



THE BULLETIN

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

FEBRUARY/MARCH 2026
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The Dean's Corner

As we embark on our Lenten journey at Christ Church, we take a moment to reflect on the paths that have led us here together and the journey that lies ahead. In this edition of The Bulletin, we celebrate the remarkable tenure of our Canon for Music, Bob Simpson, and the remarkable legacy he has built at our beloved Cathedral. As we prepare for Bob's retirement following the choir's European tour this summer, we anticipate the beginning of a new chapter in music ministry that will build upon the foundation of passionate commitment he leaves with us.



THE VERY
REV. NATHANIEL
KATZ

We also commemorate the 25th anniversary of the At-Risk Youth ministry, which began as an outreach initiative aimed at assisting families from Houston's working poor during emergencies. This ministry has grown into a true blessing for all those it serves.

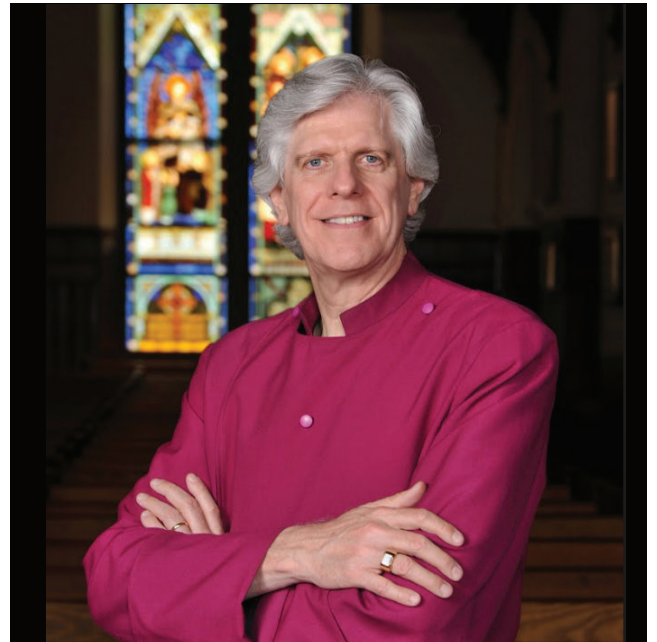
As human beings, we were designed to exist within a network of profoundly interconnected relationships: with God, our siblings in Christ, and the natural world around us. Yet, we also find ourselves navigating an era marked by division and isolation. This Lent, the Robert C. Stuart Lenten Series welcomes the voices of scholars, artists, and ministers discoursing on the timely topic of Belonging in a Divided Age. The Lenten season provides our community with an opportunity for introspection and spiritual growth through our Lenten Series, worship services, and Stations of the Cross. Amid the various activities and events on our calendar, we can see that Lent at the Cathedral fosters connection and a sense of belonging, culminating in the joyous celebration of Easter. Let us continue to seek ways in which we can come together to embrace this season with open hearts.

After 33 years of service Canon Simpson takes a bow

In the heart of the city, Christ Church Cathedral has long been a beacon of spiritual and musical excellence. As Bob Simpson, Canon for Music, retires after an illustrious 33-year tenure, the community gathers to celebrate his remarkable contributions that have resonated far beyond the Cathedral's walls.

Bob Simpson's impact on Christ Church Cathedral is immeasurable, weaving music into the very fabric of the congregation's spiritual life. Under his leadership, the Cathedral's music program has flourished, drawing people from all walks of life into a shared experience of faith and harmony.

Gary Smith, who served as an organist under Bob's guidance, reflects, "My time as Bob's organist at the Cathedral was the greatest musical/spiritual experience of



my life — something I was not expecting to happen." This sentiment echoes throughout **SIMPSON, page 5**

Jazz and Worship: An Interview with musician Paul English



The Paul English Quartet brought the sacred sounds of jazz to the Jazz Mass on January 11.

The New Year brought a new reason to celebrate on Marathon Sunday as Christ Church Cathedral welcomed back the Jazz Mass. In a candid conversation, musician Paul English shares his insights on the unique appeal of incorporating jazz into church services, drawing from his extensive experience and deep passion for music.

INTERVIEW, page 3

OUR CATHEDRAL FAMILY

We Celebrate with

☞ Newly Baptized: Charles Bullington, Hattie Reynolds Hawk, John Henry Alexander Lehfelddt

We extend heartfelt sympathy

☞ to the family of William Reno Davison who passed away on October 31, 2025. Reno is spouse to Kelly Davison and father to Ford Davison.

☞ to the family of Adelaide Lummis who passed away on November 11, 2025. Adelaide is daughter to David and Susan Lummis.

☞ to the family of Carol Chiles Ballard who passed away on November 16, 2025. Carol is spouse to Les Ballard; mother to Leslie Ballard Hull, and grandmother to Katherine Ballard Hull.

☞ to the family of Clifford Polk who passed away on December 5, 2025. Clifford is father to Elizabeth Goza.

☞ to the family of Gary Richard Krause who passed away on December 13, 2025. Gary is spouse to Elaine Krause.

☞ to the family of William Truitt Hallmark who passed away on December 14, 2025. Truitt is spouse to Pat Hallmark and father to Kristi Smith.

☞ to the family of The Rev. John Robert Pitts who passed away on December 23, 2025. John is spouse to Bain Pitts.

☞ to the family of Judy Stewart McEnany who passed away on January 3, 2026. Judy is spouse to Mike McEnany and mother to Michael McEnany.

☞ to the family of member Rigoberto Ojeda who passed away on January 23, 2026. Rigoberto is spouse to Sandra Ojeda.

☞ to the family of member Philip Sidney Bentlif who passed away on February 4, 2026. Philip is spouse to Wendy Bentlif.

☞ to the family of Fernando Deulofeu who passed away on February 13, 2026. Fernando is brother to David Deulofeu.

The flowers on the Cathedral Altar

☞ on January 25 the flowers on the Cathedral Altar are given to the glory of God in loving memory of her parents Mary John and Ralph Spence by Judy Tate.

☞ on February 1 The flowers on the Cathedral are given to the glory of God in loving memory of Scott Cawley by his family.

☞ on February 8 The flowers on the Cathedral Altar are given to the glory of God and in honor of the Cathedral's Vestry.

☞ on February 15 The flowers on the Cathedral Altar are given to the glory of God with gratitude for the blessings of family and friends by Carol and Tim Nielsen.

☞ on February 22 The flowers on the Cathedral Altar are given to the glory of God in loving memory of her parents Mary John and Ralph Spence by Judy Tate.



Actor Timothy Eric in The Ensemble Theater's production of *The Bluest Eye*

Cathedral Sees: *The Bluest Eye* comes to life onstage



On Friday, February 6, a group of 27 parishioners joined the Cathedral Sees event at the Ensemble Theatre's staged adaptation of Toni Morrison's *The Bluest Eye*. Ann Miller explains that when the text was chosen, and the group found out that the Ensemble Theatre was staging the play, they knew that it had to be part of the Cathedral Sees series. Attendees followed up the performance, on February 8, with a discussion group about the themes in the book and the play. Part

of the magic of bringing a book to life within a staged adaptation is the strength of its characters and the actors who portray them. *The Bulletin* had the privilege of catching up with one of the actors from *The Bluest Eye* to find out from the stage perspective what this impact of this story truly is. Timothy Eric is one of the most sought-after actors in the Houston Theatre scene, and in *The Bluest Eye*, he brings gravitas and the voice of a hard-won reason to the character of Soaphead Church.

The Bulletin: Why do you feel you were drawn to this play and your character?

Timothy Eric: I think Soaphead Church is a town crier of sorts, or perhaps the fool of the play: quietly overlooked and under-appreciated to some degree. At any rate, he is a realized individual in that he accepts the darker, more unsavory parts of his personality and faces life with a grounded pride in himself and his place in the world. This sets him as the opposite of Pecola who is just trying to find such a place. These opposites are key to an albeit tacit turn in her life. He is the one person in the play who listens to Pecola's darkest truths and deepest wishes and *does something* about what she wants without judgment. So, for me personally, I believe that I have something positive to share with the world and there are Pecola's in my life that I must attend to. Toni Morrison's play beckons me to really listen to the needs of others (particularly young people); calls to me to listen with my heart and give what I know I can give, despite any doubts I may have in such endeavors. I have been on myself to be a better Uncle and this play answered the call.

The Bulletin: What do you hope the audience will take away from the performances and this production?

Timothy Eric: As extraordinary as the story is, I believe everybody can see themselves in this play. To some degree, we have all been "outdoors", victimized, used, exploited, and discarded. As such, we have pushed down, buried, and masked over our scars just to get by. I hope this play gives space to its audiences to revisit our younger, betrayed selves and let those hurts go. We deserve to go on in peace and happiness, resolved with our past and free from our burdens. I do not mean to say that the hurts dissolve. I do mean to say that the baggage can be beautiful when seen with unburdened eyes. Our baggage can become part of the brilliant fire that burns in each one of us - lighting our way. You can't get rid of baggage, but you can reorganize and clean up the room!

At-Risk Youth: Celebrating 25 Years

In the fall of 2000, co-founders Margot Cater and Barbara Manly saw a brilliant student at risk of dropping out due to a financial crisis. They stepped in, the student stayed in school and eventually graduated college, and a vital mission was born. Today, we celebrate the 25th anniversary of At-Risk Youth (ARY), an outreach ministry of Christ Church Cathedral that has become a lifeline for families across Greater Houston.

Over the last quarter-century, ARY has achieved what many thought impossible:

- 6,000+ children kept in the classroom.
- 3,000+ families saved from homelessness

or utility disconnection.

- \$1.7 million in direct financial assistance distributed.

At-Risk Youth celebrates an 88% success rate—citing that the vast majority of families assisted remain stable a year later.

What makes ARY unique is its 100% volunteer-based model. Supported by six dedicated volunteers—Linda Murphy, Margaret Gwynne, Susan Taylor, Erin McMillin, Scottie McCord, and Margot Cater—the ministry operates with zero overhead. Every dollar donated goes directly to landlords or utility companies to stabilize a child's home life. In a world of complex bureaucracy, ARY is a "first responder," often providing help within 24 to 48 hours.

As the cost of living rises, the average crisis grant has grown from \$300 to \$1,200. To meet this increasing need, ARY has set an annual fundraising goal of \$150,000. Leading this effort is volunteer Erin McMillin, who



Child's drawing given to At-Risk Youth in gratitude for the assistance provided. Photo: courtesy At-Risk Youth project.

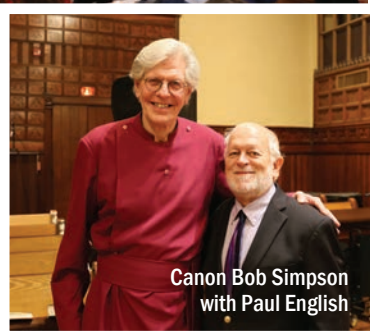


At-Risk Youth at Christmas at the Cathedral

is working to forge new partnerships with foundations and individual donors. As co-founder Margot Cater notes, ARY provides a high "return on investment" by preventing the long-term trauma of eviction and school disruption. By assisting families at their most vulnerable, we remind them that their community cares deeply for their children's future.



Jazz Mass Reception



Canon Bob Simpson with Paul English



The Paul English Quartet members during the Jazz Mass

INTERVIEW, from cover

The Bulletin: As a musician, what appeal is there to playing a Jazz Mass service?

Paul English: *There are many mansions in my father's house and many genres of music to inspire, bring comfort, and joy. Jazz is one such genre that offers a unique blend of spontaneity and expression, making it a perfect fit for the spiritual setting of a Mass. It allows for a personal and communal experience that resonates deeply with the congregation.*

The Bulletin: Do you feel Jazz, as an art form, lends itself to worship and praise?

Paul English: *Absolutely. Jazz has its origins in the church. It's only natural for it to return. The improvisational nature of jazz mirrors the personal journey of faith, allowing for an authentic expression of worship and praise. As Duke Ellington beautifully put it, "Every man prays in his own language, and God understands it all."*

The Bulletin:

How do you and your collaborators choose the music to be played in the Jazz Mass?

Paul English:

Our selection process is guided by a shared love for music and an understanding of its power to elevate the spirit. We often draw inspiration from greats like John Coltrane, whose famous exclamation, "Praise God! Praise God!" captures the essence of our purpose. To love music is to love God, and our choices reflect that love. As Louis Armstrong famously said, "Love, baby. Oh, yeah."

Through this interview, and The Dean's Hour prior to the Jazz Mass, both Paul English and Dean Katz highlighted the profound connection between jazz and spiritual worship, demonstrating how music can bridge the gap between the sacred and the everyday, creating a space for reflection and joy.

Living Seasonally at the Cathedral



Above: 2026 Annual Parish Meeting.

Below: Laying of hands on the Rev. Canon Luz Montes as she began duties as Canon for Latino Ministries.



Above: Reception honoring the Rev. Canon Luz Montes as Canon for Latino Ministries

Below: Chairman Bruce McDonald gives the Stewardship Report at the 2026 Annual Parish Meeting.



Above: Dean Katz welcomes Pádraig Ó Tuama to the Robert C. Stuart Lenten Series.



SIMPSON, from cover

the community, highlighting the profound effect Bob's mentorship has had on those who have worked alongside him. Jim Murdaugh thoughtfully shares, "Bob's tenure has been a rich, learning experience — musically, emotionally, theologically, and intellectually. Our Cathedral music tradition is pretty unique, and I devoutly hope we can continue building and maintaining a vital Anglican choral tradition, and provide music and worship that draws our city to us."

Referencing the effect that the Cathedral's

Music program has had on the community around us, under Bob's leadership, Jim adds, "As a cathedral in the midst of the city, we have that artistic and religious ob-

**PALM SUNDAY EVENSONG
CONDUCTED BY THE CANON
FOR MUSIC ROBERT L.
SIMPSON**

**Sunday, March 29, 5 p.m.,
Cathedral**

ligation." Bob's influence has indeed extended beyond the spiritual, shaping a vibrant cultural landscape within the city.



Valentina Huang, our Cathedral organist, has worked with Bob for the past year and a half, and describes the deep impact he has had on her growth as a church musician. "Working under Bob has placed such a significant impact on me. He helped me grow in a way I believe no other person could. When you are working for the best, you learn a lot already just from watching his daily routines — how he conducts choir rehearsals, how he advocates for the music program, how he handles difficult conversations," she continues, "For every anthem we sing, Bob never fails to bring along every member of the choirs to preach through music making. Every Sunday, he strives for the integrity of the service by making sure every moment of the music that we provide is relevant and purposeful. He conducts with his heart and with his love of liturgy."

—Valentina Huang

As the Cathedral community prepares to bid farewell to Bob, they do so with gratitude for the enduring legacy he leaves behind. His dedication to fostering an inclusive and enriching musical environment has not only enhanced worship experiences but has also forged deep connections among the congregation. Bob Simpson's legacy will undoubtedly inspire future generations, ensuring that the Cathedral remains a cornerstone of musical and spiritual excellence in the heart of the city.

The Bulletin invites you to follow along for updates and articles honoring Bob in upcoming issues.

Cathedral Choir hosts inspired Cabaret: Bowlers & Berets

February 7 brought an enchanting evening as the Cathedral Choir presented Cabaret 2026, themed "Bowlers & Berets: Music from London to Paris."

This spectacular event provided an immersive experience featuring vibrant entertainment from our choir, dining, and a warm sense of community. Guests were treated to a cocktail hour and a carefully curated silent auction. The evening then transitioned at 8:00 p.m. to a seated dinner and a captivating performance of



Lambeth Walk by Howard Rhoades and our choir. The Choir Cabaret 2026 featured a dazzling array of performances that captivated the audience from start to finish.

Among the evening's highlights was the enchanting duet by Chelsea and Matthew Taylor, who delivered a breathtaking rendition of "La Vie en Rose." Their harmonious voices and emotional delivery brought an evocative touch of Parisian romance to the Reynolds Hall. Another standout moment came when Bob Simpson, our esteemed Canon for Music, took the stage to perform "I Am the Very Model of a Modern Major General." His lively and precise delivery of this Gilbert and Sullivan classic set the tone for the second act, showcasing his extraordinary talent and leaving the crowd in awe. The audience responded with a thunderous applause, a testament to Canon Simpson's charismatic stage presence, impeccable musical prowess, and impressive faux mustache.

Throughout the evening, the choir's varied performances celebrated the rich tapestry of musical traditions from both sides of the English Channel. The Choir Cabaret 2026 was not merely an event; it was a journey through music and culture that resonated deeply with everyone present, reminding us of the universal power of music to unite and inspire. Proceeds from the evening, including ticket sales and auction bids, benefit the Choir Travel Scholarship Fund. This summer, our choir will embark on a tour of England and France, serving as musical ambassadors for Christ Church Cathedral at such stops as Southwark Cathedral in London and The American Cathedral in Paris. Join us in supporting their journey and celebrating the universal language of music.

ON OUR PATH TOGETHER IN 2026: HONORING MLK, ANNUAL PARISH RETREAT, CHOIR CABARET, SHROVE TUESDAY, & ASH WEDNESDAY



Cathedral Music Director Search Committee Update

The Search Committee tasked with selecting the Cathedral's next Music Director has provided The Bulletin with an update as to their progress and timeline for their search to date. The Bulletin thanks Flo Ray and the Committee for sharing the following information with the congregation.

The search is underway for a Music Director to succeed Bob Simpson when he retires as Canon for Music in Summer 2026. The Committee has been meeting regularly since January and is keeping to a fairly rigorous timeline. The job description is posted on websites for the American Guild of Organists and the Association of Anglican Musicians as well as the Cathedral website and other locations. You can also find it online on our homepage. Thus far the response has been encouraging and the group is kept busy reviewing applications and listening to

recordings of choirs and organ music that have been submitted.

We are hoping to narrow the field over the next month and begin interviewing applicants. The process will include personal visits and auditions on the organ and with a choir. Although we are moving along, the opportunity still exists for people to make recommendations or submit ideas about what they think is important for our new music director. If you have any suggestions, please send them directly to the committee at: search@christchurchcathedral.org.



Lenten Series



The Rev. Dr. Matthew I. Potts

FORGIVENESS AND JUSTICE

When, if ever, are we obliged to forgive? What forms should forgiveness take in the aftermath of harm? Does forgiveness foster peace at the expense of justice? In this presentation, Matthew Ichihashi Potts will offer an account of forgiveness rooted in a New Testament vision of justice, and will suggest important implications for our own times and lives.

LENTEN SPEAKER

March 1, 10 a.m.



The Rev. Dr. Jeehei Park

WHAT'S LOVE GOT TO DO WITH IT? LOVE AS AN ETHIC OF BELONGING

Love, when it comes to belonging, can never be a "second-hand emotion." Paul knew this well as he travelled to build and strengthen communities of faith among the earliest believers of Christ. We'll explore chapters 12–13 of Romans, one of his most well-known letters, to discover how Christian love takes shape in practice and how it can help us make our church a place of genuine welcome and deep fellowship.

LENTEN SPEAKER

March 8, 10 a.m.



Dr. Lisa Kimball

BELONGING MATTERS: FAITH BEYOND SUNDAY MORNING

As baptized Christians in the Episcopal Church promises are made at the font that change us forever. But too often baptism is understood as an event rather than a threshold ushering us into a new life of belonging in Christ. When people of all ages and abilities are equipped to live into their God-given vocations, they experience and can share abundant

LENTEN SPEAKER

March 15, 10 a.m.

life in Christ, transform local communities and change the world. In 2026 it matters that in baptism we renounce evil and all sinful desires that draw us from the love of God. It matters what we promise to put our whole trust in Christ and to love with abandon. Let's (re)claim our superpower as baptized Christians!



Chris Valka

WHAT PRISON TEACHES US ABOUT BELONGING

Most economies, cities and countries measure the standard of living – quality of life – by a job report, which makes a lot of sense. If people are working, then it leads to believe people are producing and thriving, but as people of faith we also know that we are not defined by our doings – we are human beings. Thus, while jobs are an important

LENTEN SPEAKER

March 22, 10 a.m.

measurement of our dignity, they are not the end itself, but the means to a greater end: belonging. Join us as we explore our dignity from the perspective of those who have lost and found their dignity in prison.

LENTEN CALENDAR OF EVENTS

Visit christchurchcathedral.org/events to learn more.

▲ Registration required

× Registration closed

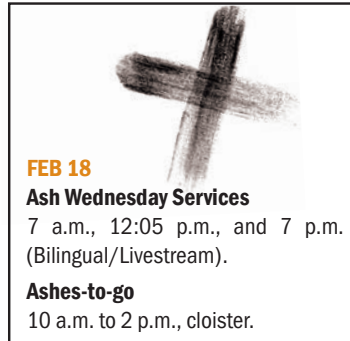
FEBRUARY

FEB 17

TUE

Shrove Tuesday Pancake Supper

6–8 p.m., Reynolds Hall. Food, music, and family fun.



FEB 18

Ash Wednesday Services

7 a.m., 12:05 p.m., and 7 p.m. (Bilingual/Livestream).

Ashes-to-go

10 a.m. to 2 p.m., cloister.

FEB 21

SAT

Pádraig Ó Tuama Event – Poetry, Conflict and Reconciliation Workshop and Retreat ▲

10 a.m. to noon, \$35.

Pádraig Ó Tuama Event – An Afternoon with Pádraig Ó Tuama Poetry Reading

5–6 p.m. Poetry reading and book signing with Brazos Bookstore.

FEB 22

SUN

Lenten Speakers Series

10 a.m., Reynolds Hall. Pádraig Ó Tuama, The Borders of Belonging.

Being With: Parents Edition ▲

3 p.m. Kick-off event.

Lenten Evensong

5 p.m., Cathedral.

MARCH

MARCH 1

SUN

Lenten Speaker Series

10 a.m., Reynolds Hall. The Rev. Dr. Matthew Ichihashi Potts, Forgiveness and Justice.

MARCH 8

SUN

Lenten Speaker Series

10 a.m., Reynolds Hall. Rev. Dr. Jeehai Park, Love as an Ethic of Belonging.

MARCH 15

SUN

Lenten Speaker Series

10 a.m., Reynolds Hall. Dr. Lisa Kimball: Belonging Matters, Faith Beyond Sunday Morning.

MARCH 21

SAT

Join or Die Film Screening ▲

4–6 p.m., Screening and discussion.

MARCH 22

SUN

Lenten Speaker Series

10 a.m., Reynolds Hall. Chris Valka, What Prison Teaches Us About Belonging.

MARCH 29

SUN

Palm Sunday

Observances at all services commemorating Jesus' entry into Jerusalem.

Palm Sunday Organ Recital and Evensong

4:15 p.m. organ recital, 5 p.m. Evensong with the Cathedral Choir. With incense.

APRIL

APRIL 2

THU

Maudy Thursday

12:05 p.m., Footwashing, 7 p.m., Footwashing and Stripping of the Altar, bilingual.

APRIL 3

FRI

Good Friday

12:05 p.m. service and 7 p.m. Stations of the Cross, A Migrant's Way, bilingual.



April 4

sat

Easter Vigil

8–10 p.m., Cathedral. The first Eucharist of Easter. With incense.

April 5

sun

Easter Day

7 a.m. Eucharist, Rite I, with hymns. 9 a.m. Eucharist, Rite II.

10 a.m. Flowering of the Cross and Parish Easter Hat Photo, Bishop's Courtyard.

11 a.m. Eucharist, Rite I, with incense.

1 p.m. Eucharist, Rite II, en español.

5 p.m. Eucharist, Rite II.

WEEKLY IN LENT

MONDAY-THURSDAY

Noonday Prayer

12:05 p.m., Golding Chapel.

FRIDAY

Stations of the Cross

12:05 p.m., Cathedral.



CHRIST CHURCH CATHEDRAL

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The Diocese of Texas Global Partnerships in Mission

TRIP TO COSTA RICA

Dean Katz and Marcia Quintanilla shared photos from their travels with the Global Partnerships in Mission delegation to the Episcopal Diocese of Costa Rica in February.

