

Summer 2018



The North Carolina DISCIPLE

THE 79TH GENERAL CONVENTION
INCLUSIVITY FOR ALL
NEIGHBORHOOD MINISTRIES





 **The North Carolina**
DISCIPLE

Diocesan House
200 West Morgan Street, Suite 300
Raleigh, NC 27601-1338
PHONE: 919.834.7474
TOLL FREE: 800.448.8775
FAX: 919.834.8775
WEBSITE: www.episdionc.org

The Episcopal Diocese of North Carolina

Bishop Diocesan

The Rt. Rev. Samuel Sewall Rodman, III
sam.rodman@episdionc.org
Diocesan House: 919.834.7474

Bishop Suffragan

The Rt. Rev. Anne E. Hodges-Copple
bishopanne@episdionc.org
Office of the Bishop Suffragan: 336.273.5770

PUBLISHER

Bishop Diocesan of North Carolina

EDITORIAL DIRECTOR

Christine McTaggart
christine.mctaggart@episdionc.org

MANAGING EDITOR / ART DIRECTOR

Summerlee Walter
summerlee.walter@episdionc.org

CONTRIBUTORS IN THIS ISSUE

The Rt. Rev. Sam Rodman
Christine McTaggart
The Rt. Rev. Anne Hodges-Copple
Summerlee Walter
The Rev. Velinda Hardy
The Rev. Tambria E. Lee

SUBSCRIPTIONS / CHANGE OF ADDRESS

Erin Sweeney: erin.sweeney@episdionc.org

SUBMISSIONS

All submission ideas are welcome and considered for publication. Email submission ideas to communications@episdionc.org.

LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

Send letters to the editor to communications@episdionc.org.



COVER PHOTOS

Episcopalians attending the 79th General Convention in Austin gathered for the Bishops' United Against Gun Violence rally in Brush Square Park. *Photo by Christine McTaggart*

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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.

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THE WAY OF LOVE IS THE WAY FORWARD

As we gathered outside the large hall where worship was being held at the Austin Convention Center in Austin, Texas, a distantly familiar song was being sung from the stage at the front. It began to make its way to the back and out into the corridor where people were entering.

“We are one in the spirit, we are one in the Lord.”

The song took me back to the late 1960s and early 70s. It was a song that was part of the renewal movement and folk masses popular at the time. The refrain includes these words: “They will know we are Christians by our love.”

Love was the theme of the opening Eucharist, and “The Way of Love” was the message at the center of the Most Rev. Michael Curry’s sermon. Cards were handed out that carried on them a simple rule of life that included these actions: Turn, Learn, Pray, Worship, Bless, Go and Rest. It was invitational, it was evangelical, it was radically welcoming, and it was a practical expression of what we have been speaking about as Becoming Beloved Community.

More than this, the opening worship set a tone for the whole of the 79th General Convention. As you know by now, this was my first General Convention, and I went into it expecting a fair amount of tension, and even discord, between the House of Deputies and the House of Bishops around resolutions such as revising the Book of Common Prayer, a salary for the president of the House of Deputies and approved liturgies for the Sacrament of Marriage.

What unfolded, instead, was a series of thoughtful conversations and debates grounded in deep and even holy listening, a strong desire to honor one another’s experience, a valuing of different voices and different perspectives, and creative expressions of compromise, common ground and collaboration.

This is The Episcopal Church at its best, and it was the spirit throughout General Convention. It was finding a way forward together and living into the way of love. It was a contemporary incarnation of the traditional Anglican principle of the *via media*, a middle way.

This spirit was especially evident in the conversation and debate around revising the

Book of Common Prayer. After a lengthy and sometimes tense dialogue in the House of Bishops regarding a resolution passed by the House of Deputies, some of the bishops gathered and worked long into the night to hammer out a compromise. The result showed a depth of appreciation and respect for both those who championed moving forward with liturgical reform and those who were more cautious about, or even opposed to, any legislation that jeopardized the centrality of the 1979 Prayer Book in our life of common prayer and worship.

The “compromise version” eventually passed both Houses in the same form.

It includes the language that the 1979 Prayer Book is a book of common prayer for the Church, and during the next three years we will enter a period of intentional reflection, during which we will develop new forms and revised liturgical rites to be submitted to a task force. The submission may then be approved for trial use. Some questioned whether this wording about the Prayer Book was strong enough. In the end, it was agreed the wording did not change the present status of the 1979 Book of Common Prayer as the prayer book for this church, but it also affirmed we can begin exploring other expressions that may, in time, supplement and enrich the forms and expressions of our worship in the Episcopal Church.

This shift and compromise was, for me, an expression



of what it looks like when the Church moves forward in the way of love, in a posture of listening with reverence and respect for a variety of viewpoints and perspectives, and recognizes there is truth in each. Then, working together, we try and create language that celebrates and honors this.

It also gave me hope the Church might serve as a model, or even an icon, for our country and the world around us. We can demonstrate how to bring people at polar opposites to a place of connection and common understanding. This work, it seems to me, is at the heart of the call and witness of Becoming Beloved Community.

Here in North Carolina, this is often expressed in the way we define our common witness. The gospel of God's love, in Jesus, is at our center. We are disciples of the Jesus Movement, the way of love. And we recognize that people of faith will not always agree about the best way to live out the gospel promise.

What we do agree on is the gospel values at the heart of our Baptismal Covenant have the power to hold us together even when we have strong and different political perspectives and practical objectives.

This is why the way we engage with each other is so important. We must always approach one another with mutual respect and strengthen our ability to honor each other and hold even those who see things differently in our hearts and in our prayers. We must not enter into conversation with the goal of changing another's point of view, but rather to learn the

truth they have to share and accept the gift of wisdom they bring to the table. To do this well, we often need to learn to listen differently and more deeply.

Holy listening was also a theme at this 79th General Convention, and the orientation to this deeper form of listening was grounded in worship. On the night of July 4, while so many watched fireworks outside, in a packed worship hall and in the context of a special liturgy built around the sharing of stories, 12 bishops read accounts of people from across the Church who had suffered some form of sexual harassment or abuse, or abuse of power in the life of the Church. As each bishop read an account carefully edited to preserve anonymity, other bishops stood with them, silently, listening, honoring those who shared their stories and the stories themselves. We stood with and beside the storytellers, both symbolically and literally.

It is this kind of holy listening, a deeper honoring and even reverence for the sacred stories that tell the truth about our journey, that helps others see the depth of our love and the unity at the center of the Jesus Movement.

"They will know we are Christians by our love."

We will continue to share the work of General Convention with all of you. In addition to information already shared online and in the recap in this issue (page 12), the bishops and deputation will hold a meeting to present more details on General Convention happenings and the work ahead on Thursday, September 6 at St. Paul's, Winston-Salem. All are welcome to attend, and our plan is to make available a recording for those who can't.

In these days of high summer, I continue to give thanks to God and to the people of this diocese for the ways we live into our calling as the Episcopal Branch of the Jesus Movement in North Carolina. I give thanks, too, for the many ways we are discovering and rediscovering the promise and power of speaking our truth, of holy listening, of walking in the way of love, of finding a middle way and of Becoming Beloved Community.

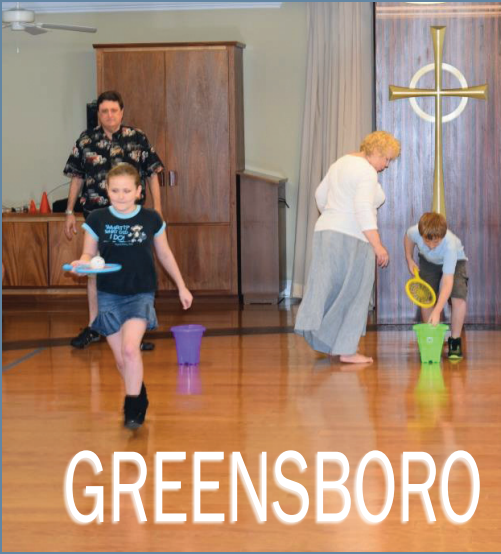
The Rt. Rev. Sam Rodman is the XII Bishop of the Diocese of North Carolina. Contact him at sam.rodman@episdionc.org.



WAY OF LOVE

Jesus-Centered Life

AROUND THE



GREENSBORO

All Saints', Greensboro, celebrated July 4 with fun and games. Photo by Gene Simpson



DURHAM



WINSTON-SALEM

St. Paul's, Winston-Salem, celebrated Pentecost in style when the Rev. D. Dixon Kinser and the Rev. Sara C. Ardery-Graves borrowed a couple of headbands made during children's chapel. Also pictured: the Rev. Darby O. Everhard and the Rev. John E. Shields. Photo by Kerry Nesbit



Top: The drummers of St. Cyprian's, Oxford, perform during the annual Pauli Murray commemorative service held at St. Titus', Durham, on July 9. Photo by the Rev. Canon Cathy Deats Left: The Little Free Library at St. Stephen's, Durham, opened in July as part of an effort by the Hope Valley Neighborhood Association to promote free neighborhood book exchanges. Neighbors are invited to find a welcoming place for finding, reading and sharing books in the shade of the sugar maple tree at the end of the church parking lot. Photo by Ellen Baer Above: A Movable Feast (AMF) Durham gathered 21 young Episcopalians across five parishes on June 28. Photo courtesy of Megan Carlson



CHAPEL HILL

Above: The Senior EYC from Chapel of the Cross, Chapel Hill, visited Philadelphia during the group's summer mission trip. Photo courtesy of Chapel of the Cross Right: Members of the EYC from Holy Family, Chapel Hill, along with parents, leaders and the church's refugee committee pose with the Afghan refugee family the church sponsors. Photo by Susie Post-Rust



THE DIOCESE



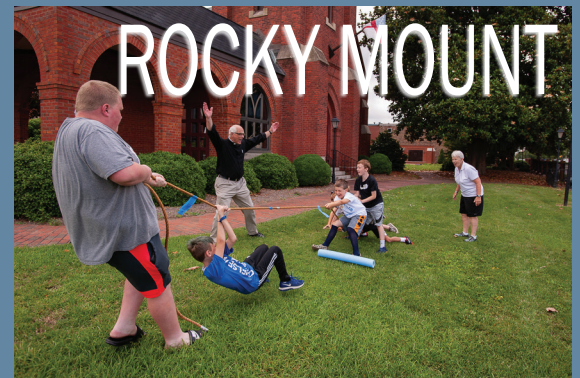
Hi-IMPACT, the youth group at Church of the Holy Innocents, Henderson, gathered on July 1 to have some fun on a hot afternoon during their weekly Sunday afternoon meeting. *Photo courtesy of Holy Innocents*



Top: The Rt. Rev. Sam Rodman spent the morning of May 20 at St. Michael's, Raleigh, confirming close to 50 children and adults. *Photo by Susan Rountree* Above: The weather could not have been more perfect for St. Ambrose, Raleigh, Annual Fitness Sunday at Pullen Park. More than 100 members and guests celebrated Holy Eucharist and enjoyed physical activity under a canopy of oak trees. *Photo by Shima Flanagan*



The Daughters of the King at All Saints', Roanoke Rapids, made by hand 100 dolls for girls at Las Rosas orphanage in Costa Rica. The Rt. Rev. Anne Hodges-Copple blessed the dolls before their travels during her visitation June 28. *Photo by Susan Molina*



Good Shepherd, Rocky Mount, hosted the annual Community Vacation Bible School in cooperation with St. Andrew's, Rocky Mount, two Presbyterian churches and a Baptist church. Close to 100 children, 20 adults teachers and 30 youth helpers experienced "The Adventures of David." This year Katharina Johnson, director of Christian education at Good Shepherd, chaired the leadership team. *Photos by Ron Sowers*



Above: Saint Martin's, Charlotte, has had a 30+-year partnership with the Cheyenne River Reservation in South Dakota. This year, a mission team visited the reservation in June. The visit included a VBS based on the same curriculum used in the Charlotte VBS. *Photo courtesy of St. Martin's* Left: The Rt. Rev. Anne Hodges-Copple confirmed 82 youth and 16 adults (not pictures) at Christ Church, Charlotte, on June 3. *Photo by Elizabeth Ignasher*

NEW, NOTABLE & NEWSWORTHY

SPRING 2018 MISSION ENDOWMENT GRANTS AWARDED

The Mission Endowment Grant board has announced six recipients in the spring 2018 grant cycle. The deadline to apply for the fall 2018 cycle of Mission Endowment Grants is November 30.

- **Advocate, Chapel Hill: \$10,000 for Pee Wee Homes**
The grant will help cover the cost of the collaborative construction phase of the Pee Wee Homes at the Advocate. Each 400-square-foot house will provide a safe space to live for Chapel Hill residents experiencing homelessness.
- **All Saints', Greensboro: \$14,718 for summer lunch program**
All Saints' will deepen its engagement with Sedgwick Elementary School by providing food-insecure children at a local apartment building with a nourishing lunch and enrichment activities for five weeks during the summer.
- **Christ Church, Walnut Cove: \$25,000 for rectory refurbishment into a community center**
Christ Church plans to refurbish its currently shuttered, circa-1910 rectory and make it fully accessible. Plans call for the building to host 12-step programs and adult literacy and community meals programs; serve as a fundraising event space for local nonprofits; provide space for the church's school supply support program and contain spaces for centering prayer, Godly Play and a youth ministry program.
- **Galilee Ministries of East Charlotte: \$25,000 for a business manager and fundraising drive**
This is a capacity-building grant to help the Galilee Center acquire accounting and communications operating tools and services instead of relying on donations.

- **Johnson Service Corps: \$21,000 in 2018 and \$21,000 in 2019 for the Pauli Murray fellowship program**

The Johnson Service Corps (Durham and Chapel Hill) and the Pauli Murray Center (Durham) will partner to host a fellow whose specific tasks will address issues of race, economics and gender tied directly to the Durham and Chapel Hill communities.

- **Episcopalians United Against Racism (EUAR): \$25,000 for anti-poverty/anti-racism training**
This grant will allow EUAR to expand and enhance, with focus on racial equity and educational access, Durham's successful anti-poverty/anti-racism collaboration with REAL Durham, and to promote the collaboration as a model for helping working poor families attain financial sustainability.

The Mission Endowment Grant is a permanent endowment created for the specific purpose of supporting the diocesan mission strategy of establishing "the Episcopal presence of Christ in communities in ways that bring the community to see Christ's presence among them." While grant projects must relate to missionary initiatives located within the 38 counties of the Diocese, the initiatives themselves do not have to be associated with diocesan entities. Only one participating member of the proposed project team is required to be associated with a diocesan entity.

To apply for a Mission Endowment Grant, complete the Common Application found at episditionc.org in "Grants and Scholarships" under the "Resources" tab. The Common Application will submit your grant request not only to the Mission Endowment review board but also to other grant review boards, including the Missionary Resource Support Team, the Episcopal Church Foundation and the Parish Grant Program.

NOMINATIONS FOR THE 203RD ANNUAL CONVENTION (GET 'EM IN!)

It's time to start thinking about submitting nominations for the upcoming 203rd Annual Convention of the Diocese of North Carolina. Nominations for the clergy and lay orders of Diocesan Council, Standing Committee and the

Board of Trustees for the University of the South are being accepted through October 8, 2018. Nomination forms and additional information about the available positions can be found at episditionc.org.

BISHOPS ANNOUNCE GUN POLICY FOR DIOCESAN OFFICES

The Diocese of North Carolina has put in place an official policy declaring diocesan offices gun-free zones. The policy reads, in its entirety:

The Diocese of North Carolina declares its office properties, specifically the offices in Raleigh (200 West Morgan Street) and the leased space in Greensboro (301 Elm Street, Suite 308-C), gun-free zones. No guns concealed or otherwise are allowed on the premises.

We believe this policy is in keeping with the nonviolent principles of the life, teachings and example of Jesus and is responsive to Resolution 2012-D003 of our Church's 77th General Convention recommending that all Episcopal dioceses and their congregations declare themselves a gun-free zone. We are not telling you what to do, and we are not telling you what decision to make. We are encouraging every congregation and its vestry to do its own prayerful and thoughtful discernment to review and determine its own policies and procedures. We ask you to consider seriously a policy that reflects the teachings of Jesus and the values of nonviolence.

We are deeply concerned about safety, and we will continue to provide resources and opportunities for trainings and assessments to help congregations address these concerns.

With the increasing number of shootings in our schools and some churches, we believe it is important to state that we believe guns are not a helpful or a safe path to increased security.

Please consult the diocesan website (www.episdionc.org/gun-policy) for more information and answers to frequently asked questions.



AUDIT REPORTS DUE SEPT. 3

The deadline to submit annual audit reports is fast approaching. Please mark your calendars with the September

3 deadline, and refer to the audit procedures available at episdionc.org under the "Resources" tab.

PLEASE DO JUST ONE THING

As the new academic year approaches, remember to do Just One Thing and refer your recently graduated seniors of your congregations to the chaplain or congregation at the university, community college or military base at which they will arrive in a few short weeks.

The Just One Thing initiative works to connect young adults to The Episcopal Church on campus or wherever their journey takes them. Look for the online form under

"Quick Links" at episdionc.org. It takes less than one minute to complete, and it will generate a

notification to the chaplain at your student's campus or to the young adult missionary for a referral.



BISHOP ANNE HODGES-COPPLE TO TAKE SABBATICAL DECEMBER 2018 – FEBRUARY 2019

In the interest of planning ahead, the Rt. Rev. Anne Hodges-Copple, bishop suffragan of the Diocese of North Carolina, announced her

upcoming sabbatical, beginning in early December 2018 and going through February 2019.

Specific information will be shared as it develops, but for now, those who work with Bishop Hodges-Copple are simply asked to be aware of the dates.

ORDER YOUR 2018-2019 GOSPEL-BASED DISCIPLESHIP BY SEPT. 30

This year we will continue to work to be good stewards of both material and financial resources by printing copies of the 2018-2019 *Gospel-Based Discipleship* based on orders received.

There will be no automatic distribution of copies to churches or to those who have requested hard copies in the past; however, we are happy to supply you with whatever you need.

If you would like copies for your church, or if you are an individual who would like a hard copy for your own use, please place your order with Diocesan House no later than September 30. There is no charge for the 2018-2019 *Gospel-Based Discipleship*, but we do need you to place your order.

Copies will be printed and shipped in early November.

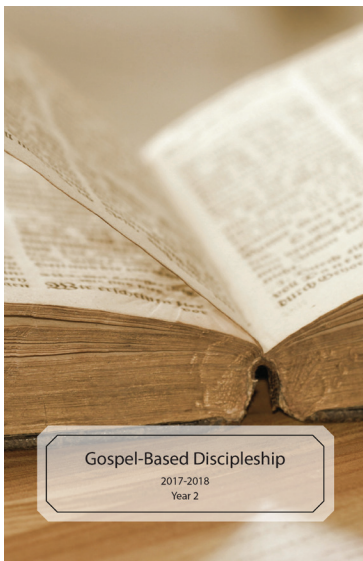
The 2018-2019 *Gospel-Based Discipleship* will also be available in its entirety as a downloadable and printable PDF

on the diocesan website, and its daily offerings will continue to be offered on diocesan social media channels.

To order hard copies, please call Diocesan House at (919) 834-7474 or email communications@episdionc.org. Be sure to include the address to which you want your copy(ies) mailed.

To receive the daily offerings via social media, find us at:

- Facebook ([EpiscopalDioceseNC](https://www.facebook.com/EpiscopalDioceseNC))
- Twitter ([@episcopalnc](https://twitter.com/episcopalnc))
- Instagram ([@episdionc](https://www.instagram.com/episdionc))



DIOCESAN EVENTS

August

- 11 Safe Church Training, Redeemer, Greensboro
- 18 Safe Church Training, St. John's, Charlotte
- 22 Safe Church Training, Christ Church, Charlotte
- 25 Safe Church Training, St. Timothy's, Raleigh

September

- 6 General Convention Follow-up Meeting, St. Paul's, Winston-Salem
- 6 Safe Church Training, St. Margaret's, Waxhaw
- 11 Safe Church Training, St. Titus, Durham
- 15 Safe Church Training, Emmanuel, Southern Pines
- 16 Safe Church Training, St. Paul's, Winston-Salem
- 20-22 Education for Ministry (EfM) Mentor Training, St. Francis Springs, Stoneville
- 22 Safe Church Training, Holy Comforter, Charlotte

October

- 1 Safe Church Training, Holy Comforter, Burlington
- 6 Seeing the Face of God in Each Other: Anti-racism Seminar, St. Ambrose, Raleigh

Look for additional events and more detailed event information online at 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 also featured in *Please Note*, the weekly diocesan e-newsletter. Sign up on our homepage.

STAY IN TOUCH

Keep up with our diocese and bishops!



Episcopal Diocese NC
Sam Rodman
Anne Hodges-Copple



@EpiscopalINC
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@episdionc
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www.vimeo.com/episcopalnc

IN CASE YOU MISSED IT

Missioner for Latino/Hispanic Ministry named

The Diocese welcomes the Rev. Daniel Darío Robayo Hidalgo as the missioner for Latino/Hispanic ministry for the Diocese of North Carolina. This is a new position created by Diocesan Council and approved by Diocesan Convention to enhance and expand the already flourishing work of 13 worship communities and outreach ministries addressing the needs of North Carolina's burgeoning Latino/Hispanic population. Given that over the next 20 years every county in North Carolina is projected to grow in the number of Spanish-speaking households, Robayo will play a major leadership role in helping the Diocese advance its vision for evangelism, racial reconciliation and congregational development, as well as the cultural competency necessary to be the Body of Christ in an increasingly multicultural state.

Robayo has served as the rector of Emmanuel Episcopal Church in Harrisonburg, Virginia for the last nine years. A priest for 30 years who has served in a wide variety of parish settings and diocesan leadership roles, Robayo has great gifts in formation and congregational development. He understands his vocation as "empowering the ministry of the baptized in the church as well as in the world." His passion is to "give people the tools to reflect theologically about their Christian identity and their place in the world so that in their daily lives they may represent Christ to the world." A native of Venezuela who has spent most of his adult life as an Episcopalian in the United States, Robayo seeks to walk with the worship communities of the diocese through the opportunities and challenges of being a multilingual, intercultural Episcopal branch of the Jesus movement.

Robayo is married to Nancy Urrecheaga-Robayo, an educator with many years of experience as a classroom teacher, principal and Godly Play instructor. Between them, they have five children and six grandchildren.

Robayo begins his tenure with the Diocese on September 1.



Scott Welborn departs diocesan staff

The Diocese gives thanks for Scott Welborn, longtime diocesan staff member, as he leaves the Diocese of North Carolina to take a new position at Hayes Barton Baptist Church, Raleigh.

Scott is known to many in the diocese from his many years as receptionist, database administrator and assistant to the canons. He will be missed, but we are grateful for the work he did and the gifts he shared with so many.

Scott's last day in the office was June 29.



Amy Campbell assumes new role on diocesan staff

On June 1, Amy Campbell was named the children and families missioner for the Diocese of North Carolina. Amy joined the youth ministry department in January 2014 as a youth missioner, and her role evolved gradually. She continues to coordinate Happening and will work with the youth ministry department in planning Bishops' Ball.



The Rev. Dr. Helen Svoboda-Barber nominated for bishop of Kansas

The Rev. Dr. Helen Svoboda-Barber, rector of St. Luke's, Durham, has been named to the slate for the X Bishop of Kansas. The Rev. Martha N. Macgill of the Diocese of Maryland is the other candidate. The election will take place on the first day of the Diocese of Kansas's diocesan convention on October 19 at Grace Cathedral in Topeka.



THE 79TH GENERAL CONVENTION



The 79th General Convention of The Episcopal Church took place July 5-13, 2018, in Austin, Texas. Over the course of 10 days, the gathering worshipped, bore public witness and took on a legislative slate that included more than 500 resolutions.

While there is a great deal more conversation to come around many of the topics and happenings of General Convention, there are lots of highlights from the triennial gathering to share now.

For more of the daily activity, we invite you to visit the 79th General Convention page on the diocesan website at bit.ly/DioNCGC79, where you'll find links to recaps from each day, the full photo album and our video collection (with even more videos to come!).

We highly recommend visiting the digital version of this recap (also available on the diocesan 79th General Convention page) to enjoy links to the sermons and videos mentioned throughout, as well as to access additional information on just about everything.

WORSHIP

As always, General Convention was filled with awe-inspiring, spiritually renewing worship. Every day featured music that lifted the spirits of all who heard it, thought-provoking, action-encouraging sermons and the grounding liturgy that unites us all. Yet even among daily Eucharists that reminded worshippers they were in a special place, three stood out and were often heard in conversations in the convention halls.

A Liturgy of Listening

On the evening of July 4, even before the official start of General Convention, a very special service took place to bring to light the stories of those who have suffered sexual abuse and harassment at the hands of the Church. In the months prior to General Convention, survivors of these abuses were invited to submit letters and share their stories with Church leadership. More than 40 letters were received, and 12 of them were read at the Liturgy of Listening, each one in the voice of a different bishop.

No absolution was offered at the service, as its intent was to focus on confession and lamentation. It was created as a first step in acknowledging the Church's role in stories of sexual misconduct—those shared and not shared. In anticipation of need following the service, a pastoral response team dedicated to responding to the needs of those affected by the liturgy and the #MeToo movement was on-site throughout General Convention.

Opening Eucharist

One of the themes to emerge and travel home from General Convention was the "Way of Love," or practices for living a Jesus-centered life. Introduced at the Opening Eucharist in an electrifying sermon by the Most Rev. Michael Curry, the Way of Love invites practitioners to follow seven simple rules:

- Turn: pause, listen and choose to follow Jesus
- Learn: reflect daily on scripture, especially the life and teachings of Jesus
- Pray: spend time with God in prayer every day
- Worship: gather in community for worship every week
- Bless: share one's faith and find ways to serve other people
- Go: move beyond one's comfort to witness to the love of God with words and actions
- Rest: dedicate time for restoration and wholeness

Every worshipper in the hall received a wallet card with the rules of living the Way of Love, and information was distributed about downloading or ordering Way of Love materials, available at episcopalchurch.org.

An Episcopal Revival

Saturday night at General Convention was a party, indeed, with an Episcopal Revival and Texas Night hosted by the Diocese of Texas. The music was sensational, spiritual,



uplifting and toe-tapping, with Presiding Bishop Curry’s sermon of love at the center. He spoke of the need for it, the key to it, the work of it and the power of it.

“The key to following Jesus, the key to being his disciple, the key to life is love, is love, is love, it’s love.... And the work of love is to work to make a world with the possibility of life for all. That is the work of love.”

The crowd was riveted for the almost 45-minute sermon, moving only to jump to its feet multiple times when an “Amen” just wasn’t enough to express the feeling in the room. Spanish-language translator Dinorah Padro stayed word for word with Presiding Bishop Curry to bring the sermon to the room in two languages, even keeping pace with his energy and movement.

The revival culminated in a truly moving moment when the bishops from the Diocese of Texas laid hands on Presiding Bishop Curry to bless and pray over him, with the crowd extending their own to join in before moving to prayer stations around the hall. At an event crowded with incredible music and worship that inspires, moves, uplifts and motivates, the Episcopal Revival found a whole new level.

More Sermons

Presiding Bishop Curry was not the only one preaching memorable sermons at General Convention. Gifted speakers from across the Church preached every day, and all of them are available at episditionc.org in the General Convention digital recap.

LEGISLATION

If worship is the grounding force of General Convention, legislation is the heart of the gathering. More than 500 resolutions were submitted to General Convention for consideration and discussion on far-ranging matters. Legislative committee meetings began at 7:30 a.m., and it was not uncommon to see them run as late as 11:00

p.m. to prepare resolutions for presentation in the House of Bishops and the House of Deputies.

The North Carolina deputation met every day for lunch to discuss and update business in committees and on the floors of both houses, exchanging stories, news and thoughts before returning to work. It is notable that every bishop and deputy from North Carolina served on a committee; none were unassigned.

Full texts and outcomes of voting on all resolutions can be found on the General Convention Virtual Binder (generalconvention.org). Read on for some of the notable legislative decisions made at General Convention (in alphabetical order).

2019-2021 Budget

The \$134 million budget once again reflects the priorities of reconciliation, evangelism and creation care. The budget was presented in a joint session of the House of Bishops and House of Deputies before further discussion in the respective houses.

Cuba

In one of the more moving moments in the House of Bishops and the House of Deputies, both houses voted unanimously to pass Resolution A238 and invite the Episcopal Church in Cuba to return to the Church as a diocese after more than 50 years apart. The celebrations that erupted upon the announcement of the voting results were deafening, and emotions ran high when the Rt. Rev. Griselda Delgado del Carpio, bishop of Cuba, took to the dais to speak. Upon completing her remarks to the House of Deputies, Cuba’s delegation marker was raised and Cuba took its place. The Diocese of Cuba will be part of Province II.

Governance

Among the legislation pertaining to governance, one decision of note was General Convention’s passing of

Resolution A072, giving dioceses approval to review the province where they currently reside and explore options should they wish to affiliate elsewhere.

Immigration

The topic of immigration at General Convention focused primarily on the issues surrounding the dignity of immigrants and the separation of families, thereby producing an overwhelming agreement. Three resolutions were passed, including Resolution C033, which “puts the church on record as respecting the dignity of all immigrants;” Resolution A178, which takes a stand against the separation of families, and Resolution C009, “Becoming a Sanctuary Church.”

Israel/Palestine

As expected, the conversation surrounding the Israel/Palestine conflict was emotional, conflicted and deeply felt. Fifteen resolutions were submitted on the subject, and only six reached agreement between the House of Bishops and the House of Deputies. While all agreed the violence is an “escalating humanitarian crisis,” the House of Bishops voted against the controversial Resolution D019 that would put in place a “human rights investment screen,” calling it tantamount to “divesting” from Israel.

However, both houses passed resolutions calling for the resumption of humanitarian aid to Palestinian refugees (Resolution B021) and upholding the status of Jerusalem as a shared Holy City (Resolution B003). While the houses may not have been in agreement on specific steps to take

regarding the Israel/Palestine conflict, they were united in the desire to see violence end, the people of both nations safe and a peaceful path forward found.

Marriage Rites

Resolution B012 was passed in both houses, giving all Episcopalians the ability to be married in their home churches with “full access to two trial-use marriage rites for same-sex and opposite-sex couples approved by the 2015 meeting of General Convention (via Resolution A054).” Resolution B012 was heavily amended and passed between the House of Bishops and House of Deputies multiple times before the final version was approved. It gives clergy access to the trial-use marriage rites for all couples (previous iterations gave them access only under the direction of their bishop); requires that if a bishop “does not embrace marriage for same-sex couples” because of a theological position, he or she will invite another bishop to provide pastoral support to couples and clergy involved; and authorizes the continued trial use of marriage rites until the next full revision of the Book of Common Prayer.

#MeToo

The #MeToo movement was a central concern at General Convention, with a particular focus on the voices of women. What began with the Liturgy of Listening continued throughout the gathering, with multiple resolutions passing both houses on subjects ranging from allowing infants on the floors of the Houses to



From left: The Diocese of Cuba officially returned to the Episcopal Church after unanimous approval in both houses. Presiding Bishop Michael Curry preached during the Opening Eucharist. Opposite page: A sea of red and orange formed as bishops gathered for the Bishops United Against Gun Violence rally. Photos by Christine McTaggart



changes to the Title IV canons. In addition, the House of Bishops adopted a covenant acknowledging the #MeToo movement and committing to seek change.

Prayer Book Revision

A substitute version of Resolution A068 was adopted to provide a path to develop new liturgies with “expansive and inclusive” language while continuing the use of the 1979 Book of Common Prayer. The revised resolution now encourages dioceses to “create a liturgical commission to collect, reflect, teach and share resources [to be developed within the dioceses] with the Task Force for the Liturgical and Prayer Book Revision (TFLPBR).” The approach was put in place to address the unmet needs of Episcopalians without proceeding to a full Prayer Book revision, as it was determined the direction of such a revision still needs to be further clarified.

In addition to the liturgical development and continued prayer book usage, Resolution D078 continued the Church’s progress toward greater inclusivity with the allowance of all congregations to use alternative language for Eucharistic Prayer A, B and D from Rite II in the 1979 Book of Common Prayer.

Salary for the President of the House of Deputies

While no specific salary was named for the president

of the House of Deputies, Resolution B014 passed to provide “director and officer’s fees” as compensation for what was previously a full-time, unpaid position.

SOCIAL JUSTICE / PUBLIC WITNESS

Despite the record-setting legislative workload, those in attendance at General Convention found time to stand in public witness against gun violence and the treatment of immigrants.

Bishops Against Gun Violence Daily Witnesses

Every day before the start of the first legislative session, the Bishops Against Gun Violence hosted a daily witness liturgy. Each worship highlighted a specific area of gun violence, and the witness included prayer, scripture and a reflection. Both the Rt. Rev. Anne Hodges-Copple and the Rt. Rev. Sam Rodman led witnesses, with Bishop Hodges-Copple speaking on the topic of gun-related suicide, and Bishop Rodman reflecting on police shootings.

Following each service, the bishops distributed 96 wooden crosses representing the 96 people killed each day by gun violence in America. As the crosses continued to be distributed after each day’s witness, they served as an increasingly visual representation of the number of people who were killed by gun violence during the 10 days of General Convention.



The GC Pigeon plots to steal some snacks from an unsuspecting delegate's purse. Photo by Christine McTaggart, who did not prevent the theft.

OTHER NOTABLE MOMENTS

TEConversations

Four joint sessions between the House of Bishops and the House of Deputies were held at General Convention: one was the presentation of the 2019-2021 budget, and the other three were TEConversations. TEConversations were sessions that presented information and speakers on a related topic, followed by a designated time of discussion. Designed ultimately to be a series of nine conversations that can be used in congregations, the first three presented at General Convention focused on the “three pillars of the Jesus Movement”: racial reconciliation, evangelism and creation care. All of the conversations were hosted by North Carolina’s own the Rev. David Crabtree, and the Rev. Dr. Lauren Winner (St. Paul’s, Louisburg) was a panelist on the evangelism program.

Pauli Murray, Thurgood Marshall and Florence Li Tim-Oi Become Permanent Saints

Three “widely commemorated” figures in the Episcopal Church are now permanent saints: the Rev. Dr. Pauli Murray, Thurgood Marshall and the Rev. Florence Li Tim-Oi were added on July 13 to the Lesser Feasts and Fasts calendar.

The Rt. Rev. Anne Hodges-Copple and Deputy Alice Freeman Elected to Executive Council

Bishop Anne Hodges-Copple and deputy Alice Freeman were both elected to Executive Council this General Convention. To have two representatives from the same diocese elected in one convention is rare, yet the Diocese of North Carolina will be well represented as these two exceptional people begin their six-year terms.

Deputy Alice Freeman Recognized with ECW Distinguished Woman Award

In addition to her election to Executive Council, deputy Alice Freeman received the Episcopal Church Women’s Distinguished Woman Award for the Diocese of North Carolina. A number of friends, colleagues and fellow ECW members were on hand to help her celebrate.

General Convention in the News

If the influx of clergy collars wasn’t enough to tip off the residents of Austin the Episcopal Church was in town, the local news made sure of it, as the Church was in the news on several occasions throughout General Convention, both for its Presiding Bishop and its public witness.

Media Hub Opens Window into General Convention

The opportunity to witness General Convention as it

Bishops Against Gun Violence Rally in the Park

On Sunday, July 8, bishops, priests, deacons and laity gathered in Brush Square Park for a public witness against gun violence. Organized by Bishops Against Gun Violence, the gathered member bishops formed a sea of red and orange, wearing stoles created especially for the occasion, and, despite the early heat, the park was crowded with witnesses. The family of Carmen Schentrup, one of the students killed February 14 in Parkland, Florida, spoke at the gathering, sharing their struggle with grief, the role of their faith and urging everyone in attendance to work to make a difference in preventing gun violence. Abigail Zimmerman, a 14-year-old advocate, also spoke. Zimmerman, along with her classmates, organized a walkout at her school and continues to work for reforms to gun control.

“I encourage all of you to make change happen,” she said. “Educate yourself, your friends. Vote. Join organizations devoted to common-sense gun legislation. Write letters. Do whatever you can to make a difference. Change must happen, and it must happen now.”

Prayer Vigil at Hutto Detention Center

Following the public witness against gun violence in Brush Park Square, a large contingent of those gathered continued their social justice witness with a trip to Taylor, Texas, to the Hutto Detention Center. Hundreds of immigrant women are being detained in Hutto, though it is unclear whether they are among those who have been separated from their families. Episcopalians gathered to worship, pray, sing and bear witness. As those gathered sang, some say there were indications they were heard by those detained inside, though the detention center was hundreds of yards away from where the faithful crowd was gathered.

happened was never greater than it was during the 79th gathering. The Episcopal Church and Episcopal News Service (ENS) combined communications forces to offer livestreams of special events, worship services, legislative sessions and more on the new Media Hub, with in-depth reports following on ENS hours later. All events on the Media Hub are still available for on-demand viewing.

The GC Pigeon

Folks at home might have wondered if the Texas heat had gotten to General Convention attendees with all of the talk about the “GC Pigeon” in conversation and on social media. The truth is that a chance occurrence became a local sensation and much-needed source of levity that carried through the 10 grueling days. During opening remarks to a joint session of both houses, a pigeon flew through the House of Deputies at seemingly definitive moments, as if it had something to say about the proceedings. Within minutes, the “GC Pigeon” had a Twitter account (@gc79pigeon), and a star was born.

Did You Know: 3 out of 4 North Carolina Lay Deputies are Long Leaf Pine Recipients

You think you know your deputies, until you attend the deputation dinner and learn an extraordinary fact.

Deputies Joe Ferrell, Martha Alexander and Alice Freeman are all members of the Order of the Long Leaf Pine society, the highest civilian honor in North Carolina. The Long Leaf Pine is awarded to “persons for exemplary service to the State of North Carolina and their communities that is above and beyond the call of duty and which has made a significant impact and strengthened North Carolina.” Substitute a few words, and that is a perfect description of the gifts these three have shared with the Diocese of North Carolina.

FINAL NOTE

Despite its length, even this summary does not include all the notes, moments, decisions and events of the 79th General Convention. We encourage you to go deeper at bit.ly/GC79Recap, enjoying links to ever more articles, photos and videos, and we hope you will be involved in the work we, as the Diocese of North Carolina, will do in the coming years.

The 80th General Convention will take place in Baltimore, Maryland in 2021.

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



The North Carolina deputation, from left: the Rev. Sarah Ball-Damberg, the Rev. Dr. Helen Svoboda-Barber, the Rev. Kevin Matthews, the Rev. Jamie L'Enfant Edwards, the Rt. Rev. Sam Rodman, Martha Alexander, Province IV youth representative Justin Mullis, Alice Freeman, Athena Hahn, Joe Ferrell and the Rt. Rev. Anne Hodges-Copple. Photo by Christine McTaggart

THE 79TH GENERAL CONVENTION: NORTH CAROLINA WAS ALL OVER IT!

General Convention is reported to be one of the largest legislative bodies in the world, and it is certainly an enormous gathering of folks affiliated one way or another with The Episcopal Church. The number of bishops, deputies and alternates who served at the 79th General Convention in Austin, Texas, was close to 1,000. But they were not alone in the convention center. In addition to those conducting the business of General Convention, there were the Episcopal Church Women holding their triennial meeting, exhibitors, visitors, representatives from Episcopal institutions across the United States, honored dignitaries from around the Anglican Communion, Church staff and hundreds of volunteers. Add them together, and you have a gathering numbering in the thousands.

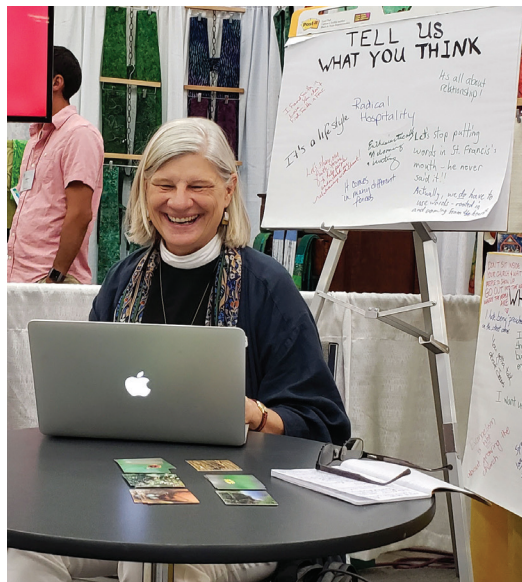
Even with such huge numbers, it was easy to spot laity and clergy from the Diocese of North Carolina making significant contributions in almost every arena. From the leadership platform during the four joint sessions of GC79, to the 23 legislative committees, to the exhibitors' hall and the prayer chapel, North Carolina Episcopalians were everywhere.

The most visible example of our diocese's passion for Spirit-filled mission is the preaching, teaching and leadership of the Presiding Bishop himself. The Most

Rev. Michael Curry and the Executive Council have laid out three pillars of the Jesus Movement. If they sound familiar, it's because our diocese has embraced and acted on these three priorities—evangelism, reconciliation and creation care—for years. In my five years as a bishop, I've heard from many quarters of the Church that the mission-minded spirit we call Going to Galilee—a biblical foundation for disciples who are transformed for mission in their local context—is seen as a pace-setter for the wider church.

It was this witness and leadership North Carolinians brought to General Convention.

As moderator of the TEConversations, three joint sessions of the Houses, the Rev. David Crabtree graciously and skillfully guided an enormous hall of mostly deputies and bishops through panel presentations and small-group discussions on evangelism, reconciliation and creation care. The Rev. Dr. Lauren Winner, author, historian, associate professor of spirituality at Duke Divinity School and vicar of St. Paul's, Louisburg, was one of three presenters for the TEConversation on evangelism, describing it, in part, as a process that elicits curiosity about God and teaches disciples to cultivate "Jesus-adapted eyes" as a way of looking at the world as Jesus would, seeing brokenness as an invitation to healing.



From left: The Rev. David Crabtree facilitated three TEConversations about racial reconciliation, evangelism and creation care. The Rev. Lisa Fischbeck, vicar of Church of the Advocate, Chapel Hill, presented workshops on Pee Wee Homes and the Piedmont Patch Project as examples of collaborative ministry. As a member of the special task force concerning Cuba, Martha Alexander worked hard to bring the diocese back into the Episcopal Church. Photos by Christine McTaggart

The Rev. Lisa Fischbeck, vicar of Church of the Advocate, Chapel Hill, conducted workshops about collaborative ministry, highlighting two Chapel Hill efforts: Pee Wee Homes and the Piedmont Patch Project. Both of these ventures combine elements of evangelism, reconciliation and care of creation, and both include community partners from within and outside of the Church. (Learn more about the projects at TheAdvocateChurch.org.)

North Carolina deputies played key roles in some of the most pressing concerns and exciting moments of GC79. The Rev. Kevin Matthews served on the legislative subcommittee dealing with all the resolutions concerning marriage rites. Matthews and his fellow committee members helped navigate a *via media* for making rites of marriage available to all couples, gay and straight, in their home churches while also respecting the authority of individual bishops.

Deputy Athena Hahn was a member of the Standing Committee on Liturgy and Music this past triennium, at the center of three years of work bringing forward proposals relating to revising the Book of Common Prayer. In the end, GC79 adopted an approach that combines the best elements of several proposals. Stopping short of wholesale revision of the 1979 Book of Common Prayer, it opens up more possibilities for revised liturgies with more inclusive and expansive language for God and more attention to providing dynamic equivalency translations of our authorized liturgies into Spanish, French and Creole.

Deputy Martha Alexander started her work long before General Convention as a member of a special task force for charting a successful process to welcome The Episcopal Church of Cuba back as a diocese. Martha's skillful legislative acumen continued during GC79's legislative process, allowing a successful outcome and tears and cheers of joy when at last the bishop and deputies of the Diocese of Cuba were seated in their respective Houses after a 50-year absence.

Deputy Alice Freeman and I had our hands full on our parallel committees on Social Justice and United States Policy. I was chair of the Bishops Committee and Alice was a member of the Deputies Committee, though both always met together. Our joint work began weeks before GC79 to be ready to receive resolutions on topics with direct impact upon most of our communities: gun safety, opioid use and abuse, immigration, voter suppression, protection of families seeking asylum, the new sanctuary movement and protection for U.S. military personnel from arbitrary and capricious discharge. In the end, 23 of the 32 submitted resolutions were passed with amendments. The two resolutions submitted by the Diocese of North



LEARN MORE

For more information on events discussed here, please refer to the General Convention recap (pages 12-17) or visit bitly.com/GC79Recap.

Carolina concerning immigration were ultimately absorbed into one of two larger resolutions on immigration: C033 and A178.

Alice and I will continue to work together in another capacity, as both of us were elected to the Executive Council of the Episcopal Church, which works as a whole as well as with the interim bodies appointed to carry out the work of the Church between General Conventions. Think of Executive Council as the Standing Committee and Diocesan Council rolled into one.

The Rev. Dr. Helen Svoboda-Barber participated in a House of Deputies special task force on the status of women in the Church. Organized prior to convention to study and make recommendations addressing the continuing presence of discrimination against women in the Church, one of the outcomes of this work was Resolution DO16—Truth, Reconciliation and Restoration—which directs Executive Council to establish an interim body to continue this work.

The Rev. Dr. Jeanine Driscoll, vicar of St. Mark's, Roxboro, helped design and guide the Liturgy of Listening that took place on July 4. She stayed on throughout General Convention as a member of the pastoral response team for those affected by the Liturgy of Listening.

And still there were more. More deputies putting in countless hours. More laity and clergy representing different interests and organizations throughout the Diocese. It seemed as though every time you walked a hall, an Episcopalian from the Diocese of North Carolina could be spotted, working, contributing, gathering information and building relationships for their work back home.

Your bishops and deputies are returning with energy and ideas to continue our North Carolina work as the Episcopal Branch of the Jesus Movement. But as always, it will take all of us—as North Carolinians and as Episcopalians—working together to move it forward. But if North Carolina's presence at the 79th General Convention is any indication of what we can do, we're not only going to continue to be pace-setters for the wider church, we're going to be picking up that pace.

The Rt. Rev. Anne Hodges-Copple is the bishop suffragan of the Diocese of North Carolina. Contact her at bishopanne@episdionc.org.

A CHURCH AS WIDE AS GOD'S LOVE

The Rev. Leslie Bland has experienced the myriad ways churches can be difficult to navigate for people who use assistive devices to aid with mobility. She has maneuvered her power wheelchair up ramps leading to locked, too-narrow doors no one was there to open when she knocked. She has worshiped in the far back corners of churches and in front of the first pew because there was nowhere else in the sanctuary her chair could fit. She's been unable to fulfill her diaconal role of serving at the table because a raised altar doesn't have a ramp leading up to it.

It's not only people with mobility issues who experience difficulty in church communities. Georgia Reuter, the youth minister at St. Patrick's, Mooresville, knew she needed to help her youth group learn how fully to include everyone in their community when one member of the youth group expressed his discomfort around another

youth with special needs. The situation arose from a misunderstanding about the second young man's behavior during a diocesan youth event. Reuter and the young man's mother pulled aside Lisa Aycock and invited her to the church to answer some of the youth group's questions.

In her role as a diocesan youth missionary and director of HUGS Camp, Aycock leads workshops at churches with questions about how to include children and youth with sensory processing disorder, developmental disabilities, ADHD or autism spectrum disorder. During her presentations, Aycock often helps churches address the needs of individual parishioners. Simple tweaks to routines can make a huge difference.

"If the overhead fluorescent lights bother someone," she said, "why not put some lamps in the youth room and leave off the overhead lights? Does a child have a gift, like singing, that can be incorporated into worship? Are they a talker? Make them a greeter. More inclusion is better."

Throughout the Diocese of North Carolina, churches are re-evaluating the ways in which they have included—or not—people with a wide range of needs. Even those congregations without current members who need accessible spaces and services should invest time and thought into making their churches as inclusive as possible.

"So much of our congregations will age into disability," Liz Stroff, the youth leader at Christ Church, Raleigh, pointed out. "You're not necessarily making changes for someone whose disability already exists in your parish but for someone who is in your parish and doesn't know yet what their needs will be."

"The reality is I think, one, we are called to love and accept everybody, but, two, even though we have some kids in our youth who maybe aren't identified as special needs, they all bring unique things to the group," Reuter said.

MAKING SPACES ACCESSIBLE

In 2012, the Rev. Randall Keeney, rector at St. Barnabas, Greensboro, decided to remove the raised platform on which the altar sat and rearrange the sanctuary to make worship more accessible. Because the parish has several members who use wheelchairs and walkers, Keeney and Bland asked them about where they wanted to sit.

"Most of the people we surveyed wanted to be in the midst of the congregations," Bland explains. "We have one person who sits in the back because she likes it there. [Another person] sits over near the



The contents of one of the sensory bags Christ Church, Raleigh, offers parishioners with sensory processing disorders. Photo by Liz Stroff

table where I sit because he likes it there, and [another] sits over by the organ.” Because the St. Barnabas’ sanctuary contains moveable chairs instead of fixed pews, they were able to rearrange the seating into a semi-round with chairs removed from the ends of multiple rows so people using wheelchairs and walkers have multiple seating options.

Because the altar now sits directly on the floor, Bland is able to maneuver behind it and assist in celebrating the Eucharist while facing the congregation. A parishioner built a small table to hold the Gospel so Bland can read from it in the midst of the congregation. Another parishioner donated the funds to replace and widen the glass doors nearest the sanctuary. The church also made modifications to the sound system—a lapel mic for Keeney and microphones on the Gospel table and lectern.

Last year, St. Barnabas began planning an accessible pathway along a trail winding down into the woods and ending at a creek on the church’s property. Eventually they would like to build a labyrinth in the open space near the creek. Finding the right materials to build the path, while also protecting the natural space and staying within budget, is challenging, but it’s worth it in order to include more fully the entire congregation in what the church has to offer.

“You had a group of people by the lakeside when Jesus would come across the water in a boat, and all those people would be scattered on the shore, but they would all have a place,” Bland explained. “Jesus wanted people to be included, everybody. I think that should be the goal of what we’re trying to do in terms of inclusivity, to allow people to come to worship, to adore and to pray in a way that’s comfortable for them, where they feel like they’re included in the midst of all of it.”

PROVIDING SUPPORT FOR ALL PEOPLE

Christ Church, Raleigh, has long offered young worshippers canvas quiet bags containing activities to help them stay focused during church. Recently, Stroff added three red sensory bags from the Autism Society to the collection. Each contains a pair of noise-cancelling headphones, a weighted lap stuffed animal, an indestructible ball for worshippers who need to squeeze something and a cloth maze with a marble inside for those who need to keep their hands busy. The bags are readily available before services, and the church website indicates where they are located.

With the help of Stroff and former assistant rector the Rev. Meg Buerkel Hunn, Christ Church has worked hard to make sure parishioners and visitors know the church will do its best to accommodate everyone’s needs. For example, all event registration forms now include a contact person for anyone who needs to discuss special

RESOURCES

- Contact Lisa Aycock (lisa.aycock@episditionc.org) to schedule an accessibility workshop.
- The Rev. Leslie Bland (lrblan105@gmail.com) is also willing to talk with churches about accessibility.
- Christ Church’s accessibility checklist is available at bit.ly/AccessibilityList

needs, including accessibility concerns or food allergies. All documents contain information about accessible parking and entrances, and the website includes an accessibility page dedicated to information about large-print bulletins, parking, braille signage, options for youth and children, and the hearing loop in the parish hall. This spring, Stroff also put together an accessibility checklist to assist those planning events at the church.

While Christ Church has made progress toward ensuring everyone has what they need to participate fully in worship and the life of the church, Stroff emphasizes that there is still work to be done. The historic building, for example, poses challenges when it comes to making the sanctuary more accessible or adding a hearing loop in that part of the building, but Stroff follows the advice offered by a panelist during a presentation by Arts Access, a North Carolina organization dedicated to making the arts more accessible.

“One of the things that stuck out to me the most is one person who said ‘Just ask,’ because if you ask the question, that means the door is open. There might not be a ramp to the door yet, but it’s open.”

Reuter also encourages churches to ask questions about how they can help include individuals with special needs. The mother of the young man with special needs came to the workshop Aycock led and answered the youth’s questions about how they can help her son. Parents in attendance also asked questions about how they could support the mother and her daughter. Reuter tears up when she tells the story.

“It’s not even so much what happened within our small community. It’s the bigger impact of ‘Gosh, those kids in the hall [at school] or sit in the lunchroom by themselves, what should you do? You should go talk to them.’”

Summerlee Walter is the communications coordinator at the Diocese of North Carolina. Contact her at summerlee.walter@episditionc.org.

Pilgrims visited well-known sites, including the Wailing Wall, Bethlehem and the Temple Mount. Photos by Lizzie McManus-Dail

By the Rev. Velinda Hardy

TO BE A PILGRIM

Thoughts from traveling the Holy Land

On April 9, 2018, a group of about 30 met at the Raleigh-Durham Airport to embark on the trip of a lifetime: We were going to the Holy Land. For most of us, it was our first time traveling there, but a few were returning to refresh their spirits and reacquaint themselves with treasured memories. For our spiritual leaders, the Rt. Rev. Anne Hodges-Copple, the Rev. Sally French and the Rev. David Umphlett, the Holy Land is one of their favorite and oft-visited venues, and we all benefitted from their perspectives and knowledge throughout the journey. It was a pilgrimage, a walk “in the footsteps of Jesus,” intended to plunge us deep into the very roots of our faith and seal our relationship with our Lord.

BECOMING A PILGRIM

At every site we visited, we followed the same path of discovery. Our tour guide, Gus, and spiritual leaders shared facts and insights wherever we stopped. One of our leaders then prayed a collect, scripture was read, and then we sang a hymn. It didn't take long for the pattern to have an impact on my mindset. I realized I was worshiping, praising God and giving thanks in remembrance of all He has done for us.

The familiar words of scripture came to life around us. We stood in Shepherd's Field, so well described in the Gospel of Luke (2:8-11). Standing there, I joined the shepherds in their watch, and Luke's story became my story, too. I will forever sing “While Shepherds Watched their Flock by Night” with a joy that is real and palpable. Such is the experience of a pilgrim. We came to be present with Jesus, to worship Him and claim our part in the great drama from Advent to Easter.

A pilgrim sees connections in the ancient and modern world. Upon visiting Jacob's Well in the city of Nablus in Palestine, we remembered the story:

“A Samaritan woman came to draw water, and Jesus said to her, ‘Give me a drink.’ (His disciples had gone to the city to buy food.) The Samaritan woman said to him, ‘How is it that you, a Jew, ask a drink of me, a woman of Samaria?’ (Jews do not share things in common with Samaritans.) Jesus



answered her, 'If you knew the gift of God, and who it is that is saying to you, "Give me a drink," you would have asked him, and he would have given you living water.'" (John 4:7-10)

This passage opens the mind to many issues with which we still struggle. We could talk about racism, or we could talk about classism and hypocrisy. Jesus knew that the "waters were troubled" in this little town, just as the currents are wailing in troubled parts of the world right now. But we took—and can continue to take—hope from this passage because doors today are being opened and boundaries pushed back. Jesus still offers "living water." The preserved well now stands inside of a church, so one of our pilgrims, newly baptized in the River Jordan, let down the bucket and drew up hope in its watery form.

BEYOND THE SITES

There were many other churches and memorable places such as the Mount of Beatitudes, the Wailing Wall and, of course, the Church of the Resurrection. But sites alone could not create the deep-rooted facets of our pilgrimage.

The topography served up many visual and tactile images. Travelling from Tel Aviv to Bethlehem on the first day, I was struck by the hills and mountains. No matter where we went, there were hills to climb, and I struggled to keep pace on uneven paths. The streets of old Jerusalem begged us to step back in time as their winding paths of rocks and stones challenged our every stride.

The buildings were constructed of the same types of stones, and the interior of some of them had been hewn into caves that served as living spaces. Called living stones, these stones have absorbed the history and struggles of many centuries. At Jesus' command, these stones can "shout out" the wisdom of the ages. We, too, are invited to dwell in a spiritual house where Jesus is not only a "living stone" but the cornerstone.

"Come to him, a living stone though rejected by mortals yet chosen and precious in God's sight, and like living stones, let yourselves be built into a spiritual house to be a holy priesthood, to offer spiritual sacrifices acceptable to God through Jesus Christ." (1 Peter 2:4-5)

Traveling throughout the Holy Land made real the journeys told in scripture. The trip from Jerusalem to Galilee took an hour and a half by bus, making me keenly aware Jesus' travels were not short strolls. The fertile, rocky and thorny landscapes were the tangible images we read in Jesus' parables, and simply standing in the waters of the River Jordan and the Sea of Galilee connected me to a life and faith lived thousands of years

ago, yet guiding my own today.

We were not alone. We joined the company of pilgrims from Africa, India, Asia and all over Europe. Like us, they were praying and singing and worshipping God in their native tongues as the Spirit gave them power. The beauty of God's children is spellbinding because in them we see Christ, just as they see his face in us.

A WISH FOR PEACE

It would be remiss not to mention what I observed of the struggle between Israel and Palestine. As we rode from Tel Aviv to Bethlehem, our guide pointed out the great disparity of Palestinians. The most obvious were the water tanks on the roofs of Palestinian homes as an emergency measure should the Israeli government cut off the water supply. There was no parity between the structures of homes; the pristine order of one neighborhood stood in juxtaposition to the disarray of another.

Perhaps the most telling part of this conflict was revealed when we visited Bethlehem University, a Christian university established for Muslims and Christians. We had the privilege of hearing from several very bright students who described the conflict as one having land solely at its roots. There is very little hope for peace, for neither side can envision an equitable resolution. There is no end in sight to the suffering and violence.

THE UNEXPECTED SOURCE

Our faith was unexpectedly taken even deeper as our group succumbed to at least two viruses as we traveled. No details are necessary, and no pilgrim was spared at least mild discomfort. But it had an odd effect: As our frailties became obvious, our need for Jesus was inescapable. We shared our woes, and our suffering bound us together and even more so to Jesus Christ.

That binding together and our deepening faith is why we traveled to the Holy Land, and to be a pilgrim there is a special thing. But if it's not in your immediate plans, know you don't have to travel to the Holy Land to keep close what we learned there. See the scripture alive and at work in the world around you—in the water, in the landscape, in our suffering, in our neighbors. Traveling the Holy Land brings scripture and Jesus' journey alive, but his journey and its teachings are there for us to find and see everywhere, every day.

The Rev. Velinda Hardy is a deacon in the Diocese of North Carolina. Contact her at vhardy5@gmail.com.

A CIRCLE OF SUPPORT

Imagine you lived in a controlled environment. Then one day you step out of that environment to begin a new chapter in your life, but standing directly in front of you is a mountain. Maybe you have some skills to climb that mountain and maybe you don't, but regardless, the mountain has to be scaled before you can begin your new life on the other side.

The mountain may be metaphorical, but the challenge is no less real to women who re-enter the world after being incarcerated.

Enter the Interfaith Prison Ministry for Women (IPMW).

ROOTED IN FAITH

Founded in 1980 as the Presbyterian Chaplain Ministry, the Interfaith Prison Ministry for Women has grown to an organization that works to empower women leaving prison. For 38 years, IPMW has served incarcerated women's spiritual needs through its chaplaincy and, for the last 17 years, through transition education programs.

Now they are working on a third facet: reentry support after leaving prison.

"The average length of sentence is 3 to 3.5 years, but we've worked with women who have been in for far longer," said Jennifer Jackson, executive director of IPMW. "One of the biggest obstacles they face is the conglomeration of all the individual needs that have to be addressed upon release. But it's really the need to address them all at one time that gets overwhelming. We ask these women to climb a very big mountain with a lot of sub-mountains all at the same time.

"Many, if not most, who are coming out are not prepared to scale that mountain," she said. "It can be done, but you have to have the right equipment and know how to use it. These women are expected to climb with or without it and are judged harshly if they can't."

THE REALITIES OF FREEDOM

The days following release from prison can be incredibly stressful. Few know how much awaits those released. They must secure housing, find employment and navigate the rocky maze of social services to reunite families. 82.9 percent of incarcerated women struggle with substance abuse or mental health issues, so ensuring a healthy path and staying in recovery must be a priority. Transportation is needed to attend to it all, and then there's the economics of incarceration. It's expensive and can follow you when you leave; post-release fees, court fees, restitution, outstanding fines and legal fees all await payment. And that is on top of the necessary funds to cover basic needs like food and security deposits.

"When a woman first gets out, she may not have family

to help her navigate the system," said Kaye Ward, IPMW program assistant. "She needs doctor appointments and may need help making and getting to them. She may not be familiar with computers, and most job applications are online now. She has to learn that. She may need a driver's license, state ID, social security card, bank account, debit card, cell phone – a lot of these women don't have any of it, and some of it may be unfamiliar. They start from scratch and have to work their way up."

Ward knows firsthand what it is to face the challenges. Before working for IPMW, she was incarcerated for 44 months. During her time in prison, she got involved with the IPMW chaplaincy program and later the pre-release Job Start program, an initiative that partners community agencies with volunteers to help women get to know themselves and prepare for release.

"It's a wonderful program," said Ward. "I was fortunate to be in it."

Ward now works full time for IPMW and attends school at the University of Mt. Olive. A Free Will Baptist, she will be ordained in January and upon her graduation next summer, she will begin the chaplaincy program at Campbell University.

Because she knew the value of support the chaplaincy and pre-release programs gave to incarcerated women, she began to dream of continuing that circle of support for the women after their release.

She was not alone.

THE CIRCLE OF SUPPORT

From the start, IPMW differentiated itself from other prisoner-support programs by focusing on women. "In general, when you think and hear reports about people who are incarcerated, you hear about men," said Jackson. "Most of the reentry tables we sit at are formed around men."

Because women make up only about seven to eight percent of those incarcerated, they often get lost in the shuffle of programs and research funding. Data has shown this lack of resources and support affects the way women are able to rebuild their lives upon release.

Jackson began doing research on organizations that focused on post-release support and learned about the "circle of support" model. Traditionally used for families in homelessness and poverty, the concept of the model is to focus support not in any one area, but to provide resources in a number of areas simultaneously.

"Catholic Charities of Raleigh had been using this model for more than a decade following Hurricane Katrina," said Jackson. "We spent nine months with them, customizing what they were doing and crafting a program designed

GET INVOLVED

There are several ways to help the Interfaith Prison Ministry for Women in their work, including donations, mentoring, support circle formation, supply drives, volunteering in the office and with worship in the prison.

To learn more about or get involved, visit ipmforwomen.org.

specifically for formerly incarcerated women.”

The result is a sustainable partnership model that prioritizes the needs of women leaving prison and puts in place resources to meet them.

“It’s a team mentoring model,” said Shanae Artis, IPMW mentor and outreach manager. “We work with faith-based and civic organizations to put together teams of eight to 10 people with different skill sets. We organize the group, train those in it and then partner it with the woman and her family.”

The goal of the reentry support circle is to work with the woman on both her immediate and future needs. Because the circle is with her for 12-15 months following her release, the expectation is the circle will be able to help firmly establish the woman in her new life. The expectation is rooted in the design of the circle itself; since nothing is resting on any one set of shoulders, there is far less chance of the formerly incarcerated woman losing her mentor because of circumstance. Too, because everyone in the circle brings a different skill set, they’re able to assist with and meet myriad needs at the same time.

Sara Stohler is a parishioner at St. Mark’s, Raleigh, and a longtime volunteer mentor. “I knew a lot of the problems the people I mentored [in prison] were going to face,” she said. “I saw the need for someone to walk with them.”

Stohler spoke with the Rev. Sallie Simpson, then a deacon at St. Mark’s, about the post-release program IPMW

was starting. She wondered if there would be interest among the congregation to form a support circle. Simpson supported the idea, and so Stohler began the conversation. “I started asking people if they wanted to be a part of it,” she said, “and they talked to other people, and where I thought we’d have trouble getting a team of six, suddenly we had eight.”

That circle of eight is comprised of six members of St. Mark’s, one member of the Yavneh Jewish community that nests at St. Mark’s and one additional volunteer. In addition to the team, St. Mark’s lent its support in another way.

MISSION ENDOWMENT

Simpson knew of the Mission Endowment grants available through the Diocese of North Carolina, and she saw a good fit. The IPMW post-release support circles are “outreach into the community,” she said. “It’s taking church—and the power of the church—into the community.”

With the first support circle underway already and the second in the formation stage, the Mission Endowment grant awarded in the fall of 2017 will help fund IPMW’s post-release initiative.

“The women who have served time in prison and are coming out are just like everyone else,” said Stohler. “To spend time with them is an enriching experience. Those barriers we put up about prison just go away. And those of us who serve have formed a tight bond ourselves. It creates community within the congregation and church.”

“The opportunity to help someone with the knowledge you have, to enrich their lives and help them to rise is very satisfying,” added Ward. Having been on both sides of the relationship, “the giver gets far more out of it than the person they’re helping.”

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



KNOW YOUR NEIGHBOR, SERVE YOUR NEIGHBOR

Across the Diocese of North Carolina, churches serve their communities in ways big and small by meeting people in their neighborhoods and learning from them about the community's needs. Sometimes the discernment process leads to major new initiatives, like Christ's Beloved Community/Comunidad Amada de Cristo, a bilingual church plant collaboration between The Episcopal Church and the Evangelical Lutheran Church of America, or Galilee Ministries of East Charlotte, a multi-ministry center offering more than a dozen services primarily to refugees from Southeast Asia. More often, though, churches address needs in their communities through smaller ministries that make a huge difference in the lives of those they touch.

MEDICAL MINISTRY COLLABORATIONS

The people of St. Andrew's, Haw River, have long been in relationship with the families living in the mobile homes behind the church. The church provides tutoring for children in the neighborhood and has provided information about legal rights to the largely immigrant community. In 2017, rector the Rev. Miriam Saxon and the church's former deacon, the Rev. Jan Lamb, were brainstorming additional ways to serve their neighbors when they decided to host a community health fair.

Former parishioner Sylvia Mand, a nurse practitioner with a passion for health education, took the idea and ran with it. Mand reached out to various community groups to engage their help in planning and promoting the event. She contacted Haw River Elementary School to post flyers, and the school volunteered to send home information about

the clinic in students' backpacks. Local businesses donated door prizes the church gave away at intervals throughout the day. Two employees at the pizza place next door to St. Andrew's volunteered to provide Spanish translation. The church, which sits on Highway 70, placed a large banner in the yard, and the local paper wrote a preview article for the event.

On the day of the clinic in October 2017, more than 100 people visited the church, which has an average Sunday attendance of 40. Those who attended got free blood pressure and blood sugar readings from Haw River's emergency medical services and fire department while their children explored a fire truck. Hearing and dental screenings were also available, and Rep. Mark Walker sent a staffer who set follow-up appointments for people having issues with their Social Security or Medicare. The fair also offered six health education talks, including one about domestic violence led by the Haw River police department.

The event might have saved at least one life. One woman who attended learned her blood pressure and blood sugar were dangerously high. She shared her test results with Saxon, who called a free clinic in Burlington to schedule a follow-up appointment. As a result, the woman's diabetes is now under control.

The health fair at St. Andrew's inspired a similar event elsewhere in the convocation, at Holy Spirit, Greensboro. Before she became Holy Spirit's vicar, the Rev. Audra Abt served as the diocesan missionary in Greensboro, in which role she helped the church discern how to engage with the community during a series of walks through the neighborhood surrounding the church. As parishioners



met their neighbors, they collected prayer requests and prayed with and for those who asked for it. After the walks, members would gather to pray, then look for themes in the prayer requests. Health problems arose as a common concern.

In the fall of 2017, as Abt was transitioning to her new call as Holy Spirit's vicar, she met a community nurse in the course of her volunteer work as a chaplain with Faith Action International, an organization working with new immigrant families. The nurse, it turns out, was Maureen Flak, a member of Holy Trinity, Greensboro, who works with the congregational nurse program through Cone Health System—and who knew the program was looking for a partner in the medically underserved part of Northeast Greensboro where Holy Spirit is located.

“The community nurse program had been looking for the blessing of a space, and Holy Spirit [church] has been looking for even more opportunities and holy excuses to know our neighbors better,” Abt explained. “The Holy Spirit just kind of started orchestrating the dance to be a little closer and more choreographed.”

For the two health fairs they've hosted this summer, Holy Spirit has provided the space, outreach and hospitality; Holy Trinity provided the medical supplies and Cone Health provided nurses. Holy Spirit did minimal advertising via Facebook, online community event calendars, weekly local newspapers and flyers posted at small businesses. Nonetheless, in the weeks leading up to the first health fair on June 23, local organizations started calling with requests to set up tables during the event. The Center for New North Carolinians, the Mental Health Association of Greensboro, Faith Action International, North Carolina Legal Aid and Deez Doorz, a nonprofit serving women escaping domestic abuse situations, all had a presence during the first health fair. Volunteers from Holy Spirit, Holy Trinity and St. Francis cooked burgers and hotdogs and kept the kids entertained with crafts, games and face painting. Abt credits the communal, celebratory atmosphere with much of the event's success.

“Joy and enjoying each others' company is a huge part of community health and wellness. That is what the church can provide so legal aid and medical workers can do their jobs.”

Just as Holy Spirit drew inspiration from St. Andrew's, St. Andrew's learned a lesson from Holy Spirit.

“It was a tremendous amount of work,” Saxon acknowledged of the first health fair St. Andrew's hosted. She presented a scaled-back version to St. Andrew's vestry this month, and the church plans to work with Southern Alamance Family Empowerment, which does health fairs



Opposite page: The community health fair at Holy Spirit, Greensboro, featured children's crafts and blood pressure readings. During the health fair at St. Andrew's, Haw River, attendees could get their hearing screened. *Photo by the Rev. Miriam Saxon* Above: Youth from St. Margaret's, Waxhaw, build front steps during Fixing it for Christ. *Photo by Tammy McGee* Volunteers from St. Andrew's, Rocky Mount, refinish a cabinet door and hang vinyl siding. *Photos by the Rev. George Greer*

in Saxapahaw and is looking for host sites, to partner on its next event.

“Churches need to learn we can depend on the community,” Abt explained. “It's not just the community depending on us. That's not how Jesus intended it.”

FIXING IT FOR CHRIST

Just as lack of access to health care and struggles with medical expenses are common problems in the communities many of our churches serve, so are concerns about unsafe housing. Through a city-wide partnership among churches, community organizations and businesses, each summer Fixing it for Christ repairs houses in Waxhaw. The outreach ministry began in 2007 after members of Waxhaw United Methodist Church wondered

why they were willing to travel for mission projects to rebuild houses after natural disasters but weren't doing the same things to help impoverished families in their own community.

The ministry has grown each summer since then, and this year, St. Margaret's, Waxhaw, participated for the first time. The new connection grew out of parishioner Traci Scott's volunteer work. Scott met Terri Barbee of Waxhaw UMC during an outreach project and learned about Fixing it for Christ. Scott knew St. Margaret's men's group was thinking of starting a construction-related ministry.

"I said, 'Don't reinvent the wheel,'" Scott recalled. She partnered with Charlie Winsman, a member of the men's group at St. Margaret's, and the two joined the ecumenical planning committee of eight to 10 churches that spends the year fielding repair requests, working with contractors to vet projects and communicating with residents. She and Winsman tried to make it as easy as possible for St. Margaret's parishioners to get involved by helping people sign up, breaking tasks into smaller chunks and being flexible about how some tasks were accomplished. For example, those who signed up to help prepare the three meals per day Fixing it for Christ provides its volunteers had the option of cooking as a group at the church or baking at home.

During a four-day period in June, 450 volunteers from 31 churches, including 30 St. Margaret's parishioners, repaired 22 houses and prepared food for the construction volunteers. Scott and her 14-year-old son worked on the home of a neighbor with mobility problems whose house smelled so unpleasant, the team had to step outside to recover with some fresh air after they first entered the space. Soon, though, they had emptied the house, pulled up soiled carpet and replaced it with laminate, scrubbed and repainted the walls and helped the homeowner purge their belongings before resetting the house. Volunteers at other sites built wheelchair ramps, repaired sagging floors and replaced roofs. Scott emphasized the outreach wasn't just about construction, however.

"We prayed with the homeowners every day and made them understand we care about them and aren't just there to fix their house and leave," she said. "They're our neighbors. It's what we're called to do."

St. Margaret's ecumenical engagement with the community doesn't stop with Fixing it for Christ. Inspired by an ecumenical group called Heart for Monroe in the county seat, almost 20 churches in Waxhaw started meeting in March.

"Some of us heard God tell us we needed to do something similar in our backyard," Scott said.

The mix of mostly lay leaders plus some clergy are learning about each other's ministries in an effort to

avoid duplicating efforts and maximize impact, which includes supporting each other's successful ministries with volunteers instead of starting new ones.

ST. ANDREW'S SERVES THE COMMUNITY

Offering space, volunteers and donations while addressing a myriad of community needs is something St. Andrew's, Rocky Mount, does well. The Rev. George Greer, St. Andrew's rector, gets a little help from the government to identify community needs.

"I actually look at demographics," he explained. "I log onto the U.S. government website and look at demographics." Greer's research has helped inform St. Andrew's participation in the community, which has a large transient population of people who move every few years. Rocky Mount families also face serious economic challenges with a poverty rate of 25 percent.

To address some of the community's needs, every weekday morning during the school year the church preschool and kindergarten serve 40-50 children, with approximately the same number participating in the Afterschool Gang every weekday afternoon during the school year and all day during the summer months. The church's food pantry distributes sacks of nutritious food to between 80 and 100 families each month, and a group of 16 regular volunteers delivers food in the community through Meals on Wheels on the third Thursday of every month.

St. Andrew's does more than feeding and educating its community, however. Each year the church also donates back-to-school supplies, Thanksgiving turkeys and children's Christmas gifts to dozens of families living in a nearby affordable housing apartment complex. When nearby Princeville experienced severe flooding in October 2016, Greer needed to rent a U-Haul truck to transport all of the donations parishioners gathered. During the summer, volunteers from St. Andrew's participate in Gatekeepers, a collaboration among area churches to repair homes in the community.

"We've re-roofed, re-floored bathrooms and kitchens, paint, hauled trash—you name it, we've done it," Greer explained.

Regardless of the exact work they do in their communities, these four churches serve as a reminder that high-impact service to the community need not always look like a new building, church plant or \$100,000 project. Sometimes volunteer power, space and hospitality are exactly what the community needs.

Summerlee Walter is the communications coordinator for the Diocese of North Carolina. Contact her at summerlee.walter@episdionc.org.

DOING JUST ONE THING CAN CHANGE A LIFE

Creating a connection can build foundations for young adults

Imagine picking up your cell phone, reading an email or unfolding a note tacked to your office door with one of these questions:

- Can you reach out to my friend who just found out her close friend from high school overdosed and died?
- Will your church accept me if I am gay?
- Can you call John and meet him at church so that someone can be with him when I tell him his father has died?
- What does God and the church say about sex?
- Can you tell me when the 12-step program for young adults meets?
- Can I start a weekday meal for the homeless in the church kitchen?
- What do you do for spring break that doesn't involve a cruise, a bus or sleeping in a tent?
- Is there a Bible study here that allows me to ask all the questions I want?
- Can you help me figure out how to stay in school with a newly unemployed parent?
- My mother died the first week of school and all I want to do is go home.
- Do you have a young adult group for recent graduates?

These are some of the many and varied questions diocesan college and young adult missionaries answer every day in coffee shops and classrooms, at lunch tables and in corporate corridors across the state. They have learned that answering these questions makes the difference in whether or not these young people explore, join or remain in church. Some students find their way to a campus or young adult ministry, but many are not even aware these key networks exist.

Every member of the Diocese of North Carolina has the power to change that.

Many universities, particularly public ones, do not share information about students with outside groups.

REFER A YOUNG ADULT

To do
Just One
Thing, look
for the link

at episditionc.org in the Quick Links box.



Saint Augustine's University, one of two Episcopal HBCUs, is located in Raleigh. Photo courtesy of Saint Augustine's University

Campus ministers and young adult missionaries depend on congregations to connect young adults leaving their home church to campuses and parishes throughout the Diocese of North Carolina so they can be welcomed in the radical way of Jesus into the young adult community.

By using Just One Thing, you can create those connections for those leaving your church for the next chapter in their lives, helping them find their new – or even first - faith home. Just One Thing is a form that takes less than one minute to fill out; it is on the diocesan website and when submitted, it is sent to the campus minister indicated or the nearest young adult missionary. The young adult will then be contacted and welcomed.

It is a tender, exciting and vulnerable time when a first-year student, graduate, professional or undergraduate starts a new path. It is even more challenging for those leaving the comfort and security of academia for the uncharted seas of work and making friends. Help continue the adventure of faith formation begun in parish churches in the waters of baptism, nurtured in Sunday school classes and youth groups, crafted in the school of outreach and learning to reach across a pew to pass the peace. Don't make young adults wait until they have children to return to the Church. Then it may be too late to be that haven for their hungering soul. Help them, and those who have yet to discover the power of relationship with God and God's people, to keep the faith by doing Just One Thing.

The Rev. Tambria E. Lee is the chaplain and young adult missionary at the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill. Contact her at tlee@thechapelofthecross.org.

On April 15, a devastating F2 tornado hit some of Greensboro's poorest neighborhoods. Photo by the Rev. Canon Earnest Graham



By Summerlee Walter

THE FIRST LINE OF HELP

How churches rallied together after a devastating tornado struck Greensboro

Early in the evening on April 15, an F2 tornado reaching top speeds of 135 mph hit some of Greensboro's poorest neighborhoods. The storm knocked out power to 85,000 households, destroyed three elementary schools and approximately 100 houses, and killed one resident whose car was hit by a falling tree. While recovery from a major natural disaster—especially an unexpected one—is always a long-term project, the difficulty increases when the affected neighborhoods struggled even before the storm hit.

“Around the end of the month, a lot of the folks we met after the tornado, as bills come due, are requesting help,” the Rev. Audra Abt, vicar at Holy Spirit, Greensboro, explained during the last week of July. Because the storms caused disruptions to people's work schedules and created unexpected expenses like home and car repairs, hotel stays and transportation, many economically fragile members of the Greensboro community have yet to return to the level of stability

they had before the tornado hit.

Fortunately, the churches located nearest to the neighborhoods devastated by the storm—Holy Spirit, Church of the Redeemer and Puerta Abierta (the Open Door) house church—were able to pool resources to aid in the recovery effort. Churches, both within the Greensboro convocation and across the Diocese of North Carolina, reached out to contribute funds, supplies and resources to the recovery effort. In addition to helping people with immediate needs like food and transportation, donations allowed Holy Spirit to help a local domestic abuse shelter cover the repairs insurance wouldn't after a tree fell on the house. The Diocese was so generous, in fact, Abt was able to save some of the donations to assist people with long-term recovery, like filling some of those end-of-the-month requests.

“The support from the convocation and the diocese gave me a sense of why we're a diocese,” Abt said. “People were so generous.” Churches called and texted

to ask if specific contributions—like a donation to the rector’s discretionary fund—would be helpful, an approach Abt appreciated because it took some of the pressure off her to decide what she should request.

One such call came from Maureen Flak, the parish nurse at Holy Trinity, Greensboro, who has experience with disaster response. When Abt told her Holy Spirit would like to host a community meal for those affected by the storm, Flak asked only for an estimated headcount, and then the people of Holy Trinity organized the meal and brought it to Holy Spirit.

All told, 13 churches donated to Abt’s discretionary fund, and others donated via the discretionary fund of the Rev. Dr. Alicia Alexis, rector at Redeemer. (Alexis is on sabbatical and was unavailable for an interview.)

Part of the work in the convocation was coordinated through a gathering arranged by the Rev. Canon Earnest Graham. Other relief efforts started in congregations, like Holy Spirit organizing groups of parishioners to partner with grassroots groups and canvas the church’s neighborhood assessing damage, or Holy Trinity running a drive that collected 200 bags of food for a local food pantry.

The Rev. Sarah Carver, assistant to the rector at Holy Trinity, reported that parishioners also self-organized or volunteered on their own.

“The community did a good job of pulling together,” she said. Abt concurred.

“It was so clear the first line of help was immediate neighbors,” she said. “The second line of help was immediate neighbors. Lots of outside help came in, but people rallied around each other.”

Summerlee Walter is the communications coordinator for the Diocese of North Carolina. Contact her at summerlee.walter@episcdionc.org.

LEARNINGS

While the Greensboro convocation did an excellent job of responding to the April 15 tornado, the aftermath of a natural disaster always offers the chance to reflect on how to better prepare for the next disaster. Here’s what we learned.

- 1. Create a disaster preparedness plan.** Extensive planning resources are available in the Quick Links box on the diocesan homepage under “Preparedness Planning.”
- 2. Update your church’s phone tree or other contact list, and schedule a practice run.** After the tornado hit, Abt’s first priority was locating Holy Spirit parishioners and determining if everyone was safe. That task proved challenging with a phone tree that hadn’t been updated in 10 years.

“That was maybe the scariest two days of my life as a pastor. I could not get in touch with people.” A long-time member of Holy Spirit has since updated the phone tree, and the church ran a practice scenario.
- 3. Get to know your neighbors.** In the aftermath of the Greensboro tornado, there was no immediate coordinated effort to canvas the neighborhood to assess the damage, so community grassroots groups called for volunteers. Because parishioners at Holy Spirit had prior experience going door-to-door, they were comfortable going into the neighborhood and talking to people, offering prayers and comfort.
- 4. If you have power and running water, use your church building to offer hospitality and a respite.** After the tornado, Holy Spirit put out the word people displaced from their homes could stay in the church if they needed to. No one took them up on the offer, but several people expressed just knowing the church was an option relieved enough worry they were able to think more clearly and make alternate plans. If providing overnight shelter isn’t an option, offering a place to rest, a meal or a place to charge cell phones so people can check in with family are all valuable services to offer.
- 5. If you are not on-site, concrete offers of help are the way to go.** Post-tornado, “I had to live on my phone, and I couldn’t handle vague offers of help because I was in information overload,” Abt explained. “The people who just very simply offered to buy meals, take up a collection for my discretionary fund or donate bottles of water so I could say ‘yes’ or ‘no’ to specific offers were really helpful.”
- 6. Remember displaced people might not have a place to store “stuff.”** While during a disaster people on the ground might make requests for specific items, like water or cleaning supplies, needs change quickly during the first days of an emergency. If you’re not able to respond to a specific request within a day, donating funds, prepaid cards or gift cards to local retailers, grocery stores and gas stations is a high-impact gift. If you’re able to be in contact with someone on the ground, ask what the community needs.



The Episcopal Diocese of North Carolina
200 West Morgan Street, Suite 300
Raleigh, NC 27601-1338
919.834.7474 | 800.448.8775

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Until we read again...

ORDER your hard copy of the 2018-2019 *Gospel-Based Discipleship* by Sept. 30 (page 10).

NOMINATE someone you know interested in serving on Diocesan Council, Standing Committee or the Board of Trustees for University of the South by Oct. 8 (page 8).

SUBMIT your annual audit report to Diocesan House by Sept. 3.

DO JUST ONE THING and refer your recently graduated seniors to the chaplain or congregation at the university, community college or military base where they are heading (page 29).