

# Episcopal JOURNAL

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**NEWS** Church becomes response hub among mudslides



**OPINION** Speak out now for justice, urges author



**ARTS** Experience of being lost inspires artist

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## Repairs at Washington National Cathedral gain momentum six years after earthquake

By David Paulsen  
Episcopal News Service

The earthquake that struck the Washington, D.C., area in August 2011 caused an estimated \$34 million in damage to Washington National Cathedral. More than six years later, less than half of those repairs are done, and the remaining work could take another decade to complete.

Progress is being made, however, and the Episcopal cathedral received a 2017 year-end donation from a foundation that will allow it to embark this spring on the next phase of repairs. This latest \$1.5 million project will focus on the structure around an interior courtyard, the last part of the cathedral still closed to the public.

"It took 83 years to build this place. We've had scaffolding on the outside of our building more than we have not. In some ways, we're kind of used to it," said Kevin Eckstrom, the cathedral's chief communications officer.

It remains a beautiful building and an iconic religious landmark in the U.S. capital, but Washington National Cathedral also is more than the stones that form it, Eckstrom said. "The staff and the leadership feel very strongly that what's really important about the building is what goes on inside."

The courtyard project is a prime example. Known as the garth, it features a fountain and a patio. Reopening it will allow it to be used for weddings, banquets and other gatherings.



Photo/Colin Winterbottom/Washington National Cathedral

Crews reinstall an earthquake-damaged pinnacle that was reinforced with stainless steel rods.

Separate plans call for adding a columbarium and memorial garden to the space.

The walls surrounding the courtyard aren't the problem. Rather, the two pinnacles above rotated during the earthquake, causing pieces

to fall onto the courtyard below.

"It's just a lovely space, and it's another entry into different parts of the cathedral," said Joe Alonso, the cathedral's head stone mason. "The northeast end of the cathedral is kind of looming over you."

The work this spring is one of nine projects, some completed and others pending, that make up the second phase of earthquake repairs. Phase 1, costing about \$10 million, was completed in 2015. It focused on the interior of the cathedral and on the largest and oldest buttresses toward the rear. The cathedral was fully closed for three months in 2011, as crews completed stabilization work in time to reopen that November to host the installation of Diocese of Washington Bishop Mariann Budde.

The rest of the work is being completed as the money is raised through private donations.

The cathedral is a solid masonry structure, so "the only thing that's holding it together is gravity and physics and a whole lot of mortar," Eckstrom said. As they repair it, stone by stone, crews are installing stainless-steel rods between the stones to make the structure more resistant to the next major earthquake, if and when it strikes.

About 80 percent of the exterior of the cathedral still needs to be repaired. Some of the fixes merely entailed reinforcing the structure, while other pieces of towers, pinnacles, buttresses and transepts were damaged beyond

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Photo/Sharon Sheridan

### Marching again, one year later

Episcopalians from across the Diocese of Newark (N.J.), including Bishop Mark Beckwith (center in photo), joined thousands of participants at the New Jersey Women's March in Morristown, N.J., on Jan. 20. The event was one of hundreds of protest marches held around the world on the one-year anniversary of President Donald Trump's inauguration.

The Church of the Redeemer opened its doors as a hospitality center for participants, providing refreshments and a place of respite. Last year, several Redeemer members enjoyed similar hospitality at St. Christopher's Episcopal Church, New Carrollton, Md., as they traveled in and out of Washington, D.C., for the Women's March there.

Speakers at the Morristown march included New Jersey governor Phil Murphy; his wife, Tammy, who described being sexually assaulted in college and her unsuccessful attempts to prosecute her attacker; Deferred Action for Child Arrivals (DACA) recipient Cinthia Osorio; and Liz Abzug, daughter of the late feminist activist and Congressional Representative Bella Abzug.

## ANGLICAN DIGEST

Anglican Digest is a roundup of news from churches in the Anglican Communion. Except where noted the following were reported by the Anglican Communion News Service.

### Central American bishops discuss migrant crisis

Bishops from the northern triangle of Central America planned to hold their first regional cross-provincial meeting Jan. 31-Feb 2 to discuss the growing crisis facing migrants and returnees in the region. Supported by the Episcopal Church, the meeting was to involve



Moreno

bishops from the Anglican provinces of Central America, Mexico and the West Indies; and the countries of Nicaragua, Belize, El Salvador and Mexico.

The Primate of the Anglican Church of Mexico, Presiding Bishop Francisco Moreno, will be at the three-day meeting, and is asking people to pray for its success as they devise ways to “bring the good news to the afflicted and proclaim liberty to the captives and release of the prisoners.”

### Online church planned

Clergy in the Anglican Church of Kenya are being trained to use social media ahead of the launch of a new online church, Archbishop Jackson Ole Sapit has said. The move is a bid to reach out to young people who are not attending church services, but who are “permanently on social media.”

“As a church, we cannot afford to be left behind, and we need to embrace

technology. It’s a high time we start our online church to tap on the larger community in the social media,” Jackson said at the Cathedral Church of the Good Shepherd in Nakuru, as reported by *Nairobi News*. “Most of our young congregation have the latest gadgets and are not attending church services, and the best way to loop them back is to introduce online church services, as they are permanently on social media.”

“As the world is becoming a global village by the day, it’s about time we in the leadership of the church embrace technology and start online services.”

### Ugandan primate dies

The former primate of Uganda, Archbishop Livingstone Mpalanyi-Nkoyoyo, was buried Jan 9 at the Anglican Shrine of the Uganda Martyrs in Namugong. He died on Jan. 5 at age 80.

He was one of 25 children of Erisa Wamala Nkoyoyo, a sub-county chief in Busimbi, Mityana. He served as a suffragan bishop in Namirembe Diocese, then was elected as the first bishop of Mukono in 1983. He was elected to be the sixth archbishop of the Church of Uganda and served until 2004.

As archbishop, he pioneered upgrading the Bishop Tucker Theological College in Mukono into Uganda Christian University, the first privately chartered university in Uganda. It has grown from the original 120 students to more than 12,000 students on the main campus, at two constituent colleges and at several study centers.

### Rome center names director

The Rev. Justin Lewis-Anthony has been appointed deputy director of the Anglican Centre in Rome. He succeeds the Rev. Marcus Walker, who was appointed to his post in May 2014 and left to become rector of St. Bartholomew the Great in London.

Lewis-Anthony previously served as



Lewis-Anthony

## Zambian church addresses justice, health concerns

The Council of Churches in Zambia, which includes the Zambian dioceses of the Church of the Province of Central Africa, joined the country’s other two church mother-bodies, the Evangelical Fellowship of Zambia and the Zambia Conference of Catholic Bishops, in issuing a Statement on National Dialogue calling for an “ongoing process and effort” to bring peace and justice to Zambia. “Lack of peace hurts everyone,” the statement said, noting that “the reality on the ground” is that Zambia suffers from “many acts of injustice, a growing culture of corruption, incidences of violence and utterances out of deep-seated hatred.”

The church leaders appealed “to all our political leaders to stop insulting each other or anyone who does not agree with their political opinion and start genuinely to respect fellow political players as legitimate opponents with their constitutional right to hold their political opinion and to propagate it among the general public.”

The leaders also pledged prayers and support for those addressing a cholera outbreak. The Council of Churches had announced that services in parts of the

capital should be cancelled to help halt the disease’s spread. The “epicentres cannot be allowed to hold church programs on Sunday and any other day until fur-



Photo/Council of Churches in Zambia

**Leaders from the Council of Churches in Zambia, the Evangelical Fellowship of Zambia and the Zambia Conference of Catholic Bishops hold a press conference to unveil their joint Statement on National Dialogue.**

ther notice,” it said in a memo in early January. “Church services can be held in other areas outside these worst hit areas on Sunday as long the highest levels of hygiene are maintained.”

The government has begun a mass cholera-vaccination program and aims to deliver two million doses in Lusaka, with the support of the World Health Organization. It has imposed curfews and called in the army to help end the outbreak, which as of Jan. 9 had killed 67 people and infected some 3,000. ■



Hiltz

the province’s General Synod’s next meeting, on July 16, 2019. Last year, he marked 40 years of ordained ministry in the church — 23 as a bishop and 10 as primate.

“I have endeavoured to fulfil the duties required of me in the best interests of our Church and its commitment to God’s mission in Canada and as a loyal partner in the life and witness of the worldwide Anglican Communion,” he said in a letter to the province. “It has been an enormous privilege and a great adventure with blessings beyond number.”

— Anglican Church of Canada

precentor and cathedral chaplain at Christ Church Cathedral, Oxford; rector of St. Stephen’s Church, Hackington, in the Diocese of Canterbury; associate dean of students and director of Anglican studies at Virginia Theological Seminary, Alexandria, Va.; and associate fellow at the Oxford Centre of Ecclesiastical and Practical Theology.

His publications include “Circles of Thorns,” “If you meet George Herbert on the road, kill him” and “You are the Messiah and I should know.”

### Canada’s primate to retire

Archbishop Fred Hiltz, 64, announced that he would step down as primate of Canada on the final day of

## FROM THE EDITOR’S DESK

Discussion of public issues in today’s toxic political climate seems to be devolving into rigid bilateral forms — I’m right/you’re wrong, I’m a Republican/you’re a Democrat, I’m liberal/you’re conservative.

Then there is another level to which debate often quickly descends — personal attacks and name-calling, usually when the people involved don’t even know each other and are commenting online under an Internet alias. Look at the comments section connected to any news story, Twitter thread, YouTube video or, closer to home, our personal Facebook pages and those of friends and acquaintances.

This month, Episcopal Journal

presents a range of opinions by three columnists, one of whom is engaged in searching for ways that people can come together and talk like civilized human beings rather than aggressive beings lobbing verbal grenades.

Kay Collier McLaughlin is the author of “Talking Together: Getting Beyond Polarization Through Civil Dialogue” and a founder of the Talking Together seminars. She describes the work in her column, but she also goes further, urging action when confronted with hateful words and deeds.

Columnist Louis Schoen describes his participation in interfaith encounters in Minnesota, specifically a Muslim-Christian dialogue. Interfaith ministry can be daunting. Coping

with unfamiliarity is reminiscent of the TV show “The Big Bang Theory,” where Sheldon the eccentric physicist was urged to get out of his comfort zone. “Why would I? That’s why it’s called a comfort zone,” he responded.

Schoen discovered that the rewards of reaching out can be both profound and surprising.

Columnist Pamela Lewis tackles an issue burning up the news pages — sexual assault and harassment — and looks at it from a particular Christian point of view. Now that we know more about acts committed by some in power, “how should we live?” she asks.

Perhaps these opinions will inspire readers to start discussions of their own. ■

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## NEWS

# Curry visits Puerto Rico, where post-hurricane struggles persist

By David Paulsen  
Episcopal News Service

Bishop Rafael Morales leaves no impression he is still wading into his job. He had been leading the Diocese of Puerto Rico for two months when Hurricane Maria devastated the island in September. Since then, he and his staff and clergy around the diocese have mobilized relief efforts with a determination that earned praise from Presiding Bishop Michael Curry during a two-day pastoral visit in early January.

Hurricane Maria was and continues to be an unparalleled catastrophe, Morales said, but he is seizing the opportunity for ministry to his fellow Puerto Ricans.

“Our people have a good heart,” he said, while traveling with Curry to visit the coastal town of Toa Baja. Puerto Rico’s culture is one of thanksgiving, Morales said. “This diocese is a diocese of hope.”

During his visit, Curry preached Jan. 3 in the evening at the Episcopal cathedral in San Juan, the capital of the U.S. territory. The earlier stop in Toa Baja introduced Curry and his delegation to Hugs of Love, a series of

pop-up medical clinics the diocese has offered since the hurricane through the health-care system it runs. This and other ministries are strengthened by ecumenical partnerships and through collaboration with federal agencies, local nonprofits and Episcopal Relief & Development.

For the Hugs of Love event in Toa Baja, open-air canvas tents were set up on a vacant gravel lot provided by the local Disciples of Christ congregation, which also sent volunteers. The volunteers wore hats and shirts with the message “Ama Como Crist” — “Love Like Christ.”

“Thank you for what you’ve both done. It’s God’s work,” Curry told the Disciples of Christ pastor, the Rev. Prudencio Rivera Andujar, and his wife, Azalia Gomez.

Curry walked through the tents shaking hands and hugging the diocesan volunteers and some of the hundreds of residents who had come for the daylong clinic. Doctors and nurses from Episcopal Hospital San Lucas, based in Ponce, provided free blood-pressure checks, blood tests, vaccinations, prescription refills and other medical services.

Everyone from the San Lucas system



Photo/David Paulsen/Episcopal News Service

*Puerto Rico Bishop Rafael Morales gives a toy to a child during a pop-up medical clinic that doubled as a hurricane-relief station in Toa Baja. Presiding Bishop Michael Curry, far right, who was on a two-day pastoral visit, helps distribute the toys alongside three costumed Wise Men.*

gets involved in the pop-up clinics, said Jesus Cruz Correa, the hospital’s medical director. “We rotate the doctors.” Patients requiring further medical attention are referred to the hospital for follow-up visits.

A truck from the hospital, parked near one of the tents, was filled with food, water and personal hygiene items for distribution to the families. The event also included lunch, music and children’s activities.

Morales, who spent seven years as a priest in Toa Baja, was an eager host. He talked constantly about his blessings, his diocese’s blessings and his people’s blessings, even in a time of deprivation. The church is motivated to engage with the community, he said.

“It’s a blessing, it’s a ministry,” he had told Curry earlier after greeting him at the hotel in San Juan. “We have hard moments now, but Jesus is blessing us.”

## Residents still struggling

The scene around Toa Baja, about 20 minutes west of San Juan, only hinted at the scale of the disaster still gripping much of the island more than 100 days after Maria struck as a powerful category 4 hurricane. It made landfall Sept. 20 with maximum sustained winds of 155 mph, knocking out power and telephone service for the island’s 3.4 million residents. It caused mudslides, destroyed

homes and businesses, toppled trees and created extreme shortages of food and drinking water.

The official death toll from the storm stands at 64, but a recent New York Times analysis suggested the disaster’s real toll possibly exceeded 1,000 deaths.

The damage to Puerto Rico’s infrastructure has been particularly devastating. The governor’s office announced at the end of December that power had been restored to 55 percent of customers across the island and might not return in remote areas until May.

In Trujillo Alto, a downed utility pole rested at the side of a road leading to the Episcopal diocesan offices, in a neighborhood among those still without power. Some stoplights on the town’s thoroughfares only recently began working again, and Morales’ team remained based in a building powered by a generator.

Some inland mountain communities have been hit even harder. “Roads are completely destroyed,” the Rev. Edwin Orlando Velez said through a Spanish translator while visiting the Hugs for Love clinic.

Orlando Velez serves two congregations in the west-central part of the island, in the towns of Lares and Maricao. Many people remain without power or water, he said. Because of mudslides and downed trees, driving is difficult.

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## Companion dioceses work to rebuild Puerto Rico

By Dan Webster

The companion dioceses of Maryland and Puerto Rico are committing to several years of hard work to rebuild the Caribbean island after two killer hurricanes last fall delivered devastation and privation.

Churches and individuals in and outside the Diocese of Maryland responded to the call to raise money for its “Rebuild Puerto Rico” fund. More than \$20,000 for immediate emergency needs was raised the month after Hurricane Maria. So far, \$47,000 has been given.

Maryland Bishop Eugene Taylor Sutton and the Rev. Margarita Santana, canon for Latino ministry for the diocese, presented the first of these funds last October to Puerto Rico Bishop Rafael Morales when they visited the island territory.

The Diocese of Puerto Rico now

operates two centers for emergency relief and supplies, one at the Diocesan Center near San Juan and the other at St. Luke’s Episcopal Hospital in Ponce.

Sutton sent the Rev. James Snodgrass to the diocesan convention in Puerto Rico last December, where he read a letter from Sutton. For Snodgrass, it was a return trip to the diocese in which he’s still canonically resident. He and his wife, Patty Parsley, spent 5½ years as missionaries in the rural, mountainous region of Aibonito. They founded a retreat center and new mission congregation before moving to Baltimore in 2012.

Sutton asked Snodgrass to assess the damage done seven weeks earlier. Damage was extensive to vegetation, landscape and buildings — huge trees uprooted, wooden structures demolished. When the sun set, some places had electrical service, often pro-

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Photo/Eugene Sutton

*The statue of Jesus at Misión la Santa Cruz in Puerto Rico was damaged by Hurricane Maria.*

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## AROUND THE CHURCH

## Diocese aids teens stranded by snowstorm

When a severe winter snowstorm hit much of the East Coast on Jan. 4, Selene Nesland and four other chaperones were leading 20 kids from five high schools home to Vancouver, Wash. The group had traveled to the Dominican Republic with Courts for Kids, a nonprofit organization founded by Nesland and her husband that brings volunteers to impoverished areas to build or repair courts used for sports. The group spent more than a week in shirt-sleeve weather at Red Misericordia, a Christian orphanage in Santiago, whose name translates roughly as “Mercy Network,” building an outdoor basketball/volleyball court.

The group was due to change planes in Newark, N.J., on the way home but ended up stranded at a hotel near the airport, facing potentially three days cooped up inside and eating expensive

hotel fare. Many were wearing sandals or flip-flops because at the end of their mission trip they had given their shoes and extra clothing to the orphanage where they had been working.

Nesland posted about the group’s circumstances on Facebook. She’s an active Episcopalian, and a childhood friend of the Rev. Curtis Farr, an Episcopal priest in Fairfield, Conn., who saw the Facebook message and relayed the information to a seminary colleague, the Rev. George Wong, rector of Church of the Saviour in Denville, N.J. That set off a growing chain of e-mails across the diocese, with volunteers offering a variety of assistance.

“Considering the weather conditions, it was very heartening to know that people were willing to take a risk and do what needed to be done,” said Archdeacon Chris McCloud. She and the Rev. Kathryn King, rector of St. Alban’s

in Oakland/Franklin Lakes, brought socks, taco fixings and snacks on Jan 5. The teens reciprocated by assembling props for the Jan. 7 Epiphany pageant at King’s church.

Volunteers lined up additional food and other donations, but the group was able to get a flight out earlier than expected. Nesland said that local television stations in Portland, Ore., had covered the story, and people responded by making donations. “Between you guys helping us with meals and snacks, and people giving, we were able to cover all the costs” of the hotel stay, she said.

“You have no idea how much that



Photo/Kathryn King

Visiting teens stranded by a snowstorm in Newark, N.J., helped assemble props for an Epiphany pageant at St. Alban’s, a New Jersey Episcopal church that came to their aid.

meant to our students. They kept saying, ‘Why are they doing this?’” Nesland said. “They were all on the giving end in the DR, and now coming back they were on the receiving end. It was really good for them to experience.”

— Diocese of Newark

## OBITUARIES

Seminary dean  
Harvey Guthrie

The Rev. Harvey H. Guthrie Jr., former dean of the Episcopal Divinity School (EDS), Cambridge, Mass., and retired rector of St. Andrew’s Episcopal Church, Ann Arbor, Mich. died on Dec. 17 in Oxnard, Calif.

During his tenure as seminary dean from 1969 to 1985, Guthrie led in the creation of EDS from a merger of the



Guthrie

Episcopal Theological School in Cambridge and the Philadelphia Divinity School, in the appointment to its faculty of ordained as well as lay women, and in a sometimes controversial curriculum change stressing individual student initiative based on experience and involvement in ministry.

Guthrie helped found the Boston Theological Institute, a consortium of theological schools in the Boston area. He also assisted in bringing the Jesuit Weston School of Theology into a shared-facilities relationship with EDS involving a joint library program and much joint teaching. He served as General Convention deputy from 1973 to 1982, as president of the Association of Theological Schools in the United States and Canada, and as chair of the council of deans of Episcopal seminaries.

He served as rector of St. Andrew’s from 1985 to 1995. His commitment to ecumenism continued in Ann Arbor, where he helped found an interfaith association including Jews, Muslims, Buddhists and Christians. After retiring, he worked as a legal aid volunteer, counseling and representing claimants of Social Security and welfare benefits at appeals. In 2012, the Diocese of Los Angeles appointed him an honorary canon.

Guthrie’s early contributions were as a teacher and scholar in biblical studies, particularly of the Hebrew Scriptures. He wrote “God and History in the Old Testament,” “Israel’s Sacred Songs” and “Theology as Thanksgiving: from Israel’s Psalms to the Church’s Eucharist.” He also taught and lectured at numerous institutions, including General Theological Seminary in New York, St. George’s College in Jerusalem and Göttingen University in Germany. EDS endowed a professorship of biblical studies in his name.

— Episcopal News Service

Hymnal editor  
Raymond Glover

Church musician Raymond Glover, 89, who influenced millions of Episcopalians as the general editor of The Hymnal 1982, died Dec. 15 in Alexandria, Va.

Glover was born in Buffalo, N.Y., and began his musical life as a young chorister at St. Paul’s Cathedral there. Later, he sang in the choir at St. Mary Magdalen, when he was an undergraduate at the University of Toronto and studying composition with Healy Willan, who became his mentor and friend. He then earned a Master of Sacred Theology degree at Union Theological Seminary in New York.

Beginning in 1962, Glover spent 11 years at the cathedral in Hartford, Conn., where he built a vibrant music and arts program. During the 1960s, he was a member of the Episcopal Church’s Standing Commission on Church Music and taught at Berkeley Divinity School. In 1966, Glover co-founded the Association of Anglican Musicians and served as president from 1969-70. In 1980, he was appointed to edit The Hymnal 1982. He later edited a four-



Glover

volume companion.

Glover also served as music director of the Diocese of Newark and as professor of music and organist at Virginia Theological Seminary. He was instrumental in helping to develop the Episcopal Church’s Program for Musicians Serving in Small Congregations. He also taught music and conducted choirs for independent schools in each of the cities where he was organist and choirmaster.

— Episcopal News Service

## EPISCOPAL LIVES

## Michigan bishop to retire

Diocese of Michigan Bishop Wendell N. Gibbs Jr. plans to resign Dec. 31, 2019, with the ordination and consecration of the diocese’s next bishop expected in Feb. 2020. Gibbs has been diocesan bishop in Michigan since Nov. 1, 2000.

“At the time that I step down as your bishop I will be three months shy of my 66<sup>th</sup> birthday, and I will have given nearly 33 years of service as an ordained leader in the church,” Gibbs wrote to his diocese. “The time is right for me to spend more time with family and friends who have graciously shared me with the church for many years and to enjoy other lifelong passions.”

“Meanwhile, we have two years of ministry ahead of us. We have much to do as we continue to remain faithful to the call of God in our lives as individuals and as part of the ‘Jesus Movement’ in southeast Michigan.”

— Diocese of Michigan

## Cathedral dean named

The Rev. Dan Webster, canon for evangelism and media in the Epis-



Webster

copal Diocese of Maryland, has been named interim dean at St. John’s Cathedral, Albuquerque, N.M.

Webster has served nearly eight years in the Diocese of Maryland, first as canon for evangelism and ministry development. Two years ago, he was given responsibility for all media communications.

Thirty years ago, Webster was news director of KOB-TV, Albuquerque. A friend invited him to a mid-week Holy Eucharist at St. John’s. Webster has said that was the beginning of his transition into the Episcopal Church.

Webster earned his Master of Divinity degree from the Seminary of the Southwest in Austin, Texas, in 1996. He was ordained in the Diocese of Utah. Before seminary, he worked for 25 years in broadcast journalism.

Webster has served in four dioceses as curate, interim vicar, rector, direction of communications and canon for congregational development. He also was media relations director at the National Council of Churches in New York for two years.

— Diocese of Maryland

Nashota House seminary  
names interim dean

Garwood Anderson, Ph.D. has been appointed interim dean and president of Nashotah House in Wisconsin.

Anderson joined the seminary’s faculty in 2007 as professor of New Testament studies. He became acting dean and president on Sept. 1, 2017, after Dean Steven Peay resigned.

— Nashotah House



Anderson

## AROUND THE CHURCH

## Resources available on immigration, DACA

Following “Undocumented: What Do Faith Communities Need to Know?”, a teach-in for people of faith, Trinity Church Wall Street in New York compiled an online primer for those seeking information and answers about U.S. immigration policies, current issues and ways to help those at risk of deportation.

Lectures and panel discussions covering the immigrant experience, Deferred Action for Childhood Arrivals (DACA), temporary protected status and sanctuary may be watched on demand at [trinitywallstreet.org/undocumented](http://trinitywallstreet.org/undocumented).

Featured speakers include the Very Rev. Dr. Michael Battle of General

Theological Seminary; Laura Lemus, national urban fellow at Baruch College and a DACA recipient; Lacy Broemel of the Episcopal Church Office of Government Relations; Dr. Jihad Alharash, physician and Syrian immigrant; and Amaha Kassa of African Communities Together. In addition, the Rev. Dr. Chloe Breyer of the Interfaith Center of New York discusses what churches can do in conversation with Jose Chapa of Rural & Migrant Ministry in New York, the Rev. Juan Carlos Ruiz of the New Sanctuary Coalition, and Broemel.

Technical and legal definitions are also available, along with stories of what other communities are doing and referrals to

partners in the Episcopal Church and secular organizations working to create a safe space for asylum seekers, refugees and other immigrants.

“Undocumented” was presented by Trinity Institute and Church Meets City on Oct. 28 at the church.

— Trinity Church Wall Street



## Jubilee Grants awarded for anti-poverty programs

Jubilee Ministries has awarded \$67,000 in 54 grants to support mission and ministry in 35 dioceses.

Jubilee Ministries are congregations or agencies with connections to the Episcopal Church, designated by diocesan bishops and affirmed by Executive Council, whose mission work affects the lives of those in need by addressing basic human needs and justice issues.

The grants help to ensure that Jubilee carries out its charge to be a “ministry of joint discipleship in Christ with poor and oppressed people.”

Applicants were reviewed by a committee representing parish leaders, diocesan Jubilee Officers, Executive Council members and Episcopal Church staff.

Six Jubilee Grants of \$3,000 each were awarded for programs commit-

ted to alleviating poverty and injustice: to Bread & Roses Ministry/Diocese of Virginia, Church of the Epiphany/Northern California, Hands & Feet Ministry of St. Andrews, McKinney/Dallas, Sutton Scholars High School Enrichment Program/Maryland, Trinity Cathedral/New Jersey and Trinity Jubilee Center/Maine.

Twenty-eight Impact Grants of \$1,000 or more were awarded to encourage community development by and with low-income persons.

Jubilee Ministries was named to reflect the Old Testament practice of equalizing fiscal and other resources every five decades in a “Year of Jubilee.” For more information, contact the Rev. Melanie Mullen, Episcopal Church director of reconciliation, justice and creation care, at [mmullen@episcopalchurch.org](mailto:mmullen@episcopalchurch.org).

— Episcopal Church Public Affairs Office

## Curry invites church to observe World Mission Sunday

Presiding Bishop Michael Curry invited the church to observe World Mission Sunday on Feb. 11 in a video that can be viewed at [www.episcopalchurch.org](http://www.episcopalchurch.org).

Traditionally celebrated on the last Sunday after Epiphany, World Mission Sunday focuses on the global impact of the Baptismal Covenant’s call to “seek and serve Christ in all persons”

and to raise awareness of the many ways in which the Episcopal Church participates in God’s mission around the world.

“On World Mission Sunday, we are reminded that we are all called by God to live a life of reconciliation: reconciliation with God and with one another. And there has been no more urgent time to participate in God’s mission than today,” the Rev. David Copley, director of

global partnerships and mission personnel, said in a sermon. Episcopal Church missionaries serve in many international locales, including Aotearoa, New Zealand and Polynesia; Brazil; Costa Rica; the Dominican Republic; England; El Salvador; Haiti; Honduras; Hong Kong; Israel/Palestine; Panama; the Philippines; Qatar; Romania; South Africa; and Tanzania.

Suggested books for further reading about mission are listed at [www.episcopalchurch.org](http://www.episcopalchurch.org). Stories of current Episcopal Church missionaries can be found at the Young Adult Service Corps section of the church’s website.

For more information, contact Jenny Grant, interim officer for global relations and networking, at [jgrant@episcopalchurch.org](mailto:jgrant@episcopalchurch.org).

— Episcopal Church Public Affairs Office

## General Convention ‘Blue Book’ will be available online

The Report to the 79th General Convention, commonly called “The Blue Book,” will be available online this month at the Episcopal Church General Convention website ([www.generalconvention.org](http://www.generalconvention.org)).

The Blue Book contains reports of the committees, task forces and boards of General Convention and is the main preparatory document for the 2018 convention. The information will be available in English and in Spanish.

Reports will be added to the General Convention website as they are translated into Spanish and prepared for publication, said the Rev. Canon Michael Barlowe, General Convention executive officer. General Convention 2018 marks the second time the Blue Book is avail-

able free online, he said.

The 79th General Convention will be held July 5-13 in Austin, Texas. The convention is held every three years to consider the legislative business of the church. General Convention is the bicameral governing body of the church, composed of the House of Bishops, with upwards of 200 active and retired bishops, and the House of Deputies, with more than 800 clergy and lay deputies elected from the 109 dioceses and three regional areas of the church.

For questions about the Blue Book, contact the General Convention Office, [gcoffice@episcopalchurch.org](mailto:gcoffice@episcopalchurch.org).

— Episcopal Church Public Affairs Office



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## NEWS

# Episcopal church becomes response hub after California mudslides

By David Paulsen and  
Mary Frances Schjonberg  
Episcopal News Service

In early January, deadly mudslides and flooding turned life upside down in Montecito, Calif. At least 17 people died, and the tight-knit oceanside community south of Santa Barbara was under a mandatory evacuation order as emergency crews searched for survivors and victims, restored utilities and began cleaning up the mud and debris that damaged and destroyed homes in their path.

All Saints-by-the-Sea Episcopal Church was spared the worst of the damage but had no power or phone service, and the natural gas was shut off to allow repair crews to begin their work, said Sheri Benninghoven, a parishioner who has led communication efforts for the congregation. The parish's school was closed and worship services canceled.

However, the church grounds became a triage center for people injured in the disaster. Church leaders estimated hundreds of people arrived during the heart of the emergency seeking medical help and, eventually, evacuation assistance



Residents of Montecito, Calif., prepare to climb into a military vehicle as part of evacuations after mudslides devastated the community next to Santa Barbara.

from the California National Guard, which staged operations from All Saints, Benninghoven said.

"I think we're all somewhat in shock. I think a lot of people are doing things based on adrenaline," Benninghoven told ENS. "This is stunning and remarkable for everybody. This community has been hit really, really hard, and we will always think back to this week, and no one will ever be the same."

Authorities began issuing evacuation orders for parts of Montecito, anticipating the rains that posed a threat of mudslides from the water cascading down the mountainside on the northern edge of the community of about 9,000. The threat of devastation was heightened because of the damage done by the

Thomas Fire, which started in December and grew to become the largest wildfire in California's history.

The fire stopped short of Montecito. But the blaze cleared and charred the ground cover in higher elevations, making conditions ripe for disaster when rain fell Jan. 8-9.

Authorities received 9-1-1 calls from Montecito residents trapped in their homes by the mud flows, Benninghoven said. Because All Saints' neighborhood was on the south side of Highway 101 and out of the path of the flows, it became a gathering place for first responders and victims.

"Those rescuers couldn't get those victims outside the area, so they brought them down to All Saints," she said.

The Rev. Aimee Eyer-Delevett, the rector, lives on the grounds with her wife. They began assisting evacuees, opening the parish hall as a place for residents to rest and clean up. The church had some food, and they boiled water for coffee.

The injured were taken to the nave of the church to be attended by paramedics. Helicopters landed on church grounds and took the most-severely injured to a hospital in Santa Barbara.

The church became "a safe place and a rallying place" for people living near the church who were isolated and could not get to other safe places, said the Rev. Michael Bamberger, a member of Episcopal Relief & Development's Partners in Response team and the disaster coordinator for the Diocese of Los Angeles.

A doctor living in a rental house on the church campus was called in to help treat people.

Because mud surrounded the neighborhood and Highway 101 was impassable, people could not get in or out. So church leaders conducted regular conference calls to coordinate efforts and communications. Benninghoven, safe at her home in Santa Barbara, took the lead in posting information and updates for the congregation on its website and Facebook page and through regular e-mails to parishioners.

She and other church leaders also reached out to residents in the neighborhood, asking them to help in any way they could. Dozens brought food, blankets and clothes to the church.

"You just want to cry," Benninghoven said. "It was really just remarkable. It touches your heart ... They were serving as God's hands and feet. It's what we learn about on Sundays, and they just knew it was what their job was on this particular day."

The National Guard arrived late on Jan. 10 to facilitate a new mandatory evacuation for the whole community, Benninghoven said.

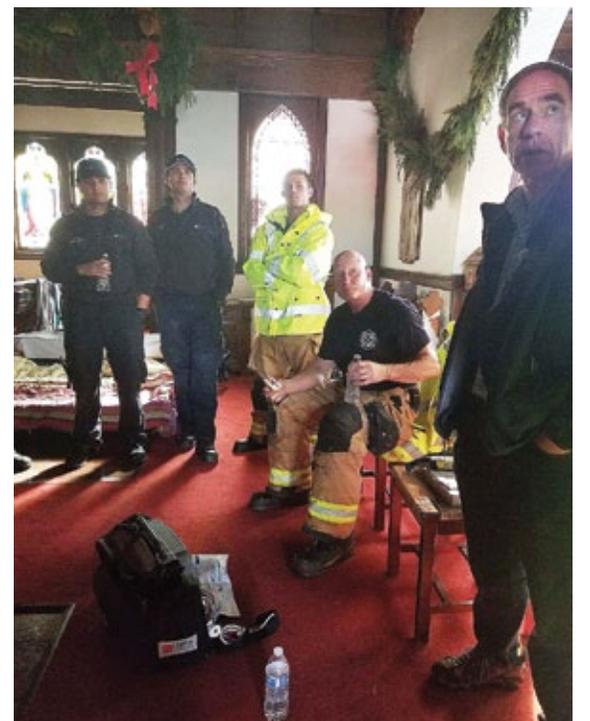
Residents at All Saints boarded military transport vehicles that brought them about four miles to a shopping center in Santa Barbara, from which they could proceed to a Red Cross shelter at Santa Barbara City College or find their own temporary accommodations.



Photos/All Saints

A California National Guard humvee is parked outside All Saints-by-the-Sea Episcopal Church in Montecito, Calif., which served as a triage center for paramedics and as an evacuation site by the National Guard.

First responders gather at All Saints-by-the-Sea, a temporary triage center for residents of Montecito, Calif., injured in the mudslides.



Eyer-Delevett and her wife left to stay at a home in Santa Barbara. Other church leaders also followed the order to evacuate. They left the parish hall open for some neighbors who chose not to flee. Otherwise, church operations shut down after the National Guard wrapped up its evacuations from All Saints late Jan. 11.

The congregation remained active from a distance. Parishioners were invited to attend Sunday services on Jan. 14 at Trinity Episcopal Church in Santa Barbara or, if they were on the opposite side of Montecito, to join a home church service hosted by All Saints' associate rector, the Rev. Victoria Kirk Mouradian.

Church leaders also looked ahead to providing pastoral care for victims of the mudslides, many of whom lost their homes. Of the 17 fatalities, none was identified as an All Saints parishioner, but it was not yet possible to determine if parishioners are among the five unidentified people whom authorities said were still missing as of Jan. 12.

The congregation, with about 1,000 members, assembled lists with the location of as many members as possible and was "cautiously optimistic" that all would be confirmed alive, Benninghoven said. But parishioners remained profoundly affected by the tragedy of so many dead neighbors, she said. "That is hitting everybody very, very hard."

The diocese, with the help of Episcopal Relief & Development, is supporting relief efforts in the area, but anticipate a long recovery time, Bamberger said. In late February, clergy and lay leaders in the fire- and flood-affected areas will meet for

a day of "spiritual debriefing," she said.

Diocese of Los Angeles Suffragan Bishop Diane Jardine Bruce, Episcopal Relief & Development Preparedness Training Coordinator Lura Steele and the Rev. Russ Oechsel, Diocese of Texas archdeacon and a member of Episcopal Relief & Development's Partners in Response team, will help with the day. Participants also will discuss pastoral care during long-term recovery.

The average annual income in Montecito was \$138,872 in 2016, according to the U.S. Census Bureau, and the municipality is home to such celebrities as Oprah Winfrey, Ellen DeGeneres and actor Jeff Bridges. It also has workers in its restaurants and residents' homes who, "when their town shuts down, they are the people who suffer," said the Rev. Melissa McCarthy, Los Angeles canon to the ordinary.

While some people have more resources, including insurance, however, "nothing can spare them from the emotional trauma of this," she said.

The diocese especially wants to help the most-vulnerable people in the aftermath of the floods, she said. They include homeless people, the working poor (including some clergy) who live paycheck to paycheck and "anybody who is afraid to go ask for resources and help, particularly undocumented people," she said. ■

## FEATURE

CATHEDRAL continued from page 1

repair and must be replaced by carving new stone.

Alonso has worked at the cathedral since 1985 and was part of the final phase of its original construction, completed in 1990. The structure continued to need maintenance and restoration in subsequent years, but nothing like in the aftermath of Aug. 23, 2011, when the magnitude-5.8 earthquake struck. It was centered 84 miles southwest of the cathedral near Mineral, Va.

"My God, the day of the earthquake, that was a punch in the gut," Alonso said. He and his team, are making the most of their present work by cleaning and renovating parts of the cathedral that would not have been spruced up for years, such

as the ceiling and the stained glass, he said. "The access that we're gaining with some of the earthquake work, we're able to do some other needed repairs."

The biggest repair project left is the central tower, which will cost an estimated \$5 million to fix.

"When the quake hit D.C., the seismic waves went to the highest part of the city, which is the hill we're sitting on," Eckstrom said. "And they traveled up to the highest part of the building. ... That happens to be our central tower." A similar scenario occurred at the Washington Monument, which is expected to remain closed to the public until 2019.

The cathedral's central tower is 300 feet, but its four grand pinnacles lost 20 to 30 feet of stonework when the stones fell or had to be removed. What remains is being stabilized with scaffolding until the repairs get the green light. If the cathedral were to receive enough money today to complete the project, it would take about three years, but this and the rest of the repairs on the list likely will stretch over the next decade, Eckstrom said.



Photo/Colin Winterbottom/Washington National Cathedral

*These carved faces of Old Testament prophets were part of a turret that was disassembled in summer 2017 and lowered to the ground until it could be repaired.*

*Stone carvers Andy Uhl, left, and Sean Callahan work on pieces of Washington National Cathedral that were damaged in the 2011 earthquake.*



Photo/Joe Alonso/Washington National Cathedral



Photo/David Paulsen/Episcopal News Service

*Washington National Cathedral's initial construction was completed in 1990, though it continued to need maintenance and restoration even before the 2011 earthquake.*

Washington National Cathedral is one of two cathedrals in the United States, and the only Episcopal one, with an active stone shop, Eckstrom said.

Alonso and two stone carvers have been busy since the earthquake. The second phase kicked off with repairs to the cathedral's north transept in spring

2016. Another project, fixing the west towers at the front of the cathedral, was completed in spring 2017.

One additional silver lining in the earthquake's aftermath has been the opportunity to see parts of the cathedral that otherwise would be out of reach. That's because they've been brought down to eye level for repairs.

Last year, a damaged turret 20 stories up had to be taken down and placed on the ground outside the cathedral, allowing for close inspection of its defining feature: the carved faces of eight Old Testament prophets.

The cathedral, unfortunately, has no record of which prophet is which, but "it really gives you a chance to see the craftsmanship that went into creating the building," Eckstrom said. ■

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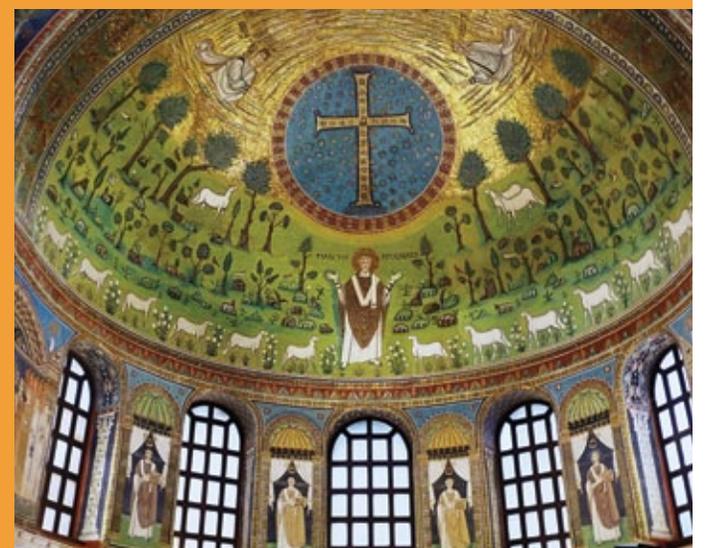
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Apse mosaic, Basilica of Sant'Apollinare in Classe, Ravenna, 6th c.

## FEATURE

# One disaster after another: Coping with compassion fatigue can be a challenge

By Mary Frances Schjonberg  
Episcopal News Service

People would be forgiven if the running list of natural disasters around seemed to pile up in 2017, especially since May.

Compassion fatigue is real. While the first studies centered on individual professional caregivers and how they lose the sense of caring that once inspired them, organizations and even society as a whole can suffer from what some call “empathy fatigue.”

Studies show that public empathy wanes within a few weeks of a disaster, but what happens if the disasters keep coming?

“I’m tired. My heart hurts. My soul is weary,” Diocese of Fond du Lac Bishop Matt Gunter wrote in a blog post in October titled “Loving Your Neighbor in an Age of Compassion Fatigue.”

The post “seems to have struck a nerve,” Gunter told Episcopal News Service in late December. “It skyrocketed to the top of my all-time clicks almost immediately, so that suggests something.”

The world contended with a lot of hurt in the past year. Torrential rains and flooding in Sri Lanka in May killed at least 224 people. A series of hurricanes — Harvey, Irma and Maria — tore through the eastern Caribbean and Florida, and deluged Texas with historic amounts of rain. The storms killed as many as 800 people. Property loss estimates approach \$350 billion.

Two major earthquakes struck central Mexico, killing nearly 500 people, displacing thousands and causing an estimated \$2 billion in property damage.

Northern California erupted in fast-moving and devastating wildfires that killed some 44 people and caused property insurance claims to top \$9.4 billion. Southern Californians are still battling the remnants of fires that swept through the greater Los Angeles area in December. One person has died, and estimates of property damage still are being calculated. The costs of the U.S. disasters have a ripple effect, with affected municipalities anticipating revenue shortfalls both because of the cost of fighting the fires and because they will not be able to collect taxes on destroyed properties.

Add to the mix of human-caused disasters: mass shootings at a concert in Las Vegas and a church in Sutherland Springs, Texas; deadly riots in Charlottesville, Va.; and terrorist attacks in New York. The year 2017 saw 413 mass shootings in which four or more people were shot in the United States, according to

statistics kept by Mass Shooting Tracker, a crowd-sourced database of U.S. mass shootings.

News of environmental disasters and sectarian violence across the world, coupled with partisan divisions fought across media platforms in the United States and elsewhere, add to what psychologist Jamil Zaki called a “habituation [that], paired with a feeling of numbness, can drain our empathy, motivating us to stop caring about victims of tragedies.”

“Cynically throwing our hands up at the surreal death tolls of natural disasters or massacres and changing the channel can be self-protective, ‘costing less’ psychologically than vicariously experiencing the suffering of strangers,” he wrote in 2011, the year Twitter came online. The years since have seen an explosion of news, graphic images and videos, and opinions flooding into people’s brains and hearts.

“Communicating the suffering of others does not always stir empathy, and can even be counterproductive, for example when an inundation of suffering depicted in stories and pictures leaves people feeling helpless or exhausted,” Zaki said.

Fond du Lac’s Gunter told ENS that he was “just not sure we’re wired to absorb it.” People once lived fairly isolated lives, knowing about what Gunter called the “normal human heartaches” of people in their communities, things like house fires and heart attacks and people dying far too early. Perhaps they got news of earthquake and other kinds of faraway destruction. But now, when



Photo/NASA Earth Observatory  
*A satellite image shows smoke from the Thomas, Rye and Creek fires in Southern California.*

“you turn on the TV, you’re faced with train wrecks and fire and images of war and hunger,” he said.

That instantaneous news raises the question: “How do we manage the input from all the 24/7 news?” Gunter said. “And you add on to that the 24/7 political commentary, which is mostly geared toward agitating you in the first place. We’re all

‘How do we break through the fear and anxiety that in many is not rational; it is emotive?’

— Bishop Matt Gunter



Photo/Reuters/John Gress

*A woman breaks down and cries in the rubble of her burned-out home after a wildfire in California destroyed it.*

on edge because here are people making money and gaining power and influence by keeping us agitated. That’s a whole other sermon, but it is a place where I think the church has something to say.”

In his blog, he suggested that many people have experienced the symptoms of compassion fatigue: disturbed sleep; unwelcome involuntary thoughts, images or unpleasant ideas; irritability, impatience or outbursts of anger; hypervigilance; “and a desire to avoid people who we know are hurting or who you know will disturb your equilibrium.”

Outsized anxiety and fear can develop. Gunter told ENS that, in recent weeks, at least two priests told him that their congregations were calling for armed guards in church. He has cautioned people to realize that the Texas church shooting was a domestic dispute that played out in a locale that just as easily could have been a post office or a store.

All of these pressures, he wrote in his blog, can lead to a “psychic numbness” that makes people want to hunker down and give up trying to live with compassion for neighbors.

Yet, as Christians, we must resist this tendency even as we acknowledge its reality and power. In his summary of the Law, Jesus enjoins us to, ‘Love your neighbor as yourself.’ That is a call to compassion, a call to care,” Gunter wrote.

The question, he told ENS, is: “How do we break through the fear and anxiety that in many is not rational; it is emotive?” And, Gunter added, given

the polarization in society, “people are pretty quick to say you’re being liberal or something else, and they can write you off because you are not giving them what they want.”

The good news of the gospel needs to be preached and lived “in a way that can be actually be heard” above all the din.

The call to do that and to remain compassionate is not always easy to answer, and answering it can lead to the very fatigue that many people are experiencing. The bishop offered some steps for finding balance:

- Make time each day to pray, and not just alone, but with others.
- Find someone to talk to who will encourage you rather than reinforce the things that agitate you.
- Set aside Sabbath time to “rest from the worries of the world” (including avoiding the news and the Internet) and do something restorative.
- Acknowledge human vulnerability and dependence on God.
- Do what you can and trust the rest to God, focusing on self-care and taking on only what you can manage.
- Dwell on the positive, not the negative.
- End each day by naming the good and thanking God for at least three things.

Many people have told Gunter that they are trying to take on that last discipline of thankfulness. His understanding of psychology, he said, says that “just that simple practice can reorient your perspective in ways that are measurable.” ■

## NEWS

PUERTO RICO continued from page 3

The churches are working with local municipalities to help with cleanup. Orlando Velez and other priests also have been ministering to hurricane victims through home visits. They often find that simply holding someone's hand and listening to the person's stories makes a difference, he said.

"I would say that they are in pretty good spirits," he said. "The people in the mountains are used to hardships. Because of that, they have had an accepting attitude."

Some of the diocese's priests lost their homes. Others didn't have power in their churches until receiving generators, with help from Episcopal Relief & Development and other church partners, such as the Diocese of Maryland.

In the first days after the storm, with phone lines down and cell service unreliable, Episcopal Relief & Development arranged to get satellite phones to the diocese so Morales' team could coordinate pastoral and medical-relief efforts with far-flung clergy. The agency also has paid for food and water and, because of its experience responding to previous hurricanes, is helping the diocese coordinate with federal agencies and other relief organizations.

Agency President Rob Radtke, who accompanied Curry on his visit, called Puerto Rico a "high-capacity diocese." The diocese has successfully leveraged its health-care system as part of relief efforts, he said, and it benefits from well-organized and ambitious leadership with a heartening interest in serving its community.

"This is where the church really has a particular gift. This is true both in Puerto Rico and elsewhere," Radtke said. "It has access to the most intimate parts of people's lives, and it has a high level of trust that it can call on, in terms of people reaching out to the church and seeing the church as a place that will meet their needs."

Morales expressed disappointment in the federal response so far.

He doesn't think the Federal Emergency Management Agency has shown the same commitment to Puerto Rico as it has to communities in the continental United States that were ravaged by hurricanes in 2017, such as Houston, he said. In areas where the government is seen as falling short, his diocese hopes to step up, he said.

"The blessing is that now we are a missionary diocese," Morales told Curry over a lunch of chicken, rice and beans while three costumed Wise Men led the distribution of bags of food and water to families visiting the Toa Baja clinic. After lunch, Morales and Curry joined them in distributing toys to a long line of smiling children and their parents — "the Epiphany in advance," Morales said.

### Seeking signs of hope

Curry had another biblical reference in mind. "You have turned the water of the hurricane into the wine of hope," he told the church leaders in Toa Baja, providing a preview of his sermon delivered hours later.

That evening, at Holy Eucharist at the Cathedral of St. John the Baptist, Curry spoke of the Epiphany Gospel reading



Presiding Bishop Michael Curry greets people at the pop-up medical clinic in Toa Baja, Puerto Rico.



Photos/David Paulsen/Episcopal News Service

Presiding Bishop Michael Curry joins a group led by the Diocese of Puerto Rico as it conducts home visits to provide medical care to residents of Toa Baja. Here, Mariana Cabrera, 83, who suffers from diabetes, high blood pressure and ulcers, is checked by medical personnel.

resonating for the local church's mission — how the Three Wise Men stumbled upon a miracle, and how Episcopalians in Puerto Rico may find miracles in themselves. Then he invoked the story of the Wedding at Cana, in which Jesus took jars of water and turned them into wine for all of those gathered.

"I've heard about neighbors taking care of neighbors," he said, highlighting examples in Puerto Rico, from the priests who have reached out to people with damaged homes to the doctors and nurses he met at the "hospital in the field" in Toa Baja.

He concluded by encouraging Episcopalians in Puerto Rico to keep following the way of Jesus as they ministered to their neighbors.

Such encouragement is welcome because despair is a constant threat for families struggling after the hurricane, said Damaris DeJesus, secretary of the diocese's board of directors. She chauffeured Curry and the other visitors to some of their stops during the visit.

"For example, that house," she said, pointing to a damaged apartment building on the side of a road in Toa Baja. "That family, what are they going to do?" At the same time, she credited Morales with emphasizing hope in calling the

diocese to serve those in need.

DeJesus is a psychologist who teaches at the University of Puerto Rico. After the hurricane she worked with interns to set up group counseling sessions with families dealing with the psychological trauma of losing so much. She was struck by the perspective of a 6-year-old boy living in a tent with his parents because his family's home was damaged in the storm.

"At the moment I met him, I saw how happy he was," she told Curry and his staff through an inter-

preter. The boy had pointed out all that his family still had, including each other. "He was thankful to God that he was with his parents."

Morales arranged for Curry to hear testimonials from people who survived the hurricane. After giving Curry and his staff a tour of the diocesan offices in Trujillo Alto, he invited them outside to a banquet lunch under a tent, where the generator's rumble mixed with the sound of live music.

Four Episcopalians stood to speak to the crowd of several dozen people about their experiences during and after Hurricane Maria. Kelma L. Nieves Serrano of Fajardo described how she and her wife lost everything — their house flooded, their car destroyed.

"We also had God as our companion," she said through a translator. And they felt fortunate to have members of the Episcopal community checking in on them and offering food, water and transportation when needed. "We are struggling, but we are standing."

Elfidia Pizarro Parrilla of Loíza said she and her neighbors similarly were thankful for the support of the Episcopal Church.

The hurricane "turned our home upside-down. I have lost everything that I had," Pizarro Parrilla said. "The church said, 'we are here, present with you.'" ■

COMPANION continued from page 3

vided by generators; many places were surrounded by darkness, some lit by a candle or abandoned. Snodgrass recalled the words of John's Gospel: "The light shines in the darkness, and the darkness did not overcome it."

On an island with a high density of automobiles and 9 percent of the population living in urban areas, driving without traffic signals, especially at night, was harrowing. In some places, foliage had reappeared, debris had been collected along the roadsides, and businesses had reopened. In other places, especially among the very poor, destruction lingered.

During the 110th Asamblea Diocesana (diocesan convention), Morales, newly consecrated in July, delivered a hope-filled address to the delegates. He thanked all who had responded to emer-

gency needs, encouraging all to pitch in and reach out, and he outlined his vision and priorities for the diocese for the foreseeable future. He proclaimed a new Christian year, which began with Advent, as "El Año de Discipulado" (the Year of Discipleship). He concluded, "Nuestra iglesia es dinámica, misionera y evangelizadora" ("Our church is dynamic, mission-oriented and evangelizing").

It was said that this diocesan convention was one of the most upbeat, well-organized and harmonious in recent memory.

After the convention, Morales told Snodgrass his top priority was to complete the retreat center, Centro Espíritu Santo, in Aibonito. The project would entail building a church and overnight facilities. Morales and Sutton have discussed this project, and how, as companion dioceses working together, it can happen.

Morales agreed to a proposed parish-based mission work project in Aibonito, sponsored by St. John's Church, Havre de Grace, Md., and led by Snodgrass, priest-in-charge there. The group members will stay in a church-owned house, pray daily and cook their own meals, repair damaged houses in the surrounding neighborhood and plant trees. The group expects to go in early March.

The experiences of this initial group will help the Diocese of Maryland advise other church groups interested in going to the island to help in the restoration and rebuilding effort. The Rev. Rafael Zorrilla, canon to the ordinary, oversees all groups coming to Puerto Rico. He told Snodgrass that he's overwhelmed by requests from church groups around the United States wanting to come and help. He asked the Diocese of Maryland to develop a screening process and recommend which groups should come. Those

groups would then be partnered with churches in Puerto Rico. Together, they would work out travel and work project arrangements. He stressed that groups coming to Puerto Rico need someone who speaks Spanish.

When Sutton visited Puerto Rico in October, he saw a statue of Jesus at Misión la Santa Cruz. He said it reminded him of the words of Teresa of Avila: "Christ has no body now but yours. No hands, no feet on earth but yours."

The hands on the statue were missing. Sutton said he hoped that the Diocese of Maryland would become the hands of Christ together with its sisters and brothers in Puerto Rico. ■

*The Rev. Dan Webster is the former canon for evangelism and media in the Diocese of Maryland. He was recently named interim dean at St. John's Cathedral, Albuquerque, N.M.*

## LENT RESOURCES

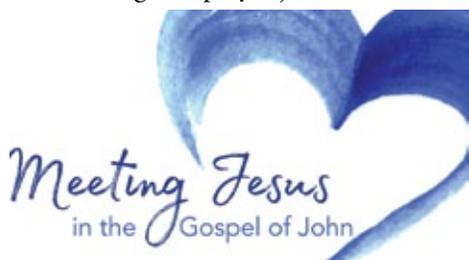
# Marking a holy Lent

*Lent, the 40-day season of repentance and reflection, begins on Feb. 14, Ash Wednesday, leading to Easter Sunday on April 1. Here is a selection of resources intended to enrich congregational or individual prayer and meditation during Lent.*

## Society of Saint John the Evangelist

*Meeting Jesus in the Gospel of John*

Presiding Bishop Michael Curry is encouraging Episcopalians to participate in the collaborative Lenten offering by the Society of Saint John the Evangelist (SSJE) and Virginia Theological Seminary (VTS): Meeting Jesus in the Gospel of John. The free six-week study, available at [www.meetingjesusinjohn.org](http://www.meetingjesusinjohn.org), is intended to lead each participant into a deeper intimacy with God by praying with the words of John the Evangelist and writing in a prayer journal.



“As many of you know, we in the Episcopal Church are seeking to grow more fully as the ‘Jesus Movement,’ — and not simply as the full embodiment of the Jesus Movement, but as the Episcopal branch of the Jesus Movement,” Curry said in a video posted at <https://youtu.be/j9xlkCfEGEw>. “So Virginia Seminary and Society of Saint John the Evangelist have come together and created a study opportunity for us to know this Jesus more closely, more fully, more intimately, more deeply.”

The Lenten study is designed to lead individuals, small groups or entire congregations into a deeper relationship with God through Jesus as chronicled in the Gospel of John. On the website, participants can sign up to receive a daily e-mail throughout Lent that includes a video message from the brothers at SSJE. They also can download a free prayer journal or order a printed journal from Amazon. The site also includes facilitation guidance for groups, resources for communicators and a help section to help participants and group leaders have a meaningful and dynamic Lenten experience.

SSJE is a monastic community for men in the Episcopal Church and the Anglican Church of Canada. The brothers seek to know and share an authentic experience of God’s love and mercy. They live a common life shaped by worship, prayer, and their rule of life.

Established in 1823, VTS is an Episcopal seminary that seeks to prepare its students, as servants of Jesus Christ, to be lay and ordained leaders of the church. Students receive theological education in a residential community marked by common life and worship. VTS currently educates approximately 25 percent of those being ordained in the Episcopal Church who received residential theological education.

## Episcopal Relief & Development

*Meditations focus on children*

The church’s relief-and-development agency is inviting supporters to “Learn from Our Children” with this year’s Lenten meditations, featuring reflections written by staff, partners and friends from around the Episcopal Church and Anglican Communion.

“At Episcopal Relief & Development, we are blessed by partners who nurture some of the world’s most vulnerable children,” said Sean McConnell, senior director of engagement. “They are people of deep faith and spirit. In this edition of Lenten meditations, we look to the source of that faith, encountering Christ in the children they serve.”

The series focuses on the gifts of children in poignant and joyous recollections and reflections of educators, caregivers, parents and grandparents.

In the Episcopal Church, Lent has been designated as a time to remember the agency’s response to global issues, with Episcopal Relief & Development Sunday set for Feb. 18, the first Sunday of Lent. Churches also may mark the day at another convenient time during the season. For more information and planning guides, go to [www.episcopalrelief.org/Sunday](http://www.episcopalrelief.org/Sunday).

To receive printed copies of the meditations in English or Spanish by Ash Wednesday, Episcopal Marketplace must receive orders by Feb. 2. Orders may be placed by visiting [www.episcopalmarketplace.org](http://www.episcopalmarketplace.org), calling 866-937-2772 or e-mailing [sales@episcopalmedia.org](mailto:sales@episcopalmedia.org).

Lenten booklets and other resources including hope chests, pew envelopes, bulletin inserts and special prayers are available at [episcopalrelief.org/Lent](http://episcopalrelief.org/Lent). Supporters are invited to sign up for daily e-mail meditations in English and Spanish.

“We do not take the Lenten journey of following Jesus alone, we are joined by our sisters and brothers throughout the world,” said Presiding Bishop Michael Curry. “And the work of Episcopal Relief & Development connects us to so many who join the church in this work. Episcopal Relief & Development gives us the opportunity to help realize God’s dream for the world; a world free from poverty and injustice and filled with compassion

and reconciliation.”

Episcopal Relief & Development works with more than 3 million people in nearly 40 countries worldwide to overcome poverty, hunger and disease through multi-sector programs. It works closely with Anglican Communion and ecumenical partners to help communities create long-term development strategies and rebuild after disasters.

## Forward Movement

*Reading God’s word together*

The belief that reading Scripture changes hearts and minds lies at the heart of the Forward Movement initiative, the Good Book Club. The Episcopal resource publisher is inviting the church to read the Gospel of Luke and the Acts of the Apostles together throughout Lent and Easter.

Forward Movement believes that engaging in Scripture brings one into deeper relationship with the Savior—and that reading God’s word together will bring participants into closer relationship with one another.

Throughout Lent and Easter, Forward Day by Day will move through Luke and Acts instead of pursuing its regular practice of following the lectionary (but will still offer the lectionary readings on its website).

Featured writers for the accompanying meditations will include Richelle Thompson, Forward Movement deputy director and managing editor (February); the Rev. Lindsay Hardin Freeman (March); the Rev. Marcus Halley (April); and Miguel Escobar (May). As always, the meditations will be available in Spanish, as a podcast, online, on an app, in Braille and in large print.

Forward Movement also will offer free downloadable Bible studies for individuals and congregations to explore some of the stories in more depth. The Bible Challenge series continues with “A Journey with Luke” and the newly released “A Journey through Acts,” daily meditations by theologians and faith leaders from around the world. With Renewal-Works, Forward Movement also presents a Good Book Club calendar featuring the cartoons of the Rev. Jay Sidebotham.

Episcopal organizations from across the church are partnering in the Good Book Club initiative. In addition, more than 25 organizations are partnering with Forward Movement to develop resources for the wider church. Presiding



Bishop Michael Curry issued a video invitation for all Episcopalians to join the Good Book Club.

Here is what some organizations are offering:

Episcopal Migration Ministries will offer a podcast featuring voices from across the United States, the church and the immigrant and refugee community. A blog will accompany the podcast featuring written reflections, art, photography, music and videos.

ChurchNext has developed a free, five-course video curriculum for Lent called “Luke the Liberator.”

United Thank Offering (UTO) has



prepared a downloadable booklet with meditations on the readings, questions for personal reflection or group discussion, space to keep a gratitude journal and a story of a ministry supported by UTO.

Forma will offer a weekly Faith-at-Home series, featuring reflections and activities for families.

Building Faith will publish a series of articles to help Christian educators and parents read and study Luke and Acts with children and teens.

A full list of the partners and inks to the resources can be found at [www.good-bookclub.org](http://www.good-bookclub.org).

Besides organizations, entire dioceses are joining the Scripture-reading initiative, and several congregations have committed to reading and exploring

Luke and Acts together. To be included as a partner organization or congregation, or to learn more about how to get involved, email [rthompson@forward-movement.org](mailto:rthompson@forward-movement.org). ■

## COMMENTARY

# People say the darndest things

By Kay Collier McLaughlin

Shortly before my older daughter was to depart for a two-year opportunity to study with the famous violin pedagogue Shin-ichi Suzuki in Matsumoto, Japan, an acquaintance leaned into my car window in the carpool pickup line and said, “You’ll richly deserve it if she comes home with a slant-eyed husband. Every one of her birthday parties have had the politically correct racial mix!”

I’ll never be sure if it was shock or socially appropriate upbringing that kept me from capturing her nose in the car window or slapping her face, which reflected the ugly audacity of her remark. I do know that I managed to retort, “Those children were her friends!”

The ugliness came roaring back to me recently as news reports magnified the current damnable rhetoric on immigration with accusations and counter accusations, and the drama escalated far beyond the level of carpool lines and personal opinions. There is visceral recall of the stinging pain of those words; of the sadness and the fury I felt at knowing

that, despite the world of multiculturalism that so greatly enriched our lives as a family, I could not protect my children or their future children from the kind of hate that would make such a statement, or others like it.

I’m one of those crazy idealists who cry at Disney’s “Small World” because I believe “There is just one moon and one golden sun, and a smile means friendship to everyone; there’s so much that we share that it’s time we’re aware: It’s a small world after all.”

It is more than idealism that I have known as the differing instruments of an orchestra blend to produce a sound that is beyond the beauty any one might produce alone. I have known it as very different individuals on an athletic team set their solo aspirations aside and come together to produce a winning team. I have known it as a consultant experiencing the deep conversations of organizations in conflict coming to understanding and then negotiated decisions for the good of all.

It is such moments, that idealism, and my experience of friendship with people who have different skin color, birthplace, religion, education and life experience from me that led me to write and keeps me working at “Talking Together: Getting Beyond Polarization Through Civil Dialogue.”

Talking Together Seminars offer guided conversations to practice respectful ways of speaking and listening to each other across differing perspectives. The book by that title gives the theoretical foundations for the work, real life examples of civil dialogue and exercises for individuals or groups to use.

It is encouraging that there are those who choose to enter into practicing conversation with the “other” — with people who make them uncomfortable. As I encounter the fear that stops the possibility of conversation, I know how much work we have to do to embrace an idea of “small world,” lest our fears lead us to the kinds of hateful words that cross the wrong person at the wrong time and lead us to extinction.

That’s my fear, as I encounter the fears of others. Fear of losing some imagined status that puts one higher on an imaginary ladder of humanity than others. Fear of losing opportunity. Fear that there aren’t enough in resources to go around. Fear of “otherness” that was inherited from generations before and never rationally examined for validity. Fear of not being good enough that hides behind extreme words and behaviors.

People are saying the damndest things. And this time around, I’m beyond shock and ready to speak back.

Enough, already! It is past time to dig deep inside of ourselves and begin to speak and behave as civilized human beings, privileged beyond imagination, who have the ability to stop this rapidly escalating slide into a madness from which there is no escape.

It will require us each to be willing to choose to stop participating in hateful words and actions. To own our fears and the reactivity they cause. To look toward the bright possibility of embracing a “small world” in which we respect the worth and dignity of every person. To break our silence.

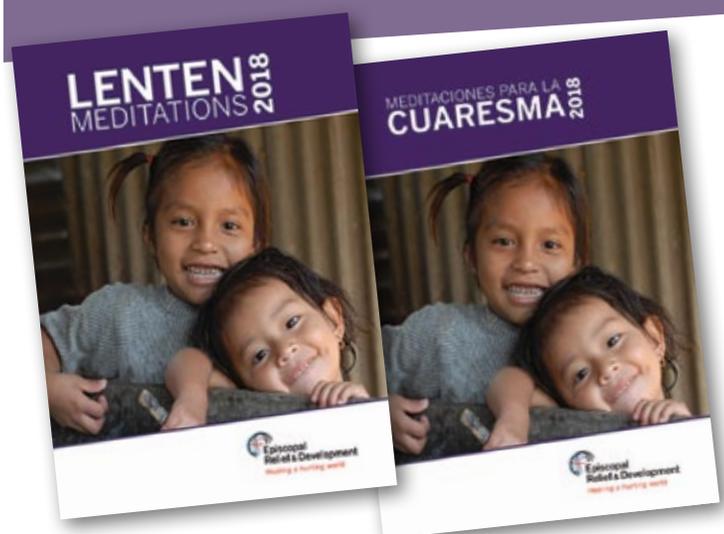
The “or else” is too awful to contemplate. And if that awful “or else” comes, each of us who has stood by without doing our part to say “enough!” — to move beyond politics, religious differences and personal ideologies to caring for the future of our world — will have been complicit. In our silence is our ugliness.

Let us begin — now — to speak the words of inclusivity, justice and peace. ■

*Kay Collier McLaughlin is an author and founder of Talking Together Seminars and Transformative Leadership Consulting who works across the Episcopal Church. She is the retired deputy for communications, leadership development and transition ministries for the Diocese of Lexington (Ky.).*

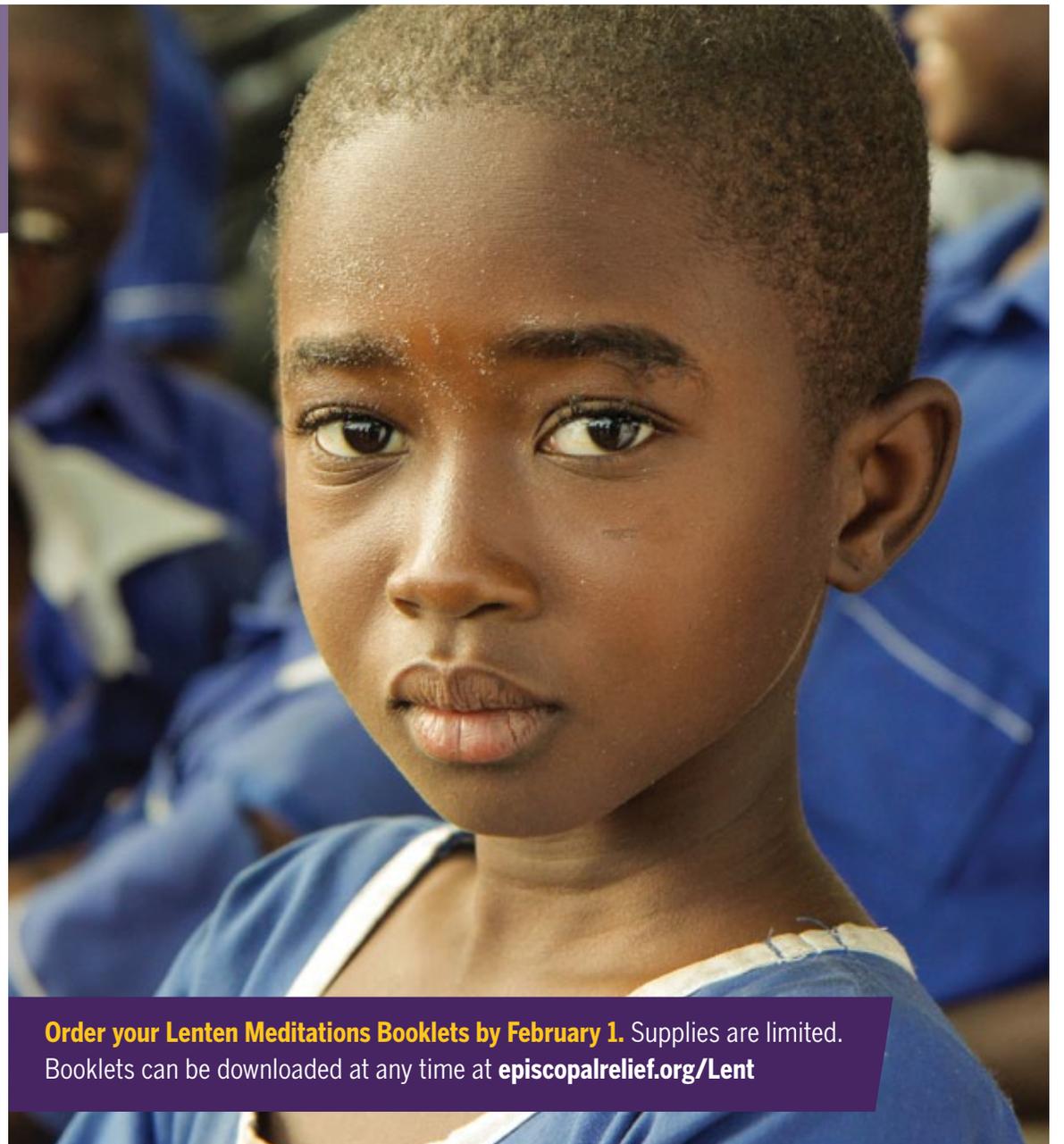


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Join Episcopal Relief & Development this Lent as we encounter the Divine through the spiritual lives of children and those who nurture them.

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Order your Lenten Meditations Booklets by February 1. Supplies are limited. Booklets can be downloaded at any time at [episcopalrelief.org/Lent](http://episcopalrelief.org/Lent)

## FAITH AND THE ARTS

## Artist transforms harrowing experience into quilted art

By Jerry Hames

Twenty years ago, when she taught Palestinian students in the Gaza Strip on behalf of Michigan's Marquette University, Patricia Merriman drove a U.N. van to Jerusalem's Ben Gurion Airport to pick up another faculty member.

When she crossed at the Erez check-



"Starry, Starry Night" quilt by Pat Merriman.

point, her van was placed on a hoist while white-gloved military searched thoroughly for explosive devices. She described that daylight border crossing as a piece of cake compared to the return trip with her companion.

"Returning at dark, there was a tapestry of stars but no moon," she wrote in a text that accompanies her art in the current online exhibition of Episcopal Church & Visual Arts ([www.ecva.org](http://www.ecva.org)). "Suddenly we dead-ended into a vacant black parking lot. Where was the checkpoint? In desperation, I got out to look.

"Standing alone, I prayed as never before. Where was I — lost in this strange land, dumped into a nothingness that seemed to lead nowhere. Calming down, I walked 200 or more yards and, suddenly, the dim lights of the checkpoint appeared in a valley below. I was lost and now found."

Merriman said she created the "Starry Starry Night" quilt as a reminder of being saved that night.

"In prior lifetimes, my artistic skills were in home decorating, sewing, quilting and cooking," said the 81-year-old artist who swims, attends cooking and

art classes, and is a founding member and volunteer at the Hillsborough (North Carolina) Art Gallery. At age 51, she began painting after a diagnosis and treatment for cancer.

"I realized I really wanted to have art classes, so I started on a journey that continues to this day. Now in retirement I am in my element with pots, tubes, jars, papers and canvas and ideas that continue.

"I paint landscapes, seascapes, treescapes, floral scenes and places I like to call home, such as local barns and park scenes," Merriman said. "I found a wonderful teacher in 2001 who continues to pique my curiosity about colors."



Photo/Laura Rogers

Episcopal artist Pat Merriman in her studio with "Starry, Starry Night," which she quilted after losing her way in a strange environment.

She and her husband, Max Preston, live in the Carolina Meadows continuing-care retirement community in Chapel Hill, N.C., where she is easily recognized by her license plate: 2B2CRE8. ■

To see more of Patricia Merriman's art, go to [patmerriman.com](http://patmerriman.com).

## California artist weaves faith into acclaimed works

By Kimberly Winston  
Religion News Service

Lorenzo Hurtado Segovia had a full scholarship to study engineering and was more than halfway to his degree when he took an art class.

It changed his life.

Today, Hurtado Segovia, 38, is a much-admired contemporary artist who lives, works and shows in Los Angeles, which has become ground zero for much of American contemporary art. He is fresh off a critically acclaimed solo show that one reviewer called "deftly crafted, quirky, spiritual, private and timeless."

He is also a Christian, something that frequently makes its way into his work in ways both open and veiled. And while the contemporary art world often dismisses religious subjects — especially if they're not critical — faith is both a touchstone and wellspring for almost all of his abstract works in wood, fiber, paper, paint, sand and tar.

For Hurtado Segovia, Christianity is not just a faith. It's woven into his Mesoamerican identity, evident in his use of handicrafts such as embroidery and beads.

"I am convinced art is my vocation, my passion, my calling, a deep part of my being," he said recently in the sunny living room of the second-floor apartment that is both the home he shares with his wife and two children and his studio. "My faith in Jesus filters how I understand the world, and the art I make that goes out into the world is therefore a seamless entity as a practice."

The religious subject matter of his art

has a purpose, one that may not endear Hurtado Segovia to either the contemporary art world or some of his fellow Christians: reclaiming from conservatives what it means to be a Christian and love God.

"For Lorenzo, Christian values are not what the media portrays as Christian values on the basis of — and I will use the word 'evangelical' Christianity, even though, to me, evangelical Christians is not what a lot of these people are," said Clyde Beswick, co-owner of CB1 Gallery, the downtown Los Angeles space that represents Hurtado Segovia.

"To me, Lorenzo is what Christians should be," Beswick said. "He lives his faith, he cares about people, and I have never seen him break away from his position of what Christianity is to him,



Photo/RNS/Kimberly Winston

Lorenzo Hurtado Segovia works in his studio in Los Angeles.

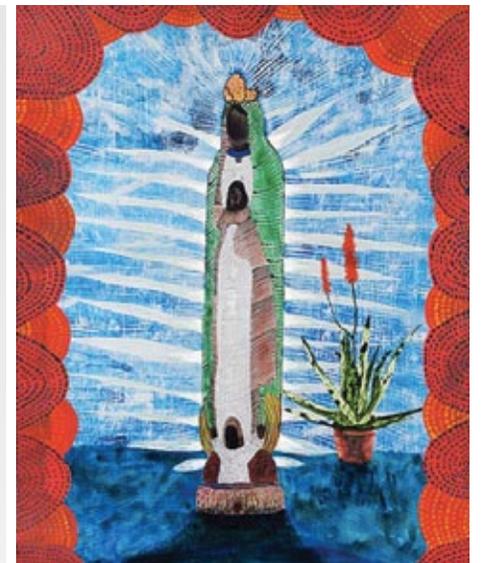
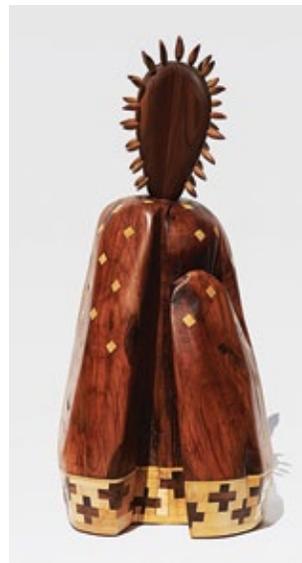
which is living out the love of God."

Hurtado Segovia was born and raised in the Colonia Azteca section of Juárez, Mexico, just across the border from El Paso, Texas. It was a collection of small, cinder block houses carved out of a hillside.

When he gives talks about his work, he includes slides of the things that influence it — the Mexican Catholicism in which he was raised; the dangerous and athletic dances of the "voladores" and "matachines;" and bright knits, beadwork, floral embroidery and geometric weaving.

Most of the titles of his works are in Spanish. He signs them with an "X" — a nod to his beloved grandmother, who was illiterate and very religious.

Hurtado Segovia graduated from the University of California at Los Angeles with a degree in art, but it wasn't until he pursued his master's degree at Otis College of Art and Design in Los Angeles that he began expressing his faith in his art. Even then, his professor and mentor, the contemporary artist Roy Dowell, sensed a restraint.



Photos/courtesy Lorenzo Hurtado Segovia

Samples of Lorenzo Hurtado Segovia's work includes, left, "Nuestra Senora Reina de Los Angeles", created of found wood and "Reflexiones sobre la muerte" (Bodegon con estatullia), acrylic on paper, both completed in 2016.

"Roy said, 'Why, when you talk about your art you don't acknowledge that? Are you embarrassed?'" Hurtado Segovia recalled.

He told Dowell that he was worried his faith would not be taken seriously — that it would be seen as a lack of "critical thinking." But Dowell — who is an atheist — challenged his student not to "close up the doors before you even knock at them," Hurtado Segovia said.

Dowell, who founded Otis' fine arts master's program, called Hurtado Segovia's faith a foundational part of what makes his art worth viewing.

"He has a confidence in both his ethnic background and his belief system that offers him, as an artist, a great deal," he said. "I think he was afraid to use those

continued on page 13

## BOOK REVIEWS

# School shooting tests child's remarkable faith

Review by Shelley Crook

**T**his Child of Faith" is the story of a mother and son's shared journey. Sophronia Scott is a writer and novelist; Tain Gregory is an eighth-grader who enjoys playing video games, acting in musicals and riding his bike.

In many ways, Tain is just like any other adolescent boy. In a couple of ways however, he is different: He has a keen and curious faith, and he was in a third-grade classroom at the Sandy Hook elementary school in Newtown, Conn. on the morning of the massacre that killed 26 children and educators.

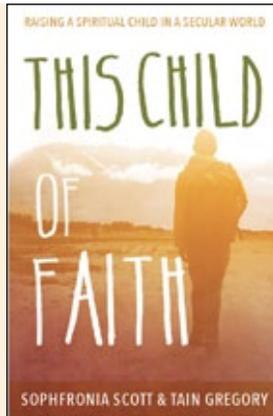
This memoir, told alternately in the voices of Sophronia and Tain, is the story of a child of extraordinary, even aspirational faith, and the wise mother who not only nurtures that faith but also is willing to learn from it. Tain's natural inborn spirituality is dramatically apparent to Sophronia, not least because she yearns to nurture faith in herself.

A wonderful moment comes when Sophronia reads a Forward Movement tract in a church foyer and realizes with both relief and wonder that she finally has found her family's spiritual home. "I had been seeking an approximation,

**This Child of Faith: Raising a Spiritual Child in a Secular World**

By Sophronia Scott and Tain Gregory

Paraclete Press  
190 pages, \$16.99



something we could live with," she says. "I set out seeking something 'less than,' and here God showed me I could have 'more than' ... Was the Episcopal Church my bigger dream?"

We are taken along on the journey as Sophronia and Tain attend services for the first time, unravel the mysterious workings and liturgical rites of the institution and create their own rituals and practices. The book is a wonderful advertisement for the Episcopal Church, and it is a testament to the power of faith when things go wrong — as, of course, they always tend to do.

The chapter titled "When Summer Disappeared" foreshadows the unnatural tragedy to come. With the help and sup-

port of their new pastor and congregation, Sophronia and Tain navigate significant losses ... and the screw tightens. This book is a natural page-turner, the tension ratcheting up because the reader is well aware of where the book is headed — towards the unthinkable horror of Dec. 14, 2012.

To her great credit, Sophronia deals with the events and aftermath of that day in the barest of language, without cliché or sensationalism. She successfully conveys the horror of hearing there has been a shooting at the school, and the subsequent waiting, without sentimentalism. It is a remarkable writing feat.

"Suddenly there it was — that gaping, soundless void," she writes. "It is an abyss separating the now from what comes next ... I had remembered Pastor Kathie's words: 'That's when you have other people pray for you.'"

Sophronia has learned to lean on her faith and her community, and it gets her through. Tain survives but loses a friend. His response to the events is nothing short of remarkable. He displays such a deep and instinctive understanding of bodily resurrection that Sophronia is taken aback. It's the natural knowing of

a spiritual child; it's a shining lesson for all of us.

The arc of this book makes it a good companion on the Lenten journey. It should also appeal to seekers, to parents and to anyone interested in the ability of faith to bolster resilience in the face of terrible trauma and loss. Tain Gregory may be young, but he's an effective teacher. And Sophronia Scott is a testament to the power of that critical yet underrated skill particularly relevant to this season of Lent: listening. ■

Shelley Crook is a New York-based writer.

## Church trailblazers reflect on their journeys

By Sharon Sheridan

**B**lack History Month annually highlights the achievements of black Americans throughout the country's history. The inaugural book of Church Publishing's new "In Conversation" series highlights two black Episcopal trailblazers still very much alive and making history: the first female bishop in the Anglican Communion, former suffragan bishop of the Diocese of Massachusetts Barbara Harris, and the Episcopal Church's first African-American presiding bishop, Michael Curry.

In conversation guided by editor Fredrica Harris Thompsett, the two reminisce about their families, and particularly the strong female relatives who influenced them; their calls into ministry; their activism and pursuit of racial justice; and what it means to be a "first."

"To be honest, when people say, 'You're the first,' they look for you to make a mistake and screw up," Harris says. "Well, you are going to make mistakes whether you're the first or not. And so I just said to myself, 'I'm going to do the best I can with what I've got and that's all I can do.'"

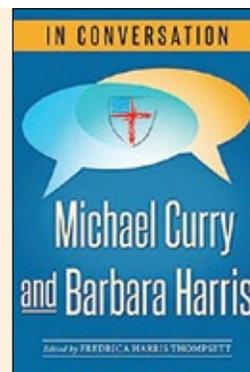
Adds Curry, "You really try to live with the values you believe and stay consistent with those values because when you don't you become a tortured person. And so, whether you're first, last, or in between, your job is to do the job."

The book traces their lives from childhood through their groundbreaking episcopacies, stories intertwined with the church's history as it navigated the civil rights movement and began ordaining women, concluding with the challenges of today's church. It shares their wisdom,

**In Conversation: Michael Curry and Barbara Harris**

Edited by Fredrica Harris Thompsett

Church Publishing  
112 pages, \$14.95



humor and affection for each other and provides insight into the people and experiences who formed them.

I found myself wishing that the text read a little more like conversation than biography. Although it contains many lengthy quotations from each speaker, the first six chapters of the book alternate between stretches of information and quotations from each more often than it portrays the give-and-take of conversation flowing between the two.

The final chapter, however, provides verbatim transcripts of the conversations, allowing readers to "listen in" and to read additional details. I was charmed, for example, by Harris' story about how Henri Nouwen gave her a set of vestments, and how impressed Curry was by this. At a time when the struggle for racial reconciliation in our country continues, it is encouraging to see how far we've advanced and that some of our church's leaders in that progress continue in this holy work, even as they inspire others to carry it forward. ■

"Por esperanza" ("For Hope") and "Por mis hijos" ("For My Children").

"One of the challenges I have is to speak to Christians and to non-Christians in an accessible language," Hurtado Segovia said, rearranging works on the dining room table that serves as his studio. He has tattoos of question marks on his left hand — to represent his questioning of the status quo — and exclamation marks on his right — a nod to his many blessings.

"I cannot be speaking in tongues," he concluded. ■

SEGOVIA continued from page 12

things in fear that they would typecast him as a religious artist or an ethnic artist. But these are the things that you know, that you have at hand, so you use them."

Sometimes, the religious subject matter of Hurtado Segovia's work is up front.

Between 2006 and 2015, he did a series of works on paper called "Plegarias" ("Prayers"), abstract renderings of dashes and vague floral shapes, dots, lines and rectangles. Only the titles reveal their intent — "Por paciencia" ("For Patience"),

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COMMENTARY

# Interfaith ministry a source of hope

By Louis Stanley Schoen

**A** week before last Christmas Eve, I attended a Muslim-Christian dialogue, held at the Minnesota Islamic Center in a northern Minneapolis suburb. These are challenging, important events as critical political leaders and occasional domestic terrorists act out beliefs that Islam is opposed to “American culture” and the Christian teachings that helped shape it. Interfaith ministry and conversations constitute a vital response.

A perfect illustration was the timely dialogue in December on “The birth of Jesus in the Bible and the Quran.” The remarkable reality that I saw was extreme similarity between the two accounts, although expressed out of differing cultural and historical traditions. Those differing traditions lay the groundwork for conversation.

These dialogues are held monthly on varying questions and are now entering their 29<sup>th</sup> year at the Islamic center. They have drawn attendance ranging from as low as 10 to as many as 350 immediately after the 9/11 attack. Gatherings near either faith’s major holidays often are the best attended, focusing on a question related to that holiday. Topics scheduled for the first half of 2018 include “The Purpose of Life,” “Salvation,” “The Rules of Marriage,” “The Crucifixion of Christ” (shortly after Easter) and “Apostasy and Conversion.”

Initiator of the dialogues in 1989 was Imam Ezzedin Taha of the Islamic en-

ter, following conversations with Bonn Clayton, then a board member of the Minnesota Council of Churches (MCC) and facilitator of Evangelical-Catholic dialogues.

Differences vary in the dialogues over scriptural issues, with Jesus’ resurrection marking the greatest variance I’ve heard. But Jesus is deeply honored in Islamic tradition, as well — “revered” was the description used by December’s Muslim speaker. The Quranic birth story, for example, highlights Mary’s chastity and the Annunciation and describes Jesus as the Messiah and the Word from God. It is told in many ways very similar to the biblical account.

Indeed, as I have attended these dialogues over the past two years, it has become clear to me that there are far fewer significant theological differences between Christianity and Islam than there are within either faith tradition. In each faith, the selective literalist readers of their holy book tend to reach highly judgmental conclusions, damning those who disagree with them and arguing that opponents’ conversion is fundamental to their salvation. Some, as we have seen in recent years, even seek to kill those who disagree within their own faith as well as those claiming a different scripture.

Although such brutality has most often been committed recently by Muslims, via Al-Quaida, ISIS or related groups, self-identifying Christians have attacked mosques in the U.S.A., and our internal differences over abortion and racial justice have led to violence (including murder), as well. Historically, of course, Christianity resorted to violent mayhem in the Crusades, followed by its support for slavery and, via the Doctrine of Discovery, genocidal colonial policies

in most of the world.

Thankfully, even in those times, some lived faithfully according to Christ’s teachings, and we’ve mostly outgrown that history. Christian ecumenical gatherings have helped facilitate that growth. There and, as I’ve seen at the Minnesota Islamic Center, when people of differing

**‘When people of differing traditions come together for intelligent, mutually respectful dialogue ... and openly listen to one another, the process can lead to friendships and even collaboration.’**

traditions come together for intelligent, mutually respectful dialogue, share their theological roots with honesty and understanding, and openly listen to one another, the process can lead to friendships and even collaboration. As a minimum, for theological conservatives, often present in the Islamic center discussions, there is at least some growth in mutual understanding.

The Minnesota Council of Churches, which is officially sponsored by most

major denominations (including the Episcopal Church, of course), not only promotes ecumenical dialogue but also facilitates ongoing collaboration among Christians, Muslims and Jews. Its stated mission is “to manifest the unity of the body of Christ and build the common good in the world” — both phrases seen as supporting interfaith ministry, as well as ecumenism. MCC also administers the Episcopal Migration Ministry in Minnesota, resettling refugees of varying faith traditions.

The new MCC executive director, the Rev. Curtiss DeYoung, spoke last fall at a large community gathering at a mosque in greater Minneapolis that had been bombed by a domestic terrorist the night before. The council also has partnered, in recent years, with the Muslim American Society to support a program bringing Muslims and Christians together in mosques statewide to honor Ramadan.

A separately organized advocacy group related to MCC, the Joint Religious Legislative Coalition, lobbies the state government about issues on which all three Abrahamic faith traditions can agree.

There’s widespread commitment in Minnesota to interfaith ministry as a source of hope for community and of fulfillment of our common faith beliefs. Moreover, I became aware, as an employee of MCC in the 1990s, that many other state church councils were similarly committed. Interfaith ministry is a fundamental hope of our nation and our faith. ■

*Louis Schoen is a member of Gethsemane Episcopal Church in Minneapolis, served on the national Episcopal anti-racism training team and is a member of the emerging Beloved Community team in the Episcopal Church in Minnesota.*

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VOL. 8 NO. 1 | JANU

This image of the Three Kings is part of a stained-glass triptych depicting the Adoration of the Magi at St. Peter’s Episcopal Church in Clifton, N.J. The liturgical season of Epiphany begins Jan. 6 with the biblical story of the magi’s journey following a star to Bethlehem to see the newborn king, Jesus, to whom they give gifts of gold, frankincense and myrrh.

Photos: Sharon Sheridan



Equal Exchange is a Fairtrade worker-owned cooperative that distributes organic food produced by farmer cooperatives in Latin America, Africa and Asia. A portion of Equal Exchange purchases benefit Episcopal Relief & Development.

(Episcopal Journal is a 501(c)(3) tax-exempt charitable corporation registered in the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania.)

## COMMENTARY

# How should we now live?

## *Contemplating the faith community's response to sexual harassment*

By Pamela A. Lewis

**H**e has brought down the powerful from their thrones and lifted up the lowly." (Luke 1:52)

If it has ever seemed that the words of Scripture spoke to a particular moment, it would seem so now. In the wake of the charges of sexual harassment against movie producer Harvey Weinstein



that began last October, as well as of innumerable accusations made by women against an ever-lengthening list of prominent men, we have been witnessing the dethroning of the powerful. From the arts to politics, and from academia to sports, the removal of big-name males from their talk shows, movie sets and even their kitchens has been swift and merciless. "Reckoning" and "cultural shift" have entered the lexicon as we engage in another "national conversation" about an uncomfortable subject. Some have discerned the emergence of a new women's liberation sensibility, sparked by the #MeToo movement.

Sexual misconduct goes back millennia; real life and fiction are strewn with it. Within the pages of the Bible we can find a number of accounts where sexual impropriety or coercion is a disturbing narrative element. The story of Tamar and Amnon in the Second Book of Samuel (13:1-14), as well as the more familiar tale of Joseph and Potiphar's wife (Genesis 39), are scriptural examples of men and women whose bad behavior injects mayhem into the lives of those they victimize. Not unlike in today's lurid situations, sex in these biblical narratives is the distorted currency between predator and victim; but it is the predator's abuse of power that sets these interactions in motion.

The authors of the Scriptures intended that their writings inspire, teach and exhort their readers to seek God and to understand God's will for them. However sensational they may be, the stories of Tamar and Amnon, and of Joseph and Potiphar's wife, are cautionary in that they point to the consequences humans incur when they lose self-control and abuse power.

Yet, although the Bible addresses sex and power and what happens when they are mishandled, the institutional church has had an uncomfortable history with these forces and has not been immune to sexual misconduct. Whether it has been the cases of abuse of children that roiled the Roman Catholic Church several years ago or about those in other denominations who have experienced harassment, such occurrences attest that this is not a problem limited to secular domains. In light of this reality, the entire faith community must consider — perhaps even reconsider — what it is doing and what

it needs to do in response to the problem of sexual harassment, as well as attendant issues surrounding gender inequality.

Several years ago, the Diocese of New York issued a model policy (called the "Model Rules") for consideration and adoption by its parishes regarding sexual misconduct in the church. Many parish-

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es, including my own, have incorporated the "Model Rules" into their existing policies that intend to create an environment where all people are treated with respect. Clear-cut rules or policies set the church community in the same place in terms of knowing what constitutes appropriate behavior, and it is in the community's best interest to review and, if need be, update its policies regularly.

But in addition to more formal policies such as the "Model Rules," individual churches can develop rules that are tailored to their particular parish communities. While intimidating or insulting others is not the goal, the language of such rules should be unambiguous and respectful.

A church could decide, for example, to offer adult-education seminars on harassment-related issues; require that ordained and nonordained church leaders take boundary training; preach in a direct manner a sermon on biblical texts, such as Tamar's story, where sexual violence is the central theme; put more women in ordained and lay leadership positions.

While it is easy to oppose harassment and gender-based discrimination, and to consider one's attitudes as "evolved," there remain areas within the church where institutional sexism stubbornly persists. According to a poll the nonpartisan Pew Research Center conducted in 2016, of the nine major religious organizations in the United States that both ordain women and allow them to hold top leadership slots, only four have had a woman in the top leadership position. Although Katharine Jefferts Schori served as presiding bishop of the Episcopal Church from 2006-2015, there are still far fewer women bishops than men, and there are many other denominations and religious groups where there are no women occupying the higher echelons of church leadership.

But, as with any aspect of social change, the last frontier to conquer is the individual. New laws may be devised and enacted to prevent and punish harassment, and victims of past offenses eventually may receive the justice they deserve. But the faith

community that sits in the pews must engage with its consciences, attitudes, and beliefs about how to interact with other human beings. That inner work is beyond the reach of any legislation.

Some have argued that we need a new model of manhood and masculinity; that we need to completely overhaul, if not

the worn-out cultural totems we have lived with. We might find those positive qualities in someone we already know but often overlook: Jesus.

"Oh, yeah, Jesus," you might say. "But he lived so long ago, and we live in a different, more complicated time."

True. But considering Jesus as an ideal model of humanity, not just of masculinity or of femininity, still makes sense — perhaps more sense than ever. In Jesus Christ we get something different *and* something better. As there is no male or female in Jesus, the gender-based distinctions that so often burden and traumatize our relationships are absent in his person.

Jesus's treatment of the "lesser" and the marginalized, such as the poor, disabled, and women, always has been particularly noteworthy. When he uses his power in his interactions with these groups, he gives that power away in love to help and heal rather than to intimidate. The qualities we seek in others and want for ourselves — compassion, forgiveness, unconditional love, wisdom — are present in Christ and available to us and, especially, to our children. If we want to know how we should now live in this time of #MeToo, we need but look to the one who has always shown us the way. ■

*Pamela A. Lewis, who is based in New York, writes on topics of faith.*

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