

# Dayspring

The Newspaper of the Episcopal Diocese of West Virginia



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Volume 121, Number 1

## Bishop Cowden Articulates Priorities for Diocese

By Linda S. Comins

A joyous, Holy Spirit-filled Diocesan Convention launched the Episcopal Diocese of West Virginia's year-long theme, "Abide in Christ. Let Us Pray."

The 2022 convention was held in Huntington Nov. 18-19; a hybrid online option was offered for a small number of participants who could not attend in person. The prior two conventions, in 2020 and 2021, were conducted virtually because of the COVID pandemic.

A highlight of the gathering was a service of Evensong, Recognition and Investiture of the Rt. Rev. Matthew Davis Cowden as the eighth diocesan bishop. On Oct. 14, he succeeded the Rt. Rev. W. Michie Klusmeyer, who retired after 21 years of service.

Two of Bishop Cowden's good friends and former colleagues in the Diocese of Northern Indiana participated in the investiture. The Rt. Rev. Susan Haynes, bishop of Southern Virginia, presided at the investiture. The Very Rev. Brian Grantz, dean and rector of the Cathedral of St. James in South Bend, Ind., preached at the service.

In his sermon, Dean Grantz said Bishop Cowden pursues a ministry of being a bridge and healing divisions. "We are all called to be bridges," he said, adding, "Every one of us is saved by grace and not by our own will."

Dean Grantz shared a moving account of Bishop Cowden accepting an invitation to cross a bridge – despite the presence of armed National Guardsmen -- to stand with tribal elders at Standing Rock, N.D., on All Saints' Day in 2016 during a protest over a proposed pipeline across Native American sacred sites.

"Matthew did not hesitate," Dean Grantz recalled. "He said, 'We've been invited by the elders and that is a great honor. I'm sure this is what Jesus would do.' We crossed the bridge, Matthew and me, and two other priests who knew us."

Bishop Cowden outlined five priorities for the diocese in his convention address: clergy, youth, communications, congregational development and lay formation.

Noting that clergy and lay leaders had done "yeoman's service during the pandemic," he cited the importance of maintaining the clergy's health and well-being; offering formation; and providing continuing education and resources for preaching. "Raising up new clergy is also part of my priority of caring for the clergy," he said.

For youth, he said, "We have to put our money where our ministry priorities are."

The Peterkin Board is exploring how its camps and ministries may



Photo by Linda S. Comins

Bishop Matthew Cowden prepares to open his first Diocesan Convention in West Virginia.

tie in with youth. Acolyte trips, mission trips and pilgrimages also are important. "Our youth ask the most important questions when we take them out of their ordinary church lives and on such pilgrimages," the bishop observed.

"You have a valuable ministry, lay and ordained, to be present for them wherever they are, wherever you find them, to incorporate our

youth and to resource your church however the Spirit is calling us," he said.

Regarding communications, Bishop Cowden said a new diocesan website is being developed; the WV Mission email system is being converted to a Constant Contact format; and a diocesan position of communications officer is being created.

The bishop encouraged laity and clergy to participate in congregational development programs and formal relationships across the diocese.

Lay formation is important to equip laity for ministry. "We need our lay voices, pray-ers, lay preachers, lay visitors, exercising our priesthood as well," the bishop said.

Expounding upon the diocese's year-long theme, Bishop Cowden said that abiding and persevering in Christ involves "holding on, especially in times of difficulty and division" and "being faithful even when the church and the world around us don't seem to be." He added, "Those who persevere in the end shall be made whole."

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## Peterkin 2023: Grounded and Rooted in Christ

By the Rev. Canon Jordan Trumble

The Peterkin Board is excited to welcome the Diocese to Peterkin this summer and beyond.

We've been hard at work preparing the property and designing a program for the season ahead while engaging in work to build a strong foundation for future ministry.

Under the direction of Lisa Marie Ryder, one of the co-executive directors of the Claggett Center in the Diocese of Maryland, the board has been working on a strategic vision and plan for Peterkin's future.

While this work is ongoing, one of the earliest stages of the work was identifying core values for our ministry. Our three core values will guide everything from our hiring process to our program offerings, and they are: Joyfully Committed, Grounded in Christ, and Good Shepherds.

As people who are **Joyfully Committed**, we are dedicated to seeing Peterkin, both the place and the people, flourish. We are hopeful about our future and are ready to follow God's call into a new, bigger and possibly different future.

We've witnessed how being Joyfully Committed at and to Peterkin often leads to being joyfully committed to Jesus. For example, we regularly hear youth describe Peterkin as being central to their faith and adults cite their Peterkin experiences as being formative throughout their lives long after their time at Peterkin ends.

Many of the clergy ordained in the Diocese of West Virginia since Peterkin's beginning identify Peterkin as a seminal part of their discernment and formation.

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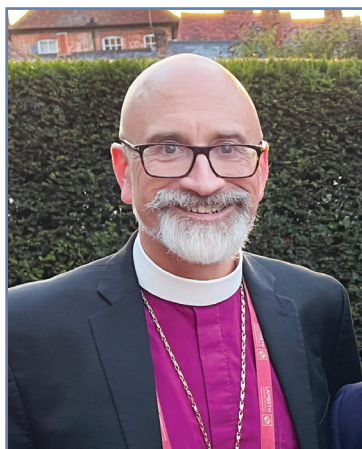


Photo by Linda S. Comins

Bishop Matthew Cowden celebrates Holy Eucharist during Diocesan Convention at Trinity Church, Huntington. Joining him are the Revs. Nancy Martin, Jim Morgan and David Johnston.



## Prayer: Our Necessary Ground in Episcopal Renaissance



Right now, in the Diocese of West Virginia and in the wider Episcopal Church, we are experiencing the excitement, the pain, and the unknown wilderness of rebirth. At a recent meeting of the House of Bishops and also at a Church planting conference, the word “renaissance” was used to try to describe the place we are at in the Church right now. The older models for being “church” have been challenged since the modern era, and the recent pandemic has heightened that challenge, hastening the process of change and transformation.

In some of our congregations our renaissance, our rebirth, feels like decline and, in some places, death. And even if we have a feeling that we are being refashioned to be reborn anew, we may not have a good grasp on our future or yet have a clear vision about what our congregation will look like in its next chapter.

As your new bishop I have been listening deeply so that I might begin articulating a shared vision that will help give shape and structure to our future life together; to provide us with a shared direction in our renaissance. This vision is still in the process of formation, but I can begin articulating the shared values that I have seen as I travel the diocese.

One of our core values is a commitment to one another. Our Episcopal identity across the state is unique among Christians in West Virginia. Though not all of us agree on all the issues we face, our commitment to one another as Episcopal Christians is strong. Formed by the prayers and patterns of The Book of Common Prayer and shaped by our church councils that convene us as members with a participatory voice, we know we are part of a larger and unique Church family. We value our relationships with one another and are proud of our Episcopal heritage. We do not

easily dismiss one another, even when we disagree. Like St. Paul’s description of the Church as being parts of the body (1 Corinthians 12), we are aware that we need one another.

A second core value I have identified, is that we have a willingness to do whatever it takes. I have witnessed so many of us, both lay and clergy, rolling up our sleeves, taking on long drives across the diocese, and tending to those in crisis, often showing up for one another at our own expense. West Virginia Episcopalians go above and beyond the call of duty to care for one another. While this happens most often in crisis, such as floods, during tragedies or sudden loss, I have seen this in times of joy as well. I have seen churches working together for prayer meetings and potlucks, as Episcopalians and in ecumenical circles. I have seen congregations sharing clergy and making difficult adjustments to work together for mutual flourishing.

And yet, even living out these two core values is not enough to produce the renaissance we are being drawn into. There must be more. If we are just committed to one another and even if we are willing to do whatever it takes, but do not have an authentic relationship with Christ we will burn out trying to do it all on our own. If we are not grounded in prayer, if we are not connected with Christ Jesus, then when we engage in our life together in church, we are only a “resounding gong or clanging cymbal” (1 Corinthians 13).

We will only get to an authentic renaissance in the Church through prayer: opening and continuing to open ourselves to the one through whom this rebirth is actually happening. Anything else is simply a social club of like-minded do-gooders and will only produce shallow and short-lived successes. Prayer is necessary because our life together in the Church is a holy one, and must be fed by an active relationship with Jesus Christ. This is often scary because an authentic relationship with Christ Jesus always draws us into unknown territory. This is what scripture means when it says the fear of God is the beginning of wisdom (Proverbs 9:10). Fear comes from knowing that God is not simply a projection of my own imagination, but is deeply real and deeply “Other” and “not me.” Like engaging in any authentic relationship with “an other”, we will grow and change.

And most of us resist change. But you can trust Christ, even when the transformation he offers is scary and calls us into unknown territory.

So, dear Friends, Pray. In silence or in words, in your body and in your mind, open to the one who calls you and calls the Church to rebirth. Our future depends on this relationship in prayer. The vision and the new life will be revealed, including our core values, and fed by the holy one through whom all things were made and through whom all things are being remade anew.

*Pray, for we are being transformed.*

*Pray, for we are called to transform.*

*Pray, for we are being reborn.*



*The Rt. Rev. Matthew D. Cowden is the eighth Bishop of West Virginia.*

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## Peterkin

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We see the joyful commitment of the Peterkin community lived out in service to others, including returning to volunteer their time for the next generation of campers and through active participation in their own parishes and beyond.

For Peterkin to be **Grounded in Christ** means that we strive to foster a vibrant life of faith for all those who participate in our ministries. The heartbeat of Peterkin is the daily Eucharist and prayer, and the camp experience is designed to help form the faith of our campers and staff members while they are at camp and empower them to carry those experiences with them beyond the gates of Peterkin.

We often hear stories from past and present campers who share how the relationships they built through Peterkin are among the closest relationships in their lives: these are friends who are responsive to prayer requests; who pray Compline together over FaceTime; and who show up for life milestones such as weddings, baptisms, funerals and ordinations.

As we strive to be Grounded in Christ, we believe we will see and experience hearts that burn

and glow with love for God and others. Being Grounded in Christ also leads us to be Good Shepherds.

As **Good Shepherds**, we guide the people in our care into deeper relationships with God and each other by building holy community and working toward reconciliation and renewal of our people and our place.

Being Good Shepherds means protecting the hearts and minds of people in our care by creating a spiritually, emotionally and physically safe place for all people to celebrate their God-given identity and gifts. It also means being good stewards of the land and resources we’ve been given. The beautiful Peterkin property is a gift and resource to us and is a serious opportunity for conservation and creation care.

As we welcome campers of all ages to Peterkin this summer, our offerings will be shaped by the work of discernment that we’re doing.

Our theme for the summer, **Grounded and Rooted in Christ**, grows out of these core values. As part of our program, campers will explore daily themes such as prayer, joy, servitude, gratefulness and com-

munity to help them learn about God and to help them become ever more joyfully committed, more deeply grounded in Christ and to grow in their capacity to be good shepherds.

Campers will also continue to enjoy camp activities such as hiking, swimming, and arts & crafts. We’re excited to welcome people back to Peterkin this summer and are looking forward to further programs and events in the future.

For more information about Peterkin summer camps, please visit [www.peterkin.org](http://www.peterkin.org).

### Peterkin Camps 2023

**June 11-17:** Counselor Training  
**June 18-24:** Senior Camp (entering 9th grade through graduated high school seniors)

**June 25-July 1:** Junior Camp (entering 4th-8th grades)

**July 5-8:** Alpha Camp (children and their grownups)

**July 9-15:** Family Camp (families of all types and ages)

**July 16-22:** Music, Art, Drama Camp (entering 4th-12th grades)

*The Rev. Canon Jordan Trumble is the diocesan canon for communications and congregational development.*



## New Canon's Position Created for Diocese

The Rev. Jordan Trumble has been called to serve as canon for communications and congregational development in the Episcopal Diocese of West Virginia.

Canon Trumble began her new ministry in the diocese on Feb. 1. Before accepting this position, she was rector of Christ Church, Fairmont.

She is a deputy to General Convention and is the theology and ethics instructor for the Iona program. In addition, Canon Trumble is the managing editor of *Earth & Altar Magazine*.

As canon for communications, she will oversee and support the diocese in building connections between congregations and between congregations and the diocese. This will include engaging in the development of the diocesan website, online and social media, print media, and connections with the wider Church and with witness in the world.

As canon for congregational development, she will oversee and support the inauguration of diocesan-wide congregational development ministries. This ministry will teach models for interpreting the culture of each congregation, invite lay and clergy participation to address the needs of their community with fresh eyes, build on the strengths already present, and



The Rev. Canon Jordan Trumble

develop planning and programs around shared values.

Canon Trumble, an Elkins native, graduated from Capital University and spent three years working with Episcopal Service Corps, first in Los Angeles and later in New Haven, Conn. She remained in New Haven to study at Yale Divinity School, during which time she worked with the Episcopal Church at Yale campus ministry and served as a chaplain to the professional children's choirs at Trinity on the Green Episcopal Church in downtown New Haven.

In 2015, she returned to the Diocese of West Virginia as the program director at Peterkin and to serve St. Stephen's, Romney, and Emmanuel, Moorefield, as lay pastoral associate and later priest-in-charge.

## New Director Named for Highland Educational Project

The Rev. Deacon Paul Barker has been called to serve as both the director of the Highland Educational Project and as pastor of Christ Episcopal Church in Bluefield.

Deacon Paul, who came from the Diocese of Pittsburgh, began his new ministry on Jan. 1.

The Highland Educational Project has worked in the southern coalfields of West Virginia to enrich the lives of local residents and outside ministry groups for more than 70 years.

Deacon Paul first came to West Virginia to work with this program more than a decade ago. He will work to revitalize and reimagine this ministry with the help of a new board and years of his own ministry connections.

He also will provide administrative oversight and pastoral care to the congregation of Christ Church in Bluefield. In time, he seeks ordination to the priesthood and a greater sacramental role in the parish and in the wider community.

The Rt. Rev. Matthew Cowden, bishop of West Virginia, said, "Pastor Paul has a heart for West Virginia and for our ministry of the Highland Education Project. His previous experience with both Christ Church, Bluefield and with HEP make him uniquely gifted for this collaboration. I'm excited to



The Rev. Deacon Paul Barker

work with Pastor Paul as he grows in these ministries and shares his gifts in the diocese."

Pastor Paul, as he will be known for now in the community, brings a deep love for the people and place of West Virginia.

He completed a ministry internship at Christ Church in the summer of 2020 under the guidance of the Rev. Russ Hatfield while the parish's then-rector was on sabbatical. Most recently, he served as a deacon at St. Paul's Episcopal Church in Mount Lebanon, Pa.

The Rev. Canon Chad Slater was rector of Christ Church until being chosen as canon to the ordinary for the Diocese of West Virginia. The Rev. Lou Hays, a former rector of St. Paul's in Mount Lebanon, completed his service as interim rector of Christ Church on Christmas Eve.

## Exactly 100 Years Later, St. Matthew's Parish House Comes Full Circle

The renovated parish house of St. Matthew's, Charleston, was rededicated Oct. 30 -- 100 years after the hall's initial construction.

The Very Rev. Kim Webster, rector of St. Matthew's, said a prayer, read a brass plaque and dedicated the structure, now named the Sutherland Family Life Center, at a ceremony attended by about 100 people after the Sunday church service. Guests ate lunch and toured the building.

The project included a complete refurbishment of the kitchen, gymnasium, performance stage, and handicapped-accessible restrooms.

The final part of the project is an outdoor neighborhood playground, planned for the spring of 2023.



David, Fred and Jim Sutherland at the dedication hold a plaque honoring their parents at the dedication of the Sutherland Family Life Center at St. Matthew's, Charleston.

Like the event 100 years earlier, the 2022 rededication ceremony included a report from the construction team and a conceptual design display (this time of the new playground.)

A Girl Scout troop affiliated with Holtz Elementary School was the first outside group to use the center. Interestingly, a Girl Scout troop was the first group to use the original facility.

While the building served its purpose well for 100 years, by the time COVID hit in 2020, the facility was worn and dated.

Although a much-needed adjoining meeting and classroom building was constructed on the left side in 1972 (named Mathes Hall, in memory of Mrs. Luther Telford Mathes), the original structure continued to function with modest repairs and minor piecemeal upgrades for a century. When the COVID pandemic suddenly shut everything down, almost all programming in all churches stopped immediately. St. Matthew's lead-



Attending the dedication of the Sutherland Family Life Center at St. Matthew's, Charleston, are, from left, Canon Chad Slater, Barbara Sutherland, Fred Sutherland, Bishop Matthew Cowden, Jim Sutherland and Cathy Sutherland.

ership recognized that they were holding worn, dated and closed facilities, while trying to determine how to emerge safely from their closure and reinvigorate the programming.

At that point, in 2021, a longtime parish family decided to make a major gift to renovate the facility. The gift honored the 60-year ministry of Lewis F. (Dick) and Dorothy (Dot) Sutherland, who had been members of St. Matthew's since the early 1960s. Dot died in 2014 and Dick in 2021.

The new construction projects were funded mostly by their son Fred. He and his brothers, Jim and David, worked with church leadership of Andy Boyd, Steve Roberts, Fr. Webster, the vestry and multiple committees to design and manage the renovations. It took over a year, from conception to dedication, to complete the multiple projects.

As a result of the family's major gift, the renovated gymnasium, performance stage, kitchen, restrooms and the planned outdoor playground have been collectively named the Sutherland Family Life Center.

Roberts, a previous senior warden, observed: "The Sutherland Family Life Center increases our opportunities for ministry. A well-

lighted, easily available gymnasium, performance stage and kitchen, along with bathrooms accessible to people with disabilities, add immeasurably to the St. Matthew's campus. Our church has begun using the newly improved facility for parish gatherings and our basketball program now has a bright and cheerful home. These facilities are useful now and will carry us well into the future."

The rector summed it up: "The mission statement for St. Matthew's says we are called to be a Christ-centered community, equipping, and enabling ourselves to minister in the power of the Holy Spirit so that people are drawn to Christ. Hospitality is a key component in drawing people to Christ. With the renovations to our 100-year-old facilities, we are opening ourselves to expanding groups of people, who experience our hospitality and our desire to connect to the greater community. When people experience our openness to innovative ideas and opportunities to engage our community, we are showing people our faith in action. We are excited by the generous gift of the Sutherland family which opens for us a new day in mission and ministry in Charleston."



Parishioners of St. Matthew's, Charleston, enjoy a dedicatory luncheon in the church's Sutherland Family Life Center.



# Bishop Articulates Priorities

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People can give permission for God's presence to abide in their hearts and minds. "You get to decide every day, every hour, whether to allow God in or not," the bishop said.

Upon his arrival in West Virginia in January 2022, Bishop Cowden began meeting and listening to people around the diocese. "There is a lot of listening still to be done, a lot of dialogue still to be had," he said.

He predicted that about 18 more months of deep listening and conversation will be necessary to identify the diocese's core purpose, priorities and direction. The priorities will be accomplished while abiding in Christ together and praying together.

Bishop Cowden exhorted convention attendees: "All the challenges before us can only be met and the vision can only be properly articulated and voiced and proclaimed and lived out only when we are in Christ together, abiding in Him who is the vine upon which we are the branches. Seek ye first the holiness of God and His abiding presence within and among you. Be His holy people. Let us pray."

The convention's opening session, hearings and banquet were held at the DoubleTree Hotel in Huntington. Evensong, Holy Eucharist and the business session took place at Trinity Church, Huntington.

During the business session, delegates approved the diocese's 2023 budget totaling \$1,985,480.

Delegates elected the diocese's deputies to The Episcopal Church's 2024 General Convention, to be held in Louisville, Ky.

Elected as clergy deputies were the Revs. Joshua Saxe, Jordan Trumble, Kim Webster and Greg Pennington. The Rev. David Johnston was chosen as the alternate clergy deputy.

Elected as lay deputies were Karen Klein, Linda Comins, Vivian Kost and Beth Marquart. Ray Lowther was selected as the alternate lay deputy.

Chosen for diocesan offices were Steve Robey, trustee; the Rev. Michelle Boomgaard and Vicki Iber, Constitution and Canons Committee; the Rev. Greg Pennington and David Lumsden, Standing Committee. Mary Ruth Cilles was elected to the Sandcrest Board, while Dr. John Holloway, Rebecca Sinclair and D.K. Wright were re-elected to the board.

Convention delegates gave unanimous approval to a resolution condemning the Russian Federation's aggression against Ukraine. Delegates also passed an amended resolution on reproductive freedom and expansion of social safety nets.

During the convention banquet, Bishop Cowden honored three recipients of the Bishop's Shell Award for their service to the diocese: Daisy McBride, director of Peterkin Camp and Conference Center; Kelly McGhee, a member of St. Matthew's in Charleston, co-chair of the diocesan Transition Committee and former convention coordinator; and Vicki Iber, a member of Christ Church in Fairmont and a member of the Transi-

tion Committee.

For the first time in several years, a convention youth event was held. The Rev. Chris Scott, pastor of Winfield United Methodist Church, led the program for youth of the diocese.

Bishop Cowden announced that the 2023 Diocesan Convention will be held Oct. 26-28 at the Holiday Inn in Martinsburg.

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



Photo by Linda S. Comins  
The Very Rev. Brian Grantz, dean and rector of the Cathedral of St. James in South Bend, Ind., preaches at the service of Evensong, Recognition and Investiture.



Photo by Linda S. Comins  
Diocesan Convention delegates attend a budget hearing at the DoubleTree Hotel in Huntington.



Photo by Linda S. Comins  
The Rev. Nancy Martin reads the Gospel for Holy Eucharist during Diocesan Convention at Trinity Church, Huntington.



Photo by Linda S. Comins  
The Rt. Rev. Susan Haynes, bishop of Southern Virginia, presides at the investiture of the Rt. Rev. Matthew D. Cowden as the eighth bishop of West Virginia during Diocesan Convention at Trinity Church, Huntington.



Photo Provided  
Vicki Iber, a member of Christ Church, Fairmont, holds the Bishop's Shell award that Bishop Matthew Cowden presented to her at the Diocesan Convention. With them are Vicki's husband, Matthew Iber, and the Rev. Canon Jordan Trumble, then-rector of Christ Church. Bishop Cowden also awarded the Bishop's Shell to Daisy McBride and Kelly McGhee, but they were unable to attend the convention.



Photo by Linda S. Comins  
Bishop Matthew Cowden delivers his first Convention Address at Trinity Church, Huntington.

# Good Morning, Your Grace!

Friday, October 15, 2022, was Day #1 for the Great #8, the Rt. Rev. Matthew Cowden, as he took his seat as the eighth bishop of the Diocese of West Virginia.

Lay people and clergy gathered at an open house planned and hosted by diocesan staff members Tracy Hannah, Annette Combs and the Rev. Canon Chad Slater.

The food was abundant, and delicious. The company was exuberant and delightful. And a champagne toast was made to the health and well being of Bishop Cowden and his ministry to the people of the Diocese of West Virginia.

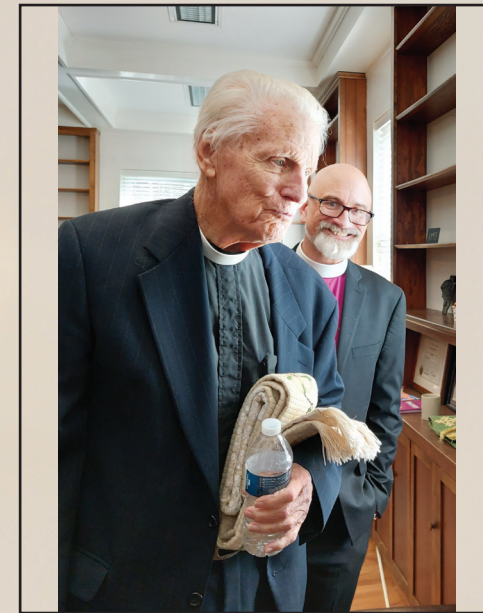


Photo by Beth Marquart  
The Rev. Jim Lewis attends the open house honoring Bishop Matthew Cowden.



Photo by Beth Marquart  
Bishop Matthew Cowden leads a champagne toast during an open house at Diocesan House. Among those joining in the toast are Annette Combs, the Rev. Kim Webster and Melissa Cowden.



Photo by Beth Marquart  
Dr. Bonnie Bailey and Nathan Arnett congratulate the Rt. Rev. Matthew Cowden on his first day as bishop diocesan.



Photo by Beth Marquart  
Tracy Hannah pours champagne for the open house at Diocesan House. Those attending the event include the Rev. Betsy Walker, Nathan Arnett and Dr. Bonnie Bailey.



Photo by Linda S. Comins  
Bishop Matthew Cowden gives the blessing at the service of Evensong, Recognition and Investiture. He is flanked by the Revs. Al Prichard and David Johnston.



## Retired Bishop Says 'Thank You'

The Rt. Rev. W. Michie Klusmeyer, retired bishop of West Virginia, is now serving as canon to the presiding bishop for ministry within The Episcopal Church.

He retired as bishop diocesan on Oct. 13 and began his new duties Oct. 17.

In this role, he supports Presiding Bishop Michael Curry's ministry with pastoral assistance and strategic advising. He helps with the planning and execution of diocesan visitations and bishop consecrations. He represents the presiding bishop in preparation for General Convention.

A series of three receptions were held in the Diocese of West Virginia in October to honor the retiring bishop for his 21 years of service. Bishop Klusmeyer and his wife Marsha also were honored at a festive Evensong service and reception at St. Matthew's, Wheeling, and at a luncheon at St. Matthew's, Charleston.

Bishop Klusmeyer wrote the following thank-you letter to the diocese:

Dear People of God,

I write this brief letter to you to let you know how thankful Marsha and I have been over these past 21 years, to be among you.

We want to thank you for being a vital part of our lives -- family and spiritual. It has been a blessing to with you all for all of these years.

We thank you for the many aspects of your lives that you have shared with us, and allowed us to share our lives with you.

When we arrived in West Virginia, we literally knew one person who lived in West Virginia. Over the years, we have gotten to know you all.

I know that God has great things in store for The Diocese of West Virginia, and please know of our continued prayers for you.

We thank you for your kind and generous 'send off,' and we pray we will continue our friendships for decades to come.

Faithfully,

Bishop Mike and Marsha

## Lawrencefield Parish Unveils OWL Project

Lawrencefield Parish Church in Wheeling has established an OWL Project, but it has nothing to do with our feathered friends.

OWL is the acronym for Outside the Walls of Lawrencefield. This project is an intentional partnering with selected local ministries and outreach programs helping them to respond to the needs of the region.

So far, the parish has collected blankets and socks for the Greater

Wheeling Homeless Coalition to distribute. Members have donated women's personal care items to be distributed through the YWCA Wheeling.

In Lent, donations have been made to the Dig Deep - Appalachia Water Project in McDowell County. Dig Deep is helping an area where there often is no clean, safe water in homes because of failing 100-year-old water pipes, contamination from mines and the collapse of the local economy.

Lawrencefield's other OWL partners for 2023 include Wheeling Health Right's Congregations for Caring initiative, the Gabriel Project, Street Moms and The House of the Carpenter. For more information about the OWL Project partnerships or ways to participate, send an email to clergy.lawrencefield@gmail.com.



## Deanery News

### Kanawha Deanery

**ST. MATTHEW'S, Charleston:** The history of liturgy is the topic for a Lenten series. **Andy Bird** is serving as the parish's seminarian. During **Bishop Matthew Cowden's** visitation on Feb. 5, he confirmed **Dwayne Cyrus, Jacob Cyrus, Lou Ann Cyrus, Crawford Goldman, Sean Ryan Whitt Jarrell, Claire Mullen, Jay Payne, Benjamin Chen, Christopher Schick-Chen** and **Charlie Castle**. Monthly potluck parish gatherings are being held after Sunday services. A new partnership is being formed with people in the community. Youth held a Souper Bowl of Caring raise funds for a food pantry and a bake sale to raise funds for their sponsorship of 12 children through an Angel Tree project. During a trick or treat event, acolytes collected 853 pounds of food for Covenant House's food pantry. Retired **Bishop Mike Klusmeyer** and **Marsha Klusmeyer** were honored at an Oct. 15 luncheon; they received West Virginia-themed cufflinks and pendant, respectively, made by parishioners **Scott** and **James Petit** and a quilted wall hanging. Blessing of animals was offered on Oct. 4.

**ST. JOHN'S, Charleston:** The spring schedule for Concerts @ St. John's, all at 4 p.m., includes performances by mezzo-soprano **Elisabeth Baer** and pianist **Robert Frankenberry**, March 19, and pianist **Eric Ruple**, April 23. There is no admission charge, but

donations are accepted to support the continuation of the series. The Shrove Tuesday Pasta Delights and Sinful Desserts event returned after a three-year hiatus. "The Whos of St. John's" participated in the Charleston Christmas parade. A Taizé service was offered in memory of **Beth Hamrick**, who died in 2020. **Chelsea Steelhammer** was baptized and confirmed by **Bishop Matthew Cowden** during his visitation on Oct. 2. During Manna Meal's Hunger to Hope dinner on Oct. 11, the **Rev. Jim Lewis** was honored as founder of Manna Meal and **Carter Blunden** was recognized for being a Manna Meal volunteer and supporter since its inception 46 years ago.

### Southwestern Deanery

**TRINITY, Huntington:** A retirement reception was held on Feb. 5 to honor the **Rev. Jim Morgan** for his dedicated service to the parish. The **Rev. David Johnston** and Marshall University students gather weekly for Compline and study at Marshall's Campus Christian Center. Members purchased Christmas gifts for the children of Marcum Terrace.

**ST. JOHN'S, Huntington:** Members of St. John's also purchased Christmas gifts for the children of Marcum Terrace. Blessing of animals was offered at the church. In addition, the **Rev. Ray Hage** participated in a

community pet blessing and pet adoption event.

### New Southern Deanery

**CHRIST CHURCH, Bluefield:** Members **John** and **Becky Beckett** received an honorary alumni award from Bluefield University. Longtime member **Bea Paine** died on Nov. 20. She was the first woman to serve on the church's vestry and as senior warden; she was a past president of the diocesan Episcopal Church Women. She also was the first female member of Bluefield's city council, serving 16 years, including eight years as vice mayor.

**INCARNATION, Ronceverte:** Greenbrier Episcopal Ministries' pet blessing was held at the church on Oct. 10. The church's Tony Livesay Memorial Golf Tournament raised \$5,310.

### Northern Deanery

**ST. THOMAS, Weirton:** Member **Dorothy Hawkes** was inducted into the New Cumberland Hall of Fame on Feb. 5. The church celebrated its 75th anniversary on Dec. 21, with a combined observance of the Feast of St. Thomas and an early service of Christmas Eve, with **Bishop Matthew Cowden** presiding and celebrating Holy Eucharist. The bishop's visitation included the baptism of one child and the reaffirmation of four adults. The celebration concluded with a re-

ception in the parish hall.

**LAWRENCEFIELD PARISH CHURCH, Wheeling:** A weekend celebration, with **Bishop Matthew Cowden** as the celebrant and preacher, is planned on April 29-30 to commemorate the 60th anniversary of the first service conducted in the church building. The **Rev. Dr. Nancy Woodworth-Hill**, rector, is offering an in-person Lenten Retreat and Conference Center on March 18 and an online Lenten Retreat series. **Barbara Hinkle** has begun serving as the parish's verger; she is taking a course through the Vergers Guild of The Episcopal Church. Pet blessings were offered on Oct. 2. In addition to the regular ingathering, the parish held an art auction that raised \$430 for the United Thank Offering. Parishioners collected blankets and socks for distribution by the Wheeling Homeless Coalition and purchased Christmas gifts for children served through the House of the Carpenter.

**ST. MATTHEW'S, Wheeling:** A Lenten music series and a mid-week study series are being offered. Taizé services are offered monthly at St. John's Chapel on the parish's Churchfield campus. Faith Formation Sunday programs for youth and adults are presented monthly. Youth Night for middle and high school students takes place monthly. Parishioners are purchasing underwear for distribution by the Street Moms group. Christmas presents

and food boxes were given to 20 families in Ohio County. The traditional Advent Procession of Lessons and Carols and a festive wassail reception were presented. Organist **Robert Troeger** and guest musicians **Edward Washington II** and **Edward Callahan** presented a Christmas Carol-Fest.

### Ohio Valley Deanery

**TRINITY, Parkersburg:** Christmas gifts and food were provided for 12 families. The Trinity Episcopal Warriors raised \$1,400 for Relay for Life of Wood County. **James V. Full**, Trinity's director of communications, died Jan. 9 at the Cleveland Clinic; his wife **Barbara Full** serves as editor of the parish newsletter, The Trinity Times. **Bishop Matthew Cowden** confirmed **Isabelle Grace Deem, Breellen Fleming, Rick Ebert, Olivia Mezick, Rosetta Hamilton** and **Teresa Henderson** during his visitation on Dec. 18. Parishioners also bid farewell that day to their rector, the **Rev. Paul Hicks**, who has accepted a call to St. John's Episcopal Church in Wytheville, Va. The annual book sale and luncheon took place in October.

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

**The Very Rev. Robert “Bobby” Shives** has been elected rector of Trinity Church, Martinsburg. He began his ministry on Feb. 1. **Bishop Matthew Cowden** installed him as rector on Feb. 19.

After a military career, Shives continued to serve the government as a contractor for the Department of Defense and FEMA. Later, he accepted at position with the Department of Homeland Security’s Federal Protective Service in Washington, D.C. as a security specialist.

Shives graduated from a Master of Divinity degree program with Regent University in 2016. He was ordained a deacon in the Diocese of West Virginia in June 2017 and a priest in December of that year. Since that time, he has served at Grace Church, Middleway, and St. Philip’s Church, Charles Town.

He resides in Middleway with his wife Kim. They have three adult children and four grandchildren (with a fifth grandchild on the way this spring).

Bishop Cowden is enthusiastic about this new call. “Fr. Shives’ leadership experience in the military, business, and the federal government are among the great gifts he brings to lead Trinity as they explore new opportunities for mission and ministry in the eastern panhandle. His pragmatic focus together with his faithful, prayerful, pastor’s heart are great gifts in building up and building on the dynamic ministries and witness that Trinity provides in Martinsburg. I’m grateful for the meeting of ministries between Trinity, Martinsburg, and Fr. Bobby Shives as their new rector.”

**The Rev. Zachary Drennen** has been called to serve as priest-in-charge of St. James in Lewisburg. He began his ministry on Jan. 1.

He will serve St. James part-time while also teaching humanities classes at the Yew School, a middle school devoted to outdoor, experiential learning. Pastoral and sacramental support to St. James will also be provided by the Rev. Joseph Lutz.

Bishop Cowden said, “We are excited that Fr. Drennen has been called to St. James and that he is sharing his many gifts and talents in this parish ministry. His long experience in the Church and in the world, his personal warmth, and his missionary zeal are blessings to St. James and to the community of Lewisburg.”

Drennen earned a Master of Di-

vinity degree from Harvard Divinity School and was ordained in 2002. He spent two years as a curate and assistant priest at The Church of the Good Shepherd in Parkersburg, West Virginia. He then served for three years as the school chaplain and history/reigion teacher at The Neighborhood Academy in to Pittsburgh. In 2007, he went to Kenya where he served as an appointed missionary for The Episcopal Church for eight years. During that time, he started and ran The Elewana Education Project, an NGO intent on improving the resources and educational offerings in Kenyan high schools.

Returning to West Virginia in late 2015, he began working with the nonprofit Coalfield Development on various projects. In 2019, he founded Revolt Energy, a solar installation company, where he worked until late 2021. Beginning in 2022, Drennen moved with his family to Lewisburg. He is married to Lida Shepherd and they have two daughters, Lucia, 10, and Fredi, 4, and one son, Everett, 2.

**The Rev. Dean Lawrence** has been called as priest-in-charge of Christ Church, Fairmont, effective March 15.

A native Texan, he came to West Virginia a few years ago to serve as rector at Zion, Charles Town. He graduated from Virginia Theological Seminary in 2009 and was ordained priest in the Diocese of Texas, where he served for 10 years. He and his wife Sarah and their daughter, Emeline, 5, are excited to move to Fairmont.

**The Rev. C. Christopher Thompson** has been called to serve as interim rector of St. John’s, Charleston. He began his tenure on Feb. 15.

Thompson, who grew up in Wheeling and graduated from Virginia Theological Seminary, was ordained as a deacon in 1979 and as a priest in 1980.

He has served churches in West Virginia (three of them called St. John’s: Wheeling, Huntington and Ripley), Southern Ohio, Southwest Florida, and Southern Virginia. He also served 21 years as a chaplain in the Air Force National Guard and the Air Force Reserves and retired at the rank of lieutenant colonel.

In recent years, he has served various mission churches, the West Virginia Veteran Assistance Program and as an interim rector. He and his wife Mary Jo live in Winston-Salem, N.C.

**The Rev. Elizabeth “Betsy” Walker** is rector of St. Thomas, White Sulphur Springs, but is no longer missionary of Greenbrier Episcopal Ministries, effective Jan. 1.

Bishop Cowden ordained the **Rev. Nancy Martin** as a priest on Jan. 6 at Ascension, Hinton. She serves in the New River Episcopal Ministries, where she was a deacon for many years.

Bishop Cowden ordained the **Rev. David Johnston** as a priest on Jan. 28 at Trinity, Huntington. He is serving at Trinity, where he has been a pastoral associate for the past year.

Bishop Cowden ordained **Gina Griffith** to the vocational diaconate on Feb. 4 at St. Mark’s, St. Albans.

**The Rev. Jim Morgan** has retired as priest-in-charge of Trinity, Huntington.

**Sandy Bachman** retired from the Sandcrest staff in December after 35 years of service.

**Mary Green** completed her time as the director of evangelism and communications for the diocese on Oct. 13. She had served in that capacity since 2017. More recently, she served as interim director of the Highland Education Program until the end of 2022.

**David Ramkey** resigned as the diocese’s chief financial officer, a position he had held for 15 years.



**Rosemary Atkinson**, widow of the Rt. Rev. Robert P. Atkinson, fifth bishop of West Virginia, died on Feb. 19.

Bishop Cowden stated, “Mrs. Atkinson is remembered as a faithful Christian, active and dedicated Bishop’s spouse, devoted mother and grandmother, and dear friend whose wit, laughter, and godly counsel will be missed. Her love of and care for the people and places of the Diocese of West Virginia continued throughout her life.”

Mrs. Atkinson is survived by her three children, Amy, Rip and Anne, and numerous grandchildren. The family is planning a memorial service in Virginia in April when the spring trees are in bloom.

**The Rev. Rodgers “Rodge” Wood** of Kennedy Township, Pa., died Jan. 13 of congestive heart failure at the age of 89.

He served as rector of Christ Episcopal Church in Ross Town-

ship, Pa., from 1981 until he retired in December 1999. In retirement, he served as an interim and supply priest for parishes in the Diocese of West Virginia and the Diocese of Pittsburgh. A memorial service was held Jan. 21 at Christ Church, Pittsburgh.

**The Rev. Thomas “Tom” Seitz Jr.** died in Florida on March 3, at age 70, after a series of strokes. He was ordained to the diaconate in 1977 and to the priesthood in 1978. He served St. Stephen’s, Beckley, as a deacon and was rector of Christ Church, Clarksburg. Later, he served parishes in Virginia, Michigan and Florida. He was rector emeritus of the Church of the Good Shepherd, Lake Wales, Fla., where he was rector from 1997 until 2017. A burial Eucharist will be celebrated at the Church of the Good Shepherd on March 25. Survivors include his wife, Anna, and three brothers, including the Rev. Mark Seitz, retired canon to the ordinary in the Diocese of West Virginia.

**The Rev. Charles Roger Butler** died in Charlotte, N.C., on Feb. 22 at age 91. He was ordained to the diaconate in 1956 and to the priesthood in 1957, both by the Rt. Rev. Wilburn C. Campbell, who was his father-in-law. He served St. Ann’s, New Martinsville, from 1956 to 1960. Later, he served churches in Pennsylvania and New York and was a supply priest in North Carolina. A funeral service was held at All Saints Episcopal Church, Concord, N.C., on March 4

**The Rev. James Sell** died at home in Norfolk, Va., on Sept. 30, just hours prior to his 80th birthday. He was a former rector of St. James, Lewisburg; St. Thomas, White Sulphur Springs; Christ Memorial, Williamstown; and St. Martins in the Field, Summersville.

He also served Episcopal churches in New Jersey and, in the late 1980s, as an archdeacon in the Diocese of Newark. He returned to parish ministry in 1990 as rector of Christ & St. Luke’s Episcopal Church in Norfolk, Va. He retired in 2005 and spent the next eight years as interim rector at several parishes on the East Coast. A memorial service was held Nov. 12 at Christ & St. Luke’s Episcopal Church in Norfolk.

*May the souls  
of all the departed,  
through the mercy of God,  
rest in peace  
and rise in glory. Amen.*



### Celebrations in Romney



Photo by Candy Ponchak

Children of the Mercer family decorate a tree at St. Stephen’s, Romney, with Chrismons made by women of the church many years ago. The four older boys are acolytes.

### HEP and Area Churches Spread Holiday Joy



This year, the Highland Educational Project provided 52 children with two high-quality gifts, beautifully wrapped and tagged. The members of St. Stephen’s in Beckley, along with members of their sister church, St. Luke’s Lutheran, sorted and wrapped all the gifts and packed the bags. Grace Episcopal in Elkins and St. Matthias in Grafton provided all the fixings for 52 Christmas stockings. HEP also provided 89 hams for Christmas dinner and 34 Thanksgiving meals.



## Bishop McLeod Dies

The Rt. Rev. Mary Adelia Rosamond McLeod, the first female diocesan bishop in the history of the Episcopal Church, died at her home in Charleston on Oct. 12. She was 84.

McLeod, who had been co-rector of St. John's, Charleston, was ordained as the ninth bishop of the Diocese of Vermont amid a blinding snowstorm on All Saints Day in 1993 and served until 2001. She was the third woman to become a bishop in the Episcopal Church, but the first to lead a diocese, and her ordination was broadcast globally via satellite from Burlington.

The Rt. Rev. Shannon MacVean-Brown, the diocese's 11th bishop, hailed McLeod as a champion of women's ministry and a dedicated advocate for the inclusion of lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender people both in the church and the broader culture.

"She was always encouraging to me," said MacVean-Brown, the first Black woman to lead the diocese. "I'm trying my best to continue her work of empowering and supporting lay ministry, promoting inclusion, strengthening our stewardship, improving transparency around our financial

resources, and encouraging the ministry of women."

In 2000, as the state of Vermont was debating same-sex marriage, McLeod released "Let the Church Be the First to Issue an Emancipation Proclamation," an article she asked to be read in every church in the diocese. In it, she wrote, "homosexual persons choosing to live together in a life-long union are not committing a sin," and argued that



great gift of love and expressing that love cannot and should not be denied for those among us who happen to be homosexual."

As a bishop, McLeod was known for spurring rapid growth in membership, developing the ministry of the laity, facilitating respectful conversations on difficult issues, restructuring the diocese's governance, improving its financial position and conducting a successful capital campaign

that helped to establish a diocesan loan fund.

She served at St. Timothy's Church in Athens, Ala., and St. John's Church, Charleston, before her election in Vermont. At both parishes, she served as co-rector with her husband, the Rev. Henry "Mac" McLeod III. She also served as archdeacon in the Diocese of West Virginia.

A native of Birmingham, Ala., McLeod was a graduate of the University of Alabama, where she studied history. After college she married and reared five children.

In 1976, she and her husband each felt a call to the priesthood, and together they entered the Episcopal seminary at the University of the South in Sewanee, Tenn. Four years later, she graduated second in her class and became the first Alabama woman to be ordained to the Episcopal priesthood.

Her published works included contributions to "A Voice of Our Own: Leading American Women Celebrate the Right to Vote" and "Women's Uncommon Prayers: Our Lives Revealed, Nurtured, Celebrated."

Photo: Diocese of Vermont

## New Book: God's Welcome



The Rev. Dr. Cynthia Byers Walter, former rector of Lawrencefield Parish Church, Wheeling, has published a new book, "God's Welcome: A Co-Creative Vision of the Spiritual Exercises of St. Ignatius for Women."

While remaining true to the original Spiritual Exercises, "God's Welcome" approaches the Exercises interactively, dialogically and co-creatively. Conceived as a response to the issue women typically face when making the Exercises, the book appeals to

anyone interested in a deeper, cooperative relationship with God through Jesus Christ.

Most versions of the Nineteenth Annotation begin in assuming a level of competence in the prayer practices that support the Exercises, such as journaling, lectio divina and the Examen, so that the participant must deal with mastering these skills while trying simultaneously to assimilate the thematic material.

"God's Welcome" begins by concentrating on developing familiarity with these practices. In this way, attention may be more effectively focused, as the exercises progress, on the spiritual content.

Using the Ignatian pattern of a daily discipline of prayer, "God's Welcome" then takes the seeker through a journey of about nine months, in which spiritual growth is informed not only by Holy Scripture, but also by the scripture of daily life and experience.

Copies may be ordered directly from the author at [cbwalter@comcast.net](mailto:cbwalter@comcast.net), from Amazon, or from Dorrance Publishing Co.

## St. Thomas Celebrates 75th Anniversary



Photo: Linda Comins  
Bishop Matthew Cowden celebrates Holy Eucharist on the Feast of St. Thomas at St. Thomas, Weirton, as part of the church's 75th anniversary celebration. Joining him at the altar are Wendy Speer, lay minister at St. Thomas, and the Rev. Joshua Saxe, rector of St. Matthew's, Wheeling.



Photo: Linda Comins  
Bishop Matthew Cowden cuts a 75th anniversary cake at St. Thomas, Weirton. Helping at the reception are Wendy Speer, lay minister at St. Thomas, and the Rev. Joshua Saxe, rector of St. Matthew's, Wheeling.

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