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ON THE COVER

In the midst of seasonal stresses, South Dakota Episcopalians are supporting a nationwide movement on reservations to lift up prayers and awareness about addiction (see “A Sacred Fire,” p. 4).

Matthew Townsend photo



THE LIVING CHURCH

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LIVING CHURCH Partners

We are grateful to Truro Anglican Church, Fairfax, and the Diocese of Virginia [p. 24], Church of the Transfiguration, Vail [p. 25], and Trinity Church, Vero Beach [p. 27], whose generous support helped make this issue possible.

POSTCARD FROM SOUTH DAKOTA

A Sacred Fire

The faithful are defying December weather to promote healing and recovery from addiction.

By Matthew Townsend

The Christmas season can be a hard time for addicts and their families. Seasonal stresses, often compounded by the ghosts of traumatic holidays past, can raise tensions even for those with years of sobriety. And those still struggling with alcohol, drugs, or gambling may run deeper into addiction as a means of escape.

Nowhere is this pain more poignant than in places like the Lake Traverse Reservation in northeastern South Dakota. In many ways, the Sisseton Wahpeton Oyate (formerly Sisseton-Wahpeton Sioux Tribe) struggle with American problems that are not at all uncommon: alcoholism, drug abuse, gambling, broken families — but the stakes are raised by a distressing suicide rate, high unemployment, and a struggle for identity that only indigenous peoples can likely appreciate.

Jamie German, communications coordinator for the Episcopal Sisseton



Jamie German

Mission and a member of the tribe, told TLC that everyone on the reservation has battled to hold on to a loved one in the throes of addiction, and that everyone she knew had lost a loved one, usually overcome by depression



Matthew Townsend photos

Kenneth Morsette of Sisseton adjusts ventilation on the tipi used to host the sacred fire. Sisseton Wahpeton Oyate use tipis for ceremonies and special events.

and substance abuse, to suicide.

A nephew of German's recently committed suicide, and she has relatives struggling with addiction. This is part of why she and other Episcopalians among the tribe have been supporting a new initiative by Brandi DeCoteau, also a member of the Sisseton Wahpeton Oyate. DeCoteau, a recovering methamphetamine addict and mother of six, is spending the month of December in a robust tipi in the Sisseton Wahpeton Oyate Community Memorial Park.

There, she and husband, Tom DeCoteau Jr., are keeping the flame of a Sacred Fire lit for 30 days. The fire, part of a nationwide movement on reservations to raise prayers and awareness about addiction through these month-long events, warms the tipi, but it does much more. People of all walks of life — Native Americans, whites, Christians, observers of the traditional reli-

gion, addicts, and relatives of addicts — come to sprinkle tobacco on the fire and offer a prayer.

“The fire will be lit to promote healing, awareness, and unity amongst our people. With this Sacred Fire we will protect our people, women, children, and those in need with our cultures and traditions,” the mission statement says.

“But with this fire we are also praying that it leads people to God — whether it's through church or through our traditional ways,” Brandi told TLC inside of the tipi on Dec. 4, as she and Tom prepared for the first blizzard of the year.

“I believe that addiction is a spiritual sickness, and that a lot of the people live in spiritual poverty, not having that connection with the Creator. And I know for me, I learned that having God in my life wasn't good enough. I had to have him in my heart,” she said.

Brandi said God used the Bible and the traditional religion of the Dakota to save her. She cited Mark 5:1-16, Jesus' restoration of the possessed man. "That was me," the young woman said. "I was on meth for two years, but I used marijuana and I drank since I was 11. I tried other drugs on and off. But I never had anything take over me the way meth did. It was like I was possessed.

"And when I didn't feel possessed, I felt like an empty shell. I was just breathing. I didn't think I was ever coming out of it. I didn't think I was ever going to get saved. And I thought my only way out was death, so I was suicidal."

Brandi said the grace of God — and the work of 12-step recovery — helped save her.

"We pray that this fire will lead people to God and help people heal, so that we don't need drugs and alcohol. There's a lot of people hurting; not just here, but everywhere. It's not just the natives, but a lot of the white people, too."

"Around here, there's so much hurt we go through our whole lives, passed down through generations," Tom told TLC. "We're ashamed of who we are and what happened to us. So, it's really easy for us Dakota people on the reservation to get ashamed and not feel like we're worth anything. So, when we use, we feel something.

"Just come, say a prayer, and start on your journey," he said. "We've had a couple of people come through and go to treatment. It's just getting our pride back — and our strength back as a people — that's going to help us."

Brandi said the opposite of addiction is not sobriety but connection, especially to others and to God. She added that connection has been impeded by the trauma inflicted on native peoples throughout history, including by Christians.

"All these people who claimed to be of God came, put us in boarding schools, and took away our connection — took away our spirituality, took away everything. So, all that is passed down from generation to generation. They almost took away our language. Another big part of healing is our identity."

Brandi said that Christians wanting to help should avoid bringing dogmatic views to the reservation, a complex environment in which religions and denominations can sometimes work at cross purposes. "I love the Bible and I love Jesus, and I also love my Chanunpa [a sacred pipe]. I believe there is one God, but I think it's harmful when the pastors come and say, 'Jesus is the only way.' They say that our ways are wrong. That close-mindedness hurts."

The Rev. Charles Chan, priest with the Sisseton Mission, said that approach to evangelism, which can be seen on the reservation, is often a reflection of the prosperity gospel and other televangelist-inspired faith movements. He cited the official position of the Episcopal Church as an asset.

"We can claim salvation inside the church. We cannot say there is no salvation outside the church. So, I always

(Continued on next page)

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Sacred Fire

(Continued from previous page)

try to focus on what we have.”

Chan told TLC that he has been visiting Dakotah Pride Treatment Center, which provides rehabilitation services in Sisseton, as a form of outreach. There, Chan helps those struggling with addiction by listening to the moral inventories they create during fourth-step work.

Recently, the center has leaned toward traditional Dakota spirituality, meaning Chan’s visits have shifted from weekly to as-needed. He said that does not bother him, though.

“The truth is, with that kind of situation, the first thing to go is spirituality. And it’s the last thing to come back. So whatever spirituality they can regain, that will help them. So, it’s fine with me.”

The Episcopal churches have also considered hosting a new Alcoholics Anonymous meeting, he said, but they are careful not to compete with existing opportunities. The priest has also worked on adapting 12-step recovery within a Christian context, offering that to parishioners who are interested.

German, who grew up Episcopal, said she wanted to see more connection as well with other Episcopalians. “I wish more people would come from the outside, more Episcopalians, and have a workshop or gathering, so they could help spread the word that there’s a crisis.

“It’s real. It’s tearing a lot of families apart,” she said. “A lot of little kids have to deal with it too. The whole family has to deal with the addicts, and they don’t know how to get out of it.”

She invited Episcopalians to pray for the DeCoteaus as they maintain their vigil, and for people struggling with addiction. “Pray wherever you’re at, just say a prayer for them. Say a prayer for him. Say a prayer for her.”

Matthew Townsend and his wife, Katy Crane, are spending December with the Sisseton Mission on the Traverse Lake Reservation.



Courtesy of St. Stephen's Church

National Guard soldiers turn the sanctuary at St. Stephen's, Sebastopol, California, into a dormitory for elderly evacuees during wildfires.

‘We Get to Be the Church’

In a year of fires, storms, and mass migrations, churches have found new ways to minister to the displaced.

By G. Jeffrey MacDonald

As rampaging October wildfires forced thousands of Northern Californians to flee for their lives, St. Stephen’s Church in Sebastopol opened its doors to the most vulnerable and received a surprising lesson in Christian hospitality.

The call first came from relief workers caring for 500 evacuees in a gymnasium-turned-shelter at nearby Analy High School. Elders between age 70 and 100 were not doing well in that environment. Could the church quickly provide shelter for about 30 people?

Yes, answered the Rev. Kate Sefton, a deacon. Parish volunteers rallied, movable pews became beds, Red Cross cots arrived, and shaken elders began arriving. But it was in enabling *others* to be hospitable, including non-churchgoers and displaced fire victims, that St. Stephen’s gained a deeper understanding of the practice.

One crystalizing moment for Deacon Sefton came when a tall man in his early 30s spotted her in her clericals at Analy High School. When he explained that his home had burned to ground, Sefton offered him condolences and a meal. But he insisted that

what he really needed was not food.

“He said, ‘No, you don’t understand. I’ve just lost everything. You need to give me something to do to help someone else. Please help me to help someone else right now,’” Sefton said.

“In that moment, I realized how important being a bridge between the church and the world really is,” she said. “There are people in communities — in Puerto Rico, Houston, everywhere — who are in communal pain. And what can assuage that pain to some degree is to be able to help others.”

Such accounts of reimagined hospitality are resonating this year as the Christmas season arrives. Tradition summons Christians to be especially generous toward the homeless and disadvantaged, especially as they remember circumstances of their Savior’s birth in a stable because there was no room at an inn.

This year, conditions across the globe have made displacement — and the question of how the church might respond to it — an especially prominent theme. Worldwide, an unprecedented 65.6 million people (including 22.5 million refugees) have been forcibly displaced, according to June figures from the United Nations High Com-

missioner for Refugees. In the United States and Caribbean, hurricanes Harvey, Irma, and Maria this fall compelled new mass migrations, whether temporarily into shelters or, for thousands, permanently to new locales.

Displacement is not always as dramatic or visible as it is in disaster zones. It can also be psychic or economic in nature. Events of 2017 have stoked a sense of insecurity among immigrants who worry what new travel restrictions or deportation practices could mean for their families and communities. Many Americans feel displaced by a new political environment under President Donald Trump, by a loss of livelihoods in the heartland, by a merciless opioid epidemic, or by gentrification in fast-transforming neighborhoods where, rather suddenly, they can no longer afford to live.

“People are trying to figure out, *how do we live in this time without going crazy?*” said the Rev. Nell Archer, vicar of Iglesia de Santa Cruz in Brooklyn’s Bushwick neighborhood and planter of Bushwick Abbey, a new church. “We try to provide a place where people can think, talk about these things, and have opportunities to take some positive action.”

For congregations, ministry to the displaced has traditionally meant helping stabilize lives that have become detached from familiar moorings. In the Diocese of Southwest Florida, a \$20,000 grant from Episcopal Relief & Development helped with the immediate response after Hurricane Irma, such as emergency tree removal and preparation for long-term recovery.

In Santa Rosa, California, Church of the Incarnation raised more than \$50,000 to help fire victims, including individuals struggling anew to stay in their homes. Among the beneficiaries is a housekeeper, said the Rev. James Richardson, priest-in-charge. Her entire income stream vanished when all the homes she used to clean were reduced to ash and rubble.

In discerning how to help, many Christians tend to be more comfortable as hosts than as guests, said the Rev. Jesse Zink, principal of Montreal Diocesan Theological College and author of *Backpacking Through the Angli-*

can Communion. They would rather sponsor a refugee family or cook a meal for the homeless than be guests of either group, Zink said in Boston at a November meeting of the Society for the Study of Anglicanism.

But Christians should also agree to be others’ guests, Zink said. The theological rationale: “Because in the Incarnation, the Son of God became our guest.”

“Not only are we called to be hosts, we are also called as Christians to be guests,” Zink said. “And the people we may want to make ourselves guests to are the very people, migrants, whom we thought we were supposed to be hosting. In my experience, this is a much more difficult step for people to take.”

Yet it’s a crucial step. Displaced people strengthen their sense of identity and establish new grounding as they are hosts, no matter how tenuous their circumstances might be. When the world serves up turmoil, many find security in the unchanging nature and ways of God.

Zink noted, for instance, how immi-

grant communities of Pentecostal Christians eagerly host newcomers to the United States. Many also delight in hosting long-established Americans, including Episcopalians willing to be on the receiving end of hospitality.

In the tumult of 2017, congregations and clergy have expanded what it means for them to care for the displaced. At St. Stephen’s in Sebastopol, the congregation provided more than a venue where church members could supply comfort through food, blankets, phones, and prayer. They also made room for neighbors of various religious and non-religious backgrounds to share their blessings.

Psychologists trained in disaster counseling used the church to give local counselors a crash course in handling disaster-related trauma. A masseuse helped calm elders’ nerves by offering free massages. A pedicurist donated her skills at the church to help one elder evacuee alleviate a painful toenail problem.

In Brooklyn’s Bushwick neighbor-

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Serving the Displaced

(Continued from previous page)

hood, where Latinos have seen friends and relatives flee to outer boroughs to escape ever-steeper housing costs, Bushwick Abbey and La Iglesia de Santa Cruz have used their stature to celebrate a different anchor in the community: the bodega, or small grocery store in which the owners and customers converse in Spanish.

It is in these street corner stores that foods from native lands are sold and enjoyed and neighborhood news is shared over coffee. To honor the ties represented by these durable institutions, the two congregations this year launched the Bodega Advent Project. It involves installing 25 works by local artists — one per day, starting Dec. 1 — in 25 Bushwick bodegas. The project marks a nod to how these stores welcome wanderers in search of a resting place, much like Joseph and Mary in the time of Caesar Augustus.

“They’re kind of a citadel or refuge in themselves for people in the community who might be kind of on the fringes,” Archer said. “They offer their own kind of hospitality for people who need kind of a respite.”

These days, helping the displaced gain a new toehold in society can involve activism on the front lines of immigration policy. In South Texas, Presbyterian pastor and theologian Helen Boursier ministered to 5,000 mothers and children at three Immigration and Customs Enforcement detention facilities in 2015 and 2016. Her ministry involved guid-

ing them to tell — first verbally, and then through visual artwork — the often-difficult stories of situations they left behind in Central America.

Boursier’s goal was twofold: help the detained move past trauma through the making of art and enable the preparation and rehearsal of personal narratives in such forms that they would meet criteria for immigrants receiving asylum in the United States.

The Department of Homeland Security revoked Boursier’s visiting privileges after she showed photos of detention conditions at a meeting of the American Academy of Religion, a professional association of scholars, in November 2016.

Despite her expulsion, she still sees her hospitality as one of having empowered victims to speak immediately about their traumatic experiences. This can include talking about threats of violence they faced in their native Honduras or El Salvador, even if they would rather forget or repress such memories.

“They don’t have a lot of time to deal with this, you know what I’m saying?” Boursier said at a 2017 AAR workshop in Boston. “They’re locked up. They need to be able to say, ‘I will be directly persecuted, threatened, killed if I am deported, and this is why.’”

As congregations stretch their understandings of what hospitality can entail, classic formulations of the virtue are being reinterpreted, too. St. George’s Church in Bradenton, Florida, frequently plays host for the displaced. This can mean anything from feeding the chronically homeless to operating a non-emergency shelter in the aftermath of a storm, which the church has

done at least three times this year.

Hosting the displaced at St. George’s does not always mean retaining control. It can mean surrendering a measure of it, along with some convenience and familiar comforts. When St. George’s shelters evacuees, Sunday coffee hour moves outside to the sidewalk because the parish hall is occupied. The parish’s electricity bills spike 25 percent during those periods.

Even when no one is sheltered at the facility, worship at St. George’s increasingly means sliding over in a pew to accommodate someone with a pungent body odor. The people of St. George’s are learning to regard such experiences not as a burden but as a unique blessing.

“We get to be the church,” said the Rev. Bryan O’Carroll, St. George’s rector. “People are coming to know the depth of their faith by being given permission to live it out in really bold and sometimes crazy ways that weren’t necessarily accepted before. Now we have children who see homeless people and see them as people.”

Idowu-Fearon Sees Vigor

During a visit to Virginia Theological Seminary, the secretary general of the Anglican Communion stressed Anglicans’ work in evangelism and cross-cultural ministry.

The Most Rev. Josiah Idowu-Fearon spoke on “The Vitality of World Anglicanism” Nov. 15 as part of the 2017 Mollegen Forum and 20th anniversary celebrations for the Center for Anglican Communion Studies.

Idowu-Fearon, secretary general since 2015, spoke about the life and vigor that he has witnessed across the Anglican family of churches. Contrary to the narrative of bloggers, he said, the Anglican Communion is alive and well, and through this family the gospel of Jesus Christ is growing.

This evangelism is the Church’s primary job, he said, if we take the Great Commission seriously. The Communion has grown 10 percent in the last decade, and not because of birthrates, he said.

Western Anglicans perhaps assume



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this is true because of the Communion's African provinces, and Idowu-Fearon, former Archbishop of Kaduna in the Church of Nigeria, affirmed that church-planting in Africa is a high priority. In one diocese, every priest is expected to participate in a two-week evangelism mission every year, and much church-planting focuses on poor rural communities.

But he also cited examples in other parts of the world: the Diocese of Singapore has five missionary deaneries, and in 2016 Bishop Rennis Ponniah flew by helicopter into remote villages of the Himalayas to baptize more than 500 new Christians. Asian Anglicans, he said, are taking the lead in evangelism in China, the area of the greatest Christian growth in the world.

But even in the West, the missionary spirit is still stirring. Idowu-Fearon singled out the Diocese of London, where in 2015 Bishop Richard Chartres established a Centre for Church Planting and Growth with an explicit intention of planting 100 new churches by 2020. The diocese has 27 new congregations so far, with a total average Sunday attendance of 1,240.

Holy Trinity Brompton has a wide effect on the broader Church: it not only has an average Sunday attendance of 6,000, but has also led the way in planting new congregations in vacant church buildings. HTB's Alpha course is now used in 169 countries, across a range of denominations.

Idowu-Fearon also highlighted the work of the Anglican Mothers Union, a force in almost every diocese in Africa. Mothers Union empowers women who face immense challenges and injustices in the developing world by creating training centers and schools that teach marketable skills.

The archbishop stressed that churches in the West can learn from the Global South that church growth happens not through telling people what they want to hear but by preaching the gospel and calling for commitment. He spoke of the necessity, amid all the growth in the Global South, for more effective and substantive theological education and catechesis to build Christians up in their new life in Christ.

Mac Stewart

AMiE Plans First Ordinations

The Anglican Mission in England (AMiE), which now claims 10 British parishes in its network, held its first ordinations in a Dec. 7 service led by its missionary bishop, the Rt. Rev. Andy Lines.

AMiE said the London event would celebrate the commissioning and sending of nine new ministers "who have gone through a process of rigorous discernment and training."

Some will serve in existing AMiE congregations, while others will lead teams engaged in planting new churches.

"We know that many faithful Anglicans remain within the structures of the Church of England," said Lee McMunn, AMiE's mission director. "However, some are finding their entry to ordination blocked by liberal clergy who do not believe orthodox Anglican teachings.

"Many are now talking to AMiE about a different way of being an Anglican in England."

John Martin

American to Lead St. Anselm

The Rev. Rosalyn Murphy, vicar of St. Thomas' Church in Blackpool, will become prior of the Community of St. Anselm in April. She succeeds the Rev. Anders Litzell, prior since the community's launch in 2015.

Murphy has served as a training facilitator for curates and new priests in four Church of England dioceses. She

is a published biblical scholar, bringing a liberation and womanist theological perspective to her research.

She was born in Texas and grew up in Wisconsin. She has lived in the United Kingdom for nearly 20 years with her husband, Kenneth, a retired entrepreneur and priest. She has two grown children.

New Sanctuary Diocese: San Diego

The Diocese of San Diego has pledged to "resist efforts to target and deport millions of undocumented immigrants, and to eliminate the Deferred Action for Childhood Arrivals (DACA) program." San Diego's annual convention approved Resolution 17-05 on Nov. 11.

San Diego is the southernmost Episcopal diocese in California, and it shares a border with the city of Tijuana, Mexico.

"Any church that chooses to provide aid or assistance to anyone does so for humanitarian reasons, and not in any way to flout the law. However, there is no requirement that a church providing aid or assistance ask or seek to determine their legal status," said Jim Stiven, president of the diocese's standing committee.

A Song before Dying

Ian Squire, one of four British medical missionaries held captive in Nigeria beginning in mid-October, was martyred immediately after he sang "Amazing Grace," said Dr. David

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Martyr

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Donovan, a fellow hostage.

Squire stood after finishing the hymn, and a volley of gunshots killed him instantly. His fellow hostages fled from the hut where they were held, fearing they would be next.

“We jumped out of the shack and into the water, as we thought they were coming for us next, but a member of the gang came and put us back in there with Ian for the rest of the day,” he said.

Donovan and his wife, Shirley, with colleague Anna Carson, have been telling their story to U.K. media.

The surviving hostages were freed in early November.

Squire, an ophthalmologist from London, moved to Nigeria to establish an eye clinic. He had developed a solar-powered lens grinder for the mission.

Donovan speculated that a member of the gang may have murdered Squire after fearing that his singing might alert others to the hostages’ presence.

“It was the perfect song, and at that point things began to look not quite as bad,” Donovan said. “Ian was hungry to know more of God, and lived his life with that purpose.”

John Martin

Rogers Harris Dies

Bishop Rogers Sanders Harris, whose call to Southwest Florida came at a critical time for the diocese, died on Nov. 15, 2017 in South Carolina. His

predecessor, the Rt. Rev. Emerson Paul Haynes, had served a 13-year episcopate and died while in office in 1988, which left the diocese without a bishop.

“He just came at a very difficult time,” said the Rt. Rev. Barry Howe, the current assisting bishop of the diocese and, during Harris’ time, dean of the Cathedral Church of St. Peter. “He took a very difficult situation, and made the best of it he could.”

Bishop Harris was invested as diocesan on September 9, 1989, at the Cathedral. It was also during Bishop Harris’ tenure that the diocese first ordained female priests.

“He provided a steady hand that was needed and appreciated,” said the Rev. Ed Henley, who believes that putting the diocese on a sound administrative footing was a critical accomplishment. “His personality was not such that you ended up with a lot of stories, but that was perfectly fine.”

The issues and discussions of worship styles were not of great importance in his role as bishop.

“He didn’t make a whole lot of fuss about liturgy,” said Howe, who worked across the street from diocesan offices, which were then in St. Petersburg, across from the Cathedral. “We just kind of became good friends.” He recalls that in his personal demeanor, he was reserved. “He was a very soft-spoken guy, and thought a lot, before he spoke.”

His wife, Anne Harris, survived him. Family members said “Amazing Grace” was playing in the hospital room as he died.

Diocese of Southwest Florida

Uncovering Roots, Raising Questions

Anglo-Catholic conference explores the movement’s future.

By G. Jeffrey MacDonald

BOSTON — Episcopalians who self-identify as Anglo-Catholics have reason to believe their niche packs a mysterious magnetism that draws both the well-off and the dirt-poor to seek God in the sacraments.

But Anglo-Catholics are also concerned that after nearly two centuries, their movement needs renewal. They are inviting hard questions to make sure it does not atrophy but instead enjoys a relevant, compelling future.

Such hopes, coupled with a shared interest in learning more about Anglo-Catholicism, brought together 120 people at Church of the Advent in Boston for “Anglo-Catholicism: Uncovering Roots,” a two-day conference in mid-November. Ordained and lay participants came from as far away as Texas and Nebraska to engage young scholars on topics covering the movement’s history, challenges, and outlook.

Anglo-Catholicism is “another road toward God.

—David Lapin

The event was co-sponsored by Church of the Advent and THE LIVING CHURCH.

Anglo-Catholicism “is not important except if it brings people closer to God,” said David Lapin, a Church of the Advent member. “It’s another road toward God. Traditionally we think of drawing people as *we’re opening our doors, and they can come in*. But there may be a role down the road for a little bit more proactive and assertive profile for us to take.”

Though interpretations of Anglo-Catholicism vary, the term refers broadly to the legacy of the Oxford Movement, a 19th-century campaign to reconnect Anglicanism with its ancient roots. Anglo-Catholics became known for reclaiming age-old formu-

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G. Jeffrey MacDonald photo

“We have to give people robust articulations for why they should be involved.”

—The Rev. Jeff Hanson

lations of theology and liturgy, as well as serving the poorest segments of British society.

The movement’s liturgical sensibilities have endured. When conferees gathered in Boston for evening Mass, the scent of incense filled the nave. Church bells rang out over the city when the host was consecrated. Worshipers sang both the Nicene Creed and the Lord’s Prayer.

“We never really drilled down into defining what ‘Anglo-Catholicism’ is, exactly. That was intentional,” said Christopher Wells, editor of TLC, via email. “There have been several ‘schools’ that would lay claim to the term, and I think we were keen to invite them all.”

However it might be defined, Anglo-Catholicism attracts an eclectic flock. In the high-rent Beacon Hill neighborhood where Church of the Advent is located, worshipers tend to value traditional forms of beauty and high-brow culture, from Brahms to bow ties and the finer points of High Mass, said the Rev. Jeff Hanson, curate for Christian education at Church of the Advent and co-organizer of the conference.

Most Anglo-Catholic priests have traditionally been men, Hanson said. More than 80 percent of “Uncovering

Roots” registrants were men. About 40 percent of attendees were clergy; laymen were well-represented too.

“There’s an attraction for a certain kind of broadly traditional man who may not feel at home in other environments, where perhaps they feel there’s less for them to do or less of a contribution to make,” Hanson said. Those who are not married with kids, for instance, might struggle to fit in at other churches, but Anglo-Catholic formality works for them.

Anglo-Catholicism strikes a chord with certain immigrant groups, especially those who recognize it from their home countries, including Caribbean natives who comprise much of the congregation at All Saints, Ashmont, in Boston’s Dorchester neighborhood.

Overseas, Anglo-Catholicism remains prevalent among the poorest of the poor. In the most poverty-stricken 1 percent of English boroughs, nearly one-fifth (18 percent) of all Church of England congregations are Anglo-Catholic, according to new research from the Society, a group supporting Anglo-Catholicism within the church. That’s five times the rate at which Anglo-Catholicism is seen across the church’s 12,600 parishes.

“Ministry and mission to the poor and deprived in Anglo-Catholic parishes is as much a hallmark of their commitment today as it was in the past,” writes Anne Gray, projects officer to the Council of Bishops of the Society, in a 2017 report on the research.

In a spirit of deepening understanding, “Uncovering Roots” focused largely on what needs tuning up or recovering in Anglo-Catholicism.

“There’s a perception that numbers are declining and there’s not as much vitality in the Anglo-Catholic circles as there used to be,” Hanson said. “And also an identity crisis: we have to give people robust articulations for why they should be involved.”

In presenting a paper on race and ecclesiology, Wells looked back to 1920 when the first of six Anglo-Catholic congresses convened ahead of that year’s Lambeth Conference. He noted how the organizing congregation, St. Matthew’s Westminster in London, was known for attracting both the

well-to-do and slum dwellers alike. He quoted from a report of the 1920 Lambeth Conference, envisioning a Communion that is “less Anglican and more Catholic.”

“Our sanctification will and must include confession, penance, amendment of life, and, I am sure, whenever possible, reparation and reparations, both personal and social,” Wells said in delivering his paper.

Historical theologian Liza Anderson of Claremont School of Theology said those who try to claim Anglo-Catholicism often equate it with particular practices, including some that are not well-founded.

For example, she said Anglo-Catholic clergy are exalted while lay contributions tend to be downplayed or overshadowed. She sought to debunk what she called the “myth of the Anglo-Catholic slum priest.” She acknowledged the laudable work done by these clerics in Christ’s name among the poor, but called for more recognition of lay contributors.

“For every Anglo-Catholic slum priest, you had basically 20 to 30 full-time, mostly female volunteers,” Anderson said. “We’ve sort of embraced this narrative that elevates the priests and thinks that he, or maybe now she, is supposed to do all of that stuff. It’s no wonder when my students go out into the world believing that that they all burn out.”

She proposed introducing payment for laypeople, in the spirit of equal pay for equal work, in a move that might show they are valued and not less important than priests.

Plans for another conference on Anglo-Catholicism in fall 2018 are in the works, Wells said. Participants at this year’s event said they were heartened to find more tough questions than nostalgia.

“What I was really impressed by was the self-criticism of the Anglo-Catholic movement,” said the Rev. Jim Ransom, a retired priest in the Diocese of Maryland. “People here were willing to be self-critical and to look beyond the old tradition and talk about how we might be more racially inclusive and embrace that in a Catholic spirit. That’s just right where we ought to be.”

St. Martin's: A Texas-Sized Growth Story

By Kirk Petersen

St. Martin's in Houston has been the largest Episcopal church for many years, and that is not likely to change anytime soon. Its 2016 average Sunday attendance of 1,871 is more than 30 percent higher than the next-largest church. The Rev. Russell Levenson Jr., rector of St. Martin's since 2007, has been a prominent voice among evangelicals in the church. He recently spoke with me for well over an hour. The interview has been edited for brevity, clarity, and narrative flow.

How did St. Martin's get to be so big?

A consistent pattern of engagement with members; a Christ-centered ministry. Our mission is to make and grow disciples for Jesus Christ. I think that's what the world hungers for. I think they hunger for connection with God, and I think we within the Anglican-Episcopal tradition can offer a very clear, concise message of helping people become connected to our Lord.

Houston is an extraordinarily diverse city. A lot of things are changing, and I think people look for something that's not changing. We have six services on Sunday. Four are Rite I traditional liturgy. One is Rite II, more contemporary liturgy, for young adults,

and there's another that I would almost call Rite III; it's Anglican-Episcopal shaped but it's more child-friendly. But our fastest-growing service and the one where most of our members enter is our 11:15 a.m. traditional, Rite I Eucharist.

We've seen for a generation the church chasing after the culture. It's not uncommon to go to many Episcopal churches now around the country and the sermons are full of politics, full of issues that easily divide a parish. I don't care what the issue is, whether it's abortion, or sexuality, or whatever. We have a particular view of those things here, and we certainly are a traditional evangelical, orthodox church — but we don't use the pulpit for those kinds of things. The pulpit is always used for the proclamation of the gospel, or what I call pastoral preaching, issues around forgiveness, mercy, caring for others. You see churches that have become kind of a United Way with a cross on top.

We're very committed to outreach and social justice issues in our community, but that's never the core. I saw a church not too long ago that publicly proclaimed that the very core of its mission was racial reconciliation. And I thought, *no, that's not the core of the mission of the church.* That is a function

of the church. We're a church that has every demographic — black, white, Hispanic, young, old, gay, straight: we are that church. But we're not defined by those words. Our core mission is making and growing disciples of Jesus Christ.

The current presiding bishop talks a lot about the Jesus Movement. What do you think about that?

I think it's wonderful. I did have a relationship with the last presiding bishop; we were not close, but we had several conversations. I think there was a disconnect in her leadership with the local church and the great body of the church. I'm sorry to say that, but I do think there was a disconnect.

That disconnect, I might add, played out here at St. Martin's. People were very supportive of the Diocese of Texas and our bishop, but were not always supportive of the leadership of the national church.

When I heard [Presiding Bishop Michael Curry's] closing sermon at General Convention after he was elected, I thought, *this is something different.* I actually brought big screens into the church and played his closing address to the congregation, after which there was universal applause. My hope is that he will live into that.



Fr. Levenson in the pulpit at St. Martin's

St. Martin's Church photos

It's one thing to say *I'm part of the Jesus Movement*, but for him to say what he said in his closing address — we are a church of liberals and conservatives, Democrats and Republicans and independents — that is the church. I think the great missed opportunity of the last generation is that we failed to embrace the breadth of our Anglican identity.

We've traditionally, over the last generation, leaned to the left on almost every issue, and have not listened to the other voices that are in the church.

[Bishop Curry] is providing very strong leadership. It's got to be an impossible job. It's different from anything I've seen since my ordination 25 years ago. The way he preaches! I have

yet to be disappointed when I've heard Bishop Curry preach. He preaches with passion and commitment, and I think those are things that we need to be teaching in seminary.

Tell me more about St. Martin's.

We have a high expectation of the members who join. Everyone who joins St. Martin's, even if they're coming from another Episcopal Church, has to go through a six-hour membership class. If you are a member of this church, the expectation is that you will come to church; that you will be involved in Christian education; that you will be involved in a ministry here at St. Martin's, and committed to our outreach ministries; and that you will pledge to the parish. If you don't do these things, you're not going to be an active member of the church.

I think people in our world respond to high expectations. We don't expect you to be balcony Christians, or spectator Christians, we expect you to be on the stage, on the field, part of the life of the church.

If you come to St. Martin's and fill out a welcome card, you'll get a call within 48 hours from a member of our staff, and then you'll get a letter and a packet from me within a few days. About 10 days out you'll get another call from a member of the clergy. When we have a [St. Martin's 101] class, we'll go back and invite all those people who filled out cards. We have five of these 101 classes a year; the average attendance has been about 40 to 60. Of those, I would say 80 to 85 percent do join, and of that, between 95 and 98 percent pledge.

I preached on stewardship yesterday, and I was crystal clear: our understanding is that you work toward achieving the tithe. We have all of our leadership — clergy, vestry, and senior council [which is all the retired wardens] — sign a public statement to the parish saying that they are committed to the principle of tithing in their personal giving. We can't grow outreach if

(Continued on page 15)



Easter at St. Martin's

we don't have people participating financially.

Is there a downside to being as big as you are?

Yes. The downside for me is, before here I was at Christ Church in Pensacola, and I knew everybody who was in the hospital. I probably visited most of them once or twice a week. I knew most everybody whose family was in crisis. I knew everybody who had a new baby. I don't know that here. There's no way for me to keep that kind of pastoral touch as a rector. However, I do have 12 clergy. We get together every Tuesday at 12:30 for an hour, then we eat lunch and we pray and we go through the list [of people who are in the hospital or recently released].

You have 12 clergy in addition to you?

That's right. Four of those are part-time retired folk. We've got a wonderful 88-year-old deacon who's still very engaged and present on the campus. We've got a young priest on our staff — her husband is a priest in town, and they have two children. We worked out an arrangement where she's three days a week, and Sundays as available. She is such a gifted young woman that we were willing to work almost anything out with her.

I am so fortunate to work with incredibly gifted colleagues. I know where my deficiencies exist, and over the years I have hired people who can fill in the gaps that I can't as a rector.

How many staff do you have?

At St. Martin's we have over 220 full- and part-time staff. That's inclusive of our preschool staff. Probably 80 percent of them are full time. We have a 15-acre campus and about 220,000 square feet of usable space. We try to be good stewards of the space we've been given. So, we have a pretty big buildings and grounds staff.

Do you have any programs devoted to the LGBT population?

We do not. We've discussed it. I've al-

ways sat and cocked my head [at conventions] when we've had yet another resolution that says something about a specifically identified group. To me, that actually diminishes the validity of the Baptismal Covenant. I think that covenant requires that I respect the dignity of every human being, and I don't need another resolution that tries to do one better than the covenant I'm already part of.

We do not offer same-sex marriage. There are Episcopal churches right down the street from us that do. We do have gay couples here who are married, or want to be married. If they want that, I make sure we find a parish where they can have that. And they remain active at St. Martin's, which I think is a great statement again about the breadth of Anglican identity.

When churches and dioceses started leaving the Episcopal church, did you consider that yourself?

Not for myself. I did have people who wanted me to consider it. [At Christ Church Pensacola in 2003, with the election of Bishop Gene Robinson], there were people who supported being combative about it. I certainly did not support that at the time. I think we're called to be the body of Christ together.

I've tried to stay actively engaged with some of those groups that have broken away. We actually have on our staff a former [Anglican Mission in America] priest; a priest who was ordained an Anglican, he never was an Episcopalian; and we've had an [Anglican Church in North America] priest.

I think reconciliation with the other Anglican bodies needs to be something we continue to work on. I think the presiding bishop has got the bully pulpit there.

What do you think of the term megachurch?

I don't describe us that way. We are a big church; I'm not apologetic about it. But we are a family. People say to me

when they join, I felt welcomed from the first time I came. I was greeted at the door, I was made to feel welcome in the pew, I got a card and got a phone call. There is a methodology to it.

We have poor, middle class, and rich. We have everyone from people who work in the service industry to a former president of the United States. We have doctors and lawyers. One of our fastest-growing demographic groups is Nigerians who have come here to be in the oil business.

The former president is the elder Bush, right?

Yes, he and Barbara. They are very active, they are not sometime members. If they're in town and there's not a health challenge, they're in church. They've played an active role in everything we've asked of them. She taught Sunday school, and it was not uncommon before he went to D.C. to see him serving coffee on Sunday morning, that sort of thing.

Do you hold out hope for a reconciliation of the various factions of the Episcopal and Anglican church?

Yes. I'm a prisoner of hope. I always hope for reconciliation. I pray for that. I think that's what Jesus prayed for in the Garden of Gethsemane. I can't give up on that.

We've got an opportunity to say, *here's a church that's made up of all these different kinds of people.* Some of them do same-sex marriages and some of them don't, and yet they can still come to the Lord's table together. They have different opinions about pro-choice and pro-life. They are Democrats or Republicans. Living into that's not easy, but I do think it's the Christian way.

So that would be a hopeful sign for growth in the church?

I think so. I hope so. I hope the whole church grows. And I think we have an opportunity to do that. □

Gift ideas

from Friends of THE LIVING CHURCH

John Alexander

Artisanats des Monastères de Bethléem (Crafts of the Monasteries of Bethlehem) creates stone and wood statues — of Christ, the Virgin Mary, saints, and angels.



Ranging in style from medieval to contemporary, many of the carvings are exquisite. Browse the catalog and order online at artisanats.bethleem.org. For those traveling in Europe, the Congregation of the Sisters of Bethlehem has shops in Paris, Lourdes, Lisbon, and Fatima.

The Rev. John D. Alexander is rector of St. Stephen's Church in Providence.

Garwood and Dawn Anderson

If you have ever found yourself in a gathering of people looking at their smartphones or staring blankly at a television, revolt! Vertellis (vertellis.com) is a simple game that prompts profound discussions. Vertellis was the highlight of an already lovely Thanksgiving for our family of grown children, along with some dear friends.

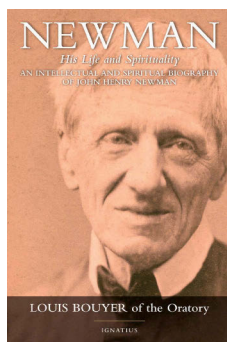


Gar is interim dean of Nashotah

House Theological Seminary and sometimes professor of New Testament. Dawn, when not correcting people's grammar, keeps the world spinning on its axis.

Tory Baucum

What St. Augustine was to the early Church, and St. Thomas Aquinas to the medieval, John Henry Cardinal Newman is for modern times. So claimed Fr. Louis Bouyer in *Newman: An Intellectual and Spiritual Biography*. (Ignatius, 2011). In *The Heart of Newman* (Ignatius, 2010), Fr. Erich Przywara arranges Newman's key insights topically. Reading these books in tandem makes Newman a newly prized mentor.



The Rev. Tory Baucum is rector of Truro Church and a Six Preacher of Canterbury Cathedral.

John and Caroline Bauerschmidt

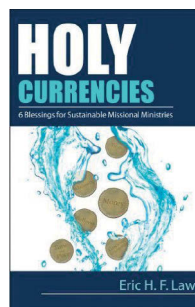
Delia Smith is the doyenne of the traditional English Christmas. In 2014 we found her wonderful book *A Feast for Advent* (Bible Reading Fellowship, 1996). To find a person who loves to cook and loves the Lord and his Church is a gift. This devotional takes you through the four weeks of Advent and the 12 days of Christmas. Enjoy!



Smith

The Rt. Rev. John Bauerschmidt is Bishop of Tennessee. Caroline is the director of children's formation at Christ Church Cathedral.

Thomas Breidenthal

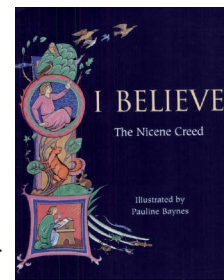


I commend Eric Law's brilliant and extremely practical *Holy Currencies: Six Blessings for Sustainable Missional Ministries* (Chalice Press, 2016). A must-read for congregations seeking to follow Jesus into the neighborhood.

The Rt. Rev. Thomas Breidenthal is Bishop of Southern Ohio.

Michael and Susanna Cover

Pauline Baynes was best known for illustrating works by Tolkien and Lewis, but her greatest unsung achievement was *I Believe* (Eerdmans 2003), an illustrated Nicene Creed. Out of print, but worth tracking down, this book has all the intricacy and drama of a medieval illuminated manuscript. Replete with mythic beasts and rich vignettes of the great Story, *I Believe* is a feast for the eyes and soul, for both children and adults.

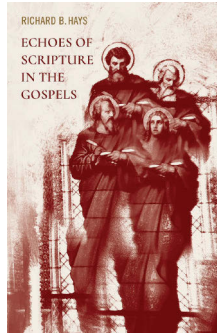


Michael and Susanna Cover are raising three young daughters in Wauwatosa, Wisconsin.

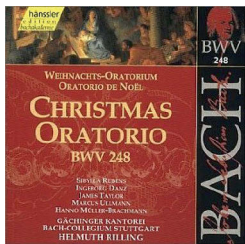
C. Andrew Doyle

Richard B. Hays, *Echoes of the Scripture in the Gospels* (Baylor University Press, 2017), will help light warm fire in your Old Testament studies. And for warming the heart, *Watch for the Light* (Plough, 2014), a book of collected writings for Advent and Christmas by Aquinas, L'Engle, Bonhoeffer, and Romero, among others. May you have a blessed Advent and Holy Christmastide.

The Rt. Rev. C. Andrew Doyle is Bishop of Texas.



Neva Rae Fox

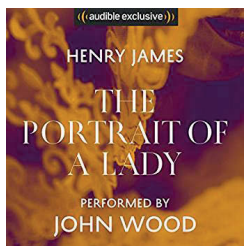


I enjoy giving the gift of music as much as I enjoy receiving it. Advent and Christmas offer a sublime selection of musical treats. No holiday collection is complete without Handel's *Messiah* (a masterpiece beyond comparison).

Bach's *Christmas Oratorio* transports the listener to a new level of wonder and awe. Do not overlook the favorites — carol collections, and secular standards like “Jingle Bell Rock” and “Rockin’ Around the Christmas Tree.”

Neva Rae Fox is a music aficionado who frequents the Metropolitan Opera and can be found at rock concerts by Billy Joel, Eric Clapton, Ringo Starr, and Lady Gaga.

R. William and Carmela Vircillo Franklin

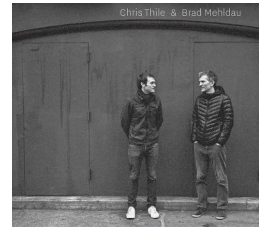


We like audio books by strong readers: Rita Moreno reading *My Beloved World* by Justice Sonia Sotomayor, or John Wood reading *The Portrait of a Lady*. After Bill listened to Ron Chernow's *Hamilton* (11.5 hours!), our two daughters gave us tickets to *Hamilton* on Broadway.

Who knew Bill would fall for rap music, and who knew the show would be a life-changing experience, transforming the way we look at the American Revolution? *The Rt. Rev. R. William Franklin is Bishop of Western New York. Carmela Vircillo Franklin is professor of classics at Columbia University.*

Beverly and James Gibson

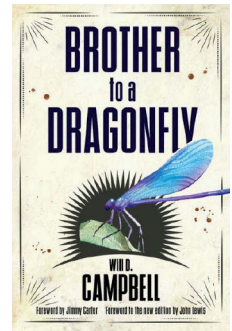
A wonderful musical gift this year to our family time at home has been Chris Thile and Brad Mehldau's eponymous album released in January on Nonesuch Records. It is a beautiful blending of American musical styles — jazz, bluegrass, American songwriters, and Celtic roots. Their music is both peaceful and energizing, and a reminder of the wide and deep roots we share with many others. Here is something we could share with all our friends and family.



The Very Rev. Beverly F. Gibson is dean and rector of Christ Church Cathedral, Mobile, Alabama. James M. (Mike) Gibson is a wine purveyor.

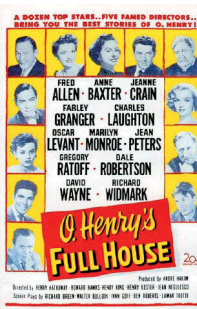
Wesley Hill

How can a Democrat love a Trumpist (and vice versa)? If you think that question imagines an impossible future, try another haunting one: How can a committed civil rights activist love a KKK member? That's the high-stakes mystery at the heart of Will D. Campbell's 1978 finalist for the National Book Award, *Brother to a Dragonfly*. In addition to being a beautifully written page-turner, it's a tract for our troubled times.



Wesley Hill is associate professor of New Testament at Trinity School for Ministry in Ambridge, Pennsylvania.

Douglas and Monica LeBlanc



Two movies transformed a melancholic Christmas morning in our home last year. *A Christmas Carol* (1951), in glorious black and white, has been Monica's favorite for most of her life. Accept no substitutes! *O. Henry's Full House* (1952) features actors as diverse as Charles Laughton and, in a cameo of startling vulnerability, Marilyn Monroe. Both films will immerse you in wonder.

Douglas LeBlanc is TLC's senior editor and Monica LeBlanc is an analytical scientist.

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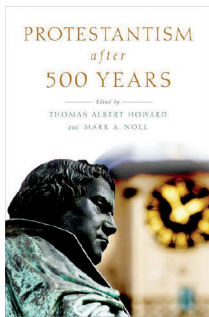


Gift ideas

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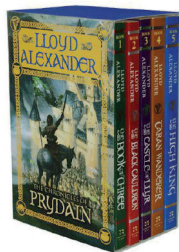
G. Jeffrey MacDonald

Protestantism after 500 Years (Oxford, 2016) is a collection of big-picture essays from historians whose work deserves notice in a year swamped with new Reformation-related books. Mark Noll, Carlos Eire, and Timothy George number among the insightful veteran contributors. Each tackles a major theme, such as the Reformation and higher education, and the legacy of the doctrine of *sola Scriptura*. To read it is to appreciate more fully how Protestantism continues to shape the modern age. G. Jeffrey MacDonald is a TLC correspondent.



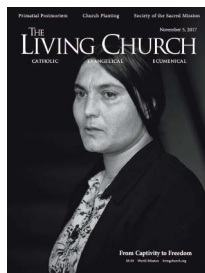
Scott MacDougall

The Chronicles of Prydain by Lloyd Alexander remains a go-to gift for fans of folklore and fairy tales of almost any age. Available in a variety of formats, including a boxed set of paperbacks and beautiful hardcover 50th-anniversary editions, this classic five-volume saga based on the Welsh legends known as the *Mabinogion* is an exciting, inspiring, and multi-layered story of discovering yourself while being pushed and pulled by the powers of fate, desire, good, and evil. Scott MacDougall is assistant professor of theology at Church Divinity School of the Pacific and co-editor in chief of the Anglican Theological Review.



Ian Markham

A lovely gift for the season is a subscription to THE LIVING CHURCH. All the news about global Anglicanism and the Episcopal Church is captured; but more importantly, the quality of the writing, superb book reviews, and substantial reflective pieces make this the finest magazine in the Episcopal Church. The Very Rev. Ian Markham is dean and president of Virginia Theological Seminary.



Mark Michael



A primocane (everbearing) raspberry bush is a perennially delicious present. Our four bushes supplied a handful of berries every other day for more than five months, just enough for a taste at breakfast or after dinner. For fruit-bearing plants, raspberries are remarkably disease- and pest-resistant and easy to grow. They will return vigorously year after year. Consider Caroline Red, whose dark, sweet berries are a fitting tribute to the royal martyr. The Rev. Mark Michael grows raspberries behind the rectory of St. Francis, Potomac, Maryland.

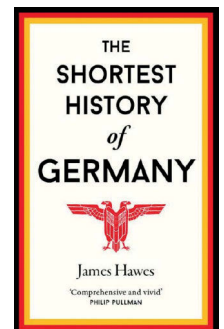
Joan and Oliver O'Donovan

We enjoy giving our musically inclined friends CDs of the Renaissance choral group Stile Antico. Two Christmas collections, *Puer Natus Est* and *A Wondrous Mystery*, are special favorites, and this year's disc, issued by Harmonia Mundi, has works by the Flemish composer Giaches de Wert, with colorful settings of texts from Paul and the Gospel stories of the Canaanite woman and the stilling of the storm. The Rev. Oliver O'Donovan is professor emeritus of Christian ethics and practical theology at the University of Edinburgh and Joan O'Donovan is an honorary fellow in its School of Divinity.



Colin Podmore

Brexit makes Germany even more dominant in Europe, and understanding this complex nation even more important. *The Shortest History of Germany* by James Hawes offers entertainment, fascinating facts, and deep insights, communicated in sparkling prose and more than 100 maps, diagrams, and images in 240 pages. Though sometimes over-extended, his thesis that Germany east of the Elbe, never conquered by the Romans or by Charlemagne, is a dif-



ferent country from the wine-growing west is key to understanding German history, culture, and politics. *Colin Podmore is the director of Forward in Faith.*

Ephraim Radner



Give a nice little print of things Anglican. eBay is a great place to do this: portraits of the Oxford Martyrs, Berkeley, Johnson, Charles I; Picart's "Religious Customs of the English"; engravings of beautiful parish churches or cathedrals; a group portrait of 1885 Bible translators. You can spend \$12 (plus shipping) to a little over \$100 and gain something wonderful to gaze at,

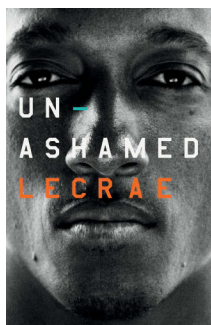
adorn an office, put on a desk, or lay inside a book.

The Rev. Ephraim Radner is professor of historical theology at Wycliffe College, University of Toronto.

Grace Sears

For Lecrae, five-time Grammy nominee, rap once voiced his yearning for a father, and his rage at the abuse and violence around him. After his stunning conversion at a student conference, he slipped into old habits that landed him in rehab. There, with a Gideon Bible, he started over. Step by step he learned to live and write music as an everyman in need of God's grace. Spare and direct, his story — as he tells it in *Unashamed* (B&H Publishing Group) — is riveting.

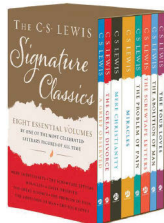
Grace Sears is vice president of the Living Church Foundation's board and a past president of the Order of the Daughters of the King.



Kino Vitet

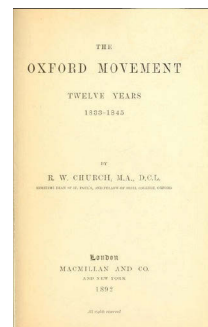
I recommend the eight-volume C.S. Lewis Signature Classics (HarperOne) as an excellent gift for all Christians: those who are new to the faith, others who have a desire to deepen their faith, and those who believe but sometimes struggle with moments of doubt. Lewis has done a wonderful job in pointing us to and encouraging us in Jesus Christ. He was not only a Christian academic but a sincere pastoral apologist.

The Rev. Kino G.L. Vitet is rector of the Church of St. Mark's in Brooklyn.



Christopher Wells

For students of English literature and Anglicanism: R.W. Church's classic eyewitness account, *The Oxford Movement: Twelve Years, 1833-1845* (1891; available from AbeBooks.co.uk), documents the spirit of the movement with sophistication and seriousness in elegant, ennobling Victorian prose. Writing at the end of his life while dean of St. Paul's Cathedral, Church fearlessly places Newman's genius and holiness at the center, as an apparent gift for the Catholic renewal of Christianity in England and beyond. *Christopher Wells is executive director of the Living Church Foundation.*



Abigail Woolley

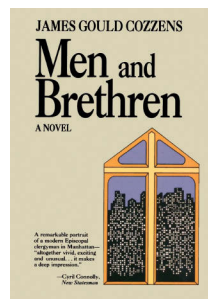
Dads are notoriously hard to buy for. Mine is not keen on sports or tools, and chooses all his own books. A winner, though, was an anthology I made for him, combining poems and short essays my brothers and I had written throughout the years, our favorite classic poems, and a few family photos to illustrate them. This mix made it personal, but not *too* homey! A version of this idea could be perfect for someone you love.

Abigail Woolley is pursuing a PhD in Christian ethics at Southern Methodist University and is a member of Church of the Incarnation, Dallas.



Paul Zahl

Men and Brethren by James Gould Cozzens is a 1936 novel (reissued in paperback by Rowman & Littlefield in 1989) about an Episcopal priest in New York City. It concerns the Rev. Ernest Cudlipp, vicar of a Manhattan chapel of ease in the Yorkville area of the Upper East Side. Mr. Cudlipp just does the work of ministry — a most hard-working, single parish priest in his mid-30s helping solve the problems of everyone who seeks him out. *The Very Rev. Paul F.M. Zahl, now retired, is the former dean and president of Trinity Episcopal School for Ministry and former dean of the Cathedral Church of the Advent in Birmingham.*



Isaiah the Evangelist

Review by Philip Harrold

The IVP Academic Ancient Christian Texts series supplies new translations of biblical commentaries and sermons by the early Fathers, most for the first time in English. The series includes one of the earliest Christian commentaries to be written in the form of a line-by-line exposition of Scripture, a style that has since been dominant in the West.

This work also happens to be the earliest extant commentary on Isaiah. The author is “the first real church historian of early Christianity,” Eusebius of Caesarea (c. 260-c. 340), which is an additional point of significance, as I will explain. These firsts make the new translation of Eusebius’s work important in a number of ways.

To begin with, the English translator, Jonathan J. Armstrong, explains why it took so long for the commentary to gain serious attention. For the most part, the oldest manuscripts were “disheveled and fragmentary,” with significant discrepancies after the first 16 chapters of Isaiah. Not until the mid-19th century did anyone bother to collate these texts. A reconstructed version in a critical edition finally appeared in 1975, yet it is “little studied thus far” (p. xxv).

Certainly the new English translation offered by Armstrong will make a difference, especially given the high quality of the work and its accessibility and affordability. In keeping with the IVP series method of *dynamic equivalency*, Armstrong conveys something of the original writer’s mood, his exegetical brilliance, but also his “unspeakably mundane” ruminations (p. xxxi). Eusebius was both a meticulous text critic, noting the subtlest of differences between the Greek of the Septuagint and alternative translations available in his day, and a theological exegete who was ever mindful of the

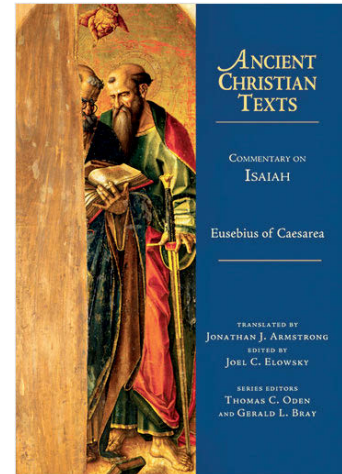
analogia fidei (Scripture interpreting Scripture).

Armstrong is likewise attentive to grammatical nuances in the Greek manuscript, relying on fellow scholars like Michael J. Hollerich as well as his own analysis. When he grows more adventurous, Armstrong presents the original text to the reader in a footnote. And so, for example, Eusebius sees the “mountain of the house of the Lord” (Isa. 2:2) as Christ, “the evangelical law, who relocated from the ‘heavenly’ Zion above and set up shop in the Zion on the earth” (p. 12). Here Armstrong indicates that “set up shop” is his translation of the Greek word *ὀρμηθεῖς*, which, more literally, means “moved his base of operations or headquarters.”

When we take a closer look at Eusebius’s line-by-line exegesis, we encounter a reader who discerns two interwoven levels of meaning in Isaiah: the literal and the figural. In comparison to Origen, Eusebius is more committed to the literal-historical sense, even when he engages the complexities of the Isaianic oracles. He was one of the first Christian writers to comment at length on the Cyrus passage of Isaiah 45:1-13 with an emphasis on the historical king who is *not* Christ.

That said, Eusebius’s christological renderings of Isaiah are plentiful and, at times, profound in their exposition. Clearly, as Brevard Childs has observed, there is an ontological relation between Immanuel (Isa. 7:14), most especially, and Jesus. This is not just a promise-fulfillment connection but one that, in Eusebius’s words, reads Emmanuel as a name for the Savior “who stands not far away, for he is always present and attends those who call on him” (p. 38).

This brings us to the importance of Isaiah for Eusebius. From beginning to end, the prophet was an “evangelist”: “For [Isaiah] preaches the Son of God



Commentary on Isaiah

By Eusebius of Caesarea

Translated by Jonathan J. Armstrong;

edited by Joel C. Elowsky

Ancient Christian Texts series,

eds. Thomas C. Oden and Gerald L. Bray

IVP Academic. Pp. 332. \$60

surpassingly, here expounding divine truths and there foretelling the angelic announcement in the heavens, and the ‘virgin’ birth ... and the resurrection, and he even prophesied about the apostle Paul” (p. 1).

We see repeated references to the “gospel” that was already emerging in the prophet’s day (2:2-4), to the “good news” that even the idolatrous Egyptians would be “worthy of [the Lord’s] advent” (19:1-4), to the life-giving streams of the Savior’s “gospel words” (Isa. 35:1-7), and to the “evangelical promises” of Isaiah 60, which bore witness to the dual nature of Christ, no less. Eusebius could not help but write of the mystery of Christ, which meant that he had to account for the gospel according to Isaiah, the prophet who most inspired what Armstrong calls “the apostolic vision of Jesus’ messianic mission” (p. xxxiv).

This was all part of an apologetic task that served a variety of purposes. As a historian, Eusebius saw a place for the Roman Empire in salvation history, and so he exalted its Christian emperor (Constantine). But more important to Eusebius was the universal reach of the Church, blessed in his own day with

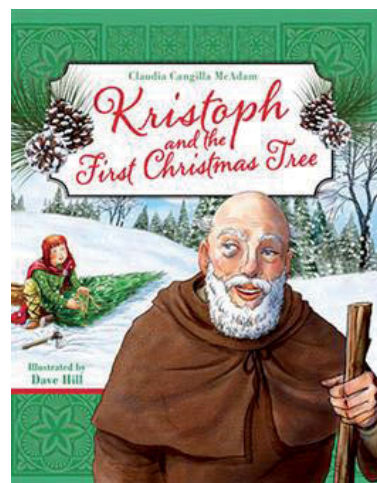
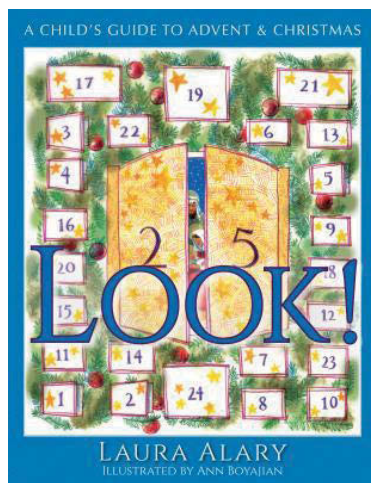
imperial sanction. Wherever Christ and the apostolic vision of Isaiah were discerned, so too Eusebius saw the prophet pointing to the Church.

Ultimately “the wilderness and the dry land shall be glad” (35:1) because of the “washing of regeneration” in the Church’s baptizing and preaching “throughout the whole world” (p. 176).

Eusebius was, after all, a *Church* historian, and he read Isaiah accordingly, not just for institutional vindication but as an account of the gospel that had long ago been set in motion by God’s “saving and evangelical grace” (p. 11). This deep reading and Armstrong’s invigorating translation bring the good news according to Isaiah to

life in a powerful way. May this new resource stir our own minds and hearts as we hear the prophet’s glad tidings today.

Philip Harrold, recently retired from teaching church history at Trinity School for Ministry, is now an independent writer and lecturer.



Look!

A Child’s Guide to Advent and Christmas
By **Laura Alary**. Illustrated by **Ann Boyajian**.
Baker Book House. Pp. 32. \$16.99

This is a lovely book with soft, peaceful illustrations, setting the scene that it is the season of Advent and that the church is dressed in purple. The church is waiting for Christmas and we, too, as part of the universal Church, are waiting.

Laura Alary has us look back and remember a few examples of those who have waited for Jesus — those in the Old Testament, John the Baptist, and Mary. As we visit each of these examples, we are encouraged to consider what their struggles might have been. Was it difficult to continue to hope? Am I brave enough to say yes to God?

These concepts are presented in a gentle manner, accessible to a child,

but poignant enough to capture the imagination of the adult sharing this book. Just as each of these people waited and longed for Jesus, we can look around us and see those who are searching. Alary gives examples of how we can show God’s love to them during this season.

Finally, it is Christmas Eve. The church is aglow with a candlelight service, and the Church has received the Light of Christ.

Kristoph and the First Christmas Tree

By **Claudia Cangilla McAdam**
Paraclete. Pp. 32. \$16.99

This is the story of St. Boniface (672-754) and a young child he is caring for named Kristoph who are heading to the village on the eve of Christmas.

As they make their way through the forest, they come across a group of men who regard trees as sacred.

As the pagans are trying to protect a tree, Boniface is able to speak to them about their worship of nature versus the God who made nature. He explains how an evergreen tree is a sign of everlasting life in its continued greenness, and points out how it reaches heavenward, and fills a home with happiness and hope.

This is a beautiful gift book, with strong, vibrant, colorful illustrations. Facial expressions are captured with great energy. From the anger of the pagans, to the glee of the children, to the kindness of the saint, they are all drawn with intensity. This joy continues to the end, as Kristoph drags home his very first Christmas tree.

*Melissa Sims
Denton, Texas*

Bejeweled Gospels



Lindau Gospels, rear view

Magnificent Gems

Medieval Treasure Bindings
The Morgan Library and Museum
Clare Eddy Thaw Gallery
225 Madison Avenue at 36th Street
New York City
Through January 7, 2018

Review by Pamela A. Lewis

As so few of them have survived, treasure bindings — book covers encrusted with gold and silver, and studded with precious gems — were a luxury in the Middle Ages. We can be grateful to the foresight (and monetary might) of John Pierpont Morgan for collecting some of the finest examples of these medieval masterpieces, now part of the Morgan Library's extraordinary collection.

Beautifully displayed in the library's intimate Clare Eddy Thaw Gallery, this exhibition presents these works in context for the first time. It celebrates this collection of jeweled bindings, which not only venerated the sacred texts they contained and embellished the liturgy, but also stood as valued assets in their own right, reflecting the wealth and status of the patrons who commissioned them.

Morgan, who in 1902 donated the renowned Star Sapphire of India to the American Museum of Natural History (which he cofounded in 1869), was attracted to the beauty of gems. Despite his generosity to other museums, however, when gems were used in treasure bindings Morgan kept these objects for himself, which accounts for the abundance of the exhibition's bindings that incorporate star sapphires, diamonds, emeralds, pearls, and garnets.

Entering the gallery, visitors come face-to-cover with the breathtaking Lindau Gospels, Morgan's first treasure binding. Considered the finest surviving Carolingian example, the Lindau front cover presents a gold *repoussé* crucifixion surrounded by ten mourning figures, as well as the Virgin, John, the Magdalene, and Mary Cleopas. Architectural features allude to the Heavenly Jerusalem; raised stones in the borders and tiny bejeweled footstools protect the *repoussé* work when opened.

The highly decorative and equally stunning rear cover presents a cross, the arms of which broaden at the ends,

and on which medallions of the four evangelists were added in the late 16th century. Purchased by the financier in 1901, distinguishing it as the oldest jeweled binding in the Morgan, it is thought to have been made around 875 in the court workshop of Charles the Bald, grandson of Charlemagne, and perhaps at the Royal Abbey of St. Denis, where Charles was secular abbot from 867 to his death in 877.

Bindings specially made for royal patrons are also represented, notably a fine example that was done for Judith, Countess of Flanders. In addition to making donations to several religious establishments, Judith commissioned several Gospel Books, which she took with her into exile in England. One of the two bindings, possibly Germanic work done around 1060, sets cast figures representing Christ in Majesty, flanked by seraphim, and the crucifixion, including a mourning Virgin and John, against a delicate filigree background; a translucent green enamel title, *Jesus of Nazareth, King of the Jews*, is above the cross.

The inclusion of a book box lid possibly made under the direction of Guglielmo Libri (1803-69), a notorious manuscript thief, lends a touch of scandal to the collection. In a style of almost modern simplicity, the object depicts a 13th-century Limoges style *champlevé* enamel of Christ in Majesty (the only original part of this work) with symbols of the four evangelists in its corners (most likely 19th-century copies). Modern crystal cabochons that inset the framing silver-gilt metal plate almost illuminate this otherwise austere object. Libri sold this pastiche of varied elements to Sotheby's in London in 1862, and the binding helped to raise the selling price for the Gospel fragments of Luke and John that it contained.

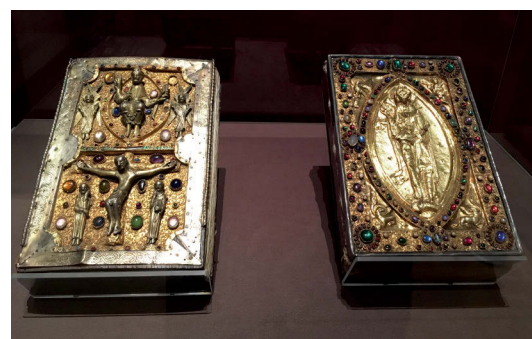
The dazzling jeweled binding of the Berthold Sacramentary attests to Weingarten Abbey's flowering under Abbot Berthold (r. 1200-32), who commissioned the Sacramentary between 1215 and 1217. It is the most luxurious manuscript of his time. Reflecting her cult at Weingarten, the Sacramentary presents the Virgin and Child at its center, surrounded by 12 figures identified by inscriptions. In addition to the four evangelists in the corners, the virtues Virginité and Humility, SS. Oswald and Martin (the abbey's patrons), and Abbot Berthold and St. Nicholas, are also represented on the binding cover.



Saint Luke writing his gospel (Da Costa Hours)



Guglielmo Libri book box lid



Judith, Countess of Flanders, bindings

The abbey dissolved in 1802, its treasures were dispersed, and the Sacramentary became a Morgan treasure in 1926.

Similar to what occasionally happened with medieval reliquaries, treasure bindings were often modified and added to across the centuries. Such is the case of a Gospel Book, in Latin, from Germany created around 1030. The cover's central section showing the crucifixion (in ivory, possibly part of the original binding) is unusual in that Mary holds a book, and John the Beloved Disciple is shown writing. The four evangelists in the corners, late-12th-century Rhenish work, are carved from walrus tusk. Diamond-shaped bloodstones — allusions to the blood of Christ — seem deliberately placed on the silver-gilt cover on axes with the crucifixion, and most likely date from later centuries. The patchwork aspect to this striking object does not diminish its solemn power, enhanced by a 15th-century painted head of Christ wearing the crown of thorns, located behind a large crystal at the binding cover's bottom.

The jeweled bindings are unquestionably the stars of the exhibition, but other objects within the collection also vie for visitors' attention. An enormous choir book leaf made in Rome around 1519 for Pope Leo X (r. 1513-21) is one of the most impressive illuminated manuscripts of the 15th and 16th centuries. A scene depicting the adoration of the magi is bordered by the arms, mottoes, and devices of the pope. Although unverified, it is believed that the leaf was removed from a gradual in the church of Santa Maria sopra Minerva in Rome.

The unknown artist of this work was apparently acquainted with the trend of using "imagined" (two-dimensional) representations of gems as a decorative element, such as in the historiated initial *E* (of *Ecce*: Behold) that introduces the music for the Feast of the Adoration of the Magi (Jan. 6). The artist also knew Leonardo da Vinci's famous drawing of the Holy Family, given the unusual posture of Jesus in this work. The leaf's imposing size and nearly pristine condition make it one of the collection's outstanding objects.

Other "imagined" gem works are also featured on three of Girolamo da Cremona's hand-painted Venetian books: Augustine's *City of God* (1475), Plutarch's *Parallel Lives* (1478), and Artistotle's *Opera* (1483), all undisputed masterpieces of *trompe l'oeil*. And Simon Bening's Da

Costa Hours, opened to a page with its touching image of St. Luke, seated on the ox that is his symbol and writing his Gospel, and its facing page of *trompe-loeil* borders with realistic cut flowers that cast soft shadows, beckons our attention as much as its more sparkling neighbors.

At his death in 1913, Morgan's fortune was estimated at "only" \$80 million dollars, prompting John D. Rockefeller to remark: "And to think, he wasn't even a rich man." If that is true, *Magnificent Gems* is absolute proof that even modest means can acquire glorious things.

Pamela A. Lewis writes for The Episcopal New Yorker and Episcopal Journal.

A Prayer for Christmastide

Lead me, O Spirit of God, to the manger.

Not a manger of my own making, or thinking, or imagination; but to the manger wherein the baby Jesus lay.

Let me smell the wet hay, the sweat and steamy breath of cattle.

Let me feel the chill of the night, the rush of unwanted winds, the brittle warmth of bands of cloth.

May I see the tears of Mary and Joseph, that well up and spill over lips that grin in joy, purse in wonder, tighten in fear for what may yet come.

Give me ears to hear the silence of shepherds who shuffle in from fields to behold the face of God.

Let me, O Spirit of God, taste the incarnation with all that I am; that I may be emptied of this world, and filled, filled with You.

Amen.

The Rev. Russell J. Levenson Jr., in Autumn Leaves: A Collection of Scriptures, Meditations, and Prayers (Insight Press)



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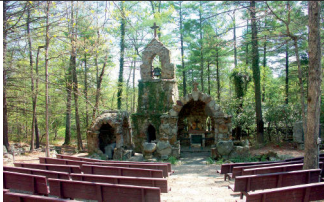
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SUNDAY'S READINGS | 4 Advent, December 24

2 Sam 7:1-11, 16 • Cant. 3 or Cant. 15 or Ps. 89:1-4, 19-26
Rom. 16:25-27 • Luke 1:26-38

The Tent of God

The days when darkened churches were often open to visitors seeking solace and quiet have largely passed. When empty and dim, they are usually locked. When open, they are brightly lit and wired for sound. Talk is frequent, loud, and mostly trivial. In our time, the church is not so much a temple to what is deeply sacred as a place of communal comfort and fellowship. Does God need a home? If so, what kind?

At one time, God lived in a tent: easy to erect and easy to move. "I have not lived in a house since the day I brought up the people of Israel from Egypt to this day, but I have been moving about in a tent and a tabernacle" (2 Sam. 7:6). This may seem cheap and lowly, but it was God's preferred mode of being and remains so, though providence permits fixed churches and other holy sites, a permission that should not obscure God's will to pitch a tent among us (John 1:14).

The motion of God, however lowly it seems and perhaps is, suggests nonetheless great and awe-inspiring power. "The Spirit of God moved over the face of the waters" (Gen. 1:2). "And the LORD went before them by day in a pillar of cloud to lead them along the way, and at night in a pillar of fire to give them light, that they might travel by day and by night" (Ex. 13:21). He who is the way shows the way by moving along the path. Come, follow me.

In the fullness of time, the Word became flesh and dwelt among us. Christ our Lord entered human history under the veil of his Mother conceiving by the power of the Spirit. As with many great biblical characters, Mary is a type. She is both uniquely herself, holding an irreplaceable part in the story of the incarnation, and a model of every Christian who, like her, carries Christ to the world.

Unfortunately, a biblically sound Marian devotion is often suspect in certain Christian quarters in which the Bible is said to be most valued. A seri-

ous and careful reading, however, may go a long way in reopening an assessment of her indispensable role and its significance for every Christian. Mary is the tent of God. She is the place and body in which Christ is set. When she walks to meet her cousin Elizabeth, when she goes down to Egypt, when she returns to Nazareth, she carries him from place to place. She carries him as the Virgin Mother of God.

Mary's virginal state graphically expresses some of the most powerful theological terms: graces, election, calling, and providence. God acts in her life; and although her consent is awaited, the priority of God's calling and overshadowing is preeminent. Salvation is of God. This was true for her and it is true for every Christian.

Consider this meditation with an open and relaxed mind. Listen to one of Church's finest biblical interpreters. "Through this wonderful participation [one in substance with his mother while sharing the Father's substance], the mystery of new birth shone upon us, so that through the same Spirit by whom Christ was conceived and born, we too might be born again in a spiritual birth; and thus the evangelist declares the faithful to have *been born not of blood, nor of the desire of the flesh, nor of the will of man, but of God*" (Leo the Great, Ep. 31, 2-3).

The Holy Spirit overshadows and conceives Christ in all the baptized. The revelation of the mystery that was kept secret for ages lives in the faithful. We are the dark and quiet tent of meeting.

Look It Up

Read Isaiah 64:4.

Think About It

Perplexed and filled with joy.

Word of Salvation

The prologue of John's Gospel invites a different meditation on Christmas, one that is quiet and mysterious, and opens great possibilities for an expansive joy that reaches well beyond private or even merely human concern. God loves us each, yes, and God loves every family, language, people, and nation, and we sense this with great emotion in the coming of Christ as an infant among us. And yet St. John records nothing about the birth and infancy of Jesus: "In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God"; "All things came into being through him"; "And the Word became flesh and lived among us" (John 1:1, 3, 14).

He who is with God and *is* God is truly and utterly with us. The flesh he assumes is our own, but more than our own, for the substance of our flesh is drawn from the earth. "The LORD God formed man [*adam*] from the dust of the ground [*adamah*]" (Gen. 2:7). Thus, when St. Paul says that "God sent his Son, born of a woman, born under the law," he shows Jesus subject to the temporal condition of humanity and the earth, and shows furthermore that he bears and feels the inward groaning for redemption shared by humans and all creations.

In a sense, everything and everyone stands under the law, instructed by a disciplinarian who points toward an eternal future. "We know that the whole creation has been groaning in labor pains until now; and not only the creation but we ourselves, who have the first fruits of the Spirit, groan inwards while we wait for adoption, the redemption of our bodies" (Rom. 8:22-23).

Salvation is about persons, humanity, the earth, and the cosmos. "When I am lifted up from the earth, I will draw [all things] to myself" (John 12:32; *panta* and *omnia*, all things, are well attested and theologically justified). Jesus is both the grain that falls into the earth and the bodily fruit erupting

from the dust of the ground (John 12:24, 32). All things die in his death, and all things rise to his new life. We know this now, and know it truly, but know it as a cry, as groaning, as emptiness. Saying "Abba, Father," we commit to working out our salvation in fear and trembling. We commit ourselves to persons, communities, the world, the earth, and the cosmos, and we engage in the long road toward peace and justice.

Until God is all in all, we will cry and groan, but we will also feel and know that the life of Christ is in the wounds we feel. He is the Spirit who helps us to prayer and to work. In that sense, we have great joy, joy in our lives, joy among people of good will, and the joy of all creation.

The Word was made flesh and dwelt among us. He heals the broken hearted and binds up wounds. He lifts up the lowly, and scatters the proud. He gathers his little one in peace and security. He numbers the stars and graces them with names. He forms the clouds and makes the rain. He covers the mountains with grass and green plants. He feeds the flocks and herds, and the ravens when they cry. He makes snow like wool and frost like ash. He scatters hail like bread crumbs. He makes cold and heat and wind and the waters that flow. His Word runs swiftly to save all things (Ps. 147).

Look It Up

Read Eucharistic Prayer D, BCP, p. 373.

Think About It

Give voice to every creature under heaven.



On the Mountaintop

Transfiguration, Vail Valley, celebrates more than 40 years of watching Jesus reveal himself as God's radiant Son amid the majestic Rocky Mountains of central Colorado. God's provision has driven Transfiguration's growth through many abundant blessings.

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Risk and Trust

Rising and breaking the water's surface, Jesus sees a portal in the dome of heaven, a gate through which love pours in the image of a dove. "You are my Son, the Beloved; with you I am well pleased" (Mark 1:11). Going to the baptism of John, Jesus walks to the place of human sin and the wages of sin. He is buried, raised, washed, and revealed, for our sake and our seeing and the incitement of our faith. He is our brother. He stands among those who hope their sins will be washed down the river. In truth, he, the sinless one, is the washing river. We go to his font in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit, and we hear what he heard through the door of heaven. We are, by adoption and grace, beloved sons and daughters of God. And he gives us "power to become children of God" (John 1:12).

And power is what we need, the strength to go on living for Christ in the face of so much care, anxiety, fear, and naked evil. We need forgiveness, but we also need patience. We need maturity and forbearance. Your word is a lantern to my feet, a small light glowing in pitch blackness, and the darkness does not overcome it. A light upon my path sweeps over a formless void. We walk as yet by faith. Providence may unveil a vocation for the long road, but the daily work will often be difficult and confusing. "Did you receive the Holy Spirit?" St. Paul asked the saints in Ephesus (Acts 19:2). Do I have the strength for this moment? And what am I to do? Is Christ with me, in me, behind me, before me, beside me? Will Christ win me as I step out on water amid the storm? Am I doing the right thing, am I being God's child, is my heart open to the prompting of grace? As in the Gospels, Jesus speaks often by his silence. And we must go on in faith.

God moves over a formless void, stirs the black deep, and says, "Let there be light." Light shines in the darkness, and yet darkness remains as

night. A formless void, an abyss of nonbeing, threatens and is held back by God's creative word. Humans "have always suspected that behind all creation lies the abyss of formlessness ... that chaos signifies simply the threat to everything created," Gerhard Von Rad writes in his commentary on Genesis. "For the cosmos stands permanently in need of this supporting Creator's will." Faith is waiting for God's Word to create life and purpose, moment by moment, over a vast and empty canyon.

Faith will often feel vulnerable and dark, but not always. Faith can be sustained by returning again and again to God's great power given first in baptism. "As many as received him, he gave power to become children of God" (John 1:12). "The voice of the Lord is over the waters; the God of glory thunders, the LORD, over mighty waters" (Ps. 29:3). The voice of the LORD is powerful, full of majesty, shakes the wilderness, causes the oaks to whirl, strips the forest bare (Ps. 29:4-9). "May the LORD give strength to his people! May the LORD bless his people with peace" (Ps. 29:11).

This is real strength and real grace and a real presence. "I have said this to you, so that in me you may have peace. In the world you face persecution. But take courage; I have conquered the world" (John 16:33). So, faith and hope become love and happiness, a quiet trust that Christ is power at hand.

Look It Up

Read Gen. 1:3.

Think About It

God will give you just enough light.

The Body Is a Temple

The boy Samuel is ministering to the Lord. As a mere youth, he is, we imagine, strong and beautiful, fearfully and wonderfully made (Ps. 139:14). Eli, the priest he serves, is an old man, confined to his bed, staring at a dark world through dim eyes. The body is as beautiful as it is frail, perfect and imperfect, a clay vessel, and yet a temple in which the Holy Spirit dwells. This is holy ground.

“For it was you who formed my inward parts; you knit me together in my mother’s womb. I praise you, for I am fearfully and wonderfully made. Wonderful are your works; that I know very well. My frame was not hidden from you, when I was being made in secret, intricately woven in the depths of the earth. Your eyes beheld my unformed substance. In your book were written all the days that were formed for me, when none of them as yet existed” (Ps. 139:13-16). The birth of a beautiful and perfect infant will bring such thoughts to mind, that the God of goodness and love is at work in the substance of bodies and the deep emotions of love. The Word became flesh and dwelt among us.

The Incarnation is not, however, a simple yes to the world as it is, and the bodies we have and the passions we feel. God’s yes affirms the body as an instrument of divine work, or rather as an instrument *being transformed* for this work by the infusion of sanctifying grace, which purifies and orders all want and desire, so that both God and all creation are valued, esteemed, and work in perfect union with God’s love for all created beings. To love as God loves is a refusal to love any less or any more than providence appoints. Indeed, the body and the world may be loved in ways excessive and extreme, avaricious and consuming, causing misery and death. Love may also be too cool, too reserved, too restrained in precisely the places where God’s fire would be. Loving as God loves, loving our bodies and all beings as God loves

them, is the work of a lifetime, and even that will not remove all traces of shame and sorrow and regret. Even so, the body remains the beloved temple of the Holy Spirit.

God so loved the world. God shows his love toward us in that while we were yet sinners, while we were yet burdened with moral guilty and physical frailty, Christ came to forgive and to heal and to rescue, the fulfillment of which is coming at a time we do not know. Yet in Christ we have a down payment, a guarantee, a new covenant of this new life. So we know by faith that God knows: Where I sit, when I rise, all my thoughts, my path, my resting, all my ways, my inward parts, in my mother’s womb, my frame, my unformed substance” (Ps. 139:2-16). As God looks, he sees with deep love.

God wants the body as a resting place for the same love that pours everlastingly into the boundless life of the coeternal Son. God looks to the body’s emotions, thoughts, words, and actions for the responsive love of the Son to the Father. This can only be if we become sons and daughter of God, which we are by adoption and grace. This can only be if, through days and weeks and years, we grow in grace, being transformed into the temple of the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit.

Look It Up

Read Ps. 139.

Think About It

A theological aesthetic of the body takes full account of disease, disability, and death.



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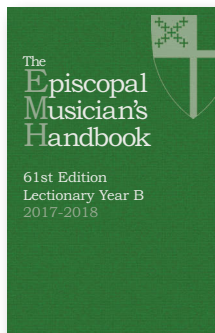
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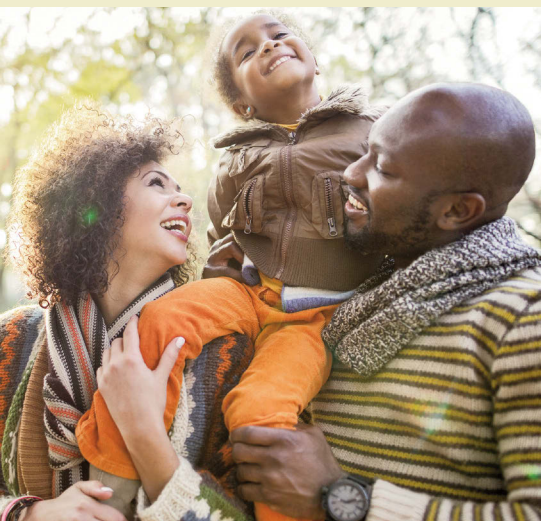
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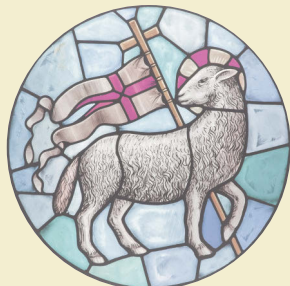
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Dear Friends in Christ,

If the Lord has put it on your heart this Christmas to give to a “Christ-centered” ministry committed to ministering to the heart, mind, body and soul of kids, teens and adults, for the building up of God’s Kingdom, I invite you to join me in investing in Christ the King Spiritual Life Center located in the beautiful hill country of upstate New York. Your investment in the ministry of Christ the King Center can truly make a positive difference in the lives of countless people (young and old alike), helping them to grow ever closer to Christ and be better equipped through the power of the Holy Spirit to share the Good News of Jesus Christ and serve as a channel of His love and mercy and healing grace in this broken and hurting world in which we live.

To learn more about Christ the King Spiritual Life Center and the various ministries the Lord has entrusted to our care, visit us at: www.ctkcenter.org

Better yet, we would love to have you come visit us in person so we can show you true Christian hospitality. We are here to serve Christ and His Church – You!

Your financial support is greatly appreciated, as well as your prayers. You truly can help make a difference. We pray that you and your loved ones have a very blessed and joyful Christmas.

Faithfully Your Brother in Christ,

+ *Bill*

The Rt. Rev. William H. Love

Donations can be made on line at: www.ctkcenter.org or, by sending a check made out to:

Christ the King Center
575 Burton Road
Greenwich, NY 12834
(518) 692-9550