

South Dakota Episcopal
Church News



www.episcopalchurchsd.org

Fall Issue

ADVENT 2021

In Luke 21, Jesus describes a moment in which we are notified that a change is coming. Just as newly budding leaves send us a message that the warm weather is coming back soon, the coming of Advent tells us that Christmas is coming soon.

In the same passage, Jesus also tells us what we should do after seeing this change:

Watch ye therefore, and pray always, that ye may be accounted worthy to escape all these things that shall come to pass, and to stand before the son of man. Luke 21:36

One does not have to look far to find something worrisome or anxiety-inducing. In the face of these elements, watch and pray nonetheless. The act of watching and praying does not eliminate these stressors; rather, it eliminates any need for us to face them alone.

This Advent, I will try to deepen my relationship with God through prayer and patience. I invite you to do the same.

Mitchell Honan

[Bible Study for Advent:](#) This link will take you to the Episcopal Church website and the web page gives you Bible Studies for Advent, Christmas, Epiphany and Lent.

www.episcopalchurchsd.org
Storytelling
Sermons that work

**The Diocese of
South Dakota**



Volume 74, Number 4
Statement of Ownership
South Dakota Episcopal
Church News
(ISSN 0746-9276)
Published 4 times a year,
February, May, August &
November

by
The Diocese of
South Dakota
408 N Jefferson Ave
Pierre, SD 57501

Periodicals postage paid at
Pierre, SD, and additional
mailing office.

Postmaster:
Send address changes to:
South Dakota Episcopal
Church News
408 N Jefferson Ave
Pierre, SD
57501-2626

Correspondence and articles
should be sent to:

Church News Editor
408 N Jefferson Ave
Pierre, SD 57501-2626
(605) 494-2020

Or E-mail:
office@episcopalchurchsd.org

Or fax: (605) 494-2025

Annual Subscription: \$5.00

The times they are a Changing.

With information being sent, received, interpreted, and reissued and an alarming rate, getting your news via a print source is slowly ebbing away. News that was of great importance today is soon replaced by a bigger story and before one can process the after effects of major news story number one, people have moved on to the next major news story.

The Diocese continues to utilize Mailchimp as our venue of sharing important and/or immediate news. If you are not receiving these emails please check your promotions box or spam box in your email account. Often the email is sent directly there instead of your inbox. Or, please check to see that we have your newest email address by sending a quick email to the Diocesan office at office@episcopalchurchsd.org.

With this in mind and with the mindset of improving our communication, the Diocese is asking for your input as to what type of communications you use the most.

We have often asked ourselves the following questions.

How best do we communicate with people in our diocese that have limited or no email access?

What format for information do you access the most to receive important news regarding your church or about the diocese?
Word of mouth from your Clergy, Facebook, Email, Announcements at Church

Why is the Church News important to you? Why do you read it?

What type of news would you like to see in the Church News? (e.g. information regarding Church history, what education opportunities there are, news about major upcoming events, Niobrara School of Ministry weekends, General Convention, Niobrara Convocation, Diocesan Convention, news from The Episcopal Church worldwide, stories on how to help local congregations, suggestions for Creation Cares, how best to keep my church property safe)

Please email me at office@episcopalchurchsd.org with your suggestions.

If you do not have access to email, please mail your response to:
Marlys Fratzke
Episcopal Diocese of South Dakota
408 N. Jefferson Ave. Pierre, SD 57501

2021 Diocesan Address: “Risking Something Big for Something Good”

Let us pray: Gracious God...we know that:

What we choose changes us.

Who we love transforms us.

How we create remakes us.

And where we live reshapes us.

In all our choosing, O God, make us wise;

In all our loving, O Christ, make us bold;

In all our creating, O Spirit, give us courage;

and in all of our living, may we become whole.

In the name of God the Father, God the Son, and God the Holy Spirit: Amen.

Many years ago, following the completion of a course that I was taking at the College of Preachers in Washington, D.C., there was a closing Eucharist service. And the words of the benediction, the words of the final blessing given by the Celebrant of that service completely changed the outlook of my ministry...and it did so forever.

“May God grant you the grace never to sell yourself short; the grace to risk something big for something good; the grace to remember that our world is too dangerous for anything but truth; and is too small for anything but love.”

From the moment that I first heard the words of this benediction – which is a very close paraphrase of the benediction written by the Rev. William Sloane Coffin – these words became my blessing of **choice**. These words of Pastor William pierced my **heart** and they did so in a way that I cannot describe. And based on the number of times that I have been asked to write the words of this benediction down and share them with others, the impact of this blessing is as powerful today as they were when Pastor William Kirst spoke them. They are, in fact, written down on the back of my business card.

“Risking Something Big for Something Good.” This is the theme of our 2021 Diocesan Convention – and now you know where these words have come from. We have tied this theme, especially, to the story of Jesus raising his friend, Lazarus, from the dead in the 11th chapter of John’s Gospel. And in that story, Jesus calls Lazarus forth from his tomb: “Lazarus,” Jesus commands, “come out!” And, in verse 44 of that chapter, Jesus instructs that Lazarus should be unbound from his burial wraps and set free.

Jesus, in raising Lazarus from the dead and through his direction that Lazarus be released from his burial bonds – in this story, Jesus is taking a risk. And we know that Jesus is taking a risk because, in verse 53 of that very same chapter, Jesus’ opponents begin formulating their plans to put him to death.

Jesus, who is our Lord and Savior whom we confess to follow – Jesus took **risks**! Jesus took risks for God and for God’s mission of reconciliation and restoration! Jesus challenged the powerful leaders and influencers of his time. He questioned the norms of his society, his government, and even the expectations of his own people. And as a result, Jesus encountered resistance. He encountered hesitance! He encountered opposition! And do you know what else happened? Jesus brought in **God’s kingdom on earth**. Jesus through his life, his ministry, and his death risked something big for something good. And none of us would be here had Jesus not taken those risks.

As followers, therefore, of Jesus Christ, the risk-taker – we are a people who have been **baptized** into his risk-taking **life!** And because we have been baptized into his life, we, like him, should expect to encounter resistance! And we should expect, like him, to encounter opposition! – and especially so wherever there is a very unhealthy respect for power, privilege and comfort! – as well as a high avoidance of change.

As a result – following Jesus through the kingdom of God on earth is not always a safe path to take. Being a Christian today? If we're doing it well, then it's a pretty risky life. And yet, at the end of each day, we know that whatever risks we have taken...they have been risks well worth the taking. For we have taken those risks on behalf of God and on behalf of God's people! We have taken those risks for people who do not have earthly power! We sleep better at night because...today we risked something big!...and we did so for something that was much greater than ourselves.

At the same time – it must be confessed and acknowledged that some risks are far easier to take than others. Taking the risk to stand alongside and support the sovereign rights of our tribal siblings when they chose to set up check-points during COVID-19 – or when some of our number chose to take the risk of speaking and protesting against some of our state governmental leaders who wish to wipe away the presence of Native Americans from our state's history in the classroom – these two risks are not nearly as difficult to take when compared to standing alongside our tribal siblings in the aftermath of the discovery of the graves of so many Indigenous students who attended boarding schools.

The difference between these risks is this: when it comes to the issue of Indigenous children in boarding schools, we – and by “we”, I mean the “white Church” (with a capital “C” meaning all white Christians of all denominations) – we have been and we are **complicit**. Those who came before us...those who represented the Church (with a capital “C”), those who bore the title of “Christian”...they are amongst the guilty. Our ancestors who came before us in this Church, for better or for worse, they sought to assimilate Native Americans. They sought to force them to think like white people think! – and to act like white people act! – and to dress like white people dress! – and to worship like white people worship. The parents of these children in the mid-1800s were given a choice: sign away your land and, one day, you might see your child again. Don't sign away your land – and you'll never see your child again.

This complicity, based upon our white heritage? This has made it very difficult for those of us who are white to stand alongside our Native siblings today. The behaviors of our white ancestors has made it very difficult for the white Christians of the present day to ask for justice and seek reconciliation and restoration on behalf of our Native siblings. And why? Because our words are not believed – as our clergy leaders in the Northeast Deanery will tell you.

Fr. Charley Chan and Fr. Richard Zephier attended an event in the Sisseton Mission where stories of boarding school experiences were being told. One person who wished to tell his story saw Fr. Charley and Fr. Richard. They were wearing their clergy collars – so they weren't exactly incognito. And when this man saw the clergy collars, he demanded that these two priests of our Diocese **leave**. It made no difference to him that Fr. Charley is the Supervising Presbyterian of the Sisseton Mission! It made no difference to him that Fr. Richard is a Native American and is the Itanchan of our Niobrara Council! It made no difference that these two priests represented **Jesus Christ!** That man wanted them gone!

Being asked to leave was very hard for these two priests to hear. Fr. Charley and Fr. Richard were taking a risk to be at that gathering but they were there because they wanted learn

from and to offer their support to those who were hurting! But you know something? – they left. They left because they were asked to leave. They left because they respect – and because they deeply love God’s people. They left because they didn’t want their presence to cause further harm. And I am very proud to say that their being asked to leave has not lessened their resolve to continue to stand alongside and offer their support to those who are in pain. Their being asked to leave has not lessened their resolve to continue to risk something big...for something much greater than themselves.

Today – this moment – in the midst of everything that is happening – today I am asking us compare ourselves to the biblical figure of Lazarus. Jesus called Lazarus to come out of his tomb. And Jesus is calling us out of our tombs as well. And the tombs that Jesus is calling us out of are the tombs of our own making. Jesus is inviting us to come out of our places of false comfort. He is inviting us to come out of the dark and into the light, and that’s oft times a scary invitation to accept!

And you know why? Because when we live in the dark, it’s easier to ignore that which is right in front of our faces! In the dark, life can be anything that we want to imagine it to be. In the dark, it’s a lot easier to lie to ourselves! – and to believe those lies.

So – let’s view ourselves for a moment as Lazarus being invited to step out of his tomb! Let’s envision our congregations as being a collective Lazarus who have been invited to step out of a tomb. Let’s envision our various Diocesan ministries and committees and programs as being Lazarus! And let’s say that we’ve all made the decision to step out! – and, having taken that step, and now being in the light, let’s take a good look at ourselves. Let’s take a really close and honest look – at the burial cloths in which we are wrapped! Each **band** of cloth symbolizes something!

Each band symbolizes **something** that is holding us back! What are they? What fears can we name as being alive and well in ourselves, and in our congregations, and in our Diocesan ministries and programs? What **is** it that is keeping us from being truly **free**? – free to risk something big for something good? What is it that is keeping us from risking something big?...for something so much greater than ourselves?

Imagine what our Diocese will look like in ten years’ time if nothing at all were to change. Imagine what your own congregation will look like in ten years’ time if nothing were to change. In ten years’ time, should all of us consciously and deliberately choose to remain bound up in our fears – and go back into the safety of the dark tomb – what does our future hold?

On the other hand – on the other hand, imagine what our Diocese and our congregations will look like if we chose instead to risk something big for something good. What would we look like – what would our congregations and communities look like – if we took some real risks to make new life happen? – and experience some new resurrection moments in Jesus’ name? What would our future hold then?

The Rev. Shaneequa Brokenleg and Archdeacon Paul Sneve, when talking with me about the creation of our Diocese’s anti-racism committee, they introduced me to the word “Wolakota.” And they taught me that this word, in English, means “right relationships.” It’s a word that means being in right relationship with everything: God, neighbor, creation, community...everything. Wolakota.

That word sounds a lot like restoration to me. It's also resembles reconciliation to me. But how do we get there? How can we experience Wolakota in our congregations and Diocese? We experience Wolakota by taking risks. We get to Wolakota by choosing to risk something big...for something much greater than ourselves.

Insofar as our relationships with God are concerned, what are we willing to risk in order to bring ourselves and others into a deeper relationship with God? How are we going about forming our minds and our hearts – and how are we forming those who come to us because they want to learn how to become a follower of Jesus Christ? What are we willing to risk when it comes to our relationship with the Creator?

And insofar as our relationships with each other are concerned, how are we re-building our Christian fellowship after being apart for so long? How are we caring for each other? And what is it that we are willing to risk in order to exemplify Jesus' selfless love of neighbor?

And insofar as our relationships with our communities, our state, our nation, and God's world is concerned – what are we willing to do? What are we willing to say? What are we willing to stand for? What are we willing to stand against? Who are we willing to stand with? Again, what are we willing to risk for Jesus? – and for God's kingdom on earth? When anyone, nowadays, raises a question that goes something like, "What's the next step regarding this issue?", my first response is to ask, "What are we willing to risk?"

These are the questions which face all of us as we move into this next year. And these are the questions that I am asking our Diocesan Council and the clergy and lay leadership of our congregations and reservations to discuss as we collectively prepare for 2022.

Question 1 – (and this question is of the utmost importance): To paraphrase the famous quote from Andy Dupree in the movie "The Shawshank Redemption" – in 2022, are we going to get busy living? Or are we going to get busy dying? Are we going to choose the darkness of a tomb and stop trying? Or are we instead going to step out into the light – and confess any fears, any doubts, and everything else which has us all wrapped up? Are we going to acknowledge the reality that our risks might work and that our risks might fail, and yet not allow that reality to stop us from trying?

Which of those two statements will we affirm as being true for us in 2022? Are we a Church that is busy living and taking new risks for Jesus, for His Gospel, and for the kingdom? Or no?

If a congregation discerns and decides on their own that the time has come to end their ministry in that place – if a congregation sincerely and prayerfully has reached a point where they are no longer able or willing to continue to try – then they will be given all the love and pastoral support that they require. Because that would not have been an easy decision for them to make. And we will talk about where and how they wish to proceed. There will be no shame. There will be no blame. There will only be love. A decision has been made. They are no longer uncertain about their future. And lots of prayers of thanksgiving for the ministry that has happened in that place will be prayed.

However, should a congregation instead decide and affirm that they want to start living anew, or living again, or living differently – then the following three questions will be discussed.

If your congregation affirms that they want to get busy living, what risks are you willing to take in Jesus' name that will bring the members of your congregation and others into a deeper right relationship with God?

If your congregation affirms that they want to get busy living, what risks are you willing to take in Jesus' name that will bring your congregation into a deeper right relationship with each other? And, finally...

If your congregation affirms that they want to get busy living, what risks are you willing to take in Jesus' name to make a transformative difference in your community, our state, our nation, and/or God's world?

At next year's Diocesan Convention, each congregation in our Diocese will be given the opportunity to bring their stories of the risks that they are taking in 2022 and the results that are being experienced. This will be our shared Wolakota Project. This will be an opportunity for us on both a Diocesan and on a congregational level to offer a new kind of witness – a witness of our willingness to follow Jesus, the risk-taker. A witness of our willingness to risk something big for something good. And a witness of our willingness to take risks...for something much greater than ourselves.

May God the Father grant all of us, in the name of His Son and through the power of His Holy Spirit, everything we need to bring us into Wolakota – into deeper right relationships with everything. And to God – always – may our glory be given. Amen.

This homily was preached on October 29, 2021 by the Reverend Canon Cody Maynus on the occasion of the Reverend Lydia Hird Simmons' first celebration of the Holy Eucharist.

May I speak to you in the Name of the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit. Amen.

Consecrate us now to Thy service, Lord, / By the pow'r of grace divine;/ Let our souls look up with a steadfast hope,/ And our will be lost in Thine.

The inestimable Dr. Lisa Kimball preached as beautiful an ordination homily last night as anybody could ever possibly want and so I am sorely tempted to sit my behind back down and hope that the Holy Spirit refreshes your memory from last night. Dr. Kimball preached poignantly about the courageous act of saying yes to God at this particular juncture in human history. She taught us all about the work that we—the whole People of God, the priesthood of all believers—were about last night during the ordination. This morning, I'd like to preach mostly to the new priest. The rest of you are OF COURSE welcome to listen in and I do hope the Holy Spirit shows up and tends to the garden of your heart, but please know that the next few minutes are priest-to-priest.

Before anything else, I would like say a very quick word of thanks to my colleague and friend: Mother Lydia—that's got a nice ring to it, huh?—Mother Lydia, thank you for offering yourself as a priest, pastor, and teacher, not only to this beautiful-if-sometimes-difficult Church of ours, but to this whole blessed world which Jesus desperately loves. As of about 7:00PM last night—give or a take a few minutes—you offered your whole life—'body, soul, and spirit' as the prayer book says during the Celebration of a New Ministry—to the whole world: to the last, the lost, and the least; to the good, the bad, and the otherwise. The author of Hebrews has the best words I've found to describe ordination: "It is a terrifying thing to fall into the hands of the living God." And my friend, you have done just that.

But this is not the time to regale you with war stories from the presbyteral trenches, mostly because I know you've got your own fair share of war stories from your period of formation and the several months since you were ordained deacon.

No, this is not the time to swap stories. It is the time to offer thanks. That is, after all, why we've gathered here today: to celebrate the Holy Eucharist—the Great Thanksgiving—but this is not just any celebration of the Holy Eucharist. It is your first celebration of the Holy Eucharist. The first time you'll stand behind the altar and ask God the Holy Spirit to descend upon simple and ordinary gifts of bread and wine and water and make them into the very Body and Blood, Soul and Divinity of Jesus Christ. For the very first time, you will speak the words of Jesus—'Take, eat, this is my Body; take, drink, this is my Blood'—as his own voice. This is the first time that you will declare forgiveness to penitent sinners—that is all of us and perhaps especially me—in God's Name, not in your own name, which you have done plenty of times, but in God's Name.

'It is a terrifying thing' indeed 'to fall into the hands of the living God.'

I want to make sure that two small pieces of liturgical minutiae aren't lost in the whirl of the Holy Spirit's descent last night and Her anticipated appearance today. (Although if there is anybody in the Diocese of South Dakota who appreciates liturgical minutiae, they're surely sitting in this room right now! We know who we are...!)

In just a few moments, you will be handed a beautiful earthenware chalice and paten set which were given to you as a thank offering by the beautiful people of this parish. There is a reason that we did not use that beautiful chalice and paten last night during the ordination mass and that's because they weren't blessed.

But in a few short moments, you will ask the Holy Spirit of God to be present in a particular way and set this chalice and paten—the gift of people who have received you as their pastor and who already love you something fierce—you will ask God to set this chalice and paten apart for a particular use. Never again will this chalice be used as decoration or for a nice bubbly soda pop. And never again will this paten be used as a charcuterie board or a fruit tray. From this day and forever more—until the clay breaks down and returns to the earth from which it was drawn, hopefully long, long after we have all done the same—from this day and forever more this chalice and this paten will be set aside by Almighty God and her Church for sacramental ministry, to be receptacles by which the People of God receive the Gifts of God, the very Body and Blood of Jesus.

And last night—just after you received the Bible and were reminded of the authority which you now bear in God's service—just after you received the Bible, the Bishop poured the Sacred Chrism on your hands and set them apart for sacramental ministry. Just as soon as the Bishop poured that oil—which only the Bishop can make and only on behalf of the whole People of God—just as soon as the Bishop poured that oil on your hands, your hands ceased to be your own hands. Your hands have now been set aside for the work of priestcraft. Your hands have been set aside by God and the Church to forgive sinners in God's Name, to bestow God's blessing upon God's people, and to consecrate ordinary things—bread and wine and water—and make them bursting to the brim with God's presence.

I remember very vividly listening to a monk at Holy Cross when I was an aspirant in the community talking about the day he was ordained a priest and his Bishop poured Sacred Chrism on his hands and set him aside for the work of ministry. He told me about how, as a kid and as a young man—before entering the monastery, mercifully—he was known as a fighter. He got into physical altercations. And, as an older adult, he spent a great deal of time working through those early experiences of violence. And all of those emotions resurfaced when the Bishop of New York set his hands apart for the work of reconciliation. Your hands no longer belong solely to you. God has made a claim on them and indicated through the ministry of the Church that those hands are not for tearing down or dividing or any other kind of violence or self-centeredness. Whether those hands are holding a chalice or pouring blessed water on a baby or drawing the cross for the last time on a dying woman's forehead, or holding a paintbrush or walking a dog or holding another person's hand, no matter what those hands are doing, those hands are for nothing less than the building up of God's people and nothing less than that.

But your hands, Mother Lydia, are merely a stand in for the rest of you. Your life, my friend, ceased to be your own life at about 7:00PM last night.

Your life has been given—just like that chalice and paten—to the service of God's Church and God's world. You have offered yourself for the bringing about of God's Reign of justice, love, and peace here on earth.

And, although you are now a priest of this diocese and have entered into a covenant with this parish, you do not belong to this parish and to this diocese—thanks be to God! You are at God's service and are called to be priest, pastor, and teacher to the whole people of God. Your presbyteral ministry, my friend, will take you all over the

place, not just geographically, but emotionally and spiritually as well. You will be called to absolve, to bless, and to consecrate—the ABCs of the priesthood as Father Ward preached at your ordination as a deacon—you'll be called to absolve, bless, and consecrate in the most unlikely places and in the most unlikely circumstances.

And you will do so with the full support of your clergy siblings in this and every diocese. You will do so with the full support and backing and guidance of your Bishop. You'll do so with Mother Lauren and I sitting on your shoulders—and no I will NOT telling you which of us has the horns and which has the halo. You will journey through this thing called priesthood with the prayerful support of so many people and, perhaps most importantly, with the intercession of the Blessed Virgin Mary, the Mother of Priests, and the whole company of saints in light.

And so, my dear friends, in thanksgiving for this chalice and this paten, in thanksgiving for these hands, and in thanksgiving for this priest of God, let us join our voices in a chorus of praise to God:

*Ateyapi, Cinhintku kin,
Qa Woniya Wakan kin He,
Wakantanka wanjina kin,
He wowitan yuha nunwe. Amen.*

Note: Earlier this year (Sept. 7), three of the world's top Christian leaders—Pope Francis, Ecumenical Patriarch Bartholomew and Archbishop of Canterbury Justin Welby—issued the following press release and joint statement on climate change

Pope Francis, Ecumenical Patriarch Bartholomew, and Archbishop Justin Welby urge everyone to play their part in “choosing life” for the future of the planet.

In a joint statement, the Christian leaders have called on people to pray, in this Christian season of creation, for world leaders ahead of the United Nations Climate Change Conference (COP26) this November. The statement reads: “We call on everyone, whatever their belief or worldview, to endeavor to listen to the cry of the earth and of people who are poor, examining their behavior and pledging meaningful sacrifices for the sake of the earth which God has given us.”

The joint declaration issues a clear warning—“Today, we are paying the price... Tomorrow could be worse”—and concludes that, “This is a critical moment. Our children’s future and the future of our common home depend on it.”

The three Christian leaders spoke against injustice and inequality, saying, “We stand before a harsh justice: biodiversity loss, environmental degradation and climate change are the inevitable consequences of our actions, since we have greedily consumed more of the earth’s resources than the planet can endure. But we also face a profound injustice: the people bearing the most catastrophic consequences of these abuses are the poorest on the planet and have been the least responsible for causing them.”

The statement calls on people to do the following:

Pray for world leaders:

For individuals: To make meaningful sacrifices for the sake of the planet, working together and taking responsibility for how we use our resources.

For those with far-reaching responsibilities: To choose people-centered profits and lead the transition to just and sustainable economies.

RESOLUTION: 4th Sunday of June as a day of remembrance for all Indigenous children
Submitted by: The Niobrara Council

RESOLVED, that the One Hundred Thirty-seventh Convention of the Diocese of South Dakota directs all congregations and worshipping communities to dedicate the 4th Sunday of June as a day of remembrance for all Indigenous children who have died in boarding schools operated by both governmental and church authorities; and be it further

RESOLVED, that this convention direct all congregations and worshipping communities to dedicate that same 4th Sunday of June as a day in which our missing and murdered children are remembered and prayed for.

Explanation: Given the discovery of multiple bodies of indigenous children who attended boarding schools in Canada and the United States and given both the history and the current reality of those who are suffering from historic trauma because those in power sought to exterminate the heritage and culture of indigenous peoples through treats and indoctrination; and given that children continue to be our most vulnerable victims. We believe that the 4th Sunday of June is an appropriate day to raise awareness across our Diocese and is a necessary and essential step towards healing and reconciliation.

Impact on Budget: None

Resolution Passed

Resolution CPG and ECMT misgendering clergy and employees of The Episcopal Church

Resolved, That this Convention calls upon the Church in this Diocese to fully embrace, respect and uphold transgender, non-binary, and two-spirit people in all facets of its life, particularly by facilitating access to health care and insurance for employees that wholly affirm the gender identities of two-spirit, nonbinary as well as binary-identified people; respecting and using individuals' pronouns including "they/them"; avoiding using exclusionary binary language; and supporting nonbinary and/or transgender youth and their families; and be it further

Resolved, That this Convention directs the Secretary of the Convention to write to the Church Pension Group (CPG) and the Episcopal Church Medical Trust (ECMT) calling upon them to change internal systems and actively work with healthcare and other benefits providers with which they contract to cease perpetuating harmful and discriminatory practices that force choosing only male or female as a condition of obtaining healthcare and retirement benefits for gender-diverse employees.

Explanation:

The Episcopal Church Medical Trust and the Church Pension Group, which administer employment benefits for The Episcopal Church, still require employees to declare their gender as "M" or "F," even when these options are inappropriate or unnecessary, especially for gender-diverse people who are recognized with an X on their state issued IDs (as is legal in many states). This pattern of misgendering – that is, using pronouns (e.g., he, she, him, her, they, them), salutations (e.g., Mr., Ms., Mx., sir, madam) and gender markers (male, female, non-binary) that do not align with an individual's gender identity – causes harm and falls short of our Baptismal Covenant commitment to respect the dignity of every human being.

The resolution also asks the Secretary of this Convention to send a letter conveying this resolution to the Church Pension Group and the Episcopal Church Medical Trust, an important step in naming the impact of CPG/ECMT's limited gender options and calling on them to align their practice fully with the policy of The Episcopal Church.

Resolution Passed

Resolution for full inclusion of Transgender, non-binary, and Two-Spirit people in the life and work of the Episcopal Church

Resolved, That this Convention supports legislative, educational, pastoral, liturgical, and broader communal efforts that seek to end the pattern of violence against transgender and two-spirit people in general and transgender women in particular, calling attention especially to the rising violence against transgender women of color and gender non-conforming people and be it further

Resolved, That this Convention urges parishes to remove barriers to full participation in congregational life by making their gender-specific facilities and activities fully accessible to all, regardless of gender identity and expression; and be it further

Resolved, That this convention affirms the following guiding principles for the inclusion of transgender and non-binary people in their parishes, missions, schools and camps:

Guiding Principles for the Inclusion of Transgender Non-Binary and Two-Spirit People in Dioceses, Parishes, Missions, Schools and Camps:

- We believe that all people are created in the image of God and that all people are beloved children of God. Because this is true,
- We will protect the rights and respect the dignity of transgender, non-binary and two-spirit persons, refusing to reject, judge, abuse, belittle or in any way dehumanize them.
- We will engage the complex realities for transgender, non-binary and two-spirit persons in our churches, schools, and camps, and not yield to the temptation to ignore those realities.
- We will recognize and accept our responsibility to protect the privacy of transgender, non-binary and two-spirit persons.
- We will make decisions about how to support transgender, non-binary, and two-spirit minors in our schools and camps in sensitive and appropriate communication with their parents.
- We will provide a safe environment for transgender, non-binary and two-spirit persons, for those who support them, and for those who do not understand our commitment to these principles.
- We will stay flexible in response to the complex and changing ramifications of this work by being open to relevant stories, to emerging information, and to the movement of the Holy Spirit.

Explanation: The first two Resolves of this resolution are derived from Resolution C022, passed at the 79th General Convention of the Episcopal Church in 2018 while the third Resolve and guidelines are derived from Resolution C054, also passed in 2018.

Resolution 2018-C022 called on dioceses to prayerfully consider passing similar resolutions locally, **yet only four dioceses of the Episcopal Church passed resolutions on these topics between 2018 and 2020** (The Episcopal Church in Connecticut, The Episcopal Diocese of Newark, The Episcopal Diocese of Washington, and The Episcopal Diocese of Chicago). This does not send a positive message of love, support, and inclusion to our trans/non-binary siblings in our own diocese and across the Episcopal Church.

RESOLUTION PASSED

Resolution officially opposing legislation that harms trans/non-binary children and youth

Resolved, That this Convention opposes legislation that impacts transgender, non-binary, and/or two-spirit children and youth through restrictions of access to public facilities, including locker rooms, bathrooms, and other educational facilities, and athletic and other activities.

and be it further

Resolved, That this Convention opposes legislation that impacts the access of transgender, non-binary, and/or two-spirit children and youth to healthcare. Healthcare includes fair and equitable access to physical and mental healthcare, access to gender affirming treatments, including puberty blockers, and respect for the relationship between transgender, non-binary, and/or two-spirit children and youth, their families, and their doctors.

Explanation:

2021 has been one of the worst years in recent history when it comes to legislation against LGBTQ+ Americans. As of May 2021, more than 250 anti-LGBTQ+ bills had been introduced to state legislatures. At least 35 of these bills directly targeted access to healthcare for trans/non-binary children and youth. At least 84 of these bills attempt to prohibit access of trans/non-binary children and youth to facilities and activities, such as sports teams, that align with their gender identity. This resolution, based on Resolution C022, passed at the 2018 General Convention, makes explicit diocesan support in the opposition of these and similar legislative actions. (Source for legislation statistics: hrc.org)

RESOLUTION PASSED

Resolution recognizing “gender identity and expression” refers to transgender, non-binary, two-spirit and/or gender diverse people

Resolved, That this Convention affirms that the non-discrimination Canons of the Episcopal Church include “gender identity and expression” as a protected category for access to discernment process for all orders of lay and ordained ministry (Title III, Canon 1, Sec. 2).

and be it further

Resolved, That this Convention affirms that “[n]o one shall be denied rights, status or access to an equal place in the life, worship, governance, or employment of this Church” due to “gender identity and expression” (Title I, Canon 1, Sec. 5).

and be it further

Resolved, That this Convention affirms that two-spirit, non-binary as well as binary identified people are included in the phrase "gender identity and expression."

Explanation:

The phrases “gender identity and expression” or “gender identity or gender expression,” when used in the Canons of the Episcopal Church, are intended to include two-spirit, transgender, non-binary, and other gender diverse individuals and their fair, free, and equal access to all parts of our congregational life together as the Body of Christ.

RESOLUTION PASSED

**DRAFT TWO: Resolution regarding Article III, Section 4:
“QUORUM”**

Submitted by: Committee on Canons

RESOLVED, that the Constitution of the Diocese of South Dakota, Article III Diocesan Conventions, Section 4 Quorum be changed to read: “A majority of lay delegates who are certified as provided by Canon, and a majority one-third of the Clergy entitled to vote as defined by Canon, when duly assembled, shall constitute a quorum for the transaction of business.”

Explanation: The reason for this proposed change is because we have come into a greater awareness that our ability to obtain a quorum in the clergy order at Diocesan Convention is growing more uncertain each year.

Currently, we have sixty-seven clergy people who are eligible to participate in our Diocesan Convention. Eighteen of this number are retired and do not serve congregations. They ask to be excused from attending Diocesan Convention because of their retirement status or for medical necessity. Additionally, as our clergy members increase in years and more of them choose to retire; and as some of our retired clergy persons, who are actively serve congregations, choose to “retire” again by choice or because they are affected by health issues and thus unable to continue, the number of clergy people from this category requesting to be excused from attending Diocesan Convention is expected to grow larger each year.

Three more clergy members in our Diocese are bi-vocational and, because of responsibilities required of them by their other vocation, they too cannot attend Diocesan Convention. Additionally, the attendance of four other clergy members at our Diocesan Convention annually depends upon their current health status or travel at that moment.

These twenty-five clergy members, representing thirty-seven percent of our clergy, are canonically and physically resident in our Diocese. As such, they are counted as part of the required number for a quorum according to Canon 3.1.1 regarding “Membership” at Diocesan Convention: “All Clergy canonically and physically resident in the Diocese shall be members of the Convention.”

According to the current reading of Article III, Section 4, thirty-four clergy members are required to obtain a quorum given our current status. That means that if an additional nine clergy members were to be absent from Diocesan Convention because of health issues, sudden emergencies, or for any other weighty reason, a quorum in the clergy order would fail. Were that to happen, we who have gathered to do the work of Diocesan Convention could not do what we are required annually to do.

After discussing the matter with other Dioceses who have faced this same issue in the past, this year’s Diocesan Convention is being asked to pass the first reading of changing the wording of Article III, Section 4, and reduce the number of clergy persons required for a quorum from a fifty-percent plus one majority to a number reflecting one-third of our clergy who are entitled to vote.

Impact on Diocesan Budget: If Diocesan Convention passed this resolution, it would have no impact on the Diocesan Budget. However, if we fail to achieve a quorum in either the lay or clergy order and thus could not do the business of Diocesan Convention, the money budgeted and invested in the operation of the Diocesan Convention would be wasted that year.

RESOLUTION PASSED

STANDING COMMITTEE: Each position is for a four year term.

The Diocese would like to acknowledge The Rev. Pat White Horse-Carda and Tammy Fonder for serving on the Standing Committee the past few years. Thank you for helping to shape and guide the Diocese of South Dakota.

Our newly elected clergy member to the Standing Committee is The Rev. Kim Fonder, Superintending Presbyter Standing Rock Mission.

Fr. Kim serves St. James', Mobridge, St. Elizabeth's, Wakpala, St. Peter's, McLaughlin, St. John's, Bullhead, St. Paul's, Little Eagle, Good Shepherd, Little Oak Creek and Holy Spirit, Firesteel. He believes every member of the Diocese should help guide the Diocese in its life in Christ. He has served as the Diocesan Convention Representative to Diocesan Council and he is currently serves as the treasurer on the Niobrara Council and he will be representing the Diocese at the next General Convention.

Our new lay person member to the Standing Committee is Robin Bowen, St. James, Enemy Swim.

Robin was born and raised an Episcopalian. Baptized on the Sisseton mission. She is now a member of the St. James Church of Enemy Swim, where she serves as a lay reader, Jr. Warden and youth coordinator. She also runs the Brotherhood of St. Andrew Jr. Camp. She will be moving to Gethsemane Church shortly and helping out there. She was taught by her Father Rev. Ron Campbell and her Uncle Rev. Les Campbell that you serve where the people need you the most.

The Diocese would like to extend our gratitude to the Rev. Kim Fonder for serving the Diocese as its convention representative the last several years.

DIOCESAN CONVENTION REPRESENTATIVE TO DIOCESAN COUNCIL:

This is a four year term.

This is Stephanie Bolman-Altimirano, St. Albans, Ft. Hale Bottom.

Stephanie is a lifelong member of St. Albans Episcopal Church located in Ft. Hale, SD within the Mni Sose Mission and an enrolled member of the Lower Brule Sioux Tribe and also Hidatsa from the MHA Nation in North Dakota. Currently she is an elected official, serving as a Tribal Council Member of the Lower Brule Sioux Tribe in Lower Brule, SD. She has a background in healthcare and nonprofit leadership and is a Certified Diversity Professional through the National Diversity Council. She believes her greatest asset is her "youthful" idealism. She believes that the actions of one can lead to changing the actions of many.

Stephanie was also elected our new ECW President, term ending 2023.

Update on Deacon Formation

by the Rev. Canon Cody Maynus

Well, as they say, the only thing in life that stays the same is... that everything changes! So it is in the world and so it is within the Church.

I want to share briefly with you some information about our newly revised formation process for those who have been called by their communities to the permanent diaconate in the Episcopal Diocese of South Dakota.

The formation process begins officially after a person has progressed through the diocesan discernment process and is named a Postulant by the Bishop upon the recommendation of the Standing Committee and the Commission on Ministry.

The word 'Postulant' simply means 'A person who asks questions' and that's exactly what this stage of formation looks like. The postulant continues to ask questions of God and of the Church. The Postulant continues to ask questions like "How is God calling me to respond to my baptism? Where is my ministry—as a baptized Christian and, God willing and the People consenting, as an ordained deacon—where is my ministry needed most? What are the skills that I need—and what are the skills that I already possess—to help me be an effective and healthy minister for the whole People of God?

These are important questions and they're difficult ones to answer, especially if a person is thinking about them in isolation. That's why all those in formation for the diaconate in this diocese will be part of a Formation Cohort. This group—convened by an experienced Deacon Mentor from our diocese—will commit to accompanying one another on the journey throughout formation. This group will stay together throughout the whole formation process and will support one another as they each grapple with the big questions of formation: how is God calling me to serve God and the Church right here and right now? How will that service change if and when I'm ordained? Who is God calling me to be as a deacon in my community and in the world around me? What are the People of God expecting from me as a leader?

In addition to the ministerial formation that the cohort experience will hopefully provide, the Canons of the Episcopal Church require a certain amount of theological education to be completed. The very good news is that, while the Canons specify that a postulant for Holy Orders in this church be formed theologically, it doesn't specify what that theological education looks like.

In the Diocese of South Dakota, we are launching a two year program of deacon formation which the Archdeacon and I have developed in consultation with other diocesan formation ministers, Bexley Hall Seabury Western Seminary, St. John's University School of Theology, and the Presiding Bishop's team on Indigenous Ministry.

I want to stress that this formation program is brand new in South Dakota! This year will be the launch of the program and those students who enroll in the program this year—as well, I hope, as others throughout the diocese—will help us iron out the inevitable kinks.

The basic structure of the formation program includes a series of courses which are offered in a two-year cycle. When we've finished the second year, we'll loop back to the first year and start the cycle all over again. If a person can't take a particular course in a particular year, never fear, the course will be offered again!

These courses will generally be 6-8 weeks long and will involve a mix of independent and group learning, as well as a mix of online and in-person learning. The aim is to provide quality content that will enable the student to achieve proficiency in the material while being as flexible as possible. We know that people have real lives—especially the kinds of people who are called to the diaconate in this church—and that’s why we want to be as flexible as possible throughout the process while also ensuring that each postulant for Holy Orders has the tools in their toolbox to be the effective and healthy minister that God and the Church needs them to be.

The best news about these courses is that they won’t require a test at the end! Students will, of course, have to be engaged in the learning process, but more and more research shows that simply repeating facts on a test does not contribute to lifelong learning or educational retention. To that end, each course will have some kind of summative project—which might be something as simple as a reflection paper or as practical as planning the details of a burial service. All of these projects will be gathered into a portfolio alongside the instructor’s constructive feedback and that portfolio will form the bulk of the Board of Examining Chaplains’ work in determining proficiency in each canonical area. More and more dioceses are moving to this portfolio model of educational assessment because it shows a student’s ability to integrate their learning and not simply to regurgitate it.

The faculty of this formation program have each been selected because they are what we’re calling *scholar-practitioners*. This is because their research is also matched by their service in the life of a faith community. The faculty is diverse in terms of theological, denominational, racial, and gendered backgrounds. Some of our instructors will be experienced clergy and lay leaders from our own diocese and others will be clergy and lay leaders from other dioceses and even other denominations. The goal is provide our postulants with a right tapestry of formators.

As I mentioned earlier, there will be kinks that need to be ironed out. We will make mistakes. And, with your help and encouragement and a hefty measure of grace, we will continue to refine this formation program until it is the flagship of formation programs in the Episcopal Church. Father Paul and I are committed to being good pastors to the people walking through the formation program—as well as to those who are sending their beloved friends to be formed as deacons—and I earnestly hope that you’ll commit to being good and prayerful supporters of all those involved in this process.

Please please please be in touch with the Archdeacon and with me in the weeks and months to come if you have any questions or concerns about this program or if you are sensing a call to the diaconate or you know somebody who might be discerning such a call. And, as ever, please do pray for an increase in vocations throughout our Church.

**The *Diakonia* Program of Deacon Formation
in the Niobrara School for Ministry**

Year A

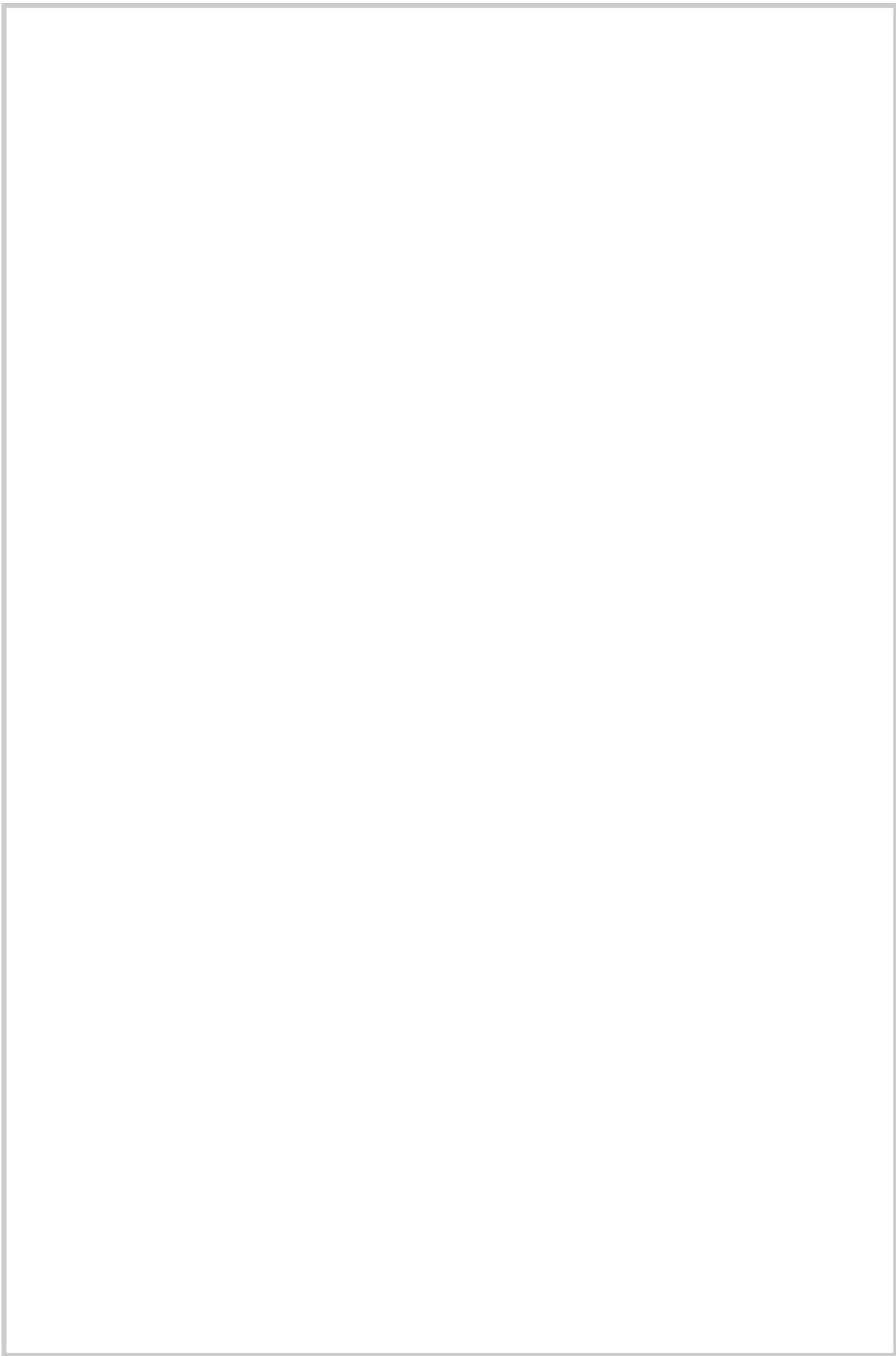
Church Polity & History (in collaboration with Bexley Seabury)
Old Testament
Practicum: Exegesis
Prayerbook I: Sacraments
New Testament
Pastoral Care/Spiritual Guidance
Theology & Ethics (in collaboration with Bexley Seabury)
Practicum: Funerals and Weddings

Year B

Preaching
Family Systems
Christian Spirituality
Practicum: The Deacon in Holy Week
Practicum: The Deacon in the Liturgy
Prayerbook II: Pastoral Offices
Faith Formation (in collaboration with Bexley Seabury)
Advocacy/Community Organizing
Constitution & Canons (in collaboration with Bexley Seabury)
Prayerbook III: Daily Office/Sunday Worship in the Absence of a Priest (in collaboration with Bexley Seabury)

General Requirements

Safe Church Training
Dakota Experience
Seeing the Face of God in all People
Exploring the Doctrine of Discover (in collaboration with Bexley Seabury)
Diocesan and South Dakota History
Suicide Prevention
Internship Experience



Every copy of *The South Dakota Church News* that has an incorrect address is returned to us with a 75¢ postage due charge.

Please use this form to correct your address or supply your new address BEFORE you move.

Moving? Please tell us...

Change Cancellation New Subscription

Name.....

NEW Address.....

City, ST, Zip.....

Effective Date

Church we will attend after move

THANK-YOU



Mail to: South Dakota Church News

Bishop's visitation & travel dates are in bold letters.
Please remember the Bishop's schedule is subject to last minute changes.

Diocesan Calendar

NOVEMBER

Nov 28 & 29 Diocesan office closed
Nov 28 Thanksgiving weekend

DECEMBER

Dec 5 St. Marys, Mitchell
Dec 12 St. Matthews, Rapid City
Dec 19 Returning from the Bishop Consecration Diocese of Iowa
Dec 24 Christmas Eve assisting on the Mni-Sose Mission
Dec 31 New Years Eve

JANUARY 2022

Jan 9 St. Andrews, Rapid City
Jan 14-18 Winter Talk
Jan 23 Trinity, Watertown
Jan 30 Grace Church, Madison

DAY LIGHT SAVINGS TIMES

Ends: Sunday November 7, 2021 Fall Back

Begins: Sunday March 13, 2022 Spring ahead

Save the Date!

UTO Annual Grant Materials will be released on the first Friday of December!

Be sure to check our webpage, Facebook, and other social media platforms for all of the information.

MARK YOUR CALENDARS

**Clergy Retreat
May 2-5, 2022
Abbey of the Hills, Marvin, SD**



Check out our website
Episcopalchurchsd.org
 for updates regarding the upcoming

Follow us on Facebook
 The Episcopal Diocese of
 South Dakota



Follow us on Instagram
 @episcopalchurchsd



Follow us on Twitter
 @DioceseSD



FEATURES INSIDE THIS ISSUE:

Bishop's Convention Address	Page 3-7
Canon Homily	Page 8-10
Creation Cares	Page 11
Communications Future	Page 2
Convention Election Results	Page 18
Convention Resolution	Page 12-17
Deacon Formation	Page 19
Diocesan Calendar	Page 23