

LOGOS

CREATIVE EXPRESSION, THEOLOGICAL REFLECTION, AND
TIDINGS FROM THE EPISCOPAL DIOCESE OF WEST TEXAS

THE EPISCOPAL DIOCESE OF WEST TEXAS COMPRISES 86 CONGREGATIONS IN SOUTH AND CENTRAL TEXAS, WITH 26,000+ MEMBERS.
OUR CORE PURPOSE IS TO BE JESUS' WITNESSES.



ISSUE #01: 2019 - 2020

WELCOME TO LOGOS MAGAZINE

“Logos” is a Greek word that translates most easily in English to mean word, reason, or plan. In Scripture, logos defines the role of Jesus Christ as the principle, fundamental truth of God. In the first chapter of the Gospel of John, Jesus is identified as “Logos,” the Word incarnate, or made flesh. Logos, within its five letters, carries the weight of not just any word, but THE Word that changes everything about our existence. The word logos defines a plan, provides purpose, and creates meaning for the people of God as participants in God’s restoration of wholeness in the world.

LOGOS Magazine seeks to capture God incarnate, the Word made flesh, in the people and ministries of the Episcopal Diocese of West Texas. Through contributions of clergy, spouses, lay ministers and staff, we are committed to illuminating the truth about God’s movement in our lives and world. We pray you will be inspired, enlightened, and challenged by our words.

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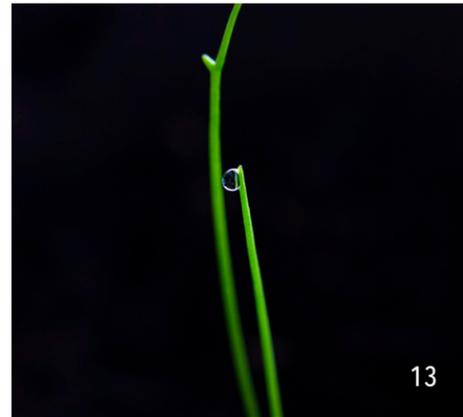
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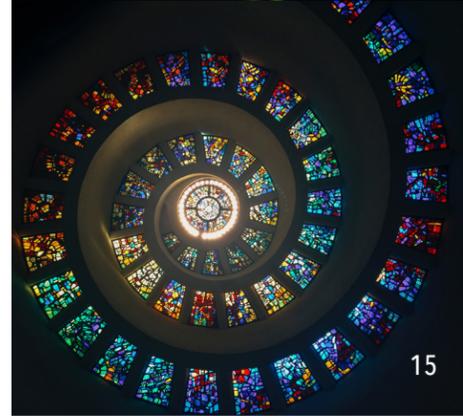
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WITH THE EYES OF OUR HEARTS ENLIGHTENED

I can explain.

The theme for Council in February, and for the Episcopal Diocese of West Texas in 2020, takes some explaining.

"With the eyes of our hearts enlightened" (Ephesians 1:18) is not catchy. It doesn't provide an easily understood message or a clear call to action. Instead, the letter's author, Saint Paul, offers an odd mash-up of important organs: the eyes and the heart. What the phrase does is invite us to pause, wonder, and perhaps, to wander around in it for a while.

I wish I could say that the theme came to me in a blazing revelation, but the truth is, I was trying to be clever. The 116th Diocesan Council begins on February 20, 2020. So I thought it would be very clever indeed for our biblical theme to reference vision. 02/20/2020... Get it? I began reading passages on vision and sight, and there are plenty, but this verse from Ephesians was the first to catch my eye, so to speak, and touch my heart.

"With the eyes of our hearts enlightened," of course, isn't a complete sentence, or even a complete thought. I hope this phrase will make us curious about the words that come before it and where the letter

is going, drawing us into an ongoing theological conversation of our own. In that sense, it is a snapshot of the entire biblical story and the ways we encounter the "logos," the living Word of God, in daily life.

Here are the verses from the first chapter of Ephesians that frame our theme, "I do not cease to give thanks for you, remembering you in my prayers, that the God of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Father of glory, may give you a spirit of wisdom and of revelation in the knowledge of him, with the eyes of your hearts enlightened, that you may know what is the hope to which he has called you, what are the riches of his glorious inheritance in the saints, and what is the immeasurable greatness of his power in us who believe, according to the working of his great might which he accomplished in Christ when he raised him from the dead and made him sit at his right hand in the heavenly places...and he has put all things under his feet and has made him the head over all things for the church, which is his body, the fullness of him who fills all in all." (Ephesians 1:16-22, RSV)

Even this larger context does not explain Paul's intentions, rather it invites us into a larger and deeper conversation with the Word,

wondering about and wandering deeper into God's power, glory, and beauty.

Our 2020 theme invites us to wake up and keep our eyes peeled. With confidence and boldness, the Gospel proclaims that God is at work, that He has not wandered off, and that there is always more going on than meets the eye.

Back in the fall, a wise man shared with me something he had heard a priest say during a retreat at Duncan Park, our conference center in Colorado. The priest explained the difference between asking, "What is happening?" versus "What is going on?"

The first question speaks to the surface level facts of the situation, whether personal, cultural, or political. Answering it requires some consideration and discernment, even more so in the current state of our nation. But, the second question requires a deeper engagement; asking, "What is going on amidst what is happening?" It leads us to consider what God is doing in the present moment, regardless of whether it is a good moment or a bad one. Both questions matter. The questions lead us from the "givenness" of our lives to the



Pillar of Clouds Photograph by the Rev. Doug Earle, Retired Priest and Member of St. Mark's, San Antonio.

“giftedness” of the ways that God reveals himself to us.

Through the theme, events, worship and workshops of Council, we will establish a pattern of looking once and then looking more deeply, of seeking grace to watch expectantly with the “eyes of our hearts” for what is truly going on as God continues the redemptive and saving work in Jesus Christ and through the power of the Spirit, right in the midst of what we see happening. Of course, this perspective is not limited to the delegates, alternates, and clergy at Council, but intended for the whole diocese, so that we might love one another more truly and follow Jesus more closely.

This mission extends to our new diocesan magazine, which you’re currently reading, as well. LOGOS invites you to wonder and be in conversation about what is happening throughout the Episcopal Diocese of West Texas, and about what is going on in our shared theological and spiritual reflections.

Guided by our theme verse, I invite our congregations to study the Book of Psalms in 2020 and to allow the beauty and authentic prayers of these sacred songs to permeate the course of your year. Recommended resources will be available at Council and shared online.

By the grace and power we receive in baptism, let us keep the eyes of our hearts enlightened and open to see the works of God in the world, and the face of Christ in our neighbor. In the simple prayer of an old hymn: “Day by day, dear Lord of Thee three things we pray: To see Thee more clearly, love Thee more dearly, follow Thee more nearly, day by day. Amen.”

CREATIVITY

ARTISTIC EXPRESSIONS ROOTED IN
"HEARTS ENLIGHTENED"

"How Eye See It"

Poem by the Rev. James Derkits, Rector of Trinity by the Sea,
Port Aransas

My head eyes
are clearly blurred;
clear as the mud from which they're made.
Or, blurred by the clarity
of what we call reality.

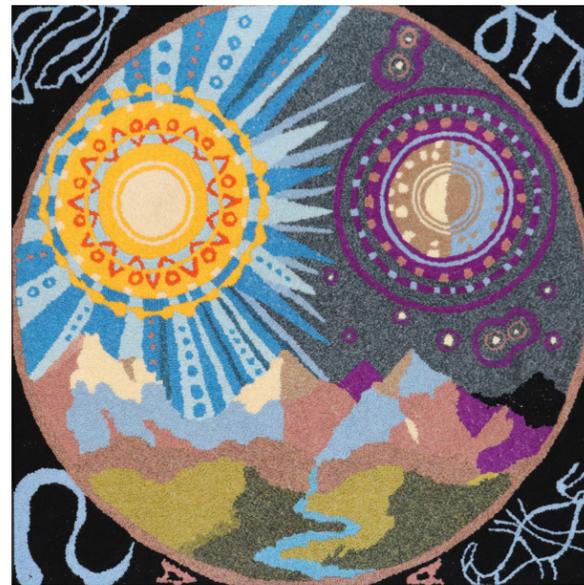
To Hell in a handbasket?
Or are we in Hel's handbasket?
Who gets to say we're in there?
Or, how did she get in our story:
Loki's half-dead daughter?
What would Hades think?
Or any other underworld guardian?

I don't believe in Hel or Hades
Or, we don't believe in Hel, Hades, Tyr, nor Ares.
We profess to believe in Jesus,
say he's been there and back again!

Left it all Harrowed,
trampling down death by itself,
and therein lies my belief-trust;
in him I see without head eyes:

I trust he's done his work,
is doing his work.
It is always being done:
Jesus is doing what Jesus does.

My heart eyes see clearly the clarity;
the transparency;
transparently transforming me.
My heart eyes see the sunrise of hope.



Creation

23" x 23" Embroidery Textile by Olivia Nalunga,
Threads of Blessing, Uganda

Threads of Blessing is an international nonprofit organization committed to supporting and nurturing the creative process. Threads of Blessing enables women in Uganda to produce unique pieces of textile art that represent their culture and surroundings. Through the sale of their work, these women are able to provide medical care, education for their children, buy livestock and seed for crops, and build homes for their families. Find more info at www.threadsofblessing.org.

Created

Mosaic tile tapestry by David Chidgey,
Member of St. Luke's, San Antonio



"Created" reflects a return to feeling alive and ready to celebrate life following the loss of our youngest daughter, Sarah. Choosing materials like clay expresses a primal rawness and contrasts with the polished and colorful glass like the cycle of life. This is a tapestry of life, reflecting brokenness and healing, exploring new possibilities and renewing dreams, and celebrating life itself.

"All I Am"

Song written by the Rev. Matthew Wise, Associate Rector of St. Mark's, San Antonio

The whole world feels so fragile now
So delicate and frail,
And I am afraid that letting go
Might leave me shattered, cold, and pale.
And yet, my hanging on so tight
To some love-born fairytale
Ain't enough to make our hopes and dreams come true.
I know I'm risking all I am on you.

'Twas longing got us here my love,
For something worth much more
Than anything the two of us alone
Were worth before.
Heart-broken let-me-downs
Across our bathroom floor.
We were willing and did all that we could do.
I know I'm risking all I am on you

All I am is lying in that bed beside you.
All I am is helping you stand.
All I am is crying, 'Baby, don't go without me.'
Please good Lord, won't you help us make it through?
I know I'm risking all I am on you.

Trying hard to hide the fear
Though my eyes give me away-
Welling up with angry words
I'd be ashamed to say.
And all hangs in this moment,
This anticipated day,
And I crumble as you disappear from view.
I know I'm risking all I am on you.

All I am is lying in that bed beside you.
All I am is helping you stand.
All I am is crying, 'Baby, don't go without me.'
Please good Lord, you gotta help us make it through.
If this is it, God just take me too.
I know I'm risking all I am on you.

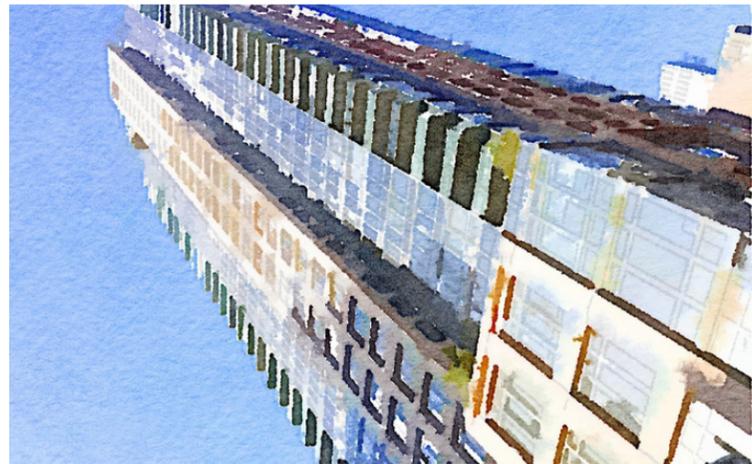
The emotional roller coaster of more than four years' struggle with infertility had apexed with the deep joy of my wife becoming pregnant with twins. But the last 48 hours before they were born turned harrowing and horrifying for me, the helpless father, as all three of their lives were in danger. I wrote "All I Am" about two years later, still trying to process and cope with that fear and anxiety.



Let the Waters Under Heaven Be Gathered

30" x 22" Watercolor by Gordon West, Member of Church of Reconciliation, San Antonio

"Let the Waters Under Heaven Be Gathered" commences "the Seasons of Creation" in the Fall, depicting reflections found in the San Antonio River. The original 30" x 22" watercolor was replicated and enlarged to 4' x 5' by Janet Flohr for display over the altar of Reconciliation, San Antonio.



New York City

Digital Watercolor, iPhone Photography by Kurt Vandewalle, Member of Holy Spirit, San Antonio

I think of all my photography as if it was a painting. Composition and color is the focus, and watercolor is the artistic medium of choice. In New York City, the architecture is abundant, colorful, and diverse. Street photography combined with digital rendering allows me to creatively capture and study design.

Heart Enlightened

8" x 10" Watercolor and Ink by Grace Symmons, Member of Holy Spirit, Dripping Springs



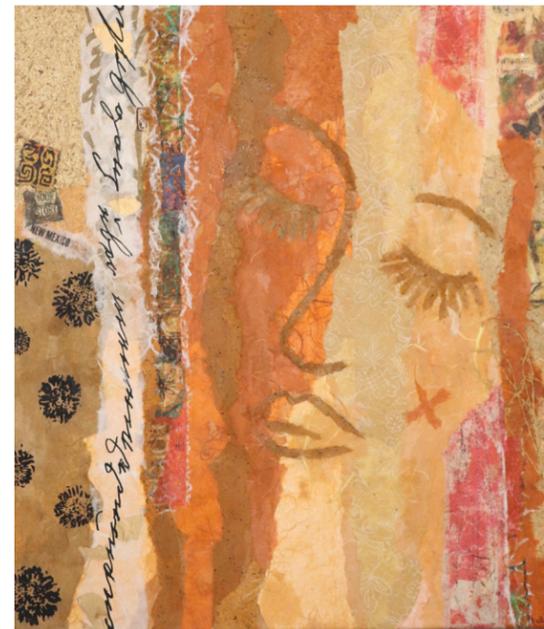
Just as we all have different skills, interests and gifts, God reveals himself to each of us in different ways. I am inspired by our Creator's creativity. Have you taken the time to observe the complexity of a tiny leaf, the variety of colors in a garden, or the star-soaked sky on a dark night? When I am intentional about appreciating my surroundings more than getting caught up in life's busyness, my heart is colored to glorify him and worship The Creator more deeply.

"From Womb to Womb"

Poem written by Stacy Dowdy, Member of Holy Spirit, San Antonio

I've heard
each female child is born
with all the eggs she will ever
produce in her lifetime.
If that is so
when I carried my daughter in my womb
I also carried the egg that would become
this blessed grandchild cradled in my arms.
Likewise, my mother carried the egg that became my daughter
My grandmother carried the egg that became me
Continuously linking us to mothers
far beyond our memory

My daughter gazes adoringly at her new babe
gently rocking, cooing words of comfort and adoration.
My heart swells
She reminds me of myself as I learned the same dance
with her in my arms.
Now a grandmother, my actions instinctively mirror lessons
my mother taught me
She is everywhere in this snug little house
and my grandmother Ruthie, her mother Susie, and her mother Caroline
Connected to us through that miraculous daisy-chain
From womb to womb
They look on and smile
Their wisdom passing to yet another generation
Our mothers guiding our hearts and hands
Loving one more mother into this family
One more child into our hearts.



Untitled

*Handmade Paper and Image Transfer on Canvas by Patti Reed,
Member of St. David's, San Antonio*

*People see different things, different layers, in this collage. Some see the mark on
the woman's cheek as a wound or scar, but I created the "X" as a kiss from Jesus,
which brings healing and peace, and frees her to move out of darkness into light.*



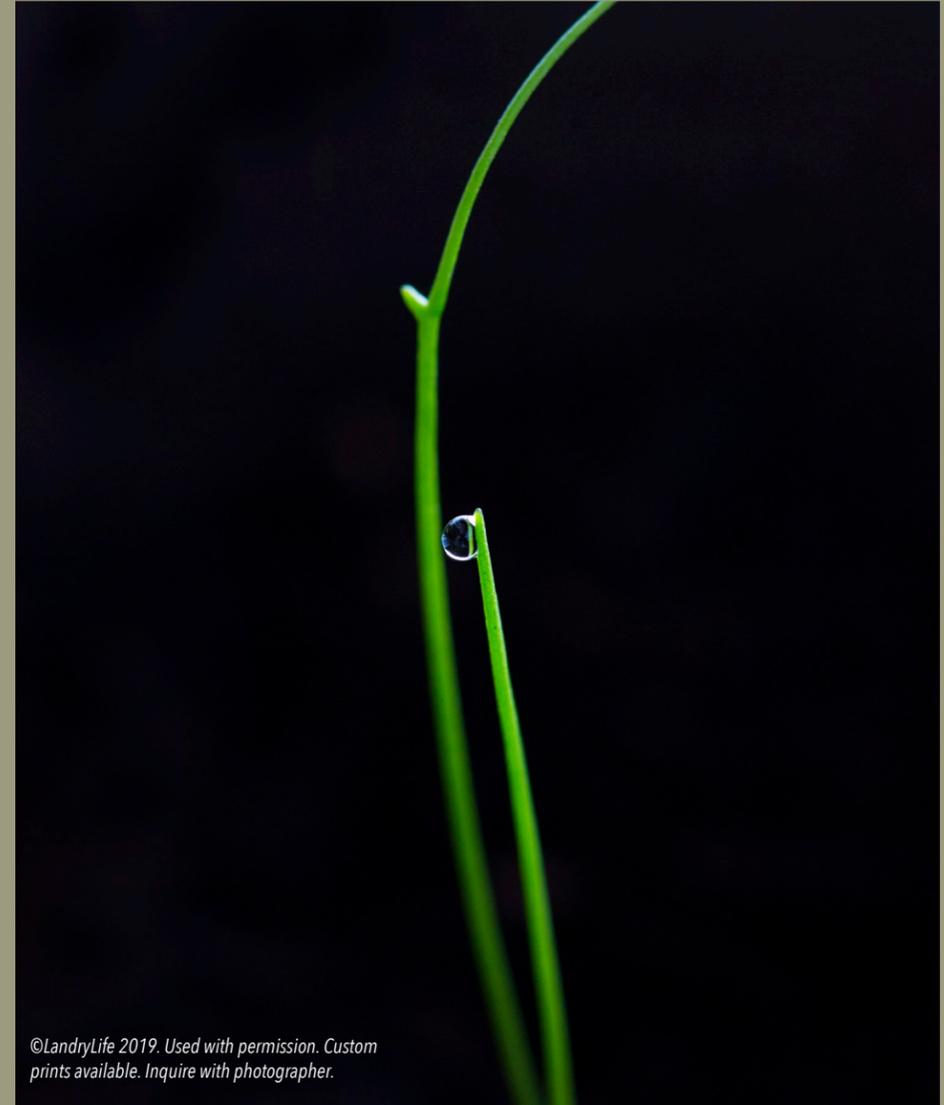
From Womb to Womb - An Icon of Life

*Painting on Canvas by the Rev. Kelly Conkling,
Retired Priest serving St. Timothy's, Cotulla*

*Two years ago, I decided to scrape the paint off of a
painting I didn't like. As I scraped, figures began to
appear. I let the painting sit for a while, wondering
what the figures might represent. Over the past year, I
took it out many times, trying to see what the figures
were saying to me and slowly refining the images. A
couple of weeks after I had completed it, my sister,
Stacy Dowdy, showed me a poem she had been
working on entitled, "Womb to Womb." The two, my
icon and her poem, fit together perfectly.*

Chive

Photograph by Elizabeth Landry, Member of St. Paul's, San Antonio.



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prints available. Inquire with photographer.

*A tiny chive seedling on my back porch, with an equally tiny water droplet so miniscule as to
almost be missed. Photography, and macro work in particular, has been a way for me to pause
and look closer, to take notice of the beauty around me. There is beauty in dramatic landscapes
and stunning sunsets. There is also beauty in the ordinary. Finding beauty in the ordinary
requires a pause, though. An intentional pause to see loveliness in the mundane and daily.
And, having seen, to be grateful for the gift.*

THEOLOGY

THEOLOGICAL REFLECTIONS INSPIRED BY
"HEARTS ENLIGHTENED"

LET ALL THAT HAS BREATH PRAISE THE LORD

THE REV. JOHN INSERRA,
RECTOR OF ST. ALBAN'S, HARLINGEN

The Episcopal church I attended as a young child had unique stained glass windows. The church was built in the 1950s and each window had two panels, on one side was an image of a Biblical event, and on the other an image of real parishioners, as well as the rector and bishop from that time, doing something similar.

While this idea surely helped raise funds for the build at the time, by the late '80s and early '90s the images were notoriously dated. The one window that stays in my mind was near my family's pew; you will be shocked to know that we did not move pews and sat in the same spot every single week. This particular window depicts the Israelites celebrating crossing the Red Sea, with the other panel showing parishioners kneeling in their pew. The Scripture quotes Psalm 150, "Let everything that has breath praise the Lord."

I understand what the window designers meant: that there are numerous ways to praise the Lord and that the trademark reserved style of Episcopalians, especially Episcopalians of the 1950s, is equal to the Israelites' celebration of crossing the Red Sea. The theologian in me, who is the son of one of The Episcopal Church's biggest introverts, wants to believe this to be true, but a larger part of me responds, "Really, they don't feel the same."

I am not sure when I first read Psalm 150 or, even better, when I first actually retained some of it, but it was later in life. Perhaps because of that window I came to associate it with the image described above.



Psalm 150 is all about praising the Lord, beginning with where and why we should praise the Lord.

*Praise God in his sanctuary;
praise him in his mighty heavens.
Praise him for his acts of power;
praise him for his surpassing greatness
(Psalm 150:1-2, NIV)*

We praise God for his greatness and power. This certainly fits with the artistic choice to show the Israelites on the other side of the Red Sea, a liberating act of God's mighty power as far as the Old Testament is concerned.

What I have always found fascinating in the psalm is the portion that follows, on how we should praise the Lord.

*Praise him with the sounding of the trumpet,
praise him with the harp and lyre,
praise him with timbrel and dancing,
praise him with the strings and pipe,
praise him with the clash of cymbals,
praise him with resounding cymbals.
(Psalm 150:3-5, NIV)*

I fully admit my bias; before really reading Psalm 150, I had assumed that the Old Testament way of worship was as rigid as their code of law, obligatory and formulaic. I never pictured the praise band in

the temple that Psalm 150 describes; harp, lyre, timbrel, strings, pipe, plus enough cymbals to clash and resound that the room fills with their sound. And anyone who has ever heard a child practice drums knows how quickly a room can be filled with the sound of cymbals.

The picture painted in the psalm is vibrant, joyous, and loud. It is not really reserved and not really how I would describe The Episcopal Church. While I love the contemplative ethos of our worship, I wonder if there is space for praise and joy to fill the room on a regular basis, along with transcendence. I have grown up in The Episcopal Church, and rarely have I found the two go together.

I remember one day when I got a chance to sit with a professor of church music, well known and respected in the church. Over lunch, he told me his dream, that all the people of God would come to their senses and burn their acoustic guitars in an act akin to the story of Acts 19, when the Ephesians burnt their sorcery scrolls in response to their conversion. Safe to assume this professor was not a resounding cymbals fan. I decided not to press him for his thoughts on harp, lyre, or trumpet.

In the psalm we see musicians coming together to make a joyful noise, another phrase we take from the psalms, in praise. There is even dancing! While I love our liturgy and worship customs, and

could not imagine serving in any other tradition, I wonder if there is something we can gain from allowing a Psalm 150 view of praising the Lord to enter our communities, a space where joy and praise can give balance to

Maybe the silent, reverent kneeling is not the equivalent of joyous, grateful praise of God, but its much needed counterbalance. I hear Psalm 150 as an injunction to loosen up and incorporate joy, thanksgiving, praise, and maybe even noise in my worship of God.

While I love the contemplative ethos of our worship, I wonder if there is space for praise and joy to fill the room on a regular basis, along with transcendence.

reverence and contemplation.

I have come to think that the window comparing the joyous Israelites and kneeling, suit-wearing Episcopalians does not really get it right. Maybe the silent, reverent kneeling is not the equivalent of joyous, grateful praise of God, but its much needed counterbalance. I hear Psalm 150 as an injunction to loosen up and incorporate joy, thanksgiving, praise, and maybe even noise in my worship of God.

Who would have thought the Old Testament could teach us how to loosen up?

The ending reflection of Psalm 150 moves us towards inclusion in this joy and praise.

*Let everything that has breath praise the Lord.
(Psalm 150, verse 6, NIV)*

I remember serving as a chaplain for a skilled care community and leading chapel for residents with dementia. I was new and, in my arrogance, thought the whole exercise would be futile. The experienced chaplain spoke for a few minutes and then led the group in two or three classic hymns. During the hymns I saw people who gave no signs of life come alive, lift their heads, and sing praises to God. I was amazed, humbled, and repentant, that despite their

condition the chaplain was able to lead them in a few minutes of praise.

Let everything that has breath praise the Lord. I love this mandate for inclusivity in Psalm 150. I often think about our way of worship and where children who cannot read, or older people who may struggle with dementia, can find their moment to praise

God. I wonder as the leader of worship if there are moments where everything and everyone with breath can praise the Lord in a weekly liturgy.

How do we allow space for joyful praise of God, for God's greatness, in our worship where all God's people from young to old can participate? That's the image I see in Psalm 150, the noble goal it sets in front of us. Indeed, let everything that has breath praise the Lord.

"My Heart's Eye"

Poem by the Rev. James Derkits, Rector of Trinity by the Sea,
Port Aransas

My once-protected
heart-of-stone
is now grief torn.

Through
the eye-shaped-hole
shines the light.



Wisteria by Elizabeth Landry
©LandryLife2019

OUR LIFE'S CREATIVE JOURNEY

**THE REV. KELLY CONKLING,
RETIRED PRIEST SERVING ST. TIMOTHY'S, COTULLA**

*"When we engage in a creative activity, we are seeking to connect to God,
the great creator, artist to artist." - Douglas Eby*

*"To be in touch with our hearts is to be in touch...with the heart of the
Divine Creator." - Matthew Fox*

As an artist, one of the most frightening things to me is a blank canvas. It is also one of the most exciting things. It incites fear over my ability to make my vision incarnate. It brings excitement over the possibilities of what can be.

This is such a contrast to my granddaughters. When they are presented with a blank piece of paper there is no fear, no hesitation, only excitement. I was recently watching my ten-month-old granddaughter finger paint. She was so intent, so focused with her hands swirling over the paper. Then she looked up, her face covered in smears of red, green, blue and yellow with a smile of such satisfaction and light in her eyes. And the older girls? When they are painting or drawing, there is nothing but fun going on. They are humming, sticking their tongues out as they consider each mark, making big decisions about red or blue. They don't compare, they don't worry that trees aren't purple, they are totally in the moment creating what is true to them.

We are born full of potential and possibilities to become all that God created us to be. Even so, the way we see ourselves, how we feel about ourselves and react to those around us, are formed by the outside world. From the moment of our birth, from the moment that our mother held us,

our sense of identity, our sense of self was formed by the opinions of those around us.

What a beautiful baby! Oh, your baby - is it a boy or girl? She is such a good baby. He is such a fussy child. He does everything he is told. She is so smart. Always in trouble. Moody. Good natured. Responsible. Irresponsible.

We are created with an innate, God-given nature. The problem, however, is that with so much outside input of behavior expectation many, many times the God-self - that true self, that self, created in the image and likeness of God - somehow gets lost in our struggle to make sense of the world and our place in it. We spend our lives trying to find ourselves, trying to discover who God truly intends us to be and what God wants for our lives.

"In the beginning, God created..."
(Genesis 1:1) The first thing we learn about God is that our God is one who creates, and we see this creative nature woven throughout the scriptures. One of God's creations is us, created in God's own image and likeness. It follows, then, that creativity is literally part of our spiritual DNA. Biologically, we procreate. Spiritually, we reflect God's creativity. In Matthew Fox's book, *Creativity: Where the Divine and Human Meet*, he shares a quote from Hildegard of

Bingen, saying "humankind, full of creative possibilities, is God's work. Humankind alone is called to assist God. Humankind is called to co-create. God gave to humankind the talent to create with all the world." As Christians, we are called to live into that heritage that creative truth about ourselves.

Creativity is the work of the imagination, the heart, the brain, and the spirit. It is through our imaginations and our heart center that we begin to understand something of the nature of God. God, who cannot be seen, heard, felt, touched, smelled, tasted, or logically understood, can still be imagined. So the imagination, the creative force, is an instrument of faith. This faith becomes concrete, incarnate, something that we can see, hear, feel, touch, smell, taste, and experience in other ways, through the act of making. Therefore, the intentional act of engaging in creativity as a spiritual practice is an act of trying to make known the object of our faith - God.

There was a time when I believed that making art, praying art, creative expression was an act of self-indulgence. It is not. It is an act of faith, a movement of the parts towards the whole. Creativity is a calling from the spirit, a chance at one of life's most powerful experiences, to make

A LESSON IN CURIOSITY

THE REV. BRIAN TARVER,
RECTOR OF ST. PHILIP'S, BEEVILLE

something whole from the pieces of our lives. In the creative process, we must listen, open ourselves, summon courage, commit ourselves to the task, and begin. Not waiting for the sentence to be fully formed before writing the first word. Not waiting for the completed image to form in our minds before approaching the canvas.

Creativity is a calling from the spirit, a chance at one of life's most powerful experiences, to make something whole from the pieces of our lives.

We are all creators and artists, even if you have never thought of yourself in this way. We all have the gift to imagine. Each of us, as our own unique person, has our own creative journey, and we must each find our own way, whether through the visual arts, poetry, music, gardening, housekeeping, cooking, teaching, counseling, nursing and doctoring, raising children, or running a business. Any creative endeavor, when intentionally approached as a spiritual practice, becomes a living prayer, makes one's faith tangible, and makes God present in the world.

Creative practices open us up to God, open our hearts to the stirrings of the Spirit, free our creative imaginations, and allow us to see more deeply into our own hearts, and into the heart of God. This creative spirit, fostered and cared for within us, flows outward into our own lives, our relationships, and the world around us. Creativity then, as a spiritual practice, is an act of living. Anthropologist Ellen Dissanayake observed that the act of creating is a biological need that is basic to human nature, and she describes creativity as, very simply, "making special." This creativity, she believes, encompasses our whole lives so that every act in which we "make special" can be a creative one whether it be play or work, relationships, problems or celebrations.

Over the years, creativity and art have become more and more essential to my priestly life and relationship with God; it has become my primary form of prayer, enabling me to intentionally live into who God has called me to be. In my ministry, I encourage people to seek out and discover their own unique creative gift, to make it part of their spiritual practice and an integral part of their lives. I once read, "the most visible creators I know of are those artists whose medium is life itself. The ones who express the impossible –

without brush, hammer, clay or guitar. They neither paint nor sculpt – their medium is being. Whatever their presence touches has increased life. They see and don't have to draw. They are the artists of being alive."

Creativity is always a process, not a final product. It is never too late to begin living into your creative journey. You cannot change what has been, but from this point on, your life is a blank canvas – to live creatively – to collaborate with God and allow God to bring out something new – to design and live as only you are meant to – to live into your unique call – created in the image of God.

Imagine what you want your life to be. Imagine what you can change. Imagine what you can learn. Imagine what you, through God, can bring to life. Imagine who you are, deep down in the center of your heart – your God-created self, hidden within. Open your heart and look deep within: What is God calling you to do, to be? What will you create or make special? What prayer will you make tangible? How will you make God incarnate in the world?

**"The work of the eyes is done. Go now and do the heart-work on the images improvised within you."
- Rainer Maria Rilke**

Standing at the front of the room for the first time as an elementary classroom teacher is a nerve-racking experience. I have always tried to imagine ways of putting to use my arts background in my priestly vocation. However, until the school at St. Philip's, Beeville needed to fill the art teacher position, I had never entertained filling this role. But there I was, learning how saintly and underrated teachers are. It was my first time to manage chaotic classrooms, trying to adapt what I knew for the students. So I stood at the front of the room and posed my first question to the class, "How many of you are creative?" The majority of the students did not raise their hands. When I asked why they thought they were not creative, each one of them explained how they were not good at drawing.

We often mistakenly equate technical proficiency with accomplished creativity. Evident by the students' shamefully admitting to poor drawing skills, too many people assume that mastering a narrow set of artistic skills represents a creative mind. Following this model, people can achieve artistic proficiency only after years of mastery. Pablo Picasso begs to differ, and is quoted saying, "Every child is an artist. The problem is how to remain an artist once he grows up." For the master artist, creativity is something we innately possess, some part of us that is sadly restricted and lost over time. Unfortunately, creativity, if not fostered or regularly practiced, becomes an atrophied muscle.

The big question is, "Why?" Why do we often lose the ability to be creative?

Creativity, ultimately, necessitates risk. Setting out in uncharted waters, blazing a new path, making something different or unheard of, requires trial and error. It means playing, trying something, failing often, and starting again. Creativity practices repeated risk and failure, but people tend to be risk averse and afraid to fail. Why go

out on a limb when the tried and true ways can limit risk? The influential jazz musician, Louis Armstrong, is recorded as saying, "What we play is life." Improvisation sparks newness and energy. Children at play do not worry about failure or risk. They can imagine new things due to their reckless abandon. Recovering a sense of play and letting go of potential failure brings about life. It allows for surprise, for the unexpected.

Photography, probably more than any other medium, requires technical proficiency. Technical know-how of camera settings can be a barrier to entry with this art form, but it does not have to be. A whole world of toy camera enthusiasts have shown that the unpredictability of these plastic cameras can result in fantastic pictures. When I learned of the toy camera phenomenon among accomplished photographers, I had to give it a try. Buying a plastic toy camera, photography felt more like play. Without any expectation of perfection, I could experiment.

Creativity, if not fostered or regularly practiced, becomes an atrophied muscle.

I tried this thing where I only halfway wound the film after each picture. What resulted was a kind of ongoing picture. It was like a "mash-up" of different scenes, a story played out across several connected images. Some stories worked, created interesting sequences. Others fell flat and were lost to the cutting room floor. The imprecision of the toy camera brought out the ability to experiment.

My idea would have never come about without the permission to play.

A life with God is not a life to acquire technical proficiency. It is more like an artistic experiment. It expresses vulnerability and explores creation with curiosity and possibility.

Unfortunately, many people understand the spiritual life to require the opposite of creativity. Ideas of perfection, the “right way”, or quantifiable success, somehow get all tangled up with spirituality. But, a healthy spiritual life has incredible joy, vulnerability, the unexpected, and even play.

Nowhere more present is the creative spirit at work in Scripture than in the Book of Psalms. The Psalms record the many ways people encountered, argued, and rejoiced with their Maker. They give permission to be curious, to be vulnerable, to venture risk. They reveal people being imperfect, and they showcase beautiful artistry. The Psalms embody creative expression. People often turn to the Psalms for encouragement or a helpful mantra,

but more than an individual verse used for a pick-me-up, the Psalms as a whole grant us permission to wade into the life of God as an explorer. Wonder and curiosity are innate gifts. Delving into the rich expanse of the Psalms, inner curiosity and playfulness are only encouraged.

Psalm 100 says, “Know this: The LORD himself is God; he himself has made us, and we are his; we are his people and the sheep of his pasture.”

We are made, and we make. This relationship is imprecise and imperfect, risky and vulnerable. It is also energy, and surprise, and play, and life. Our spiritual life will not culminate in mastery. A life with God is not a life to acquire technical proficiency. It is more like an artistic experiment. It expresses vulnerability and explores creation with curiosity and possibility. With the Psalms as an example, venture to try a new expression. “Sing to the Lord a new song” (Psalm 96).



Above Connected by the Rev. Brian Tarver

BANISH THE WORDS OF YOUR THIRD GRADE ART TEACHER

THE REV. BETH KNOWLTON,
RECTOR OF ST. MARK'S, SAN ANTONIO

I was at a workshop called “Spiritual Autobiography Through Creative Expression,” and it had taken some guts for me to sign up. You see, I don’t think of myself as creative. For some reason as a child I had internalized the notion that my sister was the creative one, which precluded my participation in that arena.

I was, however, always expected to make the salads growing up, because I had a “wonderful way of arranging vegetables.” I assumed that if I was going to be creative, it was clearly limited to cruciferous expressions with an occasional dip into the world of fruit. These were the expectations set for us as children, not out of any malice, but rather an attempt to honor who we were. It took me many years to realize that my sister’s gifts didn’t need to have anything to do with how I thought about my own giftedness. We could both be creative, even if this showed up in different ways.

So, I finally signed up for an “art thing.” I had heard good things about the woman who did these workshops and decided to give it a whirl. She started our time together by lighting a candle. As she lit it, she said, “This is to banish the words of your third grade art teacher who told you that you were not able to draw. It is to invite you into the space to allow your creative gifts to emerge with the freedom of the Holy Spirit.”

I learned many things in those workshops, but perhaps one of the most important was that the creative process is just that—a process.

We would gather in her workshop, listen to some meditative readings, and then we would work in silence. We were invited to go and take whatever materials seemed interesting to us and work with them. At the end of our meditative time we would share with one another what had emerged for us. It was always a time of rich sharing, and deep things

sprang from the process that bared our souls. I often found myself discovering important spiritual insights that would never have come from my usual left-brained analysis of the world.

What was most interesting to me was the lack of attachment I developed to the actual art piece. Sometimes I was delighted with the results, and sometimes I threw away what I had made as soon as I got home. But regardless of the final product, I had learned something important. I never regretted the time spent, and it was an honor to see how others could hear the same readings and have such vastly different responses.

‘This is to banish the words of your third grade art teacher who told you that you were not able to draw. It is to invite you into the space to allow your creative gifts to emerge with the freedom of the Holy Spirit.’

Honoring creativity as a process is a way to invite ourselves into a partnership with God. The Psalmist reminds us in Psalm 104 to look to the creation to see evidence of God’s presence. When we proclaim in wonder, “O Lord, how manifold are your works! In wisdom you have made them all; the earth is full of your creatures (Psalm 104:24),” we understand that we are part of that. When we rejoice in the

growth of the fields, we see grace scattered not only in the harvest, but in all the steps we have co-participated in that have allowed that grace to be manifest. If we are made in the image of our Creator, then to be creative is a deeply human trait. This does not mean we will all become professional artists, but it does mean that deep lessons can emerge from creative acts.

When I was leading a lot of retreats during my work at the Cathedral in Atlanta I always included an art project of some sort. But it was not based on everyone coming up with the same product. Instead, I used lessons I learned from those open-ended workshops that allowed me to engage with materials without a clear idea of what might manifest during our time together. I was usually met with resistance from some of the participants. They too had internalized the idea that they were not meant for that kind of expression. I could usually encourage them enough along the way that they would eventually become free to discover the process we were being invited into.

If we are made in the image of our Creator, then to be creative is a deeply human trait.

A few years ago, after I landed here in San Antonio, I got a wonderful text from someone I worked with at the Cathedral. She was passing along a message from one of the women who used to come on those many

part of yourself. Can you approach it with a spirit of playfulness? Can you let go of the final results enough to allow yourself to explore a fuller life of creativity? Maybe start by lighting a candle and offering this prayer,

Creator God, who invites our participation in the creative work of your world; Set aside any doubt which might prevent me from more fully experiencing your presence, so that I might further the work of your kingdom, through the power of your Son, Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen

retreats. It was a beautiful picture of an elaborate quilt that the woman had just completed. She said, “Please pass this along to Beth. I always dreaded her art projects on those retreats, but usually just made myself do them. I never would have found quilting without the invitation to engage in creative pursuits.”

We are created with an indwelling spirit of creativity. What voices do you need to banish to allow yourself to explore this part of yourself more deeply? What might you risk to try and engage this

TIDINGS

NEWS OF DIOCESAN MINISTRIES
AND INITIATIVES

In beauty I walk

Hózhóogo naasháa doo

With beauty before me I walk

Shitsiji' hózhóogo naasháa doo

With beauty behind me I walk

Shikéédéé hózhóogo naasháa doo

With beauty above me I walk

Shideigi hózhóogo naasháa doo

With beauty around me I walk

T'áá altso shinaagóó hózhóogo naasháa doo

It has become beauty again

Hózhó náhasdlii'

Excerpt from the Navajo Blessingway "Hózhóji"
Closing Prayer

IN BEAUTY I WALK

NAVAJOLAND MISSION PARTNERSHIP

LAURA KEAN MCGREW,
COMMUNICATIONS MANAGER OF THE DIOCESE OF WEST TEXAS



Photos for this article taken by the Rev. Jack Robertson,
Deacon of St. Timothy's Episcopal Church, Greenville, NC.
Used with permission.



There is exquisite beauty in the Episcopal Church in Navajoland, shaped by centuries of common prayers and community life, rooted in a connection to the earth, and persisting in the face of the historic violence experienced by North American indigenous peoples. It is a beauty that exists in harmony with the scriptures, traditions, and reason of The Episcopal Church, an intersection encapsulated by the Navajo word hózhó, meaning wholeness, balance, beauty, or unity. Hózhó represents a holistic wellness of body, mind, spirit, and community that inform the current mission of the Episcopal Church in Navajoland as it continues

to find its place within the Episcopal branch of the Jesus Movement.

Recognizing the unique spiritual gifts of this region and the missed opportunities to serve Episcopalians who also identify as Diné, the word the tribe uses to identify itself in the Navajo language, The Episcopal Church combined portions of the Dioceses of the Rio Grande, Arizona, and Utah that share a border with the Navajo Reservation in the Four Corners region of the United States, creating the Navajoland Area Mission Diocese in 1978, encompassing 27,000 square miles.

Previous Page Left The steeple of the Hózhó Wellness Center's chapel in Farmington, NM.
Previous Page Right Pueblo dwellings in Canyon de Chelly, a National Monument site encompassing 84,000 acres of land within the Navajo Nation.

Today, the Rt. Rev. David Bailey, Bishop of Navajoland, divides his time between visiting congregations, raising up clergy and lay leaders from within local congregations, and traveling extensively to build relationships with neighboring diocese. Bishop Bailey promotes a four-pronged vision for the Church which focuses on promoting wellness and sustainability, providing culturally relevant and effective education opportunities, building fellowship between the clergy and congregations of Navajoland, and nurturing relationships with partner dioceses.

In 2017, the Rt. Rev. David Reed answered Bishop Bailey's invitation to begin an exploratory partnership between Navajoland and the Diocese of West Texas. In the years following, Bishop Bailey has visited West Texas several times, addressing Diocesan Council and visiting with our bishops and churches about the needs and opportunities within the region. From the start, Bishop Bailey and Bishop Reed have shared their hopes for a

collaborative, sustainable partnership of equals, a two-way friendship that will advance the mission and spiritual growth of both dioceses.

Several mission teams, clergy, and diocesan staff members have traveled between West Texas and Navajoland to learn the history of this region, to repair church and diocesan facilities, and to begin rebuilding relationships of trust between the Diné people and the Church, marred by generations of broken promises and well-meaning, charitable projects that nevertheless failed or fed into broken systems of dependence and poverty.

Dr. Marthe Curry, Director of World Mission for the Diocese of West Texas, brings decades of experience building sustainable mission partnerships to this growing relationship between the dioceses. She has guided the process and visited Navajoland multiple times with mission teams and alone, driven by her relentless commitment to mission inspired by faith.



Hogon, a traditional dwelling place of the Navajo families built in a circle, signifying the connections between everyday life and the sacred traditions of both the Diné and the Christian faith.



Members of the first team from West Texas to visit the Episcopal Church in Navajoland.

*It has become beauty again
Hózhó náhásdlíí'
It has become beauty again
Hózhó náhásdlíí'
It has become beauty again
Hózhó náhásdlíí'
It has become beauty again
Hózhó náhásdlíí'*

Curry describes the delicate balance between acknowledging the challenges and celebrating the opportunities of this partnership, saying, "We look at where we are, the history [of Navajoland] and the difficulties, but we don't stop there; we bring hope. In the first sermon Jesus preached, he says, 'The Spirit of the Lord is on me, ... to proclaim freedom for the prisoners and recovery of sight for the blind, to set the oppressed free,' and 'Today, this scripture is fulfilled in your hearing.' (Matthew 22: 18, 21 NIV). Well, today we've still got blind eyes, broken people, and people in chains, but we've got Good News and the Spirit of the Lord is upon us. Jesus has been at work in Navajoland and West Texas, and he is at work now. We are called to join him there and work together as his people."

She emphasizes that learning about the historic and modern challenges faced by the Episcopal Church in Navajoland can lead to a disquieting sense of disequilibrium. However, Curry warns against becoming discouraged in the face of this challenge, emphasizing that our sense of spiritual unease should "make us look at our own position again, make us examine ourself and work towards equilibrium [hózhó] by studying Jesus' teachings and following his example. There is much work to be done, and everyone ought to be able to find a project to call their own," whether it is serving on a mission team, hosting educational sessions in West Texas, sponsoring services and programs provided by the Episcopal Church in Navajoland

to the Diné people, or the prayerful work of reconciliation.

This invitation to friendships in Christ and shared ministry is an opportunity to shine the bright light of Christ into the dark, cobwebbed corners of our nation's history and to seek a way forward together as friends. This is not a simple invitation, and there is no shortcut to reconciliation. Ultimately, the meaning that may be missing from our modern lives of full calendars and empty pursuits can only be found at the shared table, through the sacraments of Jesus' body and blood poured out for all, the ultimate expression of unity and of wholeness. We are called to pick up our crosses and follow Jesus, together, to wholeness, to beauty, to community, to hózhó.

The World Mission Department will host a Navajoland Partners Workshop at the Bishop Jones Center in San Antonio on Saturday, January 25, 2020, from 10:30 a.m. to 1:00 p.m., including lunch. The Rev. David Chalk, Rector of St. Francis by the Lake in Canyon Lake, and Marthe Curry, Director of World Mission, will present the history, call, priorities, and objectives of this complex relationship. Anyone who is interested in supporting or participating in this mission partnership is invited to attend. RSVP online at dwtx.org/world-mission.

Photos for this article taken by Haley Bankey, Member of St. Nicholas Launch Team. Used with permission.



ST. NICHOLAS CHURCH PLANT BLOOMS WITH JOY

PUBLIC WORSHIP LAUNCHES IN SPRING BRANCH, TX

**EMILY V. KITTRELL,
DIRECTOR OF MARKETING & COMMUNICATIONS
FOR THE DIOCESE OF WEST TEXAS**

Four years into the process of planting a church in the Diocese of West Texas, the Rev. Beth Wyndham, in collaboration with a village of support, has brought the bishop's vision to life creatively and joyously. St. Nicholas Episcopal Church, the newest diocesan congregation, celebrated its first public worship service on Sunday, December 8th, in Spring Branch, Texas.

The Church Planting Initiative was launched in 2016 by the Rt. Rev. David Reed. A task force began studying, and in 2018 called the Rev. Beth Wyndham as Church Planter. Beth and her husband, Jeremy, were commissioned at the 115th Council of the diocese in February 2019, where she announced that the planting efforts would be directed along the US 281 corridor near Bulverde and Spring Branch, north of San Antonio. Throughout 2019, the Wyndhams researched the region extensively, which included current demographic data, as well as visiting area churches across denominations. They also formed a three-year ministry plan, including the budget and a timeline. In late spring, the launch team began gathering in coffee shops and homes, and Bishop Reed officially discerned the church's name of St. Nicholas Episcopal Church. Beth and the launch team then coordinated community outreach events to begin advertising the "joy filled church" within the community, including a Back to School picnic and backpack blessing, and St. Francis Day pet blessing. While St. Nick's approached its first official public worship service, the plant was announced as a recipient of a \$30,000 seed grant from The Episcopal Church in October to support new worshipping communities throughout the Church.

Throughout the entire planning process, Beth and the St. Nick's launch team allowed themselves to be open to the new and different ways that God is calling them to exist in their community. This meant everyone had to let go of some of their own personal preferences and ideas to trust what God has in store. The team focused on staying open to creative expressions of faith, if you will, from blessing pets in a Wal-Mart parking lot, to intentionally equipping members to share their faith with

“We are a community deeply committed to living JOYOUS lives. We are committed to loving Jesus and reaching out to Others with authenticity and grace; we are a church for all ages - Young and Old and every age in between. United in the love of Jesus Christ, we live our lives being Sent to serve our community.”

others and lead small groups that follow mutual invitation guidelines with no expectation to join the larger, corporate congregation.

One of the books the launch team studied was *Surprise the World: The Five Habits of Highly Missional People* by Michael Frost. Frost challenges readers to a life filled by habits of reaching out to others in a way that invites questions and sharing the Gospel in organic, surprising, and authentic ways. Beth said, “I think this study, along with time in prayer, study, and fellowship with one another has led the St. Nick’s community to see how necessary it is to share our faith. But we also want to do it in a way that meets others where they are with grace and humility. We often recite our desire to be a community where everyone matters, everyone is loved, and everyone belongs. We wholeheartedly want to meet people where they are in their faith lives, but also share how Jesus is changing us and working on us. And of course, most of the time we do this, we are in places other than our worship space since that is rented out and only used on Sundays. Our faith conversations and studies happen in homes, coffee shops, restaurants, offices,

and on the street. We are doing what Jesus did, meeting people where they are, in their lives, and loving them.”

Jeremy said, “Our community strives to be a place where negative opinions and preconceptions of Christians are shattered, and all feel that their varied backgrounds and opinions help to make St. Nick’s an inclusive community, reflecting the diversity of all of God’s kingdom. St. Nick’s will embody the generosity and kid-friendliness of its namesake.”

The first public worship aligned exactly with their vision. On Sunday, December 8th greeters welcomed visitors and guests at every point of entry, even with assistance for elderly in the parking lot. Worship took place in the yoga studio of a family fitness center, with yoga mats and blocks neatly pushed aside to make room for the stage, altar, and chairs. Band members leading worship had no previous experience in a Christian community. Children were encouraged to participate in every aspect of the service, with activity kits available for tactile learning during the service. The liturgy and

lyrics were projected on the wall with no printed bulletins or use of Prayer Books or Hymnals. Coffee and tea were welcome and provided in the worship space.

Over the next year, the church will continue to participate in and host public events, partner with other congregations and organizations to serve the community, and form new small groups for members and guests.

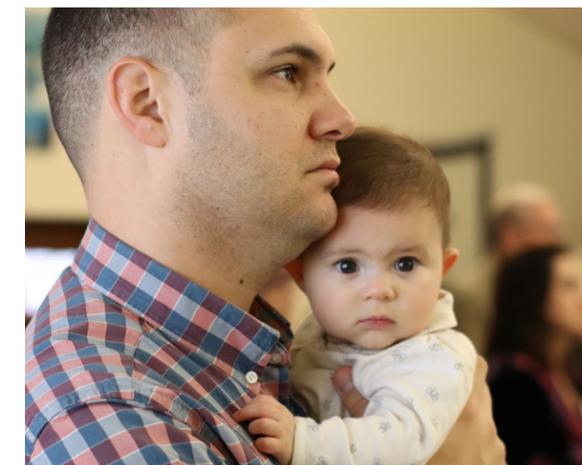
Beth and Jeremy continually express their gratitude and appreciation for the outpouring of support from the diocesan family as they have begun this journey. Many churches have shared liturgical resources, Godly Play materials, financial support, human resources, and an abundance of prayers to assist the planting efforts. However, there remains a plethora of opportunities to partner with and support the community of St. Nick’s, including continued prayer, in-kind donations of resources and materials, financial support, volunteers, and trainers or workshop leaders. Beth stated, “We are full of gratitude. Our prayer is that as we grow we may offer support and love back into our community and our diocese for many years to come. We wholeheartedly and joyously praise God for the efforts of everyone to build up this little part of God’s Kingdom.”

Rooted in faith and evangelism, nurtured by the communion of saints within the diocese and beyond, and blooming with joyful hospitality, St. Nicholas flourishes in the hill country and

offers a beautiful expression of faith we all can be encouraged by. St. Nick’s may be unique in its public expression and creative in its functions, but we all have something to learn from the faith of Beth and Jeremy, which allows them to embody Jesus in their community and shepherd His followers into disciples. May we all strive to be as open, faithful, creative, and filled with Godly joy as the people of St. Nick’s Episcopal Church.

St. Nicholas Episcopal Church, Spring Branch gathers for Worship at 9:30am on Sundays at Family Fitness, 4800 US HWY 281, Spring Branch, TX 78070. All are welcome. For more information, visit www.stnickshillcountry.org and stay connected on Facebook, Instagram, and Twitter (@stnickshilletry). If you would like to connect an individual or family to St. Nick’s, you may provide them with the Rev. Beth Wyndham’s cell phone: 214-213-0739 and e-mail: revbeth@stnickshillcountry.org

Previous Pages Advent Wreath at St. Nick’s Worship Launch
 Opposite Page Left The Rev. Beth Wyndham offers a blessing over a child during Eucharist
 Opposite Page Right Father holds his infant during worship



WALKING WITH HEARTS ENLIGHTENED

IMMIGRATION MINISTRY IN THE
EPISCOPAL DIOCESE OF WEST TEXAS

**LAURA KEAN MCGREW,
COMMUNICATIONS MANAGER OF THE
DIOCESE OF WEST TEXAS**

The Diocese of West Texas shares approximately five hundred border miles with Mexico, along the Rio Grande from Del Rio to Boca Chica Beach on the southernmost tip of the state. Individuals and churches throughout the diocese are responding to the needs of asylum seekers, as well as local law enforcement members, in a variety of outreach and pastoral care ministries. Additionally, the diocese has sent mission teams for decades into the countries from which many are fleeing today, and continues to pursue sustainable mission projects to care for vulnerable populations there.

In a letter released on World Refugee Day 2019, the Rt. Rev. David Reed wrote, “as the immigration crisis continues to roil and divide our beloved country, we find our souls as stressed as our legal and political systems. Our desire to act wisely and compassionately, to “Walk in love, as Christ loved us,” collides with the enormity and complexity of the issues. ...A simple solution to this crisis does not exist, but we can be instruments of God’s grace and peace. We cannot do everything, but for Christ’s sake, we can do something.”

Bishop Reed continued, “A number of our clergy and people are doing something to alleviate the human suffering along the border and farther north. I commend them for the hope and healing they offer, for their persistent love in the face of suffering. I commend them to your prayers and as worthy of our support. They are seeking to serve Christ in the person standing in front of them, whether asylum seeker or Border Patrol agent.”

In May 2019, the Diocese hosted a “Walk in Love” Border Tour, joined by several Episcopal Church staff representatives and the Rt. Rev. Anne Hodges-Copple, Bishop Suffragan of North Carolina. The tour allowed participants to experience humanitarian efforts and hear from clergy and lay leaders within the Diocese who are involved in ministries to asylum seekers, law enforcement, and government officials in South Texas, San Antonio, and Matamoros, Mexico, providing insight into the complexities of the issue and illuminating the



Previous Pages Andrea Rudnik serves breakfast to asylum seekers waiting for processing in Matamoros, Mexico
 Opposite Page Top Left Clothes hanging to dry on tree branches outside a tent city in Matamoros, Mexico
 Opposite Page Top Right Mother holds a polaroid image taken by a volunteer of her son
 Opposite Page Bottom Left Man holds a Spanish Prayer Book during Eucharist led by the Rev. Laurie McKim
 Opposite Bottom Right The Rev. Laurie McKim and the Rt. Rev. Anne Hodges-Copple serve communion to a young woman

need for continued outreach efforts.

During her reflection on the tour, Bishop Hodges-Copple said, “I needed to go and be present, not with any presuppositions, not with any agenda, just to be present and listen and see for myself and try to see what God is trying to say at this time.” Bishop Hodges-Copple continued,

One of the core missions of people of God and The Episcopal Church is the ministry of hospitality and welcoming the stranger.

“The community in North Carolina that is growing numerically, growing in faith, and growing our churches, are our newest neighbors who are all from Central America. These are our folks from Honduras, from El Salvador, from Guatemala, and they love going to church and they love bringing their children to church. These are the families our Episcopal churches are praying come through our doors... If I’m going to also understand my people, then I need to understand some of what they’ve been through and some about where they are coming from. I’ve done trips to Honduras, I’ve been in Central America, but what is happening on the border has just felt particularly heartbreaking, confusing, and painful.”

Jennifer Wickham, Bishop’s Deputy for Disaster Recovery, also attended the tour and afterwards reflected, “What gives me hope in the midst of the darkness is that there are people still out there who are saying their prayers, and saying, ‘What can I do? How can I help?’ And that is what it’s going to take, the people who want to be the hands and the feet [of Christ] showing up.”

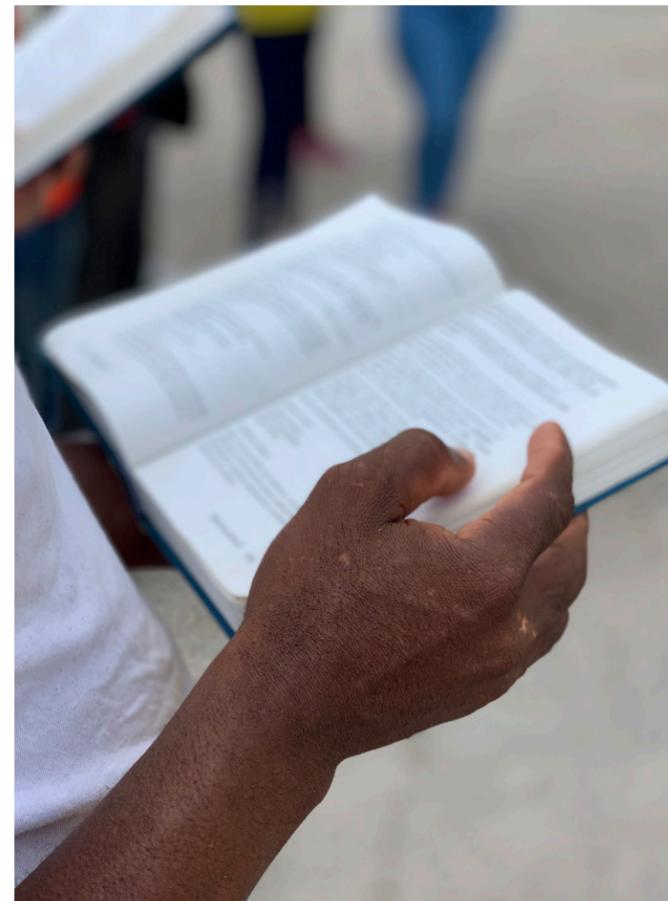
Later in the summer, the Episcopal Bishops in the State of Texas issued an open letter to state and federal elected officials. In the letter, initiated by the Rt. Rev. Scott Mayer, Bishop of Northwest Texas and Fort Worth (provisional), with input from the cosigning

bishops, the bishops declare, “All of Texas feels the impact of anything that happens on our southern border... We feel it in our souls, for these are our neighbors, and we love them. We write to decry the conditions in detention centers at our border, because we are Christians and Jesus is unequivocal. We are to pray without ceasing for everyone involved – refugees, elected officials, and law enforcement – while also advocating for the humane treatment of the human beings crowding our borders as they flee the terror and violence of their home countries.”

The week before Thanksgiving 2019, The Episcopal Church hosted the second Border Ministries Summit in

Tucson, Arizona. Participants learned about the border and its history, America’s current immigration system, how U.S. domestic, foreign, and trade policies impact neighboring Mexico and Central American countries, and the ministries carried out by dioceses and churches on either side of the border. Tatiana Hoekcer, former diocesan employee and current staff member of the Office of Global Partnerships, presented a report on the situation and activities in the Diocese of West Texas. Plans are underway for a third annual Border Ministries Summit in 2020 to be held in San Diego, California.

One of the core missions of people of God and The Episcopal Church is the ministry of hospitality and welcoming the stranger. As the diocese continues to respond to the changing needs, news and information, including a list of immigration ministries within the diocese and opportunities for engagement and support, can be found at dwtx.org/immigration.



AFFAIRS

INFORMATION ON DIOCESAN
EVENTS AND AFFAIRS

COUNCIL 2020

FEBRUARY 20 - 22, 2020
CORPUS CHRISTI, TX
#HEARTSENLIGHTENED

www.council-dwtx.org

INVITATION

All Saints', Corpus Christi, and Trinity, Port Aransas will host the 116th Diocesan Council of the Diocese of West Texas. Council will convene at the AmericanBank Center in Corpus Christi. The Host Churches are thrilled to welcome all to the Coastal Bend to enjoy the beauty of the natural setting, to engage in creativity, and to build and strengthen our relationships in our diocesan community. More information and complete details of Council are available online at www.council-dwtx.org.

BUSINESS

ELECTED OFFICES TO BE FILLED

Offices to be filled by election at Diocesan Council include: Secretary, Treasurer, Chancellor, and more as **Officers of the Diocese**; Members of the **Standing Committee**; Members of the **Executive Board**; Trustees of **the Episcopal Church Corporation of West Texas**; Trustees of **Sewanee: the University of the South**; Trustees of **TMI Episcopal**; and Delegates and Alternate Delegates for **General Convention / Provincial Synod 2021**.

RESOLUTIONS

All resolutions to be presented at council are received before Dec. 31, 2019 and reviewed by the Committee on Constitutions and Canons. Anticipated resolutions to be presented in 2020 include creating the office of Assistant Bishop for a period not to exceed three years. More on next page.

REPORTS

The diocesan bishop invites committee chairs and ministry leaders to present written, verbal, or video reports on ministries and initiatives of the diocese. All reports are shared on the council website.

PROGRAM

WORKSHOPS

Returning in 2020 after many years of absence, Bishop Reed and diocesan staff have organized two workshop sessions on Friday afternoon, to build community, foster connections, and broaden knowledge. Every participant will join two of the thirteen workshops offered. RSVP is required through the Council registration process.

EUCCHARIST

After Council Business concludes Thursday evening, all are welcome to gather for Holy Eucharist, beginning at 5:30 p.m. in Selena Auditorium with guest preacher **the Rev. Becca Stevens**. Becca is an author, speaker, Episcopal priest, social entrepreneur, and president of Thistle Farms in Nashville, Tennessee.

BISHOP'S LUNCHEON

All attendees are invited to join the Bishop's Luncheon on Friday, featuring speaker **Dr. Scott Bader-Saye**, Professor of Christian Ethics and Moral Theology, Seminary of the Southwest, Austin.

COUNCIL BANQUET

Friday business concludes with a fellowship banquet, celebrating the rich blessings of shared ministry and friendship within our diocesan community. A Reception will begin at 6:15 p.m., and the Banquet will start at 6:45 p.m. Entertainment will be provided by **Down for the Count Band**.

MINISTRY MEALS & GATHERINGS

Clergy spouses, Commission for Women's Ministry, Small Church, Big Mission, and the Christian Formation Committee will offer meals and gathering opportunities to those wishing to attend.



BISHOP SUFFRAGAN TRANSITION

In September 2019, the Rt. Rev. David Reed, Bishop of West Texas, shared that the Rt. Rev. Jennifer Brooke-Davidson would be resigning as Bishop Suffragan of West Texas to accept a call to serve as Assistant Bishop in the Episcopal Diocese of Virginia. Following this announcement, Bishop Reed and the Standing Committee of West Texas began meeting regularly to consider the next best steps to support the mission and ministries of the diocese and consider the new opportunities that God may place before it through this transition.

The Standing Committee and Bishop Reed agreed not to hold, or call for, a Suffragan Bishop's election at Diocesan Council in 2020, due to the substantial time, resources, and energy required to facilitate a fruitful election and believing that the clergy and people of West Texas would encounter difficulties preparing hearts and minds to elect a successor only three years after the previous bishop suffragan election. To support the immediate mission and ministries of the Diocese of West Texas, Bishop Reed and the Standing Committee will submit a resolution to Diocesan Council in February 2020 asking the Council to create the office of Assistant Bishop, and to give Bishop Reed approval to seek and appoint an already consecrated bishop to that position.

Bishop Reed and the Standing Committee will submit a resolution to Diocesan Council in February 2020 asking the Council to create the office of Assistant Bishop.

In this way, the Diocese may benefit again from the work of two bishops, which has been its practice for more than sixty years. This resolution is not an attempt to circumvent the diocese's right to elect its bishops, but rather to respond in a faithful, creative, and timely fashion to the current situation, and to provide for needed episcopal ministry. It is an interim step, taken by Council resolution rather than canonical change, and the office of Assistant Bishop will not last longer than three years unless Council chooses to renew it.

For reference, the canons of The Episcopal Church provide for three types of bishops to serve in an assisting role to the diocesan bishop: suffragan, assisting, and assistant.

A suffragan bishop is elected by the clergy and people of a diocese and can be a priest who will then be consecrated in order to serve. Their tenure is not determined by the diocesan bishop. West Texas has elected six suffragan bishops since the mid-1950s, including Bishop Brooke-Davidson, Bishop Reed in 2006, and Bishop Hibbs in 1996.

An assisting bishop is an already consecrated bishop who serves on an occasional basis at the request of the diocesan bishop, helping with confirmation visits and other duties of the bishop. Typically, they have retired from the dioceses in which they were previously called to serve.

An assistant bishop is an already consecrated bishop called by the diocesan bishop to serve on an ongoing, regular basis with duties delegated to them by the diocesan bishop. They can serve in a full-time or part-time capacity and typically have resigned all previous responsibilities to other dioceses. An assistant bishop's tenure cannot extend beyond that of the diocesan bishop who called him or her.

The results of the Council 2020 resolution will be made available on the diocesan blog in February 2020, at www.dwtx.org/blog.

Opposite Page Charlotte's Web by
Elizabeth Landry @LandryLife2019

DIOCESAN EVENTS LIST

WWW.DWTX.ORG/EVENTS

DIOCESAN COUNCIL

01/19 Western Convocation Pre-Council
01/21 Northern Convocation Pre-Council
01/22 Eastern Convocation Pre-Council
01/23 Northeastern Convocation Pre-Council
01/26 Valley Convocation Pre-Council
01/27 Southern Convocation Pre-Council
01/30 Central Convocation Pre-Council
02/20 - 02/22 Diocesan Council

AD-HOC COMMITTEE ON APPORTIONMENT

03/01 Northern Convocation Meeting
03/05 Western Convocation Meeting
03/08 Northeastern Convocation Meeting
03/23 Valley Convocation Meeting
03/24 Southern Convocation Meeting
03/26 Eastern Convocation Meeting
04/02 Central Convocation Meeting

MUSTANG ISLAND FAMILY CAMPS

03/12 - 03/15 Spring Break Family Camp
05/28 - 05/31 Family Camp Session 1
06/04 - 06/07 Family Camp Session 2
06/11 - 06/14 Family Camp Session 3
06/18 - 06/21 Family Camp Session 4
06/25 - 06/28 Family Camp Session 5
07/02 - 07/05 Family Camp Session 6
07/09 - 07/12 Family Camp Session 7
07/16 - 07/19 Family Camp Session 8
07/23 - 08/26 Family Camp Session 9
07/30 - 08/02 Family Camp Session 10
08/06 - 08/09 Family Camp Session 11
09/04 - 09/07 Labor Day Family Camp

DUNCAN PARK CAMPS

06/07 - 06/12 Veteran Family Camp
06/14 - 06/19 Explorers Camp
06/21 - 06/26 Junior High Camp 1
06/28 - 07/03 Senior Adventure Camp
06/28 - 07/03 Senior Backpacking Camp
07/05 - 07/10 Junior High Camp 2
07/12 - 07/17 Adult and Advanced Backpacking
07/19 - 07/24 Adult Backpacking
07/26 - 07/31 DWTX Family Camp

CAMP CAPERS CAMPS

01/03 - 01/05 Mid-Winter Camp I
01/10 - 01/12 Mid-Winter Camp II
01/17 - 01/19 Mid-Winter Camp III
05/31 - 06/06 Primary Camp A
06/07 - 06/13 Senior High Camp A
06/14 - 06/20 Junior High Camp A
06/21 - 06/27 Intermediate Camp A
07/05 - 07/11 Senior High Camp B
07/12 - 07/18 Junior High Camp B
07/20 - 07/24 Good Samaritan Camp
07/26 - 08/01 Intermediate Camp B
08/02 - 08/08 Primary Camp B

SPRING RETREATS, WORKSHOPS, & EVENTS

01/25 Navajoland Workshop
02/07 - 02/09 Father / Son Retreat
02/07 - 02/09 Food for the Soul Retreat
02/27 - 03/01 Discovering Wholeness Retreat
03/17 - 03/20 Preachers' Retreat
04/03 - 04/05 Nails & Prayers Retreat
04/17 - 04/19 The Good, the True, the Beautiful Retreat
05/01 Bishop's Valley Golf Classic

FALL RETREATS, WORKSHOPS, & EVENTS

08/20 - 08/24 Book of Nature Retreat
08/29 World Mission Symposium
09/03 - 09/07 Enneagram and Spiritual Practices Retreat
09/11 - 09/13 Mother / Daughter Retreat
09/13 - 09/19 College for Congregational Development
10/09 - 10/11 Mother / Son & Father / Daughter Retreat
11/06 - 11/08 Art & Soul Retreat

EXPERIENCE LOGOS ONLINE

Visit www.dwtx.org/logos to enjoy additional stories and photography, subscribe to email communications from the diocese, and suggest stories for our next issue.

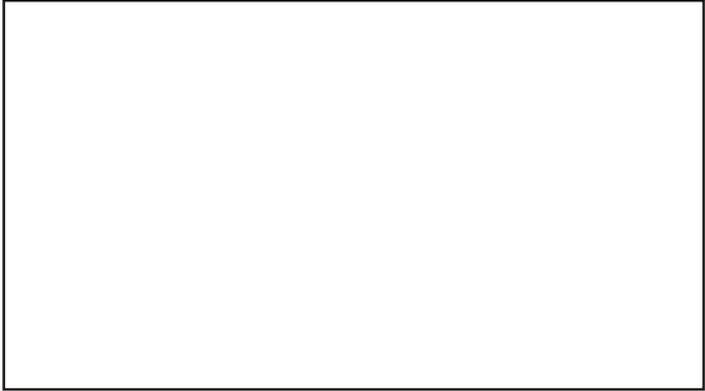
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