

# Evangelism Issue

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I Will  
Make  
You GO  
Fishers  
of Men  
Therefore...

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The Rt. Rev. Andrew M.L. Dietsche

## A Missional Mandate

By the Rt. Rev. Andrew M.L. Dietsche

From Sunday to Sunday I visit churches across our diocese, and almost always have some time to sit with the vestry. When I do, one of the most common questions put to me is this: "How can we grow our church?" Back when I was a candidate for bishop this was the most commonly asked question, and I would guess that our recent suffragan candidates had the same experience. We have been through a lot of years of decline in the Church, and have come to a place where the issues of church growth have more urgency among our people than they maybe did in other times. It is not a local question either: it has marked the national conversation of the Church for decades.

So when we talk about evangelism, our institutional anxiety and our fears about decline lead us to think about evangelism almost entirely in terms of church growth. But I am convinced that the single-minded focus on church growth can become a distraction from the call we have been given by Jesus to be evangelists.

This does not mean that church decline and growth are not and should not be matters of great importance to us, for we have been given the care of the church in our day, and have a responsibility to the past and the future, and to the health and vitality of our churches in the here-and-now, to do all that we can to build institutional strength. And we know that decline in numbers and dollars threaten a lot of our ministry and mission. So this is important.

But the biblical charge to go and make disciples of all nations was not, as Jesus gave expression to it, about building up the institution of the church. It was about bringing people to an authentic experience and knowledge of God through him. Evangelism is at heart a missional, not institutional, mandate. And as long as we talk about evangelism in terms of putting bodies in the pews, as though that were an end in itself, we will obscure even from ourselves the beauty and the grace and the transformational power inherent in the evangelical invitation.

To the question, "how can we grow our church?" I would give this answer. We were never called to grow the church, but to be faithful. Our call, our charge, our invitation, is to so witness to others the love of God for all people that we have come to know in Jesus, that they may be drawn to and desire the full and free lives that we have found in Christ. Our call is to address the ministerial and missional challenges and opportunities right in front of us right now, on the day and in the place where God has placed us, and to accept the privilege of serving God's own children. We may or may not grow our churches, but that is evangelism.

*Andy*

## Un Mandato Misional

Por el Revdmo. Obispo Andrew M. L. Dietsche

Domingo a domingo, visito iglesias a través de nuestra diócesis y casi siempre tengo tiempo para sentarme con la Junta Parroquial. Cuando lo hago, una de las preguntas más comunes que me hacen es ésta: ¿"Cómo podemos hacer que crezca nuestra iglesia"? Esta fue la pregunta que más frecuentemente me hicieron cuando fui candidato a obispo, y me imagino que nuestros(as) recientes candidatos(as) a sufragáneo(a) tuvieron la misma experiencia. Hemos pasado por muchos años en los cuales el crecimiento de la iglesia ha disminuido, y hemos llegado a un punto donde, entre nuestra gente, los asuntos sobre el crecimiento de la iglesia son más urgentes que tal vez lo fueron en otros tiempos. Tampoco es una cuestión local: ha marcado la conversación nacional de la iglesia por décadas.

Entonces cuando hablamos sobre evangelismo, nuestra ansiedad institucional y nuestros temores a causa del descenso nos llevan a concebir el evangelismo casi totalmente en términos del crecimiento de la iglesia. Pero, estoy convencido que el enfocarse solo en el crecimiento de la iglesia puede convertirse en una distracción al llamado que se nos ha dado por medio de Jesús, el de ser evangelistas.

Esto no quiere decir que el crecimiento o el descenso de la iglesia no son y no deberían ser asuntos de gran importancia para nosotros, porque se nos ha encargado el cuidado de la iglesia en nuestro tiempo, y tenemos una responsabilidad con el pasado y el futuro, y con la salud y la vitalidad de nuestras iglesias en el aquí y ahora, para hacer todo lo que podamos a fin de construir fuerza institucional. Y sabemos que el descenso en números y en dólares amenaza a muchos de nuestros ministerios y misiones. Así es que esto es importante.

Pero, el deber bíblico de ir y formar discípulos en todas las naciones, como lo expresara Jesús, no era para construir la institución de la iglesia. Era para conducir a la gente a una auténtica experiencia y conocimiento de Dios por medio de él. El evangelismo es fundamentalmente el mandato misional, no el institucional. Y en tanto hablemos de evangelismo en términos de poner cuerpos en los bancos de la iglesia, como si ese fuera un fin en sí mismo, opacaremos, hasta de nosotros mismos, la belleza y la gracia y el inherente poder transformador de la invitación evangélica.

A la pregunta ¿"cómo podemos hacer que crezca nuestra iglesia"? le daría esta respuesta: Nunca fuimos llamados a hacer crecer la iglesia, sino a ser fieles. Nuestro llamado, nuestro deber, nuestra invitación, es dar testimonio consecuentemente a los demás del amor de Dios por todas las personas a quienes hemos llegado a conocer en Jesús, de tal manera, que desean y sean atraídas a la vida plena y libre que hemos encontrado en Cristo.

Nuestro llamado es responder a los desafíos y a las oportunidades tanto ministerial como misional justamente frente a nosotros(as) ahora mismo, en el día y en el lugar donde Dios nos ha situado, y aceptar el privilegio de servir a los(as) propios(as) hijos(as) de Dios. Puede ser que hagamos o no crecer a nuestras iglesias, pero eso es evangelismo.

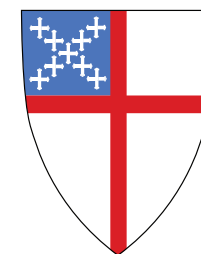
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*Andy*



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## The Best Quote St. Francis Never Said

By Br. Jason Gaboury, OPA

The yellow-edged paper on mom's desk had the words printed in elegant script. "Preach the gospel at all times, when necessary use words." A thin script underneath identified St. Francis of Assisi.

The script, the hand, even the composition of the paper suggested a scriptorium, monks copying aphoristic sayings of the saints by candlelight.

More than two decades later I still think of this quote when I remember my mom. The phrase captured a way of being that extended beyond the pulpit and pastor's desk of her small parish church. It propelled her into Habitat building projects, compelled her to visit the imprisoned, and made her a companion to the suffering.

Imagine my disappointment to learn, after mom's death, that this quote was something St. Francis never said. Often attributed to St. Francis, it (along with several variants) doesn't appear in print before the 1990s.

Discovering this raised some questions for me. Why associate this quote with St. Francis in the first place? What is it about this quote that is so compelling that it so quickly became received as saintly wisdom? How should the ideas in this quote be appropriated?

It's not difficult to imagine why this quote became associated with St. Francis. His life and legend encapsulate a radical commitment to follow Christ as literally as possible. Jesus said, "Take nothing for your journey...no bread, no bag, no money in your belts." And Francis followed breadless, bagless, and moneyless. A quote as all-engrossing as "preach the gospel at all times" fits the radical personality of St. Francis.

Additionally, St. Francis is well known for his innovative ways of communicating the gospel. He is the first to have organized a Christmas pageant, complete with live animals, as a way of communicating the story of Christmas to rural and largely illiterate people. So the sentiment seems to fit. "Preach the gospel always... use words occasionally."

On the other hand, I'm not so sure Francis would have approved. His desire to embody obedient service to Christ was not in conflict with articulate preaching. Francis' famous sermon to the birds is a telling case in point. Francis is reported to have said, "My little sisters the birds, ye owe much to God, your Creator, and ye ought to sing his praise at all times and in all places, because he has given you liberty to fly about into all places; and though ye neither spin nor sew, he has given you a twofold and a threefold clothing for yourselves and for your offspring. Two of all your species he sent into the Ark with Noah that you might not be lost to the world; besides which, he feeds you, though ye neither sow nor reap. He has given you fountains and rivers to quench your thirst, mountains and valleys in which to take refuge, and trees in which to build your nests; so that your Creator loves you much, having thus favored you with such bounties. Beware, my little sisters, of the sin of ingratitude, and study always to give praise to God."

This is quite a verbal exhortation! It was also an example to the brothers who were accompanying him. St. Francis was a master communicator. Might he have been modeling a robust verbal proclamation, one that even included birds?

Still, there is something compelling about this little aphorism. Almost 100 years after the social gospel/soteriological gospel split of the early 20th century, this quote spoke to both sides of the divide. "Preach the gospel at all times" is a slogan that would fit within the world of evangelicalism. The emphasis in this part of the



Giotto *St. Francis Preaching to the Birds*, fresco, c. 1295, in the portico of the Upper Church at the Basilica of San Francesco, Assisi.

phrase is on preaching and gospel. There is an active engagement in the conversion of others. "When necessary use words" subverts this elevation of word over action and strongly suggests "actions speak louder than words." This fits quite well within the mainline Protestant insistence on demonstrating faith by doing justice, establishing mercy ministries, and reserving judgment.

By holding these two clauses together, and by attributing itself to a catholic saint, our little phrase offers itself to the whole Church. Yes to words. Yes to deeds. This is the wisdom of the Church throughout the ages.

How might we appropriately apply the wisdom of this little phrase attributed to St. Francis?

A negative example is one I see from time to time among well-meaning Christians. When challenged to become active participants in witness to their neighbors or in evangelism, this phrase is invoked. The sentences that follow often say things like, "I don't really do evangelism. I like to...you know... just live my life... and be kind to people." Or, "People who like evangelism are so pushy. I'd just rather let my life speak for itself."

While I'd never question the value of kindness or celebrate brash insensitivity, these examples don't fully appreciate the phrase or the saint to whom it is attributed. Kindness is rarely self-explanatory. If I help my neighbor carry in his groceries, he might think I'm a nice guy, a

good neighbor, or buttering him up so that I can ask for a favor later. There is little, if any, hope that my neighbor will say, "You must be a follower of Jesus." St. Francis valued verbal preaching enough to include birds as hearers. I doubt it's legitimate to appeal to him as the patron saint of 'being nice'.

A positive application of this aphorism might be an appeal to integrity, intentionality, and to evangelism as spiritual formation. This aphorism calls for an integrity between creed and deed. It is not enough simply to recite the creed on Sunday and live as a functional atheist the rest of the week. St. Francis' radical commitment to follow Jesus as literally as possible continues to gain admirers and followers hundreds of years later. What would happen if ordinary Christians emulated his promiscuous generosity, truth telling, courage, and love?

Preaching the gospel in word or deed is not possible without intentionality. Gospel articulations abound. Tragically, many Christians are timid about articulating the gospel and find themselves unprepared when the opportunity comes to talk about it. A great step of intentionality might be learning a gospel outline and asking a friend over for coffee to talk about it. (I recommend one called the "four circles" or the book *Based on a True Story* by James Choung, but there are plenty of great resources to choose from.)

While evangelism can often feel like a dirty word to Episcopalians, I'd suggest that this little phrase helps us to engage it as a part of our spiritual formation. What if, as a Lenten discipline, we took on the habit of praying that we would find a creative means to "preach the gospel" today? What if we decided to step into the awkward moment in a friend or stranger's life by offering prayer, or blessing, or by asking about their spiritual background? These practices would shape us. Perhaps, if we did this over time, we might become people who could "Preach the gospel at all times... when necessary, use words."

*Gaboury is a friar in the Anglican Order of Preachers and a member of All Angels' Church, Manhattan.*

## Community and Social Activism Are Not Enough

By Theo Hobson

The dominant liberal approach to “evangelism” is to say that it’s not about bashing people with truth-claims, or hectoring them with moral rules, or unfolding complex apologetics: it’s about being a community of witness. So we should leave aside doctrinal stuff about salvation, and highlight the appeal of belonging to a community that worships together, and makes a practical difference to people’s lives, and has a big social vision.

I’m a bit wary of this. It puts a lot of pressure on church to be a place of communal joy and social transformation, to prove the good news-ness of Christianity. In reality, church has its limitations—even a vibrant creative church can only give certain glimpses of the good news. For the good news is the redemption of the cosmos, not the goodness of any subculture. Evangelism should remember that the content of Christianity far exceeds anything that any community can express, in the sense of realizing, embodying.

If this is forgotten, then evangelism is too much about an upbeat community spirit—look what perfect happiness there is here at church! Look how friendly we are! And this will be one-sided, perhaps even dishonest, for it will not be admitted that being religious in a secular culture can feel difficult, lonely, more of a burden than a source of joy. This religion is intellectually and psychologically difficult. We should be honest about this—partly through giving due weight to aspects of the liturgy such as psalms of lament; partly through making space for mystery, otherness, somber reflection (and not just in Lent).

By foregrounding community, the liberal approach to “evangelism” is liable to lead to an excessively secular conception of Christianity. Of course the Church should be involved in the practical world, but its message is bigger than any social or political activism. It must put forward the grand mythological vision of our salvation—which cannot be directly translated into any practical agenda.

How can churches pursue a wider sort of “Christian communication”? Through trusting the power of Christian language and ritual. And through seeking a new fusion of worship and the arts. Ideally this should include large-scale public events like processions and passion plays. Why is there so little of this in New York? It would usefully balance the general impression that the Episcopal Church gives: that its calling is to support secular progressive causes.

I’d like to see a new culture of Christian public art and performance. You have to start somewhere. Last year I made a large sculpture of the crown of thorns in the yard of the Manhattan church I attend, St Mark’s-in-the-Bowery, out of old hosepipes and some red paint. It was a way of saying: this is what the church is here for, alongside the practical social engagement—just telling the story, presenting some icons of it. It wasn’t a great art event, but it started a few conversations and I’m determined to try something else next year.

*Hobson is a theologian and writer who attends St. Mark’s Church-in-the-Bowery.*



## “Let Our Light Shine Out of Darkness”

2Corinthians 4:6

By Helen F. Goodkin

**W**hen the editor asked me to write something for the issue on evangelism, I thought of one of my favorite Biblical characters, the Samaritan woman in John 4. When she meets Jesus at the well outside her village, the two engage in genuine interfaith dialogue, sparring with each other about the differences between Judaism, Samaritan beliefs, and Jesus’ own views of how God and humanity are meant to interact. This woman is remarkably knowledgeable about the tenets of her faith. Yet she becomes overwhelmed when Jesus tells her that in the future neither the Temple in Jerusalem nor that in Samaria will matter, but that believers will worship “in spirit and in truth.” Suddenly, she realizes that the Messiah she has long awaited has indeed come. She returns to her village and invites everyone to come to see Jesus. They all follow her and recognize Jesus as “Savior of the world.” The first interfaith theologian of the New Testament has become the first Christian evangelist.

Think about her the next time your parish has “bring a friend to church day.” The only reason the villagers followed her was that they respected and probably loved her. Yet, the church for two thousand years has maligned this woman, saying she was alone at the well at noon because no one liked her; or she had five husbands, and was living in sin, implying she was definitely “Not Our Kind.” But when she told the others about how remarkable this person Jesus was, they held her in such esteem that they went with her to see him, ignoring the heat of the day and forgetting their animosity towards Jews. Thus, God’s work was done by a woman in this small patch of the Holy Land.

This story makes me think of the words attributed to St. Francis, “Preach the Gospel always, if necessary use words.” The ministry of St. Francis was built not so much on “telling” people what to believe, but on living life in such a way that others wanted to follow his chosen path, the path that Jesus has laid out. Like St. Francis, something about this woman made the others follow her.

In reality, anything that we humans have to say about our faith is always imperfect. Our words can never measure up to what Jesus has said. But, like St. Francis, we each should try to preach the Gospel with our lives, living as one committed to the Good News of the Gospel, which is the very root of the word evangelism. “Let your light shine before others, so that they may see your good works and give glory to your Father in heaven,” Jesus says. (Matthew 5:16) We need to let our light shine in the world so that people see it as the light of God and are stirred to see, not us, but God working in the world.

The Matthew quote, of course, puts us right in the middle of the Sermon on the Mount (chapters 5-7), the greatest compendium of guidance on what is important in life and how best to live a life that reflects these values. It is in attempting to live into these values that we reflect God’s presence in our lives. This is the way we witness to our faith.

So, when you think about evangelism, think about how you live your life. Think about how you interact with your family, your co-workers, the guy at the cleaners, your cab driver, the person in the car doubled park in front of you. Is the Light of



Guercino *Christ and the Woman of Samaria*, oil on canvas, c. 1619-20.

God always illumined in your actions the way you intend in your heart? Do those around you love and respect you enough, trust you enough, to want to engage with you in understanding God’s presence in their lives?

The best and perhaps the only way to spread the Good News of Jesus Christ is to live in such a way, day in and day out, that those with whom we interact, say “I want to be like her.” I want some of that Light for myself. If we don’t show love and respect for one another, why would anyone be interested in learning about the faith undergirds our lives? It is only in living the Good News of God’s love that we are able to spread the Good News.

Several chapters after his encounter with the Samaritan woman, Jesus gives his followers “a new commandment, that you love one another. Just as I have loved you, you also should love one another. By this everyone will know that you are my disciples, if you have love for one another.” (John 13:34-35) Jesus calls us to love as he loves. This seems simple enough, but as we all know, it is rather difficult. Yet, to be true evangelists, like St. Francis or the Samaritan woman, we must let love for others illumine our lives so profoundly that it becomes a beacon of light for the world. We need to live it and to share it, with each other, with our parishes, with our communities, with the world.

But, don’t just read my words, read the Bible: John chapters 4 and 13, and Matthew 5-7. One might also read John 15:1-17, the Discourse on the True Vine, a meditation on the interconnectedness of the Christian community in which Jesus repeats the commandment to love one another.

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## How to Do It, How to Stifle It

by Louie Clay

This article first appeared in the March 1990 edition of *The Episcopalian* under the byline of Louie Crew, and is reprinted here with the author's permission. Some of the details in our lives and in the church have changed since it was written, but the message remains as valid now as it was a quarter century ago.

Episcopal evangelism"—oxymoron? Millions will never know God's love if we Episcopalians do not incarnate it. Too readily we Episcopalians abandon some of our most effective ways to evangelize. For example, we have dismantled scores of college ministries over the last two decades, deeming them "not cost effective"—accountability inspired by Big Business.

God reckons differently. I can name over 30 acquaintances now Episcopalians who first learned about our church while they were in college. For some of these, Episcopalians provided the first evidence that Christians can respect the mind. For others, Episcopalians provided the first evidence that Christians can love nonjudgmentally.

"Father Gribbin came right into her house like he was perfectly comfortable there!"

The young atheist referred to Emmet Gribbin, chaplain at Alabama in the 1960s. The student's friend had had a baby out of wedlock, and the student observer was pleasantly shocked to discover that a religious person could respond without scorn. Instead, Father Gribbin saw to it that the mother and the baby got what they needed, materially as well as spiritually. The baby is now grown, and its mother and stepfather are now Episcopalians, as is the prominent lawyer, who was the undergraduate atheist student at that time. Through love and simple kindness, Father Gribbin spoke far more cogently than most of their childhood pastors.

Just as true, unlove and unkindness stifle evangelism.

For example, racism now severely inhibits growth in most parts of the Episcopal Church. Recently, I taught at a small black school where I had taught 18 years earlier, in my native South. On the earlier occasion, most of my colleagues attended the various churches of their youth. Last year, many stayed at home, except on Easter and Christmas. Many who knew that I am religious told me that they are anxious not to throw the baby out with the bath water, but are unhappy with traditions that leave little room for their intellect. Ripe for becoming Episcopalians? Yes, but...

That town has two Episcopal churches, about 300 yards away from each other. The white parish operates a youth camp with funds that it received from a black family; but it removed a deacon, another Southerner, when the deacon suggested that he might occasionally invite youths from the black parish to join the white youth for church functions. 1969? No, 1989.

Classism also inhibits Episcopal evangelism. The Southern black parish to which I belonged has the highest percentage of Ph.D.'s that I have ever encountered in any congregation; yet few people without Ph.D.'s feel comfortable worshipping there. If they knew how much God loves, the parishioners would jump to share God's love with everyone. Even their vicar, my dear friend, long ago quit bringing in guests, not wanting to subject the guests to subtle forms of rejection in that congregation. These same rejectors were kind to me personally, at risk to themselves, and I love them dearly. They are not evil, only myopic. With better vision, the Episcopal Church everywhere could double its membership in five years.

Sexism also inhibits evangelism in the Episcopal Church. For several years, I lived in one of the dioceses that still refuse to recognize the priesthood of women. A retired woman priest was frequently a house guest, and on one occasion we held a house mass, inviting anyone and everyone to come. The huge crowd spilt into the front and back yards on a hot summer afternoon. Most of the women at the local Catholic convent came, as did women leaders in the local Lutheran, Methodist, and Presbyterian congregations. When the bishop wrote a letter asking my house guest not to celebrate, the local newspaper took the Good News of God's unconditional welcome all over the county. While one member of my parish refused to share the

Peace with me after that time, at least two other persons date their first interest in the Episcopal Church from that occasion. One was only ten or eleven then; last week she sent e-mail to me from her campus, noting that she has become an Episcopalian and may become a priest.

We have worried too long about how our positive convictions will drive people away who disagree with us. It is high time for us to celebrate those whom our convictions welcome, many for the first time.

Homophobia inhibits our evangelism. Millions of lesbians and gays have fled churches, in other denominations even more than in our own. Some lesbians and gays stick around church not fully convinced that they belong. Other lesbians and gays have understood clearly that God loves us all unconditionally, not on our own merits, but on Christ's. We need help in spreading that Good News.

Clericalism also inhibits evangelism in the Episcopal Church. Bishop Frey has poignantly warned, we're in danger of becoming a club of clerics with fewer and fewer members. While individual priests sometimes encourage us to place them in charge of everything, more often we lay people put priests in charge against their will. "We pay you; now you do all of God's work," we seem to say.

We can't evangelize in that way. Professional ministry is indeed important, but no more important than "to do the work you have given us to do, to love and serve you as faithful witnesses of Christ our Lord." That's everyone's vocation.

The remedy for excessive clericalism is not anti-clericalism, but instead, a strong vision of lay ministry. Even the most dedicated professionals cannot do lay ministry. Even the most charming of priests lack ubiquity. They can never see and influence

all the people whom we lay persons touch. Simple neglect also stifles our evangelism.

Few people ever bring any non-Christians to church with them. Do they fear non-Christians will misunderstand their motives? Are they afraid to seem pushy? I bring a steady stream of visitors, especially house guests, and even those who are atheist and agnostic seem to understand that I am not trying to convert them when I take them to church with me. I never pressure them to pretend they're anything that

they are not. I respect their decisions, and they respect mine. Many seem to enjoy my sharing what they know to be an integral part of my life. Taking them to church is an unconditional part of my hospitality.

Nevertheless, the Holy Spirit, the real Evangelist, has made good use of these visitations. At least four non-Christians who first traipsed off to church as my guests over the last two decades, are now priests in our church.

Hundreds of gay people won't come to church if I ask them to join me, but many will begin to come if heterosexuals will start inviting them.

If every person in our pews invited just one person every three months, God's kingdom would grow phenomenally, especially if we invited those whom others have made to feel unwelcome.

To evangelize, we do not have to corner a stranger, thrust at tract at her, and ask, "Are you saved?" We don't have to buy a share of the copyright some people think they hold on the words "Born Again." We don't have to memorize a dozen Bible verses to convince a sinner that he is lost and that we alone hold his only chance. For many of us, all these tactics sound like bad taste, even bad news, especially if delivered by someone concerned more to get herself into heaven than to bring love to our lives.

While the Anglican style is not for everyone, God's love is, and many there are who will not know God's love if we Episcopalians fail to incarnate it.

The most serious barrier to evangelism is that we lose sight of how much God loves us and how fully God wants us to love the world.

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Clay (né Crew) is a professor emeritus of English at Rutgers University.

## Not Without Blemish

By Anne Nelson



The Seal of the Society for the Propagation of the Gospel in Foreign Parts, in a memorial window in St. Peter's Church, Freehold, NJ.

New Yorkers tend to think of themselves as too sophisticated to be proselytized, but in the 18th century, the city was a hotbed of missionary activity.

The engine for the city's Anglican evangelization was the Society for the Propagation of the Gospel in Foreign Parts (SPG), founded in England in 1701. By then it had come to the attention of the Anglican Church that the Americas could be, as it were, at risk. The Catholic Spanish, Portuguese and French had been colonizing the southern reaches of the Americas for over a century, and the Puritan Congregationalists had established strongholds throughout in New England.

The Church of England created the SPG as a missionary society with a purpose that "consisted of three great branches: the care and instruction of our people settled in the Colonies; the conversion of the Indian Savages, and the conversion of the Negroes."

The society was particularly committed to education. In 1709, a new charity school was founded in the belfry of Trinity Church, "under the fostering care of the Society for the Propagation of the Gospel in Foreign Parts." The school survived an early fire and went on to become Trinity School, and a few decades later the Trinity community founded King's College nearby, which would evolve to become today's Columbia University.

King's College was an Anglican anomaly among early American educational institutions. In pre-revolutionary times, one "dissenting" seminary, Yale College, fined its students "as often as they attend Public Worship in the Church of England, communicants only excepted, and that only on Christmas and Sacrament days."

The New England Puritans couldn't decide whether they were resentful or pleased that the Society concentrated its efforts in wealthy urban areas like New York. In 1763 Boston Congregationalist clergyman Jonathan Mayhew noted that the Society had dispatched sixteen missionaries to New York and ten to New Jersey in 1761—but had unleashed an onslaught of 30 missionaries in New England. There they gravitated to the "oldest, most populous and richest towns" and sowed strife and intrigue among the Puritan congregations, "setting up altar against altar."

One of the most troubling aspects of the Society's history concerns its relation to slavery. In 1712, it passed an act officially embracing slavery. Its reservations concerned religious practice, not physical freedom.

In 1730, David Humphreys, the secretary of the SPG, wrote, "The Society looked upon the Instruction and Conversion of the Negroes, as a principal Branch of their Care; esteeming it a great Reproach to the Christian Name, that so many Thousands of Persons should continue in the same State of Pagan Darkness, under a Christian Government, and living in Christian Families, as they lay before under, in their own Heathen Countries."

"Hundreds of Negroes," Humphreys reported, had been instructed by the clergy, but thousands of others were "unconverted, living, dying, utter Pagans." He urged their masters to give their slaves enough time off for religious instruction, but neglected to consider a Christian position on the question of slavery itself. As of 1703, nearly half of the households in New York City held slaves. Slavery was not abolished in New York State until 1827.

The Society for the Propagation of the Gospel's involvement went even further. It was willed the deed to a sugar plantation in Barbados which it operated for a number of years—branding its slaves with the word "SOCIETY" to prove ownership. (The 2006 Synod of the Church of England offered an official apology for its complicity in the slave trade.)

The SPG was responsible for establishing many Anglican religious and educational institutions in North America. Following the American revolution, it discontinued its work in the U.S., and continues to operate as the United Society for the Propagation of the Gospel throughout the world.

*Nelson is a member of the Church of St. Ignatius of Antioch in Manhattan and serves on the Episcopal New Yorker advisory board.*



## It's Like Breathing

By James Murphy

I have always felt that as followers of Jesus, it should be very natural to share our faith with others in the same way we would share other things that are important to us. And since our faith should be of primary importance, the guiding force that animates everything we do and say, I don't understand how one would **not** engage in evangelism. Don't we want others to experience some of the joy that we experience as believers? We should! But we need to be gentle, not calculating. I think that's the difference between evangelization and proselytizing. Evangelization allows room for the spirit to lead so that others can respond to the spirit, not to you. So leave plenty of room for the spirit!

I tend to think of every human interaction as evangelism... if we maintain the proper focus on our faith. I like to think about how Jesus interacted with people. It's clear that he was able to relate to anyone, in an instant, because he understood that his mission was to love and to heal and to save. Just walking down the street is evangelism. And I think it should be as natural as that. That's one of my most cherished visions of Jesus. He was someone who could speak to anyone and show them love. Once people know that we are a person of faith, we need to assume that they may base their attitudes about God, Jesus, the Church, faith, etc., on what we do, on what we say, and most importantly, how we act toward them and toward others. At that point, we are Jesus, or at least we are a vessel filled with Jesus. So be Jesus! It's a big responsibility, but that's what we signed up for. And we need to take this quite seri-

ously. We are all called to ministry, and we are all called to spread the good news. "How beautiful upon the mountains are the feet of the messenger who announces peace, who brings good news, who announces salvation, who says to Zion, 'Your God reigns.'" (Isaiah 52: 7) We need to strive to let our feet be "beautiful on the mountains" to those who would hear us speak of the good news. What a vision! The most basic form of evangelism is joyfulness. And it might just be the most powerful.

*"Evangelism is like breathing. Sharing one's faith should be a normal part of conversation. We don't need to think about telling people how much we love our family, right? If our faith fills us with joy, then there is no solution... because there is no problem. Let the spirit lead."*

I think Episcopalians tend to over-think this. If people don't detect joy in you, and they know you are a believer, you need to think about what you say you believe. God has given us an abundant life. Be joyful about it. That's evangelism.

*Murphy serves on the vestry of St. Paul's Church, Staten Island.*



## Bishops' Appeal for Youth Programs

Nearly 50,000 children have been helped by Episcopal Charities youth programs throughout our Diocese. Programs include:

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- \$500** feeds 10 children for a week at a residential summer camp
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- \$150** enables 30 children to experience a museum field trip
- \$100** sends a child to summer day camp for two weeks
- \$ 50** provides two children with a week of after-school care

To learn more about the programs of Episcopal Charities or to make an online donation, please visit our website at [www.episcopalcharities-newyork.org](http://www.episcopalcharities-newyork.org)

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## Rural & Migrant Ministry: Evangelical Work

By Grayson Morley

Evangelism is a term that, as an Episcopalian, I'm not entirely comfortable with.

It's a term that conjures to mind subway pamphlets and televisual flair. It's a term I associate with the kind of Christian who does not share but foists the Gospel on others. It's a term that, frankly, feels kind of icky to say out loud, if only because I associate it with social or political backwardness. Though I can't speak for all Episcopalians, I suspect I'm not alone in this sentiment.

And yet, if I'm honest about the work we accomplish through Rural & Migrant Ministry, I cannot argue otherwise: the work we do is evangelical in nature.

If you look up the dictionary definition of evangelism like I did, you'll find the basic definition of spreading the Christian Gospel (by public preaching or personal witness), but you'll also find a secondary definition: "zealous advocacy of a cause."

Now, Rural & Migrant Ministry has been accused of being many things, but I think, no matter what side of the aisle you land on, you can't deny that we are definitely, absolutely, 100 per cent zealous advocates of a cause.

We advocate most zealously for farmworkers. They are New York State's most marginalized and oppressed population. Due to a host of factors, not the least among them being our state labor laws, farmworkers live lives of extreme poverty and isolation. If you've come in contact with Rural & Migrant Ministry before, you've heard us say the following, time and time again: that farmworkers are excluded from overtime pay; that farmworkers are not guaranteed a day of rest; that farmworkers are barred from collective bargaining, limiting their ability to self-advocate or organize. You'll excuse us if this list, coincidentally triune in nature, comes off as repetitive, tiresome or pedantic. My counterargument to this complaint would be that these things are facts, and until they aren't facts, we are going to keep saying them.

I believe that, as Christians, we have a duty to serve the least among us. This is not a radical statement. It comes from the Gospels, and any toddling church-schooler is familiar with it. So it comes as a surprise to me when the work of Rural & Migrant Ministry is considered by some to be a radical effort. That we should choose a subsection of our state's most oppressed persons and attempt to serve them should not be so divisive. And yet, there is a sense that the work we do is perhaps too politically tinged, too leftist. There is the argument that the Episcopal Church should not be involved in this kind of work because it involves legislative advocacy.

But of course, I think differently.

I will tell you that, as a young person, trying to speak openly about one's faith with one's peers (i.e., trying to evangelize) is nigh impossible. Revealing to my friends that I go to church twice or thrice a month has a similar effect to revealing a particularly unsightly boil. We live in an increasingly secular world, and though Episcopalians are among the more progressive divisions of our particular faith (at least in the state of New York), we still live and proclaim the Good News in Christ, which practice is considered by many, fairly or unfairly, to be a deeply conservative one. This being true, many of my more liberally-minded peers are less than amenable when it comes to hearing about an enlivening hymn or a particularly apropos homily. And don't even think about mentioning the Eucharist.

And yet, when I tell my peers of the work I do with Rural & Migrant Ministry, they allow their ears to be bent. When I tell people of our farmworker steering committee where leaders in the farmworker community come together to decide



Members of Rural & Migrant Ministry's Youth Empowerment Group demonstrating at Farmworkers Albany Day, May 13, 2013. Photo: Rural & Migrant Ministry

which issues in their lives they wish to take action on, where I've heard men cry out in desperation and young girls stand in fervent courage and solidarity, where the plight of a community becomes a statewide initiative—these stories resonate with others. When I tell people of our trips to Albany to advocate for legislative equality, where the children of farmworkers toured the Capitol Building and marveled at the history of New York State, where young, native-born men and women spoke out against the injustices experienced by their non-native brothers and sisters—these stories persuade. When I tell people of community dinners shared between parishioners and farmworkers in Sodus, New York, of the music played together by persons who could not possibly speak to each other except in song, of the summer camps run in rectories and parish halls where children of every background play and learn together, their commonalities as plain as a summer day—these stories move me, and perhaps they move you as well.

And if it wasn't already apparent in the bubbling subtext, it is my belief that Christ is involved in all of these stories, and that, in the telling of them, I am evangelizing. (There, I said it!)

So maybe—and really only maybe, not a rhetorical maybe—maybe evangelism isn't such a bad word after all.

In order to evangelize through Rural & Migrant Ministry, you have to get involved first. The easiest way for New Yorkers to get a first taste (or a second or third) of Rural & Migrant Ministry is to attend our upcoming symposium on April 24th at Riverside Church. The symposium takes the theme of "The Broken Food Chain: Honoring the Work of Farmworkers."

Speaking at the event will be Barry Estabrook, former contributing editor at *Gourmet* magazine, Margaret Gray, author of *Labor and the Locavore*, and Ruth Reichl, host of *Gourmet Adventures with Ruth* on PBS. Whether you are a veteran or newcomer to these issues, you're sure to glean much from this group of zealous experts.

For many New Yorkers, farmlands may seem more of an abstraction than a reality. Come take a step in the right direction—join us on April 24th.

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Morley is a member of Church of the Messiah in Rhinebeck, NY, and serves as communications coordinator at Rural & Migrant Ministry.

# Eleven Ways Outreach Can Help Your Parish Grow

By the Rev. Samuel J. Smith

**T**he Churches of the Diocese of New York do amazing things to support our neighbors in need. The programs supported by Episcopal Charities alone touch the lives of more than 800,000 individuals every year through vital, transformational programs. Of course, this work is undertaken because serving

our neighbors is a crucial part of our Christian mandate. But our outreach can also bring attention to our churches and more people into their lives. How?

**1) Outreach shows that a church is alive.** When passers-by see, or learn of, activity at a church (beyond Sunday morning), they gain a broader sense of its vitality. Recent conversations with our New York State Assembly member revealed that he knew our church because he had seen the lines of people outside every Saturday for our free meal.

**2) Outreach highlights our passion for serving the community.** We do this work to help our neighbors—and nothing demonstrates compassion better.

**3) Outreach gives us something to talk about.** Outreach can provide PR opportunities. While it is a challenge to get a news outlet to talk about our worship or educational efforts, they are often interested in talking about the ways we reach out to support those in need.

**4) Outreach provides a doorway for newcomers.** Outreach provides an easy way to connect to a church—newcomers can volunteer. As they get to know our church home, as well as the parishioners themselves and the work we do, they may take interest in joining in beyond the food pantry or tutoring program.

**5) Outreach shows that we're about more than worship.** Our service for our neighbors helps us to move from the theoretical to the practical—and to show the love of Christ in action.

**6) Outreach demonstrates to our children what it means to live Christ-like lives.** We can talk about caring for our neighbors every week, but for those who need more concrete illustrations, the love exemplified in serving the community speaks louder than any Sunday school lesson. And giving kids the opportunity to take part in hands-on outreach provides the opportunity to experience being of service to others.

**7) Outreach allows us to really get to know our neighbors...and vice versa.** Only when we move beyond our own familiar territory can we learn exactly who is in our community and what matters to them. When we help people meet their practical, day-to-day needs, we show that we care—and that they are important to us and that that the Church is a community that is **for** them.

**8) Outreach makes us a more desirable church home.** There's a big difference between "going to church" and participating in the life of one.

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*There's a big difference between "going to church" and participating in the life of one. Parishioners who are involved in outreach become better connected to one another, and thus more likely to remain active.*

Parishioners who are involved in outreach become better connected to one another, and thus more likely to remain active.

**9) Outreach generates Church leaders.** The regular work of outreach provides the opportunity for new leaders to emerge and hone their skills. The most vital outreach programs help create strong leaders who often move to other aspects of church leadership.

**10) Outreach connects us to other community players.** Politicians, social service leaders, other church communities—outreach provides an opportunity to connect to the movers and shakers in our area. They come to know us better and become more likely to tell others about us.

**11) Outreach makes Church relevant.** When we serve the real, practical needs of others outside the church doors, we see our faith in action—and we are reminded why the Church matters.

One caveat (and oxymoron): While all of these statements are true, your outreach efforts will only be an asset to church growth if you **aren't** undertaking the work only to grow the church. People can easily sense your motivations; outreach undertaken only to make your church look better will not serve the community or attract long-term members. Only embark on this work when you have the full support of your church's leadership and volunteer base, and when there is a clear consensus about the needs of your community and the desire of the church body to work to meet those needs.

And as you start new outreach projects, always remember that our diocese has great technical support resources through Episcopal Charities and through

*Your outreach efforts will only be an asset to church growth if you AREN'T undertaking the work only to grow the church. People can easily sense your motivations; outreach undertaken only to make your church look better will not serve the community or attract long-term members.*

diocesan staff, commissions, and committees. As you develop new ministries, ask for help!

Bless you all for the work you do to serve our community. May your work not only meet the needs of the world, but also strengthen your parish for the future.

*Smith is the assistant priest at St. Michael's Church, Manhattan. He was the director of programs at Episcopal Charities from 2009 to 2013.*

## Quiet Evangelism: Outreach in the Diocese of New York

by Rachel Quednau

**A**s a rule, Episcopal Charities only funds parish-affiliated programs that are free of religious content. And yet, evangelistic terminology is right there in our mission—outreach, the act of reaching out into the world to share Christ’s love through service and justice. How do we live out our Christian calling while remaining committed to openness towards all people in need? I spoke with leaders from several Episcopal Charities partner programs in order to learn their perspective on evangelism in the context of outreach.

To begin with, many Episcopalians wish to distance themselves from a traditional understanding of evangelism as proselytizing. Ann Natale, Vice President of the Mount Kisco Interfaith Food Pantry and member of St. Mark’s in Mount Kisco, stated, “If evangelism is the preaching of Christian beliefs with the intent to convert others to those beliefs, I am not comfortable with it—particularly not within the context of my work with our pantry.” Indeed, most of the people I spoke with consciously avoid proselytizing, preferring instead, a quiet, action-based evangelism.

The Rev. Richard McKeon, rector of Church of the Messiah in Rhinebeck explained, “When I see people witnessing for justice, that is a much more powerful version of evangelism than shouting on the street corner.” Father McKeon, whose parish leads several outreach efforts, views evangelism as a “‘come and see’ [model], inviting people to learn more about God” on their own terms. Thus, we share God’s love in our outreach programs by demonstrating it through example and action, not preaching.

Of course, the hospitality and fellowship shared through outreach sometimes brings people into the fold, too. At St. John’s Church on Staten Island, staff members and volunteers regularly host an activity center at a nearby low-income senior home where they sponsor events, serve food and offer a social

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*Evangelism is not something you can immediately spot when you walk into a soup kitchen or a senior center, and it is not overtly practiced. Instead, it is woven into the fabric of Episcopal outreach in subtle, but impactful ways.*

space for seniors. Through this ministry, St. John’s has created an opening for guests to ask for prayer, and join the church for services and fellowship when they feel moved. The Rev. Roy Cole, rector of St. John’s and chair of Episcopal Charities’ Advisory Committee, recalled an older gentleman and his wife who lived at the senior home and “because of their association with us over many years, they had come to the decision that [this was] a community of faith they wanted to more formally identify with.” The couple was confirmed during the Bishop’s visit to St. John’s last year. Several outreach programs that partner with Episcopal Charities tell similar stories about guests who become parishioners because they see Christ’s love enacted through outreach. It’s not an explicit evangelism, but one that develops organically in spaces of radical hospitality.

What’s more, hospitality is transformational, not just for the people who are served, but also for those who are serving. The Rev. Keith Johnson, rector of St. Philip’s Church in Harlem, shared an experience from one of his previous parishes that demonstrates the power of Christ’s love through service. A young woman joined the choir at Father Johnson’s church and her nonreligious husband decided to try his hand at serving in the soup kitchen. After several years of sharing in the hospitality of the church, the couple’s son—who was only six—approached Father Johnson and asked to be baptized. This child had grown up in a loving, giving community, and even at a young age, he knew that he wanted to be part of it. His parents gave their blessing and the boy was baptized soon after.

Evangelism is not something you can immediately spot when you walk into a soup kitchen or a senior center, and it is not overtly practiced. Instead, it is woven into the fabric of Episcopal outreach in subtle, but impactful ways. “Even though we aren’t communicating religious teachings,” says Mary Beth Sasso, executive director of Episcopal Charities, “we are driven by our deep belief in the gospel message.” That message comes through the volunteer who offers prayer for a sick guest, through the soup kitchen that decorates its space in a welcoming way, and through the child who recognizes the love around him and wants to enter into that community.

The power of outreach traverses the boundaries between the servant and the served, between the person in need and the person with abundance, creating a space where everyone can grow. “It works both ways,” says Ann Natale. “We’re brought to the work because of our beliefs and we take something away from it that feeds our faith.”



Mount Kisco Interfaith Food Pantry.

Photo: Episcopal Charities.

Quednau is an Episcopal Service Corps Intern with Episcopal Charities.

## Social Media: Not an Add-on Ministry

By the Rev. Yejide Peters

As we move through the next stages of the digital revolution, churches and church leadership continue to grapple with the challenge of technology. Our stone churches and “modern” A-frames habituate us into a way of thinking about church that is quickly passing away. As we approach these new digital realities, we may be filled with questions and uncertainty. We’ve finally gotten the hang of Facebook, and almost overnight it has been replaced by the many-headed-hydra of ever-changing social media. What is Instagram? Vine? Snapchat?

Any number of wonderful work has been done on the “how” of church and social media (I recommend the work of Meredith Gould [www.meredithgould.com](http://www.meredithgould.com) as a great starting point.) But the challenge may not be in technique so much as focus. As you consider your first (or 2,001st) foray into digital ministry, these suggestions may be helpful:

### Try a new social media tool (Vine, Instagram, Facebook)

First, try it for yourself (not as “the church” but as an everyday person). After a few weeks of exploring, ask yourself:

- Could this make people more aware of God’s presence in their lives? If so, how?
- How might it help us share the Christian message?
- How might it strengthen our church’s (or ministry’s) life together?

If we are not asking these questions, our social media approach will be little more than mediocre advertisement. “Come to St. Boniface’s –on-the-Beach. Why? Because!”

### Embrace Failure

I don’t mean seek it out. Rather, be willing to get things wrong. When first attempts fail, try something new. While holding to your central aims (see the questions above), it is helpful to maintain a continual process of evaluation and experimentation. With practice, you will improve your technique and your sense of what “success” might be with social media.

### Be a Copycat

Do not be afraid to imitate. If someone else’s site or a digital strategy seems to work well, sit down with a few parishioners or colleagues and try to figure out some of the basic technique behind it. Perhaps an adapted version of their strategy might work for you. Do a little experimenting. Please remember: *Admiring someone’s technical mastery of evangelizing via social media does not imply that you agree with their theology or world view.*

A significant percentage of conservative evangelical churches and institutions have good to outstanding online media strategies. Looking outside our denomination, and even the mainline churches, can broaden our imaginations and supplement our toolkits.

Finally, digital ministry is not peripheral to evangelism, it’s central. The majority of Americans are spending more and more of their time in the digital landscape. Now more

than ever, it is less likely that we will “catch” folk through road signs and the beauty of our stained glass. If we want to fish for people, we will need to go where the fishing is good. Social media is not an add-on ministry. It is a primary way (and may soon become the primary way) to encounter and encourage those who are seeking God.

*Peters is rector of All Saint’s Church, Briarcliff Manor and serves on the Episcopal New Yorker editorial advisory board.*

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### UPCOMING EVENTS-ALL ARE WELCOME!

**Re-imagining the Waterfront: An Improved East River Esplanade** Since 2011, CIVITAS has organized museum exhibitions, design workshops, lectures, and community service projects focused on visions for an improved East River Esplanade from 60th-125th Street. CIVITAS feels strongly that the East River waterfront could serve a major recreational and environmental need for East Harlem, the Upper East Side and, indeed, the whole city. **Suggested donation: \$10. Thursday, April 24, 6:30 pm**

**An Evening of Poetry and Music** Join us for a spring concert celebrating National Poetry Month. Composer Alison Tung will feature the words of W.H. Auden, e e cummings, Jane Kenyon, Edna St. Vincent Millay, Mark Strand, John Updike and others. Reception to follow. **Tickets are \$30 at the door. Advance and student tickets are \$25. Monday, April 28, 7:00 pm**

**Narrative Theology: Storytelling and Scripture** The Rt. Rev’d. Neff Powell, Priest-in-Residence for the month of May, will present an introduction to the art of storytelling, followed by “The Bible in Fifteen Minutes,” The Book of Ruth and one or two other Bible stories. **Free of charge. Tuesday, May 6, 6:30 pm**

**Pollen Nation with James Fischer** Come hear about bees found around Manhattan, the arms race between pollinators and plants and how man has attempted to “domesticate” both flowers and bees. The lecture will be accompanied by stunning photographs. Through words and pictures, you will learn about what goes on in a bee hive, how bees fit into the ecosystem of a garden, a backyard, and Central Park, and how modern agricultural practices have forced “beekeeping” into becoming such a crucial component of our food supply. **Suggested donation: \$15. Tuesday, May 13, 6:30 pm**

**Fabbri Chamber Concert: American String Quartet and Clive Greensmith, cello**, will perform Schubert’s *Cello Quintet*. Full program to be announced. **Tickets are \$40 at the door. Advance tickets are \$35 (\$20 for students). Please call for reservations. Thursday, May 15, 7:30 pm**

**Annual House Garden Party** Please join us for our annual festive garden party at the House of the Redeemer. We welcome our friends and neighbors to enjoy the beauty of the House at a reception with entertainment and, of course, our wonderful auctions. Invitations will be mailed in the spring. Please contact the House for more details. Donations for our live and silent auctions are greatly appreciated. **Wednesday, June 4, 6:30 pm**

### ONGOING PROGRAMS

**Morning and Evening Prayer Monday-Friday 8:00 am and 5:30 pm.**  
**Eucharist Tuesday evening and Thursday morning (September-June).**

**Wednesday Bible Study, 3:30-5:00 pm (September-June).**

**Mondays, 6:30 pm, Worldwide Christian Meditation Group (year round).**

For Reservations/Costs/Information: (212) 289-0399 or [info@houseoftheredeemer.org](mailto:info@houseoftheredeemer.org)  
You may also visit us online at [www.HouseoftheRedeemer.org](http://www.HouseoftheRedeemer.org)

2014

## Youth Ministry is Evangelism

By the Rev. Michael A. Bird

**K**enda Creasy Dean, in her very unsettling book *Almost Christian: What the Faith of Our Teenagers is Telling the American Church*, examines the National Study of Youth and Religion (NYSR) from 2003-05. She concludes that we are raising a generation of young people who profess an adherence to a “do-good, feel-good spirituality that has little to do with the Triune God of Christian tradition and even less to do with loving Jesus Christ enough to follow him into the world.”

According to Dean, American young people are unwittingly being formed into an imposter faith that poses as Christianity, but that in fact lacks the holy desire and missional clarity necessary for Christian discipleship. To put it briefly, nice is replacing love, following Jesus Christ is being replaced by Moralistic Therapeutic Deism. We have conveyed that religion is a very nice thing. What we have been unable to convey to young people is faith. As Douglas John Hall defines it, faith is a “dialogue with doubt,” a personal reckoning with God’s involvement in the world, and investment in our own lives.

What our young people are getting is so nebulous or non-existent: it’s like poking at a cloud with a stick—no matter how sharp the stick, you come away with nothing. What our young people need is a ministry of presence that embodies the great Gospel story and helps them see that their lives are woven into that story. Youth ministry must be seen as evangelism.

There are as many ways to do youth ministry as there are people who want to do it. But the necessities are:

- Integrity in discipleship
- Intentionality in programming
- Relationship—being where they are.

At Christ Church, Bronxville, experienced adults volunteer with the youth ministry program (Episcopal Youth Community) to create and sustain a loving com-

munity, in which students engage in the practice of Christianity through a fellowship of love, prayer and service to others. EYC meetings bring high school students together around a meal and small group discussions on scripture or upcoming church events. But while giving opportunity for teens to reflect on their life, youth ministry is much more than weekly meetings. Youth leaders establish meaningful relationship with each teen outside of EYC. They spend time out in the community instead of pulling teens into a weekly EYC program. Leading active lives, our students juggle sports, homework, extracurricular activities and church commitments. Christ Church staff and EYC leaders are visible within the community, whether going to the spring musical, cheering athletes on from the bleachers or taking seniors for ice cream to unwind during college applications.

I’ve spent time getting to know the families of the Christ Church congregation and of the community both as a priest and mentor, and as coach of the Varsity Girls Lacrosse and Varsity Football teams. Current EYC leaders attended my youth group when I was youth minister at St. Mark’s, New Canaan and now as adults they give back leading youth group and chaperoning mission trips.

Jess Tighe, a senior in EYC comments, “With EYC come really great youth leaders, including Father Bird, Mother Brown, Katie Gojkovich, Matthew Gojkovich and Katherine Bryce. The youth group and I love having them around because whether it be at games, recitals, Starbucks or in the hallway at school, they provide great support in any situation. We know that we’re loved specifically, not generally, and we respond to that.”

This commitment to youth evangelism, supported by the entire congregation, has deepened our young people, seeded and supported their faith and grown the church.

*Bird is rector of Christ Church, Bronxville and serves on the Episcopal New Yorker editorial board.*



You Are Joyfully Invited to Join in Celebrating  
**The Ordination and Consecration of**  
**The Rev. Allen K. Shin**  
**as Bishop Suffragan of**  
**the Episcopal Diocese of New York**  
On Saturday, May 17, 2014 at 11:00 a.m.  
At  
The Cathedral Church of Saint John the Divine  
1047 Amsterdam Avenue (at 112th St), New York NY 10025

*Clergy will receive mailed invitations to process.*

*Parishes will be invited to process with banners (2 representatives per parish).*

*Other seating will be unreserved.*

# A Communion Celebration Class: Incorporation, Welcome... and Evangelism

By the Rev. Claire Woodley



Participants in the Communion Celebration Class with the Rev. Claire Woodley. With their celebration banners behind them, these students have made the connections between the Communion table, the Communion of Saints, their food pantry and the command to come to the table “not for solace only but for strength” to do their ministry.

Photo: Suzanne Mignianelli Blair.

**O**n a Sunday morning in May of 1962, I put on a white crinoline dress with puffed sleeves and four tiny tears on the left side of the bodice—corsage pin remnants of my four older sisters’ First Communion. By the end of the day I would add one more tiny tear to this dress. Being raised Roman Catholic, there was a whole set of liturgies and passages in which I longed to follow my older siblings. I remember it as being The First Big Deal in my life. For many Roman Catholics coming into the Episcopal Church, this is one Big Deal they still long for.

As Episcopalians we admit all baptized Christians to the Eucharist. We do not wait for a fictional “age of reason” in which people are able to “fully understand” what they are engaged in, but acknowledge that it is a life-long learning experience. Instead, plumbing the potential of the twin languages of childhood, action and emotion, we engage children as soon as possible in the experience of Communion with their Lord and Savior, welcoming them into the great mysteries, weaving the spiritual practice of Communion into their lives.

But there it is—that white crinoline dress with the puffy sleeves or that spanking new Communion suit—hanging in the back-closet memories of many a transplanted Roman Catholic. After a decade explaining that “we don’t do that...,” I realized the un-mistakable nudge of the Holy Spirit: here’s an opportunity for evangelism, formation and community building. Since then, I’ve refined my Communion Celebration Class and now I have a vital, central experience for the first to third grade classes of my Sunday School, and for their parents. And while not an initiation, the Communion Class is a deepening of their experience of Communion.

As many congregational development writers will tell you, a small group

connection is vital to incorporating and retaining people. As any parish priest will tell you, the competition for family time and commitment is fierce. Many families seek a “religious” education for their children around the age of kindergarten. There is then a brief window in which to incorporate those children before the siren songs of soccer and other Sunday activities begin to pull families away. For many of them, the first Communion Celebration Class can play a vital role as its first small group experience and form their basic friendship group throughout their life in the parish.

We offer the class every other year, beginning on Palm Saturday with Gretchen Wolff Pritchard’s Palm Saturday Walk from her book *He is Risen*. This hands-on experience of what is being remembered in the Eucharist is powerful for both children and adults. It is followed by six one-hour classes held on consecutive Wednesday evenings. Held at sunset time, with candlelight, quiet, and special time in the sanctuary, each one of these carries the flavor of a

retreat. The children attend with one adult. The curriculum used is *This Bread This Cup* from Morehouse/Cokesbury. As with all curriculums, it benefits from tweaking. I have added making an altar cloth (white paper wedding procession carpet works well) in which children draw a picture of themselves, their name saint or another saint on one side, and a relative who has gone before on the other, to gain insight and personal connection to the Communion of Saints. They make Communion bread and banners for the procession on Communion Celebration Sunday (The personal banner kits are available from Creative Communications). The children participate in many aspects of the service and join me at the altar at the time of consecration. Once they have taken the Communion Celebration Class they are eligible to be trained the following year as an acolyte.

For this group of children, it is two or three years before they begin Tween Group, the first level of the St. Mary’s youth program. As I take each succeeding group of high school teens on pilgrimage, I see the beginning of that group as having started many years before, in the Communion Celebration Class.

Far from being a rough cultural accommodation to a significant subgroup in the Episcopal Church, the Communion Celebration Class has proved a delightful, mysterious, evangelizing event. In bringing together Roman roots and Episcopal wings, we have a better catechized and committed group of families that honors where they have been and looks forward to where they are going together.

*Woodley is rector of St. Mary’s Church, Mobergan Lake and chair of the diocese’s Congregational Development Commission.*

## St. Nick's: Our Formula for Growth

By Diane Levitt

**A**lthough Zion Chapel (a chapel of Zion Church, Wappingers Falls) was initially built to serve the small insular community of New Hamburg, it has successfully evolved into a church, St. Nicholas on the Hudson, which attracts people from many walks of life and far beyond the hamlet's borders. "St. Nick's" has been blessed with many strong bearers of good news—priests, congregants and friends—that have led us through several decades.

In the late 1960s, the Rev. Paul Clayton introduced a climate that would begin the growth outward for Zion Chapel. People began driving from other areas to be part of his thriving congregation. As with many churches though, there were some hard times after this popular priest left.

Zion Chapel ended its affiliation with Zion Church in the 1970s, and moved into a decade of finding a new identity. In the 1980s, the newly formed St. Nick's continued to broaden its base with the help of the Southern Dutchess Ministry and the Rev. Deborah Tammearu. Deborah inspired another period of growth and markedly improved both the spiritual life and the physical plant. Once again, the congregation expanded beyond the immediate area.

After Deborah's departure and a few up-and-down periods, St. Nicholas was blessed with the arrival of the Rev. Astrid Storm. Like the others before her, she has attracted communicants from neighborhoods outside of the hamlet: people are willing to travel to St. Nick's.

One must ask, what is the attraction and does it go beyond the pastor of the moment? The church has a dynamic priest, a beautiful setting and a very small property to support and maintain. This is a very important portion of the success formula, but the make-up of the congregation also deserves to be valued as part of this equation.

St. Nicholas' central location in the hamlet and its jewel-like size have made depending on our non-congregant neighbors a very important factor. The people in New Hamburg have supported the church financially and by offering the use of their space. Annual meetings and pancake suppers have moved to the local yacht club or firehouse. The relationship is two-way: Astrid regularly offers the benediction at the Yacht Club's annual Memorial Day ceremony and is the chaplain of the local volunteer fire department. Our St. Francis celebration is attended by many non-members who view the church as a place where they can partake in what is now a community event and be welcomed without having to be committed as an active congregant. Hosting an after-school reading program administered by a local library and active participation in the food program headquartered up the road at Zion, our former mother church, are important ways St. Nicholas' and its congre-



The Church of St. Nicholas-on-the-Hudson, New Hamburg.

Photo: EDNY

gation attend to some of the critical needs of our broader community.

We are an inclusive, open-minded parish that is sensitive to the needs of both the congregants and those in the greater community. The people come from various walks of life, and there is no one economic, intellectual or spiritual type that dominates. Our liturgy is strong, and we try to offer programs that will appeal to various types of people. Those that are attracted to St. Nick's seem comfortable stepping out of their comfort zone for others. The general character and behavior of this parish is welcoming. An important factor in our success is Astrid's belief that, if you ask, people will respond. This has been apparent in raising the funds to meet our budgetary needs, supporting our committee work, and assisting in programs both within and outside of St. Nick's.

All of this adds up to an environment that successfully makes people feel part of the community and builds on the desire to evolve and grow stronger with it.

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*Levitt is a member and former warden, St. Nicholas-on-the-Hudson.*



# A Missionary Church for a Changing World

By the Rev. Canon Dr. Peter B. Stube

**T**he Episcopal Church was established in 1789. In 1821 we adopted the visionary name “the Domestic and Foreign Missionary Society of the Protestant Episcopal Church.” From the outset we understood that our reason for being was the spread of the good news of God in Christ. We saw ourselves in continuity with Christ and the Apostles in the mission of God to the world. Like the apostles of Acts, early Episcopal missionaries went to undeveloped parts of this nation to serve diverse people and introduce them to Christ. Leaving the comfort of homes in civilized areas, they provided education, hospitals and pastoral care for pioneers in the west and Native Americans wherever they found them. They were at the forefront of serving the needs of those who lived in the poorest parts of our cities. They were courageous for the sake of the gospel.

Today many are rethinking what it means to be a missional church that can respond more nimbly to an ever changing cultural landscape. We have lately spent energy to maintain our old ways of thinking, our buildings and our structures, even as these no longer meet the deepest human needs. The early missionary church, on the other hand, was far less encumbered and far more amenable to the movement of the Spirit of God: Paul supported his mission by working in the marketplace; members of the early church felt an urgency that drove them into public places and temples to speak the gospel in the context and language of disparate people.

Now it may be time for us to consider new wine for the new wineskins, and to recover the dynamism of a Spirit-led people and bring the mission of God more readily to the people of the earth.

The Baptismal Covenant in the 1979 Book of Common Prayer (p.299) has now shaped the Episcopal Church’s moral vision for over a generation. It asks the candidates for baptism six questions. The first three concern the formational disciplines of the community of faith. Then, we turn to our response to the world. We pledge to proclaim our faith by word and example, finding ways to communicate with people in the language they best understand.

New to this Prayer Book are the last two questions on page 305: “Will you seek and serve Christ in all persons, loving your neighbor as yourself?” and “Will you strive for justice and peace among all people, and respect the dignity of every human being?”

For 35 years Episcopalians have prayed these questions, and they have profoundly influenced our moral engagement with the world. In them we recognize our responsibility to all God’s children, our call to love our neighbor (who may also be our enemy), to strive for justice, work for peace and respect the dignity of every human being. We mirror Micah of old, “He has told you, O Mortal, what the Lord requires of you; to do justice, to love kindness (mercy), and to walk humbly with your God.” And we affirm the two great commandments, “Love the Lord your God with all your heart and soul and strength. And love your neighbor as yourself.” In Aquinas-like fashion the Episcopal Church has thus entertained the questions that culture has been asking—and when tradition has no answer we have prayerfully offered new responses, and then invited the Church to discern whether we have the mind of Christ. These seasons of discernment can be very chaotic, but God has always created life and clarity from chaos.

In this Baptismal Covenant, then, Episcopalians articulate the mission of the Church in this generation. We are to bring people to Christ, strive for God’s justice, peace and compassion to the world, and seek to ease the deepest needs of the most broken people. The task is so broad that every skill and gift of the baptized is needed if God is to redeem the world through us.

## A Mission-Oriented Church will understand that:

**1. The mission is God’s mission**, discerned by a community engaged in worship, faithful prayer and study.

**2. The scope of the mission is the salvation of the world and all its peoples and systems**, including economic justice, ecology, racism, sexism, government, medicine, commerce, the relations of nations, relationships with other faith communities, but without limit.

**3. As a missionary people we will be profoundly aware of our dependence on**

## God and the power of the Spirit.

**4. The call to mission is integral, not optional.** This understanding of mission has its foundation in God’s promises to Abraham and Sarah, the call of God to the prophets, and in our Lord’s commission to the apostles to go forth into the world.

**5. A mission-oriented church realizes that at the very core of our being we are missionaries.** Like Paul we hold every skill, vocation and gift captive to the missionary mandate on our lives. We spend every resource that God might be “known, worshipped and obeyed.” When we grasp a sense of God’s mission and his call of each of us to be missionary, then business, work, vocation, service cannot go on as usual.

**6. Our primary task is to focus on people and their need to experience the Good News of God (through our action and witness).** The first century church met in houses and worked in the market place in order to live the gospel before a world that had never heard it. Today most of us have buildings. We must be clearer on how these buildings exist to serve God’s mission in our communities. Are they places where all are truly welcome? Do justice, righteousness, healing and peace radiate in and from them? In a missionary church, buildings will complement Christ’s mission through us. We will come to them for solace, and for strength in order that we might fulfill the Gospel in our vocations. A passionate disciplined life of worship of God must be related seamlessly to the proclamation of God’s power, justice, compassion and inclusiveness.

**7. The church is healed and finds its vitality when it concerns itself with the things that are most important to God.** When the church celebrates the mighty acts of God, joy and energy become available to help us share with others what God has done and is doing. Our own healing is a byproduct of our humility and obedience to the mission. We need to create opportunities in our church life for people to share with each other what God is doing in our lives; how we are being healed, in mind, body, spirit, and relationships; how our doubts and fears are being addressed; how our prayers are being answered; and how our loneliness is being filled with presence—both God’s and members of the faith community.

**8. The proclamation of the Gospel is to engage and bring wholeness to all dimensions of what it means to be human, not just the so-called “spiritual needs.”** If we engage the deepest need of people and culture by doing the hard work of justice, reconciliation, and mercy we are often given time to speak. It may be necessary at first to proclaim the Gospel without words.

**9. The task of mission is best accomplished in community.** When we are in prayer community with a community of faith committed to the mission of God and each other, we discern the mind of the Holy One, and receive the encouragement and exhortation necessary to continue the mission.

*Stube is the executive director of the Seamen’s Church Institute of Philadelphia and South Jersey.*

This is an edited extract of a longer and more comprehensive article which is available on the SCI Philadelphia website at <http://www.sciphiladelphia.org/>

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## On “Ashes to Go” *From the Rev. Gaylord Hitchcock*



SCI Chaplain James Kollin distributing ashes to seafarers and port workers in Port Newark, NJ on Ash Wednesday, March 5, 2014. Photo: David Rider.

Long before the *Book of Common Prayer* restored the rite of imposition of ashes in 1979, the invariable practice was to impose ashes on those who wished to receive them at the beginning of the Ash Wednesday liturgy. (Naturally, priests might well be loath to deny ashes to churchgoers who might have arrived a bit late, and would have imposed them immediately after the liturgy to those who had been at Mass.) By 1979, it was clear that it was time to encourage the entire Episcopal Church to adopt this devotion, and it now forms part of a penitential section of the service between the Liturgy of the Word and the Eucharistic celebration itself, which makes perfect sense. We hear the Word (with a call to repentance) read and preached, we acknowledge our sinfulness, and we receive ashes as a sign of our sinfulness and, above all, our mortality. (BCP, p. 265.)

But then, we do something! We celebrate the Holy Eucharist, in which we plead yet again the one atoning sacrifice of Him who bore on the cross all those

sins we have lamented, and countless others besides, and celebrate the Risen Presence of Christ triumphant over sin and death. We receive his Body and Blood, assuring us that we are reconciled with God and with one another. The Imposition of Ashes are of a piece with the proclamation of the Word and the celebration of the Eucharistic Sacrifice. Apart

from them, they are nothing more than a morbid reminder of the fact that we're going to die. That is no gospel! As I have preached on numerous occasions, “ashes are never the last word.” Far less are they the *only* word!

The practice of giving out ashes apart from the liturgy, “ashes to go,” is an abuse—the very sort of abuse and superstition that the reformers rightly condemned. It has never had, and does not now have, the slightest justification in the Prayer Book tradition. The present Prayer Book reintroduced the devotion properly. The fact that people seem to want this “magic,” is no justification for catering to it. It is not evangelism. It impedes church growth. “You are dust, and to dust you shall return” is no gospel. “Christ has died, Christ is Risen, Christ will come again (which liturgically follows the imposition of ashes) is. I don't need a smudge on my forehead to remind me of the bad news that I'm going to die.

Far from providing lists of places carrying on this abuse, it ought to be actively discouraged.

*Father Hitchcock was not alone in expressing his opposition to the distribution of ashes in isolation from the liturgy, but the practice has nevertheless rapidly become standard in many parishes in the diocese (making clear, in itself, that many clergy take a different view). The following are a few excerpts from comments posted on the diocesan Facebook page ([www.facebook.com/Episcopalny](http://www.facebook.com/Episcopalny)) in response to the question: “Some say ‘Ashes to Go’ (the distribution of ashes on Ash Wednesday on station platforms, ferry docks, or to drivers-by outside the church) is a form of evangelism, while others say that when separated from the liturgy of which it's a part, it is merely satisfying the recipient's demand for magic. What do you think?”*

“So many arguments against this seem to begin with the premise that the practice of ‘ashes to go’ somehow lessens the integrity of ‘ashes imposed during liturgy.’ Fear. It seems to me it is a similar argument to that made

against same sex marriage; that it somehow lessens the integrity (I think the word ‘threatens’ is employed) of heterosexual marriage.”

“It's meeting people where they are, instead of demanding that they come to us, and in my book that's a very good thing.”

“Real issue may be: does it have integrity -- for either the bestower or the recipient?”

“It is not magic—just a reminder of who we are and how we need to be humble—it is not showing off ‘our Christianity.’ It is an act of penance and a very visible reminder of who we are. As we learned when we were preparing to be confirmed—it is the outward and visible sign of an inward and spiritual grace...”

# Time for a Carbon Tax *From Had Talbot*

I support the thesis in Steven Knight's article (*ENY*, Fall 2013) that people of faith of all traditions have a common bond through a desire to fulfill the Genesis covenant—or the equivalent for other faith traditions—to care for Earth, our home. In that context, as a statement of moral concern, religious institutions should certainly, as he suggests, sell their fossil fuel and related investments—and prudently reinvest in equally rewarding businesses, particularly those with a renewable energy component. A further rationale for this is that much of today's market value of fossil fuel companies lies in the future value of their carbon-based reserves, which, as the consumption of fossil fuel based products is (it is argued) increasingly seen as unsustainable, will become increasingly worthless.

However, divestment—selling fossil-fuel-related securities—is not enough. We must do much more than make a statement of moral concern and a bet on future asset values.

The entire focus of the fossil fuel divestment movement is on influencing the producers and sellers of fossil fuels through the capital markets. But the producers and sellers are the *supply* side of the supply/demand equation—and as long as there is a *demand* for fossil fuel products, fossil fuel producers and sellers will provide the supply to meet it. Fossil fuel companies are energy companies: until they can provide energy to their customers from sources other than fossil fuels and at a competitive price they must continue to supply their millions of customers with fossil fuel based energy. It's their job.

So what will affect *demand* for fossil-fuel-based products? Many factors, but certainly price is high among them. The more expensive fossil fuel products

become, the less consumers are likely to use them. Whenever available, they will begin to switch to other products—hopefully to less polluting and offensive ones to humanity and to Earth as a whole.

An important element of fossil fuel prices is taxes. I personally favor some form of a “carbon tax.” If our government imposed such a tax on all fossil fuel products, they would certainly be more expensive—and consumption would almost certainly decline along with the release of carbon into our atmosphere.

Further, the truth is that current prices of fossil fuel products are “discounted” to the extent that they do not include full costs. In particular, they do not include the price of pollution, however one chooses to calculate that price. So there is actually an economic justification for a “carbon tax.”

Most people don't like taxes, me included! And maybe there are other good ways to achieve a reduction in consumption of fossil fuels. But I, for one, would certainly rather sacrifice a bit today rather than shift the cost—which probably would not be limited to dollars and cents—to my grandchildren.

As Americans, we believe in the separation of church and state. It's the job of our elected officials to decide on taxes and such. However, we, as people of faith—each and every denomination of each and every faith tradition—are entitled to have a voice in the process, a voice expressing our moral outrage, our fear for the future, and our deep concern for God's Earth. Let's use our local, regional and national (and indeed, international) structures to make ourselves heard! Let's make it clear that we are convinced that we must find ways to reduce the demand for and consumption of fossil fuel products—by virtually any means, including a “carbon tax.”

## Mariandale Retreat & Conference CENTER

### JUNE

#### Artists' Contemplative Retreat

Facilitator: Rose Amodeo Petronella  
Thursday, June 5 – Thursday, June 12  
Fee: \$500-\$525 (As You Are Able)

#### Always Gifts

Presenters: Gaysell Cronin and Jack Raithschmidt, OFM Cap.  
Sunday, June 8 – Friday, June 13  
Fee: \$400-\$425 (As You Are Able)

#### Re-envisioning the Second Half of Life

Presenters: Maria and Michael Morwood  
Sunday, June 15 – Saturday, June 21  
Fee: \$550-\$575 (As You Are Able)

#### Encountering the Gospel Again for the First Time

Presenter: Mary Schneiders, OP  
Sunday, June 22 – Thursday, June 26  
Fee: \$325-\$350 (As You Are Able)

#### Dance of Divine Intimacy: Mutual Knowing and Loving

Presenter: Dan Bisson, FMS  
Thursday, June 26 – Sunday, June 29  
Fee: \$350-\$375; Commuter: \$250-\$275 (As You Are Able)

#### Directed Retreat

Directors: Aedan McKeon, OP, Nancy Eris, OP,  
and Judy Schlavo  
Sunday, June 29 – Saturday, July 5  
Fee: \$475-\$500 (As You Are Able)

Restore the Soul

#### New Window of Opportunity

Presenter: Beverly Mosgrave  
Sunday, June 29, 6:00 pm – Friday, July 4, 11:00 am  
Fee: \$400-\$425 (As You Are Able)

### JULY

#### Heart Themes in Matthew's Gospels

Presenter: Michael H. Crosby, OFM Cap  
Saturday, July 5 – Wed. July 9  
Fee: \$450-\$475 (As You Are Able)

#### Crafters' and Quilters' Retreat: Postcards Tell Our Stories

Prayer Facilitator: Nancy Eris, OP  
Craft Instructor: Patricia Wiener  
Wednesday, July 9 – Sunday, July 13  
Fee: \$300-\$375; Commuter: \$250-\$275 (As You Are Able)

#### Women's Retreat: Wise Women of the World; Healing the World

Presenter: Nancy Eris, OP  
Sunday, July 13 – Saturday, July 19  
Fee: \$400-\$425 (As You Are Able)  
Commuter: \$40 per day; \$65 includes overnight

#### Men's Retreat: Real Men Pray

Presenter: Patrick Cleary-Burns  
Sunday, July 13 – Saturday, July 19  
Fee: \$400-\$425

#### Directed Retreat

Directors: Francis Gargani, CSsR and team members  
Sunday, July 27 – Sunday, August 3  
Fee: \$525-\$550 (As You Are Able)

## Summer Retreats 2014

Uplift the Spirit

### AUGUST

#### Finding a Living Faith; Revisiting the Creed

Presenter: Mary Schneiders, OP  
Sunday, August 3 – Friday, August 8  
Fee: \$400-\$425 (As You Are Able)

#### The Heart Cave: Deepening the Journey Within

Presenter: Michael Laratonda, FMS  
Sunday, August 10 – Friday, August 15  
Fee: \$425-\$450 (As You Are Able)

#### Christians Evolving Faithfully as the Universe

Presenters: Carol DeAngelo, SC and Nancy Eris, OP  
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# Militarism, Nationalism and the Church's Care of Veterans

By the Rev. Frank Alagna

As the victories won by American forces in Iraq have begun to be reversed, those who served there inevitably find themselves questioning the merit of the sacrifices they made.

I would hope that the Church, as guardian of the Spirit, might be in a position to lovingly hold these men and women as things begin to unravel and as they struggle with this conundrum.

But to do so effectively, we must, I believe, step back and reevaluate the long-established, matter of fact, endorsement of militarism and nationalism that is part of the church's enduring legacy from the fourth century Constantinian Settlement that wed the ecclesial and civil orders, and which the Episcopal Church has, for the most part, embraced at least as readily as other denominations.

Before the start of the Iraq/Afghanistan wars, the leaders of all the mainline Christian churches declared that the proposed action was illegal and immoral. Our civil leaders declared war nonetheless—after which most of those same religious leaders either went missing, or quickly supported participation in the war, to avoid even the appearance of being “unpatriotic” or of not “supporting the troops.”

Our religious leaders might, however, have served their country better with more forceful and forthright teaching about the moral consequences of participating in an unjust war—as did Bishop John Botean of the Romanian Catholic diocese of Canton, Ohio, in a pastoral letter read from every Romanian Catholic pulpit in the country. Bishop Botean wrote, “Beyond a reasonable doubt this war is morally incompatible with the Person and Way of Jesus Christ. With moral certainty I say to you it does not meet even the minimal standards of the just war theory. Thus, any killing associated with it, is unjustified and, in consequence, is unequivocally murder. Direct participation in this war is intrinsically and gravely evil and must be strictly forbidden.”

But Bishop Botean's was a solitary voice crying out in an ecclesial wilderness. Our own bishops did not take this opportunity to sever, once for all, the thread from which the so-called “just war” theory hangs. Instead, the church, for the most part, quickly embraced the “support our troops” rhetoric, together with the standard, unquestioned requirements of “patriotism.” Love for “our” men and women in uniform and love for “our” country seemed quickly to trump any significant stirrings of conscience with respect to the morality of engaging in such a patently unjust and immoral enterprise.

We are, it is true, citizens, while we are in this world, of the nation in which we live. But, as we have been taught, Christians have their primary and eternal citizenship in relationship to the Kingdom of God—and God has a different and higher set of priorities.

There is no easy way to manage this dual citizenship and allegiance. But can we really, as Christians, afford to let our primary allegiance to the priorities of the Kingdom of God get lost in the tide of worldly patriotism? Shouldn't we at least begin to take seriously the obvious truth that the two are not inseparable, and certainly cannot be treated as one and the same? Should a declaration of war, by temporal powers, simply override all other considerations? Or should such a declaration



Constantine the Great, mosaic in Hagia Sophia, Istanbul. It is time to reevaluate the Constantinian settlement that wed the ecclesial and civil orders, says the author.

Photo: The Yorck Project, Directmedia.

of war, in our age, instead heighten our awareness of the dual nature of our citizenship?

We have, of course, come to unite those citizenships in so many ways. We do so when we gather as Christians for prayer and worship. We experience no inner conflict in raising up prayers to God for “our” fighting men and women. Nowhere on our radar is the truth that for Christians to speak in this way is to offend against the very God who calls us not to be servants of war, but always to be instruments of peace and disciples of nonviolence.

We should indeed pray for soldiers; but should not the prayer we raise as Christians be a prayer for “all” rather than for just “our” fighting men and women, and for “all” whose lives have been, are and will be ravaged and devastated by war? Is not the voice of the praying Church the voice of Kingdom people, as distinct from the voice of a group of nationals of any earthly nation? Should not the language of our prayer be language that reflects this truth?

As it is with our corporate voice so too it is with our corporate space. It is generally assumed that our parish churches will serve as ancillary VFW and American Legion Halls, where the service of “our men and women in uniform” will be acknowledged and honored and we will comfortably pay

tribute to them for “their sacrifice on our behalf.” Church observances of Veteran's Day and Memorial Day, though they have not been given an official place in our calendar of liturgical observances, are religiously kept as “sacred” re-enforcers of the “support the troops” sentiment, which has been an essential underpinning of U.S. war policies. If they could, some among us would turn soldiers not only into heroes, but even into saints—for, as the myth goes, “soldiers fight and give their lives not only for their country but for God.”

The cause of unquestioned nationalism and militarism are further served and even sanctified by the American flags that often occupy a central place in our sanctuaries. The place that rightly belongs only to the Cross is routinely shared with another icon. Why are we not made uncomfortable by the rhetoric of the holy being applied to the national emblem, as when the flag is referred to as a sacred symbol? What does this say about our regard for the nationalist impulse? Does not such an ascription encourage and legitimize a worshipful response? Did not Jesus counsel, “Only God is Holy”? Did He not warn about the “Abomination of Desolation” being erected in the Holy of Holies?

Finally, the church through its military chaplaincy often does everything it can to assure young soldiers that carrying out the works of war is what God would want them to do. Military chaplains do not burden tender consciences with questions about the morality of a given military enterprise. The Pentagon expects that chaplains will fulfill their role of “force multiplier.” Many soldiers would be unable to continue as efficient warriors without the spiritual support of chaplains who counsel obedience to commanding officers.

How well has the Church preached the Gospel and shed the light of Sermon on the Mount morality upon American war-making? How well have we taught that violence in all forms is at odds with the Kingdom of God; *(continued on page 29)*

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# The Vassar Haiti Project: On the Ground in Haiti

By Lila Meade



Lila Meade, Cindy Fung and friends.

Photo: Vassar Haiti Project.

**K**oté Priscilla?” asked the young Haitian girl as she grabbed my hand, beginning the ascent to the mountain village of Chermaitre in northwest Haiti. Two hours of strenuous hiking awaited before we reached our destination at the summit. While I understood the depth of her question, it wasn’t clear how my basic knowledge of Haitian Creole could ever convey to Gina that her two words succinctly defined our work in Haiti. Simply put: “relationship.” The previous March, Vassar College senior Priscilla Sevilla had visited Chermaitre with a group of other students to assess the progress of education, health, water and reforestation initiatives that she and others had worked on throughout their tenure in college.

Gina had wondered why the student was not on the trip this year. “Where is Priscilla?” This beautiful child with a hundred barrettes and a radiant smile could not forget her friend who was not with this new group of college students. Then, in rapid fire, she asked, “Koté Fiona? Koté Tamsin? Koté Francis?” Gina asked about some of the many other students who had visited her school and village over the previous years.

The Vassar Haiti Project, an all-volunteer non-profit organization, was born in 2001 with the simple idea that every child deserves to be educated and fed. Through the sale of the joyous and vibrant art of Haiti, my husband Andrew and I began a journey along with hundreds of Vassar students and Hudson Valley residents to partner with the village of Chermaitre.

It takes a day and a half to reach this remote village in northwest Haiti from the airport in Port-au-Prince, traversing rivers on unmarked roads through glorious untamed mountains to the place where the road ends and the upward climb begins. It’s remote enough that most Haitians have no idea where it is.

Our work in Haiti is done through the Partnership Program of the Episcopal Diocese in Haiti. Working with a local priest, the partnership has grown. Many churches have joined us in hosting art sales over the years to help raise funds for our new projects in Haiti: Trinity Episcopal Church, Fishkill, and Christ

Church in Sag Harbor have both hosted sales in support of the health initiative. All Saints Church in NYC, St. John’s in Washington, CT and St. Barnabas in Greenwich, CT have all joined as partners with VHP. Thirteen years later, a six classroom school and a medical center (a clinic which dispenses medications) stand, and soon another building which will serve as a church/kindergarten/women’s cooperative will be completed.

“Partnering with a village is so much more than helping.” VHP Co-Founder Dr. Andrew Meade explains. “It is much more of a win-win. The village gains funds for its critical needs, such as a school lunch program and teacher salaries. More importantly, they engage in dialogue about sustainable impact, such as how women can develop and nurture marketable skills or how farmers can regrow a forest of fruit and lumber trees. Students who travel to the village have the chance to facilitate conversations such as these, and come away with an unsurpassed experiential education.”

In early April, as in past years, the Vassar Haiti Project held an art sale at Vassar College in Poughkeepsie, featuring over 350 affordable, original Haitian art and unique handmade crafts, as well as an auction that will take place on Saturday afternoon. We love hosting this event that enables us to continue the important work in Haiti each year.

There are 280 children, along with Gina, who attend Ecole St. Paul’s in Chermaitre, and have no idea what an art sale looks like, but who cherish their school and the one meal guaranteed in a given day. *Where is Priscilla?* She is somewhere in their hearts. And for sure, the feeling is mutual.

Meade is co-founder of the Vassar Haiti Project.

The Haitian Art Sale and Auction is free and open to the public and all purchases are 50% tax deductible. Please visit [www.thehaitiproject.org](http://www.thehaitiproject.org) which shows all the art available for sale or call 845.797.2123.

## Shopping with a Conscience

by the Rev. Duncan Burns and Katrina Joseberger

**O**n January 17, St. John's Church, Kingston hosted a "Spirituality on Tap" event with the topic of "Shopping with a Conscience." This series was initially supported by a First Step Grant through the diocese, and has included topics such as "Fracking in New York," "Indian Point: Nowhere to Run," "Meet your Politicians" and "Beyond Newtown: More than Gun Control." We have met in pubs, churches and other community venues. Every session has been well attended. In January we looked for a slightly younger audience by asking a high school student to give one of the presentations. In addition to our young adult regulars, this event drew youth groups from Grace Church, Millbrook; St. John's, Kingston; and Christ the King, Stone Ridge.

Katrina Josberger, a junior at Coxsackie-Athens High School, gave the following presentation to 60 youth and young adults from the Mid Hudson Valley:

"I first became involved with the Sweat-free NYS movement last April. A group from my school was taking a field trip to the Capital in Albany to listen to the story of Sumi Abedin—a young woman who survived a horrific fire in a garment factory. Her story, which I will explain in a moment, really changed how I view the clothes I wear every day, the American businesses which permit injustice, and the garment industry. Nearly 2,000 Bangladeshi workers have died in factory fires and building collapses (Rana) since 2005.

"In November of 2012, Sumi was working on the 4th floor of the Tazreen Factory in Bangladesh. The factory workers were working in the evenings to meet deadlines. On the evening of November 24, the Tazreen workers smelled smoke, but the supervisors assured them that it was a false alarm. However, very soon it became clear that a fire was real, but the factory supervisors were nowhere to be found and had locked the gate of the factory, so workers could not escape. Sumi crawled, in the dark, down to the third floor with her coworkers by the light of a cell phone. Left with no choice, she jumped out the window, believing that she would not make it. And most importantly, her reason for jumping was not to save her life. She wanted to "save her body," so her family would have a way to identify her. Sumi survived, unlike 111 of her coworkers, but broke her arm and her leg. Her parents had to borrow money from their neighbor to take her to the hospital. She was in the hospital for a month and a half, but only received \$1,200 for her injuries, not nearly enough to pay for her hospital bills or her medical leave while recovering from her injuries.

"Sumi came to New York and the Capital to simply ask for help in getting a fair compensation for her and her coworkers. She begged Wal-Mart, The Children's Place, and other corporations who manufactured garments in the Tazreen Factory, to fully pay for her hospital

bills and medical leave. So far, there has been no money given by Wal-Mart or other billion-dollar corporations to help these workers.

"And Sumi is only one story from the tragedies occurring in Bangladesh. There are thousands of young teenage girls like her who work day in and day out in dangerous conditions. And boycotting is not necessarily a safe answer because the workers want their jobs. They just want things like fair wages, safe conditions, the ability to form unions, and the right to take a maternity leave.

"While listening to Sumi speak, I was moved by her soft-spoken, nervous manner. She looked so young, not older than my peers and me, and never smiled or looked comfortable in the few hours I spent with her. Here was a completely innocent girl, who was fighting for justice. And I wanted to help her.

Whenever I have heard other adults speak about the issue of corporate injustice, they have always made the point that young people have much more power than they think. It is through our wallets. We go to the mall. Many of us love fashion, clothes, and buying new jeans and an outfit for a special occasion. We are in a position of power by how we spend our money. Please support companies which provide their workers with fair wages and safe working conditions. Together we CAN make a difference."

They have been, and look forward to where they are going together.

*Burns is the rector of St. John's Church, Kingston. Josberger is a junior at Coxsackie-Athens High School.*



High school students and young adults gathered Jan 17 for a presentation on "Shopping with a Conscience"—one of the Spirituality on Tap events organized by St. John's Church, Kingston.

Photo: St. John's Church.

### CHRISTIANITY AFTER RELIGION: THE END OF CHURCH AND THE BIRTH OF A NEW SPIRITUAL AWAKENING

BY DIANA BUTLER BASS  
HARPERONE, 294 PAGES

Reviewed by the Rev. Robert C. Lamborn

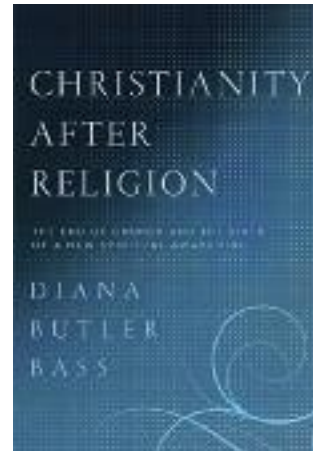
Dean Markham of Virginia Theological Seminary has sparked a good deal of discussion by saying that it is a myth that the Episcopal Church is in decline. Putting “the end of church” in the subtitle of her most recent book makes it clear that Dean Markham’s fellow Alexandria (Va.) Episcopalian, Diana Butler Bass, holds a different view.

*Christianity after Religion: The End of Church and the Birth of a New Spiritual Awakening* does not limit itself to the Episcopal Church, nor even to the mainline Protestant denominations that have previously been the focus of Dr. Butler Bass’s research. She uses recent statistics to counter the longtime assumption that liberal denominations were losing members because of being liberal, while conservative ones were growing because of being conservative. Denominational loyalty in general, she demonstrates, is on the wane in this country, with approximately 44 per cent of people in the United States having left the denomination they grew up in, either

for another tradition or to have a religious affiliation no longer.

Part I, “The End of Religion,” treats the familiar decline in religious participation in the United States, and gives anecdotes of people’s disenchantment with organized religion. Butler Bass recounts how contemporary Americans have become accustomed to a huge number of choices, and how that reality is reflected in an increased fluidity of religious identity and practice. Indeed many have become increasingly frustrated and disenchanted with institutions of all types. To cite two of Butler Bass’s examples, a large percentage of Americans now describe themselves as unaffiliated rather than either Democratic or Republican, and the category “spiritual but not religious” seems to encompass a growing number of people.

Butler Bass’s book does not see despair in such dislocations, however, but transformation: “a time of cultural revitalization and reorientation rather than a time of religious apocalypse.” She views the current changes as part of an awakening, in the tradition of the great awakenings earlier in our nation’s history and containing the possibility of rebirth. To this end she argues for a shift of focus from religious institutions to an experiential faith she calls *religio*, remind-



ing readers of it Latin roots meaning “reconnecting.” This experiential emphasis “invites every generation to experience God—to return to the basic questions of believing, behaving, and belonging—and explore each anew with an open heart.”

For me the heart of the book is the middle section, “A New Vision,” where Butler Bass re-casts Christian ways of believing, behaving, and belonging. In each instance, she seeks to rediscover the dynamism at

the heart of the cluster of practices, which in many cases has taken on an overly-institutional focus. She also calls for the three to be re-ordered: “Instead of believing, behaving and belonging, we need to reverse the order to belonging, behaving, and believing.” My own experience as a parish priest is that a good percentage of people come still asking questions about what Episcopalians believe, while others become comfortable helping with an outreach initiative before wishing to belong to the congregation. I would like to see us become responsive enough to make all three—belonging, behaving, believing—into potential entry points of welcome.

Part III, “Awakening,” is the shortest and least fully-developed section of the book, reminding me of the brevity of Resurrection (*continued on page 30*)

### ANTONIO CANOVA: THE SEVEN LAST WORKS THE METROPOLITAN MUSEUM OF ART, ROBERT LEHMAN WING, FIRST FLOOR, GALLERY 956 THROUGH 27 APRIL 2014

Reviewed by Pamela A. Lewis

Many regular visitors to the Metropolitan Museum have probably believed that they knew all there was to know about Antonio Canova (1757-1822), the great exponent of Neo-Classicism, by way of his stunning sculpture group, *Perseus With the Head of Medusa*, which was for years prominently displayed on the balustrade overlooking the museum’s Great Hall, and is now in the European Sculpture and Decorative Arts section. The cool, restrained purity of the *Perseus* has, for many, represented the sum total of Canova’s Greco-Roman-inspired output, as well as defined the heroic image in time of revolution; if you have seen *Perseus*, you have seen all of Canova. But this very small and almost meditative exhibition of religious works in plaster, *The Seven Last Works*, whispers *au contraire* to such thinking, and introduces us to a side of Canova that

we never knew, yet can still appreciate.

In the last decade of his life, Canova designed and financed a church for his hometown of Posagno, northwest of Treviso. A graceful synthesis of the Greek Parthenon and the Roman Pantheon, it would become the artist’s mausoleum. Canova had intended a series of 32 relief panels to be placed within a frieze, but had modeled only seven before his death. The panels (six of which are from the Gallerie dell’Accademia in Venice, and are Canova’s original plaster models made in his Roman studio) depict four episodes from the Book of Genesis and three episodes surrounding the birth of Christ, as described in the Gospel of Saint Luke.

While the seven works (all completed from 1821-22) taken together constitute an unfurling of some of the key events in the biblical narrative, each panel, carefully designed and beautifully executed, exudes its own distinctive power. In *The Creation of the World*, the series’ first panel, God, clad in swirling drapery, has been caught in the full act of fashioning the cosmos: a sweet-faced but vibrant sun has just been made by the creator’s left hand, while the earth (showing the Italian peninsula surrounded by the Mediterranean Sea) comes into existence by his right. In *Cain and Abel*, Canova’s elegant modeling



Antonio Canova, *The Visitation*, 1821-22, Plaster. Gallerie dell’Accademia, Venice (S.218)

of the figures contrasts with the violence of humankind’s first murder. In the panels relating to the New Testament episodes (*The Annunciation*, *The Visitation*, and *The Presentation of Christ in the Temple*), Mary is portrayed as the embodiment of the ideal holy young woman, whose serene features and gestures are Luke’s words in sculpted form.

As he had done in the Old Testament panels, Canova takes a minimalist approach in the New Testament sets by including only the most essential elements—a step, a dove, a small altar—so that the figures receive our undivided attention, since it is they who are telling these extraordinary stories. Their gestures, while restrained, are not meaningless. In *The Presentation of Christ in the Temple*, we can feel the old priest Simeon’s joy as he reaches out to hold the long-awaited Christ child, who reaches out to the elderly man as well.

The space that has been created for this show is an appropriate one: the gently curved wall against which the panels stand enables the viewer to move comfortably from one panel to the next. The lighting is soft but does not obscure the panels’ details, and the wall labels, like the works they describe, tell us just what we need to know. A large color photograph of the superb Posagno Temple occupies the wall opposite the panels, with an accompanying text that explains in detail Canova’s innovative working process.

Lewis is a member of St. Thomas Church, Fifth Avenue.



## Support from the Bishop for Prison Education

By Molly Gordy

As a member of the Bard College board of trustees, Bishop Dietsche was pleased to officiate at its May 2013 commencement by offering the opening and closing prayers. He expected to be touched by the keynote speaker, Congresswoman Gabrielle Giffords, who had survived a near-fatal gun attack by a mentally ill constituent in 2011.

Yet he was unprepared for the wave of emotion that engulfed him when, as two of the 465 graduating seniors collected their diplomas, they were met with cheers, sobs and screams of joy. These particular students were recently paroled inmates from Sing Sing penitentiary in nearby Ossining, who had attended all classes and completed all coursework behind bars.

“It was a truly remarkable moment, one that illustrated the program’s success in reclaiming lives that had wandered off course,” the bishop recalled. “It goes to the heart of prison ministry, which is about reclaiming lives.”

Dietsche’s position is not new; he has actively supported prisoner rehabilitation since ministering to inmates at maximum security facilities decades ago as a parish priest. He became more outspoken in his commitment in 2008 when his good friend, the Rev. Canon Petero Sabune, then chaplain at Sing Sing, invited him to visit Bard’s and Cornell University’s prison college programs.

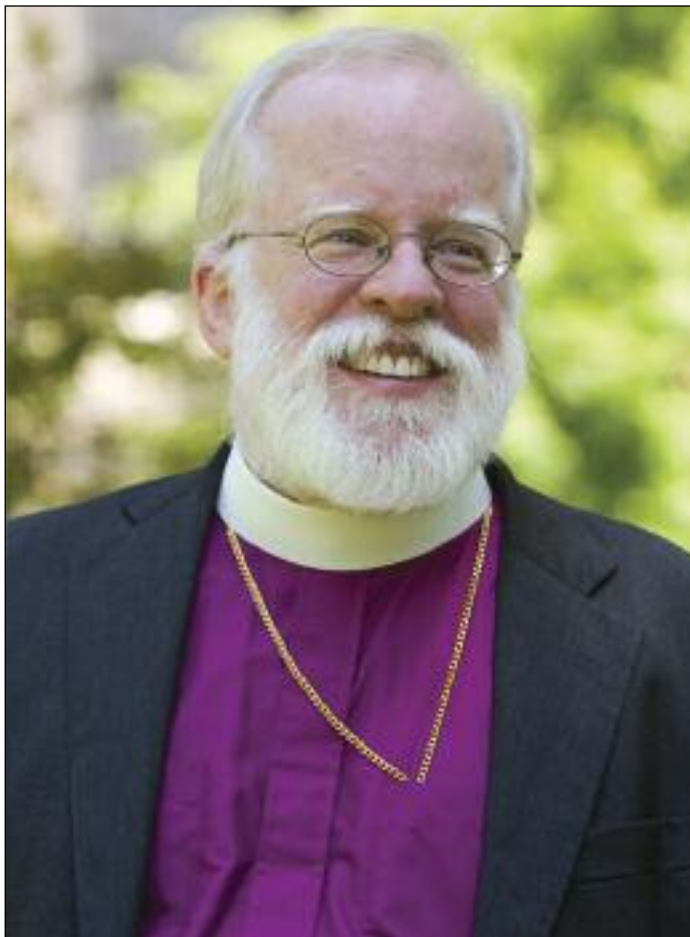
He went a step further and publicly advocated for college behind bars on March 3 of this year, when Gov. Andrew Cuomo issued a request for proposals to create state-funded college degree programs at 10 prisons—one in each region of New York.

“When the governor first announced his intention in February, he took some heat for this,” Dietsche said. “So, knowing my thoughts on this kind of thing, his people reached out to me on March 3 and asked me to issue a public statement of support.”

Dietsche said reaction to the open letter he sent by email to members of the diocese, and published on the diocesan website, was generally more favorable than that of the public at large—a fact he attributes to the large number of Episcopal churches and parishioners already engaged in inmate support. Yet he acknowledges that some in the diocese are opposed to the Cuomo initiative, and that he understands their position.

“Their theme seems to be that a college education is a great asset often obtained at great expense, and by providing it free to people who are incarcerated, we are rewarding them for committing crimes,” he said. “Some cited members of their family who had spent decades paying off student loans.

“And I will tell you that I am sympathetic to that. Between paying for my undergraduate education, my seminary education, my graduate education and then the



Bishop Dietsche.

Photo: Kara Flannery

college educations of my two daughters, I am right now at the point where I have been making student loan payments for 42 years.”

Bishop Dietsche counters his critics by urging them to “look around and acknowledge that the vast majority of people in the prison population were raised in circumstances of great deprivation and without much support from family or community. So, they are not on a level playing field.

In that context, a college education “is not a reward, but a key piece of these inmate’s commitment to turning their lives around and becoming a useful part of society, which is helpful to us all.”

The statistics support him. New York currently spends \$60,000 per year on every prisoner in its system, and those who leave have a 40 percent chance of ending back behind bars. Research indicates that these high and expensive rates of recidivism fall to less than 22 per cent if prisons offer significant educational opportunity to incarcerated men and woman. And the per-inmate cost of a college education behind bars is just \$5,000.

While Gov. Cuomo is emphasizing the cost effectiveness and public safety benefits of his proposal, as leader of the New York Diocese, the bishop’s justification is spiritual.

“It is a call by Jesus to visit the prisoners in their affliction and minister to them,” he said. “The prodigal son, having chosen to live in exile, having left his father, fell into ruin. And there in ruin, the Scripture tells us, he came to himself, and he said “I will return to my father and humble myself, not as a son, but as a servant.”

“When we see people in prison who are availing themselves of educational opportunities, it is very much in this tradition,” Dietsche said. “I will return, I will humble myself, I will serve.”

He called on every member of the clergy, every parishioner in his diocese “to respond to Jesus’ call to help the prisoner, even if it’s at the smallest level.”

This could range from a formal chaplaincy to teaching a literacy class behind walls to visiting inmates, helping them maintain contact with their children, providing financial support for programs, or writing Gov. Cuomo in support of his college initiative behind bars,” the bishop said.

“At the very least, every church should be praying for the inmates and the guards.”

Gordy is a freelance writer who specializes in matters of spirituality and theology.

This article was first published in slightly different form in the April 2014 edition of *Episcopal Journal*, and is reprinted here with their kind permission.

## Meet Our New Transitional Deacons

### Ordained March 15 in the Cathedral Church of Saint John the Divine by Bishop Dietsche



Front row left to right: the Rev. Christine Ann Jones, the Rev. Joanne Izzo, the Rev. Richard Saint John Pike, the Rev. Robert Karl Chambers, the Rev. Euan Kerr Cameron, and the Rev. Jennie Talley. Middle row left to right: The Rt. Rev. Andrew M.L. Dietsche, the Rt. Rev. Chilton R. Knudsen Back row left to right: Bishop-Elect Allen K. Shin, the Rev. Canon Charles W. Simmons, the Rev. Diane Reiners, the Rev. Deacon Anne Nicholson, the Rev. Canon Constance C. Coles, the Rev. Deacon Miguel A. Hernandez, and the Rev. Canon Julia E. Whitworth.

Photo: Alito Orsini

**The Rev. Dr. Euan Kerr Cameron** was sponsored for ordination by the Church of the Heavenly Rest, Manhattan. He is the Henry Luce III Professor of Reformation Church History at the Union Theological Seminary.

**The Rev. Robert Karl Chambers** was sponsored for ordination by Christ Church, Riverdale. He is a Master of Divinity student at the Seminary of the Southwest, Austin, Texas.

**The Rev. Joanne Izzo** was sponsored for ordination by the Church of the Ascension, Staten Island. She has received her Master of Sacred Theology degree and her Diploma in Anglican Studies from the General Theological Seminary.

**The Rev. Christine Ann Jones** was sponsored for ordination by St. Augustine's Church, Croton-on-Hudson. She will receive her Master of Divinity degree in May from the General Theological Seminary.

**The Rev. Richard Saint John Pike** was sponsored for ordination by Grace Church, Manhattan. He will receive his Master of Divinity degree in May from the General Theological Seminary.

**The Rev. Jennie Talley** was sponsored for ordination by St. Michael's Church, Manhattan. She will receive her Master of Divinity degree in May from the General Theological Seminary.

## Global Women's Fund Forum at House of the Redeemer

A forum presented March 18 by the diocese's Global Women's Fund (GWF) attracted more than seventy people to hear three women, educated by the Fund, speak about their work on behalf of women and girls in the developing world. These women are living proof that the work the GWF is doing around the world is important and making a difference. Bishop Knudsen and the Rev. Theodora Brooks moderated. Margaret Dietsche, a GWF board member, made the introduction and Bishop Dietsche led us in prayer.

Alyse, an ordained priest and chaplain at Easter College in the Philippines, shared her journey as part of an indigenous tribe, usually neglected by the government economically, to becoming the fifth female priest ordained in the Philippines and the first woman chaplain at Easter College. She now works with women in rural areas on micro financing and community efforts in agriculture, and participates with the local government on water works projects. Lucie is the only one of her ten siblings to survive the genocide in Rwanda. She is now her country's representative to the Anglican Consultative Council, and will receive her master's degree this year in developmental studies. She is the Mother's Union coordinator where she oversees the teaching of Anglican values in marriage and raising of children, helps build communities among women by using powerful Biblical women as examples, encouraging women to empower themselves economically by starting, owning and running their own small trade businesses.

Faith is from the Maasai speaking tribe in Kenya. She ran away from home at the age of nine to avoid FGM (female genital mutilation) and being



Lucie, Alyse and Faith with Bishops Knudsen and Dietsche at the Global Women's Fund Forum.

Photo: Lauren Salminen

sold as a child bride for one cow. Her entire family, as most of her village, is illiterate. Faith is studying for a bachelor's degree in international studies at the University of Nairobi. She told the audience that now that she is an educated woman, her mother could get twenty cows for her hand in marriage! Faith mentors women and girls on the importance of getting an education. She is a frequent speaker on the rights of women and girls at such forums as UN Commission on the Status of Women, UN Hong Kong Consultation on Human Trafficking and Child Labor, and the Association for the Development of Education in Africa (ADEA) Triennial on Education and Training in Africa. She will pursue a career as a diplomat and hopes to hold public office in Kenya.

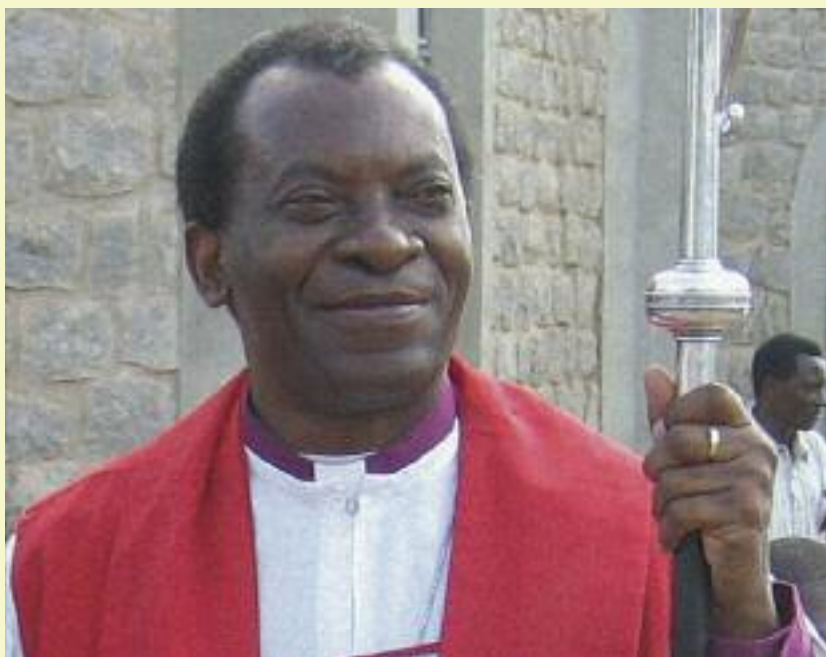
All three of these women talked about their work with women and girls and how that responds to Millennium Development Goal #3, *promote gender equality and empower women*. Each expressed their gratitude to the Global Women's Fund for their education. Alyse, Lucie and Faith are wonderful examples of how educating women not only changes their lives...it also changes the life of their family, their community, and will eventually, change the world.

# Episcopal Charities Awards \$490,000 in Basic Human Needs Grants

Episcopal Charities (EC) announced recently that 54 outreach programs across the diocese will receive Basic Human Needs (BHN) grants in 2014, totaling \$490,000 in funding. This is EC's highest BHN grant on record and comes at a vital time when slow economic recovery, cuts in government programs, and high rates of unemployment keep individuals and families throughout the diocese in poverty. Funded programs provide services to the working poor, the elderly, those living in poverty, and to specific vulnerable populations including the homeless, recent immigrants, prisoners, the formerly incarcerated and their families, and individuals living with HIV/AIDS and other chronic illnesses. The average BHN grant for 2014 is \$9,075.

## Bishop Mhogolo Dies

Led Tanzanian partner diocese in Carpenters Kids program.



We learned with great sadness of the death on March 26 of Bishop Mdimi Mhogolo of the Diocese of Central Tanganyika in Tanzania. In a letter to the clergy of the diocese, Bishop Dietsche wrote “Over the last decade, few mission endeavors of the Diocese of New York have been as transformative for our participating parishes and our diocese as has the Carpenters Kids program, which was largely the vision of two great leaders, Bishop Mhogolo and Bishop Cathy Roskam of our own diocese. Dozens of our parishes have made pilgrimages to Tanzania, and many more have made substantial contributions to support this critical work among AIDS orphans. Through this work, many thousands of children whose lives otherwise held little hope have been fed, educated and prepared for full and productive lives in their villages and the nation of Tanzania. It has been a great privilege for our diocese to have been part of this work, and a wonderful blessing to have known and to have had our own lives enlarged by this great man.”

## Gloria Cruz Honored in Congress

Mr. Speaker, today I rise to honor the contributions and efforts of Ms. Gloria Cruz, a resident of the Bronx and an advocate for reducing gun violence by enacting sensible gun safety laws,” began Representative José E. Serrano, (D) of New York, on March 13, in an address in the House of Representatives. “... through her work, Ms. Cruz has been an inspiration and mentor to many, and a comfort to those who have lost loved ones as a result of gun violence... I ask that my colleagues join me in honoring Gloria Cruz for all that she has done to help make the Bronx a safer place for our children.”

For the full text of Rep. Serrano's address visit [http://capitolwords.org/date/2014/03/13/E374-2\\_honoring-gloria-cruz/](http://capitolwords.org/date/2014/03/13/E374-2_honoring-gloria-cruz/).



Gloria Cruz with Dr. Rowan Williams, retired archbishop of Canterbury, on his visit to St. Ann's Church in the Bronx in 2010  
Photo: : Nicholas Richardson.

## Diocese Hosts Episcopal Urban Caucus Annual Assembly

The Episcopal Urban Caucus (EUC) gathered for its 34th Annual Assembly, hosted by the Diocese of New York, from February 19 through February 22, with “Racism in America in Light of the Trayvon Martin Verdict” as its theme. The Assembly was welcomed by Bishop Chilton Knudsen on Wednesday evening, who spoke about the long history and relationship of this diocese with the Caucus. On Thursday morning, it heard from Byron Rushing, Vice President of the House of Deputies and State Representative to the Massachusetts House of Representatives, who shared a long and rich history, including his observations on the issues of race. On Thursday afternoon, buses transported participants either to the Church of Our Savior in Manhattan or to the South Bronx, where they saw magnificent examples in each case of service to the community and the fruits of the engagement in our diocesan urban mission efforts. The day ended with the celebration of the Eucharist at the Cathedral of St. John the Divine, with Bishop Dietsche as preacher and celebrant. On Friday, the Episcopal Network for Economic Justice (ENEJ)—one of the active networks of the EUC—hosted its annual awards luncheon at the Ramada Plaza Hotel, at which this year's recipient of the Gloria Brown Award was the South Bronx Churches. The banquet speaker Friday evening, founding member and first president of the EUC the Rev. Canon Lloyd S. Casson, took the audience back to the early days of the organization and gave a challenge for the future of social justice. The Assembly adjourned on Saturday afternoon. We invite you to visit our website [www.episcopalurbancaucus.org](http://www.episcopalurbancaucus.org) for further information and for information about our EUC Assembly in 2015.

## Human Trafficking Forum at Holy Trinity

**O**n Wednesday March 12, to coincide with the 58th session of the U.N. Commission on the Status of Women, Manhattan's Church of the Holy Trinity's L.O.V.E. (Love Ourselves, Value Everyone) Task Force on Non-Violent Living presented "Hidden in Plain Sight: The Engines that Drive Human Trafficking."

The evening began with a live performance of "Trafficked" by Girl Be Heard, a not-for-profit theater collective with a mission to empower young women from challenging circumstances to become brave, confident, socially responsible leaders. The performance used song, dance and narrative in a series of vignettes exploring various aspects of the sex trafficking subculture.

Following the performance, a panel discussion moderated by Janelle T. Marshall, a corporate attorney based in New York City, explored human trafficking from a wide variety of perspectives. Jessica Greer Morris, executive director and co-founder of Girl Be Heard, and herself a survivor of gender-based violence, spoke on the success of the Girl Be Heard project in empowering young women for successful futures, while Melanie Thompson, a Girl Be Heard performer and sex trafficking survivor, described her trafficking ordeal and how Girl Be Heard has become a second family to her as she plans to enter college and prepare for a career in social work. Linda Oalican, a founding member, organizer and board mem-

ber of the Damayan Migrant Workers Association, and a former domestic worker, spoke on the indignities and exploitation to which domestic migrant workers are often subjected. She cited the example of Filipino women domestic workers, who are often forced to emigrate due to a lack of employment in their native country, and frequently hesitate to come forward with complaints of abusive labor practices by their employers. Deborah Sigmund, founder and director of Innocents at Risk, a non-profit founded in 2005 to help stop the trafficking of women and children, noted that there was little public consciousness of human trafficking prior to the past decade. She spoke at length on Innocents at Risk's project—with assistance from the Department of Homeland Security—to educate flight attendants about human trafficking, so that they are prepared to spot and report trafficking victims arriving in the US on international flights. Pam Rajput, Ph.D., Chairperson of the Government of India's High Level Committee on the Status of Women, summarized the various U.N. conventions on human rights that are violated by human trafficking. She explained that trafficking ranks as the world's third-largest organized crime after drugs and weapons, and the problem is often invisible to authorities: for example, 35,000 Indian children are reported missing every year, an unknown number of whom are trafficking victims.

Panelists and attendees adjourned to Holy Trinity's parish hall following the presentations for a reception, networking and questions for the speakers.

## Xu Bing's Phoenixes at the Cathedral

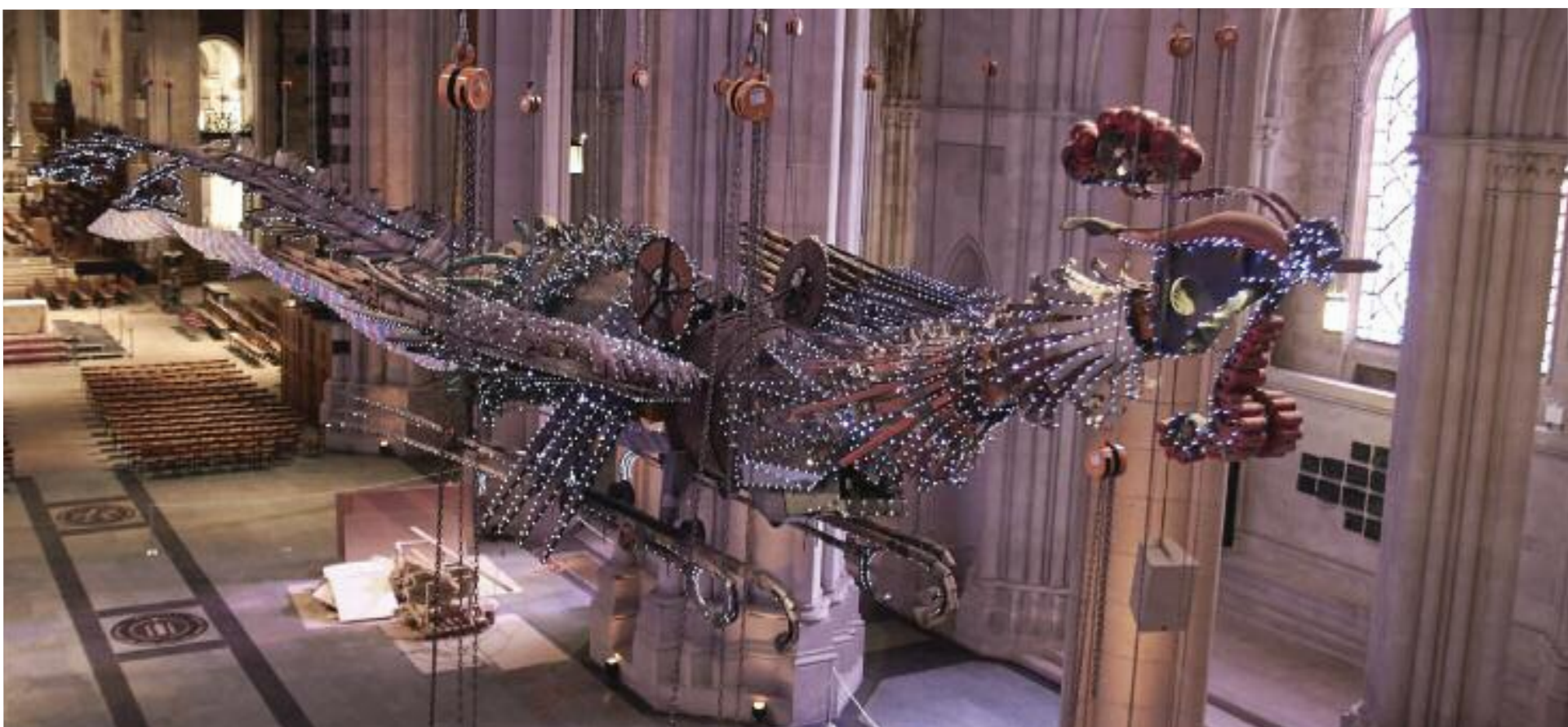
**N**ow and through the rest of 2014, two massive phoenixes hang from the ceiling of the nave of the Cathedral: majestic, unearthly and seemingly at home. The creations of pioneering Chinese artist Xu Bing (b. 1955), the 12-ton birds refer to ideas of perfection and immortality, but are more directly related to the raw power and amazing complexity of industrial China today.

For two years, Xu Bing culled detritus from construction sites across the rapidly changing urban landscape of Beijing, and transformed it into his most monumental project to date. Steel girders, shovels, hardhats, and other industrial materials make up the bodies of the phoenixes, steampunk superheroes that become

even more mysterious at night, when hundred of LED bulbs turn them into constellations.

The installation of "Phoenix within the Cathedral" was a monumental undertaking. Portions of the work were brought through the Great Bronze Doors, the only portals able to accommodate their scale. The sculptures are suspended above the floor from 140 feet of aluminum trusses, using over 30 hoists. Tours and workshops informed by the phoenixes are available to school groups and other visitors.

Xu Bing was born in China, spent 15 years as a resident of Brooklyn, and now lives in Beijing, serving as Vice President of that city's Central Academy of Art.



The Phoenixes in the Cathedral of St. John the Divine, looking east.

Photo: Joe Griffin

# Supporting Haiti: Become a Friend of Darbonne; Buy a Piece of Haitian Art

The devastating Haiti earthquake of 2010 damaged or destroyed the buildings of both the Church of the Annunciation and the Holy Spirit School in the town of Darbonne, which the congregations of Zion Church, Wappingers Falls and Saint Andrew's Church, Poughkeepsie have supported for over 50 years through a joint organization called the Friends of Darbonne.

While the Malteser Foundation (a Swiss non-profit) paid for the restoration of the school buildings, the church currently remains in ruins. Plans to rebuild it in earthquake-proof form were drawn up by an architect who was once a member of the youth group run by former St. Andrew's rector, the Rev. Paul Clayton—but earthquake-proof construction is costly, and those plans have yet to be put into effect.

Meanwhile, Zion and St. Andrew's parishioners continue to raise and send money for the church reconstruction, and also for scholarships for the children and as project funds (to buy items such as a refrigerator for the rectory). The most recent fundraiser was an October "Holy Spirit on the Hudson" cruise, which raised \$2,100. It is hoped that further funds will be raised through the sale of Haitian art which has been donated by members of the two congregations.

## Trinity Wall Street Makes \$25,000 "Wildcard" Grants to Two Manhattan- based Programs

Trinity Wall Street recently announced that it has given "Wildcard" Awards to two organizations with headquarters in Manhattan, Creative Arts Workshop for Kids and Healing Community Network. Creative Arts Workshop for Kids uses art to inspire and teach under-served NYC youth in after-school and Saturday classes, and in a public art youth employment program. Its \$25,000 award will support a sustainability plan to generate income by developing contracts with new business partners to provide large-scale public art. Healing Community Network forms support groups for the formerly incarcerated and their families in New York, helping the once-incarcerated readjust to society. Its \$25,000 award is to support current post-prison reentry programs in Queens and Manhattan and possibly open new networks.



Teachers and students at Darbonne

Photo: Donna Ruf.

If you would like to give a special person a piece of Haitian art, or if you or your parish would like to be a Friend, please contact Donna Ruf, President of Friends Darbonne at 845 691-6387.

### VETERANS (continued from page 20)

that religion can never honestly be used to legitimize violence; and that violence itself is essentially a lie?

The reversals in Iraq will certainly be repeated in Afghanistan. Only the incurably naive will allow themselves to believe that as this war winds down, its presumed successes will not in due time be revealed as equally illusory. More and more returned soldiers will inevitably begin to ask themselves if there was really any point to what they gave, suffered and lost. It is such a hard question—one that only the truly brave and courageous will ask, because the only possible answer is a resounding "NO." Was not such the postscript on the war in Vietnam? But the "lostness" and despondency of Vietnam veterans will pale by comparison, if for no other reason than that they were conscripts compelled to go to war, while the returning soldiers this time were volunteers who chose to go.

Will we, then, be ready to support these new veterans in their asking? Will we hold them as they wrestle? Will we help their voices become a chorus in opposition to the next national summons to violence?

As the myths and rhetoric encounter real-life failed results, many veterans will know a new dark night of the soul: they will wrestle with the truth that lives were not lost, but thrown away; they will endure bodies that were irreparably broken, and souls that were permanently scarred, with nothing of enduring value being gained. Again, does not the Church, as guardian of the Spirit, have a grave responsibility to name the absurdity of evil? Should it not stop the cooperation that makes that evil seem sensible and acceptable?

As returned soldiers wake from the orgy of violence that has vanquished their lives, do we not owe them, at least, an affirmation of the truth—which they are already beginning to intuit—that they are not heroes but victims? We know from the psychology of abuse how difficult it is for victims to own that identity, and in particular, how difficult it is to do this without support. And we also know that this acknowledgement is a critical threshold in a recovery process that would move them away from self-blame and self-hatred, and toward active participation in securing justice for themselves. These are essential ingredients in any real healing. Will we proactively support these veterans in their recovery, or will we participate in further medicating them by upping their dosage of militarism and nationalism?

It is, undoubtedly, easier to go with the flow. All that would be lost to the Church in swimming with the tide is the possibility of biblical holiness and gospel heroism. But is that loss really such a small price to pay for mere comfort?

*Alagna is priest-in-charge at the Church of the Holy Cross in Kingston.*

An article on this subject by the Rev. Judith Ferguson, Episcopal Civilian Chaplain at the United States Military Academy, West Point will be published in the Summer issue of the *Episcopal New Yorker*.

# Notices

## REVIEW (continued from page 24)

accounts in the gospels compared to the length of the Passion narratives. Butler Bass's awakening is still being lived out, and thus the results cannot yet be fully described.

Dr. Butler Bass draws on her experience as Project Director of a national Lilly Endowment-funded study of mainline Protestant vitality, as well as her extensive work with church groups. She relates personal stories to illustrate the points she is making, but also cites heavyweight theologians and properly documents them in footnotes. I did find myself asking if she was over-reaching in a few instances where her point could have been made just as strongly with more modest claims. Although a substantial volume, the book is made easier to read because of how it is divided into relatively short sections each with its own heading.

I took encouragement from *Christianity after Religion* that the numerical decline we see in so many church institutions does not have to be a threat to Christian faith itself. I believe that healthy Christian institutions can and should nurture Christian faith and life. At the same time, it is clear that changes in the world around us mean that in order to continue nurturing Christian faith and life, Christian institutions will have to make some changes. Diana Butler Bass offers a vision of fresh, revitalized, and joyful Christian practice with a healthy heart to sustain the Body of Christ into the future, whatever the particularities of its institutional structure.

*Lamborn is interim pastor at St. Luke's Church, Katonah.*

## WANT TO PLACE AN AD IN THE EPISCOPAL NEW YORKER?

As the official publication of the Episcopal Diocese of New York, *The Episcopal New Yorker* reaches more than 31,000 households representing every congregation in the diocese. Reaching laypersons and clergy, this newspaper informs, inspires, teaches and promotes understanding among the diverse constituencies in the diocese.

Advertisements can be purchased for a single edition or in groups at a discounted rate.

### Non-profit display rates (figure are per insertion)

Ad size	1 ad	2 ads
Full Page	\$1250	\$1125/insert
1/2 Page (7" x 10" horiz., 5" x 14" vert.)	\$700	\$630/insert
1/4 Page (5" x 5")	\$400	\$360/insert
1/8 Page (5" x 2.5")	\$195	\$175/insert

### For-profit display rates (figure are per insertion)

Ad size	1 ad	2 ads
Full Page	\$2200	\$2000/insert
1/2 Page (7" x 10" horiz., 5" x 14" vert.)	\$1000	\$900/insert
1/4 Page (5" x 5")	\$485	\$435/insert
1/8 Page (5" x 2.5")	\$300	\$270/insert

Classified ads \$35

Sheet and envelope insertions available for an additional fee.

### 2013 ad deadlines:

February 15 for Spring issue; May 31 for Summer issue; August 31 for Autumn issue; November 30 for Winter issue.

To submit an ad or to receive more information, contact the editor of *The Episcopal New Yorker* at: 1047 Amsterdam Ave., New York, NY 10025 Tel: 212-316-7520 e-mail: ads@episcopalnewyorker.com.

## BISHOPS' VISITATION SCHEDULE

### APRIL 13 (PALM SUNDAY)

#### Bishop Knudsen:

Christ Church, Red Hook

### APRIL 17 (MAUNDY THURSDAY)

#### Bishop Knudsen:

Mediator, Bronx 7 p.m.

### APRIL 19 (EASTER VIGIL)

#### Bishop Knudsen:

St. Luke in the Fields, Manhattan

### APRIL 27 (2 EASTER)

#### Bishop Dietsche:

St. Mark's in the Bowery, Manhattan

#### Bishop Knudsen:

Ascension, Mount Vernon

### MAY 4 (3 EASTER)

#### Bishop Dietsche:

St. Thomas, Manhattan

#### Bishop Knudsen:

St. James', Manhattan

#### Bishop Wolf:

St. John's, Monticello

### MAY 11 (4 EASTER)

#### Bishop Dietsche:

St. James the Less, Scarsdale

#### Bishop Knudsen:

St. Bartholomew's, Manhattan

### MAY 18 (5 EASTER)

#### Bishop Dietsche:

St. Joseph's, Co-op City

#### Bishop Knudsen:

St. Mark's, Mount Kisco

#### Bishop Shin:

St. Bartholomew's, White Plains

#### Bishop Sauls:

St. Ignatius, Manhattan

#### Bishop Wolf:

St. John's, Pleasantville

#### Bishop Sisk:

Christ Church, Pelham

### MAY 25 (6 EASTER)

#### Bishop Dietsche:

Regeneration, Pine Plains

#### Bishop Shin:

St. Paul's, Ossining

### MAY 29 (ASCENSION DAY)

#### Bishop Dietsche:

Transfiguration, Manhattan

#### Bishop Wolf:

Ascension, Staten Island

### JUNE 1 (7 EASTER)

#### Bishop Dietsche:

St. Mary the Virgin, Chappaqua

#### Bishop Shin:

Christ Church, Bronxville

#### Bishop Sauls:

Ascension, Manhattan

#### Bishop Wolf:

Grace Church/La Gracia, White Plains

### JUNE 8 (PENTECOST)

#### Bishop Dietsche:

Trinity Wall Street

#### Bishop Shin:

St. Matthew's, Bedford

#### Bishop Wolf:

Christ's Church, Rye

### JUNE 15 (TRINITY SUNDAY)

#### Bishop Dietsche:

St. Martin's, Manhattan & St. Luke's, Manhattan

#### Bishop Shin:

Grace Church, Manhattan

#### Bishop Sauls:

St. John's, Larchmont

### JUNE 29 (3 PENTECOST)

#### Bishop Dietsche:

Good Shepherd, Granite Springs

#### Bishop Shin:

St. Ambrose, Manhattan

### JULY 13 (5 PENTECOST)

#### Bishop Dietsche:

St. James', Fordham

## CLERGY CHANGES

	FROM	TO	DATE
<b>The Rev. Dr. Yesupatham Duraikannu</b>	Supply	Interim Pastor, St. Andrew's, Bronx	January 1, 2014
<b>The Rev. Robin L. James</b>	Cathedral Staff, Cathedral of St. Mark, Salt Lake City, UT	Priest-in-Charge, St. Andrew's, New Paltz and Chaplain, SUNY, New Paltz	January 1, 2014
<b>The Rev. Deborah Magdalene</b>	Priest-in-Charge, Zion, Wappingers Falls	Rector, Zion, Wappingers Falls	January 1, 2014
<b>The Rev. Canon Patricia Sobers Mitchell</b>	Canon for Christian Formation, Diocese of New York	TBA	January 1, 2014
<b>The Rev. Canon John A. Osgood</b>	Canon to the Ordinary, Diocese of New York	Retirement	January 1, 2014
<b>The Rev. K. Jeanne Person</b>	Director, Center for Christian Spirituality, General Theological Seminary	Canon for Pastoral Care, Diocese of New York	January 1, 2014
<b>The Rev. Wm. Blake Rider</b>	Rector, Christ Church, Poughkeepsie	Canon to the Ordinary, EDNY	January 1, 2014
<b>The Rev. Canon Dr. Williamson Taylor</b>	Canon for Congregational Development, Diocese of New York and Priest-in-Charge, St. Joseph's, The Bronx	Priest-in-Charge, St. Joseph's, Bronx	January 1, 2014
<b>The Rev. Canon Claudia M. Wilson</b>	Canon for Congregational Development, Diocese of New York and Priest-in-Charge, Holy Communion, Mahopac	Priest-in-Charge, Holy Communion, Mahopac	January 1, 2014
<b>The Rev. Dr. Richard L. Jeske</b>	Priest-in-Charge, Trinity, Garnerville and Vicar, St. John's-in-the-Wilderness, Stony Point	Vicar, St. John's-in-the-Wilderness, Stony Point	February 16, 2014
<b>The Rev. Dustin Trowbridge</b>	Priest-in-Charge, St. George's, Newburgh and Priest-in-Charge, St. Thomas', New Windsor	Priest-in-Charge, St. George's, Newburgh	March 1, 2014



# Good News, Sort Of...

By Sheba Ross Delaney

Here's some good news: there is something horribly wrong with you; the person who made you that way is going to punish you cruelly for it forever; you can only escape by assuming personal and permanent responsibility for a gruesome murder that happened twenty centuries before you were born; then you get to live forever rent-free in a great neighborhood.

Original sin, God, Hell, Crucifixion, Salvation, Eternal Life.

During my twenty-five years as an atheist, when religion meant nothing to me, I found the evangelical message presumptuous, offensive and silly.

During my twenty-five years as a born-again Christian, when religion has been of profound importance to me, I've liked it even less, because it's a jumbled mess of contradictory ideas and because it has very little to do with my experience and understanding of my religion.

Jesus said that God was love and that we shouldn't be afraid. So why has Christianity devoted itself to terrifying countless numbers of impressionable human beings with feverish visions of a cruel God and the torments of hell?

As for heaven, the idea of immortality has always been distasteful to me. I'm a human creature, part of a natural world that lives and dies. It's enough for me that God is immortal. I don't need to be some kind of God mini-me, marching along after Him through eternity. Eternity is God's business. My business is today. And speaking of eternity, can someone explain to me why you have to believe in heaven in order to get there, but you go to hell whether you believe in it or not? I've never been able to figure that one out.

Our message may be confusing, but what about the good that Christian evangelists have done, roaming the world to feed the hungry, tend the sick and comfort the dying? I would never deny or devalue compassionate acts, but how often have Christian missionaries in fact been the vanguard for the forces of exploitation, disenfranchisement and cruel oppression? More often than not.

Case in point: Hawaii. In 1841, Daniel and Emily Dole, Protestant missionaries from Maine, arrived in Hawaii and established the Punahou School, famously attended by Barack Obama. Exactly fifty-three years later, in 1894, the Hawaiian monarchy was overthrown and their son, Sanford Dole, established himself as the President of the new Republic of Hawaii. The indigenous people lost everything—their land, their culture, their rulers and their resources. Were they happy to have been evangelized? The late Hawaiian singer Israel Kamakawiwo'ole answers that question in the sorrowful words of his song *Hawai'i 78*—"cry for the gods, cry for the people, cry for the land that was taken away..." The Doles came to bring the good news of Christ, and stayed to amass power and great wealth.

The Christian ideal is peace, harmony and brotherly love. Where has it ever been achieved? In Christian Europe, with its bloody wars? In the lands evangelized by Christians? In America?

Is Christianity a failed experiment in human history? Or was Chesterton right when he said that "the Christian ideal has not been tried and found wanting; it



**G.K. Chesterton: "...the Christian ideal has not been tried and found wanting; it has been found difficult and never tried."**

has been found difficult and never tried."

Christianity loves nothing better than telling people they are sinners. Here's a thought experiment: what if Christianity itself is a sinner? What if collective Christianity has been lost, wandering, vain, self-righteous, proud, disconnected from God, violent, stubborn and vengeful, yearning to be better but never quite managing to?

If this were true then Christianity would do well to practice what it preaches. Stop. Wake up. Learn humility. Look inward. Reflect. Figure out what is essential and true. Allow for uncertainty. Ask questions. Think. Jesus calls us to life, not fear and fossilized dogma.

If I'm hard on Christianity, it's because I love and am fiercely loyal to my religion in spite of its many failings. I want what is true and useful in it to survive. Right now what used to be called Christendom is sliding off into polarized extremes—atheism on one end and rigid fundamentalism on the other. Old time evangelism—the guy on the street telling you that you are going to hell unless you accept Jesus as your savior—does not, in my opinion, represent what is true and useful in our religion. It displays an aspect of Christianity that makes people turn away.

We are called to proclaim the good news.

I'm perfectly happy to tell anyone who is curious and interested (they are not lining up!) that Christianity works and that Jesus saved me, not from torment after death but from a tormented life.

But perhaps, as a community, we should put proclaiming on hold until we have figured out what the good news actually is—what we truly believe, why our religion is important and what it has to offer.

I believe that as Episcopalians we are specially called to think critically and analytically about our religion. When I committed myself to baptism, I chose our denomination because I knew I would never stop asking questions. Anglicanism, from its inception, thanks to the hard work of sixteenth century theologians like Richard Hooker, acknowledged that the capacity for critical thought is one of the good gifts God has given us. It has always sought to reconcile faith and reason, and accepts that individuals will have diverse ways of coming to terms, intellectually, with the Christian narrative.

Our church should be a hotbed of discussion and debate. Those of us who are alive together on this earth now and who are proud to call ourselves Christians should be sorting out our theology and letting go of what is useless and contrary to the teachings of Jesus. We should be confirming and strengthening the good, the true and the beautiful in Christianity. We should be seeking to understand what conversion is, and what it means to be born again, and working to comprehend these things in the context of modern understanding of psychology and human nature. If we don't do this vital work to reenergize Christianity, if we are too lazy or fearful, then we are failing the next generation by passing on a religion in disrepair. I believe we are better than that, and I believe that with God's help, all things are possible.

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*Delaney is a member of the Church of the Heavenly Rest.*