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Serving The Episcopal Diocese of Pennsylvania

CASTING NETS

START-UP PLAN

FEMALE VETERANS

MORAL INJURY PROGRAM

EVENSONG

POWERFUL EVANGELISM

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A FEMALE VETERAN PARTICIPATES
IN THE DIOCESE'S MORAL INJURY
PROGRAM.
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The Episcopal Diocese
of Pennsylvania

Casting Nets

GOALS, CREATIVITY,
LISTENING, PLANNING
AND IMPLEMENTATION

*This start-up plan
for churches was
sent out earlier
this month.*

Just after daybreak, Jesus stood on the beach; but the disciples did not know that it was Jesus. Jesus said to them, "Children, you have no fish, have you?" They answered him, "No." He said to them, "Cast the net to the right side of the boat, and you will find some." So they cast it, and now they were not able to haul it in because there were so many fish.

John 21: 4-6



My Siblings in Christ,

"Cast the net on the right side of the boat..." With those words, Jesus challenged the disciples to do something new, something different, something that went against everything they knew and understood as fishermen. They had worked all night and given it their best but caught nothing. But when they trusted Jesus, everything changed.

Just imagine how they must have felt. How their exhaustion and frustration was transformed to wonder, amazement and exhilaration as the net strained against the enormous catch. And it happened, not because of their skill or experience, but because they trusted in Jesus and dared to do something different.

I am writing to call you to something new – something that will **revitalize our churches, our communities and our diocese**. This letter is an invitation for you to embark on this spiritual journey with us.

We stand at a threshold. A new day is dawning.

Over the past 18 months, we have discovered new and creative ways to worship, pray, connect and serve. Building on that success and momentum, we are excited to introduce the "Casting Nets" initiative.

Allow yourselves the chance to really dream what your church might be if it was not expending so much energy focused on buildings, people and money. How might you break free from how you have always done things and to dare to envision a church that is focused on the life-giving essentials of prayer, community, worship and ministry to and with our neighbors?

We learned during Covid-19 that we can find ways to thrive despite obstacles, and this has opened up tremendous opportunities. Change does not have to take decades. It can come quickly, if we have faith to embrace new possibilities and to focus on what is most essential.

I am asking you to think as if you are a startup business.

Ask yourselves about goals, creativity, listening, planning and implementation. That's what "Casting Nets" is about. You don't need more money or more people, you don't need the latest theories or programs, all you need is a ***willing heart and a desire for your church to become more the church that God envisions***, as opposed to the church the world says is possible.

There are four parts of this initiative, which can take as little as 10 weeks to accomplish. ***The first phase - Deep Water - is attached to this letter.*** The rest of the phases will be released on a rolling basis. I cannot say exactly where this journey will take you but I can promise that if you dare to "cast your nets" and trust in Jesus, that your church will be changed for the better. Above all, you will not be alone. Your diocesan staff will be here to assist and guide you in this process.

I am entering my sixth year now as your Bishop. Each day, I come to love you more, love the people, love the history, as well as our potential.

I love our revolutionary spirit. It is that spirit that stands at the heart of this project. Let us follow Jesus and those first disciples and "cast nets" on the other side so that together we may transform our churches, our communities and our diocese in his most holy name.

In Christ,

The Rt. Rev. Daniel G. P. Gutiérrez
XVI Bishop of the Episcopal
Diocese of Pennsylvania



Fullfilling God's Purpose

When it comes to your dream, you already have all that you need to fulfill the purpose that God has for you.

This is the real miracle at the heart of the feeding of the 5,000. Although no one would have suspected it, the disciples already had all that they needed to feed the people. While it was Jesus who multiplied the loaves and fishes, he still chose to work with and make the most of the gifts the disciples already possessed. Nothing more was required. Through the grace of God, they already had all that they needed!

As you go out into the deep water and enter this sacred dreaming, know that there is already enough to accomplish what God has in mind for you.

You are already enough. You have enough time and energy. Your community is strong enough. God is calling you into something new, and God will equip you with all that you need to do that which he has called you to do. For it is not our dream, but God's that we seek to make real. God's dream for you is already a reality. All you need to do is discern it and then venture forward in faith as God works in and through us to make it real.

“Then Jesus took the loaves, and when he had given thanks, he distributed them to those who were seated; so also the fish, as much as they wanted. When they were satisfied, he told his disciples, “Gather up the fragments left over, so that nothing may be lost.” So they gathered them up, and from the fragments of the five barley loaves, left by those who had eaten, they filled twelve baskets.”

John 6:11-13

Recommended:

Please make copies of these next pages for all participants >>>

What to Expect

The Dreaming Exercise involves two tours, one of your church campus and one of your community. It is followed by a time of reflection and sharing. It is recommended that you do this exercise with your vestry and any other key leaders from your church.

Dreaming Exercise

You have enough ... enough people and resources. You have enough time and energy. God has given you all that you need to make your dream for your church a reality.

**NOW, WHAT DO YOU DO? HOW DO YOU CHANGE THE WORLD?
WHAT IS YOUR DREAM?**

If you could fix anything, it would be?

If you could help anyone, it would be?

In your dreams, your church looks like?

In your dreams, your community looks like?

Look with Fresh Eyes

How is Jesus present and active in your church?

- Gather the clergy and vestry and go everywhere inside and out.
- Look at the light streaming through the windows.
- Touch the stone and feel how strong it is.
- Look up the aisle and consider how many have walked there.
- Allow yourselves to revel in memories of music and midnight mass.
- Let the laughter that has filled the hall fill your heart.
- Where is Jesus in this place?

NOTES | PICTURES | SKETCHES | IDEAS

A series of 15 horizontal red lines, slanted slightly upwards from left to right, intended for writing notes, pictures, sketches, or ideas.

Take a Field Trip

Where is Jesus in your community?

Next, the same group should make a similar tour of your community.

- It can be by foot, car or both, depending on your context and physical ability.
- If it is easier, go in small groups.
- Stop and talk to people.
- Go into businesses and shops.
- Open your eyes, ears and hearts so as to take in what life is like for the people who live around your church. As you do, make particular effort to go to the places that may seem strange, different or even frightening.
- Take the time to look and listen for Jesus.
- Don't rush. It may take multiple trips to gain a thorough sense of the totality of your community.
- Ask yourself: Where is Jesus?

FIELD TRIP PLANNER

DATE

LOCATION (S)

SCHEDULE

CONTACT

NOTES ON FINDINGS

Reopened, Resurrected



The diocese continued its spate of reopening churches. The Church of the Crucifixion which had closed its doors in 2013 became the third church in three years to reopen under Bishop Gutiérrez. Founded in 1847 as the second Black church in the Episcopal Diocese of Pennsylvania, Crucifixion was once known to attract such luminaries as singer Marian Anderson and sociologist W. E. B. DuBois.

The reopened church, led by the Rev. Yesenia Alejandro, will minister to all people with a specific focus on the growing Hispanic population in the city. The United States Census Bureau estimates that over 60 million U.S. residents are Latino and nearly a quarter of a million live in Philadelphia – 15.2% of the city’s population.

This ‘resurrection church’ follows similar reopenings at St. Stephen’s Episcopal Church in Philadelphia and St. John’s Episcopal Church in Norristown. St. Stephen’s, in the heart of the city and near two major hospitals, offers itself as a sanctuary with a weekly healing service. The church is also soon to be the site of a diaconate training center for the diocese.

The reopening of St. John’s created a space for diocesan headquarters as well as a new media center where clergy and lay people can receive training and borrow equipment.

“At a time when many churches are fearful of the future, we are planting the seeds of new life and reaching new communities in the name of Jesus Christ. Living fearlessly is the only way to church growth.”

Bishop Gutiérrez

Living Fearlessly

Thistle Hills Home

After the Trauma of Trafficking, a Second Chance at Life for Chester County Women

Hope & New Life



“God of hearth and home, maker of love and laughter, make this a place for reflection and restoration, rest and renewal, a place where the life of Thistle Hills may find its strength.”

Bishop Daniel Gutiérrez
at the Blessing of Thistle Hills
Home in May.

On the outskirts of Coatesville, a home filled with the promise and hope of new life awaits its first residents.

Thistle Hills—a sister organization of the inspiring and highly successful Thistle Farms residential program that helps women who are survivors of human trafficking, prostitution, and addiction get a second chance at life—is now actively recruiting the initial two women who will live there.

Eventually, it will be home to as many as four women at a time who are accepted into

the two-year program that grew out of a partnership between the Episcopal Church of the Trinity, Coatesville, and the Episcopal Diocese of Pennsylvania’s Anti-Human Trafficking Commission.

The program, recognized as a 501c3 nonprofit by the Internal Revenue Service with its own board of directors, also has substantial community support, including a \$323,000 award from the Chester County Community Development Block Grant program that made the purchase of the Thistle Hills house possible.





Kaitlin Joyce, a Licensed Clinical Social Worker (LCSW), is already working on-site as Thistle Hills's executive director, preparing the house for residents, planning programming, and raising funds. The intent is to serve women from the Chester County and Coatesville areas.

"The goal is hopefully to shed more light on the situation in our area," Joyce says. "We're ready to hit the ground running. Everything is furnished. We've had tons of donations for the house in terms of kitchen supplies and toiletries. In theory, they could move in tomorrow."

A Holistic Approach

Thistle Hills, modeled on the Thistle Farms program, seeks to address the complex range of factors that result from the trauma of trafficking, prostitution, and addiction.

"We're approaching it holistically, assisting with every area of the person's life," says Rev. Sherry Deets, rector of Episcopal Church of the Trinity.

That includes a requirement to attend an Alcoholics Anonymous (AA) or Narcotics Anonymous (NA) meeting daily, intensive outpatient therapy for the trauma they have suffered, as well as group therapy in

the home for social skills and issues such as anger management, Joyce says. Joyce also is certified in trauma yoga, and hopes to run yoga sessions during the week as well.

The program also will help the women further their education by getting their GED or taking classes, or perhaps learning a trade. Eventually, they will be expected to get a part-time job and learn how to save money, with Thistle Hills matching their savings up to a certain amount.

"With the goal being that after two years, they've stayed clean and sober, they're in a better place in terms of their trauma, and they're able to financially be independent," Joyce says.



How You Can Help

As preparations continue to welcome the first residents, Thistle Hills is looking for volunteers willing to help with the program, especially as drivers to take the women to medical appointments, the grocery store, shopping, etc. “The goal is to have some female volunteers that they can get to know and trust so that when they’re out of the house, they have another person that they can lean on,” Joyce says.

Deets explains: “We need to require that they be female because of the nature of what happened to the women. It may be uncomfortable to have men as drivers, especially if it’s one-on-one contact.”

Joyce adds that the need for volunteers is likely to expand as Thistle Hills progresses. “I think down the road, we may look into having volunteers come and share some activities and things that the women can learn.

“We talked about maybe having someone come and help with the garden in the backyard and teach them a little bit about that. Also, really coming up with not just practical skills, but things that they can do to keep them busy and to build a new lifestyle. We talked about—and maybe including this in the social enterprise down the road—doing some pottery classes, some tactile art that can help with processing their trauma and can lead to a fun activity.”

In addition to volunteers, Thistle Hills also remains in need of financial support, and is accepting donations on their website: www.thistlehills.org/donate.

If you would like more information regarding the Thistle Hills program, please contact Rev. Sherry Deets, revsherrydeets@aol.com, or Executive Director Kaitlin Joyce, kjoyce@thistlehills.org.

New Life Innovation

The Value of Social Enterprise

One of the innovations Thistle Farms pioneered is its use of social enterprise. Women in the Nashville-based program started out making and selling candles, and it grew into a global business that includes everything from essential oils and personal care products such as lotion, body balm, and bath salts to clothing, accessories, and jewelry, among other items.

Deets and Joyce are hoping that Coatesville’s revitalization opens the door to opportunities for the women who enter the Thistle Hills program.

“We’ve been in conversations with the powers that be here in the downtown area about businesses that are contemplating coming in and finding ways to partner with them,” Deets says.

A successful social enterprise component could also help support the residential program, providing a sustainable funding source that could even continue to benefit the women after they leave Thistle Hills.

“Like our sister organization, Thistle Farms, the goal would be years down the road that that social enterprise could continue to give back to the women who have been through the program by employing them in whatever manner that might be,” Joyce says.

Female Veterans Living with Moral Injury

The diocese, in coordination with the Veterans Administration in Pennsylvania, created the nation's only group for female veterans living with moral injury. Although many symptoms overlap with PTSD, moral injury differs in the key characteristics are shame and guilt. A veteran can have the effects of witnessing or being a part of a traumatic event leaving them with difficulty sleeping, psychological problems, mood changes, images of the event, and more.

The diocese's moral injury program is a 12-week program specifically for female veterans. Often veterans walk around with symptoms that leave them feeling isolated, uncertain about their identity and even suicidal.

For female veterans the issue of military sexual trauma (furthermore the lack of justice after a sexual assault), leaves them feeling isolated in a male-dominated system. This program offers them a safe space to gain awareness that what they are experiencing is not a disease and that there is nothing wrong with them. In the end, the veterans are encouraged to share their story - their truth - with the community in a healing ceremony. During this ceremony the community learns of the obligation and of the importance to help carry the burdens veterans have when they return home. For more information on this program, please contact the Rev. Canon Toneh Smyth, tsmyth@diopa.org.



Women in the diocese's program participate in the community healing ceremony.

Supporting our Veterans

Depaul USA Partnership

Diocesan Collaboration
with Homeless Services
Nonprofit is a ‘Win-Win’

Housing Mission



The Rev. Canon Smyth (l) meets with Sandra Guillory.

God does indeed work in mysterious ways. Consider the confluence of events that led to House of Prayer Episcopal Church embarking on a new mission to provide housing for low-income adults, including college students, who were experiencing homelessness.

House of Prayer, located in the Ogontz neighborhood of Philadelphia, had a rectory building sitting vacant since water pipes burst in December 2018, and was planning to rent it out to bring in income once they managed to make the required repairs.

Depaul USA, a national homeless services nonprofit organization, was looking for housing in the Philadelphia area for college students who were experiencing homelessness at a time of rising college costs and a raging global pandemic.

Meanwhile, the Rev. Canon Toneh Smyth, Canon for Mission, was in discussions with Depaul concerning how the Episcopal Diocese of Pennsylvania could

partner with the organization, which currently operates five different programs, a medical respite, and a social enterprise in Philadelphia.

“They had just started a program for college students who are experiencing homelessness,” Smyth recalls. “They were looking for property. I really like the program, the structure that they had. So I asked if they were looking to expand because maybe we could use some of our rectories that are sitting empty for that purpose.”

And the Rev. Canon Betsy Ivey, Canon for Growth and Support, was working with local churches—including some of those with vacant buildings on their properties—throughout the diocese to encourage them to “change their perspective from insular to community-oriented and community mission.”

All of these elements coalesced, as the diocese played the role of matchmaker, bringing together House of Prayer leaders

and Depaul. It was the start of what Tom McGill, who has been rector’s warden at the church for two decades, calls “a wonderful partnership.”

House of Prayer has had a supply priest, Rev. Steven Ngenga, for almost two years. Before the pandemic struck, the church averaged 20 to 30 parishioners worshipping at Sunday services. Virtual services on Zoom have averaged around 20 parishioners throughout the pandemic. For churches like House of Prayer that may not have the capacity to fully take on community outreach and ministry, the Depaul partnership brings a fully formed program into the parish, with its own staff and volunteers.

“What that does is it brings a ministry where there isn’t one, right into a space that’s being under-utilized by the church,” Ivey says.

The nonprofit Depaul does pay rent to use the rectory for transitional housing for people experiencing homelessness,

but it's less than the market rate. Ivey and Smyth make the case that "the difference between market rate and ministry is worth it," Ivey says. "Because in the long run, that difference is going to be made up in ministering and doing mission, not only to the homeless college students, but also to get the community involved in this ministry and then, ergo, involved in church again."

That's a fair tradeoff for House of Prayer, McGill says.

"Their mission is what sold us on forming this partnership," he says. "What they were doing impressed us, that they were seeking housing for homeless individuals. And this was right at the beginning of the pandemic. We just couldn't resist the thought of helping out. And they pay a fair sum of money each month. It's a win-win as far as House of Prayer is concerned."

The rectory got its first resident from the Depaul program in February 2021, and a second person moved in about six months later. There is room to house four people currently, with plans to expand to five people once the basement is renovated as living quarters for a house manager, McGill says.

The diocese and Depaul are also working with Christ Church and St. Michael's Episcopal Church in Northwest Philadelphia to bring a similar program there, and hopes to expand to other churches struggling with being able to do outreach and mission work in their communities.

"It really is taking your faith and putting it to work, in terms of how you would like to be the body of Christ in ways you've not ever done before, the whole sense of being a neighbor in your community," Ivey says. "This is a new model. With a ministry like Depaul, it gives meaning to our spaces. People will see your church and they'll go, 'Oh, we know we're a part of what's going on there. They have an interest in us because they're addressing the needs that we have.'"

Homelessness Goes to College

During the last homeless count in 2019, before the pandemic, the Hope Center at Temple University found that, in Philadelphia, approximately 12 to 17 percent of students had experienced housing insecurity or homelessness in the previous year, Sandra Guillory, director of Depaul USA Philadelphia, says.

However, most people remain unaware of the problem.

"I think a lot of folks remember their own college experience from 10, 20 years ago," Guillory says. "They were eating Ramen and scrounging to have change to go buy a beer. And they think that's what college is still like when people talk about their hardships right now. No, it's not. These are young people today who are first-generation college students who are living in their cars to go to school or sleeping in other people's

basements. And the Covid pandemic has accelerated all of that in so many ways, like where people were and how they couldn't stay where they currently were.

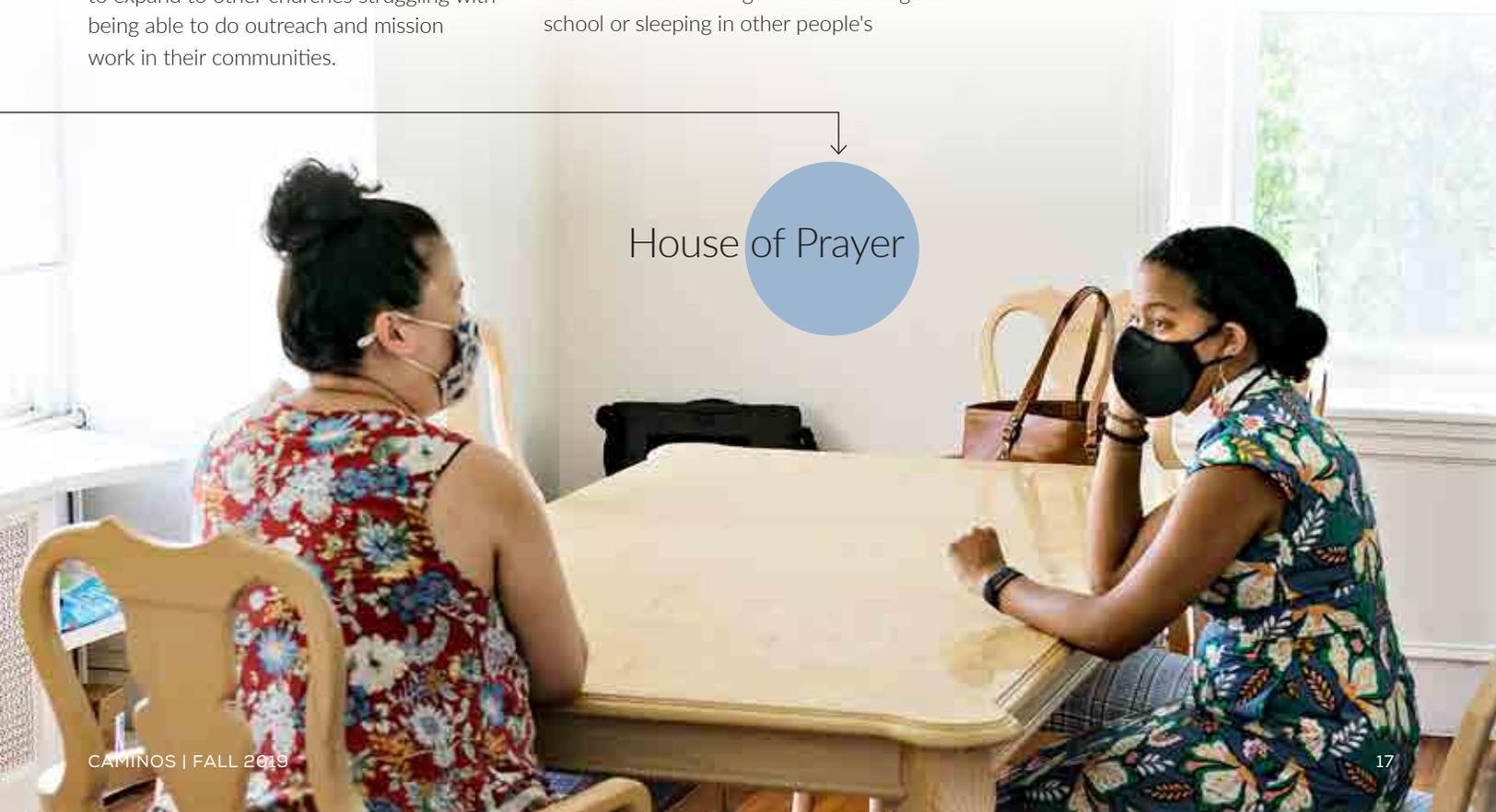
"Not everyone needs long-term housing for two years, but we do need to find more resources for our young people," she says.

Depaul USA, an affiliate of the international homelessness services organization, Depaul International Group, operates in six cities with 17 programs. Programs in Philadelphia provide various services to help individuals exit homelessness, including housing, case management, financial education, and consumer-centered employment assistance.

The partnership with the Episcopal Diocese of Pennsylvania is a great fit for Depaul Philadelphia, Guillory says.

"We believe strongly in partnering with religious communities to figure out how to adapt and use their buildings because they're built as housing, so they're kind of perfect," she says. "And I think our mission of using these homes for housing and using these buildings to serve our most vulnerable neighbors, I think it fits really nicely in the missions of the religious communities and with us."

To learn more about Depaul USA or support their work to eradicate homelessness, visit <https://depaulusa.org>.



W E L C O M E

New Faces

We asked about everything and have their answers here.

“Jesus is my everything. But mostly my best friend.”

The Rev. Lorraine Harris



The Rev. Lorraine Harris
St. James' Episcopal Church
in Kingsessing (Phila.)



The Rev. Eric Hungerford,
St. Paul's Episcopal Church
in Chestnut Hill (Phila.)



The Rev. Benjamin Capps
Saint Andrew's Episcopal
Church, Glenmoore

“I am deeply interested in the arts and unconventional ways to reach out to potential new Episcopalians.”

The Rev. Eric Hungerford



The Rev. Trey Kennedy
St. Luke's Episcopal
Church, Newtown



The Rev. Jill LaRoche Wikel
St. John's Episcopal
Church, Glen Mills



The Rev. Joseph
Wallace-Williams
Church of St. Luke and
the Epiphany, Phila.

“Turning everything into nachos.”

The Rev. Benjamin Capps,
on what superpower he
would like to have.

Newly Ordained



The Rev. John Conner
Grace Church, Hulmeville/
Church of the Incarnation,
Morrisville



The Rev. Steve Lindsay
Church of the Ascension,
Parkesburg

Which Priest?

- Is a fencer?*
- Counts iconography as a hobby?*
- Is an avid camper?*
- Is a trained classical guitarist?*

Fencer/Kennedy; iconography/Wallace-Williams; camper/LaRoche Wikel; guitarist/Hungerford

Partnering with Philabundance

No One Should Go Hungry While Healthy Food Goes to Waste

Every Tuesday morning, Carolyn Ellis, director of The Food Cupboard at the Church of Annunciation on Carpenter Lane in Northwest Philadelphia, joins with her volunteers to prepare for one of the busiest days of the week. Clients begin waiting in line well before the 11 a.m. opening, and stream in and out of the food pantry throughout the day. Each will leave with healthy portions of both fresh and non-perishable food, and might also receive some instruction on life skills, nutrition and perhaps even recipes to use with the more unique ingredients they may cart home. Some might linger, enjoying the camaraderie and the opportunity for social contact – even more welcome during times of Covid isolation, Ellis said.

“Before Covid, we had a group of men who would sit here and play dominoes,” she said. “It’s become a social thing – the highlight of the week for many of the people who come here.”

Whatever food is unclaimed by the end of the afternoon is delivered to the Four Freedoms House of Philadelphia, where it is shared with its senior residents who also struggle with food insecurity. Nothing goes to waste, Ellis said, and all of it is appreciated.



Volunteers from Church of the Annunciation. From left: Jackie Allen, Judy Prout, Benne Noble, Carolyn Ellis and Cathy Barnes.

“Every one of the people we serve is grateful,” she said. “They say, ‘Oh, thank God you’re here,’ or they talk about how they can’t believe how much food they get. They thank us for helping to feed their family. It’s a good feeling. We all look forward to Tuesday.”

The goodwill – and the very real lessening of hunger in Ellis’ community and beyond – is the result of a partnership between churches in the



Community Partners

diocese and Philabundance, a non-profit organization founded in 1984 with the simple belief that no one should go hungry while healthy food goes to waste. At its inception, Philabundance was run by former corporate communicator Pamela Rainey Lawler, who delivered food to needy city residents from her Subaru. Last year, the organization's 150-plus employees distributed more than 50 million pounds of food through its 350 member agencies in nine counties – five in Pennsylvania and four in New Jersey, according to Cathy Faatz, a distribution coordinator at Philabundance. Through these cooperative efforts, the organization is able to help feed roughly 90,000 people (including nearly 30,000 children) each week.

"We couldn't do it without the people we work with at the agencies, which includes food cupboards, pantries and emergency kitchens," said Faatz. "And we are able to do it in a way that makes sense for the community. They are the ones who know the community best, know what their needs are and the best way to meet them, whether it's a food cupboard, or a boxed meal for seniors or a retail rescue, where we can partner with a local grocery store to pick up extra food, such as produce. We refer to it as the 'last mile' of service."

The cooperative arrangement was particularly helpful during the Covid epidemic, which forced the organization to rethink delivery models, said Faatz, who worked with churches and agencies to develop drive-through pick-ups and other methods of contactless distribution.

'Whatever We Need'

At the Church of the Annunciation, Ellis has been overseeing The Food Cupboard for the past 10 years, and has seen the quality of the pantry's offerings improve – all thanks to Philabundance. "They provide whatever we need – everything from the shelving and the bins and baskets we use

to store the food, fresh produce, a new refrigerator and freezer ... and they even promised us a van that we can use for pick-ups and deliveries. They also gave us a \$500 Sunoco gift card to help with our pickups, and that really came in handy. They've been wonderful, and it's been a great partnership."

Across town, at the Philabundance hub deep in South Philly, volunteers from St. Mark's parish pick up roughly 700 pounds of fresh food every Tuesday morning and deliver it to the Church of the Crucifixion at the corner of Eighth and Bainbridge. There, the St. Mark's volunteers work with Crucifixion's Rev. Yesenia Alejandro – known as Mother Jessie – and her volunteers to set up food tables "farm market style," according to Charlie Miller, the volunteer coordinator for St. Mark's. Over the next four hours, more than 200 people will pass through, collecting fresh bread, fruits and vegetables and dairy products. The Tuesday morning fresh market offerings are supplemented by access to non-perishables from Tuesday to Friday at St. Mark's.

"The Food Cupboard at St. Mark's has been in existence going on 40 years now," said Miller, who adds that the churches also leveraged the partnership with Philabundance to expand into a food ministry at St. Simon the Cyrenian Church in Point Breeze, where Paul Jackson had been providing hot lunch-time meals to hungry neighbors for years.

Beginning in 2015, Jackson said he began purchasing large quantities of food from vendors in the Italian Market in South Philadelphia to serve to the homeless at St. Simon's twice a month. At that point, he estimates that he served nearly 50 people each time. During the Covid pandemic, the level of need expanded, as did Jackson's efforts to meet that need. His hearty meals of baked chicken, cooked cabbage and fried rice and peppers currently draw up to 200 people a day, six days a week. He is joined by a number of volunteers, who make sure the hot meals get to those who would otherwise go hungry.



Reduction of Hunger



Staff from St. Luke's in Germantown (l to r): Roberto Morales, Dina Harvey and the Rev. Canon Lorna Williams.

Food Outreach

"It's a labor of love," he says of the demanding schedule he keeps. "You have to take care of people as well as you can, while you can. You never know, someday, I may be on the street and I would hope someone else would be there to take care of me. I look at it this way: Everyone deserves respect, whether you sleep under a roof or under the stars."

Jackson's work intersected with Philabundance efforts when another weekly free "farm market" was set up at St. Simons. It is supported by the St. Mark's volunteers, who go to the Philabundance hub on Friday mornings and drop off fresh fruits and vegetables, eggs, fresh bread and other seasonal offerings at Jackson's church. They then return to set up another market at St. Mark's on Saturdays. All told, Miller said, food is distributed to hundreds of households throughout the city each week.

"We listened to the people we served to meet an acute, immediate need," Miller said. "They told us what they needed and we were able to leverage this beautiful ministry partnership to help them. We know we are participating in the reduction of hunger."

At St. Luke's parish in Germantown, Father David Morris has been working with Philabundance for 15 years. The organization makes bi-weekly deliveries of non-perishable foods, which St. Luke's supplements with fresh fruits and vegetables from Philly Food Rescue. About five years ago, Philabundance granted the church much-needed kitchen equipment, such as a walk-in refrigerator and a freezer, which, Morris says, "comes in pretty handy when we can buy high-nutrition items like meat, or other foods in bulk." As with other parishes, St. Luke's had to adjust their delivery methods due to Covid, but their efforts never wavered. "We never stopped

providing free food to the people who needed it," he said. "On the average, we're helping 20 to 30 families each day."

Part of the effectiveness of the partnership between Philabundance and the Episcopal churches' programs is the organization's significant buying power, says Eleanor Anderson, a former ministry resident who focused on outreach efforts at St. Mark's and is now a ministry associate at Grace Church in Newark. "Because Philabundance is so large, they have the buying power to be able to get the food at very reasonable costs – maybe a fraction of a dollar per pound of food – and the churches can afford to buy in bulk," she said. "We were able to distribute about a ton of food bi-monthly through St. Mark's, and it was good, nutritious, high-quality food – not highly processed or unhealthy food."



Morales, stocking shelves. Jackson, from St. Simon's, maintains an intense schedule. "Everyone deserves respect, whether you sleep under a roof or under the stars."



Addressing the Persistent Issue of Poverty

Hunger and poverty present persistent and heartbreaking realities for many in Philadelphia and the surrounding communities. With one in four families in the Philadelphia area living in poverty – the highest rate among the 10 most populous cities in the U.S. – the commitment to end poverty has become a priority for the diocese and a driver of many of its programs.

Anderson said she sees the Episcopal food cupboard programs and other outreach work as fulfilling the mission of Jesus Christ: “We are called to feed the hungry, clothe the naked and tend to the sick. It is our job as Christians to treat others as we would like to be treated.”

Miller, who was just confirmed this past spring, said that one of the factors that drew him to the Episcopal church was its commitment to social change and equity. “And yes, there are broader, systemic issues we can all work on, but we can also effectively address the immediate and acute needs and problems of the people we serve on a very basic level by just feeding people, by providing food where it needs to be,” he said. “There is a beauty to that sort of direct ministry.”

Adds Morris: “We see the nutritional ministries as being in line with our bishop’s call to service. I don’t see addressing poverty as a single issue. Our bishop has spearheaded a revival of people helping others, and that takes many forms of outreach: legal aid, health fairs, voter registration – it’s all part of it. And it’s part of us helping each other. We’ve had people come to a meal here, and become a volunteer. You share of plate of spaghetti with someone, you learn about their joys and sorrows and you begin to develop a sense of community.”

For Jackson, the issue can be stated even more simply: “It doesn’t help to talk about it – you have to be about it.”



Nutrition Ministries →



Evensong as Evangelism

Think Your Church Can't Do An Evensong Service? Think Again, Says St. Thomas Whitemarsh Minister of Music Michael Smith

Powerful Evangelism

Michael Smith first encountered the profound beauty and mystery of Evensong while attending Samford University, a Southern Baptist school in Birmingham, Alabama. He had grown up as a Southern Baptist, and chose Samford because of its fine music program.

"There was a regional convention of the American Guild of Organists in Birmingham, and I went to one of the events, which was Evensong at the cathedral there," Smith recalls. "I had never seen anything like that. It just blew me away. And I have a very concrete memory of singing the hymn, 'O Praise Ye The Lord' and—on the bus leaving that Evensong—I remember thinking, 'I have to become an Episcopalian now.'"

While still in school, Smith became the organist and choirmaster at St. Andrew's, a small Episcopal church in Birmingham. Within a year, he was confirmed as an Episcopalian. After graduating from Samford with a degree in church music, Smith went on to earn graduate degrees at Yale University in organ performance and choral conducting, and then worked at private boarding schools in Massachusetts and Philadelphia, serving as music director in small Episcopal parishes throughout his studies and career "to help them discover the beauty of these musical liturgies."

In 2017, Smith joined St. Thomas' Church, Whitemarsh, in Fort Washington as Minister of Music. He still treasures the beautiful Anglican Evensong service—which follows the traditional pattern in The Book of Common Prayer and consists of choral music (psalms, canticles, and anthems), scripture readings and prayers—as a "worshipful and personal encounter with God." But Smith also believes it can play an important role in evangelism and faith formation. "I really resist doing Evensong as a concert or doing it once a year as our little Evensong project. I think it has to have a bigger purpose."

'It Gives People Room to See How They Fit into the Liturgy'

For the past couple of years, Smith has been working with the diocese to develop a plan to enable each parish to do Evensong their way.

"This idea that Evensong has to be just like Cambridge and Oxford in England, or at the big cathedrals with loads of resources and two organists—that's an unfortunate myth," Smith says. "A beautiful, reverent, holy Evensong can be done with a volunteer choir and no organ and simple chants. For this particular project, I hope it will show people

who have always thought, 'Well, we just can't pull that off,' that you can, indeed."

In fact, doing Evensong at a consistent time and inviting people from the community to attend can be a powerful form of evangelism, he says. Smith jokingly calls Evensong "sort of like a gateway drug for the church", because it doesn't ask anything of you except presence.

"The visitor, the hesitant, the seeker—you come to Evensong and something happens to you. It's like the centuries of that prayer tradition just washing over you and it gives people room to see how they fit into the liturgy. And then that leads them to explore and come to Eucharist and, hopefully, jump in."

You need only look to the Anglican Church in England to find evidence that supports Evensong's link to evangelism. While Anglican church attendance has been falling at a rate of 10 percent per decade, attendance at cathedrals nationwide has grown, particularly at Choral Evensong services. And the audience for BBC Radio 3's weekly Choral Evensong broadcast has topped 300,000 listeners, an all-time high.

"I think it's one of the most underused tools we have," Smith says.



Smith practices with choir here.



→ Straight from The Book of Common Prayer

Smith took on the Evensong project at the request of Bishop Daniel Gutiérrez shortly before the Covid-19 global pandemic struck in 2020, bringing an abrupt halt to in-person services and moving services online for most of the year and into 2021. And just as church services moved online and even onto Philadelphia television during the pandemic, so did the Evensong project.

"I came up with almost a script that is straight out of the The Book of Common Prayer. No alterations," Smith says. "Of all the options that are in the The Book of Common Prayer, I chose the options that would be the simplest for any parish to overlay their own sensibilities on, while following the rubrics so that it's

strictly a prayerbook service. And then we recorded the first two here at St. Thomas just as a way of getting it started."

All choir members and Smith wore face masks for the recordings of the two Evensong services in the spring, which were shown on the CW-Philly at 10 a.m. Sunday morning on May 30 and June 20, 2021, as well as on the diocese's One Love Channel and Facebook at 8 p.m. Both services remain available for viewing on the diocese's YouTube channel under Evensong.

The diocese is recruiting other churches to record more Evensong services, and the hope is that churches throughout the diocese of all sizes, styles, and musical ability will be inspired to learn how to incorporate Evensong into their own parish life and worship.

In September, Evensong from Church of the Good Samaritan, Paoli, was broadcast, and October featured a broadcast of Evensong from Church of the Good Shepherd, Rosemont.

Two services have already been scheduled for broadcast in 2022:

- **1/13/22: Evensong from St. Paul's Episcopal Church, Elkins Park**
- **2/17/22: Evensong from St. Peter's Episcopal Church, Phila.**

If your church is interested in learning more about doing an Evensong service, please contact Michael Smith at mws.organist@gmail.com.

Loving Presence

Revolutionary Journey to Dismantling Racism Begins with Baptismal Covenant

In the wake of the murder of George Floyd in May 2020, as the Covid-19 global pandemic raged and masses of protestors took to the streets across the nation to demand justice and an end to systemic racism, Bishop Daniel Gutiérrez held his weekly Zoom meeting with clergy, and made a bold pledge.

“He staked his episcopacy on dismantling racism in the Diocese of Pennsylvania, and in service of that promise, he created this group known as Loving Presence,” recalls the Very Rev. Judith Sullivan, dean of the Philadelphia Episcopal Cathedral and, along with the Rev. Canon Jordan Casson, co-chair of the Loving Presence group. “It’s an unusual name, and that’s because it had an unusual charge and an unusual scope. The bishop charged us with creating a plan to see his vision through, which was to dismantle racism.”

When Loving Presence, a diverse group of 15 clergy members from across the diocese, including men and women of color and white, released its final report in June 2021, it was titled: “Toward a Vision of Anti-Racist Transformation in the Episcopal Diocese of Pennsylvania: A Revolution of the Heart Leading to a Discipline of Action.” The report identifies 10 major recommendations, with accompanying elaborations and action steps for implementation of each recommendation categorized as short-term, medium-term, and long-term. The report, and an accompanying video, are available on the diocesan website.

It is essential reading for everyone in the Diocese of Pennsylvania, and beyond.

“I do believe that this diocese has all of the grace to do this and do this well, and be leading examples of how you do this as an institution as old as ours,” Sullivan says. “As the Bishop likes to say, we are revolutionary.”



Members of the Loving Presence (l to r): The Rev. Canon Jordan Casson, the Rev. Barbara Ballenger, Irma Tyler-Wood from KI Thoughtbridge, the Very Rev. Judith Sullivan and the Rev. Jarrett Kerbel.

Casson quickly adds: “And this is a revolutionary journey, for sure.”

That journey begins with our Baptismal Covenant.

“We were clear, as a group, that racism affects all of us and is damaging, is debilitating, and will only continue to do this if we didn’t start the engines moving the other way, which is the justice, love, grace and most importantly, the promises we make in our Baptismal Covenant as Christians,” Casson says.

That’s why the first recommendation in the report is: “All members of the Diocese of Pennsylvania be invited to undertake the work of antiracism in accordance with their Baptismal Covenant.”

A Tool to Aid Spiritual Discernment in Addressing Racism

To help people undertake that “ongoing, honest, and rigorous process of self-examination,” the report includes a spiritual discernment tool in Appendix A titled: “Living Our Baptismal Promises: A Revolution of the Heart Leading to a Discipline of Action.”

The discernment tool takes each of us through an “intensely personal and specific” process of examining our lives in light of the Baptismal Covenant, with four overarching questions leading from prayer to transformation, as those engaging with the process create their own personal covenant statement. A model statement is offered as a guide.

The questions are:

- **PRAYER:** How may I engage more deeply in my prayer life as I invite God's presence in identifying, confessing, and reforming my own racist attitudes and behaviors?
- **CONFESSION:** What behaviors and blindness do I see in myself that I will stop and/or change?
- **For white persons, this means a renunciation of the idolatry of whiteness, the idolatry of privilege, and the idolatry of a false security and a false peace.**
- **REFORMATION:** How will I demonstrate my expanded vision of racial equity in my life and wider community?
- **TRANSFORMATION:** How will God's vision of a just and loving society be reflected in my own actions and attitudes to bring change?

As a first step, Casson and Sullivan encourage all members of the diocese to download and print out the spiritual discernment tool in the Loving Presence Report, and commit to the process of remembrance, reflection, and repentance it calls for. Visit diopa.org/racialjustice for report.

"You could do it in a group, you can do it alone. You could do it slowly over time," Sullivan says. "You could have a small personal retreat with that material, but to pray and discern and reflect about your own life, honestly, about how you are meeting that promise and what changes you might want to effect. And of course, all of us have changes to effect, changes to make in ourselves, and we pray to God for God's help, for God's grace, for strength, for clarity, for wisdom, for discernment."

'Hard, Lifelong Generational Work'

The Loving Presence Group understood how difficult the goal of dismantling racism would be, and that the diocese would need help to accomplish such a bold and ambitious outcome. So another recommendation in the report is: "An independent consulting organization be engaged to provide diocesan-wide assessment, coaching, and training for individuals, groups, parishes, and diocesan bodies undertaking the work of the antiracist transformation of the diocese."

Ki ThoughtBridge, a consulting firm with past engagement in the diocese, was selected to equip clergy and lay leadership teams in parishes with the essential adaptive leadership skills needed to engage in effective anti-racism work, and has begun collaborating with diocesan bodies already engaged in anti-racism work, as well as an advisory group for implementation chaired by Casson.

"[The consultants] said several things, one was that this is a lifelong commitment to the work," Casson says. "This is not a one-and-done, where you have a report and you're going to implement all these things in a year and then we will be there. No, we're talking about change. The country has not always done well with this particular type of change. If they haven't figured it out in 200 to 300 years, we're not going to just wave a wand and poof."

Revolutionary Journey

Workshop Kicks Off Loving Presence Journey

An online workshop titled "Adaptive Leadership Work: Beginning The Loving Presence Journey" will be held Friday night, December 2, and Saturday, December 3, 2021 for Clergy and Lay Leadership teams from churches throughout the diocese to begin the work of dismantling racism outlined in the Loving Presence report.

Ki ThoughtBridge will lead the workshop sessions. The Friday night session, titled "Introduction to the Adaptive Leadership: A Call to Action," takes place from 6-9:30 p.m., and will begin laying the foundation for conducting the parish and diocesan conversations on race and racism.

It's followed on Saturday by two sessions: "The Leadership Difference: Establishing a Shared Story," from 8 a.m. to noon; and "Adaptive Leadership Skills: Learning to Lead and Manage Change," from 1- 3:30 p.m.

Registration for Clergy and Lay Leadership teams that wish to participate is through Eventbrite. Go to www.diopa.org/racialjustice for details.

“So that was strong for us to understand that this was not going to be just a rubber stamp, that this was going to be hard, lifelong generational work to live into many of the things that the report calls for. I think when it comes to systems and navigating conflict, addressing conflict, addressing change and the levels of where you start to where you end, I think Ki ThoughtBridge is just fabulous. The insights that they have brought into how we do this, when we do it, why we do it, and what we should expect and then rebuild from there has just been terrific.”

The work with clergy and lay leaders will begin as Ki ThoughtBridge will lead a series of workshops in December. (See sidebar, page 27.)

“So immediately, the idea is that this is participatory,” Sullivan says. “This is not simply led by clergy alone. This is the work of the clergy. This is the work of the laity. It takes all of us and we have to come together and support each other as we go through it and to acknowledge openly that change is really hard. It stirs up a lot of emotions and sometimes makes people feel frightened and we need to be equipped to respond and to lead. And that’s what Ki Thought Bridge will help us to do. And we think that’s extremely important.”

Rooted in History and Scripture

The report opens by briefly recounting how the histories of the Episcopal Church and the Diocese of Philadelphia are “inextricably linked” to the history of the United States. It discusses the mistreatment of the Rev. Absalom Jones, the Episcopal Church’s first Black priest, and the congregation he established, the African Episcopal Church of St. Thomas. “For almost one hundred years after its incorporation, St. Thomas was denied the right to vote in diocesan conventions due to the Church’s position on race,” the report states.

“We wanted to contextualize this work and say we recognize that racism is prevalent throughout our society as a culture,” Casson says. “But where it begins with us as a diocese and as a church in Pennsylvania is in the 1700s with Absalom Jones and St. Thomas. So that way, when people read the report, they could begin with Philadelphia, begin with the first Black church and the first Black priest, and then start to move through the arc of the

American story of how we get to a George Floyd. And then our response to the work ahead. So it is a contextual report, as much as it is a report that any diocese in the country can read and start to enact changes in their own contexts toward a more anti-racist way of life.”

The report also examines how Holy Scripture was historically used to defend African enslavement, and calls for us to “look with a wider lens at salvation history as a whole, and recognize that we have, as often as not, misread ourselves into salvation history with evil consequences that betray our alleged faithfulness to the Word of God. In particular, the salvation history tropes of “the chosen people” and “the promised land,” have misled believers time and again into delusions of exceptionalism and superiority—notably expressed as whiteness and white supremacy.”



The challenge we face is summed up in the report as follows:

... in the context of the United States of America in the 21st century, we must conclude that our biggest challenge in following the light of Christ is to learn at long last how to share

God’s space—resources, power, recognition, access to the means of life, personhood—equitably between white people, who have set themselves apart in a fortress of privilege, and people of color. Given the world as we have found it in this century, our faith in God’s Good News calls all of us to meet each other’s gaze with respect for the human dignity of all, and for the love of neighbor that Christ so urgently taught.

To do this we must undertake the daunting task of undoing the ideologies, systems, and structures of racism and white supremacy at every level.

Please download and read the full Loving Presence report for all of the recommendations, historical and scriptural context, and helpful appendices that together serve as the Diocese of Pennsylvania’s action plan to dismantle racism.

“We are hopeful and we remain humble. It will take our lifetimes, I think, to live into this call,” Sullivan says. “It’s really a calling to every one of us, a calling to our church communities, our parishes. And it’s going to take resolution, dedication, determination and hard work. It is. And there will be joy along the way, I expect, too. Because the Holy Spirit is in it and whenever the Holy Spirit turns up, there is joy. So we will look for that. We will anticipate it. We will look for this deep change, which will come, but we come humbly.”

Media Center and Digital Disciples



The pandemic created an opportunity for churches to reach beyond the physical pews and to use technology to share the Gospel. Here's information on three ways the diocese is helping.

Digital Disciples

The need for help in taping, streaming, editing, analyzing and marketing digital programming was apparent. Responding to that need, Bishop Daniel Gutiérrez created a group of talent from within our churches – Digital Disciples – who could answer this call. Requests are run through the diocese and the digital disciple that fits the request is contacted. Ideally, digital disciples have a connection to one of our churches and/or are enrolled in a university program.

Technology Grants

Paired with in-person and virtual assistance, the diocese also offered churches technology grants. The grants – up to \$2,500 per church - provide churches with the tools needed to pre-record and/or stream their services and

ministries. These grants can be used to bring internet into a space, or acquire/ upgrade equipment used for virtual worship (cameras, lighting, microphones, software, etc.). As of printing, 72 churches out of the 135 in the diocese received grants.

Media Center

Even with church resuming back in the sanctuary for some, many of our churches expressed a desire to continue to live-stream services – to reach new audiences and/or reach those who are unable to come to church due to sickness or travel.

An idea of Bishop Gutierrez's since he came to the diocese, the Media Center launched in Fall 2021 next to the diocesan house. Digital Disciples hold office hours to accommodate churches who want to come in for training; test equipment; or troubleshoot issues.

For more information on any of these programs visit www.diopamediacycenter.org or contact jenbtucker@diopa.org.



Goats Forge Connection Between Church and Community

The Church of the Holy Apostles partnered with the Philly Goat Project to help clear invasive plant species. They also planted seeds in the surrounding neighborhoods.

Promote Well-Being

Quick, what do building community, getting rid of invasive plant species, and evangelism have in common?

Would You Believe Goats?

At Church of the Holy Apostles in the Penn Wynne section of Wynnewood, four goats from the nonprofit Philly Goat Project managed to help achieve that strange trifecta of goals during their memorable eight-day visit in May 2021, says the Rev. James Stambaugh, rector of Holy Apostles.

It all started with the invasive plant species, which included invasive honeysuckle, invasive rose, and Japanese knotweed, among others, that had basically overtaken the sloped portion of Holy Apostles' property behind the church. Stambaugh's wife, Deb, and other church members worked hard to begin reclaiming the densely forested area, but needed help.

One member had heard about the nonprofit Philly Goat Project, founded by Karen Krivit, which is "committed to engaging with friends and neighbors across generations to promote well-being, take care of our environment, and create unique opportunities with partners around the city."

Since the Philly Goat Project considers building community its "cornerstone," it was a match made in heaven.

"I'm always looking for ways to engage in community, ways to do evangelism, and ways to love our neighbors," Stambaugh says. "That's a question I ask of any event like that. How can we make this into an opportunity for community engagement?"

'Those Little Seeds Are Planted'

While the goats took care of clearing invasive plant species the old-fashioned way by day, they also quickly turned it into a spectator sport, as large and enthusiastic crowds of children and families from the community came to watch them. The church promoted through social media, put out large banners advertising the goats' visit, and sent home flyers with children who attend a day care that rents space at Holy Apostles.

One of the highlights was the evening "goat walk," with trained adult volunteers leading the goats. Each goat, trained to respond to hand and voice signals, also had leads for three children to take turns walking with them. Before the first walk, Stambaugh led a short blessing of the goats service, adapted from the Book of Occasional Services.

The evening goat walks took the goats from the church property into the community. "There's a park right next to the church, so we walked around the park with the goats and there was a throng of kids and their parents following. It was a lot of fun," Stambaugh says.

Over the course of the week-and-a-half the goats were there (they had other commitments on the weekend), Stambaugh says children and parents from the church mingled with people from the neighborhood to enjoy getting to know the distinct personalities of each goat. The church estimates that some 250 people, which includes some repeat attendees, came by to watch and take part in the goat walks and other activities.



Stambaugh and his wife, Deb, spent every afternoon hanging out by the goat pen, having “some really wonderful conversations” with neighbors from the community.

“It was very well-received by the neighborhood,” Stambaugh says. “It was more successful in that regard than we imagined it would be. And that was really cool. There are a lot of people from the surrounding five miles who are like, ‘Oh, I never knew that this church was here.’ Now, they do. Even if that’s that, those little seeds are planted and you never know what will grow from them.”

Over the following months, Stambaugh would occasionally see one of the families from the neighborhood whose first contact with the church was coming to see the goats, and stop to chat with them. In late September, they attended Holy Apostles’ family service for the first time.

A little seed had sprouted.

‘They View the Church Differently Now’

The positive connection the goats helped forge between Holy Apostles and the community lingers to this day.

“From the day that the goats left, people were asking me when they’re coming back,” Stambaugh says. “When I’m walking around, meeting people, talking to people in the neighborhood that I know, they frequently ask me about the goats. It’s definitely something that resonated in the neighborhood. It is a natural conversation starter, even now that the goats have been gone for a few months. There’s some connection between the church and the community that lives on because of that memory. And I’m sure they view the church differently now.”

As for the land where the goats plied their trade, there is now interest in creating a path and woodland garden, perhaps a prayer garden, including native plants that attract pollinators such as butterflies and bees. Some neighbors from the community with a passion for gardening have gotten involved in helping make that happen.

While the work on the previously unused land behind the church continues,

Stambaugh keeps the door open to bringing back the goats for a return engagement. “I think probably I would love to have the goats back if they’ll come back as a part of that plan” he says.

‘We Are the Light of Christ Here in This Neighborhood’

Stambaugh says the Philly Goat Project partnership “has energized our ongoing conversations about what evangelism is and outreach and mission, and being an outward-focused parish. Because we are nestled in this neighborhood, we have a unique opportunity that a lot of churches don’t to be a neighborhood parish. I get to live in the neighborhood and walk to the church. And a lot of people who go to the church, walk to church, which is just a really neat thing.

“We know the church is a spiritual resource for the whole neighborhood and we have a certain kind of a spiritual responsibility to pray for, to be present to, the whole neighborhood—whether or not all of our neighbors come to our church or give money or not. That’s not the point. The point is we are the light of Christ here in this neighborhood, and that’s our mission and our calling.”

BEYOND SUNDAY

“I started the food pantry when I had my son in 2018 because I realized while I was on unpaid maternity leave how easy it would be to end up in need of basic necessities,” said Maryann Waters, pictured below (center). Waters serves as one of the food pantry volunteers and senior warden for the Church of St. John the Evangelist in Essington. “We originally opened once a month in conjunction with our community dinner. However, when Covid-19 hit we had to stop the dinners and found the community was still reaching out for the food pantry. We started delivery and pick up for guests, and then moved into being open every week in 2021.” Food pantry guests have also become part of the all volunteer group. The team of 15 volunteers has grown through social media and to include guests as well.



The Anglican Communion & the Episcopal Diocese of Pennsylvania

The Rev. James Stambaugh

Every member of every parish of the Diocese of Pennsylvania is also a member of the worldwide Anglican Communion. We are an integral part of the third largest group of Christians in the world. But exactly what is the Anglican Communion? What benefits do we enjoy as members, and what responsibilities must we hold sacred?

Like Roman Catholics and the Eastern Orthodox, Anglicans throughout the world are a diverse bunch. More than other traditions, however, we Anglicans have trouble giving an “elevator pitch,” the one-minute rundown of what makes us unique. It is notoriously hard to define the unique qualities and characteristics of Anglicanism. This article will explore several avenues toward a working definition of the Anglicanism.

Obviously, this isn't an elevator pitch (unless we're stuck on a broken elevator with plenty of time). Instead, I hope to sketch a multi-dimensional portrait of Anglicanism with the intent of emphasizing how important the Anglican Communion is to our identity as Jesus-followers in the Episcopal Diocese of Pennsylvania. In pursuit of understanding the Anglican Communion, I will invite you to try on a variety of lenses—historical, institutional, doctrinal, liturgical, and finally through the “bi-focal” lens of relationships and mission. Instead of a blur, what will hopefully emerge is a clearer, if nuanced, picture of what the

Anglican Communion means to us in our own context.

Let's first look at an historical approach toward defining Anglicanism. Anglican churches throughout the world, including the Episcopal Church, are descendants of the Church of England. The Church of England was a result of the English Reformation in creative and sometimes violent tension with the English catholic tradition. Settlers and missionaries brought the Church of England with them as the British Empire expanded around the globe in the 17th through the early 20th centuries. The Anglican Communion came into being as colonial churches developed in their contexts and navigated the tricky politics of colonial governments and independence movements. Consequently, Anglicanism today is marked by British colonialism.

A good example of this in our own context is the vestry as it operates in the Episcopal Church. Our vestries developed as they did because priests were in short supply in the American colonies in 18th century. This leadership gap was a result of the politics of the British Empire, but it created an opportunity for the development of strong and unique lay leadership in what eventually became the Episcopal church. There are other more insidious effects of colonialism and imperialism on Anglicanism throughout the world. While some Anglican missionaries

The Anglican Communion is one way to enact our relationship with Jesus that is both local and global, personal and communal.

Aspects of  Worship

The Anglican Communion is constituted of 42 provinces in 165 countries on every continent.



Liturgy & Worship

stood up for the well-being of the people they served in defiance of colonial governments, there are many more cases where Anglicans, including Episcopalians, have allowed imperial interests to get in the way of our commitment to the Gospel. Colonialism, and our participation in it, has caused extraordinary damage. Yet, this isn't the whole story. This doesn't explain the extraordinary resilience and authentic faith of many of those who have suffered and continue to suffer injustice. In other words, the historical circumstances of imperialism and colonialism—including its great sinfulness—do not fully determine what Anglicanism is today. The sinfulness of Christians can never eclipse the mercy of God.

Our complex history has given rise to complex institutions. Let's explore Anglicanism through this institutional lens. The Anglican Communion is constituted of 42 provinces in 165 countries on every continent. It is the spiritual home for tens of millions of Christians worldwide. Each Province is a self-governing Church with jurisdiction over a particular geographic area. All the Provinces share four institutional aspects of unity, officially called the four Instruments of Communion. First and

foremost, each Province is in official communion with the See of Canterbury, the ancient seat of the archbishop of Canterbury. Except for the Church of England, the archbishop of Canterbury does not govern the Provinces of the Anglican Communion. The archbishop is not our pope, but a symbol of our mutual continuity with the Apostolic faith that has been handed down from the time of Jesus. The other Instruments are the Lambeth Conference, a meeting of all bishops in the Communion that takes place every 8-10 years; the Primate's Meeting, which is a yearly gathering of the lead bishop (known as Primates) of each Province; and the Anglican Consultative Council, which is a large gathering of laity and clergy from around the world.

While there are disagreements and rifts that affect the institutions of the Anglican Communion, we must remember that institutional unity is not the same thing as spiritual unity. Institutions can foster unity or discourage it, but the essence of unity is more profound. The spiritual unity of Christ's body is not constrained by the limitations of any of our institutions. We have to dig deeper still to find the source of unity and purpose in the Anglican Communion.

Another way to define Anglicanism is by what Anglicans believe. In some ways, this is the clearest articulation of Anglicanism, but also the most contested. The classic articulation of the Anglican approach to doctrine is known as the Chicago-Lambeth Quadrilateral. It attempts to describe the four essential elements of apostolic, catholic (universal) faith. The four elements are Scripture, the Creeds, the Sacraments of Baptism and Eucharist, and the historic episcopate (office of bishops) adapted to

local circumstances. These remain important marks of Anglican identity, even as Anglicans differ in understanding how these elements constitute and shape the Christian life. To some extent, it is possible to be faithful to Jesus and disagree on the interpretation of Scripture, the nature of the Sacraments, and so on. As important as doctrine is, we have found that unity cannot be based on cognitive agreement alone.

We could try to define Anglicanism through our liturgy and worship. Anglicans have inherited distinctive aspects of worship that are embodied in the Prayer Book tradition. Some hallmarks of this tradition are a strong focus on Scripture, worship in the language of the people, monastic patterns of prayer adapted and made available for every Christian, excellent and inspiring music, and an approach to the sacraments that is both deeply catholic and reformed. This heritage is an important and beautiful part of our Anglican identity. But, Anglican worship has never been homogeneous. There is no one Book of Common Prayer throughout the communion. To a greater or lesser degree, each Province (sometimes each diocese or parish) has adapted the Prayer Book tradition to their local contexts, which vary widely. We might hope to maintain some continuity, some shared connection to our heritage. At the same time, the worship of God has always been shaped by context. The Gospel is always contextual because God became human in Jesus Christ. God intervenes in human life in specific times and places. Our worship and experience of God reflects that fact whether we like it or not. The key to maintaining continuity in our Anglican worship is to keep the focus of our worship on God and not ourselves and our own agendas. True worship aligns us

... we're Anglicans
when we're
acting like
disciples of Jesus.

toward God and God's purposes, and this alignment—this relationship—moves us, at last, toward our goal of defining Anglicanism and our place within the Communion.

Anglicanism is defined through its relationships. Above all, we are defined by our relationship with Jesus Christ. The Anglican Communion is one way to enact our relationship with Jesus that is both local and global, personal and communal. By the Spirit of Christ, the Anglican Communion is unified through a vast web of inter-relationships that span continents and decades. We might call this "unity on the ground," or in Professor Robert Heaney's phrase, "catholicity from below" in contrast to a unity enforced from the top down.¹ The irreducible unit of this unity is the diocese. While dioceses do have institutional structures built around them, a diocese is not primarily an institution. It is a sacred relationship between a bishop and the churches under their care with the purpose of uniting us all to Christ. Every diocese is made up of parishes, of course. But parishes do not exist alone. A congregation that is not connected to a global and spiritual communion will turn inward, which is fatal for the spiritual life. The local embodiment of the Church must have a formal and spiritual connection to the universal and global Church. That's what a bishop is—a spiritual sign of continuity, sound teaching, and unity.

One of the best measures of what the Anglican Communion actually is can be found in the network of relationships between dioceses, parishes, and other ministries. For the Diocese of Pennsylvania, our relationships across the Communion, for instance, with the Episcopal Diocese of Jerusalem, are among the surest indicators of our Anglican identity. Our relationships define us. They help us to understand the world and ourselves better. Relationships across difference give the local Church a vitality that it could never find on its own. These relationships do not depend on rational or doctrinal agreement. They depend on loyalty to Christ and to each other. This is what St. Paul meant when he commanded the Philippian church to "have the mind of Christ" (Philippians 2:1-11). It isn't about cognitive agreement. Instead, it is about humility and sharing mutual concern for each other. It is our mutual commitment to offer ourselves and our gifts for the benefit and flourishing of the other.

The holy vocation of Anglicanism is mission. This is the purpose for the existence of Anglican Communion. Not that we Anglicans have a mission of our own. That misconception leads us toward the pursuit of wealth and power instead of love and justice. Instead, our vocation is to figure

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out what God's mission is. We must learn to see with our spiritual eyes what God is doing in God's world and join in with our whole being. This is never done in isolation, but always in partnership across difference. When we are pursuing God's mission, we are the best embodiment of Anglicanism. In other words, we're Anglicans when we're acting like disciples of Jesus.

You want to be an Anglican?

Know Jesus and entrust your energy, time, and soul to the ways God is transforming the world.

Another way to define Anglicanism is by what Anglicans believe. In some ways, this is the clearest articulation of Anglicanism, but also the most contested.



¹Robert Heaney and William Sachs, *The Promise Anglicanism* (SCM Press: London, 2019), xxvi.

I am indebted to Robert Heaney, professor of mission at Virginia Theological Seminary, for much of my understanding and enthusiasm for this topic.

“ Change does
not have to take decades.
It can come quickly,
if we have faith to embrace
new possibilities and to focus
on what is most essential. ”

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