

ANGLICAN EPISCOPAL HOUSE OF STUDIES

# Perspectives

DUKE DIVINITY SCHOOL 2012-13

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## The Compleat Anglican (with apologies to Izaak Walton, 17th c.)

**I** AM A “cradle Episcopalian,” and I have never been much of an ecclesial explorer. All my life I have worshiped in the tradition into which I was born; I am happy at home, so to speak. Nonetheless, I remember the point at which I began to sense that my identity as an American Episcopalian was fundamentally incomplete. It was following my third year in seminary, which I had spent studying in Oxford (UK) and working at the church in a nearby village. In the next several years I noticed that, while I did not feel less at home in my local church, I thought of it in a somewhat different context. Now my larger frame of reference was less the Protestant Episcopal Church in the U.S.A. (as we called it then) than the Anglican Communion, and so it has been ever since. My sense of belonging to a church body that is multinational has grown stronger through these (many) years, as has my sense of obligation to Anglicans in other parts of the world. Apart from Duke Divinity School, my greatest commitment of teaching time and energy is now to the Episcopal Church of Sudan, a church of some five million.

I am convinced that what I have recounted of my own Anglican experience, from seminary days to the present, is not peculiar to me. Each one of us Anglicans around the world is privileged to have our lives linked with others whose circumstances and outlook may be unimaginably different from our own.

We are linked together whether we know it or not, whether or not we enact those “bonds of affection,” as the Communion likes to call them.

So I have a dream, a theological educator’s dream: Someday soon, say ten years from now, no Anglican will graduate from seminary without having had some “face time” with another Anglican seminarian in another part of the Communion. They may have met on the screen rather than in the same room, but they will have spoken face-to-face. North Americans will know what it is like to study theology and exegete Scripture in East Africa or Cuba or Oceania. They will have a pretty good idea of what their counterparts an ocean or two away will be facing when they go out “into the real world.” I hope these colleagues on different continents will be discovering together some hermeneutical options and theological paradigms that are not yet on the table, because now we all tend to work in our own relatively parochial frames of reference.

Mine is not an impossible dream; already I see the beginning of its realization. Last year we at AEHS had a conversation via Skype (an instrument of the Holy Spirit?) with the students at Bishop Gwynne Theological College in Juba, South Sudan. One Sudanese student came to the principal’s office each of the next three days to ask, “Were those people really live on the screen? Could they really hear us?”

“Could they really hear us?” That is the key question for us throughout the Communion, and also for us here at Duke, where North American Anglicans of different church brands and theological stripes come together to pray and study and play and grow, listening to each other as together we listen for God’s Word. We must do that together, because each of us, on our own or within our small group, is incomplete. My dream and my prayer is that, continuing in fellowship with each other and with sisters and brothers in distant lands, we may discover something of what it is to be “compleat” Anglicans in the 21st century.

**Ellen Davis**, *the Amos Ragan Kearns Distinguished Professor of Bible and Practical Theology*, is the interim director of the Anglican Episcopal House of Studies.

The Anglican Episcopal House of Studies bids farewell to Jo Bailey Wells, who has served as director since our founding in 2006. She joins her husband, Sam Wells, in London, England, where he has accepted the position as vicar of St. Martin-in-the-Fields church. We welcome Ellen Davis as our interim director and Liz Dowling-Sendor as our interim associate director. For more on their appointment, visit our website: [www.divinity.duke.edu/initiatives-centers/aehs](http://www.divinity.duke.edu/initiatives-centers/aehs)



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ROOTS DOWN – into our rich tradition  
WALLS DOWN – in God’s church today

# Ministering to God's Creation

BY JUSTIN FLETCHER



**ACCORDING TO A** 2007 USDA survey, the land on which we live is disappearing—1.7 billion tons of topsoil per year. Wind and water sweep across perpetually cultivated fields, removing the rich soil and depositing it into lakes and rivers. This destroys the land's fertility. Tragically, we validate this each time we buy tomatoes in February. That most readers may find the vanishing act a somewhat regrettable matter, but one having little to do with God, only demonstrates how deep the problem truly is. Yet, we do not find it too regrettable because we all enjoy the artificially cheap meat and year-round strawberries produced by these destructive habits. Because we enjoy the fruits of these destructive practices and are busy with jobs, school, and family we are convinced God pays no mind to our earth-destroying habits.

I suggest attention to our soil is essential to faithful Christian witness.

What does the soil have to do with the Christian God? Is this really a matter for theology, and not just

another political issue? Yes, according to Genesis. The soil has much to do with God's relation to humanity. The narrator writes, "The Lord God formed man from the dust of the ground," and again, "The Lord God took the man and put him in the garden of Eden to till it and keep it" (Genesis 2:7, 15). According to Dr. Norman Wirzba, research professor of theology, ecology and rural life at Duke Divinity School, "Our fate, quite literally, is tied to the fate of the soil." The fundamental vocation of humanity is related to care for the garden of God, and the fundamental constitution of humanity is connected to the earth, for our very life derives from the ground. This means, then, that the erasure of soil entails the erasure of human life.

This also raises the question of what it means to minister to people whose lives depend upon the vanishing soil. At the least, it means that the country parson—despite popular opinion—cannot be dead. Rather, rural priests must be transformed as witnesses to the goodness of the soil God has given

us to till and keep. The church needs priests capable of declaring that the annual loss of 1.7 billion tons of topsoil is a failure to worship rightly the God who made humanity from the dust. For those who share God's grace through bread and wine—gifts from God's own creation—there could be few more pressing theological matters than the health of our soil.

Besides confessing our culpability in the situation, what could be less glamorous than evangelizing the forgotten, deteriorating countryside? At the Eucharist, for all our splendid ceremonies, we are continually offended to find our God so unglamorous: a wafer of bread and a sip of wine and then scattered to "love and serve [God] with gladness and singleness of heart." Perhaps this love and service begins with something as ordinary (yet revolutionary) as caring for the ground on which we stand.

**Justin Fletcher M.Div.'13** is a candidate for the priesthood in the Diocese of Oklahoma.

# RECOVERING THE BODY *Through Liturgy* BY ANNA MASI

**ONE WIDESPREAD ASSUMPTION** of modernity is that our personhood resides in our brain or soul, and our body merely carries us around. In academia we use such phrases as “cultivating your mind” to refer to our own progress and growth as intellectuals. At home we throw verbal punches like “Use your head!” when we argue with our loved ones.

It was not until I was 19 that I began to question this logic. Having just shed my contemporary evangelical skin, I wandered, rather accidentally, into an Anglican church and experienced Anglican liturgy for the first time. What I did not realize then is that the discovery of Anglican liturgy would lead to the discovery of the rest of my body.

It started simply. It was subtle and in pieces. First it was my hands: I watched my fingers uncurl and my palms rest on top of one another, two hands opening to beckon bread from the priest. Then it was my legs as they bent, how my knees would catch me on the kneeler as we prayed. Soon after I realized I had a forehead, a chest, and two shoulders to cross. I had arms to swing my hands in order to complete the motions of the cross. Limb by limb I felt my body gain dignity and grow through every aspect of the liturgy. As it grew, I realized quickly that the liturgy engaged not just my own body, but others’ as well. Priests and laypersons genuflect together; we cross ourselves in unison. Before my hands

open to receive communion they first must open to receive the hands of those around me in the passing of the peace. I gained my body, I gained theirs, and in turn they gained mine.

The liturgy, I learned quickly, is about more than just a good, intellectually challenging sermon that we can think about during the week. It is about more than our favorite hymns with catchy tunes that get stuck in our heads for the rest of the day. When the church baptizes a person, we baptize her head-to-toe. When we take communion, we swallow it—and then carry it out into the streets of our cities, over to our neighbor’s house for lunch, to our own dinner tables.

Here at Duke the focus of my studies is bodies, and often I receive puzzled looks as to what on earth that means or why it matters. But I am still in awe of just how much it means and how much it does matter. When I pass a priest in the store, I pass a sacrament: a whole body set apart by the church, holy orders walking down the aisles of Target.

Liturgy does not reside merely in the Book of Common Prayer. Liturgy latches onto our skin and bones, stepping out of the chapel doors to bring the church out into the world. The body of Christ is a body because it is bodies, constituted by the whole of ours.

*Anna Masi M.Div.’13 hopes to continue her studies with Ph.D. work in New Testament.*



MEGAN MORR,  
DUKE PHOTOGRAPHY

# Prayer, Pancakes, and the Hope of the Poor on “The Hill”

BY ELIZABETH COSTELLO AND JOSEPH WOLYNIAK

**A CHURCH AT** the corner of Ninth Street and Main Street in Durham, St. Joseph’s Episcopal Church, is home to two congregations. One congregation, whether out of preference or necessity, sleeps in tents and makeshift shacks in a wooded area just west of the church. “Homeless,” they are often called. The other congregation is a group of people who, whether out of preference or necessity, sleep in homes in the Durham area. “Housed,” they are often called. It’s hard to say who first laid claim to “The Hill” on which St. Joseph’s sits. For as long as each congregation can remember, the other has been there. Mostly they have cordially acknowledged one another with a passing “hello” here, a smile-and-wave there, all with the usually obligatory Southern charm. But these two congregations have primarily existed in parallel universes. Not antagonistic, just parallel. Until, that is, the needs of one and abilities of the other brought them together—over a bowl of cheese grits and a cup of black coffee after communal prayer.

The prayer part is easy enough to explain. A few years back, a smattering of ardent AEHS seminarians, led by Colin Miller, Ph.D.’10, began saying morning and evening prayer at St. Joseph’s. During the daily office, they were struck by the daily recitation of the Suffrages based on Psalm 9:18:

*“Let not the needy, O Lord, be forgotten; Nor the hope of the poor be taken away.”*

That line birthed an encounter of the two congregations. Out of the encounter sprang friendships. Out of the friendships arose a daily meal, breakfast in St. Joseph’s Parish Hall following morning prayer. Out of the daily meal grew a permanent

community of some four to six men (at any given time) living in a house of hospitality supported by Episcopal parishes and parishioners from across the county and country. Out of this community emerged an idea for a more formal expansion and solidification of the venture in hospitality, friendship, and community. Currently the idea is evolving for an intentional community in the Catholic Worker tradition called the Community of the Franciscan Way, derived from St. Francis of Assisi’s faithful love of Lady Poverty. This is, notes Mac Stewart, M.Div.’13, what the tradition teaches us about how to live in word and deed.

Here, in community, lies the point about the needs of one and abilities of the other.

It might be assumed that the “homeless” are the needy and the “housed” are the able. Friendship, however, is often filled with unexpected discoveries. These surprises reveal that the housed-and-abled are not the hope of the poor; in fact, the homeless-and-needy have a hope the housed-and-abled need. Pancakes after prayer are fine and good, for they certainly fill the belly. But we have needs beyond full bellies. Even those whose bellies are rarely empty have to recognize that they have other large voids in their lives that need to be filled.

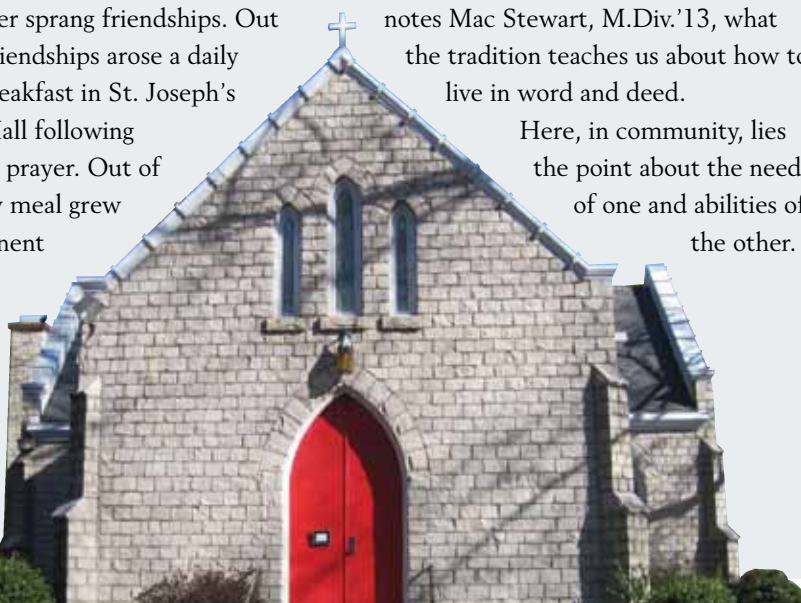
This was one of the lessons we learned in an AEHS seminar with the Rev. Dr. Sam Wells on incarnational ministry. This, too, is the lesson learned through friendships built on “The Hill.”

If we are to live faithfully, we will need to recognize our own needs and empty places. Perhaps companionship and community with the poor will start us on the right path.

**Elizabeth Costello M.Div.’09** is the director of Christian formation at Holy Comforter Episcopal Church in Burlington, N.C., and a postulant in the Diocese of North Carolina.

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St. Joseph’s Episcopal Church,  
Durham, N.C.



# On Being IN

# DANGER

BY CHRIS YODER



**DANGER!** We are in “great dangers” because of “our unhappy divisions.” These words come from the collect,

“For the Unity of the Church.” They struck me forcefully during this year’s Week of Prayer for Christian Unity. I found it startling to pray them with Anglicans and Episcopalians, Methodists and Baptists, during morning prayer at Duke Divinity School.

While I understand and indeed grieve the unhappiness of our divisions, to say our divided condition is dangerous is another thing altogether. It is like a punch in the stomach, or a sudden noise in the night that startles you awake. Unlike a blow or a bump in the night, however, the danger of the divisions among and within Christian communions is not immediately evident. Instead, we are more like someone who does not know that cancer is vitiating her body, and she will not know until a doctor detects the malignancy and directs decisive action. Likewise, we require God’s grace to know ourselves as endangered. So we pray God to “give us grace seriously to lay to heart the great dangers we are in by our unhappy divisions” and to take away whatever “hinder[s] us from godly union and concord.” We ask God both to enable us to recognize our divisions as malignant and to excise the causes

of disunity. We ask for the grace to cry out, “We are in danger! Good Lord, deliver us!”

What does it mean to say that divisions among Christians are dangerous? Divisions among Christians are symptoms of sickness, a lack of flourishing. The church flourishes insofar as it is conformed to the life of the triune Lord, insofar as we “live in love, as Christ loved us and gave himself up for us, a fragrant offering and sacrifice to God” (Ephesians 5:2). The church’s health—and unity—is conformity to the self-emptying, sacrificial love of the crucified and risen Lord Jesus. “Be of the same mind, having the same love, being in full accord and of one mind. Do nothing from selfish ambition or conceit, but in humility regard others as better than yourselves. Let each of you look not to your own interests, but to the interests of others. Let the same mind be in you that was in Christ Jesus” (Philippians 2:2–5). Disunity indicates that Christians are “behaving according to human inclinations” (1 Corinthians 3:3), not according to Christ. The disunity of the church persists, and we are in danger to the extent that we are not conformed to Christ.

Church unity is found in the identity given us in the Paschal mystery and nourished in the Eucharist, by which the whole church is made one body with Christ Jesus through the Holy Spirit.

**Chris Yoder M.Div.’12** is a postulant for Holy Orders in the Diocese of Dallas.

# WORSHIP: *An End, not a Means*

BY JOSEPH ANANIAS

**ONE MORNING** this past summer, I found myself alone in the sacristy of Saint Peter's Church in Tallahassee, Fla. I was an intern for the summer, and this particular week it was my job to prepare the altar for the mid-week Eucharist and healing service. I went about my work, making sure I closely followed the customary: checking the calendar for the proper liturgical color, filling the candles with oil, setting out the chrism, building the "stack" of eucharistic vessels, and placing the lavabo on the credence table.

As a new Anglican, I must confess that I found (and still find) these ceremonial particulars fascinating. But in the solitude of the sacristy that morning, a thought came to mind that broke through my enthrallment with the mystique of it all. *Everyone takes these ceremonial details so seriously, I thought, but most of the participants in the liturgy won't even see them. Most of this stuff is totally unnecessary.* Then it hit me: *Exactly. This is all totally unnecessary. That's the point.* If worship is about God's people ascribing due honor to God, if it is the place where God's self-gift is savored and celebrated, then worship is necessarily the antithesis of utility.

In order to live responsibly, we are to a certain extent forced to think in terms of utility. I must, for example, arrange my schedule in a way that enables me to do the best work in the most efficient manner. I must decide whether a particular purchase will be the best use of my money. When I'm running late I have to take the shortest route. But what I learned this summer is that unlike schedules, money, and routes, worship is not a means to an end. Rather, worship is the eschatological presence of our true and final end: eternal communion with God.

I've begun to understand that worship, with all that it involves, needs no justification, for any justification implies an end greater than God. Thus

insofar as we enjoy God for God's own sake, our worship is rightly celebratory and festive. As the Prayer Book has it, all Sundays are "feasts of our Lord Jesus Christ." Feasts and festivity entail extravagance, gratuitousness, and even uselessness. According to the philosopher Josef Pieper, "A festival is essentially a phenomenon of wealth; not, to be sure, the wealth of money, but of existential richness. Absence of calculation, in fact lavishness, is one of its elements."

By its lavishness and gratuitousness, Anglican worship has taught me and continues to teach me that God is never to be used, always to be enjoyed. As I look forward to a lifetime of ministry, I am grateful to have glimpsed—through an Anglican lens—how the whole church may worship the Lord in the beauty of holiness.

**Joseph Ananias M.Div.'13** is an aspirant for priesthood in the Anglican Church of North America.





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KATE ROBERTS

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