

The Virginia Theological Seminary

**Celebrating the Music of Appalachia in the Episcopal Church  
and Anglican Tradition: Mission, Evangelism, and Renewal**

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the Faculty of the Virginia Theological Seminary  
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Doctor of Ministry

by  
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## Dedication and Celebration

*The People of St. Thomas Episcopal Church, Elizabethton, Tennessee*  
The Diocese of East Tennessee, The Right Reverend Brian L. Cole, Bishop, 2017-  
“Welcome home.” The First Sunday of Advent, November 29, 2015

*The Doe River Ensemble of St. Thomas Episcopal Church, 2018-*  
“Whoever shows up.”

*The Reverend Doctor Peter John Gomes, 1942-2011*  
American Preacher and Theologian  
Harvard Divinity School and Minister, Memorial Church, Harvard University  
Cambridge, Massachusetts  
“Mr. Holder, more Gospel.”

*John Bell Carden Holder, 1924-2011*  
My father, a fine gospel music singer who let me travel along  
and with my mother, Ruth Scott Holder, 1929-2006, showed me the way of Love.  
Elizabethton, Tennessee

*The Reverend Jennifer Marie Phillips, D.Min.*  
Trusted guide, spirit of light and knowledge, and dear friend.  
Westwood, Massachusetts

and

*The Right Reverend Furman Charles Stough, D.Min., 1928-2004*  
VIII Bishop of Alabama, 1971-1988  
Teacher and builder of the “one holy catholic and apostolic Church”

# Chapter 1

## Introduction

### Christmas Midnight Mass, December 24-25, 2017

*The wind bloweth where it listeth, and thou hearest the sound thereof, but canst not tell whence it cometh, and whither it goeth: so is every one that is born of the Spirit.*

*The Gospel of John 3:8, The King James Bible*

The lights and sounds of St. Thomas Episcopal Church, 1861, welcomed a church-full at Christmas Midnight Mass in 2017. Beautiful church and people shined forth as one into “Old Town” Elizabethton, Tennessee in the heart of Appalachia. The Doe and Watauga Rivers, great, dark mountains outlining the winter sky, bright stars surrounded in a yet snowy-cold air. Christmas was at hand. Worshippers were expectant and open-eyed at nearly midnight.

#### ***“There’s a Sweet, Sweet Spirit in This Place”***

Beautiful children of different cultures lined up into procession-traditional Anglo, Latino, and African American. A group of talented musicians from throughout the City and its traditions began to sing “Sweet, Sweet Spirit” from the “Oratory” (some like to call it) in the rear area of the church, at the doors. The musicians, a pianist, two organists, and half-a-dozen or more singers began to raise their prayers and voices as “God prepared us to proclaim Jesus’ birth in song,” according to a locally renowned African American

whose voice has “saved the souls of about half the county,” according to one of the other musicians. “There’s a sweet, sweet spirit in this place,” the group sang on, “And I know that it’s the Spirit of the Lord!”

The congregation now crowding into the beautiful church began to sing and sway along. “Sway in the spirit,” one faithful descried it. Little children processed “Bebé Jesu” to the Altar. The people were audible in their adoration of both Jesus and all of the children. We then struck into “O Come All Ye Faithful.” St. Thomas opened the annual Christmas celebration proclaiming the birth of Christ in what would be a liturgy like never before. I had arrived back to my family’s tenth generation home of Elizabethton and Carter County only two years before. St. Thomas’ future was not assured. The Bishop bid me, “Let’s give it a try.” Christmas Midnight Mass 2017 would be a critical turning point for St. Thomas and its congregation, now beginning to grow and celebrate new life.

The musicians joined beautifully in “Sweet, Sweet Spirit” preparing themselves and all of us for the glory of Christmas. “There was such unity and Love that night,” a young couple expressed some time later, “We all felt it, in family and among total strangers!” St. Thomas began a great celebration. The feeling of anticipation and joy



became palpable. A Free Holiness<sup>1</sup> musician and preacher, Joey Hildebran, a child prodigy on the piano from across the Carter County mountains into Morganton, North Carolina, was responsible for introducing St. Thomas to this beautiful, spirit-filled piece of music. “Joey” and his husband, Bishop Patrick Potts, a Pentecostal bishop, and I had met at the time of the tragedies when forty-nine persons were killed and fifty-one wounded at the Pulse Nightclub in Orlando, Florida on June 12, 2016. We participated at a several-hundred person vigil in nearby Johnson City at the City’s Founder’s Park. I later visited, preached, and led prayers at their church, “Landmark Free Holiness.” They and their beautiful family became frequent guests at St. Thomas. We became good, trusted friends. I am godparent to one of their four adopted children.

I asked Joey what he would be playing as a “Gospel Responsorial.” He responded, “Father Tim, I will know as the Gospel closes. God tells me what to sing.” I responded, “Joey, we Episcopalians appreciate a little more order than that.” Joey stated, “Well, I guess we’ll just have to learn from each other!” I closed, “Joey, I trust and love you and Patrick very much, so I will trust in the Lord and you on this one.”

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<sup>1</sup> Holiness congregations are fast-growing across Appalachia. They are largely Holiness and Pentecostal in practice, sometimes fiercely independent, located from poor rural and city neighborhoods to storefronts and out-of-the way areas. Free Holiness are among a large number of independent congregations, traditional to Appalachia, as discussed by Deborah Vansau McCauley in *Appalachia Mountain Religion: A History* (Urbana and Chicago: University of Illinois Press, 1995, Chapter 13), “How an Independent Holiness Church Became a Major Denomination,” 276-310. Local congregations are of all kinds, left and right politically, ‘Black, white, some brown,’ LGBTQ friendly and not, literalists scripturally and others ‘liberationist’ (but not friendly to the name), some more Pentecostal and others less or not at all, ‘holiness’ and turned-away Baptists of all varieties (there are many). As for our good brother, “Joey,” at St. Thomas, I always describe him as absolutely, “free” and undeniably, “holy.”

I was uneasy. Christmas Midnight Mass was one of our biggest, most carefully planned liturgies of the year. It has become what one of our new, younger leaders calls, “St. Thomas’ ‘Gold Standard’... Don’t touch it.” The parish was beginning to turn a few corners experiencing new ways and new days. Everybody’s opinion was important.

***“For unto you is born this day in the City of David a Saviour which is Christ the Lord.”***

***Luke 2:11-14, The Holy Bible, King James Version, 1611***

I finished with the Christmas Gospel in English and Spanish, St. Thomas celebrating bi-lingually for two years by 2017, and I looked over to Joey. His eyes opened wide looking towards me. I nodded my head for him to sing. Then began a beautiful rolling forth of the piano keys powerfully introducing the song to come. An amateur musician, I can only describe it as a “New Orleans roll.” Joey performed what I would name a “Mountain roll.” There was great reverence yet exaltation throughout the congregation. People sang, joined hands and moved together, wept, expressed great happiness, embraced, and praised what one sister described as the “Living, amazing God!” Joey closed singing the words known well in Appalachia for years:

*“Oh beautiful star the hope, the grace  
For the redeem of good and blessed  
Yonder in glory where the crowd is one  
Jesus is now the star divine  
Brighter and brighter He will shine  
Oh beautiful star of Bethlehem shine on*

*Oh beautiful star of Bethlehem shine on.”<sup>2</sup>*

Christmas Midnight Mass 2017 revealed possibilities and challenges for St. Thomas Church. That evening presented opportunities for worship not merely as a performance, but as a deepening of spirit and relationship with our home of Appalachia through the beauty of music and liturgy. Christmas Midnight Mass 2017 blessed St. Thomas with the grace of God in answering *if and how* the music of Appalachia might be faithfully incorporated and, indeed, embodied into the life of the community. The midnight service was the inspiration for this thesis, *Celebrating the Music of Appalachia in the Episcopal Church and Anglican Tradition: Mission, Evangelism, and Renewal*.

Inspired and then motivated to welcome more Appalachian music<sup>3</sup> to St. Thomas, the community decided to offer additional services celebrating and appreciating the music and cultures of Appalachia, its many artists and musicians locally. We would discover and be discovered by more and more worshipers just outside our doors. Opportunity and beautiful worship would overwhelm us. The opportunities for a serious consideration of regularly inviting local musicians to lead song and Gospel witness blessed the people of St. Thomas and our community of Elizabethton and beyond. Mission and evangelism

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<sup>2</sup>“Few people today realize the popular Christmas song “Beautiful Star of Bethlehem” was written by the late R. Fisher Boyce in a Middle Tennessee milk barn in the early part of the 20th century,” according to Sheila Selby, “Hillbilly at Harvard Christmas Extravaganza,” December 24, 2013, [wordpress.com](http://wordpress.com). Boyce, 1887-1968, a Middle Tennessee farmer, wrote the song (published in 1940) in a milk barn one rainy night to celebrate his first wedding anniversary at Christmas.

<sup>3</sup> “Appalachian music” is used in this work as a term both generally and popularly describing music widely appreciated throughout Appalachia including texts and traditions inherited throughout history over cultures and time though not necessarily originating from nor the exclusive ‘property’ of the region. The pride and honor of place and locality in music - its origin, story, familiarity, and resonation in general - are strong and abiding characteristics of the people and traditions of the Appalachian mountains.

practically fell into our laps. Hearts brightened and the music so resonant in Appalachia became increasingly a great beacon providing hope and direction for the future. The beautiful night and celebration of Christmas, earliest morning, December 25, 2017 opened the way.

*"...Shine on, shine on."*

## Chapter 2

### The Argument

#### **Celebrating the Music of Appalachia in the Episcopal Church and Anglican Tradition: Mission, Evangelism, and Renewal**

*“Father Tim, where did all of this come from? I have never experienced anything like this.” So asked a young, new member of St. Thomas Episcopal Church excitedly calling in the early morning hours following Christmas Midnight Mass December 24-25, 2017. Appalachian musicians joined in the Episcopal liturgy as worshippers, musicians, and singers from Episcopal and Anglican, African American spiritual, Pentecostal, Holiness, and Latinx traditions from the throughout community gathered for festivities.*

*“I hope we can always celebrate this way,” said the young man that Christmas morning, who had come to St. Thomas earlier that fall from the Southern Baptist tradition. A thoughtful, intelligent young professional, he was making important life decisions searching for a spiritual home, community, and beginning a young family. Since those early days at St. Thomas, the young man has brought others to the Church, including a brother. He has become a vestry member and leader of the congregation, married a beautiful young woman who leads bilingual Sunday School. The couple also serve as the first godparents from St. Thomas to two young Latin children, “Alexander” and “Kelvin.” helping care for and raise them, both acolytes. The young family celebrated the arrival of their own child, baptized “Jack Wayne” only last year.*

*I accurately stated the answer to the young man’s question that Christmas morning, “From many places.”*

#### ***Thesis Description and Reason***

Traditional music of Christian faithful in Southern Appalachia offers hope and richness, greater community, and life for Episcopal churches throughout the region and beyond. As St. Thomas’ Christmas Eve celebration in 2017 revealed, musicians whose

music is drawn from the Christian traditions in Appalachia offer Episcopal/Anglican parishes opportunities for renewal of spirit, faith, and community. The music traditions of Appalachia are many. Broadly, recognizing that diversity, what we might call “Appalachian gospel” offers musical settings, lyrics, instruments, and voices that make sense of Christian faith in the lived experience of the people. This is what is valuable for St. Thomas and other mainline, Protestant congregations to know and celebrate. The formal English of *The Book of Common Prayer* and the musical texts and settings in English tradition are sometimes experienced as remote, even aloof from language of prayer and religious experience. St. Thomas and other such congregations, importantly, have and need members from across cultures that reflect, understand, and care for the communities of which they are a part, sharing their ideas, experience, spirit, and music.

The literature and music of Appalachia abound. Great schools, centers of learning, study, and practice of Appalachian old-music (ballads, tunes, and melodies), Bluegrass, and country, are celebrated throughout the region, nationally, and internationally in the twenty-first century. Both the literature and music of Appalachia are honored, respected, and the music especially, cherished and celebrated. Bluegrass itself has become a prominent genre of music worldwide. History, story, a sense of place, honor, joy, and great pride and celebration bless young and old, traditional and not, throughout Appalachia and well beyond. What I have come to call, “Liturgical Bluegrass” is an example of great opportunity and spiritual blessing. Might there be a dawning in St. Thomas’ and the Episcopal Church’s tradition of what at least a few

related to this study have followed in calling, “Liturgical Bluegrass?” This thesis describes and proposes just such a thing.

Music is an expression of faith itself. Music is as well a statement and story of identity, spirit, and love of oneself and community in hard times and good, for loss and for celebration. Appalachia knows both. One singer from a gospel quartet said to me years ago, “Music is my faith. This music (Appalachian gospel) takes me to God.” So it is music that is a central “meeting point” connecting and enriching Appalachian and Episcopal/Anglican Traditions.

Local Appalachian genres of religious music can be celebrated positively and regularly by Episcopalians not as entertainment or show, but as worship. Word, sacrament, our children and young people, local folkways and love of creation and our home all come together in liturgical celebrations here in our mountain home. Music at St. Thomas shares more today in the heart and spirit of Appalachia. St. Thomas offers a wonderful meeting place and nurturing-physically, historically, and spiritually-for Appalachian and Episcopal/Anglican music traditions, old and new. We celebrate all peoples appreciatively, spiritually and thankfully at “Street and Altar” as honored Anglican tradition describes it.<sup>4</sup>

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<sup>4</sup> Anglican clergy of successive, late nineteenth century generations of the Oxford Movement carried or played no fiddles or hammered dulcimers into the slums of Industrial England; however, ‘Word and Sacrament’ were proclaimed throughout the slums and tenements with no heat, water, and straw for beds, homes of squalor and deprivation where poor Irish could barely subsist. See Chapter VI, “Pioneers in the Parish,” Geoffrey Rowell, *The Vision Glorious: Themes and Personalities of the Catholic Revival in Anglicanism* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1983), 116-140. These loyal priests went as far as necessary to serve the people of the community, and join together “Street and Altar,” as it came to be called. “You have both ‘street and altar’ are you have neither,” I have often preached and written, and as discussed later in Chapter 6, “Learnings” of this Thesis Project. We most essentially see, know, and celebrate Christ in one another.

St. Thomas and the Episcopal Church beyond can not only appreciate but integrate gospel music into liturgical celebration enriching what is already present which is the rich and beloved tradition of the Episcopal Church and Anglican tradition. Such a union offers great possibilities for worship, evangelism, and spiritual growth for all. Appreciating and learning local music and genre can and has already meant greater spirit and life for the Episcopal Church as at St. Thomas and beyond.

The Episcopal Church and Anglican tradition is home to the *King James Bible*. As that evidences, Anglicanism was brought itself into existence by a people who claimed the vernacular. As Anglicanism became a world-wide Communion it grew as a faith spoken in the language of many cultures and peoples, regionally, in the new world, and across continents and many cultures. The appreciation and integration of the music of Appalachia in the Episcopal Church and Anglican worship is a means for Episcopalians of Southern and Central Appalachia to become who they are as Episcopalian and Appalachian and to support, celebrate, and invite others likewise.

Challenges for churches in understanding and incorporating music multiculturally are real. The goal is not so much as to appropriate, but to appreciate in mutual endeavor and worship. A one-event, one-season or concert series on the lawn may entertain, but a performance is not worship. For starters, exposure and knowledge about Appalachia and an appreciation and understanding for the persons and constituencies that make up diverse communities throughout the region are required. And most significantly, we seek and offer deepening relationship and enterprise with the musicians, artists, and those who encounter worship with others, familiar and stranger. We are called to identify and reflect



upon the commonalities of faith traditions. We grow and see new life as we understand and more fully and meaningfully appreciate shared history.

The relationship of musicians invited by music, expression, passion, and ability unveils often heretofore unimagined vistas for endeavor and celebration. Episcopalians, earlier Anglicans and Appalachians, after all, share history in the Southern Uplands or “Highlands” from England and the Isles. This is evident in our hymnodies from “Dr. Watts,” Wesleyan traditions, and the great preacher George Whitefield’s revivals from the eighteenth century. All of this laid foundation into later eighteenth and nineteenth centuries for pioneers settling new frontiers throughout Appalachia into a “Great Awakening” and the Revivalism of the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries. The Episcopal Church’s establishment and development was alongside great tent revivals and camp meetings. Typically, however, in the South and Appalachia, Episcopal churches began on plantations and farms and eventually in towns and cities both the deep South and mountain South.

The independence of the colonies and frontier were an outgrowth of the religious independence of early America. King George III was no friend to the revolutionaries. We in Appalachia—heirs of Kings Mountain and frontier revolutionaries<sup>5</sup>—are still proud today of victories over the tyranny and rule of English monarchy. Those early

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<sup>5</sup> Some 1,100 frontier volunteers marched from Sycamore Shoals in present day Carter County, Tennessee in 1780 to fight and defeat the armies of King George III in the decisive Battle of Kings Mountain which historians regard as the decisive Southern victory of the American Revolution. Bordering North Carolina was an English Colony, Tennessee and its predecessors decidedly not.

Episcopalians as sons and daughters of the Church of England were often slow to settle in the frontier and hinterlands.

Early frontier folk entered America's "first frontier," the Ohio Valley, what we call the Central and Southern Appalachians and Blue Ridge today and mountains of present day West Virginia, from the colonies "over the mountains" (East and North) and "into the mountains" to what would become Tennessee by the close of the eighteenth century. There were many Englishmen and women along with Scots and Irish mostly Protestant. They knew well the Anglican tradition, having escaped the homeland, leaving more formal and ritualistic liturgies for a personal religion with little prescribed prayer and certainly no acclamation or prayer of allegiance to a king or prelate. The hymns and music of Watts, the Wesleys, and others were very familiar, many memorized. Many are shared today in Episcopal, Baptist, Presbyterian, and other Christian hymnals.

The Anglicans were mostly left behind in port cities such as Savannah and Charleston maintaining 'high' and formal tradition—"citified" as one can still hear Episcopal liturgy itself described. The pioneers would venture up the rivers and trails into the mountains taking and developing their own traditions many without the possibility if desire for educated clergy of the 'established' church.

The music, while itself steeped in the old Western European traditions, would grow and adapt to new days and new places. A fine old English hymn, for example, would be heard to the strings of what the mountaineers would eventually call "fiddles." An occasional wood flute—hand-crafted—would accompany strings. Instruments such

as African drum and, later, the “Black banjo” created by early slave peoples, eventually joined early settlers with mandolin, guitars, and more fiddles. If you did not have anything else, what would be called, ‘shape-note’—voice only-singing— would often be heard providing harmony and song for white folk. The Black folk would commonly be led in ‘call-and-response’ by a lead voice or farm-hand.

The old hymns endured steadfastly through the eighteenth century and many today. England has been rightly called the “mother country” for Episcopalians. It also must be regarded likewise for the multiple churches and traditions that would develop into a new day in a new society and country. The music was interlocking joining religious traditionalists and reformers alike. The old hymns and carols of European tradition would join in use by all “sorts and kinds” beginning in early American experience as white and Black peoples entered the territories and colonies became the United States of America.

Understanding and sharing our history across boundaries is the opportunity of the Spirit, the mission of God, and vocation of the Church, and the gift of evangelism. Sharing one’s sense of the Gospel and, in sharing, listening to one’s own sense of grace, is to experience a deepened and enlarged sense of the Gospel. A great teacher of the catholicity of mission and faith, Aidan Kavanagh, said it well, “discourse in faith is carried on not by concepts and propositions nearly so much as in the vastly complex vocabulary of experiences had, prayers said, sights seen, smells smelled, words said and heard and responded to, emotions controlled and released, sins committed and repented, children born and loved ones buried, and in many other ways no one can count or always

account for.”<sup>6</sup> Particularly the works of Kavanagh and Roland Allen, an English priest, missionary, and author, a century before, liturgical and missiological theologians, provide foundational theology and practical commentary for the purpose and interpretation of this thesis as discussed in Chapter 6, “Learnings.”

The Episcopal Church and Anglican tradition know diverse backgrounds represented in its many cultures and vernaculars. The old music, ballads, psalm and ‘story’ singing, Bluegrass, gospel and country music are celebrated across the span and generations of America’s Appalachia. And, I add, may this appreciation and celebration in good Episcopal/Anglican style consider and celebrate new genres and home-grown traditions emergent: “Affrilachian,” “LatinGrass,” “Liturgical Bluegrass,” justice and freedom songs across various traditions of the Appalachian homelands-genres included in the project events of this thesis. There is, in the words of a local musician, a maker of some eight-hundred hammered dulcimers, “sent across the world...,” “more to bring us together (Episcopalians and other faith traditions) than keep us apart.” This same musician is a founding member of St. Thomas’ “Doe River Ensemble,” the parish’s group of musicians, singers, fiddlers, mandolin players, banjo pickers, “and such.”

I then see the Episcopal Church and Anglican tradition as a place and home for the variety and wealth of much of what Appalachian tradition offers in worship and

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<sup>6</sup>Stephen S. Wilbricht, CSC, STD, *Aidan Kavanagh, OSB (1929-2006), The Fiftieth Anniversary of the Constitution on the Sacred Liturgy: A Parish Celebration*, originally appearing in *Pastoral Liturgy* (Chicago: Archdiocese of Chicago, June 5, 2013). Also, see Chapter 7, “Liturgy, Canonicity, and Eschatology,” Aidan Kavanagh, *On Liturgical Theology* (Collegeville, Minnesota: Pueblo Publishing Company, Inc., 1992), 122-150.

liturgy. The doors opened in the three project events-worship services-of this effort, as described in Chapter 5, “The Project: Three Worship Services.”

Appalachia has been ‘talked down to,’ that is to say, not so appreciatively, variously described, pitied, and romanticized throughout history. Appalachia and its inhabitants have been stereotyped to the point of ridicule often experiencing obfuscation, disregard, and worse. The soul of Appalachia offers great beauty and spirit. This is nowhere more true than in the music of the people. Music is “meeting point” for this thesis because it is the music of these mountains over three and four centuries which blesses, sustains, enlivens, and heralds salvation and joy from the Gospel of Jesus Christ to both traditional and newer populations. Music renews faith and calls the body of the faithful to new days of celebration of God’s love and abundance in all creation and all humanity. This thesis at its heart is about spiritual vitality and growth in worship and community-mission, evangelism, and renewal. Music, it must be repeated, is not about a ‘one-time’ concert or periodic ‘event,’ and certainly not a minstrel or sideshow. Music is the gift, revelation and guidance of a Creator who loves and creates all.

In the true spirit of appreciative endeavor, incarnation is only genuine when all are valued and upheld, when all are celebrated, as we sing in Appalachian tradition, only “when we all get to heaven.” The practice and good results of the project events, then, have evolved from an informed and appreciative collaboration, from mutual endeavor and mutual celebration, one benefiting and complementing the other. The work of this thesis is crucially needed because of the long-term opportunities and challenges in reaching others and in creating new, fresh, and vibrant communities not concerned with

self-preservation so much as being of a place and people, of Christ incarnate in all and for all. In this, St. Thomas has witnessed great light and accomplishment.

The mission of the church cannot be alive and well apart from spiritual vitality and growth in worship and community. This requires openness, welcoming, appreciating, and engaging the music of home, place, and faith. This is what makes worship genuine and meaningful, rooted in place, giving and receiving the voice of faith in the life of authentic, beloved community. This is what is meant by saying that Christian faith must be incarnate, literally enfleshed. Mission flourishes in the recognition and deepening of location, in its engagement with and heartfelt welcoming of others.

With illumination and melody, the stories and cadences of Appalachian mountain cultures, the good news of the Gospel can become familiar and harmonious to and with other people of faith, with those long separated from earlier communities, and with those who have no faith or tradition, young and old, stranger and kin. LGBTQ persons and families, young millennial, pre-millennial, and “Z-Generation,” self-described agnostics and atheists, generations and residents of the area who love Bluegrass and country music are, for example, often turned away from Christianity by fundamentalist and literalist biblical traditions. One young couple from an interview for this thesis commented, “You honor Appalachia, our families and traditions. You are genuine, and the love you put into those celebrations (Appalachian liturgies) is uplifting for the whole community. Appalachia *is* love. We are looking for a community of faith which loves and embraces all of us.”

Members and new friends of St. Thomas have discovered the faith anew here at home celebrating the abundance of God in the collaboration and welcoming of the worship music of Appalachia. This simply means that we are all the family of God and that we are more than ready for the music to begin as at St. Thomas as begun though this project thesis.

***“In music, matters of Christian faith become incarnate.”***

***Timothy Sedgwick<sup>7</sup>***

Music itself offers renewal and hope, community, and mutuality. Following the 2017 Christmas Midnight Mass that incorporated traditional Bluegrass, Affrilachian spiritual, and mountain Holiness and Pentecostal music, the argument of this thesis began to develop. This included a ministry project focused on three worship services planned for St. Thomas Episcopal Church. These three liturgies were developed collaboratively with Appalachian Bluegrass, African American, Latin, Holiness and Pentecostal singers and musicians from and coming to St. Thomas Church. Most of the musicians initially were from Elizabethton and Carter County (growing to other areas as news spread). The services provided the opportunity to examine what it means to collaborate and incorporate music and church traditions, specifically in terms of challenges and opportunities in Southern Appalachia. Of central importance was to understand through focus groups, interviews, and conversations what the incorporation of “liturgical Bluegrass,” local African or “Affrilachian” and Latin American, Holiness and Pentecostal

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<sup>7</sup> Timothy Sedgwick, Faculty Advisor to this Thesis, in a note to the author, November 1, 2019.

traditions beside and within Anglican heritage at St. Thomas meant spiritually to all who came and participated.

Three liturgies were planned and organized: an Appalachian Evensong at Advent (December 2, 2018), a Christmas Midnight Mass (December 25, 2018) and a Community Celebration of Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr., (January 20, 2019). These three project events speak powerfully to how music gives voice to faith, especially where it speaks afresh to the experience and traditions of a people. The project events provide an opportunity and witness to the mission, evangelism and rebirth of faith tradition and liturgical vitality.

“In music, matters of Christian faith become incarnate,” comments Timothy Sedgwick. Music reflects the cultures that have formed a people, giving voice and life to faith. Music of prayer and worship is necessarily indigenous, rooted in the music of tribe and custom, history and development. For faith to be the faith of the people of St. Thomas in Elizabethton, engagement, sharing, and collaboration with others become the trademarks of experience, work, and planning together. Incarnation is not subdivided, but whole; not specious, but organic and universal.

The music of Appalachia is welcomed by members of St. Thomas parish today as beautiful, life-giving and Spirit-filled. The thesis project is focused on continuing what was inspired by the Christmas Eve service in 2017. Three, subsequent, distinct worship services at St. Thomas provided the opportunity to evaluate and study challenges and opportunities in incorporating Appalachian music in worship. The project thesis studies how such incorporation was experienced as affecting worship that revealed God in the



lives of people. In this way, the project of developing three distinct services of worship tells the story of how one Appalachian parish experiences rebirth by ‘old-time,’ Bluegrass, Gospel, and country music, inspiring people and their faith. Music brings together renewal of soul and spirit, church, family, and community. No matter the separation of time, family, and culture, music ‘breaks down walls,’ to paraphrase a recent Grammy-nominated “LatinGrass” (Bluegrass) song by young Appalachian and Latin musicians shouting out justice for immigrant and refugee peoples at the Southern border of the United States.<sup>8</sup>

***“For he is our peace; in his flesh he has made both groups into one and has broken down the dividing wall...”***

***Ephesians 2:14***

The Episcopal Church is called to receive, give and be given voice from the music of the people in the place of home in and outside the doors of churches. Already St. Thomas tells the Good News of the abundance of talent and gift in one parish church community. “It is a courageous and contagious thing we do,” spoke a new millennial couple recently. “We want to be a part of St. Thomas.” This study of St. Thomas begins to describe how the beauty and traditions of Episcopalians and Anglicans, liturgically and theologically, can accomplish the unforeseen and surprising when, in the words from the old hymn, we are, ‘thanks be,’ “Standing on the Promises of God.”

A great source of pride, esteem, beauty and joy for Appalachia is music. This is true likewise for the Episcopal Church and Anglican tradition. Few things in society

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<sup>8</sup> Che Apalache, “The Wall,” Latin Grass, 2017.

offer greater story, understanding, hope and love than song. Often the lyric and verse is country, Bluegrass, mountain “soul” (Black and white), perhaps old ballad or a poem or psalm set to music. Ethnomusicology teaches that music is an essential yearning of humanity. With it, we can be fully human. Without it, our own music and verse, we are less. Appalachia loves its music. The Episcopal Church can appreciate and grow from the music of Appalachia, spiritually, evangelically, and as neighbors in these mountains we call home. This can be accomplished with the Episcopal Church and Anglican tradition’s own rich musical and theological heritage, as we appreciate more fully the spirit, traditions, and music of home.

## Chapter 3

### Of Exploitation

#### “Local-Color” and “Home Missions”

*Viewed broadly, there were four profoundly important, interrelated processes going on in the mountains—and in the South generally—at the end of the nineteenth century: economic colonization by northeastern capital; the rise of indigenous resistance among workers and farmers; the discovery indigenous culture by writers, collectors, popularizers, and elite-art composers and concertizers; and, the proliferation of (mostly Protestant) missionary endeavors.*

*David E. Whisnant<sup>9</sup>*

*“You have to sweep the floor and get the house clean before you can get anything else done.”*

*“Aunt Pearl Cole” preparing for the day’s work  
after feeding the farmhands breakfast.  
Stoney Creek, Carter County, Tennessee, mid-1960s*

The music that forms worship comes from many places. It is shaped by history and culture, giving voice to the distinct experiences of those who sing. Especially as cultures formed in the history of immigration, the music of prayer and worship of divergent groups often clashed. The melodies, harmonies, and rhythms of one group may be dissonant to another. However, the religious music of different peoples, especially as they share common faith, may give voice that breaks open a new sense of faith and connects people in the midst of their differences. This is certainly the case for Episcopalians in Appalachia where they have been shaped by an Anglican tradition of the socially privileged, the Establishment, while the songs and ballads of Appalachia have

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<sup>9</sup> David E. Whisnant, *All that is native & fine: The Politics of Culture in an American Region* (Chapel Hill, North Carolina: The University of North Carolina Press, 1983), 6.

been inspired by subsistent farmers, laborers, oppressed and exploited peoples.

Musically, this has been expressed by the privileged and those who answer to them as the difference between high culture and "common people," or the difference between culture that is refined and that which is not, or even vulgar. Before any study claiming authenticity and integrity about Appalachia might proceed, an understanding of the history of exploitation until the present day is required.

For the reasons that commentary, social action, religious, and political attitudes throughout history and today would stereotype, dehumanize, and exploit Appalachia and its peoples, this thesis seeks to hold up and honor, to celebrate, learn, and grow from the beauty and richness, the tradition and experience of the music and its spiritual depth in Appalachia. Not without its problems, not absent of woe and challenge, it is in the music of Appalachia that the struggles and defeats of life, the hope and joy of living and salvation, too, are expressed in story become poetry and song—some for the ages, all for redemption, relief, and humbling of ourselves unto the providence of God to “Abide with me,” in the words of the old hymn.

Before any thesis or serious writing and research can be done on the subject of Appalachia—certainly its poetic and spiritual verse—there is “floor-sweeping” and “cleaning-up” to do. And I am not at all sure that the ‘Establishment’ Church (which is unappreciatively called by many Appalachian faithful, the “home mission board,” somewhere far away) has done its job of listening to and serving Appalachia and not the bureaucracy and greed of overseer. “Home mission board” has become a synonym for irrelevancy, ineptitude, money-grabbing, and “not welcome here.” These tendencies are

described and reported variously in the literature on churches and faith communities in Appalachia.<sup>10</sup>

The music of Appalachia has tended to heal and assure, give hope and “carry us through,” states a young friend whose beloved career is playing the mandolin.

Understanding realistically and factually the history of colonization with its subjugation and abuse helps us to understand why the music of Appalachia speaks across cultures and holds the possibility of breaking open privileged enclaves. “Somehow, someday,” as Johnny Cash sings, truth :will “make a way out of no way” the African American tradition adds, which can mean a mutuality of trust and love.

Churches, missionary societies, and religious organizations from ‘away’ have acted and reacted not altogether unlike coal companies, land-grabbers, and other colonizers. The truth hurts. A great hero of Appalachia, Helen Matthews Lewis, a sociologist, historian, and activist has long regarded Appalachia as an internal colony of the United States. She and her co-writers identify the process of colonization as so often occurring in Central Appalachia and beyond. The authors offer four stages of colonization, each easily identifiable throughout the region:

1. Gaining entry: invasion and securing of the area of resources

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<sup>10</sup> “The Home Mission to ‘Mountain Whites,’” Deborah Vansau McCauley, *Appalachian Mountain Religion: A History* (Urbana and Chicago: University of Illinois Press, 1995). See, “Victims’ and Their ‘Liberators’ Today,” 442-464. Also, the excellent essay, “Protestant Home Missions and the Institutionalization of Appalachian Otherness” in Henry D. Shapiro’s *Appalachia on Our Mind: The Southern Mountains and Mountaineers in the American Consciousness, 1870-1920* (Chapel Hill: The University of North Carolina Press, 1978), 32-58. In relation to Appalachia’s music in greater society, see David E. Whisnant’s *All That Is Native and Fine: The Politics of Culture in an American Region* (Chapel Hill: The University of North Carolina Press, 1983) and numerous discussions about outside influences throughout Appalachia, sometimes in harmful, “self-congratulatory,” too frequently distant and destructive ways.

2. Establishment of control: removal or opposition and resistance to prevent expulsion of invaders
3. Education and conversion of the natives: change the values and social systems of the colonized
4. Maintenance of control: political and social domination.<sup>11</sup>

The legacy and imprimatur of such colonization is best remembered and well considered in any thesis regarding the spirit and lives, the land and all creation of Appalachia. The abuse, hurt, and tragedy continue this day.

Let me continue with some basics of history. Appalachia as a region of the United States first entered the American consciousness around the time of and just following the Civil War, 1861-1865, into the last decades of the nineteenth century. The mountain peoples were fiercely independent and strong Unionists for the greatest part, “Voted for Eisenhower ‘cause Lincoln won the war,” sings John Prine, American folk singer and balladeer. Carter County, Tennessee, for example, site of this thesis project, led the entire State percentage-wise in voting against Secession.<sup>12</sup> These mountain peoples—the “Southern Highlanders”—would be described variously as from a “strange land” and as a “peculiar people” in popular magazines of the day, such as Lippincott’s Magazine, Harper’s, and the Atlantic Monthly. “Between 1870 and 1900 scores of articles, both

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<sup>11</sup> Helen Matthews Lewis, Sue Easterling Kobak, and Linda Johnson, “Family, Religion and Colonialism in Central Appalachia” or “Bury My Rifle at Big Stone Gap,” appearing in, *Colonialism in America: The Appalachian Case*, Helen Lewis, Linda Johnson, & Donald Askins, Editors (Boone, North Carolina: The Appalachian Consortium Press, 1978), 117.

<sup>12</sup> Eric Russell Lacy, Appendix B, “Statistics of the Crisis Period in East Tennessee,” *Vanquished Volunteers: East Tennessee Sectionalism from Statehood to Secession* (Johnson City, Tennessee: East Tennessee State University Press, 1965), 218. Carter County’s population in 1860 at the outset of the Civil War was 7,124, 374 slaves, and 82 slave-owners. Carter County voting overwhelmingly against Secession in two statewide votes. Carter County voted 86 “For” (6.1%) and was the leading county statewide voting 1,343 “Against” (93.9%). Middle and West Tennessee (non-mountain) led the State totals of 101, 487 For (68.5%) and 46,520 Against (31.5%).

fiction and nonfiction, were published that pictured ways of life in the highland South as vastly out of step, culturally and economically, with the progressive trends of industrializing and urbanizing nineteenth-century America.”<sup>13</sup> The music was regarded by more prosperous families and churches as an unseemly leftover of old ballad and religious revivalism, by no means suitable for city people and city churches now boasting pianos, pipe organs, and beautiful choirs.

Stringed instruments called “banjos,” “fiddles,” and homemade “hammered dulcimers” accompanied by wailing and weeping, joyful and ecstatic sounds and movements, were found nowhere near “respectable” churches. It is this history that lays the foundation for what is often still regarded in stereotypical terms: a gap between ‘do-gooders’ and the recipients of their charitable efforts. Well-meaning, well-educated and well-heeled, yet many misinformed, if caring, typically sought no social or religious relationship with those to whom they would extend ‘charity’. Well intentioned ‘study,’ ‘project’ and investment would sometimes result in impractical if not destructive social

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<sup>13</sup>Dwight B. Billings, Mary Beth Pudup, and Altina L. Waller, “Taking Exception with Exceptionalism: The Emergence and Transformation of Historical Studies of Appalachia” appearing in, Dwight B. Billings, Gurney Norman, and Katherine Ledford, Editors, *Appalachia in the Making: The Mountain South in the Nineteenth Century* (Chapel Hill and London: The University of North Carolina Press, 1995), 1.

reform, 'objectification' and education.<sup>14</sup> It would be some of these same, "respectable," Christian folk who would profitably exploit and counterfeit Appalachia into the twentieth century days of coal mining, 'black-lung,' mountain topping, deforestation, and, dangerous and deathly labor conditions throughout the region. "The textile industries came here (to Elizabethton in the 1920s) for one reason," I remember my own grandmother saying, "to work us to death, pay us nothing, and disrespect our ways."

The Episcopal Church's purpose and role in such a cultural sharing and learning as proposed by this thesis is to know and appreciate that religious faith in Appalachia goes somewhere beyond "hoopers and hollerers," snakes, iodine-swallowers and, for that matter, the "Home Office" or "Home Board" or "Bishop-man," as I have heard various prelates described. Again and again, you often hear about people who come here, take our money, our children, our land, our hope and future, yet never addressing human need. Appalachia is traditionally fierce about its hard-won independence and self-dignity over time and history. For the music to be understood and appreciated, one must genuinely and knowledgeably appreciate taking into account this fact.

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<sup>14</sup>David E. Whisnant in his illuminating and seminal text in Appalachian Studies, *all that is native and fine: The Politics of Culture in an American Region* (Chapel Hill: The University of North Carolina Press, 1983), presents research and stories from the travails, sometimes exploitation, 'gifted' to Appalachia: cultural and misdirected social change for a settlement school; what he calls "This Folk Work" and "Holy Folk" disdaining the lack of understanding and appreciation for local culture and values. Closing with an insightful afterword, "Cannibals and Christians," Whisnant points out the devastation and ruin often experienced by indigenous culture and society when "cultural intervention" enters the picture, Englishman over Native American, outsider-'do-gooder'-over Appalachian. The harm to the American Indian, Whisnant writes, was much worse than that done to Appalachian; however, both cultures were discounted, exploited, and one annihilated.



Low self-esteem (degradation) is hopelessness, is despair. It is not “comedy” (referring the poor and outcast) or “tragedy” (about those who control and define). “Why so much drug abuse and rising numbers of addiction and deaths?,” we often hear asked in this part of the country. Is it any surprise that Appalachia experiences historically and today high addiction and death rates associated with drug use? One-hundred and more drug-related deaths annually are reported in the Tri-Cities area of Tennessee where Carter, Johnson, Unicoi, and Washington Counties, all served by St. Thomas Church, are located. Fentanyl and street drugs accounted for significant increases from 2016 to 2017.<sup>15</sup> Healthy, desirable self-esteem is life, our hope and future.

Positivist psychology teaches that we can move from inferiority to recognizing strengths, from socially constructed concepts such as low self-esteem to self-determination and wellness, for many, and even to a flourishing community. An analysis of the role of such a positivist approach as St. Thomas exhibited through the three events of this project emphasize the attributes and wholeness, the beauty and appreciation for the community and its music, culture, and promise.

We at St. Thomas Episcopal Church and beyond must ask ourselves how we understand and appreciate our homeland of Appalachia first-hand, locally and not from somewhere away. Do we stereotype, even exploit the “hillbilly,” “redneck,” “covite” (a

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<sup>15</sup> “Tennessee records most overdose deaths in 2017,” *Johnson City Press*, August 19, 2018. See also Carter, Johnson, Unicoi, and Washington Counties, Tennessee Profiles, Appalachian Regional Commission. 2015-2019. The pandemic of COVID-19 in 2020-2021 has doubled, even tripled addictive opioid and other drug-use numbers rating Appalachia top in the nation.

cove or ‘holler’ dweller), or a family that we might label “white trash” or “undesirable?” We must insist that we teach and raise our children with high self-esteem, that we are proud of our very birthright and ‘blood,’ and, that we honor and claim Appalachia. These are all personal and highly determinative queries for a thesis, and for a church which holds forth the Good News of the Gospel of Jesus Christ, teaching respect and love for all.

Our worship can then portray, appreciate (or not), teach, and celebrate Appalachia and our faith through music. We then, perhaps, will value ourselves more highly as we take pride in our music traditions throughout Appalachia. These learnings become an important part of the enriching and powerful story of this work which is the celebration and appreciation of the music and local artists at St. Thomas. Let us stand *for* the spirit of a place and people and *against* the ‘show,’ social downgrading, manipulation, and profiteering by those who abuse.

After years of informed and uninformed social programs from governments, institutions and philanthropists, corporate and church exploitation, might, as argued here, the beloved music of Appalachia be a pathway for greater unity and authentic relationship as well as an open-door and open-heart for the Episcopal Church and Anglican Tradition in Appalachia? This thesis addresses these questions through the music and musical traditions that have sustained and given life to followers of Jesus Christ in the mountains from the white man’s arrival here in the mid-eighteenth century to today.

One of the best of a number of texts on this important subject is a collection of essays and a major contribution to the goals of this thesis: *Confronting Appalachian*

*Stereotypes: Back Talk from an American Region*. Amidst poverty, addiction, and sickness, the disregard and alienation from its American homeland, Appalachia stands to speak. This collection of essays shows an appreciation for Appalachia and its people, not bemusement or dismissal. The sensationalism and ridicule, the subjugation of peoples, the tragic become comedic have meant the dehumanization of the region's proud inhabitants through the present time.

More recently, a cottage industry for "Appalachianna" sprang up around J.D. Vance's 2016 best-seller, *Hillbilly Elegy: A Memoir of a Family and Culture in Crisis*.<sup>16</sup> Vance's message was well received at first reading depicting the sad plight of Appalachian life: drug use, low education levels, struggling and closing down towns and villages, failed government handouts (like the ones that enabled a legal education at Yale for the author and his book gaining national publicity and tens of millions of dollars), and more. The national celebrity invested little or nothing in the plight facing his home of Appalachia. Second impressions led many to conclude that *Hillbilly Elegy* was nothing but another big stereotype. Anthony Harkins and Meredith McCarroll's *Appalachian Reckoning: A Region Responds to Hillbilly Elegy* (Morgantown, West Virginia: West Virginia University Press, 2019) and Elizabeth Catte's *What You Are Getting Wrong About Appalachia*<sup>17</sup> are excellent responses calling for fairness, accuracy, justice, and respect for Appalachia and Appalachians in the twenty-first century, as often absent. "While many

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<sup>16</sup>J.D. Vance, *Hillbilly Elegy: A Memoir of a Family and Culture in Crisis* (New York: HarperCollins Publishers, 2016).

<sup>17</sup>Elizabeth Catte, *What You Are Getting Wrong About Appalachia* (Cleveland, Ohio: Belt Publishing, 2019).

regional groups experience this treatment,” as scholar Elizabeth Engelhardt recently wrote in the journal *Southern Cultures*, “Appalachia is relegated to the past tense: ‘out of time’ and ‘out of step’ with any contemporary present, much less a progressive future.”<sup>18</sup>

Important for any real hope and celebration for Appalachia today are Ronald D. Eller’s words from *Uneven Ground: Appalachia Since 1945* (Lexington, Kentucky: University of Kentucky Press, 2008). This book is both testament and vision for the future of Appalachia. Civic, political, church, and communities must heed its call for Appalachia as the region hopefully arriving into a new day, a new time well past stripped mines and capped mountains, sick, dying, and beleaguered workers, mothers, and dads, children and young people waiting to leave mountain homes, and leaders who do not lead but accumulate and govern for themselves and interests, not for the welfare and hope of all. Eller concludes, “The stories that we [Appalachians] tell about ourselves can give us a vision for the kind of community we want to become. As the prophet has said, ‘Where there is no vision, the people perish’.

Regaining history and culture can mean hope and transformation into the future. Church and society can ideally join in this endeavor and dream and work for our beloved home of Appalachia. The author closes his missive:

Along with the rest of America, Appalachia must undergo a deep transformation in values and behavior if we are to bridge the troubled waters of the region’s environmental, social, and economic crises. Building a broad social movement for such a transformation in the twenty-first century is possible if we learn the lessons of our own history.<sup>19</sup>

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<sup>18</sup> Ibid., Catte, 9.

<sup>19</sup> Ronald D. Eller, *Uneven Ground: Appalachia Since 1945* (Lexington: University Press of Kentucky, 2008), 273.

Might faith communities embrace Appalachia claiming such a vision as Eller's? Might Appalachia's stories, hearts, music, traditions, and vision—powerfully and spiritually expressed in old-music, hymns, Bluegrass, gospel, “Americana,” and country music—help lead the way to new days for beloved Appalachia, its people and music? In not a few ways, music already is changing the picture. This thesis project proposes and supports the faith community's role in such change through a music which has blessed and stirred, raised up and dignified the people ‘Appalachia’ for generations, and we pray, those to come.

This project is centered in the mission, evangelism, and renewal of just one of many Episcopal churches throughout Southern and Central Appalachia, St. Thomas, Elizabethton. A critical part of mission is the desire and intent to reach out across lines of difference to connect, share, and enter into conversation. A prerequisite is feeling that the initiator has, gives, and receives value worth sharing. So in building a community's esteem we very possibly improve upon our own self-regard, our own styles and beauty. We are thus empowered setting the stage for reaching out one to the other. This is, God bless St. Thomas, what began happening with the three project events of this thesis.

## Chapter 4

### Review of the Literature: Heritage, Faith, and Music

*No group in the country, in my estimation, has aroused more suspicion and alarm among mainstream Christians than have Appalachian Christians, and never have so many Christian missionaries been sent to save so many Christians than is the case in this region.*

*Loyal Jones<sup>20</sup>*

*So variety was limited in the moralism of East Tennessee and so was spirituality... somber silence and puritanical barrenness. Certainly where there is no variety of experience, the people grow as docile and as gray as the winter landscape around them.*

*Phyllis Tickle<sup>21</sup>*

With all gratitude to Phyllis Tickle, educator and author, a leader of the “emergence church movement” of the late twentieth and early twenty-first centuries, this thesis yet presents much to appreciate, honor, learn about, and introduce into the spirituality and liturgical celebration of the Episcopal Church. Likewise, there is much for the faith in Appalachia, yes, sometimes ‘somber’ and ‘barren,’ those faithful and not, Christian and not, to experience, learn and appreciate about the Episcopal Church and Anglican tradition, the English monarchy the King’s Church, King George III, and the American Revolution notwithstanding. Such a contention has never had an easy going time in Southern Appalachia, certainly not in the little bedroom and rural communities in

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<sup>20</sup> Loyal Jones, Part 4, “The Home Mission to the ‘Mountain Whites,’” Deborah Vansau McCauley, *Appalachian Mountain Religion: A History* (Urbana and Chicago: University of Illinois Press), 340.

<sup>21</sup> Phyllis Tickle, “Of a Remembered Quiet, (Notes from the Hill Country,” Douglas Paschall, Editor and Alice Swanson, Associate Editor, *Homewords: A Book of Tennessee Writers* (Knoxville: Tennessee Arts Commission and The University of Tennessee Press, 1986), 149.

East and especially Northeast Tennessee, these mountains which were home to Ms. Tickle, as quoted above.

Tickle would not appear to be a sure lover of the instrumental varieties represented in Appalachian music and worship. Nor would she seem to appreciate both traditional as well as more contemporary, diverse cultural representations of the region's music. I seek to more closely examine historical to present-day religious music of the region and to reach all the way to conjecture that a great "Third Awakening" might just lie ahead.

The discussion of heritage, faith, and music is framed by the eighteenth through the twenty-first centuries for an understanding of Christianity and its development from the white man and woman's arrival from Western Europe in the mid-eighteenth century to what would after the end of the Civil War (1861-1865) popularly and stereotypically be termed "Appalachia." This text will focus primarily on Southern Appalachia and, most specifically, that part of Southern Appalachia commonly referred to as "Upper East" or "Northeast Tennessee." The City of Elizabethton (1799) and the seat of Carter County (1796) are home to St. Thomas Episcopal Church (1942).

The categories of discussion are *The Eighteenth Century: Pioneers, Settlement, and Revival; Music, The Eighteenth Century; The Nineteenth into the Twentieth Century: 'Great Awakenings,' 'Local Color,' and Home Missions; Music, The Nineteenth into the Twentieth Century; The Twentieth into the Twenty-first Century, Trying to "Keep on the Sunny Side:" Envisioning and Building the Church Anew in Southern Appalachia* with developments in music discussed and highlighted throughout the discussion.

***Heritage, Faith, and Music***  
***The Eighteenth Century: Pioneers, Settlement, and Revival***

*Meanwhile population had flowed into the Territory [of the Southwest], 1790-1796 with amazing rapidity, and Knoxville, its capital, had become a center of great activity... Nathaniel and Samuel Cowan... the great traders of the district... For it was a wonderful store... in which was to be found everything that grows in the air, on the earth, and in the waters under the earth... The principal books were the Bible, Watt's and Rippon's Hymns, the "Pilgrim's Progress," Baxter's "Saints' Everlasting Rest," and Dilworth's "Spelling Book" ...<sup>22</sup>*

*A Testimony to The Psalms and Hymns of Dr. Isaac Watts (1674-1748) and Dr. John Rippon (1751-1836) by early settlers in East Tennessee including Colonel John Sevier (1745-1815), the State's first Governor in 1796.*

Earliest Western European settlers in what is today East Tennessee, then part of the western frontier of the English Colony of North Carolina, began their 'over-the-mountain' search for home and liberty by the 1760's. King George III and his Army considered such 'pioneering' illegal. American independence would not be declared until July 4, 1776 and the British surrender at Yorktown in 1781. The State of Tennessee was not admitted to the Union as the sixteenth State until 1796.<sup>23</sup> These settlers who defied the crown's prohibition on westward movement were the stout, strong and independent-

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<sup>22</sup> James R. Gilmore (Edmund Kirks), *John Sevier as a Commonwealth Builder* (D. Appleton and Company: New York, 1887; The Overmountain Press: Johnson City, Tennessee, 1997), 257-59.

<sup>23</sup> These pioneers in the northeastern part of Tennessee of the Western Appalachian mountains formed the first free form of government in the new world known as the "Watauga Compact" (1772), applied for statehood as the "State of Franklin" (1784-88), eventually joining efforts for Tennessee's admission into the Union in 1796. In his book, *The Winning of the West* (1889), Theodore Roosevelt related the Watauga Association as a microcosm of the subsequent American Revolution, writing, "the Watauga settlers outlined in advance the nation's work. They tamed the rugged and shaggy wilderness, they bid defiance to outside foes, and they successfully solved the difficult problem of self-government." Samuel Cole Williams, *Dawn of Tennessee Valley*, p. 370 citing Roosevelt's *Winning of the West, Volume 1* (Johnson City, Tennessee: *The Watauga Press*), 11-28. Date unavailable.



minded first settlers, English and Scots-Irish, who built forts along rivers, hunted for food, cleared the pathways over the high mountains of the Western Appalachians. The mountaineers mustered some 1,200 pioneer soldiers led by Colonel John Sevier to march eighteen days over the mountains to win with the American Colonial Army the decisive Battle of Kings Mountain (Cowpens, South Carolina) in the southern theater of the American Revolution.

Colonel John Sevier, early leader of the settlers, commander of the Overmountain men at Kings Mountain, leader of the “Lost State of Franklin,” and first governor of the State of Tennessee, was known to carry with him the Holy Bible and *The Psalms and Hymns of Dr. Isaac Watts (1674-1748) and Dr. John Rippon (1751-1815)*.<sup>24</sup> Like his soldiers and the earliest Americans from Europe in the Southern Appalachians, Sevier and the frontier people were constantly moving. English hymnody strengthened their resolve.

The immigrant and westward-moving pioneers were Anglican, Presbyterian (especially strong in Northeast Tennessee), Baptists (many converted by New England Puritans), with some Lutheran and other Protestant traditions with various confessions and creedal statements. The Methodists, Baptist “subdenominations,” revivalists, and ‘independents’ of all kinds would soon ‘awake’ in two “Great Awakenings” in both the early-mid eighteenth and again in the early nineteenth century, a ‘democracy of faith’ which many believe strongly influenced America’s own democracy and Revolution.

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<sup>24</sup> James Gilmore, (Edmund Kirks), *John Sevier as a Commonwealth Builder* (D. Appleton and Company: New York, 1887; The Overmountain Press: Johnson City, 1997), 257-259.

The Anglicans brought with them-as did Governor Sevier, of French Huguenot ancestry-their Watts' Hymns, King James Bibles, traditions, memories and ways. What they also brought to this new land was a fierce dislike of and independence from King George III and anything smacking of monarchy or outside rule. The Head of the English Church was much despised. There would be little presence or influence of King George and his Church in at least this part of Appalachia. This irony is not lost in the purpose and argument of this thesis, hopefully bringing more positively and appreciatively together the Episcopal Church of Anglican Tradition and the spirit and faith of the music of Southern Appalachia.

The Anglican Church did produce, at least in part, however, preachers and prominent leaders of what would become known as the "First Great Awakening" of the early eighteenth century, notably George Whitefield, (1714-1770), the so-called "revived Puritan."<sup>25</sup> The great Englishman, Whitefield, was educated and a member of "Holy Club"<sup>26</sup> at Oxford, beginning his American days assisting Charles Wesley at Christ Church, Savannah, in 1739. He began preaching on the streets, eventually launching a revival of great and far-reaching proportions. Thousands of worshippers and onlookers from Savannah and Charleston, to Philadelphia, and into Boston and New England. Practically every city in colonial America (as in England) took part. His revivals inspired

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<sup>25</sup> Michael A.G. Haykin, Editor, *The Revived Puritan: The Spirituality of George Whitefield* (Dundas, Ontario: Joshua Press, Inc., 2000), 21.

<sup>26</sup> A group of highly respected, scholarly, religious, prayerful young men intent on dedication to the Gospel and "conversion" to Jesus Christ. See Arnold Dallimore, *George Whitefield: The Life and Times of the Great Evangelist of the Eighteenth-Century, Volume I* (Guildford and London: Billing & Sons, Ltd., 1970), 61-77

what were variously described as, “outcries, faintings, and conversions,” things suspect in much of the Church of England.<sup>27</sup>

Matthew Talbot arrived from Georgia in 1772 to begin services at what would eventually be called “Sinking Creek Baptist Church,” Carter County and Tennessee’s first church building. Sunday services, however, had to be disbanded in 1776 due to the threat of attacks from local native Americans. Converts to the Sinking Creek Baptist Church from throughout Appalachia and the South included many Anglicans who did not have funding for bishops, well-educated priests, and fine churches, at least in the mountain areas. Most positively, the pioneer families and early Appalachians appreciated localized leadership, and what was for most, a relational, sometimes emotional and ‘down-to-earth,’ common worship, one not controlled by a foreign, despotic monarch.<sup>28</sup>

First arriving in the area of present-day Northeast Tennessee in 1778, Samuel Doak, having graduated from the College of New Jersey at Princeton in 1775, would become a great father of the Christian faith in Southern Appalachia. Preaching to local communities throughout the mountainous region, blessing the pioneer soldiers on their way to the pivotal American Revolutionary War battle of Kings Mountain, Doak established a college, schools, and numerous churches throughout the region. A proud

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<sup>27</sup> Joseph Tracy, *The Great Awakening: A History of the Revival of Religion in the Time of Edwards and Whitefield* (Columbia, South Carolina: The Acadia Press), 126. A reprint of the original, author and publisher not given, 1842.

<sup>28</sup> A fascinating and informative passage about the early settling and religious experience up the road in Abingdon and beyond during Virginia’s colonial days serves as a rich contrast to Appalachia: “This culture [in Virginia] was characterized by scattered settlements, extreme hierarchies of rank, strong oligarchies, Anglican churches, a highly developed sense of honor and an idea of hegemonic liberty.” *America: A Cultural History*, David Hackett Fisher, *Volume 1, Albion’s Seed: Four British Folkways in America* (New York, Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1989), 786-87.

“Old School,” strong Calvinist Presbyterian, Doak’s influence grew into the nineteenth century, his children and successors going off to Princeton, then returning to Elizabethton, for example, nurturing and prospering the young city, state, and country, leading abolition, and loyal to the Union throughout. Elizabethton’s Presbyterian Church was the first in the City, the first with its own church building, “sometime prior to 1835.”<sup>29</sup>

### ***Music, The Eighteenth Century***

We can imagine that first settlers used stringed instruments, flute and simple wood instruments, perhaps military drum and rhythm-makers of crude or fashioned wood. Ted Olson writes in his essay about music in Appalachia that the oldest forms of music for Western Europeans in the region involved “balladry and fiddling” brought over from the British Isles.<sup>30</sup> Church music, like ‘travel’ (on-the-road) and ‘idle’ (‘nothing else to do’) music were from song and ballad, from memory and sometimes hymnals, perhaps led by a preacher or designated song leader. It likely included much revelry with instruments, singing, and dancing (but not in worship, of course).

Likely best known and most widely used worship music during this period and beyond are the voluminous works of Isaac Watts (1674-1748) who authored three *Great Books of Christian and Bible* hymns. John Wesley’s *First Hymn-Book, 1737* and George

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<sup>29</sup> Robert K. Johns, *A History of First Presbyterian Church, Elizabethton, Tennessee* (Elizabethton, Tennessee: First Presbyterian Church, 1989).

<sup>30</sup> Ted Olson, Section Editor, “Music,” appearing in, *Encyclopedia of Appalachia*, Rudy Abramson and Jean Haskell, Editors (Knoxville: The University of Tennessee Press, 2006), 1110-1115.

Whitefield's own "Gospel-centered" hymnal, *A Collection of Hymns for Social Worship* (1753), were used throughout the eighteenth and into the nineteenth centuries.<sup>31</sup> Camp meeting (revivalist) song books would be distributed and sold into the nineteenth and twentieth centuries.

Songs and ballads, dances and instruments, royal music and common, handed down over the generations are described as the "carrying stream" signifying the stream that continues through today. Fascinating stories abound from generations about a great-great-great "grandpappy" playing the tunes known to Queen Elizabeth (I) and songs and dances in Appalachia coming straight from the "jigs, reels, and hornpipes of Scotland, Ireland, and England."<sup>32</sup> Writers and authors, stories and traditions from later into the twentieth and twenty-first centuries provide narrative, essays, and texts about African spirituals and worship, and instrument-making in Appalachia, the subject of the third of three project events in this thesis. Many of these experiences come from my own witness and participation since childhood in African American churches in Elizabethton and Northeast Tennessee.

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<sup>31</sup> Mark Noll, "Whitefield, Hymnody, and Evangelical Spirituality" appearing in, *George Whitefield: Life, Context, and Legacy*.

<sup>32</sup> Proud of our heritage in Appalachia though we are not all from Britain or the Isles (Ireland and Scotland) though we often claim to be. We in Southern Appalachia, including Elizabethton and Carter County, hold close our family stories handed down from generations of family and 'kin'. Fiona Ritchie and Doug Orr respect these stories and traditions of the generations beautifully in *Wayfaring Strangers: The Musical Voyage from Scotland and Ulster to Appalachia* (Chapel Hill: The University of North Carolina Press, 2014).] Music is often the pathway and guiding point when it comes to the deeper meanings and religious practices of life in the mountains. Ritchie and Orr tell in-depth the great inheritance that the music of Appalachia has received from Scotland and Ulster.

***Heritage, Faith, and Music: The Nineteenth into the Twentieth Century: 'Great Awakenings,' 'Local Color' and Home Missions***

*I am of the opinion that it is as hard or harder, for the people of the west to gain religion as any other. When I consider where they came from, where they are, and how they are, and how they are called to go farther, their being unsettled, with so many objects to take their attention, with the health and good air they enjoy, and when I reflect that not one in a hundred came here to get religion, but rather to get plenty of good land, I think it will be well if some or many do not eventually lose their souls.*

*Bishop Francis Asbury*

*One of the first two Bishops of the Methodist Episcopal Church in the United States of near Elizabethton, Tennessee, September 28, 1797*

The years following the American Revolution and the fight for independence, up through the Civil War and through the beginning of the twentieth century, were times of tremendous growth for the young country as well as a great outburst of all kinds and persuasions of Christianity. The music and song that followed the creation and organization, location and development of old and new traditions of faith boggled mind and imagination. The soil was rich for revival. The new country needed faith and leadership, and the people were anxious to exercise their newly found freedom and liberty. The time was ripe with opportunity and movement.

With the first “Great Awakening,” early mountaineer faith established itself in towns and villages, founding so-called “independent” churches and houses (tents or cleared forests and fields for gatherings) strewn about everywhere across the Appalachians. Many of the first widely distributed hymnals and harmony books, many ‘shape-note,’ later along with with the proliferation of fiddles, banjos, pianos and strange ‘pump-organs,’ the faith began to be created anew on the frontier. Souls were very much

alive, thank you, Bishop Asbury (quoted above), early Wesleyan and first Methodist bishop.

The nineteenth century began with what is widely regarded as the “Second Great Awakening.” Several-day, even week-long revivals and “camp meetings” were commonplace throughout Appalachia and the South. Stories throughout the mountain country of East Tennessee still circulate today about “great revivals” in rural, rustic areas such as Boones Creek (in Washington County), Sycamore Shoals and outskirts of Elizabethton (Carter County), and all over Sullivan County (Blountville and other small towns and rural areas yet to become the “Tri-Cities” of Northeast Tennessee, Johnson City, Kingsport, and Bristol).

The converted would then return home to their villages and homes in the mountains beginning “independent,” ‘free-will,’ ‘new reformational,’ and “who knows what else” (one old preacher once commented), founding “sometimes successful, fastspreading” churches of their own.<sup>33</sup> No bishops or hierarchy, or downtown, high-

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<sup>33</sup> Howard Dorgan begins his text about Baptists in Southern Appalachia (into the twentieth century) describing the development as, “Baptists, Baptists, and More Baptists.” “Dozens of “Independent Baptist,” “Free Will Baptist,” Churches of Christ and Christian Churches (the “Stone-Campbellites”), Presbyterian off-shoots, and more spread like wildfire in early nineteenth century America. Dorgan in *Giving Glory to God in Appalachia: Worship Practices of Six Baptist Subdenominations* (Knoxville: The University of Tennessee Press, 1987), 1-54) studies six Baptist subdenominations in Western North Carolina, Northeast Tennessee, Southwestern Virginia, and Eastern Kentucky: Union Baptists, Missionary Baptists, Regular Baptists, Old Regular Baptists, and Free Will Baptists. Mark A. Noll in his book, *The Rise of Evangelicalism: The Age of Edwards, Whitefield, and the Wesleys* (Downer’s Grove, Illinois: InterVarsity Press, 2003), 218, provides an amazing chart, “American Methodists-Number of Society Members and Preachers, 1773-1792.” In 1773, early Methodism counted some 2,000 Members and barely a dozen Preachers. By 1791, there were some 64,000 Members and nearly 300 Preachers. Revivals in areas such as Northeast Tennessee crowds of 1,200 and more were known to traveling evangelists in the nineteenth century through the mid-twentieth century who would offer “Revival” or “Camp Meetings” with “Singings” for a few days, perhaps a couple of weekend evenings, count the conversions into the dozens and hundreds, head for the next town, and the new believers would found new communities of believers having gone to preaching themselves. Source: Family and local stories from Northeast Tennessee, 1950s-1960s.

steeped, formal-singing, no preacher's salaries or formal education were needed in this scenario, as widespread as it became. It was once remarked that Elizabethton and Carter County, for example, had so many churches that the "300 or more" took up most of the local phone book, and that was not counting those many little churches without a telephone.<sup>34</sup>

The great revivalists had done their job. Great church and tent revivals would last from the late eighteenth throughout the nineteenth and post-World War II era of the 1950s into the 1960s in the Northeast Tennessee mountain areas. The televangelists took up their television revivalism, redefining their soul-saving and miracle-working methods and techniques into the modern era. Yet the little independent churches would survive, break up and multiply, many of them existing until the present day.<sup>35</sup>

Appalachia was also growing with more and more persons coming across the mountains to move into the new state of Tennessee or to "stay awhile" before packing up and leaving for Texas, and beyond the Mississippi River, over five-hundred miles away from the Northeast Tennessee mountains. Census figures from the time show the following dramatic decades of growth of resident populations (not counting those crossing the state to new frontiers westward). From 35,691 in 1790, Tennessee grew to 105,602 in 1800, 261,727 by 1810, 422,823 by 1820, 681,904 by 1830 and over a

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<sup>34</sup>A story popularly repeated during my childhood by especially those families moving in to manage and 'run the (textile) plants who (management and owners, typically Roman Catholic, Jewish, and a few Episcopalians) would be aghast at all the little churches everywhere around the county.

<sup>35</sup>The advent of the 'megachurches' by the new millennia in Southern Appalachia would also attract many from the Baptist subdenomination and independent churches.



million, 1,002,717 by 1850, doubling its population again to 2,020,616 by the turn of the century in 1900.<sup>36</sup> Such numbers can make for good church growth.

As the century went on, Presbyterians, Methodists, Baptists, occasionally Roman Catholics and Episcopalians (later) began to locate their houses of worship downtown or in the central area of commerce. It was this time, from the late eighteenth into the early and later nineteenth centuries, that the eventual ‘mainlining’ of Protestantism began. Wesley’s Methodist Church had increasing popularity and membership throughout Appalachia and the nation. The Methodists preached conversion and salvation for all, seeing evangelism as integral to their doctrine and teaching of church growth. The Baptist Church, having blazed the trails during pioneer days, settled ‘properly’ in the City of Elizabethton in 1842.<sup>37</sup> The Methodist Church settled in the “Old City” of Elizabethton on the banks of the Doe River in the 1840s, joining the Presbyterians (from the 1830s). ‘Downtown’ churches had arrived in “Old Town” which became the “City of Elizabethton” (1799) into a new century and new day.

The Episcopalians would finally arrive to stay in 1942 when the parish was given the name, “St. Thomas Episcopal Church” by diocesan convention. An earlier Episcopal congregation existed in Elizabethton in the 1890s, but little is known about the parish

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<sup>36</sup>Tennessee Resident Population and Apportionment for the U.S. House of Representatives,” U.S. Census Bureau, Washington, D.C. It is important to remember that approximately a third of Tennessee’s population and over a-half of its counties make up part of Southern Appalachia (the 33 counties of East Tennessee and 19 more form Middle Tennessee totaling 52 of Tennessee’s 95 counties). *Source:* Appalachian Regional Commission, Washington, D.C.

<sup>37</sup> Dr. Bob Welch, PhD, *The History of First Baptist Church: The Story as Best I Can Tell* (Elizabethton, Tennessee: First Baptist Church, 2019).

which disappeared from diocesan records by the closing years of the nineteenth century.<sup>38</sup> As mainline Protestant churches in Elizabethton and throughout Appalachia grew in number and social prestige, “home missions” and “charitable societies” grew up to share ‘their’ Gospel with mountain peoples, many already adherents to countless independent churches from throughout the county and far reaches of rural areas. One thing can be safely presumed: few if any of the country preachers, singers, and musicians would find welcome at the fine churches of the City whose congregations, almost all, would send dues and support to the often distant ‘headquarters’ in Nashville, Dallas, and other big, far-away places. Appalachia itself would remain so-called, “home mission” for many years-folk from away deciding what might be best or not for First Methodist, First Baptist, or First Presbyterian in Elizabethton, for example (“First” because of divisions and split-aways to the Confederacy at the Civil War and afterwards).

Meanwhile, the independent churches, typically in the county and in rural mountain areas, moved along “just fine.” Emma Bell Miles in her celebrated if romanticized text, *The Spirit of the Mountains*, wrote at the turn of the nineteenth into the twentieth century about what a more rural, independent-minded worship service might look like:

The time of “taking up church” is uncertain. After a sufficient congregation has assembled, according to the preacher’s judgment, he and some of the amen-corner members raise a hymn, which serves instead as a bell to concentrate the gathering. They sing without books, for these hymns have never been printed... The preacher’s voice strikes through

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<sup>38</sup>Michael Doty, *The Ministry of the Episcopal Church in Elizabethton, Tennessee: Being the History of Calvary Chapel and St. Thomas’ Church* (Elizabethton, Tennessee: St. Thomas Episcopal Church, 1993).

the words of the song with encouraging shouts of goodwill... Tears are running down seamed and withered faces now, as the repression and loneliness of many months find relief; the tune changes again, and yet again - they do not tire of this... 'Glory to God, my soul's happy! It is a woman's scream that rings high over all....'<sup>39</sup>

While I personally remember similar stories from the old folk growing up in Elizabethton and Carter County, I suppose that about the closest St. Thomas Episcopal Church ever came to an experience such as this was on Christmas Midnight Mass, December 24, 2017 as recounted and celebrated earlier in this text. This was when pianist and song leader, Joey Hildebran, a Free Holiness preacher himself, led the crowded church in singing the beautiful Appalachian hymn, "Beautiful Star of Bethlehem," The song went on for some fifteen or more minutes as a "Gospel Responsorial." Great joy expressed in tears, song, embrace, and clapping hands broke out among the congregation in what, one Episcopalian commented, was a "heavenly time," as described in the Introduction to his text. St. Thomas' folks cannot quit telling the story, so rich and beautiful it was for everyone.

### ***Music, the Nineteenth into the Twentieth Century***

*Happy is the house in which fiddles and fiddlers dwell, and nearest to heaven where fiddler and singer blend their music in hymns to praise the Almighty God.*

*The Honorable Alfred A. Taylor, (1848-1931),  
Governor of Tennessee The Fiddle and the Bow  
The Story of Tennessee's  
Beloved Governor Alf Taylor and Senator Bob Taylor<sup>40</sup>*

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<sup>39</sup>Emma Bell Miles, *The Spirit of the Mountains* (New York: James Pott & Company, 1905), 122-23; 128-29.

<sup>40</sup> Sara Pett Fein, *The Fiddle and the Bow: The Story of Tennessee's Beloved Governor Alf Taylor and Senator Bob Taylor* (Boston: Christopher Publishing House, 1952).

Carter County brothers Alf and Bob Taylor opposed one another in Tennessee's famous gubernatorial race of 1886. Alf, the Republican, and Bob, the Democrat, traveled the State in what was dubbed Tennessee's "War of the Roses," Bob wearing the white rose for the House of York and Alf the red rose for the House of Lancaster. Bob was the great orator and Alf the great fiddler. Despite their rivalry, Bob would clap and lead the crowds in song while Alf fiddled on. The 'sweet strings' of the fiddle joined with the lovely fragrance of the two roses together, as Bob 'rolled (spoke) on,' Alf backing up from fiddle and bow. The fiddle or "violin" if you prefer, is a beautiful liturgical instrument bringing us together in unity, harmony, and emotion, in sound and elegance, excitement and joy-in praise-at least at St. Thomas Episcopal Church in Elizabethton, Tennessee today. The prevalence of the fiddle and song-making is shown in the many stories about Tennessee's "War of the Roses," the two Taylor brothers vying for governor in 1886 playing the fiddle and speaking "up-a-storm," as my grandmother Bess Scott used to describe it. "Mamma Scott," we called her, an avowed "Lincoln Republican" and great gospel singer herself, had actually attended a Taylor rally. Her rose was red, staunchly for Alf.

The nineteenth century represented a bursting forth of traditional and newer Christian music, manifested in numerous hymnals and traditions, including *Amazing Grace* set to William Walker's popular melody of "New Britain" and the 'discovery' for many of African American song and spiritual. Building upon the older standards of the

nineteenth century, the following hymnals and collections represent some of the more popular hymnals throughout the new century:

William Cowper, (1731-1800), *William Cowper's Olney Hymns and Other Sacred Works*, Charles J. Doe, Compiler, (Minneapolis, Minnesota: Curiosmith, 2010). John Newton (*Amazing Grace*, 1772) served as clergyman to Cowper at Olney.

James Montgomery, *Olney Hymns In Three Books: On Select Texts; On Occasional Subjects; On the Progress And Changes of The Spiritual Life (1840)* ([www.kessinger.net](http://www.kessinger.net): Kessinger Publishing, Rare Reprints).

William Walker, *The Southern Harmony, and Musical Companion: Containing a Choice Collection of Tunes, Hymns, Psalms, Odes, and Anthems; Together with Nearly One Hundred New Tunes, Which Have Never Before Been Published; Suited to Most of the Meters Contained in Watt's Hymns and Psalms, Mercer's Cluster, Dossey & Choice, Dover Selection, Methodist Hymn Book, and Baptist Harmony; Are Well Adapted to Christian Churches of Every Denomination, Singing Schools, and Private Societies: Also, and Easy Introduction to the Grounds of Music, the Rudiments of Music, and Plain Rules for Beginners* (E.W. Miller: Philadelphia, George Street, Above Eleventh, New Edition, 1847; Lexington, Kentucky: The University Press of Kentucky, 1987). “Amazing Grace” was written in 1772 by Anglican Evangelical clergyman and former slave-trader, John Newton (1725- 1807). William Walker here in 1836 gives the hymn its most popular tune, “New Britain.”

Charles Wesley, *Wesleys Hymns and the Methodist Sunday-School Hymn-Book* (London: Wesleyan Methodist Book Room, Wesleyan Methodist Sunday School Union, 1779).

Frank Baker and George Walton Williams, Editors, *John Wesley's Hymn-Book, 1737, A Facsimile with Additional Material* (Charleston, South Carolina: The Dalcho Historical Society, Charleston and The Wesley Historical Society, London, 1964).

Isaac Watts, *Hymns and Spiritual Songs: The Three Books of Great Christian Bible Hymns - Complete* (Columbia, South Carolina: Pantianos Classics, 2019). Watts, the “the Godfather of English hymnody,” wrote 750 hymns, many use today, and most certainly throughout the eighteenth, nineteenth, and twentieth centuries.

Those city churches that would become the so-called ‘mainline’ or ‘mainstream’ churches were able to provide what downtown folk at least considered to be “proper” or “educated” hymnals, as I have heard these nicely bound hymnals called—shelved ever so neatly—in the handsome hardwood church pews. “Those pews cost ‘good money’.” I remember an outspoken aunt of mine commenting. The more rural and less prosperous gatherings of the faithful could not necessarily afford either the compilation or printing of hymnal books or the nice hardwood pews. Hymnals typically with a nice, thicker cover were used by less privileged white folk (and Black) would not appear popularly until after World War I and the Great Depression of the 1930s. ‘Call-and-response,’ ‘shape-note’ singing, some with instruments, others without (intentionally or not), were all popular and well-known, familiar alternatives.

The role of the African American in Appalachia and Appalachian music is traditionally limited at least for most, but of increasingly great appreciation and study. I will comment further on contributions by African Americans to gospel music as researched and performed in one of the three projects conducted for this thesis and for ongoing celebration at St. Thomas. Southern Appalachian gospel music traditional to African Appalachian populations and experience from the nineteenth century, and likely before, are critical to this work and study and musical and academic pursuit overall.

*African Banjo Echoes in Appalachia: A Study of Folk Traditions* by Cecelia Conway<sup>41</sup> recounts the story of the Black man who brought the instrument we know as a

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<sup>41</sup> Cecelia Conway, *African Banjo Echoes in Appalachia: A Study of Folk Traditions* (Knoxville, Tennessee: The University of Tennessee Press, 1995).

banjo with him from the Islands of the Caribbean. African Americans made the banjo, first played and danced with the banjo, and introduced the instrument to Americans as early as the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries. “Liturgical Bluegrass,” as celebrated at St. Thomas for this thesis and since, often enjoys banjo, fiddle, mandolin, and guitar. The banjo is “heart and joy of Appalachian music,” as Thomas Cassell, St. Thomas’ “Bluegrass Liturgist” puts it. Cassell, 2020 recipient of the “Young Performer of the Year Award” by the International Bluegrass Association, has written in an article for publication, “The Banjo Is Black.” Though it has been appropriated and reassigned a symbol of most often backwards whiteness, the banjo carries with it a long, complicated story of racism and cross-cultural interaction.”<sup>42</sup> For most, the banjo is pure joy and celebration of good times and blessed assurance in time of trouble and trial.

In addition to honoring the place of the “Black banjo,” for example, and African American tradition in Appalachian music from earlier times through today, it is important that “Shape-Note” or “Sacred Harp” singing is recognized appreciatively in worship in Appalachia and beyond since the early 1800s. Sacred Harp is known as a proud, democratic, and participatory tradition. Local communities come together, song leaders rotate, politics and denominational affiliation are not discussed. “The Sacred Harp is often cited as an embodiment of American democracy,” writes the author, not without its difficult history and challenges, but a great American idea of the ‘many as one’.<sup>43</sup>

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<sup>42</sup> Thomas Andrew Cassell, “Go Back and Fetch It: Black Banjo Reclamation in a Genre of Whiteness,” 2020. Cassell’s work is planned for publication in 2021.

<sup>43</sup> David Warren Steel with Richard H. Hulan, *The Makers of the Sacred Harp* (Urbana, Chicago, and Springfield: University of Illinois Press, 2010), 3.

“Shape-Note” was popular in several Christian traditions throughout the South and in Appalachia throughout the nineteenth into the twentieth century. “Sacred-Harp” is a collection of shape note music written distinctively to help singers find pitches without complex staff and clef notation. Historically, when instruments were not available in frontier and early American times, ‘shape-note’ hymns and hymnals provided beautiful singing for worship. Churches in Alabama and Mississippi, as well as here in Southern Appalachia, are still known to use ‘shape-note’ hymnals. Societies for preservation and celebration of the art of Sacred Harp exist in New England and the South, as well as in the British Isles. Shape Note is known to at least one Church of Christ (“Campbellite” tradition).<sup>44</sup> A society of Shape Note singers also holds forth monthly at an area Episcopal Church. Sacred Harp claims historic and current participants from throughout Protestantism, Christian, Churches and Disciples of Christ, Brethren, Assemblies, Cumberland and Independent Presbyterian, and an occasional Episcopalian.

***Heritage, Faith, and Music: The Twentieth into the Twenty-first century.  
Trying to “Keep on the Sunny Side:” Envisioning and Building the Church Anew***

*“Keep on the sunny side, always on the sunny side  
Keep on the sunny side of life  
It will help us every day, it will brighten all the way  
If we keep on the sunny side of life.”*

*Written by Ada Blenkhorn, 1899, music by J. Howard Entwisle.  
Popularized in the 1927 “Bristol. Recordings”  
by A.P., Maybelle, and Sara Carter known as the “Carter Family.”*

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<sup>44</sup>Referring to adherents of three Christian traditions: the Christian Church, the Churches of Christ, and the Disciples of Christ who trace their roots back to what is called the “New Reformation” dating from the early nineteenth century and populous in Southern Appalachia.



It is a reasonable argument to make that Appalachians and many other Americans might not have made it through hard times of a first world war, a Depression, no jobs, little hope, another world war, faster and faster change, unfaithful and dishonest leaders, myriads of personal, family, and community problems, had it not been for country music. “We just all try and stay on that Sunny Side,” the famed Carter family of country music fame from up on Clinch Mountain in Southwestern Virginia always used to say and sing. I speak of ‘Country Music’ today beginning the third decade of a new century as encompassing old ballads and musics, white and Black Gospel, Bluegrass, and more on up to newer forms and efforts and sounds, “LatinGrass,” “Americana,” “Bluegrass Mash,” singing justice, love, and ‘new’ Country. Southern Appalachia’s role in “America’s music”-“Country Music”- is an important one.

I sometimes wonder if the established Church can make a home for “Country Music” and vice versa. That is to ask, is the Church present, nonjudgmental, and willing to stand with those in Appalachia going through the ‘thin’ and “nasty of a life” as my Aunt Pearl used to comment about the downtrodden up in Stoney Creek in the upper reaches of Carter County just over the mountains into North Carolina. Is the Church singing and working for a better day, welcoming and understanding the plight of broken families and hearts, raising those very hearts to hope and answer, and not condemning folk away and apart? “Country music” in its broadest, most generous definition offers the faith unbounded resource, relevance, community, knowledge, celebration, message, and love. Tex Sample wrote a fine book on the subject. “Country has primarily been the soul

music of rural and urban white working people across most of the twentieth century.”<sup>45</sup>

Andrew Root in *Faith Formation in a Secular Age* importantly observes, “If the church has an apologetic in a secular age, it must be bound to the experience of ministry itself and the humble desire to make sense of the profoundly full experience of being ministered to and ministering to another.<sup>46</sup> I find “humble desire” a great strength and sustaining characteristic of the faith and music of Appalachia. Loyal Jones describes the two main traits of such a faith in Appalachia. “The first is that mountain religion is a search for meaning, and the second is the statement that humility is one of the cornerstones of Appalachian theology. That humility is tangible in the majority of mountain churches, and it is something natives rarely forget.”<sup>47</sup> Humility is hope, wisdom, experience, harmony, and love, all familiar to the best of Appalachian and “Country music.”

Reviewing the twentieth and into the twenty-first century, I will focus on several major developments important to this thesis: the rise and decline of post-World War II Appalachian and American Christianity; the 1927 Bristol Recordings - the “Big Bang” of country music; the immensely important development of the “Appalachian Studies” movement of the last half-century assembling and teaching past, present, and future for Appalachia; and, I ask, a “New Appalachia?” and music’s and the Church’s role in it.

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<sup>45</sup>Tex Sample, *White Soul: Country Music, the Church, and Working Americans* (Abingdon Press: Nashville, 1996), 13.

<sup>46</sup> Andrew Root, *Faith Formation in a Secular Age* (Grand Rapids, Michigan: Baker Academic, 2017), 210.

<sup>47</sup> An introductory essay by Loyal Jones, Bill J. Leonard, Editor, *Christianity in Appalachia: Profiles in Regional Pluralism* (Knoxville: The University of Tennessee Press, 1999).

## ***The Rise and Decline of American and Appalachian Christianity***

*According to Gallup's data, [national] church membership declined from 70% of the adult population in the 1970s to near 50% in 2018... A Pew Research Center telephone poll shows similar trends... 65% of adults described themselves as Christians, down 12 percentage points from a decade ago.*

*Nathan Baker, "Faith in the future: Church membership fell from 70% of adults in the 1970s to 50% in 2018," Johnson City Press, December 22, 2019 2019, page A1-2.*

*"Has the last Episcopalian been born?" ... "Philip Jenkins, a scholar and Episcopal layman does the math and finds out that at the Episcopal Church's current rate of decline, there will no more Episcopalians by the end of this century."*

*Rod Dreher  
The American Conservative, October 27, 2014*

*"Well, Father Tim, pray for us. All of our little Baptist country churches are fading away. One by one, just disappearing."  
A longtime, faithful Baptist minister from the Keensburg community of Carter County, Tennessee*

Following World War II in the mid-late 1940s, families would move ahead with a good education, good-paying jobs, and new homes in new neighborhoods. Home and family-building meant good nation-building for many, but not all Americans. American prosperity did not extend so easily African American citizens and many Appalachians, yet the America of Eisenhower was a purportedly ideal America, a great and proud country on-the-rise.

Appalachia would continue to suffer neglect and disassociation from the status quo in the country. Exploitation of the people in the nineteenth into the twentieth century was joined by exploitation of the land and waterways throughout the new century. The

coal industry and absentee owners of great parcels of land, for example, wielded power while paying minimal wages, allowing dangerous working conditions, dominating local and state politics, and damaging the natural environment of Appalachia. And that is all before the advent of the epidemic of drug addiction, poverty, and high-risk, work-related sickness, sorrow, and death. How did the people of Appalachia keep faith? I am not sure that we will ever know all of the answers, but despite despair and abuse, faith lives in the heart somehow, someway.

Dr. King's words from throughout the Civil Rights Movement of the 1950s and 1960s resound again and again, for Appalachia, too, "God will make a way out of no way!" Strong personal independence, a sustaining faith for many, hope for self and community, a reverence for all creation and restoration of family and home, all are part of faith and worship, all joining in Appalachia and much of its music in and outside church. Music witnesses and tells the stories: Johnny Cash, Dolly Parton, Bill Monroe, the Stanley Brothers, Loretta Lynn, Jimmie Rodgers, A.P., Maybelle, and Sara Carter, "Keep on the Sunny Side"—and so many more—despite the hardships and "toils and tribulations," in the words of one old hymn.

The "King of Country Music," Roy Acuff's "The Great Speckled Bird" would stir the poorest, most pitiful old mountain woman at the Covered Bridge Festival in Elizabethton to dancing and tears as her heart and dance filled with joy and light. I witnessed just such a woman in the 1960s with Mr. Acuff singing from a long truck-bed atop the Elk Avenue Bridge over the beautiful Doe River downtown one Saturday afternoon. Tennessee Ernie Ford singing "How Great Thou Art" in a high school

auditorium drew hearts closer to the Lord for healing and redemption as two old enemies, opposing ballplayers, would approach one another, asking forgiveness, then shaking hands in tears while the wonderful baritone voice of Tennessee Ernie sang on. Can faith and its music yet serve such agency and fullness of life? This thesis asks, evaluates, and begins, I hope, to answer that question: a third ‘Great Awakening’?

There are signs of hope and promise in Appalachia beginning in its song, lyric, and melody, old and new, familiar and not at all. There is much to heal and dream aplenty. I hear it in the songs and messages of our young and old alike at concert, on the radio, and Sunday mornings at St. Thomas. And, Bluegrass these days, brings the message home to many.

Two churches of our area were featured on all three major networks of the Tri-Cities (nearing 600,000 population, 2020 Census) on Easter Day, April 4, 2021. One was a 2,000-person non-denominational congregation with a big, dancing “Bluegrass Mash” band (indicating “hard-playing” or aggressive) performing on a large stage, bright lights and sounds flashing, hundreds of lilies, and a smiling preacher. Juxtaposed to this was a small Episcopal Church where fifty or so gathered in worship under big, beautiful shade trees all set against an old, red, handmade-brick church, great sunshine skies and mountains surrounding with a dozen lilies at altar. The preacher and people were beaming in joy. It was the parish’s first, in-person Eucharist since Sunday, March 8, 2020 at the onset of the pandemic of Covid-19. Leading worship was “Christ the Lord is risen today,” *The Hymnal 1982* (Episcopal) followed by “The Roses Will Bloom” (Ralph Stanley) offered by three young Bluegrass musicians, humbly joined in blessed voice,

mandolin, and fiddle standing together under the trees singing in-praise of Christ's resurrection, "When you see the Rose of Sharon, the roses will bloom..." *This* is the promise of soul and song dedicated to the Love of God. *This* is St. Thomas Church, viewed by thousands on Easter evening television news, the subject of this thesis, and we are blessed and blessing. People began calling Easter week from across the Tri-Cities requesting prayers, pastoral visits, and sending gifts of greetings and support to the Church.

### ***The 1927 Bristol Recordings and the Appalachian Studies Movement***

*"These recordings in Bristol in 1927 are the single most important event in the history of country music."*<sup>48</sup>

*Johnny Cash*

*"In barely two years of doctoral study, I have worked with gospel, Bluegrass, and traditional musicians and singers in churches, including my own. I have met well over a hundred students pursuing academic degrees in Appalachian Studies from Tennessee and Kentucky to North Carolina and Virginia, for teaching, writing, and professional careers in music. I have celebrated at numberless country music and Bluegrass events from the "Birthplace of Country Music" in Bristol, Virginia, Tennessee and later, all the way to "Albert Hall" in Waretown, New Jersey, in the "Pineys." I stood with a granddaughter of the Carter family at "Carter Fold," the family home atop Clinch Mountain, Virginia, stilled*

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<sup>48</sup> Johnny Cash, liner notes, album cover, *The Bristol Sessions: Historic Recordings from Bristol, Tennessee featuring the Carter Family, Jimmie Rodgers and Twenty-One Additional Artists* (Nashville: The Country Music Foundation, 1991). While the recordings in Bristol in 1927 might always be known as the "single most important event in the history of country music," more recent scholarship has cast important questions. The first has to do with the claim and commercialization of that claim that Bristol is the "Birthplace of Country Music," as touted in story and popular notion (and millions of dollars). Facts and questions to the contrary now arise. The second is whether Ralph Peer, the so-called "founding father" of the "commercial music industry and the linchpin of American roots music." Ted Olson, "The 1927 Bristol Sessions and Ralph Peer: a Myth and A Legend Losing Luster in the Cold Light of Recent Scholarship: ," *The Old Time Herald*, Vol. 14(3), 20-22. Also, ETSU Faculty Works, Digital Commons @ East Tennessee State University (Johnson City, Tennessee).

*into the night at the Hiltons, Virginia at United Methodist Church looking with great heart and blessing at the colorful stained glass window installed into the Church depicting the Carter Family, A.P., Sara, and Mother Maybelle singing forth. My friends, there is something happening for the good in Appalachia!”<sup>49</sup>*

*The Reverend Timothy Holder  
Appalachian Symposium, the University of Kentucky, Lexington,  
March 1-2, 2019*

After two centuries of exploitation and abuse, continuing into a third, Appalachia begins to stand celebrating the great wealth that is the Region, its music, and people. We take account of where we are and who we are: drug use on the rise once again at pandemic, the fading but drastic effects of the coal industry to the health and welfare of humanity and creation alike, persisting stereotypes, families and their children struggling through life, young men and women in jail, the enormity of problems and difficulties breeding devastation, giving up and apathy still. Music as an identity and companion offers hope and light, the music itself, what the music represents, and the artists and musicians who sing inspiration, joy, sadness, love, faith, and hope.

Ronald D. Eller eloquently states in his final chapter, “The New Appalachia,” in *Uneven Ground: Appalachia Since 1945*: “The stories that we tell about ourselves can give us a vision for the kind of community we want to become, and building a vision of alternative possibilities is critical if we desire broad-based systemic change. When we recognize our own history and exchange false stories for real stories, we nurture pride

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<sup>49</sup> *Appalachian Evensong: ‘Then Sings My Soul,’ St. Thomas Episcopal Church, Elizabethton, Tennessee, December 2, 2018,*” A paper presented by The Reverend Timothy Holder to an auditorium filled with students and faculty at the Appalachia Symposium, the University of Kentucky, Lexington, March 1 and 2, 2019.

and identity.”<sup>50</sup> This thesis provides at least one forum, one community, one faith tradition, and many celebrations for these stories and this vision to be welcomed, shared, learned, nourished, honored, and celebrated.

Three among a number of developments have brought significant meaning to the value and depth of the spirit and life of Appalachians in the twentieth into the twenty-first century: the 1927 Bristol Recordings leading to a proliferation and popular celebrations of the ‘birth’ of Country Music, Bristol, Tennessee and Virginia its birthplace; the development of the Appalachian Studies movement reaching today across the region involving schools, colleges, universities, symposia, publications and scholarship; and, an evident pride across the faces, hearts, and minds of innumerable young (middle and old-aged) folk from the region holding and playing their fiddles, banjos, mandolin, guitars and such all over Appalachia, the country, and the world, even into worship at St. Thomas Episcopal Church.

I have heard it said by church musicians and singers in Appalachia that you ‘can’t sing a real ‘country song’ without some spirit moving about in it somewhere’ (testified a local dulcimer maker and player). Looking at the roster of seventy-six songs and nineteen performers for the the Bristol Sessions, twelve days of recording in 1927, the first ever, I can begin to understand the sentiment, as others have said it, ‘country’s got soul’. Ernest Phipps & His Holiness Quartet (*I Want to Go Where Jesus Is*), Ernest V. “Pop” Stoneman and his wife Hattie, singing and playing the guitar and harmonica, led a

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<sup>50</sup> Ronald D. Eller, *Uneven Ground: Appalachia Since 1945* (Lexington, Kentucky: The University of Kentucky Press, 2013), 272.



number of other musicians and singers (singing old and beloved favorites, *Tell Mother I Will Meet Her*, *Midnight on the Stormy Deep*, and *Are You Washed in the Blood?*); and “Blind” Alfred Reed (*Walking in the Way With Jesus*) and others sang old mountain songs of faith, much like you can still hear in Southern Appalachia churches, houses of prayer, and revival meetings and concerts. If you had not heard country music in person (the voices, the instruments, and the messages), the 1927 Recordings opened the way to a new world. This was the “Big Bang,” the beginning of what we know today as “Country Music” and it overflowed with the spirit and character-the songs of faith-of Appalachia. The recordings were made by Ralph Peer, New York, from the “Victor Talking Machine Company.”<sup>51</sup> Peer is rightfully praised for making it happen *and*, many observe, criticized for making money off of willing and earnest country musicians who had never been recorded.

Beginning services at St. Thomas’ “Summer Evensong,” June 13, 2019, subsequent to the three liturgies presented in this thesis, we opened with the Carter Family’s *Keep on the Sunny Side* from the 1927 Bristol Recordings. Spirits rising after singing it the first time, the congregation asked that we sing it again. We all stood and a parishioner would later comment, “Father Tim, it was like we were singing a national anthem or a beautiful song of faith.”

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<sup>51</sup> Charles K. Wolfe and Ted Olson, Editors, *The Bristol Sessions: Writings About the Big Bang of Country Music* (Jefferson, North Carolina and London: McFarland & Company, Inc., Publishers). Material gathered from throughout this text for this thesis. And, “*The Bristol Sessions: Historic Recordings from Bristol, Tennessee featuring the First Recordings of the Carter Family and Jimmie Rodgers and Twenty-One Additional Artists* (The Country Music Foundation, 1991).

Rosanne Cash commented in Ken Burns' and Dayton Duncan's widely popular Country Music series on PBS, fall 2019, "The Carter Family was elemental. It's like the atom... Those songs, they were captured rather than written. They were in the hills like rock formations."<sup>52</sup> Such were the dreams and foretelling of those who loved Appalachia in ages past. "Surely this is the folk-song of the highest order. May it one day give birth to a music that shall take a high place among the world's expression."<sup>53</sup> These were and are today 'holy words'-hope, respect, birthright, and love-for many an Appalachian.

Scholarship and academic studies about Appalachia began to appear in the 1930s into succeeding decades. There has been much to research and expose after "all the nonsense," as one writer termed it, that had been "thrown around" from those who would exploit and denigrate Appalachia in both the nineteenth and twentieth centuries. This work would not be conceivable if not for the expansive and valuable writings of numerous Appalachian scholars, including Berea College professor Loyal Jones, called the "Dean of Appalachian Studies," cited and interviewed here. Hundreds of students, many at graduate level, learn about the various areas of Appalachian Studies. This includes readings, classic and more recent, global and comparative studies, literature, religion, development, history, ethnomusicology, European roots, learning about our heritage including travels and studies in the British Isles, and more, chiefly, practice, artistry, and techniques of musical performance, "Old Time, Country, and Bluegrass."

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<sup>52</sup> Dayton Duncan, Based on a documentary film by Ken Burns, written by Dayton Duncan, *Country Music* (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 2019), 32.

<sup>53</sup> *Ibid.*, xv. Emma Belle Miles, *The Spirit of the Mountains*, 1905, as quoted by Dayton Duncan in the opening of *Country Music*.

A faculty member here might do a year's Fulbright Scholarship in Country Music in the Czech Republic or Japan, both with Bluegrass communities. Franklin, Marshall, Kentucky, Berea, East Tennessee State, Appalachian State, Tennessee, and many other colleges and universities offer courses and graduate programs in Appalachian Studies. Regional, national and international societies and academic organizations hold conventions, seminars, and symposia for discussions, publications, and celebrations of Appalachia. The longterm effect of Appalachian Studies over the later twentieth century into today is incalculable. I hope to see theological education in Appalachian Studies and courses in seminaries and schools of theology as well.

*What role can music play in society, in church and faith?* If music is identity of a person or community, much like the finest of holy icons or the Carter family's stained-glass window at Hiltons' Methodist Church up on Clinch Mountain, might not the Church celebrate and embrace Appalachian prose and melody offering good news, new life, and renewal to self and community? Music becomes the incarnation of Jesus Christ in us and our community. St. Thomas, the Episcopal Church and Anglican Tradition have a story to tell and celebrate. I am reminded of an old hymn we know and sing well these days, "There is power, power wonder-working power... in the blood...of the Lamb...". Let us sing and believe in a new and exciting day.

### ***Three Worship Services***

Music produced in three worship services at St. Thomas Church addressed an opportunity for long-term mission, evangelism, and rebirth of new and bold, culturally

diverse, informed faith in Appalachia. These three worship services show the vitality, cultural variety, inspiration and beauty of rich traditions, old and new, of the music of the faith in Appalachia. This music becomes great joy and great mission and renewal at St. Thomas.

David Goodhew, a visiting fellow of St. John's College, Durham University, vicar, St. Barnabas Church, Middlesboro, England, and the co-director of the Centre for Church Growth Research, stated in *The Living Church*, November 15, 2020, that "The number of Episcopalians in church of a Sunday in 2040 could be as few as 200,000-less than a quarter of the number in church in 2000." He concludes, "The American population is diversifying fast ethnically. This is the best soil in which to plant churches."<sup>54</sup> Including Appalachian music in the liturgy represents not a mere formula for church growth; rather, it is a promising opening, a great awakening of the Spirit's presence among us. It leads and calls worshippers of many traditions and none at all to holiness, to a "new song" for many.

An American Anglican scholar, Ross Kane, of Virginia Theological Seminary, said this: "Anglicanism is not a static form but rather something that is shaped afresh in and through every new expression of it. That understanding gives more agency to Appalachian Episcopalians by letting them shape it afresh, thereby informing Anglican tradition."<sup>55</sup> New ground, new formation, new and fertile mind and heart await. The Episcopal Church and the Anglican tradition are suited for this work, theologically,

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<sup>54</sup> David Goodhew, "Facing Episcopal Church Decline - the Latest Numbers," *The Living Church*, November 15, 2020, 12-13.

<sup>55</sup> Ross Kane, a note and conversation, November 15, 2018.

liturgically, and missiologically. Again, with all due respect to Tennessean and theologian Phyllis Tickle, thank you, but the mountain country of Northeast Tennessee is not so quiet these days.

***More to come***

The principal works of literature and music that have most influenced this thesis originated in Western Europe and the British Isles coming down the Watauga Valley (Elizabethton and Carter County) of Northeast Tennessee. Though of importance, interest and scholarly pursuit, this effort does not include studies in two areas: Native American (Cherokee, known and unknown peoples before), and newer Latinx American populations holding forth as Bluegrass becoming “LatinGrass” and Old Music (mariachi and marimba liturgical music).<sup>56</sup> Native American contributions and LatinGrass songs of

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<sup>56</sup>“The Appalachians have been home to humans for longer than most of us realize,” writes Scott Weidensahl in *Mountains of the Heart: A Natural History of the Appalachians* (Golden, Colorado: Fulcrum Publishing, 1991), 140. Weidensahl continues, “both the Native and the European periods stretch back further in time than the average person appreciates. And more than perhaps any other mountain system in North America, the Appalachians have been changed by-and changed-the human cultures that sheltered among them. Still, in the grand scheme of geologic time, our species is a newcomer to these hills, present only for a few thousand years out of a span of hundreds of millions. No one can pinpoint the first visitors, of course, but until recently most experts agreed on a general date: sometime after 11,500 years B.P. (before present), the time mankind was thought to have first crossed from Asia.”

faith, justice and celebration are planned for a Hymnography and Videography begun as an important part of St. Thomas' ongoing mission and worship.<sup>57</sup>

A fascinating early view of Native American religion, cultural, religious practices is offered in John Haywood's (1762-1826) book, *The natural and aboriginal history of Tennessee: up to the first settlements therein by the white people, in the year 1768* (Printed by George Wilson: Nashville, 1823). The 390 page text with "Commentaries" and "Errata" (and index) in addition, was re-published by "Scholar's Choice" (Lighting Source UK, Ltd, Milton Keynes UK, date not provided). Outlining historical data, cultural histories, sciences, social practices, "first appearance in the Unica mountain... of East Tennessee," Haywood speaks specifically about "The religion of the aborigines of Tennessee-the sun and the moon painted upon rocks... the dress of idols... incense" in Chapter VI and the "Biblical traditions" and "Hebraic rites" of Cherokee and Chickasaws, East of the Mississippi in Chapter X.

A posting entitled, "Cherokee Spirituality" on *Native American Netroots*, October 30, 2016, described numerous liturgical and social rites among Cherokee peoples. Citing numerous texts and articles about religious and "spirit-life," commentators offer spiritual

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<sup>57</sup> "Listen to 2020 Grammy-nominated, "Che Apalaché" on *You Tube* at "LatinGrass," and their album, "Rearrange My Heart," a National Public Radio "Top Ten Album 2019," Beautiful songs for justice, "The Dreamer," "The Wall" and more in Bluegrass/Ralph Stanley-style (wailing, repetitive, high-pitched and poetic). Though called a "trial idea" or newly formed "experiment" by some, songs such as "Maria," and "Green Pastures" reveal great depth and spirit in Bluegrass and Latinx traditions. "LatinGrass" and developments such as "Mexilachia" begin to develop and appeal to appreciative audiences across the United States and internationally. Che Apalaché and their music represent new and powerful voices for justice. Script and song are often biblically centered with passionate messages. A dream of the author of this thesis is to invite Che Apalaché to Episcopal churches and diocesan conventions for great "Misas de Justicia!"

teachings and practices such as honoring “fire as transformation,” the “Green Corn Ceremony,” celebrating birth, harvesting and seasonal rituals, the communitarian ethic that shaped their lives,” “river blessings” and “water rites” throughout life.<sup>58</sup>

Little can be stated or observed about Cherokee culture and society and the white man’s treatment of these native peoples without knowledge of the infamous “Trail of Tears” (1831). In *Voices of Cherokee Women*, Carolyn Ross Johnson, Editor (Winston-Salem, North Carolina: John F. Blair, Publisher, 2013) the Cherokee woman, “Wahnenauhi” (given the name, “Lucy Lowrey” by Christian missionary parents), became the first author of a Cherokee hymn, “The Lord and I Are Friends.” The hymn was published in *The Cherokee Hymnal*, also known as *The Cherokee Hymnbook* available through the Museum of the Cherokee in Cherokee, North Carolina. Also, see John Ehle, *Trail of Tears: The Rise and Fall of the Cherokee Nation* (New York: Anchor Books, A Division of Random House, Inc., 1989).

These closing words are offered in respect, but also in desire and opportunity that the Appalachian liturgies at St. Thomas might entertain and appreciate those important segments of Appalachia that are Native American and Latin American. Stories and music significant to Appalachia, our history and future, will, we pray, be an important part of our liturgies and worship into the years to come.

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<sup>58</sup> Bookmark: permalink [<http://nativeamericanroots.net/diary/2209>]. Posts at “Indians 101” and “Cherokee Indians, Religion, spirituality.”

## Chapter 5

### The Project: Three Worship Services

#### *Appalachian Evensong with Lessons and Carols*

1 Advent, Sunday, December 2, 2018

#### *Christmas Midnight Mass + Misa de Medianoche de Navidad*

Festival Holy Eucharist + La Santa Eucaristía  
December 24, 2018

#### *Celebrating Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. Weekend*

The Holy Eucharist + La Santa Eucharist  
Sunday, January 20, 2019

*Commenting on his joining worship with St. Thomas at Christmas Midnight Mass, 2017 and 2018 in which this thesis finds its origin as told in the Introduction and Chapter 1, Joey Hildebran, a child prodigy singing at piano at twelve in Morganton, North Carolina, an ordained minister in the Free Holiness tradition in Appalachia, stated, “St. Thomas is a place that has been opened up and is being used by God... The Episcopal Liturgy brings greater solemnity and beauty of God to me.”<sup>59</sup>*

#### ***Argument and Questions, Responses and Means***

For Episcopalians, can the music of Southern Appalachia ranging from renditions and adaptations of old English hymn and ballad, Wesleyan hymnody, and African American tradition to later day Bluegrass Gospel, “Americana” (a new name for folk music into a new day?), “Affrilachian” and “LatinGrass” become integral and significant spiritually with their respective liturgical forms of worship? For those outside of the Episcopal Church in Southern Appalachia, and especially those for whom the music of

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<sup>59</sup> An interview by Timothy Holder with Joey Hildebran, May 29, 2019, Elizabethton, Tennessee.



Southern Appalachia has been a part of their lives, can worship in the Episcopal Church, given its distinctive liturgical form, be spiritually meaningful in supporting faith, lives, and communities of believers? I argue that the three worship services here begin to reveal and celebrate Episcopal Church/Anglican liturgy, and old-time, Bluegrass, and country as not only mutually viable, but beautiful and inspirational in the praise and worship of God.

In order to develop a better understanding of how the old-time, Bluegrass, and country music of Appalachia may in the Anglican liturgical traditions of worship bless spiritually Episcopalians and the larger community of Southern Appalachia, three parish worship services were developed with local musicians, members, and friends of St. Thomas Church. The purpose of the project was to address two central questions. First, how and why is the music of Appalachia experienced as significant for Episcopalians when it is sung and instrumentalized as an integral part of worship in their liturgical tradition? And second, how do non-Anglican persons from the community experience the music of Appalachia in the context of Episcopal liturgies and why might this be so?

In addition to these two questions, the design and development of the three worship services provided the opportunity to identify what is needed so that “liturgical Bluegrass” (as termed and referenced at St. Thomas) is important to worship across cultures and religious traditions. Three successive services were developed collaboratively among clergy, parish leaders, and musicians.

Musicians were uniformly treated as practiced throughout the Episcopal Church. Diocesan compensation standards were honored for all musicians. Some musicians

accepted stipends, others did not, and still others designated earnings for local agencies for the hungry, poor, and needy. As planned in the Project Thesis Proposal, budgeting called for some \$2,500 for musicians, advertisement, and incidental expenses. We were able to produce all three liturgies for a total of approximately \$1,400 representing forty-four percent savings. Major donor gifts were given from around the country by generous donors interested in our evangelism and mission at St Thomas.

By inviting those outside the Episcopal Church to join together with Episcopalians, these services provided the opportunity to understand their response to this collaborative effort. The level of participation and the involvement of worshippers over three services provided important data on whether the collaborative development of worship integrating distinctive liturgical forms and music with one another might be accomplished in ways that engage participants and enrich experience. Beyond observation, surveys, group meetings, music rehearsals and planning, in-depth individual interviews provided further means of identifying participant response. These responses suggest some reasons of how and why these services are effective. They also raised questions for further development, exploration, and planning.

The three worship services were planned in order to offer a traditional “Appalachian Evensong” at Advent, a Christmas service with cultural and religious representation from multiple traditions and cultures, and the Celebration of Dr. King were designed to be led-at least in part-by African American members, guests, and sister churches in the City. Together these three services offered the opportunity to understand

better the possibilities of such cross-multicultural work liturgically and spiritually as well as theologically and practically.

Several persons commented that St. Thomas “was an unlikely place” for such collaboration. Few could imagine a ‘catholic,’ broadly representative worship service here in Elizabethton, Tennessee in Southern Appalachia. “Of all places,” one surprised participant stated. “If God is truly abundant,” I remember responding to an enquirer from another part of the country, hardly believing my story, “why not here... are you saying that abundance and the love of God stops somewhere way away from Appalachia?”

The planners, church members, new and old friends of St. Thomas, a growing number of musicians, and those who became increasingly excited about new prospects for the parish hoped and prayed that our three project events not be characterized as ‘show’ or ‘performance.’ All liturgy was intended for worship. Good music can draw many people singularly for the entertainment or ‘show’ value. Our purpose and efforts were to conduct ourselves and our music in terms of biblical and traditional worship as offered by the various traditions and peoples attending. We prepared respectfully, carefully, inquisitively, prayerfully, and joyfully. We prayed. A great old hymn of the faith, “Showers of Blessings,” has become a favorite of participants as we would gather with new friends and old.

We desired to test for authenticity as a central aim of our work and mission. Our success would be measured in terms of the experience and then the responses to the worship encountered and enjoined at the three project events. We also found that numerous people (non-Episcopal) returned to one or both of the remaining services.

Three well-produced events in forty-nine days-practically “one in every two weeks at Christmas,” our St. Thomas ‘team’ kept reminding one another, some three dozen singers, instrumentalists, and musicians, over two-hundred worshippers, in forty-four completed surveys, and eleven in-depth interviews with countless ongoing conversations among musicians, supporters, and worshippers made up the data and ‘testing’ of the project’s three worship services. A great effort was made by many.

Organizers and volunteers consisting of parish leadership and musicians were interested in how such a trio of events (first ever for St. Thomas) might support and build St. Thomas and the Episcopal community in Elizabethton and in the four-county area we serve: Carter (Elizabethton), Johnson (Mountain City), Unicoi (Erwin and Unicoi), and Washington (Johnson City and Jonesborough) Counties. We asked in interviews, “What is the sustainability and potential future development of events like these at St. Thomas and in the Episcopal Church?” And, “Will you come again?”

Added to St. Thomas’ ‘traditional’ membership (white, Western European ancestry), the parish has welcomed new persons and communities among its membership over the past five years. These include: LGBTQ (lesbian, gay, transgender, and questioning) persons, the Diocese’s only Latinx, bilingual, Spanish-speaking congregation, and, a number of persons and families, musicians and young people through what we call our “Appalachian ministries.” We grow as we celebrate the love and beauty of God in and with more and more people and communities. Mission, evangelism, and renewal are reality, gift, and celebration among us.

Call it “church planting,” “market segmentation,” “emerging church,” as you will, but the key is “new community,” as we call and experience it at St. Thomas. The three project events proved to be a major and meaningful project resulting in new pathway and deepened spirit for St. Thomas, its people, and community. St. Thomas was setting a pathway for welcoming more people and amazing new music into 2019 and beyond.

Two principal means of testing for the Project Thesis were a survey with questions and commentary followed by in-depth interviews. The survey with pre-stamped and addressed envelopes was distributed to worshippers at the close of service. Personal, in-depth interviews were scheduled within the several weeks into months following the events. Respondents varied from attending one or two to all three of the worship services. Both questionnaires (two pages) and in-depth interviews provided simple differentiation of gender, faith tradition, church membership (if any), locale, and musical contribution(s). Each of the three-event Surveys with responses are published in the Appendices.

Secondarily, an ongoing, informal but highly useful “Conversations Diary” was kept with input and statements by the musicians, St. Thomas parishioners, and guests. A Facebook page was also established where numerous affirmative comments and observations were offered by attendees, new friends, and others looking for more information and offering ideas and music.

Thirdly, before, during, and following the three worship services of this thesis project, conversations, information, resources, feedback, and evaluations were positively and freely given by leaders, musicians, and representatives from St. Thomas’ and the

“Doe River Ensemble” who attended and offered their talents. Other feedback was offered by those who brought their families to one or more of the worship services. Conversations and feedback from students and faculty, musicians and numerous persons interested in the project from the Appalachian Studies Department, East Tennessee State University, Johnson City and the Birthplace of Country Music Museum and Studios in Bristol, Virginia and Tennessee offered invaluable comments.

More often than not, rehearsals before and in-between each worship service provided a substantive exchange and learning of ideas from various musicians and participants representing various religious traditions, music backgrounds, and cultures including Western European, African American, and Latinx American. A number of musical traditions represented, we purposefully decided on three services to provide for a greater variety of music and to better welcome those who were coming to St. Thomas, all as indicated in the service programs in the Appendix.

St. Thomas and Episcopal folk and their families, friends, and neighbors made up the majority of each congregation. We were joined by musicians and their families, friends, and neighbors who represented numerous Christian and a variety of other traditions. The congregations grew in size, interest, publicity, and notice. Parishes from around the Episcopal Diocese of East Tennessee and from throughout the Episcopal Church contacted St. Thomas for information, programs, and asking to stay in touch. A Facebook page, “Celebrating the Music of Appalachia in Episcopal and Anglican Tradition” has helped to communicate with other persons and communities near and far

interested in mission, evangelism, and renewal through music. Local and area media have played an important role in publicity, recognition, mission, and evangelism.

Each service program with hymns and readings, participants and traditions are found in the Appendices along with a videography, social media references, and news stories announcing all three worship services. These references continue to be compiled and well-used by St. Thomas for Appalachian music, worship, and celebration.

### ***The Project: Three Worship Services***

#### ***Appalachian Evensong with Lessons and Carols, 1 Advent, Sunday, December 2, 2018***

On the First Sunday of Advent, on the evening of December 2, 2018, fifty-five people filled St. Thomas with the hope and expectation of something new and beautiful, good beginnings for a blessed and holy Advent preparing for the Christ Child's birth at Christmas. The beautiful old 1861 structure was bedecked inside and out with greenery from Roan Mountain, second-highest peak East of the Mississippi, pride of Carter County. As families, old friends and new gathered, prelude selections of familiar and new songs lifted spirit and interest. The musicians seemed to assemble without fanfare or announcement, just 'tuning in and up,' one commented, "like an old-Irish 'Ceilidh,'" described loosely as an impromptu local music or arts gathering. A friend commented, "Don't get nervous, Padre... we get here when we get here and it all comes together wonderfully."

Seasonal readings guided our way at what we titled "Appalachian Evensong," bringing together Appalachian and Episcopal/Anglican traditions. The fall in Genesis,

Isaiah's prophesying a "new heaven and a new earth," Zephaniah's bidding a time to rejoice and sing, Mary's song to God "My soul doth magnify the Lord" from Luke, prepared and lightened our way to the manger where the Christ Child would come into the world on Christmas morning.

Appalachian Evensong on December 2 included mostly hymns from the older traditions in the region, English hymnody, *Amazing Grace* and beautiful instrumentals on hammered dulcimer and mandolin, yet two newer spiritual hymns. We also had a vocal and piano accompaniment of *Mary, Did You Know?*, a popular contemporary song, which was well received.

Congregational singing, soloists, instrumentals, and prayers accompanied by strings of mandolin, guitar, and hammered dulcimer alongside a piano that lifted our hearts and souls to new heights that evening. Hearing the words from Isaiah 65 where the prophet foretells a "new heaven and a new earth," the people began to clap their hands and move together with the amazing rhythm of a Spirit-filled pianist singing *I Am in a New World* from rich, enlivening Free Holiness tradition. Just as Zephaniah summoned, we rejoiced and sang, mightily. We closed encircling the Church nave joining hands and began to sing 'call and response' a cappella, *How Great Thou Art*. As we sang, 'What joy filled our souls' great love and tears welcomed all hearts and worshipers in unity.



***Hymnody: “Solemnity, Simplicity, Participation, and Swing”***

The solemnity of hammered dulcimer and soft guitar prepared worshippers as prelude. A last-minute harmonica-player was welcomed to bless us with *Love Lifted Me* before we began the Evensong. Simplicity yet power and tradition guided the worshipers from the First Lesson - *Amazing Grace!* Centuries-old English and Wesleyan hymnody invited congregational singing through the Second and Third Lessons, both from Isaiah, assuring believers of God’s presence and love among us. As Zephaniah in the Fourth and Isaiah in the Fifth Lesson proclaimed, rejoicing and singing in a “new heaven and a new earth,” a Spirit-filled, Free Holiness pastor and musician broke out in praise and glory on a piano that “came alive,” as one worshiper exclaimed. A whole church stood, raised arms and hands in praise, and were seen to ‘swing’ and ‘sway’ a little. A church member who had not played a piano in years was inspired to join in along with a priest-soloist in a contemporary and heartfelt, contemporary ‘Magnificat,’ “Mary, Did You Know?”

A local college sophomore offered the prayers written for the occasion for a “Closer Walk with Thee,” another for “Peace, Love, and Justice,” “Thanksgiving, Care and Love for Everybody and All Creation,” and, lastly, to “Thank God for beautiful music, especially here in Appalachia.” After an offering for a local human relief organization, and the Blessing from the Priest and Pastor, the Congregation circled the nave of the Church, joined hands and sang, “*How Great Thou Art*” a cappella, in ‘call-and-response’. Tears, embrace, great joy and thanksgiving were shared by strangers and family members alike, maybe half of us Episcopalian. Everyone was saying, “We want

to come and participate again next year.” St. Thomas was a beacon to the City that night shining forth from its historic beauty and the hope and Love of the assembled from what we affectionately call, “Old Town,” made new on an evening that will not soon be forgotten.

The holiness of that night was felt and expressed by all. “I felt the conversion of the Holy Spirit,” one participant would testify later, just as we sang *Amazing Grace*, written by a slave-trader who was saved by the grace of God, and later an Anglican clergyman himself, I could not help but imagine if the slave peoples of Elizabethton who made the brick on site and then raised up what was the old Southern Methodist Church, St. Thomas today, might have been singing with us. Surely, “How sweet the sound,” as several sang in joy and then embracing as we left St. Thomas that evening.

***“We just happened!”***

At this first Advent service, someone asked, “Who planned, led the music, and led in celebration?” There was no formally selected, well-planned committee except for what was becoming the Doe River Ensemble, our musicians, families, and friends who volunteered and showed up. “We just happened,” an organizer exclaimed.

All of our seven or eight-member troupe, “plus a few,” were local, four members of St. Thomas and others musicians and new friends. As folks gathered, we enjoyed hearing musicians “tuning-up,” with one another as was explained by one cherished balladeer, “as they could... after work” or “driving from up Roan Mountain” (an hour

away), We celebrated with piano, harmonica, guitar, mandolin, hammered dulcimer, and beautiful voices.

The intimacy of St. Thomas (fifty making for a generously-sized congregation that night) and its age and history (dating from 1861-the oldest 'in-use' church building in the city) was a memorable setting strings of guitar, dulcimer, and mandolin and soft voice, but also with greater hymn singing and praise. Worshippers admired the pine and evergreen garlands adorning about everything in sight. The first candle on the Advent Wreath shined forth. Advent had begun like never before at St. Thomas, Elizabethton.

Someone insisted, "Well, *what is, who is* the "Doe River Ensemble?" (The "Doe River Ensemble" took its name from the Doe River, a block away, from which children of the Parish learn about and present waters for Holy Baptism at St. Thomas). My reply: "Whoever shows up! Long live the "Doe River Ensemble!"

### ***Responses***

Surveys were distributed at the end of the service. We ultimately heard from eleven of those fifty-two persons and families who worshipped at Appalachian Evensong with Lessons and Carols on December 2, 2018 by survey, in-depth interviews, and conversations. These included respondents from both St. Thomas and others from a variety of faith traditions, mostly local, but several from throughout the Tri-Cities area. Respondents were from across all age groups. In-depth conversations and formal interviews regarding the event were soon underway. These included mostly persons from St. Thomas who, as a group, took great heart from what we had experienced, were

hearing from others about, and what might be ahead for our great ‘experiment,’ and “Father Tim’s education.”

We noted that nearly half of those who attended Appalachian Evensong were members of other faith traditions, if identified at all. The interest and joy described in the surveys in-hand revealed a sincere appreciation for “a service like this... our community is enriched by St. Thomas’ efforts... this music is beautiful!” Another respondent noted, “Father Tim, we have to do this every year, maybe two or three times a year.” And another, “Can we do a Summer Evensong?” Numerous responses unanimously expressed support represented by a comment from one participant who joined for all three liturgies. Father Tim, “we’re growing with this program.”

A number of respondents expressed surprise. “I didn’t know that *this* music could be so beautiful in church,” one commented. Several noted how the music and event “seemed so appropriate and fitting” in the historic 1861 church. “I can imagine hearing these same instruments here at St. Thomas a hundred years ago,” one person remarked and continued, “This little Church rang out here in “Old Town,” (a name used for those recognizing our area of downtown as the ‘first’ Elizabethton).

The dulcimer and mandolin received high marks and numerous mentions in the surveys. “The old hymns from England and France were totally beautiful on those instruments, Father Tim,” observed one appreciative person. Nearly all respondents were favorable to all traditions, instruments, vocals, and music varieties presented.

Respondents loved the piano and spiritual singing “raising our hearts” at the end of the

service. “That piano and singer took us on up to heaven,” said an Episcopalian, “I loved it, Father Tim. Can he come back?”

St. Thomas’ members pointed out their appreciation that all singers and musicians “were local” from Elizabethton and Carter County, and “several from St. Thomas” (four as of an eventual ten or more) were either members or ‘regulars’ at St. Thomas. We grew as word spread and more musicians and church folk, followers of Appalachian culture, music, academics, and faith, joined the succession of services.

The old traditional hymns, *Amazing Grace* at the beginning and *How Great Thou Art* at the closing, received warm and beautiful comments. “There was something wonderful about God’s *Amazing Grace* as we begin Christmas, Father Tim, thank you,” a visitor from the Methodist Church wrote. People also mentioned how much they appreciated joining in circle, joining hands during the a cappella, call-and-response singing of *How Great Thou Art* (found on the web page referenced in the Appendices).

Two respondents (from other faith traditions) stated that they were “unsure” if St. Thomas could be a “home for this kind of music.” Another said, “I’m not sure you’re going to have enough room at St. Thomas!” I always like to say that St. Thomas “holds about seventy-five, average-sized people, focus on *“average-size!”*”

Appalachian Evensong was a ‘first try’-at least formally-for St. Thomas Episcopal Church to more fully incorporate and appreciate ongoing and substantive use of the wealth of Appalachian Traditions. With beautiful music and liturgical traditions from throughout Episcopal and Anglican experience, daughters and sons of *The Book of Common Prayer* from the English Reformation (seventeenth century), St. Thomas had

begun to welcome new or little-celebrated music and all kinds of new people into greater community, worship and celebration.

***Christmas Midnight Mass + Misa de Medianoche de Navidad***

***Festival Holy Eucharist + La Santa Eucaristía, December 24-25, 2018***

St. Thomas had already begun to experience what Appalachian music and culture might offer to the vitality of a seventy-seven-year-old Episcopal congregation over the past year. Not by design initially, but by inviting a number of friends from around town, all local artists and religious musicians to join in, we celebrated Christmas Midnight Mass 2017 at St. Thomas. “Let’s ask ‘so and so’ to sing” said one. “She’s a great gospel singer,” said another, “I think we need to have our Pentecostal brothers and sisters here,” exclaimed one of St. Thomas’ newer members, “You know that their music director was a child prodigy from over in North Carolina, singing and playing the piano as a young boy!”

One doubter whispered into my ear that St. Thomas had “backed into a beautiful celebration.” We heard at least four liturgical styles raising people’s love and joy to “highest heaven,” a young, new Episcopalian kept telling everybody. We heard and celebrated mountain gospel, African American gospel, ‘downtown’ traditional Methodist, all framed in *The Hymnal 1982* and *The Book of Common Prayer* of our tradition. As Holy Week and Easter approached two-and-a-half months later, St. Thomas folks began asking me, “Can we invite our friends back to join Good Friday, Palm Sunday, and Easter?”

Preparation became a sizable job. Publicity, spreading the word, consulting with friends from Appalachian Studies at East Tennessee State University in Johnson City and the Birthplace of Country Music in Bristol, conferring with knowledgeable Episcopal and ecumenical clergy in the area and around the country-all seemed to fall into place for us. We also began to hear from parishes in Pennsylvania and Virginia and a diocese (in Rochester) about their interest in what we were doing, requesting that we share materials with them as we proceeded to our second project event, “Christmas Midnight Mass, Misa de Medianoche de Navidad,” the congregation having welcomed and now building a bilingual community, the first and only bilingual Episcopal congregation in the Diocese of East Tennessee.

Planners for Christmas Eve, a few weeks away, included our collaborative team of musicians, the “Doe River Ensemble,” growing in number, plus our work team, ranging from a faithful two or three to a dozen as we prepared for Christmas Eve. All worked diligently and creatively together. We were excited, still celebrating the warm and exciting reception of our beloved parish home. “A new birth?,” one veteran at St. Thomas asked. “Reaching out a little can mean a lot,” a team member expressed in thanksgiving and in anticipation of Christmas.

The Christmas worship service would grow to around twelve musicians and singers: Latinx children leading a beautiful procession of “Bebé Jesu” to altar at the very beginning singing in Spanish a tribute honoring “María, Madre;” two pianists (traditional) and two vocalists (traditional, an Episcopalian and “downtown Methodist... more like an Episcopalian,” the singer kept repeating); a pianist and vocalist (Free

Holiness/Pentecostal); and, two soloists (African American tradition). It would be the two African American sisters who led the big congregation out the doors past midnight singing with great joy, “Go tell it on the Mountain” from their tradition at local African American churches, all of us eventually clapping, dancing, singing in ‘call and response’ with the priest proclaiming, “Jesus is born in Bethlehem of Judea! Rejoice! Rejoice!” People did not want the Celebration to stop, so we sang and embraced a little more, and we danced in celebration well into the early morning of Christmas.

A number of questions have come to mind:

- “Can the Episcopal Church mix and integrate with Appalachian traditions and those traditions with us?”
- “Can Episcopalians honor and genuinely worship in local and regional traditions?”
- “Might all of us together mean a new and greater spirit here in Appalachia for all?”
- “Is the Episcopal Church ‘up to it?’”
- “Can this happen at ‘little’ St. Thomas? ...I guess it already is!”
- “Where can we find the musicians and singers... how do we begin?”

These and other critical questions about what we were doing to “try it out” and “see if all of this is possible” were being answered in lived experience and revelation. The first two worship services, Appalachian Evensong and Christmas Midnight Mass, *Misa de Medianoche* led us forward in spirit and song, and in great love for our home of Appalachia.



## *Responses*

Testimonies and in-depth interviews, along with other sources of testing and review, told the story. “Spirit and great Love,” testified one inspired Episcopalian calling me early Christmas morning hours excited and blessed by Christmas Midnight Mass 2018. St. Thomas, the faithful person kept repeating, “had never witnessed so many different people in the pews:” Episcopal/Anglican traditional, newer Latinx families with many children, congregations from maybe a dozen different churches in town, beautiful Free Holiness, and a “good few more.”

“I don’t think we were missing anybody,” an usher burst out in happiness. “How did this happen... they were standing celebrating outside the doors and would have celebrated another hour... We’re going to do this every Christmas, right?” the young parishioner exclaimed. Testimonies and stories were topic and celebration for some time, most impossible to record except by diary and in memory as planners and participants began joining for in-depth interviews into 2019.

A well-intentioned parishioner almost forgot to distribute surveys as the congregation at the close of service joined on the street singing, “Go tell it on the mountain...” Joy and love bursting out all around us, only a limited number of the questionnaires were distributed to the people. We received four back in the mail and were able to secure eleven more by later distribution and follow-up. Our official attendance was eighty-two. “Who knows? It was big,” an organizer stated. A “dozen up to twenty or more” of our Latinx men were outside due to the crowded church apparently readying “fuegos” (liturgical fireworks), I later heard, catching up with one another,

perhaps praying and singing with all of us inside, no one was sure. People were everywhere.

Subsequent conversations and interviews validated near unanimity of opinion and approval for the variety of music and celebration of what one respondent described as “all of us coming together—as one—why can’t we always do this?” Two concerns were expressed: one about the “catholicizing of St. Thomas” and another judged that “(African-American) spirituals and ‘Appalachian’ songs should only be used at St. Thomas on special occasions. We have a Hymnal.”

“Beautiful Star of Bethlehem,” a founding inspiration for this thesis, as described in the Introduction, was much beloved along with “all of the music this holy night.” “Unbelievable,” stated a young couple, “I will always have tears of great joy remembering and anticipating Christmas Midnight Mass at St. Thomas. It’s heaven!”

### ***Celebrating Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. Weekend***

#### ***The Holy Eucharist + La Santa Eucharistia, Sunday, January 20, 2019***

St. Thomas began hosting Elizabethton’s annual “Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. Celebration” in 2018, a year before. The Parish typically celebrates on the Sunday before the Monday national holiday commemorating Dr. King’s birth. St. Thomas welcomed an estimated seventy-five worshippers<sup>60</sup> on 3 Epiphany, January 20, 2019 which meant a

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<sup>60</sup> We began with an estimated seventy-five attendees; however, at the “Peace” (midway through the service), many, mostly Baptist faithful left. We would learn that they left because the “Peace” (after the sermon and prayers) marked the end of the service for them. Several would later call and apologize for their departure, missing the Lord’s Supper (and offering, my wardens pointed out). Only funny today, I now explain the Order of Service or even offer the Peace at the end of worship.

full house at our church. We celebrated Dr. King and our Appalachian and East Tennessee Black heritage. We honored those enslaved peoples—unknown by name—who more than a century-and-a-half ago made the bricks by hand, on site and then raised up and built our church home at the outset of the Civil War, today, the oldest church structure in-use in the city.

We began the service with a reading from Dr. King’s “I Have a Dream” speech from the “March on Washington,” August 28, 1963 followed by a period of silence to remember those African Americans who made the brick and raised up the church building housing St. Thomas Episcopal Church today. However, in 2019 , we were interested in identifying and celebrating especially our “African-Appalachian-American,” or “Affrilachian,” roots.<sup>61</sup>

Some six hundred African Americans reside in Elizabethton and Carter County, Tennessee. The first Black slave peoples arrived here relatively early, around the time of the city’s founding in 1799. “We sing ‘mountain Black,’” a local African American leader explained to me. “Much like Southern Black, but we’re the ‘mountain Blacks.’” St. Thomas has welcomed Black peoples here throughout its history, though membership has always been overwhelmingly white. For purposes of this project event, we wanted to at least explore what the more traditional spiritual and celebratory praise, song and

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<sup>61</sup> The term, “Affrilachian,” chosen by some and not by others, was first introduced by Frank X. Walker, Associate Professor, Department of English, and Co-Chair, Africana Studies, at the University of Kentucky, Lexington, several decades ago. The term has been increasingly popularized throughout Walker’s poetry, writings, and lecturing. Influenced by Walker and social events, many writers, scholars, and activists follow Walker today defining blacks in Appalachia as “Affrilachian” claiming sometimes uniquely challenging hardships and inequality historically and today. See Frank X. Walker, *Affrilachia* (Lexington, Kentucky: Old Cove Press, 2000).

'hymn-making' meant in terms of Appalachian heritage. That question has not been adequately answered, though the annual King Celebration at St. Thomas filled St. Thomas on Sunday, January 20, 2019 with about half Black and the other half white and brown. "What a beautiful sight, Father Tim," two members of St. Thomas' expressed with pride and happiness.

### ***Responses***

One thing we did not determine through all testing and results was whether there exists historically or today an "African Appalachian American" or "Affrilachian" style or identifiably distinct tradition of religious music, spiritual and praise as distinguishable from overall African American spiritual song and music from throughout the South and country. What can be concluded without doubt is that St. Thomas' 2019 "Celebration of Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr." was met with enthusiastic approval by all Black, brown, and white worshippers, Episcopal and many more. Seventy-five worshippers joined in song, tradition, and spirit.

Eighteen completed surveys joining the eleven in-depth interviews and literally dozens of conversations and shouts of joy praising all aspects of the event and its seven musicians, singers, spoken word artists, one (white) mandolinist, a "black banjo" player (an 1850's reproduction of the first banjos created by Black folk in early Appalachia-America), and three clergy. Comments and observations were overwhelmingly positive and spirit-filled:

"faith-abounding,"

“the Holy Spirit filled the room,”

“overpowering joy,” “full of love and life,”

“don’t add or remove anything,”

“St. Thomas’ openness inspires me and my family to come again,”

“St. Thomas’ welcoming everybody has started something new and alive,”

“God *is* diversity and we showed it,”

“You help us know our history,”

“Dr. King and this service, thank you, gave me a perspective of how much we are all loved and valued by God,”

“Everyone was connecting with each other without judgment, all cultures came together... the Holy Spirit was inside everyone,”

“[The worship service] is rooted in hope, and we will be back. Come visit us, too.”

“the singing kept me singing... let’s do more.”

Everyone appreciated St. Thomas’ efforts to “begin to tell the story of the African American in Appalachia...” “My great-great-great grandmother came in as a ‘baby slave’,” testified one young man. “I’m proud that you can honor the slaves who raised this church up, today the oldest and most beautiful in our town.” Poignantly he said, “when I touch the brick, made by slave hands, and stand to sing in this place built by slaves, I feel the spirit of those unknown by name, but I know them in my soul.”

“Lift Every Voice and Sing” calling people to worship after the reading from Dr. King’s “I Have a Dream” speech by a young person, “Let My People Go,” and “We Shall Overcome” were prominently listed as favorite hymns. “I don’t feel in no way tired,” a

spiritual well known in this area by Black congregations, moved and stilled the entire congregation, powerfully sang a cappella by a well-known and beloved African American soloist in the area. “I sing it like my momma and her momma sang it,” commented soloist Loretta Bowers, “without a lot of the frills and ‘add-on’s’ like they do on down South.” Much of the singing was by ‘call-and-response’ or became that as everyone kept singing. We Episcopalians were proud that visiting song leaders appreciated the African American hymnal of the Episcopal Church, *Lift Every Voice and Sing II*, which was a gift to the Church pews in 2017. Several of our guests were presented with the *Lift Every Voice and Sing* hymnal as a gift of appreciation for their participation and leadership among us.

### ***Hurdles and Pitfalls***

Any church or faith community trying to welcome and integrate as many cultures from as many places as represented in the three worship services will encounter numerous questions including those hurdles and pitfalls that made for a sometimes uneasy and less than optimum result. I will identify just a few of those problems encountered in this thesis project:

- Balancing representation and integration of at least three distinct cultures and communities throughout the services: traditional Anglo, African American, and Latinx American;
- Fully utilizing the gifts of musicians and participants from varying religious traditions, movement and praise worship in one and reserve and careful order in another, for example;
- Providing clear and repeated guidance for musicians and volunteers;

- Genuinely welcoming those faith traditions and persons with whom we disagree;
- Taking time for everybody, but especially those members of the host Church, St. Thomas, who are seeing and experiencing much that is ‘new’ or ‘other folk, different church’;
- Breathe easily at all times, but especially when musicians have started praise music, “There’s Sweet, Sweet Spirit,” the congregation following along, and it is ten minutes after Christmas Midnight Mass was to begin. As the musicians and people led, and three clergy joined in, a Christmas morning had begun.

## Chapter 6

### Learnings

*“For I am about to create new heavens, and a new earth.”*

*Isaiah 65*

#### ***Collaboration***

Working together in the planning and making of music for worship became the “heartbeat” of growing in relationship, knowledge of our faith traditions, and absolutely loving the celebrations begun in early December for the first of three worship services. We shared a sense of mission, a common purpose, praying and discussing our lives and faith at rehearsal and at Liturgy. We created and designed three beautiful services together with a church team joining in vision and work. Sharing inspiration and worship, giving thanks for one another and our work together, for St. Thomas, our joys and sorrows, concerns and future, we found and were found by grace, love, and beauty in it all.

Spiritually we began to share a deepened sense of God in testimony, discussions, and in the music itself. I received several confessions, in effect, and assured struggling souls, hard-working, wonderfully-gifted student musicians of God’s forgiveness and love “ever here, forever for you, and me.”

St. Thomas’ graciousness and welcome blessed everyone. Parishioners became increasingly involved in the three worship services, welcoming all kinds of new folk, introducing them around and offering a seat, making sure that the musicians were



comfortably settled into place, and inviting individuals and families back to St. Thomas. Others helped in liturgical readings and prayers. Many influences, great variety, fine and able musicians from different backgrounds, complementary and conflicting theologies and religious persuasions, those searching, those new and old to the Episcopal Church, not a few who could not pronounce the name "Episcopal," and others *all came together in collaboration*.

Prayer and unity developed from the first worship service. We were proud that as many as seven or eight of our own at St. Thomas joined with the Doe River Ensemble, to sing and to play piano and organ. Several of the musicians eventually inquired about a "prayer service" around a weekly "Liturgical Bluegrass Jam" at St. Thomas. We pray for just this, as time unfolds.

More than two dozen musicians, singers, instrumentalists, and song leaders came together for the three events. We kept reaching out, believing, learning about and greeting such lively spirited folk from here in Carter County and throughout the region, lots of Appalachian Studies students and musicians. No other development, argument, fact, or learning of this project was more vital or meaningful than the collaboration of talented, dedicated, loving musicians and team members from St. Thomas who were putting everything together.

We learned that real, lasting community, new energy and vision can arrive on your doorsteps when you least expect it—"Bluegrass? In the Church, Father Tim?" exclaimed a dear sister when hearing about the Appalachian Evensong. This was a first for St. Thomas. "Holiness Pentecostal? What!" said another, perhaps frightened at any

outbreaks of the Holy Spirit. “But we sure do appreciate, what are we calling it, the ‘Doe River Ensemble’,” exclaimed yet another to the congregation one Sunday morning. Appreciating both the music, the musicians and all of the new people entering the doors, “Maybe we try this regularly,” suggested the longtime, faithful member of St. Thomas, expressing support for the Doe River Ensemble and what was happening.

Such a blessing it was to see at first, strangers. musicians, coming together. Before each service, they ‘tune-up’ together, join into beautiful rhythm and harmony, meeting one another in ‘warm-up’ prayer and in the music itself, and then slowly, the ‘pre-service; music begins and the spirituals and old hymns start to bring a powerful spirit together. The musicians were not present to merely perform, but to praise God and lead others in that praise and worship. Led by the musicians, their families and friends, we began in earnest, wonderful “prayer and praise,” as one student called it-unscheduled, *not* in the program, yet becoming an extended prelude and extemporaneous prayer. All in the Church would join in before we began the service. That custom has continued.

Christmas Midnight Mass began with the musicians first humming and then softly singing “Sweet, Sweet Spirit” which moved on and on as folk came in the doors, took a seat, and began singing and ‘swaying-a-little’ as the Holiness Pentecostal pianist sang forth the Love and Spirit of God: “God’s sweetness to us...” went an old hymn *before* the procession. I got out of the way and prayed and sang with everybody. We learned from those first worship services to slow down, “roll-with-it, lean-with-it,” as the African American sisters would say. This is exactly how our collaboration began at Appalachian

Evensong, Sunday, December 2, 2018, and Christmas Midnight Mass, Monday, December 24, 2018.

Nothing could be more important than a prayerful, unified music team respecting and appreciating one another and the people assembling, as all of our hearts and minds opened and lifted up. We thanked God for the importance and blessing of difference and newness. Hearing the words from Isaiah 65 where the prophet foretells a ‘new heaven and earth,” the people began to clap their hands and move together with the amazing rhythm of a Spirit-filled pianist singing, “I Am in a New World” (Gospel Tradition). Just as Zephaniah summoned in Scripture reading, we rejoiced and sang. We-some of us-learned to clap our hands and in rhythm. We learned, I believe, more about our own hearts and yearning in worship and love of God at altar. We rejoiced a little more fully in body, mind, and soul.

The Doe River Ensemble welcomed folk when they arrived, made them welcome, and always provided a new tune or two. Musicians and singers from St. Thomas, or good friends of the parish, joined a dozen and growing artists from other or no faith traditions from throughout the area, including Southwestern Virginia and Western North Carolina. We celebrated fine Appalachian music including from here at home. St. Thomas folk would express surprise on the one hand and great pride on the other. “You’ve made how many dulcimers?,” a stunned parishioner asked when one of our musicians proudly started talking about having made 800 “up home in Hampton,” a few minutes going up the mountains surrounding the county. One of his hammered dulcimers is part of our Doe River Ensemble collection and used for services today.

This collaboration became an important part of the lives of the musicians and team leaders, mostly Vestry, from St. Thomas. The Doe River Ensemble would provide music, voice, creativity, new and exciting interpretations of the “message for the day” based on the Lectionary calendar while St. Thomas and its tradition enriched the experience with liturgical form, theology and worship, faith and teaching, and sacramental worship (new for many), color (welcoming differing cultures) and diversity (greeting new people and ‘new’ music). Experience, knowledge, spirit and interest grew. Music became an amazing pathway for mission and evangelism. “The Episcopalians contributed beauty and solemnity,” one musician noted, “many of the musicians brought spirit and passion,” one musician commented.

Ethnomusicology teaches that many cultures regard music as vital to human existence and survival. Music and worship are critical to life, hope, and faith as integral parts of human life.<sup>62</sup> Music is often the lynchpin and heartbeat of growing together and is central to the renewal and sharing of Christian faith. St. Thomas in years to come will have the opportunity to explore ideas and invite greater participation by the musicians and new members, young and old, who are drawn to our “Appalachian Ministries” borne from our new, old-time, Bluegrass and country gospel communities, their friends, and families. Plans being discussed at St. Thomas include a weeknight service, outdoor worship services, supporting students and artists from the Doe River Ensemble with

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<sup>62</sup> Timothy Rice, *Ethnomusicology: A Very Short Introduction* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2014) 65-66; Elizabeth Hellmuth Margulis, *The Psychology of Music: A Very Short Introduction*, Chapter 3, “Music as Language” (New York, Oxford University Press, 2019) 34-48; and, Andre Viskontas, *How Music Can Make You Better* (San Francisco: Chronicle Books, 2019).

scholarships and awards, hosting area music festivals, and, as discussed, a “St. Thomas Liturgical Bluegrass Jam” monthly or bi-weekly. We are also considering Christian formation and education as components of all we do, in person and online. A class, “Old Time, Bluegrass, and Country Gospel” where we can learn more about the theologies of our Appalachian music is one great dream. Music and worship we see as critical to life, hope, and faith as integral parts of humanity. Loving and serving in Appalachia, we are excited about promise and possibilities for the future.

Could there ever have been a collaboration and coming together so beautifully harmonic inviting unity and worship of God at St. Thomas? Did we believe in ourselves? Were we ready, truly, for mission, evangelism, and rebirth as we proclaimed? These collaborations of music and faith laid the foundations.

### ***The Three Worship Services, Music and Culture***

The music of Appalachia in its broadest definitions and descriptions is meaningful (connecting to persons), spiritual (connecting to faith and the presence of God), and communal (happening in a worship community of welcoming where song is central) as celebrated here in the Episcopal Church and Anglican tradition. This was shown by the three culturally representative worship services, one at Advent in traditional Anglican and old time traditions, a second at Christmas Midnight Mass bringing together Episcopal/Anglican, Latinx, Bluegrass, Holiness Pentecostal and newer influences, and, a third liturgy celebrating Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. and Black History with Negro Spiritual, Southern and so-called, “Mountain Black” Gospel. The beauty and liturgy of

the Episcopal Church and Anglican Tradition joined and was joined by any number of vernaculars and cultures in worship, ways of Appalachian cultures and musics. A space was formed, given by the spirit of all, where music and prayer were brought together, where silence and prayer prepared for the Gospel, with this leading to celebratory acclamation of the Good News from Anglican chant to Free Holiness hymnody of joy and elation. A space was opened for praise and thanks, hopes and vision, unity and wonder in the love of God.

Such unity means hospitality and heartfelt worship come together from across cultural backgrounds. These same cultures which are often apart in matters of doctrine, politics, and social values are now meeting in worship and music, the “universal language” (as a beloved music teacher here in Elizabethton used to teach her music students according to one project participant).

Music is sung as prayers from the heart when persons who have gathered together feel recognized and welcomed in the community that has gathered to worship together. Otherwise, music becomes a performance for those who have gathered. As these worship services effected a deeper sense of Christian faith as given together in the most of different of peoples, it opened up a fuller sense of the integral relationship between Christian faith, worship, the life of the community of faith, and hence the mission of the church as tied to the invitation, welcome, and embrace of others. In other words, these worship services opened understandings of evangelism as given in worship and as grounded in music and prayer that celebrates and reflects life together in Christ.

Two Episcopal colleagues agree. The Reverend Frank Crumbaugh, a priest formerly in the Diocese of New Jersey, beloved preacher and writer, commented on hearing the stories of St. Thomas' Appalachian liturgies, "Why, Tim, you've made all these 'different' kinds of folk feel welcome!"<sup>63</sup> Likewise, the Rev. Dr. Jennifer Phillips, an Episcopal priest serving in the Diocese of Massachusetts, a well-known liturgist, poet, and writer, has observed that "Music as prayer physically causes those who sing to breathe together... Hence it produces a solidarity, a conspiring toward unity... One forms a bond with people one sings with, prays with-they are no longer strangers as perhaps they were before."<sup>64</sup>

As we welcome one another, recognize and appreciate the worth and gift in and from an 'other,' relationship forms and is nurtured, sincere and authentic. New possibilities are imagined and realized. The 'strange,' 'different' often new became familiar. A congregation at Appalachian Evensong joins in hand, heart, and voice circling the nave of the church singing out *How Great Thou Art* closing the service. A filled house of many different peoples and cultures join in exuberance, moving, keeping rhythm, and eventually embracing in celebration of the Good News of Christ's birth at Midnight Mass to a rich, old, mountain hymn introducing this thesis project, *Beautiful Star of Bethlehem*, sung in melodic, call-and-response, Free Holiness tradition, previously unknown to most. Finally, commemorating Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr., *Glory, Glory, Hallelujah!* is led by

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<sup>63</sup> The Reverend Frank Crumbaugh, Episcopal priest, retired, formerly Diocese of New Jersey," interview and conversation, December 2020.

<sup>64</sup> The Reverend Jennifer M. Phillips, D.Min., Episcopal liturgist, author, essayist, and poet, a note and conversation, December 12, 2020.

two African American singers of the community, sisters, leading a procession with piano, organ, and the “black banjo” playing and everybody singing, “up a storm.” All these moments happened at St. Thomas Episcopal Church in Elizabethton, Tennessee, at *all* three worship services.

Through all of this, we learn about the breadth, gift, opportunity, and scope (in just three events) of possibilities and dreams for church community, mission, evangelism, rebirth and renewal. “Culture is dynamic,” states the music anthropologist.<sup>65</sup> The spheres of ‘traditional’ and ‘modern’ in terms of music, ‘familiar’ and not, are memory that opens up the world only when they are not insulated one from another. When they are brought together, as shown in this work, they open new worlds, new and unexpected alliances that form people together in life together.<sup>66</sup> A consistent theme throughout the three worship services was pronounced in the lesson from Isaiah 65:17-25 at the first worship service of this project, Appalachian Evensong, December 2, 2018:

*“For I am about to create new heavens,  
and a new earth;  
the former things shall not be  
remembered or come to mind.  
Be glad and rejoice forever  
in what I am creating...”*

Then the pianist sings forth in great joy, “I am in a new world,” an old Pentecostal spiritual, foretelling that we gathered at St. Thomas and the faithful of the twenty-first

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<sup>65</sup> Alan P. Merriam, *The Anthropology of Music* (Evanston, Illinois: Northwestern University Press, 1980), 303.

<sup>66</sup> Timothy Rice, *Ethnomusicology, A Very Short Introduction* (Oxford and New York: Oxford University Press, 2014), 65.



century are a part of Isaiah's story also. Unity and love for one another was a spirit that moved throughout the congregation in those moments.

Long thankful and blessed by the hymnals and music of the Episcopal Church, St. Thomas is sustained by and enjoys that tradition. Today and over the past few years, St. Thomas incorporates and celebrates more fully and appreciatively, more knowledgeably and joyfully the music and traditions of the mountains that are its home. St. Thomas celebrates Appalachia in spirit, word, and love. Results of this work and commentary show this to be strongly the case for St. Thomas in a pivotal time for the vitality and future of the Episcopal Church and Anglican tradition.

Appalachian music stretching across many cultures-traditional and contemporary - including English, Scots-Irish, German, French, African American, and Latinx American backgrounds in genres today celebrated internationally-even Bluegrass-are of great potential value to the mission, evangelism, and renewal of the Episcopal Church in Appalachia. We learn and celebrate that there is talent and inspirational worship from throughout the community. Engaging these builds self-esteem in the community and church. Episcopal liturgist Jennifer Phillips, notes, "Part of mission is the desire and intent to reach out across lines of difference to connect, share, and enter into conversation. A prerequisite is feeling that the initiator has something of value worth sharing. So building community esteem, as pride and its own cultural artifacts, its own style, its own beauty empowers and sets the stage for this reaching out to the 'other'. This is what your folks have been doing."<sup>67</sup> St. Thomas has been about congregational

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<sup>67</sup> The Reverend Jennifer M. Phillips, D.Min., a note and conversation, December 12, 2020.

singing of new and old standards, Baptist, Presbyterian, Pentecostal Holiness, old-time, Bluegrass, country, 'mountain-Black,' and Anglican chant, accompanied by mandolin, guitar, hammered dulcimer, piano, bass, and more. This has been a coming together as one, for all, and in the heart of all. This can mean peace and joy in the worship of the Lord, here and now, no discussion, no delay.

Resources and gifts of talent and love of Gospel are ready and waiting at our doors to foretell the Good News of our faith, bilingually in Spanish and English, or sing it out in 'call-and-response' with African American singers recessing out the church doors at Christmas Midnight Mass to 'Go Tell it on the Mountain,' or simply kneel and adore the beautiful creche, the manger bed, blessed by candle light and 'fiddle-serene,' peaceful and beautiful - tears and joy flowing into the midnight hours guiding and blessing hearts of all kinds, all created by one God.

*The Book of Common Prayer*, Rites I and II and its Spanish language counterpart *El Libro de Oracion Comun* provide forms of structure that effect and enable worship connecting people to their vernaculars of faith and communities across cultures. We experience community as we celebrate and renew our faith in God and humanity with one another. "The Rite I language with the music unites and blesses us all," commented one worshiper at Appalachian Evensong. The beautiful space and location of St. Thomas - inside and out - in "Old Town" Elizabethton amidst history, lovely architecture-"bricks made on-site by slave peoples, then they built the Church" (1861)-serves as welcome and authenticity in the community. We manifest the love of people for living heritage, not to

mention a beautiful house of worship in which to “sit, praise the Lord, and celebrate it all with a little fiddle, mandolin, and guitar,” described one our young musicians.

The Church in Appalachia (at least St. Thomas Episcopal Church in Elizabethton) looks back at colonialism in Appalachia, which meant exploitation and disregard if not destruction of cultures, people, preservation and respect for its land and resources as described earlier in this work, perpetrated by both civil society and the churches. The monetization and servitude of a land and people exists today, yet progress and change have come to Appalachia. Gone are the days of the “home missions” calling for dues-paying and “sending in more missionaries” to the neglected mountain regions to “save souls” and collect dollars, exploit and dominate. Exchange and sharing by mutual desire and consent are today the norm of mission relationships, at least for those believers who have remained in protestant mainstream denominations. We welcome this day when we see in the three worship services the music of Appalachia warmly and appreciatively celebrated by musicians and worshippers who are integral for worship and singing together as one. The three worship services expanded into St. Thomas hosting six Appalachian Liturgies in the following year. Artists for the Doe River Ensemble participated once or twice monthly, and parishioners began to request Bluegrass and Appalachian music for weddings, baptisms, and more.

Owning our history, good and not-so-good, is a critically important matter as we educate our young and build excellent schools and graduate programs in Appalachian Studies and music across the region. To own one’s history means self-knowledge, mutual integrity, varying emotions and levels of relationship and, at base, a ground now on

which to grow, a place on which we can all together offer precious harmony to God. We at St. Thomas are blessed by the fact that East Tennessee State University next door in Johnson City through its Appalachian Studies and Bluegrass, Old-time and Country Department of Music serves as a tremendous asset for a church community such as ours, as we seek to more fully appreciate and celebrate the music and people of Appalachia. We were surprised and blessed to welcome people from every part of Carter County even to the far reaches of Roan Mountain, Poga, Stoney Creek, Buck Mountain, Simerly Creek, Long Hollow, Holder's Cove, and Shady Valley; delighted to be led in beautiful voice by a parishioner whom no one had ever heard sing and another who, for the first time, played piano beautifully. 'Owning' who we are and what the person standing next to us in the grocery store line might open doors 'hitherto' closed and unknown. Music invites such ownership and celebration.

There is great pride and respect in locality, in traditions and cultures, in self, family, community, and region: Appalachia. There has risen at each thesis project-each examined by interviews, surveys, conversations, and stories as detailed in Chapter 4-an experience and appreciation of greater love, beauty, and awe at a newness yet a familiarity brought together by that which is holy, that being the love which is universal in God. The work of this thesis simply and boldly proclaims the promises of God: abundance, beauty, hope, and a new day, all in Appalachia at a small Episcopal parish.

We welcomed more musicians at our doors looking to offer their talents and testimonies than we could possibly accommodate in three worship services, though 2019 and 2020 calendars would include many of these folk as discussed in the Conclusion and

shown in the Appendices. Music, worship, musicians, and prayer together was inspirational to all kinds of people once the news reached the community. Wonderful new ministries have grown from our original Appalachian services including a quilt guild, animal family group (“animals are our family, too,” an organizer explained), and popular outdoor services on the West Lawn.

Planning and sharing in worship that draws on the music of the community as a whole - as in the case of the three services of worship that draw together Appalachian gospel, Bluegrass, and Anglican liturgical and choral music-is the experience of Christian faith shared together that is not colonized and captive to a church denomination (Episcopal, Baptist, Reformed, Evangelical, or otherwise), social class, and/or ethnic culture. Instead, the three services offered at St. Thomas evidence that the music of Appalachia, old-time, Bluegrass, country, and gospel and the Anglican music tradition together express the sense of place and life lived in Appalachia for worshippers. Given this history and the continuing presence of struggle, stratification, and separation of peoples by class, race, and culture, music gave a voice to what is holy and life-giving, to faith in God, in the gift and abundance and beauty of life, in mercy and love, all in hope of a new day for all.

### ***Theology***

#### ***Image of God, the Incarnation, “Street and Altar,” and Abundance***

We know and learn about God in all creation (“Image of God,” Genesis 1:27), the “awesomeness” of God (Psalm 68) among and through all peoples, languages, traditions,

music, and cultures (the Incarnation, John 1:1-14), “And the Word became flesh and lived among us, and we have seen his glory, the glory as of a father’s only son, full of grace and truth.” (John 1:14). The Prologue to John gives us the great declaration of a God revealed in humanity. God became incarnate into humanity living, acting, and loving among us in Jesus Christ. William Temple, Archbishop of Canterbury (Anglican), 1942-1944, described it succinctly and best, “The primary principle of Christian Ethics and Christian politics must be respect for every person simply as a person... each man and woman is a child of God, whom God loves and for whom Christ died.”<sup>68</sup> The recognition and appreciation of this truth is the foundation of any faith shared and celebrated in music among all Christians in Appalachia.

Episcopalians can only benefit by a greater understanding and celebration in worship and liturgy of the music of Appalachia which itself reveals the divine from the spirit and heart of generations in these mountains. Archbishop Temple (1881-1944) brought together perhaps the most influential teachings of the Incarnation in the past century or more in two celebrated works, *Christus Veritas* (1924) and *Nature, Man and God* (1934).<sup>69</sup>

The indescribable beauty of the words from Zephaniah from the seventh century B.C.E. that the Lord is among us, summoning us to rejoice joined to a Free Holiness, Pentecostal song of praise in the twenty first century, C.E. brought all worshipers together

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<sup>68</sup> William Temple, *Christianity and Social Order* (London: Shephard-Walwyn, 1987. First published by Penguin Books, 1942), 67

<sup>69</sup> William Temple, *Christus Veritas* (London: MacMillan, 1924) and *Nature, Man, and God* (London: Kessinger Publishing, LLC, 2010). See Chapter 12, “Man in the Light of the Incarnation,” pages 212-226 and Chapter 13, “Worship and Sacrament,” pages 229-252 in *Christus Veritas*.

as one, incarnate as beloved by Creator. A young college student, an Episcopalian from St. Thomas, prayed eloquently for God's creation, "Let us thank God for the beauty and love of home." In that night of Evensong, the images of God pressed onto our hearts forever, led by *our* home, *our* music, and *our* people. Joining hands at the close, singing "How Great Thou Art," we thanked God with everything within us, then lifting joined hands in praise, and all closing with embrace of love and hope. This, surely, was the face and image of God, the incarnate God in each and everyone, and it was the God, as we acclaimed, of "eternal awesomeness." And all of this in one night, from a little Appalachian church, diverse folk experiencing a God of faith, promise, and eternal love for all kinds in all places. Indeed, "Let us rejoice and sing," as the pianist and song leaders invited all into praise of the one, incarnate God.

***Simply, powerfully, a beginning***

Steeped as it is in experience and story from the times of the first Scots-Irish arriving in the mid-eighteenth century pioneering down the Shenandoah to escape George III (1760-1810), isolated throughout history from much of America, sensationalized and pitied, stereotyped, ridiculed and mocked, the music of Appalachia blesses by discerning the image of God in Creation and of a tried and risen humanity - and reflecting these in its very music. The singers and musicians, writers and poets, young and old praise God in a new vernacular for many in the Episcopal Church and Anglican Tradition. This informs and interprets the Gospel story of a God who came among us to "live in the holler and upon the mountains cliffs," as one banjo player

described it, “We are all made and loved by God,” he testified, whether on the world-stage by a Johnny Cash or Dolly Parton or in a little country Methodist or Independent Baptist congregation away in the mountains. The integration of beautiful rhyme and verse into usage and celebration of the Gospel message rings out anew, alive, and true throughout the three worship services of this project.

The Anglican fathers and mothers of the Oxford Movement (nineteenth century), certainly by the time of its second and third generations served among the squalor and poverty-stricken urban homes of Industrial England. These “slum ritualists” celebrated the Holy Sacraments with the “greater Body of Christ,” as one cleric described it, by serving ‘street and altar,’ both necessary for salvation.<sup>70</sup> They understood that street and altar were the locus of an intersection of Christ and the heavenly beauty and virtue with earthly hunger and need. In a dual movement, Christ deigns to come among people and the liturgy lifts up the people and creation as a holy and sufficient offering to God.

“And the Word became flesh and lived among us,” we hear from the Gospel of John’s prologue, verses 1:1-14. This thesis does not underestimate or denigrate the incarnate word as expressed in Appalachian music. To the contrary, the “music of the people” (old-time, Bluegrass, and country) is offered both at “street” and at “altar.” This music and the musicians of the three worship services are messengers of God, not performers or ‘show-folk,’ but those who proclaim the Word and salvation of God

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<sup>70</sup> Geoffrey Rowell, *The Vision Glorious: Themes and Personalities of the Catholic Revival in Anglicanism*, (Oxford and New York: Oxford University Press, 1983), see “Chapter VI Pioneers in the Parish: Ritualism in the Slums,” 116-140.



through and for all as witnessed by facial expressions, closed eyes, and body language of the musicians.

All three worship services exhibited-celebrated-the abundance of God's goodness and promise. "All of this happened here in Carter County, everybody welcomed and honored?" asked a local LGBTQ activist from the area. My response: "If God is truly abundant for all, everywhere, all humanity and Creation, does that not include us here in the mountain-South, in Elizabethton and Carter County, Tennessee...?God is alive in Southern Appalachia and God is good, up and down every mountain, valley, and river," I responded. The three worship events of this project thesis brought together, and closer, for many the new reality of a 'greater' God known in welcoming and being welcomed in worship by the music of Appalachia as are claimed throughout the stories of this work.

### *Theologies of Love*

#### *God is Love, 1 John 4:8*

Jesus explains to Nicodemus in John 3 and 4, "You must be born from above... The wind blows where it chooses, and you hear the sound of it, but you do not know where it comes from or where it goes. So it is with everyone who is born of the Spirit." We experienced the Holy Spirit throughout the three worship services, through Bible readings, song, and inviting or responding to not a few witnesses or "personal testimonies," inspired during or following the events. Where the Spirit might be leading we did not know, but we knew that the Spirit was alive, tending to, and loving us at all three liturgies. People described weeks afterward how "deeply we were touched..."

“I rarely have had such a beautiful, peaceful feeling... Can we testify more often?” Love being the chief manifestation of the Holy Spirit, the Appalachian music at St. Thomas displayed and introduced a greater appreciation for the role of community and church to value, appreciate, and engage mission, evangelism, renewal and rebirth for a beloved parish and its community.

Dr. King’s theology of love led us in this project thesis. “Love will make a way out of no way,” he preached. Genuine, ‘long-time, reckoning’ love—I have heard it described in the mountains—real, just, abiding love-relational, experiential, reconciling, and joyful love that inspires heart and dream. These characteristics were the heart of the liturgy and theology of the three worship services. We began to see a new church, a new way, a new music (for many), which began to form new believers and a new and renewed community of believers. Only Love could open such a way in a place that many had regarded as “barren and without promise,” as Episcopalian remarked, but a short time ago.

To define the Spirit would be to somehow limit or confine the ways of God to human explanation and extrapolation. We are told by Isaiah (11:1-2) that the spirit of the Lord shall rest upon the one to come, the “root of Jesse.” We learn from patristic and church teaching. The Apostle Paul teaches in 1 Corinthians 12, that there are varieties of gifts and service, all from the same Lord and Spirit, and all for the common good. These are utterance of wisdom, utterance of knowledge, faith, healing, the working of miracles, prophecy, spiritual discernment, speaking and interpretation of various kinds of tongues. Manifestation of these gifts was clearly evident-most profoundly in and through the

music-in gained wisdom, knowledge, faith, spiritual healing, and likely more.

“Effective liturgical text needs vigor,” Anglican liturgist, the Reverend Dr. Jennifer Phillips has written, “It (liturgy) should be inspiring, thus stirring the will to pray and act well - that ancient cardinal value of fortitude... foster[ing] strength of soul, and help[ing] to overcome fear.” Phillips speaks to the liturgical experience of the three project events when she writes about the need and opportunity for “startling, evocative imagery” and language of “juiciness and passion.”<sup>71</sup> Generations of liturgical reformers from contemplative Christians to later day practitioners, writers, and musicians open sometime spiritually profound doorways to revelations of the Spirit and its gifts. This, I observed, was abundantly evident in the varieties of music and messengers of St. Thomas’s three worship services.

***That they all may be one, as thou, Father, are in me, and I in thee, that they also may be one in us: that the world may believe that thou hast sent me.***

***John 17:21***

Families that infrequently worshipped together, attended their own churches or none at all, gathered in joy and then returned to St. Thomas; old-time musicians entered St. Thomas, blessed by its “beauty and reverence,” as we would hear, maybe unable to pronounce the word “Episcopal,” but often promising that “we’ll be back.” Back they came. Various townspeople and faithful Christians of all theological stripes and backgrounds, some a little hesitant at first, joined in-hand to testify to the presence of

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<sup>71</sup> The Reverend Jennifer M. Phillips, D.Min., “The Poetics of Liturgy” appearing in *Gleanings: Essays on Expansive Language with Prayers for Various Occasions* (New York: Church Publishing, 2004).

God among us at Appalachian Evensong. Hearing the Lessons and Carols, learning that King James of the *King James Holy Bible* fame was an ‘Episcopalian’ (okay, Church of England, the “mother church”), local folk became more interested in just who and what is the ‘Episcopal’ Church. Young student musicians deeply aware of their own spiritual lives and resources asked if they might attend on Sundays or be taught about *The Book of Common Prayer*. More than a few people who did not know about the Episcopal Church became interested in learning more, all because of the music and what the three services said about St. Thomas.

Episcopalians know how to appreciate other faith traditions around the globe. Catholicity, we believe, means all baptized. As Jesus prayed in his “high priestly prayer” in the Gospel of John (Chapter 17), we Christians are called to “be one.” Mission, evangelism, and renewal bid us to appreciate the people and spirit of Appalachia, its people, traditions, folkways, art, its spirit and faith-*its music*. May we then thank God for a greater light and understanding, for new experience and new life as represented in this project thesis.

Hope and vision from Appalachia, across cultures and society, borders and boundaries responded in but three worship events, in a small church, some would say an unlikely community and region of the country. Might we through such an endeavor as St. Thomas' three worship services learn the value of being together more often, more meaningfully, and more intentionally? The 2019 calendar for what we would name our “Appalachian Music and Worship Celebrations,” following the three services of this project, celebrated five liturgies (Good Friday, Advent and Summer Evensong, St. Francis

Blessing of the Animals (“Jesus, Dogs, and Bluegrass”), and Christmas Midnight Mass along with accompaniment on a Sunday or two monthly, and additional sacramental and liturgical celebrations. Something very important has been planted at St. Thomas.

An integrated, companion worship community (likely not ‘parallel’) might well be a developmental strategy at St. Thomas. Sunday traditional services often enriched with old-time, bluegrass, and country gospel will always serve as the foundational liturgy, but weekday and weekend services such as those from the Prayer Book and English tradition (Evensong with Lessons and Carols, feast and saints’ days, community worship services, for example) are today a part of St. Thomas. “We believe in one holy catholic and apostolic church” from the Nicene Creed in *The Book of Common Prayer* may well be given new, expanded meaning by our liturgical developments here in Appalachia. Beautiful hymns and traditions represented in the three events of this thesis project as detailed in the appendices have begun to unite unfamiliar peoples and traditions and awakened a hunger for “more like this,” as I often hear at St. Thomas. St. Thomas is given meaningful, deeply spiritual, and greater ‘catholic’ opportunity by welcoming and being welcomed by the people of Appalachia.

Talented, creative, and inspired young (and old) musicians and writers are among and around us here at home. These include Grammy Award winners and nominees recognized for their lyrics and music calling for justice for Appalachian Latinx children and their families. Others speak and sing for justice and God’s creation. Still others offer lyric and song from African American tradition. St. Thomas becomes in-part today,

the “Episcopal Church at Bluegrass,” as one television interviewer called it, as celebrated in this thesis project and its development into future years.

Timothy Sedgwick, an Anglican theologian, writer, and academic, describes and foretells our experience at St. Thomas today and the future of our work of mission, evangelism, and renewal. In the Christian mission, he writes, to share the Gospel,

“Christians come to recognize how they have been cultured and how their faith and life, their beliefs and practices, are cultured in particular ways that makes them different as members of the Christian church. At the same time, they meet other Christians and see how they differ. As they recognize how those differences reflect their distinctive histories, they can see what they share in common and what is central in their identity in Christ. This understanding of Christian identity as given in mission centers Christian faith and life in the community of faith, in the church, as the church celebrates and forms its life invites understanding of the gospel, in its understanding of the good news of God in Christ. This is not a universal culture imposed on others as in a Latinized or Anglicized or Germanized or Americanized form of Christianity. *Instead, the universality of Christian faith, its catholicity, is given in its mission to the ends of the earth.*”<sup>72</sup> [Emphasis added.]

We at St. Thomas are “*given* [this] mission,” in Sedgwick’s words. Simple, static dependence on yesteryear and insistence upon ‘our way’ is no longer enough. God is always new, always renewing and recreating life and hope. Isaiah 43:19 “Behold, I will do a new thing, now it shall spring forth; shall ye not know it? I will even make a way in the wilderness, and rivers in the desert.” We begin to celebrate new ways of being and ‘doing’ church, community, liturgy and music. We begin to bring together Episcopal

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<sup>72</sup>Timothy F. Sedgwick, “The Trajectory of Christian Mission,” *Church, Society, and The Christian Common Good: Essays in Conversation with Philip Turner, ed.*, (Ephraim Radner, OR.: Cascade, 2017), 35.

Church tradition and practice honoring local vernaculars and cultures over history, time, and geography.

***Change is about.***

***Something new is happening.***

Afresh we hear the old words from Isaiah, “Do you not perceive it?” (43:19).

The Preface to *The Book Common Prayer*, 1789, states it with wisdom and clarity: “It is a most invaluable part of that blessed “liberty wherewith Christ hath made us free,” that in his worship different forms and usages may without offence be allowed, provided the substance of the Faith be kept entire...”<sup>73</sup>

We celebrate the words that welcome all of us into the family of God:

Holy Baptism<sup>74</sup>

<i>Celebrant</i>	There is one Body and one Spirit
<i>People</i>	There is one hope in God’s call to us;
<i>Celebrant</i>	One Lord, one Faith, one Baptism;
<i>People</i>	One God and Father of all.

***Personal***

***Reconciliation, All God’s Children, “Broken and Mending”***

There is a sense of God’s closeness in these mountains of Appalachia, a sense of familiarity and generations, history and neglect, new hope and know-how, music always, poetic truth and standing-up. The love of God is real here. The Gospel is our friend and

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<sup>73</sup> Preface, *The Book of Common Prayer*, 1979, 9.

<sup>74</sup> “Holy Baptism, *Ibid.*, 299.

heart. Much of history has created distance between the Episcopal Church and Anglican Tradition from Appalachia, its ways, practice of faith, and ethos. I felt this conflict as a young fellow, a proud tenth generation Appalachian. I left town for school and eventually politics and ordained ministry. Absent for some thirty-five years, my return home to Elizabethton and Carter County, Tennessee has been a remarkable tale and gift of, truly, coming home to this place and to myself. Those very 'issues' of theology, politics, humanity and human rights which led me away have brought me home like never before. Mine is the story and witness of 2 Corinthians 5:11-20, to paraphrase:

*“For the love of Christ urges us on... From now on, therefore, we regard no one from a human point of view... So if anyone is in Christ, there is a new creation, everything old has passed away; see, everything has become new! All this is from God, who has reconciled us to himself through Christ, and has given us the ministry of reconciliation; that is, in Christ God was reconciling the world to himself, not counting their trespasses against them, and entrusting the message of reconciliation to us. So we are ambassadors for Christ, since God is making his appeal through us; we entreat you on behalf of Christ, be reconciled to God.”*

Issues and debates, separations and difficulties around theology, politics, personality and more are not the point. Reconciliation to God *is* the point. The music of Appalachia is that agent, that gift of spirit and story of human condition and beauty which tells and appreciates the reconciliation we pray for the place itself, historically neglected; for the people, noble and good, created by God yet often mocked, crippled and then pitied. I knew - humanity knows - that story within. Reconciliation is that hope and yearning - a gift from God - which I prize for myself and my community. We at St. Thomas are a reconciling people and we hear and take to heart the reconciliation and love



we are privileged to hear and encounter in the music of Appalachia and then witness this story far beyond our doors.

The music of Appalachia plays a vital role in bringing the message of reconciliation home to ‘street and altar.’ If we truly know ourselves—our church, tradition, and community—we can then begin to effectively heal and witness to the world around us. Little is more important than living and proclaiming in word and deed God’s message not of judgment, but of healing, grace, and love which is reconciliation.

Music is effectively a pathway to reconciliation as shown in the three worship services of this thesis project. It was as if people were freed in movement, exclamation, and song when hearing of God’s promise of a new heaven and a new earth in Isaiah 65 at Appalachian Evensong with Lessons and Carols on December 2, 2018. When the pianist and singer broke into, “I Am in a New World,” from Church of God tradition, the congregation (Episcopalian and not) raised up physically and spiritually into bright, shining, glory-filled smile and joy. At Christmas Midnight Mass on December 24-25, 2018, when a beautiful singer accompanied by guitar sang the Wexford Carol from eighteenth century Ireland people were silenced in great beauty, silenced in expectancy, and then some seven or eight musicians and singers began extemporaneously to lead into holy Negro spiritual we hoped would not end. Peace and love for Jesus’ birth was palpable, souls were cleansed, tribes and cultures were insignificant, and we were one, powerfully, at beautiful St. Thomas where that night Christ was born into our hearts and we knew nothing but peace and reconciliation.

Hearing the witness of “If I Can Help Somebody,” an old spiritual, one of Dr. King’s favorites, sung by strong and beautiful “Appalachian” African American voice at “Celebrating Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr.” weekend, January 20, 2020, hosted by St. Thomas, helped the congregation hear the story of ‘helping one another’ as our salvation and reconciliation to God through ‘the other’. A “Black banjo” accompaniment was played by a young bluegrass artist who seeks to honor the Black peoples who first introduced the instrument to America. This was music and example of reconciliation before us and into our hearts. The congregation was blessed and stirred.

Reconciliation is my major learning throughout life and has been exemplified powerfully with the people and greater community of St. Thomas Episcopal Church in Elizabethton. The musicians and singers of the Doe River Ensemble serve as our “ambassadors for Christ.” Theirs was the message of peace and harmony, love and reconciliation for all. They manifested reconciliation in their music for our community celebrations in three worship services, reconciliation among friend and stranger, political and socio-status labels and classifications; Black, white, and brown; young and old; “educated by book and educated by life” folk (as a dear family member used to describe it), worker and “loafer.” Reconciliation to God and neighbor was our greatest gift.

Things learned throughout this project were many. Perhaps they measure lesser or greater in scale, but they are all important to the success and reception of the three worship services. These include:

- a greater awareness and attention to human gift as more crucial than order (for example, a late arrival still offered to sing)

- the importance of abiding by *The Book of Common Prayer* and its liturgies as written and honored for going on 500 years
- hospitality in all we do
- working knowledgeably and authentically throughout our liturgy and music
- the need to publicize through interviews, flyers, and social media in the announcements and reviews of the worship event
- “piggy-backing” off as many feast and saints' days and customs as possible and to “Never,” in the words of Lord Robert Alexander Kennedy Runcie, 102nd Archbishop of Canterbury, “belittle the customs of the people, but to ‘church’ them”<sup>75</sup>
- taking time for testimony
- actively inviting and giving roles to ecumenical clergy
- naming and developing your own house band, the “Doe River Ensemble”
- actively inviting, encouraging, recruiting, and evangelizing student leaders and musicians from throughout the area
- encouraging and welcoming new ministries spawned by our Appalachian music program (the “St. Thomas Animal Family,” the Quilt Guild of St. Thomas, celebrating Appalachian art and heritage)
- celebrating gifts of "house" guitar, fiddle, banjo, mandolin, and dulcimer for the Doe River Ensemble by placing with the organ and piano in the church
- offering and responding positively to “old-time, bluegrass, and country” music at weddings, funerals, baptisms. parish liturgies and events

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<sup>75</sup> A comment to me at dinner one evening, General Convention of the Episcopal Church, Phoenix, July 11-20, 1991. We were discussing evangelism. As Director of Development for what was then the “Presiding Bishop’s Fund for Word Relief” today the “Episcopal Relief and Development,” I served as a host for Lord Runcie as a member of the staff of American Presiding Bishop of the Episcopal Church, Edmond L. Browning.

- associating with area Appalachian music and history centers (for example, the Birthplace of Country Music in Bristol, Virginia/Tennessee, East Tennessee State University, and Appalachian State University)

Mission, evangelism, and renewal grew from the first Appalachian music events, an Evensong, Christmas Midnight Mass, and Celebration of Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. Each worship service was given form, prayer, and order by *The Book of Common Prayer*, the Episcopal Church, and Anglican Tradition.<sup>76</sup> What had begun, seeing and appreciating that which is holy and good in all of us, was a bountiful, more joyful hospitality and respect for one another, same and different, known and unknown, traditional hymn and bluegrass. The new day for St. Thomas is becoming new mission, new evangelism, and rebirth into new community.

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<sup>76</sup> Imagine our surprise to learn that the day of St. Thomas' first Appalachian Evensong was also the 100th anniversary of the first Lessons and Carols," at King's Chapel, Cambridge, England in finest English tradition. "A Festival of Nine Lessons and Carols" King's College Chapel in Cambridge, England, is the sound of Christmas for Anglicanism if there ever was one. "King's College Chapel, Cambridge: 'The place where the carols are sung,'" proclaimed *The Epoch Times*, London, December 17, 2018. Meanwhile, local news media here in Elizabethton headlined, "Appalachian Evensong with Lessons and & Carols Light Up 'Old Town' at St. Thomas Church, Sunday, December 2, 2018," *The Elizabethton Star*, November 30, 2018. "We prepare the way for Jesus by readying our hearts and souls in prayer, Bible-reading and loving one another," according to Father Holder (of St. Thomas Episcopal Church, Elizabethton), "Only then can we begin to celebrate the full meaning of Christmas."

## Chapter 7

### Conclusion: Mission, Evangelism, and Renewal

#### *“Hark! a thrilling voice is sounding”*

*“Hark! a thrilling voice is sounding...  
Christ is nigh it seems to say...”<sup>77</sup>*

Three worship services resulted in astounding, ‘thrilling’ possibility for St. Thomas Episcopal Church, who welcomed three celebrations, new communities, old friends, new ‘church’ music and musicians, and the “Doe River Ensemble” which itself doubled the numbers of musicians and artists in 2019. New ministries began to grow out of the parish’s love for Appalachia. In barely twelve months, St. Thomas welcomed a Quilt Guild, an Animal Family Ministry including our first ever “parish donkey,” musicians and more and more musicians singing and playing guitars, fiddles, mandolin, banjo, a “Black banjo” at Sunday services, Evensong, feast days, community celebrations, a church wedding, and numerous local and regional news stories throughout the area, and more. We were recognized with media stories about St. Thomas’ “Appalachian Evensong” and at an Appalachian Studies Symposium at the University of Kentucky in Lexington and later by a theological journal at Sewanee, the University of the South.

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<sup>77</sup> *The Hymnal 1982, The Episcopal Church*, “Hark a thrilling voice is sounding,” Words: Latin, ca. 6th cent.; Music: *Merton*, William Henry Monk (1823-1889) (New York: Church Publishing Incorporated, 1982), 59.

We at St. Thomas, according to one supporter, were “playing catch-up all year.” Appalachian music and liturgy had become a significant part of our development at the parish, leading into new mission, evangelism and renewal.

Following the three worship services in 2018 and 2019, St. Thomas announced its “2019-2020 Appalachian Worship and Ministries Calendar” inviting everyone to the Appalachian liturgies and ministries. This became a powerful statement of what was beginning to happen following the three worship services of the project thesis. The roster -our first annual calendar of planned ongoing Appalachian worship services-began, in effect, with the third and final event of the project, at Epiphany, Sunday, 2 Epiphany, January 20, 2019, the City’s Celebration of Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. We commemorated Good Friday at Holy Week, April 19, 2019 with “The Way of the Cross” with a local drug rehabilitation program, “Recovery Soldiers.” Two dozen or more men sang as a choir and testifying to their own ‘crosses’ and salvation through Jesus. We hosted our first Appalachian Summer Evensong where “Keep on the Sunny Side” was sung twice by popular demand on Thursday, June 13, 2019 for a pre-Covered Bridge Festival prayer and music service. Parish family quilts and our animal family were celebrated - on site - that weekend.

Moving to the fall, our traditional St. Francis Blessing of the Animals also became celebrated as “Jesus, Dogs & Bluegrass!” with a wonderful bluegrass band making up the Doe River Ensemble, and a large crowd of folk gathered on the West Lawn on Sunday, 16 Pentecost, October 6, 2019. We largely followed script from the year before celebrating our “second annual” Appalachian Evensong with Lessons and Carols at 1 Advent,

December 1, 2019 and Christmas Midnight Mass, December 24-25, 2019. Both were beautiful services, much anticipated by the community, and both new and veteran members of the Doe River Ensemble leading music.

Throughout our first year, 2019, programmatically speaking, the Doe River Ensemble grew into several dozen musicians, singers, and artists. The musicians offered music at two or more Sunday liturgies monthly. See the names of musicians and instruments played in the Appendices. Many people were introduced to St. Thomas, the Episcopal Church and beautiful “Old Town” Elizabethton, our home. Even more were blessed by the beauty and spirit of the Appalachian music.

Six major Appalachian music worship services with monthly old-time, Bluegrass and country gospel accompaniment added several hundred worshippers at St. Thomas over 2019 including new members and musicians. The Doe River Ensemble became an important and celebrated addition to St. Thomas. Musicians were honored and beloved. Traditional Bluegrass artist Ralph Stanley sings, “When you see the Rose of Sharon, the roses will bloom...” The three worship services were undoubtedly St. Thomas’ “Rose of Sharon” and what began to grow and bloom from our first year of Appalachian celebration were many beautiful roses.<sup>78</sup>

Building upon the three worship services of the thesis project, 2018-2019, our first full year led to impressive 2020 plans beginning with the celebration of Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr.. Originally planned and announced as shown in the Appendices, the 2020 calendar was re-designed and re-planned month-to-month due to the outbreak of the

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<sup>78</sup> Ralph Stanley, *Shine On* (Charlottesville, Virginia: Rebel Records, 2005).

coronavirus pandemic necessitating closure of the church beginning on Sunday, 3 Lent, March 15, 2020 and continuing all year. All services at St. Thomas throughout the year were broadcast on Zoom: 11:00 a.m. Morning Prayer on all Sundays with 1:00 p.m. Lord's Supper "In-the-Garden" first Sundays' where old-time, Bluegrass, and country music rang forth enjoyed by members, neighborhood and passers-by.

St. Thomas was blessed with the presence of Thomas Cassell in 2020-the first pandemic year- online and in the East Garden. Thomas was honored as "Outstanding Young Performer of the Year" by the International Bluegrass Association. Thomas, our "Bluegrass Liturgist," is a graduate student in Appalachian Studies at nearby East Tennessee State University and plays mandolin, guitar, banjo, and "Black banjo," an important part of Appalachian history.<sup>79</sup> Other musicians regularly join Thomas in the Doe River Ensemble.

St. Thomas was overjoyed to return to in-person services on Easter morning, April 4, 2021 when Thomas led a three-member Bluegrass band on the West Lawn in a number of hymns and instrumentals. We will be featuring the Doe River Ensemble first Sundays' and "high feast days" alongside our Parish Musician on the piano and organ at St. Thomas throughout 2021 hoping to be inside the Church by fall or Christmas-time. We are blessed to report that the Doe River Ensemble's music and musicians have been very adaptable and present during the challenging time of pandemic and loss.

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<sup>79</sup> "The banjo is black," Thomas writes, "Though it has been appropriated and reassigned a most often backwards whiteness, the banjo carries with it a long, complicated history of racism and cross-cultural interaction." Thomas Cassell, *Go Back and Fetch It*, an article for publication, December 6, 2020.



It is well known that “evangelism” has become abused and misused—offense to many—to the point that we deny and relinquish the telling of the Good News. Both Appalachian and Episcopal Traditions have much to share and celebrate in our prayers, worship, and music. A well-studied, well-tested, creative, organized, and knowledgeable integration of Episcopal and Appalachian traditions presented in this project thesis means new liturgical and spiritual life for a new time as spoken of by Isaiah.

We Episcopalians know how ‘to do’ our Liturgy. We know and appreciate vernacular worldwide. Our love and appreciation for all peoples are heartfelt. Appalachia is, in important ways, new frontier for us. We at St. Thomas are Appalachians and Episcopalian—“A coat [a faith] of many colors,” as Dolly Parton sings.

An ‘inventory’-a ‘trial-run’-as offered here has given St. Thomas clarity and instruction as we move forward for our own growth spiritually and evangelically. Other parishes across East Tennessee and Appalachia can learn from our experience. We at St. Thomas pray about exciting possibilities and thank God for the work of the Spirit among us and our community. St. Thomas begins to reach a wider Body of Christ as we welcome and learn new traditions and music into our own song and praise. Folks from neighboring towns and states now visit, music students from all over, and a good few Methodists, Presbyterians, and Baptists who love and support what we are doing (“as upswing for the downtown churches,” observed one local pastor). The Holy Spirit is blessing through diversity and ever-greater cultural appreciation—“Word and Sacrament” incarnate as taught, practiced, and celebrated in the best of Anglican ethos and tradition.

When I am asked “Why?” and “How?” I am sometimes perplexed to find an answer to explain the three worship services and what has happened since that remarkable time. Then I look back. I reflect upon the grace and gift of study and reflection, of a life growing up in Appalachia, experiencing many cultures and peoples, through my career in local, state, and national politics and through these past thirty years as a priest and pastor among rich cultural, societal, religious, and geographical diversity. And for the last six years, I am home in Elizabethton, Tennessee serving St. Thomas Episcopal Church, my hometown church witnessing a revival of mission, evangelism, and renewal through music.

“Why” I wonder today as I have for many years referring again to the simple, humble lady who came down from the rural mountain areas of my home county, dressed prettily in a colorful, cotton, and likely homemade dress, dipping snuff. Why did she eventually take to ecstatic dance, praising the Lord audibly, hearing Roy Acuff singing his “Great Speckled Bird?” “She ain’t on anything, Johnny,” I remember a neighbor saying to my father, “The Spirit’s got her.” The beloved Mr. Acuff was headliner for that year’s “Covered Bridge Festival” up on the Elk Avenue Bridge downtown for which hundreds and hundreds always gather from everywhere, still today. I will never forget the humble woman’s delight and dance.

I reflect also on the foundational story of this thesis when at the proclamation of the Christmas Gospel from Luke 2:21-20, “*Glory to God in the highest heaven, and on earth peace among those whom he favors*” a congregation began to sway, join hands, and celebrate Appalachia in the much beloved, “Beautiful Star of Bethlehem.” No matter

Episcopalian or not, "downtown" Methodist, "up-the-mountain," Independent Baptist, Lutheran, Free Holiness, agnostic, blue collar or, white, speaking in English or Spanish, believer or "trying to believe," the Spirit moved among us in a way we shall not forget. One dear brother, an Episcopal priest, commented, "Why, Holder, y'all've made them feel welcome." I demurred. "Frank, I think we Episcopalians have been the ones to have been made feel welcome."

"Why?" can be answered in the perfect stillness of a worshipper asking if she might remain seated at St. Thomas following the third and final worship service of this thesis project, "Celebrating Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr." on Sunday, January 20, 2019. "I've felt more holiness and goodness here than I've felt in years," she said to me softly. She remained silent, sitting meditatively alone in the beautiful surroundings of the altar and old church as the sun shined in brightly from up above the mountains encircling St. Thomas.

I kept hearing throughout this project Jesus' answer to Nicodemus in John 3:8, "The wind blows where it chooses, and you hear the sound of it, but you do not know where it comes from or where it goes. So it is with everyone who is born of the Spirit." Then Nicodemus asks as we ask, "How can these things be?" (John 9). The work and gifts of the Spirit amaze me, in others and in myself.

An inspiration from this work comes from the liturgical theologian, Aidan Kavanagh, who comments upon the "how" and "why" of religious experience. He writes, "Like poetry and art and music, liturgy provides us a means of knowing the kind of thing that can only be known transrationally, that cannot be analyzed, taken apart,

spelled out and reassembled... The outcome is an act of human communication which so drastically affects minds and hearts that reality is perceived in new and unforgettable ways."<sup>80</sup> These words have become biblical, that is, reality, for me. We cannot so easily know or analyze how God is at work.

“Why?” “How?” Our liturgy, our worship together takes us, at its most effective and realized, to places unforeseen. Our liturgy speaks to that which is deep within but sometimes unspeakable in word, undeterminable in action, though always blessing by the power of the Holy Spirit.

Three worship services in forty-nine days, from December 2, 2018 to January 20, 2019, immediately followed by a banner year of mission and evangelism, blessed the parish with music from centuries ago and today. The services included Easter liturgies, a Summer Appalachian Evensong, Bluegrass and old-time accompaniment one or two Sundays monthly, and a widely popular St. Francis' Sunday Celebration, “Jesus, Dogs, and Bluegrass,” with Blessing of the Animals filled the spacious west lawn. Then followed the second annual Appalachian Evensong with Advent Lessons and Carols and, finally, another packed-house Christmas Midnight Mass, “*Medianoche de Navidad*,” with traditional to old-time Appalachian, Bluegrass, and country gospel. The future shined well beyond our expectations and plans.

Beautifully, in a phrase introduced from the sixth century in one of our Episcopal hymns, a "thrilling voice" was and is sounding.

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<sup>80</sup>Aidan Kavanagh, *On Liturgical Theology* (Collegeville, Minnesota: The Liturgical Press, 1984), 169-170.

Let us celebrate what this project has already meant to a church and people looking upward these days. Let us celebrate this story of mission, evangelism, and rebirth in a time of uncertainty across the world and in the Episcopal Church and Anglican Tradition that we love. Let us hear and follow that “thrilling voice” today, keeping that sunshine that is the Love of Jesus Christ in our hearts, melodies, and message. St. Thomas’ soul is richer, greater, and deeper and filled today with profound spirit and wonder as we meet and welcome new traditions from beautiful and time-honored Appalachian tradition.

As St. Thomas, my own soul is richly blessed, deeper, and reconciled by a homecoming in 2015 of not what was, my own preconceptions, unawareness, and turning away for years, but *what is and can be*, a greater humanity, understanding, and love of self and community in the very context of this thesis project. Life is renewed and reborn in the Good News of the Gospel and the music which tells the story, truly, a “thrilling voice is sounding” and calling. May all of our souls sing out at a new and exciting day for a parish - and its priest - all of us grateful, expectant, and full of hope.

The local community surrounding St. Thomas is excited about what the future might hold as the congregation begins to stand and walk again after a difficult season of pandemic into a bright future. We begin to learn that music and traditions "Appalachian" can be an important part of our worship and identity. We look forward and are already celebrating Episcopal/Anglican and Appalachian Traditions together, not separated by cultures, persuasions, and history. We dream of St. Thomas as a place where Appalachian tradition is not merely welcome, but part of the fabric and joy of worshipping God.

A 'thrilling voice' yet leads us forward.

The Mission Statement of St. Thomas Episcopal Church, Elizabethton leads us forward as a community of faithful in Southern Appalachia. We come to know more and appreciate with greater heart and expectation the mission that God has given. Our Mission Statement, adopted in 2016, reads:

We proclaim Word and Celebrate Holy Sacrament.  
We Love Our Home of Appalachia.  
We Celebrate All God's Children and All Creation.

The Lord's "thrilling voice" abides with us still,

*"...so when next he comes with glory,  
and the world is wrapped in fear,  
may he with his mercy shield us  
and with words of Love draw near."<sup>81</sup>*

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<sup>81</sup> *The Hymnal 1982, The Episcopal Church*, "Hark a thrilling voice is sounding," Words: Latin, ca. 6th cent.; Music: *Merton*, William Henry Monk (1823-1889) (New York: Church Publishing Incorporated, 1982), 59.

## Appendices

- Appendix 1: Liturgy and Worship Programs for Three Worship Services
- Appendix 2: The Doe River Ensemble of St. Thomas Episcopal Church, Elizabethton, Tennessee
- Appendix 3: Survey Questionnaires and Tabulations for Three Worship Services
- Appendix 4: Selected Excerpts from Transcripts of In-Depth Interviews and Conversations with Participants in Three Worship Services
- Appendix 5: Selected Excerpts from Transcripts of In-Depth Interviews and Conversations with Religious Leaders, Scholars, Documentarians and Musicians of Appalachia
- Appendix 6: Media: News Stories, Local and Regional
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- Appendix 8: *2020 Appalachian Celebrations, St. Thomas Episcopal Church, Elizabethton, Tennessee*

## **Appendix 1**

### **Liturgy and Worship Programs for Three Worship Services**





*St. Thomas Church, 1861 & 1942*

## **Appalachian Evensong with Lessons & Carols**

The First Sunday of Advent, December 2, 2018  
6:00 p.m.

*With St. Thomas' Doe River Ensemble*

**St. Thomas Episcopal Church**

**Elizabethton, Tennessee**

[stthomazelizabethton.org](http://stthomazelizabethton.org)

**Appalachian Evensong  
with Lessons & Carols**

Sunday, 1 Advent, December 2 2018

*With the Doe River Ensemble*

***Prepare Ye the Way + Isaiah 40***

As we gather

*Bring a Torch, Jeanette Isabella*, French, 17th century

*Surely the Presence of the Lord Is in this Place*, Daywind Music

*O Come, O Come Emmanuel*, Words: 9th & Music: 15th century

The Procession, Bidding Prayer & Collect

*The Book of Occasional Services & Appalachian Liturgy*, Lee Bidgood

The First Lesson + Genesis 3: 1-15

*Adam and Eve rebel against God and are cast out of the garden of Eden.*

*Amazing Grace! Hymnal 671* + J. Newton, 1725-1807, *Va. Harmony*, 1831

The Second Lesson + Isaiah 40:1-11

*God comforts his people and calls on them to prepare for redemption.*

*What Child Is This? Greensleeves, English Melody*, 1871

The Third Lesson + Isaiah 11:1-9

*The Spirit of the Lord will rest upon the Holy One*

*Come Thou, Long-Expected Jesus, Hymnal 66*, Charles Wesley, 1707-1788

The Fourth Lesson + Zephaniah 3:14-18

*The Lord will be among us, we are summoned to rejoice and sing.*

A Song of Praise, Spirit, & Joy, Free Holiness Tradition

The Fifth Lesson + Isaiah 65: 17-25

*God promises a new heaven and a new earth.*

*I Am in a New World*, Church of God Tradition

The Sixth Lesson + Luke 1:26-56

*The Angel Gabriel announces to the Virgin Mary that she will bear the Son of the Most High + The Congregation stands and proclaims Magnificat BCP 65*

*Mary, Did You Know?* Buddy Greene, Ethan Snyder, Arr., 1991

The Prayers Emma Kate Brown

*For a Closer Walk with Thee*

Pray that we praise God at all times and in all places.  
Pray that we honor God through devotion to his son, Jesus Christ.  
Pray that we love God in all people and all creation.  
Pray that we serve God working for Justice and Peace in His Love.

*Let us Pray for Peace, Love & Justice Today*

Remember those losing homes and lives by fire and gunfire in California.  
Remember the eleven worshippers killed, Tree of Life Synagogue, Pittsburgh.  
Remember our leaders, country and all threatened and hurt by bombs and violence.  
Remember all humanity, especially refugees and all homeless.  
Remember our children and young people separated from family and home.  
Cure and sustain us through the epidemic of drug addiction.  
Pray we feed the hungry, heal the sick, and love our enemies.

*In Thanksgiving, Care & Love for Everybody & All Creation*

For our world, our country, our families, and faith at this time in history.  
Let us thank God for the beauty and love of home.  
Let us thank God for great mountains, beautiful sky,  
the City of Elizabethton and two rivers running through it,  
for Carter County, home of generations who gave a birthplace for freedom and liberty.  
For noble Cherokee and native peoples of many generations before.  
And for all of our animal family.

*Thank God for beautiful music especially here in Appalachia*

For this evening's *Doe River Ensemble*  
Kristi Carr, piano. Frank Bayes, harmonica,  
Joey Hildebran, piano, soloist & song leader, Timothy Holder, soloist,  
Cheri, guitar & Jim Miller, hammered dulcimer & mandolin  
& Jason Patrick, Parish Musician, piano. *AMEN.*

The Offering - Assistance & Resource Ministries of Elizabethton & Carter Co.

*The Peace Carol*, Bob Beers, John Denver & the Muppets, 1979

The Blessing The Reverend Timothy Holder, Priest and Pastor

The People circling church join hands & sing - 'call & response'

*How Great Thou Art*, Stuart K. Hine, 1899, MANNA MUSIC, Inc

*Insert*

*The Bidding Prayer  
The Officiant  
Prayer for Enlightenment*

*Dear Father in Heaven, Guide us. Show us your way. Save us and help us.*

Be for us like the dawn turning black skies to grey, then white, then rosy, then clear, bright day.

Be for us the sun flashing over the mountain tops gilding the trees then sending rays for the slopes over the rocks and hills into the valleys, lighting our rooftops and then our windows, filling our lives with clear, bright light of understanding.

Be for us that light. Guard us from the deep, deceptive gorges where sunlight cannot reach and keep us in the warmth and clarity of knowing you.

Then, as each evening creeps in and the sun slips back behind the mountains, keep your light in our hearts and minds as we wait through the darkness for the new light of your coming new day. AMEN.

*The Collects  
The People  
For Advent & Thanksgiving*

*Dear Father in Heaven*

As the days grow shorter and the leaves fall and the snow twinkles into the night, keep your summer in our hearts. As we mulch our gardens and prune fruit trees and roses, help us prune away the fruits of the faults in our lives. As we get out winter clothing help us remember the warmth of your Love. Cold, darkness, withering and death are not in you, nor in us when we know you. AMEN.

*For Christmas  
The People  
Dear Father*

We praise you and we bless you for sending Jesus to be born over two thousand years ago, and for his rebirth new again at Christmas to come. He is as old as our faith, as permanent as the mountains, as close as our kin. He stays in our hearts and he comes back again and again, forever and forever. HALLELUJAH, AMEN.

*Our Father...* (Lord's Prayer) adapted from *Appalachian Liturgy*, Lee Bidgood, ca. 2017<sup>82</sup>

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<sup>82</sup> Lee Bidgood, Ph.D., is Associate Professor of Appalachian Studies, Old Time and Country Music Studies and Director of the Bluegrass and at East Tennessee State University in Johnson City. Critical to my research and formal introduction to Appalachian Studies, Bidgood, an Episcopalian, and has celebrated Bluegrass Liturgies for some years. Twice a Fulbright Scholar among Bluegrass communities, first in Japan and more recently in the Czech Republic, Bidgood is widely known and revered internationally for his spirit and leadership for what we today know in the Episcopal Church and Anglican Tradition as "Liturgical Bluegrass." Among other academic and instrumental classes, Bidgood is an ethnomusicologist who guides many students and musicians from throughout Appalachia, the country, and internationally.

*Advent then Christmas 2018*  
*St. Thomas Episcopal Church, The City of Elizabethton*

*Blessed Advent, then...*

Sunday, December 2, 6:00 p.m.  
Appalachian Evensong with Lessons & Carols  
*with Lighting of the Advent Wreath*

Wednesdays, December 5, 12, & 19, 6:00 p.m.  
Preparing for Christmas with Mary & the Family of Jesus  
*with Gift Prayer Rosaries from St. George's Cathedral, Jerusalem*

Sunday, December 23, 11:00 a.m.  
Celebration with Children's Bilingual Christmas Pageant  
& Santa Claus *(with photos & gifts)*

*Merry Christmas y Feliz Navidad*

Monday, December 24, 11:00 p.m.  
Christmas Midnight Mass  
*with St. Thomas Doe River Ensemble*

**Welcome + *Bienvenidos!***  
**St. Thomas Episcopal Church**  
***1861 & 1942***

815 East Second Street + Elizabethton, Tennessee 37643  
The Reverend Timothy Holder  
(423) 707-0042 + [stthomaselizabethton@gmail.com](mailto:stthomaselizabethton@gmail.com)



## **Christmas Midnight Mass**

## **Festival Holy Eucharist + La Santa Eucaristía**

December 25, 2018

11:00 p.m. Christmas Eve

## **St. Thomas Episcopal Church**

## **Elizabethton, Tennessee**

[stthomaselizabethton.org](http://stthomaselizabethton.org)

**The First Mass of Christmas at Midnight**  
**Misa de Medianoche de Navidad + December 25, 2018**  
**Festival Holy Eucharist + Santa Eucaristía**

*The Book of Common Prayer & El Libro de Oracion Comun*

*We sing and praise God as we enter.*

Introit *The Wexford Carol*, Irish, 17th century + Catherine Edwards

The Processional *Joy to the world!* *Hymnal 100*  
David Arney, Organist & Catherine Edwards, Pianist

***We come into the presence of God in Praise + Gloria a Dios***

The Opening Acclamation Page 355

*Angels we have heard on high* *Hymnal 96*  
David Arney, Organist & Catherine Edwards, Pianist  
The Collect of Christmas

***To hear God's Holy Word + La Palabra de Dos***

The Hebrew Scripture Isaiah + Isaias 9:2-7

The Psalm Psalm + El Salmo 96

The Epistle Titus + Tito 2:11-14

The Gospel Hymn

*O come all ye faithful* *Hymnal 83*

Jason Patrick, Organist & Kristi Carr, Pianist

The Holy Gospel Luke + Lucas 2:1-20 + Celtic Alleluia!

*Beautiful Star of Bethlehem*, Appalachian traditional

Joey Hildebran, Vocalist & Pianist

Oh beautiful star of Bethlehem  
Shining far through shadows dimmed  
Giving the life for those who have long gone on  
Guiding the wise men on their way  
Unto the place where Jesus lay  
On beautiful star of Bethlehem shine on

Oh beautiful star the hope of light  
Guiding the pilgrims through the night  
Over the mountains 'til the break of dawn  
into the land of perfect day  
it will give out a lovely ray  
Oh beautiful star of Bethlehem shine on

Oh beautiful star, (beautiful, beautiful star) of Bethlehem  
Star of Bethlehem

Shine upon us until the glory dawn  
Give us a lamp to light the way  
Unto the land of perfect day  
Oh beautiful star of Bethlehem shine on.

Oh beautiful star the hope, the grace  
For the redeem of good and blessed  
Yonder in glory went he crowd is one  
Jesus is now the star divine

Brighter and brighter he will shine, *Oh beautiful star of Bethlehem shine on & Repeat*



The Sermon      Father Timothy Holder, Priest & Pastor

***To proclaim our faith in God + Proclamamos le Fe***      Page 358

***To pray in God's Holy Name, Form III + Oremos***      Page 387

***To greet one another in peace + La Paz de Jesu Cristo***

***To offer our gifts to God + The Anthems***

*It came upon a midnight clear*

Catherine Edwards, Vocalist & David Arney, Organist

*O Holy Night*, Loretta Bowers & Teresa Bowers Parker, Vocalists

& Joey Hildebran, Organist

### **The Great Thanksgiving**

***To celebrate the Love of Our Lord Jesus Christ***

The Great Thanksgiving + Prayer B      Page 367

Santo, santo, santo, mi corazón te-adora!

*Holy, holy, holy, my heart adores you!*

Mi corazón te sabe decir: santo-eres Señor.

*My heart is glad to say the words: you are holy Lord. REPEAT*

The Lord's Prayer      Page 364

The Breaking of the Bread, *ALLELUIA! ALELUYA! ALLELUIA!*

The Holy Communion *The Gifts of God + Los Donnes de Dios*

*What child is this? Greensleeves      Hymnal 115*

*The First Nowell the angel did say      Hymnal 109*

*O Little Town of Bethlehem      Hymnal 78*

Jason Patrick, Organist & Kristi Carr, Pianist

At the Manger *Silent Night, Holy Night      Hymnal 111*

Jason Patrick, Organist & Kristi Carr, Pianist

The Prayer for Thanksgiving & Celebration      Page 365

The Christmas Blessing, Father Michael Dakota, St. Timothy's Catholic

***To go into the world rejoicing in the power of the Spirit***

The Recessional      *Go tell it on the mountain      Hymnal 99*

Loretta Bowers & Teresa Bowers Parker, Vocalists

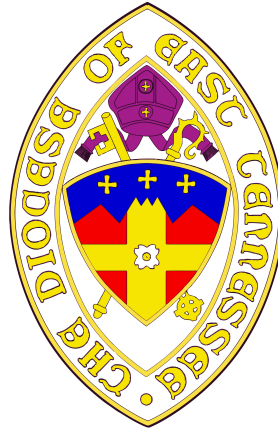
& Joey Hildebran, Pianist

The Proclamation of the Birth of Christ to the City

Bishop Patrick Potts, Landmark Free Holiness Church

Altar Flowers Given to the Glory of God  
*In loving memory of Joan Carolyn Godfrey-Corney, 1938-2018*

*Thank you Minister Teresa Bowers Parker, Father Michael Dakota  
and Bishop Patrick Potts, Servers & Acolytes, Readers, Ushers & Everyone who served.  
Thank you to St. Thomas' "Doe River Ensemble," pride of "Old Town."*



**Welcome + *Bienvenidos!***  
**St. Thomas Episcopal Church**  
***1861 & 1942***

815 East Second Street + Elizabethton, Tennessee 37643

The Reverend Timothy Holder

(423) 707-0042 + [stthomaselizabethton@gmail.com](mailto:stthomaselizabethton@gmail.com)

Sundays + Domingos

10:15 a.m. Sunday School *Escuela Domingo*

11:00 a.m. Holy Anointing + Santa Unción

Holy Eucharist + Santa Eucaristía



***Celebrating Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. Weekend***

**The Holy Eucharist + La Santa Eucaristía**

Sunday, January 20, 2019

10:15 a.m. Sunday School *Escuela Domingo*

11:00 a.m. Holy Eucharist *La Santa Eucaristía*

**St. Thomas Episcopal Church**

**Elizabethton, Tennessee**

[stthomaselizabethton.org](http://stthomaselizabethton.org)

**Celebrating Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. Weekend**  
**Sunday, 2 Epiphany, January 20, 2019**  
**St. Thomas Episcopal Church**  
**Elizabethton, Tennessee**

**The Holy Eucharist + La Santa Eucaristía**  
The Book of Common Prayer + El Libro Oración Común

*Giving thanks for the Music today led by*  
*Loretta Bowers, Minister Teresa Bowers Parker, Thomas Cassell & Pat Van Zandt*

*“LEVAS II” - Lift Every Voice and Sing II Hymnal*  
The African American Hymnal of the Episcopal Church

*In thanksgiving for the gift of the banjo by Africa America*  
*A Medley on a 19th century banjo, Thomas Cassell*  
*Processional Cross from Ethiopia. Kente Royal Cloth Vestments Central African*

*Please stand*

*“I Have a Dream,” Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr.*

March on Washington for Jobs and Freedom, August 28, 1963  
*Lift Every Voice and Sing LEVAS II 1 James Weldon Johnson, 1871-1938*

The Processional Hymn *We Shall Overcome LEVAS II 227, Traditional*

***We come into the presence of God in Praise + Gloria a Dios***

The Opening Acclamation Page 355

*Glory, Glory, Hallelujah! LEVAS II 130, Traditional, Negro Spiritual,*

The Collect of the Day

***To hear God’s Word + La Palabra de Dios***

The Hebrew Bible Isaiah + Isaías 49:1-7

The Psalm Psalm + Salmo 40:1-12

The Epistle 1 Corinthians + 1 Corintios 1:1-9

The Gospel Hymn *Great Is Thy Faithfulness LEVAS II 189, This. Chisholm, 1866-1960*

The Holy Gospel John + Juan 1:29-42

The Sermon Minister Teresa Bowers Parker

*If I Can Help Somebody,* A favorite hymn of Dr. King’s, Loretta Bowers

***To proclaim our faith in God + Proclamamos Le Fe***

*Take Me to the Water Traditional, Negro Spiritual LEVAS II 134*

*The Renewal of Baptismal Vows + Votos Bautismales* Page 304

***To pray and confess our sins + Oremos y confesión*** Page 387

***To offer our gifts to God + Offertory***

The Anthem *I Don’t Feel No Ways Tired, Negro Spiritual*

***To Celebrate the Love of Jesus Christ + Celebramos La Fiesta***

The Great Thanksgiving + Prayer B

Page 367

Santo, santo, santo, mi corazón te-adora!

*Holy, holy, holy, my heart adores you!*

Mi corazón te sabe decir: santo-eres Señor.

*My heart is glad to say the words: you are holy, Lord. REPEAT*

The Lord's Prayer

The Breaking of the Bread *Alleluia!*

*Medley on mandolin* *Thomas Cassell*

*Sweet, Sweet Spirit* *LEVAS II 120*

***To go into the World, Cristo Ha Recusitado!***

The Post-Communion Prayer & Blessing

Page 365

The Recessional Hymn *We're Marching to Zion* LEVAS 12, Isaac Watts, 17th century

*Altar flowers given to the Glory of God  
in Loving Memory of Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr., 1929-1968  
& Mrs. Coretta Scott King, 1927-2006*

⊕

*For the more than 4400 African American men, women, and children who were hanged, burned alive, shot,  
drowned, and beaten to death by white mobs between 1877 and 1950 in the United States of America.*

*The National Memorial for Peace & Justice, Montgomery, Al.*

**The Prayers**

*Pray with Dr. King*

O God, we thank you for the lives of great saints and prophets in the past,  
who have revealed to us that we can stand up amid the problems and trials  
of life and not give in. We thank you for our foreparents, who've given us  
something in the midst of the darkness of exploitation and oppression to  
keep going. Grant that we will go on with the proper faith and the proper  
determination of will so that we will be able to make a creative contribution  
to this world in the name and spirit of Jesus we pray. *AMEN.*

*For Care & Love*

For the sick, the aged, physically challenged and caregivers.

For individuals and families of addiction.

For all immigrants and refugees.

For all who die from gun violence.

For the incarcerated.

In appreciation for all Veterans and Armed Forces

For all animals and creation

**Parish Announcements / Anuncios**  
**God Bless St, Thomas Episcopal Church, 1861 & 1942**

**Calendar/io**

Sundays + Domingos

10:15 a.m. Sunday School *Escuela* God *Domingo*

11:00 a.m. Holy Anointing + Santa Unción

Holy Eucharist + Santa Eucaristía

Wednesdays + Miercoles

11:00 a.m. Team Meetings

Noonday Prayer + Mediodía

*with* Holy Anointing + Santa Unción

Thursdays + Jueves

Mediodía con Curación en la Comunidad

Vespertina en la Comunidad

1st Wednesdays Ministerial Association 11:30 a.m.

1st Thursdays Latino/a Partnership 7:00 p.m.

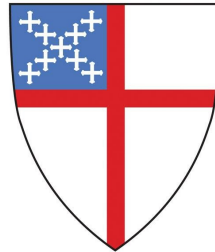
2nd Thursdays ARM 12:30 p.m.

3rd Thursdays Finance Committee 6:00 p.m.

4th Thursdays Vestry 6:00 p.m.

Food for the Multitude Saturday mornings *as announced*

The Episcopal Church



**Welcome + *Bienvenidos!***

**St. Thomas Episcopal Church**

**1861 & 1942**

815 East Second Street + Elizabethton, Tennessee 37643

The Reverend Timothy Holder

(423) 707-0042 + [stthomaselizabethton@gmail.com](mailto:stthomaselizabethton@gmail.com)

*Join us at* **[stthomaselizabethton.org](http://stthomaselizabethton.org)**

## Appendix 2

### The Doe River Ensemble of St. Thomas Episcopal Church

Elizabethton, Tennessee founded December 2, 2018, “*Whoever Shows Up!*”

*With thanksgiving, amazement, and faith for the beautiful ‘roses at bloom’*<sup>83</sup>

David Arney, organ and piano, traditional  
Elizabethton, Tennessee

Frank Bayes  
harmonica  
Elizabethton, Tennessee

Bill and the Belles  
Vintage, voice, fiddle, banjo, and bass  
Birthplace of Country Music, WBCM - Radio Bristol’s *Farm and Fun*  
Bristol, Tennessee

Lee Bidgood, banjo and voice and “St. Francis Day Band,” guitar, mandolin, and bass  
Johnson City and Jonesborough, Tennessee

Loretta Bowers, voice and spiritual, African American tradition  
Elizabethton, Tennessee

Pastor Teresa Parker Bowers, voice, preaching, and spiritual  
African American Tradition  
and Dan Parker, voice and spiritual, African American Tradition  
Elizabethton, Tennessee

Elizabethton Edwards Bunton, voice and piano, Celtic and ballad  
Elizabethton, Tennessee

Kristi Carr, piano, traditional and contemporary  
Elizabethton, Tennessee

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<sup>83</sup> “The Roses Will Bloom,” from “Shine On” collection by the Stanley Brothers, Ralph Stanley, II, Producer, Rebel Records, 2005.

Thomas Cassell  
St. Thomas' "Bluegrass Liturgist"  
International Bluegrass Association, Young Performer of the Year, 2020  
voice, mandolin, guitar and "soft" banjo  
Johnson City, Tennessee and Norton, Virginia

Students, musicians, and faculty  
Appalachian Studies, Bluegrass, Old-Time and Country  
East Tennessee State University  
Johnson City, Tennessee

Joey Hildebran and family  
piano and singers, Holiness Pentecostal tradition  
Morganton, North Carolina

Rhody Joan Meadows, voice, Sacred Harp and 'Shape Note,' fiddle, banjo, harp  
and Nowhere Valley, guitar, strings, and a trio of voices  
Poga, Little Milligan, Tennessee

Cheri, voice and guitar, and Jim Miller, hammered dulcimer, mandolin, and guitar  
Hampton, Tennessee

Josiah Benjamin Nelson  
fiddle, "RockyGrass"  
Johnson City, Tennessee and Denver, Colorado

Jason Patrick, Parish Musician, 2017-18, St. Thomas Episcopal Church  
Elizabethton, Tennessee

Michael Poole  
bagpiper  
Johnson City, Tennessee

Janice Russell  
Mountain City, Tennessee  
Parish Musician, 2020-, St. Thomas Episcopal Church  
Elizabethton, Tennessee

Gary Smith  
bagpiper  
Bluff City, Tennessee



Kathy Smith  
classical guitar  
Elizabethton, Tennessee

Linda Sorrell  
accordion  
Johnson City, Tennessee

Chirron Taylor  
voice and spiritual, African American tradition  
Elizabethton, Tennessee



*In Memoriam with Great Love*

*January 24, 2021*

Colleen Trenwith

fiddle/violin

Johnson City, Tennessee and Hamilton County, New Zealand

## Appendix 3

### Survey Questionnaires and Tabulations for Three Worship Services

#### A SURVEY

St. Thomas' "Appalachian Evensong with Lessons & Carols"  
Sunday, December 2, 2018 + 6:00 p.m. + St. Thomas Church, Elizabethton, TN

#### I. Introduction

We were so happy to see you at "Appalachian Evensong with Lessons and Carols" at St. Thomas in Elizabethton on Sunday, December 2. St. Thomas seeks to welcome all people in Christian hospitality and love. We cherish our historic home-place and location of Elizabethton and Carter County in the heart of Appalachia. Our goal in this confidential questionnaire is to better understand how the Episcopal/Anglican Tradition might more fully appreciate cultures here at home and across Appalachia both in service and worship. Your time and viewpoint are critical. *Give Father Timothy Holder a call at (423) 707-0042 or e-mail at [tholdertn@gmail.com](mailto:tholdertn@gmail.com) if helpful.*

#### II. Questions

Please indicate your level of agreement or disagreement:

*1 - Strongly Agree    2 - Agree    3 - Neutral    4 - Disagree    5 - Strongly Disagree*

\_\_\_\_\_ I attended Appalachian Evensong because I love Appalachian musics and cultures.

\_\_\_\_\_ I attended Appalachian Evensong as a newcomer to Appalachian musics and cultures.

\_\_\_\_\_ The hymns and songs at this service were well-balanced and in-sync with Holy Scripture.

\_\_\_\_\_ The musicians and artists were well prepared.

\_\_\_\_\_ St. Thomas Church seems to be a good venue for Appalachian religious celebrations.

\_\_\_\_\_ The musics, hymns, and instruments seemed to be at home at St. Thomas.

\_\_\_\_\_ I believe that such a service and others like it could be held regularly at St. Thomas.

\_\_\_\_\_ I see many reasons why Appalachian hymns and songs make sense in Episcopal Tradition.

\_\_\_\_\_ I enjoy piano at St. Thomas.

\_\_\_\_\_ I enjoy mandolin at St. Thomas.

\_\_\_\_\_ I enjoy guitar at St. Thomas

\_\_\_\_\_ I enjoy hammered dulcimer at St. Thomas.

\_\_\_\_\_ This service helped me to take time to prepare for Jesus's birth at Christmas.

One of my favorite hymns at Appalachian Evensong was \_\_\_\_\_

Another favorite hymn or song for Appalachian Evensong is \_\_\_\_\_

### **III. Comments**

Please offer a few words and descriptions in response to the questions below.

What might be a few of the most important obstacles from preventing Appalachian music in a church as St. Thomas?

Do you see St. Thomas offering Appalachian music as a part of its regular services?

What, if anything, most stirs your heart about the music of Appalachia?

Can a church such as St. Thomas genuinely welcome and offer Appalachian music? If so, how?

What blessed you in Appalachian Evensong? What might you add or remove from the service?

### **IV. Information - Confidential**

Name (optional)\_\_\_\_\_

Age \_\_\_\_\_

Gender\_\_\_\_\_ # Family Members \_\_\_\_\_

**V. Thank you. Heartfelt blessings to you and your family!**

Please enclose and return Survey in pre-addressed and pre-stamped envelope by December 9 to:

The Reverend Timothy Holder  
St. Thomas Episcopal Church  
815 East 2nd Street  
Elizabethton, TN 37643

*If any questions please call Father Holder at (423) 707-0042. Thank you & God bless you this Season*

## Survey Tabulation

St. Thomas' "Appalachian Evensong with Lessons & Carols"  
Sunday, December 2, 2018 + 6:00 p.m. + St. Thomas Episcopal Church, Elizabethton, TN

52 attendees, 11 answering survey

### Questions & Responses

Please indicate your level of agreement or disagreement:

**1** \_\_\_\_\_ I attended Appalachian Evensong because I love Appalachian musics and cultures.

*1 - Strongly Agree 2 2 - Agree 8 3 - Neutral 1 4 - Disagree x 5 - Strongly Disagree x*

**2** \_\_\_\_\_ I attended Appalachian Evensong as a newcomer to Appalachian musics and cultures.

*1 - Strongly Agree 1 2 - Agree 2 3 - Neutral 2 4 - Disagree 2 5 - Strongly Disagree 1*

**3** \_\_\_\_\_ The hymns and songs at this service were well-balanced and in-sync with Holy Scripture.

*1 - Strongly Agree 8 2 - Agree 3 3 - Neutral x 4 - Disagree x 5 - Strongly Disagree x*

**4** \_\_\_\_\_ The musicians and artists were well prepared.

*1 - Strongly Agree 9 2 - Agree 2 3 - Neutral x 4 - Disagree x 5 - Strongly Disagree x*

**5** \_\_\_\_\_ St. Thomas Church seems to be a good venue for Appalachian religious celebrations.

*1 - Strongly Agree 9 2 - Agree x 3 - Neutral 1 4 - Disagree x 5 - Strongly Disagree x*

**6** \_\_\_\_\_ The musics, hymns, and instruments seemed to be at home at St. Thomas.

*1 - Strongly Agree 9 2 - Agree 2 3 - Neutral 1 4 - Disagree x 5 - Strongly Disagree x*

**7** \_\_\_\_\_ I believe that such a service and others like it could be held regularly at St. Thomas.

*1 - Strongly Agree 7 2 - Agree 3 3 - Neutral 1 4 - Disagree x 5 - Strongly Disagree x*

**8** \_\_\_\_\_ I see many reasons why Appalachian hymns and songs make sense in Episcopal Tradition.

*1 - Strongly Agree 6 2 - Agree 1 3 - Neutral 3 4 - Disagree x 5 - Strongly Disagree x*

**9** \_\_\_\_\_ I enjoy piano at St. Thomas.

*1 - Strongly Agree 8 2 - Agree 1 3 - Neutral 2 4 - Disagree x 5 - Strongly Disagree x*

**10** \_\_\_\_\_ I enjoy mandolin at St. Thomas.

*1 - Strongly Agree 6 2 - Agree 2 3 - Neutral 1 4 - Disagree x 5 - Strongly Disagree x*

**11** \_\_\_\_\_ I enjoy guitar at St. Thomas

*1 - Strongly Agree h 2 - Agree 2 3 - Neutral 2 4 - Disagree x 5 - Strongly Disagree x*

**12** \_\_\_\_\_ I enjoy hammered dulcimer at St. Thomas.

*1 - Strongly Agree 9    2 - Agree 1    3 - Neutral x    4 - Disagree x    5 - Strongly Disagree x*

**13** \_\_\_\_\_ This service helped me to take time to prepare for Jesus's birth at Christmas.

*1 - Strongly Agree 7    2 - Agree 3    3 - Neutral x    4 - Disagree x    5 - Strongly Disagree x*

## A SURVEY

St. Thomas' "Christmas Midnight Mass"  
Monday, December 24, 2018 + 11:00 p.m. + St. Thomas Church, Elizabethton, TN

### I. Introduction

We were so happy to see you at this year's "Christmas Midnight Mass" at St. Thomas in Elizabethton. St. Thomas seeks to welcome all people in Christian hospitality and love. We cherish our historic home-place and location in beautiful "Old Town" Elizabethton in Carter County, "heart of Appalachia." Our goal in this confidential questionnaire is to better understand how the Episcopal/Anglican Tradition might more fully appreciate cultures here at home and across Appalachia both in service and worship. Your time and viewpoint are critical. *Give Father Timothy Holder a call at (423) 707-0042 or e-mail at [tholdertn@gmail.com](mailto:tholdertn@gmail.com) if any questions.*

### II. Questions

Please indicate your level of agreement or disagreement:

1 - Strongly Agree    2 - Agree    3 - Neutral    4 - Disagree    5 - Strongly Disagree

\_\_\_\_\_ I attended Christmas Midnight Mass because I love this tradition and Season.

\_\_\_\_\_ The hymns and songs at this service were well-balanced and in-sync with Holy Scripture.

\_\_\_\_\_ I appreciated the spiritual singing and piano-playing along with more traditional music.

\_\_\_\_\_ St. Thomas Church is a good venue for welcoming more Appalachian song and custom.

\_\_\_\_\_ The musics, hymns, and instruments seemed to be at home at St. Thomas.

\_\_\_\_\_ St. Thomas is wise to more fully welcome Appalachian and mountain traditions.

\_\_\_\_\_ I see many reasons why Appalachian hymns and songs make sense in Episcopal Tradition.

\_\_\_\_\_ I enjoy piano at St. Thomas.

\_\_\_\_\_ Spiritual and Appalachian songs at St. Thomas should be used only 'every-so-often'.

\_\_\_\_\_ I would enjoy other local instruments such as guitar, mandolin, dulcimer at St. Thomas.

\_\_\_\_\_ I enjoyed the old Irish and Scottish - and English - melodies at Midnight Mass

\_\_\_\_\_ This service was a wonderful celebration of Jesus's birth at Christmas. I would support more services like this at St. Thomas.

One of my favorite hymns at Midnight Mass was \_\_\_\_\_

Another favorite hymn or song for Midnight Mass might be \_\_\_\_\_

### **III. Comments**

Please offer a few words and descriptions in response to the questions below.

What might be a few of the most important obstacles from preventing Appalachian music in a church as St. Thomas?

Would you see such a church as St. Thomas offering Appalachian music as a part of its regular services?

What, if anything, most stirs your heart about the music of Appalachia?

Can a church such as St. Thomas genuinely welcome and offer Appalachian music? If so, how?

What blessed you at Christmas Midnight Mass? What might you add or remove?

### **IV. Information - Confidential**

Name (optional) \_\_\_\_\_

Age \_\_\_\_\_

Gender \_\_\_\_\_ # Family Members \_\_\_\_\_

**V. Thank you. Heartfelt blessings to you and your family!**



Please enclose and return Survey in pre-addressed and pre-stamped envelope by January 1, 2019 to:

The Reverend Timothy Holder  
St. Thomas Episcopal Church  
815 East 2nd Street  
Elizabethton, TN 37643

*If any questions please call Father Holder at (423) 707-0042. Thank you & God bless you this Season*

Survey Tabulation

St. Thomas' "Christmas Midnight Mass"  
Monday, December 24, 2018 + 11:00 p.m. + St. Thomas Church, Elizabethton, TN  
82 attendees, 15 answering survey

Questions and Responses

Please indicate your level of agreement or disagreement:

**1.** \_\_\_\_ I attended Christmas Midnight Mass because I love this tradition and Season.  
*1 - Strongly Agree 12 2 - Agree 3 3 - Neutral x 4 - Disagree x 5 - Strongly Disagree x*

**2.** \_\_\_\_ The hymns and songs at this service were well-balanced and in-sync with Holy Scripture.  
*1 - Strongly Agree 10 2 - Agree 4 3 - Neutral x 4 - Disagree x 5 - Strongly Disagree x*

**3.** \_\_\_\_ I appreciated the spiritual singing and piano-playing along with more traditional music.  
*1 - Strongly Agree 11 2 - Agree 4 3 - Neutral x 4 - Disagree x 5 - Strongly Disagree x*

**4.** \_\_\_\_ St. Thomas Church is a good venue for welcoming more Appalachian song and custom.  
*1 - Strongly Agree 12 2 - Agree 3 3 - Neutral x 4 - Disagree x 5 - Strongly Disagree x*

**5.** \_\_\_\_ The musics, hymns, and instruments seemed to be at home at St. Thomas.  
*1 - Strongly Agree 9 2 - Agree 4 3 - Neutral 1 4 - Disagree x 5 - Strongly Disagree x*

**6.** \_\_\_\_ St. Thomas is wise to more fully welcome Appalachian and mountain traditions.  
*1 - Strongly Agree 12 2 - Agree 3 3 - Neutral x 4 - Disagree x 5 - Strongly Disagree x*

**7.** \_\_\_\_ I see many reasons why Appalachian hymns and songs make sense in Episcopal Tradition.  
*1 - Strongly Agree 12 2 - Agree 2 3 - Neutral 1 4 - Disagree x 5 - Strongly Disagree x*

**8.** \_\_\_\_ I enjoy piano at St. Thomas.  
*1 - Strongly Agree 9 2 - Agree 4 3 - Neutral 1 4 - Disagree 1 5 - Strongly Disagree x*

**9.** \_\_\_\_ Spiritual and Appalachian songs at St. Thomas should be used only 'every-so-often'.  
*1 - Strongly Agree x 2 - Agree 1 3 - Neutral 2 4 - Disagree 7 5 - Strongly Disagree 4*

**10.** \_\_\_\_\_ I would enjoy other local instruments such as guitar, mandolin, dulcimer at St. Thomas.

*1 - Strongly Agree 11    2 - Agree 3    3 - Neutral x    4 - Disagree x    5 - Strongly Disagree x*

**11.** \_\_\_\_\_ I enjoyed the old Irish and Scottish - and English - melodies at Midnight Mass

*1 - Strongly Agree 11    2 - Agree 3    3 - Neutral x    4 - Disagree x    5 - Strongly Disagree x*

**12.** \_\_\_\_\_ This service was a wonderful celebration of Jesus's birth at Christmas. I would support more services likes this at St. Thomas.

*1 - Strongly Agree 13    2 - Agree 2    3 - Neutral    4 - Disagree    5 - Strongly Disagree*

## A SURVEY

St. Thomas' "Community Celebration of Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr."  
Sunday, 2 Epiphany, January y 20, 2019, 11:00 a.m., St. Thomas Church, Elizabethton, TN

### I. Introduction

We were so happy to see you at the "Community Celebration of Dr. Martin Luther, King, Jr." at St. Thomas in Elizabethton. St. Thomas seeks to welcome all people in Christian hospitality and love. We cherish our historic home-place and location in beautiful "Old Town" Elizabethton in Carter County, "heart of Appalachia." Our goal in this confidential questionnaire is to better understand how the Episcopal/Anglican Tradition might more fully appreciate cultures here at home and across Appalachia both in service and worship. Your time and viewpoint are critical. *Give Father Timothy Holder a call at (423) 707-0042 or e-mail at [tholdertn@gmail.com](mailto:tholdertn@gmail.com) if any questions.*

### II. Questions

Please indicate your level of agreement or disagreement:

*1 - Strongly Agree    2 - Agree    3 - Neutral    4 - Disagree    5 - Strongly Disagree*

\_\_\_\_\_ I appreciated the "Community Celebration of Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr."

\_\_\_\_\_ It is important for the stories of Dr. King and the Civil Rights Era to be known today.

\_\_\_\_\_ African American Tradition is inspired Christian faith and Tradition.

\_\_\_\_\_ I appreciated the spiritual singing and piano-playing along with more traditional music.

\_\_\_\_\_ St. Thomas Church is a good venue for welcoming African American song and custom.

\_\_\_\_\_ The musics, hymns, and instruments seemed to be at home at St. Thomas.

\_\_\_\_\_ St. Thomas is wise to appreciate African American Tradition as important to Appalachia.

\_\_\_\_\_ Our local churches need to celebrate African American voice and song more often.

\_\_\_\_\_ African American Tradition is important to Appalachia.

\_\_\_\_\_ African American music has been important to Christianity here since the beginning.

\_\_\_\_\_ I appreciated the use of prominence of the Ethiopian Processional and Blessing Crosses.

\_\_\_\_\_ This service was a wonderful celebration of Dr. King and our Community.. I would support more services likes this at St. Thomas.

One of my favorite hymns at this service was \_\_\_\_\_

Another favorite African American hymn or song is \_\_\_\_\_

### **III. Comments**

Please offer a few words and descriptions in response to the questions below.

What might be a few of the most important obstacles preventing African America music in a church like St. Thomas?

Can you see St. Thomas offering African American Tradition as a part of its regular services?

What, if anything, most stirs your heart about the spirit and music of African America - Appalachian African America - in testimony to God?

Can a church such as St. Thomas genuinely welcome and offer African American musics and song? How?

What blessed you at the “Community Celebration of Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr.?”? What might you add or remove?

### **IV. Information - Confidential**

Name (optional) \_\_\_\_\_

Age \_\_\_\_\_

Gender \_\_\_\_\_ # Family Members \_\_\_\_\_

**V. Thank you. Heartfelt blessings to you and your family!**

Please enclose and return Survey in pre-addressed and pre-stamped envelope by February 1 to:

The Reverend Timothy Holder  
St. Thomas Episcopal Church  
815 East 2nd Street  
Elizabethton, TN 37643

*If any questions please call Father Holder at (423) 707-0042. Thank you & God bless you this Season.*

## Survey Tabulation

St. Thomas' "Community Celebration of Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr."  
Sunday, 2 Epiphany, January 20, 2019, 11:00 a.m., St. Thomas Church, Elizabethton, TN

75 attending, 18 answering survey

### Questions and Responses

Please indicate your level of agreement or disagreement:

- 1.** \_\_\_\_\_ I appreciated the "Community Celebration of Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr."  
*1 - Strongly Agree 16    2 - Agree 1    3 - Neutral x    4 - Disagree x    5 - Strongly Disagree 1*
- 2.** \_\_\_\_\_ It is important for the stories of Dr. King and the Civil Rights Era to be known today.  
*1 - Strongly Agree 15    2 - Agree 2    3 - Neutral x    4 - Disagree x    5 - Strongly Disagree 1*
- 3.** \_\_\_\_\_ African American Tradition is inspired Christian faith and Tradition.  
*1 - Strongly Agree 15    2 - Agree 2    3 - Neutral x    4 - Disagree x    5 - Strongly Disagree 1*
- 4.** \_\_\_\_\_ I appreciated the spiritual singing and piano-playing along with more traditional music.  
*1 - Strongly Agree 14    2 - Agree 3    3 - Neutral x    4 - Disagree 1    5 - Strongly Disagree x*
- 5.** \_\_\_\_\_ St. Thomas Church is a good venue for welcoming African American song and custom.  
*1 - Strongly Agree 7    2 - Agree 8    3 - Neutral x    4 - Disagree x    5 - Strongly Disagree 1*
- 6.** \_\_\_\_\_ The musics, hymns, and instruments seemed to be at home at St. Thomas.  
*1 - Strongly Agree 12    2 - Agree 4    3 - Neutral x    4 - Disagree x    5 - Strongly Disagree 1*
- 7.** \_\_\_\_\_ St. Thomas is wise to appreciate African American Tradition as important to Appalachia.  
*1 - Strongly Agree 12    2 - Agree 5    3 - Neutral 1    4 - Disagree x    5 - Strongly Disagree 1*
- 8.** \_\_\_\_\_ Our local churches need to celebrate African American voice and song more often.  
*1 - Strongly Agree 12    2 - Agree 4    3 - Neutral x    4 - Disagree x    5 - Strongly Disagree 1*
- 9.** \_\_\_\_\_ African American Tradition is important to Appalachia.  
*1 - Strongly Agree 12    2 - Agree 3    3 - Neutral 2    4 - Disagree 1    5 - Strongly Disagree x*
- 10.** \_\_\_\_\_ African American music has been important to Christianity here since the beginning.  
*1 - Strongly Agree 12    2 - Agree 4    3 - Neutral x    4 - Disagree 1    5 - Strongly Disagree x*

**11.** \_\_\_\_\_ I appreciated the use and prominence of Ethiopian Processional and Blessing Crosses.

*1 - Strongly Agree 14    2 - Agree 2    3 - Neutral x    4 - Disagree 1    5 - Strongly Disagree x*

**12.** \_\_\_\_\_ This service was a wonderful celebration of Dr. King and our Community.. I would support more services likes this at St. Thomas.

*1 - Strongly Agree 17    2 - Agree x    3 - Neutral x    4 - Disagree x    5 - Strongly Disagree x*



## Appendix 4

### Selected Excerpts from Transcripts of In-Depth Interviews and Conversations with Participants in Three Worship Services

#### *Personal Interviews*

Ashlynnne and Mark Bailey, Elizabethton, Tennessee, young church leaders, in-person,  
October 19, 2019

*Ashlynnne-*

- “I feel the music and holiness of it all together at all three of our services...”
- “My family and I had never heard the beauty of “Silent Night” the way Loretta Bowers sang it from her tradition that night” (African American).
- “Our family, friends and cousins all loved the services and will return. I was honored to participate as a reader and help with all of our children at Christmas.”

*Mark-*

- “All three worship services brought the music home to me... You really feel like the ‘circle is unbroken’... the Christmas Midnight Mass is our ‘gold standard’.”
- “I take great pride in what we are doing here with our Appalachian work, and all of this beautiful music... Where has it been?”
- “‘Anglican’ is the ‘great center’ and meeting point!”
- “This—the three events—is how we build this Church, Father Tim.”

Caleb Bailey and Alexa Cleek, Elizabethton and Kingsport, Tennessee, new, young church  
members, in-person, October 26, 2020

*Alexa-*

- “I felt no judgment of anyone... thank you.”
- “The music and artists all worked together so beautifully.”
- “You helped me love our home (of Appalachia) more appreciatively and intelligently.”

*Caleb-*

- “I didn’t know there was a church where you could bring everything together like this. I love it and want to be a part.”
- “As a couple, we want to be more progressive, but we don’t want to give up traditional values.... the Episcopal Church can offer both.”
- “Pretty robust and amazing (the worship services) , Father Tim!”

- “St. Thomas is very authentic.. I want to give (to a community of faith), but until I found St. Thomas, I had no place to give... I believe in the mission of love which is so real here in this music and all these different people...”

Joyce and Jim Butler, Elizabethton, Tennessee, longtime church leaders, in-person, October 26, 2019

*Joyce-*

- “Each one of these services draws a crowd that you wouldn’t normally see in the Episcopal Church... Brings a community together... more and more coming...”
- “There could be some ‘blow back’ from all of this... none I know of now...”
- “Joey (singer and pianist) and all of our musicians are a gift to our worship and the future of St. Thomas.”
- “I guess you got to cross a few lines to grow and see what’s out there.”

*Jim-*

- “How we live at St. Thomas is needed right now, not just at St. Thomas, but everywhere.”
- “What we’re doing here (at St. Thomas) with these worship services stops being ‘just on paper,’ but becomes reality.”
- “Going to ruffle the feathers I’m afraid...”
- “We’re not going to be the same are we? It’s sorta like that Pentecostal piano player sings it...”
- “I love this place more now with what we’re doing. I’m excited about it all.”

Kristi Carr, Elizabethton, Tennessee, participant and church and community leader, in-person, October 26, 2019

- “If I we’re marketing, putting together a marketing plan—and I guess that we’re doing, right?—I’d do just what these three services—continuing them—are doing: growing and getting the word out about St. Thomas!”
- “Stick to it! 1) No stereotypes, period; 2) Appreciation for all; and, 3) abundance of diversity and possibility - *right here in Carter County, Tennessee!*”
- “I’ve never been to a church service this free and wholesome... white, Black, brown, well-off, poor, LGBTQ—*all in Appalachia!*”
- “We grew up here taught to ‘stick with your own kind’. This beautiful music and all these people are breaking that one open.”
- These three worship services have touched our hearts and shown us the way...”
- “I would like incense at least at Christmas, though!”

Lisa and Paula Moffitt, Elizabethton, Tennessee, church leaders, in-person, October 26, 2019

*Lisa-*

- “St. Thomas is at the center of town, and with this music can be at the center of our spirit.”
- “Music is teaching us (at St. Thomas), about one another, appearing and loving one another, no matter what...”
- “I love the musicians singing softly in prayer as we arrive each service...”
- “Can we keep singing all of this music?”

*Paula-*

- “At each event we learned a little more about cultures... what different music means... how we can love and understand one another more.”
- “The old people here, a lot of our families couldn’t read or write so music became our communication, our testament... not unlike the slaves, but they (and we) got our study told—in music.”
- “I love all the traditions in these worship services, and that St. Thomas and the Episcopal Church appreciates each one... a great gift to the people.”
- “I felt the Spirit more that day than ever (Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. worship service, Sunday, January 20, 2019). We saw no color or division, just one people.”

Joey Hildebran, pianist, singer, ordained Free Holiness minister, and Patrick Potts, husband, Pentecostal bishop, participants, in-person, two visits, May 29, 2019 and June 2019

*Joey Hildebran-*

- Joey - “The rugged life of the mountains made people humble, rugged, self-dependent, ‘separated’ yet dependent on God and kin... the pioneers had to have faith to get through life... their religion had to be ‘free’... How do you ‘put’ a religion on ‘hollow people’? You can’t.”
- Joey - “Aunt Janet bought me a tambourine at four (and for that time) I never let loose of music... they called me a “child prodigy” on the piano and singing...”
- “Some of the songs that meant a lot to me with St. Thomas... “Beautiful Star of Bethlehem” that first Christmas and since then... always warming-up with “Sweet, Sweet Spirit” with all of the other musicians... It was like we could not quit singing though we were just getting to know each other... what a holy place... beautiful St. Thomas... the Spirit began to move...”
- “There are some things you just can’t express with words...”
- “The Episcopal Church liturgy helps me to be sure that you don’t want to mess up... I appreciate the solemnity of St. Thomas... a solemn spirit... Our God is solemn... The Holy Spirit is jubilant... Jesus is forgiving and saves us... There’s a wholeness to our faith.”
- “Worshipping together with you at St. Thomas makes that wholeness real and beautiful.”
- “St. Thomas opened up... the Lord was welcomed.”

*Patrick Potts-*

- “St. Thomas is building bridges few if any churches care (ecumenically, musically, LGBTQ... ) to see welcomed so much... That’s why God is blessing and using you...”
- “You’re pioneering something that hasn’t been seen here...”
- “You’ve got a lively church! We love being a part and our folk appreciate being here with you all for feast days and all of the Appalachian celebrations.

## Appendix 5

### **Selected Excerpts from Transcripts of In-Depth Interviews and Conversations with Religious Leaders, Scholars, Documentarians, and Musicians of Appalachia**

The Right Reverend Brian Lee Cole, Bishop of the Episcopal Diocese of East Tennessee, Knoxville, Tennessee, January 13, 2020. Bishop Cole has spent nearly all of his educational and professional career in Appalachia including seven years with Appalachian Ministries Education Resource Center (AMERC) in Berea, Kentucky teaching seminarians, listening to Appalachian leaders, and learning how to read and appreciate the culture of the region.

Loyal Jones, Phillip Rhodes. and Betty Smith, Black Mountain, North Carolina, all three, all day, January 13, 2020. Loyal Jones, highly regarded as the “Dean of Appalachian Studies,” writer, scholar, longtime faculty, retired, Berea College, Kentucky. Honored as founder of what was later named the “Loyal Jones Appalachian Center” at Berea; also, Phillip Rhodes, American composer, “Bluegrass Concerto” with the Louisville Symphony; Betty Smith, celebrated ballad singer and dulcimer player, North Carolina’s “Appalachian Music Laureate.”

Ted Olson, Ph.D., professor, author, lecturer, *The Bristol Sessions: Historic Recordings from Bristol, Tennessee featuring the First Recordings of the Carter Family and Jimmie Rodgers and Twenty-One Additional Artists*, 2011 and *The Bristol Sessions, Writings about the Big Bang of Country Music*, 2005, and Grammy Award winning writer and musician, Appalachian Studies, East Tennessee State University, Johnson City, Tennessee, January 6, 2020.

#### ***Interview Questions, Discussions, and Conversations***

1. *Would you say something about yourself particularly as it applies to music, faith, and Appalachia?*
2. *What do you see as the critical developments in Appalachia over more recent years?*
3. *What is the power of Appalachian music to save souls?*
4. *Does a Christian Tradition such as the Episcopal Church and Anglican Tradition have any role in the Faith of Appalachia?*

5. *What might Appalachia teach America these days?*
6. *Please comment about Loyal Jones' statement that 1) meaning and 2) humility are important to faith in Appalachia.*
7. *In Eastern Orthodoxy, icons are theology, "knowledge and images of God." Is music theology and mirror of God in Appalachia?*
8. *What is your hope for Appalachia today? Considering Ronald D. Eller's closing words in his work, *Uneven Ground: Appalachia Since 1945* (2008) about "a deep transformation in values and behavior," how are we doing?*
9. *Please share with me two or three persons of faith in Appalachia who mean a lot to you and your faith.*
10. *What are two or three of your favorite hymns, especially Appalachian?*
11. *Do you have a favorite musical instrument? And musician or two?*
12. *We hear in 2 Corinthians 5:18, "All this is from God, who reconciled us to himself through Christ, and has given us the ministry of reconciliation." We are, as Bishop Brian Cole of East Tennessee preaches, "broken and mending." Is Appalachia mending?*
13. *How might we better teach our children about Appalachia?*
14. *What do you pray for Appalachia?*
15. *Anything else on your hearts and minds today?*

*Thank you, and God bless you.*

### ***Persoal Interviews***

Excerpts from Bishop Cole, by-phone, January 13, 2020

- "The mountains make people religious... formative of our faith... agrarianism... humility... puritan... "simple... deep hospitality and respect..."
- "Music is our faith... joy and sorrow are real... preservation of the old days and ways, the family lines, likes and dislikes, values and honesty all in the music..." "This music and what you are doing in Elizabethton has many positives for the Episcopal Church... we can no longer sit still and alone... the doors must open... we must re-introduce

- ourselves to the community in the 21st century... (if we want to still exist)... reconciliation can lead us.”
- “Appalachia is mending... I am an optimist... reconciliation comes in many forms... with one another... our communities... institutions... with all society and creation...”
  - “This region shapes every one of us,”
  - Theologies of creation, self-respect, values of community and one another are all important. You see much of these throughout the music of Appalachia.”

Excerpts from Loyal Jones with Betty Smith, and Phillip Rhodes, all in-person, January 13, 2019

*Loyal Jones-morning interview-*

- “We’re all pretty much Welsh Baptists, you see (Western North Carolina). Project was *to escape* the Anglican Church...”
- (Showing me his childhood hymnal)... “We did a lot of the “‘round’ or ‘shape-note’ singing back in the day... Calvinists did, too...”
- “Today, I’m not really one thing... I appreciate love wherever I can find it... Like the Episcopal church, but a little fancy... William Alexander Percy, one of your Sewanee boys, ‘high class’ and all...”
- “Of course, civil rights has shaped us a lot, thank God... ‘Daddy King’ was up with us in Berea (College) a lot... We cannot allow ourselves to regard ourselves above others... we must not take a backseat in respect of the poor...”
- “I don’t see Appalachia without music... church... town the street... here at home... it’s our faith and sustenance... our poetry and gospel... though I never sang much, my heart was always guided by it... “Jesus Loves Me,” “Amazing Grace,” some of old ballads and songs...”
- “You know those first settlers must’ve sung a lot of the old ‘exodus’ songs of ‘redemption and relief’ coming over these mountains...”

*Betty Smith<sup>84</sup>-joining the conversations before lunch-*

- “Singing and recording the old ballads, some from old lessons (Old Testament), the gospel, and apocrypha, many of our problems in Appalachia are what they were ages back... hurting and exploiting people, the land, our hope and future.”
- “Our leaders lie a lot, and lie about the lying... Appalachia has long known that, but we have not always had the power to change it. Our music is our voice.”
- “No curing Trump,” Loyal added.

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<sup>84</sup> Betty is a popular and widely regarded artist having recorded for the Smithsonian Folkways Archives, arts programs throughout North Carolina, and releasing at five recordings of old ballads and folk songs of her own. I was honored with copies of each, including the Smithsonian and ballad recordings which we have begun to study and use for Appalachian liturgies at St. Thomas Episcopal Church “over the mountain,” in Elizabethton, Tennessee. We hope to have Betty with us at St. Thomas.

*Phillip Rhodes-joining us for lunch-*

- Phillip Rhodes (celebrated composer from Louisville, Kentucky), Betty Smith (“88 and still singing”), and Loyal Jones (all friends and associates for many years) began lunch and introductions by naming some of their favorite hymns from their music (Betty and Phillip) and academic (Loyal) careers.
- *Phillip* - “Precious Memories,” “Wayfaring Stranger”
- *Betty* - “How Can I Keep from Singing,” “Ring Those Golden Bells,” “Beyond the River,” “Oh They Tell Me of an Uncloudy Day,” “Sweet Hour of Prayer,” all my ballads, especially the ‘cherry tree’ ballad - unnamed - but from the Apocrypha
- *Loyal* - “Farther Along” was my mother’s favorite, but “many of those hymns in my boy’s hymnal...” and, he spoke up later, “Angel Band,” I love that one.”
- Phillip’s “Bluegrass Concerto” continues to be celebrated by the McClain family, a popular Bluegrass band, and the Louisville Symphony who perform the work regularly.

Excerpts from Ted Olson, in-person, January 6, 2019

- “A lot of country music can be ‘smug’ in its sentimentality... at its best, though, consider “Keep on the Sunny Side” (Carter family, 1920s) ...simple, easy to unpack, easily sung, sweet, powerful, and straightforward, evocative, and memorable... what’s not to like?”
- “Country music is a ‘constructed’ art form... it is sincere and authentic... classic country music shares feeling and experience, ‘somebody’s had a hard day, a problem - common idiom...”
- “The ballads evolved out of medieval story telling... narrative... fantastical... less about imparting, proselytizing... more entertainment, mythical, and smartly told.”
- “*There is* a great subset of English ballads regarding the Christian story (though shunned by the Church traditionally).
- “Bluegrass has become its own genre known today as traditional into “LatinGras,” “RockyGras,” justice creating music and message across the world.”
- “It can be said that music becomes the vehicle for understanding the mysteries that surround us in Appalachia.”
- “Music articulates truthfulness, sometimes indirectly, but a real sense of truth and reality as we know it in Appalachia.”
- “Music is critical for a broader, more informed view of Appalachia as a part of the United States of America.



## Appendix 6

Media: News Stories, Local and Regional

### **St. Thomas Episcopal Church**

*1861 & 1942*

**815 Second Street  
Elizabethton, Tennessee 47654**

**(423) 707-0042**

**[stthomaselizabethton@gmail.com](mailto:stthomaselizabethton@gmail.com)**

**[stthomaselizabethton.org](http://stthomaselizabethton.org)**

**NEWS RELEASE: November 26, 2018**



### **Appalachian Evensong with Lessons & Carols to Light Up “Old Town” at St. Thomas Church, Sunday, December 2, 2018**

“Prepare Ye the Way” from Isaiah 40 in the Holy Bible is the title of this year’s “Appalachian Evensong” with Lessons and Carols at historic St. Thomas Church in the City’s Old Town. “Hebrew and New Testament readings foretelling the coming of birth of Jesus will be joined in splendid voice, guitar, mandolin, hammered dulcimer and maybe even a Carter County fiddle or two,” exclaims St. Thomas’ priest and pastor, Timothy Holder.

“We have to prepare the way by readying our hearts and souls in prayer, Bible-reading and loving one another,” according to Father Holder, “only then can we begin to celebrate the full meaning of Christmas.” Music from Appalachian Tradition will be celebrated throughout the evening which begins at 6:00 p.m.

An offering will be received for the benefit of “ARM” - Assistance and Relief Ministries - to feed the hungry, provide clothing and other basic necessities for the poor and needy. All are welcome.

# END #



*Merry Christmas! \& Feliz Navidaa! from beloved St. St. Thomas Church*

## **St. Thomas Episcopal Church**

**1861 & 1942**

**815 Second Street + Elizabethton, TN. 47654 + (423) 707-0042**

**[stthomaselizabethton.org](http://stthomaselizabethton.org) + (423) 707-0042**

**NEWS RELEASE: December 17, 2018**

### **MERRY CHRISTMAS & FELIZ NAVIDAD FROM ST. THOMAS, ELIZABETHTON**

*Children's Bilingual Christmas Pageant Sunday, December 23 at 11:00 a.m.*

*Midnight Mass with the Doe River Ensemble, December 24 at 11:00 p.m.*

The Christmas Story will be celebrated in Spanish and English at St. Thomas Episcopal Church in Elizabethton. “We are excited that our children and young people will be leading the Congregation in the telling of Jesus’ birth at Christmas, in Spanish *and* English, from the Holy Bible,” according to Timothy Holder, Priest and Pastor. “This is a first for us, and probably for Carter County,” stated Holder.

The Children ’s Bilingual Christmas Pageant will begin at 11:00 a.m. on Sunday, December 23. Services will be followed by a visit from Santa Claus with gifts for all children and a Christmas Feast in St. Thomas’ Sicos Parish Hall.

The Parish’s Annual Midnight Mass will be celebrated Christmas Eve, December 24, at 11:00 p.m. “A wonderful host of local singers, artists, and instrumentalists from

Episcopal /Anglican and Appalachian Traditions will bless with music and Christ's birth in Bethlehem will be proclaimed as we sing, out to the streets, "Go Tell It on the Mountain" led by Loretta and Minister Teresa Bowers Parker of Elizabethton," announced Father Holder.

Father Holder is pictured here with "Baby Yamila," St. Thomas' newest member, eight months old and ready for Christmas Morning. ###

## **St. Thomas Episcopal Church 1861 & 1942**

815 Second Street + Elizabethton, Tennessee 37643

[stthomaselizabethton.org](http://stthomaselizabethton.org) + (423) 707-0042



*Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr., 1929-1968 & Sisters Loretta Bowers & Minister Teresa Bowers Park*

### **NEWS RELEASE: January 15, 2019**

#### **BELOVED BOWERS' SISTERS TO LEAD COMMUNITY KING CELEBRATIONS**

**St. Thomas Episcopal Church, Elizabethton, Sunday, January 20, 11:00 a.m.**

St. Thomas Episcopal Church in Elizabethton's Historic District welcomes everyone to a community-wide Celebration of Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr., Sunday, January 20 beginning at 11:00 a.m. "It is a fitting and beautiful statement about our City and our Faith that in a church built by slave peoples making bricks on-site and then laying them to raise this House of God in 1861, that we here today celebrate Dr. Martin's Luther King's message of the Love of Jesus for All of us," stated Ms. Kathy Smith, Senior Warden for the Parish.

Two well-known and beloved daughters of Elizabethton will lead song and preaching for Dr. King's Celebration, Loretta Bowers and Minister Teresa Bowers Parker.

Loretta blesses untold numbers of faithful with her singing and testimony throughout the area and around the country. Minister Teresa lives in Brooklyn and sings and performs on Broadway.

“From Elizabethton, Tennessee come these two gifted daughters who sing, preach, and live the power of the God of Love and Justice for All,” commented the Reverend Timothy Holder, Priest and Pastor of St. Thomas. “This is the Message of Dr. King, that God is great in each and everyone of His children, here in Elizabethton, Carter County and all around the whole-wide world!”

The Bowers’ sisters will lead with such traditional spiritual singing as known throughout America’s struggle for freedom and justice for all as, “We Shall Overcome,” “Glory, Glory, Hallelujah,” and, “I Don’t Feel No Ways Tired,” and Dr. King’s favorite, “If I Can Help Somebody.” Jason Patrick serves as Parish Musician for St. Thomas.

#END#

**Appendix 7**

***Celebrating the Music of Appalachia  
in the Episcopal Church and Anglican Tradition***

**on Social Media**

<http://www.stthomaselizabethton.org/>

“Celebrating the Music of Appalachia in Episcopal/Anglican Tradition” on Facebook

## Appendix 8

**2020 Appalachian Celebrations, St. Thomas Episcopal Church, Elizabethton\***  
*Appalachian Evensong with Lessons & Carols*  
*December 1, 2019 + St. Thomas Episcopal Church, Elizabethton, Tennessee*



*Welcome to*

### **St. Thomas 2020 Appalachian Music Celebrations**

Sunday, January 20 at 11:00 a.m. + *Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. Community*  
& *Black History Celebrations beginning*

Good Friday, April 10 at 6:00 p.m. + *Way of the Cross* in Appalachian Tradition

*Annual Covered Bridge Festival, June 12-13*

Thursday, June 11 at 6:00 p.m. + *Appalachian Summer Evensong,*  
The Quilt Guild of St. Thomas & Summer Faire with Animal Farm all weekend

Sunday, October 4 at 11:00 a.m. + St. Francis Blessing of the Animals with *Jesus,*  
*Dogs & Bluegrass* on the West Lawn + *St. Francis would have loved Appalachia!*

Saturday,, November 25 + *Greening & Quilting of the Church*

Sunday, 1 Advent, November 26 at 6:00 p.m. + *Appalachian Evensong with Lessons &*  
*Carols & The Quilt Guild of St. Thomas*

Thursday, December 24 at 11:00 p.m. + *Christmas Midnight Mass + Feliz Navidad*  
& *Go Tell It on the Mountain*

***Coming! Liturgical Bluegrass Jam monthly at St. Thomas!***

\*St. Thomas "Appalachian Celebrations Calendar" growing, continued in-part as of March 15, 2020 at pandemic.



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**Chapter 5**

**The Project: Three Worship Services**

*Appalachian Evensong with Lessons and Carols*

1 Advent, Sunday, December 2, 2018

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*Christmas Midnight Mass + Misa de Medianoche de Navidad*

Festival Holy Eucharist + La Santa Eucaristía  
December 24, 2018

*Celebrating Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. Weekend*

The Holy Eucharist + La Santa Eucharist  
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### Learnings

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## Chapter 7

### Conclusion: Mission, Evangelism, and Renewal

#### *“Hark! a thrilling voice is sounding”*

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## Hymnography and Videography

### *Introduction*

All hymns and music are categorized by worship service including title or informal name(s); author(s) or composer(s); name of melody and/or identification of tradition(s); date and copyright (as available); and, liturgical usage appearing in the service program as available in Appendix 1, “Liturgy and Worship Service for Three Worship Services.” Notes and information are included below as important to this work. A hymnography and videography are included for each service.

It is important to note that newer and sometimes totally unfamiliar music was purposefully joined with old and beloved standards of seasonal traditions while together supporting one another in harmony and appeal, purpose and message. This was a critical finding most especially at Christmas and at other important times in the church liturgical calendar. Finally, it was observed how warmly old-time, Bluegrass, and country gospel musical instruments-guitar, fiddle, mandolin, dulcimer, harmonica, and more-joined in unity and beauty with piano and organ, as common for most traditional liturgies of the Church. This was true for all three worship services.

The Hymnography as a product of the project thesis initiates a longer, much anticipated effort to identify, research, and rehearse eventually and effectively integrating music and instruments into the liturgical life and ministries of the parish. The first goal will be to categorize with the participation of the Doe River Ensemble and church members, hymns and songs into the six liturgical seasons of the year as an “Appalachian Liturgical Calendar:” Advent, Christmas, Epiphany, Lent into Holy Week, Easter, and the Season of and following Pentecost including a “Creation and Thanksgiving” time. Attention will also be given not only to song, but also to most effective and appropriate instruments as Appalachian Ministries at St. Thomas move into future years.

### **Appalachian Evensong with Lessons and Carols**

The First Sunday of Advent

December 2, 2018

### *Hymnography*

*Amazing grace! how sweet the sound.* Words: John Newton (1725-1807), alt.; st. 5, from *A Collection of Sacred Ballads*, 1790; compiled by Richard Broaddus and Andrew Broaddus. Music: *New Britain*, from *Virginia Harmony*, 1831; adapt. att. Edwin Othello Excell (1851-1921); harm. Austin Cole Lovelace, (b. 1919).

*Bring a Torch, Jeanette Isabella.* Music: Charpentier, 17th century. Arr. Loreena McKennitt, 2008. Children dressed as shepherd and milkmaids sing this carol in France visiting the holy Creche, the babe lying in a manger. The melody was originally intended for French nobility.

*Come, thou long expected Jesus.* Words: Charles Wesley (1707-1788). Music: *Stuttgart*, melody from *Psalmodia Sacra, oder Andachtige und Gesange*, 1715; adapt. and harm. William Henry Havergal (1793-1870), alt.

*How Great Thou Art.* Words: Stuart K. Hine (b. 1899). Music: Swedish Folk Melody; arr. Stuart K. Hine. Words and arr. Copyright © 1953. Renewed 1981 MANNA MUSIC, INC. *Lift Every Voice and Sing II, An African American Hymnal* (New York: Church Publishing, 1993), 60.

*I'm in a New World.* Author: Vespew Benton Ellis, 1946. Copyright: 1946, Tennessee Music and Printing Company, "Christian Joy." Southern Gospel, with popular arrangement by Ralph Stanley. Mountain, bluegrass traditional.

*Let Us Magnify the Lord* (Psalm 34:3). Psalm-singing, often impromptu, as in the project thesis worship service, Appalachian Evensong, December 2, 2018. Mountain Traditional, Free Holiness/Pentecostal.

*Love lifted me.* Words: James Rower (1865-1933). Music: Howard E. Smith (1863-1918). *Lift Every Voice and Sing II, An African American Hymnal* (New York: Church Publishing, 1993), 137. Written in 1912, this hymn appears in mostly similar fashion hymnals and song books of many traditions throughout Appalachia and the country.

*Mary, Did You Know?* Words, 1984: Mark Lowry (b. 1958). Music, 1991: Buddy Greene (b. 1953). Widely popular with celebrated recordings in 2020 by Dolly Parton.

*O come, O come, Emmanuel.* Words: Latin, ca. 9th cent.; ver. *Hymnal 1940*, alt. Music: *Veni, Veni, Emmanuel*, plainsong, Mode 1, *Processionale*, 15th cent.; adapt. Thomas Helmore (1811-18900). Appearing in English throughout the mid-18th century, this bidding of Advent into Christmas is an important part of Protestant and Roman Catholic worship. Glover, Raymond F., General Editor, *The Hymnal 1982 Companion, Volume Three A: Hymns 1-384* (New York: The Church Hymnal Corporation, 1994), 56: 102-107.

*Surely the Presence of the Lord in in This Place.* Words and Music: Lanny Wolfe (b. 1942). Based on Matthew 18:20, "Where two or three are gathered together in my

name I am in their midst.” Contemporary gospel, this popular song for worship is used throughout much of newer denominational and non-denominational churches and communities. The Doe River Ensemble at St. Thomas Episcopal Church, Elizabethton, Tennessee, used the song for ‘warm-up’ and prayer before liturgies, in effect, beginning the liturgy as people arrived and began singing and praying with the musicians.

*The Peace Carol.* Words and Music: Bob Beers (1921-1972). © 1966: Renewed 1994 Cherry Lane Music Publishing Company, Inc. (ASCAP) and DreamWorks Songs Administered by Cherry Lane Music Publishing Company, Inc. A favorite of children and adults, *The Peace Carol* was popularly sung by John Denver and the Muppets in the 1979 album, *A Christmas Together*.

*What child is this, who, laid to rest.* Words: William Chatterton Dix (1837-1898). Music: *Greensleeves*, English melody; harm. *Christian Carols New and Old*, 1871, alt. Coming into official usage only in the *The Hymnal 1940*, this old English ballad and “archetypal folk song” has been known for centuries. *The Hymnal 1982 Companion, Volume Three A: Hymns 1-384* (New York: The Church Hymnal Corporation, 1994), 115: 239-240.

### ***Videography and Photography***

Jennings, Justin. *How Great Thou Art, Appalachian Evensong, St. Thomas Episcopal Church, Elizabethton, December 2, 2018.* “Celebrating the Music of Appalachia in Episcopal/Anglican Tradition” on Facebook.

<http://stthomaselizabethton.org>

### **Christmas Midnight Mass + Misa de Medianoche de Navidad**

Festival Holy Eucharist + La Santa Eucaristía

December 24-25, 2018

### ***Hymnography***

*Amen! Amen! Amen! Amen!* Jester Harrison, 1963. African American Tradition. Contemporary Christian music, popularized by Sidney Poitier in “Lilies of the Field” (1963).

“*A Spiritual Tradition of Rejoice.*” (Given title for what was untitled, extemporaneous song and instrumentation). Free Holiness, Pentecostal. as offered by Joey

Hildebran at Christmas Midnight Mass, December 24-25, 2018, St. Thomas Episcopal Church, Elizabethton, Tennessee.

*Angels we have heard on high.* Words: French carol; tr. James Chadwick (1813-1882), alt. Music *Gloria*, French carol; arr. Edward Shippers Barnes (1887-1958). Episcopalians have been singing this ‘officially’ since the *The Hymnal 1940*. *The Hymnal 1982 Companion, Volume Three A: Hymns 1-384* (New York: The Church Hymnal Corporation, 1994), 96:184-186.

*Go tell it on the mountain.* African America Tradition, at St. Thomas Episcopal Church, Elizabethton, Tennessee annual celebrations, vocals with call and response in recession through doors to street facing mountains proclaiming in song and rhythmic clapping the birth of Jesus. Words: Luke 2:8-20. adapt. John W. Work, Jr. (1871-1925). Music: Negro Spiritual, adapt. and arr. William Farley Smith, (b. 1941). *Lift Every Voice and Sing II, An African American Hymnal* (New York: Church Publishing, 1993), 21.

*It came upon a midnight clear.* Words: Edmond H. Sears (1810-1876), alt. Music: *Carol*, Richard Storrs Willis (1819-1900). “This is one of the first American carol-hymns that, over one-hundred and forty years later, is a regular part of the seasonal repertoire of congregations of all denominations.” *The Hymnal 1982 Companion, Volume \Three A: Hymns 1-384* (New York: The Church Hymnal Corporation, 1994), 89:174-175.

*Joy the the world! the Lord is come.* Words: Isaac Watts, 1674-1745, alt. Music: *Antioch*. George Frederic Handel (1685-1759), adapt. and arr. Lowell Mason, 1792-1872). Words from the great hymnodist of the 17th and eighteenth centuries, Isaac Watts, to the early nineteenth century when hymnal editors would include in their hymnals and song-books melodies and tunes from “such masters as Beethoven, Handel, and Haydn,” among them, Lowell Mason, composer, editor, and educator contributing the music of this great Christmas proclamation paraphrasing Psalm 98. *The Hymnal 1982 Companion, Volume \Three A: Hymns 1-384* (New York: The Church Hymnal Corporation, 1994), 100:192-197.

*La Guadalupana, Song of Mary*, Mexican, Traditional, Adapted for children of St. Thomas Episcopal Church, Elizabethton, Tennessee, “Procesión de Jesu, Bebé” Christmas Midnight Mass, December 24-25, 2018.

*O come all ye faithful.* Words: John Francis Wade (1711-1786), tr. Frederick Oakeley (1802-1880), and others. *Adeste fidelis*, present form of melody, arr. John Francis Wade. “The Latin hymn is found in several manuscripts copied by John Francis Wade at Douay, France, a center for exiled English Catholics, the earliest

copy dates from about 1743.” *The Hymnal 1982 Companion, Volume Three A: Hymns 1-384* (New York: The Church Hymnal Corporation, 1994), 83:159-162.

*O little town of Bethlehem.* Note: omitted from program, December 24-25, 2018.

*Oh, Beautiful Star of Bethlehem.* Appalachian Traditional. Words and Music: R. Fisher Boyce (1887-1968), a Middle Tennessee farmer and Baptist layman writing in a milk barn late one night. First sung in “shape-note” as popular in Appalachia and much of the Southeast, the song was first published by James D. Vaughn Publishing Company in the company’s songbook, “Beautiful Praise” in 1940. It is a favorite among numerous country music singers and artists. “Beautiful Star of Bethlehem,” “Hillbilly at Harvard Christmas Extravaganza,” Sheila Selby, [wordpress.com](http://wordpress.com), December 24, 2013.

*Santo, santo, santo.* Words: Variations on a traditional liturgical text. Music: Composer of melody unknown, copyrighted 1990 Iona Community, admin. by GIA Publications, Inc. *Wonder, Love, and Praise: A Supplement to the Hymnal 1982* (New York: Church Publishing, Incorporated, 1997), 785.

*Silent night, holy night.* Words: Joseph Mohr (1792-1848); tr. John Freeman Young (1820-1885). Music: *Stille Nacht*, melody Franz Xaver Gruber (1787-1863); harm. Carl H. Reinecke (1824-1910). As lights dim in the Church, past midnight, St. Thomas Episcopal Church, Elizabethton, sings by candlelight with all instruments gradually fading to silence and voices lead us to beautiful creche below Altar as mandolin, dulcimer, and guitar are barely audible, yet greatly enriching moments of home, place, and love at the birth of Jesus. Lights up, doors open, out to the mountains surrounding, *Go Tell It on the Mountain! The Hymnal 1982 Companion, Volume Three A: Hymns 1-384* (New York: The Church Hymnal Corporation, 1994), 111:230-233.

*The First Nowell, the angel did say.* Note: omitted from program, December 24-25, 2018.

*What child is this, who laid to rest? Greensleeves.* Words: William Chatterton Dix (1837-1898). Music: *Greensleeves*, English melody; harm. *Christian Carols New and Old*, 1871, alt. Coming into official usage only in the *The Hymnal 1940*, this old English ballad and “archetypal folk song” has been known for centuries. *The Hymnal 1982 Companion, Volume Three A: Hymns 1-384* (New York: The Church Hymnal Corporation, 1994), 115; 239-240.

*The Wexford Carol*, Irish Christmas Carol from County Wexford, 18th century. Irish and English lyrics (dating back to the 12th century. Transcribed by William Gratton Flood. “The Wexford Carol,” Ireland’s greatest Christmas song,” Andrew Moore, *Ireland Calling*, December 10, 2019.

### ***Videography and Photography***

“Celebrating the Music of Appalachia in Episcopal/Anglican Tradition” on Facebook

<http://stthomaselizabethton.org>

### **Celebrating Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. Weekend**

The Holy Eucharist + La Santa Eucharistía

Sunday, January 20, 2019

### ***Hymnography***

*Glory, Glory Hallelujah! Lift Every Voice and Sing Hymnal II*, 130. Words: Traditional. Music: Negro Spiritual, arr. Carol Haywood (b/1949), from the *Haywood Collection of Negro Spirituals*, Copyright © 1992. “Glory, Glory Hallelujah” was positively not sung in the South, though it was sung in the strong Unionist parts of the Appalachian South, including Elizabethton, Carter County, Tennessee where strong majorities supported President Lincoln. Many of these marched with and gave their lives for the Union, and not of few of those slave holding into the “East Tennessee Emancipation” on August 8, 1863. St. Thomas itself was built in 1861 as the Methodist ‘split-off’ named the “Southern Methodist” Church at the time. Bricks were made and the church raised up with a spire and tower all by slave peoples. St. Thomas, purchasing the historic property in 1942 beautifully situated in the City’s “Old Town,” has memorialized these slave peoples in prayer - all unknown - since 2016. “Glory, Glory Hallelujah!” is sung in their honor, including on January 20, 2019.

*I Don't Feel Noways Tired*. Artist: James Cleveland. Album: “Everything Will Be Alright.” Released: 1978. According to Rev. James Cleveland, Christian Gospel singer, an old black lady was the inspiration for “I Don't Feel Noways Tired.” “This woman was exhausted, bone-weary, her feet were swollen, she was short of breath. She'd been walking long and dusty road, filled with potholes and fallen branches,” Cleveland tells and sings the story, “She'd had a hard life, the kind of life where you get up every day knowing that people are going to hate you and demean you just because of who you are. How do you walk that road, day after day, year after year, decade after decade? For this

woman, the answer was God - her Protector, her Redeemer, her Sanctifier, her Liberator,” sings Cleveland. “The Story Behind, “I Don’t Feel Noways Tired,” BCNN1 (Black Christian News Network One), January 27, 2019. The song was sung a capella and powerfully at St. Thomas.

*If I can Help Somebody.* Composer: Alma Bazel Androzzo (1912-2001). Pub. Boosey & Hawkes, Ltd., London, 1945. Known as a favorite of Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr., “If I can Help Somebody” was popularized by King’s dear friend, beloved singer, Mahalia Jackson. Androzzo was from Harriman, in East Tennessee. “If I can help somebody, as I travel along, If I can help somebody with a word or a song, If I can help somebody, from doing wrong, No, my living shall not be in vain,” sung Jackson honoring Dr. King after his assassination in Memphis, Tennessee, April 4, 1978.

*Santo, santo, santo.* Words: Variations on a traditional liturgical text. Music: Composer of melody unknown, copyrighted 1990 Iona Community, admin. by GIA Publications, Inc. *Wonder, Love, and Praise: A Supplement to the Hymnal 1982* (New York: Church Publishing Incorporated, 1997), 785.

*Sweet, Sweet Spirit.* Words: Doris Akers (b. 1922)). Music: Doris Akers. Copyright © 1962, Renewed 1990 MANNA MUSIC, Inc. Sung softly in prayer by Doe River Ensemble before services with congregational members, as arriving, joining in and again, as here, during the worship service itself. *Lift Every Voice and Sing II, An African American Hymnal* (New York: Church Publishing, 1993), 120.

*We Shall Overcome.* Words: Traditional. Music: Negro Spiritual, arr. Carl Haywood (b.1949), from *The Haywood Collection of Negro Spirituals*, Copyright © 1992). *Lift Every Voice and Sing II, An African American Hymnal* (New York: Church Publishing, 1993), 227. Traditional and beloved at St. Thomas.

*We’re Marching to Zion,* Words: Isaac Watts (1674-1748). Music: Robert S. Lowry (1826-1899). Watts’ ten verses have become four in at least Episcopal usage. The old hymn appears today in *LEVASII* but not *The Hymnal 1982*. “We’re Marching to Zion” is sung with rhythmic clapping, tambourine and piano at St. Thomas. “We’re looking forward to drums next year,” participants state. *Lift Every Voice and Sing II, An African American Hymnal* (New York: Church Publishing, 1993), 12. We can wonder how the melodies and words first sounded to slave peoples caring for horses and carriages outside the church listening to the music from open windows.

### *Videography and Photography*

“Celebrating the Music of Appalachia in Episcopal/Anglican Tradition” on Facebook

<http://stthomaselizabethton.org>

Soto, Justin, News Team, WJHL-TV, Tri-Cities CBS/ABC, “Episcopal Church hosts community celebration of Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr.,” January 20, 2019.

<https://www.wjhl.com/news/local/elizabethton-church-hosts-community-celebration-of-mlk-jr/>



## A Vignette for Appalachian Hymnology

### The Reverend Timothy Holder

I was asked at a lecture about Appalachian hymnology, “Aren’t most of these songs about the same as we sing them anywhere else?” “A good many, yes, essentially,” I replied with a smile, “excepting for fiddles, banjos, guitars, mandolin, dulcimers and such, making all kinds of twists and turns musically. You certainly hear some ‘twang’ and all that mountain dialect passed down from the ages. Then some might go to shouting out and praising the Lord with a little dancing. One thing, though,” I continued, “be careful to seat the little old ladies dipping snuff *away* from the front pews... they’ll get to dipping, praising the Lord and get so excited shouting out a ‘Hallelujah’ or ‘Bless ‘em Jesus’ that you singers and pickers might get ‘hit with spit’. Other than that,” I closed, “It’s all pretty much the same, essentially, and it’s so beautiful.”

Psalm 95:1 *Adapted, “Old Bruton, Appalachianna”*

*“Come, let us sing to the Lord,  
Let us shout for joy to the rock of our salvation,  
Let us come before his presence with thanksgiving,  
And raise a loud shout to him with psalms.”*