



The Vergers Voice

The news blog of the Vergers Guild

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Friday, May 29, 2015

Vergers and Clergy - Partners in Ministry



The Rev. Canon Amy Chambers Cortright, Vicar of Christ Church Cathedral, St. Louis baptizing Miss Ivy

By Ken Holloway, News Manager, VGEC

When [Shug Goodlow](#), Host Committee Chair for the [2015 VGEC Conference](#), asked the Rev. Canon Amy Chambers Cortright, Vicar of [Christ Church Cathedral](#), St. Louis, to speak at the conference, Amy thought of so many subjects she could incorporate in the session that she almost felt she could do the presentation extemporaneously. Amy served as an acolyte at the [Washington National Cathedral](#) when she was a student at the [National Cathedral School](#) in the mid-90's. John Kraus was the Cathedral Head Verger at the time. Amy says that John's gracious presence and manner set the foundation of her liturgical journey, and probably was the reason that she went on to seminary.

The Vicar in a cathedral is the rector for the cathedral's regular congregation. So it follows that Amy is a very sensitive "people-person."

Amy and Shug confer weekly, planning for the week's liturgy and beyond. She told me that she treasures her relationship with Shug and all of the cathedral vergers. Working with the vergers, the acolytes, and other parishioners who support and work in the liturgy, she emphasizes the need to share experiences and opinions openly and to do so by carefully recognizing "...each other's communication style and message."

Apparently the old sage, "Dramatic spaces attract dramatic people," is at work in St. Louis at the cathedral. As is often the case, cathedral ministries re-define themselves. Thus it is at Christ Church Cathedral. Amy says that they are well into a pretty dramatic process of transforming themselves from a mostly downtown cathedral into a cathedral church ministering to a much larger region. In doing so, the cathedral vergers are very important "change agents" while moving from "traditional church" to the concept of "shared leadership." We will have more on these important concepts during Amy's presentation on Friday afternoon, October 3rd, at the VGEC

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Annual Conference.

I asked Amy what some of the most important issues were in her role as vicar. Among others, she emphasized the use of "shared language" which can be understood as, "... people developing understanding among themselves based on language (e.g. spoken, text) to help them communicate more effectively. The key to understanding language is to first notice and be mindful of your own language. Developing a shared language is an ongoing process that requires intention and time, which results in better understanding. Shared language is critical to collaboration, and collaboration is critical to business and education. With whom and how many people do you connect? Your "shared language" makes a difference in the world. So, how do we successfully do this?"

Just how is the "shared language" concept employed to include all persons at the cathedral? How does respectful conversation lead the way to loving and caring in a time of change? These too will be skill sets which we can all hear about and take home to begin our own process of implementing them in our own ministries.

After graduating from [Mount Holyoke College](#) with an English degree, Amy attended the [General Theological Seminary](#) in New York City, graduating in 2004. After ordination, she served in posts at [The Church of the Incarnation](#) in the Murray Hill neighborhood of NYC, and [Calvary Episcopal Church](#) in Columbia, MO where she was priest-in-charge.

She met her husband, Joe Chambers, at the General Seminary. In Columbia, Joe was Campus Missioner for the University of Missouri. Today he is the Canon to the Ordinary for the [Diocese of Missouri](#). Amy was called to Christ Church Cathedral in St. Louis where she became the Vicar in 2010.

A concluding thought is that to stay in touch with what makes a (church) place unique and live into it requires that our hearts be crucibles of reconciliation ministry. Amy will help us understand just how to do that.

Can we make loving each other a milestone in the path of our ministry? The Reverend Canon Amy Chambers Cortright plans to show us how to grow into a greater capacity for love and understanding within our ministry and be better partners with our clergy.

Register before June 1, 2015 to be entered in the drawing for a **\$100 gift certificate** from the Guild Shop. To be eligible you must register as a verger, be present at the official Business Meeting on Saturday morning of the conference.

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



Abstract: How is your liturgical partner to work with? What does she/he think about working with you? What can we do to assure that our liturgical and communicative skills are always tuned to the right level of understanding and grace? Be in the front row on Friday October 3rd at the Christ Church Cathedral in Saint Louis to learn these skills and more from the Rev. Amy Chambers Cortright, Vicar.

Posted by [Ken Holloway](#) at [10:04 AM](#)



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