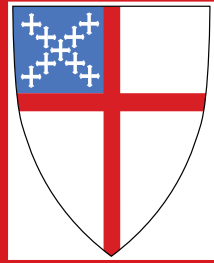


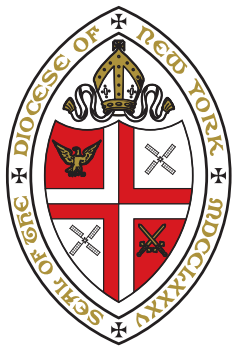
Episcopal Identity Issue



THE EPISCOPAL NEW YORKER

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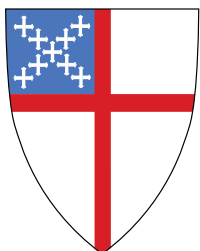
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Our Episcopal Identity

By the Rt. Rev. Mark S. Sisk



The Rt. Rev. Mark S. Sisk

Episcopal identity," the theme of this issue of the Episcopal New Yorker, has many and various definitions. We are a people whose faith is formed by Scripture, Reason, and Tradition. Classically, in relationship between these three, Scripture is primary, while reason and tradition help in understanding Scripture ever more deeply and profoundly.

One compelling image of what defines an Episcopalian was proposed, somewhat indirectly, by a former priest of this diocese, the well-known and recently deceased liturgical theologian, Leonel Mitchell. The title of his foundational book, *Praying Shapes Believing: A Theological Commentary on the Book of Common Prayer*; in a sense says it all: The way we pray together shapes and forms what we believe. Therefore, it could be said, and I would say it, that an essential element in what it means to be an Episcopalian is to be found in our common worship as offered to us in our *Book of Common Prayer*. Liturgy's central place in Episcopal identity is the reason that all those being ordained take the vow: "I do solemnly engage to conform to the doctrine, discipline and worship of The Episcopal Church."

That lays the foundation: praying shapes believing. And believing shapes action. At the heart of the Christian faith, as received by the Episcopal Church, is the conviction that the consequences and implications of our faith influence—even determine—the way we live out our lives in the world beyond the community of faith.

To be more specific: In terms of our identity as Episcopalians, our praying, as well as the direction that our praying has taken us through the centuries, has imbued us with certain sensitivities; our focus on the incarnation of Jesus, and the life of the sacraments, has given us a deep sense of the sacramental nature of creation itself. This focus on the incarnation has also reinforced in us a sense of the fundamental goodness and wonder of the created order, and of the essential claims of justice which flow naturally from the Divine origins of that gracious and wondrous act of creation. As a further consequence, a fundamental respect for the other has been built into the DNA of our tradition. Or, at least, that is the hope to which we give witness in our Baptismal Covenant when we pledge to "respect the dignity of every human being." As a consequence of this conviction, we have a strong inclination to work with anyone and everyone who shares a desire to work on behalf of that perceived good. In practical terms, that means that we often find ourselves working collaboratively with folks of different, or no, religious tradition in order to achieve a common good.

All of these elements of identity combine to provide Episcopalians with a rich and textured identity as Christians: children of God called to full maturity as witnesses to the wonder of Divine Love extended to all.

This is a calling worthy of the life that we have been given.

+ Mark

Nuestra Identidad Episcopal

Por el Reverendísimo Obispo Mark S. Sisk

La Identidad Episcopal", el tema de esta entrega del Episcopal New Yorker, tiene muchas y variadas definiciones. Somos unas personas cuya fe está formada por la Escritura, la Razón y la Tradición. Típicamente en la relación entre esos tres, la Escritura es fundamental mientras que la Razón y la Tradición; siempre ayudan de una manera más intensa y profunda, al entendimiento de la Escritura.

Una fascinante imagen de lo que define a un Episcopalian fue propuesta, en cierta forma, indirectamente, por un ex sacerdote de esta diócesis, el reconocido y recientemente fallecido teólogo litúrgico, Leonel Mitchell. El título de su libro principal, *La Oración forma la Creencia: Un Comentario Teológico del Libro de Oración Común (Praying Shapes Believing: A Theological Commentary on the Book of Common Prayer)*, de alguna manera lo dice todo: la forma en que oramos juntos delinea y da forma a lo que nosotros creemos. Por lo tanto, se puede decir, y yo lo diría, que un elemento fundamental de lo que significa ser un Episcopalian puede hallarse en el culto común, tal como se ofrece en nuestro Libro de Oración Común. El lugar central de la liturgia en la identidad Episcopal es la razón por la cual todos aquellos que son ordenados toman los votos: "Me comprometo solemnemente a conformarme a la doctrina, disciplina y culto de la Iglesia Episcopal".

Eso constituye la base: la oración bosqueja la creencia. Y la creencia bosqueja la acción. En el centro de la fe cristiana, como se reconoce en la Iglesia Episcopal, está la convicción de que las consecuencias e implicaciones de nuestra fe, influyen —es más, determinan— la manera en que vivimos nuestras vidas en el mundo fuera de la comunidad de fe.

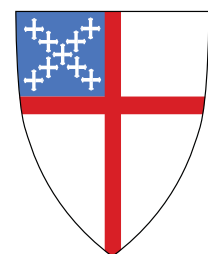
Para ser más precisos: en términos de nuestra identidad como Episcopales, nuestra oración, así como también la dirección en que nuestra oración nos ha llevado a través de los siglos, nos ha infundido cierta sensibilidad; nuestro enfoque de la encarnación de Jesús y la existencia de los sacramentos, nos ha dado un profundo sentido de la naturaleza sacramental de la creación misma. Este enfoque de la encarnación también ha reforzado en nosotros el significado de la bondad y maravilla fundamental del orden creado; y de las afirmaciones esenciales de justicia, que lógicamente fluyen de los orígenes Divinos de ese misericordioso y maravilloso acto de la creación. Como una consecuencia adicional, el respeto fundamental por el otro, ha sido forjado en el DNA de nuestra tradición. O por lo menos, esa es la esperanza de la que damos testimonio en nuestro Pacto Bautismal cuando prometemos "respetar la dignidad de todo ser humano". Como resultado de esta convicción, tenemos una fuerte inclinación a trabajar con todos (continuado en la paginación 34)

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Richard Hooker — A Key to Our Future?

By Laura Saunders

In the spirit of going forward by going back—a strategy recommended by experts as varied as Freud and Dante—Episcopalians pondering their Church's future may want to look anew at the example and thought of an English cleric named Richard Hooker. He lived from 1554 to 1600 and is considered by many to be Anglicanism's founding theologian.

Although Hooker's writings are largely unknown now, even by Christian readers familiar with apologists like C.S. Lewis or Cardinal Newman, they haven't always been. King James I of England promoted his ideas, and Hooker's earliest biographer, Isaak Walton, quotes Pope Clement VIII (d. 1605) as saying of his works, "There is in them such seeds of eternity, that . . . they shall last until the last fire shall consume all learning."

According to scholars, Hooker notably influenced later political theorists like John Locke (who quoted him) and Edmund Burke. Many believe the U.S.'s founding fathers drew on his ideas in justifying their opposition to British rule. Samuel Johnson thought Hooker a master of English prose and usage and cited him more than 100 times in his *Dictionary of the English Language*.

To Christians, specifically Episcopalians, Hooker offers a Christian theology that is orthodox, reformed and humanist, terms that should not be mutually exclusive but sometimes are—or are thought to be. His robust faith expanded rather than constricted his vision.

Hooker's accomplishment—and for that matter, his aim—is remarkable given the temper of his times. Our current Christian controversies pale by comparison with the religious conflicts of sixteenth-century England, where politics and religion were fatally entwined for several decades after Henry VIII broke with Rome in 1534. Power changed hands from Protestants to Catholics several times, with bloody consequences all along.

Here's a sampling: during the short reign of Henry's Catholic daughter "Bloody" Mary, nearly 300 Protestants were executed, many of them by burning. (Foxe's *Book of Martyrs*, the largest publishing project in England to that date, described the deaths in vivid detail, illustrated by more than 50 gruesome woodcuts.) For their part, English Protestants searched out "priest-holes," heavily fined Catholic families, and prohibited stone altars, vestments, ashes, and palms. The Jesuit priest Edmund Campion was found to be an English traitor, so he was hanged until not quite dead, then emasculated, disemboweled, and quartered (cut into four pieces).

In this world Richard Hooker grew up as the son of a modest but well-connected family in Exeter that managed to send him to Oxford, where he took orders. A mild-mannered scholar by nature, his faith supplied him with courage as well as convictions. Inadvertently he caused an uproar in 1585 (just four years after Campion's death) when he publicly declared of Catholics,

"I doubt not but that God was merciful to save thousands [of them]. . . inasmuch as they sinned ignorantly."



Statue of Richard Hooker outside Exeter Cathedral.

Photo: Richard Gillin, Flickr

Taken to task for his outrageous statement, Hooker responded with arguments both passionate and learned. Quoting from a broad range of sources including the Bible, Church fathers like Augustine, and reformers Calvin and Luther, he left no doubt he fully subscribed to "justification by faith"—the reformers' bedrock belief. But Hooker didn't stop there. Sensing a dangerous self-satisfaction lurking in his critics' charges, he challenged them:

"Is it a dangerous thing to imagine that such men [Catholics] may find mercy? The hour may come when we shall think it a blessed thing to hear that if our sins were the sins of the pope and cardinals, the bowels of the mercy of God are larger."

In doing so, says C. S. Lewis, Hooker was going "far beyond the limits of personal or controversial prudence" at the time.

Hooker's masterwork, *Of the Lawes of Ecclesiastical Politie*, began to be published in 1593 and was one of the first major works of theology written in English. (There are those who think it influenced Shakespeare, who was Hooker's contemporary.) The work is nominally his contribution to the debate then raging over how the English church should be structured and governed. Hooker vigorously defended the existing structure and the Book of Common Prayer, which many Protestants thought "popish." Although many Protestants disagreed with his positions, Hooker's arguments ultimately carried the day.

Experts say the *Lawes* has endured because it was the first work to present Anglicanism as a coherent theology. In it Hooker conceived the English church as finding a "via media" (middle way) between an authoritarian Roman Catholicism that had recently been selling indulgences and a radical, reductive Protestantism willing to smash stained glass in the name of piety.

As the Catholics were already in retreat in England, Hooker's energy in the *Lawes* is aimed at defeating the radical Protestants. Lewis says Hooker's deepest quarrel was with the "ruthless antithesis" he felt they subscribed to: "Is it 'of God'? Then fall down and worship. Is it 'of man'? Then destroy it."

Hooker insisted on the primacy of Scriptural revelation, but he also honored tradition and human reason—emphases that Lewis finds largely absent in the polemics of his opponents. The upshot, he says, is that Hooker offers a theology in which "all kinds of knowledge, all good arts, sciences and disciplines come from the Father of lights and are [quoting Hooker] 'as so many sparkles resembling the bright fountain from which they rise.'"

In his own day, Hooker challenged prevalent rigidities he thought would weaken and constrict the Christian faith, and his arguments provided the theological framework for the Episcopal Church in the U.S. What constrains Church today, and how might Hooker's ideas help us identify and address these constraints?

Saunders serves on the ENY editorial advisory board and is a member of the Church of the Heavenly Rest.

DISTINCTIVELY EPISCOPAL?

In May and June this year, the *Episcopal New Yorker* moved cautiously into the century's second decade with an online experiment, in which we asked a series of questions, focused on Episcopal identity, of three members of the diocesan clergy, and then opened up the discussion to all comers. We are printing edited highlights of this discussion in various locations in this edition of the *ENY*. To read the discussions in full, please go to www.episcopalnewyorker.com/disc1.

For Additional topics, see pages 12 and 20.

WHO TOOK PART? OUR RESIDENT PANEL.



The Rev. Milind Sojwal is rector of All Angels' Church, Manhattan - "a theologically orthodox, socially and politically progressive church that seeks to engage all of scripture with the whole human being, with a strong commitment to embracing the poor in loyalty to the Bible."



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OUR FIRST QUESTION: "What, in your view, is distinctive and uniquely valuable in the Episcopal expression of the Christian Faith?"

CRAFTON: That we maintain deep connection with ancient Christian traditions while valuing the fact of their development, over time and across cultures. We regard diversity in understanding scripture and tradition to be a sign of moral strength, not a sign of moral decay, and we welcome people who are different from us in important ways as brothers and sisters in Christ, rather than insisting that everyone believe in exactly the same way. "Lex credendi, lex orandi" (the law of belief is the law of prayer) is a good description of us: different though we may be, one from another, our worship gathers us first.

SOJWAL: I think that [Barbara's response] is a great overview of what the Episcopal Church aspires to be. If I might try to unpack that a bit I would say this: To the average non-cradle-Episcopalian who is attracted to the Episcopal Church there are a few things that make it so attractive. The liturgy—ancient in its roots, and yet contemporized for our world—is almost always the first and deepest attraction. The centrality of the Eucharist in worship, thereby eliminating the need for "super-star" preachers is vital. The diversity in interpretation and understanding of scripture also allows for rigorous intellectual and spiritual pursuits rather than the adherence to a prescriptive form of beliefs. The liturgical calendar, in its call to observe the seasons of the church is also a major draw. Also, the Episcopal Church's active engagement in public debates and engaging with the socio-political issues of our times, makes it a church that is relevant.

SCOTT-HAMBLEN: In addition to what Barbara and Milind have said, I would add the usual bumper sticker description of the Episcopal Church as "Catholics without all the guilt." Our Lord worked very hard to drill certain messages into human heads: "Love God," "love each other," and "don't judge." Hopefully, all denominations work hard at loving God and each other. Yet, I believe the ideal of not judging each other is one of the greatest hallmarks of being an Episcopalian. We realize that "one size never fits all." Other churches are able to come up with black and white statements, especially about "morality" (for example: abortion or birth control or sexual preference) whereas the Episcopal Church consistently comes out with a thousand shades

of gray. Why? Because we realize that the same act could be wrong for one person and right for another. We know we cannot judge another person's soul—especially if we haven't taken time to listen to the particulars of their decisions.

We often say we have a three-legged stool: Scripture, Tradition, and Reason. That third leg of respecting an individual's Reason/Conscience is what keeps us from judging others, which helps us to love them, which leads us to a better understanding of loving God.

AND SOME RESPONSES (NAMES AS SUPPLIED ONLINE):

One of the things that attracted me to the Episcopal Church as an adult is a notion hidden away in the Articles of Religion (and this was back in the time when they weren't "historical documents") That notion is that the church "may err" and "has erred." This was very refreshing to my emerging teenage mind, coming from a tradition that held itself to be infallible and authoritative, but which, it seemed to me, was missing a few very important points about life, the universe and everything.

POSTED BY TOBIAS HALLER

... one of the greatest strengths of our life as a church is our particularly American structure of governance, with participation across all orders. That the laity has such tremendous opportunities to shape and manage our common goal of furthering the Kingdom is such a valuable treasure, especially for those of coming to the Episcopal Church from a more top-down, hierarchically authoritarian tradition.

POSTED BY MICHAEL CUDNEY

[both] sacrament and preaching the Gospel (well) are essential to our expression of faith. While one parish may lean more heavily on one or the other, neither can be dismissed. We are ever so blessed that we do not have to choose one over the other, we are fed and enriched by both.

POSTED BY REINERS

Navigating the Rivers Of the Episcopal Tradition

By Euan Cameron



Candlemas at the Church of the Resurrection, Manhattan.

Photo: David Enlow

In our Christian experience we encounter the loving acts and hear the reconciling message of Jesus Christ within our communities and our hearts. We respond to those loving acts with the Spirit's guidance. Everything else—traditions, structures and liturgies to shape our religious lives—is in principle secondary. Nevertheless, as limited and embodied creatures, we need forms, structure, beauty and tradition to convey a sense of the sublime. Most of us who read this article will encounter that sense of the sublime especially often within the worship and life of the Episcopal Church.

Living within the Anglican tradition often feels more like being on a journey, than living in a settled home. My own journey has felt like navigating a complex river system, where new tributaries flow in, and the stream becomes constantly broader. At an English boarding school in the 1970s, Anglican worship was of the matins/evensong variety, and resolutely Low Church. It seemed an eccentricity on the part of the Head Master to bow to the altar (which otherwise only the chaplains did). At Oxford University a few years later, I observed the extreme (but also many moderate) branches of the tradition. Clergy in two town churches led worship in the evangelical style, with the characteristic combination of radically experimental worship and highly conservative doctrine to keep undergraduates on the 'right' path. Other churches and college chapels led elaborate Corpus Christi processions, and spoke of 'solemn high mass.' I once attended a Eucharist conducted almost entirely in Latin.

My wife and I long worshiped in a parish in Newcastle-upon-Tyne, where a wise vicar strove to enlarge everyone's experience through diversifying worship. A lover of the choral

tradition, Richard introduced Taizé chants. He experimented while being faithful to the Prayer Book (our parish was charged with trying out new liturgies in preparation for *Common Worship* of 2000). By the standards of the Episcopal Church of the USA, this was still low- or at most broad-church worship.

A British Anglican observes on moving to the United States that a whole wing of Anglicanism is weakly represented in American Episcopalians, while its antithesis is abundant. The dynamic, sometimes narrow evangelical strain, the public face of the Church of England for many, is largely absent over here. There is no equivalent in size or influence to David Watson's St. Michael-Le-Belfrey or Nicky Gumbel's Holy Trinity, Brompton. On the other hand, proportionately more American churches scale the heights of liturgical Anglo-Catholicism. Our Church, which from its founding to 1964 was officially the 'Protestant Episcopal Church,' includes many whose identity derives more from the liturgical and devotional traditions of the ancient world and medieval England than the heritage of the Reformation.

Recently I have heard both clergy and seminarians say that the old axis of 'high' and 'low' no longer means very much in the life of the Church. In one sense, that observation is man-

ifestly true: the greatest political tensions and cultural stresses in our church life do not align with the fault-lines of what used to be called 'churchmanship.' Those with longer memories than mine in the Episcopal Church have observed a measure of convergence in past decades: some formerly 'low' congregations embrace higher liturgies than in the past. At times I suspect, though, that some who say that there is no longer 'high' or 'low' Anglicanism are really playing a game almost as old as Anglicanism itself. Like their forbears, they are staking their own claims to the centre ground.

'It hath been the wisdom of the Church of England, ever since the first compiling of her publick Liturgy, to keep the mean between the two extremes, of too much stiffness in refusing, and of too much easiness in admitting any variation from it' [Preface to the *Book of Common Prayer*, 1662]. Yet the 'mean' between too much conservatism and too much innovation has always been debated and controversial. Generations of Anglicans have pitched tents at various points across a broad expanse of territory and declared their headquarters to be the centre, the golden mean, from which their colleagues have departed to one extreme or another.

Some real theology is at issue here. As so often where Christians differ on points of emphasis, it lies between two things which are good and holy in themselves: Word and Sacrament. For the heirs of the Reformation, right worship according to the Gospel requires exposition and understanding. Anything that distracts from grateful and thoughtful reception of God's gifts carries risks. Protestant thought denies that *we* can make anything *holy*, or offer anything to God, save what God has already given us. Early Anglicans



Eucharist, St. Paul's Chapel, Manhattan.

Photo: Leah Reddy

denounced the claim to enclose or invest holiness in physical objects as 'superstition' (often adding some derogatory epithet, such as 'ignorant' or 'profane'). Therefore much apparatus of former medieval worship was denounced by Thomas Cranmer and ruthlessly stripped out.

A century after the Reformation, Anglicans who required a higher standard of ritual called for the things of religion to be treated with respect and decorum. Spiritual things, they argued, could only be appreciated if adorned with beauty and dignity. Reverent gesture was as important as intricate thought. People must feel that religious material was more holy than the everyday matter of life. From beautifying the holy came, gradually, the rediscovery of ornate vestments, bowing to the altar, incense, or the frequent use of the sign of the cross (and not just in baptism).

For much of our history these emphases have coexisted, occasionally in outright conflict. The great spiritual poet of early Anglicanism, George Herbert (1593-1633) praised the 'British Church' for

'A fine aspect in fit array,
Neither too mean, nor yet too gay,
Shows who is best:
'Outlandish looks may not compare;
For all they either painted are,
Or else undrest. ...
'But, dearest Mother, (what those misse)
The *mean* thy praise and glorie is,
And long may be.'

Yet as Herbert knew, in his own time some English clergy—'undressed,' (or at least unvested)—were preaching in black gowns with barely any use of the Prayer Book; while others were celebrating in 'painted' vestments in a style barely distinguishable from the Roman Catholic. In the 1640s, these strains would tear the Church apart—though it largely recovered by the 1660s.

How has the Anglican tradition held such contrasting emphases together for so long? It has always remembered, consciously or otherwise, a lesson from the Reformation. Those who called for reverence toward sacred things and sacred space, and for the spiritual to be beautified with gesture and apparel as well as with language and exposition, did not

go to the further extreme of confining the love and power of God within things and people consecrated in only one way.

They did not claim that divine power was uniquely delegated to, or necessarily enclosed within such things. They did not suppose that the will of God to save and forgive was channeled through those objects and practices alone. Our God does not fussily scrutinize every act of ritual worship or ethical behavior, tallying up our offenses and our devotions to see how they balance. Anglicans who urge confession and reconciliation do not, as a rule, claim that someone who does not confess is thereby excluded from God's love: rather they argue for the spiritual and psychological benefits of a rite to be embraced voluntarily.

Over the last two centuries, we have recognized that the spirit of worship and the feelings it evokes are more primary and essential than any *particular* set of trappings or embellishments. To worship in spirit, whatever forms and gestures feel natural, testifies to faith; and without faith and the spirit, no amount of ritual reverence can have meaning.

This perspective is, I confess, especially necessary in my own situation as a Reformation historian and a postulant in training in a delightful Anglo-Catholic parish, St Edward the Martyr. Worship can be sincere and devout with incense or without (though some prefer one way or the other). Traditional language and ritual gesture does not reach God more effectively than extemporized speech or modern liturgy—but through long use it may well have power to move *human* hearts more effectively.

Our Church life must hold on—more consciously than before—to its tradition of diverse worship. Other challenges face us. To take one example, the Episcopal Church in the late nineteenth century affirmed critical and respectful use of the Scriptures. Implicitly, it disavowed the crude use of biblical verses as proof-texts. Our commitment to critical integrity in the use of scripture needs fresh emphasis, as long as isolated texts are deployed to deny others full membership in Christ's body, or to drive them out of the churches entirely. The Episcopal tradition has a special grace and mission to welcome those deprived of a spiritual home. If we remember to express our spirit through many rich and varied traditions of worship, we shall continue in that ministry of welcome. New tributaries will continue to flow into the river. But the undercurrent of keeping Word and Sacrament in balance will keep us strong.

Cameron is Henry Luce III Professor of Reformation Church History at Union Theological Seminary, and a postulant for the priesthood at St. Edward the Martyr, Manhattan.

From the Cradle

By Stewart Pinkerton

My first memories of the Episcopal Church were the words of the *Venite* (“Come, let us sing unto the Lord”) and the *Jubilate* (“Be joyful in the Lord, all ye lands”) from the 1928 prayer book, as my parents and I sang them at St. Luke’s, a small, tidy Gothic structure about a seven-minute Buick ride from our home in Minneapolis. My father was born a Methodist across the river in St. Paul, but switched teams and cities when he married my mother, who lived just down the street from him on Goodrich Avenue. My mother’s family went to St. Clement’s.

Besides polio, the main fear of the time they called the Fifties was the threat of imminent Soviet nuclear annihilation. So the soothing words of the prayer book (“Defend us, your humble servants, in all assaults of our enemies; that we, surely trusting in your defense, may not fear the power of any adversaries”) helped keep my own fears at bay, especially after being scared silly by monthly tests of the frightening air raid siren on the roof of John Burroughs School just a block away.

The lyrical cadence of the prayers, some of which are now rarely heard (“Hear what comfortable words our Savior Christ saith to all that truly turn to him”), the beautiful music and the optics of pageantry were the hooks that kept me in the church, long after my parents stopped going (right after I went off to college, but that’s another story).

Two other indelible early memories—not necessarily positive, but at least amusing: First, the mini-scandal that led to the removal of the rector, an event providing endless fodder for Altar Guild gossip. It seems the good father liked to kick back and frequently take generous quaffs of sacramental wine, a variation of the Episcopal credo that when two or three are gathered together, there’s usually a fifth. Then one Easter we volunteered to take some altar flowers to a parishioner, supposedly an invalid shut-in. When we knocked, nobody was home. A shopping trip, perhaps? Spring skiing?

The liturgy’s gravitational pull and my appreciation for Thomas Cranmer’s poetic elegance only increased over the years as my job took me across the country to larger parishes, where I was gradually introduced to high-church smells and bells, ingredients not available back at St. Luke’s, and stirring sermons. Forever etched in my memory, for example, is the echo of Job 14:14, as thundered by Bishop James A. Pike from the pulpit of San Francisco’s Grace Cathedral on Easter Morning of 1966: “If a man die . . . (dramatic pause) . . . shall he live *again*?” Or the marvelous one by

The Rev. John Andrew at St. Thomas, Fifth Avenue, in which he recalled his reaction to a midnight screening of “The Rocky Horror Picture Show.” Noting how the audience knew all the lines and recited them in unison with great enthusiasm as the film played out, he suggested that this true communal, emotional experience was something some Episcopal congregations could only envy.

More recently, as the national church has grappled with any number of emotional issues that have caused dissention and even secession, the biggest selling point for my staying in the tent has been that it’s a very large one indeed, with a big welcoming sign. Or to paraphrase Queen Elizabeth I, who had the wisdom in 1559 to remove prayers against the Pope from the liturgy, “It doesn’t matter what you believe, just use this prayer book.”

Pinkerton is chair of the Episcopal New Yorker editorial advisory board and former managing editor of Forbes magazine.



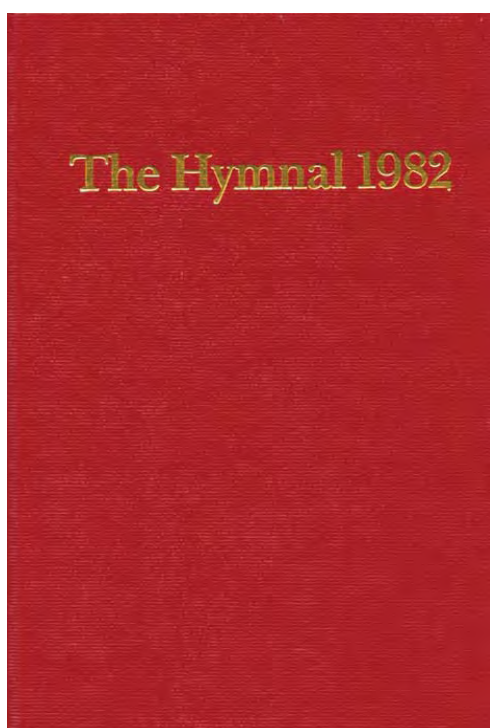
“Use the Book of Common Prayer” said Elizabeth I, shown here at prayer in the frontispiece of her personal prayer book, 1569.

One of the wonderful things about the Episcopal/Anglican viewpoint is that this world, this reality, is not a cesspool of sin and evil that we must slog through in order to get to heaven. The Lord made the world and saw that it was good...

POSTED BY VALERIE DEBENEDETTE

Why I'm an Episcopalian, and What I Wish for the Church

By the Rev. Fleming Rutledge



"Our hymns by George Herbert and Christopher Smart teach the heart and soul of the Christian faith with consummate artistry..."

of Luther Seminary, who can compare with these masters. One sign of this loss is the disappearance of the little hymn-books that used to be in every Episcopal pew alongside the larger hymnals with music for singing. These small books of hymn texts were formative, in their day, as sources for prayer and reflection.

This suggests an answer to the second question, about what I wish for the church. Since I was an Episcopalian in Virginia in the 1940s and 50s, the decline in Scriptural and doctrinal knowledge has been both precipitous and pernicious. The mainline churches, including our own, are not shrinking because they have failed to keep up with the times. They are dwindling because of inadequate theological and Christological foundations. Some have argued that an overemphasis on social justice is the problem, but that is not so. Rather, the problem is that the focus on social justice has not, in recent decades, been firmly grounded in the Christian gospel.

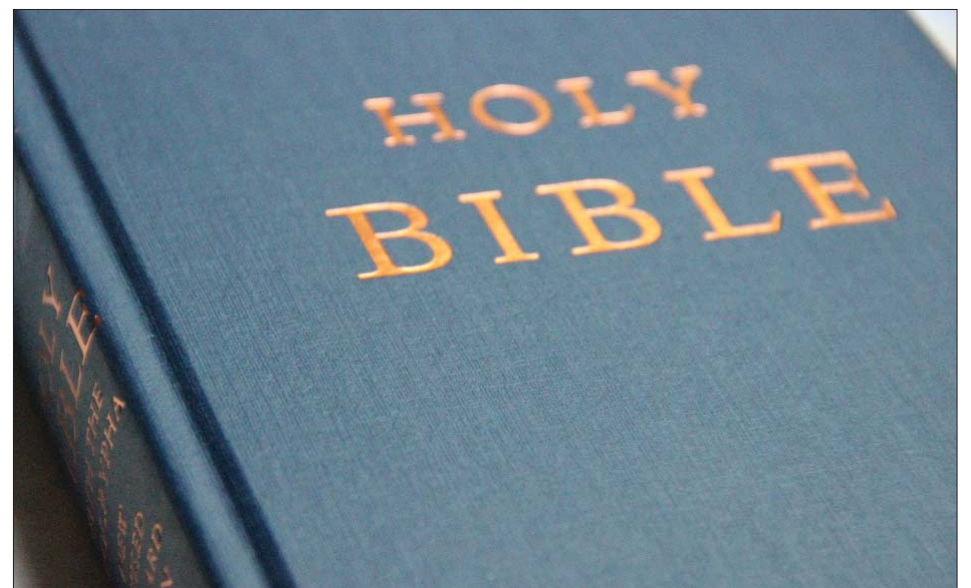
It's not sufficient simply to say that God loves everybody, or that we should take care of God's creation, or that we are called to build the Kingdom of God. These sorts of statements, heard so often in the churches today, are so vague and undifferentiated that they cannot evoke any lasting loyalty; we would be just as well off

I am an Episcopalian because of the Hymnal. I am only partly kidding. With all due respect for the Presbyterians, Methodists, and Congregationalists, the hymns, texts and tunes in our 1982 hymnal outshine those in their current hymnals by a considerable distance. Even the Lutherans have largely abandoned their great historic chorales. By contrast, our hymns by George Herbert and Christopher Smart teach the heart and soul of the Christian faith with consummate artistry (if only our congregations would attend to the words). At a rank just below these, Christopher Wordsworth, Isaac Watts, Charles Wesley and others, including American Episcopalian F. Bland Tucker, have distilled Scriptural, doctrinal and emotional truth in their superlative texts. There is no one writing hymns today, except possibly Gracia Grindal

with Human Rights Watch (to which I contribute), or the Sierra Club, or the Southern Poverty Law Center. Where there is no solid teaching of the Christian faith, there is a famine of the hearing the Word of the Lord (Amos 8:11-12). The Eucharist alone will not do it without powerful preaching alongside it. We are no longer telling our tribal story. We "know neither the Scriptures nor the power of God" (Matthew 22:29).

My daily prayer for the Episcopal Church is that the Lord would revive us with a great awakening of love for his Son our Savior Jesus Christ, and with fresh knowledge of the Scriptures of the Old and New Testaments. My daily prayer is for a revival of gospel preaching (which is not necessarily the same thing as today's ubiquitous preaching from the four Gospels). My prayer is that there would be small groups gathered around the Bible in every parish, and that out of these would grow new movements of the Holy Spirit "for the living of these days." My prayer is that many will be renewed for evangelism, so that many more will come to "believe that Jesus is the Messiah, the Son of God, and, believing, have life in his name" (John 20:31).

Rutledge was ordained as a priest in the Diocese of New York in 1977. She is the author of seven books including And God Spoke to Abraham, The Undoing of Death, and The Battle for Middle-Earth.



"My daily prayer...is that the Lord would revive us with a great awakening of love for his Son our Savior Jesus Christ, and with fresh knowledge of the Scriptures of the Old and New Testaments."

The Fish

By the Rev. Rhonda J. Rubinson

How did I become an Episcopalian? How did I find myself before Bishop Paul Moore at the Easter Vigil in 1987, bowing my head over the font receiving the sacramental water of baptism at the Cathedral of St. John the Divine?

I have a two-word answer: The Fish.

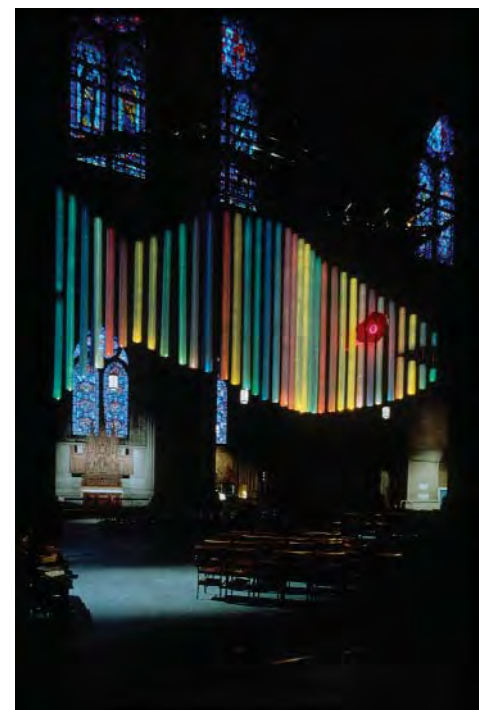
Allow me to explain.

Those of you who visited St. John the Divine in the mid-1980s might remember a large light sculpture in the shape of a fish hanging in the nave. It was made of fiber optic tubes covered in bubble plastic, and these dozens of tubes all rotated and changed color as they swung a bit overhead, kind of making the fish look like it was swimming or perhaps trying on some bright display colors, in the manner of a cuttlefish. By the time I first encountered it, the motors that rotated the tubes were creaking and squeaking, and they kept creaking and squeaking for the remaining months of the installation, probably because no one could get high enough to put some oil in them without serious scaffolding. I had forgotten the name of the sculptor, but just found it online—Jonathan Borofsky—and the given name of his creation was *Fish With Ruby Eye*.

At that time, I was in the midst of a career as a theatrical lighting designer. I worked with strange art all the time, some of it beautiful and resonant, some of it mawkish, some of it not very aesthetically pleasing; this was my daily milieu. When I walked into the Cathedral of St. John the Divine for the very first time, following an odd impulse (of then-indeterminate origin) to pray, I first heard *The Fish* creaking overhead, then looked up and was astonished to see it. The contrast between the large, campy, exuberant, noisy sculpture and the enormous gray nave of the Cathedral was mind-blowing, and one of the weirdest things I had ever seen. *Wow*, I thought. *Strange art. I know strange art. Maybe this is my home.*

God took care of the rest. As a conservative Jew, I didn't know much about the differences between Christian denominations. To tell the truth, after attending a few Sunday services I had assumed that the Cathedral was Roman Catholic, since the incense and the vestments and the processions reminded me of what I had seen on television from the Vatican. I thought maybe a smaller Catholic Church would be better, and called one by my home to inquire about baptism. A priest kept trying to reach me to set up instruction times and a baptism date, but I never called him back. Instead, one day I walked straight up to Canon West after a Cathedral chapel service and said "Father, I want to be baptized." It was only after I began baptismal instruction that I found out that St. John the Divine was an Episcopal cathedral. The history of my faith journey as an Episcopalian is still being written, and it all started with *The Fish*.

Rubinson is assisting priest at the Church of the Heavenly Rest.



Jonathan Borofsky's installation *Fish With Ruby Eye* measured in at 42 ft. long and 25 ft wide and was hung in the Cathedral of St. John the Divine for six months in 1986-1987.

Coming Home

By Lorenzo Lebrija

When they ask me about my move from the Roman Catholic Church to the Episcopal Church, I think that most people expect a dramatic story that in some ways, perhaps because I am a Latino, could easily fit into any *telenovela* on television. Yet, my experience was in fact a very peaceful change that, in many ways, brought me home.

Perhaps I should explain a bit more. The signs were there that my move should have been dramatic: for as long as I can remember I have always wanted to be a priest, yet do not have the gift of celibacy. I am a gay man. And, being born and raised in Mexico, I come from a very Roman tradition in which church is very important. So I can understand those who would think that one day, I simply had enough and walked away in anger.

Yet my experience was much more muted, and followed a significant period of discernment that probably began the day I knew I could not enter the seminary (to which I had been accepted) if I were not ready to live by those rules.

Even after I understood this, I still felt I had a calling, which I tried to explore in other ways—as a spiritual director, Eucharistic minister and in other parish settings. But my desire and calling for the liturgies and sacraments was still there. During this time I also met my now partner and fell in love. It bears noting that until my move to the Episco-

pal Church we attended a very liberal Roman church in a university setting in Miami. Perhaps it all would have been different if I had then been in a setting that had been less open to me and my partner, and where the theology at the pulpit had not been as intelligent and rooted in love.

Now this is not to say that the move was easy, or that I made it simply in order to pursue my dream of being a priest. It was incredibly hard. It took many years of prayer

I am a "cradle Episcopalian" ... I stay an Episcopalian by choice. The liturgy is important to me, the rituals are more than just tradition; they provide a connection to the past, the present and the future of my spirituality. These treasured rituals can provide me connections with other Christians, as well, through shared faith in God's love... **POSTED BY CONSTANCE E. BARRETT**

Of course I love the ritual, music, tradition, smells and bells ... and yet I am convinced that the freedom and encouragement to ask the hard questions drew me in [to the Episcopal Church] and holds me still. **POSTED BY C.G.**

The Episcopal Church Welcomed Me

By the Rev. Stephen Gerth

It started in Charlottesville. When I first went to the University of Virginia, my memory is that I went to the Baptist Student Center; but that didn't last. Looking back, I'm pretty sure my introduction to drinking with friends took me away from that journey in Christ. During my second year, I started studying philosophy and stayed away from religion—an agnostic phase. I started to go to church again in my third year, and I went to the Episcopal Church largely because some friends of mine went, one didn't need a car to get there, and it was okay with Episcopalians to drink—for better, and often for worse, a big part of my social life in those days.

Saint Paul's Memorial Church had good clergy, good welcome, and good music. I had been brought up in Virginia as a Southern Baptist; my father's family was Roman Catholic. When I was in New Hampshire, where my dad's parents lived, I went to Mass with them—and often with an elderly cousin who needed help. Her brother died in my early childhood. He was a Roman Catholic priest. His generous welcome of my committed Southern Baptist mother to the family was important in the early 1950s.

The rector at Saint Paul's when I was in college was the Reverend David Ward. I remember him as welcoming and as a thoughtful preacher. I knew I was permitted to receive Holy Communion, but did not for a long time. I'm sure it was the "Body and Blood" language of the liturgy that held me back—that was part of the sacramental tradition which was hard for me. But the mystery of the Eucharist touched something very deep in my spirit. The parish was using trial liturgies and the 1928

I belong to a church which I believe preaches love over all—love God, love one's neighbor, and love oneself—and a church that values reason. God does not play tricks on us: through science and observation we learn about the world God has created for us. And while we may shout at each other, for the most part we remember the love part and forgive and value each other. Finally, I'm proud of belonging to a church that does so much good in the world without condemning others for their beliefs. **POSTED BY RICHARD GATJENS**



St. Paul's Memorial Church, Charlottesville – good clergy, good welcome, good music.
Photo: Thomas Marshall

Prayer Book in my college years. It was not unimportant that at the service when I finally went forward for communion it was a Prayer Book day.

Graduate school followed college. I had a fellowship to study South Asian history at the University of Chicago. I started to attend the nearby parish, the Church of St. Paul and the Redeemer, and was confirmed there. I liked history. I had three months in Lahore, Pakistan, studying Urdu and living with a Muslim family. I was looking forward to the possibility of an academic career—or the fall back position for someone in my field, the Foreign Service.

Things changed.

Summer jobs brought me in contact with people my age who were making money—and after a couple of years I decided to return to Charlottesville to get an M.B.A. I was accepted. I found a place to live. But I never made it. A priest recruited me for the clergy. I think I remember his exact words: "When are you going to do something about your vocation to the priesthood?" Within a year, I would be a postulant in the Diocese of Chicago and on my way to Nashotah House Seminary.

Looking back, I can see many graces in the religious journey of my life, starting with a love for Scripture that was shaped by my Southern Baptist grandmother and childhood. The Episcopal Church welcomed me when I was ready to approach Christ and Christian community in a new way. It's hard for me today even to imagine my life apart from this branch of Christ's Body.

Gerth is the rector of the Church of St. Mary the Virgin, Manhattan.

and discernment of where I felt I could serve God best. My spiritual director on many occasions encouraged me to attend other services in other churches, just to feel them out and see. At that stage, I didn't feel called to do that. But one August day, relaxing in a pool and praying after almost two weeks on vacation away from the office, I knew that it was time for me to leave the Roman Church. I did not question it—it was time.

The very next week back home, we went to Eucharist at the Episcopal Cathedral in Miami. The strangest thing happened when I sat there and participated for the first time: I felt that I was home. The music felt right, the liturgy felt right, the homily was spot on, and the people felt right. It's hard to put into words how this felt for me beyond "right." The more I began to learn about the Episcopal Church and its history, the more I felt I belonged in it.

To be sure, the move I made is not for everyone. I pray that others find the same comfort and challenge that I continue to find in the Episcopal Church in their own traditions. My guess is that's where God wants them to be. My own partner is still a Roman Catholic. But for me this is home and from where I feel I can best serve.

Lebrija is a seminarian at the General Theological Seminary.



Trinity Cathedral, Miami: The music felt right, the liturgy felt right, the homily was spot on, and the people felt right.
Photo: Phillip Pessar, Flickr

Episcopal Identity



THE CHURCH AND PUBLIC POLICY

Here we present the second of the “Episcopal Identity” discussion topics from our online forum (readable in unedited form at www.episcopalnewyorker.com/disc1 and introduced more fully on page 5.) This time, our panelists and other contributors answer the question:

Some have said that our engagement with public policy issues is at the root of the decline in membership of the Episcopal Church, while others contend that it is an essential element of our expression of the Gospel. What do you think?

MILIND SOJWAL: There are a variety of reasons for the decline in the membership of the Episcopal Church—some obvious, some unfathomable. But a church that fails to articulate a broader agenda to influence society, national public debates, and the direction of the public policy of the nations and the world is headed towards irrelevance. Jesus did not come to simply zap individuals to eternal salvation—he came to inaugurate God’s Kingdom, here and now, on this earth, today. The Church cannot afford to sit back and avoid controversial issues of the day. It should be leading the charge to help provide a Christian perspective to critical public debates. Christians are to be salt and light, infiltrating the world, projecting the subversive message of the Gospel, and challenging traditionally-held beliefs and values in the light of scripture. Disengaging from contentious public policy issues may protect us from the barb of controversy, but will render us impotent and irrelevant. So, the Episcopal Church does not have a unified view on the difficult issues of our times—but the Church must at all costs make itself heard in every public policy issue that affects everyone, but especially those who have no voice of their own and look to us to play that role.

SHANE SCOTT-HAMBLÉN: First of all, I do not believe the decline of membership has anything to do with how we engage with public policy issues. I do believe it has more to do with successive generations of people who have less and less exposure to living in Christian community. Our grandparents never missed going to church; our parents rebelled at being made to go when they were young; now, we have a whole generation who don’t even seem to know we exist, let alone what we say.

Unfortunately, many people seem to think “Christian” means conservative extremism. This unbalanced polarization leaves people to think all Christians are fundamentalist—much the way they have the idea that all Muslims are terrorists.

Personally, I do not like for clergy to get political. We profess that “everyone is welcome” and then ostracize either the Democrat or the Republican agenda, thus alienating half of our congregation. We are called to co-exist. “The wolf shall dwell

with the lamb.”

I believe society needs us to take a much higher ground. So (going against my own policy!), to give one example: I, personally, am not very proud of how our country reacted to the terrorist attacks of 9/11. Some of it smacked of raw revenge—“an eye for an eye”—rather than Christ’s teaching of “turn the other cheek.” Rather than preach “for” or “against” a specific issue, I believe we should preach the principles rather than the particulars. [So in this example], if we were doing our jobs well, we would teach the Christian principle of not reacting on the basis of revenge. We need to work at building up the foundations before things happen. Then, we can apply our principles of forgiveness, non-judgment, and love to anything that comes our way.

BARBARA CRAFTON: The argument that discussion of public issues has caused our decline in membership seems to me unsupported by the facts: many of the enormous and fast-growing megachurches are extremely active in conservative politics as well. More prosaic issues contribute: the variations in the way parishes count “members” is certainly one of them.

I travel extensively throughout the country, teaching and preaching in many churches. I see that Episcopal churches *do* grow and flourish if they worship God with joy and devotion and make a difference in the lives of members and the neighborhoods in which they find themselves. This does not happen if they ignore large swaths of the local demographic, whatever it is, nor if they display a siege mentality with regard to people who do not belong. The ones that thrive understand that every sort and condition of person has both needs and gifts for the community, and provide arenas for the ministries of old and young, male and female, all of the either/ors present in the human family.

It is possible to exercise a prophetic ministry while remaining pastorally faithful to the charge to love and serve with equal regard for status or walk of life. A liberal and a conservative ought to find equal welcome in an Episcopal church. In my experience, people are not driven away by a leader taking a stand, but they do leave if they feel they are being manipulated in a political way. If the pastoral relationship is strong, the community can handle considerable diversity in moral understanding and politics.

EXCERPTS FROM THE COMMENTS

Commenters' names are as provided by them. Comments have been edited (and in some cases moved) for length, relevance and overall coherence. Please visit www.episcopalnewyorker.com/disc1 to read them in their entirety – or to add your own contribution to the discussion.

Pussy footing around issues of social justice turns off the younger generation, at least in our diocese. However, I can understand the dangers (to number of pledging units) of having a priest articulate political views from the pulpit. But if he or she preaches the Gospel, how can we avoid care for the sick, poor, imprisoned? As Milind says above, Jesus was not shy about articulating his objection to the politics of his day, when they went against beliefs.

POSTED BY JANICE

SHANE SCOTT-HAMBLÉN RESPONDS TO JANICE: I agree that Jesus was not shy about addressing politics and politicians. But he had the divine advantage of being able to read hearts and even minds. As none of us have those attributes, I believe we should be very slow to climb the pulpit and point a bony finger at the other party and shout “Wrong!”

You simply can't bring good news to the oppressed, bind up the broken-hearted, proclaim liberty to the captives and release to the prisoners, et al., without running afoul of someone's cherished ideology, especially in an empire, then or now. If we're “doing it right,” we are going to find ourselves with the same dilemma, and risk death, too: most likely figurative, but sometimes literal, which may be what TEC is experiencing at present. The trick is to make Jesus the lodestar for this task rather than any lesser guiding principle or person, whether saint or sinner—a kind of GPS (God's Positioning System), if you will pardon the analogy. (And do watch for the occasional “recalculating” of your route.)

POSTED BY JAN NUNLEY

... it may be time to remember our evangelical heritage. It was the evangelicals of the early nineteenth century who first spoke of the abolition of slavery, women's rights, and child welfare. Why? Because they took the Bible very seriously, and they did change our society. Today our views on public policy are also based on the reading of the Bible, we can never stress that enough.

POSTED BY RICHARD WHALEY

Church statements on public policy issues are bound to please some and offend others, and I've found myself at times in agreement and at times in disagreement with TEC's positions. What I have appreciated most is that the church has helped me form my views on public policy by challenging me to think more deeply about how my relationship with God shapes my relationship with my neighbor.

What interests me most is how we create a climate of conversation in our churches where important issues that affect our common life can be discussed respectfully, especially when there is disagreement. I appreciate it when our bishops and other leaders speak out on an issue. I also think we often fail to do the education that needs to go along with that, or we resort to resolutions (at diocesan or church-wide conventions) that simply assuage our conscience but don't lead us to action. We vote yea or nay and think we've done our job.

As for those who think speaking out will turn some people off: You're absolutely right! I am thoroughly embarrassed by the public witness of many churches that is thinly-veiled bigotry and highly partisan rhetoric. If there is anything that has brought about a decline in church membership across the board, it's that. I'm reminded of a video of on-the-street interviews where people were asked what they thought of Jesus: Love him! But then what they thought of Christians: Let's just say...not so much.

POSTED BY WILLIAM PARNELL

Engaging with ‘public policy’ is not the same as dealing with ‘politics.’ If by public policy we mean feeding and clothing the hungry and the poor, visiting the imprisoned, seeking justice, striving for peace, and working to respect the dignity of every human being, well the answer must be a resounding ‘Of course!’

POSTED BY MICHAEL CUDNEY

Discussions of matters of public policy are appropriate for churches to encourage among their parishioners—including framing and encouraging the debate. It is not appropriate for churches and other houses of worship to take positions, as institutions, regarding public policy issues, because churches are their members, who rarely have a unanimous view.

Church leaders—clergy and lay—should certainly speak out, as community leaders, on public policy issues about which they are concerned. But they only speak for themselves.

POSTED BY TALBOT

One of my heroes has long been Dom Helder Camara, the former Roman Catholic Archbishop of Recife (Brazil), who said: “When I feed the poor, they call me a saint, but when I ask why the poor have no food, they call me a communist!” If that is not a fundamental statement of Christian values—and the unfortunate response society makes to it—then I don't know what is! May our church never fail to address the social issues and injustices of our own day.

POSTED BY BR. JAMES TEETS BSG

... of course, our engagement with public policy issues could be both causative of our decline and nonetheless a matter of gospel faithfulness. But there is a theological point to be made.

We are called both to charity and to truth. The latter requires our saying-it-as-we-see-it on social issues. The former requires that we understand others' views on their best terms, and demonstrate that we do so. How many people have left our church because of flat-footed sermons in which the gospel was presented as requiring our support for policy X (fill in your favorite policy)? If those folks had been able to hear their own (differing) practical conclusions stated in a charitable, positive, and sympathetic manner, they would have felt our church was giving them room to continue to participate and be involved in ongoing conversation.

I suspect that our decline has much to do with our failure to love.

POSTED BY VICTOR LEE AUSTIN

... keeping politics out of the church is very important. The “product” that young families are looking for is sound religious (ie. Bible-based) education. I believe that cuts across all Christian faiths. We should go back to our roots and ask priests to focus on preaching the Gospel rather than focus on social justice. Just one parent's opinion....

POSTED BY SKIP JOHNSTON

... My parish does all the good stuff... feed the hungry, shelter the homeless, baptize the children of same sex couples, etc. But heaven forbid anyone make the connections between those activities and the politics which make them necessary. That's the missing piece... an awareness of what is happening in the world to make these activities necessary. I think we need to put the politics back in the churches.

POSTED BY THERESA BERGEN

the Episcopal Church in NY has become too political. I do not subscribe to a majority of the views they put forward. I have heard a high level of discontent about this expressed in my local parish.

POSTED BY WESTCHESTER



The author and the Archbishop of Canterbury at St. Ann's, January, 2010.

Photo: Nicholas Richardson

It's What We Do

By the Rev. Martha Overall

At St. Ann's, we feed people, clothe people, educate children, and much, much more as part of our ministry, because that's what Episcopalians do. In fact, it's not only what Episcopalians do; it's who we are. Because the services we provide are part of our faith, they are different from secular services.

The story is told of a third world country where villagers had to walk many miles to get food. A relief agency had an office by the road where its staff distributed food to the hungry. Farther down the road was a church, which also gave food to the needy. Many villagers chose to get their food from the church, rather than the secular agency. When an enterprising reporter asked what difference made them walk the extra distance to get the food from the church, the villagers explained that the difference is in the hands that give the food.

Our hands reach out in faith to those we serve. For Episcopalians, service is not an extension of our faith; it is an integral part of our faith and of our being. We have been baptized into Jesus Christ, whose essence is to spend himself for the sake of the world. When we offer help to people, we are fulfilling our baptismal covenant to "seek and serve Christ in all persons." We teach those who are being prepared for confirmation or reception that service is an essential part of our faith. This is particularly true in the Diocese of New York, where we are required to

maintain "an effective presence in poor communities," and where Bishop Henry Codman Potter, the prime mover of our cathedral, insisted on personal involvement in charitable work, and planned the cathedral "to teach the great lesson of Christian brotherhood, of the absolute equality of all men before their Father who is in heaven."

Service brings us closer to God. My experience is that when we take care of people in God's Name, we are somehow provided with what we need. The almost miraculous support for the ministry of the people of St. Ann's is just one example. When Moses wavered about getting people out of Egypt because he didn't speak well, God said, "I will be your mouth and teach you what you shall speak." (Exodus 4:12). When Martin Luther King was understandably frightened by threatening phone calls, he heard God's voice saying, "Martin Luther, stand up for righteousness. Stand up for justice. Stand up for truth. And lo, I will be with you. Even until the end of the world." When God is in the work, it takes on an entirely different dimension.

The services provided through our lay ministries are different because they are centered in faith. "I by my works will show you my faith....For just as the body without the spirit is dead, so faith without works is also dead." (James 2:18,26) While our works cannot earn us a place in heaven, they are mandated by our faith. The

Letter of James instructs us that we are “justified by works and not by faith alone,” (2:24) and:

What good is it, my brothers and sisters, if you say you have faith but do not have works? Can faith save you? If a brother or sister is naked and lacks daily food, and one of you says to them, ‘Go in peace; keep warm and eat your fill,’ and yet you do not supply their bodily needs, what is the good of that? So faith by itself, if it has no works, is dead. 2:14-17

While the ministry that we do makes us better people, better Episcopalians and better Christians, it is often life-saving to those we serve, and certainly brings them, and us, closer to the abundant life which Jesus came to give. Our programs transform mortal lives and spiritual lives, which we do as embodiments of the God who “lifts the needy from the ash heap” (1 Samuel 2:8) and “has filled the hungry with good things” (Luke 1:53).

How Episcopalians treat people looking to us for help is different. They are guests, rather than clients, and sometimes they become members of our community, as volunteers themselves or as worshippers. The hands with which we serve them are different not only because we are following the commandment of Jesus to love one another as he has loved us, (John 13:34), but also because how we treat those who need our help is how Jesus perceives that we are treating him (Matthew 25:31-46). Perhaps for that reason, the Rev. Dr. James Forbes, Jr., former Senior Minister at Riverside Church, posits that nobody is going to get into heaven without a reference letter from the poor. When we serve the needy, we are ministering in God’s holy Name to none other than God, especially when we are caring for children. Jesus explains that “Whoever welcomes this child in my name welcomes me, and whoever welcomes me welcomes the one who sent me; for the least among all of you is the greatest.” (Luke 9:48) So, although others may have different reasons for aiding the needy, we have no choice: we are mandated by who we are. It’s in our spiritual DNA. Our service is both inspired and required by our faith.

When I was on staff at a West Coast Episcopal church, one of our youth was derided at school for going to “that gay church.” He immediately responded, “I go to the love church!” Best answer ever. **POSTED BY WENDY CLAIRE BARRIE**

More importantly, we know that when the needy are our guests, we are pleasing God, for Jesus himself said “When you give a luncheon or a dinner... invite the poor, the crippled, the lame and the blind. And you will be blessed, because they cannot repay you, for you will be repaid at the resurrection of the righteous.” (Luke 14:12-14) Our task is simple, as Jesus directed, “Feed my lambs...Tend my sheep...Feed my sheep.” (John 21:15-17)

The job that Jesus left us is to continue reconciling the world to God. That task clarifies that there is no separation between our spirituality and our ministry through providing social services. Spirituality is our essence, through which we reflect God’s gracious gift of God’s own self to us. We share that gift through the outpouring of our service to others, which helps to reconcile this world with the kingdom of God. For that reason, Jesus taught us to pray this way: Thy kingdom come. Thy will be done, on earth as it is in heaven.

That is prayed fervently by Miss Ruby, a grandmother who volunteers at St. Ann’s six days a week, starting at about eight in the morning. On the days when she isn’t seeing to the preparation for a nutritious hot meal for our soup kitchen, she is helping to set up healthy snacks or supper for the children in our educational programs, or she is assembling food packages for people who come to our pantry program. Miss Ruby moves a little slowly now, because of arthritis in her knees. However, if you ask her why she, and others like her, give so much, so generously, I am sure she will respond, “Because that’s what Episcopalians do.”

Overall is priest in charge of St. Ann’s Church in the Bronx.

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*Hunger statistics provided by Feeding America—2010 data

What Puts the Episcopal in Episcopal Charities?

By the Rev. Sam Smith and Henry Enright

A few years ago, the comedian Robin Williams compiled a list of 10 reasons to be an Episcopalian. They were:

10. No snake handling.
9. You can believe in dinosaurs.
8. Male and female, God created them; male and female we ordain them.
7. You don't have to check your brains at the door.
6. Pew aerobics.
5. Church year is color coded.
4. Free wine on Sunday.
3. All of the pageantry, none of the guilt.
2. You don't have to know how to swim to get baptized.
1. No matter what you believe, there's bound to be at least one other Episcopalian who agrees with you.

As we thought about this list, we knew there were many different lists we might compile (like *The Top Ten Reasons to Change Subway Cars* or *The Top Ten Different Ways to Spell Poughkeepsie*), but we finally determined the list that best fits the theme of this edition of the *Episcopal New Yorker* is:

The Top 10 reasons we are EPISCOPAL Charities

10. Everyone is welcome

The Episcopal Church really *does* welcome you! Every one of the 90 programs that Episcopal Charities supports is non-sectarian—that means we offer help to everyone. You don't have to be an Episcopalian; you don't even have to be a Christian. You just have to be in need.

9. We see generosity across the spectrum

Since its founding, Episcopal Charities has been supported by donors large and small, from large corporations to individual contributors who have also received help through our programs. We are grateful for each and every gift, and 100 per cent of these donations goes to meet human need.

8. We know that parishes know best

No one knows the needs of a community better than the people who live and work there. That's why Episcopal Charities doesn't create programs; instead we ask local congregations to identify the intersection of their community's needs with the assets and gifts of the parish.



15 Years Serving New Yorkers

Episcopal Charities

A Commitment to Caring

7. We focus on today and tomorrow

If you're hungry it can be hard to think of anything else. That's why our programs focus first on basic human needs. But once those needs are met, it is important to work with those served to help them create a different tomorrow—to change their lives. That's what we expect our programs to do—and they follow through!

6. We know how to throw a party

...a party with a purpose, that is! Held in the magnificent Cathedral Church of St. John the Divine, Episcopal Charities' annual Tribute Dinner is among New York's most celebratory and successful events. In 2011 alone, the gathering raised more than \$900,000 to help New Yorkers in need.

5. We are dependable

Episcopal Charities is now 15 years old. In those 15 years we have given away more than \$10 million. And we aren't going anywhere. Programs who qualify for our support know they can depend on grants from Episcopal Charities for years to come.

4. Process matters to us

If you've ever served on your parish's vestry, you know that making decisions takes time. That's the same at Episcopal Charities—and that's OK with us. Our Advisory Committee reviews every program coming to us for support each year, including site visits and thorough review of written applications. It's a transparent process that ensures that every grant is right.

3. We rise to the occasion

In the wake of 9/11, Episcopal Charities raised and granted more than \$2.6 million to help individuals and

families whose lives were changed forever. And since the recession began, Episcopal Charities has added over a dozen new programs, including seven new feeding programs, while maintaining or increasing funding for the programs we were already supporting. In times of accentuated need, Episcopal Charities delivers!

2. We are not afraid of the hard stuff

Our programs do the things you would expect—like serving meals or taking care of children after school—but they also take on challenging tasks, work that might surprise you. Our programs include a support group for teenage parents, a mentoring program for parents who are incarcerated, and a fellowship for homeless gay, lesbian and transgender teens. Just to name a few.

And the number one reason...

1. Everyone counts

It's important to feed people, and to help children grow, and to provide all the other services that our programs do every day. While doing so, our programs also take the time to build relationships—to learn to love and respect everyone who comes through the doors. Whether you are a donor, board member, volunteer or a program recipient, we are all God's children and everyone counts. That's a truth that we never forget as we share Christ's love with one another.

To learn more about Episcopal Charities, and to make a contribution, visit our website: <http://episcopalcharities-newyork.org/>

Smith is director of programs and Enright is director of development at Episcopal Charities.

EPISCOPAL CHARITIES, the outreach arm of the Diocese of New York, provides funding and support to parish-based programs serving children and adults in need on a non-sectarian basis.

Episcopal Identity: The Anglican Communion



The symbol of the Anglican Communion, the Compass Rose, inlaid in marble in the floor of the Cathedral of St. John the Divine.

Photo: Cathedral of St. John the Divine

Anglican Communion – Why Care?

By *Mary Robison*

Why should we care about the Anglican Communion? What does it matter, really, to the lay person?

Funny that this question should come to a transplanted Virginian! I've been part of the Diocese of New York for six years now, but before that I lived in Richmond for many years, and as any Virginia Episcopalian can assure you, I know that the politics of the greater Anglican Communion really do affect the folks back home. Worrisome trends in another diocese might just be headed in your direction, and this is just one compelling reason to concern ourselves with the Anglican Communion as a whole and to understand our own part in it.

It's easier to see the long view and have perspective, I think, when one is immersed in the history of the Church on a daily basis. I'm a theological librarian and archivist, and as such, I'm as likely to be puzzling over the burning issues facing the Episcopal Church in 1871 or 1912 as I am to be concerned about the challenges facing today's Anglican Communion. The yellow brittle pages of convention journals and old sermons bear witness to the Church's struggle with the controversies of that day, and it's impossible to miss the parallels in our own time.

Through these writings, we discover that Episcopalians back then were as concerned about the secularization of society as we are today—and we see that the Church survived. Regardless of where we might stand on social issues, we can all agree to embrace our history as Anglicans, and through that, consider how we can convey that appreciation to the world.

Here's what we have to remember: we probably won't need to describe the Anglican Communion to our friends. We need to be ready to explain ourselves to people who don't know church at all. We Episcopalians don't usually think of ourselves as evangelists, but let's face facts. We're living in a nation where spirituality nowadays is

often practiced alone, where fewer people each year participate in organized religion. If we as a denomination intend to survive, perhaps even to flourish, we've got to be able not only to spread the Gospel, but also to explain what it means to be part of the Anglican Communion.

Let's hope folks wander into our parishes and start asking questions about what we're doing! We lay people and our down-to-earth responses can be a real comfort to someone who's intimidated or uncomfortable asking a priest. We can describe our relationship with Anglicans around the world, and show our pride in our denomination's emphasis on polity.

Global Anglicans care about the Message of Christ. We care about the important social issues of our time, and we discuss them (mostly) in an organized fashion. As American Episcopalians, we've been doing that for over two hundred years, and since the mid-nineteenth century, in relationship with the worldwide Anglican Communion. I am proud of our denomination and its emphasis on polity, and I think this tradition will serve us well in the future.

In a world that seems not only more secular but also increasingly populated by religious Lone Rangers, creating their beliefs out of pop psychology or thin air, let's be thankful for that tradition of polity and how it affects our interaction with the worldwide Anglican Communion. Let's learn about our past, embrace our current mission and appreciate the similarities that bind us together as Anglicans. If we don't do that, who will?

Robison is reference librarian at the General Theological Seminary and is a member of the Episcopal Women's History Project, the National Episcopal Historians and Archivists, and the Anglican Society.

The New Community Clergy and Lay Conference

By Lelanda Lee

A “New Community Clergy and Lay Conference” was held February 29 through March 4 in San Diego to gather clergy and lay persons from across the Episcopal Church for cross-cultural conversations, learning, sharing, and networking. I attended this vibrant, energetic, and hope-filled gathering, which generated intercultural conversations and provided abundant opportunities for formal and informal lessons and formation of relationships that will last a lifetime.

The conference was co-sponsored by the ethnic ministry offices—Asian/American, Black, Latino/Hispanic, and Native American—with the collaboration of the Office for Lifelong Faith Formation. More than 300 young adults, lay persons, deacons, priests, and bishops, plus staff, attended. Clergy gathered one day earlier than laity on February 29, and laity stayed one day later than clergy on March 4, so that there were both special interest workshops by order and workshops of interest to all.

The concept of a “New Community” has developed gradually among the ethnic cohorts of the church in response to the combined ethos of cooperation, collaboration, and communication among the church’s marginalized communities. For tens of decades, the Episcopal Church has been largely an Anglo church, harkening back to its origins in the Church of England. While there have been historically Black churches in the South and the urban North, and Native American churches on Indian reservations, participation as worship and governance leaders has been disproportionately Anglo, even in church communities where the Blacks and Native Americans have been in the majority. The legacies of the trans-Atlantic slave trade and the Doctrine of Discovery continue today and must be continually addressed by the church through its Anti-Racism training initiatives as a fundamental part of our Christian formation.

In the United States in particular, as the demographics in the country have changed due to migration and immigration, there are more potential churchgoers and church members, if only the church knew how to reach out to the populations of color, and invite, welcome, and incorporate them not only into our pews, but also into the church’s councils. Recognition of the fact that as a church, we can do better, and commitment of church energy and resources to making it happen, brought us the New Community conference.

The theme of the conference was “Reclaiming Our Mission, Reinterpreting Our Contexts, and Renewing Our Communities.” I encourage you to read Episcopal News Service reporter Pat McCaughan’s excellent job of capturing the flavor of the conference, its people, and its activities in an article published March 6, and available at episcopaldigitalnetworks.com/ens (enter McCaughan in the search box, then scroll down the results).

Too often in race and ethnic politics, there is a feeling among different racial and ethnic groups that they must compete among themselves for access to limited resources and connections. That sense of competition is often fostered by the power bases in the larger community as a strategy to keep communities of color divided and focused on the smaller rather than the bigger picture. For us in the church to do likewise is a travesty, and a sin against our Creator and our Redeemer.

Our fundamental theology says that we are created in God’s image and that we are



At the New Community Conference: the Filipino community performing a folk dance in native dress, accompanied by drumming. Several of the Filipino clergy were among the dancers.
Photos: Lelanda Lee

one in Christ, and our understanding of Christian stewardship is that we follow a God of abundance whose grace and gifts poured out on us are unceasing. The theology that grounds the New Community very simply and straightforwardly says that we are *all* beloved children of God and *all* members of the Body of Christ, and that there is enough of everything for all to share and that nothing God creates or gives is wasted. We cannot be divided, and in living into the reality of the New Community, we will not be divided. We have the assets within our communities of color not only to save those communities, but also potentially to save the church.

As Bishop Dave Bailey of the Navajoland Area Mission said at the New Community conference, “*It’s important for us in this gathering to come together as the New Community in support of one another in new and life-giving ways, recognizing that we don’t have to be in competition but to confirm our commonality and appreciate our uniqueness . . . I believe this is a new beginning for the life of the church and in many ways can be life-giving to many of our dioceses that can be stagnant.*”

Youth leader and advocate Kaze Gadway of Arizona brought several Native American young adults from Spirit Journey Youth with her to the New Community gathering. Read Kaze’s blog post at <http://infaith.posterous.com/what-he-says> to see for yourself these young adults’ sense of hope and desire to continue in community and go deeper. One of them said, “*I learned a lot. You should hear some of the stories that they tell of their struggle to be accepted in a church that has mostly Anglos in it. They just stuck with it until people listened to them.*”

Kaze closed her blog by saying, “*This meeting with other Natives and other ethnic groups in a location outside our home keeps us alive and growing. I can hardly wait to hear what they bring back home.*” I couldn’t agree more. Communities of color are joining together into a New Community to bring new life into the church we all love.

Lee is a member of the Episcopal Church Executive Council from Longmont, Colorado.

Young Adults Are Here to Stay

By the Rev. Mary Cat Young



Young adults meeting on April 14.

Photo: Preston Merchant

Between the age of 18 and 29 I lived in five states, finished degrees at three different institutions of higher education, moved to a different dorm room or apartment every one to two years, dated a few different people, held at least five different jobs—some part-time, sometimes more than one at a time—met and married my husband, and became a responsible pet owner. Through all of those changes, all of those different ways in which I was engaged in figuring out what I was doing and what I wanted to do with my life, I had the constant identity of being an Episcopalian.

I moved in and out of different communities constantly—including different church communities. Change was the most consistent reality in my life. But there was a certain continuity even so, of knowing that no matter where I went, I would always find a community of faith to connect with, whether by simply sitting quietly in the back one Sunday, or by becoming an active leader, recognized by the community. Whatever I needed at that stage in my life, I knew that the Episcopal Church was there for me.

A constant lament we face as a Church is that we are “losing” young people. But the thing I would have the Episcopal Church know is that young people *are* here—you just might not see them in the ways and the places you would like to.

The truth is, young adults’ lives are full and complicated.

The likelihood of 21 to 22-year-olds graduating college, getting a job, getting married, getting a house and committing to a community—either residential or

spiritual—for a significant amount of time, is simply not how it works anymore. We are going where the jobs are, going where our hoped-for partner in life is, going where the program of study is, going to travel on our own before having a mortgage and student loans to pay for—in short, we are on the move, and we are delaying marriage and child-bearing to later years down the road.

So what does this mean for young adults in and out of the Church?

It doesn’t mean we don’t like or care about our faith lives. It does mean that figuring church life and community into the equation of all the other moving parts happens differently. Here in the New York metropolitan area, there are Episcopal churches of all different shapes and sizes, and young adults enter and engage with them every day. Some arrive and look around, not sure that they see anyone else their own age in the pews; but they know that the Episcopal Church is home, so there they are. Some congregations have organized gatherings for groups of young adults, such as Sunday brunch and service-learning projects. Others have weekly Bible study where Episcopalians in their 20s and 30s carve out a commitment to be in community with one another, in conversation about God’s presence to them in scripture and in their daily lives.

presence to them in scripture and in their daily lives.

This spring in the Diocese of New York, we have taken some steps to see how individuals and groups of young adults from a variety of congregations can engage their faith lives in action together, maintaining their Episcopal identity and connection to local parishes, while at the same time connecting with a wider network of young adults with whom they share a common faith, but whom they might not have an opportunity to meet on a given Sunday in any given congregation.

On Saturday, April 14, the Church Club of New York sponsored a gathering of 50 mission-minded young adults from congregations around the diocese, with the idea of improving networking and creating more opportunities to do things together. Organized and led by lay leader Schuyler Halsey, Church Club member Dana Cole and myself as Diocesan Liaison for Young Adults—and building on informal work that has been happening for several years in congregations—we together identified many interests that engage the passions of those who participated, and established four working groups to

- Build the Network
- Engage in Spiritual Practice and the Arts
- Serve Children and Youth, and
- Respond to Hunger and Homelessness

Episcopal Young Adults are here, and we’re here to stay. We may not always be present in a given congregation, but we will always be there in a denomination that meets our spiritual needs, engages us in active mission, welcomes us into leadership roles, and understands that our lives are in constant transition, in particular in the first few years of adulthood. Have faith that we will be the Church in our lives and in the world, and do your part in being the Church that has the doors open, and welcomes us in when we arrive at the threshold.

Young is Chaplain for Campus Ministry at Canterbury Downtown and Diocesan Liaison for Young Adult Ministry. She can be reached at mcyoung@dioceseny.org.

I AM PASSIONATE about being an advocate and ambassador for Young Adult Ministry in the Episcopal Church,” writes the Rev. Mary Cat Young, “helping congregations be present to this constituency, and helping people in this age group claim their place as they transition into adulthood in their faith lives and practice. I hope you’ll join me in this work in mission, evangelism, and formation, confirming the invitation to Young Adults to be the Episcopal Church.”

AN EPISCOPAL AGENDA



In this third “Episcopal Identity” discussion topic ([online at www.episcopalnewyorker.com/disc1](http://www.episcopalnewyorker.com/disc1) — for more information see page 5) our panelists answer the question:

If you were to set an agenda for the next 25 years in the Episcopal Church, nationally and locally, what would it be?

SHANE SCOTT-HAMBLEN: The agenda I would set for the next 25 years in the Episcopal Church would be the one I wish we had set all along. Namely, I would have us be “the servants of the servants of God.” For too long we ruled over people’s lives in an imperial style. We settled on power from *fear* (for example of Hell and Judgment) rather than on the stronger power which comes from *respect* and integrity.

We lacked humility in making up answers to the mysteries of God and now people are smart enough to have figured out that we don’t really know there are “pearly gates” or feathers on angels’ wings. Quite often we tried to convince people that we knew Christ’s will—and quite often his will sounded just like ours.

I would have us be humble and honest in our teaching and our service to God and people. It takes a great deal of security to admit “We don’t know but we believe...” When people ask us to do something for them, our answer should usually be “yes” because we automatically assume it is the Spirit which has lead them to ask in the first place.

Our model should be Christ kneeling and washing the disciples’ feet, not imperial power looking down on them. How many times, and in how many ways, did he try to teach us *the highest shall be brought low and the lowest shall be raised up?*

If we can show the world the genuine happiness that comes from humble service then they might once again respect our humility and integrity. If they once again come to respect our humility, wisdom, love, and holy integrity then they might want to join us in the joy of washing other peoples’ feet—which we believe is a way of washing God’s feet (“entertaining angels unawares”). In short, I would have us be a much more “intentional” community striving for *quality* rather than *quantity*.

BARBARA CRAFTON: Reading Shane’s response, I am moved and filled with hope: he is much younger than I am, and he makes me feel that the church is in good hands with his generation.

So many things are true, and I hope we emphasize them in future:

- Our relationships are more important than our opinions.
- The main thrust of our faith is love of God and love of neighbor.
The rest is commentary.
- Care for the poor is not an option for some of us; it is a duty for all of us.
- Living in Christ every day is more important than being able to define Christ once and for all.
- God is a mystery. We’re not going to be able to understand God, and this is okay.
- This life is not all there is.
- People of faith can and do disagree about important things.
- Most people don’t want to fight our religious wars.
- The church doesn’t have to stay the same. It never has.
- The primary faith experience of most Christians happens in the local community.

MILIND SOJWAL: Issues that I would hold vital for the church to explore and strengthen for the next 25 years would be the following, and not necessarily in any order:

1. Evangelism and Mission. The church that is not committed to a proclamation of the gospel of Christ, in word and deed, is a church doomed. The bold proclamation of the life and death and resurrection of Jesus has to be central to our life and we need to recapture the power of the dreaded “E” word. I have seen church bulletins which state that “all people are welcome to this church and you are safe from any attempt on our part to convert you.” I say no. Nobody that walks into our church should be safe from an attempt at sharing Jesus in all his beauty with them, that they are compelled by him and drawn to him. We need to collaborate with people from other denominations and other faiths to fight injustice, and be engaged in dismantling structures that enable them. We need to be radically committed to sharing our resources sacrificially with those of lesser means around the globe.

2. Attract and keep young people in the church. We are a church that needs to find creative ways to make the church appealing to the young. We have to learn to question, adapt and innovate. We have to attract younger people to ministry—lay and ordained.

3. Teach Scripture and the spiritual disciplines to our congregations. Our church is notoriously biblically illiterate. We need to teach our people to read, interpret and love God’s word—for it changes lives. We need to teach our people to pray, to study scripture, to practice generosity, to engage in solitude. We need to equip our congregation to develop its inner life so that its outward life is sustainable.

4. Celebrate our theological and liturgical diversity. We need more forums for discussions over the difficult issues of our times. We need to do this with openness and genuine respect for others’ beliefs. We need to recognize that we ALL have something to learn from people who differ from us, and that when we engage in deep, non-judgmental listening, we grow, and we create space for those who differ from us to feel welcomed. Our communion-wide internecine battles have to stop and we have to grow in humility and not allow our disproportionately higher wealth and power to dominate the little guys in our communion.

BARBARA CRAFTON: What Milind says about Biblical illiteracy is so true. There’s a project afoot and gaining strength to encourage the reading of scripture, called The Bible Challenge—participants will read the entire Bible in the course of one year! Here’s where you can find more information: <http://thecenterforbiblicalstudies.org>.

EXCERPTS FROM THE COMMENTS

Commenters' names are as provided by them. Comments have been edited (and in some cases moved) for length, relevance and overall coherence. Please visit www.episcopalnewyorker.com/disc1 to read them in their entirety – or to add your own contribution to the discussion.

I agree with what has already been said. We need to be clearer and more articulate about the practice of our relationship to God and our understanding of the Bible and about how Christian discipleship that is lived in practice finds its foundation in Biblical teaching (and specifically Jesus' teaching) and develops strong faith. I want to see us genuinely equip disciples to face challenges and not find ways around them. I want to take seriously having the same mind as Jesus—being transformed and ready, willing and able to heal the sick and feed the poor and change all forms of oppression. It may sound naive but I want us to hunker down and be real about God's mission and get up and be courageous followers of Jesus and bring all things in our own lives under Christ.

POSTED BY PEGGY SULLIVAN

The setting of an agenda makes me mindful that there are likely to be the Episcopal equivalents of Super-Pacs supporting one agenda or another. I think rather that we need to turn to Jesus and scripture for the answer:

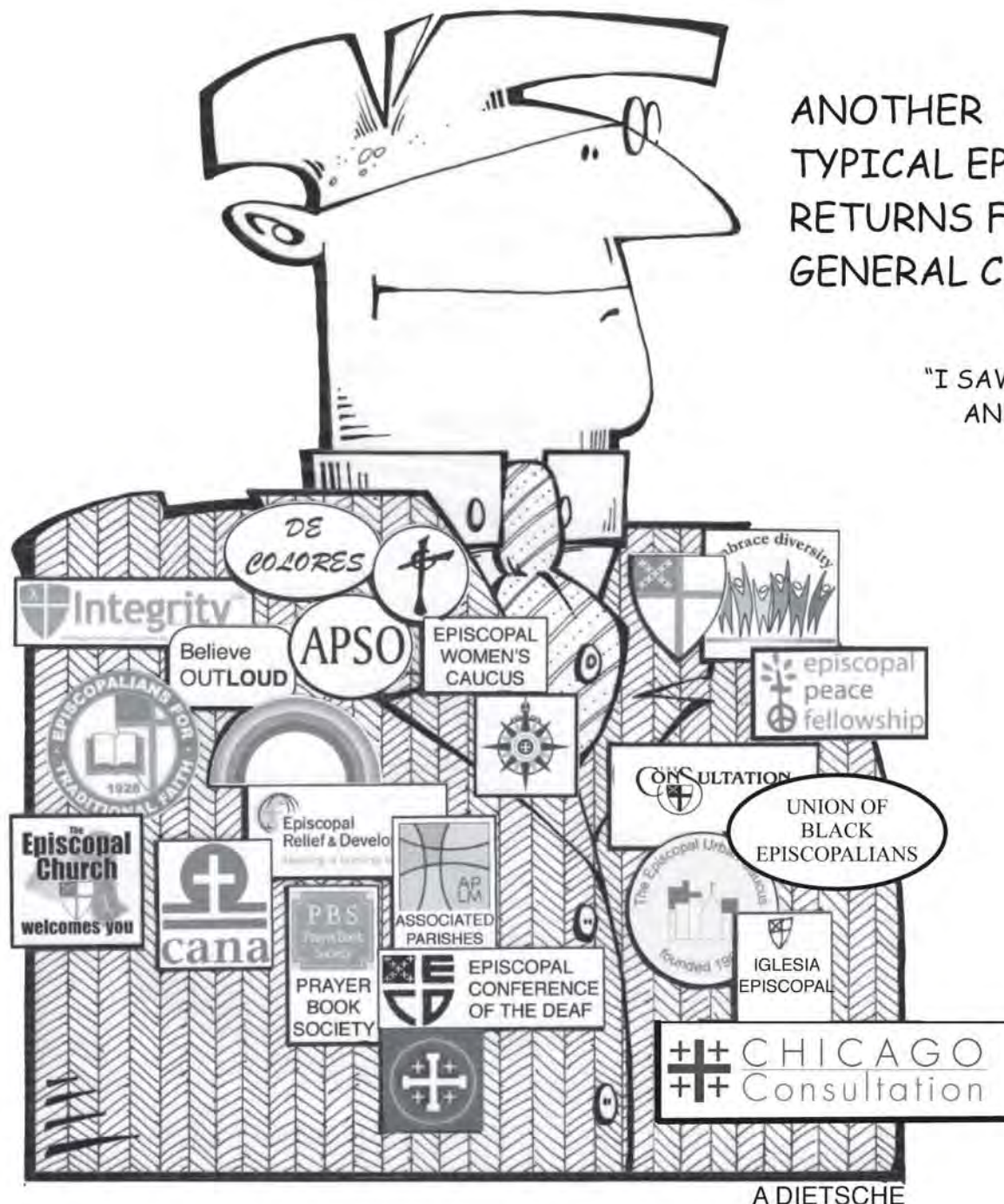
“Then one of them, which was a lawyer, asked him a question, tempting him, and saying, Master, which is the great commandment in the law? (*i.e. What is our Agenda?*) Jesus said unto him, Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart, and with all thy soul, and with all thy mind. This is the first and great commandment. And the second is like unto it, Thou shalt love thy neighbour as thyself. On these two commandments hang all the law and the prophets.” (Matthew 22:35-40)

If we can try to do that, and then share our own brand of worship not because it is the only way but because it is our way to worship in the beauty of holiness, we'll be just fine.

POSTED BY WAYNE KEMPTON

We tend to take fundamentals for granted and then wonder why we have the problems we have. Back to basics: evangelism, mission, biblical literacy (Christian education), stewardship, study/fix why we don't attract youth and men in representative proportions. Ask how smart it is to offer liturgy that assumes pre-existing belief when America is on its 3rd generation of mostly unchurched people. Look seriously at everything written by Brian McLaren. Overhaul our seminary education programs with a view to all of the above...

POSTED BY DEBORAH JACOBY-TWIGG



ANOTHER
TYPICAL EPISCOPALIAN
RETURNS FROM
GENERAL CONVENTION

"I SAW IT ALL...
AND THEN SOME!"

A DIETSCHÉ

Can Liberal Christianity Get Tough?

Theo Hobson in conversation with Gary Dorrien

Contrary to popular belief, the president of the United States is not a rare mix of Muslim and secular liberal. He is a liberal Christian. But what is a liberal Christian these days? Is it a secular liberal posing as a Christian? Why has this tradition, once so dominant in America, fallen into decline? I put these questions to Gary Dorrien, a leading expert on American liberal Protestantism, who has just written a book on Obama.*

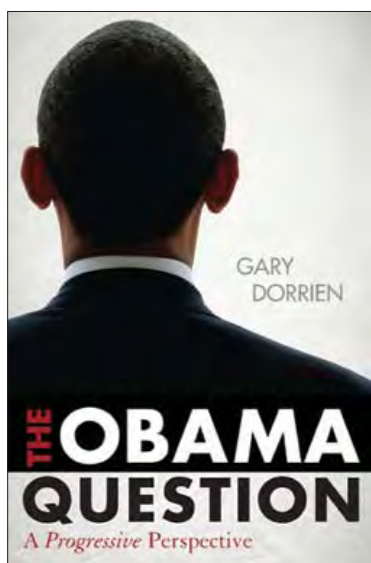
We meet in the cafeteria of New York's Union Theological Seminary, where he holds the Reinhold Niebuhr chair in Social Ethics. He is a slight man who wears red-rimmed specs and speaks with a mid-Western accent. He tells me that he was a nominal Catholic until his studies in political thought, and his interest in political activism, drew him to serious engagement with Christianity—but only after a long process of seeking did he settle in the Episcopal Church.

Reinhold Niebuhr is an obvious place to start: he's the only theologian that Obama has cited as an influence, beside Martin Luther King, Jr. In the 1930s he reacted against the liberal theology of the day, which was full of idealism about building of the kingdom of God on earth—but in retrospect he was the quintessential liberal theologian, wasn't he?

"Oh he was. He kept hold of the fundamental assumption that the church had a social mission to transform the structure of society—but he had different ideas about what that meant. He thought that such idealism had to be firmly based in awareness that there's no pure, sinless exercise of power." In the fifties he influenced liberals including Martin Luther King—and also, because of his stern anti-Communism, he became the inspiration for the original Neoconservatives. Why such broad appeal? "Well, Niebuhr is a symbol of something. Even people who've never actually read him know that Niebuhr is the one who grappled with this issue of how do you hold together some kind of Christian ethics with some kind of political realism."

While still a senator, Obama told an interviewer that Niebuhr was his favorite philosopher. He put it like this: *There's serious evil in the world, and hardship and pain. And we should be humble and modest in our belief we can eliminate those things. I take away from Niebuhr the sense we have to make these efforts knowing they are hard, and not swinging from naïve idealism to bitter realism.*

It was a good little summary of Niebuhr. But does Dorrien think that the influence is serious? "Yes, and it shows in the way he argues. Niebuhr's always dialectical:



the tension never really resolves itself in any synthesis—paradox is practically a criterion of truth for Niebuhr—and Obama argues that way. And there was a lot of Niebuhr in his Nobel Prize acceptance speech, and he wrote that one himself."

What brought Obama to Christian faith was not Niebuhr's political realism but the idealism of the civil rights movement. As he recounts in *Dreams From My Father*, he wanted to be rooted in the sort of black church that preserved the spirit of Martin Luther King. "The decision to be part of that church was about more than religion, it was about being rooted in something, saying, I'm not just going to take a cosmopolitan view of the world, the anthropologist's view of everything that he learned from his mother, and is part of himself. And that was part of Michelle's appeal—her rooted, churchgoing family."

Was he intellectually interested in theology at that time? "He'd read a certain amount, certainly including Niebuhr—in those three years in Chicago he was exploring various churches, thinking about whether he could call himself a Christian. And the preaching of Jeremiah Wright was clearly decisive."

So the importance of Niebuhr for Obama is that he balances the utopian strain in liberal Christianity, the 'I have a dream' stuff. But isn't that rousing vision still what really motivates him? "Yes, but at the same time Obama's pretty cold-eyed: balance of power—politics is about power—constraints on any kind of idealism...watch out for unanticipated consequences. As in Niebuhr it's a genuine tension." The tension was evident in one of his best presidential speeches to date, in response to the shooting of Gabby Giffords and others in Tuscon, Arizona. "Scripture tells us there is evil in the world," he said. He seemed to relish the chance to show his core belief: liberal idealism needs the tough roots of faith.

But, tough rhetoric aside, hasn't Obama been guilty of a failure of Niebuhrian realism? Didn't he naively underestimate the self-interest of the opposition, thinking he could work with them in a post-partisan spirit? "He's a likeable type, he'd always gotten people to like him before, and he thought it should work this time too. The need for a stimulus seemed obvious—he was stunned when it didn't get a single Republican vote."

Beside this balance of Martin Luther King and Reinhold Niebuhr, has Obama shown any other signs of interest in theology? Who else has he read? "It's not clear that he

Original Sin

By Bo Niles

So the serpent said to her
that to know him was to love him,
that she was the apple of his eye.

Seeing is believing the serpent said.

Believing was the easy part.
It was the seeing that confounded her.

If she were to believe
her husband was made from mud
cemented with celestial spit
and she unfolded from a rib—
now that was news...

But to see the two of them
loving each other as they did,
fruitfully and knowingly...
why was something so forthright
translated into something
so much muddier than pure delight?

read much beyond Niebuhr and Martin Luther King, and while at Chicago he would have known the work of Jim Cone here [at Union Theological Seminary].” James Cone, who is still teaching at Union, was the pioneer of “Black Theology”; in the sixties he was more drawn to Malcolm X than to King; his books include *Black Theology and Black Power* (1969) and *A Black Theology of Liberation* (1970). It is easy enough to guess what the religious right thinks of his work—in fact, the angry talk-show host Glenn Beck attacked it a couple of years ago.

Which brings us to the religious right. The obvious question, from an outsider’s point of view, I suggest, is simply this: how do they get away with it? Why do they dominate the public discussion of religion so completely? Why don’t liberal Christians challenge them more effectively? “Liberal Protestantism does not act politically in the way that the Christian right does. At root that’s because it isn’t sure whether to feel badly about the loss of Christian influence in the United States or not—the problem is that it has been part of the secularization of American culture. That makes it hard for a liberal religious figure to oppose the religious right in the name of religion.” But surely a liberal Christian could reject fundamentalism on religious grounds—as heretical, legalistic? “Well there has been a rise in liberal religious voices in the public square. The benchmark is the 2004 election. After that, progressive Christianity got organized in various ways, and changed the climate. So in 2008, all the Democratic candidates were far more comfortable talking about their faith than had been the case in any previous campaign in my lifetime.”

The image problem remains, though: liberal Christianity looks more secular than religious. “Yes, there’s no question that the policy positions of the National Council of Churches, and their member churches, just look like pure secular liberalism to much of the media and certainly to the Christian right. It just seems like warmed-over secular Democratic politics, and so even a liberal paper like the *New York Times* doesn’t cover it.”

Surely, I venture, the American tradition of the separation of church and state ought to give liberal Christianity the upper hand—but somehow it works the other way: the strong defense of religious liberty, including freedom *from* religion, is seen as a secular cause. “Yes, it’s partly that Americans don’t have a memory of what it means to have a state religion. So it’s getting harder and harder even to remember what the separation of church and state was about or why it was so important. Instead there’s been a growing sense of the government as a Leviathan that’s hostile to religion, and an urge to even the balance. But the religious right is quite con-

flicted on church and state. The candidates this time who took a radical line didn’t get very far—Perry was arguing for flat-out theocracy.” Don’t they all echo that rhetoric to some degree? “Yeah, but Romney has to be careful about it—he doesn’t want to talk about religion.”

Whatever happens before November, we won’t see the quasi-religious excitement that Obama inspired in 2008. In retrospect that was all rather superficial, wasn’t it? “Oh yeah—something of a shortcut to redemption. It had a lot to do with hope for a post-racial America, the way he drew enormous crowds of mostly white people. Early on he was asked ‘Do white people have a need for validation from black people? – is that what Oprah Winfrey is about?’...and Obama cut in before the interviewer had even finished the question; he said: ‘People like Oprah give white people a short-cut to their better instincts: I don’t think that’s a bad thing.’ He knew he was playing that role.”

*The Obama Question by Gary Dorrien is published by Rowman and Littlefield.

Hobson is an English theologian and writer currently living in Brooklyn.

Seeking is Finding

By Margaret Diehl

So I go to church, not because of any legalistic or moralistic reasons, but because I am a hungry sheep who needs to be fed; and for the same reason that I wear a wedding ring: a public witness of a private commitment.

Deepest communion with God is beyond words, on the other side of silence.

Madeleine L'Engle (1918 – 2007)

Madeleine L'Engle, author of over 60 books including *A Wrinkle in Time*, was a beloved and eminent member of the diocesan and cathedral community. For more than three decades, starting in 1966, she served as librarian and writer in residence at the cathedral. She was committed to her faith and to her extended community, and when discussions first started at the cathedral to establish a memorial shrine to American writers, was an immediate supporter.

The American Poets' Corner, which was the outcome of those discussions, honors writers because they help us make sense of experience in a particular way. How different are we from each other, and how different do we want to be? Fiction and poetry can reveal the deeply interior world that we sometimes think we've been cast adrift in, and the social and political world whose complexities and injustices we often hide from.

The majority of the writers in the Poets' Corner were born into faith, many Episcopalians. As writers, matters of identity were central—something to be wrestled with intellectually and emotionally and woven into the foundations of their work. It is not, however, always clear how far they conceived of themselves as having a specific religious identity. The Rev. J. Selden Spencer, rector of the parish in Tarrytown where Washington Irving (1783-1859, inducted into the Poets' Corner in 1984) worshipped, said of him, "Let me explain, however, why so little is said about the religious side of Irving. He was by nature exceedingly modest. He did not care to have public attention directed to any of his good qualities. He practiced his piety, but made no noisy profession of it. He considered his Christian experience a sacred thing to be felt and lived, rather than to be talked about."

But there are others who wrote more openly.

Edith Wharton (1862-1937, inducted in 1992), was from an upper class New York Episcopal family. Of austere temperament, she read, thought and corresponded widely on the important philosophical, theological and scientific ideas of her time. Although she owned more books on religion than any other subject, she was deeply critical of those whose religion was *pro forma*. In her story *Line of Least Resistance*, she describes a wealthy Episcopalian who felt about the clergy "much as he did about his library: he had never quite known what they were for," while in *The House of Mirth* she wrote that "Mr. and Mrs. Wetherall's circle was so large that God was included in their visiting-list." These are people for whom religious identity is ornamental, an offshoot of their class status and the social rituals that defined that status.

Yet Wharton wasn't a rebel against the establishment; on the contrary, she valued tradition highly—so highly that it made her angry when people didn't understand the value of what had been passed down to them. Lily Bart, at the end of *The House of Mirth*, knows the purpose of what we inherit—whether from books, our family or our cultural ancestors. "In whatever form a slowly-accumulated past lives in the blood—whether in the concrete image of the old house stored with visual memories, or in the conception of the house not built with hands, but made up of inherited passions and loyalties—it has the same power of broadening and deepening the individual existence, of attaching it by mysterious links of kinship to all the mighty sum of human striving."

Cathedrals and churches serve this function just as houses do, but for a larger audience whose kinship is not of the blood. Worship is always about more than the act

of worshipping—it takes us out into the world, just as our personal identity has value to others as well as to us.

Willa Cather (1873-1947, inducted in 1990) was ten years younger than Wharton and from an utterly different background. Born in Virginia, at the age of nine she moved with her family to Nebraska, which was still frontier country. As an adult, she lived in Pittsburgh and New York City; but Red Cloud, Nebraska remained the world of her imagination. It was a formidable world, where nature, rather than social life, was the shaping force of a life; it was also a world where she found a profound transcendence. In her novel *My Antonia*, she writes, "As I looked about me I felt that the grass was the country, as the water is the sea. The red of the grass made all the great prairie the colour of winestains, or of certain seaweeds when they are first washed up. And there was so much motion in it; the whole country seemed, somehow, to be running."

The idea of salvation in nature, which runs through all Cather's work, is not specifically Christian, and she didn't believe that God really cared all that much about the distinctions that we on earth make. In what is perhaps her most famous novel, *Death Comes for the Archbishop*, she exhibits deep fascination with and respect for Native American rituals. Anyone who affirmed the sacred through love for God's creation belonged to her congregation. Living in New York City in the 1930s, when most of the writers and artists around her were caught up in urgent debates about socialism and communism vs. the failures of capitalism and the fascism emerging in Europe, she remained true to her vision of the eternities of nature and the soul. This, too, is a familiar way of thought. Cather faced criticism for her supposed sentimentality about the lost frontier, but it is hard to accuse her of that now. Are the political struggles of human beings more important than our connection to nature? There is less and less of a distinction between the two.

Love is ultimately what identity is about. We can be described by what and whom we love, and by those who have loved us; as well as by those same choices made by our ancestors. To consider specifically one's religious identity merely raises the stakes. Few people want to be like Mr. and Mrs. Wetherall.

Cather wrote, "Religion is different from everything else; because in religion seeking is finding." One can say the same thing of identity.

Diehl is the editor of the Cathedral newsletter.



American Poets' Corner, Cathedral of St. John the Divine. Photo: Cathedral of St. John the Divine.

General Convention 2012

By Nicholas Richardson

As this issue of the *Episcopal New Yorker* goes to press, the 77th General Convention of the Episcopal Church is about to begin in Indianapolis. By the time the issue reaches readers' mailboxes, the triennial gathering, which runs from July 5 to July 12, will be almost over.

General Convention was and is covered in depth by the Episcopal Digital Network and Episcopal News Service – accessible through the General Convention Media Hub at <http://episcopaldigitalnetwork.com/gc2012/>. The main General Convention site, including links to all resolutions, is at www.generalconvention.org. There is a Twitter hashtag for the convention – #GC77 – and the flow of tweets can be expected to be prolific.

Core issues at the Convention will include:

- Deciding a budget for the next 3 years (“triennium” in GC-speak). This is an enormous, complex, contentious and hitherto apparently chaotic subject that will have morphed into something entirely different between the writing of these words and the time they are read. The budget process leaves this writer in a state of bemused befuddlement, and he is confident he is not alone. An indication of the state of things may be that for the first time ever, the Presiding Bishop issued a proposed budget of her own on June 21.
- Affirmation (or not), on a trial basis, of the proposed liturgy for same-gender lifelong covenant called “The Witnessing and Blessing of a Lifelong Covenant.” Opinions remain multi-hued in the Episcopal Church on the issue of the extension of full marriage rites/rights to same-gender couples. In the meantime, this proposed blessing liturgy seems likely to be adopted (on, as previously stated, a trial basis).
- Acceptance, rejection or something in between of the proposed Anglican Covenant. The majority of dioceses in the Church of England have rejected (at least for the life of this C. of E. Synod) the proposed Covenant, and some onlookers have inevitably interpreted the Archbishop of Canterbury’s upcoming departure to head up a Cambridge college as his response to this.
- Lay Health Plan. At the 2009 GC, a resolution (A177) was passed mandating that effective Jan 1, 2013, the same health insurance coverage be provided to lay employees working more than ¾ time as is currently provided to clergy. This plan, which requires that the insurance be purchased through the Church Pension Group (CPG), has generated a good deal of nervousness: at a time of financial stress for most parishes, how will it be funded—or will it instead lead to a mass reduction in hours of those who would currently qualify? A raft of proposals to modify the



requirements has been put forward, including: delays in implementation; allowing the purchase of insurance from other providers; requiring equity between different geographical regions; and simply deferring the whole thing. (For an excellent neophyte’s guide to this, and to the advantages/disadvantages of these proposals, check out the May 31, 2012 entry at www.goodandjoyfulthing.blogspot.com – the blog of Phoenix, AZ Episcopal priest Susan Brown Snook. The decisions may have been made by the time you read this, but her analysis of whatever those decisions end up being will still stand.)

Richardson is the editor of the ENY and communications director of the diocese.

Diocesan Deputies and Alternate Deputies to General Convention

DEPUTIES - CLERGY

The Rev. Theodora N. Brooks
The Rev. Tobias Stanislas Haller, BSG
The Rev. Martha Overall
The Rev. L. Kathleen Liles

DEPUTIES - LAY

James A. Forde Sr.
Diane B. Pollard
Michael Wood
Catherine Grant

ALTERNATE DEPUTIES - CLERGY

The Rev. Yamily Bass-Choate
The Rev. Nora Smith
The Rev. Wm. Blake Rider

ALTERNATE DEPUTIES - LAY

Jeanette E. Jones
Elisabeth Jacobs

EPISCOPAL CHURCH WOMEN DELEGATION

Virginia (Ginger) Lief
Marleene Larrier
Francilla Moore
Stephanie Harris-Ash
June Beckett

BISHOPS

The Rt. Rev. Mark S. Sisk
The Rt. Rev. Andrew M. L. Dietsche
The Rt. Rev. Andrew D. Smith
The Rt. Rev. Catherine S. Roskam

ADDITIONAL MEMBERS OF OUR DEPUTATION

Sister Faith Margaret
Sister Catherine Grace
The Ven. William Parnell

Views and Reviews

ARTS AND LITERATURE

EXHIBITION REVIEW THE RYLANDS HAGGADAH: MIEVEAL JEWISH ART IN CONTEXT THE METROPOLITAN MUSEUM OF ART THROUGH SEPTEMBER 20, 2012

Reviewed by the Rev. Stephen Chinlund

"It is a precept incumbent upon us to recount the story of the Exodus from Egypt, and everyone who does so...is to be commended."

— From the Passover Haggadah

If you go to the gift shop in the John Rylands University Library in Manchester, England (now the University of Manchester Library), you can purchase a tote bag that says "Keep Calm and Carry Books." Housed in a splendid neo-gothic building in the center of the city, the library does just that—carrying some 41 million printed books and manuscripts, 41,000 electronic journals, and 500,000 electronic volumes. For scholars and researchers, its collections unquestionably provide an *embarras de richesses*.

The Metropolitan Museum's current installation—the third in a series devoted to masterworks of Hebrew manuscript illuminations from national or international collections—is organized around a single book on loan from the Manchester's expansive holdings, known as the Rylands Haggadah.

The Haggadah (Hebrew for "telling") is a Jewish text that sets forth the order of the Passover Seder. The reading of the Haggadah at the Seder table is a fulfillment of the Scriptural commandment to each Jew to "tell your son" of the Jewish people's liberation from slavery in Egypt as told in the Book of Exodus. ("You shall tell your child on that day, 'It is because of what the Lord did for me when I came out of Egypt.'" — Exodus 13:8). According to Jewish tradition, the Haggadah was compiled during the Mishnaic and Talmudic periods, although the exact date is unknown. But the earliest examples produced as works in their own right are manuscripts from the 13th and 14th centuries, such as "The Golden Hag-

gadah" of Barcelona (c. 1320) and the "Sarajevo Haggadah" (late 14th century).

In a field of outstanding *haggadot* (the Hebrew plural) such as those of Barcelona and Sarajevo, the Rylands Haggadah ranks as one of the finest in the world. While all are distinguished by attention to detail in lettering or the beauty of their images, the Rylands is of particular interest as an important example of the cross-fertilization between Jewish and non-Jewish artists within the medium of manuscript illumination. Written and illuminated in Catalonia in the 14th century, it has retained its power to impress and delight the viewer, with much of its tempera, gold and ink (on parchment) still intact and vibrant. The Hebrew text, read from right to left, is as meticulously written as the accompanying illustrations are expressively created, resulting in an affecting esthetic whole.

Despite the instructional intent of the Haggadah to pass the great liberation saga of the ancient Israelites from one generation to the next, the text does not convey the events sequentially; it is only through prayers, poems, and Biblical teachings that details come through. In the Rylands Haggadah, the textual gaps are filled by vivid images that present each episode from the viewpoint of the characters themselves. There is a decided "you-are-there" quality to these images: the figures gesture intentionally, faces show emotion, and the particularities of Jewish daily life are precisely represented. Even grotesque scenarios, such as the Egyptians beset by frogs, boils and darkness, were set down on the parchment with unalloyed verve.

The pages of the Rylands Haggadah show how Jewish artists, working in a medieval Europe where visual art was valued as a means of storytelling, did not shun visual imagery but adopted it to tell their own stories of Jewish life and history. To underscore this, the Metro-



The Rylands Haggadah: (to the left): 16v: The Plague of Wild Beasts (above); The Plague of Cattle Disease (below); (to the right): 17: The Plague of Boils (above); The Plague of Hail (below). Catalonia, mid-14th century. Tempera, gold, and ink on parchment. 11 1/2 x 9 5/8 x 1 7/16 in., 5.732lb. (29.2 x 24.5 x 3.7 cm, 2.6kg) The John Rylands University Library, The University of Manchester (Hebrew MS 6).

Photo: Courtesy of the Director and University Librarian, The John Rylands University Library, Manchester, England.

politan Museum has drawn on its own collection to surround the Jewish Haggadah with Christian works of art depicting the Exodus accounts, and thereby points, to the larger artistic context of biblical storytelling in which such *haggadot* were produced. Recognizing that the Hebrew past was the foundation of their own faith, Europe's Christian artists found much to enrich their own creations by incorporating the epic tales of the Israelites, the images of which made their way into countless Latin Bibles and illuminated manuscripts.

The pages of the Rylands Haggadah are displayed one per month during the exhibition period, a small disappointment for those who would want to see the book in its entirety during a single visit. But regardless of whatever page one happens to find, it will nonetheless delight the eye and uplift the spirit.

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

The Rylands Haggadah is on display (a page at a time) in Gallery 304 of the Metropolitan Museum of Art through September 20, 2012. Selected images can be viewed online at <http://www.metmuseum.org/exhibitions/listings/2012/rylands-haggadah>.

EMBRACING ISRAEL/PALESTINE: A STRATEGY TO HEAL AND TRANSFORM THE MIDDLE EAST

BY RABBI MICHAEL LERNER
NORTH ATLANTIC BOOKS, 428 PAGES

Reviewed by the Rev. Stephen Chinlund

Amazing! The most baffling, bloody problem in the world is the Israel/Palestine conflict and now there is a hopeful book about it!

Rabbi Michael Lerner, author of *Embracing Israel/Palestine*, is not only a Rabbi, but has been a devout Jew all his life, worked on a *kibbutz*, had a son in the Israeli army and loves Israel. This does not prevent him from telling, in chilling detail, of the cruelties and massacres inflicted by the Israeli government on the Palestinians. Neither does he shrink from chronicling the *intifada* attacks by the Palestinians on civilian Israelis.

So where is the hope? It rests, in part on his

unflinching factual narrative of the horrors. He provides an excellent account of how we got into this mess. This is not cheap hope: Part of the cure, Lerner believes, is for both sides to recognize that the other has a legitimate narrative, and that both sides have been unnecessarily insensitive and cruel towards the other. The ability of each side to hear the other's pain, he believes, and to learn how to tell the other side's story in a compassionate way, is key to the necessary healing.

Lerner is convinced that the best of Jewish tradition favors love, generosity and "the acceptance of the stranger." He argues passionately that it is in fact, more realistic to advocate for a policy of sharing, openness and generosity than to pursue policies based on military power. He sees only catastrophe if Israel continues to pursue a "settler policy" aimed at dominating or expelling or making life intolerable for the Palestinian people.

In this book, Lerner challenges us all to face up to our commitment to a "bottom line" defined by money and power and what he calls "the globalization of selfishness and materialism," and to change to a "new bottom line" defined by love and generosity, ethical and ecological sensitivity and awe, wonder and radical amazement at the grandeur and mystery of the universe. He recognizes that in both the Torah and the New Testament, in fact in every religious and secular tradition, people hear God or their own truth through the framework of their own divided selves—divided, that is, between seeing the world through fear and the certainty that security comes only through power over others and, conversely, a belief in the possibility of love and kindness, and that security can be achieved through generosity. The task of those who want to build peace in the Middle East is, he says, to strengthen the voice of love and reduce the level of fear.

Lerner provides a detailed plan for what a final

Ancient Wisdom

The Ides of March by Thornton Wilder (1947), viewed afresh by Kate Kavanagh

Thornton Wilder, national treasure and ambassador of the best Americanness, could be a presumptuous subject for a non-American to choose, but this writer is glad to share a debt of gratitude to a book that says a lot about the nature of wisdom, and human nature.

After Wilder's almost-too-perfect and moving *Bridge of San Luis Rey* (1928), *The Ides of March* (1947) is possibly less widely read. It is set in Julius Caesar's pre-first-century Rome, as "historical fiction," based on events most of which actually happened, though freely imagined and re-ordered—Wilder described it as a "fantasy." Entertainingly presented, in imaginary letters and documents, it extends to a whole city and civilization, centered on Julius Caesar himself, the most powerful man in the known world, and the questioning of power and tradition that he represents.

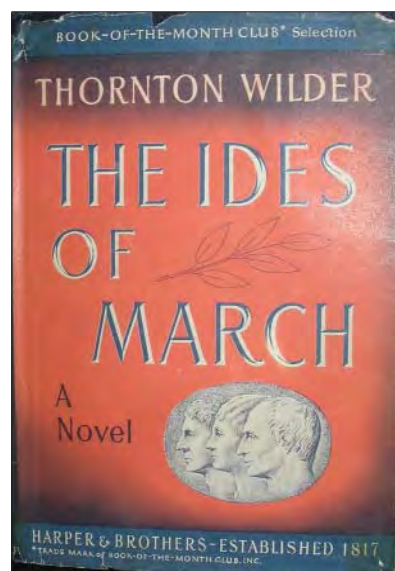
As always with Wilder, the characters are recognizable from 20th-century society: neurotic women, matriarchs, irresponsible young men, scheming politicians, upholders and manipulators of social values. They are also convincing as ancient ruling-class Romans, and the whole book is subtly distanced (where appropriate) by a slightly formal style that suggests Latin. This distancing suits the aphorisms and moralizing observations typical of Wilder, coming here from the mouths of Caesar or Cicero. Friendship, love, malice and generosity are woven then as now.

Caesar, the successful general and now Dictator of the Roman republic, is an agnostic who recognizes the value of ritual and the existence of mystery, a non-ironical celebrator of the irony in life. These insights chiefly appear in the diary-letters written by him to

his guru-friend, a blind and crippled casualty of war. Speaking of his encouragement of Queen Cleopatra (a strong presence in the book) to turn herself into an Egyptian goddess: *The adherence of a people is not acquired merely by governing them as to their best interests. We rulers must spend a large part of our time capturing their imaginations.*

It is the poet Catullus who embodies for Caesar the supreme gift of life, the element of the unknowable. In a brilliant scene, different characters argue for and against inspiration from the gods; Catullus contributes an ambiguous surrealist fable, interrupted by Caesar falling in an ecstatic fit. Later, watching at the poet's death-bed, Caesar writes: *I not only bow to the inevitable; I am fortified by it. The achievements of men are more remarkable when one contemplates the limitations under which they labor. And (good advice to follow): I am no stranger to deathbeds. To those in pain one talks about themselves; to those of clear mind one praises the world they are quitting. There is no dignity in leaving a despicable world and the dying are often fearful lest life was not worth the efforts it has cost them. I am never short of subjects to praise.*

The wisdom of ancient Rome is of course colored for us by what came after it, but Caesar's open-ended humanist view makes psychological sense, in the world of the book (whether fantasy or history) and in ours. *Life has this mystery that we dare not say*



the last word about it, that it is good or bad, that it is senseless, or that it is ordered... Life has no meaning save that which we may confer upon it... We are not in a relationship to anything until we have enwrapped it in a meaning.

Wilder's Caesar is the type of a benevolent dictator. He—and, we infer, his alter-ego the author—is both pessimist and optimist, appropriately for a book produced just after a world war. Caesar's vision is of his Roman world evolving into ever better government and greater intelligence, including

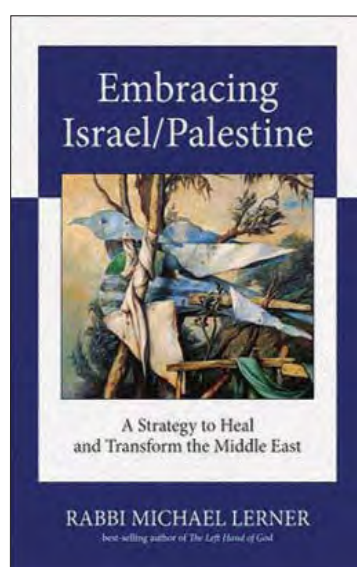
more and different populations, keeping the peace, eliminating legalized torture, building public libraries. He expects to be assassinated in the name of Freedom, but notes that those who cry Freedom are likely to introduce their own limiting laws.

... But I have reminded myself that the mind is free. The mind is easily wearied and easily frightened; but there is no limit to the pictures it makes; and towards those pictures we stumble. ... I have never heard it said that there is a limit to wisdom. The way is open to better poets than Homer and to better rulers than Caesar. No bounds have been conceived for crime and folly. In this also I rejoice and I call it a mystery. This also prevents me from reaching any summary conclusion concerning our human condition. Where there is an unknowable there is a promise.

Kavanagh is a writer and reviewer living in England.

agreement between Israel and Palestine could look like, then goes on to argue why no political agreement will work until there has been a spiritual transformation in both Israelis and Palestinians sufficient to help diminish the "post-traumatic stress disorder" that dominate and distort the worldviews on both sides. He also argues that the United States played a major role in spreading the worldview of militarism, domination and fear long before 9/11, and that our cultural power in the world could have a huge positive impact in the Middle East, if we would only start to embrace a homeland security strategy based on generosity.

The Questions and Answers at the end of the book



are particularly revealing since Lerner raises hard questions, all aimed at the hopelessness of the situation. As I read them, I thought back to my own childhood when African Americans were being lynched right here in New York State, and old people could die of starvation if they had no family to care for them. We have come a long way. We have reason to hope for new transformations. Lerner acknowledges that it will take "a change of consciousness" to bring peace to Israel/Palestine and that it will have to be part of a worldwide revolution in thinking and feeling. It

can happen. It begins with each one of us.

I think of people who have suffered a murder in their families. They have reacted by seeking the ulti-

mate, most cruel vengeance. Then over time some of them recognize their lust for revenge as a burden, a poison in their lives. They have visited the murderer in prison. Often with help, they have become acquainted with the challenges in his life, especially when he was a child. Some have been able to forgive the one who took the life of their family member. And they report being free. The same could happen in Israel/Palestine. Three years ago I visited with people there on both sides who achieved that miraculous level of forgiveness. They continue to work right now to bring the two sides together in the face of the most corrosive opposition from those who say that they will never forgive. As they embrace a "new realism" they feel new freedom. Even their bodies unclench, and they see the sky again. It is possible.

Chinlund is a priest in the diocese and former executive director of Episcopal Social Services.

Dietsche Installation Set for February 2, 2013

In a letter sent electronically to the people of the diocese May 2, Bishop Sisk announced his intention to retire as Bishop of New York effective February 2, 2013, on which date Bishop Dietsche will be installed as XVI Bishop of New York in the Cathedral Church of Saint John the Divine.

"I have made this decision with deeply mixed feelings," Bishop Sisk wrote. "Karen and I have both enjoyed these years as I have served as Bishop of this wonderful Diocese.

"These have been years when I have felt myself called, and honored to be called, to serve our Lord as your Bishop. This has been an eventful time: a time of many transitions in our life as a Diocese, and indeed our life as a nation.

"There is much in me that would like to continue working with you in the years to come, but the dictates of advancing age make that impossible. That being the case I can see no reason to cause this beloved community of faith to delay addressing the many pressing issues that will fall to the responsibility of the next generation of leadership.

"In electing Bishop Dietsche as Bishop Coadjutor the Diocese selected a person who combines great ability with a deep knowledge of the Diocese. I see no reason to prolong the time before he assumes the duties that will be his. I look forward to working with him closely in the coming and closing months of my time as Fifteenth Bishop of this great Diocese."

Cecil Wray Receives Servant of Justice Award

At the Annual Law Day Evensong held at St. Paul's Chapel Thursday May 10, Bishop Sisk presented Cecil Wray with the diocesan Guild of St. Ives' Servant of Justice Award. Wray, who became a partner of Debevoise & Plimpton in 1968, was appointed as the founding President of the Board of Directors of Episcopal Charities in 1996, and was the recipient of the Bishop's Cross on June 2, 2001. He has served as a member of the vestry and as Senior Warden of St. James' Church, Manhattan, and is a trustee both of the Church Pension Group and of the Board of Foreign Parishes of the Episcopal Church.



Cecil Wray.
Photo: Nicholas Richardson

Diocesan Priest Named "Senior Pastor Builder, Emeritus" by Church at base of CitiCorp Building

The Rev. Dr. Ralph Edward Peterson, now an Episcopal priest in the diocese of New York but formerly, as an ordained member of the Evangelical Lutheran Church, the pastor from 1966 to 1980 of St. Peter's Church on Lexington Avenue, has been named "Senior Pastor Builder, Emeritus" by his former congregation. In an announcement dated April 5, and in anticipation of Dr. Peterson's 80th birthday on April 12, the present senior pastor of St. Peter's, the Rev.

Introducing... Diocesan Global Women's Fund Scholarship Recipient: Faith Nenkai Metiaki



Faith Nenkai Metiaki.
Photo: Global Womens' Fund

Faith came to the attention of the Global Women's Fund in 2007 when she represented Kenya at the fifty-first session of the United Nations Commission on the Status of Women (UNCSW). The session was dedicated to the elimination of all forms of discrimination and violence against women and girls. Faith was eighteen years old at the time, but with the poise and commitment of a much older person. Her story is one of bravery and integrity. Faith was not only able, but she was comfortable speaking in forums and in front of the camera. All who took part in the 51st UNCSW knew Faith was someone who would make a huge difference for the greater good for all women. The Global Women's Fund has granted a scholarship for Faith to study International Affairs in Kenya. There is much more to share about Faith...stay tuned.

Food Matters at The Cathedral

On June 13, 2012, Bishop Sisk hosted a panel discussion at the Cathedral entitled "Food matters: A conversation about food, faith and farming" to explore the intersection of these topics. Panelists were Fred Kirschenmann, President of Stone Barns in Westchester County; Dr. Norman Wirzba of professor of Theology and Rural Studies at Duke Divinity School and Sister Miriam MacGillis, Director of Genesis Farms in Caldwell, New Jersey. Among the topics discussed were why what we eat matters for God's Creation, why choosing locally grown, sustainable food is central to the pursuit of justice, and how to appreciate eating as a spiritual discipline. In conjunction with the panel, the Bishop hosted a two-day roundtable conversation with 20 experts in food and faith including local farmers, chefs, and non-profit leaders. Both the evening panel and the roundtable meeting were designed and created with the input and assistance of the Diocesan



From l. to r. Norman Wirzba, Fred Kirschenmann, Bishop Sisk and, at the lectern, Sister Miriam MacGillis.
Photo: Nicholas Richardson

Amandus J. Derr, wrote that the Parish Council "took this action...as its first act celebrating the 150th anniversary of Saint Peter's congregation and the 35th anniversary of the consecration of Saint Peter's Church building."

"With a cadre of dedicated and enthusiastic lay leaders," he continued, "Dr. Peterson led Saint Peter's Church through a visionary process for "Life at the Intersection" of Lexington Avenue and 54th Street, realized in the creation of the CitiCorp Condominium -- still the only such condominium relationship between a commercial and a religious entity in the world -- and the design, construction and consecration of Saint Peter's Church building."



The Rev. Dr. Ralph Edward Peterson.
Photo: St. Peter's Lutheran Church

Continuing Indaba Update

By the Rev. Thomas Synan

Continuing Indaba is a biblically-based and mission-focused project designed to develop and intensify relationships within the Anglican Communion by drawing on cultural models of consensus building for mutual creative action. It was developed from the 'Listening Process' called for by the Windsor Report—a call that was reiterated in subsequent Primates' Meetings, as well as in the Resolutions of the Anglican Consultative Councils of 2005 and 2009. During the first Phase of the project (2009-2011) the Diocese of New York was invited to participate in one of the five pilot conversations which were developed to produce a flexible replicable model for the Communion as a whole.

The Diocese was linked with the dioceses of Derby, England and Mumbai, India. Each diocesan team consisted of eight members—four clergy and four lay. The three teams met in New York May 2011, in Derby October 2011, and finally in Mumbai earlier this year. Each gathering consisted of the host diocese presenting examples of its mission work, lectures concerning the life of the Church within the context of the local culture, and opportunities for both inter-diocesan and intra-diocesan discussions and dialogue.

The travel component is finished, but the processing of the experience by all three diocesan teams continues. And while it is easy to focus on differences, it was inspiring to discover how much we share in common. Participants ranged from ultra-reformed to ultra-catholic and everything in between, but we all shared a deep abiding belief in Christ and in the Anglican Communion. We all share the one bread and we all seek to do the work that Christ has given us to do. Mission, across the dioceses, was remarkably similar, with each working to help the most vulnerable of their respective societies. In order to truly appreciate one another, it was most helpful to witness the Church within the local culture.

Our discussions were respectful, animated, and at times intense. Most importantly, though, we were united in the belief that whatever our differences, they are not a threat to the bonds of our Communion.

Synan is chair of the diocesan Social Concerns Commission and associate priest at the Church of the Heavenly Rest, Manhattan.

Seamen's Church Institute Honors Bishop Sisk with Distinguished Service Award

On Thursday, June 7, over 800 individuals from the maritime industry celebrated with the Seamen's Church Institute (SCI) at its 35th Annual Silver Bell Awards Dinner, raising over \$865,000 for SCI's programs serving mariners.

The theme of the evening, "Unsung Heroes," highlighted the essential yet unrecognized contributions the maritime industry makes to our daily lives. Bruce Paulsen, SCI's Vice Chairman, emphasized the theme in his welcoming remarks. "For all of us in the maritime industry—and indeed all of us who consume the goods shipped on the waters of the world—seafarers are our superheroes."

SCI identified three champions in the maritime industry to receive the Institute's highest honors. SCI awarded jointly James R. Barker and Paul R. Tregurtha the Silver Bell Award and honored the Right Rev. Mark S. Sisk with the Distinguished Service Award.

Paul Tregurtha, Chairman & CEO of Moran Transportation Company, and Jim Barker, Chairman of the Interlake Steamship Company, built what Tregurtha called "the largest transportation company in the world" during their impressive 40-year partnership. SCI's Chairman of the Board of Trustees, Richard T. du Moulin, presented the award, calling it a poignant moment for him as the pair gave him his first job in shipping.

In his remarks, Tregurtha thanked SCI for providing the training, safety and care that gives the industry "happier, better-trained crews." Both Tregurtha and Barker praised the importance and hard work of the entire maritime industry.

Accepting his award, the Rt. Rev. Mark S. Sisk, 15th Bishop of the Episcopal Diocese of New York and SCI's Honorary Chairman, spoke of his pride that SCI, founded by the Episcopal Church, serves all those in harm's way—regardless of their faith or beliefs.



Bishop Sisk at the SCI Silver Bell Awards Dinner
Photo: SCI

Bishop of Cape Coast Visits Diocese



The Rt. Rev. Daniel S. A. Allotey, Bishop of Cape Coast Diocese, Ghana, visited the diocese May 30. From l. to r., the Rev. Canon J. W. Kofi deGraft-Johnson, Canon to the Ordinary, Cape Coast; Bishop Dietsche; Bishop Allotey; the Rev. Canon Frederick W. Walker, Rector of St. Mark's Church, Suffolk, VA & Commissary, Diocese of Cape Coast; Archdeacon William Parnell.
Photo: Nicholas Richardson

Acolytes Festival



The annual diocesan Acolytes Festival was held, as usual, at the Cathedral Church of St. John the Divine on May 19th. 175 acolytes took part, from 24 parishes and all three regions of the diocese.
Photo: The Rev. José Gándara-Perea.

Aphasia Training Brings Capacity Crowd to Epiphany Manhattan

By Helen Goodkin

In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God...

And the Word became flesh and lived among us."

So reads the beautiful poem that opens John's Gospel. Episcopalians are people of the Book, both the Bible and the Book of Common Prayer, who value words, and we are also people of Community for whom the words of communication are vital. But what if, due to a stroke or brain injury, the section of the brain which controls how we understand language and communication is unable to function. What if you or someone you love is no longer able to express in an intelligible manner the words which dwell in your mind and heart?

This disability is called aphasia, and about 1 million Americans, or 1 in every 250, will experience it at some point in their lives. It is sometimes treatable through speech and cognitive therapy, but its effects may linger for years. Working with the National Aphasia Foundation, 20 volunteers from the Church of the Epiphany Manhattan were trained on Sunday, April 22, in techniques to assist in communicating with people who have trouble speaking or finding the correct words. The Church will be designated the first "Aphasia Friendly Church" in the United States and hopes to serve as a model for other congregations seeking to become more user-friendly for people with all disabilities.

According to Priest-in-Charge, the Rev. Jennifer Linman, "Even though we have yet to make our church wheelchair accessible, we are striving to do whatever we can to make Epiphany a church where all people feel welcome. There was so much interest in the program that we couldn't fit everyone in the room so we hope to continue working with the National Aphasia Association and other disability groups to truly open our doors to all."

Stephen Symbolik, Program Coordinator for Aphasia Awareness Training and Epiphany's volunteer gardener, cautioned the volunteers that "the wordiness of the service might at times be too much for some people with aphasia, but they will love the music and especially being part of an understanding community of Christians."

For more information, contact the Church of the Epiphany at www.epiphanynyc.org, and to receive the Aphasia Friendly designation consult the Aphasia Foundation website at www.aphasia.org.

Goodkin is co-warden of the Church of the Epiphany in Manhattan and a frequent Bible study and conference leader.



Stephen Symbolik stands in front of the TV screen displaying the training video narrated by Alison Janney, of *West Wing* and *The Help*, who asks, "What if suddenly you were no longer able to complete all the tasks you used to do? Recovery from Aphasia is not about who you were, but who you will become." Epiphany Manhattan is eager to help!

New York-London Link Report

By the Rev. J. Douglas Ousley

On a recent visit to the UK, I was impressed by the health of the Church of England in the two cities I visited. In London churches, attendance has apparently been going up for the past ten years. Cambridge chapels and churches are well-attended in term-time; the parish church where I worshiped on Sunday morning was packed.

A highlight of my trip was a dinner for a large group of London clergy. The Bishop of London, the Rt. Rev. Richard Chartres gave a witty speech that added to the collegial atmosphere. Many of us were moved by the Bishop's tribute to the resigned Dean of St. Paul's Cathedral, the Rt. Rev. Graeme Knowles, whom many feel was a sacrificial lamb offered to the Occupy London movement. (The Dean was sitting across from me and was obviously touched by the ensuing waves of applause.)

Thanks to the rector of my link parish, the Rev. Dr. Alan McCormack, I was seated at the head table and recognized by two speakers as one of the new leaders of the New York-London diocesan link program. Inter-parish connections continue to be made; a new link is being established between the Church of the Holy Apostles in Manhattan and St. Botolph's Aldgate, two parishes with strong progressive traditions. Archdeacon William Parnell is planning the extension of the link beyond parishes to exchanges between New York and London fire department chaplains, as well as between college chaplains in the two dioceses.

In September, my own parish is hosting a group of laypersons from our link parish of St. Vedast-alias-Foster; we will be returning hospitality that was offered to a group of our parishioners last January. Then, around Christmastime, we hope to send our sexton-sacristan for a week of liturgical and building work in London.

In response to a letter from Bishop Sisk, Bishop Chartres wrote: "Thank you for your very welcome letter. Now is not the time to allow old friendships to fray..." Anyone interested in furthering the New York-London friendship is welcome to contact Archdeacon Parnell or me (ousleyjd@churchoftheincarnation.org).

Ousley is rector of the Church of the Incarnation, Manhattan.

George Potanovic Receives 2012 Outstanding Environmental Volunteer Award in Rockland

George Potanovic, a member of the diocesan committee on the environment and vestry member at the Chapel of St. John the Divine in Tomkins Cove, received the 15th Annual Outstanding Environmental Volunteer Award from Rockland County Executive C. Scott Vanderhoef. "I think what we've learned possibly over the years is the environment and our economy are not at odds with one other," he said on accepting the award. "In fact a good plan for our environment is good for our economy. And I think people are realizing that more now. It means a lot to me to receive this award from the county because it shows that we're really all standing on the same side here in terms of trying to protect our environment and use more sustainable means for land development and conservation because it's really for the betterment of Rockland County."



George Potanovic and his wife, Joanne, stand near the Cornelian Cherry Tree that was planted in George's honor at the 2012 Rockland County Outstanding Environmental Volunteer Awards ceremony held at Kennedy Dells Park, New City on April 25.

Photo: Edward W. Morgan

Celebration Raises \$45k for New Chapel at Incarnation Camp



Incarnation Camp Director the Rev. Canon Peter Larom tries on a new blazer at Ogilvy House, April 12 as, l. to r., Peter Giles, Nancy Pilon, David Brooks, the Rev. Milind Sojwal, and Bishop Dietsche look on. Photo: Nicholas Richardson

An evening reception hosted by Bishop and Mrs. Sisk on behalf of Incarnation Center at their home on April 12 raised over \$45,000 for a new 350-seat chapel at the camp. The event, co-chaired by Board members Deane Gilliam and New York Times columnist and camp alumnus David Brooks, was an opportunity to celebrate the 126 years of tradition and success of the oldest co-ed camp in the country.

In a presentation in which he also recognized the All Angels' Farm Board for their many years of generous support and presented a plaque to the Rev. Milind Sojwal of All Angels' Church, Brooks referred to Incarnation Camp as "the greatest institution I've ever been involved with." Many attending spoke of how Incarnation strengthens the spiritual relationship of individuals with God, one another, and the world in which they live, and of how it takes children from all walks of life—rich, poor, urban, suburban, domestic and international—and provides them with a safe, nurturing environment in which to grow, learn, and develop side by side in a place in which external barriers and social constraints are broken down.

Another highlight of the event was a roast of the Rev. Canon Peter Larom in recognition of his 8 years of leadership as the Executive Director of the Center, his new tenure as Camp Director, and of his earlier tenures as rector of Grace Church, White Plains and Executive Director of the Seamen's Church Institute. Roasters regaled the crowd with stories of Larom's great sense of vision and the joys of making those visions come to life.

Among those present were Bishop Coadjutor Dietsche, the Rev. Douglas Ousley, Incarnation board member and rector of the Church of the Incarnation, the founding Church of the camp, Bishop Andrew St. John, the Rev. Edward Johnston, and Bishop Herbert and Dr. Mary Donovan.

For more information about Incarnation Center, please visit their website at www.incarnationcenter.org or call them at (860) 767-0848. Incarnation Center includes Incarnation Camp, the Bushy Hill Nature Center and the Incarnation Conference Center and is located on 700 acres in Ivoryton, Ct.

Make a Joyful Noise Unto the Lord

By Barbara N. Lindsley



Members of the Holyrood Church Youth Choir in robes provided by the New York Altar Guild. Photo: Holyrood Church

"I'm not sure I always like the singing, but the robe is AWESOME," declared an enthusiastic member of Manhattan's Holyrood Church Youth Choir. The choir robes were a gift from the New York Altar Guild, responding to organist and choirmaster Loraine Schneider's request. Twenty-five neighborhood children aged five to eight, eleven of them choristers, now gather at the church Tuesday through Friday after school, for tutoring and music education. The choir was founded in the fall of 2010, with a handful of five and six-year-olds, and has now doubled in size. Once a month, the group sings at Holyrood services, and conducts demonstrations for parents at the end of each term.

Following the Royal School of Music's *Voice for Life Curriculum*, the program combines training in choral singing with the enhancement of individual confidence and poise required for performance success. The new choir robes are integrated into the curriculum by providing recognition of chorister advancement. From wearing only cassocks at the probationer level, the singers move up to completing their "White Level" exams and the subsequent awarding of cottas. In a year, the oldest members will be eligible to participate in the Diocesan Treble Choir Festival, an exciting prospect for them. The afterschool program has been funded by Episcopal Charities, Trinity Wall Street and private donors.

The bestowal of choir robes is but one example of the New York Altar Guild's ongoing efforts to help assure beauty and dignity of worship in this diocese and well beyond, throughout the Anglican Communion. Recent grants have provided new altar hangings for St. Paul's Church, Spring Valley; restoration of sanctuary memorials at Ascension, Mount Vernon; assorted linens and Eucharistic items for other regional churches and the Millbrook School chapel; and the sending of gently used vestments to St. Lawrence Church, London, and Emmanuel Cathedral, Kajo-Keji, Uganda, from the Guild's Reserve Closet. The Guild welcomes requests from churches for needed items and receives used vestments in good condition for use elsewhere. Visit www.diocesen.org > Christian Life > The New York Altar Guild for further information and a request form.

Lindsley is the New York Altar Guild's Corresponding Secretary.

Bishop of Ghana Visits New York



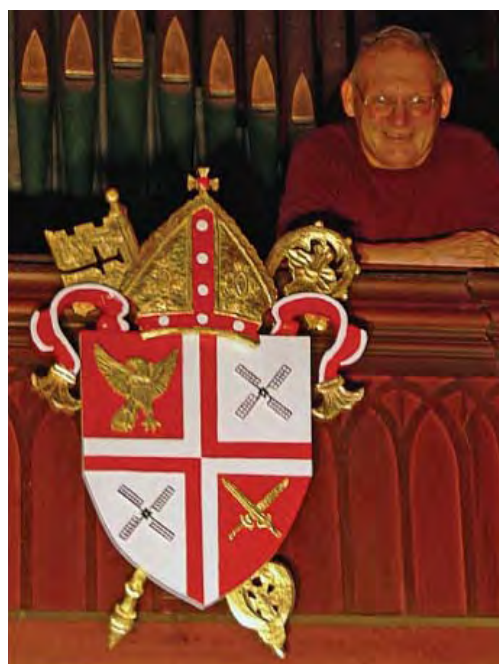
The Rt. Rev. Abraham Ackah, Bishop of Ghana, visited New York June 7 accompanied by his wife and son. From l. to r.: Abraham Ackah, Bishop Dietsche, Bishop Ackah, Mrs. Margaret Ackah, the Rev. Canon Williamson Taylor. Photo: Nicholas Richardson

Rector of Grace Church, Millbrook Elected Bishop of Western Massachusetts

The Rev. Dr. Douglas John Fisher was elected on June 2 to be the ninth bishop of the Episcopal Diocese of Western Massachusetts. Fisher, 57, rector of Grace Church, Millbrook, New York, was elected on the third ballot out of a field of three remaining nominees. "We are overwhelmed, humbled and honored by this election," Fisher said after his election. "The diocese was so prayerful and spirited in this process and is aware of the many gifts that God has given them. They are ready to take on the challenges of the 21st century, and the Fisher family looks forward to being in Western Massachusetts and serving the kingdom of God with them." Fisher will succeed Bishop Gordon Paul Scruton, 65, who announced in June 2011 that he would retire in December 2012 after 16 years as bishop.



The Rev. Dr. Douglas John Fisher.



Splendor in Tivoli

Vestryman and Parish Treasurer Fred Quenzer with coat of arms of the Bishop of New York he created to hang on the choir screen of St. Paul's and Trinity Parish, Tivoli. He can be reached at foq@frontiernet.net.

St. Mark's in the Bowery Awarded \$135,000 Grant For Portico Restoration

On June 13 St. Mark's in the Bowery learned that it had been awarded a Partners in Preservation grant of \$135,000 to restore its portico. St. Mark's was among a 16 recipients determined by an advisory committee of community and preservation leaders, in addition to four initial grants awarded May 22 to Brooklyn Public Library, Congregation Beth Elohim, New York Botanical Gardens, and Bartow-Pell Mansion Museum as the winners of an online voting scheme. Partners in Preservation is a program in which American Express, in partnership with the National Trust for Historic Preservation, awards preservation grants to historic places across the country.



St. Mark's in the Bowery Photo: Diocese of New York

Deacon's Ordination

The Rev. Deacon Lisa Chronister, ordained in the Cathedral of St. John the Divine on May 12, lived in New York from 2004 to 2010 and attended Grace Church, Manhattan, where she discerned a call to the vocational diaconate and entered the Diaconal Formation Program in 2008. After an interruption for maternity leave and a move back to Oklahoma to be closer to family, Lisa was offered the opportunity by Bishop Sisk to complete her formation in the Diocese of New York long distance. Bishop Konieczny of the Diocese of Oklahoma graciously facilitated this process.

Lisa is a Principal with LWPB Architecture in Oklahoma City. She and her husband, Aaron Mooney, are proud parents to a curious and determined toddler, Eli. She also enjoys traveling, movies, antiquing, and discovering ethnic food.



Front row left to right: The Rt. Rev. Andrew D. Smith, The William C. Parnell, The Rev. Deacon Robert A. Jacobs, The Rt. Rev. Mark S. Sisk, The Rev. Deacon Lisa Marie Chronister, The Rev. Deacon Hyacinth Lee, The Rev. Canon Constance C. Coles, and The Rev. Deacon Vonnice Hubbard. Back row left to right: The Rev. Deborah G. Tammearu, The Rev. Deacon Denise J. LaVetty.

Renewal of Diaconal Vows



Above: Deacons and others present at the Renewal of Diaconal Vows and the celebration of the twentieth anniversary of the first ordination of deacons in the Diocese of New York in 1992 following the renewal of the Vocational Diaconate by Bishop Grein.

Maximum Impact

By Sandy Taylor

Last spring Max Brooke, then 14 and a recently confirmed member of St. Mary's-in-Tuxedo, discovered that Pepsi was offering \$5,000 grants to benefit communities on a local level. The competition was called the Pepsi "Refresh Everything" campaign, with the goal of making a "positive impact on communities by moving people's ideas from wishful thinking to reality."

For Max this meant addressing hunger and helping sustainable communities. "My plan gradually evolved," he explains, "from one big meal for about 60 needy families to a longer-range benefit of supplementing local families' basic pantries. That way we could ensure that there were basic staples in the house so families could feed themselves over a longer time stretch."

"We wanted to introduce some new ideas," he continued, "such as bags of the very nourishing quinoa rather than the over-refined and less healthful starches. We also wanted to include lots of canned vegetables, soups and fruits, because shelf-life was important to our long-range goal."

A modern-day twist to this grant program—for which Max was by far the youngest applicant!—is that it was operated exclusively online. The campaign announcement, the submission of grant applications and the choice of winners were all made online, by vote open to the general public. Applicants drummed up support from friends, family, neighbors and every possible affinity network. This is where Max's brother Nick, then 12, took on a major role.

While Max was away on a teens backpacking trip, Nick led the campaign, and Max's "friend list" exploded. All sorts of stratagems were used; bargains for cross support were struck... "I'll vote for you if you'll vote for me." Facebook became a big piece of the campaign. Ironically, when, later in the summer, Nick was at his camp, which allowed no communication with the outside world other than snail mail once a week, he was unaware that Max had won one of the grants. Meanwhile, the Brooke family celebrated.

With the grant in hand, the Brooke family worked together on the provisioning. In addition to the foods listed in the grant application, Nick points out that they also wanted to include occasional treats such as Pop Tarts and other after-school treats including Fig Newtons and protein bars. "These would balance the more nourishing foods and boost the spirits of the kids in the family. Besides, sometimes kids run off to school with no breakfast."

After all the—sometimes melodramatic—preparatory activity, including the six trips of shopping at Shop Rite and Costco, the distribution of the food on Febru-



Nick and Max Brooke out shopping.

Photo: St. Mary's -in-Tuxedo

ary 12, went like clockwork. Numerous enthusiastic volunteers quickly filled giant reusable Ikea bags with the food—in 30 minutes! The local families in need were notified when pickup day would be held, and as the cars rolled in, Max and Nick took the bags out to them.

The Brooke boys are no strangers to helping others, but this was the biggest project they've taken on. Asked six months later how they felt about it, the boys grinned. Nick said, "The Pepsi Grant project was the most hands-on, direct experience of service I've ever had. The gratitude of the people had a great impact on me...I get happy over it just talking about it again."

Max agreed and was reliving the months of preparation and delivery of the gift bags. "I felt joyful, realizing that we were lightening the load on many stressed-out people. It gave us such a feeling of satisfaction to provide for hungry people who were needy through no fault of their own. It was especially satisfying to me that we were able to introduce some really healthful food, such as quinoa, to people who might not have been exposed to it otherwise. Another thing we were able to do was to take the 'extras,' the food that was left over after we filled the 60 bags, to the local Food Pantry so that nothing was wasted."

Taylor is a member of St. Mary's Church, Tuxedo Park.

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Bedford Hills Correctional Facility Third Anniversary Service

By Ann Douglas



The Rev. Betsy Roadman, the Rev. C. Thornhill, Deacon Ann Douglas, Bp Andrew Dietsche, Dwight Douglas, Sr., M.A. Collins

On Monday June 4, 2012, Bishop Andrew Dietsche joined the Rev. Betsy Roadman, Deacon Ann Douglas and musician Dwight Douglas in the chapel at Bedford Hills Correctional Facility. This is New York State's only maximum security prison for women. The event was the third anniversary of the establishment of an Episcopal congregation.

The Rev. Cleveland Thornhill, the facility's Protestant chaplain, and Sister Mary Ann Collins, the Catholic chaplain were also present. Many inmates from the two other Christian congregations joined in to celebrate the visit of Bishop Dietsche as he presided and preached at the celebration. Over 70 inmates prayed, sang joyous hymns and reflected on the word of God they heard. After the service, Bishop Dietsche graciously took the time to pray individually and offer blessings and intercessions with many of the women.

It was a wonderful celebration and Bishop Dietsche promised "it would not be his last visit" to the facility. Praise the Lord for all his servants doing marvelous works in all situations and conditions.

Douglas is a deacon at All Saints', Briarcliff Manor.

BISHOPS' VISITATION SCHEDULE

JULY AND AUGUST

No visitations

SEPTEMBER 9 (15 PENTECOST)

Bishop Sisk:

a.m. St. John's, Monticello

p.m. St. Andrew's, South Fallsburgh

Bishop Dietsche: Bon Samaritain, Bronx

Bishop Smith: St. Mary's, Scarborough

SEPTEMBER 16 (16 PENTECOST)

Bishop Sisk: St. Mark's, Mount Kisco

Bishop Dietsche: All Angels', Manhattan

SEPTEMBER 23 (17 PENTECOST)

Bishop Sisk: Grace Church,

White Plains

Bishop Dietsche: St. Peter's, Bronx

Bishop Smith: St. James', Fordham, Bronx

Bishop Donovan: St. Peter's, Lithgow

SEPTEMBER 28 (FRIDAY)

Bishop Dietsche: Good Shepherd,

Granite Springs

SEPTEMBER 30 (18 PENTECOST)

Bishop Sisk: Zion, Dobbs Ferry

Bishop Dietsche: Grace, Port Jervis

Bishop Donovan: St. Mark's, Yonkers

OCTOBER 7 (19 PENTECOST)

Bishop Sisk: Cathedral

Bishop Dietsche: Cathedral

Bishop Smith: St. Ann's, Bronx

OCTOBER 14 (20 PENTECOST)

Bishop Dietsche: Christ Church,

Marlboro

Bishop Donovan: St. Andrew's,

Poughkeepsie

OCTOBER 21 (21 PENTECOST)

Bishop Sisk: St. Paul's, Staten Island

Bishop Dietsche: St. Ignatius of Antioch, Manhattan

Bishop Smith: Trinity, Mount Vernon

EPISCOPAL CHARITIES EL MENSAJE DEL OBISPO *(continuo de la paginacion 3)*

aquellos que comparten el deseo de trabajar en nombre de lo que se considera bueno. En términos prácticos, lo que esto quiere decir es que, a menudo nos encontramos trabajando colaborativamente con personas de diferente, o no, tradición religiosa, con el fin de lograr un bien común.

Todos esos elementos de identidad se entremezclan para darle a los Episcopales, una rica y matizada identidad como cristianos: hijos de Dios llamados a una madurez plena como testigos del maravilloso Amor Divino ofrecido a todos.

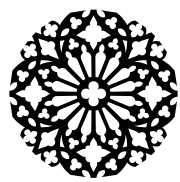
Este es un llamado digno de la vida que se nos ha dado.

+ Mark

Traducido por Lila Botero

Cathedral Calendar

SUMMER 2012



The Cathedral Church of Saint John the Divine

1047 Amsterdam Avenue at 112th Street
New York, NY 10025 (212) 316-7540

For details of ongoing programs, tours and workshops at the Cathedral please visit www.stjohndivine.org.

SUNDAY SERVICES

8 a.m. Morning Prayer & Holy Eucharist
9 a.m. Holy Eucharist
11 a.m. Choral Eucharist
4 p.m. Choral Evensong

DAILY SERVICES

Monday-Saturday
8 a.m. Morning Prayer
8:30 a.m. Holy Eucharist (Tuesday & Thursday only)
12:15 p.m. Holy Eucharist
5 p.m. Evening Prayer

TICKETS AND RESERVATIONS

Unless otherwise noted events do not require tickets or reservations. Tickets for all performances other than free or "suggested contribution" events may be purchased directly from the Cathedral's website, stjohndivine.org, or by calling (866) 811-4111.

ONGOING PROGRAMS, TOURS, WORKSHOPS

The Great Organ: Midday Monday

Cathedral organists provide a 30-minute break for mind, body and spirit at 1:00 pm with an entertaining and informative demonstration of the Cathedral's unparalleled Great Organ.

The Great Organ: It's Sunday

The Great Organ: It's Sunday invites established and emerging organists from across the U.S. and around the world to take their turn at the Great Organ and present a free 5:15 pm concert

PUBLIC EDUCATION AND VISITOR SERVICES TOURS AND CHILDREN'S WORKSHOPS

Cathedral Highlights, Vertical, and Spotlight Tours

Schedule at www.stjohndivine.org. Meet for registration at the Visitor Center. Highlights: \$6 per person, \$5 per student/senior. Vertical: \$15 per person, \$12 per student/senior. Spotlight: \$10 per person, \$8 per student/senior.

Medieval Birthday Parties

Saturdays & Sundays, reservation required. Two-hour parties in the Medieval Arts Workshop, where children sculpt gargoyles, weave, make brass rubbings, carve a block of limestone, and much more! 5 & up. 212 932-7347 for info and reservations.

Nightwatch

Nightwatch hosts youth groups for overnights at the Cathedral. For info and registration, www.stjohndivine.org, call (212) 579-6210, or e-mail nightwatch@stjohndivine.org.

ADULTS AND CHILDREN IN TRUST (A.C.T.)

To learn about the many nurturing year-round programs for young people offered by A.C.T., please call (212) 316-7530 or visit www.actprograms.org.

Children's Quest Fund: While any amount will help, \$1,000 enables a child from a low-income family to participate in a premiere summer camp experience. Please send donations to the Cathedral, designated "A.C.T.'s Children's Quest Fund."

Divine Children's Party Packages: Proceeds

support A.C.T. Children's Fund. Speak to a party manager for details, (212) 316-7530.

CATHEDRAL COMMUNITY CARES (CCC)

Please visit www.stjohndivine.org for more information on CCC programs, which include health screenings at the **Nutrition, Health and Clothing Center, the Clothing Closet, Sunday Soup Kitchen, SNAP/Food Stamps Program and Walking Club.**

SELECTED PROGRAMS AND SERVICES:

Voices From Japan:

Despair and Hope from Disaster
Friday, June 15 – Wednesday, August 8

This art exhibition shares the extraordinary experience of the Japanese people following the earthquake and tsunami of March 11, 2011 and seeks to connect the voices of those victims; transmitting their experiences and emotions through tanka poems, portraits by Naoto Nakagawa, Photographs by Magdalena Solé and collages by Yoshito & Saori Sasaguchi. For more information visit stjohndivine.org

This exhibition and related programs, is in collaboration with Studio for Cultural Exchange, The Asian Cultural Council and New Heritage Theater Group.

JULY

Spotlight Tour

**An American Cathedral:
Spotlight on American History**
Sunday, July 1, 1 pm – 2:30 pm

Celebrate Independence Day at the Cathedral! This tour considers the Cathedral as a nexus of medieval traditions and democratic values. Discover celebrated Americans who appear in the art in the Cathedral along with the traditional saints and apostles. The tour will discuss the Cathedral's history and architecture within the context of American history, beginning with a vivid description of the Battle of Harlem Heights, fought on and around the Cathedral's site in 1776. Conducted since 1990 by Senior Cathedral Guide Tom Fedorek.

Spotlight Tour

**Revelation Revealed:
Spotlight on the Apocalypse**
Saturday, July 7, 2 pm – 3 pm

Discover the meaning of mysterious images from the Revelation in the sculpture and stained glass of the Cathedral dedicated to its author, St. John the Divine. The tour includes a climb to the triforium for a close-up view of the Seven Churches Window. Led by Senior Cathedral Guide Tom Fedorek. Space is limited and reservations are recommended. Reservations can be made by calling 212 932-7347.

Spotlight Tour

**Signs and Symbols:
Spotlight on Symbolism**
Sunday, July 8, 1 pm – 2 pm

Discover the meaning of mysterious images from the Revelation in the sculpture and stained glass of the Cathedral dedicated to its author, St. John the Divine. The tour includes a climb to the triforium for a close-up view of the Seven Churches Window. Led by Senior Cathedral Guide Tom Fedorek. Space is limited and reservations are recommended. Reservations can be made by calling 212 932-7347.

Distinguished Visiting Choir Series
Sunday, July 8, 2012

4pm Evensong with College of St. Hilda and St. Bede, Durham University, U.K. (Iain Quinn, Director)

Distinguished Visiting Choir Series
Sunday, July 15, 2012

4pm Evensong with Selwyn College, Cambridge, U.K. Chapel Choir (Sarah MacDonald, Director of Music)

Textile Treasures

Friday, July 20, Noon – 1 pm

This unique opportunity includes a behind-the-scenes visit to the Cathedral's world-renowned Textile Conservation Lab, which conserves tapestries, needlepoint, upholstery, costumes, and other textiles. Particular focus will be the Barberini collection of the Life of Christ tapestries and the Acts of the Apostles tapestries, based on cartoons by Raphael. \$20 per person, \$15 per student/senior. Space is limited to 20 people 12 years of age and older. For reservations, visit the Cathedral's website or call 866-811-4111.

Spotlight Tour

**Secrets of St. John the Divine:
Spotlight on Hidden Images**
Saturday, July 21, 2 pm – 3 pm

What are a stripper and the signs of the zodiac doing in our stained glass windows? Find out on this tour that puts the spotlight on surprising images in glass and stone. Led by Senior Cathedral Guide Tom Fedorek.

Spotlight Tour

**Brilliant Walls of Light:
Spotlight on Cathedral Windows**
Sunday, July 22, 1 pm – 2 pm

Each window contains a unique style of stained glass. Explore the beautiful narrative and geometric windows by English and American firms and view the memorial to a stained glass artist. Binoculars are suggested. Led by Senior Cathedral Guide John Simko.

Spotlight Tour

**Within the Walls:
Exploring Hidden Spaces**
Saturday, July 28, 1:30 pm – 3 pm

This extended tour features "behind-the-scenes" climbs in both the eastern and western ends of St. John the Divine. In the East, descend into the unfinished crypt and then ascend Rafael Guastavino's beautiful spiral staircase to incredible views high above the altar. The western climb presents an amazing view down the entire length of the world's largest cathedral. Led by Senior Cathedral Guide John Simko. \$20 per adult, \$15 per student/senior. Space is limited to 15 people 12 years of age and older, and reservations are recommended. For reservations, visit the Cathedral's website or call 866 811-4111. Meet at Visitor Center.

AUGUST

Spotlight Tour

**Gateway to the New Jerusalem:
Spotlight on the Iconography of the West Front**

Sunday, August 5, 1 pm – 2 pm

The west front is the architectural equivalent of an overture, an exposition of the themes developed within the main body of the Cathedral. The tour introduces the interplay of modern and medieval motifs in the sculpture of John Angel and Simon Verity. Led by Senior Cathedral Guide, Tom Fedorek.

Spotlight Tour

**Signs and Symbols:
Spotlight on Symbolism**
Saturday, August 11, 2 pm – 3 pm

Explore the signs and symbols in the Cathedral and discover the unique attributes that characterize saints, martyrs, and angels. See these ancient symbols in paintings, glass and stone, and learn how the legends have inspired artists through the centuries. Led by Senior Cathedral Guide Becca Earley.

Spotlight Tour

**Revelation Revealed:
Spotlight on the Apocalypse**
Saturday, August 18, 2 pm – 3 pm

Please see description for July 7. Space is limited and reservations are recommended. Reservations can be made by calling 212 932-7347.

Spotlight Tour

**Meet the Donors:
Spotlight on Giving**
Sunday, August 19, 1 pm – 2 pm

From Elizabeth Cole's Barberini tapestries given even before there was a cathedral to display them in, to Mrs. Twing's \$1.00 offering for the original cornerstone, to J. P. Morgan's \$500,000 to "get the Cathedral out of the hole" when encountering foundation problems in 1893, to the "ten old men of Grace Hospital" who gave \$8.95 to the Cathedral fund in 1908 and the two little girls who sent a small gift "to go for the Children's Arch," donors are the life blood of the Cathedral. Come hear stories of these special people whose generous gifts are responsible for this magnificent space. Led by Senior Cathedral Guide John Simko.

The Mettawee River Theatre Company

Friday, September 7 & 14, 7:30 pm
Saturday, September 8 & 15, 7:30pm
Sunday, September 9 & 16, 7:30pm

Broadway Blessings

Monday, September 10, 7pm

United Nations Sunday
Sunday, September 23

St. Francis Day

Sunday, October 7, 11am

The Church Embracing Peace and Justice

By the Rev. Stephen Chinlund

I passionately believe that the Episcopal Church should be more involved in issues of social, economic and political justice.

When I was nine years old, in 1942, I was terrified that the Nazis might win the war. My parents were atheists and I was searching desperately for strength and hope that was greater than anything I could see in the armies of the Allies. I discovered God in my Quaker school and in the Roman Catholicism of my best friend, himself a refugee who had seen the Nazis marching by his home in Paris. So I learned, as a child, that issues of peace and justice were deeply personal, important and not well addressed by the dominant secular forces of the day.

As I read the Bible I was appalled that God seemed to be asking his people to do the very things that we were resisting: killing people to take the land that did not belong to them. But I also read the voice of love and reconciliation, a complete contradiction. I became a pacifist and have been one ever since, though, at the same time, one of my childhood heroes was my cousin Joe, who stayed in our home as he came to New York for surgery to reconstruct his face and adjust the prosthesis on his leg, victim of a land mine in the Italian campaign.

Since then, I have searched for Christian community: as a Winant volunteer in London; as a pilgrim to the Iona Community in Scotland; in the monasteries on Mt. Athos; with the Community of Taizé in France; with *The Catholic Worker* right in our own New York City; and by reading avidly the mystics, the worker priest stories and becoming a member of the Fellowship of Reconciliation.

It all seemed to come together in the parish of Grace Church in Jersey City. The ministry of Paul and Jenny Moore, Jim and Pam Morton and Ledlie and Roxana Laughlin was the embodiment of the way I wanted to live my life. It combined a serious sacramental spirituality, embrace of the best traditions of the Church and a commitment to activity in the progressive social justice movements of the day.

That was all confirmed by my choosing to be confirmed as an Episcopalian, give my life to Jesus Christ, open my heart to people of all faiths and learn from them, work for justice in many different movements over the years. It has been a special, lifelong blessing to work with men and women who have been locked up in prisons, appreciating their patience and treasuring my opportunities to have a

family, a ministry, paint and write.

I love the Episcopal Church because it is a constant reminder that none of us has all the answers. It is an affirmation of the steadfast love of God, especially in the actions of Holy Communion. And it is a constant challenge to go forth and “do the work that God has given us to do.” I believe that work includes the most

profound and ACTIVE participation in the struggle for peace and justice.

Society has been created by people who have climbed out of caves. We have struggled to figure out what life is all about. Early religion was a blend of superstition and glorious mystical vision. In seeking to reject the superstition, people like my parents rejected all religion. They then realized that it was possible to have religion without superstition. They, and I, came to see that we could love Jesus, follow Him and engage in the never-ending quest to discern His will for us as individuals and as a society. We could reject the grotesque belief that there would some ultimate future division between good people and bad people, with the bad people subjected to never-ending punishment. We can embrace the Good News that God will always be with us, even if we are marching to the crematory ovens, even if we are in prison for crimes we did not commit, even if we are suffering from a physical disease which cannot be cured, even if we are rejected by someone we love very much. The same God will always be there to help us in the glad task of doing what we can do on this earth to discover awe in the beauty of God’s creation: birds and animals; the glint in the eye of one who is very old and lived through many adventures; the animation of a child who must jump up and down in place with the happiness of being alive; the paintings, sculptures and music made by humans that lift us to a transcendent place; the glory of silence in Church, in the woods, on the sea and in prison where we may be still and know God.

So I pray with all my heart that my beloved Episcopal Church could discover new happiness in a deeper participation in the struggles for justice. Parishes need not be divided; we can disagree as good Episcopalians, about the size of the role of government and the way we define the American Empire. The important thing is that we do it in the name of the Prince of Peace and the God of love.

Chinlund is a priest in the diocese and former executive director of Episcopal Social Services.

