



# SEEK!

Mission & Ministry in The Episcopal Diocese of Missouri | Summer 2022



## CAMP PHOENIX:

Back with a splash in 2022!

Read the cover story on page 8



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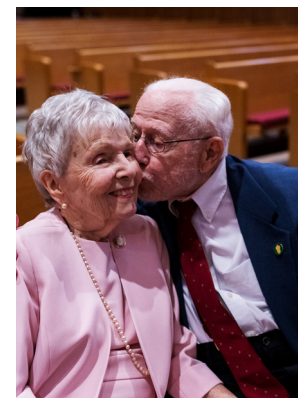


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# The Church is dead! Long live the Church!

by The Rt. Rev. Deon K. Johnson,  
Bishop of The Diocese of Missouri

"The Death of the Episcopal Church is near!" That was the headline of an article written by Professor Ryan E. Burge of Eastern Illinois University on July 6, 2021. Professor Burge, like many others, looked at the demographics of the Episcopal Church and the trend of systematic decline over the last two decades. The predictions are dire. With the average age of Episcopalians hovering in the mid- to late-sixties, prognosticators of all stripes and shades are predicting the demise of the Episcopal Church. The Episcopal Church is dying.

That's the bad news.

The good news is that the church needs to die.

How is that good news, you may ask? Well, because we serve a God who is in the business of resurrection. God raises the dead. God is raising the dead. For us as a church to be raised to new life, for us as a church to find and rediscover ourselves and our purpose, we need resurrection. We need to rediscover, reimagine, and refine who we are and refocus on following the itinerant preacher named Jesus, who transformed the lives of those around him, not with miracles and feats of power, but by simply seeing, naming, and claiming the beloved people of God. As a church, as a denomination, we need to be stripped bare of all the accumulated distractions that have become idols. We need to let the many "isms" that have become part of the church die so that we can be fully the loving, liberating, and life-giving people that Jesus calls us to be. In short, the church needs to die. We need to go back to the basics of feeding the hungry, clothing the naked, giving water to the thirsty, seeing the left behind and left out, sharing the Good News.



Growing up in Barbados I spent almost every weekend of my childhood at the ocean. I loved the salt air, the symphony of the waves crashing against the shore, the warmth of the water. There is something mystical about standing at the edge of a vast expanse of water. The shore is a sacred place that often reminds me that God is ultimately and always in charge. I remember at one point swimming in the

ocean and being caught in a rip-tide. In that moment of panic, as the current pulls you swiftly away from the shore, every fiber of your being begins to fight the current. I started swimming as hard as I could against the current. I got tired. I was afraid. And then a voice in my head, the voice of my swim teacher, whispered, "Let go." To let go, to relax and be carried in the middle of a rip current goes against every instinct and yet the letting go is what saves you. When I relaxed and let go, the tide carried me out to sea and then tossed me back onto the shore further down the beach.



This time in the life of the church is a lot like being caught in a riptide. God is pointing the Episcopal Church to a new shore, to a new way of being, a new way of living, we simply have to let go. Let go of the things that we fear. Let go of resisting change. Let go of the way we have always done and been. God is calling the Episcopal Church towards resurrection. The challenge for the church is that we continue to fight against the tide, we continue to try to swim against the current of the Holy Spirit leading us towards new life.

As the church, as followers of Jesus Christ, we must find our new "why." Why do we exist in this town, city, or neighborhood? Would our neighbors miss us if we disappeared tomorrow? What difference does it make that we gather for worship, sing hymns, offer prayers if we are not transforming the lives of our neighbors with the Good News we have discovered in Jesus?

We do not have time to argue about carpet and candlesticks, we must be about the business of sharing and showing the love of God to a world in desperate need of love. We can no longer committee the gospel imperative to serve others, we must step out of our buildings and our places of comfort and engage with our neighbors.

I am convinced that this is our time as the Episcopal Church. I am convinced that we have been called for precisely this moment. I am convinced that our branch of the Jesus Movement is needed now more than ever. With fear and division rampant in our nation, with the ravages of COVID-19 still being felt across the world, with the dual scourges of racism and homophobia continuing to infect our communities, God is pointing this church of ours towards a new shore, towards a new way of being, towards resurrection.

The death of the Episcopal Church is near! The new shore is in the distance. Resurrection is calling. Let go!

<sup>1</sup> <https://religioninpublic.blog/2021/07/06/the-death-of-the-episcopal-church-is-near/>

# The 80th General Convention of The Episcopal Church

July 8 - 11, 2022  
Baltimore, Maryland

Episcopalians from around the world will gather in Baltimore this summer for the General Convention of The Episcopal Church.

Every three years the governing body of our church meets as a bicameral legislature that includes the House of Deputies and the House of Bishops. Each house is made up of lay deputies and bishops from each diocese.

The Rt. Rev. Deon K. Johnson, Bishop of The Diocese of Missouri, will be attending. Four clergy and four lay members who were elected by our diocesan convention, will represent The Diocese of Missouri.

The 80th General Convention was originally scheduled for July of 2021, but was postponed due to the COVID-19 pandemic. And because of the surge in infection rates this spring, organizers are planning a scaled-down version for this

summer. General Convention will be only four days (instead of eight); attendance will be limited to bishops, deputies, essential staff and volunteers, and a limited media presence; masks will be mandatory; everyone attending must be vaccinated; and rapid testing will be conducted.

Our deputation has been preparing for convention throughout this year, reviewing hundreds of pieces of proposed legislation they will be voting on.

Watch for reports from our deputies during General Convention on our diocesan social media channels, on our website, and in our weekly iSeek email newsletter.

After General Convention is over, our deputies will visit each convocation in our diocese to share their experiences and provide a wrap-up of legislative action and how it will effect us in The Diocese of Missouri.



## General Convention Deputies from the Diocese of Missouri



### Clergy deputies:

- The Rev. Tamsen Whistler  
Trinity Episcopal Church, St. Charles
- The Rev. Leslie Scoopmire  
St. Martin's Episcopal Church, Ellisville
- The Rev. Todd McDowell  
Grace Episcopal Church, Kirkwood
- The Rev. Shug Goodlow  
St. Martin's Episcopal Church, Ellisville  
*(alternate for the Rev. Renee Fenner)*
- The Rev. Canon Doris Westfall  
Canon to the Ordinary  
*(clergy alternate)*

### Lay deputies:

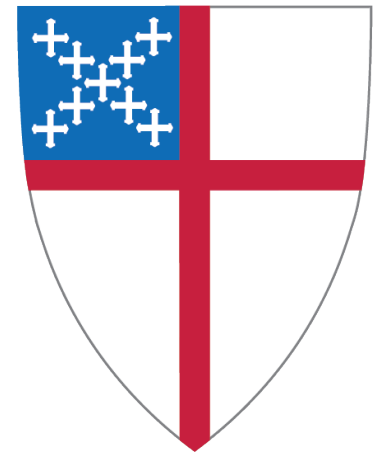
- Betty Bowersox  
Grace Episcopal Church, Kirkwood
- Michael Booker  
St. Francis Episcopal Church, Eureka
- Liz Yount  
St. Peter's Episcopal Church, Ladue
- Adrienne Dillon  
Episcopal Church of All Saints & Ascension,  
Northwoods
- Pat O'Brien  
Grace Episcopal Church, Kirkwood  
*(lay alternate)*
- Chris Masters  
Christ Episcopal Church, Cape Girardeau  
*(lay alternate)*

### Follow the news from General Convention:

[episcopalnewsservice.org](http://episcopalnewsservice.org)  
[diocesemo.org/news](http://diocesemo.org/news)

# Episco-polity:

## An introduction to how our church is organized



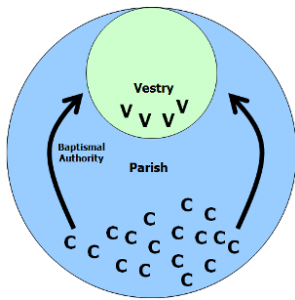
### WHERE AUTHORITY COMES FROM

In the Episcopal Church we believe that authority is given to us through baptism. We all have equal authority through our baptism:

- The Holy Spirit is active in everyone's life.
- Everyone has a voice.
- Everyone has gifts to give.
- True for everyone: Communicants, vestry members, deacons, priests, and bishops.

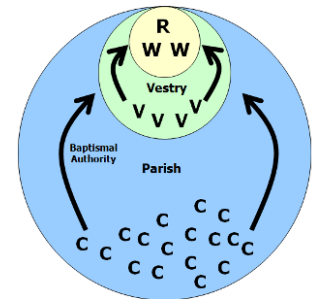
### THE "FLOW" OF BAPTISMAL AUTHORITY: LOCAL CONGREGATION

The process of sharing Baptismal authority begins with the "communicants" in the parish. At the parish annual meeting, the communicants in good standing of the parish vote to elect new members of the vestry, thereby investing some of their baptismal authority in the vestry.



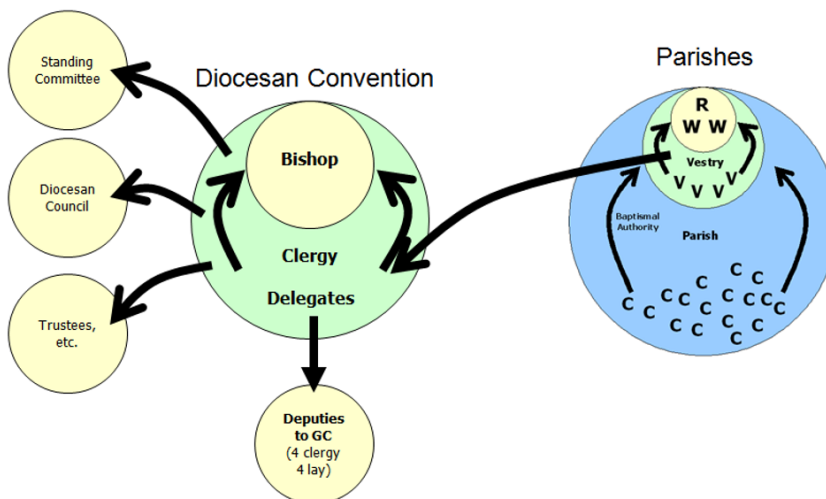
When a communicant, "C," votes in the annual meeting of her parish, she invests SOME of her baptismal authority in the Vestry. The vestry members receive that authority as responsibility to make their appointed decisions on behalf of the parish.

A vestry's election of wardens and appointment of a rector are further examples of investing SOME of one's baptismal authority in others.



### THE "FLOW" OF BAPTISMAL AUTHORITY: DIOCESE

The congregation also invests baptismal authority in the delegates it sends to the annual Diocesan Convention.



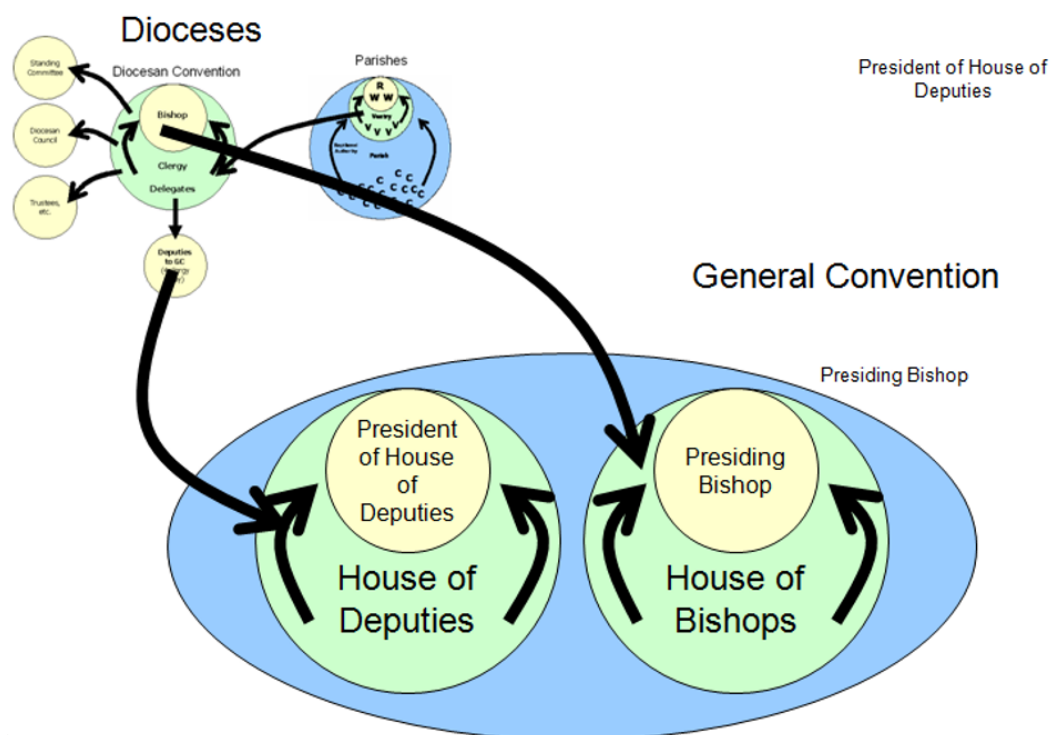
Delegates have seat, voice, and vote and are charged with:

- Electing a bishop (when required).
- Passing the diocesan budget.
- Electing leaders of the diocese (Standing Committee, Diocesan Council, Trustees, etc.), who in turn receive the baptismal authority as responsibility to make their particular decisions on behalf of the diocese.
- Setting policy and canon law for the diocese.
- Electing The Diocese of Missouri deputies to General Convention.

## THE "FLOW" OF BAPTISMAL AUTHORITY: THE WIDER CHURCH

When the Diocesan Bishop(s) and the Deputies attend the General Convention, they take with them the baptismal authority invested in them to make decisions for The Episcopal Church on behalf of the diocese that sent them.

They in turn elect the President of the House of Deputies (from among the deputies) and the Presiding Bishop (from among the bishops).



OUR church (The Episcopal Church) places the authority in the pews — not over us, coming down, but among us, coming up.

- When we invest our baptismal authority in others through election, we "surrender" our authority to them, which they then receive as "responsibility" to exercise that authority on our behalf.
- As in any representative democracy, we surrender our authority to others by election, so that those whom we elect can make decisions on our behalf, for the good of the whole.

On every level of our church, authority is shared between lay people and ordained people.

- Parish Level – Annual Parish Meeting, Vestry, Wardens and Clergy share authority.
- Diocesan Level – Bishop and Standing Committee, Diocesan Convention (voting in bicameral houses: clergy and lay), Diocesan Commission, other diocesan committees.
- Church-Wide Level – General Convention (voting in bicameral houses: bishops and deputies), Presiding Bishop, commissions and committees.



Cathedral Choir Camp, 1901



Cooking at Cathedral Choir Camp, 1901



Holiday House / Girls Friendly Society,  
Monarch, 1923

## In the Good Old Summer Time

### A history of summer camping in the Diocese of Missouri

by Susan Rehkopf, Diocesan Archivist

Church affiliated youth camping began before the turn of the last century in the Diocese of Missouri. An article in *Church News* in **1892** reported on a camp for choir boys sponsored by St. John's Church. The location had not yet been decided, but they hoped to head for the woods. In August *Church News* reported that the rector and the boys had been at camp at Meramec Highland on the "Frisco" Railway, 14 miles from the city for five days and planned to stay as long as their money held out. That same summer 70 Cathedral and Good Shepherd choir boys completed their 6th annual campout at the Arsenal grounds, sleeping in tents close to the river.

**In 1892** *Church News* also reported that boys would not have the monopoly on summer camping. St. Peter's sponsored a camp for young women on the Meramec River at Glencoe. Anna Beverly Skinker of St. Stephen's House would be in charge (she later would join Deaconess Anne in the work at Holy Cross House) and the camp would be open from July 1 to September 1. The small fee of \$3.60 would provide two weeks of camp and transportation by train from St. Louis.

Many other congregation-sponsored summer camps would follow. **In the 1920s**, the Girls Friendly Society opened Holiday House, a summer house in Monarch, Missouri near the Missouri River. (GFS chapters across the county offered similar camping programs.) **In 1922** Church of the Holy Communion offered low cost or free camping for city children at Camp Huldina, south of St. Louis on the Meramec River.

One of our best remembered camps was St. Stephen's-in-the-Hills. **In the first decade of the 20th century**, William and Elizabeth Donaldson donated 100 acres near Allenton in St. Louis County to be used for a camp for St. Stephen's Church. This camp provided an escape from St. Louis' oppressive summer heat and crowded city neighborhoods for both children and adults from St. Stephen's... mothers often joining their children as cooks and camp staff. Or sometimes just a weekend for moms to be away from the city. It was a time for swimming, hiking, playing ball and just having fun. The early camping program was established by the Rev. Henry Mizner, minister at St. Stephen's Church. Mr. Mizner spent summers at St. Stephen's-in-the-Hills, usually taking the train back to the city on weekends for church services. Camp ran from mid-June to the end of August, and often longer, with more than 400 campers of all ages some summers. The property originally included the farmhouse, cabins and dormitories for campers. Soon a new chapel was added in memory of Mrs. Donaldson. New buildings were added over the years... a new cabin for the rector, dormitories, a recreation building, cisterns for water, and finally in the late 1950s, the outhouses were replaced!

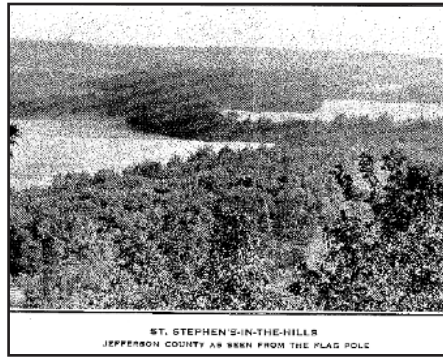
**In 1948**, the Rev. Charles Washburn became rector of St. Stephen's, and he carried on the tradition. Staff, except for the cook, were volunteers. Many of the counselors (or "crummyhunchers" as Mr. Washburn called them) were teenagers and young adult members of St. Stephen's.

**In 1935**, the Dioceses of Missouri and West





Youth Conference at Christian College, Columbia, 1947



St. Stephen's-in-the-Hills, Jefferson County



The Rev. Henry Mizner, minister, St. Stephen's Church and Camp Director

Missouri joined together to offer a five-day youth conference in Columbia. The location would be the campus of Christian College, and more than 100 high school students attended. Summer conferences in Columbia would continue through 1948.

**In 1949**, the Diocese decided to try something new... a 10 -day youth conference for senior high school students at the Lake of the Ozarks. The site was a former Civilian Conservation Camp in Lake of the Ozarks State Park. Then a camp for the Future Farmers of America, the camp was a bit primitive. The cabins were the original barracks built by the CCC boys, and to go swimming meant a long trek down the hill to the lake. Staff included clergy and lay people, even the cooks and the camp nurse or doctor came from our congregations. In addition to cleaning the bath houses and rec hall each morning, conferees staffed the mess hall, serving meals, and even washing dishes in the early days. The theme that first year was "My Church Can Help Me." Morning classes explored the theme; afternoons and evenings were for activities. Almost 90 young people attended that first year and the conference was considered a success.



Field day at St. Stephen's-in-the-Hills

Senior Conference became an anticipated annual event for high schoolers throughout the Diocese. **In 1950**, the first issues of *The Ozark Sun* were published and printed on the old mimeograph in the office, reporting on camp news and gossip, along with updates on the weather (hot!) and on how the Cardinals were doing.



The Chapel at St. Stephen's-in-the-Hills

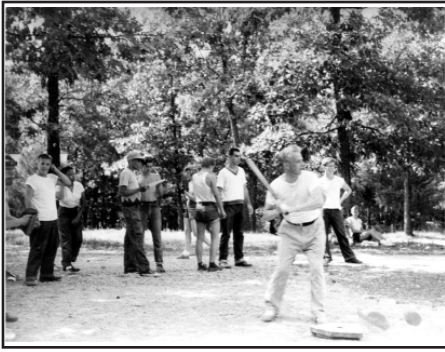
Certain activities became tradition... the hike to the fire tower, the scavenger hunt, skit night, the dance and the final night campfire at the lake and the silent hike back up the hill.

**In 1952** the Diocese initiated a conference for junior high school students. Initially using a smaller nearby camp, 41 students attended the first year. **In 1953**, this conference moved over to the FFA camp, now called Camp Rising Sun. The two conferences were held in succession in August.

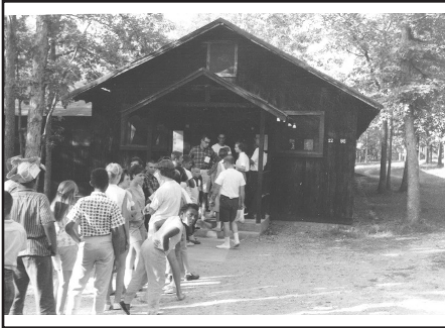


Senior High Conference at Camp Rising Sun, The Rev. Murray Kenny, camp director (in the lead)

**In 1962**, the Music Commission added Junior Choir Camp for students in 4th to 7th grades. This camp was held at Mound Ridge, a camp outside of St. James, owned and operated by the Presbytery. This was a week devoted to learning music and liturgy, and with many of the boys from the Cathedral's boys choir in attendance, campers went home knowing more about church music than many of their parents. But it wasn't all about church music. Activities included swimming in the Meramec, and then in the pool after it was built a few years later,



Bishop Lichtenberger at bat, Camp Rising Sun, 1951



The mess hall at Camp Rising Sun



Swimming at Camp Rising Sun



Worship service in the rec hall at Camp Rising Sun, 1962

along with crafts and sports. The camp was built on the side of a hill, so campers and staff always seemed to be going up or down hill... cabins at the top, mess hall and recreation building in the middle, with the river at the bottom. **In 1968**, the emphasis on music was discontinued, and the program moved to a more traditional church camp program.

Interest in church camps began to wane **in the late 1960s and early 1970**. Schools were starting earlier, teenagers heading for college were holding summer jobs, families were taking vacations and Junior and Senior Conferences, along with St. Stephen's-in-the-Hills were finding it harder to attract interested conferees.

Camp schedules were merged with the Presbytery's and most often held at Mound Ridge, and occasionally at St. Stephen's-in-the-Hills. Vandals destroyed many of the building at St. Stephen's-in-the-Hills. A camp and conference committee was put in place to explore ways to make camps a viable program. As St. Louis development spread further west, offers were received to purchase the St. Stephen's-in-the-Hills property for housing developments, and the property was finally sold in 1985.

**In 1997** the Diocese offered a new camping experience in a joint program with the Diocese of West Missouri at Cliff Springs Camp near Lebanon. Camp sessions were available for several age groups from primary grades through college freshmen. After the 2004 sessions, citing years of deficits and inability to attract enough campers to provide the necessary revenue, the Diocese of West Missouri finally closed the camp facilities and put the property up for sale.

Not willing to give up on a camping program for the Diocese of Missouri, organizers appeared before Diocesan Convention **in November 2004** and presented their plan. With a convention offering of \$1,450 and an anonymous donation of \$5,000, Camp Phoenix was off to a good start. The COVID-19 pandemic forced the cancellation of camp in 2020, but Camp Phoenix was up and running in a limited capacity in 2021 and again this year.

Church camps are a great place to make friends and memories. Whether you attended St. Stephen's-in-the-Hills or Senior or Junior Conference at Camp Rising Sun, Cliff Springs, Choir Camp at Mound Ridge, Camp Phoenix, or church camp in another diocese, you remember those summers. You remember your cabin mates and counselors. You met kids from other churches around your diocese. The memories last forever, and many times the friendships do, too.



Outdoor chapel at Camp Rising Sun



Shuffleboard at Camp Rising Sun

## The Tradition Continues: Camp Phoenix 2022

Camp Phoenix is a traditional summer camp with Episcopal values that seeks to bring campers into contact with God and into closer community with each other.

In support of that mission, organizers focus on three main priorities:

- to value each other
- to love each other
- to provide a positive experience and opportunities for spiritual growth.

The camp is located in DuBois, Illinois, and is for kids ages 8 to 15. Campers will enjoy horseback riding, swimming, arts & crafts, camp fires, and much more! This year's camp will be held **July 24 - 30**.

Capacity for this year's event is a bit lower than previous years as we make safety a top priority:

- All staff members will be fully vaccinated.
- The Diocese recommends all campers receive the second of two doses of the COVID-19 vaccination by July 10.
- All staff and campers will be required to provide proof of a recent negative COVID-19 test at check-in.

You can register for Camp Phoenix or apply for a counselor position on their website: [camp-phoenix.org](http://camp-phoenix.org).



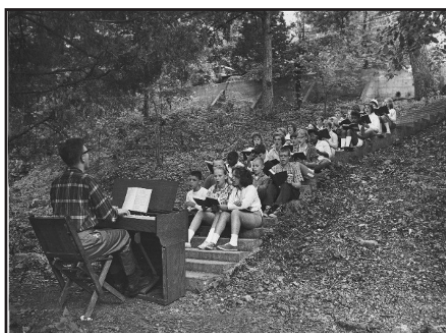
Fun and friendship at Camp Phoenix, 2021



Horseback riding at Camp Phoenix, 2021



Beach volleyball and swimming at Camp Phoenix, 2021



Choir practice at Junior Choir Camp, Mound Ridge



Bishop Cadigan pitching in softball at Junior Choir Camp, Mound Ridge



Float trip on the Meremec at Junior Choir Camp, Mound Ridge

# Christians and War

## The Brotherhood of St. Andrew explores lessons from the Bible

by Neil Tumber, member of the Church of St. Michael & St. George, Clayton

How should Christians pray during times of conflict, such as the current situation in Ukraine? The Brotherhood of St. Andrew at The Church of St. Michael and St. George in Clayton held a lively and thought-provoking discussion about that topic this spring.

It is so tempting to pray for "peace" or "for the people of Ukraine" but what do we really mean when we say these things? Do you mean for the fighting to stop? In what way? For the aggressor to win? For a successful defense? And then, what about the people? For them to be safe? To get their homes and livelihoods back? The more we are specific in our prayers, the more we can take action in support of our prayers.

See the letter of **James 2:14-25: "Faith if it is not accompanied by action, is dead"** (NIV)

We also looked at **Nehemiah 4:9: "But we prayed to our God and posted a guard day and night to meet this threat."** (NIV)

The message seems to be that God wants us to act to be part of His work on earth.

If you want an insight into how wicked people view the world and their actions, read **Psalms 36, particularly verses 2 to 4**. The leaders of any action to bully or make people bend to their desires become lost in their wickedness. Firm action that meets the aggressor with power that they understand is needed. With children, it may be enough to put your arms around them to restrain them but how to do that with an army facing you? **The Old Testament** gives us many examples of when God was with the Israelites in battle and some of us are called to be warriors.

We agreed that we need to pray that soldiers have the moral and physical courage to do their duty. In some cases, for example when given an unlawful or immoral order, the soldier must refuse even if this might mean death for them. If you have courage to stand up for the weak and powerless maybe you will save lives.

**1 John 3:16: "This is how we know what love is: Jesus Christ laid down his life for us. And we ought to lay down our lives for our brothers and sisters."** (NIV)

Finally, we considered **Ezekiel 22:30: "I looked for someone among them who would build up the wall and stand before me in the gap on behalf of the land so I would not have to destroy it, but I found no one."** (NIV)

God is calling us to stand in the gap. The gap between His Will, His Love and the actions of men. Fill the gap with your prayers and with action: lobby politicians; give money to appropriate organizations; be ready to help those who reach out to you personally for support.

This discussion was led by Neil Tumber, a member of The Church of St. Michael and St. George, and a veteran of the British armed forces.

If you would like to hold a similar discussion for your community, please contact Neil at [neiltumbe@outlook.com](mailto:neiltumbe@outlook.com).

The Brotherhood of St. Andrew meets monthly at The Church of St. Michael & St. George. All are welcome.



## A Poem by Megan Oakes

Deaconess Anne House 2021-22

my mask smells like incense on sunday nights when I grocery shop  
and the smell still lingers monday morning.  
it's not my favorite smell by a long shot: i'd rather smell pine, or detergent,  
or the crisp scent of cloth dried outside.  
i'd rather smell like something much cleaner than this, much less holy than this.

church is the only place i cry, anymore - watching the bread get held up.  
facing the cross to sing. being forgiven after confession.  
they're ordinary things, overlaid with careful steps and turns, and so much incense.  
the bland little crackers are holy. christ is in them.  
we cense them and bow over them and consume them carefully and reverently.  
we don't have wine, anymore - all of this ceremony for some water and flour, flat and dry.  
all this ceremony for a broken, ruined body.

my mask smells like incense. the holy ritual for the most holy of bodies  
has rubbed off onto my own, broken, ruined body.  
sometimes when we receive, the priest tells us to behold what we are.  
sometimes, i actually do.



# Treating Drug Addiction with Compassion

## Trinity Church in St. Louis partners with urban health and education center to serve their community

by the Rev. Aaron Rogers,  
Trinity Episcopal Church, St. Louis

Come now let us reason together  
says the Lord:  
though your sins are scarlet  
they will be white as snow;  
though they are red as crimson  
they will be as wool.  
-Isaiah 1:18

The numbers are troubling. There have been 1,168 overdose victims in St. Louis over the past three years. St. Louis ranks among the deadliest cities for lethal overdoses among African American males (Smith, 2022). The CDC has reported that overdose deaths nationally have topped 100,000 since the year ending in April and 2,004 of those deaths have been in Missouri (Salter, 2022). Most of those deaths have been in the St. Louis region.

### **We are in a funeral shroud.**

Lethal opioid overdoses have our region in a deathly grip and the specter is ominously rising. In February of this year, seven people died of a lethal opioid overdose. Six died in a single day and all within a two-block radius of each other (Salter, 2022).

Trinity Episcopal Church in the city of St. Louis is a stone's throw away from these scenes of death. The opioid crisis, largely perceived to be a rural burden, is rampant in the urban neighborhood of the Central West End. Two years ago, when Trinity Episcopal Church decided to recommit itself to a strategy of parish engagement, it did not expect to find itself in the center of a national crisis. But the triggering news of lethal overdoses and the presence of addiction in many of its community neighbors was a sobering "come-to-Jesus" moment to our congregation. We knew that if we were deeply committed to seeing the presence of Christ in the community we had to respond to these wounds in his body.

The traditional response to those suffering with addictions has been to stigmatize and criminalize.



Society, churches included, have often sanctioned shame and shackles to deal with individuals who struggle with addiction. The War on Drugs was an historically infamous example of this policy making. The hypocritical campaign criminalized poor urban communities of color who were struggling with the insertion of the highly addictive drug crack cocaine. Commercials, political dog whistles, and legislative agendas combined to blame the vulnerable for their addiction. The result was that generations of mostly male, mostly black men ended up locked in prison when they would have been better served by compassionate care and humanizing public policy.

What a difference race makes? The opioid crisis has been largely perceived to be a rural white problem. The federal government has chosen to respond by releasing funding to address the opioid crisis as a public health issue. But the vestiges of old negative stereotyping about addiction in black and brown communities has stifled addiction being appropriately addressed and resourced in communities of color. The politically convenient mental bias has also lingered in a way that perpetuates disparate treatment and stalls anchor institutions from responding immediately and compassionately to those who desperately need to have their dignity acknowledged, protected, and restored.

### **Trinity needed a different approach.**

Enter Dr. LJ Punch. Dr Punch is a genderqueer trauma surgeon and former professor at the Institute for Public Health at Washington University. Dr. Punch has been called the "Saint of the Streets"

and in recent years has focused his energy on developing The T STL, an urban health and education center with volunteer health professionals. The T, with its program *The Key @ the T*, has focused addressing the gap of addiction support in urban neighborhoods and among communities of color by a strategy of harm reduction that supports the path to recovery and maintains the dignity of the individual. The Key (named after a volunteer who lost their battle with addiction) @ the T offers medical supplies for wound care, syringe exchanges, and opportunities to test current supplies of drugs for fentanyl, the leading culprit in lethal overdoses. The Key also offers resources for recovery and maps to the closest recovery centers for individuals who are seeking them out. These services treat people who struggle with addiction with empathy and humanity. They provide an opportunity to partner with someone suffering with addiction without requiring their perfection. It's a journey to the human heart.



The Old Testament prophet Isaiah understood this journey. His community grappled with sin in such a way that its progression warranted a powerful and blatant rebuke in the first chapter of his book. The prophet somehow also understood that the overwhelming tide of wrongful behavior could never be fully addressed with judgement but might be bridged with the compassion of a persistent God willing to “reason together.” In this great act, God addresses the sin, but humanizes the transgressor. God extends Godself in empathy to meet the transgressor where they are understanding, perhaps, that sin makes us all vulnerable -- no matter where on the spectrum we find ourselves. Transgressions

always land at the transverse of the cross. To God, sin is not a cause for condemnation, even the egregious ones, but a reason to extend compassion.

### Trinity has chosen compassion.

We have decided to partner with The T STL by opening our doors (and our parking lot) to serve as a ground zero station for harm reduction services in the Central West End. Every Tuesday at 1 p.m., the mobile unit parks in our East-facing parking lot and a “T” staff member sets up a booth in our South Parish Hall where our food pantry operates.

We serve all who need support.

Anyone who needs support.

We are growing in this work. Our hope is that other congregations will join us in learning more about how lethal drugs are impacting our city and consider how they might extend themselves, their ministries, and their compassion to curve this crisis. The words of Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. come to mind: The arc of universe is long, but it bends toward justice.



### References:

Salter, J. (2022, 2 7). Seven Overdose in Two-Block Area of St. Louis. Associated Press, p. 1.

Smith, A. (2022, April 5). Missouri’s fentanyl crisis is worsening, but patients can’t get treatment for substance abuse. KCUR, p. 1.

# Renaissance in West County

## The Church of the Good Shepherd and St. Luke's agree to a merger



Two parishes in West St. Louis County are coming together to form one community of faith.

The Rev. Earl Mahan, who serves both, answers questions about the discernment process and what happens next.

**Q: When and why did you all begin to discern a merger?**

**A:** In December of 2020, as the first hints that the world might be able to look forward to a “post COVID” reality began to emerge, the lay leaders of St. Luke’s, Manchester and Church of the Good Shepherd, Town and Country, and myself, began conversations about the future. At that point, St. Luke’s and Good Shepherd were two years into a partnership in which the two parishes share clergy and partner together on certain ministry projects. During the initial COVID lockdowns, we did “ZOOM Church” together, worshipping virtually as one community. During this time there was a growing sense that nothing involved with church would ever be quite the same again. We also knew, as small parishes with limited resources, that to continue business as usual would most likely lead to a point within the next three to five years when both parishes would likely cease to exist. We agreed to begin a process of discernment together to ask the question, “What should our future be?”

**Q: What was involved in the discernment process?**

**A:** After more conversations in the first half of 2021 that also included the Bishop and Diocesan staff, a Discernment Team of 10 lay leaders (five from each parish) and me began a discernment process in July of 2021. Our process was shepherded by The Rev. Daniel V. Pearson, a priest in the Diocese of Minnesota, a church consultant who has done other similar discernment work. Meeting monthly over a five-month period, we grappled with questions of what it means to be the church from three different perspectives – the church as an

institution, the church as a community of the Holy Spirit, and the church as a missional endeavor. We also shared ideas on what a future for our parishes could look like. No idea was off-limits, and no outcome was predetermined. We strove to remain open to listening for the voice of God to help guide us. Following this period of discernment work, the Discernment Team unanimously agreed to recommend to the vestries of St. Luke’s and Good Shepherd that the parishes begin a process of merger.

**Q: When did the churches vote on the merger?**

**A:** The recommendation of the Discernment Team was shared with the parish vestries at their December 2021 meetings and with the rest of both parishes at their annual parish meetings at the end of January 2022. After some time of further reflection, the vestries of each parish voted at their March meetings to formally accept the recommendation to merge and begin a process of transition to create a new parish.



**Q: Which facilities will you use?**

**A:** The question of which facility to use for a newly merged parish was perhaps the most difficult that the Discernment Team dealt with. Like most parishes, both St. Luke’s and Good Shepherd’s facilities and property have both strengths and weaknesses. St. Luke’s facility is also home to St. Luke’s Pre-school, a thriving and growing ministry, as well as the worship home for Faith Christian Church of India. Church of the Good Shepherd is home to a columbarium and memorial garden, a newly constructed outdoor labyrinth, as well as Shepherd Farm, a community garden ministry that grows



around 3000 pounds of organic produce annually which is given to ministry partners around metro St. Louis. Good Shepherd sits on about five acres of land with room for possible future expansion. The Discernment Team agreed that all these ministries need to continue as part of the newly merged parish. Therefore, it was decided that Good Shepherd's facility and property would become the home of the new parish, while St. Luke's facility and property would continue to operate as a sort of satellite site for mission and ministry.

**Q: What happens to the other facility?**

**A:** St. Luke's facility and property, which will revert to Diocesan oversight following the completion of the merger, will for now continue to be home for St. Luke's Preschool and Faith Christian Church of India, with every intention of seeing the newly merged parish continue to work in partnership with and support of these ministries. This is especially true of St. Luke's Preschool. With St. Luke's Church no longer occupying the facility, space will be freed up for the preschool to expand its scope and serve even more families in the community with quality faith based early childhood education.



**Q: What will be the name of the combined church?**

**A:** The name of the newly created parish has yet to be determined. However, we firmly believe that a new name, along with new branding, will be essential to establishing the identity of the parish. A new name will play a role in communicating to the community the values and purpose of the parish. We hope to use the choosing of a new name as a parish-wide activity to bring the members of the parish closer together in a common sense of mission.

**Q: What are the next steps?**

**A:** The next step will be the creation of a Transition Team to work alongside me, the Diocese, and vestry leaders to chart a way forward. Joint vestry meetings will happen as needed. By this summer, we hope to have dates chosen that will mark the beginning of the new parish joining together for its Sunday worship services, and a final Sunday service at St. Luke's. We also believe it is important to celebrate and remember the ministries that have existed under the names of St. Luke's and Church of the Good Shepherd. In addition to continuing the important ministries that currently exist at both churches, we will also identify sacred objects, photographs, and other touchstones of the two parishes' ministries to be incorporated into the life of the new parish.

**Q: When will the merger be finalized?**

**A:** In one sense, a merger is never fully finalized. Like any parish, we will always be a work in progress. However, from a canonical standpoint, the merger will be finalized at the Diocesan Convention this fall, which will approve the dissolution of both St. Luke's and Good Shepherd, as well as the creation of the new parish and approval of its new name.

**Q: What has been the reaction from the two congregations?**

**A:** As with any situation involving a change to long-standing traditions, the vote has been met with mixed reactions, mostly positive, but some negative. We anticipated from the beginning of our discernment process that it would be nearly impossible for any recommendation to satisfy everyone. Both parish vestries and I are working to make sure everyone's opinions are heard and respected. We continue to encourage everyone to give the process a chance and stay engaged, including those who may not be in agreement with the decision to merge. For those that choose to walk another path, we wish them God's blessings, and they know there will always be a place for them in the ministry of the new parish.

# Inspiration Comes from Unlikely Places

## St. Timothy's adopts an Afghan family

by Karen Luecking,  
St. Timothy's Episcopal Church, Creve Coeur

At the end of August 2021, I happened to check my junk email folder and found a message from Greenscape Gardens, a St. Louis area nursery. They were organizing a "Planting for Peace" fundraiser with the proceeds going to the International Institute of St. Louis (IISTL) for their Afghan refugee relief efforts.

Greenscape's fundraiser got me thinking. It prompted me to reach out to The Rev. Liz Meade, interim rector at my home parish, St. Timothy's Episcopal Church in Creve Coeur. I asked her if St. Timothy's would be interested in sponsoring an Afghan refugee family. St. Timothy's congregation has great depth in its congregation, both in loving people and resources. Mother Liz was enthusiastic, and asked me to create a proposal for the Vestry to consider. The Vestry determined that St. Tim's Reaching Out Ministry would be a perfect fit for this sponsorship effort. *It was a GO!*

By late 2021, the IISTL was ready to start training teams of 4-5 individuals willing to support resettlement of Afghan refugee families in St. Louis. The IISTL offers essential economic and cultural integration services. Then in February 2022, we issued a call to action to create a St. Timothy's resettlement support team in our weekly e-mails and parish newsletter. The response from St. Tim's parishioners was amazing. Soon after, all the interested members met via Zoom to learn more about what we'd be doing.

Our core team is called "The

A-TEAM." We meet directly with the family members in their home on a weekly basis. We had to go through a background check, sign confidentiality agreements, and attend training. We also have another six participants that we call "The A-TEAM Auxiliary" who provide invaluable background support. Additionally, donations from church members have been off the charts!

Our Afghan family is a large one: nine members including Mom, Dad, and seven sons ranging in age from two months to 17! The children are enrolled in school. Mom and Dad speak Pashto but not English. Thank heavens for Google Translator! If we have a complex topic to discuss there is a phone translation service available.

The A-TEAM is currently helping Dad start English classes and work with job counselors for employment opportunities. We're getting Mom set up with in-home English classes. One of our team members found a local group (ihelpstl.org) which provides in-home English tutoring for immigrants. We are also creating an easy-to-understand budget to help the family manage their finances, helping them learn bus routes, and sourcing a variety of family requests including rugs, a sewing machine, and an electric dryer. St. Tim's Reaching Out program donated \$500.00 to the family account at IISTL using funds from the Diocesan Council grant. Thank you, Diocesan Council!

The language barrier has been a challenge. The resettlement bureaucracy can be trying. But the

family's appreciation and hospitality have been extraordinary. When we visit our Afghan family, we are always offered a glass of apple juice and a plate of fruit. Our family is learning about life in America, but we are learning so much more.

Americans were horrified at the humanitarian crisis as the U.S. withdrew its forces from Afghanistan in the summer of 2021. Tens of thousands of Afghan citizens had to flee. Our family elected to come to St. Louis to resettle. We truly believe that St. Timothy's support can make a huge difference in successfully welcoming this family and integrating them into their new home in St. Louis. That is our prayer.

I sometimes wonder why an email from my local nursery sitting in my junk e-mail folder caught my attention. I like to think a higher power was at work.



To donate to the IISTL's immigrant services programs, go to:

<https://www.iistl.org/donate/>

Thank you!



The living room of the family's apartment. It is Afghan custom to completely cover the floor with rugs, which were donated.



**SAINT TIMOTHY'S**  
**EPISCOPAL CHURCH**  
**CREVE COEUR, MO**



St. Timothy's Afghan refugee resettlement team:  
 Front row: Susan Moenkhaus, Karen Luecking,  
 Joy Rouse, Nancy Setzer  
 Back row: Mary Saggau, The Rev. Liz Meade,  
 LaVerne Moseley, Mitzi Uyemura



St. Timothy's Afghan refugee resettlement team:  
 Mimi Butler, Karen Luecking, Steve Crock

## Learn more / Get involved:

*Does your heart ache for migrants and refugees?  
 Is your church looking for practical ways to help these siblings?*



Neighbor to Neighbor, a program of Episcopal Migration Ministries, offers personalized training and support to faith communities who feel called to sponsor asylum seekers or Afghan arrivals.

Episcopal Migration Ministries (EMM) is one of nine national agencies responsible for resettling refugees in partnership with the U.S. government. Since its formal establishment in the 1980s, EMM has welcomed and resettled more than 100,000 individuals. Learn more about this vital work and how you can support it at [episcopalmigrationministries.org](http://episcopalmigrationministries.org).



# Rise Against Hunger

## Emmanuel's food ministry reaches beyond Webster Groves

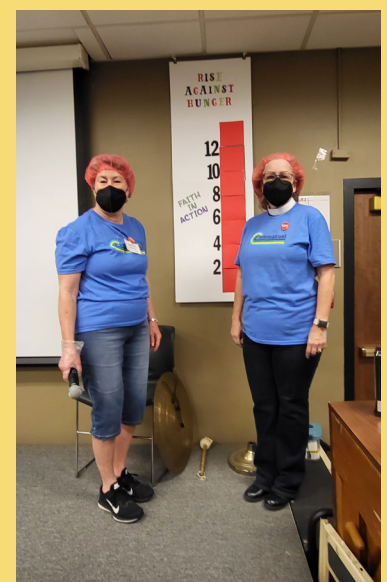
by Mimi Shipp, Communications Director  
Emmanuel Episcopal Church

As a piece of Emmanuel's Food Ministry, we hosted a Rise Against Hunger food packaging event on Sunday, April 24, 2022.

Rise Against Hunger is an organization driven by the vision of a world without hunger. Their mission is to end hunger by providing food and life-changing aid to the world's most vulnerable and creating global commitment to mobilize necessary resources.

So, on April 24, more than 60 volunteers ages 7 and up put on their hair nets and listened to "love themed" music to package a total of 14,256 meals.

It was an opportunity to share intergenerational fellowship while working toward a common goal.



# Medical Debt Relief Campaign

## Emery Washington Convocation takes action to help Missourians experiencing poverty

Medical debt is cited by many researchers as the leading cause of bankruptcy in the U.S. and one of the leading causes of financial instability for low-income families. The Emery Washington Convocation of the Episcopal Diocese of Missouri is hoping to relieve that problem in our state.

Thirteen parishes within the Emery Washington Convocation (in and around the city of St. Louis) have partnered together to raise \$13,000, which will cancel \$1.3 million of medical debt. And now they are inviting all parishes and members throughout the Diocese to join their effort.

The medical debt relief campaign is operated through RIP Medical Debt, a New York based nonprofit started by former debt collectors. It uses donations to purchase the unpaid medical debt of low-income families for pennies on the dollar to abolish the debt. \$1 purchases and cancels \$100 worth of debt.

"In Jesus' very first sermon, he says that his mission is to release people from captivity," said the Very Rev. Jon Stratton, Dean of the Emery Washington Convocation and Rector of Trinity Episcopal Church in St. Louis. "Anytime folks in the biblical context talk about releasing the oppressed, it almost always includes the release of debt. Real financial debt, not just vague overly spiritualized notions of debt on account of an accumulation of sin or personal moral failures. I figure that if this was a good project for Jesus, then it's probably a good project for us."

Dean Jon said he wanted to help organize a shared ministry project in the convocation that would be high impact and yet relatively easy for parishes to engage in. Earlier this year, the Diocese sent each parish a \$1,000 check (leftover funds from the 2021 budget year) to invest in community outreach. "By pooling together our \$1,000 Mission Stimulus Checks, we are able to cancel over a million dollars in debt for folks experiencing poverty," the dean

said. "That is high impact, and it was relatively easy for parishes to engage since we were all looking for something interesting and helpful to do with our \$1,000 checks."

The convocation has already raised \$13,000 to pay off medical debt, but they are hoping to do more. Their new goal is to raise \$26,000, which would cancel \$2.6 million in medical debt. Parishes and individuals throughout the Diocese and the community at large are invited to join this project.

The campaign runs through September 2022.

Remember, every \$1 you donate cancels \$100 worth of debt and changes the lives of real people. "The fact that we can cancel \$100 worth of debt with every \$1 raised exposes

the absurdity of the predatory for-profit healthcare system," said Dean Jon. "I hope this will stir our theological imaginations and compel us to point out and dismantle other absurd systems, and not just by writing checks, but by engaging with our neighbors to build a more Beloved Community."



To learn more about the campaign and to make a donation, visit:

[ripmedicaldebt.org/campaign/episcopal-medical-debt-forgiveness-campaign](http://ripmedicaldebt.org/campaign/episcopal-medical-debt-forgiveness-campaign)

### The Medical Debt Forgiveness Steering Committee from the Emery Washington Convocation:

- The Very Rev. Kathie Adams-Shepherd  
Christ Church Cathedral, St. Louis
- The Rev. Mark Kozielec  
St. Mark's Episcopal Church, St. Louis
- The Rev. Dr. Emily Hillquist Davis  
The Episcopal Church of the Advent and  
St. Thomas Deaf Episcopal Church, Crestwood
- The Rev. Rebecca Ragland  
St. Paul's Episcopal Church, Carondelet / St. Louis
- The Rev. Aaron Rogers  
Trinity Episcopal Church, Central West End / St. Louis
- The Rev. Dr. Valori Mulvey Sherer  
Emmanuel Episcopal Church, Webster Groves
- The Very Rev. Jon Stratton  
Trinity Episcopal Church, Central West End / St. Louis  
and Dean of Emery Washington Convocation

# Lessons from the Streets of St. Louis

## St. Peter's youth member plans a future to fix wrongs of the past



17-year old Bailey Mathews has a love for history, geography, and politics. He's the kind of student who soaks up knowledge and can answer questions off the top of his head that most of us would need to research before answering. He lives in a high-rise apartment in Clayton with his mother, Dr. Katherine Mathews, who is a practicing physician and teacher at St. Louis University. Bailey has been an active youth member at St. Peter's Episcopal Church in Ladue. He graduated this spring from De Smet Jesuit High School in St. Louis and plans to attend Fordham University in New York this fall.

Like all students, Bailey's education has been shaped by many people and events. One lesson that has been truly transformational for him came from the streets of St. Louis and our city's history of systemic racial inequality.

Bailey began doing mission work in 2016 with St. Peter's youth group when he was in middle school. The group's Mission Days focused on cleaning facilities at Haven of Grace, picking up trash in parks and along the streets, and working in community gardens in North St. Louis City.

Then in 2017, Bailey and his mom began attending community dinners at Deaconess Anne House, a branch of the Episcopal Service Corps in Old North St. Louis. DAH became their spiritual home, a welcome alternative to the structure of Bailey's Catholic schools.

As they traveled, Bailey began noticing some big differences in the neighborhoods and structures of North St. Louis and his communities in Clayton and Ladue. One day he picked up a coffee table picture book in his living room. The book was titled *Streets and Streetcars of St. Louis; A Sentimental Journey*. The book chronicled the changes in community life brought about by the streetcar from 1946 to 1966. Bailey began to wonder why the pictures in the book look so different from the actual neighborhoods today.

The teenager went on to become a self-taught expert of the history and effects of redlining in St. Louis. He learned that the National Housing Act of 1934, part of President Franklin D. Roosevelt's New Deal, declared loans to black home buyers or to whites in predominantly black areas were too "risky" and refused to insure the loans. The government literally drew red lines around neighborhoods on maps and ranked the neighborhoods according to their racial population. As a result, the majority of the federal subsidies for home ownership went almost entirely to white people.

In his senior year of high school, Bailey applied all his observations and that knowledge of redlining in a creative project for his AP English class. He decided to visit sites pictured in his coffee table book from the 1940s and took pictures of those locations today. He recreated the redline maps and directly correlated the discriminatory housing practices to the apparent decline in the neighborhoods today. The final project became a 5' by 3' poster with Bailey's hand-drawn map in the center, surrounded by his "then and now" pictures.

He got an A on the project.

The lessons Bailey learned through those mission days, his dinners at Deaconess Anne House, and his school project have led him to his next adventure: he will pursue an Urban Studies degree at Fordham University in New York City. Bailey says he eventually hopes to start a non-profit and try to solve some of the problems he has witnessed on the streets of St. Louis.

Congratulations on your accomplishments, Bailey. And we wish you the best in college. We can't wait to see what you do next!



Then...



1963 v. 2021

Taylor,  
looking north,  
near Hodiament  
Tracks

...Now



1963 v. 2021

MLK east,  
toward Sarah



1959 v. 2021

Grand and  
Meramec,  
facing north





THE EPISCOPAL DIOCESE OF MISSOURI

1210 Locust Street  
St. Louis, MO 63103

# Happily Ever After

by Shari Bonham

Grace Episcopal Church, Kirkwood



Congratulations to Diana Thomas and William (Bill) Allen, who were married at Grace Episcopal Church in Kirkwood on May 21. Patrick Thomas, Diana's grandson, gave the bride away. Anna Welch, Diana's great-granddaughter, was her attendant. Bill's best man was his son, William Reddish. May this beautiful couple, 96 and 98 years young, live together happily in the years to come.

*Photos courtesy of Jodie Allen, Fresh Art Photography*