



Summer, 2021

# The Chronicle

The magazine of St. Andrew's Episcopal Church, Yardley, PA





## ST. ANDREW'S EPISCOPAL CHURCH

Founded 1835

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## FROM THE EDITOR

*To love, my brothers and sisters, does not mean we have to agree. But maybe agreeing to love is the greatest agreement. And the only one that ultimately matters because it makes a future possible.*

—Presiding Bishop **Michael Curry**,  
in his book *Love is the Way*

TOO often it seems to be the lot of the editor to invite and then compile tributes to a beloved member of the parish who has died. In this edition we remember **Mark Baldwin**, who reached out to help so many people in so many ways in our parish and in the wider world (pp 6-8).

On other pages, in her letter to the parish, **Hilary** explains what is happening with our meetings and services in the face of Covid restrictions and what is hoped for the fall (p4); there are excerpts from annual parish reports (p5); **Bob Anderson** plays in the mud (p9) and praises saints of the mighty pen (p10); **Bishop Curry** launches a new initiative to fight racism (p11); and finally we close with **Poets' Corner** (back page).

This summer we bid a "royal" fond farewell to **Megan & Brad Sutker** who have moved to Maine. **Jill Rea** and daughter **Madeline** made and presented a tiara for Megan and a crown for Brad at an in-person service in June (below).

**Robin Prestage**



**On the cover:** Canon Jordan Casson and members of St. Michael's Church, Yeadon visited St. Andrew's on June 27. (See page 3).

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# InBrief

### On the cover:

On Sunday June 27 at our 9:00am service, we were hosts to Canon **Jordan Casson** and the people of St. Michael's in Yeadon. We got to walk through our renewed sanctuary and share how this past year has clarified our understanding of God's mission for us and how our buildings are being configured to better serve that mission. After the service, an open house enabled us to tour our sanctuary and parish house, followed by a festive brunch at the Washington Crossing Inn, On the next evening on Zoom a discussion with Canon Jordan and St. Michael's took place during our usual healing service time.

This visit by Canon Jordan and the people at St. Michael's underscored our unique partnership in the life of our diocese. The bishop named Jordan Casson the Canon for Peace and Reconciliation and me the Canon for Education and Renewal to help the church reckon with the ongoing legacy of our past, build our capacity to serve God's mission, and renew the church as God's hands and feet in the world. Canon Jordan has been co-leading an initiative, known as Loving Presence, for the entire diocese to engage in reflection, education, and restoration around systemic racism. Later, the diocese released the Loving Presence Report outlining how we will be addressing racism together. You can read the report here:

<https://www.diopa.org/uploads/attachments/ckq2qw4be41p4ciqs0o9bhghs-lovingpresencegroupreportfinal.pdf>

**Hilary**

### Garden of Hope

As part of the Interfaith Food Alliance, we are welcome to help in the IFA's Garden of Hope in Yardley over this summer and fall. Typically, help is needed in the early morning for an hour or so, starting around 7:00am. No experience is needed; any help is appreciated! If you are interested in volunteering, email **Kathy Fitchett** (ktfitchett1189@gmail.com) who sends out weekly emails listing help needed for the upcoming week. All produce grown is donated to the IFA Food Pantry in Morrisville or other local pantries. The Garden of Hope is located at the Lutheran Church of the Resurrection, 1700 Makefield Road in Yardley.

**John Buccanfusio**

# From the Rector

## **Dear Friends,**

WE all miss being able to see each other, hug each other, and worship in community inside our little stone church building. The vestry and I met to consider how we will worship together as a community now that we are able to offer the option to attend in person outdoors as well as on Zoom. These decisions are made according to CDC guidelines, state guidelines, and diocesan guidelines (which are often more stringent to keep us safe), as well as our own guiding values as a community. Please read on for more information/

## **How to attend in-person outside**

Check our website BEFORE you come – we can't risk wet sound equipment, so still go online to the Sunday service link on our website. A notice will be posted by 7:30am saying whether we're meeting in person or online-only. Bring a chair to sit on. If you can't carry a chair, the ushers can help you.

Get vaccinated – Protect yourself and those around you

Wear a mask – Masks are still required under state and diocesan guidelines

Maintain six feet of distance – be aware of where you're sitting, and ask before you touch anyone.

## **How to attend online**

You can still join all of our worship services on Zoom.

Our commitment is to remain communal, interactive, and inclusive whether you attend online or in-person. Simply go to our website and join as normal.

## **When will we be back inside the church?**

Mark your calendars for September 12 – our first Sunday worshipping together back in our sanctuary! Before then, we'll be having open houses and opportunities for parishioners to come inside our restored sanctuary in smaller numbers. Dates will be announced in the weekly parish e-news from **John Boccanfuso**.

## **Why are we doing it this way?**

In making these decisions, the vestry and I are moving forward with an abundance of caution, based on four core values that we have heard from the parish over the last year of our discernment process:

**Hospitality** – we are a boundless community that welcomes all.

Our sanctuary only fits 19 people with six feet of social distancing, or 38 people with three feet. That's less than ten percent of our current members. We have always been a church that "makes room," – we will not become one that turns people away.

**Community** – Our church exists to build the beloved community for God's kingdom.

Sunday worship is the heart of our communion, it is not something we do as isolated individuals, and we will return to indoor worship when we can worship together.

**Caring for the most vulnerable** – all people are a beloved child of God.

Christ gave his life to save others, and instructed us to do the same. The heart of our call as Christians today is to preserve the lives of those who are at risk - those not yet vaccinated, who live with compromised immunity, or live with a family member who does - until it is safer to be together.

**Valuing children and families** – Our church has always been a caring, loving, and safe place for children. Our children will be the last among us to be vaccinated. We are committed to keeping them safe and walking alongside families as they navigate this transitional time.

As a vestry, we are all weary from this past year. We all miss being together. We miss seeing your whole face! And we know that we all assess risk differently, and are moving forward as a community – not as unrelated individuals with personal preferences. Your vestry – and Andrew, John, and I – have orked tirelessly over the last year to balance the needs, fears, and hopes of our community, and we'll continue doing that work of leadership in the months and years to come. As we've learned so well over this past year, our church is first and foremost our people. Peace

**Hilary**

# From the annual meeting

## Accounting Warden's Report

I AM happy to report that St. Andrew's maintained its financial stability despite the unusual circumstances of the past year. Our operating cash balance actually increased in 2020 and remains strong.

Although our pledge and plate income decreased, we lost the income provided by the Nursery School and our interest income plummeted, our cash position actually increased as the result of inflows from other sources. We received a PPP Loan, which has now been forgiven, of over \$33,000. We also benefitted from property damage insurance recoveries exceeding \$15,000. And we raised over \$23,000 in our drive to buy streaming equipment and make repairs to the sanctuary.

Although our 2020 Stewardship Campaign fell short of its pledge income goal, giving thus far in 2021 is strong. During the first three months of 2021 we have received over \$135,000 in pledge income which is well more than last year for the same period and in excess of our budget.

On the expense side, we remained steady with both prior years and our budget. Some additional costs to facilitate our response to the pandemic were offset by savings in other areas.

We were able to deal with some important property issues during the year. We repaired the damage caused by the vandalism to the sanctuary floor, and ended up refinishing our previously hidden beautiful hardwood floor. We also painted much of the sanctuary and made necessary repairs to other parts of the interior. We also completed the exterior painting and repairs at St. Andrew's House.

Work on our properties is continuing in 2021 with the repair of roof leaks in the bell tower and work on other priority issues identified by our property consultants, CamBia Associates.

We have also restructured our investment portfolio, moving a portion of our invested funds from a low return money market fund to a more balanced fund maintained by The Church Foundation which is an investment organization associated with the Diocese of Pennsylvania.

A detailed financial report for the year ending December 31, 2020 is available in the church office.

**Gerry Yarnall**

## Caring for Friends

IN one year, we made 40,572 meals and more than 10,000 soups! In order to streamline our efforts, we moved the two freezers from the Rectory over to the

Parish House. This has allowed us to be more efficient with our new setup. Thanks to Peace and Jaf Baxter for the donation of the new freezer. We are also thankful for the generous anonymous donor that has supplied veggies and protein as well as mashed potatoes, and so appreciative of the monetary donations that we have received. It has allowed us to make nutritious and flavorful meals for the last year. We continue to supply the Parish House and the Sewing House with supplies that allow meals to be completed – meat, veggies, pasta, potatoes, other food items, and supplies for packaging meals. They have been major centers of operation for us, where people – many who have never been in our church before – are picking up supplies and dropping off food. We have also assembled a team of volunteers that collect meals in the church parking lot and parish house on Saturday mornings and we have bi-monthly pack outs and deliver meals to CFF.

Future Goals:

We would like to gather at the church to make meals together, but until it is deemed safe to be together in that space, CFF has offered their kitchen to us to meet together and make meals on site at CFF. We were just recognized by CFF with an award as their largest Church volunteer group. We hope to continue this outreach at St. Andrews with the same enthusiasm the year ahead.

**Patti Slavtcheff**

## New Vestry Members and Officers

At our annual meeting, we elected four new members of the vestry. Every year, the vestry appoints its officers (wardens) to lead key areas of the vestry and congregation's work.

Elected to serve on vestry: **Ian Conklin, Jay Johnston, Sara Peralta and Lauren Tetrault.**

Wardens of the vestry: **Bob Frankievich**, Accounting Warden; **Denise Frederickson**, Junior Warden; **Holly Gaenzle**, Rector's Warden. Other members of the vestry continuing to serve: **Carolyn Lyday; Gary Sloan; and Bill Vallier.**



# Appreciation

## Mark Baldwin: He loved and cared for all his neighbors



**MARK BALDWIN** died on April 8, aged 69 with friends, family and his husband of 27 years **Floyd Hermes** by his side. Mark was born in Melbourne, Florida to Marjorie and Robert Baldwin. However, he grew up in Lancaster, CA. After graduating from high school he moved to West Hollywood and later Studio City. Professionally, Mark worked in the television and film industry in his early years and later worked in the law library and accounting offices of the law firm of Irell and Manella in Century City for many years. He retired in 2006 when he and Floyd relocated to Yardley.

In retirement he developed a passion as a relentless volunteer in many soup kitchens, the food pantry, the Yardley library, St. Andrew's, and Newtown quilt guild. He also took up gardening and cooking. One year his prized pickled beets won first place at the Grange Fair. As an avid quilter, he made numerous baby quilts for family and friends.

Mark had a predisposition for discovering needs within his circle of acquaintances and offering a

helping hand. It could be something as simple as picking up someone and taking them to church or sitting with them during a personal crisis. His presence and willingness to help

everyone radiated throughout his community. His positive nature reflected the essence of his personality. He was loved and appreciated by more people than one can imagine. He loved life and joyfully celebrated all events whenever possible. He knew how to have fun and made things special for everyone around him.

In addition to Floyd, survivors include his brother,

**Michael**, (Teri), his sister, **Susan Livernois**, his beloved dog, **Pennee**, and many nieces and nephews as well as a large circle of friends and family all across the country. A memorial service was held on June 12 at St. Andrews His family requests that in lieu of flowers, please help continue Mark's good works by donating to the Pennndel Food Pantry or the Trenton Area Soup Kitchen.

Mark's presence will live on in all the lives he's touched over the years, and he will be greatly missed



## Parish friends remember Mark Baldwin

*O GOD, thank you for the weavers of wisdom, the mentors of our lives. These great women, these good men, are your grace embodied. They are guides Spirit sent, teachers of lessons no book could contain, healers of healers. I see them now, both here and above, with wreaths of light encircled. I honor each one. I bow my head in gratitude enduring. They have shaped us, as they served you, your truth's legacy ensuring.* (Steven Charleston, former Bishop of Alaska)

Mark Baldwin was a weaver of wisdom, a healer of healers, a builder of the beloved community. He kept his faith simple and practical: get rid of the dogma (other than adoring his dog **Pennee**) and just focus on caring for **Floyd** and everyone else he saw on any given day. I will especially treasure my memories of Mark's spreading cheerfulness at the Trenton Area Soup Kitchen and Mark's doting on the older *femme fatales* of our parish – e.g., **Sallie Berg** (see photo, p8), **Meg Cosby**, **Evelyn Faherty**, **Sara Eggers**, **Marge Connors**, and on and on.

Mark the gospel writer tells a story describing Mark our beloved caregiver (Mark 14:3-9). A woman breaks into a dinner party, breaks open an alabaster jar, and pours an expensive ointment on the head of Jesus, who will soon be executed. This woman knows that her friend is in need of extravagant love so she lavishes love on him. Mark was that person for us: the one who showed up when we most needed his kindness and then poured extravagant love all over us, expecting nothing in return and all the time deflecting attention from himself. That is why he was so beloved and will continue to be so beloved.

**Bob Anderson**

In his book *Love is the Way* Presiding Bishop **Michael Curry** reminds us of Jesus's summary of the law of Moses: "You shall love your neighbor as you love yourself." Jesus also commands us to feed the hungry, heal the sick and comfort the afflicted. A daunting task for many of us, perhaps, but not so for Mark Baldwin, who did all of that and more.

Bishop Curry goes on: "Unselfish sacrificial living isn't about ignoring or denying or destroying yourself. It's about discovering your true self...and living life



from that grounding. The ability to love yourself is intimately related to your capacity to love others....creating a life that allows you to fulfill both needs."

It is beyond measure knowing how many people were fed, healed and comforted by Mark Baldwin — among them so many people he did not know and who would never know him. He volunteered tirelessly in food pantries, soup kitchens, Caring for Friends and other outreach programs, as well as performing many individual acts of kindness and thoughtfulness. He gave rides to church and to medical appointments to parishioners who were otherwise housebound. He was there to help them celebrate significant birthdays. When I was immobile with back problems he came and sat with me one afternoon so that Laura-Jean could go grocery shopping knowing I was safe and not fearing what she might find when she returned. What she came home to was gales of laughter! That was Mark Baldwin. These and other seemingly small acts of kindness meant so much to so many people.

We nearly lost Mark a few years ago when he told me he had been made to feel no longer welcome at St. Andrew's and joined another parish. In time, he gradually returned and many of us eagerly welcomed him back home for good.

**Robin Prestage**

When Mark Baldwin first walked into St. Andrew's

*(Continued on the next page)*



(Continued from previous page)

church office in the early 2000s, where I was employed, I felt an instant connection. From that time and going forward we became great friends. He would sometimes volunteer for me in the office, but mostly came to visit with the other volunteers, especially the older ladies, taking them out to lunch from time to time and bringing them flowers. Mark was such a caring and compassionate man. He truly cared about others and was never shy about giving



out the best and biggest hugs to everyone! If you ever received one of those hugs, you felt the love! Mark volunteered for so many organizations around the area including a soup kitchen in Lambertville, Yardley-Makefield Library and The Yardley Historical Association. He hardly ever missed coming to Caring for Friends where his smiles, hugs, and hellos were always welcomed! We honored Mark

over the last few months with several drive-bys from parishioners and friends, since we were unable to visit him in person because of Covid restrictions. He was very touched by the outpouring of love. We were just returning the favor – he would have done the same for all of us!

Up until the end of Mark's life he was still reaching out to others. I will always remember the special flower arrangement arriving as a "thank you" from him to me, and the kind note which I will cherish forever! Mark Baldwin was that special person who sincerely cared for so many! I know there is a special place in heaven for him! I miss him so much!

**Cheri Peters**

Mark had so much compassion. When he was proceeding up the aisle in St. Andrews to receive communion, he would always place his hand on my shoulder to say hello. And, during the Peace observation, I would receive a hug!

**Carol Bozarth**

I remember the time the Yardley Historical Association had the Float Your Boat event on Lake Afton. Mark was in his kayak rounding up the children's little handmade boats that they made in the old

library building. They were made with a variety of handicraft materials that were supplied by the YHA. Then the children would try to get the boats they made to float in the lake. Mark was laughing as he was trying to wrangle the little handmade boats to return to the children (*see photo, p6*). It was pure pleasure that was radiating from him. The children loved to yell at him "get my boat, get my boat". He would paddle the kayak chasing the little boats, picking them up, putting them in his kayak and paddling to the children.

**Carol Such**

President of Yardley Historical Association

I want to share a wonderful memory or two about dear Mark. Recently Facebook shared a memory from six years ago that Mark had shared. It was in memory of his and Floyd's marriage. He wanted me to know that I was his favorite dance partner, after Floyd, of course (his words). He called me his Ginger Roger's. Recently this year, when Mark was in the hospital for his last chemo, a beautiful flower arrangement arrived at my door. While he was undergoing treatment he took time to send flowers. I know I was not the only one of his friends to experience this so beautiful gesture. Both of my stories speak to the beautiful person Mark was. I loved him as a brother.

**Carol Sherwood**

I have known many aspects of Mark, from his visits to elderly shut-in women to his bringing flowers to lots of us. Whether I saw him in church, at Aid for Friends (as it was called then) or at a meeting of the Friends of the Library, he would seek me out for a hug. When he was last on Church zoom, Hilary acknowledged him and I made the hug sign. I was delighted to see him hug back. Because of Mark's service to the Library and to the Friends of the Library, a donation has been made to the Bucks County Free Library in his memory by the Friends.

**Marilyn Slivka**



# Voices

## Life together playing in the mud

“HELL is other people.” So says Jean Paul Sartre. But “other people” are also the path to heaven. So says Jesus when he tells us his disciples are to be known by our love for one another and our care for the hurting. What gives?

Sartre is partially right: other people can be hell to endure. But, as the scriptures tell us, hell begins and grows in each person’s own selfish self. Yes, we are God’s beloved children, each and every one of us, made in God’s own image. Yet, we are also hot human messes, each and every one of us, prone to self-absorption, pride, gossip, grumbling, and unforgiving accusation.

To live in any community composed of human beings is to live in a stable’s muck and mire. How, then, are we to love one another in a sea of mud?

Guidance can be found in a Rule of Life composed by St. Benedict about 540 A.D. This rule became the basis for governing many monastic orders and for daily prayer services throughout the world; some argue that Benedict’s model provided a saving stability when the rest of the Western world was hurtling to hell in a handbasket. The Rule continues to offer poetic inspiration and practical wisdom to those seeking to lead sane lives and build beloved communities.

July 11 is the day appointed in church calendars for remembering Benedict. For me, this is a holy day because Benedict’s Rule brings balance to my crazed personality and frenetic schedule. He and St. Francis are my polestars: Benedict keeps me rooted in the community needed to tame my wild side; Francis sends me out into the world to be my foolish self. Benedict is an Anchor; Francis is Anchors Away. Benedict’s rule is rooted in the three monastic vows: obedience, stability, and change. These vows are keys to a healthy and holistic life, monkish or mundane, so a word on each one is in order.

**Obedience.** This word derives from a Latin word meaning “to listen.” “Listen” is the rule’s very first word, followed by an exhortation to “incline the ear of our heart” to the Master’s precepts. Those precepts are found in the scriptures embedded throughout the rule, especially in the Psalms and gospels liberally quoted by Benedict. Listening, truly listening, to scripture takes us deeper and deeper into the love taught and practiced by Jesus. For Benedict, obedience also means the art of mutual listening —

listening in love to each other and seeking a common good through a consultative process yielding a collective wisdom. Listen.

**Stability.** To love one another means to vow to stand by one another and then stick with it. That is so even when life in a community is at its muddiest and most irksome. Stability also entails having disciplines to keep oneself rooted in faithfulness and forgiveness. Periodically revisiting the Rule of St. Benedict is one such discipline for me. So too are listening to the scriptures appointed for each day, praying in light of what I’ve heard, seeking to be an instrument of peace, and, per Benedict’s instructions, never despairing of God’s mercy and welcoming each person I meet as Christ. Commit.

**Change.** This means continually opening our hearts to conversion so we may become people who, like Benedict, “[p]refer nothing to the love of Christ.” An expanding heart comes not by insisting on our own way come hell or high water, but by obedient listening and loving participation in God’s “school of service.” Change.

How are we to love one another in a sea of mud? By reveling in the mud itself. Benedict gently meets each one of us where we are and invites us to acknowledge our own shortcomings and share each other’s sufferings with generous and tender love. As we follow the path he prescribes, a dutiful slog becomes a playful romp. In Benedict’s words:

*For as we advance in the religious life and in faith  
our hearts expand  
and we run the way of God’s commandments  
with unspeakable sweetness of love.*

Your sea of mud is my sea of mud too. May all our faith communities practice the unspeakable sweetness of the divine love we proclaim and joyfully play together in a muddy world needing our shared love.

**Bob Anderson**

# Voices

## Saints of Journalism: Dr. Johnson and our very own chroniclers

"BE not too hasty to trust or admire the teachers of morality; they discourse like angels but they live like men." (Dr. Johnson)

This August 27 will be the 80th birthday of **Robin Prestage**, editor of the St. Andrew's *Chronicle* and the Dr. Johnson of our parish.

It is presumptuous to think that I or any other mere mortal can say anything that would begin to describe the tremendous character and capabilities of the immortal Dr. J. He gave us the magisterial Dictionary of the English Language; he wrote plays, essays, poems, prayers, and biographies galore; and he was the master of table talk, as so meticulously recorded by his number one fan, James Boswell, in *The Life of Samuel Johnson*. I have delighted in reading

*"Every man naturally persuades himself he can keep his resolutions; nor is he convinced of his imbecility but by length of time and frequency of experiment."*

—**Samuel Johnson**

Boswell's book as well as the terrific biography written by W. Jackson Bate and appropriately titled *Samuel Johnson* – no subtitles needed.

To me, it is a cardinal sin to be bored or boring. In that regard, Dr. Johnson is the saint of all saints. As his table talk attests, he was the soul of pithy wit, a master of the pungent phrase. Here are some other examples so perfectly describing his day and ours:

*A man seldom thinks with more earnestness of anything than he does of his dinner;  
Every man naturally persuades himself he can keep his resolutions; nor is he convinced of his imbecility but by length of time and frequency of experiment;  
The true measure of a man is how he treats someone who can do him absolutely no good.*

For purposes of this entry, I especially celebrate Dr. Johnson as a journalist and chronicler of his times. He paved the way for Robin Prestage and the St. Andrew's *Chronicle* by publishing three periodicals: *The Rambler*, *The Idler*, and *The Adventurer*. What enticing names!

There's nothing dull about Dr. Johnson and his chronicles and there's nothing dull about Mr. Pre-

stage and his chronicle. Robin has been editing *The Chronicle* for three decades (after 40 years in journalism and public relations on three continents) yet with every issue it gets more colorful and captivating. Take a moment now and say a silent or spoken Hosanna for our beloved editor. Better yet, take several minutes and write a letter to the editor expressing your appreciation and gratitude for him. Like Robin and me, journalist **Art Mayhew** has been attending St. Andrew's for decades. Art's career in journalism spanned 43 years and culminated in his serving as the publisher of *Bucks County Courier Times*. In his journalistic afterlife, Art profiles parishioners in his *Chronicle* column: Art's Gallery. A quote of Art's describing a previous vocation surely describes his St. Andrew's avocation as well: "The job was almost like a sabbatical. Here I was rubbing shoulders with so many talented people. I was exposed to a collection of people—cynical, funny, intelligent and inquisitive." Amen and Alleluia.

Again like me, Saints Robin and Arthur also get extra credit for marrying above their station. God bless you, **Laura-Jean and Carol**.

Dr. Johnson gets the last word, an apt one for Robin, Art, and all of us who have grown long in the tooth and silver in the hair:

*I am afraid, however, that health begins, after seventy, and often long before, to have a meaning different from that which it had at thirty. But it is culpable to murmur at the established order of the creation, as it is vain to oppose it. He that lives must grow old; and he that would rather grow old than die, has God to thank for the infirmities of old age.*

Thank you, Good Lord, for all our infirmities. And thank you too for Robin and Art and their faithfulness to St. Andrew's over the decades.

**Bob Anderson**

# From Episcopal News Service

## Curry announces new churchwide racial truth and reconciliation effort

THE Episcopal Church Executive Council began its June meeting with discussions on how racism is being confronted within and beyond the church, including the creation of a new working group that will be tasked with expanding the church's ongoing antiracism and reconciliation efforts.

Executive Council, a body of elected lay and clergy church representatives, met virtually June 25-28. It was chaired by Presiding Bishop **Michael Curry**, who opened the meeting by announcing that he and the Rev. **Gay Clark Jennings**, president of the House of Deputies and vice-chair of Executive Council, are forming a working group on truth and reconciliation for the entire Episcopal Church. The new working group is not intended to replace the church's existing efforts on telling the truth about its complicity in racism and dismantling the structures that perpetuate it, but to build on those efforts and extend them to every corner of the church.

"Many dioceses have already done this," Curry said in his opening remarks. "Many congregations and schools and seminaries have done this – not all, but many have. But now [we have the chance] to do this work of truth and reconciliation..." at the church-wide level "in all of the countries where we are located. To my knowledge, this has not been done before.

"This is an invitation, and an opportunity to do the hard and holy work of love. This is an opportunity to do and to model ... for the societies in which we live, what we must do to save our souls from the evils of racism, the evils of supremacy of anybody over anybody else."

The working group, Curry said, will be composed of bishops and deputies, some of whom currently serve on the Executive Council Committee on Anti-Racism and Reconciliation and the Presiding Officers' Advisory Group on Beloved Community Implementation. The group will be asked to develop proposals for the 80th General Convention, scheduled for July 2022 in Baltimore, Maryland, "that will foster and facilitate the convention's adoption of a plan and pathway for a process of truth and reconciliation in The Episcopal Church," Curry said.

The proposal will include ways to "tell the truth about our collective racial and ethnic history and present realities, to reckon with our church's historic

and current complicity with racial injustice, make commitments to right old wrongs and repair breaches and discern a vision for healing and reconciliation," Curry said. To do that, the group will conduct a review of past and present truth and reconciliation processes within The Episcopal Church, the Anglican Communion and in the countries where those churches are present, such as South Africa, Rwanda and New Zealand.

The group will convene in September 2021 and be asked to submit proposed General Convention resolutions by March 2022, including proposed budgets for the actions it recommends.

"This working group will have the opportunity to propose the creation of truth and reconciliation opportunities that can inspire the energy, prayers and initiatives of deputies and bishops from across the church while we are in Baltimore," Jennings added. "I pray that the Holy Spirit will move among us and bring us closer to telling the painful truths with which we must reckon before we can become fully the church."

"We've made significant efforts to ensure that people of color are leaders on committees addressing all areas of the church's mission," Jennings said. "For example, at [the 2022] convention, half of the deputies on the Joint Standing Committee on Program, Budget and Finance – the powerful committee that builds on the work of Executive Council and prepares the final General Convention budget, are people of color.

"Ensuring that House of Deputies legislative committees represent a full diversity of the church will not automatically correct the manifestations of structural racism that exists at General Convention, but I hope that more diverse legislative committee leadership and membership helps us make inroads in eradicating some of the injustice identified by the audit."

**Egan Millard**

*Egan Millard is an assistant editor and reporter for Episcopal News Service.*



# Poets' Corner

*Here are three poems read at our Open Mic nights.*

## **Old Friends by Freya Manfred**

Old friends are a steady spring rain,  
or late summer sunshine edging into fall,  
or frosted leaves along a snowy path—  
a voice for all seasons saying, I know you.  
The older I grow, the more I fear I'll lose my old friends,  
as if too many years have scrolled by  
since the day we sprang forth, seeking each other.

Old friend, I knew you before we met.  
I saw you at the window of my soul—  
I heard you in the steady millstone of my heart  
grinding grain for our daily bread.  
You are sedimentary, rock-solid cousin earth,  
where I stand firmly, astonished by your grace and truth.  
And gratitude comes to me and says:

"Tell me anything and I will listen.  
Ask me anything, and I will answer you."

## **Psalm 34: Fried Oyster Loaf by Bob Anderson**

It's nine o'clock, Friday night.  
All's quiet in Franklin, Pa.,  
a Victorian jewel of a town  
nestled amid the ancient Alleghenies.

Emily Myers, eight years old,  
is in bed but wide awake,  
yearning for the front door  
to creak open, to announce

her dad, the town grocer,  
arriving home, bearing  
the fried oyster loaf  
he brings her every Friday,

the day the train delivers  
barrels of Chesapeake oysters  
dug out of the mud that morning  
to be devoured that night.

A budding scholar, Emily  
is sure the Greek gods got it wrong.  
How can the taste of ambrosia  
compete with the heaven of fried oysters?

When the oysters arrive,  
Emily leaps out of bed, sails downstairs,  
pulls up a chair, raises high her fork.  
She savors this intensely present sacrament

though she ate the bread 75 years ago.  
Today, my mother cannot remember  
the glazed donut she ate five minutes before,  
yet now, now Emily's fully alive,

scarfing down the oyster loaf,  
giggling with her dad,  
inviting me to the oyster fest,  
no questions asked about who I might be.

Alzheimer's, be not proud.  
What your fog tries to conceal  
Emily's radiant soul now reveals.  
The feast of life goes on. Come, chow down!

Which takes us home to Psalm 34.  
"O taste and see that the Lord is good."  
Oh yes, Emily agrees. But the fried oyster loaf,  
the fried oyster loaf tastes even better.

## **Reverence by Julie Cadwallader Staub**

The air vibrated  
with the sound of cicadas  
on those hot Missouri nights after sundown  
when the grown-ups gathered on the wide back lawn,  
sank into their slung-back canvas chairs  
tall glasses of iced tea beading in the heat

and we sisters chased fireflies  
reaching for them in the dark  
admiring their compact black bodies  
their orange stripes and seeking antennas  
as they crawled to our fingertips  
and clicked open into the night air.

In all the days and years that have followed,  
I don't know that I've ever experienced  
that same utter certainty of the goodness of life  
that was as palpable  
as the sound of the cicadas on those nights:

my sisters running around with me in the dark,  
the murmur of the grown-ups' voices,  
the way reverence mixes with amazement  
to see such a small body  
emit so much light.