

THE REV. WHITNEY F. ALTOPP

I am a choreographer of God's joy revealed in God's people, the body of Christ, the church. From the beginning through to the end, I consider how the body of Christ demonstrates the mission of God in all its movement.

DEMONSTRATED SKILLS

Developing Congregational Leadership

- Developed ministry to youth and families that is relevant to our evolving social environment
- Completed a comprehensive reorganization of the staff and property to achieve fiscal and operational efficiency and spiritual goals
- Co-creator of Global Philanthropy Leaders- a youth initiative which makes micro-loans through Kiva while teaching economic principles. Supported expansion to several ECCT congregations; now a program available through ChurchNext.
- Completed research for DMin in Contextual Leadership. Doctoral Project Title - *Holy Experiments: Discovering the Church in the New Missional Age with the GEN Z Generation in the Episcopal Church in Connecticut*
- Empowered creative use of technology in the sanctuary
- Increased financial literacy in church finances

Organizing healthy systems

- Successfully collaborated on a visioning process, resulting in the first Mission Statement of the church in over a decade and the first ever Vision Statement and articulation of Core Values
- Worked with lay people in developing inspiring worship that increased participation
- Addressed committee structures, so that new and engaging leadership could emerge
- Trained adults for youth ministry, increasing the number of committed adults involved in youth programming by 700% over four years
- Initiated and led the effort to bring Annual Convention 2021 *Resolution 5- Sharing In The Work of Creating a Safe Church* to the floor. Currently serving on the working group.
- Established Planned Giving program
- Participated in updating financial systems and endowment procedures

Preaching the Gospel to people of all ages

- Won 4th Place in Fuller Theological Seminary PLPIT Project's 2017 sermon challenge on Forgiveness
- Shape sermons for age of focused audience

- Created and hosted 3-evening revival with Christ Church, Redding; over 100 people in attendance each night. The Most Rev. Stephen Cottrell, now Archbishop of York, was our preacher, focusing on the Loving, Liberating, and Life-Giving Good News.
- Established the Happening youth retreat here in ECCT with a team from around our diocese- a first in the history of our diocese. “*Happening* is a Christian experience presented by teenagers, for teenagers with the help of clergy and lay adult leadership. The Happening program is meant to be one of the instruments within the Anglican Tradition of renewing the Christian church in the power of the Holy Spirit, so that the church may more readily respond to its call to spread the Kingdom of God throughout the world. Happening originated in Dallas, Texas in the mid-1970s.”

Working toward Social Justice

- Co-chair of ECCT’s engagement with the Poor People’s Campaign (PPC); supporting a more robust presence of PPC in our state.
- Co-chair of Mutual Aid Working Group- an outgrowth of the Resource Pooling “World Café” conversation at Annual Convention, 2020.
- Member of The Reparations Task Force
- Member of Province 1 Economic Justice Network
- Key Leader in bringing *Resolution 7- Addressing Racism within Title IV Complaints & Processes* to the floor, Annual Convention, 2021.

Other Church Work

- Led a group of women from both urban and suburban churches in the Diocese of PA in creating and executing a Women’s Conference featuring Mrs. Jane Williams, wife of the then Archbishop of Canterbury, and other women dignitaries of the church. The conference brought more than 240 women over the course of three days, representing 33 different churches. Also inspiring two other dioceses to develop similar programs.
- Published Master’s Thesis *The Adolescent Beloved Disciple: A Young Person’s Experience of Jesus in the Fourth Gospel*, September 2010 (Abstract at the end of this document) published with VDM Verdag Dr. Muller
- Chaired the Women’s Conference Steering Committee for the Diocese of PA’s women’s conference *Changing the World for Women and Girls: A faithful response to the Millennium Development Goals*, Feb 17-19, 2011
- Developed a model for future diocesan women’s conferences
- Led a class for ECCT Spring Training 2022- *Participatory Action Research: A Model for Making a “Try On” More Effective*.
- Chair of Ridgefield Clergy Association; formerly active member of Montclair Clergy Association

WORK HISTORY

- St. Stephen's Church**, Ridgefield, CT 2012-present
Rector (438 communicants)
Ridgefield combines progressive values with Norman Rockwell idealism.
www.ststephensridgefield.org.
- St. Thomas' Church, Whitemarsh**, Ft. Washington, PA 2007-2012
Vicar (aka Senior Associate plus) (1200 communicants)
Ft. Washington is a sprawling suburb in historic farmlands outside of Philadelphia.
<https://www.stthomaswhitemarsh.org/>
- St. James' Episcopal Church**, Upper Montclair, NJ 2002-2007
Assistant Rector (600 communicants)
Montclair prides itself in its long-standing diversity, only a 45-minute train ride from mid-town Manhattan. <http://www.stjamesepiscopal.org/>
- St. Michael's Episcopal Church**, New York, NY 2000-2002
Intern (600 communicants)
Located on 99th and Amsterdam, the boundary of the Upper West Side and the academic communities to its north. <https://www.saintmichaelschurch.org/>
- Church of the Redeemer**, Pittsburgh, PA 1997-1998
Volunteer Youth Leader (300 communicants)
Squirrel Hill is a predominantly Jewish neighborhood with an established business district. <https://redeempittsburgh.org/>
- St. James' Episcopal Church**, Skaneateles, NY 1994-1997
Youth Director (400 communicants)
A destination small town on the northern tip of Skaneateles Lake, 30 minutes outside of Syracuse. <https://www.stjameskan.org/>
- First Free Methodist Church**, Greenville, IL 1992-1994
Jr. High Youth Director (750 members)
A small town in southern Illinois, an hour's drive east of St. Louis, MO on I-70.
<http://greenvillefmc.org/>

Comments from church leaders:

“You constantly show me that the richness of the Gospels is so much more than I realize at face value.” – Sr. Warden

“I'm amazed at how many ideas you have.” – Task Force member

“Your commitment and energy propel the church forward in so many ways.” – Vestry member

“Working with you we get things done.” -Vestry member

“I adore how you ‘read’ a situation. You sort out the clutter and focus right on the main issues at hand and have such constructive and sensible suggestions/solutions.”- Commission member

“I was amazed and pleased to hear that you were working for Whitney Altopp, one of the most competent students in all areas of life I ever had at General.”

-The Right Rev. Tom Breidenthal, Bishop of Southern Ohio, in a note to a third party
(used with permission)

“The real success of the conference was the way that the committee worked together and the creative ground covered. This was due to the leadership of Whitney.”

-Phoebe Griswold, in a note to a third party *(used with permission)*

EDUCATION

BA, Religion/Psychology Youth Ministry	Greenville College	1994, cum laude
Certified Coordinator, Journey to Adulthood Program	Leader Resources	2000
Episcopal “Preaching Excellence Program”	Virginia Theological Seminary	2001
MDiv	The General Theological Seminary	2002, cum laude
Interim Ministry Training	Interim Ministry Network	2005
Breakthrough Leadership	Stephen Ministry St. Louis	2007
Matriculated Student, DMin	Palmer Seminary	anticipated May 2023

The Adolescent Beloved Disciple: A Young Person’s Experience of Jesus in the Fourth Gospel

For years scholars have debated the identity of the disciple named “Beloved” in the Fourth Gospel. Many have considered various men and women, but no one has considered the significance his age would play on his experience of Jesus. The stories of the Fourth Gospel and the way in which they are told highlight the emotional, mental, and sociological journey of a young person on his

way to full adulthood. Using the research of scientists and historians, a case is made advocating the youthfulness of the Beloved Disciple, a young man between the ages of 13-16. Adolescents place great emphasis on relationships as they seek to know themselves in their social setting. As the Beloved Disciple attempts to understand his identity as a Jew, he looks to others for guidance. Jesus becomes a devoted teacher to the adolescent, creating his identity as the “beloved.” Considering the Beloved Disciple as an adolescent gives new insight to Jewish/Christian relations and how young people are perceived in the modern Christian church. This theory will be beneficial to anyone studying the Gospel of John, dedicated to Jewish/Christian relations, or with a passion for ministry to teenagers.