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The Summer of 2015

150th Anniversary of the Community of St. Mary

Ordinations to the Diaconate at the Cathedral of All Saints

The 78th General Convention

The 147th Convention of the Diocese of Albany

Beaver Cross 2015

Corpus Christi Festival

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- The 147th Diocesan Convention
- Why Do We Say the Creed?
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Diocesan Updates

The Diocesan Update is the diocesan weekly e-mail newsletter, containing news and events from around the diocese. If you’re interested in receiving the Diocesan Update, send an e-mail to: webmaster@albanydiocese.org. Put “Subscribe” in the subject line, and include your name, address, phone number, and parish (or other diocesan affiliation) in the body of the message.
For centuries, Anglicans around the world have begun their day with the joyful line, “Worship the Lord in the beauty of holiness.” Likewise, we have ended both Morning and Evening Prayer with the petition for “walking before you in holiness … all our days.”

When a person is ordained a deacon, priest or bishop, or instituted as a rector, all the people pray after Communion that the person “may be an effective example … in holiness of life.” We ask God to clothe ordinands with “holiness of life.”

During the Great Vigil of Easter, the Exsultet cries out: “This is the night, when all who believe in Christ are delivered from the gloom of sin, and are restored to grace and holiness of life.” In the Eucharist we pray that all Christians “may hear and receive the holy Word, serving them in holiness and righteousness all the days of their life.”

And in the Supplication attached to the Great Litany we find a final prayer “that we may evermore serve thee in holiness and pureness of living, to thy honor and glory.”

The call on every Christian life is the call to holiness.

All this relates to the holiness of God of which the Bible and the Prayer Book speak hundreds and hundreds of times. The final Question in the Catechism’s section on Prayer and Worship asks, “What is corporate worship?” and the Answer tells us that “we unite ourselves with others to acknowledge the holiness of God…” How does the holiness of the all-Holy God connect with us who are “very far gone from original righteousness …and inclined to evil” (Article IX)? How does a church made up of sinful men and women, come to be described in the creed as ‘holy’?

A clue is found in the Collect for the 2nd Sunday after Christmas: “Grant that we may share the divine life of him who humbled himself to share our humanity, thy Son Jesus Christ.”[BCPp162.] Here we see the full impact of the Christmas story, not only that God became Man, but that His purpose was to restore us to the exalted state planned for us prior to the fall of our first parents.

God has not only created us, redeemed us, and sanctified us, but also wants us to share in the inner relational life of the Trinity. Astonishing. Christians reject the false teaching of pantheism (god-in-everything) and yet assert that the Almighty wants to draw us into a lasting union where our hearts beat in sync with His. We are invited into the communal life of the Trinity through Jesus.

To that end the Lord provides the goal, the desire, the way and the means. What is left is our assent, our acceptance, our agreement. We are invited to union without absorption.

The Goal – While we cannot cause this, we are not passive spectators. In some cases we were blessed to be born into Christian families where Jesus was loved and trusted. We cannot recall when we did not know Him. We were baptized and made members of the family of God, the Body of Christ and the Temple of the Holy Spirit. Others have the distinct recollection of coming to a personal faith in Christ and responded to His grace to put all their trust in Him alone. Baptism made it a permanent feature of our life and personhood. In each circumstance we welcomed the call of come and follow Jesus in the way to eternal life.

As sin-inclined human beings, we fail and forget and defy the Lord. We disobey His commandments. We fail to love our brothers and our sisters and our enemies as Jesus calls us to.
When we sin it bothers us. We know that we are guilty and we want to get right with God. Our conscience troubles us. We can push it to the back, but we can’t silence it. The Goal stands.

The Desire – Part of that is because we are still drawn to God as the desire of our souls. Great spiritual leaders like John Wesley and Ignatius Loyola saw the desires and the affections as prime indicators of our lives. And so, in the pursuit of holiness, we can ask the Lord to give us desire for Him, and to order our affections back to His heart of love.

The Way – In the Acts of the Apostles the earliest name for the Church was The Way. Those who decided to follow Jesus were in The Way (of salvation). Today we have the fellowship of other Christians as we encourage one another, assist one another, lift up one another, forgive one another, support one another and pray for one another. The Christian life is not a solo Journey. It’s with Christ and in the company of others. Sometimes we share deeper bonds; a prayer group, a Bible study, an outreach ministry, an intercessory group, a prayer team, an apostolate, and of course, a parish family.

The Means – Jesus promises that we are not alone, that He is with us until the end of the ages. He does this primarily by pouring out His Holy Spirit on us. It begins in Baptism, is strengthened in Confirmation, renewed in Absolution, particularized in Ordination and experienced in healing. Jesus himself comes to us in the Eucharist as we are nourished with His Body and Blood.

On a continuing basis we have access to the Scriptures where the Lord manifests His mercy and love. Daily partaking of the Bible is a means of grace that helps conform our lives to Jesus, the only norm of holiness. We see failure, disappointment, fear and isolation. We see God’s faithfulness, His overarching care, His relentless pursuit of us. (It’s not merely our pursuing Him which precedes and prompts our pursuit of Him.)

Personal Prayer functions as the integrating means of grace. Jesus the Vine wants us to be living branches. We need that life that flows from Him alone. Recently at the CtK Healing Service, Fr Art Peters spoke of the living water and our need to keep hydrated. Daily prayer is the key.

The English Reformers sought to provide all Christians with a simple, straightforward pattern of prayer. Archbishop Cranmer digested centuries of Benedictine prayer into a single volume, the Book of Common Prayer, which would be placed in the hands of Everyone. Any person or family or group or parish could pray through the Psalms (which was the prayerbook of Jesus and the early church). Using it enables us to read the Gospels and the rest of the New Testament more than once. And in the course of two years we cover most of the Old Testament.

A great Christian psychiatrist I worked with repeatedly said, “If Jesus meant this for everyone, it has to be simple.” It is. The Spirit, the Scriptures and the Sacraments are the great gifts God has for our sanctification, for our holiness. We don’t need to whip ourselves up, we just need to receive, to be agreeable, to persist, to be formed, reformed and transformed.

As we persist, we shall discover the joy of the Lord, the beauty of holiness, the unmatchable glory of the all-Holy God. We want the Lord’s desire to be our desire. We want to be conformed to the likeness of Christ, we want to grow up into the full stature of Christ, we want more and more of Jesus.

The church never stops encouraging us. Even as we stand at the gravesides of our friends and family, we, the living, are reminded of the shortness and uncertainty of human life. The final prayers are offered on our behalf, “let your Holy Spirit lead us in holiness and righteousness all our days.”

Our believing, belonging and behaving will all reflect that holiness of life to which we are called. As summer wraps up we begin a new season of life. (In spite of the civil and the church calendar, America really runs on the school calendar.) So we begin afresh to live that life to which we have been called [Eph 4:1] the vocation to holiness. Trusting in the Lord’s mercy and grace, we desire/thirst/strive “for the holiness without which no one will see the Lord” [Heb 12:14].

+ Dan, Albany VIII
ON SAYING THE CREED

Each Sunday at the Eucharist, when the sermon comes to an end, we stand and recite the Nicene Creed. Not everyone, however, is comfortable with this collective affirmation of faith. I recently read a disarmingly honest statement by someone who said, “I am an active Episcopalian and I don’t say the Nicene Creed. I don’t believe the statements about Jesus. The Church says, ‘say it anyhow, it’s good for you’. No, it’s not… It’s a sort of bullying.”

It is not just those who struggle with traditional doctrine who object to the Creed. Ever since the seventeenth century the Pietist wing of Evangelical Protestantism has protested that the Creed reduces Christian faith to dead orthodoxy and dry intellectualism, a pale counterfeit to a vibrant personal relationship with Jesus Christ.

In recent years, some who might otherwise affirm the content of the Creed, have been concerned that it is not “seeker friendly.” Its ancient theological phraseology is unfamiliar and opaque to unchurched visitors, and its recitation in public worship seems rote and – frankly – boring and irrelevant to modern people.

As one who has recited the Creed with conviction for almost forty years, I have to admit that there is no point in the liturgy when my mind is more likely to wander than during the Creed. Yet if I fail to be attentive to those rich and familiar phrases, I believe that the problem lies more with me than the Creed itself. Worship entails an intentional mindfulness.

As a prayer “before worship” in the prayer book (p. 833) asks, “Deliver us, when we draw near to thee, from coldness of heart and wanderings of mind, that with steadfast thoughts and kindled affections we may worship thee in spirit and in truth.” And yet even if we are not fully mindful of the words we recite, this still does not rob them of their significance nor their efficacy. In an essay on “churchgoing,” John Updike observes that when we regularly recite the creeds, they “are like paths worn smooth in the raw terrain or our hearts.” In other words, the Creed’s very familiarity and constant repetition shapes us on the inside.

The Story of the Creed – “There was when he was not”

The Nicene Creed has its own story. Knowing that narrative brings its compact theological affirmations to life, and enriches our grasp of their meaning. In 313, Emperor Constantine issued the Edict of Milan, which lifted the persecution against the Christianity. The edict was itself a statement of religious toleration, but quickly, toleration shifted to favored status. Constantine saw Christianity as a unifying force for his empire. He thus reacted with alarm a decade later when an unexpected controversy threatened to fragment the Church.

In 318, a priest named Arius began to attract attention with his preaching. His message was a strict monotheism that stressed the transcendence and immutability (or unchangeableness) of God. Such a God could not enter the creation, since to do so would render Him subject to change and corruption. Hence the Son – or Word (“Logos” in Greek) who is made flesh and dwelt among us – was necessarily something less than fully divine.

Arius taught that the Son was a creature. He was not “begotten” of God, but was “made” – derived not from the substance of the Father, but created out of nothing like the rest of creation. To be sure, the Son was the first of God’s creatures, preeminent above even the angels. God created the Word as the initial impulse and instrument of his work of creation. Arius based this on Old Testament references to the role of Wisdom (“The Lord by wisdom founded the
earth; by understanding he established
the heavens,” Prov. 3:19) and the
Word (“By the word of the Lord the
heavens were made,” Ps. 33:6), and on
the beginning of John’s Gospel, “In the
beginning was the Word...all things
were made through him, and apart
from him was nothing made that was
made.”

Arius was not alone in equating
Wisdom and the Word with Jesus
Christ, nor in seeing the Logos as
the instrument of creation and the
intermediary between God and
humanity. The early church fathers
before him, had said much the same.
Some even subordinated the Son to
the Father. What set Arius apart was
his clear statement that the Son was a
creature, and hence not eternal. Arius’
catch phrase was the slogan, “there
was when he was not.”

“God was not always a
father. There was a time when God
was all alone, and was not yet a
father: only later did he become
a father. The Son did not always
exist. Everything created is out of
nothing...so the Logos of God
came into existence out of nothing.
There was a time when
he was not. Before he
was brought into being, he did not exist.”

Arius rejected the doctrine of
“eternal generation” formulated by
the great Christian teacher, Origen of
Alexandria (185-254), who said,

“Human thought cannot
apprehend how the begotten
God becomes the Father of the
only-begotten Son. For it is an
eternal and ceaseless generation,
as radiance is generated from the
light....As an act of will proceeds
from the mind without cutting
apart from the mind or being
separated or divided from it; in
some such way the Father is to be
thought of as ‘begetting the Son.’”

For Origen, the begetting of the
Logos is not an event with a before
and after. It is an eternal relationship
of dependence and derivation of the
Son from the Father. But Arius would
have none of it, for it compromised
the supremacy and transcendence and
ultimate unknowability of the Father.

The Council of Nicaea

The Emperor Constantine feared
that the controversy over Arius
would undermine the unity of the
empire, so he summoned the bishops
of the Church to a council at his
summer palace in Nicaea in 325.
The council condemned Arius, and
issued a “Symbol of Faith” – a creed,
in which a traditional baptismal creed
was expanded to clarify the council’s
rejection of Arius’ teaching.

The Creed stressed that the Son was
fully divine: “God from God, Light
from Light.” It went on to reiterate,
“true God from true God,” to stress
that scriptural language about Jesus
as God is not merely metaphorical,
but that he is properly called “God.”
In a direct response to Arius’ slogan,
“There was when he was not,” the
Creed reaffirmed the Origen’s doctrine
of “Eternal Generation” by asserting
that the Son was “eternally begotten
of the Father.”

The pivotal phrase of the Creed,
“of one Being with the Father,” asserts
that the Son shares fully in the divinity
of the Father without compromising
the oneness of God. In order to
articulate what the council believed
to be the teaching of the scripture, the
Creed employed a Greek term that was
not found in scripture, “homoousios”
(“same being”).

The Nicene Council,
however, did not settle the
issue. In the aftermath of
the council, many were
uncomfortable with the formula “homoousios” because the term was not directly scriptural, and some felt it erased any distinction between the Father and Son (similar to the heresy of “Modalism”). An alternate term intended as a compromise became popular: *homoiousios*, to indicate that the Son was of “similar being” with the Father.

**Why Does it Matter? The Stubborn Witness of Athanasius**

The distinction between these two terms lies in a single Greek letter, iota (ι). Edward Gibbon, author of *The Rise and Fall of the Roman Empire*, observed with scorn that the Church was divided over a single iota – a mere “iota of difference.” His implication was that this was an abstruse and trivial matter. Even granting Gibbon’s underlying hostility to Christianity, it is reasonable to ask whether it really matters whether the Son is of the “same being” or “similar being” with the Father.

Under Constantine’s successor, Constantius (293-306), the Arian party that embraced the *homoiousios* (“similar being”) formula the Church dominated by. One prominent figure refused to go along, Athanasius, the Patriarch of Alexandria. Athanasius had attended the Nicene Council as a deacon and secretary to his predecessor, Bishop Alexander, and was the principle defender of Nicene orthodoxy. He was said be “contra mundum” or “against the world,” for his defiance of the prevailing Arian compromise, and he spent many years of his episcopate in exile or hiding among his monks in the Egyptian desert.

Athanasius’ concern was simple and urgent: can we be saved from our sins – or not? Only if God had truly become human could our fallen humanity be restored to fellowship with God. An intermediary who was less than fully divine would not do. Otherwise, God would still maintain his distance, our sin would remain unatoned for, and our humanity be unchanged. In a famous passage from “On the Incarnation” Athanasius stressed that God became what we are, in order that we might be redeemed and made like him.

“He, indeed, assumed humanity that we might become God. He manifested Himself by means of a body in order that we might perceive the Mind of the unseen Father. He endured shame from men that we might inherit immortality.”

For Athanasius, the Creed’s declaration that the Son is of “one being with Father” addressed the heart of the Gospel and he saw the Arian controversy as a struggle for the soul of the Church. In 381, the Council of Constantinople reaffirmed the Creed and vindicated the position of Athanasius. The reason why we continue to repeat the Creed is a classic application of the famous adage of the Spanish philosopher, George Santayana, “Those who cannot remember the past are condemned to repeat it.”

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here stood a man who could look no way but downwards, with a muckrake in his hand. There stood also one over his head with a celestial crown in his hand, and he proffered him that crown for his muckrake; but the man did neither look up nor regard, but raked to himself the straws, the small sticks, and the dust of the floor. [Pilgrim's Progress]

How do we talk about the future of Anglicanism? Following John Bunyan's imagery in THE PILGRIM'S PROGRESS, are we a people of the muckrake or the crown? Even the most cursory look at the history of Anglicanism in America shows a decline in dominance and influence beginning in the late eighteenth century. The lack of a fully developed hierarchy and institutions for the training of clergy put the Church into a crisis that would last well into the nineteenth century. The problem stems from churches having left their core values, their organizing purposes, in an attempt for relevancy. As a result, says church historian D. Newell Williams, “Many people now see no reason to be Christian. The mainline churches are just plain boring.”

What has this to do with the future of Anglicanism and, the Episcopal Church in particular? Everything. We hear again and again that we need to ‘revitalize’ our dioceses and our parishes. To ‘revitalize’ is to bring new life. Thus, for most, revitalization is to be achieved by an increase in numbers: in churches or church members. This, however, is a mistaken notion. All the market-driven, culture-accommodating programs that have been produced to “grow” or “develop” churches simply will not work if nothing of substance underlies them. True revitalization begins for us as Episcopalians when there is a rediscovery and a new embracing of

is to take the risk of the crown rather than the surety of the muckrake.

Organizations and individuals share the common presupposition that to know where one is going involves knowing whence one came. Two professors at Stanford University's Graduate School of Business, James C. Collins and Jerry I. Porras, did a study some years ago on the successful habits of visionary companies based on this presupposition. They discovered that successful companies operate out of a system of core values, which sets the tone for the doing of business. They reported their findings in the book Built to Last, a study of some fifty different companies, their development and subsequent success. The comments of John Young, former CEO of Hewlett-Packard, are illustrative of their findings:

Our basic principles have endured intact since our founders conceived them. We distinguish between core values and practices; the core values don't change, but the practices might. We’ve also remained clear that profit – as important as it is – is not why Hewlett-Packard Company exists; it exists for more fundamental reasons.

As Porras and Collins also observed, those companies that did not operate out of a base of core values failed to perform well, or just failed.

To forget where one comes from, the core values out of which one operates, places one’s existence in jeopardy. The harsh truth of the matter is that most, if not all, of ‘main line’ American Protestantism is living in a state of collective amnesia. Thomas Reeves in The Empty Church: The Suicide of Liberal Christianity and C. Kirk Hadaway and David A. Roozen in Rerouting the Protestant Mainstream demonstrate that the problem stems from churches having left their core values, their organizing purposes, in an attempt for relevancy.

To take the risk of the crown rather than the surety of the muckrake.
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The ideal and the values upon which our faith is grounded.

Let me talk about this recovery by telling a bit of my own story. I came to the Episcopal Church and Anglicanism as “one untimely born.” My spiritual journey began in a “mixed” home – Roman Catholic and Free Methodist. I grew up loving God, seeking a fuller sense of what I heard when I went to worship with my mother at the Free Methodist Church, and longing for the “beauty of holiness” I experienced at Mass with my Grandmother. Eventually I found my way into the Roman Church, where I entered monastic life as a Benedictine and answered God’s call to priesthood. After eighteen years of monastic life I left and ended up serving in a Congregational Church and found myself again missing the beauty of holiness.

Through the years of my academic work I had read and studied a great deal about the Church of England, its Benedictine roots, and had come to know and admire THE BOOK OF COMMON PRAYER. During my time among the Congregationalists the BCP became my breviary and even guided how I prepared worship for those I served. In the Prayer Book I found the connection to the deep roots of “faith once delivered to the saints,” a reformed Catholicism, if you will, that allowed me to be a part of the great tradition that had formed and influenced Western civilization. When a door opened for me to make my way into the Episcopal Church I walked through it and, despite all the turmoil, have been at peace. Five years ago I was received as a priest of the Diocese of Albany and my gratitude to God, to Bishop Love and all the good folk of this diocese continues.

So, how do we put down the muckrake and put our hands out for the crown? We can do it by aggressively seeking to return to the core values of our Anglican/Episcopal faith, which are found in the Bible and the Prayer Book. In many ways I am calling us to begin a new Oxford, or Tractarian, Movement, which sought the essential recovery of Anglicanism back in the nineteenth century (and was presaged by the work of New York Bishop John Henry Hobart). Over the years the concern for “relevance” has largely managed to make us irrelevant.

If we want to make a difference we need to be what we say we are. If we are Christians, then Christ must be at the center of ALL that we do and His saving Word must make a difference in our lives. Living as God’s people, loving as God’s people, being transformed by the Gospel, just being Catholic Christians – that is what will revitalize the Church.

So, I would urge us to put down our muckrakes and reach up for the crown. Join me in praying for the Church and let’s pray this prayer every day, taking up the crown:

Gracious Father, we pray for thy holy Catholic Church. Fill it with all truth, in all truth with all peace. Where it is corrupt, purify it; where it is in error, direct it; where in anything it is amiss, reform it. Where it is right, strengthen it; where it is in want, provide for it; where it is divided, reunite it; for the sake of Jesus Christ thy Son our Savor. Amen.

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The 150th Anniversary of The Community of St. Mary

On Trinity Sunday, May 31, the Convent of the Community of St. Mary celebrated its 150th Anniversary with Evensong of the Feast of the Visitation of St. Mary the Virgin and Rededication of the Sanctuary of St. Mary’s Chapel and Benediction of the Blessed Sacrament. Officiant of the Evensong was Bishop William Love, Bishop of Albany. The Evensong homilist was The Most Rev. George Carey, 103rd Archbishop of Canterbury, and his distinguished wife, The Lady Eileen Carey, was the Evensong reader. Master of Ceremonies was The Very Rev. Marshall Vang, SSC.

The May issue of The Albany Episcopalian highlighting the Sisters’ celebrated history and details leading to this event can be found on the Diocesan website, www.albanypeiscopaldiocese.org.

Other bishops attending the historic event were Bishop David Ball, Retired Bishop of Albany, Bishop Fanuel Magangani, Bishop of Northern Malawi, and Bishop Todd McGregor, Bishop of Toliara, Madagascar. A dinner reception followed at the nearby Christ the King Welcome Center for all who came.
On most Wednesdays, when walking the streets of Arbor Hill, Albany, a priest can be seen seated at a small table at the busy intersection of Clinton Avenue and Lark Street. An Episcopal priest of merely one year, he is The Rev’d Paul Hunter, Canon for Mission of the Albany Diocese and the Cathedral of All Saints. His purpose? To meet, talk, pray over people and introduce them to Jesus as they pass by.

It should be noted that Arbor Hill is considered to be amongst the poorest and most dangerous neighborhoods of Albany, particularly the intersection of Clinton Avenue and Lark Street where Fr. Hunter’s table rests. The area is well known for violence, drug trafficking… and even worse activities. Joining him this summer at the Prayer Table is an intern, Mrs. Margaret Brack, currently studying at Nashotah House, Wisconsin. A large sign on the table invites the curious to stop, read and begin a dialogue. It simply states, “May I pray for you?”

One Wednesday this summer, it was my privilege to observe Fr. Hunter and Mrs. Brack at the Prayer Table, ministering to the local men, women, children and passersby at the busy intersection. (I must confess that, knowing the high crime and violence in the area, there was a slight tinge of “trepidation” as I walked the six blocks from the Cathedral of All Saints to where these missioners set up their prayer table each week.)

This particular day, Mrs. Brack tended to a woman and two children, who, she learned, were walking the streets because they had no place to live. It was easy to see that she, along with Fr. Hunter, provided much needed counsel and hope. During my stay, others stopped at the Prayer Table, however, not being privy to their reasons for coming to the Prayer Table, I can only suspect they were passersby simply needing someone just to listen to their troubles, find comfort or in need of prayer.

Fr. Hunter considers his time at the Prayer Table in Arbor Hill, as some of the best hours of his week. It was inspired by the prayer table seen at the cathedral, as well as numerous prayer tables throughout the diocese. Fr. Hunter is quick to say, “The table has made a huge difference. It’s amazing to see how open people are to prayer. I have made a number of friendships in Arbor Hill with people who stop by. My favorite story about the Prayer Table isn’t actually about the prayer table. I was walking in Arbor Hill, and I walked past the home of a couple who had stopped by the table - their home was near the corner where I put the table,
and they had invited me in once to get warm during the winter. As I was walking, I had the overwhelming sense that I was supposed to knock on the door, but hesitated. I didn’t know the couple well, and didn’t want to seem like I was being too pushy. I really thought it was the Holy Spirit’s prompting though, so I did it anyway.

Well, the wife answered the door and gave me a big hug. It turned out her husband had just been diagnosed with some serious complications from epilepsy, and she was really in need of prayer. I prayed with her and him - she actually made him get up from a nap so I could pray for him.

They had about four friends over at the time. I ended up praying with them as well, including praying for one lady who was experiencing some demonic oppression, and a man who was struggling with addiction. A couple of months later, I ran into that man on the Street. He spotted me walking and went out of his way to tell me that he had been clean and sober for over a hundred days. It was one of the most rewarding moments of my ministry. I think God let that happen so I could be reminded that our prayers do make a difference, although we often don’t get to see the results.”

Fr. Hunter is not an imposing or intimidating figure. If he’s 160 lbs., that’s a lot. He speaks with a soft, gentle voice. He may not appear able to “take on” aggressive individuals with any measure of success, but to those in Arbor Hill who are beginning to know him, he’s becoming a tower of strength; one who brings hope... and Jesus into their lives.

A few have described Fr. Hunter as a “street priest”. He’s not sure if that title is deserved, but in his words, he is “committed to ministering to people who don’t have a church, perhaps because they have been hurt, or because their struggles make it difficult to function well in a structured church community. Well, my basic plan is just to tell people who do not yet know him about Jesus Christ and his grace.”

Fr. “Paul”, along with volunteers from the Cathedral, have also been running a weekly outreach youth group at St. Francis Mission in West Hill, which is possibly the most successful outreach initiative to date. A small group of kids from the neighborhood between the ages of 8 and 13 attend each week. Mrs. Brack, his summer intern, has been assisting Fr. Hunter to run the youth outreach and do street evangelism. Together, they prepared two of the youths for baptism. If that isn’t enough, Fr. Hunter is also celebrant at the monthly 12 Step Eucharist, an outreach to the recovery community.

A little personal history of this devoted priest reveals that he is the oldest of five siblings - three sisters and a brother. Fr. Hunter was born in Greenwich Village, New York City, and home schooled all the way through high school. The Hunter family moved to various parts of the country, including the Midwest, Texas and southern California. While a Californian, he attended California’s Thomas Aquinas College, graduating with a Bachelor’s of Arts in Liberal Arts in 2009. Afterwards, he attended Trinity School for Ministry in Ambridge, PA, where he earned his MDiv in 2012.

Ordained Deacon in January, 2013, Fr. Hunter became a priest in June of the same year. He began his ordained ministry as Deacon at Christ Church, Cooperstown, later becoming its curate. He is currently on staff at the Cathedral, is an occasional preacher and celebrant, and assists the Dean in some pastoral duties. A voracious reader, he loves writing short stories, cooking, hiking and playing the bagpipes.

Fr. Hunter joins his family of the ordained. His father is The Rev. Kenneth Hunter, Rector of St. James Episcopal Church, in Oneonta. His mother is The Rev. Vicky Hunter, a permanent Deacon serving at the same parish. In 2014, he married Mother Christina (Vance) Hunter. They reside in the city of Albany.

When Fr. Hunter first began reading about Albany, he was excited to learn that by some measures it is actually the most “post-Christian” city in America. He said, “When I hear something like that, it seems to me that God must surely be preparing to do something great with this city. I still believe that.... I felt more and more convinced that this was true, and felt a stronger and stronger call, especially to Arbor Hill.”

When asked about accomplishments in Albany, Fr. Hunter finds immense pride in the outreach internship program, not only for the Cathedral, but the Outreach Team itself. He’s quick to add, “It was really all arranged and sustained by God from the first, in amazing ways.”

Fr. Paul found inspiration to enter this vocation by looking to the example of friends, colleagues and Saints; among them, Saint Francis, Dorothy Day, Fr. Mike McGhee, a church planter in Pittsburgh who mentored him in seminary and helped him...
understand the real meaning of grace; also Mother Hannah Mudge and Fr. Hunter’s wife, Mother Christina Hunter, at Oaks of Righteousness ministry in Troy.

His hope is to see the Cathedral become a place that is known for outreach work that can be a model for other churches. “What I have tried to do, first of all, is just to be as much a part of the community as I know how to be. The Cathedral Outreach Team and I have worked to start a number of programs, and done things ranging from neighborhood cookouts in West Hill, to now running a free Summer Art program for kids. I also just spend as much time as I can hanging out in Arbor Hill, praying and talking with people. Outreach programs are really helpful, but the most important thing is just relationships. Programs are only good insofar as they help us establish those friendships.”

“I would like to see the Cathedral become more and more a part of the neighborhoods to which we minister. As part of that, I want to see us establish an outreach center in Arbor Hill, so we can be a permanent presence in the neighborhood, and not rely on borrowed space.”

Fr. Hunter’s vision for the future is to provide educational opportunities for those who want to learn how to do outreach in their own cities, accomplished through internship programs, for people to get hands on experience with urban evangelism, as well as educational programs for pastors and other urban missionaries. Next year, a summer Urban Missions Symposium is being planned to bring experienced urban missionaries to Albany to share their experiences and insights. Ideally, the internship program will be expanded to include more extended practicums and classes.

When asked about his major strengths, Fr. Hunter says, “I think I’m a decent preacher and teacher, and I love working with people one on one in pastoral care. I am not an administrator or an organizer. Those will never be my primary gifts, but I am trying to grow in that area and learn from others. I’m also a very shy person, who has good and bad points, but it means the evangelistic ministry I feel called to do does not always come naturally to me, and I have to push past my natural reticence, and trust God to help me in that.”

As for what may lie ahead for Fr. Hunter, he doesn’t ever expect to leave behind evangelism or ministry to the poor. He says, “I do have academic aspirations, and I hope that I can pursue doctoral studies in theology at some point in the future. It wouldn’t surprise me if my ministry moved toward church planting, particularly planting a church that tries to minister to the very poor, the homeless or the otherwise marginalized. There are a lot of people who love Jesus, but who struggle with really difficult issues, like mental health or addiction, that means they may never be totally functional.” He goes on to say, “I think most churches find it difficult to bring these people into the life of the congregation. These are the people I really love ministering with, and it would be great to see an Episcopal church in Albany for them - not so that other churches don’t have to deal with them, but so they could have a place of their own, where they could not only worship but take leadership.”

Fr. Paul often reflects on the words from Philippians 4:8, ESV, that reads, “to whatever is true, whatever is honorable, whatever is just, whatever is pure, whatever is lovely, whatever is commendable, if there is anything worthy of praise, think about these things.

Problems and opportunities are not, in any way, exclusive to Albany. Every city, town, rural and suburban community has its own Arbor Hill of sorts. Whether it be crime, poverty, addiction, not knowing Jesus… or, for that matter, no longer looking to Jesus - hopelessness and despair can be found. The question is, “What are we, both cleric and lay, doing in our own communities?” The two individuals in this story are doing something about it. A few others are doing their share. What can be said about the rest of us?

“But they were told they were serving you and not themselves. They preached to you by the power of the Holy Spirit…” 1 Peter: 1:12 CEV

For those interested in contacting Fr. Hunter, he may be reached at revhunter3@gmail.com

- The Editor
On June 5th to 7th, the 147th Annual Convention of the Albany Diocese was held at Camp of the Woods, Speculator. The theme was "Three Persons One God – Three Streams One Church". Nearly 800 attended for either all, or part, of the weekend.


Three plenary sessions and twenty-three workshops were offered; among them, "From the Inner City to Lambeth Palace, a Half-Century of Ordained Ministry", given by Abp. Carey, "The Great Commissions", given by Bishop LeMarquand, "Making the Connections: What Does the Trinity Have to do With 'Three Streams'?", by The Ven Dr. C. Brown, and "All the Realm Shall Have One Use...A Survey of the Development/Use of the BCP", by Fr. Steven Peay, just to name a few.

Keeping with tradition, the official opening of the Convention began with the Bishop's address. Bishop Love touched on a number of subjects that included the following:

Christian concerts at Christ the King Spiritual Life Center: A vision to build an outdoor pavilion will soon come to fruition. It will be set on a hill overlooking the nearby mountains of Vermont and New York, whereby small and large audiences may enjoy concerts given by local, regional and national artists, as well as other evangelical events; Thus far, donations have reached $50,000, with more support anticipated. Interviews with contractors are now taking place for completion by spring, 2016.

A "rustic" chapel at Christ the King: Plans are underway to construct an outside "rustic" chapel, "set in the woods at Christ the King, so that people may worship God in the beauty of His creation." Completion is expected by the end of this summer.

Bible studies in the Diocese: Bible studies continue to grow in parishes throughout the Diocese. Programs such as Scripture Unions "Essential 100", the new "Essential Jesus", "Encounter With God" and Alpha are being offered. Also, a new member's course is given at Christ Church, Ballston Spa. Bishop Love noted, "There is no greater collection of books than God's Holy Word...every parish should have at least one Bible study in their program".

Support Nashotah House: Bishop Love stressed the importance of having "a positive relationship with Nashotah House, not only for training our own clergy, but our lay leaders as well." Bishop Love emphasized, "A healthy lay ministry is vital to the overall health and effective ministry of the church."

continued next page...
Healing Ministry at Christ the King
Spiritual Life Center: This ministry, led by Bishop Herzog and the Healing Prayer Team, continues to minister to thousands of people each year.

St. Stephen’s, Delmar: St. Stephen’s began a pre-school with 14 children in 2003. Since then it has grown to 35 and registration for the fall is expected to be 60. Bishop Love stated, “That while many children attend this school, their parents do not go to that church or any church. One child was prompted to ask his/her parents, ‘Why don’t you come to learn about Jesus?’ That child’s parents are now attending church.” Bishop Love went on to say, “If you want the church to grow, prepare for children. Involve them into the life of the church as much as possible to include the worship service.”

The Canon Missioner: Fr. Paul Hunter, the new Canon Missioner of the Diocese and the Cathedral of All Saints, has expanded his ministry to Albany’s inner city, Arbor Hill, bringing people the Gospel and inviting them to know Christ. (A detailed story of his ministry in Arbor Hill is highlighted in this issue of TAE.)

St. David’s, East Greenbush: A year long trial is underway to move from its current East Greenbush location to the St. Francis Mission (formerly Grace and Holy Innocents), in the West Hill section of Albany. The move brings them closer to where many of its Burmese congregation currently reside. It will house two parish families and reach out to the larger community.

The Oaks of Righteousness: Mother Hannah Mudge and Mother Christina Hunter, leaders of the Oaks of Righteousness, may soon find a new home. Beginning with no office several years ago, two years ago they moved to a converted café in order to better serve the very poor in north central Troy. Today, they are in negotiations with the Roman Catholic Diocese for another facility that will enable them to house a chapel, prayer rooms, class rooms, a play and meeting room, cooking area and possible living space for interns. Bishop Love announced, “If the deal comes through - and we pray it will, Fr. Marty (Wendell) and the generous people of Trinity, Watervliet, have offered to pay for most, if not all, of the cost of renovating the building.” The announcement was met with a thunderous applause from the almost 800 gathered in the auditorium.

General Convention: The bishop spoke on several issues that will be raised at the upcoming General Convention in Salt Lake City, Utah, June 25-July 3rd. Among them, restructure of the Episcopal Church, election of a new Presiding Bishop and human sexuality. The results of actions taken at General Convention and Bishop Love’s letter on sexuality are detailed in this issue of TAE.

Before closing his annual address, Bishop Love spoke of The Daniel Plan, and how it has helped him in his life. Calling it “a lifestyle”, rather than a diet, he recommended the book to all with overweight issues. That said, the regular business of Convention followed. Actions of the 147th Convention are found further in this Convention story.

In addition to the regular business of all Diocesan
Conventions, a number of activities were offered to fit anyone’s need. There were exhibits, workshops, Vacation Bible School, Daughters of the King Prayer Walk, Youth Rally, Stations of the Resurrection walk on the beach and the Saturday evening Healing Service, to name a few. Visiting dignitaries led either a plenary session, workshop, or both.

Saturday’s Eucharist speaker was Archbishop Carey, a tall, slender figure of a man, possessing a powerful voice – and that delightful British accent Americans always find pleasing to the ear. Keeping the gathering focused on every word he was to say, he did not disappoint. Balancing that British tongue-in-cheek humor with a sober assessment of the Christian Church throughout the world, he offered words of hope for the future of the church and [the importance of] faith if the church is to grow.

Quoting Bishop William Frey, Archbishop Carey said, “Genuine hope is listening to the music of the future and faith is dancing to it today……Hope is listening to what God is calling us to do…..and to take bold steps to plot new vision and to be vision bearers.”

On faith, he said, “When people reach out in faith, when they find the power of the Holy Spirit, things begin to happen. Quoting William Carey in the 18th century (no relation), “Expect things from God - Attempt great things from God”. He followed with, “Is there a problem in your church that's holding back your ministry? Then expect and attempt – never allow money to set the agenda for your church life! If you do, you will find your vision closing down.” He added, “The church can grow!”

On Sunday, the final day of the three-day gathering, there was the ever-exciting Youth Service with Bishop Herzog its Celebrant, and the visiting bishops, Concelebrants. Vacation Bible School children brought cheerful song and dance to an appreciative audience, and teens served as lectors, ushers, acolytes and musicians.

The inviting weather drew many to the lakefront beach during the Convention’s pleasant days. Each evening, it was the always-favorite Tee Pee, a gathering place for people to “catch up” with friends and make friends anew. Ice cream, soft drinks and snacks were provided, along with entertainment supplied by several talented groups of musicians and singers comprised of both clergy and laity.

Thus ended this 147th Convention of the Diocese of Albany. The next Diocesan Convention is scheduled to return to Camp of the Woods, Speculator, June 3 – 5, 2016.
ACTIONS OF THE 147th CONVENTION

Appointments:

Committee to Approve the Minutes of Convention
Archdeacon Harvey Huth, Chair  The Very Rev. David Ousley
The Very Rev. James Shevlin  The Rev. Marian Sive

Committee on Convention Arrangements
Carol Drummond, Chair  The Rt. Rev. Daniel Herzog
Archdeacon Harvey Huth  Margaret Haskell
Sue Ellen Ruetsch  The Rev. Marian Sive
The Rev. Nancy Goff  John Iseman

Diocesan Development Fund
Cn Robert Haskell  Clark Curtis, Treasurer
Doris Bedell  John Boyce
Robert Boynton  Jeffrey Brown
Richard Carroll  Joy Felber
The Rev. Art Peters  Charles Szuberla

Committee on Church Architecture and the Arts
The Rev. Cn Charles King, Chair  George Baldwin
Jeffrey Gullock  Jeffrey Hart
The Rev. Nixon McMillan  William Smart
Charles Szuberla  The Rev. Thomas Papazoglakis

Commission on Ministry (New Appointments)
The Rev. Steven Schlossberg  Jennifer Griswold Kuhn
Ken Ogden  Stana Iseman
Polly Montgomery

Finance Committee
Treasurer: Clark Curtis,  Asst. Treasurer, the Rev. William Tatem
Debbie Bisner  David Brenner
Lay Cn. Jerry Carroll  The Rev. Nancy Kin
Nancy Priputen Madrian
Elected Offices:

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<td>Margaret Haskell</td>
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Resolution #1
RESOLVED, that Diocese of Albany Operations Budget 2016, as presented in this Convention Book, be adopted.

Resolution #2
RESOLVED, that the Reduced Standard Assessment Formula, as presented in the Convention Book, be used for calculating Parish Assessments for 2016.

Resolution #3
RESOLVED, that for 2015, the recommended clergy stipend schedule increase by 1.6%.

Resolution #4
RESOLVED, that diocesan canon 9.4 be amended to read as follows:
The Diocesan Development Fund may lend capital funds to the Parishes, Congregations, Corporations and Institutions of this Diocese for new construction, remodeling, major improvements, equipment, furnishings, emergencies and lend funds for other diocesan ministry needs. The Diocesan Development Fund Committee shall consist of the Bishop, the Treasurer and nine members appointed by the Bishop at each Annual Meeting of the Convention. This Committee shall investigate all applications for loans. Loans approved by this Committee shall be confirmed by the Standing Committee. This Committee shall set the rate of interest to be charged on all loans. This Committee shall submit a financial report quarterly to the Standing Committee and shall submit an Annual Report to the Convention at the annual Meeting of the Convention.
seen through the Lens
MORE... “As seen through the Lens”
Welcome the New Deacons!

On Saturday, May 30th, three women and one man were ordained to the Deaconate in the Cathedral of All Saints, Albany. Joining Bishop Love in the ordination event were The Most Rev’d and Right Honorable George Carey, 103rd Archbishop of Canterbury, The Rt. Rev’d Fannuel Magangani, Bishop of Malawi, and Albany’s retired bishops, Bishop Herzog and Bishop Ball.

**Newly ordained were:**

- Karen Gottwald Malcolm – St. Michael’s, Colonie
- Sandra Maria McGowan – St. David’s, East Greenbush
- Denise Maureen Moore – Grace Church, Waterford
- David Robert Radzik – Christ Church, Schenectady


Top row: Bishop Herzog, Archbishop Carey, Bishop Love, Bishop Magangani

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**Clergy In Transition**

**Appointments**

- **Fr. Colin Belton** has been called as Rector to Church of St. Sacrement, Bolton Landing
- **Dcn. John Cairns** has been appointed Deacon Vicar for the Adirondack Mission
- **Mtr. Jean DeVaty** has been called as Rector to St. James, Lake George
- **Fr. Jacob Evans** has been appointed Priest in Charge of St. Matthews, Latham
- **Fr. Desmond Francis** has been called as Rector to Trinity Church, Lansingburgh
- **Dcn. Nancy Goff** has been assigned to assist Dcn. Cairns at the Adirondack Mission
- **Fr. David Haig** has been called as Rector to St. Luke’s, Mechanicville

**Departures**

- **Fr. Mark Michael**, Christ Church, Cooperstown, accepted a call to be the Long Term Interim at St. Timothy’s Episcopal Church in Herndon, Virginia
- **Fr. James Shevlin**, St. Paul’s, Sidney, has been called as Rector to Church Of Our Saviour, Okeechobee, Florida
On June 3rd, Christ the King Spiritual Life Center held a Corpus Christi Festival Procession and Benediction. Celebrant of the Eucharist was Bishop Herzog, joined by Bishop Love, Bishop Magangani and Archbishop Carey, who also delivered the Sermon.

At the conclusion of the Eucharist, a Procession moved outside of Christ the King Chapel to the adjacent Spiritual Life Center’s heliport where an altar with candles was lying and waiting. The view from the heliport, especially on this day when one could clearly see the mountains on the east and mountains in...
CORPUS CHRISTI FESTIVAL

the west, provided a magnificent setting for the solemn event. Leading the procession was Bishop Daniel Herzog, joined by his fellow bishops and nearly 100 cleric and lay attendees.

The Feast of Corpus Christi (Latin for Body of Christ), is often celebrated in Anglican, Lutheran, and Catholic churches that hold similar beliefs. The feast celebrates the tradition and belief in the body and blood of Jesus Christ and his Real Presence in the Eucharist. It emphasizes the joy of the institution of the Eucharist, observed on Holy Thursday in the somber atmosphere of the nearness of Good Friday. The procession of the Blessed Sacrament generally displays a monstrance as shown in these photos.

The Convention considered quite a bit of legislation with far-reaching implications for the life of the Episcopal Church, and did so in a very different way than in years past. At this Convention all of the information needing consideration was distributed through iPads that were assigned to each Bishop and Deputy certified to be seated at the Convention, rather than the large, heavy binders of the past. This system worked well, with a minimum of glitches, and time and paper were saved, not to mention sore muscles from carrying around heavy binders!

The legislation considered at General Convention was described by many as being historic, and it certainly contained many potentially significant changes for The Episcopal Church. Not all of this legislation passed,
but some of the legislation that did pass did result in significant changes. Two such resolutions were Resolutions A054 and A036, the two resolutions dealing with marriage. Resolution A054 authorized three liturgies of marriage for trial use, which begins the process of amending the Book of Common Prayer. Resolution A036 changed Canon I.18 (the Marriage Canon) to re-define marriage from being between a man and a woman to being between two people, thus allowing for the blessing of same-gender unions.

During the debate in the House of Bishops on Resolution A036, Bishop Love spoke against the change to Canon I.18 by citing Mark 10:6-9 where Jesus says, “But from the beginning of creation, ‘God made them male and female.’ ‘For this reason a man shall leave his father and mother and be joined to his wife, and the two shall become one flesh.’ So they are no longer two, but one flesh. Therefore what God has joined together, let no one separate.” Bishop Love stated that nowhere in the Bible does it say that two people of the same gender cannot love one another, nor does it say that two people of the same gender cannot have a life together. The Bishop went on to say that the Bible does say that the covenant of marriage, and sexual relations, are intended by God to be between a man and a woman. Despite this, both Resolution A054 and A036 passed the House of Bishops and the House of Deputies by overwhelming majorities.

These changes to our canons and authorized rites had consequences outside of The Episcopal Church, too. On June 30th, after these two resolutions passed the House of Bishops, Justin Welby, Archbishop of Canterbury, issued a response. In this statement (which can be found at www.archbishopofcanterbury.org/articles.php/5581/response-to-the-us-episcopal-church-resolution-on-marriage), the Archbishop stated that the “decision will cause distress for some and have ramifications for the Anglican Communion as a whole, as well as for its ecumenical and interfaith relationships.” The Archbishop urged “prayer for the life of the Anglican Communion; for a space for the strengthening of the interdependent relationships between provinces, so that in the face of diversity and disagreement, Anglicans may be a force for peace and seek to respond to the Lord Jesus’ prayer that ‘they may be one so that the world may believe’ (John 17: 21).”

While these resolutions make monumental changes to the Episcopal Church’s stated understanding and practice regarding marriage, both resolutions contain “conscience clauses.” Bishops retain their authority to prohibit same-gender blessings in their dioceses if they hold to the traditional, Biblical understanding of marriage. Priests are also permitted to decline to bless such unions in those dioceses where they are permitted. However, Resolution A054 requires that bishops “will make provision for all couples asking to be married in this Church to have access to these liturgies.” What this means in practice is that, should a same-gender couple living and/or worshiping in a diocese that does not permit same-gender marriages want to be married, the bishop of that diocese would be required to work with another neighboring diocese so that couple could be married in an Episcopal Church. In addition, while Resolution A054 states that “no bishop, priest, deacon or lay person should be coerced or penalized in any manner, nor suffer any canonical disabilities, as a result of his or her theological objection to or support for the 78th General Convention’s action contained in this resolution,” it was made clear that should a priest officiate at a same-gender blessing in a diocese where they are not permitted by the Bishop, that priest would still be breaking his or her vow of obedience to the Bishop.

continued next page...
The resolutions regarding marriage were not the only resolutions that had the potential to make substantial changes to the life of the Episcopal Church. The original resolutions submitted by the Task Force for Reimagining the Episcopal Church (TREC) contained some sweeping changes for the structure of the church. Many of these resolutions were substantially re-written by the Legislative Committee on Structure and Governance before being presented to the houses for consideration. Possibly the most significant change to the structure and governance of The Episcopal Church to pass both houses was Resolution A006. This resolution reduced the number of Standing Commissions from fourteen to two. The Presiding Bishop and the President of the House of Deputies are granted authority, however, to create time-limited task forces, where needed, to do what the eliminated commissions have formerly done. The two commissions created in Resolution A006 are the Standing Commission on Structure, Governance, Constitution and Canons and the Standing Commission on Liturgy and Music.

The most sweeping resolution from TREC recommended that General Convention be restructured to operate as a unicameral legislature, instead of the current bi-cameral legislature. That resolution, Resolution A002, was rewritten for the General Convention to “charge the Standing Commission on the Structure of the Church to explore unicameral models of church governance including the polities and the legislative processes.” Resolution A002 also directs that the Standing Commission “will seek input from bodies beyond The Episcopal Church including, but not exclusive to, the Anglican Church of Canada and the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America,” and report its findings to the 79th General Convention.

In this same vein, Resolution D008 amended Article I, Section of the Constitution of the Episcopal Church to allow what may be a “try-out” of a unicameral legislature. While keeping the provision that “There shall be a General Convention of this Church consisting of the House of Bishops and the House of Deputies, which Houses will sit, debate, and vote separately, unless otherwise provided for by this Constitution or the Canons.” Resolution D008 allowed for the two Houses to “to sit, debate, and vote, or any combination thereof, together” after a majority vote by each House to do so. The resolution further states that, “The General Convention may by Canon establish procedures for such sessions.”

Resolution D011 originally called for the complete elimination of Provinces in The Episcopal Church. This resolution was rewritten to direct to call for a task force to be appointed to study “the potential effects of eliminating provincial structures in The Episcopal Church,” including “what structures might replace Provinces to facilitate or create networks to support mission and ministry,” while ensuring geographic diversity, and how these proposed new structures would be formed, how they would function and how they would be funded. The task force will also look at what effect eliminating provinces would have on overall costs.

There were also resolutions dealing with evangelism and mission. Resolution A173 called for an Evangelism Summit that would “identify existing evangelism resources, gaps and challenges... to develop an evangelism road map: to propel the church beyond its walls, to spread the Gospel, proclaim the Kingdom, and to share the love of God in the world.” Resolution D005 called for the creation of “a church-wide network for planting congregations, training and recruiting planters; and establishing new congregations each triennium,” requesting $5,000,000 for this purpose. Resolution D009 requested $700,000 to be put towards the revitalization of existing churches, to train and provide for “coaches” to help churches interested in revitalization, and to provide training in this area for clergy and lay leaders.

Much was done at the 78th General Convention. It remains to be seen what the repercussions of the resolutions regarding marriage will be in the Anglican Communion and the wider church. As we walk this road, let us pray continuously for our individual parishes, for our Diocese, for our Bishop, for The Episcopal Church, the Anglican Communion, and the wider church, that we all may faithful servants of Christ and honor and glorify God in all that we do.

Editor’s note: The Rev. Jill Stellman is Priest-in-Charge at Christ Church, Herkimer, and Communication and Technology Officer of the Diocese of Albany
Dear Brothers and Sisters in Christ,

As many of you are aware, the 78th General Convention of The Episcopal Church recently voted to change the marriage canon (Canon 1.18), by making all references to individuals being married gender-neutral. In addition, Resolution A054, authorizing the use of specially designed liturgies for the blessing of same gender marriages, was also adopted. With the passage of these two resolutions in conjunction with the recent ruling by the U.S. Supreme Court on same gender marriage, the majority voice in The Episcopal Church has opened the door for same gender marriages to occur in those dioceses where the bishop allows them.

I am keenly aware that there are some in the Diocese of Albany who see the above actions as an answer to prayer and believe it is time for this diocese to adopt the views of much of the rest of The Episcopal Church, thus allowing for same gender marriages in local parishes. I know there are some who don’t care one way or the other, but just want the fighting and arguments about “sex” to stop. The vast majority of the people of the diocese, however (as evidenced by the overwhelming support of past actions of Diocesan Convention opposing the blessing of same gender unions), see the above actions to be apostate in nature, an attack on the authority of Holy Scripture and the sacramental nature of holy matrimony, as well as a total disregard for the impact TEC’s actions have on the wider Anglican Communion.

Given the wide disparity of views and the highly emotionally charged nature of the topic of marriage equality for gay and lesbian couples, not everyone will agree with the decisions I make as Bishop of Albany regarding these issues. One of the great difficulties in dealing with issues concerning human sexuality and same gender relationships is that the issues in question focus on the very identity of people we love and care about. I pray that regardless of which side of the issue you find yourself on, you will know that I truly love and respect each of you as brothers and sisters in Christ, and will do everything within my power to remain faithful to our baptismal covenant striving “for justice and peace among all people, and respecting the dignity of every human being” (BCP 305), while at the same time remaining true to God’s Word as best I understand it, and carrying out the responsibilities entrusted to me as a bishop.

With that said, as a bishop ordained in the one, holy, catholic, and apostolic Church who vowed at my ordination to “guard the faith, unity, and discipline of the Church of God”, promised to “be faithful in prayer and in the study of Holy Scripture” and to “boldly proclaim and interpret the Gospel of Christ” (BCP 518), I am deeply troubled by the actions of the majority voice at the 78th General Convention regarding these two resolutions as well as the U.S. Supreme Court’s ruling on marriage.

Despite what some might argue, this is not simply a question of civil rights or marriage equality. It is far more involved than that. The very definition of marriage and the sacramental nature of holy matrimony have been called into question, as well as the authority of Holy Scripture and the unity of the Church, particularly within the Anglican Communion. The spiritual health and well-being of fellow brothers and sisters in Christ, particularly within the gay and lesbian community, is also of major concern. I will try in the limited space of this pastoral letter to address these concerns.

Looking first at the definition and intent of marriage as understood by the Church, the rubrics of the Book of Common Prayer state, “Christian marriage is a solemn and public covenant between a man and a
woman in the presence of God” (BCP 422). The marriage service in the BCP goes on to say, “The bond and covenant of marriage was established by God in creation, and our Lord Jesus Christ adorned this manner of life by His presence and first miracle at a wedding in Cana of Galilee...The union of husband and wife in heart, body, and mind is intended by God for their mutual joy; for the help and comfort given one another in prosperity and adversity; and, when it is God’s will, for the procreation of children and their nurture in the knowledge and love of the Lord. Therefore marriage is not to be entered into unadvisedly or lightly, but reverently, deliberately, and in accordance with the purposes for which it was instituted by God” (BCP 423).

In speaking of God’s intent for marriage, Jesus stated, “But from the beginning of creation, ‘God made them male and female.’ ‘Therefore a man shall leave his father and mother and hold fast to his wife, and the two shall become one flesh.’ What therefore God has joined together, let not man separate” (Mark 10:6-9 - ESV). As the Son of God, God incarnate, it would stand to reason that Jesus would know God’s purpose or intent for marriage. Jesus could have allowed for, or made provision for, a wider interpretation of marriage (to include that between two men or two women), but He didn’t. Homosexuality is not unique to our generation. It existed long before Jesus walked the face of the earth, yet from the very beginning of creation (as referenced above), marriage has been between a man and woman. The Bible and the marriage service in the Book of Common Prayer attest to that.

The fact that some in our modern 21st Century society may have broadened their understanding of marriage to be more inclusive, allowing for same gender marriages, doesn’t mean God, “the Father Almighty, creator of heaven and earth” (BCP, 96) has changed His purpose or intent for marriage as revealed in Holy Scripture - the living Word of God. In John’s Gospel, Jesus clearly states that the ways of God are often not the ways of the world. He said, “I have given them Your Word, and the world has hated them because they are not of the world, just as I am not of the world” (John 17:14). The Lord often calls the Church to share a message that the world (particularly our modern culture) doesn’t want to hear. I believe this is one of those occasions. While we may not always like what God has to say in Holy Scripture, that doesn’t mean we don’t need to hear it, or that we can simply ignore it. Our vision is limited; His is eternal.

The U.S. Supreme Court’s recent 5 to 4 split decision to legalize same gender marriages throughout the United States impacts the civil and legal rights of gay and lesbian couples, giving them the same rights as heterosexual married couples, many of which I would support. However, the decision says nothing about, nor does the U.S. Supreme Court, have any control over the Church’s understanding of the sacramental nature of marriage. Despite the Court’s actions and the recent actions of the 78th General Convention, I do not believe that it was appropriate for The Episcopal Church to take it upon itself to change that which God has ordained and that which the catholic (universal) Church has taught and believed for over 2000 years. Even if one believes that God is now making new allowances for gays and lesbians to be married, before any such action is taken, the whole universal Church
(or at least the vast majority of the Church) needs to come to that same conclusion or understanding, and not simply The Episcopal Church. The decisions we make are not made in isolation. They impact the entire Body of Christ, either directly or indirectly.

While some would argue that The Episcopal Church is being prophetic in its actions, others, to include myself, believe TEC has shown a blatant disregard for our brothers and sisters in Christ in the wider Anglican Communion, particularly those living in predominately Muslim countries. These brothers and sisters in Christ find themselves under growing persecution partly as a result of their association with the western Church and the western sexual culture. The actions of The Episcopal Church are in direct opposition to the teachings and will of the vast majority of the wider Anglican Communion (as evidenced by the Windsor Report and numerous other communiqués), as well as the wider Body of Christ. As a result, it has caused, and continues to cause, great division and harm within the Church.

As mentioned above, as a bishop, I am called along with other bishops to "guard the faith, unity, and discipline of the Church" and to "share in the leadership of the Church throughout the world" (BCP 517). I take this calling and responsibility very seriously as indicated by my recent signing of the Communion Partners Salt Lake City Statement and pledge to uphold its precepts. If the Diocese of Albany was to authorize the blessing of same gender unions and marriages, as some would like, not only would we contribute to the growing division within the Church and undermine the Church's ability to share the Gospel of Jesus Christ throughout the world, but we would also find ourselves separated from the vast majority of the wider Anglican Communion.

Jesus doesn't want the Church to be divided; He prayed that His disciples would be one. On the night He was betrayed, Jesus prayed, "I do not ask for these only, but also for those who will believe in me through their word, that they may all be one, just as You, Father, are in Me, and I in You, that they also be me in Us, so that the world may believe that You sent Me" (John 17:20-21). I believe the recent actions of the 78th General Convention have put a major stumbling block in the way of Church unity and the sharing of the Gospel.

While I am very concerned about Church unity and TEC's relationship with the wider Anglican Communion and body of Christ, I am also deeply concerned about the spiritual health and well-being of our gay and lesbian brothers and sisters in Christ. There has been much debate as to the underlying cause of one's sexual orientation, particularly in regard to same gender attractions. It is often argued that people with same gender attractions were made that way by God and therefore it is in accordance with God's will for homosexual couples to engage in sexual relations, and the Church should bless such unions. That argument almost always seems to be based on experience and feelings. The main problem with allowing one's experience or feelings to be the main source of one's belief is that our experience and feelings can, and often do, deceive us.

There is no doubt more and more people are coming to accept the above argument. To the best of my knowledge, however, there is no genetic evidence to support such a claim. While God has allowed homosexual and bisexual orientations and transgender gender identity to come into the human race as a result of our fallen human nature, that doesn't mean He designed a person that way or intends for one to engage in sexual relations with a person of the same sex, regardless of their desire to do so.

On the contrary, there is much evidence to suggest just the opposite. Before we even look at what God has revealed in Holy Scripture concerning sexual relations, we have only to look at the design of the human anatomy. God designed the male and female bodies to complement one another in a way that two male or two female bodies cannot. Biologically, the human body is not designed for two men or two women to come together naturally in the sexual act as a man and a woman can. That is not to say two people of the same gender are incapable of experiencing some type of sexual pleasure with each other.

Looking from a theological or religious perspective, in both the Old Testament (Leviticus 18:22) and the New Testament (Romans 1:26-27), God has spoken against sexual relations between two men or two women. He has revealed that the appropriate place to share the gift of sexual intimacy is within the bonds of marriage between a man and woman (Genesis 2:24; Exodus 20:14; Matthew 19:4-6; Romans 13:9; Hebrews 13:4). Any sexual relations outside of that, regardless of how special or satisfying they may seem, are not part of God's plan nor are they in accordance with His will, and therefore they should be avoided.

If sexual intimacy is intended by God to be experienced only between a man and a woman within the confines of marriage (as God's design of the human body suggests and Holy Scripture proclaims), I believe that it is not only inappropriate, but unjust for the Church to promote same gender
With that said, I do not believe God calls the Church to attack or condemn people who are homosexual or bisexual in orientation or transgender in gender identity, but rather (as Christians) we are to love them as God loves them and to support and uphold them as best we can without encouraging them to engage in a behavior that is physically and spiritually detrimental to them. While God loves every person He creates, that doesn't mean He approves of or blesses all of our behaviors. He clearly doesn't. Oftentimes we misuse the gift of free will that God has given us and enter into sin. The Lord doesn't call us to remain in our sin, but to confess it and by His grace turn away from it and turn back to Him.

One's sexual orientation in and of itself is not sinful; how one chooses to live it out can be. Regardless of whether or not we have any control over our sexual orientation, we all by God's grace can control how we respond to our sexual desires. I believe it is God's intent for men and women who are not married to abstain from sexual relations. I realize that is not easy and certainly isn't the way of the world.

In trying to discern how best to lead the Diocese of Albany and share in the leadership of the wider Church during these troubled times, particularly in light of the Supreme Court's ruling on same gender marriage and the recent actions of the 78th General Convention opening the door for same gender marriages in those dioceses where the bishop allows for it, I have been praying and continue to pray, seeking God's will and the mind of Christ; I study and meditate on the Holy Scriptures, study Church teaching and doctrine regarding the sacrament of marriage, apply reason in regard to the design of the human anatomy, as well as listen to the voice of the wider Anglican Communion expressed in the Windsor Report and numerous other communiqués, and listen to the voice of the homosexual community. In so doing, I cannot in good conscience, despite listening to the very moving stories and experiences of many gay and lesbian brothers and sisters in Christ, give my approval for the Church's blessing of same gender marriages.

The Diocese of Albany will continue to uphold the Church's traditional understanding of marriage as that “solemn and public covenant between a man and a woman in the presence of God” (BCP 422). The Diocese of Albany's marriage canons, Canon 16.1 “Celebration or Blessing of Marriages by Clergy” and Canon 16.2 “Marriages on Church Property” remain in effect. In addition, as stated earlier, I will honor and uphold the precepts of the Communion Partners Salt Lake City Statement.

Those gay and lesbian couples, who, in spite of all that has been said above, still want to and believe they should be married, can take advantage of the provisions allowed for in General Convention Resolution A054. I will work with the bishops of the surrounding dioceses to assist them in doing so. I have, in fact, already begun conversations with the bishops of Vermont and Central New York. Whatever provision is ultimately decided upon will not violate Diocese of Albany Canons 16.1 and 16.2.

While I am aware that not everyone will agree with the above decisions, I have tried as best I can in the course of this letter to explain in detail why I have made the decisions that I have. My inability to approve and give my blessing to same gender marriages is not due to a lack of love and respect for our gay and lesbian brothers and sisters in Christ, but just the opposite. Because I do love and care about them, I cannot authorize that which I believe ultimately does more harm than good. It is my hope and prayer that everyone who seeks to worship God and grow in their faith and relationship with Jesus Christ, regardless of their age, race, gender, sexual orientation, or gender identity, will be respected and made to feel welcome in every parish family within the Diocese of Albany. We have all fallen short of the life God calls us to, and yet, as witnessed by Jesus' offering of Himself on the cross for the sins of the world, God loves us and calls us to love one another. May all of our dealings with one another be guided by a spirit of love.

+ William H. Love
## UPCOMING DIOCESAN EVENTS

### October
- **22-4** Clergy Wives Conference
- **5** Standing Committee Meeting
- **10** Commission on Ministry Meeting
- **12** **Columbus Day** (Offices closed)
- **15-18** Women’s Cursillo (CTK)
- **23-25** Deacons Retreat
- **30** Ordination Dcn Aidan Smith to Priesthood – St. Luke’s, Catskill

### November
- **1** *All Saints Day*
  - Investiture of Bishop Curry as 27th Presiding Bishop – Natl Cathedral, Washington, DC
- **2** Standing Committee Meeting
- **3** *Election Day*
  - Deans Meeting
- **3-6** Priest Retreat (CTK)
- **11** Veterans Day (Federal Holiday)
- **14** Commission on Ministry Meeting
  - Acolyte Festival – Cathedral of All Saints
- **18** Trustees Meeting
- **26** *Thanksgiving Day*
  - (Offices closed Thursday & Friday)

### December
- **1** Deans Meeting (if required)
- **5** Diocesan Council
- **6** Institution & Installation New Rector – St. James, Lake George
- **7** Standing Committee Meeting
- **12** Commission on Ministry Meeting
- **25** *Christmas Day* (Offices closed)

### 2016

#### January
- **4** Standing Committee Meeting
- **9** Commission on Ministry Meeting
- **11** Great Chapter Meeting, Cathedral of All Saints
- **18** *Martin Luther King Federal Holiday*
- **23** Parish Leadership Conference – Holy Family School, Malone

#### February
- **1** Standing Committee Meeting
- **6** Parish Leadership Conference – Christ Church, Cooperstown
- **10** *Ash Wednesday*
- **12-21** SonShine and Winter Break Camps at Beaver Cross
- **13** Commission on Ministry Meeting
- **15** *Washington’s Birthday – Federal Holiday*
  - (Diocesan Offices Closed)
- **20** Diocesan Council Meeting
- **27** Parish Leadership Conference – Christ the King Spiritual Life Center

#### March
- **7** Standing Committee Meeting
  - Lenten Healing Service – So. Adirondack Deanery, Messiah, Glens Falls
- **9-16** House of Bishops – Spring Meeting, Camp Allen, Texas
- **10-13** Mens Cursillo Weekend – Christ the King Spiritual Life Center
- **20** *Palm Sunday – Christ Church, Schenectady*
- **21** Chrism Mass – Cathedral of All Saints
- **22** Chrism Mass – St. James’ Church, Oneonta
- **23** Chrism Mass – St. Thomas, Tupper Lake
- **25** *Good Friday*
- **27** *Easter*
On a trip to the Dominican Republic in 2006, Harold and Jan Bedoukian, from St. John’s, Essex, visited the Episcopal clinics and schools in San Pedro de Macorís and the barrio of De Las Flores. The Bedoukians had heard about the wonderful work being done there by the medical team from St. Eustace in Lake Placid. It became obvious on this trip that not only did the area need medical help but the schools also were in dire need. There were no libraries and the general educational supplies and equipment were either in short supply or non existent.

On the return to the “north country”, Jan met with a group of Episcopal woman and asked if anyone was interested in helping Episcopal schools in the Dominican Republic. The response was an overwhelming “yes” and Libros Para Los Niños was born. It was decided that our mission was to enhance the educational experience of Dominican children and to provide the tools to make this education possible. It is our belief that an education is the most important gift that can be given a child and it is the one gift that can never be taken away.

Over the past eight years we have worked very closely with the Ven. P. Ramon Garcia, our mentor and spiritual guide. Father “Tony”, as he is affectionately known throughout the DR, has directed us to the neediest of schools. Libros has worked with Santiago Apóstol in Angelina, La Transfiguración in Baní, San Antonio de Paduá in Carretón, La Anunciación and Albergue Infantil Cristo Salvador in Santiago, Buen Pastor (Barrio De La Flores) in San Pedro de Marocís, Santa Cruz in Santa Fe, San Bernabé in Pizarette, Cristo Rey in Puerto Plata, Jesús Peregrino and La Rendición in Barahona, and Monte de la Transfiguración in Jarabacoa.

Since our founding, Libros has taken over one and a half tons of Spanish language books to the Dominican Republic, purchased printers and photocopy equipment, students desks and chairs, chalk boards, audiovisual equipment, computers, and fully equipped science labs in Jarabacoa, Baní, and Carretón. In addition to purchasing school equipment, Libros has provided over 75 scholarships for children to attend school and awarded 5 scholarships for graduates of our schools to attend university. Several recipients of Libros scholarships are studying to be teachers with the aim of returning to their communities to teach.

Albergue Infantil Cristo Salvador in Santiago is a special focus for Libros, as this school feeds and educates children who come from homes rife with drug and alcohol abuse. Some of the students come from physically abusive family situations. Our work in this school is important not only for an academic education but for a moral one as well. Christian family values must be taught to children who may otherwise be lost to an undesirable cycle of life. Libros subsidizes the breakfast and lunch programs for the school children, who would otherwise have little or nothing to eat. You cannot educate a hungry child.

Libros has funded field trips for the students of Santiago Apóstol to Santo Domingo to visit the National Aquarium, Zoo, Children’s Museum, and Botanical Gardens. The
students from Angelina come from a very economically depressed background. It is important for these children to see the world beyond the boundaries of their sugarcane village and to see the possibilities that exist if they continue their education. Since our work in this school began, the enrollment has increased from 22 to 68 students.

In 2013, Libros began working with a Jesús Peregrino and La Rendención in Barahona. Jesús Peregrino is an albergue, working with children from impoverished backgrounds similar to those of Cristo Salvador in Santiago. La Rendención doubles as a school for the hearing impaired as well as a regular school.

The 2014 Libros team travelled from the southwest coast to the north coast, over 520 miles, and worked in seven schools in six different towns or communities. Each team member must travel at her own expense and is responsible for bringing a minimum of 50 pounds of education supplies or equipment with her. Libros is constantly raising funds for their projects by craft and bake sales, recycling, sale of Dominican coffee, personal donations, and grants from the Diocese of Albany and support from St. John’s Church in Essex.

Libros Para Los Niños is continually working to enhance the educational experience of the Dominican children. As one of our schools is adopted by another mission team or has other means of support, Libros will move on to another needy school. It generally takes two years for Libros to bring a school up to our standards.

For more information on Libros Para Los Niños, contact:
Janice Summers Bedoukian, 764 Highlands Road, Keeseville, NY 12944
518-834-9412 • 954-292-4483 (cell)
araratrug@comcast.net
“Follow Me” Jesus says. It’s an invitation. Our Lord Jesus Christ invites us to faith and discipleship...an invitation for all to live in and through Him, as He lives in and through us. Through our faith, Jesus helps us to learn and grow, to witness and proclaim, to be His agents in the world. Ultimately, “Follow Me” is an invitation to eternal life and this eternal life begins today.

Ifollow has been the theme for Beaver Cross Camp 2015. We lived out this theme in community as John Iseman led us on a dynamic journey through the lives of Daniel and David to find Jesus and His invitation to follow. A special thanks to camp Chaplains Mother Christina Hunter, Mother Hannah Mudge, Father Scott Garno, Father Darius Mojallali, Father Dan Jones, Father Brad Jones, and Father David Haig for their help teaching and ministering to our young people.

A special thanks also to all the summer staff, counselors, program team, and volunteers whose love for the campers helped make Summer 2015 a resounding success. To those individuals, families, churches and deaneries who provided camper scholarships, know that your generosity and love for Beaver Cross made a real difference in the lives of hundreds of kids this summer.

Father Matt Baker
Beaver Cross Camps Director

Thanks to the many Friends of the King for the new Zip Tower, Playground, Wagon, and much more this summer!

Under the exceptional leadership of Shannon Ames, the Daycamp more than doubled in size this summer!

The new Outdoor Chapel, provided through the generosity of the Tessman Family!

www.beavercrosscamps.com // 518.692.9550
Christ the King 575 burton road, greenwich ny 12834
My Brothers and Sisters in Christ,

The school year is upon us, and with it comes a transition from Summer Camp to our regional Bible study and retreat ministry. Beaver Cross Camps had an incredibly blessed summer, as many campers grew personally, matured spiritually, and made new friends. God did a great work in our midst this summer, and we are looking forward to His continued blessing on our ministry this fall.

This year we are blessed to have three returning youth ministry interns: Goh Zan, Emily Luger, and Heather Valyou. All three are veteran youth ministers with considerable youth ministry experience. They will be an incredible asset in ministering to the youth and in supporting our parish-based youth workers.

The Youth Ministry Internship Program is entering its fifth year, and we are beginning to see it bear considerable fruit. For example, most of the Beaver Cross summer staff was comprised of young adults who have attended our regional Bible studies. Additionally, two of our former Bible study locations, Delmar and Schenectady, now have parish based youth leaders and vibrant youth groups! This sort of growth and development at the local church level is exactly what we are aiming for! We long to see local churches develop and sustain youth groups that are committed to drawing youth closer to Christ and playing their part in fulfilling the Great Commission. We pray that God will continue to bless our Diocese, and that even more churches will be able to develop thriving youth groups.

We are so excited about the work our Lord is doing in the youth of our Diocese, and we are committed to continuing the work of proclaiming the gospel, discipling kids, and supporting parishes with even more vigor and dedication. Practically this means that we will continue our Bible studies and retreats, but that we will also be focusing a great deal on identifying and training youth leaders throughout the Diocese. This increased emphasis on training and development will also affect the Youth Ministry interns who will be receiving even more formal training to better equip them as youth ministers. If you are interested in learning more about what it means to be a youth leader or want to know what kind of training and resources are available please call or email. We simply cannot reach the youth of this region without your help, please partner with us as we seek to bring the youth in our Diocese to a deeper knowledge and love of Jesus!

Thank you for being a part of Beaver Cross Ministries!

John Iseman
Youth Ministry Director

FALL 2015 RETREATS

BC: Fall Edition/Elementary Retreat
October 9-12
Grades 7-12 & 3-6
$95/camper

Men of Valor/Women of Identity
November 20-22
Grades 9-12
$95/camper

REGISTRATION FORMS ONLINE OR CALL 518-692-9550

GET PLUGGED-IN!

Online at
www.beavercrossministries.org

Email at
jiseman@ctkcenter.org

Phone at
518-692-9550

In person!
575 Burton Road
Greenwich NY 12834

On social media
Facebook
Instagram
Youtube

Through Materials
Plug-In Packet available online or at your church!

BIBLE STUDIES
Locations: Mechanicville, Ballston Spa, Glens Falls, Amsterdam
Times and Dates: TBA
Regional Events: in the Diocesan deaneries; stay tuned for more details!

www.beavercrossministries.org
The Diocese of Albany is One Church fulfilling the Great Commandment and Great Commission, moving from membership to discipleship; equipping, emboldening and sending disciples to make disciples.

- Diocesan Vision

The Albany Episcopalian is printed four times a year. Publication is scheduled the months of March, May, September and December. Submissions for consideration must be received prior to the first Monday of the month before publication. News items of diocesan interest are welcome, and should be sent to the Business Office at 580 Burton Road, Greenwich, NY 12834, in care of Editor or transmitted via e-mail to: TAEeditor@albanydiocese.org.

Diocesan Website
For the most up-to-date information about events in the diocese, parish and clergy directories, mission news, parish resources, and more, visit the diocesan website at www.albanyepiscopaldiocese.org. You can also visit us on Facebook at www.facebook.com/albanydiocese.

BISHOP LOVE’S VISITATION SCHEDULE

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