

MY MOUNTAIN TOP INTRODUCTION TO MICHAEL CURRY OUR NEXT PRESIDING BISHOP

By The Rev. Gary Eichelberger

Back in the summer of 2003, when I had just begun my career as a young lawyer, I had the opportunity to attend the General Convention of the Episcopal Church in Minneapolis. I was invited as a member of the first class of a new mission initiative of the Episcopal Church – the Young Adult Service Corps, through which I served in Zimbabwe during 2000 and 2001.

Despite what those of you familiar with the history of recent General Conventions might think, my most powerful memory from that General Convention has nothing to do with controversy – instead my most powerful memory is of a sermon that I heard. It was there, in Minneapolis, that I first had the opportunity to hear Michael Curry preach. Thankfully, it was not the last.

At that time, Michael Curry was just three years into his tenure as the Bishop of the Diocese of North

Carolina. Unfortunately, though, for me at least, Bishop Curry had been elected Bishop of North Carolina one year after I had completed my graduate studies at Duke and moved away from North Carolina. As a result, I had no idea what I was missing until I was sitting in that large convention center ballroom over a thousand miles away from the Carolinas.

After Kacey and I moved back to North Carolina in 2006, I would have many more opportunities to hear Michael Curry preach. But, on that day, in 2003, I had no way of knowing that Bishop Curry would be my bishop some day, that he would eventually become a critical source of wisdom and prayer when I later entered into the process of discerning a call to ordained ministry, that he would, several years later, place his hands upon my brow and lead prayers for the Holy Spirit to make me a priest in God's church, and that he would, several



months later, be elected Presiding Bishop of the Episcopal Church. In hindsight, I can now name all of these as blessings.

Nonetheless, I will never forget the energy, spirit, and enthusiasm of that sermon back in the summer of 2003. It concluded with the following call to action:

*Don't be afraid of it. Don't be ashamed of it. Don't underestimate the power of God's love lived out. This is the Gospel. This is the good news. Here is our greatest strength. Here we can find healing, courage and grace. Here we find life for us and for the world. So come to the mountain. Come to the mountain of God's unchanging love. Come, there's room for us **all**. And all means **all**.*

And, then, Bishop Curry did what I have seen him do many times since: he launched into song. This time, he sang: "Go tell it on the mountains, over the hills and everywhere. God tell it on the mountains that Jesus Christ is born!" And, as I have also seen many times since, a room full of enlivened Episcopalians joined right in.

The Right Reverend Michael Bruce Curry

- Born March 13, 1953 in Chicago and grew up in Buffalo, NY
- Ordained to the priesthood in 1978 at St. Stephen's Episcopal Church in Winston-Salem, NC
- Served as a priest at Episcopal churches in NC, OH & MD
- Consecrated 11th Bishop of the Diocese of NC in 2000
- Elected to be the 27th Presiding Bishop of the Episcopal Church at General Convention on June 27, 2015 (installation will take place on All Saints' Day at the National Cathedral)
- Author of two books: *Crazy Christians: A Call to Follow Jesus* (2013) & *Songs My Grandma Sang* (2015)
- Married to Sharon Clement Curry and has two adult daughters, Rachel and Elizabeth