THE

SIMinarian

THEOLOGICAL REVIEW

100

Becoming Beloved Community Scholars

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The Society for the Increase of the Ministry (SIM) is a public charity 501(c)(3), established in 1857 to identify future ordained leadership and develop their gifts through merit-based and need-based educational scholarships. Since the founding of SIM in Hartford, Connecticut, it has supported over 5000 seminarians. Today SIM is a community of thought-leaders cultivating wisdom and offering educational resources for The Episcopal Church. We provide scholarships for theological education, analyze and publish data, convene dialogues, and deliver adaptive leadership training throughout the church and in support of the whole Body of Christ.

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About *The SIMinarian*

Theological education is a journey of discovery. In its evolving landscape ideas and beliefs shape the future of faith communities. In this journal we offer you a glimpse into the theological inquiry, spiritual growth, and personal development of our SIM scholarship recipients. Every year our brilliant scholars prove that their vocations have no boundaries, embracing diversity, tradition, and innovation. Each annual issue of *The SIMinarian* is a celebration of faith and the unending journey of growth and discernment. Our hope is to inspire, inform, and ignite passion for the future of our Church.

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From the Editor

Year after year, SIM receives dozens of applications for the Becoming Beloved Community scholarship, and the stories, callings, and faith of these applicants never fail to amaze us. We often wish we could support them all, but part of our work is making difficult choices about how best to nurture this growing community. We try to give where we can make the greatest difference and trust that even small gifts can ripple widely.

This year, with the arrival of a new cohort of SIM scholars, we reach a milestone: 100 Becoming Beloved Community scholars. Our hearts swell with pride and hope as we reflect on the remarkable people who make up this community. Seeing this group, we at SIM have no doubt about the future of our Church!

This issue celebrates that milestone by featuring work not only from current SIM scholars but also from our alumni and the newest class of scholarship recipients joining this legacy. These individuals embody a wide range of gifts and experiences, which shape how they see God at work in the world and imagine the Church's future. They remind us that the work of Becoming Beloved Community is not distant or abstract, but a living reality carried in the witness of these leaders who are already shaping the Church.

A theme of prophetic love weaves its way through these pages, a love that resists fear and despair, speaks truth with courage, and insists on hope even in difficult times. You will glimpse the depth and variety of our scholars' callings and voices, seeing how their scholarship connects to lived experience, how their personal journeys intersect with the Gospel, and how their faith is lived in both struggle and joy. Each page carries a heartbeat, and that, to me, is the true gift of this journal.

As you move through these pages, I hope their words stir your heart and soul. And if the future of the Church ever weighs heavy on your heart, I encourage you to get to know our scholars more personally. You'll see enough light to quiet your fears and lift your spirits.

Yours in Christ,

Mari Shiukashvili
Editor of *The SIMinarian*
Missioner for Theological Formation, Leadership & Pastoral Care
The Society for the Increase of the Ministry

Holy and Weighty Space

It is a joy and a privilege to welcome you to this space hosted by The Society for the Increase of the Ministry on behalf of the one hundred Becoming Beloved Community scholars of The Episcopal Church, whose composite portraits you see on the cover of this issue of *The SIMinarian*.

SIM's scholars are Episcopalians, all of whom have demonstrated particular vocations to the work of becoming beloved community, the relational reality promised by the Christian gospel, and won for us by Jesus, who, in the succinct words of one of our scholars, "chose love even when it cost him his life." [1]

This issue has been compiled even as we mark the 60th anniversary of the martyrdom of Jonathan Myrick Daniels, the twenty-six year-old SIMinarian and non-violent civil rights activist enrolled in the Episcopal Theological School in Cambridge, Massachusetts, when he was killed saving the life of 17 year-old activist Ruby Sales in Hayneville, Alabama, in August of 1965.

We dedicate this issue to Jonathan Daniels, a SIM scholar from 1963 -1965, who dared to live the kind of love that SIM's Becoming Beloved Community scholarships seek to honor in the lives of our emerging current-day sacred activists. This is a new generation whose lives are being consecrated, in the words of another Beloved Community scholar, Mildred Reyes, to the nurture and growth of a loving unity "forged by shared love, mutual respect, and the willingness to speak truth in the presence of power." [2]

In addition to the life and witness of Daniels this issue was inspired by the essays and sermons we received this year as part of the application process each Becoming Beloved Community scholar enters before they are selected and granted a scholarship for one to three years.

This year's provocative essay question was inspired by the interfaith Service of Prayer for the Nation at Washington National Cathedral on January 21, where Bishop Mariann Budde's sermon drew both praise and controversy. Applicants were asked to imagine stepping into a pulpit the following Sunday: What would they say in response? How might the Gospel speak into our divided moment? How does their story and calling shape that response?

The responses were profound.

I invite you to enrich your spiritual life and ministry by reading what just a few of the members of this anointed body of leaders has to say. Together their writings gathered in this journal create the kind of deeply faithful reflective environment Mildred Reyes says was present in the National Cathedral when Bishop Budde preached from the pulpit on January 21, 2025, – a "weighty and holy space," where the power of the truth, the wisdom and the challenge of Jesus Christ's humble yet uncompromising love is made manifest, an inspiration and invitation to *metanoia* for us all.

This issue also serves to thank our SIMinarians, alumnae/i, friends and donors. Through the support of faithful Episcopalians SIM has been funding the theological education and formation of Episcopal leaders for 168 years, most recently distributing over one million dollars in Becoming Beloved Community scholarships. At SIM we believe that these 100 leaders, joined by all the future Beloved Community scholars SIM funds year after year, have the grace and the power to create the pathways we need to forge if The Episcopal Church is to become beloved community, God's dream and prayer for all of us and for the whole Church and the world.

Courtney Cowart
Executive Director
The Society for the Increase of the Ministry

1. Quincy Hall, "*The Audacity of Love: Living the Gospel in the Deep South*," p. 39 in this issue of *The SIMinarian*.
2. Mildred Reyes, "*The Cost of Discipleship*," p. 10 in this issue of *The SIMinarian*.

The Cost of Discipleship

By Mildred Reyes, *2028*
Wesley Theological Seminary

***Mildred Reyes** is a SIM Scholar at Wesley Theological Seminary and Bexley Seabury Seminary and serves as Missioner for Latino/Hispanic Ministries and Diocesan Initiatives in the Episcopal Diocese of Washington. She is a professed member of the Third Order Society of St. Francis (TSSF). Born in San Pedro Sula, Honduras, and raised in the Washington, DC area, she brings a passion for joy, love, justice, and presence to her ministry. Mildred lives in Maryland with her family and enjoys hiking, poetry, music, and celebrating diverse cultures.*

On Tuesday, January 21, I was honored to serve as a verger during the Interfaith Service of Prayer for the Nation at the Washington National Cathedral. I was seated just beneath the pulpit from which Bishop Mariann Edgar Budde preached. It was a holy and weighty space. As she began to speak, I watched her words unfold and the faces around the room shift — some with reverence, some with discomfort, some clearly wrestling with what was being said. I was struck by the clarity and courage of her voice. She spoke with a pastoral heart and prophetic edge, naming our blessings and national wounds. She addressed the newly inaugurated President directly, calling him, as she called us, to moral accountability and civic responsibility.

At that moment, I was humbled and felt seen. I felt the cost of discipleship. I remembered that to preach the Gospel truthfully is not to flatter the powerful, but to love the people enough to risk discomfort. I thought of the prophets who stood before kings and wept for cities. I thought of Jesus, who set his face toward Jerusalem, knowing what awaited him there. And I thought of our calling as disciples of Christ — not to waver, but to stand firm in love and truth.

So, if I had walked into a pulpit on the Sunday following that sermon, I would have spoken with this experience fresh in my heart and prayer on my lips. I would have turned to the Gospel according to John, where Jesus prays in chapter 17: "*That they may all be one… so that the world may believe that you have sent me*".[1] This is not a naïve unity. It is not a fragile peace built on silence. It is a unity forged by shared love, mutual respect, and the willingness to speak truth in the presence of power.

We are living in a time marked by deep divisions — political, racial, economic, and spiritual. These divisions are not new but have been laid bare in painful ways over the past years. In such a time, it is tempting to retreat into neutrality, to avoid "getting political." But the Gospel has never been neutral. As the Catechism of the *Book of Common Prayer* reminds us, "the mission of the Church is to restore all people to unity with God and each other in Christ".[2] That mission compels us to enter the broken places, not avoid them.

Jesus' first sermon in Luke 4 was explicitly political: "*The Spirit of the Lord is upon me… to bring good news to the poor… to proclaim release to the captives… to let the oppressed go free*".[3] These are not polite words. They are liberating words — and they cost him his life.

As Episcopalians, we are part of a Church that

believes faith must be lived in public. Our polity affirms shared leadership — bishops, priests, deacons, and laity all bearing responsibility for discerning the Spirit's movement. Our Baptismal Covenant calls us to "strive for justice and peace among all people and respect the dignity of every human being".[4] When Bishop Budde addressed the President, she was not violating our polity — she was living into it. She exercised her episcopal voice not as a partisan figure, but as a shepherd and witness to truth.

I saw the sermon land in real time from my vantage point below the pulpit. It stirred something in the room, not just within the theological debate, but a reckoning. It revealed how hungry we are for moral clarity, and how quickly we bristle when that clarity touches a nerve. I watched expressions of affirmation, concern, even disapproval ripple through the pews. And still, Bishop Budde did not waver. Her voice, rooted in prayer and Scripture, trembled, yet did what all preaching should do: comfort the afflicted, and afflict the comfortable.

This is why the Church's voice matters. We must be a people who tell the truth. Who name sin not just in personal terms, but in public ones. Who proclaim not just personal salvation, but collective liberation.

I was reminded then that prophetic preaching always comes at a price. It may cost us popularity. It may invite critique. But as disciples of Christ, we are not called to safety — we are called to faithfulness.

As Paul wrote to the Galatians, "*Am I now seeking human approval, or God's approval? Or am I trying to please people? If I were still pleasing people I would not be a servant of Christ*".[5] This isn't a license for arrogance. It's a call to integrity. It reminds us that our allegiance is to the Gospel — not partisan platforms or public applause.

I preach and minister as a Latina immigrant woman, a postulant for Holy Orders in The Episcopal Church, and a daughter of communities who have experienced violence, migration, and resilience. My family migrated from Honduras to live a better life. I was raised by parents who prayed not necessarily in stained-glass sanctuaries, but while cleaning kitchens, hotel rooms, fixing faucets, and sweeping floors. Their prayers were often for daily bread, safety, peace, justice, and a better life for their children.

I carry their stories when I preach. I have the longings of people whose lives are shaped by policies made far away and systems stacked against them. Our calling is not to be neutral — it is to be faithful. To name where injustice festers, and to speak of a better way. A way shaped not by fear, but by the fierce love of Christ.

This is why the Church's voice matters. We must be a people who tell the truth. Who name sin not just in personal terms, but in public ones. Who proclaim not just personal salvation, but collective liberation.

So what do I have to offer, standing in the pulpit after such a week? First, I call for humility. Not a humility that silences, but one that listens. That recognizes our limitations and leans on God's grace. Second, I call for courage. The courage to speak out when it is costly. The courage to hold leaders accountable, not from hostility, but from deep love for the common good.

Third, we should return to our core practices: prayer, worship, community, and public witness. Our *Book of Common Prayer* gives us language

for this moment. We pray in the Collect for the Nation: "*Bless our land with honorable industry, sound learning, and pure manners… Save us from violence, discord, and confusion; from pride and arrogance, and from every evil way*".[6] These are not passive prayers. They are pleas for transformation.

And finally, I remind you, the Church, that reconciliation does not mean pretending everything is fine. It means telling the truth, confessing our complicity, and working together for repair. As the former Presiding Bishop Curry said, "If it's not about love, it's not about God."

In a moment when many fear the Church is becoming too political — or not political enough — I say this: the Church must always be pastoral and prophetic. Our voice should offer healing and hope, but never at the cost of silence in the face of injustice.

That day at the Cathedral, Bishop Budde's sermon reminded us that discipleship costs something. It costs comfort. It costs approval. But it is worth it. As Jesus said, "*You will know the truth, and the truth will make you free*".[7]

So let us not waver. Let us be brave enough to speak, tender enough to listen, and bold enough to hope.

May we, like those first disciples, leave behind our nets of fear and follow Christ into the unknown — not alone, but together, upheld by the Spirit, and grounded in the Word.
Amen.

1. John 17:21
2. The Book of Common Prayer, p. 855
3. Luke 4:18–19
4. The Book of Common Prayer, p. 305
5. Galatians 1:10
6. The Book of Common Prayer, p. 820
7. John 8:32


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Justice is God's Love

By Marisa Sifontes, *2021*
Candler School of Theology

The Rev. Marisa Sifontes *is a SIM alum from the first cohort of SIM's Becoming Beloved Community scholars and a graduate of Candler School of Theology (M.Div., 2021). She serves as Associate Rector of St. James' Episcopal Church, NYC with a focus on mission, parish life and pastoral care. Previously, Marisa was Associate Rector of a parish in Roanoke, VA and Diocesan Commissioner for Becoming Beloved Community in the Diocese of Southwestern Virginia. She now chairs the Commission on Reparations for the Diocese of New York.*

When we think of the world's oldest professions, lawyers may not immediately come to mind. But perhaps they should. Because God gave humankind the law, and we've been arguing about it ever since.

You see, the law has always shaped our common life. Laws of inheritance. Laws to settle disputes. This careful divining of what is right and what is just. We see this throughout scripture. When Moses stood before Pharaoh and pleaded for the ancient Israelites to be set free. In the ways their deliverance was anchored in the mandate to care for the stranger. Through the time of those known as Judges — who led the people — imperfect though they were. And especially through the words of Jesus who reminded the scribes that just because they could recite the law didn't mean they were applying it correctly... or in accordance with God's will.

Even now, the law looms large in our common imagination. When a child has a penchant for arguing — we proudly say, you're going to grow up to be a lawyer. If you're not happy with a decision someone has made — 'you sound just like a lawyer.' Those who practice law are seen both as champion and defender — both lauded and reviled.

And these days, the law — and the lawyers who work with it — are in the public eye even more than normal. The practice of law has become the domain of the many. Between the pundits and the posts on social media, suddenly everyone has become a constitutional scholar.

But somewhere along the way we seem to have forgotten that our laws were never intended to be interpreted in a vacuum. Much like theology, the law is a living breathing thing — because it applies to living, breathing people. Which means those who work in law must remember that the basis for our statutes and regulations — and even the common law principles we apply — they all have a common root in justice. And what is justice if not the vision of God's love made real in the world? It is putting into action the commandment Jesus gave us — that we do unto others what we would want done to us.

It is caring for the stranger because we, too, were once strangers in the land of Egypt. And making real the words of our baptismal covenant — to work towards peace and respect the dignity of every human being. But people — and governments — and even whole Departments of Justice — sometimes lose sight of what's most important. They pick apart words of both law and

scripture, sculpting legal principles into finely honed blades designed to cut down God's people, instead of building them up.

Or ignore the law completely.

Much like the corruption called out by the prophet, Amos, and the hollow legalism of the Pharisees — somewhere along the way, there are those who have forgotten that the underpinning of our entire legal system rests not on might — but on compassion and empathy. Even as a nation that believes in the separation of church and state, our laws are designed to mirror the same principles that God sets before us. And in that way, the highest and best role of lawyers is to help us be the people God means for us to be.

And know that others are not just looking to us — but counting on us — to continue to make real God's love in the world around us. For we may live in an evil time. But most surely, we will not be silent.

But I must confess, I'm most troubled with one particular verse in our reading from Amos — how he says the prudent will keep silent in an evil time.

Those sound like dangerous words because some might hear them and see them as a reason to throw up their hands or keep their heads down. Because, as we've seen, speaking up and taking action carries real consequences. In the playbook of authoritarianism, no one is immune from overreach — certainly not those who stand against it.

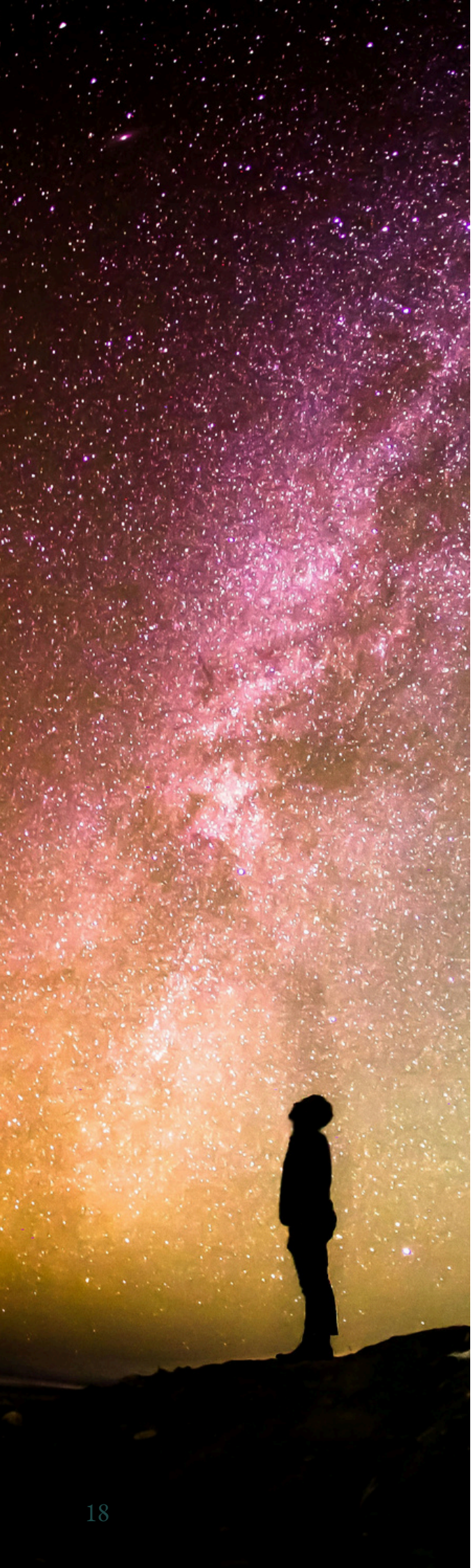
But I suspect many of us gathered here this evening instead hear those words as an invitation to action. That we have taken and will continue to take our places among those who speak the truth and make God's justice real. That we give thanks for schools who fight to protect their students. For the witness of people who stand up with signs and voices to remind us that we are better than this. For companies that continue to show that our God-given diversity is not a weakness, but a strength. And especially for the lawyers who with their words and deeds show that their oaths are more important even than their paychecks.

As much as it has always struck me as a bit ironic to defend a constitution that would have considered me three-fifths of a person, I draw strength that the laws we live under now recognize that women can vote; that two adults who love each other can marry; and that separate, but equal, was never a balanced equation.

That was the work of many — but especially those in the legal profession who lifted their pens and raised their voices, and refused to accept what was set before them. And if we soon put to bed the fact that due process under the law means just that, that, too, is the work of those in the legal profession — as they protect those in need of protection and give voice to those who would otherwise have none, all the while, pointing us towards justice. For the lawyers among us, and I am proud to count myself among that number, know that we walk in the footsteps of those from the earliest days of our faith, with examples both to follow, and to take as lessons. Know that the role we play is one no one else can. And know that others are not just looking to us — but counting on us — to continue to make real God's love in the world around us.

For we may live in an evil time.

But most surely, we will not be silent.



To Those Who Paint Over Rainbows

By Phil Hooper, *2019*
Church Divinity School of the Pacific

It's difficult, I'm sure,
an inconvenience,
to see how black and white
are not the only colors.

It's surreal, surely,
to walk on a path
paved with the shades
of someone else's stories.

Believe us, we know.
We have been walking
on yours
for years

and we were merely
trying to cross over
to something closer
to safety.

Or actually, forgive us,
perhaps it was
an agenda
after all:

for you to stand
upon reconciliation;
to see how light
breaks through storm;

The Rev. Phil Hooper *is a SIM alum who completed his seminary formation at Church Divinity School of the Pacific (2019). He currently serves as Rector of St. Anne's Episcopal Church West Chester, in the Diocese of Southern Ohio. He is a contributor to several publications, including Sermons That Work, Earth & Altar, and the Prophetic Voices preaching podcast offered by The Episcopal Church. His sermons and other writings can be found at www.byanotherroad.com.*

to feel how fierce
joy can be
when it has already
faced every fear.

Believe us, we know.
we have been living
with ours
for years.

So just one request:
paint slowly, friends.
Give yourself every chance
to change your life,

styled as it is
by the refusal
of truth's many
vivid hues.

And some day,
if you cross over
to something farther
from safety,

we'll be there,
incandescent,
saying,
welcome.

Each year, the Becoming Beloved Community scholarship invites seminarians to reflect on questions connecting the Gospel with the challenges and hopes of our time. This year's prompt was inspired by the interfaith Service of Prayer for the Nation at Washington National Cathedral on January 21, where Bishop Mariann Budde's sermon drew both praise and controversy.

Applicants were asked to imagine stepping into a pulpit the following Sunday: What would they say in response? How might the Gospel speak into our divided moment? How does their story and calling shape that response?

What follows is one such reflection.

Linda Etim *is a SIM scholar currently enrolled at Yale Divinity School in the Master of Sacred Theology (S.T.M.) program (2026), having previously received her M.Div. from Union Theological Seminary in New York in 2025. Prior to pursuing ordination in the Episcopal Church in the Diocese of Long Island, Linda had an extensive career in government and humanitarian service, particularly in Somalia, West Africa, and South Sudan.*

The Spirit of the Lord is upon me because he has anointed me to bring good news to the poor. He has sent me to proclaim release to the captives and recovery of sight to the blind to let the oppressed go free, to proclaim the year of the Lord's favor.[1]

There is not an Episcopal seminarian who hasn't pondered what they may have said had they already been charged with preaching to a church community on the Sunday following Bishop Mariann Budde's sermon at the National Cathedral. We are in a country mired in growing inequality, deep mistrust among political parties and their adherents, and where telling the truth and having compassion for those who are suffering are now contested ideas. The role of the church, and therefore of the appointed preacher at times such as these, is to maintain their balance on a highwire of incredible stakes while staying true to the teachings of Jesus by insisting on the innate humanity of those we disagree with. Therefore, although I am only taking my position in that fated January 26, 2025 pulpit through this essay, I still find the exercise excruciatingly humbling.

In the current political climate, reaching across divisions and speaking to those whose hearts have been hardened requires faith. Therefore, I would ground my sermon in the teachings of Jesus by framing it within the context of Luke, Chapter 4, the Gospel reading of that particular Sunday. I would begin by explaining the importance of understanding the occasion and context of that morning's Gospel story: that Jesus, in Luke's Gospel, is delivering his first public sermon in Galilee — an area that had been known for Judean rebellions against the Roman Empire and whose people were living in the aftermath of that defeat and grappling with how to survive under a government that was oppressive and often cruel. I would then explain that even then, there had been disagreements about how to stand up to injustice or even what to advocate for as right in the face of such power. These divisions meant some people would have advocated for quiet acquiescence and others for a violent revolution. There would also have been a tendency to malign those on the other side by questioning their integrity or intelligence.

As I framed my sermon, I would stress that Jesus speaks of bringing "good news" to the poor and oppressed, and wonder aloud whether a modern-

day Jesus might have referenced migrants, those who were undocumented, or members of the LGBTQIA community, as Bishop Budde had done. I would also draw the congregation's attention to the importance of being willing to speak God's truth even in front of those who may disagree with us and those who are powerful. After all, Jesus modeled this form of bravery within the Gospel multiple times. A few verses later in the day's Gospel reading, people disagreeing with Jesus would attempt to throw him off a cliff! [2]

We are living through a critical moment in history in which all of us must become skillful in working with, rather than spiritually bypassing, the divisions and tensions manifest in our communities, country, and world.

Finally, I would underscore that while Bishop Budde's words mattered, her approach and context were equally important. I would emphasize that Jesus, grounded in biblical teaching (his sermon, after all, quotes Isaiah 61), did not need to lambast or lecture; therefore, he could simply tell the truth and affirm the humanity of the poor and oppressed. Similarly, Bishop Budde could quote Micah while addressing the most powerful man in global politics, economics, and military might while wielding nothing more than the power of scripture — a proverbial slingshot in the face of Goliath. However, I would caution my congregation to look more closely at the scenario and the power dynamics that were at play: My seminary homiletics instructor loves to upset common understandings of the story of David and Goliath by insisting that David was never actually an underdog because God was on David's side. In this way, although Bishop Budde wielded no obvious weapons, by speaking "in the name of our Lord," her strength had been evident. Thus, she pleaded with the President of the United States, as someone who was created in the image of God, to another who was as well, and used her voice to humanize and request mercy for people who were hurting and afraid. I would conclude by challenging congregants to read Jesus' teachings before siding with pundits on the left or the right as well as to lean into our baptismal covenant that calls all of us to see God in one another and to love one another, especially when the stakes are the highest and when we most disagree.

> *He has told you, O mortal, what is good, and what does the LORD require of you but to do justice and to love kindness and to walk humbly with your God?* [3]

I am very aware of how my story and my calling directly intersect with Bishop Budde's sermon at the National Cathedral. My mother, a Black Vietnam veteran who returned to a country torn apart during the Civil Rights Movement, became the first Black English teacher to integrate Milwaukee's public schools. My father, fleeing from Nigeria's Biafran War, spoke often of his gratitude to and commitment to dialoging with the people who had welcomed him to the United States while still protesting American involvement in issues beyond its borders. Both of my parents died of cancer when I was 15 years old, but not before impressing upon me the importance of understanding both the complexity and the devastating potential of ignorance and fear. For them, the toxic combination of ignorance and fear was responsible for bad policies like segregation; it

eroded the recognition of the humanity of the other, particularly during times of war. It would take me years before I would realize that I am a child of two trauma survivors who dedicated their lives to doing the justice Micah speaks about — educating and working alongside people who hate you while quietly and humbly insisting on the humanity of everyone. Looking back, I recognize their lives as a testament to the importance of Bishop Budde-style bravery in the face of fear and ignorance; a testament wholly inspired by an *imago dei* form of love.

Before discerning a call to ordained ministry, I spent 20 years in the U.S. Government and nonprofit sector trying to prevent wars and help people recover from the legacies of poverty, trauma, and violence that war leaves in its wake. In particular, I spent five years with the recently shuttered U.S. Agency for International Development to support humanitarian response efforts in Somalia, the Ebola epidemic in West Africa, and peacebuilding efforts in South Sudan. I have come to realize that this work, in addition to my upbringing, gives me a unique perspective on the specificity, complexity, and universality of human suffering.

From this perspective, I have also come to realize that divisions and tensions, while intense and serious, are part of the human story. I have never been more convinced about the necessity for pastoral care, the relevancy of the biblical stories for contemporary concerns, and the absolute vitality of social solidarity to address increasingly complex problems. We are living through a critical moment in history in which all of us must become skillful in working with, rather than spiritually bypassing, the divisions and tensions manifest in our communities, country, and world. Moreover, as Bishop Michael Curry rightly insisted when quoting a statement made by Colombia's bishop during the 2021 violence in his country: "Being baptized moves us in a prophetic spirit according to the teachings of Jesus the Christ, to put ourselves on the side of the oppressed and violated, to demand the peace and justice necessary for a dignified and harmonious life." This is a tall task, and the audacity of even making such an attempt is why the church asks us to willingly and publicly proclaim the deficits in our capacity for perfection in our Baptismal and Ordination vows when we declare, "I will, with God's help!" As a Postulant for Holy Orders, I hope to obtain the critical training and formation necessary to attend to our community, country, and world's physical, mental, and spiritual health. I believe that my calling is to serve the people of God as a priest who remains conscious of the challenges facing the world while also intentionally holding and creating space within my church community for the new life in Christ that the bible promises us.

1. Luke 4:14
2. Luke 4:28-30
3. Micah 6:8

How do we resist?

The Episcopal Church in the Present Crisis

By Demarius Walker, *2026*
Earlham School of Religion

Demarius Walker *is a SIM scholar at the Earlham School of Religion in Richmond, Indiana. A gifted social commentator and activist, Demarius's spiritual pilgrimage of more than a decade has been dedicated to forging a social consciousness deeply ingrained in contemplative practice. His journey has taken him from Boston University's Marsh Chapel, to Canterbury Cathedral's Community of St. Anselm, to Corrymeela Peace and Reconciliation Center in Northern Ireland, to Holy Cross Monastery in West Park, NY, and to serving as director of an Episcopal Service Corps program in Indianapolis.*

How do we resist? This question has been, in one form or another, on my mind for decades. Growing up in Atlanta, the cradle of the Civil Rights Movement, this question emerged quite naturally. It first became clear to my conscious awareness in response to the genocide in Darfur and the War on Terror. The horror led me to the Social Action Club and debate team in high school. I participated in walkouts and die-ins and competed with bright young minds around the country, wrestling with the profound moral and political issues. All the while, this central question remained.

I took this question to Boston, where I studied political science, philosophy, and conflict and became involved in electoral politics. This question stayed with me as I engaged in social work and community organizing in D.C. and across Georgia and as I served as a protest chaplain amidst my community's uprisings against police brutality.

This question led me to Northern Ireland, as I lived and worked at a peacebuilding center. There, I was exposed to a Conspiracy of Love stretching across the globe. In seeing the murals and statues of black civil rights leaders and in hearing how the music and example of my people's struggle for liberation inspired movements in far off places like Lebanon, Korea, and Ukraine, I came to understand the prescience of Gandhi's suggestion to Howard Thurman in 1935 that "it may be through the Negroes that the unadulterated message of nonviolence will be delivered to the world." This is our great strength as a species: we can learn from each other.

Most recently, the question "How do we resist?" has led me to a Quaker seminary in Indiana to study Peace and Social Transformation.

Given this history, I was struck by Presiding Bishop Sean Rowe's call for the Episcopal Church to become an "engine of resistance." Though I didn't grow up Episcopalian (a detail that I know matters to some), I was received into the Church after three years in the Episcopal Service Corps. I've served as a steward at the Lambeth Conference, lived twice at Lambeth Palace, studied at Virginia Theological Seminary, joined prayer teams for Primates gatherings in

Canterbury and Jordan, and served in parishes across D.C., Atlanta, and Indianapolis. So, it is out of at least some experience with this tradition that my eyebrow raises at the Presiding Bishop's suggestion.

My hesitation does not come from a progressive cynicism that treats history as an unshakable burden. I don't even reach for utterances about camels and needles at these remarks. I take seriously the example of William Wilberforce and the Clapham Sect's work to end slavery in England. Jesus' reliance upon his wealthy friend must not escape notice. My fear here is that such a call might lead members of the church to simply cosplay "resistance" rather than engage in the slow, grueling work of dismantling systems of injustice and caring for the marginalized and most vulnerable. If we are not intentional, the forms of resistance we choose may fall far short of what the moment calls for or, even worse, may inadvertently lead our nation further into the abyss.

Before we answer the question, "How do we, as the Episcopal Church, resist?" we have to answer the questions, "What are we resisting?" and even more fundamentally, just "Who are we?"

Bishop Rowe seems to be aware of this danger when he writes of the shortcomings of the Confessing Churches' opposition to the Nazi regime, with its narrow concern for the Church's autonomy. He writes, "Its history, however, teaches us that when we are awash in propaganda, even our resistance can be bound by its definitions and incline us to see the world in the same categories — foreigner and neighbor, cisgender and transgender, white and people of color, Christian and Muslim — that we seek to transcend." I urge us to tarry awhile with this wisdom and consider the potential narrowness of our concern when we speak about resistance.

In a moment like this, when the stakes are so very high, part of our work must be to escape the *fantastic hegemonic imagination*, which Emile Townes explains, "uses a politicized sense of history and memory to create and shape its worldview. It sets in motion whirlwinds of images used in the cultural production of evil." Our images of resistance are vulnerable to manipulation by powers and principalities whose interests lie in leading us into activities that serve their own ends. This dynamic is part of what makes social change so difficult.

Environmental activist Joanna Macy speaks about social change as composed of three interdependent dimensions: holding actions, building alternatives, and shifting consciousness. An American *fantastic hegemonic imagination* often leads us to idolize holding action (protesting, lawsuits, public pronouncements) to the detriment of the other dimensions of social change.

For example, this imagination may lead us to misremember the Montgomery Bus Boycott as the result of a tired woman inspiring a group of people to force the bus company to bend to their will through the sheer strength of their anger and resolve. This, of course, obscures the reality of Rosa Parks' embeddedness in a web of organizations like the NAACP, Women's Political Council, Montgomery Improvement Association, and Highlander Folk School, where she trained in the tactics of nonviolence before she helped begin the boycott. This story overlooks the alternative economic and

transportation systems that were built to sustain the boycott. This lackluster imagination fails to grasp the shift in consciousness necessary for such collective action to be possible and obscures the new consciousness unleashed from the campaign's success.

Our goal cannot simply be to resist. We must engage in resistance that is authentic, meaningful, and effective. Before we answer the question, "How do we, as the Episcopal Church, resist?" we have to answer the questions, "What are we resisting?" and even more fundamentally, just "Who are we?" Admittedly, this journal does not provide the space to fully examine these questions. What follows is a distillation of preliminary thoughts; an invitation to deeper discernment and a broader conversation. I hope to expound upon these ideas elsewhere. Note crucially, such discernment must not become an excuse for inaction but rather must be done alongside our participation in the immediate work of caring for the marginalized, protecting the most vulnerable, and witnessing to the tremendous suffering being wrought across the globe.

Who are we? We are an American expression of the Anglican branch of the Jesus movement. We are part of a Universal Church gradually emerging out of the wilderness, plagued by temptations to be spectacular, relevant, and powerful. We, the Episcopal church, are gradually emerging out of the wilderness with an established history, considerable economic resources, the conception of the *Via Media*, and the power to convene.

Once central to society and culture, Christianity now finds itself increasingly on the margins. After centuries of prominence, the Church is being invited — perhaps compelled — to rediscover its identity apart from influence. To understand this moment, we might return to Jesus in the wilderness, as told in Matthew: just after his baptism and public affirmation, he is led into solitude and faces three temptations.

Henri Nouwen's *In the Name of Jesus*, explains these temptations as ever relevant for Christian leaders: to be relevant (turn stones to bread), to be spectacular (leap from the temple), and to be powerful (bow to Satan for the world). Jesus resists each, and only then begins his public ministry. The Church, however, has not exited the wilderness so swiftly. Instead, it has often succumbed to these mirages, seeking relevance, spectacle, and power.

Nouwen's framing is revelatory for the Church's self-understanding. The temptation to be relevant has led to a crisis of meaning, where the Church justifies itself not by its divine calling but by its utility. Jesus counters this with, "Man shall not live on bread alone," reminding us that our vocation begins in a relationship with God. Nouwen offers contemplative prayer as a remedy. The temptation to be spectacular has fueled rivalry and fragmentation, as churches compete for cultural significance. Jesus responds, "Do not put the Lord your God to the test." Here, Nouwen calls for confession and forgiveness. The temptation to be powerful is the most familiar. The Church has repeatedly traded fidelity for influence, often at significant cost. Jesus's refusal, "Worship the Lord your God and serve him only," calls us back to theological reflection and discernment.

We cannot ignore the ways institutionalization has compromised the Church's integrity. We've known what it is to be relevant, spectacular, and powerful, and we've often enjoyed it. But we've also been shaped and matured by these

experiences. The Episcopal Church holds real power, resources, and influence, capable of shaping our national character. It would be disingenuous to act otherwise. The most visible sign of this power is the National Cathedral and its role in American public life.

What are we resisting? This question is more complex than we hope to admit. To answer it, we must navigate through the narrow gate. On one hand, we must escape the fantastic hegemonic imagination that alters our perceptions of reality, leading us to draw upon its conclusions about who is friend or foe. Who is worthy of merit and blame? Who can be saved and who is irredeemable? On the other hand, we must avoid the temptations to be relevant, spectacular, and powerful, which draw us away from seeking and following God. This is an inner and outer struggle, and in both places Nouwen's practices become helpful: contemplative prayer, confession and forgiveness, and theological reflection.

The problem is deeper than Trump. It's deeper than Christian Nationalism. It's deeper than white supremacy. America…the West…the World is in crisis. The exact nature of that crisis is up for debate. Our inability to agree is part of the crisis. This crisis has many manifestations across the globe. They are legion. To reduce the issue to a single political figure, group, ideology, economic system, or set of institutions underestimates the pervasive nature of the problem. This desire to quickly find a scapegoat to blame is a central feature of the crisis.

One way to understand the present moment is that the world's complexity is outpacing our collective understanding. Our capacity to cope is being overwhelmed. Innovation is exponentially speeding up, a new world is being born, and our internal software desperately needs an update. Political, economic, social, and environmental systems are crumbling in the face of technological advancement. People who live separated by borders, real and imagined, are now forced to encounter the other in cyberspace, the marketplace, and near the places we call home. The future rests on whether this encounter can become an embrace where *the other* is welcomed in their full, flawed, fantastic humanity. But wanting to justify ourselves, we ask Jesus, "Just who are my neighbors?"

In this process, we find that we must resist what Howard Thurman calls the Spirit of Retaliation, which is presently emerging in response to an increasingly complex and disordered world. This Spirit is at the heart of many problems that we perceive, including the rise of authoritarianism, xenophobia, and White Christian Nationalism. This Spirit leads to ever-increasing division, hostility, and dehumanization. This Spirit threatens the nation's survival and is the root cause of so much unnecessary suffering. This Spirit propels injustice.

I fear that even well-intentioned responses to these injustices risk deepening cycles of violence by feeding what Howard Thurman calls the Spirit of Retaliation (SoR). To understand this dynamic more fully, I turn to René Girard's mimetic theory, which reveals how human desire is shaped not by intrinsic need but by imitation — mimesis — of what others desire. This imitation breeds rivalry, as individuals or groups compete for the same object, not only materially but symbolically, believing the other possesses something essential to their own wholeness. The rival becomes both a threat and a model, escalating conflict and destabilizing identity.

Girard argues that societies resolve this tension by scapegoating — channeling collective aggression onto a target whose elimination temporarily restores unity. These cycles, whether brief or generational, reflect a deeper struggle for psychic survival. Thurman's SoR and Girard's mimetic theory together suggest that reconciliation is obstructed not just by external conflict, but by internalized fears of inadequacy and the impulse to conquer what we cannot integrate. True resistance must confront these patterns, lest our efforts to heal become new forms of harm.

How do we resist? Embodying its status as an establishment church, The Episcopal Church (TEC) must follow the advice of peacebuilder John Paul Lederach in *The Moral Imagination*, and use its power to convene to expand the nation's moral imagination by nurturing a web of relationships across points of conflict, and cultivate spaces that enable constructive dialogue and prophetic change. Actualizing the spiritual and political dimensions of the *Via Media*, TEC may use its considerable resources to build alternative spaces, which shift the nation's consciousness. TEC must become not merely an engine of resistance but peace centers and engines of moral and prophetic imagination.

This work is not just a feel-good type of reconciliation; instead, it is crucial to the success of many current struggles against injustice. In *Why Civil Resistance Really Works* the authors examined 323 resistance campaigns across the globe from 1900 to 2006. They found that nonviolent resistance was twice as likely to succeed, strategic choices of the movement mattered more than what they were up against, and the key factor in success was the movement's ability to develop a broad-based coalition across society with many entry points into participation. In other words, developing deeper ties and a wider community makes for more effective resistance. Unfortunately, the Spirit of Retaliation actively works to undermine necessary coalitions. TEC is uniquely positioned to engage in the sort of resistance that weaves our fraying collective fabric together and at least gives us a chance at survival.

To end, I will suggest some ways TEC can begin to engage in this sort of creative resistance.

1. TEC could use some of its vacant property to support intentional Christian communities that build alternative, sustainable, and peaceful ways of living across differences.
2. Episcopal dioceses could appoint Ambassadors of Reconciliation who commit to developing peacebuilding skills and working to cultivate peacebuilding activities within their churches and communities.
3. Churches could begin holding regular contemplative services of lament to allow space to publicly name and acknowledge the harms that are occurring to individuals, groups, and the nation as a whole. This might create space for strangers to meet, grieve, and support each other.
4. Churches and dioceses could cultivate cross-cultural and cross-ideological spiritual friendships mediated primarily through letter writing as an alternative to toxic communication via social media.
5. TEC could host shared meals designed to foster collective theological reflection across lines of difference. Below is a framework for one such gathering I facilitated within a community navigating conflict.

Psalm 85 Meals

Before the meal

Participants: Invite 6–9 individuals with diverse perspectives on the issue. A group of 6 is ideal; do not exceed 9 to maintain depth and intimacy.

Participant Preparation

Each person is asked to complete the following before the meal:

1. **Choose a guiding value**
   Select one value that feels most important as you approach the issue:
   Mercy, Truth, Justice, or Peace [1]
2. **Research the issue**
   Identify three facts you believe are most relevant or important.
3. **Formulate questions**
   Prepare three open-ended questions you have about the topic.
4. **Spiritual reflection**

- Read and reflect on *Psalm 85*
- Review *Rose Castle's 12 Habits of a Reconciler*

During the Meal

The meal is facilitated using the Circle of Understanding format.[2] Two designated hosts are recommended.

Opening

- Begin with introductions.
- Each participant reads one of the 12 Habits of a Reconciler aloud.

Three-Part Meal Flow

Each section begins with a host reading a portion of Psalm 85.

Part 1: Re-member (Psalm 85:1–3)

Prompt: Share a personal story of either:

- A time you received mercy
- A time your mind was changed through dialogue or experience

Part 2: Re-humanize (Psalm 85:4–9)

Each participant shares:

- "In this conversation, I most value [mercy/truth/justice/peace] because…"
- "I think the following facts are important to this discussion…"
- "About this topic, I wonder…"

Part 3: Re-imagine (Psalm 85:10–13)

Facilitated in the style of a Quaker Clearness Committee:

- Allow spacious, contemplative dialogue with silence and open-ended questions
- Use the Rogerian repetition technique: Before responding, restate or paraphrase the previous speaker's point to ensure understanding

Closing Ritual

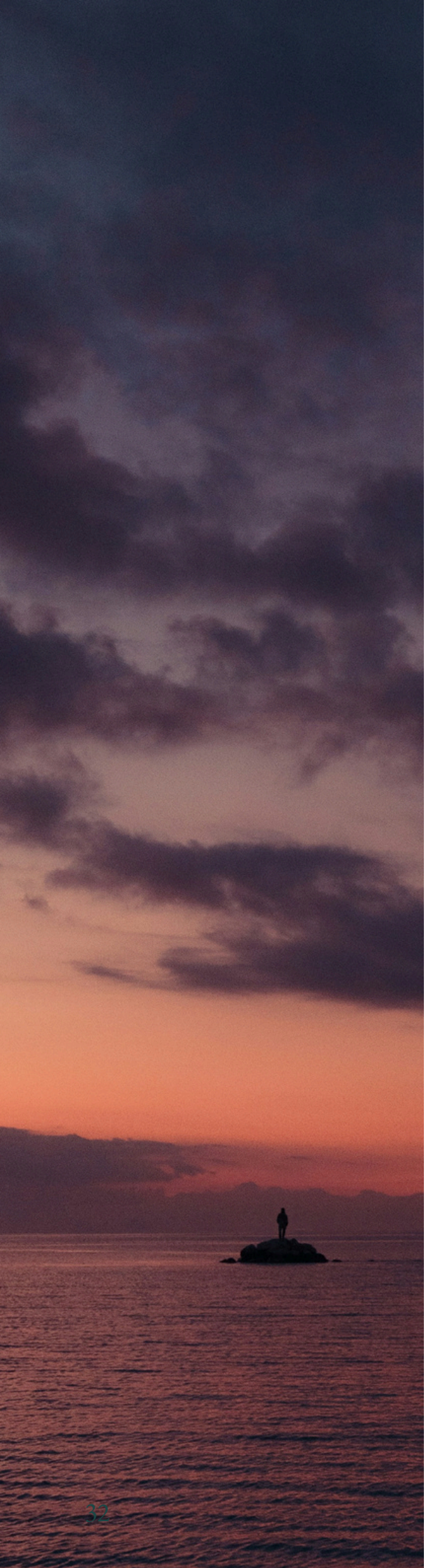
Lectio Divina Reading

Read *Psalm 85* slowly and prayerfully as a group.

Final Reflection

In a closing circle, each person names a "treasure" they are taking from the conversation — an insight, a question, a feeling, or a renewed commitment.

1. Inspired by John Paul Lederach's exercise in *Reconciler*, p. 83
2. Kay Pranis, *The Little Book of Circle Processes: A New/Old Approach to Peacemaking* (Intercourse, PA: Good Books, 2005).



A Psalm *of* Lament

By Kendall Paige Trivett, *2026*
Episcopal Seminary of the Southwest

My God, my God,
the One to whom I turn:*
Your presence it seems is unwavering.

Every fiber of creation, every sinew of my body,*
Feels the vibrations of your love, your power, your overwhelm.

You whistle the tune, "Let there be…,"*
And all substance, all essence obeys.

You, Lord, the starbursts behind my closed eyes,*
Remind me of the miniscule space I take up in the cosmos.

I know this as truth,
and yet I am furious at my insignificance;*
Why make me this way, so small,
that my cries fail to reach your ears?

For surely if you heard me in my grief,*
You would rescue me from my drowning state.

But the waves keep crashing;*
The chaos in your world has stolen my breath.

The pain others feel
flows through me and compounds,*
As if I am a sponge that cannot be wrung out.

Where is the yoke of relief
your Only-Begotten Son has promised?*
I shake away my burdens and yet they cling to my hands.

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I stand still in the slight rustles of your Spirit*
With a yearning for your comfort.

Awaiting a change in course with hope-filled gasps,*
I trust that your love for me prevails
Over every snare and pitfall I encounter.

O God my Savior,
Bless me with peace;*
Give my anxious heart the respite it needs.

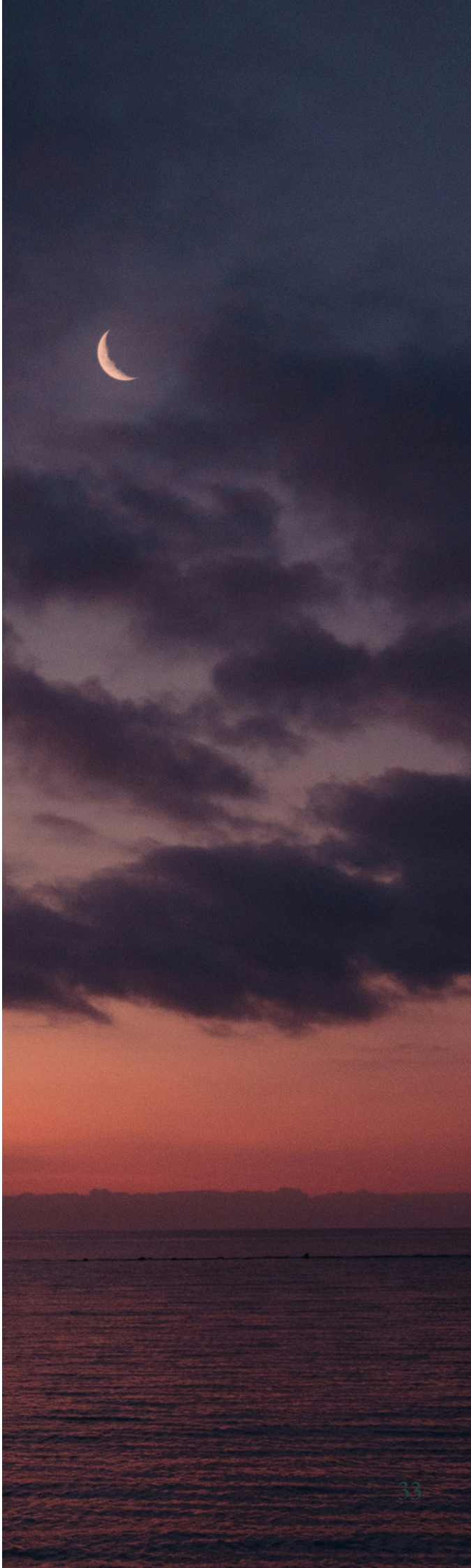
Help me to stand firm in the face of turmoil,*
Yet gentle and supple enough to allow
Others to embrace me.

Allow me to glimpse your abundant, renewing love,*
And let it sustain me in this life.

This I know will come to pass,*
For your covenant with me withstands
no matter how much I waver in doubt.

Lord, I offer you the most sacred parts of me,
Even the ones I do not yet know,*
Praising your perfect compassion.

Your Holy Name rings out in the highest heavens,*
And in the tiny, silent prayers of my heart.



Each year, the Becoming Beloved Community scholarship invites seminarians to reflect on questions connecting the Gospel with the challenges and hopes of our time. This year's prompt was inspired by the interfaith Service of Prayer for the Nation at Washington National Cathedral on January 21, where Bishop Mariann Budde's sermon drew both praise and controversy.

Applicants were asked to imagine stepping into a pulpit the following Sunday: What would they say in response? How might the Gospel speak into our divided moment? How does their story and calling shape that response?

What follows is one such reflection.

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The Gospel lesson for the day (Third Sunday after the Epiphany) retells Jesus' reading of the words of the prophet Isaiah, then declaring these words fulfilled in the synagogue goers' hearing. These words declare Jesus to be sent to proclaim good news to the poor, release to the captives, sight to the blind, freedom from oppression, and the year of the Lord's favor. My sermon would tell of how Jesus began these works of mercy, then called we who follow him to continue his works, until he comes again. I would invite the congregation to consider: Upon whom are we called to have mercy? For whom are we called to do these works of mercy that Jesus did? I would say that, in order for us to do works of mercy, first we need to have eyes to see and ears to hear the cries for help of those in need of mercy, then we need open minds and compassionate hearts to be willing to help them. Then I would share my own story: of needing mercy, of becoming aware of the need for mercy, then of taking steps to show mercy.

I was born and raised in the United States to ethnically South Asian Indian immigrant parents of the Hindu religion. My family was of modest means, experienced racial and cultural discrimination, and endured many hardships in their early days as new Americans. As a child and young adult, I faced financial hardships, questioning of my status and my place in this country, and discrimination on account of race, class, gender, and culture. Although I was neither Hispanic/Latina nor Arab/Muslim, on account of my brown skin, I would sometimes be mistaken as one or the other, then face the discrimination which that demographic faces. My own experience of troubles helped me to understand some of the troubles that other poor and marginalized people face. That was the beginning of my learning about the need for mercy.

In my young adulthood, I moved to a big city (New York) for college, in which poverty and homelessness rates were high. Then I went, with my parents, to their homeland (India), exploring parts of the country that I'd never seen before, in which not only was poverty high but also there was severe discrimination on the basis of race, class, gender, caste, and disability. Seeing and hearing those who suffer severely opened my eyes anew to the need for mercy. My heart was stirred to have mercy.

I was forced to confront the theology of *karma* (a fundamental tenet of Hinduism) that motivated people like my parents to refuse to help those who suffer, on the grounds that the sufferers supposedly deserved it. I could no longer follow in good conscience the religion of my upbringing, and eventually felt compelled to convert to Christianity, the religion of the Lord who has mercy and who calls us to show mercy. As a new Christian, I studied the Scriptures to learn what our Lord commands us all to do. An edition by name of The Poverty and Justice Bible, which highlights every instance of the Word of God which concerns the poor and the oppressed in orange, awakened me to God's call to mercy. A growing awareness of my prior limited knowledge and lack of willingness to help taught me about the need to be called to repentance by God's Word and God's people, so that we would turn away from hard-heartedness and be compelled to show mercy.

I would speak about some of the factors that shaped my initial lack of knowledge and lack of willingness to be compelled to have mercy. I would draw attention to those Bible verses (highlighted in The Poverty and Justice Bible) which stirred my heart to recognize the need for mercy and our call to have mercy. Then I would broaden the conversation to talk about the state of the nation and about America's minds and hearts. I would point out that the vast majority of Americans, on all sides of the various political divides, genuinely want our country to be great, but disagree on what makes us great and on how to get to greatness. I would name how divided our country is, then credit the differing visions of greatness and how to get there with causing the divide. Then I would warn the people that it is our responsibility to make sure that our vision of greatness and how to get there aligns with Scripture, and that a central concern of the entirety of Scripture is care for all those who are in need of mercy.

I would warn that, with any public policy or any vision of greatness, there are "winners" who do well and "losers" who suffer. I would point out that, in some way or other, every administration has failed to have mercy on some demographic that is suffering or marginalized. I would admonish the people to consider our responsibility, in the Gospel, to find out who the helpless and hurting "losers" are, under every administration, to stand up for them and to have mercy upon them. It is Jesus himself who calls us,

Most Americans, across political divides, want our country to be great but differ on what makes it so and how to get there. Our responsibility is to ensure that our vision of greatness aligns with Scripture, whose central concern is mercy for those in need.

following in his footsteps, to proclaim good news to and to be merciful to all those who have not and/or who suffer in this world.

It is in this context that I would situate Bishop Budde's words. I would name the three qualities which Bishop Budde said are essential to unity: honoring the inherent dignity of every human being, honesty in public and private discourse, and humility to admit our blind spots and our faults. I would point out that these very qualities are necessary for us to obey Scripture's command to have mercy. Mindful of the fact that every administration has "winners" and "losers", I would ask the people to consider whom, under

the present administration, might be the "losers" who need mercy. I would advise us to consider how we might draw attention to their plight, so as to advocate for them and to mitigate their suffering.

I would frame Bishop Budde's plea for mercy as her attempt at doing exactly this: advocating for those whom she identified as the "losers" of the present administration. I would acknowledge the fact that not everyone is happy with what she said nor with how she said it. I would admit that no attempts at pleading for mercy are perfect, and that hers is no exception. Even still, I would ask the people to be charitable to Bishop Budde, and to understand her intent in pleading for mercy as she did. I would ask the people to consider Bishop Budde's words in light of Scripture's command to have mercy upon all those who suffer.

I would remind people, as Bishop Budde did, that we cannot have unity without working towards the common good, and that our doing so requires talking about who the suffering "losers" are and how we might help them. I would acknowledge that such conversations might be uncomfortable and difficult, especially in light of the fact that our differing visions of greatness and how to get there prioritize helping different demographics and their particular concerns. Then I would remind the people that it is our responsibility, as part of our baptismal promise to honor the dignity of every living being, to be mindful of the plight of all who suffer, not only of those persons whose plight catches our attention. I would frame Bishop Budde's plea for mercy as her attempt to draw attention to the plight of certain peoples whom she feared would otherwise be overlooked during the present administration. Then I would ask the people to consider how all of us might do our best to follow suit, by finding, advocating for, and showing mercy to all those whom we fear will be the "losers" of the next four years.

I would tell the people that Gospel centered advocacy requires us to turn to Scripture and to allow it to confront us about our own failures to have mercy, as what happened to me, in my conversion journey. I would remind the people that as Christians we are a "people of the Book" who must let Scripture be our guide, not partisan politics, and for us the "losers" are worth helping. I would invite the people to start by searching the Scripture for texts, such as today's Gospel, which names people who are in need of mercy. Then I would ask the people to prayerfully consider how and to whom we ought to plead for mercy on their behalf, as well as how to ourselves proclaim the good news and show mercy. This is our loving and obedient response to our merciful God, who loved us so much that he gave his Son to die for us, that we might receive the mercy of forgiveness of our sins, reformation of heart, and life eternal with endless joy.

The Audacity of Love

Living the Gospel in the Deep South

By Quincy Hall, *2026*
Bexley-Seabury Seminary

Quincy Hall *is a SIM scholar at Bexley-Seabury Seminary and a Candidate for Holy Orders in the Episcopal Diocese of Alabama. An educator at the University of Alabama at Tuscaloosa, he has more than a decade of experience in Honors programs as a classroom instructor, curriculum developer, and nationally certified counselor. A queer African-American man in the South, Quincy brings both personal insight and pastoral imagination to his vocation, alongside his work as a classically trained pianist and church organist.*

On a sweltering August afternoon in Hayneville, Alabama, I stood among pilgrims gathered to honor the life and legacy of Jonathan Myrick Daniels. The same sun that burned on the road where Jonathan once walked now pressed against our shoulders as we sang hymns of freedom and lament. It was holy ground — soil watered by the blood of a young seminarian who dared to live the kind of love that the Gospel demands, a love so radical it put him in the path of violence to save another.

Standing there, I couldn't help but wrestle with the cost of that love — and the invitation it extends to us still. What does it mean to love prophetically in a world where division feels deeper by the day? How do we speak hope when fear and cynicism have hardened so many hearts, sometimes even our own?

To live and minister in the South is to hold contradictions in your hands. There are moments of deep hospitality and moments of deep hostility. I grew up Black and working poor here, learning early that the Gospel could be both balm and weapon, depending on whose mouth spoke it. Later, as a queer man discerning a call to the priesthood, I would learn again how quickly the invitation of "all are welcome" could be narrowed by fear and prejudice.

And yet, the South is my home. It is the place where I have seen small-town neighbors come together to rebuild after storms, where church basements have been sanctuaries of safety and grace, and where I have witnessed the quiet bravery of people choosing love over bitterness in ways that never make the news.

But it's also the place where Christian nationalism is rising, where racial and economic disparities remain stubbornly entrenched, and where too many pulpits preach exclusion under the guise of holiness. It is into this complex reality that I feel the call to embody what I have come to call the audacity of love.

Prophetic love is not soft or sentimental. It is the kind of love Howard Thurman described in *Jesus and the Disinherited* — a love that is both survival and resistance. It refuses to be diminished by fear or hate. It looks the oppressor in the eye and insists on their humanity while still naming their sin.

James Cone wrote that "the cross is God's critique of power — white power — with powerless love." That "powerless love" is anything but weak; it is dangerous because it threatens the systems that thrive on domination and division. I see that

truth every time I sit with a student in crisis at the university where I work or pray with a parishioner who feels alienated from the Church because of who they are or who they love.

Prophetic love demands that we keep showing up. It's in the tutoring session where a student, burdened by self-doubt, finally sees their own brilliance reflected back at them. It's in the parish hall where someone whose politics feel worlds apart from mine shows up to serve food to our unhoused neighbors, and we stand shoulder to shoulder in the kitchen — strangers made kin by the work of grace.

Hope, I've learned, is not naïve optimism. It's defiant. It refuses to cede the last word to despair, even when despair feels justified. Romans 8 reminds us that nothing — not death, not life, not powers, not principalities — can separate us from the love of God. That truth doesn't erase the pain of the present moment, but it reframes it.

I've witnessed this defiant hope in the quiet acts of bridge-building that rarely make headlines:

- The student who, after losing a parent, channels her grief into organizing a support group for her peers.
- The congregation member who overcomes his own biases to advocate for a trans teen in the community.

Each of these acts whispers the same truth: the Kingdom of God is breaking in, even here, even now.

There is a cost to this kind of love. It asks you to remain vulnerable in a world that will sometimes exploit that vulnerability. It means risking rejection, or fatigue, or the quiet ache of knowing that the seeds you plant may never bear fruit in your lifetime.

And yet, this is the call. To love prophetically is to align our lives with the pattern of Christ — the One who bore rejection, who risked everything, who chose love even when it cost him his life.

I think often of Jonathan Daniels stepping in front of that shotgun blast in 1965 to save 17-year-old Ruby Sales. His act wasn't the result of a sudden burst of courage; it was the natural outflow of a life steeped in the Gospel, a life shaped by daily, ordinary choices to see Christ in the faces around him.

That is what prophetic love asks of us, too — not grand gestures, but the daily practice of showing up: choosing to see the image of God in those the world tells us to fear, choosing to create spaces of belonging, choosing to speak hope even when our voices tremble.

Prophetic love is not soft or sentimental; it is both survival and resistance — refusing to be diminished by fear and hate, insisting on the oppressor's humanity while still naming their sin.

When I think back to that August afternoon in Hayneville, I remember not just the weight of grief but also the quiet hum of hope. As we processed to the place where Jonathan fell, voices lifted in song, I was reminded that prophetic love is not ours to manufacture; it is a gift of grace. Our task is to receive it, to be formed by it, and to let it flow through our lives in ways that point to the truth of the Gospel: that love is stronger than fear, that hope is stubborn, and that the Kingdom is nearer than we dare to believe.

This is the audacity of love — to keep living as though God's dream for the world is not only possible, but already breaking in, one courageous act of love at a time.

Each year, the Becoming Beloved Community scholarship invites seminarians to reflect on questions connecting the Gospel with the challenges and hopes of our time. This year's prompt was inspired by the interfaith Service of Prayer for the Nation at Washington National Cathedral on January 21, where Bishop Mariann Budde's sermon drew both praise and controversy.

Applicants were asked to imagine stepping into a pulpit the following Sunday: What would they say in response? How might the Gospel speak into our divided moment? How does their story and calling shape that response?

What follows is one such reflection.

Israel Portilla-Gómez *is Associate Rector for Family Ministries at St. Mary's Episcopal Church in Anchorage, Alaska, and a Doctor of Ministry candidate at Bexley-Seabury Seminary. Born and raised in Colombia, he was formed in Catholic schools and seminaries and ordained a Catholic deacon in 2010 before being received as an Episcopal deacon in 2016 and ordained priest in 2019. He previously served as Priest-in-Charge of Mission at St. John's Cathedral in Bogotá. An educator for nine years, Israel holds a Master of Science in Education and e-Learning from the Open University of Catalunya, Spain. He lives in Anchorage with his wife, Linda, and son, Matthew.*

I would like to start by saying that I did not imagine what it would be like to walk into the pulpit on the Sunday following Bishop Budde's sermon because I did it. Coincidentally, I was preaching that day in our church's schedule. I had already started writing my sermon before Tuesday, January 21, but how could I skip her sermon when it was so powerful and meaningful for my family, our wider church, committed Christians, and even for the entire world?

I remember clearly feeling eagerly proud of listening to last part of Bishop Budde's sermon multiple times from different news sources and reading different articles telling the story. Also, I went to the social media apps, Instagram and TikTok, to watch the short videos showing her asking for mercy for LGBTQ+ and immigrant communities. There was overwhelming support for her call for mercy and compassion in the comments.

In my personal circumstances, as an outsider who moved to this country two and a half years ago, I had to understand and measure exactly how to preach as an immigrant. The sermon below is my attempt to do just that. I reproduce my full sermon, focusing on the last part of Bishop Budde's preaching.

Sermon preached at St. Mary's Episcopal Church
Anchorage, Alaska
January 26, 2025

Let the words of my mouth and the meditation of my heart, be acceptable in your sight, O Lord, My strength and my redeemer. [1]

This week, many interesting things have happened. A new presidential term was initiated. It was raining in Anchorage and snowing in Florida and other southern states. There was a planetary parade yesterday, and, of course, we heard Bishop Mariann's sermon during the National Prayer Service at the National Cathedral, which I will mention later. Let's start with the message of the second reading.

There is an unofficial story where the Brain said to the Body, "I'm the one who really runs things around here. Without me, we would be clueless!" The Body replied, "But without the rest of us, you would just be a brain-dead idea!" And that's right. Without each other, we cannot imagine how our lives would be because it is almost impossible to just exist without others. It doesn't matter how important or influential a person is. That is what the Second Reading of Paul to the Corinthians is telling us, with the example of the parts of the Body. We all are necessary, needed, and valuable.

Our personalities are shaped by many people, not only our parents. For example, I was listening to a video conference of Dr. Russell Barkley, former president of the American Psychological Association. He said that the peak years of parental influence are below 7 years of age. From 7 to 12 years, it drops dramatically. After 15, it is only 6% and could be 0% after 21.

If a call for mercy for vulnerable people such as the LGBTQ+ and immigrant communities sounds like partisan politics, pause for a second: let us hear again today's Gospel.

So, all those out-of-home influences are peer groups, other adults, neighborhoods, schools, churches we go to, and the larger community. This makes me think that we have been influenced by so many people that we may not even be fully aware of all of them. We are designed to learn from and take care of each other. We are shepherds to one another, often being the sheep. We are stronger when we find a community that loves us.

Therefore, I want to emphasize the words of the Episcopal Bishop of Washington, Mariann Edgar Budde. Maybe you now know about Bishop Mariann since her sermon drew national and international attention on Tuesday. She says how, in a hyperpolarized environment, a culture of contempt threatens to destroy us. The culture of contempt destroys the respect and dignity that everyone is entitled to in the image of God.

If a call for mercy for vulnerable people such as the LGBTQ+ and immigrant communities sounds like partisan politics, pause for a second; let us hear again part of our Gospel today.

When Jesus read the scroll of the Prophet Isaiah, to the surprise of those who heard and saw him, he assured them that he was the one who brings good news to the poor, who proclaims release to the captives and recovery of sight to the blind and lets the oppressed go free. It is not partisan politics. First, it is in the Gospel. Jesus centered his message on loving our neighbors as ourselves, caring for the oppressed, and seeking justice for the marginalized. Also, we may be aware that this is a countercultural message. We resist many powers and ways that try to diminish the dignity of every human being. It is not new; it has been like that throughout history, and the world is constantly hungry for justice, love, and mercy. If we go to some more verses in today's Gospel, we will find that some rejected his message and were filled with rage, so much so that they drove Jesus out of the town and tried to throw him down over the cliff. [2]

The word mercy shows up approximately 300 times in the Bible. What about immigrants? Around 400 times. The Bible talks about caring for strangers because the people of Israel were also strangers in Egypt. So, we, as Christians, are faithful when we support the most vulnerable

among us. The specifics of how governments handle migration are one thing, and the general stigmatization of immigrants as bad people is wrong. I am an immigrant; my family is; we are documented as legal aliens by the US government. By the way, we do not come from Area 51. If you wonder, I come from Colombia, my wife from Latvia, and Matthew from both places, I guess.

In Hebrew, the word for "mercy" is "rachamim" (רַחֲמִים), which is related to the word "womb," which means a deep and maternal kind of compassion. In Greek, it is "eleos" (ἔλεος), which is derived from the word for olive oil. Olive oil was used to treat wounds. Metaphorically, those words are expressed to point out that intimate, deep, and loving feeling that binds us.

Learning to be merciful is a beautiful thing. It is one of the best influences we can receive and give from wherever we may be. Being merciful is one of the signs of authentic love. Bishop Mariann was faithful to our Christian core values when she asked for mercy for our LGBTQ+, immigrant, and other marginalized siblings. Let us remember when Jesus tells us in Luke 6:36: "Be merciful, just as your Father is merciful." In Matthew 5:7: "Blessed are the merciful, for they will receive mercy." Also, in the book of James 2:13, the brother of Jesus says: "For judgment will be without mercy to anyone who has shown no mercy; mercy triumphs over judgment."

Amen.

After my sermon, here are my concluding thoughts: In harmony with Bishop Budde's sermon, I reaffirm my commitment to unity, which comes from the same three foundations: honoring the inherent dignity of every human being, embracing honesty, and cultivating humility. All these foundations definitely stem from the commandment of love that Jesus gave us in the Gospel. When faced with divisions of any kind, I strive to respond with patience, de-escalation, and active listening. Also, I am aware that living into this reality implies a long patient pilgrimage for all participants, and I need to continue being connected to the source of love and mercy that emanates from our resurrected Lord Jesus Christ.

1. Psalm 19:14
2. Luke 4: 28-29

The Crafty and Cunning Work of the Gospel

By The Rt. Rev. Brian Cole
Episcopal Diocese of East Tennessee

***The Rt. Rev. Brian Cole** is a member of the Board of Trustees of SIM, and serves as the fifth bishop of the Episcopal Diocese of East Tennessee. In this sermon Bishop Cole reflects on Luke 16:1-13 in light of a recent experience this summer visiting the Mississippi Delta.*

Tennessee Ernie Ford. Do you remember Tennessee Ernie Ford? He was a native of Bristol, Tennessee. For decades, from the 1930s until his death in the early 1990s, with that deep baritone voice, he sang Country and Western, and Gospel songs. I knew him because of my family's deep commitment to watching Hee-Haw every Saturday night.

He had several hit songs, like Mule Train and The Ballad of Davy Crockett. But I think if you remember him, you remember him because of the song, Sixteen Tons: [snapping fingers and singing] "*You load sixteen tons, and what do you get? Another day older and deeper in debt. St. Peter don't call me, 'cause I can't go. I owe my soul to the company store.*"

Isn't that a great song? Isn't that a great song about an unjust situation? The worker works and produces great wealth. For that, he is paid in script that can only be redeemed at the company store. The company store prices are a bit high. And no matter how hard the worker works, the fix is in, and the cycle continues. More work, more script, more company store, which owns your soul, world without end.

At first glance, this morning's parable appears quite confounding. Except, if we look at it while whistling Sixteen Tons and snapping our fingers, then we can see the parable looks like much of what many of us know about life. The fix is in. The main character in the parable is the manager, also spoken of as the steward in the King James. And he has been squandering the owner's property. He has been taking too big of a cut when collecting the rents from the farm workers who work the land on behalf of the owner. Now the owner understood that the steward, for his troubles of collecting rents, was entitled to a handling fee.

But the steward has grown greedy, and his fees are too high, and the owner has had enough. So, turn in your accounts and your records, because you can no longer be my steward. So, the steward must start thinking and fast. He has lost the confidence of his boss. So, he needs help and lots of it. Since he knows the fix is in, work with what you got. The good brother knows how to shave here and cut there.

So, he goes to the workers who owe the debts to the owner and the steward starts wheeling and dealing. He doubles down on taking from the owner, but this time, on behalf of the workers who will owe the steward once he is unemployed.

And once the owner finds out about this? He commends the steward. We are left with the impression that the steward may keep his job, perhaps even end up promoted. For the steward understands how the world works and that the fix is in.

Jesus tells a story about corruption to remind us that the Good News is always situated in the real world where you and I live and work. The Good News was not intended simply to stay put in the Sunday School room while workers owe their souls to the company store. As stewards of the Good News, we are to be as crafty and cunning as the unjust steward, but on behalf of the cause of the Kingdom breaking in here and now, where we work and live and wheel and deal.

The unjust steward paid attention to every angle and knew how to count things and take the measure of the day and the people who filled it. Jesus wants the hearers of this teaching, both the first listeners and you and me to pay attention to every angle and learn how to count things and take the measure of the day and the people who fill it.

As stewards of the Good News, we are to be as crafty and cunning as the unjust steward, but on behalf of the cause of the Kingdom breaking in here and now, where we work and live and wheel and deal.

But pay attention, not to use people but to learn how to love them, as people made in the image of God, made to be treated as holy things. Their souls are to belong to themselves, not held as collateral at the company store.

"Whoever is faithful in a very little thing is faithful also in much." I hear Jesus saying that most of what you and I encounter is a series of small things. If we are always waiting for the large and grand moment to do the right thing, then we end up missing most of the opportunities to do the right thing in the countless small moments that make up most of living in the world where the fix is in.

This week, a friend of mine, while reflecting on the need to tend to small things, told me that if we are always waiting for the large and grand moment to do the right thing, it's not just that we will miss the many smaller opportunities but that we also won't have the habit and muscle to do the grand thing when something grand is required.

Jesus calls us children of light. Claim that vocation now, for this world, like the world of St. Luke's Gospel, is one where the fix is still in.

This summer, while on sabbatical, I took a trip to the Mississippi Delta. While there, a friend and I spent the day with an older black man named Sylvester Hoover. Mr. Hooever gives tours, highlighting the history of blues music in the region. Mr. Hoover is about 10 years older than me. Mr. Hoover grew up on a plantation near Greenwood. We drove past the property, and he told us about growing up there and his father's life as a sharecropper and how the entire family helped work the land on behalf of the owner.

Later that day, Mr. Hoover took us to a now empty house where a sharecropping family would have lived. He told a story about his father and one year where they had picked more cotton than ever before. At the end of the year, while settling accounts, his father came home with the news that the family's debt had grown, despite the record amount of cotton.

In that empty house, hearing an unjust story, I came to believe that it is not enough for us to hear the blues and be moved by the cry and the lament.

Why is the singer crying and lamenting? Do we hear the cry and lament? Can we, through the grace of God, give ourselves to the crafty and cunning work of the Gospel, to show up in small things? Can we do the next right and good thing in the world as it is, not waiting for someone else to set aright what we see and know to be wrong?

Witnesses for Prophetic Imagination

In an age of narrowing attention spans, distracting headlines and sensation-driven social media, these submissions by our SIM scholars and alums remind us of what we as a church cannot live without: a regular meditative acquaintance with the truth via what the gospel refers to as "the signs of the times" — without such regular acquaintance our lives are the poorer, if not totally misdirected. Their writings, lacking any trace of sentimentality, remind me of Jesus – the one the gospels speak of, the one alien to any pre-fabricated ideologies; the one who said that no one can serve two masters, the one who invites us not to an anxious presence to these times but to trust in our heavenly *abba*, and, not least, the one who told us to love our enemies.

What you witness here in their writings I have also heard out of their mouths in conversation, that this is a time where the language of faith needs to be skillfully applied. And that is no easy enterprise. As one of our contributors states, "The role of the church, and therefore of the appointed preacher at times such as these, is to maintain their balance on a highwire of incredible stakes while staying true to the teachings of Jesus by insisting on the innate humanity of those we disagree with." This creative tension, you will notice, is characteristic of the tone throughout this issue of *The SIMinarian*. To speak a prophetic word is to risk being misunderstood or, today especially, to risk being read through a pre-formed ideological lens; remember Jesus's parable about "this generation [being] like children in the marketplace…calling to one another" (Lk 7: 31 – 35). But I think that as you read through these sermons, meditations, and poetry, you may conclude, as he did, that "wisdom is justified by her children."

As these scholars suggest, our problems and dilemmas are — more often than not — accompanied by limited imagination, an inability to see beyond current circumstances, as frightening as they are for many, to commit to a world where bullies and demagogues are not the barometer of our collective will but rather that inborn human instinct to care for one another and to seek to live well in each other's company.

I am in awe of the imagination and courage for truth-telling of our contributors. But, above all, I am awed by their faithfulness in engaging the truth of the Gospel in a non-combative way, in a manner eager to make room for everybody. I hear echoes of the Baptismal Covenant in their offerings — especially the

one which invites us to "respect the dignity of every human being," as made in the image of God, and therefore not hidden from God's seeing them. These writings invite a renewed seeing of ourselves as the Body of Christ, of seeing those previously considered in the margins as central to our thriving. Another of our contributors relates of her faith formation through her parents, "I was raised by parents who prayed not necessarily in stained-glass sanctuaries, but while cleaning kitchens, hotel rooms, fixing faucets, and sweeping floors. Their prayers were often for daily bread, safety, peace, justice, and a better life for their children." To those prayers we owe much, especially as they have brought such distinguished company to the SIM Becoming Beloved Community of scholars in the person of Mildred Reyes and so many others among our current 100 scholars.

Each year, this community of scholars reminds us at SIM that the church, as a whole and these emerging leaders in particular, are anything but uniform, not shaped by a single story but formed, more and more, by the conviction that love is at the heart of God's continuing presence to the world. And that love needs witnesses who are willing to become themselves living flames of love, to become Christ — even as God was willing to become one of us. My sincere hope is that, reading this journal may remind you of others who belong to this company. At SIM, we are ever ready to expand this beloved community.

James Goodmann
Associate Director & Director of the Scholarships Program
The Society for the Increase of the Ministry

100 Becoming Beloved Community Scholars

The list follows the 100 Becoming Beloved Community scholars' images on the cover, arranged row by row from left to right. Unless otherwise noted, all degrees listed are Master of Divinity.

1. Anthony Rodriguez, Virginia Theological Seminary 2027
2. The Rev. Yaa Addison Warren, Virginia Theological Seminary 2023
3. Adele Gay Dennis, School of Theology at Sewanee 2026
4. Alden Emery Fossett, Yale/Berkeley Divinity School 2026
5. The Rev. Alejandra Trillos, Virginia Theological Seminary (DMin) 2026
6. The Rev. Alyssa Stebbing, Seminary of the Southwest 2022
7. The Rev. Amanda Taylor-Montoya, Church Divinity School of the Pacific 2022
8. The Rev. Amelia Bello-Santana, Virginia Theological Seminary 2025
9. The Rev. Anatol "Ana" Ferguson, School of Theology at Sewanee 2025
10. Bro. Angel Gabriel Roque, Seminary of the Southwest 2026
11. Bethany Lynn Gugliemino, School of Theology at Sewanee 2028
12. The Rev. Bernard Ago Quaye, Candler at Emory University 2027
13. The Rev. Brendan Francis Nee, EDS @Union 2024
14. Camilla Caudell, Virginia Theological Seminary 2027
15. Carissa Riedesel, School of Theology at Sewanee 2027
16. The Rev. Carlos Ruvalcaba, Bloy House 2019
    Claremont University (PhD) 2030
17. The Rev. Marcia Chanta Bhan, Virginia Theological Seminary 2020
18. The Rev. Chris Leung, Virginia Theological Seminary 2025
19. The Rev. Creamilda Yoda, Virginia Theological Seminary 2022
20. The Rev. Cruz Torres-Razo, Seminary of the Southwest 2025
21. Demarius Jarron Walker, Earlham School of Religion 2026
22. Quincy DeShawn Hall, Bexley-Seabury Seminary 2026
23. Djalia Alice Uwimana, Candler @Emory University 2024
24. The Rev. Edward Smith, School of Theology at Sewanee 2025
25. Emily Elder, Candler (MDiv); Virginia (Anglican diploma) 2025
26. Felicity Adetimojou Thompson, Bexley-Seabury Seminary 2026
27. Maria Ermine Sophia May, General Theological Seminary 2027
28. The Rev. Francisco Serrano, Episcopal Diocese of Washington Diaconal School 2023
29. Gregory Hunter Jones, School of Theology at Sewanee 2028
30. The Rev. George Black, Virginia Theological Seminary 2025
31. The Rev. Harlowe Zefting, Church Divinity School of the Pacific 2025
32. The Rev. Dr. Herschel vonEdward Wade, Virginia Theological Seminary 2023

100 Becoming Beloved Community Scholars

33. The Rev. Israel Portilla-Gomez, Bexley-Seabury Seminary (STM) 2028
34. The Rev. Jordan L. Bishop, Iliff School of Theology 2024
35. The Rev. Jed Dearing, Church Divinity School of the Pacific 2021
36. Jerrick Rutherford, Bexley-Seabury Seminary 2027
37. The Rev. Jesus Ivan-Ruiz Swartz, School of Theology at Sewanee 2025
38. "Jae" Kirkland Rice, Yale/Berkeley Divinity School 2027
39. The Rev. Joseph Hubbard, Virginia Theological Seminary 2021
40. The Rev. John Mnyema N'goma, School of Theology at Sewanee (DMin) 2026
41. The Rev. Julius Chunga, School of Theology at Sewanee (DMin) 2026
42. The Rev. Kaley Elaine Casenheiser, Yale/Berkeley Divinity School 2024
43. Catherine Mears, Union Theological Seminary 2021
44. The Rev. Katherine C. Campbell, Seminary of the Southwest 2023
45. Kaley L. Stewart , School of Theology at Sewanee 2027
46. The Rev. Kelly Ramer Moody, School of Theology at Sewanee 2025
47. Kelly Cynthia Park, Yale Divinity School 2026
48. Kate Holbein Rademacher, School of Theology at Sewanee 2027
49. The Rev. Laura Elizabeth Natta, Virginia Theological Seminary 2023
50. Linda Iquo Etim , Yale Divinity School 2026
51. Mari Shiukashvili, Candler @Emory University 2023
52. The Rev. Marisa Sifontes, Candler @Emory University 2021
53. The Rev. Mary Caitlin Frazier, Virginia Theological Seminary 2024
54. The Rev. Marycelis Otero, Candler @Emory University 2025
55. Mariely Jineldy Gutierrez, Seminary of the Southwest 2028
56. Matthew Webster Argonauta, Union Theological Seminary 2026
57. The Rev. McKenzi Jo Roberson, School of Theology at Sewanee 2025
58. The Rev. Megan Allen-Miller, Seminary of the Southwest 2020
59. The Rev. Megan Carlson , Seminary of the Southwest 2023
60. The Rev. Melina Dezhbod, Virginia Theological Seminary 2021
61. Milton Frank Gilder, Yale/Berkeley Divinity School 2025
62. The Rev. Mitchell Felton , Virginia Theological Seminary 2023
63. Nicole Tingle Walters, Candler @Emory University 2025, D.Min. at Winebrenner (OH) 2025
64. Kendall Paige Trivet, Seminary of the Southwest 2026
65. The Rev. Patricia Rose, Church Divinity School of the Pacific 2021
66. The Rev. Pedro Cuevas, Virginia Theological Seminary 2021

100 Becoming Beloved Community Scholars

67. The Rev. Pedro Lara, Nashotah House 2017
68. Rachel Chan Ambasing, Seminary of the Southwest 2028
69. The Rev. Reginald L. Hayes, Virginia Theological Seminary 2023
70. The Rev. Robert D. Rose, Bexley-Seabury Seminary 2024
71. Shruti Gopal Kulkarni, Nashotah House (STM) 2028
72. Samuel L. Manirakiza, Virginia Theological Seminary 2028
73. Sadaf Erastus McAfee School at Mercer University 2026
74. The Rev. Canon Salmoon Bashir, Candler @Emory University 2022
75. Dr. Sarah Stonesifer-Boylan, Vanderbilt (Peabody College) 2022
76. Bernadette Shawan Gillians, Candler @Emory University 2027
77. The Rev. Silas Kotnour, Union Theological Seminary 2024
78. The Rev. Suresh Shanthakumar, Virginia Theological Seminary (DMin) 2025
79. Tabitha Jamal, Candler @Emory University 2025
80. The Rev. Jennifer Allen, General Theological Seminary 2020
81. The Rev. Antoinette Belhu, Seminary of the Southwest 2022
82. Richard Tyler Regnier, Yale Divinity School 2027
83. Tyler Thurston Jeffrey, School of Theology at Sewanee (on leave)
84. The Rev. Yuri Rodriguez-Lauriani, School of Theology at Sewanee 2023
85. The Rev. Tommy Watson, Yale/Berkeley/ISM 2024
86. Rachel Clare Pinti, Yale/Berkeley Divinity School 2026
87. Mildred Reyes, Wesley Theological Seminary 2028
88. The Rev. Malcolm McLaurin, School of Theology at Sewanee 2021
89. The Rev. Julie Rodriguez, Seminary of the Southwest 2022
90. The Rev. Greg Williams, Virginia Theological Seminary 2025
91. The Rev. Audra Reyes, School of Theology at Sewanee 2024
92. The Rev. Anthony Suggs-Perea, Seminary of the Southwest 2024
93. The Rev. Dana Jean, Virginia Theological Seminary 2024
94. The Rev. Grace Flint, Church Divinity School of the Pacific 2020
95. The Rev. Jose Santiago Rodriguez, Seminary of the Southwest 2021
96. The Rev. Peter Akicmeir, Seminary of the Southwest 2025
97. The Rev. Melissa Fauci, Virginia Theological Seminary 2025
98. The Rev. Rosa Briones, Episcopal Diocese of Washington Diaconal School 2021
99. Thomas Martin Conroy, Virginia Theological Seminary 2024
100. The Rev. David Patino-Mejia, Bexley-Seabury Seminary 2023

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