

VIRGINIA THEOLOGICAL SEMINARY

FALL 2020



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PHOTO: LOGAN LOVE/LACE '22

The Chapel team processes onto the Grove for the first worship service of the academic year.

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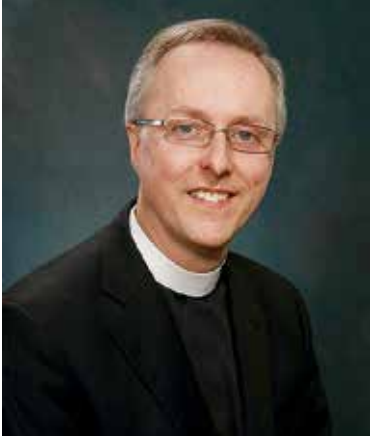
PHOTO: ANICE HOACHLANDER

ON THE COVER

The Annunciation by Allan Rohan Crite. Diptych linoleum cut, hand colored with watercolor and gold leaf, circa 1947, 6.25" x 9". The African American Episcopal Historical Collection (AAEHC) purchased it via auction from Swann Galleries on October 7, 2010. The AAEHC is home to one of the largest collections of liturgical art from artist Allan Rohan Crite (1910–2007).



VIRGINIA THEOLOGICAL
SEMINARY

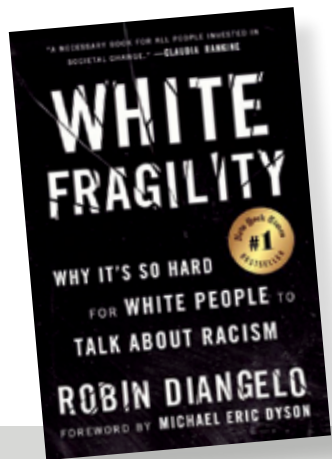


The Time is Now

Everyone should agree with this simple point: the systemic racism that

is the legacy of chattel slavery is itself a trauma and abuse inflicted upon persons of African descent. For a seminary, our reasons for this conviction are grounded in the Gospel. We are a seminary that loves the Lord Jesus; we believe that all people are made in the image of God; we believe that Christ died on the cross for the salvation of all people; we believe that sin is pervasive; and out of these convictions, we arrive at the conclusion that racism is a deep and destructive sin because of the human cost that it so brutally exacts. Regardless of one's political affiliation, on this Christians should all agree.

And the damage of racism can be perpetrated even by people who want desperately not to be racist. One of the most shocking lines in Robin DiAngelo's challenging book, *White Fragility*, is when she writes:



“I believe that white progressives cause the most daily damage to people of color. I define a white progressive as any white person who thinks he or she is not racist, or is less racist, or in the ‘choir,’ or already ‘gets it.’ White progressives can be the most difficult for people of color because, to the degree that we think we have arrived, we will put our energy into making sure that others see us as having arrived.”

For all of us who like to imagine the problem of racism is “out there,” DiAngelo actually claims it is the white progressives who are the hardest crowd for persons of color to handle.

David Brooks, the *New York Times* columnist and conservative, has observed, “The reaction to the Floyd

murder has been, on the whole, a very good news story. I look at the marches, and there was some violence in the beginning, but the violence has gone down now. They were not a black uprising. They were an American uprising.”¹ The Seminary needs to be part of this “uprising” that comes out of the Black Lives Matter movement and is now being embraced more broadly across this society.

“As we prepared for our Bicentennial, the Seminary sensed that this was the time to look carefully at our past. It is a past marked by sin and grace.”

The Seminary is embarking on a serious program of repentance and inclusion. This is a continuation of work that started a long time ago. In 1951, the Board of Trustees admitted the first African American student, John T. Walker (who later became the Bishop of Washington) and in 1953, the Seminary merged with the Bishop Payne Divinity School. A journey was begun which had a long way to go.

There have been many highlights along the way. It was during the tenure of Dean Martha Horne '83 that a Carpenter Grant was obtained, which led to the Office of Multicultural Ministries. Under the Rev. Margaret A. “Marge” McNaughton, D.Min., '82, the Rev. Joseph Constant '03 became the first director of the office. The recruitment of students of color became an institutional priority and programming commemorating the martyrdom of the Rev. Martin Luther King, Jr. started.

In 2009, a formal apology was offered to African American alumni. *No Turning Back* was written by Joseph Constant, and this provocative book captured the agony and pain of being an African American student at VTS. Multicultural sensitivity training was required of all students, all employees, and the Board of Trustees. The directorship of Multicultural Ministries became



a faculty position, with the first holder being the Rev. Donyelle McCray, Ph.D. '06. She designed the highly acclaimed training which was much appreciated. Her successor, the Rev. Joseph Thompson, Ph.D., '18, has worked with the community to create the Seminary Covenant. We are serious about the business of creating a community where all can be affirmed and feel safe, and the Covenant is a strong step in that direction.

As we prepared for our Bicentennial, the Seminary sensed that this was the time to look carefully at our past. It is a past marked by sin and grace. The corporate sin needed some serious attention. Those whose exploited labor was used to build the iconic Aspinwall Hall needed to be acknowledged. We determined that we were not simply going to learn the names of those enslaved persons who were “rented” from Mount Vernon, but that we were going to try and contribute something to their estate for their cruelly exploited labor. This is reparations. As Jesus put it when he commissioned the disciples to go out—“the laborer deserves to be paid” (Luke 10:7). Reparations is fundamentally paying into an estate something (and as it happens in our case to be a very modest something) in acknowledgment that those who worked hard for the Seminary were not rewarded for their labor when Aspinwall Hall was built. Instead, they were ruthlessly exploited.

A plaque will appear in the entryway of Aspinwall Hall. As we find the names, not simply of those who built Aspinwall Hall, but all those who were exploited by the Seminary in the oppressive system of slavery, they will be recognized and honored. They will be remembered. The list of names is growing. You will learn in this issue about Julia Parker, age 19, hired from John Augustine Washington III, for the sum of \$12 for three months’ work as an enslaved person at the Seminary. Just the name and the age make one pause. Just five years younger than my son Luke. I can scarcely imagine what it must feel like to know that you, and your child, are literally someone else’s property. There are other names: there was Milly; there was Sophy. As we continue this hard work, this list will get longer. This work touches the core of what it is to be human. It speaks

Herschel Wade '23, from the Diocese of Maryland.

to the way we treat each other. It invokes in us feelings of empathy, sadness, and anger. Out of it, we should resolve that the future must be different. This is the work the Seminary has been called to do. This is our “uprising.”

This issue captures some of the ways we will do this work. As Addison Academic Center reopens, the space stands ready to do this work. The Center for Anglican Communion Studies, with an interview with Archbishop Magkoba, stands ready to do this work. Our alums—people like Vincent Harris—stand ready to do this work. We also remember those who did this work so well, as the Rev. Harold Cobb '90 and the Rev. J. Barney Hawkins, IV, Ph.D. reflect on the remarkable life of the Rev. Tom Midyette '66, as well as our faculty, past and present—like professors Robert Prichard and Katherine Grieb—who prove why they are so valued in the Church and in the academy.

The future is hopeful. God is in our moment of “uprising.” We take this opportunity to shape the present so that we can anticipate a future that God always intended.

Yours in Christ Jesus,

The Very Rev. Ian S. Markham, Ph.D.
Dean and President

¹ See David Brooks, on the Newshour, transcript found here: www.pbs.org/newshour/show/reasons-for-hope-amid-americas-racial-unrest



While the community is prepared for an academic year that will be different, the semester began as many have in the past (but now with an increased element of safety): picnics, bike rides, and the first service of the year, all on the campus grove.

1 Seminary children 2 The Commonwealth Brass quintet with Marty Wheeler Burnett, D.Min. on the far left 3 The Rev. Mark Jefferson, Ph.D., assistant professor of homiletics 4 L-R: Sarah Watts '21, Lauren Banks Killelea '21 and her children, and Katie Beaver '21 5 Tami Shepherd, technical services and acquisitions technician at Bishop Payne Library 6 Andrew Jaw and MJ Layton '22 7 Billy Adams '22



ROAF: Why did you decide to remain in the Episcopal Church? Clearly, you could have joined another denomination at any point. Why are you still an Episcopalian?

HARRIS: I guess I'm a creature of habit. That's all I've known. That's all I've been. If I were to put it in a theological frame, I love the Lord and I thrive in the Episcopal Church. That's the quick and dirty response to your question.

ROAF: Is there anything specific about the tenets of our Anglican identity that still speak to you today?

HARRIS: The Episcopal Church, as I have experienced it, is not going to tell you what to think, how to think, and there's an emphasis on intellectual acuity and on mission. That's the attraction to it. You're not put into—at least I've never felt that I've ever been put into—a box. I could explore not only aspects of other denominations, but also aspects of other faiths. But the key is always to be solidly grounded in your particular expression of the Christian faith.

VTS SPOTLIGHT:

FATHER VINCENT HARRIS '79

A retired rector from St. George's Episcopal Church in Washington, D.C., the Rev. Vincent Powell Harris '79, is a second-generation Episcopal priest. The son of a graduate from the Bishop Payne Divinity School, Harris returned to Virginia Theological Seminary six years after his graduation as an adjunct faculty member, eventually becoming a member of both the Board of Trustees and the Alumni Association Executive Committee (AAEC). During his time at VTS, he was a mentor for many students, including the Rt. Rev. Phoebe A. Roaf '08, the bishop of West Tennessee and the vice-chair of the VTS Board of Trustees.

ROAF: How can we retain more of our young folks, especially those of us who are of African descent and have this long history, multi-generation, of being at the table in the Church?

HARRIS: The most important thing is being authentic; entertaining the questions that young people ask, rather than saying to them, "Here, swallow this." The young people of today are asking different questions than the questions that I asked when I was young.

I remember when I was at St. George's Episcopal Church, Washington, D.C., one of the things that I did was to have younger members of the congregation talk about how their work lives connected with their faith. It caused people to think about the connection between what they do on Sunday and what they do the rest of the week.

It's the way you carry yourself. People will want to know, "Why do you do the things that you do? How do you carry yourself in such a way? Why do you have the sense of calm, of peace even in the midst of a crisis?" It's like saying, "Well, I'm catching hell, but I'm at peace," making that kind of connection.

“I wanted to pass on what I had received to those who were coming after me, and I wanted to make sure that all of the seminarians were people who wanted to learn and who were open to learn and wanted to expand themselves in the knowledge of the Church, and also people who really wanted to make a difference.”

— Father Vincent Harris '79

ROAF: I think about all of the folks who came through St. George's, either as a member that you helped sponsor going to seminary, or that you helped form in seminary, like the Rt. Rev. Rob Wright '98 and '13 (H), the Rev. Allen Robinson '95, the Rev. Canon Rose Duncan '05, D.Min. '13, the Rev. Allison St. Louis '00, myself, and many, many others. As you reflect on that aspect of your vocation, what was it that you were looking for in people that gave you a sense that they truly had a call to ordained ministry?

HARRIS: Actually, there were three things I looked for. The three Cs: Christ-centered, committed, and competent. A love of Jesus, committed to the Christian faith, and competence; people who would make a difference. If you talk about nurturing, I was nurtured in the faith by my father, my mother, and the priest who sent me off to seminary, Father Parker. I did my field work at St. George's under the Rev. Richard Cornish Martin '61, a graduate of VTS, because of his ability to share his knowledge. He was a great liturgist.

I wanted to pass on what I had received to those who were coming after me, and I wanted to make sure that all of the seminarians were people who wanted to learn and who were open to learn and wanted to expand themselves in the knowledge of the Church, and also people who really wanted to make a difference. Look at you. You're making a difference. And Rob, Rose, Allison, and Allen.

ROAF: I would hazard a guess that not all seminarians who were at VTS when I was there, had the sort of experience with their field supervisor that I had with you. People have different leadership styles, and I guess our leadership style and our approach in part comes from our personal experiences.

HARRIS: I guess growing up in a rectory probably had a lot to do with that.

ROAF: You saw the other side of the Church even as a boy.

HARRIS: Right. I should have known better. I should have known what I was getting into. Growing up, I never wanted to become a priest.

ROAF: You didn't?

HARRIS: No. People would say to me, “you're gonna be just like your father.” I said No. I was trying to get as far away from being a priest as I could and look what happened. I finally gave in and gave up.

My father, the Rev. Toussaint Vincent Harris, was the second person in my family to go to Bishop Payne Divinity School. My aunt, Lula Harris Robinson, was the first graduate in our family. She graduated in 1946, and my father graduated in 1947.

ROAF: That was decades before the ordination of women. Did she just want to have theological training? Do you know enough about her to know what drew her to do that?

HARRIS: I don't know if they called it that at the time, but she got a Master's in Christian Education. She married Prezell Robinson, who was the president of St. Augustine's College. She taught at St. Augustine's. Prezell got an honorary degree from VTS back in the 1980s. I just wanted to make sure that I mentioned her because people always talk about my dad. My aunt, Lula Harris Robinson, was the first graduate in the family who went to Bishop Payne.

ROAF: Wow, that is wonderful.

HARRIS: We do not choose God. God chooses us. I never regretted answering the call, saying yes to that choice, so I try to pass that on. One of the things I tried to do was to pass that on to the seminarians that came through St. George's. I was looking for people who had the mettle.

ROAF: I wonder, as you reflect back on your years of observing your father and his generation of priests, and then yourself and now this current generation of priests who are still laboring in the vineyard, about your thoughts about the Episcopal Church and how she has handled those of us of a darker hue.

HARRIS: In the Episcopal Church and its relationship to African Americans, a lot of that relationship has been based on paternalism. *We know what's best for you.*

I don't know if you remember this, but maybe you do. There was a conference in Sewanee in 1883. It was called together to discuss "the Negro problem," but there were no Negroes there. There has always been this ambiguity within the Church when it comes to African Americans. One of the things they wanted to do at the conference was set up a separate missionary jurisdiction in order to increase the number of African Americans in the Episcopal Church because there was a mass exodus after the Civil War.

People don't talk about that. Many African Americans left the Episcopal Church after the Civil War because they didn't want to experience this paternalism anymore, or what you might call ecclesiastical slavery, so they left. The Sewanee conference was the response of the leading Southern clergy and lay people in addressing this issue.

Some of that is beginning to dissipate, but I think the ambiguity still exists. The question is, "whose responsibility is it to resolve that ambiguity?" It's not as if African Americans are going to take over the Church. The only thing that African Americans are saying is, "we're part of the body of Christ and we want to be included based on our abilities, our skills, and our faith."

ROAF: Do you know why there are more Black bishops than cardinal rectors? The bishop comes once a year and you have a beautiful party and it's wonderful. On the other hand, the person who's in the trenches with you week in and week out, month in and month out, as your pastor—and if we're talking about the Episcopal Church and an endowed congregation—overseeing your money. That's a different situation.

HARRIS: Yes. Well, think about this: if you have a Black rector, let's say in a white parish, that Black rector cannot call another Black assistant. I told a priest friend of mine, "When you've got three Black priests on the staff of a large white church, get ready, because Jesus is coming."



Members of the Class of 1946 at Bishop Payne Divinity School, Petersburg, VA; L-R: Matilda Syrette, Iris King, and Lula Harris.



The Rev. Vincent Harris '79 and the Rev. Solomon Jacobs, BPDS '48, at the 1993 Black Alumni Conference.

ROAF: What about the fact that white rectors have chosen white associates for generations and that's never been questioned?

HARRIS: That's my point. That is my point.

ROAF: Well, I think it's very interesting that two of the persons that you have been a mentor to, Rob Wright and me, are now bishops of Sewanee, the institution that you just mentioned.

HARRIS: Right! You're a presence there.

ROAF: Here we are in the summer of 2020 and we've got three major pandemics; we have the coronavirus, the pandemic of the realization of systemic racism in the United States, and the third is the ecological crisis that we're facing. If you think in particular about these pandemics and the role of the Episcopal Church, is there room for us to be involved in the conversation about how we can resolve these issues and really come together as human beings, as the human family?

HARRIS: The Church finds itself in a continuing conundrum that the Church has always found itself, particularly in the last half of the 20th century and then the first part of this century. What are we called to do? How do you move from abstract discussions to concrete action? Too often, we in the Episcopal Church want to stay in our little silo, without connecting with other people of faith to address some of these issues. That's an ongoing process, much more than "I love you, you love me." That will not occur on a macro level. It's got to occur on the micro level.

ROAF: In other words, when is the last time any of us have had a person of a different race or ethnicity or culture to our home to break bread at our table?

HARRIS: I hear that, Phoebe, but we break bread around the altar.

ROAF: We do, but for many of our Episcopal congregations, they're 99% one race. There's very little diversity.

HARRIS: Why is that? Why is it that when we talk about integration it's always Black folk going to white congregations, but we never talk about the reverse? Why is that? Most Black congregations were created in the first place—

ROAF: — because they couldn't attend white Episcopal churches.

HARRIS: Exactly, and so now we come to the point where the many Black congregations, the disparate congregations, as well as those congregations which have transitioned from white to Black, many of them are struggling.

In some instances it is benign neglect. *I'm not going to close the church, but I'll just let them die. Or, I will close them and I'll send the Black folk over to the white church, where they don't want Black folk in the first place, which is why there was this Black church.* What happens when that occurs is that many Black folk leave the Episcopal Church. They don't end up going—

ROAF:— to a white Episcopal Church; they go to a different denomination.

HARRIS: If we talk about reconciliation or reconciliation/integration, why is it that when neighborhoods gentrify, the whites don't go to the Black churches in the neighborhood, which would then repopulate that church? The Black church, I think would be welcoming. I've not gone to a Black church yet that said, "We don't want white folk here." There's not a sign up for it. The wafer is the same. The wine is the same, the vestments, so forth and so on, so what is the difference? Many Black churches now have white priests in charge of Black congregations, but the reverse is not true.

ROAF: There are not many white congregations with a person of color as their rector.

HARRIS: That's a conundrum. That's above my pay grade. That's in your ballpark, how to deal with these issues. I do think that we need to be honest and talk about them. I'm all for reconciliation, but isn't rectification before reconciliation, isn't that the conversation that we need to have? How do we rectify this?

ROAF: This is really difficult stuff. There's something about the horrific murder of George Floyd that has just cracked something open. People around the world are saying enough is enough. This is just so wrong. What gives me hope is seeing people protesting, not only in the United States, but around the world. It's all races, all people coming together to say we may not know what to do, but we know that this current situation is just wrong.

HARRIS: It's strange that we in the Church are afraid to have those kinds of honest conversations. What kind of witness is that to the world? My hope is a concrete hope. I look at you, I look at Rob, I look at Rose, Allison, and the seminarians that have come through. I look at lay people and the ministries that they have, and that's what gives me hope. From when I started to see all of the bishops of color, to see a presiding bishop of color that's what gives me hope, but I also wonder: It's historical — but will it be transformative?

ROAF: That's the \$64,000 question.

HARRIS: My prayer is and my hope is that it will be transformative, but we'll just have to wait and see. I've gotten to the point where I have lived longer than I've got left. I think it's incumbent upon all of us to move the ball forward and to create the kind of community within the Church that is a powerful witness to the world that this is how people can occupy the same space and achieve the same end, but no one has to say, "I can't breathe."

“From when I started to see all of the bishops of color, to see a presiding bishop of color that's what gives me hope, but I also wonder: It's historical — but will it be transformative?”

— Father Vincent Harris '79



Seminary application photo for Vincent Harris.

An Update on the Seminary's Reparations Research

By *The Rev. Joseph D. Thompson Jr., Ph.D. '18*
Director of Multicultural Ministries and
Assistant Professor of Race and Ethnicity Studies

As part of the Seminary's reparations program, a group of dedicated researchers is trying to unearth as much information as possible about the African Americans who worked at VTS during slavery and afterwards. This is a complex project that has been ably shepherded by Seminary archivist Christopher Pote and by the processing archivist for the African American Episcopal Historical Collection, Ebonee Davis.

It is fascinating to see the detective work involved in identifying the individuals and fleshing out the stories of their lives. One could say that the investigation is bidirectional, with some research focused on discovering the names of enslaved persons who worked at VTS and then trying to move forward in time to figure out who their descendants are, while other research works backwards in time by gathering information from African American families still in the area who are certain that they have ancestors who worked at the Seminary.

To date, the names of three enslaved persons who worked at VTS have been found, and there are other possible names being explored. One interesting development is that researchers are finding the names of free African Americans who worked at the Seminary during slavery.

I asked two of our researchers, Elizabeth Drembus and

Char McCargo Bah, to provide an overview of their work for this issue of *Virginia Theological Seminary Magazine*. The following are excerpts of their reports:

Elizabeth B. Drembus

Elizabeth B. Drembus is a professional genealogist for a lineage society and serves on the vestry for St. Aidan's Episcopal Church, Alexandria.

My task is to research the antebellum period and discover the names of enslaved people who labored at VTS. For a genealogist familiar with this time period and with African American research, the challenge is always what records are available. My research has concentrated on looking at several VTS faculty members from 1840 through 1870, as well as searching for documentation of enslaved labor at VTS.

Unfortunately for the project, no ledgers or account books have been found. These records in theory would list names of laborers, their enslavers, and any financial transactions. Searching alternate sources, we found clues in newspaper advertisements and a local history book which led to archival research at the library at George Washington's Mount Vernon.

For example, in 1856, C.H. Bland placed an advertisement in the *Alexandria Gazette* newspaper to hire servants to work at VTS. On that same

day, John Augustine Washington III, great-nephew of George Washington and owner of the Mount Vernon Estate at that time, advertised hiring out enslaved laborers. Scott Casper's book *Sarah Johnson's Mount Vernon* revealed the connection between enslaved labor at the Mount Vernon Estate and VTS.

According to Casper, three young women were hired out by J.A. Washington to the Seminary—Julia Parker, Milly, and Sophy.

Julia Parker—According to Mary Thompson, historian at Mount Vernon, Julia was mentioned in J.A. Washington's 1842 list of slaves. Her birthdate is given as April 18, 1823. According to Washington's diary, Julia was hired out in 1844 for 3-month's work at the Seminary, earning \$12 for her enslaver.¹ Soon after, Julia was sold to an unnamed judge in Jefferson County, VA (now WV).

Milly—Milly was born circa 1839 and was between 16 and 18 years old when she was hired out to VTS. According to the letter of instructions J.A. Washington gave to his wife, she was "to deliver Milly at the Seminary to Mr. Bland."

Sophy—Further information about Sophy has not yet been found.

SERVANTS WANTED IMMEDIATELY, for the Theological Seminary, near Alexandria.

A COLORED WOMAN who is a good cook, to cook for 50 in family.

A HOUSEMAID, capable of waiting.

A COLORED MAN to attend the chambers of the Students.

Two good **WAITERS.** Good references will be required. For further information, apply to **Mr. JAMES ENTWISLE, Jr.,** Apothecary, King street, or to **C. H. BLAND,** dec 20—eo3t **Theological Seminary.**

1856 Slave ad placed in the Alexandria Gazette by Charles H. Bland for Virginia Theological Seminary.

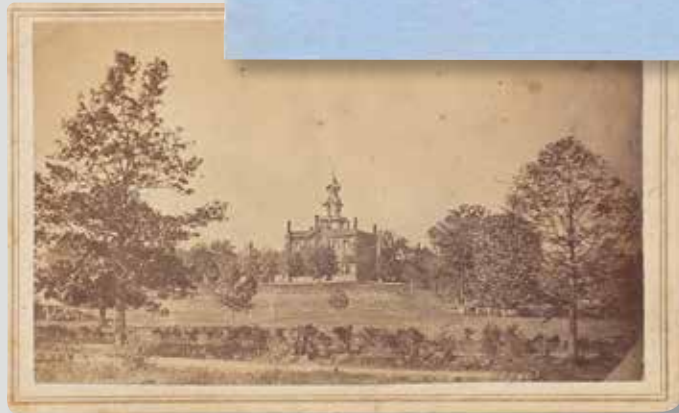
Char McCargo Bah

Char McCargo Bah is a freelance writer, author, and professional genealogist. She is a Living Legend of Alexandria, VA and the CEO of FindingThingsForU, L.L.C.

The freed people of color [who worked at VTS] prior to 1865 were skilled craftsmen. For example, Wallace Wanzer was a free person of color living in Falls Church around the Seminary prior to the Civil War. He was a skilled blacksmith and wheelwright. He provided his services to VTS. For several generations, Wallace’s descendants found employment with VTS well into the 20th century.

Another freed person of color was David Middleton, who was born in 1792 and emancipated in 1826. David worked for a bricking company that had a contract with VTS. In 1850, David died at work. It was reported that he died by being crushed to death. His son David, Jr. went into the same profession and worked for a contractor at VTS.

Many of the free people of color who were identified as employees of the contractors who worked at VTS were born in Alexandria, Fairfax or the Washington, DC area. Some of these free people were emancipated from George Washington’s plantation in the early 1800s. On the other hand, the enslaved people who migrated to the



Above right: Letter from John Augustine Washington III of Mount Vernon to his wife, Eleanor Love Seldon Washington, detailing instructions for the drop off of enslaved woman, “Milly,” at Virginia Theological Seminary. In 1858, Charles H. Bland facilitated the loan of Milly from Washington to the Seminary for \$90. Letter from John Augustine Washington III, 29 Dec 1858, Collection Document is within, Special Collections, Fred W. Smith National Library for the Study of George Washington.

Above: The Seminary Campus in the late 1800s.

VTS area came from different areas in Virginia and Maryland. Many of those people came to Alexandria and Falls Church during the Civil War.

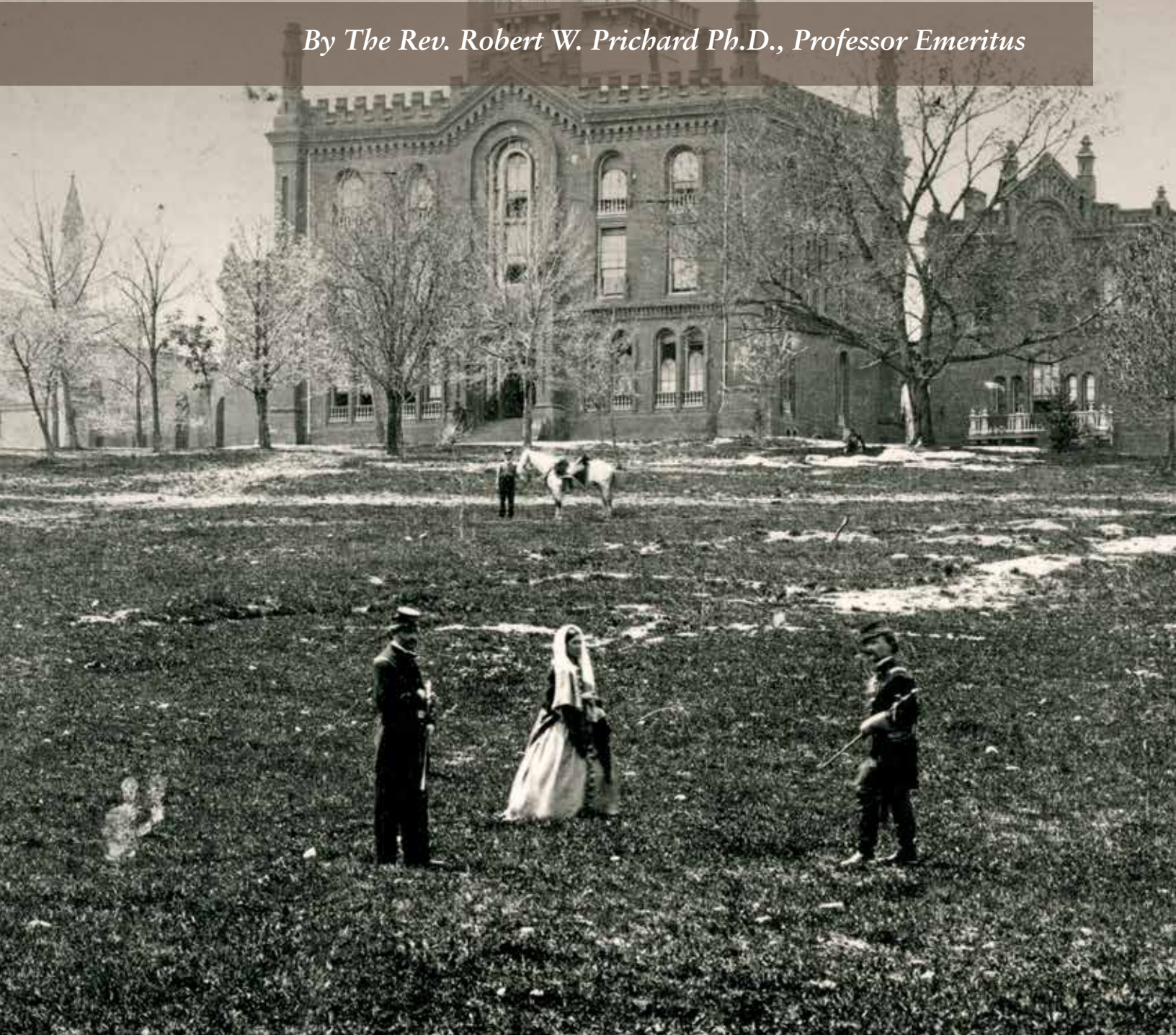
Middleton, Nelson, Nickens, Parker, Peters, Randell, Roy, Simms, Strange, Terrell, Thomas, Vowell/Vowel/Vowells, Wanzer, and Williams.

So far, close to two dozen African American families have been identified as descendants of people who worked at VTS in the 19th and 20th centuries. The surnames of these descendants’ families are Adams, Carpenter, Casey, Dickenson/Dixon, Franklin, Hall, McKnight, Medella/Madella,

¹ Casper, Sarah Johnson’s Mount Vernon, p 43; footnote ref letter from JAW to Mrs. EL Selden, 26 Nov 1844, Mount Vernon Archives; JAW Diaries 1, 5, January 1844.

LIBERIANS *at* VTS

By The Rev. Robert W. Prichard Ph.D., Professor Emeritus





Most Virginia Theological Seminary students and alumni know that the Rt. Rev. John Thomas Walker (VTS 1954), later Bishop of Washington, was the first African American student to attend VTS. Many are not aware, however, that at least three African students studied at VTS a century before John Walker's arrival on the campus as a junior in the fall of 1951.

By the 1840s, the Seminary had already established a reputation for interest in foreign mission. Six students from the 1830s served outside of the United States, including Dr. John Hill (VTS 1830), who would be part of the first foreign mission team supported by the Domestic and Foreign Mission Society of the Protestant Episcopal Church. Eleven more alumni entered the foreign mission field from the classes of the 1840s, and 14 from the 1850s. Hill and his wife Frances went to Greece.¹ The remaining students from the classes of the 1830s, 40s and 50s were roughly divided between those who went to Africa and those who went to Asia.²

The Rev. John Payne (VTS 1836), like a majority of the Africa-bound VTS alumni, went to Liberia. The ministry there had two foci. One was to the Cape Palmas region and included outreach to the indigenous people who predated the arrival of colonists from the United States. Payne was particularly interested in the ministry to the indigenous people. By the 1840s, he and others in the Cape Palmas area were making progress in raising up indigenous candidates for the ordained ministry from among the Grebo people. The progress in that ministry may have been one of the reasons that the House of Bishops elected Payne in 1850 to become "the Missionary Bishop of Cape Palmas and Parts Adjacent."³

The second focus was more exclusively upon ministry to African American expatriates, particularly in Monrovia. Alexander Crummell (1819-98) was an important spokesman for this approach from the time of his arrival in 1853. Settling in Monrovia, he objected to the leadership of Payne, argued that an African American missionary such as himself would be better equipped for leadership among African American colonists, and favored separating the Monrovia and Cape Palmas efforts into separate jurisdictions.⁴

Even before Payne returned to America for consecration as a bishop in 1851, he had begun sending Liberian students to Virginia. There would be at least three such students. Musu finished his studies in 1849. Ku Sia (or Siah) began his studies after Musu's departure and prior to July 1851.

Bidi (or Bede) Wah (1832-97) began his studies in July 1851. Ku Sia and Bidi [Bede] Wah may have returned to Liberia together in January of 1852 or 1853.⁵

All three Liberians adopted Americanized names. Musu was also called John Minor; Ku Sia, Clement F. Jones; and Bidi [Bede] Wah, G. T. Bedell. The surnames were chosen in honor of Episcopal clergy. The name that Musu took was that of the father of Launcelot B. Minor (VTS, 1836) one of the early VTS alumni to serve in Liberia. Gregory T. Bedell was the name of an 1840 graduate, who would later become Bishop of Ohio. He was a supporter of Liberian missions.⁶ Clement F. Jones, who was not a VTS graduate, was a professor at Washington College and also a supporter of foreign mission. The practice of renaming people after clergy who were important in one's faith development was not unknown in the United States at the same time. The Rt. Rev. John P.K. Henshaw of Rhode Island, for example, added the name "Kewley" to his name in acknowledgment of the Episcopal clergyman who had baptized him.

The experience of the Liberians at Virginia Theological Seminary would have been impossible, had it not been for James May (faculty 1842–61), professor of ecclesiastical history and pulpit eloquence, and his wife Ellen Stuart Bowman May. A native of Pennsylvania, he was the only one of the three primary members of the faculty of the 1840s and 50s not to have enslaved persons in his household. (The 1850 census showed that there was one enslaved person in the household of William Sparrow and three in the household of Joseph Packard.⁷) When the Civil War broke out, May would be the only faculty member to move to Union territory. He settled in Philadelphia, where he would teach in the newly founded Philadelphia Divinity School. He also was the probable author of an anonymous tract critical of presiding bishop the Most Rev. John Henry Hopkins' published defense of slavery as a Biblical institution.⁸

Alexander Shiras *Life and Letters of the Rev. James May* provide some glimpses of the life of the Liberian students at Virginia Seminary. Shiras quoted letters from James and Ellen May about the departure of Musu, and about the meeting of Bidi Wah and Ku Sia at the May house. He explained that the two, who were both Grebo-speaking and were distant cousins, were delighted to find one another in a strange land.⁹

When Bishop Payne brought Musu, the first of the three Liberian students to study in Alexandria, there was some debate on campus about where he was to be housed. According to Shiras, Professor May and his wife Ellen Stuart Bowman May "threw open their own home to him, boarded and clothed him without any thought of compensation." May provided instruction for him, but he was not the only one to do so. Shiras noted that May drew upon the "the aid of some among the [American] students." Shiras did not provide the names for the students or their dioceses of origin, but if the campus debate about slavery in the 1856–57 academic year was any indication, the student volunteers were from the North.¹⁰

Shiras, at least, understood the program of study to be successful, claiming that May and the student volunteers "affectionately and considerately trained [Musu] for his work." After Musu finished his studies, the Mays provided the same hospitality for Ku Sia and Bidi Wah.

Musu and Ku Sia were both ordained as deacons in Liberia on Easter Sunday of 1854; they were the first Liberians ordained to serve in the Episcopal Mission. Both of them served the church over a number of years.¹¹ The third student, Bidi [Bede] Wah (1832–97), was the son of Prince Will (d. 1848) of the Half Cavalla region. Bidi Wah returned to Liberia and initially worked as a lay employee of the Episcopal Mission. He soon developed a career in local politics in Rocktown.¹²

The Liberian students were not in residence for three years, but that was common prior to the 1920s, when theological seminaries adopted more uniform educational standards. Students studied for as long as their bishops thought necessary to prepare them for the ministry that lay ahead. The alumni list that VTS maintains for the 19th century does not distinguish between those American students who were in residence for three years and those who were on campus for shorter periods of time.

When the absence of the three Liberians from the list of alumni was called to the attention of the Board of Trustees in 2010, the Board adopted the following resolution: "In recognition for their residence at Virginia Theological Seminary and their study with Professor James May, the Board of Trustees make Musu (John Minor) a member of the class of 1849 and Ku Sia (Clement F. Jones) and Bidi Wah (G. T. Bedell) members of the class of 1851."¹³



From left to right:
The Rev. John Payne (VTS 1836),
Dr. John Hill (VTS 1830).

Above: Liberia flag.

¹ Greece had secured independence from the Ottoman Empire in 1830 and was seeking to rebuild Christian institutions. The Hills would have a rich ministry there in education.

² Fourteen went to Africa—the most popular destination prior to 1855—and sixteen to Asia. For a list of VTS graduates who served overseas see “Graduates of Virginia Theological Seminary who served as missionaries in foreign fields” in John E. Booty’s, *Mission and Ministry: A History of the Virginia Theological Seminary* (Harrisburg: Morehouse Publishing, 1995), 380-85.

³ *Journal of the Proceedings of the Bishops, Clergy, and Laity of the Protestant Episcopal Church in the United States of America, Assembled in a General Convention . . . 1850* (Philadelphia: King & Baird, 1851), 149.

⁴ Wilson Jeremiah Moses, *Alexander Crummell: A Study of Civilization and Discontent* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1989), 89-118.

⁵ Sources disagree on the date of departure. Anna M. Steele Scott’s, *Day Dawn in Africa; or, Progress of the Prot. Epis. Mission at Cape Palmas, West Africa* (New York, Protestant Episcopal Society for the Promotion of Evangelical Knowledge, 1858), 34, 40, 113, 174, and 294 refers to the Liberians at several points in her narrative and suggests that Ku Sia[h] and Bidi [Bede] Wah left the seminary together in January of 1852. D. Elwood Dunn, Amos J. Beyan, and Carl Patrick Burrowes, *Historical Dictionary of Liberia*, 2nd ed. (Lanham, Maryland: the Scarecrow Press, 2001), 36, however, suggest that Bidi [Bede] Wah was in residence at VTS during the 1852-53 academic year, which would imply a different departure date or a return to VTS for further study.

⁶ See *The African Repository* 63 (April 1877):45 for Bedell’s election to the board of the American Colonization Society, the chief organization in the United States supporting resettlement of formerly enslaved persons in Liberia.

⁷ The Generations Network, Inc., “1850 U.S. Census-Slave Schedules,” www.ancestry.com, accessed May 21, 2010.

⁸ Hopkins, who was bishop of Vermont, argued in his *Letter from the Right Rev. John H. Hopkins, D.D., L.L.D. Bishop of Vermont on the Bible View of Slavery* that the institution of slavery was accepted in the Bible. Alexander Shiras *Life and Letters of the Rev. James May* identified May as the author of the anonymous pamphlet.

⁹ Alexander Shiras, *Life and Letters of the Rev. James May* (Philadelphia: Protestant Episcopal Book Society, 1865), 70-72.

¹⁰ Northerners were numerous on campus and at times constituted a majority of the student body. For details on the 1856-57 debates see Robert W. Prichard and Julia E. Randle’s, *Hail! Holy Hill!: A Pictorial History of the Virginia Theological Seminary* (Brainerd, MN: RiverPlace Communication Arts for the Virginia Theological Seminary, 2012), 48-52.

¹¹ According to Dunn, Beyan, and Burrowes, *Historical Dictionary of Liberia* both men were later deposed. They provide a date for only one of the two depositions—1874. The date suggests two possibilities: either a dispute with the changing leadership of the mission or involvement in a church division. Short-term bishop John Gottlieb Auer (1872-73) was followed by Charles Clifton Penick in 1874. If they did not quarrel with either bishop, the two men could have been involved in a secession related to that of the Reformed Episcopal Church in the United States (1873).

¹² Dunn, Beyan, and Burrowes, *Historical Dictionary of Liberia*, 36-37.

¹³ Virginia Theological Seminary, “Board of Trustees Minutes,” November 2010.

THE UNION OF BLACK EPISCOPALIANS MOVES TO VTS

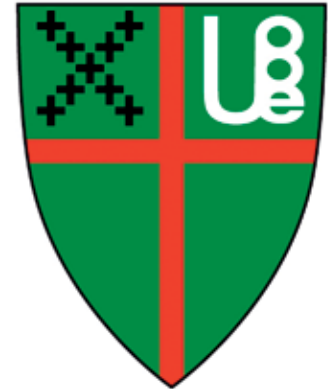
Earlier this year, Virginia Theological Seminary proudly welcomed the Union of Black Episcopalians (UBE) to the VTS campus.

“Our relationship with the UBE goes back to the 1960s when the organization was formed,” said Dean Markham. “We are honored and humbled that our campus is their new home.”

UBE is a confederation of more than 42 chapters and interest groups throughout the continental

United States and the Caribbean. UBE also has members in Canada, Africa and Latin America.

Organized in 1968 as the Union of Black Clergy and Laity, the UBE is the proud inheritor of the work of Absalom Jones, James Holly, Henry Delaney, John Walker, Tollie Caution, Charles Lawrence, Deborah Harmon Hines, and countless others, all dedicated to the ministry of Black people in the Episcopal Church. The name was changed to the Union of Black Episcopalians in 1971.



For more information, please visit www.ube.org.



VTS WELCOMES THE REV. ADAM BOND AS THE MARTHA J. HORNE VISITING PROFESSOR

Virginia Theological Seminary welcomes the Rev. Adam L. Bond, Ph.D. as the Martha J. Horne Visiting Professor for the Fall 2020 semester. Currently serving as American Baptist Liaison at Virginia Union University (VUU) in Richmond, VA. He will teach the course “The Black Church in America,” preach, and give several presentations on the VTS campus. “I am grateful for the opportunity to serve in this position,” Bond said. “This position is a highlight in my career.”

An ordained minister in the American Baptist Churches USA (ABCUSA), Bond received his Ph.D. from Marquette University in Milwaukee, WI, a Master of Arts degree in Theology from Marquette, and a Master of Divinity degree from the Samuel DeWitt Proctor School of Theology at Virginia Union University. Bond has published *The Imposing Preacher: Samuel DeWitt Proctor and*

Black Public Faith (Fortress Press, 2013) and *I've Been Called: Now What?* (Judson Press, 2012), and served as co-editor of *Church on Purpose: Reinventing Discipleship, Community, and Justice* (Judson Press, 2015). At present, he is writing *Enduring Tensions: Black Baptist Preachers and the Salvation of America* (Mercer University Press).

Established in May 2007, the Martha J. Horne Visiting Professorship Fund honors the distinguished service of the Very Rev. Martha J. Horne '83, 13th dean and president of Virginia Seminary. The purpose of the fund is to increase the international, racial, ethnic, or cultural diversity of the Seminary community and its academic curriculum by providing funds for a visiting professor who will teach at least one course for a full semester while in residence at the Seminary.

The Renovation of the Addison Academic Center

By *The Rev. J. Barney Hawkins IV, Ph.D.*
with *Shelagh Casey Brown, Christopher Pote and Curtis Prather*

The Addison Academic Center was dedicated on April 21, 1994. The Seminary's Dean and President was the Very Rev. Martha J. Horne '83. The bishop of Virginia and the chair of the Board of Trustees was the Rt. Rev. Peter James Lee '67, D.D. '84 (H). Edmund B. Addison (1883–1922) is honored in the naming of the academic center. He was the grandson of the Rev. Walter Delaney Addison and an executive officer in the Virginia Carolina Chemical Company. He was also a member of St. James' Episcopal Church in Richmond, VA.

With the completion of the Addison Academic Center, classes were no longer held in Aspinwall Hall. It was a new era with a modern "hub" for shaping the "life of the mind" for leadership in The Episcopal Church and the Anglican Communion.

The naming of rooms in the Addison Academic Center provided the opportunity for VTS to give thanks for the likes of former dean the Very Rev. Richard Reid (lecture hall, Room 101); John Legare O'Hare (Room 103); and Marie Cartinhour Woods (lecture hall, Room 201).

Since 1994, the Lettie Pate Evans Room on the lower level became a gathering place for Convocation activities and for large academic lectures. In 2010 when the 1881 Chapel was destroyed by fire, the Lettie Pate Evans Room became the interim chapel with the installation of the Gibson Windows. The Gibson Windows were given by Mrs. Robert F. Gibson in memory of the 10th bishop

of Virginia, the Rt. Rev. Robert F. Gibson '42, D.D. '48 (H), to celebrate VTS missionaries in Africa, North America, Mexico, Central America and Japan. The windows have been relocated to the second floor of the Addison atrium.

The 2020 renovation of Addison is a reminder that buildings need updating and made current "fit for purpose." Teaching has changed dramatically over the last 30 years. The lecture halls became somewhat antiquated as theological formation required more collaborative, conversational learning. The 1994 Addison was not prepared for 2020 technology. There was no Flamingo (our campus coffee shop) in the first incarnation of Addison. Online education and the worldwide internet were on the distant horizon when Addison was envisioned in the early 1990s. Now, a sleek modern mezzanine on the lower level is home to Lifelong Learning with its far-flung global enterprise (which has only increased with COVID-19).

A new feature of the 2020 Addison Academic Center will be a digital, interactive wall on the lower level. This state-of-the-art wall celebrates our Bicentennial (2023) and is called *A Seminary's Saints and Stories*. Please see Vice President Linda L. Dienno's article on page 22 for more about this.

The plaque honoring faculty who have retired from VTS, which was in the 1994 Addison, will be incorporated in the 2020 Addison. This plaque will be updated and installed in a place of



BICENTENNIAL CAMPAIGN

honor—to remind us of the teaching which is at the heart of formation for ministry and mission.

The highlight of the Addison Academic Center will likely be the six stained glass windows which will hang in the rotunda of Addison. These windows were given by the Class of 2004. Originally, these windows were installed on the north and south walls of the 1881 Immanuel Chapel. Thankfully, the windows survived the 2010 chapel fire and were carefully restored. The windows celebrated Old Testament figures. There are some wonderful stories about these very significant windows. Let us share a few:

The Hagar Window (page 19) was originally destined to be the Sarah Window. The Rev. Canon Paula E. Clark spoke up about the importance of Hagar and the racial and power dynamics that are part of the Sarah/Hagar narrative. The class had a significant theological discussion and decided to go with Hagar.

The David Window honors King David. Also, and perhaps not incidentally, there were four Davids in the Class of 2004!

The Deborah Window (at right) was imagined initially with a more stereotypical image with helmet and only a bit of red hair. The class remembered that the Rev. Judy Fentress-Williams, Ph.D. spoke of Deborah's long, flowing hair. So, they went with such an image.

It seems quite fitting that we celebrate these windows anew in the renovated Addison Academic Center. The members of the Class of 2004 are listed below. We give thanks for their ministries and for the ways they have made us all stronger in faith and service.

This issue of the *Virginia Theological Seminary Magazine* focuses on race at VTS. The issue itself is a Hager issue. We rejoice that the Class of 2004 is still teaching us well.



MEMBERS OF THE CLASS OF 2004

The Rev. Jeffrey Adams
The Rev. Debra Andrew-MacOnaughey
The Ven. Zacchaeus O. Asun
The Rev. Mariann C. Babnis
The Rev. Elizabeth Bagioni
John L. Bartlett
The Rev. Vanessa Bickle
The Rev. Canon Joseph M. Browne III
The Rev. Leslie Chadwick
The Rev. Canon Paula E. Clark
The Rev. Susan Q. Claytor
The Rev. Annie Fredericks Cooper, D.Min. '10
The Rev. David P. Culbertson
The Rev. Mary H. T. Davisson
Barbara D. Day, D.Min. '12, Ph.D.
The Rev. John G. Earls
M. Michelle Fincher
The Rt. Rev. Jeff W. Fisher
The Rev. Mark S. Forbes
The Rev. David Frazelle
Dontie S. Fuller
The Rev. Canon Patricia M. Grace
The Rev. Jacquelyn T. Hardman

The Rev. Rebekah Bokros Hatch
The Rev. Sarah F. Hurlbert
The Rev. Jerald W. Hycle
The Rev. Arthur Ingalls
The Rev. Virginia B. Inman
The Rev. Dr. Anne-Marie Jeffery
The Rev. Evans E. Kachiwanda
The Rev. Kate E. Kelderman
The Rev. Susan J. Kennard
The Rev. Jennifer S. Kimball
The Rev. Barbara H. Kirk-Norris
The Rev. John P. Leach
The Rev. Harold J. Lockett, D.Min.
The Rev. Anne Coghill MacNabb
The Rev. Karin MacPhail
The Rev. Carla B. McCook
The Ven. Jennifer Gaines McKenzie
The Rev. Todd L. Miller
The Rev. Dr. John G. Morris III
Mrs. Karen M. Moseley
The Rev. Laureen H. Moyer
The Rev. Julie B. Murdoch
The Rev. Francis Mwansa

The Rev. Rachel A. Nyback, D.Min. '15
Godson Nzeadu
The Rt. Rev. George M. Okoth, D.D. '17 (H)
The Rev. Paul A. Price
The Rev. Thomas C. Pumphrey
The Rev. Wm. Blake Rider
The Rev. Douglas F. Scharf
The Rev. William T. Scott, Jr.
The Rev. Kevin B. Seaver
The Rev. Phyllis A. Spiegel
Barton K. Stevens
The Rev. Kristin L. Sullivan
The Rev. Ellie Thober
The Rev. Gail R. Tomei
The Rev. Adam T. Trambley, D.Min.
The Very Rev. Gene R. Tucker
The Rev. David A. Umphlett
The Rev. David C. Wacaster
The Rev. Hillary T. West
The Rev. Mark D. Wilkinson
The Rev. Wendy J. Wilkinson
The Rev. Sarah A. Wood



PHOTO: ANICE HOACHLANDER

A NEW CHAPTER FOR ADDISON

By *The Rev. Melody Knowles, Ph.D., Vice President of Academic Affairs*

It was something of an impossible project: take a well-designed but aging building and renovate it to support classes that range on a spectrum from large formal lectures to small discussion groups to performance classes that needed a lot of space for movement. And it wasn't just a variety of floor plans that were an issue—the acoustic requirements to support a single lecturer, small breakout groups, music production, and preaching also needed to be considered. And it would be nice if the space was welcoming enough to engage quiet study and group work outside of class.

The Addison renovations are a creative and thoughtful reworking of a key building on campus—the place for our classrooms, large lecture halls, Lifelong Learning offices, and the Flamingo. The basic footprint remains the same in that we still have the good mix of small, medium, and large-sized classrooms in a contemporary space. But we replaced some walls throughout the building with glass so that some dark corners now feel much more open and brought in some striking lights that redefine the rooms.

Some of the most dramatic changes are on the second floor. The fixed-in-place raked seating in the large classroom space in Room 201 was removed, and now a flat floor and rolling tables and chairs allow for much more flexible configurations. Two medium-sized classrooms were joined to make another large space, now with a coffered ceiling

and wooden floors that is perfect for liturgy and homiletics classes. It also now presents a much better way to enjoy the impressive round window that dominates one wall. And the open area around the rotunda has been reconfigured with a curved tabletop on which students can use their laptops and set down their coffee mugs.

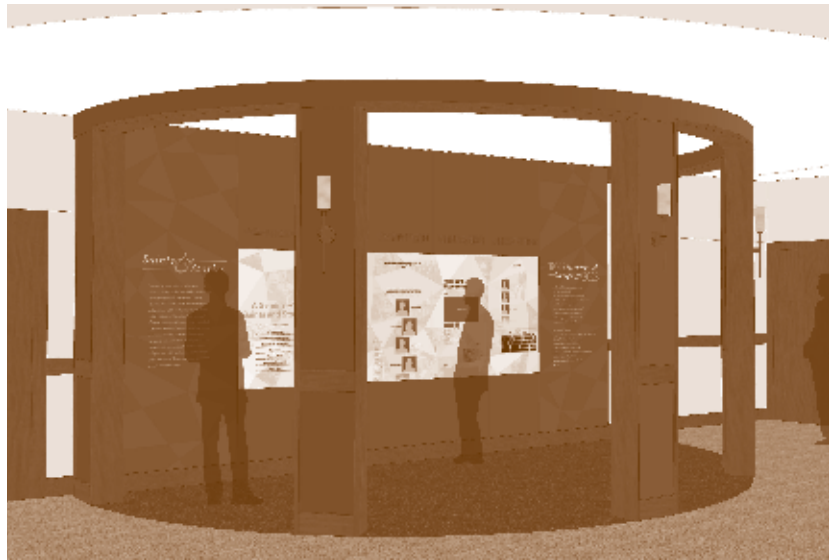
On the lower level, the Lifelong Learning suite is a beautiful and sleek space, suitable for small meetings, offices, and video conferences. The Flamingo has never looked better. And the Lettie Pate Evans Room is a handsome and flexible auditorium-sized space, perfect for large lectures and events.

As you walk through the building, you know that the space has been designed to support teaching and learning in a variety of contexts. Faculty are now able to integrate technology into their classes with greater ease and shape the seating plans more easily to create an appropriate learning environment for their class. And the lighting, art and wonderful coffee shop all invite one to linger after class is complete.

Thanks to thousands of donors (who are recognized in the new digital exhibition, *A Seminary's Saints and Stories*, on the lower level of Addison), teaching and learning at VTS is now better supported by this wonderful renovated space.

A Seminary's Saints and Stories

By Linda L. Dienno
Vice President for Institutional Advancement



A Seminary's Saints and Stories is a virtual celebration through video, photos, and story text of life on the Holy Hill from 1823 to the present day. The interactive display will be in the lower level of the newly renovated Addison Academic Center. At first approach, a waterfall of photographs from VTS' earliest days to this present moment cascades over five screens. When a visitor touches a screen, they

are invited into the full menu of saints and stories including a video welcome from Dean Markham.

The other segments include information and photos about our first two hundred years, our Bicentennial Campaign's volunteers and donors, the campus for the third century, reparations, people and programs, marking the Bicentennial, and support.

VTS staff and faculty thoughtfully vetted the photographs and writing in each segment. The Bicentennial Campaign's volunteers and donor section shows photos of our donors and a quotation telling why they support VTS. The quotations and photos are from alumni, friends, dioceses, parishes, and foundations and provide insights into what VTS means to each.



From Emmanuel Episcopal Church, Greenwood, VA:

We give to Virginia Seminary because it is a generational partner in ministry, a thought leader for the Church, and the alma mater of many of our faithful priests.

From the Episcopal Diocese of West Virginia:

Since the beginning of Virginia Seminary, and the beginning of the Diocese of West Virginia, we have been linked. VTS educates and forms people for a ministry in the mid-Atlantic, which is vital for our future. We strongly support the three-year residential model and the formation that Virginia Seminary provides, as we move into the future of the Church and where God is calling us. Well done, good and faithful servant!

From the Rev. Nic Mather '15:

I give to VTS because I believe in The Episcopal Church, and I believe that VTS educates and equips the leaders of The Episcopal Church to go out into the world and create real change at both the local, community level, and at the larger societal level.



From the Rev. Leon Spencer, Jr., M.Div. '89, D.D. '05 (H)

“Traditional” residential seminary studies, somewhat vulnerable these days, still offers a vision for ministerial formation that, really, cannot be matched, and VTS has done it extraordinarily well for generations. Moreover, the commitment to global engagement, symbolized for me by opportunities VTS provides for gifted international and especially African seminarians, receives my constant admiration and appreciation.

From friend Dr. Non Vaughan-O'Hagan:

I am an accidental pilgrim here. I was gifted the opportunity to reflect on the history of VTS for the bicentennial celebrations. The more I learned, the more I cherish the way in which today's VTS strives to build a loving, inclusive Christ-led church for the future.



A Seminary's Saints and Stories is VTS telling its story and our donors telling their story. The donors' stories reinforce that since our 1823 founding, a tradition of generosity has enabled the Seminary to prepare the hearts and minds of those who bring the good news of Christ to the world. This generosity, in turn, has allowed VTS to educate and train both ordained and lay to do their work across the globe; it has also allowed VTS to

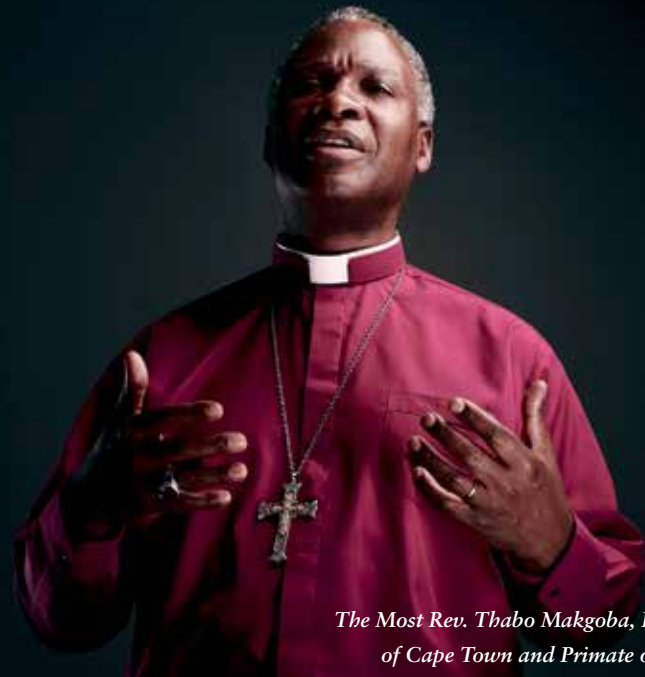
provide resources to people, parishes, and dioceses across the Anglican Communion.

Please visit the display in the lower level of Addison Academic Center. View the photographs. Read the stories. Watch the videos. Search for donors and their stories. Pause and reflect on the great good that has come from 200 years of service and generosity.

We give thanks for this interactive digital record of our historic moment that allows us to capture in the cloud for all time what we might previously have captured in a book. If you have not yet participated in our comprehensive campaign by having made an Annual Fund or Bicentennial Campaign gift, please do so now; simply contact me at ldienno@vts.edu or (703) 461-1717. We want to give voice to YOUR story.

RACE IN THE COMMUNION

By *The Rev. Robert Heaney, Ph.D., D.Phil.,
Director of the Center for Anglican Communion Studies
and professor of Theology and Mission*



*The Most Rev. Thabo Makgoba, Ph.D., Archbishop
of Cape Town and Primate of Southern Africa*

For some years, the Seminary's Center for Anglican Communion Studies (CACS) has worked with international partners on a range of issues relating to Episcopal-Anglican identity and witness. The communities, stories, and histories that make up the Anglican tradition have a complicated, contested, and controversial relationship to the work of racial justice.

The Episcopal Church is a settler and colonialist church. Today, we are a denomination that is 90% white. This is no accident of history. God continues to call the church to a fuller expression of the gospel of Jesus Christ in penitential, reparative, restorative witness. But such discernment of the mission of God cannot be done in isolation. Such witness can only emerge from deeper solidarities within an intercultural Communion, ecumenism, and inter-religious movement. Seeking such solidarity and discerning the Spirit of Christ, amidst diversity and pluralism, is at the heart of what CACS is about. Always aware that we start from a place of weakness, we seek to listen both for the grace of God and the judgment of God in relationships and across differences.

I am delighted that, this summer, Hartley Wensing, CACS director of communion projects, and the Rev. Maurice Dyer '19 were able to interview the Most Rev. Thabo Makgoba, Ph.D., Archbishop of Cape Town and Primate of Southern Africa. Anglicanism came to Southern Africa as a settler English church. It was a tradition committed to the status quo and the hope for gradual change through liberal means.

In the late twentieth century, under the influence of Black leaders and Black theology, the Church began to take an oppositional and even prophetic stance against state sponsored oppression. In the interview, we learn something of Archbishop Thabo's own life story and commitment to justice. For a wider view on his work and vision, please read Archbishop Thabo's *Faith and Courage: Praying with Mandela* (SPCK, 2019). To view the full interview with Archbishop Thabo, visit the Seminary's YouTube channel.

Archbishop Thabo Makgoba: Race and Witness in the Anglican Church of Southern Africa: Excerpts from a conversation with Hartley Wensing and the Rev. Maurice Dyer '19.

WENSING: Your Grace, in 2018 you were a key voice at the Center's panel conversation on "Race in the Communion" in Austin, Texas [at the 79th General Convention of the Episcopal Church]. As you reflect on that conversation, and on the histories of Anglicanism in North America and South Africa, do you see common roots feeding systems of racial oppression in both contexts?

“If you go back and look at who brought Christianity, we see the Dutch East India Company coming to South Africa and the Dutch West India Company coming to North America and all carrying the flag and imperialism disguised as Christianity.”

— The Most Rev. Thabo Makgoba, Ph.D.

MAKGOKA: Reflecting on the issue of racism in both North America and South Africa, one sees a thread running through: the settlers from Europe bringing Christianity with them to both North America and South Africa, a brand of Christianity that assumed Western cultural practices were Christian practices, assumed the superiority of Western culture, and led both groups of settlers to justify oppression of the people they found already living there. When they came to South Africa, they said our cultures were like “dancing with the devil.” So you can see historically the similarities. If you go back and look at who brought Christianity, we see the Dutch East India Company coming to South Africa and the Dutch West India Company coming to North America and all carrying the flag and imperialism disguised as Christianity.

DYER: You are the great grandson of King (Kgoši) Mamphoku Makgoba who was killed as a result of resisting white settler expansionism in Limpopo. Can you say something about your own upbringing and how historical and ongoing injustice impacted you and your commitment to Christ?

MAKGOKA: On the 9th of June every year, I spend significant time alone in chapel praying because the 9th of June in 1895 was quite an unfortunate time for the family. King Mamphoku Makgoba ... was beheaded and so my forebears had their land stripped from them and were forced to live in poverty in remote rural areas and in some run-down ghettos instead of the beautiful well-watered valley from which they came from called Makgoba’s Kloof. But their religious faith sustained them in exile. In my case, in spite of

the Anglican Church’s settler origins, Anglican schools and parishes and the youth and student movement offered me an education and nourished my spirituality. The juxtaposition here is the faith that carried the imperial flag and emblem, by God’s funny sense of humor, later nurtured me. [I became like]... a “wounded healer”, if I may borrow that phrase. With the help of others and within the faith community, we decided that we would tell our story. We prayed hard that our story would not immobilize others and make them close up, run away and not engage. We mobilized students to say “let’s challenge the Anglican church.” It is ironic that just yesterday I was engaging a group of theologians and women priests in our province and they were saying they can’t breathe, they find the Anglican church in South Africa to some extent very patriarchal



PHOTO: ELIZABETH PANOX-LEACH

Left: Panelists on the 2018 “Race in the Anglican Communion” panel conversation at General Convention, sponsored by CACS. On the left of the banner are: The Rev. Maurice Dyer, ’19, the Rev. Hershey Mallette-Stephens, the Most Rev. Thabo Makgoba, Ph.D. and the Rt. Rev. Rose Hudson-Wilkin. On the right of the banner are the Rev. Ruth Paguio, the Rev. Robin Denney ’17, and the Rev. Robert Heaney, Ph.D., D.Phil.

Right: L-R: The Rt. Rev. Rose Hudson-Wilkin, the Rev. Hershey Mallette-Stephens, and the Most Rev. Thabo Makgoba, Ph.D.



The Rev. Robin Denney '17 and the Most Rev. Thabo Makgoba, Ph.D.

and it is not moving to condemn life-threatening doctrines. I smiled because I remember saying I will not run away from this church, but we will use our God-given youth, our pain and our stories to say it is possible to talk about this. In that way, we were really saying God can work in us and through us if we are prepared to listen and hear one another and to journey together. But one thing that I never shied away from was to really tell that story of pain. Through telling that story of pain I feel healed, people are transformed, and others can also tell their stories.

WENSING: You are the son of a pastor from the Zion Christian Church and now a primate of the Anglican Communion. These are two traditions with distinct histories when it comes to racial justice in South Africa. Where, especially since the free elections of 1994, have you seen Christians frustrate the cause of justice and where have you seen them move the cause of justice forward?

MAKGOBA: I have seen Christians fail to deliver on the promise of the faith-based struggle [against] apartheid when they have used the power given

to them under democracy to advance their own personal agendas and their own material wealth, even going so far as to excuse and justify corruption and conspicuous consumption. Now that hurts. That is painful. Before apartheid, we were in it together; we were trying to root out that self-centeredness and that selfishness. I have seen Christians advance the cause of justice when they have stood up and repudiated their former comrades, in campaigns against inequality, in Black Lives Matter, in campaigns against corruption, and all that is being done in the interest of the poorest of the poor and the marginalized. So, we are still on the road learning how to critique ourselves, how to give each other feedback, and how to really use the tools that we learned pre-democracy in order to ensure that there is no corruption because corruption steals from the poorest of the poor.

DYER: Learning from your experiences of the Truth and Reconciliation Commission (TRC), what lessons can you share for the Church in the US? What priorities for life-giving witness do you think predominately white churches have yet to adopt?

MAKGOBA: One could just reflect on our journey, because like the road to Emmaus, sometimes these things are revealed when we walk together. It is in that spirit of *koinonia*, of walking together, that I am sharing with my brothers and sisters and not really dictating to you. The strength of our Truth and Reconciliation Commission was we had a structured process of public truth-telling. You may decide, as the Church, that you want a structured process of public truth telling and you give it certain parameters because if it is structured it empowers the victims of past and current injustices to talk about that. It gives everyone a chance to listen, to hear, and to respond. The response in South Africa was a commitment to working together on symbolic and sometimes practical ways of bringing about restitution. The point is to ask, who could we get in a structured process that could tell us about the truth of the victims and the pain of the slaves and let's also hear from the beneficiaries of an unjust system. Then you commit to say, in a symbolic way, this is what we are going to do to bring about restitution. Removing images or monuments is a good step but if one does that alone it loses what I am calling for — a structured process of public truth telling and a commitment to say we will work together.

DYER: At our 2018 General Convention panel, we framed the conversation around the idea of formation and reformation. People with racist ideas and racist practices were not born that way, they were formed in such a worldview. What priorities for Christian formation (and reformation) do you prize?

MAKGOBA: I have found what I call “walks of witness” to be very powerful. This involves immersing others into a situation where the privileged are exposed to the harsh realities of what the oppressed have suffered and

continue to suffer. That is priceless. In Cape Town, the city and the people that have lived in the ghettos were at loggerheads over the sanitation issues. Without getting into the debates, we got a group of religious leaders together and we agreed that we were going to walk, smell, see, touch the squalor of those that do not have proper sanitation and water. The transformation was ... palpable. It led ... to agency ... It led to people saying, "I have a lawyer, I have an advocacy officer." It was to take an intentional step to say, "I may not have an answer, but I pledge to listen, to accompany them as they work on possible solutions."

The Episcopal Church could generate some of the questions, look at its catechism, and ask how you might weave [such work] into the Jesus Movement. How can the Jesus Movement, as it affirms others, also speak about the fact that you are called as the Episcopal Church to be bridge builders?

WENSING: In your book, *Praying with Mandela*, you share some of the prayers you used when visiting President Nelson Mandela. What,

today, is your prayer for the Church of Southern Africa and the Anglican Communion?

MAKGOBA: When you ask that question, my heart leaps for joy. I always remind people I am not a theologian. I am not a good administrator but my love for the Lord is really endowed in the fact that I can pray for hours and hours. It is a little gift God gave me and I use it to pray for myself, to pray for the nation, to pray for others. And so today in this interview, I was taking it as a prayer of the three of us that we will share with those that will read and listen. And so my prayer is:

Loving God of peace with justice,

Your people face new realities with the impacts of COVID-19. Keep us mindful of your ever-present Holy Spirit, strengthen us to care for one another and your planet, and move us to seek your face of reconciliation and truth for you desire us to be God's Church in God's world, one God, world without end.

Amen.

“I have seen Christians advance the cause of justice when they have stood up and repudiated their former comrades, in campaigns against inequality, in Black Lives Matter, in campaigns against corruption, and all that is being done in the interest of the poorest of the poor and the marginalized.”

— The Most Rev. Thabo Makgoba, Ph.D.



CACS Director Robert Heaney and Archbishop Thabo Makgoba both serve on the Lambeth Design Group, pictured here at their October 2017 meeting in London.

Quartet

for the End of Time

*By The Rev. A. Katherine Grieb, Ph.D. '83
The Meade Professor of Biblical Interpretation and New Testament*



The Rev. A. Katherine Grieb, Ph.D.
'83 will be retiring from faculty on
December 31, 2020. We are delighted
she has agreed to become the director
of the Center for Anglican Communion
Studies starting on July 1, 2021 for
three years. She will continue to teach
students and bring her wisdom and
insight to the community.

Olivier Messiaen (1908–1992) was a French Roman Catholic composer known for his mystical religious music, much of it composed for organ. But on January 15, 1941, he was far from a cathedral or from any such site where his rhythmically complex and ethereally abstract atonal music might be performed. Instead he found himself in a Nazi prison camp, Stalag VIII-A in German-controlled Silesia, where he was a prisoner of war from 1940 to 1942. On that day, he was on the piano, accompanied by three other musicians playing the cello, clarinet, and viola, in a concert premiering a piece which he had written for the occasion, “Quartet for the End of Time.” Messiaen had met these three other musicians during their imprisonment. He wrote the piece for the only four musical instruments they had and the four of them performed it for an audience of prisoners and prison guards. It is widely acknowledged as one of the twentieth century’s musical masterpieces.



French composer
Olivier Messiaen.

I have chosen Messiaen’s *Quartet* for my title of this essay for preachers pondering how to proclaim the gospel with authenticity during the Advent season, which begins the Church’s new year, during a time when there is great concern about matters of life and death related to the COVID-19 virus, for several reasons. I want to reflect theologically and exegetically on (1) prison and imprisonments of several kinds, whether imposed by others or constructed for ourselves; (2) the question of reality, and contested realities, both visible and invisible; (3) the ambiguity of certain practices and gestures, together with the possibility of sanctifying them during this time; and (4) making the most of unexpected opportunities, such as the opportunity to repent, especially of injustice and of unjust social structures, and to tell the truth, for the glory of God, about the past and present racism that afflicts us.

This “quartet” of purposes is well served by Messiaen’s title and context, not least because the phrase “for the end of time” can evoke several different meanings and metaphors which I trust will be of interest to preachers during our own time. Because Christianity came out of Judaism, we have similar understandings of time. For both of us, the beginning of a new year is not an occasion for wild drunken parties, like the Roman Kalends, from which we get the word “calendar,” a period of days in January to make the year come out even and to transition from the old year to the new one. Janus is the god with two faces, one looking back to the old year, one looking ahead to the new one. For Israel, Rosh Ha Shana (the head of the year) and Yom Kippur (the day of atonement) comprise a sober period of reflection, a time for seeking forgiveness from those wronged, and to be reconciled to those estranged or offended. It is a time to begin again in hope, because the God of Israel is the Lord of time. Time

is a part of God's good creation. All the days of a human life are numbered, because life is holy, so the Psalmist prays, "Teach us to number our days so that we may gain a wise heart" (Psalm 90:12).

Christian churches "keep" the feasts and fasts of the calendar year at different levels and in different ways, but common to all of us is the idea of "waiting upon the Lord" (Psalm 27:14, 37:7, etc.) who is the Lord of time. In Advent, Christians traditionally wait for the coming of Jesus Christ our Lord in at least three ways: Christ comes to us in history, in mystery, and in majesty. In *history*, because in Advent, the Church prepares for the coming of Christ in the past, in the Incarnation (enfleshment) of God who "pitched a tent to dwell with us" as the Johannine Prologue (1:14) expresses it: the Word became flesh and lived among us for a time. It may seem strange to think of preparing for an event that is already past, but the historicity of Jesus Messiah is one of the non-negotiable givens in Christianity, an event so important that it is confessed constantly in the creeds and is the focus of our attention in Advent, which means "coming" or "arrival." Christ comes to us in *mystery* through the power of the Holy Spirit of God in prayer and especially in word and sacrament. Martin Luther paraphrased God's message to humanity when he described God saying, "Here I am. If you want to find me, I have promised to be present in the Word proclaimed and

at the Sacrament of the Table. I will meet you there." The Church also confesses that Christ will come in *majesty*, "at the end of time" to judge the living and the dead, because as Saint Paul reminded us, "Whether we live or die, we belong to the Lord." (Romans 14:8)

For Olivier Messiaen, "the end of time" may have signaled an uncertainty about whether he and his companions would live or die in Silesia; but even more importantly, the names he gave to the sections of the piece witness to his belief in the eternity of Jesus Christ, who transcends human time ("before Abraham was, I AM" John 8:58) and whose resurrection life is unaffected by the ravages of human time ("Jesus Christ the same, yesterday, today, and forever" Hebrews 13:8). The "great expectation" that Christians have is that we will one day share in that life, won for us in Christ's victory over Death on the cross, since his resurrection is the "first fruits" that empowers us to trust God in matters of life and death (I Corinthians 15).

Preachers in Advent 2020 will be aware of a kind of battle fatigue that is already setting in as I write this in July and will surely grow stronger as the months pass and the number of deaths continues to climb, more slowly or more quickly, depending on where someone lives and what kinds of precautions are being taken. It is easy to become numbed by the numbers, as if every single one of those who are dying or losing someone to death was not a wound in the heart of God, "who takes no pleasure in the death of anyone" (Ezekiel 18:32). Whatever we make of this relentless disease, more on that later, it should be understood as something God does not will for human flourishing and something that God will not allow to have the last word.

All the days of a human life are numbered, because life is holy, so the Psalmist prays, "Teach us to number our days so that we may gain a wise heart" (Psalm 90:12).

Advent Lessons and Carols in Immanuel Chapel.



I. Prison as a Context and Imprisonment as a Metaphor for doing Theological Exegesis in Advent 2020

“In San Quentin prison, you wait until COVID-19 comes for you.” (headline from *The Washington Post* 7/26/2020)

“Are you the one who is to come? Or are we to wait for another? John the Baptist in prison to Jesus (Luke 7:20, Matthew 11:3)

Meditating “on the end of time” is particularly relevant to those who are incarcerated, who are “serving time” or “doing time” within the prison system, especially right now. It is no secret that the populations of the United States who are genetically disposed to suffer the most serious consequences of contracting the COVID-19 virus—African Americans, Hispanic groups, and indigenous people—are also the populations who are five times as likely as those who are socially constructed as “white” to be serving time in prison. To be in prison at any time is to be in danger: the prison culture tends to be a violent one; sexual harassment and rape are not unusual; sometimes the overstressed and underpaid prison staff finds it easier to turn a blind eye to that; in other places, it is the prison guards themselves who are committing the violence. Many people die in prison under mysterious circumstances after they have communicated to their families and friends their fear of the prison system. But to be in prison in a time of plague must be simply terrifying: in a cell that is six feet by six feet, there is nowhere to go to escape the disease. Every cell is on death row.

Those who have power and wealth can escape to the countryside or the deep woods and wait out the corona virus there, in much less densely populated areas, but those in prison cannot escape; they are in the most densely populated space of all. It is the ultimate nightmare: COVID-19 is the driver of one of those cars that has a rifle sight on the front hood barreling down on you in a narrow street; there is no way that driver is going to miss you—in either sense of the word. There is nowhere to go, no way to avoid it, it is only a matter of time until you die. And you have lots of time to think about it.

Christians are exhorted by the author of Hebrews to “remember those who are in prison, as though you were in



Nelson Mandela served 27 years in prison in South Africa.

prison with them; those who are being tortured, as though you yourselves were being tortured” (Hebrews 13:3). Many Christian communities have members who are or have been in prison and many more have members who have a family member or friend serving time in prison. Reading the stories of the Acts of the Apostles reminds us that Peter, James, John, Paul, and others spent time in prison and several prison epistles appear in the early Christian writings now called the New Testament. One of the best collections of Karl Barth’s sermons, *Deliverance to the Captives*, (SCM Press, 1961 Translated by Marguerite Wieser) whose title is taken from Luke 4:18 (“He has sent me to preach deliverance to the captives,”) collects sermons and prayers from his ministry in the prison in Basel, Switzerland.

When Paul writes from prison to the church at Philippi, he is not sure whether he will get out of that situation alive and be able to return and continue his apostolic labors to the Philippians or not. That uncertainty accounts for much of the homiletical and rhetorical weight of prison epistles. Dietrich Bonhoeffer knew that at any moment he might hear the words that he eventually did hear, “You will come with us now, Herr Bonhoeffer” which meant his imminent death (hanged at the concentration camp of Flossenbergl).

Nelson Mandela almost singlehandedly changed the course of history in South Africa by refusing to leave his tiny uncomfortable prison cell on Robbens Island until he was granted justice. Martin Luther King Jr.'s "Letter from Birmingham Jail" remains one of the classic texts of the Civil Rights movement in the United States.

It is clearly impossible for anyone who has not experienced prison life to comprehend fully the fear that this population must be feeling at this moment, but imprisonment has also become a metaphor for the experience of the nation as a whole. There are so many different kinds of imprisonment: physical quarantine for two weeks at home after testing positive for COVID-19; families having to share a small space during the day while schools and summer camps are closed; vacation plans cancelled because it isn't safe to fly or take the train; international students unable to return to their homes because the airports are closed; international students afraid to travel to the United States because of the high rate of infection here; unemployment and loss of income; businesses, especially small businesses failing; people losing their homes because they can't pay the rent or the mortgage; people who must work or who feel they must work even though they are sick; people who are caring for family members who are sick and have nowhere else to go; people whose vocations put them at high risk (doctors, nurses, house and hospital cleaners, undertakers); the list of confining or imprisoning circumstances seems endless....

The experience of confinement now suddenly widespread as people undergo voluntary and not so voluntary quarantine, or feel trapped by their circumstances, can feel like being under house arrest much like prison in the time of Jesus and Paul. As a culture, our imaginations have been awakened: a person under quarantine might suddenly experience an awareness of what it might feel like to have to do this for ten or twenty years instead of two weeks, or what it might be like to be in solitary confinement. Social media, in my context especially Zoom, has been a lifeline for communication and relating, but it isn't the same as being physically present in the same space with other people. An elderly widow said the part of church she missed the most was the peace: it was the only time during the week that someone actually touched her; while the family where both parents are working from home and several children are studying school by distance learning from home may be trying to overcome murderous thoughts. More seriously, domestic abuse cases have risen sharply, as lost jobs and lost incomes with them put pressure on households already fragile or unsteady. By Advent 2020, the situation may be grim. "What happens to a dream

deferred?" asked Langston Hughes. "Maybe it just sags like a heavy load. Or does it explode?" (Langston Hughes, "Harlem" 1926)

"Are you the one who is to come? Or are we to wait for another?"

John the Baptist's question to Jesus from his prison cell focuses the angst of waiting and trying to trust God in a situation of shattered dreams, lost jobs, lost businesses, lost educational plans, lost travel plans, lost relationships, and lost lives. You will remember that Jesus had almost certainly been a follower of John the Baptist before he became known as a teacher, healer, and exorcist in his own right (Mark 1:9-14). Luke's Gospel describes their birth narratives in parallel (chapters 1-2); John and Jesus are cousins. Matthew's Gospel has John the Baptist protest, when Jesus comes to the Jordan River to be baptized by him, "You ought to be baptizing me!" (Matthew 3:13-15). John's Gospel has the Baptist reflect on their changed situations: "He must increase; I must decrease" (John 3:30).

But now, John is shut up in Herod's fortress prison and both he and Jesus know that there is no way out of that prison. Clearly John is beginning to wonder if he is going to die for no reason at all. In both the Matthean and Lukan accounts of this story, immediately beforehand are narrated instances of Jesus healing and casting out demons. As readers of these Gospels, we know that Jesus *is* the one who is to come, but John, languishing in prison, does not know. Jesus says to the messengers from John, "Tell him what you see and hear" (the facts on the ground are persuasive) but the story is left open-ended and we are left to wonder what John's reaction was. It might have been relief and satisfaction, but it also might have been similar to that of the parent whose child wasn't healed from cancer or the spouse whose partner died from COVID-19. Why are so many healed and this one is not? Why does John have to die in Herod's prison?

That question is left unanswered, but we notice that Jesus continues to "follow" John in another sense: he carries on John's work of proclaiming the reign of God and calling the people to repentance. And, at the end of his own short life, he, too, will die at the hands of the authorities. The artists of the Italian renaissance were astute when they painted scenes of the nativity of Jesus with crosses built into the architecture of the stable or drew Jesus and John the Baptist as infants with the Baptist carrying a cross as if to show the future to his cousin. John shows us the fate of Jesus early in the Gospel narratives.



II. What does a materialistic culture do when the most real things are invisible?

“He who travels far will often see things
Far removed from what he believed was Truth.
When he talks about it in the fields at home,
He is often accused of lying,
For the obdurate people will not believe
What they do not see and distinctly feel.
Inexperience, I believe,
Will give little credence to my song.”
(Hermann Hesse, *The Journey to the East*, Translation
by Hilda Rosner, 1956)

“He is the image of the invisible God, the firstborn of
all creation;
For in him all things on heaven and on earth were
created, things visible and invisible”
(Colossians 1:15–16)

Just after the number of COVID-19 cases spiked dramatically in Florida, I met a young woman who was about to move to that state. When I asked her if she wasn't worried about her health, she told me she didn't believe in the corona virus (which may have been why she wasn't wearing a face mask) as if the existence of the virus were a dogmatic assertion in a creed that you could affirm or deny.

Much has been made of the invisibility of the corona virus, a deadly enemy that is invisible, can strike suddenly, and you can be dead two weeks later. Yes, COVID-19 is invisible—like God or like the true church in some understandings of ecclesiology. Materialism as a philosophy recognizes as real and therefore important only those things that can be seen, heard, touched, or otherwise experienced by the senses. The difficulty so many people in the United States have taking seriously something they cannot see is startling evidence of how materialistic

our culture has become. Materialism is often used as a synonym for greed or acquisitiveness (as in Madonna's "material girl living in the material world"), but the underlying philosophical assumptions about reality are the key to understanding that second meaning. College majors in business, economics, and pre-law are growing; classics departments have nearly disappeared and most of the humanities are in trouble. If it can't be measured, it isn't real.

One of the most important lines that has been drawn in the United States recently is the distinction between "essential" and "non-essential" as that has been applied to occupations and employees. In northern Virginia, where I live, I was only a little surprised to learn that libraries are considered "non-essential" (the libraries and bookstores have all been closed here for months) while the vape shops, with their e-cigarettes and hookahs are "essential" and have been allowed to stay open. Tony Campolo reminded us that living as a Christian in this materialistic culture is like window shopping outside an expensive store where all of the price tags have been wrongly placed: the wool hat is \$5,000 and the diamond tiara is \$2.50. We must learn that we cannot assume the accuracy of cultural values.

A more dangerous confusion of price tags occurs when the immigrant Guatemalan workers who cut the grass and tend the gardens as employees of landscaping firms in Florida are forced to work even when they or their immediate family members are sick with COVID-19 or when they must take dangerous public transportation to get to work because landscaping is considered "essential" and their work is "essential" to wealthy golf course owners and their golf-playing customers. If they don't show up or they refuse to work, they will be fired. There is always another immigrant willing to take their place. Of course, playing golf takes place outside; it is one of the safer forms of recreation for the wealthy. But a decision is being made about whose lives are more valuable: ironically the most "essential" workers are the ones who will probably die.

“One of the most important lines that has been drawn in the United States recently is the distinction between ‘essential’ and ‘non-essential’ as that has been applied to occupations and employees.”

The same could be said of nurses in hospitals that are not provided with enough personal protection equipment and other workers that assume COVID-19 risks daily so that other "more valuable" people don't have to.

One of the most important biblical metaphors connected to the idea of the righteousness or justice of God (the main theme of the Letter to the Romans) is that God shows no partiality. The imagined contextual setting here is the great throne room where God presides as judge. Before deciding the case of a particular person, a human judge may instruct the guard to lift up the face of the person bowed low in front of the throne, so that the judge can see who the person is, or, at least, how well they are dressed. But "God does not lift up the face" before making a just judgement. In the background here is the characterization of the just king found in Psalm 72:12-14:

For he delivers the needy when they call, the poor and those who have no helper.
He has pity on the weak and the needy, and saves the lives of the needy.
From oppression and violence, he redeems their life;
and precious is their blood in his sight.

Or the job description of God's chosen one, "the shoot that comes out from the stump of Jesse":

He shall not judge by what his eyes see, or decide by what his ears hear;
but with righteousness he shall judge the poor,
and decide with equity for the meek of the earth.
(Isaiah 11:3-4)

A rough translation into today's idiom would be "black lives matter" because all lives are precious in the sight of God and black and brown lives are the ones historically and currently most at risk in our culture.

Eliza Davies '22
from the Diocese of
New York



PHOTO: JOSHUA PAGET '21

III.

“Sanctifying Life, Time, and Space”: talking about masks, washing of hands, and social distancing.

My subtitle here comes from an important older book about Liturgy by Marion J. Hatchett (*Sanctifying Life, Time, and Space: An Introduction to Liturgical Study* (Seabury Press, 1976) which reminds us that liturgy is something done *by* the community rather than something done *for* the community: it is the vocation of the whole people of God. Because language not only describes reality but also shapes it, the present day ethical practices connected to controlling the spread of the COVID-19 novel virus provide an opportunity for preachers to shape the ethos of the worshipping community to conform more nearly to the double commandment of loving God and loving one’s neighbor.

For what seems like a large number of people, the constant useful reminders to wash our hands frequently, wear face masks, and keep at least six feet apart from one another, feel like nagging restrictions on our basic freedoms, even an infringement of our human rights. These are experienced as duties and obligations, as law rather than gospel. I overheard a man in the grocery store recently complaining that some people were getting all bent out of shape about people not wearing face masks and observing a six feet distance from others. Others are increasingly frightened to visit public places at all. A friend who is a nurse shops

only once every three weeks very early in the morning or late at night to avoid all the people who either don’t understand what is being said or who refuse to practice social distancing for whatever reason.

Much is being said about the generation of people in their twenties, most of whom, if they contract the COVID-19 virus, are not likely to suffer serious consequences from the disease. They are not the ones who will need ventilators, still in short supply in some places, or die alone in the intensive care room of a hospital, unable to be visited and supported by their loved ones. It is, after all, the time of life when people are most interested in social interaction, forging friendships, dating, and seeking business and other professional opportunities for networking. Not only is the COVID-19 virus invisible; it is also largely undetectable. Many of the people who show no symptoms are in fact carriers of the disease and have no way of knowing how much harm they are doing to other more vulnerable populations. Those groups (the elderly, those genetically predisposed to suffer more serious results, and those with underlying medical conditions that could complicate their treatments) are “reaping the whirlwind” (to use Walter Brueggemann’s powerful biblical language) of this “why should I care when it doesn’t affect me?” way of thinking.

Of course, it isn't just the younger generation which is unwittingly spreading COVID-19. Many others who at the beginning of March were super careful about social distancing, wore face masks and washed their hands more often than Lady Macbeth, are now just tired of the extra trouble, perhaps resentful about the added expense of buying masks and suddenly expensive hand sanitizer or the complicated dance of managing social distancing etiquette, and just forgetting to wash their hands after every encounter, every purchase, every door handle, all the time. It can be exhausting.

Moreover, these three activities—so important to maintain—feel all wrong to a community well-read in the biblical narratives and in cultural discourse. We tend to associate wearing a mask or other face covering with hiding our identities, not just for fun as in a masked ball or Hallow'e'en costumes, but for nefarious purposes like robbing a bank. Tamar “covered her face” pretending to be a sex worker, in order to trick Judah into doing his familial duty (Genesis 38:13-15). So the gallows humor that warns young African American men about “driving a car with a broken tail light while black” has now been extended to “wearing a mask while black” in a culture that penalizes young men wearing hoodies or ski masks because they are assumed to be robbers. Actions and gestures are notoriously ambiguous: the same action can be helpful or harmful depending on the circumstances and how it is interpreted.

The most prominent example of social distancing in the biblical world is probably the requirement imposed upon

lepers to keep their distance from the rest of the community and to signal their affliction by their torn clothes and disheveled hair. They were required to call out to passersby “unclean! unclean!” by way of warning and they were forced to live alone, “outside the camp” (Leviticus 13:45–46). Luke's Gospel reports an incident where ten lepers approached Jesus, carefully “keeping their distance” and were healed by him (17:11–19). The author of Hebrews reminds us that in the days of the wilderness tabernacle the bodies of animals offered as sacrifices were burned “outside the camp” and that Jesus was crucified outside the holy city of Jerusalem. Therefore, followers of Jesus are also to go “outside the camp” to care for the poor and those excluded from society (13:11–13). So we continue to give thanks for those on the front lines of caring for those COVID-19 patients at great risk to their own safety and wellbeing.

It would be foolish exegesis to conclude from these biblical passages that we are to ignore the social distancing requirements designed to stop the spread of this disease, but, like wearing a mask, the action of social distancing is ambiguous. Normally we stay close to family members and friends; we remain distant to our enemies or those whom we think have wronged us. Ironically, the greatest gift we can give our friends and neighbors is to keep them even more than “at arm's length” away from us.

The same thing is true about washing our hands. The most famous New Testament example of handwashing is that of Pontius Pilate, famous for his cruelty, who deliberately employs this gesture to signal that he washes his hands of any responsibility for the death of Jesus of Nazareth. Pilate is a gentile, who, for political reasons, is adopting a Jewish practice to tell a lie: he pretends to be innocent of Jesus's death on the cross, when it could not have happened without his approval. Crucifixion is a Roman death and Pilate was the Roman governor in charge of Judea/Palestine.

The Jewish customs about washing of hands, food, and pots and pans after entering the gentile marketplaces are described in Mark 7. Then Jesus teaches that what defiles a person is not what goes into the mouth but what comes out of the heart: hostility and hate make us unclean in the sight of God. Mark's Gospel interprets this teaching to mean that all foods are now considered clean. But the story may only deal with food purity laws in a secondary way. It is no accident that immediately following this teaching, Jesus encounters a Syro-Phoenician woman (gentile, foreigner) who prompts him to practice what he preaches with respect to the social implications of clean and unclean (Mark 7:24–30).



“To do actions that seem to us trivial and even burdensome, but to do them for the glory of God, transforms “drudgery” into “divinity” the way the famous philosopher’s stone was reputed to turn all things it touched into gold.”



Creamilda Yoda '22, from the Diocese of Washington, and Annie Jung '22, from the Diocese of Louisiana.

The closest modern equivalent I can think of is in “South Pacific” where Mary Martin sings “I’m going to wash that man right out of my hair and send him on his way” to try to distance herself emotionally from someone who is clearly getting to her. She eventually realizes what Jesus apprehended in a few seconds, so the story has a happy ending. In our situation, washing our hands is not about washing people away from us, but washing away a disease that is afflicting all of us, friend or foe, neighbor or foreigner. That’s why the appellation “the Chinese disease” is so unfortunate. Someone told me recently that syphilis and gonorrhea have both been labeled “the Italian disease”, “the French disease”, and “the German disease” depending on the nationality and prejudices of the person speaking. But diseases know nothing about politics and less about political boundaries.

Preachers will want to engage in act-redescription with respect to all three of these ambiguous actions. Act-redescription is a term that some ethicists have found useful in determining the limits of truthful speech about actions. So “saving a village from communists” cannot legitimately be substituted for “destroying a village and all of its inhabitants.” If I am asked “What are you doing?” and I reply that I am moving my finger, the fact that my finger is beside the trigger of a gun is a circumstance that cannot be omitted if I am to speak truthfully. In this article,

I want to use the term “act-redescription” in another sense, to re-name and re-imagine the same old boring actions of masking, handwashing, and social distancing, in order to give them new meaning and purpose.

There is a (trite?) story about three stonemasons each of whom was asked what he was doing. The first replied irritably, “Can’t you see? I’m squaring the corners of this stone.” The second one explained, “This is part of a wall going up here.” But the third man said with excitement, “We’re building a cathedral!” All three were describing the same action, but only the third saw himself and his work as part of something much bigger than himself, a holy vocation, a divine liturgy. George Herbert’s poem “Teach me, my God and King” explains this phenomenon better than I can. To do actions that seem to us trivial and even burdensome, but to do them for the glory of God, transforms “drudgery” into “divinity” the way the famous philosopher’s stone was reputed to turn all things it touched into gold. Preaching is, among other things, the most efficient form of pastoral care: it re-describes our situation that we might have understood primarily in human terms, in the light of God’s dream for creation and all creatures. Who knew that putting on a mask, washing our hands, and keeping our distance are part of building a cathedral?

IV. “Let us not talk falsely now, the hour is getting late”: repentance and truth-telling

This line from Bob Dylan’s “All along the watchtower” was made famous by Jimi Hendrix at Woodstock and elsewhere. Just as Saint Augustine, reading Romans 13:11–14, realized that it was finally time to make those lifestyle changes he had been putting off for so long, so our present moment has achieved a kind of clarity about “things done that ought not to have been done and things left undone that ought to have been done” that is striking. It has almost become a truism now to say that the novel virus COVID-19 has exposed what is *not* novel in our culture: it is the “strange fruit” that reveals the fault lines of a nation founded on genocide and built up by slave labor, almost completely based on skin color and income level. What this nation has been determined not to see about its past and its present injustices is suddenly plain as day; and perhaps some of all that frustration about the things we can’t do right now is the source of the enormous energy for reform that we are experiencing. And yet, there is still the human tendency to blame the victims instead of making those needed changes.

“Rabbi, who sinned, this man, or his parents, that he was born blind?” the disciples of Jesus ask him, shortly before he heals the man and re-describes the situation as an opportunity to celebrate God’s healing work revealed in him. Here, in John 9, Jesus clearly breaks the apparent connection between sin and the suffering that results from sin when he explains, “Neither this man nor his parents sinned.”

Another New Testament take on the same question is provided by Luke 13:1–9:

Some people told Jesus about “the Galileans whose blood Pilate had mingled with their sacrifices” (an incident not known outside of this reference to it, but typical of what is known about Pilate’s career) and about “eighteen people who were killed when the tower of Siloam fell on them” (a natural disaster once again known to us only from this account). In both cases, the response of Jesus was the same: “Do you think that because these people suffered in this way, they were worse sinners than all the rest? No, I tell you!” Then he adds, “But unless you repent, you will all perish as they did.” What follows immediately is

the parable of the unfruitful fig tree that is given one last chance to produce fruit before it is cut down.

T.S. Eliot, writing *The Waste Land* in 1922, tells a similar parable in the scene where people are talking in a pub late at night, oblivious of the time passing and the closing of the institution. “Hurry up, please, it’s time” calls the bartender at several points in their conversation, but they continue talking as if they had not heard the warning.

The “lateness” of the hour is apocalyptic language for the turning of the ages, the turning of God’s hourglass, “the end of time” in Messiaen’s phrase. It is time to repent “of the evils done by us and the evils done on our behalf.” Never mind that I personally never owned a slave and never forced a native American down the trail of tears to nowhere: all my life I have benefitted from past actions of my ancestors that disenfranchised others; my ease of living has come directly as a result of dis-ease done to them and the COVID-19 disease has made that clearer than I ever wanted to see it. If the first casualty of war is the truth, the first act of repentance is confessing the truth about ourselves and our lives. Not because the dream deferred is going to explode—although it might—but because it’s time and past time to put things right.



Quartet for the End of Time:

Some Concluding Thoughts by way of Preparation

1. Preachers in Advent 2020 may want to understand at least some of their ministry as prison chaplaincy, both literally, walking with the incarcerated in a prison nearby the congregation, and metaphorically, anticipating that those who hear Advent sermons this year may feel confined and imprisoned, as if they were “doing time” and were also “at the end of time.” I strongly recommend two resources for the preacher’s bookshelf: *Hear My Voice: A Prison Prayer Book*, from the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America (Augsburg Fortress, 2019), which contains many powerful prayers, and *Inside the Fence: A Handbook for Those in Prison Ministry* by David M. Schilder, Alba House (1999). Schilder has a chapter each on the chaplain as servant, priest, teacher, mediator, ecumenical reconciler, counselor, pastoral administrator, prophet, poet, and volunteer coordinator, all roles which are highly relevant for preachers in Advent 2020.

2. Any idea that we live in a Christian culture, of the kind that was spoken of in the early twentieth century, will have been dispelled by attention to the demographic make-up of religious and anti-religious groups in the present population and/or by the rhetoric and behavior of our political leaders during the presidential and local election campaigns that, hopefully, ended in November. As I write this, that desired outcome, once taken for granted in our democracy, is somewhat in doubt. Since the Church’s “flag” is the cross of Christ, preachers will be paying attention to the tensions between cultural values and Christian commitments and

will be keen to remind ourselves and others that *coram Deo* (in the presence of God) the lives of some are not worth more than the lives of others.

3. Preachers who are engaged in act-redescription to give new meaning to the same old actions of handwashing, masking, and keeping our distance from others for the good of all may wish to suggest short prayers that help to sanctify life, time, and space in the minds of their congregations. Just as those in the altar party often say prayers in the sacristy as they are vesting and planning the last details of the liturgy about to be enacted, so these everyday actions can be transformed into works of love in the mind of the agents through prayer. When I put on a face mask, I can remind myself that even though it seems to make my breathing more work, all of us can breathe more easily—without ventilators! When I wash my hands, I can sing twice (for 20 seconds) “I’m gonna wash this bug right outa my hands (3x) and send it on its way” in the spirit of a revised Mary Martin. When I take care to protect myself and others by social distancing in public places, I can smile a greeting with my eyes to make my gesture clear. In each of these actions, I can pray that God will use my efforts as part of the larger plan to redeem creation.

4. Whatever else preachers do in Advent 2020, it is crucial to tell the truth from the pulpit (truth as we see it, of course; we do not have God’s perspective) and to model the repentance we hope to encourage in those who hear us. Without subscribing to everything on his list, in my view, Lawrence Ferlinghetti has captured something of the mood of Advent in his poem “I am waiting.” Advent waiting upon the Lord is an active waiting, a holy impatience with things as they have always been and with those who say, “That’s just the way it is.” Advent waiting is waiting for the greatest gift ever given: God’s gift to us in Jesus Christ. It is also waiting for human repentance and fruits that befit repentance. That is, for justice and peace. The church can say “I am waiting for the American eagle to really spread its wings and to straighten up and fly right” at the same time it says “And I am waiting for a rebirth of wonder.”

Jenn Pilat '19 and family lighting the Seminary Advent Wreath.



This work is hard. And this year, it's been even harder, as the pandemic has pushed us out of our church buildings, away from our congregations, and, for some of us, into the streets, lifting the message that Black Lives Matter. Even if our pulpits and classrooms are empty, voices calling for an end to racism have not been silent, and COVID-19 has in some ways amplified those voices and made even more clear the crisis of racism we're facing as a country and as Church.

What is our role, as teachers, clergy, lay leaders, musicians, youth ministers? How can we resist injustice and work

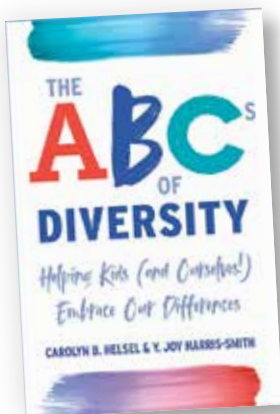
against racism in ways that are not just one-off events?

How can we, as Christians, acknowledge and lift the voices of those at the margins? How do we respond to the agony of this moment, recognizing that to live into our baptismal covenant, to be the people God has created us to be, means working to dismantle systemic racism, not just individual prejudices, to see God in every human being? Recognizing, responding and taking action in our households, parishes, dioceses and as the Church can make a difference in every community of which we are a part.

Selection of Group Book Studies and Adult Formation on Antiracism, Race, and Diversity

Book groups and Sacred Ground discussions are powerful entry points that compel us to go further-to build inclusivity and antiracism into the fabric of our teaching, worship, fellowship, community engagement-to being anti-racist.

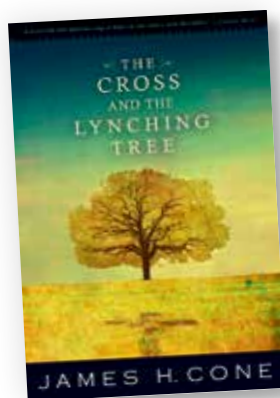
BOOKS



The ABCs of Diversity: Helping Kids (and Ourselves!) Embrace Our Differences by Carolyn B. Helsel, Y. Joy Harris-Smith (Chalice Press, 2020) is a great book for opening up conversations with parents about teaching antiracism to children. Each chapter has an “Activity for Personal Reflection” at the end that could easily be used by a conversation group. Chalice Press also provides downloadable worksheets to help readers reflect.

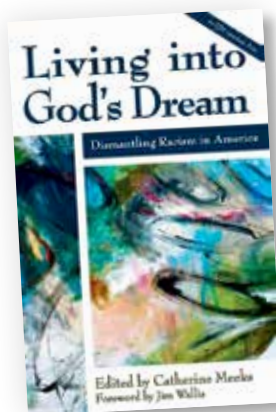


Dialogues On: Race by Lenny Duncan, Rozella Haydée White, Daniel Hill, Broderick Greer '15, Kristofer Coffman, Cami Jones, and Jim Bear Jacobs (Augsburg Fortress Press, 2019) is the most comprehensive package: facilitator guide, learner book, and a DVD with interviews to give viewers an inside look at the center of race today. Contributors come from different denominational backgrounds.



The Cross and the Lynching Tree by James H. Cone (Orbis Books, 2013 reprint) is a revealing book in which the author explores the history of two major symbols in African American faith, and the interplay between the two. There is a free reader's guide available from Cokesbury. The Episcopal Diocese of Rhode Island also offers the robust “The Cross and the Lynching Tree” study guide. Participants should be prepared

to learn about and discuss specific lynchings that have occurred.



Living into God's Dream: Dismantling Racism in America edited by Catherine Meeks (Morehouse Publishing, 2006) is a collection of essays from individuals involved in the work of dismantling racism in the 21st century. Parts read more like a memoir, parts like a field report, and parts are theological reflections. Some parts include

more scripture citations than others. The book includes three to five questions per chapter for individual or group reflection.



PHOTOS: ANICE HOACHLANDER



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SACRED GROUND DISCUSSION

Sacred Ground is a free film-based dialogue series on race and faith, provided by The Episcopal Church’s Becoming Beloved Community initiative. It is a small-group curriculum designed in 10 parts with documentary films and readings that focus on Indigenous, Black, Latino, and Asian/Pacific American histories as they intersect with European American histories. The syllabus includes a video, discussion guide, scripture and prayers. Lifelong Learning is hosting dialogue circle session this winter—join us: virginiaseminary.eventbrite.com

To find the original articles:

15 Ideas For Small Group Book Studies On Antiracism, buildfaith.org/15-book-studies-antiracism/

Resources For Adult Formation With An Emphasis On Race And Diversity, buildfaith.org/adult-formation-diversity/

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Alumni on the Move

1976

The Rev. Benjamin W. Turnage ▶ Interim Rector for St. Catherine's Episcopal Church, Chelsea, AL

1988

The Rev. Kim Capwell ▶ Interim Rector for St. James Episcopal Church, Wilmington, DE

1989

The Rev. Grace L. Cangialosi ▶ Priest-in-Charge for Christ Episcopal Church, Brandy Station, VA

The Rev. James B. Cook ▶ Assisting Priest for St. Luke's on the Lake, Austin, TX

1992

The Rev. Paul W. Gennett Jr. ▶ Interim Rector for Immanuel Church Highlands, Wilmington, DE

The Rev. Dena Whalen, D.Min '18 ▶ Vicar for Church of the Advocate – The Red Door Community, Asheville, NC

1994

The Rev. Clarence B. Baker ▶ Priest-in-Charge for Trinity Episcopal Church, Pine Bluff, AR

2002

The Rev. Linda Kapurch ▶ Interim Rector for Middleham and St. Peter's Episcopal Parish, Lusby, MD

2004

The Rev. Canon Joseph M. Browne III ▶ Rector for All Saints' Episcopal Church, Roanoke Rapids, NC

2007

The Rev. Jason L. Cox ▶ Rector for St. Luke's Episcopal Church, San Francisco, CA

The Rev. Canon Arienne Davison ▶ Canon to the Ordinary for the Diocese of Olympia, Seattle, WA

2008

The Very Rev. Matthew B. Bradley ▶ Dean for Christ Church Cathedral, Louisville, KY

The Rev. Peter W. Gray ▶ University Chaplain for The University of the South, Sewanee, TN

The Rev. Canon Loren V. Lasch ▶ Canon to the Ordinary for the Diocese of Georgia, Savannah, GA

2010

The Rev. Richard D. Meadows Jr. ▶ Priest-in-Charge for St. James Episcopal Church, Baltimore, MD

The Rev. Sara Palmer ▶ Senior Associate to the Rector for St. Mary's Episcopal Church, Arlington, VA

The Rev. Christopher M. Robinson ▶ Priest-in-Charge for Episcopal Church of the Redeemer, Biloxi, MS

2011

The Rev. Melissa L. B. Adzima ▶ Rector for St. Stephen's Episcopal Church, Longmont, CO

The Rev. Charles A. Browning II ▶ Priest-in-Charge for St. Mary's Episcopal Church, Honolulu, HI

The Rev. L. Peter Doddema ▶ Priest-in-Charge for Church of the Ascension, Frankfort, KY

The Rev. Katie Nakamura Rengers ▶ Staff Officer for Church Planting for The Episcopal Church, New York, NY

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2012

The Rev. Dawn A. Foisie ▶ Rector for St. Philip's Episcopal Church, Marysville, WA

The Rev. Dr. Randall K. Hehr ▶ Interim Associate Rector for Episcopal Church of Ascension, Clearwater, FL

The Rev. Connor Newlun ▶ Rector for St. Paul's Episcopal Church, Sharpsburg, MD

The Rev. Shirley M. Porter ▶ Rector for St. Christopher Episcopal Church, Perry, GA

2014

The Rev. Jean Beniste ▶ Rector for Christ Episcopal Church, Waukegan, IL

The Rev. Patrick Bush ▶ Priest-in-Charge for St. Andrew's Episcopal Church, Rocky Hill, CT

The Rev. Katherine H. Byrd ▶ Priest-in-Charge for St. Francis' Episcopal Church, Goldsboro, NC

The Rev. John Hogg ▶ Associate Rector for All Saints' Episcopal Church, Richmond, VA

The Rev. Steven King ▶ Priest-in-Charge for Trinity Episcopal Cathedral, Omaha, NE

2015

The Rev. Maxine Barnett ▶ Rector for All Saints' Episcopal Church, Baldwin, NY

The Rev. Grace A. Pratt ▶ Lower School Chaplain for St. Stephen's & St. Agnes School, Alexandria, VA

2016

The Rev. Marianne S. Allison ▶ Associate Rector for St. John the Baptist Episcopal Church, Portland, OR

The Rev. Daniel J. Lemley ▶ Rector for Holy Trinity Episcopal Church, Clearwater, FL

The Rev. Ian G. Lasch ▶ Rector for St. Francis of the Island Church, Savannah, GA

2017

The Rev. Kenneth Pierce ▶ Deacon for St. Michael's the Archangel Episcopal Church, Lexington, KY

2018

The Rev. Richard C. Bauer ▶ Rector for St. Edward's Episcopal Church, Lancaster, PA

The Rev. Paul Moore, D.Min. ▶ Rector for St. Paul's Episcopal Church and La Iglesia Episcopal de la Resurreccion, Mount Vernon, WA

2019

The Rev. Gaelyn L. Evangreene ▶ Rector for St. David's Episcopal Church, Cullowhee, NC

The Rev. AnnaMarie G. Hoos ▶ Marketing and Communications Consultant for Grace Episcopal Cathedral, San Francisco, CA

The Rev. Elisabeth Malphurs ▶ Priest-in-Charge for St. Alban's Episcopal Church, Vicksburg, MS

The Rev. Valerie Mayo ▶ Campus Minister and Urban Missioner for the Diocese of Kentucky, Louisville, KY

2020

Ms. Alison Pace ▶ Family Formation Minister for St. Mary's Episcopal Church, Arlington, VA

The Rev. Catherine Cox ▶ Curate for Christ Cathedral, Salina, KS

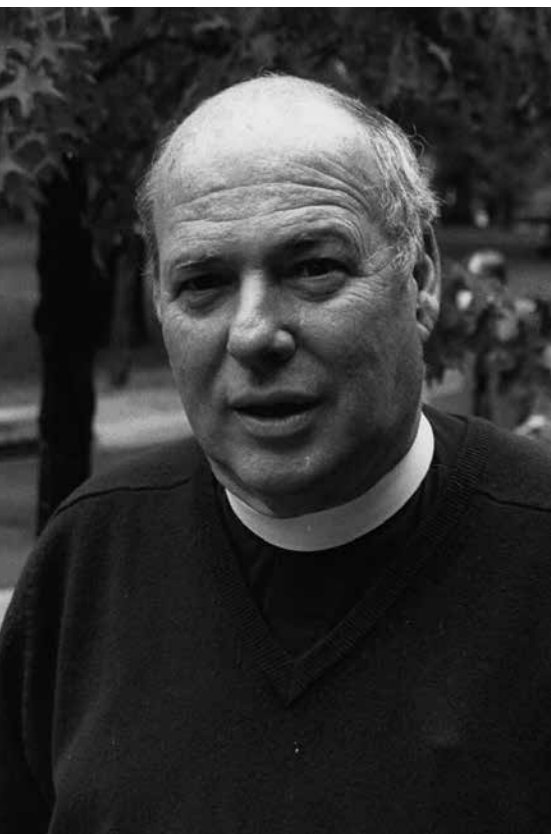
IN MEMORIAM

Rest eternal grant to them, O Lord; And let light perpetual shine upon them.

2010s

The Rev. Canon Norbert Ayebo '18
June 20, 2020

At the time of publication, we learned of the death of Marie Woods, the widow of Dean Cecil Woods, Jr. More will be shared in our January 2021 issue. May she rest in peace and rise in glory.



Remembering The Rev. Edward Charles Thomas Midyette III '66

By *The Rev. Harold J. Cobb, Jr. '90, D.D. (H) and
the Rev. J. Barney Hawkins IV, Ph.D.*

The Rev. Edward Charles Thomas Midyette III '66 of Beaufort, North Carolina died on June 1, 2020, surrounded by family at his daughter's home in Middleburg, VA. *The Washington Post* obituary said of this extraordinary priest: "He loved God, family, good scotch, telling stories, classical music, and the water—sometimes, but not always, in that order. Most of all, he loved God's people."

"Tom loved being a priest. It was worth his life! Tom's *joie de vivre* made all who knew him glad to be alive. He lived radical hospitality."

—The Rev. J. Barney
Hawkins IV, Ph.D.

Many of us knew firsthand Tom's love and encouragement. The Rev. Harold J. Cobb, Jr. '90, D.D. (H), rector of Grace Episcopal Church in Norfolk, VA, remembers well the Tom Midyette many of us knew and loved:

The Rev. Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. said that the Rev. Dr. Benjamin Elijah Mays was his spiritual and intellectual mentor. The Rev. Dr. Charles Thomas Midyette III was one of my spiritual and intellectual mentors.

I was introduced to Tom by the Rt. Rev. Robert W. Estill, bishop of North Carolina in 1986. Bishop Estill sent me to Tom as a supervisor for my intern year. We became lifelong friends immediately. We could not talk for six months and pick up the conversation, as if we talked an hour ago.

When Bishop Estill sent me to Tom it was more significant than one might imagine. Tom Midyette and St. Philip's Episcopal Church in Durham, NC would be the first predominantly white parish to have an African American intern in the entire state of North Carolina. This will give you an insight into Tom Midyette, he never made a big deal out of it, he introduced me to the parish as: 'this is Harold Cobb, he will be our seminarian.' He always referred to me as his seminarian.

When I was ordained in 1990, I would be the first African American to be ordained in the state of North Carolina, and there are three Episcopal dioceses in North Carolina, since before World War II. Tom Midyette is the reason I am a priest today. He taught me everything, including how to put on an alb the old-fashioned way where you tied first the hood on your

head. He gave me that alb, cassock and surplice and everything else I needed for seminary.

Tom Midyette is the one who told me you must go to Virginia Theological Seminary in Alexandria. He said and he was right: it is the greatest seminary in the Episcopal Church—and the worldwide Anglican Communion for that matter. He gave me seven books he told me to read and know: *The Episcopal Church teaching series*. He said you will have to know these for your GOEs. I said what is that—he had a way of softening difficult tasks! He said it is the General Ordination Examination and you will have to pass all seven to be ordained in North Carolina, and he said you will and I did. I also shared those seven books with the four seminarians I mentored in the Diocese of Southern Virginia, and they passed and were all ordained priests in the Episcopal Church. I have basically emulated and imitated Tom Midyette my entire ministry and it worked! When I was rector of my first parish and had my first awful vestry meeting, I called Tom, ready to quit and go get an M.B.A. Tom said: “No sir, tell me what happened,” and so began the many phone calls and visits of our lifelong friendship.

When I was a senior in Seminary, the Organization of Black Episcopal Seminarians was meeting at St. Augustine’s College in Raleigh, NC, twenty miles from Durham. Tom said, you must bring the Black Episcopal seminarians to our home for dinner. This is classic Tom Midyette! We took a bus to Tom’s house where he had a professional bartender and fifty people feasted on prime rib and salmon.

That event is still talked about today. Here’s why: Tom Midyette treated all people the same. That night at his home was the best experience that some African Americans had ever received in their lives. Tom really practiced in a gregarious, exponential, generous fashion: *God and The Episcopal Church*. Tom Midyette welcomed ‘all y’all.’ I will love Tom forever!

Tom preached my ordination sermon and the sermon at our wedding. Tom was one of the few white priests to receive an honorary

doctorate from St. Paul’s College, Lawrenceville, Virginia. He was an outstanding, remarkable, loving and blessed person. Amen.

Tom loved being a priest. It was worth his life! Tom’s *joie de vivre* made all who knew him glad to be alive. He lived radical hospitality. Young and old enjoyed Tom Midyette. My son, Crawford, was proud to have a Tom as his godfather—always funny and always serious.

My lasting image of Tom’s love and faith comes from a late August day many years ago. My daughter, Ellen, and I were visiting Tom and Peg in Beaufort, NC. It was a gorgeous, to-die-for day, so Tom invited Ellen and me to join him for an afternoon on his sailboat. Soon, the sky turned dark. The placid sea became choppy in the twinkling of an eye. The waves of the Atlantic were breaking against our small boat. Ellen looked at Tom and me and asked: “Are we going to die?” Tom immediately reassured us all: “No, Ellen, you are going to live forever,” as he sailed the great sea, laughed and loved!

Tom never missed such an opportunity to share the Good News of Jesus Christ. Yes, he loved the sea. For as long as I have known him, Tom owned a framed cross-stitch picture of a Breton fisherman’s prayer: “O God, thy sea is so great, and my boat is so small.” Tom always found room in his small boat for us all. We give thanks for the Rev. Edward Charles Thomas Midyette III, child of God, who will live forever.



The Rev. Edward Charles Thomas Midyette III '66 and the Rev. Harold J. Cobb, Jr. '90, D.D. (H).



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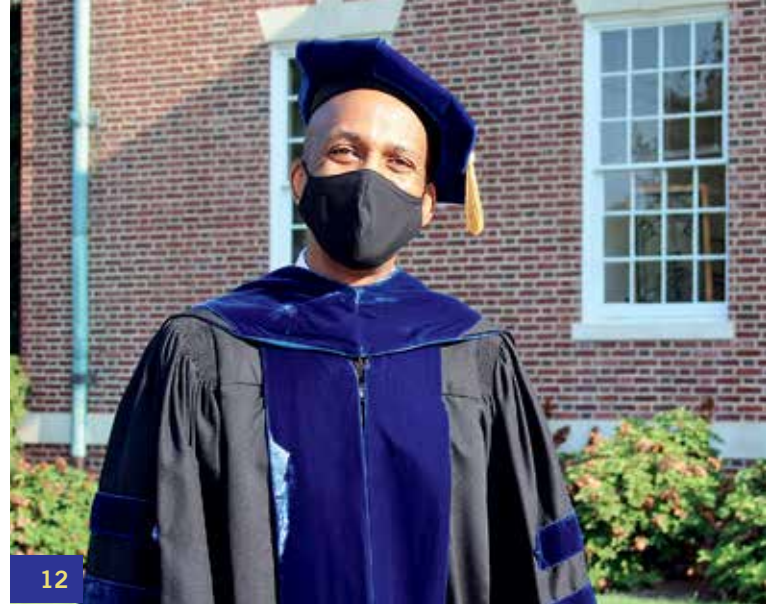
The Very Rev. Billy Alford '92

FACULTY AND STUDENT REPRESENTATIVES

Mr. Dillon Green '21

The Rev. Mark Jefferson, Ph.D.

The Rev. Kate Sonderegger, Ph.D.



8. Lara Case '22 and Zachary Baker-Rhodes '22; **9.** Jeremy Bradley '22; **10.** Molly O'Brien, administrative coordinator for CACS; **11.** Dillon Green **14.** Samson Mamour '22; **15.** Kimberly Dunn '23 and Stacey Carlson '22; **16.** Daniel Vijayathan Jeyaruban '21 and Timothy Rutherford '22; **17.** Glover, M.P.A., SHRM-SCP, vice president for administration and institutional effectiveness; **19.** Brandon Nonnemaker '23; **20.** Daniel Harris '21; Goldstein '21 and Ambrose Adega '21; **24.** The Rev. Katherine Sonderegger, Ph.D., the William Meade Chair of Systematic Theology; **25.** Omar Ro

PHOTOS: JOSH PAGET '21



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21; 12. The Rev. Adam L. Bond, Ph.D., Martha J. Horne visiting professor; 13. Jean Mackay-Vinson '22 and Donna Arendell '22; The Rev. A. Katherine Grieb, Ph.D. '83, the Meade Professor of Biblical Interpretation and New Testament; 18. Kathryn "Katie" 21.Laura Natta, Ph.D. '23 and Kathryn Wood; 22. Andrew Lazo '22 and Christin Ditchfield Lazo; 23. William Yagel '22, Meg Rodriguez '23 and Edwin Rodriguez; 26. Grace Casola '22.

THE FIRST DAY OF THE NEW AND DIFFERENT ACADEMIC YEAR

Because of the ongoing pandemic, most services for the academic year will be done virtually. One of the exceptions, however, was on Tuesday, September 8, 2020, when the community safely gathered on the Grove for the first worship service of the new year.

1. Jennifer Fischer '21; **2.** Adam Lees '22; **3.** Mitchell Felton '23; **4.** Lauren Bloom '22; **5.** Linda Dianno, vice president for institutional advancement; **6.** Olaph Mhema '21; **7.** Jacqueline Ballou, M.B.A., vice president for finance and operations.





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GOTHIC FRANCE PILGRIMAGE

MAY 21–31, 2021

As part of our Bicentennial Campaign celebration, VTS is offering an extraordinary pilgrimage through Gothic France in the summer of 2021.

This once-in-a-lifetime pilgrimage will include visits to: the Church of St. Pierre de Montmartre, the Sacré Coeur Basilica, the St Denis Basilic, guided tours of Notre Dame de Chartres Cathedral and Notre Dame Cathedral, Sainte Chapelle, the St Séverin Church, the Cluny Museum, Mont Saint-Michel, the Abbey of Mont Saint-Michel, Bayeux Cathedral, Normandy, and the D-Day Museum. The full itinerary is available at www.vts.edu.

For more information please contact
Victoria Elie at velie@vts.edu.