

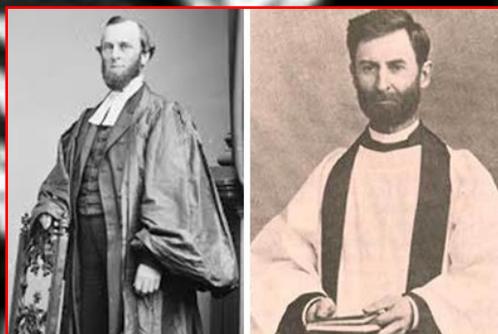


June 2019—August 2019

The Deaf Episcopalian



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Board Member Highlight

Emily Hillquist Davis Treasurer



Emily's family moved a lot because her father served in the Army. A cradle Episcopalian, she loved living in Germany, traveling and meeting people of different countries, languages and cultures. Hearing, she grew up clueless about Deaf culture and ASL. She studied German and French in college and grad school and took Spanish, Arabic, Medieval German, Latin, Greek and Hebrew.

After seminary, the Bishop's Canon noticed her love of languages and asked if she'd like to serve a church in a different language. She was excited!!! His answer: "We have a Deaf church."

Lay leader David Early and the Rev. Arthur Steidemann (age 92!) interviewed Emily and gave her a chance. She's been Vicar of St. Thomas Deaf Church in St. Louis for 12 years, part time.

She dreams of offering worship fully attuned to Deaf Culture and Language that also attracts hearing people and helps them acquire a love of ASL and Deaf Culture.

Emily's mother (who later became a priest) prepared taxes and audited business accounts. This helped Emily not be too scared of numbers and made her willing to become ECD Treasurer in 2017 after being on the Board for one term.

ECD Board Members

The ECD Board of Directors is elected from the membership of ECD Conventions.



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Cover photo: Rev. Jay Croft preaching at the first inaugural 1989 Gallaudet-Syle Day. Many thanks to Michael J. Olson and Christopher Shea, archivists at Gallaudet University, for providing the wonderful photos of this historical event used in this edition!

Greetings from President of the ECD

Hello, friends!

This summer, the ECD will host an exciting workshop, “The Bible Comes Alive: The Power of Story-telling” led by the Rev. Deacon Patrick Graybill in St. Louis, Missouri, from July 15-17, 2019. Patrick Graybill is a well-known Deaf actor and a deacon in the Roman Catholic Church. He is a great storyteller and has a wonderfully passionate way of telling Bible stories in ASL. I strongly urge you to take part in this exciting workshop. It is especially important if you are a reader or a leader in your church, but *everyone* is welcome. *Everyone* can benefit from Patrick’s lively approach to the Bible!

On June 9, 2019 (Pentecost Sunday!), The Rev. Jay Croft will be celebrating the 50th anniversary of his Ordination to the Priesthood at St. Barnabas Church in Gaithersburg, Maryland. Lee Holland, our Vice President, and I will represent the ECD at Jay’s celebration. Congratulations to you, Jay, and many thanks for fifty years of faithful service to God and to the Church!

Lee Holland, our vice president, and her great team are still working on our upcoming 2020 ECD Convention, which will take place August 11-15, 2020 at the Dumas Bay Retreat Centre in Federal Way, Washington. Save these dates and make plans to join us! Watch the website for more information about the convention and how to register.

Summer is approaching. Summer is the season for travel, vacations, weddings, family reunions, and outdoor adventures. Wherever you might be traveling this summer, have a safe and blessed journey. Rejoice in the beauty of all that God has created.

Wishing you peace and love.

In Christ,

The Rev. Dick Mahaffy



The Bishop and The Diocese of New York along with St. Ann's Church for the Deaf and The Episcopal Conference of the Deaf are pleased to announce this open position: **Vicar** of St. Ann's for the Deaf and Chaplain for the Deaf NYC.

Contact: The Rev. Canon Nora Smith, Canon for Transition Ministry

Email: nsmith@dioceseny.org

Position closes: June 15th, 2019

Go to ecdeaf.org to view the link for the job description

Collect

Almighty and everlasting God, you have given to us your servants grace, by the confession of a true faith, to acknowledge the glory of the eternal Trinity, and in the power of your divine Majesty to worship the Unity: Keep us steadfast in this faith and worship, and bring us at last to see you in your one and eternal glory, O Father; who with the Son and the Holy Spirit live and reign, one God, for ever and ever. *Amen.*

ASHES TO GO

Written by: Rev. Laurence Wainwright-Maks
Ecumenical Lent Serves RIT & NTID Newman Catholic Community & The Table Lutheran-Episcopal Campus Ministry collaboration



“Ash Wednesday isn’t the cheeriest day of the year, yet attendance rivals Christmas and Easter, as many Christians intentionally make time to turn to God.”

Ash Wednesday reminds us of our own mortalities and our dependence on God. This day marks the beginning of the Lenten Season; a time for self-examination and reflection, prayer, meditation, repentance, and fasting. Catholic and many Protestant Christians gather specifically for the Imposition of Ashes. Clergy or lay persons mark the foreheads of everyone who comes forward, saying, “Remember that you are dust and to dust you shall return.” That is the message of the day.

From one perspective, being reminded that we are finite creatures is frightening and morbid. On the other hand, there is something beautiful and poetic about the biblical life cycle we Christians generally understand. “Our story,” goes all the way back to the beginning, when God took a chance on humanity. God began with the dust of the earth. Then, when we die, our bodies go back to the place where it all began.

To meet people where they are, churches have taken this particular service to the streets. It is a day that many Christians recognize is important. “Ashes to Go” helps members make time, whatever little there is, to intentionally be present and turn back to God. At RIT/NTID The Newman Catholic Community and The Table: Lutheran Episcopal Campus Ministries recognized that many members struggle to make time for this service in their busy schedule. We took a risk and tried something new.

In addition to our regularly offered services, we offered an ecumenical service and met with students, faculty, and staff who wanted to receive ashes at designated spaces throughout the day. In a classroom at the National Technical Institutes for the Deaf (NTID), Deaf Catholic *Deacon Patrick Graybill* and I met with 27 persons in the morning. Some were hearing and several were Deaf. Later, at Allen Chapel in the Schmitt Interfaith Center, the Catholic, Lutheran Chaplains, and I held a service and waited for anyone who wished to visit us. On the RIT side of campus we engaged with about 118 persons, mostly hearing and some Deaf, who came seeking at least a moment for prayer, reflection, and then imposing with ashes before they leave.

The chaplains gathered afterward to reflect on our experience of Ash Wednesday at RIT and NTID. Overall, we agreed that offering “Ashes to Go,” was an ecumenical success and well received on both campuses and would be worth doing again next year. Personally, all of this was just a start. It was the first of many ways I hope to engage with several of our students who aren’t familiar with “feast days,” liturgical worship, or even The Episcopal Church. It was testing to see whether or not we can create a holy space in the unexpected of places. This experience was the beginning to discover more ways of connecting our communities on campus.



From left to Right: Hannah Cameron (Interpreter), Deacon Patrick Graybill, Rev. Laurence Wainwright-Maks

August 27—a day for us!

Written by: Rev. Jay Croft

The Episcopal Church's General Convention meeting, in Anaheim, California in 1985, approved the inclusion of the Rev. Thomas Gallaudet and the Rev. Henry Winter Syle, the first Deaf person to be ordained in any denomination, in the Church's liturgical calendar. However, inclusion must be approved by two General Conventions.



Rev. Jay Croft—Canterbury pulpit at the Cathedral

Three years later, in 1988, General Convention met in Detroit. This was an important year for the Deaf community. The protests at Gallaudet University had just happened four months previously, which resulted in the selection of Dr. I. King Jordan, who had grown up in the Episcopal Church, as its next president. Would the 1988 General Convention take the necessary step to include these two men in the Church's liturgical calendar?

At that time I was ECD president. Members of the Standing Liturgical Committee hemmed and hawed.; not everyone who is proposed makes it to the "finish line." Finally, the Rt. Rev. Peter Lee, of the Diocese of Virginia—one of the longest-serving and most respected bishops in the Church—declared, "I am tired of commemorating dead English kings. I support this motion!"

And so, the entire convention voted to add Gallaudet and Syle to the liturgical calendar, picking the date August 27th — the day that Thomas Gallaudet passed away in 1902.

Still at General Convention, Charles Perry, sub-Dean of the Washington National Cathedral, offered to host the official inauguration of the commemoration the following year. I immediately accepted, of course! We looked at our calendars and found that August 27, 1989 was on a Sunday. So an afternoon service was held that day, with about 700 people attending.

Dr. I. King Jordan, the new president of Gallaudet University, read Scripture. Members of All Souls' Church for the Deaf and St. Barnabas' Church of the Deaf signed hymns in the choir. A photo of this choir became the cover photo for THE LIVING CHURCH magazine a few weeks later!

Simultaneous celebrations were held in St. Louis MO, Mobile AL, San Francisco CA and elsewhere. It was a great day for Deaf Episcopalians and our friends.



Sandra Pickering, wife of the Rev. Roger Pickering, leading the choir

I had the honor of preaching at the Washington service. In my sermon I said, "When we honor the ministry of these two men, we honor Jesus Christ. We honor Jesus' love for all humanity. We honor his death on the cross not for a few, but for many. We honor his insistence that no one be shut out of the kingdom of God. We honor Jesus' words, 'I, when I am lifted up from the earth, will draw all men to myself.'"

So, this year marks the thirtieth year of our very special day.

Rejoice!

Pentecost is Here!

By: Rev. Dick Mahaffy

The word “Pentecost” means “fiftieth.” Originally, it referred to a Jewish harvest festival – also known as “The Festival of Weeks” – that was celebrated fifty days after the first day of Passover.

In the New Testament, the word “Pentecost” was given a new meaning. In the early Church, Pentecost was celebrated on the fiftieth day after *Easter*. On the Day of Pentecost, the Church remembered the coming of the Holy Spirit upon the disciples after Jesus’ Crucifixion, Resurrection and Ascension. The Day of Pentecost is described in Acts 2:1-4:

“On the day of Pentecost all the Lord’s followers were together in one place. Suddenly there was a noise from heaven like the sound of a mighty wind! It filled the house where they were meeting. Then they saw what looked like fiery tongues moving in all directions, and a tongue came and settled on each person there. The Holy Spirit took control of everyone, and they began speaking whatever languages the Spirit let them speak.” [Contemporary English Version (CEV)]

The Pentecost event was the fulfillment of Jesus’ promise of the return of the Holy Spirit in John 14:26:

“ But the Holy Spirit will come and help you, because the Father will send the Spirit to take my place. The Spirit will teach you everything and will remind you of what I said while I was with you.” (CEV)

Some Christian denominations understand Pentecost as celebrating the birthday of the Christian church. Pentecost is one the seven major feasts of the church year in the Episcopal Church. The liturgical color is red, reminding us of the flames of fire that were seen on each person’s head.

On the Day of Pentecost—June 9th (and in the season of Pentecost), we pray that God the Holy Spirit will continue to inspire and guide the Church. Jesus reminded us that we can do nothing on our own; we need the power and the presence of the Holy Spirit to strengthen us. Come, Holy Spirit, come.

Come and See

By: Rev. Dick Mahaffy

In John 1:35-42, two disciples “come and see” Jesus. They ask him if they can come with him. In the ancient world, it was common for students to approach teachers and ask if they could study with them. After they had talked with Jesus, they were convinced that Jesus was the Messiah. One of these disciples, Andrew, went to find his brother, Simon Peter, and told him, “We have found the Messiah.” Simon came and saw, and he followed Jesus also.

What can we learn from this story? We can see how *important* it is, and how *easy* it is, to bring people to Jesus. Simon and the two disciples were invited to “come and see.” Someone told them about Jesus, and they came to see for themselves, and they believed.

Who can you invite to “come and see”? To whom can you talk about Jesus? Is there someone you know who does not know Jesus and does not go to church? Invite them to “come and see.”

Today, many Deaf people don't want to talk about religion. Some are not interested, and others have had negative experiences in the past with the Church or with Christian people. But many *do not know* about Jesus or about the Church, especially the *Episcopal* Church! We can tell them that the Episcopal Church emphasizes God's love. It offers a wonderful alternative to both fundamentalism and to the rigidity of other churches. No one likes to be threatened with the fear of God's anger or punishment. It's better to be *invited* than to be threatened! We have Good News to offer them! We can assure them that they are loved by God, that God cares for them and values them. This is the work of every Christian: to invite other people to “come and see” the Good News the Church has to offer.

How can we, as Deaf Episcopalians, do this? Here are some things to remember when you invite someone to “come and see” Jesus or to “come and see” the Episcopal Church:

1. Connect with people socially *before* you invite them to church. Ask them to go out for coffee or tea, or to meet you at a social gathering or at a bar. Get to know them first. Accept their communication method (oral with sign language supports or full sign language). Be a real friend. Treat them as a friend. People love to talk about themselves. Ask questions and be interested in their lives. Don't interrupt them and don't do all the talking yourself!
2. When you feel that the time is right, you can say that you know a church where they will be accepted and understood and valued. Ask them if they would like to come with you to this church. If your friend says, “No, I'm not interested,” change the subject to something else you would enjoy talking about. Let them know that you value their friendship, and that you respect their decision. But stay in touch with them. Prove that you can be a real friend, whether or not they agree to come to church with you. Maybe they will change their mind later. Let the Holy Spirit work in them. Pray for them.
3. Explain to your friends that the Episcopal Church is concerned with a person's spiritual growth, but it is also concerned with their whole lives! The Church can help people transform their lives. We want to listen to their concerns and challenges, and we want to help. We can offer friendship and support. We can explore with them their relationship with God. And we can help them worship God – in a language they can understand. We know that God loves them, and we believe that their Deaf identity and their Deaf culture and their rights as Deaf citizens are all gifts from God. God takes delight in each one of us.
4. Deaf people (like *all* people) want to be assured that they belong, and that they are wanted and needed. They want to believe that they have something to give. Our church can be a place that shows them how valuable they are. We can show them how much God cares for them. We can invite them to serve alongside us, as we work towards building the Kingdom of God.

We are followers of Jesus, who loves us and who wants us to “come and see” for ourselves. That's why Jesus tells the two disciples, “Come and see.” We too can invite people to “Come and see.” Bringing people to Jesus, introducing them to the Church and to other followers of Jesus – that is our role.

Upcoming Events and Opportunities

Diocese of California

St. James Episcopal Church
ASL led worship every Sunday at 10:30am PDT



Diocese of Fort Worth

St. Stephen's Episcopal Church
Interpreted worship at 10am CDT



Diocese of Massachusetts

Trinity Episcopal church
Interpreted services at 10am EDT

Diocese of Missouri

Sharing worship: St. Thomas Deaf Episcopal Church
ASL livestream worship on Facebook every Sunday at 10am CDT

Diocese of New York:

Holyrood Lay Eucharistic Minister and Eucharistic Visitor Training for Deaf and Hard of Hearing
Sat, June 22, 2019 @ 9:30 am - 2:00 pm

Gracious Leadership: Creatively Cultivating Inclusive Ministries – New York City Kaleidoscope Institute Training
Sat, October 5, 2019 @ 9:00 am - 1:00 pm

Holyrood Church/Iglesia Santa Cruz Holy Eucharist (with sign)
every Sunday at 10am EDT

Diocese of Rhode Island

St. Peter's & St. Andrew's Episcopal Church
Interpreted worship at 10am EDT

Diocese of Virginia

St George's Episcopal Church
Interpreted worship at 9am EDT

If your church was not listed here, please let us know! We want to spread the word of current Deaf and Interpreted services.

The Apostles for the Deaf

By: Rev. Deacon Bill Mosier

Be ye doers of the word and not hearers only, deceiving yourselves — James 1:22

Let us think for a moment about how the first apostles came about. We read the account of Jesus calling the twelve original disciples. It is important to remember that these men were chosen as disciples, not apostles. The question is necessary... What is an apostle?

An apostle is a doer of the Word: a person who actively teaches and promotes a way of life and spiritual being. We often mix this word up with the term, “disciple,” which is a student: a person who learns from a teacher. Jesus was a teacher, or Rabbi, of THE WAY who taught chosen disciples, those disciples later took what they learned from Him and taught others: thus becoming apostles. There can be no apostleship without education!

The difference between a disciple and an apostle is between those who receive instruction and those who live and teach that instruction. They carry the teaching forward to those who come after them. Thomas Gallaudet and Henry Winter Syle are often called The Apostles of the Deaf. Why?

Remember that a disciple becomes an apostle when he or she picks up the mission to spread the word. Back in the days of Gallaudet, the mid 1800's, the teaching of the Gospel, from the bible, was part of the educational curriculum. Every student received it. This allowed an educated Deaf community to come alive due to the work begun by Laurent Clerk and Thomas Hopkins Gallaudet. Clerk and Gallaudet provided the Deaf community with a knowledge of scripture and a thirst for the apostolic teaching in spiritual action that is missing today in our changed educational environment.

Thomas Gallaudet, the youngest son of Thomas Hopkins Gallaudet, grew up with an intimate knowledge of the Deaf Community; His mother was deaf and was one of the founders and teachers at the American School for the Deaf in Hartford, Connecticut and his father was a pastor in the Congregational Church.

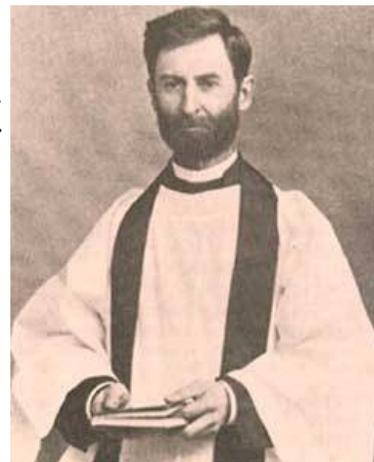
Thomas Gallaudet became a teacher and an ordained priest of the Episcopal Church. One of his students, Henry Winter Syle, became the first Deaf priest in America. Gallaudet and Syle had an educated deaf community with little opportunity to worship in Sign Language. They devoted themselves to the apostolic mission of making worship in Sign Language available to the whole Deaf Community. It was because of their missionary work that a spiritual fire was lit in the American Deaf Community that still burns brightly to this day. They are rightfully called Apostles of the Deaf!



Thomas Gallaudet

It is true that the spirituality of the Deaf Community has changed since those early days. It became common knowledge that deaf people have spiritual lives and need access to worship in their common language.

Due to the pioneering work of Thomas Gallaudet and Henry Winter Style, there are now Deaf ministries in many denominations.



Henry Winter Syle

Meet your Workshop Presenters

The workshop this July will focus on how to analyze and understand scripture in order to enhance proclaiming the liturgy readings in American Sign Language. Participants will have a deeper understanding in translating scripture texts from English to ASL. They will learn translating techniques and strategies and apply them in their own ministry with the Deaf community.



July 15-17, 2019

Pallottine Renewal Center, St. Louis, Missouri

Online registration only at: www.ecdeaf.org/retreat-2019

Deacon Patrick Graybill received both his Bachelor's and Master's degrees from Gallaudet University. After two years in Theological College at Catholic University, he was a member of the internationally acclaimed National Theater of the Deaf for ten years. Then he enrolled in a permanent diaconate program of the Roman Catholic diocese in Rochester, New York, and was ordained in 1982, while serving as a performing arts and literature professor at the National Technical Institute for the Deaf. He retired from the NTID in 2004. He now travels across the country to provide retreats and workshops.

Susan Masters is an ELCA pastor who serves in both transitional ministry and Deaf ministry. She learned sign language because her sister and nephew are Deaf. One of her passions is empowering Deaf communities of faith to create liturgical worship forms that reflect their culture and language. Susan's home is in Minneapolis, MN, but she is currently serving a one-year interim call in her hometown of Dayton, Ohio, so that she can hang out more with her dad, who's 104 years old. She looks forward to also hanging out with her ECD buddies in St. Louis for her invite-only workshop!

Rooted in Wholeness

Contemplative Prayer and Mindfulness Featuring the Rev. Ōshin Jennings, a Deaf Buddhist Monk

By: Beth Klein and Laurel Loch



Rev. Ōshin and Rev. Joe

St. George's Episcopal Church in downtown Fredericksburg, Virginia welcomed the Rev. Ōshin Jennings for their annual Lenten Weekend. This year's event was titled "Rooted in Wholeness" and included two evenings of meditation as well as an Interfaith Panel discussion. Participants were invited to "be still" and learn more about their inner selves. Discussion about how meditative practices can lead to integrating the mind, heart, and whole body as well as how to incorporate this idea into prayer life were highlights of the event.

Rev. Ōshin is a Soto Zen Buddhist priest, trained psychotherapist, and multi-media artist. He is the first known Deaf Buddhist monk and leads No Barriers Zen, a meditation community that meets at Gallaudet University twice a month. The aim of No Barriers Zen is to make meditation practice accessible to people of all abilities and disabilities.

St. George's hosted the Friday and Saturday evening meditation sessions in their historic Nave. Both evenings were well attended with more than 80 attendees each evening, including eleven (11) Deaf individuals. Under the guidance of Rev. Ōshin, participants learned about meditation and contemplative prayer. Additionally, there was ample opportunity to practice what was learned.

Rev. Ōshin continued his visit by delivering the Homily in ASL at the 9 am Sunday worship service and by leading an adult forum during the Christian Formation hour. During the adult forum, Rev. Ōshin shared more of his Buddhist journey, answered questions about his personal practice, and discussed Buddhism in general. He also met with the youth from St. George's and had a lively discussion about centering prayer and the importance of learning about other faith traditions.

The Lenten Weekend concluded with an Interfaith Panel Discussion. The question posed was "How do different faith communities participate in meditation?" Panelists included: The Rev. Ōshin Jennings; Seham El-Ansary, an Islamic and inter-faith scholar and community leader; Dr. John McLaughlin, M.D., physician and mindfulness-based stress reduction instructor; and The Rev. Joseph H. Hensley, Jr., rector of St. George's. The Rev. Deacon Ed Jones, Episcopal deacon and former editor of the *Free Lance-Star* served as the moderator for the panel discussion.

At a time of great division in our world, how can we use meditation to build community and break down barriers? Learning about secular, Buddhist, Muslim, and Christian perspectives of incorporating meditation into a personal practice provided the perfect opportunity to bring differing faiths and ideas together. In the words of Rev. Ōshin, "Silence is our holiest language." The silence shared between all who attended spoke volumes of what we have in common and illuminated how we are truly connected with one another. This event was well received and has helped encourage additional partnerships for future collaboration.



Rev. Ōshin at the Altar

THE DIOCESE OF NEW YORK & DEAF PROJECTS IN TANZANIA

Submitted by: Rev. Dr. Gene Bourquin

Rev. Deacon Dr. Gene Bourquin had the opportunity earlier this year to visit the Diocese of Central Tanganyika in Tanzania, which is the largest Anglican diocese in the world! He went with his fellow clergy, Deacon Robin Newman and Rev. Patrick Ward, on a task force mission to identify ways that the Diocese of New York could to support people who are deaf and blind within the Diocese of Central Tanganyika.



Photo: Deacon Bourquin surrounded by children at a village in Tanzania

While there, Deacon Bourquin visited villages, talked with Diocesan representatives and even met and talked with Bishop of Central Tanganyika, the Rt. Rev. Dickson Cholongani. Deacon Bourquin’s mission in Tanzania was met with love, warmth, and hospitality from all the people there.

The Diocese of Central Tanganyika has obvious love for people with a wide range of disabilities. The Cathedral has interpreted services for the Deaf and there is even a Deaf transitional Deacon who is on the path to becoming a priest. The Christian support there is amazing, considering the area does not have the wealth or resources we have here.

“It is a poor region,” Bourquin says, “yet not poor in outreach and pedagogical sciences: the diocese opened the Buigiri Primary School for the Blind in 1950 as the first school for blind children in Tanzania, and in 2008 added a Blindness and Visual Impairment Unit at its Mvumi Secondary School. And until recently they ran a school for Deaf children.” (The Episcopal New Yorker, 2019. para. 5)

The diocese of Central Tanganyika and the government of Tanzania are working together to establish a diocesan school for the deaf and support a Deaf Project, which addresses education and work in creative ways (the interpreter for the Deaf Project is fluent in Tanzanian Sign Language and familiar with ASL) . The task force that Deacon Bourquin is on will be asking for updates on the building of the school that will hopefully impact the lives of many people.

Another task force idea, which involves the Deaf Project, is a carpentry training program for deaf students to enroll in at the Ibihwa Vocational School. The Ibihwa Vocational School has been supported by the Diocese of New York with various projects over the years. The goal is to have a Deaf carpenter teach the deaf students a trade that allows them to become independent and potentially start their own businesses in their own villages.



Front: Deacon Bourquin, Bishop and Mrs. Dickson Cholongani, Robin Newman. Rear: The Rev. Patrick Ward



UNITY

Way of Love

ECD 75th Convention

August 11-15, 2020

Federal Way, Washington

Image of sunset at Dumas Bay

ECD is excited to announce that the 75th convention will be at Dumas Bay Centre, on the edge of beautiful Puget Sound near Seattle.

Watch for more details in the next newsletter. Registration will open in December.

An Episcopal Summer Word Search

W X Q E Z P M N U F G F C R J D Q S I B Y R P A C
 Z X L O Z Q C A K Y Q L Q S A I N T S L N Q I N X
 Q Y R Q C O R A A A W P M C F U T Y A O R S N X M
 S D D T R I N I T Y X A K V W E P N T Z T R T K W
 B C H W U J T U R H W P M R D A Z H R R K N E K M
 C A M P I N G L A O E B B U T C S G N P W O R A M
 C A F M Y Q B X N D I D A E Q M F C Y O H Y F Z D
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 I G T Q E H L S R O R C H G E O U H G Z D O P N E
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 G B O N F I R E H K P H I L A D E L P H I A E Q D
 Q B A R B E Q U E Q A P O S T L E Z H Z Q I I R K

- CAMPING
- PICNIC
- BONFIRE
- CATHEDRAL
- PENTECOST
- WORKSHOP
- TRINITY
- APOSTLE
- DISCIPLE
- PHILADELPHIA
- ASCENSION
- GOSPEL
- SUNFLOWER
- ROADTRIP
- SYLE
- GALLAUDET
- ORDINARY
- SAINTS
- BARBEQUE
- EUCHARIST
- TRANSFIGURATION
- INAUGURATION
- CONVENTION
- INTERFAITH
- ORDINATION

The Changing Church, for the Better

Written by: Rev. Suzanne Johnston

Minorities have typically been underrecognized, underrepresented, and even oppressed in our culture. As Deaf and Hard of Hearing persons in the church, we continuously work to assimilate as equal partners in the church community. From where can we take our inspiration for fulfillment of our dreams of equal representation and acceptance? How can we change the church? The “Philadelphia Eleven” is one such example.

Up until the 1970’s, men could be ordained as either deacons or priests, yet women could only become ordained as deacons, “deaconesses”, and typically wore a habit (similar to Catholic nuns). Though there was nothing in the canon laws that prohibited women from becoming ordained as priests, it had not yet been approved by the Episcopal Church. As such, the rights of women to become ordained were quietly oppressed in the church.

In 1971, due to a rising demand for recognition and equal rights, the Anglican Consultative Council resolved that women should be allowed to be ordained priests under certain circumstances, though these conditions were still not clearly defined. In response to this, a group of women who were active in the church gathered together as the Episcopal Women’s Caucus, a national coalition, in preparation to work to advocate for women’s roles in the Episcopal Church - particularly women’s ordination.



The Philadelphia 11, July 29, 1979

On July 29th, 1974, eleven women were ordained as priests by three retired bishops at the Church of the Advocate in Philadelphia, PA. Almost two thousand people participated in that service, which lasted almost 3 hours. These women became known as the Philadelphia 11.

“as blacks refused to participate in their own oppression by going to the back of the bus in 1955 in Montgomery, women are refusing to cooperate in their own oppression by remaining on the periphery of full participation in the Church.”

– Excerpt of July 29th sermon by Charles V. Willie

Less than a month later, the Presiding Bishop called an emergency meeting of the House of Bishops. A decision was made that the women had been ‘irregularly’ ordained, and later declared that they had been ordained ‘in principle’ only and were forbidden to practice as priests.

However, with the formation of Women’s Ordination Now, a group of women supporting women’s ordination, as well as four more women being ordained as priests, the ordination of women was finally approved at the 1976 General Convention of the Episcopal Church. Over the next 10 years, over 600 women were ordained to the priesthood in the Episcopal Church. In this day, we know that women number as many as men in the church and have been ordained to roles that include the office of the Presiding Bishop in the United States.

So, the Philadelphia Eleven is a guiding example of how our culture and the church have wrestled to come to terms, and ultimately has become better for it. It took people who were ready to speak up for what they felt was right, to organize, to persevere, and to support each other in times of joy and times of trial. Let us use these examples to inspire us to continue our work for Christ every day and dedicate ourselves to change our church for the better!



The Philadelphia 11, July 29, 1979

COMMUNITY HIGHLIGHTS

50TH ANNIVERSARY OF ORDINATION



Jay Croft is celebrating 50 years of being ordained!

It all starts on June 9th at 12pm with Eucharist. The preacher will be the Rev. Richard Mahaffy, the ECD president. It will be held at St. Barnabas' Deaf Church.

After the Eucharist, the party continues!

Be nice and RSVP to jaycroft50@gmail.com so they can figure on enough food for people.

David P. Early.

(Jan. 5, 1931 – May 6, 2019)



David was a member of St. Thomas Deaf Episcopal Church in the St. Louis, MO area. He was confirmed there in 1953 and over the years he filled most leadership roles. He served in many ways: on the vestry he was Sr. Warden for many terms; Treasurer; a Licensed Lay Reader—able to lead Morning Prayer, funerals, and even Last Rites; Eucharistic Minister and Visitor; mentored lay leaders and clergy; and excelled at church administration. He was quite handy, if anything broke in the church or the office, he fixed it! (Professionally, he was an Electronics Design Engineer for McDonnell Douglas jets. A brilliant guy!)

Dave was very active in the ECD, serving on the board for about 36 years! He attended The General Convention of the Episcopal Church 12 times! His final 4 terms on the ECD Board, he served as Treasurer about 1996-2008.

St. Thomas Deaf Church celebrated his life on May 18, 2019 with 140 people attending the funeral and reception. It was an important event for our church and local Deaf community, in which he also held many leadership positions and mentored others. He is survived by his wife Jane, 2 brothers, 2 children (one of whom, Angeline, has interpreted for the ECD at General Conventions), 3 step-children, and 12 grand- and step-grandchildren.

“Blessed are those who die in the Lord, for they rest from their labors.” ~ Rev. 14:13
He will be missed!



- * First, a happy belated birthday to Laurence WM, who leveled up on May 15th!
- * Lee Holland—June 1st!
- * Cass Martensen—June 2nd!
- * Suzanne Johnston—July 1st!

Contact the editors of The Deaf Episcopalian to have your news or events highlighted!



The Deaf Episcopalian



Episcopal Conference of the Deaf

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ADDRESS SERVICE REQUESTED

