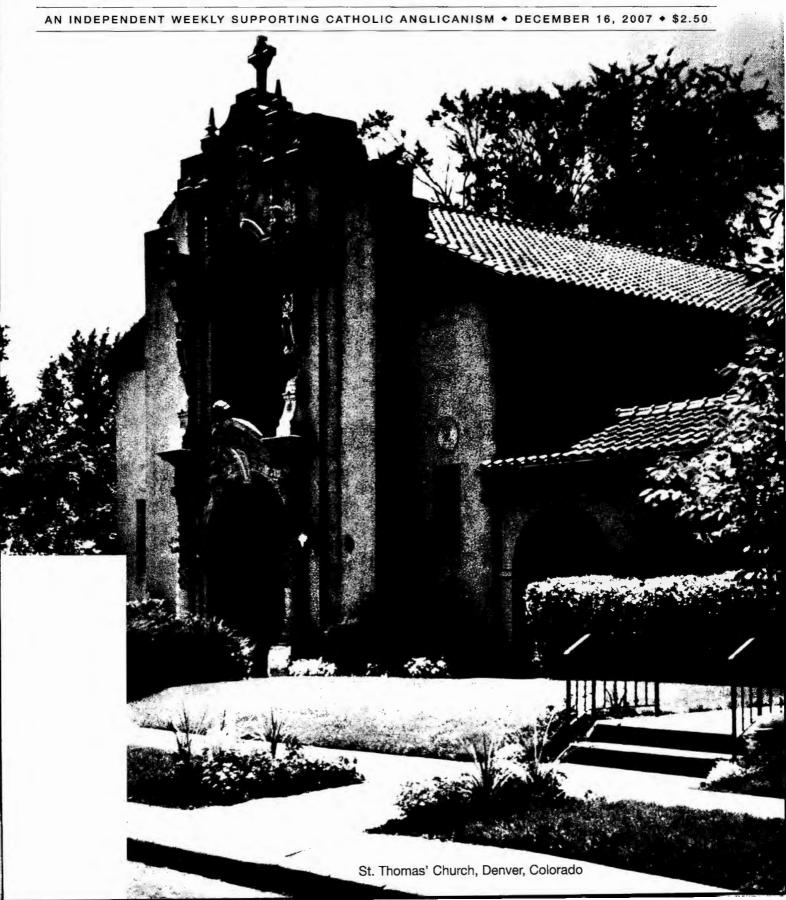
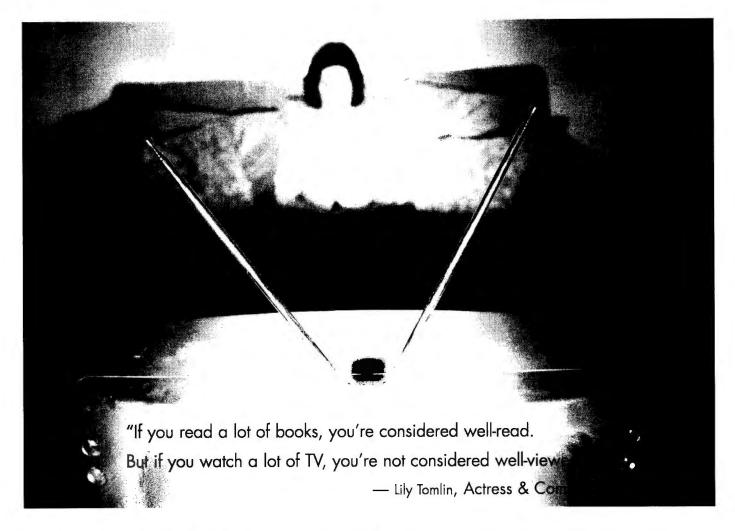
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St. Thomas' Church, in the Park Hill neighborhood of Denver. The building (Spanish Colonial Revival and Baroque) was designated a historic landmark by the city and county of Denver in 1977. The feast of St. Thomas is Dec. 21.

St. Thomas' Church photo









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SUNDAY'S **READINGS**

Present and Future Hope

'Why then did you go out?' (Matt. 11:7)

The Third Sunday of Advent (Year A), Dec. 16, 2007

BCP: Isaiah 35:1-10; Psalm 146 or 146:4-9; James 5:7-10; Matt. 11:2-11

RCL: |saiah 35:1-10; Psalm 146:4-9 or Canticle 3 or 15; James 5:7-10; Matt. 11:2-11

God's kingdom will come (Advent 1) led by God's chosen one (Advent 2). The readings of Advent 3 give us a glimpse of what that day will be like and challenge our motivations.

Isaiah paints a glorious picture: "The desert shall rejoice and blossom (vs. 1); the eyes of the blind shall be opened, the ears of the deaf unstopped" (5). It is a vision full of hope for a people who lived a difficult life from day to day. We may face trials and tribulations in the present, but our God is leading us to a brighter future.

John the Baptist, now in prison, sends a message via his disciples to Jesus: "Are you he who is to come, or shall we look for another?" (Matt. 11:3). In both Matthew and Luke, Jesus responds with an extensive quote from Isaiah 35.

For some early Christians the fulfillment of Isaiah's prophecy seemed to be just around the corner. So the Letter of James advises, "Be patient, therefore, brethren, until the coming of the Lord" (5:7).

If one can move beyond a literal interpretation of the text in Isaiah and Matthew, what are the spiritual characteristics of God's emerging kingdom? Clearly healing is one (the blind can see, the deaf hear, the lame walk), a theme reinforced by Psalm 146:8: "the Lord opens the eyes of the blind." Another is adding something not now present (waters in the wilderness, streams in the desert).

But perhaps the most important sign that God's kingdom is coming will be perceived in the way believers change. "The ransomed of the Lord shall return, and come to Zion with singing; ... sorrow and sighing shall flee away" (Isaiah 35:10). "Happy is he whose help is the God of Jacob" (Psalm 146:5). "The poor have good news preached to them" (Matt. 11:5).

As so often happens, Jesus takes things a step further. He challenges the crowd: "What did you go out into the wilderness to behold?" (Matt. 11:7). In fact, the question is asked three times (vs. 8 and 9). Since bold and italic type were not available in those days, this is scripture's way of telling us that this question is really important: "Why then did you go out?" Our motivations and expectations will affect what we see and hear.

Episcopalians are more apt to go to church on Sunday mornings to experience God than out to the wilderness. Wherever one goes, Jesus' question follows us: Why did you go?

Look It Up

Aside from Isaiah 35, a description of the works of the predicted Messiah also will be found in Isaiah 29:18-19 and 61:1.

Think About It

If your own blindness and deafness were to be healed, what would you be able to see and hear?

Next Sunday

The Fourth Sunday of Advent (Year A), Dec. 23, 2007

BCP: Isaiah 7:10-17; Psalm 24 or 24:1-7; Rom. 1:1-7; Matt. 1:18-25 **RCL**: Isaiah 7:10-16; Psalm 80:1-7, 16-18; Rom. 1:1-7; Matt. 1:18-25

Bishop Lipscomb to Join Roman Catholic Church

The Rt. Rev. John B. Lipscomb, Bishop of Southwest Florida from 1997 until he stepped down Sept. 15, announced Nov. 20 that he has written to the Presiding Bishop asking that he be released from his ordination yows

Bishop Lipscomb will be the fourth bishop of The Episcopal Church to become a Roman Catholic this year.

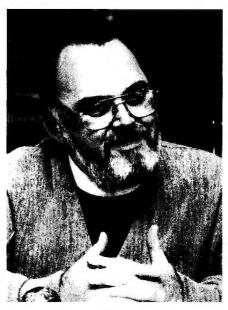
in order to leave The Episcopal Church and become a Roman Catholic.

Bishop Lipscomb, 57, spoke that same day about his actions with his successor, the Rt. Rev. Dabney Smith. Bishop Lipscomb also explained his decision in an open letter to the diocese.

"Through a long season of prayer and reflection Marcie and I have come to believe this is the leading of the Holy Spirit and God's call to us for the next chapter of our lives," Bishop Lipscomb wrote. "I am most grateful for the opportunity you, the people of the Diocese of Southwest Florida, gave me to serve as your bishop and to participate in the life of the Anglican Communion.

"I believe God is now calling us to continue our ministry to serve in the healing of the visible body of Christ in the world," he continued. "I am convinced our Lord's deepest desire is for the unity of the Church."

Bishop Lipscomb will be the fourth bishop of The Episcopal Church to become a Roman Catholic this year. Bishop Dan Herzog of Albany moved shortly after his retirement in January. Bishop Clarence C. Pope, retired Bishop of Fort Worth, returned to Roman Catholicism in August, and Bishop Jeffrey N. Steenson of the Rio



Diocese of Southwest Florida photo Bishop Lipscomb: "I am convinced our Lord's deepest desire is for the unity of the Church."

Grande announced his intentions at the House of Bishops' meeting [TLC, Oct. 14].

Bishop Wolfrum, Retired Colorado Suffragan, Dies



Bishop Wolfrum

The Rt. Rev. William Harvey "Dub" Wolfrum, Bishop Suffragan of Colorado from 1981 to 1991, died Nov. 24 after becoming ill on Thanksgiving Day. He was 81.

In a short note posted on the internet, Bishop Wolfrum's wife, Beverly, stated that Bishop Wolfrum "suddenly sort of wilted" while awaiting the arrival of his children on Thanksgiving Day.

After the retirement of the Rt. Rev. William Frey as Bishop of Colorado in 1990, Bishop Wol-

frum became the acting ecclesiastical authority in the diocese until the election of the Rt. Rev. Jerry Winterrowd the following year. Bishop Wolfrum returned to the diocese as an assisting bishop, 1993-1995. He also helped with an episcopal transition in the Diocese of Wyoming, serving as an assisting bishop in

that diocese in 1996 and 1997. He remained active in retirement, serving for a number of years as bishop-in-residence at Trinity Church, Jeffers, Mont. Recently he and his wife relocated in Colorado in order to be closer to their children.

A native of Missouri, Bishop Wolfrum graduated in 1959 from the Episcopal Theological Seminary of the Southwest (ETSS) in Austin, Texas. He was ordained priest in the Diocese of Colorado the following year. After ordination he served at a number of congregations in New Mexico until 1968, when he accepted a call as chaplain and chairman of the department of religion at St. Stephen's School in Austin.

Bishop Wolfrum had been rector of St. Alban's, Worland, Wyo., for 10 years when he was elected Bishop Suffragan of Colorado in 1981.

He is survived by his wife and their three children.

No Agreement Yet on Central Florida Protocol

Following a joint meeting of the standing committee and diocesan council, the Rt. Rev. John W. Howe, Bishop of Central Florida, announced Nov. 15 that they were unable to agree upon a protocol for congregations desiring to secede from The Episcopal Church.

The rejected proposal would have permitted a departing congregation to purchase property from the diocese, provided that they participate in a parish discernment process devised and supervised by the diocese and make adequate provision for those members who desire to remain with The Episcopal Church.

The diocese's special task force on property planned to revise the document, Bishop Howe said, for reconsideration at a Dec. 13 joint meeting.

Participants to the joint meeting were able to agree on the language of a proposed amendment to the diocesan constitution for consideration at the annual convention to be held Jan. 25-26 at St. James' Church, Ormond Beach.

The proposed revision to Article 3 of the diocesan constitution would delete a statement that the diocese gives an unqualified "adhesion" to the constitution and canons of The Episcopal Church.

The proposed revision states that Central Florida is a "constituent member of the Anglican Communion, a fellowship of those duly constituted dioceses, provinces, and regional churches in communion with the See of Canterbury, upholding the propagating of the historic faith and order as set forth in the Book of Common Prayer. So long as The Episcopal Church is the constituent member province of the Anglican Communion with rightful jurisdiction in this country, the Diocese of Central Florida declares its adhesion to the same and accedes to its constitution and canons."

The proposed revision to the constitution passed the joint meeting on a unanimous voice vote.

Sisters Helping Sisters



The chapel at St. Mary's Retreat House, Santa Barbara, Calif., which is owned by the Sisters of the Holy Nativity.

The Sisters of the Holy Nativity have had a ministry of hospitality since they established St. Mary's Retreat House in Santa Barbara, Calif., in 1954. As of Thanksgiving weekend, they have expanded their mission to include hospitality to three displaced Roman Catholic nuns from the Sisters of Bethany.

The three Sisters of Bethany have been evicted from their small home convent in Santa Barbara by the Roman Catholic Archdiocese of Los Angeles. The home is to be sold in an effort to raise money to cover the \$600 million settlement associated with the clergy abuse cases in that archdiocese. A modest home such as that of the Sisters of Bethany in Santa Barbara's eastside neighborhood can sell for approximately \$600,000.

The Sisters of the Holy Nativity issued an open-ended invitation to their Roman Catholic sisters to stay with them as long as needed. While this is not expected to be a permanent solution, it will give the Order of Bethany, based in Guatemala, time to consider options for the three sisters.

Sister Abigail, SHN, has said she welcomes the Sisters of Bethany because "they are my sisters," but hopes that the media and others will not intrude on their retreat center.

Second Canadian Bishop Joins Southern Cone

Two bishops have left the Anglican Church of Canada and, in a related development, the Anglican Province of the Southern Cone recently extended an invitation to Canadian Anglicans "in serious theological dispute" with their dioceses and or the national church.

The Rt. Rev. Malcolm Harding, who retired as Bishop of Brandon in 2001, announced he will return to active ministry under Presiding Bishop Gregory Venables and the Anglican Province of the Southern Cone. He follows the Rt. Rev. Donald Harvey, who became the first Canadian bishop to defect when he left Nov. 16. The Southern Cone [TLC, Dec. 9] is one of the Anglican Communion's 38 provinces.

Both Bishop Harding's announcement and the invitation to join the Southern Cone came at the start of a meeting in Burlington, Ontario, Nov. 22-23 that was convened by the Anglican Network in Canada (ANiC), a group aligned with the Anglican Communion Network.

"We want to provide a fully Anglican option-a safety net-for others who feel their church has abandoned them and who are contemplating the same action," Bishop Harvey said.

Bishop Harvey, the moderator of ANiC, served as Bishop of Eastern Newfoundland and Labrador from 1992 to 2004.



Tony Copple/Anglican Network in Canada photo The Rt. Rev. Donald Harvey (left), moderator of the Anglican Network in Canada (ANIC) and retired Bishop of Eastern Newfoundland and Labrador, congratulates the Rt. Rev. Malcolm Harding, retired Bishop of Brandon, during an ANIC meeting on Nov. 22.

Watershed Moment

Delegates to the annual convention in the Diocese of Fond du Lac adopted four resolutions in support of the primates' communiqué from Tanzania. One of the resolutions calls on the rest of The Episcopal Church to line up behind the communiqué as well. Convention met Oct. 19-20 in Appleton, Wis.

In votes by orders, convention approved resolutions that commend the concept of an Anglican Covenant in general and in particular the covenant language presented in draft form during the primates' meeting; and two asking The Episcopal Church "to provide meaningful pastoral support and oversight to the dissenting minority, having involved persons from that dissenting minority in discussion." Another resolution calls on the national church to "cease its participation in the litigation that is at present before the courts and any future such litigation of the type referenced in the Dar es Salaam communiqué."

Another resolution approved on a voice vote calls for the continuation of the practice of giving individuals the option to redirect their gifts away from the program portion of the General Convention budget.

In his address, the Rt. Rev. Russell Jacobus, Bishop of Fond du Lac, said the Anglican Communion, The Episcopal Church, the diocese, and most of its congregations were all at a watershed moment in their histories.

"Is there hope for the church? I believe so, but the hope lies with us," he said. "If the church is to succeed, it will be because we have taken seriously our responsibility as Jesus' followers. If the church fails, it could be because we were not as attentive to proclaiming the good news as we needed to be."

other delegates In business. approved a budget for 2008 of \$634,900, an increase of approximately \$20,000 over the previous year. The budget is based on a new variable rate assessment formula of 10-12 percent, half the 25 percent assessment rate in place 10 years ago.

Youth Presence

As its initial act of business, the convention of the Diocese of Vermont voted to give seat and voice to five members of the first official Vermont Convention Youth Presence. Convention met Nov. 2-3 at the Cathedral Church of St. Paul in Burlington.

Thirteen youth and two young adults prepared by attending a training and orientation session on the nature and workings of diocesan convention. The youth and young adult contingent rotated among the five seats allotted to them. They were also invited to attend a lunch and meeting with Presiding Bishop Katharine Jefferts Schori, who was a guest of the diocese during the week of convention.

Delegates adopted by substantial margins all six proposed resolutions. One calls on congregations to conduct in-house environmental audits of their energy use, consumption patterns and facility management; a second merges two congregations that had been effectively functioning as a single parish for many years; a third establishes a committee to plan a capital campaign; and two deal with clergy compensation.

The sixth resolution, sponsored by seven members of the 2006 General Convention deputation, commends

the national Executive Council for a resolution adopted in October in response to the statement developed in New Orleans by the House of Bishops.

Convention opened with a public forum at the University of Vermont's Ira Allen Chapel led by Bishop Jefferts Schori. Some 560 Vermont Episcopalians, Burlington area college students, a group of Episcopalians from Western Massachusetts, and local residents heard the Presiding Bishop offer a theological framework for understanding the importance of the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) in the mission of the church and to engage her in conversation following her address.

In addition to speaking at the convention dinner and preaching at the Eucharist, Bishop Jefferts Schori spent an hour responding to questions from convention delegates.

Delegates unanimously approved a balanced \$1.2 million budget for 2008. The approved amount includes a 16percent commitment to the program budget of General Convention, up from 15 percent in 2007, and representing the intention to work toward the full asking of 21 percent. It also includes a commitment of 0.7 percent to international development projects aimed at achieving the MDGs.

Anne Clarke Brown



Anne Clarke Brown/Mountain Echo

Presiding Bishop Katharine Jefferts Schori responds to a question from a convention delegate Nov. 3 at the Cathedral of St. Paul in Burlington, Vt.

Endowment Grows

The Diocese of Western Kansas' convention received a progress report from Bishop Jim Adams on plans to endow the episcopacy. Convention met Oct. at Ascension-on-the-Prairie Church, Colby.

For the first time, the diocese did not receive any financial support from The Episcopal Church in 2007, an immediate cut of 15 percent from the previous year's budget. In order to ensure in perpetuity that there are sufficient funds to support the office of the bishop, the diocese began an endowment fund several years ago. Bishop Adams reported that the principal in the Western Kansas Growth Fund doubled during the past year.

In his address to convention, Bishop Adams presented sobering attendance statistics and lamented the loss of national church support. He noted the diocese would have to rely increasingly on its own resources for survival.

"I believe it is time to pay more, if not all, of our attention, at least for a while, to the diocese in which we serve," he said. "Several dioceses in times past have decided to focus totally on themselves, with outreach they chose themselves, until such time as the diocese was financially stable, and in doing so, have moved their dioceses to a place where they can now support the whole of the church, sometimes many times what they did when they were just surviving."

Convention approved the only resolution proposed. The resolution requests the leadership at each congregation to furnish a plan in writing for how it intends to increase in numbers and diversity and how it intends to build up diocesan neighbors through networking.

A balanced budget of \$338,000 was adopted for 2008.

Marking 100 Years

Recapping a year marked by the departure of the diocesan bishop, the annual convention in the Diocese of Eastern Oregon reflected on the past and received an update on the search

for a new bishop. Convention met Oct. 12-14 at St. Andrew's Church, Pineville, with the theme "Past, Present, Future."

Convention adjourned 100 years to the day that General Convention accepted Eastern Oregon as a missionary district. It was recognized as a diocese in 1970.

Attendance at convention was more than twice the number planners anticipated. In remarks to convention, Douglas Harder, outgoing standing committee president, said the diocese was basically in good shape. He predicted a bright future.

Among the few business items during convention, delegates approved a 2008 budget of \$539,000, a slight increase over the previous year.

Youth and MDGs

In one way or another, the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) were everywhere at the convention of the Diocese of lowa Nov. 2-3.

Bishop Alan Scarfe's convention address focused on the diocesan strategic plan One Church Many Locations. He found the MDGs a natural fit globally and locally with all four sections of the plan: Strengthening Congregations, Shared Resources, Next Generations and Anglican Identity.

Bishop Scarfe restated his commitment to youth and young adult ministry, groups who are often unchurched. He also called attention to those in retirement who are asking questions about life and the meaning of eternity.

The bishop reminded delegates that "our companion relationship with Swaziland is not just one way and money. For example, it is a gift from the people in Swaziland to entrust the Rev. Charles Kunene to Iowa for the next two years to teach us about evangelism and learn our ministry development process." A group of Iowans will go to Swaziland in 2008 to assist in the 40th anniversary of their diocese and participate in an evangelism campaign.

The MDGs theme was expressed in worship at a U2charist on Friday night, and meditations interspersed with the business of convention.

Convention adopted a resolution that commits the diocese to paying the entire asking from The Episcopal Church. Among the 11 resolutions approved were ones supporting the MDGs, another encouraging the diocese to become a place of sanctuary for "those who have traveled here as immigrants," and another that condemns the sin of racism.

Delegates approved a balanced \$1.3 million budget for 2008.



Sharpe Smith/Iowa Connections

Youth process into the Cathedral Church of St. Paul in Des Moines at the start of a U2charist held during the annual convention in the Diocese of Iowa Nov. 2.

Promising Results for Florida Prison Ministry

The Diocese of Florida has welcomed an independent report on the state's faith- and character-based prisons that found that prison ministry is an effective tool in turning around the lives of inmates.

The Urban Institute's report released Oct. 19 stated Florida's Faith and Character-Based Institution (FCBI) program resulted in lower rates of inmate recidivism and better adjustment to civilian life.

Faith-based prisons were "absolutely a great thing," the Rt. Rev. Samuel Johnson Howard, Bishop of Florida, told THE LIVING CHURCH. The Urban Institute report confirms all of the "anecdotal evidence we have that prison ministry is effective in reducing recidivism and helps improve inmate behavior."

Six months after leaving North Florida's Lawtey Prison and its volunteer-led rehabilitation programs, none of the 189 inmates surveyed were back behind bars, whereas 2.1 percent of a comparison group had re-offended.

The report, titled "Evaluation of

Florida's Faith and Character-Based Institutions," noted that more research needed to be done, as a similar study of female participants in the faith-based program found no significant difference in recidivism in relation to those who did not participate in the program.

"Our findings are strictly preliminary, but they suggest that inmates throughout the Florida prison system could benefit from self-betterment programs that are volunteer run and virtually budget neutral," said Nancy La Vigne, the study's lead author.

The report found that the FCBI program improved inmate behavior, prepared inmates for successful re-entry into society, promoted family reunification and job prospects for released prisoners, and improved the "prison environment for inmates, volunteers, and staff."

The voluntary FCBI program includes worship and scriptural study. personal relationship building through mentoring and small-group activities, and character development programs



The Rev. Sandy Tull, a missioner to prisons from Trinity Church, St. Augustine, Fla., with Bishop Howard at her ordination to the priesthood.

on parenting and anger management. The programs are funded and operated by volunteers.

Bishop Howard said prison ministry was a priority for the Diocese of Florida. "There are 30,000 inmates in this diocese, and 30,000 Episcopalians," he said.

Three priests had been "ordained for work in the prisons," Bishop Howard noted, and a fourth ordination was scheduled for Dec. 9.

The interdenominational Kairos Ministries is at work in half of North Florida's prisons, Bishop Howard said, and "day in and day out, there is an Episcopal presence in a third of our prisons." Last year the diocese inaugurated Camp St. Elizabeth, a residential summer program where the children of inmates received one-on-one adult supervision.

Bishop Howard said his experiences as an assistant U.S. attorney and criminal lawyer before he entered the ministry had taught him that prison outreach was vital both to the spiritual health of inmates and to society.

(The Rev.) George Conger



For the past two summers, the Diocese of Florida has conducted a week-long camp for children whose parent or parents are incarcerated. Held at the diocese's Camp Weed, Camp Elizabeth is for children ages 8 to 11 who reside in the diocese. Following the week, each child is assigned a mentor to meet with for a year. The camp is modeled after a similar one at Camp Allen in the Diocese of Texas.



Steve Waring photo

Bishop Monterroso (left) speaks to the Rev. Gay Jennings (right), a member of the national Executive Council, with the assistance of a translator, Giovanna Serrano.

Bishop Puts Clergy to the Test

Those who seek ordained ministry in the Diocese of Costa Rica first must prove that their call is genuine. Then they go through continuing education that includes submitting sermons for possible grading before they are delivered, said the Rt. Rev. Hector Monterroso, provincial secretary of the Anglican Church in Central America and Bishop of Costa Rica, in an address to Executive Council on Oct. 27.

Costa Rica and the other four dioceses of the Central American Province were originally part of The Episcopal Church before thev became autonomous under terms described in a 1997 covenant agreement. The Episcopal Church has covenant agreements with churches in five Anglican provinces. In addition to Central America, they are: Brazil, Mexico, the Philippines, and Liberia, which is a diocese within the province of West Africa. All five covenant partners were invited to the meeting of the national Executive Council, Oct. 26-28 in Dearborn, Mich., to report on their church and observe council deliberations.

Through a translator, Bishop Monterroso said anyone who wants to become a priest is encouraged to plant a church or otherwise prove that the

call is genuine. Bishop Monterroso was consecrated four years ago. Last year he requested that priests under his care submit their sermons to him in advance of delivery as a way "to promote cohesion and unity" and to "convey to our members that we are respectful of them through our work."

Bishop Monterroso has equally high expectations of diocesan property. which he expects to be in use throughout the week. "We can't afford to use them once a week for worship and drinking coffee," he said. Several congregations in the Diocese of Costa Rica have started after-school programs. They feed, educate and care for the children of prostitutes, drug addicts and criminals. Bishop Monterroso ran a similar program during the 17 years he served as a parish priest in Guatemala prior to his consecration.

Prior to ordination, he was a mechanical engineer with a beverage manufac-When he inquired ordination, his bishop told him that he would have to quit his job as an engineer.

"I opened a mission with no salary," he said, "but I did have faith, and up to this point I have lacked for nothing, so I know that this work can be done."

Steve Waring

Correction

The article about the Soup Kitchen at the Church of the Holy Apostles in New York City [TLC, Nov. 25] contained some factual errors.

The annual operating budget of the Soup Kitchen is \$2.6 million. Out of its annual operating budget, the soup kitchen contributes \$130,000. not \$2.6 million, toward parish expenses, and \$71,000 depreciation to the building fund to offset the wear and tear on the physical plant. The church sustained a serious fire in 1990. In substantial part, because of the church's reputation in sponsoring the Soup Kitchen, a large number of people and institutions contributed to a \$7 million restoration, which was completed in 1994. As a result of the restoration, the nave became a flexible use space. enabling it to double as the main dining room of the Soup Kitchen.

The person who envisioned and established Holy Apostles' Soup Kitchen was the Rev. Rand Lloyd Frew, rector from 1978 to 1984. rather than the Rev. Paul Cochran.

Brazilian Churches Reach Baptism Agreement

The Anglican Church of Brazil was one of five signatories to an ecumenical document which mutually recognizes the validity of baptism among five branches of the Christian faith.

The five churches have agreed that "re-baptism" is not necessary when a person changes affiliation from one branch to another. In the document the five agree that "the baptism instituted by Christ is fundamentally a free gift of God," the signatories also "accept the baptism as a basic link of the unity that is given by the faith in the same Lord."

Igreja Episcopal Anglicana do Brasil (IEAB), is joined by the following churches: Roman Catholic, Evangelical Lutheran, Presbyterian United and Syrian Orthodox.

Episcopal News Service contributed to this report.

Many Web Improvements

In recent weeks we have been involved in the launch of our new website. Let me rephrase that. Some of us at The Living Church have participated in the transformation of our website from a functional, somewhat homely place to a spiffy, more contemporary site where we expect to do a considerable amount of business. For obvious reasons I have stayed out of the development phase of this project, for having me involved would be like expecting a possum to drive a semi-trailer.

Fortunately, we have people on hand who are far more technologically adept than I, and it is they who deserve the credit for seeing to it that this vision became a reality. It hasn't been easy.



We're proud of our new website, but we're not done with it.

Michael O'Loughlin, our director of associated publications, is a patient person, but his persistence has been tested by this project. First, there was the matter of dealing with members of the firm that is the designer and host of the website. Working with these people required more security clearance than entering the Atomic Energy Commission.

The launch took far longer than we expected. There were glitches to solve, particularly with the "shopping cart" (I had similar difficulty at the grocery store the other day when one of the wheels became stuck.) Our shopping cart problem involved difficulties in ordering subscriptions and paying online with a credit card. Once that got straightened out, we encountered other problems.

Finally, the site was launched, but not everyone could see it. In some places people were able to view the new site, but in others, visitors were sent to the old one. An acquaintance near Baltimore called to say he liked the new look, but when I tried to go to it, I got the old site. This is a normal process on the web, but trying to explain to him how this could be left me nearly speechless. The following day, when I tried again I was sent to a different website. After a couple of days, we were running smoothly, and so far the feedback from website visitors has been positive.

Along the way, we've had some unusual occurrences. In mid-October, visitors to our old website found themselves directed to a site intended to reach inquirers to Islam. It seems as though hackers got into our server during the night and somehow were able to send our visitors elsewhere. In particular, those who tried to get to the online version of *Illuminations* found themselves in a strange place. One person who called me actually thought TLC was trying to promote Islam!

That problem also affected our e-mail, as people who tried to send messages to us were told we don't exist. Some good-natured correspondents had some fun with that, even though it didn't seem very humorous to us at the time. Fortunately, it was all cleared up in a few hours.

For some site visitors, the new look has required some changes. *Illuminations* subscribers are now asked to log in using the e-mail address they used when they first registered, and that has required several subscribers to contact us after they unsuccessfully flogged their memories to recall that e-mail.

One big improvement is the site's "search" function. In the past, site visitors and staff alike often were frustrated when they tried to search for archived articles they knew they'd read online. The new "search" box on the homepage is a quick and convenient way to search for an article by keyword. Many readers will find this comes in very handy.

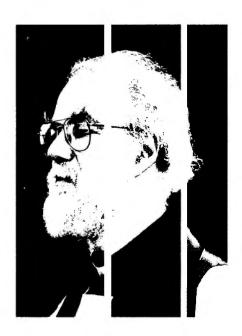
We regard our website as an important tool in disseminating news and features of The Episcopal Church and the Anglican Communion. About 10 years ago, some focus groups held in different parts of this country revealed to us that people were not relying on print publications to obtain information. The circulation these days of newspapers and magazines, including this one, has proved those findings.

We're proud of our new website, but we're not done with it. We will be making improvements and additions to it during the weeks ahead, and eventually we'll be able to offer online subscriptions to TLC. If you haven't visited the site yet, I hope you will soon. I think you'll be impressed.

David Kalvelage, executive editor

Did You Know...
According to Time
magazine, only half
of Americans can name
a single gospel.

Quote of the Week
Michael King, a member
of the Royal College
of Psychiatrists (England),
to Anglican bishops
on the need to support
gay clergy and laity:
"The Church has
a wonderful opportunity
to lead rather than to be
dragged along kicking
and screaming."



The archbishop has drawn criticism about his apparent reticence concerning the Communion, but he didn't seem hesitant to criticize American leadership.

Unhelpful Remarks

While many Anglicans are waiting for the Archbishop of Canterbury to express his thoughts about the meeting of the House of Bishops of The Episcopal Church, which he attended in September, the archbishop decided to communicate about something else: American foreign policy. In an interview with a British Muslim magazine, Archbishop Rowan Williams called the United States the only "global hegemonic power," and compared the carrying out of power by the U.S. with the heyday of the British Empire.

Instead of offering his own comments on his experience with the bishops in New Orleans [TLC, Oct. 14], the archbishop wrote to the primates of the Anglican Communion and to members of the Anglican Consultative Council [ACC] in which he summarized their responses to that meeting but not his own. He mentioned that his own reflections of what he experienced will be made in future correspondence.

The archbishop has drawn criticism from some quarters about his apparent reticence to speak his mind concerning current problems besetting the Communion, but he didn't seem hesitant to criticize American leadership. In the magazine interview, Archbishop Williams blamed the U.S. of trying to accumulate influence and control, and mentioned the "chosen nation myth of America, meaning that what happens in America is very much at the heart of God's purpose for humanity."

With the Anglican Communion threatening to implode, it would seem that the Archbishop of Canterbury could serve people under his care more effectively if he were to address the current crisis rather than criticize another nation's foreign policy. It's one thing for the archbishop to oppose the war in Iraq. but quite another to rail at another nation's leadership. His remarks were not helpful.

Safeguard of Audits

From time to time it is helpful to remind parish vestries, wardens and treasurers of the need for an annual audit to take place in their congregations. Not only is an audit by an independent certified public accountant called for in the church's constitution and canons, it is responsible stewardship.

It is a rare occasion when financial mismanagement is uncovered in a church, but unfortunately, there are instances of it taking place. An annual audit can be a safeguard against embezzlement, fraud, or other misuse of church funds. Most parish treasurers are incredibly honest as they carry out the often-thankless role of administering a church's finances. Still, an audit can provide a valuable oversight of church volunteers.

All dioceses and diocesan institutions are expected to have their accounts audited annually. Parishes and mission churches need to do the same.



The 2006 Christmas pageant at St. James' Church, Pullman, Wash.

St. James' Church photo

THE CHRISTMAS РАGEANT

More than Just Sentiment

By Lyndon Shakespeare

My 8-year-old daughter has 16 lines to learn. She has been asked to play Mary in the Christmas pageant. Her friend, Ally, is to play Elizabeth. She has only five lines to learn. The familiar lineup of characters will be played by the other children of the parish. The children are excited; the parents are excited. I expect pageant Sunday to be a day of camera flashes,

video tripods and full pews. Everybody loves a show.

Christmas pageants are popular in many of our churches; but it goes without saying that some people dislike them with a passion. People concerned with the integrity of the biblical voices point to the blatant blending of characters and story lines from St. Luke and St. Matthew. Some, concerned with over sentimentalizing of the Christian story, see pageants as

the worst of Christian *schmaltz*. Still others complain that pageants exploit the innocence of our children, allowing for moments of "cuteness" for the benefit of smiling grandparents. All of these concerns are valid.

Yet pageants have at least two redeemable qualities: They provide an account of the Christian narrative without explanation, and they give our children the chance to make the

(Continued on next page)

READER'S VIEWPOINT

(Continued from previous page)

Christmas story our story, and not just another epic tale or national myth.

In my preaching and teaching, I find that I do my fair share of explaining the biblical story. Whether it's the story of Ruth or the dragons in Revelation, the people of my parish desire some assistance in order to make some sense of what is being proclaimed as good news. As clergy, most of us are equipped with seminary training, a commentary or two, and access to myriads of articles and

reflections on the internet. These resources can make the act of explaining the characters and plot of the Bible a workable task. This task, however, can often obscure the strange world of the Bible with its demand to have us adjust our world to the world of scripture, and not the other way around. This is not so in the Christmas pageant.

When the pageant is performed, the words on the biblical page are transformed into the actions and speech of our children. There are no explanations given, no commentary offered. The angelic announcement is spoken by an angel (albeit an angel that produces giggles more than fear); the

voice of the Magnificat sounds from a child (a child only a few years younger than Mary was thought to be); the hesitant support of Joseph is embodied in a hesitant 10-year-old. The language of these characters is not filtered in any way. The script is simply the language of the gospels. The awkwardness of a chancel full of shepherds, angels, random animals, and a child Mary with a baby Jesus only heightens the realism of the story being told. In those 20-odd minutes, the scripture is truly being performed.

There are other pageants, of course, that try to tell a story of significance. I am thinking of the annual Thanksgiving Day play that my 6-year-old was in this year. The national myth around thankful pilgrims and generous Native Americans gets performed in front of

many of the same people filling the pews on the Sunday of the Christmas pageant. Yet there is a difference between the two performances. Whereas the Thanksgiving play sustains the national myth of God's special providence toward the people of this country, the pageant performed near Christmas is not about how special we are, but bears witness to the God who journeyed into the far country of human flesh to bring salvation to all. And unlike Thanksgiving, the Christmas pageant doesn't try to gloss

forgotten lines and give cues to angels and shepherds. Performing the story of Christmas is not about getting everything perfect. It takes others to know the story; to guide action, provide cues, and to make sure that we are faithful to the narrative. The pageant is not the place for innovation. The children learn the lines that were taught to other children last year, and the years previous to that.

My daughter now has one more thing to do after school for the next few days. She has to learn her lines. I



over the more awkward details. In our pageant, we witness the scandal of Mary's pregnancy, the reality of angels and archangels, the oddness of a king born in the company of barnyard animals. It's all there, acted and spoken with the received words from the evangelists' testimony. As the cameras silently "click" (thank God for digital technology!), the story of the man born to be king is performed in front of our very eyes. In that moment, the strange world of scripture becomes our world: Glory to God in the Highest; peace, goodwill among all people.

I am certain that the proclamation of the angels will be a crowd pleaser. Even if a line is forgotten, the story will not come to an embarrassing end. Kneeling in front of the children are the volunteer directors, who provide showed her that the words she's memorizing come right out of the Bible. She was as interested in that fact as much as any 8-year-old might be. For the moment, getting a grasp of the words is clearly where her focus remains. When it comes time for pageant Sunday, the script will be put away, the costumes donned, and once again, the angels will sing the good news, that this night a Savior has been born. Come, let us adore him.

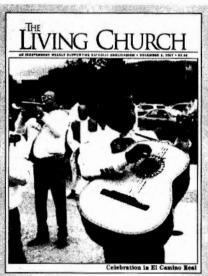
The Rev. Lyndon Shakespeare is the rector of All Saints' Memorial Church, Navesink, N.J.

The Reader's Viewpoint article does not necessarily represent the editorial opinion of THE LIVING CHURCH or its board of directors.

Landmark Event

The report of the events in El Camino Real [TLC, Dec. 2] seemed somewhat incomplete.

Yes, we enjoyed the picture of the mariachi band on the cover, and the mention of the bilingual service, the Hispanic congregations, and Bishop Frade's sermon. But there was much more. El Camino Real has gone through difficult times in recent years. We deliberately took several years for intensive self-



Yes, we enjoyed the picture of the mariachi band on the cover ... but there was much more.

appraisal, restructure, and renewal with much new leadership and vision, then finally the choice of a new bishop. Mary Gray-Reeves was chosen, with strong purpose, on the second ballot at our convention.

On the day before the ordination, Presiding Bishop Jefferts Schori met with us. In her poised and pleasant way, she fielded questions of all kinds about TEC, the Anglican Communion, and the House of Bishops, responding for several hours with unfailing accuracy, candor, clarity and wisdom. Magnificent leadership! It was clear that she and Mary Gray-Reeves already have formed an effective working relationship. After splendid service, Bishops Mary and Katharine assembled all of the El Camino Real female priests and deacons for a picture to commemorate the landmark event; the first female Presiding Bishop, the first female bishop in California, and all the "sisters." They broke into spontaneous song, "We are marching in the light of God."

The service also included the traditional

Four Winds smoke ceremony by our own Native American priest, and glorious music of all kinds. Thus we were celebrating three things: our development as a multicultural diocese, our enthusiasm that blessed and gifted women are in their rightful places, and our profound gratitude that we have completed our healing and renaissance as a diocese. It was a day of great significance and joy!

Gordon W. Gritter San Luis Obispo, Calif.

A Profound Question

I was particularly taken, in the Editor's Column [TLC, Nov. 25] by a seeker's question, "Why does the Church spend so much time arguing about sex?" In my opinion, it is the most profound of all questions, because it tries to resolve the central, critical, dysfunction of the Church since the Resurrection of our Lord.

This dysfunction has been deeply entrenched in the Church, and our individual psyches, for almost 2,000 years because of our unwillingness to give up what the rest of the world

believes and accept the biblical fact that women are part of the restored human race, and eligible for leadership. We, the Church, have acted, contrary to scripture, as if women are "less saved" than men; as if the punishments for sin at "the Fall, (subservience for women, dominion for men) have not been voided by what Jesus did; as if he died and rose from the dead in vain; as if neither men nor women are restored as persons made fully and equally in the image of God. The unresolved theological/anthropo-

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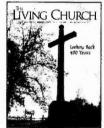
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LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

(Continued from previous page)

logical question, leading to our present Christian dysfunction, is, "Do the benefits of Jesus' death and resurrection extend to all human beings in the Church, or not?"

If we say that they do not, we shall forever believe that all women and all homosexual men are not "masculine enough" to be eligible for leadership in the Church.

> (The Rev.) Robert G. Hewitt Westcliffe, Colo.

Reasons to Leave

I have fled The Episcopal Church (TEC) to another province for a variety of reasons. I reject the term "The Episcopal Church" because there are other Anglican provinces that include in their titles "The Episcopal Church." The American church, by adopting that title, shows characteristic arrogance since the other provinces would be implicated in whatever TEC does.

Principal among the reasons for flight is that I don't believe the Catholic Church has a magisterium outside the *consensus fidelium*. If there were a magisterium, the Bishop of Rome has far greater plausibility than the General Convention of the Protestant Episcopal Church in the United States.

When a bishop of The Episcopal Church can claim that the church made the Bible and the church can change the Bible, where the second "church" means the General Convention; when the matter of the ordination of women can be elevated to a major doctrinal issue (ignoring the Virginia Report on the matter of reception) and a Court of High Commission can be appointed to bring those dioceses which do not accept this doctrinal change into line (its chairman seemed to lament the absence of any power to punish); when the meaning and definition of holy matrimony can be changed unilaterally to make fathers unnecessary (I wonder if those bishops who publicly support bisexuality realize that by so doing, they are also abandoning monogamy); when Jesus Christ becomes only one way to salvation; and the church makes a host of

other major changes in the *consensus* fidelium and is prepared to force through these strange new doctrines by any means, especially the civil law, then it is time to cut out.

(The Rev.) Joseph P. Frary St. Andrew's Theological Seminary Manila, Philippines

Biased Commitment

The interview with Bishop Steenson [TLC, Oct. 14] reveals an amazing perception of biblical authority for a bishop in The Episcopal Church: "For all my ordained life I have looked to John Paul II and now Benedict XVI as the authoritative voice for interpreting scripture and tradition."

With that biased commitment to authority, one wonders both how and why he sought ordination in this church and received it. May we expect other non-Anglicans in the House of Bishops to rise now from their seats and to depart to their various true homes?

(The Rev.) John B. Wheeler Annapolis, Md.

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- M. Jason Abel, Organist and Choirmaster, Christ Church, Alexandria, Va.

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Appointments

Elizabeth Beach-Hacking is coordinator of the United Thank Offering, 815 Second Ave., New York, NY 10017.

The Rev. **Hugh W. Chapman** is rector of St. Philip's, 321 W Union St., Jacksonville, FL 32202.

The Rev. **Tim Cherry** is rector of Holy Cross, 322 S Church St., Paris, TX 75460.

The Rev. Linda English is vicar of St. George's, 168 W Arizona St., Holbrook, AZ 86025-2824.

The Rev. Laura Thomas Howell is rector of Trinity, 44 E Market St., Bethlehem, PA 18018-5989.

The Rev. **Neil Kaminski** is rector of St. Francis', 3545 Cahaba Valley Rd., Indian Springs Village, AL 35124.

The Rev. Canon **Mary Koppel** is canon for youth and young adult ministry at Christ Church Cathedral, 2919 St. Charles Ave., New Orleans, LA 70115.

The Rev. **James B. Lemler** is priest-incharge of Christ Church, 254 E Putnam Ave., Greenwich, CT 06830-4871.

The Very Rev. **Edward O'Connor** is dean of St. Andrew's Cathedral, PO Box 1366, Jackson, MS 39215-1366.

The Rev. **Richard Osborne** is priest-incharge of St. Christopher's, 2211 S Bluff St., Wichita, KS 67218.

The Rev. **Jim Price** is rector of St. William Laud, PO Box 1057, Pittsburg, TX 75686-3057.

The Rev. **Daniel Repp** is vicar of St. Paul's, 312 E Main St., Plymouth, WI 53073.

The Rev. Katy Smith is deacon at St. Stephen's, PO Box 43677, Birmingham, AL 35243-0677.

The Rev. **Michael Snider** is rector of Christ Church, 200 Duhring St., Bluefield, WV 24701.

The Rev. **Andrew Walmisley** is chaplain at Seabury Hall, 480 Olinda Rd., Makawao, HI 96768.

The Rev. **Deb Woolsey** is rector of St. Alban's, PO Box 202, Sussex, WI 53089.

Ordinations

Priests

Central Pennsylvania — Christian Brady, assistant, St. Andrew's, 208 W Foster Ave., State College, PA 16801-4822; Dee Calhoun, Veronica Chappell

Quincy — Steven Capitelli, Bill Easterling, William Miller, Joe Scalisi, assistant, Redeemer, 222 S Palm Ave., Sarasota, FL 34236-6799; Steven Schlossberg, John Wallace.

Southeast Florida — Scott Petersen, curate, Good Shepherd, 400 Seabrook Rd., Tequesta, FL 33469.

Deacons

New Hampshire — Susan Langle.

Quincy — Christian Maxfield, youth and family pastor, Cathedral of St. Paul, 3601 N North St., Peoria, IL 61604-1599; Tom Myers, St. Uriel's, PO Box 237, Sea Girt, NJ 08750-0237; Christian Whatley.

Resignations

The Rev. Josh Acton, as rector of St. Luke's, Dallas, TX.

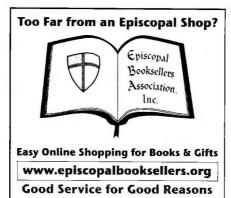
The Rev. **Victor Lawson**, as missioner of the Nelson Cluster Regional Ministries in the Diocese of West Virginia.

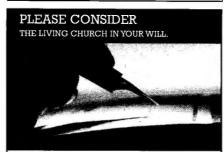
The Rev. Laurie Moyer, as priest-in-charge of Grace, Middleway, WV.

The Rev. **Jed Roseberry**, as curate at St. Luke's, Dallas, TX.

Retirements

The Rev. **Dennis Hayward**, as rector of St. Luke's, St. Albans, VT.





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Or you can donate to our annual campaign with MC/VISA by calling **TOLL-FREE** at 1-800-211-2771. The Rev. **Bill King**, as deputy to the bishop for congregational development and clergy deployment in the Diocese of Alabama.

Clarification

The Rev. **John Taliaferro Thomas**, has been appointed head of St. Andrew's-Sewanee School, 290 Quintard Rd., Sewanee, TN 37375-3000, effective July 1, 2008.

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FULL-TIME PRIEST: Trinity Episcopal Church, Melrose, FL. We are a small, family church with a big footprint in our rural lakeside community in north central Florida. Trinity is a diverse and multi-talented congregation that emphasizes worship, fellowship, outreach and pastoral care. We seek a preacher of strong faith who will help us grow spiritually and bring the gospel to our everyday lives; a skilled leader who is approachable, sincere and goodhumored; a pastor to nurture, minister to and counsel our parishioners; a teacher who is committed to Christian formation and will lead us to a deeper spiritual life; an ecumenical leader who will help us broaden our outreach mission, and a community builder who will help our church grow. Reply to Search Committee, P.O. Box 1463, Melrose, FL 32666, visit us at www.trinitymelrosefl.org, or cmail gsilver@diocesefl.org.

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HALF-TIME VICAR: St. Stephen the Martyr, E. Waterboro, ME. Pastoral-sized church in growing southern Maine seeks a priest to guide our growth and stewardship in this congregation known for local outreach. Preaching, pastoral care and liturgy skills a plus. See website at www.ststephenwaterboro.org and contact CDO at Diocese of Maine, 143 State St., Portland, ME 04101, 1-800-244-6062, or e-mail vwiederk@episcopalmaine.net. Vicki Wiederkehr,

FULL-TIME DIRECTOR OF YOUTH MINISTRY: Good Shepherd Episcopal Church, Centennial, CO. seeks an experienced, engaging and team-oriented individual to help grow our active youth program by building relationships with youth and their families, sharing faith, leading and overseeing weekly youth programs, and planning local outreach events and summer mission trips. College degree and previous youth ministry experience preferred. Competitive salary and compensation package based on experience. E-mail resumes to: The Rev. Craig MacColl at cmaccoll@gshep.org. For more info visit www.gshep.org.

FULL-TIME DIRECTOR OF PASTORAL CARE AND SPIRITUAL FORMATION: Experienced Anglican priest at The Falls Church, Falls Church, VA, inside DC beltway, to provide proactive leadership, advocacy and direction for extensive pastoral care and spiritual formation ministries, staff and key volunteers. Will ensure effective programs and ministries. Strong administrative and organizational skills; loves pastoral ministry. Contact Martha Berg, (703) 574-4405, or mberg@thefallschurch.org.

HALF-TIME VICAR: St. Jude's Episcopal Church, Ocean View, HI. Southernmost Episcopal church in the U.S. in remote part of the island of Hawaii (the Big Island) seeks priest with strong faith, entrepreneurial spirit, and leadership skills able to channel abundant energies of small (ASA 25) congregation. Church is a central point of outreach in community of 4,800 people and growing. Priest asked to be involved in local community. Located near southern tip of island of Hawaii, in dry area near volcano and coffee-growing region, with abundant outdoor activities. Brand new 3-bedroom vicarage provided. Send resume to MinistryOpenings@episcopalhawaii.org. or call Canon Liz Beasley at (808) 536-7776, ext. 326.

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The Rev. William C. Thiele, p-i-c frthiele@gmail.com
Sun Low Mass 8, Sung Mass 10:30, HD anno.

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(570) 724-4771 Website: www.stpaulswellsboro.org The Rev. Gregory P. Hinton, r Sat Eu 7, Sun Eu 8, 10; Wed H Eu 12

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CHURCH OF THE HOLY COMMUNION (843) 722-2024 218 Ashley Ave. Website: www.holycom.org The Rev. Dow Sanderson, r; the Rev. Dan Clarke, c; the Rev. Patrick Allen, assoc. Sun Mass 8 (Low) 10:30 (Solemn High)

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