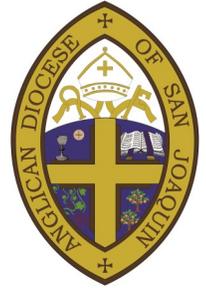


# THE SAN JOAQUIN ANGLICAN



## **The Bishop's Corner—Alleluia! Christ is risen!**

*The Right Reverend Eric Vanter Menees*

With these words we opened our Easter celebrations and will continue to do so throughout the Season of Easter. That opening acclamation really says it all. Alleluia literally means “Praise God.” Christ is risen refers to Jesus’ Resurrection from the Dead that first Easter Sunday! So, we might also say – “Praise God Jesus has risen from the dead!”

Because of Jesus’ resurrection from the dead, all of human history – our very existence – is different. No longer enslaved to sin and death we have, in Jesus, new life abundantly on earth and eternally with Jesus in heaven.

Because we have that new life, we recognize that we are the Church – the Church is made up of the people of God who gather for the faithful preaching of the Word of God and the faithful Administration of the Sacrament of Christ! Because of this we know that the church is not the four walls of the buildings that we call churches. We’ve had to learn that in spades as our church buildings have been confiscated. Still, we recognize that walking away from these buildings is difficult. Memories are formed in those buildings. Memories of weddings and baptisms, first communions and confirmations, Requiem Masses and Easter celebrations.

As I write this article I am preparing to lead the brothers and sisters at St. Andrew’s, Mariposa, in thanksgiving to God for all that He has given them at St. Andrew’s and then in the deconsecration of their building. God’s grace is perfect and immediately following the service we will transit over to Christ Church, Oakhurst where the congregations will be merged and life will continue on. Still, we take the moment to grieve and acknowledge

## **BISHOP'S SCHEDULE AND DIOCESAN CALENDAR**

April 29-May 1—Clergy Conference

May 5—Bishop @ St. John’s, Petaluma

May 11—Bishop @ Jesus the Good Shepherd’s 10<sup>th</sup> Anniversary Picnic, Henderson, NV

May 12—Bishop @ Jesus the Good Shepherd, Henderson, NV

May 19—Bishop @ Saint Mary the Virgin Anglican Church, Manteca

May 26—Bishop @ Saint Augustine’s, Tres Piños

May 27—Memorial Day—Diocesan Office Closed

May 30—Feast of the Ascension

*(Continued on page 2)*



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our sorrow, even in the shadow of the resurrection of our Lord. It is precisely because of the Lord's resurrection that our grief is temporary because he has new life for the people of St. Andrew's and for us!

This week, I read the following from Deacon John Stonestreet and I thought I'd pass it along to you all in light of the above.



## Sacred Spaces Matter

by The Rev. Deacon John Stonestreet

As the Notre Dame cathedral burned, many mourned—some for the destruction of history and beauty and others because it was one of the world's most iconic houses of Christian worship, where for centuries, French Catholics lifted up prayer, song, and sacrament to God.

As of now, the devastating fire has been ruled an accident, but earlier suspicions that the blaze may have been deliberately set weren't unfounded. In the months prior to the Notre Dame fire, historic churches across France were set ablaze, altars and crosses and statues were knocked down, and treasures were looted, all by vandals. Some churches were even fouled with human excrement. By some reports, over 800 churches were hit just last year.

In fact, there's been a startling surge in church desecration *worldwide*. Back in January, the Guardian reported on a new wave of anti-Christian persecution in China. Hundreds of churches have been shut down, defaced, even demolished by the Chinese government. Last year, officials in Shanxi province dynamited the sanctuary of Golden Lampstand Church, one of China's largest houses of Christian worship.

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And that's not all. Here in the States, a Louisiana man was just charged with setting fire to three African American churches in St. Landry Parish. And just last week, in the wake of the Notre Dame fire, New York police arrested a philosophy professor at St. Patrick's Cathedral who was "carrying cans of gasoline and lighter fluid." Heaven only knows what he had planned.

Of course, in addition to hundreds of people tragically killed by Islamic militants in the Sri Lanka terror attacks on Easter Sunday, many church buildings were devastated too.

Godless governments, racists, radical Islamists, and common arsonists seem to understand that places matter, especially sacred spaces. But before the smoke had even cleared above Notre Dame last week, well-meaning Christians took to social media to remind us that the Church isn't a building, it's a people.

Of course, that's true... in the same way that a family isn't a house. But that doesn't make it less tragic, painful, or awful when someone's house burns down! Why are so many, especially evangelical Christians, so quick to dismiss the importance and value of tangible beauty and creative expression, including sacred space?

Since the very first days of the early church, Christians have struggled with the temptation to stray into a Gnostic way of thinking. Gnosticism takes various forms, but believes that the material world is ultimately bad, and therefore only "spiritual" things matter.

Terrorists, racists, and vandals attack sacred space because of what it means, not only to those who worship but to the histories of the communities in which they exist. Sacred space is defined by a purpose, set aside for the worship of God. When the early Christians were finally free to publicly worship, they responded by setting aside space for corporate and individual worship, some that are amazing feats of architecture and design. For two millennia Christians sought to fill these spaces with beauty—in art, song, and in reverence. It's an amazing heritage.

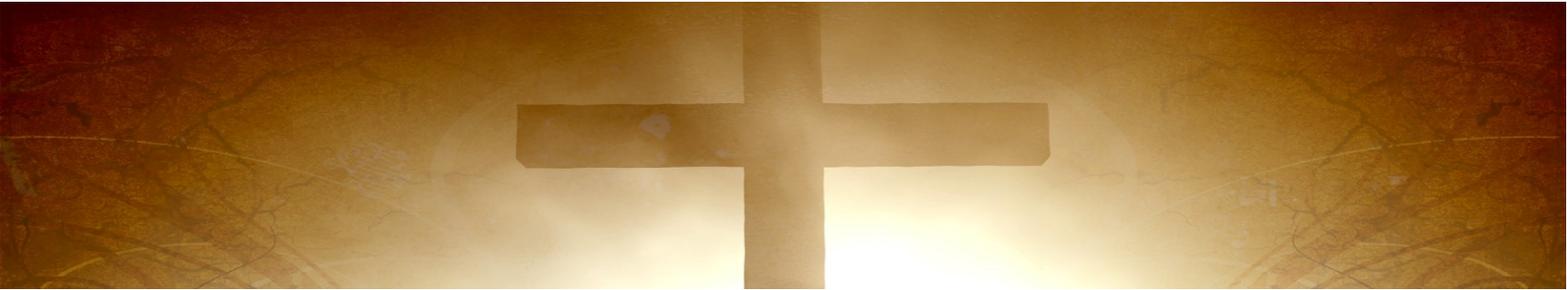
The fact that so many churches today are seen primarily as functional spaces, and therefore made to look like shopping malls or performance venues, suggests that we've lost something. Charles Taylor called it "disenchantment." That's a fancy way of describing how a sacramental view of reality has been replaced by an efficient, functional view.

Of course, true worship often happens in plain, simple buildings. The book of Acts describes a pretty amazing worship service once held in a Philippian jail. Still, the human impulse to beautify spaces, and to mourn the loss of spaces points to a truth about God and ourselves.

Russian novelist Fyodor Dostoyevsky may have overstated it when he said "beauty will save the world," but to downplay the loss of beauty is to miss something very important about ourselves and our world.

No, buildings aren't the Church. But in a time when attacking church buildings has become a favorite means of attacking God, His people, and even cultural order, we should never forget what even arsonists and vandals know: that beauty matters, and stones can sometimes preach.

*(Dcn. John Stonestreet is a speaker and fellow of the Chuck Colson Center for Christian Worldview, as well as the co-host with Eric Metaxas of "Breakpoint", the Christian worldview radio program founded by Chuck Colson.)*



## MPC Spiritual Retreat in Fresno

On March 29 and 30, over 100 people from nine different states and Canada gathered at Campus Bible Church in Fresno, the current resting place of St. James Anglican Church, to attend a spiritual retreat led by Ministries of Pastoral Care (MPC).

MPC was born out of the teaching and healing ministry of Leanne Payne, an Anglican lay minister whose books and leadership brought hope, healing and renewal to the Church as she reminded Christ's people of the elemental truth of the gospel: **Christ lives in us.**<sup>1</sup> Carrying on her legacy, speakers Sarah Colyn, Tommy Briggs, Anjie Baum, Sill Davis and Melanie Post provided solid orthodox teaching and biblically grounded testimony which celebrated that truth. Through the teaching and corporate prayers, they then led the assembly into removing barriers which block Christians from experiencing the full reality of that truth. The Presence of God was both palpable and powerful.



*Sarah Colyn at the podium with Anjie Baum and Tommy Briggs, seated left.*

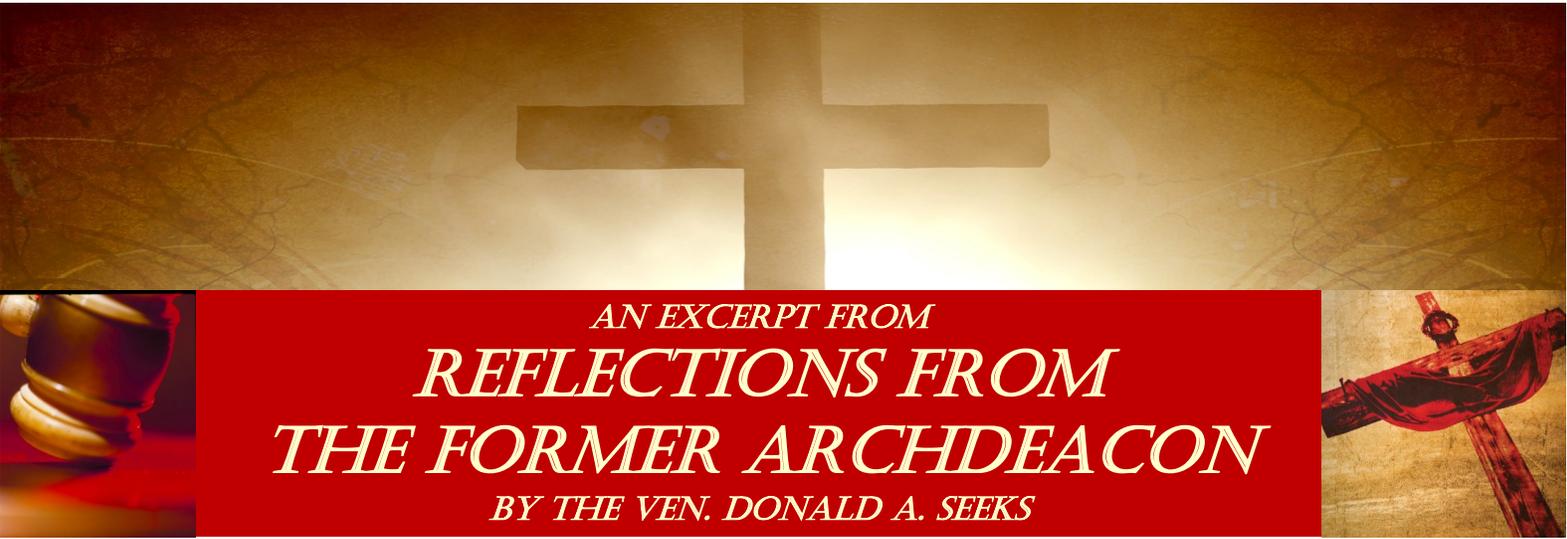
The musical team was led by Beyond the Beat director Tony Manjarrez on guitar, MPC team member John Cannon on piano, and We Got The Beat director Brenda Myers on percussion. The celebration of worship began with a procession of the Cross and continued throughout the retreat with the traditional worship tools of the Church: prayer, confession and the sacrament of the Eucharist. Bishop Eric Menees wrote, "The team...provided outstanding leadership, solid orthodox biblical teaching on healing, and a pastoral presence that inspired all who attended." Bishop Menees encourages everyone to attend the next MPC event being held in the US at Wheaton College, from July 28 to August 2, 2019.



The blessing went both ways. At the conclusion of the event, MPC president Sarah Colyn wrote to their team of the growing partnership between St. James Anglican Church and MPC: "It is clear that God is on the move not just for a one-time event, but is at work here on the heart of MPC's mission, to restore the full healing power of the gospel to the Church."

For information about the upcoming MPC school in Wheaton, visit: <http://ministriesofpastoralcare.com/schools/> or send an e-mail to [info@ministriesofpastoralcare.com](mailto:info@ministriesofpastoralcare.com).

*"I have become its servant by the commission God gave me to present to you the word of God in its fullness--the mystery that has been kept hidden for ages and generations, but is now disclosed to the saints. To them God has chosen to make known among the Gentiles the glorious riches of this mystery, which is Christ in you, the hope of glory." (Colossians 1:25-27 NIV)*



*AN EXCERPT FROM*  
***REFLECTIONS FROM***  
***THE FORMER ARCHDEACON***  
*BY THE VEN. DONALD A. SEEKS*

## NOT SO SIMPLE

It has been said that at least during the two thousand years of Christian history, mankind has been striving to keep things simple. There's a story of a priest who was sitting next to a scientist on a flight across the country. "Well, I'm not a religious person," remarked the scientist, "I'm an astronomer. But it surely seems to me that all religion could be reduced to one statement: 'Do unto others as you would have them do unto you.'" "Of course," replied the priest, "I've always had some considerable interest in astronomy. And it seems to me that all of astronomy could be reduced to one statement: "Twinkle, twinkle, little star."

People will often talk simplistically about Christianity as an ethical or moral emphasis as though there was nothing else of value. All the rest, such as the story about Jesus, is just a collection of sentimental stories or myths. If you try to elaborate, you often get the response: "It's not fair to impose your standards on someone else."

The high moral view and strong ethical standards which Christianity imposes are okay for you, they say, but not for me. Or, we hear the old and tired excuse, "All the Church wants is money," or "What about the Inquisition?", or "What about Columbus?", or "What about the battle between Roman Catholics and Protestants?" And on and on it goes.

C.S. Lewis wrote that the best remedy for such charges is to keep coming back to the truth of Christ in one's own life, upon the changes He already has wrought to bring our God-given potential, the strength to deal with all of life with power, and joy, and real inner peace, no matter what comes before us.

Christians must insist on the full truth of the Gospel and undermine the idea that a little religion is good, but a lot of religion produces a fanatic. The idea that all religions are basically and essentially the same is as false as can be. No Christian worthy of the name should ever allow such a comment to pass without it being strongly challenged.

Christianity claims absolute truth and therefore is not a comfortable or easy religion. It opposes our tendency to sinfulness at every turn. We can be comforted by its truth, but not unless we "buy" the whole package. It is a very true saying that in the Gospel we will find comfort, but it also will afflict the comfortable. Just read about the Church in Laodicea (Revelation).

The central fact of Christianity is found in Saint John 3:16: that God loves (each of us in the world) so that He gave His only-begotten Son, that whoever receives Him (as Savior and Lord) will not perish, but gain eternal life. Is that true?

If it is false, then our religion has no importance for anyone. But if it is true, it is of life-saving importance for everyone. It never will be simply of moderate importance that people can ignore.

Again, if the message of God in Christ Jesus is but a myth, then no honest person ought to believe it, even if it seems helpful at times of need. However, if it is true, then no honest person will want to disbelieve, even at the times when such belief doesn't seem to be particularly helpful, wrote C.S. Lewis.

*(Continued on page 6)*



*AN EXCERPT FROM*  
***REFLECTIONS FROM***  
***THE FORMER ARCHDEACON***  
*BY THE VEN. DONALD A. SEEKS*

*(Continued from page 5)*

Some folks proclaim they can have a “good life” without being a Christian. That may be true to a slight degree if we have a very casual understanding of what “good” means.

A man told me one day he thought he could live properly and morally by following the Golden Rule and the Ten Commandments. I asked him, “How are you doing? How are you doing with Commandment Number Four?” And of course, he had no idea what it was! Such people are deluding themselves, often because they don’t believe Jesus is alive and dwells at the right Hand of the Father. If they admit this fact, then it will alter their lifestyle in ways they prefer not to happen. The Risen Christ has put humanity on a new footing with God, which means they will have to obey God. Almighty God calls we who are Christian to be perfect, which is not even a remote possibility without help from the Spirit of Christ.

The comfortable surely will be afflicted if they accept the words of Jesus and His apostle Paul. Both inform us that there is a real battle going on within every believer between the forces of Satan and the Holy Spirit Who dwells within. But we have the whole armor of God, thanks be to His Holy Spirit, who stands to protect us from the fiery darts of the enemy. We who are serious Christians know the depth of our afflictions, but by the mercy of God we will be absolved and comforted.

Jesus reveals many such truths in His teaching and thus we are in touch with reality as long as we remain faithful. We know how we are to think, to act, to love, and to receive love. Truth is on the objective side of our faith and this truth comes from Jesus.

So we do not see Truth as a philosophical possibility or a dream, but as a Person Who is absolutely reliable, and the One in Whom we can place our trust – forever.

In summary, we have the words of John Milton: “To believe in God means, at the very least, that there is a Truth to be known, and a goodness to be revered and served, that justice and love both belong to the nature of things, and are neither ‘relative’ or ‘illusory.’”





# MATTHEW 25 INITIATIVE

## Matthew 25 New Grant Cycle Opens April 1

It is with great excitement and hope in Jesus Christ that the Anglican Church in North America announces we will be accepting new ministry grant applications for the Matthew 25 Initiative beginning April 1, 2019.

The Lord is doing such wonderful ministry through our family of congregations, reaching those who are suffering from poverty, homelessness, drug and alcohol addictions, trafficking victims, post incarceration, sexual brokenness, refugees in need, etc. The Lord Jesus tells us in Matthew 25:40, “The King will reply, “Truly I tell you, whatever you did for one of the least of these brothers and sisters of mine, you did for me.””

In the last 4 years, 84 Anglican Church in North America churches and ministries have received grants through the MT25i process to either begin a new ministry or continue their ministry to the “least of these.” We are overwhelmed by the goodness of our Lord and the faithfulness of His people in our family of churches and to the generous donors making the grants possible.

To apply, download the grant application [here](#).  
Email your completed application to [matthew25@anglicanchurch.net](mailto:matthew25@anglicanchurch.net).

We look forward to receiving your grant application with great excitement. May the Lord continue to bless the ACNA and MT25i as we bring the Love of Jesus to those He loves so very much.

To learn more about the Matthew 25 initiative, visit their [website](#).

To learn about the Matthew 25 Gathering back in February, [click here](#).



*25i is a ministry of the [Anglican Church in North America](#). Funded by your generous donations, and matching donations from an anonymous donor, M25i is helping ministries all over North America reach the poor and needy in their communities. Find a ministry that touches your heart, and donate today – knowing that every dollar you donate means two for the ministry of your choice!*





# disciple ASSEMBLY 2019

## Renewing our Call to the Great Commission

PLANO, TEXAS — JUNE 17-19

Don't miss your chance to gather with other Anglican leaders from across North America at Assembly this summer. As we celebrate the 10 year anniversary of the Anglican Church in North America, let's learn, plan, and pray together about the next decade.

All attendees will receive special commemorative editions of the new 2019 Book of Common Prayer to mark the occasion.

5 plenary sessions and 30 breakout sessions offer something for everyone.

### SPEAKERS



Foley  
Beach



James  
Bryan Smith



Laurent  
Mbanda



Ravi  
Zacharias



Russell  
Moore



ANGLICAN CHURCH  
IN NORTH AMERICA

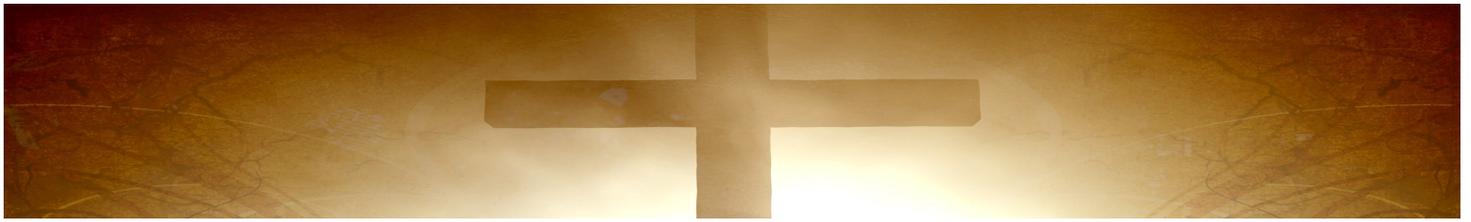
LEARN MORE & REGISTER TODAY AT

[Disciple2019.com](http://Disciple2019.com)

# Diocesan Youth Mission Trip: *Come Build Hope* July 14-19, 2019

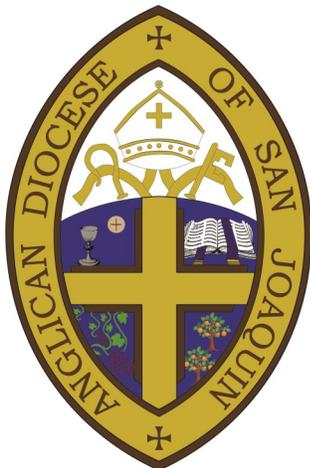
Once again, the diocese will partner with Amor Ministries in Tijuana to build a home for a family in need. This trip is geared for youth entering the 7<sup>th</sup> grade through college and is open to adults as well. Younger children may come if accompanied by their parent. The cost will most likely be between \$200-300 per missionary. This includes lodging in a tent, food while in Mexico, along with the building materials and tools needed to build the house. The amount will be determined by the fundraisers participating congregations hold along with diocesan scholarships. All participants must have a passport and some spending money for meals while traveling. It currently takes 6-8 weeks to get a passport and the cost varies by age between \$115-145. Look for more details to come in the next couple of months. If you have any interest or questions, please contact Father Mark Hall at [hallfour@gmail.com](mailto:hallfour@gmail.com).





## Bishop's Note series--

The ***Bishop's Note*** is a pastoral message published weekly by Bishop Eric Menees. To subscribe, send an email message with your email to [receptionist@dioceseofsanjoaquin.net](mailto:receptionist@dioceseofsanjoaquin.net).



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Please send these to [akr93555@gmail.com](mailto:akr93555@gmail.com) and cc: [melody@ctkridgecrest.org](mailto:melody@ctkridgecrest.org)

Thank you!