

# THE LIVING CHURCH

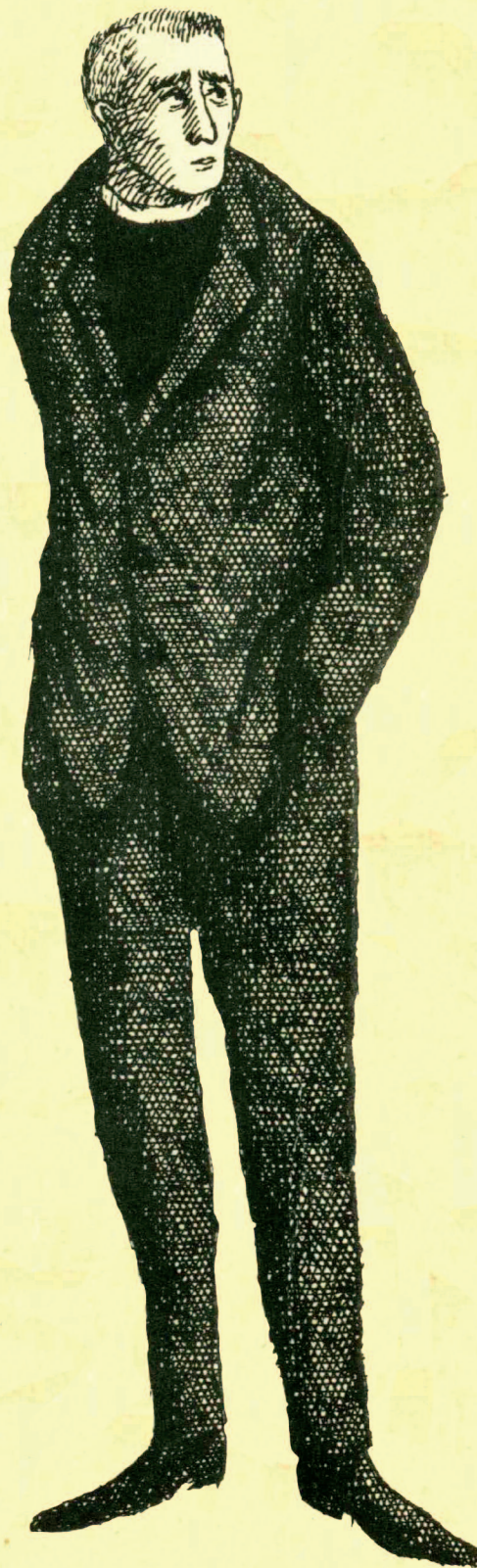
May 28, 2017

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For Anglican book collectors, there are few titles so sought after as *The Innocent Curate*, A. Paris Leary's 1963 *roman à clef* about life at St. George's Church, Schenectady.







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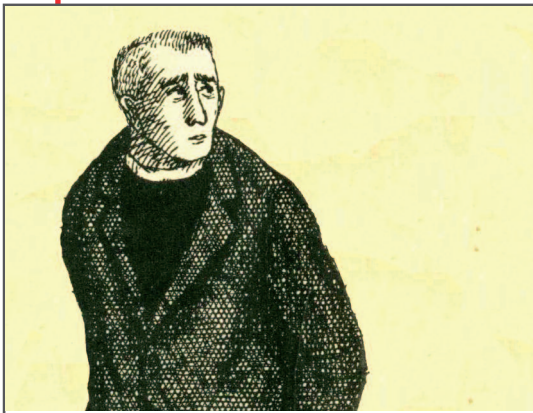


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## ON THE COVER

“The curate in his innocence receives the stigmata while delivering a tray of drinks to friends at the country club, and things fall apart: ‘But why?’ asks Sonny. ‘I didn’t do anything wrong’” (see “I Didn’t Do Anything Wrong,” p. 28).

# THE LIVING CHURCH

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### LIVING CHURCH Partners

We are grateful to Camp Allen and the Episcopal Church in Connecticut [p. 41], Jerusalem Peacebuilders [p. 43], and the Diocese of Indianapolis and St. Michael’s by-the-Sea, Carlsbad [p. 44], whose generous support helped make this issue possible.

# Spiritual Disarmament

“Unholy Trinity” conference confronts the menace of gun violence in America.

Episcopal bishops, clergy, and lay people gathered in Chicago on April 20-22 for a conference addressing the problems of poverty, racism, and gun violence in the United States.

Bishops United Against Gun Violence’s “Unholy Trinity” conference met in Hyde Park, the neighborhood of the University of Chicago and Barack Obama before his election as president. It drew about 150 participants from 37 Episcopal dioceses, including 25 bishops and one bishop-elect. Lutherans, Presbyterians, and Roman Catholics also participated.

Chicago had the nation’s highest number of homicides in 2016. Chicago’s struggles with violence may have set the tone for the conference, but many speakers stressed that the problem is not isolated to one city, nor is the outlook as bleak as many news headlines suggest.

Among the presenters was the Rev. Canon Kelly Brown Douglas, a professor of religion at Goucher College in Baltimore and canon theologian at Washington National Cathedral.

Douglas detailed racism’s roots in Colonial-era America before outlining an indictment of white supremacy in the United States. Higher rates of poverty and incarceration, she argued, are continuing effects of a “violent anti-black narrative that helps to define American identity.”

Given such historic and systemic oppression, Douglas asked why it is surprising that blacks face a greater threat of violence.

“The system has been structured to lead to their death, not to their life,” she said.

Afternoon workshops on April 21 featured discussions of how to lobby legislators, how to engage with evangelical Christians on these issues, and how to develop community organizing campaigns. In one ses-



David Paulsen/Episcopal News Service photo

Bishops Jeffrey Lee, Ian Douglas, Mark Beckwith, Eugene Taylor Sutton, and Mariann Edgar Budde carry an “Unholy Trinity” conference banner as they lead a procession April 21 on the streets of Chicago’s Hyde Park neighborhood.

sion, the Rev. Carol Reese discussed her work as a chaplain in the trauma center of Chicago’s John H. Stroger, Jr., Hospital. In another session, a delegation from the Diocese of Massachusetts explained the diocese’s successes working with youth in a program called B-Peace for Jorge, which honors a young man who was murdered in 2012.

The Rev. Rob Schenck, president of the recently created Dietrich Bonhoeffer Institute in Washington joined Lucy McBath in leading a workshop about evangelical Christians and gun violence. McBath, whose 17-year-old son, Jordan, was shot dead at a Florida gas station in 2012, are the subjects of a documentary, *The Armor of Light* (2015).

“I think it’s critical and necessary that we treat the subject as a moral, ethical, and even spiritual concern,” Schenck told TLC. He said the life-and-death nature of gun violence and the way it affects relationships make it a theologically substantial subject that often finds evangelicals and other Christians on opposite sides of the spectrum.

Schenck, a pastor in what he describes as a very conservative and evangelical old-line Methodist tradition, said he sought to create conversation and understanding between mainline Protestants and evangelicals at the workshop.

“I wasn’t sure how many of my attendees would know, for example, that evangelicals are one of the population subgroups that are most likely to defend unfettered gun access and to actually have access to firearms,” he said. “This was really about revealing serious ethical, moral, and theological problems in my own community.”

Schenck hopes participants in Unholy Trinity will see the challenge of working with evangelicals as a worthy one that shows promise. “It won’t happen passively,” he said. “So, I asked participants in my session for help. I literally asked them for help to get to a better place.”

The conference included a public procession down the sidewalks of the streets that lead through the University of Chicago.

*Matthew Townsend, with reporting by David Paulsen, ENS*



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the people.”

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# Risk it All in Mission

Participants in the Missional Voices National Gathering heard challenges to risk everything and explore transformative new ways of ministry to share Jesus' love. The conference met at Virginia Theological Seminary on April 21-22.

The gathering drew about 225 clergy, seminarians, and lay people to VTS; about one-third were seminarians. This was the second Missional Voices conference, following last spring's student-organized event.

The Rev. Alan Bentrup, cofounder of Missional Voices, was a VTS student when he helped organize that first meeting. He told TLC the purpose of this year's gathering was to continue the conversation within the Episcopal Church on innovative ministries and missional communities. Bentrup is now a curate at St. Mary's Church in Cypress, Texas.

The gathering met in partnership with VTS, the Diocese of Texas, the Diocese of Washington, Bexley Seabury, the Episcopal Evangelism Society, Evangelism Initiatives, and Genesis. The aim: to create an annual event that empowers congregations to develop new forms of church that reach an increasingly diverse society. Plans are to hold the 2018 Missional Voices gathering April 19-21 in Indianapolis, Bentrup said.

The Very Rev. Ian S. Markham, dean and president of VTS, said he is committed to the work of Missional Voices because the gathering can create a network of people who are doing innovative work within the Church. "The network will make a difference to the future of our tradition," he said. He added that the "single greatest threat to the Episcopal Church is our paralysis."

The Rt. Rev. C. Andrew Doyle, keynote speaker and Bishop of Texas, stressed the need to look beyond the institutional church in finding new forms of ministry.

"Everything is about supporting a structure in which we are imprisoned," he said. "We have made the church a professional business." This structured church is "an organization that Jesus did not imagine."

Doyle noted that all of Jesus' disciples turned into apostles and were sent into the wider world. The bishop said of the current church structure, "If we're going to have it, it has to work for the gospel."

Doyle cited Jesus' parable of the Good Samaritan (Luke 10:25-37) to illustrate the concept that Christians need to think of everyone as their neighbors, not just the like-minded. Followers of Jesus are called to "step fearlessly outside what our culture has sanctified," he said.

"I think we completely underestimate what Jesus expects of us as individuals and as a church," Doyle said. "There is a deep sacrificial act that is required of us. ... This is not about being nice people."

Asked by TLC what advice he would give to congregations, given the church's institutional structure, he said, "You have to be good stewards of what you have." But he also said parishioners need to take ministry into surrounding neighborhoods: "You have to walk outside your doors and meet your neighbors."

The Rev. Canon Stephanie Spellers, canon to the presiding bishop for evangelism and reconciliation and a faculty member at General Theological Seminary, cited Luke 10:1-12, in which Jesus calls 70 of his disciples and gives them instructions for taking the risk of going out into the world. He tells them to travel from town to town carrying no purse, bag, or sandals, preaching the kingdom of God. That passage, she said, embraces Jesus' values of what it means to be church. Spellers said traits important in missional ministry include humility, curiosity, compas-

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sion, a sense of playfulness and joy, and resilience.

The Rev. Tim Baer and the Rev. Kirsten Baer, 2011 graduates of VTS, took a risk when they accepted a call in July 2013 from the Rt. Rev. Edward K. Konieczny, Bishop of Oklahoma, to provide a new vision for ministry in Yukon, a growing suburb northwest of Oklahoma City. They faced hard decisions when they took over as co-vicars of the small Church of the Savior, in which membership had shrunk to about 25.

"It was really a prime location to start a new church," said Tim Baer, but "it was a hard restart." Kirsten Baer said the church was cluttered and badly in need of repairs.

The Baers decided to close the church for a while and meet with parishioners in their living room to discuss a new vision and bring in new people. They talked about what a church of 200 to 300 members might look like.

"It's a pretty extreme option," said Tim Baer of closing a struggling church for a time. "Maybe more churches should try it."

Kirsten Baer said she and her husband took pruning as their inspiration, which Jesus mentions often (see John 15:1-5).

"We threw out a lot, we cleaned, we renovated," she said. "We also pruned old ideas." But, she emphasized, "We did not prune people."

She said they knew they were on the right track when a 14-year-old said, "I will do anything to help this church grow."

Grow it did, doubling even before a relaunch in January 2014 with its new name, Grace Church. It has grown 30 to 40 percent year by year and now has about 275 active parishioners.

Tim Baer said their story is "just one example of restarts in the Episcopal Church." But unfortunately, he said, "the Episcopal Church is closing more churches than we are starting."

Both Tim and Kirsten Baer emphasized the importance of having the trust, support, and courage of their bishop. They said he provided a step-down grant of \$500,000 for the restart. It takes "spiritual venture capitalists" to

invest in the mission of the church, Tim Baer stressed. "It takes money to do ministry. ... We can't be afraid to ask for that."

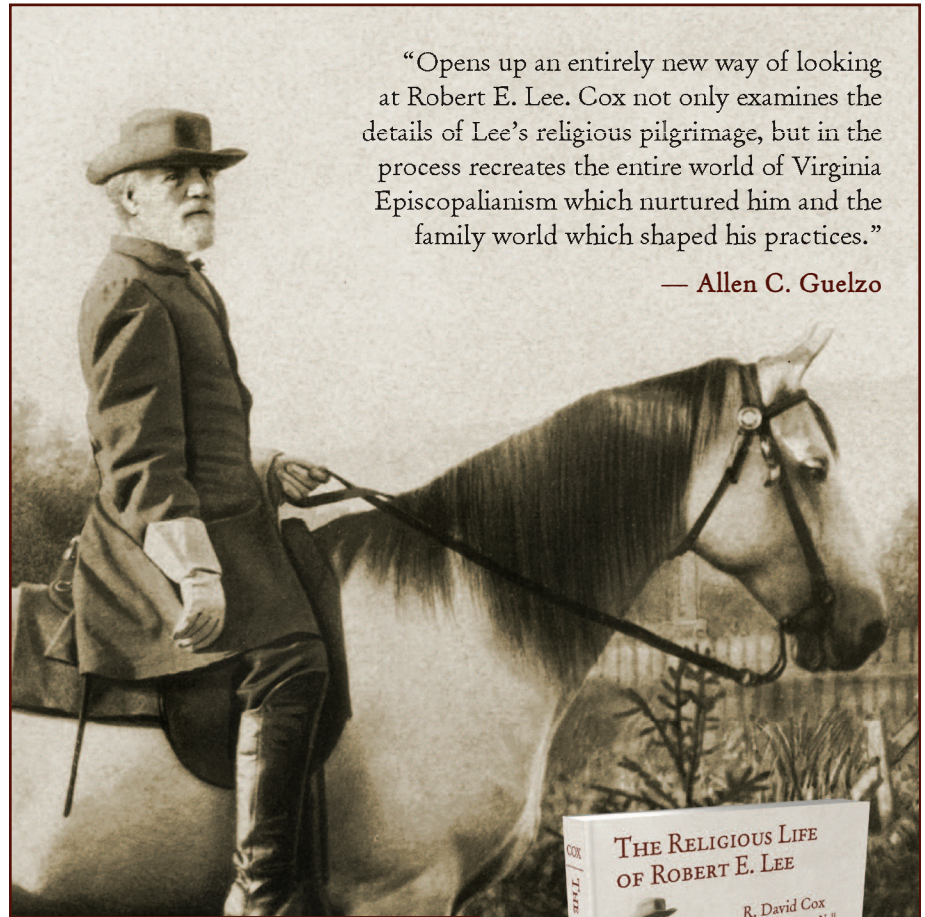
"Focus on your spiritual life, focus on your roots," Tim Baer told seminar-ians at the conference. "The Spirit is moving; let's get pruning."

Above all, he told them, they need to spend time in prayer, noting that he and his wife had never prayed so fervently as when they were sent to Yukon.

The Rev. Nancy Frausto took a risk when she became pastor of Trinity Church on Melrose Avenue in Los Angeles, which she described as a "scrappy" church that preaches the gospel on the wrong side of the tracks in Hollywood, far from the glamor pictured in movie magazines.

"Scrappy church ministry is not for the weak," she said. "I love scrappy church ministry because it's full of scrappy people. ... I have learned that

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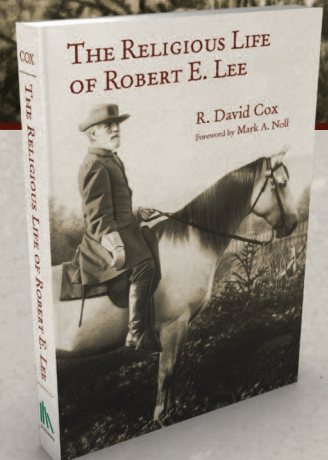
"Opens up an entirely new way of looking at Robert E. Lee. Cox not only examines the details of Lee's religious pilgrimage, but in the process recreates the entire world of Virginia Episcopalianism which nurtured him and the family world which shaped his practices."

— Allen C. Guelzo

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## Mission

(Continued from previous page)

good things are worth fighting for.” She described scrappy ministry as “ugly and dirty and heartbreaking” and a response to the “benign neglect of the higher leadership of the mainstream church.”

“It’s all about love,” she said. “Scrappy church love calls you to be authentic.”

Frausto, who recently left Trinity and said that this scrappy church may have to close, recounted the story of a former parishioner who had become homeless and lived on the streets.

The man came forward during a Maundy Thursday service to have his feet washed. Frausto, wondering if anyone would rise to wash his feet, was moved when everyone came forward, including children.

“It took six of us to remove his shoes

and socks,” she said. They were encrusted with a mixture of sweat, dirt, and blood. A parishioner offered the man clean socks and shoes.

“Real ministry that is out in the street will break your heart, and it’s worth it,” Frausto said. “Take up your cross and risk it all, just like Jesus.”

The Rev. Becca Stevens, founder and president of Nashville’s Thistle Farms and the Magdalen House recovery program (a healing ministry for women who have a history of substance abuse and prostitution) said she had to learn that success and faithfulness are not the same thing.

“I spent years trying to hide it when someone relapsed in our program,” said Stevens, who has served as chaplain of St. Augustine’s Chapel at Vanderbilt University.

But, she said, she has learned as a risk-taker that “if you are faithful to what you’re doing ... people can weep with you. People will hope with you, people will long with you.”

Thistle Farms, whose motto is “Love Heals Every Body,” is the largest U.S. social enterprise run by survivors of violence, trafficking, prostitution, and addiction. It makes handcrafted natural body and home wares such as soaps, healing oils, and candles, funneling the profits from sales back to the women who make them.

Stevens’s healing ministry also has an international outreach. She described a new Thistle Farms weaving project with Syrian refugee women in the Rilsona Greek refugee camp. The women are learning to weave doormats using the bright material from life vests they wore during their harrowing escape from Syria.

“You heal the women, you heal the village. ... Let new dreams come,” said Stevens, who in 2011 was named a Champion of Change by the White House for her work against domestic violence. “We are walking toward wholeness and healing together. ... This is old-school stuff; it’s called community.” She said, “It’s a privilege to do the missional work of the church.”

Like Stevens and Frausto, other speakers emphasized the spiritual rewards of missional ministry. Indeed, people who receive missional ministry

need to be allowed the opportunity to give back, said the Rev. Canon Angela S. Ifill, retired missionary for black ministries in the Episcopal Church.

“Even in our most generous moments we talk about ‘doing for,’” Spellers said. “Look for what people know” instead of going into a neighborhood “wondering how you can fix them.”

*Peggy Eastman*

## Reforms in Haiti

A newly released covenant among Presiding Bishop Michael Curry and the bishops and standing committee of Haiti requires that the Rt. Rev. Ogé Beauvoir resign his role as bishop suffragan. Bishop Curry will then appoint him as special envoy to Food for the Poor, which has employed Bishop Beauvoir since May 2015 as executive director of its Haiti office.

The Office of Public Affairs has released a report about the covenant, English and French copies of the covenant, Bishop Curry’s letter to the covenant’s parties, and a memorandum of understanding.

The covenant “seeks to address and resolve many of the issues of conflict that have been burdening the diocese,” lifts postponed fundraising by the Episcopal Church, and opens new possibilities for a united future as the diocese prepares to elect its next bishop in 2018.

## Greater 501(c)3 Freedom

Churches in the United States may now exercise more freedom of speech on political issues, thanks to an executive order signed by President Donald Trump on May 4.

The order directs the IRS to use “maximum enforcement discretion” of the regulation, which prohibits churches and tax-exempt groups from participating in campaigns and endorsing candidates. Churches and other 501(c)3 organizations that stray into political speech risk losing tax-exempt status.

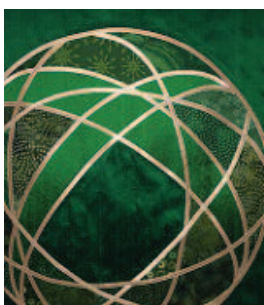
Trump signed the order on the Na-

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tional Day of Prayer at the White House. “This financial threat against the faith community is over,” Trump said. “No one should be censoring sermons or targeting pastors.”

The order did not repeal the rule but directed the IRS to stop enforcing it. During a speech in February, Trump had promised to “totally destroy” the Johnson Amendment. Congress approved the law in 1954 under the guidance of Sen. Lyndon Johnson, who later became president. Repealing the amendment requires an act of Congress.

Some religious leaders and pastors expressed dissatisfaction to the Associated Press about the order, saying it was inadequate. Gregory Baylor, senior counsel for the Alliance Defending Freedom, told the AP that the order leaves Trump’s campaign promises unfulfilled.

Evangelical leader Ralph Reed, however, said the order was a first step. “This administratively removes the threat of harassment,” Reed told the AP. “That is a really big deal.”

Episcopalians have been more tight-lipped on the order’s suggested expansion of speech rights, which Trump also says will provide “regulatory relief” by suspending Affordable Care Act requirements that require employers to provide access to birth control, including abortifacients.

Employers ranging from Hobby Lobby to Little Sisters of the Poor filed lawsuits to seek exceptions from that requirement.

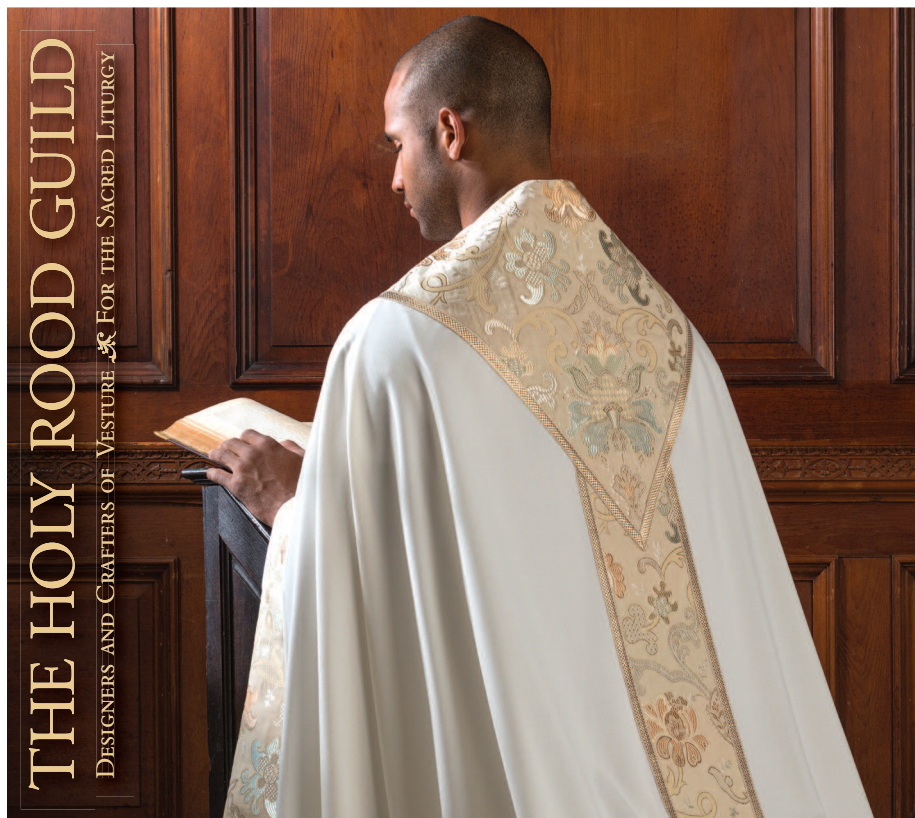
Neva Rae Fox, public affairs officer of the Episcopal Church, told TLC by email that she did not anticipate comment from Presiding Bishop Michael Curry.

The Rt. Rev. Scott B. Hayashi, Bishop of Utah, told FOX 13 in Salt Lake City that he had mixed feelings on the order.

“On the one level, I’m happy he did not attempt to allow businesses to discriminate on religious grounds,” he said. “On the other hand, there is a fair amount to be concerned about what may be coming next.”

Hayashi said he tries to avoid endorsing candidates or parties in his

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## Freedom of Speech

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work as a bishop, and cited fear that “churches can simply become tools of whatever candidate or wealthy individual wants to get so-and-so elected to office.”

The Episcopal Church is no stranger to the effects of the Johnson Amendment. In 2005, the IRS warned All Saints Church in Pasadena, California, that it risked losing tax-exempt status because of a guest sermon delivered two days before the 2004 presidential election.

The Rev. George F. Regas, former rector of the parish, called the Iraq war

a disaster. The IRS cited a description of the sermon as a “searing indictment of the Bush administration’s policies in Iraq” and noted that the sermon described “tax cuts as inimical to the values of Jesus.”

The IRS dropped the matter two years later.

Matthew Townsend

## No Blessing Rites in Ireland

The Church of Ireland’s General Synod rejected a call for services that celebrate same-sex unions. It voted 147 to 176 with 24 abstentions to reject a motion asking the church’s bishops to commission a service of public thanks-

giving for legally married same-sex couples.

The synod did, however, authorize bishops to further examine theological differences on the issue.

The vote followed a two-hour debate. Clergy (56 to 72, nine abstentions) and laity (90 to 104, 15 abstentions) voted against. The motion was sponsored by Changing Attitude Ireland. Opponents said it impinged on the church’s traditional teaching on marriage and would constitute a problem for relations with other churches.

One delegate, the Rev. Trevor Johnston of the Diocese of Connor in Northern Ireland, said the motion discriminated against those who do not act on their same-sex attraction.

“I feel I am being bullied,” said the Rev. Alison Calvin of Kilmore. “It’s not fair that my deeply held convictions are portrayed as those of a narrow-minded bigot.”

The synod had before it a 96-page *Guide to the Conversation on Human Sexuality in the Context of Christian Belief*. The guide, the result of four years of work, made clear that there were “deep divisions” within the select committee producing it and the Church of Ireland.

The motion asked the church to prepare “sensitive pastoral arrangements for public prayer and thanksgiving with same-sex couples” at key points in their lives, including marriage. It also asked the church to acknowledge the “injury felt by members who enter into loving, committed and legally recognized same-sex relationships, due to the absence of provision for them.”

“The tone of the debate was respectful on both sides of the discussion and the debate was very sensitively chaired by the Archbishop of Armagh,” said Canon Ian Ellis, editor of *Church of Ireland Gazette*, in the *Belfast Telegraph*. “While I believe that couples who enter into such same-sex relationships need to be reassured both that the Church respects their love and care for each other and that they are not barred from receiving Holy Communion, I believe that the kind of public liturgical celebration that was envisaged in the motion could easily have given rise to confusion over the Church of Ireland’s

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teaching that marriage is between one man and one woman.”

“We hope people will see this not as a defeat but as a debate to be revisited,” said Scott Golden of Changing Attitude Ireland. “It’s encouraging to note that views are changing.”

*John Martin*

## Church Picks Austin Developer for Archives Building Project

The Episcopal Church has chosen Cielo Property Group to develop a church-owned city block in downtown Austin as the new home of the Archives of the Episcopal Church and an adjoining mixed-use project.

The Episcopal Church purchased the Austin city block bounded by Seventh, Eighth, Trinity, and Neches Streets in 2009 as the site for the archives. The new 67,000-square-foot home of the archives will include research, exhibit, and public space. The facility will serve as a space in which Episcopalians and others can study and celebrate the history, beliefs, and work of the church and provide a cultural amenity for the broader Austin community.

The church chose Cielo from among 40 private developers that expressed interest in the property. The church requested proposals in 2015 from private developers interested in a partnership to build the national archives facility and a mixed-use project. As part of its search, the church developed a website called Block 87.

“Years of thoughtful planning have led to this remarkable partnership to achieve the Episcopal Church’s goal of a permanent research facility for its historical archives,” said Mark Duffy, director of the archives. “We are excited by this next step for the archives in setting down deeper roots in the Austin community, where church life, education, research, and cultural engagement are valued and affirmed as gifts.”

“We wanted a partner who knew Austin and was trusted by the community,” said the Rev. Canon Lang Lowrey III of Atlanta, who represented the

church in its search for a development partner. “Cielo is an Austin-based company led by people who really care about making the city a better place. This, combined with their vision and ideas for the property, made Cielo our top choice.”

“Cielo is honored to be selected by the Episcopal Church,” said founding partner Bobby Dillard. “We understand the importance of this project to the Church and its members, and we’re excited to have the opportunity to bring even more positive change to the northeast area of downtown Austin where many exciting things are already happening.”

Dillard said the company is in the early stages of designing the mixed-use project, but the concepts are preliminary. Financial details were not released.

Cielo is a privately owned commercial real estate investment and development firm that specializes in redeveloping and repositioning of underutilized properties with strong potential for value enhancement. Founded in 2010,

the company has acquired or developed more than 1.3 million square feet of commercial real estate assets in Texas, including eight retail and office buildings in Austin’s urban core, where the company is developing an additional 500,000 square feet of office, retail, and residential projects.

*Office of Public Affairs*

## A ‘Hate Crime’ that Barked

An organist has been arrested in the post-election vandalism at an Episcopal church in Indiana — an incident that generated national headlines in November as a possible case of politically motivated hate speech, but one that prosecutors now say was instead the act of someone hoping to mobilize others disappointed with the election results.

Nathan Stang, 26, faces a misdemeanor count of institutional criminal

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## ‘Hate Crime’

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mischief for the damage to St. David’s Church, the congregation in Bean Blossom, Indiana, where he serves as organist. He was arrested May 3, three days after Episcopal Church Presiding Bishop Michael Curry came to St. David’s to preside at the Sunday Eucharist and preach.

The congregation feels “like we had the rug pulled out from underneath us,” the Rev. Kelsey Hutto, priest-in-charge at St. David’s, told Episcopal News Service in a May 3 interview.

*David Paulsen, ENS*

## GAFCON Enters Europe & U.K.

The primates of GAFCON have decided to consecrate a bishop for Europe and the United Kingdom as they anticipate rites for same-sex marriage within the Scottish Episcopal Church. The primates met in Nigeria on April 24-28.

“Of immediate concern is the reality that ... the Scottish Episcopal Church is likely to formalize [its] rejection of Jesus’ teaching on marriage,” the GAFCON primates wrote in a communiqué that followed the meeting. “If this were to happen, faithful Anglicans in Scotland will need appropriate pastoral care.”

Already there is speculation about the identity of the GAFCON bishop, including the Rt. Rev. Michael Nazir-Ali, former Bishop of Rochester, and Canon Andy Lines, chairman of GAFCON-UK and general secretary of the Crosslinks mission agency.

The Most Rev. David Chillingworth, Primus of the Scottish Episcopal Church, responded to GAFCON’s plan on May 1.

“In June, the General Synod of the Scottish Episcopal Church will reach the final stage of consideration of changes which would make possible same-sex marriage in our churches,”

he said. “The news that GAFCON intends to send a missionary bishop to Britain is regrettable. The Anglican Communion functions as a global communion on the basis of respect for the territorial integrity of each province. This move is a breach of that understanding.”

GAFCON offers courses for bishops through a Bishops Training Institute conference.

*John Martin*

## Baskerville-Burrows Leads Indianapolis

The Rev. Jennifer Baskerville-Burrows was ordained and consecrated the eleventh bishop of Indianapolis April 29, making her the first black woman to lead a diocese in the history of the Episcopal Church and the first woman to succeed another woman as diocesan bishop.

From 2012 until her election as bishop, Baskerville-Burrows served as director of networking in the Diocese of Chicago.

Before her work in Chicago, Baskerville-Burrows was rector of Grace Episcopal Church in Syracuse, New York, where she also served as Episcopal chaplain at Syracuse University. She holds a bachelor’s degree from Smith College, a master’s degree in historic preservation planning from Cornell University, and a master of divinity from Church Divinity School of the Pacific.

She and her husband, Harrison, met at her ordination to the priesthood in 1998 and were married in 2003. They have a son, Timothy, age 6, who is a kindergarten student at St. Richard’s Episcopal School in Indianapolis.

*ENS*

## Long Path to New Call

The Rev. Jake Worley, an Alabama-born priest, has been elected bishop of the Diocese of Caledonia in British Columbia, Canada.

Worley, rector of the Bulkley Valley Regional Parish, which includes three congregations in northern British Co-



lumbia, was elected on the eighth ballot of an episcopal election held in Prince Rupert on April 22.

Worley is a graduate of Trinity School for Ministry and was ordained in the Episcopal Church in 2005. He founded a church that became part of the Anglican Church in North America, served as an interim rector at St. Martin's Anglican Church in Fort St. John, British Columbia, served a year as a priest in the Church of Ireland, and most recently became rector in Bulkley Valley.

*Tali Folkins, Anglican Journal*

## Llandaff Appointment

The Very Rev. June Osborne, Dean of Salisbury for 13 years, has been chosen as the 72nd Bishop of Llandaff, a diocese that serves most of Cardiff, the South Wales Valleys, and the Vale of Glamorgan.

Bishops of the Church in Wales became responsible for appointing the Bishop of Llandaff when no candidate nominated at the electoral college in February secured enough votes for election.

The Very Rev. Jeffrey John protested that election, which he said discriminated against him as an openly gay man. Several other parties joined him in the protest, but the church stood by its decision.

A confirmation vote by the Sacred Synod of Church in Wales Bishops is scheduled for July 14 at Brecon Cathedral. Dean Osborne's consecration is scheduled for July 15, and she will be enthroned at Llandaff Cathedral on July 22.

*Anna Morrell, The Church in Wales*

## Costa Rica's Texas Extension

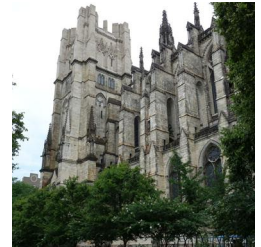
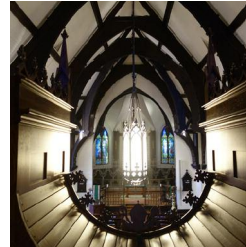
The Rt. Rev. Hector Monterroso, Bishop of Costa Rica, will serve as Assistant Bishop of Texas beginning July 1.

Monterroso will serve as bishop of the southern region of the diocese. Elected delegates approved the position at the diocese's annual meeting in

(Continued on next page)

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## Assistant in Texas

(Continued from previous page)  
Galveston on Feb 12.

Citing their mutual vision of mission and evangelism, Bishop C. Andrew Doyle said Monterroso's work will continue to strengthen growth in Hispanic congregations and new missional communities and church plants in the Diocese of Texas.

"I'm thrilled Bishop Monterroso has accepted my invitation to join our diocesan staff," Bishop Doyle said. "He has a heart for mission and will be a great presence in our congregations. He will also help raise up leaders within the Hispanic congregations, although he will not minister in these communities exclusively."

"I identified with Bishop Doyle's vision of missional communities and expansion," Bishop Monterroso said.

While other U.S. dioceses had approached him previously, Monterroso said he felt most aligned with Bishop Doyle and the Diocese of Texas.

*The Diocese of Texas*

## Five Delaware Nominees

The Diocese of Delaware has announced a five-member slate in the search for the diocese's 11th bishop:

- The Rt. Rev. Laura J. Ahrens, Bishop Suffragan, the Episcopal Church in Connecticut

- The Very Rev. Michael Battle, Herbert Thompson Professor of Church

and Society and director of the Desmond Tutu Center at General Theological Seminary

- The Rev. Kevin S. Brown, rector, Church of the Holy Comforter, Charlotte

- The Rev. Patricia S. Downing, rector, Trinity and Old Swedes Parish, Wilmington, Delaware

- The Rev. Canon Scott A. Gunn, executive director of Forward Movement

The election is scheduled during a special convention on July 15.

## East Tennessee Slate

The Diocese of East Tennessee has announced a slate of four men and one woman for the diocese's election of a fifth bishop:

- The Rev. Brian Cole, rector of Good Shepherd, Lexington, Kentucky

- The Rev. Hendree Harrison, rector of St. Paul's, Athens, Tennessee

- The Rev. Canon Frank Logue, canon to the ordinary, Diocese of Georgia

- The Rev. Canon Lance Ousley, canon for stewardship and development in the Diocese of Olympia and priest-in-charge of St. John's, Kirkland, Washington

- The Rev. Marty Stebbins, rector of St. Timothy's, Wilson, North Carolina

The election is scheduled for July 28 at St. John's Cathedral in Knoxville.

## Sudanese Church Plans School

Despite civil war and 500 percent inflation, the Episcopal Church of South

Sudan is pressing ahead with plans to found an Anglican university for the nation. The plan is to open the multi-campus university in the next two years.

An important part of the vision for the new institution is being a catalyst for national unity, and it will be open to all regardless of tribe. The new university will bring together eight existing Anglican theological colleges in South Sudan.

There are currently five state-run universities in South Sudan, but three have suspended operations because of civil war.

There is high demand for tertiary education, not least for women. Women account for a quarter of current South Sudan university students.

The U.K.-based South Sudan Church Partnership is among the project's backers.

*John Martin*

## Archbishop Welby at Yad Vashem

The Archbishop of Canterbury and the Chief Rabbi of the Commonwealth visited Israel's Holocaust memorial, Yad Vashem, May 3.

Archbishop Justin Welby and Chief Rabbi Mirvis made the joint visit to remember and lament the tragedy of the Holocaust. Speaking at Yad Vashem, the archbishop acknowledged the history of anti-Semitism in the Church and restated his commitment to continue efforts to stop anti-Semitism.

Earlier in the day, the two leaders prayed for peace at the Western Wall in Jerusalem.

## Steps to Reconciliation

Church leaders invite Episcopalians to study the newly released *Becoming Beloved Community: The Episcopal Church's Long-term Commitment to Racial Healing, Reconciliation and Justice*.

The document's release follows a year of consultation by the presiding bishop, the president of the House of Deputies, and other officers of General

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Convention's House of Bishops and House of Deputies.

Presiding Bishop Michael Curry and the Rev. Gay Clark Jennings, president of the House of Deputies, will host a webinar to discuss the church's long-term commitment May 16.

"You're not looking at a set of programs," Bishop Curry said. "You're looking at a path for how we, as the Episcopal branch of the Jesus movement, can more fully and prayerfully embody the loving, liberating, life-giving way of Jesus in our relationships with each other. Look at the scriptures, at Christian history. There is no doubt that beloved community, healing, justice and reconciliation are at the heart of Jesus' movement in this world."

*Becoming Beloved Community's* vision emerges as a response to General Convention Resolution C019 ("Establish Response to Systemic Injustice"). The comprehensive commitment, which the church's top leaders created in partnership with the presiding bishop's staff, key leaders, networks, and organizations dedicated to racial reconciliation, links new initiatives with existing work and seeks to support local, regional, provincial, and churchwide network efforts.

*Office of Public Affairs*

## Bishops Defend Refugees

Sixteen bishops of the Episcopal Church have filed an amici curiae brief that opposes President Trump's executive order restricting immigration.

Attorneys for the bishops filed the brief April 21 with the U.S. Court of Appeals for the Ninth District in San Francisco. Another brief, filed with the U.S. Court of Appeals for the Fourth Circuit in Richmond, makes the same arguments.

"The Bishops earnestly believe the President's recently revised executive order impedes the ability of Episcopalians to practice their faith and keep their baptismal covenant with God," the brief says. "This executive order has slammed the door on people who have suffered some of the greatest atrocities in recent times, and it does

this solely on the basis of their religion. From its earliest inception, America has been a safe haven for victims of religious oppression in part because religious tolerance is a value enshrined in our Constitution through the Establishment Clause."

## Cathedrals and Expenses

English cathedrals would be in fine shape if the sole measure were the

numbers of people worshipping within them. Half of them, however, face acute financial challenges, and Archbishop Justin Welby has warned against believing they are too big to fail.

Cathedral deans are meeting in London in the last week of April amid talk of cash crises and out-of-control costs. A cathedral "could get into a situation so desperate that there is no obvious solution," said the Rt. Rev. Adrian

(Continued on next page)

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## Cathedrals

(Continued from previous page)

Newman, Bishop of Stepney and former Dean of Rochester, in *The Guardian*.

Newman, who leads a new national working group to investigate the running and financing of cathedrals, said his “finger-in-the-wind estimate” is that nearly half of cathedrals face stern financial challenges.

A new cloud on the horizon is an expectation of greatly reduced government funding for cathedral maintenance through the Heritage Lottery Fund.

In recent months, stories have emerged of individual cathedrals in trouble. Guildford Cathedral’s plans for a massive house-building project on its grounds suffered a death blow when the Guildford Borough Council vetoed the plan.

The Bishops of Exeter and Peterborough recently intervened because their respective cathedrals were in a parlous financial state. Peterborough had a severe cash flow crisis leading to job redundancies. Intervention by the Bishop of Exeter led to the early retirement of its dean.

There is no national process for

funding cathedrals or national rules for running them. Core congregations are often quite small, and those cathedrals that charge entry fees to non-worshipping visitors are generally better off than those that request contributions. But only nine of the 44 charge entrance fees.

Westminster Abbey charges tourist visitors £20. Durham, a historic 900-year-old building, asks £7.50 for the chance to visit a permanent exhibition. Its annual deficit is currently £500,000. The average visitor contributes 35 pence against daily average running costs of £3,500.

“There has never been a time over the past 25 to 30 years when we’ve had so little public money going into cathedrals,” Newman said. “And I think that does need looking at afresh.”

His working group is due to report in December.

*John Martin*

## One Baptism

Roman Catholic and Coptic churches have agreed to recognize each other’s baptisms. The decision was disclosed in a common declaration signed on April 28 by Pope Francis and Pope Tawadros II of the Coptic Orthodox Church. Francis was on a solidarity visit to Egypt in the wake of the Palm

Sunday bombings that left 47 Coptic Christians dead and many injured.

Under the agreement, the churches undertake not to repeat baptisms done by the other church. This long-standing practice followed the split between the two churches dating from the Council of Chalcedon (451).

The statement commits the churches to work together for a shared formulation of the Lord’s Prayer and a common date for celebrating Easter. While in Egypt, Pope Francis addressed a peace conference hosted by the Grand Imam of al-Azhar.

*John Martin*

## TLC Wins 3 Awards

THE LIVING CHURCH won three honors in the Best of the Christian Press Awards 2017 by the Associated Church Press:

- Photography: Photo Spread — “New Americans: A photo essay by Asher Imtiaz” (Sept. 4)

- Photography: Single Photo — Richard Hill, for “A Nation Wounded,” the focus of TLC’s cover essays (Aug. 7)

- Reporting and Writing: Biographical Profile — Richard Mammana, for his profile of Mabel Dearmer, an artist, writer, and pacifist who gave her life in caring for the wounded of World War I (June 12)

Members of the Associated Church Press, founded in 1916, share a common commitment to excellence in journalism to describe, reflect, and support the life of faith and the Christian community.

The ACP announced the award-winners April 28 during its annual convention, which met this year in Chicago.

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St. Luke's Church in Fair Haven, Vermont

G. Jeffrey MacDonald photo

# Pay for a Priest or a Building

For churches with limited income, various options help ministry continue.

By G. Jeffrey MacDonald

In Bethel, Vermont, Christ Church cannot afford a full-time priest. But its buildings — an in-town church and parish hall, plus a historic church for summer use a few miles away in the countryside — are in good shape. So is the congregation's record of giving thousands a year to the local food pantry and supporting other missions.

Christ Church's priest, the Rev. Shelle Richardson, is a volunteer who works as a full-time insurance agent.

That has freed much-needed cash for buildings and benevolence.

"It's money we just wouldn't have available if we were trying to pay for a salary, a reasonable retirement, and all the things that go along with being an employer," said Nancy Wuttke, Christ Church's senior warden.

In turning to volunteer clergy, Christ Church ranks among scores of Episcopal congregations exploring what becomes possible when the priest is not paid a penny. Such arrangements can have drawbacks and need careful

structure, diocesan officials say. But they also open the door to new vitality, an invigorated laity, and what many regard as a heartening shift in congregational dynamics.

"This is a small but mighty congregation," said the Rev. Beth Hilgartner, diocesan companion to Christ Church, which has an average Sunday attendance of about 20. "In some ways, they're more vital than when they had a paid priest. ... I like to ask, *what does this church mean to you?* In a vital con-

(Continued on next page)





The Rev. Deacon Kathy Hartman leads her fellow congregants in worship at Christ Church in Bethel, Vermont.

Photo courtesy of Christ Church

(Continued from previous page)

gregation, the answers will be all about the community that gathers or about the ministry they're doing in the world."

Because unpaid clerics are seldom identified as such, their status often is unnoticed, but they are in every diocese of the Episcopal Church. Thirteen percent of all working Episcopal clergy are uncompensated, according to church statistics. The practice of using unpaid priests stretches across dioceses from Northern Michigan, where 91 percent of working clergy are unpaid, to Nevada (61 percent), Northern California (46 percent), and Northwestern Pennsylvania (43 percent).

The faithful usually turn to volunteer clergy for financial reasons. Episcopal congregations saw average Sunday attendance drop 26 percent from 2005 to 2015, and yearly pledging has not kept pace with inflation. In a cross-denominational survey, the Hartford Institute for Religion Research found median church budgets shrank from

\$150,000 in 2010 to \$125,000 in 2015. Reliance on part-time clergy jumped in the same period from 29 to 38 percent. The vast majority of volunteer clergy serve part time, according to data from the National Congregations Study.

But having a volunteer priest does not require settling for reduced leadership or ministry.

Take, for instance, St. Matthew's Church in Henderson, Texas. In 2007, when the last full-time priest stepped down, the congregation counted 65 active participants. Morale was low and funds were too scant to call a successor.

Now after 10 years with the Rev. Patsy Barham as volunteer priest-in-charge, St. Matthew's has swelled to 100 active congregants. The number of pledging units has nearly doubled from 10 to 19. The entire campus has been renovated, including an expanded playground and new flooring in the sanctuary. A capital campaign was unnecessary to fund improve-

ments because the church budget can now afford both regular maintenance and upgrades, Barham said.

"Patsy's church has blossomed under her part-time leadership much more so than when they had full-time clergy," said Mary MacGregor, former canon for congregational vitality in the Diocese of Texas.

Volunteer pastorates vary widely in their structure and what they entail. Some congregations find ways to provide the ample tending and priestly care they need. Others thrive on the freedom and flexibility that come with the territory.

At St. Matthew's, Barham dedicates 40 to 50 hours a week to the ministry. She's a retired teacher and can afford to do unpaid ministry, she said, because her husband works, her children are grown, and rural east Texas is relatively affordable. She spends more than 20 hours preparing each week's sermon, she said. The rest of the time goes into Sunday morning, administrative du-

ties, and pastoral care such as hospital visitation, which can involve long drives.

Barham finds that being unpaid makes a big difference in how members perceive and respond to her. She teaches that everyone has a ministry. No one is excused, in her view, because excuses — such as *I'm too old, I'm too young, or I've done my turn* — have no basis in Scripture. That point sinks in because she models it.

“They have a photograph that somebody took of me, and underneath it says, ‘It’s hard to say no to her,’” Barham said. “It’s all part of identity. They picked up on the fact that nobody is paying me anything. Nobody is reimbursing me for anything. ... If I can do this and give of myself in the way I am as a model to them, then it’s hard for them to use excuses.”

Barham also finds parishioners hold her work in high regard precisely because she is unpaid. One vestry member served for a year before he studied the budget during one meeting and gasped when he saw no line item for clergy pay. He said nothing until the meeting was over.

“As we were all leaving in the parking lot, he extended his hand, and when I extended mine, well, he kissed the back of my hand,” she recalled. “He said, ‘I had no idea that we did not reimburse you for your time and giving. I have a new respect for you.’ That’s all we’ve ever said about that.”

At Christ Church, members take a very different approach. They rally to make sure the pastoral load is shared among many. Three more congregants are aspirants to ordination in order to give Christ Church a deep bench of priestly leadership. Ten of the 20 who attend weekly take turns preaching, which means Richardson can focus on being the celebrant at Eucharist. She needs to prepare a sermon only a few times a year.

“It’s up to us to keep the church alive,” said Katie Runde, an artist, musician, and divinity-school graduate who takes a turn preaching at Christ Church several times a year. “In some ways, it’s more alive because every member is active.”

But some who work closely with

congregations urge caution. Remaining committed to church buildings while cutting back on staff positions is common practice in the Diocese of Western Massachusetts, where about half of the 56 congregations have no full-time priest, said the Rev. Canon Pamela Mott, canon to the ordinary. When churches cut back a priest’s hours, they end up with diminished means to sustain their properties, she said.

“You don’t have the leadership to keep it going, to be able to do the development work and keep the building going for a smaller and smaller group

of people,” she said. “So my question is, *why does the building always win?*”

Mott mentions an alternative path to vitality for the cash-strapped: keep the salaried priest and leave the building. She cites Grace Church in Great Barrington, which launched in 2013 after two historic congregations parted with their large buildings and high maintenance costs.

“It was the best thing that ever happened to them, most of them will tell you,” she said. The new congregation has a full-time cleric, just not a building. It rents worship space in Barrington.

(Continued on page 21)

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The Rev. Canon Catherine Gregg leads a discernment workshop at St. Matthew's Church in Las Vegas.

G. Jeffrey MacDonald photo

served in her first visit to the congregation for a workshop in January.

"You know what I really noticed when I came here?" she asked a group of 50 who had gathered on a Friday night to brainstorm about the church's niche and future. "Your generosity. You take time to gather stuff and make it available to your neighbors in three different rooms. It's so beautifully displayed: food, clothes, wine glasses, silverware. There's a spirit of generosity that says, *What we have, we share. What we have, we give.* That really, really struck me in my first 15 minutes of being here."

As congregations seek ways to do more with less, some are teaming up to learn how a volunteer pastorate and vitality can go hand in hand. In Vermont, Christ Church leads two other churches — St. Luke's in Fair Haven and St. Andrew's in St. Johnsbury — through a diocesan program. Parishioners see the mentorship as sharing a blessing.

"It would be stifling for us to go back to having a full-time priest," said Wutke, senior warden of Christ Church. "If we were given some big chunk of money, we would do more repairs on old Christ Church. To think, *Oh, you know what, we could afford a priest now*; I just don't think that would occur to us."

*This report is the third of three made possible in part by funding from the BTS Center, mission successor to Bangor Theological Seminary. Based in Maine, BTS (thebtscenter.org) focuses on 21st-century communities of faith and practice. The conclusions reported here are those of the reporter and the people he interviewed.*

(Continued from page 19)

ton Brewery's reception hall and rents an office in a strip mall.

"It raises some challenges around funerals and Christmas Eve," when the church lacks access to its usual worship space. "Some people long for a building, for a place," she said. "But there are benefits. The brewery sets up for them, plows and shovels. If there's a leak, they don't have to worry about it."

However practical a rental arrangement may be, cutting back to part-time or unpaid clergy is the more common path for cost containment. Forty-eight percent of Episcopal congregations had no full-time paid clergy in 2014, up from 43 percent five years earlier.

Sustaining a volunteer priesthood is part of that tapestry, especially in dioceses that have a tradition of it, such as Nevada.

Most Nevada clergy are paid nothing, largely because the region has a half-century heritage of Total Ministry, which refers to distributing pastoral roles across a team of congregants. Without formal training, clergy were raised up from within a local flock and authorized to serve in only one local setting. (The Episcopal Church no longer authorizes a separate class of limited-authority clergy.) The trend in Nevada is now moving from volunteer clergy to part-time paid priests with some theological training, said the Rev. Canon Catherine Gregg, canon for congregational vitality.

In general, "congregations did not


grow and flourish and mature under this kind of leadership," she said. But a few continue to make it work and even find vitality, in part by dedicating most resources to outreach rather than salaries.

Gregg cites the bilingual St. Matthew's Church in Whitney, the East Las Vegas neighborhood with the city's highest crime rate. The Rev. Christie Leavitt serves with two other priests and two deacons in a Total Ministry model in which all have served without pay for decades. The congregation is a model for others, in part because it offers the Eucharist in Spanish as well as English.

In Nevada, "the Total Ministry model allowed us to keep parishes because you needed that sacramental presence and you needed the outreach-into-the-world kind of presence to have a viable parish," said Leavitt, who has served without pay at St. Matthew's for 28 years. "We were looking for that to be the core and build other ministries around that. And that's what happened."

With no salaries to pay, St. Matthew's takes pride in steering what resources it has into helping impoverished neighbors and welcoming worshipers who cannot afford to donate much, including recent immigrants, casino workers, and prostitutes. Giving has become a defining attribute, not only of St. Matthew's clergy but also of the entire flock, as Gregg ob-





The ancient art of retreat  
is crucial in our hectic  
and distracted world.

# *Step Out of the Chaos*

By Jon Davis

[Jesus] said to them, “Come with me by yourselves to a quiet place and get some rest.”

—Mark 6:31, NIV

**T**he pace of life is faster, more hectic, and more intense than ever before. For many of us, the demands on our time and the pressures we face are incredible. In recent years, we have added an ever-present torrent of distraction: smartphone screens, news that comes in

140-character snippets, and a constant flurry of electronic data.

I sense among many of my friends and colleagues a felt loss. If we are not careful, our activity and distractions keep us from what is really important, life-giving, and eternal. I think the ancient art of *retreat* is all the more needed today in our hectic and distracted world. We desperately need to get away from our normal routines, finding time to be quiet and still, to reflect, and to reconnect with God through silence and prayer.

Jesus modeled this ancient disci-

pline for us, regularly pulling away from the activity of the crowds and the disciples to be by himself. He was not just by himself, of course: Jesus sought solitude to spend time with his Father in heaven. In the sixth chapter of Mark, Jesus invites his disciples to do the same. After the brisk pace of ministry, they were feeling somewhat harassed and hurried, maybe a little tattered around the edges. Jesus wanted to lead them to something we all need: time away in quiet reflection; time to rest and be with God. This is especially true for

those involved in active ministry, which is invigorating and fulfilling, yet draining at the same time.

Jesus invites us today to follow him in this discipline, by making regular spiritual retreats. How often do you see people do this? When was the last time you got away to be still? The Psalms teach us to *Be still, and know that I am God* (Ps. 46:10). I have found in my life that if I am not still, I will not know God. But knowing God is what this earthly pilgrimage is all about (Phil. 3:7-14).

I do not mean to say that our daily work is unimportant, or that we cannot find God in our everyday callings. The Christian life is multifaceted. There are many tasks set before us: evangelism, discipleship, stewardship, missions, justice, and repentance. On top of that there's paying bills, grocery shopping, getting the car repaired, and school functions. All of this work is important, even essential. The kingdom of God grows from work. But it is crucial to ask: Is our work centered in a heart that's in communion with the Lord? Does it flow from that center?

**I** find that our work can be done in three postures:

*Rushing:* We are often so busy, running from work to school and shuttling our families to activities. It can be frantic and we get lost in the process. We handle a variety of media streams that invade our lives with stress and distraction. We are often running so fast that we miss the more valuable moments of eternal import.

*Resting:* We get stuck in the same routine, going through the motions day after day. It feels like movement, but we are getting nowhere. Life becomes monotonous, an endless routine leaving us empty and without purpose. We get stuck in a cycle, not aware that decades have gone by and we have not grown in our faith, rela-

tionships, and understanding.

*Resting:* From a position of rest, we become more keenly focused and are able to navigate life with a sense of calling and trust. Jesus never ran anywhere. He walked. Yes, he grew weary at times, but because he knew the art of retreat he would find moments of silence and solitude in each day. When we function from a posture of rest, we can work with greater efficiency and make progress in things that really matter.

How can we find this posture of rest in our everyday working lives? After more than 35 years of vocational ministry, I have learned the importance of filling the core of my being with the restfulness that comes only from taking time to be with the Lord. You have probably heard sayings like "You cannot give away what you do not have," or "You cannot lead people to a place you have not been," or (my favorite) "You teach what you know but you reproduce what you are." The sayings are true! If I want to see my family, my workplace, and my community growing in their knowledge of the Lord, it means I need to have that at the center of my piety. To pray, read, study, focus, and be still, entering a time of solitude when I'm filled with the fruits and gifts of the Holy Spirit, is how I become a better priest, husband, father, and friend.

**T**hat is why twice a year for a week, I pull away into a hermitage on retreat. I've been doing this for the past 20 years. When I go on retreat, I learn again a new rhythm and pattern of life. I hear a new cadence, and in doing so I tune myself into my relationship with God. His voice becomes clearer, his presence sweeter, and my faith is fanned into a greater flame. It's a little like turning the lens on a blurry camera, bringing life back into proper focus. Retreat for me is a time of gathering spiritual fuel for

every day. It brings me into a posture of rest, in which I can trust in God's work and fret less about my work.

A friend told me about a conversation with a member of his congregation. This woman had a dream. She was in heaven with Jesus, and as she looked around she saw what looked like our planet at a distance. It was covered with black dots moving hurriedly all over, looking like ants swarming about. She asked Jesus, "What is that?" Jesus replied, "It's my people doing all the things I never asked them to do."

I believe that the busyness and distraction of our culture has put us in danger of losing what is truly important. We need to reconnect with what will bring comprehensive healing and wholeness to our broken, distracted, and unfocused lives; to reunite body and soul, mind and strength, in God.

I invite you to discover the power of personal retreat. I am blessed to serve the Lord every day as director of a diocesan retreat center. In my daily work, I see the difference that the art of retreat can make: people come in and leave refreshed, renewed, and engaged again with the Almighty God, the source of our very breath. I challenge you to find a place like mine. Maybe it's your diocese's retreat center. Maybe it's a chapel near work or a city park where you can spend just an hour in prayer and reflection. Wherever you find it, learn the art of retreat, of being still and entering into solitude and prayer. In doing so, you will gain the posture of restful trust that you need for taking on the work and the challenges of everyday life, with a renewed vigor and passion and a deepened knowledge and love of the Lord.

*The Rev. Jon Davis is executive director of Canterbury Retreat and Conference Center in Oviedo, Florida.*



# My Schnorrer Is Calling Again!



By Steve Schlossberg

**T**here are two women in my life named Ruby. One is a beloved family friend, the other is something else entirely. The other calls me no less than once a month, and our conversations, which are not only interminable but (for both of us, I think, but certainly for me) simultaneously tedious and infuriating, occasionally conclude with us shouting at each other. A few weeks ago, my 12-year-old daughter, having overheard my end of one of these high-volume exchanges, asked me in alarm, “Why are you shouting at Ruby?”

“It’s not your Ruby,” I reassured her.

“Then who is it?” she asked.

Searching for a word to capture my most faithful, persistent, and insufferable interlocutor, I finally said, “She’s my schnorrer.”

(Continued on next page)



# My Schnorrer Is Calling Again!

(Continued from previous page)

As a priest in an urban parish and the former director of a homeless ministry, I am familiar with the frustrations of serving the vast, multiracial, multi-cultural, multi-disadvantaged nation we call “the poor.” They almost never fail to disappoint me; they almost never fail to prove me a failure. All the time, money, patience, and kindness I have poured into the poor strangers I have met along the way have yielded precious few “success stories,” and my contribution to any of these successes has proved to be fairly marginal. They are miracles, at least in the sense that they are anomalies.

Most single mothers, derelict fathers, mentally ill addicts, alcoholics, prostitutes, abusers, and abuse victims whom I have met along the way remain more or less as I first met them: paralyzed by fear. Like anybody else in pain, they wish that things could be different for them. Like almost everybody else suffering chronic pain, they either despair that anything could ever be different or they decide that the demands of a different way of living are too steep. What they decide to settle for, and what they finally set their hearts on, is not a different life but the retention of the lives they have, supplemented with analgesics.

Consequently, they lie to me. They tell me what they judge I want to hear to extract from me the money or material assistance that will make the crisis of the day disappear. To be fair, many of them believe they are being honest with me; they are only lying to themselves. It is not just the seriously mentally ill persons I have met who are fundamentally deluded about reality; many of the perfectly sane persons I have met are honestly persuaded that all they really need is a certain amount of money, just enough to pay a bill or buy a beer, and then their lives will finally be different.

I realize that I am making a gross generalization, but even if the generalization fails to do justice to the poor, it at least accounts for every other member of the human race. It at least accounts for me. I am one of the poor people of the world who consistently lies to himself about the true nature of his crisis. I would rather retain the life I have than lay my life down, pick up a cross, and follow Jesus. My vices, my resentments, and my self-serving ambitions are a large part of what makes my life miserable; paradoxically, they are what makes my life tolerable. They are to me what alcohol is to a street alcoholic. It has reduced him to homelessness and it makes homelessness bearable.

I do not know how I ever would have learned the truth about myself if had not met so many street alcoholics. Trying and for the most part failing to love them, looking into their faces and trying to find the face of Christ, I eventually discovered my own. They were mirrors to me. What they

really need, I realized, is what I really need. Along with everything else I need, I need to be honest with myself. I need to grapple seriously with who I really am, how I really am, what is really ailing me, what I am willing to do, and what I am trying to evade.

Seeing what an alcoholic must do if he wants to live a different life taught me what I must do if I want to live a different life. One way to say it is that I must lay down the life I have, pick up a cross, and follow Jesus. More concretely, I must honestly acknowledge my vices, resentments, and ambitions and I must audibly confess these to others; I must be willing to part myself from these and to suffer the great pains of deprivation; and I must be willing to allow others to hold me accountable. That’s hard; initially, it’s miserable; but with God it is possible, and I have found that it is life-changing.

That’s what serving poor people did for me. It brought me into contact with myself and changed my relationship with God. But the point here is that this experience taught me how to serve the poor, or at least some of the poor, the poor who are like me. I learned that while material assistance can make a substantial and enduring difference in a person’s life, what most people most deeply need is not the amelioration of the crisis of the day. What hurts people like me is escaping the crisis of the day. What hurts people like me is anesthesia. What helps people like me is the hard-to-swallow

medicine of honesty and accountability, the painful work of making excruciating decisions, suffering consequences, and, during the cold season of withdrawal — repentance — suffering the pains of deprivation.

That happens to be the way I serve the rich people who come to me for help, and the poor are no less deserving than they. Frankly, that has made me a disappointment to many of them, rich and poor alike, but these disappointed people are no longer disappointments to me. I no longer expect them to be saints; I expect them to be no better than me. And what I offer them is what I want for myself: compassion instead of pity, respect instead of patronization, honesty instead of indulgence, and a more or less sincere

What hurts people like me is escaping the crisis of the day. What hurts people like me is anesthesia. What helps people like me is the hard-to-swallow medicine of honesty and accountability.

(depending on the day and how willing I am to follow Jesus) desire to walk beside them through their crisis, to disinter and discover the real root of the crisis, and to grapple with it with them.

Because I have some sense of my own bottomless need, I know what I can do to help others meet theirs, and I know what I cannot. Now that, by itself, does not make the work of serving another any easier; in some ways it is far more demanding, and it does not necessarily yield any more success. Most of the people I meet are not willing or able to be completely honest with me, and sometimes they fool me, sometimes they successfully manipulate me, and there are many instances when I am not sure what charity demands, when I am just not able to offer a person anything better than a little bit of money. But for all the inescapable ambiguities involved in learning to love and serve another, that approach gives definition to the otherwise amorphous word *compassion*. And because that approach prescribes boundaries, it makes entering a real relationship with the other person possible.

All of which is to say that I think I more or less know what I am doing when I meet poor strangers who ask me for help. But I am sure I have no idea of what I am doing with Ruby. The septuagenarian widow of a pedophile, she lives with her traumatized daughter, her mentally disabled son-in-law, and her three young grandchildren. Pooling, and no doubt mismanaging, Ruby's Social Security check and her daughter's disability income, this family is perennially on the edge of homelessness.

Now there is a family in real need. Where does one begin to assess all those needs? A social worker — no, a team of social workers — would have their work cut out for them. And the truth is that a team of social workers is just what that family needs, along with two or three therapists and a vocational counselor, along with a good pastor, along with a church whose members are willing to walk beside the members of that family and love them.

But Ruby, the matriarch and the only adult member of the family able to communicate with outsiders, has determined that what her family needs is money and money alone. A stick-like woman with a pruny face, baleful eyes, and a crackling voice cured by many decades of cigarette smoking, Ruby has devoted her life to holding her broken family together, and she holds it together by valiantly fending off any serious reckoning. Hence, she absolutely refuses to visit a social worker, though I have numerous times offered to accompany her to the appointment.

I believe she is a reasonably honest person, perhaps an uncommonly honest person — she is at least a refreshingly candid person — but she is stubborn, demanding, and shamelessly manipulative. Having exhausted all her poor friends and neighbors, she makes ends meet by begging money from a fairly extensive but rapidly shrinking network of local priests and pastors, of which I am but one. I have spoken with a couple of the others, and they have told her what I have told her: that money will never solve her

crisis, that the trickle of money she is trying to bleed from us is only prolonging her crisis. That plea falls on deaf ears, largely because Ruby cannot conceive of a reality beyond the crisis of the day, partly because I only inconsistently practice what I preach. Like most of my colleagues, I occasionally break down and give her money.

I occasionally give her money because she is the very picture of the persistent widow and I am no better than the unjust judge, and I cannot find another way to love her. Quite understandably, this is confusing to her, that the priest who sometimes gives her money more often refuses to give her money, which leads to tediously repetitive telephone conversations in which we exchange opinions on what will really help her, at some point during which she begins to manipulate me, at which point I begin to raise my voice, at which point she begins to raise her voice. We shout at each other like old married people. We shout at each other because we are genuinely exasperating to each other, and I think we so exasperate each other because we have come, in one sense or another, to love each other, or at least to want to try to love each other.

Perhaps I am giving one or both of us more credit than deserved. But I cannot bring myself to hang up on her because I believe that Jesus makes himself present to us in poor strangers, and I have come to believe that he is making himself especially present to me in Ruby.

The Yiddish word for beggar is *schnorrer*, but in the Jewish tradition a *schnorrer* is not just a beggar. A *schnorrer* is the particular kind of beggar who populates Yiddish literature and Jewish jokes, a beggar with *chutzpah*, a shameless beggar, a beggar who knows no shame because he knows himself as God's gift to the world. It is a *mitzvah*, the *schnorrer* knows, to give alms to the poor, and those who keep the commandment are blessed. The *schnorrer*, then, is not begging on his own behalf; he is begging on behalf of those from whom he begs. He is doing them a public service. A pillar of the community, the *schnorrer* is selling subscriptions to righteousness.

This is who Ruby is to me. She is insufferable and she is proud, she is stubborn as a mule, subtle as a serpent, and she is absolutely impervious to suggestion. When I am being honest with myself, I can see that Ruby's approach to me mirrors my approach to God. When I am being honest with Ruby, I try to get her to see that not only does my money do her no good, it perpetuates what does her ill. How many more times must I explain this to her, to no effect? How many times will I wilt and give her money, to no effect? I do not know. I do not see any way out of this. I am afraid that what Jesus said is true: I am afraid that Ruby will be with me always. And though I am reasonably sure that I will never do her any good, I am persuaded that in some mysterious way she is doing me some good.

A lowly handmaid of the Lord, Ruby is my *schnorrer*. I remain the Lord's.

*The Rev. Steve Schlossberg is rector of St. John's Church in Troy, New York.*



# ‘I Didn’t Do Anything Wrong’

*The Innocent Curate*, Paris Leary’s heavily criticized roman à clef from 1963, is now a collector’s item.

By Richard J. Mammana

For Anglican book collectors, there are few titles so sought after as *The Innocent Curate*, A. Paris Leary’s 1963 roman à clef about life at St. George’s Church, Schenectady — veiled thinly in the novel as “St. Clement’s, Schinderhook.”

The book was published by Doubleday with a dust-jacket illustration by Edward Gorey, sold for \$3.95, and was never

released in softcover. It drew negative reviews almost universally and went out of print quickly. It is hard today to find copies on the used book market for less than \$100, and prices can jump to twice and thrice that amount depending on condition or the seller’s knowledge of what buyers will tolerate.

The novel is richest in its personalities, atmosphere, and turns of phrase. Despite the careful and obligatory notice at the beginning that “All of the characters in this

book are fictitious, and any resemblance to actual persons, living or dead, is purely coincidental,” they are all obviously drawn from life or serve as projections of the author’s background and experience.

## The Characters

The book opens with an extended portrait of **Mrs. O. Felix Cooper**, chief patroness and low-church lay pope of St. Clement’s, a former Menshevik of vast wealth. She is six feet tall, wears turbans and high heels (“plastic shoes”), and expresses the subtleties of her mood by the force or gentleness with which she uses doorknockers when she visits persons whose collaboration she requires.

Mrs. Cooper is a keen supporter of her parish church, but also of the Order of the Divine Aumbry at Belcher’s Landing on the Hudson — in which it is easy to see a depiction of the Order of the Holy Cross at West Park. She owns the largest collection of relics outside of Europe. She is a generous but determined person who “brooks no opposition from man or the Devil.”

“To human beings she was cruel only to be kind, and, if heads must roll, it was only as a symbol of encouragement to the ranks not to fall prey to the deceiving lures of the powers of darkness.” She introduces herself as “the widow of Cooper and Sandy’s Mining Company,” the source of her great prosperity. She takes in waifs and strays who subsequently turn their lives around and become contributing members of society.

**Mrs. Fleming Van Rensaaler** dies before the beginning of the book, but gives funding and inspiration for the middle 20th-century liturgical and architectural enrichment of St. Clement’s. We learn that “she had had a protracted illness, which she enjoyed immensely.” She is a type of the remnants of Dutch patroon-settler aristocracy in Schinderhook. She entertains 65 guests for breakfast after Christmas midnight Mass as a matter of course, and performs her anticipated death exquisitely:

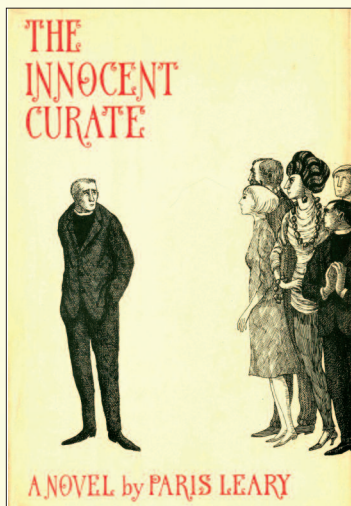
The Blessed Sacrament was carried to her every morning in the gold pyx she had herself bought for Dr. Groby in Vienna. She had become as familiar with the Last Rites as she had been with mattins and evensong. She had had a horn installed outside her window; when she pressed a button by her bed it hooted across the whole First Ward like an air-raid siren — it was to call the clergy in the event she felt herself sinking and unable to reach for the telephone.

When she does expire, Mrs. Van Rensaaler leaves \$15,000 directly to the rector of St. Clement’s, and an additional \$50,000 “for the construction of a Lady Chapel to her glory, in memory of God.”

The eponymous curate of the title is the handsome **Sonny Ball**, who has “a sacerdotal Ivy League look” and an “ostentatious cleanliness of limb and morals.”

“Everyone knew Sonny Ball. Sonny Ball knew everyone. Everyone liked Sonny Ball. Sonny Ball liked everyone.” He had grown up at St. Clement’s and spent all of his life in Schinderhook except for three years at St. Dismas’ Seminary in New York (naturally, the General Theological Seminary).

Sonny’s fiancée is **Rosemary Van Vranken**, who caused local scandal in Schinderhook by attending Oberlin rather than Skidmore, emerging liberated and bohemian. “Rosemary laughed at everything and everyone. Except Sonny Ball.” Rosemary is at heart a pagan daughter of Camus and



Sartre, despite being a daughter of Schinderhook, but she is “hopelessly in love” with Sonny and laughs at the “mental image of herself doing the parish bit — going to meetings, guilds, canvasses, bun fights, rallies, sodalities ... oh, it was panic-making!” Their gentle, mutual love is the happiest subplot of the book, and she appears briefly in a bikini.

St. Clement’s parishioner **Oakes Broussard** is an English professor by vocation and a Southern aristocrat by background, a man to whom “it never occurred that a woman was capable of opening a car door by herself or that she carried her own matches.” He has “three degrees from Cambridge (the *real* one), a beautiful speaking voice, and splendid yellow hair.”

He is the character most like the author, educated in England on a Fulbright, having adopted European attitudes as an American Southerner who eschewed exposure to New York. His artist wife, Sophie, is a Frenchwoman whose love and understanding help him to recover from “a despair which had nearly destroyed him.” Sophie grew up in a French colonialist family in Algiers, makes her own clothes from fabric she chooses herself to avoid appearing like other women in the Schenectady Stockade, and “sees to it that Oakes has real French wine with his meals and lots of red meat, which American men like so much.” She and Rosemary socialize at the country club. Oakes Broussard observes; Paris Leary transcribes mentally and writes later.

The most withering portrait in the book is its treatment of the Rev. Dr. **Walter Groby**, rector of St. Clement’s, whose preaching is “in the Fulton Sheen style, but with less content and better taste.” He is highly successful. He drives a convertible, or someone drives him in one. Not long after his arrival, “young female faces began to appear in the congregation, which heretofore had been comprised largely of one hundred and ninety-seven elderly ladies and old Dr. Van Der Horn (the vestry absenting themselves except at Christmas and Easter).”

Dr. Groby longs to become a bishop, is deft at raising funds from Schinderhook old money and “National Electric” (General Electric, founded in Schenectady in 1892) interests alike. He “charmed the maiden daughters,” and “caused a grudging acceptance among even his most vocal adversaries.” Women began “playing Héloïse to his Abelard (not that their sheltered minds visualized for a minute to what anatomical straits this would have led him). He paid more attention to widows than their husbands had when alive.”

His wife is **Fiona** (*née deCourcy-Sprat*). “She drinks” and “would bring a good fifteen thousand pounds a year to whoever married her.” Leary writes in one of his best character illustrations that Fiona

wanted to be carried off (quietly) to a small village. She wanted a rather tired, pale husband, with insufficient stipend, who was cautiously Sarum about saints and church furniture. She wanted him to be absent-minded, untidy, and not alto-

gether well. She wanted to take care of him. She wanted a large, draughty vicarage, with an early kitchen and feudal plumbing. She wanted several large cats. She wanted to wear thick wool stockings, heavy thornproof-tweed skirts, and sweaters of no definable shape and color. She wanted a few poor people to work for, a modest hospital to visit, a reasonable number of Sunday School children to tell stories about Gentle Jesus Meek and Mild. She wanted hills to climb, covered with rough friendly heather. So when the funny-looking but charming American clergyman asked for her hand, she saw no reason not to accept.

One of the main difficulties of the novel is its one unfortunate sentence about the union: “After their wedding night, Walter Groby had thanked her for ‘a very lovely experience’ and installed her henceforth in a separate bedroom.”

Dr. Groby is of course the Rev. Canon Alfred Darwin Kirby, Jr. (1918-2006), rector of St. George’s, Schenectady, from 1947 to 1987 — a towering figure in 20th-century American Anglo-Catholicism (and sometime member of the board of directors of the Living Church Foundation). Fiona is his wife, Constance.

### The Plot and Reviews

The novel’s plot — if it can be called a plot — consists entirely in the interactions of these individuals and their interests during an undefined period of time described in 203 easy pages that can be consumed in a morning with three strong coffees or an afternoon with many weak lemonades. The parish, with its constellation of competing interests and characters, is unable to manage an experience of the miraculous. The curate in his innocence receives the stigmata while delivering a tray of drinks to friends at the country club, and things fall apart: “But why?” asks Sonny. “I didn’t do anything wrong.” The rector insists that the curate has been praying too much, and asks him to go to the library.

The secret of scarce copies is a perfect combination of just one edition with a relatively limited print run, cover art by a major graphic artist, and a large enough group of persons who were offended by their portrayal in the book and keen to limit its circle of readers. There were credible stories as recently as the late 1990s about admirers of Father Kirby stealing *The Innocent Curate* from public libraries to remove it from circulation, or hoarding triplicates and quadruplicates of the book when it came up for sale.

*Kirkus Reviews* found that *The Innocent Curate* had “lots of intellectual jokes and *jeux d’esprit* — which do not quite make a novel.” The Episcopal Church Diocesan Press Service noted, blandly: “All sorts of over-stated characters move through the story, adding to its improbable fun. It is enjoyable and relaxing reading.” THE LIVING CHURCH was unusual in offering a kind evaluation, calling it “devastating enough to earn our gleeful gratitude.” Otherwise, it was a

(Continued on next page)



# 'I Didn't Do Anything Wrong'

(Continued from previous page)

failure even within the rarefied community of readers who could understand it. As late as 1970, seven years after its publication, *The Innocent Curate* was still causing a stir in *The Schenectady Gazette*: "This book really is malicious — an attempted satire on downtown Schenectady and one of its churches. It tries too hard to be funny, and so it isn't. This is a book you can skip."

## The Man

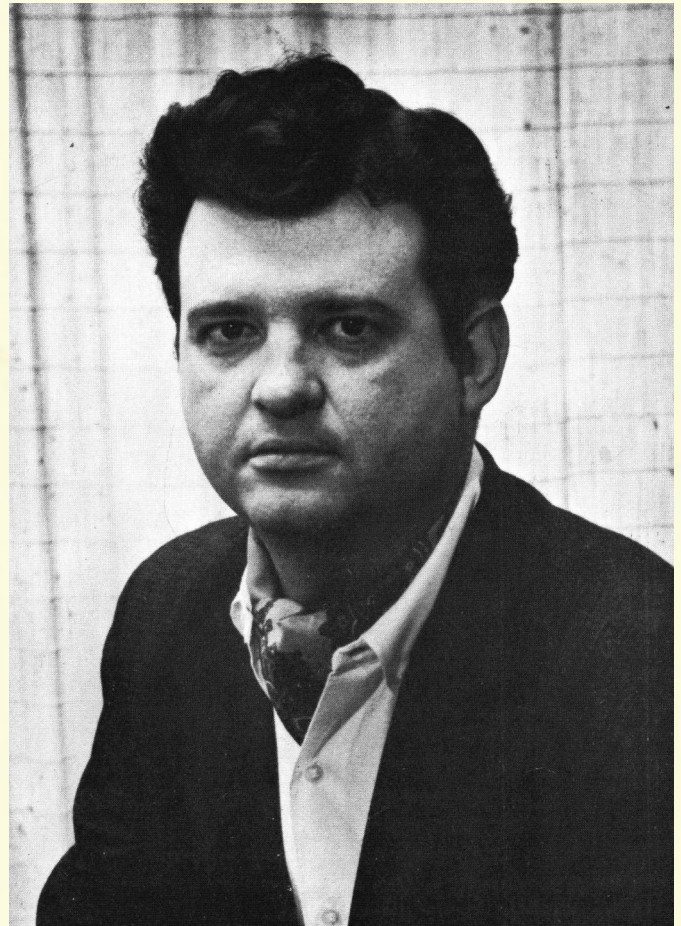
Albert Paris Leary was born in Shreveport, Louisiana, in 1931 as the only child in a family connected to the Church of the Holy Cross. He grew up there, precocious and encouraged by maiden aunts. Leary (who dropped "Albert" as an adult) completed his studies at Centenary College in 1951. Even before college graduation, Leary's poetry appeared in *The Atlantic Monthly*, followed quickly by his national and international prominence as a young American poet whose work appeared in *National Review*, *The New Yorker*, *The Saturday Review*, *The Village Voice*, *The Hudson Review*, and in his words "in at least twenty of the better reviews and quarterlies here and in England."

After studies at Seabury-Western Theological Seminary, Leary was ordained to the diaconate in the Diocese of Louisiana in 1954 and to the priesthood in the Diocese of Albany in 1955. He would serve in just two parishes, and very briefly: at St. George's, Schenectady, in 1954 and 1955, and at St. Mary Magdalene's, Oxford, from 1956 to 1958 during his doctoral work.

Leary's unpublished 1958 DPhil dissertation at Oxford was *The Theology of Herbert Thorndike (1598-1672)*, a 760-page exploration of the work of an overlooked Caroline divine. His adviser was Frank Leslie Cross (1900-68), the Lady Margaret Professor of Divinity, known the world over as the editor of *The Oxford Dictionary of the Christian Church* and the organizer of the International Conference on Patristic Studies.

Leary returned to the United States in 1958 and served briefly as an associate professor of English at the University of Kentucky before becoming director in 1960 of the Writers' Workshop at Bard College, Annandale on Hudson. He had left that position already by 1964 when he was working as an assistant professor at the State University of New York in New Paltz. Leary next accepted a Fulbright Fellowship to teach at the University of Leicester in 1964, and began tenure as inaugural lecturer in American literature in the University of Leicester's Department of English in 1965. Having at last found a permanent position, he retired from Leicester at the end of 1988.

Perhaps unsurprisingly given the reception of his too-personal first attempt at fiction, *The Innocent Curate* was a first and last novel for Paris Leary. His other significant



Paris Leary

published works were two titles now mostly forgotten but possessed of curious success in their day. The 1965 *Jack Sprat Cookbook* — a collaboration with his friend Muriel De Gré — offered 120 pages of "delicious recipes for light eaters and weight watchers." The much more influential *A Controversy of Poets: An Anthology of Contemporary American Poetry* (1965, published with Robert Kelly) was a popular anthology of modern American poems through which two generations of high school and college students learned about the work of Allen Ginsberg, Denise Levertov, Robert Lowell, Thomas Merton, and many others.

Leary died unmarried in 2005, having converted to Orthodoxy in his retirement, and was buried from the Russian Orthodox Church of St. Aidan and St. Chad in Nottingham.

In Orthodoxy, he took the name Tikhon in honor of St. Tikhon of Moscow, pioneer of Anglican-Orthodox relations in the early 20th century.

*Richard J. Mammanna is the archivist of the Living Church Foundation and a member of the Connecticut Academy of Arts and Sciences.*



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Nadia Bowers, Christa Scott-Reed, Rob Nagle, and Jonathan Louis Dent in *Church and State*

Russ Rowland photo

# ‘Less than Six Degrees of Separation’

Playwright Jason Odell Williams confronts the blight of mass shootings.

By Retta Blaney

The U.S. Senator from North Carolina is an unquestioning supporter of all things red, especially on God and guns. His convictions are challenged, though, after a shooting at his sons’ elementary school leaves 29 dead. After the funeral for one of the victims, he admits in response to a blogger’s question that the killings are enough to make him doubt God’s existence.

He is running for a third term and his comments go viral three days before the election.

Jason Odell Williams, 42, was inspired to write his latest play, *Church and State*, after the 2012 shootings at Sandy Hook Elementary School in Connecticut, but he had been thinking about gun violence since 2007, after the mass killings at Virginia Tech, a football rival of his alma mater, the University of Virginia.

“I watched the news and saw a candlelight vigil in Charlottesville and it struck a chord with me,” he said during a telephone interview from his home on the Upper West Side of

Manhattan. “I had been a student there not that long before. It really shook me.”

Then came the shooting outside a Tucson supermarket in which Rep. Gabrielle Giffords and 16 others were shot, six of them fatally.

“I thought, *What if it had been a man and he had been a Republican?*” Williams said. “That’s a really dark and twisted thought, but when tragedy strikes, our thoughts become dark and twisted.”

The tragedy at Sandy Hook prompted him to write. His first draft of *Church and State* was “like a well-written Facebook rant with a very one-sided liberal New Yorker view.”

He sent it to Ralph Meranto, artistic director of the JCC of Greater Rochester’s CenterStage Theatre, who had produced his first play, *Handle with Care*. Meranto “asked smart questions” and offered suggestions to make the characters — the senator; his wife, a conservative Christian; and his campaign manager, a liberal Jew from New York — more three-dimensional and to present gun control more evenhandedly. Meranto also suggested the

twist that the senator’s remarks be tweeted, two years before the election of America’s Tweeter in Chief.

The show had a successful run in Rochester before moving to Los Angeles, where the *Huffington Post* called it “powerful, humorous and highly contemporary” and included it in the Top Ten L.A. Theatre Productions of 2016. It is now at Off-Broadway’s New World Stages, with tickets on sale through Sept. 3.

Talkbacks have been a part of *Church and State*’s runs. In New York the talkbacks met three Wednesdays in April, featuring representatives from the Virginia Tech Victims Family Outreach Foundation; actress Julianne Moore, founding chairwoman of Everytown for Gun Safety; and New Yorkers Against Gun Violence.

During the Virginia Tech talkback, a woman identifying herself as a Donald Trump voter said she thought the play had done a good job of presenting both sides and later told Williams in the lobby that she hopes the play will be presented in red states. That would be fine with him.

“My goal was to get it to New York



and then across the country. I'd love to see it in all the purple states. That's my ultimate goal."

He is in talks with theater producers in Alaska, Florida, North Carolina, rural Virginia, and Washington, D.C., about possible productions.

"I want to stir up some controversy and start conversations."

He sees areas for compromise, such as universal background checks. He created an open-ended finish that encourages audiences to draw their own conclusions.

"We're so divided now. Maybe the rubber band will break and we'll all come back to the middle."

Williams is adamant that he intends no disrespect to people of faith or Southerners, and he does not see conservative Christians as the enemy in gun-control talks. He saves his wrath for one target.

"To me it's the NRA. They're only thinking about profit. Nothing about their agenda is reasonable. Living

without fear is more important than somebody's gun collection."

Shootings have not affected Williams directly, but he thinks "we're all less than six degrees of separation now from gun violence."

"There's stuff in the newspapers every day," he said just as he was interrupted by a text from Rob Nagle, the actor playing Sen. Charles Whitmore, informing him about a shooting at a San Bernardino elementary school that left two adults and one child dead and another child wounded.

"It's crazy. It just keeps happening. People are afraid to go to the mall, the movies, church, places that are supposed to be safe."

Williams, who was nominated for an Emmy Award as a writer for National Geographic Channel's *Brain Games*, has never worked in politics. He says he could only be lured into politics if Nagle would run for office. Williams would like to be his speechwriter.

Williams grew up in a mixed-faith home. His mother is Roman Catholic and his father is Protestant. He was baptized but not confirmed, and his first two Off-Broadway plays centered on God and faith.

"I don't know where I stand, which is why I keep writing about it," he said, adding that his wife grew up Orthodox Jewish in Israel and turned from her religion when she moved to America. After the birth of their daughter, Imogen, now 11, they began worshiping at a synagogue and sending her to Hebrew school. He has no plans to convert.

"It's nice to have a sense of community, of coming together," he said. "I'm always examining what it is and what it means."

*Retta Blaney is an award-winning journalist and author of Working on the Inside: The Spiritual Life Through the Eyes of Actors.*

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Photo by Janis Wilkins



# Lewisian Apologetics

Review by Andrew Petiprin

“Western civilization may have declined,” writes Leslie Williams, “but individual belief still stands.” In *When Anything Goes*, Williams seeks to appeal to the spiritual longings of individuals in an increasingly atomized society. Her strategy is an anecdote-heavy defense of Christian doctrine. She concludes, “God is God. I am not.” Amen to that. Likewise, in the first sentence of her epilogue she counsels seekers: “The first thing I would recommend is the Bible.” This is a simply refreshing piece of advice.

In *Mere Christianity*, C.S. Lewis describes the familiar sight of a postman going from house to house. Responding to the hypothetical objection that he does not know for sure that people are receiving letters, Lewis notes, “I’m explaining the packets I’m not allowed to open by the ones I am allowed to open.”

Human beings know themselves from the inside (although God knows them better than they know themselves), and their experiences are valuable in understanding the way the universe works. Homiletical instruction has agreed for several decades. My preaching

teacher in seminary once told me, “If you’re 20 years old, you’ve had enough experiences to preach for a lifetime.” Perhaps. But another seminary professor once told me, “Jesus is a lot more interesting than you are.”

Williams is a seminary-trained literary scholar, and



## When Anything Goes

Being Christian in a Post-Christian World

By Leslie Williams

Abingdon. Pp. 208. \$16.99

she follows Lewis’s apologetic tactic in examining herself to extrapolate truth for a post-Christian world. She very often succeeds, but occasionally the balance between her story and God’s story is a bit uneven. Williams tells tale after tale of her childhood, cleverly embedding a particular Christian doctrine amid the illustrations.

## One Love

A Pastoral Guide to the Order of Celebrating Matrimony

By Paul Turner. Liturgical Press. Pp. 88. \$14.95

In *One Love*, liturgical scholar and parish priest Paul Turner provides a succinct and practical commentary on the Roman Catholic Church’s new *Order for Celebrating Marriage* (2016). Part of the first comprehensive revision of English-language liturgical texts since the Second Vatican Council, the OCM, like the 2011 translation of the Roman Missal that preceded it, is marked by more technical, Latinate theological language (as in the occasional *matrimony* instead of *marriage*).

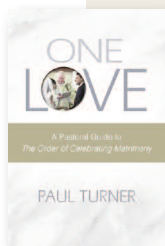
The rite also reintroduces use of the Gloria and the blessing of the rings with holy water, and includes several new presidential prayers and nuptial blessings (all the latter, for the first time, including an invocation of the Holy Spirit). Catholic couples may also now make their vows using the familiar form from the

Book of Common Prayer (“to have and to hold”), which Turner rather obtusely describes as “another traditional form [with] historical standing in the culture.”

The book’s clear audience is Roman Catholic parish priests, who may be bristling a bit at the prospect of relearning the craft of conducting weddings after nearly 50 years of using the former rite. Turner’s guide to incorporating the Mexican and Filipino ceremonies of the *arras* and the *lazo* into the marriage rite may be useful to Episcopal parishes engaged in work among these communities.

His survey of the expanded rite for marriages between Catholics and unbaptized persons also provides helpful guidance for adapting the marriage liturgy faithfully to multifaith situations. On the other hand, the chapter that considers use of the Paschal Candle for unity candle ceremonies should be skipped by those with even slight interest in liturgical decorum.

*The Rev. Mark Michael  
Potomac, Maryland*



Unfortunately, in more than a few chapters I lost track of the point. It was like sitting uncomfortably in someone else's living room, listening to reminiscences akin to the letters "not addressed to me" that Lewis mentions in his postman analogy. For example, Williams speaks often about her father's alcoholism. But what was it connected to again? I remember a story about her biting her sister, but how does that relate to hamartiology again?

In many parts, however, Williams draws the reader in expertly and succeeds in her apologetic strategy. "Been there, done that, got the T-shirt" is a winsome defense of Chalcedonian Christology, and a straightforward plea (again *Lewisian*) to go deeper in exploring faith: "The human tendency is to dismiss what we can't explain." Christian orthodoxy simply makes better sense than easier heresies, but not at first. "Potluck Suppers and Other Worship Opportunities" reminded me that I am a liturgical creature. I *must* worship, and I need Christian community to do it.

As useful as this book may be to some, my concern is that its admirers will be primarily of Williams's age

group and social class. I wonder, in fact, if many younger people would like it at all. As a Gen-Xer, I found the book almost too Baby Boomer in tone. Perhaps this fact cannot be helped. But if Williams's concern is for a "Post-Christian World," how will people native to it receive the testimonies of someone so completely shaped by the blemished ideal of mid-century American social cohesion?

I would likely put this book in the hands of a parishioner over 50. It is hard to imagine putting it in the hands of a Millennial, whom I would gladly steer toward the older classics: *Mere Christianity* or, better yet, G.K. Chesterton's *Orthodoxy*. Williams's writing is succinct and stylish. It may not achieve the goal its subtitle suggests, but it could be a breath of fresh air to religious seekers of a certain age. And any book that champions the basics of traditional Christian doctrine is a cause for rejoicing.

*The Rev. Andrew Petiprin is rector of St. Mary of the Angels Church in Orlando.*



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# Digging into Christian Tradition

## Being Disciples

Essentials of the Christian Life

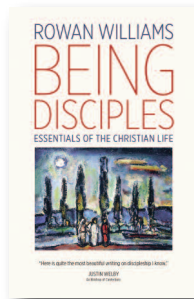
By Rowan Williams

Eerdmans. Pp. 96. \$10

Review by Paul Nesta

Christian discipleship remains a vast field, in which new books purport to offer the key to unlock discipleship and make sense (once and for all) of the Christian life. To produce something original in such a climate is no small task, especially considering the breadth of the Christian tradition and how much has already been said on the matter.

That is the precise brilliance of Rowan Williams's latest book. *Being*



*Disciples*, which serves as a companion to his earlier work, *Being Christian*, is an essential series of lectures on discipleship, not because Williams offers anything entirely original, but because he plumbs the depths of the Christian tradition and emerges with fresh, imaginative, and much-needed wisdom for the Church today.

Discipleship, as Williams describes it, is the spiritual practice of awareness and attentiveness to the one who beckons, "Come and see" (John 1:38-39). The disciple knows the importance of cultivating those skills that assist her in remaining in a state of awareness, like that of an experienced birdwatcher, of what the

Master is doing. Being attentive to the movements and actions of Jesus means "being in the company of the people whose company Jesus seeks and keeps."

Practically speaking, disciples will deepen their attentiveness to the Scriptures, the sacraments, and the life of the body of Christ. Disciples will also seek to keep company with the most unlikely characters of our world, the sort Jesus sought out. Through attentive action, disciples will ultimately find themselves drawn into the company of the Father, "in whose company [Jesus] eternally is."

The chapters on personal and social holiness are perhaps the best of the whole book. Holiness is a practice, Williams writes, that has more to do with being *set apart* than being *sepa-*



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rate. The holy person takes her cue from Jesus, who was involved and engaged in the world, going where it was most difficult.

Holy people are those who shape the lives of people they encounter by enlarging the surrounding world and revealing God's activity in it. As a result, true holiness rejects the possibility of exclusivity, anxiety, and self-consciousness, which so often accompany today's notions of holiness, because our interest in God and the world encompasses us in a self-forgetting love of God.

Christian discipleship, as a pathway that refuses to detach from the world, is naturally engaged in the wider society. At the heart of Christian public engagement is the commitment to recognize that human dignity "depends on the recognition that every person is related to God before they are related to anything or anyone else." Here Williams argues that Christian discipleship is a dynamic vision in which "everyone is engaged in building up everyone else's human life and dignity." Within such a framework, Christians make a difference in the world by seeing others from the vantage of God's eternal, unflinching, and unalterable love.

From a thought-provoking chapter on forgiveness that takes an unlikely focal point, all the way to a discussion on life in the Spirit and the building blocks of self-knowledge, stillness, growth, and joy, *Being Disciples* is a short but surprisingly comprehensive work that invites the reader not only to follow Jesus, but to enter into the life of God the Trinity so that the values and habits of Jesus become personal practice and are woven into the fabric of the surrounding society.

The best works on Christian discipleship are not so much those that arrive at novel conclusions, but ones that examine and highlight ancient and proven practices of the Christian faith. *Being Disciples* is to be commended for its ability to dig deep into the Christian tradition and emerge with ancient wisdom for the modern world.

*The Rev. Paul Nesta is rector of St. Paul's Church in La Porte, Indiana.*

# The Lord of Surprises

Review by Anthony Petrotta

One of Professor Ellen Davis's earliest books was *Imagination Shaped* (1995), a book on Anglican preaching in the 17th and 18th Centuries. A decade later she published *Wondrous Depth: Preaching the Old Testament*. A further decade later comes this collection of her sermons and five essays on preaching. Bookending her sermons and essays is a foreword by Stanley Hauerwas with his usual charm and insights, and an appreciative afterword by Austin McIver Dennis, who also provides wonderful introductory comments to each sermon.

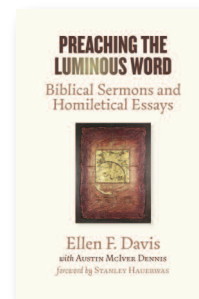
Quite simply put, this is a superb volume. There is abundance for the scholar, plenty for the preacher, and encouraging challenges for the lay reader.

In his foreword, Hauerwas rightly notes that many sermons seek to "make a point" whereas Davis's sermons preeminently trust the text, the story of Scripture. She is a scholar who reads the text for the Church, seeking in it the one "whom Scripture reveals as the Lord of surprises" (p. xiii). For Hauerwas as for Davis, preaching is the most "theologically enlivening thing" they do (p. xiv). Unlike illustrations that seem apt, but often lapse into sentimentality, for Davis it is words, story, and the liturgical occasion that enliven a sermon. Such a sermon begins with entering the text as "inspired speech" that begs for interpretation, not by our agenda but by the agenda of the text and the preaching occasion.

The essays on preaching are models of scholarship, insights, and clear expression. The joy of *Luminous Word*, though, is seeing how these same qualities infuse her sermons. Davis shows us what her approach to sermons looks like in concrete examples from 30 years of preaching on various occasions and sundry topics. The titles given to her sermons are evocative enough to court our imagination: "Living Icons,"

preached at a baccalaureate service; "After the Rain," preached at a wedding; "The Incongruity of Sin," preached at a choral Evensong; "Beautifying Heaven," preached at a baptism.

My favorite is "I Saw God," preached at my ordination. She notes, rightly, that Isaiah 6 is not the most encouraging passage for someone starting out in ministry: Isaiah is charged to speak to a people who are not going to hear it (Isa. 6:9ff.). She concludes with this exhortation: "Open our eyes . . . so that we



## Preaching the Luminous Word

Biblical Sermons and Homiletical Essays  
By Ellen F. Davis  
Eerdmans. Pp. 356. \$33

may see God more clearly, and thus look at our world, and ourselves, without illusion" (p. 194).

Professor Davis had pointed out at the beginning of her sermon that perhaps no other person in Scripture had a clearer picture of God than Isaiah on that day. In her sermon, she makes it clear that to be a minister has more to do with seeing God clearly than any skills or gifts one has to offer. It is a surprisingly comforting sermon.

Ellen Davis's sermons and essays are elegant — in exegesis, in execution, and in theology. It is no accident or marketing stretch that the titles of her books on preaching employ the words *imagination*, *wondrous*, and *luminous*. In his afterword on her sermons, Austin Dennis further uses words like *fecund*, *prophetic*, and *prayerful*. All are descriptively apt.

*Preaching the Luminous Word* is rich fare for both clergy and laity.

*The Rev. Anthony Petrotta is rector of St. Francis of Assisi Church in Wilsonville, Oregon.*



# Resurrection, Ascension

Our faith is not some scholastic puzzle or elite curriculum, and certainly not reserved for the clever. Our faith unveils Truth in time; Truth incarnate and crucified; Truth, in turn, triumphant. And it endeavors to speak *to* God and *of* God, following his lead — and repeating after him, to guarantee truthfulness and accuracy. “Pray then in this way: *Our Father in heaven*” (Matt. 6:9).

Like all true prayer, the rosary draws us into conversation in a bid both for clarity and assistance from a higher power who is *the* higher power, the maker of heaven and earth, God Almighty. This is ensured by beginning with the creed and returning mystery by mystery to the Lord’s Prayer and the “Glory be.” The incarnate and resurrected Christ, like the Suffering Servant, is set within his biography as Word and Son, who with the Father and the Spirit lives and reigns, world without end.

Taking resurrection and ascension together — as the first of the last set of mysteries of the rosary, the glorious mysteries — permits us to emphasize at the outset a commonality between the two: that the Christian faith finally maintains and enjoins the possibility of *return* to God, following our prior departure from him. In an old philosophical way of speaking, the Western tradition has sometimes characterized this arc as an *exitus* and *reditus*, according to which the sweep of salvation history marks a continuous movement *away from* and then *back to* God. Borrowed from Plato, the images map neatly onto the biblical pattern of Fall and redemption, as the arduous journey of the pilgrim who is homeward bound. And the journey finds its north star, as it were, in the

most characteristic of Christian claims, described by St. Paul as the non-negotiable lynchpin of our faith (see 1 Cor. 15:17): that Jesus Christ rose from the dead. He *rose*, initiating the exemplary movement of return; and then, as if to underline the teaching, he *ascended*. On both counts, to follow faithfully entails answering the “upward call of God in Christ Jesus” (Phil. 3:14), which bids us rise and ascend to the heights of the heavenly hosts, in whose company we may praise his name forever. In a sentence of Scripture appointed for Morning Prayer that perfectly captures the unity of movement in this season: “If then you have been raised with Christ, seek the things that are above, where Christ is, seated at the right hand of God” (Col. 3:1).

In a way, our Lord’s return to the Father by resurrection and ascension corresponds to the principal sacraments that he instituted, baptism and the Lord’s Supper. In baptism, Paul emphasizes, we are “buried” with Christ, so that we may be “also raised with him through faith in the power of God, who raised him from the dead” (Col. 2:12). Baptism therefore functions as the sacrament not only of death to sin and self but of resurrected life in Christ — traditionally, the means of our justification by grace through faith. The liturgy bears this out, as we know, starting with a series of questions for the candidates (*Do you renounce Satan? Do you turn to Jesus Christ? Do you promise to follow and obey him?*). Having prospectively committed themselves to God, relying on his aid (*I will, with God’s help*), the celebrant prays that all who are baptized may live in the power of Christ’s res-



urrection. Finally, the priest thanks God for forgiving the sin of the baptized and raising them “to the new life of grace” — for which he also prays, anticipating or otherwise marking concomitant confirmation, that they may be given “the courage to will and to persevere,” sustained by the Holy Spirit (all from 1979 BCP, pp. 302-09). The placement of Holy Baptism at the

precise pivot of the Easter Vigil, “now that our Lenten observance is over,” underscores the especial fittingness of our law of belief in this instance — at the high point of the Christian year — to which the sacrament always points. As the priest may say: “Through the Paschal mystery, dear friends, we are buried with Christ by Baptism into his death, and raised with him to newness of life” (p. 292).

In turn, to ascend with Christ is to *share* in his perfect union with the Father and the Spirit, albeit as creatures who are being sanctified. The end of Christian life aims at a fullness of communion that will be the beatific vision, that is, eternal

life with God or salvation, for “all will be made alive in Christ. But each in his own order: Christ the first fruits, then at his coming those who belong to Christ” (1 Cor. 15:22-23). We commune with Christ in this life by eating his flesh and drinking his blood as a real participation in and foretaste of the end for which we pray, namely, “that we may evermore dwell in him, and he in us” (BCP, p. 337; cf. John 6:54-58). We com-

mune in hope that we may persevere, by grace, and by so partaking we advance in this cause.

Reasoning along these lines, Thomas Aquinas taught that God uses the sacraments both to heal and to elevate the Christian soul, and that the Eucharist is the greatest sacrament, both because it “contains Christ himself substantially” and because all the other sacraments are ordained to it as their end (*Summa theologiae* III 65, 3 c). Of course, we do not presume to come to the table of the Lord, because we rely continually on God’s mercy and forgiveness, and eucharistic communion especially calls forth a regular act of discernment and preparation (see 1 Cor. 11:27ff.). At the same time, we desire to receive the Lord, which “arises from love,” as Aquinas says. While a certain reverential fear is fitting, therefore, in keeping with the statement of the centurion (“Lord, I am not worthy to have you come under my roof”: Matt. 8:8), “love and hope, to which the Scripture constantly urge us, are preferable to fear,” says Thomas. Thus, “when Peter had said, ‘Depart from me, for I am a sinful man, O Lord,’ Jesus answered: ‘Fear not’” (III 80, 10 ad 3).

Approaching our Lord in the Eucharist, we ask God to form us in the death, resurrection, and ascension of his Son, so that “we may also in heart and mind there ascend, and with him continually dwell” (Collect for Ascension Day, BCP, p. 226).

“Rise, let us be on our way” (John 14:31).

*Lord God, our heavenly Father, we praise you for delivering us from the dominion of sin and death and bringing us into the kingdom of your Son, our Savior Jesus Christ. We pray that, as by his death he has recalled us to life, so by his love he may raise us to eternal joys; who lives and reigns with you, in the unity of the Holy Spirit, one God, now and forever. Amen.*

*Christopher Wells*

To ascend with Christ is to *share* in his perfect union with the Father and the Spirit, albeit as creatures who are being sanctified.



## PEOPLE & PLACES

### Appointments

The Rev. **John Badders** is interim rector of St. Alban's, 1417 E. Austin Ave., Harlingen, TX 78552.

The Rev. **Joy Blaylock** is dean and canon for discipleship at a school for ministry being formed by the Diocese of the Central Gulf Coast, to be based at St. Agatha's, 144 Circle Dr., DeFuniak Springs, FL 32435.

The Rev. **Catherine Tyndall Boyd** is rector of St. Martin's, 1333 Jamestown Rd., Williamsburg, VA 23185.

The Rev. **Leslie S. Burkardt** is rector of St.

Thomas', 2000 Highland Ave, Rochester, NY 14618.

The Very Rev. **Tom Callard** is dean of Christ Church Cathedral, 35 Chestnut St., Springfield MA 01103.

The Rev. **Matthew Cobb** is director of Episcopal House of Prayer, 14215 Fruit Farm Rd., Collegeville, MN 56321.

The Rev. **Marya DeCarlen** is rector of All Saints, 46 Cherry St, Danvers, MA 01923.

The Rev. **Liz Embler** is associate for congregational development at St. Paul's, 6249 Canal Blvd., New Orleans, LA 70124.

The Rev. **Amanda Gott** is rector of St. Matthew's, 2325 S. 24th St., Lincoln, NE 68502.

The Rev. **Stephanie M. Johnson** is rector of St. Paul's, 200 Riverside Ave., Riverside, CT 06878.

The Rev. **Judith Jones** is vicar of St. Stephen's, 414 S.W. 9th St (P.O. Box 1014), Newport, OR 97365, and St. Luke's by the Sea, 1353 Hwy. 101 S. (P.O. Box 422), Waldport, OR 97394.

The Rev. **Roger Joslin** is vicar of Redeemer, 13225 Sound Ave., Mattituck, NY 11952, and Holy Trinity, 768 Main St., Greenport, NY 11944.

The Rev. **Kevin O. Olds** is rector of St. Timothy's, 4670 Congress St, Fairfield, CT 06824.

The Rev. **Maggie Rourk** (ELCA) is priest-in-charge of Messiah, 76 Peachtree St., Murphy, NC 28906.

The Rev. **Richard Rowe** is priest-in-charge at St. Paul's, 1659 St. Paul's Road, Edneyville, NC 28727.

The Rev. **Lyn Stabler-Tippett** is rector of Trinity, 472 N. Main St., Mt. Airy, NC 27030.

The Rev. **Sandy Stone** is interim pastor of Word of Hope (ELCA), 1870 Armstrong Mill Rd., Lexington, KY 40517, and remains rector of St. Martha's, Lexington.

**Deb Strainge** is head of St. Mark's School, 3395 Burns Rd., Palm Beach Gardens, FL 33410.

The Rev. **Susan Berry Taylor** is rector of St. Andrew's, 219 Winthrop Center Rd., Winthrop, ME 04364.

The Rev. **Jon White** is rector of St. Luke's, 5402 W. Genesee St., Camillus, NY 13031.

The Rev. Mary Grace Williams is vicar of St. John the Evangelist, 1114 River Rd., Red Hook, NY 12571, and chaplain at Bard College, P.O. Box 5000, Annandale-on-Hudson, NY 12504.

### Ordinations

#### Deacons

**Nevada — Angela Anderson**  
**Northwestern Pennsylvania — David Betz, Mark Elliston, Nicholas Evancho, and Dorothy Konyha**  
**South Carolina — Jason Roberson**  
**Utah — Patricia Anne Sanchez and Kathalin Ree Walker**

#### Priests

**Iowa — Thomas Michael Early**  
**Southwest Florida — Richard T. Earle**

### Retirements

The Rev. **Robinson Dewey**, as senior chaplain of Coastal Crisis Chaplaincy, Charleston, SC

The Rev. **Geri Nelson** as deacon at St. Thomas, Isle of Hope, Savannah, GA

The Rev. **Richard Nelson** as rector of St. Thomas, Isle of Hope, Savannah, GA

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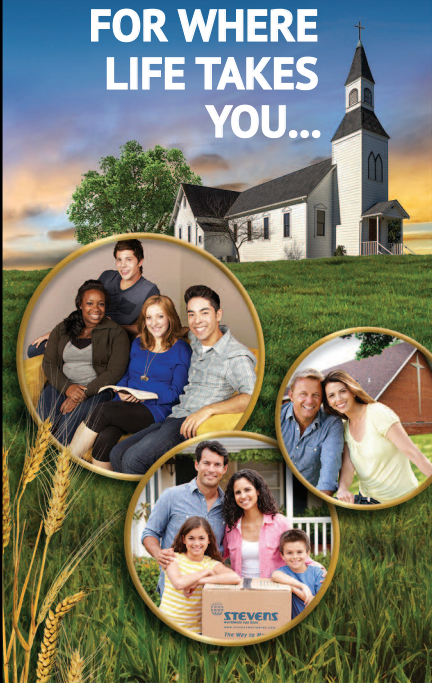
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## Above and Below

“As they were watching, he was lifted up, and a cloud took him out of their sight” (Acts 1:9). Robed in celestial mist, he whose power is in the skies rides upon the clouds (Ps. 68:4, 35). Even now, looking upward, “all angels pray, every creature prays, flocks and wild animals pray, they bend the knee and go forth from their dens and caves and look up to heaven and breathe expectantly, vibrating the air in their own way. The rising birds are directed to heaven and stretch forth a cross of wings like hands and say something that seems like a prayer” (Tertullian, Tract on Prayer, Cap. 28-29). Nature is in travail too, but groans deeper than words make a perfect supplication (Rom. 8:26).

Look up. Lift up your hearts. “So if you have been raised with Christ, seek the things that are above, where Christ is, seated at the right hand of God. Set your mind on things that are above, not on things that are on earth, for you have died, and your life is hidden with Christ in God” (Col. 3:1-3). The Greek and Latin best capture what it means to set your mind upon the heights: to feel, to think, to strive for, to sense, to taste. “Taste and see that the Lord is good” (Ps. 34:8).

But have we noticed that “a cloud took him *out of their sight*,” and what are we to think of intruding angels: “Men of Galilee, why do you stand looking up toward heaven?” (Acts 1:9-10)? Contemplation has a place, and its home proves to be both obscuring clouds and the mundane matter of human lives. With their minds set on daily things and the wonder of an unseen Messiah, “all these were constantly devoting themselves to prayer” (Acts 1:14). Look down, do your work, and endure to the end. “Let the same mind be in you that was in Christ Jesus, who, though he was in the form of God, did not regard equality with God as something to be exploited, but emptied himself, taking the form of a slave, being born in human likeness. And be-

ing found in human form, he humbled himself and became obedient to the point of death — even death on a cross” (Phil. 2:5-8). Jesus is in the world, and now prays for his own who are in the world (John 17:11). Indeed, “As you have sent me into the world, so I have sent them into the world” (John 17:18).

Jesus goes up to the heavens. “Sing to God, sing praises to his name; lift up a song to him who rides upon the clouds — his name is the LORD” (Ps. 68:4). He is hidden and gone, and yet he is here. “You will receive power when the Holy Spirit has come upon you; and you will be my witnesses in Jerusalem, in all Judea and Samaria, and to the ends of the earth” (Acts 1:8).

And you will tell and display a divine mystery in the untidy work of human compassion. You will show that God is the father of orphans, the protector of widows, a homebuilder for the desolate, prosperity to prisoners, rain from heaven, the restorer of what languished, a dwelling for flocks, a provider for the needy (Ps. 68:6-10). O rider in the heavens, the ancient heavens, what tender care you show for this particle of creation.

I leave now to a home for the weak, ordered more or less, but still cluttered with wheelchairs, shower chairs, electric lifts, and adaptive implements for meals. The TV will be on, as always. It is good to be there, and look up.

### Look It Up

Read Acts 1:9. He has gone.

### Think About It

Power upon you.



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Acts 2:1-21 or Num. 11:24-30 • Ps. 104:25-35, 37

1 Cor. 12:3b-13 • John 20:19-23 or John 7:37-39

## Fire

Moses went up onto the mountain of God and saw a bush transfigured before him. “There the angel of the Lord appeared to him in a flame of fire out of a bush; he looked, and the bush was blazing, yet it was not consumed” (Ex. 3:2). Just as Moses looked, the reader or listener looks and finds the bush still burning, still standing and presiding over the arid landscape, brutal in its determination to live. Heaven and earth will pass away, but this bush, it seems, will not. God is the flame burning but not consuming desert wood. Grace perfects nature and does not destroy it. In other words, God loves the world. Later, God spoke to Moses, and the skin of his face shone, red from flame and heat (Ex. 34:30). It was dangerous and mysterious, but Moses survived to be himself. They spoke together, God and Moses, face to face, as friends (Ex. 33:11).

“Would that all the Lord’s people were prophets, and that the Lord would put his spirit on them” (Num. 11:29). The Spirit who fell upon Moses fell upon the 70 elders who stood before the tent, and the two, Eldad and Medad, who remained in the camp. The brush fire of God’s Spirit was leaping from person to person, beyond human censure and control. If only they were all prophets and friends of the Most High God. Indeed, when human nature was assumed into Jesus Christ, it followed that Christ, who is in the bosom of the Father, would share by adoption and grace his life and status as Son of the Father. “To as many as received him, who believed in his name, he gave power to become the children of God” (John 1:12). He made them children and friends of God (John 15:15). Without harm to individuals, without threat to the integrity of persons, God unleashes the fire that burned in the bush. The fire of the Spirit is the power and life of Christ.

On the Great Day of Pentecost, when the disciples were gathered together in one place, the heavens rum-

bled and split, and a torrent of fresh air filled the house where they were. “Divided tongues, as of fire, appeared among them, and a tongue rested on each of them” (Acts 2:3). Awakened and strengthened by a heaven-storm and fire, they spoke in other languages, so that all the nations living in Jerusalem heard and understood: Parthians, Medes, Elamites, residents of Mesopotamia, Judea and Cappadocia, Pontus and Asia, Phrygia and Pamphylia, Egypt, parts of Libya belonging to Cyrene, visitors from Rome, both Jews and proselytes, Cretans and Arabs. This strange list of countries and ethnic groups may suggest a stylized catalogue, but it definitely suggests the universal reach of the gospel. “In our own language we hear them speaking about God’s deeds of power” (Acts 2:11). The power of the resurrection of Jesus Christ was and is creating and igniting the Church. “I will pour out my Spirit upon all flesh, and your sons and daughters shall prophesy, and your young men shall see visions, and your old men shall dream dreams” (Acts 2:17). Let the whole earth praise the name of the Lord. Let the fire burn.

And the fire is effectual. The one and the same Spirit gives gifts and services and activities for the common good. There is a gift for each and a gift for all, the one Spirit.

### Look It Up

Read Acts 2:3 and John 20:22: diversity and unity.

### Think About It

The angel of death will pass over you, but the angel of resurrection will thunder into your home and spark a living flame.

## Fear, Wisdom, and Kindness

Formless and void, darkness over the deep: the first elements churn in a murky soup of being. God rides on wings over the face of the waters. God calls forth light, makes a dome in the sky, and pushes mud above the waters. The land brings forth plants and fruit trees, God allowing. God puts two glowing orbs in the sky and speckles the dome with shining jewels. God lets the waters swarm and makes sky the realm of birds. God lets the earth bring forth living creatures, cattle, creeping things, and wild animals. God prepares to make humans, saying, "Let us make humankind in our image, according to our likeness" (Gen. 1:26). "Let us," says God.

"Hear, O Israel, the Lord our God, the Lord alone" (Deut. 6:4). An NRSV footnote adds: "Or *The Lord our God is one Lord*, or *The Lord our God, the Lord is one*, or *The Lord is our God, the Lord is one*." There is one God, one divine substance, one cause of all being. God is sovereign and majestic, above the heavens, that than which nothing greater can be conceived. God creates, and looks, and admires the goodness of created beings, calling their summation "very good." God finishes the work, rests, and looks in contemplative love.

Love is the ground of all being, the font of the universe. To human beings, this may feel like power, the power of love. Beholding the grandeur and magnificence of nature, humans sense a power source. Looking more deeply, creation shows evidence of order and purpose on so grand and small a scale that we naturally sense a mystery is at work from moment to moment. Something like Wisdom cries out. More subtle still is the sense, violated often by tragedy, that there may be something like kindness in all seven days of an evolving creation. The great Leviathan owes its existence to another, is guided by an unseen wisdom, is preserved by a kindness put in the water world.

Hugh of St. Victor, speaking of the

Trinity, imagined three days that are, in essence, one day. "The omnipotence of God is considered and arouses our heart to wonder, it is the day of the Father; when the wisdom of God is examined and enlightens our heart with recognition of the truth, it is the day of the Son; when the kindness of God is observed and enflames our hearts to love, it is the day of the Holy Spirit. Power arouses fear; wisdom enlightens; kindness brings joy. On the day of power we die through fear. On the day of wisdom, we are buried away from the clamor of this world by contemplation of the truth. On the day of kindness, we rise through love and desire of eternal goods" (*On the Three Days*, trans. Hugh Feiss, OSB).

Wondrous fear, the contemplation of Wisdom, and the enflaming warmth of kindness suggest the mystery of Father, Son, and Holy Spirit, though this mystery would only be named after the revelation of Jesus Christ. In Christ's coming, the grace of his life is the first experience of his followers. He heals and casts off demons and teaches as one with authority, even raises the dead. He embodies the love and presence of God so vividly, articulately; a Word, it seems, from the Father (John 1:18). Departing from the disciples, Jesus promises that he will not leave them orphaned. He sends the Holy Spirit, his own Spirit, the Spirit who is the Father's love for the Son and the Son's love for the Father. Sending the Spirit, he sends the Trinity: holy fear, Wisdom, and kindness in the unity of one being. A love story.

### Look It Up

Read Matthew 28:19.

### Think About It

Indeed: think.



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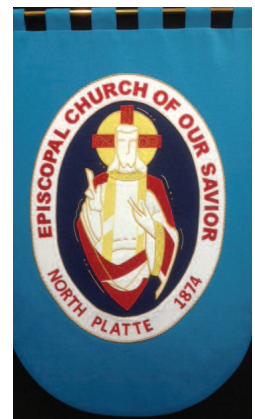
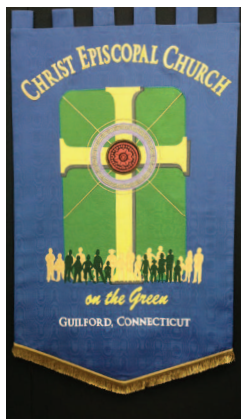
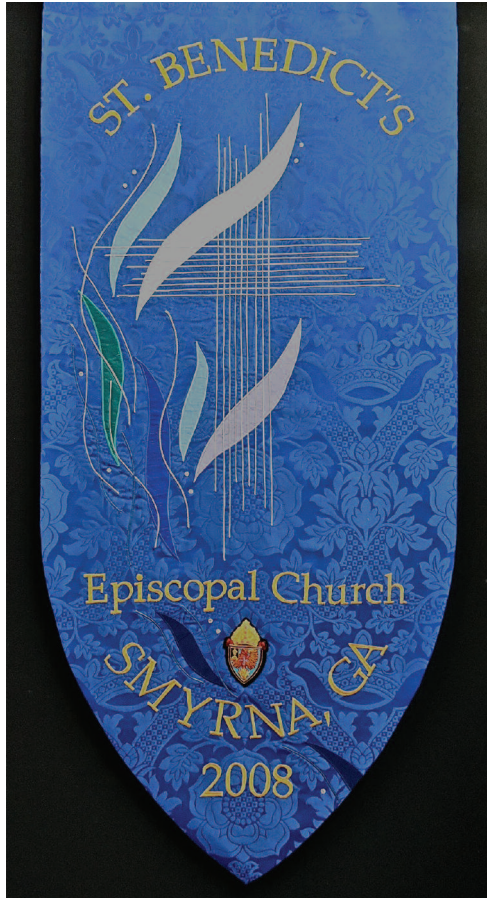
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