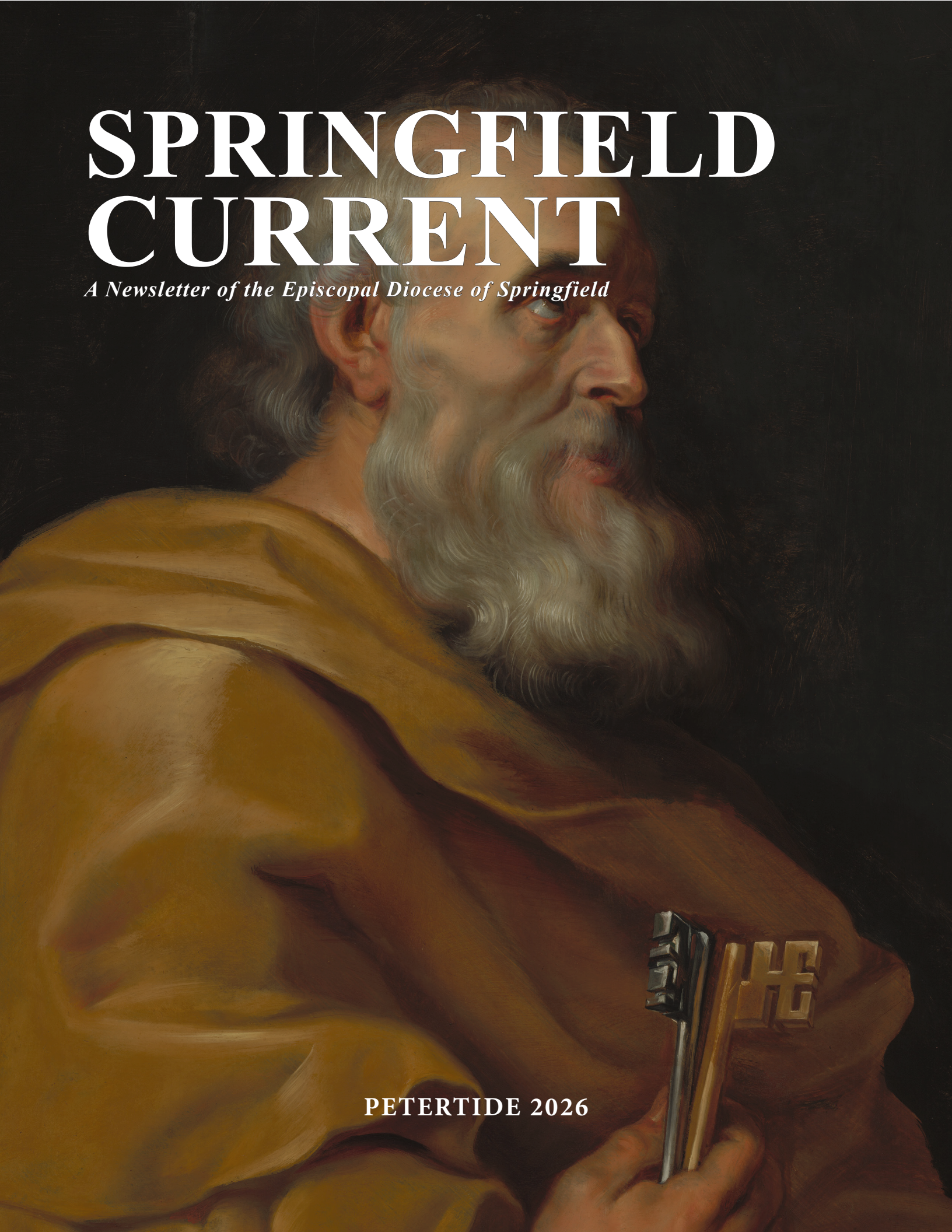
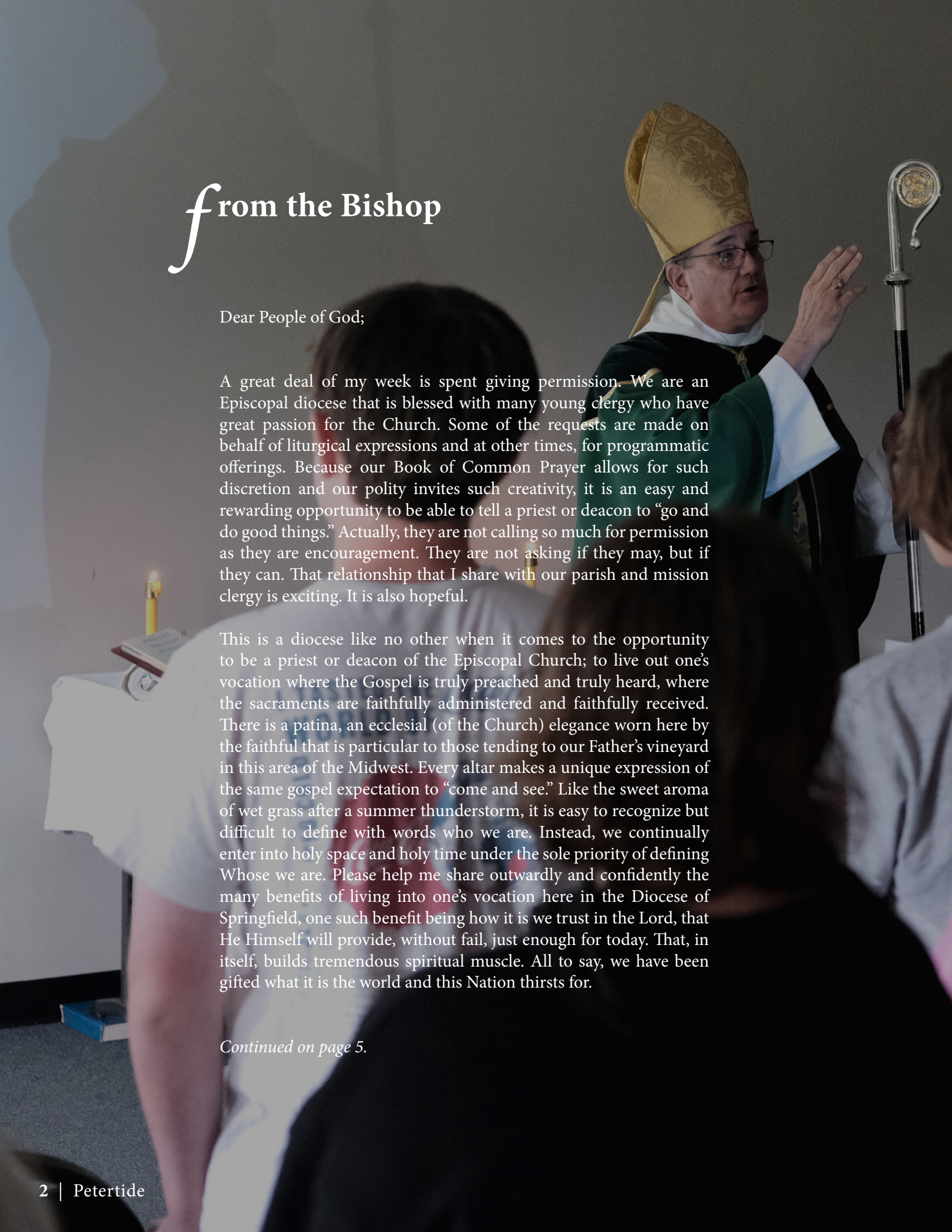
SPRINGFIELD CURRENT

A Newsletter of the Episcopal Diocese of Springfield



PETERTIDE 2026



from the Bishop

Dear People of God;

A great deal of my week is spent giving permission. We are an Episcopal diocese that is blessed with many young clergy who have great passion for the Church. Some of the requests are made on behalf of liturgical expressions and at other times, for programmatic offerings. Because our Book of Common Prayer allows for such discretion and our polity invites such creativity, it is an easy and rewarding opportunity to be able to tell a priest or deacon to "go and do good things." Actually, they are not calling so much for permission as they are encouragement. They are not asking if they may, but if they can. That relationship that I share with our parish and mission clergy is exciting. It is also hopeful.

This is a diocese like no other when it comes to the opportunity to be a priest or deacon of the Episcopal Church; to live out one's vocation where the Gospel is truly preached and truly heard, where the sacraments are faithfully administered and faithfully received. There is a patina, an ecclesial (of the Church) elegance worn here by the faithful that is particular to those tending to our Father's vineyard in this area of the Midwest. Every altar makes a unique expression of the same gospel expectation to "come and see." Like the sweet aroma of wet grass after a summer thunderstorm, it is easy to recognize but difficult to define with words who we are. Instead, we continually enter into holy space and holy time under the sole priority of defining Whose we are. Please help me share outwardly and confidently the many benefits of living into one's vocation here in the Diocese of Springfield, one such benefit being how it is we trust in the Lord, that He Himself will provide, without fail, just enough for today. That, in itself, builds tremendous spiritual muscle. All to say, we have been gifted what it is the world and this Nation thirsts for.

Continued on page 5.

SPRINGFIELD CURRENT

THE NEWSLETTER OF THE EPISCOPAL DIOCESE OF SPRINGFIELD

The Episcopal Diocese of Springfield
821 S. 2nd Street, Springfield, IL 62704 Phone: (217) 525-1876
Fax: (217) 525-1877

Publisher:
The Rt. Rev. Brian K. Burgess
XII Bishop of Springfield

Editor and Art Director:
Bethany Buscher

Monthly Diocesan E-Newsletter
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We accept submissions for *The Current* **on the 15th of the months of December, March, June, and September.** Articles, photos, and news can be submitted to *communicator@episcopalspringfield.org*. Contributions to the monthly e-newsletter may be also be sent to that email and are accepted on an ongoing basis.

Cover art: (c. 14th century). Saint Peter, holding a key. Wellcome Collection. Wikimedia Commons.

Background image: Fr. Parker Asplin, Episcopal Church Camp of IL 2026

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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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Fr. Parker Asplin, 2026

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FROM THE BISHOP

Continued


David Jaeger, Portrait of Robert Baden-Powell, 1929. Photograph/

When was it that we stopped building institutions? I don't mean brick and motor buildings, but institutions. Real, lasting, institutions of Christian mission, evangelism and witness. As an example, the Scout movement was founded in 1907 in England by Lieutenant General Robert-Baden-Powell. Baden-Powell was a devoutly religious Anglican whose father, The Reverend Baden Powell, was a Church of England priest. I think we can all agree that the modern-day Boy Scouts own relatively very little real estate or property. However, their reach has historically been very wide. Starting with their first experimental Scout camp on Brownsea Island in the United Kingdom in August of 1907, it was truly intended to be a ministry and evangelical reach of the Church.

> ***"There is a patina, an ecclesial elegance worn here by the faithful that is particular to those tending to our Father's vineyard in this area of the Midwest."***

Another example of a lasting institution that has compounded in influence is one that was intended to meet a need in a moment but serves a divine purpose even unto today. In 1858, the seminary that I and a few of our Diocesan priests attended was established. Actually, that was the year the University charter was granted by the State of Tennessee. It wasn't until after the Civil War in 1866 that construction began and 1868 when students actually matriculated. Because of the delay, the Episcopal Church in the Southeast had very little time left to make good on the promise to establish a university on the dedicated site or allow the land to revert back to the railroad. What no one planned on beyond the stacking of sandstone was an institution that still exists today.

Following the American Civil War and during the time of Reconstruction (1865-1877), war widows and mothers who lost their sons made it to the top of the Cumberland plateau because they knew that the Church was building a future promised by God there. These women who had come from great wealth and prosperity were now totally dependent upon the Church for their livelihood and security. Confronted with an unprecedented need, it was decided that if you were going to educate and form Christian gentlemen, you needed to have the influence of a gentlewoman in the home. Each and every dorm or student house was overseen by one of these women who ensured that Christian virtue and southern manners were taught and adhered to strictly.

Today, when you eat in the dining hall, if a dorm matron approaches your table to join you, the conversation stops and the gentlemen stand until she is properly greeted and seated. Archaic? I think not. It is an outward and visible sign of an inward and spiritual grace. If you make it to this mountain, the church will not only care for you and provide for you but honor the sacrifice that

you and your family have made. The Anglican tradition entrusted to us has always recognized the redeemed of Christ as heirs of His eternal kingdom. Even unto today.



As the Church in Central and Southern Illinois, we have had enough of secularizing the sacred, of deconstructing transcendence to the point of no longer having need to observe holy day. Impatient lives continually seek to bypass around one critical tenet of Christian faith and practice: Sacraments are administered and never taken. There is a minimum of 33 altars entrusted to us, some of our churches have two or three. This is the reason why the sacred priesthood is so critical to our very existence. To put it another way, there is an understanding of awaiting what is promised here in Springfield that a world intoxicated with all things "on demand" will never understand. Here, our songs of praise are intentionally chosen and our historic churches are preserved for future generations, and, as our prayer book expects, we speak of difficult things well. Why so focused on heavenly things? Because young scouts and war widows need to be fed heavenly food, as it is we do here. There is a proficiency expected here that has long served this Diocese well. As I would often share with my vested youth acolytes before processing into the church for a service of Holy Eucharist, "I need you to listen with your eyes."

There is a great deal to give thanks to our God in Christ for when it comes to the ways and means of the Church here in the Diocese of Springfield. This newsletter reaches nearly 2,000 addresses within the State of Illinois and beyond. Please know how it is you complete us. Now, go and tell others where it is you have encountered our risen and ascended Lord. Imagine the awakening if 2,000 households prioritized their worship of God in Christ as our utmost calling and privilege.

In the peace of God, which passeth all understanding;

Bishop Brian K. Burgess
XII Springfield

+ B. K. B. XII

> *"Be thou my vision, O Lord of my heart; all else be nought to me, save that thou art Thou my best thought, by day or by night waking or sleeping, thy presence my light."*

Image: Adelia Springer and her daughter, Elva. National Archives,

EPISCOPAL CHURCH CAMP 2026

By Jeremiah Ratliff, Camp Coordinator

If there was one word that could be used to summarize and describe Episcopal Church Camp of Illinois 2026 it would be: SUCCESSFUL!



The Lord Our God blessed us the entire week with (mostly) cooperative weather and cooler temperatures, no accidents or illnesses (heat related or otherwise), a healthy ratio of volunteers to campers, and joy, smiles, laughter, and the love of Christ that echoed throughout the hills of Camp Wartburg! This year, while smaller and different than years past, was viewed as a gift by campers and volunteers alike.





There were 19 campers, 14 volunteers, and several invited guests from all across the Diocese. From as far north as Christ the King in Normal to as south as Episcopal Church of the Redeemer in Cairo, all corners of our Diocese were represented in our few but faithful numbers. We had a total of 10 Alphas (younger campers) and 9 Omegas (older campers), all of which experienced fun summer activities like rock wall climbing, team building challenges, archery, creek walking, fishing, and swimming during our recreational time. During our daily Eucharist Services, Compline Campfires, and time with Spiritual Directors, they experienced thought-provoking homilies, reflections, challenges, and devotions throughout the week as we unpacked what it means to be a follower of God in pursuit of "Higher Ground."

While there were many phrases of joy and praise that I heard throughout the week, what that told me this year was a smashing success was at least four campers (two Alphas and two Omegas) indicated on their feedback form: "[We] wish camp was another week longer!" In this Camp Coordinators opinion, not only did ECCI 2026 provide the space for all to experience the spiritual practice of retreat and reconnection with our Creator, but it also embodied the words of Jesus in Matthew 18:20...

> ***"For where two or three are gathered in my name, I am there among them."***



PICTURES FROM CAMP

Photos by Fr. Parker Asplin & ECC counselors












David Jaeger, Portrait of Robert Baden-Powell, 1929. Photograph.

2027 PRE-LENTEN CLERGY RETREAT

For the Episcopal Church Camp of Illinois

Bishop Burgess is pleased to announce that The Reverend Dr. Frederick A. Robinson has accepted his invitation to offer three reflections during the 2027 Pre-Lenten Clergy Retreat. Gathering again at King's House Retreat and Conference Center on the campus of the National Shrine of Our Lady of Snows in Belleville, the focus of this year's reflections will address The Interior Life of a Priest and Deacon.

Fr. Robinson retired from full-time vocational ministry on January 31, 2020 after serving as Rector of Church of the Redeemer in Sarasota for nearly 26 years. Prior to being called to the Diocese of Southwest Florida, Fr. Robinson was Rector of Grace Church, Monroe, Louisiana, and before that was Rector of St. Andrew's Church, Grand Prairie, Texas. Upon his retirement in 2020, Fr. Robinson served as Interim Rector of St. John's Episcopal Church and Parish Day School in Tampa, Florida and then Emmanuel Memorial Church in Champaign, Illinois. Currently, he serves as Interim Rector of St. Michael and St. George's Episcopal Church in Clayton, Missouri. Fr. Robinson is the Editor of The Anglican Digest and serves as President of the Board of Visitors at Nashotah House Theological Seminary.

Ordained deacon and priest in 1982 by Bishop Donald Davies of Fort Worth, Fr. Robinson has earned academic degrees from Ohio State University (BS) and Nashotah House Theological Seminary (MDiv). He and his wife, Linda, have two grown children.

All clergy of our Diocese, both active and retired, canonically resident or licensed, are encouraged to make plans now to attend. The 2027 Pre-Lenten Clergy Retreat is scheduled for Monday afternoon, February 1st through lunch on Wednesday, February 3rd, which is one week ahead of our 2027 Ash Wednesday observance. Registration will open after Christmas.

ORDINATIONS

of Deacon Danny Shuler and Deacon Jeff Wenzel

On Wednesday, June 24th, The Nativity of St. John the Baptist was observed within the Cathedral Church of St. Paul the Apostle with a Mass of Diaconal Ordination. Danny Shuler and Jeff Wenzel were presented to Bishop Burgess for the conveying of Holy Orders. Over 70 stood as witness and lent their voice to the necessary consent when asked, "Is it your will that Danny and Jeffrey be ordained deacons?" (BCP pg. 539) Dean Andrew Hook preached the Homily reminding the congregation that it is quite liberating to properly subject our lives and ministries to rightful authority. Clergy and laity stood as the rubrically-required presenters and assisted in the vesting of the newly ordained according to the order of deacons. Following the Episcopal Blessing and Dismissal, a reception was held in the Diocesan Center as the opportunity to greet and congratulate those now living their lives under Diaconal Orders.

APPEAL DONORS

A special thanks is extended to the following donors for their generous financial contributions to the Capital Improvement Fund and Restoration of St. James Chapel in Marion, IL

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on the Diocesan Appeal for the Capital Improvent Fund & Restoration of St. James Chapel

Thank you to everyone that has donated to the Diocesan Appeal for Capital Improvement Grants and the restoration of St. James Chapel in Marion, IL. The first phase of renovations has been completed, including the demolition of the old vicarage.

Endorsed by Diocesan Council and Trustees, Bishop Burgess will be matching all donations made to the Diocesan Appeal from now until November 1 (up to $40,000) from funds left to his discretion by previous generations of faithful giving. All donations received during this time will receive a one-to-one match. It is his hope that this will motivate a final wave of sacrificial giving that will push the project to its completion and the total $250,000 goal.

To read more about the progress on the Appeal and how you can double the impact of your generosity, visit https://episcopalspringfield.org/give/capital-improvement-fund

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