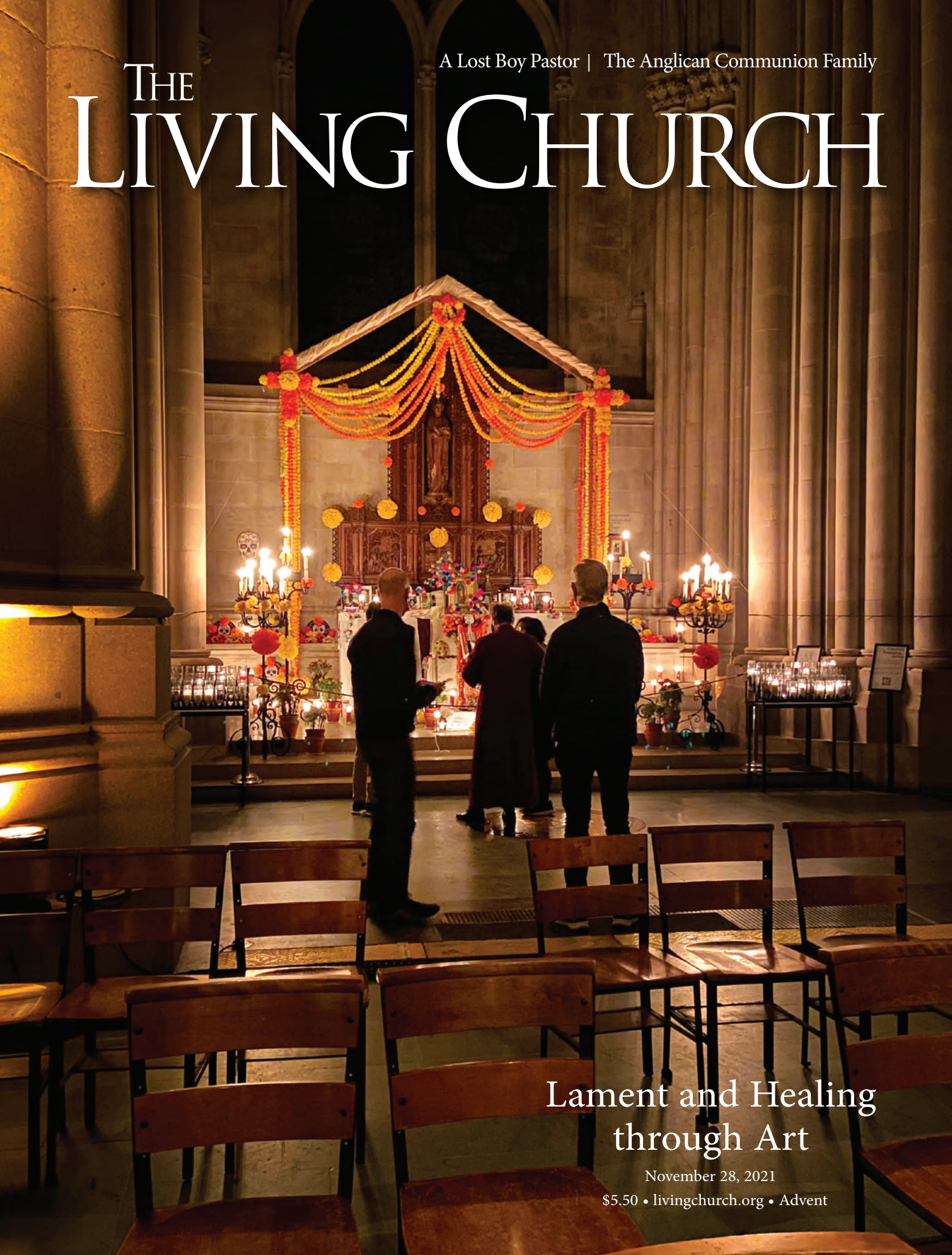


A Lost Boy Pastor | The Anglican Communion Family

# THE LIVING CHURCH



Lament and Healing  
through Art

November 28, 2021

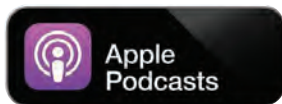
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November 28, 2021

# THE LIVING CHURCH

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### ON THE COVER

Visitors pause at one of the *Día de Los Muertos* altars at the Cathedral of St. John the Divine in New York (see p. 12).

Patrick Malloy photo







The Rev. Theodora Brooks and Gen. Colin Powell

Theodora Brooks via Facebook

## CPG's Compensation Report Offers a Wealth of Data

By Kirk Petersen

Church Pension Group has issued its annual survey of clergy compensation, in an updated version of the interactive tool it introduced last year. The survey has added data on race, ethnicity, gender, and sexual orientation, all part of CPG's effort to fulfill compensation-related resolutions from the 2018 General Convention.

For the first time, the survey has some data from every diocese in the church, although the report for domestic dioceses is more robust than the non-domestic report.

Some highlights from domestic dioceses:

Median compensation nationally for full-time clergy in 2020 was \$83,392, up from \$81,250 the prior year. The level has been roughly flat on an inflation-adjusted basis for the past few years.

The number of clergy considered full time was 4,559, continuing a steady decline from a high of 6,338 in 2003.

Sixty percent of clergy were male, and male clergy received median compensation about \$10,500 higher than female clergy. That gap has widened slightly since last year's report, which showed a gap closer to \$10,000.

When the tool was first introduced a year ago, *TLC* noted: "A seminarian might, hypothetically, be interested in knowing which dioceses have the highest median compensation. ... There is no practical way to learn this information with the interactive tool. (The transcendently impractical method would begin with clicking every diocese one by one, capturing the desired data about that diocese, and pasting it into a spreadsheet.)"

The new iteration of the tool takes a step toward improving this. It's still not

## Colin Powell, Episcopalian

By Kirk Petersen

Former Secretary of State Colin Powell, who died in October, was a lifelong Episcopalian, and his funeral was held November 5 at Washington National Cathedral.

*TLC* took note of Powell's faith as an Episcopalian in 1996, in a review of his memoir, *My American Journey*. The review said: "Gen. Powell grew up in St. Margaret's, the neighborhood parish [in the South Bronx] where he served as an acolyte and came to love the splendor of Anglo-Catholic liturgy. 'The higher the church, the closer to God; that was how I saw it.'" The original edition is out of print, but an updated version was published in 2003.

These days, the Rev. Theodora N. Brooks is priest in charge of St. Margaret's. On her personal Facebook page is a picture of her walking with Powell and others toward the church after dedication of the nearby General Colin Powell Apartment Complex in 2010.

"He loved his church and he never forgot it," Brooks said. "There are people in the congregation who still

remember him, remember his parents." She did not know the exact years when he attended as a child. Powell graduated from high school in 1954.

Out of respect for privacy, Brooks declined to answer some questions about the church's relationship with Powell, but said he had visited the church on other occasions.

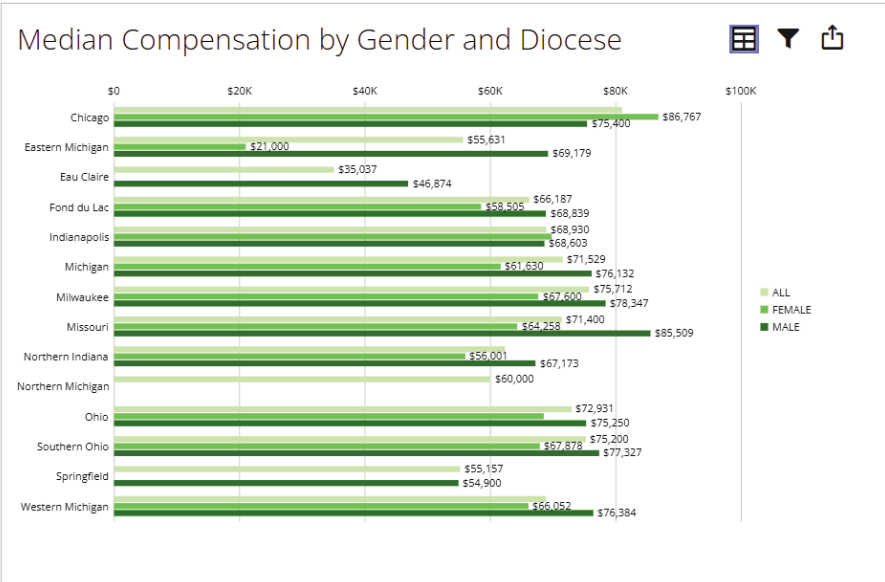
"Like the rest of the world, our hearts are broken," she said, but "he has left with us every reason to walk tall, and so many lessons, when it comes to service and living out our faith."

When Powell died, Presiding Bishop Michael B. Curry issued a statement:

"I recall fondly having breakfast with him a couple years ago. He became energized and passionate about his work with the Colin Powell School for Civic and Global Leadership, which is part of his alma mater, The City College of New York.

"He cared about people deeply. He served his country and humanity nobly. He loved his family and his God unswervingly. As Jesus says in the New Testament, 'Well done, good and faithful servant.'"

## Median Compensation by Gender and Diocese



levels varies significantly across dioceses.

In the Diocese of Eastern Michigan, which is north of Detroit, the median compensation for male clergy is more than *three times* the level for female clergy: \$69,179 vs. \$21,000, a disparity that dwarfs the national difference. Note that small sample sizes lend themselves to outlying results. Other parts of the tool reveal that the Eastern Michigan comparison is of nine men and seven women. (For privacy reasons, CPG omits any subset with fewer than five clergy, which is why there are some gaps in the chart.)

Chicago provides a different anomaly. Compensation for men in most Province V dioceses is higher than for women (women have a slight edge in Indianapolis, but it's essentially parity). But in the Diocese of Chicago, median compensation for women is more than \$11,000 *higher* than for men: \$86,767 vs. \$75,400. Chicago is

(Continued on next page)

possible to browse comparisons across the entire domestic church, but it is now possible within each domestic province.

If you select the “Diocese” category on the Province V map, for example, you’ll find a chart labeled “Median

Compensation by Gender and Diocese,” which is displayed nearby.

Studying the chart leads to some interesting insights. As noted earlier, male clergy in general are more highly compensated than female clergy. But the difference in relative compensation



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(Continued from previous page)

the largest diocese in the province, with 67 male and 44 female clergy.

A longer version of this article on the TLC website shows how the tool can be used in ways not immediately obvious to tease additional insights from the CPG data. For example, it turns out there are 14 domestic dioceses where median clergy compensation for women is higher than for men. To learn which ones — and for instructions on finding that and other interesting tidbits — go to [livingchurch.org/cpgtool](http://livingchurch.org/cpgtool).

## Albany Standing Committee Permits Same-Sex Marriage

By Kirk Petersen

The Diocese of Albany has authorized the use of same-sex marriage rites, becoming the last domestic diocese to accept the mandate of the 2018 General Convention.

The diocesan Standing Committee announced the change in policy on November 1, less than a week after an unsuccessful effort to overturn the diocesan canon that prohibits the use of such rites [see *TLC*, Nov. 14]. The canon remains in place, but is unenforceable.

The Standing Committee currently

is the ecclesiastical authority of the diocese, during the search for a new diocesan bishop. The previous Bishop of Albany, William H. Love, resigned in the face of disciplinary action rather than comply with the mandate. He subsequently left the Episcopal Church, and now serves as a bishop in the Anglican Church in North America.

While the members of the Standing Committee “as a body” remain opposed to same-sex marriage, the announcement said that “in order to comply with Resolution 2018-B012, we direct all clergy who desire to use such rites for same-sex couples, with the advice and input of the congregation’s Vestry, to contact our Assisting Bishop to work out on our behalf the details of a Letter of Agreement for supplemental episcopal pastoral support.” Resolution B012 provides for the appointment of a bishop from another diocese to oversee the use of same-sex marriage rites in cases where the diocesan bishop is opposed to the practice.

The assisting bishop is the Rt. Rev. Michael G. Smith, who was appointed in August to serve the diocese on a part-time basis. Smith also opposes same-sex marriage, but pledged when appointed to “reach out across the aisle to theological liberals.”

Smith and Love were two of the eight diocesan Communion Partner bishops who had exercised a veto clause in the 2015 General Convention

resolution that originally authorized the use of same-sex marriage rites. In 2018, Resolution B012 was crafted to eliminate the veto while enabling bishops to uphold a traditional standard of diocesan teaching and practice about marriage. The Standing Committee’s decision to require supplemental pastoral oversight for parishes that wish to use the rites is consistent with the practice of most Communion Partner dioceses.

## Archbishop of Canterbury Apologizes for Climate Comments

*Adapted from the BBC*

The Archbishop of Canterbury has “unequivocally” apologized for comparing politicians who fail to act on climate change to those who “ignored what was happening in Nazi Germany.”

Justin Welby made the comments while attending the COP26 climate conference.

But he later apologized, saying it was “never right to make comparisons with the atrocities brought by the Nazis.”

He added that he was “trying to emphasize the gravity of the situation facing us.”

Asked if climate change would be worse than allowing a genocide to happen, Welby said: “It will allow a genocide on an infinitely greater scale.

“I’m not sure there’s grades of genocide, but there’s width of genocide, and this will be genocide indirectly, by negligence, recklessness, that will in the end come back to us or to our children and grandchildren.”

The COP26 conference in Glasgow is seen as crucial if temperature increases, and changes to the climate, are to be limited.

Speaking to BBC political editor Laura Kuenssberg, Welby said history would judge current world leaders “probably on this fortnight alone.

“They could have been rubbish at everything else they’ve done but if they get this right, the children of today will rise up and bless them in 50 years.”

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Wynter Byrd photos

**SOLAR CELEBRATION:** As a drone hovers overhead capturing aerial pictures, the Rt. Rev. Glenda Curry, Bishop of Alabama, asperges the newly installed solar panels recently on the parish hall at Saint Stephen's Church in Cahaba Heights, a suburb of Birmingham, Alabama. The 104-kilowatt solar project is expected to provide about a quarter of the electricity the church needs.

The Rev. John Burruss, rector (lower right photo), said the

total cost of the project was about \$220,000, and it is expected to pay for itself in seven to eight years. The Solar Moonshot project, based in San Diego and assisting nonprofits, provided a \$25,000 grant.

In 2020, the parish undertook an LED light conversion projected to save the congregation roughly \$14,000 per year in energy costs, making more funds available for other projects that benefit the wider community.





## Taking Time to Attend

But yet, O my God who made us, how can that honor I paid her be compared with her service to me? I was then left destitute of a great comfort in her, and my soul was stricken; and that life was torn apart, as it were, which had been made but one out of hers and mine together.

—Augustine, *Confessions* IX, 12, 30

Like St. Monica, my mom was always ready to talk — that is, to converse; especially, to listen, to help sort out, to encourage; not to instruct or guide unduly, though she had a high view of formation. This was her way with me and my brother when we were young, and it continued throughout our adult friendship, which took root by phone when I left home at age 18, since we never lived in the same city again. Phone conversations can permit a unique focus on another's words, free of other distractions, and once we shifted to cell phones, long distance charges became a thing of the past. Even in the old days, though, we often spoke for an hour or two.

We tried to talk once a week, often on Sundays, and managed it as a rule for 30 years, till she died last summer. We both treasured our talks enormously. When I was struck with anxiety before heading off to divinity school, she introduced me to the lament psalms over the phone one day and suggested I avail of their tried-and-true comfort, throwing my cares on the Lord. As I came more fully into an adult faith of my own, our friendship became primarily theological, circling around questions of God's character and purposes in our lives, listening to the Spirit, Holy Scripture, life in the Church (especially the Episcopal Church, which we shared), and the ins and outs of faithfulness.

Born in 1938, she lived a life replete with riches of family, friends, good

work, and above all a steadfast and sustaining Christian faith. She often said that her greatest joy in life was motherhood. In all her relationships and certainly with her sons, she was smart, expressive, full of compassion and kindness, with a keen mind. Ever the analyst, she loved to untangle the skein of a problem and came alive in the face of genuine vulnerability.

"As I understand myself," she wrote in the early 1980s when applying to a graduate program in social work, "my greatest strength is based on my philosophy of life. As a committed Christian, I believe that every person is of infinite value and worth. My own attention to this reality has the effect of deepening the seriousness with which I view and respond to another person's social, emotional, and spiritual struggles. Insofar as these needs can be addressed through social agencies and well-designed and well-implemented programs, I want to be involved with such vehicles of treatment and therapy."

My mom enjoyed precise articulation of her thoughts in service of truth, a habit that often left her speechless at the end, as her mind would trip into webs of dementia and struggle to recover. Rather than settling for a *good enough* word or phrase (and it was hard to say goodbye to the artful subordinate clause, which she loved dropping in to modify and otherwise complicate the point at hand), she would freeze up mid-sentence, ransacking her memory for 30 seconds or more, sometimes to return with the sought-for treasure, but more typically to relinquish the errand altogether, defeated. This was hard for her and me, as long, probing conversations had been our bag. It took practice to learn new techniques — mostly, accepting inelegant, imprecise workarounds and moving

on. I think she made peace with this, for the most part, because what else can you do? The humiliations of oldest age are legion, and forgetting words is hardly the worst of it. Even so, flickers of impatience told me she still had some stubborn Swede in her, and yes, perfectionism. If the matter was not urgent, as it rarely was, we learned to laugh and turn to something else: news, memories; and especially stories.

My mom could not read at the end, so she loved to be read to — first in

*A good story provided salutary mental stimulation, fun with words, the pleasure of company, and, I realized, an outlet for my mom's endless wells of empathy.*

person, then mostly by phone, including for a 13-month stretch during the COVID-19 pandemic when visitors were not permitted into her assisted living facility. A good story provided salutary mental stimulation, fun with words, the pleasure of company, and, I realized, an outlet for my mom's endless wells of empathy. In the last months, when she could not easily maintain even a simple conversation or recall what we had discussed two days prior, she could remember the gist of where we were in our book and thrilled at its resumption, eager to hear what happened next. In a sense, I had become parent and she child, but she brought with her a whole lifetime of faith, hope, and love to draw upon. Many details were gone, but the muscle memory of habituated listening to





God and neighbor remained. Attentive to the end.

We never agreed that we would read memoirs by women, but I found that these were the books she most readily warmed to. She had been a marriage and family therapist and especially loved accompanying women who were finding their voice and their spirit. As an evangelical, and increasingly catholic, Christian, my mom looked for chances to encourage her clients in their faith and to seek suitable community. And she did the same throughout her adult life with dozens of female friends, with whom she walked in solidarity and laughter. I can't recall any point when she was not immersed in such seminars of the spirit, in and around Bible study, religious and therapeutic literature, and intercessory prayer in service of inner healing, which was her life's work.

Among our favorite books were Onnie Lee Logan's *Motherwit*, the inspiring, down-to-earth autobiography of an African American midwife in rural Alabama, who persevered with grace and grit through a host of harrowing circumstances, arriving at the end with heaps of Christian wisdom; Edna Hong's delightful *From This Good Ground*, recounting her

happy girlhood on a farm in rural Wisconsin, the sixth of eight children who ran free, tended the animals, baked bread, and learned by heart Luther's *Small Catechism* (all of which my mom's mom would have done on their family farm in Iowa); Edith Schaeffer's *LABri*, the amazing and ennobling story of the founding of one of the most culturally formative Christian communities of the 20th century, set almost accidentally (though not really, the Presbyterian Schaeffer explains) in Huémoz, Switzerland — all the more enjoyable for my mom, since she spent a few, wonderful months there in her late 20s working alongside Edith in a home for children and adults with cerebral palsy; and of course the two volumes of missionary memoir by Genie Summers (*Go! You Are Sent* and *Our Family's Book of Acts*), recounting the extraordinary adventures of their growing Catholic family once she and her husband, Frank, were born again in the charismatic renewal of the 1970s, sold all that they had, and set off into the world to preach the gospel.

After finishing that day's chapter, I would read a psalm from her leather-bound 1928 Book of Common Prayer bearing her name (Kathleen Wells),

and we would take turns adding something extemporaneous and, increasingly, simple. "O Lord, thank you for this time together with you and one another. We rejoice in your many blessings, and for the opportunity to learn more about your kingdom on this earth. Please give us courage to share our faith in your Son Jesus, and to hear your Spirit. Amen."

The last time I saw my mom, we prayed Morning Prayer together (1979, Rite II), and she came up with most of the confession of sin, creed, Lord's Prayer, and various responses: muscle memory. We laughed together, shared an ice cream, and I sang her one of her favorite songs by the Haven of Rest Quartet. We spoke again by phone some days later on my birthday, and she miraculously emerged from her fog to sing me the entirety of "Happy Birthday" and to issue something of a benediction, centered on the constancy of her love. We thanked each other for the special friendship that we shared.

*Eternal rest grant unto Kathleen Maren Almgren Wells, O Lord: And let perpetual light shine upon her.*

—Christopher Wells

# South Sudan's Lost Boy Pastor Shows the Way

By Jesse Masai



After living for several years in refugee camps in Kenya, Ethiopia, and Uganda, the Rev. John Chol Daau thought his life was over.

“On one occasion, I spent three to six months along the Ethiopia-South Sudan border, before briefly returning home in 1991,” the Anglican priest from the Diocese of Bor in the Episcopal Church of South Sudan and Sudan recalled. “In 1992, I then fled to the Kakuma United Nations refugee camp in Northern Kenya. I must have been 14 years old. Some of my friends were as young as five. We were separated from our families for a long time.”



He is an heir to 1899 pioneer work by the Church Missionary Society in Omdurman, Sudan. Daau is also the author of *God's Refugee: The Story of a Lost Boy Pastor*.

The Diocese of Sudan was under the Jerusalem archdiocese until 1974 and reverted to the jurisdiction of the Archbishop of Canterbury. A new province, consisting of four new dioceses, was established in 1976.

The gospel spread fast in Daau's Southern region, which is predominantly Black and partially animist.

Civil strife and a steady flow of refugees have, however, plagued the church, despite a comprehensive peace agreement between the two Sudans.

Daau's big break came in 2002 when he joined Daystar University, a liberal arts Christian University in Kenya's capital, Nairobi.

"The institution was mounting short courses on conflict resolution," he said. "My admission letter came via the United Nations' High Commissioner for Refugees. I was penniless. An American, Dr. Tom Wones, was teaching the course. He asked me to attend anyway, assuring that he and his wife, Betty, would pay for it."

Ordained in 2004, Daau ministered at St. Paul's Church, Athi River, in the Anglican Church of Kenya's Machakos Diocese, where Daystar runs its main campus.

He now holds an undergraduate degree in development and communications from the institution and a master's degree in religion, with concentration in systematic theology, Church history, and mission from the Trinity School for Ministry in Ambridge, Pa.

**I**n 2011, Daau became active in peace-building and trauma-healing in South Sudan, including under the East African nation's former primate, Archbishop Daniel Deng Bul.

The intervention included establishing Good Shepherd Educational Foundation, a nonprofit that hosts the Good Shepherd Academy for students ages three to 14 in the South Sudanese capital, Juba; a slowly emerging Good Shepherd College and Seminary; and *The Christian Times*, the nation's first Christian newspaper.

"The name Good Shepherd resonated with me not only because it is from John 10, but also because I am a pastoralist," he said. "The idea came to me in 2004, after I had completed my diploma. I was seeing problems arising from a leadership that is not based on Christ."

For long-term sustainability of the transformation, his

wife, Sarah, advised him to make learning at the academy value-based.

"We began it on land donated by a relative as a wedding gift in 2012. We have been adding a class each year. We now have six classes, 396 learners; 16 teachers; eight supporting staff, and 176 parents. Seventy-nine of our students are orphans, either with one parent or both parents dead," he says.

An estimated 13 tribes are represented at the school, vastly enhancing reconciliation through shared meals, play, study, and routine meetings with parents.

"We are deliberate about sound academics, character-building, and faith in Christ," he said. "As we open and close academic terms, we host prayer days which bring the community to praise God with us. We follow the Anglican liturgical calendar, by which some have come to faith."

A well in the school compound, which generates over 20,000 liters of water per day, has enhanced his witness as the neighboring community benefits from it.

With the support of the Anglican Relief and Development Fund, Daau has built four safe and friendly permanent classrooms.

A South Sudanese businessman is funding construction of two more classrooms.

"Flooding in neighboring South Sudanese states led many learners to us," he said. "We have turned away several of them because of limited space and the standards we have set. We turned away a further 383 because of COVID-19."

He seeks to build a multipurpose building comprising a library, 16 more classes, a computer center, and guest house. He wants to hire qualified teachers, buy food for children, establish a vibrant chaplaincy, and acquire a public address system.

These investments, Daau believes, will help secure the future of the Church in South Sudan by reducing ethnic conflict and enhancing the capacity of its leaders.

"For anyone who is looking at integrating Christian practice and the world, our future is bright," he said. "But we must prepare for it now through discipleship, leadership development, and the unending task of nation- and peace-building. Liberal teachings and other secular forces may persist. However, the Church can take the space of service provision as a missional strategy."

Opportunities abound for mission work in South Sudan through education, health services, and other forms of integrated development.

# Lament and Healing through Art

By Elizabeth Orens

A number of Christian poets, musicians, and visual artists have responded to the COVID pandemic, offering their gifts in churches and cathedrals to express the gospel message.

Their inspired, sometimes mystical, gifts of the imagination bring us more than solace. Through image, song, metaphor, and symbol, their works stop us in our tracks, inspire us to be still, invite us to see anew.

“[T]he arts give people a reason to live,” Deborah Sokolove writes in *Sanctifying Art*, “the strength to carry on in the presence of terrible pain, or the ability to face death with dignity and peace.”

Sokolove’s insight brings to mind a few examples that antedate the pandemic, yet resonate all the more strongly

today: a painting by Mark Rothko’s that reveals a radiance of light; a haunting chant sung by choristers in Arvo Pärt’s *Beatitudes*; a verse from John Donne’s Christmas Eve sermon:

He brought light out of darkness,  
not out of a lesser light.  
He can bring thy summer out of winter  
though thou have no spring.

And although some church buildings have been closed throughout the pandemic, others that have been able to open their doors have become venues for works of artistic and spiritual healing.

“Art literally feeds us through beauty in the hardest, darkest hours,” Makoto Fujimura writes in *Art and Faith: A Theology of Making*. Whether in a painting, a sculpture, a poem, a mural, or a musical offering, the beauty of art beckons us even in our “hardest darkest hours” to “seek his Way amidst our many ways.”

The Cathedral of St. John the Divine in Manhattan offered a creative response to the pandemic during the feast days of All Saints and All Souls. In recognition of those who cared for the sick and dying and in remembrance of those who lost loved ones to the Coronavirus, the cathedral leadership observed the feasts with the theme “Lamentation, Thanksgiving, and Hope.”

Because the pandemic wreaked an especially deadly toll on the Mexican-American and wider Latino communities, cathedral leaders invited guest artist Sebastian Gamez to build *Día de Los Muertos* altars for two bays. Through social media, the cathedral then invited those who were grieving to send photographs and mementos of loved ones to be placed on the altars. These altars will remain in the cathedral through November.

Another work is a glass sculp-



One of two *Día de Los Muertos* altars at the Cathedral of St. John the Divine in New York City

Patrick Malloy photo





*Les Colombes* in the dark at Washington National Cathedral

Courtesy of Danielle E. Thomas/Washington National Cathedral

ture of angel wings originally displayed in the Lady Chapel of Ely Cathedral. This ten-foot high sculpture, *Solace*, consists of 160 blown glass feathers hung from the metal bones of the wings. Layne Rowe, its creator, offered this “reflective memorial” to honor those who have lost their lives during the pandemic.

In an interview, Rowe explained that his glass wings represented “freedom and fragility, but also peace, strength, and protection.” This sculpture suggests the wings of birds, angels, and the Holy Spirit. Rowe’s *Solace* has drawn many to the cathedral’s Lady Chapel for reflection and for meditation.

From December 2020 through July 2021, the Washington National Cathedral sponsored another remarkable installation, *Les Colombes* (the doves), to symbolize peace and the work of the Holy Spirit. It was not created in

response to the pandemic, but many may have found it suitable for the times. The exhibit featured a flock of 2,000 white origami paper doves that whirled in a winding column from the very height of the cathedral nave.

The exhibit’s German creator, Michael Pendry, says that he chooses churches for his work because his creations can instill a greater sense of hope and peace

(Continued on next page)



*Confinement*, by Tari Watson, one of the art tiles at St. James Hendersonville, Tennessee





Layne Rowe, on his glass wings at Ely Cathedral: they represent “freedom and fragility, but also peace, strength, and protection.”

(Continued from previous page)  
 in a sacred environment. *Les Colombes* has previously been installed at such churches as Salisbury Cathedral, Grace Cathedral in San Francisco, and St. Martin-in-the-Fields in London. When the light from surrounding windows (often stained glass) falls on the paper doves, the visual effect delights the eye with its splendor.

St. James Episcopal Church in Hendersonville, North Carolina, responded to the pandemic through

visual art tiles. Tim Jones, the deacon in charge, inspired volunteers in his congregation to each create two tiles — one representing despair and the other hope.

Upon completion, parishioners organized a full-display mosaic for the church’s courtyard. The mosaic, “Circumference of a Pandemic,” brought adults and children together in a creative project that attended to feelings of loss and isolation, but also to healing. In a television interview about the project, Jones reported that

painting the tiles helped parishioners “speak what is in their souls.”

Friends Congregational Church (United Church of Christ) in College Station, Texas, opened its doors during Easter week to a prayer service and art exhibit, “The ‘Holy Pandemic’ Stations of the Cross.” Mary Button, the artist, painted images of hope and resilience that featured frontline healthcare, sanitation, and mortuary workers, along with verses from Emily Dickinson’s poem, “Hope is the thing with feathers.”

“[The exhibit] was something we as a community needed to do, especially after 12-plus months of being mostly in isolation,” said Dan De Leon, senior pastor. “It shows the resiliency in the face of so much suffering and death much the same way that the Easter resurrection gives us hope in the face of the sufferings and death of Jesus.”

*The Rev. Elizabeth Orens assists at All Souls Church in Washington, D.C.*

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# Encountering Each Other in the Anglican Communion

By Joseph Wandera

*“Did not our hearts burn within us, while he talked to us on the way, while he opened to us the Scripture?” (Luke 24:32).*

Although at a worldwide level there have been heated debates that tend to highlight divisions in the Anglican Communion, underlying these differences are strong bonds of affection.

Such stories of affinity and solidarity need to be told, lest we take for granted the grace of God at work within the Anglican family.

Shortly after I was made bishop of the Anglican Diocese of Mumias, Kenya, in the summer of 2019, I was invited to join a group of bishops and their spouses on a Pre-Lambeth pilgrimage to the Holy Land. Organized by the Anglican Communion, it included participants from Brazil, Canada, Central Africa, Chile, Colombia, Europe, Ghana, South East Asia, Southern Africa, Swaziland, Tanzania, the United States, and the West Indies under the theme “Walking Together.”

We ate, worshiped, and conversed as we visited the Holy Land. I was moved by the depth of relationships built during the short time.

Later, I was invited to Virginia Theological Seminary for a consultation, “When Churches in Communion Disagree,” held in conjunction with the Living Church Foundation. Beyond the excellent papers given, my abiding memory is of the amazing fellowship I experienced with fellow bishops across the communion, VTS faculty, and the organizers. I experienced the generous hospitality of my brother bishops George Sumner and John Bauerschmidt of the Dioceses of Dallas and Tennessee and the Living Church Foundation in Dallas.

With the advent of COVID-19, bonds of fellowship across many institutions have been tested but not destroyed. Many have died or lost loved ones during the pandemic. Churches were closed and some remain shut; international and local travel was closed. This has harmed the

depth of face-to-face interaction. The historic Lambeth Conference, which I had been eagerly looking forward to, was postponed. I hope to attend this historic meeting in 2022.

Social media have helped develop prayer, fellowship, and mutual learning, though not without challenges. For those of us in the Global South, internet access can be unreliable and the cost prohibitive. Nevertheless, we thank God for the internet.

Our diocese is grateful for the solidarity expressed by members of the



Bishops from Africa, Asia, North and South America, Oceania, and Europe at Caesarea Philippi, in 2019  
(Photo: BishopinEurope.wordpress.com)

Anglican family during these unprecedented times. Trinity Church Wall Street responded to our appeal for internet connectivity, when our churches were closed. The Diocese in Europe, courtesy of Bishop Robert Innes’s Lent appeal, supported building a classroom for our diocesan primary school to enable our students to keep a safe distance from each other. The Diocese of Dallas assisted us in furnishing the classroom. When we had serious flooding in the midst of COVID-19, we again sent out an appeal and received humanitarian support from friends locally and abroad.

The Anglican family is alive and working, despite our painful differences. When I interviewed Anglican bishops in Kenya on what it means to be a communion amid difference, a majority described disagreements as usual in families but ones that should not break our bonds of affection.

It seems to me like the notion of “communion” works best when we engage

with each other, especially during crises, like now. Such solidarity goes beyond theological reflections into the realm of *diap Praxis* (dialogue in action).

Being on the way together, there are many opportunities to break bread. And when we do so, “our hearts will burn within us” (Luke 24:32).

While bishops in the Global South might not easily remember the contents of the Windsor Report or the Covenant, the understanding that we belong to one Anglican family abides always with us, even sentimentally. And we identify with these values in a deeper way than words can explain.

While the vast majority of Anglicans in these parts of the world are deeply orthodox on the matters that have shaken our Communion, we still love and would like to enjoy fellowship with those who believe differently. There is an African proverb: “When brothers fight, the enemy takes over their wealth.”

We must forever guard the amazing fraternal heritage we share as Anglicans and not allow the Enemy to share the spoils.

This is not to gloss over the things that cause us pain and injure our common heritage, but to acknowledge the massive opportunities for fellowship.

Serving in Mumias, Kenya, every day we encounter our Muslim brothers and sisters in the journey of life. This coexistence is largely peaceful, albeit with moments of mutual suspicion. In this context, we are enriched by each other’s presence helping us understand how each one of us finds fullness in the other, and above all in Jesus Christ, our savior.

Encountering each other with an attitude of charity and a spirit of generosity opens us to our common future before God, when we shall all feast on the heavenly bread together. But until that day dawns, we must offer others an opportunity to come to the table of the Lord.

*The Rt. Rev. Joseph Wandera is Bishop of Mumias, Kenya, and a member of the Living Church Foundation.*





*Virgin and Child with a Cat*

## Rembrandt's Unwitting Madonna

By Dennis Raverty

Dutch art of the 17th century has often been described as the first truly secular art in the modern sense, attuned to a burgeoning art market with a high demand for portraits, landscapes, still lifes, and genre scenes — that is for non-religious subject matter, and painted in a naturalistic style rather than the idealized or theatrical Baroque manner so common in contemporaneous Catholic lands. But beneath the surface realism of much secular Dutch art there are often elaborate allegories or symbols that allude to a distinctly Protestant yet almost mystical spirituality: the secular signifying the sacred, the everyday indicating the eternal and the ordinary suggesting the marvelous. Those quiet Dutch interiors, with their almost photographic scenes of everyday life, by Vermeer or de Hooch come immediately to mind.

But even in Rembrandt's openly religious work, such as his small unassuming etching, *Virgin and Child with a Cat*,

the true significance of the little print is disguised in the form of an everyday genre scene of figures in an interior dressed in the contemporary clothing of Rembrandt's time. A young peasant girl hugging her infant, pressing his cheek close to hers, sits on the floor in front of an open fireplace. Behind her is a leaded glass window with a prominent oval form that happens to create a sort of natural halo. This effect is reinforced by the fact that the morning sun on the horizon glimpsed through the window is rising directly behind her head, creating a glowing, radiating, nimbus around the Madonna's darkened face, a halo of which she is unaware. She has apparently awakened and built the fire in anticipation of the dawn.

Her husband, Joseph, is visible outside the window, standing apart from them in order to suggest that the child she cradles in her arms is not his own. To the left in this small room, is a sturdy, undecorated yet regal wooden chair, which is elevated on a step that almost seems to be a pedestal. The heavy cloth drapery hanging behind the chair



gives it an air of Baroque grandeur, a hint that this could represent a throne, at the feet of which the Virgin sits, bringing to mind the words of Mary herself from the Magnificat: “He has brought down the mighty from their seat and has exalted the humble and meek.”

The empty chair is also perhaps a reference to the vacant throne or “Mercy Seat” over the Ark of the Covenant in the Holy of Holies at the Temple in Jerusalem during the time of Jesus. Mary herself is sometimes referred to as the Ark of the Covenant because during her pregnancy she is believed by Christians to have encompassed within her womb the living incarnation of the New Covenant, God in the flesh. Yet Mary in Rembrandt’s etching seems blissfully unaware of the true significance of her son; to this simple girl he is just her miraculous infant, as all infants are a sort of miracle to their mothers. It is the very ordinariness of this intimate scene that is striking.

Near the foot of the chair on the left a cat is poised, every muscle tensed, staring at its prey, ready to pounce on its unwary victim, and it is only then that the viewer notices the snake that slithers out from underneath the Virgin’s dress. It is an easy detail to miss because the curves of the snake’s writhing body blend almost imperceptibly into the folds of cloth in her voluminous skirt.

This common garden snake that has somehow come into the house symbolizes the serpent in the Garden of Eden, but he will not be able to beguile this “new” Eve, even though she seems ignorant of its presence and unaware of the danger the snake poses. It is as if this whole setup is an elaborate trap to ensnare the devil, and Christ is the “bait.” Yet Mary and Joseph seem unaware of it, going about their mundane business unselfconsciously.

The Holy Family in their home in Nazareth are part of a larger narrative, although Mary and Joseph seem to be oblivious to the cosmic drama unfolding in their lives. They both take roles and play an important part in the larger story of human salvation, the true significance of which they cannot comprehend. If this little print is examined closely, it will be seen that the infant Christ looks out directly at the viewer with a knowing gaze, as if he is letting us in on a secret to which even his mother and foster father are not privy.

Rembrandt’s naturalism is such that without the title, this little etching could easily be mistaken for a naturalistic representation of a rural family at home in the 17th-century countryside. Only the easily overlooked presence of the snake and the coincidence of the natural halo formed by the glass and the rising sun indicate that this is a scene from a sacred narrative rather than just a realistic portrayal of a contemporaneous Dutch interior. This elevation of the ordinary in details easily overlooked is what distinguishes Rembrandt’s subtle, mystical realism from the merely naturalistic work of most of his contemporaries.

In another of his etchings, *Virgin and Child in the Clouds*,



*Virgin and Child in the Clouds*

Mary looks upward with a distracted, unfocused gaze, as if in a moment of reverie or lost in her thoughts. She seems unaware of her surroundings, caught up in her private musings; she is transported to heaven without even knowing it. Her coarse, unidealized features, like that of her homely, sweet infant son, embody a sort of holy naiveté, a divine ignorance — Mary is depicted here as a “fool for Christ.”

According to Jewish author Abraham Joshua Heschel, there are two kinds of ignorance: one is “dull, unfeeling, barren, the result of indolence” the other is “keen, penetrating, resplendent,” and leads to humility. It is this latter type of ignorance to which Rembrandt’s simple, innocent Madonna and Child, swept up into the clouds, bids us aspire.

*Dr. Dennis Raverty is an associate professor of art history at New Jersey City University, specializing in art of the 19th and 20th centuries.*



# ‘Color, and the Light of God Behind It’

## Cathédrale Notre-Dame de Chartres, France

By Simon Cotton

The first French cathedral I ever saw was Chartres; did it give me a taste for more, or did it spoil me for all the rest? Perhaps both. There were four of us in the car heading south down the *Route Nationale*, the N154, from Dreux that early January day in 1984, fine and not too cold. A female nursing tutor, who was several months’ pregnant; a young curate; his 75-year-old housekeeper; and me. Only one of us had driven in France before, on the “wrong” side of the road for people from the U.K., and only two of us spoke French, neither *couramment*.

We’d crossed the Channel on a lunchtime sailing from Dover to Calais the previous day, then driven for three hours down the N1 to enjoy the hospitality of the Benedictine nuns at le Bec Hellouin, and now we were starting on our long drive to the south. Some optimist entrusted me with route planning, and so we were heading for Chartres. I can still recall the moment when we crested a rise, and there was a spike on the horizon ahead. A little nearer and the spike resolved itself into two spires; as we neared the little city, I realized that the spires were not identical. It was shortly before noon as we parked close to the south side of the cathedral (you could in those days) and we hastened for the western entrance, in case it was one of those cathedrals that shut for lunch at noon (it doesn’t).

The west entrance is the best place to begin at Chartres, for the great Gothic cathedral has an important western portal in the Romanesque style, a reminder that the current cathedral is at least the fifth on the site. A fire in 1134 had devastated the western part of the 11th-century cathedral, which was largely inspired by the great scholar-bishop Fulbert (we sing his



Chartres Cathedral showing the two west towers, the northwest with a later spire c. 1506

Photos courtesy of Simon Cotton

hymns today). Soon after the fire, a great popular building campaign began, with the construction of the northwest tower we see today (its cur-

rent spire was built by Jean Texier, after its predecessor had been struck by lightning in 1506) and a decade later the southwest tower was begun. Soon



the façade was built between them, the *Portail Royal*, whose sculpture marks the transition from Romanesque to Gothic, with figures that seem to come from the great age of streamlining, the 1930s. Fine sculpture is also found on the north and south portals.

Each of the three western doorways is topped by striking Romanesque sculpture. On the north side, Christ ascends to heaven, flanked by zodiac signs and the Labors of the Months; in the center, Christ in Glory is shown as judge, surrounded by the symbols of the Four Evangelists and with the Apostles beneath his feet. To the south is the *Portail de la Vierge*, with the Virgin and Child marking the coming of Christ. Below is a Nativity scene, where a recumbent Virgin looks upward to her child, lying in swaddling clothes on an altar, prefiguring his destiny.

When you pass through the *Portail Royal* into the nave, you move into another world, from Romanesque to Gothic, as well as from light into darkness. Chartres cathedral was formed by fires. On June 10, 1194, an immense conflagration destroyed nearly all the building, save the very western part — the *Portail Royal* and its two flanking towers. The ruins smoldered for three days, then the clergy who had been trapped in the crypt with the great relic of Chartres, the chemise of the Virgin Mary, emerged to great rejoicing,



South portal. Five Apostles, with Peter on the right.



*Notre-Dame-de la belle Verrière*, late 12th-century glass in the ambulatory on the south side of the choir

bearing the relic. The rebuilding of the cathedral began immediately, and it gripped the population. The new building was to be both beautiful and strong, with a stone framework held together with the help of flying buttresses. This Gothic framework was designed to support huge windows that even today retain most of their original 800-year-old stained glass.

The local population participated enthusiastically in the building campaign. Pilgrims harnessed themselves to the wagons bringing the stone from the quarries. People seeking donations (*quêteurs*) went round France with holy relics, asking for contributions — and to England as well. England was at war with France, but that made no difference — the Catholic Church is universal — and they were welcomed by King Richard the Lionheart (who was to die in 1199 besieging a castle in the Dordogne). King Canute had similarly contributed generously to Fulbert's

campaign in 1020.

The immense rebuild was achieved in less than 30 years, creating the highest cathedral then in existence — Notre Dame in Paris had a nave 108 feet high; Chartres' nave was to be 120 feet, a height later to be exceeded successively at Reims (125 feet), Amiens (139 feet), and finally at Beauvais (157 feet). We know that some of the vaults were completed in 1220 and choir stalls were in place in 1221; the great building was consecrated on October 24, 1260, as the Cathedral Church of the Assumption of Our Lady of Chartres.

The glazing was complete by then, with over 120 large windows, full of rich colors that glow vividly with light behind them, contrasting with the darkness inside the building. They contain around 4,000 figures — from the Old and New Testaments as well as saints and donors. After seeing them, Rudyard Kipling wrote to Rider Hag-

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gard: "Color, old man, is what, *au fond*, clinches a creed. Color and the light of God behind it." A little of the glass, like the west window, with the Last Judgment as a theme and centered on Christ the Judge, predates the fire of 1194, but most of it is early 13th century.

Among the most striking are the two great rose windows in the transepts. The northern Rose is centered on the Virgin and Child, surrounded by doves and angels; the five figures below are the priest-king Melchizedek, David, St. Anne carrying the young Virgin Mary, Solomon, and Aaron. The male figures below are four antagonists: Nebuchadnezzar, Saul (committing suicide), Jeroboam, and the Pharaoh of the Exodus. The southern Rose has the Risen Christ, and a chorus from Revelation; below are lancets with the Four Evangelists.

As a building dedicated in honor of the Virgin Mary, the cathedral contains many representations of her (people who have counted say 175). The oldest of these is *Notre-Dame-de la belle Verrière* in the first window of the ambulatory on the south side of the choir, a miraculous survivor of the fire of 1194, where the serene Virgin supports her Son on her lap. On the other side of the choir is *Notre Dame du Pilier*, traditionally a Black Virgin, but recently "cleaned."

You can spend days in Chartres, not absorbing more than a fraction of its wonder, and will understand why many regard Chartres as the greatest cathedral ever built. Eight hundred years ago, people saw it as a foretaste of the eternal city. On entering it for the first time, Napoleon Bonaparte remarked, "*Un athée serait mal à l'aise ici*," usually paraphrased to "Chartres is no place for an atheist." Perhaps the last word on Chartres should be left to Émile Mâle, the great French historian of medieval art: "*Il n'y a rien qui puisse se comparer à Chartres*" ("there is nothing that can compare with Chartres").

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



*Notre Dame du Pilier*, presented to the cathedral circa 1507 by Canon Wastin des Feugerets



Central bay of the *Portail Royal*. Christ in Majesty, surrounded by the Four Evangelists. Below is a frieze of the Apostles.



# A Measure of Grace

Review by Shirley O'Shea

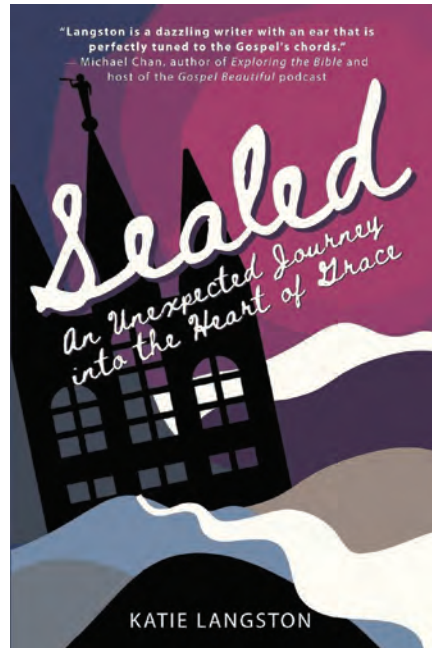
A few decades ago, it was not uncommon to see on the road cars sporting the bumper sticker “Question Reality.” Of course, there is some theological soundness to a phrase that is meant to be irreverent. But Katie Langston, author of the memoir *Sealed: An Unexpected Journey into the Heart of Grace*, has had questions about her reality that were for her matters of life and death.

Langston was born into a lower-middle-class, Mormon family sometime in the 1980s. (I use *Mormon* rather than LDS because that is the term Langston uses throughout the book.) From childhood, she had doubts and questions about the teachings and practices of Mormonism, and she details her struggles to reconcile her experiences with Mormon dogma.

Doubting a faith that one's family clings to out of fear and love is difficult enough for a young person. But when Langston was still a child, she began to be besieged by what she calls “The Questions,” which were harsh self-interrogations and frequent confessions made to her mother regarding thoughts and actions that the Mormon church taught were sinful.

Langston is at her most powerful in describing the anguish she felt about having taboo thoughts about sexuality and describes vividly many of the unwanted images that assailed her, sometimes to comic effect. In order to gain assurance of her acceptability to “Heavenly Father” and the church, she shared her thoughts and feelings with her mother. Even one of her bishops assured her that she was “Okay.”

Langston experienced the symptoms of obsessive-compulsive disorder even before adolescence. Her



## Sealed

An Unexpected Journey  
into the Heart of Grace

By Katie Langston

Thornbush, pp. 221, \$24.95

descriptions of the torment she lived with into adulthood are vivid and will help readers, and in particular clergy, understand the role that rigid religious instruction can play in encouraging scrupulosity and OCD patients' suffering.

Mormons' practice of interviewing believers about their spiritual condition before entering the temple — and, it seems, in particular, about their sexual behavior — presented a special torment for Langston. The bishops' questions could approach the prurient. As an adolescent with a blossoming sexuality, Langston strove to be honest with her bishops, but no matter how many times she confessed to mother, bishops, or Heavenly Father,

she still felt profoundly flawed and unworthy of Heavenly Father's forgiveness and love.

Langston illustrates the Mormon emphasis on sexual purity in a passage that evokes pain in the reader, in which she is interviewed by a bishop to determine her worthiness to enter the temple.

Then, a question I wasn't anticipating: “Do you live the Law of Chastity?” I hesitated.

He looked up from the interview questions “Do you know what the Law of Chastity is, Katie?” he asked softly ...

He pulled out a booklet called *For the Strength of Youth* and handed it to me ... “We'll just read through this pamphlet, and you tell me if you've done any of the things mentioned in here, okay?”

“Okay,” I said, a little unsure.

“The Lord specifically forbids certain behaviors, including all sexual relations before marriage, petting, sex perversion, masturbation, or preoccupation with sex in thought, speech, or action,” he read. “How are you doing with the stuff on this list?”

Langston also agonized over the concept of worthiness. A Mormon could not hope to attain to the Celestial Kingdom without earning the privilege. There were steps in the Mormon life, known as sealings — baptism, being baptized on behalf of the dead, serving on missions — in which one could prove one's worthiness, but Langston, despite doing

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these rites of passage, was not convinced that she had earned God's acceptance.

The sealing of marriage, "for time and all eternity," to her open-minded and accepting husband brought her a measure of grace, as did her brief career in theater. But it wasn't until she

*Langston was leaving behind a family history, a community, an institution, regardless of how inherently abusive it was.*

began to engage with others who had left Mormonism, as well as a group of Mormon feminists who convinced her she had a vocation to preach, that Langston began to realize the possibility of grace.

As a more mature woman, she began to examine the history of Mormonism, and found herself unable to give it her allegiance. She drifted toward non-denominational Christian churches and gradually was able to take in the doctrine of grace. The conversion to Christianity was long and slow; Langston was leaving behind a family history, a community, an institution, regardless of how inherently abusive it was.

Langston has found a home and a vocation in Lutheranism, unsurprisingly. Her story is a powerful antidote to those of us who have become complacent about the incomprehensible grace of God.

*Shirley O'Shea is a freelance writer residing in Oneonta, N.Y., with her husband, Geoff, and their son, Jeremy. She has worked as a paralegal, elementary school teacher, and newspaper reporter.*

## A Most Useful Volume

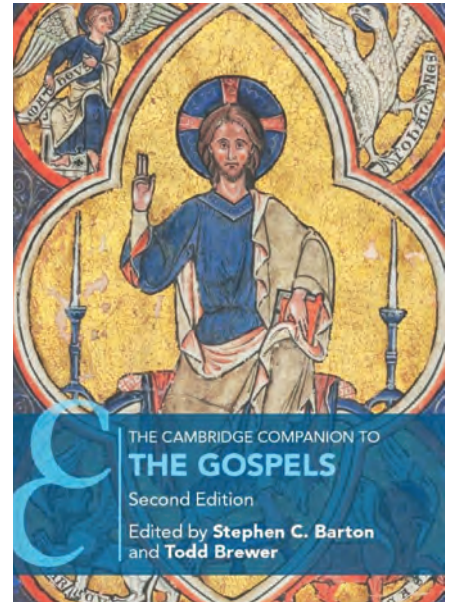
Review by Stephen Platten

Fashions change even in such a long established discipline as theology; the move away from purely historical criticism is just such a shift, with an accompanying decline in detailed commentaries. Stephen Barton's book both in its 2006 and in this latest edition, is a classic example of this trend. Both editions include three sections focusing on Context and Method, Content and Interpretation, and Impact on Church and Society.

The editors have assembled an excellent team and explore interesting new themes. The first section begins with Loveday Alexander investigating the nature of a gospel, arguing that there is a sense in which they are biographical, albeit not in the modern sense; this is itself a shift in perception.

The fourfold nature of the gospels is then explored by Francis Watson, and next, Todd Brewer looks at the synoptic problem, reviewing Streeter's four-gospel hypothesis in its different forms and the competing Farrer hypothesis, further developed by Mark Goodacre. Richard Hays and Christopher Blumhofer show how the different evangelists each use the Jewish Scriptures, and Stephen Fowl focuses on quests for the "Historical Jesus" from Samuel Reimarus onward. Sandra Schneider's final chapter in this section looks at the varied themes noted by critics, including liberation, feminist, ethical, and spiritual readings.

The second section begins with an essay on each evangelist. Here, we come closest to redaction and critical/sociological analysis. Roland Deines on Matthew looks at the impact of critical history on Matthew in Reimarus, Schleiermacher, and Weisse; he concludes with reference to



### The Cambridge Companion to the Gospels

(Second Edition)

Ed. Stephen C Barton and Todd Brewer

Cambridge, pp. xvi + 392, \$122, \$29.99 paper

Matthew 13.52: the "scribe to the Kingdom of Heaven brings out is his treasure house things new and old." Is Matthew describing himself?

Elizabeth Shively investigates Mark, the first written gospel. John Squires's take on Luke implies greater accuracy from the evangelist than the evidence supports. This is the least focused of these four essays. Christopher Skinner points to the key influence of John's Gospel during the fourth century in the making of the creeds. Surprisingly, despite this, he does not highlight the irony of John's late acceptance within the canon. Simon Gathercole's chapter offers a good introduction to non-canonical gospels and Stephen Barton adds a useful summary chapter at this point.



The final section offers a fascinating miscellany. Frances Young begins with reflections on the gospels and doctrine: Justin Martyr, Irenaeus, and Tatian are called forth as early witnesses. Christine Joynes focuses on hermeneutics, starting with Gadamer and Jaus — there is an uncanny echo of scientific relativity theory in her essay. Gordon Mursell offers some rich paths into the gospels and their contribution to Christian spirituality and there are references

*Scott Bader-Saye takes both Immanuel Kant and Reinhold Niebuhr to task for what he calls their “invention of ethics and loss of Jesus.”*

to all aspects of the arts; *lectio divina* is discussed, as is Ignatius Loyola’s use of the gospels and imagination.

Music, from Johann Sebastian Bach to Black gospel, makes an appearance; there is an excellent quote on “prayer and post-critical study” from Leslie Houlden on just this point. David Matzko McCarthy captures how different traditions — from Athanasius to Francis of Assisi, from Catherine of Siena to Franz Jägerstatter — have used the gospels to enrich theological reflection.

Scott Bader-Saye, in the penultimate essay, writes about the gospels, morality, and politics and takes both Immanuel Kant and Reinhold Niebuhr to task for what he calls their “invention of ethics and loss of Jesus.” There is more than a hint of Stanley Hauerwas in his critique. Ben Quash’s concluding essay is refreshing on the arts and the gospels.

This is a most useful and attractive volume, not only for beginners, but for all interested in being stimulated by new slants on the evangelists, often characterized as the lion, the man, the ox, and the eagle.

*The Rt. Rev. Dr. Stephen Platten is the retired Bishop of Wakefield.*

# Heartbreaks and Hubris

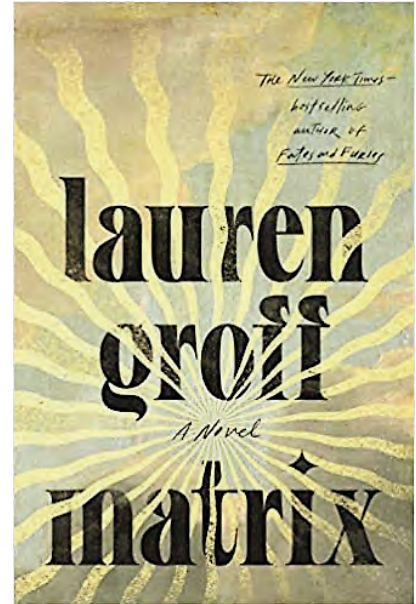
Review by Christine Havens

**M**atrix: the word might conjure images of boxy, linear patterns; the green lines of “reality” sheeting down around Keanu Reeves — the iconic visual from the *Matrix* films; the rectangular multiplication matrices used to express complex equations in mathematics and physics; the way we use the word as a metaphor for an origin point or that which serves as a foundation for something else.

Lauren Groff’s long-awaited novel goes past those meanings to reclaim its etymology. *Matrix* is derived from the Latin *māter*, “mother.” In doing so, Groff gives fictional form to the life of Marie de France, a medieval poet about whose identity scholars have speculated for centuries. While it’s an origin story, certainly, *Matrix* is anything but boxy. It is a sensuous, multilayered work of neomedievalist mysticism, beautiful, visionary, and unorthodox.

In the second half of the 12th century, the time of Henry II of England and his wife, Eleanor of Aquitaine, when chivalry and courtly romance bloomed, plays written by a woman named Marie appeared and became popular alongside the grail quest literature newly written by male poets such as France’s Chretien de Troyes. Her identity, if known then, was lost and “de France” is an 18th-century addition. Based on textual and historical evidence, one candidate among the various Maries is the abbess of Shaftesbury, the half-sister of Henry II and the illegitimate child of Geoffrey of Anjou.

This Marie becomes Groff’s Marie. A Marie who is 17 in March of 1158, and who “rides out of the forest alone” toward Shaftesbury on an old warhorse.



## Matrix: A Novel

By **Lauren Groff**  
Riverhead Books,  
pp. 272, \$28

Eleanor, with whom Marie is enamored, has sent her there to be prioress, a great “honor” bestowed because the girl does not have the traits of beauty and grace and light that are valued by the queen and her court of love. She is “a giantess of a maiden,” too unfeminine to have any hope of marriage or even staying in the court. Heartbroken, with no sense of “a godly vocation,” yet with a “twisted” faith and a keen sense of her own greatness, Marie sets out. The abbey is impoverished and considered a “dark and strange and piteous place” by those who live in the surrounding countryside.

Groff unfolds the story from here. The narrator bears witness to the

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events, feelings, and thoughts of this strong woman, carrying the reader inward and outward throughout her long life, mirroring the labyrinth Marie eventually builds around the abbey. We see the turns Marie takes as she navigates the politics of the land, both ecclesiastical and temporal, with an astuteness and hubris that rivals Eleanor's own. She quickly rises to the role of abbess, of mother, turning the Benedictine community into a self-sufficient, even wealthy, sanctuary for women, in a way that reminds one of the Isle of Avalon in Arthurian legends.

Along the way, Marie finds that faith is growing on her, much like mold, to use one of Groff's metaphors. In middle age, Marie is granted visions by the Virgin Mary. While touched to the depths of her soul, she yet uses them for her own glory in building not only a place apart from men but also a space worthy of her own greatness.

There is much to unpack in this novel and much to challenge readers. For example, all Marie's theology is grounded in the female, and aimed toward love as "exaltation," not "abatement." Marie names Mary Magdalene "*Apostola Apostolorum*," considering her "the truer rock of the church." Controversy also comes to the abbey when Marie takes on priestly liturgical and sacramental duties, partly due to a lack of visits from clergy, partly because she would have that authority, too. Marie's deathbed vision as well as Groff's lowercasing of *god* will also provoke lively conversations.

Much of this is not innovation on Groff's part. In her acknowledgements, Groff credits Dr. Katie Ann-Marie Bugyis, professor in the Medieval Institute at Notre Dame, for sparking this story. Her research and recent book, *The Care of Nuns: The Ministries of Benedictine Women in England During the Central Middle Ages* (OUP, 2019) provided many of the details of abbey life in *Matrix*, especially the extent to which the nuns "exercised control over

their own spiritual care" in the ways that Groff presents in the story.

*Matrix* is a novel to be admired for its risk-taking and beauty. Every single word chosen, every sentence, paragraph, and chapter, attests to the love Lauren Groff has for Marie de France and the rest of the nuns of the abbey, as well as the love she bears toward the monastery she spent time in while researching *Matrix*. Her poetic and evocative prose call mystic to mystic.

"Those to whom god has given understanding and eloquence must not be silent or hide their gift, but must

return the gift so that it flowers under the admiration of others." This is Groff's translation of the first line of the prologue to the *Lais* (she studied French literature, including two semesters of *anciens français*), and it is so apropos to this masterwork, this neomedieval romance, this matrix of powerful storytelling.

*Christine Havens is a poet and writer and a graduate of the Seminary of the Southwest whose work has appeared in The Anglican Theological Review and Mockingbird Ministries' blog, mbird.com.*

## Our Place in Creation

Review by Pam Hyde

The Rev. Leah Schade of Lexington Theological Seminary conducted a survey in 2017 to assess how preachers were approaching their sermons during a divisive time in our nation's history. Of the ten most controversial issues that more than 1,200 mainline Protestant clergy respondents identified, four were related to the environment: fossil fuel extraction, species extinction, climate change and environmental racism. The reasons they were deemed so controversial were that they were thought to be antithetical to the gospel, not a priority, too obscure or complex, or too risky to preach.

If the preachers responding to this survey had been acquainted with the dialogue presented by Kiara Jorgenson and Alan Padgett in *Ecotheology: A Christian Conversation*, perhaps their responses to Schade's survey would have been markedly different. Jorgenson and Padgett have pulled together a comprehensive and coherent portrayal of

ecotheology by first recognizing that the various approaches to this theological subdiscipline all to some extent overlap and complement each other, and then putting those approaches in dialogue with each other. Four scholars in biblical studies, ecological ethics, and systematic theology contribute essays to this book, and each essay is followed by responses from the other three contributors. Key ideas and themes come to light, even as some divergent views also receive the occasional spotlight.

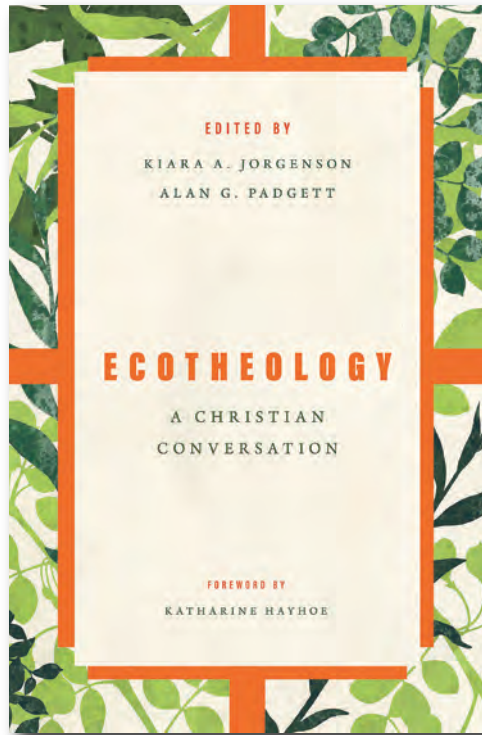
An interdenominational quartet of scholars represents the prevailing perspectives within the growing field of ecotheology:

Richard Bauckham, an Anglican biblical scholar and theologian, uses a green hermeneutic to provide a scriptural critique of the traditional hierarchical model of stewardship of creation, and argues instead for a horizontal relationship of humankind with the rest of creation.

Cynthia Moe-Lobeda, a Lutheran ethicist and theologian, espouses a perspective of ecotheology as ecojustice,



**Ecotheology**  
 A Christian Conversation  
 Edited by **Kiara Jorgensen**  
 and **Alan Padgett**  
 Eerdmans, pp. 240, \$24.99



examining ecotheology in the context of the call to love neighbor and making the case for moving from moral inertia to embodying love as communities of resistance and rebuilding in the face of what she calls “climate sin” and “climate violence.”

Steven Bouma-Prediger, an evangelical Christian and ethicist, proffers an ecological virtue ethic, arguing for moving beyond stewardship into earthkeeping and emphasizing the importance of moral character as well as conduct.

John Haught, a Catholic systematic theologian with a particular interest in science, cosmology, and ecology, addresses ecotheology from a sacramental approach to nature, drawing on the works of Pierre Teilhard de Chardin to characterize nature not only as sacrament but also as God’s promise of new creation yet to come, and to argue for hope as a fundamental ecological virtue.

The interplay between the four not only enlightens the reader, but helps us reach a deeper level of under-

standing. By allowing each to reflect on the others’ offerings — agreeing, questioning, and challenging — the editors give us a window on the convergences that exist across approaches. Placing the authors in dialogue is also notably effective in eliciting questions that we as readers may have to these approaches and, for the most part, in addressing them.

In some cases, however, the ques-

tions go disappointingly unanswered, leaving one wondering whether a brief opportunity for further response from the author would have enhanced the dialogue. Nonetheless, the dialogic approach succeeds in providing clarity on fundamental themes of ecotheology, including a recognition of the interconnectedness of all creation and a refutation of the notion that humankind is separate from and sovereign over the rest of creation, the importance of regenerating an ecocentric eschatology, and an imperative focus on hope. It reaffirms that ecotheology is fundamentally forward-looking while firmly rooted in the present, and encompasses praxis as well as belief, the relevance of moral character, and the importance of how we live in the community of creation.

For anyone interested in how Christianity engages the ecological crises of our day, this book is a true gift. It speaks clearly to the truth that Scripture does indeed address how we as Christians are to approach our planetary emergency, and invites us to reexamine our place in creation. Those who read it will be inspired to confront the ecological issues of our time with urgency, new purpose, and hope.

*The Rev. Canon Pam Hyde is the Diocese of Arizona’s canon for creation care.*



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The Rev. **Marcella Gillis** is rector of Christ the King, Stone Ridge, N.Y.

The Rev. **Christine Gilson** is vicar of St. John's, Wichita, Kan.

The Rev. **Bret Hayes** is rector of Advent, Tallahassee, Fla.

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The Rev. Canon **Judy Heffron** is priest in charge of St. Luke's, Monrovia, Calif.

The Rev. Dn. **Sally Herring** is transitional deacon in charge of St. Catherine's, Chelsea, Ala.

The Rev. **Link Hullar** is vicar of Good Shepherd, Bristol, Conn.

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The Rev. Canon **Lisa Senuta** is canon for spiritual life and clergy care in the Diocese of Kansas.

The Rev. **Dee Shafer** is rector of Calvary, Tarboro, N.C.

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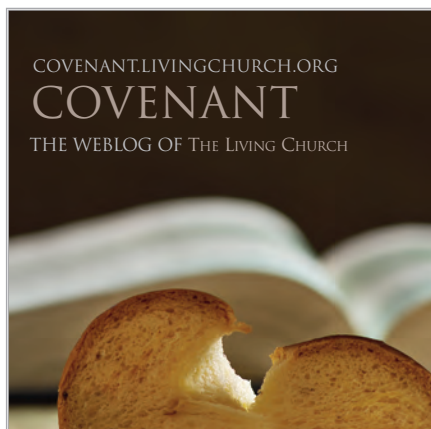
The Rev. **Adam Spencer** is rector of St. Elizabeth's, Glencoe, Ill.

The Rev. Canon Dr. **Lauren R. Stanley** is the Diocese of South Dakota's canon to the ordinary.

The Rev. **Susan Ashley Stanton** is the Diocese of Los Angeles' director of finance.

The Rev. **Anthony Stephens** is interim priest at Zion, Wappingers Falls, N.Y.

The Rev. **Natasha Stewart** is priest in charge





of St. Luke's, Scituate, Mass.

The Rev. **Joshua Stibb** is pastor of St. Peter's, Henrietta, N.Y.

The Rev. **Matthew Stone** is rector of Calvary, Bastrop, Texas.

### Deaths

The Rev. **Gregorio Guerrero Bayaca**, a Filipino immigrant who did missionary work in the Diocese of Los Angeles, died October 31. He was 85 and died from complications of leukemia, diagnosed in March, and a stroke on Oct. 19.



Born in Caba La Union, Philippines, Bayaca was a graduate of St. Andrew's Episcopal Theological School, Quezon. He was ordained in the Philippine Independent Church, a full-communion partner with the Episcopal Church.

In 1968 Bayaca emigrated first to California, then to Florida, where he worked odd jobs and assisted part time at an Episcopal parish in Jupiter-Tequesta. In 1969 he married Josefina, a physician who trained in the Philippines and later earned certification to practice medicine in the United States. The couple had one son, Francis, who also became a doctor. The family moved to California in about 1970.

Bayaca began to do missionary work among Filipinos living in the Los Angeles area. Bishop Robert C. Rusack of the Diocese of Los Angeles encouraged his work and that of three other PIC priests, offering them the use of the Galilee Navy Family Chapel, where they formed the congregation of the Holy Child.

In 1983, Rusack appointed Bayaca priest in charge of the century-old St. John's Church in Wilmington after the death of its vicar. Many members of Holy Child followed him to his new cure, and eventually the two congregations joined together in shared ministry as St. John's and Holy Child.

Bayaca transferred his orders to the Diocese of Los Angeles in 2003. He served as vicar of St. John's and Holy Child from 1983 to 2008, and continued as priest of the congregation after his retirement.

He is survived by his second wife, a son, two grandchildren, and two sisters. His first wife died in 2015.



The Rev. Canon **Peter C. Ensor**, a veteran of the U.S. Marines who marched with Martin Luther King Jr. in Selma, Ala., died Oct. 26 while in hospice care. He was 83.

He was a native of Cambridge, Mass., and a graduate of Hamilton College and Episcopal Divinity School. He was ordained to the diaconate in 1963 and to the priesthood in 1964. He served churches in California, Delaware, Massachusetts, Texas, and Wyoming.

In 1999, Los Angeles Bishop Frederick H. Borsch named Ensor an honorary canon of the Cathedral Center of St. Paul.

Ensor is survived by his wife, a daughter, and two granddaughters. A memorial service is scheduled for June 30, 2022, at St. Thomas Church in Dubois, Wyoming.

## SUNDAY'S READINGS | 1 Advent, November 28

Jer. 33:14-16 • Ps. 25:1-10 • 1 Thess. 3:9-13 • Luke 21:25-36

## Alert

Advent marks the beginning of the church's calendar, an ominous beginning indeed because Advent does not direct our attention to a fresh start and healthy resolutions. Rather, we hear of "stress among nations" and that "people will faint from fear and foreboding of what is coming upon the world" (Luke 21:25-26). "They will see 'the Son of Man coming on a cloud' with power and great glory" (Luke 21:27). The second section of the Nicene Creed that begins with the words "We believe in one Lord, Jesus Christ" concludes: "He will come again in glory to judge the living and the dead, and his kingdom will have no end." The world, reaching even to our souls, is under judgment insofar as it has rejected the Anointed One. Time will end, and we will all stand before the great judgment seat of Christ. May God have mercy on us all.

Strangely, time is always ending, passing away, subtracting from the length of our lives. "The span of our life is seventy years, perhaps in strength even eighty; yet the sum of them is but labor and sorrow, for they pass away quickly and we are gone" (Ps. 90:10). "You sweep us away," says the Psalmist, "like a dream; we fade away suddenly like the grass" (Ps. 90:5). Hard as it may be to face the end of time, even the end of our own lives, or, for that matter, the end of each passing day, God is calling us to do just that.

Live and let live, we might say. Take it easy. Be upbeat. Yes, of course, life is a gift and can be a tremendous and incredible joy. Still, when we live as if there will be no end, no final judgment, no establishment of the kingdom of Christ, we are apt to fall into "dissipation and drunkenness and the worries of this life" (Luke 21:34). We succumb to boredom, listlessness, apathy, what the ancient Fathers of the Church called "the devil of the midday sun."

Advent is a call to wake up and count the number of our days. "Be on guard so that your hearts are not weighed down" (Luke 21:34). A more literal translation would be "Pay attention to yourself." We are admonished, "Be alert at all times, praying that you may have the strength to escape these things that will take place, and to stand before the Son of Man" (Luke 21:36). I realize it's counterintuitive, but a proper and fitting fear regarding the end of time can enrich our lives immensely. At the very least, we will not waste time; we will put our hands to the plow and get on with the business of living and working and glorifying God.

So, what are we to do before the coming of the Lord at the close of the age, or the end of this day, for that matter? Pay attention to yourself, be alert at all times, do not succumb to dissipation and drunkenness and the worries of this life. Stated differently, St. Paul advises the church in Thessalonica to "increase and abound in love for one another and for all, just as we abound in love for you. And may he so strengthen your hearts in holiness that you may be blameless before our God and Father at the coming of our Lord Jesus with all his saints" (1 Thess. 3:12-13).

Fully alert and abounding in love and growing in holiness in the short time we have, we may have rich and beautiful lives adorned with self-sacrifice and a foretaste of the resurrection.

### Look It Up

Psalm 25:3-4

### Think About It

Show me your ways and teach me your paths in this very short life.

## Event, Process, and Joy

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Repentance is both a decisive moment and a process. At some point we repent, we turn from a life focused entirely on ourselves, our wants, our needs, our desires, and we look Godward to draw rich and deep meaning from the source of life itself. We decide, we turn, we repent. But following that critical moment, we soon find that what people once called the Old Adam persists and needs to be stripped away.

So, our conversion is first an event, which we acknowledge in the sacrament of baptism. At that time, we ourselves, or others on our behalf, renounced Satan and all the spiritual forces of wickedness that rebel against God, renounced the evil powers of this world that corrupt and destroy the creatures of God, renounced all sinful desires that draw us from the love of God. We then turned with our whole hearts to Jesus Christ. We plunged into the waters of baptism and emerged as new beings. Like Jesus rising from the River Jordan, it was as if we heard about our own lives: "This is my beloved child, in whom I am well pleased." God makes spirit-born children who are new, perfect, and clean.

But then we are sent back into the world, and the world is waiting. The world, in this sense, is everything we have renounced in baptism, and its power is immense and its allurements almost irresistible. Influenced by the world (think of constant mass media), Christians are almost inevitably formed more by the influence of the surrounding culture than the faith we profess. For this reason, our repentance, our turning to Christ, requires constant renewal.

The prophet Malachi speaks of the day of the Lord's arrival as a great purging and renewal. In a sense, the day of the Lord is every day and every moment. "Who can endure the day of his coming," says the prophet, "and who can stand when he appears? For

he is like a refiner's fire and like fullers' soap; he will stand as a refiner and purifier of silver, and he will purify the descendants of Levi and refine them like gold and silver" (Mal. 3:2-3). Daily repentance occurs as we are slowly, perhaps painfully at times, refined and conformed to the image of Christ. We are refined and purified by the obligations set before us, by our respective vocations, by the difficulties and trials of daily life. John Kelbe, English poet and priest of the 19th century, captures this well: "The trivial round, the common task, will furnish all we ought to ask: room to deny ourselves; a road to bring us daily nearer God."

In baptism, we renounce Satan and say a resolute *yes* to Jesus Christ. Every day and every moment, we renew this commitment by turning to Christ in the long purification process covering the whole length of our lives. There is, however, something more than purging. We prepare a way for the Lord, as John the Baptist insists. "Every valley shall be filled, and every mountain and hill shall be made low, and the crooked shall be made straight, and the rough ways made smooth; and all flesh shall see the salvation of God" (Luke 3:5-6). We prepare a straight and secure path, and we go in safety toward the Lord. And there are consolations too along the way. "The woods and every fragrant tree have shaded Israel at God's command. For God will lead Israel with joy, in the light of his glory, with the mercy and righteousness that come from him" (Bar. 5:8-9).

Repent, renew your repentance every day, and walk with joy along a footpath amid fragrant trees.

**Look It Up**  
The Collect

**Think About It**

To repent and to greet with joy.



## Consolation, Calling, and Fire

St. Paul may be talking about a final judgment and return of Christ when he says to the Philippians, "The Lord is near" (Phil. 4:5). But he is also reinforcing a well-known teaching concerning the closeness of God to his creation in every moment of every day. "The word is very near to you; it is in your mouth and in your heart for you to observe" (Deut. 30:14). "Where can I go then from your Spirit? Where can I flee from your presence? If I climb up to heaven, you are there; if I make the grave my bed, you are there also. If I take the wings of the morning and dwell in the uttermost parts of the sea, even there your hand will lead me and your right hand hold me fast" (Ps. 139:6-9).

Consider for a moment the wordless voice of God suffusing and penetrating all creation: "The heavens declare the glory of God, and the firmament shows his handiwork. One day tells its tale to another, and one night imparts knowledge to another. Although they have no words or language, and their voices are not heard, their sound had gone out into all lands, and their message to the ends of the world" (Ps. 19:1-4).

Wordless and almost silent, God is the hidden ground of love nearer to us than we are to ourselves.

God is a source of strength and consolation that transcends us, surrounds us, and abides within us. The prophet Zephaniah, speaking to the children of Israel about the intervention of God on their behalf, strikes a joyful note: "Do not fear, O Zion; do not let your hands grow weak. The Lord, your God, is in your midst. . . . He will rejoice over you with gladness, he will renew you in his love; he will exult over you with loud singing" (Zeph. 3:16-17). The nearness of God is nearer still in the mystery of the Word made flesh. In Jesus Christ, we meet the true light that enlightens everyone, God from God, Light from Light, true God from true

God, all goodness and life and the joy of the world.

We are consoled, strengthened, and renewed by our divine source and companion. But we are haunted too by the sense that we are being addressed, and demands are being made, and that God's voice may be the pounding of waves as well as a thin whisper. God wants something, and past credentials and previous good works are not enough. John the Baptist says, "Do not begin to say to yourselves, 'We have Abraham as our ancestor'; for I tell you, God is able from these stones to raise up children to Abraham. Even now the ax is lying at the root of the trees; every tree therefore that does not bear fruit is cut down and thrown into the fire" (Luke 3:8-9). God calls us to some good work each day, and a clear-eyed assessment of our obligations will make much of that work quite obvious. And the God who calls us to do good is also, even through the good work we do and the many inconveniences we may suffer, purifying our lives. John the Baptist says of Jesus, "His winnowing fork is in his hand, to clear his threshing floor and to gather the wheat into his granary; but the chaff he will burn with unquenchable fire" (Luke 3:17).

The Lord is near in love and consolation; the Lord is near calling us to good works; the Lord is near as a purifying flame.

**Look It Up**  
The Collect

**Think About It**

The Lord is at hand, coming speedily.

## CLASSIFIEDS

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**Christ Church Cathedral in Indianapolis** is seeking a Canon for Spiritual Formation to work with the Dean and other leaders to revitalize the Cathedral's formation ministries in order to help those at the Cathedral become a people who can articulate and embody their distinctive perspective of the Christian faith that is Anglicanism and the Episcopal Church. The Canon is an executive leader in a diverse and multi-staff environment and duties include:

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- Identifies, recruits, trains, supports and motivates leaders and volunteers.
- Coordinates lectures, guest speakers, seasonal retreats, and fellowship opportunities.
- Manages and supervises the Director of Youth and Children's Ministries.
- Prepares and manages the approved Spiritual Formation ministry program budgets.

Ideal candidates have a familiarity with progressive Christian tradition and theology, conversational proficiency in Spanish, a personal and professional character that demonstrates an authentic commitment to Christ and Christian standards, and a passionate desire to help people discover the love of God and to grow as disciples of Jesus Christ.

For the full job description and education and experience requirements, visit: [cccindy.org/canon-for-spiritual-formation](http://cccindy.org/canon-for-spiritual-formation).

**RECTOR position available at St. Paul's Episcopal Church Hudson Wisconsin.** See [episcopalchurch-hudson.com](http://episcopalchurch-hudson.com) for job description and posting information. Application Deadline: 11/30/2021.

**RECTOR: St. Paul's Church at Federal Point (East Palatka, Putnam County, Florida)** is searching for our next rector. We are a congregation with a small group of faithful followers comprised of long-time members and a couple of young families in a changing community west of St. Augustine. We have been located in Putnam County on the east bank of the St. John's River since 1880, and we are interested in embracing the changes to the community to the continuation of our witness and ministries in the area.

Federal Point on the St. John's offers unique recreational opportunities, and Stanton Landing on the church property is the site of community gatherings and a favorite stop along the canoeing, hiking and bike trails passing through it. Our rector opening will appeal to young families, youthful retirees, and bi-vocational clergy alike. We seek to fulfill a hunger in our members for joyful worship, sound Christian formation, outreach opportunities, and fellowship. To learn more about St. Paul's and Federal Point/East Palatka, contact: **Rhonda Williams, Senior Warden (386) 983-1659 • [justrhonda521@gmail.com](mailto:justrhonda521@gmail.com)**

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