

THE Harvest

Summer 2020 | The Episcopal Diocese of Kansas

**PEW
CLOSED**

Worship options

Churches decide whether, how and when they can resume in-person worship; online remains everywhere

Former Black churches / Episcopal civic leaders / Diocesan Convention

Blindness and the Beloved Community



LAST YEAR Father Bob Terrill gave me this wonderful photo as a gift — a group portrait of the clergy of the Diocese of Kansas in 1962 (the year I was born). It portrays a beloved community; the faces seem to hold purpose and joy.

Of course, I was immediately aware that women were completely absent. I think part of what Father Bob and I were celebrating in this image is the fact that, if photographed today, nearly half the clergy would be women, and there is a woman bishop! I am heartened that the assembled clergy now more fully reflect all the people of Kansas.

However, there was a fact I noted but soon lost sight of: there were two African American clergymen in the 1962 portrait.



At our 2019 Clergy Gathering? There were none.

African American clergy have disappeared from our midst, and they symbolize the loss of four churches.

Racism and white privilege are loaded words, but one form is the experience I describe here. I have not consciously meant to exclude Black and brown people from our ranks. On the contrary, I have often stood for diversity. Yet, being included, I was easily blind to this deep and devastating loss. While well-intentioned, desegregation efforts across most of our lifetimes have had both positive and devastating outcomes for Black and brown people in the U.S.

As always, Presiding Bishop Michael Curry articulates so well the work before us: As the Episcopal branch of the Jesus Movement, we dream and work to foster Beloved Communities where all people may experience dignity and abundant life and see themselves and others as beloved children of God. The Presiding Bishop's team offers a process for racial reconciliation which includes Telling the Truth, Proclaiming the Dream, Repairing the Breach and

Practicing the Way of Love.

There are important stories in our gospels about Jesus healing people who are blind. In Mark, Jesus asks of two blind men, "Do you believe I can do this?" "Yes, Lord," they replied.

In John, Jesus touches a blind man's eyes but then tells him to go and wash his eyes. The man must participate in his own healing before he can see.

The newly formed diocesan Justice and Racial Reconciliation Task Force has been gathering in recent months and is committed to helping us, in faith, participate in healing our blindness to racial injustice. This topic will be the focus of this year's Gathering of Clergy (Sept. 25-27), which will be both in-person at the Spiritual Life Center in Wichita and via Zoom.

Moreover, we are committing to search anew the history connected with the loss of our Black churches. We do this so that our eyes may be opened in order to continue to dismantle racism in our diocese, to make room for everyone in our photo, to continue to become the Beloved Community as intended from the beginning by God. ☉

In This Issue

2

Around the diocese

Learn about church activities and outreach during the pandemic, as well as a special program for youth and a liturgically correct mask.

4

Change in archdeacons

Charles Pearce retired after 13 years as one of the two archdeacons of the diocese, and Anne Flynn has been appointed to take his place.

5

Five are ordained in June

Four deacons and one priest were ordained in separate services, in three cities, in June, to keep the number of people attending each service small.

6

The Black churches of the diocese

In its 161-year history, the diocese has had four historically Black congregations. None remain today. Read more about their history and legacy.

8

In-person? Outdoors? Online?

The 44 churches of the diocese are making decisions about what kind of services, and where they take place, can be safely offered to members.

11

Diocesan Convention

Delegates and clergy can't gather in Topeka this year, but smaller groupings will help provide community while also conducting needed business.

12

Youth and campus activities shift

When programs for youth and college students no longer could gather, leaders found ways to shift to provide a needed sense of community.

14

Episcopalians in public office

Several elected officials who are tackling tough challenges during the pandemic say their Episcopal faith has been a help and support.

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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 sign at the Church of the Covenant, Junction City, helps direct people to pews where they can maintain proper distance during worship. | Photo by the Rev. Doreen Rice

News and notes from congregations

St. John's, Abilene used its online coffee hour on May 31 to thank the Rev. Jerry Rankin for his services as priest in charge of the parish, as he retired.

Trinity, Atchison marked Trinity Sunday, June 7, with a worship service in the church parking lot, which also was livestreamed. Participants included people from several far-flung states as well as the Philippines.

St. Paul's, Coffeyville continues to collect items each week for a local social service agency, ranging from non-perishable food to diapers and paper products.

St. Martin's, Edwardsville continues to make plans for a walking trail and prayer spot on its extensive property in Wyandotte County.

Trinity, El Dorado remains committed to helping pets and pet owners in the area, with Priscilla's Pet Pantry offering drive-thought pick up of items once a month since April. In May 74 pets were helped with food and other pet items.

St. Andrew's, Emporia asked members to send cards and notes to nine people living in care facilities, noting that residents have been without visitors for months.

Epiphany, Independence hosted a sack lunch picnic on June 14 to help their vicar, the Rev. Sid Breese, mark the 50th anniversary of his ordination to the priesthood.

Covenant, Junction City continues to serve weekly community meals, distributed in to-go containers outside the church.

St. Paul's, Kansas City hosted Wellness Circle small groups to help adults connect intentionally with other parishioners to strengthen their spiritual life, during six-week sessions.

St. Margaret's, Lawrence used its large parking lot as a drive-in movie theatre this summer, with its north wall serving as the screen and sound available from a local FM transmitter. Featured were "Charade" in May and "Napoleon Dynamite" in June.

Trinity, Lawrence children's education director Susan Hires provides an online "Children's Story Time" every Tuesday and Thursday morning, where she reads picture



PHOTO VIA FACEBOOK

Matching masks

The Rev. Marc McDonald, rector of St. Andrew's, Emporia, sports a face mask that matches his chasuble, as the church began offering in-person worship again on July 5.

The vestment maker Almy now sells face masks in damask-style fabric that matches the colors of the church year: green, white, purple, red and blue. ©

books and classics of children's literature. She also explores crafts and beekeeping.

St. Paul's, Leavenworth sought help from members to tend to garden beds on church property. Members were invited to "adopt" an area for weeding, watering and other plant maintenance.

St. Paul's, Manhattan welcomed to its online worship service July 12 a sermon by Dillon Green, an incoming-senior at Virginia Theological Seminary. St. Paul's is Green's sponsoring parish.



PHOTO VIA FACEBOOK

Bags become mats for those without housing

Sarah Stolberg (far right) shows elementary-aged members of St. Thomas', Overland Park, how to turn plastic shopping bags into woven mats during a Reaching Out to the Community session in mid-July.

Bags are linked into "plarns" that then are woven into mats that can be used by people without housing. Stolberg began the project "Bed of Bags." It takes 1,000 bags to make one sleeping mat. ☉

St. Michael's, Mission Kitchen Angels have been assembling "glory bags" for people to pass out to those who don't have access to hygiene supplies. Each bag now includes two face masks and hand sanitizer in addition to other products.

Ascension, Neodesha marked its patronal feast, Ascension Day, with a service livestreamed over Facebook. Dulcimer music was provided by Elsa and Fred Hester.

St. Matthew's, Newton is collecting school supplies for students at Northridge Elementary, across the street from the church.

St. Aidan's, Olathe again is helping the Olathe Public Schools serve students in need by collecting packages of children's underwear, or donations to purchase needed items.

St. Thomas', Overland Park offered youth the chance to do some outreach this summer partnering with Bridging the Gap, a local eco-justice organization. Tasks included picking up litter or working in a recycling center.

St. John's, Parsons welcomed Bishop Bascom on June 20 when she blessed and helped dedicate the church's memorial garden.

Epiphany, Sedan is using "The Way of Love 5-Day Bible Challenge" for its weekly adult education classes.

St. Luke's, Shawnee hosted "Fellowship Fridays" for all members via Zoom video, featuring a different fun activity each Friday evening: First Friday, A is for Art; Second Friday, B is for Book Club; Third Friday, C is for Cooking; Fourth Friday, D is

for Dirt Diggers; and Fifth Friday, E is for Extra — something unusual for all to enjoy.

Grace Cathedral, Topeka hosted "kids of all ages" for a drive-in Vacation Bible School. Six half-hour sessions in the cathedral parking took place on Monday and Wednesday evenings in July.

St. David's, Topeka has welcomed the Rev. David Jenkins, who serves St. Peter's, Pittsburg, but lives in Topeka, as he began offering bereavement counseling through the parish. Jenkins recently retired as a hospice chaplain.

St. Luke's, Wamego sought donations to help match a foundation grant to the local Council of Churches food pantry. The first one came from the discretionary fund of its rector, the Rev. Casey Rohleder.

Good Shepherd, Wichita member Margarita Hunt has been named Kansas's representative to Church Women United, a national, ecumenical organization of women that fosters a vision of Christian unity and prayerful action.

St. Johns, Wichita said farewell to its urban ministry partner Paxton's Blessing Box, for which the church had provided storage space for several months. Patterned after Little Free Libraries, Blessing Boxes now provide nonperishable food in 75 locations across the state and needed more warehouse storage space.

St. James', Wichita rector the Rev. Dawn Frankfurt was one of the panelists in a discussion about multi-faith and multi-race issues in the Wichita community. It was sponsored by Global Faith In Action, a

Continued on page 4

Continued from page 3

Wichita-based organization that promotes religious dialog.

St. Stephen's, Wichita Daughters of the King chapter has been meeting by conference call since April, to continue its ministry of prayer and service.

Grace, Winfield invited parishioners to send cards to members Tom and Teresa Snyder to help them mark their 50th wedding anniversary. ☉

Clergy news

The Rev. Gar Demo has been appointed Canon for Congregational Mission by Bishop Cathleen Bascom. He will serve on the bishop's Council of Deans and will advise the bishop on resources related to congregational vitality and work to empower congregations in their mission, with a special focus on helping parishes offer meaningful online worship as needed and developing small group ministries. Demo continues as rector of St. Thomas, Overland Park.

The Rev. Tom Baker is the new rector of St. Aidan's, Olathe, beginning July 1. He previously was director of spiritual care at Stormont Vail Hospital in Topeka.

The Rev. Jerry Rankin retired at the end of May as priest in charge at St. John's, Abilene.

The Rev. Eli Montes has resigned for health reasons as rector of St. John's, Wichita.

Deacon Bob Hirst has retired as the innkeeper for Bishop Kemper School for Ministry. He continues his diaconal ministry at Good Shepherd, Wichita.

Deacon Suzanne Layne, formerly of this diocese, died on Aug. 6. She was 84.

Retired Arizona **Bishop Robert Shanahan**, formerly of this diocese, died on Aug. 14. He was 80. ☉

Long-time Archdeacon Charles Pearce retires; Anne Flynn named as his replacement

DEACON CHARLES Pearce, who served as archdeacon for the diocese for 13 years, retired in mid-June.

At that time he also retired from ministry at St. Paul's, Manhattan, where he had served for 20 years.

As archdeacon he served as liaison to deacons in the Northwest and Southwest Convocations and frequently accompanied Bishop Wolfe and Bishop Bascom to services in those convocations.

On July 10 Bishop Cathleen Bascom announced that she had named Deacon Anne Flynn, who serves at Grace Cathedral, Topeka, as archdeacon, to succeed Pearce.



*Archdeacon
Anne Flynn*

As archdeacon Flynn will serve as a liaison to deacons in the Northwest and Southwest Convocations, and she will assist the bishop in public worship, when that again happens across the diocese.

Archdeacon Monte Giddings, St. Michael and All Angels, Mission, continues his ministry of service in the Northeast and Southeast Convocations.

Flynn said of her appointment, "I am pleased and humbled to accept the call to be an archdeacon for the diocese and look forward to working with Bishop Bascom in this role. In addition to providing support and counsel to the bishop and assisting the bishop liturgically, I look forward to deepening my relationships with deacons throughout the diocese so I am able to support them in their ministry."

Flynn has served in this diocese for five years, following her move to Kansas from the Diocese of Central Pennsylvania. At the cathedral she helps lead outreach ministries, including serving as co-chair of Topeka JUMP, an ecumenical social justice coalition. She also is the current president of the Topeka Interfaith and is active in ecumenical conversations and events supporting dialogue between all faiths in the Topeka community.

A native of New York, Flynn also holds a full-time job as a hospice chaplain at Midland Care. Her husband, Patrick Early, is director of public relations for Washburn University in Topeka. ☉



*Deacon
Charles Pearce*



Five are ordained in June

FIVE ORDINATIONS

in June took place in five separate services, in three cities, to keep the number of people attending each service small. Bishop Cathleen Bascom was the officiant for each.

Three people were ordained in Grace Cathedral, Topeka:

- Karen Deal, Grace Winfield, was ordained a deacon on June 12;
- Jennifer Allen, St. Michael's, Mission, was ordained a transitional deacon on June 13;
- Mary Donovan, Trinity, Lawrence, was ordained a transitional deacon on June 13.

Yvonne Amanor-Boadu was ordained a deacon on June 14 in her home church, St. Paul's, Manhattan.

The Rev. Rex Matney was ordained a priest on June 14 at Church of the Covenant, Junction City, where he had served as a deacon since 2012.

Allen graduated in May from General Theological Seminary in New York City; the other four are graduates of Bishop Kemper School for Ministry.

Four of the newly ordained will serve 1-year internships:

- Deal will serve half-time at St. Andrew's, Derby and half-time at Trinity, Arkansas City.
- Donovan will serve at the Canterbury Houses at Lawrence and K-State.
- Amanor-Boadu will be half-time at Grace Cathedral, Topeka and half-time at St. Luke's, Wamego.
- Matney will be curate to the Bluestem Minster and the Northwest Convocation.

Allen will spend two years as the Bishop's Curate for Mission with offices in Bethany House, the former diocesan offices, in Topeka. ◉

Top row (from left): Deacon Karen Deal; the Rev. Jennifer Allen; the Rev. Mary Donovan

Center left: Deacon Yvonne Amanor-Boadu

Bottom left: The Rev. Rex Matney

PHOTOS BY MELODIE WOERMAN, PATRICK FUNSTON AND DOREEN RICE

The former Black churches of the Diocese of Kansas

By Melodie Woerman

IN ADDITION to being the diocese's director of communications, I also serve as the bishop-appointed historiographer. In that role I routinely get asked all kinds of questions about the history of the diocese, but recently those questions have had a singular focus: does the Diocese of Kansas have, or have we ever had, any historically Black churches?

Today, the answer is no. But in our past, we have had four Black congregations that provided ministry to communities that often felt, or frequently actually were, excluded from existing Episcopal churches.

Information in this article about these churches comes in part from two histories of the diocese: *The First 100 Years*, a short book written in 1959 for the diocese's centennial; and *Plenteous Harvest*, a longer work that looked at the history of the Episcopal Church in Kansas from 1837 to 1973. Other information comes from other sources, including interviews I have done with people associated with some of those churches.

Early efforts

The Episcopal Church's General Convention in 1865 expressed concern for the religious instruction of recently freed slaves, but little money went toward that effort.

In 1866, Bishop Thomas Vail, shortly after his election as the first bishop of the Diocese of Kansas, visited the "colored" Sunday school in Fort Scott. And in 1876, the Diocesan Convention looked for ways to "interest the colored people of the diocese in our church services."



HARVEST FILE PHOTO

Deacon Joseph Thompson is shown outside St. Simon's, Topeka, shortly after his ordination in 1956.

Several parishes did create Sunday schools for Black children, but only with the creation of the four predominantly Black congregations did the church in Kansas see much work in reaching Black members.

In 1917 the Episcopal Church consecrated its first Black bishop, Edward Demby, to serve Black congregations in the Province of the Southwest. Bishop Demby made 26 visits to the four Black churches in Kansas between 1927 and 1938, but those congregations remained under the jurisdiction of the bishops of Kansas.

They did so in part because they valued their close connection to, and support from, their bishops, but also because they held seats and votes at Diocesan Convention, something Bishop Demby, who served many Black churches but without jurisdiction anywhere, could not provide.

St. Simon's, Topeka

St. Simon's, Topeka, was organized in 1884, originally under the name St. Philip's, and in 1885 it was admitted as a congregation of the diocese. Its delegate, F. R. McKinley, was the first Black member of the convention.

Throughout much of its history, the small mission church had no priest of its own, with services provided by priests from nearby Grace Cathedral, but it raised up at least four clergy from among its members, including Deacon Joe Thompson, who served as the church's vicar from his ordination in 1956 to 1964, and then served at the cathedral until his death in 2003.

In an interview in 1998, Thompson said he first attended St. Simon's in 1911 as a 6-year-old. His father, who was an Episcopalian, took him and his sisters into town to begin Sunday school classes at Grace Cathedral.

His father's buggy that day was met at the curb by some men of the cathedral, who turned them away and directed them to St. Simon's.

The church was closed by Bishop Edward Turner in 1964, after he had concluded that segregated parishes were not in keeping with the church's declared position on human rights.

Thompson said that after its closing, about half the members of St.

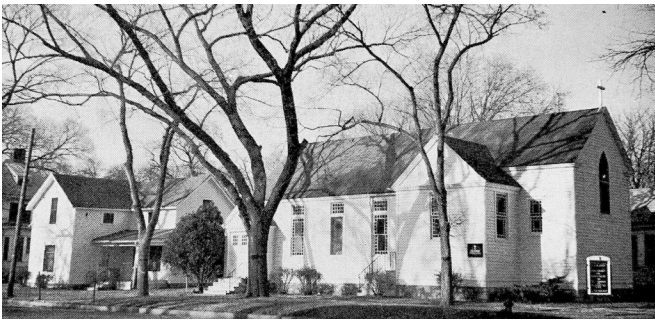


PHOTO FROM THE FIRST 100 YEARS

St. Simon's, Topeka, as it looked in 1959.

Simon's began worshipping at the cathedral or at St. David's. "A lot of people didn't feel comfortable attending one of the white churches because they hadn't been welcomed there before," he said.

Church of the Ascension, Kansas City

Church of the Ascension was founded in 1888 to provide a church for Black people in Kansas City. It maintained a robust ministry, often with its own priest, and occupied a variety of buildings. In 1959 it had a membership of 179 people.

But in the 1970s, financial support from the diocese no longer was forthcoming, and some members chose to move to St. Paul's, the other church in Kansas City, Kan. By the 1990s its numbers continued to dwindle, and it was meeting in space at Turner House, which for several decades was a diocesan ministry to underserved youth and adults in Kansas City.

In 1998 Ascension merged with St. Paul's, after a period of shared ministry and joint work by the priests that had served the two congregations. The chapel at St. Paul's was renamed Ascension Chapel, intended to be a living memorial to the members of Church of the Ascension.

Bishop William Smalley presided over the service marking the merger. Noting that this action closed the last Black church in the diocese, he said, "If this action means we don't have a commitment to ministry among

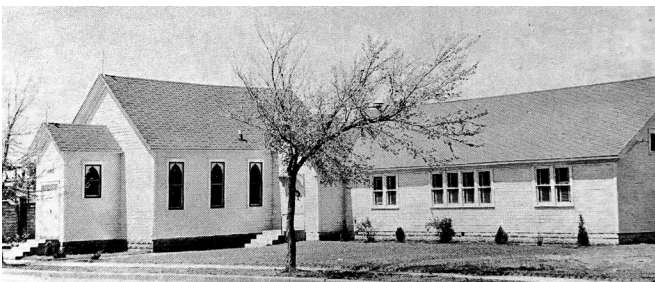


PHOTO FROM THE FIRST 100 YEARS

St. Augustine's, Wichita, as it looked in 1959.

our African American brothers and sisters, this closing would not be good, and it would not be to our advantage."

The Rev. Dixie Junk, priest in charge at St. Paul's, says some members from Ascension today are St. Paul's parishioners, along with Black members who previously had joined the church apart from the merger.

St. Augustine's, Wichita

St. Augustine's was established in 1910, and it also was closed by Bishop Turner in 1964. It had its own building for much of its 50 years, but at the time of its closing, the church was meeting on the campus of Wichita State University.

Maxine Walters, who was a member of the church, in a 1998 interview said the church had struggled financially as the number of members declined. After it was closed, she said Bishop Turner encouraged members to attend other Episcopal churches.

"He didn't want a parish to be black or white, so he asked us to attend different churches," she said. Walters said about two-thirds of the members did move to other Episcopal churches in the city. She first attended the now-closed St. Christopher's before becoming a member of St. John's. She died in 2003 after a career working for civil rights.

But a section of the Episcopal Church online archives, "African American and the Struggle for Justice," describing the work of the church's last vicar, the Rev. Earl Neil, tells a different story about what happened to St. Augustine's members. It said, "An inability to integrate the parishioners into other Episcopal parishes in Wichita resulted in the migration of 98 percent of the parish to other denominations."

It also said that the loss of his parish inspired Neil "to make resistance to segregation the heart of his pastoral mission." After leaving Kansas he helped organize the voting rights march from Selma to Montgomery, Ala., worked with the Black Panthers while serving a church in Oakland, Calif., and in 2005 moved to South Africa and served on the staff of Archbishop Desmond Tutu.

St. Philip's, Leavenworth

This Black mission church was founded in 1896 and operated without clergy and in mostly rented facilities for most of its existence. Despite valiant efforts to remain a viable church, St. Philip's closed in 1949 for lack of funds and members. ©



PHOTO BY CONNIE VOSBURGH

Worshippers gather on July 12 for an 8 a.m. service in the cloister courtyard at Grace Cathedral, Topeka. This was the first in-person worship service by the congregation since March 15,

Services across the diocese evolve as churches cope with pandemic realities

By Melodie Woerman

ON MAY 1 Bishop Cathleen Bascom issued guidelines under which churches of the diocese could resume having in-person worship services, after eight weeks away, beginning on May 24.

Since then, 27 of the diocese's 44 churches have done that, usually offering communion in one kind (bread only) or celebrating a spiritual communion.

Of the remaining churches, most offer services only online, and four have begun small outdoor services.

These churches provide a mix of spiritual communion and Morning Prayer.

Two churches resumed in-person worship in July but had to return to online-only services after virus cases spiked in their area.

And even churches worshipping in-person are continuing to provide online options, too, for those who can't attend or who prefer to participate from home.

And whether in-person or outdoors, the bishop's May directives remain in place. Masks are required for everyone, and people have to

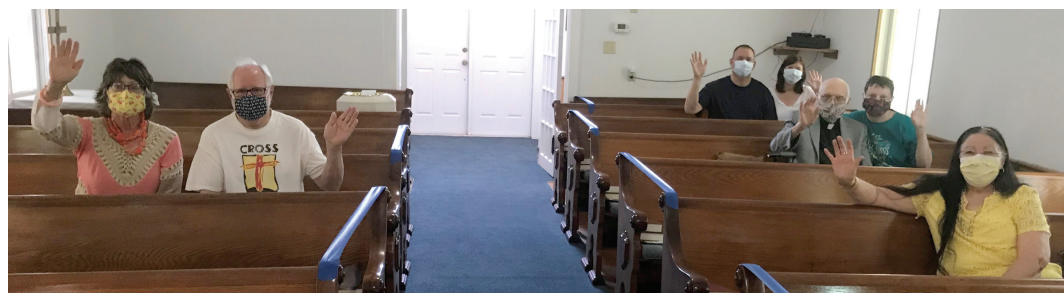
keep 6-foot distance from anyone not in their family. There is no singing, and no food or drink can be part of any fellowship time.

Church size plays a role

The 44 churches of the diocese have an Average Sunday Attendance (ASA), as reported on the 2019 parochial report, ranging in size from 310 people to 5. Eight churches have an ASA of more than 100, ranging from 310 to 121. Four churches have an ASA greater than 50 (a range of 98 to 77). The remaining 32 churches average fewer than 50 people.

Members of St. Mary's, Galena returned to the church for worship on May 24.

PHOTO BY JOHN SMITTLE



CHURCHES, SIZE AND WORSHIP

The size measurement used is 2019 Average Sunday Attendance, or ASA.

ASA	# CHURCHES	SERVICE TYPE
Above 100	8	2 in-person 3 online 3 outdoors
50 – 99	4	1 in-person 2 online 1 outdoors
25 – 49	19	12 in-person 6 online 1 no services
Below 25	13	12 in-person 1 online

The services indicated are as of Aug. 16.

When looking at what service churches now are offering, size appears to be a strong determinant (see the chart above) — the smaller the church, the more likely it is to be offering in-person worship.

This may reflect small congregations with large worship spaces that make physical distancing easier to maintain. It could be that smaller churches frequently are in smaller cities and towns where the number of coronavirus cases can be lower. Whatever the cause, the difference between the current worship practices of larger and smaller congregations is significant.

Making things work

St. Mary's, Galena, was one of three churches that welcomed worshippers back into the building on May 24. John Smittle, the senior warden, said the congregation already had decided to return to the church as soon as the bishop announced it was possible. "Since our congregation is small it was easy to social distance," he said. Areas are marked to keep people 6 feet apart, and Ena Smittle, his wife, provides organ music.

Members of Calvary, Yates Center also resumed in-person worship on May 24, with communion in one kind, and its vicar, the Rev. Helen Hoch, said she sometimes has to stop herself from singing along with the instrumental music.

Good Shepherd, Wichita, and St. David's, Topeka, are the largest churches that have resumed in-person

worship. Good Shepherd waited until July 18 to do so, and limits attendance to 30 people in two weekly services in its Fellowship Hall (for better distancing), with sign-ups required. The rector, the Rev. Andrew O'Connor, said keeping members informed about all the deliberations and decisions being made by the Vestry has been imperative and helpful. Those services also are streamed live on Facebook for everyone who can't be in church.

The Rev. Vicki Smith of St. David's said that health department guidelines have allowed as many as 90 or as few as 45 people to meet in-person, so it is critical that they continue to livestream. They do that via Zoom instead of Facebook, she said, "because the community connection is important to us. People are able to talk with each other before and after the service."

The Rev. Casey Rohleder, rector of St. Luke's, Wamego, said her church will always mix in-person and online, since only about one-fourth of the congregation so far comes to the church for services.

And that isn't unique. Most churches meeting in-person say online will remain a crucial form of worship for them.

Starting outdoors

The Rev. Gar Demo, rector of St. Thomas', Overland Park — the largest church in the diocese by ASA — said the church currently is offering four outdoor worship services for groups of no more than 20 people, with communion in one kind.

Continued on page 10



PHOTO BY ST. THOMAS'

An outdoor altar serves those who attend one of the four services weekly at St. Thomas', Overland Park.

Continued from page 9

Demo said he and the Vestry are basing their decisions on specific criteria about local coronavirus cases. He said they initially thought the church could return to in-person worship in July, but cases in Johnson County began to rise. “Sticking with the out-of-doors worship and gatherings made sense, he said.

Now they are guided by two virus-related numbers — the case positivity rate and cases per 100,000 people. The county has created green, orange and red zones for each criteria. The red zone for two consecutive, 7-day periods means the church suspends any indoor activities and might reduce numbers for outdoor worship. But if those numbers turn green for 14 days, they will start in-person worship.

“The thinking is that this is a science-based determination that removes emotion from the decision and also gives us a clear way to gauge activity,” he said.

The Very Rev. Torey Lightcap, dean of Grace Cathedral, Topeka, said after the bishop issued her May 1 guidelines, he and others went into the cathedral nave to measure seats 6 feet apart. He said that would yield about 104 people, far fewer than the 500-plus the pews normally hold. But after seeing a June ordination service with 38 people attending, Lightcap said even that number felt crowded to him.

He said he and the Vestry had many conversations about resuming indoor, in-person worship, “and it

seemed there would be too many risks, too many outliers, too many things that could pop up and go wrong, in order for people to feel safe.”

In mid-July they opted for small (about 60 people on average) services early on Sunday morning in the courtyard between the cathedral and the office building. “This feels about right,” Lightcap said, “so we are sticking with this going forward. We try things, and we learn.” In bad weather the service moves into the large parish hall.

Picking the virtual lane

The Rev. David Cox is rector of St. Michael and All Angels in Mission, the diocese’s second-largest church. He said members who are medical professionals have offered valuable advice to him as a Covid-19 task force, and their expertise, plus the growing number of cases in Johnson County this summer, told him that a planned mid-July return to in-person worship just wasn’t feasible.

Because of that, he has told the parish there will not be in-person worship for “the foreseeable future.” He suspects that means a year from now.

He said that the constant planning for multiple scenarios had become a drain on everyone in the church. “We needed to pick a lane,” he said. “I have chosen the virtual lane.”

They maintain a robust online worship schedule on Sunday mornings, along with other weekly or monthly services. Some outdoor activities may be in the mix, too. “We are trying to think creatively but wisely,” he said. ☉

Diocesan office resumes regular business hours

THE DIOCESAN office in Topeka resumed regular office hours on Aug. 3, with many staff members working a mix of days in the office and other days at home.

Staff contact information, as well days each are in-office or working-from-home, is on the diocesan website: episcopal-ks.org > About > Contact us.

Meetings with Bishop Bascom or any other staff member can be made by appointment. Everyone, staff or guest, will wear a mask when in common areas of the office or during

meetings with others, especially at a distance of less than 6 feet.

Many diocesan events and meetings will continue to take place over Zoom video conferencing or by telephone.

New staff member named

On Aug. 3 Taylor Mather joined the diocesan staff in the newly created, part-time position of Diocesan Dispatcher and Bishop’s Correspondent.

His duties will include answering the phone, directing inquiries to

other staff and assisting with routing messages to staff from the bishop. He also will assist with weekend video meetings of diocesan task forces, as those begin to expand their work.

He is married to the Rev. Ashley Mather, curate at Grace Cathedral, Topeka, and they have two rescue dogs, Hope and Clarabelle. ☉



Taylor Mather

Plans for Diocesan Convention will adapt to coronavirus realities

By Melodie Woerman

THE WORK OF THE Annual Convention of the Diocese of Kansas will go on this year in spite of the coronavirus pandemic, but its look will be decidedly different.

Delegates and clergy from the diocese's 44 churches still will vote on people to fill elective office and adopt a financial mission plan for 2021.

But to provide for physical distancing while continuing to have a sense of community, the Council of Trustees in June voted to have 12 convention sites — one in each minster — across the diocese, as well as a “head table” location in Topeka.

Delegates and clergy will gather at those minster sites, with all locations connected by the Zoom video conferencing platform. This also will allow delegates who do not wish to gather in a larger group to participate online from home. Plans also call for the convention sessions to be broadcast to the diocesan Facebook page.

To symbolically represent that virtual connection across the diocese, the convention theme was taken from Ephesians 4:16: “Joined and knitted together.”

The Council did note that if conditions make it unsafe for even these smaller convention gatherings to take place, all or part of the event will move online.

Delegates and clergy will elect people to serve on two diocesan bodies — one clergy person and one lay person to fill at-large seats on the Council of Trustees, and two clergy people and one lay person to fill unexpired terms on the Disciplinary Board.

Nominees for these positions are:

Council of Trustees, clergy (elect one for a 3-year term)

- The Rev. Tom Baker, St. Aidan's, Olathe
- The Rev. Jonathan Brice, St. Luke's, Shawnee
- The Rev. Ashley Mather, Grace Cathedral, Topeka

Council of Trustees, lay (elect one for a 3-year term)

- James Beck, St. Paul's, Clay Center
- Teresa Ryther, Good Shepherd, Wichita
- Diana Waddell-Gilbert, Good Shepherd, Wichita



The 161st Annual Convention
The Episcopal Diocese of Kansas
October 24, 2020

Disciplinary Board, clergy (elect two for a 1-year unexpired term)

- The Rev. Christine Gilson, retired
- The Very Rev. Torey Lightcap, Grace Cathedral, Topeka

Disciplinary Board, lay (elect one for a 1-year unexpired term)

- Jeff Ellis, St. Michael and All Angels, Mission

The convention also will confirm the election for 3-year terms of clergy representatives to the Council of Trustees from each of the four convocations.

Delegates and clergy also will hear an address from Bishop Cathleen Bascom, and a convention Eucharist will be broadcast on social media.

More information about this year's Diocesan Convention is available on the diocesan website, www.episcopal-ks.org.

Youth, campus programs find new ways to gather

By Melodie Woerman

WITH A PROGRAM that has been built around in-person connections, the diocesan Youth, Young Adult and Campus Ministry has had to pivot, adapt and change since mid-March.

The program is led by two full-time diocesan employees: Karen Schlabach, Youth, Young Adult and Campus Missioner; and Michael Funston, Associate for Youth, Young Adult and Campus Ministries. Together they have overseen the merger of two previously separate program areas — Youth and Campus Ministries — into one that also seeks to engage college-age young adults who are not attending college.

Year-round program assistants also live at the Canterbury Houses on the campus of Kansas State University and the University of Kansas and help with youth and young adult work as well.

Once church services across the diocese were cancelled starting on March 16, and with school districts and colleges suspending classes, Schlabach and Funston knew they had to do something to help keep the communities together. They first set up a youth group gathering via Zoom video conference on March 22. Funston said, “We wanted to find a way to touch base with the youth who usually attend youth events, just to ask them ‘How are you?’”

She said that first group included youth and some adult volunteers. “I was crying,” she said. “It was so good to see everybody.” She said students on the call offered special prayers for their friends, especially those without a faith community on which to



PHOTO BY KAREN SCHLABACH

Students enjoy a card game in an outdoor pavilion at Camp Wood YMCA near Elmdale on July 12. Two in-person sessions were available for youth and their parents; another was set aside for young adults to be together,

rely. Funston said, “I was amazed at how aware they were of their peers.”

Separate Zoom gatherings for those connected with the Canterbury Houses soon followed, with program assistants offering to provide a free meal to any students who wanted one, to replace the weekly community dinner hosted by each house. Schlabach said these online gatherings were really important for independent college students who now were back to living in their parents’ house. “They were grateful for a connection with people at college,” she said.

What about camp?

Schlabach said one immediate question hung over everything else in those early days — what about camp? The weeklong MegaCamp, the ministry’s biggest program that brings together students from third grade through high school gradu-

ating seniors, takes place at Camp Wood YMCA in Elmdale, west of Emporia. Students learn, play, eat, worship and sleep in group settings, and Schlabach said the early questions were around how this could happen safely. And then, could it happen at all. Should they delay, or even cancel? “It was six weeks of unknown,” she said.

Initially they did delay, from June until August, but in late May Camp Wood canceled all youth camps for the summer, including MegaCamp. “No one was very surprised when it was cancelled,” Schlabach said.

By then, Schlabach said she knew the program needed to start thinking long-term. “We know that people are Zoomed out and need to be with each other,” she said. “But what will a year look like with no overnight events?”

Special summer activities were planned. The first was a MegaZoom



YOUTUBE SCREENSHOT

A student plays the drums for the online MegaZoom talent show, made available via YouTube and Facebook.

in early July, to provide online versions of typical camp activities. But, Schlabach said, “We were really careful that it was not camp.”

The annual talent show took place via submitted videos, and the cardboard boat race, which usually involves paddling a large cardboard box fitted with a tarp and duct tape across the Camp Wood lake, was replaced with shoeboxes “racing” in bathtubs.

For those who wanted to be together, three half-day sessions, all outdoors, took place at Camp Wood. Young adults and college students met the afternoon of July 11, and youth (and any driver parents) had sessions on July 12. Masks were required, along with hourly hand sanitizing.

The gatherings included worship, activities and time for discussion. Schlabach said, “It worked great to get people together.”

To enhance the summer offerings, Schlabach said she asked the campus

program assistants, plus the two college-aged youth summer interns, to come up with some creative online programs.

Youth intern Jonah Brandley created a podcast about the popular C.S. Lewis book *The Lion, the Witch and the Wardrobe*. He provided a summary of each chapter and offered some questions for discussion. Program assistant Anastasia

Cunningham, who serves at Canterbury at K-State, hosted a series of cooking classes on the youth program’s Instagram account.

Going forward

The peer ministers who will be serving on campuses this fall met for a one-day event in late July. Indoor meetings had everyone masked and physically distanced, and box lunches were eaten outside. The two Canterbury Houses resumed weekly meals and discussions in August, with everyone outside as long as weather permits. Masks will be required except when eating, with everyone at a physical distance.

Youth events will resume in January with the popular Miqra, a Bible-based event, taking place on a single day instead of over a weekend. Some smaller leadership gatherings will be taking place this fall.

Schlabach said every in-person event will also have an online component, but that will not be the same as what those who attend experience.

“People are Zoomed out,” she said. “We may only have a handful of people, but for those who want to get together, this will be a resource.”

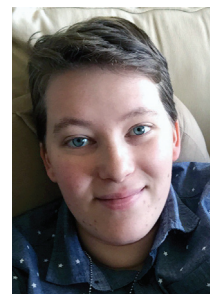
Mortensen joins campus ministry team

Clarke Mortensen is the diocese’s new campus ministry program assistant at Canterbury House of Lawrence, beginning on Aug. 1. She takes over from Will Chaney, who served in that position for the past three years. He is starting graduate school at the University of Kansas.

Mortensen is a recent graduate of Kenyon College in Ohio, where she majored in English and served three years as a peer minister at Canterbury Kenyon.

In 2019 she served as a summer youth intern at St. Thomas’, Overland Park.

She said, “Last summer, I left a little piece of my heart in Kansas, so I’m eager to return.”



Clarke Mortensen

Episcopalians in public office face tough calls in the Covid era

By Melodie Woerman

LOCAL OFFICIALS across the state of Kansas have faced difficult decisions this year, from health concerns caused by the coronavirus pandemic to economic downturns that resulted in job losses. And when those officials also are members of churches of the diocese, they say their faith helps them through tough times.

Brandon Whipple is the mayor of Wichita, the state's largest city, who took office on Jan. 20 after serving four terms in the Kansas House of Representatives. And just as the word "coronavirus" was making its way into America's vocabulary, Wichita was facing a crisis of a different kind — the loss of jobs in the aviation industry, the city's largest employment sector.



Mayor Brandon Whipple

With Boeing 737 Max planes grounded by safety concerns, employers that provided parts for those planes shut down, too, including Spirit AeroSystems (which produced 70 percent of the 737 Max planes) and about 500 local small business.

Thousands of people were laid off.

"When I came into office I was told that Wichita was one of the most recession-proof cities," Whipple said. "That's true, unless your largest employer is grounded."

Within weeks of that blow, Whipple and other city officials also had to confront what the effects of Covid-19 might mean. "Early on we didn't know what to expect," he said. "Can we set up extra hospital beds at the university? Can we ask for help from the National Guard?"

As in other places across the country, Black residents were hit hard by the virus, so Whipple worked with leaders of that community to get a mobile test site set up and 5,000 masks distributed. "My focus now is the health and well-being of our citizens," he said.



PHOTO VIA FACEBOOK

Wichita Mayor Brandon Whipple (left) helps volunteers hand out donated masks in late May.

Whipple said the most challenging thing so far was his desire to get a citywide mask ordinance in place before the July 4 weekend, after political differences meant the governor's ability to mandate mask usage statewide had expired. Having seen the correlation between gatherings and spikes in case numbers, he knew this was an important step.

The mayor said he risked the ire of City Council members by calling them to an emergency meeting on July 3. "People had to cancel vacations to be there," he said. After hearing from more than a dozen medical professionals, the council voted 5-to-4 to mandate mask usage. "This was the biggest risk I'd taken as mayor," he said. "But I knew if it happened, this could be my biggest success."

Err on the side of love

Whipple, who is a member of St. James', Wichita, and serves on its Vestry, said his faith helps him when making tough calls. "Episcopalians err on the side of love in almost everything," he said. "Land on the side of what is right and just, and you probably will make better decisions."

That was tested on July 4, when people opposed to the mask mandate he had championed picketed his house, some openly carrying weapons, while his three young boys were inside. He went to the store and bought cases of soft drinks and water, and his wife Chelsea, who is director of programs for St. James', put them in a cooler on the lawn, with a sign inviting picketers to enjoy a cold beverage, along with a wish for a Happy 4th.

“The protest was small and we were able to keep the kids away from that,” he said. “But we tried to set the tone — err on the side of love.”

Decisions about school openings

Those entrusted with decisions about school openings this fall face some of the hardest challenges. Two of them are active members of the diocese.

Jacquie Lightcap is a member of the school board for the Auburn-Washburn district, with about 6,300 students in suburban Topeka. She is an active member of Grace Cathedral, Topeka, where her husband, Torey, is the dean.



Jacquie Lightcap

She said the questions around students returning to school this fall were “the biggest decisions I’ve had to make as a school board member.” The board decided to delay the start of school by two weeks, with students in a hybrid model — one-half of each class attending school in person each week and other days online, with the other half of the class flipping days.

She received many emails from parents and teachers with ideas about classes this fall, but they were only one thing she had to consider. “Wading through all the facts provided by health officials in our community, listening to the concerns and opinions of our staff and families, learning about all the layers of work our teachers and administrators have put into making this successful for all our students — all these factors go into these decisions.”

Lightcap said her faith is “absolutely critical” to who she is and how she approaches everything in her life, including school board matters. “Tending to my neighbor, seeking Christ in those I meet, taking care of those in need, honoring everyone with dignity and respect — that’s all based on my faith and is built up by my Grace Cathedral community,” she said.

Brian Geary, a member of St. Thomas, Overland Park, and the treasurer of the Diocese of Kansas, is vice president of the school board for Olathe Public Schools, the state’s second-largest district with more than 30,000 students. That district is providing parents with the option on in-classroom learning or online learning for their students, with the chance to change options after the first semester. The district has



Brian Geary

delayed the start of school until Sept. 8 to allow more time to prepare. Geary said the board has “relied almost completely on the Johnson County Health Department for all guidance related to our students’ participation in both academic and extracurricular activities,” along with recommendations from the State Board of Education and the Kansas State High School Activities Association, and input from parents and teachers. “We try to blend it into the best for all,” he said.

He said his faith has helped him to better see the needs of others. “I think the biggest thing my faith has helped me with in this decision-making process is to respect each other’s points of view and have empathy for others.”

He also encouraged fellow Episcopalians to turn to prayer to help their schools. “I ask that all of those in the Diocese of Kansas pray for all of the members of their school communities in these unprecedented times, and that you offer grace and hope to each other.”

Health of the largest county

Janeé Hanzlick, a member of St. Michael and All Angels, Mission, has been a Commissioner of Johnson County, the state’s largest with more than 600,000 residents since 2019. She said that during the pandemic, “county commissioners across Kansas were put in the challenging position of deciding when and how to reopen businesses and services,” and she received hundreds of emails and calls.



Janeé Hanzlick

She said constituents wanted everything from opening with no restrictions to keeping everything closed until a vaccine was available. In the end, she and a majority of the commission voted to adopt the reopening plan put forward by Gov. Laura Kelly.

Hanzlick said that in deciding how to vote, she relied most heavily on the guidance of doctors and epidemiologists in county and state health departments. But she also considered the question often posed by Presiding Bishop Michael Curry: “What would love do?”

She said her faith has helped her decide how best “to offer compassion, care and safety for people with differing ideas of what those values mean.” Having a strong group of women friends from church also helps, she said.

And while dismayed by the level of divisiveness and vitriol shown about Covid-related decisions, she said she has grown a thick skin so she can be at peace with her decisions as she seeks to help people of her county. ☉

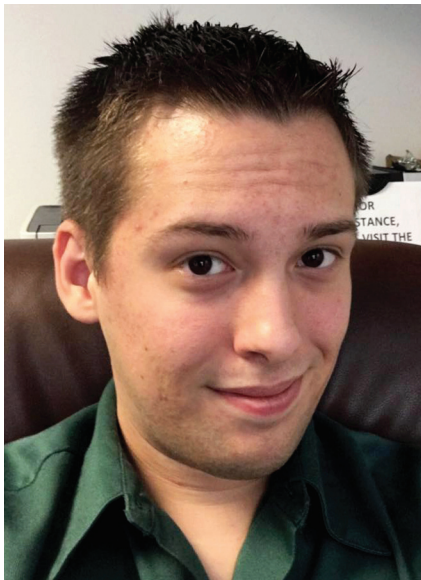
Two Kansas young adults will be helping others through Episcopal Service Corps programs

By Melodie Woerman

TWO YOUNG adults from the diocese will be spending the next academic year in one of the 15 programs spread across the Episco-



Maddy Bishop



Jonah Brandley

pal Church though the Episcopal Service Corps. And one of them began that service in January of this year.

Maddy Bishop, a member of St. James', Wichita, has been serving with the Deaconess Anne House in St. Louis since the first of the year, and she will continue there until July 2021.

Jonah Brandley, a recent graduate of the University of Kansas and a member of Trinity, Lawrence, heads this fall to Lawrence House, a ministry of All Saints Episcopal Church in South Hadley, Mass.

Episcopal Service Corps programs vary in their work from location to location, but each one involves participants serving others, promoting justice in community, deepening their spiritual awareness and vocational discernment, and living simply in an intentional Christian community.

Bishop is no stranger to ministry in St. Louis, having spent the summer of 2019 there as an intern at Christ Cathedral and working with the Diocese of Missouri's Camp Phoenix.

Her placement through Deaconess Anne House is with Rockwell House Episcopal Campus Ministry, serving students at Washington University and St. Louis University.

"I was thrilled at the opportunity to work for a campus ministry where I would assist with the weekly Sunday night Eucharist service, Wednesday night Bible Study, writing sermons, planning liturgies and other ministry related tasks," she said.

"I was also interested in living with a community of young people who were asking similar questions about what Christian discipleship looks like in 2020 and challenging me to ask the better questions about what following Christ demands of my life."

Bishop was active in her parish before heading to St. Louis, and she also helped with diocesan youth programs. In 2019 she was elected as an alternate deputy to the 2021 General Convention.

Brandley has served as a peer minister at Canterbury House of Lawrence for the past two school years and was a 2020 youth summer intern.

Because of the pandemic his placement for work with the ESC program in western Massachusetts hasn't yet been decided.

He said he was drawn to a year of service through former campus program assistant Will Chaney's descriptions of his own year in Memphis, as well as time Brandley spent with campus ministry alternative spring break trips in recent years.

He said of the coming year, "I'm really excited to live outside of the Midwest and to have an adventure, but I mainly want to get some experience and to try out projects that will hopefully pique my interest that I can continue to work on after the program is done." He also hopes to spend time exploring a possible call to life as a monk.

"Above all, I am trusting in the time of discernment that the Lawrence House supplies for me to find out what God's calling me to do." ◉

'Pleasing' others is at the core of the gospel

AS HE BEGINS to put a head on his Letter to the Romans, it seems like Paul has heard of some conflicts in the community. One of these conflicts feels especially important for our pandemic-laden times. With individual pandemic responses becoming unfortunately politicized, science squaring off with individual liberty, I hear Paul asking us to check our motivations.

In Rome, there is an argument about whether it's permitted to eat meat that has been sacrificed to idols. One side says it shouldn't be eaten because it is profaned by what has happened to it. The other says it's just meat, because the gods to whom it is sacrificed are not real.

Paul himself believes the latter, but instead of declaring a winner outright, he challenges the eaters to think differently about their choices. If seeing another eating meat causes one to sin, eaters need to avoid eating so as not to be the cause of another's sin. If another sins in thought, word or deed by your actions, then you aren't living the Good News.

"Everything is indeed clean," he says, agreeing on the point, "but it is wrong for you to make others fall by what you eat." (*Romans 14:20*) "Do not, for the sake of food, destroy the work of God," he warns.

As Christians, our orientation is not to win or lose an argument, but to avoid destroying another. He says

it another way looking to Christ's example: "Each of us must please our neighbor for the good purpose of building up the neighbor." (*Romans 15:2*)

With social distancing and masks recommended and required, science squares off against personal liberty in a battle of rights and right-ness. It's a battle of righteousness and self-justification as old as Romans. When we participate in these fights with self-righteousness, we risk causing another person to sin (indeed we are probably sinning ourselves).

Neither personal liberty nor epidemiological science conflict with Christianity per se; however, neither is the gospel. As Christians, we worship a God who said, "Love one another as I have loved you" (*John 15:12*), the love he showed through the washing of feet. Paul put it another way, "Each of us must please our neighbor for the good purpose of building up the neighbor." (*Romans 15:2*)

If building up the neighbor our purpose, how do we do it? "Please" is an interesting word here... Paul's Greek is *areskó* which means 'please' but with the added valence of "with the idea of willing service rendered to others."

Science tells us we should wear masks and keep our distance. As Christians, we don't do these things *ipso facto*, we do them as acts of *areskó* toward others. The motivation



to act is to pursue service and love toward our neighbors.

While masking and distancing are consonant with the science, we wear them because of love.

In Christian perspective as articulated by Paul, personal liberty takes a backseat to service. ☉



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