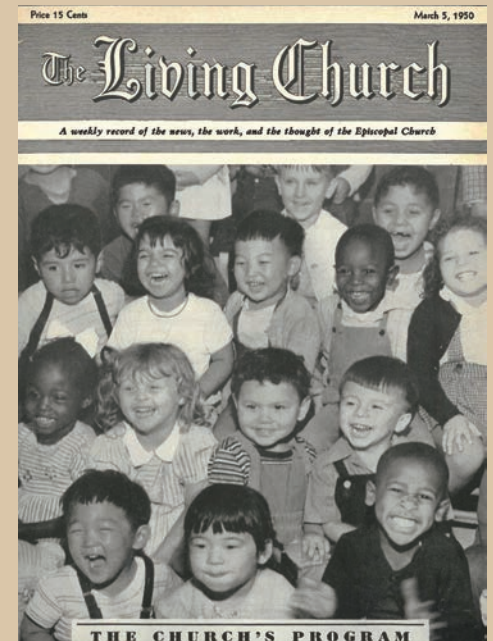
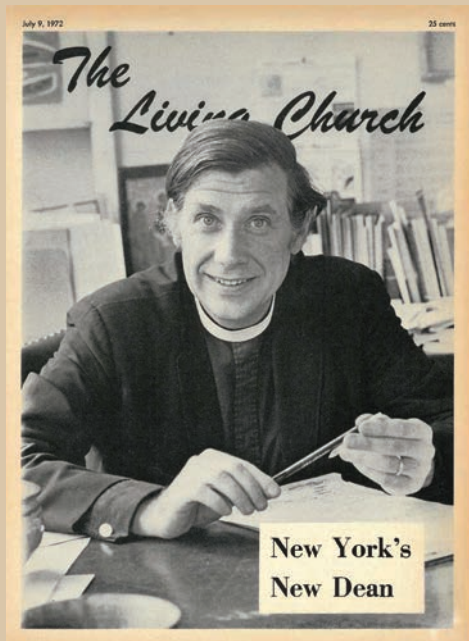
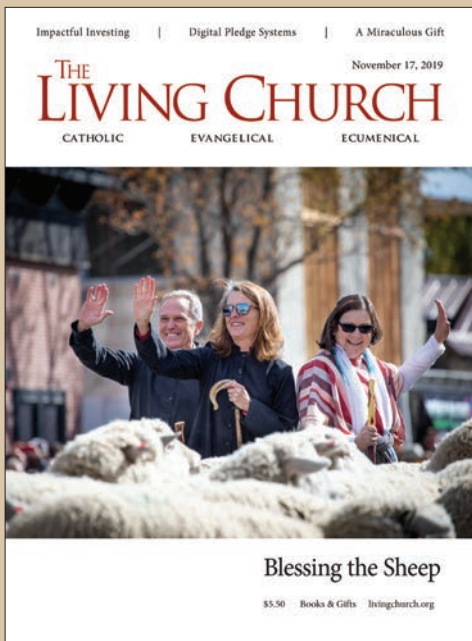
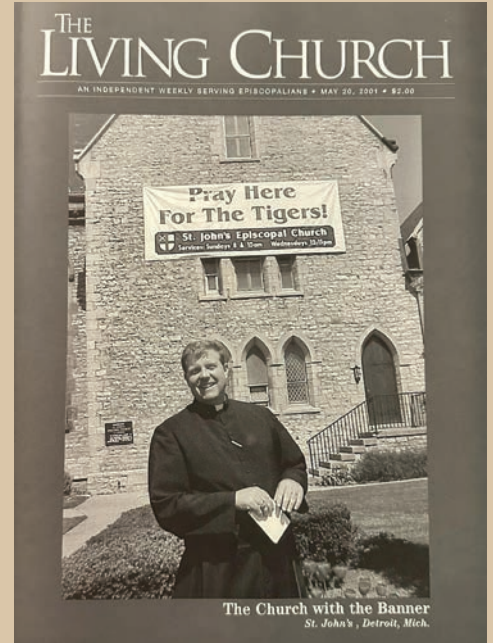
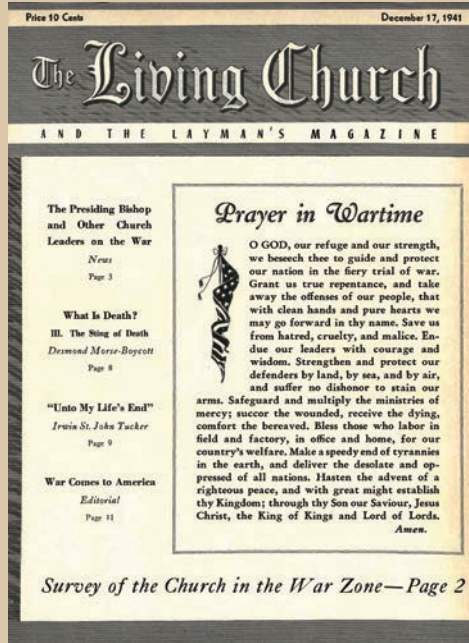


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# Abp. Welby Chooses ‘Self-Denying Ordinance’

The Archbishop of Canterbury will, as a focus of Anglican unity, abstain from using the Church of England’s new prayers and blessings for same-sex couples.

By Rosie Dawson

The Archbishop of Canterbury has welcomed prayers and blessings for same-sex couples, but said he will not use them.

The Rt. Rev. Justin Welby spoke at a press conference January 20, ahead of the next meeting of the church’s General Synod (Feb. 6-9). Earlier in the week, more than 100 bishops agreed that, while they would not initiate legislation to allow same-sex couples to marry in church, they would endorse *Prayers of Love and Faith* for people wanting to celebrate faithful same-sex relationships.

The agreement was immediately leaked to the BBC. Those who had been campaigning for same-sex marriage and those who had wanted no change in the church’s position gave their reactions to a voracious media. This meant the press conference intended to unveil the bishops’ proposals had only one genuinely new story to tell.

Welby called his decision a “self-denying ordinance” in view of his position as spiritual head of the Anglican Communion. Churches in the United States, Canada, and Scotland have recognized same-sex marriage, but the overwhelming majority of churches in the Anglican Communion oppose it.

Welby said the bishops’ proposals represented “a moment of joy and celebration. We have actually made decisions which change our approach to LGBTQI+ people.” But he added that, as Archbishop of Canterbury, he is supposed to be “an instrument of communion and a focus of unity. I have a pastoral responsibility for the whole communion. So, while joyfully celebrating these new resources, I will not personally use them, in order not to compromise that pastoral care.”



Welby: ‘a moment of joy and celebration.’

Jaqui J. Sze photo

Welby embarked the next week on a pilgrimage of peace with Pope Francis in South Sudan, where Anglican bishops are among the strongest opponents of any change to the church’s position.

The U.K. Parliament introduced civil partnerships in 2005 and same-sex marriage in 2013.

The bishops’ proposals mark the end of a five-year process known as Living in Love and Faith (LLF), which distributed resources, films, and stories for discussion in churches around the country. Six thousand people sent in responses, and these were considered by the bishops’ Next Steps Group, chaired by the Bishop of London, the Rt. Rev. Sarah Mullaly.

She hailed *Prayers of Love and Faith* as “a real first. Up until now, same-sex couples have had no way of publicly expressing their desire to put God at the center of their relationship and commitment to one another in a Church of England church.”

The bishops’ statement on January 20 acknowledged their personal as well as theological differences. “The differences among you are also present among us, the College of Bishops. We are partnered, single, celibate, married, divorced, widowed, bereaved; heterosexual, gay, bisexual, and same-sex attracted. We have diverse convictions about sexuality and marriage.”

The Rt. Rev. Stephen Cottrell, Archbishop of York, told the press conference that, while he understood Welby’s position, he would use the prayers for blessing same-sex relationships. He became emotional as he recalled attending the civil partnership of two gay friends who were not allowed by law to include a Bible reading as part of the ceremony.

He spoke about an apology by the bishops “for the ways in which the Church of England has treated LGBTQI+ people”: “One thing we’ve learned in this process is just how much damage we’ve done. The sorry

now is coming from a place of being informed. We've spent so much time listening and working with people across a whole range of diversities. It has brought us to a new knowledge and a new place of humility before God, before the church, before the world where we can say, 'Yes, we got it wrong.'

Reactions to the bishops' statement have been predictably mixed.

The Rev. Andrew Foreshew-Cain, chairman of Equal: the Campaign for Equal Marriage in the Church of England, said: "They're about to apologize to the gay community for the way that we've been treated over the last few years, whilst proposing to continue treating us as second-class citizens within church and not officially recognizing our relationships."

A cautious welcome came from the Rev. Charlie Bell, a priest of the Diocese of Southwark.

"For the first time, we're saying that relationships between two people of the same sex are good, and that good comes from them. We're not saying they're equal, and that's an issue. But there's a fundamental shift."

Helen Lamb of the Church of England Evangelical Council told a briefing held by the Religion Media Centre that LLF had been helpful in changing the tone of debate within the church, but she worried that the new proposals were a "Trojan horse" leading to an eventual change of doctrine.

"I hesitate to accuse bishops of this, but it's as if they're speaking out of both sides of their mouth," she said. "On the one hand, marriage is between one man and one woman. And that is the doctrine. And on the other hand, we want to bless and say that something is holy that God in his Word says is not."

Her CEEC colleague John Dunnett suggested that the gulf between traditionalists and liberals was so wide that special arrangements might be necessary to accommodate them.

"We need to recognize that the liberals want something that is so different to what we believe is right — that the only 'settled' way forward is through a clear differentiation between those in the Church of England who

hold different views. At a practical level, this might involve the creation of a new space in the Church of England for those wishing to pursue change."

The Archbishop of Canterbury said the overwhelming majority of bishops supported the change. Many bishops issued personal statements. Bishop Christopher Cocksworth of Coventry described the decision as "a form of 'differentiated consensus' that has an authentically Anglican character," pro-

viding "a pastoral framework in which all can serve and common ground on broad but sensitive liturgical provision."

Some, like the Bishop of Bristol, the Rt. Rev. Vivienne Faull, expressed regret that the church was not looking to change canon law to allow same-sex marriage. Others indicated they would push for further change. A statement from bishops in the Diocese of Chich-

(Continued on next page)

# WHO IS MY NEIGHBOR?

This Lenten Season, Episcopal Relief & Development invites you to join us as we meditate on the commandment to love our neighbor and consider the meaning of this fundamental instruction in our daily lives.



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(Continued from previous page)

ester emphasized that the Church of England continues to affirm holy matrimony, “as it has always done.”

The Global Anglican Future Conference, which includes Global South Anglicans and some who are not in communion with Canterbury, condemned the bishops’ decision. Archbishop Foley Beach, chairman of GAFCON, said in a statement that the bishops’ decisions “not only deny holy practice, but reject the authority of Scripture, the teaching of the historic church, and the consensus of the body of Christ from every tribe, tongue, people, and nation alive today.”

One area still to be addressed is the situation faced by clergy in same-sex partnerships and marriages. Some of those clergy have lost their licenses to officiate. The bishops will draft pastoral guidance within the next three months to be brought before July’s meeting of General Synod.

It will include a statement on the necessary qualities for a relationship to be considered faithful, and another on the conduct expected of clergy and ordinands. This will replace *Issues in Human Sexuality* (1991), which said homosexuality could not be considered equal to heterosexuality in the created order, and that clergy were not at liberty to enter into sexually active gay relationships.

“The very minimum that must happen is that those relationships and those marriages should no longer be a bar to either ordination or continued ministry, and those who have been barred from ministry through entering same-sex civil marriage should immediately be reinstated,” Bell said. Bell told TLC he has received private assurances that this will happen.

A motion going before February’s General Synod will invite its members to join in the bishops’ apology, and to welcome *Prayers of Love and Faith*.

But prominent campaigner Jayne Ozanne has introduced an amendment calling on General Synod to discuss legislation that would authorize same-sex marriage in the church. While

voting on the motion might give a closer indication of the level of support for same-sex marriage within General Synod, any legislation discussed in July would have no chance of gaining the two-thirds majority required to pass into church law.

## From Death Metal to Episcopacy

By Kirk Petersen

People find their way to the Episcopal Church by many different paths. For the Bishop-Elect of Central Florida, the path led through a death-metal band called Mansoul.

“I was the lead screamer,” said the Rev. Justin Holcomb, who on January 14 was elected to lead the Diocese of Central Florida, which he has served as canon for vocations for the past decade. If a majority of bishops and standing committees grant consent, he will be consecrated as the fifth Bishop of Central Florida on June 10. The fourth bishop, the Rt. Rev. Gregory Brewer, has led the diocese since 2011, and reaches the mandatory retirement age of 72 on July 6.

Holcomb was ordained in South Sudan, speaks openly of being sexually abused as a child, has written or edited 20 books, supports the church’s compromise policy on same-sex marriage, and is poised to lead one of the most conservative dioceses in the Episcopal Church. He also is a member of the Living Church Foundation’s board, and a contributor to TLC’s *Covenant* blog.

But let’s get back to the death-metal band. The four band members all were Christians, and the guitarist’s stepfather was an associate rector at Episcopal Church of the Redeemer in Sarasota, Florida. Holcomb, a high-school student at the time, grew up in a nondenominational, charismatic household. His parents became Christians in the 1970s Jesus movement.

Whenever he went to the guitarist’s home to visit or practice, he would pepper the stepfather priest with questions about the structure of the church, bishops, prayer books, and sacraments. “He gave me my first prayer book, and



Bishop-elect Holcomb delivers the blessing after the election, with Bishop Brewer crossing himself.

Jhon Francis Gamboa Vargas photo

blew my mind. I mean, I was reading through that, and I was like, ‘this is amazing!’” Holcomb said. “I just didn’t have a context for it.” He started worshipping occasionally at his friend’s church.

Mansoul recorded a 19-minute demo tape in 1993, which was played one night around midnight on a local rock station. You can find the five tracks listed online at a site called Metal Kingdom, along with a very low-resolution photo of the band. Holcomb is the guy with the longest hair, not holding an instrument. “I’m not gifted musically at all. I had really long hair and I could scream loudly,” he told TLC.

Holcomb completed a degree at a Florida Bible college, Southeastern University, then attended Reformed Theological Seminary in Orlando, earning two master’s degrees. He was heading toward an academic career. RTS is a nondenominational seminary, but one of his professors in a pastoral-care course urged his students one day to visit the Diocese of Central Florida’s Cathedral Church of St. Luke.

“You’ll see how much pastoral care there is. The liturgy is not just theology; it’s theology and pastoral care mixed together,” the professor said. “You’ll notice how powerful it can be to repeatedly receive the absolution, and to be welcomed at the Lord’s Table weekly.”

Worshipping there refreshed Holcomb’s memories of the excitement he felt years earlier when he first discovered the prayer book. “That’s how I ended up Episcopalian,” he said.

After earning a doctorate in theological studies at Emory University, he landed a postdoctoral fellowship, and

later an adjunct faculty position, at the University of Virginia in Charlottesville. There he met Lindsey Vardy, a case manager at a sexual assault crisis center. She became Lindsey Holcomb in 2006, and within a few years the couple began writing books together, starting with *Rid of My Disgrace: Hope and Healing for Victims of Sexual Assault*.

“We know about this pastorally, professionally, and personally. Pastorally because I’m a pastor. Professionally, because my wife’s a case manager, and I was teaching about this . . . . And then personally, because when I was a boy, I was sexually abused by a distant family member,” Holcomb said. He emphasizes the word *distant*, and praises how his parents responded. “The effect was just not as much as it easily could have been for me.”

The Holcombs wrote a book about domestic violence, and three children’s books, including one geared toward helping children distinguish between appropriate and inappropriate touching. Justin Holcomb also has written or contributed to numerous theological books.

While in Virginia, Holcomb was spending one to three months a year in what is now South Sudan, an Anglican stronghold. (The Episcopal Church of South Sudan is an autonomous province of the Anglican Communion, with about twice as many members as the U.S.-based Episcopal Church.) He was training chaplains for the Sudanese People’s Liberation Army, which in 2011 won independence from the overwhelmingly Islamic northern portion of Sudan.

Back home, Holcomb had realized he was drawn more to the church than to the academy, and he entered discernment for ordination in the Diocese of Virginia. On one of Holcomb’s trips to Sudan, Bishop Nathaniel Garang of the Diocese of Bor said to him, “You keep on coming back and you keep on training all of my priests. I should ordain you.”

Holcomb thought he was kidding, but Garang sought and received the blessing of Bishop Peter James Lee of Virginia, and Holcomb was ordained in Juba in May 2006 — just months before his marriage in December.

After stints as an associate rector in Charlottesville, and as executive director of a ministry for leadership development in Seattle, Holcomb returned to the Diocese of Central Florida as canon for vocations in 2013.

Central Florida is one of a handful of dioceses led by a bishop who does not support same-sex marriage, affirming instead the Book of Common Prayer’s definition of marriage as the union of a man and a woman.

Until 2018, these bishops had the authority to veto the use of same-sex marriage liturgies within their dioceses. That authority ended when the 2018 General Convention passed Resolution B012, which mandated access to same-sex marriage rites in every diocese where such marriages are legal. The resolution established a mechanism for any traditionalist bishop to invite another bishop to provide oversight for same-sex weddings.

At the time B012 was passed, 93 diocesan bishops supported same-sex marriage. Eight were opposed, including Bishop Brewer in Central Florida. As

these eight bishops have begun to retire, or otherwise leave the church, the selection of their successors has drawn scrutiny. In 2021, TLC published a diocese-by-diocese assessment of B012 implementation.

Tensions flared in late 2022 in the neighboring Diocese of Florida, where there is a continuing effort to block the consecration of the Rev. Charlie Holt, who has twice been elected to succeed the Rt. Rev. Samuel Johnson Howard. Both men hold traditional views on marriage.


Holt’s first election was nullified because of procedural irregularities, and new objections have been raised to his second election, although Holt has repeatedly promised to adhere to B012. Opponents also seek to persuade bishops and standing committees to withhold consent.

In that environment, Holcomb was elected in a first-ballot landslide from a field of three, with more than 60 percent support in both the lay and clerical orders. The issue of same-sex mar-

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riage was approached delicately in the election, despite a pointed query in the candidate questionnaire.

Question 7 asked each candidate to read the portions of B012 that provide access to same-sex marriage rites in every diocese, and to read Central Florida's Canon XVI, which categorically forbids same-sex marriage. The canon states that clergy in the diocese may participate in "only those unions prescribed by Holy Scripture: the wedding of one woman and one man. Said clergy are forbidden to allow to take place in their cures, officiate at, bless or participate in any other unions."

All three candidates said, without elaboration, that they would adhere to both measures. TLC asked Holcomb to explain how that is possible. The bishop-elect declined to address specific details. He noted that he is entering a consent process in which he will be questioned on that topic by bishops and standing committees throughout the church, and said he wanted to have those discussions, as well as conversations with the clergy of the diocese, before addressing the matter in the news media.

He did, however, emphasize his support for B012, saying that as a deputy to the 2018 General Convention, he not only voted for the measure but also supported it in legislative hearings. After the passage, he chaired a diocesan task force — with members on both sides of the issue — to study the implications of B012 for the Diocese of Central Florida.

"Resolution B012 has removed a portion of the Bishop's ecclesiastical authority and the implications of that removal are troubling," the final report said. "We implore the church and church leaders in the Diocese to engage the discussion outside the confines of their own positions.

"The Task Force believes the clergy of the diocese should support the Bishop in his implementation of Resolution B012. His leadership on this issue is essential," the report said.

The Rev. Allison Harrity, rector of St. Richard's in Winter Park, is the only priest in the diocese who has performed same-sex marriages under the provisions of B012. "I've never talked to Justin about the issue," she said.

Is she concerned about his election? "I'm concerned about people who want to get married in the Diocese of Central Florida," or who want to pursue ordination. She expressed neither support for nor opposition to Holcomb.

The other candidates for bishop were the Very Rev. Charles (Roy) Allison II, rector of St. James Episcopal Church, Ormond Beach, and the Rev. Dr. Stacey (Stace) Timothy Tafoya, rector of Church of the Epiphany, Denver.

## E. African Leaders Back Peace Call

By Jesse Masai

Two presidents have backed a call by Archbishop Justin Badi's call for peace in South Sudan.

Civil strife and a steady flow of refugees have plagued the nation,

Africa's youngest, despite a comprehensive peace agreement in 2005 with its predominantly Muslim northern neighbor, Sudan.

Hostilities have particularly intensified in Upper Nile and Jonglei states — encompassing two of the Episcopal Church of South Sudan's eight internal provinces — sparking calls for humanitarian intervention.

"Initial fighting began in Panyikang and Fangak counties in Upper Nile State in July 2022 before escalating into heavy conflict by mid-August. It has since spread to parts of Jonglei and Unity states," *The East African* reported.

The government, it also reported, had in December been forced to airlift the king of the Chollo Kingdom, Reth Kwongo Dak Padiet, to Juba after fighting spread to his residence in Fashoda County, amid mounting calls for de-escalation.

"Our focus should be on the importance and power of good and godly families," Archbishop Badi said on Christmas Eve. "Both the church and the government rely on good families in what they do. When Caesar Augustus wanted to know the population and strength of his empire, he had to reunite families in their home territory."

The primate added: "When God wanted to send his Son as Savior of the world, he had to choose a well-disciplined family of Joseph and the Virgin Mary. It is my prayer that during this Christmas season we all present ourselves in ways that please God so that the presence of the newborn Savior may be in our families and our lives to bring love, harmony, respect, unity, and joy that will enable us to join the angels in singing for peace in the world and South Sudan."

President William Ruto of Kenya revealed on January 2 that he had received a call from his Sudanese counterpart, President Abdel Fattah al-Burhan, and they "deliberated about the security situation in the Eastern Africa region, and specifically in South Sudan."

"We committed to hold a special Intergovernmental Authority for Development (IGAD) Summit focusing on South Sudan before the end of this



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month to assess the status of implementation of the 'Revitalized Agreement on the Resolution of the Conflict in the Republic of South Sudan' and address any emerging issues," he added.

Founded in 1986, IGAD brings together the Horn of Africa countries of Djibouti, Eritrea, Ethiopia, Kenya, Somalia, South Sudan, Sudan, and Uganda for development and drought control in the region.

Ruto further noted: "We also appreciate [South Sudan] President Salva Kiir's special message recognizing Kenya's support in seeking solutions to emerging challenges in South Sudan, [searching] for durable peace, and in delivering humanitarian assistance to the affected communities."

The gospel has spread fast in South Sudan, which is partially animist.

Pioneered as the Diocese of Sudan in 1899 by the Church Missionary Society in Omdurman, Sudan, the See was under the Jerusalem archbishopric until 1974, before reverting to the jurisdiction of the Archbishop of Canterbury.

A new province, consisting of four

new dioceses, was established in 1976, before a final split on June 30, 2017, into the provinces of the Episcopal Church of South Sudan and Episcopal Church of Sudan.

## Traditionalist Bishop Appointed as Diocesan

By Douglas LeBlanc

The Rt. Rev. Philip North, who has served in a suffragan's role within the Diocese of Blackburn for eight years, has been appointed that diocese's 10th bishop. He is scheduled to succeed Bishop Julian Henderson in May or June.

Bishop North's traditionalist understanding of women in ministry has attracted opposition in the past, and again this year. Bishop North has twice declined appointments in other dioceses (as a bishop suffragan of Whitby in 2012 and as Bishop of Sheffield in 2017) amid protests that followed his

appointments.

This year, North draws strength from his long association with the Diocese of Blackburn; the service of the other bishop suffragan within the diocese, the Rt. Rev. Jill Duff of Lancaster, as leader of the committee that recommended North for the office; and a hearty endorsement by the Archbishop of York, whose archdiocese includes Blackburn.

Dr. Martyn Percy, who had urged North to withdraw from nomination in 2017, has since left the Church of England after a years-long conflict with the University of Oxford's Christchurch College.

Women and the Church (WATCH) has renewed its previous opposition to North's becoming a bishop diocesan.

"We recognize Bishop Philip's many gifts and are aware that he has been supportive of women in a range of ministerial posts in the Church, some at senior levels," WATCH said after North's appointment was announced January 10. "Nonetheless, Bishop

(Continued on next page)

# Vocational opportunities for priests and deacons

"Let your priests be clothed with righteousness; \*  
let your faithful people sing with joy."

Psalm 132:9

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Philip does not recognize the ordination of women as priests and bishops, and will be the first diocesan bishop to be appointed with his theological position on the ordination of women since women were permitted to be bishops in 2014.”

WATCH said it “cannot support the nomination,” and listed five reasons it sees North’s appointment as problematic.

Bishop Duff expressed no misgivings as she presented her brother bishop through a diocesan video and in a diocesan announcement.

“Philip North is a prophetic leader and a tender-hearted pastor who loves Jesus and loves the people of Lancashire,” Duff said. “I have found much joy in serving alongside Philip as a fellow suffragan bishop for the last five years. He has inspired me, encouraged, and greatly supported me. And I believe that Philip is called for such a time as this to lead the Diocese of Blackburn, cherishing the diversity of opinion, theology, and background that our county has always welcomed.”

The Most Rev. Stephen Cottrell, Archbishop of York, likewise expressed confidence in North.

“Bishop Philip comes to this new role already knowing and loving the Diocese of Blackburn,” Cottrell said. “He respects and understands the diversity of the diocese and is committed to growing a church where all can flourish, both ordained and lay alike. As an evangelist, he will also strive to share the Christian faith with

others. As a friend of the poor, he will be a voice for the most hard-pressed and excluded in our society. I am hugely excited about his appointment and ensure him and the Diocese of Blackburn of my support and prayer.”

The Diocese of Blackburn reports that 27,500 people were on its rolls as of 2015. It counted 15,600 adults (over 16) and 3,400 children as weekly participants in the same year. The diocese says that as of June 2017 it has 177 benefices, 238 parishes, and 274 churches/licensed worship centers.

North is a graduate of the University of York and trained for ministry at St. Stephen’s House, Oxford. He was ordained priest in 1993. In 1996 he became vicar at Holy Trinity and St. Mark’s Hartlepool and was appointed area dean of Hartlepool in 2000.

In 2002, he was appointed priest administrator of the Shrine of Our Lady of Walsingham before being appointed team rector of the Parish of Old St. Pancras, in the Diocese of London, in 2008. North was appointed Bishop of Burnley in 2015.

North’s service at Walsingham is a point to which WATCH objects. WATCH also protests that North serves on the Society of St. Wilfrid and St. Hilda’s Council of Bishops. Society clergy abstain from the Eucharist based on their convictions about women in the episcopate.

“Appointing a diocesan bishop who does not share in the Eucharist with the whole of the House of Bishops is a challenge to the unity of that body and the Church’s teaching on this matter,” WATCH said.

A pamphlet by the Society of St. Wilfrid and St. Hilda says that “there

can be occasions when it is appropriate (though none should feel compelled) to receive [C]ommunion from other validly ordained bishops and priests. This must be a decision for the person concerned, as a matter of conscience.”

For his part, North did not concentrate on such matters in responding to his appointment.

“I believe with all my heart that God has called me to carry Jesus across Lancashire, to bear witness to his love and peace here in this county. I have done that for the past eight years as Bishop of Burnley, and I will go on doing that as Bishop of Blackburn. I am delighted to be staying in a county that I love very deeply indeed, delighted also that we will be able to carry on the work here in Blackburn Diocese,” he said.

The bishop-designate added: “There are three things for which I will be laboring tirelessly in the years to come. Firstly, I am committed to continuing the growth of the church in Lancashire, helping to build joyful Christian communities. Secondly, I would love to see the Church of England in Lancashire being an ever-stronger voice for justice, especially for the poorest.

“And thirdly, I believe children and young people need to be at the very heart of all that we do. The current generation of young people is such an impressive one, with a real desire to build a better world. Yet at the same time I know that life is not always easy for them. There are such exciting opportunities for young people in Lancashire — we need to see more.”

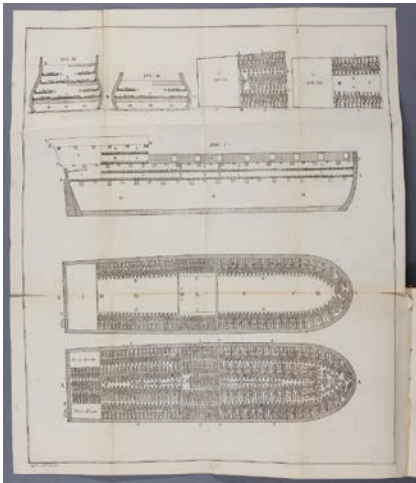
## Investment Fund Discloses a Slave-Trading Past

By Douglas LeBlanc

The investment body known as Church Commissioners for England has disclosed evidence of slave trading in its history, and has pledged £100 million to a program of “impact investment, research, and engagement.”

The Church Commissioners fund handles the Church of England’s investments of £10.1 billion, and contributes





Slave ship diagram in the Lambeth Library

wasn't enough — we wanted it to become public, to acknowledge the sins perpetrated through our predecessor fund and to respond to the findings,” wrote Bishop David Walker of Manchester and Jay Greene, both members of the Church Commissioners’ board of governors, and of a subgroup established to study the history.

“Nothing we do, hundreds of years later, will give the enslaved people back their lives,” they wrote. “But we can and will recognize and acknowledge the horror and shame of the Church’s role in historic transatlantic chattel slavery and, through our response, seek to begin to address the injustices caused as a result.”

The full report provides copious details about the forensic accounting that evaluated what was originally known as Queen Anne’s Bounty. Proceeds from the bounty helped support needy clergy in the 18th and 19th centuries, and in time the bounty became the Church Commissioners fund.

The report also discusses the ugly history of how the bounty gathered its funds.

“It can easily be shown that the South Sea Company was responsible for shipping thousands of people across the Atlantic, even if the data is sometimes incomplete,” the report said. “Several thousand people died on board those ships and their bodies were thrown overboard. Anyone investing in the company before 1740, whether they made money on their investment or not, was consciously investing in these voyages. The purpose of this report is to highlight this linkage, as a moral issue rather than as a purely financial one.”

The Archbishop of Canterbury welcomed the report’s findings, and expressed his hope that the Church of England will repent of these sins.

“I am deeply sorry for these links,” he wrote. “It is now time to take action to address our shameful past. Only by obeying the command in 1 John 1:6-7

(Continued on next page)

about 15 percent (£300 million) of the church’s annual operating expenses. The Sovereign Wealth Fund Institute ranks it as 31st among the world’s largest endowments by total assets.

“The Church’s involvement in the trade in enslaved people in this way shocked us. Having the information



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and addressing our past transparently can we take the path that Jesus Christ calls us to walk and face our present and future with integrity. It is hard to do this at a time when resources in many parishes are so stretched, but by acting rightly we open ourselves to the blessing of God.”

The Church Commissioners said it will spend £100 million for the next nine years in these categories:

- Establishing an impact investment fund to invest in a better and fairer future for all, particularly for communities affected by historic slavery.
- Develop grant funding for projects focused on improving opportunities for communities affected by historic transatlantic chattel slavery.
- Engaging in further research, including into the Church Commissioners’ history, supporting dioceses and parishes to research and address their historic links with transatlantic chattel slavery, and sharing best practice with other organizations researching their slavery legacies.
- Assuring that Church Commissioners will use its voice as a responsible investor to address and combat modern slavery.

The Lambeth Palace Library has announced that a related exhibit, “Enslavement: Voices from the Archives,” opened to the public on January 12.

“The exhibit includes early 18th-century ledgers from Queen Anne’s Bounty that was founded in 1704, a predecessor fund to the Church Commissioners’ endowment, and an anonymous letter written by an enslaved person in 1723 to the ‘Archbishop of London,’ the earliest known such advocacy for freedom,” the library’s announcement said. “A missionary book from 1808 published specifically for enslaved and former enslaved people will also be on display. This book contained selected sections of the Bible, deliberately edited to remove all references to freedom from slavery.”



Vatican Media photo

## Benedict and Anglicans: Problems and Hopes

By Richard J. Mammana Jr.

**T**he long life and relatively brief pontificate of Pope Emeritus Benedict XVI close a chapter of Church life and theological writing that will continue as a rich seam of study for centuries.

As both a cardinal and later as pope, Benedict brought a profound ecumenical and interreligious mindset to bear on questions throughout the 20th century. A regular conversation partner for Cardinal Ratzinger and Pope Benedict was the Anglican tradition, which he described in 2009 as a “precious gift nourishing the faith of [Roman Catholics] and as a treasure to be shared.”

### As Cardinal

Cardinal Ratzinger’s longest sustained comment on relations with Anglicans was “Anglican-Catholic Dialogue: Its Problems and Hopes” (1983), a 33-page essay on the first cycle of the common statements (1970-81) by the Anglican-Roman Catholic International Commission (ARCIC) on the Eucharist, ministry, ordination, and authority in the Church.

The cardinal’s assessment was mainly critical, including the words *meagre*, *unsolved*, and *unsuitable*, but

affirming that “what has been achieved in the way of agreements is precious and must not be lost but must be deepened and extended.” He praised the dialogue’s “openness to factual data,” through which “old prejudices lose their power; [and] a new impartiality arises that is able to see and to understand others’ ideas.”

The essay is a durable statement on the nature and possibilities of ecumenical dialogue, written at the very beginning of the cardinal’s tenure (1981-2005) as prefect of the Congregation for the Doctrine of the Faith (CDF), when Ratzinger gained a high international profile as a doctrinal traditionalist. The cardinal’s frustration with the ARCIC reports was that they “left [him] completely in the dark as to the concrete structure of authority in the Anglican community.” He was also uncertain about the usually decennial Lambeth Conference: “what sort of teaching authority belongs or does not belong to this assembly of bishops?”

One immediate piece of background for Cardinal Ratzinger’s 1983 essay was the 1981 establishment “of a pastoral provision which will provide, for those who desire it, a common identity reflecting certain elements of their own

heritage” in response to requests “on behalf of some clergy and laity formerly or actually belonging to the Episcopal (Anglican) Church for full communion with the Catholic Church.”

Known as the Pastoral Provision, this undertaking met needs expressed by individuals who wished to retain aspects of Anglican culture while entering into the Roman Catholic Church. It also addressed the matter of married clergy and a future of seminary formation, and developed an Anglican Use liturgical tradition that took root especially in Texas and Massachusetts.

### As Pope

Bishop Gene Robinson welcomed the 2005 election of Joseph Ratzinger as Benedict XVI in an offhand comment that took on a life of its own: “Pope Ratzinger may be the best thing that ever happened to the Episcopal Church.” Robinson said he had made the comment in response to a question from a gay Roman Catholic struggling with his place in his church, adding that Catholic moral teaching is an “act of violence against gay folk.”

As Benedict XVI, the Bishop of Rome intensified his engagement with Anglicans by reactivating stalled ARCIC’s discussions and encouraging the work of the practically oriented International Anglican-Roman Catholic Commission on Unity and Mission.

Pope Benedict found common ground with Archbishop Rowan Williams, another international head of communion who was a distinguished scholar with a decade in his leadership position. Archbishop Williams attended the pope’s inaugural Mass at the Vatican, thus becoming the first holder of his see to participate in that event in modern times.

The archbishop addressed the pope in German and gave him a pectoral cross. Some commentators noted at the time that the new pontiff welcomed the archbishop with a handshake, while he had greeted Orthodox bishops with open-armed embraces. The men would have ample opportunities during their overlapping reigns to improve upon the initial gesture.

The November 23, 2006, Common

## Pope Benedict found common ground with Archbishop Rowan Williams.

Declaration of Pope Benedict and the Archbishop of Canterbury drew on the 40th anniversary of a historic meeting between their predecessors, Pope Paul VI and Archbishop Arthur Michael Ramsey. They commended the ARCIC documents *The Gift of Authority* (1999) and *Mary: Grace and Hope in Christ* (2005) for further study and offered a carefully worded commitment to full, visible unity.

Rowan Williams and Pope Benedict next met in Rome in 2008 for a half-hour private visit to discuss American matters and Christian-Muslim dialogue.

The next year saw the creation of personal ordinariates through the apostolic constitution *Anglicanorum coetibus* “for Anglicans entering into full communion with the Catholic Church.” This document was responsive to requests from Anglicans and Episcopalians from as early as 1894 for a canonical structure that offered cultural, liturgical, and ecclesial continuity for groups leaving their home churches.

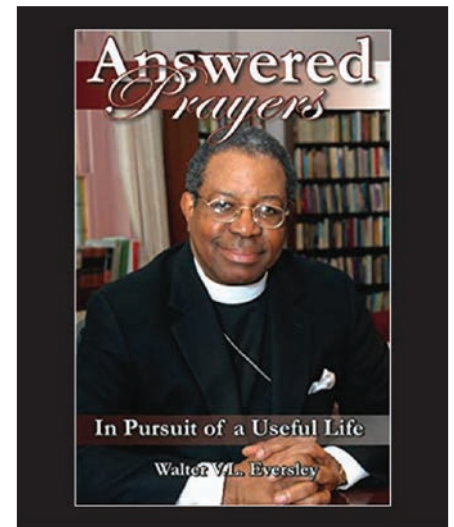
Syndicated columnist Terry Mattingly noted in his *On Religion* column that 400,000 Anglicans would join the Ordinariate structures in England, Wales, and Scotland (Our Lady of Walsingham); the Chair of Saint Peter for Canada and the United States; and Our Lady of the Southern Cross (Japan and Australia). To date, about 9,000 members have affiliated with these robust communities that continue specific traditions of musical excellence, liturgical language, pastoral culture, and dress. The clear statement of *Anglicanorum coetibus*, signed by Pope Benedict, is that the Holy Spirit is at work within Anglicanism.

The pope’s beatification of John

Henry Newman in Birmingham on September 19, 2010, at an open-air Mass was the culmination of a process begun in 1958; he had been declared venerable in 1991 by Pope John Paul II and would be canonized by Benedict’s successor, Francis, on October 13, 2019.

Pope Benedict was one of five popes to meet with Queen Elizabeth II, the temporal head of the Church of England, during her reign. The queen sent her husband, the late Prince Philip of Edinburgh, to meet the pope at the airport.

As both pope and cardinal, Benedict, the servant of the servants of God, combined personal warmth toward Anglicans with his rigorist theological method. The “elements of sanctification and of truth” he found in Anglican writings and communities are ultimately defective and preparatory for full communion with the see he held and in which he lived in brave retirement since 2013.



Walter V.L. Eversley wrote *Answered Prayers in Pursuit of a Useful Life* to encourage people to persist in prayer. He earned his PhD at Harvard and a law degree at Columbia. He is an Episcopal priest born and raised in Guyana. He has planted churches in Boston, Brooklyn, and Washington. He has been a seminary professor at Harvard and for 15 years at Virginia Theological Seminary and has lectured at Yale and Oxford.

Persons may obtain the book for \$20 paid postage to Walter Eversley at 214 Lambeth Rd., Baltimore, MD 21218.



# ‘Doing Church Well’

St. Francis in the Fields,  
Harrods Creek, Kentucky

By Dylan Thayer

The Rev. Clint Wilson is in a hurry. “I’m boarding a plane in about 40 minutes,” he tells me, politely and matter-of-factly, at the start of our call. “So there might be some background noise, and I might have to hop off sooner than I hoped.” He pauses. “I do apologize.”

A hectic airport terminal is an apt backdrop for a conversation with a man who works hard and wastes no time. Wilson is the rector of St. Francis in the Fields, a parish church in Harrods Creek, Kentucky, a sleepy suburb of Louisville. St. Francis has boasted impressive growth, numerically and spiritually, during the past three years.

(Continued on next page)



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Across a challenging season featuring vicious rinse-and-repeat cycles of lockdown and reopening, St. Francis managed to increase its average Sunday attendance by more than ten percent, one of only 39 parishes in the Episcopal Church to do so.

For Wilson, the growth has been no surprise. “Healthy organisms grow,” he says. “God wants us to be healthy, and healthy growth is a natural consequence of a healthy church.”

open. It was not easy, but it seems to have succeeded.

During the depths of the pandemic, Wilson and the vestry — which Wilson credits as being essential to the parish’s renaissance — took some time to reimagine their strategic direction.

“We took the first two years of my rectorship to think strategically about where we want to go. Now, in the third year, we are ready to launch,” Wilson says.

What does this launch look like? Coming to St. Francis in 2023: a Christ-focused preschool grounded in the Anglican tradition, changes to the structure of committees, a governance task force, and Louisville Fellows, a leadership development program for recent college graduates, which will welcome its first class in September.

But St. Francis enjoyed growth before implementing these programs. Wilson thinks that is not an accident: he believes the conversations and activity tied to the parish’s new strategic vision have created heightened energy, enthusiasm, and faithfulness, spurring people upward in a virtuous cycle, as Paul writes (Rom. 12:10).

“We haven’t really changed that much,” Wilson says. “We’re just doing church well.” Wilson is a prayer book Anglican, and he makes no apologies

about that. St. Francis has embraced Wilson’s philosophy of “joyful orthodoxy,” which Wilson defines as “strong, scripturally anchored preaching, relational discipleship, lives rooted in worship and prayer, and a joyful community.”

But part of “doing church well” at St. Francis has meant doing some things differently. The parish has strengthened and reimaged its newcomer ministry, especially by implementing a new step-by-step process for newcomers to transition into the congregation. And there are a lot of newcomers at St. Francis: 43 in 2021 and 75 in 2022, a bumper crop for a parish with an average Sunday attendance of 317 in 2022.



Photos courtesy of St. Francis in the Fields

Health was at the top of his mind when Wilson arrived in Harrods Creek in February 2020: the pandemic lockdowns began only a few weeks later. Like so many other churches, St. Francis immediately shifted to online, setting up streaming, embracing new technologies, and maintaining a high-quality music program as much as safety regulations allowed.

For all the parish’s nimbleness in adopting new approaches, St. Francis was steadfastly committed to reopening as quickly as possible. The parish tried to navigate a middle way, Wilson says, between those who wanted to stay at home indefinitely and those who believed the church doors should always be





Many of these people are ex-evangelicals or former parishioners of Episcopal churches that did not reopen as quickly or effectively as St. Francis. But many others are unchurched people who came to appreciate the parish's liturgy, worship, children's ministry, affirming energy, and focus on Scripture. Wilson believes St. Francis is a "good place for people from other traditions who are wounded to find healing" and that this charism is shared by the Episcopal Church writ large.

This last statement supports two of Wilson's core beliefs: that all churches are called to grow, and that every Episcopal parish has been

called by God and equipped with special gifts for this task. What advice does he have for leaders who want to connect with the unchurched in their communities?

"Pray," he says, quickly and emphatically. "Prayer will cultivate a discipline of having the eyes of faith to look for those who God might providentially bring into your view."

Wilson also emphasizes that he and the vestry "unapologetically and unambiguously" focus on growth. "Numbers matter because people matter," he says. Finally, Wilson stresses that no leader can do this alone, and highlights the importance of having staff, clergy, and lay leaders whose different strengths can complement each other without causing undue tension.

As we near the end of our conversation, Wilson jumps in again. "I am so sorry. I have to board now." The work of God's kingdom never stops, especially when Wilson and his parish are flying high.

*Dylan Thayer is parish coordinator of St. Paul's K Street, Washington, D.C. The Rev. Clint Wilson is a member of the Living Church Foundation's board.*





*De terra veritas*

# Praying for Renewal in Kentucky's Holy Land

You can spot them easily on maps of nationwide religious membership, three Catholic counties in central Kentucky, amid a sea of evangelicals. Rural Nelson, Marion, and Washington counties are known collectively as “the Holy Land,” and their rolling hills are dotted with hamlets called St. Mary, Calvary, and Loretto. About a third of their combined population of 70,000 are Roman Catholics, the highest percentage in the Southeast outside greater Miami and Louisiana’s Cajun country.



Blessed Virgin Mary, St. Francis Catholic Church, Loretto, Kentucky

It’s a land of front-yard statues of Our Lady of Lourdes and pickup trucks lined up for Saturday night vigil Masses, high-vaulted 19th-century churches surrounded by well-tended cemeteries and flanked by schools rebuilt for baby boomers 75 years ago. There were once seven religious communities based in the Diocese of Louisville, most of them

here in the Holy Land. Gethsemani Abbey, the former home of Thomas Merton, still welcomes many pilgrims, as does the Basilica of St. Joseph in Bardstown, completed in 1819 as the first Catholic cathedral west of the Alleghenies, and decorated with paintings sent by Pope Leo XII and King Louis Philippe of France.



Grotto of Lourdes, Holy Cross Church, Holy Cross, Kentucky

Bardstown is more famous these days for its bourbon, and you could fit the basilica inside one of the industry’s seven-story black warehouses without too much trouble. But here, too, the Catholic roots run deep.

The first group of Catholics to settle the region in 1785, 25 families from southern Maryland, were led by Basil Hayden. He was the pioneer distiller of the region (Old Grand-Dad is named for him), but also built its first Catholic church on his farm, Holy Cross, which is the only going concern in the Marion County hamlet to which it gives its name. The Beams (as in Jim Beam) of nearby Clermont were pious Catholics as well, and legend has it that when Father William Byrne founded St. Mary’s College, the first of its kind west of the Alleghenies in 1819, in an abandoned distillery, he used whiskey crates for classroom benches and desks.



Gethsemani Abbey

Foursquare photo

I discovered the region while researching my family history, as I am descended from old Mary-

land Catholics. These English recusants flocked to the colony during its brief interlude as a refuge for Catholics in the mid-17th century. My ancestors gradually made their way west after the colony’s 1689 “Protestant Revolution” banned Catholic worship, and tensions about the Hanoverian succession led to crackdowns on loyalty to the Catholic Stuarts.

One ancestor of mine built a large chapel in his log home as a way around laws against public worship. Some sent children back to Europe to train as Jesuit priests and to join convents. Another was associated with a group arrested for firing a volley in front of the State House on the Old Pretender’s birthday in 1716, when state law banned Catholics from owning firearms. He responded by naming his daughter in honor of the would-be king and his consort a year



St. Joseph’s Basilica, Bardstown, Kentucky

later. The name “Jacoba Clementina” was proudly passed down through the family for several generations.

None of my relatives were part of Basil Hayden’s first band, but some joined parties that followed soon after, and Kentucky and Maryland cousins kept in contact for generations, often intermarrying, or resettling in each other’s communities to work or be cared for in old age. A first cousin many generations removed,

Catherine Spalding, was the foundress of the Sisters of Charity of Nazareth, a teaching order founded in Bardstown in 1812. Made superior at 19, she ruled the order for 54 years.

The Kentucky Catholics became remarkable institution-builders, founding in a few decades — besides



St. Thomas Church, Bardstown

St. Mary's College — a seminary to train missionaries, several convents, orphanages for boys and girls, and dozens of parishes and schools at a time when central Kentucky was still on the edge of the frontier. They built their churches in brick, generally in a Neoclassical style modeled on the Cathedral of the Assumption in Baltimore. The oldest were adorned with age-blackened Baroque paintings, whose journeys over mountain footpaths or down the Ohio River on keelboats were surely once the stuff of campfire yarns.

Their proclivity for fiery tipples and horseracing aside, the Kentucky Catholics probably most resembled America's other once-persecuted, culture-building religious group, the Mormons of Utah. Years of opposition from the surrounding Protestant culture confirmed their sense of a just cause and helped cast a vision for the kind of society they could build, if their neighbors would just give them space to do it. Placing a high value on education, they fostered gifted leaders, and hundreds dedicated their lives to helping their new institutions thrive.

I spent a day exploring Nelson, Marion, and Washington counties in December, after attending the Louisville wedding of our former

executive director, Christopher Wells. I visited several churches and walked long lines of headstones carved with family names I knew well from my research: Elder, Spalding, Mudd.

After vigil Mass on New Year's Eve, I chatted with the pastor of a church that had been served almost 200 years ago by a distant cousin.

Like me, he was a Marylander, but most of his ministry had been in the Holy Land. He was a few months short of retirement, and wasn't sure how the diocese would staff his two remote churches once he

stepped down.

"They call it the Holy Land," he told me, "that's what it used to be, anyway." His two parish schools had closed decades ago, when vocations ran short at the convents and the local farmers just couldn't afford to pay lay teachers. The church buildings were still tended lovingly, and there were a few dozen families in the pews that Saturday night, in a village with an official population of 144 — not all that bad, considering. But his parish was graying, with few children, offerings were down and there were serious doubts about the future.

"What happened? Was it the abuse scandals?" I asked. "No," he responded, "furthest thing from it. Just laziness — not teaching the faith to their children, not showing up. I guess they just didn't know what they had."

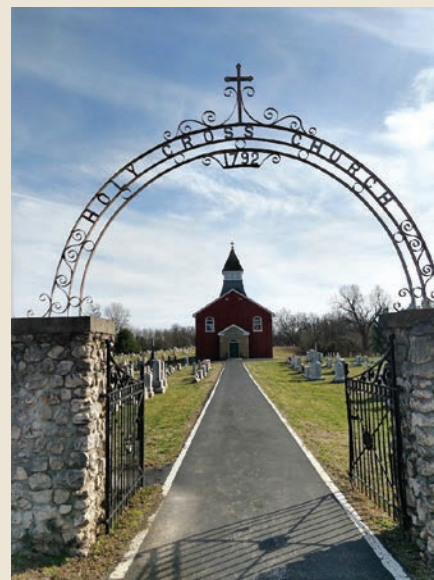
I hope the well-meaning — if rather weary — priest won't have the last word on the Catholics of Kentucky's Holy Land. As a leader in another church blessed with its own glorious past and struggling with similar forms of decline and forgetfulness, I can hardly cast stones. These days, at least, old Maryland Catholics and Anglicans have more in common than our ancestors would have guessed.

In church after church, I gave thanks for those who had brought the gospel to these communities, facing the hazards bravely, inspiring dedication and generosity in those who gathered in them. I also prayed for renewal, that the sons and daughters of Kentucky would fill the convent stalls and seminary desks again, that parish schools would reopen, and leaders be raised up to tackle today's problems: joblessness and opiate addiction.

Lent summons God's lazy people, those who "just don't know what they had." Joel speaks to weary Israel, "Rend your hearts and not your garments. Return to the Lord, your God, for he is gracious and merciful, slow to anger, and abounding in steadfast love." God, who justly condemns our indifference, also promises new life to those who repent. "I will pour out my spirit on all flesh; your sons and your daughters shall prophesy, your old men shall dream dreams, and your young men shall see visions."

Once the Spirit was poured out, and a 19-year-old girl became mother superior, cathedrals were raised in the wilderness, and boys learned the faith while sitting on whiskey crates. Who's to say he can't do it again?

*Mark Michael*



Holy Cross Church, Holy Cross, Kentucky

# Fourteen Decades of an Episcopal 'Family Album'

By Kirk Petersen

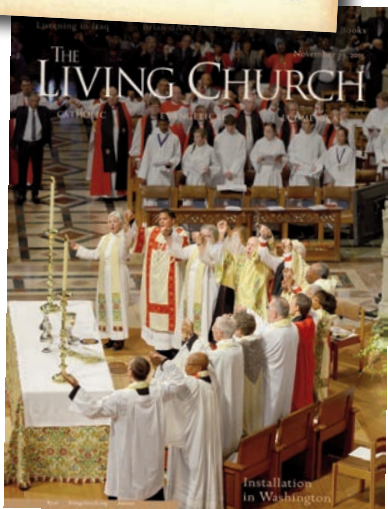
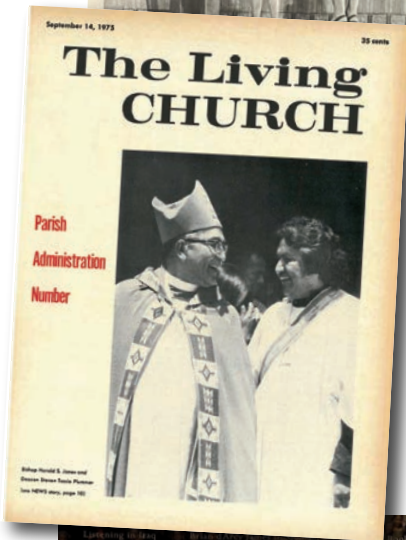
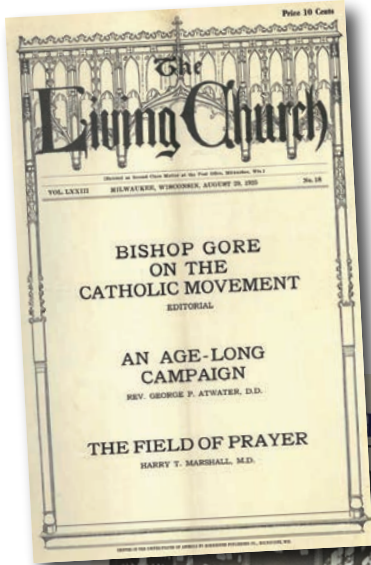
**T**HE LIVING CHURCH has been published continuously since 1878. The issue you are reading now is the 7,017th. Decades before anybody alive today was born, the proprietors of TLC started collecting the issues into bound volumes. In the past few years, we've been working toward making those historical issues available to the public (and for that matter, to our geographically distributed editorial team).

"It is really like a time travel opportunity," said Mitzi Budde, head librarian at Virginia Theological Seminary, which in some early decades did a better job of maintaining TLC collections than did the magazine. The collections allow "people to just step into the life of the church at that time and place and to see what THE LIVING CHURCH was describing and saying about what church life was like, what the theological questions were, what churchmanship was like."

"I'm passionate about getting these old issues online because I think of THE LIVING CHURCH as the Episcopal Church's family album," said Editor Mark Michael, who began working on the digitization project two years ago. "Our issues document the big ideas and crucial stories, but there's an awful lot of everyday church life in them — churches dedicating stained-glass windows or launching new chapters of the Brotherhood of St. Andrew; creative mission projects; obituaries of leaders long forgotten by the world, but remembered by God."

In the 14 decades of TLC's existence, editors have shown varying levels of commitment to maintaining archives. TLC has thousands of copies, but hundreds of the early issues were missing. Michael launched the project with a systematic search to track down copies of the missing issues. He found more than 900 issues at VTS, and a few dozen more at Nashotah House in Wisconsin. Both seminaries agreed to loan us what they had, to be scanned by a vendor specializing in preserving old manuscripts.

The early stage of the project was supported by a grant from the Historical Society of the Episcopal Church, which enabled the magazine to hire William Hargrave as a summer intern. Hargrave helped organize



the collection and began scanning. In the past two years, he and various staff members have hand-scanned 2,419 of the issues we own.

“I think the Historical Society understood, when we voted to fund this, this was going to be something of interest to historians generally, the church at large, and that it was valuable in and of itself,” said Dr. J. Michael Utzinger, president of HSEC and a professor of religion at Hampden-Sydney College in Virginia.

Utzinger specializes in religious movements of the late 1950s and 1960s, and has reviewed TLC issues from 1956 to 1964. “The one thing I’ll say about Episcopalians that THE LIVING CHURCH shows in spades,” he said, “is that we air everything out in the news, right? We’re just not afraid to put our dirty laundry out where everyone can see it.”

As an example, in 1958, schools in parts of Virginia closed rather than obeying federal orders to desegregate. Episcopal churches in Norfolk and Charlottesville grappled with whether they were willing to use their facilities to provide classroom space. Different churches came to different conclusions, and the arguments were reflected in the pages of TLC. For a historian, “all of those things are important pieces to the puzzle,” Utzinger said.

Optical character recognition (OCR) technology has advanced to the point that it’s not just possible, but also economically feasible, to create a searchable digital document from an image of words printed on a page. This can be done at high speed for new and recent books, by machines that turn the pages automatically and capture image after image without human supervision.

You know how when you photocopy a page from a book, sometimes you have to push down *really hard* so the book lies flat enough to capture the entire page?

You don’t want to do that with a century-old manuscript of yellowed paper. If it’s an old, bound document, you don’t even want to lay it face down, to avoid stress on the deteriorating glue in the spine.

Using a high-speed machine with fragile originals can turn an irreplaceable artifact into “historical confetti,” said Alfredo Ignacio, director of digital services at Progressive Technology Federal Systems (PTFS).

“The industry has really made huge advancements over digitization of fragile rare copies of materials,” said David Buresh, a digitization professional. Buresh is working with Budde on the TLC project as part of his studies toward a master’s degree in library science at the Catholic University of America in Washington.

TLC has selected Maryland-based PTFS, which has been a vendor for the federal government since the 1990s, to scan the issues on loan from VTS and Nashotah. Among many other services, PTFS specializes in digitizing old documents without damaging the originals.

“Having worked for so long with these kinds of materials, we basically developed a very nuanced skill set with them,”

Ignacio said.

The primary tool PTFS uses to digitize old manuscripts is an i2s CopiBook V-Shape Scanner, model V-A1 XD — a \$90,000-plus device with two high-resolution cameras pointing down at a V-shaped cradle. For each pair of facing pages, a clear, V-shaped cover is carefully lowered by hand to flatten the manuscript, and digital images are captured through the glass. The device can also be used for individual pieces of paper.

For each image, the camera also records metadata, including the name of the publication, volume number, issue number, date, and a variety of technical specifications.

“Once indexing is completed, we then go through the process of creating the Adobe PDF file and adding the OCR layer of hidden text, to make it full-text searchable,” Ignacio said. “We then do a quality assurance, and then make sure that the file and the outputs are in the correct file structure, the right naming convention.” The quality assurance involves adjusting factors like lighting, contrast, and resolution.

In other words, there’s a lot of complicated stuff, and trained operators are required. Still, the cost is more modest than you might expect: 50 cents per page. But that starts to add up if you’re scanning tens of thousands of pages.

Technological change has affected how the magazine has been printed, stored, and — in recent decades — digitized. To save storage space, some magazines were transferred to microfilm — an older technology that archivists will contend with for decades to come.

Many of the back issues are available at [livingchurch.org](http://livingchurch.org) — look for “Archive” on the bottom left of the homepage. But the collection there is frustratingly incomplete, and the issues are a patchwork of PDFs and links to Google Books.

Google Books is an ambitious digitization project that the tech giant launched in 2004, with the goal of scanning every book in the world. Copyright litigation followed. The project is largely moribund now, but over a decade ago, Richard Mammana Jr., who was then on the Living Church Foundation’s board, filed individual copyright waivers for thousands of issues.

The reproduction quality of the Google Books volumes is poor compared to the PDFs, and the interface for reading



TLC’s vendor uses a \$90,000-plus device with two high-resolution cameras pointing down at a V-shaped cradle.

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them is awful. Multiple issues are lumped together into PDFs that are hundreds of pages long. The only way to navigate is by scrolling, and they're housed on Google servers, with no guarantee they will remain. But they are searchable, and generally legible. The online archive search tool on the TLC site will perform a universal search of all the available issues in either format, but it tends to miss references in the Google Books issues.

In parallel with the PTFS scanning effort, Michael has been scanning issues donated by the Diocese of Maryland that span some of the years of the Google Books volumes. He's filling the gaps by methodically downloading the Google Books volumes and breaking them into PDFs for individual issues, which we then will house on our servers. That will make it easier to browse individual issues, but the reproduction quality for the Google Books issues will remain the same.

Some of the earliest issues at VTS are available only on microfilm. Because the microfilm issues are high quality, they can be scanned directly on PTFS's Eclipse 400 NextStar Plus work station, at about a third of the cost per page.

Charges from PTFS for the next phase of scanning total about \$15,000, which is a tidy sum for a small nonprofit like TLC. We're looking for additional grants to cover the cost.

When this phase is complete, we'll still be missing four issues — one each from 1896 and 1898, and two from 1905. If you have a box full of your great-grandparents' old issues in the attic, we'd love to hear from you. □

# Vol. I, No. 1, of THE LIVING CHURCH: An Appreciation, of Sorts

By Kirk Petersen

I enjoy telling people, usually to their surprise, that THE LIVING CHURCH has been published continuously since 1878. For years I've wanted to see the very first issue, but TLC didn't own a copy. Thanks to modern technology and to the Bishop Payne Library at the Virginia Theological Seminary, we now possess digitized, searchable issues from the earliest years.

Volume I, Number 1, is dated November 2, 1878 — a 24-page issue edited by Samuel S. Harris, D.D., and John Fulton, D.D., who could not have imagined they were launching a publication that would endure for 144 years, and counting.

To be frank, the first issue provides few clues about *why* the magazine has enjoyed such longevity. To modern sensibilities, some of the editorial choices seem bizarre.

The cover is a full-page, text-only advertisement for Jansen, McLurg & Co., a Chicago bookseller that stayed in business until 1962. Few if any of the dozen-plus blurbs for books reveal any obvious religious theme. Page 2 is crowded with 17 small ads for books, jewelry, wigs, aprons, and more.

Page 3 is the opening article — three oppressive gray columns of uninterrupted text, beginning with a tiny one-column headline and subhead: "News and Notes — ABROAD." Not exactly clickbait. Similar walls of text consume 14 entire pages, and parts of several others. Throughout the magazine, the only illustrations or bold headlines are in advertisements.

Keep in mind that this is the very first issue of a magazine focused on what was then "the Protestant Episcopal Church." How does the lead article begin?

THE Eastern Question which was to have been settled by the Treaty of Berlin, seems to be as much a question as ever. The situation may be briefly summarized as follows: All Turkey is in a condition of lawlessness and discontent. Wherever Mahometan power is in the ascendant, the abuses against which Christian Europe protested, are even worse than before the late war.



The geopolitical analysis continues into the second column of text, where we finally find an Anglican reference: “THE eighteenth Congress of the Church of England, held recently at Sheffield, deserves more than a passing notice.” The meandering paragraph includes the full titles of eight discussion topics from the program, starting with “Foreign and Colonial Missions, their Condition, Organization, and Prosperity.” Nothing specific about what was said, mind you — just the titles, and some vaguely snarky commentary.

Midway through the next page, we find our first mention of the Episcopal Church, under a tiny subhead: “AT HOME.”

“THE first event to be chronicled among our notes of home intelligence is the advent of this journal,” it begins. We learn that TLC is an evolution of a monthly Diocese of Illinois newspaper called *The Diocese*. “Under the direction of Dr. Leffingwell, *The Diocese*, afterward called *The Province*, became the brightest monthly newspaper in the country.”

The bright Dr. Charles Wesley Leffingwell edited TLC from 1880 to 1900, but you won’t find his full name in the article. The magazine also apparently was beginning a style of referring to bishops only as “Bishop McLaren,” “Bishop Burgess,” et cetera, along with identifying the diocese. (Quick: What’s the first name of the bishop two dioceses to the east or west of you?)

Despite giving short shrift to their names, TLC was unambiguously pro-bishop.

No men, we believe, have higher views of the authority of Bishops than the editors of THE LIVING CHURCH. ... [T]he Bishop is, by virtue of his office, the canonical judge of everything. ... THE LIVING CHURCH will gladly serve the Bishops, and will still more gladly strive to earn their approbation. Nothing we can do to help them in their apostolic work will be left undone. No man shall attack them in our columns.

The current editors of TLC also hold many bishops in high regard, but we seek to “serve” only the Episcopal Church, the Anglican Communion, and the Almighty.

Here’s a passage that resonates today, describing the “two great parties arrayed against each other” in the Episcopal Church:

There is still a Low Church tradition and a High Church tradition. ... Out of the latter there has sprung the retro-

gressive tendency to [medievalism] in doctrine, practice and worship; out of the former comes the far more deep and silent tendency — full alike of peril and of hope — to reconsider all old questions in the light of modern criticism and scientific fact.

Another foreshadowing of recent events:

Yellow fever is a specific poison of exotic origin. Its habitat is within the tropics, and it is safe to say that it never originates within the United States. ... The General Government should at once establish a Department of Public Health ... to maintain a rigid quarantine against infected foreign ports, employing the naval forces, if necessary, to enforce it.

Church governance meetings these days often begin with an acknowledgement that the meeting occurs on land taken without compensation from specific Indigenous tribes. This is part of a broader effort to atone for the church’s past sins. The first issue provides a window into the attitudes that gave birth to those sins:

The Indians have been on the war-path again. Something ails them. What is it? What is the evil, and what the remedy? Possibly the evil and the ailment are not the red man’s only. ... It is perfectly certain that whether the Indians are to blame or not, the authority which ought to control them is responsible for their behavior.

I could go on, but it’s time now to end on a note more respectful to the editors who founded a resilient organization that helps sustain my body and soul. That first issue gave voice to an aspiration that still inspires us more than 14 decades later. It’s a guiding principle that has come to be known as communion across difference.

On this first day of its existence, THE LIVING CHURCH desires to be distinctly understood. It is not, and under its present management it cannot be made, the organ of any school or party in the Church, and just as little will it be the enemy of any. In their work for Christ, it is the friend of all; and if in free discussion it finds reason to oppose the views or purposes of any of them, it will do so with a glad remembrance that we are all the sons of one beloved Mother.

These days, of course, we also remember the daughters. □

## ETHICS

# We Cannot Automate Wisdom

By Jon Jordan

In the world of technology, there is nothing new under the sun. That is not to say there is no innovation in technology, but rather that when a new technology emerges, the same old cycle occurs.

The Next Big Thing is announced, and is greeted with heightened expectations from all sides. Whether the reaction is *This changes everything* or *We are all doomed*, expectations of the new technology's significance are almost universally overstated.

This leads to part two of the cycle: the letdown. This new technology doesn't change everything, and it has not destroyed us all. The general population moves on. Either the technology becomes so ubiquitous that its presence is hardly noticed, or it becomes so obsolete that nobody cares.

But there is one final step to the cycle. It is perhaps the most dangerous step, in large part because most people have moved on. Part three of the cycle is the arrival of unintended consequences. The Next Big Thing designed to improve our lives harms more than it helps. Nuclear technology led to the rise of both nuclear weapons and microwavable bacon. Put mildly, both are detrimental to human flourishing.

ChatGPT is, in this sense, the Next Big Thing. We are in the middle of the first cycle, though some among us have already moved on to the second.

Headlines about this new iteration of artificial intelligence have ranged from "Goodbye, Homework" and "ChatGPT Will End High School English" to "Will ChatGPT Make Lawyers Obsolete? (Hint: Be Afraid)." The more nuanced among us are either ignoring the phenomenon entirely, or pointing out that it does some things surprisingly well. Whether it does what it tries to do is one question; whether we *should* try to use it, and for what, are more important questions.

I serve as a priest in a sacramental church and headmaster of a school in the classical tradition. Both of these roles mean my interest is piqued when our culture is attracted to *virtual* replacements for otherwise human activity.

Tools like ChatGPT do not negate the need for a proper education in the humanities; they emphasize the need for a more *humane* approach to teaching and learning. These



Possessed Photography via Unsplash

new tools cannot replace the very human act of teaching and preaching.

On the contrary, tools like this highlight a deeper problem in our increasingly virtual age. Our increased appetite for automation points to a detrimental consequence for those who care about both formation and thinking: we have an increasing preference for transmitting and consuming *information* rather than wisdom.

In both the world of education and of the church, the rise of artificial intelligence highlights the need for a recovery of wisdom, not information, as the chief aim of formation. Information can be communicated by a computer; wisdom must be transmitted from one human to another.

If an English class and the essays it assigns are geared toward teaching students how to convey information, then artificial intelligence will succeed in helping students cheat more easily. If, instead, an essay asks students to glean from the virtues or vices of a particular character, there is little that disembodied lines of code can do to help with this very human task.

Similarly, if a preacher is already using the Sunday sermon simply to inform congregants or call them to a specific action or cause, artificial intelligence could easily be used to form the sermon. The fact that some AI sermons are being touted as an improvement to preaching says far more about the state of mainline Protestant preaching today than it does the merits of artificial intelligence.

If, instead, sermon preparation is meant to be a prayerful reading of the Scriptures with a particular community of fellow pilgrims in mind, there is little that an anonymous bot can do to help with this very human task.

Artificial intelligence can make an already misguided approach to formation easier on both the teacher and the learner. It can serve as a shortcut to consuming and creating information. But by taking another step toward virtual automation, it also further reduces the possibility of learning wisdom from another human.

What is the answer to the problems highlighted by tools like ChatGPT? What can we do to pursue wisdom ourselves, and to guide others? This is too important a question to be answered by one person.

But I do suspect that recovering the pursuit of wisdom over information will coincide with rediscovering the beauty of the Incarnation, in which an embodied human does something only a human can do for the sake of other humans.

A starting point for this sort of rediscovery is a preference for the most human approach to our daily tasks. If, like me, your daily tasks involve writing in any capacity, ChatGPT and tools like it are pale parodies of the human work we could be doing. We are better off doing what we can to approach our tasks in the most human of ways.

*The Rev. Jon Jordan is a priest at Church of the Incarnation, Dallas, and is head of Coram Deo Academy's Dallas campus.*



# Artificial Intelligence and the Episcopal Church

Review by Kirk Petersen

Artificial intelligence has been much in the news of late, particularly ChatGPT, a creation of OpenAI, which instantly begins spitting out detailed answers when a question is entered.

Articles about ChatGPT generally fall in one of two categories:

- Gee whiz, this is so cool! (Despite its inaccuracies and other flaws.)
- Artificial intelligence raises significant concerns about the future of learning. As the technology improves, will AI undercut the need for research and writing skills, much like calculators have undercut basic math skills?

The pedagogical concerns are real and important, and are considered in the essay on the facing page. This is a gee-whiz article. To co-opt a Russian proverb, the marvel is not that the bear dances well, but that it dances at all.



I asked ChatGPT a series of questions about the Episcopal Church. The answers ranged from quite sophisticated to quite wrong. Here are some of the questions and responses, annotated in *italics*. Some responses have been shortened.

## Explain the schism in the Episcopal Church in the early 2000s.

In the early 2000s, the Episcopal Church experienced a significant schism, or division, over issues related to theology, governance, and social issues.

The *primary cause* of the schism was the ordination of Gene Robinson as the first openly gay bishop in the Episcopal Church. (*It would be more accurate to describe this as the “precipitating event”; cf. Archduke Ferdinand, assassination of.*) Robinson’s ordination in 2003 was strongly opposed by some members of the church, who argued that it was contrary to traditional Christian teachings on sexuality and marriage.

The ordination of Gene Robinson and other issues related to human sexuality, such as the blessing of same-sex unions, led to a significant rift within the Episcopal Church and the Anglican

Communion. ...

As a result of the schism, some conservative members of the Episcopal Church, including some bishops and congregations, withdrew from the denomination and formed new, more conservative Anglican churches. The schism had significant consequences for the Episcopal Church and the Anglican Communion, and the issues that led to the schism continue to be sources of tension and disagreement within the church.

**Grade: A** (*Excellent, despite a minor quibble; nuanced and impartial*)

## Who is the president of the House of Deputies of the Episcopal Church?

The President of the House of Deputies of the Episcopal Church is the leader and chief spokesperson for the House of Deputies, which is one of the two houses of the General Convention, the highest legislative body of the Episcopal Church. The President of the House of Deputies is elected by the House of Deputies and serves as a co-president of the General Convention, along with the Presiding Bishop of the Episcopal Church.

As of 2021, the President of the House of Deputies of the Episcopal Church is the Rev. Gay Clark Jennings. Jennings was elected as President of the House of Deputies in 2015 and is serving her *second* term in office. (*No: She was re-elected in 2015 and was serving her third term in office in 2021. This answer also demonstrates a systemic shortcoming: ChatGPT’s knowledge base has not been updated extensively since 2021. Julia Ayala Harris was elected to the role in 2022.*)

**Grade: B-plus** (*drops to a C if points are deducted for 2021 cutoff*)

## How many issues has THE LIVING CHURCH magazine published?

*The Living Church* is a weekly magazine (*Outdated: TLC transitioned to a biweekly schedule in 2011, and to a monthly schedule in 2023.*) that covers news, events, and issues related to the Episcopal Church and the Anglican Communion. The magazine has been in

continuous publication since 1878 and has published thousands of issues over its long history.

It is not possible to determine the exact number of issues that *The Living Church* has published, as this information is not readily available. (*This is the 7,017th issue of TLC, as stated in the cover story. “Not possible” is overstated, but “not readily available” is spot on. Editor Mark Michael did a lot of research to come up with that number. No points deducted.*) ...

*The Living Church* is a respected and influential source of news and analysis for the Episcopal Church and the wider Anglican Communion. (*Sucking up for a better grade?*) It covers a wide range of topics and issues, including theology, liturgy, governance, social justice, and current events. The magazine is published in print and online and is available by subscription.

**Grade: A-minus** (*including extra credit for “respected and influential”*)

## How many dioceses are in the Episcopal Church?

As of 2021, there are 101 dioceses in the Episcopal Church in the United States of America. (*Close enough; it depends on how you define a diocese. But this neglects the fact that some of the dioceses are in other countries.*) A diocese is a geographical division of the church that is headed by a bishop and is responsible for the oversight and governance of the church within a specific region.

The Episcopal Church is organized into nine provinces, which are regional divisions that include multiple dioceses.

The provinces are:

The Province of the Atlantic States

The Province of the Midwest

The Province of New England

The Province of New York

The Province of Newark

The Province of the Southeast

The Province of the Southwest

The Province of the Virginias

The Province of the West

(*Not even close. There are in fact nine provinces, and Province VII is known as the Province of the Southwest, but every other*

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*part of this section is wrong. See Wikipedia or the Episcopal Church's website.)*

Each diocese is headed by a bishop who is responsible for the spiritual and administrative leadership of the church within the diocese. The dioceses of the Episcopal Church are diverse and serve a wide range of communities and congregations throughout the United States.

**Grade: D** (*Rises to B if you omit the section on the provinces*)

### Which is the largest diocese of the Episcopal Church?

It is not possible to determine the largest diocese of the Episcopal Church based on the number of parishes or congregations alone, as the size of a diocese can also be influenced by factors such as the geographical size of the diocese, the population of the region, and the number of lay and clergy members.

That being said, some of the larger dioceses of the Episcopal Church in terms of membership and geographical size include:

1. The Diocese of Texas, which covers the entire state of Texas (*No: Texas includes four complete dioceses and part of a fifth*) and has more than 70,000 members.
2. The Diocese of Los Angeles, which covers the counties of Los Angeles, Santa Barbara, and Ventura (*also San Bernadino, Orange, and part of Riverside*) and has more than 70,000 members (*actually, 44,000*).
3. The Diocese of Ohio, which covers the entire state of Ohio (*the Bishop of Southern Ohio begs to differ*) and has more than 50,000 members (*the two Ohio dioceses combined have about 33,000 members; even the combined diocese would not rank in the top 10*).
4. The Diocese of Central Florida, which covers the central part of the state of Florida and has more than 45,000 members (*No: 24,000, ranking about 20th*).
5. The Diocese of New York, which covers the boroughs of Manhattan, Staten Island, and the Bronx (*plus seven counties north of New York City*) and has more than 45,000 members.

Again, it is important to note that the size of a diocese is not the only factor that determines its importance or influence within the Episcopal Church. All dioceses, regardless of size, play a vital role in the life and mission of the church. (*Nice touch.*)

**Grade: C-minus** (*Comprehensive data is readily available, although it's tricky to pluck precise answers to questions like this from the tables. The Diocese of Haiti, which operates a network of more than 200 schools, reported just under 100,000 baptized members in 2021. The second-largest diocese is Texas, with more than 73,000 baptized members. Virginia, Massachusetts, and New York round out the top five.*)

### How many U.S. Presidents have been Episcopalian?

Several U.S. Presidents have been Episcopalian, including:

George Washington  
James Monroe  
John Quincy Adams  
Franklin D. Roosevelt  
Gerald Ford  
George H.W. Bush  
George W. Bush (*cradle Episcopalian; United Methodist while in office*)

(*Eleven presidents were Episcopalian while in office — nearly one of every four, the most of any denomination. This list omits William Henry Harrison, John Tyler, Zachary Taylor, Franklin Pierce, and Chester Arthur — all ranked by historians as among the worst presidents in history.*)

**Grade: Incomplete**

### What do Episcopalians believe?

Episcopalians are Christians who belong to the Episcopal Church, a mainline Protestant denomination that is part of the Anglican Communion. Episcopalians share many beliefs with other Christians, including belief in one God, the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit; belief in the divinity and humanity of Jesus Christ; and belief in the Bible as the inspired word of God.

Episcopalians also believe in the historic creeds of the Christian faith, including the Nicene Creed and the Apostles' Creed, which summarize the central beliefs of the Christian faith.

In terms of theology, Episcopalians are generally considered to be part of the

broad middle ground of Christian belief, between more liberal denominations on one side and more conservative denominations on the other. Episcopalians generally place a strong emphasis on reason, tradition, and scriptural authority in matters of faith and practice.

Episcopalians are also known for their liturgical worship, which includes the use of the Book of Common Prayer and the celebration of the Eucharist, or Holy Communion, at each Sunday service. The Episcopal Church is also committed to social justice and works to promote peace, justice, and reconciliation in the world.

**Grade: A**

### In the Episcopal Church, what are the arguments for and against same-sex marriage?

Some argue in favor of same-sex marriage on the grounds that it affirms the equality and dignity of all people, including LGBTQ+ individuals. Others argue that the Bible teaches that marriage is between a man and a woman and that same-sex marriage is therefore not in line with the teachings of the Church.

Those who support same-sex marriage often point to the fact that the Episcopal Church has a long history of working to include and welcome all people, regardless of their sexual orientation or gender identity. They argue that the Church has a responsibility to recognize and support loving, committed relationships between people of the same sex, just as it does for opposite-sex couples.

On the other hand, those who are opposed to same-sex marriage may argue that the Bible clearly states that marriage is between a man and a woman and that the Church should not deviate from this teaching. They may also argue that allowing same-sex marriage would go against the traditional understanding of marriage and the natural order of things.

It's important to note that within the Episcopal Church, there is a diversity of opinions on this issue, and people of good faith can hold different viewpoints on this matter.

**Grade: A-plus** (*stuck the landing with the last sentence*)

# Finding Holy Fire

## Ten Minutes with Christopher Poore of Seminary Street Press

By Richard J. Mammana Jr.

On October 28, *Anglican Theological Review* announced its annual Hefling Award to Christopher Poore of Virginia Theological Seminary for his essay “The God of Virginia Seminary: Retracing a Tradition of Theological Liberalism and White Supremacy” in the Fall 2022 issue. Poore is the editor of VTS Press, and serves as founding editor of Seminary Street Press ([tiny.cc/anglicanlibrary](http://tiny.cc/anglicanlibrary)). Poore’s writing has appeared in *America*, *Earth & Altar*, and *St. Vladimir’s Theological Quarterly*. Before attending VTS, he was a Regenstein Fellow at the University of Chicago.

### Could you say something about how you started Seminary Street Press?

I like to read my way into things, and I actually had a very hard time reading my way into Anglicanism. I would ask, “Who is an Anglican theologian I could read?” And people would say, “Rowan Williams.” Well, yes, of course. I love Rowan Williams. But what then? What next? That was a much harder question.

I tried to read some contemporary books, and they would make these wild generalizations about Richard Hooker — but, then, no quotation, no citation, just a generalization. I got the sense that we did not have the sources open before us. I wondered why that was. I wondered why we feared holding the past accountable, and I wondered why we feared being held accountable by the past.

But I kept poking around in odd little corners of Twitter and Facebook, and I found these strange, wonderful people who were reading all of these Anglican texts — but in PDF scans from old library copies, scans from



Christopher Poore

Gravin Tomlin photo

books published in the 1700s, the 1800s. Really, I mean, the texts I found on Archive.org or Google Books were sometimes barely legible. And all of these texts were out of print — or available only in unpredictable facsimile editions. You never knew what you were buying, and you had to be in on these online conversations in order to find them, to know about them. I thought, “How can we make these texts easier to find?”

And then there is just something about having a physical book. The

book, or the codex, really took form alongside Christianity. I think there is something about the book that helps us perceive incarnated reality. Since I am a young person, let me speak for a moment about young people in the Church: we long to be incarnated. We have lived at such a distance from ourselves. The Church should be saying: “Come here, God has given you a body.” And that’s what I wanted to say — albeit with a book.

So COVID happened. I was stuck

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in my house. The Midwestern tundra blew around me, and the sun shattered through an atmosphere that was 20 degrees below zero. I thought, *Looks like I am not going anywhere. I will stay inside and make books, and maybe the people on Twitter will want them.* As it turned out, they did.

### **Why did you start Seminary Street Press?**

I came to the Episcopal Church from Eastern Orthodoxy, and in the Orthodox Church, I had seen the way that publishing old, almost forgotten texts could revivify a tradition. I'm thinking of the way that, in the 1700s, St. Nikodimos of the Holy Mountain and St. Makarios of Corinth decided to compile all of these old texts on prayer, and the Jesus Prayer in particular, and they did this for those who loved the beautiful, who wanted to dwell in the radiance of the beautiful — thus, we have the *Philokalia*. And now the entire world, Orthodox and otherwise, is on fire for the Jesus Prayer. It seems like such a sturdy tradition, but actually, Nikodimos and Makarios took something fragile, something that could have disappeared, and gave it new life.

That is sort of how I conceive of our task, but in regard to Anglicanism. I want to help us discover an inner sturdiness that comes from the strenuous act of reading our own past — sometimes with sheer joy and awe, other times in a spirit of repentance, sometimes indeed with real terror. Our past is too complex to ignore.

And what's more, we are all up against this constant anxiety: will the Episcopal Church disappear? Well, we honestly don't know. The judgment of God is inscrutable. So, in the meantime, find some holy fire in the world you have been given, and ignite something, warm the bodies of people who have grown frigid in the world's darkness, heal the wounds the Church has caused, tend to everyone with the power of the light.

I have been given this church, the Episcopal Church, as the place where God has providentially decided to bring me into the depths of his beauty and holiness. So my job is to tend to the light that has already been given here, the light that, we know, is always being given again and anew. Touch the mountains, O Lord, and they shall smoke.

### **What's the production process for individual titles?**

The first task is to create a dependable transcription of the book, and then we ask about whether it needs to be enriched in some way. William Douglass, for instance — he was the successor of Absalom Jones at the African Episcopal Church of St. Thomas, and in the 1800s, they published his sermons, but the publisher didn't give Scripture citations. We fixed that.

Or Vida Scudder's *Social Teachings of the Christian Year* — her citations were sort of helter-skelter. People couldn't always go and find what she was talking about. So I refurbished the references. I also could see that Scudder's book had enormous potential for parish formation. Her love of the prayer book is palpable. So I wrote a discussion guide to help us all along.

Once that refurbishing process is done, I do the design work — every book receives a completely new typesetting — and I make the book available through our social media profiles. Then we try to share the wisdom of these texts through Instagram and Twitter and Facebook, because maybe not everyone will read the entire book, but there is something here, some small pearl of great price that has the potential to transform our life before the triune God.

### **Do you have any sense of how things are being used in courses or parishes?**

That has been one of the most exciting things to see: the books satu-

rating the everyday life of Anglican communities around the world. The Rev. Dr. Katherine Sonderegger teaches three of our books in her Anglican Thought class at Virginia Theological Seminary — *The Incarnation of the Son of God* by Charles Gore, *Social Teachings* by Scudder, and then we just made a version of *The King's Book* specifically with her class in mind, and they began using that this year.

We also just got tagged in an Instagram post from a Brazilian priest who bought all of our titles and is reading them through, one by one. I'm also thinking about the wonderful priest Mother Brit Frazier, who distilled the wisdom of Felicia Skene's *The Ministry of Consolation* in order to help people prepare for confessions. We're talking modern people, people with iPhones, people who've maybe never been in a confessional. These people were helped along by a Victorian Anglo-Catholic named Felicia Skene. This is the communion of saints at work. And it really does seem like Vida Scudder has been adopted by college ministries and college students, who love her holiness and her radical politics and her belief that poetry and liturgy can heal us.

### **What's next?**

The titles on the horizon are fascinating — readers can look forward to volume two of the *Tracts for the Times*, Andrew Raines has been editing a classic commentary on the 1662 prayer book, and I also want to publish more texts reflecting the experience of Black Episcopalians. I'm interested, too, in expanding the way we reach readers and in expanding our pool of editors. Dreaming big, for a moment: I'm curious about ways we can instigate conversations: parish retreats on Anglican spirituality, podcasts, reading groups. As I said, these are just dreams for now, but dreams have been known on occasion to become reality. □



The Madonna of Zinkovy, originally in the Church of Wenceslas in Zinkovy, was painted circa 1330-40. It is on loan to the Convent of St. Agnes Museum of Bohemia, Prague. Wikimedia image

## Child with Goldfinch

By Elizabeth Orens

*The goldfinch that Christ holds in his hand anticipates his future suffering. According to legend, the bird is a symbol of redemption in that it extracted thorns from Christ's crown at his crucifixion.*

The child clutches a bird to his chest  
His mother, crowned, turns her head away  
Startled, she sees her child's farewell test  
Crossed in suffering on his glorious day  
And the gold bird sings his Savior a song  
All becoming in melodic grief and beauty  
Enchanting a reversal of the world's wrong  
And a-plucking Christ's thorns as his duty  
Mother, child, bird together in innocence  
Enjoy this quiet moment of sweet affection  
Nature's gift a new trinity of magnificence  
A mystery of divine purpose and perfection  
Here God's intervention of song and time  
Sweetens all heartaches — a blessed paradigm

*The Rev. Elizabeth Orens is priest associate at St. Paul's K Street, Washington, D.C.*

# ‘Modern’ Devotion

## Pärt, Poulenc, & Stravinsky

Works for Choir & Orchestra (Live)

Genia Kühmeier, Bavarian Radio Chorus,

Bavarian Radio Symphony Orchestra, and Mariss Jansons

BR-Klassik, €19.95

Review by Christopher Hoh

This album captures outstanding live performances of three choral masterworks of the 20th century.

Estonian Arvo Pärt’s “Berliner Messe” conjures the near-mystical sound world he made famous. While introspective and slow at times, such as in the quiet Kyrie with which it opens, the work elsewhere (the “Credo”) is vigorous, almost boisterous.

People who reject Pärt as too static should give this a listen. The liturgically minded will be interested to note this rendition includes two alleluias and the sequence for Pentecost, with Pärt’s original music. Despite the crunchy dissonances, the work remains contemplative and profound. It ends with an “Agnus Dei” that is simple and spare and feels just right.

The critique of Francis Poulenc a few decades earlier was nearly opposite: too jaunty for sacred music. Again, the music today sounds appropriate, even for the crucifixion tableau of the “Stabat Mater.” (Well, maybe not the happy “Quæ Mœrebat.”) The 12 short movements range over the emotional landscape, including moments of ravishing beauty (“O Quam Tristis”).

The beginning and ending movements are calm, even when loud. Throughout, Poulenc’s distinctive harmony is rich and intriguing. Soprano Genia Kühmeier commands the stage in her brief solos. These first two works fit together well. In both, conductor Mariss Jansons and

the Bavarian Symphony offer an expressive, evocative rendering.

Igor Stravinsky’s sublime, seminal symphony led the way in 1930 for updated treatment of venerable church texts. Nearly 100 years later, it doesn’t strike my ear as new music, yet in some ways it’s still the most arresting work of the three. The modernism comes through in energetic syncopation, jazz harmony, and orchestral color. This performance keeps the music fresh, lively sometimes, poignant at others. The third and final

movement begins slower than some interpretations, and in the later, fast sections is never rushed, an approach that adds convincingly to the drama.

Pärt writes out of an Eastern Orthodox tradition; Poulenc’s insouciance was quintessentially French. Stravinsky’s background reflected both strains, so his symphony is at home with the others on the disc. It’s a satisfying program. Note, if you are searching for the recording, titles and spellings are German, i.e., “Berliner Messe,” “Strawinsky.” The

album is available through streaming services, but also through the label’s website: [br-klassik.de](http://br-klassik.de).

Jansons has both orchestra and chorus firmly in hand, bringing subtle finesse to all the works. In the recorded sound the instruments may overshadow the singers occasionally, but it’s never terrible; and with an orchestra as fine as the Bavarian Symphony, it still sounds good. A few extraneous noises from the concert hall do not detract from the overall impression — moving musical monuments of the last century offered with authority and devotion.

*Christopher Hoh is a composer/publisher and artistic consultant based in Arlington, Virginia. He is also a retired U.S. career diplomat and lifelong musician and concertgoer.*



# Lenten and Lent-Adjacent

## Learning Humility

A Year of Searching for a Vanishing Virtue

By Richard J. Foster

IVP, pp. 192, \$25

## Lent

The Season of Repentance and Renewal

By Esau McCauley

IVP, pp. 112, \$20

## Failure

What Jesus Said About Sin, Mistakes, and Messing Stuff Up

By Emma Ineson

SPCK, pp. 240, \$14.99

Review by Cole Hartin

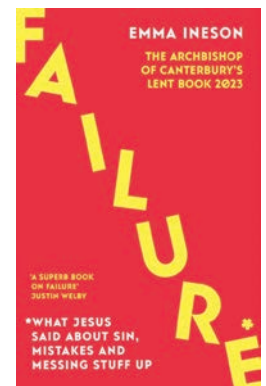
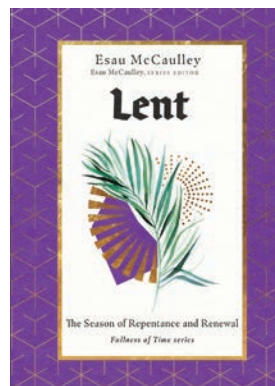
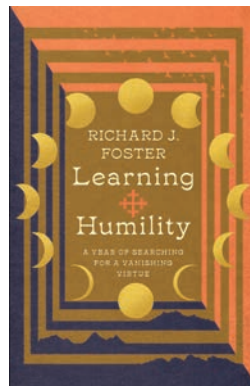
Richard J. Foster's *Learning Humility: A Year of Searching for a Vanishing Virtue* is a bit of a puzzle. As a meditation on humility, it is surely a welcome gift during the season of Lent. But the path to the subject is labyrinthine. Instead of a study structured topically or historically, it is a haphazard set of field notes from Foster's musings in a calendar year, and not a standard Gregorian calendar year, mind you. Foster uses the Lakota calendar instead, because of its "close connection to the earth." Okay. Foster is part Ojibwa.

So what we have with *Learning Humility* is a collection of diary entries grouped into the weeks of the 13 Lakota moons. They feel scattered and out of joint at times. Sometimes they are meditations on Scripture or reflections on what the great thinkers of the Christian tradition have had to say about humility. At other times, Foster writes about tending his home fireplace, hiking, or snatches of Lakota history. I am left feeling like these are notes for a book rather than a finished project. Foster has enough of a following, and enough of a

legacy, that he can get away with it.

I read the book quickly at first. I didn't enjoy it. But I submitted to the text and came to be warmed by Foster's prose. It's best to think of Foster as a tour guide, rather than a sage. He brings us to saints and has us

Time series, a collection of short "theological and spiritual reflections that seek to provide spiritual formation by helping the reader live fully into the practices of each season." Each is meant as an "accessible guide to the church year ... more than a devo-



ponder their writings. One of the few times Foster mentions Lent, he writes:

I've tended to have a rather dim view of the contemporary practices surrounding Lent. Often these practices are embarrassingly trivial ... perhaps fasting from coffee or chocolate or other equally trite things. And for me the liturgical traditions that have grown up around Lent seem to be little more than efforts at "organized gloom," with no genuine rationale for the gloom.

I suspect Anglicans might have a different perspective on the liturgical practices of Lent. Foster is not all critical: he is attracted to an Eastern Orthodox practice of adopting an "interior posture of 'humility and repentance.'" Maybe cultivating this posture can go hand in hand with our liturgical practices.

If Foster addresses Lenten themes in indirect ways, Esau McCauley tackles them head-on in *Lent: The Season of Repentance and Renewal*. *Lent* is the first in IVP's Fullness of

tional but less than an academic tome." If McCauley's first contribution is any indication of what is to come, we can expect short (about 100-page), heartfelt reflections written for a popular audience that are beautifully printed and bound.

Other than a short introduction, and an even shorter conclusion, it is divided into four chapters. The first is a meditation on the Ash Wednesday liturgy, the second focuses on Lenten disciplines or rituals, the third is an exegesis of the prayers and Scriptures of Lent, and the last walks us through Holy Week. All of McCauley's reflections are rooted in the Book of Common Prayer. Though he references the 1662 edition, his primary text is the Episcopal Church's 1979 prayer book.

McCauley gives readers an excellent introduction to the season of Lent. It is deeply shaped by Scripture and the prayer book tradition, sprinkled with allusions to McCauley's life in Baptist and Anglican churches. The tone is sermonic and there are

(Continued on next page)

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flashes of insight throughout. For example, in writing about the readings from Palm Sunday, McCaulley notes, “These readings (without extensive commentary) also help us remember that the cross is not just something to discuss, interpret, and understand. It is a thing to behold.”

His discussion of Lenten rituals is also excellent, with its insistence that the spiritual disciplines “open up space to encounter the grace of God” and are not meant to be burdens or ends in themselves. For all of this, though, McCaulley’s writing is sometimes awkward, and the editors would do well to catch some of the typos (such as “Psalm Sunday” on p. 30).

McCaulley’s book is a resource for young Christians or mature believers who are just discovering the Great Tradition of the Church.

**E**mma Ineson’s *Failure: What Jesus Said About Sin, Mistakes, and Messing Stuff Up* is not a book about Lent, and it refers to Lent in only a handful of places (see 16, 79). But it is the Archbishop of Canterbury’s Lent Book for 2023. It follows on the heels of Ineson’s previous book, *Ambition* (SPCK, 2019). The book seems primarily intended for British people with some knowledge of the Church of England. Ineson is Bishop to the Archbishops of Canterbury and York, and she quotes frequently from Archbishop Justin Welby.

Her book is an attempt to answer some questions about failure, and it may be read “during Lent or at other times of the year — any time when failure may be possible.” Ineson adds that “Lent is a good time to read it, though, because it’s the season when we’re supposed to examine ourselves and see where we’re lacking.”

Though Ineson is privileged (she lists her besetting privileges on p. 4,

and again on p. 41) she is qualified to write this book on failure because she lives “with a constant worry” that she “may not be quite good enough.” She is also worried about her community, especially the Anglican Communion. Ultimately, though, she believes she is qualified to write this book about failure because she is a “member of the human race.”

The book has six chapters. After a foreword by Archbishop Welby and a lengthy introduction (chapter 1), Ineson defines failure more generally (chapter 2), before moving to a theology of failure (chapter 3). She then focuses on the failing Church (chapter 4) before moving to Jesus, “the greatest failure of all” (chapter 5). Ineson concludes by giving practical advice about how to “fail well” (chapter 6). Suggestions include learning how to fail widely (in many areas) and how to lose an argument.

The content of the book is extremely fresh, with references to the COVID-19 pandemic, the war in Ukraine, Lambeth 2022, the murder of George Floyd, Brexit, the rising cost of living, and the nastiness of Twitter. This makes the book exceptionally timely, but it may seem stale in a few years. I wonder if it would have been better as a series of blog posts or as an eBook.

The style of the writing is also very strange. Ineson is extremely chatty, her tone informal. This does not stop her from drawing from a variety of sources, classical thinkers (Augustine looms large), liberation theologians, and modern poets. I think she is trying to represent some classical Christian thinking on sin and atonement in a way that is fun and interesting.

I appreciate that her prospective audience is broad, and she is trying to keep her writing inviting. But the wittiness and newsy references made the book feel a little forced, a little too light. It will find its way into many hands during Lent, but I think

the Church may be better served if the books by Foster and McCaulley gain more traction.

*The Rev. Dr. Cole Hartin is associate rector of Christ Church, Tyler, Texas.*

## Centered on Christ Crucified

### 1 Corinthians

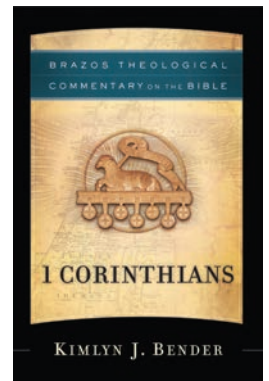
By **Kimlyn J. Bender**

Brazos Press, pp. 298, \$35

Review by Eugene R. Schlesinger

**W**hen the first volume of the Brazos Theological Commentary on the Bible appeared 15 years ago, the series promised to fill a much-needed lacuna in theological engagement with the Scriptures. In the intervening years, the landscape has changed considerably, no doubt due, at least in part, to these volumes, whose authors are self-consciously committed to interpreting the Bible through the lens of Nicene orthodoxy.

What was once something of a bold gambit in a field dominated by historical-critical methodologies is now, if not commonplace, at least a well-established mode of scholarly engagement with the sacred text. One never quite knows what to expect when picking up a volume in the series, because each author brings certain proclivities and outlooks to the task, with the result that the series is, at times, uneven. But one can also count on the results never being boring. The vibrancy of orthodoxy is on full display throughout this expanding col-





lection. Kimlyn Bender's recent commentary on the First Letter of Paul to the Corinthians is no exception.

Bender, an expert in the theology of Karl Barth and professor at George W. Truett Theological Seminary at Baylor University, is particularly well-suited to provide a theological commentary on this letter. His apprenticeship to one of the most rigorously Christological thinkers of the 20th century leads him to follow St. Paul's determination to know nothing except Christ and him crucified with striking consistency. As a result, the commentary admirably keeps the main thing the main thing.

Throughout Bender's treatment of the epistle, with its forays into ecclesiology, theological epistemology, ethics (personal, social, sexual), sacramental and liturgical practice, eschatology, and more, the overarching apostolic mandate to proclaim the gospel of the crucified and risen Christ rings clearly. To call it a *Leit-motif* would be to understate its prominence. It is more akin to a canon or a fugue.

In this regard, Bender's commentary encapsulates at once the promise and the liabilities of the Brazos Theological Commentary on the Bible as a whole. On the one hand, should a reader wish to find insight into how to interpret particular controverted passages in the letter, she would do well to turn elsewhere. The series does not intend to provide such a resource, and this contribution is no exception. (Somewhat curiously, Bender does delve into significant textual detail in his treatment of the classic 13th chapter on love.) And yet his consistent Christocentrism provides a vista where would-be interpreters can find their overall bearings and approach those convoluted sections of text with the proper orientation and disposition to engage with them fruitfully.

Preachers in particular would ben-

efit from this volume, for while there's no substitute for sound exegesis in sermon preparation, when it comes to sermon delivery, exegetical minutiae should be left in the workshop, so that what is presented to the gathered people of God is a singularly focused, unambiguous proclamation of the gospel. Bender's treatment of the text provides the key to effective homiletical engagement with this central New Testament text. Would that more preachers would take to heart the approach laid out so plainly by Bender. This alone suffices for me to heartily commend this volume.

Not that there are not shortcomings. While Bender's Barthian orientation leads to christological rigor, it also informs several frustrating denunciations of metaphysics and "speculation." In such instances, what is denounced was more or less unrecognizable to this generally Thomist reader. For instance, Bender asserts: "As we saw above regarding the question of Christ's relation to God the Father, such rich developments exemplified at the Council of Constantinople (381) were not speculative exercises but attempts to provide theological coherence to the church's interpretation of scripture and worship."

Yet this is precisely an articulation of the task of speculative theology in its relationship to positive theology. Similarly, we find oppositions of "static metaphysical states" to "the dynamic realization of a cruciform life." Metaphysics, though, are not inherently static, but rather are the anticipated structure of being in all its concreteness and dynamism.

Still again, Bender rather capably insists, in his concluding remarks to chapter 11's treatment of the Lord's Supper, that "the theology of the cross and sacrifice for others ... determines everything Paul says here," rendering all other concerns ancillary. Yet in doing so, he more or less summarily

dismisses the question of real presence (or, to be fair, of its denial).

What if, though, these were all intrinsically related, as the broader catholic tradition, exemplified in Augustine's eucharistic theology of the "whole Christ," has insisted? Bender is right to insist that we ought not allow the question of eucharistic presence to occlude the central mystery of Christ's death and resurrection and the way it should inform ecclesial life, but to further conclude that the question is altogether irrelevant strikes me as a bridge too far.

Faced with a choice between the lordship of Christ, crucified and risen, and a robustly sacramental understanding of the Church, we had better choose Christ every single time. But it's not at all clear that Bender (or Barth before him) is correct in presenting us with such a choice.

Of course, these observations are more or less par for the course from a Barthian perspective, and, depending on one's outlook, they may seem more like strengths than shortcomings. Fair enough.

One final aspect of the commentary troubled me. In his discussion of lawsuits among believers, Bender notes that "for Christians to display their dirty laundry and impugn one another before the world brings shame to the church and its witness and calls into question the eschatological reality of the church as a new community of reconciliation and transformation." This is true, so far as it goes. And yet, to read it on the other side of (if we are indeed on the other side yet) the church abuse crises, where the impulse to safeguard the Church's reputation was prioritized over protection of the abused, is chilling.

I do not mean to hold Bender responsible for any of this, of course. For those of us who labor and minister within the present context, we

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must reckon with these dynamics. We can no longer appeal to the way of the cross without also opposing the ways in which such appeals have been weaponized against and perpetuated the crucifixion of vulnerable populations. We cannot and must not soft-pedal the cross. But we must also be resolute in preventing its cooptation by the powers and principalities,

including those lodged near the heart of the Church. This is a critique, then, not of Bender, nor of this volume, but of us all.

For all this, though, Bender's *1 Corinthians* is an admirable, worthy contribution to this valuable series. To peruse it is an occasion to be caught up once more into that mystery that gives meaning to all existence, and, hopefully, to see the Scrip-

tures, and indeed the whole of life, differently as a result.

*Dr. Eugene R. Schlesinger is lecturer in the Department of Religious Studies at Santa Clara University, editor of Covenant, and the author of Salvation in Henri de Lubac: Divine Grace, Human Nature, and the Mystery of the Cross (forthcoming from University of Notre Dame Press).*

# Testing and Transformation

## Seren of the Wildwood

By Marly Youmans

Wiseblood Books

Review by Tessa Carman

Marly Youmans is a master enchanter whose visionary novels and poetry deserve, even demand, rereading and reading aloud. A poet and novelist, Youmans often teams up with artist Clive Hicks-Jenkins to create beautiful stories that long inhabit the mind afterward. Her historical novels, such as *Charis in the World of Wonders* (2020) and *Catherwood* (1996), are as spell-binding as her poetry collections, such as *The Book of the Red King* (2019) and the novel-in-verse *Thaliad* (2012).

In her new blank-verse novel, *Seren of the Wildwood*, the power of words to weave spells and to reveal things hidden is a key thread. A family lives on the edge of the Wildwood with two sons, and one day the father angrily reprimands his roisterous boys. Something seems to have overheard these words carelessly spoken, and they become a curse. A baby is

conceived that very night, and just as the mother grows larger with child, so her sons waste away. No matter what

Ariel accompanies her, and awakens yearning for an “incarnate boy ... in some glade to pause and kiss her lips.”

## Wiseblood Books

mother and father try, the boys continue to wither, and at last perish when their sister, Seren, is born.

Seren flowers amid the ice and fire of her parents' grief. Her mother and father, fearful of fresh loss, hedge their daughter in, even while she increasingly turns a listening ear to the songs of the Wildwood, “the verdant notes / And whispers that inhabited the woods.” She ignores the warnings of Lia, a frail young girl wandering through the trees, seeking escape from things “that will slay the heart of you — / That slew the child, the innocent in me.” Stay “happy by the hearth of home,” Lia urges her, “Content to be unknowing and unknown.”

But the voices prove too much for Seren, and she flies from the safety of home and hearth and roves “deep into the forest's heart.” Almost immediately a silver-tongued spirit she calls

Goaded on by images of “golden castles in the air,” Seren moves further into the forest, and deeper into delusion. Ariel tempts her to try to scratch the heavens through climbing a Babel-like tree; she falls and is captured by a kind of pagan tribe. The spirit proves just as false as his flattery: He has led her just to this place, to engage in a profane ritual with the tribe's chief that leaves her pregnant with a demon-child — “One-third mortal and two-thirds god.”

Wracked with dread and sorrow, a sadder and wiser Seren wanders the Wildwood. But this is not the end of her adventure: from here she embarks on a journey of transformation. She encounters friendlier beings, such as Cavan the hermit and Wren, a kind of forest godmother, who encourage her to persevere, to find the Green-mother, to not give up hope.

In both monastic and mythic literature, the wilderness is a place of renewal through confrontation — with devils, yes, but also with our

errors. We read of Moses leading the Israelites through the wilderness, and of saints like St. Anthony battling demons in the desert. In wild, lonely places, Jesus encounters the devil, but also withdraws to pray.

Seren, too, ultimately discovers “paths to blessedness” in her Wildwood wanderings — and she does so through a peculiarly feminine, even maternal, road: Rather than fighting dragons or demons with shield and armor, Seren takes the way of St. Martha: taming the monster through self-sacrificial love.

Seren — and the reader, swept up in her haunting, dream-like journey — undergoes good enchantment, the kind that allows for what J.R.R. Tolkien called Recovery: “seeing things as we are (or were) meant to see them.” And as through a tree she had given into Ariel’s serpentine whisperings, so through another tree — with blood-tipped thorns — she is transfigured. She will live to tell her tale around the hearth fire, and to love her family anew, upon her return home.

Tolkien described Faerie as a “Perilous Realm,” a land “wide and deep and high and filled with many things: ... beauty that is an enchantment, and an ever-present peril; both joy and sorrow as sharp as swords.” The Wildwood is just such a land of peril — of “paradise and hell and mundane hours” — where, through the wilds of splendor and suffering, comes redemption.

This is not Mary Poppins’s Fairyland, nor is it Shakespeare’s. The Wildwood of the title is truly a land of menace and delight, demons and angels: “everything that says the world is not / Exactly what it seems is hidden here, / But also there are paths to blessedness.” This is the Faerie written of by Tolkien, Susanna Clarke, and many a tale spun around

household fires. In this land, one would be wise to be on guard for changelings, but also for more sinister spirits.

In his essay “The Weight of Glory,” C.S. Lewis enjoins us to “remember your fairy tales. Spells are used for breaking enchantments as well as for inducing them.” Appropriately, Youmans weaves her spell in poetry: *Seren* comprises a prolegomenon, or prologue, and 61 sections, each of 21 iambic lines followed by a bob and wheel. The latter group — one short line, the bob, is followed by a quatrain, the wheel — is found in the 14th-century poem “Sir Gawain and the Green Knight”:

... was he.  
Great wonder grew in hall  
At his hue most strange to see,  
For man and gear and all  
Were green as green could be.  
 (“Sir Gawain,” Marie Borroff trans.,  
lines 146-150)

Enough!  
I’ve said too many things;  
The wildwood is a tough  
Terrain, yet beauty springs  
Like diamonds from the rough.  
 (*Seren*, final lines of the Prolegomenon)

In the Perilous Realm, Seren must confront all that she cannot control, and through her vulnerability, she uncovers wells of unsought strength — as well as a path to grace. As in the tale of the Green Knight, Seren, in her search for the garden of the Greenmother and in her courageous reception of suffering, finds the Wildwood not only a place of testing, a vale of humiliation and tears, but also of reconciliation and transformation.

*Tessa Carman writes from Mount Rainier, Maryland.*

## LETTER TO THE EDITOR

THE LIVING CHURCH painted a picture of an empty General Seminary campus with limited opportunities [Jan. 8]. It is true that this is a season of reconstruction. We are rebuilding the seminary. It is also true that at its heart is an imaginative M.Div. where professors such as Bishop Rowan Williams and Brian McClaren are offering courses.

The problem of depending upon anonymous sources, of course, is that they are often inaccurate. We will be providing daily worship in the Chapel of the Good Shepherd in the spring semester, and have already begun to make plans for a range of public worship services throughout the coming year.

It is also true that the goal in the long run is the recreation of an intentional community of students on this campus with a thriving chapel life.

*The Very Rev.  
Ian S. Markham, Ph.D.  
President, The General  
Theological Seminary*

*The Very Rev.  
Michael W. DeLashmutt, Ph.D.  
Senior Vice President and  
Dean of the Chapel of  
the Good Shepherd*

*TLC has updated the story online.*



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## PEOPLE & PLACES

### Appointments

The Rev. **Thomas Alexander Allain** is hospice chaplain for the Medical Team, Reston, Va.

Ms. **Rachel Ambasing** is the Diocese of San Diego's missionary for multicultural ministries.

Canon **Bonnie Anderson** is an honorary canon of the Cathedral Church of St. Paul, Detroit.

The Rev. **Dean Aponte-Safe** is co-pastor of Incarnation, Ann Arbor, Mich.

The Rev. **Garrett Ayers** is assistant rector and curate at St. John's, Columbia, S.C.

The Rev. Canon **Abbott Bailey** is partnership canon for strategy and chief operating officer for the dioceses of Western New York and Northwestern Pennsylvania.

The Very Rev. **Kathryn Banakis** is dean of the Diocese of Chicago's Evanston Deanery.

The Rev. Dcn. **Paul Barker** is director of the Highland Educational Project and pastor of Christ Church in Bluefield, W.Va.

The Rev. **Alexander D. Barton** is rector of Redeemer, Lorain, Ohio.

The Rev. **Jon Baugh** is rector of St. George, Jacksonville, Fla.

Ms. **Merrie Beard** is director of operations and administration for the president of the House of Deputies.

The Rev. Deacon **Donald Bebbler** is vicar at St. Raphael's, Benson, Ariz.

The Rev. **Douglas Beck** is priest in charge of Trinity, Castine, Maine.

The Rev. **Phil Berghuis** is a chaplain at Hinds Hospice, Fresno, Calif.

The Rev. **Nora Boerner** is interim beloved community missionary at the Beloved Community Initiative, Iowa City, Iowa.

Ms. **Shirley Bolden** is an honorary canon of Grace and Holy Trinity Cathedral, Kansas City, Mo.

The Rev. **Margaret Brack** is rector of St. Alban's and pastor of Faith Lutheran, both of Salisbury, Md.

The Rev. **Charissa Bradstreet** is interim rector of Good Samaritan, Sammamish, Wash.

The Rev. **Kristin Braun** is curate of St. David's, Austin, Texas.

The Rev. **Scott Brennen** is rector of St. Luke's, Fort Myers, Fla.

The Rev. **Debra M. Brewin-Wilson** is priest in charge of St. Mary's, Point Pleasant Beach, N.J.

The Rev. **Carey Connors** is rector of St. Christopher's, Springfield, Va.

The Rev. **Celeste O. Cox** is assistant priest at All Saints' & St. George's, Rehoboth Beach, Del.

The Rev. **Teri Daily** is vicar of Grace, Clayton, N.C.

The Rev. **Nate Darville** is rector of St. Peter's, Essex Fells, N.J.

The Rev. Canon **Zabron A. Davis III** is executive director of the Duncan M. Gray Center.

The Rev. **Mary Davisson** is co-vicar of Holy Cross, The Rocks, Street, Md.

The Very Rev. **Randall C.K. Day** is co-dean of Deanery 1, Diocese of Los Angeles.

The Rev. **Aelred Dean** is priest in charge of St. Paul's, Columbus, Ind.

The Rev. **Keith C. Esposito** is curate at Chapel of the Cross, Chapel Hill, N.C.

The Rev. **Kristen Farrington** is priest in charge of Cople Parish, Kinsale, Va.

The Rev. **Tom Ferguson** is vicar of St. Aidan's, Ann Arbor, Mich.

The Rev. **Sabeth Fitzgibbons** is rector of Trinity, Seattle.

The Rev. **Bill Garrison** is interim priest in charge of All Souls', Point Loma, Calif.

The Rev. **Johnna Georgia** is parish deacon at Good Shepherd, Sun Prairie, Wis.

The Rev. Canon **Jane Gerdson** is rector of St. Barnabas, Cincinnati.

The Rev. **Rebecca Gettel** is rector of St. Paul's, Natick, Mass.

The Rev. **J. Malone Gilliam** is rector of St. George's, Nashville.

The Rev. **R. Christopher Heying** is rector of St. James', La Grange, Texas.

The Rev. Dr. **J. Lee Hill Jr.** is the Diocese of Virginia's canon for racial justice and healing.

The Rev. **Danny Hindman** is church planter in residence at Redeemer, Richmond, Va.

The Rev. Dr. **Robin Hollis** is deacon at St. Stephen's, Phoenix.

The Rev. **Naz Javier** is priest in charge of Advent, Hatboro, Pa.

The Rev. **Lucretia Jevne** is associate priest at Epiphany, Newport, N.H.

The Rev. **Bradley Johnson** is priest in charge of St. James the Less, Madison, Tenn.

The Rev. **Brett Johnson** is interim assistant rector at Christ Church, Andover, Mass.

The Rev. **Leo G. Loyola** is assisting clergy at Church of the Apostles, Coppell, Texas.

The Rev. Canon **Morgan MacIntire** is canon to the ordinary in the Diocese of Louisiana.

The Rev. **Eric Mancil** is rector of St. Mary's, Andalusia, Ala.

The Rev. **Catherine Manhardt** is curate at St. James', Potomac, Md.

The Rev. **Joannie Martinez-Jantz** is interim rector of Trinity, St. Mary's City, Md.

The Rev. **Sarah Mato** is associate rector at St. John the Evangelist, Hingham, Mass.

The Rev. **David Matson** is rector of St. Matthew's, Lisbon Falls, Maine.

The Rev. **Christian Maxfield** is parish priest at Trinity, Platteville, and Trinity, Mineral Point, Wis., and chaplain at the University of Wisconsin-Platteville.

The Rev. **Enrique Alejandro (Kiki) McCartney** is campus missionary to Prairie View A&M University, Texas.

The Very Rev. **Carol Mead** is dean of the Diocese of Mississippi's Central Convocation.

The Rev. **Elizabeth Gordon Meade** is rector of Holy Communion, Lake Geneva, Wis.

The Rev. **Ricardo Medina** is vicar of Iglesia El Buen Pastor, Durham, N.C.

The Rev. Dr. **Jarred Mercer** is rector of St. Paul's, Newburyport, Mass.

Ms. **Ruth Mercer** is a program developer for the Diocese of Ohio and Bellwether Farm.

The Rev. **Julia W. Messer-Croteau** is rector of St. Aidan's, Virginia Beach, Va.

The Rev. **Timothy M. Meyers** is rector of St. Matthew's, Snellville, Ga.

The Rev. **Mario E. Milián** is rector of St. Mary's Church and Day School, Tampa, Fla.

The Rev. **Claire Nevin-Field** is rector of Emmanuel, Chestertown, Md.

The Rev. **Hilary Njoroge** is priest associate at St. Matthew, Tacoma, Wash.

The Rev. **Jay O'Rear** is priest in charge of Grace Church, Honesdale, Pa.

The Rev. **Shadrack Owour** is priest in charge of Grace, Port Huron, Mich.

The Rev. **Fernando Paiva III** is priest in charge of Trinity, Woodbridge, and St. James, Edison, N.J.

The Rev. **Jose Palma** is an honorary canon of Grace and Holy Trinity Cathedral, Kansas City, Mo.

The Rev. **Michael Palmisano** is middle school chaplain at the Episcopal Academy, Newtown Square, Pa.

The Rev. **Pilar Parnell** is rector of St. Stephen's, Heathsville, Va.

The Rev. **Tyler Parry** is priest in charge of St. Mark's, Moscow, Pa.

The Rev. Dr. **Midge Pendergast** is deacon at St. Gabriel's, Douglassville, Pa.

The Rev. **Amy Peterson** is associate rector at Trinity, Asheville, N.C.

The Rev. **Joe Pierjok** is priest in charge of Grace, Carthage, Mo.

The Rev. Dr. **Wayne Ray** is pastor of St. Thomas, Diamondhead, Miss.

The Rev. **Tom Reeves** is priest in charge of St. Matthew's, Bloomington, Ill.

The Rev. Canon **Allison Reid** is priest in charge of St. Mark's, Harvey, La.

The Rev. **Mike Reinke** is associate priest at Our Saviour, Milford, N.H.

The Rev. **Robert Anthony Rhodes**, CMMR, is parish priest of Trinity, Michigan City, Ind.

The Rev. **Lissie Rhoton** is associate rector of Old Donation, Virginia Beach, Va.

The Rev. **Sara Rich** is associate rector at San Jose, Jacksonville, Fla.

The Rev. **Blake Rider** is interim rector of St. Stephen's, Huntsville, Texas.

The Rev. **Ashley Simpson** is associate for parish ministry at St. Paul's, Beaufort, N.C.

The Rev. **Thomas Skillings** is interim pastor at Grace, Kirkwood, Mo.

The Rev. **Amy Slater** is associate rector at Christ Church, Ponte Vedra Beach, Fla.

The Rev. **Amy Whitcomb Slemmer** is bridge priest at St. Stephen's, Boston.

Mr. **Thomas Stodghill IV** is the Diocese of Western Louisiana's communications officer.

The Rev. **Whit Stroud** is deacon in charge of St. Francis, Goldsboro, and Holy Innocents, Seven Springs, N.C.

The Rev. Canon **Mary Sulerud** is the Diocese of Maryland's interim canon to the ordinary.

The Rev. **Maggie Sullivan** is rector of St. Francis, Denham Springs, La.

The Rev. **Henry (Caleb) Tabor** is chaplain of the Young Episcopal Adult Hub, Raleigh, N.C.

The Rev. **John G. Talk IV** is priest in charge of Trinity, Manassas, Va.

Sister **Sarah Patricia Terry** is a canon of the Diocese of Los Angeles.

The Rev. **Teresa F. Terry** is staff chaplain for VA North Texas Health Care System, Dallas.

The Rev. **Evan Thayer** is rector of Trinity Church, Demopolis, Ala.

The Rev. **Deb Tickell** is the Episcopal Church in Connecticut's Northwest and Southwest Region missionary.

The Rev. **Jim Trimble** is rector of Emmanuel, Winchester, Ky.

Ms. **Rebecca B. Troutman** is youth education coordinator and pastoral assistant at St. Aidan's, Alexandria, Va.

The Rev. **Dustin Trowbridge** is rector of Grace, Nyack, N.Y.

The Rev. **Timothy True** is interim priest in charge of St. Luke's, Jackson, Tenn.

The Rev. **Jordan Trumble** is the Diocese of West Virginia's canon for communications and congregational development.

The Rev. Canon **Meg Wagner** is canon to the ordinary of the Diocese of Iowa.

The Very Rev. **Kara Wagner-Sherer** is dean of the Chicago North Deanery in the Diocese of Chicago.

The Rev. **Bryce Wandrey** is rector of Christ Church, Reading, Pa.

The Rev. **Charlie Warwick** is supply priest in charge of St. Martin in-the-Fields, Mountain Top, Pa., and will continue at St. Clement and St. Peter's, Wilkes Barre, and St. Andrew's, Nanticoke.

The Rev. **Anne Weatherholt** is interim rector of Epiphany, Odenton, Md.

The Rev. **Barbra Weza** is executive director of Chaplains on the Harbor, Montesano, Wash.

The Rev. **Jon White** is priest in charge of St. Mark the Evangelist, Syracuse, N.Y.

Dr. **Lynn Wiljanen** is director of the Bishop's Institute in the Diocese of Easton.

The Rev. **Jill B. Williams** is priest in charge of St. Simon & St. Jude, Irmo, S.C.

The Rev. **Richard Wineland** is a priest associate at Christ Church Cathedral and St. Augustine's Chapel, Vanderbilt University, and serves as chaplain to the Episcopal School of Nashville.

Ms. **Erin Wolf** is youth networking coordinator for the dioceses of Eau Claire, Fond du Lac, and Milwaukee.

The Rev. Dr. **Robin Woodberry** is deacon in charge of St. Paul's, Canton, Ohio.

The Rev. Dr. **Luke Zerra** is associate dean for academic affairs of the Diocese of Central Pennsylvania's Stevenson School for Ministry, and curate at St. Andrew's, Pittsburgh.

## Ordinations

### Diaconate

Atlanta: **Florence Mitchell**, (St. Michael and All Angels, Stone Mountain), **Julie O'Neill** (St. George's, Griffin), **Jess Speaker** (for Virginia; St. Catherine's, Marietta), **Devon Smyth** (St. Margaret's, Carrollton), **Faustina Ward-Osborne** (St. Paul's, Atlanta).

California: **Laura Elizabeth Natta**, **Stephen Michael Siptroth**, **Mees Tielens**

Central New York: **Joseph M. Hannah**

Central Pennsylvania: **Dina Carter Ishler**

East Tennessee: **Kat Cantelou Chappell**, **James Frazier Davis**

Indianapolis: **Yuriria Rodriguez-Laureani**

Iowa: **Elizabeth Abbot Wells McElroy**, **Catherine Ann Schroeder**

Kentucky: **Jan Pauline Scholtz**

Louisiana: **Patricia Toburen**, **Caroline B. Wright**

Maryland: **Carolyn Elizabeth Buser**,

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### Retirements

The Rev. **Debra Asis** as vicar of Church of the Apostles, Oro Valley, Ariz.

The Rev. Dr. **Luis Barrios** as priest in charge of Holyrood, New York, N.Y.

The Rev. **Sudie Blanchard** as deacon at St. George's, York Harbor, Maine

The Rev. **Tracy A. Bruce** as rector of St. John's, Western Run, Reisterstown, Md.

The Rev. **Cynthia Caruso** as rector of St. Augustine's, Benton Harbor, Mich.

The Rev. **Earl R. Christian** as deacon in residence at St. Cyprian's, Hampton, Va.

The Rev. Dr. **Myrick Cross** as priest in charge of St. Patrick's, Brewer, Maine

The Rev. Dr. **Gordon DeLaVars** as rector of Transfiguration, Braddock Heights, Md.

The Rev. **Tom Downs** as priest in charge of St. Paul's, Gladwin, Mich.

The Rev. **Jim Enelow** as deacon at St. Augustine's, Benton Harbor, Mich.

The Rev. **Sue Gahagan** as deacon at St. Paul the Apostle, Savannah, Ga.

The Rev. **Kathryn Galicia** as priest in charge of St. Francis, Turlock, Calif.

The Rev. **Raisin Horn** as rector of Christ Church, Clinton, Iowa.

The Rev. Canon **Martha Ishman** as vicar of St. James Memorial, Titusville, Pa.

The Rev. **Martha Magill** as rector of Emmanuel Parish, Cumberland, Md.

The Rev. Canon **Bob Marsh** as rector of St. Mark's, Palatka, Fla.

The Rev. **Hank Morrow** as deacon at All Saints, Hershey, Pa.

The Rev. **Diane Murray** as rector of St. James, Manitowoc, Wis.

The Rev. **Tom O'Dell** as rector of Christ Church, Charlevoix, Mich.

The Rev. **Beverly Patterson** as priest in charge of Christ Church, Gordonsville, and Emmanuel, Rapidan, Va.

The Rev. **Gail Reynolds** as deacon at St. Paul's, Kansas City, Kan.

The Rev. Dr. **James B. Simons** as rector of St. Michael's of the Valley, Ligonier, Pa.

The Rev. Canon **Paul Stephens** as canon to the ordinary of Mississippi

The Rev. **Martha Tucker** as priest in charge of Christ Church, Sharon, Conn.

The Rev. **Ted Voorhees** as vicar of St. Cyprian's, St. Augustine, Fla.

The Rev. **Bruce A. White** as rector of St. Alban's, Tucson, Ariz.

The Rev. **Stephen Yagerman** as rector of All Saints, New York.

(Continued on next page)

### Deconsecrations-Closures

**St. Brigid's of Kildare**, Rio Vista, Calif.  
**St. Matthias**, Cave Junction, Ore.

### Deaths

The Rev. **Elizabeth May Anderson**, a priest and former magazine editor, died December 22 at 68. She was a native of Waukegan, Illinois, and a graduate of Lake Forest College, Nashotah House Theological Seminary, and Seabury-Western Theological Seminary.

Anderson was ordained priest and deacon in 1994, and served in the Diocese of Chicago for all her ministry. She was an assistant rector of St. Lawrence Church, Libertyville (1994-97), rector of Church of the Annunciation, Bridgeview (1997-2002), and priest in charge of Church of the Holy Family, Lake Villa (2003-09). She also served as a night chaplain at Northwestern Memorial Hospital (1994-96).

In the mid-1990s, she edited *Daughters of Sarah*, a Chicago-based magazine for Christian feminists. Issue themes during her years as editor in chief (1995-96) included "Let Us Keep the Feast," "Always Acceptable in Thy Sight," "The Redemption of Power and Eros," and "On Spiritual Motherhood."

She is survived by a sister, a nephew, and a great-nephew.



The Rev. **George Burchill**, who led a day school in Tampa, Fla., for 38 years, died December 12 at 95.

He was a native of New Brunswick, Canada, and a graduate of Dalhousie University and the University of King's College in Halifax, Nova Scotia. He was ordained in Canada and transferred into the Episcopal Church in 1954.

Burchill was headmaster of St. John's Parish Day School from 1954 to 1992. "Fr. Burchill left a legacy and an indelible mark on South Tampa and St. John's Church and Day School. Fr. Burchill trained thousands of children as headmaster of St. John's," said the Rev. Christian Wood, rector of St. John's. "Fr. Burchill was a scholar and educator whose single-minded focus was on creating the best environment for learning."

The Rev. **Joseph Austin Erickson Jr.**, a clinical psychologist, licensed pilot, and priest of the Diocese of Los Angeles, died December 28 at 98.



A native of Cambridge, Massachusetts, he was a graduate of Harvard University, Episcopal Theological School, and Claremont School of Theology. He was ordained deacon and priest in 1951, and served as rector of St. Mark's Church in Upland, California, from 1954 to 1963.

From 1965 to 2010 he was a clinical psychologist in private practice in Claremont,

### Correction

James Litton [People & Places, Jan. 8] took piano lessons from the Mason College of Music and Fine Arts and earned undergraduate and graduate degrees from Westminster Choir College in Princeton, New Jersey.

working with families, children, and educators.

He was a flight instructor at Brackett Field in La Verne and Cable Airport in Upland. His wife of 52 years, Catherine Jo, said in *The Episcopal News* of Los Angeles that he was "a great pilot but a lousy flight attendant."

His other survivors include four daughters; a son; 17 grandchildren; and 12 great-grandchildren.

The Rev. **Bryan Eaton Glancey**, who was passionate about feeding the poor and preserving their dignity, died on January 2 at 72.

He was a native of Poughkeepsie, New York, and a graduate of Marist College and General Theological Seminary. He was ordained deacon



and priest in 1977, and served parishes in Maryland, New York, Pennsylvania, and Virginia. He served longest as rector of St. Andrew's Church in Hurlock, Maryland, beginning

in 2003.

During his tenure at St. Andrew's, the church became a center for food distribution. Each Saturday, the parish set up a grocery store-style distribution where people could choose what they needed and keep their dignity. The parish's food bank is still active.

Glancey is survived by his wife, Barbara; two brothers; a son; and two grandchildren.

The Rev. Canon **John W. Kline**, who was active in both healing ministry and ecumenism, died November 18 at 88.

He was a native of Ridley Park, Pennsylvania, and a graduate of West Chester University and Lutheran Theological Seminary at Gettysburg. He was ordained as a Lutheran pastor in 1959. After studying the Anglican ethos at Philadelphia Divinity School for a year, he was ordained deacon and priest in 1965.



He served at two parishes in Vermont before returning to Pennsylvania, serving as rector of churches in Williamsport, Sunbury, and Sharon. While at St. Matthew's, Sunbury, he became active in healing ministry, was made a chaplain in the Order of St. Luke the Physician, and led healing missions in the dioceses of Central Pennsylvania, Northwestern Pennsylvania, and Pittsburgh.

In the Diocese of Northwestern Pennsylvania, he served as rector of St. John's, Sharon (1975-79); archdeacon of the diocese (1979-83), and rector of Ascension, Bradford (1983-97). He was president of the Standing Committee for 19 years, and was elected a General Convention deputy eight times.

He was the diocesan ecumenical officer, and in 1995 Bishop Robert D. Rowley named him an honorary canon ecumenist in recognition of his long-standing work for Christian unity at the diocesan, state, provincial, and national levels of the Episcopal Church.

After his retirement, he served as priest associate at Holy Nativity Church in Plano, Texas, for 25 years.

He is survived by Jane, his wife of 67 years; three children; two grandchildren; and two great-grandchildren.

The Rev. **Johnny Lane**, a U.S. Navy veteran of the Korean War and a deacon for nearly 30 years, died January 3 at 89.



He was a native of Clay Sink, Florida, and a graduate of the University of Florida. He was ordained deacon in 1995, after a career with BellSouth and owning a construction company.

He served in four parishes, and loved serving with Worship on the Water, a summer outreach of Christ Church in Cordele, Georgia.

"I loved serving with John on the resort dock on Lake Blackshear," Bishop Frank Logue said in a sermon at Deacon Lane's funeral. "He was always so passionate about that ministry and so grateful for assistance. To speak of John's ministry is to also speak of how John and Beth have been a team. He was living his best life when he and Beth were helping others to get set up for Worship on the Water — in a Hawaiian shirt clergy shirt greeting the congregation arriving by boat."

His survivors include Elizabeth, his wife of 44 years; a sister; two sons; and two daughters.

The Rev. **David Otis Sivret**, a major and chaplain in the Army National Guard, died November 23 at 67. He enlisted with the Maine Army National Guard in 1976, serving with the 152nd Maintenance Co.



He was a native of Augusta, Maine, and a graduate of Bangor Theological Seminary and the State University of New York. He was ordained deacon in 1987 and priest in 1988. He served at churches in Maine, New Hampshire, and New York.

In 1988 he was deployed to Mosul, Iraq, with the 133rd Engineer Battalion as battalion chaplain. In December 2004, Sivret was injured when a suicide bomber attacked the dining facility at Forward Operating Base Marez, and he earned a Purple Heart. He returned home in 2005 and retired from the Army National Guard in 2006. He retired from ordained ministry in 2010.

At every church where he served, Sivret led fundraising to remodel church facilities and ensured each church had a thrift store and food pantry. After his retirement, he became director of the Irene Chadbourne Ecumenical Food Pantry in Calais, Maine. He was instrumental in starting the Calais Community Thrift Store and the Calais Veterans Center.

## SUNDAY'S READINGS

LAST EPIPHANY: FEB. 19

Ex. 24:12-18; Ps. 2 or 99  
2 Pet. 1:16-21; Matt. 17:1-9

### Shining Lamps

In the last weeks of the seasons following Pentecost, we have met the image of “light.” We meet it again today in its most intense representation: Jesus transfigured on the holy mountain. And while his Transfiguration anticipates our own as we are “being changed into his likeness from glory to glory,” the blazing glory of Jesus on the holy mountain is given especially to strengthen us “to bear our cross” in union with him (the collect). “In the world you face persecution, but take courage,” Jesus says. “I have conquered the world” (John 16:33). A more comprehensive translation would be: “In the world you face oppression, affliction, and suffering, but *take heart, I have overcome the world.*”

The victory of Jesus Christ is announced preeminently in his resurrection, but anticipated as he stands upon the holy mountain with Peter, James, and John. Three of his closest disciples, his intimate friends, are with him, as are we, at this moment. They see that “he was transfigured before them, and his face shone like the sun, and his clothes became dazzling white” (Matt. 17:1-9). It is precisely this vision that opens before us if we have eyes that see with faith and love.

Jesus speaks to us just as God once spoke to Moses: “Come up to me on the mountain, and wait there” (Ex. 24:12). As we wait, we see “Moses and Elijah talking with Jesus.” And so we realize that Jesus is the fulfillment of the law and commandments and all their instruction given to Moses. He is no less than the fulfillment of everything spoken by the prophets, represented by Elijah. Finally, we know that Jesus is all in all because Moses and Elijah vanish. “We [see] no one except Jesus himself alone” (Matt. 17:8). Although this is an astounding claim, we behold Jesus shining with the glory of God, presented to our mind’s eye as

the fulfillment of every human hope. This vision will strengthen us as we meet the days ahead, the demands and sufferings of duty, and the obligations of love.

The disciples see Jesus and Moses and Elijah enveloped in a cloud and hear a voice from heaven: “This is my Son, the Beloved; with him I am well pleased; listen to him!” They fall upon their faces in holy fear. In truth, they are overwhelmed by love, by light, by a heavenly voice, and moved to behold Jesus alone.

St. Peter gives his account of the event. When he says, “We ourselves heard his voice,” we cannot but think of the Church that gathers in his name to hear his Word and to celebrate his mysteries. “[W]e made known to you the power and coming of our Lord Jesus Christ, but we have been eyewitnesses of his majesty. For he received honor and glory from God the Father when that voice was conveyed to him by the Majestic Glory, saying, ‘This is my Son, my Beloved, with whom I am well pleased.’ We ourselves heard the voice come from heaven, while we were with him on the holy mountain” (2 Pet. 1:16-18).

The unimaginable and transcendent light of Jesus Christ emanates from us. By his light, we are the light of the world. Like Peter, “we have the prophetic message confirmed. [W]e will do well to be attentive to this as to a lamp shining in a dark place, until the day dawns and the morning star rises in [our] hearts” (2 Pet. 1:19). The light we await is already here, in our heart, in our holy faith, in our good works.

The cross will come, yet nothing can separate us from the light and love of God in Christ Jesus our Lord.

**LOOK IT UP:** This week’s collect

**THINK ABOUT IT:** We are changed into his likeness from glory to glory.

1 LENT, FEB. 26

Gen. 2:15-17; 3:1-7 • Ps. 32  
Rom. 5:12-19 • Matt. 4:1-11

### Superabounding Grace

The Devil promotes “critical thinking skills” in the face of a mystery we know only in part. Where devotion is first and foremost required, evil insinuates sin and death by asking questions, putting God to the test, examining God as a thing for clever speculation. Austin Farrer rightly names the problem of bad theology: “If he hears a dogma of the faith discussed as a cool speculation, about which theories can be held and arguments propounded, the Christian cannot escape disquiet. ‘What are these people doing?’ he will ask. ‘Do they not know what they are discussing? How can they make an open question what the country is like, which they enter when they pray?’” (*Lord, I Believe*, p. 9)

In Genesis, we meet a cool speculator. “Now the serpent was more crafty than any other wild animal that the LORD God had made. He said to the woman, ‘Did God say, “You shall not eat from any tree in the garden?”’” (Gen. 3:1) The serpent stands aloof from the divine, suggesting that it is possible to live by something other than “every word that comes from the mouth of God” (Matt. 4:4). It is not. Once the woman and her husband step outside the circle of divine being and divinely ordered creation, they fall inexorably into nothingness. They are naked, their lives a formless void. Moreover, the Devil would have even Jesus as a debating partner, issuing his provocative charge, “If you are the Son of God.” Unlike the first Adam, the Second Adam stands firm, winning a triple victory in the power of his divine being.

Looking at this story another time, we might think about our own lives. We live in the presence of divine mystery suffusing all creation, and so are invited to wonder and exultation. Goodness, truth, beauty, faith, hope, and love continually pour out as God

(Continued on next page)

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THE LIVING CHURCH is published 12 times per year, dated Sunday, by the Living Church Foundation, Inc., at PO Box 510705, Milwaukee, WI 53203. Periodicals postage paid at Milwaukee, WI, and at additional mailing offices.

SUBSCRIPTION RATES: \$65 for one year; \$115 for two years.

Canadian postage an additional \$10 per year;

Mexico and all other foreign, an additional \$60 per year.

POSTMASTER: Send address changes to THE LIVING CHURCH, P.O. Box 510705, Milwaukee, WI 53203-0121. Subscribers, when submitting address changes, should please allow 4-6 weeks for change to take effect.

THE LIVING CHURCH (ISSN 0024-5240) is published by THE LIVING CHURCH FOUNDATION, INC., a non-profit organization serving the Church. All gifts to the Foundation are tax-deductible.

MANUSCRIPTS AND PHOTOGRAPHS: THE LIVING CHURCH cannot assume responsibility for the return of photos or manuscripts.

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(Continued from previous page)

holds all things in being. To see the world this way is to be rich beyond all knowing. There is, of course, another way to see the world, of which we are all quite aware. The world is a place of limited resources and ominous threats. Life is a fight and struggle in which survival means taking what you need or want. The world thus becomes no longer beautiful but merely alluring, tempting, “a thing to be grasped.” Again, turning to Genesis, “So when the woman saw that the tree was good for food, and that it was a delight to the eyes, and that the tree was to be desired to make one wise, she took of its fruit and ate; and she also gave some to her husband, who was with her, and he ate” (Gen. 3:6). Evil is provocative and alluring, always presented as a good wrongly denied. Where does it lead?

In the Epistle to the Colossians, a list describes life before we have put on Christ. It is by no means exhaustive: fornication, impurity, passion, evil desire, greed (which is idolatry), anger, wrath, malice, slander, abusive language, and lies. These evils are the ruination of one’s interior life and the destruction of human community. Still, they present themselves disguised as an angel of light.

Is there a way back to innocence? In a sense, the answer is no. We cannot be those who have never fallen. We can only be those who have been restored. But forgiveness and restoration are glorious. “If, because of one man’s trespass, death exercised dominion through that one, much more surely will those who receive the abundance of grace and the free gift of righteousness exercise dominion in life through the one man, Jesus Christ” (Rom. 5:17). Jesus Christ is the superabounding grace by which we are created and yet more wonderfully restored.

**LOOK IT UP:** Psalm 52

**THINK ABOUT IT:** Happy are they whose transgressions are forgiven!

2 LENT, MARCH 5

Gen. 12:1-4a • Ps. 121

Rom. 4:1-5, 13-17

John 3:1-17

Motion and Stasis

We have been called, and we have responded in the obedience of faith. Still, we may from time to time go astray, and so the calling must be renewed, and the response reinvigorated. With penitent hearts and steadfast faith, we are called to Jesus Christ over and over again. That is, we are called to the unchangeable truth of the eternal Word of the Father (the collect). It began, we know, with the calling of Abram: “Now the Lord said to Abram, ‘Go from your country and your kindred and your father’s house to the land that I will show you. I will make of you a great nation, and I will bless you, and make your name great, so that you will be a blessing. I will bless those who bless you, and the one who curses you I will curse; and in you all the families of the earth shall be blessed.’ So Abram went, as the Lord had told him, and Lot went with him” (Gen. 12:1-4a).

Likewise, we are called to leave everything in pursuit of a new homeland, Jesus Christ our Lord. And because Jesus Christ is an inexhaustible treasure, the search and the quest never end. For whatever we have in Christ is but a foretaste of impending discovery. To live in Christ, to be moved and animated by his Spirit, is to float on the current of wind-like grace, rising and falling, ascending and descending like the Son of Man between heaven and earth. We live by faith, not by sight. “The LORD himself watches over [us]” (Ps. 121:5). Carried by grace, we are born from above (John 3:7). We are, as St. Paul says, a new creation.

The Spirit of Christ is like the wind, yet Christ is a rock. The Christian life is both fluid and firm; it is motion by the prompting of grace and grounding in vocation by that same grace. If we move with Christ in the Spirit, we must also learn to stay with him in the vocation to which we have been set.

Keeping our journey with Christ, we might consider the question of the rich young man who approached Jesus. “What must I do to inherit eternal life?” (Matt. 19:16; Mark 10:17; Luke 18:18). Jesus directs him to the Ten Commandments and then further requests that he sell all that he has and give it to the poor. The man walks away sorrowfully. In a sense, the man’s question must still be raised by every disciple. Not “What must I do to

## How does it work, this new life from above?

inherit eternal life?” but “What must I do in response to the gift of eternal life?”

Again, the Ten Commandments are a guide, of which the two Great Commandments are a summary. “Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart, and with all they soul, and with all thy mind. This is the first and great commandment. And the second is like unto it: Thou shalt love thy neighbor as thyself” (BCP, p. 324). In these commandments, we find work in motion and stasis, spontaneity and unwavering commitment.

How does it work, this new life from above? Aided by St. Augustine, we might notice that “Love of God is first in the order of commanding; the love of neighbor is, however, first in the order of doing” (Tract 17 on St. John). “Because, however, you do not yet see God, by loving your neighbor, you gain whom you would see. ... Carry therefore him with whom you walk that you may arrive to him with whom you desire to remain.”

Walk in your bounden duty and stay with Christ.

LOOK IT UP: Romans 4:17

THINK ABOUT IT: In daily work, however difficult or confusing, God gives life to the dead, calling into existence things that do not exist. Press on!

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