



CAMINOS

OUR ROADS TOGETHER

EDITION 6 | FALL 2019

Serving The Episcopal Diocese of Pennsylvania



**NURTURING
YOUTH**

THROUGH MUSIC

**TRANSFORMING
LIVES**

THISTLE FARMS PROGRAM

EVANGELISM

INSIDE A GRAVEYARD

“

WE HAVE TO REMEMBER

THAT POVERTY IS NOT ONLY

AN ECONOMIC CONDITION;

THERE ARE SISTERS AND BROTHERS

WHO ARE EXPERIENCING SPIRITUAL,

PHYSICAL, AND MENTAL POVERTY.

TOGETHER WE MUST WORK NOT

SIMPLY TO FEED OR CLOTHE THEM

FOR A DAY, BUT TO HELP BREAK

THE CHAINS WHICH HOLD THEM

FOR ALL TIME. ”

LIVING FEARLESSLY IN CHRIST

THE RT. REV. DANIEL G.P. GUTIÉRREZ
XVI BISHOP OF THE DIOCESE OF PENNSYLVANIA

*"I therefore, the prisoner in the Lord, beg you to lead a life worthy of the calling to which you have been called, with all humility and gentleness, with patience, bearing with one another in love, making every effort to maintain the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace. There is one body and one Spirit, just as you were called to the one hope of your calling, one Lord, one faith, one baptism, one God and Father of all, who is above all and through all and in all. But each of us was given grace according to the measure of Christ's gift."
(Ephesians 4:1-7)*



As I begin my fourth year serving you as Bishop, I write this introduction with great hope. We are at the point in our common life when we are prepared to take those bold steps to proclaim the Good News. The world desperately needs the promise and love of Jesus Christ. As disciples in the 21st Century we are prepared to move forward with faith and courage. Now is the time to live fearlessly in Jesus.

Over the past three years, together we have done the hard and important work of preparation and formation. In a world of increasing secularism and separation, our time is now. We can no longer live as though this beautiful

diocese is receding into the shadows of irrelevance. We can no longer plan for a church suited for 1950; our ministry is to prepare for 2050 and beyond. The world needs us, and we need to be part of the world. Our diocese matters. We matter to southeast Pennsylvania, we matter to The Episcopal Church and we matter to the world at large. Working together we are making a difference in the name of Jesus Christ.

I have the blessed opportunity to be with you three to four times a week. At each visitation, I see and hear your desire to live into our true calling. All our churches, whether small or large, work to spread the Gospel. With each

liturgy, outreach, confirmation, hospital visitation, common interaction, we are showing the face of Christ. And your efforts are providing a glimpse of God's Kingdom. I am always inspired to see your ministry to our community, where prayers are turned into reality. You show tireless Christian love in action. This reflects our convention theme, "The Year of Living Fearlessly in Christ." We chose this theme because of your witness. It is evident that we are ready. Ready to try, to fail, get up and try again. All because of our belief in the power of Jesus Christ.

Together, we are meeting the world as a church. ►

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FRONT:

Children participating in the St. Peter's Sing Philadelphia Summer Camp. This photo and others courtesy of Timothy Roberts.

BEYOND SUNDAY

Started as a way to reach and engage families, Grace Episcopal Church and the Incarnation began 'Family Fun Friday' some 10 years ago in their Port Richmond neighborhood. "It is a powerful 'out-of-the-box' worship service that is changing the lives of our parishioners," said the Rev. Brian Rallison. "The parishioners that started this ministry kept it going and they are the ones that have let it organically grow into the thriving ministry it is today. The service is intimate and inspiring for anyone that is in attendance." After the service, everyone heads down to the parish hall for dinner and games. "It is a great way to start anyone's weekend."





RESOURCE

GRAVEYARD TOURS BRING HISTORY TO LIFE — and the Living to Church



▲ Debbie Klak, with headset, leads a tour at All Saints' in Torresdale

As historian Debbie Klak prepares to lead the first group out on a tour of the historic graveyard on the grounds of Trinity Church, Oxford, she gently reminds them: “Be mindful that you are in a sacred space. This church is still very active, and the graveyard is still an active graveyard. And we ask you to leave nothing behind but your prayers.”

On this sunny summer morning, the graveyard is far more active than usual. Over the course of the day, some 80 people, many from the community, take the living history tour, with parishioners from Trinity dressed in colonial garb, portraying those who found their eternal rest in the graveyard after doing their part to bequeath the church to future generations.

“I often refer to them as our silent congregation. They’re all in pews outside. Someone has to speak for them now,” says Klak, a member of the Diocese of Pennsylvania’s History Committee and chair of All Saints’ Torresdale Episcopal Church’s History Committee.

Klak worked with Trinity vestry member Ginny McCracken and others at the church

to help organize Trinity's first graveyard tour in June. In preparation, McCracken went back through Quaker historical records and found that Trinity "is the only instance they know of where a meetinghouse converted to Anglicanism."

Trinity Church, Oxford, traces its roots back to at least 1698—the year that the Rev. Thomas Clayton, the first Church of England minister known to have been in the Colony of Pennsylvania, died. It is believed that Clayton started the Anglican congregation, bringing in people from other faith traditions, including Quakers, Anabaptists, Sabbathians, Swedish Lutheran, and other dissenting groups. The original log Quaker meetinghouse that stood on the property was replaced by a quaint, red brick church in 1711 that still welcomes worshippers each Sunday.

Vestry member Chuck Tucker, whose colonial costume is topped off by a tri-corner hat and wig, is speaking on this particular day for Benjamin Cottman, a yeoman farmer who was the only person to serve on Trinity's vestry before and after the Revolutionary War—37 years all told. Cottman Avenue, just a few blocks away, bears his family's name because Cottman's property straddled the roadway.

"Trinity was suspect because of our association with the Church of England," Tucker tells a group taking the tour. There is even a legend, likely apocryphal, Tucker says, that, "Gen. George Washington came here and locked the front door to keep the loyalists out."

Not far from Cottman's grave, parishioner Paul Kamalu speaks for Caesar Penrose, a free black person who served as Sexton at Trinity Church, Oxford, for more than 50 years. While George Washington may not have come to personally lock the church, Kamalu recalls the tensions between loyalists and patriots, and how he and Cottman worked together to help keep the church open during the war.

By speaking for the dead, graveyard tours are a creative way to bring to life the history not only of the church and its people, but of the broader community the church serves. It may strike some as offbeat, but graveyard tours offer a creative way to do community outreach, evangelism, and fundraising. ▶



Historic Trinity Church Oxford, which traces its roots back to at least 1698, held its first graveyard tour this summer. Participants (left and next page) dressed in authentic period wear. (Photos courtesy of Megan McGee.)



“...graveyard tours are a creative way to bring to life the history not only of the church and its people, but of the broader community the church serves.”

“There’s something the Bishop said at a meeting that I totally agree with: You have to be careful not to make your church a museum,” Klak says. The idea is to celebrate not only the past, but the life that continues to shine in our sacred spaces.

Klak’s home church, All Saints’ Torresdale—founded in 1772 with the present Gothic Style church built in 1854—has been offering graveyard tours for years. Over the summer, All Saints’ held its first “Chemistry in the Graveyard” tour, sharing the stories of major chemical manufacturers who are buried in the church’s graveyard and how they shaped America. It drew about 100 people on a Wednesday evening in June.

And their annual October living history graveyard tour, held in conjunction with the church’s popular soup dinner, has attracted as many as 170 people—mostly from the community around the church in Northeast Philadelphia. The church collects free-will donations for events, and the annual soup dinner is a \$5 ticket.

“We don’t make a ton of money,” Klak says. “But it’s not necessarily about that. It’s about seeing the community come out and enjoy your church.”

Making History

Even if a church doesn’t have three centuries of history—or a graveyard—it can still tap into its history to reach out to the

community, spread God’s love, and find new sources of revenue.

What does it take to get started? Klak offers the following advice for churches:

Start simple. Anybody interested in history could begin by writing a “Did You Know?” historical factoid drawn from church records or vestry minutes for the church bulletin or newsletter. Be sure to include a name and phone/email so people who want to learn more or help know who to contact.

Go on tour. To take the next step and conduct tours, there are really only two traits necessary: an interest in history and being comfortable with speaking in public. If you’re looking to start a History Committee at your church, asking lay readers—who are already comfortable speaking in public—is a good place to begin.

Spotlight your stained glass windows.

What if your church doesn’t have a graveyard? “Your stained glass windows—the memorial windows—essentially tell the story of those who came before us without having a graveyard,” Klak says. You can research the names on the memorial windows to learn about the families who donated them, starting with church records and vestry minutes. If the windows are insured, the name of the artist or artists who designed them should be on the insurance policy. If not, the Philadelphia Architects and Buildings website has



Silent Congregation



“You can stitch their life quilt together and tell a simple story”

information on stained glass windows for many churches and denominations. It's also good to include information on the Bible passage depicted in the window. It may have a special tie to the donor's life. And even if it doesn't, it allows you to share scripture with visitors.

Emphasize the architect. Another option would be to tell the story of the architect who designed your church. If you don't have information on the architect, Partners for Sacred Places may be able to help.

Go online. Ancestry.com is a great starting place to find out more about either the names on the tombstones in the graveyard or on the stained glass windows or other memorials in your church. You can often discover how many children they had, the names in the family, where they lived in relation to the church, and even what they did for a living. If you don't have access to Ancestry.com, the Free Library of Philadelphia does, and other local libraries may as well.

Research public records. They are other rich sources of information. Death

certificates may provide insight into the kind of lifestyle a person led depending on their cause of death. Wills may indicate potential schisms or problems in a family, if, for instance, one child is conspicuously left out. Census data can open a window onto how people in your community lived at the time.

Be social. Google Books has many Social Registers available online that can shine a light on what interests a person had by revealing the organizations they belonged to.

Always have a donation box. At All Saints Torresdale, all money raised by the graveyard tours supports restoration of tombstones.

Open the church. Even if an event is held outside, make sure the church is open. “You never know when people are looking for a church,” Klak says. “People want to see the inside. We started opening the door when we have an event and one or two people stay inside the church to let people see it.” They also hand out brochures with the times of services and information on church history.

Offer chairs outside. At the start of the “Chemistry in the Graveyard” event, Klak quipped: “Walking in a graveyard is good exercise. The rough terrain is good for your calf muscles.” But remember that walking over rough terrain may be difficult for some. Have chairs available for those who are interested in the tour, but have trouble walking.

Remember: A picture's worth a thousand words. For any historical event, if there are photographs available of the people or events you discuss, display them on a table.

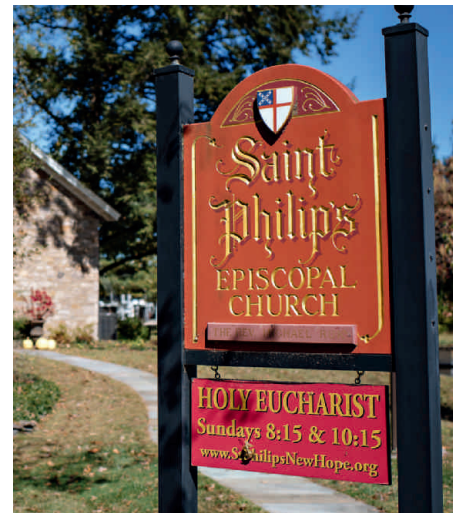
Offer refreshments. Again, keep it simple. Ice tea, lemonade and cookies are just fine.

Whether it's a living history graveyard tour, a tour of stained glass windows, or a lecture or discussion, remember: It's all about telling a story. And that doesn't cost a lot of money. It just takes a bit of time and research.

“You can stitch their life quilt together and tell a simple story,” Klak says. “And that's all people need to know.” ■

BEYOND SUNDAY

A celebration of nature in every way that honored a parishioner's legacy. The first annual Care of Creation Fest at St. Philip's Episcopal Church in New Hope was conceived by Liz Bowman, a longtime parishioner and journalist who died months before the event. "Liz loved gardening and was herself a force of nature," said the Rev. Michael Ruk, rector of St. Philip's. The environmentally themed festival brought together area organizations that educated and engaged all ages. And, a blessing of the animals with some sweet dogs up for adoption. (Two were adopted!)



P R O G R A M



Earlier this year, St. Luke's Episcopal Church in Germantown was one of two local non-profits to receive a grant for green storm water infrastructure site improvements from the Philadelphia Water Department (PWD). The grant totaling \$800,000 is part of the PWD's "Green City, Clean Waters" initiative. Greenprint Partners will deliver rain gardens and additional canopy trees to the church with funds from the grant.

According to Greenpoint, St Luke's will not only receive property enhancements because of this grant, but it can also reduce the church's annual storm water bills up to 80 percent. The project will be completed in March 2020.

Looking for information on related grants? Contact Canon Betsy Ivey, bivey@diopa.org, or Canon Kirk Berlenbach, kberlenbach@diopa.org.

R E S O U R C E

Collect, Reflect, Teach, and Share

A year ago at General Convention, resolutions A068 and D046 were passed urging each diocese to create a liturgical commission to prayerfully collect, reflect, teach, and share resources within the diocese.

As a result, Bishop Gutiérrez has commissioned a diverse group of 12 lay and clergy members from around the diocese to serve on a new Liturgical Discernment Commission.

As the Committee journeys together in our work, we keep always in our mind the words of the A068 resolution to "collect, reflect, teach, and share" the liturgical depth and breadth of our prayer book and the common prayer that rises out of our worshiping communities. To that end, the committee has endeavored to look into those four areas to help us respond with faithfulness to the call from the General Convention and our Bishop towards this work. We are well on our way in collecting and understanding the diversity of liturgical practices within our diocese, as seen through the eyes of a survey sent out this summer. Through this survey, we were able to get a peek inside a typical Sunday within our parishes, as well as other services that are engaging with liturgy. With many of our parishes responding, it has allowed us to use the survey as a launching point for reflection and discussion around the needs and hopes of our communities, and how our prayer book and liturgies respond to them.

Through this information, as well as through ongoing discussions in our diocese, we continue to understand our strengths as a worshiping community, as well as the gaps that have formed. Particularly in response to those gaps, we have been exploring and developing educational concepts that will teach and engage with the transformative depth and richness of the 1979 prayer book, as well as other existing resources. Our hope is that out of that work, we are able share pathways of education and support for musicians and clergy as the liturgical needs and capacities of our congregations shift. It is exciting to dream, discuss, learn, and explore what could be possible when, out of a wealth of education and resources, our liturgical growth as a community inspires our missional growth (and vice-versa!) This is holy and exciting work.

We ask for continued prayer as we journey further, and look forward to continued conversation with our diocese!

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The Rev. Joshua Caler: jmcaler@christpottstown.org

Liturgical Growth

Chorister Programs Tap the Power and Joy of Music to Nurture Faith



Even as an infant, Stella Mische would sing herself to sleep at night, and wake up singing in the morning.

“We always used to say that for Stella, life was a song,” says her mother, Barbara Mische.

Stella was baptized at St. Mark’s Church in Philadelphia, as were her younger brother Elliott and sister Vivian. But like so many young families, Barbara Mische says, “Life got crazy, and we didn’t come regularly.”

Stella’s love of singing, which continued to grow as she did, helped them find their way back.

St. Mark’s Choir of Boys and Girls seemed like a perfect fit for Stella, and her family. “We were ready to engage in the life of the church a little bit more,” Barbara says.

The Boys and Girls Choir has been nurtured by two wonderfully talented, accomplished, and dedicated professionals, both of whom are keeping alive the English choral tradition among children and youth in the Diocese of Pennsylvania.

The chorister program was started at St. Mark’s in 2013 by Darryl Roland, who served at both St. Mark’s and St. James School simultaneously before he was hired as Music Director and Artistic

Director of the Chorister Academy at Saint Peter’s Church, Philadelphia, in 2015. The Chorister Academy, an affiliate of the Royal School of Church Music America, started in 1868 to train boys to sing in what was then St. Peter’s Choir of Men and Boys. In recent decades, it has provided musical education and training at a professional level to girls and boys.

When Roland arrived at St. Peter’s, he created an intergenerational choir, a tradition that can be traced back to the Middle Ages, with boys and girls from the after-school Chorister Academy program singing with adults for Sunday church services, concerts, and choir tours.

St. Mark's, which also is affiliated with Royal School of Church Music America, continues to have a separate Boys and Girls Choir that sings nearly every Sunday on their own and performs with the adult choir about once a month. Robert McCormick, who joined St. Mark's as Organist and Choirmaster in 2016, has grown the chorister program from about 14 students when he arrived to about 23 now, and it is a key part of St. Mark's Christian formation ministry.

Initially, Barbara Mische says, they chose the St. Mark's chorister program for Stella primarily because of its superb musical education and training, with Christian formation viewed as an added plus. "Over time, both aspects equalized," Barbara says.

Last year, after five years in the chorister program, Stella was confirmed at St. Mark's. "She didn't hesitate for a minute as a 12-year-old might," her mother says. "I think it's helped her develop into a lovely young woman."

Elliott, now 11, joined the chorister program the year after Stella, and Vivian, 8, joined last year. The family that sings together worships together. On family trips, Barbara says, her children often break out in song. And one of their favorite games is, "Guess That Hymn Number."

"It's really a part of who they've become," she says.

The same can be said of Barbara, who has engaged in the life of the church to the degree that she now serves on Vestry as accounting warden.

"It's not just about making something beautiful, as wonderful as that is," McCormick says of the chorister program. "It's about more than that. Seeing the power of music to form children in faith and really strengthen their faith and nurture them is something that I find remarkable."

As Roland puts it: "So the centuries-old tradition continues in the 21st century as a viable way to train young people to be involved in music and also to be involved in their formation." ▶



▲ St. Peter's choristers rehearse during Sing Philadelphia, a camp where they learn the fundamentals of choral singing and music theory.



“We believe that a Christ-like community—‘Love God, Love Your Neighbors’—is one of love for everyone.”

Saint Peter’s: Their Minds are Growing’

Darryl Roland recalls a Christmas concert “early in the game, when I started,” when he was working with a church in Evansville, Indiana. Since it was a formal concert, involving the complex Christmas portions of Handel’s Messiah, the young children from the choir were not performing with the adults.

But Roland noticed a young girl from the choir, probably about 7 years old, sitting with her parents in the audience. And she was singing along because she had heard the music during rehearsals.

He realized that “just being in the environment—hearing the tone, hearing the repertoire—it’s like osmosis.”

That lesson has been confirmed many times through the years since, and Roland sees it now in the intergenerational choir he started at St. Peter’s.

“We don’t view our choristers as a children’s choir, but rather as a treble section in the intergenerational choir of St. Peter’s Church,” Roland says. “We’re a choir of boys and girls, and men and women, who are singing as a single ensemble.

“What makes this kind of program unique or different is that you are intentionally, at the very beginning at age 7, training the child to sing on a professional level with an adult. That doesn’t mean that, at age 7 or a precocious 6-year-old, you’re throwing them into an 8-part Byrd motet. But from the very beginning, they sit with the choir on a regular basis and are involved in various degrees. When they’re sitting with the choir as a whole, even when they’re not singing, they’re assimilating and they’re hearing and their minds are growing.”

The fact that the chorister programs at both St. Peter’s and St. Mark’s are affiliated with the prestigious Royal School of Church Music (RSCM) is significant. Founded by Sir Sydney Nicholson in England in 1927, RSCM is an educational charity committed to promoting the study, practice, and improvement of music in Christian worship. Its original focus was primarily on the English choral tradition.

Today, the school’s work is far broader and more diverse, as well as more international and ecumenical, with more than 11,000 affiliates in the United Kingdom, United States, Canada, Australia, New Zealand, South Africa, Nigeria, and throughout Europe.

RSCM America has more than 400 affiliates crossing denominational lines and the boundaries of nearly every state.

“You don’t have to be an Episcopal Church to be a member. You don’t even have to be a church. You can be a school,” Roland says. “It’s really about promoting good musical education to young people.”

The chorister programs at both St. Peter’s and St. Mark’s follow the same approach, welcoming children of all backgrounds and religious traditions, including none at all.



Sing Philadelphia spreads the joy of music.

"We're a community that strives toward being a Christ-like community. And we respect all faith traditions. We're quite upfront that you do not have to be Christian or Episcopalian. We believe that a Christ-like community—"Love God, Love Your Neighbors"—is one of love for everyone. So you are not going to be judged, you're not going to be pressured. You're going to be received as part of the community."

While adhering to the principles of the RSCM program, most affiliates adapt them to their own use. Roland is no exception. He employs what's known as the Kodály method, developed in Hungary in the mid-20th century, to introduce 7-year-olds to music and music theory, or written notation. "It did not come out of the English tradition, but it is a very effective way of training

young people," Roland says. "It's sound followed by symbol. So you're getting them to hear certain intervals through folk songs and then to see it on the page so that they can hear what they see, as opposed to entirely teaching a child by rote – for example, playing it on piano or singing it and repeating it until they have it memorized. The Kodály method helps the singer to hear music and read it in their mind."

Roland uses Kodály songs as an integral part of the annual Sing Philadelphia summer camp that St. Peter's holds for the community. Under Roland's instruction, the week-long choir camp for boys and girls ages 7-12 teaches classical repertoire with special attention to breathing techniques, vowel formation and choral tone, sight singing and intonation, and music theory. ▶



▲ St. Peter's intergenerational choir processes into church; service inside; Roland directs the choir during the summer camp.



▲ St. Mark's Organist and Choirmaster Robert McCormick leads the after-school chorister rehearsal. Opposite: Children pay attention to McCormick's directions. ►

The camp, which drew 32 participants in 2019, has a tiered tuition program that can provide full or partial scholarships to ensure that children have equitable access to the exceptional music experience it offers—regardless of a family's financial resources. It also helps recruit children to the Chorister Academy program.

Fourteen of the 32 families with children attending this year's Sing Philadelphia expressed interest in the Chorister Academy. Of those, 11 are now members.

Roland's previous experience developing the award-winning Cathedral Choir School of Delaware and serving as its Artistic Director informs his thinking on the future of the chorister program at St. Peter's. The Cathedral Choir School, located in Wilmington, provides music training, leadership development, mentoring,

and academic support for children from underserved areas of Wilmington.

"Over 50 percent of choristers were from at-risk zip codes," he says. "We were able to expand the program with very significant academic support, with research-based mentoring and tutoring and homework help."

St. Peter's applied for and received a grant from Philadelphia's MENTOR Independence Region to establish a formal mentoring program this year. The first phase is to start a program that can accommodate children during the hours of the after-school program from 3-6 p.m., and expand its transportation help.

The Delaware program received national recognition, including a 2005 Coming Up Taller award, the nation's highest honor bestowed on after-school programs for

children and youth by the President's Committee on the Arts and Humanities and its partner agencies.

"A lot of people have the same vision here, and it will grow with good leadership, and also organically to what makes us unique," Roland says. "Choristers, in my experience, from every part of the demographic continuum, will say their experience is so much better because of the diversity."

St. Mark's: 'Nothing Less Than Excellence'

It's late on a Friday afternoon in September, and the Boys and Girls Choir of St. Mark's Church are rehearsing a difficult portion from the French composer Maurice Duruflé's setting of the Latin *Requiem* that they will perform at a special All Souls Day service in November.

And Robert McCormick isn't happy. But not because of the performance or effort of the choristers fanned out in a semi-circle before him.

"I saw on Facebook that someone wrote a new piece of music that they said is very simple so a children's choir could sing it," he told his young students. "That made me so angry! What I want to do is take a picture of this and say, 'This is what children should be singing!'"

The choristers laugh, and then return to the solemn and complex piece of music on the stands in front of them.

While both Roland and McCormick are adept at using humor and positive encouragement to help choristers learn, they hold themselves and their charges to very high standards.

"I'm always asking for nothing less than excellence," McCormick says. "Obviously, someone who is less experienced has a different definition of excellence than someone who has been doing it for years. But I ask everyone to bring their best to the table because that's what God asks of us.

"I think sometimes we adults think we need to simplify or dumb down for children. Don't do that. Children are bright, inquisitive, and love to be challenged. It's a strong

belief of mine that children will respond to challenges and that they want to be challenged. The choristers here respond to very sophisticated music and also to being asked to perform at a high level."

It is because the bar is set so high for the choristers that St. Mark's and St. Peter's and other affiliates of the RSCM pay them a stipend. It's not much, starting at just 50 or 75 cents per rehearsal, Sunday service, and performance. The amount increases as choristers are "promoted" through different levels based on achievement in meeting certain standards and effort, among other criteria. At both St. Mark's and St. Peter's, choristers are expected to attend two rehearsals and Sunday service virtually every week during the school year. The stipends are accumulated over the course of each semester, and then paid to the choristers.

"The stipend is meant to underscore the seriousness of the commitment," McCormick says.

It also sends a message to the children and youth that they are doing something that the church considers to have real value, he says.

And in many ways, McCormick says, that value is priceless. ▶

High Standards



"I think that music—liturgical music especially—can have an almost sacramental quality," he says. "I'm not a sacramental theologian. I don't even play one on TV. But there's something to the idea that music can mediate something holy."

There's a quote often attributed to Saint Augustine, although its sourcing is questionable, that McCormick says rings true nonetheless: "He who sings prays twice."

"I talk about how the choir's role in the liturgy is to help the congregation pray, so

people in the pews can pray through music," he says. "And our fundamental job is to glorify God, and everything else is secondary to that."

McCormick grew up attending a Methodist Church in Macon, Georgia, where he fell in love with music, and especially the organ, at an early age. He attended Westminster Choir College in Princeton, N.J., and was confirmed in The Episcopal Church his freshman year there after visiting several Episcopal churches in New York and Philadelphia.

Before joining St. Mark's, he previously served as Director of Music at St. Paul's Parish, K Street, in Washington, D.C., and as Organist and Music Director at the Church of St. Mary the Virgin in New York City.

Although the chorister program at St. Mark's was less than three years old when he arrived, "so much of the hard work had been done in building the groundwork by Darryl (Roland) and in the interim year before I was hired," he says.



▲ St. Mark's choristers rehearse twice a week to sing almost every Sunday, including once a month with the adult choir.

“The choristers here respond to very sophisticated music and also to being asked to perform at a high level.”



▲ McCormick, top, sets the bar high for choristers while making the experience fun.



Like Roland, McCormick also has adapted the RSCM program over the years, describing the curriculum he uses to train choristers as “the same idea, same principle” as the original..

And like St. Peter’s, St. Mark’s holds an annual week-long Summer Choir Camp that serves as both community outreach and a feeder for the Boys and Girls Choir. The younger children (ages 3-7) participate in a half-day session involving prayer, singing, Bible stories, arts and crafts, games, and musical presentations. The older children (generally 8 and up, although some 7-year-olds are accepted on a case by case basis) participate in the full-day Choir activities, which include singing, music composition and theory lessons, musical presentations, and field trips. This year’s camp drew almost 50 children, with slightly more than half in the younger group.

“We’ve certainly had some choristers who originally came through the camp,” McCormick says. “We don’t necessarily expect that everybody who comes to the camp is going to join the choir. But it certainly is a vehicle for recruitment.”

Choristers actually form the core of participants in the choir portion of the camp. This summer, a dozen St. Mark’s choristers attended, along with 10 new, potential choristers. Of those, two are now part of the choir.

Regardless of whether a church has the resources for a full chorister program, McCormick says it’s important to recognize the role that music plays in Christian formation. “I’ve known choristers who say they come to believe in God after having been a member of the choir,” McCormick says.

McCormick also has talked with his parish priests and adult members of St. Mark’s choir about the importance of “nurturing and teaching children through music and singing in the context of liturgy.

“We ask the question, who’s going to do this in 20 or 30 years if we’re not teaching children to do it now? So we’re investing in the future of the church,” McCormick says. “We’re doing our part to help equip the adults of the future to be able to do this.” ■

Priceless Value

W E L C O M E



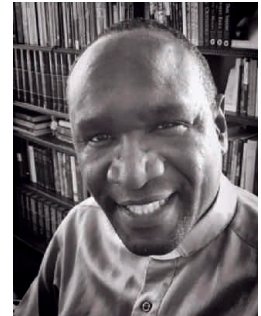
A WARM WELCOME

To those in new positions and those who are new (*) to the diocese.

- **Church of the Ascension, Parkesburg**
The Rev. Jill Roche Wikel, Priest-in-Charge
- **All Saints, Torresdale**
The Rev. James Walton, Rector
- **St. John's, Essington/
St. James, Prospect Park**
*The Rev. Jessie Thompson, Deacon-in-Charge
- **St. Mark's, Honeybrook**
The Rev. Kim Guiser, Rector
The Rev. Asha Guiser, Sunday Missioner
- **St. Mary's, Ardmore**
The Rev. Sean Lanigan, Rector
- **St. Paul's, Chestnut Hill**
The Rev. Daniel Kline, Associate
- **St. Peter's in the Great Valley, Malvern**
The Rev. Chris Exley, Associate
- **St. Peter's Phoenixville**
The Rev. Samuel Ndungu, Rector
- **Church of the Redeemer, Bryn Mawr**
The Rev. Michael Palmisano, Associate
- **St. Stephen's, Clifton Heights and Church of the Redeemer, Springfield**
The Rev. Jon Clodfelter, Priest-in-Charge
- **St. Stephen's, Norwood**
The Rev. Hentzi Elek, Priest-in-Charge
- **St. Thomas', Whitemarsh**
The Rev. Dennis Bingham, Deacon
- **Washington Memorial Chapel, Valley Forge**
The Rev. Mark Nestlehutt, Rector



Christ Church, Ridley Park
*The Rev. Jane Gober, Rector



St. George St. Barnabas, Philadelphia
*The Rev. Dr. Robert Magoola, Rector



**Free Church of St. John/
Cristo y San Ambrosio (both Philadelphia)**
*The Rev. Joseluis Memba, Vicar



Holy Innocents St. Paul's/Grace Church and the In
*The Rev. Brian Rallison, Rector



**St. John's, Essington/
St. James, Prospect Park**
*The Rev. Jessie Thompson, Rector



St. David's, Radnor
*The Rev. Maurice Dyer, Associate Priest

Making a Difference

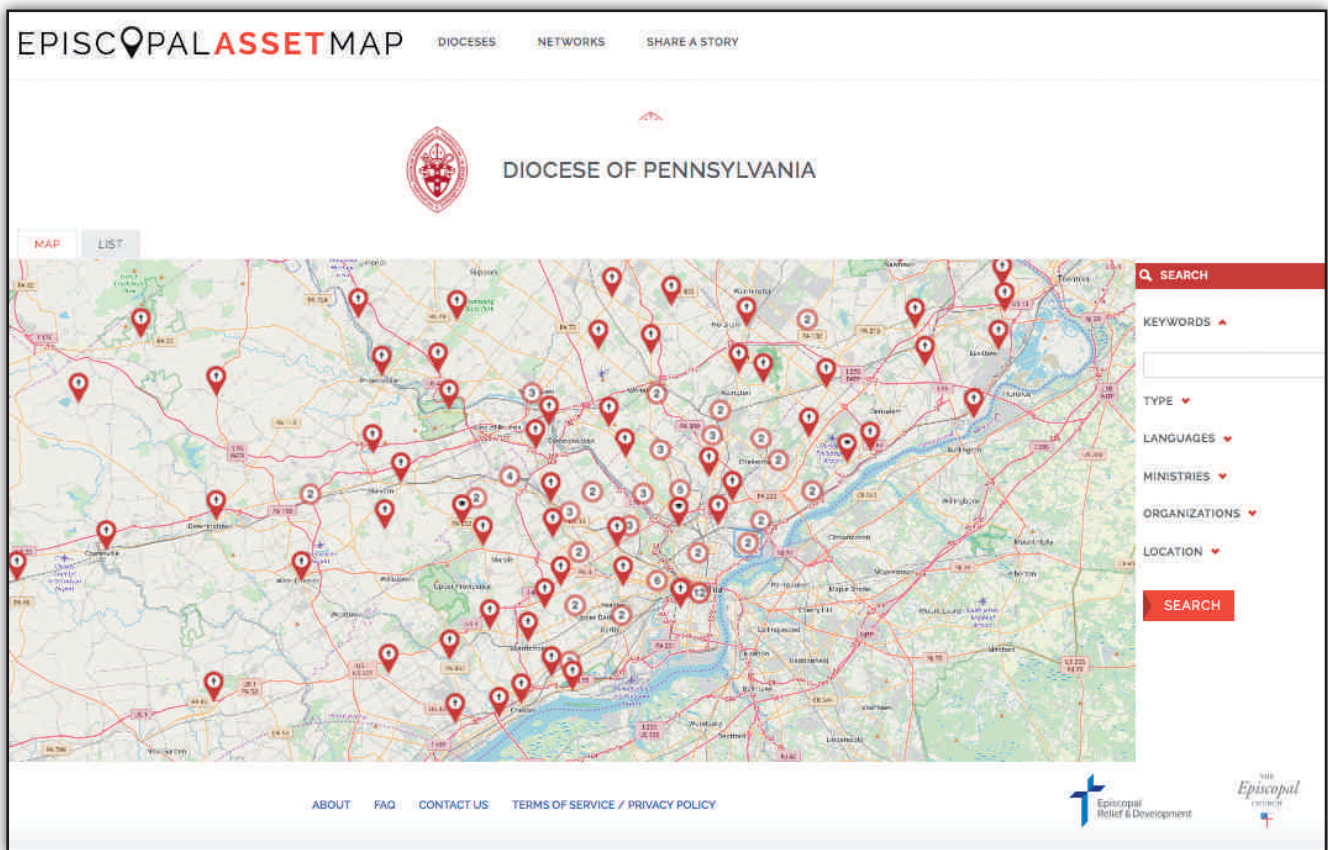
Episcopal Asset Map

Find Your Church



Would you like the opportunity to share how your congregation serves God? The Episcopal Church Asset Map, which started out as a disaster preparedness tool, is being used by people looking for churches in their area, specific ministry areas (e.g. meal programs, immigration, youth ministry), language spoken, and organizations that are aligned with churches. Last year, the diocese added information for many of our parishes and are asking your help in contributing to update the map. The map is user-friendly, reminiscent of Wikipedia, allowing anyone to submit suggested edits. This is a joint project of the Episcopal Church and Episcopal Relief & Development.

To access the Asset Map, go to our web site, diopa.org, and search for “Asset Map.”





▲ Fr. Benjamin Gildas has been doing podcasts since the medium was in its infancy.

“The Front Door of Our Church Is Essentially a Digital Front Door”

When Fr. Benjamin Gildas launched his first podcast, *No Avatars Allowed*, while studying at Lutheran Theological Seminary in Philadelphia in 2008, the medium was still in its infancy. “There were podcasts out there, but it was so niche at that time,” recalls Gildas, who has been rector of Incarnation Holy Sacrament (IHS) Church in Drexel Hill since 2013. That first podcast, created and co-hosted with fellow seminarian Joshua Wise, focused on two passionately shared interests: video games and theology. The podcast was successful but, as Gildas was about to be ordained as a priest about five years later, he left podcasting. (Gildas and Wise, now Theologian in Residence at IHS, relaunched the *No Avatars Allowed* podcast in 2018, and, in October 2019, Church Publishing published “*No Avatars Allowed: Theological Reflections on Video Games*,” based on the podcast by Wise, with a Foreword by Gildas.)

Finding he missed podcasting, in 2014 Gildas launched “*Priest Pulse*” with co-host Fr. Colin Chapman. The podcast has been downloaded more than 55,000 times since it started, and has a loyal following in the Episcopal Church. Gildas, a member of

Anamchara Fellowship, a religious order founded in the tradition of the Episcopal Church, with a Celtic spirit, talked with *Caminos* about podcasting, the church’s “digital front door,” and how to make digital ministry a natural, authentic extension of your own ministry.

What was your intention in launching *Priest Pulse* initially? What did you have in mind?

To be honest with you, I don’t know that I had a great intention. I don’t think I was thinking missionally about it. I didn’t do the important work of saying, here’s going to be our mission statement and we’re going to stick to that. At the beginning of our show, it was really, what is Ben interested in talking about? What are the topics that are peaking my interest and let’s cover those. So it took me some time to learn to think missionally about everything, really. To have a mission statement for everything, even a purpose statement for my own life. Through doing this, I have learned the importance of clarifying your purpose, clarifying your mission, and letting that drive your decisions about what you’ll do. And in podcasts, that means letting the mission statement, letting the purpose statement, drive your content.

Clarifying Your Purpose

Do you now have a mission statement for Priest Pulse?

From the very beginning, we had an amazing relationship with Church Publishing, which has been a huge part of the reason we have been successful because they want their authors to have a platform. I think that's part of the relationship between publishing and podcasting, which has a long and glorious tradition of working together. So Church Publishing has from the beginning hooked us up with authors whenever we want. And it really helped steer the content of our show in that direction because the way we were getting good content was by getting great authors to come on and talk about their books. So we definitely had a lot of resonance in that way.

We found our voice in the podcasting world, which was to talk about relevant issues in the church, to talk about church growth and spiritual growth. Basically, I think the mission of Priest Pulse is to discuss contemporary issues of what it means to be the church and the Episcopal Church in the 21st century. And we didn't go into the show with that clearly labeled as our mission. It just became that based on our own interests and the people who were willing to come on our show and give us time.

You talk a lot about the “digital front door of the church” and the need for the church to embrace digital ministry. Why is that so important?

You have at least two front doors to your church. We think a lot in our congregations about the experience someone will have when they open the door to the church. They show up on a Sunday morning, they go to the front door—what do they see? Who's the first person that greets them? How are they treated when they walk through? Will someone give them a bulletin and a hymnal and help them to their seat? Will someone be friendly to them? What does it look like in your narthex or vestibule, whatever you have,



if you have one? How welcoming is that experience? What does a newcomer experience when they come through that door? We think about that stuff a whole lot.

But if we're not thinking about the digital front door, the data is very clear that almost everyone who visits a church to check it out has already checked you out online. This is all just data driven. This is definitely not out of my head. This is something lots of people have observed and now talk about as far as evangelism. The front door of our church is essentially a digital front door. If you're church shopping, if you are actively searching for a church, then before you get to that red door at the building, you've gone through an online front door, you've checked out the website. I think we spend a lot less time thinking about what that experience is like for the person. How welcoming is it? How easy is it for them to learn the information they want to learn in order to come through your physical door?

The statistics say the pastor page and the sermon page are the most visited pages on a church website. People want to know, who's this pastor going to be? Is it somebody I can see as my own pastor? What do their sermons sound like? What time is the service on Sunday? And

how do I find the church? It's not rocket science. If a church website includes just those things, I feel like they hit a home run. That's like having a very well laid out, friendly, welcoming narthex.

But I think the idea of the digital front door goes even beyond that. What I've come to believe is that in the context of the 21st century, I don't think we can think of the digital front door as just the means of getting someone's body into our pews. We have to treat it as its own relevant ministry—that the digital world is its own front door to the church and to the church existing in a digital space.

Because the reality is that people already live in that digital space. People already spend an enormous chunk of their lives on social media or on online platforms. If you're not a church person, if you're not a person who goes to church regularly, it's just so foreign of a concept to get up and go to a building on a Sunday morning into a physical space when they can get the kind of content that feeds them, that feeds their soul, that nourishes them—they can get that online. So our churches need to think about the fact that digital is as relevant a ministry space—if not more relevant—than the physical spaces we think of on our property. ▶



“...if I want to get the word out about a church event, I have an email list of more than 600 people, almost all of whom are not members of my congregation.”

▲ Fr. Gildas references a new book titled *No Avatars Allowed*, based on a podcast he does with Joshua Wise.

I still believe that people need to come through our doors in order to receive the sacraments, in order to be part of the Christian community and become disciples. I really believe that. But I think if we don't take that digital space seriously as the front door, we're not going to get people to come through our front doors anymore because we're not going to be relevant to them.

What are some of the ways congregations can start building a more welcoming digital front door?

I think a lot of times, when it comes to this digital stuff, people think like, “Oh I'm supposed to do a podcast because that's what people are doing.” It used to be, “I'm supposed to do a Facebook page because everyone has a Facebook page.”

Well, that one's actually probably true. Everyone should have a Facebook page. (laughs) There always seem to be “the newest thing” and people feel like that's what I need to do because everyone else is doing that. I would steer people away from that mentality. Don't do something in the digital world because you think you're supposed to. Do it because it's a natural, authentic extension of your own ministry.

For example, we started using the website Meetup.org to launch a gaming ministry at our church. My staff—Dr. Joshua Wise, our Theologian in Residence, and our community coordinator, Blaine Martin—and

I started this podcast network called the All Ports Open network. We relaunched the No Avatars Allowed podcast and started a bunch of other podcasts that were mostly focused around the intersection of gaming and gaming culture and Christian faith. We create podcasts for it, but we simultaneously launched a game ministry—a physical game ministry—at our church called Saturday Night Strategists. People bring board games and play board games every Saturday night. The game night has been around for two years, and we have over 600 members in our Meetup group online. So if I want to get the word out about a church event, I have an email list of more than 600 people, almost all of whom are not members of my congregation.

We launched this game ministry because I was into games and the people on my staff were into games. So we thought we'd launch this ministry that is focused around games because it's a natural extension of our own passions and interests. And there are people out there who are a segment of the community who are not being reached, or evangelized, who we could reach. For any other priest in this diocese or any other lay leader or vestry member in this diocese, I would say: What is it that interests you and your congregation and what would be a natural, authentic digital extension of that?

From your own experience, what are some of the pitfalls people should look out for if they're thinking about doing this?

My personal experience has taught me, above all, something that is pretty common sense, which is that the KISS rule applies to absolutely everything: Keep It Simple, Stupid. In all these things, I really think you can get away with keeping it simple. And in fact, you should, because I think it's better. For example, when we launched our new website for our church, we just used Wix, a free, very simple editing program to put up a very simple website. We had two or three things we wanted the website to do. When you open the website, the first thing your eyes see is the service time, right away on the front of the screen. Holy Eucharist is 10 a.m. on Sundays. Boom. Right there. The most simple thing you could do. We wanted it to have our address and phone number easy to find. And we wanted it to have a pastor page that says who I am, and have our sermons on the website. And we've grown from there, adding a calendar with events and other features. But those simple things are the most important. Just start with keeping it simple. That's the most important thing because it's easy to bite off more than you can chew. ■

"Historic Bella Vista church hosts baking bread sessions to spur social change." That is one of the headlines around a new ministry called RISE, created and organized by Saint Mark's Episcopal Church in Philadelphia and sponsored by the diocese. RISE is affiliated with the Zoe Project, administered by Princeton Theological Seminary, with financial support from the Lilly Endowment Inc. The Zoe Project is intended to engage young adults (ages 21-35), especially those who do not attend church, in order to learn the ways in which they find community, meaning, and purpose. As part of the Zoe Project, RISE lives out the Gospel message by seeking to build relationships between the church and young adults. At the same time, RISE is breathing new life into The Episcopal Church of the Crucifixion, which has been closed since 2016. While the bread "rises," the group offers unique and empowering workshops and presentations for those who are seeking meaning, connection, and the opportunity to rise up in service and stand up for justice. The bread that is made then goes directly to local organizations that are combating food insecurity in Philadelphia.



THISTLE FARMS PROGRAM

Evening the Playing Field in Coatesville



▲ Regina Mullins speaks to parishioners of the Episcopal Church of the Trinity in Coatesville about how the Thistle Farms program changed her life.



▲ Mullins, right, and the Rev. Sherry Deets share a lighter moment.

After years lost to prostitution, drug addiction and human trafficking, years that cost her custody of her children and a relationship with her family, along with any sense of self-worth, Regina Mullins left prison for the last time in 1997 and found a home—a real home—at Thistle Farms’ Magdalene House in Nashville.

She clearly recalls the day 22 years ago when she first met Thistle Farms founder and Episcopal priest Becca Stevens. Mullins was just the fifth woman to join the fledgling two-year residential program that provides housing, food, healthcare, therapy and education to women who have survived trafficking, prostitution and addiction—at no charge. She knew most of the other women in the program from the streets or prison.

Mullins had serious reservations about entering a program run by a priest in “a black shirt and white collar” who would be “draggin’ me to confession all the time.” What she encountered instead was a barefoot young woman wearing cutoff shorts and a midriff shirt, carrying her 2-year-old son in her arms.

"That day," Mullins told parishioners at Episcopal Church of the Trinity in Coatesville one recent Sunday morning following the service, "she said to me—and I take it with me everywhere I go because I know it's true because of the people I met before and the people I will meet—she said, 'Regina, if there's a line between priests and prostitutes, it's a very, very thin line.' And that floored me. Because at that moment, somebody made the playing field even.

"It didn't matter what you'd done. It didn't matter what anybody had done. What it meant was that everybody—it doesn't mean you have to be an addiction survivor or a trafficking survivor or a prostitution survivor—everybody's got some brokenness. And our job is to be willing to listen, to see where we can help. How can we be God's eyes? How can we be God's hands? How can we be his feet to go?"

'We Should Do It in Coatesville'

On this Sunday morning, Mullins is on the go to share her inspiring and redemptive story and encourage the congregation of Episcopal Church of the Trinity in Coatesville as they embark on what Rev. Sherry Deets called in her sermon "a new path in our faith adventure:" creating a residential program with a social enterprise piece modeled on the highly successful Thistle Farms program.

It would mark the first sister organization of Thistle Farms, known as Thistle Hills, in the Diocese of Pennsylvania. Working under the umbrella of the Capstone Legacy Foundation, a Philadelphia-based, 501 (c) (3) nonprofit Christian Community Foundation, the Thistle Hills project has already won approval for a \$300,000 Chester County Community Development Block Grant to purchase and renovate a house located near the church in downtown Coatesville. A house suitable for the women who will live there to call home.

The project also has received a \$7,500 grant from the Stewart Huston Charitable Trust and the diocese's Anti-Human Trafficking Commission covered all expenses for Deets, Deacon Joan Wylie, and Thistle Hills Mission Committee member Jennifer Lopez, who also serves as Executive Director of the Friends Association For Care and Protection of Children, an organization working to help families move out of poverty and homelessness, to attend the national Thistle Farms conference in Nashville earlier this year.

Deets expects the \$300,000 Chester County Community Development Block Grant to aid efforts to raise needed start-up funding to get the program off the ground. And once it launches, the program will need volunteers.

Deets has long been an unabashed fan of Becca Stevens and the Thistle Farms program. "I have every one of her books, I quote her all the time, and I've admired her ministry," she says. ▶





“This community is about to spread grace, mercy and love”

REGINA MULLINS

When the Anti Human Trafficking Commission first began looking at starting a Thistle Hills sister program in the Diocese about three years ago, Deets' first reaction was: “We should do it in Coatesville.” ▶

There were discussions about starting a program in Philadelphia, but Deets says “the idea would not leave me alone. I couldn't sleep. For me, this is kind of how things happen when the Holy Spirit is telling me, ‘You're going to do something and I'm not going to let you alone until you do it.’ I've also been around long enough to realize it doesn't necessarily happen the way I think it will happen.

“So I thought, ‘OK, God, I'm going to take the steps and see what happens. Because maybe you're not telling me it will necessarily be a Thistle Farms program, but whatever happens in the process is where we're being led.’ I started talking about it in the community, and I was overwhelmed by the positive responses.”

A City on the Rise

The timing certainly seems fortuitous. In addition to the residential program, Thistle Hills also has an intriguing social enterprise component that enables the women to learn new job skills and earn a living wage to support themselves. As an added bonus, the profits generated by the business stay in the community to support the residential program.

Once again, it's modeled on Thistle Farms, which started its social enterprise with candle-making when Mullins was a resident there. It has since blossomed into a global business that includes everything from essential oils and personal care products such as lotion, body balm, and bath salts to clothing, accessories, and jewelry, among other items.

Coatesville is currently in the midst of revitalization efforts that are bearing fruit. Coatesville 2nd Century Alliance is a public-private partnership working to

build the city's capacity to improve current conditions, stabilize the socio-economic stature of the city, foster economic development, and bring resources and community partners together.

The city is also Chester County's only Opportunity Zone, a federal community development program that encourages private equity investment in low-income communities.

“It would be great here. It just seems this would be a perfect community for that, especially with all the new development that's going to be happening here and the way this community looks out for each other,” Deets says.

Examples of social enterprises from other Thistle Hills sister organizations include hand-crafted leather products, honey and granola, earrings, coffee shops, blankets, art studios, selling products of other artisans, and much more.

“We need to figure out exactly what that social enterprise piece will be,” Deets says.



Discover the Grace

'Love Is the Most Powerful Force for Change in the World'

Some places where Thistle Hills programs have started began with the social enterprise component. But Deets says she believes that starting with the residential program is important for women who are coming out of the trauma of human trafficking, addiction, and prostitution.

"What makes this program so successful is the two-year residential piece. It is the offering of a comfortable home for these women to live in, and everything is provided for them," Deets says. "Their medical needs are met, their spiritual needs are met, their mental health needs are met. They're provided food, care and shelter for two full years. But during that time, there's some intensive work, especially at the beginning, on recovery.

"I recognized that two years was a key in helping people get their lives transformed."

Mullins is living proof. "Regina is a living, breathing example of how love is the most powerful force for change in the world," Deets said as she introduced her.

Today, Mullins, who has been clean for 23 years, is married and has custody of her children. She has studied theology at a Nashville university, and spent the past two decades working at Thistle Farms "to bring this gift of another chance" to women all across the country.

Recently, she started her own nationwide consulting business with Thistle Farms sister organizations, including the Coatesville project.

"You guys have offered me the chance to come here to say the women in Coatesville, the people in Coatesville, are about to have their minds blown because of Thistle Hills," Mullins told parishioners. "It's coming. It's going to be a refuge to so many women who are feeling what I felt

all those years ago. Hopeless. Helpless. Loveless. Worthless. And this community is about to spread grace, mercy, and love and let [those women] know you have a home, not a house. You have a home to come home to."

When the Thistle Hills program opens in Coatesville, women who have traveled the same hard road as Mullins will have the opportunity to discover the grace and mercy and love that she found at Thistle Farms more than two decades ago.

"God heard me when I said I can't go back to those streets," she said. "God didn't forget me. I just believed the lie that He didn't love me." ■

HOW FAITH AND SERVICE INTERTWINE

BY LIBBY LERCH

Volunteering and community service are core values to me, and I believe they are a part of who I am. For as long as I can remember, my family and my church have instilled in me a passion for community service. I was diagnosed with Type 1 Diabetes at the age of two, and even before then my family had been raising money for Type 1 Diabetes research, since my dad also has Type 1. Every year we have a team that participates in the JDRF One Walk in Philadelphia and raises money for research and awareness for the disease. The Walk, along with other volunteer events for Type 1 Diabetes, became the cornerstone of my service work.

I'm also a class representative for my school's Service Council, which organizes and publicizes local service events, such as feeding the hungry in our community and all over the world, giving underprivileged kids in Philadelphia backpacks filled with school supplies, supporting local nature preserves such as Riverbend Environmental Center and various other events. I'm also a member of the No More Kids With Cancer Committee, which is the liaison between the No More Kids With Cancer Organization and my school.

The No More Kids With Cancer Organization was founded after the passing of my classmate and close friend, Naya Summy, from a long and tough battle with a rare form of brain cancer at the age of 11. I remember in the days and weeks leading up to her death, I prayed to God every night for a miracle and for her to overcome her cancer. However, she eventually passed away, and I remember feeling angry and betrayed by God because He chose not to save such a special girl in so many people's lives. I now know that this was how it was meant to be, because I believe Naya is in a much better place now, with God, and that she is watching over the No



More Kids With Cancer Organization and its marvelous efforts in funding further research for childhood cancer. This helped me understand that God always has a plan for us, and every once in a while we should step back and let Him do as He plans in order for something positive to come from a negative.

My church, St. David's in Radnor, has also given me many volunteering opportunities, ranging anywhere from helping out with the annual St. David's Fair to dressing up as one of the three Wise Men on the first Sunday of Epiphany! St. David's has a way

of making community service fun, even for those who might not be too keen on service work.

I have been a member of St. David's for as long as I can remember, and I believe that I'll be forever indebted to the church for everything it has given me. The St. David's community is the warmest, most welcoming and loving community I've ever been a part of, and I see God in so many of the people I know at St. David's. They've taught me about God's miracles and Jesus' parables, how to be a good Christian and to believe in what I believe (not what I'm



“...if Christ is in your heart and you are serving Him, He will be seen to others through you and the works you do.”



told to believe), and what a good person looks and acts like. The church has given me an unwavering faith in Christ and I hope to be a part of St. David's for a very long time.

I think my faith is intertwined with my passion for service. I see works of God in the people I volunteer with, no matter how big or small the project might be, and I feel God's presence in knowing we are helping people who do not have the same opportunities as many in our community do. On a life-changing service trip to Guatemala with St. David's this past

summer, I saw God multiple times each day. It is an incredible thing to be able to feel God's presence, and I feel this the most when I'm doing things for others.

My faith has made me realize the incredible gifts and opportunities I've been given, and that these were given to me by God, and should be used to serve others. This is one reason why volunteering is so important to me, because what one person might need is something that another can give or do. I've learned that God sees people for their actions, personality, and their heart, and not for anything they wear or own. I

don't think I have everything, nor do I want "everything," because I know I have God, and He has given me the ability to give to others. The things I give are my time, my work ethic, and whatever I can contribute to any given project. I don't think you have to be the strongest, smartest, or most qualified person in order to be a good servant to God and to others; if Christ is in your heart and you are serving Him, He will be seen to others through you and the works you do.

LIVING FEARLESSLY IN CHRIST (Cont.)

Your Office of the Diocese will not be a distant entity far removed from your daily journey. We are committed to live incarnationally with you and the community. In the last year, we strengthened and re-envisioned new life and possibility at previously closed churches like St. Jude and the Nativity, Church of the Crucifixion, St. Stephen's Philadelphia and St. John's Norristown and worked hard assisting parishes in making critical decisions which allow them to continue their life of worship and service; recruited 6 priests from outside the diocese and ordained 11 new priests and deacons towards the overall goal of recruiting 60 deacons in five years;

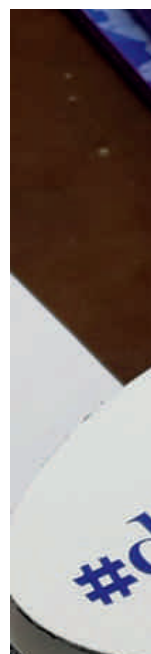
added 8 parish wellness centers with the goal of adding more; opened the nation's first program for female veterans living with moral injury and offered trainings in the use of Narcan and mental health first aid; created a partnership with the School District of Philadelphia to address impoverished children; led more than 18 churches through the work of envisioning, offering assistance with marketing, providing demographic data; and disbursed \$300,000 in direct financial support to our parishes through the Growth Development Fund.

Yet there is still so much to do. This is especially true when it comes to our commitment to address poverty in the

world. Jesus tells us that our very salvation depends upon how we respond to those in need (Matt 25:31-40). Philadelphia has one of the highest poverty rates in the nation. It also has the highest number of children in poverty. Christ echoes the words of the prophet Isaiah when he proclaims freedom to those who are held captive (Luke 4:18). We have to remember that poverty is not only an economic condition; there are sisters and brothers who are experiencing spiritual, physical, and mental poverty. Together we must work not simply to feed or clothe them for a day, but to help break the chains which hold them for all time.

This brings us to the 2020 budget itself. Budgets tell a story. They speak of who we are. They tell of our aspirations and where we hope to go. They can even hide secrets. In short, the budget of the Diocese of Pennsylvania tells the world who we are.

So, what does this 2020 Budget say about the Episcopal Diocese of Pennsylvania? When I look at these numbers, I see four threads that weave throughout. It is a story that speaks of: 1) meeting the challenges we face with courage and hope, 2) deepening our trust with one another 3) grounding ourselves as a community formed in Christ 4) the willingness of a faithful diocese to move



forward in hope spreading the Good News of Jesus Christ.

We began 2019 facing the obstacle of a projected deficit totaling \$873,000. This was troubling for many people across our diocese and for me personally. Yet there was no clear answer. We wanted to continue to support our churches but at the same time needed our churches to increase their giving to support our diocese. In much the same way, the deficit was a result of transparency. Over the past three years, we have aligned all previously existing budgets and demonstrated what it actually costs to run a diocese. For the previous three years we had frozen assessments and dramatically increased direct support of parishes, missions and ministries. I was not willing to let us go backwards and undermine the seeds of growth that are sprouting across our diocese.

Yet at the same time we heard the concerns you voiced at the budget and preconvention meetings last year. The deficit was an obstacle which was impairing our capacity to move forward as a single body. We had to find a solution. This brings us to trust. Immediately following Convention 2018, diocesan leadership went to work. There were seven sacred conversations in the spring of this year during which we listened to your concerns and suggestions. We heard you when some of you said that the



“ If we do not proclaim Jesus Christ, we should not exist.. ”

deficit made it harder for you to increase your commitment and support of our diocese. We listened as some expressed fear of declining membership and giving. We integrated your suggestions into the evolving budget. We heard of your willingness to go forth into the world and support our mission in southeast Pennsylvania and the world. We took your words to heart. As a result, we once again approached the 2020 budget ready to continue our commitment towards mission, accountability and transparency and the proclamation of Jesus Christ. We were firm in the resolve to discard anything that detracts from addressing the pain and poverty of the world, the support of our churches and that proclamation is Jesus Christ. After prayer and hard work, we:

- Eliminated another 2.5 FTE staff positions. Staffing costs are lower than 2015 levels. (This includes increases in health and pensions.)
- Relocated the Offices to Norristown.
- Reorganized the staffing at four of our Missional Churches.
- Sold property where we could not otherwise find a way to restart ministry.
- Thoroughly evaluated the potential uses of Wapiti and it is now for sale.
- Made a slight adjustment in the distribution from Endowment (4.6%) in order to maximize support of our churches.

When we were done, we were left with a surplus of \$2,000. While some of those cuts were costly, it was worth it for the sense of community that this budget has helped engender. This reflects my commitment that we cannot simply play at being “church.” We must be the Church.

We are not a social club based on a religious ideal. Neither are we a social service organization, or a political entity. We are the Church centered in Jesus Christ. All our words, actions and life must be formed and centered in Christ. Christ,

in every breath, word, thought and action. Christ should be holy encounter after holy encounter. If we do not proclaim Jesus Christ, we should not exist.

We are also called to build up the Body of Christ known as the diocese. We have turned the proverbial pyramid on its head. We are out with you at your churches and in your communities. I am working to hold office hours, worship or participate in service at our churches on a weekly basis and the canons are out with you every day. We do so in order to strengthen our common bonds. We laugh, cry, rejoice, mourn and support one another in our life together. We are not 134 individual congregations; we are 134 churches. We are one diocese, one people, one church.

This brings us to the final part of the story. As Paul writes to the Ephesians, as Christians we are one body united by the bonds of baptism. In our diocese our collective sense of mission and vision is growing stronger day by day. It is reflected in your increased engagement and support. Moving forward we will be asking churches and vestries to gradually increase their support of our collective diocesan budget. Stewardship is essential to our identity and mission. Giving is an act and extension of our worship that continues throughout the week. Your sacred gifts reverberate throughout our diocese.

As you may already know, the average parish support of our diocese is far below the norm. Across The Episcopal Church the average giving to the diocese is 13% of the church’s normal operating income. In our diocese it is 5.9%. For 2020 we are asking our parishes to take a first small step towards increasing their support towards an ultimate goal of 10%. Some parishes are already giving at this level. Some are close. Others have some work to do. But as one body sharing one spirit we must all share equally in our common life and work. ►

Story of Hope

For 2020 we have asked only for a very modest step forward in your support of .02%. We will continue to have open and honest conversations about the best way to get there and I look forward to sharing in this work with you.

When I look at the story told by our budget, I am enormously proud of all that we have accomplished together. Yet there was concern left unresolved, namely our support of The Episcopal Church. How could we demonstrate our responsibility to one another and build trust with our churches, and neglect to do the same as part of a wider church community?

As one of the richest dioceses in The Episcopal Church, we could no longer in good conscience continue asking for a waiver from our obligation as the dioceses of Haiti, Honduras and Mississippi are forced to do. The Diocese of Pennsylvania has not met our full obligation to The Episcopal Church since 2007. This is not who we are. So, we went back to you, to the diocese with a proposal to meet our full obligation, not in five years or even three years but now. What we found was overwhelming support culminating in a unanimous

vote from the Diocesan Council. This decision was made easier, because our endowment has enjoyed consistent and steady growth, which has continued through this year.

I understand that some may wonder why it is important for us to meet our obligation to the wider Church. We all appreciate the importance of full participation in our relationships, but how is it helping? Right now, The Episcopal Church is partnering with us on many initiatives which support our mission to Know Jesus and Change the World. They are supporting new and innovative forms of ministry, providing resources for evangelism and racial reconciliation, and advocating for refugees, the poor and for the environment. We must re-claim our rightful place as full participants in this larger story.

I hope that as you read through these numbers that you too will find threads that weave together a story of hope and possibility. It speaks of people and churches that refuse to give up or give in; about vestries and clergy who believe in the promise of the Gospel and who will do whatever it takes to proclaim the love of Jesus Christ to a broken and hurting world.

This budget takes those bold steps into our collective future. We will still face our challenges. But Jesus repeatedly told his disciples to “be not afraid.” Further,

he assures us that he will be “with us always.” Let us move forward fearlessly with this knowing. Let us be innovative, faithful, loving and willing to lead, not just here in southeastern Pennsylvania but across The Episcopal Church. We can do this; we will do this. Let us move deeper in prayer, holiness, discipleship as one people united in Jesus Christ. Let us step forward fearlessly in the knowing that Christ is with us till the end of time.

Our story is still emerging. I am blessed to walk this holy pilgrimage with you as fellow sojourner and your servant. ■



2020 PROPOSED DIOCESAN BUDGET

	2017 Budget	2017 Actual	2018 Budget	2018 Actual	2019 Budget	2020 Proposed Budget	2020 Proposed Budget vs 2019 Budget
Diocese of Pennsylvania							
MISSIONAL EXPENDITURE							
31 Total Diocesan Ministries	\$ 51,500	\$ 36,680	\$ 52,700	\$ 35,974	\$ 100,000	\$ 72,000	\$ (28,000)
59 Total Grants to Congregations	86,500	76,500	102,100	102,100	111,400	55,000	(56,400)
69 Total Mission Vicar Compensation	440,394	457,842	598,396	611,404	621,200	530,800	(90,400)
73 New Ministry & Plants Vicar Comp. & Ben.	150,708	163,716	180,890	180,600	187,400	99,700	(87,700)
75 Emergency Property Repairs Mission Congr.	-	2,925	35,000	12,467	35,000	35,000	-
86 Total Youth Ministries	284,630	154,925	285,223	158,259	162,600	162,600	-
89 Total Congregational Dev. & Support	50,000	50,000	50,000	50,000	50,000	20,000	(30,000)
92 Total Parker Bulmer - Senior Outreach	87,000	87,000	90,000	115,162	90,000	91,000	1,000
95 Total Growth Development Fund	-	-	300,000	165,732	300,000	300,000	-
sub-total	\$ 1,150,732	\$ 1,029,588	\$ 1,694,309	\$ 1,431,698	\$ 1,657,600	\$ 1,366,100	\$ (291,500)
GREATER CHURCH EXPENDITURE							
101 Total Mission of Greater Church	\$ 399,000	\$ 398,500	\$ 399,000	\$ 441,339	\$ 975,500	\$ 1,013,000	\$ 37,500
sub-total	\$ 399,000	\$ 398,500	\$ 399,000	\$ 441,339	\$ 975,500	\$ 1,013,000	\$ 37,500
OPERATIONAL EXPENDITURE							
139 Total Staff Compensation	\$ 2,168,455	\$ 2,062,204	\$ 2,167,535	\$ 2,223,875	\$ 2,150,900	\$ 1,976,900	\$ (174,000)
152 Total Operations	644,500	648,517	738,237	783,755	705,800	528,300	(177,500)
157 Total Property Expenses	-	332,296	395,956	244,143	447,500	448,800	1,300
165 Total Diocesan Life	91,720	212,953	94,500	110,096	205,500	216,500	11,000
sub-total	\$ 2,904,675	\$ 3,255,970	\$ 3,396,228	\$ 3,361,869	\$ 3,509,700	\$ 3,170,500	\$ (339,200)
TOTAL EXPENDITURE REVENUES							
3 Sacred Gifts for Mission	\$ 710,000	\$ 685,754	\$ 640,000	\$ 620,296	\$ 640,000	\$ 610,000	\$ (30,000)
17 Total Dedicated Mission Revenue	292,002	190,124	632,722	376,009	501,400	462,500	(38,900)
111 Sacred Gifts for Support	1,487,467	1,403,002	1,487,467	1,468,933	1,487,500	1,637,400	149,900
114 Endowment distribution	1,769,117	2,017,557	1,685,000	2,136,918	1,663,600	1,891,000	227,400
116 Transfers from Closed Church Prop. Fund	111,000	362,844	450,000	190,925	387,500	388,800	1,300
124 Total Revenue - Special	85,000	155,393	175,338	157,002	163,000	161,900	(1,100)
sub-total	\$ 4,454,407	\$ 4,684,058	\$ 5,489,537	\$ 5,234,906	\$ 6,142,800	\$ 5,549,600	\$ (593,200)
NET NORMAL SURPLUS (DEFICIT)							
	\$ 4,454,586	\$ 4,814,673	\$ 5,070,527	\$ 4,950,083	\$ 4,843,000	\$ 5,151,600	\$ 308,600
NET NORMAL SURPLUS (DEFICIT)	\$ 179	\$ 130,616	\$ (419,010)	\$ (284,823)	\$ (1,299,800)	\$ (398,000)	\$ 901,800
172 ENDOWMENT TRANSFER							
	\$ -	\$ -	\$ 420,000	\$ 450,000	\$ 1,300,700	\$ 400,000	\$ (900,700)
NET BEFORE TEC COMMITMENT							
	\$ 179	\$ 130,616	\$ 990	\$ 165,177	\$ 900	\$ 2,000	\$ 1,100

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based on a religious ideal.
Neither are we a social service
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All our words, actions and life
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THE RT. REV. DANIEL G.P. GUTIÉRREZ
XVI BISHOP OF THE DIOCESE OF PENNSYLVANIA



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