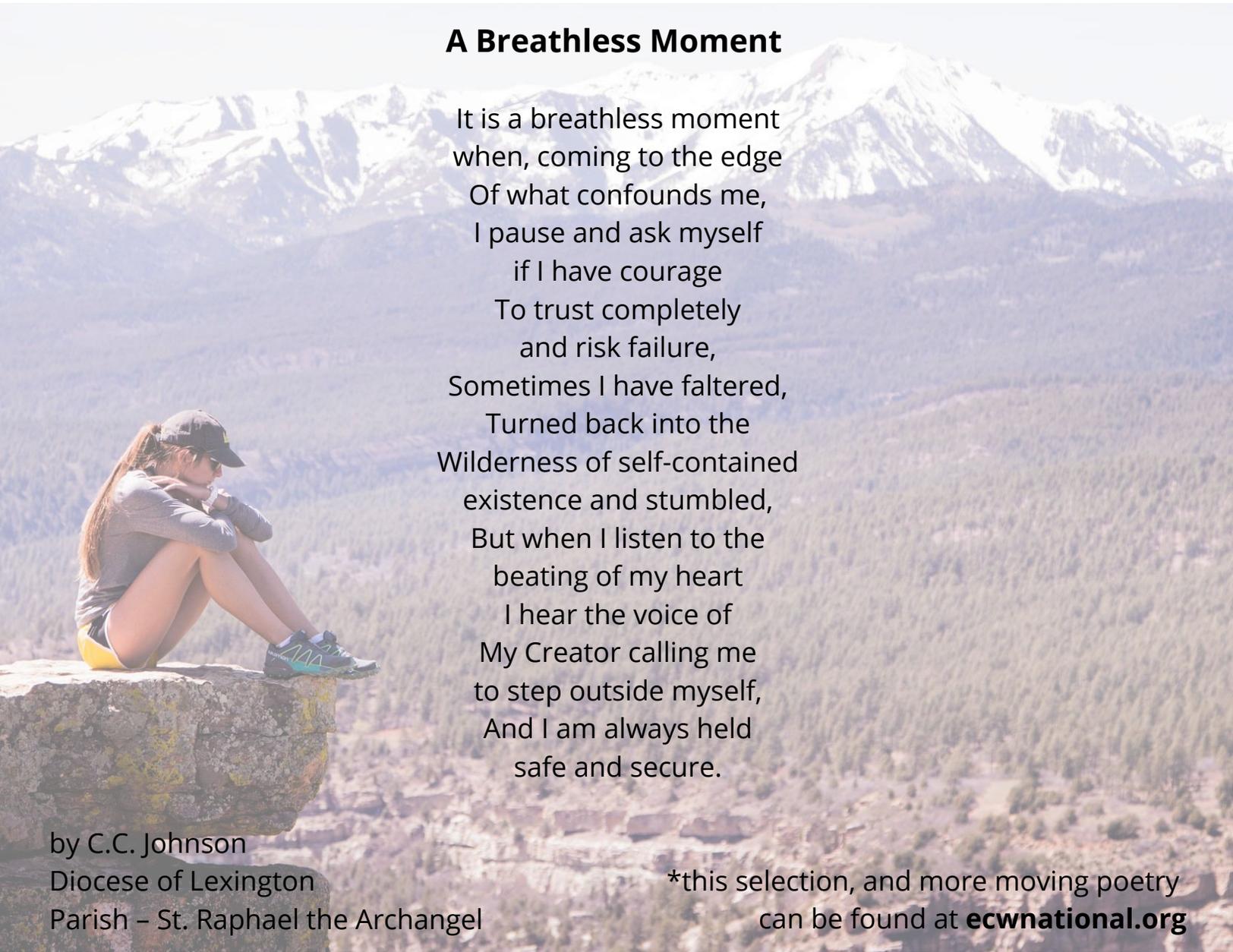


# The Carpenter's Helper

*This Week..we recognize the Episcopal Church Women*

## A Breathless Moment

A woman with long hair, wearing a grey long-sleeved shirt, yellow shorts, and a black cap, is sitting on a large, grey rock ledge. She is looking out over a vast, scenic landscape of rolling hills and mountains. In the background, there are large, rugged mountains with patches of snow under a clear sky. The overall scene is peaceful and majestic.

It is a breathless moment  
when, coming to the edge  
Of what confounds me,  
I pause and ask myself  
if I have courage  
To trust completely  
and risk failure,  
Sometimes I have faltered,  
Turned back into the  
Wilderness of self-contained  
existence and stumbled,  
But when I listen to the  
beating of my heart  
I hear the voice of  
My Creator calling me  
to step outside myself,  
And I am always held  
safe and secure.

by C.C. Johnson  
Diocese of Lexington  
Parish – St. Raphael the Archangel

\*this selection, and more moving poetry  
can be found at [ecwnational.org](http://ecwnational.org)

**During the COVID-19 pandemic, St. Thomas's is alive and well.** We are worshiping via live streaming on YouTube (See our YouTube Channel and hit Subscribe!). The full-text bulletins for our services can be found on our website, and by email request.

We also continue to respond to the needs of the Newark Community through our collaboration with the Newark Empowerment Center and others. Those who would like to support our work may do so by going to our "Giving to St Thomas's" page.

Our prayers are with all those who are ill, all who are caring for them, and all who are striving to hear the voice of God in these challenging times. May God bless you and keep you, now and always. For more, see the Episcopal Diocese of Delaware COVID-19 site.

# **ECW** *As the eyes, ears, hands, and heart of Christ in the world, we will persist in the work of healing, justice, and peace.*

Women are empowered by working collaboratively with women's organizations, program and ministry groups within and outside the Church as well as with global and local networks working for gender justice, and with individual women compelled to risk transformation of the world, the church and their own lives in Christ.

The concept of Episcopal Church Women as an organization/ministry began in 1871 at the General Convention. One Hundred and Twenty-five years later in 1985, the Triennial Meeting adopted by laws forming Episcopal Church Women, Episcopal Church USA.

The first Triennial Meeting was held in 1874 at the same time and place as the 31st General Convention. Sixty-six women from five states gathered. By the second Triennial Meeting in 1877, 48 dioceses had formally organized groups. Much of the early work of the Women's Auxiliary was to address the problem of funding women who dedicated their lives to mission work. (Thus, the reputation as fundraisers goes back to the beginnings!) From the beginning collections were taken up which led to the formation of The United Thank Offering. This effort, as well as the number of participants, grew at each Triennial Meeting. In preparation for the 1898 Triennial Meeting, 25,000 collection boxes were sent out which gathered in \$82,818.56.

The increasing number of participants, almost 2000, prompted a change in 1907 in which only the officers of diocesan organizations could attend the Triennial Meeting in order to seat everyone and have manageable groups in small mission studies. The Triennial Meeting in 1922 reflected the new concept in program and organization. A National Board had been formed to oversee the direction of the work of the women, in not only supporting missionaries, but in social service, religious education, and prayer and worship.

Between 1958 and 1985, the role of women in the Church went through numerous and significant changes. As women were accepted into seminaries and ordained, elected to vestries and as deputies to General Convention, and otherwise mainstreamed, the Episcopal Church Women struggled with their position in the Church. Over time, the national structure changed from being a part of the National Church structure to an independent group culminating in the creation of the National Board of the Episcopal Church Women in 1985. This Board, with minor changes, continues to function.

FROM THE SPIRIT OF MISSIONS, VOLUME XXXVII FOR 1872: What we do seek is to quicken the Missionary spirit, and then to urge it to prompt and generous action. We want your gifts of time, of strength, of intellect, not for ourselves, but for our Master. There are hundreds more, earnest, faithful, devoted women, who would be cheered and whose hands would be strengthened, if they could only know what is being done by their sisters in the Church, and could see their offerings, small and insignificant as they seem, increased and multiplied by union with the gifts of others. We wish all to draw closer to each other, labor more unitedly, to give more nobly, to pray more fervently, and to follow Christ's example.

**Vision – Our vision for all women of the Episcopal Church is that we become a vibrant blend of all ages, coming together as a peacemaking, healing part of the Church. We aspire to be a Godspark – shining and sharing the love of Christ.**

\*to learn more about ECW, please visit [ecwnational.org](http://ecwnational.org)