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November 14, 2021

# THE LIVING CHURCH

## NEWS

- 4 Albany Postpones Vote on Marriage Canons  
By Kirk Petersen

## FEATURES

- 9 'Big Jim' — Franciscan mystic and Italian poet  
Jacopone da Todi | By Charles Hoffacker
- 10 Nebraska Parish, Yazidi Thrive in Long-Term  
Relationship | By Neva Rae Fox
- 16 Episcopal Stores Offer Gifts, Books Galore  
for the Holidays | By Mike Patterson
- 18 Two New Churches Celebrated in Bangladesh  
By Neva Rae Fox

## ETHICS

- 14 What's Wrong with Big Business?  
By Stewart Clem

## BOOKS

- 20 *Stewardship* | Review by Neal Michell
- 21 *Creating Financially Sustainable Congregations*  
and *We Aren't Broke* | Review by James W. Murphy
- 22 *Finding Abundance in Scarcity*  
Review by S. Thomas Kincaid III
- 24 *Crisis in Care*  
Review by Charleston David Wilson

## OTHER DEPARTMENTS

- 12 *De terra veritas*
- 26 People & Places
- 27 Sunday's Readings



### ON THE COVER

St. John's Church, Sridhampara, in the Church of Bangladesh, opens with great fanfare, many people, abundant music, and ecumenical prayers and blessings (p. 18).

Photo courtesy of the Church of Bangladesh



## Albany Postpones Vote on Marriage Canons

By Kirk Petersen

The Diocese of Albany has postponed action that would bring its rules on sexuality into compliance with the broader church. The postponement, at the annual convention on October 23, delays a conversation that will indicate how conservative the diocese will continue to be.

Albany was the last remaining domestic diocese where a bishop prohibited same-sex marriage rites. The Rt. Rev. William H. Love, who held the traditional view that marriage is a union of a man and a woman, resigned as Bishop of Albany earlier this year, and subsequently joined the Anglican Church in North America. He had been convicted after a lengthy disciplinary process of violating his vow of obedience to the church, by declining to conform to the General Convention's 2018 decision authorizing same-sex marriage rites wherever such marriages are legal.

The diocese is in the early stages of searching for a new bishop, and the person selected will face the challenge of bringing together the liberal and conservative factions of the diocese. Partisans on both sides are looking for indications of how conservative the next bishop may be.

The convention had been scheduled to consider two changes to the canons of the diocese. The first would have eliminated the canonical requirement that priests and deacons in the diocese must either be celibate or in a marriage between a man and a woman. The second would have eliminated a canon that explicitly prohibited the solemnization or blessing of any same-sex marriage or union.

But the measures were halted at the beginning of the convention, during consideration of a resolution author-

izing the convention to be held online, rather than in person.

The Rev. Richard Roessler, rector of Church of the Cross in Ticonderoga, New York, moved an amendment to prevent consideration of changes to the canons at an online convention. He and other same-sex marriage opponents argued that the online format inhibits the depth of deliberation necessary for something as important as a canonical change.

Same-sex marriage supporters responded that other important matters would be considered at the convention, and if the online format is inadequate, the convention should be adjourned. The Rev. Glen Michaels, priest in charge of five small congregations in the Adirondack Mountains, also argued that any healing process requires extensive conversation about the sources of conflict, and that debate over same-sex marriage would provide a forum to begin that conversation.

After more than 90 minutes of debate and procedural motions, the amendment barring votes on canonical changes was approved, 126 to 116. A subsequent motion to adjourn was defeated 161 to 78. There's no way to know which tally, if either, serves as a better proxy for overall sentiment on same-sex marriage, but it's clear there is substantial support for each side.

The votes were largely symbolic. The Rev. Scott Garno, president of the Standing Committee and rector of St. Stephen's in Delmar, told the convention that the diocesan canons on marriage and sexuality "conflict with the legislation of the Episcopal Church, and as such, are unenforceable." But he added that some in the diocese believe the canons "make an important statement about what the Diocese of Albany believes."

Michaels, who proposed the resolu-

tions to change the canons, told *TLC* he was disappointed that they had failed. He also said he was concerned that "if we recruit a bishop who is comfortable coming here with these resolutions on the books, we may end up selecting a bishop who can't gather enough votes from the standing committees of the other dioceses to become our new bishop."

## What to Do With a Multi-Million Dollar Surplus?

By Kirk Petersen

The Episcopal Church has the kind of problem you like to have: a huge budget surplus.

At its four-day meeting in Linthicum Heights, Maryland, the Executive Council learned that the church expects to end the year, and thus the 2019-21 triennium, with a surplus of just under \$16 million.

The problem is the optics. More than 80 percent of the church's revenue comes from the 109 dioceses, which are expected to send 15 percent of their income to the Church Center, or apply for a waiver. Some of the dioceses have been struggling financially for years, although Treasurer N. Kurt Barnes told the council that assessment payments from the dioceses are "in line with commitments" for 2021. The council recognized this reality in April, when it voted to make grants of \$40,000 to each diocese that applies.

"It wasn't a surplus because we were flush," said Presiding Bishop Michael B. Curry. "We tightened our belts dramatically." Virtually all travel was halted at the beginning of the pandemic, and the council was gathering in person for the first time since the beginning of the pandemic. When the

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General Convention was deferred for a year, so was most of the associated expense. After moving \$2.5 million in net costs for the July 2022 General Convention, the surplus drops to \$13.5 million.

In 2017, the Executive Council voted that when there is any surplus at the end of a triennium, 20 percent of it should be applied to short-term reserves, and 80 percent invested in the church's various trust funds — essentially, building the endowment. The Rev. Mally Lloyd, chair of the finance committee, told the council that the 20 percent, about \$2.7 million, was applied to the short-term reserves. But because the reserves already were funded at a prudent level of three months operating expenses, \$2.3 million was transferred from reserves to balance the 2022 budget.

That leaves \$10.8 million to be invested under the 80-20 rule — but the discussion revealed there is little appetite for burying all that money in a trust fund. It was noted that the 2017 council had not anticipated a pandemic, and that a rule made by Executive Council can be changed by Executive Council.

“This is an opportunity to do something with what we have, because we tightened our belts dramatically,” Curry said. He and others said the money could be used, for example, for the church's core priorities of evangelism, racial reconciliation, and care of creation; or for a truth and reconciliation fund related to the church's role in Indigenous boarding schools, as was discussed in a previous plenary session; or for rebates to churches or dioceses.

Russ Randle, a lawyer and frequent voice of prudence on the council, urged his colleagues to “spend at least 75 percent of the so-called surplus, don't reinvest it. This is the time to put the chips on the table. We've come through some pretty horrific events as a country and as a world. Let's act like we're in an urgent situation and put the money where we say it belongs.”

The council passed the one-year budget for 2022 without resolving how to deal with the investment part of the surplus. That will be considered along

with the 2023-2024 budget at the council's January meeting in Cleveland. President of the House of Deputies Gay Clark Jennings, who lives in a Cleveland suburb, closed the meeting by warning the council to dress warmly for January in Cleveland.

## Council Focuses on Indigenous Boarding Schools

By Kirk Petersen

The Executive Council is continuing to explore the history of the Episcopal Church with Indian boarding schools, which were part of a government program of forced assimilation in the late 19th and early 20th centuries.

The council is meeting in person for the first time since the beginning of the pandemic, gathering October 25-28 at the Maritime Conference Center in Linthicum Heights, Maryland, on land that was taken from the Piscataway and Susquehannock people, as council member Sarah Stonesifer noted in introducing the discussion on boarding schools.

The council is working to fulfill a mandate to deliver to next summer's General Convention a comprehensive plan for addressing the church's legacy of Indigenous boarding schools. The ambitious goal was set in a public state-



Carlisle Indian boarding school pupils in Pennsylvania (circa 1900) Wikimedia Commons

ment on July 12 by the presiding officers of Executive Council: Presiding Bishop Michael B. Curry and President of the House of Deputies Gay Clark Jennings.

The Rev. Dr. Bradley Hauff, missionary for Indigenous ministries and an enrolled member of the Oglala Sioux Tribe, told the council that “both of my parents were raised in Indigenous boarding schools.” He said his father was raised in a school run by the federal government, and his mother in St. Mary's Episcopal School for Indian Girls in Springfield, South Dakota. Most of the major Christian denominations operated Indian boarding schools with government funding. The large majority were run by the Roman Catholic Church, but Hauff said there were at least nine Episcopal boarding schools.


“We don't even know how many Indigenous boarding schools the Episcopal Church operated,” Hauff said. It has “long since been time for us to come to terms with this. This is a beginning, I'm privileged and feel blessed to be a part of it, as I know my

(Continued on next page)

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(Continued from previous page)

colleagues do as well.”

The colleagues he referred to also addressed the council: the Rev. Isaiah Shaneequa Brokenleg, staff officer for racial reconciliation and an enrolled member of the Rosebud Sioux Tribe (Sicangu Nation), and the Rev. Canon Mary Crist, Indigenous theological education coordinator and enrolled member of the Blackfeet (Amskapi Pikuni).

All three staffers have been hired since 2018. The church’s increasing focus on Indigenous matters took on added urgency this year after horrific stories emerged of abuse and unmarked graves at Indian boarding schools in Canada and the United States. For nearly a century, the government took hundreds of thousands of Indian children from their families, often by force, and placed them in schools designed to suppress their Indian heritage and instill European-

American culture and customs.

Brokenleg emphasized that “cultural DNA is passed on to future generations,” but the boarding schools were designed to interrupt that process. “Even though the boarding schools are gone, and the government policies have gotten better, that negative stuff is getting passed on — the abuse, the suicide, addiction, the hopelessness, all of that stuff.” She said people sometimes ask her “‘this was so long ago, why can’t you just get over it.’ This is why you cannot just get over it. Until you heal that cultural DNA, it is going to continue to perpetuate.”

Despite Jesus’ admonition to forgive one’s enemies, “we’re not just going to go out and forgive history that was genocidal,” Crist said. “We are called to recognize the pain of the past,” she said, citing the truth and reconciliation commissions in South Africa as an example of a path to healing. “Everybody was injured in it, not just the native people. The colonizers were injured in this as well. And why is that? Well from the native perspective it’s because harmony was disrupted among God’s people.”

## Bishops in Ghana Endorse Anti-Gay Bill

By Kirk Petersen

The House of Bishops of the Anglican Church in Ghana has endorsed the passage of a proposed law that would subject anyone who self-identifies as LGBTQ to a prison term of up to five years, according to reports in the Ghanaian news media.

“Advocating for LGBQ+ rights would also be illegal under the bill, with activists facing [between] five and 10 years of jail sentences,” the reports said. The penalties for self-identification and advocacy are as strong or stronger than the five years prescribed for consensual same-sex physical acts.

The Ghana News Agency reported that a statement advocating for the bill was signed by the Most Rev. Dr. Cyril Kobina Ben-Smith, metropolitan archbishop of the Internal Province of Ghana, which is part of the Anglican

Province of West Africa.

“The support of the church for the Anti-LGBTQI Bill is borne out of the belief that the practice is unbiblical and ungodly,” the statement said. “We see LGBTQI as unrighteousness in the sight of God and therefore will do anything within our powers and mandate to ensure that the bill comes into fruition.”

“Leviticus 20:13 clearly declares that, a male lying with a fellow male is an abomination and punishable by death,” the statement said.

Despite calling for criminal penalties for LGBTQ identification and advocacy, “the church does not condemn persons of homosexuality tendencies but absolutely condemn the sinful acts and activities they perform,” the statement said, adding that LGBTQ supporters should not be harassed or subjected to violence, “but rather, see them as potential souls to be won for Christ.”

“We will gladly open our counselling and support centres for the needed transformation services required by these persons or groups,” the statement said.

*The Telegraph* of London reported that, according to some critics, the proposed law “could be the most draconian anti-LGBTQ legislation on earth.”

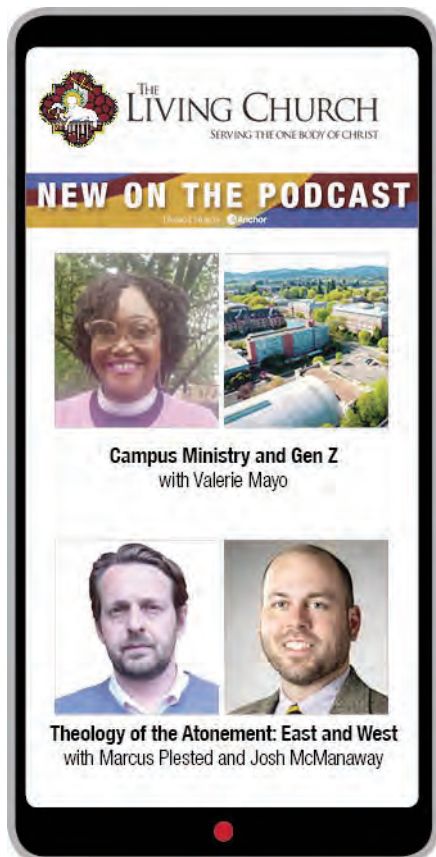
Several days after the news broke, Archbishop of Canterbury Justin Welby issued a statement reminding the Anglican Church in Ghana that the primates of the Anglican Communion have repeatedly opposed criminalization of LGBTQ people.

“We are a global family of churches, but the mission of the church is the same in every culture and country: to demonstrate, through its actions and words, God’s offer of unconditional love to every human being through Jesus Christ,” he said.

## Bishops Roundup

By Kirk Petersen

Five weeks after the Rt. Rev. Prince Singh announced he would step down as Bishop of Rochester, he has been nomi-



[Livingchurch.org/podcast](https://Livingchurch.org/podcast)

nated as the sole candidate for bishop provisional for the dioceses of **Eastern Michigan and Western Michigan**.

The two Michigan dioceses will hold an up-or-down vote on the nomination at a joint annual convention October 29-30, and if approved Singh would move to Michigan in February 2022. His last day leading the Diocese of Rochester will be February 2, the 14th anniversary of his election as bishop.

Also on October 30, the annual convention of the Diocese of Rochester will vote on ratifying the nomination of the Rt. Rev. Stephen T. Lane to serve as bishop provisional upon Singh's departure. Lane retired as Bishop of Maine in 2019. The Standing Committee announced Lane's nomination on October 5, less than three weeks after Singh announced he would leave.

While it may seem like changes are happening at breakneck speed (by diocesan standards), the timeline actually is a bit more sedate than it may appear. Singh said he had been in discussions for some time with the Standing Committee about his plans to retire, before making a public announcement September 16.

And at the time he was elected Bishop of Maine, Lane was serving as canon for deployment and ministry development for the Diocese of Rochester, making him a familiar candidate for bishop provisional.

Still, time has been fleeting. "I didn't expect that something like this would come up so quickly, but it did," Singh told *TLC* by telephone, referring to the Michigan opportunity. "And so I trust in the Spirit, and I trust in the guidance and leadership of our presiding bishop and his staff, so I said I would be open to it. So here we are."

The dioceses of Western Michigan and Eastern Michigan agreed to share a bishop and other staff in 2019, an arrangement that could lead to a reunion. Western Michigan was spun off from the Diocese of Michigan in 1874, and Eastern Michigan was created in 1994. The Rt. Rev. Wayne Hoagland was serving both dioceses when he was suspended in June 2020

after admitting to an extramarital affair. He resigned in June 2021 as he neared the end of his suspension.

The Standing Committee said that while the two dioceses continue discerning their future, "Bishop Singh would serve both Eastern and Western Michigan on a full-time basis for a period of up to 3-5 years." A bishop provisional has all the authority and privileges of a bishop diocesan, but does not have tenure.

There are four dioceses in the state of Michigan. The others are Northern Michigan, which serves the geographically isolated Upper Peninsula, and Michigan, which serves Detroit and nearby counties.

It has been an eventful year for Singh, who in May escaped uninjured when a fire destroyed his home in suburban Perinton, New York.

"It happened so quickly, I was inside the house, on a Zoom call, and heard some crackling noise, so I went to check," Singh said. "I realized it was coming from the garage, and when I opened the garage door, it was already fully enflamed." He added, "the insurance company suspects that it was a lithium battery that self-combusted."

Singh left the house carrying only his cell phone, his laptop, and his guitar, which had been sitting next to the front door.

"All my vestments were destroyed, including my crozier," he said. "The presiding bishop sent me his spare vestments that week, I was so moved."

Ironically, the Sunday after the fire was Pentecost — when tongues of fire appeared above the heads of the disciples. "I didn't have to preach, I just had to show up," he said with a laugh.

### Upper South Carolina

The Very Rev. Daniel P. Richards was elected the IX Bishop of Upper South Carolina at a special convention on September 25, the diocese announced. Richards, an Arizona priest and former Baptist minister, was elected on the fifth ballot from a slate of five candidates.

The bishop-elect currently serves as rector of Christ Church of the Ascension in Paradise Valley, Arizona, and as dean of the East Phoenix Deanery of the Diocese of Arizona, which encompasses most of the state.

Richards grew up in Mississippi and Tennessee before moving to Phoenix with his family for his high school years. He graduated from Grand Canyon University in 1994, and in

(Continued on next page)



Singh



Richards



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1996 was ordained a minister in the Southern Baptist Convention. He promptly left the Baptist church to become a youth and young adult coordinator for the Diocese of Arizona, and was confirmed as an Episcopalian in 1997. He graduated from the Church Divinity School of the Pacific in Berkeley, Calif., in 2003, and was ordained that same year as a deacon and later a priest.

The other candidates were:

The Rev. Furman L. Buchanan, rector, St. Peter's Episcopal Church, Greenville, in the Diocese of Upper South Carolina

The Rev. D. Seth Donald, rector, St. Michael and All Angels Episcopal Church, Lake Charles, in the Diocese of Western Louisiana

The Rev. Lonnie Lacy, rector, St. Anne's Episcopal Church, Tifton, in the Diocese of Georgia

The Rev. R. Jemonde Taylor, rector, St. Ambrose Episcopal Church, Raleigh, in the Diocese of North Carolina

It was a rare all-male slate of candidates, in an era when all-female slates have become more common.

Assuming he receives the necessary consents from a majority of diocesan bishops and standing committees, Richards will be consecrated Bishop of Upper South Carolina on February 26, 2022. He will succeed the Rt. Rev. W. Andrew Waldo, who has served since 2010.

The Diocese of Upper South Car-

olina includes 59 churches with 22,000 members, and serves the northwest half of the state, with the Diocese of South Carolina serving the remainder.

## Haiti Described as 'Failed State'

By Kirk Petersen

Executive Council members heard a sobering assessment of the chaotic situation in Haiti, home to one of the largest dioceses in the Episcopal Church. "The church is functioning in a civil society that many characterize as a failed state," said the Rt. Rev. Todd Ousley, who oversees the church's relationship with the Caribbean nation.

Director of Government Relations Rebecca Blachly ticked off the recent woes of the poorest country in the Western Hemisphere:

President Jovenel Moïse was assassinated in July.

"There hadn't been elections for more than five years, there was a dissolved parliament," she said. "The Supreme Court no longer has a quorum because several justices died of COVID," and justices cannot be replaced without a parliament.

The government is headed by Prime Minister Ariel Henry, "who many believe is not in place through any constitutional or legal process."

The island has been hit by natural disasters, including an earthquake and tropical storm flooding.

The country has the lowest vaccination rate in the Western Hemisphere

— yet recently had to return 250,000 doses to the United States, because of distribution problems and vaccine hesitancy.

"The security situation continues to deteriorate, as we saw in the case of the kidnapped missionaries [earlier this month], there's widespread gang violence, gang-controlled areas, and increased numbers of kidnappings."

There are shortages of food, gas, and electricity, and the security situation inhibits relief efforts.

Ousley said Haiti is "a proud diocese with a rich history of very effective ministry and engagement, not only on the typical church issues, but in social ministries, feeding and housing for the poor, and perhaps most significantly, provision of education at all levels within the society."

Unfortunately, the dysfunction in society is echoed in the polity of the church, where "there seem to be irreconcilable conflicts between factions" among both clergy and laity, Ousley said. The diocese held an election for a new bishop in June 2018, but the election was voided after a church court found irregularities that rendered the election "deeply flawed."

One bright spot he noted is the Standing Committee, which has functioned as the ecclesiastical authority. "They are not always in agreement with each other, but I have to say, by and large they have done a remarkable job of providing direction and leadership," Ousley said.

There's very little that the council can do to improve the situation in Haiti, especially given the country's distrust of outsiders, the United States in particular. "The Haitians are very clear that they want Haitian solutions to Haitian challenges," Ousley said. There is a coalition of groups in the country called the Commission for a Haitian Solution to the Crisis, and the council passed a resolution expressing support for the commission and pledging to "stand alongside our Haitian relatives in the Episcopal Diocese of Haiti and throughout The Episcopal Church, pray with them, and aim to listen and better engage our Haitian relatives to ensure that the Church and people can flourish."



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# ‘Big Jim’

## Franciscan mystic and Italian poet Jacopone da Todi

By Charles Hoffacker

**B**orn Jacopo Benedetti and known by several variants of his name, Jacopone da Todi (c.1230-1306) is well remembered in his Italian homeland, especially in the Umbrian city of Todi, where he spent almost all of his life. He is little known in the English-speaking world except through a trio of major works. The first is Evelyn Underhill’s groundbreaking spiritual biography, *Jacopone da Todi* (1919). The other two were published 60 years later: *The Fool of God: Jacopone da Todi* (1980) by George T. Peck and *Jacopone da Todi: The Lauds* (1982) translated by Serge and Elizabeth Hughes, a volume in the Classics of Western Spirituality series. All three books include biographical and historical information and translations of at least some of Jacopone’s nearly 100 lauds. This body of vernacular poetry illustrated many moments in the spiritual journey and contributed to the foundations of Italian theater.

Jacopone’s life is a drama in its own right. A native of Todi and well-educated at a time when few people were, he worked until his late 30s as a successful and worldly notary, a profession far more wide-ranging and lucrative than the title suggests today. In 1268, shortly after their marriage, his wife, Donna Vanna, died in an accident, apparently the collapse of a balcony. Some versions of this story relate that only upon inspection of her body before burial did he discover that under her beautiful gown she wore the rough hair shirt of a penitent.

The death of Donna Vanna prompted Jacopone’s radical conversion from indulgence to a life of deep penitence. The old Jacopone was broken not simply by grief, but also by

contrition for the selfishness he had long embodied. This once respectable and wealthy man spent the next 10 years wandering as a holy fool in his hometown among people who had once known him as a different person. He received — perhaps from the mockeries of children — the name Jacopone, meaning Big Jim or Crazy Jim, in place of his original name, Jacopo.

Around 1278 Jacopone sought admission to the new and growing Franciscan order. Francis had been active in nearby Assisi until his death in 1226. Severe tensions subsequently arose among his followers about the practice of poverty. The Spirituals insisted on rigorous adherence to the founder’s absolute insistence on poverty, while the Conventuals supported a mitigation of this original emphasis for the sake of effective mission.

Jacopone belonged to the Spirituals. He became a leader in the movement. Despite his education, he never sought

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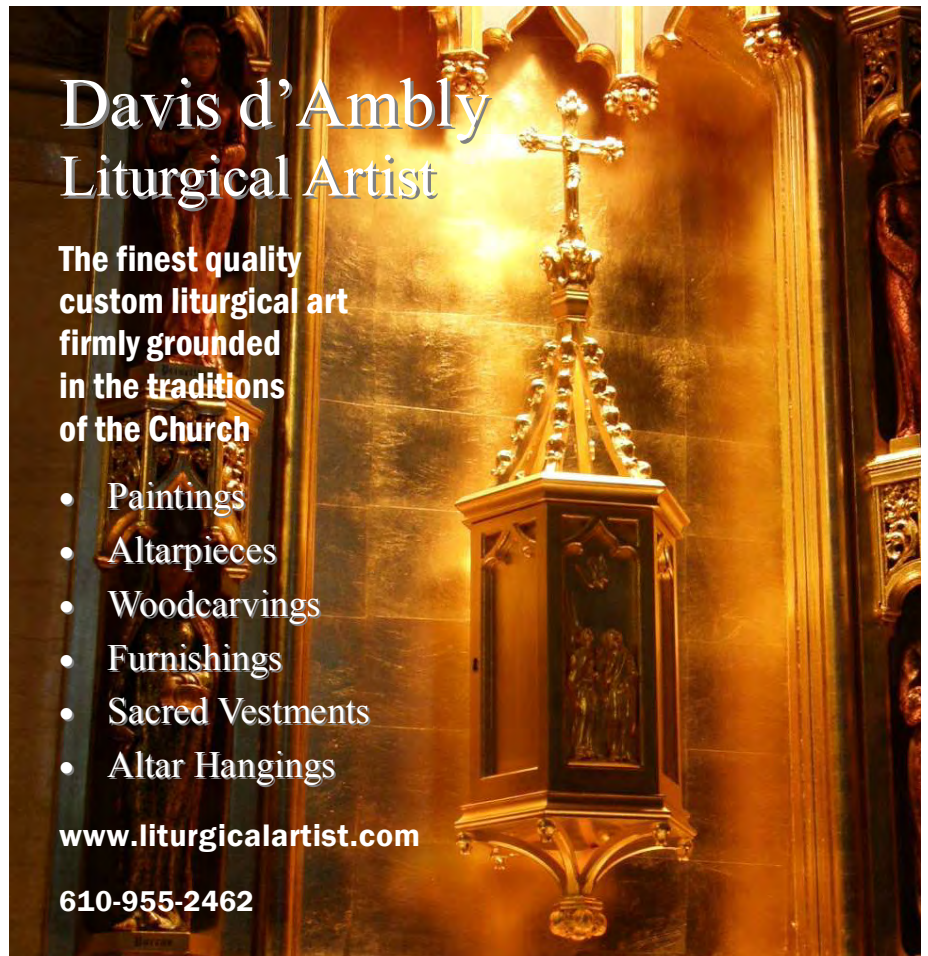
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# The Grandma Program



Geoff Strehlow illustration from snapshot

## Nebraska Parish, Yazidi Thrive in Long-Term Relationship

By Neva Rae Fox

A long-established relationship continues to thrive between a Lincoln, Nebraska, Episcopal parish and a non-Christian minority community that has faced worldwide discrimination and genocide.

The Yazidis are an ancient community originally from the Middle Eastern area of Iraq, Iran, Syria, and Tukey. The Yazidis are Kurdish, not Muslim, which has been a source of

confusion and derision for centuries. In August 2014, the Yazidi faced genocide by ISIS, with a reported 7,000-plus men, women, and children killed. As a result of this terror, thousands fled the Middle East to start their lives in exile, including to the United States.

At 97 square miles, Lincoln is a sprawling state capital boasting a university, museums, and a well-known children's zoo. With a population of about 284,000 people, Lincoln has become home to the largest Yazidi

community in North America, which, at 3,000, is still growing.

*The Living Church* has reported on the relationship between St. Matthew's and the Yazidi, most recently in a 2017 article.

St. Matthew's ministry and relationship with the Yazidi community began in 2015 when parishioners were challenged to help their new neighbors.

"We started with a meal," parishioner Linda Rabbe said. That first simple connection grew to meetings,

# “We want to do what is good for our Yazidi friends, and not just what makes us feel good.”

—The Rev. Amanda Gott

educational opportunities (such as English as a Second Language), and community events.

“We had the space,” parishioner Dick Quinn said. “We had classrooms for individual groups. It became better than education — it became social and fun.”

An important program evolved, named the Grandma Program. “The Grandma Program drew Yazidi women together to learn the language, reading and literacy, and especially learning to drive,” said the Rev. Amanda Gott, rector. “The other curriculum that couldn’t be written down is the building of community: eat together, be together, get out of the apartment, laugh together.”

Quinn said Lincoln’s sprawling geography kept Yazidi women from seeing each other regularly. “They didn’t live in the same part of the city, so what they had in common was St. Mathew’s.”

St. Matthew’s recently continued its longstanding support of Yazidi with a \$2,3000 donation devoted to improvements to their cemetery.

“When the Grandma Project started, St. Matthew’s received a generous grant from Diocese of Nebraska,” Gott said. “When the pandemic came and the Grandma Project came to a crashing halt, we had some funds. We wanted to honor the intent of the gifts to support and love the Yazidi community.”

Establishing a cemetery was not easy, Gott said. “The cemetery is outside Lincoln city limits. It is a rural area and a conservative area. There was resistance.”

“It’s a really big deal that there is a Yazidi cemetery in Lincoln,” she said. “Lincoln has the largest Yazidi community in North America. It is meant to be a Yazidi cemetery for all Yazidi

folks in this country and Canada. Having a cemetery means that you can bury your family with your own prayers, your own traditions, customs, and rites.”

The funds enhanced the cemetery with trees and flowering bushes.

“We are thankful to be a part of it,” Quinn said.

Despite the close connections the two communities share, Rabbe and Gott stressed that proselytizing was never part of St. Matthew’s efforts.

“We were very clear that we were not there to convert them,” Gott said. “The Yazidi tradition predates Jesus Christ. It is beautiful, ancient, noble, rich, and meaningful. It is not our place to convert them. That would be a breach of trust.”

Rabbe said, “We didn’t want them to make feel that they had to join the Christian community.”


COVID-19 has prevented the Grandma Project and other ministries from gathering, but that has not diminished the relationship.

“There has been a pandemic, and nobody knows what is going to happen,” Gott said. “We want to do what is good for our Yazidi friends, and not just what makes us feel good.”

In the meantime, the Episcopal Diocese of Nebraska’s Annual Council provided more support on October 21. “Bishop J. Scott Barker decided and announced that the offertory from the Festive Eucharist would be donated to the nonprofit organization in Lincoln that stewards the Yazidi cemetery, for continuing improvements and maintenance of the cemetery property,” Gott reported. “People at council were extremely generous — the offering was over \$1,800, and a check has been sent for the Yazidi cemetery.” □

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*De terra veritas*

# The Soul of Philanthropy

Back in June, billionaire investor Warren Buffett announced that he was resigning as a trustee of the Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation. Buffett, who is 90, gave no particular reason for his decision, and said he will continue his substantial contributions to the foundation's work. But the announcement came about a month after the Gateses announced their pending divorce and revelations surfaced about Bill Gates's sexual harassment of a member of his staff.

Trustees resign from foundations all the time, but the Gates Foundation, which holds \$49.8 billion in assets (a number higher than the GDP of around 125 of the world's nations), has had only three trustees for years: Buffett and the two now-divorcing Gateses. Bill and Melinda subsequently announced plans for negotiating leadership of the foundation during the next two years, and for adding additional independent trustees to the board.

The Gates Foundation has done an astounding level of good since being launched in 2000. Bill Gates is the world's most generous philanthropist, hands down; by the age of 44, he had given away four times as much, in real terms, as John D. Rockefeller did in his entire life. Programs supported by the foundation's grants have made major strides in eradicating polio and malaria, enhancing crop productivity, and developing non-sewered sanitation systems, among many ambitious projects.

But the foundation has also made some major missteps, especially in its quickly abandoned effort to overhaul public education in several of America's most troubled cities. The Gates #metoo-type scandal raises another series of questions about reputation whitewashing, and even the possibility that the foundation's largesse, like that of the opioid-crisis plagued

Sacklers, could be viewed as tainted money.

As Paul Valley documents extensively in his massive and magisterial *Philanthropy from Aristotle to Zuckerberg*, the successes and liabilities of the Gates Foundation's work are characteristic of the "philanthrocapitalists" who play an outsized role in contemporary philanthropy, as the ranks of the super-rich have grown worldwide. The Gates Foundation searches for interventions that effectively address high-profile humanitarian issues, like malaria or poor sanitation. It pours massive amounts of money into the interventions, and then scales up the response using best practices from the business world. It doesn't just seek to help polio sufferers, but to eliminate polio — and programs supported by its work have cut worldwide case rates by 99.9 percent in the last 30 years.

Some criticize the foundation's penchant for quick, measurable, tech-driven interventions over systemic problems. It funded, for example, an Indian vaccine campaign that used two million staff administering 170 million polio shots to Indian children in two days, but largely ignored needs for healthcare infrastructure and solutions to chronic diseases. The foundation's agricultural solution for Africa focuses on genetically modified seeds and synthetic fertilizers, forcing subsistence farmers into Western-style cultivation while ignoring a global trade regime that makes it more difficult for poorer countries to compete.

Others worry about the disproportional influence wielded by the foundation in the areas where it chooses to intervene, and that a tendency toward groupthink and hidden decision-making stifles the exchange of views that could ultimately result in more effective solutions. A top civil servant responsible for an East African country's health ministry, when asked

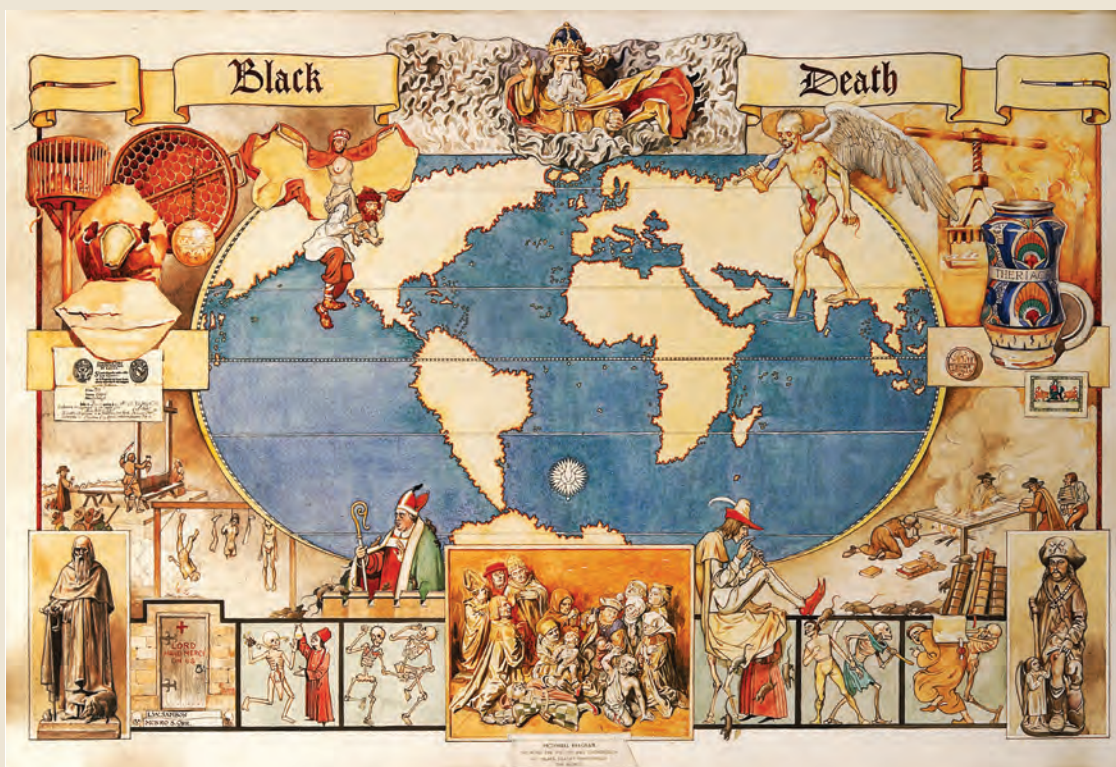
what his country's health priorities would be in five years' time, reportedly said, "Don't ask me, ask Bill Gates."

Valley points out that, while the scale of Bill Gates's philanthropy may be groundbreaking, his approach is characteristic of one of the West's oldest strains of thought about giving. The ancient Greeks and Romans were impressed by lavish gift giving and lifted up constructing public buildings and sponsoring festivals as a sign of civic-mindedness and an opportunity for the giver to gain honor for himself. The ancient pagans, with a few excep-

*A different tradition emerged out of Judaism, with its emphasis on God's generosity and the creation of all in his image.*

tions, found the poor revolting, hardly worthy of gift giving, and the bread and circuses doled out strategically by the state were mostly a means of social control.

A different tradition emerged out of Judaism, with its emphasis on God's generosity and the creation of all in his image. Israel's laws sought to secure their dignity and those who could give were obliged to do so, for the good of their own souls and the unity of God's people. A complex set of social institutions aimed at relieving the most vulnerable grew up in Jewish communities in the centuries just before Christ, as did the notion of redemptive almsgiving: that giving for the poor atones for sin and secures God's favor, a concept assumed by Jesus' teaching on the subject in the Sermon on the Mount.



The Black Death  
Watercolor by Monro S. Orr  
via Wikimedia Commons

The early Christians were formed by this Jewish tradition, eventually brokering a *modus vivendi* between the Church and the earlier pagan ways as the Church became the West's most socially formative institution. The benefactions that had once built hippodromes and sponsored tragedies now financed parish churches, monasteries, and a complex system of charitable institutions, focused mostly on the poor, who were valued as God's special friends, powerful in their intercession.

Most Westerners, Valley points out, understand this medieval social system through Protestant polemics about buying salvation and Enlightenment worries over haphazard organization. Most modern Western philanthropists have kept the Christian emphasis on caring for the poor, but see them more as problems to be solved than as fellow sufferers.

Most have also wanted to keep an old Roman grip on the causes for which their money is spent, and to earn a name in the civic record for themselves. Americans especially seem to think that philanthropists can solve problems, tied up in the myths they tell about their rise to success. Andrew Carnegie, the union-busting industrialist turned philanthropist whom Gates claims as his personal hero, built thousands of libraries to help enterprising poor boys study their way to the top. But Carnegie was a social

Darwinist with a pagan contempt for the indigent, and a disinclination to support religious colleges until they severed church ties. Gates, the garage tinkerer turned business whiz, is characteristically sure that more research and carefully calibrated delivery systems will answer our greatest problems. If it worked for him, why wouldn't it work for everything else?

Valley believes that the cure for much of what ails contemporary philanthropy is a recovery of the democratic, humble approach of the Judeo-Christian tradition, transposed into a secular idiom. He lifts up person-to-person crowdfunding (which saw a big boost during the pandemic) and reciprocal philanthropy projects that emphasize open dialogue with those who receive assistance and carefully monitor long-term effects. He evenhandedly notes that Bill Gates, under Melinda's influence, has become much more ready to listen and to change course in recent years, though the pending divorce may make this less likely in the future.

An epilogue charts some possible ways that the pandemic might shift philanthropy. Writing a few months into the crisis, Valley was hopeful about a rekindled sense of social solidarity, and anticipated a reckoning with the abuse of social power that drove much of 2020's racial justice movement.

He also grimly notes that another worldwide pandemic, the Black Death, decisively altered Western philanthropy, in ways that hardly bred reconciliation in the wake of shared suffering. The Black Death effectively shattered Western Christendom's infrastructure for dealing with the sick and suffering. Though some were moved to repent and return to the Lord, a secular spirit prevailed.

The plague's high death toll led to dramatic increases in wages, and a much greater suspicion of the poor, a scorn of begging, and the development of complex systems to prove their worthiness and set them marching out of public assistance. The medieval love for God's little poor ones had grown cold long before it was subjected to Protestant critique.

In the wake of the Great Resignation, with nearly constant grumbling about the difficulty of finding low-wage workers, we may well be heading in exactly the wrong direction. If recession still lies ahead, will the poor be blamed yet again? This moment pleads for deeper attention to what Valley calls "the soul of philanthropy." Christian witness, drawing from the deep wells of biblical teaching, can play a timely and dynamic role in the current crisis, blessing the poor and reconciling humanity anew.

—Mark Michael

# What's Wrong with Big Business?

By Stewart Clem

Remember when Amazon was an online bookstore? You can still buy books on Amazon, of course, because you can buy just about everything there. But what was once simply a place where you could save a few dollars off the retail price of the latest John Grisham novel has now become a ubiquitous fixture of life in America. Amazon doesn't just sell us stuff—it has woven itself into our home life with its artificial intelligence (personified as “Alexa,” named after the library in Alexandria, the most comprehensive and magnificent in the ancient world), and it fills our roadways with its fleet of delivery vehicles. If Amazon has its way, it will soon be filling our skies with delivery drones and roaming throughout our homes with its robots (currently named “Vesta,” after the ancient Roman goddess of the hearth—notice a theme here?). It's difficult, if not impossible, to imagine life in the 21st century without Amazon.

And then there's Facebook. Like Amazon, Facebook is technically a private business. Sure, it's a publicly traded company, but it's not a public utility or a government service. But this doesn't stop people from decrying Facebook's practices of censoring and manipulating information. Why? Maybe it's because about one-third of Americans get their news from Facebook. If Facebook can decide what you read and how it's shared, the net effect isn't all that different from government censorship. Facebook is so ubiquitous that those who choose not to engage it must “opt out.” In today's society, not having a Facebook profile is almost an act of rebellion. If you're a business, not

having a Facebook profile is basically a death wish.

As much as we might bemoan these corporate behemoths, we tend to accept their presence as the natural outcome of free enterprise. Businesses are supposed to *grow*, right? Isn't that the point? If you've ever watched *Shark Tank*, you're familiar with the basic pattern: John and Jane Entrepreneur invent a product that meets a perceived need. “Need” is simply defined by whether people will



pay money for the product, whether that product is something like Pet Paint (spray paint that allows you to turn your pet into a work of art) or DrumPants (you guessed it: a pair of pants that can be played like drums). Their market research reveals that customers are willing to pay up to a certain price for this product. They manufacture the product in small numbers, and sales indicate there is larger demand.

To meet this demand, the Entrepreneurs need help. One or more investors (the “sharks”) offer to loan money to the Entrepreneurs, usually in return for a share of company ownership. What matters most is that the company's concept is scalable. Sure, some sharks will only invest in products they personally “believe” in, but this is never a sufficient condition in itself. On *Shark Tank*, businesses exist to generate wealth, and generating wealth requires increasing production and increasing profits.

Most of us assume that this is just what business *is*. While circumstances

have changed throughout the centuries, and technological advances have opened new horizons for commerce, we take for granted that this is the way the economy has always worked. But this assumption reveals our historical amnesia. For starters, the fact that we think of the market as the essence of the economy is a modern innovation. We need economic historians like Karl Polanyi to remind us that the economy was not always controlled by markets. Whereas today we tend to think of the economy as exchanges within the market, Polanyi demonstrates in his classic work, *The Great Transformation*, that “gain and profit made on exchange never before played an important part of human economy.” Every society possesses an economy of some sort, but *oikonomia* (the Greek word from which the English *economy* is derived) simply used to refer to the way in which a society strives to meet the material needs of its members.

As G.K. Chesterton reminds us, “In all normal civilizations the trader existed and must exist. But in all normal civilizations the trader was the exception; certainly he was never the rule; and most certainly he was never the ruler. The predominance which he has gained in the modern world is the cause of all the disasters of the modern world.”

Our lack of historical awareness is also tied to our inability to imagine the economy as anything other than it is today. When Americans debate economic issues, we find ourselves trapped in the binary of “the free market” versus “state intervention.” One side points to the tendency of unrestricted markets to increase countries' GDP; the other side points to the tendency of welfare states to increase the overall well-being of their citizens. Whether we realize it or not,

this binary reveals our commitment to the creeds of neoliberalism. The market and the government are two discrete, powerful entities, rather like King Kong and Godzilla. If you're a right-leaning neoliberal, you hope these two beasts will never come near each other; if you're a left-leaning neoliberal, you hope one will be able to subdue the other.

But what we never do is question whether we have let the market become something it should never have become: a beast.

What is the proper size of a market? The question sounds absurd. Surely whoever asks such a question must not understand basic economic principles. We think this because we are moderns. The ancients would have considered it foolish *not* to ask such questions. Aristotle once wrote that there is a "due measure of magnitude" for things, ranging from animals, plants, and tools to city-states, and when one of these things is too small or too large, it will be defective and in some cases will lose its true nature.

Channeling Aristotle, the economist E.F. Schumacher insisted that the question of the proper scale of things is "the most neglected subject in modern society." His best known book, *Small Is Beautiful: A Study of Economics as if People Mattered*, first published in 1973, is frequently dismissed today as nostalgic and naive. It's unfortunate that people only associate his work with 1960s counterculture, the Green Party, the *Whole Earth Catalog*, and other movements whose cultural moment has passed. The roots of Schumacher's economic philosophy are deeply Catholic, and I think a rediscovery of his work is in order. At the very least, it might lead us to ask the kinds of questions that we didn't even know we could ask about the economy and its role in our lives.

The problem with the outsize role of the market in our lives is not simply that it leads to exploitation, unjust wages, environmental degradation, or mass-produced goods of poor quality. These are serious problems, but in another sense they're red herrings. Advocates of the market economy will propose solutions to these isolated problems and point to large corporations that are doing far better than others on each of

these scores. Their left-leaning critics will advocate for increasing the minimum wage and promoting corporate social responsibility. And thus begins another King Kong vs. Godzilla debate.

The problem with big business is not reducible to the harmful side effects it has brought about. The problem with big business is its very ubiquity.

When the market is accepted as the essence of *oikonomia*, trade becomes the heart of society. "When God looked on

**We must ask God  
to renew our minds.  
Because clearly we have  
failed to imagine what  
a humane economy  
might look like.**

created things and saw that they were good," Chesterton explains, "it meant that they were good in themselves and as they stood; but by the modern mercantile idea, God would only have looked at them and seen that they were The Goods." When we abandon the question "What is the proper place of the market in human society?" we cease to reflect on the order of creation. We assume that the market economy is what naturally emerges when human beings freely and rationally interact with one another in society.

As I've already suggested, this claim rests on a false historical narrative. It also rests on an anthropology that is incompatible with Christianity. Before you dismiss this as mere hyperbole from an overzealous moral theologian, consider the words of one of the foremost champions of free-market economics, Ludwig von Mises: "A living Christianity cannot exist side by side with, and within, Capitalism." Mises claims that the teachings of Jesus demonstrate a failure to understand that people cooperate socially "because this best serves their own interests. Neither love nor charity nor any other sympathetic sentiment but rightly understood selfishness is what originally

impelled man to adjust himself to the requirements of society." This Enlightenment anthropology insists that human flourishing consists in maximizing individual interests (whatever they happen to be) rather than an end that is inscribed in the very nature of humanity.

For economists like Mises, human society and the market are coterminous. Yet, as Christians, we must acknowledge that something has gone horribly wrong when questions like "What is the proper size of the market?" or "When is a business too big?" are no longer intelligible. A business is too big when it becomes something more than a "business." In other words, when it becomes something that humans must serve rather than something that serves human society. This happens all too often in an economy that has become synonymous with the market.

You'll notice that I've come nowhere close to proposing a solution to this problem. The predicament I've described is not one that lends itself to five practical steps. We cannot retreat to the past, as if we could undo the creation of the modern world, nor can we create the false utopia of John Lennon's "Imagine," where there are no possessions. But this does not mean we must accept the status quo.

What we must do is renew our minds. Rather, we must ask God to renew our minds. Because clearly we have failed to imagine what a humane economy might look like. To imagine such an economy will require the *metanoia* spoken of in the New Testament—a total conversion of our thought patterns. Make no mistake: I am not suggesting that this is a 'heart problem' that will be solved when individuals adopt the right mindset toward material possessions. Neoliberalism refuses to be baptized. As the people of God, we must ask the Spirit to reveal to us how we can work together to build a true *oikonomia*, an economy in service to human beings who are created in the image of God.

*The Rev. Dr. Stewart Clem is assistant professor of moral theology and director of the Ashley-O'Rourke Center for Health Ministry Leadership at Aquinas Institute of Theology, St. Louis.*

# Episcopal Stores Offer Gifts, Books Galore for the Holidays

By Mike Patterson

As the year-end Christmas shopping season gets into full swing, Episcopal gift and book shops across the country have stocked an array of specialty gifts, locally hand-made arts and crafts and books by clergy and lay members.

“Bibles and prayer books are traditional Christmas gifts,” said Lucy Chambers, manager of the Christ Church Cathedral Book Store in Houston and president of the Episcopal Booksellers Association. But Episcopal shops carry a menagerie of gifts and books that may be outside the realm of those traditional gift items.

For example, if you're interested in introducing Fido to the Episcopal Church, you can find dog leashes and collars emblazoned with the Episcopal insignia. “They fly out of here,” said



Above: Shield of Faith by Gracewear Jewelry  
Above, right: Intertwined candles, hand-crafted by refugee women

Cory Lites, manager of the Cathedral Book Store in Atlanta.

The internet makes it possible for shoppers to browse the cathedral's merchandise as well as other Episcopal stores to their heart's content, no matter where they live. From the comfort of your home, you can hop from shop to shop and coast to coast to find unusual, unique, and creative gift items, some with an Episcopal motif, whether for the holidays or not, or things that seem a little wild, like the men's Halloween socks decorated with tiny skeletons at Trinity Church's Trinity Treasures in New Orleans.

Poking virtually through the online shops, you can also find face masks with the Episcopal insignia, water bottles, iPad cases, angel door knockers, silver alligators, carved gourd ornament with a Nativity scene inside, bud vases, teddy bears, a Noah's ark, towel sets, pottery, candles, towels, notecards, nail polish and stuffed unicorns.

Those shopping for Christmas and holiday gifts and interested in patronizing Episcopal stores will find many listed at the Episcopal Booksellers Association's website ([episcopalbooksellers.org](http://episcopalbooksellers.org)), a community of more than 50 Episcopal gift and booksellers. The association maintains an interactive map of member stores to make it easy for shoppers to scan the virtual store shelves via their websites.

What is apparent in ranging among the shops is the diversity of books and products offered that are special to their area. For example, store managers agree that some of their most popular items are books by local authors as well as products crafted by local artisans.

“We sell a whole variety of fair trade and social enterprise products,” said

Kathryn Bissette, manager of St. John's Cathedral Bookstore and Gift Shop in Jacksonville and executive director of the Episcopal Booksellers Association. “We also try to support local vendors,” including Bee Hill Farms, Drema Farmer Jewelry, and The Oaken Bowl.

Lites said her shop finds local jewelers and artisans are popular with customers. Among favorites is

jewelry crafted by Andrea Barnett utilizing a mix of vintage chains, rosaries, and semi-precious stones, and necklaces, earrings, and bracelets by erin gray (the artisan's preferred spelling), who uses proceeds to support cancer

organizations.

“We also carry a line of Gracewear (jewelry). They do pretty well,” Lites said. Another popular item are hand-crafted dogwood crosses made by a local Atlanta wood carver and Intertwined candles, handcrafted in Clarkston, Georgia, by refugee women.

Of course, books are always popular. Store managers find titles by local clergy and lay members are always in demand.

In the Episcopal Diocese of Atlanta, Lites said books by Beth-Sarah Wright on depression, faith, the stigma of mental health and the role of personal storytelling plays in healing are popular. She is married to Rt. Rev. Robert C. Wright, the Episcopal bishop of Atlanta.

At St. John's Cathedral bookstore, the seven books by the Very Rev. Kate Moorehead, dean of St. John's Cathedral, are among the top sellers, Bissette said.

“The other book that has been our top seller this year has been *With Glad-*







Skeleton socks from New Orleans

ness: *Answering God's Call in Our Everyday Lives* by Christopher H. Martin," she added.

Like retail stores across the country, the COVID-19 pandemic has hurt Episcopal bookstores and gift shops. "I think COVID definitely affected everybody," Chambers said.

However, the widespread availability of the internet enabled many stores to expand their reach and offset some losses from in-store shopping.

"What we have found during COVID is that we have had a surprising number of people finding us," Bissette said, crediting Moorehead's morning devotions as "particularly helpful in expanding the reach of the Cathedral and the bookstore."

St. John's and other bookstores have also joined the Bookshop.org network as a way of offering an online purchasing feature. "It's a wonderful way to have an online store," she said. "It's a way you can support your local bookstore."

And with the advent of internet shopping, local authors once known only locally or regionally have found a wider audience.

Knowing that stores would not be able to offer in-person speakers during the pandemic, in October 2020 the association launched a series of monthly Zoom presentations featuring prominent authors and providing participants an opportunity to engage in conversations with writers.

Kicking off the series was Presiding Bishop Michael Curry discussing his new book, *Love Is the Way: Holding on to Hope in Troubling Times*. "That was a wonderful one to start the program with," Bissette said.

Following Curry were other prominent authors, including Marilynne Robinson, James Martin, Anne Lamott, and Kate Bowler.

"Anne Lamott was a big deal for us to have," Bissette said, adding that Curry's *Love Is the Way* "was a big seller for us last year."

With the internet, Lites said, "We're getting customers from all over the country."

It's uncertain whether the author series will continue after its concluding speaker in December. "We're trying of thinking of what we can do next," Chambers said. "People are burned out on Zoom."

At St. Mark's Bookstore in San Antonio, manager Carla Pineda said "we're totally online right now," but not because of COVID. The in-person shop was closed for remodeling. "We're waiting to move back into a new space," she said.

She said online shopping "turned out to be a really nice bonus" and enabled the store to "stay even remotely in front of people's faces."

The store is now receiving inquiries from across the country.

She the store does do a good trade in prayer books, hymnals, Advent and Lent studies, children's books, and "a lot of good, solid spirituality books. We tend to do a good bit of Celtic," such as books by John O'Donohue, Pineda said.

Other local favorites are *Wild Woman: A Footnote, the Desert, and My Quest for an Elusive Saint* by Colorado author Amy Frykholm and books by San Antonio author Mary C. Earle, a retired Episcopal priest.

"We sell a lot of her books," Pineda said. "She has a much bigger following than just local. She's pretty well-known, especially around Episcopal communities." Pineda suggests that her book of poetry, *Did You Sing Your Song?*, "is a nice little gift book."

Chambers said website traffic is dropping as more people are vaccinated and returning to in-person shopping. "Sales are definitely picking up," she said.

One advantage of in-person shopping, she said, is that when shoppers "come into an Episcopal bookstore, they



The Oaken Bowl in Atlanta

are looking for a curated selection."

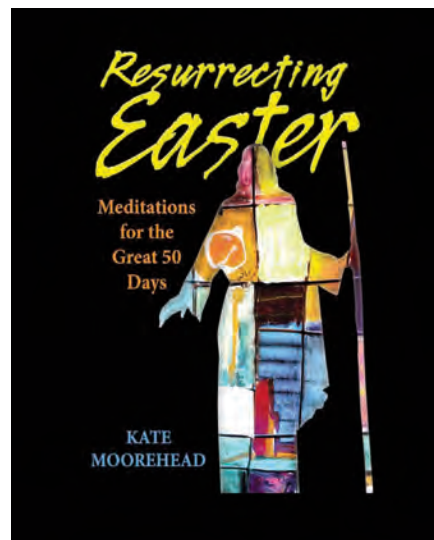
At Christ Church, for example, Chambers said "we think about our audience, not only our church but our community." She said she wants to be a "resource and haven for anybody who might walk through the doors, not just church members."

They even offer customers a cup of tea "because book lovers tend to like tea," she said.

Being in the Southwest, Chambers said they "have a lot of crèches from Mexico. We have access to lots of pretty products from Mexico and things with a Southwestern feeling."

Pineda is looking forward to reopening after her store's remodeling. The bookstore had a table at the Diocesan Council in 2019 but was unable to attend in 2020 when COVID restrictions required a virtual council.

To increase its visibility, "We hope to return with a table in 2022," she said. So far, the in-person council is on. □



A bestseller in Jacksonville, Florida

# Two New Churches Celebrated in Bangladesh

By Neva Rae Fox

COVID-19 has hindered gatherings worldwide, but the people of two newly constructed churches in Bangladesh have celebrated their openings in great style.

At 56,000 square miles and a population of more than 133 million, Bangladesh is nestled between India and Myanmar, with the Bay of Bengal to the south. Formerly part of Pakistan, in 1971 East Pakistan became Bangladesh.

A member of the Worldwide Anglican Communion, the Church of Bangladesh is one of the United Churches, formed by a union of Anglicans with Christians of other traditions. The church maintains 115 congregations in three dioceses with more than 22,000 members.

The pandemic has overwhelmed Bangladesh, with a reported 1.56 million COVID-19 cases.

“The average daily death toll of the Corona Delta Pandemic is 200,” said the Most Rev. Samuel S. Mankhin, moderator and primate of the Church of Bangladesh. “Right now, Bangladesh has been horrendously, viciously, unprecedentedly devastated.”

“All of Bangladesh is affected by Coronavirus,” said the Rev. John Probhudan Hira, provincial secretary. “City areas have some hospital and medical facilities. But rural areas need to come to cities for medical care.”

Hira said schools, colleges, and churches that closed for 17 months are slowly coming back. Online worship was available, but “even with COVID-19 many people come here to church, but kept rules — masks.”

Thanks to recent United Thank Offering (UTO) grants, two churches had reason to celebrate. The churches were constructed in part because of a 2020 UTO Grant of \$80,000.

The UTO website said the funds were earmarked for “two new and needed churches: To contribute to create worship and education space for vibrant communities living in Christ, promoting a complete code of life for the



The May 16 opening of St. John's, Sridampara, was “a big celebration,” with more than 600 in procession.

underprivileged ethnic community at Sridampara (Tangail district) and Eastbaromari (Netrokona District), the centers of biblical and faith-based life for newer Christians.”

Before the church construction, “People used to worship in tents,” Hira said. But there was a determination to have a church building. “They have the mind to have the church. They give the land. But they don't have money. They

are not financially well. People give labor.”

The land for the church was donated by the parish secretary and congregants.

Hira reported that the May 16 opening of St. John's, Sridampara, was “a big celebration,” with more than 600 in the procession, attended by the primate, other bishops, 16 clergy, and religious leaders from villages throughout the region.

“In the midst of COVID, we cele-

brated,” said the Rev. Canon Bruce Woodcock, the Episcopal Church’s Asia and Pacific partnership officer, noting the great fanfare, many people, abundant music, and ecumenical prayers and blessings.

Hira addressed the effect of the UTO contribution to the church and to the people: “St. John’s new church construction in Sridampara helped the ethnic and tribal community who don’t have much family. The church, it brings life and light to the area. It gives new spirit to that area. St. John’s gives immense joy to the community. The church is for worship, for sharing, for learning.”

Coming next is a school for all ages and for lay leadership to include Bible study and Sunday school.

“When there was no church, there was no formal church community, there was no lay leader, no women’s committee, no youth committee. Now we have leadership in the churches. Many people are coming and helping,” Hira said.

“The church builds up spiritual leadership. It gives vibration and vitality in that church.”

The second church, St. Andrew’s in the village of Purbo Baromari, opened October 3 with another grand celebration. “We were celebrating life,” Hira said. “The people were celebrating life.”

The Rev. Dr. Caroline Carson, rector of Holy Innocents’ in Beach Haven, N.J., has traveled and offered UTO grant development help in Bangladesh. She echoed the joy of the Bangladesh people.

“The church is increasing their care of creation,” Carson said. “They also believe in helping their neighbors. My hope is that they will gain confidence and growth in their ministry of presence.”

While there is celebration in the churches, COVID-19 still permeates the Bangladesh society.

“I request you all to remember Bangladesh in your prayers, please,” Mankhin said.



“They realize the value of relationships. We need to pray for them,” Carson said.

“God has opened the door and brought the blessing to the people in that area,” Hira said. “Great partnership for our church. Immense joy all over Bangladesh and not only that area.” □



St. John’s new church construction in Sridampara helped the ethnic and tribal community who don’t have much family. St. John’s gives immense joy to the community. The church is for worship, for sharing, for learning.

# Going Back to the Beginning

Review by Neal Michell

This is not just another book on stewardship. It has an easy reading style that is essentially an introduction to stewardship. It provides both a biblical understanding of stewardship and a framework for understanding how to preach and teach stewardship in a holistic way. It enables developing discipleship among the congregation rather than simply trying to convince church members to give more money to the church.

The *why* of stewardship is that we were created in the image of God and called to be stewards over his creation.

The overall message is that biblical stewardship is about restoring God's original order in creation and that forming parishioners with a biblical understanding of stewardship in the local parish is larger than just finding the best stewardship program that works.

The authors use Simon Sinek's *Start with Why: How Great Leaders Inspire Everyone to Take Action* as their framework. A healthy and biblical understanding will start with *why* and then move to *how* and *what*. The authors contend (and rightly so, I believe) that

most churches that engage in stewardship really start with *what* rather than *why*.

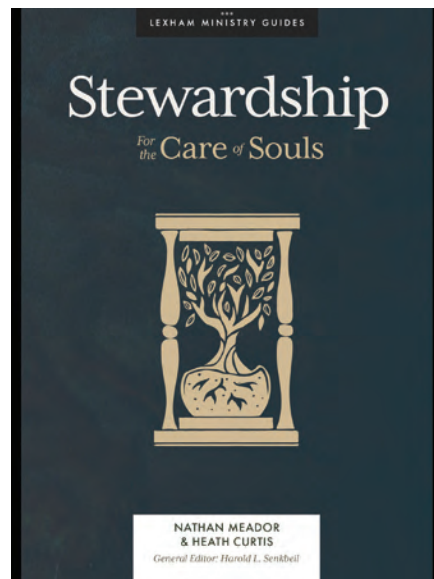
Curtis arrived at his first church and within four months was welcomed by the local banker, who informed him that the bank was canceling the church's line of credit, which it had grown to depend on for cash flow. The church's problems were deeper than cash flow. The church's revenues were 40 percent under budget.

"I saw a financial problem and started to think in terms of a financial answer," Curtis writes. "This financial crisis was not the ultimate crisis; it was a symptom. The issue was theological and pastoral, and the solution was 'confidence in Christ and godly living.'"

The *why* of stewardship does not start with the church's individual vision. Rather, it starts at creation in the book of Genesis. The *why* of stewardship is that we were created in the image of God and called to be stewards over his creation. When humanity fell into sin, we disrupted God's order of creation, but through the death of Jesus, God is restoring and equipping us to steward the good order of creation.

The authors assert that teaching and preaching on stewardship should be a process and not an event that the church does one month of the year. They call for an intentional plan of aligning stewardship throughout the whole parish. This requires more than simply running this year's stewardship program. The book provides several suggestions for how to preach and teach stewardship in an intentional way. This is why good stewardship requires more planning of the leaders than provided for by a typical stewardship program.

Chapter 4 deals with forming the culture of the church. The authors show their awareness of the challenges



## Stewardship

For the Care of Souls

By Nathan Meador and Heath R. Curtis

Lexham, pp. 115, \$19.99

of everyday parish life and the real difficulty of changing a church's culture, but they also give suggestions about how to change the culture of the church. Many churches, they aver, live in a culture of scarcity that "will render innovation in ministry impossible and will make even survival a challenge." Change is brought about "by carefully shepherding through teaching and listening and praying and teaching and suggesting and teaching and praying."

This book provides the parish priest with a foundational understanding of stewardship in the local parish and in the Bible. It is not so much about how to run a stewardship campaign as how to form Christian disciples in stewardship.

*The Very Rev. Dr. Neal Michell recently retired as prebendary in the Diocese of Dallas.*

# Useful Guides to Church Finances

Review by James W. Murphy

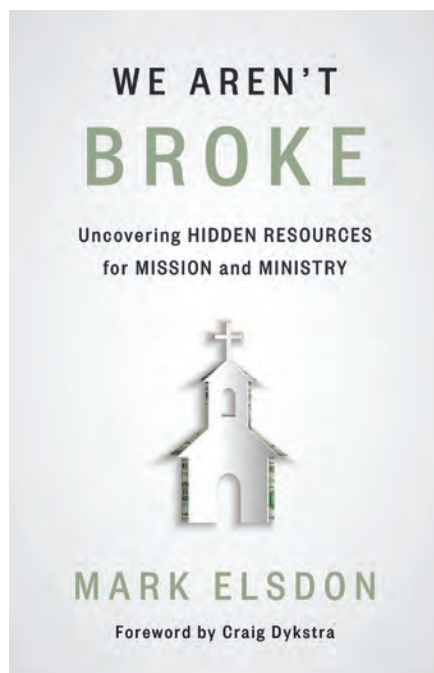
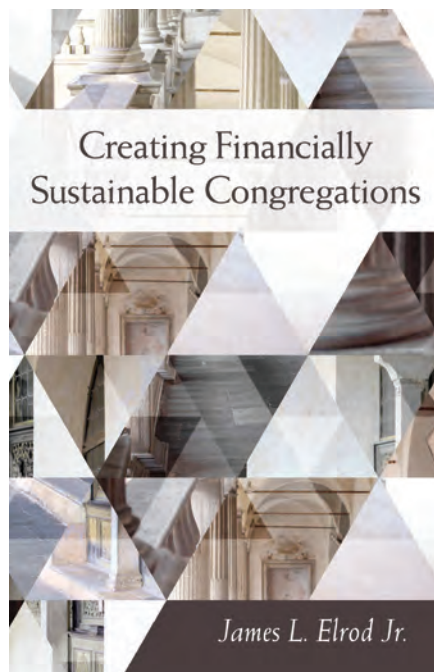
James Elrod's *Creating Financially Sustainable Congregations* and Mark Elson's *We Aren't Broke* are filled with useful guidance, and both pose provocations as churches seek to be effective, sustainable, and relevant in the post-COVID world. Both focus on the importance of church leaders gaining basic financial knowledge and insight. And each warns about losing missional focus through the misuse of the church's capital in all forms. Though essentially complementary, Elsdon's additional focus on using church assets to create new mission-focused sources of income makes for especially compelling reading.

Elrod writes that capital "is not just cash and investment," and it includes "inventory, good will, buildings and property." Elrod's book is a valuable primer for church leaders on the basics of church finances, reporting and funds management.

He offers important parameters for measuring success and reframes congregational financial practices in light of what most nonprofit agencies now embrace, due to the intense competition for gifts and easy availability of online charitable comparisons. Elrod challenges church leaders to continual reflection on the missional effectiveness of their work and how that manifests through responsible financial behavior.

"Budgets matter in churches because they articulate the immediate next steps the church plans to take in pursuit of its ultimate goals," Elrod writes. He makes a strong case for how avoiding deficits, building reserves, and enhancing donor relationships all empower a congregation's mission.

Though not as extensively reviewed, Elsdon clearly supports the same fiduciary/accountability standards to build



trust and confidence among supporters. "If we don't attend to the business of mission, our mission will not be effective," he writes. "If the business is managed and run well, the real work of

mission is much more fruitful."

Yet Elsdon's expansive perspective encourages churches to enhance their reach by imitating many successful nonprofits to create new sources of income from mission-based initiatives. He summons churches to take up both "social enterprise ... a venture seeking social impact while also generating revenue" and "redemptive entrepreneurship ... a business model to pursue social impact through the lens of God's work in the world.

"Let us put money back in its

## Creating Financially Sustainable Congregations

by James L. Elrod Jr.

Church Publishing, pp.128, \$14.95

## We Aren't Broke

Uncovering Hidden Resources

for Mission and Ministry

By Mark Elsdon

Eerdmans, pp. 239, \$18.99

rightful place, as a tool for us to control and not a force exerting control over us," Elsdon writes. He asks church leaders to consider using assets in a truly mission-focused way through "impact investing" and measuring performance beyond simple financial return. Elsdon promotes reclaiming an ancient approach to resolving "wicked problems" that persist, like drug addiction, limited affordable housing, and access to economic opportunity, by addressing their root causes through impact investing and alternative use of property.

Elsdon challenges complacent denominations and congregations that improving human lives is not only the church's goal but could also lead to new

(Continued on next page)

# Generosity in COVID-tide

Review by S. Thomas Kincaid III

**F**inding *Abundance in Scarcity: Steps Towards Church Transformation* will feel simultaneously fresh and familiar to longtime readers of Samuel Wells, vicar of St. Martin-in-the-Fields in London. For those less familiar with his work, his writ-

ings in this volume, alongside those essays he collects (all from clergy and laity at St. Martin-in-the-Fields), will provide ample example of his theological project. For all readers, the volume serves as a window into what God might be up to this past 18-plus months.

Above all, this volume is encouraging.

(Continued from previous page)

sources of revenue to support its broader mission, such as new housing options, drug treatment centers, affordable loans and other financial tools that may be unavailable in a local community. Though some impact investments may provide lower-than-market returns, Elsdon argues that the opportunity to enhance societal impact is quite substantial and necessary. His re-envisioning of assets both physical and financial creates new opportunities to empower a new relevant mission in the world, and he provides tools for evaluating current and future ministries and funding sources.

Elrod's excellent guidance and insights do not venture beyond the traditional model of funding church budgets from philanthropy and enhancing donor trust through transparency and good financial management. Elrod makes the important case that individual giving will remain the primary source of income for most churches and that there is potential risk from unrelated new ventures. "Most churches will remain reliant on household donations for the majority of their revenues," he writes. "In fact, spending money and time trying to develop alternative revenue sources might send mixed signals about the church's mission."

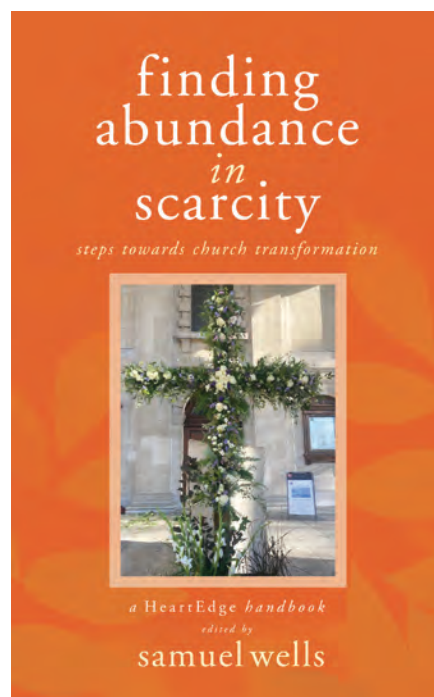
Elsdon also acknowledges that individual giving may remain primary, and

discerning particular opportunities that fit context and capacity remains a challenge for numerous congregations. Since coordination and collaboration are lacking among many churches, Elsdon wisely recommends that some congregations and institutions could invest when other congregations have the transformational vision but lack needed assets.

Something not fully addressed by Elsdon is the fiduciary restrictions for investment of "true endowments," which may limit impact investing due to liquidity and investment requirements. However, many other funds could prove eligible or new gifts might be raised to support these exciting missional endeavors to reinvigorate the church.

Clergy and lay leaders alike would benefit from reading both books. So many congregations remain far from the standards of Elrod's responsible vision, and need to rise to that crucial level to thrive in the new post-COVID reality. Other congregations need to discern how to recast their assets and be inspired by Elsdon's vision of a more engaged and resilient church. Thankfully both authors offer numerous examples and useful discussion questions to help individual congregations discern their next steps as fitting their contexts.

*James W. Murphy is managing program director of stewardship and resources for the Episcopal Church Foundation.*



## Finding Abundance in Scarcity

Steps Towards Church Transformation

Edited by Samuel Wells

Canterbury, pp. 160, \$23.99

Wells and his parish refuse to see any part of this experience that God cannot or will not redeem. Covering a startling breadth of ministry work (moving online, grief, pastoral care, prayer, the arts, disability ministry, faith at home, and several others), the authors are adamant: The God who raised Jesus Christ from dead has not abandoned us and is not finished with us.

If there is a dominant scriptural frame from the volume, it's Wells's opening illustration from Daniel 3 written in May 2020:

"What salvation *doesn't* mean is that we're not going to get the virus. Salvation doesn't mean freedom from sickness, care, anxiety, fear, pain or threat.

Shadrach, Meshach and Abednego don't avoid the fiery furnace. Christians don't believe they are immune from suffering, sealed off from worry, aloof from conflict, inoculated against panic, exempt from grief, vaccinated from the virus. Quite the opposite .... What salvation does mean is one of two things."

Wells adds that those two possibilities are "God is with us in the fire" and that conversion is possible by our witness to God's faithfulness (as in the case of Nebuchadnezzar). Those two meanings of salvation—God's commitment to us in every circumstance and the possibility of conversion—are the thread through each essay that follows.

As one might expect, at moments the authors struggle to catch a still picture of a nascent and developing situation. One can hardly blame them. Writing reflectively about the pan-

demic in 2020-21 is a bit like trying to write reflectively about the wonders of snow-skiing as one exits the lift for the first time. Regardless, the book is useful now as a contemporary witness to what God is doing, as a challenge to the Church to live into what God is up to, and as something of an idea-generating guidebook of what might be possible in other parishes and contexts. Even if at times it feels like the painter can't quite make out every detail of her subject matter, the painting was still worth doing.

That said, some readers might find the text less obviously applicable in their context, either because of the scale of ministry St. Martin-in-the-Fields (a relatively large, complex parish) or because of particular theological commitments presumed by the authors that won't be shared by all readers. In my view, neither of those

distinctives detract from a work I have found myself often captivated by and grateful for.

The pandemic is unique in the lifetime of almost everyone alive today — certainly everyone in positions of official leadership within the Church. The temptation (as in 1 Cor. 10:13) is toward despair. But God does not know a situation beyond his redemption. We should not be so arrogant as to assume that a novel Coronavirus of our day means a novel experience for the God who walked through death itself. I'm grateful that in the midst of an incredibly challenging ministry season, the team at St. Martin-in-the-Fields took enough time to pause and bear witness to what God is doing.

*The Rev. S. Thomas Kincaid III is vice rector at Church of the Incarnation in Dallas.*

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# Helpful for Getting Started

Review by Charleston David Wilson

Another book hot off the “pandemic press” is *Crisis and Care: Meditations on Faith Philanthropy*. Readers are promised “great joy amid uncertainty” that comes when “crisis and care meet.”

The editors tell us their collection of essays will “capture the wisdom of this moment” and “reflects the kind of generosity and mutuality that distinguishes Christian philanthropy.” Their goal and their title are lofty indeed. The opportunist deep within me is still waiting to read this disclosure up front: “Never let a good crisis go to waste.” The idea is certainly present, but it is given shelter in safer churchy words like “incarnate possibility.” Hey, whatever it takes at this point to get our attention is a good and holy thing.

Benac and Weber-Johnson define Christian philanthropy as “a way of life marked by generosity, including the ability to give to and be by others, in order to enrich the common good.” Fifteen mediations (think brief essays) are divided into five parts that are each given well-crafted and polished titles — e.g., “When the Field Changes” and “From Barriers to Opportunities.” The winsome titles, while uber-professional and perfectly researched, may come off as academes to a parish priest or stewardship committee. Perhaps a better title for the subtitle would have been “Somebody Hit the Panic Button.”

The volume is filled with quotable material expertly presented and skillfully organized. I highlighted (okay, dog-eared) something on almost every



## Crisis and Care

Meditations on Faith and Philanthropy

Edited by **Dustin D. Benac**  
and **Erin Weber-Johnson**

Cascade, pp. 168, \$22

page. I wanted to meet each author for a further chat. Eric Barreto’s essay, “Imagining Belonging with the Book of Acts,” deserves sustained reflection and could, conceivably, serve as a springboard for a committee-wide or parish-wide study of the book of Acts.

“We do not know what is next. Can we trust God is still with us?” he openly asks. Challenging the standard approach to Acts as the recipe book for building an ideal parish, Barreto asks us to use the book that brings us ship-

wrecks, miracles, and jailbreaks as a “spark for our imaginations,” not as a cookie cutter. Indeed, the entire volume could best be described as a “spark for our imaginations.”

In final analysis, however, the volume’s strength is its Achilles’ heel. While it is very much worth the time and small investment, it leaves nearly every practical question unanswered, even unexplored. As a parish priest, I’m looking for concrete strategy to sustain and expand the parish budget. How do I find and pay staff? How can I keep donors connected? Is inflation a factor? I love theory, and I liked it more before COVID. But right now I need a more concrete approach — what is working and what isn’t?

Thus, I’m left craving more application, more real-world stories of success where these theories have been put into practice. *Crisis and Care*, then, is a great start. But, it’s only a start, and I’m not sure it’s even the first course, given the larger narrative of membership decline, apathy, and secularization that are the real reasons Christian organizations should be worried about money.

Do buy the book, however. Read, mark, and inwardly digest it. But, remember, it’s an amuse-bouche, not a roadmap to glory. *Crisis and Care* calls us to greater reflection and to a hard path ahead. In the end, Robert Tepper sang it best: “There’s no easy way out. There’s no shortcut home.”

*The Rev. Charleston David Wilson is rector of Church of the Redeemer in Sarasota, Florida.*

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*I love theory, and I liked it more before COVID. But right now I need a more concrete approach — what is working and what isn’t?*



(Continued from page 9)

ordination, believing the Franciscan order should remain largely a lay movement. He persisted in this even as many Franciscans became priests.

In *The Fool of God*, Jacopone scholar George T. Peck devotes a chapter to “The Prime of Todi.” He makes an engaging case that during Jacopone’s life, his native city experienced unprecedented economic and material expansion. How did this development contribute to Jacopone’s dramatic conversion and his subsequent support of the Spirituals? The answer may never be known, but his poetry, especially the unswerving asceticism of the early lauds, suggests that his conversion may have included an intentional rejection of the rising mercantile spirit of his time.

Once he became a Franciscan, he remained so until his death. There is no indication that throughout his life he was ever anything other than a loyal and orthodox Christian. Together with many others, Jacopone was strongly influenced by changes in the papacy. The election in 1294 of an elderly and unworldly hermit as Pope Celestine V raised his hopes for a renewed and more spiritual church, just as the unprecedented resignation of this pope a few months later dashed these hopes.

Celestine’s successor, Boniface VIII, a worldly and clever man with roots in Todi, withdrew his predecessor’s permission for the Franciscan rule to be kept in its original strictness by Jacopone and others. Due to his fierce criticisms of Boniface, Jacopone was imprisoned and denied the Eucharist. After the pope’s death in 1303, he was released and lived out his remaining years in peace and seclusion.

There is enough likelihood in the usual chronological arrangement of the Lauds to see them as illustrating in bold and beautiful ways their author’s spiritual progress over several decades. As Evelyn Underhill remarks, for Jacopone da Todi, love first appeared “as a wildness, a fury, a dance,” and later as “the very secret of stability, the rule of the Universe.” His

early poems witness to love’s frenzy; his later compositions to the steady flame of perfect charity. Thus in one lifetime there can be a transition from “the whirl of a spiritual maelstrom to the movement of the Infinite Sea.”

Although Jacopone’s expression of his transition is informed by the work of earlier Christians, it came to him through personal revelation. As it appears in his poems, this progress bears witness to how holy foolishness and spiritual wisdom can complement each other. Foolishness opens up a capacity for wisdom, and wisdom represents a fruition of foolishness. This held true for Jacopone and for Francis. It held true for Jesus if we read the Gospels as Elizabeth-Anne Stewart does in her reverent study, *Jesus the Holy Fool*. The complementary nature of holy foolishness and spiritual wisdom can be manifest in us as well.

Jacopone’s remains rest in a magnificent tomb in Todi, built almost three centuries after his death. The Latin inscription there speaks of “The bones of blessed Jacopone dei Benedetti of Todi, of the Order of Friars Minor; who, a fool for Christ’s sake, by a new artifice cheated the world, and took heaven by storm.” As Evelyn Underhill notes, this inscription describes only one side of his life. Jacopone, mystic and poet, cheated the world and stormed heaven only to surrender himself to that tranquil and infinite sea that is God and remains beyond all human description.

*The Rev. Charles Hoffacker is an Episcopal priest who lives in Greenbelt, Maryland.*

Regarding Laud 76, what he calls “this little masterpiece,” translator George T. Peck states that “If a musician were to select just one of Jacopone’s laude to set to music, this would be it.”

### Laud 76

O iubilo del core

O joy of the heart that makes one sing of love! When joy heats up, a man must sing and the tongue babbles and knows not what it is saying, and joy cannot be hidden inside, so great is its sweetness.

When joy is lit up, a man must shout. The heart is seized with love that it cannot bear and makes him yell and scream and not be ashamed of it.

When joy has captured the loving heart, folk make fun of him, thinking his speech the unbalanced prattling of an overheated spirit.

O joy, sweet gladness, when you enter the mind, the heart becomes wise in hiding what should be hidden, but it cannot keep from making a cry.

Whoever hasn’t experienced it thinks you are crazy, seeing the eccentricities of a man who is unbalanced has a wounded heart, and has lost touch with external reality.

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## PEOPLE & PLACES

### Appointments

The Rev. **Kevin Beesley** is priest in charge of St. John's, Newport, R.I.

The Rev. **Fanny S. Belanger** is priest in charge of St. Margaret's, Woodbridge, Va.

Ms. **Sandra Beld** is the Diocese of Tennessee's diocesan administrator.

The Rev. Dr. **Andrew Benko** is dean of formation for the Diocese of Texas' Iona School of Ministry.

The Rev. Canon **Alan D. Bentrup** is rector of St. Martin's in the Fields, Keller, Texas.

The Rev. **David Beresford** is interim rector of St. Martha's, Bethany Beach, Del.

The Rev. **Elizabeth Berman** is rector of Holy Nativity, Honolulu.

The Rev. Canon **Jose Juan Bernal** is rector of St. Cornelius, Dodge City, Kan.

The Rev. **Will Berry** is priest in charge of Resurrection, Nicholasville, Ky.

The Rev. Dr. **Stephen G. Clifton** is rector of St. James House of Prayer, Tampa, Fla.

Canon **Easton Davis** is the Diocese of Atlanta's canon for communication and digital evangelism.

The Rev. **Luke Fodor** is priest in charge of Grace, Randolph, N.Y.

The Rev. **Edward F.P. Gibbons** is rector of Epiphany, Cape Coral, Fla.

The Rev. **Joshua Hill** is rector of St. Alban's, Cape Elizabeth, Maine.

The Rev. **J. Robert Honeychurch** is interim rector of St. Wilfrid of York, Huntington Beach, Calif.

The Very Rev. **David Hodges** is rector of St. Peter's, LaDue, Mo.

The Rev. **AnnaMarie Hoos** is associate rector of Epiphany, San Carlos, Calif.

The Rev. **Clark Hubbard** is interim rector of Holy Cross, Trussville, Ala.

Mr. **Robert Jerger** is lay missionary at St. Clare's, Tyler, Texas.

The Rev. **Kathy Kelly** is priest in charge of Resurrection, Spokane Valley, Wash.

The Rev. **Palmer Kennedy** is chaplain of Porter-Gaud School, Charleston, S.C.

The Rev. **Lauren Banks Killelea** is assistant rector of Christ Church, Alexandria, Va.

The Rev. **Francis King** is priest in charge of St. Matthias, Asheville, N.C.

The Rev. **Kyrie Kim** as the Diocese of New York's missionary for Asian ministries and pastor of Metropolitan New York Japanese Ministry and Korean Ministry.

The Rev. **Rick Matters** is vicar of St. Paul's, Kennewick, Wash.

The Rev. **Colin Matthewson** is rector of St. Matthew's, National City, Calif.

Ms. **Shantelle Maxwell** is the Diocese of Southeast Florida's communications director.

The Rev. Dr. **Charles Mayer** is priest in charge of St. Paul's on the Hill and Trinity Church, Ossining, N.Y.

Ms. **Caroline McCall** is the Diocese of Spokane's canon for congregational development.

Ms. **Lindsey Nickel** is communications director of the Diocese of Southwest Florida.

The Rev. **Brent Norris** is rector of St. Paul's, Foley, Ala.

The Rev. **Sarah Odderstol** is rector of Grace, Silver Spring, Md.

The Rev. Canon **Linda Potter** is interim rector of St. Gabriel's, Portland.

The Rev. **Jonathan Pucik** is vicar of Galoway Memorial, Elkin, N.C.

The Rev. Dr. **Dominique A. Robinson** is John E. Hines Assistant Professor of Preaching at Seminary of the Southwest, Austin, Texas.

The Rev. **Oscar Rozo** is priest in charge of Epiphany, Newtown, N.C.

The Rev. **Carl Ruttan** is interim rector of St. Philip's, Columbus, Ohio.

The Rev. Dr. **William Sachs** is interim rector of St. Stephen's, Culpeper, Va.

The Rev. **Walter "Burl" Salmon** is rector of the Falls Church, Falls Church, Va.

The Rev. **Holladay Sanderson** is vicar of St. Mark's, Moscow, Idaho.

The Rev. **Kristin Saylor** is rector of St. Lawrence, Libertyville, Ill.

### Retirements

The Rev. **Carol Blaine** as interim vicar of St. Boniface, Comfort, Texas

Canon **Bonnie Burgess** as the Diocese of Atlanta's canon for finance and administration.

The Rev. **Jo-Anne Campo** as supply priest at St. Andrew's, Hartsdale, N.Y.

The Rev. **Joseph Campo** as rector of St. John's and St. Paul's, South Salem, N.Y.

The Rev. Canon **David Lee Carlson** as canon missionary of the Diocese of New York's Delaware Catskill Regional Ministry.

The Rev. Dr. **Catherine Collier** as associate rector of Christ Church, Tuscaloosa, Ala.

The Rev. **J. Cooper Conway** as priest in charge of Trinity and St. Paul's on the Hill, Ossining, N.Y.

The Rev. **Bob Coon** as assistant priest at St. Francis in the Fields, Louisville, Ky.

The Rev. **Rebecca Debow** as associate rector of St. Luke's, Birmingham, Ala.

The Rev. **Jeff Kohn** as rector of St. James, Monterey, Calif.

The Rev. **Charles Kramer** as rector of St. James, Hyde Park, N.Y.

The Rev. **Peter Lam** as priest in charge of Holy Spirit, Bensonhurst, Brooklyn, N.Y.

The Rev. **Shannon Leach** as rector of Grace in the Desert, Las Vegas.

The Rev. **Christy Shain-Hendricks** as rector of Ascension and Holy Trinity, Pueblo, Colo.

The Rev. **Susan Sica** as rector of St. Gregory's, Parsippany, N.J.

The Rev. **Margaret Sullivan** as priest in charge of St. Andrew's, Walden, and St. Francis of Assisi, Montgomery, N.Y.

The Rev. **Masud Ibn Syedulullah**, TSSF, as vicar of St. Paul's and Trinity, Tivoli, N.Y.

The Rev. **J. Barry Vaughn** as rector of Christ Church, Las Vegas.

The Rev. **Roger Walker** as priest in charge of Holy Trinity, Brandenburg, Ky.

The Rev. **Carol Walton** as priest in charge of St. Timothy's, Henderson, Nev.

The Rev. **F. Allen Weatherholt** as rector of St. Thomas, Hancock, Md.

The Rev. **Gretchen Weller** as priest in partnership with St. Alban's, Morehead, Ky.

### Deaths

The Rev. **Samuel Leslie Hall**, a parish priest and hospital chaplain in the Diocese of Los Angeles, died Sept. 21 at age 92. He had lived in Albuquerque, N.M., since 1987.

Born in San Francisco, he was a graduate of the University of California-Berkeley and Virginia Theological Seminary.

Hall was ordained to the diaconate and priesthood in 1957. He served as a priest in East Whittier and Long Beach before becoming a chaplain at Hospital of the Good Samaritan in Los Angeles.

He is survived by a first and second wife, three sons, a daughter, two stepsons, and a stepdaughter.

The Rev. **Donald W. Jaikes**, a retired chaplain in the Diocese of Southwest Florida who served at St. Luke's Chapel at Westminster Suncoast, St. Petersburg, died September 19, at age 71.

A native of Hannover Township, Pa., he was a graduate of Wilkes University and Bexley Hall Seminary. He was a priest in the Diocese of Massachusetts from 1967 to 1995.

He is survived by his wife, a son, a daughter, and four grandchildren.

The Rev. **Gary Grant Kennedy** died Aug. 30 at age 81 in Galena, Kansas.

A native of Joplin, Mo., he was a graduate of Pittsburg State University, DeVry Technical Institute. He taught at a technical high school in Des Moines, Iowa, before his ordination.

He was ordained to the priesthood in 2000 and served in Galena and Columbus, Kansas. He is survived by his wife, two sons, and a daughter.

The Rev. **Albert W. Majkrzak Sr.** died Sept. 27 at age 77 in Sun Prairie, Wisconsin.

A native of East Orange, N.J., he was a graduate of Seton Hall University, the University of New York, and the Episcopal Theological Seminary of Kentucky. He was ordained to priesthood in 1979 and served churches in California, Connecticut, Illinois, and Wisconsin.

He is survived by his wife, three sons, and multiple grandchildren.

The Rev. **Kyle McGee Sr.** died Sept. 12 at age 79 in Hartford, Conn.

A native of Dayton, Ohio, he was a graduate of DePauw University and Yale Divinity School. He was ordained deacon and priest in 1967.

He served as a priest in Dayton before becoming an assistant rector at St. Stephen's and the Incarnation Church in Washington, D.C. He later became chaplain at Georgetown University, and then served several parishes in Connecticut before retiring in 2005.

McGee is survived by two sons, two grandchildren, a brother, and other relatives.

The Rev. **Samuel A. Tomlinson III**, who served as a priest for 60 years, died August 17 at age 85.

Tomlinson was born in Natchez, Miss., in 1935. He was a graduate of Millsaps College in



Jackson and of General Theological Seminary. Ordained to the priesthood in 1961, he served churches throughout Mississippi with a brief stay in Arkansas.

He is survived by his wife of 32 years, Susanne, and by two sons and two grandchildren.



The Rev. **Irvin Doyle Turner** died Sept. 14 at age 77 from complications of COVID-19. Turner, a tribal judge of the White Earth Reservation, was known as “Netamishkang,” the One Who Goes Before His People.

A native of White Earth, Minn., he was a graduate of Bemidji State University, Moorhead State University, and Seabury-Western Theological Seminary. He was a tribal judge from 1978 to 1981.

He served churches on the White Earth Reservation from 1985 to 1994.

Turner’s family said he sought out those who grieved, required solace, needed friendship, or desired to learn more about Ojibwe culture. He served the Episcopal Diocese of Minnesota as a canon missionary for Indian work, was a founder and co-chair of the Minnesota Committee on Indian Work, and served as executive director of the Indigenous Theological Training Institute from 1997 to 2000.

He is survived by his wife, a daughter, two sons, four grandchildren, and a great-grandchild.

The Rev. Dr. **David Williams**, former rector of St. Stephen’s Episcopal Church in Charleston, S.C., died Sept. 14 at age 76.



Born in Pennsylvania, he was a graduate of DeSales University, Episcopal Divinity School, and Andover Newton Theological School. He was ordained a priest

in 1973 and served churches in Pennsylvania and Washington, D.C., before coming to Charleston. He maintained a private practice of psychotherapy and was a jazz pianist.

He is survived by his wife, a sister, and a brother.

The Rev. Deacon **Dorothy (Doe) Gene Yates** died Sept. 1 in San Francisco at age 82.



A native of the state of Washington and baptized as a young adult, she moved to San Francisco at age 21, was confirmed at Grace Cathedral by Bishop James Pike, and completed her univer-

sity studies in California.

She was a graduate of the Diocese of California’s School for Deacons and was ordained to the diaconate in 1986.

“Deacon Doe’s service to many church communities and ministries is acknowledged with gratitude, especially her presence among us at Grace Cathedral, where in worship she proclaimed the gospel with deep conviction and lived out its commands serving in our many outreach programs,” the Diocese of California said in announcing her death.

## SUNDAY’S READINGS | 25 Pentecost, November 14

1 Sam. 1:4-20 or Dan. 12:1-3 • 1 Sam. 2:1-10 or Ps. 16

Heb. 10:11-14 (15-18) 19-25 • Mark 13:1-8

# Prayer in Crisis and Confidence

Whenever we read Holy Scripture, no matter how challenging or confounding the passage, we read it “that we may embrace and ever hold fast the blessed hope of everlasting life” (Collect).

We listen to Scripture patiently: we read, mark, learn, and inwardly digest. “The letter kills,” says St. Paul, “but the Spirit gives life” (2 Cor. 3:6). “The Advocate,” says Jesus, “the Holy Spirit, whom the Father will send in my name, will teach you everything, and remind you of all that I have said to you” (John 14:26). “It is that very Spirit bearing witness with our spirit that we are children of God” (Rom. 8:16). As we read Scripture, we come to realize our union with Christ more deeply, and we grow in our desire for everlasting life.

It is not to frighten us that Jesus speaks of trial in this age. He tells us what we can plainly see, and he warns us not to be led astray. “Many will come in my name and say, ‘I am he!’ and they will lead many astray. When you hear of wars and rumors of wars, do not be alarmed; this must first take place, but the end is still to come. For nation will rise against nation, and kingdom against kingdom, there will be earthquakes in various places; there will be famines. This is but the beginning of the birth pangs” (Mark 13:6-8).

Jesus is describing every era of human history. There has never been peace on earth, though we are summoned to work for it every day of our lives. “Blessed are the peacemakers,” to be sure, but their blessedness resides not in a placid hope but in their tenacious effort to build peace where there is bitterness, conflict, and war.

Jesus says the sufferings of the world are birth pangs, the pain of something new coming into the world. Similarly, St. Paul writes to the Romans, “I consider the sufferings of this present time are not worth comparing with the glory about to be revealed to us. For

creation waits with eager longing for the revealing of the children of God” (Rom. 8:18-20). There is a glory about to be revealed, but in this present age, we have tribulation and trial. The world is simultaneously in a state of suffering and on the threshold of new life.

In this condition, the Church resorts to prayer and looks to God for help. The Church prays in pain but also in confidence. The story of the barren woman Hannah praying for a child illustrates this deep prayer, this groaning and waiting. She pleads in her misery, silently moves her lips, and so the priest Eli, observing her, thinks she is drunk. She defends herself, saying, “No, my Lord, I am a woman deeply troubled; I have drunk neither wine nor strong drink, but I have been pouring out my soul before the Lord. Do not regard your servant as a worthless woman, for I have been speaking out of my great anxiety and vexation all this time” (1 Sam. 1:15-16). Her distress gives force and conviction to her prayer. Indeed, the whole Church is called to this deep prayer from the heart.

While the Church prays in a state of birth pangs, she also prays in the confidence of new life. “We have confidence to enter the sanctuary by the blood of Jesus, by the new and living way he opened for us through the curtain” (Heb. 10:19). We pray in vexation and yet with “a true heart in full assurance of faith” (Heb. 10:22).

## Look It Up

Daniel 12:1-3

## Think About It

In this time of anguish, may we shine like the brightness of the sky.

## Descending from on High

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“Blessed be God, Father, Son, and Holy Spirit. And blessed be his kingdom, now and forever” (BCP). With these words, we acknowledge and welcome “a kingdom not from this world” (John 18:36). We bear witness to a power from beyond this world, high and lifted up, beyond all knowing. We enter a celestial realm beyond this world, where the King of justice and mercy rules over the cosmos.

Entering this new realm, we open our minds to images of glory and wonder. “As I watched,” says the prophet Daniel, “thrones were set in place, and an Ancient One took his throne; his clothing was white as snow, and the hair of his head like pure wool; his throne was fiery flames, and its wheels were burning fire. A stream of fire flowed out from his presence” (Dan. 7:9-10). A God of transcendent wonder presides over the universe, the One God: “a thousand thousand served him, and ten thousand times ten thousand stood attending him” (Dan. 7:10). It is a glorious and otherworldly picture. We can almost hear the Ancient One say, “I AM WHO I AM” (Ex. 3:14).

“The Lord is high above all nations, and his glory above the heavens. Who is like the Lord our God who is seated on high?” (Ps. 113:4-5). Miraculously, the One God, high and lifted up, is also “our God.” God comes to us by creating, sustaining, blessing, redeeming, and restoring all things in his beloved Son, Jesus Christ our Lord. God deigns to be among us. Asking the psalmist’s question again, we listen for a fuller answer. “Who is like the Lord our God who is seated on high, who looks far down on the heavens and the earth? He raises the poor from the dust, and lifts the needy from the ash heap, to make them sit with the princes of his people. He gives the barren woman a home, making her the joyous mother of children” (Ps. 113:5-9).

God has descended in love through

his Son. The Son of God, the Lord Jesus Christ, stands before Pilate. The kings of this world presume to stand in judgment over the Son of the Living God, the giver of life and salvation. “The kings of the earth set themselves, and the rulers take counsel together, against the LORD and his anointed, saying, ‘Let us burst their bonds asunder, and cast their cords from us’” (Ps. 2:2-3). Who will rid this world of this meddlesome messiah, a would-be king?

Jesus tells Pilate, “For this I was born, and for this I came into the world, to testify to the truth. Everyone who belongs to the truth listens to my voice” (John 18:37). There is no peaceable kingdom without the truth that Jesus Christ is, for his truth brings a peace that passes all understanding. Belonging to the truth, we hear his voice. We know our King. We do not interrogate him but follow him and love him and know ourselves most deeply in union with him.

Jesus said, “The time is fulfilled, the kingdom of God has come near; repent and believe in the good news” (Mark 1:15). Jesus is the everlasting King of a kingdom not from this world. And yet the kingdom draws near!

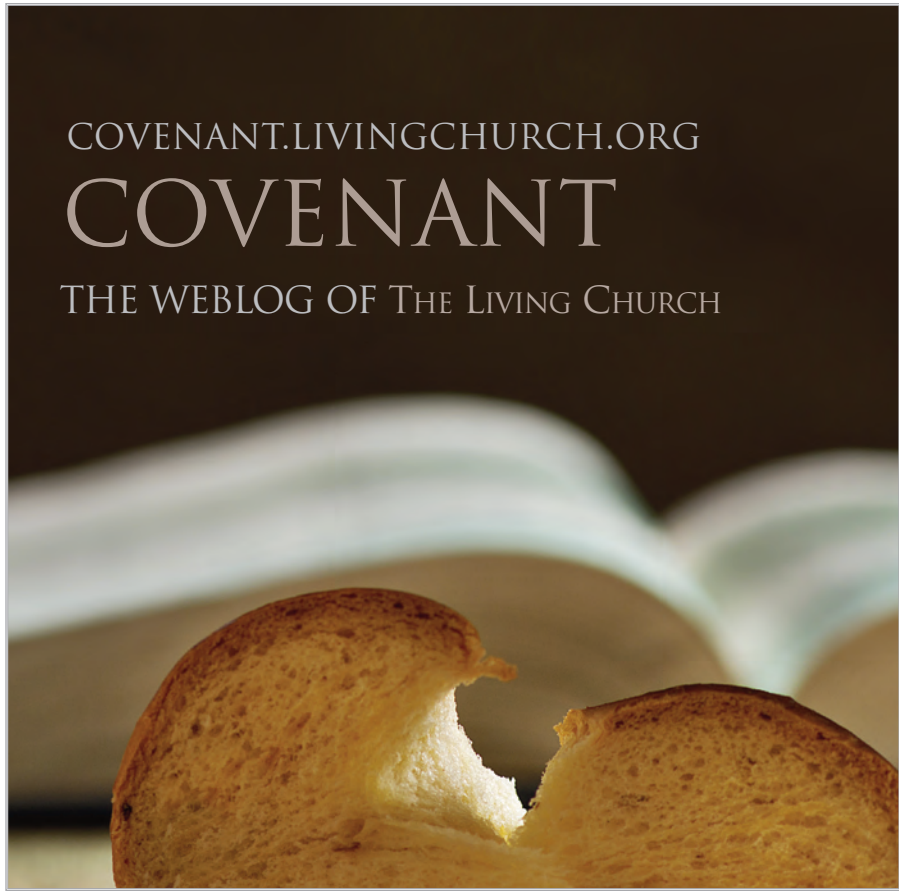
The Lord is high above all nations, and yet the Lord has come to be among us, leaving nothing out, descending even to the grave and hell, marrow and heart.

### Look It Up

2 Samuel 23:3-4

### Think About It

The kingship of Jesus is “like the light of morning, like the sun rising on a cloudless morning, gleaming from the rain on the grassy land” (2 Sam. 23:4). Our king is beautiful!



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