

SEPTEMBER 2023

# COMMUNITY OF HOPE International



## *Porter at the Door of the World*

**COHI 2023 Conference**

**All Saints  
Episcopal Church  
Atlanta, GA  
October 19 @ 2pm-  
October 21 @ 12pm**



**The Rev. Willard  
Kamandani,  
Priest in the  
Anglican Diocese of  
Southern Malawi**



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## Porter at the Door of the World

### KEYNOTE SPEAKER:

The Reverend Willard Kamandani, Priest in the Anglican Diocese of Southern Malawi

### LOCATION:

All Saints Episcopal Church

### TRANSPORTATION:

click [\*here\*](#) for further details.

### ACCOMODATIONS:

Book your own accommodations according to your needs\* and budget. The closest hotels, within 2 city blocks walking distance are (ordered according to distance from All Saints Church & MARTA):

### REGISTRATION:

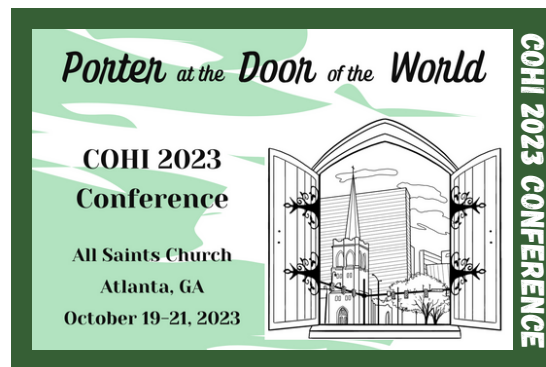
In-Person Conference Registration - \$275 (In-Person Conference Registration Fee includes some meals (2 continental breakfasts, 1 catered lunch, 1 catered dinner, & 2 evening socials))

Zoom Participation Conference Registration - \$125

[Click HERE to register!](#)

[Click HERE for details and more information!](#)

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## “Be Opened!” Excerpt of Sermon by The Rev Laura Masterson PRIEST-IN-CHARGE AT ST. MARY AND ST. MARTHA OF BETHANY EPISCOPAL CHURCH, BUFORD, GA BASED ON MARK 7:31-37

That first reading, ahhh, we like to skip over it, with the gentile woman calling Jesus to the carpet. We will get to that. And then the deaf man story. Jesus spits on him and puts his fingers in his ears. What’s that about? There’s a lot going on in this text that requires us to know a bit more about the traditions and political scene of the day in order to understand it all. We have been talking about that some in our adult forum, to really get familiar with the context.



But what is especially good for us in this gospel text today is that a common feature of both of the stories is that the people who are healed do not approach Jesus alone but are with someone else from their community. The young girl is freed of demon possession because her mother pleads on her behalf. The deaf man is brought to Jesus by friends. In these stories it is not the faith of the disabled person that brings about their healing but the active faith of their companions.

Hearing these stories plainly today should remind us that we as humans get weak- in body, AND in faith. And that sometimes in those moments, we have to borrow someone else’s energy and someone else’s faith. We have to let someone else drag us to Jesus and argue with him on our behalf. We might be too tired, too sick, or too sick and tired. **Again and again these stories say and again and again you will hear ME say that life as a vulnerable, loving, honest community is what it takes to stay connected to all the love and mercy that God gives us, endlessly.**

Right now, you are probably still working over a few things from the past year and half. Or maybe longer. What are they? And you might be tired and feeling a little weary in faith. Hear this message today, that the people sitting next to you are responsible for dragging you to Jesus, and thank goodness that you seem to whole-heartedly love each other enough to do that.

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## “Be Opened!” Excerpt of Sermon by The Rev Laura Masterson

### *Continued*

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But in order to do that, you all must be willing to be vulnerable with each other and in the world, enough to say what hurts. What if we really answered honestly when people asked us how we are. “How ya doin?” “Today, um, not too good.” We like to just answer in a way that slides by the heart of the POINT of conversation, so we can get to the technical matters at hand. “How are you?” is just a nicety, usually. But if we are really brave enough to say out loud what is going on for us, I feel confident that our collective listening skills, to be present and not fix, to not interrupt or one-up, can heal. Because then what we do, after the listening, is pray. We pray for each other. Also—just as an aside— God listens to ALL prayer— it doesn’t matter the denomination, it doesn’t have to be ancient, and it doesn’t have to be sung. We are God’s creation speaking back— there are no boundaries in that. And we should always pray for the world and also ourselves. Do you pray for St. Mary and St. Martha while you pray for those suffering in Louisiana and Haiti and Afghanistan?

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Hearing these stories plainly today should remind us that we as humans get weak— in body, AND in faith. And that sometimes in those moments, we have to borrow someone else’s energy and someone else’s faith. We have to let someone else drag us to Jesus and argue with him on our behalf. We might be too tired, too sick, or too sick and tired. **Again and again these stories say and again and again you will hear ME say that life as a vulnerable, loving, honest community is what it takes to stay connected to all the love and mercy that God gives us, endlessly.**

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## “Be Opened!” Excerpt of Sermon by The Rev Laura Masterson

### *Continued*

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By praying, we are doing something that Jesus shows us today in Mark. And this is the pinnacle of the text’s message, I think— that even JESUS, as human, is transformed and changes his mind, or is convinced in some way by the appeal of those that are suffering. When the man who is deaf and mute is healed and can hear and speak, we hear a word of hope for those of us whose faith is weak, those of us who for whatever reason have our ears blocked. Thanks to the faith of others, we can be brought to Jesus who is revealing a facet of God that stands out among the rest. That God is COMPASSIONATE and merciful. And reaching out on behalf of others fulfills God’s mission of peace— not just for the suffering, but for all of us.

Think about it this way. The deaf man is not a part of society— he cannot contribute, so he is shunned. In his healing, he is made well enough to work, communicate, and contribute to the workings of the group. Can you imagine the suffering of the mother and daughter duo— I can’t imagine the mother’s life was easy with her child ailing from whatever it was. I know some of you know about that here. Jesus is healing whole groups when he heals individuals. Here, too. We are all healed by your healing.

And the same is true for when we listen to another who needs to say what is wrong. We, too, are changed in a way that is holy. WE are opened. The Syrophenician woman’s faith, as she challenges Jesus, calls for a larger vision of God’s mission to the gentiles—to all outside the in--group. To those outside church. To the non-churched in Hall County or Gwinnett County. Because she says what she says, Jesus does not just have second thoughts— he is opened— his vision and work are radically changed. However unsettling this exchange may be, its resolution says something about hope for every SINGLE person when we lean in to listen to each other. When we pray and when we are honest. This uncomfortable text should embolden us to share whatever glimpse of God’s mercy and compassion we are given by someone else’s faith. By these moments we are witnesses. So let’s say how we’re doing and lean in to listen and then pray. This is healing. *Ephphatha*. Be opened.

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## Utah Region Adopts Hybrid Circle of Care

**CAROLYN ERSHLER-UTAH REGIONAL REP AND CO-FACILITATOR  
CATHEDRAL CHURCH OF ST. MARKS, SALT LAKE**

The Community of Hope center in Salt Lake City has had a wonderful year! We recently concluded a new training series and were able to welcome eight new Lay Pastoral Caregivers to our Circle of Care. We have gradually been able to provide a “hybrid” meeting modality where about a third of our members attend via Zoom. Currently, our Circle includes members who live from Logan, in the northern part of the state; to Santaquin, a town south of Provo; to Park City and Heber City, towns to the east of Salt Lake City. We continue to hope that we can offer our training and membership throughout the state, and we are pleased that we have become so efficient in our use of technology!

Most of our new members have already been involved in ministries of one kind or another and have come to join us for spiritual growth. It has been a joy to have even our newest members be so willing to share their experiences and the insights that come from meeting Christ in those whom we serve.

Our annual retreat was a special joy for all twenty who attended where we discussed how the Benedictine values of Stability, Conversion, and Obedience provide the essential platform from which we are able draw strength for our pastoral visits. We also had time for silent reflection, a lectio divina, Eucharist, and a wonderful group meal.



I have included a picture of the “family altar” that we created during the training. As always, this is one of the most moving parts of any training when we get to learn so much about each other! I am so pleased and blessed to be surrounded by such a lovely and caring group!



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# A PRAYER FOR THOSE LIVING IN POVERTY AND HUNGER: Sharing Abundance

**BY ANN CASE-EPISCOPAL RELIEF AND DEVELOPMENT**

*O Creator of all living things:*

*We are all hungry in a world full of abundance.*

*The possibilities of food for bodies and souls  
overflow in this beautiful world.*

*We ask for the grace to see the abundance of our world and  
enough awareness to acknowledge our sins of greed and fear.*

*Give us openness of soul and courageous, willing hearts  
to be with our sisters and brothers who are hungry and in pain.*

*We ask for your intercession on behalf of every person hungry  
for earthly food and hungry for the taste of the Spirit of God.*

*We give thanks that we can be part of that intercession.*

*This world is blessed with enough food of the earth  
for every person to eat and be satisfied.*

*We all can feed on the bread of Christ, through the Holy Spirit,  
as God makes a home in our hearts.*

*We come together in awe and wonder*

*at the Creator who loves us so much*

*that we are invited and urged to be co-creators with God*

*in the care of our brothers and sisters.*

*In the name of the tender Mother-Father of all people*

*who hears every cry, Amen.*

<https://www.episcopalrelief.org/prayer/nisi-est-sit-amet/>

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## North/Northwest Region Welcomes New Reg. Rep.

**SARAH ROBERTS-PRESIDENT-COHI**

Please join me in welcoming James DeDeaux as our newest Regional Representative! James is a deacon in the Episcopal Diocese of Spokane and will be joining Pam Heidt in representing the North/Northwest Region.

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**The newest video password  
has been released!  
Please check with your  
regional rep. for more  
information.**

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**WE WANT TO HEAR FROM YOU!**

**Tell us about books & blogs you like, ways of  
reaching care-receivers, and training ideas  
that work!**

**DEADLINE: 9/28/2023**

Email Pam Piedfort at  
**[pam.piedfort@cohinternational.org](mailto:pam.piedfort@cohinternational.org)**  
to share your story!

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