

Reconciliation,
Healing,
and Hope

SERMONS FROM
WASHINGTON NATIONAL CATHEDRAL

Edited by

JAN NAYLOR COPE

Foreword by Jon Meacham



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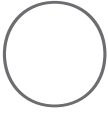
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INTRODUCTION

 n March 12, 2020, we closed the Cathedral's doors. It was a Thursday, cloudy and unremarkable in the way that March often is. We, like many others, had not fully grasped the magnitude of this virus and thought we would be back to “business as usual” in a matter of weeks. Yet we, unlike many others, had cameras and microphones in place, a YouTube channel, and a full-time videographer on staff. As more and more churches across the country also closed their physical doors in the days and weeks that followed, we found ourselves at the threshold of a new, online Cathedral with virtual doors wide enough to welcome worshippers from across the country and around the world.

In those early days of the pandemic, friends and colleagues often asked me what it was like preaching to an empty Cathedral nave, looking out at endless rows of brown leather chairbacks, each word echoing against the bare stone. While it took quite an adjustment to learn to preach to a camera affixed to a stone pillar twenty-six feet from the pulpit, the hardest part was not the empty chairs, but rather not knowing how a sermon was resonating. I could “see” familiar worshippers in my mind’s eye and hold their stories in my heart, but I could not “see” how they were reacting to the sermon. Is the pace too slow? Is the message coming through? Are they following me or starting to fidget? Preaching is meant to be an aural and communal experience; this felt like preaching in a vacuum. We all wondered if worshippers would stay with us from week to week in this new virtual reality. The answer came quickly.

The idea for this book came from the hundreds of emails, letters, cards, and calls we received in thanksgiving for our worship services and sermons during the pandemic. Many of these kind messages flowed in immediately, with lifelong churchgoers and clergy alike wrestling with what Holy Week and Easter would look like in the midst of a global pandemic and with no churches to go to. In Christianity’s holiest season when we journey together from the cross to Calvary to the empty tomb, what would it mean to not be journeying anywhere—essentially locked behind closed doors in fear like the disciples were two thousand years ago?

When Bishop Mariann Edgar Budde presided at the Easter Sunday service on April 12, 2020, proclaiming the Good News of the resurrected Christ to an empty Cathedral, fifty-five thousand people were watching online. When Presiding Bishop Michael Curry preached during that service, he did so from his North Carolina home 275 miles away. That was when the reality of our new landscape and the responsibility of our reach truly began to take root. A presider and preacher separated by geography, an online congregation united by technology and large enough to fill the nave eighteen times over—the Cathedral’s long-held aspiration to be a spiritual home for the nation was on our virtual doorstep.

During the months that followed, the Cathedral community here in Washington was a microcosm of what was happening in the world around us: the pain of the pandemic’s deadly toll and economic uncertainty, mounting anxiety, racial injustice, and divisive politics. A beloved member of our Cathedral staff community died of COVID-19 after caring for her mother who had previously contracted the disease. The daughter died; the mother survived. Hers was a heartbreaking story seen so many times across the globe, and the first of what would become many virtual funerals at the Cathedral. We would endure several scares and self-quarantines among our staff over the course of the year.

Closing the Cathedral to worshippers, tourists, event attendees, concertgoers, and public visitors of any kind also meant a total loss of our earned income. Like many businesses and organizations from Main Street to Wall Street, we were forced to make extremely difficult decisions, including staff layoffs, furloughs, and budget cuts. It was unquestionably one of the most painful periods in the Cathedral’s history. Only days after sharing this hard news with our staff, George Floyd was murdered. Protesters streamed through downtown Washington, demanding accountability for the racial injustices and social inequities laid bare during the pandemic. The Cathedral provided a safe space for some of the protests on the green space of our west lawn.

And yet, as my dear friend and colleague Rose Duncan says, “Sunday comes.”

Week after week, we were blessed to welcome more and more worshippers, each yearning to hear the Good News in a time when good news seemed so hard to come by. We wanted to learn more about these new friends—How did they find us? What were they interested in?—so

we sent a brief survey to about one thousand new supporters. Over fifty percent of those surveyed answered “Preaching” to “What aspect of Cathedral online worship services are you most drawn to?” We have always taken our preaching seriously, but the landslide margin of the survey, and the increasing numbers of viewers on YouTube and Facebook, pushed our clergy way beyond humility onto what felt like hallowed ground.

As preachers, our task is to stay engaged with what is happening in our community and the world around us, and to seek understanding and interpretation through the lens of the gospel and biblical narrative. Indeed, theologian Karl Barth is often quoted as saying, “. . . take your Bible and take your newspaper, and read both. But interpret newspapers from your Bible.”¹ We look for our story within “The Story.” And we hope our words allow listeners to find their story within ours—and God’s. That is the preacher’s life; our sacred responsibility and privilege.

It is also our task to set aside the noise and chaos of our individual lives and the world around us, to reach down deep to preach whatever we had fervently asked God to give us and received to say. Those are the words we took with us on typed manuscripts or iPads, or no notes in my case, as we ascended the eight steps to the center of the Canterbury Pulpit each Sunday. Words of reconciliation, healing, and hope.

The sermons in this book reflect the uncertainty, pain, and disorientation of the COVID-19 pandemic and the pandemic of systemic racism. They also point us toward the goodness and hope that is always ours if we have eyes to see, ears to hear, and hearts to respond. The preachers are a diverse group by age, gender, race, sexual orientation, denomination, and geographic upbringing to name a few. It is important to remember that all sermons are crafted to be heard. As you read these sermons—imagining the voice of each preacher emanating from the Canterbury Pulpit and reaching through space and time to you—we hope that you will see and hear and feel the richness of God’s grace in the diversity of our voices and life experiences. My dear friends and fellow preachers never failed to encourage and spiritually nurture me; it is my sincere hope that their words and presence offer the same to you.

1. “Barth in Retirement,” *Time*, May 31, 1963. <http://content.time.com/time/subscriber/article/0,33009,896838,00.html>.

This book is organized chronologically and by liturgical season. The sermons often build on one another and reflect what was happening at the time in the world around us. The notable exceptions to chronology are the first two sermons which establish the arc of the book—reconciliation, healing, and hope. In the first, Presiding Bishop Michael Curry names the two pandemics of COVID-19 and systemic racism. He had prepared and pre-recorded an entirely different sermon for Pentecost. Then the murder of George Floyd happened. The world saw the deadly effects of racism with our own eyes, and Bishop Curry knew he needed to preach a very different sermon instead. The second sermon in the book is the first sermon that Dean Randy Hollerith preached at the Cathedral, August 21, 2016. “We are to be healers, reconcilers, peacemakers, seekers of justice, and builders of bridges between people, races, and religions.” He called us to be repairers of the breach, and that has been the hallmark of his leadership ever since.

This book begins with Bishop Curry’s Pentecost 2020 sermon and concludes with his Pentecost 2021 sermon. He reminds us, “Pentecost is about a revolution. It is not about mere moral reform. It is not about tinkering at the edges. It is about transforming an old order into a new order. . . . This is a revolution. A revolution of love; a revolution of goodness; a revolution of kindness; a revolution of compassion; a revolution that happens when the Spirit gives birth to Jesus in our lives.” So much has happened in our lives in the year between Pentecost 2020 and Pentecost 2021, yet we are reminded that the way of Jesus is, and always has been, about transformation.

I want to thank my friends and colleagues whose sermons are included in this book, and our online worshipping community who inspired and challenged us to be our best whenever we stepped up to preach. Our editor Nancy Bryan and Church Publishing were encouraging and wise counsellors from the very beginning. My Cathedral colleagues and friends Diane Ney, Kathy Prendergast, Margaret Rawls, Gabrielle McKenzie, Bonnie Willette, and Margaret Shannon contributed untold hours of editing, copyediting, and footnote chasing to make this book a reality, and the exquisite photography of Danielle Thomas graces the cover of our book. No service at the Cathedral could happen without the collective gifts of our worship, music, communications, and video production teams, tireless sextons, and truly every department of the Cathedral—the dedication and professionalism of our Cathedral

staff is an incredible blessing. I also want to thank all the spouses of the contributors who love and support us in the work we feel called to do. It is a gift beyond measure. As editor, I would like to take a moment of personal privilege to thank my husband, John, who is my biggest supporter and beloved life partner in all things.

In the time since March 12, 2020, we have welcomed over three million virtual worshippers. Our online congregation spans all fifty states, several territories, and countries around the world. This book covers but one chapter—about sixteen months long—in the Cathedral’s over 125-year history. Washington National Cathedral was created through an Act of Congress on January 6, 1893, over one hundred years after Major Pierre L’Enfant designed the original plans for the city of Washington and in one rendering envisioned “a great church for national purposes.” It would take an additional fourteen years before the Cathedral’s foundation stone was laid, on September 29, 1907, and President Theodore Roosevelt announced to the crowd of ten thousand, “Godspeed in the work begun this noon.” The foundation stone is a solid block of granite embedded with a smaller stone quarried from a field near Bethlehem. The inscription on the Bethlehem stone reads: “The Word was made flesh and dwelt among us” (John 1:14, KJV). This is the Cathedral’s bedrock—physically and spiritually. God loved us enough to take on flesh and dwell among us. It is also the sacred responsibility of every subsequent generation to pursue the work God has given us to do: to be reconcilers, healers, and beacons of hope. May it be so for you and for me.

Jan Naylor Cope
Provost, Washington National Cathedral
Pentecost 2021

1

The Pandemic and Our Call to Be Reconcilers

PENTECOST IN A PANDEMIC

THE MOST REV. MICHAEL B. CURRY

The Day of Pentecost, May 31, 2020

A note about A Prayer for the Power of the Spirit among the People of God:

From Pentecost Sunday through the first Sunday in September, Presiding Bishop Michael Curry and his Lutheran counterpart Presiding Bishop Elizabeth Eaton welcome congregations and individuals to regularly pray “A Prayer for the Power of the Spirit among the People of God.” This prayer—crafted by a team of Lutheran and Episcopal prayer leaders in light of the COVID pandemic—is meant to unite us in common prayer and revive us for common mission, wherever and however we may be gathered.

A Prayer for the Power of the Spirit among the People of God

God of all power and love, we give thanks for your unfailing presence and the hope you provide in times of uncertainty and loss. Send your Holy Spirit to enkindle in us your holy fire. Revive us to live as Christ’s body in the world: a people who pray, worship, learn, break bread, share life, heal neighbors, bear good news, seek justice, rest and grow in the Spirit. Wherever and however we gather, unite us in common prayer and send us in common mission, that we and the whole creation might be restored and renewed, through Jesus Christ our Lord. *Amen.*

Today is the day of Pentecost, sometimes referred to as the birthday of the church, the beginning of the Jesus movement being launched into the world when the Spirit of God, the same spirit that rested upon Jesus, rested upon those first gathered apostles and followers. It was the beginning of what we call the church, this movement of those

who follow Jesus. But this year, we observe Pentecost in the midst of a pandemic, and that's what I'd like to talk with you about for a few moments. Pentecost in a pandemic.

For our text, the words of the Apostle Paul in Romans, Chapter Five:

“We . . . boast in our sufferings, knowing that suffering produces endurance, and endurance produces character, and character produces hope, and hope does not disappoint us, because God’s love has been poured into our hearts through the Holy Spirit [who] has been given to us.” (Rom. 5:3–5)

The old spiritual says it this way:

If you cannot preach like Peter and you cannot pray like Paul, just tell the love of Jesus how he died to save us all. There is a balm in Gilead to make the wounded whole. There is a balm in Gilead to heal the sin-sick soul.¹

Pentecost in a pandemic. We really do observe this Pentecost in the midst of a pandemic. The pandemic of COVID-19 is real. It is painful. We pray that scientists and researchers and all of the folk who are working hard will find a way to bring this pandemic to an end.

But there's another pandemic, not of the viral kind, but of the spiritual kind. It is a pandemic of the human spirit, when our lives are focused on ourselves, when the self becomes the center of the world and of the universe. It is a pandemic of self-centeredness. It may be even more destructive than a virus.

This pandemic of self-centeredness, if you will, has been the root cause of every humanly created evil that has ever hurt or harmed any child of God or even the earth itself. James, in the epistle, says, “What causes wars? What causes fightings among you? Is it not the passions that are at war in your own members? You desire and do not have, so you kill. And you covet and cannot obtain, so you fight and wage war” (cf. James 4:1–3). That is the pandemic of selfishness, of self-centeredness. It is the pandemic where I am the center of the universe and if I'm the center of the universe, then everybody else and everything else, including you, is on the periphery.

1. “Balm in Gilead,” African-American spiritual, public domain.

That pandemic is the root cause of every humanly created evil that has ever been made. Every war that has ever been fought, every bigotry, every injustice, every wrong that has ever been wrought. Anytime a human being has hurt another human child of God directly or indirectly, explicitly or implicitly, at the root cause is me being the center of the world and you on the periphery. Dr. Martin Luther King called this the reverse Copernican Revolution, where not the sun is the center of the universe, but the self. Love is the antidote to that. Love is the cure for that. Love is what can help us remove that way of living and establish a way of life where we find life for us all.

*If you cannot preach like Peter,
and you cannot pray like Paul,
just tell the love of Jesus,
how he died to save us all.*

There is the balm in Gilead
that can make the wounded whole.
There is the balm in Gilead
that can heal the sin-sick soul.

There is a cure for that pandemic: unselfish sacrificial love. If you listen to the writer of the spiritual, that's what's grasped. Jesus didn't die for himself, he died for others. He died for the good and the well-being of others, not for anything that he could get out of it. It was an unselfish act, if you will, a sacrificial act. It is that way of unselfish, even sacrificial, living that has the innate spiritual capacity to actually save and help us all.

Jesus, following the teachings of Moses, told us long ago, you shall love the Lord your God and your neighbor as yourself. To love God and love the neighbor and genuinely to love the self—not prideful false self-love—but genuinely to love the self. That is the way. That's the way to life, not just for us individually, but for us corporately as a society and us globally as a global human family. Love is the way. It is not a mere utopian dream. It is our hope, our only hope, and it is the cure for this pandemic caused by the human spirit.

But let no one deceive you. This is not cheap grace or sugar-coated religion. It's not easy. It's not easy to live an unselfish life. It's not easy. The truth is, much that we see around us is the fruit of this unhealthy

self-centeredness seemingly ruling the day. But again, the spiritual may help us here. The singer said it this way,

*Sometimes I feel discouraged,
and think my life's in vain,
but then the Holy Spirit
revives my soul again.*

*O, there is a balm in Gilead
to make the wounded whole.
There is a balm in Gilead
to heal the sin-sick soul.*

Love is the way, but we don't always have the power to live that way. But the spirit of the living God does have that power, because I think, if I read my Bible correctly, in 1 John chapter 4, it says, "Beloved, let us love one another, because love is of God and those who love are born of God and know God, because God is love." If God is love, and the Spirit of God is the spirit of God's essence and life and heart, then when that spirit is poured out on us, the very love that is the heart of God is being poured out on us and love becomes possible. But it's hard.

This past week, we have not only had to endure a pandemic occasioned by a virus—a viral pandemic—but we've had to endure and face a spiritual pandemic: the roots of self-centeredness, where one person can look upon another person and despise and reject them, and not even behold them as a fellow child of God. We have seen once again the unthinkable become thinkable. It's caused great pain or better said, increased the great pain that was already there.

In Minnesota, the killing of George Floyd was a violation of basic human decency and dignity and we all saw it. We all saw it. Maybe the deeper pain that comes with that is that that wasn't an isolated incident. It happened to Breonna Taylor on March 13th in Kentucky. It happened to Ahmaud Arbery on February 23rd in Georgia. And need I mention Melissa Ventura, Paul Castaway, Sandra Bland, Eric Garner, Michael Brown, Trayvon Martin? This is a painful path that we have been on for a long time. We've made such progress in our human relationships and in our racial relationships, and yet this seems not to have changed at all.

I'm sixty-seven years old. In the late 1960s and early 70s when I was a teenager, the same thing was going on then. My father, who was

an Episcopal priest, rector of St. Philip's in Buffalo, also served not only as a parish priest but as the director of human relations for the city of Buffalo. In that capacity, after riots in the 1960s, he was brought on board and brought others on board to lead sensitivity training sessions for police officers in the Buffalo police force. That was necessary because some of the riots that were occasioned resulted from precisely the same thing that happened just this past week in Minneapolis.

I was a teenager then and it was going on then. I was a teenager when my father warned me when I learned how to drive, that if ever you have encounters with the police: obey; do what they say; do not talk back and watch how you move your hands. I was told that in the 1960s and we're still having to say it today. That's where some of the anger and the frustration that we're seeing on our streets is coming from. It's accumulated hurt and disappointment, not just for those on the streets, but for people of goodwill and human decency of all races, of all stripes, of all religions, of all kinds.

There is a part of us that just wants to throw up our hands, and in the words of the Psalmist cry: How long? How long, O Lord? How long? And yet, we are not victims of fate. We are people of faith. We are not doomed and condemned to continue our past into our present and future. We need not be slaves of fate. We follow in the footsteps of Jesus. This Jesus taught us that love will make a way out of no way. He taught us that sometimes you have to take up the cross and follow in his footsteps and that if you dare to follow his way of love, you will find God's way of life. We will not submit to fate. We must not give in to fate. We must dare to follow Jesus in the way of love that can save us all.

But I don't have the power to do that all the time and, I suspect, neither do you. But God does and that's why the singer of the spiritual had a verse that said,

*Sometimes I feel discouraged,
and [I] think my life's in vain,
but then [that] Holy Spirit
[It] revives my soul again.*

*There is a balm in Gilead
to make the wounded whole.
There is a balm in Gilead
to heal the sin-sick soul.*

Love is the way. It can save us all. And maybe we've seen a sign of it and maybe we've seen evidence that by the power of the Spirit, we might be able to do it.

Public health officials have told us that we all need to start wearing these when we go out in public—these face masks. It's interesting, when you put the face mask on, it's not fun to wear. They've told us that you're really putting it on not to save yourself. You're not putting it on to protect yourself. The reason for wearing the face mask is so that I don't spread anything to you. I wear it to protect you. It's a small inconvenience, a little sacrifice that actually may be a symbol of what it means to love. The possible miracle could be that if I wear it to protect you from me, and you wear it to protect me from you, or the virus within you, we get protected and we all win—and that is the power of love.

If I make room for you, and you make room for me, and if we will work together to create a society where there is room for all of God's children, where every human being, every one of us is treated as a child of God, created in the image and likeness of God, where everybody is loved, everybody is honored, everybody is respected, everybody is created as a child of God—if we work together to build that kind of society and don't give up, then love can save us all.

*If you cannot preach like Peter,
and you cannot pray like Paul,
just tell the love of Jesus,
how he died to save us all.*

*There is a balm in Gilead
to make the wounded whole.
There [really] is a balm in Gilead
to heal the sin-sick soul.*

So, walk together children and don't you get weary because there is a great camp meeting in the promised land.

REPAIRERS OF THE BREACH

THE VERY REV. RANDOLPH MARSHALL HOLLERITH

Fourteenth Sunday after Pentecost, August 21, 2016

Good morning! What a joy it is for me to be here with you this morning, my first Sunday, in this storied cathedral. My thanks to everyone who has reached out to welcome us. Thank you for the nice notes, emails, and phone calls. My family and I are so glad to be with you. My wife Melissa and my daughter Eliza are here this morning. Eliza leaves next week to begin her freshman year at the University of the South in Sewanee, Tennessee. Keep her in your prayers. My son Marshall could not be with us today; he is a rising senior at Washington & Lee University and in the middle of two-a-day football practices. God bless him in all this heat. Now, some of you might be wondering if I am nervous standing up here in this famous and imposing Canterbury Pulpit, looking out over this grand nave. Well, I have to admit part of me was hoping that if my first Sunday was in the middle of August and people were on vacation, I might be able to have a soft opening. No such luck! Am I nervous? Yes, I am nervous, but if you think I'm nervous, just imagine what the Search Committee is feeling right about now!

In all honesty, what I am feeling most this morning is grateful. I am grateful to Bishop Mariann, the Chapter, and the Search Committee for the honor of serving amongst you. I feel humbled by the task and blessed by the opportunity.

As we begin this journey together this morning, let's take a look at the words of Isaiah. Isaiah writes, "If you offer your food to the hungry and satisfy the needs of the afflicted, then your light shall rise in the darkness and your gloom be like the noonday . . . Your ancient ruins shall be rebuilt; you shall raise up the foundations of many generations; you shall be called the repairer of the breach, the restorer of streets to live in" (Isa. 58:10, 12). I believe these words touch the heart of the gospel; they point to the essence of what it means to be a faithful Christian. Let me share a story with you that I hope illustrates this truth. In 1987, during my first year at Yale Divinity School, I interned for an unusual woman named Betsy who spent her life doing street ministry. Betsy was an upper middle class White lady in her late sixties. She was happily

married, lived in a good neighborhood, and had a bunch of grandchildren. At a time when many people in her situation were playing more golf, growing a garden, or traveling on weekends, Betsy was busy repairing the breach, determined to help the homeless on the streets of New Haven. She spent her days in the alleys and abandoned buildings of the city reaching out to the addicted, the destitute, and the often mentally ill homeless men and women of the city. She was passionate about their welfare. She spent all her money on them and gave them all her time. She was determined to get as many people as possible off the street and into a better life.

I ended up as her intern because her husband and her children were worried about her. They did not want her doing this work. They worried for her safety and as a result they demanded that she not undertake her ministry alone. When she worked on the streets, she had to have someone with her. So, she applied to the Divinity School for an intern assistant and she wound up with me. For a year, I followed behind her in awe, marveling at her faith and her determination, marveling at her willingness to love and to risk for the sake of the gospel. Her family thought she was unnecessarily placing her life in danger. I learned that she was one of those beloved souls St. Paul would proudly call a fool for Christ. I am not sure I was much help during that year, but being a part of her ministry changed my life.

“You shall be called repairers of the breach, the restorer of the streets to live in.” If you pressed me for four words that describe what it means to be part of the Jesus movement, four words that describe what it means to build the kingdom of God, four words that exemplify the Christian life, it would be: repairers of the breach. This is what Isaiah makes clear this morning as he speaks to the people of Israel who have just returned from exile. If you want to know what God wants from you, he tells them, then quit your bickering, your finger pointing, your slandering of others, and offer your food to the hungry, satisfy the needs of the afflicted—work to repair that which is broken in your own lives and in the lives of those around you. I believe that this is our calling, and it is the reason I am so excited to share in ministry with you, because this cathedral has been a repairer of the breach for many, many years.

Some of you know this, but as a child growing up in Alexandria, I used to come to the Cathedral to watch the stone carvers work and

to attend services. I had three great aunts who lived on 29th Street in Georgetown. Those ladies, along with my mother, grandmother, and godparents, were passionate about this cathedral and its mission to be a house of prayer for all people. For decades they were proud to contribute to the work of the [National Cathedral Association] and to play some small role in the Cathedral's creation. As a result, this place has always been a beacon for me—a cathedral that not only points to the glory of God in its grandeur and beauty, but a community of people dedicated to sharing the love of God within this city and across our nation. Leaders like Bishop Walker inspired me during some very formative years in my life. You have a powerful legacy as repairers of the breach, and I am proud to be a part of this community and its mission.

Yes, this cathedral, like any cathedral, indeed like any Christian community in this day and age of rapid cultural change, has its fair share of challenges—financial and otherwise. But we should never forget that we are also immeasurably blessed. We are blessed with talented and gifted people who are willing to share their gifts and talents here. We are blessed with vibrant ministries and an important mission. We are blessed to worship in this space of unparalleled beauty that touches so many who enter these doors. Yes, we have much work to do, but we should never forget that our God has given us so many good gifts with which to do that work.

Now, in closing, our gospel for this morning reminds us to keep central that which is central, to stay focused on the core of our faith. In our passage from Luke, Jesus is attacked for healing a woman on the Sabbath, a woman crippled for eighteen years. Life has literally bent her over and she is unable to stand upright. Jesus in his compassion lays hands on her and says, “Woman, you are set free from your ailment” (Luke 13:12). However, the leader of the synagogue sees Jesus's act of healing as work, and work was forbidden on the Sabbath. In his zeal for the law, this leader allows legalism to trump grace, tradition to trump love, doctrine to trump compassion. He misses the entire point of God's law, and Jesus calls him on it.

My brothers and sisters, Jesus calls to us today and reminds us to never lose sight of what is central to our faith. He reminds us to never let anything distract us from the healing and reconciling work of God's kingdom. He reminds us to be careful not to let the trappings of our faith divert us from the heart of our faith. As the body of Christ, as

the hands and feet of Christ in the world, we are to be repairers of the breach in everything we do. We are to be healers, reconcilers, peacemakers, seekers of justice, and builders of bridges between people, races, and religions. The Washington National Cathedral is perfectly positioned for this kind of work. It is work that has been a powerful part of our history, and God willing it will be a powerful part of our future. Thank you for the opportunity to serve amongst you, to share in this ministry with you. I am honored to be here and excited for the future. Amen.