



THE BULLETIN

CHRIST CHURCH CATHEDRAL
An Episcopal Community in the Heart of Houston, Texas

MAY 2026
CHRISTCHURCHCATHEDRAL.ORG

AFTER-HOURS EMERGENCY CARE LINE | 713-826-5332

Stitched together in love The Cathedral Quilt Project

In a heartwarming display of unity and creativity, members of Christ Church Cathedral have embarked on an inspiring quilting project, the likes of which have not been seen since 1939. The initiative, begun by the Christian Formation and the Arts Council, and lead by Jane Curtis, aims to bring the community together while raising funds and awareness for the Beacon, a charitable organization committed to serving those in need.

The Cathedral quilting project was conceived as a means to foster community spirit and collaboration through a shared purpose. Quilts, imbued with meanings of warmth, cooperation, and love, serve as the perfect symbol for this endeavor.

In an era dominated by digital interactions, the project offers a refreshing opportunity for personal connections and hands-on engagement. The slow, deliberate process of quilting is not



only about creating a beautiful end product but also about the journey of crafting something together by hand.

IN STITCHES, page 4

Celebrating Día Internacional de la Mujer/International Women's Day



Group photo from the International Women's Day reception with Liliana Elizondo.

On March 8, the Cathedral celebrated the strength, wisdom, and dignity of women everywhere who help shape families, communities, and our church. There was a reception held after the 1 p.m. service and Liliana Elizondo was the keynote speaker for the event.

The reception following the 1 p.m. service on April 26 will celebrate Día Mundial del Niño World Children's Day. All are invited to attend.

THE DEAN'S CORNER Tending to joy

By the time this article finds its way to you we will have already celebrated Christ's resurrection in resplendent glory on Easter Sunday. Our Easter hats are back on the shelf. The brass ensemble that led us in belting out "Welcome Happy Morning" have moved on. And still it is Easter.



**THE VERY
REV. NATHANIEL
KATZ**

It amazes me how after forty days of Lent, we can so easily let the joy of Easter waft away like a petal blown off a stem jubilantly placed in the frame we use to flower the cross on that morning. The desire to return to life as normal after Lent is strong. It actually takes effort to hold onto the joy of Easter. Joy doesn't always have to be exuberant. It doesn't have to be loud or colorful. It can be quiet. It can be still. It can be intimate. But it takes tending.

My prayer for our Cathedral family is that we can be a community that tends to joy – in ourselves and one another. Joy is not frivolous, even in times of great uncertainty. We celebrate Jesus' resurrection for fifty days to drive home its reality into our hearts. Insisting on joy is itself a living witness to the promise that resurrection life was not just for Jesus, it is for us. It is our living witness to the promise that (as a friend of mine puts it) the worst thing isn't the last thing, for us or for our world.

Let us lift one another up in being people of joy in our time.

**VIEW DEAN KATZ'S
ANNOUNCEMENT ABOUT
THE NEW DIRECTOR OF
MUSIC & ORGANIST**



at: christchurchcathedral.org/announcement/from-the-deans-desk-director-of-music-announcement/

Shop local at the Cathedral Bookstore

Tucked just off the Bishop's Courtyard in the Latham Building, the Cathedral Bookstore has been a quiet fixture of Christ Church Cathedral life since 1983 — and right now, it might be the most lively corner of the whole campus.

Walk in any day this spring and you're likely to find Lucy Chambers, Bookstore Manager, or one of her happy team of volunteers in the middle of something. These days, that something includes the Cathedral Quilt Project, which has made the Bookstore its home as volunteers work to complete it in time for May Fete on May 3. The shelves are stocked with something for everyone this season — think Mother's Day gifts, Pride-themed titles and even rainbow florals, and a selection of books tied to this summer's pilgrimage that Dean Katz has personally recommended. Popular perennials include jewelry, tea towels, and — coming back soon — the Cathedral Cross, a wearable silver replica of our altar cross. There are small, thoughtful gifts, one-of-a-kind pieces crafted from antique quilts; and a wide

selection of craft, quilt, and spiritual titles, including one of the largest used religious and spiritual book collections you're likely to find downtown, and perhaps across Houston. Lucy and her team are intentional about their inventory. "Things you wouldn't find even on Amazon," she says — with an emphasis on fair trade and small-business-made goods. Book club members receive 20% off titles, gift wrapping is available (pro tip: shop before lunch at Treebeards and your gifts may be wrapped by the time you finish), and all proceeds support the ministries of the Cathedral.

"Our mission is to be the front porch of the church," says Lucy — a warm gathering place for parishioners, and visitors alike. On Mondays and Wednesdays, that welcome extends



to Bailey and Julia, the Bookstore's canine regulars.

Stop by Sunday mornings from 8:45 a.m. to 12:30 p.m., or Monday through Thursday, 10 a.m. to 2 p.m. (through May). You can also support the Bookstore while shopping online by selecting it as your beneficiary at bookshop.org.

OUR CATHEDRAL FAMILY

We celebrate with

- ☞ Abbie-Louise Lord and Benjamin Martin who were married on April 11.
- ☞ Returning Members: Allison, Henry & Catherine Miller (family of the Rev. Patrick Miller)

We extend heartfelt condolences

- ☞ to the family of Betty June Taliaferro who passed away on March 4, 2026. Betty is mother to Joan Taliaferro.
- ☞ to the family of Theo Walton Pinson III who passed away on March 13, 2026. Theo is brother to member Harry Pinson.
- ☞ to the family of member Bebe Johnston Gow who passed away on March 18, 2026. Bebe is mother to Andy Johnston, Rusty Johnston, Peter Johnston and Doug Johnston Jr.
- ☞ to the family of member John (Tom) Thomas Gwynne Jr. who passed away on March 24, 2026. Tom is spouse to Dr. Margaret Gwynne.
- ☞ to the family of member Angela (Angie) Karen Spivey who passed away on April 4, 2026. Angie is spouse to Jack Spivey.

The flowers on the Cathedral Altar

- ☞ on April 12 were given to the glory of God in loving memory of Cindi Blakely by her family.
- ☞ on April 19 were given to the glory of God in celebration of the 100th birthday of Nancy Stallworth Thomas by her family.
- ☞ on April 26 were given to the glory of God in joyful thanksgiving for the stitchers of the Christ Church Cathedral Community Quilt project by the Altar Guild.
- ☞ on May 3 are given to the glory of God in loving memory of Elaine Wheeler Krause by Sharon and Bob Baker.
- ☞ on May 10 were given to the glory of God in loving memory of our mother, Mary Bain Haralson Pearson, and our grandmother, Mary Bain Haralson, by their family, Gary Jim and Mary Bain Pearson.



"Join or Die," film screening and discussion event

Last month, the halls of Christ Church Cathedral were filled with more than just music; they were filled with the lively hum of a community coming together to confront the "loneliness epidemic." Hosted by Canon Bradley Varnell, a sizable group gathered for a special screening of the acclaimed documentary "Join or Die." As the scent of popcorn and snacks filled the room, attendees settled in to explore the work of social scientist Robert Putnam. The evening also allowed for a pop-up quilting session and a lively discussion about connection and community.

It was a powerful reminder that in an age of digital isolation, the simple act of showing up for one another remains our most radical and necessary tradition.

Interview: 5 Minutes with Chris Valka

During the Robert C. Stuart Lenten Series, the Dean's Hour welcomed Chris Valka as its final speaker in the series. As CEO of the Prison Entrepreneurship Program (PEP), Valka took time to share with *The Bulletin* how PEP has impacted the community.

Bulletin: Can you describe the primary ways in which the Prison Entrepreneurship Program (PEP) has impacted the community?

Chris Valka: Since 2004, PEP has been increasing the success rate of those returning to society after incarceration through the transformative experience of entrepreneurship – whether they become one or not. PEP restores families and communities and has launched over 750 businesses and assisted over 6,000 men. Year after year, PEP boasts impressive statistics such as 100% employment within 30 days of release and 43% homeownership within 3 years of release. Equally impacted are the lives of the hundreds of business executive volunteers who mentor inside and outside prison, as they realize how often the difference between “them” and “us” is the grace of a single moment.

Bulletin: Can you share examples of successful collaborations between PEP and church communities that have amplified the program's reach and effectiveness?

Chris Valka: Over its 20 year history, the culture of PEP often finds its origins in prison culture,

since many of the people leading PEP were prisoners first. Although faith, quite often explicitly in the Gospel of Jesus Christ, is a major facet of people's lives in prison; the respect one prisoner offers another requires a permission to be extended rather than an assumption to be made. In prison, curiosity is a powerful evangelical tool, leading one prisoner to ask another, “why have you changed?” (among other questions). This is the permission we read in 1 Peter 3:15, “Keep the Lord in your hearts, and whenever anyone asks, be ready to give reason for your hope.” Our lives will cause others to ask. This is also the example of Christ through his earthly ministry, inviting people to “come and see”. The evidence PEP offers as a faith-driven organization is not found in a statement which might prevent some from engaging in its work; for as St. Paul writes to the Galatians, “neither circumcision or uncircumcision has any value, but the only thing that counts is faith expressing itself in love.” (5:6). Quite often, this love has led people to belong first which then has opened the door to a belief in the saving power of Christ which might otherwise not have occurred; for love cultivates the mind beyond prejudice.

Today, PEP enjoys partnership with many faith communities who provide volunteers and even financial support. Parishes within the Episcopal



Chris Valka with parishioner & PEP Volunteer Keith Frazier.

Diocese of Texas that share their generosity in one form or another include Palmer, St. Martin's, Holy Family, Christ Church Cathedral, and St. Stephen's – to name just a few.

Bulletin: What drew you to the PEP and how do you feel it has impacted your journey?

Chris Valka: For 20 years, I belonged to a religious order in the Catholic Church, and for 10 years served as a priest in the church. I have dedicated my life to reconciliation – the work of helping people turn their lives towards healing after something went wrong. We are social beings, hard wired with a desire to belong. PEP embodies all of these things. Additionally, PEP reminds me that God's mercy usually takes time, which many of these men have a lot of, so that we may finally pray the prayer that is the one we were meant to pray all along. At PEP, you experience the extremes of life, but sometimes we need those to train us to recognize God's work in the mundane.

The Movable Feast is a monthly adventure for families

What if one Sunday each month was set aside for a holy adventure: where worship, learning, and fellowship move together like a joyful parade through the morning—and no one goes home hungry? On select Sundays throughout the year, families with children are invited into a full morning of faith, formation, and fun—all under one roof. It begins at 9 a.m. with worship. For parents with young children, this is a warm and welcoming introduction to the rhythms of worship—a place where little ones are celebrated.

At 10 a.m., it moves into Formation Hour. Children age 2 through fifth grade, youth in sixth through 12th grade, and adults in the Dean's Hour and other offerings. At 11 a.m., the Children & Family Ministries Council hosts a lunchtime celebration, and the whole family is invited to the table. Minister for Children and Families KariAnn Lessner has made sure the menu is anything but predictable.

The name itself carries meaning. While many know the phrase



from Hemingway, KariAnn reaches deeper—into the Christian liturgical calendar, where holidays like Easter and Pentecost are called “movable feasts” because their dates shift from year to year. “We are invited to the table for Eucharist every week,” she reflects, “and often we forget that there are other parts of the Sunday experience that are of great import as well—formation and fellowship being two of the first things that come to mind.” The Movable Feast doesn't follow a fixed monthly date either, intentionally bending around the church calendar and the real lives of families.

As for what success looks like? KariAnn's vision is simple and profound: “I think if later in a child's life they remember eating a slice of pizza on the playground with the sun shining down and they knew they were loved and seen and safe—that will look like something worth writing another article about.”

For more information, contact the Cathedral office at 713-222-2593 or info@christchurchcathedral.org.

LIVING SEASONALLY AT THE CATHEDRAL



The Rev. Canon Bradley Varnell leads his course, *Daily Prayer: How, What, Why*.



Quilt Project lead, Jane Curtis, holds a pop-up quilting session in the Cathedral Bookstore.



The Rev. Liz Kronenberg, Canon Vicar, leads the clergy in procession on Palm Sunday.



Dean Katz represents the Cathedral at the Jewish Federation's Community Leaders Seder.



Community Life Minister, Elizabeth Cuevas, delivers the Cathedral's Canned Good Collection to Emergency Aid Coalition.

BEAUTY of FLOWERS

Summer Sunday Altar Flowers

Fresh altar flower arrangements for Sunday services may be donated to honor a friend or family member, a loved one, to celebrate a birthday or anniversary. There are vacancies in May, June, July, and August for Sunday Altar flower donors. Please contact Lisa Viktorin at lviktorin@christchurchcathedral.org for more information.

IN STITCHES, from cover The Quilt's Journey From Creation to Auction

The completed quilt will stand as a testament to the beauty of collaboration. Following a summer display at the Cathedral, it will be auctioned off at the 2026 Come to the Table fundraising gala, with all proceeds benefiting the Beacon. This auction provides a unique chance for community members and supporters to own a piece of art that embodies collective effort and shared values.

The creation of this community quilt involves four carefully planned stages, beginning back on August 24, 2025, the Cathedral's Rally Day. Participants received kits to piece together blocks, with support available through written instructions and

drop-in classes held on weekends throughout the fall. During the second stage, the blocks' central squares were embellished with motifs inspired by the Cathedral's décor, allowing for creative interpretation through embroidery, beading, and applique. Following the blessing of the pieces on Ingathering Sunday, volunteers collaborated to piece the blocks together from Thanksgiving to Ash Wednesday.

With the onset of Lent, the quilt layers were placed on a frame, allowing 10-12 people to stitch simultaneously. The goal is for every community member to contribute, symbolizing fellowship and love.

This project echoes a similar endeavor from 1939, when a quilt was created as a fundraiser after a fire devastated the sanctuary. Parishioners, at that time, paid to sponsor petals, which were embroidered and sewn together.

The current quilt aspires to be both meaningful and practical, with proceeds supporting the Beacon and its outreach ministries. The Cathedral quilting project not only revives a cherished tradition but also strengthens the bonds within the community. As each stitch is laid, participants weave together a narrative of hope, unity, and generosity that will resonate throughout the Cathedral and beyond.





Bring Your Differences — A morning with Imam Abdullah Antepli

There are Sunday mornings at Christ Church Cathedral when the Dean's Hour feels less like a conversation series and more like a gift — a reminder of why this downtown cathedral has anchored Houston's spiritual and civic life for nearly two centuries. The recent morning of Sunday, April 12, that Dean Katz welcomed Imam Abdullah Antepli, the newly inaugurated president of the Rothko Chapel, was one of those mornings.

For just under an hour, two faith leaders — an Episcopal priest and a Muslim imam — sat together before a congregation and spoke honestly about difference, fear, holy envy, and about what's broken in American interfaith life, and what, with courage, might yet be built.



Imam Abdullah Antepli, President of the Rothko Chapel, at the Dean's Hour.

Dean Katz opened by introducing Antepli with a warmth that made clear this was no formal institutional handshake. "I'm honored to be in conversation and to call him a friend," he said.

The accolades are real: Antepli served as Duke University's first-ever Muslim chaplain, later becoming an associate professor of the practice of interfaith relations at Duke Divinity School. He is the only Muslim chaplain to have delivered prayer before the U.S. House of Representatives — twice, in 2010 and again in 2017. He has been honored by the Anti-Defamation League with the Daniel Pearl Award for his work building bridges between Jewish and Muslim communities. In 2023, he was elected to the American Academy of Arts and Sciences.

But credentials, Antepli made clear from his very first words, are not the story. The story begins somewhere else entirely.

"My journey started in the southeastern part of Turkey," he said. "I grew up in a slum. My parents have no formal education." He described arriving at Duke's Gothic campus every morning and pinching himself. "Is this actually real?"

Now he walks into the Rothko Chapel and feels something similar. He came to Houston, he said, not for a job, but for a vision, "Houston is one of the most underrated, underappreciated, and misunderstood cities in America."

"I believe Houston is remarkably poised to exemplify what America will look like in 30 years — a multicultural, multi-religious, harmonious, peaceful, constructive American social fabric. That's why I came here. That's why I'm here." In closing, Imam Antepli offered,

"You have a brother and a home at Rothko Chapel, come and visit us."



Pentecost Whitsuntide Concert

Join the Christ Church Cathedral for its final campus-wide concert under the direction of Canon for Music Robert Simpson. On Sunday, May 24, at 5 p.m., the Pentecost Whitsuntide Concert will bring the celebration of Pentecost to its culmination and will be followed by a reception. Make your plans to attend what is sure to be an exceptional concert. Following this concert, the choir will prepare for their final Sundays in June with us before their international tour will take them to London and the U.K. before finishing their trip at the American Cathedral in Paris, France.

PENTECOST WHITSUNTIDE CONCERT

Sunday, May 24, 5 p.m.

EfM Graduation is May 31

The Education for Ministry (EfM) program is a four-year formation experience designed for small groups, focusing on study and the practice of theological reflection. Established in 1975, this international program has guided over 120,000 participants into nurturing their call to Christian service within their everyday lives.

EfM GRADUATION

Sunday, May 31, 11 a.m.

At Christ Church Cathedral, four people will graduate from the EfM program at the 11 a.m. service on May 31 this year.

Through seminar groups, individuals embark on a transformative journey, discovering new dimensions of faith and service, while forming lasting bonds with fellow participants. For more information, please contact: Lucy Wagner via the Cathedral website.



HOLY WEEK 2026 FROM PALM SUNDAY TO EASTER SUNDAY, THANK YOU



U FOR SHARING THE WEEK WITH US



CALENDAR OF EVENTS

Visit christchurchcathedral.org/events to learn more.

▲ Registration required

× Registration closed

APRIL

APRIL 26

SUN

The Climb

9 a.m. and 1 p.m., Cathedral.

The Movable Feast

11 a.m.

Grieving Together

3:30 p.m.

Dia del Niño Reception

2:30 p.m.



MAY 14

THU

Ascension Day Noonday Prayer with Eucharist

12:05 p.m.

MAY

MAY 2

SAT

May Fete Work Day

10 a.m. to noon.



MAY 3

SUN

May Fete

10 a.m. bilingual service. Celebrate one of the oldest, and most beloved, Cathedral traditions. Gather at Christ Church for a Sunday filled with special worship, favorite foods, fun games, and the crowning of the May Fete royalty.

MAY 17

SUN

Senior Sunday/End of Program year

We will honor our high school seniors. Cathedral.

Worship Training Day/ Dia de Entrenamiento

11 a.m.

MAY 19

TUE

Spring Neighborhood Gathering

6-7:30 p.m. RSVP to Lisa Cantu indicating the date of the party at least two days before your preferred date (lcantu@christchurch-cathedral.org / 713-222-2593). Capacity is limited at each venue and a reservation is required. We look forward to seeing you!

MAY 23

SAT,

Baptism Workshop

Baptism workshops happen throughout the year.

MAY 7

THU

Cameron Carpenter Organ Concert

7:30 p.m., Cathedral.

MAY 9

SAT

20s/30s Cookout/Hangout

Off-campus.

MAY 10

SUN

Youth Confirmation

9 a.m., Cathedral.

Mother's Day Special Reception

After 1 p.m., Latino Ministry.

MAY 11

MON

Cathedral Downtown Lunch

Treebeards, Noon.

MAY 13

WED

Dean's Collect Writing Workshop

7 p.m. - last session.

MAY 16

SAT

Plantations Tour ▲

9:45 a.m., off-campus. Register on the announcements page, \$12.



MAY 24

SUN

Pentecost Sunday

Baptisms, 9 a.m.

MAY 24

SUN

Pentecost Whitsuntide Concert

5 p.m., Cathedral.

MAY 31

SUN,

Summer Place/Art Space for All Begins

10 a.m.

EfM Graduations

11 a.m. service/EfM reception



CHRIST CHURCH CATHEDRAL

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Did you know you can read **The Bulletin** on our website? If you'd like to go "online-only," contact Ramona Sikes at rsikes@christchurchcathedral.org or call her at 713-217-1347

Mark your calendars and save the date for our **MAY FETE**

The annual tradition of May Fete dates back to Christ Church's nascency. Join us on Sunday, May 3 for the 2026 celebration and help us make it the best one yet! To Volunteer, visit: christchurchcathedral.org/Mayfete.

