

The Peace

A Newsletter from the
Episcopal Diocese of West Tennessee

SPRING 2023 | ISSUE 4

A group of five people, four women and one man, are standing in front of a large window. The window is covered with many blue sticky notes. The people are smiling and looking towards the camera. The woman on the far left is wearing a pink jacket and a purple scarf. The woman next to her is wearing a black jacket and glasses. The woman in the center is wearing a grey top. The woman next to her is wearing a striped top and glasses. The man on the far right is wearing a blue suit jacket and a blue shirt.

Growing God's Holy Garden

Diocesan LeadersCARE team
invites all to the table *page 11*



The Peace

The official publication of the
Episcopal Diocese of West Tennessee

Copyright 2023 The Bishop and
Diocese of West Tennessee

Contact

692 Poplar Ave.
Memphis, TN 38105

901-937-4700
EDWTN.org

Submissions

We encourage the submission of articles and images.
We reserve the right to edit materials offered for
publication. Please submit content to Emily Austin:
eaustin@episwtn.org.



The Anglican Communion

The Most Reverend Justin Welby, Archbishop of Canterbury
A global community of churches with more than
85 million Christians in more than 165 countries
worldwide



The Episcopal Church

The Most Reverend Michael B. Curry, Presiding Bishop
An international community of 1.8 million
Christians in North and South America, Europe,
and Taiwan



The Diocese of West Tennessee

The Right Reverend Phoebe A. Roaf, Bishop
Serving 21 counties through 29 churches
between the Mississippi and Tennessee Rivers

ON THE COVER

In Fall 2022, five people from the West Tennessee Episcopal community attended a powerful retreat in Atlanta designed specifically for small churches. Read more on page 11. (Left to Right: Lavonnie Perry Claybon, Martha Webb, Alisa Kelly, Wanda Clark, Swazoo Claybon).

A MESSAGE FROM Bishop Phoebe



Dear friends,

As Charles Dickens famously commented in *A Tale of Two Cities*, it was the best of times, it was the worst of times. Although Dickens' novel about the French Revolution was written in 1859, his opening line summarizes things in West Tennessee today. This edition of *The Peace* highlights several examples of congregational and diocesan engagement with the community including stories about feeding ministries and new leadership models for our small congregations, as well as an agreement memorializing the relationship between the Diocese and St. George's Independent School. We continue to identify ways to be of service to others and to support the most vulnerable members of our communities.

And yet, in spite of this good news, the unprecedented levels of violence over the past several months are cause for real concern. It's easy to feel anxious and afraid given the random violent acts that seemingly occur without any rhyme or reason. As we grapple with how to ensure that our churches, schools and affiliated organizations are safe, Episcopalians do not engage in this work on our own. Congregations are reviewing their safety protocols with members of law enforcement. Several Episcopalians are actively engaged in the Memphis chapter of Moms Demand Action. I am a member of Bishops United Against Gun Violence; for additional resources, visit their website: bishopsagainstgunviolence.org.

One of the lessons of *A Tale of Two Cities* is things are not always as they seem. In spite of the challenges we face, the message of Easter is that God always has the last word. Jesus has defeated everything which hinders us, including death itself. May we continue to work with local partners as we seek to be part of the solution to the problems facing our communities.

**Weeping may linger for the night,
but joy comes in the morning.**

Psalm 30:5

Peace,

Bishop Phoebe A. Roaf

Bishop & Staff

**The Right Reverend
Phoebe A. Roaf**
Bishop of West Tennessee

**The Reverend Canon
Sharon Alexander**
Canon to the Ordinary

Emily Austin
*Director of Communications &
Community Engagement*

**The Reverend Dr.
Noah Campbell**
College Missioner

Clarence Davis
Sexton

Mark Henderson
Building Manager

Alisa Kelly
*Canon for Finance &
Administration*

Danesha Murray
Accounting Assistant

Elise Patterson
Diocesan Administrator

Brad Thompson
*Director of St. Columba
Episcopal Camp & Retreat
Center*



Row 1, left. In November 2022, Christine Todd was the recipient of the Bishop's Cross award for her outstanding service to the community. Ms. Todd is the Director of Outreach Ministries at Calvary (Memphis).

Row 1, right. Holy Trinity Episcopal Church and the GRACE chapter of Daughters of the King are pleased to announce that one of their own, Christine Fox, was awarded a Master's Fund scholarship by the National Order of Daughters of the King. Ms. Fox is a student at Memphis Theological Seminary pursuing a Master's of Divinity degree.

Row 2. Special Friends Fellowship Club collected money for Ukrainian refugees and made a special trip to the Diocesan House to make their offering.

Bishop & Council

The Reverend Dr. Jesse Abell
The Reverend Miranda Cully
Ms. Ann Duncan
The Reverend Richard Fletcher
Ms. Susan Kenny

The Very Reverend Gary Meade
The Honorable Elijah Noel, Jr.
Mr. Steve Smith
The Reverend Sandy Webb

Clergy Transitions

August 2022 - May 2023

The Reverend Clay Calhoun, previously associate rector at Church of the Holy Apostles in Collierville, is now serving Holy Cross Episcopal Church and St. Timothy's Episcopal Church in the Diocese of Mississippi.

The Reverend Saul Burleson, former supply priest at Ravenscroft Chapel in Brighton, has relocated to California to serve the Diocese of San Diego. **The Reverend C.B. Baker** now supplies regularly at Ravenscroft.

The Reverend Canon Chip Davis now serves as Director of Camp Bratton-Green in the Diocese of Mississippi.

The Reverend Alicia Gomes was ordained to the Sacred Order of Deacons as a transitional deacon on December 29, 2022 at Calvary Episcopal Church (Memphis). She currently serves St. Mary's Episcopal Church in Tampa, Florida.

The Reverend Amanda McGriff is now serving as full-time chaplain at Le Bonheur Children's Hospital.

The Reverend Gary Meade assumed the position of Interim Dean of St. Mary's Episcopal Cathedral (Memphis) on February 1, 2023. He was previously the rector of Saint Mary's Episcopal Church in Dyersburg.

The Reverend Jeffrey Samuel, former priest-in-charge of St. Luke's Episcopal Church in Jackson, is now serving the Episcopal Diocese of Long Island.

The Reverend Tim True is interim rector at St. Luke's Episcopal Church in Jackson. He previously served Grace Episcopal Church in St. George, Utah.

The Reverend Jean Vargo completed her service as Interim Dean of St. Mary's Episcopal Cathedral (Memphis) in December 2022.

The Reverend Drew Woodruff, previously Deacon for Social Justice at St. Mary's Episcopal Cathedral (Memphis), now serves Christ Church (Brownsville) and St. Thomas (Somerville).





Table of Contents

INTRODUCTION

A message from **Bishop Phoebe** 2

FEATURE

Restorative Glory: **St. Mary's Episcopal Cathedral** undergoes major restoration work 6

COMMUNITY

Barth House: A place for you to be 8

OUTREACH

How **Barb Boucher** is Recovering Food and Feeding Hope 10

CONGREGATIONAL DEVELOPMENT

Small Church Leaders attend **LeadersCARE Retreat** 11

REFLECTION

St. Columba and New Growth 12

EDUCATION

Diocese and St. George's Independent School Enter Covenant Agreement 13

THE LAST WORD

What's In a Name?: A Reflection from **the Rev. Tom Momberg** 15

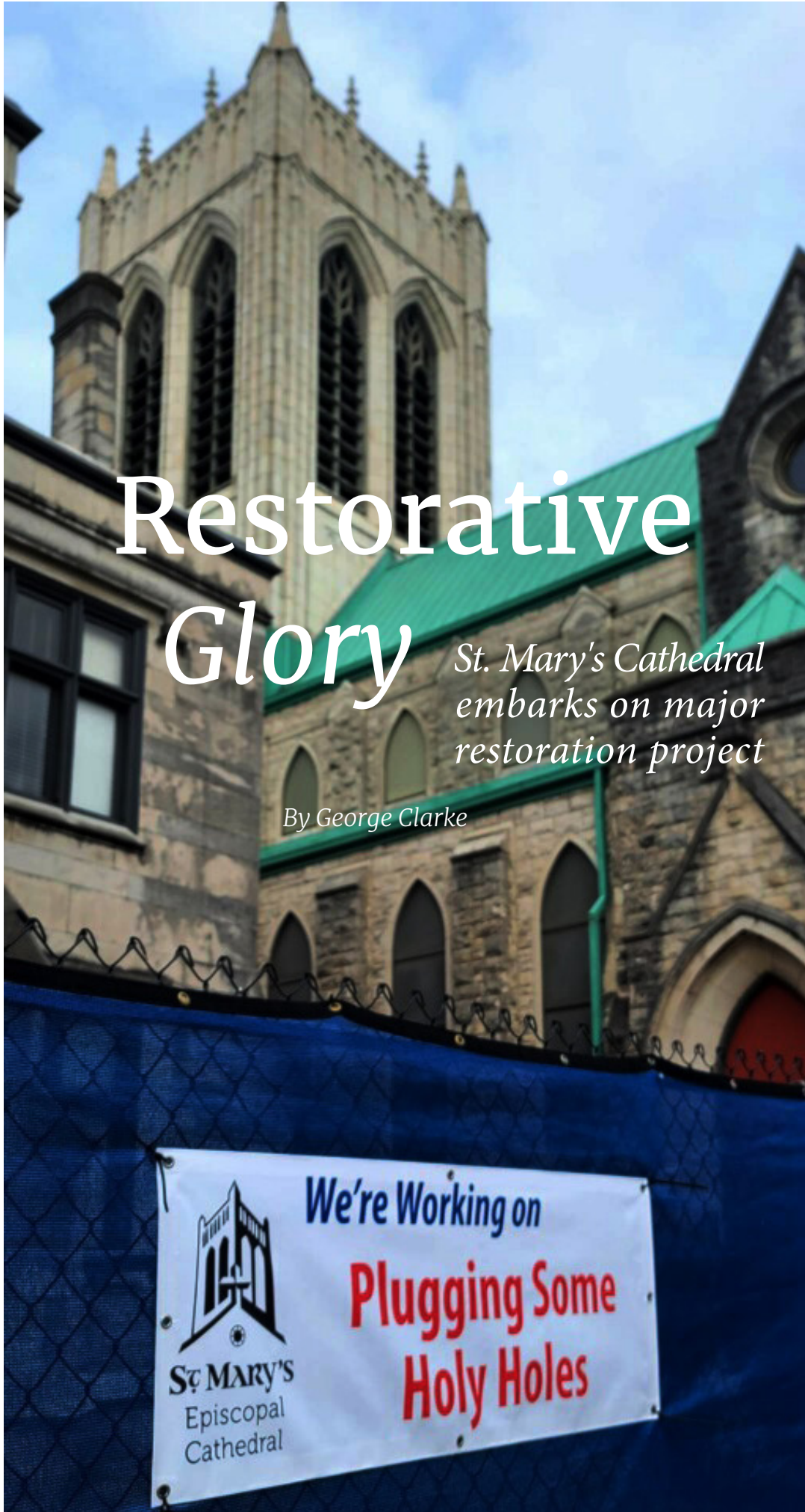
OPPOSITE

Episcopalians from across the Diocese of West Tennessee worship together in October 2022 on the grounds of Immanuel Episcopal Church in La Grange in celebration of the harvest and the 40th anniversary of the establishment of the Diocese.

Restorative Glory

*St. Mary's Cathedral
embarks on major
restoration project*

By George Clarke



If you've driven down Poplar Avenue toward downtown Memphis in the last couple of months, you've probably noticed bright blue construction fencing across the front of the Cathedral and Diocesan House. What's going on you might have asked?

If you have visited St. Mary's in the last few years, you have noticed peeling paint and plaster on the ceiling of the nave. This condition was the result of a severe leak in the bell tower roof in combination with excess condensation from the air conditioning system. A Cathedral restoration project began in January 2023 under the direction of Hord Architects and Linkous Construction, and repair work is now underway.

We are not closed down. During restoration, we are worshipping in the Sisters Chapel. This beautiful, intimate space is the oldest building on our campus, constructed in 1888.

As a result of dedicated bequests over the years, and especially several generous gifts in 2022, the project has virtually full funding to complete the work. As we await a final bequest to work through probate, the Diocese, on recommendation of the Finance Committee and approval by Bishop & Council, has agreed to bridge any needed funding pending receipt of that gift. We are eternally grateful for this faith shown by the Diocese in support of the Cathedral for The Diocese of West Tennessee.

An additional aspect of the project is the removal and protection of all the organ pipes and equipment during construction, and then cleaning, reinstalling and retuning the organ at completion. This aspect was not a part of the original scope of work, and we hope to be able to fund this project separately.

Since 1858, St. Mary's has been "A House of Prayer for All People." It is who we are.

If you feel so inclined, we invite you to support these restoration projects in any manner, large or small. Donate at www.stmarysmemphis.org or mail to 692 Poplar Ave., Memphis TN 38105, with your designation for Building Fund or Organ Fund.

Mark your calendar for September 9, 2023. At 5 p.m., we will rededicate St. Mary's Episcopal Cathedral. More information to come!

All Episcopalians in West Tennessee have surely attended some event in the Cathedral over the years. Maybe it was your faith community at some time in your life. Maybe you have attended the seating of a bishop or the installation of a dean. Or a wedding or a funeral. The Feast of Lights. Or one of the outstanding musical offerings in our Concert Series.

—George Clarke



OPPOSITE LEFT. St. Mary's Episcopal Cathedral is in the midst of substantial restorative work, which includes pressure washing its granite exterior, repairing the plaster in the nave, work on the bell tower, and organ improvements.

TOP. St. Mary's parishioners gather for worship in Sisters Chapel, the oldest part of the Cathedral campus.

LEFT. All exposed organ pipes have been safely stored and the wind chests covered and protected. Milnar Organ Company of Eagleville, TN did the removal. Pipes are all stored onsite at St. Mary's. Contributions to St. Mary's that are designated "Organ Fund" pay for the continual care and programming associated with our organ. Removing these pipes, in advance of the interior painting of the Nave, was critical in guaranteeing the care, and in turn the joy we all receive from the great sound it produces.

PHOTOS. Courtesy of St. Mary's Episcopal Cathedral

A PLACE FOR YOU TO BE: THE BARTH HOUSE

by Maggie Schaumleffel

Barth House is a place for you to be. That's all you have to do—just be. You can study, work, pray, socialize, eat your lunch, use the WiFi, and find community. It is a community center of the Episcopal Diocese of West Tennessee, and you are the community!

Over the last two semesters, some of our community building highlights included the enrichment received from digesting art and process with filmmaker Kyle Taubken and two of his leading actors at our Filmmaker Showcase; a room full of student artists meeting and building connections at our Advent Arts Market; and the touching final College Night compline of the semester, which was led by students and featured their musical offerings.

Other ways you can come and be at the Barth House include the Quarterly Recovery Book Club and the monthly Lynching Sites Project Com-

munity Meeting.

The Addiction and Recovery Ministry of the Episcopal Diocese of West Tennessee convene quarterly at the Barth House for its Book Club.

Join them on August 7 and November 6. Contact Laura White (901-210-1833) or Shannon Tucker (901-281-0785) for more information.

The vision of the Lynching Sites Project of Memphis is “to create a new legacy of racial equality and justice by turning the light of truth on lynchings in Shelby County, Tennessee.” (LynchingSitesMem.org)

They encourage anyone who is interested in their work to join them at their monthly meetings at the Barth House on the second Monday of every month at 5:30 p.m. They even have a way for you to join by Zoom if you wish.

The Barth House seeks to support creativity, people, and faith and the interlocking features of all three. We are joyful to announce our upcoming offerings of a pollinator garden, debate project, and monthly vigils at the Barth House. Whether you have a green thumb or not and want to help us plan, develop, or maintain a pollinator garden to be enjoyed



by many in our community, please let us know. The debate project will showcase the God-given gifts of creativity, faith, curiosity, and learning.

We know that even with the abundance of life surrounding us, we are all facing issues that feel too big, and our world is suffering from the violence wreaked by scarcity and fear. We don't have a simple answer to this but to pray and connect with community. That is why we will be offering monthly vigils, to combine community engagement and faith to intentionally pour love into these areas of hurt and suffering.

Our doors are open to you.

Reach out to us anytime:
BarthHouse@episwtn.org

Join our newsletter:
tinyurl.com/BarthHouseNews

Come and be:
Barth House Episcopal Center
409 Patterson St.
Memphis, TN 38111

Hours of Operation:
Monday - Thursday
11:00 a.m. – 5:00 p.m.

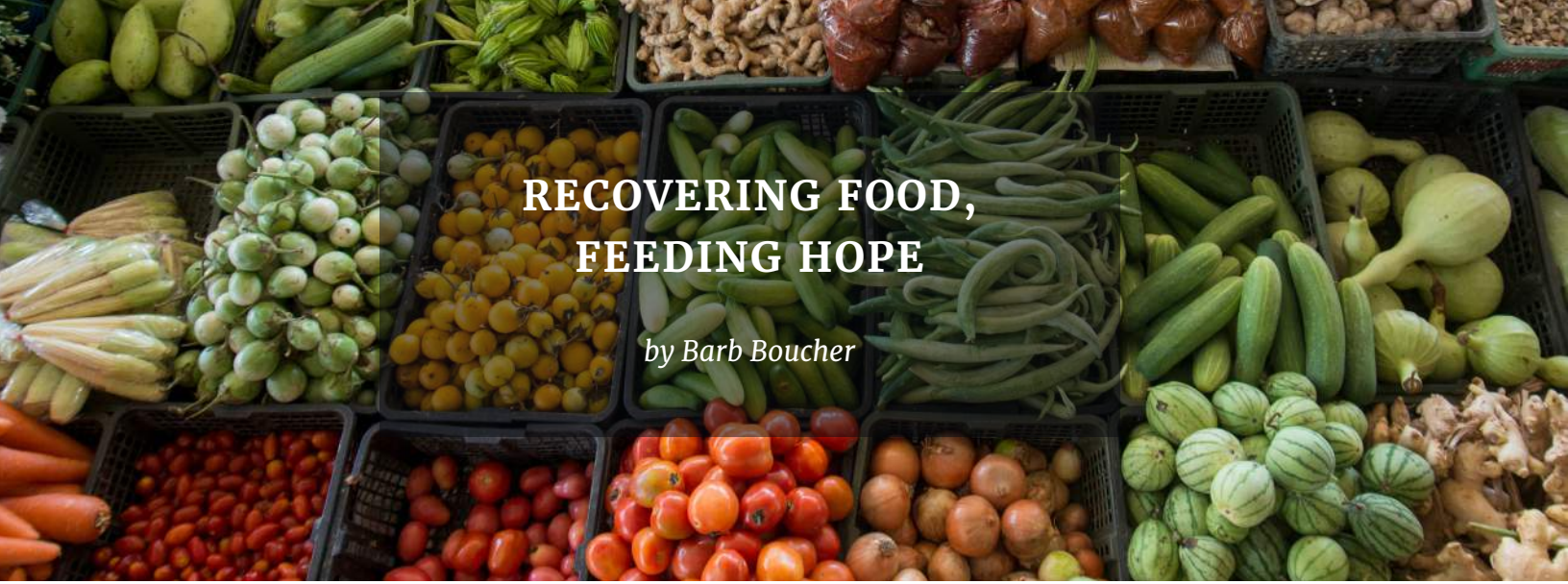


Opposite. College Night always draws a smiling crowd! College students gather together for prayer, a meal, and fellowship each Sunday evening.

Left. A group gathers in the Barth House Commons for the opening reception of a spring art exhibit.

Right. The second annual Advent Arts Market in December 2022 at the Barth House attracted artisans, musicians, and shoppers from across West Tennessee. This year's market is set for Saturday, December 9, 2023. Contact the Barth House for vendor information.





RECOVERING FOOD, FEEDING HOPE

by Barb Boucher

Recover Food, Feed Hope, an outreach ministry based at Church of the Holy Communion, evolved from efforts to feed the Constance Abbey community during the pandemic. Volunteers started gleaning in 2020 during the pandemic and continued meeting weekly after the initial need was met. The ministry has grown to include other parishes and faith groups interested in addressing food insecurity and eliminating food waste.

As of March 2023, the ministry provides 150-180 individually packaged meals a week from food that otherwise would be wasted. The packaged meals are given to the Emmanuel Center, Hope House, Lisieux Community Drop-In Center, Holy Trinity Episcopal Church, St. George's Memphis campus and the 901 Refrigerator Project for distribution to the food insecure in Memphis. In addition, the ministry provides First Congregational Church a hot meal to serve 75-100 each week. It also

provides meals to Room in the Inn.

The project started early in the pandemic when Constance Abbey asked Holy Communion for help feeding its neighbors. Barb developed a plan to provide more than 900 sack lunches a week, plus enough hot food to serve 40 to 50 people on weeknights. Soon, other parishes in the diocese as well as faith groups across the Mid-South were involved and continued to provide Constance Abbey lunches and meals into the summer of 2021.

The work led to a gleaning partnership with Memphis Jewish Family Services and farmers at a large Shelby County-based farmers market. The produce is chopped and pureed to make home-cooked entrees and desserts. From there, the meals are packaged, frozen, and distributed to people in underserved areas of Memphis.

As the word spread, restaurants and institutional kitchens, including Rhodes College and LaBaguette, began reaching out to see if the ministry could use excess from its kitchens to reach more hungry people and eliminate food waste. Once a week, Holy Communion receives large serving pans of food, which it repurposes into nourishing,



Barb Boucher, a parishioner at Church of the Holy Communion and part of the beginning of the ministry was honored in March as the Woman of Achievement for Determination in Memphis for her empathy, ability to see and plan a project that has continued to grow.

individually-packaged meals.

The ministry works closely with Calvary Episcopal Church and Clean Memphis to expand food recovery from more institutional kitchens, restaurants, and caterers.

With more volunteers, including your support, the project could feed more people and keep more food from landfills. Currently, work groups meet on Sunday afternoon, Monday and Thursday mornings at Holy Communion. The ministry also needs more drivers for pick-up and delivery on Mondays, Tuesdays and Thursdays.

Learn More

If you have any questions or know of someone who needs a meal, please contact us at recoverfoodfeedhope@holychommunion.org.



GROWING GOD'S HOLY GARDEN:

*Small Church Leaders Ignite LeadersCARE
Initiative in West Tennessee*

Diocesan Staff

Rebirth and restart are themes that have been on everyone's mind over the past year. Questions that we were already asking about the future of organized faith were only pressed by the pandemic. In some ways, this new era that we find ourselves in is extraordinary: the stakes have never been so high to explore new paths, and the opportunities for growth and exploration have never been so ample. What does faith community vitality look like in a post-pandemic era? What is the church, really? What does it mean to be a gathered people? What is our purpose in gathering?

Episcopalians in West Tennessee aren't the only Christians asking these questions about the future of our churches. Indeed, the Society for the Increase in Ministry (SIM) — an independent organization that supports Episcopal students and organizations — has been asking them in some form since its founding in 1857. And in late 2022, lay leaders from small churches in West Tennessee gathered in Atlanta, Georgia for LeadersCARE training offered by SIM. The training

aimed to “knit together a learning community sharing ideas and helping one another strengthen the church and increase ministry in powerful ways.”

Here's an excerpt from our conversation with EDWTN participants Alisa Kelly (Canon for Finance & Administration); Martha Webb and Wanda Clark (Emmanuel Episcopal Church, Ripley); and Lavonnie and Swazoo Claybon (St. Paul's Episcopal Church, Mason).

EDWTN: Can you tell us about the conference you all recently attended?

Martha: We went into this training with the thought that it would help our own church grow.

Wanda: We thought we would get tools to grow membership. None of us thought we would go out to recruit other churches to get them involved. It's important to keep

(continued on page 14)



ST. COLUMBA AND NEW GROWTH

by the Rev. Jonathan Chesney, Associate Rector of Church of the Holy Communion

When my wife and I moved to Memphis in September of 2018, I entered a world of construction. I had been called to serve as a new associate rector at Holy Communion, Memphis, which was already in the midst of a large renovation, and through mutually beneficial circumstances, we came to reside on campus at St. Columba Camp and Retreat Center.

In short order, after a generously supported Capital Campaign, it began the construction of new lodges, now the finished and beautiful Coleman and Johnson buildings. In addition to some critical maintenance after the last couple of severe ice storms, construction has continued as you'll notice upon entrance of the camp, with new housing for additional staff quickly going up!

There are challenges of course. In the interim, one must make use of spaces that were not designed or intended for the use to which one must adapt them. One must keep an eye out for errant nails and dodge multi-tracked construction vehicles barging through the tunnels of branch and canopy. There is noise and mess.

And then, suddenly, there is new and finished possibility. The dance of inconvenience shifts and you find yourself stronger for it, not unlike the wildernesses through which our ancestors in faith traveled, and survived, and met God. The muscles of

adaptiveness and creativity, sharpened by necessity, now have a blank slate upon which to offer new and exciting work. Living or working or utilizing a space designed for the uses to which you to put it make it sing, to the harmony of the gratitude in your heart. Mere stone and wood are transfigured into a terrarium of community, spirit, and growth.

Through Capital campaign, construction, pandemic, recovery from multiple ice storms, and new growth, I haven gotten to see St. Columba go through the hard work of preparing to welcome friend and stranger alike as Christ. Atop the city of Memphis like a crown, within the city limits and far enough away to feel like a woodland oasis, your Camp and Retreat Center is filling its calendar, and hopes to host you, the Episcopalians who are its owners, stewards, caretakers, and cheerleaders.

People come to know God, themselves, and others here

in the quiet of retreat, in the birdcall of creation, in the shouts and giggles of campers in the lake or the mudpit. Even amidst the challenging demographic changes our culture is experiencing, Camps remains a lively intersection of faith and curiosity, church-goer and unchurched, seeker and survivor.

It's a ministry of encounter here, of intention and space. St. Columba is grounded in the virtue of hospitality, a virtue so many Episcopalians value and excel in. It's a gift extended to you too! Come see, experience and participate in this good work and ministry that you have enabled. Take some intentional personal time in a hermitage. Bring your parish or a group to retreat.

Seek. Slide. Play. Pray. Your St. Columba has grown and continues, and is ready to welcome and serve!

Top. Rain didn't keep Episcopalians away from St. Columba in September 2022 for the diocese's first Intergenerational Fun Day event. The event was part of the EDWTN's 40th anniversary commemoration.



Bottom. A home to Happening of West Tennessee for over 30 years, St. Columba gratefully welcomed back teenagers for Happening 70 in February 2023. A spiritual awakening weekend, participants prayed, dance, sung, played Mud Volleyball and had deep experiences with their faith and with each other.



On February 15, 2023, the Episcopal Diocese of West Tennessee and St. George's Independent School (SGIS) entered a covenant agreement marking the latest step in the ongoing work of reconciliation and relationship building between the two organizations.

SGIS was founded in 1959 as a private day school on the former campus of St. George's Episcopal Church in Germantown. In 2007 following a dispute between SGIS and the Church, St. George's Episcopal Church relocated to its current location.

Although SGIS is neither a parochial school of the Church nor an institution of the Diocese, there are many connections between SGIS and the Diocese. Subcommittees of the SGIS School

Board and Bishop and Council worked to formulate a covenant agreement given that two Episcopal clergy persons now serve at SGIS. SGIS's head chaplain is the Rev. Deacon Jessica Abell. In this role, she has supervisory oversight of all SGIS chaplains and supervision over matters of religious education and worship during school events. The Rev. Hester Mathes is the Chaplain for the SGIS Memphis Campus in addition to being Vicar at Holy Trinity Episcopal Church.

SGIS is a member of the National Association of Episcopal Schools (NAES), many of whose members are independent schools. The covenant agreement stipulates that SGIS is committed to operating in the spirit of the values, policies and guidelines outlined by the NAES. Bishop Phoebe Roaf participates in SGIS's commencement and in worship services at all three

DIOCESE AND SGIS ENTER COVENANT AGREEMENT

Diocesan Staff



(L to R) Mr. David East, Chair, SGIS Board of Trustees; Bishop Phoebe Roaf; Timothy Gibson, SGIS Head of School; the Rev. Ollie Rencher, Bishop's Representative

SGIS campuses. Her representative on the SGIS School Board, the Rev. Ollie Rencher, is an Ex-Officio trustee on the SGIS school board.

We look forward to the ways in which the relationship between the Diocese and SGIS will continue to evolve.

(continued from page 11)

these rural churches alive.

EDWTN: How do you describe Emmanuel Ripley Church, Martha?

Martha: We are a small church and consider ourselves family. We spend a lot of time in relationship with one another with the Lord guiding us to pastor others. We are very hospitable. We welcome everyone and create programming outside the church. We are an aging church, but our youngest member is ten years old. Growth within our own church is challenging being in the economy and rural community we are in. To grow, we have to be a presence in our community.

Wanda: If more people knew about us and the Episcopal Church, we could reach more people and grow. While there's a strong church community, many are unchurched. It's an opportunity to invite and encourage people to visit.

EDWTN: We have something special to offer and we value learning and being in community with one another.

Swazoo: It gave us the opportunity to reflect and see where we wanted to go. I wasn't sure what to expect, but once we got there and started listening and learning about one another, I think that experience of sharing where we are and what we see as our Christian apostleship to live out God's will helped us get to the point where we, at least, had a starting point to think about goals and a way forward.

EDWTN: I believe I remember Alisa saying that there's been some good clay put on the spindle to take what we learned and share with

others in the Diocese. Can you speak to that, Alisa?

Alisa: As a result of attending, we came up with a goal. Our goal is as follows: Come help us grow God's holy garden and be a voice for unity, hope, love and truth by creating and facilitating in the Mathew 7:16 Congregational Teams.

Lavonnie: The central theme was all about what our church looked like if it was on fire. That really resonated because at St. Paul's we have 17 to 19 people in person and some online. It really makes us think about our story and how we share it to grow God's holy garden. We have to step out of our comfort zone. We started

The central theme was all about what our church would look like if it were on fire. It really makes us think about our story and how we share it to grow God's holy garden. We have to step out of our comfort zone.

—Lavonnie Perry Claybon

with our youth and received some interesting feedback about their involvement. We learned that some things were missing for them, like music.

EDWTN: What are next steps for you all? And what keeps you all motivated to do this work?

Martha: During Advent, we used the skills and ideas we learned and shared at the conference to meet with a large group of online parishioners. It was extremely

satisfying that after the first session we had everyone back and no one ran screaming. I know there's a dying of a spiritual world that I grew up in and that's a tragedy, but I believe in the Episcopal liturgy and what grew me closer to God. In a time with so much stress and distress, we have the opportunity to bring people into the fold.

EDWTN: Why does this work matter to you?

Wanda: We are so divided, but even with this division we can be there for one another. The church and the belief in Christ can bring us together. It's about God and loving our neighbors.

EDWTN: That's why I love my church as well. We are not of one mind.

Lavonnie: What motivates some of the parishioners including myself is that the church is a place to disagree and discuss issues and process them together. For example, conversations around intergenerational trauma and healing the shame and guilt some of us feel or have felt.

Swazoo: I think unity is something we are called to as Christians. The Episcopal Church is good at communicating and breaking down barriers. I think we have to call out others and bring out the love, unity and love. As we carry out our apostleship, I believe we can stand in the gap and on the word of Jesus that we will be able to be strong to carry out the will. It only happens with strong Christian leadership.

WHAT'S IN A NAME?

By the Rev. Tom Momberg,
Priest in Charge of All Saints' Episcopal Church

I began to write this on the feast of St. Thomas. *Thomas* is the name I use for legal purposes. Except for an uncle who's always called me *Tommy*, I've always been known as *Tom*.

During my days serving a church in Kansas, another name laid claim to me. It was given me by a Native American Episcopal priest, now of blessed memory. His Anglo name was Doyle, but first, he was Netamishkang: The One Who Goes Before His People.

Doyle was sent to me by a mutual friend. She had been his field ed supervisor during his seminary days. She fondly remembers Doyle's gentle way of being and of preaching. It was like he was sitting by the fire, she says, telling stories.

Like Jesus.

Early on, in seminary, Doyle had this crystal clear sense of justice, examining everything through that loving lens. "He had a nose for justice and love, both micro and macro. For him, an injustice was just a failure to love," my friend recalls. Love and justice in action for Doyle was as simple as this: paying the substitute childcare worker the same as the hired one.

Doyle came to Kansas to consult with both me, a new rector, and the also-new president of Haskell Indian Nations University. Together, along with leaders from the university and the parish, we

entered discernment about creating a new position at HINU: an inter-tribal chaplaincy, offering prayer and care to students who came from more than 100 tribal nations.

One weekend, Doyle helped campus leaders hold a sweat lodge, a ceremony for cleansing body and soul. Due to a health issue, I arrived afterward for their time of food and fellowship. During that gathering a little Native American boy fell down, right in front of me, and cried. Without hesitating, I picked him up, held him, and tried to console him. It was the father in me. Doyle saw what I did.

After the new Haskell chaplain had been hired, my friend Netamishkang moved back to Minnesota, serving as priest alongside several Episcopal congregations there. He also served as diocesan Canon Missioner for Indian Work and Executive Director of the Episcopal Church's Indigenous Theological Training Institute. Later Doyle became Chairman of the White Earth Reservation Tribal Council and Secretary for the Minnesota Chippewa Tribe.

Among his accomplishments, Doyle was particularly excited to have co-created events called "Healing of the Nations," celebrating sobriety and encouraging a drug-and alcohol-free lifestyle. A master woodsman and fisherman, he would often call me from home while gazing out his window. "Sorry, Tom, I lost my train of thought. I was distracted by this deer."

In addition to all those good things he did before he died, Doyle saw what I did with that little boy. He gave me a gift. As we said our last goodbye, he had a new name for me. Doyle said, "Tom, you are a Singer of Songs and a Lover of Children."

I'm still a singer of songs. I'm grateful to be serving a small church with a choir whose director and members have invited me to sing with them. I'm grateful to be in a men's community chorale again. I'm grateful for the words attributed to St. Augustine: "Those who sing pray twice."

And I'm still a lover of children. I'm grateful to be a biological father and a father-and-grandfather-by-marriage. I'm grateful to be in mentoring relationships with young adults. I'm grateful for the prayerful words of Michel Quoist: "Help me to be like this child once more, to recapture your likeness and your life, now so deeply buried in my heart."

Doyle, The One Who Goes Before His People, has gone to God. Yet he still reminds me of Aaron, Moses' brother, who put on a bejeweled breastplate - each jewel representing one of the twelve tribes of Israel - whenever he went before God with his people on his heart (Exodus 28:15-29). Whatever names we're given, may we - like Aaron, like Doyle - be given the heart wisdom to go before our people and our God.

worship

learning



IT'S ALL ABOUT LOVE:

A Festival for the Jesus Movement



FEATURED SPEAKERS
The Most Rev. Michael Curry • President Julia Ayala Harris • Brian D. McLaren • The Rev. Mariama White-Hammond • Dr. Kwok Pui Lan • Sarah Augustine

FEATURED ARTISTS
Live Hymnal • Charles Milling • Zack Nyein • Carrie Graves • Lily Lewin

community

action

July 9-12, 2023 • Baltimore
iam.ec/allaboutlove



Save the Date



The 42nd Annual Convention of the Diocese of West Tennessee

November 17, 2023
Saint John's Episcopal Church
3245 Central Ave.
Memphis, TN 38119

*Nomination & Registration
Information Forthcoming*



Diocesan Redbirds Night



FRIDAY, JUNE 9 @ 7:05 PM

AUTOZONE PARK

200 UNION AVE. | MEMPHIS, TN 38103

TICKETS: \$15 AND INCLUDE FOOD!

TINYURL.COM/EDWTNREDBIRDS

