

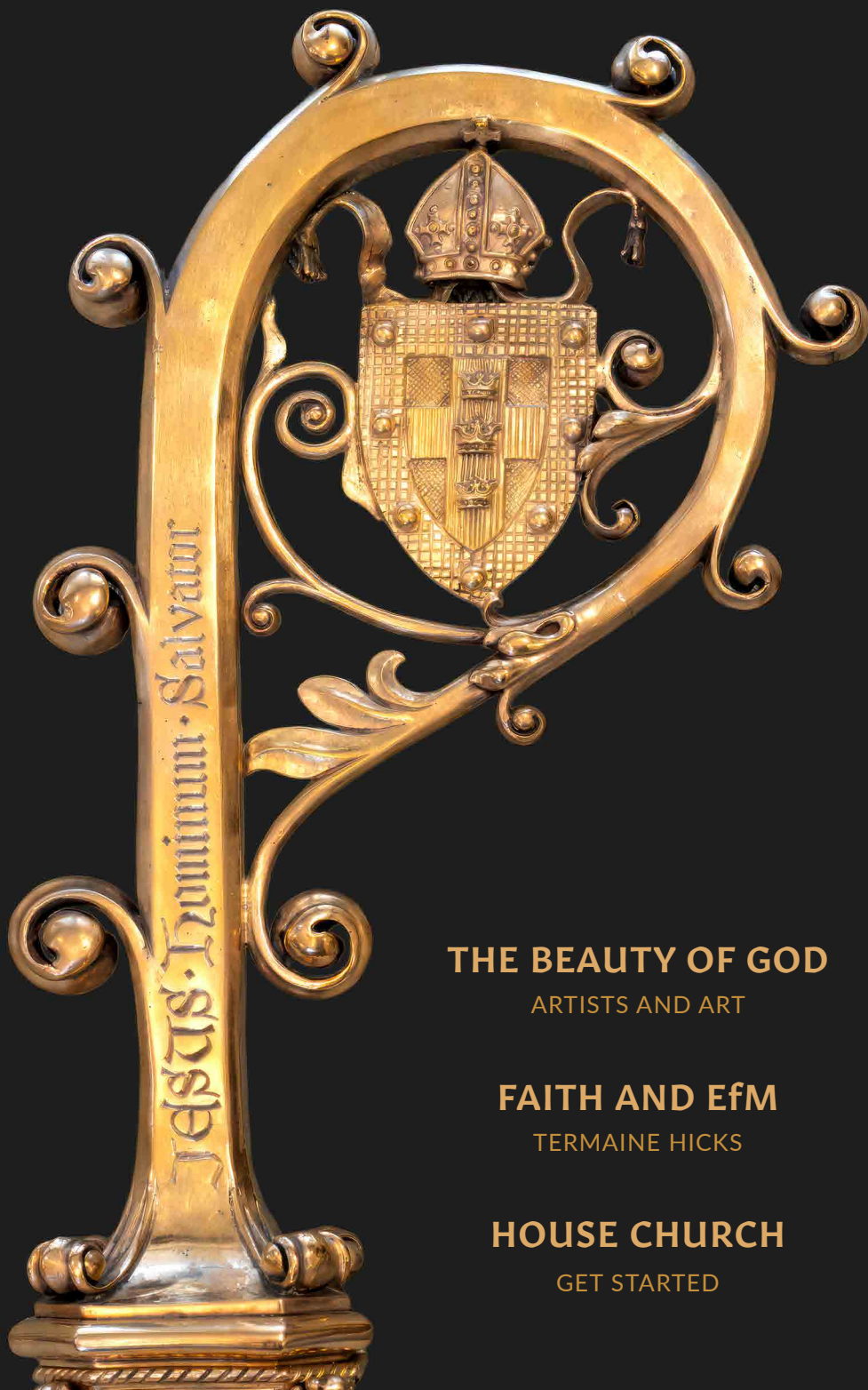


CAMINOS

OUR ROADS TOGETHER

EDITION 9 | FALL 2023

Serving The Episcopal Diocese of Pennsylvania



THE BEAUTY OF GOD

ARTISTS AND ART

FAITH AND EfM

TERMAINE HICKS

HOUSE CHURCH

GET STARTED

“

Church is a place
where art and
artists should thrive.

- Bishop Daniel Gutiérrez



Watch the bishop speak about
the art initiative as well as others.



My siblings in Christ,

Art is an expression of the beauty of Christ. Through art, we can experience our connection to God on a different level. Church is a place where art and artists should thrive. In this magazine, you will see and read about how some of members of our diocese connect to art. And, how that art provides a means of expression for people who are marginalized.

In this issue are two stories that tie history to modern day. One details the lessons we learned from the 1918 flu epidemic and how those reflect our own experience with the recent pandemic.

This year we introduced the idea of House Churches. The earliest church was house church, people gathered in a familiar setting to pray. This ancient idea has new relevance for us today. In this issue, you will find a guide to get started.

We know our faith can uphold us in times of great challenge. Imagine being wrongly accused of a crime and then spending 19 years in prison for it. How do you hold on to faith and hope? In our interview with Termaine Hicks, an EFM graduate, you will hear a tale of survival and thriving in the midst of dire odds.

I pray these stories and images inspire you.

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

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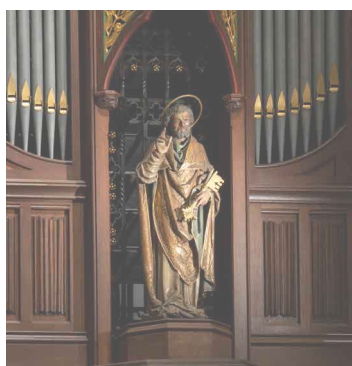
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- Jack Croft, writer
- Michael Krasulski, historian
- Kathy Montoya, designer
- Liam Reid, photographer

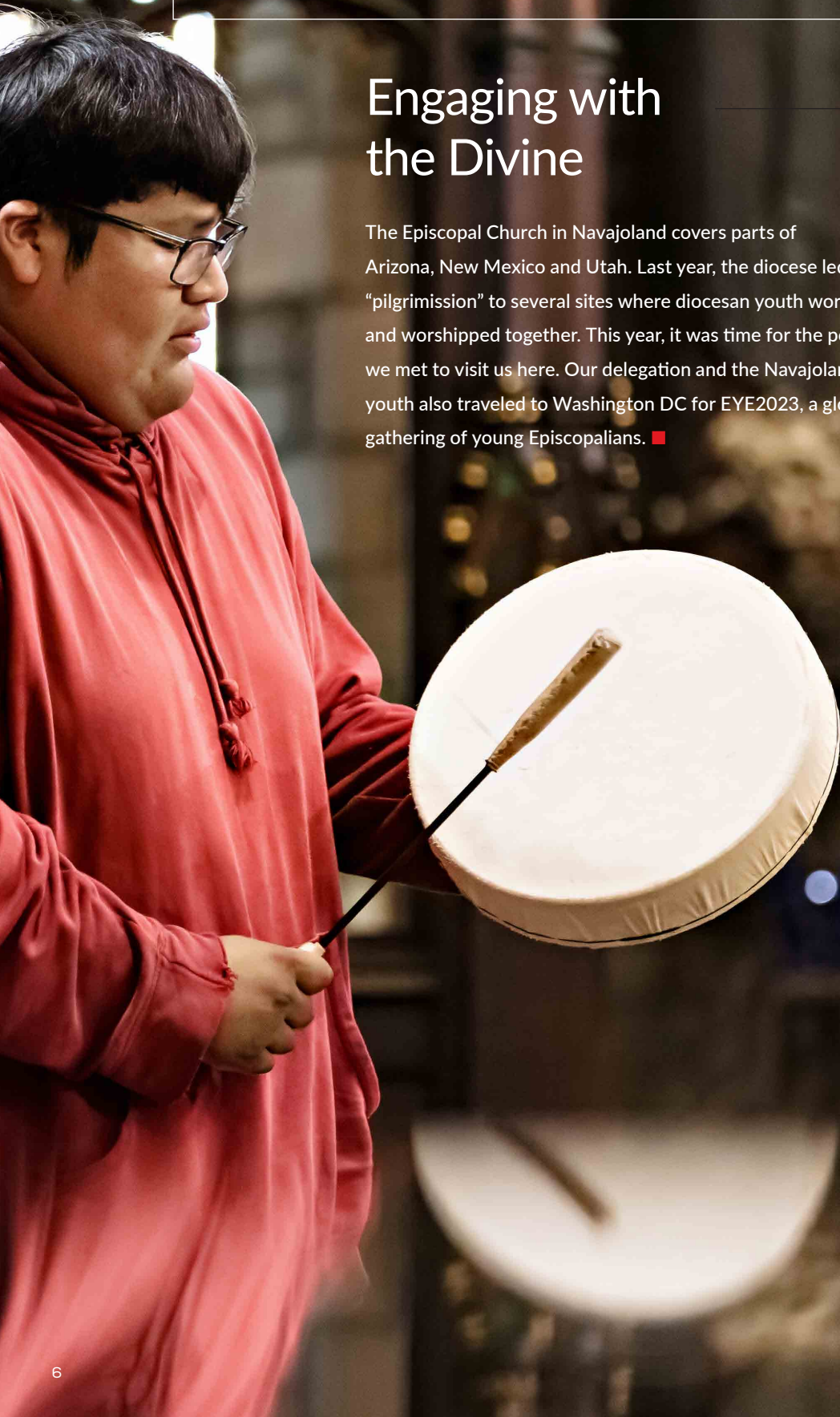
for their contributions to this magazine.

SUGGESTIONS OR COMMENTS?

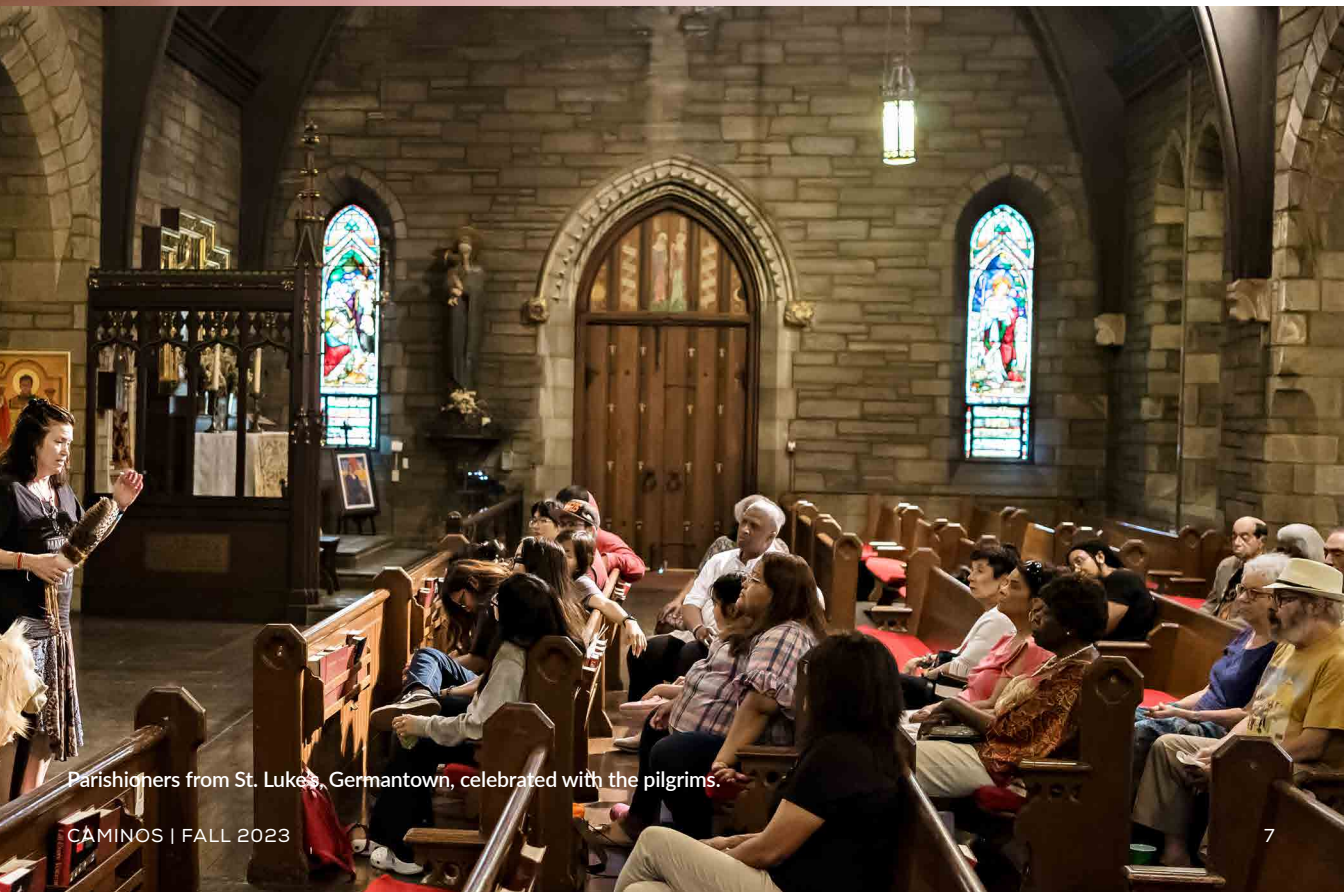
Contact
Jen Tucker, jenbtucker@diopa.org.

Engaging with the Divine

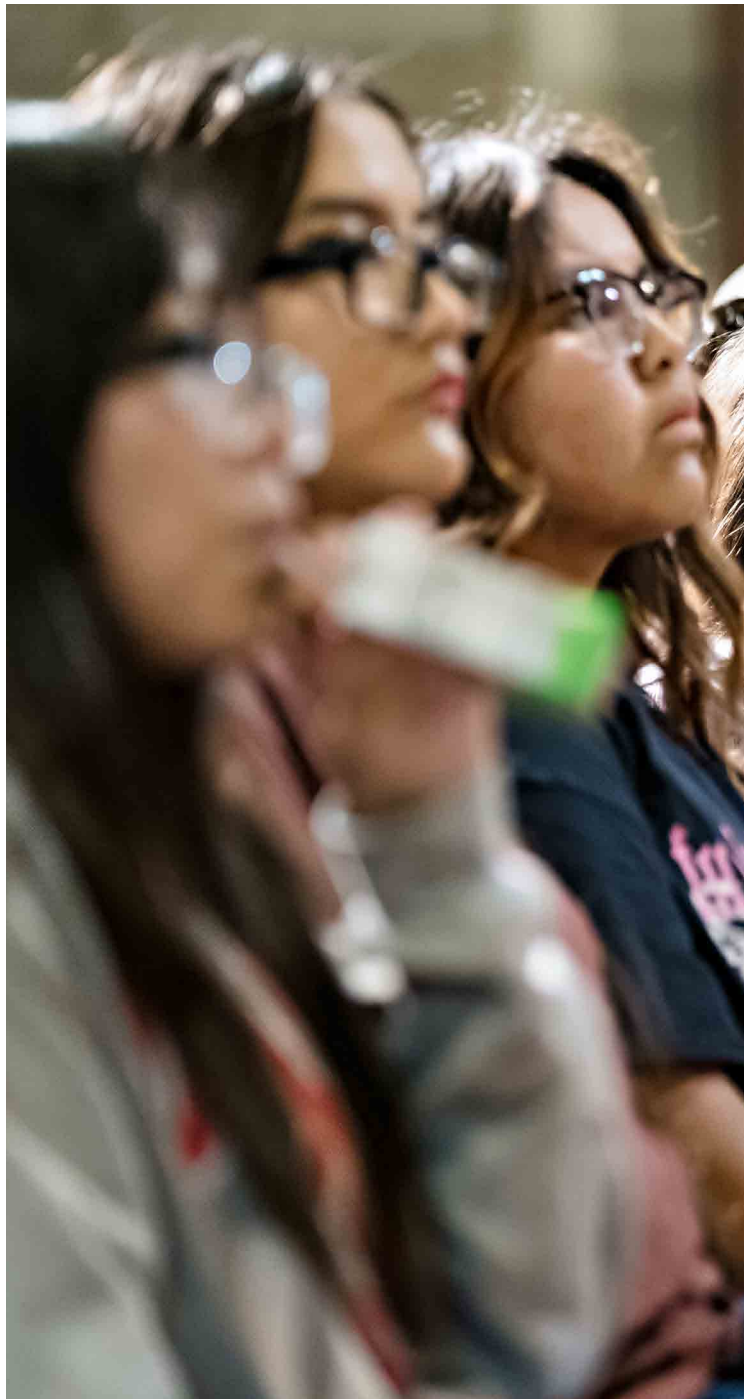
The Episcopal Church in Navajoland covers parts of Arizona, New Mexico and Utah. Last year, the diocese led a “pilgrimission” to several sites where diocesan youth worked and worshipped together. This year, it was time for the people we met to visit us here. Our delegation and the Navajoland youth also traveled to Washington DC for EYE2023, a global gathering of young Episcopalians. ■



Work & Worship



Parishioners from St. Luke's, Germantown, celebrated with the pilgrims.





Global Gathering

“Our siblings will come to our diocese and spend time in our schools, serve in our churches, work in our offices. We will do the same on the reservation. An actual life-giving relationship.”

– Bishop Daniel

A R T

Let Us Remember



Let us remember the shoulders we stood and stand on.
We must give thanks and stop longing for what we did not receive, but reflect on the blessings we have acquired.
Please, give thanks and show appreciation for our ancestors near and far for the foundation we did receive, because without it, how could we be? So take a few moments for love, respect, and an appreciation for life.

**~John Dowell, from the program for his Cathedral Arts exhibition
"Let Us Remember"**



It was after the third time that his grandmother, lovingly known to his family as Big Mommy, appeared to him in a dream that one of John Dowell's sisters told him, "I don't know what you were doing. But you better get it together 'cause

Big Mommy didn't play. So you better go back and sleep and figure out what she is trying to get you to do."

Big Mommy had first come to him in a dream in 2011 about three months before Dowell was



Artist Dowell (r) at gallery opening.



scheduled to have an exhibition in Savannah, Ga., of photographs of his cityscapes.

The appearance of his grandmother in a dream came as a surprise. “She’d been dead 40 some years,” says Dowell, a nationally recognized photographer, painter and printmaker, Professor Emeritus of Printmaking at the Tyler School of Art at Temple University, and longtime parishioner of the Philadelphia Episcopal Cathedral.

When he had a second dream, he asked his four remaining sisters and one brother, “Any of y’all dreaming about Big Mommy?” No, they all said.

As he thought about his sister’s admonition after he told her about his third dream, he remembered that his grandmother had talked to him about cotton in each of his dreams. The more he thought about it, the more he came to believe that cotton was the key to his dreams. And as a renowned photographer, heading to the South for an exhibition in Georgia, he decided he would photograph cotton.

Dowell contacted a USDA farm agent near Savannah, and got contact information for three farmers in Georgia. The very first one agreed immediately to let Dowell come down and photograph his cotton fields.

So three days before his exhibition, Dowell came down to Savannah early, and drove about 35 miles to the farm.

He noticed something somewhat disconcerting as he looked out his car window on the trip. “I don’t see no black people,” he remembers saying. “Big Mommy, you’re not sending me some place I can’t get out, are you?”

Once at the farm, his concerns were quickly allayed. The farmer couldn’t have been nicer, welcoming Dowell, showing him around the farm, feeding him lunch, and then giving him permission to go anywhere he wanted to make photographs. And in what seemed like another sign that he was in the right place, it turned out the farmer’s daughter had just graduated from art school with a major in photography.

As the farmer turned to leave Dowell so he could start photographing cotton, the farmer told him, “This property has been in my family for seven generations.”

“It flipped me out, ‘cause it was like Big Mommy sent me home,” Dowell recalls. “I never really checked, but I just felt it. Somehow our relatives had worked this property.”

Dowell, 82, has been photographing cotton and creating beautiful, emotionally challenging, and often

Dreamlike Images

dreamlike images ever since, leading to several exhibitions and other creative endeavors. The Philadelphia Episcopal Cathedral hosted an exhibition of some of his cotton photographs, “Let Us Remember,” in January-February of 2023, as part of its Cathedral Arts program.

“We imagine cotton in the Johnson & Johnson boxes of cotton balls that we open up,” says the Very Rev. Judy Sullivan, Dean of the Philadelphia Episcopal Cathedral. “The cotton plant is really quite brutal. I don’t think I realized that before I experienced John’s photography. Walking through those cotton fields is like walking through barbed wire. That a product so soft as cotton could produce such a hostile environment around it is extraordinary.”

The six-week exhibition led up to a stunning, multimedia performance based on Dowell’s work. The production, called simply “Cotton,” was a collaboration between Dowell and Lyric Fest co-founder and fellow

Cotton Fields

“My work is meant to encourage contemporary African Americans to move forward with the same courage and determination as our ancestors.”

~ John Dowell

Philadelphia Episcopal Cathedral parishioner Suzanne DuPlantis. It combined Dowell's photography; poems written specifically for the production by a Who's Who of brilliant poets, including Nikki Giovanni; and a powerful song cycle by composer Damien Geter based on the poems and performed by legendary mezzo-soprano Denyce Graves and rising star baritone Justin Austin, with Lyric Fest Artistic Director Laura Ward accompanying them on piano.

The world premiere was at the Philadelphia Episcopal Cathedral. Three nights later, the production went on the road to a little venue known as the Kennedy Center in Washington, D.C.

DuPlantis became friends with Dowell after she started attending the Cathedral seven years ago,

and was deeply moved by his first exhibition (see bottom of this page) of cotton photography in 2018 at the African American Museum in Philadelphia. That started the wheels turning to find a way to collaborate on a project that would amplify Dowell's work with music.

“The same way he was stirred, I was stirred,” says DuPlantis, who in addition to being the Co-Founding Director of Lyric Fest, is herself an accomplished professional singer, painter and visual artist who sings in the Cathedral choir and whose paintings have been exhibited as part of the Cathedral Arts program. “And I was feeling called to do something with this work.”

So to celebrate its 20th anniversary, Lyric Fest — the only performing arts organization in the Mid-Atlantic region with a primary focus on song

“Angels are Coming”

in all its varied expression — decided to commission poetry and a song cycle based on Dowell's cotton photography.

On a cold February night, Cathedral parishioners, Lyric Fest members, music and art lovers, and other members of the community packed into the Cathedral for the performance. It was a deeply moving achievement. Each of the eight poets commissioned by Lyric Fest appeared on the screens via pre-recorded videos, reading their poems while images of Dowell's cotton photography swirled behind them. When each finished, the image on the screen disappeared, revealing the featured singers live, singing the poet's words to music commissioned specifically to allow listeners to experience the poetry through a different medium.

When the multimedia song cycle concluded, the audience rose as one in a standing ovation that went on and on.

In the program for the "Cotton" performance, Dowell is quoted as saying his photography evokes "the remembering, feeling, and sense of wonder at our ancestral strategies of survival. And this is timely, as countless African Americans lose their lives in an era fraught with politically sanctioned white supremacy — an era steeped in the careless attitude that Black lives really do not matter. My work is meant to encourage contemporary African Americans to move forward with the same courage and determination as our ancestors."

Since Big Mommy appeared in his dreams in 2011, sending him on that first trip to cotton fields in Georgia, the ancestors — and what they still have to tell us — have increasingly become a focus of his work.

Dowell's approach to photographing cotton started out as documenting photography. That first trip, he went back and forth from Savannah to the farm for the three days leading up to his exhibition, photographing a great deal of cotton. He knew this was important, but wasn't yet sure why. Not long after, he photographed cotton on two farms in Virginia, a relatively close drive from his home in Philadelphia.

In subsequent years, he went to farms in South Carolina and back to Georgia to photograph cotton.

"The more I experienced it, I started getting these feelings like, what would I have done if I had to do this? What would I have done if I was getting beat because I didn't do it? And so because of that, I started creating a number of what I call surrealistic images that would emotionally involve the viewer," Dowell says.



His first exhibition featuring those surrealistic images of cotton, the one that so moved DuPlantis, was titled, "Cotton: The Soft, Dangerous Beauty of the Past." In a 2018 Philadelphia Inquirer review, Edith Newhall wrote that the exhibition, then at the African American Museum of Philadelphia, "doesn't hide his ambiguous feelings about the plant — many of his images are seductively beautiful even as they embody the horrors of slavery."

Janyce Glasper, in a review on Artblog.com, called the exhibition "awe and sustenance, a reflection on a fluffy plant and its grisly impact on past and present black lives. The whole breadth of this sincere and educational show is a love letter addressed to the wonders of the human condition — a love letter that confesses yearning, compassion, and victory."

Dowell's fascination with cotton has continued to grow. In 2019, he began photographing cotton fields at night in North Carolina, infusing a ghostly aspect to images that conjure the "ancestors near and far," sometimes explicitly. As in "The Ancestors Spoke," which Dowell wrote in the "Cotton" program was "inspired by a feeling of connection to the ancestors."

"A lot of people who see this exhibition have no or have very little connection to my ancestors and my past," Dowell says. "They know something about it, but they really don't know. And so my thing is I would hope to

strike up a curiosity with someone to go investigate possibly, but more importantly to investigate how they respond to this. The idea is to get them to be aware of where they are. Wherever they went, wherever they are, it's fine. But you can't go any place if you don't know where you are."

And Dowell has something else he hopes everyone who views his cotton photography will do. No doubt, Big Mommy would approve.

"The next time you see your grandmother, you hug her," he says, smiling. "You hug your grandmother or you hug your mother and father and you think about them. And you might even investigate their history in the past because that's who you have stood on."

"Whether you like it or not, you stood on them."

You can hear Dowell speak about his exhibit and see some of it by clicking on the QR code here:



Through the Cathedral Arts program, Philadelphia Episcopal Cathedral has made welcoming artists and celebrating art part of its identity.

"This is a very important ministry for us," Sullivan says. "It is a way of reaching people with love, with the love that we know in Jesus through the experience of created beauty."

Thomas Lloyd, the Cathedral's Canon for Music and the Arts, recalls being surprised when he first came to the

Cathedral in 2010 that "there were artists that were performing at such a high level.

"People often don't think of creative artists as being religious people, but these people are deeply religious in a probing kind of way and the way they probe is through their art," he adds.

Lloyd curates art exhibits that are often themed around the liturgical seasons. The exhibits are an important way that the Cathedral reaches out to the community, highlighting the work of artists who are parishioners as well as artists in West Philadelphia, throughout the City of Philadelphia, and in the five-county Diocese of Pennsylvania.

The Cathedral Arts program provides "important dimension both to our liturgies and to our community outreach and connection," Lloyd says. "We believe here that there's



Creative Experience

a union between contemplation and engagement. Between the beauty of God's creation and working for justice. That it shouldn't be one or the other, but both together.

"We have a very contemplative liturgy, which benefits from having artistic creation on the walls, whether explicitly religious or not. We use our judgment as to what qualifies as something that works in the space. There's not a checklist. The art is here in the sanctuary, not off in a room somewhere that's unlocked only when it's time to see the art. It's all integrated and of a whole and accessible."

Sullivan, who has announced she is retiring as dean at the end of October after 13 years, believes that art "has an extraordinary capacity to engage people deeply in their spiritual

journeys. It reaches them beyond words. And as Episcopalians, we talk a lot about the gift of the incarnation in Christ. And we also understand that the creator God infuses the creation and very specifically the arts.

"So artistic expression reveals something of the divine to us. The creative experience certainly shows us something about the divine spirit and inspiration. Artists often are reflecting aspects of their own spiritual journey and those very common themes have a way of touching other people in their own experience and in their own journey." ■



"Cotton"

Lay Led Churches

They came to share their experiences and left feeling inspired. This year, the diocese held two gatherings for lay people leading churches. Over several meetings this group has formed a network of mutual connection and support that is helping those leaders and churches discover best practices, support one another and above all, to know that they are not alone in the challenges they face. Their churches are not dying; they are being transformed into a new way of being. We are grateful for these leaders to come out and give even more of their time than they already do. They represent both the present and the future of our diocese. ■



Restorers of the Lost Artifact

Thanks to the Talents of Natural Medium Sacred Arts, the Curious Case of the Missing Crozier Has an Ending Filled with Joy and Wonder



Shortly after his consecration in 2016, Bishop Daniel Gutiérrez embarked on a quest to recover a lost, century-old crozier (a bishop's pastoral staff shaped like a shepherd's crook) that had mysteriously disappeared from the Diocese of Pennsylvania six decades earlier.

Over the next six-plus years, as several seemingly promising leads turned into dead ends, he continued to trust that God would find a way to bring the artifact home to the diocese where it belonged.

"I always have faith," Gutiérrez told Episcopal News Service in 2019. "You never know how the Holy Spirit will work, so I have faith that someday it will turn up."

"And it did," says Diana Whitener, almost four years later, sitting at the dining room table of the Philadelphia home she shares with her partner in life and art, Paige Miller.

And in the Curious Case of the Missing Crozier, Miller and Whitener have been cast as the Restorers of the Lost Artifact.

Keeping Alive the Ancient Techniques of Craftsmanship

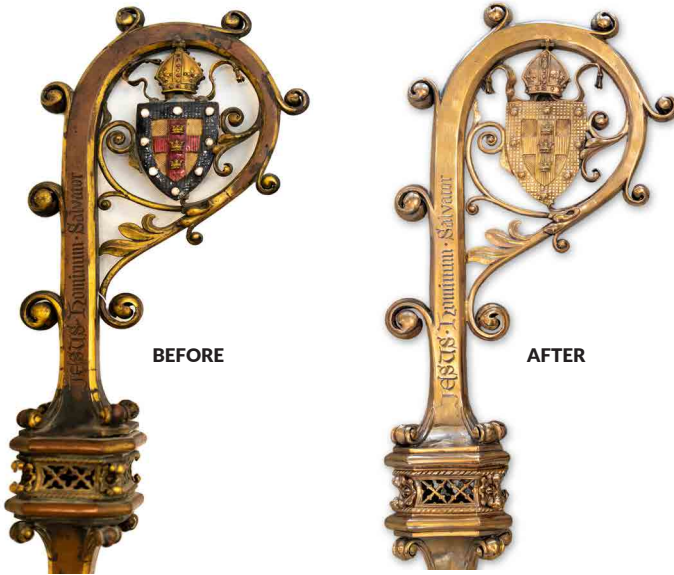
Miller is an accomplished sculptor, and her restoration talents include working with brass, bronze, silver, iron, steel, wood, stone and concrete, among other materials. Her art is rooted in ancient techniques and methods that she says are "virtually exactly the same today as they were hundreds and thousands of years ago when all of these sacred statues and sculptures were created.

"The decorative work of sacred pieces really speaks to me. It's much different than contemporary art, where it's all about minimalism and just concepts. These are very illustrative and very decorative and very ornate and have a very specific purpose. And what draws me to that is there's history in this."

Whitener is a painter whose art reflects and expresses her spirituality, with angels and religious figures as frequent subjects. She is currently painting an updated portrait of Blessed Absalom Jones, who in Philadelphia, in 1804, became the



Artists Paige Miller (l) and Diana Whitener (r) with the bishop.



first African American ordained to the priesthood in the Episcopal Church. Whitener also has been a singer since she was 5 years old, and sings in the choir at St. Paul's Episcopal Church in Chestnut Hill, where she and Miller are members.

"We both feel called to keep alive the ancient techniques of the craftsmanship that we're involved in," Whitener says. "I paint very traditionally. I use a very traditional color palette most of the time, oil on wood. It's really vital to us to keep those techniques alive, especially in this day and age, and to use them for such a fundamental purpose as for worship and community."

Miller had been doing a lot of restoration work at St. Paul's, from restoring a broken thurible to building a solid oak wooden creche. And Whitener's paintings since childhood had been deeply influenced by the religious portraits, statues and iconography she saw every day attending Catholic school growing up. "I feel that God was speaking to me through these pieces of artwork," Whitener says. "And I think that was his way of inspiring me to create pieces of artwork with a similar subject matter."

Divine Timing

In early January of 2023, Miller says, she had a revelation. "It dawned on me one day that this is it. This is what we do. This is the business that we've been wanting to create," she recalls. "This is what we are called for, together."

They decided to align their artistic endeavors with their faith by changing their business name from Natural Medium to Natural Medium Sacred Arts, offering a wide variety of painting, sculpture and restoration services for sacred spaces.

"It was divine timing," Whitener says. Within a week, Miller and Whitener had a chance to speak with Gutiérrez at a service they attended at Washington Memorial Chapel in Valley Forge. They told him about the work they were now doing and gave him a freshly printed business card.

The bishop beamed. It just so happened that the missing crozier he had been searching for since 2016 had just been found on an auction site and he bought it. He was going to pick it up the following week, but it needed some serious restoration work. Would they be interested in taking on the job?

The next week, they met Gutiérrez at Diocesan Center in Norristown and he showed them the crozier, a bit

battered and worse for wear, but still a magnificent and historic piece of art and history.

Samuel Yellin, a European immigrant who became an acclaimed blacksmith in Philadelphia in the first half of the 20th century, crafted the crozier for the Diocese of Pennsylvania in 1921. Where the crozier has been since it was last seen in the diocese in 1961 remains a mystery.

But at some point, it had fallen and gotten bent, and there were small cracks on it. As best they could determine, the crozier originally was gold-plated copper, but the gold plating had worn off in many places, probably the result of polishing it with metal polish. The miter tassel, featuring a shield-shaped insignia, at some point had been covered with enamel and painted, and had been reattached to the crozier backwards.

'Now, She's Home'

The crozier received the tender, loving care it needed in Miller's basement workshop, as Whitener and Miller worked painstakingly to restore it to the way it looked in 1921. The artists like to say that Miller handles the 3D aspects of restorations, while Whitener brings her 2D perspective to bear.

"We were in constant communication with Bishop Gutiérrez through the whole process and making critical decisions with each other," Miller says. "His vision of the restoration of this crozier was to restore it back to as close as it could be to its original condition and the intent of its creator."

The restoration work took considerable time and patience. "To get the enamel off, I soaked it in hydrofluoric acid, which dissolves glass, but not metal. So it was safe to

do so,” Miller says. “Once that was off, Diana is a very skilled jewelry worker. So she was in charge of reversing the tassel.”

After several discussions between the two artists and Gutiérrez, Miller used an electroplating process to cover the entire crozier with 24 carat gold plating. Original black and white historical photographs of the crozier obviously couldn’t tell what color it was when it was made. But the photos made it clear the whole crozier had been the same color, and evidence of past gold plating found on it indicated that it likely had been completely covered when Samuel Yellin created it.

“The three of us together really talked it over for several weeks before we decided to go through with a total gold plating,” Whitener says. “So that was a fun decision to make because it wasn’t just a technical question. It was an artistic question. It was an ethical question.

What would Mr. Yellen have liked?”

Keeping in mind the bishop’s vision of restoring the crozier to how it looked when Yellin finished it, Miller took great care not to remove any marks made by Yellin’s tools as she removed numerous scratches, dents and dings that had accumulated over the past century.

“The biggest part about it was discerning dents from mishandling and scratches from mishandling versus tooling marks from Samuel Yellen,” Miller says. “And for the trained eye, you know right away what you’re looking at. So it was really easy to see what needed to stay and what needed to go and what needed to get addressed.”

The artists are enormously grateful for the opportunity to get to do such a historic job like this. “This is such a gift,” Whitener says. “It was a real treat to get to return it to what we believe it really looked like when Samuel Yellen was finished with it.”

Paige and Whitener completed the restoration in early June, and presented it soon after to Gutiérrez at the Diocesan Center in Norristown, as staff members looked on.

Miller carried the crozier into the office shrouded in a red tablecloth. As the restored crozier was revealed for the first time, Gutiérrez stared at it with a mixture of wonder and joy and awe. “Look at that! That is beautiful. It’s worthy of the diocese.”

As members of the staff oohed and ahed, he asked, “Isn’t it gorgeous? This is amazing.”

And then, softly, he said to Miller, “This being lost for so long ...”

To which Miller replied: “Now, she’s home.” ■

Watch this story here.



ENS EPISCOPAL NEWS SERVICE

Pennsylvania bishop on hunt for historic crozier receives tips, gift from blacksmith’s granddaughter

BY DAVID PAULSEN
Posted Jul 26, 2019

[Episcopal News Service] Pennsylvania Bishop Daniel Gutiérrez, after his consecration in 2016, embarked on a modest quest for relics from the diocese’s distant past and soon caught wind of one of the church’s lesser-known local legends, the mystery of the missing crozier.

Gutiérrez has had no problem getting his hands on a more modern crozier, the ceremonial staff commonly clutched by all Episcopal bishops, but the object of his fascination was a crozier rumored to have been created by the renowned blacksmith Samuel Yellin, a European immigrant who arrived in Philadelphia in 1906. ● ● ●

To read full article,
Scan this QR Code



Diocese of Pennsylvania’s century-old bishop’s staff found for sale in online auction

BY DAVID PAULSEN
Posted Jan 31, 2023

[Episcopal News Service] The mystery of the missing crozier is solved – its location at least, if not its reason for going missing.

The Diocese of Pennsylvania’s century-old bishop’s staff was crafted by renowned blacksmith Samuel Yellin, a European immigrant who arrived in Philadelphia in 1906 and died in 1940. Its existence, however, has long been little more than local legend, and Pennsylvania Bishop Daniel Gutiérrez had been on the hunt for the missing crozier nearly since his consecration in 2016. ● ● ●

To read full article,
Scan this QR Code



Healthy Habits

For children, summer is freedom from the obligations of the school year. For many working parents, it is a challenge – and an expensive one. Sending children to camp for the day can be extremely costly. According to research, higher income children are nearly three times more likely to participate in a structured summer experience than children from lower income families. Cost is the number one factor. Opportunities are not meeting demand, in particular for low-income families.

The diocese's City Camp program continues to grow as a result of this need. Created in 2009 by the Rev. Andrew Kellner as a summer day camp for kids and their families in the underserved neighborhoods of the diocese, the diocese provides staff

and financial support to churches who want to have the camp, but are unable to support it.

In summer 2023, four churches provided a month of camp to children in their community either for free or for up to \$25 a week per child. "After the pandemic, some summer programs in the city were no longer viable," said the Rev. Canon Betsy Ivey, who oversaw the City Camp and youth outreach for the diocese before retiring this summer. "As a result, we are seeing an even larger need from our communities to be a stable presence for their families. City Camp is also one of the best evangelism tools. Churches are encouraged to invite parents back in the fall for service."

In the Fall of 2021, the diocese began a partnership with the American Diabetes Association in Philadelphia, coordinated by the Rev. Canon Toneh Smyth, who spearheads mission work for the diocese. This partnership then grew into development of a summer camp component. Children at all of the City Camp locations receive tools and education to reduce cases of diabetes in children under the age of 20. "When children feel a part of learning the 'why' we do things versus just being told what to do, they tend to connect more with the information," said Smyth. "This program would not be possible without City Camp in place." ■





Supporting Children



House Church: 'Creating New Ways for People to Encounter, Experience and Express God'

"We are doing things differently. That is who we are as a diocese."

~Bishop Daniel Gutiérrez

Over the summer, Bishop Gutiérrez introduced the diocese to an idea that goes back to the first Christians – the House Church. The earliest church involved people gathered in a familiar setting to pray and worship God.

In Acts, we hear that "they broke bread in their homes and ate together with glad and sincere hearts."

This ancient idea has new relevance for us today. It offers a way to reach people who are seeking prayer, inspiration and community beyond Sunday, people who are new to the Christian faith, people who long to connect with Jesus, but for whatever reason, are not comfortable in a more conventional church setting.

"I want to be clear, this will not replace traditional Sunday worship at one of our 136 church buildings," Gutiérrez said. "It is a way to grow our churches and our diocese, creating new ways for people to encounter, experience and express God."

Think about whether House Church is for you – either as a host or as an attendee. Don't worry about the details right now. Dream. Visualize. Imagine what could be.

"While every process will be unique, a house church is organic, based on the hope and love of Jesus and the gathering of people together," Gutiérrez said.

House Church can be anywhere. It just takes people, prayer, and planning. Scan the QR code to watch this short video and contact us to get started.





Core Elements of House Church

Here are some basic steps to starting a house church.

CLARIFY YOUR VISION AND PURPOSE

Define the purpose of your home church. Is it to study and discuss scripture, worship, provide support, or serve the community? Or some combination of those purposes? Understanding your vision will guide your decisions throughout the process.

GATHER A CORE TEAM

Begin by gathering a small group of individuals who share your vision and are committed to being part of the home church. This core team will help you with planning and getting the word out.

PRAY AND SEEK GUIDANCE

Dedicate time to prayer and meditation, seeking guidance from your faith tradition or spiritual beliefs. A home church is a sacred endeavor, and seeking divine guidance is essential.

LEGAL AND PRACTICAL CONSIDERATIONS

Check local laws and regulations to ensure you can host gatherings in your home. Look into any permits or permissions required. Liability insurance is worth considering, as you'll have people coming to your home regularly.

DETERMINE THE FORMAT AND SCHEDULE

Decide on the structure of your home church meetings. Will you have a traditional worship service, a study group, or a mix of activities? Determine the frequency of gatherings (weekly, bi-weekly, etc.) and the duration of each meeting.

SET UP YOUR HOME SPACE

Create a comfortable and inviting space in your home where people can gather. Depending on the size of the group, you may need to rearrange furniture or designate a specific area.

PROMOTE YOUR HOME CHURCH

Spread the word about your home church to friends, family, neighbors, and through social media. You can also create flyers or a simple website to share information.

PLAN AND LEAD THE GATHERINGS

Develop a schedule for each meeting, including worship, prayers, study, and any other activities. Consider assigning different roles to members of your core team, such as leading prayers, reading scriptures, or preparing refreshments.

ENSURE INCLUSIVITY AND DIVERSITY

Aim to create an inclusive and diverse environment where people of all backgrounds feel welcome and valued. Embrace different perspectives and experiences.

NURTURE RELATIONSHIPS

Foster a sense of community and fellowship among your members. Encourage open communication and make time for personal sharing and support.

ADDRESS PASTORAL NEEDS

Be prepared to address pastoral needs that may arise within the group. This can include counseling, prayer support, or referring members to professional help if necessary.

ENCOURAGE PERSONAL GROWTH

Provide opportunities for personal and spiritual growth, such as workshops, guest speakers, or outreach activities.

ADAPT AND GROW

Be open to feedback and willing to adapt as your home church evolves. Seek input from your members and adjust when necessary.

STAY CONNECTED

Connect with other home churches or local faith communities to share experiences, resources, and collaborate on projects.

Remember, starting a home church requires patience and commitment. Focus on building a loving and supportive community, and let the spiritual growth and connections develop naturally over time. ■

Making Art that Expresses 'the Beauty of God'

Faith and Art

Davis d'Ambly's first experience in church was a memorable one Down Under.

"My mother was Australian and when I was a little boy, she took me home to spend time with the family. And they lived next door to the parish church," d'Ambly recalls. "One Sunday, I happened to show up in the front pew of the parish church, all by my lonesome. A 3-year-old boy, toddled along and then I went and sat down. And there was, I am told, a lot of carrying on because this lonesome little child came in by himself."

D'Ambly, a liturgical artist, has spent much of his life since that auspicious

debut in various churches, for worship and work. He describes his vocation of more than 40 years in modest, slightly whimsical terms.

"Liturgical churches need things to produce the liturgy. They need stuff," d'Ambly says. "So when people ask me what I do, I say I make stuff for churches. That's what I do."

The artwork he has created for churches in the Episcopal Diocese of Pennsylvania, as well as Catholic churches and other sacred spaces from Charleston to San Francisco and from Texas to Toronto, spans a wide range of mediums, including paintings and altarpieces; woodcarvings,

sculptures and furnishings; sacred vestments and altar hangings, and design and decorations.

For d'Ambly, art in churches combines with the music and the liturgy to create "a kind of dance ... It's an expression of the beauty of God. And our beautiful offerings—can we make them beautiful enough? No, never. But we sure better try. That's the whole point."

Faith and Art 'Intermingled from the Beginning'

Growing up in the Philadelphia area, his first experience with the arts was singing in the boys choir, along



with his two brothers, at St. Mary's Episcopal Church in Wayne. But even as a boy, he had an eye for the integral role that art plays in sacred spaces.

"As of a Sunday morning, I would be looking around the space and thinking how I could improve it," he says.

When asked how he gains an understanding of what might fit into a particular sacred space, d'Ambly replies, "Oh gosh, that's just osmosis. I mean, I absorb what places look like."

His faith and his interest in art, d'Ambly says, "were intermingled from the beginning. That's very unusual. So many people come to the

faith late in life, especially nowadays, because a lot of younger people don't have that experience as a child growing up."

Starting at a very young age, D'Ambly attended art classes for kids at the Philadelphia Museum School of Art (now the University of the Arts) every Saturday. It was there that he learned to paint and draw. The classes, he says, "really were wonderful."

His father drove him to the classes for years, until he became old enough to take the train in from Devon on his own. When the time came to consider his post-high school academic pursuits, d'Ambly says,

"there was no question in my mind. I was going to go to art school."

He attended the Tyler School of Art, then located in Elkins Park. "When it came time to go off to art school, I was prepared that I wanted to do work for the church," d'Ambly says. "I was very, very involved as a teenager in St. Mary's, in the parish. And in art school, I was a very odd person, because 1966, when I went off to art school, was not a time when being an overt Christian was thought to have much to do with art."

The best thing about Tyler for d'Ambly was that "they insisted that you learn almost every medium.

Amazing Gift

That was the curriculum, at least in those days,” he recalls. In his first year, he learned about painting and printmaking, sculpture and ceramics, “and all the various crafts.

“So that was a huge benefit for me because when, as time went on and churches just began to reach out to me, to see if I could help them with projects, I said, “Well, yeah, I’ve done that before.”

‘I Want My Work to Disappear In a Way’

After art school, Bolton Morris, a distinguished Philadelphia artist and ardent Roman Catholic who created art for churches throughout the area, took d’Ambly under his wing, teaching him how to work with mediums he was unfamiliar with, such as metalsmithing and stained glass, and handing off jobs to help him get established.

“He was really the most extraordinary gift in my life,” d’Ambly says. “He just supported me as a person in my work and in so many amazing ways.”

It was Morris who handed d’Ambly his first big job to do polychrome—color decoration—at St. Luke’s Episcopal Church in Germantown. “That job kept me busy for two years. And I didn’t make a lot of money on it. I rarely make money on my projects. But I survived.”

And embarked on a career doing the only thing he ever wanted to do.

The thing d’Ambly disliked most about being at art school at Tyler in the mid-1960s was that it was “all about self-expression. That’s what art was, just expression. And I never had any desire to express myself. I wanted to make things that fit into churches. So in a way, I’m more of a craftsman than I am an artist.”

Perhaps because he’s always viewed the art he creates as a way to express “the beauty of God” rather than himself, d’Ambly lacks the abundant ego associated with so many artists. In fact, he is happiest when what he’s created fits into a church in a way that calls no attention to the artist who made it.

“The thing that’s highly important to me in my work is that I not make a personal statement,” d’Ambly says. “I want to work with what’s there. I want my work to disappear, in a way. I want it to be happy at home with the things [surrounding it].

“And the highest compliment I ever receive, and I receive it quite often, is that it looks like they’ve always been there. I can’t think of any higher praise than that, honestly.” ■

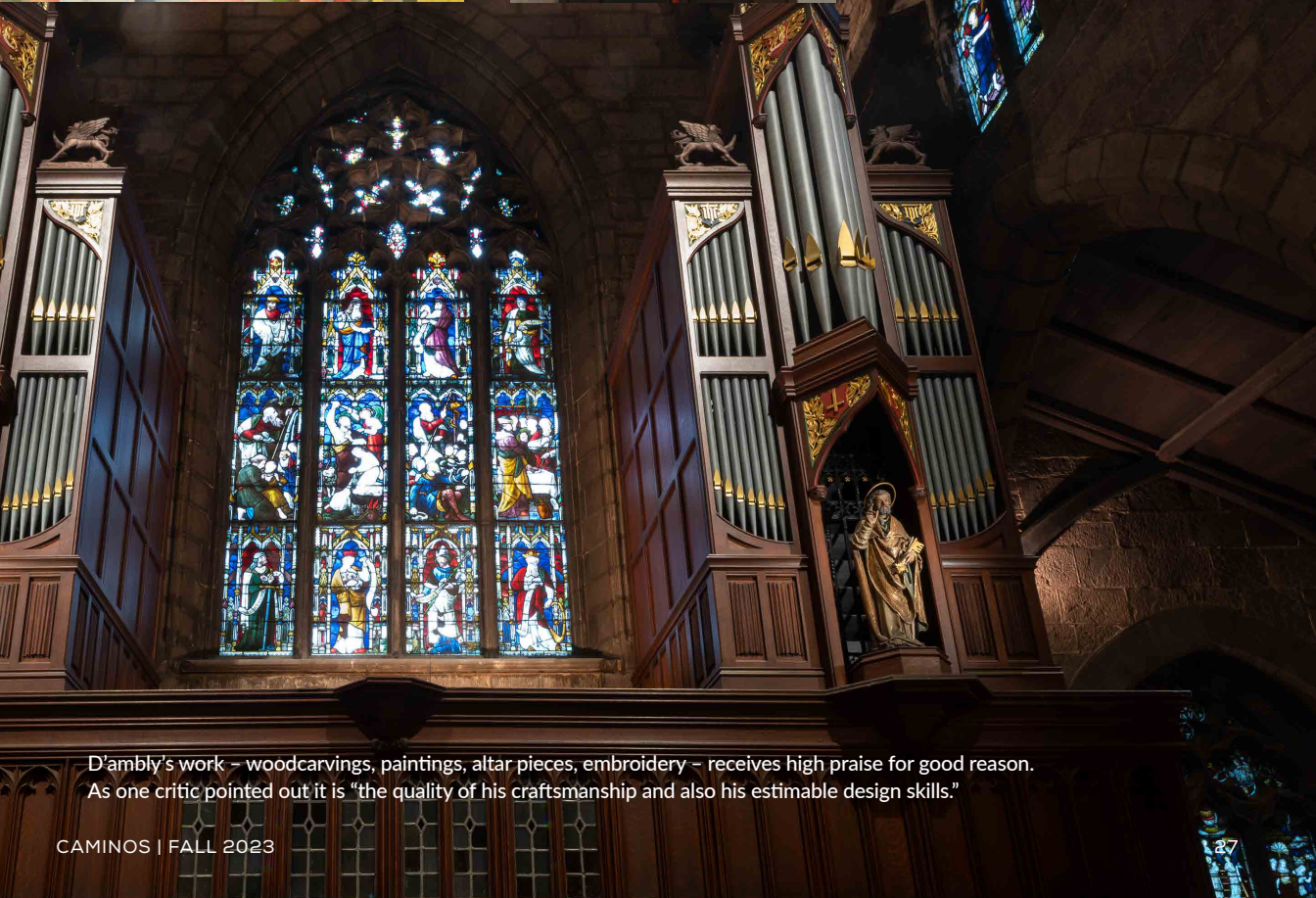




“And the highest compliment I ever receive, and I receive it quite often, is that it looks like they’ve always been there.

I can’t think of any higher praise than that, honestly.”

~ Davis d’Ambly



D’ambly’s work – woodcarvings, paintings, altar pieces, embroidery – receives high praise for good reason. As one critic pointed out it is “the quality of his craftsmanship and also his estimable design skills.”

‘God Kept You Around for a Reason. You Need to Figure Out Why.’

Termaine Hicks graduated from the Education for Ministry (EfM) program while serving 19 years in prison for a crime he didn't commit, before being exonerated and freed in 2020. He is now devoting his life to S.T.E.P.U.P., an organization he founded that teaches at-risk youth critical thinking and conflict resolution skills, and to helping EfM reach more inmates and their families.

A day or so after undergoing surgery for the gunshot wounds he suffered when a Philadelphia police officer shot him on a South Philadelphia street in the early morning of Nov. 27, 2001, Termaine Hicks realized he didn't know how many times he'd been shot.

So when the nurse taking care of him at the hospital came in to bathe

him, Hicks asked, "Excuse me, ma'am. Could you tell me how many times I was shot?"

"I don't know, baby, but you got about seven bullet holes in your body," the nurse, who was counting entrance and exit wounds, told him.

"God kept you around for a reason. You need to figure out why."



Choosing Happiness

Termaine Hicks (r) speaks with our writer.

Throughout the ordeal of his 2002 trial, during which 20 police officers testified against him before he was convicted by a jury of rape, aggravated assault, possessing an instrument of crime, and terroristic threats and sentenced to 12 ½ to 25 years in prison ...

Throughout the byzantine appeals process that denied his attempts to have his conviction overturned starting with the local trial court and going up to the Pennsylvania Supreme Court, even though there were glaring discrepancies in the case against him ...

Throughout his 19 years incarcerated for a crime he steadfastly maintained

he didn't commit, contending that he had been framed by Philadelphia police to cover up shooting the wrong man — a stance that cost him any chance of parole when he came up for consideration in 2015 because he would not admit guilt or remorse

And in the years since he was finally exonerated and freed in December 2020, after the Innocence Project documented compelling forensic evidence that Hicks had been shot three times in the back, and couldn't possibly have been holding a gun and lunging at the police officer who shot him — evidence that led the Philadelphia District Attorney's Office's Conviction Integrity Unit to conclude that the testimony at trial of the officer who shot Hicks was tainted by "factual inaccuracies, discrepancies, and inconsistencies" ...

Throughout all of those years, from the day he went to prison as a 26-year-old father of a 5-year-old son to his release from State Correctional Institution (SCI) Phoenix as a free man at age 45, with a 24-year-old son, a daughter-in-law and a 2-year-old grandson he had never met ...

Hicks kept thinking about what the hospital nurse told him on that day in 2001 when he could have died or been paralyzed as a result of his gunshot wounds:

"God kept you around for a reason. You need to figure out why."

'I Had to Reevaluate'

There was a time, Hicks admits, when "me and God or church wasn't on the same page.

"Church was a big part of my young life, but as to my adult life, I kind of got away from it until, you know, this situation happened to me. Once this

life-altering event happened, I had to reevaluate."

After his conviction, Hicks was first sent to SCI Somerset in western Pennsylvania, southeast of Pittsburgh. It was a long way from family and friends, and he was locked up there for the first six or seven years of his incarceration, before finally being allowed to transfer to Graterford Prison—which closed in 2018 when SCI Phoenix opened to replace it—in Montgomery County.

At Somerset, Hicks says, "I was a practicing Christian. I'm going into church services. I'm listening to TV evangelists. I'm reading all these books. And I'm reading the Bible and doing my own independent studies and fellowshipping with the men that I was incarcerated with.

"So I had a solid foundation by the time I transferred to Graterford. Me and God, we was talking regular. I still do to this day. Down at Graterford, the men knew I was a Christian."

An usher in the prison chapel one day asked if Hicks would be interested in checking out the Education for Ministry (EfM) program, an intensive, four-year distance learning certificate program in theological education based upon small-group study and practice. Although there are EfM programs at prisons with lower security levels, the program at Graterford, and now at SCI Phoenix, was and remains the only one at a maximum-security prison.

It was at Graterford that Hicks met "Mama Ginny," as she was affectionately known to the inmates in the EfM program for the first couple of years she led the group. Ginny Slichter had taken over as mentor when Dennis H. Warner, the rector of Church of the Epiphany





Hicks with Slichter.

in Royersford who started the EfM program at Graterford, died in 2007.

Hicks and Slichter have become close friends over the years, and now serve together on the board of the Educational Assistance for the Incarcerated and Freed (EAIF) Foundation, which provides education scholarships for the families of EfM inmates as well as EfM scholarships for inmates and for EfM graduates who are released from prison. (See sidebar, page 35)

Slichter still remembers her first impressions of Hicks. "It didn't take

him long to meld with the group," she says. "At the very beginning, I thought, oh, how is this going to go? Because he was pretty self-assured. That was before I knew anything about him. He'd come in and he had that strut. I guess it was a facade for him at that point. But it didn't take long for me to see his heart.

"I guess that's the armor that they put on there. But even with that cockiness, the guys really liked him. So it wasn't off-putting."

When Hicks joined EfM in fall 2008, there were six inmates in his first-

year class. By the fourth year, Hicks was the only one left in his class. He completed the work and earned his certificate.

It wasn't easy.

In fact, when Hicks shared his inspirational story as the keynote speaker at the EfM 2023 Summer Conference in June on the campus of the University of the South in Tennessee, he talked about his 19 years of wrongful incarceration and joked, "Well, the good news is I survived EfM. That was a rough four years going through."

The audience, comprised primarily of college professors, clergy, and EfM mentors attending the conference sponsored by the School of Theology, laughed wholeheartedly, with knowing recognition.

The Play's the Thing

For his own EfM graduation ceremony at Graterford in 2012, Hicks asked if he could write a play specifically for graduation and perform it instead of making a speech or giving a sermon.

Hicks had gained a following among the inmates for plays he had written, starting with a comic holiday play he wrote back at Somerset called *The Christmas Conspiracy*. In his youth, Hicks dreamed of growing up to be a rapper, and tried his hand at writing rap lyrics, “writing and rhyming and just trying to make something of it.

“Writing was there early on, then it kind of got lost,” he says. Ninth grade was the last grade of high school he completed. He may not have graduated, but he did earn his GED when he was 18 years old.

He rediscovered his love of writing in prison, and started writing his own plays. He took a creative writing course at Somerset, and wrote *The Christmas Conspiracy* play for himself and a couple of classmates to perform for their fellow inmates.

“It was real fun,” Hicks says. “Guys loved it. That was the beginning, man. I had a blast doing it. And I was able to hone my writing skills and introduce guys to acting and stage.”

He went on to write eight plays that were produced for the prison population while he was incarcerated. “Over the years, man, I just honed that writing skill,” he says. “Writing plays, writing poetry, writing short stories, writing essays.”

The play he wrote for his EfM graduation, “Soldiers in the Army of the Lord,” was funny, too. He cast himself as a no-nonsense, Bible-thumping drill sergeant his troops called Sgt. Holy Roller. Members of other EfM classes at Graterford were cast as the soldiers, who gave the drill sergeant a hard time, and he gave it right back, making them drop down for push-ups while he quoted various scripture passages.

But the play also conveyed a serious message: “It was just to basically give the imagery of how tough and strenuous EfM was and is,” Hicks says. “Because you cannot be—I use this expression, the same expression that Jesus uses (Matthew 11:7)—a reed shaken by the wind.

“You got to have a solid foundation prior to going to EfM or that would turn upside down your whole belief system. The fact that I had a solid foundation, it helped me get through the course, and it gave me a clear understanding.

“First and foremost, it’s solidified my belief system. But it also gives me the diplomacy to speak to people from all walks of life about religion, about a relationship with God. And not only that, but listening to their perspective, and their beliefs as well.”

Between EfM and honing his writing skills, Hicks was beginning to figure out why God had kept him around. But there was still one big piece missing from the puzzle.

Stepping up to Gun Violence and Bullying

His plays resonated with the men with whom he was incarcerated, especially “the younger generation,” Hicks says. They would come up to him on the cellblock or at chapel or

in the gym, and, out of the blue, start quoting lines from his characters.

“That let me know that I was doing something right,” he says.

Over the years he’d been incarcerated, Hicks says, he noticed “that the population of men that was coming through the penitentiary were getting younger and younger. And they were staying for the rest of their lives because of a fight that they may have lost because somebody stepped on their sneakers, or said something to their girlfriend, whatever, something stupid. Literally, something just that foolish.”

Hicks thought if he could teach these young men critical thinking and conflict resolution skills, showing them alternative ways they could have handled their situation to keep it from going so wrong, it would be a way to use his writing talents to change lives.

“If only they could have just paused, just that one moment, it would have saved them a lifetime of heartache and a life in prison or however many years or decades, that they got to serve because they shot a guy. They killed a guy. Whatever,” Hicks says.

He began writing educational scripts for what he envisioned becoming short videos, with the theme of stepping up to problems plaguing teens and young men. “Step up to help curb gun violence. Step up and say no to bullying, because we know bullying leads to gun violence,” he says.

After he was finally exonerated in 2020, he took several months to enjoy being with his family and reacclimate himself to society. During those months, he heard from men he had been incarcerated with who knew about his educational scripts

and kept asking Hicks what he was going to do with them.

Hicks realized that using his talents to help young people avoid making mistakes that could land them in prison for years or decades or even life was why God had kept him around. He had finally figured it out.

Hicks created a 501(c)(3) nonprofit organization in Philadelphia that primarily focuses on producing educational and inspirational short films and open dialogue about preventing gun violence and bullying within local schools and neighborhoods.

The organization is called S.T.E.P.U.P., an acronym that stands for Selfless Thinking Expresses Potential that Uplifts People. Hicks, founder and CEO of the organization, revised and updated those first two scripts he wrote 15 years ago and produced two shorts films that deliver on his original idea at Graterford: “STEPUP to Help Curb Gun Violence” and “STEPUP and Say No to Bullies.” Both films can be viewed on the organization’s website, | stepup4youth.org.

“All I’m doing with S.T.E.P.U.P. is reinforcing some old adages that our grandparents and parents taught us,” Hicks says.

Over the past couple of years, Hicks has gone into schools all over the country, from up down the East Coast out to Portland, Ore., and many cities and towns in between, making presentations, showing his films, conducting writing workshops—all aimed at developing critical thinking and conflict resolution skills.

He has no illusions about the magnitude of the problems faced by children and youth today, or about the role his work plays.



Choosing God

“Always, my intention—whether it be a play or these short films or talking to kids or whoever I’m talking to—is to reach one person. Just one,” Hicks says. “I don’t have this grandiose idea that every school I go into, I’m going to reach 100% of the students. No, just give me one.

“Let me look that one kid in his eyes, him or her, and hopefully make a big difference in their life where they can look back 20 years [later], and say, ‘This guy Termaine, he helped spark something within me.’ That’s my prayer., with my plays, everything that I write, everything that I say, everything that I do, especially with S.T.E.P.U.P.”

‘I Chose Life. I Chose God.’

Hicks was down to one last desperate chance to appeal his conviction by 2012, a Hail Mary pass that would involve him representing himself to try to convince the U.S. Supreme Court to hear his case.

“I didn’t stand a chance,” he recalls. “I was burnt out. I was tired.”

So he made the personally wrenching decision to surrender his appellate rights. Two weeks later, however, he got a letter from the Innocence Project in New York, an organization that works to free the innocent, prevent wrongful convictions, and create fair compassionate, and equitable systems of justice for all.

“It’s kind of like God was like, you fought the good fight,” Hicks recalls. “You took it as far as you possibly could go. And I appreciate that. And now, I’m here to help.”

It took from 2012 to 2020 for the Innocence Project to finally win justice for Hicks. Initially, the Innocence Project team focused on possible DNA evidence. Later, however, they analyzed forensic evidence—specifically, the three bullets that Police Officer Martin Vinson fired into Hicks’ body on that morning in 2001.

The Philadelphia Inquirer coverage of Hicks’ exoneration in December 2020 included this account of what the forensic analysis found:

Police Officer Martin Vinson said he shot Hicks in the chest or stomach as Hicks was pulling a gun from his pocket and lunging toward him. Hicks said the officer shot him in the back as he was reaching into his pocket for his phone to call 911. Both a forensic analysis of Hicks' medical records and a review of his clothing — with bullet holes in the back, but none in the front — supported Hicks' account, according to the city's chief medical examiner.

[Innocence Project attorney Vanessa] Potkin said further evidence suggests police planted the gun they said they retrieved from his jacket pocket. She noted that the gun was smeared with blood, while the inside of Hicks' coat pocket was clean.

"He has always maintained that he arrived at the scene when he attempted to help the victim," she said. "He had his hand in his pocket because he was going to attempt to call the police when they arrived and shot him in the back. Police claimed that Mr. Hicks had a gun on him as part of their effort to cover up the circumstances of the shooting, but the weapon that was attributed to Mr. Hicks was registered to an active Philadelphia police officer." The officer had not reported the gun missing.

Patricia Cummings, chief of the Philadelphia District Attorney's Office's Conviction Integrity Unit, was quoted in the Inquirer article explaining why her office would not retry the case: "False testimony was used, and I believe it's impossible to say that did not contribute to the conviction."

Which is what Termaine Hicks has been saying for two decades.

"They mistook me for the attacker, even though I didn't match the

description of who they were looking for," Hicks says. "It was a male with a gray hoodie on. I didn't have nothing covering my head. They just saw a black male, with his hand in his pocket, getting ready to pull his cell phone out, and they mistook it for a threatening gesture. And they shot. Three times."

Before the paramedics arrived to take him to the hospital on the day he was shot, Hicks recalls, "I can feel my life slipping away from me. I prayed the



Hicks with Bishop Gutiérrez.

“Always, my intention—whether it be a play or these short films or talking to kids or whoever I’m talking to—is to reach one person. Just one.”

~ Termaine Hicks

Choosing Life



Hicks reads through notes of support.

sinner's prayer, for sure. And I was thinking about my family."

He woke up a day or two after surgery handcuffed to the bed in the hospital. It wasn't until his mom came to visit later that day that he learned what he was accused of doing. She told him that she had heard on the news that he allegedly was caught raping a woman, and had a gun that he pointed at police and they shot him. Hicks told her he hadn't raped the woman, didn't have a gun, and had been shot in the back.

During his trial, knowing he was innocent of the crimes police officers testified he committed, Hicks says, "I felt good, that I was going to get acquitted. I really did."

Throughout his 19-year incarceration, with the disappointments of appeal after appeal being denied and the

eight-year effort by his Innocence Project attorneys to overturn his conviction, Hicks maintained his faith that the truth would one day prevail.

On the day that it finally did, and Philadelphia Common Pleas Court Judge Tracy Brandeis-Roman vacated his conviction, she offered a "bittersweet congratulations" to Hicks, according to the Inquirer.

Bitter, however, is not a word anyone would use to describe Hicks, who has an infectious smile that lights up a room.

Hicks titled his keynote address at the EfM Summer Conference in June: "God Kept You Around for a Reason. You Need to Figure Out Why." When he was asked during a Q&A session following his talk how he kept from giving into bitterness and anger, Hicks replied:

"I just chose to be happy. I chose not to linger on bitterness and resentment and anger and hate because those negative words will kill you quicker than a bullet. I took their best shot—literally. ... I chose life. I chose God."

EfM Foundation Looks to Future



Termaine Hicks never met Dennis H. Warner, the founding mentor of the Education for Ministry (EfM) program at Graterford Prison (now SCI Phoenix) who died of brain cancer in 2007—the year before Hicks joined EfM.

But as he said in his EfM Summer Conference keynote address in June, Hicks knows Warner was “a great man passionate about men locked away from society.”

Hicks understands and benefitted from Warner’s legacy, and is now helping to pay it forward by serving on the board of the recently renamed Educational Assistance for the Incarcerated and Freed (EAIF) Foundation. The initial funds to create the foundation, originally known as the Dennis H. Warner Memorial Foundation, were raised by family and friends when Warner died to fulfill his desire to provide educational scholarships to children related to inmates who were part of EfM.

That original mission has been expanded to also provide scholarships for inmates after they’re released to continue furthering their education.

“When you join EfM, especially from the perspective of being incarcerated, you go in there to get a clearer and

better understanding of why you believe the way that you believe,” Hicks says. “And you want that to be the predicate of making you a better person moving forward. So my hope and my prayer is that for the men who go through it as I did, 10 or 15 years ago, get the same, if not something better, something more.”

Early this year, the board—which includes Warner’s wife, Helen; his daughter, Alicia Warner DeMont; the Rev. Dr. Bud Holland, who serves as convener; Ginny Slichter, who stepped in as mentor of the EfM group after Warner’s death; the Rev. Chris Exley, rector of All Hallows Church in Wyncote; Kitty Di Battista, a longtime member of Church of the Epiphany in Royersford, where Warner was rector; and Hicks—voted to change the foundation’s name so it conveys the organization’s mission and looks to the future.

Since that vote, three new members have joined the board: Alan Lindsay, the EfM coordinator for the Diocese of Pennsylvania; Rev. Lori Tucker Exley, rector of St. Andrews-in-the-Field, Philadelphia and of Redemption, Southampton; and Archdeacon Dennis Coleman of Christ Church, Pottstown.

There also will be a passing of the torch in the SCI Phoenix EfM program. After 17 years as mentor, Slichter is stepping away so she can focus on the Essentials Pantry she coordinates, which offers shelf-stable food and toiletries to those in need, and outreach to those experiencing homelessness at Christ Episcopal Church in Pottstown.

“It was really a very difficult decision. I prayed about it. I cried about it. I talked to people about it,” Slichter says. “There are seasons in our life when we do things. And I had a 17-year season at the prison. So it just seemed like that was a season in my life and God was calling me in a different direction.”

Stepping in as EfM mentor at SCI Phoenix is Alan Lindsay, “The guys are familiar with him” from leading an EfM graduate group at the prison. “They really like him and interact well. So it’ll be a smooth transition.” ■



For more information, visit www.eaifreed.org

GATHERING

Space for Retreat

Looking for a place to have your church or work retreat? The following churches have designated themselves as retreat centers (facilities have WiFi, kitchens, etc.) for people in and out of the diocese.

Girl's Friendly House, Cape May, NJ.

Can accommodate about 45-50 guests overnight or 70 daily. Just two blocks from the beach and shopping. They also offer meals.

Contact canderson617@aol.com.



Church of the Good Shepherd, Rosemont.

Can host day and overnight retreats. Accommodations include seven guestrooms, three bathrooms, and two kitchens.

Visit them online:

www.goodshepherdrosemont.com/retreathouse



Church of the Redeemer, Bryn Mawr.

Can host day retreats/meetings. Kitchen plus rooms available. Burns Hall can accommodate 120 theatre style; Masterman Hall can accommodate 64 theatre style; and several other rooms can accommodate smaller groups as well.

Visit them online: www.theredeemer.org/rentals



St. Luke's Episcopal Church, Germantown..

Can host day and overnight retreats/meetings. They can accommodate 60 people in their Mission Center and 25 people in their St. Margaret's House.

Visit them online: www.episcopalmissioncenter.com/

St. Thomas' Episcopal Church, Whitemarsh.

Can host day retreats/meetings. Sample retreat and event options include yoga classes, labyrinth walks, spiritual day retreats, wellness seminars, art exhibits and classes, and environmental workshops.

Contact STWretreats@gmail.com. ■

Images from the Retreat Center in Rosemont.

Influenza, Philadelphia, and the Episcopal Church

Contributed by Michael Krasulski

Pandemic Changes

In the early days of the COVID-19 pandemic, once it became clear that a two-week quarantine would likely last a bit longer, I received several emails regarding the experiences of Philadelphia's parishes during the 1918 influenza epidemic. People wondered what, if anything, was held in the Archives of the Diocese of Pennsylvania about the epidemic, how parishes responded, and what were the long-term effects of the epidemic upon our parishes.

There seemed to be a desire, especially among the clergy, to apply whatever lessons that could be learned from 1918 to 2020 and beyond. As the Archives were inaccessible for close to a year during the pandemic, I initially relied upon a vast trove of materials that had already been digitized from the Archives and the parishes themselves. Most of these materials were already posted on my blog: philadelphiastudies.org.

Newsletters, parish magazines, annual reports, and service leaflets from Church of St. Luke and The Epiphany; Church of the Ascension; Church of the Covenant; Church of the Crucifixion; Church of the Holy Comforter, West Philadelphia; Church of the Holy Trinity,

Rittenhouse Square; Memorial Church of St. Paul, Overbrook; St. Clement's Church; St. James's Church, Philadelphia; St. Mark's Church, Philadelphia; St. Mary's Church, Hamilton Village; and St. Stephen's Church, Philadelphia were used to capture parish life throughout 1918, before, during, and after the height of the influenza pandemic in the City. This article is a preliminary report of the findings used to answer these various inquiries.

While the Philadelphia press started to report on an increased prevalence of influenza by April 1918, attention was focused on World War I overseas, as American involvement in the European conflict was at the one-year mark. Philadelphia was also in the grips of a fuel crisis caused by a United Mine Workers strike across the coal fields of northern Pennsylvania. The immediate concern of Philadelphia's clergy as they began 1918 was how to keep their churches open without coal to heat their buildings. As January turned into February, and February turned to March, parishes reduced services, combined services with neighboring parishes, or just advised their

parishioners to dress warmly. As Philadelphia grew warmer that spring and the need for coal decreased, patriotism and the war effort were the parochial foci.

Evidence suggests that the mood amongst the clergy appeared to be upbeat. However, it is not unreasonable to think that the war, in addition to a fuel crisis, was taking its toll and an upcoming summer holiday would be a welcome relief. In those days, most of the Center City parishes closed their buildings for the summer months (shortly after Trinity Sunday to the end of September). The parishes that did this typically had summer properties for the parishioners to enjoy, and those wishing to attend services could attend them at these suburban outposts. Outside of Center City, those parishes that remained open that summer did so with reduced services and programming. The Anglo-Catholic parishes across the City remained open and typically relied on their curates to conduct services while their rectors took their summer vacations outside of the City.

“Our greatest danger now, declare authorities, is the great American tendency to forget easily and to believe the peril is over.”

**Churchless Sunday
Will Be Observed
Because of Plague**

Different Denominations
Urge Parishioners to
Pray at Home.

**SPANISH INFLUENZA
MORE DEADLY
THAN WAR**

Said That Epidemic Cost More Lives
Than American Loss In War.
Danger Not Over. Great Care
Necessary To Prevent
Further Outbreak.

The appalling ravages of Spanish influenza in this country are perhaps best fittingly by the fact that it is now nearly made, that more deaths have resulted in little more than a month from this disease than through our whole nation's seaver participation in the battles of the European War. Our greatest danger now, declare authorities, is the great American tendency to forget easily and to believe the peril is over. Competent authorities claim the coming of cold weather is very apt to bring a return of this disease and there should be no let-up throughout the winter months of the following easily observed precautions, remembering that influenza is far easier to prevent than cure.

Influenza is a crowd disease. Avoid crowds as much as possible. Infectious germs spread with liberest of each other in public places. Avoid the use of common drinking cups and water fountains in public places. Breathe some reliable germicidal and antiseptic air to destroy the germs that do find lodgement in your nose and throat.



A City in Crisis

As summer turned to fall and Episcopal life in the city resumed, a few hints of what was to come started to be discussed in the press. A small uptick of influenza cases in September exploded into a full epidemic that October. Given the restrictions placed on news outlets during wartime, news about the threat of influenza to the civilian population was downplayed in the Philadelphia press. As the number of influenza cases soared in the city that October, the epidemic was unavoidable, and the city was in crisis mode.

The Philadelphia Board of Health began to restrict public gatherings in early October. By October 4th, these restrictions extended to churches. The response by Philadelphia's Episcopal clergy was mixed. The Rev. Dr. David M. Steele, the rector of the Church of St. Luke and The Epiphany, expressed that his parish "have all gladly co-operated with the Board of Health in their endeavor to do all that might be done to stem calamity and to avert contagion." The Rev. G. Woosley Hodge, rector of the Church of the Ascension, speaking for many Philadelphia clergy, "did not approve of this, to close churches which are sanitary and well ventilated, and allow department stores and trolley cars, in which people are crowded in a foul atmosphere to be undisturbed, seemed... unfair and unwise discrimination." The discourse then, as reflected in the Philadelphia press, mirrored the discourse that was seen on social media when the decision was made to restrict public worship in Philadelphia in 2020.

Trying to find some middle ground, the Rt. Rev. Philip J. Rhinelander, Bishop of the Diocese of Pennsylvania, implored the Board of Health to allow services to be held with reduced congregations. The Board of Health agreed, and on Sunday, October 13, a few parishes reopened. Seating was capped to no more than 25 people. St. Clement's Church found "this provision...quite ample for our needs." St. Clement's also reminded its people that their clergy still said daily masses in the clergy house while the parish was officially closed. St. Mark's Church, Philadelphia, resumed services the following week. The remainder of the parishes in this study resumed services by the first Sunday in November.

Resuming Services

My dear Friends:

It has been a strange experience we all have had this past month, in being literally locked out of church. I could think of many things to say, if this were the right time or place to point a moral and adorn a tale. I find it hard to repress at least this one remark: I never knew before so many people to express anxiety to do a thing because they were forbidden. Maybe this was not the case; mayhap it indicates that churches will be overcrowded all this winter, once again the doors are open. We will see what we will see.

I heard one person remark—I think it was facetious, but I do not know—that it was a punishment imposed on those who had been out of church too long already, six months out of twelve. I know well, however, levity apart, that we have all gladly co-operated with the Board of Health in their endeavor to do all that might be done to stem calamity and to avert contagion through the period of this dread epidemic.

In the annals of the Church, this period will long be one peculiar. In this parish in particular, we have been fortunate in the fact that there have not been so many fatalities as in the majority of others. Even so, the Parish Register, appearing on another page, contains entry of burials away beyond the average. All fondly hope the worst is over and that, from whatever quarter came this wind of pestilence, it may never come here again.

Excerpt from the St. Luke and the Epiphany 1918 parish newsletter.

The November 1918 issue of the various parish magazines all mentioned the epidemic's toll on their respective parishes. All note an uptick in funerals and all stress that other parishes had it far worse than themselves. Dr. Carl Grammer, rector of St. Stephen's Church, Philadelphia, took it a step further and suggested that parishes needed to consult the City's morgue or the local funeral director, rather than their funeral registers, to fully appreciate the scope and scale of the calamity.

As parish life resumed to some level of normalcy in November 1918, the mood quickly shifted from sorrow to jubilation. The Armistice was declared on November

11, 1918. The December 1918 parish magazines were overjoyed with the news from Europe and mournful of the soldiers lost from their parishes. Services of thanksgiving for peace were held across Philadelphia. Free of influenza and victorious in Europe, it is as if October 1918 never happened.

Pining for the Past

Looking at the evidence, it is safe to conclude that Philadelphia's parishes learned no clear lessons by their experiences during the influenza epidemic. However, as we have seen in our own time, a pandemic changes people and their habits. Philadelphia and Philadelphians changed after

1918, and the parishes in Center City would be among the first in the city to notice subtle changes in the churchgoing habit that would have great implications in the years to come.

Influenza made real for Philadelphians and for Philadelphia's well-to-do that living in close proximity to each other was a dangerous proposition. After the First World War, the evidence demonstrates a slow but steady movement out of town in the parish registers across Center City. As documented by E. Digby Baltzell, noted sociologist at the University of Pennsylvania, in *Philadelphia Gentlemen*, the full implication of this migration is not fully appreciated for another decade or more.

Parishes like Church of St. Luke and The Epiphany, St. Stephen's Church, Church of the Holy Trinity, Rittenhouse Square, Church of the Holy Apostles, and St. James's Church, Philadelphia – some of the largest parishes in the City and Diocese on the eve of the First World War – were still recording over 1,000 congregants each in their annual parochial reports.

However, the evidence suggests that these numbers were highly exaggerated. The clergy of these parishes complained that their churches were emptier, and that no one went to church anymore. While plenty of people lived in and around Center City after the influenza epidemic, the City's parishes were slow to adapt and to reach the people who remained near them. It seemed these rectors wanted their pre-1918 congregations back.

A Tale of Two Churches

While most parishes remained in their locations, two that did not are worth mentioning here. The Church of the Holy Apostles moved from the central city in 1944 and merged with its large chapel in West Philadelphia to form Church of the Holy Apostles and the Mediator. The Church of the Holy Apostles survived, just not in the same location.

St. James's Church, Philadelphia, was not so lucky. With the equivalent of \$1 million in the bank and located at the busy intersection of 22nd and Walnut Streets, St. James's vestry, at the prodding of the Rt. Rev. Oliver J. Hart, decided that there was no future left for the Episcopal Church in Center City. The parish was closed in 1944, the building demolished for an Atlantic Richfield gas station, and

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the parish's assets transferred to a suburban mission.

E. Digby Baltzell suggested the demise of St. James's Church was an excellent metaphor that signified the shift of the Episcopal power base in the Philadelphia metropolitan area from Center City to the western suburbs. The Episcopal Church did have a future in Center City, though it would be another decade before the parishes that remained discerned what that future would be.

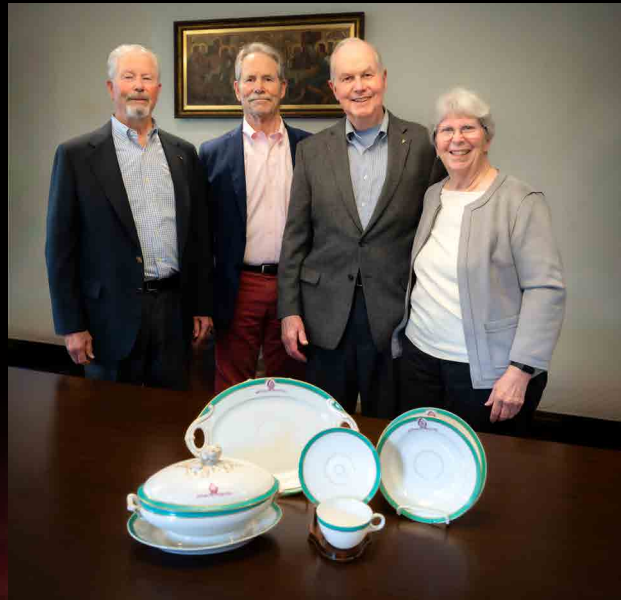
Perhaps, then, that is the lesson from 1918. Those who left the Center City parishes in the years after the influenza pandemic were gone. And no matter how hard rectors may have tried to woo them to return, they were not coming back. Clergy and parishes had to reframe their scope to the new fields of ministry right outside their doors.

While much more research is needed, particularly comparative studies with other cities, it seems to this researcher that the lesson from 1918 is not to chase those who left. Instead, look around your communities with fresh eyes for new and fertile grounds for ministry. As a rector's warden thinking about the future directions of his own Center City parish, this is a scary and exciting prospect. ■

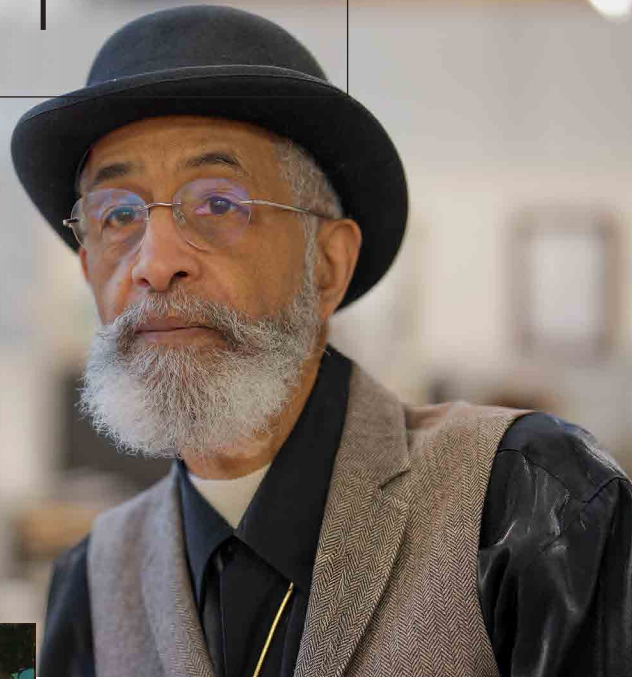
H I S T O R Y

Serving Up History

Bishop William Bacon Stevens (1815-1887) was the fourth bishop of the Episcopal Diocese of Pennsylvania. Despite gaining success as a doctor and a historian, he felt a call to ministry that he could not ignore. He served this diocese before becoming bishop in 1862. In 1876, he was chosen to give the closing sermon at the Pan-Anglican Conference at St. Paul's Cathedral in London. He was gifted Haviland china for his participation. This Spring, his descendants visited our offices to gift the china to us – and for all who visit us to see.



Representing the Voices of the Marginalized



One of the most inspiring and historic works of art in Episcopal Diocese of Pennsylvania churches is the stunning, large-scale series of murals at the Church of the Advocate, created in the mid-1970s. “The Church of the Advocate was an interesting project because I had never done a mural,” recalls Richard Watson, who today is exhibitions manager and artist in residence at the African American Museum in Philadelphia.

Watson and fellow Philadelphia artist Walter Edmonds were appointed by Father Paul Washington to create the 14 murals linking passages from scripture chosen by Washington that “correlate to the experiences of Black people,” Watson says. The artists were asked “to interpret through your vision what these things mean and how Black people can be the voice of these words and how God’s hand played a part in all of it,” he adds. ■



Scan the QR Code to gain insight into the power of art within the context of Christianity and the importance of preserving historic churches like the Church of the Advocate.



Celebrating Women

Next year, we celebrate 50 years since the first women were ordained into The Episcopal Church. A little over a year ago, Bishop Gutierrez expressed an interest in having this diocese commemorate two of its most historic events: the ordination of eleven women at the Church of the Advocate on July 29, 1974; and the ordination of the first woman bishop, Bishop Barbara Harris, who was raised up in this diocese and consecrated Bishop Suffragan of the Diocese Massachusetts in 1989.

Our diocese is working to create a permanent location to honor the journey of the Philadelphia 11 and Bishop Harris. At this time we are calling it The Center for Courageous Women of Faith.

The Center will seek to honor the legacies of these trailblazers by creating a place for educational programs, witness, prayer, and study to further the vision of radical hospitality, equity, justice, voice, that is open to all.

The Center is in the early stages of development and needs for more support, both in-kind and financially. Please contact us to get more involved, phil11rgt@gmail.com.

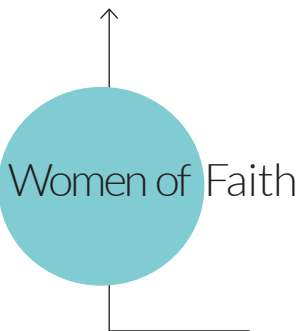


Photo courtesy of Mary Frances Schjonberg, ENS



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CONTACT US

23 E. Airy Street
Norristown, PA 19401
(215) 627-6434
contact@diopa.org
www.diopa.org