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ON THE COVER

Bishops and other clergy join hands as they sing the Lord's Prayer during the installation Eucharist for Presiding Bishop Michael Curry.

Matt Townsend photo

THE LIVING CHURCH

THIS ISSUE | November 29, 2015

NEWS

4 An Epic All Saints' Day

FEATURES

12 Saying Yes: Christopher Bishop's mission to listen in Iraq | By Jim Hamilton

CULTURES

14 A David-and-Goliath Story | By Retta Blaney

BOOKS

16 Ten Books for Advent and Christmas
Review by John A. Thorpe

18 *Simply Good News* | Review by Kevin Dodge

20 *Patience* | Review by Andrew M. Harmon

CATHOLIC VOICES

22 Good News to Share | By John C. Bauerschmidt

OTHER DEPARTMENTS

26 Sunday's Readings



12



14



LIVING CHURCH Partners

We are grateful to St. Martin's Church, Houston [p. 25], and All Souls Anglican Foundation [p. 27], whose generous support helped make this issue possible.



With the passing of the crozier from Katharine Jefferts Schori, Michael Curry becomes the 27th presiding bishop.

Matt Townsend photo

An Epic All Saints' Day

Michael Curry Installed as Presiding Bishop

Marked by excitement, joy, and gravity, the All Saints' Day installation of the Most Rev. Michael Bruce Curry as 27th presiding bishop gave glimpses of the Episcopal Church's past and future.

The festive Holy Eucharist at Washington National Cathedral featured a diverse liturgy, including readings in Spanish and Diné, gospel music, and traditional choral singing.

Curry's election has drawn substantial attention from mainstream media and the wider culture. The first African American presiding bishop's ministry is timely amid increased calls for racial reconciliation in the United States.

The press and public have also noted the evangelical fire of Curry, whose *Crazy Christians* urges believers to take the gospel seriously and to welcome Jesus' leadership in their lives.

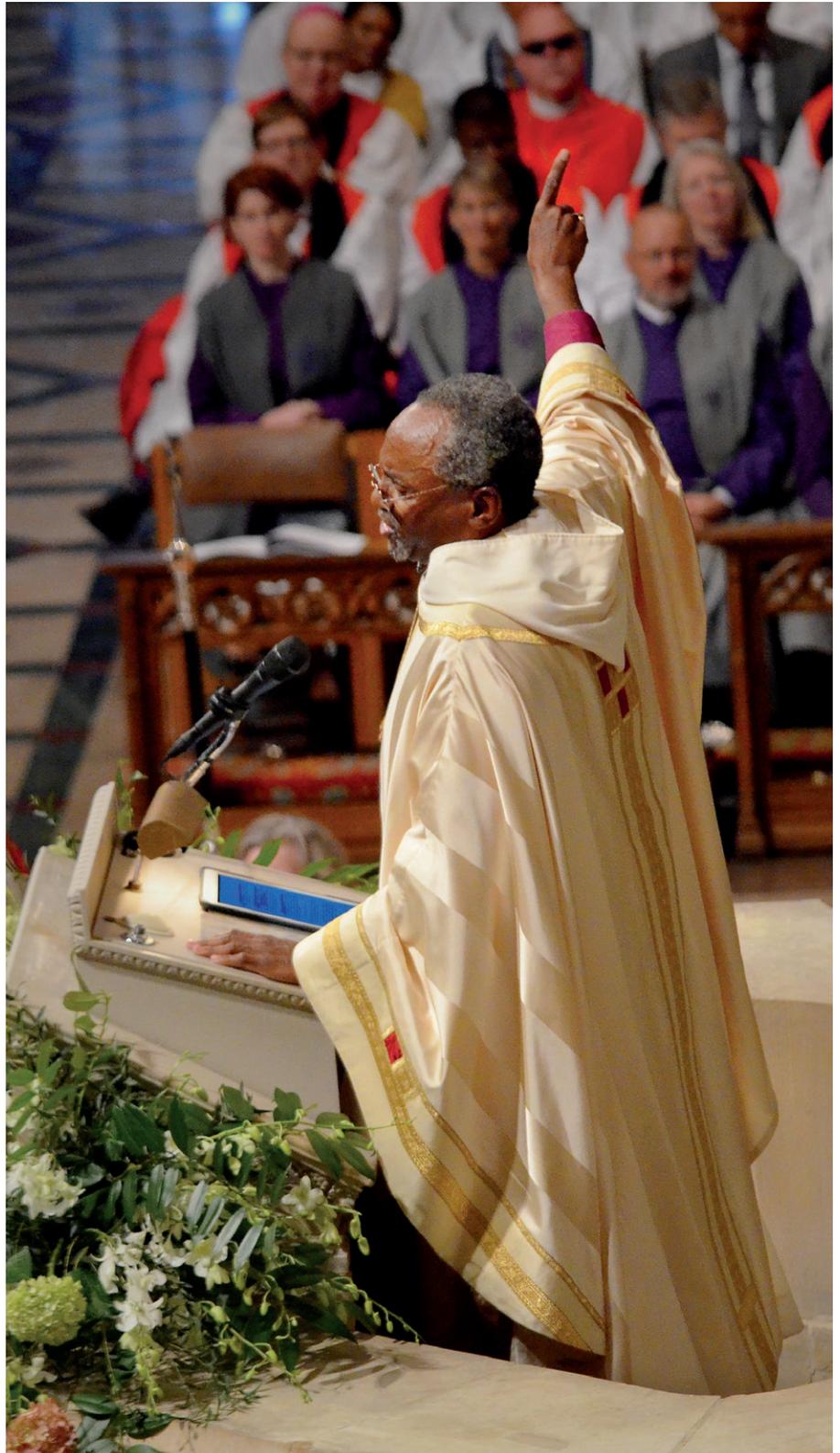
For Curry, the topics of reconciliation and evangelism are intertwined. He scarcely mentioned one topic without the other while preaching at his installation. The Presiding Bishop, who was elected on June 27 during the 78th General Convention, cited its mandate to embrace both paths.

"We made a commitment to live into being the Jesus movement by committing to evangelism and the work of reconciliation, beginning with racial reconciliation," he said. "I believe the Holy Spirit showed up."

Curry acknowledged the difficulty of focusing the church on topics like evangelism and reconciliation.

"Imagine *Jeopardy* or another television game show," he said. "The question asked of the contestants is this: Name two words that begin with

(Continued on next page)



Preaching in a full cathedral, Presiding Bishop Curry calls on Christians to give up their worries and joyfully follow Jesus Christ in the missions of evangelism and reconciliation. Matt Townsend photo

Michael Curry Installed as Presiding Bishop

(Continued from previous page)

E but that are never used at the same time. And the answer? What is *Episcopalian* and *evangelism*?"

Like the service, Curry's delivery shifted fluidly between jovial and deliberate. At times, his preaching was quiet and subtle, especially when he told the story of his parents visiting an Episcopal parish and his father deciding to become an Episcopal priest.

"They were the only people of color there," he said. "When the time came for Communion, the woman, who was confirmed, went up to receive. The people before her drank from the cup. *The blood of our Lord Jesus Christ*. Another person drank. *Preserve thy body and soul unto everlasting life*. The person right before her drank. *Drink this in remembrance that Christ's blood was shed for thee*. Then she drank. *And be thankful*. She drank. Now was the moment her fiancé was waiting for. Would the next person after her drink from that cup? He watched. The next person drank."

"The Spirit has done evangelism and reconciliation work through us before," he said, "and the Spirit of God can do it again, in new ways."

In the moments before Curry's installation, before the Most Rev. Katharine Jefferts Schori passed the presiding bishop's crozier to him, the father of two stood outside the cathedral's doors and waited for the signal to knock. He laughed with reporters, peeked in on the procession, and he prayed silently, head bowed.

God, he said, has the power to turn the world upside down, transform power structures, and address perils like climate change and racism. God has not given up on the world.



Mary Frances Schjonberg/Episcopal News Service
Presiding Bishop Curry greets the Rev. Carrie Craig outside Washington National Cathedral.

"If God has not given up on this world, we dare not give up on it either," Curry preached. "God is not finished with this church. God has work for us to do. Jesus has shown us the way, and we are the Jesus movement."

Matt Townsend

Communion Breakthrough?

A U.S. Conference of Catholic Bishops committee on ecumenical and interreligious affairs plans to send the Vatican a bold suggestion for "expansion of opportunities for Catholics and Lutherans to receive Holy Communion together."

The 118-page text of "Declaration on the Way: Church, Ministry, and Eucharist," unanimously affirmed by the committee in October, will be submitted to Cardinal Kurt Koch, the President of the Pontifical Council for Promoting Christian Unity at the Vatican.

Promotional materials call the declaration a "unique ecumenical text that draws on 50 years of Lutheran-Catholic dialogue in preparation for the 500th Reformation anniversary coming in 2017." A news release from

the bishops claims it "marks a pathway toward greater visible unity between Catholics and Lutherans."

The Most Rev. Denis J. Madden, Auxiliary Bishop of Baltimore, has suggested the document stands in the service of what Pope Francis has called a "culture of encounter": "This Declaration on the Way represents in concrete form an opportunity for Lutherans and Catholics to join together now in a unifying manner on a way finally to full communion."

The statement is a response to Cardinal Koch's December 2011 proposal of a "declaration to seal in agreements in the areas of the church, ministry, and the Eucharist." It is the work of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America and the U.S. Conference of Catholic Bishops.

According to an executive summary of the declaration, the structure of the text is important since "reception and affirmation [of 32 agreements] naturally lead to practices that advance the growing communion between Lutherans and Catholics."

Signatories of the declaration conclude the text by inviting both the Pontifical Council for Promoting Christian Unity and the Lutheran World Federation "to create a process and timetable for addressing the remaining issues" existing between Catholics and Lutherans. They also suggest practices to be observed in the interest of ecumenical communion.

John Paul Shimek

Tribunal Backs British Bishop

The case of the Rev. Canon Jeremy Pemberton, who was refused a license enabling him to work as a hospital chaplain because he married his

(Continued on page 8)

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Tribunal Backs British Bishop

(Continued from page 6)

same-sex partner, is likely to be fought all the way to the European Court of Human Rights.

On Nov. 4 an employment tribunal in Nottingham dismissed Pemberton's discrimination claim against the Diocese of Southwell and Nottingham. It likewise dismissed his petition that the church's handling of his case constituted harassment.

Pemberton, who married Laurence Cunningham in April 2014, was blocked from becoming chaplain with Sherwood Forest Hospital Trust. The appointment required that a chaplain hold a church license. The Rt. Rev. Richard Inwood, acting bishop of the diocese, declined to issue the license.

The tribunal found the bishop could do this because entering a same-sex marriage was "contrary to the doctrine of the Church of England." The Church of England's rules are clear that marriage is between "a man and a woman" and not between two people of the same sex (Canon B30).

The 57-page judgment said a bishop's license was "at the heart" of the health trust's job requirements because it signified a chaplain was a recognized minister in good standing. The ruling upheld the view that the church was entitled to take this stance because it had an exemption under Schedule 9, Section 2, of the Equality Act 2010 of U.K. law. Under this provision the church was immune from the usual discrimination laws. The tribunal said the church's handling of the case was "consistent" and there could be no question of harassment.

Canon Pemberton, a former IT specialist in London, was originally married to a woman and the couple with their family went to Congo and worked with the Church Mission Society. The tribunal heard that Pemberton suffered a nervous breakdown as he came to understand himself as gay. He moved to Nottingham and

lived openly with his male partner. He held a hospital chaplaincy in Lincolnshire, but conflict arose when he was chosen for the post in Nottingham. When Pemberton married Cunningham, his bishop rebuked him but did not bring charges under the Clergy Discipline Measure.

Legal costs for this long case are unknown but expected to be high. Normally the loser can be required to meet the costs of both sides. The church has said it will not pursue Pemberton for its costs provided he makes no appeal. He has tweeted, however, that his legal team are assessing grounds for appeal. He very probably will be able to call on financial help from sympathetic backers in what will be a landmark case.

A statement from the Diocese of Southwell and Nottingham said: "We are thankful to the tribunal for its work on this complex case and for its findings in favour of the Rt. Rev. Richard Inwood, on all the claims made against him. Churches across the diocese continue to offer a generous welcome to people from all backgrounds."

Peter Ould, a consultant to the group Living Out, said the judgment "tells us that there are no legal obstacles in the Church of England holding on to its current doctrine of marriage," and that House of Bishops guidelines concerning same-sex marriage and clergy "are legal and enforceable."

Tracey Byrne of the Lesbian and Gay Christian Movement said the groundswell of support for Pemberton was "quite remarkable" and his case had "shone a light on the church's ongoing discrimination against gay and lesbian people."

The judgment drew the ire of the National Secular Society, which said publicly funded chaplains "should not have to be licensed by any religious body."

John Martin

A Philosopher Loves the Heart

"You can't think your way to holiness," American philosopher James K.A. Smith said during a conference on spiritual formation that met on Oct. 22-24 in Toronto.

Smith grew up unchurched in southwestern Ontario. Now, as a professor at Calvin College in Grand Rapids, Michigan, he urges Anglicans to appreciate their rich liturgical heritage. He spoke while standing in what was formerly a Roman Catholic convent that today serves as Tyndale University, College, and Seminary, an evangelical Protestant school.

The conference theme was "Desiring the Kingdom," derived from Smith's book of that title.

Smith spoke in the beautiful chapel of what had been the motherhouse of the Sisters of St Joseph. The Vatican approved transferring it to Protestant hands on the condition that Tyndale committed to maintain the aesthetically significant chapel as sacred space.

As Smith argued that "humans are more than brains-on-sticks," and that Christian worship therefore needed to entice the imagination and not just appeal to the intellect, he did so before a stone curtain of shimmering blue mosaics. His listeners could see not only tall windows of stained glass but also powerful Stations of the Cross rendered in marble.

Smith commended the chapel as one artifact of the 1960s that "lives well" in the 21st century.

About 120 people from across Canada attended the three-day conference, which was hosted by the Anglican Communion Alliance with the support of Wycliffe College in Toronto, and Tyndale. The alliance's mandate is to be an orthodox voice within the Anglican Church of Canada.

Smith opened by noting that in John's Gospel the first words of Christ are "What do you want?" and one of his last questions in that gospel is "Do you love me?"

"We are what we want, what we long for and desire," he said. "We are



Tyndale Chapel



Smith

all lovers.” But usually “our loves operate under the radar of the intellect.”

He defined sin as “disordered love” and said humans need to be “situated in God’s love.” Humans are designed “not for something but for someone.” Christians are to “desire God and desire what God desires.” Smith denied Descartes’ famous proposition that “I think, therefore I am” and proposed instead “I love, therefore I am.”

Smith does not want Christians to negate the intellect or think less, but to value the affections and imagination as well and to become more aware that “God made us creatures of habit.”

He was also clear that there are competing secular stories, habits, practices, and liturgies that appeal to our emotions and imagination. For many North Americans the shopping mall has become a temple, a “cathedral of consumerism” that markets a kind of evangelism.

But the mall does not court the intellect (no one hands out doctrinal tracts as you enter). It appeals instead directly to the senses and imagination. Mannequins are the new icons. Be aware of the “litanies of consumerism,” he said. “The mall knows we are lovers and goes straight to the heart.”

We are drawn by story and image, but we can be captivated by “deformative liturgies.” “What you think you love doesn’t always align with your deepest longings,” Smith said, but Christian worship can address this gap. He urged that we ask ourselves: “What am I giving myself over

to?” and “What do these practices want me to love?”

Virtues are “good moral habits” and “should be woven into the fabric of one’s character,” creating “a Christian sensibility” until imitating Christ becomes “second nature.”

When asked how he would do a church plant, Smith replied cryptically: “The future of the Church is ancient.” He added later: “A contextualized Book of Common Prayer plucks at the heartstrings.”

Although he worships in the Christian Reformed Church, he includes the Book of Common Prayer (1979) in his personal devotions. He praised Cranmer’s prose as “drenched in biblical language and biblical sensibility” and warned against the “idolatrous fixation on novelty” in much contemporary worship. He would prefer to trust the “ancient intuitions” and wisdom of the Church, and urged his listeners to be “communally rehabilitated” in the Christian story through Christian worship.

Sue Careless

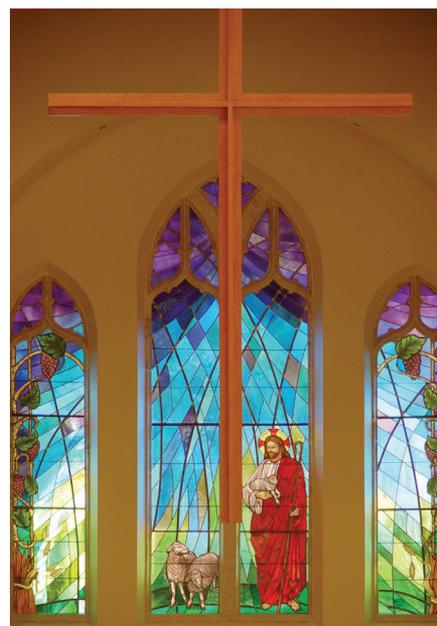
Pilgrim Draws Pilgrims

LETTER FROM LONDON

About five years ago our parish (St. Barnabas, Ealing) started running cinema evenings. One spur was the closure of the nearest local cinema. For reasons no one understands, wrangling continues over plans for a replacement. The site is still a hole in the ground fronted by a sad-looking skeleton of an unfinished facade.

Meanwhile, our cinema evenings go from strength to strength. Screenings attract just more than 30 viewers, on average. Attendance is primarily local, mostly people living within walking distance. We think less than one in 20 is a regular churchgoer. Between January 2010 when we launched and June 2015, a total of 6,764 people crossed our threshold. We charge for entrance at about two-thirds the price of the nearest cinema

(Continued on page 11)



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MEN

Neck	15	15.5	16	16.5	17	17.5	18	18.5	19	20
"To Fit" Chest	39	41	43	45	47	49	51	53	55	59
Sleeve Length	32/33 34/35	32/33 34/35	32/33 34/35	32/33 34/35	32/33 34/35	33/34 35/36	33/34 35/36	33/34 35/36	33/34 35/36	33/34 35/36

WOMEN

American Standard Size	8	10	12	14	16	18	20	22	24	26
Neck	14	14.5	15	15.5	16	16.5	17	17.5	18	18.5
"To Fit" Bust	32	34	36	38	40	42	44	46	48	50
Sleeve Length	27	27	27	27	28	28	28	28	29	29

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Pilgrim Draws Pilgrims

(Continued from page 9)

complex roughly two miles away. This has become a handy income stream, boosting parish finances.

Several weeks ago we were declared runners-up in the National Film Society award for best local event. On the anniversary of the start of World War I we ran a cabaret-style evening. People heard moving diary accounts and poems by locals who fought in Flanders and on the Somme. Food served replicated what soldiers ate in the trenches. The centerpiece was a screening of Lewis Milestone's award-winning 1930 American epic *All Quiet on the Western Front*, which won two Oscars.

Our experience with Pitshanger Pictures (that's our brand) is that, like so many Church of England parishes, we are quite good at getting people onto bridges we build into the local community, but we find it much more difficult to persuade people to cross them to become part of our worshiping life. That's despite lots going on: local groups use our hall for events ranging from fitness classes to a nursery school. There's an abundance of musical events.

We gradually realized we needed to create more stepping stones to encourage people on the journey. There are various options like the Alpha Course. It is a remarkable instrument bringing people to faith, but in Pilgrim, a national discipleship course launched two years ago by the Church of England, we found something better suited to local temperaments.

Church House Publishing reports it has sold 90,000 copies of the study book and harnesses Twitter campaigns to promote it. So far eight modules, each containing six parts, have been released.

Pilgrim is distinctively Anglican. A team of 31 authors worked on it, several diocesan bishops, some academics, and the evangelist J. John. One of its strengths is that leaders do not need to be theological heavyweights,

and Pilgrim groups work for people of all ages and abilities. Its main method is *Lectio Divina*, which leaders and participants quickly pick up.

The first module, "I turn to Christ," engages the six questions the baptism service puts to parents, godparents, and candidates able to answer for themselves. Then follow modules of six parts on the Lord's Prayer, the Commandments, and the Beatitudes. Pilgrim has already supplemented its foundation course with the Follow stage: six session modules on Creeds, Eucharist, Bible, and finally Church & Kingdom.

Our parish has now completed the first four modules and is moving on to the Follow stage. It has attracted a trickle of newcomers and held their attention. It has formed part of our confirmation preparation for adult candidates. During Advent we plan our own series, *The Songs of Christmas*, run in the same style as Pilgrim, comprising the Magnificat, the Gloria, the *Nunc Dimittis*, and *Benedictus*.

Our vicar and church council agree we now have something ready-made in which people who come across our threshold and want to know more can find next steps.

John Martin

Eastern Oregon Nominates 3

The Diocese of Eastern Oregon's standing committee has nominated three priests in its search for a seventh bishop.

The Rt. Rev. Bavi Rivera was elected as Eastern Oregon's bishop provisional in 2009.

The Rt. Rev. William O. Gregg, the diocese's sixth bishop, served from 2000 to 2007, and is now an assistant bishop in the Diocese of North Carolina.

The nominees are:

- The Rev. Patrick W. Bell, rector of St. Luke's Church, Coeur d'Alene, Idaho

- The Rev. Jedediah Holdorff, rector of Trinity Church, Bend, Oregon

- The Very Rev. Churchill Pinder, dean of St. Stephen's Cathedral and School, Harrisburg, Pennsylvania

The diocese accepted nominees by petition from Oct. 27 to Nov. 3, but none emerged.

Global Briefs

Corrymeela Celebrates 50 years: The Archbishop of Canterbury joined Archbishop Eamon Martin of Armagh for an ecumenical service at St. Anne's Cathedral, Belfast, to celebrate the 50th anniversary of Corrymeela. Northern Ireland's oldest peace and reconciliation organization strives to create understanding between divided religious communities. Archbishop Welby said Corrymeela emerged "as a place which has achieved the capacity to say even in the worst moments that there is hope for people who are deeply divided and deeply enmeshed in conflict to meet each other and to talk and to find their common humanity."

Sharing Faith is Risky: New research suggesting Christians can do "more harm than good" when they try to speak openly about their faith has received mixed reaction among church leaders. The study, commissioned for the Church of England's General Synod and the Evangelical Alliance, suggested people who talk about their beliefs to friends or colleagues are three more times likely to put them off God as to attract them to the faith. Four in ten people did not think Jesus was a real person and 22 percent thought he was a "mythical or fictional character." The Rt. Rev. Michael Hill, Bishop of Bristol, said the findings would be "greeted with disbelief" by Synod members; all 470 members received a copy. William Fittall, Synod's general secretary, agreed that some methods of evangelism could be "counterproductive."

John Martin



Christopher Bishop distributes eggs to needy refugee residents of Ankawa, Kurdistan, Iraq.

Saying Yes

Christopher Bishop's mission to listen in Iraq

By Jim Hamilton

Before he found a call to the priesthood, before the church held any real sway in his early life as a documentary filmmaker in New York City, before he witnessed how ecumenism triumphs over terror in the wilds of Iraq, Christopher Bishop said a daring yes to driving a truck to El Salvador.

Ostensibly just along for the adventure with Oxfam Pastors for Peace, a young Bishop found much more. He listened to stories, shot footage, and had a political awakening. That 1993 trip established a sense of international connectedness in Bishop, now the rector of

St. Martin's Church in Radnor, Pennsylvania.

"What we do matters," he said. "What we do as a country matters. What we do as individual people matters."

Now that he is a priest, he knows that what we do as a church matters. "If we are going to be vital members of the Jesus movement it is about getting out of our buildings and trading in our outreach committees to actually do outreach," he said. "The most important and loving thing we can do is to listen."

Listening is what started his most recent adventure.

In rehearsals for St. Martin's 2014 Christmas pageant, Bishop met a construction worker from the Erbil region of Kurdistan in Iraq. After hearing about conditions in Ankawa, a sleepy Christian community turned refugee suburb north of Erbil, he first thought, "Somebody ought to do something."

Then, after the problem of 120,000 fellow sisters and brothers in Christ displaced and wanting nagged at his heart for a few days, he began to think, "No, I have to do something."

He recalls the sense of drive as it turned from idea to action: "Even if it's just me, a Nikon, and 100 bucks, I'm going over there."

He knew no Christians in Iraq. He had no connections, save the contract construction worker. But he had a mission to listen.

With barely a plan in place, he presented this yearning to the parishioners he served. He is humbled by their willingness also to say yes. He calls the small, suburban St. Martin's "a little church trying to recreate itself in the face of a changing mission environment, a church charged to live outside its walls."

He had support from the Diocese of Pennsylvania and its bishop, the Rt. Rev. Clifton Daniels III, and he saw God send new opportunities and partners. He had not picked up a camera for some time and was daunted by recent leaps in the technology of filmmaking.

A direct question ("So, are you going to make a film about this?") challenged him to make the connection between his past career and his present call.

At first he thought, "Oh no! I don't want to do it. I want to be a priest. I want to take some aid. I want to offer my friendship. I want to celebrate Eucharist."

But he remembered this: "I had said when there is a story worth telling I'm going to go to the trouble to make a film about it."

This place and the people he met have an important story to tell. Partners and places to visit began to come together until, finally, clergy from many different churches in Erbil started welcoming him, in order to bring Western attention to the region.

Through successful social media campaigns and a fundraiser at his parish called iRock 4 IRAQ, Bishop raised the money to travel.

The people he met had stories of terror and desperation. "They ran with the clothes on their back. They are living in a 10-by-15 rectangular box. They were living a normal life and they lost everything." But, time and again, they said to him: "This experience has not weakened my faith, because God never abandoned me."

He gave out food and aid, but Bishop was con-



Christopher Bishop at St. David's, Radnor: "If this little church can do this, any church can."

stantly challenged by the bravery of clergy working across denominational lines. Their tone of daring set a higher standard than traditional checkbook benevolence.

The Rev. Douglas al-Bazi stood as a rare, public Christian figure, and that could easily mean death at the hands of ISIS radicals. This Mar Elias priest shifted the identity of the refugee hovels by calling them Family Centers. He focused his efforts on giving washchildren playgrounds, green grass, gardens, and hope. Though he had lived through capture and torture, he decided each day to be defined by love.

Long rivalries of denominations dissolved by necessity in Ankawa. Bishop worshiped beside Assyrian Orthodox, Chaldean, and non-denominational Christians.

"We all have to get to the kingdom of God together," he says about the radical ecumenism he saw in Iraq. He sat in the epicenter of churches saying yes to each other and he saw the power of God's love to restore a broken people. They had every reason to be fearful. Instead, they live with joy.

Bishop returned to Pennsylvania transformed. "There is nothing special about me. The only thing is that I decided to do it. I felt that I was supposed to be doing it and I did it."

He wants to inspire others to say yes and be transformed, too. His film will soon be out. His journey is chronicled on social media. "If this little church can do this, any church can," he said. "This mission, to seek God and be Christ's body in the world, we are actually living that in small and, increasingly, larger ways."

The Rev. Jim Hamilton is pastoral missionary for Church on the Square, Baltimore.



Photos: Kerry Hayes/Distributor: Open Road Films

The lead cast of *Spotlight*: Michael Keaton, Liev Schreiber, Mark Ruffalo, Rachel McAdams, John Slattery, and Brian d'Arcy James.

A David-and-Goliath Story

Brian d'Arcy James, a lifelong Roman Catholic, plays a reporter in *Spotlight*.

By Retta Blaney

Like many people, actor Brian d'Arcy James was aware of news coverage of sexual abuse by clergy in the Roman Catholic Archdiocese of Boston 15 years ago, but he did not follow it closely. He had no way of knowing that coverage would one day be part of his life.

"It was on my radar," he said. "I received information wholesale and processed it as best I could."

It was not until he read the script for *Spotlight*, the new film based on *The Boston Globe's* four-member investigative team that pursued and broke the story, that he understood its magnitude. "For me it was an education in terms of the size and scope, and the ramifications of the reporting"

He saw the coverage as "a beacon of sorts," coming as it did from a mainstream news source. "People who perhaps had not been heard or believed prior to that

could say, *This is my story.*"

James, 47, discussed the film in his dressing room at Broadway's St. James Theatre, where he is starring in the hit musical *Something Rotten!* James, a churchgoing Catholic, said that portraying *Globe* reporter Matt Carroll helped him see the cover-up as "an institutional problem with significant and widespread consequences," but he still finds spiritual comfort in Catholicism.

"It's not something to make me leave the church," he said. "I lost a lot of faith in the institution. I'm still baffled by it, but it didn't stop me altogether. I'd be lying if I said it didn't slow me down."

"My impulse is still to attend church and experience the ritual of the Mass."

The movie's goal is not to make the church look bad, he said. "It's the responsibility of anyone in power to do the right thing. When they don't, they have to be held accountable."

It's happenstance, he said, that the film is being released soon after Pope Francis's American tour, which was largely a boost for the church's image because of the pope's popularity. James does not think the film will dim that glow.

"It's a great thing, because the pope made comments about sexual abuse in the Catholic Church. He said, 'God weeps.' He said he will hold people accountable and I hope he does. I wish he had spent more time on that subject matter, but he started a conversation. That creates a space where dialogue can occur. It all comes back to accountability.

"Catholics can see this film without defensiveness."

During his childhood in Saginaw, Michigan, James attended St. Stephen School. "The teachers taught us to value education in the way they taught us to think. It was a great benefit. My education taught me to till the soil of a subject."

He was influenced by how his parents drew "a great deal of strength and solace" from their faith.

"It allowed them to live lives fulfilling for them. It taught them and me to live a life of thoughtfulness, generosity, and respect for others, the Golden Rule.

"My identity has been shaped and formed by my evolution as a Catholic. It's something I'm proud of."

He attends Holy Trinity Catholic Church in Sherman, Connecticut, with his wife, actress Jennifer Prescott, and their 14-year-old daughter, Grace. Lately, though, he's "been porous in [his] attendance."

The cast performs eight shows per week in *Something Rotten!* James plays Nick Bottom, a struggling Renaissance playwright who hears from a soothsayer that hit plays will someday involve singing and dancing as well as acting. Bottom sets out to create the world's first musical. James is onstage for 100 of the show's 125 minutes. His efforts earned him a Tony Award nomination for best actor. The show received a total of 10 nominations, including one for best new musical.

Besides being a regular on New York stages, James has appeared in several TV shows, including *Smash* and *Game Change*, as well as many films, including *Sisters* with Tina Fey and Amy Poehler, which premieres Dec. 18. In mid-December he will be featured in the New



Rachel McAdams, Mark Ruffalo, and Brian d'Arcy James chase the sobering details of priestly abuse.

York Pops holiday concerts at Carnegie Hall.

While James followed his heart into the theatre, with his background he could easily have moved into politics. His maternal grandfather was governor of Michigan and his father, a lawyer, served on the city council and was involved with Republican fundraising. James heard stories of political life and considered following in the family trade "for a few seconds" before heading to Northwestern University to major in theatre.

In preparing for his role in *Spotlight*, which also stars Michael Keaton, Liev Schreiber, Mark Ruffalo, and Rachel McAdams, James read *Globe* coverage and spent time with Carroll to understand who he was and how he worked. Carroll's work and research became James's map into the role. People who had suffered abuse told him their stories because of his role in the film.

"It allowed people to speak, to say 'Let me tell you my story.' The movie has the potential to do that."

It's also a "good, old-fashioned movie," he says.

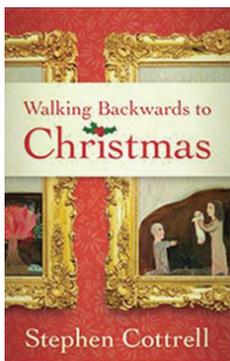
"People love a David and Goliath story, especially when it comes to justice. It's a very compelling thing to watch. Add to that the fact that it's true, and it's stunning."

Retta Blaney is the author of Working on the Inside: The Spiritual Life Through the Eyes of Actors.

Prepare for Christ

Ten books for Advent and Christmas

Review by John A. Thorpe

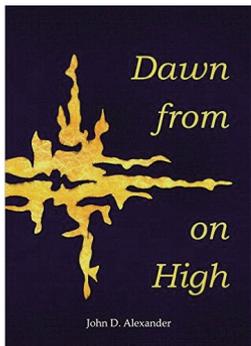


Walking Backwards to Christmas

By **Stephen Cottrell**. Westminster John Knox. Pp. 128. \$14

Building on his success in *The Nail*, Bishop Cottrell has put together a remarkable and refreshing series of first-person reflections about the birth of Christ through the eyes of each character involved. Each more or less biblical character tells a story: some

are earthy, some dark and raw. King Herod is full of paranoid self-justification, Anna full of prophetic wonder — but in each reflection Cottrell displays powerful insight into the “sorts and conditions” that surrounded Christ’s birth. And he maintains a remarkably pious approach to the Holy Family and the mystery of the Incarnation, even while telling about it from the inside. Like C.S. Lewis’s *Till We Have Faces*, it builds upon itself as the characters’ stories interact. Cottrell works backward, starting from Anna and reaching all the way back to Moses; as much as this runs contrary to the normal flow of the Advent season, he makes it work through judicious allusions to the progressing themes of Advent. While Cottrell’s hope that this book could become an adult Nativity play might be a little impractical because of the length of the narratives, it would make an excellent Advent book study, and it ought to be read even outside its target liturgical season simply on its own merits.



Dawn from on High

Homilies for the Weekdays of Advent, Christmas, and Epiphany
By **John D. Alexander**. Forward Movement. Pp. 165. \$15

Alexander’s homilies are primarily exegetical. Keyed to the Episcopal Church’s weekday eucharistic lectionary, these short sermons link all

the readings for each day in one broad theme. The sermons display a firm, text-centered hermeneutic and a traditionalist theological perspective peppered with allusions to the Fathers, Anglican liturgy, and Church history. Clearly linked across the three seasons, they are also capable of stand-alone usage and can be read for personal devotion or as homilies for weekday services. If the work is thin in any department, it is in the application of biblical truths to daily life: after treating the texts at length, Alexander usually makes a single, concise point of application and leaves further reflection to the reader.

Expecting Jesus

Daily Meditations for Advent and Christmas

By **Danielle Tumminio**. Forward Movement. Pp. 104. \$5

Tumminio walks readers through both Advent and the Christmas season with daily meditations and questions for personal reflection. The meditations include Advent texts from Holy Scripture, colorful anecdotes from her ministry, quotations from popular literature, and theological reflection influenced by liberation theology. Tumminio purposefully centers the entire work around imagery of birth and pregnancy. Her work is strong on Christology but weak on traditional atonement soteriology. Readers who are new parents or expecting a child will find much to appreciate here, but the work’s appeal is not limited to new and soon-to-be parents. Tumminio writes in an accessible and personal style, and her treatment of the Magnificat during Christmas season is worthwhile.

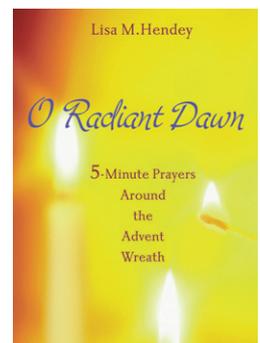


O Radiant Dawn

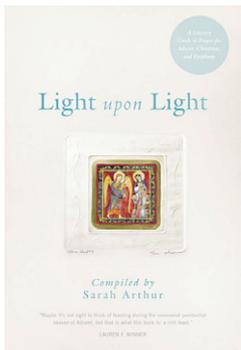
5-Minute Prayers Around the Advent Wreath

By **Lisa M. Hendey**. Ave Maria Press. Pp. 32. \$1.25

This short book delivers on the promise of its title. Hendey’s daily Advent wreath devotions are brief, but they



include a full slate of responsive prayers, a short reading from Holy Scripture, moments for silent prayer, reflection questions for general audiences and younger children, and closing prayers. The devotions are designed for families or households, but they could be used profitably by individuals or churches as well. Theologically, the prayers and reflection questions tend to ask some variation of *What more can you do?* They could be balanced by reflections on what God has already done in Christ.



Light upon Light

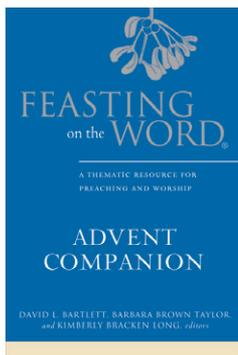
A Literary Guide to Prayer for Advent, Christmas, and Epiphany

Compiled by **Sarah Arthur**.

Paraclete. Pp. 224. \$18.99

Anthologies can be difficult to get right, especially when the genres of literature and prayer mix in close proximity. Often this results in too thin an appreciation for prayer or the

wholesale substitution of literary forms for liturgical ones. Arthur, however, gets it right. An evident reverence for liturgical prayer guides her choices, such that this is no mere anthology of literature: it is an anthology of real Christian spirituality, expressed through a wide breadth of literary cultures and forms. The readings begin in Advent and continue all the way through the ordinary time of Epiphany. Each set is preceded by a brief liturgical order suitable for personal or small-group devotional use.



Feasting on the Word

A Thematic Resource for Preaching and Worship

Advent Companion

Edited by **David L. Bartlett, Barbara Brown Taylor,** and **Kimberly Bracken Long**, editors.

Compiled by **Jessica Miller Kelley**.

Westminster John Knox. Pp. 208. \$25

As with other volumes in the Feasting on the Word series, this book is

eminently practical and adaptable for preachers and worship leaders. Each week's selection includes an entire Sunday liturgy, including song suggestions, responsive prayers, Scripture readings, and even a children's sermon. It is designed for churches that do not use a lectionary or those that desire an alternative to the lectionary readings. Each selection also includes four essays about the readings, essays written by well-known scholars, preachers, and pastors.

The essays are intelligent, but not too academic to be accessible; they do, however, display a notable lack of breadth in theological perspective, almost universally assuming a foundation of liberation theology.

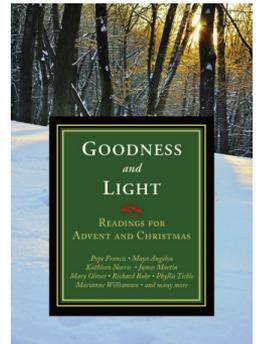
Goodness and Light

Readings for Advent and Christmas

Edited by **Michael Leach, James Keane,** and **Doris**

Goodnough, editors. Orbis. Pp. 300. \$16

This anthology of daily readings includes selections from Pope Francis, Maya Angelou, Phyllis Tickle, and many other well-known writers. Some selections are essays, some are poems, some are short stories — all are compelling and draw the reader into contemplation of the Nativity of Christ. These selections are not exegetical, but literary. Readers will find a wide variety of literary styles and forms and a good breadth of theological perspectives. This anthology succeeds at the difficult task of hitting the rhythm of the Advent season's changing themes, such that it would make a fine companion to a more exegetical collection of daily readings, or to daily worship.



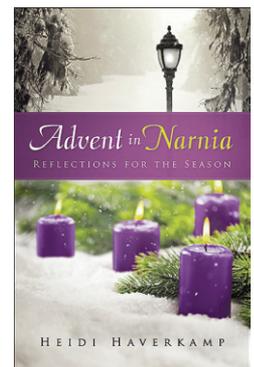
Advent in Narnia

Reflections for the Season

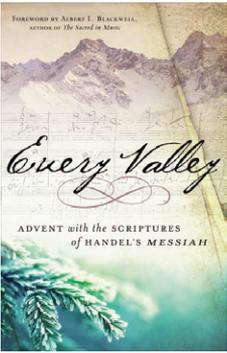
By **Heidi Haverkamp**. Westminster John Knox.

Pp. 112. \$16

Haverkamp sets herself an ambitious project: connect Lewis's classic *The Lion, the Witch, and the Wardrobe* with traditional Advent Bible passages and themes as they progress through the season. Remarkably, she succeeds at this without the reader feeling like the novel has been shoehorned into an artificial framework. The connection as Haverkamp develops it feels natural, and she avoids the temptation of equating *Wardrobe* with Holy Scripture. Others of *The Chronicles of Narnia* are also quoted, and she brings in Rowan Williams's insights from *The Lion's World*, as well as Lewis's own letters. After four weeks' worth of reflections, Haverkamp provides suggestions for "Narnia Nights" as family-friendly church events and discussion prompts for leaders of small-group studies.



BOOKS



Every Valley

Advent with the Scriptures of Handel's *Messiah*

Compiled by **Jessica Miller Kelley**.

Westminster John Knox. Pp. 192. \$15

The subtitle of this work describes it perfectly: it is an exploration of the texts of Holy Scripture that form the libretto of Handel's classic oratorio.

It is neither an exploration of the oratorio for its own sake, nor of Handel's music, but it does connect the familiar words and music with a devotional application of those scriptures. Its treatment of the biblical texts is expansive, scholarly but accessible, and leads into plenty of application for daily life. If a church choir is preparing to sing *Messiah* for Advent, this work would make an outstanding devotional study as members prepare not only to sing a classic work of art but also to proclaim the gospel through Handel's straight-from-Scripture libretto. Theologically, the book stays close to traditional understandings of the bodily resurrection and eschatology, but in key points it lacks the Atonement theology and the identification of Isaiah's suffering servant as Christ that undergirded Handel's treatment of the texts.

Exploring Advent with Luke

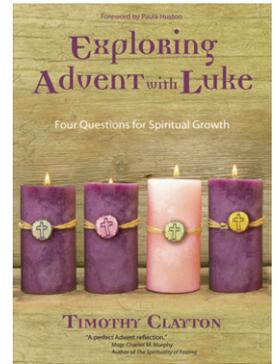
Four Questions for Spiritual Growth

By **Timothy Clayton**.

Ave Maria Press. Pp. 160. \$13.95

For anyone wishing to add a touch of monastic spirituality to Advent, Clayton's reflections will be perfect. But the added value to this work is its deep engagement with the text of the first two chapters of Luke. Like a very readable mini-commentary, each week's essay digs into Greek keywords and focuses intently on key characters, their contexts, and their motivations. But then each essay (four for the weeks of Advent, one for Christmas Day, and one for the Christmas season) turns toward the spiritual life, centered on significant questions asked by the biblical characters and how those questions resonate with modern daily life. This book would make a rewarding parish Advent study or a fine discipline of advance sermon preparation for the pastor hoping to engage the themes of Advent and Christmas with scholarly acumen, theological clarity, and spiritual sensitivity.

The Rev. John A. Thorpe is chaplain of St. John's Episcopal School in Dallas.



BOOKS

Too Simple

Review by Kevin Dodge

In the 19th century, religion in America underwent a seismic shift, as people streamed out of Episcopal, Congregational, and Presbyterian churches and into Baptist and Methodist congregations. Historians of the period estimate that 2 percent of the American population was Methodist in 1775, but by 1850 this number was closer to 35 percent. Overall church attendance doubled during this period.

While there are many reasons for this shift, one important factor was revivalist preaching. Protestant evangelists fanned out into the countryside with a

message of salvation, promising eternal life if one would just believe. This preaching had great effect, but often came at the expense of fidelity to orthodox doctrines such as substitutionary atonement, salvation by grace, and original sin.

As Charles Finney, the most effective of the evangelists, put it: "Gospel salvation seemed to me to be an offer of something to be accepted, and that it was full and complete; and that all that was necessary on my part, was to get my own consent to give up my sins and accept Christ" (*Memoirs*, p. 14). Finney's gospel, which exhorts us to "accept Jesus into our hearts," has been with us ever since.

N.T. Wright's latest book, *Simply Good News*, is an attempt to define the gospel. With characteristic fervor, Wright is out to convince the reader that the gospel is not a set of instructions on how to get heaven but a proclamation of Jesus' death, burial, and resurrection. As he puts it, the gospel is good news, not good advice.

Wright's admirers will find many familiar themes in this book. His central argument can be found in inchoate form in *What St. Paul Really Said* (p. 133). Wright admits that his treatment of Revelation 21 and 22 is broadly congruent with what he wrote in *Surprised by Hope* (p. 90). Wright's handling of covenant and new creation is similar to many of his works, including his lengthy discussion in *Justification*. Wright's insistence that the gospel must be understood within its second-Temple Jewish context appears to be reworked from *Paul in Fresh Perspective*.

Wright is certainly correct to press against popular understandings, reminding readers that the gospel is what

again, without any supporting evidence), one wonders how the Church has managed for so long with such an erroneous understanding.

Further, Wright claims that in the Middle Ages, "though everyone gave lip service to mainstream religious belief, it doesn't seem to have made a radical difference in most people's lives" (p. 148). This is at least highly debatable. As Cambridge's Eamon Duffy has concluded: "Medieval English Catholicism was, up to the very moment of its dissolution, a highly successful enterprise, the achievement by the official church of a quite remarkable degree of lay involvement and investment, and of a corresponding degree of doctrinal orthodoxy" (*The Stripping of the Altars*, p. xviii). Perhaps Wright disagrees, but he provides no evidence to help us evaluate his claim.

Moreover, Wright frequently admonishes the reader that the gospel "is not [about] going to heaven when you die" (p. 90). Fair enough. Wright is on firm ground when he writes that the culmination of the biblical story is the "rescue and renewal of the whole creation" (p. 91) and that the "new creation has [already] begun" (p. 95).

But Wright goes further when he claims that heaven is merely "a signpost to an unknowable reality rather than a precise and accurate label for a specific place" (p. 145). Heaven is unknowable? For centuries, the Church has been grappling with the reality of heaven, most tangibly through the Christian sacraments. In this book, Wright presents the gospel as inherently word-centered. This leaves little room for sacrament and thus no tangible way of intuiting what difference the promise of heaven makes for this life.

Do not heaven and earth, time and eternity, God and man come together in the Eucharist? It may be a mystery, but according to Gregory of Nyssa it is a mystery that changes us (*Catechetical Oration*, XXXVII). Indeed, as Wright argues, everything is different because of the gospel. Yet, since first-century Jewish backgrounds drive his argument, Wright needs a way to bring the gospel into a contemporary Christian context, one that can accommodate not just Paul but Peter's metaphor of theosis as well (2 Pet. 1:4).

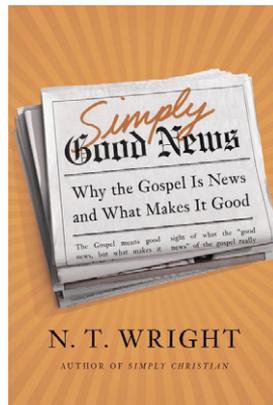
Simply Good News is a timely book with a useful central argument. Readers who want Wright's thinking distilled into a highly digestible, easy-to-read format will profit from it. Those who are used to more subtlety might prefer his previous works.

A parishioner at Church of the Incarnation in Dallas, Kevin Dodge is author of Confessions of a Bishop: A Guide to Augustine's Confessions (2014).

Simply Good News

Why the Gospel is News
and What Makes It Good

By N.T. Wright. HarperOne. Pp. 189. \$24.99



St. Paul told us it was: that Christ "died for our sins in accordance with the Scriptures, that he was buried, that he was raised on the third day" (1 Cor. 15:3-4). This really is good news because, as Wright points out, now everything is different after Jesus' resurrection. Thus, Wright's core message is helpful and timely.

But significant problems occur because of Wright's tendency to make big claims without much support. In explaining how the Church has lost the gospel, Wright claims that this results from "collusion with the legacy of the Middle Ages" (p. 83). The upshot of this is that "for the last thousand years or so" the Church has been presenting the gospel poorly (p. 64). This is a startling claim, and Wright offers scant support for it. Are we supposed to believe that the entire Church has had little idea for 1,000 years what the gospel was until greater knowledge of second-Temple Judaism came along? Although Wright gives Calvin and Luther a pass (once

A Neglected Virtue

Review by Andrew M. Harmon

While waiting is central to our human existence, ours is perhaps the least patient generation in history. As David Baily Harned puts it, we perceive waiting as entirely accidental (p. 5). For us, “real life” is the equivalent of *doing* something, and we are most ourselves, *most human*, when we are in control of that doing. Our understanding of patience follows suit: the unspoken gumption that helps us through our modern malaise.

Harned wants to argue that this a mistaken take on “real life,” which props up only a semblance of the virtue. The results are jarring: we have become increasingly impatient, and yet we have failed to understand what precisely patience means or looks like (p. 18). The remedy, by Harned’s lights, is a thicker description of patience as a virtue buttressed by historical reflection from some of the past’s most capable thinkers.

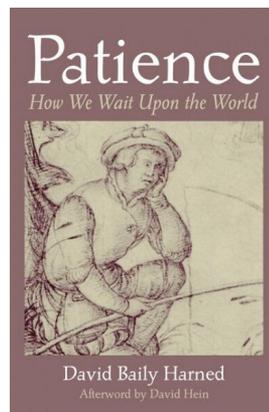
Patience’s roots can be found in the Hebrew and Christian Scriptures, wherein we witness God’s incredible forbearance, mercy, and promise for his people (p. 29). Jesus more fully exemplifies and embodies the divine patience revealed in the Hebrew Scriptures (pp. 32-40). Perhaps most acutely, the early Church sensed that learning to welcome suffering’s many forms simply was the Christian lot. Versed in Stoic thought and rhetoric, Tertullian, Cyprian, and Augustine crafted a distinct moral vision with patience as its hallmark. While these North African thinkers owe much of their development to Stoic reflection, theirs is a posture not free from emotion and passion (p. 43) but ordered in disposition and effusive in thanksgiving.

Still, Harned thinks these (and other) early Christians run into trouble because of their uncritical debts to Stoic equanimity (pp. 44-45). Echoing the Stoic clarification call to self-control, Tertullian contended the greatest and first sin was one of impatience, of Adam’s impetuous affect. Cyprian shows signs of shaking the Stoic hangover, assigning patience to God as a divine perfection. Augustine too builds out from this tradition by emphasizing the important of perseverance in the face of uncertainty or adversity.

Marking the transition from patristic to medieval reflection is Gregory the Great’s commentary on the book

of Job. Filled with aphorisms and illustrations for everyday use, Gregory’s text named the driving importance of patience as suffering through misfortune. In the thought of Thomas Aquinas, patience goes from atop the hierarchy of moral excellences to each excellence’s infused core. Thomas à Kempis marked yet another shift in language and tone: moving from the academy to the prayer bench and describing the virtues through the personal language of friendship and love.

John Calvin, perhaps more than any other, indicated that divine sovereignty shaped patience (p. 83). That God knows and rules all implied that human beings were to trust God, exemplifying forbearance and enduring hardships along the way. Calvin also introduced the concept of mortification, constituted by self-denial



Patience

How We Wait Upon the World

By David Baily Harned. Wipf & Stock.

Pp. 234. \$26

and bearing the cross, as constitutive of godlikeness. Jeremiah Burroughs, representative of Puritan reflection on patience, examined adversities in the grand narrative of God’s saving works in hopes of engendering humility. Søren Kierkegaard, who rounds out Harned’s narrative, stressed the patience to will one thing; this was primarily to understand the “slowness of the Good” (pp. 98-106).

Chapter six marks the turning point in *Patience*; Harned begins to define what does and does not constitute the virtue. He weaves together myriad Christian witnesses in hopes of supplementing the thin, four-fold dictionary definition of patience: endurance of hardship, forbearance, willingness to wait, and perseverance (pp. 111-12). In Harned’s moral vision, faith knits these aspects together. He names patience a di-

vine perfection given by grace that must be nourished and enacted in public; still its root, like all Christian virtues, is gift rather than achievement (p. 113).

Only time, marked by deep attention and care, can reveal the world as it truly is (p. 128) and begin to combat patience's rivals: impatience, apathy, boredom, and displacement (p. 148). And while some might disparage patience as unduly resigned, Harned argues the unity of the virtues bucks against the claim. True patience for Harned comes packaged with the other virtues, cardinal and theological, knowing how and when and where to act justly, prudently, temperately, and courageously. In fact, he insists that the converse is true too: none of the virtues exist outside of patience (p. 160).

If Harned's main hunch is right, that to be human is to wait and even to suffer, then it is through that waiting and suffering that we discern our capacities for acting freely and fully. This is not the way of the unaffected sage, Harned contends, but the way of Christ, who for the world's sake patiently endured the road set before

him, even to the point of death (p. 179).

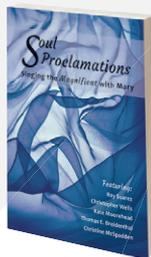
For all of *Patience's* artfulness, some nuance would be helpful. In seeking to offer a uniquely Christian proposal for virtue, Harned cleanly pits classical or philosophical outlooks against their biblical or theological perfections (pp. 69, 107, 109, 113), presenting the reader with neat dichotomies sometimes more apparent than real. Along similar lines, Harned will speak in general of our culture, or our age, or "the modern world" in a way that seems too facile (p. 116). Neither of these quibbles is damning and is not meant to take away from a fine meditation on a virtue long in need of recovery.

Unsurprisingly, *Patience* is best slowly digested. While it will likely be of interest to moral theologians and some historians, Harned's book is accessible to a broad audience and, given its organization, would be especially suited to book groups.

Andrew M. Harmon is a doctoral candidate in theology at Marquette University, Milwaukee.

ARE YOU READY?

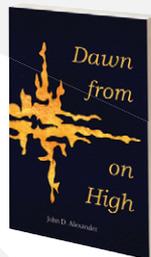
PAUSE. BREATHE. REFLECT. You can prepare today to celebrate our Savior's coming, becoming a more faithful disciple this Advent and Christmas. These daily meditations, available in both book and e-book forms, offer you and your congregation a path for the journey.



Soul Proclamations Singing the *Magnificat* with Mary

#2382 | \$5.00 | \$4 ea. for 10+ copies

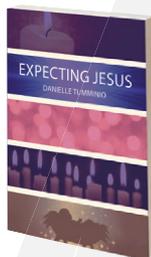
Join Mary's proclamation this Advent as you let your soul sing the *Magnificat* with her. Walk with Mary as you prepare your heart and mind and ready yourself to respond to Jesus. Daily meditations feature the writings of well-known faith and thought leaders in The Episcopal Church.



Dawn from on High

#2344 | \$15.00 | \$10 ea. for 10+ copies

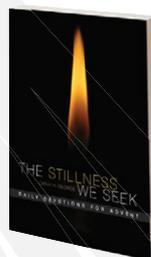
In these inspiring and accessible meditations based on the eucharistic lectionary of The Episcopal Church, John Alexander provides a theologically rich and biblically grounded journey through Advent, Christmastide, and the first days of Epiphanytide.



Expecting Jesus

#2298 | \$5 | \$4 ea. for 10+ copies

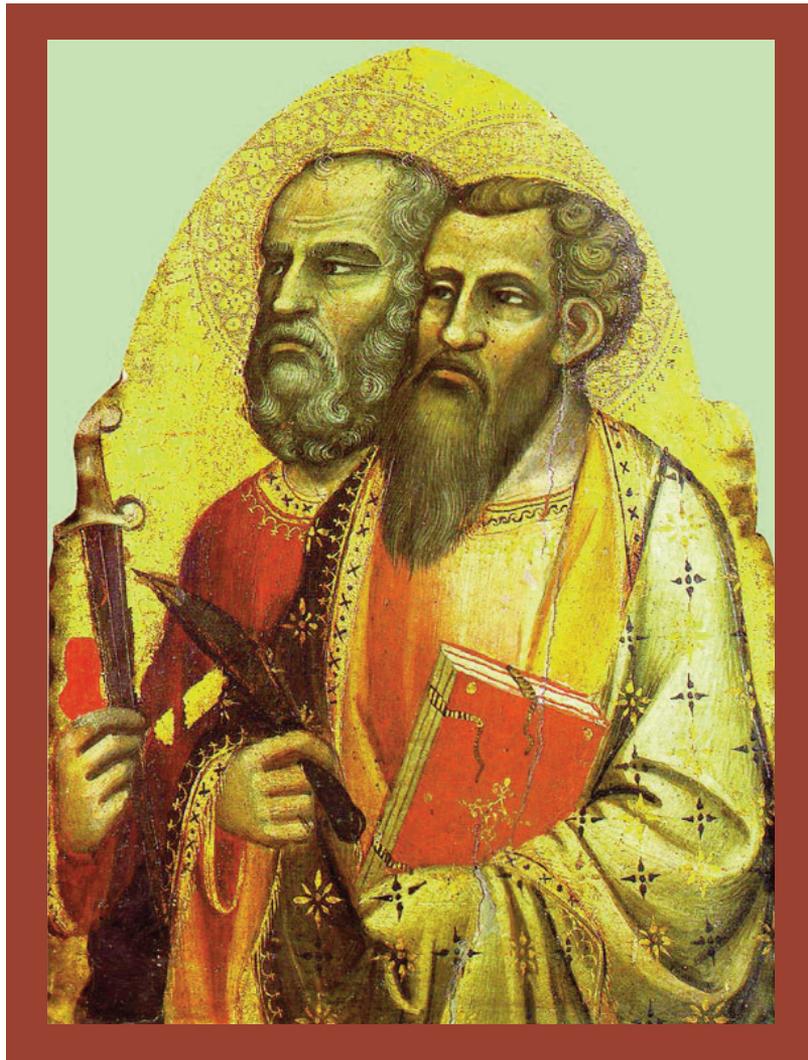
Are you expecting Jesus this Christmas? Advent offers a time for preparation, to wait in hopeful expectation for the coming of our Savior. Author, Episcopal priest, and new mom Danielle Tumminio explores birth – both the physical birth of Jesus and the metaphorical opportunities for rebirth in our spiritual lives.



The Stillness We Seek

#2076 | \$5 | \$4 ea. for 10+ copies

This Advent, rest in the Lord. Be present and watchful. Guided by the psalms, author Cathy H. George travels back to her past, reflecting on the moments and memories that have shaped her faith and offering spiritual support for all who seek stillness.



Good News to Share

So then you are no longer strangers and aliens, but you are citizens with the saints and also members of the household of God. —Eph. 2:19

By John C. Bauerschmidt

Years ago I used to attend an occasional weekday Eucharist at a neighboring parish. On certain feast days the preacher's opening gambit was to say something like, "We don't know much about Saint Whomever, but in spite of that" Having offered this sacrificial pawn to his listeners, in the hopes that they would take it, the preacher went on to make his homiletical point, which of course I do not remember.

This sacrificial opening always left me raw, since the point was never made that sanctity has nothing to do with notoriety, a very modern confusion exploited by reality television; and that in regard to the communion of saints, biography is, if not beside the point, pretty close to it. Keen observers of the Church calen-

dar will have noted that not much has changed in regard to this confusion, except that the saints we do not know much about are now overwhelmed by the holy women and men about whom we know way too much.

My preacher friend would have so enjoyed our celebration today, the feast of Saints Simon and Jude, apostles. Indeed, we do not know much about them, except the absolutely crucial point that they were numbered among the Twelve. The calling of the Twelve by Jesus Christ is one of the most prominent reminders that the Messiah came to reform the life of the people of God, the community of faith; and that the perpetuation of the Twelve with the calling of Matthias as a witness to the resurrection (Acts 2:22) was a sign that this community was to continue. The Twelve were the nucleus of the Church, the leaders of twelve notional tribes

that perpetuated in a new key the life of Israel. Now all the nations of the earth were included, Jew and Gentile alike, in the one, holy, catholic, and apostolic Church.

The Church is a communion of saints, a fellowship of believers; citizens of a common city and members of the same household, as our reading from Ephesians reminds us. It is God's household to which we are called and of which we are made members in baptism. We are built up on the foundation of apostles and prophets, and Jesus Christ himself is the cornerstone. These are huge claims to make about the community of faith, the *Catholica* that is the mother of us all, which includes the many in the one; a wide and expansive vision that lifts our eyes beyond this "momentary affliction" (2 Cor. 4:17) to the true horizon that lies ahead. That vision is precisely the one we need, and we are grateful to these apostles for providing the occasion to remember it.

We are mindful also on this occasion of those who have gone before us. The Living Church Foundation prays in its annual gathering for benefactors and contributors of the past who have gone before us into the larger life prepared for all the saints of God. Prayer for the dead is a work of charity, a sign of the love that

binds all the saints together in one communion and fellowship. It is no small part of the work we do as a foundation, recalling their witness with gratitude and nurturing the bonds of our communion with them through our common prayer.

Our name is fortunate here at THE LIVING CHURCH, for the Church is a living organism whose members are all alive in Christ. The apostolic witness we celebrate today in this feast provides us with a vision of the Church spread out in time and space, from the Twelve gathered by Christ and then sent out in mission after his resurrection, even to these saints gathered here today to do the work of the Church. Church work is good work, a "good work" in fact; and the strivings of the saints are Christ's own work within us and a treasury of merit that is Christ's own as well. We have been given Good News here at THE LIVING CHURCH, good news of Christ's death and resurrection, and it's our privilege to share it with others.

The Rt. Rev. John C. Bauerschmidt is Bishop of Tennessee. He preached this homily on Oct. 28 at St. Martin's Church, Houston, at the annual requiem Mass of the Living Church Foundation.



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The Living Church Foundation Welcomes New Members

The Living Church Foundation held its annual meeting Oct. 28 at St. Martin's Church in Houston. The Rev. Dr. Russell Levenson, Jr., rector of St. Martin's, is a member of the foundation.

The foundation elected 12 new members:

- Dr. Garwood Anderson, professor of New Testament at Nashotah House Theological Seminary
- Mr. Richard Clements, CEO and co-owner of 405 Plastics & Distribution in Oklahoma City
- The Rev. Jake Dell, former manager of digital marketing and advertising sales for the Domestic and Foreign Missionary Society and a lieutenant in the U.S. Navy Reserve's Chaplain Corps
- The Rev. Dr. Julia Gatta, professor of pastoral theology at the University of the South's School of Theology
- The Rt. Rev. Dr. Josiah Idowu-Fearon, secretary general of the Anglican Communion
- The Rev. S. Thomas Kincaid III, vice rector of Church of the Incarnation, Dallas, and treasurer of the foundation
- The Rt. Rev. Dr. Graham Kings, mission theologian of the Anglican Communion
- The Rev. Dr. David Marshall, director of the Anglican Episcopal House of Studies at Duke Divinity School
- The Rev. Andrew Petiprin, rector of St. Mary of the Angels, Orlando
- The Rev. Leigh Spruill, rector of St. George's Church, Nashville
- The Rev. Dr. George Sumner, now-Bishop of Dallas
- The Rt. Rev. and Rt. Hon. Dr. Rowan Williams of Oystermouth, master of Magdalene College, University of Cambridge, and 104th Archbishop of Canterbury (2002-12)

Seven foundation members were re-elected:

- The Rev. Dr. Michael B. Cover, assistant professor of theology at Marquette University and a priest of the Diocese of Dallas
- Prudence Dailey, chairman of the Prayer Book Society in England and a lay member of the Church of England's General Synod since 2000
- The Most Rev. Gerald James Ian Ernest, Archbishop of the Province of the Indian Ocean
- The Rev. Dr. Andrew Goddard, associate director of the Kirby Laing Institute for Christian Ethics at Tyndale House, Cambridge, and a part-time teacher at Trinity College, Bristol
- Dr. Colin Podmore, director of Forward in Faith (U.K.) and secretary of the Society's Council of Bishops
- The Very Rev. Dr. Graham M. Smith, dean of St. George's College in Jerusalem
- Dr. Shirleen Wait, a retired national curriculum specialist and owner of Atlantic Beach Connections, LLC, a property management company in Atlantic Beach, Florida

Two board members were re-elected:

- The Rt. Rev. D. Bruce MacPherson, Bishop of Western Louisiana (2002-12), president
- Mr. Richard Mammama, Jr., archivist

Two foundation members completed their terms during this meeting:

- The Rev. Dr. Charles Henery, Delafield, Wisconsin
- Mr. David A. Kalvelage, Hot Springs Village, Arkansas

Alert

The end is not yet, but the end is near. The sun's boiling heat, the pocked moon, the beauty of a black sky salted with stars, salmon-colored clouds at dusk, deliver the Son of Man and the angels of heaven. There is a way of seeing that unveils the surface of limited perception, that pushes out and beyond into wide-open wonder. God is this *parousia*, literary, "this presence," a presence that *is* and *is coming*. Signs have said so, in the sun, and the moon, and the stars. If you have eyes to see, look and know that he is near. "Stand up and raise your heads, because your redemption is drawing near" (Luke 21:28). Go out to the night sky; walk under the midday sun; sense his coming.

The earth is troubled. The seas rage and churn. "The people faint from fear and foreboding of what is coming upon the earth" (Luke 21:26). They always have. There is nothing new under the sun. We could despair, but do not for the rock-solid reason that a promise has been sewn into us, the promise of God's arrival, justice, and righteousness over this land (Jer. 33:15). "The days are surely coming, says the Lord, when I will fulfill the promise I made to the house of Israel and the house of Judah" (Jer. 33:14). St. Jerome's Vulgate has a Christian eye. It says, "*Ecce dies veniunt, dicit Dominus, et suscitabo verbum bonum*" (Behold the days are coming, says the Lord, and I will raise up a *good word*). And the Word was with God, and was God, and dwelt among us. The Word is the justice and righteousness that is present in and is ever coming to this broken and tragic world. We do not lose hope. Instead, we remain alert and attuned to the coming of the kingdom of God.

There is work to do. We may increase and abound in love for one another and for all (1 Thess. 3:12). We may strengthen our heart in holiness,

making the heart a castle for a blameless God (1 Thess. 3:13). Loving God and our neighbor, and waiting, and giving all of our heart, mind, and soul, unveils the moment as God's fresh coming. And the God who comes wants justice and righteousness, salvation, and safety. This is not from us, but it is a work given to us.

Yet nothing is expected and no human work is done if energies are dissipated by drunkenness and worry. And what of the Church with its slogans, mission statements, campaigns, noise and fuss, alcoholism and gluttony? Some gentle but firm exhortation is needed. Our minds and bodies and souls are called to this deep expectancy, the awareness that we live not to ourselves alone, but to Christ, and in the power of his bracing love that convicts and renews. In the sure confidence of Christ's love for us, we ready ourselves "to stand before the Son of Man."

In contemplative silence, in loud praise, in daily duties, and in righteous action, Christ arrives. Who is he? He is "intelligent, holy, unique, complex, subtle, mobile, clear, unpolluted, distinct, invulnerable, loving the good, keen, irresistible, beneficent, humane, steadfast, sure, free from anxiety, all-powerful, overseeing all, and penetrating through all spirits that are intelligent, pure, and altogether subtle" (Wis. 7:22-23). He who comes is the beginning, middle, and end of all things.

Look It Up

Read Psalm 25:5. You can wait all day long in the desire of your heart.

Think About It

Jesus does not want you to look and perceive, to listen and understand, in the same old way (Mark 4:12). He wants you to see his invisible arrival in the visible mysteries of this world (Rom. 1:20). He wants you alert.



Outreach and Mission to the World

Whether we are reaching out to help others less fortunate in the local community or another country, doing so "makes the heart happy!" for parishioners at St. Martin's Episcopal Church in Houston, Texas. In response to Our Lord Jesus' call to reach out in love and service to others, we partner with more than 50 agencies citywide and abroad in numerous projects, events, grants, donation drives, and more. Each week there is an organized effort to serve others and share in fellowship with other parishioners.

One of St. Martin's largest Outreach Ministry groups is our mentoring or advocacy groups for young children, adolescent boys, and men. More than 100 church members serve as mentors for children or men in need. Local mission opportunities give parishioners the chance to take part in a wide range of activities as well, from serving holiday meals to the needy and leading worship services for the homeless, to making sandwiches for hungry kids and hosting food drives for the underserved.

Parishioners also are involved in mutually transformative and long-lasting relationships that extend far beyond the church campus. During mission trips to San Jose, Costa Rica, parishioners helped build a church; in Cochabamba, Bolivia, church



members played alongside the children of Amistad Mission orphanage; and near Tegucigalpa, Honduras, volunteers partnered with the Texas Water Mission to bring clean water to communities in need.

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Burning

A vivid and forceful mention of the Amass migration from Iraq, Afghanistan, Syria, northern Africa, and other places to the shores of Europe and other Western nations should be quite enough to outlaw happy Christmas carols in this Advent season. People leave their homeland because of war, persecution, terrorism, and desperate poverty. It is a grueling and dangerous journey from ills known to hopes mixed with fear and anxiety. Hosting nations will find their hospitality stretched and tested; unfounded prejudices are not easily contained. A humanitarian crisis of unimaginable scale is unfolding.

Today we remember the migration of the children of Israel from their exile in Babylon to their homeland, a migration permitted under the rule of Cyrus, king of Persia. They felt their exile as a punishment, they wept in bitter sorrow, they struggled on the path toward home when providence arrived. It was bitter and slow. But hope was present in their steps, in the risks they took, in the land they remembered and planned to renew. In all this bitterness, there was something beautiful at work, the beauty of persistent hope. The prophet Baruch says, "Take off the garment of your sorrow and affliction, O Jerusalem, and put on forever the beauty of the glory from God" (Bar. 5:1). He sees sorrow and suffering and exhaustion as something real, but not the skin on their backs, not the marrow of their bones, and not a genetic destiny. Sorrow and affliction may be thrown off and replaced with robes of righteousness, a headdress of diadems, and divine splendor (Bar. 5:2-3). Baruch speaks for God, recreating the landscape: mountains and hills lowered, valleys lifted, a path secured, the shading woods emit a fragrant hope. The people will arrive.

The journey is hard, the arrival harder. As they build a city and a temple, the Lord comes. "Who can en-

sure the day of his coming, and who can stand when he appears? He is like a refiner's fire and like a fuller's soap; ... He will purify the descendants of Levi and refine them like gold and silver" (Mal. 3:2-4). They sowed with tears, but reap with joy in the promise of a beautiful homecoming. But they find refining fire at the center of their dream. Is this a contradiction?

The city is civic order and the temple the place of prescribed religious duty. Consider a story: "Abbot Lot came to Abbot Joseph and said, Father according as I am able, I keep my little rule, and my little fast, my prayer, meditations and contemplative silence; and according as I am able I strive to cleanse my heart of thoughts: now what more should I do? The Elder rose up in reply and stretched out his hands to heaven, and his fingers became like ten lamps of fire. He said: Why not be totally changed into fire?" (*Sayings of the Desert Fathers*, trans. Thomas Merton). The judgment of the just judge is enlightenment.

In Advent we are each to make our way along a prepared path, to John and his baptism of repentance for the forgiveness of sins. Yet our little bath is not enough. "He will baptize you with the Holy Spirit and fire" (Luke 3:16). There is no escaping. "For everyone will be salted with fire" (Mark 9:49). This purifying, however, is good for one and for all: "Have salt in yourselves and be at peace with one another" (Mark 9:50).

Look It Up

Read Phil. 1:6. Homecoming and cleansing: God will bring it to completion.

Think About It

The bush was blazing, yet it was not consumed. Put your head back, open your mouth, and swallow the flame that rests just over you. You're better when you burn.

Judgment and Mercy

Zephaniah poured out the venom of divine judgment against King Josiah's multinational idolatries. Everyone was implicated. He thus roared until he, or his devout redactor, grew exhausted with the foul smell of wrath. Joy broke through. He said, speaking for God, "Sing aloud, O daughter Zion; shout, O Israel! Rejoice and exult with all your heart, O daughter Jerusalem! The Lord has taken away the judgments against you" (Zeph. 3:14-15). God is near and in the song, "The Lord, your God, is in your midst, a warrior who gives victory; he will rejoice over you with gladness, he will renew you in his love; he will exult over you with loud singing as on a day of festival" (Zeph. 3:17-18).

A day of festival is anticipated right along with a day of wrath. Wrath is God's truth in the face of human corruption, which, after it has blown, leaves a humanity adjusted to its providential place. "For I will leave in the midst of you a people humble and low. They shall seek refuge in the name of the Lord — the remnant of Israel Then they will pasture and lie down, and no one shall make them afraid" (Zeph. 3:12-13). It is good to be human again. It's good to walk in a world not merely our own.

John the Baptist stands in the tradition of prophetic judgment. He called the gathering crowd a "brood of vipers." His question is a thinly veiled threat: "Who warned you to flee from the wrath to come?" (Luke 3:7). He is speaking directly to their expectation, a narrative they well know. "That day will be a day of wrath, a day of distress and anguish, a day of ruin and devastation, a day of darkness and gloom, a day of cloud and thick darkness, a day of trumpet blast and battle cry against the fortified cities and against the lofty battlements" (Zeph. 1:15-16). John knows, as do the people, that a devout and holy life can only exist in

the face of a sober meditation on the brevity of life and the certainty of divine judgment. Bear good fruit, share your extra coat, collect the amount prescribed, do not extort money. God is not mocked.

So the announcement "The Lord is near" sits uneasily alongside "Do not worry about anything" (Phil. 4:5-6). Yet the Lord has never been nearer than in the living flame of love (John of the Cross) blazing out in the person of Jesus Christ. Jesus said hard words too. People walked away, tried to entrap him, caught him, mocked him, and killed him. But for all the fire of his presence and the promise that he will come to judge, he is from before all beginnings and to the ages of ages, a pure divine person and the full substance of love. He is the truth, and the truth is never less than flame, never less than love.

Can this be said? Truth and mercy, God's truth and mercy, have kissed each other. Caution is required. A ponderous tone and even a hint of threat will not sell in this time. The sermon is over when people stop listening. And yet, if gauged carefully, people will listen and receive the truth of their own need. They know they are not altogether good. Seeing this, they may see and feel the need for mercy.

In the face of mercy, what are we to say but this: "Sing aloud, O daughter of Zion; shout, O Israel! Rejoice and exult with all your heart, O daughter of Jerusalem!" (Zeph. 3:14).

Look It Up

Read Phil. 4:7. Mercy brings peace unimaginable.

Think About It

Truth and need make an empty flask ready for water from the springs of salvation.



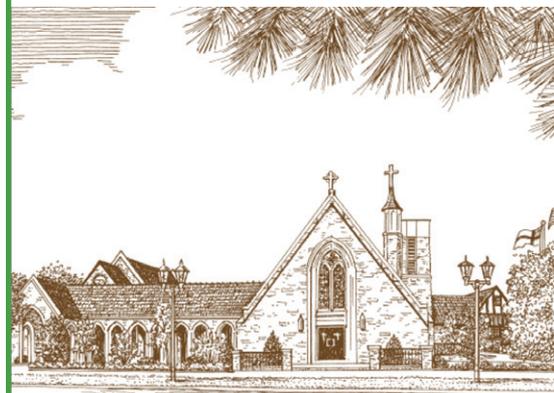
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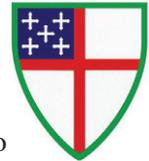
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