



The Columns *Online*

July 27, 2022 | Waynesboro, Virginia | *a newsletter supplement*

Women in clerical collars.

By Teri McDowell Ott, *editor and publisher of Presbyterian Outlook.*

“Is your daddy a pastor?” the carpet salesman asked after I’d inquired about his clergy discount.

I was 26, newly ordained after graduating with my Master of Divinity, and carpet shopping for my first house. None of my credentials changed my appearance, though. To this salesman, I didn’t look like a minister. This became a professional problem when I began regularly dealing with funeral directors as a solo pastor. When deciding on closed or open caskets or where to display Great-Grandma Eloise’s portrait, the male funeral directors deferred to the elders. When they did speak to me, they called me “precious,” “dearie” or “honey,” with a little pat on my back.



I needed to make a change. I considered dying my hair darker and shopped for serious-looking glasses. Then I remembered my first time wearing a clerical collar with Geneva tabs. On that first try, I never did figure out how to fasten the two-fingered, white cloth onto the collar. On that Reformation Sunday, I secured it with scotch tape, hoping no one would notice.

continued

Women in clerical collars, continued.

Wearing the collar stayed with me, the attention and authority it brought. Having had enough of men calling me “precious,” I started shopping for a clerical collar that I decided would accompany me to every funeral. 20 years ago, there weren’t many styles or colors — tab or round collar, black or grey shirt in a cotton-poly blend. I measured my neck and ordered over the phone. When I received the shirt and tried it on, it was sized for a man’s body. It fit me like a big, black garbage bag cinched at the neck.

Today, I can order a clerical shirt made by women for women. Short sleeve, cap sleeve, sleeveless; tunic or A-line, maternity shirts in cotton, bamboo or tencel. I celebrate the progress the church has made — even as the world around us slips backward. But as statistics shared in this Outlook issue reflect, and as women ministers know through personal experience, there’s still room for our church to grow.

A few years ago, a video of the Evangelical Lutheran Church of America’s North Carolina Synod circulated. In it, male pastors read comments female pastors have received, bearing witness to gender discrimination and unsupportive church cultures. These are a few of the comments received by our ELCA Lutheran sisters:

“I’ve never met a female pastor before. What do I call you? Pastorette?”

“You are the first female minister I’ve ever met. Are they all as good-looking as you?”

“You don’t look like a senior pastor.”

“We really like you and we think you’re a great pastor. But you can’t be senior pastor because you’re a female.”

“We called you because we knew we could afford you. Women pastors are cheaper.”

Friends, these comments aren’t unique to the ELCA. The PC(USA)’s most recent research on gender and leadership reveals pervasive gender discrimination in our Presbyterian churches — and that almost half of our members are unaware of this.

Like Anghaarad Teague Dees, who writes of all the women whose shoulders she stands on as the first female pastor of Quaker Memorial Presbyterian Church in Virginia, I, too, am grateful. I am grateful to Jill Duffield, called in 2014 as the first female editor of the Presbyterian Outlook. Grateful for pioneers like Margaret Towner, Katie Geneva Cannon and Johanna W.H. van Wijk-Bos. Grateful for stained-glass-ceiling-breakers like Joanna Adams, Barbara Wheeler, Magdalena Garcia, Susan Andrews, Pat Jones, Amantha Barbee and Shannon Kershner.

I am also grateful for opportunities to help the church welcome and include the women who follow me. I’ll never forget the 8-year-old girl I met after being first installed as an associate pastor in 1996. “She wanted to meet you,” the mom said, giving her daughter an encouraging little push. “She’s never met a woman minister before. She asked me during worship if she could be a minister someday.”

The little girl looked up at me in my black robe and long red stole.

I knelt, pulled the stole from around my neck and wrapped it around her. “Looks good on you.”

Too shy to speak, she smiled wide, fingering the silky red stole. For her, the promise of her, and the progress I trust our church will make in welcoming her gifts, I am grateful, too.

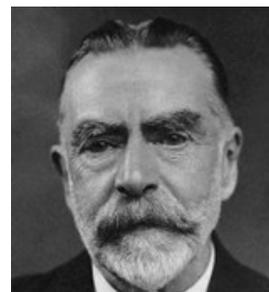


Music Notes for Pentecost VIII.

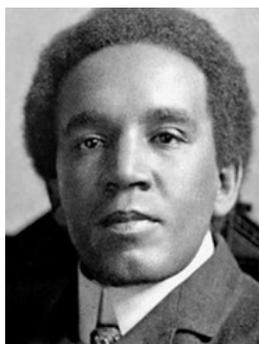
We are so blessed at First Presbyterian Church to have a congregation filled with the Holy Spirit and doing God's work. Last Sunday's congregational meeting showed God's will in progress, for which we are immensely grateful.

This week, the closing hymn will be *In Christ There Is No East Or West*.

The text was written by **William Arthur Dunkerley** (1852-1941) using the pseudonym *John Oxenham*. As Oxenham, Dunkerley wrote poems, novels and hymns in several languages, including Tagalog, Arabic, Portuguese and Spanish. He was also a journalist, writing for various publications. under the pen name *Julian Ross*.



Dunkerley.



Coleridge-Taylor.

The musical setting of *In Christ There Is No East Or West* was originally an Irish tune which was adapted by African slaves in America, and transcribed by **Samuel Coleridge-Taylor** (1875-1912) in his seminal collection *Twenty-Four Negro Melodies*. **Henry T(hacker) Burleigh**, (1866-1949), set Oxenham's text to the melody and enhanced its harmonies for the 1940 Episcopal Hymnal - the first African American melody to appear in a mainline hymnal. Burleigh was a gifted baritone who received a scholarship to study at the National Conservatory in New York City. **Antonín Dvořák**, the conservatory's

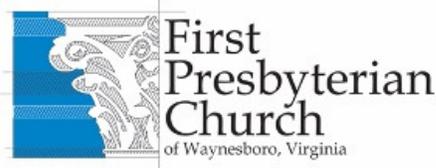
director, became acquainted with Burleigh, particularly his singing of spirituals. Their "great and noble" quality inspired the Czech composer, in particular, his Symphony no. 9, *From the New World*. Burleigh also assisted Dvořák in copying out instrumental parts for the symphony. He served as the baritone soloist for St. George's Episcopal Church in New York City for 52 years. While singing at St. George's, Burleigh arranged *In Christ There Is No East Or West* and named it MCKEE, after the rector of St. George's, Elmer M. McKee. The hymn is one of hundreds set by Burleigh, including *Deep River*.



Burleigh.

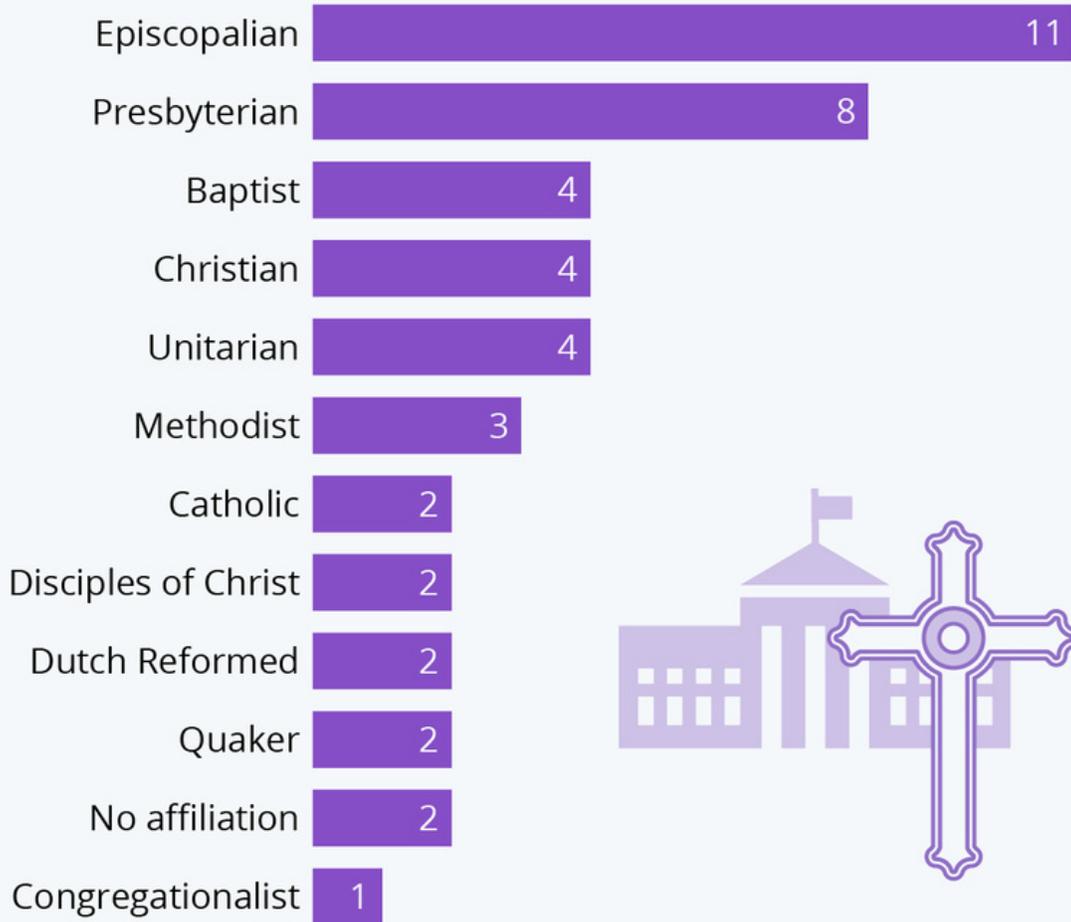
Our Worship Channels

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Religious Affiliation of Past Presidents

Number of U.S. presidents publicly affiliated with each religion



Source: Pew Research Center

Liturgist this week: Jean Hashagen
Scripture lessons: Psalm 49:1-12
Luke 12:13-21

Sermon: Rich Fools

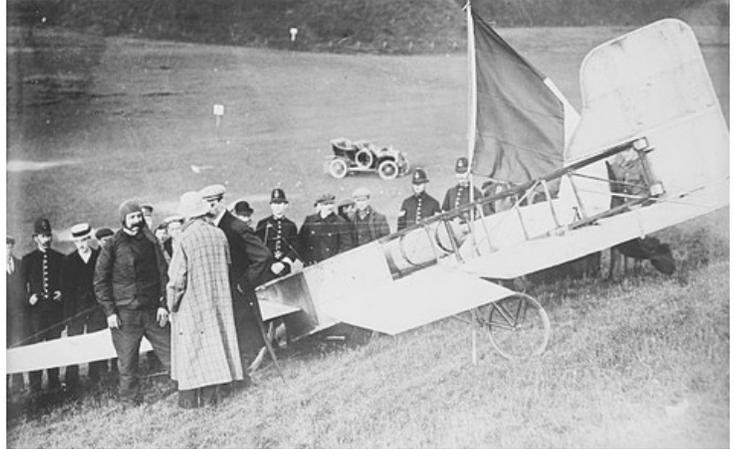


This Week in History.



Simon Bolivar born in Caracas Venezuela. Known as the *George Washington of South America*, he helped liberate Venezuela, Colombia, Panama, Ecuador, Peru, and Bolivia from the rule of Spain.

July 24, 1783



Louis Blériot makes first international flight, from Calais to Dover.

July 25, 1909



The U.S. Army begins to desegregate its training facilities.

July 26, 1944



Labor leader James Hoffa last seen at a restaurant near Detroit, MI. He would be declared dead in 1982.

July 30, 1975



Korean Conflict ends with Armistice signed by UN Forces, the Korean Peoples' Army and the Chinese People's Volunteer Army at Pammunjon, Korea

July 27, 1953



Jacqueline Lee Bouvier Kennedy Onassis born in Southampton, NY.

July 28, 1929