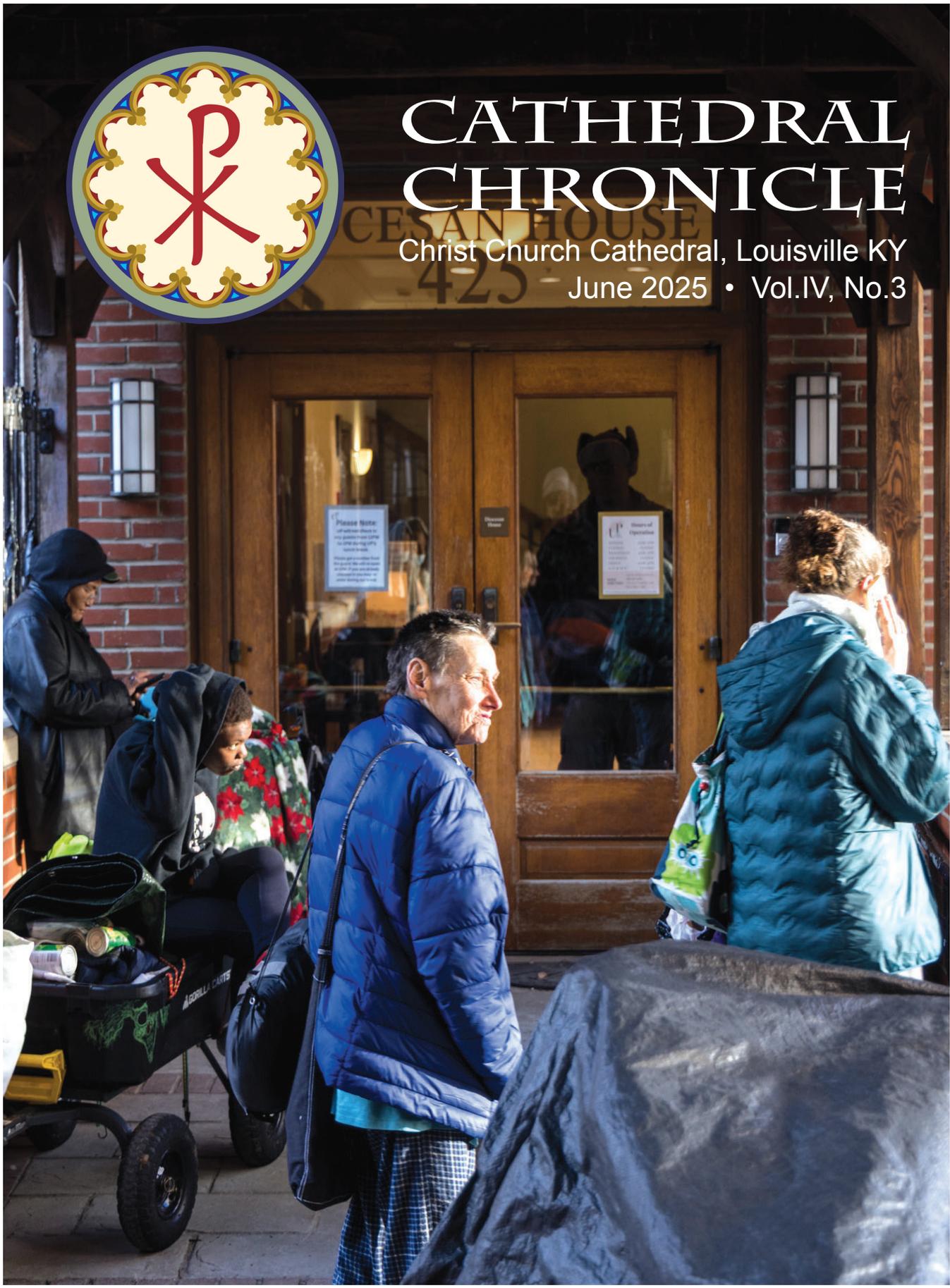


CATHEDRAL CHRONICLE

Christ Church Cathedral, Louisville KY
June 2025 • Vol.IV, No.3



CHRIST CHURCH CATHEDRAL

→ a church in the heart of the city with a heart for the city ←

WELCOME

ccclou.org
502.587.1354
421 South Second Street, Louisville, KY 40202

Service Times

Sunday Mornings

9:00 Bible study, 2nd Floor, Diocesan building
10:30 Holy Eucharist in-person and livestream
11:30 Coffee Hour

Midweek

Tuesdays and major feasts during the week, 12:00–12:30 p.m.

Office Hours

Monday and Wednesday, 9:00 a.m.-5:00 p.m.
Tuesday and Thursday, 10:00 a.m.-1:00 p.m.
Friday, 9:00 a.m.-1:00 p.m..

Parking

Available on Sundays only:

- At the Louisville Surgery Center, 444 S. 1st St., (accessed from 1st Street), which is directly behind the cathedral
- At the Transamerica parking lot, adjacent to Cathedral Commons, at the corner of 2nd Street and Muhammad Ali Boulevard (Saturday and Sunday only FOR A FEE OF \$8.)

Additional paid parking is available at the locations below on Sundays and during the week:

- YMCA Garage (555 S. 2nd St.)
- Marriot Garage (280 W. Jefferson St.)
- PARC Garage at 1st and Jefferson
- Meters are available on 1st and 2nd Streets

Staff

The Very Rev. Matthew Bradley, Dean
Deacon: Dr. Eva Markham
Interim Director of Music: Dr. Jim Rightmyer
Susan Shockey, Parish Coordinator
Thomas Thill, Sacristan

Lay Leadership

Senior Warden: John Kiesel
Junior Warden: Ashley Pasteka
Treasurer: Kay Wilkinson

Editorial Staff

Members of the Communication Committee edit the *Chronicle*.

The *Cathedral Chronicle* is a quarterly newsletter that focuses on our work together in fellowship, ministry, and worship. We welcome ideas and contributions from parishioners. Please send submissions to cathedralchronicle@gmail.com

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on the cover . . .



Up For Women and Children
guests wait their turn in the cold, grateful for both the warmth of the morning light and the care and hope they will receive inside.

• photo courtesy of
UP For Women and Children

Christ Church Cathedral Land Acknowledgement

Christ Church Cathedral of the Episcopal Diocese of Kentucky gathers and stands on land which has been home, for over 11,000 years, to primarily Shawnee, Cherokee, Osage, Haudenosaunee Seneca, Hopewell and Adena peoples. Today we acknowledge the role our Church has played in colonialism's devastating legacy of death, stolen lands, dehumanizing removals, and forced assimilation of native people. We repent of our complicity in perpetuating the dominance of white European culture, even to the present day. We seek forgiveness. We honor the original peoples of this land and the presence of native people still living in Kentucky. We honor with respect their Elders, past, present, and future, their traditions, and the land itself. We commit to listen, learn, and walk in love.

from the Dean . . .

A couple of weeks ago, a small paper sign appeared in the hallway of the Cathedral offices. Artfully posted just above the coffee pot in the Link Building, the words, set to the music for the sung dismissal, read, "It's Ordinary Time, alleluia, alleluia!"

Ah, Ordinary Time, the seemingly endless stretch of weeks which run through the summer and all the way up to Advent. By the time we reach this season, we have passed all of the big name Holy Days of spring and early summer - Easter, Ascension, Pentecost, and Trinity Sunday. And the arrival of this more relaxed liturgical season coincides with the time of year during which many folks prioritize travel, time with family, and looking for lighter schedules in general.

So what does the coming of Ordinary Time mean for the mission and ministry of the Cathedral and our life as disciples of Jesus? In a world which values the new and dazzling, the exciting and sensational, Ordinary Time might sound like a season worth skipping. But nothing could be further from the truth. This is God's annual reminder to us, enshrined in the Church's calendar, that most of our lives will be spent in ordinary days.

These days we rise, break our fast, get ready, and amble out the door with our to do lists more or less set for us by rhythm and routine. Somehow, with a comfortable predictability, we arrive back at our home more or less in the same state in which we left, perhaps a little wearier for the exertions of the day. And, as dusk gives way to dark, we wrap up the loose ends of the day - or leave them to dangle - knowing that another dawn awaits us on the other side of dreams.

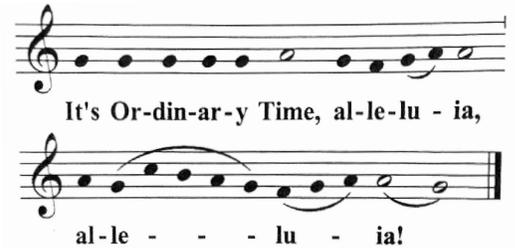


These are our ordinary days. The 30-minute-sit-com days, where, by the time the episode ends, all is, in general terms, as it was in the beginning, is now, and ever shall be, world without end. And that, my friends, is the illusion of these days - that that will go on forever, unchanging and endless. But that isn't really the case, is it?

Why make a special season of the year only to call it ordinary? So that we might take note of that which might otherwise pass by unnoticed and unpraised. These days are, after all, the substance of our lives. And there is such a blessing in their relative stability. Oh, God knows that the world and its powers and principalities don't cease their volatile convulsions simply because a new Church season has arrived. But, on balance, these days aren't those in which we burn the candle at both ends or sprint from one moment to another. And that is, itself, a gift.

If Ordinary Time is a season in which we can walk the path of our day by routine, perhaps this is an invitation to consider if these routine routes we take help us encounter God. This might be a chance for us to integrate habits of holiness into the rhythms and rituals of our day to day. To rise, greet God in a brief word of prayer, and give thanks for the dawn. To step out into the world and notice, without fanfare, how life has taken root and grows all around us in the trees and grass and fleeting flowers of the field. And as the winking fireflies light their signal fires, calling us home at the gloaming hour, to count our weariness as a blessing which is only bestowed on those who have lived another day - an ordinary day. Thanks be to God, alleluia, alleluia.

Yours in Christ,
Matt+



A Lay Volunteer Reflects On The 81st Episcopal Church Convention

— Bill Shelton

For the second time in Episcopal Church history, the Diocese of Kentucky hosted the triennial General Convention. The eighty-first General Convention took place June 21-28, 2024, and certainly every Episcopalian in this city was aware of its presence. With the passage of time, the sixty-fourth General Convention, held in Louisville in 1974, is fading from our collective memory. At General Conventions Church legislation, policy, changes to liturgy and Prayer Book wording are approved or rejected. Then a new Presiding Bishop of the Episcopal Church is elected. During the 1974 General Convention, Rt. Rev. John Allin of Mississippi was elected to that august office. (Not without a little local controversy, and we'll get to that later in this article.) At the recent General Convention, Bishop Sean Rowe of Northwest Pennsylvania was elected the twenty-eighth Presiding Bishop, with no surrounding controversy. Both elections took place in our Cathedral nave; both elections made easier by Christ Church's aplomb for hospitality.

The General Convention of the Episcopal Church is a monumental event by anybody's scale and standard, requiring the logistical coordination of people, equipment and countless details by literally a small army of permanent staff employed by the Episcopal Church Center in New York. It is nothing short of a herculean feat to organize and carry out the three main purposes of the Convention: Worship, Legislation, and Election of the Presiding Bishop.

To this end there is an additional, even larger, army of volunteers employed to carry out the minutiae of procedures and business that is required every day to keep the events of Convention moving along every hour. When a General Convention concludes, planning is already underway to organize the next Convention three years away. I became aware of the astounding immensity of General Convention during the week I served as a lay volunteer last year.

In early autumn of 2023, our diocesan office asked parishioners to indicate their interest in volunteering during the Convention. This call was issued almost a year prior to the convention. I submitted my name, and several weeks later Amy Spicer from Hopkinsville contacted me, explaining that she was our diocesan coordinator of volunteers for Convention, and she asked if I was still interested in lending my time and energy. She inquired about any special skills I might have, and when she learned that I spoke Spanish passably she guaranteed me employment. Months later in November we volunteers attended an orientation at the downtown Gault House Hotel to meet the various people from



the Episcopal Church Center who would serve as coordinators and supervisors of volunteers for the various services needed to manage the Convention. I learned that I was assigned to Language Services and would be working under Iris DiLeonardo and Jennifer Mendez from the national church to make translation services available for the House of Bishops. During the ensuing months before Convention Iris and Amy Spicer contacted me periodically with updates about locations and hours.

Convention attendees—bishops, lay deputies, visitors and observers— come not only from the United States, but also from dioceses in Latin America, Haiti, Taiwan and the Convocation of Episcopal Churches in Europe. In order to be full participants in the daily business of the two legislative houses of Convention, deputies and bishops require simultaneous translation from English into Spanish, Haitian Creole and Mandarin. Language Services at Convention make sure that all business sessions on the legislative floors have interpreter service available, and volunteers make sure that all voting participants of Convention have a working headset to hear the interpreters during legislative sessions and at worship services.

In order to grasp the impressive size of Convention, one needs to realize that the event utilized the floor space of the entire Kentucky International Convention Center. Each legislative house required an entire convention hall for seating, the worship space required two combined halls, and a seemingly endless warren of small meeting spaces and hallways on the bottom level of the Center was dedicated to administrative offices and volunteer accommodations. All this space was necessary to facilitate the gathering of thousands each day. On any given day of the eight-day convention, we Language Services volunteers toted heavy listening equipment cases a couple of miles (sometimes close to 10,000 steps according to my cell phone) per day

from hall to hall, distributed the headsets, collected them again, and secured them at the end of the sessions. There is a lot of behind-the-scenes grunt work that moves a convention along. My co-workers and I were amazed every day that we could move in unison like cogs turning in a well-oiled machine, a tribute to the planning skills of our supervisors from Episcopal Church HQ.

The sheer volume of business handled by Convention would have been nearly impossible to complete in one week's time without the efficiency of electronic processing and communication. Paper documents were almost non-existent. All bishops and deputies were issued specially programmed tablets that became their constant companions. On their tablets, the agendas, legislation under consideration, notices, news, changes of meeting schedules, etc. — in fact everything they needed to know — could be found on their tablets. Even us volunteers were encouraged to download a Convention application into our personal cell phones in order to stay current with the events. Before the days of modern IT management, apparently General Convention's business used to advance at glacial pace, and consequently General Conventions lasted a longer period of time.

As the end of Convention neared, the election of the Presiding Bishop required the space and hospitality of Christ Church Cathedral, the venue of the elections of 1974 and 2024. The Cathedral's worship space was cleared of pew, chairs and tables were set up for meetings. Refreshments were available. The afternoon of the election, all deputies and volunteers met in a special session at the Convention Center while the House of Bishops was sequestered and kept incommunicado (electronic devices were surrendered at the door) at the Cathedral to carry out their electoral deliberations and voting. Toward the end of the afternoon a messenger arrived from the Cathedral and presented a note to the President of the House of Deputies. There the awaited announcement was issued: Rt. Rev. Sean Rowe had been elected, and the House of Deputies duly confirmed

the result. Cheers and thankful prayer spread all around.

At the 1974 election in Louisville, however, the confirmation of election results was mysteriously and very inconveniently delayed. The House of Bishops was kept in the dark regarding confirmation of its vote and lunch time was approaching. The plan, apparently, had been to wrap up the election not long after breakfast. CCC parishioner Kay Shields-Wilkinson was present at the Cathedral that day. She was allowed to remain in the building and work because in 1974 there were not the electronic conveniences and potential for mischief of today. As she explained, "That was the year it was decided the House of Deputies should confirm the election of the PB; up to then it had been a House of Bishop's decision. That threw the timing off. The Cathedral had only prepared a brunch." So, when the bishops were still there at lunchtime, she remembers, "it was Susie Reed, wife of Bishop David Reed [and mother of Sarah Reed], who went to the old Haymarket and some other places and bought whatever she could find to put on an impromptu lunch." The volunteers who prepared the brunch earlier were still at the Cathedral, and they helped Mrs. Reed set up lunch for the starving prelates. Following lunch there was still no word from the House of Deputies, and, as Kay related, "Bishop Marmion did what he loved to do: he launched a hymn sing-along with all the bishops. It was a glorious sound."

The word did finally come from the Deputies by mid-afternoon, and the Bishops' vote was confirmed: Rt. Rev. John Allin, Bishop of Mississippi, was to become the twenty-third Presiding Bishop-elect of the Episcopal Church.

Once again, as in times before and, hopefully, times yet to come, Christ Church Cathedral would, by its saving talent for hospitality, rescue the day.



AN INTERVIEW WITH *Summer Songwriter Series* CREATOR NICK TEALE

Kirt Jacobs Please tell us what the Summer Songwriter Series is and what it's all about?

Nic Teale The Summer Songwriter Series is a curated celebration of original music and storytelling hosted within the sacred walls of Christ Church Cathedral. It's a space where emerging and established artists alike can share their truth through song—stripped-down, intimate, and rooted in vulnerability. We're also raising money for the incredible work done by Cathedral-affiliated organizations—namely CLOUT, CLCM, and UP for Women and Children.

KJ What drew you to take on such a creative and musical endeavor and to host it at CCC?

NT I've been looking for a lot more spaces to host original acoustic music in Louisville—especially spaces that aren't dependent on alcohol sales, since a lot more of my peers (including myself) have been opting out of that lifestyle. A lot more coffee shops around town used to do that kind of thing, but COVID pretty severely impacted that scene, and a lot of the bars around town are increasingly more focused on larger bands and artists playing covers. Since I tend more toward the acoustic and singer-songwriter side of music, I want to be part of creating the infrastructure that can support artists in those genres. If you read the history of music scenes like Minneapolis or Seattle that blew up on a national scale, you start to realize how important

Summer Songwriter Series
*Join some of Louisville's best rising artists
in giving back to the local community!*

June 22: Help build people power to solve community problems
 *Katie Didit | Shannon Vetter
Michael Schrader | Joe Piano*

July 20: Help end the cycle of need in Louisville
*Cait Justice | Vincent Gleeson
Aaron Bibelhauser | Scott T. Smith* 

August 24: Support unhoused women/children and DV victims
 *A Girl Named Earl | Don't Call Me Lady
Avery Joyce Landrum | Alisha Nikole*

*Christ Church Cathedral (421 S 2nd St)
1-3 PM | No cover, donations encouraged
Parking available at 444 S 1st St*

it is to build that infrastructure at home as opposed to chasing the Nashvilles or New Yorks of the world.

KJ What excites you about CCC's 2025 Singer/Songwriters' Series?

NT I'm especially excited about the incredible organizations we'll be supporting through this series! Our first date is June 22, and we'll be raising money for Citizens of Louisville Organized and United Together (CLOUT), which is a non-profit working on building people power to hold our leaders accountable on issues ranging from mental health and education to maintaining the reforms of the consent decree in the absence of federal support. Then on July 20 we're raising money for Central Louisville Community Ministries (CLCM) and their efforts to end the cycle of need in the downtown area of Kentucky. Finally, on August 24 donations will support UP for Women and Children, the women's shelter adjacent to the Cathedral that supports women, children, and marginalized individuals facing homelessness and domestic violence.

KJ How did the 'Aha Moment' come to you to create the series?

NT I was out hitting up coffee shops downtown to see how many of them would be interested in starting up live music again, and Dean Matt was outside the cathedral as I passed by. I told him about some of my ambitions and he suggested having the cathedral as a songwriter space. I was a bit skeptical at first due to financial reasons—no one likes to talk about money—but part of my concern is actually getting other songwriters paid, which can be difficult if nothing is being sold. But then I realized that we've got a model for that kind of show in Louisville already—the Monarch on Bardstown Road. They put on a wide range of both free and ticketed shows that are supported by both yearly memberships and—relevant to this series—donations from attendees. I had the idea to raise money to split between both the organizations mentioned above and the artists—last year we had quite a bit of success and I look forward to taking it further this year!

KJ As this is your 2nd year as Creator, what's the primary difference between 2024 and 2025?

NT We've been able to expand upon what worked for the series last time around and revisit some less successful parts of the series. For one thing, by making it monthly instead of weekly, we can bring more people out to support a wider range of artists and focus our promotion on one show a month instead of four. I was also thrilled to move the series to be closer to the end of service. Last year we had to do the series from 3:00-4:30 largely due to the preparations

going on for the General Convention, but this year we're starting at 1:00, and I think that'll be a lot more convenient for both parishioners and newcomers alike.

KJ Are you looking to explore anything different in the 2026 series or beyond?

NT I've been working on expanding a lot of the connections I have with other musicians and media entities in the Louisville area to take this series to another level next year. We've been working with LPM and the LEO Weekly on getting the word out about the series this year, and I'm excited to raise the profile of this series for next year so that we can better support both the musicians and the Cathedral partners that do so much incredible work for Louisvillians.

KJ What opportunities do you see for the 2026 series and beyond?

NT I've been talking with some of CCC's partner congregations, including fellow CLOUT and CLCM affiliates, such as Calvary Episcopal, First Unitarian, and Jeff Street Baptist, about undertaking a similar series at their parishes, perhaps at different times throughout the year. Ideally, I'd like for the Summer Songwriter Series at CCC to be our flagship event while also having similar events at other parishes—this way we can support a wider range of artists and organizations while building up our local churches as a space to supporting the arts and local musicians.

KJ If a singer/songwriter wants to contribute or participate in the series in the coming years, how do they go about that process?

NT We welcome all interested artists to reach out via my email address: nicholas.teale49@gmail.com. Submissions should include a short bio, a couple of sample tracks or videos, and a brief statement on why they feel called to this series. We're not looking for polish—we're looking for heart.

KJ If you could wave a magic wand, what would you like to see the Singer Songwriter Series evolve into over the years?

NT I would love for the series to become adopted by more churches and organizations across the city, state, and region. As I mentioned, I've been talking with other congregations who've expressed interest in doing a similar series at their churches, and since CLOUT has several affiliates across the country (including BUILD in Lexington), I think that could be an awesome opportunity to expand this concept into other cities and make our churches—especially more progressive and inclusive denominations across the country—a third space for established and emerging musicians the same way coffee shops have historically been.

1900	1910	1920	1930	1940	1950
<p>1835 Protestant Episcopal Asylum for Girls</p> <p>1851 Episcopal Church Home</p> <p>1851 Norton Infirmary (support in establishing)</p> <p>1867 Night School for Poor Children</p> <p>1869 Orphanage for Boys</p> <p>1872 The First (in Louisville) Industrial School for Children</p> <p>1879 Founded Home of the Innocents</p>	<p>Endowment was started</p>	<p>School for Defective Children (Montessori)</p> <p>School for the Deaf</p> <p>Cathedral became hospital during flu epidemic</p> <p>USO site</p> <p>Note: upon completion of the Cathedral House with a bowling alley and kitchen, the Cathedral became a civic center for Louisville's activities as well as a diocesan center</p>	<p>Formation of the Fellowship for Reconciliation</p> <p>Celebration of Christ Church Centennial; the pews freed</p>	<p>Cathedral Welfare Council — an unemployment office after the stock market crashed</p> <p>Refugee Center after the 1937 flood</p> <p>Established a staff position of social worker</p>	<p>USO site</p> <p>Outreach support to General Hospital</p> <p>Established the <i>Well Baby Clinic</i></p> <p>Provided space for the Syrian/Lebanese Orthodox to have their worship</p> <p>Wayside Christian Mission came into existence</p> <p>Clarksdale Youth Group joined with our Cathedral Youth for socializing</p>

A HISTORY OF INSTITUTIONS BORN FROM

Part One of an Occasional Series — Benjamin Wilson

“History,” said Stephen Dedalus in James Joyce’s novel *Ulysses*, “is a nightmare from which I am trying to awake.” When that landmark modernist novel was published in Paris in 1922, Christ Church Cathedral was celebrating its centennial. Ninety-eight years prior, Ludwig von Beethoven was premiering his majestic Ninth Symphony in Vienna at the same time as the first iteration of Christ Church’s building was nearing completion. The silver patens and chalices from which the faithful receive communion each Sunday were forged in 1837, a full 24 years prior to the outbreak of the Civil War.

In a nation so new, settled on lands so ancient, the sheer existence of this parish—let alone our facilities—for over 200 years renders palpable the warp and weft of history as it unfolded around this place and its congregation. But what of the congregation’s involvement with that history?

As the Cathedral moves into its third century, history continues to beguile and bedevil us. Surely belatedly, we have begun to reckon with the intertwining of the enslavement of those of African descent and our own antebellum origins—even as this congregation made signal contributions to the Civil Rights movement in the 1960s.

Likewise, our efforts to recognize that the lands we inhabit were not ours, but were the home of “primarily Shawnee, Cherokee, Osage, Haudenosaunee, Seneca, Hopewell, and Adena peoples,” as our Land Acknowledgment states, reckon with the nightmares of history in ways perhaps new to us, if equally belated.

By the same token, as we move forward in our efforts to establish and grow our ministry to Louisville’s unhoused through our monthly first Sunday breakfast

1950	1960	1970	1980	1990	2000
<p>Founded the Citizens Metropolitan Planning Council</p> <p>Clothes Closet begins (not housed here yet)</p>	<p>Clothes Closet comes to Christ Church</p> <p>University of Louisville Ministry to Students begins with our clergy volunteering as chaplains</p> <p>Bach Society begins</p> <p>Cathedral supports the St. George Center</p> <p>Cathedral marches for Civil Rights</p> <p>Actor's Theater comes to rehearse — stayed for almost ten years</p> <p>Locus for many Hiroshima/Nagasaki Remembrance events</p>	<p>Clothes Closet continues</p> <p>Innecity Street Ministry begins — later becomes St. John's Center</p> <p>Coalition for the Homeless begins to meet at the Cathedral</p> <p>Christian Social Relations begins</p> <p>Sewing Project begins</p> <p>Financial Support Chaplaincy at UofL Hospital</p> <p>Social Ministry Grant Program</p> <p>Home of the Innocents Advocacy is rejuvenated</p>	<p>Clothes Closet continues</p> <p>Founding of the Council on Peacemaking and Religion — later becomes Interfaith Paths to Peace and Justice Solutions</p> <p>Cathedral is designated a Jubilee Ministries Center</p> <p>Cathedral opens its doors to housing the meeting of Integrity (a Gay and Lesbian support group)</p> <p>Beginning of Memorial Day Worship/Peace Seeking Services</p>	<p>Clothes Closet continues</p> <p>Cathedral sponsors for Refugee Ministry (Bosnian Family)</p> <p>Sponsor (with other congregations) Chaplain for Norton Hospital</p> <p>Cocaine Anonymous begins to meet at the Cathedral</p> <p>Cornerstone begins here</p> <p>Home of the Innocents Chaplaincy begins</p> <p>Repair Affair is supported</p> <p>Ministry on the River is supported</p>	<p>2004 Groundbreaking for Cathedral Commons</p> <p>2006 Cathedral Commons opens for residents</p> <p>2014 Urban Partnership begins</p> <p>2019 UP for Women and Children begins</p> <p>2021 Cathedral Commons sold</p> <p>2025 <i>Room In the Inn</i> launched</p>

OM CHRIST CHURCH CATHEDRAL

and Room in the Inn, in partnership with UP for Women and Children, we can gain a sense of continuity by looking back at the founding of the Protestant Episcopal Asylum for Girls in 1835, or our long-running Clothes Closet throughout the latter half of the 20th century, or our contributions to the establishment of St. John's Center.

Starting with its earliest efforts to today, Christ Church Cathedral has helped birth institutions of all kinds that have proven to outgrow the parish and become independent and self-sustaining ministries, from the Episcopal Church Home (1851) and Norton Healthcare (also 1851) to Room in the Inn (2024). Some of these ministries continue; others have passed into history. More, we pray, are yet to come. All testify to the Cathedral's desire to not be a passive witness but a constituent presence within and beyond our downtown Louisville footprint, to be a catalyst for the Gospel not just in preaching and the sacraments, but in deed.

Last year, the Cathedral Chapter adopted our new mission statement, which reads: "Our mission is to embody Christ by serving our neighbors so that we share together in the power of God's unconditional love." As we look to the needs of our community and respond in faith, it is worthwhile at the same time to consider the Cathedral's history of establishing ministries and institutions that, in their own time, sought likewise to meet urgent needs.

In forthcoming issues of the Cathedral Chronicle, we will take a deeper look at some of the institutions born from our history, and consider what we might learn from the successes and failures of the faithful who went before us, whose efforts continue today to witness — paraphrasing the Gospel of St. John — to the light that shines in the darkness, which the darkness has not overcome.

A HISTORY OF THE SISTERHOOD OF THE HOLY NATIVITY

Advancing the Anglo Catholic Movement in the Episcopal Church by Sheryl A. Kujawa-Holbrook

A Review — Edgar Wallace

Many people are unaware that religious orders (monks, nuns, or mixed communities) exist in the Episcopal Church. Depending on where they live, Episcopalians themselves may never have encountered an Episcopal sister or brother living in a monastic community. Nevertheless, such orders have existed for some time within our church and continue to enhance the ministry and gospel outreach of our Communion. Monastic communities were abolished in the Church of England at the time of the Reformation, but began to be re-established through the influence of the Oxford Movement in the Nineteenth century. Today, the Episcopal Church recognizes 18 traditional orders and 14 Christian communities for men, women, or both.¹

“The stories of Indigenous Christians are often told from the perspective of the missionaries, not from the Indigenous peoples themselves. This is also the case for narratives relating to the Oneida and the Episcopal Church, including their relationship with the Sisterhood of the Holy Nativity. While the living memories of the Oneida regarding the sisterhood are positive, the historical analysis of the relationship is more nuanced. There is limited data from the perspective of the Oneida themselves during the years the Sisterhood of the Holy Nativity ministered among them.”

Sheryl A. Kujawa-Holbrook, an Episcopal priest, seminary professor, and editor of *Anglican and Episcopal History*, has engagingly told the story of one religious order in her book *A History of the Sisterhood of the Holy Nativity: Advancing the Catholic Movement in the Episcopal Church* (Pickwick Publications, 2024), which was published earlier this year.

The Sisterhood of the Holy Nativity was founded in 1882 in Boston, under the leadership of Fr. Charles Chapman Grafton, rector of the Church of the Advent, who would later become Bishop of the Diocese of Fond du Lac, Wisconsin. The order relocated to Providence, Rhode Island, in 1884 and then moved its Mother House to Fond du Lac, Wisconsin, in 1905. For one hundred forty years, the sisters have carried out work in dioceses and parishes through convents, retreat houses, and mission houses, in Massachusetts, Rhode Island, Wisconsin, New Jersey, New York, Maryland, California, Oregon, Nevada, Maine, West Virginia, and through individual missions in

numerous other locations². One sister now lives in Ripon, Wisconsin. Although the work of the order no longer continues, and most assets have been dispersed to other ministries, the legacy of the SHN’s work and the charisms which they brought to the larger church continue.

Bill Bippus and I were received as Associates of the Sisters of the Holy Nativity on December 8, 1982, in the chapel of the Convent in Fond du Lac. At the time, we were seminarians at Seabury-Western Theological Seminary in Evanston, Illinois, and had found a welcome place of retreat at the convent. Bill already knew the sisters from his time as a student at Brown University, when they had a mission house in Providence, Rhode Island. He even house-sat for them one year when the Rhode Island sisters returned to Wisconsin for the summer. After seminary, when we were ordained priests, Mother Boniface, SHN, traveled to Oklahoma to be a presenter for each of us. It was largely through her recommendation that we both got jobs in the Diocese of Fond du Lac a year later. My first position in the Diocese was as Canon Residentiary at St. Paul’s Cathedral, just down the street from the Convent. One of my duties was regularly celebrating the 7:00 am Daily Mass at the Convent. This included breakfast and often a bit of time with Mother Boniface or one of the other sisters, who provided wise counsel,

friendship, and much good humor for a young priest finding his way. For both Bill and me, the sisters have had an immeasurable influence on our ministry. Over the years, I had the honor of leading retreats for the sisters and associates at their retreat house in Santa Barbara, California, and for several years, Bill served as the sisters’ confessor at the Convent in Fond du Lac. For us, this book reads much like a family narrative, and we are honored to have been interviewed by the author during her research.³

Many others will find great interest in this history for its insight, not just into the story of one Anglican Sisterhood, but for its broader understanding of the 19th to 21st century church movements in which the order was formed, ministered, and eventually declined. Sheryl Kujawa-Holbrook masterfully tells the story, not just through individual accounts of the sisters, priests, and lay associates connected to the order, but through scholarly and insightful explorations of the times and situations in which their work was carried out.

Sheryl A. Kujawa-Holbrook

foreword by
Matthew Gunter



Advancing the
Anglo-Catholic
Movement in the
Episcopal Church

A HISTORY of the SISTERHOOD of the HOLY NATIVITY

*"This book, the first history of the Sisterhood of the Holy Nativity, traces the origins of the order in the late nineteenth century through today. Though clergy were the theological voice of the Oxford Movement, the role of sisterhoods included advancing the catholic faith among the laity through religious education, parish mission, guilds for women and children, spiritual guidance, instruction in the sacraments, the ecclesiastical arts, and humanitarian relief."*⁴

Like all true history, such recounting includes admirable and inspirational episodes, but also failures from institutional and personal flaws. SHN began when several sisters left the Society of St. Margaret,

an Episcopal sisterhood founded in 1855 in England, which had come to the Church of the Advent in Boston in 1871. The exodus caused misunderstandings and accusations on both sides, resulting in a bitter dispute that I remember hearing referenced when I spent time with the sisters a hundred years later. In time, reconciliation took place between members of the two orders, but institutional memories long remained. Kujawa-Holbrook gives a well-researched account of this episode, which also provides insight and clarity, not only to one situation but to the personalities and dynamics that are frequently present in the mission and movements of the church.

A substantial chapter of the book is given to the sisters' work with indigenous peoples, particularly the Oneida of Wisconsin. Originally from New York, the Oneida had been Christians since 1702. When they were moved to Wisconsin in 1822, they became the first Episcopalians in the territory, well before white Episcopalians settled there. The Oneida were Anglicans for almost two hundred years before any contact with the Sisters of the Holy Nativity, so the work of the sisters was not to convert, but to support the deep faith already present. SHN began their ministry with the Oneida in 1895, building a Mission House next to the Church of the Holy Apostles. The sisters supported parish ministries, taught in the Episcopal Day School, and organized

groups for women, which included a lace-making industry. The book honestly explores their history and relationship with the Episcopal Church, as well as the 50-year mission of the Sisters of the Holy Nativity to the nation.

*"They were progressive for their era in their recognition of the heritage, rights, and dignity of the people. The sisters also understood when it was time to relinquish their control to facilitate leadership from the Oneida. At the same time, they did not question white cultural superiority, nor were they publicly critical of federal policies assumed to be in the Oneidas' best interests."*⁵

A History of the Sisterhood of the Holy Nativity also explores the ministry of *Soul Work*, which SHN carried out among women of diverse backgrounds. "When the Sisterhood of the Holy Nativity first began hosting retreats for lay women in 1883, the practice was relatively unknown in the United States." It began to grow within the Episcopal Church largely through the work of Sisterhoods, such as SHN.⁶

Early on, the Sisterhood also established "houses for rest and refreshment that intentionally served the working poor in coastal Rhode Island. While it was common for wealthy Episcopalians to occupy summer homes during July and August and attend church there, the idea that workers would benefit from rest and refreshment was considered an innovation." The houses provided places of rest and spiritual retreats for sisters, household staff, associates, and guests.

Throughout its history, SHN strove to balance cloistered life and external mission work. Most of the external work was done in parishes, Sunday schools, retreats, youth work, and visits. This was balanced by silence, daily liturgical offices, intercession, a community life, and work such as the Margaret Peabody Lending Library and the Ecclesiastical Arts department, which engaged in vestment design and altar bread making.

During its history, eighty-seven life-professed sisters remained in vows until their deaths. The book includes appendices which provide biographies of each of those sisters of diverse backgrounds, a timeline, a list of convents and mission houses, and photographs.

Numerous other women spent time bringing their gifts to the order as novices and professed sisters before leaving the order. Although they are not named in the book, the author acknowledges their contribution. *"Just as the Sisterhood of the Holy Nativity claimed its early formation in the Society of St. Margaret, one-third of the women who left continued in some form of religious life after their departure, building on and expanding their early formation. Some went on to other sisterhoods or church ministries, and at least three established new traditional or dispersed religious communities."*

Sheryl Kujawa-Holbrook also explores in well-researched depth the many changes that took place in society and the Episcopal Church as the 20th century progressed. These brought challenges as well as opportunities to traditional orders such as SHN. The years also brought a steady decline in numbers. In the early 20th century, the average number of sisters in the SHN at any time was 51. By 1980, there were 28 sisters, by 1990, 16, by 2000, 13, and by 2010, the number had declined to 10.⁷ When this history was published earlier this year, two were living. The number is now one.

Sheryl Kujawa-Holbrook makes a compelling case, however, that the legacy remains. Her careful and engaging account provides an enjoyable and informative look at an important, if not well-known, segment of the Episcopal Church.

*"As the earthly witness of the Sisterhood of the Holy Nativity passes into history, their lives demonstrate a steadfast love of the catholic faith for all willing to open their hearts. May their hidden way of holiness inspire a new generation to devote their lives to loving service in God's name."*⁸



1 www.episcopalchurch.org/organizations-affiliations/religious-orders-and-christian-communities/listings/ "The Episcopal Church canonically recognizes 18 traditional orders and 14 Christian communities for men, women, or both. Religious Orders and Christian Communities serve the greater church in several ways. Many offer retreat houses and individual spiritual direction. Each community has a rule of life and is committed to prayer, life in community, and hospitality."

2 Appendix B, Kujawa-Holbrook, *A History of the Sisterhood of the Holy Nativity*, pp.211-212

3 Kujawa-Holbrook, *A History...*, Acknowledgements xiv

4 Kujawa-Holbrook, *A History...*, Back Cover

5 Kujawa-Holbrook, *A History...*, pp. 97-98

6 Kujawa-Holbrook, *A History...*, p. 180

7 Kujawa-Holbrook, *A History...* p. 165

8 Kujawa-Holbrook, *A History...*, p. 189

RISING GEESE

— Susan Shockey

*The geese gather at the waters edge before me
and then suddenly rise, their slender necks stretched forward in sure anticipation,
Their wings rise and fall with a gentle motion that begins to crescendo,
stirring the air about me
and lifting them upward with a slow and almost liquid elegance.
The team holds formation, ascending with ease,
their movement graceful,
their loud squawking, leaving only deep silence behind.*

*I stand motionless, transfixed by the brilliance of sky, water,
light, movement, and sound,
anchored to earth and yet feeling a much deeper anchor shift and pull within me.
Prayers for my own guidance in the journey pour from my heart out onto my lips,
prayers that I may know such eager anticipation,
that I might set my course always to the same whispered call
that lovingly guides even the rising geese.*

9-21-2023



ROOM IN THE INN LOUISVILLE



Planning Team Update

— Leta Watson

After the success of the first season of **Room In the Inn**, the Planning Team has jumped almost immediately back into preparation for the 2026 season. Great progress is being made! The nineteen board members, representing our diocese as well as local Baptist, Catholic, and Unitarian congregations, are actively engaged in the planning process.

During the meeting convened on June 3, the documentation necessary for tax-exempt status and incorporation received approval for filing. Furthermore, committee chairs were appointed, and the following individuals were elected to the board: Suzanne Meeks (First Unitarian Church), President; Leta Watson, Vice President; Sharon Bidwell (St. Francis of Rome Church), Secretary; and Dean Matt Bradley, Treasurer.

Current efforts are focused on securing a second site and identifying funding opportunities, while initial frameworks have been established for soliciting volunteers and donations. Watch this space for updates, including ways you can get involved!



DEAN MATT BRADLEY HONORED WITH AWARD

— John Kiesel • photos – Leta Watson

On May 16, the Coalition for the Homeless presented Dean Matt Bradley with its “Outstanding Homeless Service Award: Outstanding Advocate” for his role in launching the Room in the Inn-Louisville pilot program. Dean Matt accepted the award on behalf of all those who were instrumental in developing this experimental approach in Louisville that addressed the needs of unhoused women and their minor children during January and February 2025.



The award also recognized his efforts in recruiting sixteen houses of worship, a local nonprofit organization, and a service vendor, in coordination with Uniting Partners for Women and Children (UP), which serves this population in Christ Church Cathedral’s complex.

Dean Matt, in his acceptance comments, noted the success in providing 526 overnight stays for 36 women and four children during these two months. Many individuals, churches, not-for-profit organizations, and institutions contributed to the development of this program following the “Room in the Inn” model begun in Nashville, Tennessee, in 1986. He announced that the project’s continuation in 2025-26 will include forming an independent not-for-profit organization, Room in the Inn-Louisville, and the recruitment of an additional site to address the overnight needs of unhoused men.

At the awards presentation, the Coalition for the Homeless announced the increasing number of unhoused individuals, including 1,527 persons, who sleep outdoors nightly in the Louisville Metro area. One of the Coalition’s goals for this year is to develop Supported Affordable Housing designed to address primary causes of chronic homelessness: mental health issues, substance abuse/addiction, and lack of financial resources. Presently, the Coalition estimates the need in the county for affordable housing ranges between 30,000 and 60,000 units.



