

# The Good News

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## In Memoriam

### Bishop Krister Stendahl, 86

*Editor: For years, Bishop Stendahl was a friend of St. Mary's. He was invited to preach on the first Sunday of Advent and taught a Swedish confirmation class. The following information is adapted from the obituary by Douglas Martin, which appeared in The New York Times on April 16th.*

Krister Stendahl, a former dean of the Harvard Divinity School and a bishop in Sweden whose scholarship opened new ways of interpreting the Apostle Paul and whose activism pushed churches toward unity and tolerance, died on Tuesday in Boston.

**As a religious leader with the World Council of Churches and other bodies, Dr. Stendahl, a Lutheran, fought for the ordination of women and gay men and lesbians and against the use of sexist language in Scriptures, saying that Jesus' maleness was no more significant than the color of his eyes. Dr. Stendahl pushed Christians toward ecumenicism, not only among denominations, but also with other religious traditions. He urged believers to find beauty in other faiths, a phenomenon he called "holy envy."**

**"In the eyes of God, we are all minorities," he said in an interview with *The Tulsa World* in 2003. "That's a rude awakening for many Christians, who have never come to grips with the pluralism of the world."**

As dean of the Harvard Divinity School from 1968 to 1979, he followed his own advice by transforming it into a more diverse institution. The female divinity students so appreciated his support that they called him "Sister Krister." As bishop of the Diocese of Stockholm in the 1980s, he challenged members of the Church of Sweden—many of whom had come to see the church as a place only for rituals like baptisms and funerals—to ponder whether "they should be members of the church at all." He accelerated the process that ended the Swedish government's sponsorship of the church.

Dr. Stendahl combined deep research into the Old and New Testaments to question whether Paul was a Hamlet-like figure wrestling with questions of conscience, the prevailing view since at least the time of Martin Luther. Instead, he argued that Paul, rather than expressing any inner conflict, had dealt with profound theological problems concerning Jewish law and the meaning of sin. Dr. Stendahl presented this new interpretation at a 1961 meeting of the American Psychological Association, saying that the idea of an angst-ridden Paul had been foreign to the first three centuries of the church.

"What he aimed to do was, in effect, to rescue Paul from the psychoanalytic couch," Thomas G. Long wrote in the theological journal *Interpretation* in 2004. Garry Wills, in his 2006 book "What Paul Meant," wrote that Dr. Stendahl had helped transport readers "back into the Spirit-haunted, God-driven world of Paul in the heady first charismatic days of Jesus' revelation."

Krister Olofson Stendahl was born on April 21, 1921 in Stockholm, where his father, Olof, worked as a harbor administrator. The family did not attend church because, his father explained, the building was "very drafty," Krister's teenage rebellion was to go to church. He did not have a "born again" sort of religious awakening, his wife said. Rather, his faith grew out of extremely painful arthritis in his spine that started when he was 16 or 17. While traveling to other countries for treatments and spas, he learned several languages, including German. His pain informed his religious readings: he meditated on Jesus' pain, his wife said. But he brought humor and intellect to his readings.

2007 edition of *The Good News*), he wrote that he had learned to “argue with God,” saying that in Jewish and biblical tradition this was the proper relationship.

Dr. Stendahl earned his doctorate from Uppsala University in Sweden, writing his dissertation on the Dead Sea Scrolls, the biblical-era writings found in Jordan in 1947. In 1954, Harvard hired him to teach New Testament studies. In the early 1990s, after retiring as bishop, he taught Christian studies at Brandeis.

In an interview with *The New York Times* in 1974, Dr. Stendahl rejected Christians’ emphasis on life after death as “selfish” and as absent from Judaism and early Christianity. But life on other planets was another story. In an interview with National Public Radio in 1996, he expressed the hope that life exists on Mars. If so, he said, “God would be bigger than we thought.”

### *El Salvador 2008*

Our mission trip to El Salvador departs on Saturday, May 10. The team includes six from St. Mary’s—Peter, Ariel Acuna, Tim Green, Paul Pyzowski, Tom Riley and Ann Wessel—and five from St. Paul’s Episcopal Church in Natick—The Reverend Mark McKone-Sweet, Ron Burns, Mary Erickson, Sandy Hall and Joan Hellmuth.

The support from our parish has been tremendous. Thank you to everyone who donated money, participated in the Cabaret fundraiser with St. Paul’s, donated new or used computers, and/or kept this trip and this team in their prayers. We are particularly appreciative of the magnificent music program delivered by our adult choir. The program included several solos by choir members Lynn Edwards, Robert Kluter and Glen Wright, as well as Jennie Mulqueen, a former choir member.

We are still finalizing the totals from the various fundraising programs, and it looks like we will be able to cover all the expenses associated with the trip (including travel and the cost of construction supplies); make a direct donation to our sister parish, Santa Maria Virgen; and also make an additional donation to the Diocese of El Salvador.

In addition, Sandy Hall of St. Paul’s has been able to secure a significant amount of first aid supplies to bring as a donation to the Diocese. Second, a request to St. Mary’s members for a gently used computer to bring and donate to one of the parishes yielded eight computers, all of which the Diocese says they can use. However, this does present a packing challenge. Allan Klumpp has graciously offered to pack these supplies in 11 boxes so that each team member can carry a computer as checked luggage.

We hope to provide live updates from our trip on St. Mary’s website so that you can all share the experience in El Salvador with us.

—Paul Pyzowski

### *The Journey of Four Slate Gravestones*

After the 10:00 a.m. service on Sunday, May 25, Peter will be blessing four early 19<sup>th</sup> century slate gravestones, which were recently returned to St. Mary’s cemetery by John Rodman, a member of the Board of Directors of the Newton Historical Society. John was cleaning out a garage in Newton where he found the stones. He realized the probable historic significance of the stones, photographed them, and brought the photos to Susan Abele, Curator of Manuscripts and Photographs at the Jackson Homestead for identification. Susan did research on the family names of Neal, Daniell and Mills, but could find no tie to any burials in the three historic Newton cemeteries.

Beverly Hurney, our cemetery superintendent, recognized the names as belonging to Lower Falls families.

Why the stones were removed from, or never set in, St. Mary’s cemetery will remain a mystery. Is

What we do know is that they were discovered in 1965, in the house at 2321 Washington Street, by the Gale Construction Company. The house, adjacent to the church property, was being razed for the development of an apartment building on the lot owned from 1837 to 1905 by the Neal family. Two of the stones had the family name of Neal. From the house on Washington Street the stones were removed for safe keeping to the garage where John Rodman found them more than 40 years later!

The stones were made of local slate, carved and signed by A.A. Park, R.K. Park and J. Park of Groton and each bore one of the following inscriptions:

“MARY ELIZABETH/daughter of/Mr. Jeremiah F. &/Mrs. Sarah Daniell/died Feb. 16, 1832/AEt.  
(*aetatis*, Latin for “at the age of”) 3 yrs. & 8 mos”

“ELIZABETH L./daughter of/William &/Mary A. Mills/died Nov. 11, 1838/AEt. 17 yrs”

“HORATIO/son of/Mr. Benjamin &/Mrs. Eunice Neal/died May 22, 1831/AEt. 4 yrs”

“SARAH MANN/daughter of/Mr. Benjamin & Mrs. Eunice Neal/died Aug. 30, 1826/AEt 15 mos”

Of historic and genealogical interest to St. Mary’s: Mrs. Eunice (Daniell) Neal is sister to Mr. Jeremiah F. Daniell. Mr. Benjamin Neal was the first organist at St. Mary’s and served for fifty years.

—with contributions from Beverly Hurney

### **United Thank Offering Ingathering Continues through May**

The UTO’s mission is “to expand our circle of thankful people in the Episcopal Church.” This mission is accomplished through our daily prayers of thanksgiving and our donations. Each gift supports missions and the ministry of the Church throughout the world.

Gwen Buehrens has had firsthand experience with the UTO:

“When I worked at our church headquarters in Manhattan in the late 1980s, I was the point person in the States for the Anglican Children's Fund, begun after the famine in Biafra. Anglicans in both Britain and the U.S. agreed to sponsor orphaned children and to provide general funding for one orphanage, in particular. Located in a mountainous rural area, the orphanage operated an agricultural school, which trained the residents to become farmers. The school was forced to rely on an old rickety truck to transport its produce to market. Because funding a truck purchase exceeded our capability, we applied to UTO for a grant. The UTO provided the necessary funds and the training program flourished. Thanks be to God.”

A blue UTO envelope has been mailed to you. Please use it to give generously to this important cause. Donations can be placed on the collection plate on Sunday or dropped off at the church office. Contributions will be welcomed throughout May.

### ***Upcoming Events***

**Special Music Program for Choirs and Percussion, Dan Foote, drummer, Sunday, May 4 at 10:00 a.m. Service**

**Walk for Hunger, Sunday, May 4**

“Team Turtle” i.e., Anne Rippey Turtle and John Turtle, will be joining others from St. Mary’s for their 17<sup>th</sup> year. Donations in support of this important cause are most welcome, before and after the event.

**St. Mary’s Outreach Committee Meeting, Monday, May 5 at 7:00 p.m.**

Elisabeth Comer is hosting the committee meeting at her home, 32 Chestnut Street, Wellesley (781-772-2220.) Anyone interested in outreach at St. Mary’s is invited to attend. At the meeting, outreach opportunities will be reviewed and disbursement decisions (current pool is approximately \$2,400) will be made. By way of background, this committee meets and disburses funds semi-annually. In addition, other outreach funds, otherwise disbursed, include \$2,000 from the Barbara Robinson Fund, which is restricted to educational purposes, and the proceeds from the Foods ‘N Fancies Bazaar

**The Reverend Kathy McAdams, *Ecclesia Ministries*, to Preach, Lead Adult Forum on Sunday, May 18**

By way of background, McAdams writes:

“We very much enjoyed having groups from your congregation visit *Common Cathedral* last April. It is relationships with congregations like yours that help us continue our vital ministry with the poorest people of Boston. We hope that your visits were valuable to your Confirmation or Outreach program, or simply to raise the consciousness and compassion of your congregation about the many and complex causes of homelessness. [It is my hope that we] strengthen this partnership begun by our two congregations, and continue *Ecclesia's* many programs for people experiencing homelessness, as well as our educational/formational offerings to housed congregations.”

**Junior Choir Step-up Sunday, May 18 at 10:00 a.m. service; Babson Night program at 6:00 p.m.**

Babson Night is an annual program for religious institutions in the Wellesley area. The Grace Night Babson Fund for Religious Education sponsors this program which is held at the Knight Auditorium at Babson College. Young people representing the churches and temples in the area each give a brief presentation (song, skit or story) that is based on a Scripture text. The program begins and ends with hymns accompanied by the large Wurlitzer theater organ housed in the auditorium. Institutions receive a monetary gift from the Babson Fund for their participation. *Everyone is welcome to attend.*

**Annual Celebration of Music on Sunday, June 1 at 11:15 a.m.**

Musicians of all ages are invited to perform at the program which will be held in the Parish Hall. A brunch will be served followed by the music. If you are willing to perform please speak to Kirsten Johnson.

**Annual Church Picnic and Recognition of Acolytes on Sunday, June 15**

We plan to recognize our wonderful, dedicated team of acolytes during the 10:00 a.m. service. *All acolytes are asked to attend.* Following the service, St. Mary's annual picnic will be held in the churchyard. *All are invited to attend; guests are encouraged.* A sign-up sheet will be posted in the parish hall.

***About Town***

Gail Jessup is completing her move to 54 Caroline Drive, Milton, MA 02186. Her granddaughter, Abbi Golledge will be attending Georgetown University in the fall. Abbi's family continues to reside in Ghana, where her father Bob is director of the Peace Corps, and was recently visited by President Bush...Perry Bank has spent the past three months on a Gap Year semester program in Bolivia and Peru. Her experiences have included extensive home stays with rural Bolivian families, community service, trekking up to 18,000 feet, a week at a research station on the Amazon River as well as a visit to Macchu Picchu in Peru. She will be attending Duke in the fall. Perry's brother, Teddy, is a sophomore at Amherst College where he is also a pitcher for the varsity baseball team.

***The “Ask-It Basket”:***

**Q: What does “Before the Common Era” mean?**

**A:** CE stands for “Common Era.” It is a relatively new term that is experiencing increased usage and is expected to eventually replace AD or “Anno Domini”, Latin for “the year of the Lord.” BCE stands for “Before the Common Era” and is expected to eventually replace BC, which means “Before Christ,” or “Before the Messiah.” The word “Common” simply means that it is based on the most frequently used calendar system: the Gregorian Calendar.

*Editor: Tim Green*