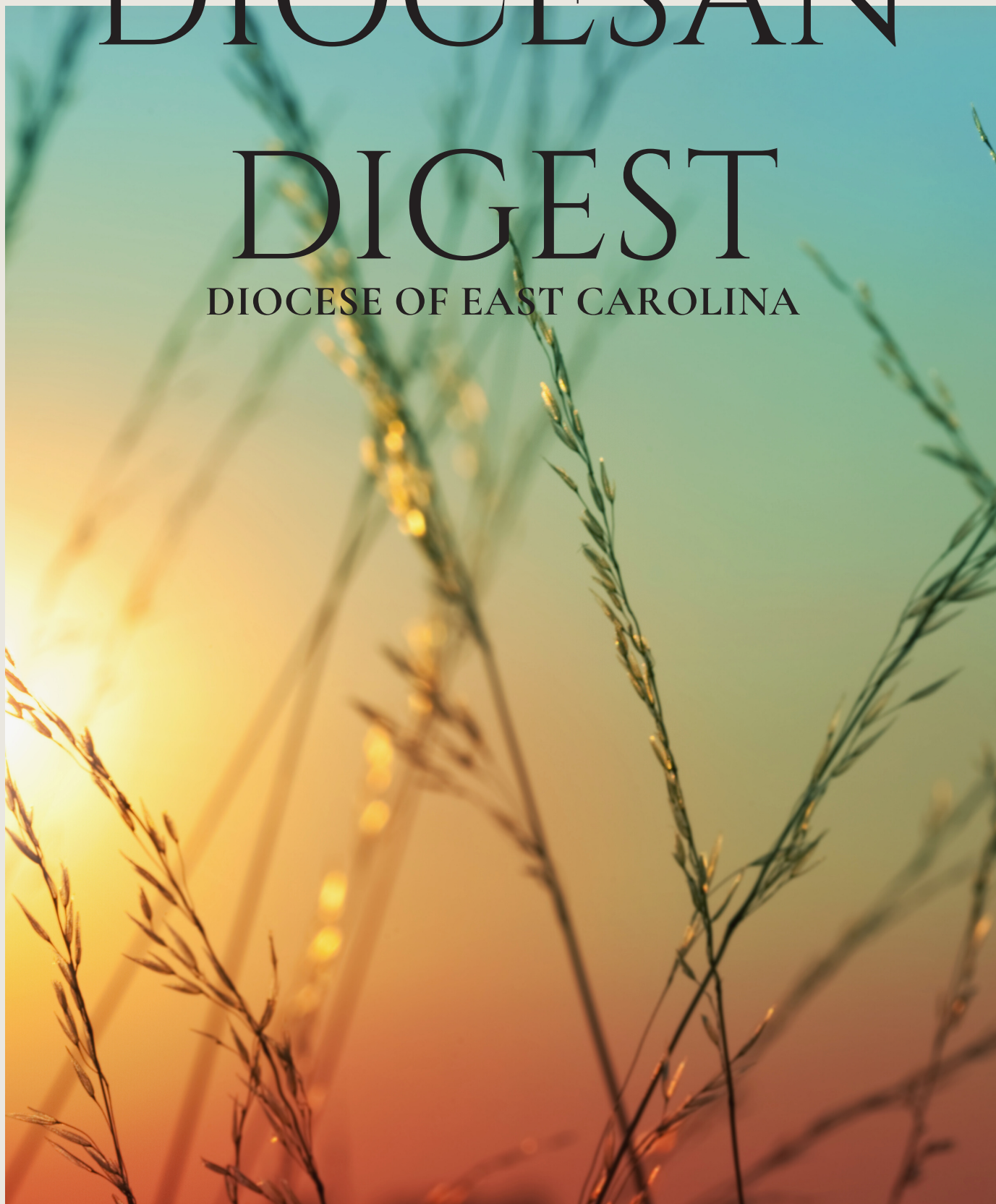


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SUMMER 2023

DIOCESAN DIGEST

SUMMER 2023

The Diocese of East Carolina

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A NOTE FROM THE EDITOR

Welcome to our Summer issue! This time, we're celebrating community and collaboration around the diocese as we get ready to welcome all people to our Episcopal revival this October: *Open House, Open Hearts: Extending God's Welcome in East Carolina*. Inside, you'll find stories of relationships being built amongst communities here in East Carolina, including updates from our Small Church Leadership Project and the work of ministry in action. You'll learn more, too, about our revival festival, meeting our headliners and learning about the faith, fun, and food in store at *Open House, Open Hearts*. May you feel the blessings of the Spirit today and everyday, and happy reading!

In Christ,
Sara

*Sharing our stories,
Sharing our life in Christ.*





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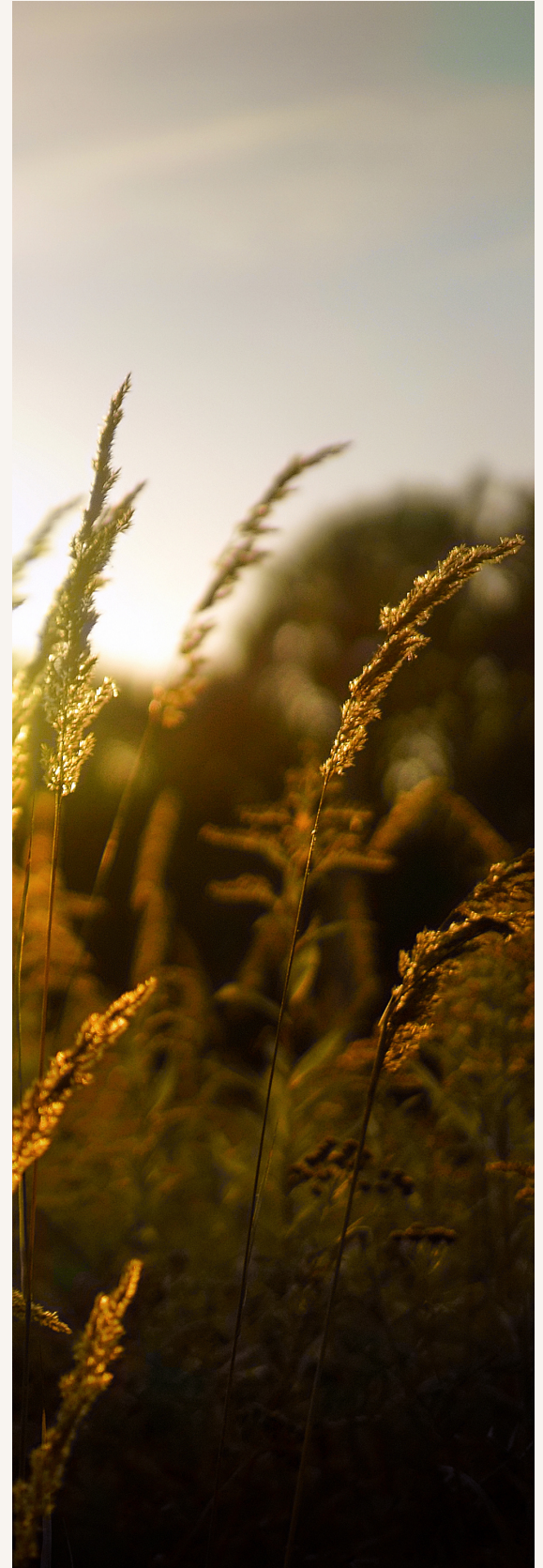
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OPEN HOUSE, OPEN HEARTS: A FESTIVAL FOR ALL AGES

Extending God's Welcome in East Carolina this October at Episcopal Farmworker Ministry

We cannot wait to welcome you all this October to our Episcopal Revival with Presiding Bishop Michael Curry! In this article, we're sharing more about what you can expect at Open House, Open Hearts that our revival planning teams are cooking up.

What's in Store for You at Open House, Open Hearts

Open House, Open Hearts promises to be a day of joy, where all can come together as we open our doors to celebrate God's work in our midst with the spirit of love and community. With activities and opportunities galore, there's something for everyone to enjoy:

Inspirational Musical Acts, Speakers, and Preachers: Prepare to be moved by headlining musical acts like Jenny & Tyler, Holy Heat, Termaine Hicks, and the charismatic Presiding Bishop Michael Curry, who will share their songs, stories, and faith to stir your heart.

Interactive Ministry Fair: Explore a diverse array of Episcopal and ecumenical ministry groups from across eastern North Carolina and beyond, all ready to welcome you to their booths.

Outreach Sharing Pavilion: Curious about the Episcopal Church or the Christian faith? Discover how the Holy Spirit is active in churches across Eastern North Carolina. This is a welcoming space for all, whether you're a lifelong Episcopalian or searching for a church home.



Extending God's Welcome in East Carolina



Quiet Retreat: Need a moment to relax? Enjoy a quiet and cozy space where you can chat with new friends, catch up on knitting, or simply take a breath.

Creation Care Station: Learn more about and contribute to the stewardship of our Earth

Youth and Families Tent: Engage in prayer and explore various types of prayer through interactive stations. It's a unique opportunity to bond with your loved ones in faith.

Storytelling and Testimonies: Listen to the inspiring stories of people and ministries from our diocese, demonstrating the power of faith in action.

Revival Worship: Cap off the day with an uplifting worship service that will be etched in your memory with Presiding Bishop Michael Curry's powerful preaching of the Way of Love and God's welcome to all.

Prayer and Worship: Throughout Open House, Open Hearts, there will be opportunities for worship and prayer, extending the invitation to express and deepen your faith.

Food and Fun: Savor a delicious array of food options such as our first Diocesan Pig Pickin' Contest, authentic Hispanic food cooked on site, various food trucks, and even various desert options (or you're welcome to bring your own!). Kids will get to enjoy face painting, playground time, and an inflatable obstacle course. Fun and laughter await around every corner!

For more information and to stay updated, visit the Open House, Open Hearts pages on our diocesan website. We have English and Spanish pages available.



*Extendiendo la Bienvenida de Dios
en Carolina del Este*

There's more to this event than just the activities. It's an opportunity to connect, share, and extend God's welcome to all. Whether you're deeply rooted in your faith or looking to explore, "Open House, Open Hearts" invites you to be part of a warm and welcoming community of faith in The Episcopal Church.

Mark your calendars for October 21, 2023 from 10:30 a.m.-5:00 p.m., and get ready to open your heart to a day filled with faith, community, and celebration at "Open House, Open Hearts." This Episcopal revival festival promises to be a day you'll cherish and remember, a testament to the enduring power of God's love and welcome.

WE LOOK FORWARD TO EXTENDING GOD'S WELCOME TO YOU!

MEET OUR HEADLINERS



On the pages that follow, get to know some of our headliners scheduled for Open House, Open Hearts. From speakers to preachers to musicians, we have something for everybody in store at our Episcopal Revival this October!



GET TO KNOW BISHOP CURRY

PRESIDING BISHOP MICHAEL CURRY

Official Biography provided by The
Episcopal Church

The Most Rev. Michael Bruce Curry is presiding bishop and primate of The Episcopal Church. At the church's 78th General Convention in June 2015, he was elected to a nine-year term in this role and installed in November of that year; he serves as The Episcopal Church's chief pastor, spokesperson, and president and chief executive officer.

Throughout his ministry, Bishop Curry has been a prophetic leader, particularly in the areas of racial reconciliation, climate change, evangelism, immigration policy, and marriage equality. The animating vision and message of his ministry is Jesus of Nazareth and his way of radical, sacrificial love, and he regularly reminds Episcopalians they are "the Episcopal branch of the Jesus Movement."

Widely regarded as one of the most dynamic preachers of our time, Bishop Curry was ordained a priest in 1978 and served parishes in North Carolina, Ohio, and Maryland until his election as the 11th bishop of the Episcopal Diocese of North Carolina in 2000.

Bishop Curry has been extensively involved in Crisis Control Ministry and the Absalom Jones Initiative, founding ecumenical summer day camps for children, preaching missions, creating networks of family day care providers and educational centers, and brokering millions of dollars of investment in urban neighborhoods.

The descendant of enslaved Africans brought to North America by way of the trans-Atlantic slave routes, Bishop Curry was born in Chicago in 1953. His father was also an Episcopal priest, and after Bishop Curry's mother died when he was young, he and his sister were raised by their father and grandmother in upstate New York.

Bishop Curry attended public schools in Buffalo, graduated with high honors from Hobart and William Smith Colleges, and earned a Master of Divinity degree from Yale Divinity School. He furthered his education at The College of Preachers, Princeton Theological Seminary, Wake Forest University, the Ecumenical Institute at St. Mary's Seminary, and the Institute of Christian Jewish Studies. He holds honorary doctorates from Yale University, Virginia Theological Seminary, Hobart and William Smith Colleges, and Episcopal Divinity School.

Bishop Curry is the author of five books and a regular guest on national and international media outlets. In 2018, Religion News Association named him religion newsmaker of the year.

A resident of Raleigh, North Carolina, Bishop Curry is married to Sharon (Clement) Curry, and the couple has two adult daughters, Rachel and Elizabeth.

Bishop Curry is the author of:

- *Love is the Way: Holding on to Hope in Troubled Times*
- *The Power of Love: Sermons, Reflections & Wisdom to Uplift and Inspire*
- *Following the Way of Jesus: Church's Teaching for a Changing World*
- *Crazy Christians: A Call to Follow Jesus*
- *Songs My Grandma Sang*

We are thrilled to have Bishop Curry with us for our revival worship service at Open House, Open Hearts! We also keep Bishop Curry, his family, his staff, and his medical team in our prayers for his upcoming surgery and recovery.

THERE WILL BE A SONG

Meet Jenny & Tyler, headlining musical act at our Episcopal revival *Open House, Open Hearts*



It started back in the Fall of 2004 when I was a freshman at the University of Delaware. It was my first weekend at school and my roommate invited me to take a bus with her to a local church on a Sunday morning. I remember the morning vividly. We approached the bus stop and there was Tyler, standing in the center of a small group of students, wearing khaki shorts and an olive green t-shirt. He was all smiles and it seemed like the other students were naturally drawn to him. I was anyway.

I picked a seat behind him on the bus and he turned around and introduced himself. We talked a little and then went our separate ways at church. I saw him around campus from time to time after that, but he never remembered my name.



I ended up getting involved in the Baptist Student Ministry at UD. Tyler was the worship coordinator and I told him I liked to sing. We started leading worship together, writing songs, and performing a bit around town. He helped me record a little EP in our dorm. It was the beginning of our musical partnership and eventually, dating relationship.

In the summer of 2006, we traveled to Nashville and made a record together.

I slept on an air mattress in a friend's walk in closet for 3 months and Tyler crashed on another friend's couch. We were young enough for it to feel risky and romantic. We loved it. We don't sell that record anymore, but it will always be special to us as it marks the beginning of our adventure pursuing music. We returned to school in the fall of 2006 and Tyler asked me to marry him. We all know how that turned out.

Fast forward 11 years and we're living in Nashville with our 3 daughters. We've lived a lot of life in the 10 years we've been in Nashville. We released a slew of records and one of those, *Faint Not*, actually did a little something, making it possible for us to tour with bigger artists and catch the attention of a few record labels; that was pretty cool.

Along the way, we've discovered - and leaned into - things we are passionate about, specifically the fight against human trafficking and modern slavery. We use our small platform to raise awareness and finances for International Justice Mission. Making records to benefit IJM (*For Freedom & For Freedom II*) and speaking about their work at nearly every show has helped us love others better. Being part of something bigger than the two of us has strengthened our marriage. The folks who buy those records and come to the shows have made an impact in the fight against slavery and it's an honor to have played some role in that.

There have been many highs and lows over the past decade. We've fought, forgiven each other, had babies, walked with family and friends through hard places, relied on that same family and those same friends to bring us through stretches of our own trial and darkness. The road can be lonely and put cracks in a marriage. We've come out the other side, able to see the fruit of those struggles and confusion.

And that's what this new record, *There Will Be A Song*, is about. It's about real life. About young love turning into something much deeper and stronger when life isn't perfect. About parenthood and wondering if we're doing anything right at all. About our longing for the brokenness and injustice of this world to be made right. It's about the calling of the Divine and the freedom that can be found in being still and allowing ourselves to believe that we are truly loved, cared for, and of priceless worth - made in God's image. That we're enough.

A few years ago, we signed a record deal and released our last full-length record, *Of This I'm Sure*. We love that record and the people at the label and the way they supported us and fought for us to succeed. It was released with all the bells and whistles. There was a crazy awesome photo shoot complete with professional styling, lots of money for PR, radio promotion, wardrobe support, interviews in NYC, you get the idea. It felt like we were getting somewhere.

But it didn't work out. Here we are back where we were all those years ago, an independent artist duo. And the thing is, we couldn't be happier. Our goal has always been to tell our own story and for that story to be honest and true. Hopefully that transparency will inspire hope in others and remind them that they're not alone. We see you. God sees you. You are enough.

And so, it only feels natural for me to write the biography to go along with this record. We've hired professional writers in the past and they've been amazing and surely more eloquent than I am, but this feels right (and I would love for my parents to know that I am using my English degree from time to time). Should you take the time to listen to *There Will Be A Song*, thank you.



MEET TERMAINE HICKS

HEADLINING SPEAKER AT OPEN HOUSE, OPEN HEARTS



Wrongly accused and incarcerated as a young man, Termaine Hicks made national news in December 2020 when he was exonerated and released from prison after a 19-year fight for justice.

After his dramatic exoneration and release from prison, Hicks spent several months easing back into society before beginning work on the non-profit **Selfless Thinking Expresses Potential that Uplifts People (S.T.E.P.U.P.)**, which provides resources for at-risk youth.

S.T.E.P.U.P. produces and promotes educational videos and also offers motivational speaking and training in schools, teaching positive decision-making, how to recognize bullying, and how to communicate with peers who carry guns, sell drugs, or who drink and drive.

The training also emphasizes the importance of physical fitness and a healthy lifestyle. “We empower youth to use their voice to prevent bullying and violence,” says Hicks about his presentations at schools. “This is my ministry. EfM gave me the skills, and this is my gift back to the world.”

We are thrilled to have Termaine with us at Open House, Open Hearts, and hearing his transformational story will be an experience not to miss!

Learn more about Termaine’s Story:

“Stepping Up with Termaine Hicks” from Sewanee

“How Education for Ministry changed Termaine Hicks’ life” from the Episcopal News Service



GET TO KNOW HEADLINING
MUSICAL ACT

HOLY HEAT

Based out of Wilmington NC, Holy Heat is a Rock & Soul trio that writes and performs original music across America. Pulling inspirations from many artists and bands and their respective genres from the 70s and 80s.

Holy Heat is seeking to implement new styles of rock, blues and soul into the forefront of today's popular music. What started as a collaboration between cousins Carlos Rising (vocals/guitar) and Christian Black (drums) quickly grew into a trio with the addition of Jonathan Damico (bass.) Since then, Holy Heat have been performing live in various venues and recording at School House Studio.

Established in 2022, Holy Heat seeks to continue to bring a fresh sound with the release of their third single entitled Holy Roller in July 2023 and available on all streaming platforms. You can find holy Heat on instagram @holyheatmusic

Recognize Carlos Rising? He was on the most recent season of NBC's The Voice.

CHRIS ADAMS

Born in Texas, Chris moved to Eastern North Carolina at 12 and has considered it home ever since. An ECU graduate, Chris went to seminary at Duke Divinity School and has continued to study theology and philosophy as time allows.

Speaking of time, he spends as much time as he can with his wife, son, two dogs and three cats. Very few things make him as happy as laughing with his family, but coffee, comic books, and professional wrestling come pretty close.

Chris loves being a parish priest and trying to offer as much of the hope and love of Jesus Christ as he can.





SKIP WALKER MUSIC

Skip Walker is a drummer, composer, producer, educator, and Episcopal Priest. He is a graduate of Boston's prestigious Berklee College of Music (the world's foremost institution for the study of Jazz and modern American music) where he studied with renowned drummers John Ramsay, Skip Hadden, and Ed Uribe.

Skip got his first break at the age seventeen touring Europe as the drummer for the New York based funk group "The Fatback Band," but after hearing great jazz drummers such as Art Blakey, Max Roach, Roy Haynes, Elvin Jones and Tony Williams.



Skip slowly began falling in love with Jazz. According to Skip, "although I started out being heavily in to R&B/Funk music, the more I listened to Jazz and studied Jazz History, the more I realized that this music is American History with its roots firmly planted in the African American struggle for identity, freedom and justice – I had to get into this music."





ST. PAUL'S, GREENVILLE; ST. TIMOTHY'S, GREENVILLE; AND OUR REDEEMER LUTHERAN

COLLABORATIVE VBS

By Juniper LaNunziata & Martha Whitesides

St. Paul's and St. Timothy's Episcopal Churches in Greenville have worked together to plan and execute vacation Bible schools for decades, to varying degrees of success. We were sad in 2020 to have to cancel VBS altogether because of the pandemic, and in 2021 we were still not meeting together indoors in any great numbers, so we created a sort of VBS-lite: the Festival of Creation. We took two days, one at St. Timothy's, and one at St. Paul's, and focused on different aspects of the Earth and how we can better care for the planet. It was a hit. We had a ton of people show up: children, youth, and adults.

In 2022, we were feeling more secure in meeting together indoors and we thought we were ready to revive VBS at our traditional time, between 9 a.m. and noon. The registration deadline came and went, and we had fewer than 10 children signed up, so we sadly pulled the plug on VBS 2022 and offered some other intergenerational events, including renting an inflatable water slide for Slide into Sunday School. We knew it was time for a change, but we weren't sure exactly what we wanted to offer.

By 2023, all the kids who had memories of VBS 2019 would mostly be middle or high schoolers by then, so whatever we were going to do would be brand new to everyone. We decided it was time to try an evening VBS, from 5 - 7 p.m. each evening, and include supper for the children and volunteers. We also incorporated Our Redeemer Lutheran Church, who has a much smaller group of children at their church, but had an eager core of volunteers.



When VBS 2023 arrived, we ended up with 40 children registered, and had over 50 volunteers, including both adults and youth. We were ready to call it a success if we had 20 children register, and we ended up doubling that! In addition to the core folks from our parishes, we also reached out to current and past preschool families, as well as a few organizations in our community that we partner with. Going outside our doors let us serve a wider swath of our community, and it let us tap into volunteers we otherwise would not have access to.

Providing a nursery was essential, because many of our volunteers had children who were too young for VBS and needed care while the parent was volunteering. In the past we had assigned people to a specific task each day of VBS, but this year we mixed up people's assignments. This way if someone only wanted to volunteer for two hours total, we were able to accommodate that. The low commitment level meant that more people were willing to volunteer, and we had some people who signed up with the intent of only volunteering on Tuesday, but ended up staying and volunteering for the entire week because it was so much fun.

Each parish has different gifts, and this VBS was a great time for them to be put on display. St. Paul's and St. Timothy's already knew what our gifts were because we have worked together for so long, but it was really great to see the gifts of Our Redeemer coming in to round us out. Our Redeemer provided dinner for 2 of the 5 nights. They also have a great group of crafters who were able to take on 2 big projects for us: altar cloths and a quilt. On the first night of VBS, everyone who was there put big paint handprints on some altar cloths, one for each of our communities. On the last day of VBS, we wrote or drew our prayers for mending the world on fabric squares, which the quilting club at Our Redeemer is turning into a quilt that can be shared between the three churches.

We used the curriculum Operation Restoration: Mending God's World, which is a Lutheran curriculum published by Augsburg Fortress. Both St. Paul's and St. Timothy's had decided to focus on creation care as an important value independent of VBS, so we wanted to incorporate elements of nature into each day, and the curriculum was very well suited to that.



Much of it we used exactly as it is written, and we supplemented it with other activities. We included an activity where the children went into St. Timothy's community garden, picking sweetcorn and eggplant and tomatoes, and sampling anything they found along the way. Of course the older boys got into the cayenne peppers and had to show off how tough they were.

We invited an expert from the Keep Pitt Fit Community Garden, and she offered a demonstration on vermicompost, using worms to create good soil. We brought in the program director of Sound Rivers, an organization that works for the health of the Neuse, Tar, and Pamlico rivers through education and advocacy. In addition to the programmatic connection to the environment, we decided that we needed to live out our environmental commitments, and where possible we decided to reduce, reuse, and recycle. It meant that we tried our best to only print out what things we needed, eschewing expensive (and plastic-heavy) craft kits for things we already had in our resource cabinets.

We served dinner on real plates each night instead of on disposable, thought the temptation was certainly there! Each day of VBS included scriptural teachings and a connection to a real-life practice. The children left with an imminent sense that they had work to do as menders of God's world. Each activity had a clear connection to the spiritual practice of the day, whether it was feeding hungry people, cleaning up the messes in the world, forgiving one another, praying for the good of the world, or finding rest and connecting with God, the rest of creation, and with one another.

The words of the Mender's Chant have been lingering in our heads since VBS concluded:
Menders, menders, 1, 2, 3.
Menders, menders, God and me!
Menders, menders, 1, 2, 3.
We can mend God's world!



Dropping in on

SUMMER FUN AT



SOUND TO SEA
Environmental Education Program

Dropping in on

SUMMER FUN AT



CAMP TRINITY

The Episcopal Diocese of East Carolina

JAZZ: AN INSTRUMENT FOR RACIAL HEALING



By Lloyd Brinson, Ginny Woodruff, & Rev. Skip Walker

Mid-August, 2022: Members of the recently reconstructed Racial Healing Commission of the Diocese of East Carolina were in retreat at Trinity Center at Pine Knoll Shores. Having endured the COVID-19 shutdown with minimal in-person contact, the new and former members talked and listened as each presented their thoughts about how to encourage people to look honestly into the past in order to improve the future.

The after-dinner speaker was a commission member, the Rev. Skip Walker, an unusual combination of Episcopal priest and jazz drummer. As he showed a PowerPoint presentation, he explained his vision of how to bring people together:

- “Well, you know, for me, putting race in perspective in America is all about music... especially jazz.
- “Jazz is America’s only original art form.”
- “Jazz is African American history and American history as a whole.”
- “Jazz is the story of the African American struggle.”
- “Jazz deals with America’s original sin of racism.”
- “Jazz offers real solutions for racial healing.”

His presentation was compelling and prompted the commission to revisit a pre-COVID idea that Skip and Rev. Fred Clarkson had of planning some type of annual event that would address issues of race that included jazz music.

The Rev. Walker, a graduate of Berklee College of Music in Boston, MA, is associate rector at St. Paul's Episcopal Church in Greenville, NC, a former online adjunct professor of religion at Methodist University in Fayetteville, NC, a pre-pandemic annual workshop leader and speaker on "Jazz, Spirituality and Race" at the Absalom Jones Center for Racial Healing in Atlanta, GA and former adjunct professor of jazz studies at the University of North Carolina at Pembroke.

Rev. Walker committed to reaching out to Dr. Catherine Meeks, a personal mentor, and the Founding Executive Director of the Absalom Jones Center for Racial Healing in Atlanta to bring her aboard for an annual event in a format that could move around the diocese in successive years making attendance reasonable for all members of the diocese. His relationship eventually led to Dr. Meeks agreeing to be the speaker for the first Jazz and Race Symposium, for which the commission is very grateful!

After much discussion, the Wilmington, NC in the Lower Cape Fear Deanery appeared to be best able to attract and host sufficient numbers of attendees to make the event cost effective and serve as a model for similar future annual events in other areas of the diocese. Several Wilmington area churches were willing to provide space and other accommodations. Because St. James has a large multi-purpose room that could handle 300+ people, it was determined to be the best location for the event. The St. James Committee on Racial Unity agreed to coordinate hospitality functions for the event along with other local congregations, including the evening meal. Dr. Meeks will be the keynote speaker in the afternoon followed by dinner. After dinner Skip Walker and jazz musicians from around the State of North Carolina will provide a presentation on the history of jazz along with music.

In addition to being the founding Executive Director of the Racial Healing Center, Dr. Meeks led the Commission on Dismantling Racism in the Diocese of Atlanta. She is the retired Clara Carter Acree Distinguished Professor of Socio-Cultural Studies at Wesleyan College and the author of six books and an inspirational CD. Dr. Meeks sees her calling as a teacher, highlighting those who have been marginalized. She holds a master's degree in social work from Clark Atlanta University and a Ph.D. from Emory University. She received the President Joseph R. Biden Lifetime Achievement Award and the Presidential Volunteer Service Award medal in 2022 and has recently received several honorary doctorates.

The First Annual Jazz and Race Symposium will take place Saturday, September 16 at St. James Parish in Perry Hall from 1:30pm-7:30pm. Dr. Meeks will be welcomed as guest preacher for the St. James 10:15 am Holy Eucharist Rite II service on Sunday, September 17, and all are invited to attend.

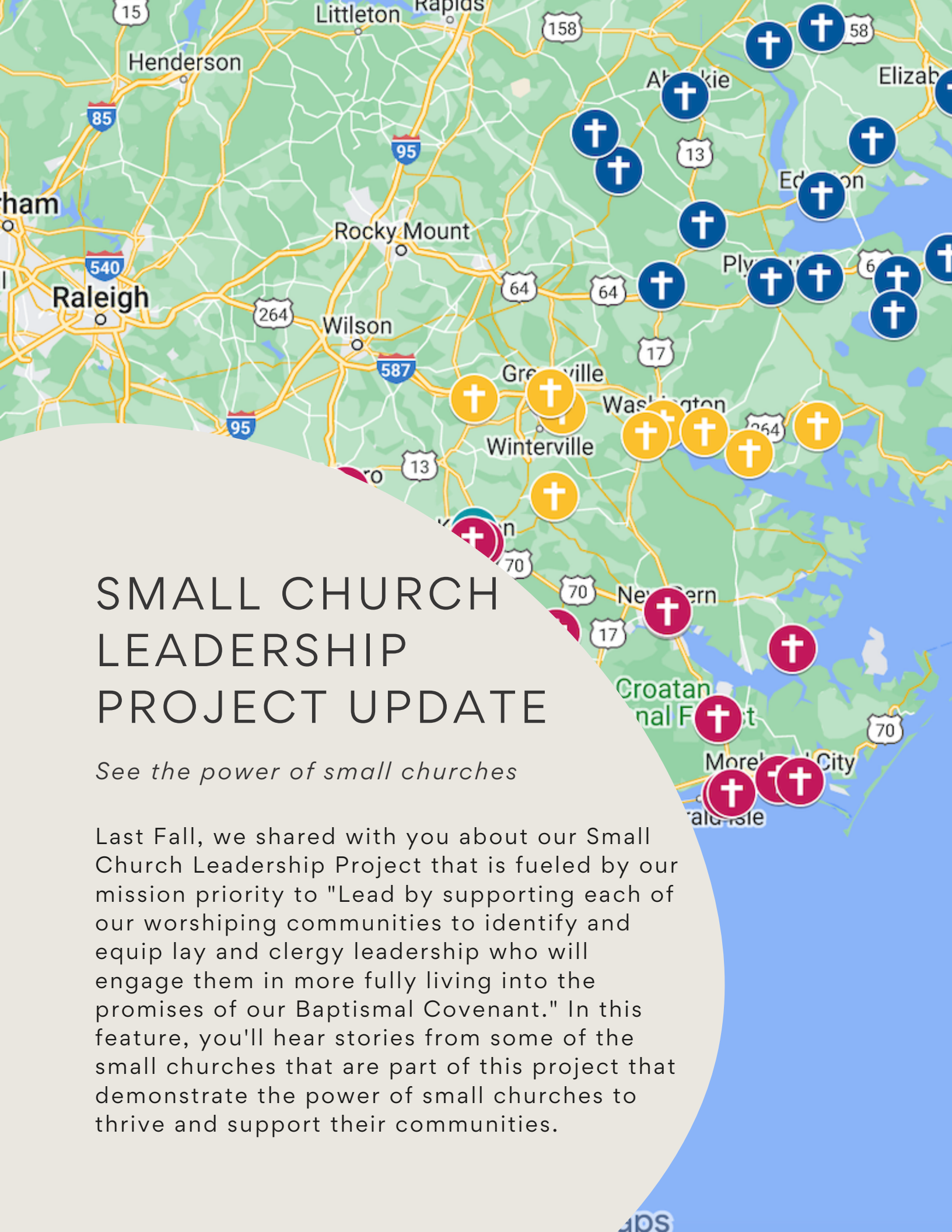
The Rev. Fred Clarkson, the Spanish Language Ministry Coordinator for the diocese and a member of the commission, noted at one of the planning meetings that an event such as a jazz/race symposium exemplifies the four mission priorities of the Diocese of East Carolina. In this endeavor, he said: "We are LEADING our communities into a LEARNING opportunity in order to HEAL wounds and SERVE our worship communities and their partners."

An important point noted in Rev. Walker's initial presentation was that such an event supports all four of the Becoming Beloved Community goals by:

1. **Truth-telling** – Telling the truth about our churches and race
2. **Proclamation** – Proclaiming the dream of Beloved Community
3. **Formation** – Practicing Jesus' way of healing love
4. **Justice** – Repairing the breach in society and institutions

We are excited to announce that this event "sold out" prior to the registration deadline. Stay tuned, as plans for the 2nd Annual Jazz & Race Symposium will be announced via News and Notes!





SMALL CHURCH LEADERSHIP PROJECT UPDATE

See the power of small churches

Last Fall, we shared with you about our Small Church Leadership Project that is fueled by our mission priority to "Lead by supporting each of our worshipping communities to identify and equip lay and clergy leadership who will engage them in more fully living into the promises of our Baptismal Covenant." In this feature, you'll hear stories from some of the small churches that are part of this project that demonstrate the power of small churches to thrive and support their communities.

ST. JAMES, BELHAVEN FOSTERING COMMUNITY CONNECTIONS

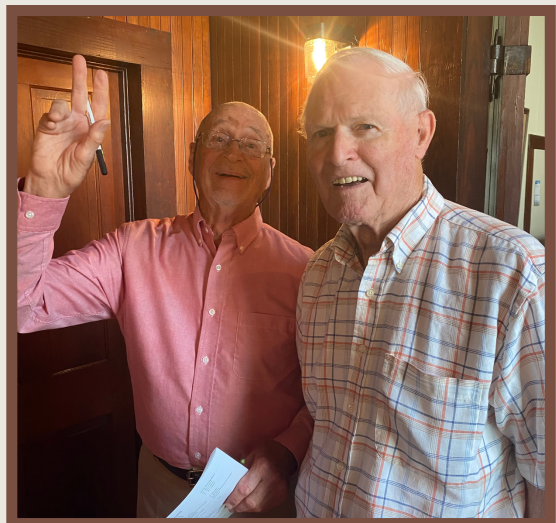
By Karen Wahab

The people of St. James Episcopal Church in Belhaven, NC, are known for reaching out to embrace their community. We might be small, but our community outreach has grown.

St. James was organized as a Preaching Station in December of 1866, situated near the town of Pantego. In May 1868, the station was organized as a parish and the congregation later moved to Beech Ridge Road. By 1900, a new church building was completed at the present site on East Main Street in Belhaven.

When our local hospital closed in 2015, our church decided to raise money for a rural health care fund. This fund was done in memory of Lt. Col. Thomas W. Wahab, USAF. Lt. Col. Wahab was raised in Belhaven and was very concerned about good health care for this rural community. So far this fund has helped a wide variety of people who needed medicines, dental care, eye care, scholarships for health care students, and assisted in providing a ramp for a disabled person.

For several years, St. James has also sponsored a summer Vacation Bible School program. This VBS program is open to the whole community.





Members of the congregation are key to the success of this program, as they volunteer their time, talents, resources, and efforts. This year, we had approximately 28 children. These children were so excited to be a part of VBS; our theme this year was “Jumping Through the Bible.”

Additionally, St. James has a Scholarship Fund, which supports our young people at Camp Trinity and in colleges or trade schools. We also support Teacher Appreciation Day with gifts, “Stuff the Bus” with school supplies, and provide needed supplies for the Hyde County Women’s Shelter. Last year, we started having a Red Cross blood drive. St. James is known in the community as a church that gives.



Our members take an active role in many other activities in the community. They volunteer at Martha’s Food Pantry, which hands out food every month. They deliver Meals on Wheels and help coordinate the running of the program locally. We are also active in the Belhaven Senior Club and help in many other projects. Every time we help in our various ways in the community, we are putting the church’s name out in the public.

St. James has only supply priests who take turns doing the Sunday services. This basically means that the people have to run the church. It is with a lot of gratitude and living in the presence of the Lord that the church is able to handle all of the daily challenges. There is a lot of purpose and meaning in this small church.



There is a small sign in the front of our church that says in several languages “Hate Has No Home Here.” We try hard to live up to those words.



CHRIST CHURCH, CRESWELL KEEPING COMMUNITY TOGETHER

By Ann Woodley

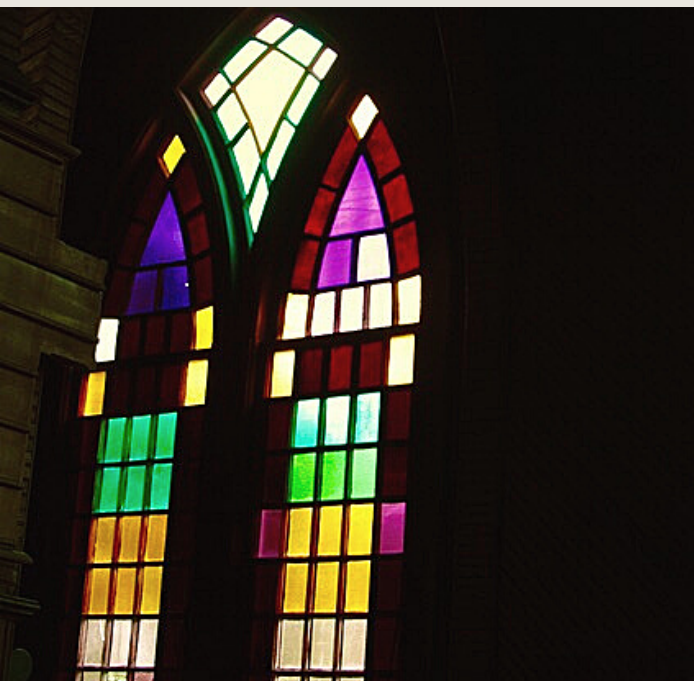


Last fall, one of Christ Church's beloved members, an 88-year-old parishioner, encountered an unexpected health journey that tested her spirit. As her community, we wanted to share our love and care, and we found a way to keep our community together for worship.

Following an auto accident, our parishioner was flown to ECU Health in Greenville, facing a long road to recovery that included an extensive stay in rehab. Following rehab, she came home with challenges: limited mobility and no transportation.

Recognizing her inability to travel or navigate stairs upon her return home, Christ Church devised a solution to rally around her with love and to keep our church family in worship together. We consulted with Galilee Mission to hold Morning Prayer at our parishioner's home in order to include her. We gathered around a dining room table to worship together every Sunday morning.

It was important to us to worship together and to adapt to the changing needs of our congregation, and by being able to be flexible in our worship space, we gratefully overcame the barriers that would have kept our parishioner divided from us in worship. This pivot enabled us to include our very loved soul.



ST. CHRISTOPHER'S,
ELIZABETHTOWN

JOINING HANDS

By Pastor Mark Gustafson & Maryellen Robeson



***"For where two or three come together
in my name, there I am with them."***

Matthew 18:20

The United Methodist Church (UMC) is going through a time of wilderness right now. There is a great theological divide in this country and in our churches regarding political issues, which has been distracting many of us from our primary Christian mission of making disciples of Jesus Christ for the transformation of the world. When Trinity UMC in Elizabethtown chose to split away from the United Methodist Church, a group who had worshiped there was determined to remain UMC.

I am a local UMC pastor with two churches in small towns near Elizabethtown. Through my friendship with Trinity's UMC Pastor, I found out about this group and met with them on November 30, 2022. We met at St. Christopher's, with Maryellen Robeson present. There, I heard their stories, filled with all stages of the grief process – sadness, loss, anger, and even a readiness to move on.





Towards the end of that night, I felt God's hand move. Maryellen, along with agreement by members of St. Christopher's vestry, offered St. Christopher's worship space for anytime earlier than their own 10:30 a.m. worship. The vestry also offered the entire campus whenever need be. The members of St. Christopher's recalled a time when their very congregation needed help from another congregation and God provided. Things fell into place.

We started worshipping in January at 8:30 a.m. and our little group has grown. The North Carolina Conference of the UMC worked with us on all the logistics and on June 4, 2023, we officially launched Grace UMC! It was a glorious day with our Conference Bishop Connie Shelton leading worship! We had four denominations present, all worshipping and giving thanks for the work of God's hands.

We are grateful to God and our Episcopalian friends that have made this possible. We continue to worship in the beautiful space of St. Christopher's, and we pray that our fellowship together can grow into many joint ministry opportunities!

Praise God from whom all blessings flow!





ST. PAUL'S IN THE PINES,
FAYETTEVILLE

THE CHURCH THAT WELCOMES

By Vera Guarino

FEARLESS LOVE

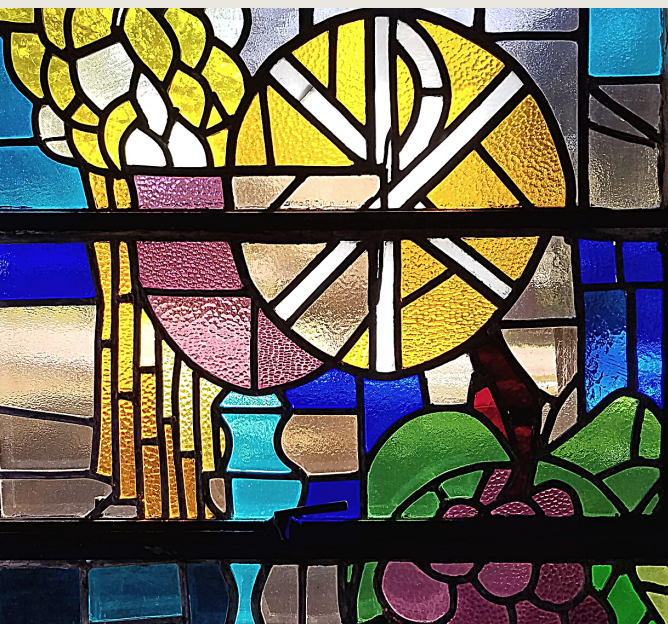


The Episcopal Church
Welcomes You.

St. Paul's in the Pines is a church that, like the sign says, "welcomes you". We truly welcome all of God's people, be they Black or White or Asian or Native American or multi-racial/multi-ethnic, be they "straight" or LGBTQIA+, be they Democrat or Republican or Independent, be they from another Christian denomination or a non-Christian faith tradition or spiritual but not religious or even agnostic/atheist, be they young or old, be they liberal or conservative. We are a very diverse church, embracing all of the above.

St. Paul's was initially founded as a mission church sponsored by St. John's Episcopal Church (also in Fayetteville), with a focus on serving the military since we are the closest Episcopal church to Fort Liberty (formerly Fort Bragg). It has long since become independent in its own right.

Although we are a small church, we have big hearts and are very loving. Our members are like a family, looking out for one another, being a support in times of both joy and distress. The COVID pandemic hit many of our members, but we have nevertheless survived. Members who have moved away or passed away still return for weddings, baptisms, and funerals.

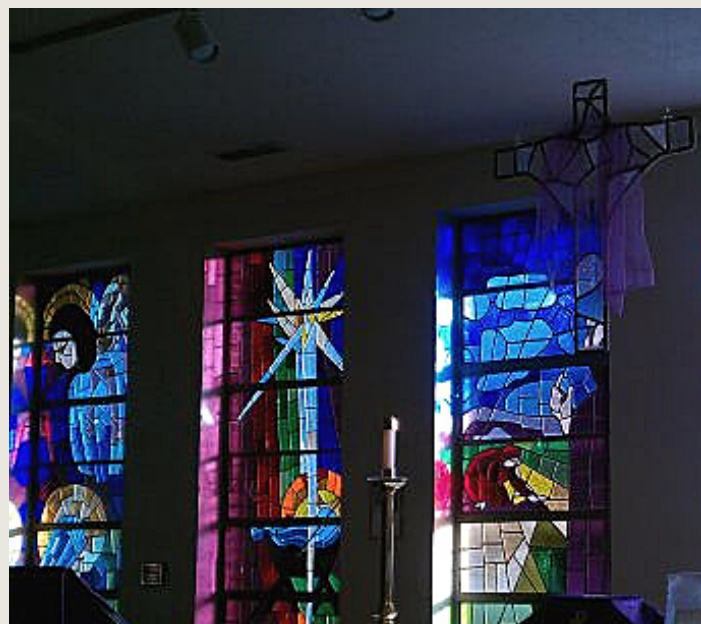


Our last rector, Fr. John Frazier, recently retired, but he still serves the parish in a supply priest capacity. He celebrates Eucharist on the 1st and 3rd Sundays, and conducts women's Bible study on Wednesday afternoons and Education for Ministry (EfM) on Sunday afternoons.

Many members are involved in Cursillo. One aspect that we are very proud of is the building's beautiful, vibrant stained glass windows, created by members of the church. And, of course, once one visits our grounds, it's easy to see where the "in the pines" comes from.

Also, we have a gifted pianist, Anastasia Bryant, who plays professionally, appearing at a number of venues - including Carnegie Hall, New York City!

We invite y'all to come on down for a visit, or even better become a part of the St. Paul's family! ALL are welcome!







By Rev. Fred Clarkson

Hispanic Heritage has touched and blessed us all, even those who are not Hispanic and think that Hispanic Heritage has nothing to do with them. Our nation's broader culture has absorbed elements of Hispanic Heritage to such a point that many have forgotten the origins of those elements. Keep in mind that Hispanic culture, like all cultures, is ever-changing and never static. Virtually no one in this country can go through the day without touching upon something we inherit from Hispanic culture. Here are just a few of the things we take for granted.

The Almighty Dollar is the Spanish Peso in Disguise

Have you ever wondered why we wound up with the English language but do not have an American pound as our currency? We only need to look at the fact that, during the time of the American Revolution only one country had standardized silver coinage with an intrinsic value: this was the first international currency widely circulated throughout the colonies.

That country was Spain, and its coin was the Peso. The symbol of the Peso is \$, which originated from imposing the line of the "P" from the Peso through the "S," the two consonants in the word. When the US became independent, it adopted the standard of the Peso for its coinage as the US dollar and the symbol. We have retained the symbol to this day. Similarly, Canada opted for its own dollar when it confederated in 1867, and even Australia did so in the mid-1960s.

Most American

The importance of modern Hispanic culture is due to the fact that most Spanish speakers live in this hemisphere. Spanish has the second greatest number of native speakers globally, after Mandarin. Hispanic culture has many influences, principally Spanish, Native American and African.

In contrast, English-speaking culture was more widely influenced by African culture because of the significant number of enslaved African people and genocidal tendencies toward the natives. The European settlers who arrived in the Americas from England tended to be families, while those who arrived in the Americas from Spain tended to be single men who fathered children with native women. This resulted in a more native bent for Hispanic culture, such as with food and language like avocado, chocolate, and barbecue. All these are elements of Hispanic Heritage that we enjoy, often without realizing their origins.

Similarly, since the Spanish were among the first Europeans to settle in America, many words we get from the natives come from Spanish, like maize, which is the Spanish word for corn. The actual word "corn" ironically comes from an old English word meaning grain. Most Hispanic culture is very much at home in the Americas, perhaps even more so than English culture, whose engagement with the continent's foods has been limited. Hispanic countries eat far more of the foods native to this continent, like yucca, various kinds of potatoes, and innumerable fruits. Meanwhile, the English and French speakers in North America hang on to European foods such as wheat and barley, which, while known and now grown here, are historically alien to this land.

Profoundly Christian

Historically, Hispanic culture is a melding of many influences, with two unifying factors: the Castilian Spanish language, and the Roman Catholic faith. Historically, various Protestant debates concerning Christianity and cultural practices, such as Santa Claus, have not influenced Hispanic culture. Hispanic culture is more influenced by native perspectives, such as ancestor worship; this translates to a profound connection to one's forefathers consistent with our Christian idea of the communion of saints. However, in general, the Hispanic view of the Christian story is relatively straightforward,



with most celebrations clearly biblically based, with Christmas and Easter centered around Jesus and the story of his birth and resurrection, respectively. Similarly, Christianity imbues the language in which the concept of resurrection is reflected in the existential form of "to be." Goodbye, "Adios," is an explicit commendation of a person to God. The daily greeting comes from acknowledging our relationship with the divine, which is why: "Buenos Dias" is plural. And cats have seven, not nine, lives because of the seven virtues and vices.

Prepare to Celebrate

Celebrations are central to Hispanic culture, from all the celebrations of the church year to the culturally specific Quinceañera. Celebrations build community and imbue life with meaning, which is why they are essential to Hispanic culture. They are part of the Heritage that is celebrated as histories and stories told, retold, and passed down from one generation to the next. Hispanic Heritage Month begins on September 15th - the Independence Day of most Central American countries - and lasts through October 15th, Indigenous Peoples Day.

This is a time to remember and celebrate all of the gifts we have received from Hispanic culture, and stay tuned: *Life In Vibrant Colors*, a new video series from Spanish Language Ministry is coming soon in News & Notes!

THE LEADER'S WAY

BY REV. CALEB LEE

Amongst the clergy, the narrative around effective continuing education is that it can be very hard to find. The past two years have changed that narrative for me. Two years ago I went to my first Mockingbird Conference and it did not disappoint. If you want to learn about Mockingbird Ministries please go to www.mbird.com. But, this article is not about Mockingbird. This article is about my continuing education experience this summer, and it was the best formation experience in my vocational life as a priest.

Last winter, a trusted colleague told me about a new program at the Berkeley Divinity School at Yale called The Leader's Way. I investigated the program and discovered that The Leader's Way at Yale is a certificate program including a week of intensive learning in residency, followed by seven months of online workshops and mentor-led small groups. Each participant chooses an innovative project to pursue in the local congregational setting. The program is a hybrid of personal, vocational, and congregational growth and innovation.

I decided to apply, trusting that my colleague's mention of it and the fact that I had been searching for something like it was a signal of the Spirit's nudge in my vocational life. This was what I had been searching for. In addition to my personal desire to do something new and interesting, I was also serving (still am) in a growing parish standing on the precipice of some really interesting possibilities.



The growth at St. Paul's is exciting, but we need to be faithful in facilitating and managing that growth, while, at the same time, caring for an historic campus and looking toward the future of our unique ministry in Wilmington through the lens of innovation. I received an acceptance letter a couple of months later. Fast forward to this past summer in late June.

I arrived on the Yale campus to find 50 new friends and colleagues from all across the country. We were warmly welcomed by The Very Reverend Andrew McGowan, Dean of Berkeley Divinity School. The Dean Emeritus of Canterbury, The Very Reverend Robert Willis, would be our chaplain for the week. Every morning we prayed together and received a homily from Dean Willis. Our days were jam packed with unbelievably enriching workshops from groundbreaking leaders in the church and beyond.

Topics included Truth Telling, Pauli Murray's Spirituality of Risk Taking, The Wisdom Pattern and the Inner Work Necessary for Innovation, Spirituality of Fundraising, Vulnerability and Innovation, Human Centered Design and Innovation, Leading Faithful Innovation, Emotional Intelligence, Leadership as an Act of Hope, and many more. We talked candidly about the changing landscape of the church. Dwight Zscheile reminded us that many in the church are in "A Time of Disorientation." Characteristics of this post-pandemic reality are the unraveling of inherited ministry models; a magnified experience of isolation, disconnection, distraction, and depletion; and facing challenges with no easy answers.

The Leader's Way gave me space to dive deeper into my own spiritual life, while also being immersed in an academically enlivened environment. I made lifelong connections with new and interesting people. I met one priest from the Diocese of Lesotho, just east of South Africa. His situation is much different than mine. However, it was good to hear each others' contexts and share experiences and new ideas. He is in my small group that meets monthly for the next 7 months.

One of the major questions that stuck with me over the week was: "What can we as Church offer that no one else can offer?" It was interesting to hear all the answers. I had a different answer at the beginning of the week than I did by the end of the week. Isn't that what it's all about? Growing in the knowledge and love of the Lord?

I am looking forward to my ongoing journey with this program!



The Leaders Way is made possible through the generosity of Yale donors along with seminal support from Trinity Church Wall Street Philanthropies and the Lilly Endowment Inc.

GOD'S PRESENCE THROUGH THE STORM

Rebuilding from Florence Continues as Storm Season is Active

As the East Coast braces for yet another hurricane, Florence's devastation in 2018 seems all too recent for many in the Diocese of East Carolina. Brent Meadows of Pollocksville and member of St. Anne's in Jacksonville, sees first-hand the continuing impact the storm has had on the lives of families in Craven, Pamlico, Jones and Carteret Counties.

Brent works as a volunteer chaplain with Florence Rebuild, a Baptists on Mission (BOM) multi-denominational project. The Florence Rebuild ministry has operated for 1,804+ days with 277 projects completed and 32 still underway in the four county area. To date, BOM has completed 1056 projects with a total of 6 total rebuilds throughout eastern NC.

Brent was asked in January 2022 to join this ministry as their chaplain to the volunteers from across the country who travel to New Bern to assist with this ministry.



BOM operates a facility located in New Bern that houses 94 volunteers for a minor cost of \$10 per day. College, church, and youth groups from all across the nation come to New Bern to lend a hand and to share God's love with those continuing to rebuild after the storm.

BOM provides volunteers hot meals for breakfast and dinner and a bag lunch to carry on work projects. The facility has a full kitchen, dining room, TV room, reading room and indoor and outdoor activities down times away from projects.

"I would argue that I have the best job there," says Brent. "I'm able to go out and visit with recipients of this ministry."

Brent's ministry of listening and connecting helps recipients process the damages and upheaval that they have experienced. Many share with Brent their background and faith journey, giving him an opportunity to minister to their souls and share God's love and grace.

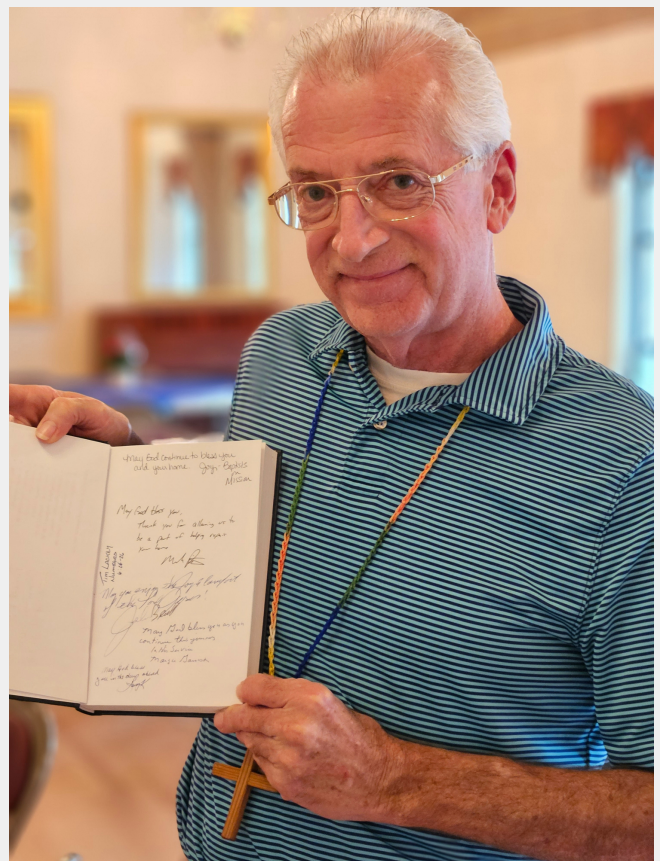


Brent explains that his main function is to deliver Bibles signed by the volunteers who completed repairs. In reality he delivers so much more. He assists with a place of worship and provides devotions for the visiting groups. He provides spiritual support and blesses the completed sites. He helps others see God's presence in the path of the storm.

"I'll let you in on a little secret," Brent says with a twinkle in his eye, "I think I get more of a blessing than the people I see, but I'm sure they may argue with me over that."

BOM's Florence Rebuild is a wonderful ministry that reaches across denominations and can use any support you can provide. If interested in being a part of this ministry, you may contact Joy Pickett at newbern.rebuild@gmail.com or call (252) 571-6347.

God bless each of you, and let's all continue to Share God's Love in ministry to others.



UPCOMING DIOCESAN EVENTS

[HTTPS://WWW.DIOCESE-EASTCAROLINA.ORG/EVENTS/](https://www.diocese-eastcarolina.org/events/)

Inspirational Musical Acts, Speakers, and Preachers: Be moved by songs, stories, and faith to stir your heart.

Interactive Ministry Fair: Explore a diverse array of Episcopal and ecumenical ministry groups

Outreach Sharing Pavilion: Discover how the Holy Spirit is active in churches across Eastern North Carolina

Quiet Retreat Tent: Enjoy a quiet and cozy space where you can chat with new friends, catch up on knitting, or simply take a breath.

Creation Care Station: Learn more about and contribute to the stewardship of our Earth

Youth and Families Tent: Engage in prayer and explore various types of prayer through interactive stations

Storytelling and Testimonies: Listen to the inspiring stories that demonstrate the power of faith in action

Revival Worship: Cap off the day with an uplifting worship service with Presiding Bishop Michael Curry's powerful preaching of the Way of Love and God's welcome to all.

Prayer and Worship: Express your faith with some time in prayer and worship in our chapel space

Food and Fun: Savor a delicious array of food options (or you're welcome to bring your own!), and kids will get to enjoy face painting, playground time, and an inflatable obstacle course.

Featuring



*Extending God's Welcome
in East Carolina*

SATURDAY, OCTOBER 21, 2023, 10:30 AM - 5:00 PM

We cannot wait to welcome you!

Our Episcopal Revival with Presiding Bishop Michael Curry will be at the Episcopal Farmworker Ministry in Dunn this October.

Open House, Open Hearts promises to be a day of joy, where all can come together as we open our doors to celebrate God's work in our midst with the spirit of love and community. With activities and opportunities galore, there's something for everyone to enjoy.

Whether you're deeply rooted in your faith or looking to explore, "Open House, Open Hearts" invites you to be part of a warm and welcoming community of faith in The Episcopal Church.

There's more to this event than just the activities. It's an opportunity to connect, share, and extend God's welcome to all.



SHARE WITH FRIENDS
www.diocese-eastcarolina.org/openhouseopenhearts

October 20-21, 2023

Entry Registration Deadline: October 8



**EPISCOPAL FARMWORKER MINISTRY
DUNN, NC**

Learn More Here



OLD- FASHIONED DESSERT CONTEST

East Carolina Revival | 10.21.23
@ Episcopal Farmworker Ministry

[Learn More Here](#)



OFFERED BY THE RACIAL HEALING
COMMISSION OF THE DIOCESE OF
EAST CAROLINA

1st Annual Jazz & Race Symposium

Jazz and Racial Healing intersect in many ways. Join us as we listen to Jazz and learn more about its history from The Rev'd Skip Walker. Dr. Catherine Meeks will share from her extensive involvement in Racial Healing in the larger Episcopal church and beyond.

**St. James Episcopal Church
Wilmington, NC**

September 16 - 1:30 PM - 7:30 PM

Dinner included.

Registration is sold out.

**STAY TUNED FOR DETAILS
ABOUT THE NEXT ANNUAL JAZZ
& RACE SYMPOSIUM**

Christian Formation Events & Opportunities 2023-2024



Fall Conference for Middle Schoolers

November 17-19, 2023
6th - 8th grades
Trinity Center

Please note events & opportunities may be subject to change due to unforeseen circumstances.

Creation Keepers

Children, Youth & Adults
Saturday, April 27, 2024
St. Mary's • Kinston • 10 - 3

Youth at Convention

February 9-10, 2024
9th - 12th grades
Greenville

REVIVAL

With Presiding Bishop Michael Curry
October 21, 2023
Episcopal Farmworker Ministry

Formation Leader Gatherings

Tuesday Evenings @ 7:30 PM or
Wednesday Afternoons @ 3:00 PM

August • 1st & 2nd October • 3rd & 4th
January • 16th & 17th April • 16th & 17th

Winter Retreat

January 12-14, 2024
8th - 12th grades
Trinity Center

Happening

March 1-3, 2024
9th - 12th grades
Trinity Center

Amazed & Astonished

Luke 2:41-52

Faithfully navigating relationships with your teen
Three Part Series
Tuesday Evenings
Late Fall
with Susan Peek, LCSA

New Beginnings

April 12-14, 2024
6th - 8th grades
Trinity Center



Continuing Ed Opportunities

Weaving Our Gifts
Center for Children & Theology
October 27 - 28 • Online or
Local Watch Retreat

Forma Conference
Forma & Virginia Theological Seminary
January 22 - 25, 2024 • Online
Watch Retreats Available

Christian Formation Conference
Kanuga • June 2024
Dates & Rates TBA

Adult Formation

The Good Book Club
Epiphanytide 2024
via Zoom

Adult Series for Lent
February - March 2024
via Zoom

Questions?

Contact:

Emily Gowdy Canady
Missioner for Lifelong
Christian Formation

egowdycanady@diocese-eastcarolina.org

For more info



October Formation Leader Gathering **2023** 3rd @ 7:30 PM • 4th @ 3PM

Intergenerational & All Ages Resources and Ideas



Sarah Bentley Allred, MDiv. will be leading this Formation Leader Gathering. Sarah is the Senior Formation Associate for Lifelong Learning at Virginia Theological Seminary (VTS).

**Scan HERE to learn more!
Registration Required to join
the Zoom**



Formation Leader Gatherings in the Diocese of East Carolina are open to anyone who leads or coordinates Christian Formation in their parish for children, youth, young adults and/or adults.

Gatherings are quarterly, shifting between outside speakers and group resource sharing and support.

**Questions? Contact
Emily Gowdy Canady,
Missioner for Lifelong
Christian Formation**



April 2024 Formation Leader Gathering

**Spring & Summer
Resource Sharing**

**Registration will
open in March 2024**

January Formation Leader Gathering **2024** 16th @ 7:30 PM • 17th @ 3PM

Tapping into Our Brainpower: Exploring Happiness Chemicals



The Rev'd Jess Elfring-Roberts will be leading this Gathering. Jess is the Executive Director of Episcopal Camps and Conference Centers. She is an award winning improv comedian from Chicago.

**Scan HERE to learn more!
Registration Required to join
the Zoom**



CREATION KEEPERS

ALL AGES EVENT

Saturday, 27 April 2024

10 AM - 3 PM

St. Mary's, Kinston



**REGISTRATION OPENS
FEBRUARY 2024**

**SCAN HERE
FOR INFO**



Sponsored by Lifelong Christian Formation



SHARING OUR STORIES, SHARING OUR LIFE IN CHRIST.



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