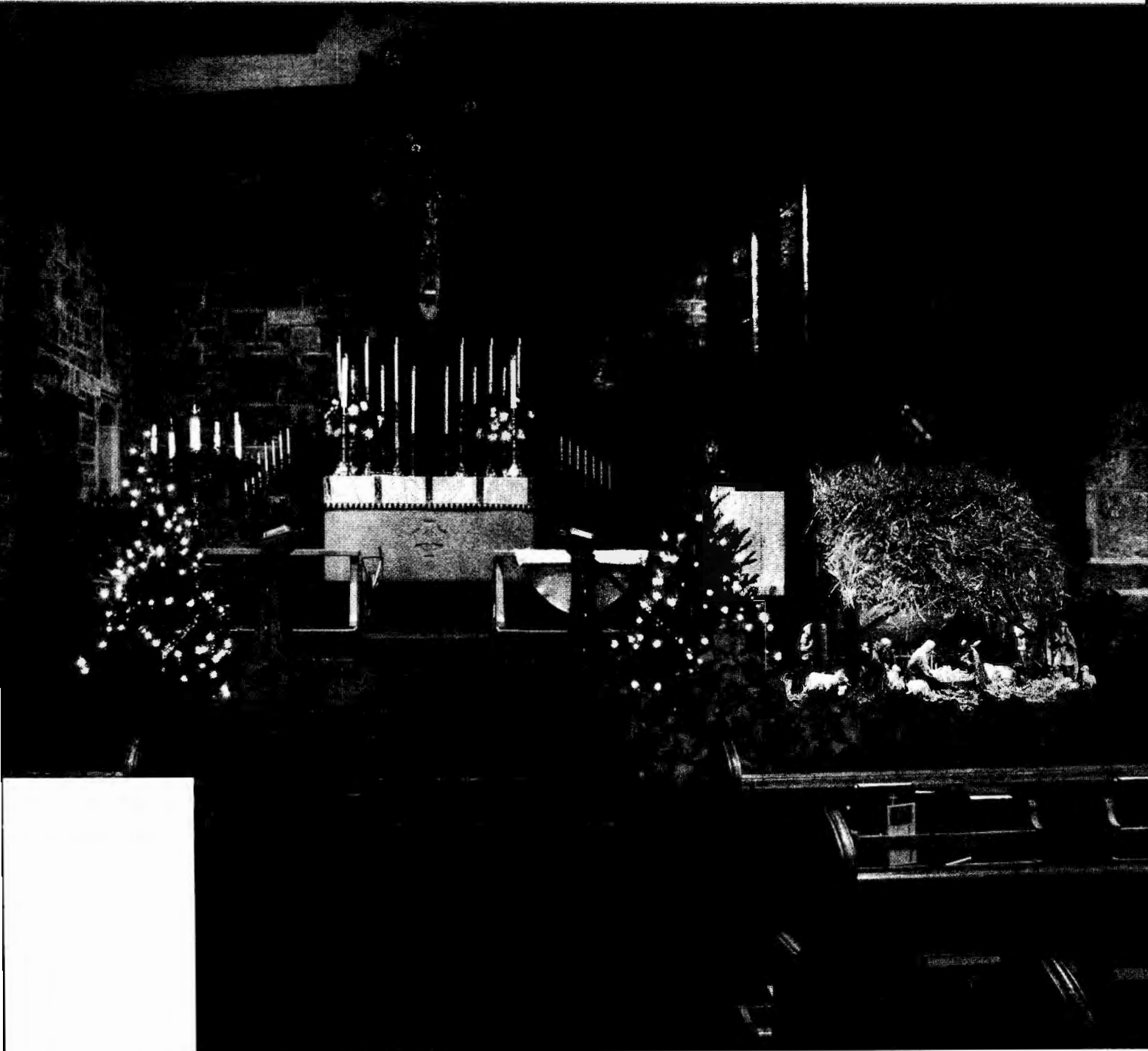


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Much the Same

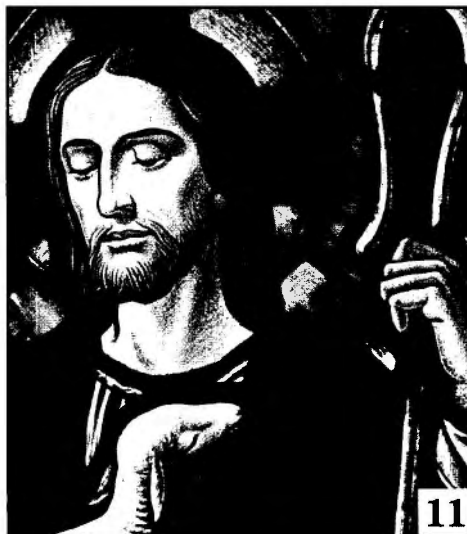
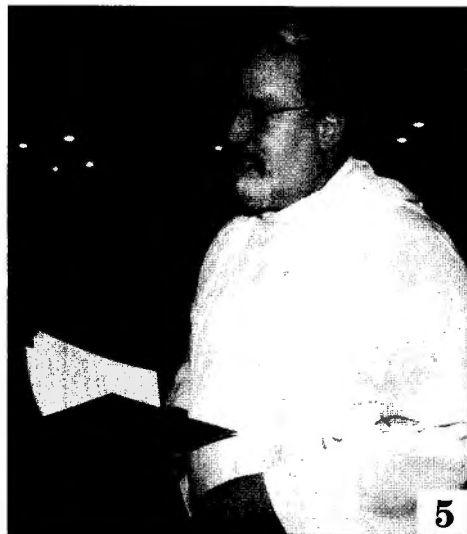
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On the Cover

The sanctuary of Grace Church,
Alexandria, Va., at Christmas.

Deborah Crabtree photo



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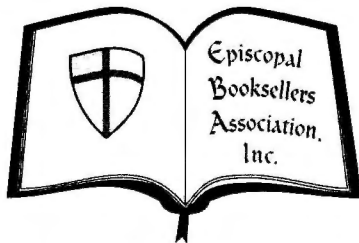
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SUNDAY'S READINGS

Coming Kingdom

*'Behold, a young woman shall conceive and
bear a son'*
(Isaiah 7:14)

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

This prophecy of Isaiah is often lifted out of context and used as a firm prediction of the birth of Christ. This is sometimes called "christianizing the Old Testament." In fact, Isaiah is speaking to Ahaz, the distressed king of Judah, who is confronted with pressure from Israel and Damascus to join in their anti-Assyrian alliance. In short, Ahaz seeks political self-preservation in the absence of authentic, personal faith.

Isaiah tells Ahaz: "Ask a sign of the Lord your God" (7:11). Like most political rulers, Ahaz is unwilling: "I will not ask, and I will not put the Lord to the test" (7:12). Actually it is Ahaz who seeks to avoid this test of faith.

For Isaiah, faith includes patient waiting upon God, a patience sustained by an unquenchable optimism about the divine purpose. Undeterred by the stubbornness of Ahaz, Isaiah proclaims what the sign will be: A child is to be born shortly or has been born (tenses in Hebrew are practically non-existent) and his name will be Immanuel (God with us). Neither the circumstances of his birth nor his parentage were integral to his function

as a sign of the imminence of God.

Isaiah may have been drawing on the widespread ancient theme of a divine mother and redeemer child. Nevertheless this child would bring a new orientation toward the holy God, a transformed outlook upon the world. And this vision of the coming kingdom is exactly the point where Matthew can find common ground.

Matthew was undoubtedly writing to Jewish Christians who lived in the Hellenistic world. He tells the story of the birth of Christ with great delicacy, emphasizing God's role, Mary's faithfulness, and Joseph's willingness to trust the angel. And, of course, he quotes Isaiah 7:14 to demonstrate again the linkage between the faith of the covenant people and events occurring in the present.

While it is widely understood that the story of the miraculous birth appeared late in the preaching of Christianity, the theological point being affirmed is clear: The will of God is once again manifesting itself in human affairs; the faith, trust, and full participation of ordinary people (in this case, Mary and Joseph) was essential to the task at hand.

Look It Up

For Jews, an authentic Messiah would have to be descended from David. Thus in addition to Matthew 1:1-17, the genealogy of Jesus is mentioned in Acts (2:30, 13:23), Romans 1:3 (today's epistle), 2 Timothy 2:8, and Revelation 22:43-45.

Think About It

Where is God's kingdom breaking forth in your world? Are you a spectator or a participant?

Next Sunday

The First Sunday after Christmas (Year A), Dec. 30, 2007

BCP and RCL: Isaiah 61:10-62:3; Psalm 147 or 147:13-21; Gal. 3:23-25; 4:4-7; John 1:1-18

Canadian Leaders Accused of Breaking Agreements

Canadian Anglican leaders are practicing either "denial" or "hypocrisy" when they criticize bishops who cross diocesan jurisdictions to minister to congregations unable to accept the liberal drift of the Canadian church, according to Presiding Bishop Gregory Venables, Primate of the Anglican Church of the Southern Cone.

Archbishop Fred Hiltz, Primate of the Anglican Church of Canada, and the church's regional archbishops released a letter Nov. 29 calling on Archbishop of Canterbury Rowan Williams to condemn the initiative because it contravenes the Windsor Report, previous Lambeth resolutions, as well as historic church canons and practice.

"They have broken historic agreements — the Lambeth Conference agreement and the Windsor Report — to go ahead with blessing same-sex relationships," Bishop Venables said in an interview with the *Anglican Journal* of Canada. "To use that argument against us is a bit odd to say the least."

In November, the General Synod of the Southern Cone [TLC, Dec. 9] approved a plan to provide pastoral care to Anglicans in North America who are unable to accept the theological innovations which have characterized the Anglican Church of Canada and The Episcopal Church over the past 30 or so years. The decision by General Synod follows a similar decision by the House of Bishops of the Southern Cone in September.

Briefly...

The Rev. **Robert Certain**, who retired as rector of St. Margaret's Church, Palm Desert, Calif., earlier this year, has been nominated to the federal Defense Health Board. The board was formed last year to provide assistance to the Department of Defense on health issues for troops returning from the Middle East.

Report: Turnaround Strategy Needed

Declining church attendance, low morale at the Episcopal Church Center, and reports of conflict from an increasing number of congregations are evidence of the need to develop and implement a turnaround strategy, according to an interim report released by the Committee on the State of the Church.

"Part of the responsibility of the Committee on the State of the Church is to serve as sentinel for The Episcopal Church," the report states.

The State of the Church Committee is appointed by the president of the House of Deputies, Bonnie Anderson, and is comprised solely of deputies who serve for the current triennium.

The three-page report is divided into

areas of encouragement and areas of concern. Encouraging signs cited in the report include increased giving per member, increasing benefit contributions to retirees by the Church Pension Fund, the staff reorganization of the Episcopal Church Center, and the planting of seven new campus ministries during the past year.

In addition to declining attendance and parish conflict arising from reduced finances and the consecration of the Bishop of New Hampshire in 2003, the report notes the high level of debt incurred by seminarians and dioceses' failure to support the program budget of General Convention.

Episcopal News Service contributed to this report.

Council Officers Address Bishops' Concerns

Civil litigation is the only recourse available when the canons of The Episcopal Church are not honored, according to two officers of Executive Council who recently wrote to a group of retired bishops.

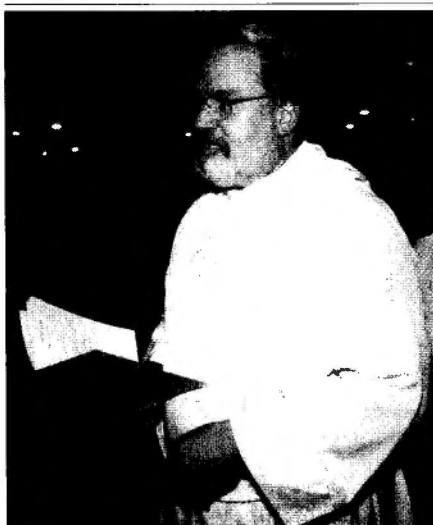
Four retired bishops — C. FitzSimons Allison of South Carolina, Maurice M. Benitez of Texas, Alex D.

Dickson of West Tennessee, and William Wantland of Eau Claire — wrote a series of letters to Executive Council requesting publication of the amount of money spent to date on legal and court fees in church property disputes. They also asked council to stop suing congregations that have left [TLC, Aug. 5].

"We reiterate that the Executive Council has no wish or intention to 'level charges' or to 'threaten litigation,'" said council members Josephine Hicks and John Vanderstar, who are lawyers. "But we and the presiding officers have a responsibility to protect the assets of The Episcopal Church and to preserve its structure. That structure, as set forth in the constitution and canons, confers on the General Convention the sole authority to make changes in the identity and responsibilities of dioceses.

While declining to provide the actual sum spent on litigation, Ms. Hicks and Mr. Vanderstar said, "We give you our professional opinion that the church is receiving extraordinary value for the funds it does spend."

Episcopal News Service contributed to this report.



Bob Kinney photo

The Very Rev. Douglas Travis enters St. Matthew's Church, Austin, Texas, Nov. 8 for a festival Eucharist celebrating his installation as seventh dean and president of the Episcopal Theological Seminary of the Southwest.



Elizabeth Beasley photo

Convention in session in the Diocese of Hawaii under the leadership of a new bishop.

Hopeful Start

About 200 delegates of the Diocese of **Hawaii** gathered in convention Oct. 26–27. The tone of the gathering was enthusiastic and hopeful for the first meeting of the convention with the Rt. Rev. Robert L. Fitzpatrick as diocesan bishop. He was elected at last year's meeting and then consecrated on March 10.

Convention passed a 7.5-percent increase in clergy compensation for 2008. This is the third year of substantial salary increases: 10 percent for 2006 and 7.5 percent in 2007. In 2005, the Clergy Compensation Review Committee began pushing for substantial raises over the next five years in order to bring clergy compensation to more competitive levels, especially given the high cost of living in the state. While in previous years the raises met with objections and occasional debate in the convention, this year the increase was approved with no discussion.

Half of the 10 resolutions brought before the convention concerned the goals of a strategic plan adopted in 2004 — conversion, transformation, evangelism, and reducing administrative structures and costs.

Resolutions presented by the

Strategic Plan Implementation Task Force called on all congregations and commissions to develop strategic plans, and encouraged the bishop, diocesan council, and the bishop's staff to assist in such efforts and to recognize those that live out the plan's goals. Another resolution called for an annual diocesan convocation, beginning in 2009, to focus on mission and formation. All the task force's resolutions passed.

Among other business, a balanced budget of \$2.6 million was approved easily, having been discussed previously in regional meetings throughout the diocese.

(The Rev. Canon) Elizabeth Beasley

Wait and See

Waiting on both the Lord and earthly leaders seemed to be on the minds of many who attended the convention of the Diocese of **Western Louisiana** Oct. 12–13 at a hotel convention center in Alexandria.

Meeting two weeks after the conclusion of the House of Bishops' meeting [TLC, Oct. 14] and with no formal response yet made by the Archbishop of Canterbury and the primates, convention was awash

with speculation about what may be ahead for The Episcopal Church and the diocese.

The Rt. Rev. D. Bruce MacPherson, Bishop of Western Louisiana, urged convention to allow the process outlined by the Archbishop of Canterbury to proceed to its conclusion before contemplating any decisive move.

Convention defeated a resolution which "called upon our Bishop, standing committee, and General Convention deputation to initiate plans and to take all possible action toward the creation and implementation of the pastoral scheme proposed in the Dar es Salaam communiqué and to take all possible action to ensure that the Diocese of Western Louisiana remains fully in communion with the wider Anglican Communion."

A \$1.4-million budget for 2008 was approved.

Faith Once Delivered

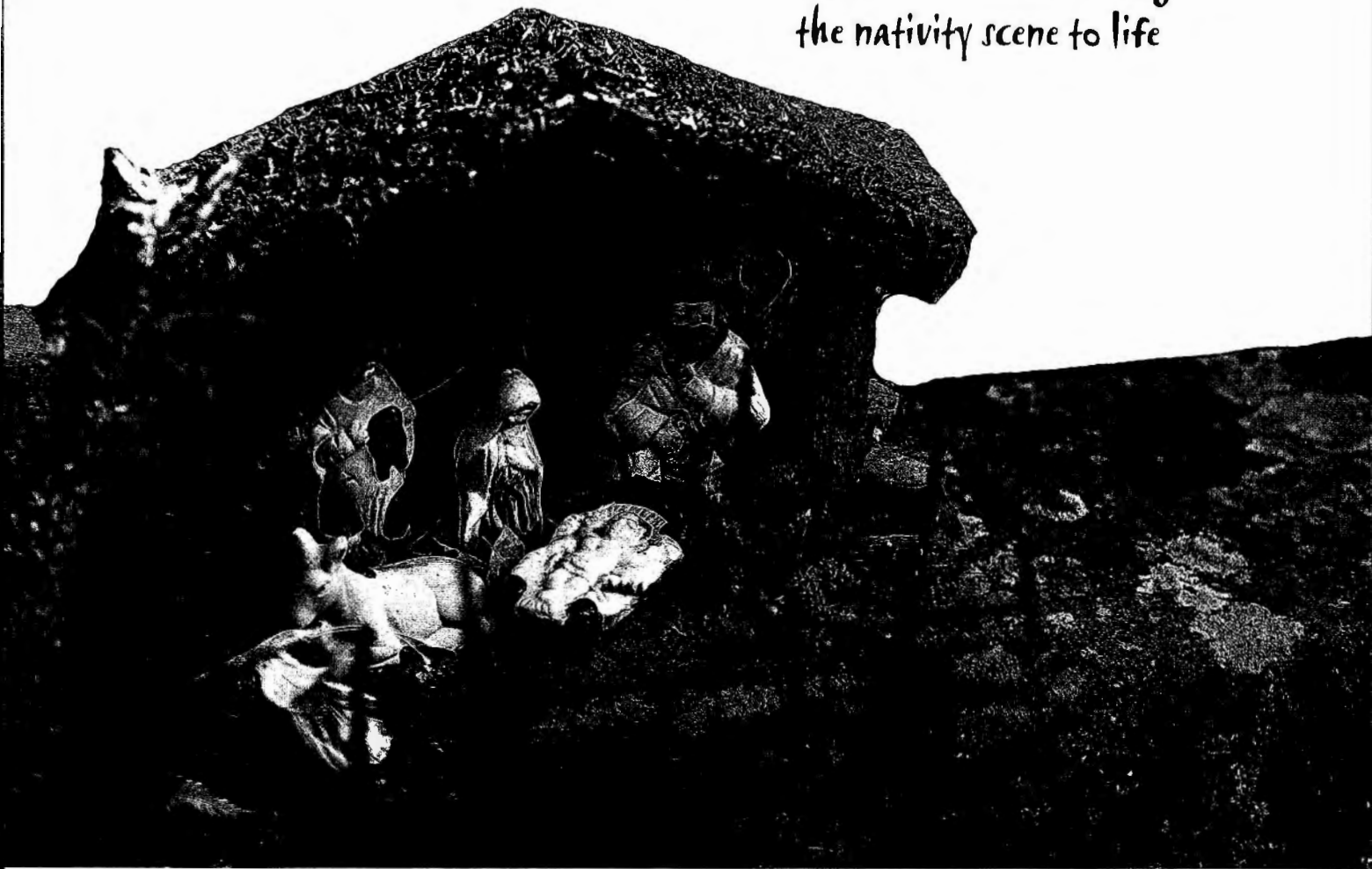
There were no resolutions and no contested elections during the annual synod of the Diocese of **Springfield**, which met Oct. 26–27 at Trinity Church, Jacksonville, Ill.

Bishop Peter Beckwith of Springfield noted in his address that little had changed in the Anglican Church either nationally or internationally. It was not a very positive picture, he said, before highlighting several promising diocesan initiatives during the past year.

"But before becoming too proud of what we do, let us not deny the fact that our situation remains very tentative," he said. "If we are not successful in the struggle with discouragement and complacency, our situation will become more tentative as ministry levels decline and souls are lost. Let us not neglect this opportunity to recommit ourselves to the faith once delivered to the saints and to the saving ministry which flows from it by keeping 'the main thing the main thing' in what we say and what we do."

Honoring the Poor King

*St. Francis' vision brought
the nativity scene to life*



By Larry Harrelson

Christmas is popular and profitable. Regrettably, commercialization of Christmas has skewed the season's focus, causing much heartache, indebtedness, and self-centeredness.

The first Christmas occurred in a much different context — poverty. The New Testament describes the Incarnation not in shopping terms, but as “the generous act of our Lord Jesus Christ, that though he was rich, yet for your sakes he became poor, so that by his poverty you might become rich” (2 Cor. 8:9).

The draw of God's humility and divine vulnerability impelled early Christians to celebrate the nativity. It is a compelling story. The Son of God leaves heavenly glory and comes to earth as the infant child of hard-working, poor parents.

The first living nativity scene, at Greccio, Italy, in 1223, was developed for the purpose of teaching this humility of the poor Christ. The idea took hold in Christian piety, and all nativity scenes and crèches

descend from the Greccio celebration.

Nativity scenes now occupy favored places in many homes during the Advent-Christmas seasons. Crèches are found in most liturgical churches and appear in churches of other denominations as well. Living nativity scenes are popular in many communities.

Who started this and why? None other than St. Francis created the first living nativity scene. To grasp its significance, we must first understand God's work in “the little poor man of Assisi.”

Born in 1182, Francis was the eldest son of a wealthy cloth merchant and a devout mother. In his youth, he was a fun-loving party boy. As a young adult, Francis zealously became a cavalry soldier, went to war for Assisi against Perugia, and was taken prisoner. War, imprisonment, illness, and the grace of God changed him dramatically. Francis discovered what was important in life and decided to follow the poor Christ, opening his life to radical grace.

(Continued on next page)

(Continued from previous page)

Francis' conversion was sealed by a providential encounter with a dreaded leper. Riding his horse one day near Assisi, Francis turned a bend in the road and suddenly came upon a leper. Fighting back his urge to flee, Francis dismounted, gave the man a coin, and kissed the diseased man's hand. In return, the leper bestowed on Francis the kiss of peace. Soon after this, Francis "left the world" to live the gospel.

After years of itinerant ministry and bodily depra-

The Feast of the Holy Nativity
had always moved Francis deeply
because it clearly depicted
the humility
of Christ,
who voluntarily
left glory
to become
a vulnerable infant
in a working-class family.

vation, by 1223, Francis was in failing health. His eyesight was poor. He could no longer travel on foot. Preaching was difficult. The "friars minor" had grown tremendously in numbers, and strong voices vociferously called for a lessening of the order's austere requirements. A rule of life much like other established religious orders with buildings, lands, and comfort was desired.

Francis was pressured into rewriting the order's rule, which went through several revisions before the enlarged order accepted it. The final rule of 1223 had little of Francis' spirit.

Francis withdrew to a hermitage near Greccio and avoided most of the brothers. The little poor man was in severe spiritual and physical pain. The approach of Christmas in 1223, however, revived Francis. The Feast of the Holy Nativity had always moved him

deeply because it clearly depicted the humility of Christ, who voluntarily left glory to become a vulnerable infant in a working-class family. The poor baby Jesus had no crib, with only a manger for a bed.

Francis desired to share his Christmas joy with the people who lived in and around Greccio. The saint was energized by a new idea, one of celebrating the nativity in such a way that those present would more directly experience the divine gift.

A good and wealthy spiritual friend named John provided the organization and resources to recreate the scene in Bethlehem, including the ox and the ass. The first biographer of Francis, Thomas of Celano, poetically describes that Christmas Eve celebration with its living nativity scene:

"Finally the day of joy has drawn near, the time of exultation has come. From many different places the brethren have been called. As they could, the men and women of that land with exultant hearts prepare candles and torches to light up that night whose shining star has enlightened every day and year. Finally, the holy man of God comes and, finding all things prepared, he saw them and was glad. Indeed, the manger is prepared, the hay is carried in, and the ox and the ass are led to the spot. There simplicity is given a place of honor, poverty is exalted, humility is commended, and out of Greccio is made a new Bethlehem."

Mass is celebrated next to the manger, in which lies a baby doll. A priest presides at the Eucharist. The humble deacon Francis sings the gospel and

"preaches to the people standing around him and pours forth sweet honey about the birth of the poor King and the poor city of Bethlehem." A devout man claimed he saw the sleeping doll open its eyes when Francis bent over the manger to bless it. The night was full of light, and the woods rang with joy.

Christmas at Greccio was Francis' last large public event. The stigmata, more suffering, and death awaited him. Yet the little poor man's example of living the gospel continues to summon, and Christmas nativity scenes everywhere beckon us toward the poor Christ.

The Rev. Larry Harrelson is a retired priest of the Diocese of Eastern Oregon who lives in Boise, Idaho. He is a member of the Third Order, Society of St. Francis.

It's Encouraging

Because Advent (the time when this is written) is a season of hope, and because of the upbeat mood of the Christmas season just ahead, I am not going to raise any of the negative aspects (and there are plenty) of the Interim Report of the House of Deputies' Committee on the State of the Church, which was released as November came to a close [p.5]. Instead, some comments on positive facets are in order.

The committee is comprised of clergy and lay deputies of General Convention. In the report, the committee points out that one of its responsibilities is to serve as a sentinel for The Episcopal Church. A sentinel is to "keep watch and call out what is occurring," the committee states, and for taking this task seriously, the church should be thankful.

The report's Introduction includes a reminder that is worth pointing out: "... marvelous work goes forward at all levels of our church." Indeed it does, and this magazine, along with much of the rest of the church, sometimes tends to forget or overlook that. There are many healthy, vibrant congregations in The Episcopal Church. They are places where the gospel is truly preached day by day and week by week, and where the worshipers are nourished by word and sacrament. It would be unfair to try to produce a list of such churches, but for this purpose an acknowledgment of their existence is sufficient.

The committee has made some of my task easier by including in the report some areas of encouragement. For example, it points out that commitment to mission and outreach is increasing. We tend to lose track of the fact that The Episcopal Church continues to be a leader among churches involved in outreach ministry. Whether it's the establishment of programs of care for the hungry and poor or offering facilities for groups such as A.A. and food pantries, many look to this church for leadership. It has become almost expected that when a need is present in a community, The Episcopal Church responds.

Episcopal Relief and Development (formerly the Presiding Bishop's Fund for World Relief) is mentioned in the report as having greatly increased its support base. For example, between 2004 and 2005, the number of individual donors increased from 20,000 to

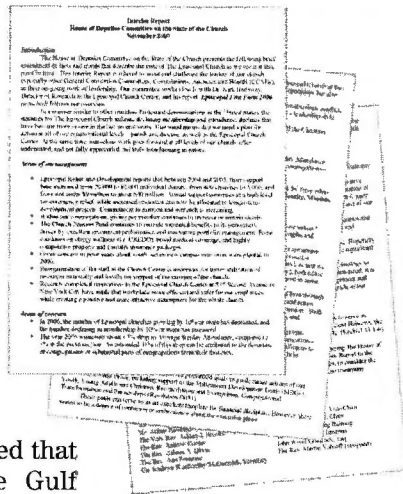
80,000, and the number of churches involved went from 400 to 5,000. That amounts to an increase from roughly \$9 million to \$40 million. It should be mentioned that major hurricanes in the Gulf Coast probably were responsible for much of the growth, but the sizable increases are still encouraging.

The reorganization of the staff at the Episcopal Church Center in New York City is listed among the encouraging developments. Presiding Bishop Katharine Jefferts Schori's plan already is underway. There will be regional offices away from New York City, including one in Los Angeles where the communications department will function. Other relocations are in the works. In a related development, renovations at the Church Center have brought about a more attractive and safer workplace for employees.

Perhaps the most optimistic aspect of the report is that within our congregations, giving per member continues to increase or remain steady. As reported by the Congregational Development office [TLC, Nov. 18], plate and pledge income increased 2.5 percent from 2005 to 2006. That does not seem like a positive increase, but when one figures that attendance and membership dropped during that year, an increase in giving is a positive occurrence. No doubt there are places where effective stewardship is being taught, and others where some individuals have stepped forward with increased commitments amid membership losses.

The Committee on the State of the Church has provided a valuable document. It is refreshing to see one of the church's official agencies, committees, commissions and boards produce what seems to be an honest look at the church. The committee should be commended for the brevity of its report, and for admitting that the church seems to have an identity problem. Such questions as "What does it mean to be an Episcopalian?" and "What are our core values?" need to be addressed, to use the words of the report, "with a sense of urgency."

David Kalvelage, executive editor



Did You Know...

The last three rectors of Grace Church, Paducah, Ky., all have birthdays on December 16.

Quote of the Week
Herbert Guerry, Episcopalian and writer, quoting an opponent of the decision by Christ Church, Savannah, Ga., to affiliate with the Church of Uganda:
"Stop worrying about doctrine and sing."



Warm Greetings

We extend warm Christmas greetings to all our readers. The staff of THE LIVING CHURCH offers wishes for a blessed Christmas to all. We hope the spirit of this season will help to make this a time of great joy and hope for you and for those you love.

Human and Divine

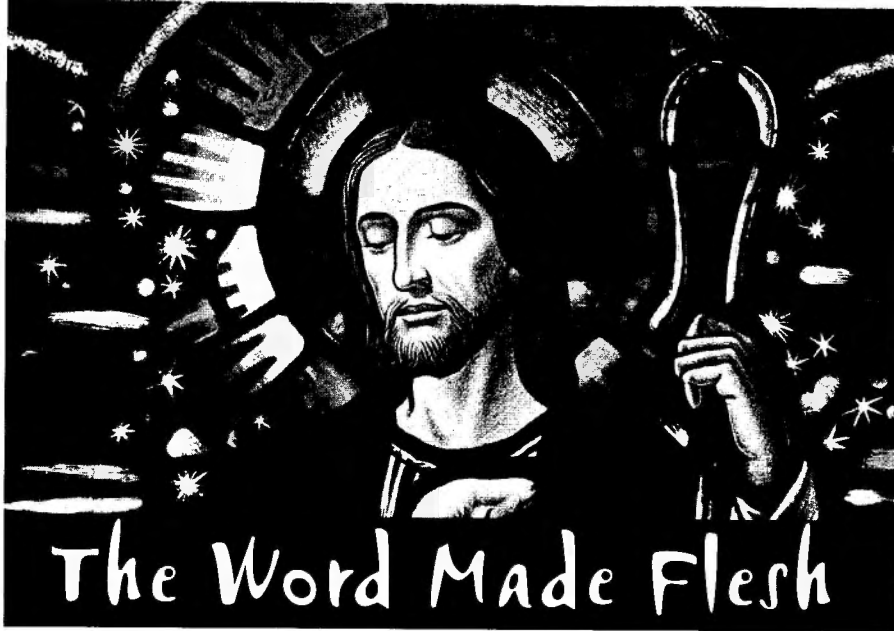
As Christians, we are accustomed to celebrating the Incarnation of our Lord as a major historical event and as a public holiday. In the midst of a festive celebration, it is easy to lose track of some other important aspects of Christmas. For example, it is the ultimate example of God's love for us. When we consider that the Son of God should be born in a barn, the mystery of the Incarnation can become nearly overwhelming. God the Father sends his Son, who possesses not only a divine nature, but now a human nature, born of a virgin, as his gift to the world. God is no longer a distant concept, far removed from the lives of humanity, but he is here with us. Emmanuel — God with us! May the worship of God at Christmas be a transforming experience for all.

Once a Year...

It is not too early to make plans to attend the annual parish meeting. Many congregations hold these gatherings during January, so this is a good time to note the date and to make plans to attend. Annual parish meetings usually include election of members of the vestry and delegates to diocesan convention. An annual budget is usually presented, and reports by various entities may be made. Because the most important business of the parish takes place at these meetings, it is advisable that those who care about the life of the parish be present. Most rectors schedule these events at a time which is convenient for most parishioners. We urge members of parishes to take part in their annual parish meetings and to learn more about what's happening in the congregation.

A Sad Farewell

We mourn the loss of two more bishops of The Episcopal Church to the Roman Catholic Church [TLC, Dec. 16]. Bishop Jeffrey N. Steenson of the Rio Grande became a Roman Catholic on Dec. 1, and Bishop John B. Lipscomb of Southwest Florida will follow shortly. We rejoice in the knowledge that both will be working toward the healing of God's church, but we are saddened that their gracious, pastoral presence will be missing from the House of Bishops. May both Bishop Steenson and Bishop Lipscomb enjoy faithful and fruitful ministries in their new home.



By Tony Noble

"In the beginning was the Word," writes St. John, "and the Word was with God, and the Word was God."

No mucking around with St. John! He is quite adamant. In the beginning, there was Jesus. John establishes at the very beginning of his gospel that Jesus always existed — because he is the second Person of the Trinity, the one through whom the world and all things were made. The only Son of God.

Jesus is not just a good man, not just a prophet, not even just someone endowed with divine Spirit. The baby in the manger we worship is none other than God himself. All the talk of everyone believing the same things, that we are all going the same way, have the same understanding of God, is dismissed by St. John for what it is: pure talk and speculation.

The other monotheistic religions — Judaism and Islam — are left behind by St. John's great declaration "And the Word was God." Ours is the only monotheistic religion that proclaims its teacher and leader is also its creator.

St. John uses the Greek word *Logos*. He uses that word so that all may understand that Jesus is the fulfillment of all those religions, and the expression personally of all those philosophies.

He goes on in verses 4-9 to use images of light and darkness which were also familiar in Greek philosophy, and in most religions of the time. "The light shines in the darkness," he says, "and the darkness comprehended it not." So to verse 9: "the true

light that enlightens every man was coming into the world." This is a very profound declaration. If St. John was declaring the uniqueness of Christ in verses 1-2, he now declares that Jesus is also the light that has always enlightened the world.

From the beginning the divine light has shone:

- in laws
- in morals
- in ethics
- in reason
- in conscience
- in goodness.

Long before Christ appeared he was illuminating this world in all the good things that we understand. This light has always urged the human race onward in evolution. But this light was never perfect before Jesus. Now this light is fully and perfectly expressed in Jesus.

All the hopes and aspirations that humans might have in their hearts to be able to create a perfect world have now been fulfilled by the one who is perfect. He comes to us and makes us his children. There has always been only one divine light, and everyone has always been enlightened by it.

Of course, in every age it was never recognized as such. Even the chosen people the Jews did not recognize him. For all their closeness to God's purpose, for all the preparation God has bestowed upon them, St. John says: "His own people received him not." Why? The same reason that other human beings did not receive him. Human pride. The Jews, for all the preparation they had gone through, thought they knew it all. And thought

they had it all. Like others, they saw no need for the savior when he came. It is the perpetual problem of the human race.

And now we celebrate the fact that God understood that, and sent the divine light, his only Son, in flesh and blood — so that we might see him and recognize him, and therefore be enlightened.

Consider: If the divine light was recognized for what it is, its presence would always be welcome. But so often it is not.

Even in Christian countries the light can be overshadowed by darkness. As St. John says, "the darkness comprehended it not." So the light had to be more than light; it had to become the Word. The world not only needed to see the light; it had to hear. Hence it is the word of God.

The Word was made flesh.

Everyone can now see and hear this divine light. The true light that was coming into the world becomes our self-fulfillment. That is what everyone hopes from the divine light: that we will be fulfilled. But the Word requires also — and first — our self-surrender. We cannot be fulfilled unless first we surrender to the Word, and then we are fully enlightened.

St. John says that when we believe in him, when we are enlightened, when we see the Word and take him to ourselves, we become children of God. And in words directly related to and mirroring the virgin birth, he says: "who were not of blood, nor of the will of the flesh, nor of the will of man, but of God."

Just as the virgin birth declared that God is responsible for this child who is Christ, so God is the one responsible for that light which shines in our lives and makes us his own children.

Having said all this, St. John gives the great declaration that this light is now revealed:

And the Word was made flesh and dwelt among us.

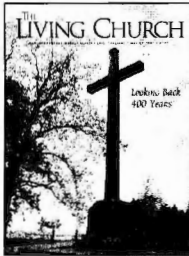
The Rev. Tony Noble is the rector of All Saints' Church, San Diego, Calif.

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LETTERS TO THE EDITOR



Much the Same

TLC is to be commended for publishing the informative article by Kevin Martin [TLC, Dec. 2]. I offer some comments as one with 30 years experience in the fields of congregational and clergy development:

The Episcopal Church over the years stays basically a small-church denomination. The large congregations are much publicized and simply hide the general situation.

Mr. Hadaway, quoted in the article, is not the only reliable source. So also is the Rev. Suzanne Watson, small church officer in the Congregational Development Unit at Episcopal Church headquarters. Her work receives little official publicity.

Precious little has changed in the 30 years I have both lived in and surveyed church development. In about 1975, I published a paper in which there is an estimate that the average size of congregations in The Episcopal Church is 128, and the percentage of small churches (under 128 members) at 62 percent.

Kevin Martin's figures are not so different.

*(The Rev.) James L. Lowery, Jr.
Old Lyme, Conn.*



Sharing Might Work

Bishops Benitez and Wantland's plan for balanced response to congregations departing from The Episcopal Church [TLC, Nov. 18] leads to the concept of sharing buildings, practiced for decades by some Episcopal congregations with Orthodox, Lutheran, Roman Catholic, and Jewish congregations. If we can share with other denominations, can we also share with other Anglicans?

Sharing accomplishes much:

1. It demonstrates diversity and Anglican comprehensiveness to the outside community.
2. It provides opportunity for conversation and "converts" between the two groups.
3. It eliminates litigation expenses (we give our money to the church for outreach!).
4. It reduces maintenance/utility bills per congregation.
5. It enables both congregations to cope with future challenges.

*Stuart S. Bamforth
New Orleans, La.*

For the President

A few days ago I sent a suggestion to my own mailing list that I missed hearing in the Prayers of the People: petitions for those who have been called our enemies along with prayers for those serving in the Armed Forces. One person responded by asking how we should pray for President Bush, whom she viewed in the former category.

Of course, there is Prayer 19 in the Book of Common Prayer. But I decided to take a more specific approach and so here it is:

Holy God, we offer prayers at this time for your servant George, President of the United States. We ask your forgiveness for his many failures in upholding the ideals embodied in our national creeds, the Declaration of Independence and the Constitution and our complicity in those failures. As he moves toward the end of his term of office, bless, guide and direct him, and us, in the ways of true compassion, peace and justice, not as we would but according to your most gracious will. Above all,

**Can we
also share
with other
Anglicans?**

grant him, and us, a spirit of restraint in our dealings with those we call our enemies with the assurance that under you, loving God, we are all part of one human community and that you will wipe away all tears from our eyes. All this we pray through the one who offered his life for us all, Jesus Christ our Savior. Amen

*(The Rt. Rev.) Sanford Hampton
Assistant Bishop of Olympia, ret.
Anacortes, Wash.*

Established by God

It is clear from the writings of Paul and others that authority in the church and the state are established by God. Isn't it interesting that those who claim that The Episcopal Church has departed from the faith, often on the basis of the writings of Paul, find it convenient to ignore those writings when property, personal gain, self-

aggrandizing and power-gaining authority are possible? Indeed, for those who claim God's power is almighty, isn't it convenient to have to "help out" the Holy Spirit to get God to do the "right thing"?

Having grown up a thorough fundamentalist, I've seen it all before. The flesh masquerading in the guise of the Spirit. To quote a song from the '60s, "oooooo, it makes me wonder..."

*(The Rev.) Rob Bagwell
Stoughton, Mass.*

Spiritual Awakening

Lest anyone still wonders what all the brouhaha is about in the Anglican Communion, please refer to the report from the Diocese of Utah convention [TLC, Nov. 25]. Bishop Charleston, the dean of Episcopal Divinity School, preaching at the Eucharist, called for "a great spiritual awakening..." led by Native American traditions, including

spiritual centering and a relationship with nature.

As for me and my family, we prefer to have a relationship with Jesus Christ, the Creator of nature, and to center our faith in him and his redeeming work on the cross.

Dean Charleston represents the new religion we are rejecting.

*Joan Francis
Edwards, Colo.*

Approved or Not?

Regarding the apparent approval of a homosexual lifestyle by the Presiding Bishop and many other bishops and other clergy, I would appreciate it if she or someone would acquaint me with where in scripture it is recorded that fornication is not a sin and therefore such a lifestyle is approved by God.

*(The Rev.) John C. Sterling
Lakeland, Tenn.*

Best wishes for a blessed Christmas from all of us at **THE LIVING CHURCH.**



Top row, from left: Amy Grau, Tom Parker, Renee Weber, Michael O'Loughlin, Betty Glatzel, David Kalvelage
Bottom row, from left: Sarah Mellott, Steve Waring, Thais Jackson, Amber Murna, John Schuessler

PEOPLE & PLACES

Appointments

The Rev. **Timothy Clayton** is assistant at St. John's, 1623 Carmel Rd., Charlotte, NC 28226.

The Rev. **Carol Luther** is chaplain and director of service learning at St. Paul's School, 116 Montecito Ave., Oakland, CA 94610.

The Rev. **James B. Magness** is interim rector of Galilee Church, 3928 Pacific Ave., Virginia Beach, VA 23451.

The Rev. **Travis K. Smith** is youth pastor at St. Michael's, 1520 Canterbury Rd., Raleigh, NC 27608.

Retirements

The Rev. **William Krulak**, as rector of St. David's, Baltimore, MD; add: 5708 Kenmore Rd., Baltimore, MD 21210.

The Rev. **Robert McBride**, as rector of Good Shepherd, Terrell, TX.

Deaths

The Rev. **Salvatore A. Mistretta**, retired priest of the Diocese of Rochester, died Dec. 2. He was 74.

Fr. Mistretta was born in Brooklyn, NY, and was a graduate of CNY-Hunter College, and the General Theological Seminary. He was ordained deacon in 1966 and priest in 1967, and served the following churches: curate of St. Christopher's, St. Paul, MN, 1966-70; St. Margaret's, Staatsburg, NY, 1973-77; rector of Trinity, Canaserage, NY, 1977-80; and priest at St. James', Hammondsport, NY, 1981-87. In retirement, he was a frequent supply priest at St. John's, Catharine, NY. Fr. Mistretta is survived by his wife, Joan, of Hammondsport.

The Rev. **H. Paul Osborne**, 93, of Garrison, KY, died Nov. 12.

He was born and raised in Garrison and graduated from Kentucky Wesleyan College, Incarnate Word College, and Lexington Theological Seminary. In 1945, he was ordained deacon and priest. Fr. Osborne served churches in Kentucky, Texas, South Carolina, Kansas, Massachusetts, and Arkansas. Among them, he was rector of Church of the Advent, Alice, and Epiphany, Kingsville, TX, 1945-48; rector of St. Paul's, San Antonio, TX, 1948-54; and rector of St. John's, Great Bend, KS, 1971-80. He left parish ministry for a time and became a fund-raising consultant. He also worked for the U.S. Treasury Department. Fr. Osborne was active in the dioceses he served, including membership on executive council, General Convention deputy, and delegate to the Province 7 Synod while he was in West Texas. In Western Kansas he was the diocesan ecumenical officer. He is survived by his wife, Gladys; a daughter, Ann; a son, John; eight grandchildren and 10 great-grandchildren.

Next week...

Year in Review

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ANGLICAN THEOLOGICAL BOOKS: Scholarly, out-of-print. Request catalog. **The Anglican Bibliopole**, 858 Church St., Saratoga Springs, NY 12866-8615. PH: (518) 587-7470. E-mail: AnglicanBK@aol.com. Visit www.anglicanbooks.klink.net.

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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@gshp.org. For more info visit www.gshp.org.

HALF-TIME VICAR: *St. Jude's Episcopal Church, Ocean View, HI*. Southermost 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.

POSITIONS OFFERED

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 **Vicki Wiederkehr**, vwiederk@episcopalmaine.net.

FULL-TIME RECTOR: *Calvary Episcopal Church, Rockdale, in Aston, PA*, seeks a full-time rector to guide our spiritual and physical growth. We are a pastoral-sized congregation located in historic and beautiful Delaware County, adjacent to Philadelphia.

We are a parish of loving and caring people. We seek a rector who has strengths as a preacher, teacher and crisis minister. We invite you to learn more about us by visiting our website: calvaryepiscopalrockdale.org. Our parish profile is also available by e-mail request at: mail@calvaryepiscopalrockdale.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.

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