



The Sheaf

A publication of the Episcopal Diocese of North Dakota
Easter Edition ~ April 2024



Alleluia, Christ is Risen! The Lord has risen indeed, Alleluia!

With these words of acclamation on Easter Sunday, we proclaimed the once and ever certainty of God's overflowing love for us. With these words, we again claimed the truth that nothing can separate us from the love God. With these words, we drew deep breaths of comfort and hope, knowing that a transformative God awaits and expects our notice.

For parish clergy (and Altar Guilds) there is often a different kind of relief that comes with the conclusion of Lent and Easter services. For some parents, the high drama over the visitation of a chocolatey member of the *Oryctolagus* genus are gratefully set aside early Easter morning. Other adults may not find relief until the leftover ham, scalloped potatoes, and green bean casserole from Easter dinner are wrapped in foil and sent home with much-sated guests.

I wonder, however, about the neighbors around us who literally do not know what they are missing? Not concerning the festive celebrations so much, but rather about the sacred assuredness that despite the sad reality of Good Fridays – denial, betrayal, pain, darkness, large stones blocking our escape – there is always an Easter morning.

I also wonder about others, well, us.....who know the stories by heart, yet seem more eager to focus on the splendor and festivities of Easter Day and lay aside the necessity of Good Friday.

We won't dare to compare our Lord's crucifixion with the regular slings and arrows that we experience within the course of our lives, however, the poignant reality of the Friday we call Good confirms that the gift of Easter must be preceded by the darkness of hard place.

I speak here of our own experiences of Good Friday tombs. Tombs we are thrown into or tombs of our own making. Small deaths due to the acts of others or bad fortune or larger confinements that are the result of our failures to maintain our own integrity, compassion, and selflessness.

I would be quite happy to enter into a deeper relationship with God merely by sitting around a table perusing wise books or engaging wiser human beings. Indeed, I can acknowledge moments when a dear revelation has come from such a setting, yet... I'm pretty sure there was a distant darkness somewhere inside me that had been anxiously biding its time until the conditions were right for illumination and release.

For our spiritual health, I urge us not to decry the Good Friday moments in our lives. Rather, with a bit of courageous self-examination, we can embrace the sun-obscured, curtain-tearing, thunder-pealing experiences of our darkest places, believing that God is waiting for just the right moment to roll back our stones.

Despite any of our Good Fridays, there's an Easter morning waiting. Then. Now. Always.

+Brian

Bishop Provisional of The Episcopal Diocese of North Dakota

Easter through the eyes of: Bp. Brian Thom, The Rev. Steve Godfrey, and The Rev. Kim Fox



Church of the Advent — Devil's Lake



St. Peter's Walhalla—Bp. Brian Thom and Dn. Elsie Magnus



St. Paul's, White Shield — Blanket on the altar was given by Mrs. Bonnie Fox's father. It was on the altar when Fr. Duane and Bonnie were married, the first wedding at St. Paul's existing location.



Altar at St. Thomas, Fort Totten



Stained Glass Window at St. Peter's, Walhalla



Easter celebration at St. Michael and All Angel's, Cartwright

WoDakota Annual Appeal

Upon a successful completion of our WoDakota Annual Appeal in 2023, we will once again be launching an Easter Appeal. Watch your email and mailboxes for upcoming information for our WoDakota Annual Appeal!



Calendar

**All noted times are Central Time*

Bishop Thom's Schedule

April 2024

- 16th-22nd: Bishop Thom in North Dakota
- 21st: Bishop's Visitation to Grace Church, Jamestown

May 2024

- 7th-9th: Province VI Bishop's Retreat, Colorado
- 14th-20th: Bishop Thom in North Dakota
- 19th: Visitation to St. Lukes, Fort Yates, and St. James, Cannonball

Diocesan Events and Dates to Note

April 2024

- 2nd: Clergy/Congregation Leaders Meeting (Zoom); 6:30pm
- 2nd: Province VI Small Church Gathering (Zoom); 7:30pm
- 5th: Diocesan Office Closed
- 9th: Finance Committee Meeting (Zoom); 5:30pm
- 11th: Diocesan Ministry Support Team Meeting (Zoom); 9am
- 11th: General Convention Deputies Meeting (Zoom); 5:30pm
- 13th: School for Ministry Preaching Workshop (Jamestown); 10am
- 19th: Diocesan Ministry Support Team Meeting (Fargo); 12pm
- 19th-20th: Diocesan Council Meeting (Fargo)
- 23rd: Annual Convention Committee Meeting (Zoom); 6:30pm
- 27th: Province VI Synod Meeting (Zoom); 9:30am

May 2024

- 2nd: Diocesan Ministry Support Team Meeting (Zoom); 9am
- 2nd: General Convention Deputies Meeting (Zoom); 5:30pm
- 7th: Clergy/Congregation Leaders Meeting (Zoom); 6:30pm
- 7th: Province VI Small Church Gathering (Zoom); 7:30pm
- **10th: Pentecost Sheaf Deadline!!**
- 13th: Finance Committee Meeting (Zoom); 5:30pm
- 17th: Diocesan Ministry Support Team Meeting (Bismarck); 11am
- 23rd: Diocesan Council Meeting (Zoom); 7pm
- 27th: Diocesan Office Closed (Memorial Day)
- 30th: Diocesan Ministry Support Team Meeting (Zoom); 9am



Bishop Brian's Visitation Schedule

2024

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|--------------|--|
| April 20-21 | Grace, Jamestown, and All Saints, Valley City |
| May 18-19 | St. Luke's, Ft. Yates, and St. James, Cannonball |
| June 16 | St. George's, Bismarck |
| July 14 | Advent, Devils Lake, and St. Thomas, Ft. Totten |
| August 18 | St. Sylvan's, Dunseith |
| September 22 | All Saints, Minot |
| October 27 | St. Paul's, White Shield |
| November 24 | Gethsemane Cathedral, Fargo, and St. John Divine, Moorhead |
| December 15 | St. Paul's, Grand Forks |

2025

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|----------|--|
| February | St. Michael's & All Angels, Cartwright, and St. Peter's, Williston |
| March | St. Stephen's, Fargo |
| April | St. John's, Dickinson |



The Sheaf



Future Editions of the *Sheaf*

We are working on making the *Sheaf* more collaborative and celebratory of all the ministry that happens throughout the Episcopal Diocese of North Dakota. And we want YOUR input! Let us help you celebrate the ministry you are a part of!

Sheaf Deadlines and Publication Dates

Pentecost: May 10, 2024 Deadline | May 20, 2024 Publication

Pre-Convention: September 25, 2024 Deadline | Oct 2, 2024 Publication

Advent: November 25, 2024 Deadline | December 4, 2024 Publication

Cycle of Prayer

**Tuck this in your prayer book for easy access for weekly prayers!*



Sunday, 7 April 2024

The Episcopal / Anglican Province of Alexandria
St. Peter's, Williston; George Abdilnour, Senior Warden; and for the North Dakota Episcopal Foundation.

Sunday, 14 April 2024

The Anglican Church in Aotearoa, New Zealand and Polynesia
St. Gabriel's Camp, Solen: John Floberg, Priest; and for Episcopal Relief and Development: Andrea Stomberg, coordinator.

Sunday, 21 April 2024

The Anglican Church of Australia
The Diocesan Ministry Support Team: Bishop Brian Thom, The Rev. Steve Godfrey, Jessica Krzewina, and The Rev. Kim Fox; and for those in the ordination process.

Sunday, 28 April 2024

The Church of Bangladesh
Widowed Clergy Spouses: Alice Hauan, Joann Nelson, Patricia Sauer, Gary Towne, Del Peterson, Lew Cowardin, Ron Walters, Sandy Bukhardt; and for the Canons Committee: Leo Wilking, chair.

Sunday, 5 May 2024

Igreja Episcopal Anglicana do Brasil
Retired Clergy: Alan Broadhead, Charles Cherry, Bonniejean Christensen, Virginia Luger, George Schulenberg, George Slinger, Cherian Mathew, Sharon Luntsford, Mike Horn, Bart Davis, Mary Johnson, Zanne Ness; and for the Community of Deacons: The Rev Dn. Sloane Floberg & The Rev Dn. Terry Overbo, co-chairs.

Sunday, 12 May 2024

The Anglican Church of Burundi
Clergy Serving Elsewhere or on Leave: Matthew Coomber, Mary Gokey, Alex Lodu-Kenyi, Gadi Edward, Sally Smythe, Erin Richards, Lindsey Dwarf, Zechariah Reng, Brandon Mauai, Crystal Towers; and for the Standing Committee: The Very Rev Mark Strobel, chair.

Sunday, 19 May 2024

The Anglican Church of Canada
St. George's, Bismarck: Beth Lipp, Jane Towne, Ed Wos, Deacons; Zanne Ness, Canon; Joanne Lassiter, Senior Warden; and for the Diocesan Council.

Sunday, 26 May 2024

The Church of the Province of Central Africa
St. James', Cannon Ball: John Floberg, Rector; Sloane Floberg, Deacon; Elaine McLaughlin; Senior Warden; and for the Commission on Ministry: The Rev Harvey Henderson, chair.

Genesis and Living Waters

Submitted by: The Rev. Steve Godfrey, Diocesan Minister

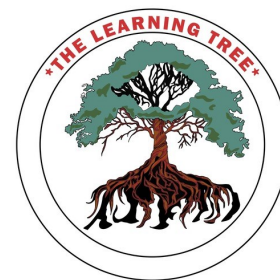


In my role in the Diocese of North Dakota I work mostly with our smaller and more vulnerable congregations, providing pastoral presence, sacramental ministry, teaching, and encouragement for leaders struggling to maintain and perhaps grow their congregations again. Some are celebrating the participation of new seekers and striving to connect with neighbors. Some are feeling out of energy and pondering closing and letting new things emerge. Some are considering letting go of buildings that take up all their time and resources and imagining ministry they can engage beyond them. Some are wondering where God is calling them to focus that may be different from the focuses of the past. The Congregational Development Committee has provided support for discernment, visioning, and planning for a number of congregations.

As I work to support our relatively isolated diocese and congregations in facing the challenges of being church in the 21st century, two communities addressing these challenges for the whole church have become places where I am especially experiencing life and hope: Genesis Gatherings hosted by the Episcopal Church Office of Church Planting and Redevelopment (<https://www.episcopalchurch.org/ministries/church-planting-redevelopment/>) and the Living Waters Cooperative.

Genesis gatherings include two sets of monthly online meetings and semi-annual in-person meetings. On Second Tuesdays, online gatherings explore topics with people with particular wisdom to share about developing new faith communities or supporting existing communities in developing anew. One recent meeting explored Rural Shrink Smart (<https://ruralshrinksmart.org>), a project at Iowa State University to identify how small towns can maintain and expand vitality while shrinking because of broader societal forces, and how churches might be key participants in their efforts. On Third Thursdays, leaders meet on Zoom to help each other clarify specific ideas and action steps. I recently shared some work I am doing with one congregation to help me as I support their brave work.

I also attended the Genesis Gathering in Los Angeles last fall, at a church that has struggled with identity and survival as its neighborhood has changed. That gathering was led by De'Amon Harges of Broadway United Methodist Church (<https://www.broadwayumc.org>) and The Learning Tree (<http://thelearningtrees.com>) in Indianapolis. He invited and taught us to "listen with our feet," to get out into our neighborhoods and notice God's gifts already flourishing and consider ways to support those efforts to foster new life. There was ample time to connect with others who are pondering or nurturing the development of new communities and supporting congregations in developing new life in their communities. I am looking forward to the next Genesis Gathering at Grace Church (<https://www.graceyukon.org> - a 10-year-old church plant) in Yukon, Oklahoma, in May.





The Living Waters Cooperative formed after the end of Living Stones in early 2020 to explore how the Spirit may be leading the church to embrace and develop collaborative leadership and ministry now. Living Stones was an association of dioceses and seminaries that supported local collaborative ministry for a few decades. Living Waters began with online gatherings that have developed into monthly Open Space conversations. A recent conversation focused on identity

as congregations embrace shared leadership and led to considerations of the impact of changes in ministry structures on our Anglican ecclesiology (church structure theology), which can be a pinch point in exploring these kinds of changes. We plan to continue that conversation next month.

Living Waters has also hosted three in-person retreats for 15-30 people, loosely structured with paperless music, worship and prayer led by whoever showed up, and the agenda built with the assembled group. The first became sort of a think tank about collaborative ministry challenges and opportunities; the second turned out to be a powerful experiment in Christian community development with very diverse group of leaders; the third and largest featured large group conversation on “courageous curiosity” and a number of powerful, small group Open Space conversations, all led spontaneously by participants, tied together with worship and song.

We are planning a more programmatic conference for a larger audience September 16-19, near Minneapolis, for reflecting on the status of collaborative leadership and shared ministry in the church and inspiring and equipping leaders for this kind of work. Bishop Brian and I are forming a team from the Diocese of North Dakota to participate in that conference. Please let me know if you are interested in attending the conference or the online Open Space conversations, so I can get you an invitation.

Genesis Gatherings and the Living Waters Cooperative are helping me to support circular leadership and new life in our diocese. I am excited to draw more people into these two communities that are giving me life and I believe are offering new life for the whole church.



A Resurrection Story

Submitted by: The Rev. Harvey Henderson, St. Paul's, Grand Forks

"When a (stranger) resides with you in your land, you shall not oppress the (stranger). The (stranger) who resides with you shall be to you as the citizen among you; you shall love the (stranger) as yourself, for you were (strangers) in the land of Egypt: I am the LORD your God." — Leviticus 19:33-34

It was at midnight in mid-September that they arrived at the Grand Forks airport, after a long journey from South America. The family of five – mother and father, and three children – ages 17 and 13 and 2 – spoke very little English and they arrived with very few of their personal possessions. A member of St. Paul's who is fluent in Spanish was there to greet them along with folks from the Global Friends Coalition – a local group which has been helping settle refugees and immigrants in Grand Forks since the mid 1990s.



In the days prior to the new family's arrival, folks from St. Paul's and United Lutheran worked to collect furniture, kitchen, and bathroom items to furnish their small three-bedroom apartment. They arrived in a strange place, not able to speak the local language, at about 1:30am. It is hard to imagine what they were feeling that first night!

The Federal government gave them a living allowance for three months. The Global Friends Coalition staff help with getting Social Security cards and other documents. As of January, the father has been employed at Simplot, a local potato processing factory. Mom works nights cleaning at Target, and the 17-year-old works as a cook at the local Applebee's restaurant.

One of the women here at St. Paul's has befriended this family and she takes mom, Karina, and the two-year-old, Samuel, around town and goes shopping with them. The older children, Alejandro and Tatiana, are learning English at school and on their cell phones. And young Samuel is learning his letters, numbers, and colors in English.

What a resurrection story. I do not know the details of their life before coming here except for the fact that their lives were in danger if they stayed in Columbia, their country of origin. I do know now that they have become responsible citizens in a place far away from where they were born.

A Reflection on Land Acknowledgements

*Submitted by: Stephanie Garcia, St. Stephen's, Fargo
Reconciliation Committee Chair*

The Reconciliation Committee recently took up the issue of developing land acknowledgements for each congregation. This may seem like a clear step towards healing division; however, the reality of this initiative is more complicated.

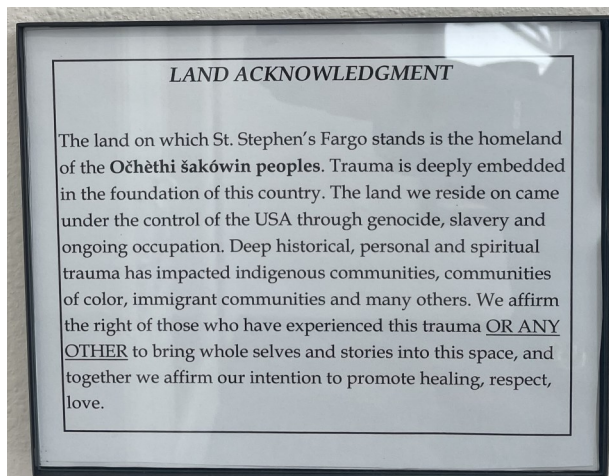
According to the National Museum of the American Indian, "land acknowledgments are used by Native Peoples and non-Natives to recognize Indigenous Peoples who are the original stewards of the lands on which we now live." This is a practice that dates back centuries to honor the history of the land and recognize the violent ways land has been stolen. In recent years, more people are working on reconciling their relationship with our history. Many churches, schools, and organizations have a written land acknowledgement or verbalize a statement before meetings as a means to address the trauma. I encourage you to review the land acknowledgement presented by our former Bishop Tom Ely at the 52nd annual convention found on the North Dakota Episcopal Diocesan website.

While this is a valuable practice, it is important to remember that the acknowledgement is merely a beginning. These statements have been described as empty gestures if done without any consideration for action. In fact, these declarations may further separate us from deeper healing as the words create a feeling of reconciliation but may be hollow without genuine intention or action.

If your congregation would like to consider a land acknowledgement, first reflect on why this is the right step for your community at this time. Consider what additional steps may be taken to honor the land and the people who came before. Consult individuals or local organizations from your indigenous community. Pray deeply about the words and the intentions behind the work.

Earlier this year, St. Stephen's in Fargo placed a land acknowledgement in the entryway of the church. The statement acknowledges the multiple traumas commonly associated with the painful history of the country. The congregation researched the known history of the land, consulted members from the indigenous community, and then voted as a vestry to ensure that their intentions and actions were aligned. They remain a radically inclusive congregation and the Green Team helps to ensure they are good stewards of the environment. The congregation feels this is a good start to a life-long commitment towards reconciliation.

Think deeply about your intentions and goals. Pray. Consult. If your congregation is called to reconciliation, this may be a good first step.



Creation Care Committee Update

*Submitted by: Solveigh Barney, St. George's, Bismarck
Creation Care Committee Chair*

I am writing to update the diocese on some of the goals and projects of the Creation Care Committee this year! To start, we are excited to collaborate with the Reconciliation Committee in some upcoming joint projects reflecting the inseparable connection between the two. We hope to offer some future workshops and gatherings regarding Environmental Justice. As for the upcoming Earth Day, we plan to produce a video message on Environmental Justice to share around the diocese.

We cannot wait for the weather to warm up and stay consistently warm, as we plan to lend a hand with the UTO project on White Shield in late spring and throughout the summer. Once fall hits, we will be co-hosting an open house on October 27th when Bishop Brian plans to visit.

Another goal for this year is to gather information about energy audits, allowing us with the connections and knowledge to conduct these audits on parishes across the diocese. If you have any information about energy audits or know of people or places that do them in churches, feel free to send that information my way.

Our final goal this year is to create a video project about a diverse collection of Creation Care stories throughout the diocese. These stories can range from small organic gardens to large-scale farms. Hopefully, I will be producing this project throughout the summer, so let me know if you want to be a part of it, or send me names of people you think would be interested. Email: solveigh.barney@gmail.com



Tips for a more Sustainable Church



WHOLE BUILDING

- Fix Leaks
- Avoid phantom load- be sure to unplug items that are not being used on a regular basis such as microwaves, coffee machines, chargers, etc.
- Use LED lightbulbs in overhead light and in exit signs! They are better for the environment and they cost 70-90% less in the long run.
- Recycle!
- Buy local! It cuts down on transportation and packaging. It is also important as a faith community to support one's local community.
- Promote and sell fair trade goods.
- Incentivize carpooling.



KITCHEN

- Precycle! Bring in more reusable items instead of items you have to throw away.
- A full refrigerator runs more efficiently; even filling it with jugs of water makes it run better.
- If appliances go out, look for Energy Star certified replacements.
- Composting!



WORSHIP SPACES

- Use ceiling fans in summer mode (turn counter clockwise) and winter mode (turn clockwise to push heat down).
- Instill and maintain entrance mats to keep the church clean.
- Caulk the windows and doors to keep the church insulated.
- Celebrate Creation Care in liturgy!
- Host worship services outside!



OUTSIDE

- Plant shade trees on the south and evergreens on the north for wind protection.
- Plant drought resistant plants.
- Collect rain water.
- Install bike racks.
- Install pervious paving.



LONG TERM GOALS

- Conduct an energy audit.
- Using a ground source heating pump for geothermal heating.
- Converting to solar power or wind energy.
- Installing electric car chargers



The Sheaf

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The Sheaf—Easter Edition

Included in this issue:

- A Letter from our Bishop Provisional — page 1
- Calendar — page 3
- Bishop’s Visitation Schedule — page 4
- Cycle of Prayer — page 5
- Genesis and Living Waters — pages 6-7
- A Resurrection Story — page 8
- A Reflection on Land Acknowledgements — page 9
- Creation Care Committee Update — page 10
- Tips for a more Sustainable Church — page 11

If you would like to see a colored copy of the *Sheaf*, or read it digitally, please go to:
www.ndepiscopal.org/the-sheaf

