



broadcast

from the Office for Young Adult & Campus Ministries
at the Episcopal Church Center

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Liturgy

Happy 2010! After a brief break to recover from the holidays and get the semester rolling, our colleagues in ministry across the country have once again put pen to paper to share their experiences, insights, and lessons learned.

In this month's issue, three writers grapple with what it looks like to create liturgy alongside young adults, to truly allow it to be the "work of the people" with a generation whose worldview is continuing to shift and find shape. We invite you to wrestle with the challenge of worshipping as one body in each of our, often very different, contexts.

Also in this issue, you will find some notes and resources from our Office. To the right we offer the Lenten devotional guide for young adults including original images by young adults from across the church for the Stations of the Cross, as well as some exciting opportunities in the world of campus ministry. Below you will also find a note from our office updating you on the reconfiguration of the Episcopal Church Center and some of our ideas for how we might better serve you in 2010. As always we look forward to your comments and feedback.

May this Lent be a time of quiet reflection, honest assessment, and continual growth for you and the young adults with whom you minister. We give thanks for you and your ministry!

Paz y fuego,
Douglas and Jason

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Holy Stuff

The Rev. Amy McCreath, Massachusetts Institute of Technology

Episcopal worship is full of "stuff." Candles, crosses, special garments, bread, wine, water, and more. We like to worship God in the beauty of holiness, and we use many things from God's creation in order to communicate mean-

ing and deepen prayer. Our bodies are part of the "stuff," as we use them actively in worship: making the sign of the cross, walking up the aisle, shaking hands at the peace, eating bread. All of these elements of our worship come down to us from generations of our forebears in faith. All of the things and movements held meaning for people -- enough meaning that they were passed along, commended or commanded to the next generation, and make up part of what we cherish as "tradition."

In our worship at the Lutheran Episcopal Ministry (LEM) at MIT, as in many other communities of young adults these days, we love the "stuff." We've made frontals for the altar, we bake our own bread, we fill the baptismal font and dip our hands in it all through the Easter season. When I was in seminary, we talked a lot about the "sign value" of material and gesture. A big loaf of bread was better than a tiny wafer because it had greater sign value. A big, noisy baptismal font was better than a tiny bowl of water, because it had greater sign value. That has seemed to be true in our worship at MIT. Students love draping long bolts of blue cloth over the altar and down the aisle for Advent Lessons & Carols. They love celebrating Easter day Eucharist with a huge loaf of Portuguese sweet bread.

But stuff is not just stuff in worship. It points to something beyond itself. It is a sign of something greater than its physical material. Our gestures are not random gestures, or just there for fun. If we are actually worshipping, then our gestures indicate or invite something about our relationship with one another, with stuff, and with God. I've wondered in recent years what exactly it is we are communicating in liturgical worship with young adults at this time in history. Does a candle mean to a college student today what it meant to a college student

in England in the 17th century? Do vestments communicate now what they communicated in the 4th century? What lens do people bring with them when they come to church for the first time and try to figure out what all this means?

Last Wednesday at MIT, we did an experiment to try to learn more about what our worship service communicates – what it seems to mean, both to newcomers and to our worship “regulars.” We called this a “reverse instructed Eucharist,” because rather than the pastors explaining what the church is trying to communicate, we wanted to learn from the people what it was they understood the service to mean. We asked the students active in LEM to bring along a friend who had little-to-no experience of liturgical worship. Before the service began, everyone was asked to simply notice certain things during the service: candles, special clothing, movement, people reading in unison, bread & wine, gestures. After the service, everyone was asked to write down (anonymously) their impression of what these things mean. We asked, “What do they ‘say’ to you, what do you imagine we are communicating in or through them?”

So what did we learn? First, there was no one thing or movement that everyone understood in the same way. For example, candles “meant” the power of God to one person, the power of nature to another, and peace to another. Second, there was remarkably little difference between the responses of the newcomers and the regulars. For example, passing the peace was interpreted by both groups basically as a social exchange meant to foster community.

Third, and most interesting to me, the elements of the service that seemed to communicate most powerfully and positively to all students were those in which they were actively involved and that they understood as “unifying.” These included passing the peace, speaking or singing in unison, holding hands for the Lord’s Prayer, and offering the blessed bread and wine to one another. The actions, apparel, and words of the clergy were less salient, readable, and, frankly, important to the newcomers.

Our experiment at MIT doesn’t prove anything that is generalizable, of course, but I think it was valuable for us. It sends me back to the liturgical think tank with questions like: How important is it that stuff means to people today what it meant back in the day? What are my responsibilities as a priest to teach the community what the church “means” in the elements of worship? Is there “stuff” in culture today that communicates core Christian truths and values which might be creatively incorporated into worship, and if so, how do we invite it in?

If you’d like to know more about our “reverse instructed Eucharist,” or try one yourself, please be in touch (mccreath@mit.edu).



Tradition

The Rev. Lucas Mix, University of Arizona

Where is our identity? Is it found in millennial march of the church, passing age to age through history, or is it found in the will and feeling of the people gathered?

In seminary I was taught to be wary of tradition. Not the Tradition, mind you, that glorious arc of history that binds us together, particularly in the Anglican Communion. No, I

was warned about tradition, the local customs of the congregation. They could be deep set and, regardless of their theological merit, there to stay.

A Traditionalist (big T) and Anglo-Catholic by nature, I was surprised after seminary to be called to an emerging church congregation. Church of the Apostles in Seattle challenged me weekly to question Tradition. I needed reasons for the things I believed, the things I did, and how I led worship. “No we cannot have goldfish shaped crackers and apple juice for communion.” “Yes we do have to have a gospel reading >from< the Bible.” I lost some battles and won others, but I learned important things about piety and ritual. And I learned that tradition (little t) was alive and well. Practices that had only been around for 6 months became “the way we have always done it” and people reacted strongly either for or against.

Thus my new job as a chaplain has been confusing. Working with a small group of students, half of them new this year, I encountered very little tradition. For the most part, they are open to change. Students come and go every year, and it can be hard to find a worship style that reflects who we are as an ongoing community.

Once you step out of the parish setting, thousands of new options open up. How should we arrange the chairs? Should we read from a book or an image projected on the wall? What songs should we sing? Which prayers should we use? Should we have a sermon or a discussion? In the parish I felt constrained by strong opinions, but college students (with a few notable exceptions) seem less attached. It makes it harder to forge a tradition.

All of this leads me to wonder about who we are as a church—and as the Church. What is the essence of the good news that it makes strangers into friends? How important is the great cloud of witnesses that brought the truth of Jesus Christ through two millennia? I know there won't be a simple answer, but I delight in the opportunity to explore it with students who are discovering their own place in the church and in the world.



Gathered In

by Rev. David Umphlett, St. Mary's Episcopal Church, High Point, NC

Last week our young adult group met for dinner. We left convinced that Domino's new recipe really is better than their old one. Other than the discussion of the virtues of one delivery pizza over another, I asked the group to name what it was that they liked about St. Mary's. The over-

whelmingly common answer was its worship.

St. Mary's is one of those stone gothic churches with front-facing pews that we all know well. The music program is renown and the servers move with dignity and decorum. The worship is excellent because it is joy-driven, not anxiety-driven.

The idea that worship of this sort in this kind of place is attractive to young adults is no surprise. Emerging worship patterns often employ actions, settings, and music found in mainline traditions (which themselves have inherited patterns from much older traditions). It is interesting, however, that in our efforts to get young adults engaged in the life of St. Mary's by creating a group of peers, their favorite aspect of the life of this place is the part in which all age groups, political perspectives, races, sexual orientations, socio-economic levels, and tastes are crammed into one space – or more politely, held in tension with one another.

Our lives have become so compartmentalized that the worship of the Church offers us one of those rare occasions in which we are put together with folks we might not otherwise have chosen to be around. The bishop of East Carolina often says, "The Church is no club of our own choosing." In other words, the Church is full of people we may or may not like, but with whom we are bound in Christ for all eternity. Think of that next time you look down the row at church.

The worship of The Episcopal Church at its best allows for and welcomes disparate groups to come together in one place. We young adults may only drink our coffee at the local, free-trade, shade-grown coffee bars and we may only eat out at restaurants with the hippest menus and lighting, but at worship, it's not all about us and what we like or what makes us comfortable. Worship is the gathering of God's family around God's table for a taste of that eternal family feast.

Like any family get-together, there are those there with whom we wish we didn't share any DNA, but who are nonetheless a part of the family. The challenge today is to avoid the tendency to make worship, like everything else in our lives, just like we want it (the we being any group of like-minded people). The gospel never calls us to be comfortable. It calls us beyond ourselves into places and situations that shake us and surprise us.

So head down to your local church this Sunday and sit next to the oldest person you can find (that is, if she lets you onto her pew) and celebrate the whole body of Christ, whether the hair is blue and spiked or blue and permed.



An Update from Young Adult and Campus Ministries

VOICES & RESOURCES OF THE EPISCOPAL CHURCH CENTER

Moving Forward

The Rev. Douglas Fenton and Jason Sierra, Office for Young adult and Campus Ministries at the Episcopal Church Center

Dear friends and colleagues,

Another six months have passed since we last wrote at length about our Office's vision for our shared work with the 18-30 year olds of our church and our world. Many things have changed in that time at all levels of the church.

Parishes, dioceses, provinces and the Church Center have all had to undergo often painful transformations responding to economic and cultural changes. And yet, we again are reminded of our call to give thanks, to rejoice in blessings, and to seek out and serve 'the least of these.'

The disaster in Haiti has reminded us of the incredible prosperity and responsibility we own in relation to huge portions of our world. The U.S. legislature's struggle to pass health care reform has highlighted both our common vision and our differences. In all this, the body of Christ is called both to serve in humility and to lead in unity. In particular, the generation with whom we minister must learn both to serve and to lead grounded in our faith, our tradition, and our communities. How will we equip them to do so? This is a question before us all. And in particular, the question before us at the Church Center is how best to equip and support you in equipping them.

Reconfiguration at the Church Center

As we shared with you last fall, the Church Center has gone through some major shifts, financially and structurally, following General Convention. Our work has been reorganized into smaller teams based on commonalities of vision and structure. Young Adult and Campus Ministries has landed on the Life Long Christian Formation and Vocations team along with Children's Formation, Youth Formation, Adult Formation, and Life Long Formation. Bronwyn Skov, Officer for Youth Formation will lead our team.

This new configuration promises to help focus our efforts on supporting and equipping ministers to address transitions between life stages and to develop a commonality of vision for all of Christian formation and life-long discernment and vocation. It will also aid us in addressing the needs and concerns of the those of you who are asked to take on more than one program area. This new configuration will not exclude ongoing and future collaboration with other program areas. For example our collaboration with Mission Personnel on the Young Adult Service Corps and with Ethnic and Intercultural Ministries on the Why Serve (formerly Does It Fit?) conference will continue. We are also pursuing greater collaboration with Transition Ministry which will allow for the creation of a fulltime Officer for Young Adult Discernment and Vocation.

Communications Update

As you may have noticed, the Broadcast main page has been redesigned to help you access past issues by topic. This is part of our continued effort to improve communications with you and between you. You may also have observed that the Episcopal Church website has undergone a thorough re-design. While Young Adult Ministry can still be found by typing in episcopalchurch.org/youngadults and Campus Ministry with episcopalchurch.org/campusministries, you can also access both pages under the Networking tab on the website. In particular, we invite you to use this site to access event, internship, and employment opportunities under the Inspire heading. We are also working on cleaning out and updating our resources page. If there are particular resource topics you would like to see addressed, we invite you to email us and share your ideas and needs.

Regional Networks

In the world of young Adult Ministry many of you have heard some buzz about the new Regional Networks. These networks consist of small groupings (8-10) of bishop-appointed Diocesan Young Adult Coordinators, one for each diocese. These informal, voluntary, and mutable groupings are designed to spark conversation and resource sharing between geographically and culturally similar dioceses. They are not designed to replace the provincial structure, or be another required meeting, but are simply opportunities for greater collaboration and feedback. Currently these groups are being facilitated by members of the Committee for Young Adult Ministry, but hopefully will take on a life of their own and become communities of support for dioceses and ministers. We invite your questions and feedback on this new venture.

New Campus Ministry Start-up Grants

Dioceses and parishes are invited to submit proposals for grants to assist in the start-up of new campus ministries or the re-start of dormant campus ministries. A total of \$300,000 is available in this triennium, and grants will be awarded from that amount over a two-year period beginning in July 2010. It is expected that the diocese, parish, or campus ministry will match the amount awarded in the grant.



Completed proposals must be received by March 31, 2010. They will be reviewed by the Provincial Coordinators for Campus Ministry and make recommendations to the Office for Young Adult and Campus Ministries. Follow this link to the application.

Leadership Development Resources

Finally, we continue in our effort to better equip, resource and support you in your ministries. We look forward to “The Art of Resurrection,” at the College Chaplains’ Conference from June 30 – July 3 in Athens, GA, the Diocesan Young Adult Coordinators’ meeting, September 17-19 in Linthicum Heights, MD and the College Student gathering “Gather Around the Table” December 28, 2010-January 1, 2010 at YMCA of the Rockies, Estes Park, CO.

These are all opportunities for gathering and sharing our many stories and gifts for ministry while sharing innovative resources and opportunities for collaboration. For those unable to join us we are continuing to explore online training resources for both young adult and campus ministers. Please keep an eye on the website as well as the right sidebar of broadcast as these are rolled out over the coming months.

As always, it is our joy to work with you, to hear from you and to share with you in your frustrations and your successes. We want to help you share your story, to empower those with whom you work, and to uphold you in your ministry in whatever way we can. You are in our prayers and our thanksgivings.

Peace,
Douglas and Jason