



# Risen

ADVENT 2021

Rhode Island's Source for Episcopal News



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*Dear Friends, As we begin the Church year and move toward the close of the calendar year, I invite you to read about some of the good work that goes on in our Diocese, despite all the obstacles. I hope that you are inspired to look for the work that you can do, and I ask you to help me tell the stories of the work that you see around you. I wish you a blessed Advent, a Merry Christmas, and a happy, healthy New Year! — Kristin Knudson-Groh, editor*



## BISHOP'S ADDRESS ■

# To proclaim the Gospel of Jesus

*The following is an edited summary of the Bishop's Address to Convention. The video of his full address may be found here.*

If you're like me, you're starting to think twice about that habit of turning on the news at night or picking up the newspaper first-thing in the morning. And you're realizing we're all kind of worried about the direction we're heading. We are facing — as a world — very serious challenges, such as climate change. And there seems to be a kind of cynicism about whether or not we as a species have the political will to respond to the challenges. We're also seeing young people who are disheartened and beginning to change the way they are making life choices, because they're beginning to doubt that they have a future on the earth.

We know there are significant economic challenges in front of us as a society. We have seen the gap widen between people who are well-off and people who are just barely making it. It has become, frankly, scandalous how much money is moved from one set of pockets, with very little in them, to the set of pockets that already have more than enough — even more than we can even imagine. And the social fabric seems to be being torn at the local level, where we are having trouble just talking to one another or talking about difficult questions, even in our churches.

It's the social fabric that has me most concerned because, without the social fabric, we have an inability to create coalitions or the kind of community we're going to need to be able to have a serious sustained response to the challenges we're facing. Challenges the world is facing, the church is facing, congregations are facing, and our families are facing.

Some of that social fabric being torn is because we lost a sense of shared values, a sense of "this is what everyone believes and holds to be true." And I think, too, there's a lack of trust in people in authority. That's often with good reason, but if someone in authority says something and is automatically doubted because he or she has authority, that's not going to help us move as a community, to be able to respond.

I believe the church has a response to this moment, and I believe that response is the Gospel. And I believe that the presence of the Gospel in our communities is the reason we're seeing a different kind of response at the congregational level and across the church. That may not be happening everywhere across the country, but at least within the Episcopal Church and within our sister denominations we're seeing a way of being able to respond appropriately.



I believe that God was uniquely present in the historical person of Jesus of Nazareth. I believe that Jesus died on the cross and that he rose again. I believe that what he taught and his manner of life change our understanding of the purpose of the universe, of God's relationship with creation, and of our relationship with one another.

And that means right now, as you worry about the direction that things are going politically or in terms of creation or for us as a church, the most important thing we can do is to proclaim the Gospel. We need to stop worrying about our survival, and we need to recognize that the purpose of the church, of the diocese, of each of us individual baptized Christians is to proclaim the Gospel of Jesus. Because it changes things. The Gospel has changed things in the past, and I believe passionately and strongly that it will change the future.

Our congregations have gotten smaller and fewer people are coming to church because it's "the done thing," but the people who are coming are there because they want to hear about the Gospel. What we're recognizing is things that we used to expect could be done, probably need to be dropped.

One of the things I know has happened is that the clergy, who are helpers by their own orientation and will step up to help out whenever possible, have filled the gaps where we've had a lack of volunteers. So we have clergy doing things they really don't need to do, and maybe no one really needs to do, or maybe we can find a different way to do.

Do one or two things well and that's OK. Just know that you do them so that the Gospel will be shared, the world will be changed and lives will be saved. I'm not speaking metaphorically. I'm not speaking in terms of the future. I'm speaking in terms of the here and now, because the path we're on is not the path we want to be on.

It's not going to get easier in the immediate future, but we are called in the power of the Gospel to transform the world around us. If you think about it, I'm sure you can find ways you have been transformed by people who have shared the Gospel with you in an effective way.

And now, in our time. It is our moment to do that for the people around us.

— *The Rt. Rev. W. Nicholas Kniseley,  
Episcopal Bishop of Rhode Island*

## MINISTRY UPDATE

# ECC

*Weeping may last, but the joy will come.*

Each summer at the Episcopal Conference Center the campers and staff write an original song based on the summer theme. This summer the theme was from Psalm 30: “Weeping may last through the night, but joy comes in the morning.” For our theme song this summer we simplified the text:

*Weeping may last, but the joy will come.*

The ECC staff chose the summer theme in May of this year, when they gathered together at camp for a planning day for the first time in over 18 months. Thirteen months before, the staff had been together via zoom, while they were informed that the summer program for 2020 would be canceled. There wasn't a dry eye present at that meeting as we grieved such a profound loss due to COVID.

In May, with a summer program lurking on the horizon and enough of us vaccinated that we could safely hug again, we found ourselves overwhelmed with joy. The summer theme came easily and naturally, as we reflected on the tears we had shed over the last year and looked to the future with joy and expectation.

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The summer of 2021 did not disappoint. ECC offered a limited camp program that met the needs of every population we serve: teens, children, [Bridge Campers](#), family camp participants, and [City Camp](#) children. Each session was filled to capacity, and each session was brimming with joy.

After a year in relative isolation, the experience of being back together at camp with friends and community was profound for everyone present. ECC is blessed with incredible outdoor space, and campers and staff were able to have all activities and meals outdoors, allowing for safe interaction with one another. Staff was vaccinated, and campers were tested prior to arrival. There were no COVID cases at ECC this summer.

While a healthy community was worth rejoicing, the real celebration of the summer came in the laughter and tears, songs and worship, friendship and connection we shared with one another all summer. Our camp ministry has never been more important than it was this summer. Our mission at ECC is to nurture authentic relationships between God, one another, and ourselves that transform lives. After a year apart, our relationships required nurturing. And the summer of 2021 allowed that nurturing to take place. We did not take one another for granted this summer, and the joy and appreciation we shared transformed us personally and communally throughout the camp season.

As the summer was drawing to a close the landscape of the virus had begun to change again, and we realized that we

would not be returning to a school year as free from concern as we had hoped. Knowing that was taking place in the outside world, we clung to the present moment we shared at camp, fueling ourselves for the chapter ahead.

We talked often about our summer theme, reflecting on the idea that weeping is part of life (some years more than others). The summer of 2021 helped us to remember that while weeping is part of our human experience, God promises joy. And after spending the summer linked together after too long apart — we believe that promise.

*Hear our summer theme song and see some of our joy here.*

*Get ready for Summer 2022 here.*

## Raise Together

ECC has recently launched a capital campaign, Raise Together, to fund the preparation of some of its structures for the next 80 years of ministry. The beloved Barn requires reinforcement of its beams, roof, and foundation. The former garage, now called the Carriage House, is to be transformed into a year-round meeting space. A new bathroom will be built, with single occupancy and ADA-compliant units, heated for year-round use. The campaign has already raised more than half of its million-dollar goal. [Watch the powerful video](#) made for this campaign here, or give at the ECC website, [eccri.org](http://eccri.org). Thank you!



## CHURCH PROFILE ■

# St. Peter's and St. Andrew's

St. Peter's & St. Andrew's, Providence, is becoming “a place where the Gospel is being lived out and joy can be found in the midst of complexities of our world.”

That's how the Rev. Maryalice Sullivan, vicar, described the small congregation this fall. It's focused on being a **center of hope** for the community where it's located, and since the beginning of the COVID-19 pandemic, it has provided more and more hope for that community.

The church hosts a testing and vaccination clinic. A partnership with the “Free.” program provides feminine hygiene products to give away. And a thrift shop helps fund a food pantry that dates from the 1970s and increased its opening frequency in the spring of 2020 in response to a request from the Rhode Island Food Bank.

Now the pantry operates every Saturday, giving away about 2,000 pounds of groceries each week. It distributed 56,000 pounds of food in 2020 and exceeded that total by mid-September this year.

“Everything has changed since the pandemic began,” Sullivan said. “We were a church on the edge of collapse. We were tired and going nowhere. A few people had been holding the place together.”

Now people talk about — and take on — opportunities. Nearly all of the 25 or so active members are involved in one way or another, Sullivan said.

Kristen Milette, who manages the expanded food ministry, said the program “is bringing new life into the place. Even people who can't physically come to church support it by donating aprons or making baskets, etc. New families from the community are coming every week because we're providing good stuff.

And a lot of it. Milette said the program has served 300 different families in the past six months, at a rate of 60–65 per week. The food being offered has expanded from “mostly dry goods,” she said, to include produce, milk and bread, thanks in part to a grant from Farm Fresh RI. Volunteers also pick up leftover produce from local farms.

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## Center of Hope Food Pantry

The Center of Hope Food Pantry, known as “Pete and Andy’s,” has just learned that it will receive a \$15,000 grant from the Rhode Island Community Food Bank, and additional funds from the City of Providence. And, Kristen Milette was presented with this year’s Sister Carol McGovern from the RI Food Bank at their Annual Meeting. The Sister Carol McGovern award is given to someone who has been nominated for doing an outstanding job working on the front lines to alleviate hunger and poverty in their community. Sister Carol McGovern was Co-Director of Amos House from 1983 to 1995 and she was a founding board member of the Food Bank from 1983 to 1990. The Sister Carol McGovern Award is a tribute to her lifetime of work assisting others. Congratulations all around!

*To volunteer for the food pantry or other ministries of the church, contact Sarah Karlavage Rocchio at [sekrocchio@gmail.com](mailto:sekrocchio@gmail.com).*

Milette manages the operation, ordering food, picking it up, storing it, making sure licenses are up to date, rooms are clean, etc. Her husband and two kids are part of a nine-person volunteer team — including church member Josie Goldberg, a Spanish-speaking greeter on Saturday mornings. Todd Grisdale, the senior warden, is a certified Food Safety Manager and ensures that the kitchen is up to code. He oversees the distribution of meat and dairy products each week, welcoming each guest and filling orders.

The church casts a wide net for volunteers. One is Sarah Karlavage Rocchio, who is responsible for recruiting other volunteers, reaching out to colleges and other organizations to get involved. For example, a group of students from a fraternity at Johnson & Wales University help to unload the food truck on Fridays; and members of the Cranston chapter of General Federation of Women’s Clubs help to sort the thrift shop goods.

The church also has actively collaborated with other external entities, including Grace Church and St. Martin’s in Providence. Connections to the Elmhurst and Mount Pleasant neighborhoods bring donations to the thrift shop.

“It’s not an ordinary thrift shop,” Sullivan said. “We do not price anything, asking only for donations. We try hard to meet the needs of the community.”

The shop offers household goods such as sheets, blankets and holiday items as well as clothes. And the search for goods to offer can take on a variety of methods. In late September, for example, Milette drove to New Bedford, Massachusetts, to pick up leftover items from a church yard sale.

Sullivan said they see even more opportunities. In September, the church applied to the Diocesan Council for a grant to make repairs to the basement. That expanded space would allow the start of English-as-a-second-language classes and citizenship classes and provide additional storage space for the food pantry and seasonal thrift shop items.

The church offered its first Blessing of the Animals service in October, and

is planning a Christmas service for the community during Advent and something for Ash Wednesday — in Spanish and English.

“We have much more than a food pantry,” Sullivan said. “We are a place of community. We are still small, but we are alive, we have joy, we have laughter, we are growing, and we have a balanced budget.

It’s a place of miracle stories,” she added. “Now someone is going to pay for us to have a music license, and someone else donated 50 tubes of toothpaste. And a carpenter has come forward to help with small jobs that need to be done.

“In order for any of this to happen, we have to change and then change again. That’s not always easy, but it’s amazing what can happen when we say ‘yes’ to God.”

— Dave Seifert



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25 Pomona Avenue, Providence  
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[www.stpeters-standrews.org](http://www.stpeters-standrews.org)

# Transitions: Clergy Profiles & New Calls

## The Rev. Kevin Beesley, Priest-in-Charge, St. John's, Newport



### **What called you to ministry? Did you attend an Episcopal church while growing up? If not, what brought you to the Episcopal Church?**

I was raised in a Pentecostal denomination where my father, grandfather, and great-grandfather pastored for many years. While I felt a call to ministry at a young age, that call wasn't fully realized until we discovered the Episcopal Church.

Following my father's retirement, we began to explore where God might be leading us. My wife and I felt a call

away from how we were raised and to something consistent with how we understood God's love to exist in the world. After several months of searching, we discovered All Saints Episcopal Church in New Albany, Ohio. One day following Mass, I was overwhelmed with a sense of God's love. It was in that moment, by myself, wrapped in God's love and mercy, that I felt God speaking to my heart. I knew that God was calling me to the priesthood and that the time and place had come. Eventually I left my job, we moved to a small apartment, and I began seminary at Bexley-Seabury.

This was not a first career, but more of a third. I had spent most of my life in law enforcement before teaching criminal justice, serving as chair of the department and eventually dean of education. I was ordained to the diaconate in 2016 and priesthood in 2017.

### **How are you getting to know your new parish and new state?**

I have enjoyed learning about Rhode Island. I attended a bible college in Barrington in the early 1990s and was struck with what a great location Rhode Island is. The accessibility to Boston and New York is fantastic and I love the history, New England charm, and

culture that my wife and I missed while living in the Midwest. Life is slower in some ways compared to Columbus, and there has been an adjustment living in a smaller community and yet, it is a nice change of pace.

My wife and I were both raised in New England and had always desired to come home. I am humbled and thankful for the opportunity to serve the wonderful people of Saint John's, in this wonderful diocese under Bishop Knisely.

### **What are your interests/hobbies? Is there anything else you'd like to tell us about you?**

My wife (a registered nurse) and I have been married for 27 years and have two sons; our oldest is 20 years old and lives with us while we help him through special needs and additional support. Our youngest son is 18 and is going to college in Columbus where he is majoring in Philosophy and desires to enter law school (hopefully on the east coast) after graduation. I love New England sports, particularly the Boston Bruins; cooking; electronics; and technology. We are all thrilled to be here and look forward to getting to know everyone as we all share in what I consider to be one of the greatest privileges of all: ordained ministry.



## Changes

**The Rev. Kevin Beesley**, Priest-in-Charge, the Zabriskie Memorial Church of St. John the Evangelist, Newport. July 2021.

**The Rev. Lynn Orville**, Rector, St. Andrew's by the Sea, Little Compton, accepted a call as Rector of All Saints, Gastonia, N.C. August 2021.

**The Rev. Norman MacLeod**, Interim, St. Andrew's by the Sea, Little Compton, September 2021.

**The Rev. Rob Travis**, Senior Pastor, Ascension, Wakefield and Chapel of St. John the Divine, Saunterstown, accepted a call as Rector of St. Mary's Episcopal Church, High Point, N.C., October 2021.

**The Rev. Sarah Saxe**, Associate, Ascension, Cranston, November 2021.

## Retirements

**The Rev. Don Parker**, Priest, from St. Mary's, East Providence, September 2021.

**The Rev. Michael Coburn**, Priest-in-Charge, from Ascension, Cranston, November 2021.

**The Rev. Al Zadig**, Priest, All Saints, Pontiac, November 2021.



**The cross is my anchor**

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