



Photos provided by Patrice Toney  
 New-Bishop Michael Curry was ordained Deacon-in-Charge and then Rector of St. Stephen's Episcopal Church in Winston-Salem between 1978 and 1982. Here he leads a Bible study class in 1980.



Presiding Bishop Michael Curry of the U.S. Episcopal Church is congratulated by outgoing Presiding Bishop Katharine Jefferts Schori, who was the first woman in the job.



Photo provided by Patrice Toney  
 Bishop Michael Curry of the U.S. Episcopal Church is being installed as presiding bishop.

## Locals see bishop installed

**Bishop**  
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ues today due to his passion for social justice and fighting poverty.

Toney was among the members of St. Stephen's who attended last Sunday's installation and described the event as full of "pomp and circumstance." Being held in the Washington National Cathedral added to the elegance of the event, according to Toney, but what she will always remember is the diversity of the participants. "Every age, race and culture was represented. Parts of the service were in other languages, a choir from St. Thomas, the Virgin Islands, performed.

Native Americans played the drums and chanted. It was the most diverse body of people I've ever witnessed."

The 62-year-old Curry served as Bishop of the Diocese of North Carolina for the past 15 years before being elected to the position of presiding bishop of the U.S. Episcopal Church. Father Steve Rice, rector of St. Timothy's Episcopal Church in Winston-Salem, remarked, "I will always remember Bishop Curry as a bishop who was not afraid, who was attentive, and understood the importance of laughter. As in demand as he always was, he would always respond to texts or emails and he always made time for me,

even when we were in disagreement."

Rice recounted a time at the end of September when he and Bishop Curry had lunch. "Our conversation flowed from church politics to theological controversies to our favorite Western television show. As we walked back to his office, knowing this would be our moment together, I asked for his blessing. He put his hands on my head, as a father to a son, and gave me his blessing. A man who would lead the Episcopal Church and be an important voice in the Anglican Commission was a shepherd to one of his flock, which at that moment, was all that mattered."

Curry's ability to give his undivided attention to each individual was also expressed by Father Lawrence Womack, rector of St. Anne's Episcopal Church. Womack recalled, "Since meeting Father Curry in 1996, I have learned much from him. Most importantly, I have seen him in patient and earnest discussion with all types of people - young children to octogenarians, friends and enemies, alike. He is consistently present with all people who find themselves in his presence. One such example was on an ordinary Sunday morning in Baltimore - two services down and (possibly) one more to go, he stood at the Crossing in St. James' Church talking with

parishioners - some who were happy with something and others who had complaints about other things. He attended to each with the same level of concern and care, all while gently attending to his youngest daughter, who was more than ready to get home."

To Womack, one of the most extraordinary things about Curry is "he is consistently present with folks in the ordinary stuff of their lives. In whatever capacity, whether he makes a decision with which they agree or disagree, he communicates his care for them as his sisters and brothers - all members of God's family. He truly listens and hears and values the depth of people's concerns. As a person, as a priest, as the Bishop of North Carolina and now, as Presiding Bishop, Michael Curry is caring of and careful with people in the ordinary stuff of their lives and that is what makes him extraordinary."

Toney also noted this patient concern after the end of his installation when Bishop Curry made a point to meet and greet every person who wanted to congratulate him. Although the line was long, he stayed until he had met every person. Toney believes Bishop Curry will unify the Episcopal Church. Toney recalled that in his sermon, he said, "God didn't call us to religion, but to love our neighbors."



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