



# The Sheaf

A publication of the Episcopal Diocese of North Dakota  
Pentecost Edition ~ June and July 2023

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## The Fragrance of Pentecost

*Submitted by: Bishop Thomas Ely*

A few weeks ago, on the sixth Sunday of Easter, the promised gift of the Holy Spirit was featured in the Gospel reading from John. I was preaching on Standing Rock that day. As I often do now, I looked up the passage in the indigenous translation of the New Testament, known as *First Nations Version*. There we read: *"If you love me, you will walk in my ways. I will ask the Father to send one who will always walk beside you and guide you on the good road."* I was drawn to the idea that the Holy Spirit is the one who walks beside us and guides us on the good road.

That day, we celebrated baptisms and confirmations at both Saint Luke's and Saint James. During liturgies such as these, the congregation is asked the question, *"Will you who witness these vows do all in your power to support these persons in their life in Christ?"* The response is, *"We will."* I wondered that day if another way of asking that question might be, *"Will you who witness these vows do all in your power to walk beside these persons and guide them on the good road?"*

To me, that rephrasing of the question suggested, at least in some measure, that we are animators of God's promised Holy Spirit in and through our relationships with one another as members of the Body of Christ. In other words, God has commissioned us to walk beside one another and guide one another on the good road. And, when we recall in the Pentecost narrative in the Gospel according to John that the gift of the Holy Spirit comes through the breath of the Risen Christ, I take note that we respond with our breath to that baptismal question by saying, *"We will."* Is it too much of a stretch to think that we are called to be the embodiment of Holy Spirit to one another? If so, might it also follow that we are called to be the embodiment of Holy Spirit to the world? To be the breath of God's Holy Spirit in our daily lives.



*Continued on page 3*



## *The Sheaf—Pentecost Edition*

### Included in this issue:

The Fragrance of Pentecost — pages 1 & 3

Celebrating and Supporting the Ministry of All the Baptized — pages 4-5

New Season of Ministry Task Force — page 6

Mutual Ministry — page 6

Pentecost Greetings from the Northwest — page 7

Pentecost and the WoDakota Appeal — page 8

Community Connections: A Light in the Darkness — page 9

Creation Care Corner — page 10

North Dakota Episcopal Foundation does Dogs! — page 11

NDEF Grant for All Saint's, Minot — page 12

Reconciliation Committee Retreat — page 13

White Privilege — page 14-16

St. Stephen's Celebrates Rogation Sunday — page 17

United Thank Offering — page 18

Calendar — page 19

Convention — page 20

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On Standing Rock, I also shared this story that I heard several years ago about a small village in France where a perfume factory, situated in the center of the village, is the major employer. Every afternoon at 3:00 p.m. the doors of the factory are thrown open and the workers stream out. On their way home, they stop at the butcher and grocery store, get a haircut in the barber shop, and visit the bakery. They visit friends and family. Each person, after eight hours in the factory, is immersed in the sweet, beautiful smell of perfume, and as they move into every corner of the village the sweetness fills and transforms the identity of the town. The entire village becomes a place of beauty and peace.

I was led to wonder if it is too much of a stretch to imagine that each time we gather for worship and fellowship we are being immersed in the fragrant love of God's Holy Spirit, and everywhere we go, and in all our actions, that love goes too, and not just as an idea, but as our very way of being. Might it be that this is what it means to be the embodiment of the Holy Spirit, to be the breath of God offering a promise of hope, love, justice, peace, and possibility to the world, when we say, *"I will, with God's help?"*

In God's amazing Pentecostal love,

*+ Thomas*



# Celebrating and Supporting the Ministry of All the Baptized

*Submitted by: The Rev. Steve Godfrey, Diocesan Minister*

*“When the day of Pentecost had come, the disciples were all together in one place. And suddenly from heaven there came a sound like the rush of a violent wind, and it filled the entire house where they were sitting. Divided tongues, as of fire, appeared among them, and a tongue rested on each of them. All of them were filled with the Holy Spirit and began to speak in other languages, as the Spirit gave them ability.” (Acts 2:1-4)*

Pentecost is the day when the Resurrection of Christ is fulfilled in the ministry of the Church. It is sometimes called the church’s birthday. That ministry and the ability to carry it out was given to each and every member, in particular ways, but without exception.

The weekend before Pentecost, I went with a few members of the New Season of Ministry Task Force to the Diocese of Northern Michigan’s Visitors Weekend. That diocese has a long history now of developing the ministry of all the baptized and sharing the ministry of the church among all members. I have read about their structure and have several colleagues there, but it was a treat to experience firsthand their culture of shared, baptismal ministry, where congregations form teams to preach, preside, teach, and serve and care for one another and their communities, with the support of a team of seminary-trained missionaries who function as resource people and mentors. (See Christie Iverson’s article in this issue of *The Sheaf* for details about our learning there.)

One of those missionaries is their bishop, Rayford Ray, who led us in an exercise reflecting on the ways that each one of us practices diaconal, priestly, and apostolic ministry in our daily lives. In what ways do each of us serve others; gather, celebrate, and reconcile; envision, oversee, and teach? Around tables we shared stories of caring for children and elders, organizing birthday parties, teaching, and parenting. We realized that everyone there, regardless of their leadership status in the church has and uses gifts for all kinds of ministry.



*Photo by Rayford Ray*



Photo by Rayford Ray

The Diocese of Northern Michigan leans into the Pentecost assumption that we have all been called and equipped for the ministries of service, celebration, and oversight, in various ways, and they pool their resources to provide specialists to support, not provide, ministry. There are few passive attendees, and most of the people are active participants in the ministries of the church.

We have many active participants in the ministries of the church in the Diocese of North Dakota too and some of our churches function primarily

through the leadership of local teams. I wonder how much more effective we could be if we leaned even more into that Pentecost vision of calling and giftedness for all and prioritized supporting everyone in discovering and using their spiritual gifts for building up the church and especially for sharing the Good News of the Risen Christ through serving the people around us, gathering our neighbors in reconciliation and celebration, and sharing the vision of abundant life we follow in faith.

I look forward to seeing how the New Season of Ministry Task Force recommends that we strengthen our response to the Spirit's call to each of us to serve, bless, teach, and invite and encourage our neighbors in joining us in Resurrection life. Happy Pentecost!



It was wear your red St. Georgians t-shirt to church on Sunday, May 28, 2023 to celebrate Pentecost.

Joanne Lassiter, Past Senior Warden  
Photo credit, Dan Dailey



# New Season of Ministry Task Force

*Submitted by: John Baird, co-chair*

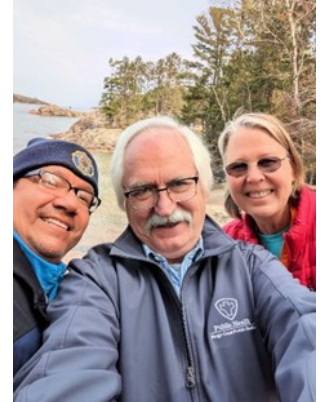
It has been exciting to visit with every congregation and to hear thoughts and ideas from those visits as well as the individual surveys. The Canons and Finance Committees will be asked their thoughts on structure and finances. We are having conversations and discussions with the wider church. This included visiting and understanding mutual ministry in the Diocese of Northern Michigan and discussions with other surrounding and companion dioceses. Christie Iverson and Steve Godfrey have summarized our Northern Michigan visit well.

## Mutual Ministry

*Submitted by: Christie Iverson*



The Diocese of Northern Michigan recently had a visitors retreat to help others explore how they organize the life of their diocese. Members of the New Season of Ministry Task Force, Robert Fox, John Baird and Christie Iverson as well as Diocesan Minister Steve Godfrey attended. Other dioceses including Los Angeles, Central Gulf Coast, Southern Ohio, and Michigan, specifically Detroit, also were present. It made for a wonderful weekend of exploring different experiences in the Episcopal Church.



Northern Michigan is a diocese where congregations are run by mutual ministry or ministry teams. Each team consists of a deacon, presbyter, preacher, and coordinators for ministry, stewardship, education and priestly ministry. There are also ecumenical coordinators. No one has more than one spot on a team. The leadership is circular and not hierarchical. All are equal and there is no voting by Orders in the Diocese of Northern Michigan. The teams are locally trained and ordained. The Diocese does have seminary trained missioners who are used as a resource for the congregational team ministry. Each missioner serves 4-5 congregations. Responsibilities of the missioner is to help congregations with discernment- adding new members to keep the teams whole and healthy, form the team locally through the commission on ministry and local education per canons, support community mission work and give encouragement.

Northern Michigan is very similar to us in that they are small with approximately the same number of worshipping congregants on a Sunday morning and have 21 congregations. They are not as geographically challenged but would serve as a good model for the Diocese of North Dakota.

Mutual ministry did not happen overnight in Northern Michigan. It took a couple of decades to reorient the average Episcopalian from expecting clergy to “do everything” and not feeling enabled or worthy to do things themselves. Clergy, also in their seminary studies, are taught what it is to be a Rector, “the ruler of their congregation” so it was a difficult transition for them as well. Funding for this ministry is different and difficult too for those not used to the system. Each congregation sends 21% of its operating budget to the Diocese as well as 40% for the missioners’ salaries. Mutual ministry would need a total commitment to do things differently in the Diocese.

Mutual ministry works in Northern Michigan. The congregations are vibrant and hopeful, the Spirit is working there. They are engaged in community missions. They are not afraid to experiment or look at themselves critically to find new ways to make things work. It might work in the Diocese of North Dakota too.

# Pentecost Greetings from the Northwest

*Submitted by: The Reverend Kim Fox, Northwest Regional Coordinator*

Dear Beloved in Christ,

Pentecost is one of my favorite holidays. At my parish in North Carolina, we had a tradition of people wearing red. We also read in different languages and it made for a joyous, if cacophonous, celebration!

Having walked through the Great 50 Days of Easter to Pentecost, we get to rejoice at the coming of the Holy Spirit and the change of colors from white to red signifies that fire and energy.

Where is the energy in your own life? Your own congregation? One of my favorite Scripture passages is: "Glory to God whose power, working in us, can do infinitely more than we can ask or imagine. (Ephesians 3:20)

How is the Holy Spirit working in your lives, your churches? Sometimes the Holy Spirit calls us out of our comfort zone into new and untested waters (such as my answering a call to then faraway North Dakota!--are we willing to take the risk of responding to new ways of doing ministry? The "trying on" of new ideas that our Bishop has encouraged us to do?

I enjoyed listening in on New Season of Ministry Task Force conversations at St. Peter's, Williston; St. Michael and All Angels, Cartwright; and All Saints, Minot. There is much energy and engagement around ministry not only at those congregations, but also at St. Paul's, White Shield, as weather warms and enables work on UTO projects in creation care.

Our diocese is in a period of discernment as to direction and shape of the episcopacy, but we are all called to assess continually the direction and shape of our own faith journey. I am taking time for spiritual retreat the end of May, a practice I have been intentional about in my priesthood, as without time for prayerful reflection and restoration, it can be harder to hear the promptings of the Holy Spirit.

In Cherokee, the word for red contains the word for blood. Red is the color of Pentecost and the color of blood common to us all. Amid all our differences, can we find, with God's help, the grace to allow the Holy Spirit to move us to compassion and love for those who differ from us? Are we willing to surrender to what the Holy Spirit calls us to do and to be beyond what we might perceive with our human minds and habits?

The service for baptism opens:  
There is one Body and one Spirit;  
There is one hope in God's call to us;  
One Lord, one Faith, one Baptism;  
One God and Father of all.

As varied members of this Diocese, will we strive to see each other as beloved by God our Creator? For in doing so, we move one step closer to what Verna Dozier called "God's dream for us" in which we not only worship Jesus, but *\*follow\** Jesus, even when the way forward might not yet be clear.

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



# Pentecost and the WoDakota Appeal

*Submitted by: Bishop Thomas Ely*



The Holy Spirit has really been at work during the Easter Season in response to our WoDakota Appeal, and so we begin the Pentecost phase of this appeal with an expression of gratitude to the people who have made a financial commitment.

Here are their names (in no particular order):

Fr. John and Dn. Sloane Floberg	Mark and Kate Hanlon	Hellen Lodu
Sean Burt and Julia Bowsher	St. Michael and All Angels	John and Jessica Anderson
Joelle Shewey	The James and Melody Nord	Ross and Donna Pettit
The Rev. Zanne Ness	Charitable Fund	Tammy Enockson
Corry and Kristin Kenner	Deacon Beth Lipp	Elaine McLaughlin
Dr. Joanne Lassiter	Mary Massad and Family	Dr. Amy Oksa and Leslie Ross
Sandy Holbrook	Thomas and Ann Ely	Fr. Randy and Jo Ann Keehn
Christie Iverson	Mark and Vanessa Strobel	Leo Wilking
The Rev. Mary Peterson Johnson	Kim and Robert Fox	Steve Godfrey and David Martin
Fr. Harvey Henderson	Terry Overbo	Jessica Thielke
June Lehr and Mark Lehr	Jason Thoms	St. Peter's, Williston
Ronald Wernetr	Elsie Magnus	Greg and Nancy Bjerke
Steve Bolduc	John Baird	3 Anonymous Donors
Susan and Charles Owens	Stephanie Garcia	

To date 42 gifts or pledges totaling \$49,780 have been made and \$43,050 has already been received. With those gifts and pledges, we were able to receive the full matching challenge of \$20,000 (included now in the total), and we are close to our overall goal of \$50,000. How amazing and wonderful that is! Thank you everyone who has participated to date.

That said, I don't think the Spirit is done inspiring the generosity of the people of the Episcopal Diocese of North Dakota as we embrace the spirit of WoDakota, Beloved Community, which is about being in harmony and balance with yourself and the world around you. The Spirit is continuing to beckon us to do all that we can to live into the call of Jesus to be and become that Beloved Community.

So, I pray that many more among us will respond to the Spirit's invitation to join with those who have already made a commitment to this appeal in support of three key ministry areas in our Diocesan Budget:

- Youth and Young Adult Ministry
- Native American Ministry
- Congregational Development Ministry

I feel confident that we can far exceed our goal and enjoy the blessings that come with such generosity. Brochures and other information about the WoDakota Appeal have been sent to all congregations and more can be requested from Jess in the Diocesan Office. Giving is easy. To make a donation, please click on the "Donate" button at <https://ndepiscopal.org> -or- use the QR code below.

May the Spirit continue to bless and inspire us in our calling to be God's Beloved Community.  
Faithfully,

*Thomas*





# Community Connections—A Light in the Darkness

*Submitted by: George Abdilnour*

St. Peter’s Episcopal Church, Williston, in collaboration with Partnership for ReNEWal, has embarked on an ambitious project aimed at giving back to the community. Through this collaboration, a Community Connections project was developed, designed to bring awareness to the community on issues that impact them directly, such as Suicide Prevention, Drug Awareness, and other issues specific to their concerns. Each topic in the series is given by professionals in their respective fields.

The first in this Light in the Darkness series was a three-part Suicide Prevention town hall meeting. Trish Kutz, a counselor at the Northwest Human Service Center gave a sobering and sometimes emotional account of the statistics regarding suicide in North Dakota. She engaged the audience from a personal perspective, talking candidly about her own experience with a loved one who committed suicide. The audience did not hold back, talking about their own personal experiences, or about someone they know.

Signs were posted throughout the town, and Louie Abdilnour made a special radio presentation outlining the series, as well as answering questions about suicide in a rural community. Trish provided information on the statistics of suicide, as well as what signs to look for, and what you can do if you suspect someone is attempting to hurt themselves. A special thanks goes out to Trish for donating her time to educate members of the community, Pastor Kim Fox and to Partnership for ReNEWal for their guidance in arranging this event.



*Audience engaging and interacting with Trish Kutz.*



*Information presented to the audience on suicide prevention.*



*Pictured left to right: Laura Haugen, Trish Kutz, George Abdilnour and Louie Abdilnour*

# Creation Care Corner

*Submitted by: The Diocesan Creation Care Committee*



Since spring is well underway, the Diocesan Creation Care Committee would like to offer some tips for “eco-friendly lawn care.” What is eco-friendly lawn care and why is it important? As Jane Purnell notes in “16 Steps to Eco-Friendly Lawn Care”:

“Eco-friendly lawn care is an approach that allows your turf and plants to thrive without harming the environment. Here are some facts about lawns that will raise your eyebrows:

- Maintaining lawns produces more greenhouse gases than they absorb.
- Lawns are stripped of biodiversity and have contributed to fading insect populations. (**Why this matters:** Insects pollinate the crops we rely on for food, and they keep our Earth clean by decomposing waste).
- Covering only 2% of U.S. land, residential lawns require more irrigation water than any agricultural crop grown in the country. That’s a lot of water for no agricultural value.

Your lawn’s impact on the environment may be surprising, but it doesn’t mean you need to banish its existence. Instead, look at your yard as an opportunity for biodiversity, water conservation, and awareness within your community.”

There are a variety of steps you can take to create and sustain an eco-friendly lawn:

- Test your soil to determine the most the most efficient way to care for your grass.
- Switch to organic fertilizer
- Encourage a deep root system by watering infrequently and for long periods or watering in the early morning or at night (watering during the day results in evaporation)
- When mowing, don’t cut off more than 1/3 of the grass’ length
- Leave grass clippings on the lawn (they’re healthy for the lawn and will decompose quickly)
- Switch to a clover lawn (it requires less water than a grass lawn, needs little to no mowing, and attracts pollinators)
- Downsize your lawn by creating butterfly gardens, wildflower gardens, or pocket prairies.

Caring for our lawns in an eco-friendly fashion is one simple way to participate in the Episcopal Church’s Creation Care ministry which reflects a commitment “to form and restore loving, liberating, life-giving relationships with all of Creation” (<https://www.episcopalchurch.org/ministries/creation-care/>).

For additional tips on eco-friendly lawn care, see the links below. And for more information on the Diocesan Creation Care Committee, or to join the committee, please contact Solveigh Barney at [solveigh.barney@gmail.com](mailto:solveigh.barney@gmail.com).

<https://lawnlove.com/blog/16-steps-for-eco-friendly-lawn-care/#0-what-is-eco-friendly-lawn-care>

<https://extension.umn.edu/planting-and-growing-guides/planting-and-maintaining-prairie-garden>

<https://www.reconnectwithnature.org/news-events/the-buzz/when-it-comes-to-our-lawns-many-of-us-are-keeping/>

<https://psci.princeton.edu/tips/2020/5/11/law-maintenance-and-climate-change>

<https://www.dcnr.pa.gov/GoodNatured/Pages/Article.aspx?post=235>

# North Dakota Episcopal Foundation does Dogs!

*Submitted by: Andrea Stomberg*

Last spring, the NDEF received a grant application through All Saints, Minot, for \$2900 to support the training of a dog belonging to Chaplain, Captain Mark David Bradshaw of the United States Air Force, at the time stationed at Minot Air Force Base. The following is excerpted from his report submitted this year.

“Rev” a Labrador mix, received his Therapy Dog Certification after training supported by the North Dakota Episcopal Foundation, All Saint’s Church, Minot, and the Bishop of the Armed Forces and Federal Ministries.

Rev began his service by running with a group from the base, training for the Bismarck Marathon (an official substitution for the Air Force Marathon). He completed his therapy dog certification early in 2023 after completing four public sessions: one at Minot Book Shop, at a Minot AFB Dorm Dinner, and two sessions at Edgewood Assisted Living in Minot. On January 26 Rev accompanied Captain Bradshaw to an Applied Suicide Intervention Skills Training that he led on base, and throughout February Rev visited high stress units on base after a large inspection. Rev has become a well-known entity within the Chapel and was influential in winning the 2022 Air Force Global Strike Command Large Chapel of the Year Award.

Reports from other recipients of NDEF grants will be published in future editions of The Sheaf. How can you benefit from funds available for outreach or growing your church programs? Visit the website at [www.ndepiscopal.org/north-dakota-episcopal-foundation](http://www.ndepiscopal.org/north-dakota-episcopal-foundation) for more information.



# NDEF Grant for All Saint's, Minot

*Article Submitted by: Kathy Hintz*

All Saints in Minot was delighted to receive \$935 in April and \$2700 in November from the North Dakota Episcopal Foundation to help support LGBTQ youth in the community.

In April, 2022 and April, 2023, we held LGBTQ prayer services at Minot State University. Both services concluded with an art project and we used money from the grant to purchase art supplies, printing of posters, decorations, food and also books, stickers, and buttons to give away. We collaborated with MSU's Lutheran Campus Minister and met other faith leaders in Minot who are also advocating for LGBTQ citizens. Out of this friendship developed a new group in Minot, the Interfaith Community Allies.



We have collaborated to advocate for including LGBTQ books in the local public library and host Ross Keys of the Interfaith Alliance as he came up from Bismarck to listen to our city council meeting. Some members of the group also participated in a training called Reconciling in Christ to provide a more welcoming church and there are plans for an interfaith Pride float in the State Fair Parade. In addition, we rented a booth at the Minot Pride festival and purchased a new sign for our church with a Pride flag on it.

We have a number of new people who are regularly participating in worship because of our welcoming position and have received countless compliments on our sign with some community members saying they drive by it just to brighten their day. Other upcoming plans include a booth at the 2023 Pride Festival, buttons to distribute at the festival, and new signs for the restrooms. We deeply appreciate the money and have definitely seen revitalization of our church community since we have become more welcoming and inclusive.



# Reconciliation Committee Retreat

*Submitted by: Stephanie Garcia*

“The truth will set you free. But not until it is finished with you.” – David Wallace

These words weigh heavy as I reflect on the work of repair we need to do as an Episcopal Diocese. The reconciliation committee convened on April 14, 2023 for a weekend retreat to delve deeper into our personal truths about the Church and identify the path forward. As any church meeting, we started prayerfully. We were facilitated in a Lectio Divina (translated into divine reading,) where a Biblical text is read multiple times with successive spaces for quiet and deeper reflection. We read John 20:19-31, which broadly addresses an uncertain and ultimately joyful period after the Resurrection. We shared how the Gospel spoke to us in different ways; and the text transformed as we listened to each interpretation. I recommend developing an intentional reflective practice in reading the Bible. And if you want to go deeper, engage the texts with others and remain open to yourself and other’s interpretation of the Word.

As part of our work, we shared a personal object that represents how we experienced the church at its best. We described stories of joy and reverence and radical love. We know that broadly, church engagement has decreased in recent years. However, these experiences gave me hope that the church CAN be a refuge, a celebratory space, and a genuine house of God. The church can be what so many people in the world presently crave.

Despite the sentiment of admiration and hopefulness, it was much more important to ground ourselves in the realities of the unsaid truths about the church. We also discussed the ways the institution of the church has perpetuated trauma or has personally separated us from God. The institution of the Church bears some responsibility for the reason why people have turned away from God all together. It may be comfortable to believe that the racism and other forms of discrimination are a historical footnote, but in reality, they persist as problems that requires repair. Some express that issues of racism, gender discrimination, homophobia, classism, etc. are not issues that the Church should address. However, I implore you to recall our baptismal covenant “Will you strive for justice and peace among all people, and respect the dignity of every human being?” If you have ever affirmed “Yes, with God’s help,” I implore you to believe your brothers and sisters in Christ and help us work towards repairing the violations of dignity that have been made.

There is no one single correct way to renew, repair, and provide reparations for these complex issues. The group discussed the tensions between engaging in immediate direct action or ensuring that the stories of damage are heard across the Diocese so that everyone hears/understands the hard truth. Regardless, this work reminds me of the Gospel John 16:22, which states “Therefore you now have sorrow; but I will see you again and your heart will rejoice, and your joy no one will take from you.” We may experience pain as we work towards healing, but we can take comfort in the joy of reconciliation with God’s help.

# WHITE PRIVILEGE:

## What is it, what does it look like in the church, and how do we respond to it?

*Submitted by: Amy Phillips, Sandy Holbrook, & Dan Rice*

At the Diocesan Racial Reconciliation Committee retreat on April 15, 2023, the Committee asked Amy Phillips to write a piece on White privilege for *The Sheaf*. Amy agreed, and she asked her St. Stephen's colleagues Sandy Holbrook and Dan Rice to co-author the piece because of their experiences with anti-racism initiatives.

As White individuals, we have written this piece particularly for White folks in the Diocese. We, the authors, have grappled with the concept and our own experiences of White privilege for several years and continue to do so. We have sometimes stumbled on this journey of awareness by ignoring how we have benefitted from White privilege or by not addressing comments or acts around us that reflect racial bias. But, as Episcopalians, we know that it is important for us to understand and address White privilege and White supremacy since it is part of the Episcopal Church's ministry of [racial reconciliation](#), healing, and justice, and is guided by the church's long-term commitment to [Becoming Beloved Community](#).

We offer this information in three parts. Part 1 is below, and the remaining two parts will appear in fall issues of *The Sheaf*. We hope readers will approach this topic with curiosity and openness, taking advantage of the "Reader Reflection Questions." Feel free to discuss this *Sheaf* article with friends, family, or a church group.

### Part I. What is White privilege?

Although White privilege was first discussed by W.E.B. DuBois in *The Souls of White Folks* in 1910, the concept came to prominence in 1989 when [Dr. Peggy McIntosh](#), then Associate Director of the Wellesley College Center for Research on Women, published her essay, "[White Privilege: Unpacking the Invisible Knapsack](#)." The work has been used in a variety of settings to help people understand how White skin confers privileges unavailable to people with darker skin. In the essay, she wrote:

"As a White person, I realized I had been taught about racism as something which puts others at a disadvantage, but had been taught not to see one of its corollary aspects, White privilege, which puts me at an advantage.... **I have come to see White privilege as an invisible [knapsack] of unearned assets that I can count on cashing in each day, but about which I was 'meant' to remain oblivious.**"

McIntosh then proceeded to list 26 "daily effects" of White privilege in her life in the U.S.—effects that her "African American coworkers, friends, and acquaintances" could not count on. Her list included:

I can if I wish arrange to be in the company of people of my race most of the time.

I can go shopping alone most of the time, pretty well assured that I will not be followed or harassed.

When I am told about our national heritage or about "civilization," I am shown that people of my color made it what it is.

I can be sure that my children will be given curricular materials that testify to the existence of their race.

I can choose blemish cover or bandages in "flesh" color and have them more or less match my skin.

I can be pretty sure that if I ask to talk to "the person in charge," I will be facing a person of my race.

I am never asked to speak for all the people of my racial group.

If my day, week, or year is going badly, I need not ask of each negative episode or situation whether it has racial overtones.

*Continued on page 15*

We (the authors of this piece) were influenced by the McIntosh essay and have used it individually and with groups to reflect on additional ways that we, and White folks generally, benefit from White privilege in our daily lives. Some of our own examples include:

We can visit North Dakota communities and feel fairly certain that our skin color will not result in being ignored, discriminated against, or harmed.

At our work places we could be assured of having the majority of work colleagues, mentors, and supervisors be of our race.

Our credit cards will be accepted without challenge for purchases or payments in grocery stores, restaurants, or hotels/motels.

We can be stopped by the police for a minor traffic infraction without fear of being harassed or even shot.

We can get a car or home loan at our local bank based on our credit rating and expect to pay the going interest rate and not worry about being denied or charged a higher interest rate because of our race.

We are free to **not** think about racism and white privilege and this will have no impact in our daily lives.

When Amy first began learning about white privilege and racism, she felt embarrassment, anger, and confusion. She didn't believe she had white privilege and she also didn't want to talk about it for fear of "saying the wrong thing" or appearing insensitive. Her initial response was to run away from the conversation and not deal with the reality of her white privilege. That TOO was an exercise in white privilege! People *without* white privilege don't have the option of ignoring the impact of racism in their lives.

It is hard for those of us who are White to acknowledge that we have these unearned White skin privileges since we can feel that we are not to blame for being White, and especially if we have other identity factors that may work against us in society (such as being female, having an LGBTQ+ identity, living with a disability, struggling with addiction, having a low income, not speaking English, and other factors that confer disadvantage). But **not** exploring and addressing our own White privilege prevents us from seeing the nature of racism in America and keeps us from contributing to the work of racial justice.

*Reader Reflection Question: "What is one way that I experience White privilege in my daily life?"*

### **Why does White privilege exist?**

White privilege – these unearned benefits enjoyed by White individuals -- are themselves rooted in beliefs and pre-judgments about groups of people that stem from a centuries-old trajectory of White systemic supremacy in America.

European colonists' desire for land and labor led White colonists to dehumanize and assign an inferior status to indigenous and African peoples (based largely on appearance and beliefs about their "uncivilized nature") so that White colonists could justify dispossessing Native nations of their lands and enslaving Africans (and indigenous peoples) for their labor. "By the beginning of the 19th century, 'White' was an identity that designated a privileged, landholding, (usually male) status. Having 'Whiteness' meant having clear rights in the society while not being White signified your freedoms, rights, and property were unstable, if not nonexistent" (The Smithsonian, "[Historical Foundations of Race](#)").

*Continued on page 16*

The legacy of White supremacy continues to the present in the form of White privilege and its broader corollary, systemic racism. As Debbie Irving notes in her book, [\*Waking Up White and Finding Myself in the Story of Race\*](#), “racism is, and always has been, the way America has sorted and ranked its people in a bitterly divisive, humanity-robbing system” (p. 31).

We have been educated to believe that it is *only* our own hard work, pulling ourselves up by our bootstraps, that ensures privilege and success. We are taught that in America any of us, regardless of skin color or any other identity factor, can become whatever we want, and if we don’t succeed, it’s because of some individual failing on our part.

The reality is that White supremacy, White privilege, and systemic racism have given and continue to give White folks a “leg up” and continue to disadvantage groups who have historically been viewed, and are often still seen, as “less than.” Any questions about whether White supremacy and White privilege continue to exist in the U.S. can be firmly answered by the 2022 report by Human Rights Watch and the American Civil Liberties Union entitled, [\*Racial Discrimination in the United States\*](#).”

*Reader Reflection Questions: What groups in my town, area, or state have been disadvantaged because of racism? What does that disadvantage look like?*

The next installment of the White Privilege series will examine the presence of White privilege in the church. The final installment will look at what we can do to respond to White privilege.

If you have questions or comments about this essay that you would like the authors to address in the next *Sheaf*, or if you just want to be in conversation with them, feel free to contact one or all of them at the following email addresses: Amy Phillips ([kaphillip@gmail.com](mailto:kaphillip@gmail.com)), Sandy Holbrook ([slholbrook41@gmail.com](mailto:slholbrook41@gmail.com)), Dan Rice ([danielroyrice@gmail.com](mailto:danielroyrice@gmail.com)).

**Editorial Note:** The Reconciliation Committee is currently evaluating options for dismantling racism formation for leaders in the Diocese of North Dakota that would help us to respond as Christians to the challenges raised in these articles, fulfill our commitments as Episcopalians as identified by General Convention, and be effective in our context. Watch for announcements in coming issues of *The Sheaf* and *The Prairie* email newsletter. If there are questions, please contact Christie Iverson ([christieiverson@icloud.com](mailto:christieiverson@icloud.com)), vice-chair of the Reconciliation Committee.



# St. Stephen's Celebrates Rogation Sunday and Commissions a Green Team

*Submitted by: Amy Phillips*

On May 14, St. Stephen's in Fargo celebrated Rogation Sunday with a blessing of seeds and garden tools, and by expressing gratitude for the church's outdoor spaces. The Sunday service also included a commissioning of the church's newly formed "Green Team," a group that will support St. Stephen's focus on environmental sustainability and responsibility.

The Green Team is inspired by the Episcopal Church's Creation Care Ministry, and has drawn on resources from the ND Diocese's Creation Care Committee and the nonprofit MN Interfaith Power and Light. St. Stephen's Green Team has developed an initial action plan which contains goals such as carrying out an energy audit of the church, researching solar panels, reducing paper and plastic use, installing a bike rack, and converting the front lawn to a pocket prairie. The Green Team will also provide educational resources to the congregation to encourage an individual and family focus on creation care.

For more information about creation care and green team efforts, see the links below.

<https://www.episcopalchurch.org/ministries/creation-care/>

<https://www.mnipl.org/>

<https://www.faithinplace.org/green-teams>

<https://www.wildflower.org/magazine/native-plants/make-pocket-prairie>



*Fr. Jamie blesses garden tools at St. Stephen's labyrinth.*



*Fr. Jamie blesses St. Stephen's front lawn that will be converted to a pocket prairie.*



## **Commissioning of St. Stephen's Green Team.**

*Back Row:* Fr. Jamie Parsley (Rector), Jessica Anderson (Senior Warden)

*Front Row:* Amy Phillips, Erica Venberg, Gin Templeton, Suzanne MacEwen (Deacon), MacKenzie Wutzke, John Harbinson, Dan Rice, Steve Bolduc (Junior Warden)

*Not shown:* Donna Clark, Alice Huan, Diane Hill, Sandy Holbrook, Trevor Johnson

# United Thank Offering

*Submitted by: Mary Massad, co-chair*

Happy Pentecost and warm greetings from United Thank Offering!

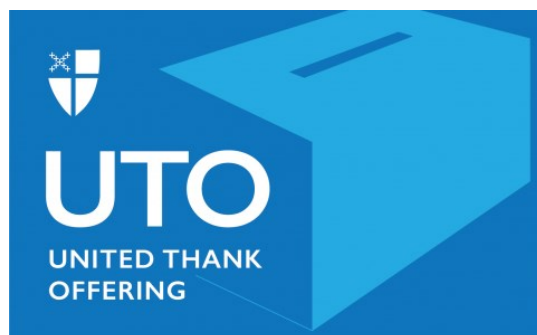
At United Thank Offering (UTO), we are dedicated to fostering gratitude and supporting the mission of the entire church. Through UTO, we invite individuals to cultivate a daily spiritual discipline of gratitude, recognizing the blessings in their lives and expressing thanks to God. By using a UTO Blue Box, we encourage people to make offerings for each blessing they receive. Rest assured that every contribution entrusted to UTO is distributed, with 100% of the funds collected going towards innovative mission and ministry within The Episcopal Church and the Provinces of the Anglican Communion.

During Lent, we embarked on a journey of gratitude together, embracing acts of gratefulness each day. Now, as we celebrate Pentecost and the conclusion of the Easter season, we kindly request that you finalize your UTO contributions. If you have already done so, we extend our heartfelt thanks! For those who have not, we kindly ask you to make your contribution now. Additionally, we urge each parish to send their UTO funds to the diocesan office no later than June 30. By tallying up our funds and sending them out in grants, we can make a meaningful difference in the lives of others around the world.

Please remember to bring your blue box (hopefully full), envelope, or check to church next Sunday if you have not done so already. To our parish representatives, we kindly request that you send in your UTO contributions to the diocese by the end of June.

Gratitude and giving thanks are transformative practices that bring joy to ourselves and those around us. When we drop coins or bills into our blue boxes, it becomes an outward and visible sign of our heightened awareness of God's gifts in our lives. Did you know that by saying thank you to God once a day and putting a quarter in your blue box, you can accumulate \$91.25 in a year? Our small signs of gratitude add up!

Let's continue to embrace gratitude and extend our generosity to support UTO's mission. Together, we can make a significant impact and empower others. Thank you for your commitment and participation.



# Calendar

## Bishop Ely's Schedule

### June 2023

- 15th-22nd: Bishop Ely in North Dakota
- 18th: Bishop's Visitation at St. George's, Bismarck
- 22nd-25th: Niobrara Convocation

### July 2023

- July 18th—August 1st: Bishop Ely in North Dakota
- 23rd: Bishop's Visitation at St. Peter's, Williston and St. Michael's and All Angels, Cartwright
- 30th: Bishop's Visitation at St. Peter's, Walhalla

## Diocesan Events and Dates to Note

### June 2023

- 16th: dMST Meeting (Bismarck); 11am
- 16-17th: Diocesan Council (Bismarck)
- 19th: Diocesan Office Closed (Juneteenth)
- 29th: dMST Meeting (Zoom); 9am

### July 2023

- 4th-8th: Episcopal Youth Event in Maryland
- 4th: Diocesan Office Closed (Independence Day)
- 13th: dMST Meeting (Zoom); 9am
- 21st-22nd: New Season of Ministry Task Force Meeting (Bismarck)
- 25th: Diocesan Council Meeting (Zoom); 7pm
- 26th: dMST Meeting (Fort Totten); 10am

### August 2023

- 1st: Clergy/Congregation Leaders Meeting (Zoom); 6:30pm
- 1st: Province VI Small Church Gathering (Zoom); 7:30pm
- 10th: dMST Meeting (Zoom); 9am
- 24th: dMST Meeting (Zoom); 9am

### September 2023

- 1st: *Sheaf* deadline: Diocesan Life Together edition



*The Sheaf*

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## Convention 2023—Save the Date



October 27-28, 2023

Baymont Inn; Mandan, ND

Theme: At the Threshold

*The Convention Planning Team is hard at work and we hope you will put this date on your calendar now to attend in October!*