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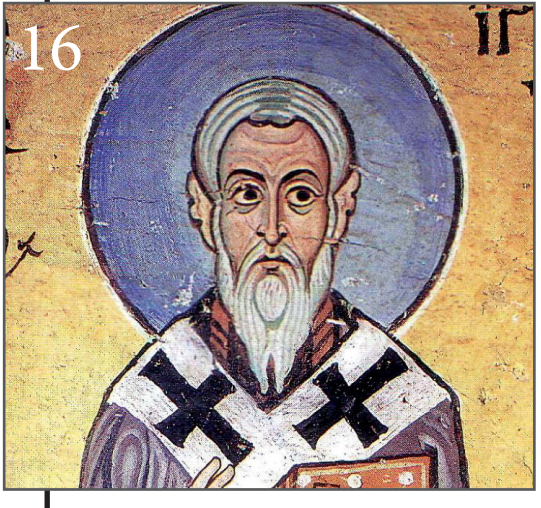
ON THE COVER

St. Mary the Virgin Church, Huntingfield, Suffolk, England, features the chancel ceiling painted by Mildred Holland in the mid-19th century.

Photo via churchofengland.org/Brian Collins



The Living Church

THIS ISSUE | October 4, 2020

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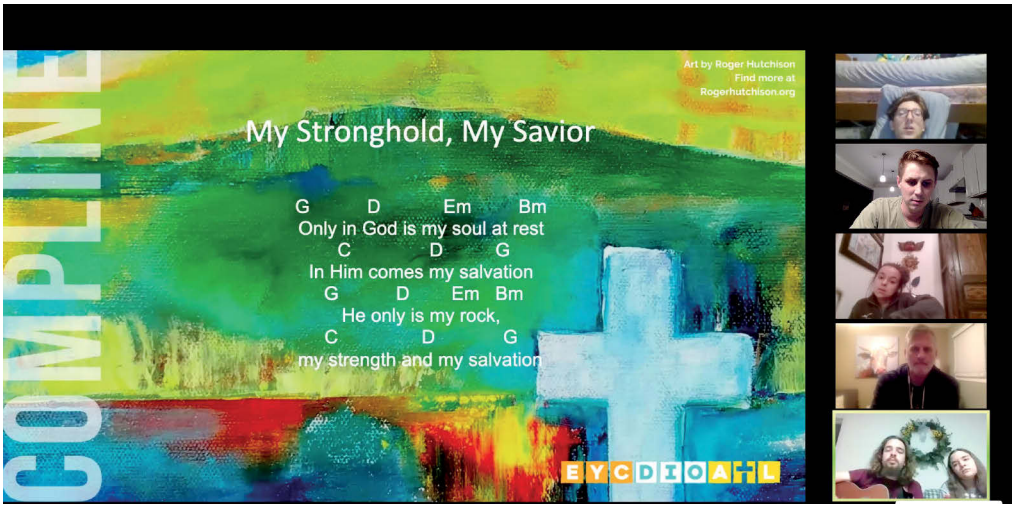
Envisioning Liturgy for a Post-Pandemic Church

By G. Jeffrey MacDonald



Youth from across the Diocese of Atlanta came together for online compline in July. | Diocese of Atlanta Youth Programs photo

Pandemic-driven innovations have blanketed the Episcopal worship landscape with changes that go well beyond live-streaming of Sunday services. Striving to balance distancing with a sense of community, congregations have tried everything this year from praising God in spaced-out lawn chairs to drive-thru Communion and sending consecrated elements to parishioners via U.S. mail.

Now six months into the pandemic, efforts are underway to start envisioning a post-pandemic liturgical life for the church. That means weighing which adaptations to retain, which ones to discard, and which sidelined practices from pre-pandemic times to restore when public health conditions permit.

"We are at a time in the life of the church when we're going to have to experiment with some liturgical innovation and see what makes sense going forward," said the Rt. Rev. Deon Johnson, Bishop of Missouri and a member of the two-year-old Task Force on Liturgical and Prayer Book Revision.

Though many congregations are still worshiping online, outdoors, or at less-than-full capacity indoors, the groundwork for post-pandemic liturgical practice is already being laid. Worship leaders are encouraged to supply the task force with examples of liturgies being used in online services, according to the Rev. Dr. Nina Pooley, the task force's vice-chair, who also serves as rector of St. Bartholomew's Church in Yarmouth, Maine. The Diocese of Missouri is exploring how lay ministries might be used more expansively to support long-term, at-home worshipers. And Associated Parishes for Liturgy and Mission (APLM), an Episcopal network focused on liturgical innovation, is developing principles to help guide priests through the uncharted terrain.

"We're all making it up as we go," said the APLM president, the Rev. Jason Haddox, who also serves as rector of St. Michael's Church in Norman, Oklahoma. "We're all improvising as seems best in the time where we find ourselves. Nobody was trained for this."

So far, worship leaders have been scrambling to keep up with all the changes. Time hasn't allowed for much reflection on, say, how to prepare congregants to properly receive Spiritual Communion, which involves receiving the benefits of the Sacrament even when one can't be physically present to partake of actual bread and wine.

"Many of us have been running at full speed just to cover each Sunday and meet the needs of our folks," said the Very Rev. James Turrell, dean of the School of Theology at the University of the South (Sewanee), where he teaches liturgy. "Thinking about what's the appropriate formation — both spiritual and educational — for a congregation that might have livestreaming in its long-haul diet is a question that frankly we haven't been able to put much time into."

Now looking ahead, leaders see a future in which online worship happens

concurrently with in-person services and distancing gets incorporated into liturgical practice. The challenge involves finding ways to do what's going to be practical and well-received without violating the integrity of worship.

Consider online streaming, which congregations are being encouraged to keep offering even after resuming in-person worship. Those that have turned their churches into de facto studio spaces, complete with up-close lighting and cameras on tripods, will need to make adjustments when congregants return. What then takes priority? The online experience or what happens for those attending in person when everything is taking place at once?

At a minimum, congregations with long-term online ambitions need to make sure they have a strong high-speed internet connection. If the church Wi-Fi signal is weak, Turrell said a Wi-Fi booster or mesh router may help. Otherwise an upgrade to a faster provider might be due.

Other enhancements can make a difference over the long term, too. Among the considerations: how many cameras to install. Turrell notes that having multiple cameras allows for switching between long shots and close ups, which makes the online viewing experience more visually interesting.

For congregations that only want to enable access for their shut-ins, Turrell said, "one camera is enough because they're not seeing the livestream as one of their primary vehicles for reaching people; it's a supplement to the in-person experience. But if one were to say, 'this is something we want to make a priority,' then to me that would mean you need to invest in some of the infrastructure."

In such cases, other physical features might also need upgrading. Poor lighting, for instance, can hamper efforts to reach people with a positive online experience.

"The days of the big room with dim lights and no microphone have really long passed," said Ethan Anthony, principal architect at Cram & Ferguson, a Concord, Massachusetts firm that specializes in renovating church spaces. His firm is working with two Episcopal congregations in North Carolina, he said, to improve chancel lighting, which will help illuminate priests' faces, and improve audio quality as part of broader renovations. At St. Timothy's Church in Winston-Salem, new décor will include hand-carved chancel furnishings to create what Anthony calls a "traditional English feel" (see "A Refuge for Beauty," p. 10). At Church of the Incarnation in Highlands, N.C., the renovation includes decorating walls and refinishing surfaces, which are expected to enhance online as well as in-person atmospherics

Illuminating the celebrant's face may be difficult in an older church building "primarily because of the need to upgrade the wiring," Anthony said. But, he added, "with the introduction of new LED spotlight fixtures, you don't actually have to independently circuit them anymore because they are now addressable. That is a huge advance within the last two or three

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years. You just need to get power to them."

Beyond spatial design considerations, congregations now need to consider how liturgical practices will play out when some worshipers are at home, others are in the church, and all are wary of getting seriously ill. How does the body of Christ come together and share a Sacrament?

Lay eucharistic ministers could be key to the equation, Bishop Johnson said. "We envision pastoral visitors or eucharistic visitors going to homes of people who are primarily sick and shut-ins," Johnson said. "Well, now all of us are shut-ins. So, in a sense, they're continuing the work that they've been doing. They're just interpreting that slightly differently."

Johnson adds that it's time to explore more of what's possible with licensed lay Eucharistic ministers, licensed lay preachers, and lay readers. The pandemic is prompting expansive reinterpretations of roles, he said, in ways that could help the scores of congregations that don't have a priest with them every week.

"What happens if we expand the license of the lay reader, or if we combine the lay reader and the eucharistic visitor into one?" Johnson asked. "With a lay preaching license from the bishop, you are authorized to lead the service, to preach and to distribute Communion from the Reserved Sacrament to your community of faith. What does that look like? We're not there yet, but we're at least asking the question."

Meanwhile, congregations offering in-person worship will need to decide how to share the Sacrament in a time when public health concerns are apt to persist beyond the pandemic. Haddox said congregations that are currently serving only consecrated bread (no wine) are doing what's appropriate for now but shouldn't normalize the practice as sufficient.

"It's very easy to slip into liturgical minimalism," Haddox said. "How little water can you get away with using for the baptism to count? How little of the Eucharistic species can you use and still have it considered valid? The question of validity interferes with the sacramental abundance."

How to share the cup will require a reckoning with theology and health concerns alike. Though a shared cup is an important sign of unity in Christ, some might hesitate to put their lips on the same chalice as others even after a vaccine is available.

"I think people are going to be cautious," Pooley said. "I do wonder how quickly we will share a common cup and how quickly we will pass the peace and how quickly people will run up and hug each other."

But liturgists are confident that as congregants learn more about the science and the protocol, drinking from a common cup will be a trusted practice once again — at least someday. After the pandemic, Episcopalians can rest assured that pure grain alcohol can be used to sterilize the cup's exterior and servers are taught to turn it after each sip so that no one drinks from the same spot as the last person, said the Rev. Dr. Nathan Jennings, associate professor of liturgics at the Seminary of the Southwest in Austin.

"The liturgical action of drinking from a common cup is a part of the performance of the unity that we're achieving in Christ," Jennings said. "If we were ever to get completely used to having a bunch of separate little cups, then my fear would be that we would depart from an essential ritual shape of the Eucharist."

Just as AIDS led to only a temporary scare regarding Communion several decades ago, Episcopalians are likely to get more comfortable with sharing the cup as they learn more about how coronavirus does and doesn't spread, said the Rev. Dr. James Farwell, professor of liturgy and theology at Virginia Theological Seminary.

"There was a period there when [abstention due to AIDS concerns] was a fairly serious crisis with people refraining from the cup," Farwell said. "But over the course of time, with greater knowledge and dissemination of information, that passed."

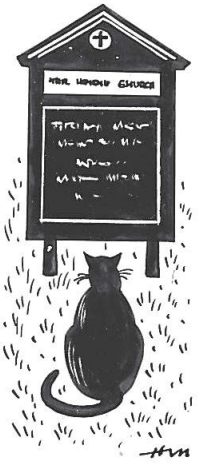
What's apt to change — for the better, in Farwell's view — is how often the faithful receive the Sacrament from a layperson at home.

"We already have ritual resources that were crafted years ago to develop a good, strong lay eucharistic ministry program for people to go out from the congregation that could gather to those who couldn't gather and bring the Eucharist," Farwell said. "I would hope that this provides an opportunity for us to think again about what baptismal ministry people can deepen and move into."

Pandemic or Not, the Animals Will Be Blessed

By Neva Rae Fox

The St. Francis Day Blessing of the Animals is a church tradition that brings joy to four-legged, multi-legged, or no-legged pets and their two-legged owners. As the October 4 feast day approaches in this pandemic year, churches from cities to rural areas are looking, out of necessity, for new creative ways to celebrate.



In areas where church buildings remain closed, the Blessing of the Animals is going virtual with online blessings. In other places, blessings are planned for the church lawn, maintaining social distance for all living creatures and masks for humans, or a drive-thru assembly.

Known worldwide for its elaborate St. Francis Day blessings, the Cathedral Church of St. John The Divine in New York is not daunted by the pandemic, although the blessings will look at bit different in 2020. The cathedral plans a six-hour livestream of "music, prayer, joy, blessings and fun," with an eye on the cathedral's well-known resident peacocks.

"October 4 will be a full day of virtual activities and videos spotlighting the cathedral's commitment to animals and the natural world," said Isadora Wilkenfeld, manager, cathedral programming and communications. "We're working on a piece that goes into depth about the cathedral's feathered residents in particular, with a special focus on Jim, one of our three peacocks, and the wonderful people caring for him and other special birds at the Center for Avian and Exotic Medicine."

Church of the Atonement, Tenafly, New Jersey will hold a drive-thru event with the Rev. Lynne Bleich Weber blessing each animal — live, photo, or stuffed toy — and distributing a Blessing to Go prayer card. "Atonement began its Blessings to Go Ministry for its 150th anniversary, offering interfaith prayer cards for, among other things, blessings for a companion animal, for those who are grieving the loss of a pet, and for Earth and its creatures. These will be encased in separate plastic bags for this year's drive-thru blessing," she said.

In Flagstaff, Arizona, Epiphany Church is planning a celebration as close to normal as possible. Music Director Mary Anne Bruner explained, "We have a labyrinth in our memorial garden. Our rector is going to mark spots six feet apart. Folks will come in the north gate and find a spot. If there's more than can be accommodated, she'll do a second round, after the first group leaves through the south gate. We've used the garden for years, so that's about as 'normal' as we can get!"

The Rev. Jon M. Richardson at St. David's, Kinnelon, New Jersey has been conducting indoor, in-person worship as well as livestream since July. "But for the Blessing of the Animals, we'll do it as a brief, outdoor service in the afternoon," he noted. "Each household will be asked to bring their pets or a picture. They will be asked to park in the church lot with an open parking space between cars, then stand at the backs of their vehicles with their pets. We'll have some brief prayers, and then I'll go around to each car/household to bless their pets. Masks and physical distancing are required."

Rather than the usual town square locale for the pet blessing, "this year we will be doing the Blessing of the Animals via Zoom and ask people to include their pet in the camera view," explained the Rev. Jerry A. Racioppi, rector at Holy Spirit, Verona, New Jersey. "In place of our larger town square event we'll offer animal bless-

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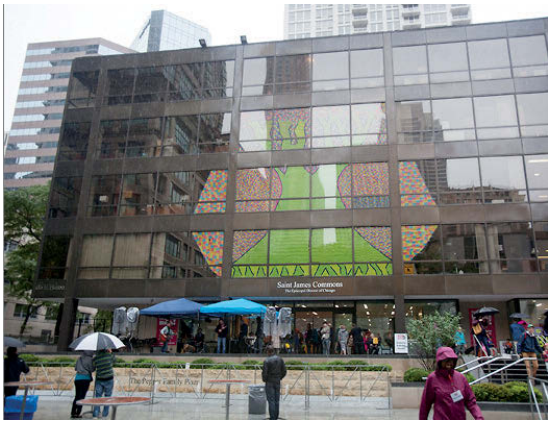
ings (and adoptions) to go. I'll be offering animal blessings — masks required for humans of course — in our parking lot and we'll have one rescue organization available onsite for possible adoptions of pets."

The Rev. Kent Marcoux of Transfiguration, Silver Spring, Maryland plans to use the church's spacious outside area for a community event. "Following the liturgy, a 'blessing party' will travel the grounds to meet guests to offer more personalized blessings, while families and friends remain stationary. Online blessings will be offered on Zoom from a station under the basketball hoop. The Zoom participants will be projected on the big outdoor movie screen next to the hoop." Marcoux is also offering local health officials an area for Covid-19 testing.

Some churches, like Christ and The Epiphany in East Haven, Connecticut include a food collection with the pet blessings. "We collect donations for the East Haven Animal Shelter," said vestry member Diane Villano.

The drive-thru at St. Timothy's, Lake Jackson, Texas will include a food drive for both pets and humans. "Our local food bank is in serious need due to the cancellation of the county fair that brought in the bulk of their fall donations," explained the Rev. Genevieve Turner Razim. "'People food' doesn't fit as well with the animal theme, but the need is real, and it provides an opportunity for folks to give."

St. Stephen's, Edina, Minnesota plans to incorporate the blessings with online liturgy. "In our pre-recorded service we are going to have parishioners do readings with their pets," explained Molly Reichard, minister of community engagement. "Parishioners are submitting photos of pets which we'll use to create a video set to *All Creatures Great and Small*. Then we're going to do a live pet blessing on our 'Live Peace & Coffee Hour' Zoom which follows the premiere of our pre-recorded worship."



Entrance to the diocesan offices in downtown Chicago.

Chicago Diocese to Sell Its Valuable Headquarters

By Kirk Petersen

The Diocese of Chicago may recognize an enormous financial windfall as it follows through on plans to sell the diocesan headquarters building, which is just a five-minute walk from the storied Magnificent Mile, Chicago's luxury shopping district.

The Rt. Rev. Jeffrey D. Lee announced plans to sell the property in a letter to the diocese on September 15. "Put simply, maintaining an underused diocesan headquarters in an expensive building on prime real estate is not good stewardship of diocesan assets," he wrote.

The parcel for sale includes the five-story, 30,000-square-foot headquarters at 65 E. Huron Street, as well as the open plaza in front of the building. St. James Cathedral, which is adjacent to the diocesan building, will not be sold.

There's no price tag yet, and nobody involved seemed interested in opening negotiations by announcing a number. Lee told *TLC* that the diocese has "a very broad sense of the range of what the values might be, but it would be really foolish of me to speculate about that. It's a valuable piece of land."

The sales price could be jaw-dropping. The diocesan building is dwarfed by skyscrapers in nearly every direction, indicating the land is worth far more than the building. The combina-

tion of the building and plaza creates a footprint large enough to support a much taller building.

"The Bishop and Trustees intend to invest a meaningful portion of any proceeds from the sale of 65 E. Huron in affordable housing, an effort to which this diocese has been committed for decades," Lee wrote.

Lee said St. Edmunds, a large church on the South Side, has been part of a public-private partnership development corporation that has developed "sliding-scale, low-income housing that has replaced the horror that was the old housing projects lined along the lake there. It's really remarkable."

Earlier this year, the killing of George Floyd by Minneapolis police spurred another large church in the diocese, All Saints on the North Side, to create the Greenlining Campaign and raise nearly a quarter-million dollars for affordable housing. The money will go toward building a model home in a development by the Lawndale Christian Development Corporation.

"No floor is fully occupied" in the diocesan headquarters building, diocesan spokesperson Courtney Reid said. During the pandemic, "We've learned that we don't need to be there nearly as often."

She added that "The building was built for a time when people had big offices for executives. … It's a space that's not designed for the way we work today or the needs we have."

The pandemic has also essentially shut down the Nicholas Center, an "overnight retreat facility" that occupies the fifth floor of the headquarters building. Nicholas Center has been "an incredible gift, and booked all the time. And the pandemic brought that to a screeching halt," Lee said. The bishop added that the days of flying somewhere for a one-day meeting may be over, eliminating the need for an overnight retreat facility.

The Nicholas Center has been one of the major developments during Lee's episcopacy, which began in 2008. He plans to retire at the end of this year, and an election is scheduled for December. His retirement was originally announced for August, but he postponed it because of the pandemic.

Briefly...

Rowan Williams, the former Archbishop of Canterbury, has retired from his position in the British Parliament's House of Lords after 17 years. He had been granted the title Lord Williams of Oystermouth, a village near his birthplace on the southern coast of Wales.

Thabo Makgoba, the Anglican Archbishop of Cape Town, has denounced the South African government for what he called "the terrible, downright despicable theft of public money, the looting of state coffers, and above all, the undisguised theft from the poor." *Church Times* reported that Makgoba's remarks were part of a month-long anti-corruption campaign led by the South African Council of Churches.

A venerable theological quarterly with an antiquated name has been rebranded by the Church Society, an independent conservative organization devoted to reform in the Church of England. *The Churchman*, which has been published since 1879, is now known as *The Global Anglican*.

A Refuge of Beauty

The New St. Timothy's, Winston-Salem

Father Rice with The Annunciation and The Presentation in the Temple, St. Timothy's Altarpiece, Mira Miteva. St. Timothy's Church photos

By Kirk Petersen

Imagine the scene: You're the Rev. Steven Rice, rector of St. Timothy's Church in Winston-Salem, North Carolina. In the midst of the pandemic, you're overseeing a long-scheduled, $2.5 million renovation and expansion of the church, while holding fast to the faith that parishioners will return someday.

You're terrified of heights, yet there you are in a cherry picker, 45 feet above the ground, shooting video while a construction guy you just met named Chuck installs the cross atop the new wing.

It's a beautiful, custom-made cross, taller than you are, and clad entirely in gold leaf that will shimmer in the afternoon sun. As the cherry picker sways gently (*in your mind, as gently as a roller coaster*), Chuck prepares to lower the cross into place. He pauses, and asks which way the cross should face.

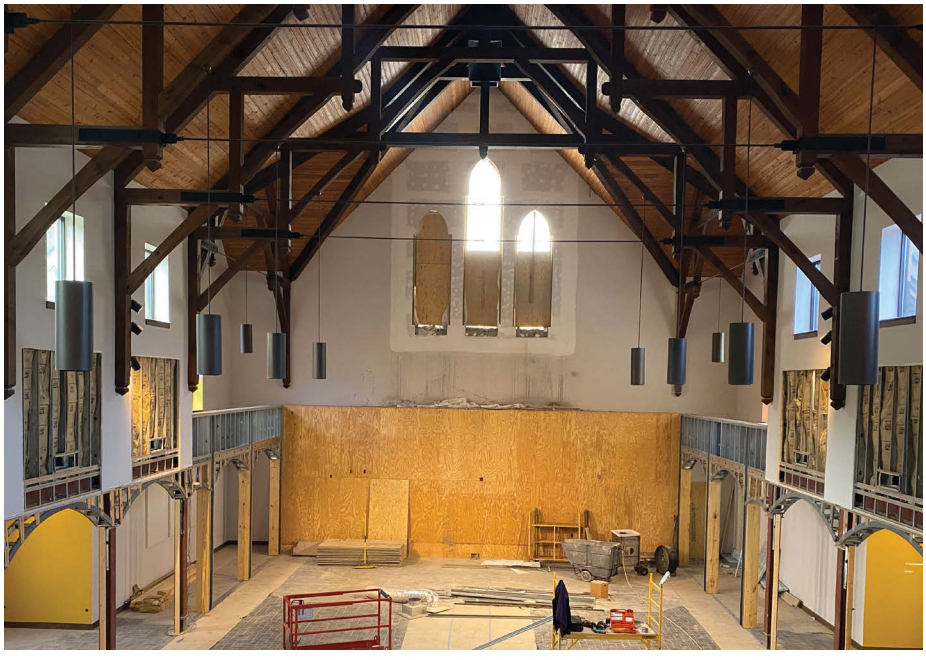
"Gosh, that's a good question!" you say, the words captured in the video that's now posted for the world to see. After considering sight lines, you ask him to rotate the cross 90 degrees, so that it faces east and west.

[Scene ends]

"It's actually facing the wrong way according to the blueprints, but I like the way it is," Rice said a few days later. "You can see it from the parking lot, so it's one of those serendipitous things that I think worked out better."

Despite the outdoor drama, the most dramatic transformation will take place indoors.

St. Timothy's is a large and active



church, with average Sunday attendance (pre-pandemic) of more than 300. But the renovation project has less to do with size than with creating a sacred space to complement and reinforce the decidedly high-church character of the congregation. (The homepage of the website features a brief video clip of Rice abundantly censing the altar, pausing to genuflect three times in unison with two acolytes.)

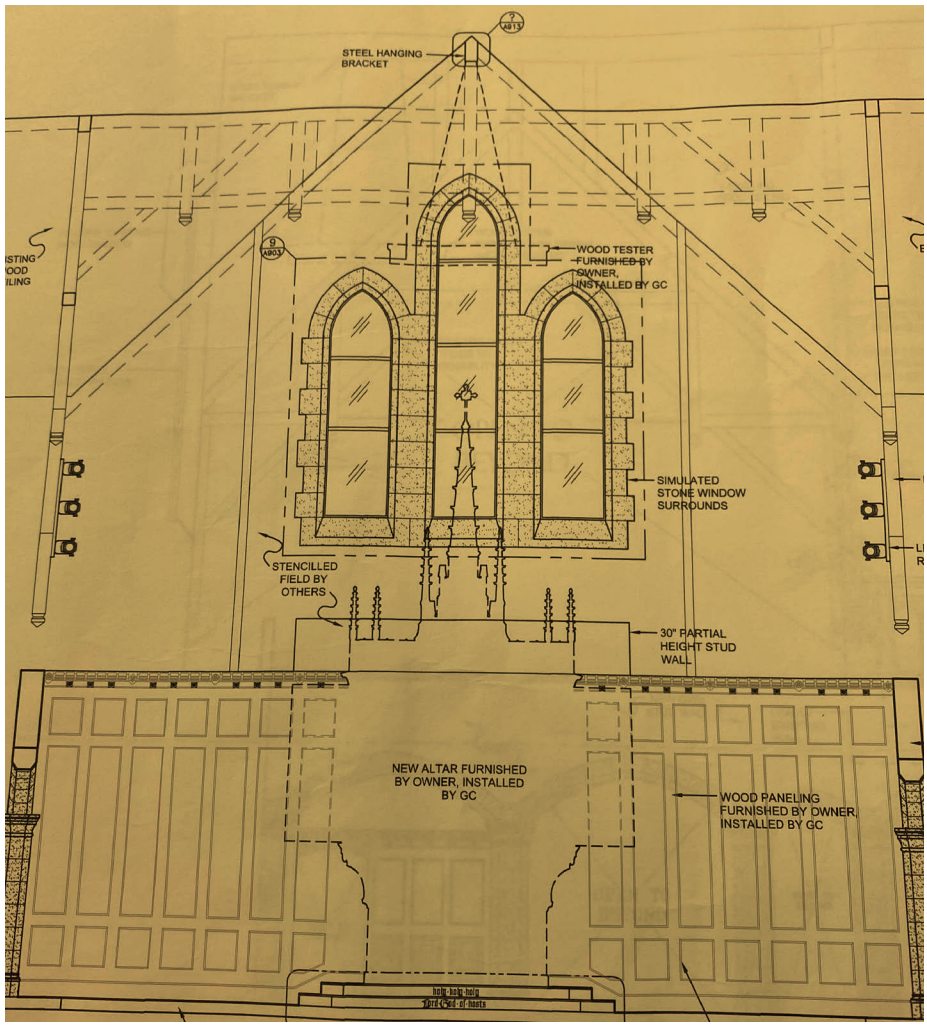
In addition to the new wing, which will be a chapel off the main worship space, "the whole interior's going to be redone, really to elevate the font and the altar, and to unify the space architecturally," Rice said. The congregation dates to 1950, but the current structure was built on a tight budget in 2000.

"Our liturgy is unique in this area, it's very Anglo-Catholic with our devotions and piety," Rice said. "Beauty is something we've embraced as one of the transcendentals, as a theological statement. We wanted that physical space to reflect what we've been living and teaching and proclaiming… to be a refuge of beauty in a world that's increasingly so ugly."

St. Timothy's provides shelter for about 20 homeless women every winter in its parish hall, from December through March. "Some of the guests came to a midnight Mass on Christmas Eve, and were confused by 'the birdbath' in the back," Rice said, referring to the modest baptismal font. "If baptism is this initiation into Jesus Christ, and it's a transformation, how does our space reflect that?"

The new baptistry will bear no resemblance to a birdbath. A visitor walking through the narthex to the main entrance of the church will encounter 11-foot wide, octagonal marble floor, supporting a large font. That will be paired with a stenciled octagonal dome descending from under the expanded choir loft, which is doubling in size as part of the project.

The structure will be directly between the narthex and the main aisle, impossible to miss. After walking around the baptistry and emerging into the nave, the visitor will get a full view of the hand-carved wooden altar and reredos, or vertical altarpiece, soaring more than 30 feet high at the east end of the church.



Sanctuary Plans, Cram & Ferguson.

The reredos features a triptych, where each of the three panels is seven feet tall. The center panel, representing the crucifixion, is inspired by *The Crucifixion Triptych* by Rogier van der Weyden, a 15th-century Dutch painter. The flanking panels are painted in similar style by a Maria Miteva, a contemporary Bulgarian artist, and depict the presentation of Christ in the temple and his ascension into heaven. The triptych contains several references to the parish, including a figure of St. Timothy holding a model of the original 1952 church.

Other details of the triptych reflect the values of the congregation. A depiction of St. Benedict Joseph Labre, the patron saint of the homeless and mentally ill, honors the church's homeless ministry. Also featured is St. Joseph of Arimathea, who placed the body of Jesus in the tomb. The church's Society of St. Joseph of Arimathea pays to cremate and inter the remains of infants and unborn children who are not claimed by their families.

The pews will not change, although they've been disassembled and stored during construction. New arches down the side aisles will help tie the space together. Other features of the project will include a new sacristy, a columbarium and sanctuary furniture.

The project is funded by a capital campaign, and Rice expects it will be completed by December. In a modest silver lining to the pandemic lockdown, the construction has not disrupted the parish's worship or activities.

Mildred Holland, Suffolk's Michelangelo

By Simon Cotton

Suffolk is a county beloved of visitors, whose image of the place is usually formed by tourist traps like Lavenham and Southwold. Along with Norfolk, it is one of the few English counties not to contain a motorway, and whole areas remain remote and difficult to access. North of Ipswich, there is a large area of the High Suffolk clayland in the wedge between the A140 road to Norwich and the A12 to Lowestoft and Great Yarmouth which is unknown to many, once you head north from the town of Framlingham (home town of Ed Sheeran).

Among the unexpected places is Heveningham (pronounced *Henning'm*) Hall, the one great Palladian country house in the county. Ignore it, but you are getting warm, you want the next village of Huntingfield. From the church gate, you look at the outside of a typical Suffolk country church, rebuilt in the 14th-15th century, with the outward display of a fine porch, decorated with flint and stone flushwork. Open the door, look up, and you are brought up short.

The Rev. William Holland (1813-1891) came from a prosperous Lincolnshire family of potato growers. In 1835, he married his cousin Mildred; they came to Huntingfield in 1848, the year in which he became rector of the parishes of Huntingfield and Cookley, where he remained until his death in 1891. Like most Victorian parsons, he was deeply involved in the life of the parish, and soon after he came, he opened a village school.

Chancel Roof, St. Mary's, Huntingfield. Simon Cotton photo

Influenced by the Oxford Movement, Holland also restored St. Mary's Church, aiming to create a solemn setting for sacramental worship. His account books show that £2034 10s. 0d. was spent on the project, of which all but £400 came from his own pocket. But for once, a Victorian parson was upstaged by his wife.

In September 1859, Mildred Holland got contractors to erect scaffolding in the chancel, so that she could spend day after day repainting the chancel roof, a project that lasted eight months. Craftsmen primed the wood, but the evidence is that Mildred worked single-handed on the remainder of the work, much of the time lying on her back. Local legend says she was hoisted up by her servants in a hammock and was nearly crippled by the time the project was complete. Just imagine a lady at work, dressed like a character straight out of *Gone With The Wind*.

Between September 1859 and April 1860, she decorated the space with 12 large angels. Half of them hold scrolls inscribed with the canticle 'Blessed be the Lord God of Israel', while the others bear the Instruments of the Passion — cross, hammer and nails, the crown of thorns, lance and reed and the scourge, along with two pelicans, in the scene called "in their piety," pecking their breasts to feed their young. Worshippers in the church in the later Middle Ages would have understood the symbolism very well, as devotion to Our Lord's Passion ran deep; the Mass of the Five Wounds of Christ was commonly requested by people in their wills as a Requiem offering.

After three years' rest, Mildred moved on to the roof of the nave. Here her subjects were the Twelve Apostles, shown holding their usual emblems — the obvious ones like Peter's keys, Paul's sword, John's chalice, and James

Photo credit

St. Mary's, Huntingfield.

the Great's scallop shells, and the others, such as Jude and his boat. There are also Saints Margaret (with her dragon) and Anne. A statue of St. Margaret may have once been placed in a niche in the South aisle, part of a widespread veneration of the Syrian martyr brought back to England in the 10th century, and particularly important in East Anglia. The hammerbeams of the 15th century roof terminate in angels carrying crowns or banners; they also share in the color scheme. Over the chancel arch the Lamb of God is depicted, together with the words 'Glory, Honour, Praise and Power Be Unto the Lamb for Ever and Ever' (based on Rev. 5:13).

She painted in bright, vivid colors, and used a total of 225 books of gold leaf in her work. Some have called it the most ambitious redecoration scheme in an English church since the Reformation. She had no formal training as an artist, but she and her husband had spent the first eight years of their marriage on a prolonged tour of continental Europe. She was advised by Edward Lushington Blackburne, author of a *History of Decorative Painting of the Middle Ages,* an architect who worked in the French Gothic style. The later master William Butterfield was his pupil.

Mildred finished her work in the nave in 1866 and lived for another dozen years. She and her husband lie in a single table tomb west of the Churchyard gate, just beyond the shadows cast by the church on which she lavished so many of her artistic gifts and so much of their shared fortune. A prominent upright cross stands sentinel beside them.

If Huntingfield had been in Italy, the world would be beating a path to the door, but because it is in the depths of the Suffolk countryside, the church is one of East Anglia's best-kept secrets. Mildred Holland, Suffolk's answer to Michelangelo.

Dr. Simon Cotton is honorary senior lecturer in chemistry at the University of Birmingham in the UK and a former churchwarden of St. Giles, Norwich and St. Jude, Peterborough. He is a member of the Ordinariate of Our Lady of Walsingham.

Nave Roof, St. Mary's, Huntingfield.

Simon Cotton photo

Morning and Evening Prayer: The Anglican Genius

By Victor Lee Austin

It's special to Anglicanism — daily Morning Prayer and daily Evening Prayer, the two "offices." We urge all Christian people to pray according to a given form, twice a day. That is to say, we expect it to be said in our churches, in public — in common. Morning and Evening Prayer are not complicated obligations laid on religious "professionals" (clergy) that they must fulfill by themselves. Rather, this Anglican tradition is a public thing, simplified into two daily services, with a fixed form, suitable for every day of the year.

This essay is an attempt to speak to the big picture. It is not a technical guide to the details of saying the office but rather a look its overall shape and a digging into some of its key presuppositions.

* * *

"Common prayer" is, first of all, Morning Prayer and Evening Prayer. These services come first in the Book of Common Prayer, preceding both Holy Communion and baptism. (The 1979 Book of Common Prayer moved up baptism to place it before the Eucharist, which makes sense in terms of the structure of the Christian life. Earlier prayer books put Holy Communion right after Morning and Evening Prayer and the Litany, since those were the services used regularly.) For about five centuries now, Morning and Evening Prayer have been the principal worship of Anglicans day in and day out.

They have a simple, tripartite structure of psalms, Scripture lessons, and prayers.

Psalms

The psalms are read in their entirety (if one includes the optional verses) roughly every seven weeks, or about seven times a year. The 1979 Book of Common Prayer also allows an older way of reading the psalms that was established with the first book (1549) and continued until 1979. This older way is to read through the psalms in order every month. (Note, for instance, the words "First Day: Morning Prayer" on p. 585; Morning Prayer on the first of any given month would include Psalm 1 through Psalm 5; Evening Prayer on the first day of the month starts with Psalm 6 (see p. 589); and so it continues.)

Reading the psalms puts Morning and Evening Prayer on a footing of praise. The opening versicle of Morning Prayer establishes the point: "O Lord, open thou our lips. And our mouth shall show forth thy praise." The Christian day begins with praise of God who has given us lips and mouth to praise him.

There are other features of the opening, which have varied over the centuries. The first book of 1549 did not open with a confession of sin, for instance; all the books until 1979 opened with the Lord's Prayer. In the 1979 book, some alternatives are introduced (most notably, the alternative ways of reading the psalms).

Nonetheless it is clear: the constant is to read a large portion of the psalter, not merely a few verses but generally more like 25 to 50, and not to read selectively, but to read it all. The psalms are the ancient hymns of God's people. They include complaints, repentance, sometimes abandonment, sometimes joy, and often come around to trust in God that is expressed amid concrete need. And all these forms are wrapped up in praise.

We may also note: While the Scripture readings to follow may be read from any authorized version of the Bible, the psalms are printed within the prayer book and are to be read in that translation. It was the translation of Miles Coverdale, which antedated the King James Version by a half-century. Subsequently, numerous small edits were made to Coverdale's psalms, until the 1979 book provided a thorough revision. Still the 1979 psalter is in the Coverdale tradition. And it is intrinsically poetic. To see the poetry, compare the opening of Psalm 62:

> "For God alone my soul in silence waits" — 1979 book
>
> "For God alone my soul waits in silence" — Revised Standard Version

That quality — I don't know what else to call it, save "poetic" — is an Anglican distinctive.

Scripture lessons

Following the psalms, there are Scripture lessons. Here we have two fundamental Anglican practices. First, the Scripture readings are designed so that the books of the Bible are read in large portions that continue from day to day. If, for instance, the first lesson today is from the prophet Jeremiah, one will expect the first lesson tomorrow to pick up in Jeremiah more or less where today's leaves off. Second, the two lessons are always from different Testaments, with the first from the Old and the second from the New.

(The 1979 book allows variation in the number of lessons, from one to three. Nonetheless and despite this innovation, it does specify that the first lesson, if there are more than one, is always to be from the Old Testament, and it lays out how to select the Old Testament for the evening; see p. 934.)

In the course of a year, most (but not all) of the Bible is read. A couple of early exceptions to continuity are of interest. The 1662 book noted that while the rest of the New Testament was read thrice in the year, this was not true of the book of Revelation, which was read only on certain "divers Feasts." The 1549 book, for another example, skips Genesis chapter 10. Unfortunately, there are many more gaps in the 1979 lectionary (starting on p. 936), some of which seem incomprehensible (for instance, skipping Genesis 38 altogether;

Tamar is a foremother of David, and of Christ!). Fortunately, a rubric allows for the lengthening of any lesson if desired, and I encourage doing so to include skipped-over passages.

What is the point of this required reading, day in and day out, of what we might well call the scriptural story, the biblical narrative? It is this: Anglicans trust that the daily hearing of the Bible will be formative for a Christian people. We want to have Christian people who know the Bible story, who are familiar with its characters, its events, its themes, its problems, and so forth. Indeed, in A.D. 2020 as in A.D. 1520, we could say that a general problem that the Church has is that we don't know the story.

The Anglican prescription for biblical illiteracy is simple: Morning Prayer and Evening Prayer.

When we see that Morning and Eveing Prayer have three parts, we also see that the center of these services is, literally, the Bible. Not a sermon — there is no sermon; not a Bible study or commentary — that could happen in a class or alone afterwards; but the written Word itself. Anglicans trust the unmediated, daily, continuous exposure to the Bible to be God's means for shaping his people into a godly people. Anglicans trust that the Holy Spirit will work in Morning and Evening Prayer just as they are. Sermons can help and Bible studies can help, but the principal thing is the office itself — Morning Prayer and Evening Prayer.

But we need also to add: It is the *entire* Bible that Anglicans trust, both Old and New Testaments. Our tradition is for both to be read, not only one. Our tradition is never to have a single Scripture lesson, but to hear Scripture in stereo (as it were), Old and New Testaments side-by-side. A fundamental Anglican principle is that the Bible interprets the Bible: that no part of God's written Word should be construed in a way that is repugnant to the sense of other parts of Scripture; that we are to aim as much as possible at grasping the entire Bible in a comprehending life of faithfulness.

After each Scripture lesson, a canticle is said. Traditionally these are the *Te Deum* and *Benedictus* at Morning Prayer and the *Magnificat* and the *Nunc Dimittis* at Evening Prayer, although the morning canticles have varied. The canticles are scriptural song-pieces of response to God's action, with the *Magnificat* as perhaps the greatest of them all: "My soul doth magnify the Lord," Mary says with Jesus in her womb. We hear the Word of God in the Scripture lessons, and the Word takes up residence within us. This, again, is the heart of Morning and Evening Prayer.

Prayers

The Apostles' Creed, following the Scripture lessons, is also an Anglican distinctive, as it is the creed said at baptism. The Word that we have heard and that has entered our hearts makes it possible for us to profess our faith in God, the Father, the Son, and the Holy Ghost.

And that makes it possible for us to pray. The Lord's Prayer follows the creed, and then some versicles and responses, and then, traditionally, three collects. The first is of the day (which would be the previous Sunday, generally). The second and third are traditionally fixed collects, the same every day (but different from Morning Prayer to Evening Prayer); in the 1979 book there are many more options.

In the 16th century books of 1549, 1552, and 1559, this was the end. But it seems that experience called forth an expansion of the concluding prayers. The 1662 book had five additional prayers, and the American books have included additional prayers also.

This fluidity of the conclusion of Morning and Evening Prayer is itself instructive. When we become people who are conformed to God's Word, our prayers naturally multiply in many directions, differing from time to time, place to place, season to season. We will have to bring the service of Morning or Evening Prayer to an end and return to our work or our homes or our study. But our praying has not ended.

And in fact, prayer never will end. Prayer is just talking with God, and that, please God, will be something native to our lives forever.

The Rev. Canon Victor Lee Austin, Ph.D., is theologian-in-residence for the Diocese of Dallas and the Church of the Incarnation, Dallas.

Learning Christ with Ignatius of Antioch

(*c.* 35-*c.* 107; feast day October 17)

By Phil Harrold

Sometime around the year 107, the church in Ephesus received a letter from a missionary bishop passing through the western region of Asia Minor. Ignatius of Antioch was headed to Rome under military escort "as a prisoner for the Name and Hope" that he shared with his correspondents. His anticipated martyrdom was an immediate concern and a scandalously visible reminder of how followers of Jesus Christ still lived according to the "pattern and example" which God displayed in the death of his Son. Through conscious participation in the "true and undoubted Passion," Ignatius also hoped to convey some of the less visible implications of dying to self in imitation of Christ. The result, in epistolary form, was an invigorating and at times paradoxical account of life in Christ, the "God-and-Man in One agreed, very-life-in-death indeed."

The intense focus on Christ in Ignatius's letter is readily apparent, and so is the breadth of his affection for fellow "beginners" in the journey of discipleship. This path defined an individual and communal integrity based on *christomathia,* or "learning Christ," the bishop's newly coined Greek word derived from the letter which the Ephesians had previously received from the apostle Paul. According to Ignatian scholar Gregory Vall, this was a deeply participatory learning "that has the person of Christ as its object, or in other words, discipleship to Christ." In effect, the bishop offered a distinctive way of life, but one that he was still learning himself. And given his tenuous circumstances, he could only write a "preliminary account" of how "God's design for the New Man, Jesus Christ" made discipleship possible. What Ignatius had to say was clearly informed by apostolic teaching, even if based on a limited portion of what eventually became the New Testament. It also showed some originality that reflected the urgency of his situation and the missionary context of his day. The result was a primer on discipleship and one of the earliest surviving accounts of life in Christ available in the church's historical record.

Like his contemporary Polycarp, Ignatius is most remembered for his martyrdom, though his vigorous defense of episcopal authority and offense against heresy have also drawn a great deal of attention and mixed reviews.

We know very little about Ignatius's life before the writing of his seven extant letters to churches in Asia-Minor (modern-day Turkey). A close reading of the epistles suggests that he came from a Gentile background and had experienced what one historian describes as a youthful period of "dissipation and self-indulgence." It is also possible that his surname Theophorus (best translated "God-bearer") was received at his baptism as a testament to the dramatic changes he had undergone as a convert to Christianity. Some scholars have underscored lingering pagan influences in his rich imagery (or "iconography") of processions, the Eucharist, and other aspects of ceremonial life, even as it all was redefined by his newfound commitment to the Christian gospel.

Like his contemporary Polycarp, Ignatius is most remembered for his martyrdom, though his vigorous defense of episcopal authority and offense against heresy have also drawn a great deal of attention and mixed reviews. In all these respects, he seems to have been an intensely committed leader of the still tenuous movement of Jesus followers, yet a gentler and more pastoral side comes through repeatedly in what is perhaps his most overlooked concern: Christian discipleship.

Ignatius's "learning Christ" was expressed most intimately in his glosses on the apostle Paul's practical theology of imitation. This captured the essence of discipleship, the actual following of Jesus in word and, most especially, deed. Ignatius was so drawn to the way that Paul modeled this life that he, in effect, imitated the imitator. In the philosophical traditions of the ancient world, such a relationship was marked by a deep interpersonal bond. In the early church, it formed a life defined, most centrally, by the death and resurrection of Christ. As Michael J. Gorman has observed, "For Paul, to be in Christ is to be a living exegesis of this narrative of Christ, a new performance of the original drama of exaltation following humiliation, of humiliation as the voluntary renunciation of rights and selfish gain in order to serve and obey." The apostle's imitation of Christ amounted to a "transformative participation" *in* Christ and in the company of believers (I Cor. 4:14-16). It is important, then,

to note that Ignatius was not imitating Paul's apostleship, but rather his life of cruciform discipleship. In this way, Ignatius set his course, much as Paul did, on the path willed by God, according to the passion of Christ.

Ignatius's reading of Paul deeply informed his writing to the Ephesians. He read and wrote as a self-described "beginner disciple" in "learning Christ." As he followed Paul, the bishop's identity was shaped, his integrity grounded, and his path charted to the extent that he could imagine his "true life" before him with the scandalous clarity of a would-be martyr.

It was by no means a solitary life, however. Guided by the master story of Christ's death and resurrection and gathered in fellowship by its rules of faith, Ignatius had learned from Paul that relationships of mutual trust, obedience, and service were essential to the journey. That is why he too wrote letters filled with firm conviction and gentle encouragement concerning the "utterances" of the Christ who calls. Ignatius clearly recognized their "force of action," as the "teacher" who spoke the word saw that "it was done," individually and corporately in the community of his followers. Conveying all of this on the way to martyrdom was a strange and, perhaps, bewildering tactic for a letter written by a "beginner," but it served as a powerful and timeless witness, nonetheless. For generations to come, it testified to "God's design for the new man, Jesus Christ," a plan that "provides for faith in him and love for him, and comprehends his passion and his resurrection."

Ignatius invites his readers to join him in learning Christ through daily exercises of dying and rising, recounting the definitive motions of baptism, in the company of fellow disciples, and in witness to the wider world — all, as the collect for his feast day suggests, in "willing tribute of our lives" as we "share in the pure and spotless offering of [God's] Son Jesus Christ."

Phil Harrold is writer, lecturer, and a retired professor of church history at Trinity School for Ministry (Ambridge, Pennsylvania), now residing in western Colorado.

Ignatius: Hosios Loukas Monastery, Boeotia, Greece Wikimedia Commons

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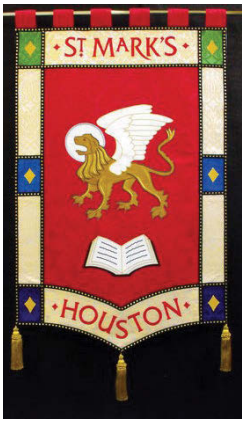

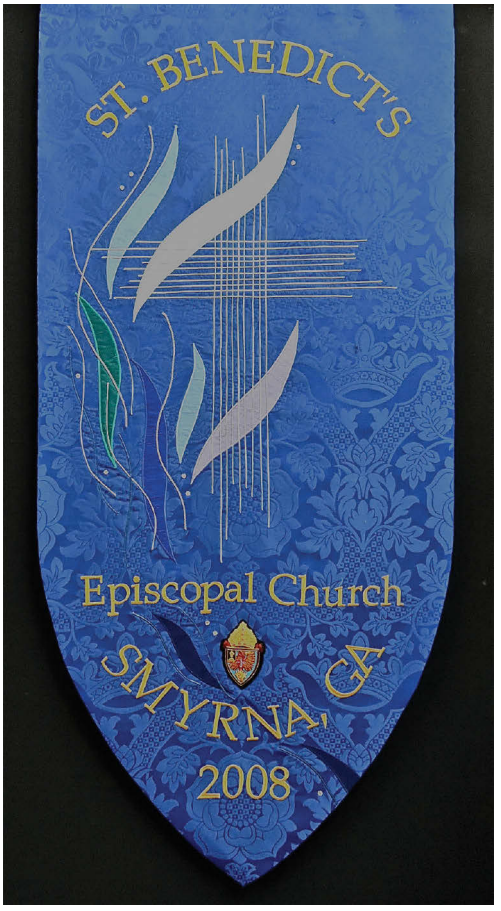

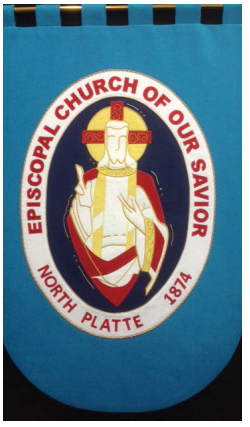

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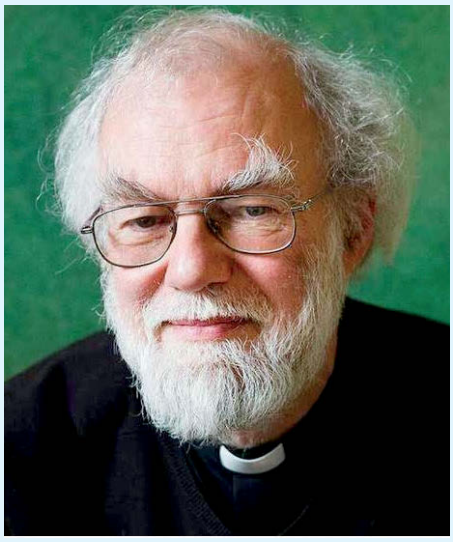
Speaking the Language of the Soul: Marilynne Robinson and Rowan Williams on *Jack*

Marilynne Robinson



Rowan Williams

This is an excerpt from a two-part interview available on our podcast. Parts one and two air Oct. 1 and Oct. 8. Listen at anchor.fm/living-church or by subscribing to The Living Church Podcast on Spotify or iTunes.

Rowan Williams: When you wrote *Gilead*, did you envisage four books, or did that emerge as you got to know the characters, as you've listened to them?

Marilynne Robinson: It was slow emerging. I learned over time that I had three-dimensional ideas of these people sufficiently robust for me to give them their own novels. They stayed in my mind. And so why abandon them really?

RW: In this novel, racism as a kind of foundational sin in American society — that's allowed to come up in a very articulate way, and in a very in-your-face way sometimes. I'm thinking of that very poignant episode when Jack is traveling and he goes to the boarding house with this kindly old woman. And when he says that his wife will be joining him, that she's a "colored lady", [the woman] sort of explodes. A warm, kind person, eager to welcome this man who's helped her family, and suddenly we're up against this extraordinary brick wall. In the whole of the book, the tensions between individual kindness, individual goodness, and a sort of collective brutality come through.

MR: You know, I didn't really anticipate the importance that it would have now. The fact that people experience themselves as kind and fair and all that sort of thing, during centuries while this one glaring exception was so conspicuously present…

RW: It's very hard, I think, in an individualistic society where we think in terms of blame. And so when people push away questionings about race, it's because often they don't want to be put at an individual disadvantage. It seems that that's quite a substantial social factor at the moment, a contradiction in our collective minds.

MR: We don't think about the issue terribly well, I'm afraid. 1619 means many things. But one thing it means is that there was not one minute in meaningful American history when we were not a country of two races. And the history of it, granting all the denial and suppression and all the rest of it, you simply can't imagine American culture without granting the huge importance of African American culture, the impact on language, religion, music, virtually everything that you would call distinctively American. It's one of the great historical ironies, of course, that the language of Jefferson is so profoundly important to the language of Martin Luther King.

Jefferson, you know, he invokes the idea of the soul — Adam "became a living soul" — Because he's retelling the creation myth when he talks about being endowed by our creator and so on, and this is not something that is simply adapted as a cultural claim. It's basically a description of human nature, that we are in an intimate, original relationship with God as individual people. And I think that that's an idea that African American culture has never seen as being narrow in its powers of description. It's an essential claim that associates them very, very deeply with the original claim made for human beings in early America.

RW: Absolutely. And the significance of the language of "soul" in the vocabulary of African American culture, that tells its own story, I think, doesn't it?

MR: It's certainly very important. Very essential.

RW: And that takes me on to an area I wanted to discuss a bit more, which is the way in which you use that language of "soul" so evocatively. One of the passages that I most immediately loved and warmed to was when Della says to Jack,

> [O]nce in a lifetime, maybe, you look at a stranger and you see a soul, a glorious presence out of place in the world. … You've seen the mystery — you've seen what life is about. What it's for. And a soul has no earthly qualities, no history among the things of this world, no guilt or injury or failure. No more than a flame would have. … And it is a miracle when you recognize it.

And that is, if I may say so, an absolutely wonderful, resonant passage. But

(Continued on next page)

(Continued from previous page)

I wonder if I can press you a bit. Some would say, well, surely souls are formed by time and change. And is that still part of the picture when you talk about this radiant timelessness of the soul?

MR: We don't know how to interpret ourselves really. But we know that there is an essence in the human being that is valuable, and, from God's point of view, lovable, despite all the accidents of worldly existence. It's a singular, impenetrable relationship of the self with God, based on the primary love of God toward the creature. So, I mean, in that sense, because we have a much more than earthly history, much more than an earthly existence, there has to be that in us that is not touched by the world.

RW: Sometimes I've suggested that if we want to understand what we mean by a "spiritual" perspective on ourselves or the world, we have to think of ourselves and whatever else we encounter as simply related to God before related to us, therefore in a dimension always inaccessible to us, which exists in primordial connection with the creative love of God. And to see another person, or even to see any material thing in the world, in that light, as turned towards God before it's turned towards us — that's, in a sense, the essence of the spiritual. That's what saves us from being completely buccaneering, dominating, possessive, cutting a swathe through the world.

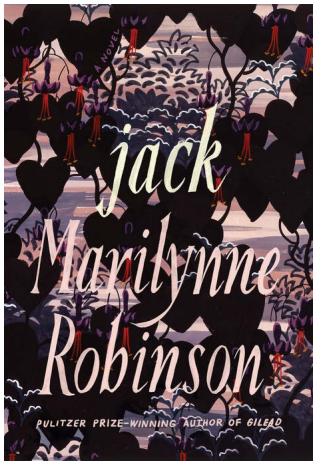
Another passage struck me very deeply rather earlier in the book, about resurrection: The angels would open the caskets and lift up old Mrs. This and young Mr. That, making themselves, to their great joy, much less marvelous and interesting than the recently disinterred. Wings are fine… but to hear a familiar laugh would be an almost unbearable joy, a human joy exceeding anything seraphim could feel, since angels cannot know death.

The heart of every person is bound up with physical memory of the remembered laugh, which is highly specific, highly material, and yet somehow not at the mercy of change and chance. And that insight that angels don't know death, therefore somehow the resurrected human is a more astonishing thing than the angels — that's a very powerful thing.

MR: Yes. I do think of people as being beautifully individuated, the billions of us that there are, all of us distinct from one another and unpredictable in indescribable ways. I think that that's a very great part of God's pleasure in creation. I don't see it as being something that would perish with the flesh. I see it as one of the great ornaments of the children of Adam.

RW: Yes, I must say that if I wanted to start a theological seminar on resurrection, I might very well start with that. ❑

Jack: A Reader's Guide



Jack
By Marilynne Robinson
Farrar, Straus and Giroux, 2020.
Pp. 320. $27.00

By Christine Havens

1. Literary references abound in the novel. Here is a partial list: *Hamlet*, William Shakespeare; *Paradise Lost*, John Milton; *Oak and Ivy*, Paul Laurence Dunbar; "Sonnet 30," William Shakespeare; "Acquainted with the Night," Robert Frost; and *Pilgrim's Progress*, John Bunyan; *Crime and Punishment*, Fyodor Dostoyevsky. How do these works, individually or collectively, shape the story? How do they affect your reading of it?

2. Read the entirety of Shakespeare's "Sonnet 30." How does this poem embody Jack and Della's relationship, especially in the last line: "All losses are restored, and sorrows end"?

3. What is the significance of eschatology (theology about the end of the world, death, and the last judgment), in the book? How do Jack and Della each view these things?

4. Consider this quote from the book: "[Jack] could see the poetry in their misconception. . . . [A]s far as he was concerned, truth versus poetry was really no contest." What is the relationship between truth and poetry for Jack? What about for you?

5. Jack frequently describes himself as "embarrassed." What is the book trying to tell us about self-image and vulnerability?

6. What role do racism and segregation play in the novel? At the beginning of the book, why does Della risk being seen in Bellefontaine, the cemetery for whites only?

7. Why is Della's teaching at Sumner High School so important to her and to her family? Do you find yourself sympathizing more strongly with them, or with Della and Jack?

8. Jack's goal in life is "harmlessness." Can a person live a life without hurting anyone? Does that equal a life without consequences? Is there a difference between being harmless and being kind?

9. What does Robinson suggest "great loneliness" can do to a person? Has there ever been a time you have experienced it? If so, do you identify with what Robinson describes?

10. Jack describes himself as an atheist. Do his actions in the book bear this out? Why or why not?

11. Why is it important to Jack to maintain his self-image as a thief?

12. What is grace? What role does it play in *Jack*?

Plumbing the Depths of Death and Eternity

The Sacred Veil

By **Eric Whitacre**
Text by **Charles Anthony Silvestri**, **Julia Lawrence Silvestri**, and **Eric Whitacre**
The Los Angeles Master Chorale
Grant Gershon, Artistic Director
Lisa Edwards, piano
Jeffrey Ziegler, cello
Eric Whitacre, conductor
signumrecords.com

Review by Marty Wheeler Burnett

Many have sought ways to express grief and lament during this time of pandemic. Among the "spiritual but not religious" population, traditional musical expressions such as choral Requiems may not be an entry point. Composer Eric Whitacre steps into the void with a powerful extended choral work, *The Sacred Veil*.

Whitacre's latest work is deeply spiritual, plumbing the depths of death and eternity. In it, he traces an emotional and physical journey through love, life, a cancer diagnosis, and death.

The 12-movement composition is based on the story of Julia Lawrence Silvestri, the late wife of librettist Charles Anthony Silvestri. The lyrics are drawn from her own writings, her husband's poetry, and poetry by the composer. The 57-minute work features the acclaimed Los Angeles Master Chorale, pianist Lisa Edwards, and cellist Jeffrey Ziegler. The plaintive, dark tone colors of the cello effectively set the mood.

As a young mother, Julie Silvestri was diagnosed with ovarian cancer and died in 2005 at age 35. Tony Silvestri, immersed in work, parenting, and emotional pain, did not write about his wife's death until almost 10 years later. With encouragement from his friend and collaborator, Eric Whitacre, the idea for the composition emerged. Through reflecting on his experiences, as well as revisiting his late wife's journals and blog posts for the first time since her death, Silvestri was able to process his grief.

Whitacre's hallmark compositional style — rich choral harmonies and expressive settings of contemporary poetry — is stretched and expanded here. The musical journey is unified through the several compositional devices. Whitacre utilizes middle C as a tonal center representing "the sacred veil," the liminal plane dividing life and death. The number 3 figures prominently throughout the work. Julie is represented by a recurring theme using the interval of a minor third; chord progressions move in thirds; lines of text are often repeated three times, providing, in Whitacre's words, a liturgical, formal feel.

The most remarkable movement and a pillar of the extended work is "You Rise, I Fall." In this 10-minute sonic exploration, the composer depicts the moment of death. Once again Whitacre utilizes middle C as a tonal center. The choir sings complex chords that slowly slide up and down, representing the departing soul rising and the surviving loved one falling into grief. In death, the rising chords slowly evaporate into ethereal sound, and the descending chords move into the abyss of grief, ending with the single, central pitch — the sacred veil. The choral performance of this movement, with its immense vocal, physical, and emotional challenges, is flawless.

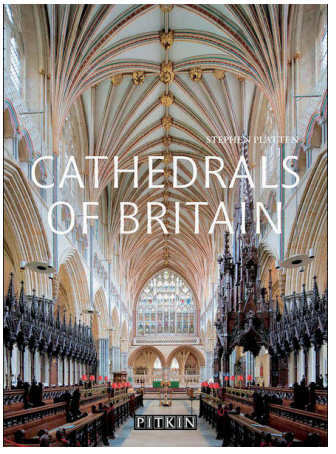
Accompanying notes describe how listeners immediately and personally relate to the story. Ironically, as I first listened to this work, I had received word of a college friend who had been diagnosed with ovarian cancer. The music and poetry inspired memories of family and friends who have succumbed to this deadly disease.

This is not "sacred music" and, indeed, does not purport to be. The composer has clearly stated as much. *The Sacred Veil* is a deeply moving exploration of the journey of terminal illness and the transitions of birth and death. It reminds us that our loved ones are closer than we often imagine, just across the sacred veil of eternity.

Dr. Marty Wheeler Burnett is associate professor of church music and director of chapel music at Virginia Theological Seminary and president of the Association of Anglican Musicians.

A Trustworthy Guide

Review by Peter Judd



Cathedrals of Britain

By **Stephen Platten**

Pavilion Books, pp. 96, £9.99

Britain's cathedrals are among its glories, visited by huge numbers of people. Here's a book by Bishop Stephen Platten to help the visitor appreciate them. The book covers the cathedrals of England, Scotland, and Wales, both Anglican and Roman Catholic. Approach a cathedral with this book in hand and you will be guided through the story behind its origin, its character and architecture, its feel and atmosphere. Platten points out important features, monuments, stained glass, and art works, while explaining the latest changes and new works of art.

Platten was for some years dean of Norwich Cathedral so he knows that cathedrals are not just museums. These are living places, hosting numerous services, as well as civic and cultural events.

The book's sections are arranged according to regions. In London and the South East, Platten describes the great cathedrals like St. Paul's, Westminster Cathedral and Canterbury (but not Westminster Abbey which isn't a cathedral because it is headed by the Queen and not a bishop). It includes Chichester Cathedral with its wonderful modern art works, and the less well-known but delightful Portsmouth, also a mixture of old and new.

The entry for Canterbury places it at the heart of the worldwide Anglican Communion. Platten tells its story, including the martyrdom of Archbishop Thomas Beckett in the cathedral in 1170. He explores the Bell Harry tower at its center, the breath-taking 14th century nave, and the very early Gothic of the quire and the monastic buildings around the cathedral.

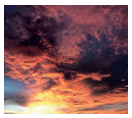
The Scottish section includes the great St. Giles High Kirk in Edinburgh and the wonderfully craggy cathedral of St. Magnus, Kirkwall in the Orkney Islands, begun in 1137.

In Wales, Platten covers the splendours of Llandaff and St. David's but also less well known cathedrals such as Bangor and St. Asaph. Dr. Samuel Johnson, the 18th century English man of letters, said that although St. Asaph was known as the smallest cathedral in England and Wales, "it has something of dignity and grandeur about it."

The book is illustrated with 103 excellent color photographs, with one of every cathedral. Some are full-page like that of the majestic East End of Liverpool, the vast modern Gothic-style cathedral completed in 1978.

I was particularly interested in seeing Platten's entry for Chelmsford Cathedral in Essex, where I was dean for 16 years. He mentions the tiny ancient chapel of St. Peter, built by St. Cedd on the east coast in 654, which makes it one of the oldest churches in England and the start of the Christian mission in Essex. He says Chelmsford has "grace and space" and he brings it up to date with a list of modern art works, including Mark Cazalet's painting of the Tree of Life. I can testify to the entry's accuracy. Stephen Platten is a trustworthy guide.

The Very Rev. Peter Judd is former dean of Chelmsford Cathedral.



Cæli enarrant

Declaration of Dependence

All of you brothers over in Africa / Tell all the folks in Egypt, and Israel, too. / Please don't miss this train at the station. / 'Cause if you miss it, I feel sorry, sorry for you. — "Love Train," The O'Jays

I want to write here in a personal way about the work of racial justice as a call for all Americans and especially for Christians, formed by God's love for us in Jesus Christ. We know that this work is "normal" for Black, Indigenous, and other communities of color, who do not command the cultural space of the majority. Whites, by contrast, can choose to reflect on systemic inequities, intercommunal division, and varied power dynamics at their leisure, or otherwise take a pass.

Jesus himself is the effective means to our end: Jesus who, St. Paul says, "*has now* reconciled" the would-be faithful "in his fleshly body through death, so as to present you holy and blameless and irreproachable before him — provided that you continue securely established and steadfast in the faith" (Col. 1:22-23). Continuing securely and steadfastly, it turns out, is not easy. Jesus himself *is* the site of reconciliation, by his passion. In his body, the death of sin *is* overcome.

Not, however, instantaneously, nor without our cooperation. Jesus invites us to follow him as faithful disciples. Our own symbolic death of baptism initiates this journey, which we are told will span the whole earth, gathering into one body every tribe, tongue, nation, and people — Africans, Egyptians; Gentiles and Jews. Along the way, we expect persecution and pain, but this, too, will prove effective, for the sake of the whole. As Paul continues: "I am now rejoicing in my sufferings for your sake, and in my flesh, I am completing what is lacking in Christ's afflictions for the sake of his body, that is, the Church…. For this I toil and struggle with all the energy that he powerfully inspires within me" (1:24, 29).

Common labor

Start with what it might look like to toil and struggle with all Americans in loving solidarity. Can we imagine first steps in this regard? Francis Fukuyama wrote recently of voluntary national service programs as a means of inculcating "a sense of citizenship" in the young, and I can testify to this truth.

At age 18, I moved to Boston to participate in the newly founded City Year, an "urban peace corps" that has now spread to 29 cities in the U.S. Our corps of 100 young people was divided into eight teams of 12, half men and half women, each rigorously reflecting the racial makeup of America and cutting across class. My team included two white working-class Catholics, two African American single moms, two inner-city Puerto Ricans, a recent immigrant from Vietnam, a white evangelical from Wellesley, and team leaders with bachelor's degrees from Skidmore and Lewis & Clark. Upon meeting one erstwhile drug-dealer teammate, he casually commented to me, "I used to beat people like you up," and we gratefully marked the passing of time. Our team started an afterschool program for elementary-aged children in the basement of St. John-St. Hugh Catholic Church in Dorchester, before turning to projects in Somerville and on Thompson Island, with corps-wide workdays in every neighborhood of the city over a nine-month period. Every one of us was transformed — by listening and speaking across deep differences of education, culture, and race, and by arguments, apologies, tears, and laughter, which produced a surprisingly deep, collective affection.

The genius of the program, founded by secular Jews drinking from the wells of Judeo-Christian moral reflection, was its intuitive reaching toward the universal longing for truth and goodness: truth about injustice, and goodness on the way to reparation. We only made a start. Confession and forgiveness sometimes sat uncomfortably alongside a creeping Manichean self-satisfaction, which led us to suppose that the good and the bad might prematurely be separated, not by the Son of Man but by us (cf. Matt. 25:31ff.). The fullness of reconciliation in and after Christ was not our bag. But we rightly reveled in the counter-cultural fact of doing good work together. Damning American divisions, we felt an appropriate pride in riding the buses and trains or walking abreast in otherwise segregated neighborhoods of the city, turning what we perceived to be envious heads that wanted what we had.

I can't think of a better school in leadership development for young people, to inculcate humility and compassion, and channel idealism. As I am sure many other programs do as well, City Year sought to replace our desiccating cynicism with cool springs of hope, and we were surely refreshed.

Common prayer

Several years on, seeking something of the same solidarity in Christian form, I started to dig into prospects of interecclesial reconciliation and quickly concluded that catholicism does not come easily to Americans. We have an uncomfortable relationship with history. The classic period of pluralization dawned around 1830 in and around upstate New York, fed by revivalist fervor. As Nathan

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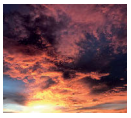


Cæli enarrant

(Continued from previous page)

Hatch recounts in *The Democratization of American Christianity*, into an already potent stew of first and second great awakening, containing Congregationalists, white and Black Methodists, Disciples of Christ, and others, were thrown Millerite (later Seventh-day Adventist) and Mormon innovations. Add a few Episcopalians and the cacophonous missionary race was on, to the wilds of Ohio and parts west.

Is it possible, in such a setting, to account for the Whole? We should answer *yes*, but our record of success is dismal. To be sure, many oldline Protestants and newline evangelicals were abolitionists, and, through the work of the saintly Richard Allen, Black Americans saw a flourishing of apostolic Christianity. Early Pentecostals unusually crossed racial boundaries, though the movement has remained unpredictable amid continual change. But most Southern and Northern Protestants would, in coming decades, feel their way toward a white supremacist armistice on the far side of war, making "peace" by the blood of the Blacks. In time, Americanist Roman Catholics would bow to the arrangement, as well.

Declarations of independence between Christians don't make much sense, but the last two centuries have multiplied majority-white denominations bent on competition, each cultivating a contrasting sub-culture to support closely held commitments propagated as normative. Living and dying by schism, hundreds of chauvinistic denominations have nurtured an exceptionalist certainty that what we are doing here and (always) *now* is vitally needed to perpetuate the faith itself. We lose track of the poor, at home and abroad, whose blood cries out from the ground (Gen. 4:10). "Our iniquities testify against us" (Jer. 14:7).

I do not mean here simply to criticize others. As an aspiring confirmand in the Episcopal Church without a settled parish, put off by culture-warring whites on right and left, I set off one Sunday for a congregation near my home on Mansfield Street, which runs as a seam between racially bounded neighborhoods in New Haven. Crossing the immediately Black Winchester Ave., I walked 1.2 miles to St. Andrew's on Shelton, where I found a congregation of fifty or so African American and Afro-Caribbean Episcopalians and a Nigerian priest. As the only white person in attendance, I was warmly welcomed after Mass by dozens of kind persons, and quickly felt I had found my home. I sang in the gospel choir, luxuriated in the catholic liturgy and evangelical preaching, and, a year and a half later, was confirmed. Over time, I also pieced together some sad history. After the neighborhood shifted in the 60s and 70s from white to Black, what had become a white remnant at the parish decamped *en masse* along with the endowment — having reached the familiar breaking point, according to which integration is deferred to accommodate the comfort of whites.

On graduating from Yale, I moved to Northern Indiana and sought out something similar to St. Andrew's in South Bend, but found no Black Episcopal churches within hailing distance, Gary being too far away. Later in Milwaukee, I was sad to learn that the two Black Episcopal parishes in the city had just been closed for lack of members. Several years ago, the bishop of Connecticut closed St. Andrew's, New Haven, as well. At least nearby St. Luke's remains.

Common life and death

Many whites in this country are not wrong to cherish memories of their own ethnic particularity. My mom's father came from Sweden and spoke with an accent all his life, while her mother grew up in a farming enclave in Iowa that worshipped in the Danish language on Sundays, just as Ole Rolvaag recounts in *Giants in the Earth*. When Carl Almgren married Gilberta Madsen, it was only half-jokingly deemed a "mixed marriage." These and many other Americans weren't here when y'all had your war, I have reminded East-coastal friends with older American pedigrees, both northern and southern. But Black folks are also old Americans, and the succession of slavery, Civil War, and Jim Crow created a persistent Black-white polarity that all Americans internalize. Witness the speed with which the newly arrived adopt our majority culture's distrust for the dark-skinned and disdain for the poor among them. I regret that my grandfather Almgren was not pleased when my 24-year-old mother dated quite seriously an African American man. I am told that a point of confrontation hastened a painful break up.

Here we arrive at deep questions about the pattern of life together among distinct and inter-twined communities of Americans and our associated churches. The de facto segregation of America by race *and* class makes day-in-day-out diversity the exception for the vast majority of us, save perhaps at work, where something like *caste*, per Isabel Wilkerson, may account for predictable distinctions between "white" and "blue" collar tasks. Every American city, town, suburb, and rural hinterland consists in distinct ethnic and professional enclaves. Take a look at judgmentalmaps.com and marvel. To our great shame, we also worship how we live in cordoned subcommunities that obscure, when they do not contradict, the truth that all Christians are one in Christ.

I take the point of Esau McCaulley, longtime contributor to our *Covenant* blog, that "God's eschatological vision for the reconciliation of all things in his Son" does not entail an erasure of race or putative colorblindness. Rather, "our distinctive cultures represent the means by

which we give honor to God," so that together (after a fashion) we worship the Lamb. As Esau concludes, "inasmuch as I modulate my blackness or neglect my culture, I am placing limits on the gifts that God has given me" (*Reading While Black*, p. 116).

At the same time, the mixture of cultures and races betokens its own eschatological anticipation of the end that the Lord has prepared for those who love him and each other. If, as St. Paul says, "there is no longer Jew or Greek, there is no longer slave or free, there is no longer male and female; for all of you are one in Christ Jesus" (Gal. 3:28), then the future *and* the present are mestizo, as a prophetic witness (*martyras*) to God's reconciling action in the God-Man. "*Now* in Christ Jesus," writes Paul in Ephesians, "you who once were far off have been brought near by the blood of Christ. For he is our peace; in his flesh he has made both [Gentiles and Jews] into one and has broken down the dividing wall, that is, the hostility between us" (Eph. 2:13-14). *He* has broken down the dividing wall. The work of the faithful is to follow and imitate, taking up our crosses and learning to die to ourselves and our sinful separations, if only we may finish our course and the ministry that we received from Jesus himself, to testify to the good news of God's grace (1 Cor. 15:31; Acts 20:24).

The mix of tribe and culture "in one body through the cross" (2:16) bears an imprint of martyrdom on the way to the consummation of the Marriage Feast of the Lamb. *Martyrdom*, here, incorporates a range of meanings, analogous to *sacrifice* in the Mass and in the Christian life as a whole. Understood as painful and fruitful relinquishing, our various and repeated "deaths," accompanied by remorse, confession, and amendment of life, may finally yield conformity with the Lamb who was slain. We glimpse something of this potentially salvific economy in the loss of memory and distinctive practice that is the pan-European blend of "white" Christianity in the new world, from Iceland to Italy, trampling down denominational divisions by assimilation, even incorporating American Jewry. And we see it more sharply in the persistent, prophetic witness of Black and Brown faithfulness in the face of persecution, since any hint of dark skin in America amounts to "always carrying in the body the death of Jesus, so that the life of Jesus may also be made visible in our bodies" (2 Cor. 4:10). This being so, the vocation of interracial marriage stands as a particular summons to courage in the power of God in Christ, who has "conquered the world!" (John 16:33).

"And now faith, hope, and love abide, these three; and the greatest of these is love" (1 Cor. 13:13). May God give us the grace, as we hear the call of racial justice, to obey the command to die and live together. Pray for the visible unity of the Church, "so that the world may believe" (John 17:21).

—Christopher Wells

PEOPLE & PLACES

Appointments

The Rev. **Lupton Abshire** is interim rector of St. Laurence, Conifer, Colo.

The Rev. **John D. Adams** is priest in charge of St. Stephen's, Grand Isle, Neb.

The Rev. **Jonathan Adams** is rector of Trinity, Upperville, Va.

The Rev. **Nina Bacas** is associate rector of St. John's, McLean, Va.

The Rev. **Melanie Barbarito** is interim priest in charge of Calvary, Summit, N.J.

The Rev. **Matthew Burdette** is rector of St. Thomas, Whitemarsh, Pa.

The Rev. **Andrew Butler** is rector of St. Margaret's, Palm Desert, Calif.

The Rev. **Lynn Carter-Edmands** is interim rector of St. Alban's, Cape Elizabeth, Maine.

The Rev. **James B. Cook** is assisting priest of St. Luke's on the Lake, Austin, Texas

The Rev. Dn. **Valerie Cowart** is deacon of St. John's, Lowell, Mass.

The Rev. **Gwynn Crichton** is associate rector of St. Paul's, Richmond, Va.

The Rev. **Michael Durning** is priest associate of Redeemer, Sarasota, Fla.

The Rev. **Ellen Ekevag** is ministry developer of the Diocese of Michigan.

The Rev. **Andrew Ellison** is rector of St. Catherine of Sienna, Missouri City, Texas.

The Rev. **Maggie Foote** is associate rector of All Souls,' Berkeley, Calif.

The Rev**. Andrew Goldhor** is priest in charge of Good Shepherd, Watertown, Mass.

The Rev. Dr. **Charles Halton** is curate of St. Raphael's, Lexington, Ky.

The Rev. **Matthew Handi** is missional curate of All Saints, Oakville, Conn.

The Rev. **Andrew Harmon** is senior associate rector of St. James, Baton Rouge, La.

The Rev. Dn. **Judy Harris** is deacon of St. Martin's, Copperas Cove, Texas.

The Rev. Dr. **Mark Chung Hearn** is director of contextual education at Church Divinity School of the Pacific.

The Rev. **Meredith Day Hearn** is priest of Indian Hill Church, Cincinnati, Ohio.

The Rev. **Terri Hobart** is priest in charge of St. Thomas,' Denver.

The Rev. Dn. **Rachel Iversen** is deacon of Christ Church, Pensacola, Fla.

The Rev. **Gregory Johnston** is rector of St. John's, Charlestown, Mass.

The Rev. **Thea Keith-Lucas** is interim chaplain of the Massachusetts Institute of Technology, Cambridge, Mass.

The Rev. **Jonah Kendall** is rector of St. Thomas, Sun Valley, Idaho.

The Rev. Dn. **John Kendall** is deacon of St. Mary's, Milton, Fla.

The Rev. **Trey Kennedy** is interim rector of St. Michael's, Fayette, Ala.

The Rev. **Steven King** is priest in charge of Trinity Cathedral, Omaha, Neb.

The Rev. **Erin Kirby** is rector of St. John's, Marion, N.C.

The Rev. Dn. **Vicki Knipp** is deacon of St. Christopher's, Austin, Texas.

The Rev. **Michael LaRue** is priest in charge of Hope, Houston.

The Rev. **Tina Lockett** is vicar of Advent, Lillian, Ala.

The Rev. **Betty Long** is priest in charge of St. John the Evangelist, Yalesville, Conn.

The Rev. **Bill Martin** is supply priest of St. Basil's, Talequah, Okla.

The Rev. **Trawin Malone** is interim vicar of Good Shepherd on the Hill, Austin, Texas.

The Rev. **Daniel McClain** is priest in charge of St. Paul's, Dayton, Ohio.

The Rev. **Kate Mckey-Duner** is missional curate of Trinity, Brooklyn, Conn.

The Rev. **Lizzie McManus-Dail** is curate of Church of the Cross, Bee Cave, Texas

The Rev. **Elizabeth Meade** is interim pastor of St. Timothy's, Creve Couer, Mo.

The Rev. **Amy Dafler Meaux** is dean of Trinity Cathedral, Little Rock, Ark.

The Rev. **Nelson Mendoza** is curate of St. Francis in the Valley, Green Valley, Ariz.

The Rev. **Eric Metoyer** is rector of St. Francis,' San Francisco.

Adia Milien is communications associate for the Diocese of California.

The Rev. **Tammy Hobbs Miracky** is family minister of All Saints, Brookline, Mass.

The Rev. **Luz Cabrera Montes** is curate of Trinity, Houston.

The Rev. **James Morton** is curate of St. James, New York.

The Rev. **Stephen Nagy** is missional curate of St. Mark's, Bridgewater, Conn.

The Rev. Dr. **Jennie Olbyrch** is interim rector of Calvary, Charleston, S.C.

The Rev. **Heather Patton-Graham** is chaplain of the St. Andrew's Schools, Honolulu, Hawaii.

The Rev. **Lisa Ransom** is vicar of Our Saviour, Mission Farm, Killington, Vt.

The Rev. Canon **Lee Anne Reat** is priest in charge of Christ Church, Springfield, Ohio, and missioner of South East Ohio of the Diocese of Southern Ohio.

The Rev. **Jessica Sexton** is priest in charge of Trinity, Long Green, Md.

The Rev. **Andrew Terry** is area missioner in the Diocese of Texas.

The Rev. **David Umphlett** is rector of Holy Trinity, Greensboro, N.C.

The Rev. Dn. **John Vancamp** is deacon of Trinity, The Woodlands, Texas.

The Rev. Dn. **Chris Weis** is deacon-in-charge of St. Paul's, Freeport, Galveston, Texas.

Ordinations

Diaconate

Arizona: **Susan Erickson, Keehna Sture**

California: **Elizabeth Mary Milner, Merrell Scot Sherman**

Central Gulf Coast: **Mike Ballard, David Chatel, David Clothier, Bob, Donnell, Rachel Iversen, Lydia Johnson, John Kendall, John Talbert**

Chicago: **George Arceneaux, Diane Luther**

Colorado: **Gary Darress, Laura Osborne, Mike Williams, Debbie Womack**

Priesthood

Oklahoma: **Chris Cole** (curate, Trinity, Tulsa, Okla.)

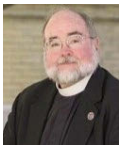
Olympia: **Rong By** (Holy Family of Jesus, Tacoma, Wash.), **Stephen Daniel Crippen**

(assisting priest, Grace, Bainbridge Island, Wash.), **Natalie S. Johnson** (curate, St. Paul's, Seattle), and **Hillary Beasley Kimsey** (chaplain, Swedish Hospital, Seattle and assistant, St. Bede's, Orchard Park, Wash.)

Deaths

The Very Rev. Canon Dr. **Steven Peay**, former dean of Nashotah House, died August 31 after a struggle with cancer.

He was a native of Indianapolis, and after studies at Greenville College and St. Meinrad Seminary, he entered the novitiate of St. Vincent's Archabbey, a Benedictine community in Latrobe, Pennsylvania. He studied for the priesthood at St. Vincent's Seminary, and was ordained in 1982. He earned his Ph.D. in historical theology from Saint Louis University and undertook additional studies in classic rhetoric and communications. Returning to St. Vincent's, he served as master of ceremonies for the monastery chapel and taught homiletics and historical theology at the seminary.



He eventually left the order and the Roman Catholic Church and served as a pastor of Congregational churches in Wisconsin for 15 years. He became an adjunct professor of church history at Nashotah House in 2008, and joined the regular faculty in 2010, when his priest's orders were received by the Bishop of Albany.

He served as Nashotah House's director of field education in 2011, became academic dean a year later, and was elected as the 20th dean and president in 2014. He served for three years, resigning in August 2017 because of ill health, and continued as research professor of homiletics and church history.

He became associate dean of the Cathedral of All Saints in Milwaukee in 2018, directing the Cathedral Institute and programs for spiritual formation. He was elected a canon residentiary in 2018 and became canon to the ordinary of the Diocese of Milwaukee in December 2019.

Dean Peay wrote four books, and published numerous articles about preaching, Benedictine spirituality, and the history of Congregationalism and Nashotah House. He had a longstanding interest in academic dress and was elected a fellow of the Burgon Society in 2018 for his work in this area at Nashotah. He gave lectures and retreats around the world and was a widely consulted spiritual director. He is survived by his wife, Julie, and by two stepsons.

Sister **Ruth Hall**, CF, who founded an ongoing hospitality ministry in San Francisco as part of the early response to the AIDS crisis, died September 7, aged 71.

A native of England, she professed her vows as a member of the Community of St. Francis at the age of 24. A year later, in 1974, she came to San Francisco as a pioneering member of the Community's American Province.

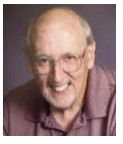
When the AIDS crisis began in the early 1980s, the Community became aware of an urgent need for housing for the family members of those suffering with the disease. They made a small garden apartment in their convent available for this purpose, but soon found that the need far outstripped their resources.

In 1985, Sister Ruth founded Family Link as a ministry of hospitality, originally using a series of apartments, and then, from 1995, a house in San Francisco's Castro District to provide a supportive "home away from home" for thousands of people caring for their loved ones. Sister Ruth was proud to have welcomed guests from every state and from six of the seven continents, though she insisted that guests from Antarctica were welcome as well. The length of stays varied from a few days to several months. No one was ever turned away for an inability to pay the nominal nightly fee.

She was assisted in her ministry of hospitality by a series of large dogs, including a St. Bernard who weighed 210 pounds. "It is a blessing to know how faithful a dog can be," she said, "trusting us to provide what is needed. Would that I could so consistently trust that God knows my needs and will provide and doesn't need me to be CEO of the universe!" Sister Ruth is survived by the four remaining members of the Community.

The Rev. Dr. **Thomas W. Joyce**, a teacher of philosophy and former Jesuit who served for several decades as an Episcopal priest, died July 25, aged 87.

He was born and raised in Boston, the son of Irish immigrants, and graduated from Boston College before entering the Jesuits. He earned a doctorate in philosophy from Georgetown University, and taught at Boston College High School and Boston College. He moved to Fairfax, Virginia, after leaving the Jesuits, and taught history at McLean High School nearby for over 15 years. He was proud to introduce a course in philosophy to the public high school's curriculum.



Joyce felt God's call to serve again as a priest and met his wife, the Rev. Margaret Wise, a UCC pastor, at a ministerial training course. He was received as a priest into the Episcopal Church in 1987 by the Bishop of Virginia, and served at St. Patrick's Church in Falls Church, Virginia, before moving with Margaret to Winchester, Virginia, where he became associate rector of Christ Church. They later moved to Chicago, where he served as rector of St. John's Church. They retired to Southern Pennsylvania in 2004, where he served Hope Church in Manheim and St. Luke's in Mechanicsburg. He also taught philosophy at Gettysburg Area Community College until his death.

He was preceded in death by his first wife, Elaine, and by three siblings, and is survived by his wife Margaret, two stepchildren and a grandson.

The Rev. **John D. Lane**, longtime rector of Trinity Church, Staunton, Virginia, died at home on August 30, aged 75.

A native of Princeton, New Jersey, Lane graduated from Amherst College in 1966, and then embarked on two years of service with the Peace Corps in Nepal, serving in what was then the organization's most remote posting, a six-day walk from the nearest road.

He prepared for the ministry at General Seminary, and after ordination, served as curate of the Church of the Holy Comforter, Charlotte, North Carolina, and, for 12 years, as rector of the Church of the Holy Comforter in New Orleans. He became rector of Trinity Church, Staunton in 1997, serving until his retirement in 2007.

Lane was active in the wider ministry of sthe Episcopal Church, serving two terms on Executive Council, and as editor of *Leaven*, a publication of the National Network of Episcopal Clergy Associations. He was also a dedicated Rotarian and served on the boards of Staunton's Salvation Army and YMCA.

His family remembered, "John was known for his quick wit, sharp intellect, spiritual guidance, loving care, and thoughtful leadership. He placed a high value on preaching and liturgy and believed that his calling was to 'comfort the afflicted and afflict the comfortable,' fearlessly expressing his views." Appearing on the television quiz show Jeopardy in 1972 was one of his proudest achievements.

He is survived by his wife of 48 years, Elizabeth Bartelink Lane, two children, Edward and Mary, and two grandsons. His son Andrew preceded him in death.

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Ex. 20:1-4, 7-9, 12-20 [Isa. 5:1-7]; Ps. 19 [Ps. 80:7-14]; Phil. 3:4b-14; Matt. 21:33-46

At All Times

"There was a landowner who planted a vineyard, put a fence around it, dug a winepress in it, and built a watchtower. Then he leased it to tenants and went to another country. When harvest time came near, he sent his slaves to the tenants to collect his produce" (Matt. 21:33-34). The tenants "beat one, killed another, and stoned another." Finally, when the landowner sent his son, the tenants said, "This is the heir; come, let us kill him and get the inheritance" (Matt. 21:39). The chief priest and the Pharisees perceive that the parable is about themselves, although the targeted audience is broader, including everyone who reads or hears this parable.

We are tenants in a vineyard. God, the owner, has a rightful claim to the fruit of the vineyard. We reject, abuse, and kill emissaries of the landowner who come to collect some of the fruit of the vineyard. We want the vineyard as our own. Stated differently, "This is my life, and no one can make a claim upon it, and I will reject anyone who tries." In truth, however, we are not the source of our life, nor even of its continuance from one moment to the next. Life is a gift entrusted to us, and we do indeed owe fruits of gratitude and service, which we can never fully repay. On a merely human level, we owe our lives to our parents and others who have supported us, and to nature itself. To God, the ground of all Being, we owe an infinite debt.

We owe a return of fruit not only at the time of the harvest but at any time God may request it. Strikingly, in the parable, the emissaries of the landowner are sent not after the harvest, but "when *the time of the fruits came near*" (Matt. 21:34). In a sense, God expects fruit even before the fruit is ready because *the time of God's reaping is always NOW*. In the strange story of Jesus's encounter with a fig tree, Jesus curses the tree "because he found nothing on it but leaves" (Matt. 21:19). St. Mark's version offers this explanation, "for it was not the season for figs" (Mark 11:12). On a merely natural level, it is entirely unreasonable to expect fruit out of season. We do not, however, hear the parables of Jesus only on the literal level. We look for strange details and narrative tension. God will reap when God will reap.

What does God want from his beloved vineyard, his pleasant planting, to use words from the prophet Isaiah? To begin, God wants justice, not bloodshed; righteousness, not a cry. God wants a human community in which God is honored, and human beings respected for their inherent dignity. And to secure this hope, God wants some things done, and some things left undone. Things to do: God wants our exclusive worship. "I am the Lord your God" (Ex. 20:2). God wants humans, all living creatures, and the earth itself to have a time of rest. "Remember the Sabbath and keep it holy" (Ex. 20:8). God wants us to respect and honor our parents and elders. "Honor your father and mother" (Ex. 20:12). Things to leave undone: wrongful use of the name of God, murder, adultery, theft, bearing false witness, coveting your neighbor's house and household.

Human effort, however earnest, will not bring forth this fruit. God is at work in us and calling us to participate. "For as the earth brings forth its shoots, and as a garden causes what is sown in it to spring up, so the Lord GOD will cause righteousness and praise to spring up before all nations" (Isa. 61:11).

Look It Up

The Ten Commandments.

Think About It

Things done and left undone.

SUNDAY'S READINGS | 19 Pentecost, October 11

Ex. 32:1-14 [Isa. 25:1-9]; Ps. 106:1-6, 19-23 [Ps. 23]; Phil. 4:1-9; Matt. 22:1-14

Two Parties

You have been invited to a party. Should you go? You have not been compelled, but asked, so you have time to deliberate. Who is giving the party? What is the occasion?

Here is a party you should not attend, although the enticement of doing so may feel almost irresistible. It looks like a great party, but it is not. It begins with impatience. "When the people saw that Moses delayed to come down from the mountain, the people gathered around Aaron and said to him, 'Come, make gods for us, who shall go before us; as for this Moses, the man who brought us up out of the land of Egypt, we do not know what has become of him'" (Ex. 32:1). A new religion, a new festival, and a sumptuous meal ensue. "[Aaron] took the gold from them, formed it in a mold, and cast an image of a calf" (Ex. 32:4). "[The people] rose early the next day and offered burnt offerings and brought sacrifices of well-being; and the people sat down to eat and drink, and rose up to revel" (Ex. 32:6). We know what happened, and we know it can happen to anyone at any time. "They exchanged the truth about God for a lie and worshiped and served the creature rather than the Creator, who is blessed forever! Amen" (Rom. 1:25). The living Lord of heaven and earth is alone the source of all felicity. A party without God is to have the whole world and lose one's soul.

Here is a party you should attend but may refuse to do so. "The kingdom of heaven may be compared to a king who gave a wedding banquet for his son" (Matt. 22:2). Despite the honor of being invited by such a host to such an occasion, the guests would not come. Later, having been told that "everything is ready," they made light of the invitation and returned to work and business. Worst of all, they abused and killed the servants of the king who issued the invitation.

Orthodox theologian Alexander Schememann has diagnosed the problem. "Feast means *joy*. Yet, if there is something that we — the serious, adult, and frustrated Christians of the 20th century — look at with suspicion, it is certainly joy. How can one be joyful when so many people suffer? When so many things are to be done? How can one indulge in festivals and celebrations when people expect from us 'serious' answers to their problems? Consciously or subconsciously, Christians have accepted the whole ethos of our joy-less and business-minded culture" (*For the Life of the World*, p. 36).

There is a party at which the things of this world are not the idols of our affection. We ascend as if into heaven, we go where Christ is, we lift up our hearts. Yet, this party is not a repudiation of flesh and blood, family and business. It is, instead, a heavenly joy that permeates every temporal good.

Go to the party. Put on your wedding (baptismal) garment and enter into the joy of the Lord. Give voice to every creature under heaven.

Praise the Lord, all works of the Lord: all angels, waters above the firmament, all powers, sun and moon, stars of heaven, showers and dew, winds of God, fire and heat, winter and summer, frost and cold, ice and snow, nights and days, light and darkness, lightning and clouds, mountains and hills, green things upon the earth, seas and floods, whales and all that move in the waters, fowls of the air, beast and cattle, children of humanity, people of God, spirits and souls of the righteous.

God's world is a festival of praise!

Look It Up

A Song of Creation

Think About It

The joy of all creation.

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— The Rev. Dr. Kristine Blaess
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