

THE Harvest

Spring 2021 | The Episcopal Diocese of Kansas



Worship options

Falling virus levels meant churches could offer Easter services indoors, outside or sometimes both

New gardens planned / Summer camp / Clergy ordinations

Staff configuration reshapes the diocese for mission



OUR EASTERTIDE and Pentecost scriptures reveal to us how the resurrection of Jesus had a motivating and re-configuring effect on his followers. Those first members of the Jesus Movement had been arrayed around the earthly Jesus in concentric circles...the Twelve... the Seventy-others. In that way, they were already participating in marvelous ways in his mission and healing. Then, after the Risen Jesus came upon them, they broke off and joined together in new missional cells bearing the Good News both far and near.

The stories in Acts and the evidence of Paul's letters describe the pairs and groups that formed and the fruit their new configuration bore.

With the news of the retirement plans of Director of Communications Melodie Woerman and Executive Assistant to the Bishop Jeanne Atha, the Executive Committee of the Council of Trustees has been working closely with me on plans for future staffing.

Great care was taken to review with these two incredibly valued and seasoned staff leaders their responsibilities and the gifts needed for the work; to listen to current staff about their gifts and aspirations; and to consider priorities of my episcopacy and what we see as the needs of the diocese in the decade to come.

The largest change is the addition of a Canon for Spiritual Life and Clergy Care. In the profile for the 10th bishop, it said the diocese wanted someone who "Loves Jesus."

While I have many intellectual ideas about world religions and how they relate to Jesus, my own life has been rooted in and remains tethered through prayer and spiritual practices to relationship with the Risen Christ. I believe that our call to nourish the faithful of our parishes and to create beloved community in our towns and neighborhoods will only truly bear fruit when deeply rooted in prayer and worship.

The new canon also will continue and expand the pastoral care of clergy done by the Rev. George Wiley, especially priests and deacons new to their work and retired clergy.

While Canon to the Ordinary Patrick Funston, Canon for Congregational Mission Gar Demo and I are engaged fully with active clergy and parishes in most aspects of congregational and clergy life, this new canon will take special, personal care of our clergy living with medical or family issues. I am in conversa-

tion with a final candidate for this position.

I am also in conversation with a final candidate for a position that combines communication and young adult ministry responsibilities. This includes the responsibility for *The Harvest*, the magazine that reaches every households in every parish throughout our diocese, as well as other aspects of written communication.

This person also will oversee campus and young adult ministry and will have a special responsibility for the formation of a new community of young adults in urban Wichita, as well as establishment of a new community of young adults at Bethany House and Gardens in Topeka. This position also will include aiding the staff in implementing diocesan goals and plans.

The new staff configuration

Michael Funston will become the new executive assistant to the bishop, with responsibility for scheduling, correspondence, travel arrangements and other items affecting the office of the bishop. She also will greet those coming to our offices and will be the first voice most hear when calling.

Michele Moss, as director of operations, assumes oversight of all diocesan information technology needs, as well as audio-visual equipment and needs, across staff and programs in the three diocesan buildings. She continues her responsibility for major diocesan events, including Diocesan Convention, as well as oversight of all diocesan facilities.

Karen Schlabach will now carry the title of youth, campus and digital missionary, with added oversight of

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The Episcopal Church is a community of 2 million members in 111 dioceses in 17 countries in the Americas and abroad.

The Most Rev. Michael B. Curry,
Presiding Bishop

The Episcopal Diocese of Kansas is a community of 8,500 members in 44 congregations across eastern Kansas.
The Rt. Rev. Cathleen Chittenden Bascom, *Bishop*

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ON THE COVER: A socially distanced Easter service at Grace Cathedral, Topeka, took place with fewer worshippers and masked soloists, among other changes. | *Photo by Melodie Woerman*

News and notes from congregations

Trinity, Arkansas City and **Grace, Winfield** had a joint online Annual Meeting on Jan. 31. Each church elected its own Vestry officers and voted on other required items. The parishes share a priest and do other events jointly.

Trinity, Atchison took part in an online book discussion for Lent, using *Love is the Way* by Presiding Bishop Michael Curry.

St. Paul's, Clay Center has continued Sunday school for its youngest members, with lessons offered on the church's Facebook page. A return to indoor, in-person worship also allowed in-person lessons for those wishing to attend.

St. Paul's, Coffeyville continues to collect needed items for Genesis, a local service agency serving people in need. Boxes near the church entrances allow people to drop off purchased items.

St. Andrew's, Derby is working with the student leadership at Cooper Elementary School to provide a new book to every kindergarten student at the end of the school year. Church members were invited to donate a book or money toward the purchase of one.

St. Martin's, Edwardsville got some winter sprucing up outdoors, thanks to warm January days that allowed people to do clean-up from the fall.

St. Andrew's, Emporia included an offering box in its bag of Lent-based items delivered to members' doorsteps in February. Donations through the boxes supported the church's commitment of \$1,500 to Lyon County Big Brothers Big Sisters.

St. Mary's, Galena continues to provide an evening meal once a month to people without housing who are staying at an area shelter.

Epiphany, Independence marked Feb. 14 as "Sock Sunday," with members asked to bring new or gently used socks to help supply two local service agencies in town, noting that socks are the most-requested item among unhoused people.

St. Timothy's, Iola provides meals every other week for families at Hope Unlimited, an agency that supports



SUBMITTED PHOTO

Manhattan church sends Lent-in-a-bag

St. Paul's, Manhattan, helped parishioners stay connected during a socially distanced Lent by sending them a packet of spiritual guides: a "Way of Love" calendar; a booklet and calendar of Lenten micro-practices; coloring pages; a bookmark; and a set of cut-out figures to create a Resurrection scene. ①

victims of family violence and sexual assault, as well as other families in need of a hot meal.

Covenant, Junction City in the past year has provided more than 5,000 hot, homemade meals to people needing help, through its weekly meal ministry.

St. Margaret's, Lawrence invited adults to become Lenten pen pals to a child in the parish, sending a note



SUBMITTED PHOTO

Organist records CD at Grace Cathedral

Grammy-nominated organist Jan Kraybill recently was selected by Grace Cathedral, Topeka to record a new CD featuring its pipe organ. The recording took place during the last week of February, with the CD available in May, featuring music by Bach and Vierne, as well as several hymn-based works by American composers.

The professionally produced recording will be distributed by ProOrgano (ProOrgano.com). This is the first CD produced on the cathedral organ for national and international distribution and sale.

Kraybill is based in Kansas City, Mo. ①

or card weekly to help people connect until indoor, in-person worship resumed.

Trinity, Lawrence rector the Very Rev. Rob Baldwin has begun leading a prayer service with a homily at Meadowlark Estates retirement home on the third Sunday of each month.

St. Paul's, Leavenworth members Candy Dials and Gwyneth Hawk have been collecting and organizing historical records, photos, papers and books to create a church historical room in the parish house.

St. Paul's, Manhattan collected \$850 and more than 120 pounds of food during the church's Souper Bowl of Caring drive to support the Flint Hill Breadbasket, noting that one-fourth of community residents live at or below poverty level.

St. Michael's, Mission has recruited parishioners who are doctors or nurses to accompany people on medical visits, to serve as extra ears for those needing help better understanding medical jargon. It's being called Senior Advocacy Ministry.

St. Aidan's, Olathe asked parishioners to again help students in the local schools by donating money to purchase underwear. Since August the church has been asked three other times to help supply students with these needed items.

Grace, Ottawa has had a weekly online Bible study since February, meeting on Zoom to discuss books of the Old Testament, and during Lent they added a book that explored dismantling racism.

St. Thomas', Overland Park launched an online cooking show on April 3, with the first episode featuring chef Carol Hamilton of Topeka, who is the mother of assistant rector the Rev. Kelly Demo.

St. Luke's, Shawnee members combined to create an online passion play, with families filming different scenes and all the segments edited into a finished product that aired on Palm Sunday.

Grace Cathedral, Topeka volunteers are helping to provide boxes of fresh produce, dairy and pre-cooked meat products for folks in need every other Saturday through Operation Food Secure, a partnership with Topeka Rescue Mission.

St. David's, Topeka continues a 40-year partnership with Doorstep, a local social service agency. Since members can't help in the clothing bank right now, they are concentrating on providing food donations.

St. Luke's, Wamego provided support for members' Lenten journey by posting daily micro-practices on the church Facebook page. It offered daily undertakings to help grow one's spiritual life.

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Good Shepherd, Wichita offered small group conversations Mondays during Lent to express grief at one's losses and to be reminded of God's ever-present help. One group met in-person and another was on Zoom.

St. James', Wichita provided a special service of prayer and bell-ringing on Jan. 19, to pray for the peaceful transition of power on Inauguration Day and to remember all the lives lost in the past year to Covid-19.

St. John's, Wichita asked members to help provide items needed by clients of the weekly Sandwich Saturday meals. The items most requested were backpacks, socks, and small bags of dog and cat food.

St. Stephen's, Wichita said a special thank-you and farewell to Bishop Michael Milliken, retired bishop of Western Kansas, who had served as interim rector for more than a year. His last day with the parish was Easter Day.

Grace, Winfield again is making plans for its Holes 4 Hope golf tournament, to raise money to remodel a church building into a community center. The tournament provides for playing up to 100 holes, from dusk to dawn, on Sept. 25. ☉

Two diocesan staff members will retire on May 31

TWO LONGTIME MEMBERS of the diocesan staff are retiring on May 31.



Jeanne Atha



Melodie Woerman

Jeanne Atha has served as assistant to the bishop since January 2004, first under Bishop Dean Wolfe and then under Bishop Cathleen Bascom. She has been responsible for the bishop's scheduling and correspondence, and she also has been the coordinator for the Council of Trustees.

Melodie Woerman has been director of communications since August 2004, appointed by Bishop Wolfe, and before that was editor of the diocesan newspaper, beginning in March 1994 under Bishop William Smalley.

Bishop Bascom describes her plans for staff re-configuration in her column in this issue, which begins on the inside cover of this edition. ☉

Wichita agency director to retire May 31



Dr. Barbara Andres

Dr. Barbara Andres, who has been executive director of Breakthrough/Episcopal Social Services since 2011, will retire on May 31.

She has more than 34 years experience with the agency, dating back to her time as director of Breakthrough Club. The board of Breakthrough/ESS is searching for her successor. ☉

Clergy news

The Very Rev. Laurie Lewis now is rector of St. Stephen's, Wichita, beginning April 5. She previously was rector of Trinity, Arkansas City and Grace, Winfield.

The Rev. Kathy Swain now is vicar of Trinity, Arkansas City and Grace, Winfield, effective April 1. She assisted at both churches since her ordination in 2019.

The Rev. Christine Gilson now is vicar of St. John's, Wichita, beginning Feb. 17. She was rector of Trinity, El Dorado, before her retirement in 2019.

The Rev. Ashley Mather has resigned as rector of St. Paul's, Manhattan, effective April 30.

Deacon Tom Herlocker has retired from Grace, Winfield, where he has served since he was ordained in 1988.

The Rev. David Kent has retired as vicar of St. Timothy's, Iola, where he served since 2015.

Deacon Annie Hedquist died on April 12 at age 82. She had served at St. David's and St. Philip's in Topeka, as well as 15 years on the diocesan staff.

The Rev. Bob Terrill died on April 5 at age 84. He had served numerous churches in this diocese and elsewhere since being ordained in 1961.

The Rev. Wayne Blakely died on Feb. 16 at age 90. He served two churches in this diocese before he retired in 1997.

Deacon Jesse Milan died on Feb. 8 at age 92. He served at St. Martin's, Edwardsville, until a few years ago.

The Rev. Elborn Mendenhall died on Jan. 28 at age 92. He had served several churches in this diocese since 1972. ☉



PHOTO BY MELODIE WOERMAN

New priests Mary Donovan (left) and Jennifer Allen (right) stand with Bishop Cathleen Bascom after their ordination in Grace Cathedral, Topeka, on Jan. 9.

Two are ordained as priests in January service

By Melodie Woerman

TWO PRIESTS WERE ordained in Grace Cathedral, Topeka, on Jan. 9, in a service scaled back to maintain distancing in accordance with diocesan Covid-19 protocols.

The Rev. Jennifer Allen and the Rev. Mary Donovan were ordained by Bishop Cathleen Bascom in front of a handful of family members and service participants. The service was livestreamed to the diocesan YouTube channel so others could watch online.

The two had been ordained as transitional deacons on June 13 in separate services, also at Grace Cathedral.

Allen is a 2020 graduate of General Theological Seminary in New York City. She was sponsored for ordination by her home parish, St. Michael and All Angels, Mission.

Donovan is a 2020 graduate of the Bishop Kemper School for Ministry and was sponsored for ordination by her home parish, Trinity, Lawrence.

Allen oversees Bethany House and Garden, the new diocesan ministry initiative centered in the former diocesan office building and encompassing the three acres of land surrounding it. As diocesan missionary she is working with Bishop Bascom on the project to create a series of gardens on the south side of the property (*more information about this is on pages 6-9*), as well as outreach to the community.

Since June Donovan has been assisting with campus ministry across the diocese, but most especially at the Canterbury Houses at the University of Kansas, Lawrence, and Kansas State University, Manhattan. She is providing liturgical support and assists with other programming.

As members of the bishop's staff, both participate as part of the rotation for the weekly "Old Saints for New Days" service that is livestreamed to the diocese's YouTube channel Mondays at 12:10 p.m. from St. Mary's Chapel at Grace Cathedral. ☉

New gardens soon will sprout at historic Bethany Place

By Melodie Woerman

A NEW INITIATIVE spearheaded by Bishop Cathleen Bascom will create a series of specialized gardens on the south side of the diocesan property in Topeka known as Bethany Place. The spaces are intended for use by the public, and will include a prairie and

pollinator garden, a culinary garden, a meditation and water garden, and an outdoor chapel.

Pathways will connect the spaces, and interpretive signs will inform people of what each area is and what it offers.

The gardens will occupy space on the east and south sides of the property, which totals about three acres and



DESIGN IMAGE BY SCOTT BINGHAM

The plan for three new garden areas and an outdoor chapel are shown on this image by the landscape architect.

includes Upton Hall Conference Center and Bethany House, the former diocesan office building.

The gardens, along with new efforts to reach out to the neighborhood by Diocesan Missioner the Rev. Jennifer Allen, form the ministry known as Bethany House and Garden.

A love of prairies

In an interview Bishop Bascom said she had a longtime love of the prairie, and while dean of the cathedral in Des Moines, Iowa, she helped create a pocket prairie garden after the catastrophic 2008 flood there as a way to help trap excess water run-off.

She said the book *City Bountiful*, about urban greenspaces, early on also was a major influence. “The book showed that urban greenspace is an important asset, but a precari-

ous one,” she said. “Land can become valuable to developers. But I realized churches have this kind of land and are more likely to keep it, because of our sense of God and creation, and a call to the common good, and we’re not so profit driven.”

The materials she submitted when standing for election as bishop in 2018 made clear her commitment to creation care. But once she had been elected and saw the Bethany Place land again (she was acquainted with it from her time as chaplain at K-State in the 1990s), she was certain it could provide more than just lawn that needed mowing.

“But having done this once before,” she said, “I was committed that we needed to listen to what others would want from this land. We have a kaleidoscope of interests and complexities here. What do Topekans want? The cathedral? The diocese?”

In the fall of 2019, just months after her consecration as bishop, she began conversations with a variety of community leaders to gain input. Those meetings ended when the coronavirus pandemic began, but Bishop Bascom said it turned out to be a bit of a blessing. “We slowed down, and it led to more listening.”

Listening to the neighborhood

That listening was facilitated in large part by Allen, who was hired as the bishop’s curate for mission in June 2020 after her graduation from General Theological Seminary and her ordination as a transitional deacon; she was ordained a priest in January.

Her job not only was to help with the garden portion of Bethany House and Garden but also to do additional outreach to the neighborhood, something for which she has great passion.

Allen said she got right to work and had what would amount to about 75 meetings with a variety of area groups and leaders, most of which were online or by phone, but a few took place outdoors, with distancing. “I spent a lot of time hearing the hopes and concerns about this property,” she said. A desire for a place of respite in nature, with a focus on education, emerged as a primary goal, Allen said.

Apart from the gardens, she also now offers sidewalk prayers, hosts a weekly Bible study and receives prayer requests through cards distributed in care bags for people picking up Saturday sandwiches from Grace Cathedral.

Meetings with the superintendent of Topeka Public Schools, and officials at Topeka Center for



PHOTO BY MELODIE WOERMAN

Landscape architect Scott Bingham (standing) presents garden options during a Feb. 20 design charrette in All Saints Hall of Grace Cathedral, Topeka.

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Advanced Learning and Careers, as well as at Topeka High School (located next door to Bethany Place) and area elementary schools, provided guidance on how the gardens could serve students as an outdoor laboratory — butterflies for younger students, produce for high school students in culinary classes.

In February of this year, three online listening sessions for educators, neighbors and Episcopalians provided greater clarity on how they saw the gardens serving people. “Out of these meetings, food gardens were a priority,” Allen said.

Landscape architect Scott Bingham from Kansas City took all the suggestions and created three possible configurations for the gardens and chapel. Those were presented to key participants on Feb. 20 during an in-person meeting called a design charrette, and their input helped refine the best options. From that came the final plan (*image on page 6*).

Garden details

Beginning from an entry portal on the southeast side of the property will be the prairie and pollinator garden, filled with a variety of native plants and grasses. That area also will have plants that attract and support pollinators like butterflies and bees, creating a Monarch Waystation, for insects that have suffered as their habitat has been reduced in urban areas.

A culinary garden will be next on the path, growing a variety of vegetables and herbs in raised-bed containers as well as in-ground plantings. Bethany Place, which is just a few blocks west of downtown Topeka, is in a food desert, so some of the produce will be set aside for residents of nearby neighborhoods. Some will go to a local Baptist church’s program to provide fresh food to hungry people in the area.

A partnership with local schools will give students farm-to-table culinary experiences, and some of what is grown may be used in cooking classes in the kitchen of Grace Cathedral, the property’s neighbor to the north.

An outdoor chapel will use an existing terrace off the south side of Bethany House as a refurbished altar area, and seating will be provided on benches nearby. Outdoor worship will be offered for those living in the neighborhood, as well as for diocesan groups.

On the northwest edge of the property, near the cathedral parking lot, will be the meditation and rain garden. With many trees already there, the garden will emphasize a sense of quiet, with a series of small intimate spaces, to offer a place for prayer and contemplation. This garden also will model best water practices, with deep-rooted plants helping to filter pollution coming from the nearby parking lot.

Historical elements

The existing three acres of Bethany Place is what remains from an initial gift of 20 acres in 1860 from the founders of Topeka to the diocese to





Images of the proposed new spaces at Bethany Place are (from top) the prairie and pollinator garden, the culinary garden with its adjacent community space, the outdoor chapel, and the meditation and rain garden.



house an Episcopal girls' school, which became the College of the Sisters of Bethany. The school stood on the grounds from 1870 until it closed in 1928.

The two stone buildings on the property are original school buildings, both built in 1875. Bethany House first served as the school's laundry, to wash linens and clothing of boarding students. Upton Hall was the school's stable, needed for horses to pull the buggies that took students on errands in an era before automobiles. Both also have been remodeled over time and served as the homes of three bishops (James Wise, Goodrich Fenner and Edward Turner).

To honor the women who studied at the school, the culinary gardens will be dedicated to them, recalling the picnics they had on the grounds.

The land given to the diocese originally was home to the Kanza People, now known as the Kaw Nation. They lived across most of eastern Kansas, with hunting grounds extending far to the west. The land then would have been part of the tallgrass prairie, 140 million acres of waving grasses that extended from Indiana to Kansas and from Canada to Texas.

To honor those who first lived on this property, the prairie and pollinator garden will be dedicated to the Kanza People.

The outdoor chapel will honor the members of St. Simon's Episcopal Church, an historically Black congregation whose building stood just a few blocks away. It was one of only four Black churches in the diocese, and it was closed in 1964. A handful of former St. Simon's members have been involved in conversations about the chapel's dedication.



Raising funds

In order to make these plans a reality, Bishop Bascom has set out to raise the funds necessary to begin construction this fall. Estimates put the total cost at about \$500,000, which covers site preparation, irrigation, walkways and stone paths, benches, raised vegetable beds, more than 30 new trees, and all the plants.

From a 2020 surplus, the Council of Trustees set aside \$50,000 for this project, and a donor already has given another \$50,000. A variety of grants from Episcopal Church entities have provided another \$49,000.

The bishop will be inviting partners to join in bringing this venture to fruition by contributing financial support, time or services.

And thinking beyond just the creation of the gardens, Bishop Bascom sees an increased role for the entire property, centered around Upton Hall Conference Center, with things like spiritual retreats being offered and an expansion of the spiritual direction currently being provided.

"I hope that, at least for some, this can be a unifying effort across the diocese," she said. ☪



DESIGN IMAGES BY SCOTT BINGHAM



SUBMITTED PHOTO

The Rev. Casey Rohleder preaches during the Easter service on the lawn at St. Luke's, Wamego.

Alleluia options

Churches worship inside and outdoors on Easter

By Melodie Woerman

AS CASES OF the coronavirus fell during early spring, and in accordance with diocesan guidelines, churches began to consider options for Easter worship.

And for a variety of reasons, congregations decided on a variety of options: some worshipped indoors, some were outdoors, and some had a mix of services that day that were in the church and outside.

Here is a look at what some did, and why.

Indoor services

Grace Cathedral, Topeka, had two indoor Easter morning services. The dean, the Very Rev. Torey Lightcap, said there had been indoor services since January, with a growing num-

ber of people allowed as virus levels dropped.

The worship space had to be reconfigured to provide adequate distance not only for worshippers but also for a small group of masked singers, requiring use of a moveable altar instead of the permanent high altar for communion in one kind.

The Rev. Marc McDonald, rector of St. Andrew's, Emporia, said the congregation had been worshipping indoors for about a month before the Easter service, where they used four masked singers to provide music. They also celebrated communion in one kind.

"We had a larger crowd at Easter, but we still were able to main social distancing," McDonald said. He noted that the post-service fellowship time did take place outdoors.

Leaders of several small churches, including Grace, Ottawa; Epiphany, Sedan; Ascension, Neodesha; and Epiphany, Independence, said their congregations had been meeting indoors, based on diocesan guidelines, as soon as dropping virus numbers gave them that option.

The Rev. Sid Breese, vicar of the Independence and Neodesha churches, said that with small numbers, distancing is no problem for his congregants.

"People are careful, and masked," he said, noting that with a larger attendance on Easter, they still were able to keep socially distanced.

For good measure, they also kept the doors open to increase ventilation.



PHOTO VIA FACEBOOK

The Rev. Marc McDonald lights the paschal candle before the start of an indoor Easter service at St. Andrew's, Emporia.

Going outdoors

The Rev. Casey Rohleder, rector of St. Luke's, Wamego, said her congregation worshipped outdoors to accommodate more people than could fit, distanced, in the small church, and also so they could join in singing hymns, something diocesan guidelines don't allow indoors.

Because so many of the members prefer to worship via the Zoom video platform, the outdoor service also was available online to nearly half of the day's worshippers.

She said worshipping on the church lawn had another benefit. "The Easter service also was a nice public witness," she said, "since St. Luke's is located on Highway 99, which runs through downtown."

The Very Rev. Rob Baldwin, rector of Trinity, Lawrence, said his congregation had its first outdoor, non-recorded service two weeks before Easter, accommodating members' level of comfort in regathering as well as pleasant spring weather.

Going forward, he said services will begin to shift indoors, in part because they plan to livestream the service rather than having a pre-recorded service online as well as an in-person service.

The Rev. Kathy Swain, vicar at Trinity, Arkansas City and Grace, Winfield, said the two churches had two joint outdoor services in covered pavilions in city parks — Palm Sunday in Winfield and Easter in Arkansas City.

The two vestries made this decision in early March, to accommodate larger crowds than could be socially distanced in the small church buildings.

On previous Sundays, recorded worship was provided, and a hardy group of worshippers has gathered weekly for outdoor Lawn Chair Morning Prayer at Grace, Winfield, bundling up in heavy coats and blankets.

Some of both

The Rev. Marco Serrano, rector of St. Margaret's, Lawrence, said two of his congregation's three Easter services were outside — a sunrise service, as well as the return of their parking lot service, where some sat in lawn chairs outside their cars and others remained in their vehicles. That service also was livestreamed to Facebook, YouTube and the church website.

A small spoken service indoors rounded out the morning. Serrano said if cases fall and indoor singing is permitted, the outdoor services likely will move inside.

Latest guidelines

Since November 2020 the diocese has tracked the level of virus in each county, using metrics recommended by health professionals, with the

results posted on the diocesan website each Wednesday.

Late last year the situation was dire — 39 of the diocese's 44 churches were in the red zone, signifying extremely high virus levels — and Bishop Bascom's guidelines required any in-person worship to take place outdoors. By late February those metrics started to improve, allowing some churches to return services indoors.

On the Wednesday before Easter, only two churches were in the caution zone, meaning all could return to indoor worship if clergy and lay leaders were in agreement on doing so.

The bishop encouraged churches to keep providing online worship services — either live streamed or recorded — and to pay attention to increased ventilation. They need to continue keeping track of everyone who attends worship in person, in case contact tracing is required.

Additionally, once parishioners have had a full series of Covid vaccinations and waited two weeks, small groups of up to 12 people can gather without wearing masks.

The bishop's March guidelines allowed churches to resume serving food and beverages both during coffee hour and in ministries that offer food, which since last March have been restricted to take-out or pick-up packages of food.

Space must be provided for those participating in these activities who want to avoid people who are not wearing masks.

Bishop Bascom also asked members across the diocese to be patient and graceful as practices change in light of improving virus numbers and an increase in the number of people being vaccinated. ①

A year of pandemic

What have we learned?

*Editor's note: We asked clergy and lay leaders across the diocese to answer a question about the past 12 months of pandemic: **What was the most important thing you learned in the past year?** We received 32 replies, and this article reflects what they said.*

By Melodie Woerman

WHEN CLERGY AND LAY leaders reflect on the past year, and what they have found to be most important, three main responses — phrased in various ways — appear:

- The importance of online worship services during the pandemic and going forward
- The need to be flexible in worship and programs
- Community is essential

Worship goes online

Worship as it had been experienced — people gathering in a church building for one or more services on a Sunday — was the first thing that changed when news of the pandemic arrived. Bishop Cathleen Bascom issued a directive on March 16 suspending in-person worship for three weeks. Four days later she delivered the news that in-person worship would be cancelled for two months, including Holy Week and Easter.

By the following Sunday, at least a dozen churches had pivoted to offering worship online, and within weeks many more followed.

Deacon Oliver Bunker, St. Timothy's, Iola, said online worship quickly began on Facebook with services in his home, but the church since has installed a new audio and video system for better quality. He said they had to adapt weekly as they learned the best camera placement and sound system settings, but “we made it work.”

Sally Gray, senior warden of St. Mark's, Blue Rapids, said the church had talked about doing something online in the future but once the pandemic hit, “online became the only game in town.”

The Rev. Marc McDonald, rector of St. Andrew's, Emporia, said the technical skills required to go online “stretched me beyond my limits at times,” adding that having a 17-year-old daughter helped a lot.

Lydia Funk, a member of Trinity, Atchison, thanked her rector, the Rev. Jon Hullinger, for figuring out how to offer Morning and Evening prayer and Holy Eucharist on Facebook and Zoom “without much of a techie background.” She credited Senior Warden Chris Wallen for having the tools and insight to help make it all work.

The Very Rev. Sharon Billman, vicar of St. John's, Parsons, said that learning how to offer livestreamed worship showed her how deeply the church's homebound members appreciated the chance to be part of the service, something they hadn't really considered before.

Many people said that what started as a necessity will become part of their worship plans going forward, to reach out to “those who cannot or do not want to attend in-person services,” according to Vestry member Candy Dials of St. Paul's, Leavenworth.

The value of online worship to reach beyond parish walls may have no greater advocates than Denise and Mace Thornton, who live in St. Louis, Mo. Early in 2020 they had moved there from Virginia, where they had been part of a loving Episcopal parish. “Covid-19 transformed us into church people without a church,” they said. Denise grew up in Wamego, and through Facebook friends she was invited to online worship from St. Luke's, Wamego. “Little did we know a connection to a



PHOTO BY SARAH KESSINGER

The Rev. Greg Doll, vicar of St. Mark's, Blue Rapids and St. Paul's, Marysville, leads an online service for the two congregations.



PHOTO BY MELISSA PFAU

Melissa Pfau, treasurer of St. Luke's, Shawnee, shares a socially distanced exchange of the Peace during a parking lot service last year.

pandemic church family and a loving parish would be made through the Zoom window meeting platform,” they said, giving them “new friends, new hope and new faith in a better tomorrow.” Once they can travel they plan to visit Wamego because, they said, “we have a lot of new church friends to meet face-to-face.”

Flexibility

Melissa Pfau, treasurer at St. Luke's, Shawnee, said she learned how adaptable her church could be. “We couldn't go in the building so we streamed, recorded and had outdoor worship. We couldn't meet for fellowship so we had Zoom Friday Fellowship and Zoom coffee hour. We couldn't have Sunday School so we had Zoom Sunday School. All with great results. We are adaptable, strong and resilient.”

The Very Rev. Vicki Smith, rector of St. David's, Topeka, said that the congregation has pulled together even while moving parish life online. “People have stepped up to keep us not only going, but relatively thriving,” she said.

Community is key

The value of the community, and the need to stay in touch with members, was a crucial part of the past year

for many churches. The Rev. Steve Lipscomb, rector of St. Paul's, Leavenworth, said he came to realize “just how important each person is to the full ministry of the church,” as well as the sheer number of people it takes to accomplish all a church undertakes.

Tom Kite, senior warden of the Church of the Covenant, Junction City, said he had taken his Christian community for granted until they could no longer be together. Its value includes “seeing other parishioners walk into the church, the smiles of greeting, the exchange of the peace, and the visiting and gathering after the service.”

Deacon Karen Michael, St. Luke's, Shawnee, said making contact with each parishioner weekly was essential, so everyone would know “that they are cared for and cared about.” Senior Warden Rose Wrede said during the first week of the pandemic, the church divided the parish into 12 groups, each one with a person designated to stay in touch with every family.

Jan Noyes, senior warden at St. Andrew's, Emporia, said she has always know the power of prayer but learned how comforted people are to hear that a church member had been praying for them.

Sarah Kessinger, Vestry member at St. Paul's, Marysville, said she had learned “the power of face-to-face interaction,” and without being able to be together, she has seen people of all ages struggling.

And being small can be an advantage, according to the Rev. Laird MacGregor, vicar of St. Martin's, Edwardsville. “We have found that we are exceedingly flexible and nimble,” he said.

The Rev. Kelly Demo, assistant rector at St. Thomas, Overland Park, asked youth of the parish to reflect on what they had learned during the past year. Here is what they said.

“I learned how much I rely on other people.” — Lily Spinner

“Sometimes fun stuff can get boring.” — Keeley Gralapp
 “I have learned how to handle new emotions and high stress. Also how to endure lack of motivation. — Amelia Whittier

“Patience.” — Jonah Gralapp

“I learned a lot about myself. Also that people depend on other people to survive.” — Asher Demo

“I have learned not to take opportunities for granted.” — Kelsey Phillips

“I have learned how to stick with a goal.” — Alli Phillips
 “Don't take things for granted. Apparently the apocalypse can happen.” — Mason Bedell ☯

Council gives its OK for summer camp

By Melodie Woerman

YOUNG PEOPLE in the diocese who are finishing third grade through graduating high school seniors again will have the chance to participate in a beloved youth event — summer camp — thanks to a vote by the Council of Trustees on Feb. 24. Camp was cancelled in 2020 because of the pandemic.

It will look different from camps in the recent past because of restrictions adopted by Camp Wood YMCA, the American Camp Association and the diocese.

Young people still will gather for a single week — June 6–12 — and will have the chance to see their friends, but that interaction will be restricted in a number of ways.

Karen Schlabach, diocesan missionary for youth, young adults and campus ministries, said that individual cabin capacity will be capped at about 60 percent of normal, with four-to-five campers in a cabin, along with two adults in accordance with safe church policy — one Episcopal staffer and one person from the YMCA camp staff.

The cabins now have air conditioning, and Camp Wood received a grant to upgrade the filters used in those units for greater safety against the virus.

Almost all activities will take place outdoors. Two cabins will participate in camp activities and faith-based programs together as “buddy cabins,” reducing the number of people overall with whom campers interact. Cabins or buddy cabins will eat together, and they will go table-by-table to pick up a meal served cafeteria-style.



SUBMITTED PHOTO

Diocesan youth last year could gather at Camp Wood for only a single day. A week of summer camp will take place this year, with restrictions on the number of campers and the way activities take place.

All participants will either have to be fully vaccinated or present results of a negative Covid test when they register. Everyone will be required to wear a mask except when eating, sleeping, showering or when proper social distancing cannot be maintained.

There also will be special protocols for campers or staff who exhibit symptoms to help keep others safe. For anyone who tests positive, contact tracing will inform everyone with whom that person was in contact.

Extra cleaning protocols are in place, and campers and staff will undergo a daily health check for possible Covid symptoms. There also will be at least three registered nurses serving diocesan campers.

Bre Elman, a member of the diocesan Youth Commission from St. Thomas, Overland Park, said, “I’m excited for camp even given all these safety precautions. Camp Wood has been a tradition since I was in mid-

dle school. Because of camp, I have met amazing people, created genuine relationships and enjoyed beautiful surroundings while growing as an individual. Experiencing a week full of joy, love and laughter is something I look forward to and I have missed this past summer.”

Schlabach said there also will be pre-camp meetings with families to stress the importance of maintaining distancing and safety in the weeks leading up to camp, for all involved.

“We can’t guarantee that the virus won’t find its way into camp,” she said, “but we are taking every precaution we can to reduce the risk.”

Before the Council vote, Schlabach shared Covid statistics from the American Camp Association for camps that took place in the summer of 2020. The numbers showed that virus spread was below normal in camps that undertook four things: required face coverings for everyone, modified programs, created cohort

Continued on page 15

Bishop Bascom's column

Continued from inside front cover

the diocesan website and serving as editor of *DioLog*, the diocesan e-newsletter. She also will assume responsibility for the annual diocesan Directory and Journal, and she will take over the diocesan social media accounts.

She also continues her years of leadership of diocesan ministries with youth and campus students.

The Rev. George Wiley will continue as canon pastor in a voluntary capacity that fits with his current responsibilities at home, mentoring and assisting the new canon in the area of clergy care.

Others on staff remain with their duties continuing as before.

The Rev. Patrick Funston, as canon

to the ordinary, is the chief administrative counselor to the bishop, with oversight of all diocesan administrative functions, and with the bishop he shares support for active clergy and for parishes.

The Rev. Jennifer Allen, diocesan missionary, continues her responsibility for missional leadership as assigned by the bishop, including the planting of a New Episcopal Community at Bethany House and Garden, a community drawn together through gardening and creation care, neighborhood empowerment, and worship. She also will be deeply involved in the creation of the new Bethany Gardens.

Jay Currie, comptroller, oversees all financial oversight and management

of diocesan accounts. He has the lead role in preparing the first draft of the diocesan mission plan (budget). He also manages accounts payable and receivable, investments, health insurance, and payroll.

Debbie Kremers remains the diocese's part-time missionary for transitions, assisting parishes searching for new clergy leadership.

Greg Bennett continues as our faithful sexton of many years.

My gratitude to Jeanne and Melodie for their years of service is beyond words, and I look forward to working with our current and new staff members as together we support God's ministry in this place. ☉

In deep gratitude for the many years of ministry that Jeanne Atha and Melodie Woerman have offered the Diocese of Kansas and the wider church, we invite all those who have been touched by their faithfulness to help us send them off well.

We hope you will join us in expressing your thanks for their many years of dedicated, cheerful and helpful service that have made this diocese such a wonderful community.

The bishop and I encourage you and your parishes to make a donation in their honor as a

way of saying thank you. With this gift, we would like to bless Melodie and Jeanne with a purse (the money kind) at their good-bye gathering. Additionally, we would like to plant or dedicate a feature in their honor in the new Bethany Garden.

You may send a check to the diocese at 835 SW Polk St., Topeka, KS 66612 or make a donation online at <https://edok.formstack.com/forms/donations>

— The Rev. Casey Rohleder
President of the Council of Trustees

Summer camp returns

Continued from page 14

bubbles and enforced social distancing. Council members noted that having the diocese adopt those very measures helped them feel comfortable giving approval for camp to resume.

Schlabach said that fewer campers means the cost-per-person will be higher this year. To help offset that increase for everyone, the Council agreed to apply about \$6,000 in scholarship money to the camp fee.

This year's fee will be \$500 per camper; in 2019 (the last year of diocesan summer camp) it was \$470.

A limited number of scholarships are available for those with financial need.

The aid usually covers one-third of the camp fee, with the camper's family and parish asked to cover the remaining two-thirds.

Additional details about the logistics for Episcopal Summer Camp will continue to be worked out with a group of experienced camp leaders, including several clergy and medical staff.

All information is available on the camp website, <https://edokformation.wordpress.com/camp/> ☉

By Melodie Woerman

FOR DECADES JOURNALISTS

have concluded their typed manuscripts with a signal to the composing room that this was the end of the story. No more copy was coming.

That symbol is –30–.

No one knows exactly how it originated — maybe a Morse code carryover, or a conflation of handwritten Roman numerals — but it has been placed at the end of submitted copy and news releases for years.

For me, here, it signifies that this is the last edition of *The Harvest* I will produce as editor. I'm retiring at the end of May.

I first was entrusted with creating a publication on behalf of the people of the Diocese of Kansas by Bishop William Smalley, when he offered me the job as contract editor in March 1994.

Somehow, I was able to produce a 12-page newspaper by April, featuring two prominent Episcopalians on the front page — Kansas U.S. Sen. Nancy Landon Kassebaum and Massachusetts Bishop David Johnson, who were speaking at a conference in Topeka.

Since then, including the one you now are reading, I have produced a total of 168 issues.

The first 87 of them were under the name *Plenteous Harvest*, and for 10 years we printed eight or nine issues a year.

In June 2004, I asked Bishop Dean Wolfe if he would consider converting the job of contract editor into a staff position of director of communications, so there could be a more wholistic approach to communications to better serve the diocese. Without batting an eye he said yes.

I spent that fall redesigning the look of the newspaper, and in January 2005 we launched it with a new name — *The Harvest*. It remained a tabloid-sized newspaper, printing six times a year, with 57 issues in that format.

In the spring of 2015 we made the leap to a quarterly color magazine, adapting again to better serve the way people consume information. We have printed 24 issues of *The Harvest* in this format, and Bishop Cathleen Bascom has remained a staunch supporter.



This is the top half of the first newspaper I produced, in April 1994. The issue you now are reading is number 168 in my 27 years as editor.

As editor I have had the chance to do some truly remarkable things, good and bad — serve on the news team at five General Conventions, cover two bishop elections, take photos of the arson fire that destroyed St. David's, Topeka, interview survivors of the Joplin tornado in what was left of their home.

I've taken photos of four Kansas bishops, three presiding bishops, one archbishop of Canterbury and retired Cape Town Archbishop Desmond Tutu — as well as first editions of the 1611 King James Bible.

I was blessed to have my work recognized with Polly Bond awards from Episcopal Communicators — 59 in all, including four times as best newspaper, three awards for best photo, several best writing awards, and second and third-place recognitions in everything from layout to website.

But now, it's time to bring this chapter to a close. I will miss reading all your church newsletters and finding the bits of information that turned into inspiring stories. I will miss the smell of ink on paper when I pick up leftover copies from the mailing house.

I will miss all of you.

I believe communications is part of God's very essence — God speaking creation into existence in Genesis, and Jesus described as the Word in John's gospel — and I am deeply grateful to have had the chance to share this ministry with you through these pages for the past 27 years.

Sharing Christ's message in a pandemic world

THIS SECOND Easter of the pandemic, I'm thinking about the weeks that followed the very first Easter. During this season, we hear the stories of Jesus's closest followers reckoning with the reality of Jesus's resurrection. In these post-resurrection accounts, we see a variety of reactions: joy, disbelief, confusion, confirmation.

Over those weeks, I wonder if the disciples started to get used to this world-changing reality only to have Jesus taken again from them in the Ascension.

As I journey through these stories, I'm wondering what it must have been like to experience such a shocking series of events, only to find oneself, in many respects, back to where one started.

The events of Easter are a profound example of the dual reality within which the early Christian faithful find themselves: with faith-filled eyes, the world has changed, death has been conquered; with other eyes, nothing has changed, the Roman empire still rules.

As the pandemic continues to roll on, I'm feeling much the same about the state of our world. Many of us are privileged to be among the 40 percent of the American population that has received at least one dose of vaccine. We see our world open back up, and we are feeling personal liberty. To us, the world feels different.

However, the pandemic doesn't feel different to billions. In many

places, the pandemic is much worse than it has been.

As of late April, India is setting shocking records of new cases and deaths: the country where many vaccines are produced is able to use fewer vaccines because they go where the money is.

We don't need to travel to the other side of the globe to experience the disparity of this reality. Because of the relative age and privilege of our denomination, many of our congregations find themselves close to fully vaccinated, even as the majority of eligible Americans are still not vaccinated.

As I speak with people around our diocese, I'm amazed by how quickly we want to step away from the experimentation and learning that we did during the height of the pandemic. When we were scared, our fear helped us change our behavior. As our fear recedes, we go back to old ways.

Like Easter, the vaccine rollout changes some things, and yet, the disparity of our world means that not much has changed. The pandemic still burns through our world, and we need to be mindful of that fact as we open more and more.

As they neared Pentecost, the disciples had to discern how they would bring the message of Christ into the world around them. They felt free, they felt empowered, and yet, the world around them hadn't



experienced what they experienced and remained largely as it was.

As we open our doors and welcome our neighborhoods back, we need to recognize that we have been changed. Many in our neighborhoods are still struggling with the realities that the pandemic has laid bare.

Having experienced our vulnerability, how will we bring our compassion into our ministry? ①



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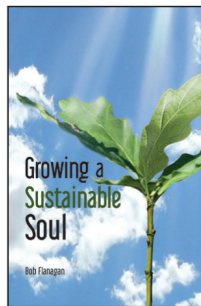
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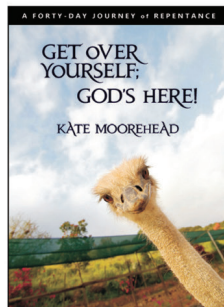
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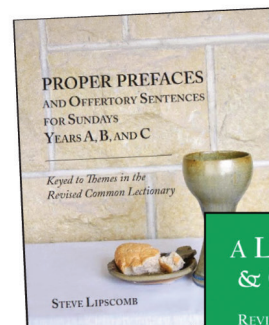
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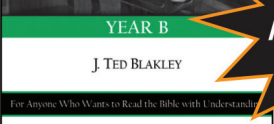
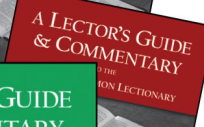
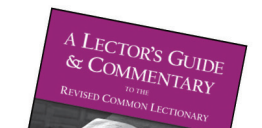
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