

FALL 2014



The North Carolina DISCIPLE

THE EPISCOPAL DIOCESE OF NORTH CAROLINA

LIVING INTO A
NEW ERA

VOICES FROM THE FIELDS
HARVEST FOR HOSPITALITY

MISSION ENDOWMENT GRANT
IMAGINE THE POSSIBILITIES



 **The North Carolina
DISCIPLE**

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COVER PHOTO

A North Carolina farmworker harvests sweet potatoes. Sweet potatoes, like most fruits and vegetables, must be harvested by hand. *Photo by Lynette Wilson/Episcopal News Service*



INSIDE COVER PHOTO

A North Carolina farmworker loads a bucket of sweet potatoes, for which he earns \$0.40, onto a truck. *Photo by Lynette Wilson/Episcopal News Service*

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ABOUT The North Carolina DISCIPLE

The North Carolina Disciple is the quarterly magazine of the Episcopal Diocese of North Carolina. Other diocesan communication vehicles, including Please Note, a weekly e-newsletter, and the diocesan website, www.episdionc.org, are used for more time-sensitive, day-to-day news.

Contact the communications staff at communications@episdionc.org with any questions or feedback regarding these communications, or to submit ideas, articles and photos.



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January / Winter Issue
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WHY TAIWAN?

Bishop Curry answers a common question about the recent HOB meeting

By the time you read this, the Rt. Rev. Anne Hodges-Copple and I will have returned from seven days in Taipei, Taiwan, for the fall meeting of the House of Bishops, only to leave after one day and fly to Jackson, Mississippi, for the ordination of the new Bishop of Mississippi. On a few occasions before my departure, people asked me, in a friendly yet understandably quizzical way, why in the world American bishops of the Episcopal Church, most of the dioceses of which are located in the Western Hemisphere, were going all the way to Taiwan for a meeting.

A really helpful answer began to emerge for me during the closing Eucharist in Taiwan, which the Rt. Rev. David Lai, Bishop of the Diocese of Taiwan, celebrated in Chinese.

disciples of all nations,” I believe he really meant that, too (Acts 1:8 and Matthew 28:19).

Jesus really was and is summoning into being a new human community “born of his Spirit, washed in his blood,” as the old song says. That community of Jesus transcends all of our ethnic, national, creedal, political and ideological differences and divisions and instead embraces our wonderful God-given variety. How does St. Paul say it?

As many of you as were baptized into Christ have clothed yourselves with Christ. There is no longer Jew or Greek, there is no longer slave or free, there is no longer male and female; for all of you are one in Christ Jesus (Galatians 3:27-28).

This community of Jesus has been born to witness: to witness to the love of God that knows no bounds, to witness to the way of Jesus that transforms our ways and those of the world, to witness to the Spirit who can lead us as a human race into becoming the human family of God — the beloved community of Pentecost — and not just an individualized collection of self interests. It is this community of Jesus that has a witness for the hope of the world. How does the old hymn say it?

In Christ there is no east or west,
In him no south or north.
But one great fellowship of love,
Throughout the whole wide earth.



Photo by Mary Frances Schonberg/ENS

The Rt. Rev. David Lai, Bishop of the Diocese of Taiwan, celebrates the closing Eucharist of the House of Bishops fall meeting in Taiwan.



Photo by the Rt. Rev. Michael Curry

Painting of Jesus as experienced by the people of Holy Trinity, Keelung.

The first Bible reading in the liturgy was from Isaiah 44:8, where the prophet says that the people of God are to be witnesses of God in the world. Building on that, Jesus said, “[Y]ou will be my witnesses in Jerusalem, in all Judea and Samaria, and to the ends of the earth.” I believe that he really meant it. When he said, “Go, therefore, and make



Photo courtesy of the Rt. Rev. Michael Curry

The people of St. Stephen's, Keelung.

*One great fellowship of love, throughout the whole wide earth.
I think I know why we went to Taiwan.*

On Sunday, bishops worshiped at various churches in the Diocese of Taiwan. As I worshiped at the Church of the Good Shepherd, Taipei, I thought of our own Good Shepherds in Ridgeway, Rocky Mount, Raleigh and Asheboro, as well as Durham's El Buen Pastor.

*One great fellowship of love, throughout the whole wide earth.
I think I know why we went to Taiwan.*

While in Taiwan we met and heard from the Anglican Archbishops of Korea, Japan and Pakistan and from the General Secretary of the Church in Hong Kong.

They told their stories of following Jesus as a distinct minority in their cultures. We heard stories of how the Church in Asia has been and is a powerful witness for the Gospel in a non-Christian culture. We heard of the Church's work of reconciliation among races and national groups. We heard of the Church's work of ecumenical and interfaith cooperation and reconciliation. We heard stories of advocacy for the poor, service to those in need and witness to Jesus in incredible ways. Through them we share in the work of Jesus in Asia. Through us they share in the work of Jesus here. And together we follow Jesus into God's dream for the world.

*One great fellowship of love, throughout the whole wide earth.
I think I know why we went to Taiwan.*



Photos courtesy of the Rt. Rev. Michael Curry



Top: The Church of the Good Shepherd, Taipei. Left: Bishop Curry with the Rev. Lily Ling-Ling, rector of Good Shepherd, Taipei.



Archbishops of Korea, Japan and the Philippines

During the Eucharist we recited the Nicene Creed in English and Chinese. I was struck by the words that I've said many times.

“We believe in one, holy, catholic and apostolic Church...”

I realized that the Nicene Creed answered the question, why Taiwan?

<p>he ascended into heaven and is seated at the right hand of the Father. He will come again in glory to judge the living and the dead, and his kingdom will have no end.</p>	<p>應驗了聖經的話， 第三天復活，升天， 坐在聖父的右邊。 將來必駕威榮再臨 審判活人死人。 祂的國永無窮盡。</p> <p>di-san-tian fu-huo , sheng-tian , zuo-zai sheng-fu de you-bian 。 Jiang-lai bi-jia wei-rong zai-lin shen-pan huo-ren si-ren 。 Ta de guo yung wu qiong jin</p>
<p>我們信聖靈，是主，是賜生命者， 從聖父聖子出來， 和聖父聖子同受敬拜，同享尊榮。 往日常著眾先知傳話。 我們信使徒所傳的唯一 聖而公之教會。 我們承認為救罪設立的 獨一洗禮。 我們盼望死人的復活， 並來世的永生。阿們。</p>	<p><i>In English / 用英文讀</i> We believe in the Holy Spirit, the Lord, the giver of life, who proceeds from the Father and the Son. With the Father and the Son he is worshiped and glorified. He has spoken through the Prophets. We believe in one holy catholic and apostolic Church. We acknowledge one baptism for the forgiveness of sins. We look for the resurrection of the dead, and the life of the world to come . Amen.</p>

Photo by the Rt. Rev. Michael Curry

The Nicene Creed, in Chinese and English.

We came because we really believe in “one, holy, catholic and apostolic Church.” We are not just a congregation, a diocese, an American Church. We are the Church catholic, the Body of Christ in the world, the whole world. And we came to Taiwan, which is part of the Episcopal Church, to celebrate their 60th anniversary as a Church and to affirm and share their witness.

Everywhere we went, the people of the Diocese of Taiwan welcomed us genuinely, joyously and wonderfully. They weren't offering just a polite welcome but instead extended deep gratitude for us being present in their Church. Each congregation greeted us with applause and a lot of food. And at one church there was a sign outside: “Welcome to the Honorable Bishops of the American Episcopal Church.”



An example of the type of welcome the House of Bishops received in the Diocese of Taiwan.

Photo by the Rt. Rev. Michael Curry

In Christ there is no east or west,
In him no south or north.
But one great fellowship of love.
Throughout the whole wide earth.

I think I know why we went to Taiwan.

Keep the faith,
+Michael

The Rt. Rev. Michael B. Curry was elected the 11th Bishop of the Episcopal Diocese of North Carolina in 2000. Contact him at michael.curry@episdionc.org.

The Episcopal Church is located in 16 countries:

- Taiwan and Micronesia
- Honduras | Ecuador
- Colombia | Venezuela
- Haiti | Dominican Republic
- British and U.S. Virgin Islands
- Puerto Rico | Austria
- Belgium | France
- Germany | Italy
- Switzerland
- United States

The largest diocese in the Episcopal Church is the Diocese of Haiti.

The Taiwanese Episcopal Church was established in 1954.

The Diocese of Taiwan has:

- 2,000 members
- 16-18 places of worship
- Several house churches
 - 8 kindergartens
- 1 University of Technology (St. John's University)

Taiwan's population is 23 million.

Less than 5% of Taiwan's population identifies as Christian.

NEW, NOTABLE & NEWSWORTHY

YOUTH MINISTRY DEPARTMENT AWARDED THREE-YEAR GRANT FOR MULTI-CULTURAL LEADERSHIP DEVELOPMENT PROGRAM

The Jessie Ball DuPont Fund has awarded the youth department of the Episcopal Diocese of North Carolina a three-year grant to execute a project called “Lift Every Voice: A Youth and Young Adult Focus on Truth, Reconciliation and Peace.”

Inviting and involving people ages 15-22 from across the Episcopal Church, the program examines and reimagines how we negotiate our history of race relations and conflict. It looks forward as well, aiming to develop tools that not only identify structures of injustice and oppression, but intervene and make positive change.

“Lift Every Voice is about calling on the younger generation to start building a better future today,” says Beth Crow, lead youth missionary for the Episcopal Diocese of North Carolina. “It’s about giving our young people the experience and exposure to understand racial injustice, giving them the tools to learn how to navigate it, and inviting them to help develop the model of how we teach others to build bridges and cross cultural divides.”

The program is designed as a three-year progression. In the first two years, youth from the U.S. and Southern Africa will together revisit the historical truths of slavery and the Civil Rights movement in North Carolina and Apartheid in South Africa; the goal is to build an understanding of social injustice that will help participants to develop a vision for diocesan programming around race and inclusivity. In the third year, participants will use the tools gained in their earlier experiences to develop a model of church leadership in today’s multicultural communities. Focuses of the three-year program include a Freedom Ride, on which participants will

visit several significant historical locations and interact with guest speakers at each; a Pilgrimage of Reconciliation in 2016, a retreat and training-focused trip to South Africa; and time at the Disciples of Change Institute.

“[Lift Every Voice] has the potential to lay a foundation that could affect change on a scale we’ve never reached before, touching lives of every age and culture.”

- Beth Crow, Lead Youth Missioner

The total grant awarded is \$138,000 over three years, with \$46,000 to be disbursed each year.

“We are extremely grateful to the Jessie Ball DuPont Fund for making this program possible,” says Crow. “It has the potential to lay a foundation that could affect change on a scale we’ve never reached before, touching lives of every age and culture.”

The Diocese invites you to take this journey with the participants and program leaders. Keep your eye on the *Disciple*, Please Note and other communications channels in the coming months to learn how to connect and be a part of this groundbreaking initiative, even if you never leave home. For more information and the application for the 2015 Freedom Ride, visit www.episdionc.org.

EPISCOPAL FARMWORKER MINISTRY DIRECTOR TO BE HONORED WITH VIRGINIA THEOLOGICAL SEMINARY’S DEAN’S CROSS



The Rev. Rojas

On Sunday, December 7, 2014, the Rev. Jesus Antonio Rojas (known widely as Father Tony), sacramental minister of the Episcopal Farmworker Ministry (EFwM), will be awarded the Virginia Theological Seminary’s Dean’s Cross for Servant Leadership in Church and Society in honor of his work with EFwM.

Established in 2008, the award “seeks to recognize those outstanding leaders who have sought the truth and embodies our baptismal vows, in particular the charge ‘to seek and serve Christ in all persons’ and to ‘strive for justice and peace among all people and respect the dignity of every human being.’”

Two recipients of the Dean’s Cross are named each year. Joining Father Tony at the awards dinner in December will be this year’s other recipient, former Secretary of State Madeline Albright.

EPISCOPAL RELIEF & DEVELOPMENT CELEBRATES 75 YEARS OF HEALING A HURTING WORLD

Episcopalians, friends and partner agencies around the globe are joining together to celebrate Episcopal Relief & Development's 75th anniversary with a 75-week celebration that will continue through the end of 2015. The focus of the celebration will be encouraging all to learn more about the organization's programs and get involved in campaigns to raise \$7.5 million to sustain its vital work.

Cornerstones of the celebration include a traveling photo exhibition that features iconic images of Episcopal Relief & Development's work (the exhibition is expected to stop in both the Charlotte and Raleigh/Durham areas) and the 75 Stories Project, a program that provides a window into the programs, events and personalities that have shaped the last 75 years and continue to shape lives today. Individuals and groups are encouraged to offer reflections and stories through the Share Your Story page.

Episcopal Relief & Development (ERD) has also created a variety of resources to help individuals, congregations, dioceses, schools and groups to join the 75th anniversary celebration, including worship and prayer resources, faith formation materials and campaign toolkits. Campaigns include:

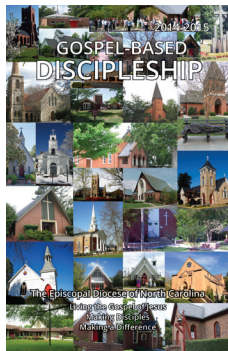


- 75th Anniversary Campaign: Lasting solutions to poverty, hunger and disease
- Carry the Water Campaign: Clean water, hygiene and sanitation
- Fast to Feed Campaign: Sustainable agriculture and livestock
- Thrive to Five Campaign: Maternal and child health
- Pennies to Prosperity Campaign: Vocational training and micro-finance

The overall goal of the campaigns is to raise \$7.5 million by the end of 2015.

For more information about ERD and the 75th anniversary celebration, visit www.episcopalrelief.org/75 or call 1 (855) 312-HEAL (4325).

GOSPEL-BASED DISCIPLESHIP IS NOW AVAILABLE



The 2014-2015 edition of *Gospel-Based Discipleship* (GBD) is now available. As always, there are four easy ways to obtain the daily readings:

- Pick up a copy at your church: Hard copies were given to clergy at this year's Clergy Conference with the request that they deliver the booklets to their respective churches.

- Request a hard copy: If you would like a hard copy, please email communications@episdionc.org with

your mailing address and the number of copies you need. NOTE: If you requested a hard copy of the 2013-2014 *GBD*, you will automatically receive the new edition; there is no need to request it again.

- Download the digital version available at www.episdionc.org.
- Follow us on Facebook or Twitter; the readings are posted each morning.

The new cycle of *GBD* begins on November 30, 2014. Answer its call to follow the daily discipline of reading Gospel passages, for they are a key first step in learning how to understand all of the nuances and complexities found within the pages of the Bible.

BISHOP CURRY TO PREACH AT NATIONAL CURSILLO EVENT

The Rt. Rev. Michael Curry will be among the speakers at the National Episcopal Cursillo Conference when it gathers October 16-19, 2014, in Charlotte, North Carolina.

Cursillo is about bringing together diverse groups of Episcopalians to explore and share the richness of our modes of worship and to gain a deeper understanding of and appreciation for the Church. The National Episcopal Cursillo Conference 2014 is a chance to connect with Cursillo leaders from all over the country and to celebrate and

grow in your abilities to bring Christ into your environments through the Cursillo ministry.

The weekend features meditations and discussions, study and fellowship, singing and silence. The conference also offers eight workshops and other break-out sessions for networking and support.

Bishop Curry is scheduled to preach Friday, October 17. Daily and weekend registration options are still available and can be found at www.nationalepiscopalcursillo.org.

“A SERMON FOR EVERY SUNDAY” BRINGS THE NATION’S BEST PREACHERS INTO EVERY CHURCH

The website sums it up like this: “America’s best preachers deliver fresh, lectionary-based video sermons to your church’s door in time for Sunday worship each week.

“All you do is push the button.”

That is the idea behind “A Sermon Every Sunday,” a new program from the Rev. Jim Somerville, pastor of the First Baptist Church in Richmond, Virginia, and author of *When the Sand Castle Crumbles*. Somerville got the idea after tracking the decline of the American church for some time and feeling a real empathy for small, struggling churches that couldn’t afford their own pastor. In a conversation with the pastor of a successful multisite church, initially Somerville had the idea of asking gifted lay people to lead worship in small churches, and then, when it came time for the sermon, simply to project it on a screen.

“I thought that every church could be a multisite church,” Somerville said, “but instead of hearing sermons from one local pastor, [congregants] could hear sermons from the best preachers in America.”

To make his vision a reality, Somerville recorded sermons from several notable preachers gathered for the 2014 Festival of Homiletics, including the Rt. Rev. Michael Curry, Bishop of the Episcopal Diocese of North Carolina; the Rev. Lauren Winner, assistant professor of Christian Spirituality at Duke Divinity School; the Rev. Dr. David Lose, president of the Lutheran Theological Seminary in Philadelphia; the Rev. Grace Imathiu, lead pastor for the Community United Methodist Church; MaryAnn McKibben Dana, pastor of Idylwood Presbyterian Church; Brian McLaren,

author, speaker, activist and public theologian; Karoline Lewis, associate professor of Biblical Preaching and the Alvin N. Rogness Chair of Homiletics at Luther Seminary in St. Paul, Minnesota; and Rolf Jacobson, assistant professor of Old Testament at Luther Seminary. Nineteen sermons were recorded the week of the festival, and more are on the way. Sermons can be either rented for \$1.99 each or purchased for \$4.99.

“We believe the quality and value of these sermons will make them an attractive option for almost anybody,” Somerville said: “Small churches, house churches, Bible studies, Sunday school classes and even individuals. We’re hoping the kind of preaching that has made the Festival of Homiletics the nation’s premiere preaching event will now be available to everyone.”

“A Sermon for Every Sunday” is set to launch on the First Sunday of Advent, 2014, with a sermon by bestselling author and Episcopal priest the Rev. Lauren Winner. A free stewardship sermon by the Rev. Dr. David Lose, available to churches for use during the fall stewardship season, is now available at www.asermonforeverysunday.com.

LEARN MORE

Bishop Curry recently interviewed the Rev. Jim Somerville in *Please Note*. Find the video at vimeo.com/episcopalinc.

THE DIOCESE HAS A NEW WEBSITE!

If you haven’t yet seen it, the diocese has a new website! Launched in early September, the site is designed for easy navigation and includes lots of great news, stories and information from around the diocese. The new site makes it simple to take care of church business while staying connected to the 120 communities that comprise the Episcopal Diocese of North Carolina.

Some of the new features you’ll see include:

- Four ways to search for what you need: a search box, full-view drop-down menus, an A-Z directory of all the information contained on the site, and a homepage “Quick Links” box with links to the most popular and timely events and pages.
- “What You Need to Know,” a quick homepage bulletin that keeps you up to date on news, upcoming events, deadlines and more. Make it a daily stop!

- A “Featured Media” section that offers sermons, blogs and more from around the diocese, as well as easy access to diocesan videos and connection points. Contributions are always welcome, and additions to this section are in development.
- A “Diocesan News” section that allows you to stay up to date on diocesan news as well as headlines from around the community, denomination and world.
- A growing Spanish-language section. (If you are interested in contributing additional Spanish-language content, please contact Evelyn Morales at evelyn.morales@episdionc.org.)

Best of all, the site is optimized for mobile devices so you get the same great experience whether at your desk or on the go. We hope you’ll take a minute to visit www.episdionc.org and get to know the new site – enjoy!

TWO VISITORS OF INTERNATIONAL RENOWN COMING TO THE DIOCESE

For those interested in poetry, books, spiritual discussion or classical music, there are two can't-miss events taking place this fall.

Poet, Author, Minister and Scholar



John Philip Newell

The Rev. Dr. John Philip Newell, a poet, author, minister and scholar internationally acclaimed for his work in Celtic spirituality, will teach and preach at St. Paul's, Winston-Salem, during All Saints weekend, October 31 through November 2.

Dr. Newell will present a lecture at 7:00 on Friday evening, October 31, and a retreat from 8:30 a.m. to 2:30 p.m. on Saturday, November 1.

On Sunday, November 2, he will preach at the 9:00 a.m., 11:15 a.m. and 5:00 p.m. church services and teach a class at 10:15 a.m.

Knollwood Baptist Church is sponsoring a "Dinner and Dialogue" event at 7:00 p.m. on Sunday, November 2. To register for that event, visit www.knollwood.org.

All events are open to the public. Admission to the Friday lecture is free, but registration is requested. General admission to the Saturday retreat, which includes continental breakfast and a box lunch, is \$30 or \$15 for students. All reservations are due by Wednesday, October 29.

All are welcome to attend Sunday worship services and the class taught by Dr. Newell at St. Paul's. No reservation is necessary.

To learn more about the events of the weekend and to register online, visit www.jpn.stpaulswinstonsalem.org. If you're not able to attend the event, look for a recap and reflection by the Rev. Darby Everhard in the "Read All About It" section of the diocesan website.

A Violin Virtuoso



Natasha Korsakova

Renowned Russian violin virtuoso Natasha Korsakova will be in concert at St. Michael's, Raleigh, on Sunday, Nov. 9, at 3:00 p.m. This is her first visit to North Carolina.

Natasha is a fifth-generation violinist and a descendant of the great Russian composer, Rimsky-Korsakov. She is one of the most popular violinists of her generation and is currently a coveted guest for national and

international orchestras, music festivals and concert events. The artist stands for "Perfect technique, bold stylistic sense and musical intuition (FAZ)" as well as for a charisma that is without equal.

Her repertoire includes ca. 60 Concertos for Violin and Orchestra as well as numerous chamber-music works.

She will be accompanied by St. Michael's organist Kevin Kerstetter, with Katherine Posner, soprano, and Ariadna Nacienceno at the piano.

Tickets are available at www.HolyMichaelMusic.org. Members of other Episcopal churches receive a discounted ticket price of \$15. Enter promotion code 1520 when purchasing tickets online.

DIOCESAN EVENTS

October

- 16 Youth Ministry Department Confirmation Webinar. Registration required.
- 18 Seeing the Face of God in Each Other: An Anti-Racism Seminar, St. Paul's, Cary
- 18-19 Avodah: Work and Worship, St. Francis, Greensboro
- 25-26 Avodah: Work and Worship, Cedar Grove, Kannapolis and St. Andrew's, Rocky Mount

November

- 6 Fresh Start, held regionally. Contact Canon Hunn (michael.hunn@episdionc.org) for more information.
- 7 Annual Episcopal Church Women (ECW) Meeting, St. Mary's, High Point
- 8 Seeing the Face of God in Each Other: An Anti-Racism Seminar, St. Peter's, Charlotte

December

- 4 Fresh Start, held regionally. Contact Canon Hunn (michael.hunn@episdionc.org) for more information.
- 12-14 Bishop's Ball, Camp Walter Johnson, Denton. Registration currently open.

Look for additional events and more detailed event information online at www.episdionc.org, or contact the Diocese at (919) 834-7474, toll-free at (800) 448-8775. Upcoming diocesan events and events from around the Diocese are featured in Please Note, Bishop Curry's weekly e-newsletter.

STAY IN TOUCH



Keep up with our diocese through social media!

www.facebook.com/EpiscopalDioceseNC

www.twitter.com/EpiscopalINC

www.instagram.com/episdionc

www.vimeo.com/episcopalinc



CHRIST CHURCH FOUNDS QUEEN CITY YOUTH CHORUS

Christ Church, Charlotte, is the proud founder and host of The Queen City Youth Chorus, a culturally diverse program that provides music education and performance opportunities to boys and girls ages 8 to 18.

The Chorus consists of youth from public and private schools including Rama Road Elementary, Trinity School, The Brookestone Schools, and choirs from other faiths including St. John Neumann Roman Catholic Church.

Participants will learn sight-singing, music theory and music history. In the process, the youth will learn about teamwork, collaboration, community, the joy of music, and most importantly, themselves.

This program emphasizes the social aspect of singing by bringing together collaborative neighborhood partners and teaching the importance of building bridges within our community. To learn more, visit www.christchurchcharlotte.org.

RALEIGH EPISCOPALIANS MARCH FOR CLIMATE



Photo courtesy of Carl Sigel

If you watched the national news coverage of September's NYC People's Climate March, perhaps you spotted Carl Sigel, a congregant of Nativity, Raleigh, and member of the diocesan environmental ministry. Sigel attended the event with his wife, Emilie, and 400,000 other concerned citizens who marched in support of "a new vision for a new world in which the environment comes before economics, and consumerism will be replaced by conservation."

IN CASE YOU MISSED IT

The Rev. Dr. Rhonda Lee Joins Diocesan Staff as Canon



The Rev. Canon
Rhonda Lee, Ph.D.

On September 15, 2014, the Episcopal Diocese of North Carolina welcomed the Rev. Canon Rhonda Lee, Ph.D. to the diocesan leadership team as a regional canon located in the Charlotte and Sandhills convocations. She brings both personal experience and expertise in multicultural, cross-cultural and ethnically diverse ministry.

As a regional canon, Lee will work with clergy, lay leaders and congregations to help facilitate the ongoing discernment of where and how God is calling the Episcopal Diocese of North Carolina to become a church reflective of the peoples of North Carolina in all our God-given variety and diversity. In particular, she will strive to help the Episcopal Church reach beyond the circles it traditionally inhabits and to nurture cross-cultural, diverse and ethnic ministry development.

"I'm very excited to be joining the diocesan team," said Canon Lee. "I've long been a scholar of nonviolence, Christian spiritual practices and the struggle for racial justice. So the chance to bring together my study of these areas with the practice of prayer and hospitality feels like a Gospel-filled opportunity."

Watch Canon Lee answer our "Five Questions" at vimeo.com/episcopalnc or learn more about her at www.episdionc.org.

Elected to Serve

The Rev. Robert and Sandy Cook were elected to serve as the Chaplains to the Retired Coordinators for Province IV. Their term began July 1, 2014, and will conclude June 30, 2017, unless re-elected by Province IV for an additional three-year term.

Director of Council of Churches Announces Retirement

North Carolina Council of Churches Executive Director George Reed has announced that he will retire at the end of June 2015. At the time of his retirement, Reed will have been Executive Director of the Council for 15 years.

Said Reed, "While I look forward to retirement – to spending more time in my garden/orchard/berry patch; reading entire books, not just thousands of words of journals, newsletters, legislative reports, etc.; delving back into my life-long love of classical music; and traveling a bit more, it also saddens me to think of not being directly involved with the Council. [It] is a remarkable organization, and I am honored to have been associated with you."

Read more about Reed's retirement and his contributions to the NC Council of Churches at www.episdionc.org.

AROUND THE DIOCESE

As the weather turns cool and the leaves change, activity in congregations across the diocese picks back up. As we reflect on the summer's good work - mission trips, exchanges and Vacation Bible Schools - we also look forward to renewed focus and restored energy.

Remember to send photos of happenings in the life of your congregation to communications@episdiocn.org.



Photo by Jane Motsinger

Both parishioners and community members celebrated the blessing of a new Peace Pole - crafted by parishioners - at St. Margaret's, Waxhaw, on September 21, the United Nations International Day of Peace. Here the Rev. Gaye Brown blesses the pole.



We've all seen, um, "interesting" church signs, but St. Christopher's, High Point, recently knocked it out of the park by turning a bad situation into an opportunity for evangelism, all while maintaining a sense of humor and grace.

Photo by the Rev. Ken Krooths



Photos by Russ Hoyser

This spring, the people of All Saints, Concord, were awarded a Green Grant to install cisterns around the church (*left*). They've used the collected rainwater to tend several newly-planted gardens around the church grounds, including an herb garden, blueberry plants and keyhole gardens built by Eagle Scout Zack Moyes and filled by parishioners (*right*).



At this summer's Vacation Bible School, the children of St. Margaret's, Waxhaw, learned about the nonprofit Canine Companions for Independence as part of the theme "Weird Animals." Canine Companions trains and matches service dogs.

Photo by Joanie A. Cameron



Photo by Steve Pearce

Congratulations to the Rev. Jose de Jesus Sierra, vicar of Iglesia El Buen Pastor, Durham, who became a United States citizen on September 12.



Photo courtesy of St. Ambrose, Raleigh

This summer the Rev. Nita Byrd joined 70 chaplains from five continents at the Eighth International Triennial Conference of the Colleges and Universities of the Anglican Communion (CUAC) in Seoul, South Korea.



Photo by Ailisa Tessier

On August 2 and 3, 41 students visiting the United States through the Duke University China Research Center were hosted overnight by parishioners at Church of the Nativity, Raleigh. The college students, who wanted to experience American family life and a Christian church service, were treated to cook-outs, sing-alongs, game nights and Krispy Kreme doughnuts.



Photo courtesy of St. Andrew's, Haw River

St. Andrew's, Haw River, hosted an intentionally multi-cultural Vacation Bible School. The VBS was planned as a partnership among five churches in the Greensboro area.

THE 199TH ANNUAL CONVENTION

Popular cartoonist to keynote

The 199th Annual Convention of the Diocese of North Carolina will take place November 21-22 at the Benton Convention Center in Winston-Salem. This year marks a return to a single two-day annual Convention after last year's dual Conventions, an arrangement that facilitated the shift from a January date to the new November date.

Special guests at this year's Convention include the Rt. Rev. Metlhayotlhe Rawlings Ogotseng Beleme, the Fifth Bishop of Botswana; Jay Sidebotham, Executive Director of Forward Movement's RenewalWorks and a popular cartoonist; and representatives from Thompson Child and Family Focus.

Pre-Convention Convocation Meetings

All convocations are required to meet twice before Convention. At the first meetings, clergy and delegates to Convention discussed the proposed 2015 diocesan

MEET THE KEYNOTER

The diocese is pleased to announce the Rev. Jay Sidebotham as this year's keynote speaker. Currently the executive director of RenewalWorks, a ministry of Forward Movement (the publishing house responsible for resources like *Forward Day by Day*), Sidebotham is known for his St. Swithin's cartoons featured in the Church Pension Group's annual calendar. His humorous depictions of the challenges of Church life hang in many church sanctuaries and offices. Sidebotham previously served in numerous parishes, including St. Luke's, Durham. In addition, Sidebotham worked as an animator on the beloved Schoolhouse Rock shorts.



budget. At the second meetings, convocations will discuss nominations and resolutions and also elect convocation deans and lay wardens. The complete schedule of second meetings is included below.



Sandhills Convocation -

Wednesday, October 22,

7:00 p.m., Emmanuel, Southern Pines

Charlotte Convocation - Thursday, October 23,

7:00 p.m., St. Peter's, Charlotte

Rocky Mount Convocation - Monday, November 3,

7:00 p.m., St. Andrew's, Rocky Mount

Durham Convocation - Monday, November 3,

7:30 p.m., Chapel of the Cross, Chapel Hill.

Refreshments begin at 7:00 p.m.

Raleigh Convocation - Tuesday, November 4,

7:00 p.m., Church of the Nativity, Raleigh

Greensboro Convocation - Thursday November 6,

7:00 p.m., All Saints, Greensboro

Winston-Salem Convocation - Monday, November 10,

6:00 p.m., St. Timothy's, Winston-Salem

Elections

This year, the Convention will elect candidates to fill one clergy and two lay positions on Standing Committee, two clergy and three lay positions on Diocesan Council, one clergy position on the Sewanee Board of Trustees and six clergy or lay positions on the Board of Directors for Penick Village.

The nomination deadline is 12:00 noon on Monday, October 13. Nominations received after the deadline will be returned to the nominator. Late nominations are in order at the first legislative session of the Convention. A late nomination must have a nominator and two seconders, all from different parishes or missions.

Submitting Resolutions

The deadline for submitting resolutions for action by the 199th Annual Convention is 12 noon on October 13. Resolutions should be submitted electronically to convention@episdionc.org, and their receipt will be confirmed via email. Those received on time will be posted to the diocesan website no later than October 24.

Late resolutions may be introduced at the first legislative session of the Convention on Friday, November 21. The Convention must agree to consider a late resolution by a two-thirds vote. Late resolutions amending the Constitution or Canons are not allowed.

Resolutions must be submitted in writing and must be phrased in such a way that the question before the Convention can be resolved by a simple yes or no vote. "Whereas" clauses are discouraged and will not be published as part of the adopted resolution. An explanation clearly marked "Comment" may be appended to the text if desired.

Canon 12 prescribes special procedures for introducing and considering resolutions that would amend the Constitution or Canons. Information about those procedures is available from the Secretary of the Convention, Joe Ferrell (jsferrel@email.unc.edu).

Paperless

The Diocese is once again going paperless at Convention. Delegates will not receive packets of information when they arrive, but all resources, including nominations and proposed resolutions, will be available in advance of Convention through the diocesan website (www.episdionc.org). Delegates are encouraged to bring their smartphones and tablets to view updated resources, like amended resolutions, as they become available throughout Convention.

FOLLOW LIVE

The Saturday of Convention will be streamed live on the diocesan homepage at www.episdionc.org, and highlight videos will become available through the weekend.

Follow Convention on Facebook, Twitter and Instagram with #DioNC199

THE TIMELINE OF CONVENTION

On a date to be set by Council (See list on opposite page)

Convocation pre-Convention meetings to discuss tentative programs and supporting budgets to be presented for Convention adoption. *Canon 19.4*

October 13, 2014
(40 days before Convention;
transferred from Sunday, Oct. 12)

Last day to submit nominations and resolutions. *Rule of Order XVIII, Rule of Order XIX*

Bishop appoints Legislative Committees no later than today. *Canon 13, sec. 2*

October 16, 2014

Diocesan Council gives final approval to 2015 budget to be presented to Convention.

October 22, 2014
(30 days before Convention)

Last day to apply for admission as a parish or mission in Union with Convention. *Canon 2.5*

On a date to be set by Council

Convocation pre-Convention meetings to discuss nominations and resolutions and to elect deans and lay wardens.

November 11, 2014
(10 days before Convention)

Date for determination by the Secretary of the Convention as to whether a parish or mission must obtain consent of the Convention to seat its lay delegates due to failure to file its 2013 parochial report or 2013 audit report.

Date for determination by the Secretary of the Convention as to whether a parish or mission has paid in full its assigned shares of the Mission and Ministry Budget for the 12 months ending at least 30 days before the Convention (i.e., October 1, 2013, through September 30, 2014). Secretary of the Convention strikes from the voting rolls clergy and lay delegates from delinquent congregations. *Canon 18.4*

November 21, 2014

The 199th Convention convenes.

November 22, 2014

The 199th Convention adjourns.

DEACONS: IN THE CHURCH AND IN THE WORLD

Deacons aren't ordered the least;
They don't take a back seat to the priest.
They're better, they're stronger,
They've been around longer,
And key to a full, holy feast.

This is a rather provocative verse of unknown origin. But does it remind you of someone in your congregation, or perhaps even yourself? Someone who may be feeling the beginnings of a call to the ancient and sacred order of deacons?

Deacons have long played a critical and unique role in The Episcopal Church. Deacons are ordained, but they are not priests. Deacons are trained and formed, but not in seminary. Deacons serve, but they are not normally paid and often have secular employment. They are in the Church and in the world, working always to assure there is a connection between the two. The Book of Common Prayer may offer the best description of the role deacons play in the Church. In the Deacons' ordinal, the Bishop says, "God now calls you to a special ministry of servanthood. . . [i]n the name of Jesus Christ, you are to serve all people, particularly the poor, the weak, the sick, and the lonely. . . . At all times, your life and teaching are to show Christ's people that in serving the helpless they are serving Christ himself." (BCP, p.543)

The life of a deacon can be frustrating and exciting. It is frustrating to explain you are a member of the clergy but not a priest, to be asked when you are going to be "fully ordained" and about what you are authorized to do rather than who you are called to be. But it is exciting to be called to this "special ministry of servanthood," to work outside the church, to minister to the poor, the

HEARING A CALL?

Do you feel called to the Sacred Order of Deacons? Are you ready to discern the call? There is room for you, and the Diocese is ready to help and welcome you. You'll find the information you need to get started at www.episdionc.org under the "Diocese" tab.



Photo courtesy of the Rev. Rebecca Yarborough

The Rev. Rebecca Yarborough, deacon at St. Alban's, Davidson, ministering to marginalized workers as part of her work in the world.

weak, the sick and the lonely, to strive to stand with our feet on the ever-changing and often nonexistent line between the Church and the world.

More than 40 deacons serve in the Episcopal Diocese of North Carolina. You'll find them working in hospitals and prisons and nursing homes, serving as advocates for children and the elderly, working with people who are hungry and disabled, working for peace and justice, and serving on the committees and commissions of the diocese and its congregations. Most importantly, you'll find them out in the world, bridging the gap between the Church and the secular community and demonstrating how seamlessly integrated vocation and ministry can be.

They try to stay true to their name,
Not less than the priest, not the same.
They're angel and waiter,
And no one's the greater,
To serve, and to work, and proclaim!



The Venerable William Joyner is archdeacon of the Diocese of North Carolina and serves at the Chapel of the Cross, Chapel Hill. Contact him at William.Joyner@src.org.

IMAGINE THE POSSIBILITIES

New Mission Endowment Grant offers opportunities for outreach on broad scale

Have you ever had a great idea but no way to launch it into action? Have you ever been called to do something but simply didn't have the resources you needed? Has a conversation with others outside your church ever led to a wish you could work together to make that possibility a reality?

With the new Mission Endowment Grant announced by the Episcopal Diocese of North Carolina, ideas, imaginings, partnerships and possibilities have a chance to become real.

The Mission Endowment Grant is a permanent endowment created for the purpose of supporting the diocesan mission strategy of establishing the Episcopal presence of Christ in communities in ways that brings the community to see Christ's presence among them.

It begins with who is eligible to apply for the grant. Eligibility for the Mission Endowment Grant is open to a wider range of applicants than any other grant offered by the Diocese. Grant projects must relate to missionary initiatives located within the Diocese, but they do not have to be exclusively associated with diocesan entities. Only one person or part of the project must have an association with a diocesan entity. This means the door is wide open for strategic partnerships, including interfaith and secular entities, companion relationships, and partnership ministries of congregations, institutions and organizations of the Diocese.

In addition to expanded eligibility, the Mission Endowment Grant is also designed to work either on its own or in tandem with other diocesan grant offerings, such as the Mission Resource Support Team (MRST) Church grants and the North Carolina Episcopal Church Fund (NCECF) grants. An example of how these grants can work together might include a Mission Endowment Grant dedicated to materials or startup costs, with MRST offering staff salary support and NCECF fulfilling support needs in other areas.

"By bringing together [these grants], we want them to work collaboratively," said the Rt. Rev. Michael Curry, bishop of the Diocese of North Carolina. "We want people to think bigger, to think Galilee, to think beyond the doors of the church to imagine the new church."

The Mission Endowment Board will fund and administer a maximum of five grants per year, each ranging between \$5,000 and \$25,000. One and two-year grants are available.

"You do not have to be a member of the clergy to apply for this grant," says the Rev. John Tampa, chair of the Mission Endowment Board. "You do not have to be a member of the vestry. Anyone within the diocese can apply for a Mission Endowment Grant. This grant is about an opportunity for anyone – clergy or lay – to collaborate with others either within or outside of the church for the sake of Christ's mission in the world."

Applications will be accepted beginning November 30, 2014; the deadline is January 31, 2015. Grants will be awarded and announced in April 2015. Applications can be found on the diocesan website (www.episdionc.org).

JUST THINK...

Two examples of the type of projects the grant supports took place before the grant ever existed. Imagine what could be possible now that it does.

Feeding Body and Soul

Once upon a time, a woman who attended Nativity, Raleigh, and her neighbor, who attended Temple Beth Or, decided to reduce hunger in Raleigh. Their idea of food recovery and redistribution began small, and, while each had ties to her respective house of worship, the ministry began outside the governance of either. The Rev. Jill Staton Bullard and Maxine Solomon, full of the Holy Spirit, blazed a trail. Their Inter-Faith Food Shuttle has become one of the two primary hunger-relief agencies in the Triangle and a shining example of an organization of explicit faith, of which The Episcopal Church remains a part.

Building a Home

When Advocate, Chapel Hill, relocated an old church building to serve as their permanent home, moving the building was only the beginning. It needed total restoration and upgrading to be brought up to code. The congregation made it happen by putting several diocesan grants and resources to work. A low-interest loan from NCECF provided a financial jump start, while a Green Grant went toward energy-efficient roofing and insulation. MRST assisted with the vicar's salary to keep resources directed at the renovation. It took years, planning, hard work and a lot of perseverance, but the Advocate, Chapel Hill, now worships in their new home every Sunday, serving as a shining example of what can be done when resources are brought together.

BISHOP ANNE GOES TO COLLEGE

Baby Bishop School Checklist:

- Pray
- Learn about ecclesiastical haberdashery
- Make connections



By the Rt. Rev. Anne E. Hodges-Copple

Living Our Vows (LOV), an offering of the College for Bishops, is a three-year program to help new bishops grow into their roles as spiritual leaders for their respective dioceses. It is sometimes affectionately referred to as “Baby Bishop School.” LOV convenes for one week each year over a three-year period, usually in the late spring or early summer. I attended my first LOV conference at the end of June at the Roslyn Episcopal Conference Center outside Richmond, Virginia.

Monday, June 23, 2014

Finally. A little more than a year after my ordination to the episcopate, I arrived for my first week of Living Our Vows, where I hoped to learn some of the closely kept secrets of being a bishop in The Episcopal Church. I’ve learned a great deal already, but admittedly there is still much about which I feel unclear: attire and episcopal etiquette on Sunday visitation; how to manage multiple levels of responsibility and accountability; duties within the councils of the church beyond the Diocese; dealing with the press; how to appreciate the home-cooked Southern meals at church dinners without gaining another 10 pounds!

In addition to my hope for LOV, I harbored a reluctant fear: what if LOV, with all its good intentions, is more about

learning to “fiddle” while the Episcopal Church is failing to “burn” with the fire of Pentecost? Would I see the connections between the mission of the church and the various components that connect vision with execution?

Happily, I faced neither these questions nor fears alone. Among the Class of 2014 are fellow North Carolinians the Rt. Rev. Wayne Hougland, formerly of St. Luke’s, Salisbury, and now Bishop of Western Michigan; and the Rt. Rev. Mark Bourlakas, formerly of St. Alban’s, Davidson, now Bishop of Southwestern Virginia.

Tuesday, June 24

Every morning after breakfast we began with Morning Prayer and a Bible study. The Chapel at Roslyn is striking in its simplicity and beauty. The soaring roofline and floor-to-ceiling windows look out over acres of rolling hills and the James River. As part of Morning Prayer, we broke into groups to reflect upon the morning readings. It’s a perfect way to start the day.

After worship, we broke into small groups for an exercise called “Critical Incidents,” in which each bishop presented a case study. We described the challenge of the situation, the characters, the context and our response. The hope was to present the situation in such a way as to be as honest

as possible about our role in the situation and then listen as the other participants talk amongst themselves, sharing their impressions of what went well, what didn't and what alternatives might have been considered. Hearing feedback on my own case study and listening about the conflicts and problems faced by these new bishops in other parts of the continent taught me a great deal and made me even more appreciative of serving in the Diocese of North Carolina.

Tuesday evening we were treated to a talk by the Rt. Rev. Thomas Breidenthal, Bishop of Southern Ohio. Among his many contributions to the church over the years is his book, *Christian Households: The Sanctification of Nearness*, one of my favorite texts for exploring ethics, human intimacy and living in Christian community. He makes a compelling and provocative case for making room for the Holy Spirit to drive or "expel" us out into mission, much the way the people of Israel were forced to cross the Red Sea and Jesus, after baptism, was driven into the wilderness. He speaks of how this image of expulsion applies to birth and therefore, to baptism. He pointed out that too often we think of mission as a task that belongs to us or to the church, rather than first and foremost to God. Especially challenging to someone of my eager and impatient temperament, he spoke of the need to practice a holiness of waiting and discerning the Holy Spirit. I left the evening sated by this feast of theology and conversation.

Wednesday, June 25

Wednesday was full of the practical insights I hoped to find, along with plenty of food for thought to go with them.

The morning was spent at a presentation on system-centered analysis, a way of understanding organizational behavior, by the Rev. Meigs Ross, a priest and licensed psychotherapist. It was fascinating but just an appetizer. I'm looking forward to sharing it with the canons of the Diocese to hear their thoughts and experiences with this approach to creating healthier systems for adapting to change and handling conflict.

And then we had the first of two sessions with the Rt. Rev. Neil Alexander, former Bishop of Atlanta and the current Dean of The School of Theology, Sewanee. It was what I'd been waiting for: how to dress for success. The Rt. Rev. Willlliam Gregg, blessed be his name, gave me a crash course in episcopal vestments before my consecration in the spring of 2013. I should have taken better notes; I learned early that haberdashery mistakes can be hot-button issues.

But thanks to Bishop Alexander, I now have his definitive guide to the history, controversies, origins and evolutions of the ways we do the things we do. I joke about

dressing for success, but the truth is it's not just about the vestments; it's about what we do, how we move, and the liturgical and spiritual meaning behind it all. How can a bishop not want to get that right?

The Incarnation of the Divine teaches us that what we do to and with our bodies matters. In worship, at homes, in secret, in public: Our own bodies and the bodies of all others are vessels of the sacred worth. Liturgical life creates in us the spiritual muscle memory to be the Body of Christ at all times, in all places.

Thursday, June 26

Thursday was a really fun day. Awkward and embarrassing, but fun. We worked with Macky Alston, a Durham native, award-winning film producer and media expert from Auburn Seminary. To practice dealing with the press in all kinds of situations, he made each of us actually go on camera and do a mock interview. Yikes!

In the evening, our now quite tight band of brothers and sisters shared a closing Eucharist. The preacher was excellent; I think he's a real rising star. His name? Oh, right. The Rt. Rev. Michael Curry, Bishop of North Carolina! In addition to all of the support he gives me, Bishop Curry has served on the faculty for LOV for years. Since at home we normally and deliberately move in different geographical directions while always working hard to move in the same direction of shared vision and execution, it was a double delight to have this extra time with my beloved brother bishop.

As a whole, the week was relaxing, inspiring and rejuvenating. The hardest part of it was taking leave of such a gifted community of fellow learners. I continue to marvel at this extraordinary call to serve God by serving the world as a bishop of the one, holy, catholic and apostolic church.

The Rt. Rev. Anne Elliott Hodges-Copple was elected the sixth Bishop Suffragan of the Episcopal Diocese of North Carolina in 2012. Contact her at bishopanne@episdionc.org.



WHAT THEY DID THIS SUMMER

Two churches get creative to keep congregations engaged

Summer days are often called lazy, and the moniker is honestly earned. Summer is the time of year when days grow long, the heat settles in, and people take a break. They break from school, routines, jobs and – as these breaks often include heading out for a change in scenery – church.

Many parishes acknowledge this trend and simply accept the fact the pews will be more sparsely populated until autumn returns once again. But two churches in the Diocese of North Carolina decided not to give in so easily this year, and their creativity made for summer days that were anything but lazy.

1. Read and study Holy Scripture regularly
2. Pray individually and as a home community
3. Engage in Christian service together
4. Financially support the work of your Church and make it known throughout the home
5. Keep the Sabbath (the entire home) along with other Christians

By strengthening the role faith plays in a person's daily life, the church in turn becomes a source of tools, resources and support that equips and enriches the journey.

"The Church should continue to work as hard as it can in Christian formation, doing all the things we have learned to do so well," said the Rev. Winton. "[But] it takes both Church and home working together if we are to form real disciples."

But when families break for vacation and leave home and church behind, the challenge becomes a question of how to keep the momentum going.

West New Bern Rd

Morehead City



A Bucket O'Blessings

St. John's, Charlotte, has an approach to worship that teaches the Church is a keystone element in a person's Christian formation, but it is not and cannot be the only element in a person's faith journey. To live a fully faithful life, a person cannot simply attend church once a week; he must live and practice his faith every day, and the foundation of that practice begins in the home.

"Historically, religious education took place in the home," said the Rev. Paul Winton, rector of St. John's. "Before radio, television and the evolution of the urban [lifestyle], home was the primary venue for engaging the Scriptures, contemplating the faith and launching a practice of the faith."

Realizing the need to reincorporate the home as a central point in a person's faith, St. John's created ChurchHome, a program and philosophy that encourages families to build the practice of faith into daily lives using simple but effective guidelines:

Church to Go

A brightly colored bucket. Sunscreen. A beach ball. Bubbles.

Prayer cards and scripture comics?

It's a Bucket o' Blessings, and it is "church to go." But the whimsical bucket carried a serious responsibility, as its job was to keep families on track with their practice and connected with St. John's. In addition to the toys and games, the bucket included Scripture lessons for every Sunday of summer, a link to The Episcopal Church's parish directory so families could find a church wherever they were, and a link to a webcast of St. John's services if they preferred stay in touch with home.

"God goes with you everywhere," said Cathy Harrison, assistant to the rector for special projects. "A Bucket o' Blessings was a fun way to stay tuned in while you were



One of St. John's Bucket o' Blessings, featuring a soon-to-be well-traveled Flat John-E.



A snapshot from the road, featuring one of the travel-specific prayers included in the Bucket o' Blessings

away from home.”

Recognizing the importance fellowship plays in any faith journey and to help keep the congregation connected, the Bucket o' Blessings also included John-E. “Think of him as a cousin of sorts to Flat Stanley,” said Harrison. Vacationers were encouraged to include John-E in photos and share them with St. John’s. Photos were posted on a map so folks in Charlotte could follow the travels of their fellow parishioners. The hope was 50 families would take a Bucket o’ Blessings and

make it part of their summer; almost 100 were distributed. Already talk has turned to next summer.

“Oh, we’ll do something again,” said Harrison. “It may be a Bucket o’ Blessings, or it may be something else, but either way we’ll make it fun.”

The Seeds of Sabbath

While one church focused on its travelers, another focused on those staying home. St. Paul’s, Smithfield, answered the call when faced with the absence not of its worshippers, but its rector.

The Rev. Jim Melnyk was departing for a three-month summer sabbatical, and so in January, the vestry and the Rev. Melnyk went on retreat to start making preparations for the priest’s absence. Both the congregation and the vestry supported the Rev. Melnyk’s sabbatical, and they wanted to find a way for those at home to share in the experience.

They found the way in the words of the fourth commandment: “Remember the Sabbath day, to keep it holy. Six days you shall labor and do all your work. But the seventh day is the Sabbath of the Lord your God” (Exodus 20:8-10). It mirrored the Rev. Melnyk’s impending journey well. As he was taking a break from his usual routine and work to care for his own faith and spirit, so the congregation would, once a week, take some time to do the same.

The Seeds of Sabbath were planted.

The plan was that every week, a member of the

vestry would offer at each Sunday service a “Weekly Seed of Sabbath.” The seeds came from a variety of sources: some were developed by the vestry; some came from Matthew Sleeth’s book, *24/6: A Prescription for a Happier, Healthier Life*, which the vestry had read and studied at length to prepare for this project; and still others came from additional readings about the Sabbath. The seeds’ purpose was to help congregants facilitate and enhance efforts to honor the Sabbath fully, and each was designed to encourage rest, reflection and, in some cases, an intentional act.

“[The Seeds of Sabbath were] a way to help each of us be with [Father Jim] and to begin to experience changes that may evolve because of our commitment to God’s commandment to stop, rest, reflect and know that He is God,” said David Lockett, vestry and Seeds of Sabbath project member.

Only the vestry and the Rev. Melnyk knew all of the seeds in advance. Every Sunday, parishioners of St. Paul’s gathered to honor the Sabbath intentionally and prayerfully, sowing the weekly seeds and, as the summer progressed, feeling a change grow within. Upon the Rev. Melnyk’s return, the church came together at a celebration to welcome their rector home and to exchange tales of their summer experiences.

When asked about the lingering effects of his church’s summer Sabbath journey, the Rev. Melnyk replied, “I’ve noticed more of a sense of calm and people trusting in their faith journeys. A lot of the day-to-day anxiety that can infect people’s lives doesn’t seem to be there as much. Folks seem to have come away with renewed confidence [both] in themselves and their faith journeys.”

One church’s project kept an established practice going; the other laid the foundation for a new way of doing things. Two approaches, both resulting in a deeper spiritual journey for those who took part.

Christine McTaggart is the communications director for the Diocese of North Carolina. Contact her at christine.mctaggart@episdionc.org.

Seeds of Sabbath: Tell God something you want no one else to know, and then wrap yourself in the warmth of his unconditional love.



By Summerlee Walter,
with additional reporting by Silvia Cendejas

VOICES FROM THE FIELDS

North Carolina's farmworkers tell their stories

The stories contained within this piece are drawn from interviews with two current and one former farmworker who spoke with representatives of the Diocese of North Carolina and the Episcopal Farmworker Ministry. It is intended to share their voices and stories, which are rarely heard, directly with our readers. These individuals' experiences do not necessarily reflect the experiences of all of North Carolina's estimated 150,000 seasonal farmworkers, but they do represent the real challenges and hardships many farmworkers face.

If you have any questions or would like to share your own stories of owning, managing or working on a North Carolina farm or of working in outreach to farmworkers, please email the diocesan communications department at communications@episdionc.org.

Leonardo Galván works in North Carolina's agricultural fields almost every day. For 10 years, beginning in 1992, he left his studies in economics and migrated back and forth from his native Mexico to North Carolina – and for one season to Virginia – to harvest tobacco, sweet potatoes, melons, cucumbers, peppers and potatoes. Sometimes Galván worked for farmers who treated him well and fairly, but just as often he labored for those who exploited their workers. Galván no longer harvests crops by hand for 12-14 hours per day, but he still spends much of his time in farmworker camps as an outreach expert and community educator for the North Carolina Farmworker Project. Both his story and the stories of the workers he serves now highlight the inherent dangers and difficulties migrant farmworkers encounter – and also reveal the hidden abuses some farmworkers experience at the hands of their employers.

According to Galván, one Fuquay-Varina farmer for whom he worked during five growing seasons in the 1990s was aware of the struggles his workers faced and treated them well, but, he says, "That was an exception for me." One common abuse Galván saw as a farmworker was crew leaders screaming at workers who did not understand instructions in English or whom the leaders felt were not working fast enough. The screaming sometimes escalated to physical violence directed toward workers.

In addition to verbal and sometimes physical abuse,

Galván also witnessed economic abuses. During one growing season in the era before cell phones, the farmer for whom Galván worked collected \$50 from each worker's check to cover the expense of international calls back to their home countries, promising to refund them whatever balance they did not use on the \$1 per minute calls. Regardless of the time they used, Galván says, workers never received any money back.

Galván continues to hear reports of similar economic exploitation from the farmworkers with whom he works now. The workers tell him stories of farmers who ban raincoats and ponchos from the field unless workers purchase them directly from the farmers, who charge up to \$50 per poncho. In addition, farmworkers share stories of crew leaders who allow workers to have food and drink during their breaks only if the workers purchase overpriced items from the crew leader. Some farmworkers have reported that funds for snacks are automatically deducted from their paychecks, regardless of what they actually consume.

The workers have little recourse when their employers demand that they purchase certain items directly from them. Much like rural coal miners and migrant workers during the first half of the 20th century, who often lacked transportation and thus had access only to an overpriced company store, modern migrant farmworkers often visit the store only when their employers provide transportation and are dependent on their employers' offerings the rest of the time. With often limited English skills, little access to transportation and fear of potentially losing their jobs, workers often find it difficult to seek help when faced with unjust or illegal treatment.

Galván's experiences, and the experiences of the farmworkers he now serves, highlights some of the dangers and difficulties faced by the immigrants who form the backbone of North Carolina's \$78 billion per year agricultural industry. The agricultural sector, which, according to the North Carolina Department of Agriculture and Consumer Science's website, accounts for more than 17 percent of the state's income, still largely depends on human labor. Unlike cotton, that other iconic Southern



Harvesting ground crops, like sweet potatoes, requires workers to bend over to collect the produce and to hoist buckets full of produce over their heads for 12-14 hours each day. Photos by Lynette Wilson/Episcopal News Service

crop, tobacco, of which North Carolina produces more than any other state, is still topped and harvested by hand, as are 85 percent of fruits and vegetables. This includes sweet potatoes, the other crop in the production of which North Carolina leads the nation.

Galván harvested both of North Carolina’s signature crops during his decade of farm labor and now, in his role as an outreach expert, he continues to see the effects that exposure to pesticides and acute nicotine poisoning have on field workers who spend their days handling crops. The effects of exposure to pesticides, including their potential neurological effects, are well-documented, and up to 44 percent of farmworker families live in housing directly adjacent to agricultural fields, increasing their likelihood of pesticide exposure. According to Galván, those working in tobacco fields are especially at risk for pesticide exposure because pesticides are applied to tobacco fields as often as once every five days.

In addition to the risks associated with pesticide exposure, North Carolina’s tobacco workers are also at risk for acute nicotine poisoning, more commonly known as green tobacco sickness. Nicotine can be absorbed through exposed skin when workers handle mature tobacco leaves, especially when they are wet. The symptoms of acute nicotine poisoning include abdominal cramps and vomiting, heart palpitations, weakness and fainting. While in extreme cases nicotine poisoning can lead to respiratory failure and comas, in most cases its effect is to prevent

sufferers from working, resulting in lost wages in addition to the medical symptoms.

Gervacio Olguin has been coming to the United States on six-month contracts for the past 16 years.

“At first the tobacco made me very sick,” he says, “but it doesn’t anymore.” Olguin’s experience with harvesting tobacco is a common one. Workers frequently adjust to nicotine exposure over time, becoming less likely to experience symptoms while still absorbing the chemical through their skin. Those who are new to field work are especially susceptible to the medical problems caused by exposure to pesticides and nicotine due to a lack of awareness about potential dangers and appropriate precautions.

This is where Galván comes in. As a community educator, he works to teach farmworkers about the dangers of pesticides and to inform them of their legal rights. During his visits to the camps, he sings songs about pesticide safety set to the popular tunes he plays on his guitar.

“The workers have lots more help now than when I worked in the fields,” Galván says. While he can provide farmworkers with information or help them contact lawyers through Legal Aid if their rights have been violated, there is less he can do about the isolation with which migrant farmworkers struggle.

“At first it was very difficult,” Olguin explains. “I was very sad and worried to leave my family alone for so long. I was worried that I would not understand what the boss said since I did not understand English. I was worried to

TAKE ACTION

Donations to Harvest for Hospitality, a campaign benefiting the Episcopal Farmworker Ministry, are accepted through the initiative's website, www.HarvestForHospitality.org. The Episcopal Farmworker Ministry serves 3,500 farmworkers each growing season by providing Spanish-language sacramental ministries and Eucharist celebrations; immigration assistance; transportation services; food, clothing and toiletry kit collection and distribution; counseling; and English as a Second Language (ESL) classes.

Visitors to the ministry can arrange to visit a migrant worker camp.

not understand people at the stores or other places.”

Nati Custodio has worked as a farmworker for 11 years. She harvested fruit and vegetables from Michigan to Florida before settling in North Carolina, where she works in tobacco and sweet potato fields. While tobacco is usually a crop harvested by men, Custodio fills in when the crew leaders are shorthanded. She usually leaves the fields by 3:00 p.m. in order to be home in time to care for her children.

Even though she lives in North Carolina with her husband and three of her children, Custodio misses the son she left behind when she moved to the United States.

“Our plan was to come to the U.S., earn money and go back home,” she says. “I left my son in Mexico to work here and send him money. We wanted to earn money to build a house back home, but it did not work out that way.”

Due to the language barrier, Custodio initially struggled with daily tasks like shopping for groceries or going to the

A crew of farmworkers harvesting a sweet potato field during a visit by the Episcopal News Service. Photo by Christine McTaggart



doctor. She looked and listened for words that sounded like their Spanish equivalents and did the best she could to decipher what signs and people were saying from there.

Despite her struggles with homesickness and isolation, Custodio plans to continue working in North Carolina's fields.

"I want my children to have a better future here in the U.S.," she says. "We have no plans to go back to Mexico. Over there, life is much harder and here, working hard, even if it has to be in the fields, we find work."

Galván also looks forward to the future. He recently started studying for a G. E. D. and after receiving it hopes to continue the education he left behind in Mexico. Galván's also working to expand opportunities for North Carolina's migrant farmworker population as a member of the Board of Directors of the Episcopal Farmworker Ministry. As part of his role with the Board, he's spearheading a fledgling farmworker leadership initiative.

Ultimately, the work of people like Galván and organizations like the Episcopal Farmworker Ministry help farmworkers like Custodio achieve their dreams.

"For the future, if we grow old, we will grow old in the fields. I hope that the children study and grow up to be somebody so they don't have to work in the fields to live like we do."

Summerlee Walter is the communications coordinator for the Episcopal Diocese of North Carolina. Contact her at summerlee.walter@episdionc.org. Silvia Cendejas is the assistant director of the Episcopal Farmworker Ministry. Learn more about the Episcopal Farmworker Ministry at www.episcopalfarmworkerministry.org

LEARN MORE

Learn more about the Episcopal Farmworker Ministry and how you can help North Carolina's farmworkers at episcopalfarmworkerministry.org.

PICK THREE

It's almost impossible to understand truly the life of a farmworker: the long hours, the hazardous conditions, the substandard living arrangements and the poverty-level pay. But it's important to learn about the life farmworkers lead so we understand the debt we owe and the help we can offer.

"Pick Three" is a series of activities that focuses on providing that awareness. They range from something as simple as a movie night to putting together educational experiences, but all of the activities are designed to inform, educate, move, inspire, and above all, to bring us together in thanksgiving for those who provide the bounty we enjoy every day.

Congregations are encouraged to take part in at least three of the activities between September 2014 and March 2015. Churches can choose which ones to do and when to do them. The possibilities include:

- **Book Club:** Choose a book related to life in the fields, then come together to discuss its themes, impacts and more.
- **Movie Night:** Don't want to read the book? No worries, movie nights provide just as much material for discussion.
- **Photo Dinners:** Modeled after Go Speak! Sharing our Faith, photo dinners encourage groups to share a meal and examine either photos or questions (or both) intended to educate and encourage discussion.
- **Bible Study:** Our Baptismal Covenant calls us to "respect the dignity of every human being." Bible study helps us to understand how that relates to farmworkers and what we are called to do in response.
- **Experience Challenges:** Walk a mile — or at least a few feet — in the shoes of farmworkers through activities designed to give you a glimpse of what life is like in the fields.
- **Field Trips:** Plan a visit to farmworker camps or the Episcopal Farmworker Ministry.

Find all of the resources to plan and get started with "Pick Three" at www.harvestforhospitality.org. The activities suggested are simply that - suggestions. Congregations can use them as designed or adapt them to best work for their needs.

If you have questions or need additional information, please contact Patti Trainor (919-834-7474).



By Bruce Elliott

LIVING INTO A NEW ERA

How one small church became a catalyst for revitalizing a community

St. Paul's, Salisbury, is the keystone church in an unfolding and very unlikely story. It features a plot line found in so many denominational churches around the country: that of once-vital churches and neighborhoods in long decline due to economic hollowing out, fracturing families and younger generations that seek non-traditional ways to express their faith and spirituality.

But this all-too-familiar story features a plot twist that began in 2012, when one man's vision and prayers set in motion a strategic plan and launched an initiative that has already produced real hope and substantial change with more on the way. And in the process, St. Paul's may well show us how a traditional and historic church can transform into a 21st-century model of what a church can become and how it can help bring about lasting community-wide change.

The Rev. Rick Williams came to St. Paul's in the spring of 2012, after retiring from a 27-year career as a chaplain in the United States Navy. He and his wife, Judith, had decided to retire in North Carolina, hoping to find a place where he might serve a small church in some way. St. Paul's was looking for a part-time vicar, and it was located in one of the most historic cities in the Piedmont, which appealed to the amateur historian. It seemed like a good fit, and the

Rev. Williams was hired.

Soon after arriving at St. Paul's, the Rev. Williams felt the Spirit leading him to bring something more than a Sunday morning service to the small parish. People from other areas of the U.S. began moving to Chestnut Hill and calling the Rev. Williams to ask if they might serve in some way. Recognizing the church and its neighborhood were suddenly becoming a nexus of willing talent and new energy, the Rev. Williams sought to gain a better understanding of Chestnut Hill's history to determine how best to move forward. He consulted with local historian Haynes Murdoch, a direct descendent of legendary industrialist and priest Francis Murdoch.

According to Haynes, his ancestor the Rev. Murdoch organized St. Paul's as a mission in 1877 and over the next several decades built some 12 other Episcopal missions and two dozen textile mills in Rowan County. "He was a strong and visionary leader whose work helped rebuild the county following the devastation that resulted from the Civil War," said Haynes. The Rev. Williams came to the same conclusion. "He provided a way out of poverty for thousands, built places for them to worship and schools for their children. He really saved this area and provided a bridge from poverty to 20th-century prosperity."

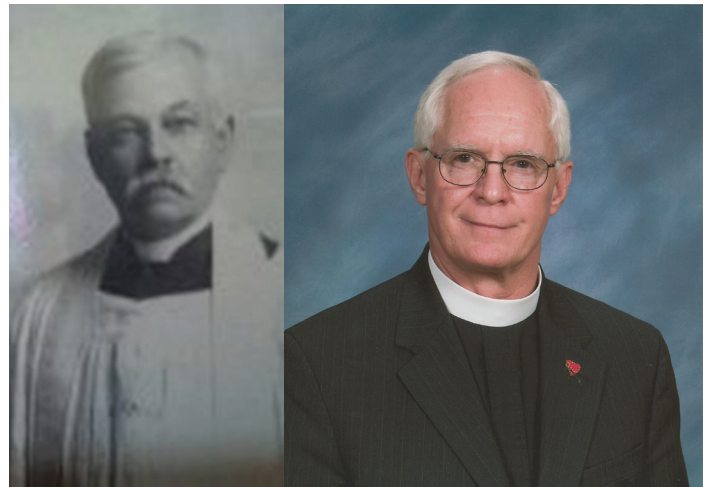
In 1893, land holdings that formerly belonged to the Rev. Murdoch were sold and the land plotted out to create the first subdivision in Salisbury. Known as Chestnut Hill, the area grew and prospered for decades. At its peak in the 1920s through 1950s, it was a solidly middle-class area whose citizens were employed at the many local mills, the Spencer train depot and a variety of other businesses.

In the years since, the area's economy gradually went downhill. The train depot closed, and all the mills and furniture factories eventually shut down. The resulting economic dislocation took a heavy toll: families moved out, the tax base declined, absentee landlords came in, and the spiritual and social fabric of the community deteriorated.

Yet in 2012, the Rev. Williams saw a vision that portrayed a different reality. Recognizing the presence of the Spirit and emboldened by its persistent inner guidance, he prayed and planned, and soon things began to happen.

He and the ministers of the other three neighborhood churches came together to discuss ways to turn this vision into a practical plan. They decided to pool resources, share ideas and collaborate in ways that would benefit both the churches' and the neighborhood's common good. Realizing they could be more effective working together rather than separately, their differences began to lose importance. As the Rev. Ed Harper, minister of Haven Lutheran Church, said, "For the church to thrive in the future, we must emphasize the essential elements of our faith and de-emphasize denominational differences."

One of their ideas was to invite nonprofits to locate in the neighborhood, bringing their services close to the people they serve, and to provide those nonprofits with space in the churches to operate. Haven Lutheran is now



Photos courtesy of the Rev. Williams

Left: The Rev. Frances J. Murdoch, founding vicar of St. Paul's, 1887-1896 Right: The Rev. Richard A. Williams, current vicar of St. Paul's Opposite page: St. Paul's, Salisbury. Photo by Ben Martin and Dave Willingham/Historic Salisbury Foundation

home to the Center for Faith & the Arts, a nonprofit that explores the intersection between the arts and spirituality. Classes ranging from performance and visual art to music are offered to adults and children. Taught by local artists, Wake Up Leonardo! is a popular summertime program that provides children from all income levels an opportunity to learn from professional art teachers. One of them is Timothy Demers, a gifted and charismatic teacher who moved his family from California to Chestnut Hill three years ago.

"It's a joyful thing helping these kids engage with art and [draw] on creativity they didn't know they had," he said. "Some are doing so for the first time in their young lives."

Coburn United Methodist Church has reached across religions, meeting with a congregation of Messianic Jews to offer a worship space and home for their young faith community. Rabbi Yoshi Wentz is already immersed in the neighborhood, proactively reaching out to anyone who lives there, including gang members. Police credit these and other efforts in helping to lower the crime rate.

Other key measures the churches took include chartering the Chestnut Hill Neighborhood Association, which quickly grew to 72 dues-paying members and a board. They created a Neighborhood Watch, initiated creative partnerships with other nonprofits and applied for foundation grants to support services for lower-income residents.

All of this new energy and activity caught the eye of local officials, who stepped up to find creative ways to address the neighborhood's problems. City Councilwoman Karen Alexander was one of the first to advocate for the Historic Salisbury Foundation to provide incentives to rehab houses and tear down several that could not be



Photo courtesy of the Center for Faith & the Arts

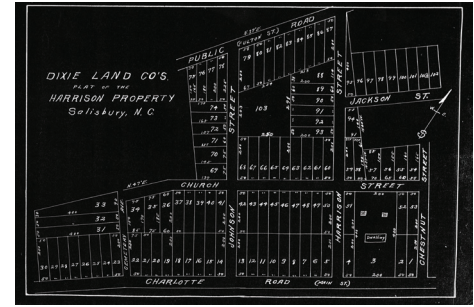
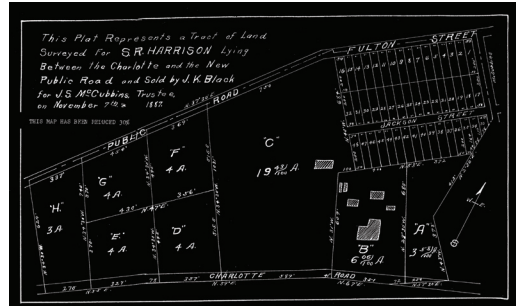
Children participate in one of the programs at Haven Lutheran's Center for Faith & the Arts.



Photo by Bruce Elliott



Photo by Brian Davis/HSF



Photos courtesy of HSF

Top left: Haven Lutheran Church Top center: Coburn United Methodist Church Top right, bottom left: Rehabbed houses in the historic Chestnut Hill neighborhood. Above: Late 19th-century survey documents of the original Chestnut Hill neighborhood.

saved. In the past 18 months, several options on homes have been exercised, the homes repaired and sold to a buyer. Alexander also offers pro bono architectural services from her firm to help homebuyers with design details and selection of materials to complete the rehabs.

As progress continues, the ministers and volunteers have come to realize the scope of their revitalization efforts is much more comprehensive than typical church programs. “We never had any intention of being part of the ‘emerging church,’” says the Rev. Williams. “We just came to realize we had to do some things differently if we wanted to survive. The health of our churches is inextricably linked to the health of our neighborhood.”

The Salisbury Chamber of Commerce, foundations, nonprofits and city officials have been sources of tangible support, creating a real surge of momentum for the recovery of Chestnut Hill. St. Paul’s continues to serve as a catalyst for action, and the church’s continuing efforts are making possible the collaborative re-weaving of the threads in the fabric of their community.

Today more so than in years past, many are choosing a faith home based on issues of social and economic justice, environmental stewardship, new expressions of music and other forms of worship, and a general personal and organizational transparency. New and potential members don’t want to be told how to believe, but rather shown ways of living a meaningful life. There is a new emphasis on living into the Gospels in ways the

Church has not always exemplified. “We must take the central elements from our faith traditions and bring them to new generations in ways they can relate to,” said the Rev. Harper.

Perhaps what is happening in Chestnut Hill is a model for what the emerging church can be about. Intentional intercongregational cooperation and creative collaboration with nonprofit and governmental agencies is a terrific start and an important component to any solution. But since the root of our social ills cannot be solved by laws or economic incentives alone, something more is needed.

Living into the Gospels can mean listening for the still, small voice to discern how and where to apply our energies and talents. Perhaps if we love our neighbor as ourselves, with genuine care and compassion, then the barriers we allow to separate and divide us will lose their importance as we struggle toward the way of living that God calls us to.

Whatever our background, we can dare to reach across perceived boundaries of social class, ethnicity and economics. In whatever ways we are called, using our caring hearts and willing hands for God’s purposes has the power to truly transform our souls and communities, right where we are.

Bruce Elliott is a freelance writer and speaker. He resides in Charlotte, North Carolina. Contact him at bce82@att.net.

COMMUNITY IN THE DUGOUT

In 1990, a ragtag group from St. Martin's, Charlotte, scratched together a softball team and took to the diamond. More than 350 games later, a few of the old timers, now joined by a new generation, continue to celebrate the annual summer rite of church softball. Donning richly colored jerseys, the players form a community known to its parish as the "Purple Martins."

Over the years, the squad has participated in leagues at all compass points around Charlotte. Recently, it has competed at a local Baptist church, where it is frequently fodder for, and yet occasionally foil to, the teams from the larger host church. 2014 was a magical year; after playing for 25 seasons, the Purple Martins celebrated their diamond anniversary by going on a victorious run to claim their first-ever championship title.


As in any church league, "the ringer" plays a key role. St. Martin's has never been above fielding one or two talented outsiders who would not meet the canonical standards as communicants in good standing; call it targeted evangelical outreach.

But the core of the squad has always come from the faithful of the congregation. Players have included multiple wardens and three members of the clergy; seven father-son combinations and one third-generation competitor. The cohesion forged on humid weeknights carries forth to mission-ministry activities and Sunday communion. For those on the margins of the church family, softball is a primary connector.

The team mirrors the church itself. All walks of life – stock traders, truck drivers, lawyers, programmers, job seekers, students and teachers – can be found in the lineup. Senior citizens and teenagers are teammates. Players come and go while a few constants maintain the momentum. Some know the game-situations, strategies and fielding

techniques. Others play on instinct or rely upon youth or grit. Most are not unusually talented, but all play a part.

The Purple Martins play to win but don't take the game too seriously.



The cohesion forged on humid weeknights carries forth to mission-ministry activities and Sunday communion.



Photo by Katie Kirby, team scorekeeper

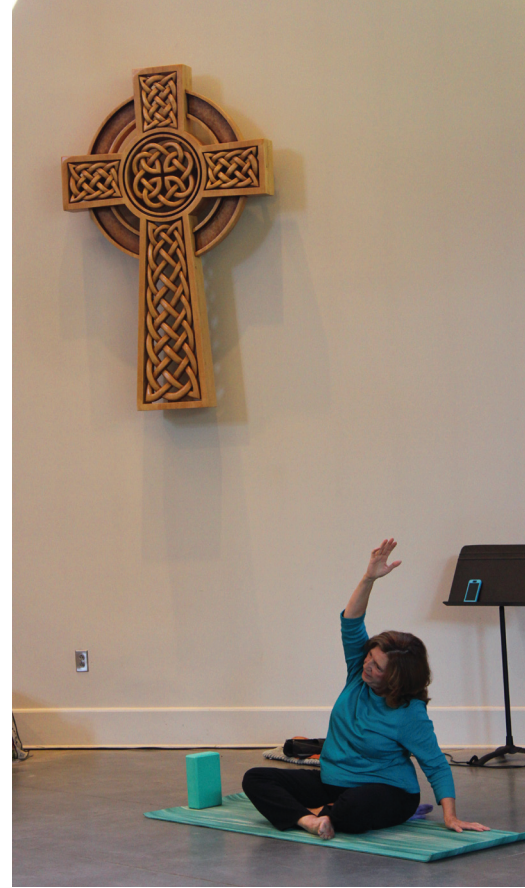
The 2014 championship men's Purple Martins softball team from St. Martin's, Charlotte. Author Rob Kirby is fourth from left (back row).

The customary pregame prayers have been followed, on occasion, by in-game violations of the third commandment. (Forgive us, oh Lord!) The action has included diving catches, clutch hits and at least one walk-off homerun. But as St. Paul told the Corinthians, "there are a variety of gifts." So, too, there have been scores of dropped pop-ups, errant throws and swinging third strikes. Laughs and smiles are plentiful.

Postgame, it is the custom of the Purple Martins to enjoy "ice cream" (known also as "adult beverages"). Gathered together, the glories are relived and embellished, the miscues are chuckled away, and the bonds of friendship are set. Reflecting upon the joy of play, the blessing of fitness, and, with a nod to the gifts of Grace, the team has adopted a toast as its de facto theological statement: "We always win!"

What endures – for the Purple Martins and, likely, for many others who have gathered to play - is a mutual affection and a love of being and playing together that goes unspoken. Church softball is an opportunity to strive, to play, to sweat, to win and to fail. It is fellowship at its purest: the occasion to cheer for and to celebrate with your friends, to pick one another up and to be, if only for a few weeks a year, one community.

Rob Kirby is a member of St. Martin's, Charlotte, and a longtime outfielder for the Purple Martins.



Photos and text by Summerlee Walter

MIND, BODY AND SPIRIT

Volleyballs bounced across the back lawn of St. Patrick's, Mooresville, while inside the sanctuary, in the shadow of the cross, parishioners worked through a yoga flow. On a nearby trail, people of all ages – and one service dog-in-training – walked and ran at their own pace while those on bikes ventured further out into the neighborhood. In the rear parking lot, older, more experienced skateboarders helped their younger friends roll down ramps and steer through cones, in between skating the course themselves, of course. In the main hallway, older adults worked through a set of Silver Sneakers exercises. The people of St. Patrick's weren't running around managing Vacation Bible School, navigating the annual church picnic or chatting up neighbors during a community outreach event — they were worshipping.

On September 21, St. Patrick's held its first Wellness Eucharist. Worshipers arrived for the service at the normal time of 10:30 a.m. They came wearing fluorescent race tee-shirts and cross trainers, loose yoga pants and racerback tops, mirrored sunglasses perched on their heads and long-sleeved tee-shirts tied around their waists. The celebration inside the sanctuary was brief: readings,



a homily, Communion and prayers. The main worship would occur a bit later as congregants filtered out to their cars to unrack bikes, apply sunscreen, retrieve helmets, stretch and organize themselves before heading out to engage in various physical activities, all enjoyed in thanksgiving to their Creator who gave them the gift of movement.

“Mind. Body. Spirit. A human being is all three,” the Rev. Mark Forbes preached during his homily. “Salvation is a journey into human wholeness. We can’t ignore the body...We have a spiritual responsibility to nurture the body like the spirit and the mind.”

The Rev. Forbes originally got the idea for a Wellness Eucharist from the Rt. Rev. Robert H. Johnson, former Bishop of Western North Carolina, who ordained him. Bishop Johnson at one point held a jogging Eucharist in Atlanta, and the Rev. Forbes had been waiting for the right time to emulate Bishop Johnson’s idea.

St. Patrick’s is the perfect congregation for such an experiment. The parish recently started hosting a yoga class, and one of their life groups previously trained together for triathlons and other races. The Wellness Eucharist was also not the first time St. Patrick’s held an active alternative Eucharist. At a previous service, parishioners put theology into action by packaging meals for Stop Hunger Now as part of the Eucharist.

Those who participated in the Wellness Eucharist activities enjoyed their time worshipping through movement and fellowship.

“I kept thinking about [today’s] Gospel reading, how

the last shall be first,” Raleigh Baker joked about the laps he walked that morning. (One of the Scriptures assigned for that Sunday was the parable of the laborers in the vineyards.)

The Rev. Forbes explained that, for thousands of years, the Church discarded the body, but it’s not an area of their existence that Christians can afford to ignore.

“We let others carry the banner of mind, body and spirit,” he said of the triune nature of human existence. “The YMCA, a Christian organization, has that banner. We should pick that up.”

The Rev. Forbes wasn’t the only one who felt the connections among mind and spirit.

“Swimming and running are my prayer time,” Becky Pendergast, who biked during the Wellness Eucharist, said. “With swimming especially I’m just in myself. I hear the water and my breathing, and it’s almost numbing. I can focus on prayer while I swim.”

Regardless of the activity worshipers chose, their enjoyment of the alternative style of worship was palpable. Whether they enjoyed the feeling of speed one gets while running or skateboarding, or savored the deep stretching of yoga, the people of St. Patrick’s benefitted from intentionally engaging with their bodies in ways Episcopalians normally don’t.

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