

THE  
*Episcopal*  
CHURCH

September 1, 2021

*For Episcopal Schools Celebration 2021-2022*

My dear friends in Christ,

God's peace and blessings to you as you join with NAES and the thousands of students, faculty, and administrators around the country to celebrate this year's Episcopal Schools Celebration. As a former school chaplain, I remember well the energy and excitement building around campus at this time of year. Just as the new year — and this year in particular — grants us a fresh start and a renewed energy, Episcopal Schools Celebration provides us with an opportunity to pause and reflect on our priorities.

And what a theme we have this year! Our passage from the Book of Isaiah, Chapter 58, proclaims something for which many of us have been yearning for nearly two years now: “Then your light shall break forth like the dawn, and your healing shall spring up speedily.” Since March of 2020, many of us have indeed been praying for healing — for our individual bodies, but also for our communities, as collective members of the body of Christ.

The COVID-19 pandemic has brought about countless challenges, and the world has seen much suffering. Families have lost loved ones; people have lost their jobs, their homes, and their businesses; and the homeless, the lonely, those suffering from addiction, have fallen even further through the cracks.

The past eighteen months have also done much to expose the systemic inequities besetting our country. The pandemic has had a far more severe impact along racial and economic lines. The murder of George Floyd shone a fresh light on the grave injustices people of color experience at the hands of law enforcement. And a chronic lack of secure access to healthcare and housing among many of our communities has become starkly apparent.

In the passage in Isaiah immediately preceding our theme, the prophet provides some context that will prove useful to understanding not only the Biblical text itself but also, perhaps, the lessons we can learn from our time of pandemic. In drawing a distinction between true and false worship, Isaiah describes an “acceptable fast” as the following:

The Most Reverend Michael Curry  
PRESIDING BISHOP AND PRIMATE



THE  
*Episcopal*  
CHURCH

*Is not this the fast that I choose: to loose the bonds of injustice, to undo the thongs of the yoke, to let the oppressed go free, and to break every yoke? Is it not to share your bread with the hungry, and bring the homeless poor into your house; when you see the naked, to cover them, and not to hide yourself from your own kin? Then your light shall break forth like the dawn, and your healing shall spring up speedily.*

In this context, a refocusing on justice is not just incidental to our healing—it is an essential precursor to it. My prayer for you this Episcopal Schools Celebration is to truly take this passage to heart. Though we can allow the miracles of science and vaccinations to take care of our physical bodies, let us not forget the spiritual lessons we have learned together during this time of pandemic. In that, my friends, is hope and our salvation for us all.

Let us continue walking together, as a family in Christ, woven together in our glorious diversity, and let our healing spring up speedily!

May God bless you and keep you always. I remain

Your brother in Christ,



The Most Rev. Michael B. Curry  
Presiding Bishop and Primate  
The Episcopal Church

The Most Reverend Michael Curry  
PRESIDING BISHOP AND PRIMATE

