Highlighted this Issue:

- The Eucharist as an Earthly Thing and a Heavenly Thing
- Summary of the Election Procedures for a Bishop Diocesan
- The Toll of COVID-19
- “What Sweetness Will God Bring Out of COVID-19?”
- The Welcome Home Initiative Retreat at Christ the King
- Beaver Cross Summer 2021
- And more…
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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.

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In my first years as a priest I served in a small church in suburban Westchester County, where, as in many parishes, we had a midweek Eucharist. One morning I had a bad cold. After I said the prayer over the elements, I announced that I would not drink from the cup because I wasn’t feeling well. An elderly woman was in the congregation that day, a lifelong Episcopalian, who regularly attended that service; let’s call her “Susan.” Sometime after that, I noticed that Susan refused to speak to me. She continued to attend as before, but she acted as if I weren’t there. She utterly froze me out, and I had no idea why. People in the congregation recognized that Susan had a rigid and brittle personality, and I took her frostiness as having more to do with her than me; but I won’t pretend that it didn’t bother me.

Eventually our relationship began to thaw. I was visiting her one day when she asked if I knew why she had been annoyed with me. When I said that I did not, she explained that she was upset that I had abstained from the consecrated wine when I was not feeling well. I should have recognized that if the wine was truly the Blood of Christ, then it would not transmit germs. So far as she was concerned, my seeming concern for my congregants betrayed a faltering faith in the Eucharist — even a lack of orthodoxy. Her conviction that the Eucharist possesses a property of divine resistance to the transmission of disease is not so different from the views of some who were angry with the church for closing down during the pandemic.

The Healing Power of the Eucharist

The Eucharist can certainly be a vehicle of God’s healing power. To start with, it is widely reported that there is little or no evidence of transmission of disease through the use of the common cup at communion. This is largely due, it is said, to the high degree of alcohol in the fortified wine used in the liturgy. But one wouldn’t want to exclude the possibility of divine providence at work as well.

In the early church, it was the practice in some places for communicants, after receiving the consecrated elements in the hand, to touch their ears and eyes that the Eucharistic presence of Christ would heal and elevate their hearing and seeing. The early Christians may have seen this as a purely spiritual act, rather than the means of literal restoration of sight or hearing, but one can’t help but see in this action an echo of Jesus’ use of touch to heal the deaf and blind.

I can offer an anecdotal account of the healing power of the Real Presence of Christ in the Eucharist. I get earaches. Not very often — maybe once or twice a year — but they can be quite painful. Some years ago, as I was processing to the altar at the beginning of the Sunday Eucharist, I was suddenly aware of an acute pain in my ear. Oddly enough, I didn’t notice it as I delivered my sermon, but when I returned to my place for the Creed it was back with a vengeance. During the Peace and the announcements that followed, it was excruciating — so much so that as I turned to the altar I was hit with a wave of pain so intense that I visibly stumbled, and members of the congregation were worried about me. I resolved to say the prayer over elements and then quickly exit the church to lie down, and let our deacon lead the Lord’s Prayer and distribute communion.

One of the key moments in the Eucharistic prayer is called the
“Epiclesis,” when the priest calls down the Holy Spirit on the bread and wine “that they may be the Sacrament of the Body of Christ and his Blood of the new Covenant.” The Epiclesis points to the role of the Holy Spirit as the divine instrumentality by which Christ becomes present in the Eucharist. (This is not to exclude the importance of the Jesus’ words from the Last Supper, as Queen Elizabeth I said, “what Christ’s word doth make it, I do believe and take it”)

On that fateful Sunday morning, as I struggled to get through the Eucharistic prayer – periodically pressing my hand against my ear to lessen the pain – I crossed my hands over the bread and wine, and made the sign of the cross. I recited the words of the prayer book, “send your Holy Spirit upon these gifts...” In an instant the pain was gone! Completely. And it didn’t come back. It was astonishing!

**Putting the Lord to the Test**

So yes, we must not minimize the power of God, or exclude the possibility that God’s healing power can be available through the sacraments. But can I assume – or presume – that God will do the same thing the next time I approach the altar with a bad earache? I know he can, and I can pray that he will. That does not mean that I can expect God’s power to fulfill my every whim, on my schedule and according to my precise specifications. I refer to this view of prayer as “Amazon.god” – in which we put in our order and await the expected delivery as ordered. But the fact is: God calls us to conform to his agenda – not the other way around.

The former director of the Healing Center at the Christ the King Center, Fr. Nigel Mumford, used to say, “something always happens when we pray.” This is surely true; God hears prayer. Nigel said this, however, as a word of encouragement for those times when it may not appear that God is responding - when God does not seem to act on our timetable. Nigel’s point was that God is at work – even if we don’t discern how. All too often, as the Apostle Paul said, “We walk by faith and not by sight.”

The point is: we must not expect or demand that God miraculously intervenes at every point. The story of Satan’s Temptation of Christ in the desert offers a cautionary example. After Jesus refuses Satan’s urging that he turn stones into bread, Satan sweeps Jesus up to the pinnacle of the temple and tells him to jump – since, after all, scripture says, “he will command his angels concerning you,” and “on their hands they will bear you up, lest you strike your foot against a stone.” Jesus incisively responds, “it is written, ‘You shall not put the Lord your God to the test.’” During the difficult months of the Covid pandemic, the insistence among some Christians that protective measures were unnecessary in worship because of God’s divine protection could be seen as a real life example of “putting the Lord to the test.” If Jesus would not put the Lord to the test, nor must we!

**The Nature of a Sacrament**

While we recognize that God can work according to his sovereign will in the sacrament, we must be careful that our understanding of the “real presence” in the Eucharist does not, as the 39 Articles of Religion says, “overthrow the nature of a sacrament.” The “nature of a sacrament” lies in the fact that, as Irenaeus said, it “consists of two things, an earthly and a heavenly.” In confirmation class we all learned that “a sacrament is an outward and visible sign of an inward and spiritual grace.” The sign is the “earthly thing.” It is something tangible, a physical, even ordinary thing from everyday
experience – water, bread, wine. The “heavenly thing” is what God does in and through these earthly things. But if we entirely assimilate the earthly into the heavenly, or allow the heavenly to cancel out the earthly, then we “overthrow the nature of a sacrament.”

This is why Lutherans and Anglicans both affirm the “real presence” of Christ in the Eucharist, but typically reject the Roman Catholic teaching of Transubstantiation. In the doctrine of Transubstantiation, according to Thomas Aquinas, “The whole substance of bread is converted into the whole substance of Christ’s body, the whole substance of wine into the whole substance of his blood.” Transubstantiation is a doctrine of replacement – the “heavenly” part replaces the “earthly” part; and the substance of the bread is obliterated. “After the consecration there remaineth no substance of bread or wine,” said Henry VIII’s Six Articles of 1539, (Henry rejected the Pope, but theologically, he remained a traditional catholic).

The Pattern of the Incarnation

According to the reformers, Transubstantiation not only “overthrew the nature of a sacrament,” more fundamentally, it goes against the way in which God operates in the history of salvation – and especially in the Incarnation, in Jesus himself. In Jesus, the word made flesh, there is also “an earthly and a heavenly part.” Jesus is truly human, and truly divine – in which neither nature cancels out the other. As the Council of Chalcedon (351) said,

“Lord Jesus Christ, at once complete in Godhead and complete in manhood, truly God and truly man truly God and truly man, consisting also of a reasonable soul and body; of one substance with the Father as regards his Godhead, and at the same time of one substance with us as regards his manhood; recognized in two natures...the distinction of natures being in no way annulled by the union.” (Book of Common Prayer, p. 864)

The Church affirmed the two natures of Christ this way because there were some who denied Jesus’ full humanity. Not long after the Council of Nicea (325) asserted that Jesus was “one being with the Father,” Appolonaris (d. 382) veered in the opposite direction and denied Jesus’ full humanity. He taught that when the “Word became flesh,” the divine Logos took the place of a rational human soul (nous logike). True, Jesus had a human body, but inwardly, the divine Word replaced a human soul and mind. “The Word of God has not descended upon a holy man,” said Apollinaris, “but the Word himself has become flesh without having assumed a human mind...but existing as a divine mind immutable and heavenly.”

Gregory of Nazianzus offered the decisive response to Apollinaris: “if anyone has put his trust in Christ as a Man without a human mind, he is really bereft of mind, and quite unworthy of salvation. For that which Christ has not assumed, He has not healed.” Jesus needs to take on our full humanity if he is to redeem our full humanity. If the inward humanity of Christ must be replaced for God to be manifest, that would mean that humanity can never convey or manifest God’s presence; it can never bear the presence of divinity, but must remain alienated and out of fellowship. But in Christ all that has changed, because he has assumed our full humanity - like us in every way (but sin) that we might share in his divine sonship.

A Christological View of the Eucharist (Earthly and Heavenly)

Martin Luther applies this principle of the human and divine natures of Christ to the Eucharist, insisting that the bread does not have to cease to be bread in order after its consecration to be Body of Christ and convey the “Real Presence.”

“What is true in regard to Christ is also true in regard to the sacrament. It is not necessary for human nature to be transubstantiated before it can be the corporal habitation of the divine, and before the divine can be contained under the accidents of human nature. Both natures are present in their entirety,....Thus in order that the true body and the true blood should be in the sacrament, the bread and wine have no need to be transubstantiated.”

Lancelot Andrewes, who chaired the committee that produced the King James Bible in 1611, perhaps
Since the resignation of Bishop Love as Bishop of Albany, effective February 1, 2021, the Standing Committee (SC), in accordance with the Canons of the church, became the ECClesiastical Authority of the Diocese. Since then, the SC has been hard at work preparing the difficult process that will one day lead to the election of the next Bishop. On June 11th, 2021, the letter (below) was sent to all members of the Diocese providing an update on its progress. The following pages summarize the process that will be followed.

Editor

Standing Committee letter to the Diocese

June 11, 2021

Dear brothers and sisters in Christ,

It has been almost 8 months since our former bishop announced that he would resign, and it has been almost 6-months since his terminal sabbatical began on January 1st of this year. We have worked hard as a diocesan family and have come a long way in that short time. While we acknowledge that there is still much work to be done, the Standing Committee feels that the diocese is ready to begin the work toward electing the 10th Bishop Diocesan of Albany. Therefore:

The Standing Committee of the Episcopal Diocese of Albany, acting as the ECClesiastical Authority of the Diocese, calls for the election of the 10th Bishop Diocesan of Albany.

We anticipate this process will take approximately 18 months. We encourage you to view the video produced by the Standing Committee and found on the Episcopal Transitions page of the diocesan website. This video will give you a helpful overview of the process that will lead to the election of our next bishop. As outlined in the video, this process will be governed by the Constitution and Canons of the Episcopal Church, the Constitution and Canons of the Episcopal Diocese of Albany, and, in particular, Rule 1a of the Rules of Order of the Convention. All these resources may be viewed on or through the diocesan website.

The process for electing our next bishop will commence with the election of a Profile and Search Committee. The election of the committee will occur in Deanery Convocations which must occur within 30 days of this call for the election of our next bishop. For more information about your Deanery’s convocation please contact your Dean.

Friends, there is much hard work ahead. We encourage every member of the Diocese of Albany to participate in this election process. We also ask you to keep our Diocese, our church, and each other in your prayers. Join us in praying daily our Prayer in a Time of Transition:

Heavenly Father, we praise and thank you for this, your diocese of Albany. Inspire and sustain us in this time of transition. Incline our hearts to do your will, and so direct us in your ways that the leader you are raising up to be our Bishop will find here joyful disciples, making disciples, united in faith, unflagging in hope, and steeped in mutual charity.

In your mercy, accept our repentance, and grant us peace; look with patience on our enthusiasms; and pour rich gifts and grace upon all who are entrusted with the ongoing work of your church; so that, with diligence and charity, we may discern correctly and walk righteously in your ways.

This we ask in the name of Jesus Christ, our Lord, who lives and reigns with you in the unity of the Holy Spirit, one God, now and forever. Amen.

Faithfully yours in Christ,

The Standing Committee of the Episcopal Diocese of Albany

The Rev. Scott Garno, president
Janet Papa, secretary
The Rev. Kathy Alonge-Coons
Christopher Cassidy
John Hyde
Jean Stevens Lauria
The Rev. Tom Malionek
Teresa Mumby
The Rev. David Ousley
The Rev. Dr. Elizabeth Papazoglakis
The Rev. Derik Roy
Sue Ellen Ruetsch
Following the announcement by the Ecclesiastical Authority (EA), a P&S committee shall be formed as follows:

**Committee elections by Deanery**

Sixteen (16) members - one clergy and one lay are to be elected from each of the eight deaneries. The eight deaneries of the Albany Diocese are:

1. Hudson Valley
2. Metropolitan
3. Northern Adirondack
4. St. Lawrence
5. Southern Adirondack
6. Susquehanna
7. Upper Hudson
8. Western Mohawk

Within 30 days of the announcement of the call for the election of a bishop Diocesan, each deanery will meet in Convocation.

Each deanery will send out notices to each member of the deanery clergy and each congregation in the deanery at least 2 weeks in advance of the Convocation.

Those entitled to vote shall be two (2) duly certified delegates from each congregation in the Deanery and all members of the clergy, canonically resident in the Diocese, who exercise their ministry within the Deanery or who reside in the Deanery.

The election shall be by ballot and a majority of the votes cast will be necessary for election.

Each dean will promptly certify to the President of the Standing Committee (SC) the names, addresses and phone number of those elected.

**Additional Members to the Committee**

Upon completion of the elections six (6) additional Members at Large, either clergy or lay are to be elected by the EA.

Two (2) other members will be appointed to comprise a total 24 committee persons:

- One (1) nonvoting priest Chaplain, appointed by the EA
- One (1) confidential secretary to be hired by the P&S committee

**Election of a Committee Chairperson**

The P&S committee shall elect a Chairperson from its members by a majority vote.

**The Self-Study and Profile**

Within one year of the call for election, the P&S committee shall develop a Diocesan Profile.

**Obtaining Candidates**

The P&S committee shall encourage the recommendation of qualified candidates and circulate the Diocesan Profile and other pertinent information to all clergy and congregations of the Diocese and other appropriate agencies throughout the Church, giving notification that recommendations are being received and stating the process for nomination and selection.

**Preparing a list of candidates**

The P&S committee shall screen all candidates recommended and establish procedures for determining which are best suited for nomination. The list of candidates shall be submitted to the Secretary of Convention, to be placed in nomination at the electing Convention. Announcing the date of Convention
The Secretary of the Diocesan Convention shall announce the date, time and place of the electing Convention and include the P&S Committee's report with the announcement. The date of the election Convention will be at least 3 months but not more than 7 months after the date the report is issued. The EA may change the date of the electing Convention and may reschedule it.

**Independent Nominations**

When the P&S committee has announced the list of nominees, independent nominations may be made, within 30 days.

Upon request, the Secretary of the Convention shall provide a Nomination Form on which the deadline and method of submitting them is clearly stated. All nominations shall require the signatures of at least 2 persons who are adult communicants of a congregation in good standing and certified deputies to the Convention and/or canonically resident clergy. No person shall sign the nomination form for more than one candidate for Bishop.

**The Election Procedures (EP) Committee**

The EA shall choose a maximum of 6 persons to assist the Secretary of the Convention in the establishment and oversight of the election procedures and agenda. Procedures established by the Secretary of the Convention and EP committee can be overruled by a 3/4 vote of the members of the SC.

**Final Report of the P&S Committee**

After the period for receiving the independent nominations has expired, the Secretary of the Convention shall transmit to the P & S committee the names of all the candidates, together with photos and biographical sketches of each, and such other material about the candidates in the Secretary’s possession.

**The Election Booklet**

The P&S committee shall publish an Election Booklet containing a detailed statement of the election process, including the agenda for the electing Convention, and distributed to each member of the electing Convention not less than 45 days before the Convention, and also made available to the people of the Diocese.

**Introducing the Nominees to the Diocese**

After the Election Booklet has been distributed, the EP committee shall provide one or more opportunities for members of the electing Convention to meet and confer with all candidates. The EP committee shall be responsible for establishing the time, place, and format of any pre-convention meeting of candidates. All such meetings shall occur at least 7 days prior to the electing Convention.

**Placing names for Nomination**

At the electing Convention, all names of the candidates listed in the Election Booklet shall be placed in nomination.

**Nominations from the floor**

Nominations may be made from the floor by any member in accordance with the Rules of Order. Each nomination from the floor shall be accompanied by a properly executed nomination form.

**Financing**

The Convention shall make an appropriation to cover the expenses of the election process as outlined herein.
In March of 2020, it became clear that Covid-19 was on a devastating path nationwide and many “non-essential” services were shut-down out of an abundance of caution. This resulted in loss of employment and furloughs of employees across the country, regardless of age, socio-economic status or productivity levels, including some hospital positions.

I was grateful to learn my position as hospital chaplain was to continue and that the leadership of the hospital valued this service as a high priority going forward. Over 20 years of hospital ministry, I’ve seen more than enough suffering and death, yet little did I know what lay ahead in the coming 12 months of the COVID-19 pandemic – the unspeakable depth of suffering and death of patients, the heartbreak and loss for families, and our hospital staff exhausted but unceasing in their efforts to save, to restore.

As the death count continued to rise, it became harder to process each death – the loss of a person – some related to hospital staff or friends in the community. No place here for mere statistics – this was hard, cold, miserable death that fractured even the toughest souls.

On top of this, in January 2021, the entire hospital community, including myself, was stunned by the tragic death of a lovely, skilled and compassionate nurse who succumbed to her injuries after a horrific snowplow accident as she was walking to her car at the end of her shift on a snowy day – a single mom heading home to her 13 y/o son. There were are no words to describe the pain of this loss.

Asked by the Hospital leadership to offer a memorial service, a tribute to this beloved member of our health care team, I privately lamented many things to God – why did this have to happen? Isn’t Covid enough? Isn’t it all enough? What is it you’d have me do to comfort others when I can’t even comfort myself? I need your help and I need it now!

Despite my anger and frustration, in His faithfulness, God’s Holy Spirit helped me and others, shape a sacred time of gathering for a diverse group of loving co-workers to acknowledge her death while celebrating her life. As grieving continued, my role was to be available to the staff - I was attentive to listen and comfort, was there to offer a word of hope for the future, pray when appropriate and periodically checked in to see how they were doing.

Though I strived to be present to patients, staff and others - and God graciously equipped me to do so - I had spiritually and emotionally hit the wall. The African American spiritual, “There is a balm in Gilead to make the wounded whole; there is a balm in Gilead to heal the sin-sick soul. His name is Jesus and he died for us all,” began playing over and over in my head.

Where, oh where, was that “balm of Gilead”? My spiritual tank was beyond low, critically in need of replenishing through healing, of renewed trust that God was somewhere in this mess, my heart desperate for emersion in that soothing balm to continue being a quiet presence, to offer a soothing word or comforting embrace to others.
When I could finally still myself enough to HEAR God respond to my cries, assuring me His true BALM was with me along with his desire to comfort me and give me rest, through the Holy Spirit, Jesus’ healing power and presence not only began to soothe me, but also showed me the goodness and grace surrounding me in the chaos of the times.

God provided the comfort I needed through the words of Mark’s Gospel (2:1-12) in the story of a lame man carried on a mat by his 4 friends to Jesus for healing. The Holy Spirit helped me remember the many dear friends whom God has placed into my life who graciously listen to me lament time and again, yet still love me, tolerate my goofiness and poor decisions, who pray incessantly for me; like the paralytic on the mat, they carry me to Jesus to receive his healing, comfort and rest.

I felt my soul begin to ease; the weight on my heart begin to lift and my mind more attuned to the truth that most folks coming to hospitals get well and go home, healthy babies are born and there is goodness in our world. To that end and to “seal the deal,” God would show me an unexpected, unusual experience of joy.

A local cemetery director asked if I would officiate a graveside service the next morning for a developmentally disabled man who lived most of his life in a group home in Brooklyn but whose brother was interred here. “John” wished to be buried beside him. His caregiver shared that John loved church - all kinds of church – that he loved the Lord!

With little time to prepare, I sought the Holy Spirit’s leading for how to bring comfort through words from Scripture and prayers. We were asked to Zoom the service so John’s housemates could participate. They were so excited, thrilled to see his urn, to view the snow-laden ground, the wreath of flowers they sent and perhaps most of all, giving their utmost to share in the prayers, in the words of the 23rd Psalm – to take part in laying their dear friend to rest – in their sure and certain knowledge John was now with the Lord!

It was a frigid -17° windchill that morning, but their unabashed love and joy set my heart on fire with a new, invigorating sense of hope in God’s power and presence. I could feel my spiritual tank go from near-empty to more than full!

That beautiful hymn, those words from Scripture, off-loading my own spiritual and emotional pain with trusted friends and certainly God’s glorious sense of humor, put me on the mend, bringing healing, renewed hope and a refreshed spirit I so desperately needed to carry on.

We should never “would’ve, could’ve, should’ve” on ourselves, but I pray the next time (and there will be a next time) my spiritual tank runs low, I won’t wait so long before reaching out to God for that balm of Gilead and to my dear friends in Christ to carry me to Jesus to heal my wounded and sin-sick soul!

The Rev Nancy L. Goff is Priest-in-Charge, Zion Episcopal Church, Hudson Falls, and Coordinator, Pastoral Care, Glens Falls Hospital, Glens Falls.
The Welcome Home Initiative© ministers healing for military veterans who have served their country in combat or any other service context that has caused suffering in varying degrees from post-traumatic stress or moral injury, and are in need of soul repair. Spouses too are welcome and encouraged to participate.

Our program helps veterans and spouses understand the hidden impact of combat and trauma, and provides a safe place for emotional healing. This essential spiritual and emotional healing is a complement to healing received from psychiatric and social services.”

The Welcome Home Initiative© (WHI©) has now completed its 42nd healing retreat on June 15th this year. Twenty-seven of that number were conducted at Christ the King Spiritual Life Center (CtK SLC). There have been five specifically held for female Veterans - all at CtK. Other retreats have been held in Ohio, Virginia and Florida, including one in a correctional unit focusing on Veterans. The ministry was founded under God’s hand by Fr. Nigel Mumford at CtK in 2008 and later moved to Virginia Beach, after which, at Bishop William Love’s request, retreats continued to take place at CtK.

No one serving in any branch of service of the armed forces who deploys to a combat area escapes trauma in some way or other. A cook who never leaves the camp experiences frequent and surprise mortar and rocket attacks. An infantryman patrolling in a foreign town never knows if or when his patrol is going to be ruthlessly attacked. The 4-man crew in an armoured vehicle gets hit by sudden rocket and machine gun fire. Another infantryman is, without warning, blown up in a vehicle by an IED (Improvised Explosive Device) and is the only survivor. A female soldier escorting re-supply trucks during darkness is involved in a violent ambush which kills some of those in the same squad. As a result of these and many other situations Veterans coming to the WHI© suffer from multiple trauma effects ranging from 100% PTSD (now termed post-traumatic stress) and other lesser hidden injuries that severely affect their lives often to point of being unable to function as a normal human being. As the WHI© ministry team listens, loves and prays for the Veterans who come, they have seen and experienced much healing.

Sharran sent a note after one retreat saying, “A quick note of gratitude. Words could not express how very much I enjoyed my time at the retreat. It is always peaceful but truly I did feel the Holy Spirit did what He does best: take control. I was able to receive validation for the emotions that were stuck in my mind but through the small breakout sessions I was able to receive prayer and a peace came over me.

For Len, it took three successive retreats before he found peace too. A Vietnam Veteran, he was plagued by guilt and shame because he “left someone behind” after an aggressive action. He was unable to remain for the full retreat until his fourth one. Hearing other Veterans talk about how war had affected them, he could listen no longer. It was too much. On his fourth retreat, with much quiet and compassionate encouragement, Len stayed and took part in a small group prayer time. He summoned up the courage to tell the others about his feelings. He did not need to go into deep detail as his fellow Veterans understood, even though they had not had the same experience. As Len was prayed for something happened – it always does, even if we do not see it. Len felt different and was able to say, “I still have the strong memory of the battle when it happened, but the Holy Spirit has removed the sting.”

A US Navy Veteran came to the Equipping Workshop in 2017 to get better equipped and ready to pray for others who are suffering from moral injury or post traumatic stress, prior to attending a full Welcome Home Initiative© retreat a few months later at Christ the King Spiritual Life Center, Greenwich, NY 12834. He has given me permission to share this story. In addition to service related trauma, our Veteran friend, Jake (real name changed), had suffered a grievous trauma several months earlier when his wife had been killed in a road traffic accident whilst riding their motorcycles through a town local to where he lives. Neither of them was at fault.
The closing ceremony was held in the Chapel of St. Michael and All Angels on the morning of June 16th, attended by approximately 40 veterans and friends of the veterans. The emcee was Chaplain Noel Dawes. Dr. William “Bill” Burler, Director of the Times Square Church (NYC) Military and Law Enforcement Outreach Team, delivered the homily. Also present were Deacon Marian Sive, Director of the Diocese’s Healing Ministry, and Fr. Michael Neufeld, Priest to the Welcome Home Initiative, who delivered the Blessing.

Attendees had come from as far away as South Carolina in the south and New England in the East. A few of these veterans offered their own testimony at the closing ceremony, describing how this retreat had such a positive effect on their lives. The Greenwich Veterans Color Guard added much to the event to honor and support these dedicated veterans, both men and women, to whom our nation extends its thanks for their dedicated service. Uplifting music of several hymns and songs, among them, “America the Beautiful”, “Battle Hymn of the Republic”, “My Country ‘Tis of Thee”, and “Eternal Father Strong to Serve” added much to the event. The next two pages are photos of the closing ceremony...
On Tuesday, June 15th, the Governor announced that New York State had reached the 70% vaccination mark among adults and was therefore lifting most guidelines that had been put in place. Like most New Yorkers, we were thankful for this news and pray that COVID-19 becomes a memory of the past and not a concern of the future. With that being said, the Standing Committee is prepared to move toward normal with caution. We are lifting all diocesan restrictions for churches; however, we fully support any Rector, Priest-in-Charge or Vicar who chooses to keep some or all of the regulations in place.

Not only is our diocese spread out geographically, but the parishes vary greatly in size. We believe that the clergy in charge of each parish know of their own unique situation, the make-up of their congregations, the space and set-up of their buildings and the health concerns of individuals, thus they have the authority to make the best decisions for their local context. We advise consultation with other church leaders as decisions are being made.

While many of us are excited to get back to “normal”, it may be advisable to take a phased-in approach to removing restrictions and guidelines. In particular, we ask that you prayerfully take into consideration the best way to move forward in regards to the following areas (not an exhaustive list):

- The unvaccinated, including children under 12
- The immuno-compromised and vulnerable
- The reception of the common cup
- Social distancing and capacity limits
- The passing of the peace and the offertory plate
- The handling of events and gatherings with food
- Continued encouragement for those who are ill to stay home

As Christians, we should be showing kindness and understanding in all circumstances and seeking ways in which we can grow in unity and love. This includes to those who may have a different opinion on how to handle the further opening up of our churches. We must continue to keep in mind those who, for whatever reason, are not vaccinated; those who choose to wear a mask; those who have serious health conditions; and those who have lost a friend or loved one because of the virus. In our freedom to come out from under the regulations, we must continue to love and respect those who may choose to wear masks or follow other safety precautions.

We thank you for your cooperation during the pandemic, we know it wasn’t easy.

May God be with you all as you continue to grow in his grace and love. May he continue to be with those still suffering with loss, and those still fighting the virus both here and around the world.

Faithfully Yours In Christ,
The Standing Committee of the Episcopal Diocese of Albany
the greatest Anglican figure of his day, takes the same Christological approach to the Eucharist as Luther.

“There is a recapitulation of all in Christ in the Holy Sacrament, in the gathering or vintage of [the earthly and heavenly] in the blessed Eucharist is a kind of hypostatical union [a technical term to indicate the two natures of Christ] of the sign and the thing signification, so united together, as are the two natures of Christ.”

To return to where we began: is it a denial of the holiness of the Eucharist and the Real Presence of Christ, to be concerned about the possibility of transmission of disease at communion? Or like Luther or Andrews, can we treat the “earthly and heavenly” in the Eucharist as analogous to the human and divine natures of Christ? To say that the elements of bread and wine retain their natural earthly properties after consecration is not a denial of their heavenly aspect in the Real Presence. To reject the possibility of transmission of germs in the Eucharist, to insist that God always provides a supernatural hedge against disease at communion, is like saying that Jesus didn’t sweat, or was not every hungry, that he didn’t ever grow weary or irritated, that he never suffered, that he didn’t weep at the grave of Lazarus or cry out in genuine despair from the cross.

Clergy In Transition

Appointments
The Rev. Kathleen Killian and The Rev. John Allison have accepted the call to serve as Co-Priests-in-Charge at Christ Church, Hudson.

Departures
The Rev. Paul Hartt, formerly Rector of St. Peter’s Church, Albany, has retired.

Openings in the Diocese:

Full time:
- St. Peter’s, Albany
- Adirondack Mission
- St. Paul’s, Albany
- Christ Church, Cooperstown

Part time:
- Grace, Mohawk
- Christ Church, Herkimer
- Christ Church, Greenville
- St. Paul’s, Keeseville

- St. James, Lake George
- St. Luke’s on the Hill, Mechanicville
- St. Michael’s, Colonie

- St. Augustine’s, Ilion
- St. John’s, Richfield Springs
- Holy Name, Boyntonville
As our lives begin to experience some semblance of normalcy, I think back to the Spring of 2020, and how our lives changed in the blink of an eye. It seemed that one day we were gathering as families and congregations, and the next we were isolating behind closed doors and wearing facemasks. It feels surreal now – NOT wearing a mask in public makes me uncomfortable, but I am sure the little moments of discomfort will quickly fade away.

The COVID-19 lockdown challenged us as individuals and communities in many ways. How and where we worked, shopped, learned, worshipped, and related to each other changed from one day to the next. Clergy faced unique challenges in how to minister to the flock, how to lead worship, and how to provide pastoral care to the grieving, the dying, the hurting, the poor, the hungry and the lonely. Pastoral care is a ministry of presence. Clergy often find themselves entering into highly emotional situations from which others might turn and run. State and local regulations limited our ability to provide in-person care, especially in hospitals and other care facilities, so our efforts to maintain connection with our congregations went virtual. Zoom meetings, YouTube videos, social media posts, and telephone conversations were helpful, but tenuous, substitutes.

Local food shelves and meal programs found themselves serving more people than ever and had to restructure their processes to meet new guidelines. Families who had survived comfortably on two incomes found themselves struggling to provide for their needs on one, or none. Isolation, rising tensions, and financial insecurity also fueled an increase domestic violence. Each day the news anchors would report the mounting numbers of those who were...
The Rev. Patti Johnson is Priest-in-Charge at St. James’ Ausable Forks, and member of the EDOA Missions Committee.

infected with the virus, and those who had died. As I struggled to find safe ways to minister to those in need, it sometimes seemed as though I was running out of time and resources. Where was the good news?

As I struggled and prayed through our local situation, I also wondered about our global mission partners: How would our friends and mission partners who lived daily with limited resources be able to combat this new enemy? How would places like South Sudan, a country of 11 million people and very limited medical resources, deal with the impending crisis of COVID-19? How could we connect with and support our partners through this latest crisis?

In the early days of summer, my heart aching with grief, I reached out to a friend in Juba, South Sudan. I expressed my concerns about their lack of resources to deal with COVID-19. Rev. Joseph acknowledged the realities of the new challenges in light of the lockdown regulations: finding sufficient soap and water, loss of income, increasing food insecurity, difficulty in social distancing, rumors and conspiracy theories. He then spoke of the Samson’s experience with the lion in Judges 14. Comparing the virus to the lion, he asked “I wonder what sweetness God will bring out of COVID-19?”

How will they deal with the challenges of COVID-19? Like they have dealt with every other challenge in their lives: with unwavering faith, confidence, and hope. God’s faithfulness through periods of war, violence, trauma, and instability has made them a resilient people. They are able to look back at the times when they were fighting “lions” with their bare hands and know that it was God’s strength that empowered them. Looking back, they see how God had prevailed and how God had provided. Looking forward, there is no question that God will continue to provide and make a way. Because God is faithful.

“Yet this I call to mind and therefore I have hope: Because of the Lord’s great love we are not consumed, for his compassions never fail. They are new every morning; great is your faithfulness.” Lamentations 3:21-23

Rev. Joseph’s faith re-kindled mine. I may be short on time and resources, but God is not. What sweetness will God bring out of COVID-19? For me, the sweetness has been a growing confidence in God’s benevolence and sovereignty.

The Episcopal Diocese of Albany (EDOA) Mission Committee has strived to maintain connection with our partners during these difficult months, to nurture relationships, join in prayer, and offer support. We invite you to join us in these conversations and prayers. Please watch for updates.

“For the word of the Lord is right and true; he is faithful in all he does.” Psalm 33:4

The Rev. Patti Johnson is Priest-in-Charge at St. James’ Ausable Forks, and member of the EDOA Missions Committee.
Summer 2021
We Are Open!!!

Activities

- Canoeing
- Archery
- Sports
- Culinary
- Theater
- Fishing
- High & Low Ropes
- Arts & Crafts
- Swimming
- Baking
- Archery Tag
- Bubble Ball
- Axe Throwing
- & More

Mask Policy

Vaccinated campers are not required to wear a mask.

Unvaccinated campers are not required to wear a mask when outside, eating, or sleeping. Unvaccinated campers are required to wear a mask inside.

All campers are welcome to wear a mask.

VISIT WWW.BEAVERCROSSMINISTRIES.ORG TODAY
Day Camp is 7 one week sessions. Each camp week is structured around exciting creative themes. Hot lunches are included. Registration is available for early drop-off and includes a hot breakfast.

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Scholarships are available

We truly believe in the power of camp and the importance it can have in a camper’s life. For this reason we don’t want financial strains to stop youth from building community in Christ with us. The pandemic has added financial burdens on many and if you need help paying for a camper to attend PLEASE contact us for a scholarship.
UPCOMING EVENTS

Please join us for our upcoming events!

WEEKLY HEALING SERVICE
EVERY TUESDAY | 10 AM | IN PERSON

Held in our St. Michael's Chapel, the healing service features outstanding talks from clergy and laity throughout our Diocese, anointing and opportunity for individual prayers for healing. Talks are recorded and can be found on our website.

MESSAGE FROM EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR REUBEN TODD

Christ the King Center is open and ready for ministry! Not that we ever completely paused our ministry, but we were limited in ways we could offer hospitality. Now we are ready to resume the things we were forced to lay aside—most notably, the ability to support local ministries and congregations by hosting retreats and conferences.

Our ministry exists because God has chosen to meet people in special ways—for healing, for renewal, for formation—in places and times that are set apart for those things. I hope you take the opportunity to Rest, Renew, and Find Peace.

COMMUNITY DINNER SERIES
JULY 5 | EVERY FIRST FRIDAY OF THE MONTH | 5-7PM | RESERVATION REQUIRED

Introducing our new Community Dinner Series: A monthly meal highlighting local community farms and products.

To see what’s on the next meal’s menu, what farm we are partnering with, or to make a reservation visit our website.

Adults $18.99 | Kids 12 & under $12.99 | 2 and under are free

To find more information on schedules, dates, menus, speakers, and to register visit CTKCenter.org!

WOMEN’S RETREAT
AUGUST 20-21, 2021

Ladies! You are invited to gather at Christ the King Center for a rejuvenating retreat in the heart of gorgeous Washington County. Expect vibrant praise and worship, peaceful prayer time, a deep dive into God’s Word in 1 Peter, fun activities, time with friends new and old and most of all, expect to be filled anew with the Holy Spirit.

WOMEN’S WELCOME HOME INITIATIVE
JULY 8-10

The Welcome Home Initiative is a healing program specifically for female military veterans who have served their country in combat or other challenging circumstances. These veterans may be suffering in varying degrees from post-traumatic stress or moral injury and are in need of soul repair. Visit our website to register.

ANYONE is welcome, and encouraged, to attend the closing service July 10 at 10 AM

Registration and more information on our website.

FROM STALLED TO FREEDOM
SEPTEMBER 13 & 14

Ready to take two days to invest in the health of your church? Far too many lead in isolation. Join us for a time of community, training, and encouragement for church leaders.

Event host Dale Sellers is the author of Stalled and the Executive Director of 95Network, a nonprofit ministry designed to help small to midsized churches through content, conferences, coaching, and consulting.

Registration, schedule, and more information is on our website.

Follow Us Online!
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.

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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.