


SPRINGFIELD CURRENT

A Newsletter of the Episcopal Diocese of Springfield



MICHAELMAS 2025



from the Bishop

Refrain from anger, leave rage alone;
do not fret yourself; it leads only to evil. (Psalm 37:8)

On the late afternoon of Wednesday, September 10th, our religious and social sensibilities were again thrown into confusion when conservative media personality and political pundit Charlie Kirk was assassinated during a Turning Point USA rally on the campus of Utah Valley University. Last week, we faced the senseless and unmotivated stabbing of a Ukrainian woman within a light-rail car in Charlotte, North Carolina as she was returning home from work. Two weeks ago, it was the mass shooting of elementary school aged children in in the Windom neighborhood of Minneapolis, Minnesota while they attended a Roman Catholic Mass to celebrate the beginning of a new school year. Today, I received word of a shooting at Evergreen High School in Denver, Colorado. You may be assured that your Bishop is offering continuous prayer to a just God on behalf of a conflicted and hurting Nation.

The turning point came when ideologies themselves turned into preferred religious experiences and expressions. These ideologies have their own liturgies, creeds, doctrines, calendars and symbols. They promise a redemption that never comes. We were once a nation that had at its core Judeo-Christian teaching. The sanctity of life, individual dignity, the Golden Rule (Matthew 7:12), and the belief that humans are created in God's image and are accountable to God for their actions. At the very foundation of Western thought and American political ideals is the person and saving work of Jesus Christ. We are fighting a spiritual warfare like never before. The deeply infected sore of darkness and death has spread over preceding decades with the intention of devouring the Body of Christ.

The political assassination of Charlie Kirk strikes a bit close to home. Both my son and his wife knew him from their professional work as political pundits, operatives and fundraisers in Washington, D.C. They have worked many campaigns and have assisted in spreading the message of many candidates' platforms out to many millions of people. My son and daughter-in-law are also the redeemed of Christ who find it most difficult to locate a parish wherein they are not being berated from the pulpit, dressed down in the Prayers of the People or finger wagged from the altar because they won't bend the knee to ideologies du jour.

Continued on page 5.

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THE NEWSLETTER OF THE
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Communication serves a crucial function in every ministry. Sharing information among congregations, committees, and individual members is no small task. Welcoming new members to our diocesan family also requires unique communication efforts at all levels.

Your contribution to this ministry of communication helps spread the word about what God is doing in our lives, in our congregations, in our diocese, and in the Episcopal Church at large. Please consider making a gift today.

We are committed to sending our diocesan publication to all members and friends of the Episcopal Diocese of Springfield. It is not necessary to contribute in order to receive *The Springfield Current*. Nevertheless, if you choose to support *The Springfield Current*, your contribution will be of great assistance in this ministry and is tax deductible. Thank you for your support!



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Photo by Fr. Parker Apslin

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FROM THE BISHOP

Continued

Our response in this and every moment is Holy Eucharist. It is to fill our churches to overcapacity with the intention of sending a physical as well as spiritual (incarnational) message to the prince of darkness. That message being, not on our watch. We are the redeemed of Christ. We are the community of the resurrection who partake of its promised inheritance now. Let me be challenged in the face of finding enough priests; not because our churches are near empty, but because they are filled to the point of needing to add additional services. We were a more faithful people when we, our families and our communities sought mightily to be made in the image and likeness of Jesus Christ. There is nothing wrong with the Church that a return to faithfulness won't cure. The Church, that wonderful and sacred mystery, exists not to make bad people good, but to make dead people alive in Jesus Christ our Lord.

Thank you for calling the Episcopal Diocese of Springfield your spiritual home. Thank you for behaving as it is you believe and living as it is you pray. Please join me before our various altars as we pray for the Church and for the world.

O God of unchangeable power and eternal light: Look favorably on your whole Church, that wonderful and sacred mystery; by the effectual working of your providence, carry out in tranquility the plan of salvation; let the whole world see and know that things which were cast down are being raised up, and things which had grown old are being made new, and that all things are being brought to their perfection by him through whom all things were made, your Son Jesus Christ our Lord; who lives and reigns with you, in the unity of the Holy Spirit, one God, for ever and ever. Amen. (The Book of Common Prayer, pg. 515)

In the peace of God, which passeth all understanding;

Bishop Brian K. Burgess
XII Springfield

+ 2019



Photo by Fr. Parker Apslin

MICHAEL THE BELL

By Zachary Buscher

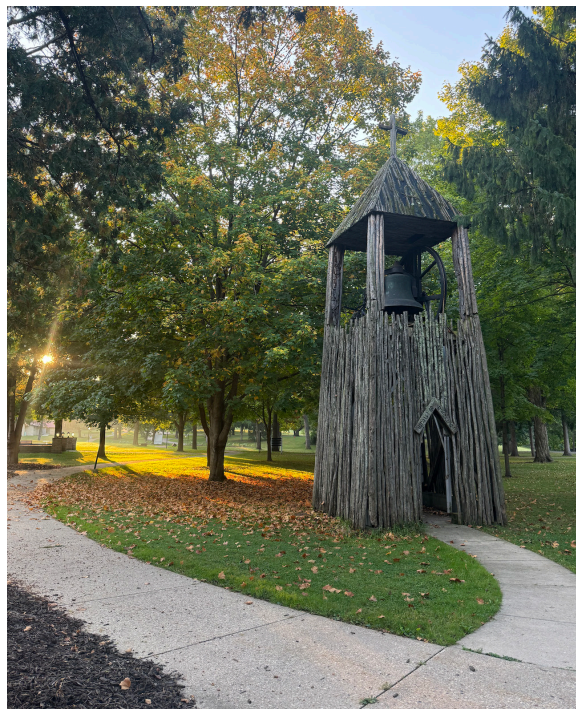
Postulant in the Diocese of Springfield

As any graduate from Nashotah House Theological Seminary can tell you, the Feast of Saint Michael is a feast to look forward to on our calendar. St. Michael's feast is an important day/season for those of us who are under the patronage of the English catholic heritage. Michaelmas, as it's more commonly known in England, is celebrated with roast goose, blackberry pie, and a whole season dedicated to him. At one point in history, Michaelmas was the start of each academic year. This may be more relevant for a seminarian like myself.

I am uncertain as to when or why our bell at Nashotah House was dedicated to St. Michael, but I suspect it has something to do with this tradition. Every year, we bless our big bell that sits in the middle of campus on his feast day. We do this because it's dedicated to the great archangel and reminds us of his intercessions and protections over Nashotah House. We have a Solemn Mass where we process out of our chapel, gather around Michael the bell, offer prayers, incense, holy water, and a blessing from the celebrant. At the conclusion of our liturgy, the entire community (spouses, children, friends, and the surrounding community) is invited to ring Michael, reminding them of their participation in the prayer life of our seminary.



Nashotah House Theological Seminary, <https://www.nashotah.edu/about/history/>



The significance of dedicating a bell for St. Michael isn't hard to see when we look to the prayer that we use at Nashotah House:

"Almighty God, who commanded that trumpets should be sounded at the time of sacrifice to remind the people to prepare for the worship of thee; grant, we beseech thee, that this bell dedicated to the honor of St. Michael may be hallowed by thy Holy Spirit, so that when it is tolled and rung, the faithful may be called to prayer and the remembrance of thy glorious Incarnation. Let thy people's faith wax stronger whenever they hear its melodious peals. At its sound let all evil spirits tremble as it rings to thy glory. And, when the peal of this bell resounds in the clouds may a legion of angels stand watch over the assembly of thy Church and afford thy ever-abiding protection to them in body and spirit. We ask this through our Lord Jesus Christ, who lives and reigns with thee in the unity of the Holy Spirit, one God, now and forever. Amen."

For those who don't know, Nashotah House is ruled and governed by bells. We try to keep it "old school." Knowing that there are more modern ways to keep time, we choose to hold to our old tradition of bells. When bells are rung at Nashotah House, they either signal that prayer or class is about to begin or that it has started. One of the most profound things I witnessed during my first couple of weeks at Nashotah was how people stop whatever they are doing to pray the Angelus at 12:30. If people are walking to lunch, they immediately stop, make the sign of the cross, face the bell, and pray. It is a powerful reminder to be interrupted in our modern, fast-paced society by a loud bell that forces you to stop and direct

all of your attention to our Lord by the intercession of our Lady and St. Michael.

If you ask any student at Nashotah, they will tell you that the prayer we use for St. Michael's day is one of their favorites because it reminds them of the power of our collective prayer.

“*At its sound let all evil spirits tremble as it rings to thy glory.*”

It's a powerful reminder of what's truly going on when we gather to pray and offer the holy sacrifice of the Mass. It reminds us that there is more going on

than what we can immediately see around us. It can be quite difficult in the middle of February to trudge through the blowing snow, freezing cold, and pitch black to the chapel and still feel "jazzed" about it (especially when you are the poor first-year student who has to ring the bell while the snow falls down the back of your cassock). Three times a day, I hear that bell, and know that I will, in fact, be praying, even when I don't want to. I can only hope that this is by the power of these holy angels that surround us day after day, beckoning us to "worship the Lord in the beauty of holiness."

The ringing of our bells at Nashotah (and elsewhere) is a





powerful remembrance that Christ is with us and we are surrounded by that great cloud of witnesses when we hear these bells. In an age when we have to think about the safety of our churches, it's important to remember the part of the prayer that reads, "when the peal of this bell resounds in the clouds may a legion of angels stand watch over the assembly of thy Church and afford thy ever-abiding protection to them in body and spirit." Just as we ask each other to pray for us, so too, we ask St. Michael and all the angels to pray for us, so that we might offer to God the sacrifice worthy of his

Name and never cease, as the angels never cease to sing, "Holy, holy, holy, Lord God of Hosts: Heaven and earth are full of thy Glory. Glory be to thee, O Lord Most High."

“*O, prince most glorious, Michael the Archangel, keep us in remembrance: here and everywhere, always entreat the Son of God for us.*”

”

EPISCOPAL CHAPLAIN'S BREAKFAST

By The Very Rev. Sherry Black
St. Mark's, West Frankfort



Many of you know me as Priest-in Charge of Saint Mark's Episcopal church in West Frankfort; I am also Dean of the Hale Deanery in the southernmost part of the Diocese. I've been a priest in this Diocese since 2008. I am also a full-time hospital chaplain, serving at Herrin Hospital in Herrin, Illinois since 2011.

As a board certified chaplain, I am required to have 50 continuing education units each year to maintain my certification. In June I had the opportunity to attend the Association of Professional Chaplains annual conference in Minneapolis. In doing so I accumulated 17.5 hours towards my CE requirement in just two and a half days.

I attended this conference regularly up until Covid in 2020, when everything was canceled. This year was my first opportunity to attend since then. I've always enjoyed the collegiality of spending time with fellow chaplains from all across the country and various ministries.

As I am presently taking classes on palliative care chaplaincy, I especially appreciated some of the workshops in this field to increase my knowledge. I attended many other workshops and plenaries.

Perhaps my favorite part of attending this conference, though, is spending time with the members of the Association of Episcopal Chaplains. Every conference we have a denominational breakfast, and many of us go out to dinner or otherwise spend time together. I've made some lasting friendships with these colleagues! I've been on

the Executive Committee of the Association of Episcopal Chaplains for six years: two years as president elect, two years as president, and I'm just finishing two years as immediate past president. It's been an honor to serve my Episcopal sisters and brothers in these capacities.

I truly enjoyed the opportunity to attend this conference, and the ability to enjoy continuing education. I heartily encourage my diocesan colleagues to look for opportunities to gather, to learn, and to grow in knowledge around your vocation and ministry.

JESUS AND HOPE

By Bob Vaughn
St. George's, Belleville

While on vacation in April, my wife Sue broke her leg, had surgery, and was in the Royal Infirmary in Edinburgh for about a week. While Sue was in the hospital, I often rode the public “double-decker” bus between our hotel and the hospital to visit her. One afternoon, I sat in front of two Gen Z young adults on the bus and overheard their conversation. Although it appeared this might be an intellectual exchange between academic colleagues, it soon caught my attention.

A brief summary:



The Archangel Michael Overthrowing Lucifer, c. 1620-1650, Public Domain



- Both of their master's degrees have not yielded satisfactory work.
- The woman (Italian) was applying for a second master's program at several places in the UK and U.S., but was most concerned about her UK immigration (student) status ending in November.
- The man said he did not support his own country (UK), that it did nothing for him and he couldn't imagine anyone fighting to defend the UK.
- The man said the American Dream was a farce in the Old World – that hard work would not result in a better life.

The man then challenged the woman, asking if she (or anyone in their generation) believed in anything. This really caught my attention, and I listened closely. While she considered her answer, I was guessing it would be... God, maybe the love of a mother for her baby, or maybe the basic goodness of mankind. After a pause she said, "Nothing, but maybe some in our generation believe in religion." I was shocked. I could not imagine being in their position – not being able to trust in something that was positive, good, something that gives hope.

While I tried to gather my thoughts, they got up to get off at the next stop. I tried to process what I just heard, and the word, "hopeless" came to mind. They did not have hope that any kind of higher power, principle, or organization was helping them – something they could believe in. It immediately came to me, "they need to know Jesus!"

Perhaps these two people were just passing the time in an intellectual spar, but perhaps they were in fact "hopeless". This observation is not an indictment of Gen Z or the United Kingdom; I suspect people of a wide range of ages and locations share this same "hopeless" outlook. I also appreciate that living in this state of hopelessness would be depressing. When I second-guess my small efforts to share Jesus, I remember this bus ride, and these two young adults. Although I don't know their names, I pray for them. Now, for me, sharing Jesus is beyond wanting to share the good news of salvation, it is the humane thing to do. Who can you share hope with?

KEYNOTE SPEAKER INTRODUCTION

for the 148th Annual Synod of the Diocese of Springfield

Bishop Burgess is pleased to announce that The Reverend Canon Lang Lowrey of the Diocese of Atlanta has accepted the invitation to offer the keynote address during this year's 148th Annual Synod. Canon Lowrey and his son are principals of the Lowrey Group of Georgia. After a several-year break to become ordained as an Episcopal priest and lead the start-up of an Atlanta-area parish and

school as founding vicar, Lang has returned to the business world with a fresh perspective on moving organizations forward.

Canon Lowrey serves as canon of Christian enterprises for the Episcopal Diocese of Atlanta and helps churches figure out what to do with their real estate, advising them on how to best manage

their assets. His focus is on helping churches generate income and plan for the future through long-term leases and other property strategies. Lowrey’s foundational premise is this: consider your properties as endowments, not liabilities. They are gifted to us to support and fund current and future ministries. “People say that churches are in decline. I look at it differently. Churches are consolidating and coming out stronger when they do,” Lowrey says, “and that leaves a lot of real estate that can be used for mission purposes or income purposes.”

Whether large or small property issues, this year’s Saturday morning address will certainly invite questions and encourage a vision for development possibilities in interest of mission and ministry. “I tell churches, never ever, ever, sell their property,” Lowrey said. “You probably

won’t do that well. Churches get taken advantage of by developers. They want to buy low and sell high.”



All sale of property must also have diocesan approval. This means that real estate listing agreements may not be signed until diocesan approval is received. Within the Diocese of Atlanta, Canon Lowrey works with parishes and organizations to submit a package to the Standing Committee to seek approval, and is asked to recommend or not recommend the project.

Plan now on joining us for this time of discovery and learning. We look forward to sharing in this time with our clergy, Synod delegates, and guests.

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