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**Gifts of Spirit**

*The Soul in Balance*
photographs by Alexandra K. Scott, texts chosen by Heddy F. Reid and Isabelle Scott

This reproduction of Ex Nihilo, the central tympanum from the Cathedral’s west façade, celebrates the achievement of sculptor Frederick Hart. Faithfully rendering all the rich detail of this masterpiece in miniature, its subtle translucence recalls the afternoon sun on Ex Nihilo. In patinated cast resin, designed for hanging or standing display. 14” x 10 3/8” x 1 1/2” $129.99

*Ex Nihilo Reproduction*

This oversize (10” x 13.5”) book presents the œuvre of sculptor Frederick Hart, best known for his works at the National Cathedral and Vietnam Veterans Memorial. With essays by Fredrick Turner, Michael Novak, Tom Wolfe, and the artist’s widow. 244 full-color pages. $65.00

*Fredrick Hart: Changing Tides*

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gifts to support the restoration of the Cathedral
Some 700 years ago, Geoffrey Chaucer began one of the first great poems in the English language with these words:

*When April’s gentle rains have pierced the drought of March right to the root, and bathed each sprout through every vein with liquid of such power it brings forth the engendering of the flower— on pilgrimage then folks desire to start.*

The *Canterbury Tales* spins its stories on the energy that flows through every vestige of spring, from reborn earth in the garden to reborn souls at Easter. There is undoubtedly an annual life surge that allows every form of promise to shine a little brighter, every shred of hope to bend toward the sun, every wintered foot to long for the open road. That which we all can feel and see at this time of year, around us and within us, is at the heart of this issue of *Cathedral Age.*

We look at the renewal sweeping through the Cathedral in the form of Easter, Flower Mart, and the continuing restoration following last year’s earthquake. There is new life coming to us through the generosity of so many of the Cathedral’s faithful—from the coins of children to a contribution from our colleagues at Westminster Abbey. There are new and fruitful partnerships with the National Trust for Historic Preservation and Blessed Earth. All Hallows Guild’s role in nurturing our gardens, woods, and lawns—begun in the wisdom of Florence Bratenahl and continued to this day—is given due honor in print, even as thousands give thanks for that work with their eyes. Minds, hearts, and institutions all have a “desire to start” in one way or another on long-imagined journeys. The pilgrimage impulse can be seen in the restlessness of our world economy, the stretching of the Middle East, and the protests in our own nation. All of these are before us, inviting our contemplation as well as our energy.

The message of spring is hard to miss at this time of year, but in the Kingdom of God it is not seasonal. The promise of God is newness every morning, a promise I have seen fulfilled over and over in the months I have been serving as interim dean. There is an open and restive spirit at work among us that brings about an eagerness for what comes next. This is a hard-working and hopeful place, with people giving shape and voice to a multitude of visions for ministry and service. I see a solid platform of expectation gathering around the new dean whose name we do not yet know. I think people are looking for this person to embody the perpetual springtime of God, calling us to new heights, new understandings, and new ways to be the spiritual home for the nation, with creative ways to touch and be touched by ministry. People in the offices and the nave alike are full of ideas and energy. Hundreds of volunteers and Cathedral Congregation members continue to serve and be enriched by God’s Spirit moving in and through this work. Urban, pastoral, and educational ministries are acquiring the kind of depth that will enable each of them to move beyond the local Washington community and feed the wider church—while countless visitors from across the country and around the world are finding their way as pilgrims to this Cathedral, in search of wonder and a closer connection with God.

Every vein is filling with God’s power. I hope you join me in anticipating the flowers being engendered here.

*The Rev. Dr. Francis H. Wade*  
INTERIM DEAN
2011 Program Year
JULY 1, 2010–JUNE 30, 2011

Cathedral Age looks back on programmatic and fiscal year 2011, as part of Washington National Cathedral’s commitment to its donors and other supporters.

The first major event in the program year was the third Nancy and Paul Ignatius Program on October 5, 2010. Other special events included “A Prayer for Japan” on April 11, 2011. This moving service featured Japanese music, prayer offerings from several faiths, and remarks by Ambassador Fujisaki.

The Cathedral also welcomed more than 4,300 NCA members in its relaunch—as well as hundreds of thousands of individuals attending worship services, tours, concerts, and other programs. Internet audiences continued to grow as the Cathedral’s online presence became more robust. New visitors made 60 percent of visits to the website. The Cathedral also increased its social media visibility, notably on Facebook and Twitter.

facebook.com/wncathedral
twitter.com/wncathedral

October 5
Ignatius Program
Joshua Bolten and David Axelrod discussed restoring civility to public discourse in “Governing across the Divide.” Bob Schieffer moderated.

PHOTO D. MARKS

January 13
Human Rights Figures Honored
Two new interior sculptures in honor of Rosa Parks and Mother Teresa were carved in the narthex.

PHOTO C. STAPERT

February 18
Jonathan Franzen
Jonathan Franzen, hailed as “great American novelist” on the cover of Time magazine, gave a reading at the Cathedral co-sponsored by the PEN/Faulkner Foundation.

PHOTO D. MARKS
April 7
Values & Diplomacy
Co-presented with the Aspen Institute, the Cathedral hosted former Secretaries of State Colin Powell, Madeleine Albright, and James A. Baker, III, in a discussion moderated by Walter Isaacson. PHOTO D. MARKS

April 11
Prayer for Japan
The Cathedral held a prayer service in the evening for victims, families, and survivors of the March 11, 2011, earthquake and tsunami. PHOTO D. MARKS

June 26
Faith Shared
Christian, Muslim, and Jewish faith leaders read from their respective sacred texts in a special interfaith prayer service as part of a project of Interfaith Alliance and Human Rights First to promote greater understanding among faiths. PHOTO E. GRAHAM

4,311 NCA members: 3,151 were new
21,569 people supported the Cathedral with donations
466,084 views of posts on Facebook
2,000 followers on Twitter
11,770,221 webpage views
175,295 attended worship services
50,606 attended concerts and programs
363,107 visitors took approximately 7,000 tours
3,764 tour buses brought 152,313 visitors for tours
The Cathedral’s financial results for Fiscal Year 2011 were positive, continuing the progress seen in FY2010. Thanks to continued strong philanthropic support and careful management of expenses, the Cathedral posted a gain from operations of $395,000 in FY2011. Coupled with the receipt of significant gifts to the permanent endowment and strong investment returns, the Cathedral’s net assets increased by $19.7 million overall.

Following are some key highlights to provide a better understanding of the Cathedral’s revenue sources, how they are allocated, and how gifts given to the endowment are invested.

**OPERATING REVENUES**

Operating revenue in FY2011 totaled $15.2 million. A total of $9.9 million came in the form of annual giving from donors. Another $2.5 million was the result of the planned use of earnings on the endowment. The Cathedral generated a combined $2.8 million from its earned income activities, including the retail store, tours, concerts, programs, special services (such as weddings and funerals), and facility rentals.

A closer look at the $9.9 million total for annual giving reveals that nearly 40 percent of that was the result of unrestricted or “general” giving from donors, both locally and nationally. Another quarter was gifts restricted by donors to support specific programs or the preservation and maintenance of the Cathedral. Other sources include congregation pledges, unrestricted bequests, gifts given in the collection plate, and donations from tourists.

Portions of this financial report were drawn from the Cathedral audit completed by an independent accounting firm. This report is presented for convenience and informational purposes only; and while reasonable efforts have been made to ensure the integrity of such information, they should not be relied on.

Questions regarding this report should be referred to Andrew Hullinger, senior director for finance and administration, Washington National Cathedral: ahullinger@cathedral.org.
OPERATING EXPENSES

FY2011 operating expenses totaled $14.8 million. A total of $5.2 million was spent on programs: this figure includes the cost of worship, music, visitor programs, the congregation, and outreach. Plant costs—including utilities, grounds, facilities management, housekeeping, and masonry expenses associated with the preservation and maintenance of the Cathedral—totaled $2.9 million. General and administrative expenses were $3.6 million, covering the operations of administration, finance, strategic planning, human resources, security, and information technology.

A total of $2.1 million was spent on fundraising; the development department operated at an efficient cost of 10¢ per dollar raised. Auxiliary operations, which include the cost of Cathedral products sold in the retail store plus the Cathedral’s share of the costs to operate the bus lane and parking garage, totaled $400,000. Finally, a total of $500,000 was spent on interest servicing long-term debt incurred to build the bus lane and parking garage.

NON-OPERATING ACTIVITY

Non-operating income totaled $19.3 million for the year. The Cathedral received $15.3 million in unrestricted bequests and restricted gifts (including a $7.0 million gift to the preservation and maintenance endowment, and a $1.4 million gift to the general endowment). Investment income (net of the planned endowment draw to support operations) was $8.0 million. The Cathedral used $2.3 million of restricted gifts and $2.0 million of unrestricted bequest income to support operations and recorded $1.2 million in non-operating expenses (primarily depreciation expenses, reflecting the aging of physical assets).

ENDOWMENT FUNDS

Endowment funds are crucial in providing current and future sustaining revenue to Washington National Cathedral. These funds comprise gifts given by donors with instructions to hold the principal in perpetuity, unrestricted gifts designated to the endowment by the Cathedral Chapter (governing board), and the accumulated earnings on these funds.

The endowment is managed by Cathedral and Protestant Episcopal Cathedral Foundation staff in conjunction with the Investment Subcommittee of the Chapter Finance Committee. Additional guidance and strategic advice is provided by Prime Buchholz, an independent investment consultant. The endowment is invested in a diversified portfolio with a long-term perspective.

Investments are selected to meet annual spending requirements while ensuring long-term growth of the principal; spending is determined by averaging the year-end endowment balance from the trailing three fiscal years, and multiplying by a draw percentage approved annually by the Cathedral Chapter and Protestant Episcopal Cathedral Foundation Board of Trustees. In FY2011, this draw rate was 5 percent.
When the Irish poet William Butler Yeats looked at the war-ravaged world of 1919, he described its confusion and anxiety in terms of a falcon whose circular flight had become so wide it could no longer hear its falconer. Yeats regretted that

The best lack all conviction, while the worst
Are full of passionate intensity

His poem, The Second Coming, ends by wondering,

What rough beast, its hour come round at last,
slouches toward Bethlehem to be born?

“Surely,” Yeats continued, “some revelation is at hand.” Few of us are blessed with Yeats’s poetic imagination, but all of us can feel the confusion and anxiety of our day as keenly as he felt it in his.
How Faith Speaks in an Era of Unrest

by Francis H. Wade

Our times are called “postmodern,” a label remarkable for what it does not describe. All we know is that we used to be “modern”—but are no longer. What we actually are is unknown to us, and the vague uneasiness of that state is rapidly becoming more focused. People everywhere are declaring their discomfort, outrage, and frustration while struggling against the assumptions that would render them helpless. The Arab Spring sweeps long-established dictators aside; Moscow feels the energy of popular uprising that has been silent since the Bolsheviks of Yeats’s day; quaint European squares fill with anger at failing welfare states; voices are raised in protest in places as unlikely as China and Myanmar; even al-Qaida, for all of its horror, is largely motivated by resistance to globalization.

And at home the Occupy and Tea Party movements share almost nothing but common frustration. Our unfolding presidential primaries reveal us as more interested in voting against than for people, ideas, or programs. Pollsters tell us that up to two-thirds of Americans sense a strong divide between rich and poor that may make class a more dangerous flashpoint than race, gender, or nationality. It is no wonder that Time magazine’s 2011 Person of the Year was “the Protester.”

For reasons both good and bad, the Postmodern Age does not readily look to the Church for wisdom as it sorts through its confusions and anxieties. Hardly anyone would suggest that faith has the answer for our age—or even a series of specific proposals for our ills. But faith does have more than a little to offer during this time of discontent.

HOLDING US ACCOUNTABLE

The enterprise of religion is literally and historically about putting things back together. The root word behind religion is the same as that for ligament, a sinew that holds our body together. Religion is literally the business of re-ligamenting and re-binding, which is why we speak so frequently of reconciliation, redemption, forgiveness, and renewal—and why we work so hard to make those real in people’s lives. Religion brings people together in a wider sense as well. The great stories of faith give us images of God, concepts of creation and community, with messages of radical expectation in terms of generosity, compassion, and service. Christianity holds the sweeping account of Jesus’ life, teaching, death, and resurrection as the message that binds all things, people, and experiences together. These great stories are the meta-narratives that help us to make sense of the little ones we experience each day.

The framing power of Scripture, along with the 4,000 years of human-divine interaction it rises from and continues to illumine, is a resource not to be wasted in times like ours. Our faith will not address the constitutional questions about an “individual mandate” in healthcare or the policies of the Federal Reserve. Religion per se does not have solutions to the consequences of economic shifts, nor will it be able to create jobs and restore the housing market. Faith can, however, hold debaters, protesters, voters, and decision-makers accountable to the higher principles of our humanity: those that have come from consistent revelation. Faith can provide perspective on where we have come from, holding ever before us the vision of what we seek to become.

While anger and frustration have a narrowing impact on vision, focusing one’s energies on specific people, events, and ideas, faith has an opposite broadening effect. Loving our enemies cannot be left to
 instinct, nor can caring for the poor be expected to emerge naturally from unfettered capitalism. In our great story, stewardship of the earth was made a human responsibility before the fall of man; but our sinfulness has not negated the command or the consequences of ignoring it: it has only made reminding us more important. While we concern ourselves with protecting our borders, faith reminds us that God’s love, concern, and compassion are not constrained by our concepts of who is in or out. Some speak of American exceptionalism as a measure of privilege, but in our great story it is clear that it is a measure of responsibility for those “to whom much has been given, much will be required” (Luke 12:48). Faith and faith’s story, God and our living relationship with God, pull at the hard edges of human anger, frustration, and fear, seeking to channel that which is headed for bitterness, conflict, and vengeance toward mercy, grace, and peace.

FAITH’S ROLE

Societies ask their institutions to hold certain values for the common good. Our need for education has been largely given over to schools; our concerns for health and healing are in the hands of the medical profession; the rule of law is tended by legislative bodies, police, and the courts; and national safety is entrusted to the military. Religious institutions have been given the responsibility of maintaining the meta-narratives that call forth our better selves and help us to sort through the impulses, fears, and hopes that make up our experience of life. For society to forget to look to religion, or for religion to forfeit its responsibility in troubling times, would be a breach of common consent and understanding that should give us great concern.

The faith community has the perspective the great stories provide, and we have the experience of living by those stories in a way that would benefit many of those who constitute Time’s Person of the Year. The anger, angst, and turmoil that the protester embodies tend to drift on the surges of passion. Strong feelings about the bleakness of where we are and the wrongness of where we are headed can topple governments and capture headlines, but they are ill-suited for crafting the future. The experience of faith can offer much to the protester.

The tradition of the Abrahamic faiths of Judaism, Christianity, and Islam began with our spiritual ancestor’s positive response to God’s invitation: to “Go from your country and your kindred and your father’s house to the land that I will show you” (Gen. 12:1). The faith journey from that day to this has involved leaving the known and stepping into the unknown, trusting in God’s guidance. The only thing clear in God’s proposition is about what is being left behind; the land God will show is as unknown as the future. The Protester is in a similar situation, with sharp clarity about what is to be left and only the vaguest of notions about what is to be found ahead. But what connects the known past with the unknown future is the presence of God on the journey from one to the other.

People of faith have learned to walk through valleys of many shadows: death, despair, grief, and even the kind of confusion and anxiety that characterize our age. To return to the imagery of Yeats, our great stories have trained us to listen for the falconer—to hold and be held by

What do you think?

What do you think? Share your reaction to this essay:

• What are the “Great Stories” or Scriptures that guide your life?
• What lessons can we learn from those whose views are different from ours?

Post your comments at facebook.com/wncathedral or on Twitter: @WNcathedral.
the unchanging center, even while we careen in ever-widening circles. It has been said that the good news of the Gospel is summarized in Jesus’ greeting to the disciples as he came to them through the storm-tossed waters of the Sea of Galilee: “Do not be afraid, it is I.” Knowing the nearness of God in turmoil, hearing the Word of God in the clamor of discord, walking confidently in shadows, letting the perfect love of God cast out our fear and the perfect presence of God guide us to a land we do not yet know: these skills are not born of immediate necessity but are rooted in the disciplines of faith. Again turning to Yeats’s powerful words, the source of “conviction” in the best among us can grow out of a living, moving relationship with God allowing us to counter the “passionate intensity” of the worst.

**FINDING THE TRUTH**

There is one more thing that people of faith have to offer the current scene. It is an insight that we ourselves are particularly prone to forget, as the many failings of religion attest. In spite of our record, the great story we treasure makes it clear that God’s truth is a large thing—much too big to be held by any one person, system, or creed. The wide concept of mystery that surrounds and permeates our every thought and understanding is one expression of that fact. This person may have a shard of truth; another has a separate piece. One system of governance or economics may claim a large or small bit of it, while a different way has another claim. Almost all under-democratizing of others; the trivializing of genders, races, creeds, and aspirations: all work to keep our grasp of truth small and contentious. We can only hope that some time in the future Time’s Person of the Year will be the “Other,” because we will have begun to realize the importance of those who differ from us.

That the world is full of tension and conflict is hardly news. That the Postmodern Age is trying to face them without the benefit of a binding narrative, a source of guidance, or a broadening impulse is more than a little disconcerting. The collective purpose of our religious institutions—including cathedrals, dioceses, congregations, schools, and programs—is to play the re-binding role, to counter the narrowing forces of anger with the broadening message of love, to keep the great stories as a backdrop for history, to be places of quiet where the falconer’s voice can be heard, to be a haven where the bits and pieces of truth can be shared.

No one knows what or even whether some “rough beast slouches toward Bethlehem to be born,” in Yeats’s memorable image. But we do know that, whatever comes, we are in the midst of God where truth is to be found, divisions healed, and fear banished. That knowledge and trust are no small offerings in the contentious year of the protester. GA
None of Christ’s teachings offers better instruction on how to care for all of God’s creation than the parable of the Good Samaritan. At first this might sound surprising, given that the parable doesn’t speak specifically about the created order—let alone our part in creation care. But what it does address is how we are to act for the sake of love, and that lesson provides a basis for the way we live on this earth.

In the Gospel of Luke, Christ is asked, point blank, “What must I do to inherit eternal life?” He replies, “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). Eternal life is seeing love at work in us and through us: not the warm fuzzy feelings or positive emotions or even the niceties of religious piety, but the love that sets people free and allows something new in the world. This is God’s love. Archbishop of Canterbury Rowan Williams notes that it is a love that deals “with the deepest tangles and knots of our situation, the love that was the essence of Jesus’ life and death and resurrection.” It is this love, the right kind of love for our fellow humans, which is the basis for keeping the earth as a place that provides a secure home for all people.

THE GOOD SAMARITAN

The man in Luke’s Gospel follows his question by asking Jesus, “Who is my neighbor?” Christ tells of a Jewish man going down from Jerusalem to Jericho,
when he falls into the hands of robbers, who strip him, beat him, and go away, leaving him “half dead.” Jesus then tells of a priest from the mugged man’s own religious group who walks by yet offers no assistance.

A second religious man comes along, a Levite. He sees the man, crosses to the other side of the road, but also offers no help.

Finally a Samaritan comes along, traveling on a donkey. He is from a wealthier socio-economic class, riding rather than walking. He is also a Samaritan, a group of people despised by the Jews (and vice versa). But the Samaritan is moved by compassion. He gets off his donkey and begins making bandages, using his own oil and wine to help the man. He then puts the mugged man on his donkey and pays for care at an inn, the equivalent of a hospital in that day. Lastly he agrees to pick up the bill for any additional care.

Christ closes the parable by asking who truly showed mercy to the mugged man. The scribe must answer, “The Samaritan.” But the answer might also suggest an instruction in how we can thrive as humans.

The parable demonstrates a continuum of compassion. It is also instructive in our thinking about how the right kind of love is the basis for our care of all creation. Consider for a moment how the priest might represent those of us who refuse to take any responsibility for environmental problems. We are faced with the consequences of generations of failure to cherish each other and the earth as we could—so we close our eyes and walk on by. All of us have choices. For the priest, it seems as if fear and greed have been given freedom to rule his heart and imagination.

The second passerby, the Levite, is perhaps like most of us: he sees the problem and then says, “I should get back to Jerusalem and raise awareness. Maybe
I’ll blog on the problem of highway muggings or send a letter off to the Roman centurion about beefing up patrols and installing better street lights.”

Like the Levite, we see the hardship caused by environmental problems, particularly for the poorest among us. We hear of devastation and desertification, of biological impoverishment and degradation, and are tempted to fall back in fear in the face of the magnitude of the problems. Perhaps we are tempted to blame former generations or wait for someone else to make the first move in the right direction. Our hearts are moved to compassion, but we do little (if anything) to help. The problem seems too big, too overwhelming. We are paralyzed and so we do not act.

Only the Samaritan, the one who is least likely to view the mugged man as his neighbor, takes action. The Samaritan is like a portrait of commitment to the environment in which God has placed us. It is the recognition that we are called to be, and are enabled to be, the place where God’s love for the world comes through. In the Samaritan’s unquestioning impulse to care and restore, we are shown an icon of what it means to live out of trust in the delight and attention God finds in creation.

WHAT IS THE SOLUTION?

When we begin from the belief that God wants us to enjoy and delight in the created world, our basic attitude to the environment will not be the fear and blame of the priest and Levite in the parable but rather hopeful patterns of thought and action, patterns that honor the goodness and needs of our ailing earth. Creation care flows from Christ’s command to love the world we inhabit as an outgrowth of the love we have for each other.

What does this parable teach us about how we should approach environmental problems today?

- To have any lasting effect, our hearts must be moved by compassion, not fear.
- We may have to use our own resources, or trust others enough to benefit from their resources.
- The way forward may be inconvenient and expensive.
- We will have to accept the role of trust in our engagement with others.
- We will have to learn the depth of a Christ-shaped love.
- Everyone is our neighbor, including people across the globe and future generations.

All of these lessons apply directly to our environmental problems today; the most important lesson of the Good Samaritan, however—the one that can separate us from the priest and Levite—is that we must “get off our donkey” before we can become part of the solution.

The future will not be saved by our good intentions. It will be made better, or worse, only by our actions.

We show our love for the Lord by loving our neighbors. Every time we buy anything, or take any action, we should consider a number of questions: Will this help me love God? Will this help me love my neighbor? And finally, what would be a healthy and sustainable relationship with this world, a relationship that would manifest both joy in and respect for the earth? The answer will always lead us to right action. G4
Make a Difference

Try committing to at least three of the following actions below to help steward our Earth

- turn off lights, TV, and computer when leaving a room
- pick up and throw away trash found on the ground
- take a shorter shower
- adjust the thermostat by three degrees
- bike, walk, carpool, or use public transportation
- change at least five lightbulbs to either compact fluorescent or LED bulbs
- consciously combine trips and errands
- take the stairs instead of the elevator
- hang clothes on a drying rack or clothesline instead of using a dryer
- use cloth shopping bags
- clean out closets and donate unused items
- check car tire pressure to increase gas mileage
- buy more local and organic produce
It is a garden of gardens, one of the most significant in the United States, a large plot often described as the “crown jewel” among Washington National Cathedral’s landscaped areas. All Hallows Guild, the volunteer organization that has stewarded all 59 acres of Cathedral grounds since 1916, derives inspiration and comfort from it—as do hundreds of thousands of individuals (gardeners and admirers alike) who visit each year. For them the Bishop’s Garden represents a quiet oasis of stability at the heart of the Cathedral Close.

The quiet was broken on September 7, 2011. The gardens had emerged practically unscathed from an unprecedented double-whammy just days earlier, when the edge of Hurricane Irene brushed the District of Columbia after the August 23 earthquake, rattling loose stonework on the central tower. Efforts to stabilize the Cathedral were proceeding apace while engineers assessed the earthquake damage, and a huge crane had been brought on site to construct the enormous platform that still crowns the highest point in Washington, D.C. Suddenly, for reasons that investigators have yet to determine, the crane collapsed. Its cab flipped onto its back wheels, lifting the operator three stories high (he was not seriously hurt). Around 500 feet of heavy metal followed, abandoning a several-ton steel beam on the edge of the tower some 300 feet above ... and hurtled to the ground.

With a surprising stroke of luck, the crane fell almost entirely along South Road; a number of cars were crushed, but it avoided a direct collision with the Cathedral. It was immediately obvious, however, that the Bishop’s Garden and the nearby Gift Shop at the Herb Cottage had been damaged. No one knew just how severely.

**GRIM LOSSES**

“My first worry was the Blue Atlas cedars (Cedrus atlantica ‘Glaucia’),” said Joe Luebke, “and it broke my heart that I couldn’t immediately check on them.” Since 2003, Luebke has been the director of horticulture and grounds on the
Cathedral Close. Planted in 1902 by Henry Yates Satterlee, the founding bishop of Washington, the trees were brought over on steamship from the Holy Land to represent “cedars of Lebanon.” Now 110 years old, they are irreplaceable—and Luebke still sounds relieved as he recounts learning that both were unharmed. But not every planting was so lucky. The trees destroyed by the crane’s collapse include a weeping cherry (*Prunus subhirtella* ‘Pendula’), a Japanese scholar tree (*Sophora japonica*), a southern magnolia (*Magnolia grandiflora*), an Irish yew (*Taxus baccata*), a large American holly (*Ilex opaca*), and a California incense cedar (*Calocedrus decurrens*). A crane pulley component said to weigh about a ton landed in a moss-lined pool: the goldfish were unharmed, despite a mighty splash that festooned nearby branches with water-dwelling plants. Stonework was damaged, too, most impressively the Romanesque “pedestrian arch” carved from Caen limestone in the twentieth century, whose original high-medieval counterpart (a “wagon arch”) survives in a courtyard near the great cedars.

The Herb Cottage, built circa 1904 as a “temporary” baptistry, lost one edge of its octagonal roof—as well as the huge fig (*Ficus carica*) that once grew before its walls. A much-loved bronze sculpture of a faun playing a pipe, Pan, was hit squarely on the head and is now being repaired. Covered over with dirt and mulch from a decimated tree, the entire small garden surrounding the Herb Cottage must be redesigned. Its hidden centerpiece, a sandstone mounting block from Alexandria, Va., where the first president once hitched his horse, was also damaged; and four sturdy memorial benches, snapped like matchsticks by the heavy crane, need to be replaced as well.

### A GARDEN OF GARDENS

As the catalogue of damaged plants and structures shows, the Bishop’s Garden is no ordinary plot of earth. The project to beautify what was originally a large mass of dirt displaced by excavation gained its earliest and most significant momentum under the auspices of landscape designer Florence Brown Bratenahl, wife of Cathedral Dean George C. F. Bratenahl. Mrs. Bratenahl worked with landscape architect Frederick Law Olmsted, Jr., to lay out the entire Close. Bratenahl and Olmsted envisioned...
the expanse of greenery at the Cathedral’s foot to recall a medieval cloister garden, with carefully chosen plants and sculpture dispersed among separate “garden rooms.” Bratenahl and Olmsted focused their efforts on historic stonework and only six major species of plant: oak, ivy, boxwood, holly, yew, and rose. Trucks rumbled up dirt roads, no more than ten miles per hour, bearing enormous trees and other “unusual material” from remote Piedmont plantations. Some notable transplants were already hundreds of years old, each deemed to possess sufficient “character” for placement next to the Cathedral.

Keeping their eye on posterity, Bratenahl and Olmsted had created a “garden for the ages.” Tended carefully by dedicated volunteers, it flourished. But more recently, battered by time and record heavy snows, much of what made it originally so striking had begun to disappear.

LEADING THE CHARGE

One might think that the September 7 crane collapse would have been the final straw for All Hallows Guild, but nothing could be further from the truth. “We never despair,” says Carol Kelleher, her voice ringing with resolution. One of just a small handful of two-term Guild presidents, Kelleher currently helps to oversee one of the most ambitious garden-restoration plans in her organization’s 96-year history, returning the Bishop’s Garden to full glory as well as Florence Bratenahl’s original plan.

The front lines of this effort, quite fittingly, are lines. “The borders are some of the most distinctive portions of the Bishop’s Garden,” Kelleher says. “We always hear compliments about the so-called ‘blue border’ to the south, made from both blue flowers and local bluestone. Perhaps my personal favorite is the wall the crane damaged, inlaid with some beautiful ‘Gospel plaques’ from the late Middle Ages—but we’ll attend to interior boxwood borders as well.” Some of the shrubs were crushed by snowfall, literally broken apart, as she explains. Others had simply lost crispness over time or had grown out of scale. Out of respect for the historic plantings and the idea of a medieval garden, these weren’t ever clipped into shape; and given their character, any change has required a lot of consideration. The entire garden can now receive a much-needed systemic upgrade.

Peggy Steuart, a long-time governance leader at the Cathedral who has been at the center of Guild efforts for decades, conceived the plan when surveying “tremendous” snow damage in 2010. “Then and there,” she says, “I knew we had to do something major.” Three years later, she makes clear how much research the garden restoration has required. With the help of Cathedral Archivist Diane Ney and the Guild’s own meticulous records, Steuart consulted the earliest plans as well as a suite of aerial photographs and maps that record how those plans developed. “With the Guild there’s a great sense of institutional history, regarding not merely the gardens but the Cathedral and the schools,” Steuart says. “No matter what changes on the Close, we’ve made sure that the gardens are not forgotten. We take great pride in that.”
Working with landscape architect Michael Vergason, who helped the restoration of Olmsted Woods and the All Hallows Amphitheater in 2005, the restoration planners have discovered that the grassy rectangle at the center of the Bishop’s Garden was formerly shaped like the Cathedral’s nave. Over time, plantings had encroached and obscured its echo of the Cathedral’s apse. Their plans entail making that shape more apparent, moving the Prodigal Son to a new location closer to Olmsted Woods and the famed “blue border,” and returning the wheel cross to its former central location where the Prodigal Son currently holds court. New transplants will replace fallen trees, and under-landscaped areas will be beautified as intended. “We like to look at the roots of things,” Steuart says proudly, “and this restoration project is returning our most beloved garden to its roots.”

“There’s no great loss without some gain,” Kelleher agrees. “What happened with the crane only proves that. As the Cathedral building moves forward with restoration and preservation, we’ll ensure the future of its grounds.”

THE PATH AHEAD
Luebke speaks with nothing but admiration for the restoration plan. “The members of All Hallows Guild are incredibly talented and knowledgeable. They appreciate all the subtleties that have been disrupted over time, and they’re motivated by a sense of responsibility and service.” Among the subtleties he most remembers are alternations of light and shade as one progressed through the various boxwood “rooms” of the garden. “It used to be that entering the Bishop’s Garden felt like walking into another world,” he says. “It still does, but some sense of enclosure has been lost. You enter and look over your shoulder, and you see the central tower; all the weight of that stone’s practically leaning over you. The Guild’s plans will help to fix that.”

The task of enacting those plans may seem monumental—they will take at least two years—but that is no deterrent to the Guild. Repairs to the Herb Cottage began in March. The Bishop’s Garden has resumed its schedule of tours as of mid-April. May brings Flower Mart—a festival that welcomes as many as 30,000 visitors to the Close in one weekend—and ongoing outreach about the stewardship of uniquely significant gardens and grounds. Kelleher and Steuart both feel optimistic about what they’ll be able to accomplish in a short time, much like Florence Bratenahl herself.

To learn more about the work of All Hallows Guild and its garden restoration plan, visit www.allhallowsguild.org.
"I have great respect for people of other faiths who believe in a greater being and live a life that is based on kindness and generosity."

**CATHEDRAL AGE**

**WHAT IS YOUR EARLIEST MEMORY OF THE NATIONAL CATHEDRAL?**

On my first visit to Washington, D.C., to visit Senator and Mrs. Prescott Bush—my beloved in-laws—they took us to visit the National Cathedral.

**YOU’VE ATTENDED AND PARTICIPATED IN COUNTLESS CATHEDRAL SERVICES AND EVENTS OVER THE YEARS—FROM SPECIAL MEMORIALS AND DEDICATIONS TO INAUGURAL SERVICES AND EVEN SERVING AS HONORARY CHAIR OF FLOWER MART. WHAT IS YOUR MOST MEANINGFUL MEMORY OF A CATHEDRAL EVENT OR SERVICE YOU ATTENDED?**

All of the services and events at the Cathedral are impressive, and we have so many memories—some funny, some moving.

In *Barbara Bush: A Memoir*, I wrote about the time Prince Charles and Princess Diana came to Washington:
The red coat and purple dress gave me a good laugh later in the year. In May, the archbishop of Canterbury visited Washington, and George and I attended a service in the Washington [National] Cathedral with His Royal Highness the Prince of Wales. An unusual cold front had come through Washington, and I decided to wear that outfit one more time before putting it away for the summer. As we were standing for the procession, young Prince Charles leaned over to George and said, “Your wife, sir, is very appropriately dressed.” We turned and looked, and there came the bishop followed by 28 primates—all gowned in purple vestments with red over-robes.

**CA WHAT DOES THE CATHEDRAL’S MISSION MEAN TO YOU IN SERVING AS THE SPIRITUAL HOME FOR THE NATION?**

The Cathedral serves as a place of worship for people of all faiths. In a more selfish way, the Cathedral always served as a constant reminder and comforter for our children. Our boys attended St. Albans School, and during some of the tumultuous times of the 1960s—including riots in Washington—the Cathedral was their refuge.

**CA WHAT DOES YOUR FAITH MEAN TO YOU, AND HOW WOULD YOU SAY IT HAS HELPED OR EVEN CHALLENGED YOU AND YOUR FAMILY OVER THE YEARS?**

In so many ways my faith was tested through the death of our second child, Robin. We saw her tormented little body release her soul to go to our heavenly Father. I often thought—and think—we are but an imitation of our Father.

**CA DO YOU HAVE FAVORITE SCRIPTURAL PASSAGES OR PRAYERS TO WHICH YOU OFTEN TURN?**

The Beatitudes with an emphasis on “Blessed are the peacemakers, for they will be called children of God” (Matt. 5:9) in Jesus’ Sermon on the Mount.

**CA HOW DO YOU VIEW THE ROLE OF FAITH IN POLITICS AND IN AMERICAN SOCIETY?**

We are a country that in many ways was founded on faith, and faith plays a huge role in our society. I hate when religion (not faith) is used as a divisive force in politics.

**CA AS A CHRISTIAN, HOW DO YOU RELATE TO AMERICANS OF DIFFERENT RELIGIOUS BACKGROUNDS?**

I have great respect for people of other faiths who believe in a greater being and live a life that is based on kindness and generosity. There are many people who live spiritual lives without realizing it.
Sitting in his downtown Washington, D.C., office, the Hon. John H. Dalton has a view of the Old Post Office Pavilion. His office is filled with memorabilia that reflect a life of public service at the highest level: framed letters from Presidents Gerald Ford, Jimmy Carter, George H. W. Bush, Bill Clinton, and George W. Bush, all congratulating him on his sixtieth birthday; photographs of him with former heads of state; and a photograph of him and his wife, Margaret, with Pope John Paul II. But the former Secretary of the Navy lights up the most when talking about Naval Academy football. Navy Commander in Chief football rings line his desk, gifts from Navy’s athletic director from the seven consecutive years Navy won. A special helmet given to him by the team following this year’s Army/Navy game bears the number 70, in honor of his service as the seventieth Secretary of the Navy.

The Daltons are also devoted supporters of Washington National Cathedral. Secretary Dalton has served on the Cathedral Chapter since 2007, and both he and Mrs. Dalton joined the Cathedral Congregation when it was formed and are regular “front-row” worshipers on Sundays.

“We love to worship there,” said Mrs. Dalton. “We try to be as active as we can in different aspects of Cathedral life. I volunteer at Friendship Place to help cook hot meals for the homeless each week. No matter what activity we’re involved with, the Cathedral just fills our lives with exactly what we need.”

Secretary Dalton recalls the privilege of being invited by Dean Nathan Baxter to guest preach at a Veterans Day service in 1997 while he was in office. Less than 10 years later, he and Mrs. Dalton were invited by a friend to attend the installation of Dean Sam Lloyd, and they were hooked. “We’ve found it very meaningful to be part of the Cathedral’s life,” Secretary Dalton said. He has since become increasingly involved with the worshiping community, serving as a Communion minister and a lay reader.

The Daltons have also expressed a love for the beautiful Cathedral building, whose preservation needs leading by example

Leaving a Lasting Legacy

Interested in doing “your part,” like the Daltons? Take the opportunity right now to secure the Cathedral’s future.

You can ensure long-term viability by including the Cathedral in your estate plans. Whether you choose a bequest or a life-income arrangement—or another creative gift—inspiration and service are sure to continue through your support.

You don’t have to make these arrangements alone. To explore the options available, call Marty Stiffler at (202) 537-5796 or email mstiffler@cathedral.org for further information.
they powerfully recognize—especially following last year’s earthquake. As a result, they recently decided to complement their generous annual operating support with a Charitable Gift Annuity that names the Cathedral as beneficiary. “The Cathedral is a very special place, but it’s been through some challenging times in recent years,” said Secretary Dalton. “Margaret and I want to do what we can so that it continues to inspire others.”

“We wanted to do our part to ensure that the Cathedral continues with its entire mission,” emphasized Mrs. Dalton. “The Cathedral is such a wonderful place, not just to Washington but also to the rest of the country. Having no denominational or federal funding means that it is incumbent upon all of us who love the Cathedral to support it.”

“We see the Cathedral serving, every day, as the spiritual home for the nation,” Secretary Dalton concluded. “It’s called upon to serve presidents at the beginning of their tenures and when they are laid to rest. I’m aware of the Cathedral’s presence at so many of the important moments in our nation’s history, continuing with the service following 9/11. We want to ensure the Cathedral is always able to be there for the American people in that way.”

As for Navy football, Mrs. Dalton is equally as passionate as Secretary Dalton. “I’m a huge fan,” she admitted. “The Academy is just like the Cathedral to us. If the doors are open, we’re there.”

Kids’ Gifts

Some of the most meaningful restoration gifts to the Cathedral have come from children. These include an enormous—Cathedral-sized!—get-well card from the students of the National Cathedral School for Girls; generous donations from the students at Beauvoir, the Cathedral elementary school; proceeds from the sale of artwork by local children who “love the old Cathedral”; and an imaginative replacement Rainbow Pinnacle, courtesy of the children at St. John’s Episcopal Preschool of Georgetown.
Interim Dean, Search Committee Named

Just after the New Year, the Cathedral Chapter announced the formation of a committee charged with identifying and recommending the tenth Cathedral dean; the Rev. Dr. Francis H. Wade would serve as part-time interim dean as that search moved forward.

Wade, who took up his position on January 6, served from 1983 until retirement in 2005 as rector of St. Alban’s Parish on the Cathedral Close. Throughout those years, and since, he distinguished himself as a guest preacher from the Canterbury Pulpit. He is an adjunct professor at Virginia Theological Seminary, where he earned both M.Div. and D.Min. degrees, and has also taught at General Theological Seminary in New York. His sermons and writings, including the book *Transforming Scripture*, have been extensively anthologized and published.

The search committee, chaired by Alexander H. Platt and vice-chaired by longtime NCA leader Craig M. McKee, includes representatives from the Cathedral Chapter, Foundation Board of Trustees, the Diocese of Washington, and the Episcopal Church.

The Cathedral’s self-study, analysis, and subsequently adopted Strategic Plan informs the committee’s search for an “exemplary national leader.” Members hope to call the new dean by the end of the year.

Events

**BISHOP MAGNESS INSTALLED AS CATHEDRAL CANON**

On January 10, 2012, the Most Rev. Katharine Jefferts Schori, presiding bishop of the Episcopal Church, joined Bishop of Washington Mariann Edgar Budde for the installation of the Right Rev. James B. Magness, the Episcopal Church’s bishop suffragan for federal ministries, as Cathedral canon for the armed forces and federal ministries. The Cathedral Choir of Men and Boys sang at the special service of Choral Evensong in the great choir.

The position of bishop suffragan for federal ministries includes pastoral care and oversight for armed forces chaplains, military personnel, and their families—as well as oversight of Episcopal worship communities affiliated with military installations, federal hospitals, prisons, and correctional facilities. In his role as Cathedral canon, Magness works to strengthen the National Cathedral’s ministries to these important groups.

Prior to his 2010 consecration as bishop suffragan for federal ministries, Magness had served as canon for mission and diocesan administration in the Diocese of Southern Virginia; interim rector of the 1,200-member Galilee Episcopal Church in Virginia Beach, Va.; and canon to the ordinary of the Diocese of Kentucky. Magness retired from the U.S. Navy in 2003 in the rank of captain, having served as command chaplain of U.S. Joint Forces Command as well as fleet chaplain for the U.S. Fleet Forces Command. Prior to those assignments, he served 1997–2000 on the Navy Chief of Chaplains’ staff as personnel manager of the Navy Chaplain Corps.
MOZART’S REQUIEM

On Saturday, March 10, more than 2,000 people filled the Cathedral nave to hear the Cathedral Choir of Men and Girls perform a concert featuring Mozart’s enigmatic and beautiful *Requiem Mass in D minor* (k. 626) under the baton of Canon Michael McCarthy. This large-scale work (Mozart’s last, left unfinished at his death) took up the second half of the program. In its first half, the girls choir and a number of its alumnæ who have since become professional musicians performed favorite pieces from their repertoire.

The concert honored the fifteenth anniversary of the establishment of a girls chorister program at the Cathedral thanks to the generosity and foresight of Isabelle Scott, long known to the girl choristers only as their “angel,” who died last fall at the age of 69.

KING IN OUR MIDST

The Cathedral held its annual celebration of the life and ministry of the Rev. Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr., in January. “King in Our Midst” filled the nave with attendees who brought children’s books or canned items as the cost of admission, and it was also webcast live from www.nationalcathedral.org.

Westminster Abbey

The National Cathedral recently received the encouragement of a generous gift from Westminster Abbey in London, an uniquely historic house of worship that most recently made headlines as the site of the “royal wedding.” The Abbey was founded in 960 by Benedictine monks, rebuilt in 1065 by Edward the Confessor, and grandly remodeled by Henry III around Edward’s shrine. Almost every English coronation has taken place there since 1066.

The Abbey today, which served as a great inspiration to the founders of Washington National Cathedral, seeks to be a place of “welcome, wonder, and worship” for the country that it serves. Its gift to the Cathedral highlights the common bond between the two great houses of worship in light of their similar role, and it recognizes the need to preserve these irreplaceable buildings for the use of future generations.
New Honorary Canon

After its February 10 meeting, the Cathedral Chapter announced the appointment of Eileen Yago as honorary canon, a high distinction held by less than a handful of living individuals. “There are few other people in the history of the Cathedral who have given so many years of service to the Cathedral in so many different ways,” Interim Dean Frank Wade said in the announcement.

Yago, with her husband John, first became active in the life of the Cathedral in 1968. Among other significant leadership roles on the Cathedral staff and governing bodies, Yago has chaired and otherwise served for many years on the Fabric & Fine Arts committee for the Cathedral, working tirelessly to promote greater awareness of the Cathedral as a national treasure as well as greater appreciation for its ongoing preservation needs. She has also been a dedicated leader as well as long-term member of the National Cathedral Association (NCA) whose efforts helped to build the Cathedral.

Yago has particularly distinguished herself as the foremost living expert on the Cathedral’s almost countless individual artistic holdings, as well as the building’s status as a major artistic accomplishment in its own right.

Yago served early on as a Cathedral docent staff aide, and offered both expertise and assistance as a volunteer to the former Clerk of the Works office, the pilgrimage program, and the Herb Cottage. She has also been director of visitor programs and volunteer services on the Cathedral staff, in which role she created and implemented the Outreach to Schools program to D.C. Public Schools and initiated the medieval workshop for visitors. In addition to the countless resource of her time, Yago and her husband have also been generous benefactors to the Cathedral since the 1970s. “Their legacy as faithful Christians and creative church members is another testament to their contributions to the life of the church,” Wade said.

Responding to the honor, Yago named “working with the extended national family of volunteers, friends, donors, visitors, and worshipers—the extraordinary gift of all who touch our lives through this Cathedral church” as a major motivation for her decades of service thus far on the Cathedral Close.

“All who share in the ministry of the Cathedral are particularly blessed to be involved in an institution that touches the lives of countless people,” she continued. “We are further blessed to be stewards of a sacred place of great beauty. As we continue that shared work of stewardship, I will do my very best to be worthy of this generous gesture of recognition.”

Yago is to be installed as honorary canon at a special service of Choral Evensong on Wednesday, May 16.
A New Partnership

The National Trust for Historic Preservation has recognized the Cathedral’s significance to American history—and its extensive preservation needs—by officially designating it a national treasure. In making the designation, the National Trust will offer a full range of consulting and technical expertise to inform and motivate the extensive work of restoration, deferred maintenance, and long-term planning ahead.

Preservation needs are currently estimated at $50 million dollars, including $20 million alone as a result of the 2011 earthquake.

Staff Updates

RALPH GODSALL

The Cathedral was honored by the participation in its life this spring of the Rev. Canon Ralph Godsall until mid-April. Canon Godsall joined the Cathedral from London’s iconic Westminster Abbey, where he is priest vicar, assisting its extensive ministry to the queen, Commonwealth, and nation.

Godsall’s wide-ranging ministry and travel, from South and Central America to London’s immigrant communities, have contributed to his deep familiarity with global Christianity. He drew on insights from this experience Sunday, February 5, to conclude the Cathedral’s “Minority Status” series on the three Abrahamic faiths.

MARY SULERUD AND GINA CAMPBELL

The Rev. Canon Mary C. Sulerud, interim director of worship, recently accepted a call to serve as interim rector at Immanuel Church-on-the-Hill in Alexandria, Va. She had joined the Cathedral staff in August as a consultant to its worship department and was officially named interim director in October. Sulerud had been a member of the Cathedral clergy previously, serving as interim precentor (2004–2005) after appointment to diocesan staff.

The Rev. Gina Gillard Campbell has now been named acting director of worship. An ordained United Methodist minister for 35 years, Campbell has served at the Cathedral since 2008 as a teacher, pastor, and logistics expert.

TIM SCHANTZ

Bishop of Washington Mariann Edgar Budde has announced the appointment of Timothy R. Schantz as executive vice president and chief operating officer of the Protestant Episcopal Cathedral Foundation, the organization chartered in 1893 to oversee needs shared by the National Cathedral and its affiliated schools. Schantz comes from greater New York City, having served most recently as director of the Mountbatten Institute’s office in Manhattan.

Schantz has more than three decades’ experience in the financial services industry, with a decade or more managing work in merchant banking, alternative asset management, corporate/structured finance, and wealth management. He has been an active board member of such institutions as the Museum of American Finance and the Historical Society of Pennsylvania, serving also as a trustee for the Investment Funds of the Episcopal Diocese of Connecticut.
Let us consider the nature of time: how we experience time and think about it, and what, in the spiritual life, is known as “opportunity time” or, in the words of St. Paul, “the acceptable time.”

Spiritual time isn’t the same as chronological time, which is marked by passing increments of minutes, days, and weeks that either hang heavily or race by depending on circumstances. We often think of chronological time as something we can have either to waste or use wisely.

Moving from the Midwest to Washington, and from a position with a certain set of responsibilities to a position and role with seemingly infinite responsibilities, I am acutely aware of a new experience of time that is my new life. Even so, chronological time is something we fill and define. Not so with spiritual or opportune time. Opportune time has a sense of purpose and potential all its own. It is time-charged energy that transcends whatever we might make of it.

Have you ever worked really hard to make something happen, but—no matter how hard you tried—nothing happened or things actually got worse? But then in a different context, in an opportune moment, you worked perhaps just as hard, and this time something else was working alongside you—there was wind in your sails—and you were able to accomplish something that was once impossible. That’s what opportune time is: the right time for something to happen that we cannot bring about on our own.

It isn’t easy waiting for opportune time, particularly when we can see what could be or needs to change. Try as we might, we can’t force things along faster than the acceptable time allows. Actually we do try all the time, and sometimes by our sheer will we force things along, but we do so at the risk of damaging the very thing we hope to bring about. As one of my teachers used to say, you can’t make a bean grow faster by pulling on it.

Yet it’s also true that opportune time may come for us as individuals, and certainly as a society, long before we feel ready. All the great movements of history tell of struggle and work and leadership that coalesce at a critical moment—along with this sense of time, the right time for something to shift. Not everyone was ready to make the change. But no matter how they resisted, things moved forward anyway, because the time for change had come. It can be that way for us as individuals, too: the time may be upon us, whether we feel ready or not.

The marriage equality debates that have gathered momentum in the country of late now have a feeling of opportune time about them. There’s a different energy and momentum, a sense of possibility that would have been unimaginable even five years ago. As supportive as I considered myself to be for full inclusion of gays and lesbians in our church and country, I would never have predicted how quickly the issue of marriage equality has captured the imagination and a sense of possibility. That kind of spiritual energy and movement in society is important for us as people of faith to pay attention to. It doesn’t happen every day on every issue, and we have a window of time—of opportune time—to act.
One of the most important tasks of life is to consider the nature of time: what time it is now, and for what. Of all the good things we might strive for, how can we discern the opportune time for particular things? There’s nothing to be gained by pining for the changes we long for but can’t bring about, if in the process we avoid the particular task before us whose time has come. God is always at work in us, bringing something to fruition at its acceptable time. Take this day to ask yourself what time it is for you. Knock on a few doors, and see which one opens. Consider the things that you exhaust yourself to make happen and the things that seem to have their own power and momentum. Allow yourself to feel the weight of time and the gift of it. God is at work in and through us, and in and through time. The acceptable time, the opportune time, will come. Amen.

“All the great movements of history tell of struggle and work and leadership that coalesce at a critical moment, along with this sense of time, the right time for something to shift.”

In the interest of full disclosure I want you to know that the purpose of this sermon is to encourage you to do what Jesus did at his baptism: make a serious, life-changing commitment to God. I want what you know of God to be the way you interpret and understand the events of your life. I want what you know of God to be the way you set priorities and take action in your life.

In the continued interest of full disclosure: if you make that kind of commitment to God, your experience will be like that of Jesus when he came up out of the Jordan River. When it was done, he immediately felt the pleasure of God—You are beloved, with you I am well pleased. That can be your experience, as well.

It is at this point that full disclosure takes a serious turn. When I am pleased with someone, I usually mean that I like them as they are: that they have arrived at some plateau where they might rest from my labors. Not so with Jesus in the lesson. Not so with us in life. The words of God’s pleasure are followed by, “The Spirit immediately drove him out into the wilderness.” Commitment is wilderness because it means living generously, openly, and vulnerably in a world that does not always respect those qualities and, indeed, often abuses them. Making a commitment to God sets us immediately in the unknown, the unpredictable, the realm of mystery and encounter.

When the first person of our faith, the patriarch Abraham, made his commitment...
“Commitment is wilderness because it means living generously, openly, and vulnerably in a world that does not always respect those qualities and, indeed, often abuses them.”

to God, it was in response to the invitation to “Come with me to a land I will show you.” It is because commitment leads to wilderness that we are called followers. We follow because we do not and cannot know the way in the wilderness to which the Spirit drives us.

Jesus’ story is not just one of spiritual exploration. There are hostile realities in that wilderness personified in the title ‘Satan’ but experienced as temptation. It does not seem fair. Why would commitment to God result in temptation, an experience Jesus equated with facing evil when he crafted the Lord’s Prayer?

The fact is that commitment and temptation go together. They are two sides of the same coin. There can be no temptation without some form of commitment, and every form of commitment includes temptation. If I do not care what I eat, junk food is no problem. But once I commit to eating sensibly, the temptation to eat foolishly is at hand.

A commitment to God works the same way. It is hard to betray a God to whom no commitment has been made, a God who is one option among many, a God on retainer who comes when we need help but maintains a discreet silence otherwise. But when what we know of God becomes our criteria for understanding life and our priority for taking action, the possibility of falling away is immediately at hand.

To let what we know of God determine our understanding and interpretation of each day is to find that day shot through with the glory of God. Sometimes it is tantalizing the way spring is hinting itself outside, sometimes it is as bold as organ and choir, sometimes as surprising as forgiveness, sometimes as quiet as an insight or as powerful as an idea, sometimes as subtle as a wink, sometimes as lavish as a sunset—but each day, each moment, brims and sloshes over with God. That reality is not known outside of commitment.

Letting what we know of God determine our priorities and our actions is like sky diving or being married or being a Marine. It can be talked about from any angle but only known from inside the experience, where you can feel the power of it and see newness with its light. Stepping into commitment to the living God is life writ large, life that hugs you and lets you hug it back.

The 4,000 years from Abraham’s journey to this pregnant morning, the 2,000 years from Jesus’ baptism to tomorrow’s priorities, are a wilderness of temptation filled with wonder upon wonder—and every wonder true. And there remains only one way for us to know it: commitment to the living God.

That is full disclosure.

Amen.

Explore more spiritual insights in our online archive, featuring on-demand sermons from Cathedral clergy and guest preachers as well as full-length video of services at www.nationalcathedral.org.
We are honored to list gifts of $1,000 or more from angels committed to supporting the Cathedral’s ongoing ministry and the restoration of this national treasure following the August 23, 2011, earthquake.

Please note that gifts listed here reflect those made prior to press time (March 23, 2012). Please notify us of any corrections: (202) 337-5765 or cburry@cathedral.org.

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