Happy 90th Birthday, Bishop Ball!

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Diocesan Updates
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Dear Brothers and Sisters in Christ,

This passage above from John’s Gospel has been on my heart and mind for quite some time. It is the passage that inspired the theme for this year’s Diocesan Convention: “Abide in Christ, Bear Fruit, Glorify God!” In meditating on John 15, the Lord has been challenging me to examine the various branches of my life and their connectedness to Christ – the True Vine.

When I was a child, my grandparents bought a farm in East Texas. Near their house was an old wooden fence covered over by a huge meandering grapevine. The first summer I went to visit them, I went out to pick some grapes off the vine and plop them in my mouth. Talk about a shock! It was almost like biting into a lemon. Despite what looked to be a very healthy grapevine full of branches with lush green leaves growing the length of the fence, there weren’t many grapes to be found, and the ones that were there were small and incredibly sour.

I have since learned that my grandfather’s grapevine was in need of some serious pruning. It was growing wild and out of control. All the nutrients needed to produce large, plump, sweet bunches of grapes were being used up by all the excess branches and leaves that looked nice, but weren’t producing anything.

If we are not careful, our lives can easily end up growing out of control like a grapevine that hasn’t been pruned. We can get so involved in all sorts of things, activities and mindsets that might look good and be temporarily pleasing from a worldly standpoint, but ultimately doesn’t bear much, if any, fruit of lasting and eternal value. If left unchecked, our natural human desires and fears can easily lead us down a “fruitless” self-centered path that can cause great harm – physically, mentally, emotionally, and spiritually, separating us from God and one another. That is never a good place to be. As Jesus points out in John 15, a branch separated from “the Vine” (Jesus) will wither and die, and be cast into the fire.

The thought of being pruned is never a pleasant thought, but the alternative is even worse. Unlike getting a haircut where the barber can take out the scissors and start cutting away and we don’t feel a thing, when the Lord takes out His pruning shears, and starts chopping, it can sometimes be quite unpleasant if not downright painful. Often times He cuts away things we have become very accustomed to, or things we really enjoy, or perhaps things we don’t really like, but we are afraid to let go of for fear of the unknown.

One of the branches in my life that the Lord constantly has to prune is my sense of perfectionism. I would like to be able to say that my desire to do things “perfectly” is always based on my love for God and my desire to please Him and glorify Him. Unfortunately, far too often my desire to be “perfect” is motivated more by my fear of failure and not...
wanting to look stupid. When rooted in fear and pride, rather than Christ’s love, my need to do everything just right and not make any mistakes is exhausting, joyless and often paralyzing, rendering me unable to bear much fruit for the glory of God and the building up of His Kingdom.

Each time I have become entangled in my perfectionistic tendencies, God the Father (the Vinedresser) has brought out the pruning shears and started cutting away my unhealthy behaviors and thought patterns -- the branches of fear, pride, ego and self-centeredness.

When we are in the midst of being pruned, it can be frightening, painful and very humbling. It is easy to misunderstand what is going on and fall into the “woe is me mode” – “Why are You punishing me Lord? Why have You abandoned me? Why are you letting me suffer like this, don’t You care? Why… (fill in the blank)?”

The reality is, God does care far more than we realize. Because He loves us and wants us to be fruitful, sharing in building up the Kingdom of God, He prunes us when our level of fruit bearing is low and disciplines us when our branch has become barren and fruitless. In the Letter to the Hebrews we are told, “My son, do not regard lightly the discipline of the Lord, nor be weary when reproved by Him. For the Lord disciplines the ones He loves…” (Hebrews 12:5-6).

In looking back at those times of being pruned and occasionally disciplined, despite what I might have thought at the time, I can see that the Lord has never abandoned me, and while He has allowed me to suffer from time to time in various ways, He has always made good come from it, helping me to be stronger, wiser, more patient and understanding, more sympathetic, less judgmental, more loving, more faithful and trusting in God, and ultimately better able to be used by the Lord to help others going through similar situations. When I abide in Christ and His life-giving love, rather than fear and the things of this world that can suck the life and joy right out of me, I am far more fruitful – bearing fruit that will last and glorify God.

Jesus said, “By this my Father is glorified that you bear much fruit and so prove to be my disciples.” (John 15:8) All Christian Disciples (lay and ordained) are called to abide in Jesus Christ and bear “much fruit” to the glory of God. We are able to do so, not in our own strength or abilities, but rather through our connection to “the Vine,” Jesus Christ. Jesus said, “Whoever abides in me and I in him, he it is that bears much fruit, for apart from me you can do nothing.” (John 15:5)

True “discipleship” requires “abiding” in Christ, for it is in abiding that we are fed spiritually and empowered to trust and follow Jesus regardless of what life might throw at us. In his Letter to the Galatians, Paul speaks of the Fruit of the Spirit that God gives to those who believe in His Son. Paul said, “But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, forbearance, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness and self-control.” (Galatians 5:22-23)

Similarly, Peter, in his Second Letter, writes: “For this very reason, make every effort to supplement your faith with virtue, and virtue with knowledge, and knowledge
with self-control, and self-control with steadfastness, and steadfastness with godliness, and godliness with brotherly affection, and brotherly affection with love. For if these qualities are yours and are increasing, they keep you from being ineffective or unfruitful in the knowledge of our Lord Jesus Christ.” (2 Peter 1:5-8)

Knowing Jesus Christ -- believing in and following Him as Lord and Savior is what the life of a true disciple is really all about. Jesus warns us not to fall into the trap of spending all our time working for and being satisfied with the passing things of this world because they won’t last.

Along these lines, I can’t help but think of the countless hours spent by millions of people each day on social media sharing things of little consequence, or the long hours spent working in order to buy the “newest and greatest whatever” only to be soon replaced by the next “newest and greatest whatever.” Jesus said, “Do not work for food that spoils, but for food that endures to eternal life, which the Son of Man will give you. For on Him God the Father has placed his seal of approval...The work of God is this: to believe in the one he has sent.” (John 6:27, 29)

As we think about our level of “fruitfulness” as Jesus’ disciples, what standards are we using to measure it by – the standards of the world, or God’s standards? Are we satisfied with living a safe and comfortable life with an attractive Christian veneer, producing a little fruit, or are we willing to be pruned in order to produce “much fruit” for the glory of God.

In his book, Secrets of The Vine, Bruce Wilkinson writes, “Left to itself, a grape plant will always favor new growth over more grapes. The result? From a distance luxurious growth, an impressive achievement. Up close, an underwhelming harvest... For the Christian, rampant growth represents all those preoccupations and priorities in our lives that, while not wrong, are keeping us from more significant ministry for God. Without pruning, growing Christians will only be able to live up to a fraction of their potential. The principle of pruning invites a revealing question about your spiritual life: Are you praying for God’s superabundant blessings and pleading that He will make you more like His Son? If your answer is yes, then you are asking for the shears. Pruning is how God answers your prayers that your life will please Him more and have a greater impact for eternity.” (Pp.59-60)

If, as Jesus states, “The work of God is this: to believe in the one He has sent” (John 6:29), how are we doing, not only in our own personal walk with the Lord, but in our call as “Disciples Making Disciples?” Are there things in our life that are preventing us from being as fruitful as we might be – things that need to be pruned away – even good things? As mentioned earlier, the idea of being pruned is never a pleasant thought, but It may very well be the thing we are most in need of, if we are to be more fruitful in sharing the Gospel of Jesus Christ and helping others who don’t yet believe in Christ, to come to know Him as Lord and Savior.

As Disciples making Disciples, Jesus is calling us to bear fruit, and not just a little fruit for far too many lives are at stake, but rather, He is calling us to bear much fruit. “For by this my Father is glorified, that you bear much fruit and so prove to be my disciples.” (John 15:8)

I pray the Lord will give us the grace we need to accept His pruning, in order that we may bear much fruit as we go forth boldly in the Name of Jesus Christ and serve as a channel of His love and mercy and healing grace. God Bless You!

In Christ’s Love,

+ Bill
The first Christian sermon took place in Jerusalem on the day of Pentecost, when the Apostle Peter, freshly empowered by the Spirit, delivered a gripping proclamation of the Gospel. It was not a call to accept Jesus as personal savior. Nor was it a declaration that we are justified by faith, and not by our own works. It was not a summons to make the world a better place by loving our neighbors as ourselves. Peter did not announce God's justice or Jesus' solidarity with the poor and the oppressed. These are all the sorts of things we hear in sermons today, and they are all part of the Gospel message. But the first Christian sermon was a witness to the resurrection:

“This Jesus delivered up according to the definite plan and foreknowledge of God, you crucified and killed by the hands of lawless men. God raised him up, loosing the pangs of death, because it was not possible for him to be held by it... this Jesus God raised up, and of that we all are witnesses” (Acts 2:23-24, 32).

“Witness” is a curious word in the Bible. The Greek verb is “martureo” (μαρτυρέω), from which our word “martyr” is derived. It originally meant bearing legal witness in court. In the New Testament it is a declaration of fact – mostly to report good news. Jesus said, “You shall be my witnesses (μάρτυρες) in Jerusalem and in all Judea and Samaria and to the ends of the earth” (Acts 1:8).

When we hear word “martyr” we think of someone who has died for a cause. This meaning is already implicit in Jesus’ teaching about bearing witness under duress: “You will be dragged before governors and kings for my sake, to bear witness (μαρτυρίον) before them and the Gentiles. When they deliver you over, do not be anxious how you are to speak or what you are to say, for what you are to say will be given to you in that hour” (Matthew 10:18-19).

The understanding of witness or “martyrdom” as the giving of one’s life becomes dominant in the early Christian persecutions of the second and third centuries. As the Theological Dictionary of the New Testament puts it, “full witness is now witness under threat. Witness, then, becomes a special term that is reserved for the one who seals the seriousness of witness by death.”

The Recent Witness of the Copts

Last year, the Archbishop of Canterbury, Justin Welby, elaborated on this understanding of witness in relation to the Coptic Christians who were murdered by ISIS militants in Libya.

“To witness is to be a martyr. I am told by the Coptic Bishop in England that the Coptic Christians murdered in Libya last [year] died proclaiming that Jesus Christ is Lord. They are martyrs, a word that means both one that dies for their
faith and one that witnesses to faith…They are witnesses, unwilling, unjustly, wickedly, and they are martyrs in both senses of the word.

One of most haunting things I have ever seen is the ISIS video of this execution of 21 Egyptian Coptic Christians, entitled, “A Message signed with blood to the Nations of the Cross.” The victims are lined up on their knees along the edge of a Libyan beach. Their masked executioners stand behind them, as the leader in the center gives a long rant against the enemies of Islamic State. The Coptic Christians display no fear on their faces, and when the end comes, their lips are clearly moving in prayer. Experts have determined that they were speaking the name of Jesus as they were killed.

Later the Coptic Church in Egypt released the names of the victims, but there were only 20 names. It turns out that the 21st victim, Mathew Ayairga, was not Egyptian. He was from Chad and he was not a Christian. But he was so affected by the witness of his fellow prisoners’ faith, that when his captors asked him if he rejected Jesus, he reportedly said, “Their God is my God.”

Archbishop Welby makes an explicit connection between the witness of martyrdom, and the specific witness to the resurrection.

“These martyrs too are caught up in the resurrection: their cruel deaths, the brutality of their persecution, their persecution is overcome by Christ himself at their side because they share his suffering, at their side because he rose from the dead.”

Persecution and the Rise of Resurrection Faith

It is a fascinating fact that historically, faith in the resurrection of the dead grew out of the experience of persecution. The earliest Israelites knew nothing about resurrection. For Abraham and Moses, the afterlife offered only the shadowy netherworld of Sheol – derived from the Hebrew verb š’h, meaning “to be extinguished.” Sheol was neither Heaven, nor Hell, but a sort of “eternal fade-out.” Any hope of immortality was realized in the continuation of the family line in one’s descendants.

Faith in resurrection develops gradually out of Israel’s conviction that God is faithful and will vindicate his people. Psalm 16:10, attributed to King David (and quoted by Peter in his sermon at Pentecost), is an audacious affirmation of the faithfulness of God that looks beyond the pessimism of Sheol and points allusively to the idea of resurrection: “you will not abandon my soul to Sheol, or let your holy one see corruption.”

But the first explicit reference to resurrection comes from Isaiah in the 8th century, “Your dead shall live; their bodies shall rise. You who dwell in the dust, awake and sing for joy” (Isaiah 26:19). These and a few other scattered scripture passages contain the seeds of a faith in resurrection that does not come into full flower until the Maccabean persecution in the 2nd century BC.

Vindication of the Maccabean Martyrs

Between 333 and 332 B.C., Alexander of Macedonia conquered the world – at least as far as India. As the 1st Book of Maccabees puts it, “He advanced to the ends of the earth, and plundered many nations.” The entire world, it seemed, spoke Greek and embraced Greek culture. After Alexander’s death, when the empire was split among his leading generals, Seleucus and his descendants ruled over Syria and the surrounding regions – and hence, over the Jews.

The Jewish feast of Hanukkah celebrates the cleansing of the Jerusalem Temple in 168 B.C. after the successful rebellion of Judas Maccabeus against the Syrian King, Antiochus Epiphanes. Antiochus provoked this rebellion when he tried to force the Jews to renounce Jewish law and worship the pagan Gods of the Greeks – like the rest of the Hellenistic world at the time.

There is a scene in the 2nd Book of the Maccabees in which the King inflicts hideous tortures on eight Jewish brothers as their mother looks on. One brother, as he is about to die, says, “you dismiss us from this present life, but the King of the universe will raise us up to an everlasting renewal of life, because we have died for his laws.”
Another brother extended his hands to be chopped off and said, “I got these from Heaven, and because of his laws I disdain them, and from him I hope to get them back again.” The text goes to say that the King and others who saw that witness, “were astonished at the young man’s spirit, for he regarded his sufferings as nothing.”

Another brother says, “One cannot but choose to die at the hands of mortals and to cherish the hope God gives of being raised again by him.” And finally, as the youngest brother refuses the offer of great riches if he will renounce his faith, his mother says, “Do not fear this butcher, but prove worthy of your brothers. Accept death, so that in God’s mercy I may get you back again along with your brothers.”

Faith in the resurrection is a faith that was born in extreme duress. It is a courageous faith – rooted in the conviction the Creator is faithful, and will raise up his people in a new act of creation.

**Resurrection Faith**

The rise of the Islamic State in Syria and Iraq has alerted us to the fact that the persecution of Christians is as real today as ever. Yet, it is doubtful that any of us will bear witness to the resurrection with our lives. The worst that we have to face, perhaps, is the occasional caustic comment in the staff lounge at work, or the incomprehension of friends and colleagues that we still actually go to church. But daily life isn’t easy for anyone, and whatever troubles we face, each is a direct challenge of our faith in a sovereign God, who loves us and is actively involved in our lives. Resurrection faith is not for the timid. It is a bold conviction that God will come through no matter what trouble we face. Illness, loss, injustice, guilt, and ultimately the inevitable reality of our own death – these things are not the last word!

As the Apostle Paul said, “the sufferings of this present time are not worth comparing with the glory that is to be revealed... as we wait eagerly for adoption as sons, the redemption of our bodies... For I am sure that neither death nor life, nor angels nor rulers, nor things present nor things to come, nor powers, nor height nor depth, nor anything else in all creation, will be able to separate us from the love of God in Christ Jesus our Lord” (Romans 8:18, 23, 38-39).

When we live this out in our own lives, we bear witness to the Resurrection every day.

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Abide in Christ – Bear Fruit – Glorify God

The theme for the 148th Convention of the Diocese of Albany is rich. It continues the theme of our life in the Trinity, and reminds us of our call and destiny. To abide, bear, and glorify all draw us to the essence of mature Christian faith: union with God.

Saint Ambrose wrote to the Church in Milan that Jesus’ words in John 15 on the vine and the branches constitute a “living parable.” What we see in the vine is what we should be seeing in our lives in relationship – with God and with others. Vines without branches don’t bear fruit and are essentially useless, contrary to what it was meant to be. Our lives lived apart from God or from others are like the vine without branches, leaves, and fruit – barren.

We abide – to use the language of Julian of Norwich “are oned” – through the use of “the means of grace.” Spending intentional time in the Sacred Scripture, moving from reading, to meditation, to prayer and then to contemplation, the work of lectio Divina, grounds us in our relationship. Entering into the worship of Christ’s Body, the Church nourishes us further in the Word and feeds us with the Sacrament, empowering us to serve.

The union with God in Christ through the Holy Spirit is, then, the source by which we grow. Our growth should then bear fruit, as Paul speaks in Galatians 5:22-23 of the “fruit of the Spirit”: But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness, self-control; against such there is no law. There is no law against these things precisely because they are the natural occurrence of the life lived in union with Christ.

To my mind that which is true of the individual believer holds true for the Church, and at every level. As the convention of our beloved diocese gathers, there is an opportunity to take stock of where we are all along the range of relationship reflected in the Baptismal Covenant. As individuals, parishes, and diocese, are we truly abiding in the blessed Trinity? The answer should be made abundantly clear in whether or not the fruits are evident. The words of our Lord in Matthew 17: 16-17 could not be clearer: You will know them by their fruits. Are grapes gathered from thorns, or figs from thistles? So, every sound tree bears good fruit, but the bad tree bears evil fruit. So, where do we stand, what sort of fruit are we bearing, and how are we glorifying God?
We live in a time that is in many ways like that of the early Church. The role of religion in the public square—once a hallmark of American life—has become suspect, and sometimes heartily opposed. Popular culture and morality appears hostile to the values we espouse as followers of Christ in the Anglican tradition. The rise of militant atheism and organizations like the Freedom From Religion Foundation should make what we’re up against very evident. That said, it is not a time to shrink back, nor is it a time for us to pine for the “good old days” (whatever that means—most often, it means the ’50s). Rather, we must deepen our union—our abiding—with Christ and with one another, so that we can witness to the wonder of God’s love that heals, makes whole, and draws us into oneness with the very life of the Trinity.

Richard Hooker, the great theologian of the Elizabethan Church, gives a wondrous picture of what this abiding, this union is:

"Thus therefore wee see how the father is in the Sonne and the Sonne in the father, how they both are in all thinges and all thinges in them, what communion Christ hath with his Church, how his Church and everie member thereof is in him by originall derivation, and he personallie in them by way of mysticall association wrought through the guift of the holie Ghost, which they that are his receive from him, and together with the same what benefit soever the vitall force of his bodie and blood may yeeld, yea by steppes and degrees they receave the complete measure of all such divine grace, as doth sanctifie and save throughout, till the daie of theire finall exaltation to a state of fellowship in glorie,”

[Hooker, Lawes, V.56.13: 2.244.11–25]

To abide in God means we abide with each other, because we are part of Christ’s very Body, sharing God’s life in the Holy Spirit. This is mind-boggling stuff, but it should make our hearts soar—we are called to be one with the True Vine, with the very SOURCE of life itself. If this is real—and it is—then how can we NOT live and love as Christ bids us?

A broken world, a broken Church, and a broken Communion calls us to abide, to bear fruit, and to glorify God. My prayer is that the days of Convention will renew, reanimate, and refocus ALL of us in this reality to which we are called. On a personal note, I regret that my work schedule prevents my attendance this year. Know that you will be in my prayers during the convention….and you are daily throughout the year!

Yours in the Risen Lord,

The Very Reverend
Steven A. Peay, PhD

The Very Reverend Steven A. Peay is Dean-President/Professor of Homiletics and Church History Nashotah House Theological Seminary and a regular contributor to The Albany Episcopalian
The Eucharist has been the central act of worship for Christians since the days of the apostles and most Episcopal churches place the celebration of the Eucharist in the center of worship every Sunday. Therefore, it is important for us to know the meanings of it, so that we can participate in it with understanding, and receive from it all that Jesus intended to give us.

The First Meaning Is Remembrance.

At his Last Supper with his disciples, Jesus says gives them bread and wine and says, “Do this in remembrance of me.” We are supposed to remember Jesus, but not just anything about him, such as his teachings or the many people he healed. We are supposed to remember his death. At his Last Supper, he breaks the bread and says it refers to his body. He pours the wine and says it refers to his blood. At the Eucharist there is a cross, a means of execution in the ancient Roman world, over the altar to remind us that it is his death that we are focusing on.

We can get even more specific about what we should remember. At the Last Supper Jesus says, “I have earnestly desired to eat this Passover with you before I suffer” [Luke 22:15]. Jesus understood the Last Supper in terms of the Passover. Before the first Passover, Moses tells the people of Israel that every firstborn animal and person in Egypt is going to die. But the firstborn of the Israelites will escape if they take a lamb and sacrifice it and put the blood from the lamb on the lintel and the two door posts. Then, God said, when he comes that evening he will pass over the Israelites. So, Jesus told the apostles at the Passover meal he had with them on Thursday night, “this is my blood which was shed for you.” The next day, Jesus died on the cross, and blood ran from his wounds. The apostle John had once pointed to Jesus and said, “Behold the Lamb of God” [John 1:29]. At communion time we remember that God the Father saw the blood of his son Jesus, and that all of us who stand under the cross are saved from death. All mankind deserves death. We have all done wrong; we have all offended the holy laws of God, but, if we stand under the cross, God sees the blood of Jesus and passes over us. We are saved from death. So, when you
come up for communion, remember Jesus’ death on the cross. Thank him for dying so you can live.

The Second Meaning Is Covenant.
At the Last Supper, Jesus gives the disciples a cup of wine and says, “This cup is the New Covenant in my blood” [I Corinthians 11:25]. To understand what Jesus means by this, look at the personal covenant between David and Jonathan, the son of Saul. Jonathan loved David and the two of them made a covenant with each other [I Samuel 18:1-4]. They exchanged clothing. They probably ate a meal together and they may have sacrificed an animal and made a mark from the blood on each other. When they did so, they were saying to each other, “My life for you and your life for me. If anyone attacks you, I will defend you. If you become poor, my money is yours.” So when Jesus gives the disciples a cup of wine and says, “This is the blood of the covenant”. He meant, “I am making a personal covenant with you; I love you and I will give you all that I have, but from you I want all that you have. You and I will be best friends; me for you and you for me; and if that’s the covenant you want to agree to, drink from this cup.” What we do in the Eucharist could be called a “covenant renewal ceremony”. We come forward for communion and take the places of the disciples at the table and we say to Jesus, “I make a covenant with you. I give my life to you and I accept your life for me. And as a sign of my commitment, I drink this cup with you.”

The Third Meaning Is Sacrament.
Sacraments, the Prayerbook says, are “outward and visible signs of inward and spiritual grace” [p. 857]. Grace is God’s “favor” or power at work in people. In First Corinthians St. Paul discusses a problem the Christians are having: should they eat the meat that had been sacrificed in front of a pagan idol and then sold from the meat market at the back of a pagan temple? St. Paul says, “no”. Explaining why they should not, he says, “this cup of blessing which we bless, is it not a participation in the blood of Christ? The bread which we break, is it not a participation in the body of Christ?” [I Corinthians 10:16]. What he means is, if you eat meat that has been sacrificed to idols you “participate” with the idol. There is some power that resides in meat that is sacrificed to idols similar to the power that you receive when you get the cup of blessing. He could only make this argument if the early Christians experienced the power of Christ when they ate and drank at the communion meal. So when you take communion you receive Jesus’ power. You “participate” in Christ. His life comes in to you. The Word “participation” here is “koinonia”, usually translated “fellowship”. When we receive communion we have fellowship with Christ, a close relationship, just like the relationship Christians have with one another as they speak with one another and pray for one another. You should know that the bread and the wine have power: power to heal and power to change your life. So when you receive communion you should say to Jesus, “I receive from you your life-giving power to make me more like you.” “Let my blood become your blood and my body become your body.”

Therefore, in communion there are three things we do. We remember how Christ died on the cross and shed his blood so that we are protected from death. Secondly, we make a covenant with Christ, committing ourselves to him and accepting his commitment to us; and thirdly, we ask Christ as we receive the bread and the wine to come in to us and to make us holy, like himself.

Fr. Haskell

Fr. Haskell is Canon to the Ordinary of the Diocese of Albany
One of the Diocese of Albany’s most beloved bishops has been The Rt. Reverend David Standish Ball, Retired, the 7th Bishop of Albany. On June 11th, 2016, Bishop Ball will reach a milestone - his 90th birthday - and of those 90 years, 63 years were as priest and bishop.

Here is his brief story…

Looking Back 90 Years: The 90th Birthday of the Right Reverend David Standish Ball

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On June 11th, 1926, David Standish Ball was born. The second son of Percival and Hazelton Ball, he had three brothers, an older brother Robert and two younger brothers, George and Peter. There were no daughters in this family.

Bishop Ball’s education began in the Menands Elementary School, and then moved on to the Milne School (He pronounced it “Mill-in” and still calls it “Mill-in” to this day.) He was an outstanding catcher and hitter for Milne and voted All-Albany in baseball and Most Athletic in his class. While attending Milne in his teenage years, he was Capt. of the Basketball team, President of the Boys Athletic Council, Capt. Of the Traffic Squad and President of Phi Sigma Society.

Because of his fair skin and very blond hair, Bishop Ball was given the nickname, “Dutch”, a nickname he still carries to this day. In later years, as in his teen years, “Dutch” excelled in athletics, taking up golf, fishing, and even tried his hand at horseback riding. When asked about his proficiency in handling equines, he humbly admits to a lacking in this noble endeavor.

Graduation from Milne came in 1943 and college was on the horizon. However, World War II was raging in Europe and the Pacific, and like so many young men of his generation, he was called to serve his country in the United States Navy. Getting into the Navy was no easy task because David was color blind, and at that time, people who were color blind had difficulty getting into the military. Determined to do his part to defend his country, he memorized the entire eye chart prior to his examination. It might be said, “He passed the physical with flying colors!” Now a sailor, David was assigned to the Atlantic fleet on the Navy destroyer, the U.S.S. Cone.

When World War II ended in 1945, “Dutch” Ball, now a veteran, could take his life in a new direction. In the fall of 1946, he entered Colgate University and it was here at Colgate that David Ball received the “call” to serve a new master and be a priest in the Episcopal Church.

After graduation from Colgate in 1950, he entered General Theological Seminary. Three years later, on June 14th, 1953, he was ordained Deacon by Bishop Barry in the Cathedral of All Saints. On December 21, 1953, Deacon Ball was ordained a Priest. His first assignment was curate of Bethesda Church in Saratoga Springs, serving there for 3 years. In 1956, he accepted an opportunity to serve at the Cathedral of All Saints, starting as Canon Sacrist. Two years later, he became Canon Precentor.

It was the custom at that time that a few promising priests from the United States would have the opportunity to attend the prestigious St. Augustine’s College in Canterbury, England. David Ball, one of those promising young priests was invited to attend and went enthusiastically on to Canterbury. However, he wasn’t to stay in England very long, because in 1960, a transatlantic cable from a very ill Bishop Berry shortened his stay. Bishop Barry asked him to come home to be the new Dean of the Cathedral. He would be Dean of the Cathedral for the next 23 years.

A highlight of Dean Ball’s tenure at the Cathedral was to officiate at his parents’ renewal of their marriage vows on their 50th wedding anniversary in 1970. How proud his parents would have been had they lived to see their son eventually become the 7th Bishop of Albany.

While at the Cathedral, Dean Ball began to see that his city was changing. The numbers of poor seemed to grow exponentially, and with that, a rising number of homeless roamed Albany’s streets. Inspired by a plaque that hung on the wall in his office which read, “IT CAN BE DONE”, it was a constant reminder that with faith, the “impossible could be done”. Dean Ball elected to take on the overwhelming task of addressing the need of housing for the poor. He joined the Board of the Albany Interracial Council and became its President in 1968. He then enlisted the Cathedral of All Saints to join forces with the Morningstar Baptist Church to begin the largest project ever undertaken by two denominations in the city of Albany. Elected President of the Dudley Park Housing Development Company, Dean Ball helped raise more than 5 million dollars to build an apartment complex to house 263 families in the heart of Arbor Hill. The project was built and completed in little more than one
Glancing back at the “IT CAN BE DONE” plaque, it could now be said, “It was done”.

By now, it was 1984. Consecrated Bishop Coadjutor in February, he was installed the 7th Bishop of Albany in October of the same year. This new bishop soon discovered an urgent need to raise funds to simply operate the Diocese, so he established the Step Out in Faith campaign. Several million dollars were raised to pay for many long overdue Diocesan projects.

While the Bishop of Albany, he made it a high priority to faithfully commit to spending one week each year in each Deanery of the Diocese – a total of 7 weeks. Bishop Ball regarded these weeks in the Deaneries as “periods of great joy”; a welcome opportunity to spend meaningful time with his clergy and laity; an opportunity to share the concerns, hopes and aspirations of the parishes, Diocese and the wider church.

Bishop Ball’s reputation for helping people has been well known for decades, including his support of hospitals, nursing homes, schools, St. Margaret’s Center for Children, the poor and the homeless. A frequent sight on Albany streets was to see a homeless or poor person stop him and ask for money. Without hesitation, he always gave something because they knew he was a “soft touch”.

A man of seemingly never ending energy, it was not all work and no play. He did find time to relax. A voracious reader, he has had a passion for biographies, old fashioned New Orleans jazz and baseball - often finding it difficult to pass up seeing a good ball game. He was a long-time avid New York Giants fan (at least until they deserted New York and moved to San Francisco in 1957!)

In 1998, after 14 years as Bishop of Albany, Bishop Ball reached the mandatory retirement age of 72, in accordance with Canon Law of the Episcopal Church. Although it was time to leave as Diocesan, his role as priest and bishop has not ended. Shortly after his “official” retirement, he became Bishop in Residence at the Cathedral of All Saints. In that role, he continues to remain active in performing priestly and bishopric duties in the cathedral and beyond.

When TAE Editor asked Bishop Ball about the cathedral, he responded “It is the Mother Church of the Diocese... it’s a symbol of our connection with each other and to the bishop. In that sense, every member of the Diocese belongs to the Cathedral ...it’s everybody’s church. [It] is a symbol of the unity we have in the Diocese with Christ.”

As we celebrate the 90th birthday of Bishop Ball, The Albany Episcopalian, along with the bishops, clerics and laity of the Diocese, wish to take this opportunity to express their sincere thanks and gratitude to Bishop Ball for his faithful service to Our Lord, his leadership in the church and having this opportunity to write a brief story of a special friend and “pastor”.

Bishop David “Dutch” Standish Ball, we wish you a very happy and blessed 90th birthday!

The Albany Episcopalian
You are invited to join friends and fellow brothers and sisters in Christ from around the Diocese for this year’s Diocesan Convention and Family Reunion. Witness the beautiful Spirit-filled worship, excellent preaching, outstanding plenary speakers and workshops designed around this year’s theme of “Abide in Christ – Bear Fruit – Glorify God”. There is something for every member of the family…young and old. Everyone is welcome!

We are blessed to have several fascinating and engaging visitors to this year’s Convention; The Rt. Rev. David and Rita Parsons, Bishop of the Arctic, The Rev. Dr. Edward and Deborah Gross, The Rev. K. Brewster and Pam Hastings, and the returning The Rt. Rev. Harold and Liz Miller, Bishop of Down and Dromore. Here are their bios.

It is not too late to register online. Go to: www.albanyepiscopaldiocese.org/forms/Convention/2016ConventionRegistrationForm.php
The Rev. K. Brewster and Pam Hastings

We welcome The Reverend K. Brewster Hastings, Rector of Saint Anne’s Church, Abington, PA, and his wife, Pam, to this year’s Diocesan Convention. Fr. Hastings has served at Saint Anne’s for the past 22 years. Close to his heart are the healing ministry, making disciples, leadership development and ecumenical collaboration that impacts the local community with the love of Jesus. Over the years, he has led parish quiet days, diocesan workshops on the Alpha Course and the healing ministry, as well as short-term missions with youth and adults. For several months, the following words of Jesus are teaching him about a living, daily obedience to God: “the Son can do nothing of his own accord but only what he sees the Father doing (John 5:19).” His wife, Pam, coordinates God’s Abundance ministry at Saint Anne’s which weekly feeds and counsels several local families in need. Fr. Brewster and Pam love to relax by gardening, walking in the woods and visiting with family and friends. They are excited about coming to the Diocesan Convention to share what the Lord is teaching them about making disciples of Jesus.

The Rt. Rev. Harold and Liz Miller, Bishop of Down and Dromore

We welcome back two old friends of the Diocese of Albany, The Rt. Rev’d Harold Miller, Bishop of the Diocese of Down and Dromore, in Northern Ireland, and his wife, Liz. Bishop Harold was born and raised in Belfast, and during the early years of the Troubles in Northern Ireland, attended Trinity College in Dublin. This time in Dublin gave him the ability to see the political situation from differing angles. During his vacations from school, he traveled to many places, including the United States and what was then Communist Czechoslovakia. During his ordination training, he studied under the famous evangelist, Michael Green. After ordination, and six years as Director of Extension Studies and Chaplain at St. John’s College in Nottingham, Bishop Harold became Chaplain at Queen’s University from 1984-1989. During his chaplaincy, he worked to influence generations of students for Christ and to find ways for reconciliation. He was also a parish rector in County Cork for eight years, during which time he was made canon of St Fin Barre’s Cathedral in Cork, and of Cloyne Cathedral, and later of St Patrick’s, the National Cathedral, in Dublin. He has been Bishop of Down and Dromore since 1997. Bishop Harold is the author of numerous publications and is involved in many projects within and beyond the Church of Ireland, including Summer Madness, an event the youth of our diocese have participated in in the past. Bishop Harold is a fascinating and engaging speaker.

The Rev. Dr. Edward and Deborah Gross

Born 1954 in upstate NY, he is the 3rd of 5 sons of Dr. Ralph Gross (Ruth), who became dental missionaries to Kenya, East Africa in 1972. He and his wife, Deborah, are parents of 4 children and grandparents of 4. He received his BA in Biblical Literature in 1975 from Shelton College, Cape Canaveral, FL, his MDiv in 1978 from Faith Theological Seminary, Elkins Park, PA, and Dr. of Missiology in 1988 from Trinity Evangelical Divinity School, Deerfield, IL. Dr. Gross pastored in Knoxville and led church planting teams in organizing new congregations in Philadelphia, Gwynedd Valley, PA and the Pretoria area of South Africa. He also led the development of the NCA (Northwest Christian Alliance) of evangelical churches in northwest Philadelphia. Joining CityNet Ministries in 2009, he now serves as its Coordinator of Discipleship Renewal. Dr. Gross has made many mission trips to Africa (including Liberia, Chad, Kenya, South Africa, Zambia and most recently Ghana) ranging from 2 weeks to 3 years teaching a range of missiology courses at Biblical Seminary (Hatfield, PA 1991-94). In South Africa they helped to plant a multi-ethnic church near Pretoria and start the King’s Hope Development Foundation and Badiramogo Adult Center. Dr. Gross presently serves bi-annually as a Lecturer at Back to the Bible Training College (Barberton, South Africa). Author of numerous books, he is currently researching and writing on New Testament Discipleship and developing Renewals of Biblical Discipleship (RBD) seminars to help pastors and churches shift from Western-styled models of evangelism and personal growth to Christ’s model for evangelism and personal growth—New Testament Discipleship.
Convention 2016 Nomination Eligibility Information

(Nominations received as of April 14, 2016)

The Great Cathedral Chapter
1 priest and 1 lay office to be filled, each for three-year terms.
The following members’ terms expire: ("E" indicates eligibility for re-election)
The Rev. Karl Griswold-Kuhn (E)
Paula Sutcliffe (E)

Convention Representative to Diocesan Council
1 clergy office to be filled for a two-year term.
The following member’s term expires: ("E" indicates eligibility for re-election)
The Rev. Nancy Kin (E)

Trustees of the Diocese
2 offices (priest, deacon, or lay) to be filled, each for four-year terms.
1 office (priest, deacon, or lay to be filled for a two-year unexpired term.
The following members’ terms expire: ("E" indicates eligibility for re-election)
The Rev. David Haig (E)
Zay Curtis III (E)
Elizabeth Collum (E)

General Convention Deputy
4 priest and 4 lay offices to be filled for three-year terms
The following members’ terms expire: ("E" indicates eligibility for re-election)
The Ven. David Collum (E) Jennifer Griswold-Kuhn (E)
The Rev. Paul Hartt (E) Sue Ellen Ruetsch (E)
The Rev. Cn. Robert Haskell (E) Clifford Thurber
The Rev. Jill Stellman

The Disciplinary Board
2 clerical and 1 lay office to be filled as members, each for three-year terms.
The following members’ terms expire: ("E" indicates eligibility for re-election)
The Rev. Adam D.J. Egan (E)
Sue Ellen Ruetsch (E)
The Rev. N. Bradley Jones (E)

The Standing Committee
2 clerical (priest or deacon) and 2 lay offices to be filled, each for three-year terms.
The following members’ terms expire: ("E" indicates eligibility for re-election)
The Very Rev. Derek Roy
Jennifer Dean
The Rev. Christina Hunter (E)
Sue Ellen Ruetsch (E)
Nominees for Elective Office

Original documents on file with the Secretary of Convention

The Rev. Kathy Alonge-Coons
Nominated for Standing Committee
Nominated by The Very Rev. John N. McMillan
Seconded by Paula Sutcliff, Calvary Burnt Hills
Reverend Katherine G. Alonge-Coons (Mother Kathy Coons) is a bi-vocational priest, Grace Church, Waterford, NY. Employed as Rensselaer County’s Commissioner of Mental Health, she is active in advocacy and leadership in state level committees for health care transformation. She is married to Earl Coons 34 years; they have two adult daughters. Ordained a priest in January 2006; MDiv 2006 - St Bernard’s School of Theology and Ministry; MSW 1984 - SUNYA School of Social Welfare; and BA Sociology - Siena College 1980. Spiritual Advisor Albany Episcopal Cursillo; active in mission ministry; and effective in mobilizing laity for ministry.

Zay Curtis III
Nominated for Trustee
Nominated by Robin Baxter, St. Eustace Lake Placid
Seconded by The Very Rev. David Ousley
Zay Curtis graduated from Lafayette College with a degree in Economics and Finance. In 1968 he founded an investment advisory firm, Curtis and Bissonette, Inc. He is a Registered Securities Principal and his firm is a Registered Investment Advisor. He holds the CFP, ChFC, and CLU professional designations. He has been Warden, Vestry member, and Treasurer of St. Eustace in Lake Placid. Zay has served Lake Placid as Deputy Mayor, and Fire and Police Commissioner. He has been Commander of American Legion Post 326, and a member of the Rotary Club. He is married with three children, and four grandchildren.

Jennifer Dean
Nominated for General Convention Deputy
Nominated by The Rev. David Collum
Seconded by The Ven. Harvey Huth
Jennifer is a lifelong Diocese of Albany Episcopalian. She is currently Senior Warden of St. Stephen’s, Delmar, also serving as Chair of Hospitality, Vestry liaison to the St. Stephen’s Pre-K Academy, LEV, LEM, and Bible study leader. On the Diocesan level, Jennifer is currently finishing her term on the Standing Committee, having served as the secretary. As an alternate “called into action”, she attended General Convention in 2015 in Salt Lake City. Jennifer was honored to be able to represent the Diocese of Albany at the convention, and would consider it a great privilege to be elected as a delegate.

The Rev. Scott Garno
Nominated for General Convention Deputy
Nominated by The Rev. Michael Neufeld
Seconded by The Very Rev. Derek Roy
I am currently rector of St. Matthew’s, Unadilla, and St. Paul’s, Franklin, and the Spiritual Care Coordinator for Chenango County Hospice. I am just completing my first year as a member of the Standing Committee. I have represented the diocese at General Convention four times. I am a Diocesan Spiritual Director for Cursillo and served a term on the Ecclesiastical Trial Court. I am married to Sarah (13 years) and we have four children: Josiah (with the Lord), Samuel (10), Maria (7), and Tobias (almost 2).

Scotty R. Gladstone
Nominated for Disciplinary Board
Nominated by The Rev. Michael Neufeld
Seconded by The Rev. Scott Garno
A cradle Episcopalian, I serve St. John’s in Delhi as Lay Eucharistic Minister, Sunday school teacher, Bible study leader, co-led a Crown Financial Ministries group, and served seven years as Senior Warden. In the Diocese I have been active in men’s ministry, Diocesan Convention, Albany Cursillo #66 and Cursillo Team Member for Albany #68, serve on the Disciplinary Board, and just completed terms on the Commission on Ministry and Standing Committee. I am retired from 31 years of service with the County of Delaware and currently attend Nashotah House Theological Seminary in the Master of Arts in Ministry program.
The Rev. David Haig
Nominated for Trustee
Nominated by The Very Rev. Nixon McMillan
Seconded by The Very Rev. Neal Longe
Fr. David Haig is the Rector of St. Luke’s on the Hill in Mechanicville. As a trained actor and director, a professional singer, and for the past 27 years a business owner, a licensed builder, a husband and father and a priest; he has seen it all! He and his wife Cathy have three “children,” Ryan, 33, in Glens Falls; Jesse, 29, working in the family contracting business, and Shelly, 20, attending Liberty University. As part of Fr. Dave’s ministry at St. Luke’s, he has engaged with the Recovery Community with many becoming wonderful members of the parish community.

Sue Ellen Ruetsch
Nominated for Standing Committee
Nominated by The Rev. John Scott
Seconded by The Rev. Marian Sive
My home parish I Calvary Burnt Hills, where I have served on Alpha team, Stewardship Committee, Vestry, as Sunday School teacher an Director of Christian Education and Formation. In the Diocese I have been involved in Cursillo, Healing a Woman’s Soul, the Welcome Home initiative and the Dash Project. I have represented our Diocese at the General Convention three times. I have served on the Standing Committee as a lay member and have been Secretary and President. I look forward to retiring from the NYS Office of Mental Health to pursue new ministry opportunities.

The Rev. Jill Stellman
Nominated for General Convention Deputy
Nominated by The Rev. David Haig
Seconded by The Rev. Scott Evans
Jill is currently serving as Priest-in-Charge at Christ Church in Herkimer and is also the Communications and Technology Officer for the Diocese. Prior to accepting her current call, she was an Assisting Priest at the Cathedral of All Saints. She has been a member of the Diocese since 2004 and served on the vestry and was the Financial Secretary of St. John’s, Richfield Springs before becoming a priest. In her former career, Jill was a Software Consultant and Software Engineer.

The Rev. Jill Stellman
Nominated for Disciplinary Board
Nominated by The Very Rev. Derek Roy
Seconded by The Very Rev. Nixon McMillan
Jill is currently serving as Priest-in-Charge at Christ Church in Herkimer and is also the Communications and Technology Officer for the Diocese. Prior to accepting her current call, she was an Assisting Priest at the Cathedral of All Saints. She has been a member of the Diocese since 2004 and served on the vestry and was the Financial Secretary of St. John’s, Richfield Springs before becoming a priest. In her former career, Jill was a Software Consultant and Software Engineer.

CLERGY IN TRANSITION

Appointments
Mtr. Teri Monica has been called as the Rector of Trinity Church, Plattsburgh.

Retirements
Mtr. Gerry Clemons will retire from St. John’s, Cohoes in May where she served as Rector since 2009.

Deaths
The Reverend Donald C. Latham, Licensed Priest of the Diocese, died on Saturday, March 5, 2016. He was 82. Fr. Latham served seven years as Priest-in-Charge at All Saints, Round Lake, until 2013. Before his retirement in 1994, Fr. Latham served as Rector of The Church of the Ascension in Rockville Center, NY for 22 years.
I love the movie *Sister Act.* Whoopi Goldberg, a crime witness under protection by impersonating a nun, made us get up and dance as she took pop music tunes and put Christian words to them. In the closing scene, even the Pope was rocking to the beat. I was tickled when Whoopi told Mother Superior that church was boring and they needed some soulful music to get butts in the seats of their empty church. (Let’s face it; all our churches have some extra room! And we could all use a little passion.)

We now live in a multi-media culture. From day one, our children receive a barrage of stimuli via TV, games, videos, I pads, IPhones and more. In order to get their attention, we need sparkle, flash, noise, and dancing to wake up the younger generation. I know. I teach high school students. If I am not animated and loud, my students’ neurons don’t energize. I have to put a little jazz into my lessons or else nothing registers.

I write this to make the following point: If my faith is the most important thing in my life, if Father, Son and Holy Spirit are my DNA, why shouldn’t I be excited, energized, joyous, dancing and animated? Talk to me about the NY Yankees, my being starts spreading the news: New York, New York! Talk to me about my God: Father, Son and Holy Spirit and it makes me want to SHOUT...kick my heals up and SHOUT! It makes me want to DANCE.

Now, enter into my “passion faith” equation, the concept of “thirst,” and hopefully you will understand how I am connecting the dots. I long for God. He is my life’s quest. Nothing fills the emptiness, the void, but GOD. In 1670, the French mathematician, Blaise Pascal, stated there’s a hole in your heart that can only be filled by God (i.e., “a God-sized hole”). In today’s world, many try to fill their hole with the gods of money, power, beauty, fame, and THINGS. But only one thing can fill a heart. It is God.

PASSION + THIRST = BIBLE

My flame became a fire and soon it spread to women in my church and then to my community. It is becoming a wild fire. Like all math teachers, my quest has become an equation:

PASSION + THIRST = BIBLE

Once my passion and thirst became the Bible, my daughter-in-law, Lauren, sealed the deal by...
introducing me to Beth Moore Bible Studies. Up to that point, I had no clue who the heck Beth Moore was. Now, I am certain some folks will poo-poo the idea of Beth Moore as a Bible scholar and leader. After all, Beth didn’t attend seminary and is not ordained (or even Episcopalian!). But before you douse my flames, please hear me out.

St Mary’s Church, Lake Luzerne, is currently running its 7th Beth Moore Bible Study. Our progression has been as follows: Jesus the One and Only (Book of Luke), Esther, Daniel, Breaking Free (Book of Isaiah), Patriarchs (Genesis), Loving Well (First John) and now Stepping Up (Book of Psalms). We have thrown open the doors of our church and invited women from our community to join us for Bible Study and prayer. We advertise in the local paper and run a 7-11 week later-afternoon local program. We have been greatly blessed.

Our Beth Moore Bible Studies are a time of fellowship, prayer and inspiration led simply by a lady with incredible energy, passion and sparkle for our Lord Jesus Christ. To date, almost 50 ladies have attended one or more studies from eight different churches. On any given session, 10-15 ladies gather for prayer, support and Bible focus and it keeps growing exponentially!

So, why Beth Moore? Beth is funny, open, passionate, entertaining, knowledgeable, mesmerizing, vulnerable, human and engaging. If you are looking for a mechanism to get you literally pouring all over the Bible, consider Beth Moore. When you do one of her studies, you will reference new and old testament scripture. She provides the historical and cultural depth you need to understand the text. The material is at a level that even I get. With Beth, I do not get lost in the theoretical and intellectual level. I understand things and see material from a different perspective or depth I never knew.

When I study with other sisters, it encourages me not to quit. I am held accountable. I grow! I never, EVER want to stop thirsting or growing for our Lord Jesus Christ. I want to live out my Christian faith, not only by doing, but by having a relationship with God the Father, Son and Holy Spirit by reading the word and listening.

I want the fire! I need the passion! I want to shout to the Lord!

Because of Beth Moore, I was inspired to step out of my comfort zone and lead a Clergy Wives Retreat a couple of years ago. (If Beth can do it, can’t I…with God’s help?) Because of Beth Moore, I have been able to help facilitate Bible Studies. (You see, it is not about Beth and it certainly is not about me…it is about Thee, Lord Jesus!) Because of Beth Moore, the SLC Healing Center hosted a women’s retreat: Loving Well, which was attended by 62 women from 5 denominations. (Via Beth, many ladies are encouraged to read the Bible, pray together and grow their faith, as they live out the Great Commission.)

To say that Satan isn’t happy right now with these Bible studies and community prayer is an understatement. During the Beth Moore retreat at the SLC, we came under attack and yet we pressed on. Those that attended the retreat have many stories to share, but the bottom line is that we’ve been blessed! After all, we know that God wins the war despite the attacks we encounter. We must fight the fight and persevere. We must never give up or give in by reading the Bible and praying in our community.

Sharing and encouraging Beth Moore Bible Studies is the next
logical step for me. Last year, I hosted a workshop at Convention to help introduce others to Beth’s programs. Once the Lord blesses you, you need to pass the blessings on to others. Beth’s programs are extremely easy to orchestrate. The videos are usually one hour long. They require someone to introduce them and lead the discussion afterwards. Most ladies purchase a workbook in order to do their homework between sessions. The true reward comes by doing your 5 homework lessons between each weekly session. Each lesson takes approximately 30 minutes to do, so the total homework time is about 2-3 hours in length. Honestly, doing the book work seals the deal, but is not required to enjoy the video programs, prayer or fellowship.

Holding a Beth Moore Retreat from February 19-20, teamed by 5 amazing sisters in Christ, became a real joy. During the weekend, the Holy Spirit abounded. We began each session with worship music. Evening Prayer and Morning Prayer echoed with the voices of women worshipping God. We concluded session four with a 50 minute period of silence where women wrote love letters to the individuals the Lord put on their heart. We even had a liturgical dance. We concluded with an amazing Healing Service centered on Romans 8:11. There was joy, laughter, loving, teaching, worship and fellowship. Sharing this good news story in The Albany Episcopalian is yet another way to encourage Bible reading and teaching. Why? Because: BIBLE + PRAYER + SERVICE + GRACE = CONTINUAL GROWING RELATIONSHIP WITH JESUS

In order for me to continue this Bible journey, I have been asked to help compile a list of Beth Moore resources to share with churches around the area. Beth Moore DVD Programs are expensive. They cost approximately $300. To date, I have borrowed programs from Calvary, Burnt Hills (Patriarchs, Esther & Stepping Up); Christ Church, Ballston Spa (Jesus the One and Only); Adirondack Christian Fellowship (Breaking Free), and Terry Bassett (Daniel). St Mary’s Church, Lake Luzerne, now owns James and Loving Well.

To encourage others, we need a lending library for the Albany Diocese. If your church (or you personally) own a Beth Moore DVD resource that you are willing to share with other churches, please e-mail Deacon Marian Sive (msive@ctkcenter.org) and me (karenlove12846@yahoo.com). This will allow us to pass on to others the passionate, dynamic Beth Moore Women’s Bible Studies programs.

Little did I know what my youth group’s prayers would ignite? Who knows how one of these Beth Moore Bible studies will spark a woman’s soul to Bible reading, resulting in a stronger relationship with our Lord, Jesus Christ. Imagine opening the doors of your church to an amazing, awesome force: Christian women across the denominations passionately studying the Bible and fervently praying together. Let’s start a revival across the State of New York where the name of Jesus Christ is shouted from the highest mountain and sung from the depths of our souls! It is enough to make you want to SHOUT... kick your heals up and SHOUT! It makes you want to DANCE. AMEN!

Karen Love is a member of St. Mary’s Church, Lake Luzerne, a high school math teacher in the Hadley-Luzerne school system and wife of Bishop William Love.
Sixteen clerics and laity of the Diocese of Albany, as well as several friends and missionary bishops who partner with the Diocese were among the thousand or more to attend the New Wineskins Conference this past April 7-10. The four-day conference was held at the Ridgecrest Conference Center, near Asheville, North Carolina. Attendees from the Diocese of Albany are pictured below.

The conference offered a variety of workshops, Bible study, worship, exhibits and several inspiring plenary sessions, among them, “Making Disciples of All Nations”, “God’s Heart for the Poor”, “God’s Heart for the Young and for Justice”, “God at Work among the Nations”, “Missions to South East Asia” and “Reaching Muslims in North America”.

New Wineskins Missionary Network Helps Anglicans in the U.S. and Canada be more knowledgeable, active, and effective in fulfilling our Lord’s Great Commission to make disciples of all nations by:

• raising mission vision and awareness
• focusing attention on unreached people groups, holistic mission, and partnership
• encouraging prayer and care for Anglican missionaries
• sponsoring the New Wineskins for Global Mission conferences every three years

New Wineskins Missionary Network (formerly the Episcopal Church Missionary Community) was founded 1974 in Pasadena, CA, where it was a founding member of the U.S. Center for World Mission. In 1990 Trinity School for Ministry asked New Wineskins to move to Ambridge, PA, to help the seminary establish a department of missions and the Stanway Institute for World Mission and Evangelism. They continue to raise mission vision among each new generation of seminarians and is a member of Anglican Global Mission Partners.

For more information about New Wineskins Missionary Network, go to their website: www.newwineskins.org
Over Easter weekend, our St. John’s (Johnstown) sponsored a Stations of the Cross Service. Being an old fashioned Dark Ages Protestant, I hesitated to attend. Was this creeping Catholicism? Would I be soon genuflecting? Bigotry may be generational? But, I did show up. The Service followed a reenactment of Luke’s version of the Passion Week which dramatized historical events with parishioners speaking the parts. Following communion, I was surprised we were not gathered together to be lectured by our minister about what we had just heard, but never digested. Instead, we were left alone to visit the several exhibitions placed in niches beneath stained glass windows to contemplate moments of that original week when Jesus was tried and executed. Lovely medieval chants played which added to the reflective moods.

At each station, we found a visual aid of a particular moment along with printed scripture. But it was the displays which reinforced the message so one could experience what Jesus must have endured. One held a box of large, sharp sand crystals. It was suggested one scrape over our flesh the sharp granules to show how Jesus must have felt as he carried his “300 pound cross” up the mount. This, of course, would be the least of his suffering.

More striking was a board into which a large spike had been driven. Next to this was a hammer. We were told to drive another spike into the board so as to better imagine what Jesus had felt as he was nailed to the cross. A few stations later I heard someone do just that and the sound echoed ominously through the nave. The message here was also as enlightening as any - that we remember that Jesus died to take away our sins. Not those of His day, but for ours, as well. Forever.

At the time of His death in Judea, the doormat of the Middle East, the only way one could pay for sins was in donating goats, spotless sheep or money to the Levites who ran the temple. They were paid off. No one was innocent of sin as witnessed in the endless lists of crimes in Leviticus and Deuteronomy. But then came this itinerate rabbi with his revolutionary offer to somehow redeem our sins if only we followed Him and abided by the Ten Commandments - as well as the eleventh: that we love all mankind as He and his Father did.

His story did not end with the crucifixion, of course, it really only began. He was seen to rise from the dead; confirming the godliness He only implied. ‘Tis a strange story, really early science fiction, not necessarily easy to pass on to non-believers. Yet that passion story may be the key to acceptance. A man, who taught us to love one another and the God who created and sustains us through life, was cruelly martyred. Yet, his dying words were, “I forgive them”. He knew that His message would be hard to understand. Nevertheless, it was understood and soon a religion based on His teachings found a home in the land of His murderers - Rome.

On the internet, I saw that the Stations of the Cross has long been a ritual institution of the Catholic Church, but I also learned that some protestants have incorporated the ceremony into their own schedule. Taking place at the end of Lent, it is a reminder that Easter is not just jelly beans, colorful eggs, pink bunnies and vacations in Florida. It is a reminder of blessings and gratitude. Still, there remains criticism of the Catholic Church for not including a fifteenth station – that of the Resurrection. Everyone crucified at the time must have gone through his own passion. But His Resurrection became an eternal moment. Humanity has never been the same. How to dramatize it? Well, I guess with a folded gown. He has Risen.

David Childs is a long-time member of St. John’s, Church, Johnstown
When Bishop Bill Love invited Bishop Todd and wife, The Rev. Patsy, to attend our diocesan convention in June of 2015, my husband and I had no idea that by the end of that convention the Lord would have linked the four of us together in a new friendship in Christ and that we would invite Patsy and Bishop Todd to stay with us in October when they next visited the Diocese of Albany.

On the Sunday that they visited, while Bishop Todd visited another parish, Rev. Patsy came to our parish, St Luke’s on the Hill, Mechanicville, where she celebrated and preached. After church, she presented a Power Point of ministry in the Diocese of Toliara that deeply touched our congregation. At the vestry meeting the following week, discussions began as to how some kind of partnership with another St Luke’s could be linked with them. Indeed, there was a St Luke’s, and next door to the apartment where Todd and Patsy first lived in when they were called back to Madagascar. It was also the church in which Bishop Todd was consecrated Bishop!

We began to be very excited!

In November Rev. Patsy arranged for our Rector, Fr. David Haig, and I, to skype with Rev Noel, Rector of St Luke’s Ankilafaly. Our link began as we shared details about our parishes and their ministries and committed to keep one another in prayer. As a result of that conversation and much prayer, Clark and I decided to accept Rev. Patsy and Bishop Todd’s invitation to visit Toliara in March along with our dear friends, Fr Chip Strickland and his wife, Beth.

On March 6, our first Sunday in Toliara, Clark and I were transported by rickshaw to St Luke’s where we were very warmly greeted. As we joined in the vibrant worship, I realized Jesus’ high priestly prayer in John 17: that “they all may be one” was being answered powerfully in our fellowship, worship and praise.

It was a great privilege to be invited to preach with Rev. Hery who was doing a great job translating...
as well as being able to talk to the congregation after the service. I shared information about our parish with them and showed photos taken the week before of our congregations at each of our services waving in greeting them. We also showed photos of our church buried in over 2 feet of snow, and still others of our church school. Gifts I brought included our banner for them to keep as a reminder of our link, as well as pen pal letters from our children and a guitar for their youth group.

A smaller meeting with their vestry after everyone else had gone provided time for more conversation and information sharing.

Blessings and relationships deepened later that day as we offered a faith and fun-filled VBS for 80 of the cutest and most well behaved kids I have ever had the joy of meeting. In the afternoon we made beaded cross necklaces and taught them a special Holy Spirit handshake. What fun it was to run into them the next weekend at the Cathedral’s dedication, many of them running up, eager to shake hands and show us their necklaces!

Blessings continued later in the week as I had the opportunity to lead a women’s afternoon of prayer at St. Luke’s. In closing, each woman was given a small gift bag with jewelry and a scarf given by the women of St Luke’s in Mechanicville as a sign of their love and prayers. What a joy it was to see women wearing the jewelry at the cathedral the next weekend.

On our last night in Toliara, Rev Noel and Rev Hery stopped by and signed the official covenant of our link. What previously had been an informal joining of hearts and prayers was now an official document outlining our agreement to support one another in fellowship, communication and prayer.

Since our link is brand new, we are eager to see how the Lord will work in and through it in the future, so that we may all become one in Christ even as Christ and the Father are one; all to God’s glory and the benefit of His dearly loved people separated by many miles, but not in love or prayers.

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Deacon Lynne Curtis is Resident Deacon at St. Luke’s, Mechanicville.
UPCOMING DIOCESAN EVENTS – 2016

May
2 Pre-Convention Information Meeting – Church of the Messiah, Glens Falls
   Southern Adirondack and Upper Hudson Deaneries
3 Pre-Convention Information Meeting – St. Mark’s Church, Malone
   Northern Adirondack and St. Lawrence Deaneries
7 Youth Leader Training – Youth For Christ, The Edge, Clifton Park
9 Pre-Convention Information Meeting – Christ Church, Cooperstown
   Susquehanna and Western Mohawk Deaneries
10 Pre-Convention Information Meeting – Cathedral of All Saints, Albany
   Hudson and Metropolitan Deaneries
13-15 Province II Daughters of the King Retreat – Christ the King SLC
   Youth Leader Retreat – Christ the King SLC

June
3 Jesus Jumpstart – Beaver Cross
10-13 148th Convention of the Diocese of Albany

July
4 Beaver Cross Opens

August
To be determined

September
9-11 Postulant & Candidates Retreat – Christ the King SLC
14-21 House of Bishops Fall Meeting – Site To Be Announced
26 Bible Symposium – Cathedral of All Saints, Albany
30 Clergy Wives Retreat – Christ the King SLC

October
1-2 Clergy Wives Retreat – Christ the King SLC
3-5 Holiness Conference – Christ the King SLC
7-14 Diocese of Down & Dromore Clergy Conference
20-23 Couple’s Cursillo Weekend – Christ the King SLC
   (subject to change)

November
1 All Saints Day
4-6 Deacons Retreat – Christ the King SLC
8-11 Priest Retreat, Christ the King SLC
12 Commission on Ministry Meeting
19 Acolyte Festival – Cathedral of All Saints, Albany

Save the Date...

On Saturday, Sept. 26, the Very Rev’d Dr. John Behr, the Dean of St. Vladimir’s Orthodox Theological Seminary in Yonkers, will be the speaker at the Cathedral of All Saints on the topic of Finding Christ in the Scriptures.

The Venerable Dr. Leander Harding is heading up this program, assisted by Fr. Paul Hunter and Bp. Dan Herzog. The teaching day will end with Evensong and opportunity for healing prayer in the Cathedral. The one day event continues the annual Cathedral Symposium, and expands it by drawing on the previous observance of Our Lady of Walsingham at St. Luke’s, Catskill.


More information on the event will follow.
Summer is nearly upon us and with it comes our annual ministry transition from regional Bible studies and retreats to Beaver Cross Summer Camps. The 2015-2016 year was very fruitful! This year we ran ten retreats and six regional Bible studies. In total, we ministered to well over 200 kids, most of them on a regular basis! We also partnered with Capital District Youth for Christ and other local youth ministries to provide four youth leader trainings. We are excited about the lives we have seen changed and the ways the Lord is moving in our ministries. We are looking forward to what God will do through Beaver Cross Summer Camps.

After summer camp is over, we look forward to starting up our year-round ministry again. Our next batch of Youth Ministry Trainees will be reporting to Christ the King for training and orientation on September 7th, and we will begin our ministry the following week. Our Bible study times and locations for next year are still being planned, but we will release that information over the summer. We are looking forward to continuing our ministry to the youth throughout the Diocese, and we are also excited to partner with parish based youth ministers and help them disciple the youth of their parishes. We long to see youth leaders who are ON FIRE for Jesus rise up all over the Diocese and invest in the youth of their community. Will you join us in fulfilling the Great Commission among the next generation?
### Overnight Camp

**Prices are per child per week**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Dates</th>
<th>Camp</th>
<th>Grade</th>
<th>Tier 1</th>
<th>Tier 2</th>
<th>Tier 3</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>July 6-8</td>
<td>Beaver Bound</td>
<td>K-2</td>
<td>$180</td>
<td>$160</td>
<td>$140</td>
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<tr>
<td>July 3-8</td>
<td>Discoverers</td>
<td>3-5</td>
<td>$450</td>
<td>$400</td>
<td>$380</td>
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<tr>
<td>July 10-16</td>
<td>Adventurers 1</td>
<td>6-8</td>
<td>$540</td>
<td>$445</td>
<td>$410</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>July 17-23</td>
<td>Adventurers 2</td>
<td>6-8</td>
<td>$540</td>
<td>$445</td>
<td>$410</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>July 24-30</td>
<td>Pioneers 1</td>
<td>9-12</td>
<td>$540</td>
<td>$445</td>
<td>$410</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>July 31-Aug 6</td>
<td>Pioneers 2</td>
<td>9-12</td>
<td>$540</td>
<td>$445</td>
<td>$410</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### Leadership Camp

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Dates</th>
<th>Camp</th>
<th>Ages 16-18</th>
<th>Tier 3</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>June 29-July 2</td>
<td>Leadership Training</td>
<td></td>
<td>$345*</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>July 3-23</td>
<td>Leadership</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Pay $245 if you also come for a week of Pioneers

### Day Camp

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Dates</th>
<th>Session</th>
<th>Grade</th>
<th>Tier 1</th>
<th>Tier 2</th>
<th>Tier 3</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>July 4-Aug 26</td>
<td>8 One Week Sessions</td>
<td>K-8</td>
<td>$275</td>
<td>$235</td>
<td>$220</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Scholarships Are Available**

Contact us for more details

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**Tier 1**

Accurately reflects the true cost of camp for a camper including program, supervision, lodging, meals, insurance, maintenance, upkeep, utilities, repairs, overhead, and depreciation.

**Tier 2**

Reflects the basic cost of camp for a camper including food, staff, and supplies. A partially subsidized rate available to those unable to pay Tier 1.

**Tier 3**

Is a subsidized rate available for families sending multiple children to Overnight or Day Camp.

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**Build Community With Us**

**Contact Us:**

575 Burton Road, Greenwich NY, 12834  
Phone: 518.692.9550, ext 106  
Email: bccamps@ctkcenter.org  
www.beavercrosscamps.org

**Now Hiring for 2016 Summer Camp Staff**

Executive Camp Director: Father Matt Baker  
Overnight Camp Director: John Iseman  
Day Camp Director: Daniel Hyde

**Here’s How:**

- Send your kids to Beaver Cross!  
- Donate to Beaver Cross scholarships and to the BC Wish List  
- Volunteer
Committed to carrying out Christ’s mission of salvation and healing, the School of Healing Prayer is an opportunity for participants to experience His healing power in their lives while also learning how to minister to others in their churches and communities.

**School of Healing Prayer**

Each ‘level’ must be completed in order, with all prior levels taken first

**July 28 - 31, - Level 3**
4-day Intensive
Expanding on how to pray for inner healing... Understanding the Emotions, Anger: The Misunderstood Emotion, The Purpose of Fear

**August 6-7 and 13-14, - Level 2 2-weekend Class**
How to pray in situations...Healing in Marriage; Healing the Wounds of Divorce - How to Pray for Inner Healing, Depression and Mental Illness

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**Day of Quiet and Healing Prayer**

**AGENDA**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Time</th>
<th>Activity</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>9:00</td>
<td>Registration at the Oratory</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9:30</td>
<td>Contemplative Worship</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10:00</td>
<td>Anointing, Soaking Prayer- Group Format, Inner</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11:00</td>
<td>Break</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11:15</td>
<td>Gospel Reading- Holy Eucharist</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>12:15</td>
<td>Lunch- on your own or at the Welcome Center</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1:15</td>
<td>Personal Time</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2:15</td>
<td>Soaking Prayer, Healing Prayer, Reconciliation</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3:30</td>
<td>Final Prayer and Blessing</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

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**Upcoming Events at Christ the King**

**School of Healing Prayer**

575 Burton Rd.
Greenwich, NY
12834
Phone: 518-692-9550
Fax: 518-692-8777
www.ctkcenter.org

**More coming events at Christ the King**

**May 8, 2016**
**Mother’s Day**—(It’s ‘early’ this year—don’t forget Mom)
**BRUNCH: 11 - 2**

**August 6-7 and 13-14**

**Holiness Conference**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Date</th>
<th>Event/Description</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>October 3-5</td>
<td>The Next WHI is October 31- November 2, 2016</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>May 13-15</td>
<td>Province II Daughters of the King Meeting at CtK</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>May 8, 2016</td>
<td>Mother’s Day—(It’s ‘early’ this year—don’t forget Mom) BRUNCH: 11 - 2</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

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**A Day of Quiet and Healing**

For this said the Lord God, the Holy One of Israel, “In returning and rest you shall be saved, in quietness and in trust shall be your strength.”

—Isaiah 30:15 ESV

**Saturday, May 14, 2016**
9:30 a.m. — 3:30 p.m.

For more information, please contact the church office at 518-692-9550 or email healingctr@ctkcenter.org. Lunch is available at the Welcome Center ($11).
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

May
1 Church of the Redeemer, Rensselaer
8 Christ Church, Hudson
21 St. Paul’s, West Middleburg
22 Christ Church, Deposit

June
5 Church of the Good Shepherd, Elizabethtown
19 Grace Church, Canton
26 Christ Church, Gilbertsville

July - September  To be announced

October
16 St. James’ Church, Fort Edward
23 Grace Church, Mohawk

November
6 St. John’s Church, Massena
13 Trinity Church, Potsdam
20 Trinity Church, Plattsburg

December
4 St. Mark’s Church, Malone
11 St. Paul’s Church, Sidney
18 St. Eustace Church, Lake Placid