

COLORADO

episcopalian

SPECIAL EDITION:
**JOURNEYING
TOGETHER**



IN THIS ISSUE

FROM THE EDITOR:

The theme for this fall edition of the *Colorado Episcopalian* magazine, "Journeying Together," invites readers to reflect on our lives of faith, through the revelatory lens of pilgrimage as a metaphor for our spiritual and communal journeys. This edition explores the transformative power of walking together in faith, discovering the sacred in both the physical and spiritual landscapes we traverse, beginning right at home and discovering the ever-expanding call of God for us. The ancient spiritual practice of pilgrimage, a central expression of this theme, embodies the intentional act of seeking and finding God's presence in the world and within ourselves. Together, we listen for God, we discern God's call, and we take steps into the future God has for us. Reflecting on our journey as pilgrims encourages deeper connections with fellow travelers, fostering unity, shared wisdom, and collective growth. Through stories, reflections, and insights, we hope this edition will inspire us all to embrace the path ahead with open hearts, knowing that we are never alone on our pilgrimage of faith.



PILGRIMAGE AS DISRUPTION

"Our lives may have many unplanned disruptions, and many are not welcome, but to feel the call of pilgrimage is to intentionally seek disruption."



EPIPHANY ON THE YOUTH PILGRIMAGE

"As we sat together each night along the river banks where we camped and the sun slowly succumbed to the powerful, spotted night sky, we recalled our interactions with God."

- 01** From Bishop Kym Lucas: Faith is a Journey
- 03** Pilgrimage as Disruption
- 05** A Pilgrim's Progress
- 08** An Alabama Pilgrimage
- 10** Epiphany on the Youth Pilgrimage
- 13** A Labyrinth Journey

COLORADO
episcopalian

PUBLICATION INFORMATION:

A publication of the Bishop and Diocese of Colorado

Copyright 2024 The Bishop and Diocese of Colorado

Published Twice Yearly

POSTMASTER: SEND ADDRESS CHANGES TO:

Colorado Episcopalian
1300 Washington St., Denver, CO
80203-2008

OFFICE AND MAILING ADDRESS:

1300 N. Washington St., Denver, CO
80203-2008

303.837.1173 • 800.446.3081

Communications@EpiscopalColorado.org
EpiscopalColorado.org

The Right Reverend
Kym Lucas

Bishop of Colorado

Canon Mike Orr

*Canon for Communications & Evangelism,
Editor*

COVER: Pilgrims to the Portuguese Camino walk at a pilgrims' retreat at Cathedral Ridge, Woodland Park.
Photo courtesy the Rev. Greg Foraker



...I have found that the most helpful description of the life of faith is “a journey.” Some might refer to it as a “path” or “a road” but in my experience, it feels more like a game trail or single track, than anything as luxurious as a road or path. But no matter how wide or narrow the way, faith has been a journey for me.

FAITH IS A JOURNEY

BY BISHOP KYM LUCAS

In the 35 years since my confirmation as an Episcopalian, I have found that the most helpful description of the life of faith is “a journey.” Some might refer to it as a “path” or “a road” but in my experience, it feels more like a game trail or single track, than anything as luxurious as a road or path. But no matter how wide or narrow the way, faith has been a journey for me.

Jesus said to the apostles, “If anyone wishes to be my disciple, let them deny themselves, take up their cross, and follow me.” The “following” part requires that we move. We who would serve the world in Christ’s name don’t have the option of staying still or remaining where Jesus found us. We are called to walk in the footsteps of our Lord. Even when the road is unclear, even if we’re not quite sure where we’re going to end up, faithfulness is about taking the next faithful step.

A pilgrimage is often defined as “a journey, especially a long one, made to some sacred place as an act of devotion.” And while we might be tempted to think of a pilgrimage as a one-time event to a particular destination, the life of faith is a life of pilgrimage. While some of us might be privileged enough to travel to a particular place, we are all pilgrims, walking in this way of Love. As we walk, we will, like the Good Samaritan, encounter those who need us. We may find along the way that we, ourselves, need help when our direction is unclear, or exhaustion sets in.

On my journey, I have been blessed with wise counselors who saw God working in me in ways I didn't recognize. I have been called to walk with those on the margins, reflecting Christ's love for them. I have been blessed to find comfort when the road was dark and foreboding. And all along the way, the Holy Spirit has shown up.

For the past five years, it has been my joy and my honor to walk this pilgrim way with the Episcopal Church in Colorado. As we've navigated the hills, valleys, and many bumps in the road, I have seen God's hand at work. As the Body of Christ, we are deepening our faith and finding Grace, learning how to love God and love neighbor. I'm sure the next five years will yield new trails and more adventures! I look forward to journeying with you. ■

A pilgrimage is often defined as “a journey, especially a long one, made to some sacred place as an act of devotion.” And while we might be tempted to think of a pilgrimage as a one-time event to a particular destination, the life of faith is a life of pilgrimage.



Sarria, Spain, along the Camino de Santiago.
Photo courtesy of Canon Mike Orr



PILGRIMAGE AS DISRUPTION

BY MISSIONER TRACY METHE

Some may wonder why you would leave the comforts of home to wander across the wet and scrappy Scottish landscape, side-stepping sheep droppings and the occasional Highland kuh, realizing your skin is the only layer of waterproofing left, and most of the landscape you might have hoped to see is masked in mist. Or why would you decide to walk out your front door to journey through your pandemic-locked-down

community, walking mile after mile alone along quiet suburban paths? Why would you venture across Portugal and Spain, not to enjoy the luxuries of international travel, but instead to walk kilometer after kilometer on the Camino de Santiago, at day's end reaching one destination in time for rest, only to set out at daybreak to do it all again the next day, and the next?

I believe we go on pilgrimage because we seek disruption. Our lives may have many unplanned


disruptions, and many are not welcome, but to feel the call of pilgrimage is to intentionally seek disruption. We seek to break out of what John O'Donohue calls the "dead shells of yesterdays," in order to "risk being disturbed and changed."¹ In the rhythms of our daily lives it is all too easy to settle into static ways of thinking and being and to make choices that favor familiarity, convenience, and comfort. On pilgrimage, we invite the opposite. We open ourselves to the discomfort of not knowing

where we are going or what the day will bring. We rely on the hospitality of strangers. We keep walking despite creaky knees and aching feet. And in doing so we allow ourselves to experience delight and wonder again. The layers of scales fall from our eyes, and we can discover life revealed in new ways: ways that lead to wholeness, connectedness, and renewed relationship with God. Immersive faith experiences like pilgrimage can break open our lives for transformation, showing us the way to live more fully alive in God's truth and love.

Some people wish to walk pilgrimage routes as a bucket list item or physical challenge. For Christian seekers, pilgrimage is about more than walking or the pilgrimage path, and there are things you can do to get ready for a deeper pilgrimage experience: equipping yourself for the journey and taking time to prepare.

Equipping: Take just the things you need. Pack with intention. Bring your poles, your broken-in boots, your favorite socks, your journal. Leave plenty of room for gratitude, flexibility, curiosity, and wonder. As pilgrims, we attempt to walk in prayer and as prayer to God, receiving all that may come our way each day. We give thanks for the sun breaking through the clouds, the snail on our path, the lively or silent companionship of the stranger for a few miles of the way. Lightening the load and bringing what matters helps us to see.

Preparing: Recently when talking or reading about pilgrimage I've increasingly heard the word *touregriño*, basically a *peregrino* (pilgrim), who takes advantage of the creature comforts available on pilgrimage (kind of like the difference between camping and glamping.) Regardless of the way you make your pilgrimage,



Since 2016 the Episcopal Church in Colorado has offered pilgrimage opportunities that have brought people together from across the diocese and far beyond. More than 300 people have participated in one or more diocesan pilgrimages, aged 15-80, representing more than 50 different Colorado Episcopal congregations.

take time to prepare—physically, mentally, and spiritually—so that instead of showing up for a long walk, you show up for a journey, ready to open yourself to God in creation, Christ in the stranger, Spirit all around. Preparing helps us to let go and receive the gift of just being.

With equipping and preparation, pilgrimage can happen nearly anywhere. In the past twelve months I have made a pilgrimage to San Luis and Chimayo; journeyed along the lakeshore through Chicago to visit the places I'd worked and started my family; and walked the Buddhist and Shinto-shrined Kumano Kodo in Japan. For each, my intention was different: encountering the sacred during Holy Week, integrating experiences from my 20s and 30s, and stretching my faith to include non-Christian traditions and practices. Each pilgrimage began prayerfully and with a need for disruption. Each required equipping and preparing so I could be present for the experience and the transformation I was seeking.

Since 2016 the Episcopal Church in Colorado has offered pilgrimage opportunities that have brought people together from across the diocese and far beyond. More than 300 people have participated in one or more diocesan pilgrimages, aged 15-80, representing more than 50 different Colorado Episcopal congregations. On our journeys, we've been joined by siblings in Christ from the ELCA, Methodist, Presbyterian, Ecumenical Catholic, and Jewish faith traditions. We have made international pilgrimages, local hybrid Camino pilgrimages, and youth mission pilgrimages, all grounded in a time of preparation and community building well in advance of our first step together. Many congregations have begun offering pilgrimages as well: from a pilgrimage across Denver to pray at the city's Episcopal churches, to pilgrimages to the Holy Land to encounter the places of Jesus; Turkey and Greece to walk with Paul; and Alabama to confront and own the actions of our past.

Are you seeking to disrupt your everyday? People of all ages are on the move! Pack your gratitude, openness, and flexibility. Prepare your body, mind, and spirit. Walk and pray. Find faith made deeper and broader, and life renewed, through sacred encounters, joyful discovery, and transformation on your journey with the living God. ■

TRACY METHE is the Missioner for Baptismal Living for the Episcopal Church in Colorado.

¹From "A Morning Offering," published in [To Bless the Space Between Us: A Book of Blessings](#)



Rural road walking, Cornwall,
St. Michael's Way.
Photo courtesy the Rev. Chris
Ditzenberger

A Pilgrim's Progress

BY THE REV. CHRIS DITZENBERGER

*Since, Lord, Thou dost defend
us with Thy Spirit,
we know we at the end
shall life inherit.
Then, fancies, flee away!
I'll fear not what men say,
I'll labor night and day
to be a pilgrim.*

To Be a Pilgrim words by John Bunyan, modified by
Percy Dearmer

In September, 15 Saint Gabriel parishioners and friends met in London to begin an eleven-day trip. We billed this as a pilgrimage, though an onlooker from several centuries ago might dispute that. Ours was not without the elements of pilgrimage, though we benefited from public transportation and modern conveniences. Given the reality of being 21st-century travelers accustomed to expectations that are usually met and privilege and agency to control our surroundings, we labored night and day to be pilgrims. How did we do that? We unplugged

as much as possible, paid attention to our surroundings, examined, queried, and reflected on our intentions, and surrendered our personal agendas as we flowed in and out of community life as we journeyed together.

When we hear the word pilgrimage we may think of the best-known literary account of a pilgrimage, *The Canterbury Tales* by Geoffrey Chaucer, a 14th-century court official. Or, closer to our time, we may think of the Hajj, the pilgrimage that observant Muslims make to Mecca. Perhaps yet even closer to home, you might have seen the film *The Way* with Martin Sheen, which tells the story of a father who goes to Spain to retrieve the body of his son who perished while walking the Camino de Santiago, the Way of Saint James.

What does it mean to make a pilgrimage today?

Historically people embarked on the oftentimes arduous, even perilous, journey from their front doors to reach a holy site. Canterbury was one of the destinations, where the shrine of Thomas

Becket was thought to bring about salutary benefits to the faithful. Jerusalem, Rome, and Santiago de Compostela in Spain were the main pilgrimage destinations within Western Christian history.

Ian Bradley in his book *Pilgrimage* writes:

Pilgrimage offers a departure from everyday life in search of spiritual well-being, a sense of adventure, getting out of a rut, to broaden our horizons, or to seek new and different experiences.

The Reverend Nigel Marns, a priest in Cornwall, England, who cites the quotation above by Bradley in his book *A Cornish Celtic Way* adds:

Some [people who go on pilgrimage] are curious, others uncertain what they seek, some go on pilgrimage to fulfil a long-held dream or promise. A pilgrimage may arise out of a sense of restlessness, a quest for a deeper spirituality or in order to re-orient one's life, to make a new start or to escape from the mediocrity of the everyday.

A pilgrim's purpose for going of course varies and is unique to each person, but I would say

Above all we hoped to meet Jesus and reflect him out into the world, seeking the grace of a companioned life because Jesus accompanies us always, whether we are treading well-worn paths a continent away, tutoring at-risk youth, or caring for an elderly parent in the midst of their own journey.

that each person is looking to deepen their own walk with Jesus. Some pilgrims may feel as if they are spiritually "stuck" and wish to have a fresh perspective. While others are sensing a desire to rekindle wonder or joy by being in the company of others who share a similar desire. And still others may be at a crossroads in their lives; they seek a time apart when their souls might be pried open to the prompting of the Holy Spirit in a way that they find hard to conceive in the harried day-to-day life here at home.



Trail Pilgrims beginning from Polgigga Cornwall.
Photo courtesy the Rev. Chris Ditzenberger



Camino badging on St. Michael's Way signpost. Photo courtesy the Rev. Chris Ditzenberger

About a year ago, what began as a parishioner approaching me one day saying, “I’ve just returned from Cornwall and thought you might be interested in this brochure,” blossomed into a comprehensive commitment to giving this a go.

The initial draw was a portion of the Camino called the Saint Michael’s Way, a 12-mile walk across Cornwall that culminates at Saint Michael’s Mount, a tidal island that in some ways resembles Mont Saint-Michel in Normandy. It was from Saint Michael’s Mount that ancient pilgrims from Ireland, Wales, Scotland, and England would make their way across the sea to Spain. It is recognized as part of the Camino de Santiago. Another day found us walking a similar length, part of the Mary and Michael Pilgrims Way, a multi-day journey of 350 miles. We limited ourselves to just 14 miles of that!

We then added two additional stops, one in London and the second in Oxford. In London, we explored Westminster Abbey, while in Oxford we received a tour of the city through the eyes of C S Lewis and JRR Tolkien of *Lord of the Rings* fame, as well as worshiped in communities while there.

More than arriving at these particular destinations, though, what I most valued was the interior work that the Holy Spirit did within us individually and

communally. My personal (indeed, to be honest, *perennial*) questions leading up to our pilgrimage were: How can I release the burdens that I carry into the loving hands of the Lord? Where am I being called to cast my gaze as I enter this chapter of pastoral ministry? What are the graces and virtues needed to navigate a time of social and cultural chaos? These questions and more are ones that I carried with me. Others may have their own specific intentions and expectations.

Above all we hoped to meet Jesus and reflect him out into the world, seeking the grace of a companioned life because Jesus accompanies us always, whether we are treading well-worn paths a continent away, tutoring at-risk youth, or caring for an elderly parent in the midst of their own journey.

A closing thought: one is reminded by those initiated into the “pilgrimage ethos” that the true heart-work *begins* when one returns from their travels, crosses the threshold of their home, and resumes the daily rhythm of life *coram Deo* – life lived before the presence of God. ■

THE REV. CHRIS DITZENBERGER is the Rector at St. Gabriel Episcopal Church in Cherry Hills Village.

Front row: the Rev. Bonnie Spencer, Linda Neuman, Ravi Chitikila, Nan Fullerton, Wanda Battle and her sister. Second and back row: Anne Knorr, the Rev. Kim Seidman, the Rev. Peter Munson, Frank Simcik, Bill Oliver, Jennifer Peterson, Bob Fullerton, Dale Peterson, Carol Park, Jennifer Allen, Daniel and Rachel Mondragon. Not pictured: Joanne Simcik. Photo courtesy Rachel Mondragon

“Injustice anywhere is a threat to justice everywhere. We are caught in an inescapable network of mutuality, tied in a single garment of destiny. Whatever affects one directly, affects all indirectly.”

- The Rev. Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr.
Letter from Birmingham Jail, April 16, 1963

“Darkness cannot drive out darkness, only light can do that. Hate cannot drive out hate, only love can do that.”

- The Rev. Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr.



AN ALABAMA PILGRIMAGE

BY CAROL PARK

How many Episcopalians does it take to go on a Pilgrimage to Alabama? Seventeen, as it turns out. We ranged in age from 11 to 80 and were from the Front Range Region of the Episcopal Church in Colorado. Most were strangers to each other before we met. But we came together in April 2024 out of a common mission: to bear witness. To confront the truth of a terrible history and shine a light so that healing may continue. By the end of the five days, we were bonded from our shared, at times painful, witness.

We carried with us an open heart, lament (softening one’s heart), justice, and a sense of “metanoia”: changing one’s direction. The Rev. Bonnie Spencer taught us the Hebrew term, *tikkun olam*, an action needed to repair and improve the world.

Our five-day itinerary was ambitious. The Rev. Bonnie Spencer and Anne Knorr, along

with Faith Journeys, created a well-organized operating itinerary that worked, with only a few tweaks needed. We started our day early — breakfast, morning prayer, reflection — and continued our day on a tour bus with our fabulous tour guide, Wanda Battle, and excellent driver, Dawn Andrews. We ended our day with dinner, evening prayer, reflection, a time for processing and sharing, and finally, bed!

We were deeply honored to be a part of the [Colorado Lynching Memorial’s](#) ceremony for the transfer of soil from the lynching site in Limon, Colorado, where 15-year-old Preston Porter, Jr. was brutally tortured and murdered in 1900. Soil was also included from the former site of the Denver City Jail. A representative from the Equal Justice Initiative (EJI) was also in attendance. The soil was transferred to a glass jar that will

be placed, among thousands of other jars of soil from lynching sites across the country, at the National Memorial for Peace and Justice in Montgomery.

The symbolic laying to rest of Preston Porter, Jr. (say his name), hearing a powerful poem read aloud by Jovan Mays, the solemn ceremony, Wanda’s lilting song (*Precious Lord*); well, our hearts were outside of our bodies and tears flowed. Of all the sites we visited, this experience was the one that brought us to our knees, and one that we will carry in our hearts forever.

Bryan Stevenson has remade Montgomery into ground zero for Civil Rights history — and accountability. All of the sites: The Legacy Museum, National Peace & Justice Museum, the Civil Rights Memorial Center, Rosa Parks Museum (and apartment where she lived),

Freedom Rides Museum (old bus station), and Dexter Avenue King Memorial Baptist Church provide an unflinching education of our history that is difficult to process in its entirety. Stevenson chose mostly narrative with few museum artifacts, employing instead videos, art, sculpture, holograms, interactive displays, photos, and story. The Legacy Museum takes you from 1619 to George Floyd — “From Enslavement to Mass Incarceration.” The effect is life-changing. You will not view the world the same after visiting these sites.

We spent a day in Birmingham, visiting the Civil Rights Institute, Sixteenth Street Baptist Church, Kelly Ingram Sculpture Park, and the A.G. Gaston Motel. We were impressed with the Gaston Motel, where in the ‘60s it was the only place Black citizens could stay. It was where MLK and other civil rights activists met. A.G. Gaston (1892-1996) was a wealthy Birmingham businessman who, along with his wife, empowered the Black community in Birmingham. The motel is a National Park Service Civil Rights

National Monument and the two NPS young women who were our guides were passionate about civil rights history and proud to be working at this monument.

Visiting the 16th Street Baptist Church (“Where Jesus Christ is the Main Attraction”), a UNESCO World Heritage Site, was an honor. For Black citizens, it ranks with Bunker Hill and Gettysburg. Standing on sacred ground where those four little girls were killed in the bombing on Sunday, September 15, 1963, at 10:22 am, and hearing the story from our tour guide was sobering and heartbreaking. Say their names: Addie Mae Collins, Carole Robertson, Cynthia Wesley, and Denise McNair.

There were so many layers to this trip, it’s difficult to describe in words. However, I would be remiss to not mention how our tour guide, Wanda, enriched our experience. As if we weren’t learning enough, while we were on the bus, Wanda insisted on teaching, singing, making us laugh, and telling us stories (“just sayin”). She challenged us with

questions that nudged us out of our white privileged comfort zone. She sincerely wanted to hear our thoughts and feelings. “Tell me, do you still feel that some white people feel superior to Black people?” As we grew more comfortable with each other, every question and conversation we had was grounded in love and respect.

This trip planted deep roots in our hearts and minds. We will be processing what we saw, learned, and experienced for months to come. We are committed to telling the truth of our history, the story of Preston Porter, Jr., to anyone who will listen. We will continue the work of peace, justice, and reconciliation. If you ever have the opportunity to go to Alabama and travel the Civil Rights Trail (Montgomery-Birmingham-Selma), do not hesitate — GO! In fact, the Rev. Bonnie Spencer and Anne Knorr will be leading another pilgrimage to Alabama in April 2025! ■

CAROL PARK has been a parishioner at St. Mary Magdalene in Boulder for almost 30 years and leads their Social & Racial Justice Ministry.



Left: Jars of soil from lynching sites across America at the National Memorial for Peace and Justice. Photo courtesy Anne Knorr

Right: Photo of Preston Porter, Jr. and jar of his lynching site soil to be transferred to the glass jar and placed on the wall at the National Memorial for Peace and Justice. Photos courtesy Rachel Mondragon



Epiphany on the Youth Pilgrimage

BY ELI BOEGLIN

This past summer, specifically the week of our youth pilgrimage, has been one of immense growth. My faith has been reformed and my interpretation of religion refined. That is something I notice about these YES Trips and other adjacent experiences: my faith grows, but not in the way you would think. It morphs and molds to fit the experiences that I have had because of intense doubt and questions.

A prime example of this comes from the first day when we stayed at the St. Christopher Mission in Bluff, UT, which is the ancestral and unceded territory of the people of the Dine, Apache, Ute, Hopi, Zuni, and Pueblo. Walter, a person with Dine ancestry who lived on the mission lands, talked with us about who he is and what his life has been like. Hearing his profound wisdom and the events that shaped his life was a thrilling adventure, but it was also very hard to step into his shoes and follow the stories of his growth with God. Walter is clearly a very loving man. He has three children: two daughters and a son. He was born and raised on the mission lands, then served our country in the military, and finally returned to the reservation

again to live and serve not far from his place of birth. This man is devoted to spreading the word of God and the love that follows. Yet I just cannot understand how someone so full of love believes in the same God who was, and still is, used to justify the pain and suffering that their people have witnessed. I'll come back to this.

Monday we began the rafting portion of our pilgrimage. As we sat together each night along the river banks where we camped and the sun slowly succumbed to the powerful, spotted night sky, we recalled our interactions with God. Whether it was a series of words said by another, a small action that blossomed in the heart of a friend, or evidence of the force of God, one thing particularly stood out to me. Every person, regardless of gender, referred to God as "He/Him." I am not sure why it stood out to me so much on this trip, but the reason it stood out to me in the first place is apparent. Why does the vicious patriarchy of our modern day, and that of humanity's entire existence, bleed into the beautiful religion we practice? Why would God, a completely good and just being, want to contribute to the power imbalance that plagues our societies today? Why does every person I hear speak of God as if this



As we sat together each night along the river banks where we camped and the sun slowly succumbed to the powerful, spotted night sky, we recalled our interactions with God.

white male god who is often used to justify racism, sexism, transphobia, and many other sicknesses of our time are a reason that Christianity loses so many with each new generation.

But if this trip taught me anything, it doesn't have to be this way and these guardrails are not cemented into the roots of what it means to be Christian. Walter, the person of the Dine tribe, referred to God as "The Creator" and spoke of how the sun watches down upon our heads and Mother Earth knows us by the touch of our feet. His children played beautiful music through their ethnic flutes. The love and the peace were so evident! This is his Lord and God almighty, who is far from the one that was used by white settlers in justifying their pain. That is what resonates with him in his Christianity.

being is male or has any affiliated gender at all? And why is it that when I hear someone speaking of God as anything other than a "He/Him," I immediately disassociate their religion from the Christianity that I know?

On day 4, one of my new friends approached me when I was alone. He asked me if I had felt or seen God on this trip. I was curious why he felt this way. This is a pilgrimage, right? A faithful journey on which we should be constantly connected to God through the scriptures we read and the prayers we speak? So, I asked him: "If not through the facilitating measures in place, how do you usually connect with God?" He proceeded to list out different ways he sees God: music, the mountains, and deep conversations with friends, among others. He did not mention the scriptures or the prayers.

This interaction was the knot that tied those two other observations together. How are we supposed to connect with God if we are unsure about what exactly we are connecting with? For many of us younger folk, we do not completely identify with the orthodox Christian God, represented as a white man. Tight guardrails that seemingly guide us to a

Furthermore, my friend told me that he did eventually see God, and that was through the patience and smile of another friend on this trip. That is his Christianity. None of us are bound in our faith by the seemingly tight guardrails that prior generations hundreds of years ago have set. God calls all of us in so many diverse ways, and it is our duty as God's children to follow that calling.

As for the details of this God, it does not matter. Maybe God is a black woman or an Arabic male. Or maybe God is the white male, and that is what you best connect with. Any of these are okay. The most important factor in this whole religion thing is that you believe, and from there, it will morph and mold to fit what you need to fill your life with virtue where there would otherwise be vice. As for what I believe, God is a formless, natural force that weaves itself through every atom in this universe, similar to the characteristics of the Tao, authored by Lao Tzu. I saw this in the sacred water of the San Juan River, the soft sand along the banks, the red rocks of the scattered canyons, and the bugs that kept me awake. The Holy Spirit flows through everything, which was evident in this trip.

Before I end, I would like to recall a defining moment of this trip that will stick with me forever. I had an epiphany as we watched the sun's glow slowly fade on the world-famous "Delicate Arch" in Arches National Park. Between the near-constant chatter of folk from all around the world, there were glimpses of silence. With the power of those short glimpses, I imagined what the silence was like before the land was inhabited by humans. Before there were people here to witness and emotionally process it, the magnificent beauty of the Delicate Arch prevailed. More than that, the sheer beauty of God's creation has been true since the beginning of time. God's beauty has been evident long before we mere humans witnessed it.



To summarize: my image of God is not the same as your image of God, but as long as we follow in the footsteps of Jesus and travel down the path laid out in front of us with an open mind and an open heart, we are true Christians; God is real, and the evidence is in the natural beauty of things that have been around far longer than us. Thank you all so much for your support for our early journey through faith. The diocese makes these experiences, revelations, and connections possible. I cannot express my gratitude enough. Know that your support is leaving positive, permanent marks on all of us. ■

ELI BOEGLIN is a senior this fall at Renaissance Secondary School in Castle Rock and will graduate in May of 2025. He is a member of Christ's Episcopal Church, Castle Rock.



YES Trips (Young Episcopalians in Service) are organized by the Episcopal Church in Colorado to offer youth the opportunity to participate in service work and pilgrimages where they explore and discover their faith. These trips are designed to cultivate a spirit of community steeped in exploration of self, the world around them, who God is, and what faith can look like in their lives. By offering both service and pilgrimage experiences, youth have the opportunity to experience firsthand how God is found in the world around them. Participants engage in service activities, learning about social justice, and teamwork while making a positive impact on the communities they serve. On pilgrimage, youth engage in the themes of leadership, adventure & creation, or community. Pilgrimages are offered in a rotating cycle of these three areas. YES Trips provide youth with a variety of experiences to lean into the work and life of Christ. To learn more about YES Trips, please visit episcopalcolorado.org/yes-service-trips.



Top: YES Trips youth rest and admire the Delicate Arch in Arches National Park. Middle: Eli and Daniel pose by their last camping site. Bottom: The youth rafting down the San Juan. Photos courtesy Kimberley Hubbs



A LABYRINTH JOURNEY

BY MARY THOMA

The labyrinth is an ancient symbol of the spiritual journey, representing a winding path of healing and pilgrimage that has resonated across cultures for thousands of years. In medieval Christianity, when pilgrims could not undertake the perilous journey to Jerusalem, walking a labyrinth—such as the renowned 13th-century design in Chartres Cathedral—offered a profound alternative for deep reflection, prayer, and the pursuit of forgiveness. Today, labyrinths remain powerful spiritual tools, with classical and medieval designs still widely embraced

alongside new forms that continue to emerge.

My own journey with the labyrinth began decades ago in a small church in Shreveport, Louisiana, during a spiritual disciplines class. What started as a simple introduction blossomed into an annual birthday ritual—beginning each new year in reflection and prayer at a local labyrinth. This practice evolved into a tradition of seeking out labyrinths in any new city I visited. I never imagined that I would one day become a labyrinth facilitator, guiding others on sacred walks, yet the spirial path

continued to reveal itself in ways I could not have anticipated.

When my husband and I retired to Loveland, Colorado, I was drawn to All Saints' Episcopal Church, where synchronistically, the congregation was exploring the creation of a labyrinth. Joining the Labyrinth Mission and Ministry Committee, I wasn't sure what I had to offer as a retired actor and teacher, beyond my love and appreciation of the labyrinth. However, I trusted that the way would become clear, and soon found myself training as a labyrinth facilitator. We shared a dream of creating a community

The meanders and rhythmic turns of the labyrinth empty the mind, relax the body, and refresh the spirit. It creates a sacred space for love and healing, offering a place where people can fully embody their experience. It weaves together creative contemplative practices and provides a way to listen to God, both individually and collectively.

labyrinth modeled after the one at Chartres Cathedral, a vision brought to life by the tenacity of our committee chair, Cherry Laucher, and supported by our rector.

Having recently completed two years of studying the mystics and the contemplative path at Richard Rohr's The Living School, I was attuned to listening for God's direction. The timing of this labyrinth journey suddenly made perfect sense. In our church's dining hall, where we temporarily taped the labyrinth pattern to the floor, we gradually introduced our congregation to the transformative power of walking the labyrinth. Together, we explored its many applications—for spiritual insight, discernment, healing, comfort, and forgiveness. We remained committed to creating a permanent outdoor labyrinth for the congregation and community.

This journey has profoundly enriched my spiritual life, challenging and comforting me in equal measure. I've been called to step into a more prominent role, becoming an advocate for the labyrinth as a spiritual discipline, and have been comforted by the gifts and graces received through this work alongside the Labyrinth Committee. Observing my evolution throughout this process has been both

fascinating and fruitful. There has been a flow, an ease, and a reassurance from Spirit, urging me to create in new ways, listen deeply, collaborate, and trust that we are being led. On August 24, we blessed and dedicated our beautiful outdoor ADA-compliant community labyrinth.

The labyrinth ministry has become a source of profound joy and fulfillment. The meanders and rhythmic turns of the labyrinth empty the mind, relax the body, and refresh the spirit. It creates a sacred space for love and healing, offering a place where people can fully embody their experience. It weaves together creative contemplative practices and

provides a way to listen to God, both individually and collectively. As a congregation, we have the opportunity to extend this sacred work to the larger community through workshops, facilitated walks, and the creation of rituals for healing, peace, prayer, and social justice.

Looking to the future, we envision supporting many people and groups through the labyrinth—those grieving, seeking self-reflection, navigating transitions, or healing their stories. The creative and spiritual applications are limitless. Facilitating labyrinth walks has revealed a deep yearning for community and shared experiences of healing



The Rev. Cynthia Espeseth blesses the labyrinth. Photo courtesy Tad Leeper

and restoration, especially now. The labyrinth offers a beautiful pathway to meet that need.

Reflecting on earlier chapters of my life as an actor, where the focus was often on performance, I've learned through the labyrinth to flow, to dance with Spirit, and to trust the labyrinth to hold us all. One of the greatest blessings of this work is that it's not about me; it's about presence—being a God-bearer and holding sacred space within ourselves to share with others.

A story from my journal captures the personal significance of the labyrinth in my life. On the last day of my facilitator training, I returned to my church to walk our temporary labyrinth, feeling a palpable energy. As I walked, accompanied by the music of Hildegard of Bingen, I held many in my heart. Everything that happens in the labyrinth can be seen as a metaphor, and as I reached the center, I noticed a gentle movement above me. To my surprise, a “Happy Birthday” balloon floated upward, left over from a friend's party the week

before. Yet in that moment, it felt like a celebration of a new chapter—a recognition of something new being born, not just for me, but for the church and the community we serve.

As I continue this journey, I am filled with gratitude for the unfolding path before me. The labyrinth is more than just a physical space; it is a metaphor for life's journey, with all its twists and turns, challenges, and comforts. It invites us to slow down, listen deeply, and trust that we are being led. As we walk into the future, I am eager to see where this winding way will take us, both as individuals and as a community. With each step, we create more spaciousness for God's love, healing, and presence in our lives. ■

MARY THOMA is a member of All Saints' Episcopal Church in Loveland.

To learn more about the labyrinth ministry at All Saints, please visit allsaintsloveland.org/labyrinth.



Above: Parishioners and guests at the blessing ceremony, Right: A person walks the labyrinth. Photos courtesy Tad Leeper

PERSPECTIVES

Right: Bishop Kym Lucas poses for a photo.

Below: Bishop Kym Lucas blesses a parishoner at her visitation to Holy Comforter Episcopal Church, Broomfield.

Photos courtesy Tim Seibert



Below: The Rev. Richard Munsell baptizes his grandson, Oliver Grant Stewart, at Grace and St. Stephen's Episcopal Church, Colorado Springs. Photo courtesy Candice Hall



Above: Karla Schapansky, Kirsten Manica, Deborah Lowery, and Nancy Jones at the ordination service held at Christ Church, Denver. Photos courtesy Deborah Lowery





Top Left: The Rev. Brian Winter with the decorated Colorado stanchion at General Convention in Louisville, Kentucky.

Top Right: The Rt. Rev. Sean Rowe is elected 28th Presiding Bishop of the Episcopal Church.

Left: The Colorado delegates to General Convention (L to R): Zoe Cole, Lawrence Hitt II, the Rev. Anne Richter, the Rev. Debbie Shew, the Rev. Tory Moir, Br. Scott Michael Pomerenk, Chuck Theobald, Bishop Kym Lucas, Erica Pomerenk, the Rev. Brian Winter, the Rev. Melissa Adzima.

Photos courtesy the Rev. Brian Winter





THE BISHOP & DIOCESE OF
COLORADO

1300 Washington Street
Denver, Colorado 80203

COLORADO
episcopal