitality House" on the memo line. Mail to: Habitat for Humanity of Durham, 215 N. Church Street, Durham, NC 27701.



FEEDING BODY AND SOUL

Efforts toward one lead to the nourishment of the other

There are countless quotes from every age and time about the impact a small thing or action can have:

“Never doubt that a small group of thoughtful, committed citizens can change the world; indeed, it’s the only thing that ever has.”

– Margaret Mead

“Great things are done by a series of small things brought together.”

– Vincent Van Gogh

“No act of kindness, however small, is ever wasted.” – Aesop

Whether discussing faith, kindness, politics or change, they all agree very little starts on a grand scale, but rather with single, small steps that eventually add up to a collective significance.

“Starting small” seems a natural solution when it comes to outreach and ministry, yet many don’t take these first steps. They are stopped in their tracks even before they begin; some are daunted by a lack of resources, whether it be people or money, while others are overwhelmed by the enormity of the problem they are trying to address.

But two churches in the Diocese of North Carolina have proven that neither size nor depth of resources are a hindrance when it comes to responding to need or making a difference. Indeed, in both cases, attempts to address an issue of food insecurity started with small steps that even today continue to add up and grow.

BLESSED BE THE CHILD

At Church of the Ascension, Advance, it began with a child.

Sidnee Everhart was a student at Cornazter Elementary School when she and her mother, Cori, noticed some children had a need for food on weekends. They’d heard of others addressing this need through a local program whereby children received backpacks of food to take home over the weekend, and the Everharts approached the Rev. Kermit Bailey, deacon at Ascension, to ask whether the church could take part in this program, too. Bailey agreed, and, though their numbers don’t total even one hundred, parishioners began to bring in food and other necessities for the packs. Backpacks were filled again and again as closets and pantries were commandeered to handle the overflow.

The donations grew. Bailey established partnerships with other local clergy and, eventually, the Second Harvest Food Bank in Winston-Salem. What started as a child’s request to help classmates quickly grew to become Our Daily Bread, a cornerstone food source for hundreds of people in Davie County.

OUR DAILY BREAD

Located on the first floor of Ascension’s parish house, Our Daily Bread’s six refrigeration units and multiple shelves are stocked with food purchased from Second Harvest. Those in need of its bounty often turn up hours before the pantry opens and are greeted by hospitality ministers, one of the dozen or so volunteers from Ascension and neighboring churches who keep the pantry going. Coffee and meals are served, but, more importantly, it is here the opportunity to build relationships finds purchase.

“Our Daily Bread is not just outreach; it’s our mission,” says the Rev. Chantal McKinney, vicar of Ascension. “We don’t want just to give and have those in need receive. Our desire is to be in relationship with them. And it *is* a relationship; they bless us as much as we try to bless them.”

Along with an open welcome, the mission also places a strong focus and emphasis on dignity. With a mix of cultural backgrounds amongst visitors, all signage is bilingual to increase comfort and ease of communication. Food is not simply given to visitors; instead each is given a box and sent to shop the pantry and make selections based on individual need and preference. Because of the relationships that have developed over the years, the food stocked in the pantry is based on what’s most likely to be needed; that coupled with the shopping approach means a great deal less is wasted.

And the assistance does not stop there. If the resources of the pantry aren’t enough, Our Daily Bread volunteers also assist shoppers get set up with food stamp support. Though its services are targeted to residents of Davie County, Our Daily Bread’s policy is to turn away no one in need. And before they go, each and every person who visits is invited to return and worship with the parishioners of Ascension.

“Everything we do is for God’s glory,” says McKinney. “The building of relationships, the opportunity for service and mission – truly every aspect of what we do and how we do it.”

Today, the mission continues to grow. It now assists

between 500 and 600 people every month, while never forgetting its roots: program volunteers still pack more than 180 backpacks each week. And the girl who started it all? Sidnee Everhart is still there; she's now dedicating her Gold Scout Project to expanding the pantry.

MARKET DAY

On the other side of the diocese, on the corner of Reid and East Nash Streets, the congregations of St. Mark's and Iglesia de la Guadalupeana, Wilson, can also be found feeding the local flocks. On the first Tuesday of every month, rain or shine, church volunteers arrive on site at 5 a.m. to meet those gathering to await the arrival of the food truck from the Food Bank of Central and Eastern North Carolina. Those in line are greeted by the volunteers and offered hospitality. Prayers are often heard in both English and Spanish.

When the truck arrives at 9 a.m., the volunteers unload its treasures onto temporary tables, creating an open-air market for the day. Soon after, a mix of folk reflective of the surrounding neighborhood begins selecting the goods that will see them and their families through the coming days. Between 120 and 150 families are served each month.

ANSWERING THE DOOR

The roots of St. Mark's food program grew out of a repeated knock at the door. "Folks would show up looking for assistance," remembers the Rev. Phil Byrum, vicar of both St. Mark's and la Guadalupeana. "So we started looking at ways we could help with that need. We didn't have a lot of resources, so someone suggested calling the Food Bank, and a partnership was born."

More than a decade later, it continues to grow and enrich those involved. Though only about a dozen volunteers from the church keep the program going, "a community has really sprung out of it, both in and outside of the church," says Byrum. "You see how many bridges get built – folks who don't speak the same language come together and find a way to communicate and help each other out."

With their raised awareness, neighbors cross those bridges as well, often bringing food unsolicited to add to whatever might be in the kitchen to help those who may need a hand between food truck visits.

"It's touching to see it happen," says Byrum. "Folks who struggle are giving to others. They find they are needed, and they give of themselves."

The kindness is spreading. Following St. Mark's example, new food assistance sites have been started by other area churches, including a nearby permanent facility.

"The little things add up," says Byrum. "Small kindnesses, mindfulness of dignity, remembering what folks



Scenes of shoppers, volunteers and stocked shelves at Our Daily Bread, the growing food pantry run by Church of the Ascension, Advance.

might be going through – when you reach out, you never know what direction things will take."

START SMALL

These two churches are indisputable examples of the power that lies within small, be it in terms of size, resources, abilities or dreams. In the cases of both Ascension and St. Mark's, parishioners number less than one hundred, and only about a dozen of those folk form the core group of volunteers. Yet because of those few, hundreds are helped every month.

"Don't try and reinvent the wheel," advises Byrum. "Look around at resources that may already be available, utilize what they have to offer and adapt them as you need to."

"[Just] start with a genuine desire to serve others and be in Christ with them," adds McKinney. "Open your heart to the relationship. If the right intentions are there, it will blossom."

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



The Episcopal Diocese *of* North Carolina
200 West Morgan Street, Suite 300
Raleigh, NC 27601-1338
919.834.7474 | 800.448.8775

NONPROFIT ORG.
US POSTAGE
PAID
RALEIGH, NC
PERMIT NO. 992

Until we read again...

Go Speak. The next iteration of Go Speak: Sharing Our Faith takes place on May 21. See page 8.

Build a dream. Donate to help make Hospitality House, honoring the Rt. Rev. Robert Johnson, a reality.

Join the conversation. “A Question of Faith” takes place each Wednesday. Like the diocesan Facebook page and be a part of the discussion.

Appoint your champion. Get your Creation Care program on track and moving. See page 22.