



The Sheaf

A publication of the Episcopal Diocese of North Dakota

December 2021



What has come into being in him was life, and the life was the light of all people. The light shines in the darkness and the darkness did not overcome it." (John 1:4-5)

Light shining in darkness: An Advent/Christmas reflection

— Bishop Thomas Ely



Light is a powerful image. In the Bible, light is the first act of Creation. The pillar of fire lit the way at night for the Exodus journey. The light of a star guided the Magi to the place of Christ's birth. "Light of the World" was an image Jesus used to describe the ministry of discipleship. The light of Easter dawn revived hope for the disciples.

Light helps us see things more clearly. It helps us find our way. It is a sign of hope, as when the light of dawn brings the hope of a new day. It is a sign of direction, as when the beacon from a light-house helps one navigate in the fog. Light helps to dispel fear, as when the faint light of a night-light helps a child get to sleep. We know well the effect of a single match lit in a dark place.

The John Gospel uses the image of light to announce that *Logos*, the eternal Word of God's di-

vine self-communication, has come into the world as shining light, human flesh, offering all the hope and promise associated with light. Not only has *Logos* come as light, but it has come in such a way that no darkness can overcome it. It has made its dwelling (pitched its tent) among us. This is the Good News of Jesus Christ that the rest of the John Gospel goes on to proclaim. This is the joy of Christmas. This is part of the anticipation of the Advent season during which the daylight hours diminish until we reach the winter solstice, and they gradually grow longer and longer once again.

The word of faith that we celebrate at Christmas is that of Emmanuel - God with us. Word made flesh, joining heaven and earth through the mystery of Incarnation. The light shone in the darkness of the world that first Christmas, and the darkness could not overcome it, nor will it ever, not even in

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in death. It is a light that shines in the dark places of our lives: places of loneliness, hurt, loss, depression, and worry. It is a light that shines in all the hurting places of the world; even a world filled with indignity, chaos, and pandemic uncertainty. It offers hope, even against tremendous odds, and at times when that light seems distant, or perhaps even absent. Perhaps you know about the power of this light from your own experience. Or perhaps you are counting on its capacity to shine in some dark place of your life, or in the life of the world today. Perhaps you have been this light for another! Maybe without even knowing it.

My hope and prayer for you and for us as a diocese is that we will let this light shine in and through us as we faithfully seek to live the Way of Love in our households, our churches, our communities and beyond. I end with these familiar words from one of my favorite Christmas Hymns:



*O little town of Bethlehem,
how still we see thee lie!
Above thy deep and dreamless sleep
the silent stars go by;
yet in thy dark streets shineth
the everlasting light.
The hopes and fears of all the years
are met in thee tonight.*

A blessed Advent and joyous Christmas,

+ Thomas

Pandemic Relief Grants

The Rev. Steve Godfrey

In its August 2021 meeting, Diocesan Council decided to divide a \$40,000 Covid Relief fund grant from The Episcopal Church Executive Council between our 20 congregations (\$2000 per congregation), “to provide relief from Covid-19 related financial hardship or to support the most vulnerable, the marginalized, and the under-served, or under resourced, within or beyond each diocese,” as outlined in the Executive Council memo. These grants are intended to address local pandemic-related needs, broadly defined. It is a great opportunity to reach out into surrounding neighborhoods and perhaps partner with wider community organizations as we discern locally what God is up



Bishop Ely presents the pandemic relief fund grant to David Lukudu and Deacon Barb Olson at St. John the Divine, Moorhead.

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to in the world around us. It could also be a way to strengthen pastoral care in congregations that have been especially hard hit by Covid-19. It is an exciting opportunity for congregations to connect with their communities and develop and strengthen innovative ministries.

Six congregations have requested and received \$2,000 each. St. Paul's, Grand Forks, plans to help out at the mission, help with the backpack program, and help purchase winter outside gear for people in need. St. John the Divine, Moorhead, is beginning to assemble equipment for streaming services online. St. Michael & All Angels, Cartwright, is addressing suicide prevention. Suicide has had a devastating and lasting effect on the congregation and community alike and the pandemic has caused feelings of loneliness and isolation. So they plan to support the local "Out of Darkness" chapter that helps teens suffering from loneliness and depression. Grace, Jamestown, will be upgrading their remote ministry equipment that now supports an international Bible study, and any left over from that will go toward a community feeding program that they are part of, "Come to the Table," begun during the height of the pandemic and planned to continue it indefinitely. St. George's, Bismarck plans to contribute

to the Community Action Backpack program and Hope Manor for addiction support. Advent, Devils Lake, plans to obtain audio/video equipment to facilitate live streaming of services from the Church to those unable to attend services in person during periods of elevated risk from the pandemic, whether community wide or for them personally; to obtain a monitor so ministers outside the community can stream to the Church; and to make internet connectivity available at the Church.

Congregations that would still like to participate in this initiative and receive the \$2,000, should email Steve Godfrey at sgodfrey@ndepiscopal.org and briefly indicate how they imagine spending the money. A sentence or two is enough. Recipient congregations are asked to submit a brief story from the experience of sharing this resource, again by emailing Steve Godfrey. We will publish these stories and share them with the Executive Council, as they requested.

For more information,
contact Steve at 515-450-9858.



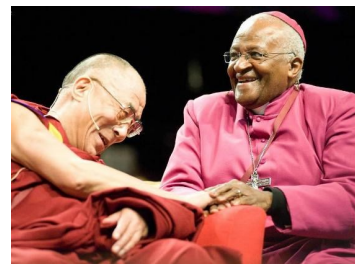
Clergy consider **MISSION: JOY - THE FILM THIS ADVENT**

Host a screening for your congregation, simply sign up [HERE](#) (it takes 3 minutes) or email MissionJoy@RocoFilms.com.

The film is **FREE OF CHARGE** to **faith communities** to help further the Archbishop's and His Holiness's goal of making the film available, without regard to ability to pay.

Watch the trailer (RT 2:45) [here](#).

His Holiness the Dalai Lama and **Archbishop Desmond Tutu** share their wisdom (and humor) through this laugh-out-loud funny documentary film that is inspired by their international bestseller, ***The Book of Joy***.



Diocesan Council Meeting: November 19-20, 2021

Submitted by Stephanie Garcia



How do you have a productive meeting grounded in the core principle of love? As an Episcopalian, I have a deeply rooted belief that we need to strive to do all things with love. It can be difficult to know what that looks like, especially within the context of executive decision making. However, the Presiding Bishop Michael B. Curry provides us with the framework "*The Way of Love*." This is an intentional practice, which helps us become closer to Jesus Christ in all areas of life. On November 19, 2021, the Diocesan Council convened with these core beliefs in mind and heart. Prior to addressing the scheduled agenda, we spent time in prayer and reflection on "*The Way of Love*;" with the intention of doing our work with these core principles.

This meeting had a full list of business items. The Episcopal Diocese of North Dakota is experiencing transition and faces many challenges. To promote higher accountability and increased communication, we relied on a system of shared leadership. While Bishop Provisional, The Right Reverend Thomas C. Ely helped guide the conversation, our decisions are largely made only with the consensus of the group. Essentially, the power of decision-making is being transferred back to the people. Which is a critical practice as we work through the important issues that impact each congregation, including finances, elections of officers, congregational renewal. While we often found ourselves in agreement, I hope for increased debate as we

wrestle with the problems that challenge our existence in North Dakota.

The Episcopal Diocese of North Dakota is in the midst of change, which can be a very uncomfortable process. In previous meetings, the *New Season of Ministry Mutual Ministry Matrix* was approved to identify areas of concern and provide a tangible process to help resolve each issue. There are working groups addressing the following areas: communication, congregational/ministry development (school for Ministry), youth/young adult, reconciliation, finance/ administration, and the New Season of Ministry Task Force (Diocesan Convention 2022).

I am a new council member and found myself called to address issues of reconciliation. Here, we discussed the divisions that threaten our church community. We discussed the marginalization of Native communities, racial discrimination, intolerance for LGBTIA + parishioners, political discord, conflicts with Eastern vs. Western parts of the state, and perceived disparities between large vs. small congregations. These conflicts and the other issues identified in the Matrix may feel daunting. However, the only way to progress as church into the future is to address them directly, with honesty and Love.

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There are challenges ahead and the meeting was a reminder that we need change makers within the Episcopal Diocese of North Dakota. However, I am hopeful as we use shared leadership to disrupt the traditional hierarchal power structure. I am also hopeful that we are examining the deeper issues that hold the church back from progressing.

Finally, I am hopeful because at our core, we strive to do all things with love.

Update on Gift to St. Vincent's Center

Following is an edited version of an email sent to Andrea Stromberg of St. Georges from Elizabeth Lowell, Board Member, St. Vincent's Center.

"I daresay that you are following the grim situation in Haiti. The value of the gourde continues to bounce around and the prices in Haiti are skyrocketing. In the earthquake stricken south, black market costs can be \$75 for a gallon of gasoline.

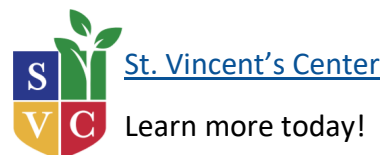
The St. Vincent's Center Board considers how our teachers can continue to teach in this crisis. Schools are closed - no fuel and a great deal of fear...understandably.

Interestingly, while patient numbers for the Clinic are down, those for the Brace Shop have held up. I think this is due to the amount of serial casting we do for club feet. Those little feet need to be

Journeying the Way of Love During the Advent Season

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- Curriculum
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torqued and recast every few weeks - and the window of opportunity to address the situation is very small. Your support of Brace Shop materials has helped to keep us functioning.

So, there are no words adequate to express our gratitude for all you have done. I'm sure this is a superfluous request, but I put it out there anyway: Please keep Haiti in your daily prayers.

*Gratefully,
Elizabeth"*



St. Vincent's Medical Clinic
and Brace Shop

Oh-SO-Generous

North Dakota Episcopalians

Submitted by Elizabeth Lowell, Board Member, St. Vincent's Center



A year ago, you graced St. Vincent's Center for Children with Disabilities, Haiti with a total grant of approximately \$11,000 - a combination of gifts from your Foundation and St. George's Church in Bismarck. The gift was in response to a proposal seeking funds for a medical analysis laboratory at the SVC downtown Port-au-Prince Medical Clinic; and the then-estimated cost was \$10,027: an amount carefully researched by St. Vincent's Director, Père Irnel Duveaux.

The totally unanticipated Haitian governmental fiat to increase the value of the gourde against the U.S. dollar meant that when your gift arrived, the cost had increased to \$13,901. This difference was met by yet another generous North Dakota Episcopalian. So, you good people deserve **all** the credit for outfitting the lab - the most expensive piece of equipment being the microscope.

The lab has been of invaluable assistance to the Clinic physicians, as diagnosis is immediately available. And, it has saved patients and their families from finding and trekking to another location for more expensive testing. As food insecurity grows, the lab can immediately identify malnutrition and advise treatment. In a time of unprecedented violence, resulting in reduced patient visits, the lab has continued to see some 60 patients a month. More "normally," that number would be around 400.

Because Haiti has no medical infrastructure (and right now, no infrastructure, really, of any kind), clinics such as St. Vincent's help to fill an immense gap. Despite the violence and the reduced patient traffic, the Clinic remains open. Our physicians are dedicated and the Clinic is secure. In fact, we have recently purchased shipping containers which will be retrofitted to accommodate a greatly-expanded Physical Therapy program and a small pharmacy, thus furthering our commitment to Haitian children's health care. We are immeasurably grateful for your partnership in this ministry.



Adam is a student at St. Vincent's. Here, he has accurately represented the building on the Santo 17 campus. Note the student in a wheelchair and the ramp.

[Ways to give to St. Vincent's](#)

Gifts can be given by check or [online](#).

St. Vincent's Center, Haiti
925 Hertzler Road
Mechanicsburg, PA 17055

Mesi anpil– Thank you very much!



Regional Coordinator for Episcopal Ministry in Northwestern North Dakota

Dear Beloved in Christ,

November is a month we traditionally focus on giving thanks. Of course, every Communion is also a Great Thanksgiving, when we join our voices with angels and archangels and all the company of heaven. We remember ancestors who have crossed over ahead of us and recall our obligation to try to think of the impact of our actions on the next seven generations. How we will honor our legacy and contribute to the faith story of our own times, own places?

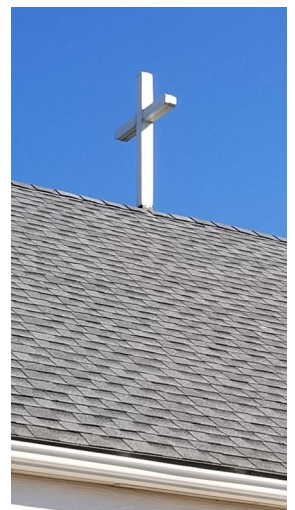
The Northwest ministry has been busily embracing our calling to live into God's dream for us. All Saints, Minot recently applied for an NDEF grant to strengthen ties to MSU campus ministry and affirm that All Saints is welcome and safe space for all. St. Paul's, White Shield is working on a UTO grant for creation care. St. Peter's, Williston is discerning how to use their covid relief fund to best serve their community, while St. Michael and All Angels, Cartwright decided to use their covid funds to support suicide prevention and awareness. St. Sylvan's, Dunseith continues to gather to celebrate baptisms and I had the joy and honor of attending two such celebrations last month.

Ministry is happening, because the faithful people and priests of these congregations are choosing gratitude over grumbling, even as we enter a second year of a trying and costly pandemic.

As coordinator, I am working to support these five congregations, along with the sacramental support of Rev. Mary Johnson and Rev. Mark Bradshaw, Air Force Chaplain.

I am grateful for the investment the NW congregations have made and continue to make in this regional initiative. However, we are one body in Christ and if your congregation wants to contribute to these regional efforts, I hope you will consider doing so, as ministry in one area enriches us all.

I leave with you an image I captured on the day of Bishop Tom's visitation to Cartwright--a stark white cross against a sheer blue sky. Our faith story is part of a larger story, as vast as the sky. We are held in our time, chronos, and in Creator's time, kairos. How will we show our thanks for the privilege of worshipping and serving together? How will we contribute to this ongoing, exciting, surprising story of faith?



In Christ's peace, power, and love,
Kim Becker+

Cartwright, Williston, White Shield, Minot, Dunseith

Diocesan Reconciliation Committee Identifies Wodakota as a Diocesan Goal

Submitted by Amy Phillips

The Diocesan Reconciliation Committee has been meeting for the past ten months with the facilitation of the Rev. Shaneequa Brokenleg, The Episcopal Church Staff Officer for Racial Reconciliation. The committee has identified a Diocesan goal of “Learning and Creating Beloved Community (Wodakota) Together” for the purpose of building relationships across divides resulting from prejudice, geography, parish size, and other issues.

To work towards Wodakota, the committee identified the following strategic directions: building relationships to become Wodakota; actively listening to the Holy Spirit’s push; improving communication and dialogue through stories; empowering youth to belong and lead in Wodakota; and innovating worship for transformation and relationships. On December 9, the committee will be

presenting its action steps for implementation of strategic directions to Bishop Ely.

The committee is excited to share its ideas with the Diocese and hopes that Episcopalians across the state will be eager to participate in activities that promote our goal of Wodakota.

Members of the Committee include Kim Becker (Northwest Regional Coordinator); Robert Fox (St. Paul’s, White Shield); Carmine Goodhouse (St. Luke’s, Ft. Yates); Peter Halbach (Church of the Advent, Devils Lake); Kathy Hintz (All Saints, Minot); Christie Iverson (St. James, Cannonball), Amy Phillips (St. Stephen’s, Fargo); Fern Pokorny (St. John’s, Dickinson); Pastor Larry Thiele (St. Thomas, Spirit Lake).



Diocesan Reconciliation Committee members at a zoom meeting on 11/22/21,
Top Row: Christie Iverson, Amy Phillips, Pastor Larry Thiele
Middle Row: Kathy Hintz; facilitator and consultant Rev. Shaneequa Brokenleg; guest Rev. Steve Godfrey (Diocesan Minister)

In Our Hope of Christmas

On Standing Rock we use the hymn O Come, O Come, Emmanuel sung in Dakota through Advent.

Submitted by John Floberg



2. O Come, O Come, Emmanuel

"Wopekitoŋ kiŋ Zion ed u kta."—Isaiah 59:20

1. O u ye, O Em - man - u - el, Qa Is - ra - el ki - yu - ška ye;
2. O u ye, O em - man - u - el, Qa Is - ra - el ki - yu - ška ye,
3. O u ye, Aŋ - pa - o - Wa - kaŋ, Caŋ - te wa - šte - uŋ - yaŋ - pi ye,
4. O u ye, O I - taŋ - caŋ kiŋ; Mah - pi - ya - ta ti - yo - pa kiŋ

8

Wa - ya - ka uŋ qa ce - ya ce, Christ Je - sus - He his šni - he - haŋ.
wa - kaŋ - ši - ca na - pe - e - taŋ, Qa wo - o - ki - ye kiŋ - qu ye.
Wi - coŋ - te o - haŋ - zi - o - was He - na ka - hiŋ - di - ye - ya ye.
A - hi - uŋ - ki - yu - zam - ni - pi Qa wo - te - hi a - na - pta ye.

16

Do - waŋ! Do - waŋ! Em - man - u - el He ed ni - hi kta, Is - ra - el. A - men.



At A Breaking Point: A Youth Perspective on Crisis and Hope at COP26

Solveigh Barney (she/her) from the Diocese of North Dakota writes from her position as an official delegate of the Episcopal Presiding Bishop for COP26 .

Dear Diocesan Council,

My experience serving as an Episcopal delegate to the Presiding Bishop at COP26 was truly fruitful. I met so many incredible Episcopalians from across the world who all had a great dedication to serving our planet. I also attended several events and panels during the two weeks of COP26 that explored topics ranging everywhere from food waste in grocery stores to indigenous women in Africa. In highlighting some stories that resonated with me, I thought it would be noteworthy to raise unheard voices at the negotiation table. I intentionally went to quite a few panels hosted by indigenous folks. All emphasized the importance of listening to indigenous messages, such as folklore and creation stories, through which we can reconnect with the sacredness of our Earth. There are indigenous led grassroots campaigns both near and far. One that sparked my interest was a renewable energy initiative in First Nation communities in Canada. These folks are ultimately leading the movement for our neighbors to the north in the transition to sustainable energy.

Another area of conversation was the Global South. I was stunned by what people from this region had to say. It opened my eyes to the massive imbalance experienced by climate change. The Global South is already experiencing catastrophic



Solveigh Barney speaks at the Episcopal COP26 workstream dialogue on climate change adaptation.

events due to climate change, and they do not have adequate funds to adapt to this reality. These events include one of the first famines that is directly caused by climate change in Madagascar, as well as the rising sea levels consuming small island nations like the Maldives and Fiji. In a broader sense, the Global South is not responsible for climate change, but rather it is the Global North at fault, and a lot of that weight falls on the United States. I remember hearing a statistic that the north needs to cut its emissions by 50% to reach that 1.5 degrees Celsius goal while the south could actually increase its footprint at its current rate, and we would still meet that 1.5 threshold. It is our job as developed countries who have the support to support these countries.

A topic applicable to my positionality was hearing the voices of young people. At COP26 global leaders were making the decisions for our future. It is so frustrating when policymakers only have the short-term economy on their mind and make current issues as later problems. I cannot emphasize enough how often I heard from both young adults and older world leaders that the time is now to make changes. I am reminded of a quote I heard at the event- if you want to know about climate

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if you want to know about climate change, ask your child. So as a young adult, I am saying the time is now.

All of this goes to say that as a diocese, it is our time to adapt. If we want to have a church presence even in the next twenty years, we must start taking the initiative to fight climate change. The question that has been on my mind for these last two weeks has been this: So what can we do in North Dakota?

When I looked up environmental justice in North Dakota, I saw a lot of narratives surrounding the DAPL protest, and the sources date back at the latest in 2017. Although I know the Episcopal Church helped in the efforts to stop the pipeline, I haven't heard of much since then. Unfortunately, this may be because DAPL is currently up and running, but we can't lose hope in a sustainable future for North Dakota. We have to keep our efforts alive. This includes raising up indigenous voices and reminding people of our Genesis covenant to be stewards of the Earth. We can also use our churches as spaces for environmental justice movements. Lastly, if churches are already doing such work, make sure to spread the news. We are a small enough diocese where we can get the message to all Episcopalians and beyond to inspire change.

There are also some initiatives on the national level. We can always bring forward new policies to the National Convention. Here's a list of current policies regarding climate change. It is our job as the Episcopal body to expand the list and fill in the gaps to create more just and equitable policies. One program that was brought up a lot were Good News Gardens (<https://www.episcopalchurch.org/good-news-gardens/>). There is also an official Epis-

copal carbon tracker in which households can track their footprint (<https://www.sustainislandhome.org/>). Finally, as you know, the Episcopal Church loves committees. Many of the other delegates were a part of creation care task forces, and I thought it would be a good idea to start a similar group in our diocese.

Ultimately, I want to keep conversations about sustainable behavior going. I will be back in Bismarck in mid-December until January 19th. Let me know if there is anything I can do to spread the word and help create a more environmentally woke diocese.

Blessings,

Solveigh Barney

November 19, 2021

Applications for General Convention Official Youth Presence 2022

The Episcopal Church invites teens age 16 to 19 to apply to become part of the [80th General Convention's Official Youth Presence](#), a group whose members have seat and voice in the House of Deputies.

Up to two youth from each of the church's nine provinces will be selected to participate in the Official Youth Presence from July 4-14 in Baltimore, Maryland. Youth who are selected must also attend orientation and training in Baltimore from March 31 to April 2.

[Applications](#) and [nomination](#) forms are **due by Dec. 23**. Nominators must not be related to the applicant.

Details are at <https://www.episcopalchurch.org/publicaffairs/applications-open-for-general-convention-official-youth-presence-2022/>.



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Calendar of Events

Dec. 14-15: Advent Clergy Retreat, Trinity Lutheran Church, Jamestown

Dec. 15: Diocesan Ministry Support Team Meeting

Public events hosted by the Episcopal Church:

- **Congress Weekly – EPPN Network Calls:** Join the Office of Government Relations for a 30-minute, weekly conversation about the policies and legislation we are advocating for. Take part in a conversation on advocacy asks, the political environment, and the legislative outlook. Thursdays, 1:00-1:30pm ET, [registration required](https://www.episcopalchurch.org/ministries/office-government-relations/events/) or visit <https://www.episcopalchurch.org/ministries/office-government-relations/events/>