

WINTER 2014



# The North Carolina DISCIPLE

THE EPISCOPAL DIOCESE OF NORTH CAROLINA

GO!  
GO DEEP  
GO SPEAK  
GO DO

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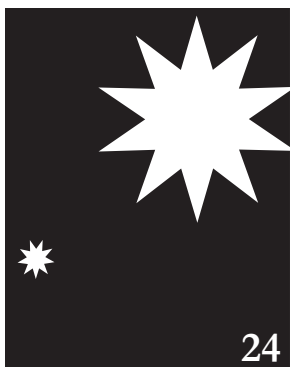
WINTER 2014

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# The North Carolina DISCIPLE

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### LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

Letters to the editor are published on the diocesan website under the NC Disciple tab.

### COVER PHOTO

A live tableau of the Harvest for Hospitality campaign logo. Special thanks to Good Shepherd, Raleigh; Patti Trainor; and Arturo Dominguez.  
*Photo by Summerlee Walter.  
Styling by Patti Trainor.*



# WE WANT YOUR CONTENT

So many stories, so many new channels in which to tell them! The Episcopal Diocese of North Carolina strives to serve and grow as a communications connection point for all of its parishes, clergy and parishioners. In the last year or two, we've done that work through the *Disciple*, Please Note and our social media networks. All of those channels will continue on, but they alone cannot contain all of the stories to be told. We have already established a few new communication channels, such as "Read All About It," to help keep the storytelling going, and more are on the way in 2014.

As always, the door remains open to each and every person who would like to contribute. Because of the new communications options, as of January 1, 2014, the



## We are on the lookout!

As 2014 gets underway, we are developing several series and themes for which we invite you to submit content. Send us your thoughts, ideas and suggestions on the following topics:

Reconciliation  
Environmentalism/stewardship  
Congregations making a difference

Diocese has put into place new submission guidelines. They focus more on discussing your story idea rather than where it might go public, along with the technical specifications to help maintain the highest possible quality when submitting photographs.

To review the new submission guidelines, please visit [www.dionc.org](http://www.dionc.org). To submit or discuss a potential story idea, contact the communications department at (919) 834-7474 or via email at [communications@episdionc.org](mailto:communications@episdionc.org).

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](http://www.episdionc.org), are used for more time-sensitive, day-to-day news.

Contact the communications staff at [communications@episdionc.org](mailto: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

By the Rt. Rev. Michael B. Curry

# GO!

The following is an excerpt from the Pastoral Address of the Right Reverend Michael B. Curry to the 198<sup>th</sup> Annual Convention.



If you remember nothing else from this address, I bid you to remember the word “Go!”

The Bible employs a rich and complex economy in its use of the verb “to go.” On the most basic level, the word “go” suggests some sort of physical movement, a change of location. But when the word “go” is uttered on the lips of the Lord, when God says “go,” it signals a change from one world to another, it signals a change from the world as it is to something closer to the world as it is meant to be. When God says “go,” the world is about to change, in some way, from the nightmare it often is into something closer to the dream that God decrees. When God says “go,” the world itself is changed, and the world of the person who hears and heeds it is about to change.

[We need to] figure out how to follow Jesus in this 21<sup>st</sup>-century world in which religion has been knocked off its establishment moorings.

I see three principles we could use. When you are no longer the establishment you have to:

Go deep;  
Go speak, and;  
Go do.

## Go Deep!

In order to go forth, you’ve got to go deep—because it must be God’s dream that we seek to proclaim, not simply our own. We go on God’s mission, not our own. It’s God’s

agenda, not ours. We are disciples of Jesus, following in his footsteps, not going our own individual ways. And to do that you have to go deep, deep into the very life of the living God, deep into prayer, deep into the Word of God, deep into the worship of God, deep into the ancient wisdom and practices of our tradition of faith. To go forth, you have to go deep.

I wonder what would happen if every church in this diocese adopted the practice of praying Morning and Evening Prayer every weekday or at least one or two days a week. We’re not talking about becoming a Church different from who we are. We’re talking about going deep and becoming the Church that we truly are.

I’m talking about an Episcopal revival, an Anglican revival. At this Convention I invite all the Episcopalians in this room, all of you, as we approach the season of Advent and begin our new year of faith, to adopt one Christian spiritual practice or discipline as a way of intentionally growing deeper into God’s call to us.

You might say the Daily Offices by yourself or in a group, or practice gospel-based discipleship in your prayers each day, or participate in the Diocesan Bible Challenge to read the Bible in a year, or practice centering prayer individually or with others. These ancient, time-tested Christian spiritual practices of study, prayer and meditation help bring us into deeper awareness of and relationship with the living God.

To follow Jesus into Galilee, to be the Episcopal Church in the cultural world we are in, to go forward, you’ve got to go deep into prayer and practices. Go!!

## Go Speak!

The power of words, of speech, was highlighted in a presentation at the 2008 Lambeth Conference of bishops in the Anglican Communion. Brian McLaren talked about the religious environment we are calling Galilee, with its ever-growing number of people who lack religious affiliation. He went on to describe what a faith tradition might do to reach these people with the gospel. He told us, “The truth is that the Anglican Episcopal way of being Christian may have the best chance [of all other traditions] of reaching many people with the gospel of Jesus in this context and this time. But the problem is, you all have been so quiet, nobody knows you even exist.”<sup>2</sup>

We often don’t speak because we’re afraid we don’t speak well. We don’t know enough of the Bible. We don’t know what to say. We don’t want to be rude or obnoxious. We don’t want to come off as judgmental of any other faith or person.

All of those are good points. But guess what?

We have a story to tell, a story filled with hope and love and God’s grace and mercy. One way to claim that story is to tell our own stories in the context of that larger story to fellow Episcopalians, and to hear their stories, too. I’m not suggesting we become intrusive or rude or false to who we are. But I am suggesting that we’ve got a story of God in our lives, a story of ways that Jesus has already been working in our lives sometimes without our even knowing. We’ve got to

start telling our story, the story of how God has moved in our lives, the story of a God who “so loved the world that he gave his only Son, so that everyone who believes in him may not perish but may have eternal life.” (John 3:16) Every one of us sitting here has a story of God in our life already.

I want to invite all of us across the Diocese of North Carolina to observe the season of Easter as a season of faith sharing. The idea is simple. I’m encouraging you to create opportunities for small groups of Episcopalians to gather around a simple potluck meal, evening tea, morning coffee and scones, or beer in a pub and share our stories.

The Diocese of Texas has created a story-sharing model that includes suggestions for moderated questions and conversation. Their organizers note that the groups “are designed

for Episcopalians to gather over a simple meal, get to know each other, and share their faith stories based on questions provided by a moderator. The process of sharing our own personal faith story helps us to deepen our own faith, and hearing others’ stories of God’s presence in their lives brings us into deeper relationship with each other.”<sup>3,4</sup>

## Go and Do Something for God’s Dream!

*“The church must go where the congregation already is.”*

– The Rev. Hugh Hollowell

That’s what is happening with the Episcopal Farmworker Ministry. Every Sunday during the growing season, Father Tony Rojas celebrates Eucharist at La Sagrada Familia on the ministry’s campus in Dunn, then goes out to the work camps and celebrates Eucharist in the fields with the laborers. He spends time with them and joins them in soccer games.

These kinds of ministries have everything to do with who

we are as Jesus’ disciples. These ministries offer a clear model of what we the Church need to do in our new world of Galilee—not waiting for the congregation to come to us, but going where the congregation is in the work camps, in the prisons, in the schools, in the coffee shops, in the country clubs, in the barrios, in the ghettos, in the hospitals, in the nursing homes, in the dormitories, in the courthouses, in the corporate offices, everywhere where God’s children already are.

Through the Episcopal

Farmworker Ministry we provide a helping hand and a compassionate presence of Jesus Christ to laborers in the fields. That is where we all stand together on common ground.

Today I am going to ask you to join us in a campaign to support the Episcopal Farmworker Ministry. Members of one of the great congregations among us, La Sagrada Familia, are laboring in the fields for much of the food we eat. We cannot as a diocese do everything, but we can do something. And the Harvest for Hospitality campaign is something we can do.<sup>5</sup>

Go deep; go speak; go do!



A prototype of the Moveable Feast van, complete with a sign pointing toward Galilee, parked outside of Duke Chapel during the Rt. Rev. Anne Hodges-Copple’s consecration in July. Learn more about Moveable Feast’s role in our Galilee journey on page 8.  
Photo by Holley Broughton.

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The Rt. Rev. Michael B. Curry was elected the 11<sup>th</sup> Bishop of the Episcopal Diocese of North Carolina in 2000. Contact him at [michael.curry@episdionc.org](mailto:michael.curry@episdionc.org).

<sup>1</sup> Learn how some communities in our diocese Go Deep! on page 16.

<sup>2</sup> This quote is from notes I took at the presentation by Brian McLaren at the 2008 Lambeth Conference.

<sup>3</sup> Sharing Faith Q & A, The Episcopal Diocese of Texas, [www.epicenter.org](http://www.epicenter.org).

<sup>4</sup> Learn how you can Go Speak! on page 19.

<sup>5</sup> Learn how to Go Do! on page 20.

# AROUND *the* DIOCESE

A new year has started since the last issue of the *Disciple*. Summer's heat has turned to winter's chill; the Church has celebrated the Feast Day of St. Francis, All Saints' Day, Thanksgiving, Advent and Christmas; and your photos have captured it all.



St. Paul's, Winston-Salem, held its 67<sup>th</sup> Annual Bazaar and Luncheon on November 20, 2013. In addition to a food booth filled with donated baked goods, the event featured a silent auction, a raffle, booths with Christmas-themed gifts and ornaments, and a full-service luncheon. Proceeds from this year's bazaar benefitted Episcopal Relief and Development, Second Harvest Food Bank's Backpack Program, and St. Paul's Preschool and Vacation Bible School. *Photo by Kerry Nesbit.*



The Rev. Gaye Brown, Galloway Memorial, Elkin; Janis McQuade, SSJ, St. Stephen's Catholic Church, Elkin; and the Rev. Stuart Taylor, Elkin Presbyterian, joined together to celebrate an ecumenical Blessing of the Animals at Elkin Presbyterian on October 5, 2013. The churches plan to continue the tradition, rotating the host church each year. *Photo courtesy of the Rev. Gaye Brown.*



Four-year-old Amelia Owens, St. Andrew's, Greensboro, helped to package meals during an ecumenical Stop Hunger Now event hosted by First Lutheran Church of Greensboro. Members of four different churches worked together to pack over 10,000 meals. *Photo by the Rev. Jo Owens.*



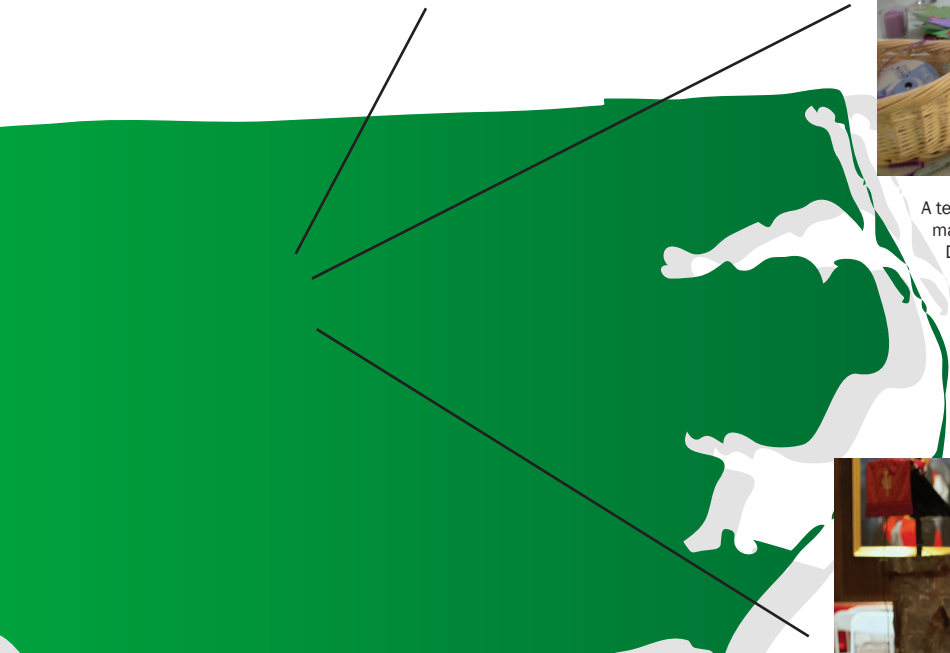
In partnership with FaithAction International House, a health clinic has opened in Julian House at Holy Trinity, Greensboro, to serve the immigrant population that otherwise wouldn't have access to health care services. The clinic was blessed on its opening day, October 10, 2013. *Photo by the Rev. Jo Owens.*



The Rev. Vicki Smith, rector of St. John's, Wake Forest, blesses a dog outside of Wake Forest Animal Hospital as part of a celebration of the Feast of St. Francis on October 2, 2013. This year St. John's offered pet blessings at the animal hospital, Paws at Play, The Lodge and the church. *Photo courtesy of the Rev. Vicki Smith.*



A team of Godly Play leaders and others at St. Mark's, Raleigh, joined to lead a marvelous multi-generational Advent wreath-making Sunday school class on December 1, 2013. Using foam kits as a base, each person personalized a wreath by arranging stars, shaping the leaves, deciding how many berries to add and drawing additional messages. The creativity of all those who made wreaths pointed to the truth that each and every one of us is a gifted person, created uniquely in the image of God. *Photo courtesy of St. Mark's, Raleigh.*



Iglesia El Buen Pastor recently celebrated its 15<sup>th</sup> anniversary as a mission of the Diocese of North Carolina. *Photo courtesy of El Buen Pastor, Durham.*



The Rev. Nita Byrd prostrates herself behind the Rt. Rev. Michael Curry during her ordination to the priesthood on October 14, 2013. *Photo courtesy of the Rev. Nita Byrd.*

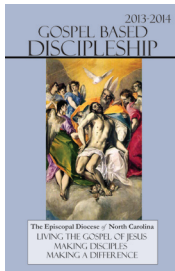
# NEW, NOTABLE & NEWSWORTHY

## THE VALUE OF LISTENING

*Gospel-Based Discipleship Now Available as Podcast*

*So faith comes from what is heard, and what is heard comes through the word of Christ. - Romans 10:17*

There is mysterious power in the spoken Word of God. There is something important about hearing the Word of God with our own ears. This is why, in part, Holy Scripture is read aloud during worship.



On December 1, 2013, we began a new cycle of *Gospel-Based Discipleship*. I encourage you to answer its call to follow the daily discipline of reading Gospel passages, for they are a key first step in learning how to understand all of the nuances and complexities found within the pages of the Bible.

This year we've added another layer to discerning the Gospels: that of hearing them spoken. With the start of this year's cycle, the Diocese is offering a daily podcast in which the Gospel is read by yours truly. You'll find the podcasts available now on the diocesan website ([www.dionc.org](http://www.dionc.org)) and soon on iTunes.

I encourage you to practice the spiritual disciplines of reading (or listening to!) and reflecting on Scripture and

praying for your church family. Hearing the scripture has a special place of importance in our tradition. Holy Scripture began as an oral tradition. "Hear, O Israel: The LORD is our God, the LORD alone. You shall love the LORD your God with all your heart, and with all your soul, and with all your might." (Deuteronomy 6:4-5). "Let anyone with ears listen!" (Matthew 11:15). Hearing the word of God is a communal activity. Whether we listen to Scripture read in worship or read the Bible at home, we are engaged in a communal act of listening, discernment and obedience.

I also invite you to extend your relationship with Scripture through study and conversation. When you read a parable that confuses you, open your Bible and read the footnotes. Borrow or buy a biblical commentary to enrich your reading. Ask a member of your church family what he or she thinks. Talk to your priest. Listen to the Gospels together. Engaging with the Gospels on a daily basis is a beautiful spiritual practice, but let it be a first step in your journey through Scripture.

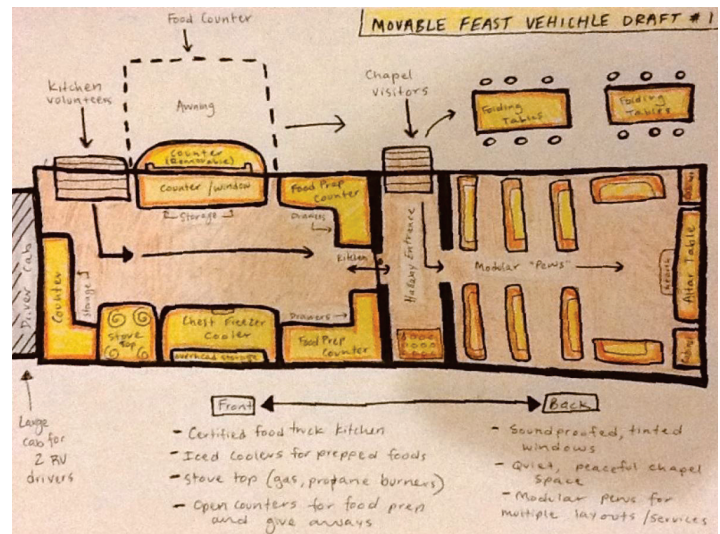
- By the Rt. Rev. Anne Hodges-Copple

## "A MOVEABLE FEAST" AWARDED LEADERSHIP GRANT

*Diocese of North Carolina honored with major campus ministry grant from TEC*

In November 2013, the Diocese of North Carolina was awarded a \$30,000 Leadership Grant as part of The Episcopal Church's Campus Ministry Grant program. A two-year grant, it is intended to help establish a new, restore a dormant,

or re-energize a current campus ministry. This grant will join additional funding from the Diocese to make possible an innovative new campus ministry initiative called "A Moveable Feast" (AMF).



Left: An artist's impression of the exterior of the A Moveable Feast van. See a prototype of the van on page 5. Right: An artist's impression of the interior of the proposed van that will serve as the centerpiece of A Moveable Feast. Artwork by Eliza Bordley.



AMF is a new model of ministry to serve young adults. It is a mobile ministry that will be based in a converted vehicle such as a bus or an RV and staffed by a pastor and a team of young adults. Its purpose is to form an intentional community and convey the real presence of Jesus Christ beyond the traditional confines of church buildings and grounds.

“A Movable Feast is all about stepping into the unfamiliar territory of Galilee and meeting people wherever they gather, bringing God’s love and care to young adults in new and surprising ways, whilst being grounded in our wonderful Episcopal traditions,” said the Rev. Nils Chittenden, missionary for the young adult ministry. “This grant is a real affirmation by the national Episcopal Church that the Diocese is looking at discipleship in really fresh and exciting ways.”

AMF is currently working to establish agreements with participating parishes and seeking young adult volunteers to participate in the program. The program is expected to launch in Spring 2014.

For more information or to participate in the program, contact the Rev. Nils Chittenden at [nils.chittenden@episditionc.org](mailto:nils.chittenden@episditionc.org).

- By the Rev. Nils Chittenden

## DIOCESAN EVENTS

JANUARY  
FEBRUARY  
MARCH

### January

- 2 Fresh Start, held regionally. Contact Canon Michael Buerkel Hunn.
- 10-12 Godly Play Training, All Saints, Greensboro

### February

- 3 Registration deadline for Genesis (Mar. 7-9)
- 14-16 A Quest for Holiness: A Sabbath Retreat for Adults Who Work with Youth
- 22 Safe Church Training, 8:30 a.m.-12:30 p.m., Holy Family, Chapel Hill. Pre-registration required, [www.episditionc.org](http://www.episditionc.org).

### March

- 7-9 Genesis: Middle School Spiritual Growth Weekend
- 17-18 Clergy Lenten Retreat, Camp Careaway, Sophia, NC. Registration open soon, [www.episditionc.org](http://www.episditionc.org).

Look for additional events and more detailed event information online at [www.dionc.org/digital\\_faith/events](http://www.dionc.org/digital_faith/events), or contact the Diocese at 919.834.7474, toll free 800.448.8775. Upcoming diocesan events and events from around the Diocese are featured in Please Note, Bishop Curry’s weekly e-newsletter.

## CLERGY CHANGES

*As of December 10, 2013*

**The Rev. Wren Blessing**, from Assistant to the Rector, Holy Family, Chapel Hill, to Canon for Christian Formation, Diocese of Montana.

**The Rev. Louise Anderson**, from Non-parochial, to Deacon, Calvary and St. Luke’s, Tarboro.

**The Rev. Weigher Bright**, from Vicar, Part-time, St. Luke’s, Yanceyville, to Non-parochial.

**The Rev. Jay Burkhardt**, from Assist. to the Rector, All Saints Concord, to Vicar, St. Andrew’s, Calallen, TX.

**The Rev. Courtney Davis-Shoemaker**, from Vicar, Part-time, St. Andrew’s, Haw River, to LEAF Campus Minister, Elon University.

**The Rev. Gail Davis**, from Assistant, St. Stephen’s, Durham, to Retirement.

**The Rev. Martha Brimm**, from Assist. to the Vicar, St. Joseph’s, Durham, to Associate Priest, Chapel of the Cross, Chapel Hill.

**The Rev. Jay Burkhardt**, Letters of Dimissory, from Diocese of North Carolina, to Diocese of West Texas.

**The Rev. Nita Charlene Johnson Byrd**, from Transitional Deacon, to Priest. October 14, 2013.

**The Rev. Christie Dalton**, from Northwest Regional Deacon, to Deacon, Ascension Fork, Advance.

**The Rev. Gregory McIntyre**, from Diocese of Western North Carolina, to Assistant, St. Alban’s, Davidson, and Chaplain, Davidson College.

**The Rev. Stewart Tabb**, from Diocese of Atlanta, to Associate Rector, Holy Trinity, Greensboro.

**The Rev. Christopher Hogin**, from Diocese of Virginia, to Transitional Deacon & Assistant to the Rector, St. Michael’s, Raleigh.

**The Rev. Jan Lamb**, from Deacon, St. Luke’s, Durham, to Deacon, NCSU Campus Ministry.

**The Rev. Melanie Mudge**, from Diocese of Kentucky, to Interim Rector, St. Luke’s, Salisbury.

**The Rev. Susan Sherard**, from Non-parochial, to Assistant Rector, Holy Trinity, Greensboro

**The Rev. Michael Battle**, from Non-parochial, to Vicar, St. Titus.

**The Rev. Foy Bradshaw**, Deceased, December 1, 2013.

**The Rev. Henry Sink**, Deceased, August 13, 2013.

## SAINTS ALIVE!

### *First Regional Fall Youth Event a Success*

This year, the Diocese took a regional approach to gathering middle schoolers together for the traditional Fall Youth Event, staging smaller, more intimate gatherings rather than a single large event. “Saints Alive” was the theme for the simultaneous retreats—one in Raleigh and one at Camp Dogwood on Lake Norman in Sherrill’s Ford—held on All Saint’s weekend.

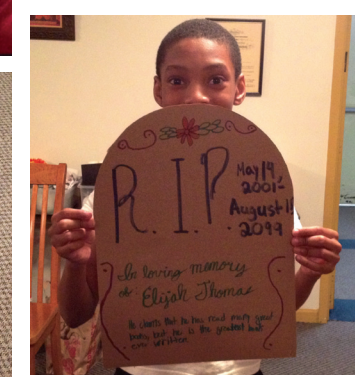
Throughout the 24 “saintly” hours, kids used the time to reflect, partake in activities, learn and worship. They heard about the saints who populate history and learned how to discover the saints in themselves. They communed during Eucharist and spent some time in contemplation.

“Coming together for an overnight event simultaneously in several different locations for Fall Youth Event proved to be a huge success,” said Beth Crow, diocesan youth missionary. “Youth who had never really been away from home outside their own parish seemed to find comfort in adventuring out within their own communities for one night. Youth leaders agreed we should continue to offer such an event for our middle school age youth.”

The Spring Youth Event is scheduled for April 4-5, 2014.

- By Lyn Holt

*Right:* Phil Black, St. Peter’s, Charlotte, offers the chalice to Miles Smith, St. Peter’s, Charlotte, as the Reverend Jon Baugh, St. Margaret’s, Waxhaw, looks on. *Bottom left:* Dominick Wideman, St. Christopher’s, High Point, and Jackson Rhinehardt, St. Mark’s, Huntersville, make their own tombstones to reflect on the kind of life they hope to be remembered for. *Middle:* Elijah Thomas, St. Peter’s, Charlotte, presents his tombstone to the group. *Photos by Lyn Holt.*



## CHURCHNEXT OFFERS “THE BIG CLASS” WITH BISHOP CURRY

From January 27 - February 3, 2014, the Rt. Rev. Michael Curry will teach “The Big Class,” a program of online Christian learning resource ChurchNext. The course will expand on *Crazy Christians: A Call to Follow Jesus*, the book based on Bishop Curry’s widely-acclaimed “We Need Some Crazy Christians” sermon preached at General Convention in 2012.

In the class, participants will learn what it means to be a disciple of Jesus in the 21st century, why it’s important, the joys and obstacles of being a disciple, the habits of discipleship and tips for remaining faithful.

“We thought about putting a warning label on this course: Danger, Your Life Will Be Transformed,” said the Rev. Chris Yaw, founder of ChurchNext. “In a world that constantly sanitizes Jesus’ radical message, Bishop Curry’s clarion call to deeper discipleship has changed lives. We pray all who take this course will experience God’s transforming power.”

Throughout the week of January 27, participants can take “The Big Class” anytime and at no cost because ChurchNext is waiving the usual course fee. For that week only, Bishop Curry will be online to moderate the course and answer ques-

tions. Anyone with Internet access and a computer or tablet can take the class at [www.churchnext.tv](http://www.churchnext.tv). The course requires no special software.

“It’s exciting to see all the new ways technology is being leveraged to help folks go into a deeper awareness of and relationship with the living God,” said Bishop Curry. “Online education is an excellent example of it. It allows folks to learn, to interact, exchange ideas and, ultimately, to share what they learn with others. The process is exactly what we as Christians are called to do; an online classroom just gives us one more way to do it.”

The Big Class is a worldwide online course for all who want to go further in their walk with Christ. It is free to everyone thanks to the support of Bexley Seabury, Church Publishing Inc., Forward Movement and the Episcopal Diocese of NC. Special materials will be available for congregations and adult education classes who desire to take the class together as part of their Epiphany season study.

To learn more, visit [churchnextblog.wordpress.com/the-big-class](http://churchnextblog.wordpress.com/the-big-class).

## 50 YEARS OF LATER: THE STATE OF RACISM IN AMERICA

On November 15, the Rt. Rev. Michael Curry participated in a groundbreaking forum that examined the state of racism

in the United States today. A video of the forum is available at [www.episcopalchurch.org/page/state-racism](http://www.episcopalchurch.org/page/state-racism).

## ST. AMBROSE CELEBRATES 145TH

St. Ambrose, a congregation organized in 1868 as a ministry to recently emancipated African-Americans, commemorated 145 years throughout October 2013 with celebrations centered around the theme Stand Up for Jesus. The month began with trumpeter Wynton Marsalis' *Abyssinian Mass*. St. Ambrose also organized a Community Health Fair and Family Fun Carnival, and its youth collected nearly 145 cell phones and accessories for United Way InterAct. The City of Raleigh honored the church's work in the community with a Raleigh City Proclamation.

The celebrations culminated with a Progressive Eucharist, during which worshippers visited three of the parish's four Raleigh locations. The service started with an outdoor Thanksgiving Prayer Service at the second location, an outdoor Communion at the third location and a picnic at the current site. St. Ambrose's seventh rector, the Rev. Joe Green, 87, preached. The service music, based on African-American spirituals, was from the 1920s and was written by the parish's third rector, the Rev. A. Myron Cochran.

After the celebratory Eucharist, St. Ambrose held the inaugural Revis Outreach Service Excellence (ROSE) Award benefit luncheon honoring James and Almetta Revis, a couple that prepared 11,000 meals for a Raleigh homeless shelter and helped deliver 32,000 homebound meals during their 60 years of marriage. The Rev. Dr. Otis Moss, III, pastor of Trinity United Church of Christ, Chicago, delivered the keynote.

- By the Rev. Jemonde Taylor



Top: 2013 ROSE Award Recipient, James Revis (center) poses with his family; the Rev. Jemonde Taylor, rector of St. Ambrose (left); and the Rev. Dr. Otis Moss, III (right). Right: The Rev. Kimberly Hudson, deacon at St. Ambrose, processes the Gospel Book under an Ethiopian canopy umbrella. Photos by Rick Crank, Jada Bing and Jemonde Taylor.



## MISSISSIPPI EDUCATIONAL CENTER NAMED FOR BISHOP MARBLE

The Diocese of Mississippi recently named its new academic program for the theological formation of vocational deacons after the Rt. Rev. Alfred "Chip" Marble. The A. C. Marble Center for Theological Formation is the first multi-diocesan online formation program of its kind in The Episcopal Church and is coordinated with the Iona Initiative out of the Seminary of the Southwest in Austin, Tex.

During his tenure as Bishop of Mississippi, Bishop Marble was instrumental allowing the ordination of vocational deacons in the Diocese of Mississippi.

- Adapted from the *Mississippi Episcopalian*, Vol. 138, No. 9

## OUR STATE FEATURES DIOCESE

Two diocesan rectors were featured in the December 2013 issue of *Our State* magazine as part of a series of prayers for North Carolina. "From the Balcony" by the Rev. Brooks Graebner of St. Matthew's, Hillsborough, and "So Much in Common" by the Rev. Jane Wilson of Calvary Parish and St. Luke's, Tarboro, debuted in the collection whose contributors included the Rev. Billy Graham. You can read them at [www.prayer.ourstate.com](http://www.prayer.ourstate.com).

## GREENSBORO PARISHIONER NAMED TO NATIONAL BOARD

Ken Keeton, a member of Holy Trinity, Greensboro, recently joined the Board of Directors for the National Episcopal AIDS Coalition (Province IV). Ken has been serving his community along these lines as the Director of Development and Community Involvement for Triad Health Project, the HIV/AIDS service organization for the greater Greensboro and High Point communities.



## READ ALL ABOUT IT

Throughout November and December, people from around the Diocese shared stories of Thanksgiving, Advent and Christmas. 'Tis still the season, and you can enjoy them in the "Read All About It" section at [www.dionc.org](http://www.dionc.org).

If you haven't checked out this newest section of the diocesan website, you'll want to visit the homepage and peruse it. There you'll find feature stories, bonus *Disciple* content, special series reflections, videos and more. Learn how you can contribute to "Read All About It"—and our other communications channels—on page 3.

# YOUR MUST-READ BOOKS of 2014

You nominated them on Facebook and Twitter, you voted for them and now here they are: the top-10, must-read books of 2014! If you missed out on the voting this time, don't worry. There will be many more opportunities to join in on social media in the coming year.



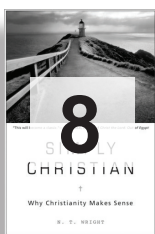
*Naming the Powers* by Walter Wink<sup>1</sup>

A provocative examination of the New Testament and what it has to say about power in its various manifestations.



*The Complete Stories of Flannery O'Connor* by Flannery O'Connor

A collection of 31 stories from revered American author Flannery O'Connor.



*Simply Christian* by N.T. Wright

Renowned biblical scholar and Anglican bishop N.T. Wright makes a case for Christianity from the ground up, walking the reader through the Christian faith step-by-step and question by question.



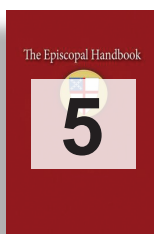
*Let Your Life Speak* by Parker Palmer

With wisdom, compassion and gentle humor, Parker J. Palmer invites us to listen to the inner teacher and follow its leadings toward a sense of meaning and purpose.



*Gilead* by Marilynne Robinson

A story about fathers and sons, the spiritual battles that still rage at America's heart, and the often unbearable beauty of an ordinary life, Marilynne Robinson tells the tale in the luminous and unforgettable voice of Congregationalist minister John Ames.



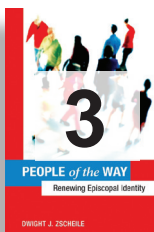
*The Episcopal Handbook*

Complete with illustrations and a healthy sense of humor, *The Episcopal Handbook* provides historical and theological information about the Episcopal Church alongside fun-filled facts and practical tips for being a churchgoing follower of Jesus Christ.



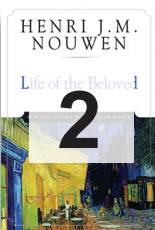
*The Great Divorce* by C.S. Lewis

*The Great Divorce* is a classic Christian allegorical tale about a bus ride from hell to heaven. An extraordinary meditation upon good and evil, grace and judgment, Lewis's revolutionary idea in the *The Great Divorce* is that the gates of Hell are locked from the inside.



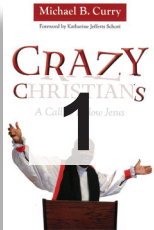
*People of the Way* by the Rev. Dwight Zscheile

Scholar and Episcopal priest Dwight Zscheile draws on multiple streams of Anglican thought and practice, plus contemporary experience to craft a vision for mission that addresses the 21<sup>st</sup>-century church's post-establishment, post-colonial context.



*Life of the Beloved* by Henri Nouwen

Initially written for a Jewish friend, *Life of the Beloved* has become Henri Nouwen's greatest legacy to Christians around the world. This sincere testimony of the power and invitation of Christ is indeed a great guide to a truly uplifting spiritual life in today's world.



*Crazy Christians* by the Rt. Rev. Michael Curry<sup>2</sup>

Based on his wildly popular address to the 2012 General Convention, *Crazy Christians* is a collection of sermons by the Rt. Rev. Michael Curry over the last decade. Read them and you'll know why "[w]e need some Christians who are as crazy as the Lord."

<sup>1</sup> All book descriptions and cover art taken from jacket copy and information provided on Amazon.com.

<sup>2</sup> Editors' Note: We promise we didn't rig the election. Bishop Curry's book was clearly and by far the run-away favorite. Honest!

# THE RESULTS ARE IN

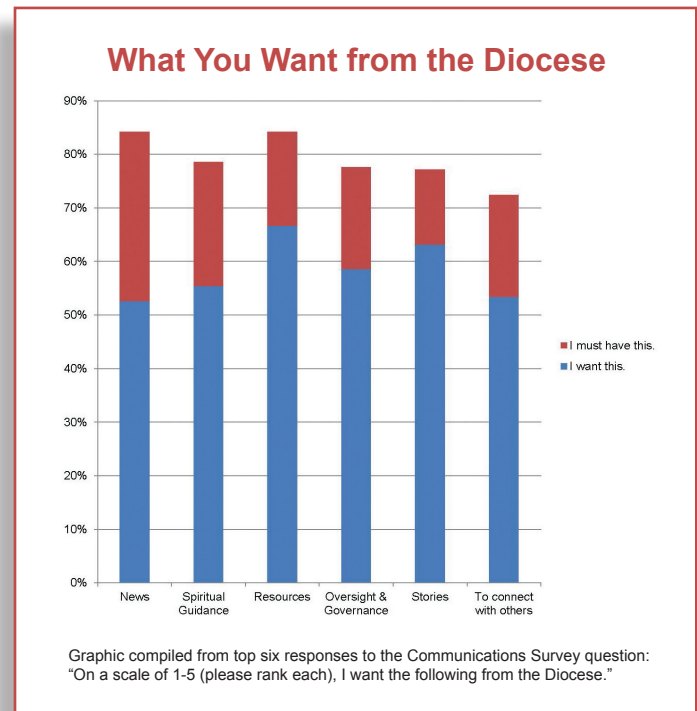
*And we're listening!*

Thank you to all who took the Communications Survey throughout the fall. We offered it as we're gearing up and planning for a great 2014, and we wanted to be sure your input was included in those plans. We are here to serve you, and we're listening to what you had to tell us.

Here are some of the highlights from the survey results:

- 100% percent of respondents are interested in what the Diocese does, but only 82% feel connected.
- 47% percent of respondents are connected with us on Facebook, and many expressed interest in seeing the Diocese expand its social media offerings.
- 89% of respondents would like to connect and engage more with the Diocese and the parishes, ministries and people that comprise it.
- 63% said they'd be interested in a mobile app that allowed users to see sermons, access event information and read news from around the Diocese.
- 73% always read the *Disciple*.
- 55% always read Please Note.
- Of the options listed, the top six things respondents said they want most from the Diocese are
  - News
  - Gospel-based, spiritual guidance
  - Resources
  - Stories
  - Oversight and governance
  - To connect with others
- 70% of respondents said they visited the diocesan website in search of information and resources or to register for an event.
- Results on the navigability of the website were mixed, although most agreed it could use some improvement.

While we continue to improve diocesan communication - and our support for congregational communication - in each of the areas the survey highlighted, we already have several channels in place to help people connect with the Diocese and with each other.



People can get connected to the Diocese, plus many parishes and missions, through Facebook (EpiscopalNC) and Twitter (@EpiscopalNC). Social media is a great way to keep up with news and announcements and to start interacting with members of other congregations.

For those looking for gospel-based guidance, hard copies of the 2013-2014 *Gospel-Based Discipleship* are still available, the daily readings are posted for you on Facebook and Twitter, and we recently released readings by Bishop Anne Hodges-Copple via podcast. And that's just the GBD – there's more to come in 2014!

Finally, because we hear so many great stories that we can't include them all in the pages of the *Disciple*, we've started a new section called "Read All About It" on the diocesan website ([www.episdionc.org](http://www.episdionc.org)). If you haven't yet checked it out, take a moment to visit and enjoy stories, reflections, meditations and more.

In addition to the survey, many of you who responded offered individual insights, feedback, suggestions and opinions. We heard every one of you, and much of what you said you wanted is reflected in our plans for the coming year.

So stay tuned, and never think you have to wait for a survey to be heard. We work to connect you, inform you and to bring us together as a diocese. Your insights are always welcome, and as we endeavor to improve current programs and launch new ones, we're counting on you to take part and let us know what you think.

# HIGHLIGHTS *from the* 198TH ANNUAL CONVENTION



The 198<sup>th</sup> Annual Convention of the Diocese of North Carolina took place on November 23, 2013, at Canterbury School in Greensboro. The second Convention of 2013, the major business of the one-day gathering was passing the 2014 Mission and Ministry budget and electing delegates to the 78<sup>th</sup> General Convention. The 199<sup>th</sup> Annual Convention will return to a two-day format November 21-22, 2014, at the Benton Convention Center in Winston-Salem.

## The Bishop's Pastoral Address

The Diocese continues to take steps on the road to Galilee, a path it has been walking since the Rt. Rev. Michael Curry's pastoral address in 2011. This year his pastoral address, "GO!," announced the next stages of the journey: Go Deep, Go Speak, Go Do. Bishop Curry encouraged the Diocese to pray the Daily Offices at the congregational level each weekday, to participate in small-group faith sharing activities during Easter, and to support the Episcopal Farmworker Ministry through the Harvest for Hospitality campaign. The Galilee Commission's learnings informed the address.

An excerpt from the address is available on page 4.

## The Mission and Ministry Budget

The 2014 mission and ministry budget passed without objection. Convention also moved that the 2015 Fair Share asking for congregations be set at 11.25 percent.

## Acts and Resolutions

**Res. 198.1.** On Amending Canon 12 to Include the Secretary of the Convention as an Ex Officio Member of the Commission on Constitution and Canons. Adopted.

**Res. 198.2.** On Repealing Canon 33. Repeals *Campus Ministry Presence in Convention*, as enacted by Act 2010-2. Canon 33 was superseded by adoption of Article III, Section 8 of the Constitution and enactment of Canon 1, Section 4. This resolution does not change the standing of campus ministries at the Convention. Adopted.

Left: The Rev. Beth McKee-Huger, deacon at St. Barnabas, Greensboro, served as the Deacon at the Gospel during the Convention Eucharist. She was recognized for receiving the Recognition of Diaconal Ministry in the Tradition of St. Stephen award from the Association for Episcopal Deacons. Right: Delegates enjoy Canterbury School's beautiful campus. Photos by Summerlee Walter.



**Res. 198.3.** On Authorizing Meetings and Voting by Remote Technology. Authorizes parish and mission vestries, the Diocesan Council, the Standing Committee, the Trustees of the Diocese and all other commissions and committees of the Diocese to conduct meetings by teleconference, video-conference or any other technology that allows all persons participating to hear each other at the same time and to participate in discussion. Adopted.

**Res. 198.4.** On Honoring God's Creation. Encourages congregations to be mindful of God's Creation and to practice good stewardship. Substitute resolution adopted.

**Res. 198.5.** On the Small Church Relief Initiative. Attempts to set the Fair Share at 10 percent for congregations with fewer than 100 adult communicants. Rejected.

**Res. 198.6.** On Participation in Harvest for Hospitality: A Campaign Benefiting the Episcopal Farmworker Ministry Through Education, Awareness and Fundraising. The Diocese and its congregations commit to participate in the Harvest for Hospitality campaign through education, awareness, involve-



ment and fundraising through the spring of 2015. Substitute resolution adopted.

**Res. 198.7.** On the pastoral address of the bishop. Courtesy resolution. Gives thanks for Bishop Curry's vision to go deep, go speak and go do. Adopted.

**Res. 198.8.** On appreciation for the ministry of Bishop Chip Marble. Courtesy resolution. Adopted.

**Res. 198.9.** On appreciation for all who worked to make this convention possible and for the hospitality of the Canterbury School. Courtesy resolution. Adopted.

## Election Results

**Delegates to General Convention | Lay:** Martha Bedell Alexander (head of deputation), Alice B. Freeman, Joseph S. Ferrell, Margaret (Meg) McCann

**Alternate Delegates | Lay:** Josephine Hicks, Athena Hahn, Wade Chestnut III, Robert (Bob) Holtzclaw

**Delegates to General Convention | Clergy:** The Rev. Sara Ball-Damberg, the Rev. Kevin Brown, the Rev. Jamie L'Enfant, the Rev. Kevin Matthews

**Alternate Delegates | Clergy:** The Rev. John Tampa, the Rev. Deb Blackwood, the Rev. David Umphlett, the Rev. Adam J. Shoemaker

**Diocesan Council | Lay:** Laurie Holden, Jeanne L. Kutrow, G. Peter Macon

**Diocesan Council | Clergy:** The Rev. Audra Abt, the Rev. Marisa Tabizon Thompson

**Standing Committee | Lay:** Thomas F. Womble III

**Standing Committee | Clergy:** The Rev. Marty Stebins, the Rev. Jane Wilson

**Trustee, University of the South:** Jane Whitt Sellers

**Penick Village Board:** A. Root Edmonson, Alice B. Freeman, John A. Greer, Judith G. Leggett, Darlene G. Vaughn, The Rev. Nicholson B. White

## The Rt. Rev. Alfred "Chip" Marble Honored with the Bishop's Award

The Rt. Rev. Alfred "Chip" Marble, honorary Associate Bishop of North Carolina and retired Bishop of Mississippi, was honored with the Bishop's Award at the 198<sup>th</sup> Annual Convention. The following is an excerpt from the Rt. Rev. Michael Curry's remarks as he conferred the award.

"Your ministry as deacon, priest, Bishop of Mississippi and Assisting Bishop of North Carolina has dared to get the Church into the world.

"You have gotten the Church into the world by bringing the ministry of deacons to the Diocese of Mississippi years ago. You have gotten the Church into the world by providing a network of support for gay and lesbian Christians in the 1990s in Mississippi.

"You have gotten the Church into the world by leading efforts of anti-racism in the House of Bishops and in the Diocese of Mississippi. You have gotten the Church into the world by organizing the Greensboro Faith Leadership Council, which brought together ecumenical and interfaith, Protestant, Catholic, Jewish, Muslim, Buddhist, Hindu and Sikh [leaders], together at a table in Greensboro. You have taken the Church into the world by supporting the Truth and Reconciliation Commission here in Greensboro, even with great controversy.

"You have taken the Church into the world by appearing and speaking before the City Council of Greensboro, writing numerous letters to editors, and causing letters to be written to the Bishop of North Carolina.

"You have gotten the Church into the world here in the Diocese of North Carolina, providing leadership and support for our anti-racism work, leading the Racial Justice and Reconciliation Commission. You have gotten the Church into the world by redeploying our retired clergy, helping them to have chaplains to support them in some of the remarkable and incredible ministries that they still do in the world.

"You have gotten the Church into the world by helping to support the School of Ministry and making it into a dynamic force for making and forming disciples of Jesus.

"And you have gotten the Church into the world by supporting the work of the deacons of this Diocese.

"You have gotten the Church into the world by being a voice for justice, a voice for human decency, a voice for God's equality for all of God's people.

"You have brought the Church into the world by being a loving, decent man of God."



The Rt. Rev. Alfred "Chip" Marble with the Rt. Rev. Michael Curry (top) and the Rt. Rev. Anne Hodges-Copple (bottom) during the conferring of the Bishop's Award, with which Bishop Marble was honored. Photos by Summerlee Walter.



*Photos by Summerlee Walter with special thanks to Scott Welborn.*



# *the* NEW MONASTICS

*To you, therefore, my words are now addressed, whoever you may be, who are renouncing your own will to do battle under the Lord Christ, the true King, and are taking up the strong, bright weapons of obedience.*  
- Rule of St. Benedict

Four years ago while at a meeting at Christ Church, New Haven, Conn., I had dinner with women and men who were seeking a hot meal through the church's Community Soup Kitchen. All of us at the meeting were standing in the same line, talking to the residents of New Haven and hearing their stories while sharing our own. I noticed the servers of the meal were all young adults; no one was more than 25 years old. I leaned over to the curate and asked who these folks were. "These are members of the Episcopal Service Corps," he said. "They live together in community in the old rectory, pray together daily and work for various social agencies for a year." "This is ours?" I asked, meaning - this is in the Episcopal Church? He nodded. It is.

Four years later, St. Timothy's, Winston-Salem, has welcomed the third class of Episcopal Service Corps (ESC) interns to The Abraham Project, one of nearly three dozen programs of the ESC and one of two in the Diocese of North Carolina. Each is different, and each has a unique charm, yet each shares the same commitment to social justice, community, simplicity and prayer.

This commitment is incredibly important, because there is a yearning in young adults. They have been the most marketed-to generation in history, and digital boundaries challenge incarnational relationships. Trust, therefore, is more difficult, and community is increasingly foreign. As we are created for both of these - we are created and called to trust in the Lord, and we are called to be in community - young adults who have been discouraged from living into their identity are frustrated.

Freedom from this frustration, they are discovering, is found in obedience. St. Benedict called obedience "the virtue of those who hold nothing dearer to Christ." Marketing and advertising have told young adults to make their own choices while telling them what those choices should be. Following the sales pitches is not obedience. It is not freedom. In obedience, there is trust. There is no bait and switch. Nothing is subliminal.

Our ESC interns come from all over the country. This year, they hail from Colorado to Kentucky. They do not know Winston-Salem, the women and men they will live with for ten months, or where they will be working 35 hours per week. There are no promises, gimmicks or parachutes. They are asked to trust God's will and the process he may use.

They are not monks and nuns in the traditional sense, and I am not their abbot. But they do give themselves to a way of life rooted in Benedictine monasticism and spirituality, a spirituality that is deeply Anglican.

At the start of their year as interns, they are asked to create a Rule of Life, a document that will govern and order their common life.

## *Serenity in* STABILITY

Willard L. Sperry once said, "We lay the altar in these lives with classical accounts of the Christian life which will light up when life itself kindles them with sudden insight or vision."

I've always found the quickest way to identify who I am and where I am going is to leap out of what is comfortable and easy. In my time as an Episcopal Service Corps intern, this meant moving into a house with two other people who weren't like me and with whom I had to navigate the exterior and interior life of faith. But as Sperry's quote suggests, the altar God built during my time in the Abraham Project was cold and dark until I moved further out of that intentional community, farther away from my family and comfort, took what I'd learned and acquired there and handed it over to the care of God, to use again as he saw fit.

St. Benedict emphasizes three things in his rule of life: obedience, stability, and "conversion of manners." During my internship, the most difficult of the three for me was stability. Stability is not a common thing these days. We are far too quick to pick up and move jobs and homes rather than stay where we are. Society tells us, too, that everything is disposable: phones, cars, relationships - the list goes on. Stability, though, speaks of a commitment, a lasting covenant. It is an outward reminder of an inward truth: God never leaves us or forsakes us. It trains us to make our home in God as he makes his home in us.

Stability is a deep, abiding trust in God and a very strong appreciation of God's presence within me, other people and every circumstance of life. It is remaining in the Vine when everything says to do otherwise. It centers me, and it draws me home.

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*Caitlin Clendenin, an intern who finished the ESC program, is now the youth director at St. George's, Nashville, Tenn.*

## *Finding the* **CENTER**

“Lord, I am not worthy that Thou should'st come under my roof, but only say the word, and my soul shall be healed.” (Matthew 8:8)

I hate routines. I have never been a routine person. I thrive on the spontaneity and trying to squeeze every drop of thrill out of every moment. I get anxious when I do fall into routine, when my room is too clean, and when I'm early to the places I need to be. Yet every day I wake up and race out of the door an hour before I need to go to work. Every day I spend an hour praying. Every day I go to Morning Prayer and mass at St. Timothy's.

The first week of going to Morning Prayer as an Abraham Project intern was a struggle. I am a cradle Episcopalian, and I haven't had to use a prayer book during normal mass since I was 16. I found myself stumbling through Morning Prayer liturgy, frustrated that despite my familiarity with the prayer book, I could never quite figure out which parts happened when. Furthermore, I have never, ever, in my whole life, used Rite I for Eucharist. I hated it. I did not get it, and I was not happy about it.

So one day, I skipped it. I decided I could probably get away with it and still be OK. It was not a good day. The actual events of the day weren't bad; I just approached everything I did with completely the wrong attitude. Something about the day was missing, and it wasn't until I went to Morning Prayer the next day that I realized what it was. I was missing Jesus. I was missing that center to my day. Suddenly, reciting the Daily Office made sense to me. It wasn't just about the words I was saying, but the act of praying every day. Something in me changed when I actually devoted routine time to Jesus.

Morning Prayer has become the steady heartbeat through my week. I find the words we pray every morning ebb and flow through my consciousness the rest of the day. It drives me and keeps me centered. It returns me to the comfort of Christ and the Eucharist, even when I'm uneasy. It returns me to stability when the rest of my life is spontaneity and organized chaos. It returns me to feeling myself being transformed into the Christian that Christ wants me to be, that he wanted me to be all along.

*Caitlyn Darnell is an intern with the Abraham Project and is serving as the youth program coordinator for Habitat for Humanity, Forsyth.*

They are asked to be specific and create ways to hold each other accountable. Who will cook the meals? Who will cut the grass? Who will lead the prayers? In a world where many things have been planned and done for them, questions like these aren't just practical, they spur maturation. Our young adults are coming out of a context that includes online classes, text messaging and cyber bullying. They are then thrust in a house with a common life that demands sharing, submission and honesty, all Gospel virtues and the antithesis of greed, entitlement and deceit.

St. Benedict demanded his monks work, as “idleness is the enemy of the soul.” All interns with the ESC work for the greater good of the community. Our interns work for and with Second Harvest Food Bank, Habitat for Humanity and The Centers for Exceptional Children. Through their work, they learn that to look inward, you must also look in the souls of others. Our responsibility in the Body of Christ is better discerned in the presence of the other members of Christ's Body. Our interns do not choose their work; rather, it is given to them. Many times they love their placements immediately while for others, it is a year-long struggle. This struggle, they learn, is a part of obedience and trust.

In our community we talk a lot about finding “holiness in the mundane.” For most college graduates, the longest commitment they've had to make is to a 13-week semester. A 10-month commitment where the scenery and work rarely changes is an initiation into adulthood rarely imagined. How can they see the sanctity in a daily grind of work and community? How can they find fruit in the daily recitation of Morning and Evening Prayer? Where will they find the fortitude to go to mass even when they don't feel like it?

Those who truly give themselves to the process find surprising strength in the ancient rhythm and discipline of the daily office. In addition to the offices of Morning and Evening Prayer, the Holy Eucharist is celebrated almost every day at St. Timothy's. The liturgy is a constant cycle of traditional prayers and rituals. The canticles of the Benedictus, Magnificat and Nunc Dimittis become the hinges of their days that open doors deeper and deeper into the love and knowledge of Christ.

In the three years since our first class arrived, I have noticed that most really understand what is happening just before they must depart. Recognition comes upon reflection. Some of our interns have gone on to seminary, while others go to graduate schools and careers inspired by their service work. My prayer is that wherever they go, they never leave the rhythm and discipline offered during their year in community, simplicity, prayer and service. My prayer is that they continue to live under obedience, and live freely.

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*The Rev. Steve Rice is the rector of St. Timothy's, Winston-Salem. Contact him at [frsteve@sttimothys.ws](mailto:frsteve@sttimothys.ws).*

### **Bonus Content**

Watch the Rev. Steve Rice discuss the meaning and importance of Morning and Evening Prayer:  
[www.dionc.org/Diocese/read-all-about-it.html](http://www.dionc.org/Diocese/read-all-about-it.html).

# SHARING FAITH

## *Learning to Tell Your Story*

*"We have a story to tell, a story filled with hope and love and God's grace and mercy."*

*- The Rt. Rev. Michael B. Curry*

*in his pastoral address to the 198th Annual Convention*

Everyone has a story. Whether it's the story of a single moment or an epic, life-changing tale, we all have a story to tell of God working in our lives. Some of us talk easily about it, and some of us are shy. Some speak of miracles, some of joy or sorrow, and still others about God's persevering, constant, treasured presence and their enduring relationship with him.

Three years ago, the Diocese of Texas began an event intended to offer Episcopalians a way to gather and tell their personal stories of faith. Sharing Faith dinners provided an opportunity for more than 1300 participants to gather in 250 homes across the diocese to share a meal, get to know each other and talk about their faith.

"It was a powerful evening, to know others were beginning the evening with the same prayer, were gathered around a meal and were together specifically to tell their own story



A faith-sharing group in the Diocese of Texas gathers in a private home to practice telling faith stories. Photo courtesy of the Diocese of Texas.

and to hear others," said the Rt. Rev. Andy Doyle.

Modeled after Houston Interfaith Ministries' Amazing Faiths Project, the gatherings are designed to encourage community. Each gathering of about a dozen people, whether in someone's home or around tables in the parish hall, is led by a moderator who guides the time of sharing. In turn, each participant receives a question from a deck of "dialogue cards" and is given four minutes to share their response without questions or interruptions. Active listening by the others at table is key. After one person finishes, the next person receives a card with a different question. Depending on time, people may get more than one or two questions and some may answer the same question, but the stories are always unique.

"The 'no interrupting' structure minimizes our tendency to respond to someone else's story with our experience, and it also gives the introverts the room to respond comfortably," said Carol E. Barnwell, director of communication for the Diocese of Texas. "In our first year, we had husbands say they learned things about their wives they had never known, people who had gone to church together for 30 years learned new things about their friends, there were tears and laughter. The reviews were very positive," she added.

Dinner groups are kept small, eight to 12 people, preferably meeting in someone's home for a very simple meal. Moderators are trained to use a set of guidelines to create a safe, inviting environment that encourages people to go deep in their sharing, to provide the experience of being heard, and to teach neutrality in interpersonal encounters.

"Many of our churches are doing additional events with neighbors and friends throughout the year. Delegates use the questions at our annual Council and vestries use the cards to talk about their faith before a meeting," Barnwell said. "We include a Sharing Faith dinner at all our conferences when we can as well. There is no limit to the creative ways in which we can learn to share our faith once we start. It's great practice for learning how to invite people to church, too."

## COMING SOON: SHARING FAITH IN NC!

"Go Speak: Sharing Faith" is coming to the Diocese of North Carolina this Easter season. Over the next few months, we'll be working with those interested in becoming moderators, setting the schedule and planning the events. Of course, we'll be sharing details with you as they develop!

Until then, you can start to get ready to share faith, too. If you've never before shared the story of God working within your life because you were too shy or unsure if others wanted to hear it, take a few first steps to start increasing your comfort level.

- **Comment.** Every story in the "Read All About It" section of the diocesan website offers a chance to share your reactions, thoughts, comments and stories.
- **Get social.** When you "share" or "like" something on Facebook, you are telling a part of your story.
- **Find a friend.** Those closest to us offer the greatest support. Find a friend or fellow congregant and ask them if you can tell them a story.

If you're long comfortable with sharing your faith, reach out and help those new to it. Offer to lend an ear, support those taking their first tentative steps, and invite others to join you at the Sharing Faith events. Go speak!



# HARVEST FOR HOSPITALITY

A CAMPAIGN TO BENEFIT THE EPISCOPAL FARMWORKER MINISTRY



Harvest for Hospitality pieces  
by the Rev. Lisa Fischbeck

## a HISTORY of the FARMWORKER

As long as there have been farms, seasonal and migrant workers have been an integral part in the planting and harvesting of crops. Because different crops are planted and harvested in different seasons of the year and in different regions of the country, farmworkers often migrate when and where their labor is needed.

The history of farmworkers in this country dates back to our earliest days. In the 17<sup>th</sup>, 18<sup>th</sup> and 19<sup>th</sup> centuries, white laborers were often brought from England as indentured servants. They were guaranteed passage to the colonies in exchange for years of hard labor, usually in the fields. Because these indentured servants did not provide enough labor to support the growing agricultural production needed for the export market, Africans were brought to the colonies as slaves to labor in the fields, eventually forming the backbone of our agricultural industry.

After the abolition of slavery in the 19<sup>th</sup> century, many former slaves were forced into low-wage sharecropping by economic necessity. Yet because of changes in agriculture, immigration policy and fluctuations in employment opportunities, migrant labor became an important part of East Coast agriculture well into the 20<sup>th</sup> century. French Canadian and Italian immigrants worked in the Northeast, while African Americans from the South began to migrate along the coast.

During the Great Depression in the 1930s, hundreds of thousands of farm laborers migrated to California, their story recounted and preserved in John Steinbeck's *The Grapes of Wrath*. Also in the 1930s, national labor laws were passed to protect those in the work force, yet those laws excluded farmworkers and domestic workers from child labor protections, overtime pay, minimum wage laws and the right to organize.

During World War II, more than 100,000 European prisoners of war labored on farms in the Southeast, while laborers from the Bahamas, Jamaica and Barbados toiled in sugarcane, citrus and vegetable production in Florida and all along the East Coast. Yet it wasn't enough. To supplement the wartime labor shortage, the Bracero "Strong Arm" Program was put in place, whereby Mexican farmworkers were brought to the United States by the federal government to work on farms and railroads. The Bracero Program was terminated in 1964, and in its place came the H2A Guestworker Program. The H2A Guestworker Program continues today, recruiting more than 20,000 workers each year for employment in agriculture.

Following the war, as African Americans moved into other industries, immigrants migrated toward jobs in agriculture. Haitians began arriving during the 1970s, to be replaced a decade later by workers from Mexico and Central America.

# TODAY'S FARMWORKER

Farmworkers play a vital role in cultivating the food we eat everyday, and North Carolina has one of the largest farmworker populations in the nation. We may think of 21<sup>st</sup>-century agriculture as being largely machinated, but 85 percent of our fruits and vegetables are harvested by hand. Major North Carolina crops requiring hand labor include tobacco, Christmas trees, sweet potatoes, cucumbers, apples, bell peppers, and other fruits and vegetables. Many farmworkers also work in greenhouses and nurseries.

North Carolina ranks sixth in the nation in the number of migrant farmworkers coming through the state each year. There are approximately 150,000 farmworkers and their dependents in North Carolina each growing season, but this estimate is considered low. In the U.S. there are two to three million farmworkers. Even though the overall number of farmworkers in North Carolina has decreased over the last 20 years, the number of migrant farmworkers has nearly doubled.

Ninety-four percent of migrant farmworkers in North Carolina are native Spanish speakers. Nationally, most farmworkers are unaccompanied males whose families still live in their home countries. Farmworkers are often away from home, family and their familiar culture for months at a time.

Nationally, a farmworker's average annual income is \$11,000; for a family it is approximately \$16,000. Farmwork-

ers on the East Coast earn about 35 percent less than the national average. At 40 cents per bucket (the equivalent of 5/8 bushel), a farmworker must pick and haul two tons of sweet potatoes to earn \$50. Most farmworkers are exempt from minimum wage laws, and all are exempt from overtime provisions, despite long workdays during peak harvest. Although they grow and harvest the food we eat, nearly five out of 10 North Carolina farmworkers cannot afford enough food for themselves and their families.

Housing for farmworkers is crowded and often hazardous. State regulations require only one washtub for every 30 workers, one shower for every 10 workers and one toilet for every 15 workers, and they do not require telephone access for cases of emergency. Many farmworker families live in housing directly adjacent to agricultural fields, increasing the likelihood of pesticide exposure. Farmworkers face higher rates of heat stress, dermatitis, parasitic infections and pesticide-related illnesses than other groups of wage earners. Barriers to receiving health care include lack of transportation, limited hours of clinic operation, the cost of health care, limited interpreter services and the frequent relocation required to seek farm work.

Farmworkers have been a part of our country's history from the beginning, but their tale is not an abstract one from which we are far removed. Farmworkers are the ones who provide the food we eat every day, and they are the stranger at our door. It is right to give them welcome and thanks for the bounty they harvest.

<sup>1</sup> Information contained within these pages was compiled from resources provided by the North Carolina Farmworker Project ([ncfarmworkers.org](http://ncfarmworkers.org)) and the NC Council of Churches ("Fact Sheet on Farmworkers and Immigration").



Opposite page: Loneliness and isolation are two of the biggest challenges facing migrant farmworkers. Above: Migrant farmworkers live in extremely basic, crowded accommodations with little to no privacy. Few have access to indoor bathrooms, and conditions are often unsanitary. These third-world living conditions exist within a few counties of most North Carolina homes. Next page: Migrant farmworkers are paid at a piece rate and are not subject to minimum wage laws. All photos by and used with the permission of Andrew Lichtenstein.

# a DAY in the LIFE of a NORTH CAROLINA MIGRANT FARMWORKER

John Steinbeck wrote *The Grapes of Wrath* in 1939, and Edward R. Murrow produced the iconic documentary *Harvest of Shame* in 1960. Both were seminal works depicting the lives and shocking plight of the migrant worker. In the years since their respective releases, the country has grown and flourished, becoming ever more aware and compassionate to the challenges faced by those in need. Yet with all the awareness we've gained, few have really heard the tale of the farmworker; even after all these years, they inhabit a world in which little has changed since the days of Steinbeck and Morrow. Hours are still back-breakingly long, pay remains minimal, accommodations are poor and worn, and life is lonely and hard.

The typical day in the life of a farmworker is one few of us can imagine. According to the NC Council of Churches, "At the height of the growing season, farmworkers often work 12-14 hours a day in the hot sun with few breaks. The average farmworker earns less than \$11,000 a year."<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup> *Fact Sheet on Farmworkers and Immigration, NC Council of Churches. The sample workday schedule is also adapted from this resource.*

## Sample Workday

- 5:00 a.m. Get dressed in the dark.  
Eat a quick, cold breakfast in your trailer.
- 5:45 a.m. Board the van that will take you to the fields.
- 6:00 a.m. Arrive at field. Working fast, pick two tons of sweet potatoes in order to earn \$50. This may or may not be possible depending on the time of year and quantity of sweet potatoes in the field.
- 9:00 a.m. Take a break for 5 to 10 minutes to drink some water from the cooler in the van. The sun is already blazing, and there is no shade.
- 12:00 p.m. Eat lunch in the fields. There's no soap to wash the pesticides off your hands, only water. You have half an hour.
- 4:00 p.m. Take your second and last 5-minute water break. Depending on the stage of the harvest, you might continue to work another four hours.
- 7:00 p.m. Ride back to your trailer. Take off your pesticide-covered clothing and shoes. Exhausted, take turns with your roommates showering, cooking dinner and preparing lunch for the next day.





## THESE ARE THE PEOPLE WHOSE SACRIFICES PUT FOOD ON THE TABLE.

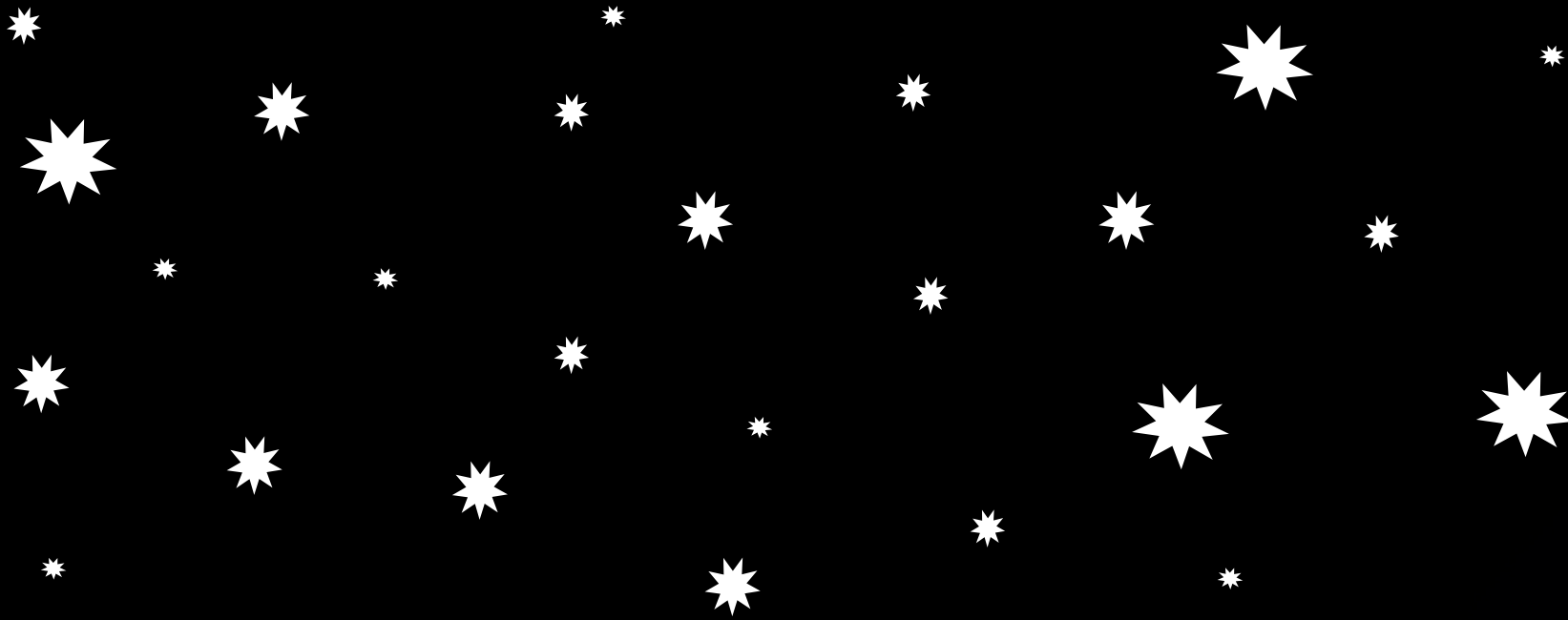
### ISN'T IT TIME WE HELP THEM?

Your donation to Harvest for Hospitality is a donation to North Carolina's farmworkers. All proceeds from the campaign will support the Episcopal Farmworker Ministry (EFwM). Since 1982, the EFwM has responded to the harsh realities farmworkers face with a kind and welcoming presence, a place of respite and recreation, worship and fellowship, and much-needed assistance with finding a way through government and business systems and forms.

Staff and volunteers drive to the camps and pick up farmworkers and bring them to the EFwM site. There the farmworkers find an outdoor church, worship and song, soc-

cer fields and clean bathrooms. The Rev. Tony Rojas offers pastoral care and the sacraments. Ministry staff members help workers understand social security requirements and immigration laws, work toward citizenship when possible, wire money home and find medical care when needed. English as Second Language (ESL) classes are offered as well as basic reading skills. In short, at the Episcopal Farmworker Ministry, farmworkers are welcomed and cared for, treated with dignity and respect, and are reminded of God's love.

To learn more about the campaign, to donate, or to learn how other are helping, visit [www.harvestforhospitality.org](http://www.harvestforhospitality.org).



By the Rev. Rhonda Lee

# SEEING EPIPHANY'S LIGHT

When I was in the third grade, my music class spent several months learning American folk songs, many of them African-American spirituals. Since I grew up in Canada, those music lessons were mixed with the history of what is popularly called the Underground Railroad.

We learned about Harriet Tubman, who earned the nickname "Moses" for the courage she showed by returning again and again to the South to lead God's children north out of bondage. When our class sang "Go down, Moses," we thought not only of the prophet who brought the Israelites out of Egypt, but also of the 19th-century woman who followed in his footsteps.

My imagination vividly illustrated these songs: the fugitives moving as quickly and quietly as they could from woods to safe houses, resting by day and running by night. They followed the north star, the bright point on God's compass they prayed would lead them to freedom. Slave catchers followed close behind, seeking their quarry by the light of torches and lanterns.

Now that I'm grown, the competing lights that illuminate these scenes of flight and pursuit call to mind the church's season of light, Epiphany. Epiphany celebrates the revelation to the world of God's light, Jesus Christ, and reminds us that following his light requires a steadfastness that can be gained only through practice in community.

Many lights compete for our attention and our loyalty today, just as they did for our 19th-century brothers and sisters. Almost all enslaved persons and slaveholders were baptized Christians. But they had two different visions of freedom. One group was convinced human beings belong only to God and cannot be owned by another; the

other was equally persuaded the freedom on which their new republic was based was for only a few, and God had ordained all others should serve those few.

Slaveholders' ideology, ironically, was rooted in the philosophy of the Enlightenment, which, while in theory advocating the ideals of freedom and equality for all, also allowed slaveholders' to justify slavery on the basis of allegedly "scientific" differences between their slaves and themselves. Those they held enslaved, however, followed an ideology of freedom rooted in the light of Scripture. They knew the story of the Exodus. And they knew Jesus Christ, whom Herod's men hunted by torchlight, but who embodied true freedom and offered that freedom to anyone who would accept it. Prayer, singing, Bible study and worship formed our enslaved ancestors into people who knew God's truth, and who found ways to live by it, even when to do so was costly.

You and I also know the Gospel truth, and we have the freedom to tell it, through words and deeds, in the season of Epiphany and throughout the year. Jesus is Lord, and he gives us light to walk by, even when our way isn't clear. But we can be distracted by other lights: some subtler than those that seduced our slaveholding ancestors, and some that history will no doubt judge just as evil, but to which we are currently blind. We need God's help to discern how best to follow the light that is Jesus Christ, and we need each other's support on that journey.

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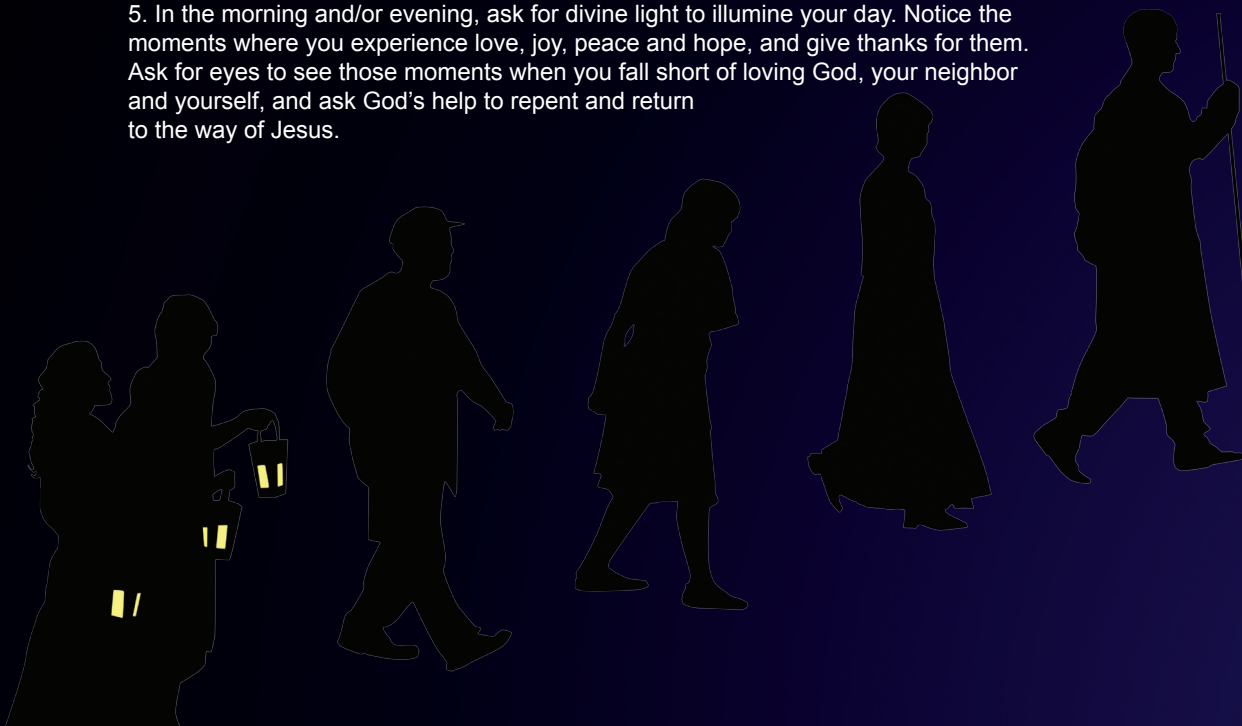


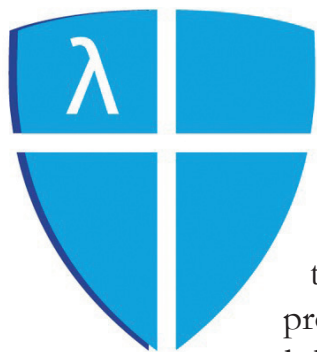


# LIVING EPIPHANICALLY

To live epiphatically, growing in our ability to perceive the light of Christ and follow him, requires practice and community. Here are some suggestions of practices that may help. You might try them with a partner: a spouse or other family member, a friend or someone at church you would like to get to know better. As is the case with exercise and a healthy diet, most of us are more likely to stick with a practice if someone else is counting on us.

1. Every Sunday, look over your calendar for the week ahead, and set aside daily time to sit consciously in God's presence. It doesn't necessarily have to be the same time every day, and it can be as short as ten minutes, but put it on the calendar and leave it there.
2. Use the treasures of the Book of Common Prayers that use the image of light and are suitable year-round include the collect for the renewal of life (p.99), the (very short) service of Noonday Prayer (p.103), and the Song of Simeon (p.135).
3. Reserve some of your prayer time to listen silently for God's guidance to you.
4. Notice the lesser but powerful lights that seek to compete with Christ: advertisements; electronic screens, especially during times reserved for prayer or fellowship; political campaigns that tempt us to demonize or objectify fellow children of God.
5. In the morning and/or evening, ask for divine light to illumine your day. Notice the moments where you experience love, joy, peace and hope, and give thanks for them. Ask for eyes to see those moments when you fall short of loving God, your neighbor and yourself, and ask God's help to repent and return to the way of Jesus.





## *with* LOVE *and* INTEGRITY

Since 1975, Integrity USA has worked to “inspire and equip the Episcopal Church, its dioceses, congregations and members to proclaim and embody God’s all-inclusive love for LGBTQ persons and those who love them.” The organization recently named Sarah Vivian Gathright Taylor its first transgender executive director. She is also the first transgender woman to lead a major mainline Protestant denominational organization.

A graduate of the University of North Carolina-Chapel Hill with a B.A. in Religious Studies and a former chaplain’s assistant to the United States Army National Guard who served in Iraq, Taylor is also among the first transgender women to enter the Episcopal ordination process.

She spoke with the *Disciple* via phone in October.

### **Could you explain what being transgender means, both generally and for you personally?**

There is no one right way of being trans and no one real kind of being trans. It’s very different for different folks. For some folks, it’s people who very strongly identify and understand themselves as one gender, not the one they were assigned at birth. They may eventually identify full-time as the gender they feel themselves to be. Some of my earliest memories were knowing I’m a girl, and it’s always been important for me to transition to living full time as a woman.

For others it’s more fluid, but they’re all working toward a very real state of authenticity for themselves. In their own way, and through communion with the Holy Spirit in Christian contexts, they are becoming who they are. For some folks it’s about making the trip, for some it’s the process.

One thing trans folks face is a lot of absolutes. There are toxic narratives about trans people. Their experiences are often boiled down into jokes or heartbreaking drama stories on television, but neither is really accurate in most people’s experience. We’re not really that scary or confusing once you get you know us.

### **Tell me about your relationship with the Church growing up and how that helped or hindered you as you grew into your gender identity?**

The Episcopal Church was a community of believers who were supportive and loving. The Episcopal Church was the first place I had real community or believers with whom I could be authentic and honest while still being in that context of a real, honest Christian environment.

I grew up Southern Baptist and more or less left the Church before joining the Army at 18, partially due to my own wanderings, partially because I was not comfortable as a queer person in that environment.

I only had the Bible to read at basic [training]. That’s all I was allowed, so I read the Old Testament like a novel. One thing the scriptures do incredibly well is tell deeply human stories, and the presence of God doesn’t necessarily clean all of these stories up. There’s so much diversity, so much room for humanity in the stories you find in the Bible. I thought about this, and I don’t know if I’d say I came back to God, but I came back to him in a way that made me feel like I was coming to him authentically.

[While I was at the University of North Carolina-Chapel Hill], I kept meeting wonderful, interesting people in the orbit of Chapel of the Cross, [Chapel Hill]. Sometimes there’s this still, small voice, sometime it’s like God is insistently tapping you on the shoulder, sometimes God picks you up and drops you where you need to be. I made friends with folks who were gay and out. I cannot tell you how good it was to be able to be in a parish in an environment where I could be my own person and not be ashamed to be who I was before God.

### **What does your role with Integrity entail? What would you like to see Integrity accomplish in the coming years?**

My most important role with Integrity is to work every day to serve every LGBTQ person within the Episcopal Church. A Church of our size and geographical diversity has people in lots of situations, and I give folks tools and

“The important thing is that people love one another, walk humbly, do justice and love mercy. If we’re working in that context, we can find ways to know each other and to be human to each other.”

support to help keep the doors of churches across the entire nation open and to give LGBTQ people a home in the community of Christ.

The goals are different in different places. In some places, we’re still making it possible for partnered gay, lesbian and bi clergy to serve openly in dioceses. In some places we’re helping churches develop better understanding. In other places we’re working to help folks take a stand on issues around transgender Christians, like marriage equality and legal protection of all LGBTQ people. We’re a large organization with lots of goals.

### **Why is it important for churches to become Believe Out Loud churches? How is that different from generally welcoming people when they arrive?**

Becoming a Believe Out Loud congregation requires going through training to make sure the church is completely open to all people and to let that be known publicly. A public declaration of openness and love for all LGBTQ people is a powerful example of evangelism and spreading the good news of Christ.

I love evangelism. We go around and tell people they are beautiful, unique, treasured and loved by God. We can’t hide anything about ourselves from God. If you try to tamp your light down and hide it, it will still keep burning, so you might as well let it shine. When you hide a candle under a basket, you eventually get a house fire. Who you are will get out there anyway.

### **For churches that aren’t yet ready to take the step of becoming a Believe Out Loud congregation, what are some other things they can do to be more welcoming and inclusive for our LGBTQ brothers and sisters?**

Simply start conversations. Once you start conversations, you can figure out where people’s hurts are and what their thoughts are, where work needs to be done, where people need to be comforted, where people just need more information. It’s always helpful to see who in the faith community supports the welcome of LGBTQ people and to help them be comfortable talking about it. It all comes back to letting your light shine and being open

about your love for LGBTQ people.

Integrity has been around for 40 years, and LGBTQ people have been in the Church much longer than that. The first non-Jewish Christian was the Ethiopian eunuch, an amazingly diverse person who wasn’t just of a different race and class [than that of most early believers] but whose gender and sexuality was very different...and problematic under the law. There’s always been people crossing these boundaries in the Church. It is incredibly important that everyone has the full opportunity to follow Jesus Christ and to love and be loved.


Very often we draw this false dichotomy between urban and rural places, but geography is not any barrier to being an incredibly loving and welcoming church and celebrating community. I’ve been incredibly blessed by a number of parishes where I have just been deeply loved, not just as a trans person but just as a person. All LGBTQ people are just people. It makes as much sense to try to make a differentiation by saying I’m going to try hard to love and accept people with brown eyes. It’s a silly social structure and also one that I strongly believe people are moving past. The important thing is that people love one another, walk humbly, do justice and love mercy. If we’re working in that context, we can find ways to know each other and to be human to each other.



Sarah Vivian Gathright Taylor is the executive director of Integrity USA. Learn more about Integrity at [www.integrityusa.org](http://www.integrityusa.org).

Believe   
**OUTLOUD™**

Become a Believe Out Loud congregation  
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# COLLABORATION *is the* KEY

## *Transforming the Diocesan Structure*

By the Rev. Canon  
Michael Buerkel Hunn

For any group or organization to thrive, it must stay fluid and willing to adapt to changing times. The Church is no different, and the staff of the Diocese of North Carolina is forever looking to find better ways to serve the parishes, clergy and parishioners in our region. It's a process of thoughtful trial and error, keeping what works, improving what doesn't and developing new ideas and directions along the way.

Take, for example, the regional ministry approach employed several years ago. Its goal was to improve the responsiveness of the diocesan staff and bring the staff, literally, closer to the people. It worked well in some ways, but we found that as time went on, rather than bringing the Diocese as a whole closer together, silos were naturally forming as regional groups connected, worked together and started to function as "mini-dioceses."

So about two years ago we modified the structure of the Diocese again, this time putting the focus on the skills and strengths the staff had to share, rather than geographical boundaries. The approach was implemented first in the creation of our regional canons ("We Have Regional Canons?," Fall 2013) and has been well-received. Feedback tells us congregations feel supported by their team of five canons and two bishops.

In the summer of 2013, the Diocesan Council voted to modify the youth ministry of the Diocese so that it might work in a similar, team-oriented way. Under the regional plan, we had three part-time regional youth coaches whose role was to coach both volunteer and paid youth ministers in the congregations. In addition to the coaches, we also had two diocesan youth missionaries who worked to produce the many youth events the Diocese holds each year. People loved their local regional coach, but they often felt miles away from Raleigh, and there were times when the many local, regional and diocesan events overlapped on the calendar. We heard complaints about communication problems and over-scheduling very similar to those we heard before we reorganized the regional canons.

The transformation of the youth ministry structure is already underway. Under the new approach, there are now three full-time diocesan youth missionaries working as a team, coordinating diocesan events and supporting congregations by coaching youth ministers locally. Once again the focus will be on available strengths and skills rather than geographical boundaries. If what we've learned from the canons team can be applied to the Youth Ministry Department,

our congregations will feel the support of three full-time staff members rather than one part-time person. It also allows us to be more proactive about the needs within the Diocese: balancing local and diocesan events, making sure everyone is communicating and responding to needs as they arise.

### **A Staff to Serve You**

The reorganization of the Youth Ministry Department is only another step in our continuing effort to build a staff structure that unites us as one Diocese. I see the diocesan staff as the metaphorical skeleton that supports the Diocese, but it's the lay and clergy who are the muscle and lifeblood of the body of Christ in North Carolina.

The diocesan staff has been transformed over the last several years. We have two priorities: first, help every congregation thrive and, second, help the Diocese be a diocese. Whenever and however your congregation needs support, we want your diocesan staff to be immediately available with a high level of expertise to help.

We no longer try to do the things congregations do better themselves, like outreach ministry. Instead, our focus is on the things for which a diocese is needed. We work to provide resources so congregations can focus on their ministries, knowing they can count on the Diocese for things like youth ministry development, stewardship, mutual ministry reviews, vestry retreats, strategic planning advice and assistance with crisis issues.

As a diocese, we also want to make things happen that would be difficult, time-consuming and resource-draining for individual congregations to coordinate themselves, such as organizing the annual diocesan convention, supporting the Commission on Ministry as it discerns who among us is called to ordained ministry, and looking after our companion diocese relationships. Our School of Ministry provides a multitude of resources and training so congregations don't have to reinvent the wheel every time it's needed. Clergy discipline and pastoral response, transition ministry, health care and insurance for clergy and lay employees, real estate transactions – all of these are examples of things the diocesan staff works to provide each and every congregation.

### **So What's Next?**

As I speak with colleagues around the Episcopal Church, there is a lot of excitement about how the Diocese of North Carolina operates. They are aware congregations are likely to need more support in the next 30 years than they did in the last 30. As the Greatest

Generation passes away and the baby boomers and Gen Xers struggle to pay the bills, we are seeing stresses on the church. If you ask our vestries and clergy how confident they are their church can continue to thrive another 20 years if they remain unchanged, you will hear a sobering conversation.

If each congregation has to be all things to all people, we're in trouble. But each does not have to be all. If we collaborate, if each congregation can focus on what God is calling it to do as a part of the wider diocese, and if there is a diocesan staff there to support, encourage and coordinate those congregations, I'm excited about the future of the Episcopal Church.

There are so many exciting possibilities about how we might work together for the Glory of God in the future. There is so much ministry to be done in a world that desperately needs the Gospel of Jesus Christ, and we have so much to give. I have worked with lay and clergy leaders across this diocese over the past eight years or so, and I am humbled by the wealth of gifts this diocese has. So many wise and dedicated lay people are ministering in their churches, with strengths and skills they are willing to share. I want to live and work in a diocese where each person feels supported and knows he has access to every resource in the Diocese and its network. I can see that as a real possibility. And we'd only build from there, sharing and making those resources available to those in need, who may not know the good news of Jesus or have ever heard the word "episcopal."

It's a changing world, and we'll continue to change with it.



*The Rev. Canon Michael Buerkel Hunn is the canon to the ordinary for program and pastoral ministry. Contact him at [michael.hunn@episdionc.org](mailto:michael.hunn@episdionc.org).*



# WALKING *with* GOD

## *while* WALKING *the* HALLS

*How one church uses imagery to bring the Bible – and their building – to life*

St. John's, Charlotte, has seen many changes to its physical structure over the years. Capital campaigns that added square footage and made improvements gave us new space for ministry, and the integration of new outside structures was always a sensitive and well-addressed concern. The inside, however, was a different story. It was at about the time of the last major expansion I began to wonder about how dated and uninviting the older structure looked, especially the areas under the nave dedicated to our children. With three small children of my own and another on the way, I was in no position to change that, but it was laid on my heart.

I had the opportunity to visit South Africa in 2012 and marveled at the children in the poorest parts of the townships. Playing in the dirt, unaware of their circumstances, and yet they were some of the most joyfully free children I have ever met, skipping, playing drums on empty soda bottles, wide-eyed and innocent. Their sense of community with one another and with the Holy Spirit was palpable; it overrode their environment. There is little to no comparison between the ground floor of our church and the townships, but the hallways and rooms hosting the grades 2-5 classrooms were certainly sad and depressing. Although excellently maintained, the paint colors were institutional. And yet our children skipped down there in vast numbers every week, united in the Spirit, unaware of the peeling paint, faded colors and dated, mismatched furnishings. Late in the summer of 2013, I knew I had reached a time when I could give this transformation the time and energy it would take. But I knew this was going to be a team project, and I knew exactly who to ask.

I was born into a family of artists, so to draw and paint came naturally to me from an early age. I love color. Some people feel a call from God in music or nature, but I feel Him through color. I met with the Rev. Paul Winton, our rector, and proposed we revitalize the elementary classrooms in the older structure to unite them with the bright and fresh preschool in our adjacent 2003 addition. I proposed painting images from a Bible story book I had researched and chosen, choosing bright, vibrant colors and images that would greet the children and parents alike. He gave his blessing on the project immediately. We are a large church, and our volunteer base is one of the most active I have encountered, so I approached our resident wall painter, Judie Ratcliffe, and asked if she would be willing to prime and paint the walls to ready them for the murals. Judie is a little beyond retirement age, but you would never know it. She has the energy of a 20-year-old and got to work quickly, painting the long hallways and classrooms with the help of her small, faithful team of Pete and Justine.

For the murals I approached four women: Katie Morgan, Lauran Godwin, Sarah Morgan and Christy Koury. I knew them from painting during vacation Bible school, and they all accepted. We all have different strengths in our artistic ability but equal commitment to the finished product, so two of us fill in color, one of us mans a projector, and a couple of us freehand the images. As the project has progressed, we have found our individual niches as we work alongside each other, paint brushes in hand, one painting hair, while the other does faces and the third paints clothing and scenery.

Our images are based on the work of artist Carolina Faris, who granted us permission to use and adapt her work. I found some of the images somewhat generic, though, or at least not reflective of the cultural diversity found in our church. Having a goddaughter in the church who was adopted from China into a beautiful mixed-race family, I was really keen for all races, ages and genders to be represented. I wanted my goddaughter to be able to see her whole family on the walls. As I thought about my desire for children to see themselves in the murals, Christy, who has a daughter with autism, asked if special needs could be incorporated as well. That was a no-brainer, so we are adapting the paintings that way, too. We will have people with crutches crossing the Red Sea, and a service dog alongside children on their toes. One of our classrooms has had the same second grade teacher in it for almost 30 years. Mrs. Brown and her dear husband, Ken, depicted as children, are included in the mural of Jesus the Teacher we painted in her room.

We are all mothers, active in our faith lives and families, so we work around our schedules and come in when we can. We have all agreed that coming and painting at church is like therapy. Our fellowship has been lively, and we all agree there are no mistakes.

The project started in October 2013 and as of mid-December, we've completed 11 of 27 images. There are a variety of both Old and New Testament stories including The Good Samaritan, Loaves and Fishes, The Prodigal Son, The Last Supper, Noah's Ark, The Nativity and stories of Moses. Our choice of stories was deliberate. When I returned to church after a college and early-marriage hiatus, I was greeted with the familiar stories of my young church life; it was a comfort to find them a constant in my life. My hope is that families new to St. John's will experience that same feeling and reassurance that God is here, and we're all OK.

I also hope they feel surrounded by love; bright, cheerful colors; and a community that made an effort to match the vibrancy, diversity and beauty of the children in its care.

*Opposite page:* A collection of murals by parishioners Kate Hindin, Katie Morgan, Lauran Godwin, Sarah Morgan and Christy Koury in the hallways and classrooms at St. John's, Charlotte. *Top row, from left:* John baptizing Jesus in the River Jordan. The Nativity of Jesus. *Middle row:* Jesus preaching the Sermon on the Mount. *Bottom row, from left:* Jesus washing his disciples' feet. Three children welcome people to the Sunday school classrooms. *Photos by Kate Hindin.*



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## Until we read again...

**GO!** Go deep, go speak, go do. Watch Bishop Curry's address to the 198<sup>th</sup> Annual Convention and get inspired for the new year. [bit.ly/1bea3aU](https://bit.ly/1bea3aU)

**Start a spiritual practice.** Read or listen to *Gospel-Based Discipleship*. Build praying the Daily Offices into your routine. Find your center.

**Take pictures.** We want to include you in the next issue of the *Disciple*, so whatever your church is doing, take some photos and send them to us so we can share what's happening "Around the Diocese."

**Join the conversation.** Like us on Facebook (EpiscopalDioceseNC) or follow us on Twitter (EpiscopalNC) to stay connected to the Diocese between issues of the *Disciple*.