

thrive!



FALL 2018

EPISCOPAL
DIOCESE
OF CHICAGO
MAGAZINE

CCD takes flight
Ray Suarez keynotes convention
Clergy adapt to fast changing church



Letter from Bishop Lee



"I can't recommend strongly enough that our parishes take advantage of the College for Congregational Development, a two-year training program that ... can help participants think with greater clarity, focus and confidence about the functioning and future of their congregations."

The Episcopal Church, like most religious denominations, is in a season of change and transformation, and it is important that we, as faithful Christians, look this reality steadily in the eye. With that in mind, I welcome you to this issue of Thrive! in which every story speaks to the theme of adaptive change.

On page 2 you will meet Ray Suarez, who delivered the keynote speech at our diocesan convention. Ray is a distinguished journalist and faithful Episcopalian with longstanding ties to the Chicago area. A former parishioner at St. James Cathedral and father of a young priest, he says Episcopalians have to answer a simple question: "What kind of church do we want to be?"

The Census Bureau, Ray notes, projects that in 2044, the country's population will be about half white, a quarter Hispanic, 13 percent black and eight percent Asian. "If we, as a church, are successful in speaking to that new American mix, we'll be one kind of church," he says. "If not, we'll be on life support by the end of the 21st century."

Whatever our church looks like, it will need well-trained leaders, which is why I can't recommend strongly enough that our parishes take advantage of the College for Congregational Development (CCD). This two-year training program blends insights from the fields of congregational and organization development into a program that can help participants think with greater clarity, focus and confidence about the functioning and future of their congregations.

As the Rev. Andrea Mysen, our director of ministries, says in a story that begins on page 14, CCD is about "empowering members of our diocese so they are the ones leading and visioning and understanding what is possible in their communities."

Increasingly, these communities are led by priests and deacons who are either serving at more than one location, or who hold more than one job. This is a

significant departure for a tradition in which worshippers are accustomed to having at least one full-time clergy person in each congregation. On page 6 you can read about the how clergy at locations as different as St. Edward and Christ in Joliet and St. Chrysostom's and Grace in Chicago are dealing with the challenges inherent in this kind of work. You will also learn how some priests and deacons are using skills acquired in their secular jobs to advance the mission of the church.

The demographic changes Ray Suarez speaks of are already evident in our region, and they affect the work of diocesan institutions in different ways. I am pleased that Matthew Berryman has agreed to lead Episcopal Charities and Community Services in responding to these changes as its new executive director. Matthew, who is profiled in a story on page 19, was previously executive director of Reconciling Ministries Network, a national, faith-based organization working for the full inclusion of LGBTQ people in the United Methodist Church.

"I am not new to the idea that those systems of power and privilege exist and they deeply impact who lives in oppression and who doesn't," Matthew says. He has begun his work by doing dozens of one-on-one interviews with staff, mission partners and donors, and what he has learned will help us to shape ECCS into an ever more effective organization.

The Rev. Barbara Seward makes the closing argument for participating in the College for Congregational Development in the back page column on page 21. Barbara is part of the consultants network that supports congregations involved in the college. Her job, she writes, is "to deliver the opportunity for each community to discover, ask questions and move toward what God is calling them to be."

And that is work that should involve us all.

In Christ, + Jeffrey

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On the Move 14

Participants in the College for Congregational Development (CCD) learn new ways of analyzing their faith communities and catalyzing change. A recent CROP Hunger Walk stopped at St. Mary's, Crystal Lake, which has a popular dinner ministry. CCD helps congregations identify potentially transformative activities.

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On our cover

Marge Bjorkland, a parishioner at St Paul's, Peoria, brought Buddy, a red-tailed hawk, to the parish's pet blessing. Photo by David Zalaznik. CROP Hunger Walk photo above by Michael Schmidt.

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SAVE THESE DATES

Holy Solitude Retreat

March 22-23

Nicholas Center

Fierce Conversations

May 12-15

Nicholas Center

College for Congregational Development

June 23-29

Loyola Retreat and Ecology Campus
Woodstock, IL

Camp Chicago at Camp Stronghold

June 23-28 (staff week); June 30-July 5;

July 7-12; July 14-19

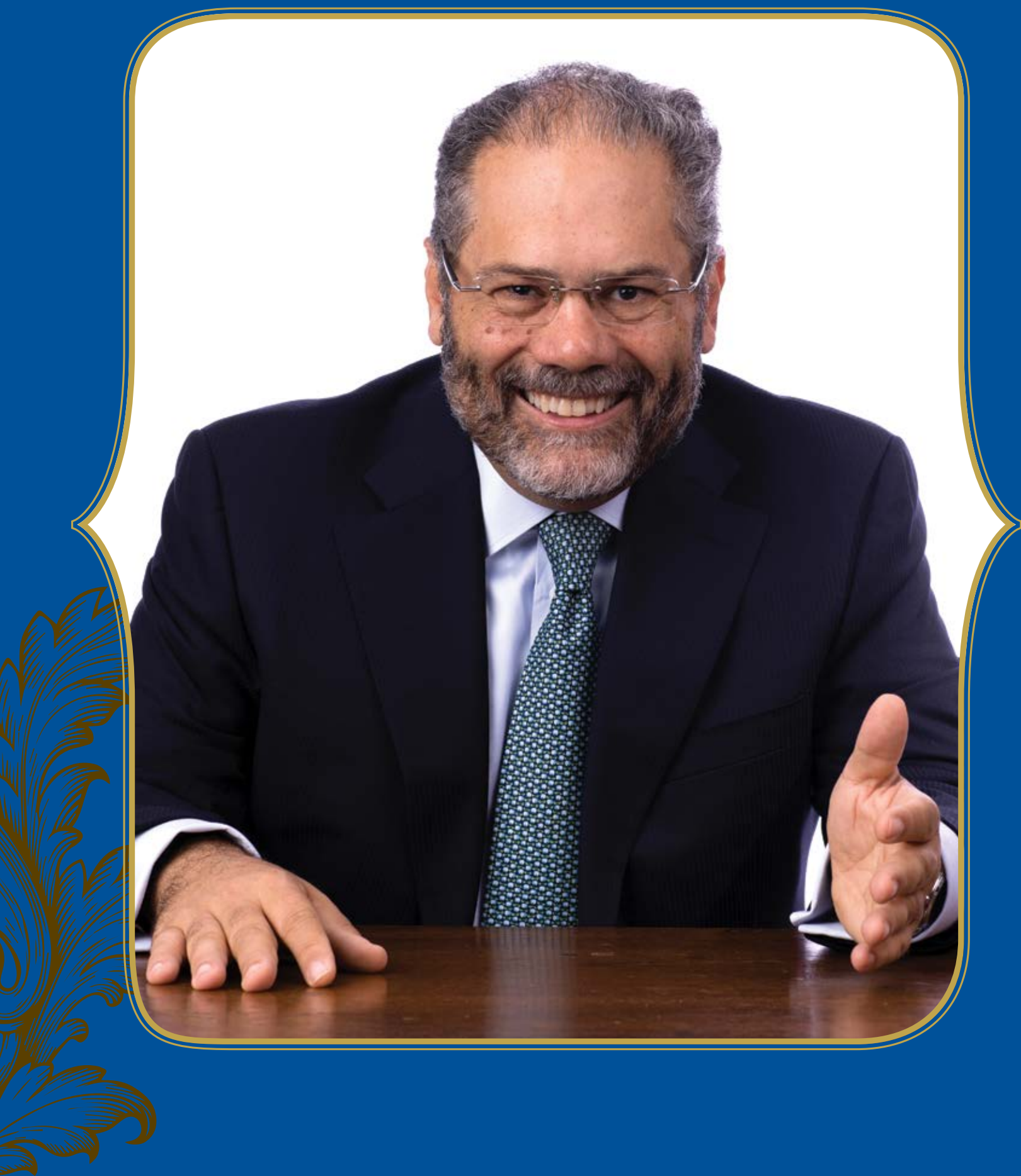
Oregon, IL

Living Compass Congregational Wellness

February 28-March 2; April 25-27;

July 11-13 (teen and family-focused)

Nicholas Center



Tipping Point

{ By Lu Stanton León }

a demographic tipping point is fast approaching the United States. In 2044, minorities will make up the majority of people living in the country. What will a majority-minority population mean to the church? How do we invite and embrace different people and traditions?

"It's going to have a tremendous bearing on the future of the Episcopal Church," says Ray Suarez, a broadcast journalist, scholar and author who discussed the issue in his talk, "Who's in the Pews in 2050?," the keynote address at this year's diocesan convention.

"What kind of church do we want to be?" asks Suarez, a lifelong Episcopalian. "If we, as a church, are successful in speaking to that new American mix, we'll be one kind of church. If not, we'll be on life support by the end of the 21st century."

The Census Bureau projects that in 2044, the country's population will be not quite half white, one quarter Hispanic, some 13 percent black, eight percent Asian and almost four percent multiracial. The minority population is projected to rise to 56 percent of the total in 2060, compared with 38 percent in 2014.

"It's not all a question of demographics," Suarez says. "It's also a question of the health of a society. I think people envisioned one kind of country when President Obama was elected. It didn't really work out in the way people thought. We are not ready to be that next America yet. If the last two years show us anything, it's that right now it's not happening. When I look at

the worst of it, I think the change to the next America is going to be more contentious than anyone ever imagined."

A native of Brooklyn and of Puerto Rican descent, Suarez and his wife, Carole, who is Jewish, currently live in Philadelphia, but home is in Washington, D.C., where he attends St. Columba's Episcopal Church. For at least three decades he has had a front-row seat to American politics, including hosting NPR's "Talk of the Nation" from 1993–1999, serving as a senior correspondent at PBS "Newshour" from 1999–2013, and hosting "Inside Story" on Al Jazeera America until 2016. Most recently he was the John J. McCloy Visiting Professor of American Studies at Amherst College. He also has worked as a radio reporter in London and Rome, and as a television correspondent for CNN in Los Angeles and WMAQ-TV in Chicago.

Suarez is much in demand as a public speaker and has been awarded 15 honorary doctorates from colleges and universities. He is the author of several critically acclaimed books including "Latino Americans: The 500-Year Legacy That Shaped a Nation," a companion volume to the 2013 documentary series for PBS.

His perspective on the church's future draws heavily on the long view he has cultivated during his career in journalism.

"There's too much handwringing about the church is too this or too that. The church is too white or the church is too rich," Suarez says. "We can't change 1950, or 1850 for that matter. All we can fix is what happens from now on. It's not something that happens overnight. We have a liturgical tradition. We have an origin story and have created a church that is largely high

A decorated journalist and author, convention keynote speaker Ray Suarez is a former member of Brent House and St. James Cathedral.



income and highly educated — more than many other churches. What are we going to do, wring our hands about that? That's what we are. But we have a new group of people to talk to, to love and make part of our story."

Suarez recently shared those thoughts at a meeting of the Consortium of Endowed Episcopal Parishes (CEEP).

"I told the attendees I had a rant, and unfortunately I was going to lay it on them. I mentioned that I had been going to different kinds of national church meetings for a long time, and there was this weird collision between people who love and treasure the things that make us, us. In the very next breath they talk about how we have to get rid of this and that to welcome people who wouldn't necessarily like what we do, and the way we do it. That tension is never resolved."

The meeting left Suarez confident and hopeful about the church's future, in part due to attendees' willingness to explore difficult questions.

"The exciting thing about CEEP was the widely held conclusion that we don't have to endlessly apologize for who we are. Recent data from Pew (Pew Research Center) and PRRI (Public Religion Research Institute) indicate that Episcopalians are among the highest income and highest education

level religious groups in America. Those are two variables that correlate badly with religious practice and congregational affiliation. It's an accident of history that the story ended up this way in America. The Anglican Church is not a 'rich man's church' in Uganda, Nigeria, or Lesotho. I've been lucky enough to worship in these places, receiving communion with a broad spectrum of worshippers.

"But we do have elaborate liturgy, a learned and extensively trained clergy, and a relaxed attitude toward the fundamentals of the faith. The conclusion was that we have to go deeper, expecting more from congregational life, avoiding shallow commitment — it was all fascinating. These are people who are thinking and asking the hard questions about how to make the church open to everyone, about the liturgy, about the music."

CHICAGO CONNECTIONS

Suarez's father, who was born in Puerto Rico, was Roman Catholic and his mother was Methodist. They dated as members of the Young People's Fellowship in their neighborhood Episcopal Church in Brooklyn.

The Episcopal Church became important to him at an early age.

"I love the hymnal. I love the prayer book. I love the preaching," Suarez says. "It's just the place that speaks to me in ways still, in ways that other things in my life don't. When I was in confirmation class, my teacher asked, 'Do you feel happy every week when you leave church?' Thinking it was the right answer, several of the kids said 'Yes, yes!' Then he said, 'If you leave happy every week, you weren't paying attention.' And I knew that was true."

After earning a BA in African history from New York University, Suarez received an MA in social science from the University of Chicago, where he was a winner of the Benton Fellowship in Broadcast Journalism and a recipient of the university's Professional Achievement Award. He was a founding member of the Chicago Association of Hispanic Journalists.

"While in Chicago, I was a weekly member of the St. James Cathedral congregation, and my son and oldest child, Rafael, was baptized there," Suarez says. "I was involved in the chaplaincy while I was at the University of Chicago, and I told my son when he headed there in 2007, 'If you ever get lonely, or just need someone to talk to, there's a place you can

go. And he listened to me! He went to Brent House [the Episcopal campus ministry at the University of Chicago] and was a student leader and very active member there. Our connection to Chicago is pretty strong.”

Rafael now works in Chicago. Suarez’s middle child, Eva, is an Episcopal priest serving at St. James’ Church in New York City as the Rockwell Fellow, an apprenticeship for recently ordained clergy. His youngest child, Isabel, is in her sophomore year at the University of Vermont in Burlington.

All three of his children consider themselves Hispanic.

“They love and acknowledge their Jewish heritage, loved Seders and blowing people’s minds with how much Hebrew Bible they knew — with those names, and the assumptions that attach to them. But each, in their own way, considers themselves Puerto Rican,” Suarez says. “My youngest daughter is active with Alianza Latina at college. My middle daughter is getting her Spanish up to preaching level. My son, when we were cycling across Croatia the other summer, would stop at major historic sites and unfold a Puerto Rican flag to represent in a place where, let’s face it, they don’t see that flag very much!”

THE CHANGING EPISCOPAL CHURCH

Suarez offers his own experience as witness to some of the demographic changes in his lifetime.

“When I was growing up I went to four Episcopal churches in Brooklyn,” Suarez says. “One is now an all-West Indian congregation; one is a Korean congregation; one is nearly empty and lives on its endowment; and one of them is closed. In that is the history of the Episcopal Church. We have the highest percentage of foreign-born people living in the U.S. in more than a century. And the church? We are moving as places move, and changing as places change, and we will continue to do so. We have to embrace this moment.

“I’m by nature an optimist and by nature a patriot,” Suarez says. “I think there is certainly a lot of evidence of people being very worried about the journey we need to take to make it to 2044. What can the church do? The church can be the church. Remind people that Jesus didn’t play favorites, that all kinds of people are called and that we are supposed to be opening our arms to the world. I think there are a lot of congregational models around the country.

“Why do many churches struggle to be diverse? Because it is hard,”

“In a lot of newsrooms, people talk about religious people as if they are strangers. And they are, because they don’t know them or understand them.”

Suarez says faith and the Episcopal Church have played a big role in his life and career.

“It has made me a better reporter,” he says of his faith. “Would I have been a bad reporter if I were someone who hadn’t been in church every week? I would never say that. That’s silly. It’s made me a better human being. It’s a very human craft. It means deep caring. It requires care of people who are strangers to you. A lot of reporting, unfortunately, uses people up. I won’t exploit people who have allowed me into their lives — I try not to.

“You cannot understand America fully unless you understand religion. It has always kept me alive to other possibilities than the ones being talked about in the biggest voices in our culture. In a lot of newsrooms, people talk about religious people as if they are strangers. And they are, because they don’t know them or understand them.”

Suarez says. “It is hard work for those who have done things a certain way to change, who have worshiped in a certain way, who have talked to, and about God in a certain way.

“We’re doing a lot better in looking like America. Arizona and Southern California have growing Hispanic congregations. You’ll find them in Florida and Texas. Along with those Sun Belt places, we have old congregations in places like Brooklyn and the South Bronx and Boston that have changed because the neighborhoods have changed. What I heard in the 60’s and 70’s was, ‘Our churches are in all the wrong places.’ No, they were the right places; we just didn’t know it yet. We need to be ready to nurture those congregations in their developing years, in many cases, as mission churches. I think that pays off.”

Who and what will the church become?

“Years of challenge are ahead for the country and our church. Will we limp into that next America, into 2044, or will we sprint?” ✚

Adaptive Clergy Hear New Calls

By Kathleen Moore

As the church adapts to serve a changing world, the traditional model of a single congregation worshipping in a single building, with a single full-time priest is no longer the norm. More than half of Episcopal congregations do not have a full-time priest, and more clergy are bi-vocational or serve more than one community. In the Diocese of Chicago, these new models are contributing to new, vibrant ministries that are reshaping the way the church exists in the world.

In his role as rector of St. Edward and Christ Episcopal Church in Joliet, the Rev. Richard J. Lundgren leads two worshipping communities, each shaped by the kinds of demographic and economic changes that have required churches to adapt new strategies in pursuing the mission of the gospel.

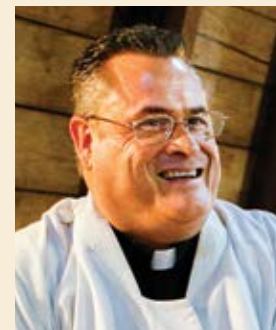
The original Christ Episcopal Church was established in a large building in downtown Joliet

in the 1830s. St. Edward's was later founded as its chapel, but due to growth on the west side of town, became a parish in its own right in the 1950s. By 2004, the dwindling congregation of Christ Church realized it could no longer afford to maintain its building, and so the two churches reunited.

"They located to the St. Edward's campus, because it was a more manageable, smaller space," Lundgren says. "The idea was to use money from the sale of the downtown property to eventually buy another campus."

The property they bought, was "a little farther west than we had intended," says Lundgren, who was associate rector at the time of the purchase. "It's in Kendall County — the first Episcopal Church presence in that county."

While Kendall County had been one of the fastest growing counties in Illinois, the 2008 financial crisis saw a slowdown in building and population growth. "We decided at that point growth was



"I'm very fortunate that where I live is equidistant between the campuses, so I make a big triangle each Sunday — about 13 or 14 miles from each place. Some Sundays are a little crazier than others."

— the Rev. Richard J. Lundgren





going to be slow, so we made the decision that campus would also operate as a retreat facility,” Lundgren says. “We get a number of groups each year — a whole variety of different types of groups.”

The property, now known as the Christ Campus, includes an original 1903 Sears Model Home and a barn built in the 1950s. (“It’s got great acoustics, but no longer has animals,” Lundgren says. “Though we have had parishioners ask, ‘Why can’t we get some animals?’”) Parishioners tend an organic vegetable garden and donate the harvest of fruit and vegetables to two food pantries.

Like many church plants or re-plants, the community in Kendall County faced the challenge of developing a worshipping community without a traditional church building. After experimenting with various times and locations, congregants eventually settled on Sunday mornings at 11:00 a.m. in the double-wide trailer they transformed into their chapel.

In the midst of this long season of change, the Rev. Kathryn White, who was then rector, announced in 2016 that she planned to retire. “The parish wasn’t in a position to hire another clergy person,” says Lundgren. “They asked if I would consider being rector.” After a full search process, Lundgren was called as rector, pastoring to both campuses.

“So right now on a Sunday morning I’ll be at the 7:30 a.m. and the 9:15 a.m. services at the St. Edward’s campus, and I’ll be able to stay for about 15 minutes of coffee hour before heading to Christ Campus,” Lundgren says. “I’m very fortunate that where I live is equidistant between the campuses, so I make a big triangle each Sunday — about 13 or 14 miles from each place. Some Sundays are a little crazier than others. The weather can be dangerous at Christ Campus — once I got stuck in a snow drift.”

Lundgren has reason to put in the extra miles, as the Christ Campus community is growing. “Just in the last six weeks we’ve grown by four families,” he says. “And we had a baptism — a little two-year-old boy. It’s a newer family, and he’s a plumber who worked on the facility. So it was very cool to have his son be baptized.”

Despite the excitement of a growing worship community, pastoring to a parish with two campuses does have its challenges. “I don’t have children, but I kind of get a little bit of a sense of what it must be like when you have an older kid and a younger kid, and one gets a little jealous,” Lundgren says. “So what I’ve discovered is we have to do something at both campuses — so we paired the renovation of the barn at Christ Campus with the renovation of the parish hall at the St. Edward’s campus.”

The model of clergy serving two campuses relies on dedicated and dependable lay leadership. Lay leaders take care of all the set-up and breakdown at both campuses each Sunday. “When I walk in, it’s ready to go,” Lundgren says. “I don’t stay until everything’s closed up and locked up — lay leaders take care of that as well. That’s been really helpful. We’ve been empowering a lot of lay folks to do things, and I really appreciate that.” Recently, the newly-formed Spirituality and Wellness Team organized an all-parish retreat. “I was able to just be a participant,” Lundgren says. “And I got to be fed.”

“When I walk in, it’s ready to go. I don’t stay until everything’s closed up and locked up — lay leaders take care of that as well. That’s been really helpful. We’ve been empowering a lot of lay folks to do things, and I really appreciate that.”

Lundgren would like others to find inspiration in this model of a startup campus connected to an established campus sharing a parish identity, but cautions that this kind of work requires patience.

“At times there has been tension with people saying the Christ campus is not growing fast enough, but you have to give it time,” Lundgren explains. “I think we’re not going to see the fullness of the pictures until we’ve been there for about 20 years.”

A BLENDING OF SKILLS & OPPORTUNITY

Spending time in bi-vocational ministry allowed the Rev. Jihan Murray-Smith to gain experience and hone skills she now brings to full-time ministry as deacon and director of youth ministries at St. Chrysostom’s Episcopal Church and chaplain at St. Chrysostom’s Day School.

Before being called to St. Chrysostom’s, Murray-Smith served as deacon at Church of the Atonement and at Messiah St. Bartholomew in addition to managing her own business. Her company, Tea & Crumpets, provides etiquette, job readiness training and public speaking skills to young people. “I taught public speaking and job readiness to middle school through college age students,” she says. “And I would get contracts with schools and other organizations. In addition to that, I served as a deacon at two parishes. I really loved serving the two simultaneously.”

Murray-Smith heard about a chaplaincy opening at St. Chrysostom’s from a clergy colleague. “I’ve always had a passion for young people, so I was interested in the day school,” she says. “I think it’s the perfect marriage of all of my interests and skill sets.”

Murray-Smith brings her teaching and professional development skills to her work as pastor to the young professionals group at St.



(Top) Youth from St. Chrysostom's host a field trip for My Block, My Hood, My City. (Bottom) Deacon Jihan Murray-Smith, center, with young people from St. Chrysostom's on a 2017 mission trip in Gary, West Virginia



Chrysostom's. "I love organizing events that either give them information or opportunity for fellowship to talk about these similar experiences that they're having," she says. "Once a month I plan an activity for them where I bring in speakers. Last month I invited a woman whose career has been in the corporate world. I had her speak about being a Christian business leader and what it looks like to be a person of faith. Next month, I'll have a professor come speak with them about how to handle conflict."

Her diaconal call to bring together the concerns of the wider community and the church also works in tandem with Murray-Smith's event management skills. "I opened the doors of St. Chrysostom's to the neighborhood when we hosted our winter indoor farmers market last March. They had never done that before," she says. "I got the church to partner with Faith in Place, whose goal is to help equip us with tools to become better stewards of the earth, and have healthy, vibrant communities. They brought the farmers market to the church and had an indoor planting activity with the little ones."

"Because of the location of St. Chrysostom's in such an affluent neighborhood in Chicago, I've had a lot of fun bringing in groups which probably wouldn't ordinarily come to the neighborhood. I'm trying to create those experiences for our children, the youth at the church and our young professionals. It's all about exposure. That's a huge part of my business, making sure young people feel comfortable in any and every setting. I would take kids to the Walnut Room at Macy's for etiquette class, because many of them have never been to downtown Chicago before and I wanted them to understand the entire city of Chicago is their city, not just one neighborhood."

RESPONDING TO A CHANGING CHURCH

The Rev. Garth Howe lives out a model of bi-vocational ministry as both vocational deacon serving at Grace Episcopal Church in Chicago and assistant vice president, account management for the Church Pension Group (CPG). In his role at CPG, he has insight into the ways in which models of clergy leadership are changing across the church, and the ways in which CPG is responding.

"My vocation revolves around social justice issues," Howe says. "As a deacon and at CPG, they all know me as the social justice guy. The diaconal call is to be in and with the world. Rather than separating my full-time work with CPG and my part-time work as a deacon at Grace Church, I choose to embrace it as one continuous ministry — expressing my call in both settings. My

"It's all about exposure. That's a huge part of my business, making sure young people feel comfortable in any and every setting."

work with CPG requires me to be out with the church most of the time, but I remain confident that my diaconal ministry is expressed in every life interaction, regardless of the setting."

Howe first began discerning a call to the diaconate before he moved to Chicago from San Diego in 2012, but he found working diaconal training in with a demanding full-time job challenging. "Because of the defined structure of the requirements, the vocational diaconate had been fairly unavailable," he says.

Once in Chicago, Howe joined St. Peter's Episcopal Church, which became his sponsoring parish. "They sponsored me originally for discernment, but I still didn't know if I could do this," he says. "My job at CPG is way more than full-time. So, I had this tugging at my heart to do more for the church, but I just didn't know if I had the capacity. But at the same time the diocese was reimagining their deacon process. It was clear there was an interest in opening up the diaconate to a broader scope of people, people who had full-time jobs and other obligations, but still felt called to this work."

Howe's process included online, intensive learning through Bexley Seabury Seminary in Chicago, as well as chaplaincy training at Bishop Anderson House. "It was attainable," Howe recalls. "And it allowed me to fulfill my call in a way that is tremendously meaningful. I've been ordained a year and a half now."

Howe believes the diaconate has an important role to play in the church as more and more priests become bi-vocational or responsible for more than one congregation.

"There's so much strain on priests these days — I think the diaconate is needed around the church," he says. "Priests with limited time and resources may say, 'okay, let's make sure that Sunday happens, let's make sure that the Wednesday night dinner happens, let's make sure that my flock is being fed.' And what may be



"I've always had a passion for young people, so I was interested in the day school," she says. "I think it's the perfect marriage of all of my interests and skill sets."

— the Rev. Jihan Murray-Smith



*Above: The Rev.
Garth Howe in
Chicago's annual
LGBT Pride Parade.
Right: Young people
from St. Chrysostom's
packing lunches for
homeless people.*



“My work with CPG requires me to be out with the church most of the time, but ... my diaconal ministry is expressed in every life interaction, regardless of the setting.”

diminishing is the time they can dedicate to church in the world. The diaconal call is identifying those needs in the world, bringing them back to the church, and then actually doing something about it. The action part is so important. Our job as deacons is to bring these things back, and for our congregation to do something.”

In an effort to help his congregation respond to needs with action, Howe led an adult forum series called “Passion before Program.”

“One result of that work was the creation of ‘GraceCares Packs,’” he says. “We collected items like soap, shampoo, socks, quarters for public transportation, and blankets, and assembled them after services. Then we would each take one and pass it on to someone we met out in the world who may have a need for such items.” During the winter season, Grace put together and distributed over 50 GraceCares Packs and repeated the program this summer, replacing winter-related items with summer necessities.

“A lot of my stories are about who I engage with on the Red Line at 6:30 a.m. on my way to Grace every Sunday morning,” Howe says. “There have been enjoyable experiences, and some have absolutely not been enjoyable. I wear clericals because I’m in the diaconal role in the church. I think it’s important for the Christian church to be visible in the world. ‘They will know we are Christians by our love’ only goes so far.”

As a co-coordinator of the Diocese of Chicago participation in Chicago Pride this year, Howe focused on why we take part in this visible public action. “While it is absolutely fun to be in a parade, the reason I believe we

march is to be in solidarity with a community which has not always been embraced, and oft times neglected and hurt by the church or religion,” he says. “It is important for the church to be visible as a sign of love, hope and support.” Howe’s sermon on the subject resulted in an increase in participation from the Grace community.

In his role at CPG, Howe has seen firsthand how new models of clergy leadership are developing across the church. “CPG started significant outreach in 2014 with an eye toward making revisions to our pension plans to adapt to the changing needs of the church,” Howe explains.

Over the course of two years, CPG senior leaders connected with more than 3,000 clients at listening events, focus groups and conferences. “We made a concerted effort to get out into the church and talk to people,” says Howe. “We talked to bi-vocational priests, non-stipendiary priests, part-time, rural, urban and suburban priests. We tried to get as much information as we could around where the church was heading. Financially we know where the church is, but this was more about how to make sure that we’re adapting the way we do business in order to stay current. We also conducted a ‘Voice of the Client’ initiative, where we listened to bishops, diocesan administrators and diocesan councils to better understand what their pain points were and what their joys were. And then we brought it all back with us.”

The result was modifications to the clergy pension plan and related plans, which took effect January 1, 2018. “The modifications make sure that we have an entry point that is attainable by anyone who receives compensation from a church employer,” Howe says. “While they may not have a material income replacement over time, there are other benefits like life insurance that are available to active participants in the clergy pension plan.”

The modifications also offer more flexibility, responding to the needs of bi-vocational priests and acknowledging that there is now generally more time between cures for clergy. “There’s more flexibility now around things that the church is experiencing,” says Howe. “The new model allows someone my age — I’m about to be 63 — to say, ‘You know what? I want to take two years off and do a mission trip. I want to go to Haiti.’ It allows that flexibility, which also is the changing face of what priests are called to do.”

Howe says people often ask him in his capacity at CPG about what the future of the church is going to look like. “We model all sorts of things,” he says. “But it depends on what the church is doing. It is changing, and our job is to stay ahead of the curves as the church continues to evolve.” ✚



“The new model allows someone my age to say, ‘You know what? I want to take two years off and do a mission trip. I want to go to Haiti.’ It allows that flexibility, which also is the changing face of what priests are called to do.”

— the Rev. Garth Howe



Going to “College”

MAJORING IN CHURCH

by Jim Naughton

The Diocese of Chicago had a specific vision in mind when it instituted its new partnership with the College for Congregational Development (CCD). “I think CCD has the capacity to really change how our churches approach their futures,” says the Rev. Andrea Mysen, director of ministries. “It is all about creating practitioners on the ground who can lead this work so that we aren’t looking for the outside experts. It is about empowering members of our diocese so they are the ones leading and visioning and understanding what is possible in their communities.”

CCD blends materials from several fields, including congregational and organization development, into a curriculum that participants say gives them new ways of thinking



about the purpose, functioning and future of their congregations. The heart of the curriculum is a set of tools that clergy and lay leaders can use to assess congregational health, identify congregational strengths, develop initiatives, resolve conflicts and focus congregational energy.

“It is relevant from the smallest fledgling parishes to the largest program-sized congregations,” says Greg Michaels, a parishioner at St. Michael’s, Barrington, who was part of a six-member team from his parish who attended two intensive weeklong training sessions, the first in July of 2017, the second in June of 2018.

“All of the concepts are spot-on and very practically presented,” Michaels says. “I worked in corporate America for 30 years, and you run into a lot of MBA-speak and jargon in presenting organizational development theory. But this, I thought was, very clear and totally relevant for the issues facing the church.”

The curriculum and teaching methods, which include plenary lectures, case study presentations, development of facilitation skills and small-group conversation, were developed primarily by Archbishop Melissa Skelton of

the province of British Columbia and the Yukon in the Anglican Church of Canada when she was canon for congregational development and leadership in the Diocese of Olympia in western Washington.

The training currently requires participation in either two intensive weeklong sessions conducted one year apart, or two series of four weekend sessions. The diocese has also trained a network of consultants skilled in CCD techniques to assist congregations with organizational projects and leadership development opportunities, and to facilitate vestry retreats, special meetings and development projects.

“It was invigorating, challenging, tiring,” says Christine Barrow, junior warden of St. Paul’s Church in Peoria who attended the week-long trainings in the summers of 2016 and 2017. “There was a lot of material. A lot. I went from that initial start of thinking, ‘Oh my gosh what have I gotten myself into,’ to ‘Oh I am so grateful to have had this opportunity.’”

Although the training instills a familiarity with organization development materials, it is deeply grounded in Episcopal theology.

“It is intensely practical, but it is steeped in a deep theology of the ministry of all of the baptized,” says the Rev. Jenny Replogle of St. Paul’s in Peoria, a member of the consultants network. “How do we live out being a faithful and healthy church?”

The Rev. Fran Holliday, rector of St. Mary’s Church in Crystal Lake, who first took the training in July 2017 and completed it in June, says participation in the college helps move people from viewing the week-in, week-out work of making church happen as a series of tasks to a series of opportunities for promoting spiritual transformation. “You can help a congregation see where God is already working through them to transform lives and you can help them become more nimble, more flexible and see again or for the first time that God is really up to something and working in all that,” she says.

Luis Garcia-Juarez, chair of the diocesan Taskforce on Hispanic/Latino Mission and Ministry Sustainability, was, like Replogle, in the first class of people to be commissioned as CCD trainers. He says including a unit on cultural competency in the college’s curriculum was extremely helpful.

“As the taskforce begins the work they are doing and congregations themselves begin to look honestly and frankly at their vitality, we will draw on the resources of this training,” he says. “I think the models are sufficiently flexible and translatable that if we had a handful of bilingual and bicultural trainers we could deploy this to the leadership of our local congregations.

The material that is being deployed now is something that Latino leaders can take home.”

THEORY INTO PRACTICE

St. Mary’s in Crystal Lake, a parish with an average Sunday attendance of about 80, adopted the “gather-transform-send” model taught by the college as a way of exploring its newcomers’ ministry.

“We looked at how we were inviting people into our congregation and how we were inviting them to go deeper in to the Christian life



“You learn a lot about people when you are sitting at a dinner table. I think that is one of the biggest things the church can offer in a world that is very splintered and divided.”

to go deeper.” She initiated newcomers’ gatherings and offered orientations to the “particular flavor of the faith,” offered in the Episcopal Church, but she and lay leaders are working on other methods of answering people’s questions and making them feel part of the community.

Another benefit of CCD training is that it helps congregations to think theologically about the sorts of work they are already doing, Holliday says.

Several years ago, St. Mary’s began serving a dinner to all comers on the third Saturday of each month from 5 p.m. to 7 p.m.

“We started publicizing it in the community and getting the word out, and anyone is welcome and we have all kinds of people who come to it,” Holliday says. “Our average attendance right now is about 75 and we are hoping to pump those numbers up a little bit.

Parishioner Tom Koegel, a professional chef, oversees the food preparation and cooking, and his wife, Amy, oversees seating. Their five children sometimes help out, as do other parish volunteers.

“We use white tablecloths and flowers,” Holliday says. “We plate the food and servers bring it to people. It’s a restaurant kind of experience.

“What we are finding is seniors on fixed incomes come; we do get homeless people who come; we do get large families, people with a number of children come. And they are just happy to eat out together. People use it as a meeting place.

“From my perspective, it is important to understand the transformational nature of what is happening,” Holliday says.

“I am very relational. I think everything we do in church is about relationships. We are celebrating the Eucharist and that is a relational meal. How are we living that out ... how do we continue to build on that?

“You learn a lot about people when you are sitting at a dinner table.

and into the life of the parish,” Holliday says. The church had a good welcoming team in place. Newcomers were invited to coffee hour, and a loaf of freshly baked bread was delivered to their doors within 48 hours along with a handwritten note from Holliday.

“It’s been pretty effective,” Holliday says. “But you have to invite people



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MAKING CHANGES

At St. Michael’s, Barrington, a six-member team had the critical mass to bring the college’s insights quickly and directly into the life of the community.

“We came away energized, and then the conversation and focus shifted to ‘What can we practically take back to the vestry and congregation?’” Michaels says. “And then, ‘What are several very tangible changes we can begin to make to feel like there is some result and outtake from this beyond just, ‘Oh, we had a great time bonding?’”

The group defined “several smaller changes as opposed to any radical shift of our core identity,” Michaels says. “And they ranged from whimsical to a little more serious.”

On the whimsical front, the parish decided to include a trivia question in its weekly e-news to spur a little interaction. The intent was to engage parishioners in regularly reading the newsletter for new and events.

Another initiative pertained to re-engaging lapsed congregants. Like St. Mary’s, St. Michael’s used the “gather-transform-send” model but focused on “how good are we at retaining congregants and understanding where they are in their journey,” Michaels says.

“We realized that we had a number of quite dedicated congregants we hadn’t seen in a while, so let’s put together a process a little more formal than ‘Oh, I haven’t seen the Smiths.’ ‘Oh, they retired to Florida.’” St. Michael’s developed a simple process for identifying lapsed members and determining whether it was a life-stage change, or

something that could be addressed with a pastoral visit.

A second initiative was focused on vestry accessibility and transparency to the congregation. Recognizing the difficulty of each vestry member dealing with a large, diverse congregation and the reluctance of congregants to attend vestry meetings, St. Michaels is experimenting with a “Parish within a Parish” concept. The plan, based loosely on a precinct model of political organizing, asks each vestry member to convene periodic small group meetings with a designated group of families simply to keep them updated on what is happening in the church and to get their feedback.

The church also is planning a gardening initiative. “We have a third of an acre, and we want to go from using it just for beauty to using it for beauty and bounty,” Michaels says. “Flowers for the altar, vegetables, herbs. We are asking, ‘What can we do with our resources?’ We want to connect our deep gladness to the world’s deep hunger. What can we do? What do we like to do? Where is the benefit?”

A CULTURE SHIFT

While St. Michael’s quickly undertook a series of small projects — as CCD participants are urged to do — St. Paul’s Church in Peoria, once the cathedral of the former Diocese of Quincy, felt called to do some work on its culture and governing structure as well.

The CCD curriculum is designed to empower the ministry of all baptized people, a mission Replogle says was not fully embraced by the leaders of the former diocese. “There were a lot of capable people here, but they hadn’t been encouraged to do things and take charge,” she says. “This is a massive culture change and when people haven’t been doing it,

“We have ... churches that don’t have a permanent priest and probably aren’t going to have one. I can think of no greater gift to give those churches than lay leaders who are empowered to lead those congregations.”

there are all kinds of habits in place that need to change.”

St. Paul’s has helped facilitate this process by revamping committees in which many people gave advice, but only the vestry and clergy had authority, into ministry teams with specific charges and tasks. The teams meet quarterly, all on the same night, to review their progress, and dinner and child care are provided.

“I do think CCD has been really helpful in answering ‘How do we make lay leadership happen? How do we train up lay leaders?’” Replogle says. “As a church, it’s something we want to do, but we don’t really know how.”

In determining its next steps — what sort of ministries to pursue, which ones to let lapse — the congregation made use of a CCD tool called Sources of Transformation.

“Transformation happens naturally in a community in all sorts of areas at all times,” Replogle says. “This model pulls out the areas that are transformative — prayer and worship, life in community, action, study and learning — and takes a close look at them.

“We gave everyone sticky notes and asked them to write down a time that was transformative for them and then to post it on a large model so we could see where transformation was happening.”

While CCD emphasizes organization-wide change, participants say it can also have a profound personal effect.

“I think what interested me most, in the beginning, was the sense that this would be focusing on what St. Paul’s needed the most, which was addressing some of the brokenness and healing,” said Barrow, referring to the lingering effects of the dispute over the legitimacy of same-sex relationships that led a majority of the laity and clergy of the

former Diocese of Quincy to leave the Episcopal Church. “Beginning a real healing process is something we really hadn’t done.”

Barrow has been a member of the altar guild and the choir, a convention delegate and chair of the worship team, but she recently became junior warden, a position that, at St. Paul’s, leads to one becoming senior warden.

“I would not have had those roles without having gone to the CCD to learn more about myself, to find out what God’s plans might be for me in the healing process,” she says. “CCD helped me to more clearly define what leadership looks like for a lay person and gave me the confidence that I might be able to handle this.”

As one of her projects, Barrow offered a lay-led service of morning prayer on Fridays for 18 months, eventually discontinuing the practice due to lack of attendance.

“I thought it was a huge success,” Replogle says. “There had never been a lay-led consistent worship service at this church. We are learning to try things and be okay when they don’t work out, or when things run a season and they are good and then let them go.”

Kathy Leson, the other member of St. Paul’s who participated in CCD, decided to establish a legacy society at the church as her first project. Her efforts led not only to the establishment of the Hartman Legacy Society, but to a presentation that discussed all issues of aging and death from retirement to senior housing to health care, estate planning and hospice. She is currently doing research on initiating a partner parish program, perhaps with a congregation in Puerto Rico.

Barrow says she can feel a transformation taking place. “We really are moving from brokenness to health, and that in any organization is going to be slow, but I feel within myself that we are moving. This feels really good, and it feels really right.”

SPREADING THE WORD

Mysen is pleased with the early results of the CCD program and is eager to make it more widely available. “I am trying to get saturation, name recognition,” she says. “We’ve had steady participation, but I’d like to bump it up.”

The intensive weeklong training program is effective, she says, but not every congregation can find members whose lives permit taking a week away from work or family responsibilities. The diocese has begun offering the course in several parts over selected weekends, and while that has reached a broader audience, most participants live within an easy drive of diocesan headquarters.

“How to take CCD on the road to make this info accessible and useful in central Illinois, in western Illinois? That’s the creative piece I am wrestling with right now.”

She says the program is especially important as the church faces a future in which lay people, increasingly, will need to exercise greater leadership. “We have groups of churches that don’t have a permanent priest and probably aren’t going to have one,” she says. “I can think of no greater gift to give those churches than lay leaders who are empowered to lead those congregations.” ✚



A New Leader

BERRYMAN IS QUICK TO LISTEN

— [By Jim Naughton] —

Matthew Berryman has begun his new job as the executive director of Episcopal Charities and Community Services by saying little and listening much.

“When you begin a job like this, there is an internal and external pressure to cast a vision prematurely,” says Berryman, who was previously the executive director of Reconciling Ministries Network, a national organization working for the full inclusion of LGBTQ people in the United Methodist Church. “What I’ve come to realize in my professional life is that it takes time for a vision to materialize. And that doesn’t happen until you’ve gotten deeply acquainted with the culture, the history, the story and, particularly, the people affiliated with an organization.

“So I decided to begin with the people and to do a lot of listening.”

By late September, Berryman, who began work in June, had conducted 60 one-on-one meetings, spoken with all of ECCS’s board members and all of its ministry partners, and was in the process of arranging meetings with the organization’s donors.

“The way I am going to find out who ECCS is is to find out who they are,” he says. “So far, I’ve only peeled back the first layer.”

This year, ECCS will donate \$450,000 to support the work of its ministry partners. ECCS’s contributions, which total more than \$6 million over the last decade, represent the largest single source of unrestricted grants for many of these agencies. Partners can also participate in a program that enhances their managerial, development and community-building skills.

“One of the things that excited me about the job is that ECCS had embarked on a new strategic plan that was more deeply interested in uncovering the systems that produce the injustice that many of these organizations are attempting to resolve,” he says. “So one of my interests in applying was that I am also interested in asking questions about why things are the way they are and working toward long-term systemic change.”

“Matt was hired after a thorough national search with the enthusiastic endorsement of the board’s search committee,” Bishop Jeff Lee says. “He has begun his work in Chicago with clarity and energy, and I look forward to working with him in close collaboration as we enhance the profile of Episcopal Charities and Community Services across the diocese.”

Berryman says he is aware of “the deep systemic problems” that face the city of Chicago and believes that as a gay man his “experience as a marginalized person” will serve him well.

“I am not new to the idea that those systems of power and privilege exist, and they deeply impact who lives in oppression and who doesn’t,” he says. “I’ve also been trained in white privilege and anti-racism and other forms of systems of privilege, so I would say having a background in cultural competency ... [helps make] me aware of what kinds of impact we want to have and where can we be engaged in ways that create impact.”

Before his work at Reconciling Ministries Network, Berryman attended law school, served as a legal editor and was pastor of United Methodist parishes in Florida and the United Kingdom. He holds a

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Master of Divinity degree from the Candler School of Theology at Emory University.

“I’ve been a preacher,” he says. “This is a job that is highly related to church life and parishes, so that experience has been really, really helpful. I think also having worked in social justice has been critically important.”

Although he comes from the United Methodist Church, Berryman is well acquainted with the Episcopal world. “I’ve always appreciated the Episcopal Church’s liturgy and the aesthetics of Episcopal worship, so I have always tended to go to Episcopal churches when I had the chance,” he says. While earning his bachelor’s degree from the University of South Carolina, Berryman was a paid singer at St. John’s, Shandon, in Columbia.

On his listening tour, Berryman says he has heard considerable interest in enhancing the role of the Bishop’s Ball. “There’s really excitement around the Bishop’s Ball and there is a commonly held perception ... that it is a great opportunity in a market like Chicago — not only as a great fundraiser, but also to create goodwill in the diocese and beyond,” he says.

Berryman also hopes ECCS will “build ourselves internally with some infrastructure and internal capacity.”

“We are not building something from scratch. There is something that is formidable and powerful in place, and the question is what we do with it going forward. That’s a question of opportunity and excitement because there is so much available to us.

“I think the question for us isn’t if we are going to have an impact but how we are going to have an impact. ... That is something we are going to ascertain together: What does the future look like and how can we use the powerful resources that exist at ECCS to continue creating something beautiful?” ✚

Learning to Consult



THE REV. BARBARA HARRISON SEWARD

“... consulting in the context of the CCD is a lived experience in which I often find myself using the skills and tools afforded by the college in my own ministry and in my work with lay people.”

How can one describe the preparation to become a consultant for the College for Congregational Development? If this question were pondered by all consultants throughout the Episcopal Church, I am certain many different answers would arise. That's because preparation is more than showing up, finishing a course and receiving a certificate; it involves continuous learning and active engagement with participants and other trainers across the diocese.

While I participated in the two-year, week-long training program which exposed me to an abundance of information and provided me with additional tools to place into my “skill toolbox,” my ongoing preparation comes through participating in every training session the diocese offers, whether it is the weeklong offering or the weekend program that began this fall. It comes in using the tools afforded by the college within my own congregation and engaging other trainers where I can experience different viewpoints and approaches.

My preparation comes in the understanding that consulting in the context of the College of Congregational Development is a lived experience in which I often find myself using the skills and tools afforded by the college in my own ministry and in my work with lay people. It is this present, lived ministry that keeps my preparation active, growing and current.

Needless to say, in the Diocese of Chicago, under the leadership of the Rev. Andrea Mysen, our director of ministries, we have a group of talented consultants with various knowledge bases, and they also contribute to my constant preparation and growth as a consultant.

In short, my preparation was not and is not a one-time event. I am constantly preparing because being a consultant means being a constant learner.

Among the first things we learn is that congregational development is the development of

congregations *of all sizes, at all locations, and of all conditions* into more faithful, healthy and effective communities of faith.

Second, we do not dictate outcomes. We deliver the opportunity for each community to discover, ask questions and move toward what God is calling them to be.

With that said, our team can aid congregations in many areas, including but not limited to:

- Fostering better communication and collaboration between clergy and laity.
- Identifying areas of mission.
- Discovering and identifying issues that may hamper mission.
- Recognizing faith development needs.
- Aiding congregations in responding to change — the challenge, as well as the opportunities that change brings.
- Discovering what congregations do well and what they can do better.
- Addressing conflict by discovering hidden issues that lie beneath the surface.
- Aiding congregations in developing a common language.
- Addressing stagnation and decline through engaging questions on purpose, identity, and context.

This may sound like highly specialized work, but beneath it all is a simple desire that drives members of the consultants network: Walking with congregations as they join in the mission of God, the mission of forgiveness, reconciliation, restoration, transformation, justice, peace and hope. It is in this togetherness that we as a community of God can make an impact in the world. ✚

The Rev. Barbara Harrison Seward is rector of St. Benedict's, Bolingbrook.

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