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LATINO COMMUNITY & LATINO MINISTRY

"In faith and with integrity, we must go deeper in seeking to form and equip congregations, so they more broadly reflect who we are, who we have been, and who we are yet becoming."



HERE I AM, LORD

"I grew up aware that all around us were people disregarded as the "other." But I was taught that all people had equal dignity and value in God's eyes. Later, I found that to some degree many of us have experienced being the "other," or who at least have felt like an outsider some time in our lives. This recognition became a cornerstone of my ministry."

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COVER:

Angela Seals with her son, Everett, watch a baptism service and discuss his own baptism at Grace & St. Stephen's, Colorado Springs, 5 years prior. *Photo courtesy Br. Steve Starr.*





BY BISHOP KYM LUCAS

have to confess I hate waiting. I usually navigate to my destination based on how many traffic lights I'm likely to encounter. I have been known to read the first and last chapters of a book before deciding whether or not I'm going to invest the time in reading it. I've also been known to return things to shopping shelves because I wasn't patient enough to stand in the long line at checkout. Knowing I have to make a trip to the DMV, or anywhere that will require me to take a number and wait, fills me with anxiety, exhaustion, and dread.

Given my disposition, Advent has always been a challenge. The season calls us, every year, to a time of preparation, expectation, and waiting. I can get excited about the "preparing" piece, but the waiting? The waiting part takes work.

Waiting, in our Western context, connotes sitting still or staying in place until a particular time or until something changes. And our culture conditions us to seek that which is immediately available and that which offers instant gratification. (There is a reason that I subscribe to Amazon Prime, and I know I'm not the only one.)

And perhaps our expectation of immediacy contributes to our frustration and irritation in this time of COVID-19; that we are locked in this waiting time with no end in sight. Not only do we not know when things are going to change for the better, we also have no idea how long we will be waiting or what we find at the end of our wait.

This year, as I contemplate Advent in the time of COVID-19, I have found it helpful to lean on our faith's Hebrew roots. The Hebrew language has lots of words for waiting: *yachal* (anticipation), *chuwl* (anxious longing), *chakah* (long, desperate wait), and *qavah*, which is my favorite. *Qavah* has several definitions but, at its simplest, it means "to bind together."

"Those who wait (qaveh) upon the Lord, shall renew their strength; they shall mount up with wings as eagles; they shall run, and not be weary; and they shall walk, and not faint." Isaiah 40:31

Qavah (waiting) is not about sitting idly by until something happens; it is about taking time to root ourselves and bind ourselves more closely to God. When we do this, when we cease our "busy-ness"— and focus on our connection with the Divine, our waiting becomes worship. When we focus on how we as branches are connected to and bound up with the true Vine, then we recognize that we are not defined by our circumstances; we are defined by the One who created us and loved us enough to come among us, vulnerable and enfleshed.

This Advent, our waiting feels different. We won't be celebrating the way we're used to. We won't be gathering in the fullness of embodied community; we might not receive the sacrament. Yet, even now, even in this strangeness, God is calling us "to bind together." I pray that God will work in us, using this time to bind us more closely to one another, that we might know anew the grace of waiting and the gift of Incarnation.

CARE & RESTORATION





MEANING MAKING IN A VIRTUAL WORLD

BY THE REV. CANON GREG FORAKER

ith the season of Advent, we take our first steps into a new year in the

Church and begin a new season of waiting and preparation. This is a time for considering the year that has passed, and for looking ahead with expectation of how God will be born into our lives in new, unexpected, and life-giving ways as we recall the inspiring beginning of what would become the Christian faith: the birth of the Christ child.

This year, we begin an Advent like none in our memory. As we imagine what gathering might be like in this sacred season, and in the weeks and months to come, we realize we will be meeting, praying, and even celebrating for the most part virtually. This will be a time when our gathering, worshiping, and exploring faith together will take place through technology as the reality of living in a time of pandemic continues.

As this unexpected season extends into the unforeseeable future, we have begun to realize that this is not a time to "tough

it out" or just "get through" as quickly as possible. As gifted members of God's beloved community, we are being called into a new way of leading. Church visionary Tod Bolsinger seemed to foresee just such a time for leadership, writing: "Leadership is energizing a community of people toward their own transformation in order to accomplish a shared mission in the face of a changing world." In this time of uncertainty and unfamiliar ways of living and gathering, there may be an invitation to something even deeper than adapting.

Could this season offer an invitation to recognize and offer our gifts in remarkable new ways? We have quickly become expert in a new and essential skill: pivoting. Pivoting, a skill we never could have imagined we would ever need or employ, has become a vital means of navigation in our new reality. While at first it may have seemed unfamiliar, pivoting resonates with core aspects of our Christian faith: turning, repenting, and even following a new way with Jesus.

And pivot we have. The year 2020 became a year we could never before have predicted. This time has taught us much about our

We may have realized long ago, but may not have spoken it aloud, that the relentless commercialism and busyness of Advents past had taken us so far away from the meaning and purpose the season commemorates. What is meaningful about Advent for us? What are we awaiting? What will we remember? Why do we gather? Now we are invited to consider the "why" of gatherings this season. Not simply repeating what we have done because "this is what we always have done."

abilities and capabilities. We have learned new skills and adapted. We have seen that the Church is indeed God's beloved community and that our call to share this message has been energized in ways we could never have imagined.

This Advent, we find ourselves deep in what Bolsinger describes as uncharted territory. This is a season in a landscape unfamiliar and daunting. Perhaps it is also a season for which we have been longing. No, not the worldwide spread of sickness and death. No. Not that. But that we are seeing exposed—no looking away the painful realities of the most vulnerable among us. We may well have been living in a world careening on a collision course: unsustainable practices heading toward existential crisis.

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consider the "why" of gatherings this season. Not simply repeating what we have done because "this is what we always have done."

Instead of replicating past approaches and activities with more hours of Zoom calls or other types of what Bolsinger terms "technical fixes," we must first step back and ask foundational questions: What is the reason or the "why" that we are seeking to experience. What is the deep need we hope to meet? What is the most important thing we hope to address? How is God calling us in this work today? Perhaps we are being beckoned to discover that place of call deep within each of us that theologian Frederick Buechner named as "the place where God calls you to is the place where your deep gladness and the world's deep hunger meet." This is the place of our individual and communal "why."

How do we carry out our "why"" in new and creative ways? There is a temptation to look at the calendar and past activities and want to replicate all those good things as quickly as possible through virtual means. It is not that simple. This time is

not about recreating in-person gatherings as they happened before, but instead this has become a time to pivot to new possibilities for gathering and new ways of being. What inspiring gifts might a quieter, more reflective Advent offer? What painful realities around us are calling us to respond with generosity and voices of solidarity? Where are we being called to express the love of Christ?

Advent, and the weeks and months to come, bring a time of profound and potentially transformative invitation. This season offers each of us and our communities the opportunity to explore our deep gladness, our unmet yearnings and also to look around us, opening our eyes to see the deep hunger, hurt, and grief of a suffering world, recognizing that God is at work in our midst, preparing to be born anew in this time and this place, a setting as unimaginable as that manger in Bethlehem so long ago. ■

THE REV. CANON GREG FORAKER is the Canon for Formation for the Episcopal Church in Colorado.

ENGAGING THE WORLD IN LOVE

"Speak up for those who cannot speak for themselves, for the rights of all who are destitute. Speak up and judge fairly; defend the rights of the poor and needy."

—Proverbs 31:8-9



Sacred Ground, Sacred Journey

BY THE REV. GARY DARRESS, DEACON, & THE REV. DEBBIE WOMACK, DEACON

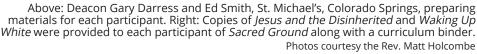
arch 14, 2020, was the last day that many of us worshiped together, in person. For many Christians, the year 2020 has become the longest penitential season in experience. This extended Lent has also become a time when we, as the Church, began to rethink how we would be Church in a time of contraction, grief, and virtual community. A pandemic has brought us to this point.

As newly ordained deacons in the Episcopal Church in Colorado, we began praying, dreaming, and exploring how God would guide us as deacons in an ever-changing Church. Shortly before our diaconate ordinations in June 2020, Canon Alex Dryer asked us to read a book entitled *Seeing My Skin: A Story*

of Wrestling With Whiteness by Peter Jarrett-Schell. After ordination, we attended Becoming Beloved Community, a training through the Office of the Bishop on racism, and we both read the book Just Mercy: A Story of Justice and Redemption by Bryan Stevenson, as part of a book study through St. Michael's Episcopal Church. These experiences opened our eyes even further to the painful realities of endemic racism that impact our brothers and sisters. We were energized as to where the Holy Spirit was leading us and we had a small revelation and an idea to collaborate and bring parishes together from across our city and state.

Meanwhile, unknown to us, three Episcopal rectors in Colorado Springs—the Rev. Matt Holcombe







(St. Michael's), the Rev. Jeremiah Williamson (Grace and St. Stephen's), and the Rev. David Dill (Chapel of Our Saviour)—were having similar conversations, in this case about ways to unite their parishes around a program of study and reflection on racism. The Rev. Matt Holcombe shared with them a film-based dialogue on race and faith supported and encouraged by the Episcopal Church. Called Sacred Ground, the program is a powerful 10-part online curriculum of documentary films and readings that focus on Indigenous, Black, Latino, and Asian/Pacific American histories as they intersect with European American histories. Sacred Ground "holds as a guiding star the vision of Beloved Community" (Sacred Ground Facilitator Guide p. 1).

Having seen the fruits from Sacred Ground at his previous parish, Holcombe learned from Williamson and Dill that their parishes, too, were intent on a meaningful study of race and racism plans. So, the groundwork was laid for Gary and me, after ordination, to become co-leaders for Sacred Ground in the Episcopal Church in Colorado. The work of the Holy Spirit was evident: bringing to fruition a hope that had been growing in our hearts since spring.

We felt called to continue our diaconal formation by organizing small groups known as Dialogue Circles. These circles permit our siblings in Christ to gain a deeper understanding of the white privilege and systemic racism running through American history.

By summer 2020, much of the planning was done. Assembling the logistical jigsaw puzzle began in earnest. What ensued was an effort among the three largest Episcopal parishes in Colorado Springs. Each rector then invited a dozen social justice practitioners in their parish to serve as facilitators after Zoom training. The Rev. Matt Holcombe worked with Jenny Beaumont, director of formation at Christ Church, Charlotte, in North Carolina to secure the facilitator training. From Jenny, the facilitators learned both what it meant to lead people through this difficult work and how to lead the Sacred Ground sessions. The facilitators, including Gary and I, practiced as participants for some elements, to allow us to experience this sacred journey as well.

A total of six dialogue circles formed, and the number of registrants for the program was far beyond what we ever imagined. All six small groups filled with participants from 13 different faith communities across Colorado, including





Above: Sue Caruthers and Regina Winters, St. Michael's, Colorado Springs, assembling totes for Sacred Ground participants. Photo courtesy the Rev. Matt Holcombe

participants from Catholic and Methodist churches. Each dialogue circle has 10 to 12 participants, including the co-facilitators. Utilizing Zoom, we are connecting people in new and lifegiving ways. During this pandemic the Church may have "left the building". But thanks to technology, the church remains present among us, beyond the walls-at least for now!

In the coming months, we are looking forward to seeing how God uses Sacred Ground and this unique collaboration to feed God's people around Colorado Springs and throughout the Episcopal Church in Colorado. We serve an awesome God. As our Presiding Bishop, the Most Right Reverend Michael Curry, has prayed: "Help us to place our hands in your hands and in the hands of each other that we may walk together and work together until our nightmares are ended and your dream for us and all your creation is realized, on earth as it is in heaven." Amen. ■

THE REV. GARY DARRESS is a deacon at St. Michael's, Colorado Springs.

THE REV. DEBBIE WOMACK is a deacon at Grace & St. Stephen's, Colorado Springs.

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In view of these notable population shifts, and in order to live more intentionally and faithfully into what God calls us, as the Church, to become, we must strive for a more authentically multiethnic, multicultural church. This struggle for real diversity is both a challenge and an opportunity for the Church, in all its expressions. In faith and with integrity, we must go deeper in seeking to form and equip congregations, so they more broadly reflect who we are, who we have been, and who we are yet becoming.

LATINO COMMUNITY & LATINO MINISTRY

BY THE REV. QUIRINO CORNEJO

ith population numbers reaching 60.6 million in 2019. Latinos have made the United States the secondlargest Hispanic country in the world, after Mexico. In fact, the Latino / Hispanic community has become one of the fastestgrowing communities in the country, with 10 million more Hispanics living in the United States than in 2010 (U.S. Census Bureau Releases 2019, June 25, 2020). That's the largest absolute growth and an increase of 20%, making Latinos the country's second-largest ethnic group, after white non-Hispanic. They make up 18.5 percent of the U.S. population, the majority of whom have been born here. With an average age of 29.8 years, they are also the youngest ethnic group in the country.

The state of Colorado has seen a 20.5 percent increase in the Hispanic population this past decade. More than 20 percent of the total population in Colorado are now Latinos, totaling nearly 1.3 million people.

In view of these notable population shifts, and in order to live more intentionally and faithfully into what God calls us, as the Church, to become, we must strive for a more authentically multiethnic, multicultural church. This struggle for real diversity is both a challenge and an opportunity for the Church, in all its expressions. In faith and with integrity, we must go deeper in seeking to form and equip congregations, so they more broadly reflect who we are, who we have been, and who we are yet becoming. By "real diversity," I mean matching in our congregations the ethnic and racial composition of our respective contexts working toward a fuller glimpse of God's image and the fullness of God's creation in our congregations and communities.

In basing this article on the strategic visions of the ELCA (Evangelical Lutheran Church of American) and the Episcopal Church, I wish to focus on the Latino community as but one component of a multiethnic, multicultural church. As a "community of communities," Latinos comprise diverse peoples. Latinos are descendants of Indigenous people, people of African, Asian, and European descent. Their cultures meld into a multicultural identity. The resulting diversity is seen by many Latinos as a gift from God. Latinos represent a mix of nationalities, ethnicities, and degrees of acculturation into mainstream American culture. Not all Latinos speak, read, and write Spanish or Portuguese. Documentation status differs: Most Latinos are legal residents, citizens, or U.S.-born; only a minority are undocumented immigrants.

The Latino community considers itself as a spiritual and cultural stream nurturing and contributing to be a more diverse United States and the



Caribbean. Their contributions arise from understanding of their Christian and historic responsibilities, observing their transformation from being objects of the Gospel to subjects of the Gospel: from being only recipients of the Good News to becoming the agents of Gospel proclamation; from ministry for, to ministry with. That is, they are becoming the means through which God is renewing the Gospel proclamation worldwide, particularly in the United States.

Latino values enrich the existing diversity in the United States, providing strength to meet existing weaknesses while allowing its Latino culture to be strengthened by other cultures. Involved in almost every productive endeavor in this country, from farm fields to

the building trades, to universities, hospitals, restaurants, and the hallways of government buildings.

The enriching and benevolent presence of Latinos here in Colorado is only one example of the ways in which Latinos add value to practically all world communities. The human and Christian community would be incomplete without Latinos.

Offering the strength of a community based in family life, and a community life that affirms their individuality with a strength forged by years of oppression and the impulse of an immigrant community not contained by borders, the Latino Community is a vast experience in racial mixture and mestizaje, and values inspired by Latino faith and spirituality.

The Latino community is here to stay in participating and developing this country and the church, offering capable and well-trained leaders.

The vision of the Latino Ministry of the Episcopal Church in Colorado is "to fully reflect the richness and unity of the Body of Christ, by welcoming, forming, engaging, and incorporating Latinos at every level of our life together into the Jesus Movement of making "disciples of all nations, and transforming this world by the power of the Good News of Jesus." ■

THE REV. QUIRINO CORNEJO is the Missioner for Multicultural Ministries for the Episcopal Church in Colorado. To learn more, please visit EpiscopalColorado.org/ multicultural-ministries.



Catechumens are welcome as they are fully initiated into the Christian Life at Cristo Rey, Denver. (Taken prior to COVID-19) Photo courtesy the Rev. Quirino Cornejo

on un número de población que alcanza a ■ los 60.6 millones en 2019, los Latinos han convertido a Estados Unidos en el segundo país Hispano más grande del mundo, después de México. De hecho, la comunidad Latina / Hispana se ha convertido en una de las comunidades de más rápido crecimiento en el país, con 10 millones más que en el 2010 (U.S. Census Bureau Releases 2019, junio 25, 2020). Este es el mayor crecimiento absoluto, con un aumento del 20%, haciendo de los Latinos el segundo grupo étnico más grande del país. Constituyen el 18.5% de la población estadounidense, la mayoría de los cuales han nacido aquí. Con una edad promedio de 29.8 años, también son el grupo étnico más joven del país.

El estado de Colorado ha visto un aumento del 20.5% en la población hispana en la última década. Más del 20% de la población total en Colorado son ahora Latinos, con un total de casi 1.3 millones de personas.

En vista de estos notables cambios de población, y para vivir más intencional y fielmente en lo que Dios nos llama, como Iglesia, para llegar a ser, debemos esforzarnos por una iglesia más auténticamente multiétnica y multicultural. Esta lucha por la verdadera diversidad es tanto el desafío como la oportunidad para la Iglesia, en todas sus expresiones. Con fe y con integridad, debemos profundizar en la búsqueda de formar y equipar congregaciones para que reflejen más ampliamente quiénes somos, quiénes

hemos sido y en quiénes nos estamos convirtiendo. Por "diversidad real", me refiero a la concurrencia en nuestras congregaciones de la composición étnica y racial de nuestros respectivos contextos, trabajando hacia una visión más completa de la imagen de Dios y la plenitud de la creación de Dios en nuestras congregaciones y comunidades.

Al basar este artículo en las visiones estratégicas de Iglesia Evangélica Luterana de América y la Iglesia Episcopal, deseo centrarme en la comunidad Latina como uno de los componentes de la iglesia multicultural y multiétnica. Como una "comunidad de comunidades", los Latinos instituyen pueblos diversos. Son descendientes de indígenas y de

decendencia africana, asiática y europea. Sus culturas se fusionan en una identidad multicultural. La diversidad resultante es vista por muchos Latinos como un regalo de Dios. Los Latinos representan una mezcla de nacionalidades, etnias y grados de aculturación en la cultura estadounidense predominante. No todos los Latinos hablan, leen y escriben español o portugués. El estado legal difiere: La mayoría de los Latinos son residentes legales, ciudadanos o nacidos en los Estados Unidos; sólo una minoría son inmigrantes indocumentados.

La comunidad Latina es una corriente espiritual y cultural que alimenta y contribuye a un Estados Unidos y un Caribe más diversos. Sus contribuciones surgen de la comprensión de sus responsabilidades cristianas e históricas, observando su transformación de ser objetos del Evangelio a ser sujetos del Evangelio: de ser sólo receptores de la Buena Nueva a convertirse en los agentes del anuncio evangélico; de ser ministerio para, al ser ministerio con. Es decir, se están convirtiendo en los medios a través de los cuales Dios está renovando el anuncio evangélico en todo el mundo, particularmente en los Estados Unidos.

Los valores Latinos enriquecen la diversidad ya existente en los Estados Unidos, proporcionando fuerza para satisfacer debilidades existentes, al mismo tiempo que permiten ser fortalecidos por las otras culturas. Involucrándose en casi todos los esfuerzos productivos en este país: desde campos agrícolas, a oficios de construcción, en universidades, hospitales, restaurantes y en los pasillos de edificios gubernamentales.

La presencia enriquecedora y benévola de Latinos aquí en Colorado es sólo un ejemplo de las formas en que los Latinos agregan valor a prácticamente todas las comunidades del mundo. La comunidad humana y cristiana estaría incompleta sin los Latinos.

Ofreciendo la fuerza de una comunidad basada en la vida familiar que afirma su individualidad con una fortaleza forjada por años de opresión y el impulso de una comunidad inmigrante no contenida por las fronteras, la Comunidad Latina es una vasta experiencia en mezcla racial y mestizaje, y de valores inspirados por la fe y la espiritualidad Latina.

La comunidad Latina está aquí para quedarse y seguir participando en el desarrollo de este país y la iglesia, ofreciendo líderes capaces y bien entrenados.

La visión del Ministerio Latino de la Iglesia Episcopal en Colorado es "reflejar plenamente la riqueza y la unidad del Cuerpo de Cristo, acogiendo, formando, involucrando e incorporando a la población Latina en todos los niveles de nuestra vida juntos en el Movimiento de Jesús de hacer "discípulos de todas las naciones, y transformar este mundo con el poder de la Buena Nueva de Jesús."

THE REV. QUIRINO CORNEJO

es el Misionero de Ministerios Multiculturales de la Iglesia Episcopal en Colorado. Para obtener más información, visite EpiscopalColorado.org/ multicultural-ministries.

Bishop Kym Lucas confirms young adults at her pastoral visit at the multicultural congregation of Intercession in Thornton. (Taken prior to COVID-19) Photo courtesy the Rev. Quirino Cornejo



RADICAL GENEROSITY

Mourning Buildings, Building Access

BY WESTON MORRIS
WITH SUPPORT FROM THE REV. TORY MOIR

hen the pandemic began, I was panicked. From the time I arrived in Denver, in 2019, until March of 2020, I had spent every waking hour building knowledge, skills, and energy towards the goal of supporting churches in their mission to live up to the words, "The Episcopal Church Welcomes You." Through educating and empowering congregations to be more accessible to people with disabilities, I had been hopeful that

Through educating and empowering congregations to be more accessible to people with disabilities, I had been hopeful that the Episcopal Church in Colorado could become a model for other dioceses, denominations, and faith traditions, that we would take the lead in welcoming every body to our sanctuaries, parish halls, formation spaces, lecterns, and altars.

the Episcopal Church in Colorado could become a model for other dioceses, denominations, and faith traditions, that we would take the lead in welcoming every body to our sanctuaries, parish halls, formation spaces, lecterns, and altars. As the Coronavirus hit Colorado and a stay-at-home order was mandated, I mourned. I mourned for the movement that had just gotten off the ground. I perceived that the work of welcoming every body seemingly became irrelevant essentially overnight. After all, if folks are not coming into churches, how could I urge congregations to prioritize ramps, accessible parking, large-print bulletins, etc.?

Mourning and grief is a process, however, and through a lot of prayer and reflection I realized what you may already know at this point: welcoming every body *remains essential* to our communal life together, regardless of whether we are meeting in a room at the church building or in a Zoom meeting room on the internet. And, yes, it is true that, in many ways, the Episcopal Church is more accessible than ever. People who could not enter our buildings before can now join from their own

homes, and many other access barriers have been removed. As we have settled into our ritual of Sunday worship during the pandemic, however, it may be time to evaluate, or even reevaluate, the accessibility of our online worship services. Just because a church is worshiping online does not necessarily mean everyone in the congregation is able to engage. In the season of Advent, when we welcome the body of Christ into the world, it is important to consider who in your congregation is still not welcome-at least online. If you have not already, take time to explore any reasons why a person or group of people has disengaged. Online worship is not everyone's cup of tea, true. But disengagement should not happen because of an access barrier. There are simple ways to make sure that everyone in your community is able to access the content of your online worship this Advent and Christmas season.

A number of wonderful styles of worship have been implemented online since March, each of them with unique positives and negatives. This article provides tips for five worship styles. These will also be helpful even if you are doing only pre-recorded worship, or a hybrid live/ pre-recorded service.

Please find below accessibility tips for online live worship services (Facebook Live, Zoom, Google Hangouts, Skype, etc.):

Level 1: Have a virtual verger—that is, one person devoted to responding to tech concerns.

Participants needing tech support can ask a virtual verger for help, or for information about who to speak to. The verger frees the priest, presider, or other speaker to perform their distinct worship roles. Vergers will offer periodic reminders so participants know how to use the platform. Virtual vergers will keep track of tech problems and report persistent issues for troubleshooting. On Zoom, the congregation should be encouraged to use the "raise hand" function when technical questions arise.

Level 2: If you are on a meeting room platform, like Zoom or Google Hangouts, mute everyone except the speaker.

The practice of muting nonspeaking participants is preferable for congregations comprising individuals with hearing loss, sensory sensitivities, in addition to language interpreters or captioners (if present). Muting will produce a clearer, more coherent,

As your worship becomes more accessible, you signal to the worshiping community your intention of truly welcoming every body. While we continue to mourn the shifts in worship style and location, our expressions of openness to the presence of Jesus are what transform us, even when we are gathered together in a Zoom meeting room.

powerful, and cohesive worship experience for other parishioners.

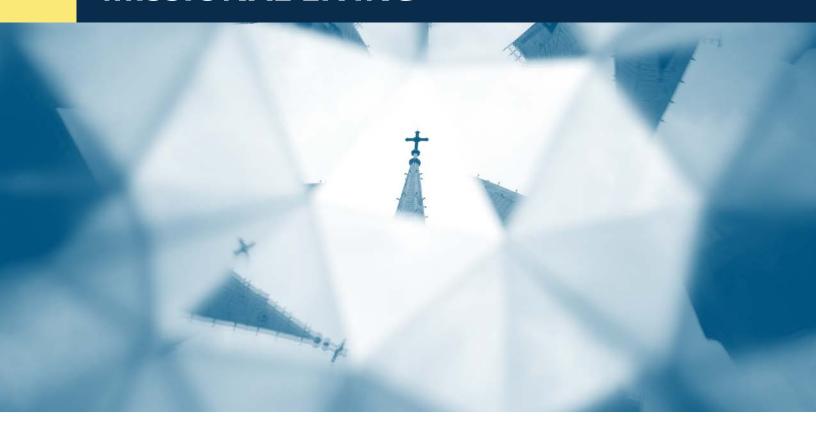
Level 3: Have speakers provide a thorough description of any photos or graphics on slides when they are on the screen.

An image description is a way to make what is on the screen accessible to those who are blind or have low vision. This is especially helpful when the images on the screen are relevant to participation. For example, if a priest preaches a sermon and uses an image on a slide as a subject or connection such as using an image of a river to convey "water of life"—a description would ensure that those unable to see the screen clearly can still follow along. This is useful not only for those who are blind or have low vision, but also for those participating by phone.

In this season of Advent, and the following seasons of Christmas and Epiphany, I encourage you to implement some of these practices into your online worship routine. There are almost certainly people already engaging in your online worship who will benefit from the implementation of these practices. As your worship becomes more accessible, you signal to the worshiping community your intention of truly welcoming every body. While we continue to mourn the shifts in worship style and location, our expressions of openness to the presence of Jesus are what transform us, even when we are gathered together in a Zoom meeting room.

WESTON MORRIS and the Rev. Tory Moir are cofounders of the organization Welcoming Every Body, a consulting firm that forms, enables, and empowers faith communities to welcome disabled and LGBTQ individuals. For more information, go to welcomingeverybody.com or email Weston and Tory at welcomingeverybody@gmail.com.

MISSIONAL LIVING



ACTS COMMUNITIES:

Iry to imagine the Gospels without physical contact—it's nearly impossible. Jesus touches, and the person is healed; bread and fish are taken and multiplied. Thousands are fed. Followers gather, and the crucified body is anointed, wrapped, and placed in the tomb. Presence and touch, proximity and gaze, these and so much more make up the church, the gathered, the ecclesia.

The church looks and feels different today. At St. Tim's, we've wondered how we can do more than simply survive. We are wondering: Could we, maybe, be stronger in our shared faith on the other side of this pandemic?

An Experiment in Digital Discipleship

BY THE REV. LAUREN GRUBAUGH AND THE REV. NICK MYERS

Over the summer, we invited our entire community into a parishwide experiment that hinged on this question. As parish leadership, we postulated that if every member of our parish were connected to a small group digital now, and in-person later it might have the potential to transform our life together.

With over 80 members ultimately participating in 10 weeks of small groups, we hoped to learn our

way into a new chapter of life together. Indeed, our own selfstudy as a congregation, utilizing RenewalWorks, made it clear that the hardest nut to crack for most people was how to practice, live out, and grow in their faith when "not at church." Well, friends, that's all we have today—faith at home, faith with scattered community.

The pandemic has heightened needs for connection, meaningmaking, and a prayerful

foundation of faith. Awareness of these growing needs catalyzed us to speed the development of an ambitious small-groups initiative. The ground had already been laid by the RenewalWorks process our parish engaged in 2019, a process that revealed parishioners' desires to grow in faith, deepen their prayer life, and engage more regularly with scripture. Leaders with an interest in formation were subsequently convened in the winter of this year to build a solid foundation for small groups. We couldn't have conceived at that time that small groups would be embraced with such enthusiasm, and from a clearly articulated sense of necessity.

We called this experiment in digital discipleship "Acts Communities." These geographically organized small groups—digital neighborhoods gathered to share their lives together and journey through the Acts of the Apostles. Participants met online for an hour a week to reflect on the scriptures and their lives using the Kaleidoscope Bible Study, a Lectio Divina approach to biblical study. This easy-to-learn Kaleidoscope Institute process worked well in the constraints of digital space, emphasizing as it does respectful communication, including active listening to the text and to one another.

We adopted a simple framework— Opening Prayer, Check-In, Kaleidoscope Bible Study, and Closing Prayer. A reading schedule was developed that

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included a couple of chapters per week, along with an excerpt that served as the common text for the group reflection. (This allows everyone who is present to participate fully, whether or not they were able to read ahead of time). Additionally, we developed check-in and reflection questions relevant to the scripture of the day, which leaders could use or adapt.

In this life, it is impossible to know a way forward until we know either what story we are telling or the story that is telling of us. Our hope has been that in traveling along the same scriptural path, with a set of shared values and a focus on dialogue, we might become a people who actually know our neighbors, share our faith stories, and are shaped by God's story in this life.

Moreover, by equipping facilitators well and empowering them to respond to the needs and hopes of their participants, we hoped that adaptability and a shared commitment to learning together

might emerge. After all, the success of small groups hinges on the commitment of a capable, creative, adaptive set of lay leaders. Therefore, we have focused on developing lay leaders during this pandemic. Our model for leadership development has been:

- 1. Train: We spent about six hours training leaders in creating and maintaining a healthy group culture, facilitating dialogue, and using technology (and how to help their participants use it too). This was time wellinvested: leaders have a clear sense of their purpose and are able to thoughtfully adapt the content within the shared framework in ways that work for their respective groups. And they have graciously helped participants troubleshoot tech issues.
- 2. Send out: Leaders were paired-in quintessential disciple style—and sent out. Pairing leaders alleviates the additional pressure created

when running a Zoom meeting while facilitating. Leaders take turns playing the role of Host (sending out meeting info, running Zoom and PowerPoint, keeping time), and Facilitator (keeping the conversation on topic, ensuring that everyone has a chance to speak, addressing questions).

3. Support: Facilitators are supported in peer-to-peer relationships (teams check in on one another with weekly Collaborative Calls). We hold a biweekly, clergy-hosted team check-in meeting to talk about "Miracles, Missed Opportunities, and Movement." And our vestry commissioned a House Church Action Group, which is taking a bigger-picture account of formation at St. Tim's. This group is developing tools to support facilitators (such as the Collaborative Calls with an accompanying list of checkin questions), and means of assessing the success of the groups as they go, including participant surveys.

All of this requires a willingness on our part, as clergy, to let go, to trust lay leaders, and focus on asking powerful questions—not giving simple answers. In many ways, the questions before us today are the most challenging: "Have we been investing in real and lasting relationship or simply meeting the needs of our consumer culture?", "How can we shift a passive participatory culture of church to a daily, sacrificial, and owned faith?", and, perhaps the most piercing of all, "How do I need to change who am I to become—when ministry has become something so radically different?"

We are learning that digital discipleship is both familiar and completely different. Digital discipleship is about moving us from a passive experience of church (as great as live-streaming is, this is often passive), to a participatory and owned life of faith. Digital discipleship, like any form of discipleship, is rooted in relationship—how are people able to join in small groups, connect with others, be known, and know others? Digital discipleship is not about counting "views" but is focused on helping people build relationships, learn the ways of Jesus, confess our shortcomings, and learn to trust and hope in God. We seek engagement, not viewership. We want connection, not passive digital presence.

It has been our hope that like the early church, Acts Communities would innovate faithfully according to their context—the needs of members and their neighbors in the moment. We've seen the initial stages of this contextualization: groups that had engaged in conversations about racial justice during their time together decided to prioritize participation in

"Sacred Ground," the Episcopal Church's dialogue program on race. Another group gathered its members and guests for pre-election nonpartisan presentations of the issues at stake in the Colorado Blue Book. Most vitally, we have heard from leaders and participants alike that these groups, regardless of content, have been a place for connection in a season of isolation. People are longing to tell their stories and to know that someone who cares is listening.

Digital discipleship, like the discipleship we all know has formed us, is about relationship. What is most important, we think, is to remember how familiar, foundational, and unspectacular all of this really is as ministry. To follow Jesus is to spend time with Jesus; to be a disciple is to learn alongside other learners; to be transformed does not depend on physical proximity, but the proximity of the soul and the heart to the one who transforms us. We hope we can continue to walk out into this new and familiar space in faith and hope and love-so that we too can be changed and learn what it is that God is up to, way out in front of us.

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MISSIONAL LIVING



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I grew up aware that all around us were people disregarded as the "other." But I was taught that all people had equal dignity and value in God's eyes. Later, I found that to some degree many of us have experienced being the "other," or who at least have felt like an outsider some time in our lives. This recognition became a cornerstone of my ministry.

Here I Am, Lord

BY THE REV. NADINE POPE, DEACON

Like good stewards of the manifold grace of God, serve one another with whatever gift each of you has received. Whoever speaks must do so as one speaking the very words of God; whoever serves must do so with the strength that God supplies, so that God may be glorified in all things through Jesus Christ. To him belong the glory and the power for ever and ever. Amen

-1 Peter 4:10-11

experienced my call to the diaconate as a prolonged journey marked by three major turning points following my Christian formation as a child. The turning points were, first, a nudge from the Holy Spirit to go in a certain direction; second, a new curiosity and willingness to open my heart and trust the direction the Holy Spirit was guiding me in; and finally, a deepening desire to serve God such that "Here I am, Lord," and "Thy will be done" became my most fervent prayers.

I was raised in the Episcopal Church. When I was young I learned that God is faithful, and church can be a haven for those in need of solace. My mother, my sister, and I spent a lot of time at church, away from chaos and dysfunction at home. The church provided comfort and order. My mother modeled what it was to have a strong faith and compassion for people who were struggling in life, no matter the struggle. I grew up aware that all around us were people disregarded as the "other." But I was taught

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that all people had equal dignity and value in God's eyes. Later, I found that to some degree many of us have experienced being the "other," or who at least have felt like an outsider some time in our lives. This recognition became a cornerstone of my ministry. My first nudge by the Spirit came many years later. I was a Sunday School teacher and a leader at church. One Sunday I was asked to help pass out sack lunches to the homeless folks who came by the church every week. I agreed, but I was actually really afraid of "them." Something, I suppose the Holy Spirit, moved me past my fear. As I put each sack into the hands of a recipient, I looked up into their eyes with mindful intention. Many avoided that eye contact, but with those whose eyes met mine, I felt a kinship, and I experienced deep compassion that almost brought me to tears. I wanted badly to tell each of them they are God's Beloved.

I thought it was odd that the next step in my formation began when I was elected to the vestry. Still a Sunday School teacher, I assumed I would be appointed as Christian Education liaison. Instead, I was made the representative for Outreach. Here, I had a notable and profound shift in the direction of my life. Yet, it was, of course, a call without words. I responded with new energy and enthusiasm, looking for ways and places to serve, dragging some parishioners with me or guiding others in discerning their own passions for ministry. While I remained a collaborator and cheerleader in outreach for several years, it was the moments I spent face-to-face with the disenfranchised, and with others who were experiencing some form of "otherness," that brought the most meaning to my life. The moments spent in conversation with the guy living under a bridge who needed an extra blanket, or the young woman with a drug addiction who put herself in degrading and dangerous situations just to get money for drugs. These were the experiences that penetrated my heart. I saw

the despair and loneliness in their eyes. I hoped that what they saw in my eyes was compassion and acceptance. I wanted them to feel loved. Although I believe all humanity is connected, I know many of our siblings don't experience that connection. When I take the time to listen to a thread of someone's story, it offers an opportunity for me to weave it together with a thread of my story. The gift is in seeing how connected we are and how important the connection is for all of us.

The interim rector asked me if I had considered ordained ministry. That sent me searching for an answer to the question "how does one know if they are called to an ordained ministry?" Our deacon affirmed that I should consider the diaconate. I had to complete Education for Ministry (EfM) before I could enter discernment. The formation programs were usually spaced three to four years apart. I did what I could to move forward. I continued to pray, serve others, read books about the diaconate, and question whether or not this ever-increasing passion (the passion to serve people who are marginalized and live on the fringes of society) was a call to the diaconate.

Once I completed EfM, I thought I was primed and ready to enter the formal discernment process. I waited. A number of administrative setbacks and poor timing fed my doubts. Another formation program came and went. Throughout the journey, there were so many times that I received enough validation to be certain of my call. With each setback or delay, however, I questioned whether I was misinterpreting that call. In the meantime, I found the courage to go back to school to get a Master's degree in Social Work, where I knew I could find great joy in helping those experiencing mental illness and addictions. I continued to find comfort in praying for God's will to be done. The desire to serve God by serving others had been

placed on my heart, as was the charge to enable the mission of the Church by leading people into the world for servant ministry. I was called. I did respond. On the Feast of the Transfiguration in 2011, fifteen years after God placed it on my heart, I was ordained to the vocational diaconate in the Diocese of Atlanta.

Guided by the Holy Spirit, I focused the first few years of my ministry leading and challenging parishioners to stretch beyond their judgments and comfort limits, to broaden their awareness of the conditions and the needs of the world. Together, we explored their discomfort, which for many led to transformation and greater commitment to pursuing the Church's mission in the world. This aspect of my diaconal call invigorates me. My truest passions for ministry were again met when I was assigned to be the deacon at Church of the Common Ground—a ministry of presence in the streets of Atlanta. Every Sunday of the year, no matter how cold or hot it was, whether it was pouring rain or the winter winds whipped between the skyscrapers, we were there. To serve coffee, share in the Eucharist, hold hands in a giant circle and say the Prayers of the People, hand out sack lunches, and listen. Accept. Remind the folks that they are God's Beloved. I vividly remember that it rained one of my first Sundays there. It was a cold rain and the wind blew hard. I was bundled up, but of course many of the folks there had nothing to keep them warm. We were all soaking wet and cold, but we still held church. We still praised God. Why not? Unfortunately those who were there were going to be outside anyway. At least we were together in community. When it was all over, I sloshed to my car. Within a few minutes down the road, I began to sob. I realized only two of us could go home to remove our soaked clothing and take a nice hot shower.

Curiosity and the willingness to keep an open heart have been instrumental to me in living out my diaconal ministry. With them, I am more attentive to nudges from the Holy Spirit. They enable me to explore different perspectives and cause me to imagine new possibilities for transformation. One such transformation occurred after I responded to a nudge to train in Asset-Based Community Development (ABCD) and become a facilitator. Learning and integrating the principles of ABCD has been one of the greatest gifts to my ministry. It

was invigorating for me to be able to incorporate this paradigm shift in how we perceive ministry. It has the potential to be life affirming to everyone involved. It was a joyful experience for me to help folks living on the margins—whose belief was that they have no gifts to offer—discover and celebrate their gifts.

I have been in the Episcopal Church in Colorado for two years now, and have served as deacon at St. Joseph's Lakewood for about 18 months. Within a month of becoming the deacon at St. Joseph's, I was diagnosed with cancer. So for most of the first six months of my ministry there, I was actually being ministered to. Early in my diagnosis, while feeling sad and anxious about my future, I very clearly heard what I believe to be a voice of God telling me, "You still have work to do." This is what has animated my call, and again I prayed fervently, "Here I am Lord," and "Thy will be done."

In these COVID times and as a member of an atrisk group, my ministry of presence to people on the margins is on hold. I miss time spent worshipping and connecting with the guests at St. Clare's Ministries, hosted at the Episcopal Church of St. Peter & St. Mary. As someone who values the gifts and power of community and human connectedness as central to my ministry, I grieved. But because the diaconate is the main lens through which I see the world, even when I can't be faceto-face with the "others" in our world, I haven't left those concerns behind. I do what I can from home to engage in social justice and advocacy and encourage others to do the same. I have used my experience and knowledge of behavioral health and provided a forum to address the increased anxiety and depression among parishioners. We continue to have conversations around identifying our gifts, assets, and talents and how they can be used to the glory of God, and we raise up parishioners' individual ministries and give thanks for them. Our future as the Church will be different from our past, but I get excited knowing that we will find more ways to further the Church's mission by striving for justice and peace and sharing God's love. Thanks be to God! ■

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I invite you to lean into the season of Advent. To lean into faith at home.

AN ADVENT INVITATION

BY ELIZABETH CERVASIO

hat's the first thing you think of when you think about Christmas? Most people, I think, would respond: "Exhaustion." There are presents to buy (and wrap). Party after party. Visits with family near and far. Photos to sit for. And that Christmas Eve service, packed with people you may or may not recognize.

With the hustle and bustle of what we call "the holiday season," we can often overlook the joyous anticipation of the infant Jesus arriving in our midst. But this season it will be different. It will not feature a never-ending string of in-person gatherings. Few friends and family members will travel by plane for visits. And those packed church services will be online. And while for some, this may make the season feel dark, I invite you to help bring the light. I invite you to lean into the season of Advent. To lean into faith at home.

Advent is the perfect time to take the season back from the secular world. To prepare your heart for the coming of Christ, born a babe into a cold and hurting world. The way to take the holy days of Advent and Christmas back is to invite Jesus into your home every day. Bringing faith into your home during Advent doesn't need to be daunting or

intimidating. Remember, Jesus isn't confined to the walls of our church. Start simple.

Start by considering the Nativity story and everyone involved in the birth of Christ. Imagine everyone who journeyed to be with Mary and Joseph to see, and adore, the newborn Jesus. Think about the journey of these courageous parents. Consider how you might want to journey alongside them on the road to Bethlehem. What does it mean to wait patiently for something precious? What must it have felt like to be turned away again and again knowing your baby was about to be born? Think about the innkeepers having nothing to offer, and the one who offered all that they had. Think about the shepherds in the fields, "watching their flocks by night," receiving the news that the savior been born. How would it have felt to be the first to receive that news? Think about the angels proclaiming the good news of Jesus' birth. Have you ever been bursting to tell good news of your own? How is that similar?

After you've gotten the hang of the simple, go a bit deeper. Think about how the story applies to your life now. How could you share, today, the wonderful news of Jesus' birth? What would it be like if Jesus were born this winter, in this day and age? How can you live your life as if he were?

The beautiful thing about bringing faith home for Advent is that the experience doesn't end on December 25th. After all, Christ didn't come into the world for one day only. Christ came to be in relationship with us and to live with us day in and day out. And the wonderful thing about starting with Advent is that these modest acts of faith, at home, can become holy habits—something you do naturally. Seeing Jesus in everyday moments and in the people around you starts with consciously bringing Jesus into your home every single day, not just visiting Jesus at church on Sunday.

So, this Advent I invite you to slow down and find ways to bring the story home. Check out resources your church may have. Think about registering for the *Journey to Bethlehem* experience offered through the Office of the Bishop and doing this important work with others from around Colorado. Gather tips from Pinterest or others from your faith community. There is no wrong way to begin faith at home. The important thing is to begin.

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Colorado Episcopal Service Corps Members and Staff at the labyrinth at Cathedral Ridge. Photo courtesy the Rev. Rebecca Crummey

Resilience & **Pilgrimage**

Colorado ESC during Pandemic

BY THE REV. REBECCA CRUMMEY

n 2020 everyone is learning to live life in a pandemic, and like everyone else, we at Colorado Episcopal Service Corps are learning to let go of things we had hoped would be, while tackling new challenges with resolution and determination. In March our corps members decided to stay together and continue to support one another through the pandemic, while many ESC houses disbanded. Our community wrestled together with all the nuances and choices that needed to be made in the early days of the pandemic, and became stronger for their efforts. In July we ended our time together as program leaders and corps members, with a camping, physically distanced retreat at Cathedral Ridge. This was the first time in months we had gathered in person, having had our formation and prayer on Zoom since March. Being able to be together while keeping each other safe, with

distance and wearing masks, was life giving as we reflected on the ups and downs of the program year. Being outdoors in a place as beautiful as Cathedral Ridge was spiritually uplifting for all of us.

This spring program directors around the country wrestled with the details and questions of starting a new cohort during a pandemic. How could we gather a new group together safely? Was ESC important enough to risk bringing strangers to live together during COVID? We all decided that the benefits of creating community during a time when we need each other the most far outweighed the risks. Working with Canon Carl Andrews, we came up with the idea to quarantine together for two weeks at Cathedral Ridge with our new cohort. Because of our innovation, many other ESC programs around the country reached out to their camp and conference centers and were able to do the same.

We began our eighth year of Colorado ESC where the seventh year ended: at Cathedral Ridge. Donna Contreraz-Wetherbee, our program manager, and I quarantined with our four incoming corps members. Because of the abundant care and love of the staff at Cathedral Ridge we were able to focus on getting to know one another and building a Beloved Community. This was a sacred and powerful time spent creating reflecting on the themes of love, vulnerability, and anti-racism. It was a joy-filled time full of laughter, learning, prayer, tears, and dancing.

Perhaps the biggest gift of our time at Cathedral Ridge was being able to build a labyrinth together in the Aspen grove at Aspen Chapel. Led by the Reverend Terri Hobart, the Reverend Kim Seidman, and the Reverend Canon Vanessa Stickler Glass, we built a Baltic Wheel labyrinth using logs from trees that had to be cut as a fire mitigating measure.

In building the labyrinth, we explored liminal space and liminal time, naming the threshold that each of us was experiencing, the threshold of a new program year, the threshold of life in a pandemic, and the threshold of quarantine. We also talked about the labyrinth as a place to walk a pilgrimage in this time of pandemic when we can't travel to Iona or the Holy Land, or other traditional places of pilgrimage. In the historical tradition of so many spiritual pilgrims confined by plague and warfare, we named this space at Cathedral Ridge as a sacred place for taking a pilgrimage, during

In the historical tradition of so many spiritual pilgrims confined by plague and warfare, we named this space at Cathedral Ridge as a sacred place for taking a pilgrimage, during pandemic and for years to come. We blessed this labyrinth with all of our hopes and prayers for transformation and love.

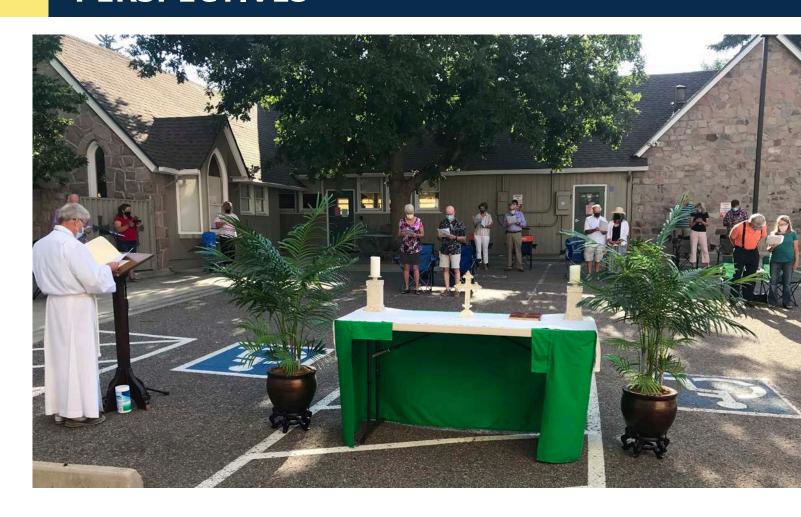
pandemic and for years to come. We blessed this labyrinth with all of our hopes and prayers for transformation and love.

As our quarantine ended, we gathered at the new labyrinth and reflected on how a year of Episcopal Service Corps is a year of pilgrimage. A year of Episcopal Service Corps is a year of transformation and learning resilience. Colorado ESC provides corps members with the tools for resiliency and adaptability while they serve in a partner agency. Corps members learn from one another and from the people they serve with in the community while living in the crucible of intentional community. Our corps members serve with the most vulnerable people in Colorado, bringing Christ's love in tangible ways. Something we all need during this time of COVID.

My prayer as we continue this season of pandemic and enter into Advent together, as Episcopalians in Colorado, is that we will continue to love one another by staying physically apart, while socially and spiritually connected. May we learn from the corps members who have chosen to create community, be present with Colorado's most vulnerable people, and to advocate for social change. May we enter into this season as pilgrims toward Beloved Community. May we emerge from the pandemic resilient, transformed by love to be Christ incarnate to a changed and broken world.

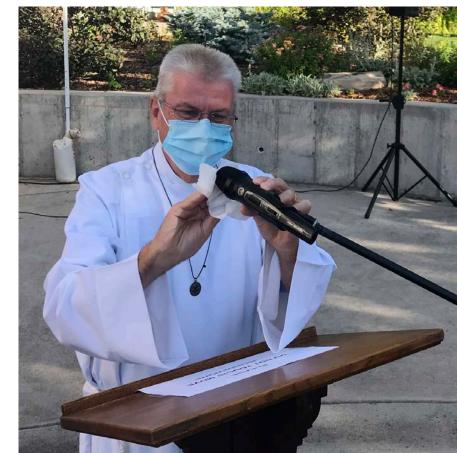
THE REV. REBECCA CRUMMEY is the founding director of Colorado ESC and the vicar of St. Peter and St. Mary Episcopal Church in Denver.

PERSPECTIVES



Above: Christ's Episcopal Church in Castle Rock worships outdoors.

Right: Trevor Hart, the Sr. Warden at Christ's Episcopal Church in Castle Rock cleans the microphone before a service.









Above Left: Bishop Kym Lucas at the Colorado Public Radio studio in Denver. Photo courtesy Bishop Kym Lucas

Above Right: Charlie Martin of St. Aidan's, Boulder, brings meals to Attention Homes, a place for teenagers and young adults to be when home is not a safe place for them to be. Photo courtesy the Rev. Mary Kate Rejouis

Left: A brother and sister before with their masked bear before service at Christ's Episcopal Church, Castle Rock. Photo courtesy the Rev. Brian Winter





Above and Left: Claire Elser is ordained a priest at Grace & St. Stephen's, Colorado Springs. Photo courtesy Br. Steve Starr





Above Left: A temperature check prior to services at St. Joseph's, Lakewood.
Photo courtesy the Rev. Michele Quinn

Above Right: The Rev. Mary Kate Réjouis and her children enjoying respite at Cathedral Ridge.
Photo courtesy the Rev. Kim Seidman

Above Left: The Rev. Quirino Cornejo baptizes a young man at Cristo Rey, Denver. Photo courtesy the Rey. Ouirino Corneio





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CORADO COSCOPAIAN