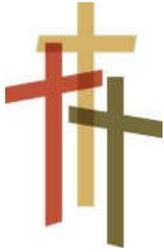
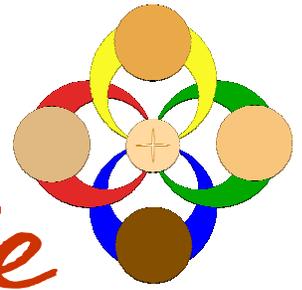


CREATOR

Chronicle



"As a congregation named for our Creator, we are children of the Living God, beloved brothers and sisters of our Lord Jesus Christ, selflessly living out our faith in worship, fellowship, giving, education and outreach."

August 2020

Wisdom in Times of Crisis

Dear Friends,

These are copies of reflections shared during our Wednesday Evening Prayer Services during the months of July and August. They are based on weekly meditations of Fr. Richard Rohr.

Sustained in God's Love

In the light of eternity, we're here for a very short time, really. We're here for one thing, ultimately: to learn how to love, because God is love. Love is our origin, love is our ground, and love is our destiny. — James Finley [anyone who thinks that loving God with all your heart, soul, mind and strength and your neighbor as yourself, is easier than keeping the ten commandments has a lot to learn.]

*Center for Action and Contemplation (CAC) faculty member **James Finley** offers a contemplative practice to help us experience the love of God even in the midst of chaos. Living out of that love transforms both ourselves and the world.*

What is the practice that matters now? A practice is any act habitually entered into with our whole heart that takes us to a deeper spiritual place. Some of these practices, we might not think of as prayer and meditation: tending the roses, a long, slow walk to no place in particular, a quiet moment at day's end, being vulnerable in the presence of that person in whose presence we're taken to the deeper place, the pause between two lines of a poem. There are these acts that reground us in the depth dimensions of our life that matter most; so, if we're faithful to our practice, our practice will be faithful to us. ...

In this contemplative practice, sit and renew your awareness that you're sitting in the presence of God all about you and within you. As you inhale, *inhale God's* silent "*I love you,*" in which God is being poured out and utterly given away to you as the miracle of your very life.

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Rev. Robert M. Blanton, Priest-In-Charge * office hours: Monday—Thursday, 9:00 a.m. — 12:00 p.m.

Please call the church office, 601-924-2261, to schedule an appointment.

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Then when you *exhale*, exhale *yourself* in love: "*I love you.*" And so, we are breathing [along with God], "I love you. I love you. I love you. I love you." From the reciprocity of love, destiny is fulfilled, and the foundations of suffering are healed.

As we sit this way, suffering arises. The suffering then might be our *anxiety* and concerns today, for ourselves, for our loved ones, for the world. As we sit in the midst of the arising of the anxiety, when we *inhale*, we inhale this love of *God loving us* through and through, *anxiety and all*, finding no hindrance in our anxiety, loving us so unexplainably forever. Then when we *exhale*, we exhale *ourselves in love, anxiety and all*, to the love that loves us. This requires gentle perseverance, because anxiety arises again. It doesn't automatically go away. We sit with it, we lean into it again, and we hold fast to this love that sustains us in the midst of things. It is in this way, little by little, that we come to understand the unsubstantiality of everything but love. Love and love alone has the authority to name who we are.

This practice, then, experientially grounds us in this love wisdom. This love wisdom—grounded in practice—empowers us to go out and share this with other people in the circumstances in which we find ourselves.

The Wisdom of Job

Theology does not by itself provide wisdom in crisis. All theology must become a living spirituality to really change us or the world. *It's disappointing that we Christians have emphasized theology, catechism, and religious education much more than prayer and practice.* The biblical book of Job is probably one of the greatest books on prayer that has ever been written. It breaks our stereotypes of what it means to communicate with God.

If we view Job's story as a journey into an ever-deepening encounter with God, we keep the question of suffering from becoming an abstract debate observed at a distance. It is a text that only fully makes sense to those who've felt suffering, been up against the wall, at a place where, frankly, God doesn't make sense anymore and we no longer believe "God has a plan."

Job loses his livelihood, his savings, his family, and his health. His practical, religious friends appear as self-appointed messengers, to speak what they are sure is God's answer to Job's suffering. They offer the glib, pious platitudes of stereotypical clergy. What they do is try to take away the mystery, but they cannot solve the problem. God says you cannot solve the problem of suffering, you can only live the mystery. The only response to God's faithfulness is to be faithful ourselves.

Most of the things Job says to God in his pain are not what Christians have been trained to say to God. The pretty words are mostly gone; there's no "swirly talk," as writer-pastor **Molly Baskette** calls it [1], that Christians so love to put in their prayers. Instead, Job dares to confront God, the very thing many of us were trained never to do. In fact, we called it blasphemy.

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During Job's crisis, he yells at God, accuses God of all kinds of things, speaks sarcastically, and almost makes fun of God. "If this is a game you're playing, then you're not much of a God! I don't need you and I don't want you!" *It's this kind of prayer that creates saints.* Yet we can't pray with that authority unless we know something experientially about God. We can't pray that way unless we are assured at a deep level of the profound connection between ourselves and God. It takes one who has ventured into that arena where we say angels fear to tread.

Ultimately Job's story reveals that God cannot really be known through theology and law. *God can only be related to and known in relationship*, just like the Trinity itself. Or, as the mystics assert, we know God by loving God, trusting God, and placing our hope in God. We cannot really "think" God.

Job's religious friends and advisers have correct theory but no experience; thoughts about God, but no love of God. *I am reminded of The chorus to The Hedgehog Song by The Incredible String Band:*

Oh, you know all the words, and you sung all the notes,
But you never quite learned the song, she sang.
I can tell by the sadness in your eyes,
That you never quite learned the song.

[Job's Friends] believe in their theology; Job believes in the God of their theology. It is a big difference. The first is information; the second is wisdom.

Dying Before We Die

CAC faculty member [and our teacher] **Cynthia Bourgeault** addresses a fear that motivates all of us on some level – *the fear of death*. It is a matter of true wisdom to know how to face death wisely and courageously, which is why every religion and culture since the beginning of time has tried to "make sense" of it in some way. From her home off the coast of Maine, Cynthia shares these words, which come from the very heart of the Christian tradition.

What is the wisdom that matters now? For me, it's the *Paschal Mystery* [the passion, death, resurrection, and ascension of Jesus the Christ]. ... Simply, *the one who would save his life, or her life will lose it and the one who's willing to lose it, will save it*. In all great religious traditions, this is the eye of the needle. Everything that's good, everything that's abiding, everything that's worthy, everything that's generative about a human being arises on the other side of our fear of death. ... The whole tradition we've had of "dying before you die" sounds like martyrdom from the outside, but what you really discover is, it's *the gateway to freedom*.

Jesus, within our own Christian path, not only tried to point toward what this *new life* is, but he also took us there and left us with the promise that he will energize this new life ... that through us he will carry this new life on. Jesus promises to walk alongside any one of us who summons from within the courage necessary to gird up our loins and *die before we die* is not left standing alone. It's on the other edge of dying to our limited preconceptions of what life is all about that we are opened

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up to courage, compassion, and generosity – this is where the *Paschal Mystery* really begins to come alive for us.

The values that are called the *fruits of the Spirit* by **St. Paul** – *gentleness* and *peace* and *forbearance*, *compassion*, *love*, *joy* – these are transformed ways of life that begin to mature on the other side of the human *being not afraid to die*. We can find and collectively draw on those wonderful gifts. But it requires a personal willingness (as the old monks in the desert said), to “sit in your cell and ponder the hour of your death” until you’ve really worked through your system what this promise means: “Whether we live or die, we are the Lord’s” [Romans 14:8]. ... When that saying moves from something nice we recite on Sundays to something we know in the marrow of our bones, then we walk out into the world as a vessel of *love* and nothing can touch us.

To the extent that we live our life from the heart now with utter integrity, death proves to be no interruption to identity. ... Who we are is held in the love of God from before time; and as we lean into that now in life and taste it, we’ll be prepared to really see death as the fullness of being and not as the lessening of it.

As **Khalil Gibran** writes in his poem “*FEAR*”

It is said that before entering the sea, a river trembles with fear.

She looks back at the path she has travelled, from the peaks of the mountains, the long winding road crossing forests and villages.

And in front of her, she sees an ocean so vast, that to enter there seems nothing more than to disappear forever. But there is no other way.

The river cannot go back.

Nobody can go back.

To go back is impossible in existence.

The river needs to take the risk of entering the ocean, because only then will fear disappear, because that's where the river will know it's not about disappearing into the ocean, but of becoming the ocean.

Our Spiritual Health

Brian McLaren, a member of the Center for Action and Contemplation Living School faculty, reminds us why it matters that we pay attention to our health, not only physically but spiritually and ethically as well.

In these challenging, difficult times, we are discovering a wisdom that we needed all along, and that wisdom is that *we are all connected. We are not separate. We used to think that we caught diseases as individuals: "I'm sick; you're not." But now we realize, no, we catch diseases as individuals who are part of*

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of families, and families who are part of cities, and cities that are part of states and nations. We realize now that our whole species can become infected, and that our whole globe can be changed because of our interconnectedness. ...

Maybe this is also an opportunity for us to become enlightened about some other viruses that have been spreading and causing even greater damage, without being acknowledged: **social and spiritual viruses** that spread among us from individual to individual, from generation to generation, and are not named. We don't organize against them, and so they continue to spread and cause all kinds of sickness [and death]. Social and spiritual viruses like racism, white supremacy, human supremacy, Christian supremacy, any kind of hostility that is spread, based on prejudice and fear.

What would happen if we said, as passionate as we are about being tested for coronavirus, we all wanted to test ourselves for these social and spiritual viruses that could be lurking inside of us? And then, when I come into your presence, I, in some way, inflict this virus on you. I make you suffer. What an awesome opportunity for us to say and begin to pray that we would be healed and cleansed, not just of a physical virus, but of these other invisible viruses that are such a huge and devastating part of human history. ...

In this pandemic, many of us are nostalgic for the old normal. We want to get back to our favorite coffee shop, our favorite restaurant, our church service. And of course, there's nothing wrong with so many of those desires for the old normal. But I'd like to make a proposal. If we are wise in this time, we will not go back unthinkingly to the old normal. There were problems with that old normal many of us weren't aware of.

The old normal, when you look at it from today's perspective, was not so great, not something to be nostalgic about, without also being deeply critical of it. As we experience discomfort in this time, let's begin to dream of a new normal, a new normal that addresses the weaknesses and problems [and dividedness] that were going unaddressed in the old normal. If we're wise, we won't go back; we'll go forward.

Social Renewal as Spiritual Practice

CAC Faculty member Dr. Barbara Holmes points us to the interwoven nature of love—love of God, of self, and of neighbor. We cannot keep the Great Commandment without fully engaging in all three. In her wisdom, she sees this time of crisis as an opportunity for a great re-imagining of our society and how it might function for the good of all. Barbara says:

The practice I'm focusing on is self-love and love of neighbor. We tend not to be very good at either one, but during this time of isolation, we have equal opportunities to rest and to heal, to love and be loved. ...

For me a spiritual practice that matters includes social renewal. ***Instead of blaming others about the state of our union, instead of blaming one political party or another, we actually can reflect on our***

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own complicity and support of systems that abandoned the poor, warehoused our children in failing schools, and failed to provide adequate health care, even under normal circumstances. As a spiritual practice, we can wake up to the possibility of building a *new order*. We can improvise those possibilities; try them out in the creative microcosm of a shared public life, realizing that our way of life before the pandemic was not perfect. It could be improved so that all members of the society thrive. We've received reports that COVID-19 is disproportionately impacting communities of color. There are many reasons for this outcome, including the fact that people of color often have chronic health problems that make them particularly vulnerable to the disease as a result of poverty, poor or nonexistent health care, and economic disparities.

We should reconsider the contours of our national social contract. Our social and economic systems work on a zero-sum game where there are winners and losers. It didn't have to be that way. *We have the opportunity to restructure society, so it works as well for the have-nots and the almost-haves as well as it does for the wealthy.* Do we really want a society organized to support the rich with the toiling of an underclass of marginalized laborers? Do we believe that it is every man, every woman for themselves, or do we want a society safety net for those who have fewer options and fewer resources?

From an article I wrote titled "*Still on the Journey,*" I believe that as a spiritual practice we can imagine and create "*a political system responsive to the people and respectful of global neighbors, a health system that is comprehensive in scope and not profit driven, an educational system shaped by innovation, improvisation, technology, and practicality.*" [1] The pandemic [and widespread demonstrations for Black Lives] have lifted the veil from our eyes.

Can we be honest now about what is not working? Can we re-envision new options? I believe that we can, if we want to.

[And so do I]

Yours in Christ,

Pastor Bob

A Message from Deborah Runyan

August 2020

Dear Creator Family,

All of us have been impacted by the Coronavirus, but none as much as minorities, the poor, and our immigrant families. Earlier in the year, we began conversations about ways in which Creator could assist the families impacted by ICE raids. All of our plans, and outreach, came to a screeching halt before we could get started because of COVID. The needs of the people still exist.

We can provide assistance to this group by purchasing gift cards to Walmart, Target, Kroger, etc. With the support of the Creator Vestry and Pastor Bob, I am reaching out to you to ask for monetary gifts in any amount that you feel moved to donate. The monies will be combined and gift cards of \$25 or \$50 will be purchased and provided to the Canton Hispanic Families that were targeted by ICE. Currently, there are 50 families that are being supported.

If you wish to participate, please mail or drop off your donation to the church. Write ***ICE Gift Cards*** on the Memo line. Thank you very much.

Love in Christ,

Deborah Runyan



Healing Service and Prime Timers

Out for the summer. See you in September!

10:30 Sunday Zoom Service

We will gather on Zoom at 10:00 prior to worship for an opportunity for everyone to "Share the Peace." Anyone who wishes to be tutored in connecting to Zoom, please call me at 601-291-0652 and I will walk you through it.

Keep the Faith. In Christ we will survive. In Christ we will Thrive.

Yours in Christ,

Pastor Bob



Come and Join Us!

Monthly Church Work Day

Saturday, August 15 (8-12 am)

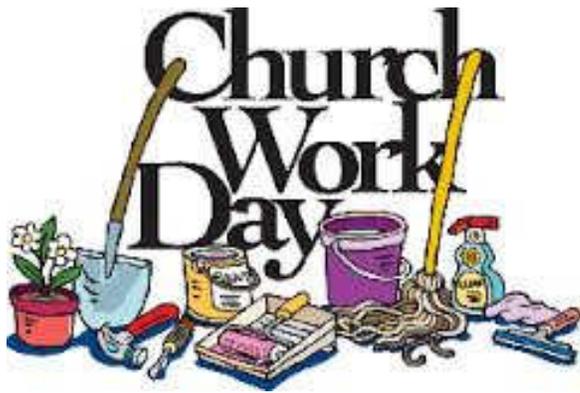
There is a lot going on and we could really use some extra hands! See "Workday List" in the newsletter for specific tasks that need attention.



FOOD PANTRY SUNDAY

(3rd Sunday each month)

When you are grocery shopping, please remember to pick up some extra, non-perishable food goods and bring them to church the next time you come. We will be continuing this outreach ministry each month on the third Sunday each month, so mark the dates on your calendar.



Workday List

We are continuing the 3rd Saturday of the month Creator Workdays. The following is a list of things that need to be done most workdays. There are tasks that can be done individually, so if you cannot make it to a work day then please feel free to work on list items when you can.

Inside projects

- Clean up pantry, storage closets, and storage rooms in education building and Parrish hall.
- Cleaning scuff marks from walls in Nave and Education building.
- Clean window sills of cobwebs, etc.
- Any general sorting or reorganizing in sacristy, narthex, kitchen, Ed. Building foyer, classrooms, attic, etc.

Outside Projects

- Check trash cans and place at road if they need to be emptied. Garbage days are Wednesday and Saturday. Recycling is on Wednesday.
- Blowing off sidewalks and parking lots.
- Hedge trimming, trim plants in front of parish hall.
- Burn leaf pile near education building.
- Picking up trash and limbs in front of church and near road.
- Weed beds around church buildings as needed.
- Clean debris out under foot bridge and culverts.
- Treat, pull, or round up any weeds or trees in drainage ditches.
- Clean up playground area.
- Pick up limbs behind church and place in burn pile.

Contact Beth if you have any questions or additions or would like to form a grounds committee.

Thanks, Rhea Estes



Vestry Digest

June 22, 2020

Present: Pastor Bob Blanton, Priest-in-Charge, Rhea Estes, Senior Warden, Ross Turner, Isabel Mills, Jennifer Duncan, Tommy Mills, Treasurer, Dianne Martin, Clerk of the Vestry

Absent: John Lanford

Visitor:

Treasurer Report

Tommy noted that we are in the best shape we have been in a long time due to the PPP loan and many parishioners keeping their pledges up. Budget reserve is 3 ½ months. The money for scouts is in the general fund as a credit. Tommy and Bob will talk to Beth about the scout money needing to be in the restricted fund rather than in the general fund.

Junior Warden Report

The lawn cutting went well. Jason McCorry of Trusting and Affordable Tree Service and Lawn Care brought his lawn mower and several other people came. Jason donated some of his time and charged only \$50.00 for mowing with no edging. We would like to have him continue mowing in a similar manner twice a month at \$100 each time during the grass growing season. The next scheduled workday is the third Saturday in July.

Old Business

There is one remaining door on the church building that needs to have the lock changed. Beth has the new keys.

Vestry Minutes *continued on next page*

New Business

There is a dead tree at the corner of the parish hall near the wooden barrier by the ditch. Rhea will get bids again. We may be able to have the wood milled for use in a bridge we want to build. Ross moved and Jennifer seconded that, if Jason McCorry's bid is comparable, we will take his bid as he has done good work for us before. The motion passed. Rhea will ask Jason about bush hogging as well.

Deborah Runyan has communicated to Rhea that the ministry to help families impacted by the ICE raids needs such things as Home Depot cards and Walmart cards rather than volunteer work at this time. Grace church in Canton and Northside Baptist in Clinton are contributing. Rhea will ask Deborah to write up a proposal for asking parishioners to donate toward this cause and Bob will communicate this to the congregation.

The vestry meeting was adjourned at 7:02 pm.

Minutes of vestry meetings may be found on the bulletin board outside the administrator's office following their approval and correction if needed. If you would like a copy, please call the office and a copy will be provided to you via email.



Vestry Digest

July 27, 2020

Present: Pastor Bob Blanton, Priest-in-Charge, Rhea Estes, Senior Warden, Ross Turner, Isabel Mills, Jennifer Duncan, John Lanford, Tommy Mills, Treasurer, Dianne Martin, Clerk of the Vestry

Absent:

Visitor:

Call to Order: Rhea called the meeting to order with prayer at 6:35 p.m.

Ross made a motion to accept June meeting minutes. Isabel seconded. The motion passed.

Treasurer Report

- Tommy noted that we are holding our own. However, expenses in June exceeded revenue by \$539.00.
- We have a budget reserve of 3.39 months available funds.
- Rhea said that the PPP loan was for expenses for 2.25 months so we have spent the loan money or are close to having spent it. We are in process of having the loan forgiven.
- Amanda Meyer has submitted an unemployment claim. Bob and Beth are handling that situation.

Junior Warden Report

- Jason McCorry of Trusting and Affordable Tree Service and Lawn Care has cut down the dead tree at the corner of the parish hall and charged \$550 to do so.
- We will ask Jason to mow every other week while the grass is still growing so fast.
- We have options for mowing the side yard – Jason could do it for \$30 or \$40 or Mike Milone may do it if someone is able to transport his mower to the church.

Vestry Minutes *continued on next page*

Old Business

- Deborah Runyan has sent a proposal to Bob for asking parishioners to donate toward the ministry to help families impacted by the ICE raids.
- Bob will communicate this information to the congregation.

New Business

- The scanner will be fixed this week.
- We need to pay the annual fee for Microsoft 365 – it will cost less than \$200.
- The fall festival is cancelled for this year due to coronavirus.
- We will sorely miss Rhea and Larry as they are moving to Tennessee probably at the end of August. Until we find a senior warden and junior warden, Beth will attend to tasks that would usually fall to the wardens except that Bob will preside over the vestry meetings.
- We will need to find a chair for the altar guild since Rhea and Larry have been heading up the altar guild.
- The vestry meeting was adjourned at 7:05 pm.

Minutes of vestry meetings may be found on the bulletin board outside the administrator's office following their approval and correction if needed. If you would like a copy, please call the office and a copy will be provided to you via email.



August, 2020

The Episcopal Church of the Creator

Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
						1 5 pm: AA / AI-Anon Meeting
2 10:30 am: Zoom: Healing Service 6:00 pm: Zoom: Safe Harbor Back to school Blessing	3 7:30 pm: DOA—Big Book Group	4 12:00 pm: AA Meeting	5 6:30 pm: Zoom: Evening Prayer 7:00 pm: Men's AA Group	6 12:00 pm: AA Meeting	7	8 5 pm: AA / AI-Anon Meeting
9 10:30 am: Zoom: Healing Service 6:00 pm: Zoom: Safe Harbor FOOD PANTRY for the 4 C's	10 7:30 pm: DOA—Big Book Group	11 12:00 pm: AA Meeting	12 6:30 pm: Zoom: Evening Prayer 7:00 pm: Men's AA Group	13 12:00 pm: AA Meeting	14	15 5 pm: AA / AI-Anon Meeting Church Work Day 8am-12pm
16 10:30 am: Zoom: Healing Service 6:00 pm: Zoom: Safe Harbor	17 6:30 pm: Vestry 7:30 pm: DOA—Big Book Group	18 12:00 pm: AA Meeting	19 6:30 pm: Zoom: Evening Prayer 7:00 pm: Men's AA Group	20 12:00 pm: AA Meeting	21	22 5 pm: AA / AI-Anon Meeting
23 10:30 am: Zoom: Healing Service 6:00 pm: Zoom: Safe Harbor	24 7:30 pm: DOA—Big Book Group	25 12:00 pm: AA Meeting	26 6:30 pm: Zoom: Evening Prayer 7:00 pm: Men's AA Group	27 12:00 pm: AA Meeting	28	29 5 pm: AA / AI-Anon Meeting
30 10:30 am: Zoom: Healing Service 6:00 pm: Zoom: Safe Harbor	31 7:30 pm: DOA—Big Book Group					

Episcopal Church of the Creator

Church Office Hours:

9:00 am—2 pm, Monday—Thursday

Presiding Bishop

The Most Reverend Michael Curry

Bishop

The Very Reverend Brian Seage

Priest-In-Charge

The Reverend Robert M. Blanton

Administrator

Beth Braley

theepiscopalchurchofthecreator@gmail.com

Choir Director

Vacant

Senior Warden

Rhea Estes, 601-813-3863

Junior Warden

Vacant

Treasurer

Tommy Mills, 601-259-5333

Vestry

Ross Turner, 601-214-2484

John Lanford, 601-708-4374

Dianne Martin, 601-906-5086

Isabel Mills, 601-954-3769

Jennifer Duncan, 601-850-6353

Contacts

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Administrator—Beth Braley, 601-924-2261

Email: theepiscopalchurchofthecreator@gmail.com

Pastoral Emergencies

Rev. Robert M. Blanton, Cell: 601-291-0652

Polly Marshall, Cell: 601-953-2980

Acolytes

Mike Milone, Cell: 601-473-6305

Adult Christian Education

Rev. Robert M. Blanton, Cell: 601-291-0652

Altar Guild

Larry & Rhea Estes, Cell: 601-813-3859

Choir

Vacant

Children's Christian Education

John Lanford, Cell: 601-966-3441

Columbarium

Wendy Brantley, Cell: 601-954-3946

Flower Guild

Becky Wright, Cell: 601-940-4861

Funeral Guild

Vacant

Parish Lunches & Special Events

Andrew Wilder, 601-842-0058

Doug George, 601-502-5063

Cubmaster

Mike Milone, Cell: 601-473-6305

Wedding Coordinator

Vacant



Episcopal Church of the Creator
1445 Clinton-Raymond Rd.
Clinton, MS 39056

*We are part of the Worldwide Anglican Communion and in communion with the
Archbishop of Canterbury.*

“We are a congregation of the Episcopal Diocese of Mississippi: One church in mission, inviting, transforming, and reconciling. We seek to serve Christ in all persons and to respect the dignity of every human being.”