Dear Friends in Christ,

Thank you for taking this opportunity to walk again the road of Lent with the authors of these reflections and the friends and staff of Episcopal Relief & Development. Each Lent, we commit our lives to a deeper focus on the incarnate God, Jesus Christ. It is my prayer that these meditations will provide a path for you to encounter Christ each day.

This issue of Episcopal Relief & Development’s Lenten Meditations is not only our twelfth edition, it is also our 75th Anniversary edition. It includes the voices of leaders throughout the Anglican Communion who have personal insights into the impact of our work. We have asked them to focus on some core statements that are the basis of our work. Those statements are:

- I believe that everyone should have access to clean water.
- I believe that no one should go hungry.
- I believe that all children and families deserve a healthy start in life.
- I believe that no one should live in poverty.
- I believe that together we can heal a hurting world.

As you walk the path of faith this Lent, we welcome your meditations on how these statements are reflected in your life of faith. Visit www.episcopalrelief.org/75share-stories to share your thoughts with our
extended church family. Ours is a community that walks together with others around the world. Through faith in Christ, this community knows that together we can heal a hurting world.

There is an offering envelope in the back of the meditation booklet; if you are so moved, we invite you to make a gift in honor of our 75th Anniversary that will help ensure our life-giving work for years to come.

Faithfully,

Robert W. Radtke
President
Episcopal Relief & Development
Episcopal Relief & Development works with more than 3 million people in nearly 40 countries worldwide to overcome poverty, hunger and disease through multi-sector programs that utilize local resources and expertise. An independent 501(c)(3) organization, Episcopal Relief & Development works closely with Anglican Communion and ecumenical partners to help communities rebuild after disasters and develop long-term strategies to create a thriving future. In 2014-15, the organization joins Episcopalians and friends in celebrating 75 Years of Healing a Hurting World.

We support programs in the following areas:

- Alleviating Hunger and Improving Food Supply
- Creating Economic Opportunities and Strengthening Communities
- Promoting Health and Fighting Disease
- Responding to Disasters and Rebuilding Communities

Episcopal Relief & Development uses the Millennium Development Goals as a framework to guide our efforts and help us measure our impact. All of our programs work to achieve one or more of the eight MDG goals:

1. Eradicate extreme poverty and hunger
2. Achieve universal primary education for children
3. Promote gender equality and empower women
4. Reduce child mortality
5. Improve maternal health
6. Combat HIV/AIDS, malaria and other diseases
7. Ensure environmental sustainability
8. Create a global partnership for development
AUTHORS

Wendy Claire Barrie has spent twenty-five years in Episcopal Christian formation and presently serves as the Director of Children, Youth and Family Ministries at St. Bartholomew’s Church in New York City.

The Rev. Mark Bozzuti-Jones is an award-winning children’s author and priest for Pastoral Care and Community at Trinity Wall Street in New York City.

Ashley Cameron served as a Young Adult Service Corps missionary at the Episcopal Development Foundation of St. Mark’s in the Episcopal Diocese of Santiago, Philippines.

Idris Dada Buabeng is an International Program Officer for Episcopal Relief & Development.

Sara Delaney is a Program Officer for Episcopal Relief & Development.

Robin Denney is a seminarian from the Diocese of El Camino Real studying at Virginia Theological Seminary; she is a former Episcopal missionary to Liberia and South Sudan.

The Rev. Pamela Dolan is rector of the Church of the Good Shepherd in Town and Country, Missouri. The people of Good Shepherd recently started a garden to feed the hungry in their community.

Xerxes Eclipse is the Director of Donor Services for Episcopal Relief & Development.

Daniella Flamenco Gómez, M.D., is the Director of the Integrated Health Program of the Episcopal Church in El Salvador.
Jenifer Gamber is the Director of Christian Formation at St. Anne’s Episcopal Church in Trexlertown, Pennsylvania, and author of several books, including Call on Me: A Prayer Book for Young People.

Phoebe Griswold is a member of the Society of the Companions of the Holy Cross, which is committed to intercessory prayer, thanksgiving, and simplicity of life; she also serves on Episcopal Relief & Development’s 75th Anniversary Celebration Steering Committee.

Roger Hutchison, an artist and writer, is the Canon for Children’s and Family Ministries at Trinity Episcopal Cathedral in Columbia, South Carolina.

The Most Rev. Katharine Jefferts Schori is the Presiding Bishop of The Episcopal Church.

The Rev. Gay Clark Jennings is President of the House of Deputies of The Episcopal Church.

Andrew Kellner serves as Canon for Family and Young Adult Ministries for the Diocese of Pennsylvania and serves on the boards of Forma and the Episcopal Service Corps and on the Youth Ministry Council for The Episcopal Church.

Heidi J. Kim is Missioner for Racial Reconciliation at the Office of Government Relations for The Episcopal Church.

Lisa Kimball is the Director of the Center for Ministry of Teaching and Professor of Christian Formation and Congregational Leadership at Virginia Theological Seminary.

Sean McConnell is the Director of Engagement for Episcopal Relief & Development.
Kellie McDaniel is a Program Officer for Episcopal Relief & Development.

Tammi Mott is a Senior Program Officer for Episcopal Relief & Development.

Dawn Murdock is a Senior Manager of Resource Mobilization for Episcopal Relief & Development.

Nagulan Nesiah is a Senior Program Officer, International Emergencies, for Episcopal Relief & Development.

Leonidas Niyongabo is the Provincial Development Officer for the Anglican Church of Burundi.

Vanessa Pizer is a Program Officer for Episcopal Relief & Development.

Robert W. Radtke is President of Episcopal Relief & Development.

The Rev. Canon Susan Russell is the Senior Associate for Communication at All Saints Church in Pasadena, California.

Regan Schutz works for the Godly Play Foundation and is pursuing her Master of Divinity at Sewanee, the University of the South as a postulant in the Diocese of Oregon.

Jay Sidebotham serves as Director of RenewalWorks, a ministry of Forward Movement. He is on the clergy staff at St. James’ Parish, Wilmington, North Carolina, and for the past six years has served on the Episcopal Relief & Development board.

Ragan Sutterfield is a seminarian from the Diocese of Arkansas studying at Virginia Theological Seminary. He is the author of This Is My Body: From Obesity to Ironman, My Journey into the True Meaning of Flesh, Spirit, and Deeper Faith.
Gifty Tetteh is Strategic Outreach Officer for NetsforLife®, a program of Episcopal Relief & Development.

Shaun Walsh is Senior Director for NetsforLife®, a program of Episcopal Relief & Development.

Rebecca Wilson is a partner in Canticle Communications and a member of Church of Our Saviour, Episcopal in Akron, Ohio.

**SOURCES/PERMISSIONS**

Unless indicated, scripture quotations are from the New Revised Standard Version Bible, copyright 1989 by the Division of Christian Education of the National Council of Churches of Christ in the USA and used by permission. Psalm passages are from the Psalter in The Book of Common Prayer.


March 14: The Jerusalem Bible, copyright 1966 by Darton Longman & Todd Ltd. and Doubleday and Company Ltd.


April 5: ‘Now the green blade riseth’ by J M C Crum (1872-1958) [altd]. Stanza reproduced by permission of Oxford University Press. All rights reserved.

Photographs are copyright by Episcopal Relief & Development, with thanks to these photographers: cover: Marcus Bleasdale (VII); image of boy praying, Harvey Wang; p. 19 Harvey Wang; p. 27 Barbara Case Senchak; p. 35 Harvey Wang; p. 43 Nagulan Nesiah; p. 51 Ashley Cameron; p. 60 Harvey Wang.

©2014 Episcopal Relief & Development. All rights reserved.
Few passages from scripture describe better the ethos of Episcopal Relief & Development than Paul’s Letter to the Romans. It takes all of us, working together as one body in Christ, to heal a hurting world. This was brought home to me vividly during a program visit I made to Myanmar in February of last year.

I had the honor of visiting a demonstration farm where about thirty students who had come from around the country were sitting in rapt attention under a shed listening to elderly men and women share their expertise in soil and crop management and animal husbandry.

Their teachers were passing along knowledge that had been lost during Myanmar’s dark years of civil and political unrest. The teachers were sharing how to rotate crops, how to use natural pesticides and fertilizers and how to breed animals.

This knowledge that had been lost was being recovered and passed along for the glory of God.

As one body in Christ, all of us have a role to play, just as the elderly teachers in Myanmar, in healing a hurting world.

What role will you play this Lent?

—Robert W. Radtke
THURSDAY, FEBRUARY 19

We thank you, Almighty God, for the gift of water. Over it the Holy Spirit moved in the beginning of creation.


When water comes from taps and faucets, we forget that every drop came from some other place. Our creation itself is patterned on where water is and flows. Creation is made up of watersheds—creeks and streams and aquifers that form a particular ecological region. Unless we learn to see our lives as connected to our watersheds, we will forget that clean water is a gift that we could easily lose through mismanagement, environmental degradation and pollution.

Many people in the world do not have to wonder where water comes from. They know that it comes from this river or that lake. In an age of ecological crisis, they also know that the water is often polluted with everything from pesticides to sewage. In response, scholar Ched Myers suggests that perhaps we should baptize not with the water from the faucet, anonymous in its origin, but rather with water from the nearest river or lake. If that water is polluted, then we can work to change and clean it—and remember that people around the world do not have the choices we do when it comes to clean water.

—Ragan Sutterfield
I BELIEVE THAT EVERYONE SHOULD HAVE ACCESS TO CLEAN WATER

You visit the earth and water it abundantly, you make it very plenteous; the river of God is full of water.

—Psalm 65:9

FRIDAY, FEBRUARY 20

In a survey of villages around the university where I worked in Liberia, we asked people about their agricultural priorities. In every village, the people responded, “We are hungry, but we are not willing to talk about agriculture until we have water that does not make us sick.” In village after village, we were shown broken pumps, installed without maintenance instructions, and dry or contaminated wells that weren’t dug deep enough.

The people taught me that water is the medium of life. Clean water is a holy thing. Dirty water brings death. Water comes from God as a gift to all people. So at the bidding of the people, we wrote grants to fix wells. The people did the work, and eight wells were brought back to life and able to give life.

When I read this psalm, I think of the river of God, full of holy water, gushing out, giving life to the people who yearn for it, who cry for it, who know the value of every drop. Praise God!

—Robin Denney
I BELIEVE THAT EVERYONE SHOULD HAVE ACCESS TO CLEAN WATER

For truly I tell you, whoever gives you a cup of water to drink because you bear the name of Christ will by no means lose the reward.

—Mark 9:41

SATURDAY, FEBRUARY 21

Drought caused by climate change affects millions. Ten percent of the world’s population lacks drinking water. At a time when pollution and deforestation are unleashing droughts and floods on our planet, we use technology for non-vital purposes such as video games and other high-tech toys. We live in an individualistic society that leads us to be selfish.

Giving someone a glass of water may seem like a simple act, but in reality, it is not easy to share our possessions—even though they are not really ours to begin with. We have forgotten that God created the oceans and the earth for every creature.

Sometimes, we deny the thirsty a glass of water. God will reward those good people who give water to people in need, such as the migrant children who are fleeing violence in Central America and struggling to survive.

—Daniella Flamenco Gómez
And just as he was coming up out of the water, he saw the heavens torn apart and the Spirit descending like a dove on him. And a voice came from heaven, “You are my Son, the Beloved; with you I am well pleased.”

–Mark 1:10-11
MONDAY, FEBRUARY 23

Have you noticed how frequently people start sentences with the word “so” today? Hosea, an eighth-century prophet, does the same. However, Hosea uses the word “so” to call us to act in response to what God has done for us.

The Lord is as constant as the rising sun and as refreshing as the rain. The people of Israel know this—the spring rains come during March, and stay through mid-April, promoting a fruitful harvest. In what ways do we feel God's presence as a refreshing rain? How do we contribute to abundant yields in parched lands?

A song set to Hosea 6:3 came to mind when I gazed at the rainwater collection tanks on school roofs in Nyanza, Kenya, which is part of a program supported by Episcopal Relief & Development. The rain that falls is collected, treated and used to “harvest” water safe for drinking and hand washing. The Kenyan students showed me the muddy river water they used to have to boil, then cheerfully demonstrated how the tap on the tank worked, producing a flow of God’s blessings.

—Dawn Murdock
I BELIEVE THAT EVERYONE SHOULD HAVE ACCESS TO CLEAN WATER

Jesus said to them, “Fill the jars with water.” And they filled them up to the brim.

—John 2:7

TUESDAY, FEBRUARY 24

About 70 percent of the earth’s surface is covered by water, but only 3 percent of that is fresh water. These statistics are alarming each time I read them, but they are a daily reality for the community of Ontong Java in the Solomon Islands, the site of an Episcopal Relief & Development program.

For several years, the nearly 3,000 residents on the remote atoll have struggled to adapt to the rising seawaters and the salinization of their water sources. Believing that everyone should have access to clean water, Episcopal Relief & Development has facilitated the strategic placement of over twenty large rainwater harvesting tanks to supply the community with clean water.

In John’s telling of Jesus’ first miracle, Jesus asks the servants to “Fill the jars with water,” and they fill them to the brim. Similarly, the Polynesian residents fill their rainwater harvesting tanks to the brim and experience a similar miracle of transformation from what could be a disastrous situation into one of good news and hope.

In this season of Lent, as we reflect on the Bible to sustain our spiritual life, let us also reflect on water as it sustains our physical life. Let us strive to protect it and not contaminate or waste it.

—Nagulan Nesiah
A Samaritan woman came to draw water, and Jesus said to her, “Give me a drink”...The Samaritan woman said to him, “How is it that you, a Jew, ask a drink of me, a woman of Samaria?”...Jesus answered her, “If you knew the gift of God, and who it is that is saying to you, ‘Give me a drink,’ you would have asked him, and he would have given you living water.”

—John 4:7-10

Jesus requests water from a Samaritan, a woman from another ethnic group. And she questions him. She does not know that Jesus is God and that everything belongs to him. If she knew, she would be asking him for living water. And he would have given her this water freely. The passage teaches us to serve without taking into account racial, ethnic or regional differences.

With the Anglican Church of Burundi, Episcopal Relief & Development follows Jesus’ teaching by providing clean water from the mountain to Burundian communities. This water is a gift from God to creation.

Jesus gave the Samaritan woman water so that she would have life in abundance—eternal life. The Holy Spirit gives us life-giving water so that we can be agents of change in a hurting world. Let us commit ourselves to ensuring this basic necessity, God’s gift of water, is available to all communities.

—Leonidas Niyongabo
Two days after I returned from a visit to Episcopal Relief & Development’s program in central India, I filled up my water bottle and left the office to meet friends at an outdoor summer concert. When I arrived, security told me I had to empty my water bottle—vendors sold water inside.

The annoyance and anger that rose up in me over this small request was surprisingly strong. I voiced my disappointment that in a city with free, clean drinking water, people were forced to buy water in plastic bottles. Security seemed to find me slightly insane.

After I calmed down, I realized my anger was coming from something bigger. In India I had spent a week talking with people struggling to find enough water to drink. Farmers had planted their fields for a third time after two failed attempts and were waiting desperately for late monsoon rains to arrive.

Drinking from taps in places like New York City can make a small difference in our global water challenge. But working for change in places such as rural India by constructing drinking water systems, storing rainwater and choosing drought-tolerant crops can make a big difference.

Working together we can make springs flow between the hills, help grasses grow for the cattle and bring forth food from the earth.

—Sara Delaney
FRIDAY, FEBRUARY 27

Hunger is both rumbling and silent. Those of us who live with abundance can relate to the rumbling hunger—a noisy stomach insisting we eat, now. Less familiar is the silent hunger for important micronutrients. Deficiencies of iron, vitamin A and zinc are ranked among the World Health Organization’s top ten leading causes of death through disease in developing countries.

Episcopal Relief & Development supports programs that focus on maternal and child health, agricultural production and microfinance—all of which address both rumbling and silent hunger. These programs strengthen community-level health structures, share new agriculture techniques and empower women’s abilities to finance projects.

The internally displaced people inside Syria testify to another silent hunger—the hunger to be heard, understood and accepted.

Since 2013, our partner, the Fellowship of Middle East Evangelical Churches (of which the Episcopal Diocese of Jerusalem is a member) has been working with families in the decimated city of Homs to fill this hunger by providing food, supplies and housing vouchers. The displaced have responded with loud, ringing gratitude. Their spiritual hunger is being fed and their suffering is being acknowledged. They are helping to reinforce their dignity, and celebrating the power of our combined prayers for peace.

—Tammi Mott
The feeding of the five thousand appears in all four gospels, an indication that it merits our attention. Each version describes the story differently. In Matthew’s version, the disciples come to Jesus with a problem and proposal. They say, “This is a deserted place, the hour is late, send the crowds away so they may go buy food for themselves.” Jesus sees another option. He says to the disciples, “They need not go away. You give them something to eat.” Where the disciples see the scarcity of only five loaves and two fishes, Jesus sees possibility. In the process, the disciples discover abundance.

I believe we live in a world where no one should go hungry. I believe we have failed to trust that there is enough and to give our hearts over to that possibility. I believe we live in a world where there is enough when resources are distributed with generosity and justice. I believe we are called to address the world’s hunger. I believe it is Jesus’ will that all are fed. Can you hear Jesus say to you and to me, as he said to the disciples, “You give them something to eat.”?

—Jay Sidebotham
For he does not despise nor abhor the poor in their poverty; neither does he hide his face from them; but when they cry to him he hears them.

My praise is of him in the great assembly; I will perform my vows in the presence of those who worship him.

The poor shall eat and be satisfied, and those who seek the Lord shall praise him: “May your heart live for ever!”

–Psalm 22:23-25
MONDAY, MARCH 2

On the outskirts of Yangon, Myanmar, the Anglican Men’s Association runs a demonstration farm. On four acres provided by a church member, smallholder farmers gather for six-day workshops about organic farming and pest control practices. They are eager to restore their land to health after decades of harsh chemical pesticides mandated by a repressive dictatorship.

Dr. Yi Yi Myint, a retired professor of plant pathology, teaches in an open-air shelter festooned with bright instructional posters. Under military rule, universities were frequently closed, so Dr. Myint and her peers (who were educated before the 1962 coup) are essential to rebuilding the country.

The day I met Dr. Myint, she examined a mushroom farmer’s crop samples and gave energetic instruction about preventing termites. Her goal is not only to help her pupils grow more food but also to equip them to educate other farmers about organic farming methods.

We believe that no one should go hungry for food. But Dr. Myint’s dedication to healing her country’s land reminds me that only by maintaining our hunger for righteousness will we end the repression and inequality that keep people around the world from having enough food.

—Rebecca Wilson
I BELIEVE THAT NO ONE SHOULD GO HUNGRY

I exhort the elders among you to tend the flock of God that is in your charge, exercising the oversight, not under compulsion but willingly, as God would have you do it—not for sordid gain but eagerly. Do not lord it over those in your charge, but be examples to the flock.

—1 Peter 5:1a-3

TUESDAY, MARCH 3

Disasters seem to strike all too often nowadays, and with Episcopal Relief & Development partnering in some of the most volatile countries in the world, our program team becomes acutely aware of many of them.

We are struck by the pain of hunger brought by disaster and heartened by the witness of our church partners in sharing God’s bounty with people who have so little. As the Church offers a safe place of support and refuge, our local church partners respond immediately to humanitarian needs, believing that no one should go hungry.

Servant leadership can be a challenge. When providing disaster relief, having control over the lives of many can at times be corrupting, but serving hurting people while respecting their dignity is what we find most rewarding in our work. Let us pray that God’s abundance becomes the gift we bring to victims of disaster and for all of God’s people in need.

—Nagulan Nesiah
I BELIEVE THAT NO ONE SHOULD GO HUNGRY

The Son of Man came eating and drinking, and they say, “Look, a glutton and a drunkard.”

—Matthew 11:19

WEDNESDAY, MARCH 4

We are not friends with our food. Everything we eat and drink is suspect—sugar, caffeine and alcohol cause addiction. Fat makes us fat, carbs make us fatter, and even lettuce can make us sick. We consume more and enjoy less. We are obese and plagued by hunger and malnutrition more today than at any time in living memory.

Our cultural food choices are not reflective of individual choices. The earth produces more than enough food for all of its inhabitants, but the choices we make about what we eat—and how it is produced and distributed—means that too many go hungry. If we could learn to truly enjoy food, to savor it, to recognize it as a primary good, a gift from God, could we stop these terrible twin evils of obesity and malnutrition? Could we be satisfied with less and enjoy what we have?

Jesus wasn’t a drunkard or a glutton. He knew when to fast and when to feast, and how to find the balance—how to consume daily bread without causing deprivation for others. May we learn this precious lesson about wholeness and satisfaction during Lent.

—Pamela Dolan
When you increase the number of gardens, you increase the number of heavens, too!

—Mehmet Murat ildan

THURSDAY, MARCH 5

When I first learned of Episcopal Relief & Development’s Abundant Life Garden Project, I was working at a church surrounded by acres of lush green countryside—a perfect spot to tend some earth and grow good food. However, it was not to be.

My next church was surrounded by skyscrapers, steel and concrete—and blessed with a terrace on the third floor. When I told people I was starting a garden, I was greeted with skepticism.

We had surprising success with pots of herbs and cherry tomatoes. Not enough to serve the two hundred or so who attended the soup kitchen for dinner every day, but enough to add to the salad for the ten shelter guests who came every night for a satisfying meal and a comfortable bed. Enough, too, that the children sold bunches of fresh basil, rosemary, thyme and mint to parishioners during coffee hour. Enough to give back from those proceeds to Episcopal Relief & Development. It was lovely for city kids to grow a garden in pots and lovely to give the women who stayed with us something fresh and delicious to eat. Lovely to know that our small contribution helped others grow food for themselves. Heaven grows in just this way.

—Wendy Claire Barrie
Is not this the fast that I choose: to loose the bonds of injustice...Is it not to share your bread with the hungry?

—Isaiah 58:6-7a

FRIDAY, MARCH 6

Fridays are hungry days. Most weeks I fast after dinner on Thursday until dinner on Friday. I fast because I practice a rule of life that requires it. I’ve found no better practice to remind me of the suffering of the hungry and my need to live within the limits of simplicity. Fasting is a way of making room—room for God, space to help us understand the cravings that drive us to want more than enough.

When time allows it, I bake bread on my hungry Fridays. I use a recipe that will require my time and attention for the whole day and yields two loaves. With one loaf I break my fast, savoring the flavors of this sacramental food. I give the second loaf away to a neighbor, a friend or to someone in need. This practice serves as a reminder that there is always enough if we live within our limits. By going hungry for one day each week, I can make room in my life to answer Isaiah’s call to fast. In hungering in solidarity and sharing bread with the hungry, I feel a partnership in God’s work of loosening the bonds of injustice.

—Ragan Sutterfield
I BELIEVE THAT NO ONE SHOULD GO HUNGRY

And the crowds asked [John the Baptist], “What then should we do?” In reply he said to them, “Whoever has two coats must share with anyone who has none; and whoever has food must do likewise.”

—Luke 3:10-11

SATURDAY, MARCH 7

My teenage daughter picked up a large quantity of chicken fingers and jojos just as the grocery store was closing its hot-food service. With so much food left, the deli manager greatly reduced their prices. She asked, “Would you consider donating the leftover food to a homeless shelter?” He told her that they were required to throw away the food at the end of the day—but agreed that it was wasteful.

Feeding the hungry has become unnecessarily complicated. Our daily patterns, habits and structures prevent us from doing what we should. John the Baptist doesn’t give us a choice. He doesn’t give us the easy out of saying we should share our food. He says we must.

In that moment, my daughter and the employee shared a desire to do things differently. What would happen if they could make those changes? Now my daughter and her friends are talking to the store about their policy regarding leftover food. Sometimes the magnitude of global problems can make us feel helpless. And sometimes a casual conversation in the grocery store can help us find ways to do what we must.

—Heidi J. Kim
For the message about the cross is foolishness to those who are perishing, but to us who are being saved it is the power of God. For it is written, “I will destroy the wisdom of the wise, and the discernment of the discerning I will thwart.”

–1 Corinthians 1:18-19
I BELIEVE THAT ALL CHILDREN AND FAMILIES DESERVE A HEALTHY START IN LIFE

Then little children were being brought to him in order that he might lay his hands on them and pray. The disciples spoke sternly to those who brought them; but Jesus said, “Let the little children come to me, and do not stop them; for it is to such as these that the kingdom of heaven belongs.” And he laid his hands on them and went on his way.

—Matthew 19:13-15

MONDAY, MARCH 9

Jesus welcomed all the children to come to him, laid his hands on them and blessed them all. There were no questions about who their parents were, whether they were clean or unclean or if they belonged to another ethnic group. Loving, welcoming and blessing children is one of the most prophetic and radical acts we are called to do as a church and as a society.

How a church and society welcomes children determines our spiritual health. More than sixteen million children live in poverty in America—most are African American and Latino. Poverty causes unnecessary suffering and death-dealing consequences, which results in the death of many children before they reach adulthood.

The words and actions of Jesus are a mandate for us. Notice the children and their families in our midst. Bless them. Welcome them, feed them, educate them, protect them and give them hope in this life. There is no other way to follow Jesus; we must bless the children.

—Mark Bozzuti-Jones
I BELIEVE THAT ALL CHILDREN AND FAMILIES DESERVE A HEALTHY START IN LIFE

There is a boy here who has five barley loaves and two fish. But what are they among so many people?

—John 6:9

TUESDAY, MARCH 10

I love this story. I love that feeding everyone is so essential to our Christian identity that it is the only story aside from Christ’s Resurrection found in all four gospels—and in two of the gospels, the story appears twice. I love that it is about a boy who shares his lunch.

Imagine that long, hot day. Among a crowd of five thousand, a boy has trouble seeing and hearing Jesus. The boy gets restless and hungry. This boy knows what it means to feel hunger. And he acts. He offers what he has. It is enough, and more than enough.

When I tell this story to children, they don’t wonder whether the miracle is that everyone else shared, too. They wonder why we have stopped sharing, why children still go hungry and what they can do to help. Even the youngest children among us know a variation of this table grace: “Father dear, for this good food, we thank you, and we pray that all your children everywhere might have good food today.”

Together we say, “Amen.”

—Wendy Claire Barrie
I BELIEVE THAT ALL CHILDREN AND FAMILIES DESERVE A HEALTHY START IN LIFE

No more shall there be in [Jerusalem] an infant that lives but a few days, or an old person who does not live out a lifetime.

—Isaiah 65:20a

WEDNESDAY, MARCH 11

Some years ago, a local Christian community of women in Nicaragua read this passage from Isaiah and heard God speaking directly to them. The women were very poor. Their children were malnourished, and their old people were dying all too soon. They were given a vision of their babies living long, healthy lives. Their plain reading of the text inspired them to act.

This group of mothers went to the Ministry of Health and learned that their diets did not contain enough protein and that soy flour mixed with corn flour would help supply what was needed. But their neighbors were not accustomed to the new flour and were reluctant to use it. The women opened a restaurant to introduce soy-enriched tortillas. Soon, families began to like the new taste and used the new flour. The health of young and old dramatically improved.

When the Bible speaks directly to us about God’s hope for the people—when we are willing and ready to take that hope into ourselves, we are empowered to act. God’s promise becomes our reality.

We hold God’s dream as told by Isaiah not only for Jerusalem but also for our families and for the world.

—Phoebe Griswold
And at his gate lay a poor man named Lazarus, covered with sores, who longed to satisfy his hunger with what fell from the rich man’s table; even the dogs would come and lick his sores. The poor man died and was carried away by the angels to be with Abraham.

—Luke 16:20-22a

THURSDAY, MARCH 12

Ebola was identified as a virus almost forty years ago. To date, no cure has been found. Is this because Ebola occurs in remote areas from which it is unlikely to spread to the rest of the world? How many people have died from this disease, without the opportunity for treatment and care that all of us deserve, regardless of where we live or our socioeconomic status?

When Ebola was spreading in isolated, distant countries, we didn’t worry about finding a cure. Now we worry about catching this incurable, highly fatal disease—but it is sad that we became concerned only when we felt threatened. May we someday learn to help our neighbor for the sake of love and justice rather than for our own protection.

—Daniella Flamenco Gómez
Imagine a child being born, a mother holding her breath until all ten fingers and toes wriggle, breathlessly awaiting that heart-warming first cry. Now, imagine holding that same breath for eighteen months, the time needed to determine if a child born to a mother with HIV/AIDS has contracted the disease.

Through their Mothers-to-Mothers education program, Anglican Development Services-Nyanza in Kisumu, Kenya, has a 95 percent HIV-negative graduation rate for such children. The mothers beam with pride for having done everything they can to ensure their babies have a healthy start. Unfortunately, HIV is only one sickness among many that disproportionately impact the poor at birth and over their lifetimes.

Scripture reminds us of disproportionate hunger, thirst and sickness among the poor. Most are strangers, and some are imprisoned, either literally or figuratively. As their brothers and sisters in service to a faith based on love, peace and justice, we must help transform communities and lives so that peace, security and wellness are present at the first drawing of breath.

—Kellie McDaniel
A small replica of Michelangelo’s Pieta sits on my desk at home. Mary peers down at the broken body of her son. Stroking his face she remembers when the angel Gabriel came and said to her, “Rejoice, so highly favored! The Lord is with you.”

She remembers the immense joy that filled her soul when she conceived the child. As the stars danced in the night sky, Mary put her hands on her stomach and smiled. All the while, her beloved Joseph was himself in the midst of a dream that would change his life forever. Mary remembers visiting Elizabeth. When she greeted Elizabeth, a child leapt in Elizabeth’s womb. For three months these women cared for each other.

Cradling Jesus’ lifeless body, Mary remembers when she first held him in her arms. His first breath was in the company of a menagerie of farm animals. Mary will forever be grateful to the innkeeper who made room for them.

May we trust like Joseph.  
May we listen like Elizabeth.  
May we provide safe haven like the innkeeper.  
May we love like Mary.

—Roger Hutchison
Then they cried to the Lord in their trouble, and he delivered them from their distress.

He sent forth his word and healed them and saved them from the grave.

Let them give thanks to the Lord for his mercy and the wonders he does for his children.

Let them offer a sacrifice of thanksgiving and tell of his acts with shouts of joy.

–Psalm 107:19-22
One bleak morning after an elementary school massacre, I told the Godly Play story of Jesus lost in the temple to a group of kindergartners.

“I wonder if you have ever been lost?” A child replied, “Sometimes adults think you’re lost when you’re really not. If you know where you are, then you’re not really lost.”

I wonder about children who are lost to adults. I wonder how to create a world where, even in the darkest moments, all children know where they are. By guiding children to encounter their own authentic relationship with God, children discover how to access God’s grace for themselves—how to follow Jesus into the temple when life unexpectedly turns upside down, when they feel lost.

We can provide the time and safe space for spiritual practice. We can nurture children’s trust in their ability to find their way to their Father’s house. But in today’s busy world, I wonder how often we do these things. I wonder how to give all children a healthy start to their spiritual lives, so children know that when darkness falls, they are never lost to God, and that the grown up who loves them will be wise enough to know where to find them.

—Regan Schutz
He answered, “You shall love the Lord your God with all your heart, and with all your soul, and with all your strength, and with all your mind; and your neighbor as yourself.”

—Luke 10:27

TUESDAY, MARCH 17

The smallest act of support in the earliest stages of life can impact a person’s health for a lifetime. These supports include giving pregnant women access to basic health services, vaccinating children at appropriate intervals, and (in Africa and other tropical climates) ensuring all family members sleep every night under long-lasting, insecticide-treated mosquito nets. These interventions are practical ways that give children and families a healthy start in life.

Every life is sacred and has a God-given potential that can be difficult to realize when there is a lack of preventative health care. We learn from Jesus’ great commandment in Luke that health includes not only one’s physical health but also mental and spiritual health.

Everyone has a right to be holistically healthy, and Episcopal Relief & Development’s mandate drives us to look at all aspects of people’s lives to help give a healthy start to life. If we want health for ourselves, then we should want it and work for it in the lives of our neighbors as well.

—Shaun Walsh
I BELIEVE THAT NO ONE SHOULD LIVE IN POVERTY

The poor will always be with you.

—Matthew 26:11a; Mark 17:7a; John 12:8a

WEDNESDAY, MARCH 18

I have struggled with these words from Jesus for years. Taken literally (and often out of context), they have been used to justify the status quo, to predict and tolerate economic injustice, to numb my conscience and to elevate a threatening apocalyptic and maddening sensibility across the culture. Something about Jesus’ pragmatism seems to fundamentally contradict everything else about the very promise of his being.

I belong to the Church of the Epiphany in Washington, D.C. It is a resilient urban parish with a courageous spirit, a place and a people committed to sustaining a community in which all are welcomed. The poor are indeed always with us, resting on the benches in the garden, enjoying the safe and temperature-controlled nave each weekday, eating a free hot breakfast every Sunday or participating in worship and programs.

The chronically homeless and the well-heeled Capitol Hill lobbyists, the spiritual seekers and our Muslim neighbors interact regularly, offering each other dignity and respect. We laugh, sing and pray together. We study scripture and participate in twelve-step recovery programs together. We participate in walks for the homeless and Mardi Gras parades together. Together (and only together) we experience the fullness of Christ’s love and mercy.

—Lisa Kimball
I BELIEVE THAT NO ONE SHOULD LIVE IN POVERTY

O God, open our eyes to wider horizons than we have imagined. Unstop our ears to hear your voice in unexpected places, enlighten our hearts to know your presence, and grant us to find you everywhere and in all your children.

—“God in Everyday Life”
Prayers New and Old, Forward Movement

THURSDAY, MARCH 19

I love this prayer. It is an expression of our Christian faith and mission—we are all God’s children, living in a world where God is ever-present and being made known to us through others.

The prayer connects us to Jesus’ words in Matthew 25:40, “Truly I tell you, just as you did it to one of the least of these who are members of my family, you did it to me.” Jesus calls us to share food, water and health care—or in community development jargon—basic needs. He also calls us to welcome the stranger, pointing us to another dimension of need—community.

Living in the abundance of the United States, we often focus on how much we have to offer marginalized communities. If we open our eyes, our ears and our hearts, we can learn how our sisters and brothers combine their strengths and resources with our contributions to transform their communities. In this Lenten season may God bless us with opportunities to recognize and understand more than we could ask or imagine.

—Dawn Murdock
FRIDAY, MARCH 20

When I was a child, the words of this song helped me to know what it means to be a Christian. When you are a child, you know the love of your parents and other family members. You know the love of friends who surround your family. You might even know love in caring for an animal companion. When I was a child, I knew that to be Christian meant to share love.

As an adult, I started to think of this song as corny or simplistic. The words have not changed, but I have. At some point in my life, my understanding of love became much more complex. Love is not always a simple thing. The Everly Brothers’ song, “Love Hurts,” tells of a love that “scars, wounds and mars.” As a parent, to love a child carries the weight of a world of care and concern.

Recently, I visited St. Martin’s Episcopal Church in Houston, Texas. After communion, the congregation sang this song from my childhood. In that moment, I reflected back on my childhood understanding of love. Love is complex, but the love we share with others when we “seek and serve Christ” in them should reflect God’s love for us—which is simply there, with no strings attached.

How will you let the world know you are a Christian today?

—Sean McConnell
I BELIEVE THAT NO ONE SHOULD LIVE IN POVERTY

But he said to them, “You give them something to eat.” They said, “We have no more than five loaves and two fish—unless we are to go and buy food for all these people.” For there were about five thousand men...And taking the five loaves and the two fish, he looked up to heaven, and blessed and broke them, and gave them to the disciples to set before the crowd. And all ate and were filled.

—Luke 9:13-17a

SATURDAY, MARCH 21

Not many of us struggle with where to store our daily wages. Most of us know the security of local banks and have access to an array of financial services. But billions of people don’t.

Like the disciples, we can often see billions of people as an impossible number to confront or even comprehend. Microfinance institutions such as the Episcopal Development Foundation of St. Mark’s in the Philippines see millions of Filipinos hungering for access to financial tools as an opportunity to partner with other organizations to build small businesses. In real terms—these partnerships put food on the table, pay for children’s education and provide a financial safety net in times of emergency.

It can be daunting to look at the big picture—the scope and size of the needs of so many—but when we divide the whole into smaller morsels, we vastly increase the opportunity for individual mission and ministry. How are you turning the impossible into the possible today?

—Ashley Cameron
The days are surely coming, says the Lord, when I will make a new covenant with the house of Israel and the house of Judah. It will not be like the covenant that I made with their ancestors when I took them by the hand to bring them out of the land of Egypt—a covenant that they broke, though I was their husband, says the Lord. But this is the covenant that I will make with the house of Israel after those days, says the Lord: I will put my law within them, and I will write it on their hearts; and I will be their God, and they shall be my people. No longer shall they teach one another, or say to each other, “Know the Lord,” for they shall all know me, from the least of them to the greatest, says the Lord; for I will forgive their iniquity, and remember their sin no more.

–Jeremiah 31:31-34
I BELIEVE THAT NO ONE SHOULD LIVE IN POVERTY

Each of you must give as you have made up your mind, not reluctantly or under compulsion, for God loves a cheerful giver.

—2 Corinthians 9:7

MONDAY, MARCH 23

My mom was a day-care center teacher in East Harlem in the mid-1970s. My dad sold encyclopedias and kitchenware. He recalls walking to the bank during a snowstorm to deposit $5 into his savings account. Mom would sometimes make us butter and sugar sandwiches for lunch. For years, we had one small, black-and-white television set. Thirty years of marriage, four kids and several college student loans later, my family and I chuckle about “the old days.” Thinking back now, we had it good.

I often remind myself that there are children whose struggles make ours seem miniscule. I always had clean running water. There was a corner market for groceries. I had medicine when I was sick. We weren’t rich. But we had opportunities that so many others didn’t and still don’t.

I know in my heart that I must try in my own way, with my own hands and with my own pockets, to empower those in need and offer them hope. Knowing my own family’s journey, how can I let others with so much less continue to struggle?

—Xerxes Eclipse
I visited an orphanage in Nicaragua and was touched to my core by the hard work and deep faith of the people working there and by those they served. The property included a large, empty swimming pool. Someone explained that a church group had raised the money to install the beautiful pool because they had heard that many children in Nicaragua never learn to swim. They believed the children’s lives would be enriched by this gift, and they sacrificed much to provide it.

The group did not, however, raise enough to maintain the pool, which would have cost thousands of dollars every year. The orphanage runs on a shoestring budget, and the directors decided that with the urgent need for food, medicine, clothing and school supplies, they could not spare money for pool maintenance. They drained the pool, and there it stood—a large, empty waste of time and resources.

This Lent, may we approach the old discipline of “almsgiving” with a renewed focus on relationship. We can choose to take time to know the people we serve and learn about their real needs. Generosity is always a good thing. Paired with humility, with open hearts and minds, giving can make a real difference.

—Pamela Dolan
I believe that together we can heal a hurting world

If a brother or sister is naked and lacks daily food, and one of you says to them, “Go in peace; keep warm and eat your fill,” and yet you do not supply their bodily need, what is the good of that?

—James 2:15-16

Wednesday, March 25

I talk a lot about service. I run the Episcopal Mission Center and host hundreds of young people and their leaders each year. These groups come to do service. We talk about difficult things, like selfish-service—service we might do because we get something out of it. This service makes us feel good; we earn hours toward a graduation requirement, it looks good on our college applications and we can feel like nice people who help.

We also talk about relational-service. You see, when I invite groups to Philadelphia, I am inviting them to my home—North Philadelphia. This community has been forgotten and ignored by many, but it is home to many sisters and brothers who face staggering poverty. Poverty begins to be conquered when we live in real relationship with those who are most in need. We have to be able to call these precious people our sisters and our brothers. We must learn to know them, to listen to their needs and to respond with grace and mercy.

—Andrew Kellner
Hear ye the Master’s call, “Give Me thy best!”
For be it great or small, That is His test.
Do then the best you can, not for reward,
Not for the praise of men, but for the Lord.
Every work for Jesus will be blest.
But he asks from everyone his best.
Our talents may be few, these may be small
But unto him is due our best, our all!
—Salathiel Cleaver Kirk, 1912

THURSDAY, MARCH 26

During this season of meditation, I ponder on the work of some 93,000 volunteers trained by Episcopal Relief & Development’s NetsforLife® program. It is amazing to know these individuals have, through self-denial, worked to ensure that their communities stay healthy, and use best practices of protection from malaria, including nets. These volunteers move from house to house to encourage and share the good news of healthy living. These words from Paul’s letter to the Colossians show in their every action:

And whatever you do, in word or deed, do everything in the name of the Lord Jesus, giving thanks to God the Father through him (3:17).

Whatever your task, put yourselves into it, as done for the Lord and not for your masters (3:23).

I believe these volunteers keep our program alive! May the Lord grant us more of these selfless acts as we strive to heal a hurting world.

—Gifty Tetteh
I BELIEVE THAT TOGETHER WE CAN HEAL A HURTING WORLD

When they had finished breakfast, Jesus said to Simon Peter, “Simon son of John, do you love me more than these?” He said to him, “Yes, Lord; you know that I love you.” Jesus said to him, “Feed my lambs.”

—John 21:15

FRIDAY, MARCH 27

I was born and raised in Africa. I thought I had been through the most difficult of circumstances. Alas, I realized during my first assignment for Episcopal Relief & Development with a disease prevention ministry that life in rural Africa was hard, even for me.

Eight hours of jostling up and down, clinging to the back seat of a truck on a dusty road through scattered villages that had recently hosted rebel soldiers, I saw women carrying their children as they struggled to survive. On this road the words of Christ came to mind: “Do you love me more than these?...feed my lambs.” Jesus was speaking to me.

Lambs are young, vulnerable and in need of attention and support to survive and thrive. Whether Jesus’ lambs are far or near, feeding them may mean giving up something that we enjoy as part of our obedience to Christ’s call to care for the vulnerable ones, for his lambs. Nourish them, comfort them and strengthen them. This is clearly proof of your love for those lambs—and for the great Shepherd of sheep.

—Idris Dada Buabeng
Then I heard the voice of the Lord saying, “Whom shall I send, and who will go for us?” And I said, “Here am I; send me!”

—Isaiah 6:8

**SATURDAY, MARCH 28**

Women stomp on wet mortar to the rhythm of song. Men pack concrete into molds. Together, a community in the Gaza Province of Mozambique is making bricks to sell and to build their own houses. Some of the proceeds go to caring for orphans in the community. Some will be given to support initiatives in other local communities. Through this project, the community is answering God’s call to hold the people in their hearts with a resounding, “Here am I, Lord.”

Episcopal Relief & Development hears that same call—a call to address poverty, violence, hunger, thirst, disease and disaster and answers, “Here am I, Lord—Here am I, partnering to support local solutions to local issues.”

As we walk into the dark night of Good Friday toward the life and light of the resurrected Christ of Easter, let us hold God’s people in our hearts. Let us say together, “Here am I, Lord. Send me.”

—Jenifer Gamber
I will fulfill my vows to the LORD in the presence of all his people.

Precious in the sight of the LORD is the death of his servants.

O LORD, I am your servant; I am your servant and the child of your handmaid; You have freed me from my bonds.

I will offer you the sacrifice of thanksgiving and call upon the Name of the LORD.

I will fulfill my vows to the LORD in the presence of all his people.

—Psalm 116: 14-18
As he came near and saw the city, he wept over it, saying, “If you, even you, had only recognized on this day the things that make for peace! But now they are hidden from your eyes. Indeed, the days will come upon you, when your enemies will set up ramparts around you and surround you, and hem you in on every side. They will crush you to the ground...because you did not recognize the time of your visitation from God.”

—Luke 19:41-44

MONDAY, MARCH 30

National and global events cause many of us to weep. Some of us seem inclined to turn away from “the things that make for peace.” To weep over a hurting world says that you and I care—we have compassion, want to make a difference, work for hope and endeavor to respond like Jesus when we see hurt and brokenness around us.

Christians are called to offer more than our tears. Jesus, the Prince of Peace, came into the city, healing those who needed healing, challenging the corruption of the political and religious authorities and giving his life to bring us peace.

Weeping requires that we pay attention to the pain of our world. It means that we play a part in healing our world. Weeping calls us to work against income inequality, work against all forms of discrimination and racism and build communities that show that we respect the dignity of every human being. Shedding tears over the places in the world that are broken demands that we live and love like Jesus.

—Mark Bozzuti-Jones
I BELIEVE THAT TOGETHER WE CAN HEAL A HURTING WORLD

Now you are the body of Christ and individually members of it.

—1 Corinthians 12:27

Tuesday, March 31

In northern Ghana, farmers trying to feed their families contend with depleted soil, poor quality seeds and climate change. They live precariously on the lip of drought, flood and infestations.

Together, we are changing their lives. The Anglican Diocesan Development and Relief Organization of the Diocese of Tamale, Episcopal Relief & Development and local farmers are collaborating to provide education, seeds and fertilizer to increase crop yields, particularly of maize and soybeans. An entire farming community can benefit if just twenty farmers participate in this agricultural initiative.

Individually, we can do little to heal the hurts of the whole world—a truth that would be all too obvious if I had to contend with a sack of soybean seeds by myself. But we are not alone; we are members of the body of Christ, called both to love one another and to feed the hungry.

Each Lent, we confront our own personal sacks of soybeans—our frailties, ignorance and inability to end suffering and fix injustice. We cannot do it on our own. But with other members of the body of Christ from around the Church and across the globe, together we can heal a hurting world, sharing both our burdens and our joys.

—Gay Clark Jennings
Have we used all our current means to follow Jesus’ call to pray always and not lose heart? Probably not. What power might we bring to healing a hurting world if we truly linked heaven and earth and met together globally in prayer with the enormous heart of God?

In our prayers we lament, cry, rejoice, plead, rant and rave before coming to a still and quiet mind in God’s presence. If we are truly able to heal a hurting world, it will only be through comprehending and surrendering to God’s plan and project. We must listen to God’s desires for the next steps toward the kingdom. Prayer is not a quick nod before our church meetings but rather an intentional turning to the deepest promises of peace and wholeness we can imagine.

Jesus ends this parable by asking, “And yet, when the Son of Man comes, will he find faith on earth?” I ask myself, “Will he find prayer on earth?”

What sustains our prayer and keeps us from losing heart and keeping our faith? Courage to keep praying comes from our capacity to pray with others around the world, not so much praying for but praying with. How does God want us to harness the power of global prayer with each other as we build relationships through prayer around the world?

—Phoebe Griswold
I BELIEVE THAT TOGETHER WE CAN HEAL A HURTING WORLD

A world in need now summons us to labor, love, and give; to make our life an offering to God that all may live.

—Frank von Christierson

THURSDAY, APRIL 2

This particular bit from a favorite hymn always takes on deeper meaning for me during Lent. As we journey with Jesus toward Jerusalem, we know the journey leads to a cross on a hill, to the ultimate self-offering of the One who loved us enough to become one of us, to show us how to love one another.

As we consider that cross, that self-offering love and our response to it, I hear Sister Joan Chittister’s challenge to “go through life reclaiming the planet an inch at a time until the Garden of Eden grows green again.” None of us can do it all. But every single one of us can do an inch.

The world that summons us with a deep yearning for hope, peace, justice, healing—is the garden God charges us to tend as stewards of creation, as beacons of God’s love, compassion, and healing. It is where we are called, in Jesus’ name, to offer our lives so others may live abundantly. It is where we are challenged to work together to heal a hurting world.

As we journey with Jesus toward Jerusalem, what inch of the garden can you reclaim today?

—Susan Russell
FRIDAY, APRIL 3

No parent wants to send his or her child into harm’s way. No one easily chooses to give a stranger an entire life savings to smuggle a beloved child to an uncertain future. This year over 50,000 unaccompanied children will come across the U.S. border from Central America. Most are fleeing gang violence and the constant threat of forced recruitment, extortion, physical harm, rape or worse. They often arrive afraid and confused. Their parents are left in their home countries with heart-wrenching and unanswerable questions about their children—wondering if they are safe, if they did the right thing in sending the children north.

Episcopal Relief & Development’s partner, the Anglican Episcopal Diocese of El Salvador, provides mobile medical and agricultural teams that work tirelessly to provide much-needed services and trainings. The diocese’s bishop, Martín Barahona, has played a key role in restoring peace by mediating El Salvador’s gang pacification process.

Like the diocesan staff in El Salvador, we have the ability to protect and empower others. Most of us do not have to choose between a life shaped by fear and violence or an uncertain future. The baptismal covenant implores us not only to be mindful of other people’s struggles but to seek and serve those denied dignity, peace and justice.

—Vanessa Pizer
Then some people came, bringing to [Jesus] a paralyzed man, carried by four of them. And when they could not bring him to Jesus because of the crowd, they removed the roof above him; and after having dug through it, they let down the mat on which the paralytic lay.

—Mark 2:3-4

I BELIEVE THAT TOGETHER WE CAN HEAL A HURTING WORLD

Many biblical healing stories describe service offered on behalf of others. In this case, a group of devoted friends carry a paralyzed man to Jesus. They refuse to be discouraged by a crowd filling Jesus’ house. They are totally fine with removing the roof of the house. They care little about interrupting Jesus’ presentation. They know Jesus can heal their friend, and they are single-minded in their determination to have the Master make their friend whole again.

Many obstacles might deter us as we seek healing in our hurting world. The enormity of problems can overwhelm us. Mark’s Gospel holds up these faithful friends as models of the persistent and audacious pursuit of healing. These friends couldn’t heal the paralysis. But they knew Jesus could. Our beautiful and broken world needs healing. We can’t do it on our own. Together as Christ’s body we move toward healing. Today we must ignore the obstacles, take a first step and bring our hurting world to Christ’s healing presence and power.

—Jay Sidebotham
I visited a church in Oregon last summer that is rebuilding after being destroyed by an arsonist. They are worshiping in a space formerly serving as a center for spirituality, adult education and prayer. On the wall behind the altar is a remarkable piece of fabric art—mostly green, depicting a cross rooted in the earth.

All that came to mind when I saw the lovely hymn, “Now the Green Blade Riseth” by J.M.C. Crum. It was written in 1928 by an English priest whose wife had died in childbirth at age twenty-one. The fabric piece is a fitting image for a congregation discovering new life out of the ashes, as well as rediscovering its identity in helping to heal the broken world outside its doors and across the world. The green blade riseth whenever healing is hoped for, begun, continued, and dreamed of in ever larger contexts. The Risen One appears again in every healing act.

—Katharine Jefferts Schori
**MY LENTEN RESPONSE**

During this season of reflection, I want to follow Jesus in caring for people in need. Enclosed is my Lenten offering to help make communities stronger and invest in a thriving future for Episcopal Relief & Development.

For 75 years, Episcopal Relief & Development’s diverse, faithful community has responded compassionately to the suffering in the world. In partnership with churches, communities, supporters and friends, we have developed into a professional international development organization. Together, we make a difference in the lives of more than 3 million people in nearly 40 countries around the world.

It takes all our hands to heal a hurting world. Please join us by investing in Episcopal Relief & Development’s vital mission, giving meaningfully to our 75th Anniversary Campaign. Your support is critical as we aim to raise $7.5 million to strengthen communities worldwide, through programs that promote health, improve food supply and create economic opportunities in Jesus’ name.

<p>| | | | | |</p>
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>$50</td>
<td>$75</td>
<td>$100</td>
<td>$500</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>$1,000</td>
<td>$2,500</td>
<td>Other $</td>
<td>$___________</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

PLEASE COMPLETE THE INFORMATION ON THE NEXT PAGE.
Name

Address

City, State, Zip

Email address

Name of your church and city

Please make your check payable to Episcopal Relief & Development, and return this page with your gift in the attached envelope. You may also call 1.855.312.HEAL (4325) or visit www.episcopalrelief.org to make a donation.

**FOR TAX-DEDUCTIBLE CREDIT CARD DONATIONS:**
Please charge my gift to my:

☐ VISA  ☐ Master Card  ☐ AMEX

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Account number</th>
<th>Expiration date</th>
<th>Security code</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>

Name on card  Signature

Phone number (required for credit card donations)

Episcopal Relief & Development is the international relief and development agency of The Episcopal Church and an independent 501(c)(3) organization. The agency takes its mandate from Jesus’ words found in Matthew 25. Its programs work toward achieving the Millennium Development Goals. Episcopal Relief & Development works closely with the worldwide Church and ecumenical partners to help rebuild after disasters and to empower local communities to find lasting solutions that fight poverty, hunger and disease, including HIV/AIDS and malaria.
Episcopal Relief & Development
P.O. Box 7058
Merrifield, VA 22116-7058

A gift in honor of the 75th Anniversary Celebration

Your postage stamp here will help save lives