

DIOCESAN



THE EPISCOPAL DIOCESE OF FLORIDA *Magazine*



WINTER 2017-2018

Hope in a
Changing World

MESSAGE

FROM BISHOP HOWARD

This issue of the Diocesan Magazine explores the subject of Hope.

Where do you find hope in your life and in your ministry?

The source of my hope is the confidence that I have with God, which is rooted in my relationship with Jesus Christ. It is as simple as that. If the promise of God as we know him in Jesus really is true then I can remain confident from day to day, hoping for good and healthy relationships with God and with the people around me, hoping to love and to be loved, and hoping that God will use me in ways that bring fulfillment and joy in this life and in the life to come.

To go deeper and beyond the immediate, I hope in the truth that we and those whom we care for and love will have the opportunity to live in eternity with Him, that nothing—nothing at all—will separate us from the love of God in Jesus Christ.

What does Hope look like in our Diocese?

Our Diocese knows a blessed assurance that God is alive and at work through us, enabling us to have strength and vibrancy in our communities and in our ministries. That assurance means that we can be confident in our hope that we will bring more and more people to know and love God in Jesus Christ.

What are the obstacles to having hope?

The first obstacle to grasping Christian hope lies in our own hearts

and minds. We misunderstand what it means to be *blessed* by God. Human nature would have us understand blessing to be good luck, or fortune, or “pulling the lever on the great cosmic machine of life, and coming up with three cherries.” That is not the scriptural understanding of being *blessed*.

Being *blessed* means to be on the right path, headed toward the place God wants us to be.

Jesus said “Blessed are the poor in spirit, blessed are those who mourn, blessed are the meek, blessed are those who hunger and thirst for righteousness, blessed are the merciful, blessed are the peacemakers, blessed are those who are persecuted for righteousness ...” That is his way of saying that God’s strength will be most evident when we are the weakest, is not it?

We are *blessed* when we are neediest. This is a counter-intuitive message to a world that teaches and glorifies self-sufficiency. To be *blessed* is to be nearer God. This is why Hope is so connected to blessing. My hope has to do with recognizing, appreciating, and living in a manner that pleases God, because this is blessing. This is *true life*.

We think we do not have enough time, enough money, enough ability, or enough resources to do the things we need to accomplish. We believe that there is something that we lack, that we are too weak to do the things we are called to do. We forget the

words of Paul who told us that it is in our weakness that we will know God’s strength. (1 Corinthians 12:9-10)

We should not spend our lives avoiding the uncomfortable places. We should rejoice as a church and as a diocese that God has put us in a turbulent world full of uncertainties with no guarantees because that is where He will lift us up, strengthen us, and use us most profoundly for His purposes.

On a practical level, how do you understand the relationship between hope and our Diocesan focus on Evangelism and growth?

God gives us hope that we can see and live the reality of what Jesus is doing in our own life. He then gives us the gift of being able to tell others about Him and what He has done for us. In turn they might share that same hope. By God’s grace this is shared and spread through His strength, not ours.

The first step is recognizing our need for Him before we are capable of sharing it with others. It is not our story, but His story. We are incapable, and yet He delights in providing. It is about our need and the reality of His love, grace, and mercy.

I hope for renewed hearts and renewed minds so that Jesus Christ will claim men, women, and children and be genuine sharers of the Good News.

† Samuel Johnson Howard

Diocesan Magazine is an official publication of The Episcopal Diocese of Florida. Our mission is to bring you inspirational news and happenings of the Diocese and beyond, to touch your daily life, become more involved and inspire you to become stronger in faith.

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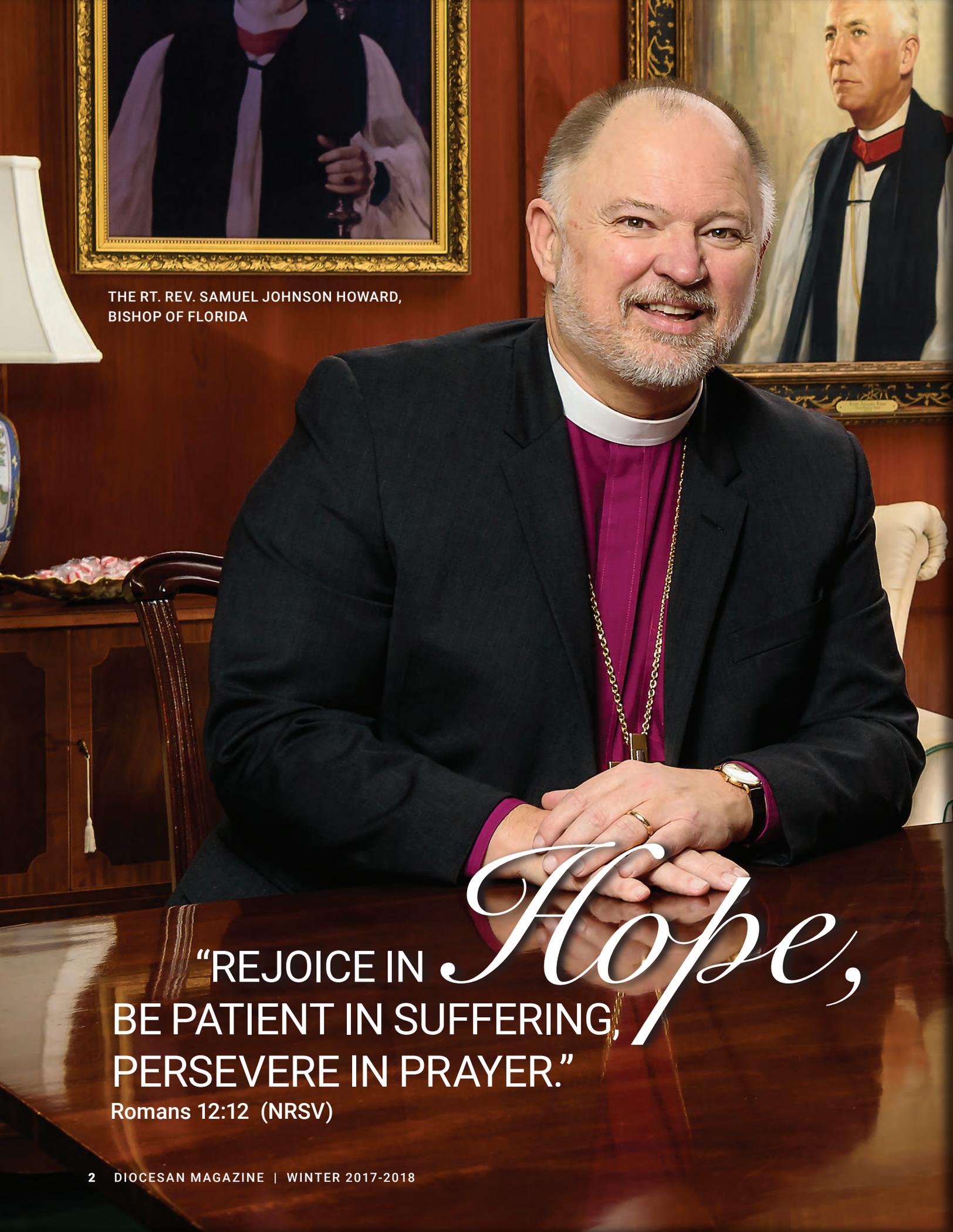
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A portrait of the Rt. Rev. Samuel Johnson Howard, Bishop of Florida. He is a middle-aged man with a grey beard and mustache, wearing a dark suit jacket over a purple cassock and a white clerical collar. He is seated at a dark wooden desk with his hands clasped. In the background, there are framed portraits of other bishops in clerical attire.

THE RT. REV. SAMUEL JOHNSON HOWARD,
BISHOP OF FLORIDA

“REJOICE IN *Hope,*
BE PATIENT IN SUFFERING,
PERSEVERE IN PRAYER.”

Romans 12:12 (NRSV)



HOLY COMFORTER, TALLAHASSEE



ST. JOHN'S, TALLAHASSEE

BISHOP HOWARD REGULARLY VISITS CHURCHES AND SCHOOLS IN OUR DIOCESE



ST. ANDREW'S, JACKSONVILLE



HOLY COMFORTER, TALLAHASSEE



EPISCOPAL SCHOOL OF JACKSONVILLE



REFORMATION HYMN FEST AT ST. JOHN'S CATHEDRAL, JACKSONVILLE

Christians as Ambassadors

FOR THE FUTURE VISION OF GOD'S RESTORATION

By The Rev. Cn. Aaron Smith

One of my favorite recurring themes throughout scripture is that of sight. Being able to see what God was doing was limited to the prophets. Only Moses was allowed to see God (and even he, not face to face with His Glory). Elisha knew he was Elijah's successor when he saw the chariots of Heaven carry Elijah away, and he too prayed for his servant to have his eyes opened that he might see that Heaven's army was larger than that of the Arameans.

Unhealthy sight gets us into trouble, as was the case of David (himself, a prophet) who saw Bathsheba across the way, and lusted with his eye. So, too, the declaration of Isaiah that "though they see, they do not see." These help us to understand both Jesus' parables, that true lust begins the moment we look at someone with wrong intent. Our sight does not just lead us to lust, but to violence, covetousness, desire, and this ancient Jewish idiom that Jesus delivered was speaking to that to which we focus our inner eye. So too, "the eye is the lamp of the body, if the eye is healthy, your whole body will be filled with light." If our eye is focused on the world, and the works of the flesh, then we are unhealthy, but, if our eye (sight) is focused on God, and being renewed by His Spirit (and here we begin to understand so much of what Paul is speaking about), then we are becoming healthy.

Sight, or being able to *see God's reality*, is very important in understanding our faith.

And hence, in the book of Hebrews, "faith, is the trust in the things that we hope for, and the conviction about

things unseen." Even though he did not see God's plan, Abram trusted in God, and so this was accounted to him as righteousness (again, Paul). Faith is to know that God's promises are trustworthy, and even though we do not see what He is doing, we trust in Him and where He is leading us. In other words, *faith* is acting and living into the reality of what God is doing, and allowing ourselves to be transformed by that reality, even though it does not always look and feel like it is true: When terror attacks London; or the opioid epidemic spreads across North America; when jobs are few, and bills are high; when a loved one leaves us; or, when someone dies, we *hope* that God is still at work, even though we do not understand

how. We trust that we must continue to act in conviction, even though it makes no sense: To forgive when we have been wronged, to lay down our arms when others point their arms toward us. It is counterintuitive, because it is a reality that we cannot truly see, and yet we know Christ is trustworthy.

This, of course, begs the larger questions, "For what do we hope?" What is the vision cast by scripture for which we hope? False prophets promise us wealth, success, health, and glory, but this is not the hope cast by Christ. His hope is different, and it is summarized in our Prayer Book as, "The reconciliation

of all people to each other and to God, through Christ Jesus our Lord." We hope in becoming humans as we were meant to become, and trust that it is only in and through Christ that this happens. Christ is life. Christ is healing. Christ brings reconciliation. Even when the world looks



THE REV. CN.
AARON SMITH



“WE WILL NOT EVEN NEED THE *light*
OF THE SUN, BECAUSE THE GOD
WILL BE YOUR LIGHT” - BOOK OF REVELATION

dark, we as Christians are the evidence that there is *hope*.

The vision cast in the Book of Revelation is that we *hope* for the New Jerusalem, where Heaven and Earth become joined, where God’s rule and wholeness is so pervasive, so absolute, so concrete, that goodness reigns and loudly drowns out the darkness. “We will not even need the light of the sun, because the God will be your light,” it says. And we *hope* that this is happening, despite the terrible and bleak news that covers our papers every day. We trust that God is at work, despite the setbacks in our own lives, and the lives of those around us. We *trust* in what God is doing, even when we cannot see with clarity where He is taking us (as though we see through a glass dimly – Paul).

To carry this one step further, the image of Jesus rubbing mud on the eyes of the blind man and restoring his sight carries more meaning than stirring the pot for the Pharisees and even more than his declaration of his Lordship over the Sabbath. When Jesus rubs the eyes of the blind man, he is showing that he has the power to bring *sight*, a truly divine gift. And the gift of our faith is

that, through baptism, we have died to the hopes of the world (ego, advancement, wealth, sex, self, power, etc.), and instead allow God to give birth to His own hopes in and through us.

To simplify, we Christians have become ambassadors for the future vision of God’s complete restoration, in the present reality. We are *ambassadors* of a nation that most cannot see. As God touches the world in his guiding ways, He guides it back toward Himself and His wholeness, and our job is to declare it, and live in it, even when all hope appears to be lost. We gather in worship to allow ourselves to become more open to this reality. We study and learn to retrain our sight from visions of Earth, to visions of Heaven. We pray to communicate and learn. We celebrate the Eucharist to be given a taste of the eternal that has yet to be. All the while we go and share this Hope with the world ... Jesus. “He who we have crucified, God has anointed and made God – Peter in the Book of Acts.” Only God has the power to open our eyes to life.

Today, one such Ambassador in the **Episcopal Diocese of Florida** is **The Rev. Beth Pessah**. She is the Missioner of **St. Christopher's Mission in Flagler Beach, Florida**. St. Christopher is the Patron Saint of Surfers, so it makes sense that The Rev. Pessah's congregants meet on Sundays at Flagler Beach's new coffee shop **Kool Beenz Coffee**.



The Rev. Beth Pessah graduated from the University of Toronto and Wycliffe Seminary and was ordained in 2012. She, her husband, and two sons, Mathew (21) and Nathan (19), traveled for years from Canada to the Florida coast. For a long while, The Rev. Pessah and her husband felt a pull - a calling - to move to Florida. Before moving, they did due diligence and research, and prayed asking God for direction. As a result, they felt that Spirit was genuinely showing them to move to Florida and build authentic relationships with the people who lived in and around Flagler Beach.

The Rev. Cn. Dr. J. Allison DeFoor, Canon to the Ordinary, at the Episcopal Diocese of Florida, told The Rev. Pessah that he had it in his heart to have a church in Flagler Beach, and he wanted her to think about starting one. The Rev. Pessah asked herself, "What would this church look like?" From her seminary studies, she knew that there had to be new ways to do church, and those new ways would begin through listening to the community's needs.

Soon after that meeting with Canon DeFoor, The Rev. Pessah called a strategy meeting. She asked her friend Michelle to bring her husband and one other person. Michelle brought her one person, plus 19 other people with her. Michelle said she made a phone call but did not want to stop there, so she did not. She called 20 people who she thought would enjoy this new idea of church.

The group did not care what the church looked like, so they had their first month's meetings in Flagler Beach's Wadsworth Park. Closer to Advent season and colder weather, they began to meet in individual homes, but that did not really give the group a chance to connect with others because after the church service, all in attendance felt that they should leave.

They next met in Flagler Beach's Island Grille Restaurant on Sunday nights from February through Easter. Then, the restaurant's patrons grew and The Rev. Pessah needed to look for a new place to meet. Someone said to try Kool Beenz Coffee Shop. When asked about the possibility of meeting there, the owners, Jody and Tim, immediately agreed to open their shop for this new church to meet. They went a step further by offering free coffee

and free pastries to attendees. Congregants now stay after the church service and are creating a church community as a result.

Throughout this process, The Rev. Pessah asked herself questions:

- How are we preparing a place in our lives to learn about Jesus?
- Are we making room for people who are not Christians?
- What about the "Dones" – the people who have dropped out of their church communities? How do we attract those people?
- What about the "Nones" – the people who have never experienced a church community?

The congregants of St. Christopher's Mission began praying intentionally for the people of Flagler Beach. They began working alongside people in the community on various projects. They began attending First Fridays in Veteran's Park. This church is a "presence" in the community and the congregants are available to everyone. They are preaching and modeling behavior, and actively asking the people in the community to attend church with The Rev. Pessah. They have asked people to point to places when you found out about God in your life. God is already present in the Flagler Beach community and now The Rev. Pessah teaches people how to recognize it.

St. Christopher's first church service was November 6, 2016. The Rev. Pessah estimates that there are now 30 foundational parishioners. Together, they decided to be visible in this outdoor community. For instance, they shared Lessons and Carols in Veteran's Park in December 2016. People who were in the park began to join in and sing with them and people in cars who were driving by thanked them.

While The Rev. Pessah's services are deeply rooted in Episcopal traditions and liturgy, she clearly has a creative mind when it comes to connecting with community. The Rev. Pessah's mantra is: Just because no one has done it that way does not mean we cannot try!

Through The Rev. Pessah's hard work and deep faith, God has given birth to His own hopes for this growing congregation.



ALL SAINTS INTERGENERATIONAL PROGRAM AT WORK

INTERGENERATIONAL PROGRAM: A CHRISTIAN COMMUNITY FOR ALL AGES

ALL SAINTS EARLY LEARNING & COMMUNITY CARE CENTER, JACKSONVILLE

One late afternoon, a mother brought her son to the park. As soon as they arrived, her son ran over to a boy with disabilities who was in a swing for handicapped children, with his mother beside him. The mother of the disabled child asked the other mother, “What makes your son different? All of the other children ignore my son or they give him cruel looks and laugh.” The mother whose son ran over to play responded, “My son attends All Saints Early Learning & Community Care Center’s Intergenerational Program. Your son is just like many of his friends at school.”

Marian Wilcher has served as All Saints Early Learning & Community Care Center’s Executive Director for the past 14 years. With a degree in Early Childhood Education under her belt, Ms. Wilcher came to lead a program that was already in existence. This school has been in operation since 1974, with adult daycare added in 1986.

The children range in age from six-weeks to 5-years-old while the Adult Daycare participants are 27-years-old all the way up to 94-years-old. They are served breakfast, lunch and a snack from Monday through Friday. At this time, All Saints Early Learning & Community Care Center has room for more ambulatory elderly adults as the wheelchairs are at capacity. Every Wednesday, the elderly attend chapel with The Rev. Donovan Cain - they look forward to chapel and enjoy it. The preschoolers attend chapel as well, and they love Vacation Bible School.

The Rev. Cain comments, “During my four years as Rector at All Saints, our relationship with the Care Center’s Intergenerational Adult Program has deepened and expanded. Every Wednesday, we gather in the church for Holy Eucharist with the special needs adults and every week, our parishioners who attend that service have gotten

particularly close to the adults from the Care Center. We have also been able to bring the special needs adults from the Care Center into our summer Vacation Bible School program, allowing our children to do music and projects with the adults. For me, the adults from the Care Center have become an important part of our greater All Saints family, and I have been able to see them truly inspire us as much as we try to help inspire them.”

“This has been a wonderful journey for me. I truly felt called to this position. The most difficult part of this position is when we lose one of the elderly or disabled participants in our Intergenerational Program. This was difficult for me, at first, until our Adult Daycare Director Barbara Hicks pointed out to me that we are with them for the journey – making the world a better place for each of our elderly or disabled participants. We are helping their caregivers and/or families, as well,” shares Ms. Wilcher.

Ms. Hicks, Adult Daycare Director and an LPN, has long worked with the elderly, disabled, and frail. In fact, she feels that she was born for a life of service. The people in the program feel the same way. She works with two licensed and certified nurses aides, and with volunteers in the Adult Daycare Program.

The at-home caregivers for the elderly and disabled are often family members. As a result, and recognizing a need beyond caring for their loved ones during the day, the All Saints Adult Daycare leaders also provide education and information about aging and about a variety of disabilities. Two of the elderly members visit from assisted living facilities, and the rest come directly from their family homes. Once a month, Ms. Hicks hosts a meeting for caregivers, where attendees sometimes just talk about their family member’s disability with others who are living through similar experiences. In fact, one caregiver told Ms. Hicks, “If it were not for you, I do not know what we would have done. This program is a blessing.”



ALL SAINTS CHILDREN MAKE CRAFTS WITH THE SENIORS



ALL SAINTS CHILDREN SING WITH THE SENIORS



MARIAN WILCHER AND THE REV. DONOVAN CAIN



ALL SAINTS CHILDREN SING WITH THE SENIORS

“When I think about hope, I think about helping our daycare participants meet their full potential with confidence. I think about how much our preschoolers enjoy spending time with our elderly and disabled participants in the Intergenerational Program.” says Ms. Wilcher. “One of my favorite stories about our program is this: One day, a young girl being picked up from daycare by her grandmother said, ‘Hey Grandmom, they have a place for you, too,’ as she proudly pointed at the daycare building.”

Ms. Wilcher shares a final thought, “We watch our young children interact with our elderly and disabled, and



know that this Intergenerational Program is beneficial for all of them. Around here, we say, ‘A child is a piece of clay waiting to be molded by an adult.’”



ALL SAINTS CHILDREN MAKE CRAFTS WITH THE SENIORS



Hope

PROVIDING HOPE TO THE ELDERLY AND INFIRM

ST. THOMAS EPISCOPAL CHURCH, PALM COAST

Today, many families are separated by several states, which leaves the elderly and those who live alone to fend for themselves. People who attend St. Thomas Episcopal Church recognized an opportunity for assisting this group in their church who desperately needed help, and as a result the Assistance Ministry at St. Thomas Episcopal Church was born.

The Assistance Ministry at St. Thomas Episcopal Church was born when an elderly parishioner did not appear in church on Sunday. When she did not appear for church on the next Sunday, everyone wondered where she was. The woman lived alone and attended church alone. Knowing this, people wondered, “Should we visit her?” Thank goodness they did. The woman had fallen at home. One of her neighbors found her a day or more after her fall. She was stubborn and would not allow her neighbor to take her to a doctor.

When the members of St. Thomas Episcopal Church visited her, they were able to convince her to visit the hospital. After leaving the hospital, she went to a temporary nursing home to recover from the fall. The woman had no real friends nearby, and she was estranged from her family. Eventually, one of the nurses that attended St. Thomas helped the woman through the often-confusing process of entering a long-term nursing facility.

This process prompted many people in the church to ask, “Why can we not provide this service free-of-charge

to our elderly members?” They also wondered, “Should we only provide this service for the elderly? What about our members who are sick or our members who live alone?” The result is what is now known as the St. Thomas Assistance Ministry. This group of concerned church members concluded that the Assistance Outreach Program Committee should be available for all church members in need.



The Committee provides strictly volunteer service - they do not provide professional services. Some of the services they provide to members with needs include rides to church, rides to the grocery store or to the doctor. Volunteers do not just pick members up and then drop them off. Instead, they sit with them in church or in the



ST. THOMAS HOSTS EVENTS FOR ALL AGES

doctor's office, and they help them choose their groceries and upon returning home, they help unload the groceries, if needed.

Before the service can begin, the person in need must share his or her family information with the Committee members so that there is someone to call in case there is an immediate health issue. Together, they create an agreement that the Committee may call the family member, or members, if such a need arises. The Committee has permission to notify even estranged family members if any serious health issues arise.

Next, the Committee assigns a point person from the church to each church member in need. This person is the one to call when needs arise or if there is a health issue, and this person also calls the church member once a week to be sure they feel that they are not alone. Of course, there are visits, as well. The point person will visit their assigned church member in a nursing home, and will pick them up at the nursing home and take that person to church and then take them back.

It is been five years since this Assistance Committee began at St. Thomas Episcopal Church. To date, the Committee has assisted many elderly church members by helping them get into long-term healthcare facilities. They credit the Flagler County Health Department's Elderly Division as being instrumental in this process. According

to Steve Wing, the Committee Chair and Senior Warden of the church, "We are a caring, compassionate parish. This service keeps these elderly and/or infirmed members involved in our warm and friendly church. These people know that they are not alone. We have two church members who are more than 100-years-old and we have 15 church members who are more than 90-years-old.

Some of our members just want someone to call them regularly because they are legitimately lonely."

The Assistance Committee now consists of eight regular members. At the time of this writing, twelve people with needs are on the Committee's help list. The Committee members

work with couples as well as with single church members. Of the 12 people who are now on the help list, three couples are receiving help.

Mr. Wing concludes, "Our former Interim Rector, The Rev. Robert Cowperthwaithe truly supported this program. That is such a blessing for all involved. My wife and I joined this church when we moved to the Palm Coast because it is the friendliest church we have ever attended. My personal call to this ministry is to care for these people."

Photos courtesy of Facebook. To protect the privacy of those people receiving assistance, we've chosen to use photos of members of the St. Thomas Episcopal Church congregation for this article.



W

E HAVE A LARGE NUMBER OF CHURCH MEMBERS WHO NEED OUR ASSISTANCE AND CARE. HELPING PEOPLE IS VERY GRATIFYING FOR ALL OF US ON THE ASSISTANCE COMMITTEE AND WE GIVE ALL GLORY TO GOD FOR THE SUCCESS OF THIS MINISTRY.



ST. THOMAS DEPENDS ON ITS GENEROUS VOLUNTEERS



Advancing

URBAN OUTREACH MINISTRIES

The Episcopal Diocese of Florida Supports Urban Outreach Ministries through its three Mission Churches – St. Mary’s Episcopal Church; Grace Mission; and Church Without Walls. The goal of our Urban Ministries is to reach out in compassion to not only serve Christ, but to also meet and follow Christ in building relationships with people – individuals and families – in need.



PROCESSION INTO ST. MARY’S EPISCOPAL CHURCH



grace mission
HELP HEALING HOPE
AN OUTREACH MISSION OF THE EPISCOPAL DIOCESE OF FLORIDA

Weekly Worship Service
We welcome you to join us!
Tuesday
12 Steps @ 4:30PM
Prayer and Healing Service
Sunday 8:15AM
GRACE MISSION raise Music
Support local churches and the Tallahassee community



THE REV. CN. BETH TJOFLAT AND THE CHURCH WITHOUT WALLS PROGRAM IN ACTION



FROM LEFT:
THE RT. REV. SAMUEL JOHNSON HOWARD,
SUE CARMICHAEL AND THE REV. CN. BETH TJOFLAT

St. Mary's Episcopal Church, located in downtown Jacksonville, Florida for more than 35 years, has grown as a mission church of our Diocese. St. Mary's has long been known as a mission of God's love — a place where many give to those in need who often live on the streets in our downtown and blighted areas. St. Mary's is currently funded by foundations, grants, organizations, churches, and through the generosity of individuals. Recently, Sue Carmichael retired from serving as a lay missionary and passed the leadership of St. Mary's to The Rev. Cn. Beth Tjoflat, who is developing a broadened approach to urban ministry. Canon Tjoflat has plans to further grow St. Mary's and its reach into Jacksonville's urban communities through partnerships, development and hard work.



Forming

NEW BEGINNINGS

THE REV. CN. BETH TJOFLAT, ST. MARY'S EPISCOPAL CHURCH & OUTREACH, JACKSONVILLE

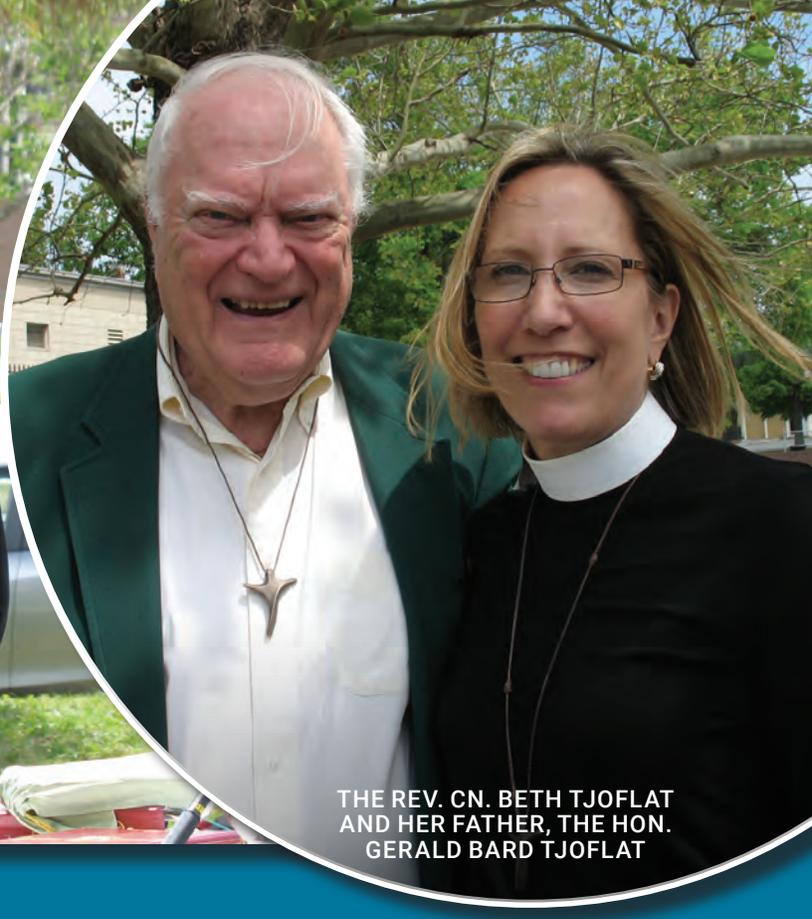
In August 2017, The Rev. Cn. Beth Tjoflat assumed responsibility for St. Mary's Episcopal Church & Outreach in downtown Jacksonville. Canon Tjoflat now serves as Canon for Urban Ministry, leading a broadened approach to urban ministry.



THE REV. CN. BETH TJOFLAT

Welcome to
St. Mary's Episcopal
Church





THE REV. CN. BETH TJOFLAT
AND HER FATHER, THE HON.
GERALD BARD TJOFLAT

How are you settling into your new position at St. Mary's Episcopal Church & Outreach? What are your plans as you guide your church and your congregants into the future?

I am thrilled to be at St. Mary's. It is a tremendous resource for our Diocese and community. I have barely landed but I am already forming collaborative relationships for community-based ministry. Look for our campus to be bustling with other organizations, churches, ministries, and individuals as we bring life and opportunity to Springfield.

In September we began a Tuesday, 5:30 pm Healing Service with a meal following immediately afterwards. All are welcome.

We are going to be at heart about relationships. We are looking to expand and enhance our Food Pantry Program. Because of this, we have suspended the furniture and clothing program with the idea that another organization will absorb these ministries. Part of the enhancement of the Food Pantry will be providing a pastoral presence. Another goal is to rehabilitate the house formerly dedicated to the clothing closet to contain offices and welcoming space for our neighbors.

We will rehab space on the top floor of one of our houses that will house people in ministry. This could be a seminarian, a priest who may be discerning a call to urban ministry, or a graduating college student discerning next steps in ministry. They will participate in St. Mary's worship and ministries, as well as with partner ministries such as Fresh Ministries and Church Without Walls, and possibly with community agencies such as Gateway Community Services, Clara White Mission, and the Sulzbacher Center.

What strengths do you bring to the position that Bishop Howard has appointed you – The Canon of Urban Ministry for the Diocese?

The willingness to move out of my comfort zone is a strength. That is where I know that I am going to experience Christ most powerfully ("stepping out of the boat"). Many years of operating in the development field, essentially building relationships in complex organizations. I am "wired" to develop partnerships and to build connections. Everything is about relationship. Jesus is all about relationship. St. Mary's will be a safe place for anyone to come to become who he or she is ... where they can become fully alive.



THE REV. AMANDA NICKLES, THE VICAR OF GRACE MISSION

PROVIDING FOR THOSE IN NEED IN TALLAHASSEE

GRACE MISSION, TALLAHASSEE

Grace Mission, located in Tallahassee, Florida, “... is a transformative ministry of the forgotten.” These are the words of The Rev. Amanda Nickles. Grace Mission has been a downtown Tallahassee Christian community for more than 20 years. It was founded in the mid-1990s with a vision of planting a radical kind of ministry that was, and still is, focused on worship while crossing racial, social, and economic lines to minister to the whole person. We are a ministry to the ‘least of these’ – a ministry about people – loving them in the name of Jesus. Grace Mission also supports other ministries, and partners with other agencies.

The Rev. Nickles was invited (more than once) to consider taking over a new storefront ministry in Tallahassee, Florida by her former Seminary Dean, The Rev. Ted Monica. The Rev. Nickles finally went through the interview process and was offered the job two days later. She has now served as the Vicar of Grace Mission for more than eight years. Since taking over as Vicar, Grace Mission raises 35 to 40 percent of its own income through fundraisers that are held throughout each year.

The current breakdown of support is as follows:

- Fundraisers - 36%
- Individuals - 26%
- Diocese - 22%
- Churches - 16%

The Rev. Nickles shares, “Our volunteers put in more than 20,000 hours each year. We could not provide service to so many without our amazing volunteers.”

Nancye Rubin has been volunteering for Grace Mission for more than eight years. In fact, she started volunteering right around the time that The Rev. Nickles began working at Grace Mission. She is a member of Holy Comforter Episcopal Church.

Nancye truly enjoys working with the other Grace Mission volunteers – Beverly, Daryl and Marcie. Recently, Nancye began volunteering during the clothing give-away, which is held on the first Wednesday of each month. She says it is very gratifying to be able to help people from different walks of life choose their clothes.

She enjoys getting to know them and hearing about their families, hopes and dreams.

While Grace Mission offers shirts, pants and shorts for women and men on a first-come, first-served basis, they also offer toiletries and other items. The volunteers do not just hand out clothes – they help people dress for interviews; dress for the new school year; and provide others a fresh set of clothes; they help the homeless and the forgotten. They help with huge smiles on their faces.

Bishop William Frey, who served as Bishop of the Diocese of Colorado and then retired to Texas said, “Genuine hope is listening to the music of the future and faith is dancing to it today ... Hope is listening to what God is calling us to do ... taking bold steps to plot new vision and to be vision bearers.”

The Rev. Nickles adds, “I think all volunteers are vision bearers. When people reach out in faith and are willing to set out in new adventures to help others they catch and embrace God’s kingdom vision of ‘loving thy neighbor as thyself.’ Since all of us are called to faithfulness, we can say that the journey of a volunteer toward faithfulness is essentially everybody’s journey. Each of us is created to be an agent of transformation. Volunteers at Grace Mission see their volunteerism as an extension of their faith. And through that faith they are helping us transform lives through help, healing and hope in the City of Tallahassee.”

Rhonda Donaldson is a tall, slim, elegant woman who spends her time as a volunteer for Grace Mission. You can meet Rhonda when you visit Grace Mission during its monthly clothes give-away, held on the first Wednesday of each month.

When you speak with Rhonda, she will share that Grace Mission is a sanctuary to her. It is the place where she healed from alcoholism, depression, homelessness, marital problems, family deaths, and various illnesses and accidents. The Rev. Nickles spent time with Rhonda praying with her often and asking God to help Rhonda realize her dreams and lead a productive life. After many prayers, and much introspection, Rhonda quit drinking alcohol, and decided to go back to school to earn her AA in Business Administration at Tallahassee Community College, where she is now working on her degree.

After an article in the Tallahassee Democrat about Rhonda, she was contacted by Jo Anne Arnette, President and Co-Founder of the Tallahassee Christian College & Training Center (TCCTC), formerly The Center of Biblical Studies. TCCTC offered Rhonda a full scholarship for their program in Seminary Studies, which is where she feels God is leading her.

As Rhonda shared with the Tallahassee Democrat recently, “(I am) eight years sober, and have mended my interpersonal relationships with my family, as well. All three sisters now live together ... a family again. I was rebellious and stiff-necked. But somehow, I always knew I had a guardian angel. Now, I am just trying to show that I can be a role model to others.”



RHONDA DONALDSON



NANCYE RUBIN

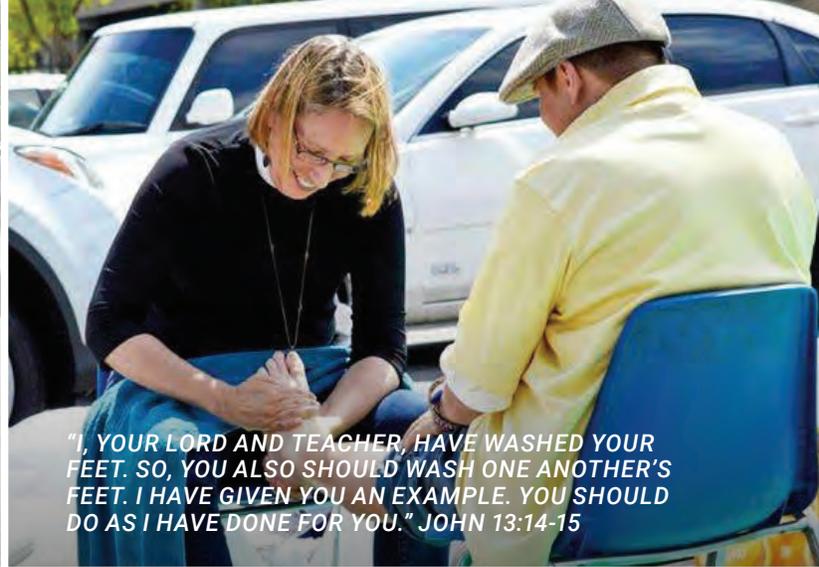


CHURCH WITHOUT
WALLS OFFERS *Faith*
WHERE YOU ARE

Church Without Walls is, based in downtown Jacksonville, Florida. The Rev. Cn. Beth Tjoflat is entering her sixth year in urban and street ministry. The foundation for Church Without Walls has been, from the beginning, to walk alongside hurting people with the intention of providing a loving presence and encouragement: “being with” as opposed to “doing for.” This is grounded in the Episcopal baptismal covenant to respect the dignity of every human being.



CHURCH WITHOUT WALLS IN ACTION



"I, YOUR LORD AND TEACHER, HAVE WASHED YOUR FEET. SO, YOU ALSO SHOULD WASH ONE ANOTHER'S FEET. I HAVE GIVEN YOU AN EXAMPLE. YOU SHOULD DO AS I HAVE DONE FOR YOU." JOHN 13:14-15

By The Rev. Cn. Beth Tjoflat

Oftentimes at Church Without Walls, a newcomer will share with me that they were moved in some way by our simple gathering of folks from all walks of life, by our common experience of thanksgiving as we share the bread and cup. Then the inevitable question comes:

“This is great. But, tell me, where is your real church?” “I am looking at it,” I say, catching their gaze then looking around at our motley crew of folks who ordinarily would not mix. The church is, first and foremost, the people. Not the buildings, not the programs, not the endowments.

Do not get me wrong, these are vital tools for ministry that help us grow and thrive and minister. But we must remember that, always, it is in the people – how we live in relationship with one another, with Christ and with the stranger in our midst – that hope is to be found. It is a messy business.

In our particular geography, we are uniquely positioned to embrace mystery and depth as we welcome an increasingly diverse community – diverse not only in the most obvious meaning of the word but also in our individual experience, strength and hope.

Recently, I spent a weekend with our diocesan college students and can assure you that the Church has great promise. These young leaders are earnest and full of the kinds of questions that we need to be asking and pondering. At the same time, we must value and engage the vast experience of our elders – the growing asset that is our aging population. God calls us to love one another, to share the gift of Christian community. It does not take much. Pray or break bread with someone you typically ignore. Move out of your comfort zone – just move an inch or two.

I cannot speak to hope for the church without drawing on my own ongoing discovery of hope

– a discovery that is birthed in that dark place of desperation and resignation. Hope comes to me when I acknowledge and accept my own experience of poverty and futility, of not knowing.

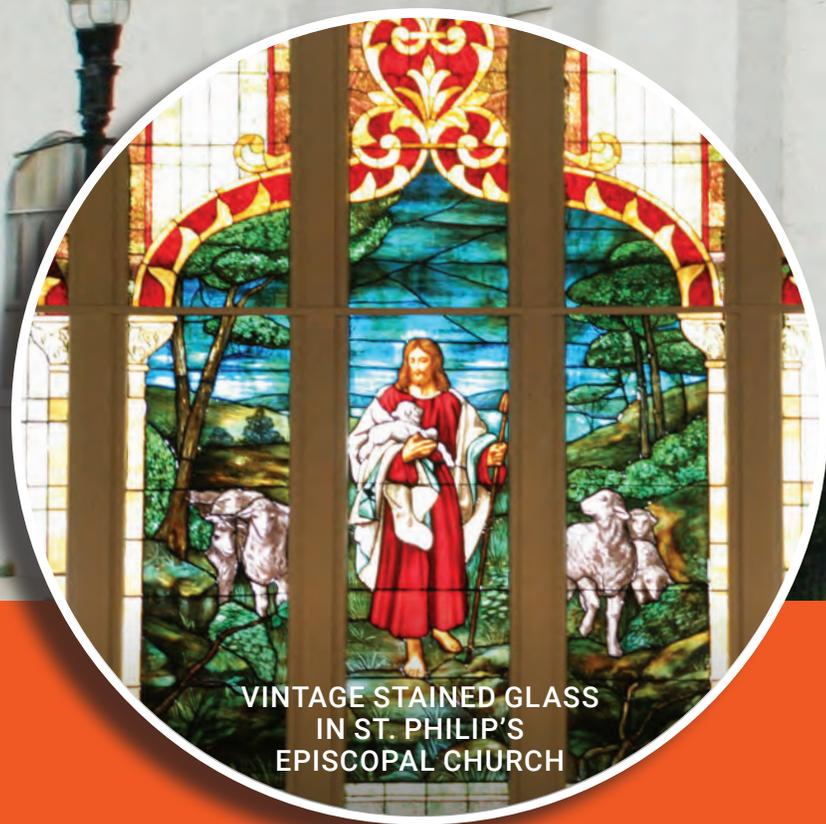
Once, when on retreat near Asheville, North Carolina, I was walking in the mountains, overwhelmed with a sense that my dreams and vision, my sense of self, were becoming “unraveled.” Then, these words resonated in my heart: *I knit you together in your mother’s womb. Know that when what you hold dear seems to unravel, I am knitting you (and all things) together anew.* God is merciful and generous. Through our “woundedness” and our coming apart, we will find a way forward.

As we set aside the concerns of ego and personal survival to wait and listen, to make room for what God is doing, we are sure to have times of disquiet and angst. It helps if we make peace with the possibility of “failure.” It helps if we cultivate a willingness to look foolish. In this process, we must remind one another that we have nothing to fear. Christ has defeated death. The church will be just fine. As will our Episcopal Church if we can remember to get out of the way, to hold our plans and dreams lightly so that the Holy Spirit, who dreams more than we could ever ask or imagine, can move in our midst, transforming us, transforming our communities, transforming our Church.

Hope for the church is found in community, as we gather and work together – formally and informally. As we meet together to ponder and grapple with the challenge of the Gospel, as we seek to make meaning of our lives and work not just in the church proper, but in the wider community, let us practice mercy and generosity. Let us be willing to touch that which we fear. Let us discover the one true hope that is God with us.

*"Give, and it will be given to you.
A good measure, pressed down, shaken
together, running over, will be put into
your lap; for the measure that you give
will be the measure you get back."*

- Luke 6:38 (NRSV)



VINTAGE STAINED GLASS
IN ST. PHILIP'S
EPISCOPAL CHURCH

Help

ST. PHILIP'S EPISCOPAL CHURCH



ST. PHILIP'S VOLUNTEERS ARE HELPING THOSE IN NEED



St. Philip's Episcopal Church has devoted a significant amount of time to serving the underprivileged in downtown Jacksonville, Florida. The homeless, the underserved, those in need are our neighbors.

To better serve their neighbors, church leaders offer a Wednesday service for the homeless that also provides a hot meal.

The Sanctuary Guild, under the able leadership of Thelma Hall, provides snack packs every Thursday to whomever visits. St. Philip's parishioners fully support this program with their donations.

St. Philip's also partners with the "Cup of Love Ministry" in order to provide breakfast on Wednesday mornings. Food, clothing and footwear is available every fourth Saturday of the month to those in need.

ing THE Homeless

IN DOWNTOWN JACKSONVILLE

Unified Optimism

EPISCOPAL CHURCH OF THE REDEEMER, JACKSONVILLE

By *The Rev. Cn. Wiley Ammons*

The greatest challenge of our Christian witness to the world is not secularization, social media, or polarization, but rather Christians' inability to love one another. Nothing compromises "God loves you, and we do too" like the unspoken end of the sentence being "unless you are one of *them*."

One needs look no further than our church's history of a decade ago and the United Methodist conundrum last month. For me, hope for The Episcopal Church looks like finding a way forward toward greater Christian unity. I am seeing more evidence of these efforts now than I have in all my time as an Episcopalian, and I am thrilled. Jesus prays in John 17 that we all may be one as he and the Father are one. Our Eucharistic prayers petition God to "Remember, Lord, your one holy catholic and apostolic church ... reveal its unity, guard its faith."

In becoming an Episcopalian, God grabbed me using one of the least likely sources of evangelism. I may be the only person to have been converted by The 1998 Lambeth Conference report. Considering confirmation as a college student, I read up on The Episcopal Church and Anglican Communion to "find out what I was getting into."

In Section IV of Lambeth '98, there is a list of resolutions detailing the work of full communion agreements with every Christian fellowship willing to respond to our requests. I decided that a church this interested in Christian unity is a church where I want to belong.

Since that Lambeth Conference, we have established full communion relationships with the Lutheran Church (ELCA), the Moravian Church, and the Old Catholic

Churches of Utrecht. On March 1, 2017, The Episcopal Church released a draft of a full communion partnership agreement with the United Methodist Church, which I hope we will consider at our General Convention in 2018. Often, the hardest place to achieve Christian



THE REV. CN. WILEY AMMONS
WITH HIS FAMILY

unity is at the top of the hierarchy, and I delight to have church leadership at all levels refocusing on The Jesus Movement and emphasizing what unites us much more than what divides us.

Maybe the most exciting of these conversations happened this year at our Interfaith Clergy Day, where we gathered with clergy from the Lutheran and Roman



“THERE IS MUCH MORE THAT *unites* US
THAN DIVIDES US.”

AUXILIARY BISHOP OF THE
ROMAN CATHOLIC CHURCH

Catholic churches (and now others) for worship, fellowship, education, and a meal. This year, our speaker was an auxiliary bishop of the Roman Catholic Church, who said, “There is much more that unites us than divides us. There are certainly obstacles that seem insurmountable for unity between our traditions, but those are not insurmountable for Jesus. We intend to unite around those things that we share, and trust in Jesus to overcome those we do not share yet. For us, this may not be possible, but not for Jesus. We believe he can do it.” Amen, Bishop, I believe he can, as well, which is the most hopeful thing I have heard from the church.

Some change happens from the top down. Most change happens from the bottom up. The leadership of our churches is in an extraordinary place in their willingness to talk Christian unity. If the same conversation comes up from the pews, as well as from the pulpit, God might be getting ready to act. There would be few things short of the Second Coming that would give me greater hope. Come, Lord Jesus. Help us come together to love one another. That is the kind of Jesus Movement that can change the world.

ST. PETER'S 30-YEAR-OLD OUTREACH MINISTRY IN THE EASTERN CARIBBEAN

ST. PETER'S, FERNANDINA BEACH, OUTREACH MINISTRY

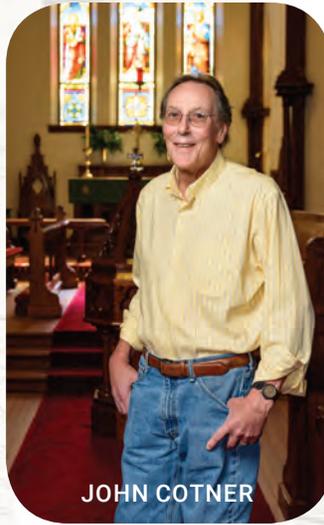
When he was a young boy, John Cotner did not just want to make a change, he wanted to change the world. Today, Mr. Cotner has done just that. An architect by profession, with a thriving business in Fernandina Beach, Mr. Cotner made his first mission visit to the Eastern Caribbean with his fellow church members of St. Peter's Episcopal Church 30 years ago.

At that time, church member Bill Fleet had developed a relationship with an Episcopalian named Rudolph Smith, from whom Mr. Fleet learned that many of the churches in the Diocese of the Eastern Caribbean and Aruba were suffering from severe wear and tear. Without the funds to repair the damage, these Diocesan churches were in desperate need of help. Many of these churches had been built in the 1800s, and the roof, the interior walls, and the floors of each church were made of wood and stone.

As a result, much of the problem was wood damage and since the churches were built in a damp environment, termites were overwhelmingly prevalent. Not only did the termites eat the church foundations and surroundings, they ate the pews.

In the 30 years that the 8 to 18 of St. Peter's members have visited the Eastern Caribbean to repair these disintegrating churches, this group has completed 15 projects of varying sizes. These people – mostly men between the ages of 30 and 80 – pay for their own travel and food expenses for the mission trips. There are three

main people who manage this group – Jim Corbett, the spiritual leader; John Cotner, the “nuts and bolts” planning leader; and Dan Roach, the “recorder.” Mr. Cotner explains, “We do not slam Bibles on these trips, we slam tools.”



JOHN COTNER

“The mission trips that St. Peter's has been taking for many years have had a lasting impact on the people in the islands where they travel to but also in the lives of those who travel. They have seen and served God through the difficult work of their hands and have established long lasting relationships with Christians in a place they never thought they would. This ministry is one of many ways that St. Peter's is able to spread the Good News of Christ, not just to the people of Nassau County, but also

to the world. I am grateful for the hard work that has been done, by those who have gone these many years, and for the support that the people of St. Peter's have so generously contributed,” adds The Rev. Stephen Mazingo, Rector of St. Peter's.

How has St. Peter's been able to afford these large-scale projects? They raised the money for construction costs through an annual church fundraiser, which is held specifically to underwrite these mission projects. Of course, there are also generous individuals who donate additional funds in order to pay for additional materials, as needed.

The largest project thus far has been the St. John's Cathedral, which is an Anglican church perched on a hilltop in St. John's, Antigua and Barbuda. The church

is also known as the St. John the Divine, the Cathedral Church of the Diocese of North Eastern Caribbean and Aruba. After a local teacher fell through the second floor, the Cathedral was closed for renovations for six years. According to Mr. Cotner, there were many physical challenges during the four phases of reconstruction projects for St. John's Cathedral:

1. Roof, aisles and pews
2. Interior walls, exterior walls and electrical works
3. Toilets, stairs and doors
4. Churchyard and surrounding walls

"Time neither respects persons or things. None—not even imposing buildings and monuments—can withstand the passage of time unscathed without at least some help."
(SOURCE: <http://thestjohnscathedral.com/restoration>)

Because they try to buy locally, finding the correct materials and equipment are often a challenge, along with navigating the terrain. Even with obstacles, they finished this six-year project. St. Peter's also contributed a new pew to the Cathedral after the work was completed. Some of the group plans to return to St. John's later this year for the 175th Anniversary Rededication of the Cathedral.

Mr. Cotner shares, "The friendships that we develop during these mission trips are so valuable to us – we are like family. We are family with our fellow St. Peter's members and family with those that we help. I will walk into a store that is located in one of these mission locations, and when I see someone I have not seen in years, we just pick up and start talking as if we saw each other yesterday."



SCENES OF THE RESTORATION OF ST. JOHN'S CATHEDRAL, EASTERN CARIBBEAN



THE REV. STEVEN MAZINGO

St. Peter's, Fernandina Beach continues to support St. John's Cathedral, Eastern Caribbean after the recent hurricanes.

Christian Growth

IN OUR SCHOOLS

Some of our Diocesan Schools' headmasters share their inspirational thoughts about the concept of hope within their schools.



HOLY TRINITY EPISCOPAL SCHOOL

"Our school abounds with hope, from our infants to our students, from those about to graduate to kindergarten. Our hope does not originate from our hard work, or individual wisdom, but from our certainty that what God has promised is true."

- Jason Hill, Head of School

EPISCOPAL SCHOOL OF JACKSONVILLE HAS BEEN VOTED "BEST PRIVATE SCHOOL FOR SECONDARY EDUCATION" IN THE 2017 BOLD CITY BEST COMPETITION HELD BY THE FLORIDA TIMES UNION. CONGRATULATIONS!



EPISCOPAL SCHOOL OF JACKSONVILLE

"The hope of our Founders was that our school educate servant leaders. Living our mission — and our faith in God and the unfailing love within the Episcopal community — is the hope we have and give freely to others."

- *The Rev. Adam Greene, Head of School*





GRACE EPISCOPAL DAY SCHOOL

"Grace Episcopal Day School is a Christian community that is passionate about assisting each student to reach their full potential academically and spiritually."

- *Stephanie Massey, Head of School*





ST. MARK'S EPISCOPAL DAY SCHOOL

"With so many changes and challenges, it seems harder than ever to anticipate what the future will bring. Our faith in God gives us hope; hope in our children and hope that our children will inherit and lead a world that is better for us having been here. Our children are our hope. Romans 8:25 implicitly calls to action the mission of our schools."

"But if we hope for what we do not yet have, we wait for it patiently." (Romans 8:25)

Educating children secures the future of human beings and the world.

- Kevin R. Conklin, Head of School



BEACHES EPISCOPAL SCHOOL

"Episcopal Schools were created to be models of God's love and Grace. We exist to not only provide an excellent academic education, but to proclaim the worth of all people as a creation of a loving God, which brings hope to our respective communities."

- Martha Milton, Head of School





SAN JOSE EPISCOPAL DAY SCHOOL

“Children are the hope of our future. What an honor it is to educate students in the Episcopal ethos – to prepare them not just to be our future leaders but leaders who are grounded in faith.”

- *Lori Gilbert Menger, Head of School*



SAN JOSE EPISCOPAL DAY SCHOOL HAS BEEN VOTED “BEST PRIVATE SCHOOL FOR PRIMARY EDUCATION” IN THE 2017 BOLD CITY BEST COMPETITION HELD BY THE FLORIDA TIMES UNION. CONGRATULATIONS!



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DOUG WALKER



**THE DIOCESE FOUNDATION
PROVIDES UPKEEP FOR
MANDI'S CHAPEL**

The Diocese of Florida Foundation provides stewardship of a \$7.5 million investment portfolio that assists a wide range of diocesan ministries, including Camp Weed and Cerveny Conference Center, some individual parishes, and clergy and seminarian support. In addition to caring for the investment sources of financial support, the Foundation manages an ongoing giving campaign, *Procession—Unified In Mission*. The campaign has raised \$12 million in gifts and short and long-term commitments for additional financial support to diocesan ministries and initiatives.

Through the generosity of individuals in our Diocese, and grants from foundations, our campaign has provided \$4 million to the Diocese largely for programs and personnel. Also, through the Foundation Board of Directors' vision, our campaign has largely supported physical plant improvements, program enhancements, and personnel for existing and new Diocesan ministries.

Gifts to our campaign have provided for:

- **Capital improvements and operations at Camp Weed and Cerveny Conference Center**
- **Youth summer camp scholarships and programs**

- **Capital improvements to Grace Mission, Tallahassee**
- **Capital improvements and programs at The Episcopal University Center at Florida State University in Tallahassee**
- **Programs at the Chapel of the Incarnation at University of Florida in Gainesville**
- **Programs and personnel at the Episcopal Campus Ministry at the University of North Florida**
- **Newly ordained clergy at specific parishes**
- **Capital improvements for small parishes**
- **Sustaining operations and personnel for The Bishop's Institute for Ministry and Leadership**
- **Sustaining operations and personnel for our Diocesan Initiative for Evangelism and Growth**

As we continue to enhance and improve our ministries, and as we grow the financial support for sustaining these and additional new ministries, we seek your interest and involvement in our campaign. For more information, please contact Doug Walker, Bishop's Deputy for Advancement and Stewardship and Executive Director of Diocesan Foundation at **904-356-1328**.