



The Vergers Voice

The news blog of the Vergers Guild

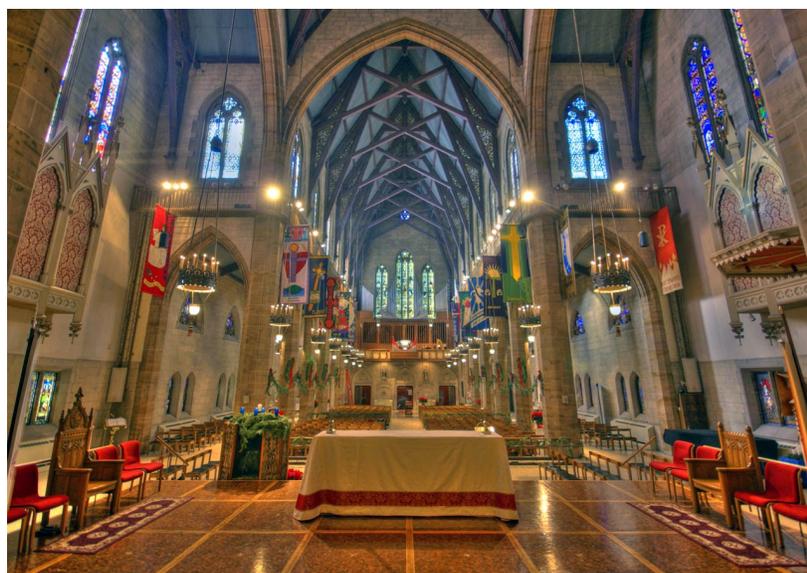
Welcome to the [Vergers Voice](#), the official news blog of the [Vergers Guild of the Episcopal Church](#). Also known as the VGEC, we are located on the web at vergers.org and facebook.com/vergerguild the #1 online resources for vergers world-wide.

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Friday, April 10, 2015

Sessions at the 2015 VGEC Annual Conference are going to Rock!



Christ Church Cathedral, St. Louis, MO, site of the 27th annual VGEC Conference - Tim Hamilton photo

By Ken Holloway, News Manager, VGEC, with Elle Dowd, Youth Missioner, Diocese of Missouri, and the Very Reverend Mike Kinman, Dean, Christ Church Cathedral, St. Louis

In 174 days, more than one hundred vergers from across North America and around the world will meet in St. Louis for education, fellowship, worship for the verger! The primary thing that I truly and eagerly anticipate about our conferences are the [conference sessions](#). This blog post is the first of a short series exploring details of the session topics. Each annual conference offers diverse sessions based on the hosting parish's ministries and interests. Here are 2 samples of what await you in St. Louis in October.

For 27 years, a LOT of work has gone into the sessions that are presented each year at the VGEC Annual Conference and this year is certainly no exception. In fact, after having talked with Shug Goodlow, our conference host in 2015, I am convinced that she is doing a phenomenal job putting our sessions together. She recently told me, "When looking back into the past few years' conference surveys, the resounding request was for more detailed sessions on various topics. The conference committee took those survey results to heart when planning this year's conference and I truly believe that everyone will see the results when they come to St. Louis. We have more sessions about more topics, some that apply specifically to the verger but others that speak to the broader church. There is something this year for everyone, I hope!"

For this post, we have chosen, "The Role of Cathedrals" by the [Very Rev. Mike Kinman](#), Dean, Christ Church Cathedral, which is one of your 2 session choices for Friday afternoon right after lunch, and "Youth Participation in Worship: Moving from Tokenism to Partnership" by [Elle Dowd](#), Youth Missioner for the Diocese of Missouri which is one of your 3 choices beginning at 2:30pm on Friday afternoon. Their thoughts on what they'll have to say in St. Louis give us much to think

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- ▼ [2015](#) (33)
 - ▶ [August 2015](#) (1)
 - ▶ [July 2015](#) (5)
 - ▶ [June 2015](#) (7)
 - ▶ [May 2015](#) (5)
 - ▼ [April 2015](#) (3)
 - [Mid-Year VGEC Board Meeting - Fun! Fun! Fun! in Sa...](#)
 - [Sessions at the 2015 VGEC Annual Conference are go...](#)
 - [A Good Friday for Vergers](#)
 - ▶ [March 2015](#) (4)
 - ▶ [February 2015](#) (4)
 - ▶ [January 2015](#) (4)
- ▶ [2014](#) (50)
- ▶ [2013](#) (17)
- ▶ [2012](#) (12)
- ▶ [2011](#) (10)
- ▶ [2010](#) (15)
- ▶ [2009](#) (2)



Past issues of the Printed Vergers Voice

about between now and October and reason to [make plans now to attend](#) the conference starting on October first.

"The Role of Cathedrals"

I spoke with the [Very Rev. Mike Kinman](#), Dean, Christ Church Cathedral earlier this week. He is looking forward to engaging us in conversation about the unique ministry of Cathedrals to be three Eucharistic tables in one -- for a congregation, the diocese, and an entire city.

He said, "It's a mission with an ancient history that is being remade in exciting ways today and raises important questions. How do we take our grand, old buildings and make them sustainable economically and missionally? How can Cathedrals be the sacred public space where congregation, diocese, city and region come together in all our diversity and lay our lives on the table for the common good?"

In identifying our mission as a threefold one of truth-telling, Jesus-spotting and blessing... what does that look like, and what can other congregations learn from a Cathedral approach to ministry? How can all our churches be the glorious presence of God in the heart of our communities?"

Explore is a great word (for Christ Church). The space is uniquely exquisite. You could hear one of the finest organs in the Midwest; the reredos is gorgeous as are the stained glass windows. You can climb into the bell tower and ring the largest bell in the state. But the best exploration is had by sitting and having a conversation with the people who wander in and spend time sitting in the Cathedral during the week. There is not greater exploration than learning the stories of each other's lives.

Dean Kinman likes showing off St. Louis to visitors. "Besides the standard things (Arch, City Museum, Ted Drewes, the Cardinals and Christ Church Cathedral), I love to take them to Forest Park and all the museums there (especially the History Museum). BBQ at Vernon's or lunch at Blueberry Hill. The Cathedral Basilica is one of a kind and awe-inspiring and, assuming good weather, I try to go to CityGarden downtown. If I had to pick one place to take someone from out of town, though, it would be the Missouri Botanical Garden." Are you taking notes for your free time during the conference?

"Youth Participation in Worship: Moving from Tokenism to Partnership."

[Elle Doud](#) is so enthusiastic about her mission within the Diocese of Missouri that she'll have your attention within 20 seconds of beginning her presentation.

She says, "Oftentimes when youth are involved in worship they are relegated to a couple roles... if they are included at all! What would it look like to include youth in all aspects of planning, preparing, and leading worship?" Diocesan Youth Missioner Elle Dowd will speak about principles that can be adapted for your specific worship context, how to deal with barriers that may be inherent in including youth as partners, and why it's worth the challenge.

Elle describes herself as a "Religious Studies" scholar with interests in incarnational relational youth ministry, feminist theology, and global ministry." She graduated with honors from Iowa State University with a degree in Religious Studies and has served as a Christian Educator, pastoral intern, and Youth Coordinator at Episcopal and ELCA churches. She has led several mission trips to Jonathan's House for Orphans in Sierra Leone as their Sponsorship Coordinator.

Elle lives with her husband, Adam, and their six year-old daughter, Alice, in St. Robert. She is excited to share her passion for youth ministry with the 2015 Verger's Conference.

After reading these summaries, I'll bet that you're as motivated as I am to be in the front row for both of these conference sessions. Just don't take my seat. O.K.?

Click the big red button to [register for the 2015 Annual Conference](#) being held October 1-4, 2015 in St. Louis, Missouri:



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Abstract: We have a lineup of VGEC 2015 Conference session presenters second to none. Read what we have to look forward to in the first two sessions we're highlighting as conference time grows near.

Posted by [Ken Holloway](#) at 10:17 AM  

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