



## Susan Kay Copley

The Reverend Susan Copley began her adult professional life as a pediatric oncology nurse at Sloan-Kettering Hospital. There, ministering to children with cancer, she experienced first-hand the living presence of God in the midst of pain and suffering, as well as in the unexpected joys of lives lived even in overwhelming circumstances. Her nurse's heart for people in sometimes desperate need led her into the formative chapter of her life in ministry, as she left for the life of a missionary pediatric nurse in Liberia. Arriving in the second year of that country's terrible civil war, she took up her work among a people ravaged by war and starvation. For three years she engaged a population so traumatized that even small children used the dolls she gave them to reenact the scenes of public executions and war-time brutality which was the whole experience of their young lives.

But it was also there that she met and married David, a missionary nurse and aid worker from England. They reflected that it was the long-suffering and loving people of Liberia who taught them "what is possible when we seek to be in relationship with God and one another before all else.... even in the midst of conflict and pain, the grace of God is revealed, and justice flows from that grace like an ever-flowing stream."

Mission work in Liberia was followed by mission work in Bolivia, and ultimately to theological studies and ordination in the Episcopal Church. But they remain exemplars among us of the miracles and wonders of the mission field. David is the Director of Mission Personnel for the Episcopal Church. Megan, their daughter born out of the strife and graces of the mission field, is a Young Adult Service Corps intern in Guatemala. And Susan, as the Rector of Christ Church in Tarrytown, has married congregational life and local outreach to the wider global mission network of this diocese, and to the ministry of Cristosal in El Salvador among displaced persons.

"As missionaries," Susan wrote, "we were privileged to be representatives of the whole Episcopal Church ... to remind others that they are cared for and to remind our church in America that we are connected to a wider communion of people. When we share this love, this connectedness, we also raise the banner of justice... We are all brothers and sisters under God." Therefore, in recognition and gratitude for her witness to the dignity of every human being, and the love of God for all people through our Lord Jesus Christ, we, on this 9th day of November 2019, in the eighth year of our consecration, do award her

## The Bishop's Cross

The Right Reverend Andrew ML Dietsche  
XVI Bishop of New York