

Thursday,  
July 2, 2015

# ISSUES 2015

The daily General Convention newsletter of the Consultation

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## MARRIAGE EQUALITY IN THE EPISCOPAL CHURCH

ISSUES joins with Integrity in great joy as the Episcopal Church yesterday passed resolutions A054 and A036 allowing for the marriage of same-sex persons in our church. The arc of the moral universe may be long but, every once in a while, a week comes along when the curve towards justice is dizzyingly sharp!

Between the Supreme Court's ruling last week and our church's decision yesterday, we rejoice that LGBT rights have been advanced and that we have taken a decided step forward towards justice for all.

Of course, there is much more work yet to be done for LGBT people and for all the disenfranchised. But today we slow down and take a moment to savor the goodness of God, and to give thanks to all those many throughout the years who have prayed and toiled that this day might come!

May we who continue their work have the strength and faith to honor them as we march even further down the road to the Beloved Community and the full Reign of God.

### Support The Consultation and ISSUES

We hope the offerings of the Consultation, its ISSUES newsletter, its Exhibit Hall booths and its Open Meetings have been of use to you and more importantly to the mission of God as we try to live into it in the Episcopal Church.

As we begin to think about our next General Convention in Austin (*Is it just as hot there?*), we ask you to consider supporting the Consultation financially.

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The Consultation  
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### The Episcopal Women's Caucus Breakfast

The Presiding Bishop opened her Sunday sermon with the words: "Talitha cum. Girl, get up! You're not dead yet." She was referring to the Episcopal Church but, for many who had just come from the Episcopal Women's Caucus breakfast, it was heard as affirmation that this group of "troublemakers" (a term used by Sarah Eagle Heart, the Keynote Speaker at the breakfast), was not only alive and well but the Caucus's focus is needed as much as ever.

The Caucus breakfast has been held at every convention since 1982. On this Sunday morning, as the room began to fill, the energy of the conversations amongst strangers, new friends, and old acquaintances, was exhilarating.

The opening prayer, offered by L. Zoe Cole (Deputy, Diocese of Colorado), reminded the gathering of the power of believing we are capable of being change agents in the world today. Convener Terri C. Pilarski (Rector of Christ Church, Dearborn, MI) welcomed those present by giving thanks for the courage of the Supreme Court around the issues of Health Care and Marriage Equality, and for the wisdom of the Episcopal Church to be open to doing God's will through the power of a vote in electing The Rt. Rev. Michael B. Curry to be our next Presiding Bishop.

Dr. Fredrica Harris Thompsett was introduced by board member Gigi Conner (Priest-in-Charge, St. Alban's Church, St. Pete Beach, FL) and was given the Mary Magdalene Award. Fredrica spoke of the need of all (especially women) to know the history of women in the church, because only by knowing and appreciating those who came before us, can we really look forward and then move into the future.

The Rev. Babs M. Meairs (Diocese of San Diego) introduced The Rt. Rev. Steven Charleston, who received the Joseph

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# The Election

The whirlwind of emotion that was this weekend reached its absolute epoch on Friday afternoon with the election of our incoming Presiding Bishop. As I said often in the last two months since the candidates' names were released, I happen to know three of the four candidates personally (one was my childhood rector, one is my current bishop, and one was on the board of my seminary). Beginning at 11:15 am, I sat in the first row of the gallery of the House of Deputies to see the proceedings.

Over the next few hours, suspense built on top of suspense as the bishops prayed, discussed and voted privately a few blocks away. The Deputies passed the time by celebrating their 230th anniversary and debating on a resolution until notice came that the bishops had made their decision. Lunchtime was approaching but, in a quite uncommon move, the deputies fiercely pushed to suspend their lunch break until the election was confirmed. While the Committee on the Confirmation of the Presiding Bishop retired to another room to deliberate, the Deputies returned to some time-passing legislation for what seemed to many of us observers to be an eternity, especially as our stomachs growled and our hearts pounded mercilessly.

Then it happened. Before a standing-room-only crowd, House of Deputies president Gay Jennings announced that the committee had confirmed the Bishops' election of the Rt. Rev...(drumroll please)..... Michael Bruce Curry of North Carolina! All who were able leapt to our feet, cheered, hugged, applauded, and I for one certainly cried!

I've known Bishop Curry for 22 years, since long before he was a bishop! In 1993 my parents and I moved to Baltimore and joined St. James Episcopal Church, of which he was the young firebrand Rector. Michael Curry was the first priest I ever strongly remember, and I had the enormous honor to hear his world-renowned preaching virtually every Sunday of my childhood. When he was elected Bishop of North Carolina in 2000, I learned for the first time what the phrase

"the Rt. Rev." meant. I was present on the day he was consecrated, June 17, 2000 – a day I will never forget – at Duke University Chapel in Durham. The Bishop's family and mine have kept close touch over the years, and I remain close with his daughters, who are around my age.

Just two hours before the election, I ran into Bishop Curry as the worship service was about to begin, and friends were taking selfies with him to mark the occasion of his potential election. I came

up to him with camera phone in hand and immediately he jubilantly introduced me to the North Carolinians around him, saying "This guy was my parishioner back at St. James in Baltimore when he was a little boy! He just graduated from Yale Divinity!" He even told me he was proud of me and I had the pleasure to introduce him to three of our EPF Young Adult Delegates! As we all took some celebratory selfies, a few of his fellow bishops came up for selfie time too!



I'm so completely blessed and honored to know this incredible man of God, and I can't wait to see how his incredible witness will continue to grow and strengthen our Church.

- Charles Graves,  
*Episcopal Peace Fellowship Young Adult Delegation*

## Sanctuary & Comprehensive Immigration Reform

Sanctuary as a place of safety has its roots in our Judeo-Christian tradition. Leviticus tells us aliens are citizens among us. Mary and Joseph, with the Baby Jesus, sought Sanctuary in Egypt. During World War II, Franciscan and Muslim communities helped Jewish people fleeing Germany to safety.

In the 80's, churches in the U.S. opened their doors to Central Americans fleeing violence in their home countries. This was the birth of the faith-based Sanctuary movement. In 2009, immigrants, predominately from Mexico and Central America were being swept up in immigration raids resulting in

broken families and broken communities. The New Sanctuary Movement was launched in several cities across the U.S. The NSM was not limited to housing immigrants in danger of immediate deportation, but became a ministry of accompaniment and advocacy. Witness in immigration court proceedings often resulted in immigrants being released back to their families while their cases continued. The Episcopal Church was supportive and involved in the movement in several congregations.

Since 2009, no significant progress has been made towards comprehensive

immigration reform. Information is confusing and unclear as states have passed policy dealing with what really is a federal issue. The press often paints a negative image of immigrants creating mistrust among and between communities.

It is time to recommit. Our churches are trusted places and can serve as meeting grounds for reflection, conversation, relationship building, as we give out accurate information and provide services.

For further information on how to become involved, please contact Dianne Aid at [wolffogubbio1@gmail.com](mailto:wolffogubbio1@gmail.com).

# The Other Supreme Court Ruling

Last week was an amazing week for Supreme Court watchers. Not only did the Supreme Court decide marriage equality, but it also decided another, remarkable decision in support of the Affordable Care Act (ACA), which has been nicknamed Obamacare.

Earlier in the week, the Court decided that the federal government could provide tax subsidies to help the poor and middle class buy health insurance from the marketplace that the federal government runs, the marketplace that residents of the thirty-six states that have decided not to run their own markets must use for insurance coverage. This will help over 85% of the customers using these exchanges in these states to qualify for subsidies to buy health insurance. That is over six million people. Without these subsidies, most of these six million would not qualify for health insurance and the cancellation of their policies would lead to higher prices for everyone in those markets. Not to mention, six million people would not be able to be insured.

Not only does this make health care more affordable for the people of these states but the ruling endorses the larger purpose of the ACA. As Chief Justice Roberts stated, "Congress passed the Affordable Care Act to improve health insurance markets, not destroy them." This is a great victory for the ACA, and for the availability of health insurance to those who want it, and need it.

- Laura Russell,  
*Episcopal Network for Economic Justice*

*(‘Episcopal Women’s Caucus Breakfast’ continued from page 1)*

award. Steven reminded the gathering that in his tradition the women were considered to be doctors – healers in the community. He also said that, when change happens, most often people can become fearful and act out of that fear.

Terri then introduced the Keynote Speaker, Sarah Eagle Heart, Missioner for Indigenous Ministries for the Episcopal Church. Sarah and her twin sister were "troublemakers" according to those who did not like the fact that they were protesting against a tradition that denigrated young women and belittled their spirituality. This call to stand up for what is just led her to her current position. She told her listeners that the Native tribes often mistrusted "the church" and that, when she was named one of 40 emerging American Indian Leaders by the National Center for American Indian Enterprise Development, it was more than an honor for her – it was also a recognition, affirmation and show of trust in the Episcopal Church which has begun the work of reconciliation and healing by repudiating the "Doctrine of Discovery." As we face into the shame of this particular part of our history, we do it with Christ by our side. Sarah was presented with a handmade shawl by a member of the Caucus board. All three were given standing ovations.

The Presiding Bishop, who was able to attend for a brief time, was also given a standing ovation of thanks for her remarkable service as Presiding Bishop. She and her husband Richard were given tote bags with Caucus swag. Her husband’s had a tee shirt that said "A woman’s place is in the House of Bishops."

What impressed the Board the most was the continual offering of thanks to the Caucus for its ministry of justice work. Also included in those offerings were statements about the continuing need for women clergy to receive parity in pay, more women in the House of Bishops, mentoring for younger women, and how to prepare congregations to be open to hiring women.

- Gigi Connor and Terri C. Pilarski, EWC Board Members

## **From Too Proud to Bend: Journey of a Civil Rights Foot Soldier**

Ninth in a series of ten excerpts from Nell Braxton Gibson’s memoir

The author is nineteen years old and a sophomore at Spelman College in Atlanta, GA.

Sitting down on a bench beside a metal table, Mrs. Forman, Ruby D., and I say hello to the women with whom we’ve been placed.... "I’m Blood," a big dark-skinned woman on the other side of the room declares. The inmate sitting next to me whispers in my ear, "That’s Blood. She called Blood ‘cause she kilt a man in cold blood."

"This here’s Tough Titty," Blood says, pointing to the medium-size, brown-skinned woman with short hair who is seated beside her. Tough Titty, the woman seated beside me whispers, got her name by surviving a hideous slashing from a man she was in a fight with who left a deep gash across one of her breasts from his knife. A few more women introduce themselves, but none of them have names as unforgettable as the first two.

Some prisoners look as if they should be sitting on a front porch rocking grandchildren; others look tough, like street fighters. As I scan the room, it occurs to me that it isn’t just my freedom and the freedom of the children I’ve seen in the projects that we’re working toward. It’s the freedom of all of us—these women, too. That white world outside doesn’t see any difference between me and the women in here. To them we are all just niggers.

Dinner arrives on a sectioned metal tray with plastic utensils. The meat looks like a dark-brown piece of dried leather. The rice is mushy, and the green beans are soft and overcooked. There is a slice of white bread on the tray—something totally alien to my upbringing. We always had whole-wheat or corn bread when we were growing up. I take a taste of the rice, which is very mildly seasoned. It all tastes like water that has been thickened and colored to look like rice and vegetables and I unconsciously turn my nose up at the first bite, but Ruby D. tells me, "Jail is one place you don’t want to be sick. Eat it." And so I do.

That night I "brush" my teeth by putting salt on my fingertip and running it around in my mouth. Then I wash out my underwear, hang it on the rail at the foot of my bed, take off my skirt and blouse, and get under the sheets in my slip and bra.

Note: *The good folks at Amazon.com would be happy to help you read more from Nell’s book.*

# STEWARDED ADAPTIVE CHANGE: MINISTERING IN GOD'S BIG TENT

Miguelina Espinal Howell is Vicar of Christ Church Cathedral in Hartford, CT, and is at the General Convention, coordinating Latino volunteers from the Office of Latino/Hispanic Ministries of the Domestic & Foreign Missionary Society (DFMS).

Being Vicar of Christ Cathedral means pastoring the Cathedral congregation and overseeing the entire Cathedral staff, working together with the Cathedral Chapter. Miguelina's comfortable authority in this august role is a testimony to the adventuresome imagination of the Cathedral congregation and its bishop, the Rt. Rev. Ian Douglas, who beheld in a young Hispanic woman priest from the Dominican Republic the gifts of episcopate – a wonderful Greek word for "oversight" that gave birth to our word "episcopate," but that extends far further than merely the role of the bishop in our church – and who called those gifts out in that young woman. They have found for themselves a leader with a clear head for structure and management and a vibrant voice for a generous sense of mission to their community and world. She calls her congregation to a renewed attention to what God is up to out there in the neighborhoods, so that they can serve God's dynamic "new thing" around them.

We should not be surprised! Miguelina grew up in a devotedly faithful Episcopal family in the Dominican Republic, her father managing a small shop and serving as the church sexton. Her parents together set a model of generosity and compassion - supporting any who had need with what means they had, and sending their children off to educational opportunities they had never enjoyed. This compassion became part of the fabric of Miguelina's character and faith. It bred in her a deep love of the Episcopal Church's comprehensiveness and via media. "One

of the things I most appreciate about the Episcopal Church is that we are able to use ALL the gifts God has given us, including our brains. We walk with the Spirit and with reason, one of the best gifts of our church. We're able to reason and communicate both emotionally and intellectually. What a gift to our spiritual breadth!"

But her appreciation doesn't stop there. "To agree to disagree – as we do in the Episcopal Church - requires much more from us, spiritually, emotionally, and intellectually. It drives us deeper into real community and gives us a bigger sense of God than those who can't handle such diversity of thought and conviction. And it makes us open to change, open to resilient adaptation to what the Spirit is doing in the world."

If we hope that our youth ministries will form Christians for leadership in the now and future Church, Miguelina is a striking example of how seamlessly we can move a woman into leadership, from youth in EYE, through ordination at 26 to Province 9 Youth Ministry Coordinator, to Executive Council membership, to President Bonnie Anderson's Council of Advice, to planting churches in the Dominican Republic, to associate rector and then rectorships in Newark, membership on the TREC task force and on the staff of CREDO, and now to Cathedral leadership. Along the way, mentors at all levels of our church polity clearly discerned her gifts and called her into them, and with each call, she has risen to the occasion, with God's help. Moving back and forth between the Dominican Republic and the United States, Miguelina has navigated differing cultures both inside the Church and out, and this cultural acrobatic continues to expand her vision of God's big tent of mission and mercy more and more.

- The Rev. Holly Lyman Antolini



The Consultation is a collaboration of progressive organizations within the Episcopal Church that partner to work for social justice. Before every triennial General Convention, we come together to develop a platform that will guide our shared advocacy and goals.

The Consultation member organizations are:

Associated Parishes for Liturgy and Mission  
Episcopal Asiamerica Ministry Advocates  
Episcopal Church Publishing Company  
Episcopal Network for Economic Justice  
Episcopal Peace Fellowship  
Episcopal Urban Caucus  
Episcopal Women's Caucus  
Integrity  
TransEpiscopal  
Union of Black Episcopalians

## *From the history of ISSUES*

*September 13, 1979, Denver*

Many people at Convention are trying Colorado's very own Coors beer. Most of them don't know that Coors is the target of a national boycott by the AFL-CIO and many church groups for its practices of racial and sexual discrimination, its insistence upon lie-detector questioning of prospective employees on their political beliefs, and above all for its persistent union-busting efforts. You can support the striking Coors workers by not buying Coors and telling your friends to do the same.



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