



# Risen

EASTER 2022

Rhode Island's Source for Episcopal News



Bishop's Message ■ St. Peter's by-the-Sea ■ St. Mary's Home for Children ■ General Convention ■ Clergy Q&A

# Risen

Rhode Island's Source for Episcopal News

**RISEN — A periodic publication of  
The Episcopal Diocese of Rhode Island**

275 North Main Street  
Providence, RI 02903  
Phone: (401) 274-4500  
[www.episcopalri.org](http://www.episcopalri.org)

**Publisher** — The Rt. Rev. W. Nicholas  
Knisely, Bishop of Rhode Island

**Editor and Director of Communications**  
— Kristin Knudson-Groh

**Copy Editor** — Kristin Knudson-Groh

**Design and Layout** — Anne M. Stone

**Writers** — Kristin Knudson-Groh,  
Dave Seifert

**Subscriptions** — RISEN Magazine is a  
free journal published by and for The  
Episcopal Diocese of Rhode Island. If you  
would like to be added to our mailing list,  
or need to change your mailing address,  
send an e-mail with your name and  
address to: [risen@episcopalri.org](mailto:risen@episcopalri.org).

## Photo Credits

All photos are used by permission.

Cover — Jeffrey Hamilton / Unsplash

Pages 2 & 4 — Kristin Knudson-Groh

Page 3 — Juliancolton / Wikimedia  
Commons / CCO

Page 5 — Courtesy St Mary's Home  
for Children

Page 7 — Dave Seifert

Page 8 — Courtesy of the Rev. Sarah Saxe

**Welcome** to the spring issue of RISEN! I hope you will find something here that makes you think, causes you to take action, or simply helps you to know that you are a part of a Church that is at work in the world. I wish you a blessed Eastertide! ■ Kristin Knudson-Groh, *Director of Communications*



*Shoppers making their way around  
the Community Market at St. Peter's  
by-the-Sea. Learn more about this  
ministry, starting on page 4.*



# Light breaks in when the night is darkest

For obvious reasons, this spring feels more meaningful than usual, doesn't it? The world is watching war and its attendant atrocities unfold because of the Russian Invasion of Kyiv. The UN has issued a climate change report that indicates that we should be much more alarmed than we have been. And COVID, while waning, is still impacting us, and helping to exacerbate divisions in American society — and still spreading in Asia and the global south. Lent and Easter this year are happening while all of this concern swirls in the background. I'm finding it hard to focus.

And yet. The promise of Easter is that light breaks in when the night is darkest. The surprise of God's Easter Victory and all that follows is startling because of the despair and pain that preceded it. And that experience gives us reason

to be hopeful even when others might despair. Peter Gomes, the former Harvard chaplain, once said that when he asked a South African anti-apartheid leader whether he was optimistic about the prospects for healing in South Africa as it rebuilt itself. The leader replied, "No, I am not optimistic. But as a Christian, I am hopeful." It feels like right now there's not much to be optimistic about, but for us as Christians right now, we have reason to be hopeful.

In other places, I have noted that the experience of the Episcopal Church in these pandemic years has been different than that of many other organizations. We have managed, for the most part, to find a way to support one another and to get through these once-in-a-lifetime challenges. Much of that is due to the creativity and faithfulness of the lay and ordained leadership, but most

of that is due to the fact that we were not overcome with despair. Rather, having hope that God was still present among us and that we had something important to share, we were able to adapt to the moment. That was not true for some others.

That hopefulness is what distinguishes us from so many of our neighbors. And, at our best, our hopefulness is contagious, so that though others might despair, they might note something different about us, and noting it, find our faith kindles their hope.

Hope at this moment is not the denial of reality. We have hope because of the spiritual discipline that we have cultivated in the years preceding this moment, in the Lenten journeys we have shared and in the Easter moments we have witnessed. It is our birthright

as baptized people. It is our possession because we have been grafted into the living body of Christ. And without hope, we would simply perish.

But while managing to hang on to hope in these moments can be salvation for us personally, sharing it with others can transform the world. The news that we have a reason to hope in God and in each other is at the core of the Gospel that we promise to share every time we renew our baptismal vows.

Do not doubt that we have something of great value to share with others. And knowing that, remember how important our common life is to the world around us.

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

# Opening Up to Change ■ St. Peter's by-the-Sea, Narragansett



On a cool winter afternoon, a small crowd starts to gather outside St Peter's by-the-Sea in Narragansett, chatting in the sun. As it gets closer to 3:00 p.m. they are allowed inside church, and sit companionably in groups of two or three, every other pew. Hellos and waves are exchanged. One woman has a small dog peeking out from her coat. Next to the door into the Parish Hall, a folding table has been set up and two volunteers are at the ready with a laptop, a notebook, and extra masks.

At 3:00 the volunteers begin to let groups of 5-6 people go through to the Hall for the weekly Community Market. Everyone is asked to give their name, but no other information is taken. Many of the guests are known to the volunteers and pause to chat for a moment or two on their way in. Inside, tables are full of groceries, fresh produce, personal care items, and even pet food. The Rev. Craig Swan, Rector, stands by the coolers handing out eggs, cheese, and frozen meats. Shoppers are free to take what they want, as much as they need. A volunteer encourages everyone to take more milk.

St. Peter's has had a food program since the 1980s and it has gone through a number of iterations before becoming the current "Community Market" ten years

ago. Keeping it going has been a challenge during the past two years, but the staffers have been determined. When in-person shopping wasn't really an option, they put together grab-and-go boxes. When they were told how much their guests missed being able to choose for themselves, they experimented with ways of taking orders. Now, they have set up online ordering, and are exploring ways to deliver groceries to people who are having trouble getting to the church.

This latest step aligns with the parish's goal to bring the church out to the community, rather than simply hoping that people will come in to them. The same idea is applied to their online worship. St. Peter's was very quick to adopt digital worship at the start of the pandemic and has continued to try out new ideas.

For St. Peter's, podcasting has been the biggest hit. They are currently recording and releasing the Sunday services as podcasts. Fr. Craig has also done a podcast series of conversations with a local rabbi, and they are discussing plans to renew that effort. It may expand into a hybrid arrangement in which they will be live on Zoom and able to take questions, with the

*article continues on next page*

*continued from previous page*

audio of the initial presentation made available afterwards as a podcast.

The parish owes a lot, regarding its digital ministry, to vestry member Ron Cowie, who was able to jump in with technical experience and equipment. He also has the imagination and the energy to “throw spaghetti at the wall and see what sticks,” as Fr. Craig says. However, the parish knows it can’t rest the entire effort on one person’s shoulders and is recruiting people that Ron will train in order to keep this ministry sustainable.

Looking ahead, St. Peter’s is excited about both resuming longtime in-person activities like the Brother’s Keeper Concert Series, and to continuing to innovate and experiment with new ways of sharing God’s love with the world around us.

— *Kristin Knudson-Groh*

St. Peter’s by-the-Sea  
72 Central Street, Narragansett  
401-783-4623  
The Rev. Craig Swan, Rector  
[www.stpetersbythesea.com](http://www.stpetersbythesea.com)

## St. Mary’s Home for Children ■ MINISTRY UPDATE

For nearly 150 years, St. Mary’s Home for Children has been providing a safe haven for people in need.

Today, it’s a provider of mental health and education for children and adults who have suffered severe trauma or are experiencing psychiatric disorders. St. Mary’s works with young people, adults and families to foster resilience and potential, focusing on treatment and healing while providing the support and skills necessary to preserve families and encourage significant growth for the children and adults.

The nonprofit institution serves about 500 families a year; 76 percent of its clients are younger than 18. The home has helped thousands of children and adults since its founding in 1877 and has received national recognition for developing best practices and innovative programs. Its connection to the Episcopal Church goes back to its founding. It’s now a related organization of the diocese, and Bishop Knisely chairs the board of directors.

St. Mary’s has three major departments:

- **Residential Services** — offers a range of clinical services on its North Providence campus to young people ages 6 to 18, based on the principles of the national Building Bridges Initiative ([www.buildingbridges4youth.org/about](http://www.buildingbridges4youth.org/about)).
- **The George N. Hunt Campus School** — provides highly structured, individualized instruction and therapeutic services to residential and day students from kindergarten through 12th grade with learning, social, emotional and behavioral challenges. Hunt served as the Episcopal bishop of Rhode Island from 1980 to 1994.
- **Outpatient Services (the Shepherd Program)** — offers a variety of programs to support children, adults and families who have been impacted by sexual abuse, sexual exploitation and other trauma, such as family violence and physical abuse.



Services include office-based counseling, equine-assisted psychotherapy, supporting teens at risk for sexual exploitation, supporting adoptive and foster families, community-based treatment, support groups and trauma-informed training, and consultation for other providers.

Jessica Clark, assistant director of Outpatient Services, said “we are the only intensive clinical service in Rhode Island for trafficking victims. We also work on a larger scale on advocacy with the Rhode Island Human Trafficking Task Force to increase service for these victims.”

*article continues on next page*

## St. Peter’s Preschool

It is not unusual for a church to rent space to a preschool, but it isn’t often that a church actually runs a preschool. In the former rectory, children gather five mornings a week for experiential learning, and a little bit of our faith. Fr. Craig drops in for Chaplain Time twice a week and is working on integrating the Godly Play curriculum in the future.



And the needs are growing. Clark noted some disturbing trends during the COVID pandemic: “Our clients are getting younger and younger,” she said, “as a result of increased access to technology and less direct oversight by adults. There’s been a pretty significant increase in online exploitation.”

One St. Mary’s program provides group education to prevent victimization or revictimization. Clark said the average age of current participants is 12 years old.

How can you help? Clark said an important need is educating people to become aware of the need — “that victimization is happening to children in Rhode Island every day.”

St. Mary’s also accepts donations of new hygiene products, clothes, prepared food, and other personal products. And, depending on COVID restrictions,

staff members are available for speaking engagements and various kinds of training.

An annual grant from Episcopal Charities provides funding to help cover the cost of therapy and treatment for children, adults, and their families impacted by sexual abuse. Grants from Episcopal Charities provide basic human needs (food, shelter, healthcare) for at-risk children and at-risk seniors through partnerships with nonprofit agencies and church-based ministries. To learn more about Episcopal Charities, visit [www.episcopalri.org/charities](http://www.episcopalri.org/charities).

Clark said the Episcopal Charities grant is very important, especially for the equine therapy program, because other funding sources have declined.

To make a financial contribution, click the “Donate” button at the top of the St. Mary’s website ([www.smhfc.org](http://www.smhfc.org)).

For more information about product donations, contact Victoria Pacinich, development director, at [vpacinich@smhfc.org](mailto:vpacinich@smhfc.org); for training, contact Melissa Santoro, director of the outpatient department at [msantoro@smhfc.org](mailto:msantoro@smhfc.org). You also can call 401-353-3900, ext. 262 for Victoria and ext. 435 for Melissa.

— Dave Seifert

## Bishops to gather in England for Lambeth Conference

This summer will be especially busy for bishops in the Episcopal Church.

In addition to spending nearly two weeks in Baltimore at the General Convention of the Episcopal Church (see page 7), many will also travel to England for the 15th Lambeth Conference ([www.lambethconference.org](http://www.lambethconference.org)), July 26 through August 8.

Unlike the General Convention, which is a legislative event related to the operation of the Episcopal Church, the Lambeth Conference focuses on “prayer and reflection, fellowship and dialogue on church and world affairs.”

As Bishop Knisely points out, “This particular gathering of Lambeth comes at a time of war in Europe, global upheaval from climate change and economic uncertainty. It is hard to think of a more important time for leaders of the Anglican Communion to gather

and to take council with each other on how the Church needs to respond.”

Bishop Nicholas and Karen, who plan to attend the conference, began prayer and Bible study with other bishops and spouses several months ago. In small groups, participants have shared ministry experiences and stories, and discussed what it means for the Anglican Communion to be responsive to the current world’s needs.

This summer, the conference community will use further conversation, prayer, and spiritual reflection to discern God’s voice for his church and agree on commitments to share with the Anglican Communion.

After the conference, those commitments will be “sent out,” inviting and calling the Anglican Communion to put them into action in their communities.



Healing Lives, Restoring Hope – Since 1877

# Deputies and bishops prepare for General Convention

*Baltimore, Md. ■ July 7–14*

Preparation continues for the 80th General Convention of the Episcopal Church, to be held July 7–14 in Baltimore, after a one-year delay.

For the first time, committees are holding some of their hearings online to review resolutions that have been submitted so far. Deputies can sign up to testify about the resolutions, and anyone can register to observe the online meetings ([www.generalconvention.org/legislative-committee-meeting-registration](http://www.generalconvention.org/legislative-committee-meeting-registration)).

More than 120 bishops and 483 deputies are assigned to legislative committees. Each resolution is assigned to parallel committees that consist of members of the House of Deputies and House of Bishops.

The committees from each house typically meet together as a single committee to review assigned resolutions. If the committee recommends a resolution, it advances for consideration separately by the full House of Deputies and House of Bishops; both houses must approve for a resolution to be ratified.

Like all other dioceses, Rhode Island will be represented by eight members in the House of Deputies — four lay

and four clergy; one lay alternate and one clergy alternate also attend. Scott Avedisian from Trinity, Cranston, is chairing the deputation; it's his third General Convention.

“General Convention has already begun for many of us,” he said. “Virtual meetings are tackling changes to the Constitution and Canons; debating issues before the Prayer Book and Liturgy Committee; looking into proposed budget items in the Program, Budget, and Finance Committee, and others. With deputies eagerly participating in meetings, the excitement of Convention is building. The Rhode Island Deputation is well represented on committees (see box) and is leading many of the discussions about the future of the church.”

In the House of Bishops, Bishop Knisely will represent the diocese. His predecessor, the Rt. Rev. GERALYN WOLF, now an assisting bishop in the Diocese of Long Island, also is planning to attend.

“This will be an historic General Convention, coming as it does as the COVID pandemic starts to wane,” Bishop Knisely said. “For the first time, people from around the church have been able to easily attend legislative

hearings and offer their views directly about the decisions before Convention this summer. I'm hopeful that the wider participation will lead to better and more inclusive decision-making process in years to come.”

Also for the first time, members of the Joint Nominating Committee for the Election of the Presiding Bishop ([www.episcopalchurch.org/publicaffairs/leaders-elected-for-presiding-bishop-nominating-committee/](http://www.episcopalchurch.org/publicaffairs/leaders-elected-for-presiding-bishop-nominating-committee/)) will attend General Convention to hear from Episcopalians about their hopes and dreams for the church's next presiding bishop, who will be elected at the 2024 General Convention.

“The committee members are committed to hearing from as many Episcopalians as possible as we prepare to write a profile and call for discernment for the 28th presiding bishop of The Episcopal Church,” said Canon Steven Nishibayashi (Diocese of Los Angeles), committee co-chair. “We feel blessed that we have this opportunity to visit with the part of the church that will be in Baltimore for convention this summer.”

— Dave Seifert



## *RI deputies serve on committees*

The following deputies from Rhode Island are serving on committees for this year's General Convention:

**Scott Avedisian** — Dispatch of Business

**The Rev. Sunil Chandy** — Ecumenical & Interreligious Relations

**The Rev. Patrick Greene** — Committees & Commissions

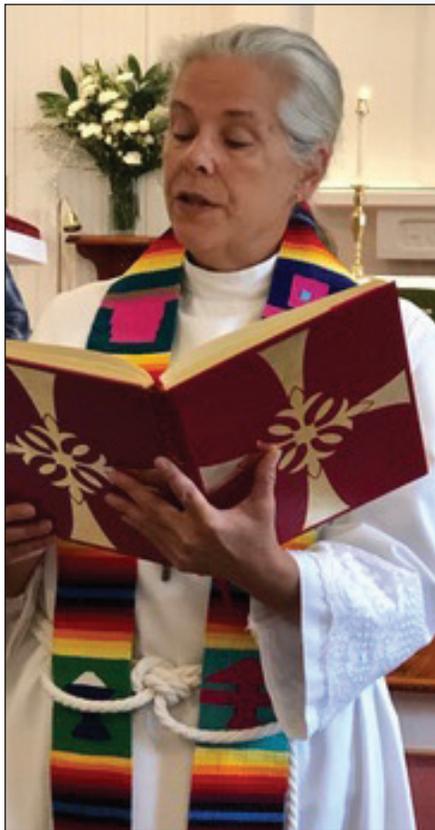
**Archdeacon Jan Grinnell** — Privilege & Courtesy

**Dave Seifert** — Deputy News

**The Rev. Dante A. Tavolaro** — Dispatch of Business

# Transitions: Clergy Profiles & New Calls

## The Rev. Sarah Saxe, Associate, Ascension, Cranston



### **What called you to ministry?**

The Holy Spirit, despite my efforts to ignore her. Over the years, the invitation became so strong, so persistent . . . insistent, via prayer, people, and sermons, that I finally gave in and became what I call “a reluctant servant.” Reluctant because I didn’t see it in me; servant because I trusted that the Holy Spirit knew what she was doing.

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

I grew up attending the Congregational Church (UCC). My husband brought me to the Episcopal Church. When we decided to get married, he informed me that he was Episcopalian and would like to be married in an Episcopal Church (ended up at St. Stephen’s in Providence by the Rev. Steele Martin). I was unchurched at the time and told him that was fine with me but I doubted I would become Episcopalian because it was too close to Roman Catholicism for me. The joke’s on me. Ha ha.

### **Did you go to seminary straight from college, or did you start off in another career?**

I majored in political philosophy and international politics and worked for Governor King in Massachusetts after graduating from college. I found I had a knack for computers (this was 1982) and most of my jobs were in that field until I “retired” from System Manager for Keyes Associates in Cumberland in 1991 to raise my twins. I had returned to college in 2009 to study database design and management and entered the discernment process for ordination at the same time. So no, I attended seminary almost 30 years after graduating from Boston College.

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

Rhode Island isn’t a new state — I lived in Edgewood from 1988/89 and in Warren from 1990 to 1998. I grew up in Mattapoisett, Massachusetts, so I have returned to familiar territory, and I’m so glad I did. From late 1998 until 2020 I lived south of the Mason-Dixon line or out in California or in the Caribbean and am so happy to again experience four seasons, especially snow!

It has been difficult getting to know my new parish due to COVID concerns. My usual practice would be to sit with different folks during coffee hour (not happening) and to invite a “pledging unit” to a potluck at the rectory each month (no rectory and again, COVID). Most of the parishioners I have gotten to know are those who are quite active in the various church ministries. One of my Lenten disciplines is to place phone calls to all the people in the church directory. What I have learned so far is that the congregation is patient, positive and dedicated to its church family. I love them and believe they love me.

### **Any interests to share?**

My lifelong interests are sailing, duplicate bridge, gardening, and reading. My latest interests are yoga and Oculus Quest 2 Beat Saber.



## Changes

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

**The Rev. James Jacob**, Priest-in-Charge, All Saints, Pontiac, January 2022.

**The Rev. Noel Bailey**, Assisting Pastor, Chapel of St. John the Divine, Saunterstown and Church of the Ascension, Wakefield, concluded her ministry in January 2022 and accepted a call as Pastoral Associate at Emmanuel, Cumberland, February 2022.

**The Rev. Kevin Beesley**, Priest-in-Charge, Saint John the Evangelist, Newport, called to serve as Rector, February 2022.

**The Rev. Mitchell Lindeman**, Priest-in-Charge, Trinity, Cranston, concluded his ministry in February 2022 and accepted a call as Priest-in-Charge, Ascension, Wakefield, March 2022.



**The cross is my anchor**

**The Diocese of Rhode Island  
275 North Main Street  
Providence, RI 02903**

**[www.episcopalri.org](http://www.episcopalri.org)**

*RISEN Magazine—Easter 2022—Published online April 2022*