



# CHURCH

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*Life*



"When we avoid difficult conversations in church, we withdraw from the very challenges that need our best selves and our deepest surrender to God. The most important conversations are not about who is right and who is wrong; those never go very far. But conversations in which we learn from one another about how we got to the perspectives we hold, in which we hear the personal stories upon which our convictions are built, those can take us to novel and more secure ground. I believe that God cares much more about how we get to common-ground solutions for the long term, than about who will win and who will lose in the short term."

-page 6

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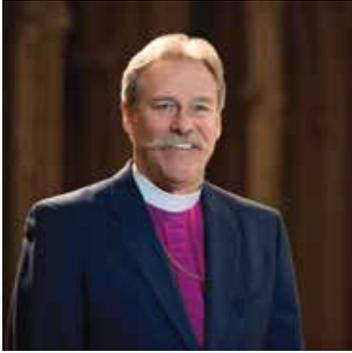
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# A MESSAGE FROM THE BISHOP

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## 203rd Convention of the Diocese of Ohio November 9, 2019 Convention Address

This morning, I want to talk about politics. It feels particularly important and timely, and it is, after all, what Jesus did when he gathered in his home synagogue with those who knew him well. He started with Isaiah 61. Straight politics. Good news to the poor, release to the captives, sight to the blind, liberty to those who are oppressed, the acceptable year of the Lord. It didn't go very well for him, but he, too, thought it was important and timely. So here we go.

Wherever I am, on parish visitations and in conversations with lay leaders, clergy, colleagues, and friends, there is a common theme of alarm and despair over the current socio-political environment, and there is increasing anxiety about what awaits us in the general election year that has just commenced. People express concern about the plummeting level of civility in both national and local political discourse, and despondency about the paralyzing partisanship of our democracy. They speak of divisive vitriol and entrenched polarization in all quarters, characterized by contempt, scorn, disinformation, and demonization.

The Presiding Bishop recently described it this way:

The United States is being torn asunder within by the inability to be in deep relationship with each other and yet hold differing positions and convictions. And the test of this democratic experiment will be the capacity of this particular nation to hold differences in the context of deep and real human relationships.

In my prayer for our country and its leaders, I continually ask God, "What is the church's responsibility in all of this, and what is my role as a Christian and a bishop?" And I am repeatedly led to this notion of relationships that are stronger than the differences we hold. It seems to me that, in the face of such deep discord, that is our business, "to restore all people to unity with God and each other in Christ." And yet, in this present context we do not appear certain how to do it, either in church or elsewhere in our lives. It is, for many, depressing and scary.

Like family members approaching the Thanksgiving holiday with trepidation, worried that someone might bring up impeachment investigations at the dinner table, we fear that conversations about difficult subjects will deteriorate into hurtful mischaracterizations and stereotyped accusations. No doubt, some parishioners go to church hoping to hear a word that affirms their positions and opinions, yet others may fear or resent the possibility that someone will bring up politics in the sermon or at the coffee hour. We avoid emotionally charged topics even with some of our closest friends, so that we might be spared awkward and unpleasant results. We are afraid of causing offense or raising identity tensions that jeopardize trust and damage relationships. And yet, real relationships are what God gives us to hold those difficult challenges.

Social psychologists who study the challenges of increasingly diverse communities argue that our social, moral, religious,



and political convictions are in large part a product of how our brains work. Jonathan Haidt, in his informative book *The Righteous Mind – Why Good People are Divided by Politics and Religion*, explains that our individual morality is formed by six basic values: Care vs. Harm; Liberty vs. Oppression; Fairness vs. Cheating; Loyalty vs. Betrayal; Authority vs. Subversion; and Sanctity vs. Degradation. Each person’s brain weights these fundamental values differently, and that weighting significantly forms our moral and political perspectives. There is no absolute right or wrong weighting. One is not better or more righteous than another; it is just how we are made. And because, for emotional security and physical survival, we are innately social beings, we tend toward group identification – birds of a feather.

Haidt’s research shows that those whose moral matrices rest principally on the foundational values of personal freedom and fairness tend politically to identify with Libertarian politics. Those whose moral matrices favor loyalty, authority, and sanctity seek stability, order, and the preservation of institutions and traditions that provide them, and they tend more toward Conservative politics. And those whose moral matrices stand predominantly on the value of care for all, even at the expense of other values, they identify most commonly with Liberal politics.

Professor Haidt contends that the human mind is designed for what he calls “groupish righteousness.” We tend to collect around common morality and politics. He explains, “We are deeply intuitive creatures whose gut feelings drive our strategic

reasoning. This makes it difficult – but not impossible – to connect with those who live in other matrices, which are often built on different configurations of the available moral foundations.” Difficult, but not impossible.

All six moral foundations are essential to a healthy society and human survival. That is why we value them. And because our brains render each of us more sensitive to some values than others, we are ultimately dependent upon the diversity of moral foundations that we can offer to one another when we cross the lines of our “groupish righteousness.” In short, we need one another. We need our differences. We need to connect about the things that matter in life. Therefore, we need to have hard conversations about those things that the power of evil is using to separate us from one another. And to that end, we need to build deep and real relationships, with God and one another, because they are the vessels that can hold those hard conversations.

Certainly, one reason we retreat from hard conversations in the church is that we yearn for a safe place of respite from the constant barrage of bad news and bad behavior we learn of in the media and on the street. Sometimes we need the church to be that reliable place where we can get away from conflict and find comfort, where we can come up for air. But if what we do in church becomes detached from the realities in which we live, it will neither heal us nor empower us to heal the world.

One consequence of our mobile society is that many of us can

and do drive past numerous churches of varying theological, ecclesiological, and political characteristics on our way to worshiping where we want. It accommodates our “birds of a feather” predisposition. It also makes us vulnerable to the precarious illusion that we can go to church to get our own way, find what we want as opposed to what God may want for us. In earlier times, particularly in small communities, people worshipped with those they were given, making it difficult to avoid the neighbor they were struggling to love. Because most of us can choose where and with whom we worship, the necessity and opportunity for hard conversations can be reduced.

As well, we hesitate to bring up difficult issues in church because they feel so dangerous. We fear that they may result in other people getting angry and leaving, or in our getting angry and leaving. In the last 40 years, we in the Episcopal Church have learned about that the hard way. I have undying admiration for

about how we got to the perspectives we hold, in which we hear the personal stories upon which our convictions are built, those can take us to novel and more secure ground. I believe that God cares much more about how we get to common-ground solutions for the long term, than about who will win and who will lose in the short term.

Our polity in The Episcopal Church and our governance in the United States of America are based on the same premise and expectation that we come together not to exercise power one over another, but to offer our best selves in the collaborative service of the greater good. E Pluribus Unum. No individual or group has all the answers or knows the only way. Indeed, “out of many” is essential to the achievement of being one. Equally essential is the other claim we make as Americans, “In God we trust.” It is our trust that God can and will see



all of those, on every side of difficult of social, theological, and liturgical issues, who have remained committed to this church. They have modeled a confidence in God and a generosity with others that is inspiring. But like our spiritual forbearers in every age, we are sometimes reluctant to bring to God and one another, in an open and trusting way, the issues that most threaten us. Like those to whom Isaiah prophesied, we sing praises, say prayers, and make sacrificial offerings, just yet continue to shy away from God’s invitation in Isaiah 1:18, “Come now, let us argue it out.” Our fear of the potentially divisive consequences undermines our trust that God will get us through. As well, it compromises the trust God is asking us to risk with one another.

When we avoid difficult conversations in church, we withdraw from the very challenges that need our best selves and our deepest surrender to God. The most important conversations are not about who is right and who is wrong; those never go very far. But conversations in which we learn from one another

us through every challenge that undergirds our ability to work together in a democratic society.

The cost of democracy, like the cost of Christian discipleship, is humility, generosity, and personal sacrifice. It is not being right and getting our way; it is belonging to God and to one another, and being so genuinely connected that together we can find solutions that serve beyond our individual capacity to imagine. A generation ago, congressional legislators moved their families to Washington and shared their lives with one another more fully, in tangible and intimate ways. They came to know one another at a personal level and to understand how each had come to the perspectives they held. It provided a foundation for the collegiality required for a democratic system to work. It inspired them to seek the common ground necessary to fulfilling the super-majority requirements of some of their most important legislative responsibilities. Now they invoke

the “nuclear option,” and they commute when Congress is in session, some sleeping in their offices three nights a week then going back to their districts, like fighters going back to their corners in winner-take-all battles.

I listen to people of opposing perspectives talk about Republican and Democratic leadership in Washington, Columbus, and elsewhere, and as the conversations increase in heat and decrease in light, it becomes clear that they are talking less about their elected leaders and more about each other. And I watch people – good, caring, passionate people – square off against each other at rallies and public events, hurling insults and sometimes fists at each other, as if that can come to any possible good. Over the years, we have witnessed similar engagements in church meetings – parochial, diocesan, and church-wide.



I don't believe that God



calls us together in this church or this country to agree with one another. I have no doubt, however, that God calls us together in the church to make a difference in the world. To heal its brokenness. To bring it out of darkness and into light. To work through together what we cannot work through alone. To help one another see with new eyes, and to see through God's eyes. To surrender ourselves to Jesus that we might become his very body, becoming one with him and in him, that the world might do the same. I think we are here to build deep relationships that can hold the rich and challenging differences we embody and handle the hard conversations that they will inevitably present. That is a big part of why I think we are here and what we have to offer in this particular moment.

And I believe that, with God's help, we can do this. Is this anywhere close to why you think we are here? Does this ring at all true with your understanding of our common vocation? If so, when people come to your church, how do you let them know that? And how do you remind one another? I know that some of you and your

congregations have taken the Golden Rule 2020 pledge, as I have. It is a good place to start in committing to a more civil discourse. Perhaps during the break you can go to [goldenrule2020.org](http://goldenrule2020.org) and consider making that commitment.

But what if we were even more overt about all of this? What if we told people every Sunday why we are here, not just by printing a mission statement in the service bulletin, but with words spoken in worship and other gatherings that confess our intention, and in actions that demonstrate our commitment? What if we told people that we are concerned about our common life, that we are here to make a difference in some very specific ways, and that we need their help. What if we told people that we gather every Sunday to learn and model how to live together with difference; that we are genuinely interested in how each person comes to hold such differing perspectives; that we want God to take those very differences that the power of evil relentlessly employs to separate

us from one another, and to use them in knitting us together into a more holy and healthy community? What if we told them that, as disciples of Jesus, we are trying in practical ways to exercise the humility and generosity that build trusting relationships so that we all will feel secure and safe in having the hard conversations that we believe will make a difference in these divisive times? What if we assured them that they will not be judged here, but, by entering into thoughtful, listening dialogue with one another and with God, we will help each other take our own measure, in the illuminating love of Christ Jesus?

And so, I wonder, have we the courage, or simply enough confidence in God, to engage at this level of trust and honesty? We can't expect others to do it if we are not doing it ourselves. And if we don't, who will? If not here, then where? Common ground. That is what the church provides. Wherever two or three are gathered together in Jesus's name, he has promised to be in their midst, that that place will be common and holy ground. Is this ground on which we ought to stand? I believe it is, and I

believe that we have the capacity to make a difference.

After a short break and the election of the Officers of Convention, we will have table discussion about whether and how we might be a healing force in this contentious time, to report back briefly, and to pray. So, I encourage you in the moments in between to think about how we might do this; to think about what would be hard about it for you; to think about practical things we can do within our congregations and with other congregations to help the world understand that Jesus's prayer that we might be one is one we are ready to live into.

Thank you.



The Rt. Rev. Mark Hollingsworth, Jr.  
XI Bishop of Ohio

# Bishops' Visitations

## December

- 1 St. Andrew's, Barberton - Hollingsworth
- 8 Trinity Church, Findlay - Williams
- 8 St. Michael's in the Hills, Toledo - Hollingsworth
- 15 St. Mark's, Shelby - Williams
- 15 St. Mark's, Sidney - Hollingsworth

## January

- 12 St. Luke's, Chardon - Hollingsworth
- 12 St. Matthew's, Toledo - Williams
- 19 St. Paul's, Medina - Hollingsworth

## February

- 9 St. Timothy's, Macedonia - Hollingsworth
- 9 St. Timothy's, Perrysburg - Williams
- 16 St. Luke's, Niles - Hollingsworth
- 23 Church of the Ascension, Lakewood - Hollingsworth
- 23 St. Andrew's, Toledo - Williams

## March

- 1 St. Paul's, Norwalk - Hollingsworth
- 8 Church of the Epiphany, Euclid - Hollingsworth
- 15 St. Matthew's, Ashland - Hollingsworth
- 22 St. Paul's, Canton - Hollingsworth
- 22 St. Martin's, Chagrin Falls - Williams
- 29 St. Paul's, Fremont - Hollingsworth

## April

- 19 Grace Church, Mansfield - Hollingsworth
- 19 St. James, Painesville - Williams



# Convention Recap

The 203rd Annual Convention of the Episcopal Diocese of Ohio was held on November 9 at the Lyman Harbor Entertainment Complex in Sandusky. Four resolutions were presented and passed without amendments: R1: Resolution on Clergy Compensation, R2: Resolution to Endorse the Diocesan Investment Policy to Consider Non-Financial Environmental, Social, and Governance (ESG) Factors, R3: Resolution Calling Parishes to Adopt a Policy for the Protection of Children and Youth from Abuse, and R4: Special Resolution Submitted by the Committee on Constitution and Canons. R3 strongly encourages all parishes to adopt a policy prior to the 204th Diocesan Convention for the Protection of Children and Youth from Abuse. A sample policy can be found at [dohio.org/safeguarding](http://dohio.org/safeguarding). R4 officially closed St. Alban's, Cleveland Heights. The parish history is posted at [dohio.org/stalbans](http://dohio.org/stalbans). See the following election results:

## Diocesan Trustee

Mr. Thomas Hill - St. James, Painesville

## Standing Committee

The Rev. Dr. Brian Wilbert - St. Paul's, Cleveland Heights  
Ms. Pam O'Halloran - St. Paul's, Cleveland Heights

## Diocesan Council

The Rev. Rose Anne Lonsway - Grace Church, Willoughby

The Rev. Gregory Stark - St. Andrew's, Elyria and Christ Church, Oberlin

Mr. James Hockey - St. Paul's, Cleveland Heights

Mr. Michael Wells - Trinity Cathedral Cleveland

## ECS Development Council

The Rev. Daniel Hinde - Diocese of Ohio

Mr. Mark Clark - St. James, Painesville

Mr. Noah Sutterisch - Church of the Ascension, Lakewood

Ms. Linda Vasconi - St. John's, Youngstown

## Diocesan Disciplinary Board

The Rev. Gayle Catinella - St. John's, Youngstown

The Rev. Evan Fischer - St. James, Wooster

The Rev. Lisa Tucker-Gray - Trinity Church, Toledo

## General Convention Deputy

The Rev. Debra Bennett - Church of Our Saviour, Akron

The Rev. Vincent Black - Church of the Ascension, Lakewood

The Rev. Percy Grant - Diocese of Ohio

The Rev. Rosalind Hughes - Church of the Epiphany, Euclid

Mr. William Powel - St. Paul's, Cleveland Heights

Mr. Richard Pryor, III - Christ Church, Kent

Ms. Dianne Audrick Smith - St. Andrew's, Akron

Ms. Eva Warren - Harcourt Parish, Gambier

# Clergy Changes

## CLERGY RETIRED:

- The Rev. Kip Colegrove is retiring as rector of Trinity, Alliance and Our Saviour, Salem as of Easter 2020.

## NEW CLERGY:

- The Rev. Dr. Daniel H. Grosseohme is serving at Akron Children's Hospital.
- The Very Rev. Bernard J Owens IV is serving as dean of Trinity Cathedral.
- The Rev. Adrienne M. Koch is serving as priest associate at Trinity Cathedral.
- The Rev. Foster M. Mays is serving as priest-in-charge of St. Michael's in the Hills, Toledo.
- The Rev. Sharon Van Dam has accepted a call to serve as extended supply at St. Stephen's, East Liverpool.
- The Rev. Clark West is serving as long term supply at St. Philip's, Akron.
- The Rev. Robert E. Witt, Jr. is serving as supply.

## CLERGY TRANSITIONS:

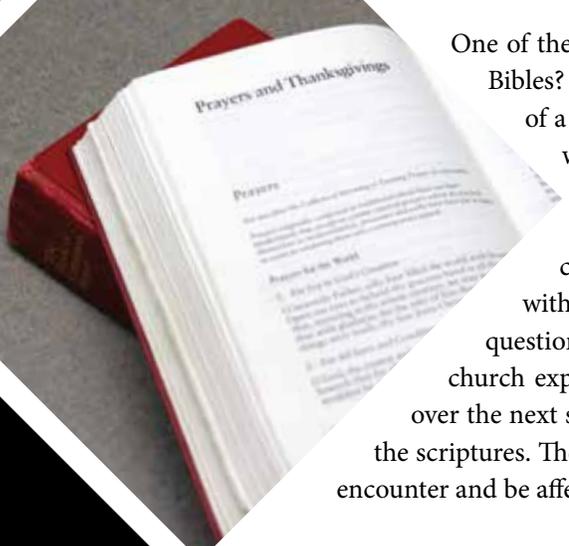
- The Rev. Stephen N. Ashby has been ordained to the diaconate and is serving at Church of the Good Shepherd, Lyndhurst.
- The Rev. Brian M. Bechtel has been ordained to the diaconate and is serving at St. Paul's, Cleveland Heights.
- The Rev. A. Paul Collins has resigned as rector of Church of the Good Shepherd, Lyndhurst.
- The Rev. Elizabeth Frank has resigned as interim rector of St. Paul's, Canton, and is serving as interim rector of St. Paul's, Medina.
- The Rev. Dr. Paul L. Gaston has resigned as acting dean of Trinity Cathedral and is serving as interim rector at St. Mark's, Canton.
- The Rev. Sally E. Goodall has been ordained to the priesthood and is serving at St. John's, Cuyahoga Falls.

- The Rev. Rachel V. Harrison has been ordained to the diaconate and is serving at St. Paul's, Mount Vernon.
- The Rev. Daniel L. Hinde was ordained to the diaconate.
- The Rev. Marie Moore was ordained to the diaconate.
- The Rev. Sarah J. Shofstall resigned as assistant priest at Trinity Cathedral and is serving as interim rector at Christ Church, Oberlin.
- The Rev. Anna Sutterisch was ordained to the diaconate and is serving as Canon of Christian Formation on the Diocesan staff.
- The Rev. Barbara J. Telfer was ordained to the diaconate.
- The Rev. Dr. Brian K. Wilbert has resigned as rector of Christ Church, Oberlin, and is serving as interim assistant rector at St. Paul's, Cleveland Heights.

# WHY DO WE DO THAT?

## [ The Book of Common Prayer ] by the Rev. Matt Wahlgren

I remember my first time walking into an Episcopal church. It was intimidating because my previous church norm was theater seating with cup holders, loud music, and a light show. In this environment, I felt comfortable, like it was made for me. But once I entered St Andrew's Episcopal Church, I found myself afraid of doing something wrong. The space felt sacred, and I was not sure I belonged there. It took me a year of asking, "Why do we do that?" Well, honestly, I asked, "Why do you do that?" The "we" didn't come until later, when I began to feel comfortable. I must have asked various forms of this question about a hundred times. Each time that I received an answer felt like an invitation into a new way of being Christian, a sacred way of being Christian. I began to learn that I belonged in the sacred spaces of the church, that God wants us in God's sacred spaces.



One of the first questions I asked when I arrived at St Andrew's was, "Where are all your Bibles? All I can find are these Prayer Books." I was eventually pointed in the direction of a Bible. However, behind the question there were two things happening. The first was my initial encounter with the Book of Common Prayer (BCP). As someone coming from an evangelical mega-church tradition, I found a prayer book odd. I had no idea the Daily Office was not a room with a desk. To me, a collect was what you did to things that were scattered. These had nothing to do with prayer. The BCP was a foreign book, and I met it with skepticism. Secondly, my question had created a framework that placed the BCP against the Bible. My previous church experiences taught me to be leery of anything that was not scripture. Regardless, over the next several months I explored the Prayer Book and realized that I was often praying the scriptures. The BCP was not against the Bible; rather, it was a tool that enhanced my ability to encounter and be affected by scripture.

As I continued to use the Prayer Book, I grew increasingly fond of the section of Prayers and Thanksgivings. All my life, my prayers had only been a conversation with God. I still think that an intimate and spontaneous prayer life is important, but there were times when I encountered tragedy or a complex issue for which I simply did not have words. In these situations, I found comfort in pages 814-841. The prayers not only gave words to the groans of my heart, but they often challenged me to see things and engage the world in a new way.

While I continued to explore this book, I also learned how the BCP connects us to the rich history of the church. It contains many prayers that have stood the test of time. Christians have gathered for centuries and sometimes longer reciting forms of our same prayers. Our connection to history in this way helps us to have assurances that our faith and worship continue from, and remain connected to, the historic church. This connection is especially important in a fast-moving and ever-changing world. The BCP ensures that the church will not shift just because the culture shifts.

Even though our Prayer Book has roots in history, it is certainly not stuck there. The BCP has gone through and continues to go through thoughtful revisions. These revisions help the BCP continue to pass down meaningful historic worship while also keeping it accessible and making it relevant. The BCP roots us in good soil, but it is comprehensive enough to encourage its worshippers to think and engage its current time and place.

It seems to me that as a society we do not only change fast, but also we change passionately. These passions often lead us into divisions. We are in a country and a world that is increasingly dividing over many issues. These divisions have also led to polarization. Polarized people see the other and treat the other as an enemy. This way of “being” leads to a life of contempt of the other. The church has not been immune to this polarization. Oftentimes the church has been one of the culprits. In this passionate and fast-changing world, the BCP helps us to keep the main thing the main thing, and the main thing is the worship of God. The BCP helps ensure that our church will not be hijacked by polarizing ideologies. The people of the church are not Democrats or Republicans or whatever ideological label that we divide over; no, we are brothers and sisters in Christ. In times of division, the BCP helps us to understand that we have something in common, that we have a lot more in common than we can ever have in conflict. The BCP draws this commonality by being incredibly comprehensive in ways that allow polarized groups to worship together. The beauty of the way it does this is that it does not quench the passions of the people, rather it connects those passions to God. It does not allow the church to be easily distracted by polarized opinions; rather, it calls us back to the focused worship of God: Father, Son, and Holy Spirit, in ways that give those passions guidance.

Finally, for me, the BCP has become more than a book that shows us how to pray. It is a book that teaches us how to believe. We have a book of prayers and services that continue to orient our lives back toward God. Bishop Jeffery Lee says it well in his book [Opening the Prayer Book](#):

"The prayer book does not offer precise doctrinal formulations that must be adhered to; rather, it provides the forms that outline our practice of the Christian faith, shaped principally by worship. If you ask an Anglican what it means to belong to the church, the answer might well be, 'Come and worship with us.' Being an Anglican means doing what the church does – and what the church does, first and foremost, is worship the living God. It is out of our common worship that our understanding of God proceeds and our ethical and moral decision-making takes shape."

If someone wants to know what Episcopalians believe, invite them to come and pray with you. Belief cannot be separated from the actions of worship and prayer. As people who worship and pray, we are constantly having our beliefs formed. Beliefs are not static, although we often treat them as if they are. Beliefs are dynamic. They come out of a relationship guided by prayer and worship. And when prayer and worship are done well, they open us up to new and challenging experiences with God.

There are many reasons that we use the Book of Common Prayer. I'm sure you even have a few that I have not shared. I encourage you to think of times that the BCP has influenced your life. Maybe it is a prayer that comforted you, maybe one that challenged you, or maybe one that helped you to pray for your enemy. The BCP is a wonderful tool that helps us to root and grow in our faith. May it be that for you in this next season of your life.

# The Bishop's Bike Ride at Bellwether

by Laura Hnat

Labor Day weekend 2019 marked the return of the popular event: The Bishop's Bike Ride. For more than 10 years, cyclists in the Diocese of Ohio have joined Bishop Hollingsworth in an annual long-distance group bicycle tour. The rides ranged from a 10-day cross-country journey from the Episcopal General Convention in Anaheim, CA to The Episcopal Church offices in New York City to a several-day trip that followed the path of the Underground Railroad across Ohio.

Forty-two riders participated in a one-day ride which started and finished at Bellwether Farm on Saturday, August 31. The event featured three different ride lengths to accommodate riders of all ages and abilities: a novice/family fun ride of 22 miles, an intermediate ride of 40 miles, and a longer ride for experienced riders of 70 miles. Each route led to a parish where riders and volunteers enjoyed lunch and fellowship.

Novice riders followed the North Coast Inland Trail to Christ Church, Oberlin; intermediate riders rode to St. Andrew's, Elyria; and the experienced riders rode to Christ Church, Huron. All riders were invited to ride back to Bellwether Farm for dinner and fellowship.

The Bishop's Bike Ride has a legacy of building community within our diocese and raising funds to support youth programs. Since the first ride in 2006, participants have raised nearly \$80,000 to support youth activities such as mission trips, leadership development, and faith formation activities. Participants invited their parishes, friends, and family to sponsor their rides. This year, riders raised nearly \$5,000 to support youth programming in our diocese.

The Rev. Jeff Bunke shared his motivation for participating, "The Bishop's Bike Ride supports work with and by youth in our diocese - often through grants for projects and ministries such as youth mission trips. At St. Timothy's in Perrysburg, we've been blessed nearly every year for the past seven years with support from the Bishop to send a team of youth (and adults) into one of the poorest counties in our nation. While the product of tasks accomplished has been great, the changed lives and personal growth of the missionaries is even greater!"

The goal of the ride is as much about building community as it is about raising funds.

Riders played "Bishop's Bike Ride Bingo," where they were encouraged to fill up a bingo card of sights, sounds, experiences, and reflections that they collected on their ride. The squares contained themes like "Up Hill," challenging riders to reflect on a time when they had to "climb" a hill in life, and "Coasting," encouraging them to think about the last time they were able to relax and let God do the work. Volunteers at the parishes provided homemade lunches for the riders and shared conversation during the meal.

Hope Jarvis and Ginger Brown, parishioners at St. Timothy's in Perrysburg, were volunteer SAG Drivers (Support and Gear). The SAG vehicles follow behind riders and provide beverages and snacks as well as help with injuries and small bike repairs. Both have participated in the bike ride in the past.

Hope shared, "Meeting fellow folk on their home turf, sharing stories, being part of a bigger picture - that is always 'church' for me."

Ginger, a veteran of four previous Bishop's Bike Rides, reflected, "I find such joy in making new friends, sharing stories, and seeing those whom I have met at other Diocesan events. I do feel a greater connection with the Diocese as well."



# Farm





# Faith and Fun in Farm and Forest

by the Rev. Anna Sutterisch

On a beautiful sunny weekend in October, participants from 13 parishes gathered for a weekend of fun, fellowship, and learning at the Diocesan Youth Event (DYE). The theme was “Science Fair: Faith and Fun in Farm and Forest,” and the weekend’s activities centered around the belief that learning more and understanding creation through science is one way to deepen our relationship with God.

Bellwether Farm was a great place to do this. Members of the Diocese with a scientific background came out in full force to lead activities for the youth, including: testing pond water, river water, and tap water for alkalinity and pH; baking sourdough and learning about edible bacteria; making bath fizzies by combining a variety of materials including wildflowers; working on the farm; protecting eggs with recycled materials for an egg drop; and “slicing and dicing DNA” using gel electrophoresis. Dr. Andy Jorgensen (St. Andrew’s, Toledo) also gave an interactive and informative talk on the spirituality of creation care and what we can do about climate change.

Between all of the learning and experimenting, the youth were also able to build relationships and have a lot of fun. There was time to visit the animals, play basketball, sit by the bonfire, and enjoy a movie night. We also played “Romans v. Christians,” a game that’s like a combination of hide-and-go-seek and capture the flag.

On Sunday morning, families and friends joined the youth to celebrate St. Francis with a roving church service. We stopped at various areas around the farm, praying, singing, and sprinkling holy water over the water, land, chickens, goats, and dogs. We celebrated Eucharist using the sourdough bread the youth had made the previous day.

It was the first youth event for Margaret, an 8th grader. She says, “I would describe DYE as a place where kids can be themselves and have some fun, not worrying about the stress of school and other things. I was most surprised at how easy it was to connect with the other kids at DYE. Everyone was so friendly and easy to talk to, making the weekend even more fun than I thought it was going to be. I was also surprised that I tried okra!” Another 8th grader, Michael, added “this would be a good event to bring a non-church friend to.”

That’s what we do best at Diocesan Youth Events—be ourselves, in ways that are often surprising, relaxing, exciting, and inviting. We spread Christ’s love through inclusion and relationships, looking at the world around us to see God’s presence everywhere. We can’t wait for the next youth event, and hope to see you there!

# Connecting Communities

by the Rev. Brad Purdom

## Would you recommend Connecting Communities to other parishes?

“Absolutely. Whatever happens, it opens possibilities otherwise unimagined - and certainly not at the forefront of our conversations when we are focused on ‘butts in the pews’. It’s gentle and rigorous; scripted and patterned; and free-flowing and adaptable.” – The Rev. Jan Smith Wood, Grace Church, Sandusky

“YES! Connecting Communities became an important piece of the lifeblood of our church. It engaged and mobilized our parish to get in touch with themselves spiritually, and to pour out love into our communities.” – The Rev. Matt Wahlgren, St. Paul’s Church, Fremont

Connecting Communities – a process to help Diocese of Ohio congregations connect more deeply with God, each other, and their neighborhoods – begins a new year in March 2020 and your parish is invited to join. Here’s how it works: congregational teams of four to six people and their clergy (if they have clergy) attend three Saturday training sessions over nine months. At the trainings, they learn three practices – listening, experimenting, and sharing/reflecting upon stories – which they take back to their churches. The exercises begin with learning to better see God in our lives and to listen to faith stories of other members of our congregations. From there, we move to trying simple experiments that help us do the same outside the walls of our church buildings; for example, taking a walk through the church’s neighborhood looking for signs of God, or being part of a community event in which we do something similar. From there, we share and spiritually reflect upon our stories of those experiments to see what God might be saying to us through them.

In these ways, the three practices of listening, experimenting, and sharing/reflecting begin transforming the way we understand what it means to be sent into the world. We no longer go into our neighborhoods primarily for the purpose of gaining new members or even solely for serving those in need. And we no longer judge such ministries successful only if they result in more people coming to church or more people being “served.” Of course, growing our churches and serving people are worthy Christian endeavors. They just aren’t the fundamental purpose for which we are sent into the world. The Scriptures are the story of God working to reconcile, restore, and redeem relationships so as to bring the fullness of God’s reign to bear within this world. That is God’s mission, as best witnessed in Jesus’ life, death, and resurrection. And that’s why we say the mission of the church is to work alongside God to “restore all people to unity with God and each other in Christ” (BCP, 855). Everything else we do is best understood as a means to that end.

What many congregations have discovered through Connecting Communities is that working with God in God’s mission of reconciliation is what brings life, vitality, and new purpose to a congregation; and that doing so is what we are most talking about when we say “and now send us out to do the work you have given us to do.” A year ago, the Diocese of Ohio sent a team of four people – Michelle Killin-Keith from St. Peter’s, Lakewood; Kate Gillooly from St. Luke’s, Cleveland; the Rev. Alex Barton from Church of the Redeemer, Lorain; and myself – to learn this process from Dwight Zscheile and others at Luther Seminary. About twenty other dioceses and Lutheran synods have now begun the process in their parishes. In 2019, twelve congregations and about 75 people completed the process here in our diocese.

Connecting Communities uses experiential teaching to introduce these ideas and practices to congregations. That means participants aren’t taught theology in a classroom style and then asked to “go do it in the world,” but are instead taught action-oriented exercises to try and reflect upon. This kind of action/reflection model is a way that adults learn best, and it’s a lot more fun as well. Most people find Connecting Communities to be fun and inspiring. But it isn’t easy. It clearly, but gently, challenges the long held ways we understand our role and work as Christian churches and people in the world. And, at its best, it isn’t a nine-month process to “complete.” Rather, it is an ongoing way to be the church – a body of Christian people constantly in the process of seeking God in our lives and neighborhoods, listening carefully to our friends and our neighbors, and discerning what God might be saying to us in this moment and the next.

## Other information:

- The three training dates are March 7, May 30, and September 26 at various locations, still to be determined. Expect more information to follow through diocesan emails. Email me with questions at [bpurdom@dohio.org](mailto:bpurdom@dohio.org).
- The cost is \$200 all-inclusive for the parish. The link to register is [dohio.org/connecting-communities](https://dohio.org/connecting-communities) and the deadline is February 17, 2020.

# Experiencing Belize



Deacon Steve Ashby and seminarian Noah Sutterisch each spent time in Belize this summer, experiencing the work of the church in a different context and continuing to build relationships in our companion diocese. Their reflections follow:

My month in Belize provided time in silence away from the busy world of my life in Cleveland to spend in deep, prayerful reflection at the beginning of my ordained ministry. The exposure to a new world of plant and animal life has broadened my appreciation for the grandness and beauty of God's creation. Serving as deacon at the Cathedral of St. John the Baptist in Belize City immersed me in a different culture and gave me the opportunity to learn their values and their social and political history as well as the role of the church in the situations unique to Belize.

One experience that stands out for me was participating in a funeral for two gang members. I had been taught to be cautious about going outside after sundown because of the prominent gang culture in the city. Yet, at the funeral, seeing their loved ones mourn for them as we held the service was an important lesson in humility for me. It was also a powerful example of what we mean when we speak of the love that God has for all God's children and the grace that God extends to each of us equally as a result.  
- The Rev. Steve Ashby

I have been able to live a life of relationships, church, simplicity, silence, and prayer in Belize. I have had time to reflect on my last year of seminary and internship, the lessons learned, the perspective that comes with hindsight, and how I ought to see myself and others differently because of this new-found experience. And I had time to pray my petitions and intercessions to God, to ask God to change me according to where I feel called and where God sees fit. This is, in part, because of "go slow," the unofficial motto of Belize. It is one thing to say you are slowing down and another to live into it.

I was changed in Belize. My prayer life became healthier, my silliness was affirmed, and I heard from many people about their faith and their families. I learned all accomplishments are grace, a gift no matter how hard we work for them.  
- Noah Sutterisch



# UNDESIGN THE REDLINE

The Diocese of Ohio and Trinity Cathedral are hosting Undesign the Redline. The transformative interactive exhibit exploring the history of race, class, and U.S. housing policy, and how this legacy of inequity and exclusion continues to shape our communities began on October 7 and will run through December 20. The exhibit seeks to spark a public discourse on how discriminatory federal policies from the 1930s continue to impact Cleveland neighborhoods today.

Since the opening of Undesign the Redline, 884 guests from 48 organizations, six Episcopal parishes, and three non-Episcopal congregations have taken tours of the exhibit. By the time the exhibit closes, more than 1,000 people will have visited the space. Since the exhibit opened in October, the 21 trained docents have dedicated a total of 114 volunteer hours to lead tours.

The exhibit offers the opportunity for both public and private tours.

## Public Tours

Sundays: 10:00 a.m. - 2:00 p.m.

Wednesdays: 11:00 a.m. - 1:00 p.m. and 5:00 - 8:00 p.m.

Thursdays: 10:00 a.m. - 12:00 p.m.

## Private tours by appointment.

Tour guides will be present.

Spanish speaking materials are available.

Spots are still available for private tours. For questions or reservations, please contact Antoinette Taylor at 216.774.0453 or [undesign@trinitycleveland.org](mailto:undesign@trinitycleveland.org).

# Bellwether Farm: A Year in Review

by **Brandon Gooch**

As the year draws to an end, I'm reminded to reflect on the experiences that have shaped me over the previous 12 months. As the director of Bellwether Farm, I've benefited from the opportunity to build relationships with many of the individuals who have chosen to bring their groups to the farm for retreats. The groups that have experienced Bellwether this year each have had their own agendas to accomplish, and our staff was always eager to help in any way possible. In an attempt to express the impact that Bellwether Farm is having on the world around us, here are some facts regarding the farm and the groups that have utilized this space.

Bellwether Farm welcomed more than 1,950 guests from 79 different organizations from all across the country in 2019. We served at least 15,630 individual meals, with every meal having at least one item that was produced on-site. There were 159 nights with guests staying in the retreat rooms or camp cabins. Fourteen parishes hosted their own retreats. We had 189 campers from 17 different counties. We awarded 64 campers \$22,206 in scholarship money so that they could attend summer camp. We grew 43 different vegetables and harvested around 7,190 pounds of produce. We collected around 9,575 eggs. We had 11 baby goats and five lambs born in 2019. Volunteers logged more than 228 hours working on the farm.

This is a story of success, and we didn't do this alone. You all did this. You made this a possibility and, for that, I want to thank you. You believed in a vision to create a place to welcome people from all walks of life to gather together to promote physical and spiritual wellness, fidelity to the environment, and social justice.

*How can Bellwether continue to be a part of your story? Brandon can be contacted at [bgooch@bellwetherfarm.com](mailto:bgooch@bellwetherfarm.com) or 662.832.5696. He would love to discuss any ideas you may have regarding potential retreats or guest groups using Bellwether Farm.*

Bellwether Farm is a unique and affordable technology, the natural and pastoral settings of rental options including A/V equipped activities. Join us on the farm and break free



## North Meeting Room

- accommodates up to 75 people
- includes a screen, projector, 65" monitor, and sound system
- 38' x 27'



## South Meeting Room

- accommodates up to 50 people
- includes a 65" monitor
- 28' x 20'



## Small Meeting Room

- accommodates up to 15 people
- 18' x 15'

# ur Event at Bellwether Farm

option for your next gathering. Offering brand new facilities designed and built to utilize the newest in green provide picturesque views and a chance to make your event more than just a meeting. We have a variety meeting rooms, farm-to-table catering service, luxurious overnight rooms, and a vast array of team-building of stagnant retreats and stale team-building workshops.



## Video Conference Room

- accommodates up to 15 people
- includes Zoom Room conferencing system and a 65" monitor
- 22' x 16'



## Dining Room

- accommodates up to 180 people
- includes a 132" monitor and sound system
- 64' x 40'
- multi-purpose space



## Multi-purpose Barn

- accommodates up to 150 people
- includes a screen, projector, and sound system
- 62' x 40'



## Overnight Accommodations

- 40 retreat rooms - 35 rooms with two twin beds, 5 rooms with a queen bed
- private bathrooms, WiFi, climate control, linens provided
- kitchenette and communal gathering space
- All buildings and rooms meet ADA standards, 10 rooms are specifically wheel-chair accessible



## Library

- accommodates up to 15 people
- 20' x 15'

# snapshots:

stories of inspiration & ministry from the diocese



This is the second year that **Trinity Church, Toledo** has participated in the city-wide Art Loop, an initiative of the Toledo Arts Commission that allows different area venues to be stops on the loop. The goal of the event is to encourage people to be creative and be themselves as a community. The Art Loop is held on the third Thursday of every month from April through December. Each month has a different theme such as Art and Automobiles or Jazz Loop. To participate in the Art Loop, attendees can either walk in between stops or take the bus tour that only stops at specific locations. This year, Trinity was given the opportunity to be a bus stop. Trinity always has some sort of craft station and tries to host outdoors when the weather allows. Some months have brought as many as 250 attendees to Trinity to participate in the Art Loop.



**St. James, Painesville** received the NAACP Lake County Robert H. Fountain Award for Public Safety and Public Service. The award was given in recognition for decades of care for the neighborhood including a feeding ministry, participation in the Code Blue Ministry Network, and the Family Pride Fair that was held this past summer. The fair was the first public Pride event in Lake County and was co-sponsored by LGBTQ+Allies Lake County and NAACP Lake County. All of these ministries include ecumenical partners with strong community support. Members from St. James were presented with the award during the Freedom Fund banquet on October 17.



**Church of the Ascension, Lakewood** held Instant Pot pressure cooker classes for members of the community. The class was designed as a way to connect the parish with individuals that come to the community meals. The classes were limited to 30 members and anyone who attended all six of the lessons was given an Instant Pot. Members of Ascension worked as table captains and assisted with the classes. The recipes were simple but healthy, and based around the food that comes in a food pantry bag. Student volunteers offered sign language interpretation for deaf individuals, of which there were 12. A nutritionist and a nurse also attended the classes. The nutritionist explained the nutritional value of every recipe taught. The nurse took blood pressure and blood sugar measurements and offered insight on how attendees could improve their health. The classes were made possible by a Diocesan Ministry and Connection grant as well as volunteers and donations from the community.

# PROFILES

Barbara Pertz  
St. Thomas, Berea



**W**hen I retired in 2007, my plan was to attend church again. I didn't know why. After two months of procrastinating, I thought of a great plan. I would go to a different church every Sunday until I felt comfortable and then join that church. My first try was St. Thomas, Berea, because it was the closest to my house. When I arrived, I was warmly greeted. Following the service, all were invited to have coffee. I didn't think I would stay, but a parishioner said, "Oh, but you have to, I want your name, rank, and serial number". With that, I busted out laughing and my great plan went out the window. I now think the desire to attend church again was the Holy Spirit speaking to me. Over the past 12 years, I have been a Vestry Member, Junior Warden (6 years), and Convention delegate. I also serve on the STARS Committee, Altar Guild, and participate in Connecting Communities. I found a sense of belonging in the Episcopal way of life and at St. Thomas.

Meghan Carlson  
St. James, Painesville



**T**he main thing that drew me to The Episcopal Church was knowing that I, a member of the LGBTQ community, would be fully accepted and affirmed for who I am. What kept me coming back, week after week, year after year, was the incredible commitment I saw to living out the way of Christ in both word AND deed. My home parish, St. James, Painesville, has been feeding the hungry through our lunch program for more than 35 years. Our altar in our main sanctuary is located directly over the table where we prepare our meals in the undercroft. We are nourished spiritually in the Eucharist upstairs, and we then share what we've been given downstairs by feeding our community. I've also had my mind nourished by my experience in Education for Ministry (EfM). My thirst for learning all I could about the Bible and theology has been met by this incredible experience, and the EfM community has become like another family to me. My journey in The Episcopal Church has challenged my mind and heart to be a better Christian.

Kris Gillepsie  
St. Martin's, Chagrin Falls



**I** am a cradle to grave Episcopalian. I was raised in our faith, but like many, I veered away from religion in young adulthood. After some personal challenges, I began to look for a deeper understanding of the lives with which we are blessed and leaned into The Episcopal Church. I began attending services at St. Paul's, Cleveland Heights and became engaged by our church's rituals and liturgy. In particular, the sermons drew me in, especially the discussions they provoked among the parishioners. When I was pregnant with Scott's and my daughter, I found a new parish to call home: St. Martin's, Chagrin Falls. I wanted Leah to have exposure to the Episcopal tradition, so I became involved with the parish's Sunday School and Vacation Bible School. I served on Vestry twice, including as Junior and Senior Warden. Why do I contribute time to St. Martin's? A large part of the pleasure comes not only from giving to my parish community, but also the deep friendships that have arisen with parishioners and clergy.

# Outreach to Build Financial Literacy

by Cecilia Payne

St. Andrew's, Cleveland has an outreach program for high school students to learn how to build financial literacy and relationships with banks. Partnering with KeyBank in downtown Cleveland, the program offers five to seven workshops a year centering on various topics such as credit, budgeting, and loans. A significant part of the process also focuses on crafting an understanding of college payments. Students are given resources to research tuition costs, scholarships and grants, and financial aid.

Johnny Williams, a veteran teacher and parishioner of St. Andrew's, started this program to give students the opportunity to form sustainable relationships with banks and stimulate their awareness of financial institutions and processes. Williams was inspired to kickstart this program while teaching fourth graders.

He realized the kids' perceptions of banks were distorted and that it could impact future financial relationships. Shortly after, Williams, in collaboration with other St. Andrew's congregants, wrote grant requests to implement the workshops.

St. Andrew's partners with two other local youth outreach ministries in Cleveland to promote the program. For each one, Williams initially works with the students to build a vocabulary and basic understanding of that workshop's focus. From there, students are brought to the KeyBank Education Facility and given the opportunity to learn from Steve Harmon, a member of KeyBank staff. Williams says that Harmon serves as a teacher and role model for the participating students.

St. Andrew's is providing a vital service

for students which will provide a lasting impact. This knowledge allows students to educate themselves and help family members become acquainted with financial mechanisms. Williams says that this program is unique in that they're "not handing them anything other than education." He believes that his involvement within this program has allowed him to "learn so much about life," and provide an enormous resource for teenagers in Cleveland.

A portion of the funds raised by the Bishop's Annual Appeal have gone to support St. Andrew's outreach ministries. For more information about the work of Episcopal Community Services or to make a gift to the Bishop's Annual Appeal, please visit [dohio.org/give-now](http://dohio.org/give-now) or contact Laura Hnat, Chief Development Officer, at [lhnat@dohio.org](mailto:lhnat@dohio.org).

## National ECW Board meets at Bellwether

The National Episcopal Church Women (NECW) Board members traveled to Bellwether Farm for their Fall 2019 meeting in October. The group was warmly welcomed by Bishop Hollingsworth and the staff of Bellwether Farm. President Karen O. Patterson is from the Diocese of Southwest Florida.

The Board includes five officers, one representative from each of the nine Provinces of The Episcopal Church, and the Member at Large for Social Justice. The Province IX representative traveled to the meeting from Tegucigalpa, Honduras. Four of the Board members are clergy. Our own Province V representative is Jan Goossens from the Diocese of Springfield. The Board meets three times each year; during the 2018-2021 Triennium, they will meet once in each of the nine Provinces of The Episcopal Church.



Women from the Diocese of Ohio joined the Board on Saturday, October 19 for Eucharist, lunch, and an informal meeting. The discussion allowed everyone to share thoughts, questions, and experiences. We heard stories of the ECW's activities across the United States and beyond. We were reminded that "All women, by virtue of their membership in The Episcopal Church, are members of The Episcopal Church Women."

The Board is currently planning the next ECW Triennial Meeting, to be held in July 2021 in Baltimore in conjunction with the General Convention of The Episcopal Church. In addition to the occasional *Communique* magazine, a monthly e-mail newsletter (Branches) is now available. There is no charge to receive these publications; all are welcome to sign up for them at [ecwnational.org](http://ecwnational.org).



# UPCOMING EVENTS

## DECEMBER

**Through December 20**  
Undesign the Redline  
*Trinity Commons*

**December 13-14**  
Diocesan Council Retreat  
*Bellwether Farm*

**December 24-31**  
Diocesan Offices Closed

**December 25**  
Christmas Day

## JANUARY

**January 11**  
Lay Preaching Continuing Ed.

## FEBRUARY

**February 7-8**  
Winter Convocation  
*Kalahari Resorts and  
Convention Center*

**February 14-16**  
Happening Staff Retreat  
*Bellwether Farm*

**February 26**  
Ash Wednesday

**February 28-March 1**  
Provincial Youth Gathering  
*Bellwether Farm*

## MARCH

**March 2**  
E.Y.E. Registration Deadline

**March 7**  
Connecting Communities Training 1

**March 13-15**  
Happening  
*Bellwether Farm*

**March 21**  
Lay Preaching Continuing Ed.

**March 28-29**  
Lenten Lock-In  
*Trinity Cathedral*

## APRIL

**April 5**  
Palm Sunday

**April 7**  
Renewal of Vows  
*Bellwether Farm*

**April 10**  
Good Friday

**April 12**  
Easter

**April 24-26**  
Spring Youth Gathering (SYG)  
*Bellwether Farm*

Episcopal Diocese of Ohio  
2230 Euclid Avenue  
Cleveland, Ohio 44115-2499



# Winter Convocation

2020

## We're Trying!

Keynote Speaker: The Rev. Lorenzo Lebrija, Director of TryTank Experimental Lab  
February 7-8, 2020 at Kalahari Resorts and Convention Center