

By Melodie Woerman

FOR DECADES JOURNALISTS

have concluded their typed manuscripts with a signal to the composing room that this was the end of the story. No more copy was coming.

That symbol is –30–.

No one knows exactly how it originated — maybe a Morse code carryover, or a conflation of handwritten Roman numerals — but it has been placed at the end of submitted copy and news releases for years.

For me, here, it signifies that this is the last edition of *The Harvest* I will produce as editor. I'm retiring at the end of May.

I first was entrusted with creating a publication on behalf of the people of the Diocese of Kansas by Bishop William Smalley, when he offered me the job as contract editor in March 1994.

Somehow, I was able to produce a 12-page newspaper by April, featuring two prominent Episcopalians on the front page — Kansas U.S. Sen. Nancy Landon Kassebaum and Massachusetts Bishop David Johnson, who were speaking at a conference in Topeka.

Since then, including the one you now are reading, I have produced a total of 168 issues.

The first 87 of them were under the name *Plenteous Harvest*, and for 10 years we printed eight or nine issues a year.

In June 2004, I asked Bishop Dean Wolfe if he would consider converting the job of contract editor into a staff position of director of communications, so there could be a more wholistic approach to communications to better serve the diocese. Without batting an eye he said yes.

I spent that fall redesigning the look of the newspaper, and in January 2005 we launched it with a new name — *The Harvest*. It remained a tabloid-sized newspaper, printing six times a year, with 57 issues in that format.

In the spring of 2015 we made the leap to a quarterly color magazine, adapting again to better serve the way people consume information. We have printed 24 issues of *The Harvest* in this format, and Bishop Cathleen Bascom has remained a staunch supporter.



This is the top half of the first newspaper I produced, in April 1994. The issue you now are reading is number 168 in my 27 years as editor.

As editor I have had the chance to do some truly remarkable things, good and bad — serve on the news team at five General Conventions, cover two bishop elections, take photos of the arson fire that destroyed St. David's, Topeka, interview survivors of the Joplin tornado in what was left of their home.

I've taken photos of four Kansas bishops, three presiding bishops, one archbishop of Canterbury and retired Cape Town Archbishop Desmond Tutu — as well as first editions of the 1611 King James Bible.

I was blessed to have my work recognized with Polly Bond awards from Episcopal Communicators — 59 in all, including four times as best newspaper, three awards for best photo, several best writing awards, and second and third-place recognitions in everything from layout to website.

But now, it's time to bring this chapter to a close. I will miss reading all your church newsletters and finding the bits of information that turned into inspiring stories. I will miss the smell of ink on paper when I pick up leftover copies from the mailing house.

I will miss all of you.

I believe communications is part of God's very essence — God speaking creation into existence in Genesis, and Jesus described as the Word in John's gospel — and I am deeply grateful to have had the chance to share this ministry with you through these pages for the past 27 years.