

# Dayspring

The Newspaper of the Episcopal Diocese of West Virginia



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## Diocesan Convention Set to Welcome South African Archbishop

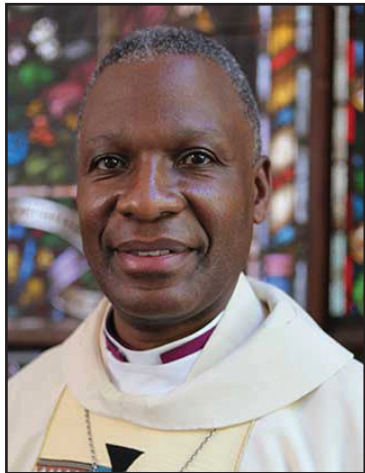
By Linda S. Comins

The Most Rev. Dr. Thabo Makgoba and his wife, Lungelwa Manona, from South Africa will be honored guests at the 146th Diocesan Convention in Martinsburg Oct. 26-28.

Archbishop Thabo will offer the keynote address on the convention theme, "Grow in Christ." He will speak during the Diocesan Banquet on Friday, Oct. 27.

He has served as the Archbishop of Cape Town and the Metropolitan of the Anglican Province of Southern Africa, one of the fastest-growing provinces in the Anglican Communion, since January 2008. He is the youngest person elected to this office, which was held by Archbishop Desmond Tutu from 1986-1996.

The Rt. Rev. Matthew Cowden, Bishop of the Episcopal Diocese of West Virginia, said, "This is an excellent opportunity for West Virginia to expand our international, Anglican relationships and to better understand the challenges and similarities that both of our unique territories and people face. Archbishop Thabo is leading the way in evangelism and Church growth in South Africa and his witness to Jesus Christ will help us set the tone



for growing in Christ in our own diocese."

Another highlight of the Diocesan Convention will be the ordination of eight people to the transitional diaconate. The number of candidates is unprecedented in the diocese's recent history.

Chosen to be ordained as deacons are Scott Williams, Martina "Marti" Steiner Unger, Marilou McClung, Andy Bird, Klara Kovacs, Amelia "Amy" Yates McClure, William "Bill" Sigler and D. Aaron Carr.

The Holiday Inn in Martinsburg will serve as the convention headquarters.

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## Peterkin Summer Growth 'Rooted in Christ'



During Alpha Camp at Peterkin, biologist Bruce Edinger from St. Matthew's Parish, Wheeling, led nature hikes and taught campers about the natural world of the forest and the creek.

By Diane Cormack

Sitting in a rocking chair on the front porch of Gravatt with a cup of hot coffee is a perfect time and space for reflection.

It is early in the morning. The mist over the South Branch of the Potomac River is rising to the ridgeline high above, and a family of red foxes are crossing the field. The only sounds are those of nature. It is peaceful.

In many ways, there is so much to celebrate. After Peterkin being shuttered for three years, we were able to open camp, welcoming campers and visitors back to Peterkin at long last.

There is no way adequately to express gratitude for the hard work of so many staff, volunteers, employees and supporters to achieve this goal. People gave with incredible generosity, both their time and resources. We were blessed to have Bishop Matthew and Melissa Cowden in residence. Their presence was a sign of hope, healing and encouragement for all.

The theme for the summer was "Rooted in Christ," a reflection of the core values adopted by the Peterkin Leadership Team. The formation program focused on prayer, community, gratitude, joy

and service.

Campers had amazing formation experiences: worship indoors and outdoors, gratitude hikes, making prayer beads, celebrating creation with a master naturalist, joyfully leaping through bubbles, and thoughtful discussions guided by Christ. We experienced faith expressed in words, music, drama and art.

Long-standing friendships were renewed and strengthened; new friendships were forged, and our community of fellowship strengthened.

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## Cormack Chosen as Peterkin Executive Director



Jim Cormack has been called as the new executive director of Peterkin Camp & Conference Center in Romney.

He assumed the directorship on Sept. 11, succeeding Daisy McBride, who retired as Peterkin director after the 2023 camp season concluded. She served at Peterkin for the past three decades.

"We're thankful for the many ways Daisy has served Peterkin and the diocese for so many years," Bishop Matthew Cowden said.

In announcing Cormack's appointment, Bishop Cowden said, "Jim comes to Peterkin following 35 years in the electrical engineer-

ing field and brings a wealth of knowledge, skill and experience in project management; he also brings a deep love of Peterkin and vision for the vital role that camp and conference ministry can play in the lives of participants and in the life of the diocese.

"Jim's experience in project management equips him to address facilities projects and improvements, to work collaboratively to retool Peterkin's programming, and to build lasting relationships between Peterkin and other members of the Diocese of West Virginia."

The bishop also thanked Julia Yuhasz, chair of the search com-

mittee, and the search committee for their time spent reviewing applications and interviewing candidates this summer.

Cormack, a native of St. Albans, attended St. Mark's Episcopal Church, where he was active as an acolyte and in youth group. He attended Peterkin as a senior camper from 1981-83 and served as a counselor in 1984.

He graduated from Virginia Tech in 1988 with a degree in electrical engineering. He worked for what is now FirstEnergy, holding a variety of operational, financial, strategic and leadership positions in Winchester, Va., Greensburg, Pa., and Fairmont. He retired

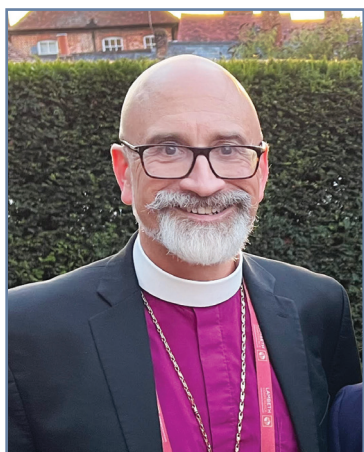
from FirstEnergy on Sept. 1.

His wife Diane works in the Harrison County school system. Their daughter Abby lives in Morgantown, where she manages a coffee shop.

During the past two decades, Cormack and his family attended Family Camp, and he served on several Intermediate and Senior Camp program staffs during that time. He has life-long connections with current and former campers and staff members.

Cormack looks forward to helping others find their place in the ever-growing community of faith that Peterkin fosters.

## All Things New: Celebrating Our First Full Year Together



As we approach our annual Convention and the one-year anniversary this month of my ministry among you as your Diocesan Bishop, I cannot help but reflect on four new developments during this first year together.

From reopening Peterkin to expanding communications, from a slew of ordinations to the launch of our Congregational Development program, we have begun to take our first steps in this new chapter, and I am most grateful for your prayerful engagement.

You took the invitation to pray seriously, and the Holy Spirit has produced much good fruit among us. As faithful Episcopalians, your prayers, patience, and perseverance have helped us to try new things, pioneer new spiritual territory, and to listen more deeply to all that God is calling through us for the years ahead.

Re-opening Peterkin with summer camp, hiring a new director, and beginning the rehabilitation of Peterkin's vision and facilities has been a significant undertaking during this first year. The time that Melissa and I spent there in residence this summer taught us much about the history and the heartbeat of our life together in West Virginia.

The gift of this land, this place, this people, and Peterkin's rich history for raising up youth and forming adults with a royal introduction to Jesus Christ is a lasting gift and legacy to the diocese and to the wider Church. Summer camp for youth is our signature Peterkin ministry, but it is not even close to fulfilling all that we are being called to do on this holy ground.

As a place of holy pilgrimage, we are called to make Peterkin available year-round, open for pilgrimage, retreats, conferences, and festivals. Imagine a place to hold vestry, choir or congregation retreats; imagine a refuge for solitude and personal time away from the busy world; imagine an annual Christian music and noted speaker festival with an Appalachian arts fair.

Our new executive director, Jim Cormack, will be shepherding this ministry for us over the next couple of years as we realign the property and programming for the board's growing vision in re-developing Peterkin.

I continue to hear that the expansion of our communications, especially online communications, has been a welcome transformation in the life of the diocese. I am grateful for the new ministry of the Rev. Canon Jordan Trumble on diocesan staff this year. Her focus and oversight on all our communications is helping to keep us connected, informed, and engaged.

"Communications" is, however, just a more business-like word for the deeper work and ministry that is really best expressed by the more biblical word: Evangelism. Hearing the words of communication in the Church are always meant to convey the Word, Je-

sus Christ, in the building of his Body, the Church.

I am grateful that Canon Trumble not only "gets" this ministry as evangelism, but also administers it in our diocesan communications with great aplomb. The main website of the diocese and the websites of our three primary ministries (Peterkin, HEP and Sandscrest), plus our print media are all still very much in the process of ongoing growth and transformation. There is more evolution in our communications yet to come.

We are, however, already seeing an increase in diocesan engagement and connectivity through the new website and e-news. If, by the way, you haven't been receiving our diocesan news in your email inbox, please look on the website or contact the office to make sure you are getting the latest updates about events, programs, and offerings for Episcopalians around the state. We plan to do a communications drive at Convention when we are together in Martinsburg at the end of the month.

Ordinations will be the capstone of our Diocesan Convention on Saturday morning and are a significant hallmark of this first year together as your Diocesan Bishop. By the time we arrive at Christmas, we will have celebrated the ordinations of 12 newly ordained ministers in the life of the diocese: eight as transitional deacons at Convention and four to the priesthood over the course of this year. Some are relatively new to the diocese, and many have been in process for quite some time.

During the first years of their episcopate, most new bishops put a long pause on ordinations while they retool the ordination process. We could not afford to do that here in West Virginia and it wouldn't be fair or properly following the call of the Holy Spirit to place a pause on ordinations here in my early years.

In which case, I am grateful to our ordinands who have been patient and flexible while I have been retooling and updating the process even while they have been going through it; building the plane while flying it, as we say. The gift of their sacramental ministry and service to The Episcopal Church in the Mountain State will help us to feed the greater flock in our charge and will reap great fruit for many years to come.

Grow Church: Diocesan Church

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Development Institute (DCDI), our diocese-wide Congregational Development ministry program, launched this fall with our first meeting in Charleston. Here in our first Grow Church: DCDI class, we have over two dozen lay and clergy from around the state and from almost a dozen congregations.

Cohorts meet with trained DCDI facilitators four times a year for two years. They learn about best practices in growing their churches; spiritually, functionally, and in the pews. Participants are learning how to examine the community within the walls of their church and beyond it, and about making connections.

Depending on the needs of each congregation, participants engage in experiments in their home congregations, implementing what they learn in the program. Most importantly, they make relationships with fellow Episcopalians from around the diocese and discover how much we have in common, the resources that we can share with one another, and how much stronger we are together.


It's not too late to join this first cohort, but there will be a make-up class on Zoom for those who jump in now. The natural entry point for each new cohort will

begin each fall, so beginning next fall is good, too.

As we approach our new year in this new chapter in the diocese together, I am grateful for your willingness and prayerful engagement in embracing all things new. From annual Convention to Advent, from Christmas to Easter, and from to Ascension to Pentecost, Jesus Christ, through the gift of the Holy Spirit, continues to meet us where we are in our year and continues to call us to go and grow farther than we could ask or imagine. Thank you for your ongoing prayers, for your own personal transformation in Christ, and for being part of this new chapter in the life of our diocese.

 **The Right Reverend  
Matthew D. Cowden  
VIII Bishop**





## Reminder


DIOCESAN YOUTH COUNCIL MEETING

Who: All current 7th-12th graders in the Diocese of WV

Where: In person at Diocesan Convention and on Zoom

When: Friday, October 27 at 5:00pm

For more information, including the Zoom link,  
contact Canon Catherine Saxe at [csaxe@wvdiocese.org](mailto:csaxe@wvdiocese.org)



## West Virginians Attend Episcopal Youth Event



Bishop Matthew Cowden joined the three diocesan youth participants, chaplains Andy Bird and Marti Steiner-Unger, and the Rev. John Unger, medical chaplain, at the triennial Episcopal Youth Event, held in July on the campus of the University of Maryland at College Park.

The Diocese of West Virginia was well represented at the 2023 Episcopal Youth Event.

A thousand Episcopalians from all around the world gathered on the campus of the University of Maryland in College Park, Maryland for the triennial event, which was held July 4-8.

The diocese had three youth participants and two adults (Andy Bird and Marti Steiner Unger) attend the event. In addition, Bishop Matthew Cowden and Melissa Cowden joined the participants. The Rev. John Unger served as a medical chaplain.

The theme for this event was "Regreso A Casa: A New Age of Faith." Regreso a Casa translates as homecoming.

The scriptural focus was from the Book of Esther: "For such a time as this."

Bird said, "During EYE we gathered to worship, learn, sing, listen and pray. It was an opportunity to meet the leadership of The Episcopal Church. Presiding Bishop Michael Curry preached a powerful sermon."

Julia Ayala Harris, President of the House of Deputies, gave presentations on The Episcopal Church and led several workshops focused on church governance. A wide range of workshops allowed for diverse offerings based on individual interests.

"We sang old hymns and new songs, we renewed our baptismal covenant, we had a healing service, we played games and trivia," Bird related. "We experienced the love of God!"



Three youth from the Diocese of West Virginia participated in the 2023 Episcopal Youth Event. Traditionally, EYE is held the year before General Convention meets.

Bird said participants were reminded that "God calls ordinary people to do extraordinary things."

Elliott Brown, a youth participant from St. Matthew's, said, "We went to the University of Maryland, College Park, and met people my age from all over the country and even outside the country. I met a lot of bishops from places like New Jersey, El Camino, California and New York."

Brown added, "A few of my favorite things about EYE were the band, the food, and the sermons. I also really enjoyed having Compline outside the dorms at night."

Brown commented, "The most important thing I learned is that I don't have to like everyone, but I have to love them. Bishop Curry taught me that. Love was the theme at EYE – it's The Episcopal Church!"

The highlight of the week, Brown said, was when Bishop Cowden came "to support us."

Brown is already looking forward to the next Episcopal Youth Event in 2026. "Overall, I enjoyed EYE very much and because of where my birthday falls, I can go to the next one with my brother Andy," he said.

## Incarnation Celebrates 140th Anniversary

The Episcopal Church of the Incarnation, Ronceverte, celebrated the 140th anniversary of the consecration of the church on May 7. For anyone preparing for "Jeopardy," that's a quadridecentennial.

In 1878, the Episcopal Church in Ronceverte was part of the Union Church which consisted of congregations of the Baptist, Presbyterian and Episcopal churches. In 1882, the Episcopalians sold their one-third ownership in the Union Church to the Presbyterians. The resulting funds were used to build an Episcopal church in what was then the growing town of Ronceverte.

The Rt. Rev. George Peterkin, first Bishop of the Diocese of West Virginia, consecrated the Chapel of the Incarnation on May 6, 1883. The building was originally located on Ronceverte



Avenue. Special cakes are served at The Episcopal Church of the Incarnation's anniversary festivities.



Members of The Episcopal Church of the Incarnation in Ronceverte assembled on the church lawn to celebrate the 140th anniversary of the church's consecration.

Avenue.

In 1937, the church was moved to its present location on West Main Street to face the recently rerouted Route 219. At that time, a full basement was built, and the sanctuary was remodeled and renovated. In 2015, Incarnation went through a major restoration of the sanctuary.

Throughout its 140 years, the "little white church with the red door" has been an important part of the Ronceverte community.

The Ronceverte Food Pantry originated in the Church of the Incarnation. The church continues to be active in the food bank, supports Gateway Industries, supports Episcopal Relief

and Development, and numerous community nonprofit organizations.

It has opened its doors to recovery programs, a preschool, and scouting groups. Outreach funds have been raised by many dinners, hot dog sales and golf tournaments hosted throughout the years.

Church members strive to live their lives following God's commandments and Incarnation's mission statement, "May our lives mirror our faith in Jesus Christ." Services are held at 9 a.m. on Sunday.

## Diocese Mourns Death of Beloved Mentor

People throughout the diocese continue to mourn the passing of the Rev. Kent Higgins, a beloved mentor and supply priest, who died unexpectedly on March 20.

He is survived by his wife of 51 years, Gail, and their two sons, Michael and Chris.

A Requiem Eucharist was held at St. John's, Charleston, on April 14, with Bishop Matthew Cowden presiding and the Rev. Nancy Martin preaching.

Bishop Cowden said, "Fr. Kent was a Fayetteville native and lifelong Episcopalian who discerned a call to Holy Orders after a long and pioneering career in the cable television and computer fields."

Early in his discernment for Holy Orders, Fr. Kent wrote: "I have always thought that God put me in all the places I have been to do something or to learn something; in other words, for a purpose. Nothing grand or noble necessarily, but nonetheless something real."

Bishop Cowden observed, "He lived out this conviction and his call to the priesthood by serving for the last 16 years as a supply priest for congregations all over the Diocese of West Virginia. Through this work, he built strong relationships with Episcopalians and parishes all over the state and became a beloved mentor to many."

Longtime friend Beth Marquart, a member of St. John's, Charleston, wrote a moving tribute to Fr. Kent in the parish newsletter.



Marquart wrote: "Reading Facebook posts and speaking with people at St. John's, and across the deanery and diocese, it is clear that Kent was our beloved and he loved us fiercely in return. Not in big, overt ways, but steadfastly dropping a thank you here, a blessing there, listening, and with pure deadpan delivery, offering an observation to help lighten the load – or at least poke a hole in it."

She recalled, "Kent and I went through Equipping the Saints together, along with others from across the diocese. We talked about ministry, Rules of Life, roadblocks, discoveries, disappointments, and successes on our journeys. I recall Kent speaking about his call to ordained ministry as a supply priest because he felt his pastoral care skills weren't sufficient to care for a congregation over time."

But, she added, "He actually possessed mad pastoral skills and over the years I witnessed him being swift to love and with all haste being kind, applying both in that delicate balance as supply clergy. Knowing when to

step in, offering a corrective word or cautionary tale, and with equal measure knowing when to step aside.

"Every last one of us basked in the light of his priesthood, with equal measure love and that comment or two keeping us bedded in reality, gladdening the hearts of those with whom he traveled. And it wasn't just me or you or St. John's, but all of us benefiting from Kent's steady, loving, balanced heart."

His early career was in cable television programming and management, which led to software development and marketing, and later to computer network design and management for the state of Florida. He retired as director of information services for Robinson & McElwee PLLC, his brother's law firm in Charleston.

After his ordination to the priesthood, he served churches in West Virginia from 2006 until his death. He was dean of the Kanawha Deanery for several years.

He graduated from Episcopal High School in Alexandria, Va., in 1963. He attended Haverford College for two years and served in the Army for four years. He completed his college education at West Virginia University, receiving a degree in broadcast journalism magna cum laude in 1972.

Memorial donations may be sent to New River Episcopal Ministries, c/o St. Andrew's Episcopal Church, 345 Kelly Avenue, Oak Hill, WV 25901. Funds received will benefit ministries in which he served.

# Peterkin Summer Growth

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It was a time for growth. We made mistakes, and we learned from them. We faced challenges, and we overcame them. We laid the groundwork for a new vision for Peterkin.

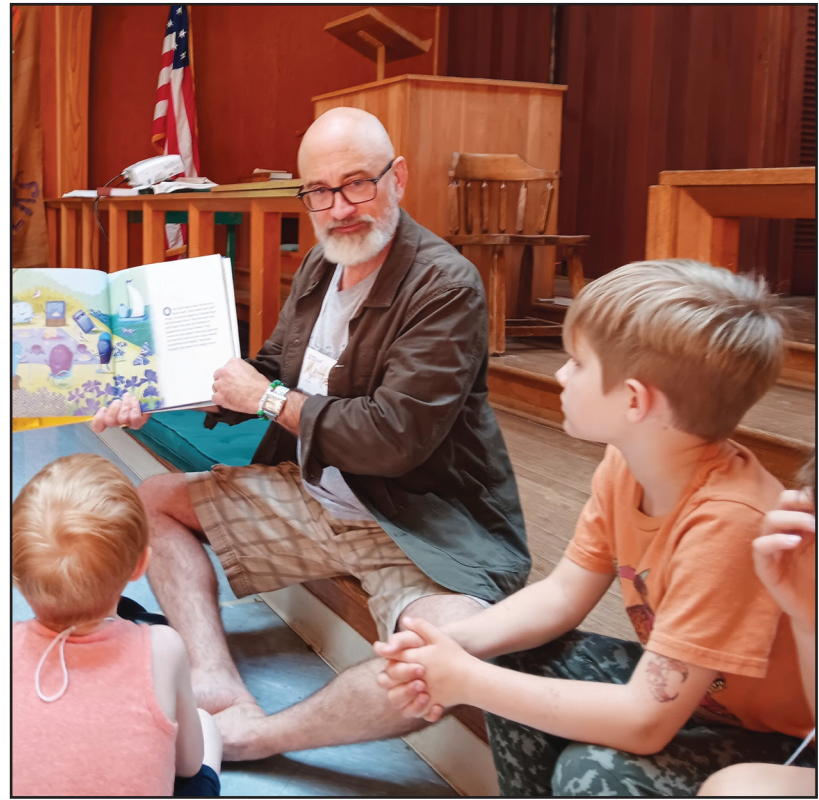
Still anchored by “living under grace,” our hope is for Peterkin to become a place of pilgrimage for all, a place to form God’s people in the wilderness, a place to build the kingdom in the here and now.

As I drove away on my last day in residence, I was overcome with the sense that while we have much work to do, the Holy Spirit waited patiently for us to restore this thin place, this holy ground, and the Holy Spirit is ever-present in Peterkin. Thanks be to God, Alleluia.

*Alleluia*



Making art is fun and messy!



Bishop Matthew Cowden reads to children during Alpha Camp at Peterkin.



Melissa Cowden supervising Alpha Camp.



Outgoing Peterkin Director Daisy McBride has fun with camp summer staff.



Campers climb onto hay bales in the fields on the grounds of Peterkin.



Campers gather, eager to start another activity.



Outgoing Peterkin Director Daisy McBride is honored with a cake for a celebration of her retirement.



Bishop Matthew Cowden and campers model their hand-painted T-shirts.



The Rev. David Johnston distributes the Body of Christ to campers during Holy Eucharist in Strider Chapel at Peterkin.



Campers show the rainbow that they created.

## Diocesan Convention—

►CONTINUED FROM PAGE 1

Events will begin at 5 p.m. Thursday, Oct. 26, with Evening Prayer and opening business at Trinity Church, Martinsburg, the host parish.

Diocesan business will continue throughout the day on Friday, Oct. 27. Bishop Cowden's convention address will be offered at 9 a.m. Friday.

The annual convention will conclude Saturday, Oct. 28, with Holy Eucharist at Trinity. The ordinations will take place during the 10 a.m. service.

The Very Rev. Robert "Bobby" Shives, rector of Trinity, said the church is set up for livestreaming all services. The Thursday evening service and the Saturday morning Eucharist may be viewed on Trinity Martinsburg's Facebook page and YouTube channel.

A highlight of the convention will be worship on Friday at the historic Morgan Chapel, established in 1741 and representing the oldest Episcopal congregation in present-day West Virginia. The current building dates from 1851.

The convention theme, "Grow in Christ," builds upon the 2022 theme, "Abide in Christ. Let Us Pray." Bishop Cowden explained that "this year's theme has emerged from a place of deep abiding and deep prayer."

Bishop Cowden said, "Through prayer, we have heard that we are called to Grow in Christ."

The diocese's special guest, Archbishop Thabo, was ordained in 1990 and served in several cathedral, parish and chaplain roles before becoming Bishop Suffragan of Grahamstown in 2002 and Bishop Diocesan of Grahamstown in 2004.

His ministry has been shaped by his work as a social and climate justice activist and as an education activist. In 2008, then-Archbishop of Canterbury Rowan Williams awarded Archbishop Thabo the St. Augustine's Cross for service to the Anglican Communion.

Archbishop Thabo has served the Anglican Communion in a variety of capacities, including as a member of the design team for Lambeth Conference in 2008 and chair of the Anglican Communion Environmental Network. In the Episcopal Church, he has been awarded honorary degrees from General Theological Seminary, Sewanee; The University of the South and Berkeley Divinity School at Yale.

He is also the author of "Faith and Courage: Praying with Mandela," issued in 2019.

*Linda S. Comins is editor of Dayspring and a member of St. Matthew's, Wheeling.*



Supervises an arts and crafts session during



er day at Peterkin.



ated with hand-painted rocks.

## Bishop Cowden at National Scouts Jamboree

This summer saw the return of the National Scouts Jamboree to the Summit Bechtel Reserve in West Virginia. Thousands of Scouts from around the world gathered in the Mountain State to earn badges, join in fellowship and trade patches. Here, Bishop Matthew Cowden and Mel Chapman of the Episcopal Scouting Group pose for a selfie.



Bishop Matthew Cowden, Mel Chapman of the Episcopal Scouting Group and Canon Chad Slater pose for a selfie at the National Scouts Jamboree in July.



Bishop Matthew Cowden and Canon Chad Slater led hundreds of Episcopal Scouts in the Eucharist on July 23. It was the first gathering of Scouts at the Summit since the pandemic and the youth were glad to be back. This was the largest gathering of Episcopalians in the state that day!



Bishop Matthew Cowden, Canon Chad Slater and Mel Chapman of the Episcopal Scouting Group take a selfie at the Summit Bechtel Reserve.



Bishop Matthew Cowden and a Scout chat during the National Scouts Jamboree at the Summit Bechtel Reserve in West Virginia.

## Lawrencefield Celebrates 60th



Celebrating the 60th anniversary of Lawrencefield Parish's church building in Wheeling are the Rev. Dr. Nancy Woodworth-Hill, rector; the Rt. Rev. Matthew Cowden, bishop of West Virginia; and the Rt. Rev. Franklin Brookhart, retired bishop of Montana and a former rector of Lawrencefield. Another former rector, the Rev. Dr. Cynthia Byers Walter, also attended the weekend celebration.

The Rt. Rev. Matthew Cowden, Bishop of West Virginia, made his first visitation to Lawrencefield Parish Church in Wheeling on April 30 as part of the 60th anniversary celebration of the first service in the present church building.

The Rev. Dr. Nancy Woodworth-Hill, rector of Lawrencefield, described the anniversary celebration as "a time to give thanks for the past, to honor those who helped create the present, and to seek inspiration that will bring us to the still unknown future into which God is calling us."

Lawrencefield was founded as a chapel in 1956 by St. Luke's, Wheeling Island. Land was given

on Table Rock Lane by Mary Singleton Paull in June 1961 for the construction of the church.

Active construction began in April 1961. The church was dedicated in March 1963 by Bishop Wilburn Campbell. The first priest at Lawrencefield, the Rev. W. Carroll Thorn, died in 1988 after serving the church for 31 years.

A 60th anniversary dinner was held at Wheeling Country Club on April 29 as part of the weekend celebration. Former rectors, the Rt. Rev. C. Franklin Brookhart, retired bishop of Montana, and the Rev. Dr. Cynthia Byers Walter, attended the dinner and the Sunday service.

Bishop Cowden officiated and preached at services on Sunday. A festive brunch was served after the 10 a.m. service. During the brunch, a program of pictures of the parish through the years was shown.

Celebration chair Lisa Martin welcomed members and friends. The anniversary committee provided celebration participants and current and former members with mementos of the occasion.



## Deanery News

### Northern Deanery

**ST. THOMAS', Weirton:** Church representatives participated in the Independence Day parade in Weirton.

**LAWRENCEFIELD PARISH CHURCH, Wheeling:** The Vestry has approved a proposal from Solar Holler for installation of solar panels on the church roof. **Barbara Hinkle** was commissioned as the parish's verger after completing a year-long study. **The Rev. Dr. Nancy Woodworth-Hill** dedicated a Paschal candle stand made by parishioner **David Duymich** in honor of the Duymich children and a new Paschal candle given in honor of the Duymich grandchildren. OWL (Outside the Walls of Lawrencefield) donations were made to the Appalachian Water Project, Wheeling Health Right and the Gabriel Project. Students, teachers and backpacks were blessed. An indoor yard sale was held. A holiday picnic and fireworks viewing party was held on the church patio for parishioners and guests from St. Matthew's, Wheeling. A World Labyrinth Day workshop was offered.

**ST. MATTHEW'S, Wheeling:** In partnership with the Wheeling Symphony, WSO on the Go yoga sessions are being offered monthly. Taizé prayer services are held monthly in St. John's Chapel on the parish's Churchfield campus. During the summer, Compline was conducted on the lawn at Churchfield. Vacation Bible School was held on the Churchfield campus. **The Rev. Canon Timothy Dombek** from the Diocese of Arizona

conducted stewardship workshops for St. Matthew's and the diocese in September. The popular Independence Day Extravaganza featured organist **Robert Troeger** and singers **Sue Pettit** and **Edward Washington II** and raised funds for Faith in Action Caregivers. Troeger, the **Rev. Richard Skaggs** and **Jessica Beckett** presented a prayer retreat for the parish choir at Sandscree. **Bruce Edinger** gave a presentation on the spirituality of John Muir. **The Rev. Dr. Bonnie Thurston** led a Lenten retreat. Youth from St. Matthew's and from Episcopal churches in Indiana and Tennessee participated in Mission: Serve, an urban mission experience held in Wheeling in June; **Gladys Mitch** served as local coordinator and liaison for the week-long project.

### Ohio Valley Deanery

**ST. ANN'S, New Martinsville:** **Clyde** and **Debby Hadley** represented the church at a breakfast for donors and scholarship recipients given by the West Virginia Northern Community College Foundation. **Kelsey Kolinski**, a scholarship recipient who graduated in December 2022 with a degree in criminal justice, is employed by the state Department of Health and Human Resources, placing children with foster and adoptive families. St. Ann's funds two scholarships annually for WVNCC students. Kolinski embodies the mission of St. Ann's to give back to the community, especially in support of children.

**TRINITY, Parkersburg:** The annual book sale took place on Oct. 4-7. A talent show was on Oct. 18. **Bree Fleming** has been hired as director of religious education; she is completing a master's degree in theology at Asbury Theological Seminary. **Quessa Brown** has been hired as choir director mentee. Hawaiian Shirt Sundays were observed during the summer months. The parish collaborated with First Lutheran Church to offer Vacation Bible School. The choral scholars are **Emma Daley**, **Noah Bryce Griffith**, **Lauren Madesitt** and **Olivia Wilson**.

**GOOD SHEPHERD, Parkersburg:** Reading camp was conducted in August, with assistance from Trinity, Parkersburg.

### New Southern Deanery

**ST. THOMAS', White Sulphur Springs:** Bishop Matthew Cowden made his first visitation to the parish and recognized the **Rev. Betsy Walker** as rector. Community dinners have resumed on the third Monday of the month. A Lenten study was presented on the book, "Sailboat Jesus."

**CHRIST CHURCH, Bluefield:** Parishioner **Dr. Joseph L. Allen**, a department chairman at Concord University, received the Professor of the Year award from the Faculty Merit Foundation of West Virginia. Parishioner **Bea Paine** was honored posthumously by the Bluefield Rotary Club. Bishop Cowden's visitation is scheduled for Oct. 22. A community picnic, with

Immanuel Lutheran Church and First Presbyterian Church, took place in August. The church picnic and outdoor service were held at City Park. A youth mission group from St. Paul's Episcopal Church, Mount Lebanon, Pa., worked at the church in July.

### Southwestern Deanery

**ST. JOHN'S, Huntington:** **Sara Lee** is the church's new organist, replacing **Will Murphy** who left to pursue a Doctor of Musical Arts degree at the University of Illinois, Urbana-Champaign. Murphy, who served as organist for 13 years, performed a farewell concert in July and was honored at a reception. A Michaelmas celebration, dragon procession and autumn lunch were held on Sept. 24. Pet blessings will be held at the church and in the community. Students, educators and backpacks were blessed on Aug. 13.

**ST. PETER'S, Huntington:** Led by the **Rev. Jim Morgan**, members celebrated the church's 103rd anniversary and homecoming on Oct. 1.

### Kanawha Deanery

**ST. MATTHEW'S, Charleston:** Acolytes attended the National Acolyte Festival at Washington National Cathedral in October. **Sean Ryan Whitt Jarrell** has been named head acolyte. **Karen Morris** is retiring as organist on Nov. 26, after 26 years of service. A Nov. 19 farewell party is planned for Morris, who is moving to Columbus,

OH. **Mimi Dinsmore** retired as prayer chain leader after 25 years of service; **Jan Kessler** is the new contact for this ministry. **Andy Bird**, a candidate for Holy Orders from St. Timothy's, Hurricane, completed his internship at the church. Parishioner **Karen Klein** entered Virginia Theological Seminary to pursue a Master of Divinity degree. A contract has been signed for the installation of a playground on the church campus. Sunday Suppers have resumed on the third Sunday of the month. A Father's Day celebration and pizza party was held. Vacation Bible School was conducted in June.

**ST. JOHN'S, Charleston:** The acolyte team attended the National Acolyte Festival in October. The Concerts @ St. John's series opened Sept. 17, with a performance by the Pandemonium 4 Flute Quartet. Bishop Cowden's visitation is scheduled for Dec. 17. An indoor church picnic and ministry fair were offered to kick off the church year. A Taizé service was offered Sept. 10. Twenty students participated in a reading camp in July. Parishioner **Raymond Lowther** completed the Education for Ministry program from Sewanee. A Mother's Day brunch was offered. As an outreach project, dinner was served to residents at Samaritan Inn, a residential recovery program for men. Bishop Cowden was the celebrant for the Easter Vigil.

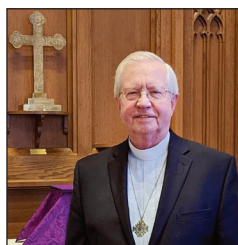
*Please send news from your churches and high-resolution photographs to Dayspring Editor Linda S. Comins by email at lcomins7@gmail.com*

## Diocesan Family News



**Bishop Matthew Cowden** installed the **Rev. Michael Delk** as rector of St. Thomas à Becket, Morgantown, on Aug. 19. He began his tenure on Aug. 1.

Fr. Delk earned a bachelor's degree in religion from Transylvania University, Lexington, Ky., and a Master of Divinity degree from Virginia Theological Seminary. Over the past 25 years, he has served as assistant to the rector at the Episcopal Church of the Good Shepherd in Lexington; canon for youth, young adults and communications at the Cathedral of St. Philip in Atlanta; rector of Hickory Neck Episcopal Church in Toano, Va., and rector of St. Luke's in Anchorage, Ky.



**The Rev. Lou Hays** is serving as interim rector of the Memorial Church of the Good Shepherd, Parkersburg.

Most recently, he was interim rector of Christ Church, Bluefield. Since retiring as rector of St. Paul's in Mount Lebanon, Pa., he has served as interim rector of Church of the Epiphany and St. Jude's Anglican Church, both in Oakville, Ontario, Canada.



**The Rev. Charles Wilson** is serving as interim rector of Trinity, Parkersburg.

He was ordained in 2005 in the Diocese of Southern Ohio and served as priest-in-charge of St. Mary's, Hillsboro. He served as rector of St. Peter, Delaware, for eight years before moving to Columbus to serve as rector of St. Philip until 2019. Since that time, he has served as long- and short-term supply, and as chaplain in hospital and hospice settings.



**The Rev. Gregory Pennington** has been called as rector of St. John's, Huntington. He was installed by **Bishop Cowden** on May 18.

Fr. Pennington was part of the first graduating class of the Seminary of the Southwest's Iona Program in West Virginia in 2021 and was ordained to the diaconate in December 2021 and the priesthood in July 2022. He earned a bachelor's degree in biblical studies in 2011 and a Master of Divinity degree in 2016 with a specialization in pastoral counseling and addiction.

For the past year, he was the clergy person in charge of St. Christopher, Charleston, where he led the congregation in worship and spiritual growth.

Currently, he serves on the Standing Committee and Peterkin Board, and as the diocese's ecumenical officer.

**Bishop Cowden** installed the **Rev. David Johnston** as rector of Trinity, Huntington, on April 25.

He has served on staff at Trinity since July 2021. He served first as a lay pastoral associate and then deacon before being ordained a priest on Jan. 28, 2023. He was elected rector that same month.

Fr. Johnston earned a bachelor's degree in religious studies from Louisiana State University and a Master of Divinity degree from Duke Divinity School. He was previously an ordained elder in the United Methodist Church for 10 years. His ministry background is in serving both churches and campus ministries.

He serves on the Peterkin Board and was chaplain of Junior Camp this summer.

**Bishop Cowden** ordained **Paul Barker** as a priest on June 17. He is serving Christ Church, Bluefield.

**Bishop Cowden** ordained **Timothy Allen** and **Christopher Scott** as deacons on May 31.

Deacon Scott is serving Christ Church, Clarksburg/St. Barnabas, Bridgeport. Deacon Allen is based in Fairmont; his ministry will focus on offering sacramental and pastoral support to congregations in transition.

During the month of June, two priests of the diocese celebrated retirement from full-time parish ministry.

**The Rev. Cheryl Winter** was honored for 30 years of service as rector of St. Timothy's-in-the-Valley, Hurricane. She retired on Sept. 30.

**The Rev. John Valentine** retired as rector of Transfiguration, Buckhannon, and St. Paul's, Weston, after 15 years of service.

Both retirement celebrations included baptisms and welcoming new members into the Body of Christ.

**The Rev. Marjorie Bevans** was honored in July on her last Sunday as rector at Good Shepherd, Parkersburg. She has accepted a call as rector of St. Michael's in the Valley, Ligonier, Pa.



**Wilma Coe**, wife of the **Rev. Frank Coe**, died in Harpers Ferry on June 4. Her funeral service was held at Trinity, Shepherdstown, on June 24.

**Monica Watkins**, wife of the **Rev. Gil Watkins**, died in St. Albans on June 10. A memorial service was held.

**Sandy Bachman**, a longtime worker at Sandscrest Conference and Retreat Center, died in Wheeling on July 30. She retired from the Sandscrest staff in December 2022 after 35 years of service. A funeral service was held on Aug. 2.

**The Rev. Dr. John Kevern** died in Rochester, N.Y., on May 9. He served several churches in the diocese as interim rector or priest-in-charge, most recently Christ Church, Fairmont, from 2013-15. A priest for more than 40 years, he also served churches in Chicago, the Rochester area and Columbus. Prior to retirement, he was on the faculty and was dean of Bexley Hall Theological Seminary.

**The Rev. Mary Weatherwax** died in Upper St. Clair, Pa., on July 7. She was ordained to the priesthood in 1981 by **Bishop Robert P. Atkinson**. She served in West Virginia for seven years, at churches in Salem and Bridgeport. She was a former assistant rector at St. Paul's, Mount Lebanon, Pa., where she served for 20 years. A funeral service was held at St. Paul's on Aug. 4.

*Rest eternal grant  
to Thy servants, O Lord;  
and let light perpetual  
shine upon them. May their souls,  
and the souls of all the departed,  
through the mercy of God,  
rest in peace. Amen.*

## Two Retirements and a Birthday



The Rev. Cheryl Winter, seated at right, and St. Timothy's in Hurricane celebrated 30 years of ministry together on June 25. She retired on Sept. 30. She spent 30 years of her ordained ministry -- and half of the life of St. Timothy's -- as rector of the church. The Rev. Canon Chad Slater, standing at left, celebrated and presided over the liturgy. The Rev. Betsy Walker, seated at left, preached a wonderful sermon. It was an emotional day filled with joy, memories, love and baptisms!



**Bishop Matthew Cowden** congratulates the **Rev. John Valentine** upon his retirement as rector of Transfiguration, Buckhannon, and St. Paul's, Weston, after 15 years of service. He and his wife Bertha have moved to The Villages in Florida.



Several members of Trinity Episcopal Church, Moundsville, helped celebrate the 100th birthday of parishioner Mary Lou Arrojo, who resides at Stonerise in Moundsville. She was honored by her family, residents and staff of the facility. Doug Pettit offered songs and birthday cake was served. Parishioners attending the celebration are, front row: Mona Smith, Mary Lou Arrojo, Doug Pettit; second row: Ann Zwolensky, Teresa Zukoff, Ramona Cunningham, Barb Davis, Cassie Sherman, Sharon Och, John Och, back row: Mike Davis, Rich Sherman and Steve Zukoff.

## WV Participates in National Festival



West Virginia participants in "It's All About Love: A Festival for the Jesus Movement" included, from left, Barbara Lutz, the Rev. Joseph Lutz, Marti Steiner Unger, the Rev. John Unger and Andy Bird. The churchwide festival of worship, learning, community and action for the Episcopal branch of the Jesus Movement, was held July 9-12 at the Baltimore Convention Center.

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### ARMSTRONG SCHOLARSHIPS AWARDED

Three students from the diocese have received 2023 Stuart and Lucille Armstrong Scholarship awards. The recipients are:

**Elliott Blackwood of St. John's, Charleston**  
**Fiona Reynolds of St. Peter's, Huntington**  
**Emma Markins of St. Timothy's, Hurricane.**

The Stuart and Lucille Armstrong Scholarship is administered by the Greater Kanawha Valley Foundation and is awarded to individuals who are active Episcopalians in the Diocese of West Virginia.

### Upcoming Safe Church, Safe Communities Trainings

Three churches are hosting Safe Church, Safe Communities training sessions that are open to all members of the diocese.

Safe Church, Safe Communities replaces the previous Safeguarding God's Children training and it is canonically required for clergy, youth workers, licensed lay ministers and others. The certification is valid for three years from the date the training is completed.

This training is also offered online on an ongoing basis; the online training takes approximately three hours for the core training vs. approximately six hours for the in-person core training.

The locations and dates for the upcoming in-person trainings are:

- **St. James', Lewisburg, 10 a.m.-4 p.m. Oct. 19.**
- **St. Matthew's, Charleston, 9 a.m.-3 p.m. Nov. 4.**
- **St. Matthew's, Wheeling, 10 a.m.-4 p.m. Nov. 16.**

To register for in-person training, contact the host church. To host in-person training in your parish or to register for the online training, contact Canon Catherine Saxe.



### Licensed Lay Ministry Application Renewal Available

Updated descriptions and applications for licensed lay ministries are now available on the diocesan website: [www.wvdiocese.org](http://www.wvdiocese.org).

There are seven licensed lay ministries in the Episcopal Church: Pastoral Leader, Worship Leader, Preacher, Eucharistic Minister, Eucharistic Visitor, Evangelist, and Catechist.

For more information about the process of becoming licensed for any of these lay ministries or about renewing a license, contact the Rev. Canon Chad Slater.