North Central Region Convenes in the Season of Racial Healing, Justice and Reconciliation

As I drove to St. Paul’s, Southington on Saturday, May 18th to join the recent convocation of the ECCT North Central Region, I wondered what the response would be to the theme of Racial Healing, Justice and Reconciliation. A priority established for ECCT at the 2018 Convention (see resolution), we knew that our topic could provide an enriching experience for those attending and, at the same time, could evoke strong emotions and possibly reveal the negative societal undercurrents that healing and reconciliation need to address. My experience, on balance, was a positive one.

The event, generously hosted by St. Paul’s parish, included a comfortable meeting space, an elaborate breakfast buffet and a catered lunch. The agenda included a variety of experiences: dwelling in the word on text from Howard Thurman’s *Jesus and the Disinherited*, the viewing of a film featuring the Civil Rights Memorial and stories of individuals who were killed during the during the modern Civil Rights Movement from 1954 to 1968, small group discussions about the film using Eric Law’s Photolanguage Cards, and a fun activity involving matching scripture segments that got us out of our
seats and interacting. We also learned about the work of the Ministry Network on Racial Healing, Justice and Reconciliation through a presentation by co-chairs Suzy Burke and the Rev. Rowena Kemp. They discussed the resources that have been assembled for parishes and field trips. After lunch, parishes shared how they responded to the call to create a program for a Day of Racial Healing, Justice, and Reconciliation on February 10, 2019. Parish activities varied from panels, book and film discussions, to the development of parish histories involving slavery and civil rights. Five parishes, on retreat together, participated in focused meditations and discussions on works of Howard Thurman, a 20th Century African-American author, philosopher, theologian, educator, and civil rights leader.

Despite the gorgeous spring day, more than 50 people chose to spend their morning with us, representing 20 parishes in our region. Conversations were avid and lively. A positive vibe prevailed throughout the morning.

- Karanne Farling, Region Leadership Team Member
  Trinity, Collinsville

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Films & Dialogue about Race and Reconciliation
Hosted by the North & South Central Regions, ECCT
Sacred Healing: A Summer Film Series
July 30, August 6 & August 13
St. Paul's Episcopal Church, Wallingford.
Films with facilitated discussion to follow. All segments will run from 5:30-9:00 pm. Films and other materials will be from this year’s Trinity Institute, “Scene and Unseen: Facing Race through film.”
Register at: https://sacred-healing-film-series.eventbrite.com

Greetings from your Region Missionary

On June 6th the Region Missionaries will celebrate their two year anniversary. This day will be marked with tremendous joy in all that we have accomplished, gratitude for the deep and prayerful friendship we have found in each other, and sadness because for half of our group this chapter is coming to a close. I will forever be grateful for the wisdom and friendship I have found in Eliza Marth (Northwest), Rachel Field (South Central), and Carlos de la Torre (Southwest) and I pray that God will richly bless them in their new ministries in Maryland, Vermont and Pennsylvania. As for me, I will continue to grow in my ministry as your Region Missionary in the year to come. I am excited to discover what God has in store for our region, and I eagerly await the newness of life and brilliant ideas that will arrive with our three new Region Missionaries this summer. I am also grateful to continue to walking this journey with Maggie Breen (Northeast) and Rachel Thomas (Southeast). We have come so far, and God as so much more in store for us!

Erin Flinn
NC Region Missionary
eflinn@episcopalct.org
Mobile: 860-966-3742
Follow on Facebook
In this season of change, as a Region we are also forming a new Region Leadership Team. At our convocation on May 18th it was announced that six of our RLT members are cycling off the team, many of whom have been on the team since the work of the Region first began three years ago. I am grateful for each of them—for their courage to imagine a new way of being, their curiosity in asking what God is up to in our region of CT, and their faithfulness in bringing our communities together in ways never done before. Please join me in thanking Linda Spiers (our convener), Darryl Burke, June Aziz, Rowena Kemp, Judy Moeckel, and Lina Howell. We have so much to be grateful for, including those who will be staying on the team for another year, and those who are prayerfully discerning a call to the team. If you would like to join the Region Leadership team please read our mission description below and contact me at eflinn@episcopalct.org or 860-966-3742.

Thank you for two wonderful years filled with friendship, holy conversation, countless cups of tea, neighborhood walks, prayer and song, and brave questions.

Interested in joining the Region Leadership Team?

MISSION STATEMENT: To create opportunities to unite the community of parishes, finding new ways to seek and serve Christ, seeing Him in all persons, and loving our neighbor as ourselves.

DESCRIPTION: Each of the six regions in the Episcopal Church in CT has a leadership team. The North Central Region leadership team currently includes lay and clergy members who have self-selected to be part of this planning team. Members will serve for two years.

FUNCTION OF TEAM: Build a sense of community within the region ● Plan convocation gatherings that will inspire new ways of working together in God’s mission ● Listen to the needs and concerns of region parishes ● Foster and support opportunities for collaboration and networking in various ministry areas ● Create a vision of what the region might become and be willing to try on new things.

REQUIREMENTS: The team meets monthly at a parish within the region ● The team supports region events ● Each region is required to have one or more convocations during the year ● In the past, the leadership team has gone on a retreat to plan for the year ahead ● Members of this team are also invited to accompany the region missionary visiting other churches.

We are looking for a diverse team representing the population of the region that is also inclusive of racial, ethnic, and gender diversity.

If you are interested in joining the Region Leadership Team please be in touch with our Region Missionary, Erin Flinn at eflinn@episcopalct.org and plan to attend our monthly team meetings on Tuesday 5/28 and 6/25 at 6 pm at Trinity, Wethersfield (300 Main St, Wethersfield, CT 06109). If you have questions you can contact our Region Missionary or anyone on our Region Leadership Team.
God's Mission in North Central Connecticut

Glory to God whose power, working in us, can do infinitely more than we can ask or imagine:
Glory to God from generation to generation in the Church,
and in Christ Jesus for ever and ever. Amen. - Ephesians 3:20-21

Wardens in Changing Times - Moving Forward Together

On February 16th a group of vestry members from the Northwest region met for a special Vestry Retreat Day. Wardens from a couple of parishes in the North Central region joined them seeking fellowship and wondering if the idea of a Wardens Ministry Network had value. One of the afternoon workshops at the February vestry retreat day was specifically for wardens and answered very clearly the question "Do Wardens have a great deal of information to share with each other?" The answer was a resounding Yes!

On May 7th, wardens from 16 parishes of the North Central Region met together for our very first Wardens Ministry Network meeting. Our overriding question that evening was, do we have enough common problems and solutions to share with each other in order to make a Wardens Ministry Network useful. Are there enough ideas and good practices that we can tell each other about? Is there enough fellowship and are enough relationships formed so that we can support and minister to each other? Is there enough joy in the simple act of worshiping together? All of those questions were answered with yet another resounding Yes!

So this newly formed Ministry Network will continue to move forward to share and support each other. Erin Flinn our Region Missionary will be the primary contact person for this network ministry. A small group of wardens are working on the next meeting and information will be available to all our North Central wardens as soon as possible. If you would like to be part of the planning please contact Erin at eflinn@episcopalct.org | 860-966-3742.

- Rose Riley, Warden
Trinity, Wethersfield

Sharing God’s Conspicuous Love at The River

On a warm, overcast, Sunday afternoon we came to the river. We came to worship. We came to be fed. We dared to dream -- What if...? What if we gathered God’s children; fed our bodies and souls? On May 19th, five worshipping communities from Portland, Durham, and Middletown gathered to do just that. As we began our service of conspicuous love, the clouds parted, and the sun came out. As our service began we were encouraged to take note of all that we had in common and to focus on our shared humanity,
rather than our difference. Together, down by the river we sang and danced to live praise music, we preached and prayed about love, and we shared our love as we broke bread together. The preacher, Pastor James Woods of Streetfire Ministries noted that we might not look like a typical church on Sunday morning, but we are the Church! Over 150 people came together to love one another with prayers and pasta salad, including members of Trinity Episcopal Church, Portland; Grace and Mercy Family Ministries, Portland; Church of the Epiphany, Durham; Streetfire Ministries, Middletown; and Church of the Holy Trinity, Middletown; as well as New Life Journey and Follow Me Home recovery communities. All who came were made welcome. We were all God’s children together sharing God’s conspicuous love with each other and the world.

- The Rev. Jessie Karpf, Deacon  
Trinity, Portland

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**Leaving Our Church & Joining Jesus**

**St. Mark’s Church, New Britain** has been my home since 1995. I was lucky enough to have one rector for most of that time and a growing group of friends that have become my family. Part of the attraction was our beautiful stone building with a bell tower reaching to heaven, stained glass windows catching the early morning sun and a Casavant pipe organ that allowed our organist and choir to fill the sanctuary with joyful song. The parish building’s meandering rooms also provided space for Sunday school, a small private school, a food pantry and AA meetings. We felt our building was a large part of our service to the community as well as a place where we worshiped God.

For the past decade or more, our membership steadily declined. We did not need a large space, nor could we afford it. Our operating budget covered mostly maintenance and comparatively little mission and that was only with the help of our endowment. We “talked” about joining with neighboring churches. But, no, we can’t leave our building!

Last June, reality hit with a vengeance. ECCT informed us that we were drawing down our endowment by unsustainable amounts. By the canon law instituted at the 2015 diocesan convention, our revenue stream would be reduced to 5% effective in 2019 at the latest. We were in shock and devastated. Surely, there must be something we could do?
Yes, there was. We had been brought to the brink of a deep chasm. We could fall and disappear, or we could adapt and survive. I am so grateful to my fellow parishioners and our priest-in-charge for their determination and vision to meet multiple hurdles head on. We had parish meetings to bring everyone on board with our new reality. We had to move. Despite our sadness and grieving, members with skills in property management and real estate stepped up to help. Others with community connections found Right Now Ministries to lease our 147 West Main Street building and a willing partner at South Church with space for us to lease as our new home. The Holy Spirit was moving amongst us.

Eleven months have passed, and we are still in transition. Sadness lurks especially when I pass by our old building. But, there are God moments with glimmers of hope. Alli Huggins wrote in her ECCT blog, St. Mark’s can now “put less energy into a community building and more energy into building community.” We have moved closer to the center of town and are in a building shared by 4 other worshiping congregations. St. Mark’s has signed up to be a part of ECCT’s initiative, Joining Jesus in a New Missional Age. Our focus is to meet God in our neighborhood. We are in the perfect place to do that. We have left our church to Join Jesus.

- Allison Penick, Parish Clerk
St. Mark’s Church New Britai

To learn more about St. Mark's and their new home in the "Church Mall" read Alli's blog: here.

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Reflexión sobre la Misa con Mariachi (Click here for English translation.)

Para las Congregaciones de nuestra Catedral fue una nueva y refrescante experiencia, porque muchos de nosotros nunca habían escuchado la música de Mariachi y mucho menos habíamos pensado que un grupo de música popular mexicana tocará música de sacra.

La música fue sorprendente, muy alegre, diferente a lo que siempre hemos escuchado en nuestra Iglesia. El grupo musical es muy bueno, sus interpretaciones fueron excelentes y los cantos fueron muy motivadores.

El servicio religioso fue inspirador porque nos permitió ver que existen otras formas de adoración. No cabe duda de que existen diferentes culturas en las que Dios se hace presente y que Dios se manifiesta en todos y para todos.

Es posible que esta nueva experiencia nos invite a tener otras nuevas experiencias con otro tipo de música para conocer algo de otras culturas. Sin embargo, no es fácil para todos aceptar los cambios ya que, muchos nos sentimos cómodos con nuestras tradiciones, pero los tiempos son otros, muy diferentes. Existe resistencia a los cambios porque atemorizan a muchos.
Aprendimos que el 5 de mayo no es la fecha de la Independencia de México, y que es la fecha de una batalla contra la invasión francesa en un particular punto del territorio mexicano después de su independencia. Esta fiesta se ha llevado a cabo en los Estados Unidos desde el inicio del Siglo XX por los inmigrantes mexicanos y sus descendientes como símbolo de su orgullo cultural y étnico.

- The Rev. Canon Jorge Pallares, Canon para la vida congregacional
Catedral Iglesia de Cristo, Hartford

(Click here for English translation)

Congratulations for Your Outstanding Service!!!

St. Gabriel’s Episcopal Church, East Berlin was the recipient of the “Faith Community of the Year” award at the 50th Annual Meeting of the Friendship Service Center of New Britain held on March 26. St. Gabriel’s provides “Mass on the Grass,” a worship service, every Saturday at 2:00 PM outside the Friendship Center followed by lunch prepared by parishioners. They also provide services for the children served by the Friendship Center. These include school uniforms, Christmas and Easter parties, and maintaining a snack closet for the children when they come home from school. They also helped furnish the Howey House, a permanent supportive housing building owned and managed by the Friendship Service Center for those who are chronically, or about to become chronically homeless. St. Gabriel’s has helped support the needs of the Friendship Service Center for more than 20 years and served on the Board of Directors for a term of five years. Deacon Donald Richey accepted the award on behalf of St. Gabriel’s.

On April 10th, Christ Church Cathedral & Church Street Eats became the first faith-based organization to receive a Hartford Community Food Security Award from the Hartford Advisory Commission on Food Policy whose purpose is “to integrate all City agencies in a common effort to improve the availability of safe and nutritious food at reasonable prices for all Hartford residents, particularly those in need.” Church Street Eats has been serving the Hartford area for more than 15 years, providing almost 10,000 meals annually, as well as clothing and hygiene products. Church Street Eats is staffed entirely by volunteers, making it unique among this year’s award recipients. Volunteers are organized and shepherded by Nancy Jacobs, Theresa Greaves, and Rose Fichera Eagen. More than a dozen North Central Region parishes help out annually, along with countless other churches, schools, and organizations.
**Upcoming Events & Opportunities**

**Disaster Ready Region:** Have you heard the saying, “build your bridges before you need them?” This is part of what the Disaster Response Ministry Network does for our communities. Using Episcopal Churches as hubs, the Disaster Response Ministry Network would like to engage with the Regions to ensure we are well connected and prepared to care of our communities when Mother Nature disrupts our business as usual.

If you would like to help the North Central Region become a “Disaster Ready Region,” please email Mike Corey at mpcorey@gmail.com. For more information check out the website.

**Our goals include:**
- Getting a point of contact for each parish, so if a disaster hits there is a clear line of communication
- Organizing Region wide trainings for CPR, First Aide, Stop the Bleed, and other basic first aid techniques
- Identify and train public safety chaplains.

Love isn’t always a warm and fuzzy feeling. Let us Love our Neighbors by being prepared to care for one another when things go awry.

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**Do you want to join the CT River Pilgrimage** but a week on the water was a bit too much? JOIN FOR A DAY! 5/27/2019 ~ 7-mile paddle from Rocky Hill to Middletown OR 5/30/2019 ~ 10-mile paddle from East Haddam to Essex. If you have questions or are interested in joining contact Jo Brooks, pilgrimage coordinator at river@kairosearth.org as soon as possible. For more information Click here.

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**06/8 - A Celebration of The Holy Spirit through Fire.** All are invited to attend an informal multi-parish and interfaith prayer service planned by the southern parishes of the North Central Region of ECCT in honor of Pentecost at Trinity Church, Portland on Saturday, June 8 from 6 PM to 8 PM. If the weather is fine, we will eat outside. Bring a lawn chair or blanket for dining al fresco. Bring a dish to share for the potluck. Bring your children. We will have a craft activity and bubbles and s’mores! For more information visit the event page.

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**07/18 - Boundless: A Celtic Vision of the Sacred in All Things with John Philip Newell.** 7 PM - 9 PM at Hartford Seminary. FREE and open to public. Opportunity to hear from John Philip Newell, internationally acclaimed Celtic teacher from Edinburgh and the celebrated author of Listening for the Heartbeat of God: A Celtic Spirituality, as well as founder of the School of Celtic Consciousness. John Philip Newell is one of the most prominent Christian teachers of spirituality in the Western world. For more information click here. This event is co-sponsored by St. John’s, West Hartford.
09/21 - SAVE THE DATE! OUR NEXT CONVOCATION!
Our Fall Convocation will be co-hosted with The Companions in Mission. Our time together will focus on sharing stories about the different ways we are participating in God's Mission locally and abroad. Come and learn about funding opportunities through the Companions grants. Time and location will be announced soon.

For more events and gatherings click here.
Click to SUBMIT AN EVENT

Season of Racial Healing, Justice & Reconciliation:

Opportunity in the SC Region: Undoing Racism Workshops - New Haven: The People's Institute for Survival and Beyond has been offering workshops for the dismantling of racism in the United States since its founding in 1980. They are "a national and international collective anti-racist, multicultural community organizers and educators dedicated to building an effective movement for social transformation."

This year there will be a series of opportunities through the Elm City Undoing Racism Organizing Collective, which is a collaborator with the People's Institute for Survival and Beyond, to participate in these three day workshops. All community leaders are invited to participate (if you're reading this you are a community leader!). Workshops will be offered on: May 30-June 1, September 12-14, November 8-10. These workshops provide one opportunity to lean into the two year focus of Racial Healing, Justice, and Reconciliation...and there are many others being offered across ECCT! Please contact The Rev. Kyle Pedersen (kyle.pedersen@yale.edu) with questions about the workshops through Elm City UROC and check out their website for more information and for an application.

07/13 Walking Tour on the History and Legacy of Slavery and Slave Trading from 9:00 AM to 4:00 PM in the neighborhood of College Hill, Providence RI led by the Center for Reconciliation. Bus departs from Trinity Church, Brooklyn. Sponsored by the Racial Healing, Justice and Reconciliation Ministry Network. Cost $45 per person. For more info. and to register contact Suzy Burke at suzy@alegriaimports.net
* Join the North Central Region Facebook Group, a community bulletin board for the region. This is your place to share parish/community events, photos, videos and more.
* Like and follow the North Central Region Facebook Page. This is where the Leadership Team will post news of upcoming Region events, gatherings, conversations, resources, etc.
* If you want to know what your Region Missionary is up to, like and follow her Facebook Page.

* Subscribe to this Quarterly to have stories from the Region delivered straight to your inbox
* Reach out to your North Central Region Leadership Team members
* Check out the Region Calendar on the ECCT website. Submit your parish events to the Region Calendar here and they will be added to the ECCT Weekly eNews. Be sure to select 'North Central Region' under category.

Please note that all of these links can also be found on the ECCT North Central Region webpage.

Almighty God,

We pray, give us such an awareness of your mercies, that with truly thankful hearts we may show forth your praise, not only with our lips, but in our lives, by giving up ourselves to your service, and by walking before you in holiness and righteousness all our days; through Jesus Christ our Lord, to whom, with you and the Holy Spirit, be honor and glory throughout all ages. Amen.

Excerpt from The General Thanksgiving, BCP p. 101

Would you like your community or event to be included in the next North Central Region Announcements/Quarterly? Contact me, your North Central Region Missionary, and let’s set up a time to chat so that I might hear your story and be a witness to God's work in your community. The next Quarterly will be sent out in August/September.