



CHURCH

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Life



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The Rt. Rev. Anne B. Jolly

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Winter

We had a great turnout at the 2024 Winter Convocation which was held at Kalahari Resort and Convention Center on February 2-3. Nearly 300 people attended from 75% of our parishes for the opportunity to get an introduction to the College for Congregational Development (CCD).

This year's Winter Convocation offered a different format than previous years. All attendees participated together in the presentations given by the Rev. Stephen Crippen and Canon Sally Ulrey, CCD trainers. CCD is built to help equip clergy and lay leaders with the knowledge, skills, and practices needed to develop their congregations into healthier, effective, and sustainable communities which are grounded in a robust identity that is rooted in Anglican ethos and spirituality. The first introduction of CCD was offered at the annual Clergy Conference last May.

This August, participants from the diocese will take the first week of the two-week training at Bellwether Farm. The second week will be offered in 2025. The training will offer readings, presentations, experiential exercises, application

activities, and at-home projects. CCD is open to clergy and lay leaders, and teams from congregations are encouraged to attend together. One of the hopes is that parishes will experience an increased energy to engage the challenges and opportunities before them with new tools to make progress in these areas. While spots will be limited at the initial training this summer, CCD models will continue to be presented in various ways to a wider diocesan audience.

Friday night everyone gathered for the first session of the evening where the presenters discussed the CCD models "Gather, Transform, Send" and the "Lifecycle of Organizations." Before ending the Friday session to gather for a reception, Tom Austin, longtime Treasurer of the Diocese of Ohio, was honored with a brief celebration of his book, *Tiverton the Groundhog Supreme*. Attendees joined together to sing a few verses of the song from the book together. Copies of the book were also available for purchase; all proceeds were donated to provide scholarships for children to attend summer camp at Bellwether Farm.



Convocation

On Saturday morning, participants gathered to celebrate Holy Eucharist, where they were able to enjoy a worship with a wide variety of diocesan participants, and a sermon from the Rev. Alex Martin, rector at St. Barnabas, Bay Village.

Following Eucharist, the morning presentation focused on the importance of storytelling as part of the Lifecycle model. Attendees were encouraged to sit with their parishes to allow some specific conversations about their individual contexts as they discussed stories about God, about people, and Anglican identity.

Lunch followed the morning presentation with additional time to mingle, network, and share conversation. During the break, many individuals visited the exhibit

tables, including Bellwether Farm and a showcase of the baptismal fonts in our diocese.

The afternoon session continued the focus on the importance of storytelling and the concept of “cardboard testimonials,” where one side of your sign would say what you were looking for, and the other side would state the gift you found in Jesus through your congregation.

In between every session offered an opportunity for prayer and joint worship. Convocation continues to be an opportunity for people to come together from across the diocese and become engaged and inspired with ideas and information to help us move forward into the future together.





"The Philadelphia Eleven"

To celebrate the 50th anniversary of the first women ordained as priests in The Episcopal Church, a documentary, "The Philadelphia Eleven," had three showings in the Diocese of Ohio at the beginning of the year.

On July 29, 1974, eleven women were ordained as priests in Philadelphia, in violation of the Constitution and Canons of The Episcopal Church at that time. These first female priests in The Episcopal Church were harassed, lost friends, and banned from stepping on church property. The documentary showcases their courage to effect change and build a movement that is still transforming the Church today. Trinity Cathedral; St. Peter's, Lakewood; and St. Paul's, Cleveland Heights offered opportunities that hundreds attended to view and discuss this important film. The Rev. Nancy H. Wittig, a priest of the Diocese of Ohio and one of the Philadelphia Eleven, attended and participated in discussions at all three events. The Rt. Rev. Anne B. Jolly joined the discussions at Trinity Cathedral and St. Paul's, and the Rev. Gay Jennings, the first ordained woman to serve as President of the House of Deputies, participated in the panel at Trinity Cathedral.

If you would like to host a showing, either online or in person, please visit philadelphiaelevenfilm.com. A short form is available to fill out, as well as additional information on cost, upcoming screenings, and some FAQs.



Celebration of the Consecration of the Rt. Rev. Barbara Clementine Harris and the Commemoration of the Rev. Absalom Jones

The annual diocesan celebration of the consecration of the Rt. Rev. Barbara Clementine Harris and the commemoration of the Rev. Absalom Jones was held on February 10 at Church of Our Saviour, Akron. This annual service is sponsored by the president, officers, and members of the Wilma Ruth Combs Northeast Ohio chapter of the Union of Black Episcopalians.

The Rev. Absalom Jones is remembered and celebrated annually on February 13. After founding St. Thomas African Episcopal Church, a Black congregation in 1794, he was the first African American ordained as a priest in The Episcopal Church of the United States in 1804.

The Rt. Rev. Barbara Clementine Harris is remembered and commemorated annually every February 11. She was the first woman consecrated a bishop in the Anglican Communion. She was elected suffragan bishop of the Episcopal Diocese of Massachusetts, on September 24, 1988, and was consecrated on February 11, 1989. Bishop Harris was an advocate for the disenfranchised and a voice for the voiceless as she served all four orders in the struggle for full inclusion of Black people in the church until her death on March 13, 2020.

To honor the work of the Rev. Absalom Jones and the Rt. Rev. Barbara Clementine Harris, as well as the dedicated work that St. Philip's, Akron and Church of Our Saviour, Akron have done for the Akron communities, Shammias Malik, Mayor of the city of Akron, issued two proclamations to be presented at the service. The proclamations declared Saturday, February 10, 2024 as "Blessed Absalom Jones Day" and "Rt. Rev. Barbara Clementine Harris Day" in the city of Akron.

The Rt. Rev. Anne B. Jolly was the celebrant; the Rev. Dr. Robin Woodberry, priest-in charge at St. Paul's, Canton was the preacher; and the Rev. Debra Q. Bennett, rector at the Church of Our Saviour, Akron was the presider. The assisting clergy for the service were the Rev. Megan Allen-Miller, St. Andrew's, Toledo and All Saints', Toledo; the Rev. Sharon Williams, St. Andrew's, Cleveland; and the Ven. Bryan Gillooly, Diocese of Ohio.



WHY DO WE DO THAT?

[Community Engagement]

by George Benson

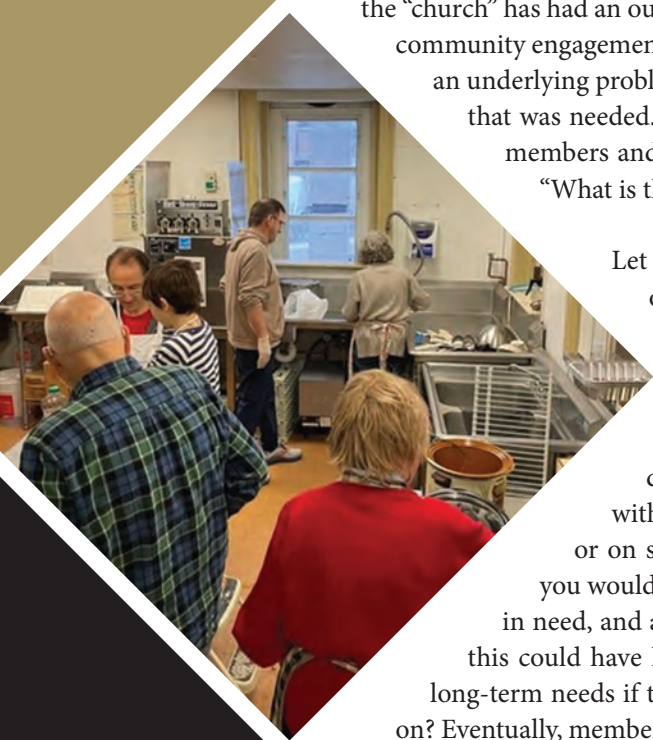
There is not a week that goes by where I don't hear the word, "outreach" used as a synonym for "engagement." This isn't just in church; it is also when people find out what I do for a living. As the Director of Community Engagement at Trinity, Toledo, people's minds immediately go to spending time providing for those outside the walls of my community. Confusing engagement and outreach is an easy thing to do, and for generations the "church" has had an outreach focus. But there is a huge difference between community outreach and community engagement. To speak broadly, community outreach has focused on visible symptoms of an underlying problem and assumes that what has been addressed through their outreach was all that was needed. In contrast, community engagement walks with neighbors and community members and asks, "What is missing/what is the underlying issue of the symptom?" and "What is the exact need, and how long is it needed?"

Let me share a story told to me that helps to illustrate the clear difference between outreach and engagement. It is one that sticks with me the most and is a teaching tool I've gone back to on many occasions.

Imagine your church is by a village whose main source of food were fish that came from a river running right next to it. One day, the fish started dying. If your church was focused on outreach, you would see what is going on with the fish, band together, and provide food for this village either once a week, or on some other schedule. If your church is focused on community engagement, you would see the fish dying, put some sort of emergency meal together, take it to those in need, and ask what is going on. How long have the fish been dying? Do you know why this could have happened? What are the immediate needs we can help with? What are the long-term needs if this problem isn't resolved? Has anyone checked upriver to see what is going on? Eventually, members of the church would go with the villagers upriver to see if it's being polluted, and, if it is, work together to bring about a way to stop it.

The church that is focused on outreach assumes it knows what is needed, but they may be short sighted in providing it. There is no relationship other than a parental approach in telling the villagers what is needed.

The church focused on community engagement also assumed that food was needed but took matters a step further and used it as a catalyst for listening to what was happening in the affected community. This investment in relationship led to seeing the village's river was being polluted, supporting – and walking arm in arm with – the village community, and addressing the underlying problem.



To sum up, the parental outreach approach that churches are traditionally known for looks at the village and says, “People need food, and the fish are dying, let’s feed them. They should be happy we’re doing it.” The community engagement approach asks, “Why are the fish dying, how can we help the villagers, and how can we walk with them to get everything back on track?” Helping the village is harder to do, but it’s not impossible. Taking a community engagement instead of an outreach approach can be an easy way to break away from “the way we’ve always done it” mentality. I like to call the engagement approach “praying with your feet.” I became familiar with the phrase through the work and writings of Rabbi Abraham Joshua Heschel. Rabbi Laurie Green tells this story about him:

Upon marching with Dr. King in Selma, Rabbi Abraham Joshua Heschel famously said: “I felt my legs were praying.” Heschel was as passionate about social justice as he was about the Sabbath and prayer. He taught that prayer must be revolutionary...

Growing up, I was often taught that prayer was only a direct communication from me to God. When I was introduced to the concept of praying with one’s feet by a former mentor, it broke my brain open about the possibilities of prayer. To pray the way I was taught growing up was always asking for some intervention without my getting involved, that was out of my hands.

To be engaged in one’s community means to walk one’s context of ministry and ask questions like, “How can we best serve our little slice of the kingdom of heaven?” or “What prayers are being said that we can be the hands and feet of God for?” Any organization that is resourced can write a check or have people show up to volunteer for an event. But only the church can be prepared to show up and strive for justice and peace among all people, while keeping the dignity of all peoples in the forefront of our minds.

After all, most of what community engagement entails is direct response of prayer. To be in community and engaging with one another is to gather the information at hand about what is needed, to discern what is the best course of action, and, finally, to wait for the spirit to arrive in whatever way she does.

For Trinity, Toledo, this has meant a lot of things, one of which is gearing our monthly mobile food pantry to those who need more than food. For the past year, we have partnered with Lucas County’s Health Department to offer NARCAN® training and a safe space for their NOSS (Northwest Ohio Syringe Services) program because, unfortunately, downtown Toledo experiences a lot of people living with addiction to opioids. So, every month, we open our sanctuary doors to those who deserve to be loved into a second, third, fourth, fifth, etc. chance of recovery in the same way Jesus does for us.

Part of the reason we at Trinity, Toledo engage with secular community partners is because we want to be a hub for those who may need help by connecting them to the ones who are doing incredible work. We want to open our arms to them and say, “How can we best serve together?” The third Saturday of the month we open our doors to a reproductive justice and health organization. This non-profit offers a LGBTQIA+ parental support group for those needing a safe space to support their teens and to ask those lifesaving questions they may be too afraid to ask. For those in The Episcopal Church to know we’re an open and affirming place is one thing; hosting this group and supporting its work widens our embrace. When we do so, I believe we are seeking and serving the image of Christ in all people.

Starting at the end of February, we rebooted our former free breakfast program, which serves as Trinity’s signature ministry. It was originally started in 2017/2018 and fed 75 to 100 people a week in and outside of our church members. In Toledo, there are a small handful of places that serve food on Sunday mornings, and if someone is unhoused or on the margins in need of food, there are restrictions and barriers they must overcome to eat. Unfortunately, that’s not possible for everyone. When we knew we wanted to feed people, we researched, asked around, and listened to our community about when a weekly meal would best be served. Sunday morning ended up being the day and time a meal was needed most. In response, we will be inviting our members and our neighbors in the surrounding community to eat together. The food serves as the catalyst for building relationships with one another.

To engage with your community means getting your hands dirty literally (or metaphorically). Sometimes it means listening to the stories of those who have been cast aside. Sometimes it also means being a safe space for those who are in need of it, long or short term. If we’re serious about being the church in ways large and small, we must listen to those around us. This work is hard, and at times frustrating, but this is the hard work worth doing. How lucky we who engage in our communities are that we get to live our baptismal covenant incarnationally, and to hold space for those who may not be welcomed elsewhere.



Theology with Teens

by the Rev. Anna Sutterisch

At the recent high school retreat, diocesan teenagers were hosted by Christ Church, Oberlin, to reflect, pray, learn, and grow together. We started by asking questions: what do we want to see in a world that is so complicated by harm and hardship? What are we called to do about it? Together, we wrote a communal mission statement of intention and hope: “To create a world of kindness and peace, we will show respect and grace to everyone so that we can all grow together.”

Our next step was to interrogate that mission statement. We played the “why” game to get to the root of our call. (Why is peace important to you? Why that answer? Why? Why? Why?) Most of our answers ended up having something to do with relationships, so we decided to dig deep into that word.

We did a theological reflection on the word “relationships,” asking what the culture, our Christian tradition, and our own personal experience say about relationships. The results of our expansive reflection were simple: culture says relationships are easy. Personal experience says relationships are hard. Christian tradition says relationships are important.

So what do we do with that? Well, we prayed. We talked about what breaks our heart, how God shows up, how to seek goodness in the school, the country, and the conflicts in the world. We read affirmations to each other, took a walk in the cold, listened to music, made art, ate pizza, and heard remarkable wisdom from Deacon Jane Trager (who stopped by to tell her stories) in the litany, and in Father Andy’s sermon on Sunday morning.

We did all this together. Relationships, it turns out, are easy AND hard, AND important. One of the youth said, “I learned how relationships vary between settings—they are different in different places.” About the retreat, one youth commented, “I was able to connect with people. And connections are important.” And finally, a comment that might warm your soul as much as it did mine: “Church can be a fun and enjoyable experience.”

Many thanks to Ben Holcomb for co-leading this retreat and sleeping on a church floor, for the teens and their families, and for your continued prayers for the young people of this diocese.

Bellwether Farm Updates

So much has been happening at Bellwether Farm! Here are some highlights:

- **Special events at Bellwether:** On February 16, Bellwether welcomed pairs to celebrate Valentine's Day with a farm-to-table dinner featuring Bellwether Farm steak. Attendees were given the option to just come for dinner, or stay the night and enjoy a delicious brunch the next morning.

Immediately following the Valentine's Day overnight, Bellwether welcomed more than 20 people for a day of yoga led by Kate Pavlovich, a local yoga teacher. The day started with a morning yoga session followed by a farm-to-table lunch, and farm, animal, and hiking time. Before the day was over, all participants came back together for a final movement and meditation session.

- **Retreat center:** We continue to host a wide variety of organizations, including Around the Table Yarns, who filled the campus in January with laughter and knitting. Eight local vestries have held their vestry retreats at Bellwether for off-site reflection and leadership development. We look forward to hosting groups from our Province V network from around The Episcopal Church.

- **Looking ahead:** Experience the eclipse at Bellwether Farm, develop your supervisory skills at "Stepping up to Supervision," learn more about Julian of Norwich at the Mystics retreat, or join with affinity groups at the Women's retreat and LGBTQ+ retreat. Find full details at bellwetherfarm.com.

Thank you for your continued support and participation in our diocesan camp, retreat, and education center.



snapshots:

stories of inspiration & ministry from the diocese



For the second year, **St. Luke's, Chardon** held a family ice carving event. This event is a way to get involved with the community and to offer families an opportunity to participate in a fun winter event. Attendees were also encouraged to partake in the offerings of fruit, hot chocolate, and fresh popcorn. This year, 10 separate families participated in the event, and the youngest members had a great time playing with the ice carvings. This event is also supported by Jump Start, a day school that operates inside St. Luke's.



St. Paul's, Bellevue features three Blessing Boxes in front of the church building. These boxes were created from old newspaper boxes and were painted by local Girl Scouts four years ago. The Girl Scouts help parishioners keep the boxes organized. Members of the community donate blankets, mittens, hats, books, personal hygiene products, and food for anyone in need to come take. At Thanksgiving, four boxes of materials were anonymously donated, and the food was all claimed within three days. To expand on this project, parishioners made Blessing Bags that include water, granola bars, hats, socks, hand warmers, candy, personal hygiene products, and a note of prayer to distribute during Lent. The bags were delivered to the police department for officers to hand out as needed. Each church season, the parishioners focus on a new community outreach project to positively complete together.



As a way to help parishioners delve deeper into their faith during Lent, **St. James, Wooster** held an Episcopal 101 class every Wednesday night. Participants were welcome to show up for one or all of these classes. Each session began with a soup supper and then they began discussing the topics. Each class used the Catechism in the Book of Common Prayer to explore questions about God, liturgy, scripture, and each individual's purpose in life.

PROFILES

Amelinda Norton
St. Peter's, Lakewood



I first grew up in a Catholic church in Indonesia. But when my mom died when I was five, my older sister took me in where we then moved to America so she could finish her Fulbright Scholarship. My godmother (a lady my sister met at church) agreed to take us in, and for that I will be forever grateful. We attended mass every Sunday at a Missouri Lutheran church where my godmother goes, but as I grew up, I lost interest in church life. My family then pivoted and went to St. Peter's, where we fell in love! We found a parish who loved God, a priest who loved teaching about God, and most importantly, we found a community we could feel like we fit in. Now I am delighted to see the people who attend class with me Sunday morning and excited to see where my new Diocesan Council position takes me. It means a lot to have a place I can go and worship while also feeling like I belong.

Karen Neilsen
St. Timothy's, Macedonia

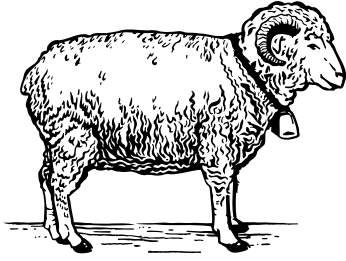


I am a lifelong Episcopalian. I was baptized in the former St. Mary's in Cleveland and confirmed at St. Timothy's which my family had started to attend just after it had been formed. While I have attended other Episcopal churches during my life, including St. Stephen's in Birmingham, Alabama and Emmanuel in Geneva, Switzerland, St. Timothy's has always been my home. I have sung in the choir, taught Sunday school, and served on Alter Guild. I have been a representative to the Summit Mission Area Council and Diocesan Council, and an alternate delegate to General Convention. Currently, I am honored to be part of Presiding Bishop Curry's delegation to the United Nations Commission on the Status of Women. I am very grateful to have been raised Episcopalian. My upbringing in Christ and our church has guided me well, both personally and professionally. And as I taught in Sunday school, no matter where life leads, you will always be welcomed and feel at home in any Episcopal or Anglican church. Plus, there is always a coffee hour.

Demetrius Carrothers
St. Paul's, Canton



I am the husband to a wonderful wife, Cynthia, of 24 years and we have two adult children. The Episcopal Church saved my spiritual life. I left another Christian denomination in the spring of 2020 and was in a spiritual desert. I was extremely close to giving up on organized religion. God then, very unexpectedly, led me to The Episcopal Church. I started attending St. Paul's in the fall of 2020 and instantly found a spiritual connection and closeness to God that I had never found before. I was confirmed in October 2021. I was raised to be humble and accept the job that needs to be done. I have served as a crucifer, torch bearer, lector, Eucharistic Minister, and lay preacher during services at St. Paul's. I was elected to vestry in January 2022. The vestry of St. Paul's recently elected me to the office of senior warden. I was recently blessed to serve The Episcopal Church on the diocesan level by being appointed to the Commission on Ministry. I am truly grateful for St. Paul's, Canton and the Diocese of Ohio and The Episcopal Church.



Bellwether — FARM —

CAMP • RETREAT • EDUCATION CENTER

Summer Camp 2024 “Every Living Thing”

June 16-21: Grades 6-12 and Leaders in Training

June 23-28: Grades 3-9 and Leaders in Training

June 29-30: Family Camp for all ages

July 7-12: Grades 3-9 and mini camp

July 14-19: Grades 3-9 and mini camp

July 21-26: Grades 3-9 and mini camp

What's the same:

Community; farm-to-table; fields, forests, friends;
creative prayer and worship; bunny yoga; silly songs;
campfires in the woods;

Sunday-Tuesday mini camp for rising 2nd and 3rd graders;
experiential play and learning; God loves you. No exceptions.®

What's new:

the animal barn and outdoor amphitheater;
a two week Leaders in Training program for rising 11th and 12th graders;
exciting fresh programming; new friends, counselors, plants, and animals!

Register at bellwetherfarm.com.





UPCOMING EVENTS

MARCH

March 16-17

Middle School Pilgrimage
Trinity Cathedral

March 16

Regional Confirmation
St. Paul's, Medina

March 20

Standing Committee Meeting
Trinity Commons

March 22-23

Diocesan Confirmation Retreat
Bellwether Farm

APRIL

April 6 - April 8

Solar Eclipse "Path of Totality"
Festival
Bellwether Farm

April 10-11

Stepping up to Supervision Training
Bellwether Farm

April 13

Regional Confirmation
Grace, Mansfield

April 14

Summer Camp Open House
Bellwether Farm

April 26 - 27

Provincial Synod and
Big Provincial Gathering
South Bend, Indiana

MAY

May 3-4

Seeing the Face of God in Each
Other
St. Paul's, Canton

May 10-11

Lay Preaching College
Bellwether Farm

May 11

Regional Confirmation
Ascension, Lakewood

May 18

Regional Confirmation
Grace, Sandusky

May 21-23

Clergy Conference
The Lodge at Geneva on the Lake

May 25

Station Hope
St. John's, Ohio City

JUNE

June 1

Regional Confirmation
St. Andrew, Mentor

June 21-23

Women's Retreat
Bellwether Farm



Bishop's Annual Appeal

To make a gift to the Bishop's Annual Appeal, please scan the QR code using your smartphone camera, or go to dohio.org/donate.

We appreciate your help with our continued sustainability efforts as we discontinue the envelope inserts.

Questions? Contact Rebecca Miller,
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& Resource Development.
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