

vol. 6 no. 2
Summer 2019

illumine

enlightening and celebrating where God is at work in our midst



A PUBLICATION OF
EPISCOPAL CHURCH OF THE
Transfiguration

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Worship Service Times

Wednesday | 6:00 p.m.

Thursday | 12:00 p.m.

Saturday | 5:30 p.m.

Sunday | 9:00 a.m.* and 11:15 a.m.*

*Childcare available for children
 6 weeks to age 5.



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Illumine is a quarterly publication of Church of the Transfiguration. The word itself has two meanings: to light up or brighten and to enlighten (someone) spiritually or intellectually. The goal behind this magazine is to tell the stories of this congregation, highlight new ministries, and celebrate where God is at work in our midst.

Cover Photo by Jessica Burgess
Good of Sunday Holy Eucharist at the 2019 Congregational Retreat at Camp Allen.



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From the Rector

Expansive Language

The Rev. R. Casey Shobe, D.Min.

Last summer at General Convention of the Episcopal Church, while most of us were paying careful attention to the debate around marriage equality, another significant conversation was also happening. After 40 years, our church is discussing whether the time has come to revise the 1979 edition of *The Book of Common Prayer* so that it better serves the needs of an increasingly diverse church. This discussion is of huge importance, because we are a church that is founded on the notion of “common prayer,” or the idea that people around the world, including those who disagree about particular elements of faith and belief, can be bound together by using the same language to guide their prayers and worship. Ever since Thomas Cranmer created the first edition of *The Book of Common Prayer* in 1549 to hold the two religious poles of England together, Catholic and Protestant, this book that helps us stay together by praying together has been the unique offering of Anglicanism to offer the world.

Any revision should not be undertaken lightly, as those who lived through the last time our church changed prayer books would attest. To begin with, changing rites that people have used in many of the most deeply personal and important moments of their lives comes with a corresponding amount of pushback. Back in the late 70s and early 80s, many people resented so greatly the idea of changing the prayer book that they simply left the Episcopal Church and never came back.

Even so, the hard work of prayer book revision is about more than

just dealing with hostile constituencies, as we learned the last time we did this as a church. Creating the 1979 edition took an enormous effort over the span of a decade by hundreds of clergy, scholars, musicians, and lay people, all of which occurred in the particularly conducive period of liturgical renewal that followed the Second Vatican Council. In those fruitful years, many denominations were actively engaged in reconsidering the way they worshipped, so there was a huge amount of enthusiasm for the project by Christians of all stripes. In particular, leaders of various churches were wrestling with important new discoveries about the worship practices of the earliest Christians and wanted to realign our modern styles with these ancient patterns. Additionally, there was a strong desire to better connect our rituals with our theology—the two best examples of which are the two central sacraments of our church, Baptism and Eucharist. According to the 1928 BCP, Eucharist was typically celebrated once a month in most churches, while the 1979 BCP assumed a weekly celebration, something most Episcopalians today take for granted. Likewise, Baptism was moved from a private ceremony conducted on Saturdays to a central public act of worship on Sundays, one that served as full initiation into both the Christian faith and the Episcopal Church. Again, all this careful, critical thinking about our practices of worship took loads of time and resources and the involvement of a great many gifted people.

As the “new” prayer book turns 40 this summer, some believe the time has come to once more update it for a new generation. This is a

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Expansive Language

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conviction I do not share. Foremost, I am convinced that the liturgies and resources in the 1979 BCP still capably provide for nearly all our needs as a congregation, and its language for prayer still inspires me into the nearer presence of God day after day and week after week. Moreover, I am also concerned that we are not capable of providing the human and other resources necessary for such a monumental undertaking. For example, we have fewer liturgical historians and theologians today than during the last process of revision, fewer additional support personnel with the available time and energy to devote to such a project, and far less available money in our church's extremely tight budget (conservative estimates of conducting a nine-year formal revision process approach \$10 million). I don't know that we can do justice to such a task at this time, nor do I think this is where our church should be deploying precious human, creative, and financial resources at this moment in history.

With that said, I am fully supportive of two particular revisions to our prayer book that can occur without pursuing comprehensive prayer book reform. The first regards the marriage rite and the need to solidify its availability to and suitability for same-sex couples. The rite we now use for same-sex couples is still technically "trial use," meaning its use requires the express permission of a bishop (something we now

receive from Bishop Wayne Smith of Missouri). It is my hope that, at the next General Convention, our church will act to remove this "trial use" label. Doing so could happen in a targeted way, without requiring a complete overhaul of the prayer book.

Similarly, I am strongly supportive of revising our prayer book with regard to gendered language for God. Male pronouns for God have a long history in Scripture and prayer, but this owes more to habit than any belief about the identity of God. Christians do not believe God is male, yet we consistently lean on male pronouns for God in our prayers and conversation, which has unintentionally perpetuated many damaging patriarchal structures in our church. This is not only about the wound inflicted on women, who are subtly (and too often *unsubtly*) told that their sex is somehow less sacred, but also about an overall impoverishment of our understanding of who God is. We can and should be much more thoughtful and expansive in our language for God. For example, in addition to the image of God as "Father," Scripture also offers metaphors for Christ such as "mother hen" (Matthew 23:37), the use of which have the potential to grow our spiritual imaginations in ways none other than Christ encouraged.

Thankfully, last summer General Convention approved the use of modified forms of the existing Rite II Eucharistic prayers. Nicknamed "expansive language rites," these revisions carefully replace the overabundance of male pronouns with other words. For example, in the Sursum Corda, where we have said "It is right to give him thanks and praise," this revised rite, which actually brings us closer to the intent of the original Greek, will read "It is right to give our thanks and praise." In the Nicene Creed, the reliance on "he" for the Holy Spirit is replaced with "who," which again is closer to the original Latin and Greek. And in the concluding doxology of the Eucharist prayer, "by him, and with him, and in him," is replaced with "by Christ, and with Christ, and in Christ," to convey the eternal and universal nature of our Savior rather than simply his maleness.

I am delighted to say that, beginning the weekend of July 13–14, we will begin to use this modified language in our regular worship. All changes will be printed in the service bulletins, to make this transition easier to follow, although I realize that those who are steeped in prayer book language may struggle at first with a few of these changes. Old habits can be hard to change! But I also trust that, even if we experience a few hiccups and have to pay more careful attention to the words we say in worship, the overall effect will be one of blessing and growth. And I hope that soon our old, default language will give way to new language that better helps us worship the God we love. 🙏

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I am fully
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prayer book
reform.”



From the altar of Dominus Flevit Church on the Mount of Olives.

WHO IS MY *Neighbor*?

AND HOW CAN I LOVE THEM BETTER?

My *neighbor* is someone who...

has different politics



is seeking asylum

is a different race



has been trafficked

needs a second chance



EXCERPTS FROM OUR LENTEN WEDNESDAY SPEAKER SERIES

Introduction by The Rev. Rebecca Tankersley

One day, a lawyer approached Jesus and asked him a question: “Teacher, what must I do to inherit eternal life?” Jesus replied with a question: “What is written in the law?” The lawyer answered: “You shall love the Lord your God with all your heart, and with all your soul, and with all your strength, and with all your mind; and your neighbor as yourself.” Jesus was pleased with this response, for he replied: “You have given the right answer; do this, and you will live.” Not finished with the conversation, the lawyer pressed on, asking: “And who is my neighbor?” (Luke 10:25–29)

This year, during the season of Lent, we explored this sacred question: who is my neighbor? In exploring the question with the lawyer, Jesus told the parable of the good Samaritan. In our exploration, we invited a series of speakers to answer the question for us from a variety of perspectives. Each speaker led us to consider those in our community we otherwise might overlook as neighbors—or for whom love of neighbor requires of us an extra level of commitment of spiritual, emotional, and financial energy. In the end, we all were awakened to the magnitude of love needed by neighbors right here in our immediate context. All of the talks are available online at www.transfiguration.net/guest-speakers

My neighbor is conservative/progressive.

PASTOR GEORGE MASON from Wiltshire Baptist Church in Lakewood opened the series by talking with us about the increasing tribalism in our society. We have become “us versus them” thinkers who isolate ourselves from anyone and everyone with whom we have a disagreement, preferring to engage online with a limited number of people who see eye-to-eye with us on political, social, and religious issues. Pastor George spoke openly and honestly about his own struggles to love those with whom he disagrees, while encouraging us to live more deeply into Jesus’ teaching on neighbors.



Excerpt from George Mason’s talk:

“We’re going to have to work hard to practice what we preach, aren’t we?...that we really do want to live in harmony with one another, and to that end, I want to encourage us to consider some strategies for doing so from three modalities: being, knowing and doing. Okay?

First, being. If we’re going to love our neighbor who has different politics we have to prepare ourselves to do so. And we prepare ourselves to do so by not allowing ourselves to feel threatened by what our neighbor represents to us. And that means we have to practice mindfulness of the deepest truth of who we are as beloved children of God. Focusing on ourselves first is crucially important, because, when we rush off to focus on our neighbors first, we tend to be anxious and fearful. So, our prayers need to begin with a meditation on the deepest truths we know. A moment or two before we begin our prayers about

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Who is my Neighbor?

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others, we begin to remind ourselves that we belong to God. At Jesus' baptism, before he began his public ministry when his identity would be challenged at every turn and when his mission would seek to be co-opted by people all along the way, he heard the words from heaven he needed to hear before he began, "You are my beloved Son, in you I am well-pleased." What we all know all too well is that un-well people make un-well people. What we know is wounded people, wound people, damaged people damage people. We will not love our neighbor well until we are well ourselves. So, begin with being. This makes sense of Jesus' words that were Moses' first, love your neighbor as yourself. If the way you love yourself is to throw shade on yourself all the time or to cast shame on yourself all the time you know what that will do: It will make you project on others. You will make it into a zero-sum game where it becomes a contest of who gets a certain amount of esteem or honor instead of knowing you have enough, and then can graciously give it, too. So, we begin with being, before what we know in our head, we have to feel in our heart which is the deepest truth about belovedness.

But then, seek to understand your neighbor. Most of our political differences these days do not spring from intellectual disagreement about the political philosophies of John Locke versus Edmund Burke. They spring from anxiety, resentment, unhealed wounds...and again, this is true on both sides of the political spectrum. Donald Trump was largely elected by white male voters unlike him. These are people who once felt hopeful about their prospects of life, but they have been increasingly feeling that the life they had planned has been taken away from them. Sometimes by immigrants coming here and taking their jobs. Maybe by off-shoring that has sent their jobs overseas, by a shift in our society and economy from manufacturing to service and technology industries. Many of them are evangelical Christians who had mastered the language of a world-view that went unchallenged in their church culture for a very long time,, when it was a subculture. And now they're in a position to speak openly about what was spoken privately. I know these people because I was one. This is the way it is. It was rooted in the idea that they were God's elect and the world was out to get them. Along comes Donald Trump and appeals to all these things whether he believes them or not. Whether he embodies them or not.

On the other side are the historically vulnerable and disenfranchised people. Black Africans. Black Americans of African slave descent. Native Americans. Women who are tired of having little to say in their own affairs and less pay for the same work. Not to mention the demeaning sexual harassment that they have had to endure quietly for millennia. Then there are LGBTQ friends who have had to hide and pretend even though they should be accorded the same respect and dignity as the rest

of us as the Constitution says. These and others: the elderly, the disabled. These are all searching for dignity in our culture. They are not asking for special treatment. They want equal treatment. And what we have to do is to listen, more than talk. And certainly, more than shout.

So, physician: heal thyself. It was Thanksgiving 2017. I was at my brother's lake house. My family, my kids, my brother's family and my mother was there. It was after dinner. We were all there sitting around. My mother raised us to be good evangelical Christians. She's more devout than all of us, including her preacher son. And out of the blue she just looks up and says, "That Donald Trump. I sure do like him." And I lost it. I did. I mean, you might as well have waved a red cape in front of a charging bull. Or raw meat in front of a hungry dog. I pounced and I told her she should be ashamed, and I recounted all the ways in which he contradicted about the way she raised us in the faith. How could she possibly say that? And, I won! I humiliated my mother beautifully in front of the rest of her family and I took my victory out to the back porch and everybody was stunned and quiet. My brother came out to remind me that I had just done exactly what she said is the reason people like her vote for Donald Trump. "You educated elites look down your nose at people like me. You don't understand us, you don't care to. All you want to do is win." My brother told me that, "I love you brother and I agree with you and now you need to go in and apologize to your mother. That isn't the way you handle things."

So, what if I had calmly asked my mother why she felt the way she did? "Tell me what you're thinking." What if I tried to understand instead of instruct? You know St. Francis, in his beautiful prayer, asks that God grant that you that "...seek to understand, more than to be understood." If we listen a little longer before we talk. If we genuinely try to understand another person's point of view, we might learn to love our neighbor better. One way to do that, I've found, is to try to master the argument of your neighbor's opposite politics. Think about this. I've often tried to do this in church on various issues. So, if you are conservative, can you imagine yourself trying to make a compelling case for political progressivism? And vice versa. You see, the truth is, that the truth is that every attempt to make your own point of view prevail in our society today will require that you count on some other people to come along side you and join you. What we're seeing in Washington and Austin and every place is that the more we polarize, the less we get done...We have to practice seeing those who have political differences as opponents, not enemies. Now, Jesus did tell us to love our enemies and pray for them. But one step in that direction is not to consider them enemies to begin with. And even if we have to acknowledge someone as an enemy, we should note that there is no command by Jesus to accept that as a permanent status."

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If we listen a little longer before we talk. If we genuinely try to understand another person's point of view, we might learn to love our neighbor better.”—George Mason

My neighbor is from another country seeking asylum.

BILL HOLSTON is the Executive Director of Human Rights Initiative of North Texas, Inc. ("HRI"). HRI is based in Dallas and provides *pro bono* legal representation to political and religious asylum seekers. Bill explained the qualifications for obtaining asylum in the United States: that one must have a well-founded fear of persecution on the basis of one of five reasons—race, religion, nationality, political opinion, or membership in a particular social group. He shared experiences with neighbors right here in North Texas who have sought asylum, some gaining protection and others being sent back to the violence of their native countries. His presentation was heartfelt and deeply resonated with those attending.



Excerpt from Bill Holston's talk:

“ I love your Lenten series and the question: Who Is Our Neighbor? Of course, that comes from the wonderful parable Jesus told about the good Samaritan. I've wondered how Jesus would tell that parable today because the Samaritans were so reviled and that is why Jesus chose them. I wonder if Jesus was telling that story today if he would say the good Syrian refugee or the good young man escaping violence and gangs in El Salvador, those groups that are marginalized and demonized by society. And, I wonder and I think that is a worthy thing for us to pause and think about... For me, working with asylum seekers, as I have for the last 30 years, is not a good deed but rather an act of worship because God himself identifies with marginalized people and oppressed people and so, when I'm working with oppressed people or asylum seekers, just like the book of Matthew tells us I feel like I am serving Jesus himself.

And, of course, there is further Biblical basis for our work with refugees, asylum seekers and, in general, immigrants. All through the Hebrew Scriptures there are admonishments, reminders, to the Jews. As in Exodus... “*You shall not oppress a stranger.*” And, “*Knows the feelings of strangers*”... “*when you were strangers yourselves in the land of Egypt.*”

And, it was interesting that the Bible is very clear and reminded people: “Remember, you were strangers. Remember, who you are and where you are from...”

We've had a lot of clients from Eritrea. It's the little tip of Ethiopia... they signed a peace treaty this year. It's known as the North Korea of Africa because it's one of the least free places in the world. Also no religious tolerance. My client was a Pentecostal Christian. She went to a pretty large Pentecostal church in the capital. The government outlawed all religion other than Islam, orthodoxy, and some reason I still do not understand Lutherans. (laughter from audience) They definitely outlawed Pentecostals. They came to the church, large church, put a chain on the front door and stopped them from meeting. Then the families met together as home churches. They started arresting people in homes when they would see a large crowd going to a home. She said, by the time she left, they were meeting just as a family and would have

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...when I'm working with oppressed people or asylum seekers, just like the book of Matthew tells us, I feel like I am serving Jesus himself.”—Bill Holston

religious services just when they met together. My client got crossways with the government because they have compulsory indefinite military service. She said she identified other Christians and their dorm. They would get together and say a prayer with their meal. They would gather in their dorm room at night and read the Bible together. The officers found them doing that and the officers took them to desert... put them in overseas shipping container. Locked them in that container and left them without food or water for three days. She managed to survive that. She was right at the end of what your body can take without water. I asked her what did (you can ask yourself if this is an inspiring moment as a lawyer) what did you do in there for three days? She said, “Jesus tells us to pray for our enemies so we prayed for our captors.” I thought, “What a privilege to know somebody like that much less advocate for them.”

When I was preparing her case for trial, I also met her brother who had already won his case for asylum. He had been through so much, and his daughter was also in prison, but he still persevered. I told him, “I am just struck by how joyful you are and despite what you've been through and despite what you continue to go through and what your family is going through... and he looked at me and shook his head and said, “You Americans have everything and you complain all the time.” It's true. It's one of the things that I love about this work, because it really gives me a sense of perspective. We take the right to worship for granted. They don't. She doesn't. There is an Eritrean church on Garland Road, about a mile from my house, where this woman worships freely—She does not take that for granted...

My neighbor is another race.

THE REV. DR. MICHAEL WATERS

is the founding pastor of Joy Tabernacle in South Dallas. He spoke of the connection between racism and poverty, outlining our nation's history of red-lining neighborhoods based upon race and the resulting institutional poverty which resulted for minorities. He addressed our city's history of overt and implicit racism, which continues to this day. He taught about police brutality and efforts to obtain justice for victims and their families. Dr. Waters helped many of us understand the lack of love for so many neighbors that is a heartbreaking reality of this city we call home.



Excerpt from Michael Water's talk:

“ A month ago, there was a report [from the] University of Texas, Southwestern Medical Center. It was released on Tuesday, February 26. It was an exhaustive study of zip codes in our state.

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Who is my Neighbor?

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And the study was to determine life expectancy, in accordance with zip codes. Some of you heard of this. Now the life expectancy rate of America, presently, is 78.8 years. That's the life expectancy rate for our nation. The state of Texas, it is 78.5 years. For our county, it is 78.3 years. For this zip code, 75254, it is 84.1 years. Out performing the nation, out performing the state, outperforming the county. In the zip code where we stood yesterday, and spoke on behalf of Miss Lee, who was brutally assaulted in Deep Ellum, it is 67.6 years.

Concerning this report in particular, a woman by the name of Dr. Sandy Pruitt, who actually led this study, this was a quote, she said, "A 10 year difference within the same region is insane. We know that where you live is predictive of health, but the degree of variation in this study was quite striking."

Ultimately they determined that the primary determinant, of life expectancy, can be associated with poverty. Those who are impoverished have a lower life expectancy rate than others. Okay? But what it failed to add to the conversation, particularly as it relates to the city of Dallas, is that when you talk about poverty, you necessarily talk about race. Because of the ways in which our city is segregated. You talk about life expectancy between the northern portion of our city and the southern portion of our city, we're talking about a great gulf of almost two decades.

That in our city, who dies and when and who lives and how long is determined by where you live. And in our city, where you live has largely been determined by your race.

(Pointing to map of Dallas) This line here is I-30. Cutting through Dallas on the way to Fort Worth. And this is the clearest separation between the haves and have nots within our city. If you live north of I-30, in the city of Dallas, you live in an area that comprises 85% of the tax base of the entire city. If you live south only 15%. Now why is that particularly alarming? South of I-30 is a land mass that is greater than the city of Atlanta. Greater than the cities of Seattle and Denver, combined. We're talking about a city of poverty, that is south of I-30. You do not live as long. You do not have access to healthcare. As a matter of fact, if you have cancer, you have to leave the southern region in order to find your care. And on and on and on, and on. And this is the reality of our city.

How did we get here?...

This is the red lining map of Dallas. Some of you know the history of

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red-lining in cities all over our country. It's alarming to share this history, publicly, because we know historically that is accurate, but the fact that persons can be so demented and dubious, to design systems to take away power and to harm communities, is discomforting even as we speak now. But we know that by an act of the federal government, in collaboration with the banking systems and with the mortgage companies and the mortgage system of our nation, we have color coded cities.

Meaning that if you live in a certain area, those areas were perceived to be more favorable, meaning you would have greater access to loans, for mortgages. Greater access to loans for small businesses. For instance, if you live in the green areas, you can receive up to 80% of what you need towards the purchase of a home. Towards the beginning of a new business. And those green areas, color coded areas, the persons who live there were the most desirable white people.

These are persons of Western European background. White, Anglo-Saxon, Protestant. If that fit who you were, you had an opportunity to live in the areas that were considered to be the prime areas for your city, and not only that, you receive social support from the Federal government, so that you can buy your home, and so you can start your business.

If you lived in the blue areas, those were the "less desirable" white people. They were those of Eastern European background at the time, or those who were Catholics, or Jews. You can live in the blue area. You can get funded up to 60% of what you need. Not as good as those who live in the green area, but still you receive some support from the government.

The yellow is the most diverse area. In that area you're going to find Asian Americans, Latinos, impoverished whites, and a sprinkling of black people. You might receive upwards of 20 to 30% of what you need to buy a home in that area, or to begin your business. But if you lived in the red area, hence red lining, you receive zero support, for the purchase of a home. And for beginning a business.

And if you are aware of the geography of Dallas, notice that this area here is downtown. Notice where the red lines are. And the red lines come in and through Fair Park, in the South Dallas, in West Dallas, Oakcliff, and if you look at the map today, the places where poverty is growing the fastest, or the places where gentrification is happening the fastest, are the areas connected to, or right beside, the red lines.

That is to suggest, ladies and gentlemen, that racial poverty in America is by design. It's not about pathology. It's not about persons who need to work harder, to pull themselves up on their own bootstraps, because the truth of the matter is, in this nation, no one's had bootstraps, everyone's had some support, even the support of a slave institution, that built the economies of this nation.



Red Line map of Dallas used in Michael Waters's presentation

My neighbor is sex trafficked.

JESSICA BRAZEAL is the Chief Programs Officer for New Friends, New Life ("NFNL"). She informed us how many of our neighbors are currently being trafficked here in Dallas, described the circumstances which lead young girls to leave home for the streets, and outlined the work NFNL does to restore and empower girls and women who were formerly trafficked. She shared survivor stories, explained the myriad ways we can support NFNL in loving these fragile neighbors, and motivated us to love more deeply.

*Excerpt from Jessica Brazeal's talk:*

“...The difficulty of studying sex trafficking is that it's really hard to understand how many people this is affecting unless they are someone that's been recovered, or there's been a bust or arrest or something like that. So all of the youth and women that are being trafficked that haven't had any involvement with law enforcement, that we are not aware of yet, we don't have a way of capturing or counting. So this number really is shocking in that it's really large, and those are just the children that are being trafficked that we know about. So 79,000 children in Texas and this was in 2016. From a financial perspective this issue costs the state of Texas every year, \$6.6 million in terms of law enforcement costs, training that is involved and services that are being provided, which is a lot of money. The second statistic is that \$99 million is being made and profited in North Texas alone every year as a result of the commercial sex industry and sex trafficking. So that is a lot of money. That is a large industry.

Texas ranks second in the country in terms of number of victims of sex trafficking, and ... Dallas is second in Texas behind Houston. Dallas is strategically placed (with a large airport in the center of the country) to be a large breeding ground for sex trafficking. I'm a trafficker in California and I've got a friend in New York City who calls and says, "Hey, I'm havin' a party this weekend. I need you to send some of your girls," we're likely to stop in Dallas on the way.

So I just want to help kind of paint the picture of "how does a girl or a woman end up in this situation"? How does this happen, how does she go from being a thirteen year old at school to being a fifteen year old that is being trafficked? I just want to paint the picture for you.

Several of the attractors for girls and women that are vulnerable for being sex trafficked are that there is domestic violence in their home. There is substance abuse in their home, there are different things happening in terms of my parents having multiple jobs, so there's not as much supervision. Maybe I have a single parent at home who is working multiple jobs so I'm home alone often. Maybe I have a parent that is incarcerated, or I have involvement with the foster care system or CPS, all are higher risk factors making me vulnerable to this. So if I am an eight year old girl and my next door neighbor is sexually abusing me, my dad is abusing my mom, and my mom is using substances to cope with the abuse that's happening, my home does not feel like a safe space for me and so I want to spend as little time there as I can. And so as I get

into my teenage years and I want to be away from home, I start to spend more time with my friends, I start to find places in the community or places out after school where I can go so that I'm not home. I'm away from the neighbor, I'm away from the violence between my parents, and I'm away from my mom kind of being numb due to coping with the abuse she's experiencing. So I have all these factors that are already going on. I'm already learning as a child that my body is not my own and that my physical boundaries between other people are not for respecting. I don't know how to tell someone to respect my boundaries because I've not had anybody teach me that. And so now I've had this history of being abused, I've watched abuse between my parents, and substance abuse occurred to cope with that, so then when I'm on the street, I don't have a lot of skill sets in terms of surviving around conflict resolution or determining who the safe people are going to be, because the adults in my life who were supposed to be keeping me safe are not, right?

The statistic is, within 48 hours of a child running away or being out on the street typically after having run away, that child will be approached by someone that is usually a pimp or a trafficker. Now the person doesn't walk up to them and say "Hey, I'm a pimp and a trafficker." They walk up and say "Hey, it looks like I've seen you out here, you're out a lot. I could give you a place to stay. I notice your phone is broken. Let me buy you a new phone. Would you like some new clothes? That might be good. I've got a job if you wanna work and you could make some of your own money so that you could have some of that going on." So to that kid that was sexually abused and watching abuse at home and is not really cared for, that's all going to sound really great, because I've got someone whose coming in to sweep me up and rescue me, essentially. He's going to provide all these things that are not being provided so I'm tempted to go with him. And often, that is what I do.

And so now I'm with this person. That usually turns into what appears to be some kind of romantic relationship. And then my "boyfriend", as I perceive him, needs me to do a favor for him. He needs me to go and sleep with this friend of his because he owes him a favor. It's not a big deal. It's just my friend. He's a nice guy. It's going to be fine. And remember, this is the person who saved me, so I think, from all of these other circumstances. He promised to take care of me, provided all these things for me, and he's saying it's just a one-time thing and so I'm going to go along with it because I'm going to trust him. This is the safest person I've had so far, in many respects, right? So I go out. I do this favor for him with his friend, and then those favors just seem to accumulate. He asks for more and more and more until I finally get to the point where, I'm fifteen years old, I say to him "I don't really want to do this anymore, I'm just going to go back home." And he says "OK, you can go back home when you pay me back for your phone and the clothes and the food and the rent time that you stayed at my place. When you can pay me back then you can leave and go home." So I have to work more, I go out on all these jobs, these calls. I sleep with more of these people to make the money to pay back the debt that I owe, but the problem is that

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I don't know how to tell someone to respect my boundaries because I've not had anybody teach me that.”

—Jessica Brazeal

Continued on next page

Who is my Neighbor?

Continued from previous page

I'm just continuing to accrue more debt the longer I'm here.

And there is where we see the entrapment of "I am never going to be able to get out of this situation". Because I am also, remember, fifteen. I don't have any kind of education degree. I probably don't even have a driver's license, right? I don't have the ability to go and ask for help because if I ask for help, no one is going to believe me because I asked for help that one time when my dad was hitting my mom and the police didn't do anything. And so if I ask them for help they're probably just going to do the same thing, right? These are all the messages that she has in her head. And so then she is stuck in this space, right?

So then we fast forward several years. She maybe has a couple of kids with this trafficker, right? She still hasn't finished her high school degree. She has now been in this industry for several years and so she probably has a criminal record. She's probably been picked up for some prostitution charges. "You know that one time he said 'can you take these drugs over to my friend' and the police happened to pull me over, and so I have a drug charge now. It actually was not my drugs that I was using, but I have this charge." But I may be using drugs also to cope with all of this, or he may be forcing me to use drugs because if I'm high or intoxicated, I'm easier to control, right? So all of these things . . .

So we fast forward. She's now 27. This has been her life for the past twelve years. And she comes into New Friends New Life. Now we have a woman who has a limited education. She has a criminal background, so getting a job is going to be tricky. She's got a couple of kids that she's trying to pay for. She's trying to leave this industry where she could go and make \$2,000 in an evening, to work a job where she can maybe make \$13 an hour, right? So you can see all of the difficulty of the place we find her in when she comes to us, and all of the places we have to start to figure out how to help her work her way out of this. Do we have a sense of who she is and what that life looks like?

My neighbor is living proof that people need second chances.

JOSEPH RAYMOND

LUCERO is a former client and now mentor serving at Homeboy Industries in South Central LA. He spoke freely about his lifelong association with gangs, the home life that led him into gangbanging, his time in prison, and the ways in which Homeboy helped him leave that life behind. He spoke about the dangers of living in the hood and the survival tactics to which people resort under such conditions. Joey opened our eyes to the neighborhoods within a few miles of Transfiguration where gang activity takes place and the need for genuine love of neighbor to replace the artificial love of fellow gang members.



Excerpt from Joseph Lucero's talk:

“ Even in the ghetto, how tough it was, was normal. The shootings, the stabbings, the drugs, the poverty was normal to me. I didn't know what rich was. I didn't know what middle class was or lower class. I thought we were all the same. Skin color, you know you would see it on TV. You would hear about racism. But when I was going to get government cheese and welfare stamps there was black, white, Asian, pink, blue. I thought we were all poor, this was just how life was supposed to be. As far back as I can remember heroin controlled my family and at the same time was the financial means for my father. I grew up in San Diego and you know on the border there was a lot of drugs coming across and my father was very involved...the group he was involved with was very powerful. They don't care—they take lives, they kill, they destroy. But they were people just like me that were living that life as well. I destroyed lives. I hurt people. I may or may not have taken a life. The life I had learned to live was passed down to me through my mother and father and because of that I thought being a gang member was what I supposed to be. When my father was a homie, my uncles were homies and everybody said, "What's up little youngster?" this and that, I thought it was the norm.

I want to get into why I looked to the gangs. And the reason was because something was missing—there wasn't love. Why didn't my dad drop me off at school every morning? Why didn't my mom? My mom was probably still in bed strung out on heroin every morning. My father was in prison. Then my real father left me and a new father had come. My mother had remarried. It took me years and years to accept this new man in my life. And I was this angry, angry, *angry* kid and I lashed out. They had me on Ritalin. They used to tell me that I was hyperactive. They used to ask me, "What's going on at home?" Well I can't tell you what's going on at home. I can't tell you there's guns in my house, there are gang members in my house, I can't tell you that everybody in my house is strung out on heroin. Because if I tell you that, you're going to take me away from my mom. And I love my mama—she's my Mama. I don't care if she puts needles in her veins, in her arms. I don't care if she sells heroin. That was my mom. You can't take away my mom.

“ *Why did I look to the gangs? It was because something was missing: there wasn't love.*”—Joseph Lucero

Right then and there a belief was instilled that the police or anyone who was an authority figure was the opposition, they were the enemy. Because you broke down my doors and you handcuffed my parents. You took them away and I had to go to foster homes. I had to go sit in detention centers and juvenile halls because my parents were gang members and drug addicts? So I got a taste of juvenile hall real quick—I was nine years old the first time I went. You know so it became second nature. But little did I know these things were becoming ingrained in me. They were becoming second nature in my character. To lash out. Because I did get

attention when I did act out. You did listen to me when I did act out.

Then I started doing time. I got sent to the California Youth Authority which is a youth prison at the age of 12. I got home when I was 19...I did all that time. I didn't graduate high school in the streets, I didn't get to go to any football games, I didn't get to play football. I didn't go to prom. These are all things that I held in that I was pissed off about because I was incarcerated these numerous years. 12–19. I became a man in the system. Oh I became a man all right. I didn't turn no cheek. I didn't care because you were going to respect me. That was all that I had. And if that meant hurting you because you were going to love me? Sorry, you were going to be hurt.

Why did I look to the gangs? It was because something was missing: there wasn't love. And then you live in the hood all day, every day with all that negative gang-xxxx and—how can I say this to where you understand it in your hearts and its gets in your skin? [In the gang,] it's so believable, it's so real—the love. And it's just overpowering to feel that love for the first time ... and it's all negative. It's all bullxxxx. It's all for the wrong.

My neighbor is a so-called enemy.

The **REV. DR. NAIM ATEEK**, founder of The Sabeel Ecumenical Liberation Theology Center in Jerusalem and former Canon of St. George's Jerusalem, spoke with us about his memories of being forcibly removed from his family home in Beisan, Palestine in 1947. He helped us begin the process of unlearning much of what we've been taught about the State of Israel and helped us understand how those who are neighbors can, overnight, become enemies. From his experience as a liberation theologian in the region, he took us from the notion of loving our neighbors to the complicated call of Christ to love our enemies.



Excerpt from Naim Ateek's talk:

“You can just imagine that before 1948, it was Palestine. And we were living as Jews, as Christians, and as Muslims together. So we knew our neighbors. We knew who were our neighbors...We knew and we lived together. It was not always the best of times, but we managed as people do. We respected “the other” as we should do.

Then, things changed. There was the state of Israel. We were driven out. We were occupied and became refugees overnight in the town of Nazareth. It was very difficult. As a boy I never really felt I needed anything. My father was able to provide for all ten of us. There were seven girls, and then I came as the eighth, so I was a pretty spoiled boy, and then my younger sister and brother Salim. We never felt we needed anything. All of a sudden we were in want in Nazareth. It took my father some time before he was able to start his business again from scratch. My father had a wonderful business in Bisant. He had built three houses including one house for some British missionaries free of charge...all of a sudden we lost everything. And we came to Nazareth. Now, my neighbor

with whom I had lived had become my enemy.

How do we deal with this as a Christian? I became very much involved in studying the question, “Who is my neighbor?” and “How can I understand it more fully as I look at the Gospel?”

Now I'm going to shift to the theology of neighbor...where did the love of neighbor come from in the Gospels? To do this, I studied the theological revolution Jesus started. Let's look at it. By the time of Jesus, the oneness of God was already well established. Religious Jews had already crystallized the foundation of Jewish faith as expressed

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We were occupied and became refugees overnight in the town of Nazareth. It was very difficult.”

—Dr. Naim Ateek

in the Shema: “Hear, O Israel, the Lord is our God, the Lord alone.” This statement encapsulates Jewish monotheism. There was no second commandment. There was only one commandment—the greatest.

So when Jesus was asked by one of the scribes about which commandment is the first of all, Jesus answered: The first is “Hear O Israel, the Lord our God, the Lord is one. You shall love the Lord your God with all your heart, and with all your soul, and with all your mind, and with all your strength. The second is this: You shall love your neighbor as yourself. There is no other commandment greater than these.” In Matthew 22:40, Jesus adds the saying, “On these two commandments hang all the law and the prophets.” Jesus picks it up and gives it universal application.

Now, what's amazing is that when the question was asked of Jesus, “What's the first commandment?” He answered it well by quoting from Deuteronomy. But he did not stop there. So he immediately continued and put something that was not there...where did Jesus bring this out from? It was already in the Jewish tradition. But it was not in Deuteronomy where the first commandment came from. It was part of the list of regulations that Jesus found in Leviticus. But this one was in the context of being very exclusive. So when it talked about love your neighbor—what does neighbor mean? It means love your fellow Jew. Not anyone else. So Jesus picks it up from its exclusive context and puts in on par with the greatest commandment of all. I'll acknowledge this was Jesus' doing...Once you comprehend this—once you really capture it, you find the revolution which Jesus has created. Because there was nothing there. 🇮🇱



The full audio recording of each speaker's presentation is available on the Guest Speakers page of the church [website](#), along with a list of action items to pursue to help us learn to love our neighbors better.

VESTRY GOALS 2019

Saturday 5:30 Service Redevelopment

By Casey Shobe

In recent years, I have had numerous conversations with people who have visited Transfiguration a few times, and who have a deep regard for our church's mission and witness, but who choose not to make this their church home.

The reason they most often cite for not planting roots is that, while they appreciate our high church style of worship, they don't personally feel at home in it. Quite often these folks were raised in, or recently a part of, less liturgical Christian traditions, which lack the formality and complexity of our services, and so our worship feels jarring. They admire our core values, they like the preaching and teaching, and they feel at home in our diverse congregation, but our worship simply does not resonate with them. So they drift away.

Also in recent years one of our core weekend services has continued a long, steady period of decline in attendance. Established in the 1980s as a relaxed alternative to Sunday morning, the Saturday 5:30 p.m. service reached a peak in average attendance of 110 around the year 2000, but since then it has decreased by a handful of people each year, and to date this year average attendance is about 50. The main reason for this decline has to do with an aging congregation that is able to attend less consistently. Added to that is the way this service has not attracted many visitors in recent years, so it is not replacing the ones who can no longer attend.

Taken together, these two dynamics present an exciting opportunity for Transfiguration. Far from moving to retire the Saturday service, the Vestry and I have chosen to make it a goal this year to invest new resources and energy in this service in hopes that it can become an exciting new doorway into the life of our church. Beginning this summer and formally launching this September, the 5:30 service will be redeveloped to include music, a simpler liturgical format, and enhanced hospitality to help visitors feel more at home. The goal is to create an experience that may feel more comfortable for those who feel drawn to our church's mission and identity, yet have struggled with the traditional ritual of Sunday morning.

To prepare for this transformation, we conducted two important processes. First, last fall I presented the data about the pattern of slow decline to the 5:30 congregation and asked for their feedback. A survey revealed that there is an openness to more music in the service by those who attend it regularly, but a discomfort with modifying the service to make it similar to the Sunday morning services. That is, current congregants are open to music, but are not interested in the "Sunday experience," which they feel they could otherwise choose. The survey also showed that regular attendees of this service rarely invite people to church with them, the reasons for which was not asked or offered, but the effect of which has contributed to the service's shrinking attendance. Ultimately, the results of the conversation and survey were extremely

helpful to me, the staff, and the Vestry as we discerned possible next steps.

The other process we conducted was about vision. I had numerous lengthy conversations with parishioners and members of the staff about what a redeveloped service should be like. Rather than simply copy the formulas of other mainline or non-denominational churches that offer "contemporary" worship, we discussed at length how to preserve our Episcopal identity and core congregational values even as we experiment with changes intended to create a fresh experience. Eventually, those conversations settled on four core themes: simplicity, accessibility, hospitality, and reverence.

During the summer, I'll be working closely with Mother Rebecca,



The sacring bells invite us into worship each week, representing the hospitality we hope this reimagined service embodies.

SIMPLICITY

The “high church” form of Episcopal worship practiced on Sunday is a source of rich inspiration and meaning for existing members, and it is one of the truly special things we offer our area, but even those of us who love it can acknowledge how it could feel overwhelming to some. It has been remarked to me that our worship feels a bit like sitting down in AP Chemistry class halfway through the school year. Some find the ritual and music exhilarating and holy, while others just feel lost. Therefore, the service will become simpler. We will reduce the number of liturgical components and draw on a smaller range of music. There will be fewer readings and less choreography. In this way, we hope to honor the existing 5:30 congregation, which greatly prefers the simple formula of the Saturday service.

ACCESSABILITY

Most who are new to the Episcopal Church, as well as many who’ve been members for some time, don’t know why we do what we do in worship. That feeling of unfamiliarity can become off-putting over time, but it is hard to perform instructed or informed Eucharistic services on Sunday morning, given the format and time constraints. Therefore, we seek to create a service style in which there is more instruction to educate congregants, more teaching in the sermon and a more relaxed homiletical style in general, and a variety of familiar acoustic instruments to lead the music. We want to foster a feeling of comfort in parishioners, even if they are new to the Episcopal Church.

REVERENCE

The tradition of reverence expressed in the worship of Transfiguration is a core value, regardless of the service time, style, or congregation. The goal of this redevelopment is not to pretend we’re a megachurch, but to offer a distinct worshiping experience that feels fresh but also remains true to our Episcopal identity. Therefore, we seek to introduce liturgical elements that may be new to Transfiguration, while continuing to draw on the rich heritage of the Episcopal tradition and preserving the core value of reverence.

HOSPITALITY

Those who are new to Transfiguration often need help feeling at home in our church, connecting to our congregational life, and participating in our worship. Therefore, we seek to expand the ministry of hospitality around this this service. We will ensure the campus is properly prepared to welcome parishioners on Saturday evening, including basic things like effective lighting and signage, an open nursery staffed with our amazing childcare workers, and simple refreshments before and after the service. Additionally, we’ll bolster our volunteer team at this service to include ushers and “shepherds,” who will assist newcomers during the service in finding their place and following along.



Joel Martinson, and other members of the staff to lay the groundwork for this service. There will be many people to recruit, including an expanded number of volunteer roles and the establishment of a Steering Committee to offer counsel and feedback as we go along. We will also create a new ensemble to lead the music, which will likely include a keyboard, guitar, percussion, a vocalist or two, and a rotation of other instruments. For the first few months, this ensemble will be directed by Joel Martinson, until he and I feel we’ve found a stable and sustainable pattern, and then we’ll seek to hire a new music coordinator. The transition of the service to this new format will happen in stages through the summer, leading to a formal launch in September.

Ultimately, whatever hopes the Vestry and I have for the revitalization of the 5:30 service depend on all of us becoming more proactive in inviting people to church. The bottom line of church growth strategies remains the same today as it has always been: people come to church when they are invited by someone they know. So, even as we make these changes to create a simpler, more accessible, and hopefully more comfortable worshiping experience for newcomers, we must all recommit to the effort of inviting people we know or meet to join us some time for a service. 🙏



VESTRY GOALS 2019

A Capital Campaign

By Casey Shobe, with Julia Trizzino

In early May, a thunderstorm passed through Dallas late one weeknight, dumping several inches of rain in a few hours. As it

fell, it dislodged one of the slate tiles from the roof above the library, which was then pushed along with the rushing water until it reached the lone drain on that section of roof. There it stopped, serving as a sort of makeshift and highly undesirable dam in the drainage system, blocking most of the water from flowing off the roof. It probably didn't take long for the water to accumulate on that flat section of roof, which then started actively leaking down various seams into the library below. Thankfully, the late-night cleaning crew discovered the water in the library and called Bracken Reece, our Director of Operations, who quickly drove back to church, mounted the roof during the driving rainstorm, waded through standing water 14 inches deep, and found the culprit plugging the drain. He pulled the tile away, cleared the drain, and the water level slowly lowered until the leak stopped. The library floor was damaged, the rug badly soiled (it has since been cleaned), and a few books ruined, but, thanks to some quick thinking and a lot of luck, catastrophe was mostly avoided.

This recent story illustrates the perils we face as a church. We are blessed with an amazing campus consisting of nearly 120,000 sf of buildings, half of which we exclusively operate and the other half of which are operated by Parish Episcopal School. Thanks to the vision and generosity of past generations of Transfiguration members, we have the facilities to do just about everything we can dream up: glorious worship, fun-filled fellowship events, extraordinary formation programs, and life-changing outreach. However, we have not always properly funded the maintenance such expansive facilities regularly require. Only in 2015 did the annual operational budget begin to include a line item for capital maintenance, but regrettably at a level well below recommended, "best practice" standards. This inadequate funding was not the result of negligence by the Vestry, but rather from the hard choices that churches often face when trying to balance the funding needs of mission and maintenance. We could have fully funded the repairs and replacements we knew were needed, but only by gutting the staff and programming that makes Transfiguration the church we know and love. So the Vestry did the best it could, made some tough compromises, and moved ahead. Unfortunately, that meant projects like replacing the roof above the library and church could not occur, and from there it's a straight line in time to a rain-dislodged slate tile, a plugged drain, and a nearly catastrophic leak in the library.



**Julia Trizzino,
Junior Warden**

Back in 2013, the Vestry contracted with the firm Building Solutions to perform a comprehensive facility audit. Nicknamed the "Keslar Report" after the firm's president and longtime parishioner Bill Keslar, this survey analyzed every building on the campus and listed every anticipated update or improvement due to normal wear and tear: roofs, HVAC, flooring, electrical, walkways, drainage, and much more. The survey included all work that would be required for the next 15 years, including a timeline of suggested performance of the repairs and cost estimates. The Keslar Report has been a significant aid to Bracken Reece and the Buildings, Grounds, and Technology Committee in recent years, which have overseen the performance of as many of the projects as possible. But even as we've chipped away at the project list, many projects have simply exceeded our financial capacity (such as the roof, which will likely cost \$250,000 or more to replace). The Vestry has kept a close eye on these projects, and recognizes that we can only defer their completion for so long before the situation becomes hazardous or the high cost to repair is eclipsed by the extreme costs associated with their failure (again, the roof is a good example).

Then, in 2016, the Vestry conducted an intensive process to identify a set of strategic goals to pursue over the following five years. The result was a list of over 30 goals, small and large, and among them was the goal of updating the facilities audit, along with a corresponding goal of elevating annual fundraising by 25% to provide the necessary funding to perform the work. The good news is that recently the Vestry approved a contract with Building Solutions to update the facilities audit, meaning we will have a new Keslar Report by the end of summer. The harder news is that halfway through the five-year cycle of the Vestry's strategic goals, and despite concerted efforts by the Rector, staff, and Vestry, we have yet to significantly move the needle on giving, meaning we are not generating more funding in the annual budget for capital maintenance than we were when the goals were established. This means that by the end of the summer, we'll have an up-to-date picture of our capital needs and projected costs, but we will remain unable to properly fund that work from our annual operational budget.

Among the Vestry's other strategic goals from 2016 was to "engage in a process of evaluation and preparation to build a chapel." This particular goal was a holdover from the Jubilee Campaign of 2006, which included in its aspirations the construction of a chapel. The overall campaign was enormously successful, but the vision of the chapel was unfulfilled owing to insufficient funding. Yet the hope for a chapel remained firmly fixed in the imagination of many parishioners, and so, in 2016, the Vestry chose to include it among our current set of goals. Then, in 2017, Bruce and Elaine Culver made a remarkable and unexpected donation of \$500,000 toward the chapel in honor of Frances and Bob Martin and committed another \$250,000 as a "match" to encourage broader giving. Longtime member George Bienfang also donated \$50,000 to underwrite design or preparatory expenses.

In response to these extraordinary gifts, in August 2017 the Vestry

appointed an Ad Hoc Committee to lead a process of study and discernment. Chaired by Mat Thekkil, the committee met throughout the autumn of 2017 to analyze all aspects of the project: how such a chapel would be used and by whom, how much it would likely cost, how it would possibly impact our operations and budget. By December, the committee concluded that a chapel would have real and important benefits to our life as a church, making such an addition an exciting prospect. They also determined that the lead gifts for the chapel represented a significant portion of the anticipated total cost, perhaps as much as half. But they also concluded that it would be imprudent to build anything new on our campus when we cannot sufficiently fund our existing capital maintenance. Only when we can perform the necessary repairs, replacements, and refreshments to our current facilities can we, in good faith, commit to build anything new, even something as hoped-for as a chapel.

Thus, in January 2018 the Vestry invited the Ad Hoc Committee to shift its focus from evaluation for a possible chapel to evaluation of our capital needs (becoming the Capital Discernment Committee, or CDC). In order to learn how our ministries use our facilities, they surveyed leaders of the Parish Council (a body consisting of leaders from each of our 30+ ministries), and then later opened the survey to the whole congregation (about 150 responded). Ideas were generated, issues and concerns expressed, and a much more accurate sense of priorities by parishioners emerged. During this time new members joined the committee, including Randy Bauer and Bill Keslar, to offer counsel and guidance, and the committee met regularly with Bracken Reece to thoroughly evaluate the current state of the campus. For nearly a year, they collected data, performed financial projections, fine-tuned estimates, and developed a series of financial models for how Transfiguration could possibly fund the capital repairs.

At the Vestry Retreat this past February, the CDC presented their conclusion that we have approximately \$3 million in anticipated capital maintenance needs over the next 15 years related to electrical, roofing, code compliance, HVAC, equipment replacement, walkways, A/V, and flooring. Some projects are more urgent than others (again, the roof is a good example), but all are important. The committee recommended to the Vestry that we perform a formal update the facilities audit, which, as was mentioned earlier, will occur this summer. The committee also determined that, in order to properly fund capital maintenance in the future, Transfiguration needs to establish a designated fund, the corpus of which could be invested and the income from which could be designated to supply the annual funding for capital maintenance in perpetuity. Based on their projections, the committee recommended to the Vestry the creation of a fund of approximately \$3 million, which



would be capable of producing a 5% draw of \$150,000 each year. That amount is in line with the Keslar Report projections of typical annual capital obligations, meaning we would be able to fund our capital maintenance needs without relying on the operational budget.

This last point has been extremely important in the Vestry's discernment. The goal is not only to take care of all the important capital maintenance around our beloved campus, but also to relieve all future generations from this burden, too. The annual dilemma of which obligation to fund, mission or maintenance, is one that has been holding our church back in recent years, and unless we resolve our capital funding strategy, it is a dilemma that will continue to haunt future vestries.

Therefore, building on the outstanding and patient work of the Capital Discernment Committee, and recognizing the urgent importance of this work for the future health of our church, the Vestry has set as a goal this year to prepare for a capital campaign in 2020. We believe we will likely need to raise somewhere in the neighborhood of \$6 million to accomplish the dual goals of the campaign: (a) performing the capital repairs we know are needed around our campus and (b) establishing an endowment-like fund to provide for all future capital repairs in perpetuity. The Vestry also hopes that, if we successfully reach those two key goals, we will be able to seriously consider the construction of a new chapel, for which we have already received considerable donations, and also pursue other long-desired improvements to important spaces like our Sacristy and Roper Hall Kitchen.

We will need the generosity of everyone in our church to have a hope of achieving these goals, and we will also need the help of many people to steer what promises to be a significant effort. Much more information will be coming out about this anticipated campaign in coming months, but in the meantime you are welcome to approach the Rector or any Vestry member with questions. 🙏

VESTRY GOALS 2019

Safety and Security

By Casey Shobe, with Frank DeLizza and Ryan Spicer

The violent events in schools and places of worship in recent years have provided tragic reminders of our vulnerability as humans.

Too many lives have been taken by people armed with weapons and hate, and barely a week goes by without another shocking event somewhere in our nation. In response, we must simultaneously resist the downward spiral of fear, and also do all we can to be prepared. In fact, churches have joined many other organizations and companies in recent years in conducting thorough evaluations of their emergency procedures. Prepare for the worst, consultants and law enforcement counsel, and you can greatly minimize its impact if it ever comes to pass.

This year the Vestry is focusing on improving our safety and security measures, and not only in response to the threat of someone with a weapon entering our campus. We know that, statistically, we are much more likely to deal with a fire, weather, or medical related emergency, and therefore need to prepare for these possibilities just as thoroughly. Therefore, the Vestry has convened a task force to conduct a risk assessment and provide specific recommendations for how we can improve our emergency procedures. Convened by Vestry member Frank DeLizza and bolstered by the leadership of parishioners Ryan Spicer and George Finney, both of whom have significant professional experiences in these matters, this task force is performing a three-phase process in 2019 to help our church be ready for the day when something unwanted happens, whatever form it may take.

The first phase involves a current-state assessment. This includes gathering information from various parishioners and staff members who've been involved with this work in the past (Susan Fisk chaired the Vestry's first safety/security initiative in 2017, and Parish Episcopal School coordinated with Transfiguration to evaluate these issues in 2018 as they related to the school's regular operation on our campus), collecting policies from other churches and organizations to learn how they operate, and creating a list of potential threats to be considered and prepared for. In order to improve your process, it helps to know why



Frank DeLizza,
Vestry Member &
BGT Chair



Ryan Spicer,
Safety & Security
Committee Chair

you do what you do, engage those who have been involved in the past. For example, in the past few years we have already made few changes to our operation based on recommendations from experts, such as securing all doors into the building to direct traffic through the main carport entrance, and updating the AED equipment (defibrillator) in the Tower Cloister and making sure we have ample numbers of trained parishioners. We've also investigated how much it would cost to have off-duty law enforcement on campus on all weekends and special events: \$25,000 or more per year. This cost remains out of reach for now, but having accurate estimates can inform Vestry decision making around budget formation in the future. Phase one is nearly complete.

The second phase is to complete a full risk assessment, including a full list of "threats" and "actions." This phase, which is underway, includes surveying many parishioners and staff members to gauge the perceived likelihood of various possible events, as well as their perceived severity. For example, among those already surveyed, fire is considered as extremely unlikely, but in its event, it would be extremely impactful and dangerous. Respondents have also been asked to rate the measures Transfiguration should take in the future to prepare for emergency events, in order to prioritize our efforts going forward. That is, we want to engage parishioner feedback to help prioritize between equipment installation such as a public service announcement system that includes lights and recorded messages and the performance of emergency and medical drills with staff and key volunteers.

The final phase will unroll throughout the remainder of 2019, and it involves creating a roadmap for improving our procedures, and implementing the practices the task force determines will make the most significant impact to improve our safety and security. For example, we know that we will need to conduct a comprehensive training with our wonderful corps of ushers and greeters, so they are clear about what to do in case of various events. That will likely happen sometime in late summer or early fall. And we know we need to post maps in nearly all rooms to show where to evacuate in case of weather or other emergencies. That, too, will happen in the second half of the year.

If you have questions about this work, or possess particular knowledge or skills that might benefit our efforts, please contact Frank DeLizza (fraankd@aol.com) or Ryan Spicer (r.spicer@me.com). As the work progresses, we hope everyone will understand that our safety is a collective challenge and responsibility. We must work together, not only during emergencies but also when things are calm and "normal," to ensure everyone's wellbeing.

We also understand that, no matter what measures we may take, there is no way to perfectly guarantee our safety from natural and unnatural dangers in the world. Yet the power of God is found not only in the grace and mercy that abounds after awful events, but also in the conscientiousness and diligence of people beforehand, who work together to be prepared for every possibility. 🙏

Civil Rights Pilgrimage | April 2019

By Meghan Mazur

Daniel 3:19–20, 24–27a, 28

"Then Nebuchadnezzar was so filled with rage against Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego that his face was distorted. He ordered the furnace heated up seven times more than was customary, and ordered some of the strongest guards in his army to bind Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego and to throw them into the furnace of blazing fire. Then King Nebuchadnezzar was astonished and rose up quickly. He said to his counselors, 'Was it not three men that we threw bound into the fire?' They answered the king, 'True, O king.' He replied, 'But I see four men unbound, walking in the middle of the fire, and they are not hurt; and the fourth has the appearance of a god.' Nebuchadnezzar then approached the door of the furnace of blazing fire and said, 'Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego, servants of the Most High God, come out! Come here!' So Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego came out from the fire. And the satraps, the prefects, the governors, and the king's counselors gathered together and saw that the fire had not had any power over the bodies of those men. Nebuchadnezzar said, 'Blessed be the God of Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego, who has sent his angel and delivered his servants who trusted in him. They disobeyed the king's command and yielded up their bodies rather than serve and worship any god except their own God."



Meghan Mazur

This April, I went on pilgrimage with 34 people from Transfiguration to bear witness to the history of the Civil Rights Movement. We traveled to Alabama and Mississippi to learn about some of America's most brutal and shadowed history, and walked in the footsteps of Civil Rights martyrs, who, like the three young men we read about in Daniel, were willing to "yield up their bodies rather than serve any god but their own God."

The Rev. Michael Waters and his wife, Yulise Reaves Waters, served as facilitators



ABOVE: A tour and presentation at Dexter Avenue Baptist in Montgomery, Alabama; BELOW: Looking toward the Alabama capitol from Dexter Avenue Baptist Church.

for the pilgrimage, helping us explore the uncomfortable truths of our nation's history in a way that was not watered-down or "sanitized". Michael and Yulise had the difficult job of educating a group of mostly privileged, white travelers (who had no idea what they were getting into!), yet they always spoke in a loving way that allowed us to ask questions and engage in discussions that were thoughtful and probing. Our bus became a rolling classroom used for showing documentaries and verbally processing the experiences we shared.

The South may not have Nebuchadnezzar's satraps and prefects and king's counselors, but we did have governors and police chiefs and Citizens' Councils. Most of us know about many of the leaders of the Civil Rights Movement, but what consistently struck me were the stories of the thousands of ordinary people who banded together to do extraordinary things in the name of justice—housewives, store clerks, janitors, children.

Anyone can read about America's history in the 1950s and 60s, but what books and media can never quite capture are the human connections that we made with veterans of the movement. Of particular importance to many of the pilgrims were the encounters we had with several heroines of the movement, whose stories are seldom told. Thanks to Michael and Yulise, we were able to meet women who shared powerful experiences with us, and shed light on the supporters of the Civil Rights Movement who have often been

overshadowed in the zeal to tell the stories of the more charismatic leaders. Pilgrim Glen Stallworth was in tears as she thanked the Waters for allowing us to experience the stories of black women, who are usually given no voice, even in the telling of their own history.

In Birmingham (or "Bombingham" as it was known), we met Janice Wesley Kelsey, who was arrested 11 times because of her participation in the Children's Marches. Children took on roles that are unimaginable to most of us, participating in protests and

Continued on next page



Civil Rights Pilgrimage | April 2019

Continued from previous page

marches, and facing dire consequences for their actions. They were piled into jails or even livestock holding pens by the dozen, often in places that were meant to hold two people. Parents, she told us, had jobs at stake and would not be able to provide for their families had they been seen participating in marches. She spoke to us about how she and her friends were trained in nonviolent resistance techniques by James Bevel and the Southern Christian Leadership Conference—how they practiced ignoring insults and physical violence to resist hatred by singing freedom songs and marching peacefully.

In Montgomery, we met Dr. Valda Harris Montgomery. Her book, *Just the Neighbor*, describes her childhood growing up next door to the parsonage where Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. and his family resided while he was pastor of the Dexter Ave. Baptist Church. She said that as a child, she didn't have a full understanding of the impact the events that happened in her family's everyday life would come to have. Pilgrim Bill Kwoka sums up one of her stories that connects real stories of individuals with historical events—"In 1961, the 'Freedom Riders' a group of white and black people led by John Lewis and traveling together on a desegregated bus (which was allowed by Federal Law), were attacked at the Greyhound Bus Station in Montgomery. For several days, they were housed in the Harris' home prior to being escorted by Federal troops to the Bus Station and on to Mississippi, where they were arrested. They

wrote letters to the Harris' from prison, addressing them to the pharmacy to hide the address of her home." Dr. Montgomery now shares her story to help prevent the same patterns of racial discrimination that she sees starting to emerge in today's culture.

Visiting Selma was a powerful experience, and not just because we crossed the iconic Pettus Bridge, where the events of "Bloody Sunday" took place in 1965. I suspect that the experience that will linger with most of the pilgrims is not just the bridge or seeing the sites of slave auctions that are still standing in Selma, but it will be meeting Ms. Joanne Bland, a civil rights activist who participated in the march on Bloody Sunday, and who had been arrested thirteen times (or at least the arrests that were documented) by the time she was 11 years old. She now works to keep the story alive for pilgrims who come to Selma in a way that could never be conveyed in writing. The word that comes to mind to describe Ms. Bland is fierce, but underneath her sharp exterior lies a heart to share the story of her people so that it is not forgotten by the next generation. As we were standing on the steps of Brown Chapel A.M.E., one local boy made his way shyly over to our group, but wouldn't look any of us in the eye. she told him, "Hold your head



ABOVE: Pastor Michael Waters teaches in Kelly Ingram Park, Birmingham; BELOW LEFT: Pilgrims at the monument commemorating where Rosa Parks boarded a bus that began the Montgomery Bus Boycott in 1955.

up high, boy. You're the future. You're the one we've been waiting on."


We also traveled to visit the site of the martyrdom of Jonathan Daniels, an Episcopal seminarian who was murdered as he shielded 17-year-old Ruby Sales from a direct shot fired by a deputy as they attempted to purchase a drink at a local store. We heard from Adrian Johnson, an Episcopalian and the judge for Lowndes county, who says that he feels the responsibility to right the injustices of the past through ensuring equitable treatment for all who enter his courtroom. We walked to the site of the store where Daniels was murdered, and which has now been converted into an insurance office, before sharing in the Eucharist in the town square. Joan Payseur said that our makeshift Eucharist (which we put together with wine and tortillas from a local restaurant thanks to the quick thinking of E.T. Manning) together in Hayneville had a particular sense of sacredness. As we were standing beneath the trees of that town square in the shadow of a Confederate Monument lauding the glory of those who had died and what they fought for, someone wondered aloud what tales the oak tree would tell us if it could speak.

One of the greatest revelations that came out of our pilgrimage was that the history of the Civil Rights movement is not history at all, least of all in our own city. It is work that has never been finished, and until each and every



one of us is willing to confront hard, painful truths about our nation's past, we will never truly move on. The pilgrims returned home with hearts that were very heavy, but we also returned home with hearts that are now more open to seek out the fiery furnaces where God is calling us to go in today's world.

If you feel called to undertake a journey like this, I encourage you not to ignore that desire. The feeling of Cain's blood crying out from the ground is palpable, and in some cases still visible. We stood in the driveway of Medgar Evers' home in Jackson where the bloodstains from his assassination are still very present. This is not an easy journey to undertake, but it is something I feel is important for all Americans. The temptation to lapse into a sense of righteous indignation and finger-pointing is great. All of us, whether present on this pilgrimage or not, must work to discern the ways in which we have benefitted from our unearned privileges, but we must not seek to place the blame on any one political party or group, and deflect from the ways in which we have shared in this injustice.

There are so many more stories of heroism and sacrificial love that the pilgrims are waiting to share with you. If you'd like to hear more of these stories and learn about our pilgrimage, please visit the Guest Speakers page of the website for a recording of our presentation and photo slideshow from June 19. I promise that you will walk away having learned something new, and with an interest to seek out places that Christ is calling you to make a difference in the world. 



Eucharist celebration in Hayneville

2nd half *presents* **Telling your STORY**

A chance to reflect on your life in stages

Summer Sunday Morning Class

Parlor | 10:15 AM

Questions? Email ndestefano@transfiguration.net

By The Rev. Nancy DeStefano

Are you a people watcher? When you find yourself in a public place with people you don't know coming and going and you have nothing else to do, do you find yourself watching folks go by and wonder what their story might be?

Everyone has a story. The way we think, the dreams we have, the things we do and why we do them all come from the experiences and people that have touched our lives and helped to form us into who we are today. And God is in all our stories because God is in us and with us every moment of our lives.

Our stories are important. Your story is important. Each of us, especially those who are in the "Second Half" of life, have lived through interesting times, seen many changes, and had to learn many new things. The next generations can benefit from knowing our stories. And we can benefit from telling them. Reflecting on our lives, where we've been and who has shaped us, is an opportunity to open up memories that may have been long forgotten. Old wounds can be healed, painful times can be seen in new perspectives, and wonderful people and events that may have slipped into the deep recesses of our lives can be remembered and enjoyed again.


Our Second Half Sunday School class is engaged in writing our stories. Each week participants are invited to consider one seven-year segment of our lives (beginning with 0–7 years old) and write about the people, personal events, world events, turning points, etc., that have helped to shape and form us. We will ponder how God has been present for us in all of these times and what we have learned about God, ourselves and our world through our life experiences.

Then in class the next week we gather in groups of 3–4 to share our story with others. Experiencing others listening to our story is a powerful experience. Listening to the story of others can help evoke our own memories of events that we had forgotten.

As each week goes by our story takes shape. Each week we hear the stories of others. Each week we are listened to and affirmed.

When the summer is over and we are finished with our stories, we can publish them in some way, even adding pictures from our past. These can be presented to loved ones who want to know what it was like when we were growing up. These stories form a priceless heirloom for the generations that will come after us.

Please feel free to join our class at any time. Check the bulletin to see what seven-year segment we are sharing and do your "homework" for that week, or just come and listen and pick up wherever we are. You can always go back to the beginning when you have time. And if you can't come to class at all, you can still write your story and share it with people in your life who will be enriched to hear it.

No one else has lived your story. No one else can tell it like you can. 



**The Rev. Nancy DeStefano,
Pastoral Assistant**



Spring at Transfiguration

These are a few of our favorite things

The Way Retreat • Lenten Speaker Series • Easter • Butterfly release
2nd Annual Congregational Retreat • Recognition Breakfast

Photos by Jessica Burgess Good, Robert Hacker, John Makowski



A Farewell Interview

with Meghan Mazur and Rebecca Gingles

Fr. Casey sat down with Meghan Mazur, Executive Assistant to the Rector and soprano section leader for the Transfiguration Choir, and Rebecca Gingles, Director of Communications, to talk about their time on staff at Transfiguration. Both women began working for the church in the spring/summer of 2015. Meghan Mazur has been approved as a Postulant for Holy Orders and will begin seminary at Sewanee (The School of Theology at the University of the South) this August. Rebecca Gingles will start as the Lower School Chaplain at Parish Episcopal School for the 2019–20 school year.

You're moving on to new vocations in the Church. How have the last few years prepared you for what you're going to be doing next?

RIn what I do now, I have seen my current role as a sacred responsibility to make sure that the opportunities for ministry, or outreach, or especially worship that exist here are accessible to someone seeking a church home, or someone who has a home here already but needs something. But my job is not just about putting together announcements or printing things; I see it as a ministry to help tell the story about all the good work that God is doing in this congregation and to help people feel invited into it. In what I do now, I serve people who are searching for a church home, to help them get the information they need to learn about who we are as a church and what we believe. In terms of what I'll be doing next, I think this job has helped me clarify what I want to say on behalf of the church, which will help me in all the preaching and teaching I'll be doing. A lot of what I've been doing the past several years has prepared me to think both liturgically and theologically.

MThis was really highlighted for me this past Holy Week. I have such a sense of gratitude for the dedicated people here [at Transfiguration]. It gives me hope for the future of the church and for what I'm setting out to do. Seeing people's commitment to their faith, and how much they care about church, helps me not to get lost in the details but to see the big picture. The people here encourage and inspire me to go and be the best at this that I can be.

How has the last four years prepared you to say yes to these new vocations? Would you have gone in this direction without working at Transfiguration?

MI have to believe that I would have gotten there eventually, but now I am able to express myself so much more confidently. I go in with eyes wide open having really seen behind the scenes, and I am prepared in ways I never would have been—even by being a staff musician. That's a hard question. Yes I would've gotten there, but no, it would not be the same. And I'm so grateful.



RI don't think I would have gotten to this new step without the last four years. I think this role was a necessary step for me to recognize my gifts in ministry, that communication is a part of anything you do in ministry. But it's been such a delightful surprise for me - I never would have connected it to working with children, even though I've always loved children. To have other people in this community speak into my life in such a way that they called forth those gifts, that helped me to envision the chaplaincy as a possibility.

MThe staff was tremendously supportive. I was so scared to tell people that I felt this call to ordination. I just never expected this level of support. Rebecca was one of the first people who ever told me outright that my skills and gifts were better suited for ordained ministry than for administrative purposes. And Rebecca always does that for people. She sees the best in them—the essence of who they are meant to be—and brings that out in people to help them find their next step. The other person who got me thinking more seriously about ordination was Liz Kerner, who also said I should really just please go on and go to seminary. She may not even remember saying that! Things like that matter, although they seem small at the time.

RThey do! More than you realize. So often people who see us doing tasks we do all the time can see what else we're capable of better than we can ourselves.

MRight. That your role doesn't always define you. But you're there for a reason.

ROne of the things I've really loved about working here when I was in the office regularly, and even now when I'm back for monthly visits is that people genuinely seek me out for conversation, and I've felt like I've been able to support and be a friend to the staff and not just that

they need things from me. That has helped me understand that the role I serve in is about more than just the tasks I do for my job.

MI don't feel like for anyone on the staff this is just a job that they come do for a paycheck. You told me once that you did not pursue the ordination track when you went to seminary 10 years ago, because you thought you wouldn't be able to meet people's expectations. And I wanted you to know that was just not true.

You've already been doing this, but can you tell a story about one another? What have you enjoyed about working together?

RI was recently trying to think of the moment we became friends, and then I realized I can't remember not being friends. Meghan's ability to be a non-anxious presence affects anyone who is around her. Her sense of inner strength and calm is a gift in a friendship and in the office. Even when things are stressful (like on a Friday afternoon when the notices still are printed after lunch), she has an ability in conversation to go straight from something practical or superficial right to the heart of something. And she listens so carefully and is comfortable in more difficult conversations. That's what led me to start saying, "Why aren't you a priest? Why don't you think about becoming a priest?" I have been in/around seminary settings and ordained people all my life, and I have seldom known someone so equipped as Meghan to be a priest.

MWe have these deep conversations that will start out as "How should I describe this for the Notices?" and we'll somehow end up talking about...today it was racial reconciliation. So, I am grateful for the ways we talk about really important things, and even when we are coming from different perspectives, or may even disagree about some part of it, there is always so much love and care in our conversations, and it's really shown me how that's possible. For me it is the ultimate example about how people can have really different views and still love and care for one another. We also have such a good time together and help other people have more fun with their jobs.

RYea, we're both the fun bringers!

MRemember when we went to the Fair as a staff?

RYes, one of my favorite memories is seeing Casey be so silly at the Fair. And we re-instituted birthday celebrations.

MWe love to see that in people! And that's what I love about Rebecca, too, because she's not afraid to be silly and show her joy.

Not all the times were easy. You both had babies, and Rebecca moved and Meghan, you were hospitalized. What was it like to ride through all of that?

RAt times, work was actually a break during some really hard times. Transfiguration has been the most consistent part of our lives. We moved three times, so it felt good to have Transfiguration as a home base, and to know I was making an impact in a community through my work, even though I didn't get to be physically present. And also that I could call Meghan at any time to accomplish 10 items on my to do list and simultaneously feel immediately connected to another person.

MThat's what I'll miss most: that sense of belonging and family when you walk into this place. When you're loved at Transfiguration, you're really loved. People really will do just about anything for you. They've brought my family meals, folded laundry, taken care of my children, visited me in the hospital. And the prayers...I always felt the prayers. There's nothing quite like the feeling of walking in and knowing that people are happy you're here. My first Sunday I walked in, not knowing anyone as a brand new staff singer, and Bill Edwards was the first person I met. I didn't know where to go (it was during all the construction in 2008), and I met Bill and immediately felt like I was going to be okay. I sang that day in the choir, where they immediately welcomed me into the choir family—and they hadn't even heard me sing!

Can you share a few stories about life in the church office?

ROut of one of our staff retreats, we talked about something we could do to form us more as a team, I mentioned that we could gather every afternoon for prayer mid-afternoon. And then someone said we should ring a gong, and gather for tea. And all sorts of ideas came out. Well, I don't know that we did much praying, and we never made tea, but we found the deep freezer that sat in the hallway for Ice Cream Social Sundays, so we pretty quickly started gathering for an ice cream treat every afternoon. We did that every day for weeks. Stand around and eat ice cream and talk.

M(laughing) Now we all have different health priorities! I will also miss Ms. Doris and John so much. I will never have a Ms. Doris again in my life! And Cindy telling me things about my children that showed how cherished they are, how they are the most precious, special people in the world. The children's staff treat every child that way.

RI remember one time in my first year I mislabeled the postage for an all-church mailing, and every single staff person came out to help us fix it. Even Bracken (smiling).

MAnd so many good stories would be told in those moments about what it was like in the church way back when. Michael talking about his time in San Francisco, and Ellen telling stories, and Joel talking about being a pastor's kid.

RI have learned so much from the depth and breadth of this staff. And this may sound strange, but I love going to Vestry meetings! I always feel so inspired and refreshed by being around the volunteer leaders. Everyone is so intelligent, and everything is so carefully considered. It gives me hope for what is possible at this church.

Meghan, before you joined the full-time staff, you were a staff singer in the choir. What are some of your favorite memories of singing and sharing in the music program?

MI don't know how to choose. There really is a sense of community in the choir. They are just so loving, even though they work so hard. Thinking about those people who show up every single day in Holy Week, sometimes for 2–3 services a day, it's completely incredible. I think some of my favorite times are seeing the view from the loft! You get to see people in a completely different way than in the congregation. I love seeing people's reactions. Then there were the Choir Tours, which

Continued on page 25

2019 Outreach Grant Recipients

The Outreach Committee is pleased to announce its 2019 grand recipients. This year, we are giving away \$25,000. The following grant recipients will be recognized during the 11:15 Eucharist on Sunday, September 10.

Dallas CASA—\$2,000

The mission of Dallas CASA is to recruit, train and supervise volunteers to represent the best interest of abused and neglected children while they are in protective care. CASA advocates are the “voice” of the child, helping him/her get the services necessary to heal from their trauma as the legal system considers a safe, nurturing home.

Our grant will fund the training of new CASA volunteers.



DME Exchange of Dallas—\$1,500

The mission of DME Exchange of Dallas is to collect gently-used medical equipment, such as wheelchairs and walkers, and sanitize and refurbish these items for people who are unable to afford need them.

Our grant will fund repair, sanitization and distribution of the equipment.



The Gathering—\$1,000

The mission of The Gathering is to serve the homeless in downtown Dallas by celebrating an outdoor Eucharist at Thanksgiving Square each Sunday, and providing support of other physical and spiritual need for those who attend.

Our grant will provide winter preparedness kits, which include blankets, thermals and miscellaneous items, which can be distributed to those in need



Gateway of Grace—\$2,500

The mission of Gateway of Grace is to help refugees start over in the Dallas-Fort Worth Metroplex by integrating and empowering them to become productive members of society by mobilizing the Church and building Christ-centered relationships.

Our grant will cover transportation and childcare for refugee women



Happy Homes Preschool of South Africa—\$1,500

The mission of Happy Homes Preschool of South Africa is to provide a refuge, care and educational opportunities for young children, age six months to six years, in a desolate area of South Africa. A number of these children are orphans due to the AIDS crisis in their country.

Our grant will be used to build a double classroom for children under the age of two.



Journey of Hope Grief Support Center—\$1,000

The mission of Journey of Hope is to provide no-cost group grief support to children, adolescents, and their parents or adult caregivers who have lost a loved one to death. This agency serves families from Dallas, Collin, Denton, Ellis, Fannin, Grayson, Hunt, Kaufman, and Rockwall counties.

Our grant will be used for program and staff training.



Kids U—\$1,500

The mission of Kids U is to improve the lives of at-risk children by concentrating on education and issues that affect the whole child. The programs operate on-site in low-income apartment communities in Dallas at no cost to the families.

Our grant will be used for summer programs. Each day, Monday through Friday, breakfast and lunch are provided, along with educational opportunities. This summer students will be learning about other countries, reading, taking field trips, having swimming lessons, reading, etc.



Literacy Achieves—\$2,000

The mission of Literacy Achieves is to improve the communication and life skills of non-English speaking adults and children in Dallas.

Our grant will be used for staff salaries for Family English Literacy. This is a new organization we're supporting for 2019.



New Friends/New Life—\$2,500

The mission of New Friends/New Life is to restore and empower formerly trafficked girls and sexually exploited women and their children. Access to education, job training, interim financial assistance, mental health and spiritual support helps these women escape backgrounds of abuse, poverty and limited opportunities.

Our grant will provide program expenses such as counseling, food and clothing.



Our Friends Place—\$2,000

Our Friends Place is dedicated to helping young women break the generational cycles of abuse, neglect, poverty and homelessness through empowering self-reliance and independence.

Our grant will support operations at their Transitional Living Centers, a program that provides single women ages 18–24, who are not pregnant or parenting, with a supportive home where they can learn the skills they need to mature into self-reliant adults.



St. Philip's School and Community Center—\$2,500

The mission of St. Philip's is to provide an unparalleled education and compatible community services through a faith-based experience, with emphasis on serving low and moderate income families.

Our grant will be used for Community Center programs, such as Afterschool Care, their Senior Citizen program, and basis administrative costs.



St. Simon's After-School Program—\$3,000

The mission of St. Simon's After-school Program is to support elementary school children and their families who are challenged by economic and family situations by providing a safe, familiar, nurturing place for children to be after school. This free care includes nutritional snack, and support and assistance with academic and social development.

Our grant will be used to help fund one of the St. Simon programs in a DISD school for a year. Up to 25 students are served per program.



Vogel Alcove—\$1,000

The mission of Voice of Hope is to provide opportunities for children living in West Dallas neighborhoods. This program focuses on building strong character, providing education and life skills, and giving support to families.

Our grant will be used to provide early education services for infants, toddlers, preschoolers.



Voice of Hope—\$1,000

The mission of Voice of Hope is to provide opportunities for children living in West Dallas neighborhoods. This program focuses on building strong character, providing education and life skills, and giving support to families.

Our grant will be used to support the organization's general operations.



A Farewell Interview

Continued from page 23

were such special bonding experiences for us. And of course, having my children in the choir loft. My kids may be involved with the music wherever we go, but they won't walk in and see "Uncle Joel" (one of their godfathers) sitting at the organ.

Rebecca, can you talk about school chaplaincy: what does a school chaplain do, and what are your hopes?

RI will lead two daily chapel services for ages 3 through second grade. That includes a homily most days. And then I'll teach Godly Play classes to pre-K through second classes. It looks like a lot of teaching, with lots of classroom time every day, when I'm not leading chapel. The classroom is a lot about storytelling, less than instruction. I think my job is to help make the stories of who we are as Christians and faithful people available and known to kids, including Christian kids and kids who aren't. And make sure the students get a sense of love and belonging.

What do your families think about these changes?

MMy family is super excited. They have been from the beginning, ever since it was a possibility. There was really no time that I thought they felt it wasn't a good idea. I thought about them very carefully when I chose a seminary, because I know they are a big asset to me, that they are one of the greatest gifts I can offer people. Brian will do absolutely anything you ask of him (sing, play instruments, compose, go on golf outings, help with children's ministries...you name it). And the kids love to be at church and be involved. I know it will be hard to leave, but they are so excited for me, and that I finally know what I'm supposed to be doing with my life. They all seem so natural. I know lots of people don't have that sort of support.

The way I knew that I had chosen the right seminary was when we took the family on a visit to Sewanee over Spring Break. James (age 8) does not get easily excited, or at least show excitement. For instance, when we told him that we were going to Disney World this summer, he

had no reaction. But when we drove into Sewanee and parked the car, he shouted "Who wants to live here?!", and shot his hand up with such joy and a great big smile. It's nice to have that kind of confirmation.

RMy family is thrilled. Dallas is supportive just like Brian. He would go anywhere for me. For the first six years of marriage I supported him through his Ph.D. program at SMU, but that didn't mean he didn't support me finding out what I was supposed to do. But he could tell that I was ready and really well suited for the chaplaincy job, and he pushed me to apply. He was so supportive. He is so gifted at what he does, and will get to keep his role as the Associate Director of the Houston-Galveston Program for Perkins School of Theology, while also teaching classes in Systematic and Moral Theology, and Bioethics for Perkins.

Graham will get to be a student at Parish, where I know he'll thrive. He's five years old and has been to five different schools. Knowing he'll have a community at Parish and Transfiguration that loves and nurtures him will be an enormous gift. And Silas is a tiny bundle of energy and joy. It's fun to think that our home in Dallas will be the first one he remembers. He's already a baptized member at Transfiguration (All Saints' 2018) so we're really following him here.

Is there anything else you want the church to know?

RI want to express my gratitude for the ability to work remotely, and to be so well supported during my maternity after Silas was born. I'm grateful for what a special place this is, and thrilled for the opportunity to be a part of it in a different way. In my new job, I'll be in the church more than most people!

MThere's no place like Transfiguration! You have made this a cherished place to raise our family for the past decade, and although I know that I am living out God's calling, leaving the Fig is a difficult thing to do. All of the Mazurs will miss everyone here dearly, but we will come back as often as we can to visit. Keep us in your prayers, and know that we'll always think of Transfiguration as our home.



Consortium of Endowed Episcopal Parishes

By Anne Schmidt

In late February John Mottram, Michael Widmer, Sophie Lowrance, Casey Shobe and I headed to Boston for the annual CEEP conference. CEEP is an

an acronym for The Consortium of Endowed Episcopal Parishes which is an organization that began in the '80s as a small group of churches that wanted to be able to share ideas about the best use for endowment funds. The founders decided a few years later to expand the discussion so they had the first conference in 1986 where 30 folks came from the 10 member congregations to discuss the ministry of endowment.

The conference has grown since then and in February the almost 200 member congregations and seminaries sent 735 people to the 4-day conference in Boston. The conference consists of keynote speaker(s) and workshops that are designed to give the attendees tools to enhance their ministries when they get back to their parishes. Areas of focus now include not only endowments but stewardship, vestry leadership, parish administration, music, evangelism, Christian formation, and outreach. Attendees and presenters are lay and clergy, professional and volunteers. The only requirement for membership is that you have an endowment or are about to start one. Member churches are large and small, historical and just planted. CEEP provides the opportunity for people from all of these churches to gather and discuss best practices, inspire each other and share tools, resources and contacts for future ministry endeavors.

Transfiguration has been sending people to this conference for years but I first attended in 2014 when the conference was held in Atlanta. I have attended every one since and have learned from some talented people. I was and still am amazed at the breadth of talent and the willingness of everyone present to share successes and failures and to dream together of what the church can be. After that first year I began serving on the conference planning committee and last year I was appointed to the board where I serve as secretary. I am so proud to be included as a small part of what this group does.

I asked our attendees to give me some feedback on their experience since for most of them this was their first conference.

What was something you learned that will benefit your ministry?

Michael: New strategies for communications, especially the value of hearing directly from people who benefit from our ministries. We also learned practical ideas that seem relatively easy to implement to develop the endowment fund. More to come!

John: The wide range of resources available to me through people who are devoted to the advancement of the Episcopal Church.

Casey: I spent time learning about capital funds raising, which was incredibly worthwhile.

What was something about the conference that you didn't expect?

Michael: I didn't expect the wealth of information and inspiration on all non-financial matters of parish life, mission, outreach, music, and



PHOTOS BY SAMANTHA STULZ

ABOVE: Anne Schmidt, author of this piece, is Director of Evangelism and Welcoming Ministries, introduces a keynote speaker at CEEP. **BELOW:** Transfiguration's CEEP attendees at dinner together with friends.



other ministries. I'm also grateful for how much we learned from the real life practices of lay leaders in other parishes. We tend to think every parish is unique, but there's a lot we can learn from each other.

John: The keynote speaker with her electrifying message of "The last shall be first and the first last" with respect to correcting many injustices in present day society.

Casey: I loved the opportunity to meet new people and also the chance to reconnect with old acquaintances and friends.

What is your biggest take-a-way?

Michael: No matter the focus, all successful ministries are about building the kingdom of heaven.

John: The long list of people who I can contact across the country from a wide range of parishes who are willing to answer questions I may have.

Casey: It was exciting to see the stimulation in the minds of our team that attended, and how the sessions and presentations energized and inspired them. 🙌

We Give Thanks



Thank you to Bracken Reece, who stayed on campus until after midnight for four straight days after the terrible thunderstorm of the Day of Pentecost (June 9). He was the primary contact for Oncor, guided cleanup of many large, downed trees and other debris, and helped ensure operations continued as normally as possible even with little or no electricity. Even by his high standards, it was an impressive week of dedicated and devoted service!



Congratulations to the Episcopal Men's Fellowship, which shattered last year's record when they raised more than \$53,000 at this year's Fish Fry and Silent Auction. The success was due to the generosity of all the parishioners who donated trips, special events, and other items, and to the other parishioners (and guests!) that bid on them! Special thanks to Jim Kirkman and John MacLennan, who once again steered the effort, and to all the other volunteers who set up the room, prepped the auction, cooked the meal, or stayed late cleaning up.



Hooray for our graduating high school seniors—Jewel Allred, Rena Gray, Audrey Griffin, George Mercer, Chris Mewing, Caroline Schmidt, Trevor Tankersley, Ryan Ubl, Rachel Wilson, and Cameron Washington. These young women and men have been extremely involved at Transfiguration as acolytes, lectors, outreach volunteers, youth group members and youth council leaders. We are proud of them, and we're praying for them to share the love of God and keep following the way of Jesus in all the places they'll go!



Hooray for our Open Door Fellowship, which led our congregational participation in this year's Pride Parade and Festival at Fair Park. We had over 50 parade marchers, including Bishop Wayne Smith, Father Casey, and Mother Rebecca, and we proudly proclaimed that "God thinks you're fabulous!"



Congratulations to our sister institution, Parish Episcopal School, which has successfully completed its Limitless Capital Campaign and will begin construction on a brand new, 600-seat performing arts center on their Midway Campus this fall! We are proud of Parish, its mission, and the way it forms the minds and moral imaginations of students.



GOD THINKS
YOU'RE
Fabulous!

