

The North Carolina DISCIPLE

THE EPISCOPAL DIOCESE OF NORTH CAROLINA

ONE DAY IN BIBLE STUDY...
THE LEADER INTRODUCED A TOPIC
THAT LEFT US SPEECHLESS...



In this issue:

Evangelism

The Lost Generation

Pentecost





 **The North Carolina**
DISCIPLE

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COVER ILLUSTRATION
The first part of "Evangelism," a comic by the Rev. Canon Earnest Graham. The story continues on page 16.

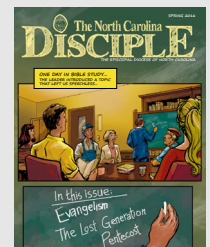
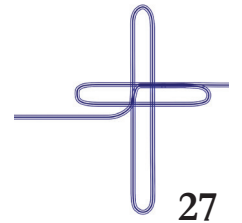


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ABOUT The North Carolina DISCIPLE

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

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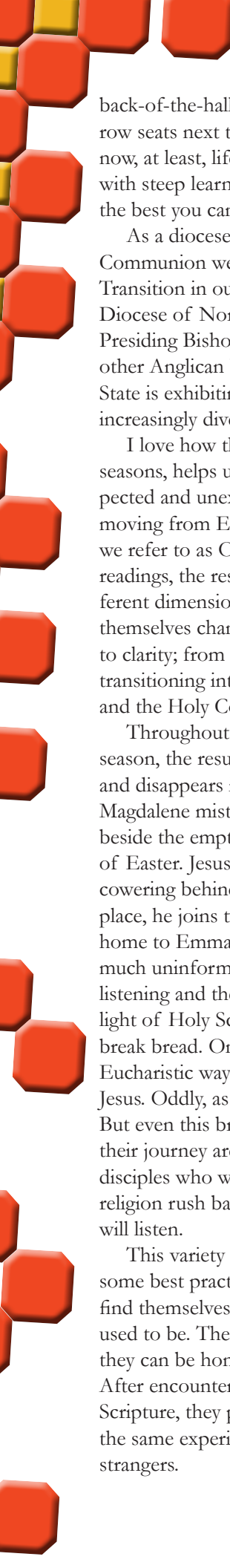
By the Rt. Rev. Anne E. Hodges-Copple

TRANSITION AND TRANSFORMATION

“I have said these things to you while I am still with you. But the Advocate, the Holy Spirit, whom the Father will send in my name, will teach you everything, and remind you of all that I have said to you. Peace I leave with you; my peace I give to you. I do not give to you as the world gives. Do not let your hearts be troubled, and do not let them be afraid. You heard me say to you, ‘I am going away, and I am coming to you.’ If you loved me, you would rejoice that I am going to the Father, because the Father is greater than I. And now I have told you this before it occurs, so that when it does occur, you may believe.”

- John 14:24-29

I suppose if you are alive and growing, you are in some kind of transition. Still, there are periods during which transition seems especially noticeable. For example, for the last three years, I’ve been in a particularly intense time of transition: from rector to bishop suffragan to bishop diocesan pro tempore; from full house to empty nest; from a short daily commute to tens of thousands of miles of travel each year; from mother of the graduate to mother of the groom; from



back-of-the-hall seating at Diocesan Convention to first-row seats next to Pope Francis at St. Peter's Square. Right now, at least, life feels like an exhilarating roller coaster ride with steep learning curves and wild descents, where about the best you can do is just hold on and enjoy.

As a diocese and as part of the worldwide Anglican Communion we are in an intense time of transition. Transition in our journey to call a new bishop for the Diocese of North Carolina. Transition as our new Presiding Bishop finds his place and voice among the other Anglican Primates. Even our beloved Old North State is exhibiting growing pains as we find ourselves an increasingly diverse collection of communities.

I love how the Church calendar, with its changing seasons, helps us understand and participate in the expected and unexpected transitions of life. We are currently moving from Easter to Pentecost and, soon, back to what we refer to as Ordinary Time. As we follow our lectionary readings, the resurrected body of Jesus ascends into a different dimension of time and space, and the disciples find themselves changed: from fear to courage; from confusion to clarity; from timid bystanders to bold witnesses. We are transitioning into the season of the Spirit, the Advocate and the Holy Comforter.

Throughout the lectionary readings for the Easter season, the resurrected Jesus comes and goes, appears and disappears in mysterious and surprising ways. Mary Magdalene mistakes him for a gardener as she stands beside the empty tomb in the faint light before the dawn of Easter. Jesus appears and gives peace to his friends cowering behind locked doors. At a different time and place, he joins two very discouraged disciples walking home to Emmaus. To them, he is a mere stranger and a much uninformed one at that. So he starts first with deep listening and then reflects upon their experiences in the light of Holy Scripture. Then he accepts their invitation to break bread. Only after they are eating together in a very Eucharistic way are their eyes opened and they recognize Jesus. Oddly, as soon as they recognize him, he vanishes. But even this brief encounter is enough. Their lives and their journey are completely turned around. The two disciples who were just hours before walking away from religion rush back to share their faith with anyone who will listen.

This variety of post-resurrection appearances gives us some best practices for evangelism. The disciples initially find themselves in a time of mourning for the way things used to be. They step away to some quiet place where they can be honest with grief, with confusion, with fear. After encountering the real presence of Jesus, they search Scripture, they pray, they break bread and go forth to share the same experience with friends, neighbors and perfect strangers.

We are still answering the call of Bishop Curry's words: go deep, go speak, go do. Disciples then and now must go more deeply in Scripture and tradition, our deepest reservoirs of spiritual practices. This is especially important in times of confusion and discouragement. That is when we are most likely to encounter Jesus: at our most vulnerable places. Disciples then and now must be willing to go speak and share their own personal stories of finding faith, hope and love in Jesus Christ. Disciples then and now must go out into the world and meet our neighbors where they are: at Habitat sites; in prisons; around circles of care for those casting off the yoke of poverty; among those who are the newcomers to our communities.

When we go deep, go speak and go do, our eyes are opened to new possibilities. Our hearts are on fire with the conviction and courage to be in communion with God and with our neighbors. Our fears melt away. Our sorrow turns to joy. Our despair is replaced with hope. Our fatigue is replaced with passion.

These are not just times of transition. These are occasions of transformation. We are not just growing and evolving. In Jesus Christ, we are a new creation. Still, there is a paradox of "now" and "not yet." We still share a yearning with the rest of creation for a fulfillment that is yet to come. We have a taste of the Kingdom of God. We've been set free from sin and the fear of death, but we still have yearning. God is not done with us yet.

St. Paul knew what it was like both to accept the good news that we have been welcomed into life in Christ and to know we must press on. "Beloved, I do not consider that I have made it my own; but this one thing I do: forgetting what lies behind and straining forward to what lies ahead, I press on towards the goal for the prize of the heavenly call of God in Christ Jesus." (Philippians 3:13)

All across our diocese I see signs of healthy transition and transformation. I see us all pressing on with eager anticipation for what lies ahead. I am impressed how our various worship communities are eager to analyze the changing demography of our state and accept the challenges of mission and ministry in the 21st century. More and more disciples are taking it to the streets: in our A Movable Feast trailer; in history days exploring the good, the bad and the hopeful in our past; in study groups taking a deep look at the sin of racism. More and more of our churches are equipping themselves for the work of evangelism through Invite.Welcome.Connect and Go Speak: Sharing our Faith.

It's true we're in a time of transition. But we're also on a path to transformation.

The Rt. Rev. Anne E. Hodges-Copple is the Bishop Diocesan Pro Tempore of the Diocese of North Carolina. Contact her at bishopanne@episdionc.org.

AROUND THE DIOCESE

This edition of “Around the Diocese” serves as a reminder that evangelism encompasses everything from moments of one-on-one connection to public processions - and that our worship lives should never be lacking in joy.

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

Photo by the Rev. Canon Earnest Graham



Forty-five members of St. Christopher's, High Point, and Puerta Abierta, Redeemer, St. Francis, All Saints, St. Andrew's and Holy Trinity, Greensboro, walked the stations of the cross through downtown Greensboro on Good Friday.

Photo by Summerlee Walter



The Rev. Hershey Mallette Stephens, the Rev. Larry Brown Conrad, Jr., the Rev. James C. Todd and the Rev. Timothy Reeves McLeod were ordained to the diaconate by the Rt. Rev. Anne E. Hodges-Copple on February 20 at The Canterbury School in Greensboro.

Photo courtesy of St. Mary's, High Point



The lighting of the Paschal fire on Holy Saturday with the Rev. Larry Conrad, Jr., the Rev. David Umphlett and Eric Grubb.

Photo by Ellen Weig



Lucy Penegar leads a tour of the Historic Loray Mill in Gastonia as part of History Day 2016, "Hearts, Homes & The Holy Spirit: Mission and Ministry in North Carolina Mill Villages, 1890-1940."



Photos courtesy of Holy Comforter, Burlington

Holy Comforter, Burlington, and A Movable Feast teamed up to celebrate St. Patrick's Day during the city's annual downtown celebration. Volunteers served free food out of the A Movable Feast trailer, and the Rev. Timothy McLeod paraded next to the youth group's Saint Patrick float.



Photo by Jack Watson

The Rev. Bob Kaynor shows a candidate for baptism the stained glass windows in St. Stephen's, Durham.

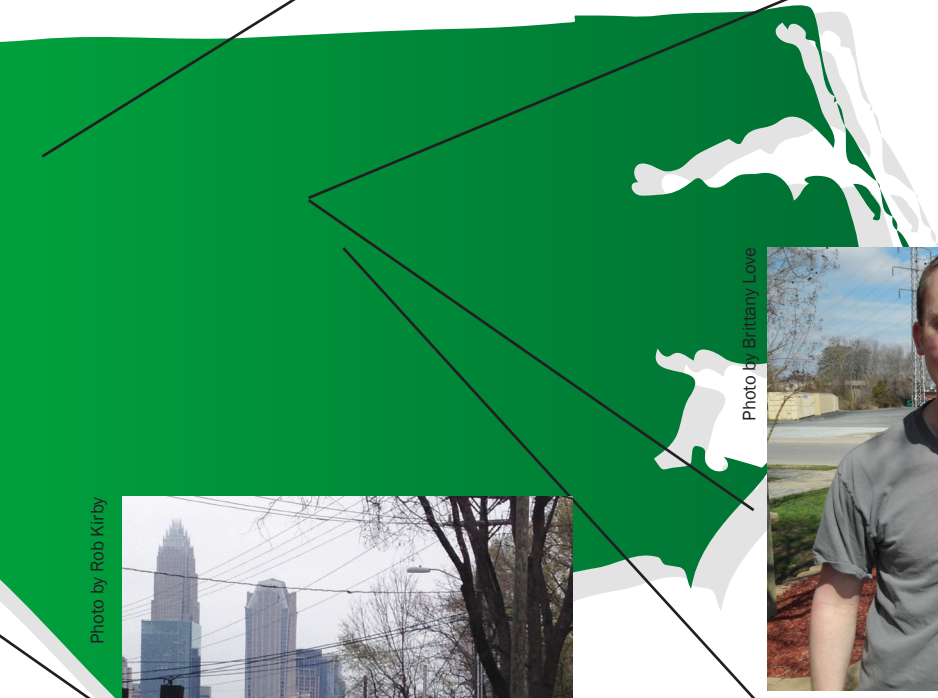


Photo by Brittany Love



A Movable Feast is bringing people together! On March 5 (THE big game day), students from Duke and UNC-Chapel Hill volunteered with the Inter-Faith Food Shuttle at El Buen Pastor, Durham.

Photo by Rob Kirby



In the shadow of Uptown, parishioners from St. Martin's, Charlotte, process through the streets on Palm Sunday.

The Rev. Jemonde Taylor, rector of St. Ambrose, Raleigh, explains what's about to happen to a candidate for baptism on Easter Sunday.



Photo by Carl Harper

NEW, NOTABLE & NEWSWORTHY

GO SPEAK: SHARING OUR FAITH TAKES PLACE MAY 19

The Rev. Canon Earnest Graham created a beautiful testament to evangelism for this issue of the *Disciple* (page 16). If you're feeling inspired to start building your comfort level with evangelism, a great way to do it is Go Speak: Sharing our Faith.

On May 19, small groups of 8-10 Episcopalians will gather in homes and other informal settings across the Diocese. Under the direction of a trained moderator, participants will share personal stories of how God has moved in their lives.

Many churches have established a Go Speak coordinator and have shared with their congregations the special plans for this day. If not, it's not too late! If you need help getting your Go Speak program underway, simply contact the communications team at communications@episdionc.org. You can also find great resources and everything you'll need to host this event anytime at episdionc.org – look for “Go Speak” in the Quick Links box on the homepage.



The diocesan team is also working with other dioceses to invite churches across the country to take part on May 19 in the hope that this will become a truly nationwide sharing of faith and connection point for us all, both as Episcopalians and as followers of Jesus.

Go Speak: Sharing our Faith is a great entry point to the practice of evangelism and a powerful experience that brings us all closer together in our faith. We hope you plan to be a part of it.

BISHOP SEARCH UPDATE

Thanks to everyone who took the time to complete a survey or attend a cottage meeting and added their voice to the search for the XII Bishop Diocesan. The response exceeded the Nominating Committee's hopes, and they were impressed with the depth of thought shared, as well as with the obvious health, hope and diocesan unity that came through in the comments.

With so much information gathered, the Nominating Committee is now hard at work compiling the diocesan

profile to introduce the Diocese of North Carolina to potential candidates. The profile is expected to be made public in late May.

Also this spring, look for announcements regarding the formation of the Transition Committee.

You can see exactly where we are in the bishop search process at any time by visiting the website dedicated to the search: bishopsearch.dionc.org. The site is also available in Spanish: busquedaobispo.dionc.org.

JUST ONE THING

High school graduations are upon us again, and as you prepare to celebrate the graduating seniors of your congregations, do Just One Thing and refer them to the chaplain or congregation at the university, community college or military base they will attend in the fall.

The Just One Thing initiative was created by a task-force of the Committee on Higher Education, which recognized a need to connect young adults to the Episcopal Church on campus or wherever their journeys take them. Due to federal student record privacy laws, most college and university campuses will not provide

names or contact information to campus ministries, even if incoming students express a specific interest in the campus ministry.

Look for the online form under “Quick Links” at episdionc.org. It takes less than one minute to complete and will generate a notification to the chaplain at your student's campus, or to the young adult missionary if there is no Episcopal chaplain, for a referral.



CONNECTION CHECK

With all that's going on in and around the Diocese of North Carolina, it's more important than ever to be connected and take advantage of all the resources available both to serve you and to connect us as a diocese.

FOR EVERYONE

- **The North Carolina Disciple:** We hope you're enjoying what our quarterly magazine has to offer! If you're not reading your own copy, or if you'd like to see a friend subscribed, simply visit episditionc.org and click the "Subscribe to the *Disciple*" link in the Featured Media box at the bottom of the homepage.
- **"Please Note":** One of the best ways to stay up-to-date on timely information, "Please Note" is our weekly e-newsletter sharing interesting stories, news, opportunities and more. To have it delivered to your inbox each Wednesday, visit episditionc.org and click the "Subscribe to Please Note" link in the Featured Media box.
- **Facebook:** Daily *Gospel-Based Discipleship* postings, breaking news, conversations, stories from our churches and more await you on Facebook at Episcopal Diocese NC.
- **Twitter:** When you've got only a moment, you'll find all the news and nuggets you need in 140 characters or less on our Twitter feed. Follow us @EpiscopalNC.
- **Instagram:** A picture is worth a thousand words, and you'll find millions' worth at @episditionc on the Instagram app.

FOR PARISH ADMINISTRATORS

List Serv: The diocese offers an email list serv dedicated to parish administrators. On it, Canon Marlene Weigert and others shares pertinent and timely updates, while

parish peers can also contact each other with questions, suggestions and a level of understanding that comes only from others who share similar responsibilities. If you are not already a part of this list serv and would like to be added, please email Elizabeth Martini at elizabeth.martini@episditionc.org.

FOR PARISH COMMUNICATORS

List Serv: As for parish administrators, the diocese also offers communicators a dedicated list serv. With real-time information and monthly updates, communicators have access to news, resources and the comradery of others who share the task of taking the Church's messages to the masses. If you are not already part of the communicators' list serv and would like to be, contact the communications department at communications@episditionc.org.

FOR CLERGY

Clergy Check Box ("Please Note"): If you connect with only one thing, make sure it's "Please Note." One of the features of the newsletter is the Clergy Check Box, which shares the highlights and critical information every member of the clergy needs to know. If you are not already subscribed to "Please Note," take a moment to do so at episditionc.org; just click the "Subscribe to Please Note" link in the Featured Media box.

STAY IN TOUCH 

Keep up with our diocese through social media!

www.facebook.com/EpiscopalDioceseNC

www.twitter.com/EpiscopalNC

www.instagram.com/episditionc

www.vimeo.com/episcopalnc



SUMMER SUPPLY CLERGY

Summer is coming, and if you're among those happily planning a vacation or getaway, don't forget to make arrangements for supply clergy.

The Diocese of North Carolina offers easy access to available supply clergy with its online supply clergy page.

On it, you'll find a request form you can submit to all available supply clergy at once.

Visit episditionc.org and look for the link under the "Resources" tab.

LIFT EVERY VOICE: 2016 UPDATE

This July, 94 youth and young adults from Botswana, South Africa and the United States will gather in South Africa for Lift Every Voice: 2016. The focus of the conference will be on South Africa's Truth and Reconciliation process, strengthening "listening skills" when hearing others' stories and discerning how to respond to these stories as disciples of change.

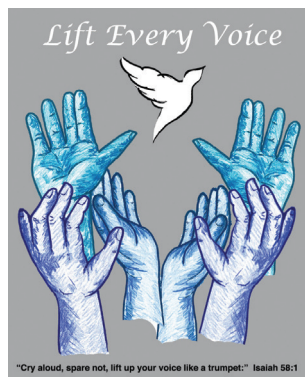
During the week-long conference, several significant leaders in the fight against Apartheid will share their stories as well as help the group understand South Africa's current challenges since the end of Apartheid in 1994. One such speaker will be Father Michael Lapsley, an Anglican priest who lost both arms and an eye in 1993 because of his anti-Apartheid work and now directs the Institute for Healing of Memories. Participants in Lift Every Voice: 2016 will also work with the Tutu Foundation and visit Robben Island, where Nelson Mandela was imprisoned for 18 years.

The group represents 12 Anglican and Episcopal dioceses:

- Botswana
- Cape Town, South Africa
- East Carolina
- False Bay, South Africa
- North Carolina
- Northern California
- South Carolina
- Southwestern Florida
- Southwestern Virginia
- Upper South Carolina
- Virginia
- Zululand

This trip marks the second phase of the three-year Lift Every Voice program that was designed to build an understanding of social injustice to help participating young people develop a vision and skills to lead their dioceses' programming around race and inclusivity.

For those interested in following the preparations and the trip itself, Lift Every Voice hosts a Facebook group you can find by searching LEV NC Freedom Ride 2015.



DIOCESAN EVENTS

May

- 15 Camper and helper camper applications for HUGS Camp due
- 21 Charlotte Regional Confirmation, 11 a.m., All Saints', Concord

June

- 5 Celebration of Ministry for Epiphany, Rocky Mount, 3-5 p.m.
- 8 Raleigh Regional Confirmation, Trinity, Fuquay-Varina
- 11 Ordination to the Transitional Diaconate, 11 a.m., Good Shepherd, Raleigh
- 17-18 Annual Deacons' Retreat, Haw River State Park, Browns Summit
- 21 Province IV Middle School Youth Event, Haw River State Park, Browns Summit

July

- 11 HUGS Camp, Haw River State Park, Browns Summit
- 28 Province IV High School Youth Event

Save the Date

- Oct. 4-6 Clergy Conference
- Nov. 18-19 201st Annual Convention
- Mar. 4, 2017 One-day Convention to elect the XII Bishop Diocesan
- July 15, 2017 Consecration of XII Bishop Diocesan

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

HUGS CAMP 2016

Applications for HUGS Camp 2016 are now available for campers, helpers, staff and scholarships. Both can be found on the HUGS Camp event listing. To reach it, click "Upcoming Events" under the "News & Events" tab at episditionc.org. Camper and helper applications are due by May 15.

IN CASE YOU MISSED IT

Diocesan House Welcomes New Regional Canon

The Diocese recently welcomed the Rev. Canon Dr. Cathy Deats to the diocesan leadership team as the regional canon serving in the East.



A native of Connecticut, Canon Deats graduated from the University of Connecticut with a B.S. and M.S.W., earned a doctorate from the Hunter School of Social Work and received her M.Div. from Drew University's Theological School. She has worked extensively in churches in both New Jersey and North Carolina, including recent cures at Good Shepherd, Rocky Mount, and St. Paul's, Cary, but her vocational experience doesn't stop there. In addition to serving

as a curate, rector and assistant rector, she also has experience as a sexton, tax preparer, college faculty member, truck stop chaplain, sign language interpreter, social worker and psychotherapist.

"Cathy's vast experience will be a gift to those working with her in the east region," says the Rt. Rev. Anne Hodges-Copple, bishop diocesan pro tempore. "Her petite frame is in inverse proportion to her giant tool kit. It contains experience in urban and rural communities, all of which were diverse and multicultural. She brings not just a theological background, but a degree and experience as a licensed clinical social worker. This is a canon who packs a punch!" (It's funny because Canon Deats also trains as a boxer in her free time.)

Canon Deats joined the diocesan team on May 1 on a part-time basis as she completes her tenure at St. Paul's. She joins the team on a full-time basis in early June.

GET TO KNOW THE DIOCESE'S RESIDENT CARTOONIST

If you enjoy this issue's special illustrated take on evangelism (page 16) created by the Rev. Canon Earnest Graham, get to know the man behind the art

with "5 Questions with Earnest Graham." The video is available on the diocesan Vimeo channel "5 Questions."

SPEAKIN' DEACONS

Throughout the month of April, deacons from around the diocese offered informational gatherings to any and all interested in learning more about what it is to be a deacon in The Episcopal Church. During meetings held both in person and online, the deacons shared stories, information, laughter and encouragement as they met with everyone from those simply curious to those seriously discerning a call.

Additional meetings will be held in the future, but the deacons extend an open invitation to speak one-on-one anytime. For more information on how to become a member of the diaconate or to get in touch with a serving deacon, visit episdionc.org. There you will also find a link to



the video "Dream a New World: Hearing a Deacon's Call," which contains testimonies from deacons about how they realized their call.

By Christine McTaggart

UNUSUAL EUCHARISTS

God is everywhere.

It's a lesson we're taught at an early age, but in a day and age in which virtually every moment is scheduled, blocked out, prioritized and organized, for many, God is sought only in church on Sunday mornings (if that), and the words and rituals used in worship have become rote.

But it's amazing what a change of scenery or routine can do. It refreshes. It invigorates. It inspires.

In several churches in the Diocese of North Carolina, they are breathing fresh life and reintroducing the beauty of the Eucharist by holding traditional Eucharists in new locations and settings or in different formats. And they're finding that doing something different is offering new perspectives, creating deeper understanding and bridging gaps.

ST. AMBROSE: TO THE SEA

For years, St. Ambrose, Raleigh, has been going to Wade Chestnut Chapel on Topsail Island for its annual parish retreat. Though it's not considered an "official" retreat, it's not uncommon for between 70 and 100 parishioners to attend the weekend gathering to discuss church business and celebrate Eucharist on Sunday morning.

When the Rev. Jemonde Taylor became rector of St. Ambrose in 2012, he thought it was wonderful the congregation went so faithfully to the chapel by the beach but wondered why it was no one ever did anything *on* the beach. So he had the idea: The traditional Eucharist would continue to be held in the chapel on Sunday morning, but a second Eucharist and Evening Prayer would be held at sunset on Saturday evening. It would be celebrated on the beach, by the sea, with music by the church's Jazz Mass Quartet both during the service and following it. Anyone who wished to attend – whether they had plans to or just happened by – would be welcome.

VISIBLE WITNESS

St. Ambrose's seaside service usually features baptismal themes. A portable altar is set up on the sand, and the time is determined by the tides. (The one year no one checked the tide schedule was the year high tide came in mid-service; attendees had to grab the altar and everything else before making a run for it.) As the sun sets, the service begins with Evening Prayer before transitioning into a traditional Eucharist, all with sea breezes blowing, ocean waves crashing and seabirds flying.

After the final blessing, attendees are invited to go to the ocean and bless themselves. For those who cannot walk to the water's edge, a cup of sea water is brought to them on the beach.

Following the Eucharist, the Jazz Mass Quartet, which plays each week at St. Ambrose, holds a concert, entertaining the crowd with jazz





(Opposite page, top three) including the year a quickly rising tide forced a quick dash inside Wade Chestnut Chapel. (Opposite page, bottom) Exercise is fun at St. Ambrose's annual FitFest Eucharist and picnic held at Pullen Park in Raleigh. (Above) Scenes from St. Clement's first kayaking Eucharist at High Point's Oak Hollow Lake

and pop favorites.

Both the service and the party afterward welcome the stranger. It's not at all uncommon for folks walking the beach to stop and listen, and some even join in.

"It's a great visible witness in the world, and something unexpected," says Taylor. "Most people think when we're setting up, we're setting up for a wedding. But the people who come might be in anything from summer attire to bathing suits."

The surprise is not just for those passing by or for whom church is new. Celebrating Eucharist by the sea has had a powerful effect on faithful churchgoers as well.

Taylor recounts the reaction of a faithful parishioner in her early 90s. "She told me, 'Father Taylor, I have never had a feeling like this in my life. At this moment, I feel as close to God as I have ever felt. Because I am at the ocean I am worshiping God, I hear the waves...I can't even verbalize how I feel it's so powerful.'"

BREAKING DOWN BARRIERS

Taylor believes one of the benefits of doing Eucharist in an unusual way is that it breaks down "this false dichotomy of sacred and secular" and the notion that "somehow there are places where God exists and places where God doesn't." Says Taylor, "We recognize God is everywhere, but we limit ourselves to when and where we worship. By taking the altar and putting it on the beach and having Communion [there], it breaks down that barrier and says there is no sacred and secular – it is all God."

On average, approximately 30 to 50 parishioners travel early to Topsail Island to attend the seaside service, though attendance is increasing each year. 2016 marks the fourth celebration, and parishioners are starting to look forward to it and ask earlier each year when the annual event will be held.

The power of the unusual Eucharist has inspired St. Ambrose to reach out closer to home as well. In addition to the seaside Eucharist, once a year they now offer

"FitFest" when Sunday service is offered at Pullen Park in Raleigh.

"That's been an interesting experience," says Taylor. "People go to Pullen Park to run and play, and to find a church there worshiping and doing Eucharist is not something they expect to see. We do the Eucharist under an oak tree and follow it with fitness activities and a meal. It generally turns into an all-day event. It's another great witness in the community, and they do notice.

"People are picking up that a lot of times we put God in a box, that we need to be in church to pray," says Taylor. "To worship on a beach and go swimming afterwards feels revolutionary and new, but it's exactly what Jesus did. He met the people where they were and went to places where people really did not expect to encounter God, and that's exactly where they encountered God."

The 2016 seaside Eucharist will be held on July 16. For additional information, visit stambrosaleigh.org.

ST. CLEMENT'S: RECONNECTING WITH CREATION

It was the kids' idea. And it was one no one could resist.

When the youth of St. Clement's, Clemmons, decided they wanted to go kayaking for an organized outing in 2015, they made it sound so great the adults in the congregation said they wanted in on the fun. The Rev. Jamie L'Enfant Edwards, rector at St. Clement's, had already said she'd go and happily opened the outing to the rest of the parish.



BONUS CONTENT

Read more of the Rev. Jemonde Taylor's reflections on the breaking down of secular and spiritual barriers in the "Read All About It" section at episditionc.org.

The pieces quickly fell into place. Several parishioners had kayaks and were willing to share, and food was organized. Edwards planned to offer a Eucharist on the shores of High Point's Oak Hollow Lake, the site of the gathering, while the Rev. Paul Crowell stepped up in a supply role and celebrated Sunday services at the church for those staying closer to home.

From the start, the intergenerational gathering "had the feel of a family reunion or picnic." The mix included longtime parishioners, new parishioners, seniors, young adults, kids and teenagers, some of whom even brought a friend, boyfriend or girlfriend they might not otherwise have invited to church. Everyone circulated and talked to each other, sharing food and laughter while taking turns with the kayaks. The more experienced kayakers happily helped those new to the sport.

And, of course, there was the Eucharist.

ANCIENT CONCEPT, CONTEMPORARY SETTING

In honor of the lakeside gathering, Edwards tied the service in with the Rogation observance.

"Back in agrarian cultures, Rogation days were a time of asking God's blessing on harvest and earth and sea," explains Edwards. "It developed us as stewards of nature."

She also incorporated the ancient English tradition of walking the geographical perimeter of the parish by inviting those in attendance to walk the lakeshore.

"We adapted an ancient concept to a contemporary setting," says Edwards. "It gave us a sense of reconnecting with nature and recovering that sense of asking God's blessing on us as stewards of the earth."

BUILDING COMMUNITY

The effect of the outdoor Eucharist and 43-person gathering was almost immediate. All who attended agreed "we have to do this more often," and the ideas quickly started flowing in response to a reawakened desire to do things together in new settings. The parish is eagerly making plans for the second annual event.

"It did increase the sense of community," says Edwards. "When we put the Eucharist in a different context, it allows the liturgy to come alive in a new way because we're [really] hearing it as we're gazing at a lake or the ocean or the mountains. That different context jars us from our routine enough to awaken us to the power of the Word."

She believes holding Eucharist in a natural setting has its own unique power.

"It reconnects us with nature and creation, which is something that in a prior age would have been completely unnecessary," says Edwards. "We used to live in communion with nature, but now we have to make an effort

to go out in it. Having a Eucharist outside in the context of creation helps us to make a connection that should be obvious but is sometimes not anymore. So there's a liturgical benefit, a spiritual and a theological benefit."

There's a community-building benefit, too, especially for those who may keep church at arm's length or may not be comfortable attending traditional Sunday services. In a different setting, "you're more likely to see friends invited, because it is inviting and appealing. The walls and barriers come down, literally and figuratively."

Edwards encourages exploring the Eucharist in different settings.

"The more variety we can offer," she says, "the more opportunities we have for people to be touched and moved and connected."

And remember that the Eucharist is intended to be *celebrated*.

"Church is supposed to be fun," she says. "It's supposed to be a happy thing! If gathering with friends to have fun and eat food and celebrate Eucharist is hugely different from what we normally experience in a church on Sunday, maybe we need to look a little closer at what we're doing on Sunday."

Edwards reflects on St. Clement's lakeside Eucharist as an example.

"It just had a wonderful spirit to it," she says. "And you have to love any occasion where you get to do church in flip flops. There's just no downside to that."

St. Clement's second annual Kayaking and Eucharist will take place on May 22. For more information, visit stclementsepiscopal.com.

ST. ALBAN'S: MUSICAL CONNECTIONS

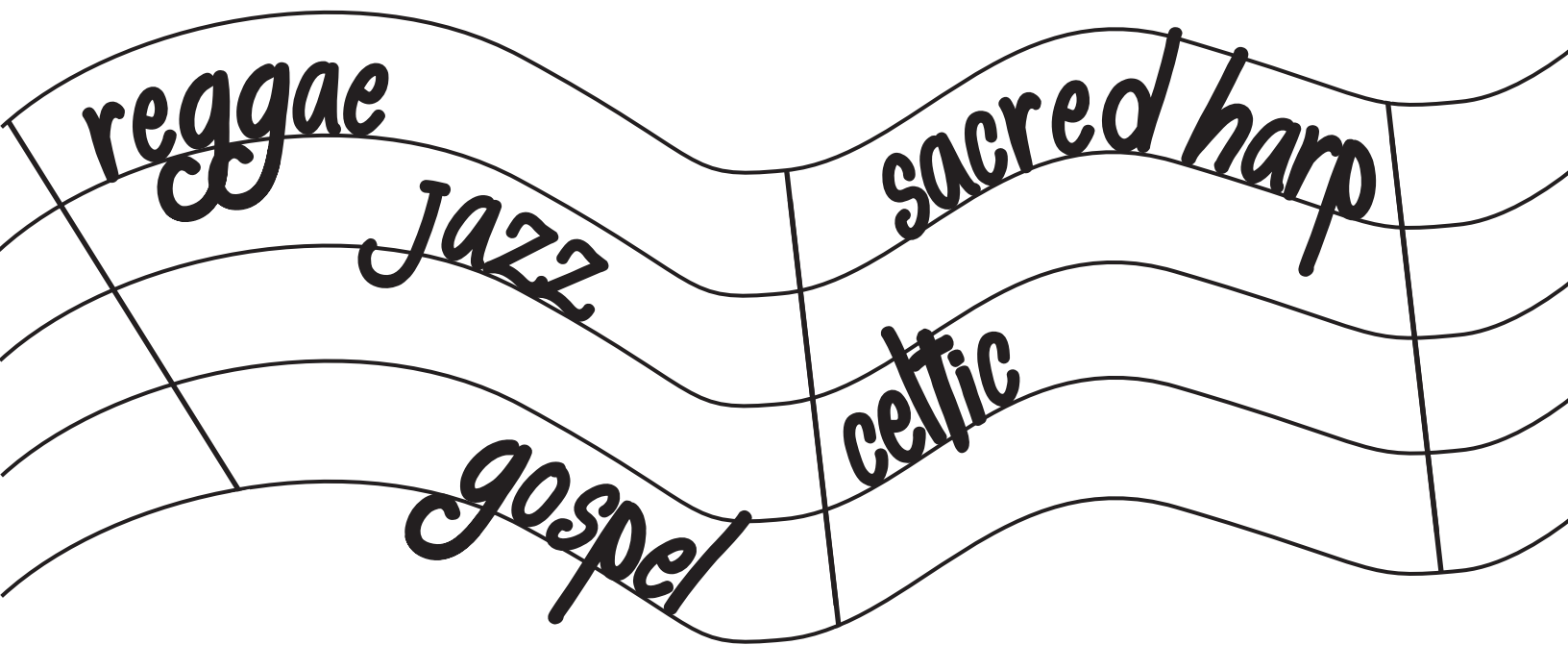
Music has always been a part of Eucharist and, indeed, a key element of Episcopal worship. It touches the soul in ways mere words cannot, and it's not unusual for churches to incorporate cultural influences into its worship through music.

But it is unusual for a church to reflect a multitude of influences.

St. Alban's, Davidson, had celebrated a Celtic Eucharist for years before Music Director David Palmer joined the staff in 2013. A deeply educated and dedicated musician, Palmer saw an opportunity to take the joy found in the music of the Celtic Eucharist to a new level.

The idea actually came as the result of a request. Several of St. Alban's parishioners had visited Costa Rica and were clearly affected by how churches there used reggae music in their services. They came home with a request of St. Alban's that a way be found to incorporate the Caribbean rhythms into their own worship.

"I don't know if the request stemmed from wanting to build or retain a connection to our Costa Rican



counterparts or just being that moved by the music,” says Palmer, “but I liked the idea of exploring different musical influences, and so St. Alban’s decided to try it.”

Plans were made, and the first reggae Eucharist was held on a Saturday evening. The concept was an immediate hit, and attendees were eager for more.

“Churches can never have too much music in worship,” says the Rev. David Buck, rector at St. Alban’s. “Connecting with God is right-brain stuff, not analytical or driven by the interpretation of biblical texts. Music appeals to every generation.”

Palmer was delighted with the chance to branch out and explore different musical and cultural influences. New genres were added to the Celtic and reggae, including Sacred Harp, southern harmony and jazz. Every month now offers something new: January honors Martin Luther King, Jr. with gospel; February celebrates the feast for St. Valentine’s with pop-culture love songs; and April features bluegrass. And all are celebrated as a Eucharist.

“I’m not sure how incredibly unique exploring different music in a Eucharist is,” says Palmer. “But I think how we reflect the diversity of St. Alban’s congregation through music is. The fact that we offer not one musical alternative but a multitude of genres and styles is what sets apart the offering.”

The variety of musical styles is an alternative in more ways than one. For starters, they are offered on Saturdays; Sunday mornings retain a more traditional approach. No matter what the musical style being featured, each is a Eucharist. “That’s been part of the enterprise,” says Palmer, “to see how these cultures can be used in Eucharistic liturgy.” Last but certainly not least, the alter-

native Eucharist has provided another avenue by which St. Alban’s can welcome the stranger, as attendees of the Eucharist include St. Alban’s parishioners, locals from the neighborhood and even a few area music fans.

“We need to meet people where they are culturally,” says Palmer. “Music is a language that can connect with everyone.”

For the full schedule of musical Eucharists, visit saintalbansdavidson.org.

THE CONNECTION POINT

For every person whose soul is nourished with a traditional Eucharist, another may find God in an unexpected place. If you are considering trying a Eucharist in a new setting, at a different time or using some other alternative approach, be bold and enjoy it. Because no matter what you do, the Eucharist will be at the core, and the new context – in the words of the Rev. L’Enfant Edwards – may bring the liturgy alive in a new way and awaken us to the power of the Word, and we’ll remember God really is everywhere.

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



BONUS CONTENT

Read David Palmer’s reflection: “Creating Musical Welcome Mats” in the “Read All About It” section at episdionc.org.

There’s also a video of St. Alban’s April bluegrass mass.

WE ALL KNEW THAT EVANGELISM IS IMPORTANT - THAT IT IS PART OF THE GREAT COMMISSION TO GO OUT AND TELL ALL THE WORLD ABOUT JESUS. SO WHY WERE WE SILENT?

I THINK IT WAS THE WORD 'EVANGELISM.'

Evangelism

BY EARNEST GRAHAM

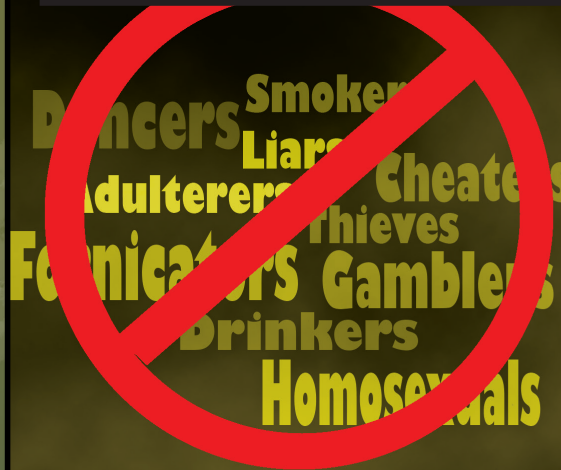


FOR SOME, IT BROUGHT TO MIND TV EVANGELISTS WHO WERE QUICK TO CONDEMN...

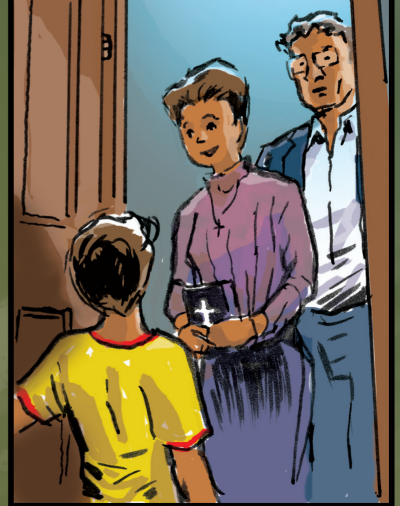
SINNERS ~~to~~ REPENT
~~to~~ ~~not~~ ~~repent~~
HELL ~~is~~



FOR OTHERS, IT WAS THE TIMES WHEN FRIENDS INVITED THEM TO CHURCH, ONLY TO HEAR A MESSAGE OF WHO IS REJECTED...



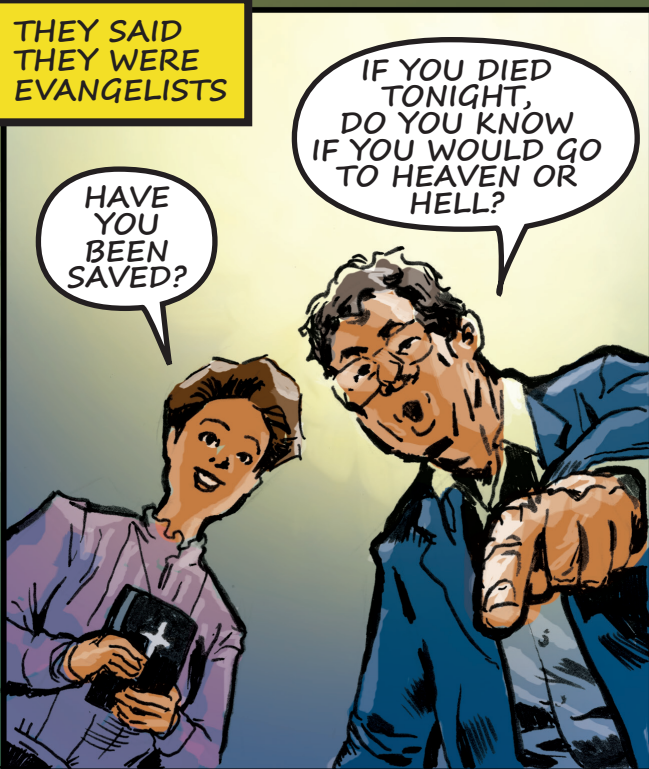
FOR ME, IT WAS WHEN I WAS 13, AND STRANGERS KNOCKED ON MY DOOR...



THEY SAID THEY WERE EVANGELISTS

HAVE YOU BEEN SAVED?

IF YOU DIED TONIGHT, DO YOU KNOW IF YOU WOULD GO TO HEAVEN OR HELL?



OUR DISCUSSION IN CLASS CONTINUED.

Evangelism
εὐαγγελιον
eu = good angel → messenger
GOOD NEWS

THE ROOT OF THE WORD 'EVANGELISM' IS GOOD NEWS.

WE WERE INVITED TO THINK OF EVANGELISM AS SHARING A STORY- SHARING THE STORY- OF GOD'S LOVE, OF THE LIFE OF JESUS. HE CAME TO SHOW US WHAT GOD IS LIKE IN THE FLESH.

IN TIME, I BECAME COMFORTABLE TALKING ABOUT MY FAITH WHEN I WAS IN CHURCH OR IN BIBLE STUDIES. I WAS EXCITED BY WHAT I WAS READING AND LEARNING.



BUT I STILL HAD DIFFICULTY TALKING WITH PEOPLE OUT IN THE WORLD.

ONE DAY, I READ THIS QUOTE.

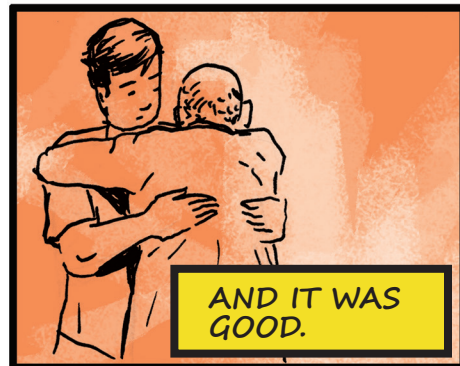
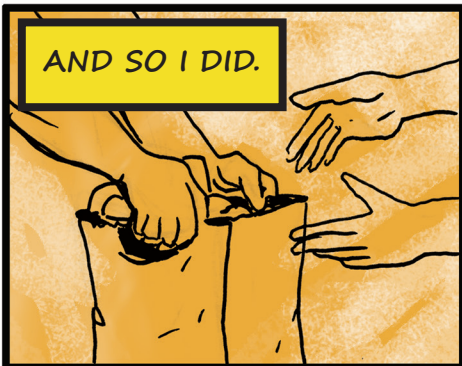
**“Preach the Gospel always!
Use words if necessary.”**

attributed to St. Francis of Assisi

I THOUGHT,
I CAN SHOW IT IN
MY ACTIONS!



AND SO I DID.



AND IT WAS GOOD.

BUT THE IDEA OF EVANGELISM REMAINED. A FEW YEARS BEFORE, WHEN I WAS AT MY LOWEST POINT, AN UNCLE SHARED HIS EXPERIENCE, STRENGTH AND HOPE WITH ME.

AT THAT TIME, I NEEDED MORE THAN ACTION, I NEEDED TO HEAR THE WORDS.

HOW CAN I TALK ABOUT FAITH?

I FOUND THIS PASSAGE IN 1 PETER 3:15.



Now, who will harm you for doing good? 14
Do not fear what is feared, for it is good?
But even if you suffer for doing good, you are blessed.
Do not be intimidated, for you are blessed
in your hearts sanctify Christ as Lord. Always be ready to give an account of the hope that is within you, 16 but do it with gentleness and reverence. Keep your conscience clear, so that when you are abused

LATER, I SERVED AS A CHAPLAIN IN A HOSPITAL FOR A SUMMER. ONE NIGHT I WAS CALLED IN TO VISIT A MAN WHO WAS DYING.



THANK YOU FOR COMING. HIS NAME IS JOE.

I WAS NERVOUS. THIS WAS NEW TO ME.

WHAT DO YOU SAY WHEN SOMEONE IS DYING?

I ASKED IF HE WANTED A PRAYER.

HE WANTED TO TALK.



PASTOR, I'VE DONE THINGS IN MY LIFE THAT I REGRET.



DO YOU BELIEVE GOD CAN FORGIVE?



I TOLD HIM ABOUT THE TIME I WENT TO CONFESSION, BECAUSE I COULDN'T HOLD ON TO THE PAIN ANY MORE. AFTERWARDS, THERE WAS A PEACE I COULD NOT EXPLAIN.

CAN GOD FORGIVE?



I THOUGHT OF JESUS.

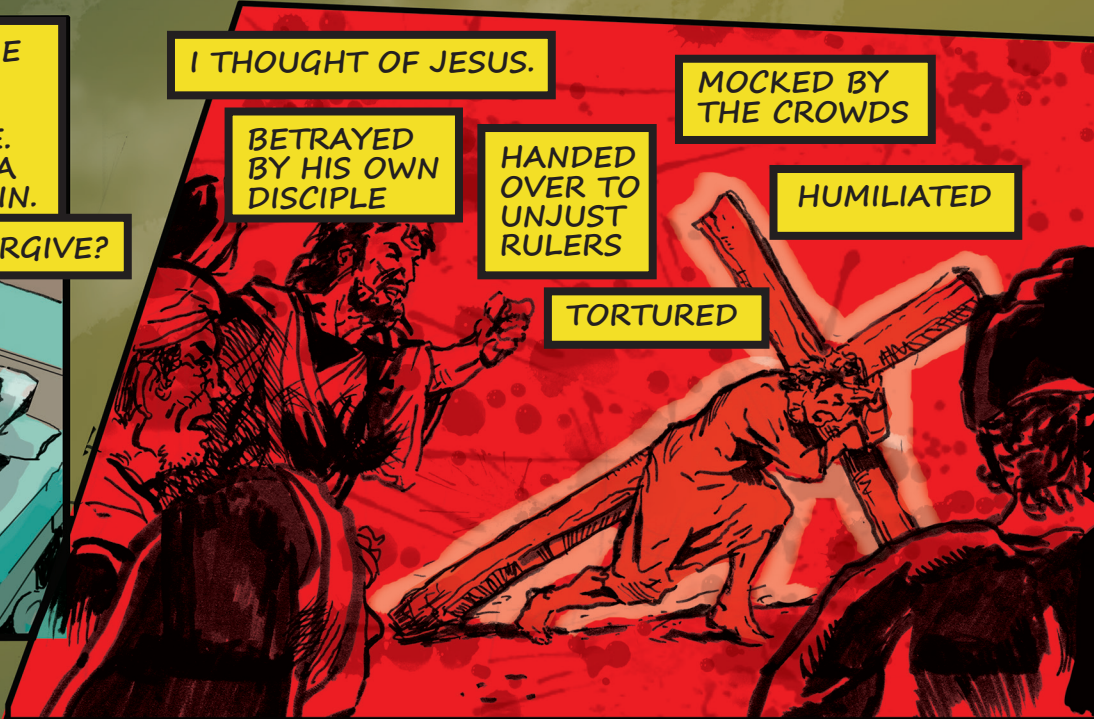
BETRAYED BY HIS OWN DISCIPLE

HANDED OVER TO UNJUST RULERS

MOCKED BY THE CROWDS

HUMILIATED

TORTURED





THEY NAILED HIM TO A CROSS, AND WAITED FOR HIM TO DIE.

HE COULD HAVE CURSED THEM. BUT INSTEAD, HE CRIED OUT,

FATHER, FORGIVE THEM, FOR THEY DO NOT KNOW WHAT THEY ARE DOING.

I BELIEVE JESUS SHOWED US WHAT GOD IS TRULY LIKE. INSTEAD OF BURNING WITH ANGER AND WRATH, HE WAS FILLED WITH COMPASSION AND MERCY.

DO I BELIEVE GOD CAN FORGIVE? I DO.

I LISTENED AS JOE SHARED THE BURDENS HE CARRIED FOR SO LONG AND HIS SORROW.

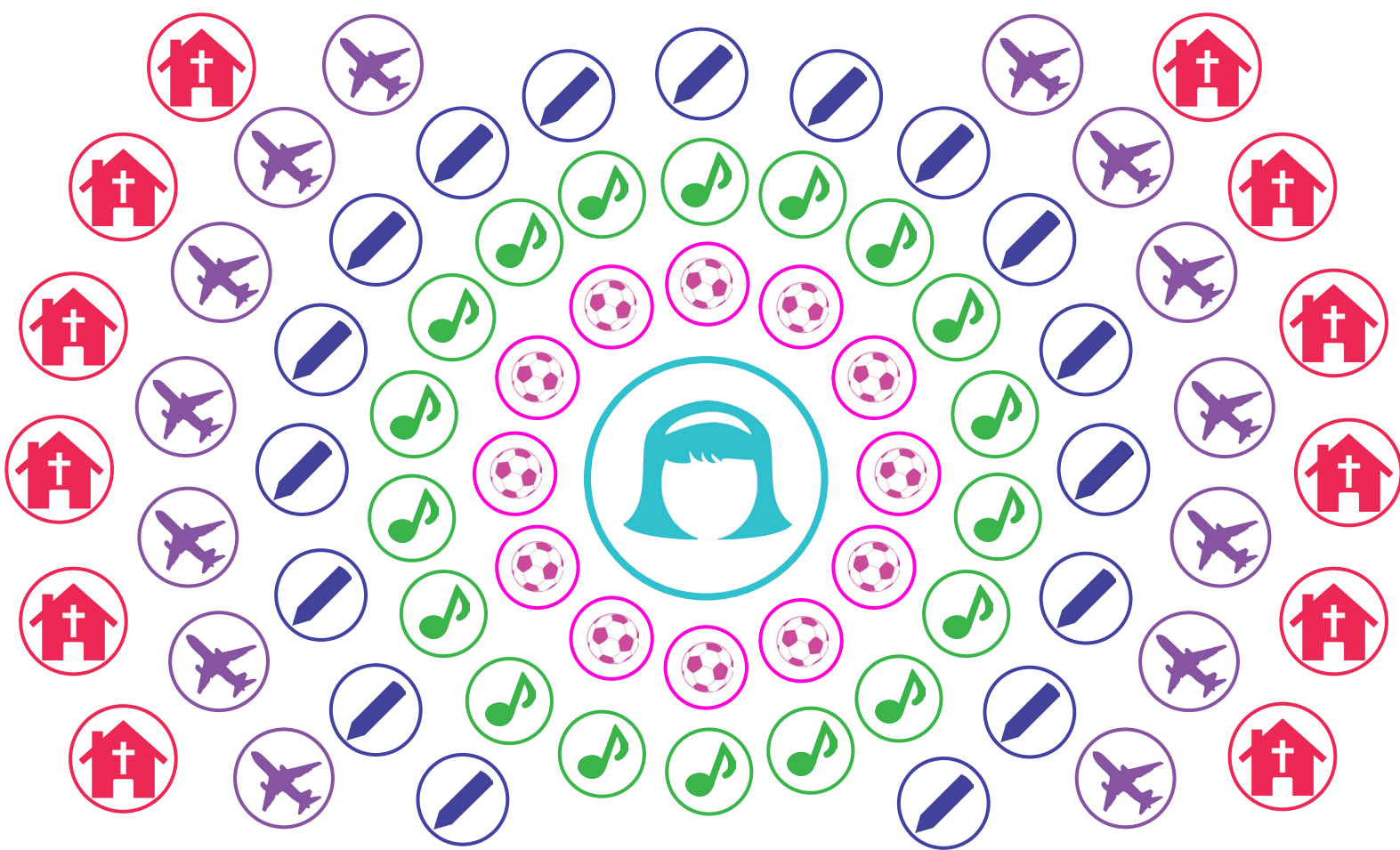
I SHARED THE WORDS OF ABSOLUTION, THE SAME THAT HAD BEEN GIVEN TO ME.

I STAYED WITH JOE THROUGH THE DARK NIGHT, HOLDING HIS HAND UNTIL HE FINALLY LET GO.

"ALWAYS BE READY TO GIVE AN ACCOUNT OF THE HOPE THAT IS WITHIN YOU."

I LEARNED THAT I NEED OTHERS TO HELP ME SEE THE HOPE THAT IS IN ME.

BECAUSE IN THE END, WE ARE HOLDING ON TO THE SAME HOPE.



By the Rev. Robert Black

THE LOST GENERATION

Resurrecting formation within the family

“Go therefore and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit....”
- Matthew 28:19

In the Great Commission, Jesus instructs his followers to baptize and make disciples; that is, to form and teach people. The goal of Christian formation is, then, to know the Christian narrative, own the faith as part of one’s identity, and make known to others the Good News of God in Christ.

But answers to Jesus’ call have become diluted over the last few decades, not through the fault of the followers, but because entire generations have not been given the tools they need in their formation as Christians.

OUTSOURCED

“Sunday schools” first began in the late 18th century, though not as what we know them to be today. They were a means to educate and teach children of the working class to read, as nothing like our public school system then existed. In the 1820s, the focus of Sunday schools shifted to cultivating religious literacy. Up until then, religion was taught primarily in the household, and faith formation

was a family affair. Sunday school programs were intended to support faith formation that was already happening at home, but slowly they became the primary method of teaching children about the Christian narrative and life. By the middle of the 20th century, with the rise of the two-income household, this task of raising children in the faith was essentially “outsourced” to the Church.

The effects were stark. Survey data and experience show that when it comes to both religious literacy and affiliation, outsourcing Christian education to the Church has not been especially successful. It’s not surprising. Christianity is really about formation, not education, but we’ve been using an educational model (Sunday school) and expecting transformative results.

Formation doesn’t happen in a classroom; it happens through lived experience. Across the country, congregations are trying to figure out how to respond. Some are ignoring the warning signs, some are trying to find the nonexistent, magical curriculum that will draw children and families in, while others have completely abandoned any sort of program for Christian formation.

The simple truth is that even if a child (or adult) comes to Sunday school every week, it adds up to only 52 hours

a year. And while that amount of time is a great start, and Sunday school can be a wonderful way to guide and inform, it alone is not enough to establish roots for the transformative discipleship we seek. At best, the church has “access” to children and youth for an hour a week for Sunday school. Families, however, have so many more opportunities to engage in various forms of Christian discipleship.

SET THE EXAMPLE

There is also the issue of prioritization and example-setting. Children learn by observation. If we say that faith is important, but our children are not given the experiences of praying as a family, talking about religion or reading the Bible at home, they will likely conclude that faith is not, in fact, important. If we encourage going to church only if there isn’t anything else on the calendar, children will conclude church is not especially important. When a child is baptized, the entire congregation promises to do all in its power to support the child in his or her life in Christ. If we make that promise and then fail to participate in faith formation ministries, parents and children alike may question our commitment to the community of faith.

It is the task of the church to do the holy work of modeling that commitment. We have lost at least one generation in regard to Christian formation, and we’re in danger of losing another because parents can teach their children only what they know. For parents not given the tools of formation in their own childhood, there is no shame or guilt in not knowing the story of the Bible or how to lead your family in prayer. That lack of knowl-

Dad, the priest talked about Amos this morning. Who was that?

Is that even in the Bible?

TOOLS FOR FORMATION

If you are looking for the tools and guidance to build Christian formation into your daily life (or to help provide it to others), the Diocese has several resources that can assist you.

1. Members of the Chartered Committee on Lifelong Christian Formation are ready to help with finding the appropriate resources and planning programs.
2. The diocesan website has a multitude of information and ready-to-use resources for both adults and children on its Christian formation page. Visit episditionc.org and check out the “Formation” section under the “What We Do” tab.

edge is not your failing; it is the Church’s. But we need to remedy that.

The Church can fight against culture and demand consistent attendance, but that is not likely to be very edifying or fruitful. Instead, it needs to give families the tools to do the critical work of formation. That way, when a family is on vacation or at a sports tournament on Sunday morning, they know that they can open the *Book of Common Prayer* and find appropriate prayers. We can find ways to teach the Biblical narrative and inspire regular practices of prayer and Scripture reading, not just on Sunday, but every day. Our Christian faith is not about what we know, it is about how we live. If our focus is on education, some people will know about Jesus. If our focus is on equipping people for (trans)formation, people will follow Jesus.

As part of The Episcopal Church, we also have access to one of the best tools for formation: our liturgy. Our liturgy teaches and forms people on a weekly basis; how much more could it do so if we used our liturgies to their fullest extent? What if we used our rich resources to pray about life events, to give thanks and to lament? What if we spent more time engaging in the practice of mystagogy, or talking about what the liturgy means and seeks to do? What if we prioritized celebrating the Church calendar throughout the year? We just might be more deeply formed as disciples.

St. Paul, in his letter to the Romans, wrote “Besides this, you know what time it is, how it is now the moment for you to wake from sleep.” (Romans 13:11) This is a call to action. It is time for all of us to prioritize faith formation in our lives. It is time to ask for help when you don’t know the Christian story or you don’t know how to teach it to your children. As Presiding Bishop Curry has told us all, in order to go out, we first need to go deep. May God bless you as you seek to go deeper in your faith.

The Rev. Robert Black is rector of St. Luke’s, Salisbury. Contact him at rblack@stlukessalisbury.net.



By the Rev. James Franklin

DOWN, UP AND OUT

Pentecost and the Holy Movement

“Jesus said to them again, ‘Peace be with you. As the Father has sent me, so I send you.’ When he had said this, he breathed on them and said to them, ‘Receive the Holy Spirit. If you forgive the sins of any, they are forgiven them; if you retain the sins of any, they are retained.’”

- John 20:21-23

I was fired from my first job out of college. I was working for a nationally known youth ministry when nine other ministers and I were fired for reasons that are to this day still unclear. All I can tell you is that it was for “theological reasons,” and it was terrible, divisive and took lots of therapy to undo.

So why bring it up? I tell you this story because it is a story of Pentecost. In the heat of that awful experience we thought, “This has nothing to do with God and everything to do with twisted human egos.” But, looking back, we can see that, in fact, it was a God-filled, downward movement asking us to trust there was some grander design – a picture not yet in focus. *Down.*

There were times I felt like I was just along for the ride (which in many cases was true), but we had reached a crossroads and decided to trust that God was not yet

done with us. We said “yes” to trusting God, and we became open to seeing whatever it was God had in store for us. *Up.*

The Holy Spirit moved and out of death came life, and out of hardship and pain came resurrection: the founding of Reality Ministries of Durham, a vibrant ministry that focuses on the overlooked and underserved local populations and creates opportunities for teens and adults, both with and without cognitive impairments, to experience the life-changing reality of Christ’s love. *Out.*

CAN’T RESIST

One of my favorite theologians, Karl Barth, notes a pattern of movement throughout Scripture: from God-to-humanity and humanity-to-God, or in simpler terms, “down” and “up.” This movement occurs both cosmically and as microcosms all throughout Scripture. But in addition to the “down” and “up,” there is also a movement “out.”

Nowhere is this outward movement more visible than at Pentecost. “Pent” comes from a word meaning “five” and refers to the great 50 days after Easter. It is when we, as Christ’s Church, celebrate our birth – the Holy Spirit

poured out on all.

In an eternally downward movement, “God moved into the neighborhood.” (John 1:14) God came down for the penultimate time because as we say in the Nicene Creed, “he will come again.” Not too long ago on Holy Saturday, we learned that Jesus went all the way down and destroyed death. From there, he began his upward ascent and completed his upward motion perfectly and in a way the prophets and we could never do. Then, instead of just giving us a commandment to go out and trusting we will do it on our own, we are given the Holy Spirit. She is the one who goes before us and who leads us out as a visible expression of God’s love to the world.

My friend and mentor, Jeff McSwain, says going “out” raises two questions: Do we go out because we are commanded to in Matthew and John? Or do we go out because we just cannot help but go?

I admit I often resist going out. As a missionary, it has been a growing edge to graft “going out” into my mission DNA: telling folks outside the concrete church walls the Truth of their belovedness. I think the reason I love the “mini-Pentecost” in John is because Jesus’ definition of “going out” is forgiveness. In campus ministry especially, that message of forgiveness often comes in the form of telling folks, “You are beloved.”

On the flip side, I know many Episcopalians who are great at going out and yet sometimes “go” without intentionality. They go without forgiving or telling someone, “You are beloved.” I’m guilty of it, too, and sometimes I also go without acknowledging the Holy Spirit has already gone before me and is present in the people I serve long before I serve them.

My favorite image of creation is the Trinity dancing together in perfect love. The down and upward movements are perfect in them as they say to each other, “I love you” and respond, “I love you, too.” I like to think that we and

all creation are created out that love. There was such an abundance of it, they just couldn’t help but spill love out.

IN BEFORE OUT

So maybe first before we go out, we need to go in. Maybe we need to ask ourselves, “When have I truly experienced that abundance of love for myself? Do I believe I am beloved?” How have we, as a church, created space for those experiences to occur? What kind of Pentecost are we preaching when we skip the Jesus movements of “downward and upward” and go straight to the “outward”? The answer has been shared loud and clear from those – especially young adults – disenfranchised by a lack of authenticity in church.

When we create the space and time for these experiences of downward and upward movements, it creates an abundance that spills out. This is the “movement” in the Jesus Movement and the “Go” Bishop Curry encourages in us. I love how he stirs up that which is already within me: the power and motivation to go out that comes only of the Holy Spirit. The downward movement of God saying, “You are my Beloved” and the upward movement of Jesus saying for and with me, “I love you, too” is compelling enough to send me out because I cannot help but tell someone else about it. The space must be made to claim that Truth for ourselves before we can proclaim it.

Those folks in John 20:21-23 didn’t go out just because they were commanded. They went out because they had an authentic experience of God’s mercy and love. The message of perfect love from Jesus’ movements of incarnation, death (down); resurrection, and ascension (up) is so compelling we just can’t help but go out.

The Rev. James Franklin is the diocesan young adult missionary for Winston-Salem. Contact him at jamesdfranklin@gmail.com. To learn more about Reality Ministries, visit realityministriesinc.org.



BEER & HYMNS

By Christine McTaggart



Jesse James DeConto. Photo by Franklin Golden

We live in a world where it's possible to be entertained constantly. Think about it – there's not a moment of any day we can't be chatting online, sharing opinions and news on social media, streaming music or movies, binge-watching not just one episode but entire seasons of our favorite TV show, surfing the internet, playing video games or doing anything else that strikes our fancy. And that's just online.

But is it enough?

Durham County Beer & Hymns founder Jesse James DeConto doesn't think so.

“WE'RE TIRED OF CONSUMING”

At any given gathering of Durham County Beer & Hymns, a ministry that brings together spiritual seekers from across denominational and interfaith – even no-faith – lines, one will find 150-250 friends and strangers enjoying food, drink, fellowship and song. It seems remarkable on its surface that so many people from so many different backgrounds readily come together to put aside differences and embrace community, but DeConto understands some of what's at the heart of it.

The entertainment options of today are largely about consumption, and “we're tired of it,” he says. “We're tired of consuming. People are ready to create something, to participate in something. People need to be together, [and] to sing together – it's something humans have always done.”

GRASS ROOTS

While Durham County Beer & Hymns was founded locally, it is not a purely innovative concept. The idea of getting people together to sing and drink is one that dates back at least to medieval Europe. But the modern-era iteration can trace its roots to England's Greenbelt Festival, a decades-old annual spiritual and social justice festival that blends music, art and social justice-oriented conversation and education.

Greenbelt's American cousin, the Wild Goose Festival, has been celebrated in North Carolina for the last six years. It was at the festival's 2011 gathering at Shakori Hills in Pittsboro that DeConto first saw the concept of Beer & Hymns in action. Hosted in the Fullsteam Brewery tent, the experience of joining others to connect on a

social and spiritual level through drink and song planted the seed of an idea.

“I knew to do it right, it would take a lot of work,” he said. “I couldn’t quite figure out how to fund my time to put it together, so it sat on a shelf for a few years.”

MUSICIAN, MINISTER

A contemporary music minister at Creedmoor United Methodist Church, DeConto’s journey to his work and the founding of Durham County Beer & Hymns was not traveled on a straight-line road. Born into a Baptist background, he found himself an Episcopalian by the time he graduated from college. “I was drawn to the liturgy and social justice of The Episcopal Church,” he reflects. He spent seven years and saw his two daughters baptized in Episcopal churches before attending a progressive, nondenominational church that structures its liturgy after the *Book of Common Prayer*. According to DeConto, “they worshiped somewhat like Anglicans, but they were not affiliated.” He spent 16 years as a journalist (and continues to work in the field), often reflecting and discerning in those years whether a call to ministry was for him. He explored that call through classes offered for religious news writers and completed a one-year program at Duke Divinity School.

Through it all, there was his music. DeConto is a recording artist and singer-songwriter who performs regularly at the Wild Goose Festival with his bandmates as The Pinkerton Raid. They also earned a spot on the *Bandspotting* compilation album at the 2013 Festival of Faith & Music at Calvin College.

When he came to a crossroads of his career, he began to wonder about the music. It had always been “done on the side,” but it had also been a constant. Was it time to answer the call to ministry? And could his music be at the heart of it?

He thought about his idea for Beer & Hymns and realized his career transition was offering him the opportunity to bring it to life.

OPEN INVITATION

DeConto already had a location and partner. Long before he attended the gathering in the Fullsteam Brewery tent at Shakori Hills, DeConto met Fullsteam’s owner (and one of the founders of North Carolina’s craft beer industry), Sean Wilson, while both attended Holy Family in Chapel Hill. Wilson was on board with the idea and offered his establishment as a gathering place.

“I had this idea to bring people together across all sorts of lines,” says DeConto. The ministry’s vision included the faithful and non-faithful, the curious and seekers alike, but DeConto knew the logical place to start was by inviting those who attended church regularly and were familiar

with and treasured the legacy of music in worship.

He contacted several of the larger churches in the Durham area to see if there was any interest in the idea. There was, and clergy shared the open invitation with congregants.

They accepted.

Word spread, and the gatherings grew.

Perhaps it’s the easygoing nature of the surroundings. Unlike the quiet reverence of a church, the atmosphere of a Beer & Hymns gathering is one found on front porches and in living rooms. Perhaps it’s the meeting of new people and making of new friends. At any gathering, ages range from toddlers to seniors with a large component of young adults, with multiple faiths and non-faiths represented. Perhaps it’s the anonymity that affords participants the chance to sing out loud and strong.

Says DeConto, “It’s louder than a Sunday service, and so folks can hide their voices a bit more. There’s a freedom in that, and the informality and anonymity builds people’s confidence if they’re self-conscious about their ability or curious but don’t know how to navigate a church service.”

Whatever the draw, it’s the feeling of connection and community that brings them back.

The flow of a Beer & Hymns gathering is simple. After a few words of welcome, DeConto launches into the first of the songs, guiding participants to join in with the lyrics provided in binders found throughout the room. The songs themselves are a mix of New-South Americana and pop culture combined with older liturgical texts rooted in Christian, Jewish, Hindu and other religious traditions. Participants may find themselves singing a traditional hymn or an old Johnny Cash or Beatles favorite.

Between songs, DeConto banters with his bandmates – all volunteer musicians who approached DeConto after hearing about and attending a Beer & Hymns gathering – but there is no praying, no preaching. The spiritual connection occurs in “the quieter moments when the emotional experience happens.”

MAKE IT HAPPEN

Durham County Beer & Hymns was awarded a 2016 Mission Endowment Grant to support its efforts to bring an old, old story into a new Galilee. If you have an idea for ministry that will do the same and would like information on applying for a 2017 Mission Endowment Grant, visit episdionc.org and look for “Grants and Scholarships” under the “Resources” tab.

YOU ARE INVITED

Beer & Hymns gathers at Fullsteam Brewery on the first and third Sunday of every month, along with a quarterly event in Carrboro. For a full schedule of dates and locations, visit durhamcountybeerand-hymns.com, where you can also watch a short documentary about the ministry.

Or connect with them on Facebook (DURMBeerAndHymns) and Twitter (@DurCoBeerHymns).

There is no cost to attend, but at each gathering offerings are collected to donate to local nonprofits. All event expenses are covered by grants and behind-the-scenes donations. In its first year, Beer & Hymns raised more than \$1,400 to benefit Reality Ministries, Open Table, Interfaith Council for Social Service, Habitat for Humanity, KidzNotes, N.C. Rails-Trails, Girls on the Run and more. Should a church or other religious organization offer direct sponsorship of the event, it chooses where the night's offering goes.

"The offerings are just another great way to invite people into community, service and hospitality. They're having this experience, but they're also doing some good together."

Despite the energy of the evening, they don't go late into the night. Each gathering lasts an average of an hour and a half, maxing out at two hours.

"Folks come out and then head back to their lives," says DeConto. He adds with a laugh, "There's always a suspicious mass exodus when *Downton Abbey* is on."

THE CREATION CONNECTION

At the end of the day, when asked why Beer & Hymns resonates so strongly with so many, DeConto has a thoughtful and reflective answer.

"People are questioning vestiges of the past – are we

really faithful, or did we just inherit culture? Do we need to rethink and develop new culture? One of those new kinds of culture that's developing is a spirituality that's more cosmic, more earthy, more corporate. [It's] less institutional and less walled-in, and more independent of denomination. People respond to the fact Beer & Hymns has hymns from so many traditions and doesn't prioritize any one in particular. We draw on pop songs and tunes that are familiar.

"The theology of creation was diminished as the church became more institutionalized and rote, and we need to recover that. The spiritual and 'not religious' trend is tapping in to that. It's why people are exploring other faiths and ideas.

"There's a connection between bodies and earth and wildlife and nature – the power of God in creation. Music taps into that connection. Songs that have stood the test of time do so for a reason – they offer a spiritual nourishment and transcend denomination and even religion."

At a time when churches are struggling with declining attendance, the rapid growth of Durham County Beer & Hymns indicates the truth of the desire for that connection. In only a little more than a year, the gatherings have brought together more than 1,000 people from at least 30 religious communities to share in fellowship and song. Some consider Beer & Hymns their church, while others built on their Beer & Hymns introduction to seek a church home. More than a dozen religious institutions have offered financial support, and more and more community nonprofits are benefiting from the gatherings, not just in financial terms, but in volunteers who find their way from Beer & Hymns to the nonprofit ministries. Founded in Durham, Beer & Hymns has already expanded into Carrboro and begun further expansion plans in Chapel Hill, Morrisville and Winston-Salem.

All because an invitation was extended.

And people accepted.

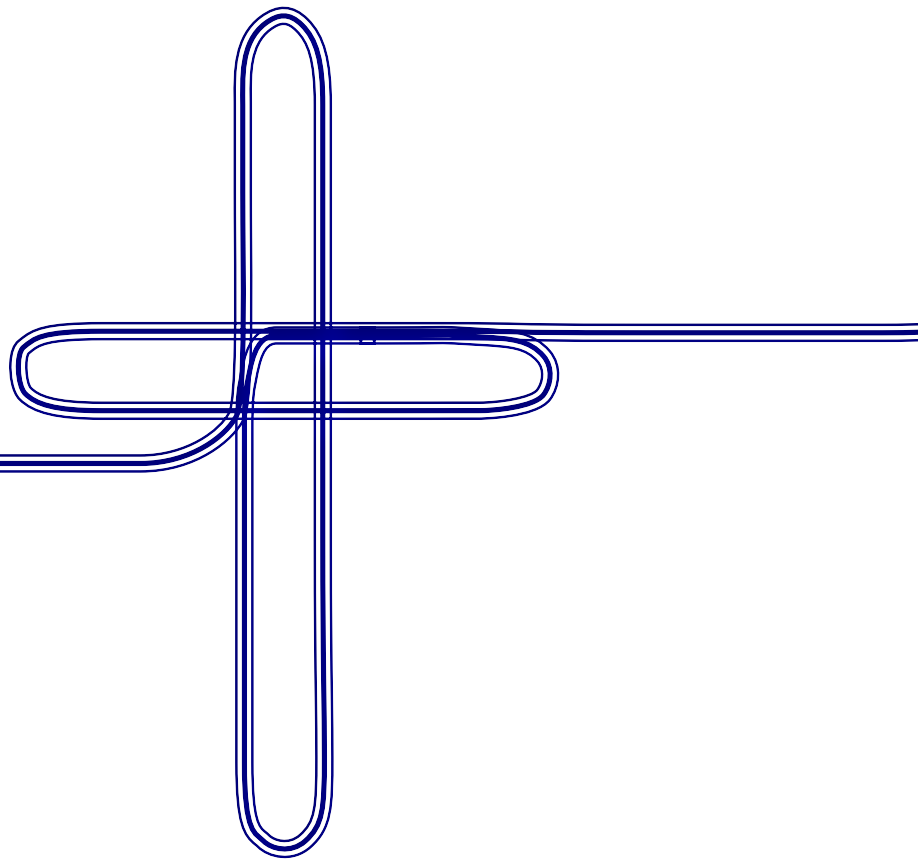
Christine McTaggart is the communications director for the Episcopal Diocese of North Carolina. Contact her at christine.mctaggart@episdionc.org.



By Kyle Matthew Oliver

DIGITAL MINISTRY HAS A NEW NAME:

MINISTRY



“Electricity is a significant part of our ministry.”

It sounds like a strange thing to say, right? We probably wouldn't be inclined to claim that vestments are a key component of our ministries, either. Or the telephone.

But how about this one? “Relationships are a significant part of our ministry.”

Lee Rainie of Pew Research Center's Internet & American Life Project isn't a minister, at least not that I know of. But he's an expert in how Americans relate to one another.

And in what he calls the New Social Operating System (also the subtitle of his and Barry Wellman's book *Networked*), the internet is fast becoming “like electricity—less visible, yet more deeply embedded in people's lives.”

Consider Pew's key indicators of the “triple revolution” that has reshaped our society: More than two-thirds of American adults have broadband internet access at home (“the internet broadband revolution”). More than two-thirds own smartphones (“the mobile connectivity revolution”). More than three-quarters of those who use the internet use social networking sites like Facebook (“the social networking revolution”).

All this social change means that a willingness to be present in digital spaces and to connect using digital tools has become a prerequisite of culturally engaged ministry in the 21st century. Digital connections and community

support strengthen the relationships that are at the heart of what we do as churches.

In a world where local nonprofits are online, where community gatherings are organized and even hosted on social media, where people's daily workflows and interactions are mediated by mobile devices, the choice not to adapt is a choice against growth and vitality.

It's like trying to run a church without electricity.

WE HAVE WHAT WE NEED

Here's the good news: the increasing *integration* of digital tools, spaces and practices into everyday life means that – more than ever – digital media ministry is just ... ministry.

“Everything that we expect of people in the physical world is true in the digital world, and it brings us the same joy,” NPR's Sarah Lumbard told a group of church leaders at Virginia Theological Seminary (VTS) in 2013. “You need trust in this world. That's everything friendship and community is built on, and that's all we're talking about here.”

Does that sound familiar? Comforting? It did to me. Turns out the practices Lumbard fostered when vice president of content strategy and operations for the public media giant are the same rules we teach in any practical theology class: Be present. Be active. Be yourself.

There is genuine opportunity in the new media

ecology for leaders with good ministry instincts. Our challenge is to learn *how* those instincts continue to apply.

The first person I know of to capture today's significant social change in words and images that deeply resonate with church people is Lutheran pastor Keith Anderson. Anderson is author of *The Digital Cathedral: Networked Ministry in a Wireless World*.

He believes the new patterns of belonging and relating in our society call for ministry models that look more like cathedral ministry in the Middle Ages than congregational ministry in the decades following the Baby Boom.

I heartily recommend *Digital Cathedral* if you're trying to wrap your head around digital ministry and how it works together with profoundly *un*-digital ministry. The book is full of vivid portraits of innovative practices taking hold across many denominations, regions and faith community configurations.

Consider this description of a church plant in St. Paul, Minnesota:

"Embedded in the life of the West End, the people of the church had literally made their entire neighborhood their cathedral. West Seventh Street, the main road in this part of town, is their nave. The side streets are the ambulatories. And the shrines, well, the shrines are everywhere—in parks and bus stops, coffee shops and pubs, churches and community gathering spaces, homes and apartments

"These are not episodic forays into the neighborhood, or trendy ways of doing ministry. They reflect a deeply held understanding of sacred space with strong roots throughout the Christian tradition."

Membership at a given church is not the be-all and end-all in the new paradigm. The best ministers today foster deepening relationship in the local community, which is both physical and digital. These ministers trust that increased involvement and commitment will follow for people who are ready for them.

FROM THEORY TO ACTION (AGAIN AND AGAIN)

Okay, so how do we actually do this? How can we make our congregations more like Anderson's digital cathedral, with deep roots in the community and strong personal connections among members, friends and neighbors?

The most important thing to do is to start. Reading a book is a nice (but not necessary) first step. It needs to lead to wise and effective implementation.

In the Center for the Ministry of Teaching at VTS,

we call this process action research. To improve you and your church's digital presence, put on the mantle of an informal ethnographer.

Ask people at your church and in your community where they hang out online: What social networks do they participate in? What blogs and websites do they read? What YouTube channels and podcasts do they regularly or occasionally check out? What community forums do they look to for local news and discussion?

Read, listen and learn as much as you can. Share the contributions of participants you admire. Start to participate yourself before you think you're ready, but don't be in a hurry to tout your church or its services. If that comes up naturally, great. But concentrate on being yourself – not just your "church self" – and trust that your Christian identity shapes how others perceive you.

When you start to feel something approaching competent as an individual, then you're ready to work with others to build or grow your faith community's corporate presence online. By now, you'll have absorbed some best practices for church websites, Facebook pages, e-newsletters and more. Online research and consultation with more experienced practitioners can help you fill in some gaps.

Work hard to gather teams that are willing and able to do the work. Try to include staff and volunteers, lay people and clergy. Set some policies and procedures, try them out for a while, then re-evaluate. Focus on fostering engagement among the folks who start to come together in your digital spaces. When conflict emerges, stay calm in the moment and do your best to engage with integrity. Case studies in conflict often help you move toward more effective policies.

Think about the full range of religious activity and how digital media can support it: Faith formation is happening for families using digital resource collections to support their religious practice at home. Evangelism is happening online through digital event promotion and engagement with social issues. Prayer is happening online with the help of daily office podcasts, email meditations and social media-based intercession groups.

Above all, trust that the Spirit is working in your community, including amid relationships that form or flourish online. When the Spirit is at work, then wisdom, guidance and growth in faith cannot be far behind.

Kyle Matthew Oliver (@kmliver) is digital missionary in the Center for the Ministry of Teaching at Virginia Theological Seminary and a priest of the Diocese of New York. He leads the e-Formation Learning Community, a network of lay and ordained practitioners learning to use technology more effectively in their ministry.

GET ON THE MAP

Episcopal Asset Map is set to become a critical tool for the Diocese

The Episcopal Asset Map is a tool created by Episcopal Relief & Development (ERD). Originally intended for use in disaster response, it quickly became apparent that it is also extremely useful for highlighting everyday ministry throughout The Episcopal Church. Every Episcopal church and mission is included, providing each with an opportunity to share the news of all their church or ministry has to offer, both every day and in times of trouble, in a format searchable by users.

Earlier in the year, the Diocese of North Carolina asked every church to participate in the map, and so far the response has been tremendous. It's not too late to complete your church profile, and there are three very important, tangible reasons to do so:

1. You will become part of a nationwide network, as the hope is The Episcopal Church will adopt this map as its search tool.
2. We plan to integrate the Asset Map into the diocesan website. It will eventually replace the current map and directory.
3. The Diocese expects to include the Asset Map as part of the diocesan profile used in our search for the XII Bishop Diocesan.

The effort you put in to filling out your map information will be time well spent.

“Working on the Asset Map has surprised and

inspired me,” said Tamara Plummer, asset map coordinator for ERD. “I have come to appreciate in new ways the vast, diverse, international, awe-inspiring world called the Jesus Movement of the Episcopal Church.”

To fill out or update your church's information:

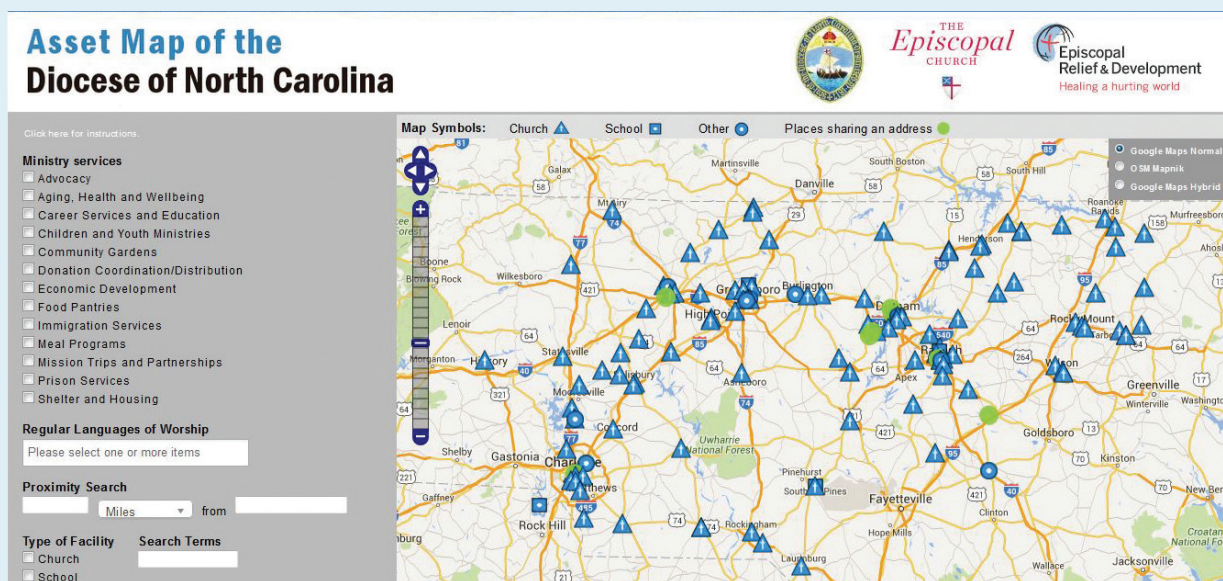
1. Visit episcopalassetmap.org
2. Click on “Explore My Diocesan Map” and select the Diocese of North Carolina from the drop-down menu.
3. Find your church's map pin, click on it and then select your church's name. (You can also find your church by selecting “List View” from the main tab menu.)
4. Click the “Take the Survey” button in the upper right corner.

No worries if your information changes over time – you can update your profile anytime you like.

If you are new to digital ministry, this is an easy first step. You could even say it's a form of evangelism.

“The map is not about taking credit or boasting, it is an invitation to have others join you,” said Plummer. “An invitation to be a little boastful, to share your story and let the world know how your hands are working in the world.”

If you have questions or need help completing your profile, please email communications@episdionc.org.





By Summerlee Walter

ST. ANDREW'S STICKS WITH IT

How a small church seeks new ways to deepen its connection to its neighbors

The people of St. Andrew's, Haw River, know a thing or two about patience and perseverance. Over the course of the last four years, this small congregation has launched a series of creative efforts to build a relationship with the residents of the low-income, mostly Latino neighborhood that abuts the church property. Their story reflects the reality of Galilee ministry: identifying a need in the community, offering a possible solution that meets people where they are, cultivating a willingness to step outside of the church doors and stay there for awhile, and practicing the spiritual discipline of patience.

The church's relationship with its next-door neighbors began with a community garden – nothing fancy, just an unused field and a hybrid sign-community bulletin board constructed of compressed wood and hand-painted with the words “Community Garden Sponsored by St. Andrew's Episcopal Church.” The garden, however, served as an invitation, a reason for the people who drove by the church building every day to stop and finally step onto the property.

From there the relationship began to grow, slowly, but enough for the people of St. Andrew's to invite the neighborhood children to a summer program in 2014. Through those new relationships, the church discerned yet another way to serve their neighbors: an after-school tutoring program.

BEING GOOD NEIGHBORS

Instead of getting bogged down in elaborate plans, the church acted quickly because, as vicar the Rev. Miriam Saxon put it, they had “made that connection and wanted to continue to be good neighbors.”

“We needed to go ahead and figure out dates and times and who could be here in those afternoons because school was going to get started and they would get behind without our being able to help them.”

That fall, a small group of volunteers set up shop at a picnic table next to the community garden. They knew parents would be more likely to allow their children to receive tutoring if the parents could monitor their children without needing to enter the church, and the table was clearly visible from most houses in the neighborhood. The program is an invitation in the truest sense of the word; neighborhood children of all ages bring their homework, whatever it covers, and volunteers from St. Andrew's work with them to figure out how to complete it.

“We're doing this totally on a shoestring,” the Rev. Jan Lamb, deacon at St. Andrew's, explained. “There was not a dime spent in order to set this program up. We have volunteers and we have volunteer materials, and mainly what we have is the children's homework.”

That spirit of being up for anything did not go unnoticed. One day, the grandfather of one of the tutees



(From left to right) The Rev. Miriam Saxon sprinkles holy water on the congregation during the church's blessing of its community garden on Pentecost in 2015. Photo by Logan Brackett. St. Andrew's started its relationship with the neighborhood children by hosting a multicultural VBS. The sign that started it all.

arrived with his own homework: citizenship paperwork. "It was great thing for us because we realized [our neighbors] actually trust us now," Saxon said.

Although the people of St. Andrew's saw signs of their deepening relationship with their neighbors, they still struggled to make inroads with the parents of the children with whom they spent time each week.

"We have a great connection with the kids, but not the adults," Saxon said, "but we keep looking for ways to invite them in."

That persistence paid off when a new family, recently arrived from Mexico, walked across to the churchyard during a parish workday. Serendipitously, the person they approached, the Rev. Caleb Tabor, vicar of St. Cyprian's, Oxford, spoke Spanish.

"By the grace of God, they asked the person who could understand them if we ever held Eucharist in Spanish," Saxon explained. The answer was not currently, but soon.

BRANCHING OUT

St. Andrew's ultimately decided to hold a monthly bilingual service so people from the parish could be part of the new worshiping community and meet their neighbors. It is a model used throughout the diocese by St. Cyprian's, Puerta Abierta and Iglesia de la Guadalupeana, among others, and it is effective in bridging cultural and linguistic gaps to unify parishes.

Saxon, in consultation with Tabor and the Rev. Audra Abt, diocesan missionary for Hispanic ministry in Greensboro, decided to begin with a trial service during Lent, posting notices on the community bulletin board

by the garden and sending home notices with the children in the tutoring program. One family attended the Lenten service, and another walked over to participate in an outdoor stations of the cross Abt led on Good Friday. Another neighborhood family came to hunt for eggs on Easter morning.

Saxon understands why families from the neighborhood may be hesitant to attend St. Andrew's.

"Families know the back door [of the church] but have never been in the front door, so there's a barrier," she said. "You can't see in through the doors out front, so that can also be intimidating if you're already nervous." To that end, St. Andrew's will hold its May bilingual service outside. They've already posted a notice on the bulletin board in Haw River's post office, and they plan to distribute brochures in the local tiendas and leave notices on mailboxes.

"We know the need is there, but we haven't figured out how to connect it yet," Saxon explained.

She keeps the church's growing pains in perspective. Although St. Andrew's has a successful track record of reaching into the neighborhood with the community garden and tutoring program, Saxon recognizes that the church's newest ministry will take time and patience to grow.

"I have great hope for this, but we just are at the very, very beginning," she said. "I keep praying for the courage to be persistent."

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Until we read again...

Get on the map! We intend the Episcopal Asset Map to be part of the diocesan bishop search profile going public at the end of May, and we want every church in the diocese to be on it! Learn how on page 29.

Do JUST ONE THING and refer graduating seniors to campus ministries at the colleges they plan to attend. Find the “Just One Thing” referral form under “Quick Links” at episdionc.org.

Send us your photos and news! We’re always happy to share the wonderful ministries and great work being done by you. Tell us about it at communications@episdionc.org.

Stay up to date. There are a lot of ways to stay connected with the Diocese, including specific channels to fulfill specific needs. Make sure you’re plugged in to them all (page 9).