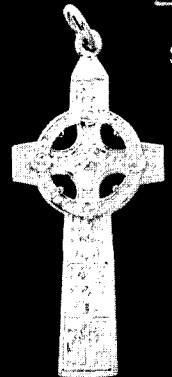


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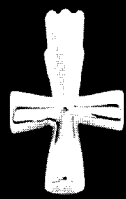
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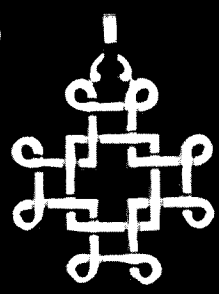
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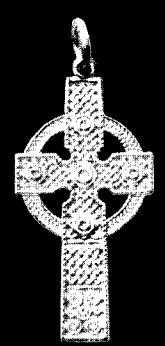


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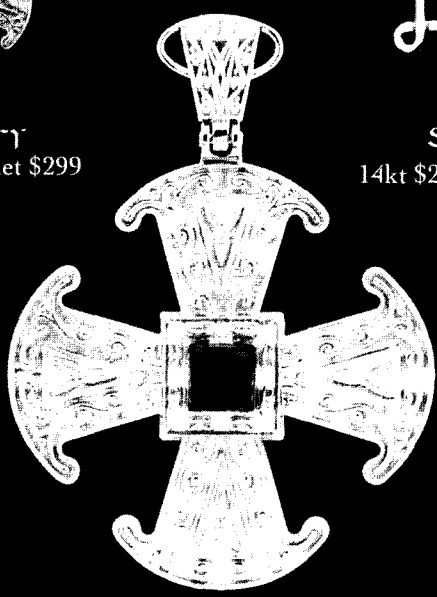


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Volume 237

Number 23

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**On the Cover** Carole Hagan photo  
A graduate of the Magdalene community in Nashville, a residential program for women who have survived lives of violence, prostitution and abuse.

Right: Kristina Marie Krug photo



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SUNDAY'S READINGS

**Prophets of God**

*'Prepare the way of the Lord' (Mark 1:3)*

**The Second Sunday of Advent (Year B), Dec. 7, 2008**

**BCP:** Isaiah 40:1-11; Psalm 85 or 85:7-13; 2 Pet. 3:8-15a,18; Mark 1:1-8

**RCL:** Isaiah 40:1-11; Psalm 85:1-2, 8-13; 2 Pet. 3:8-15a; Mark 1:1-8

There is probably no Judeo-Christian concept more widely misunderstood than that of prophecy. In the popular mind, for instance, it's something closely akin to fortune telling. It's sort of like faith-based tarot card reading.

Even many people of faith hold a similar view. A rapidly growing American religious body, in fact, teaches that a prophet is genuine to the extent that his predictions come to pass. Another, noted for doorbell-ringing, believes the accuracy of scriptural outlines for the future to be a cool 100 percent.

The problem with this popular notion, of course, is that prophecy in the scriptures has nothing to do with soothsaying. Far from laying out some program for the future, the prophets of our tradition proclaim what the Lord is doing right now, even as they urge God's people to take an active part in his work.

John the baptizer, in today's gospel, functions clearly within this model. He proclaims God's new, present work of leading faithful people to repentance and freeing them from captivity to selfishness, "proclaiming a baptism of repentance for the forgiveness of sins" (Mark 1:4). At the same time, he invites hearers to follow Jesus, even now coming into the world. This is surely he, proclaims John, whose sandals "I am not

worthy to stoop down and untie." It is Jesus through whom life in its fullness is now given, for "he will baptize you with the Holy Spirit" (1:7-8).

Prophecy, understood in this way, certainly didn't come to an end with the closing of the scriptural canon. In fact, prophets are present in the modern world. Martin Luther King, Jr., rightly perceived the Lord working for racial equality throughout this land — and he successfully persuaded millions of people to join in that clearly divine mission. Mother Teresa, in the midst of tremendous doubts about her own faith, managed to see God's hand at work among the poorest of the poor in Kolkata. By the time of her death, her Missionaries of Charity numbered some 5,000 female and 450 male religious joining God in that work. And neither is true prophecy limited to the Christian community. Tenzin Gyatso, the Dalai Lama, for instance, sees clearly God's striving for peace among people everywhere, and his example, on a daily basis, leads countless others to become peacemakers with God.

Prophets in the tradition of John the baptizer are active today in the Church as well as in the world at large. Today's gospel calls us to identify and follow them, and so join in God's own work.

**Look It Up**

Why is teaching about the so-called "rapture" really not prophetic?

**Think About It**

Who might qualify as prophets in the Church and in the world today? Why?

**Next Sunday**

**The Third Sunday of Advent (Year B), Dec. 14, 2008**

**BCP:** Isaiah 65:17-25; Psalm 126 or Canticle 3 or 15; 1 Thess. 5:(12-15)16-28; John 1:6-8,19-28 or John 3:23-30

**RCL:** Isaiah 61:1-4, 8-11; Psalm 126 or Canticle 3 or Canticle 15; 1 Thess. 5:16-24; John 1:6-8, 19-28

# Prayerful Anticipation

Advent retreats offer opportunities for spiritual renewal

Many Christians make a special effort in Advent to set aside time for quiet reflection and spiritual renewal. One popular way to do this is through a retreat, either by participating with a group or in self-directed meditation.

"A retreat is a time of prayer, a time to go apart, even a time of rest and refreshment," writes teacher and spiritual director the Rev. Margaret Guenther. "But our openness to an encounter with God is what distinguishes a retreat from a vacation. In the prayerful silence of a retreat, we are listening and receptive."

Following is a sampling of retreats and other programs offered during the Advent and Christmas seasons, along with a listing of organizations that offer year-round opportunities to arrange self-directed retreats at their facilities.



Holy Cross Monastery

**Dec. 5-7**

**Advent Retreat**

**Holy Cross Monastery, West Park, N.Y.**

The Advent themes of darkness and light, endings and beginnings, longing and fulfillment will be "woven together through reflection, silence, music, and story, to help you prepare for the living of the coming mystery of Christ among us." Led by author and retreat facilitator Suzanne Guthrie; Br. Bede Thomas Mudge, OHC, prior of Holy Cross Monastery; and Sr. Helena Marie, OHC.

Contact: 845-384-6660, ext. 3002, 9

a.m.-12 p.m. and 1:30-4:30 p.m. Tuesday-Friday. Retreat cost: \$230.

**Dec. 5-7**

**Women's Advent Retreat:  
Divine Romance**



Christ the King Spiritual Life Center

**Christ the King Spiritual Life Center,  
Greenwich, N.Y.**

As Christmas approaches, it's easy to become overwhelmed with details,

(Continued on next page)

**Clyde E. Fant & Mitchell G. Reddish**

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## Prayerful Anticipation Spiritual Retreats

(Continued from previous page)

plans and celebrations that don't satisfy the hunger for deeper spiritual connection. "Come join us as we prepare our hearts to hear God's voice and soften our spirits to live in the light of his love."

Contact: E-mail Mother Laurie at [lgruhr@albanydiocese.org](mailto:lgruhr@albanydiocese.org). Retreat cost: \$125.

**Dec. 7-10**

**Advent Retreat: Holy Space, Sacred Emptiness**



Valle Crucis Conference Center

**Valle Crucis Conference Center, Valle Crucis, N.C.**

The Rev. Jeanne Finan, rector of St. John's Church, Asheville, N.C., will "offer meditations, prayers and poetry around the retreat theme of creating holy space and celebrating sacred

emptiness." Participants also will create a simple fabric prayer cloth under the guidance of artist Danby Ludgate.

Contact: 828-963-4453. Retreat cost: \$245, includes program, all supplies, meals, and lodging.



Kanuga Conferences

**Dec. 7-11**

**Advent Retreat Kanuga Conferences, Hendersonville, N.C.**

Morning keynote addresses by teacher and author J. Philip Newell, evening preaching by professor and author the Rev. Barbara Brown Taylor.

Contact: E-mail Kate Bakko at [kate.bakko@kanuga.org](mailto:kate.bakko@kanuga.org). Retreat cost: \$615 per person, double occupancy, includes program, lodging, meals, facilities use.



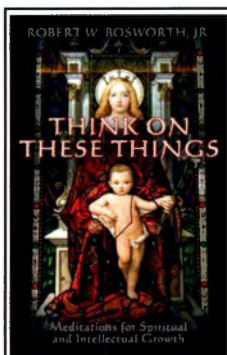
Trinity Center

**Dec. 7-14**

**Silent Retreat Trinity Center, Salter Path, N.C.**

Guests are invited to spend two nights or the full week at the center's Pelican Retreat House. "Bring a good book, the Good Book, writing materials ... whatever you need to find rest and peace." Guests pray, meditate or rest in a private room, at a variety of reflective outdoor locations, or in the comfort of Pelican House porches. Rules of silence apply except during worship.

Contact: Leslie Goff, 888-874-6287. Retreat cost: \$70 per night.



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Dec. 11-14

**Three-Day Companioned Retreat  
Society of St. John the Evangelist,  
Cambridge, Mass.**

Each retreatant meets with a brother for individual spiritual direction. Guests join the brothers for three meals daily, eaten communally in the refectory and normally taken in silence, accompanied either by a brother reading aloud from a book or by recorded music.

Contact: 617-876-3037. Suggested donation: \$300, discount available for full-time students.

Dec. 12-19

**Silent Days in Advent  
The Bishop's Ranch, Healdsburg, Calif.**

An individual, self-directed silent retreat with optional daily offerings provides a "meditative framework to experience the mystical, prepare for the coming of the Christ child, and refresh and renew yourself through the Holy Spirit." Retreatants may participate for as many days as their time allows, but reservations must be made in advance.

Contact: 707-433-2440. Retreat cost: \$65 for day use; \$110 for one night; Discounts for multiple nights.

(Continued on next page)

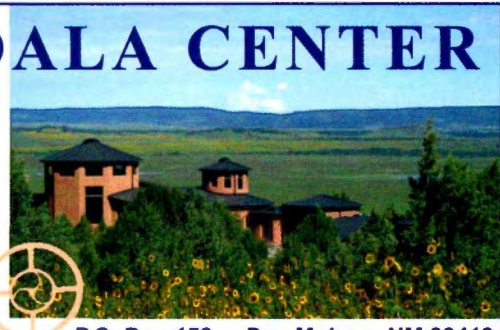


The Bishop's Ranch

For more information about these retreat opportunities, including retreat center website addresses and email contact information, visit the "Web Exclusives" section of THE LIVING CHURCH NEWS SERVICE website, [www.livingchurch.org](http://www.livingchurch.org).

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**Marriage Enhancement for Clergy Couples. Tues.-Thurs., Feb. 17-19.** Clergy couples experience the same challenges as others but their marriages and families are under more scrutiny. Explore ways to be more emotionally responsive to each other's needs and experiment with ways to handle difficult emotions surrounding often unchangeable circumstances. Workshop leaders, **Jim and Melissa Leehan**, bring extensive training and experience in pastoral ministry, social work and marriage and family therapy to their work with couples. Fee: \$750/couple, includes tuition, room and meals.

**Listening to the Voice Within: A Discernment Retreat for Clergy. Tues.-Fri., April 14-17.** Are you doing work that you are tired of or for which you have little energy? Do you yearn for a renewed sense of direction or a fresh understanding of your call? Examine personal and work needs, explore blocks to hearing holy invitation, and practice listening to the voice within with **Bob G. Stice**, LPCC, a clinical member of the American Association of Marriage and Family Therapy and faculty member of the CREDO Institute, a national clergy wellness program. Fee: \$400.

**Painting with Soft Pastels. Fri.-Sun., May 8-10.** When teaching pastels, **Martin Pavletich** concentrates on the basics: drawing skills, composition, perspective, color theory and use of materials; he encourages each person's individual style and teaches people to have fun with art. Martin has exhibited in numerous national and international juried shows and is a signature member of the Pastel Society of New Mexico and a juried associate member of the Pastel Society of America and Oil Painters of America. Fee: \$300.

**Fees include tuition, double occupancy room and meals.**

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## Prayerful Anticipation Spiritual Retreats

(Continued from previous page)



Mandala Center

Dec. 14

**Festival of Lessons and Carols,  
Potluck Dinner**

**Mandala Center, Des Moines N.M.**

This traditional service “weaves together scripture and song to carry us from the Hebrew Bible’s prophecies of the coming of the Messiah to the fulfillment of those prophecies in the birth of Jesus.” The 4:30 p.m. service will be followed by a Christmas potluck dinner. Contact: 575-278-3002, for information and directions.

Dec. 19-21

**Benedictine Weekend Retreat  
The Bishop’s Ranch, Healdsburg, Calif.**

The Rule of St. Benedict in the readings and sacred music of Advent will inspire the meditations and lectures of

this retreat, designed to bring men and women together in community to “study and experience the balanced way of life as envisioned in the Rule of St. Benedict.” The framework will be the corporate worship of God, including Matins, the Eucharist, Vespers and Compline.

Contact: 707-433-2440. Retreat cost: \$205, including meals.

Dec. 19 - Jan. 1

**Christmas and New Year’s  
— The Monastery Way  
Holy Cross Monastery, West Park, N.Y.**

A time of celebration, feasts, story reading and carol singing. “It is a time to gather, as those shepherds did in Bethlehem, to offer praise to God and pray for peace on earth using the ancient cycle of monastic prayer.”

Contact: 845-384-6660, ext. 3002, 9 a.m.-12 p.m. and 1:30-4:30 p.m. Tuesday-Friday. Fee: \$70 per night.

Dec. 25

**Christmas Morning at DeKoven**

**DeKoven Center, Racine, Wis.**

A celebration of the Holy Eucharist, “quiet and reflective,” at 9 a.m. Reception follows with “good friends, good food, good conversation.” Contact: 262-633-6401.



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**Individual Retreat Opportunities  
Throughout the Season**

**Cedar Hill Retreat Center, Carlisle, Ky.**

The center is available for weekend or weekday retreats, including individual retreats. A retreat facilitator is available for group retreats.

Contact: The Rev. Sandy Stone, 859-289-2832 or information and rates.

**Julian House, Waukesha, Wis.**

The Order of Julian of Norwich maintains two guest rooms in its monastery and is “eager to share the silence, prayer, and peace of our life with those seeking for rest, recollection, and a deeper connection



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The Anglican Communion is facing an identity crisis, with a host of competing voices proclaiming what it means to be Anglican. To understand who we are, however, we need first to understand what it means to be in “communion” with each other in Christ. Come spend a day as we explore what communion is from a biblical, theological, and historical perspective. The day will be filled with stimulating addresses and lively discussion.

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**Bishop James Monte Stanton** was consecrated the sixth bishop of the Episcopal Diocese of Dallas on March 6, 1993. A strong advocate of biblical authority, Bishop Stanton is actively involved in reasserting traditional values of Christian faith, order, and morality at the national church level while strengthening mission and evangelism ministries throughout the diocese. Bishop Stanton is the author of *The ABCs of Faith*.



The Rev. Dr. Ephraim Radner earned degrees from Dartmouth and Yale Divinity School. After four years serving as a missionary in Burundi, Africa, Fr. Radner returned to the US to complete a PhD at Yale in historical theology. Since 2006, he has served, by appointment of the Archbishop of Canterbury, as one of 10 members on the Anglican Communion’s Covenant Design Group.



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Kirkridge Retreat and Study Center, Bangor, Pa.

Opportunities are available for private retreats. Private spaces are available, each with its own bath, a fully equipped kitchen, and beds for one or two people. Private retreatants provide their own food and prepare their own meals. Spiritual books to guide the retreat are provided in each retreat space. Spiritual direction is available; call for details.

Contact: 610-588-1793. Fee: \$88 per person or \$110 per couple.

Roslyn Conference and Retreat Center, Richmond, Va.

Personal retreats may be scheduled for Monday-Thursday nights. "In the silence of God's presence or in animated conversation with our Creator, Roslyn's grounds and accommoda-



Roslyn Conference and Retreat Center

tions allow an atmosphere conducive to prayer." Meals are available when guests are in residence.


Reservations: E-mail request to [conferencecoordinator@roslyncenter.org](mailto:conferencecoordinator@roslyncenter.org) or call 804-288-6045 for information and rates.

St. Margaret's Convent, Boston, Mass.

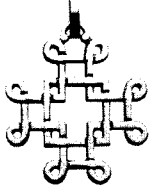
The convent welcomes individuals and groups for self-directed retreats. Call for information on directed retreats. Retreatants are invited, but not required, to join the Sisters of St. Margaret in the celebration of the Holy Eucharist and the four-fold Daily Office on Tuesdays through Sundays. Meals with the sisters are eaten in silence, except for Saturday evening, Sunday dinner, and on feast days.

Contact: 617-445-8961, ext. 127, for information and rates.

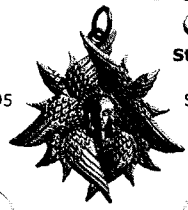
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Holy Cross Monastery

## A Time Set Apart

A retreat can be a time of refreshment and renewal — physically, mentally and spiritually. But what sets this experience apart from simply taking a vacation?

"At Kanuga, a Christian retreat is an opportunity to hear the gospel, and an opportunity to experience Christian community," explained Harmony Johnson, communications director for Kanuga Conferences. "Every Kanuga-sponsored program provides daily helpings of the gospel, whether it is corporate worship, a lecture that aids in Christian formation, Bible study or time for personal meditation. Christian community happens naturally when people gather to share like interests, to focus on their relationships with friends and family or to focus on their relationship with God."

Participating in a retreat, like taking up any spiritual practice, is a deeply personal experience. But those who facilitate retreats do receive feedback that

helps them get an idea of some benefits that many participants receive from taking part.

"Most people feel being a participant in a retreat takes them away from their everyday worries and problems and allows them to think about their journey with God and Christ," said Tom Eshelman, executive director of Valle Crucis Conference Center. "It allows them to center themselves a bit. Maybe they will get a chance to catch their breath and feel God come into their lives again."

"Ours is such a hurried and secular world, we tend to push Christ to the side. We find that people are waiting until the last minute to register for retreats as they wait to see what their lives are doing," Mr. Eshelman said. "Taking a retreat at a place like Valle Crucis provides a place set apart, a neutral place where conversation — with others and with God — is encouraged."

"You may find a new way to look at things that startles you and fills you with the Holy Spirit."

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## Convention Planned to Form New Anglican Province

Following the vote by the Diocese of Fort Worth on Nov. 15 to become the fourth diocese to leave The Episcopal Church, the leadership of the Common Cause Partnership (CCP) scheduled a constitutional convention in the Chicago area Dec. 3 to form a new

North American Anglican province.

That event will be followed by what leaders called "a province-by-province visitation and appeal for recognition of the separate ecclesiastical structure in North America."

Bishop Robert Duncan of Pittsburgh

and Bishop Bill Murdoch, a missionary bishop to the U.S. for the Anglican Church of Kenya, revealed details about the plan in an interview with the AnglicanTV website.

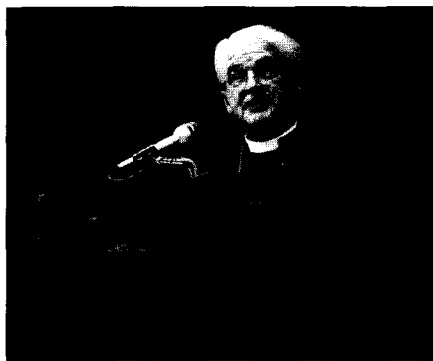
The board of trustees for the Anglican Relief and Development Fund (ARDF) met Nov. 7-12 at Trinity Church, Vero Beach, Fla., according to the parish's website. The ARDF board includes a number of primates who have been sympathetic to the objectives of the CCP. During that meeting, some of the primates present agreed to recognize the new province if the leadership of the CCP would "set aside territorial issues and ego struggles" and sign the Jerusalem Declaration drafted during the Global Anglican Future Conference in June.

## Fort Worth Votes to Join the Southern Cone

Delegates to the convention of the Diocese of Fort Worth acted quickly and decisively Nov. 15 in approving the second and final reading of a series of changes to its constitution and canons that rescinded its affiliation with The Episcopal Church and joined it on a temporary basis with the Anglican Church of the Southern Cone.

The vote by orders for realignment was 73-20 among clergy and 98-28 in the lay order. The convention also voted by a 2-1 margin for second and final approval of four constitutional amendments that rescinded accession to the Constitution and Canons of General Convention. Fifteen other canonical changes were approved by voice vote.

In his address to convention, the Rt. Rev. Jack L. Iker, Bishop of Fort Worth, urged delegates "as a matter of conscience and conviction" to revoke the 1982 convention vote seeking admittance into union with General Convention in order "to align ourselves instead with an orthodox



Suzanne Gill photo

Bishop Iker: "conscience and conviction."

province of the Anglican Communion."

In other business, delegates approved a budget of \$2.1 million for 2009, an increase of about \$40,000 over the previous year. During a press conference after the convention, Bishop Iker said a family in the diocese has pledged a portion of its fortune to help defray any legal costs arising from the decision to disaffiliate from The Episcopal Church.

### Member Groups

The CCP consists of the American Anglican Council, the Anglican Coalition in Canada, the Anglican Communion Network, the Anglican Mission in the Americas, the Anglican Network in Canada, the Convocation of Anglicans in North America, the Federation of Anglican Churches in the Americas, Forward in Faith North America and the Reformed Episcopal Church.

After the House of Bishops deposed Bishop Duncan, the Most Rev. Ian Ernest, Archbishop of the Indian Ocean and president of the Council of Anglican Provinces in Africa (CAPA), wrote to Bishop Duncan, noting in part:

"We continue to recognize you as a bishop in good standing in the Anglican Communion. Your commitment to orthodox Christian doctrine grounded in the Holy Scriptures is after all the mark of your identity as a true believer in the Anglican tradition. Your grace, patience and forbearance in the face of opposition to your holy calling is an example to us all."

The CAPA primates represent more than a third of the Anglican Communion's 38 provinces when the other like-minded primates among the Global South provinces are included.

*Steve Waring*

## Primates Hold Key to New Province's Recognition

The primates of the Anglican Communion are responsible for granting official status to a new province. That responsibility is spelled out under section 3 of the constitution of the Anglican Consultative Council (ACC).

The constitution explains that a new province may be admitted "with the assent of two-thirds of the primates of the Anglican Communion." A province becomes a member of the Anglican Communion by virtue of its membership in the ACC. Membership of a province in the ACC assumes communion with the Archbishop of Canterbury.

Assuming that at least two-thirds of the primates of the Anglican Communion do consent to the formation of another province in North America when they meet in February, it is likely that the matter would come before the ACC when it meets in Jamaica in May. If the ACC consents, then by precedent the new province is almost always immediately seated as a full member with seat, voice and vote.

The ACC does not initiate the process of a province becoming a member. It acts in response to the initiative of the primates.



Pin Lin/Forest Photography

The Rev. Charles Holt, rector of St. Peter's Church, Lake Mary, Fla., addresses the Communion Partner rectors at a workshop, while the Rev. Mifflin Dove, Jr. (right), rector of St. Paul's, Katy, Texas, waits to speak.

## Communion Partners Affirm TEC Loyalty

While understanding that for some conservative constituents another path may have been chosen, the advisory board of the Communion Partner rectors said recently that a new Anglican province in North America "is not something we desire or a structure in which we wish to participate."

The Communion Partner rectors met Nov. 6-7 at St. Martin's Church, Houston. The initial list of Communion Partner rectors has grown from 17 representing 25,000 communicants to 45 representing 42,000.

While appreciating the "serious challenges of this present season in our greater Communion and The Episcopal Church," the Communion Partner rectors said they were "firmly committed to remain in The Episcopal Church and the Anglican Communion, respecting and honoring the proper authority of our bishops and working in concert with them to strengthen our voice within the church.

"We wish to support and encourage the Windsor process, the development of an Anglican Covenant and the Instruments of Communion. We believe this is the path Christ is calling us to follow together with faithful leadership throughout the world-wide Anglican Communion."

## Fire Destroys Santa Barbara Retreat House

Mount Calvary Retreat House in Santa Barbara, Calif., a spiritual home to many members of the dioceses of California and Los Angeles, has been destroyed by the Tea Fire burning in the Montecito area.

The Order of the Holy Cross, which runs Mount Calvary, had a priory in Berkeley until earlier this year. Many of the brothers moved to Mount Calvary when the priory closed. St. Mary's Retreat House of the Sisterhood of the Holy Nativity also may be endangered by the fire.

The resident brothers, members of the Order of the Holy Cross, and staff are safe following evacuation, said Nancy Bullock, program director for Mount Calvary, as quoted by the Episcopal News Service of the Diocese of Los Angeles. Ms. Bullock said the brothers and staff at Mt. Calvary were able to leave with some of the hilltop retreat house's valuable art treasures, as well as computer records, "but so much is lost."

The Mount Calvary Monastery and Retreat House, a large, Spanish-style house, was situated on a ridge 1,250 feet above Santa Barbara with a commanding view of the seacoast and Pacific Ocean. It was established in 1947 by Fr. Karl Tiedemann, OHC, as a retreat and conference center of the Order of the Holy Cross. The guest-



Order of the Holy Cross photo

The Santa Barbara retreat and conference center of the Order of the Holy Cross was destroyed by wildfire Nov. 13.

house is operated and staffed by six members of the monastic community as well as professional staff and a chef.

At Montecito, the order to evacuate came quickly, according to the Associated Press, which reported that evening winds known locally as "sundowners," gusting up to 70 mph from land to sea, pushed the fire with frightening speed Nov. 13, burning mansions, exploding eucalyptus trees and turning rolling hills into a glowing nightmare.

Mount Calvary staff will assist groups and individuals in seeking alternate locations for retreats, all of which are now canceled because of the fire, Ms. Bullock said.

*Pacific Church News Service of the Diocese of California contributed to this report.*

## Quincy Promises 'Christian Charity'

Along with ending its affiliation with The Episcopal Church at its annual synod [TLC, Nov. 30], the Diocese of Quincy established a protocol for clergy and parishes that do not wish to join the Anglican Church of the Southern Cone.

The Rev. Canon Ed den Blaauwen, president of the standing committee, was named vicar general by Presiding Bishop Gregory Venables of the Southern Cone. Canon den Blaauwen announced that members of the clergy would receive a certificate indicating they are members in good standing of the South American province. Clergy who wish to remain with The Episcopal Church were asked to write the word "rejected" on the certificate, sign, date and return it to the diocesan office.

Canon den Blaauwen said the leadership of the diocese would work "diligently, in good faith, and with Christian charity with any member of the clergy who might wish to seek canonical transfer to another diocese of the person's choice." He added that parishes have a nine-month grace period in which they may withdraw from the synod, provided that such a move is approved by a two-thirds vote of eligible parish members.

With 21 congregations and fewer than 2,000 baptized members, the Diocese of Quincy was one of the smallest in The Episcopal Church. That will complicate efforts to reorganize an Episcopal presence in the region unless a substantial number of congregations choose to withdraw from the synod.

## Future Options Studied

Under a discernment plan approved by convention delegates Nov. 7-8, a task force in the Diocese of **Eau Claire** will consider five options for the diocese's future. The comprehensive range of options run from electing a full-time diocesan bishop to succeed the Rt. Rev. Keith Whitmore, to dissolving the diocese.

Bishop Whitmore resigned in March to become an assistant bishop in the Diocese of Atlanta.

Other options include the election of a part-time or bi-vocational bishop, hiring a provisional bishop, or junctioning with another diocese — most likely Fond du Lac — to form a new diocese.

Delegates approved a resolution requesting that the two dioceses petition General Convention for permission to explore a junctioning arrangement. The convention of the Diocese of Fond du Lac adopted a similar resolution in October.

## Draft to General Convention

The Rev. George Stamm, president of the Eau Claire standing committee, said a task force comprised of members of both dioceses will draft a joint resolution for consideration by General Convention next July. The resolution would permit only exploration, and either diocese could terminate the process at any time. If both diocesan conventions favored the plan, the new diocese would submit the necessary paperwork to Executive Council, which would officially dissolve the two dioceses and admit the new one into union with the General Convention.

Eau Claire's discernment task force will solicit feedback from throughout the diocese about the five options, and consider the financial impact of each. The information-gathering process is to be completed by Dec. 31, and the diocese is to choose one of the options no later than next year's annual convention.

Among other business, delegates rejected the proposed 2009 budget of

\$279,192, which was based on a 15-percent apportionment, out of concerns that expenses might exceed income. Last year a 22-percent apportionment rate raised \$447,000 in income, but expenses exceeded income by \$33,000.

## Olympia Goes Indaba

A year ago, delegates to the convention of the Diocese of **Olympia** called for postponing the Lambeth Conference "until the listening process is more complete." This year, convention, which met Nov. 14-15 in Seatac, Wash., followed the lead of the Archbishop of Canterbury by using *indaba* groups.

The *indaba* method is not rocket science, according to the Rt. Rev. Gregory Rickel, Bishop of Olympia. He said he loved the Bible studies and deep discussions at Lambeth and wanted to bring this back to his diocese. One reason was that "we don't take the time to talk to one another in the church today."

To make *indaba* groups work at this convention, Bishop Rickel asked specific advocacy groups not to submit resolutions. When the human sexuality group at St. Mark's Cathedral balked, Bishop Rickel asked its members to provide questions for discussion instead. With slight modification, convention planners chose three of their questions for discussion. Bishop Rickel gave other advocacy groups the same opportunity.

Some delegates questioned how well this process would work. Denaya Blalock, a 16-year-old delegate from St. Columba's Church, Kent, thought that being in groups with older people was going to be awkward. Afterwards, she said, "It was fun." There was opportunity to consider other people's opinions.

Bishop Rickel said that the use of *indaba* groups seemed to affect convention before it opened. He attributed the increase of guests and alternates in attendance this year to his announcement of the use of these groups.

The convention approved a budget



Robert R. Chapman, Jr. photo  
Canon Carl Knirk (left) of the Diocese of Olympia presents a check for \$50,000 to Pete Nunnally of the office of Disaster Response in the Diocese of Louisiana.

of \$5.6 million. This budget calls for drawing \$400,000 from unrestricted reserves, of which \$300,000 is set aside for the bishop's initiatives.

Robert R. Chapman, Jr.

## 'Move Forward'

The Rt. Rev. Andrew D. Smith, Bishop of **Connecticut**, called for the election of his successor during his address to the convention, which met Oct. 24-25 at Christ Church Cathedral, Hartford.

"Our diocese has come through a difficult time," he said. "While there is no perfect resolution to the church's controversies of the past several years, we are at a place at which many people have said they want to lay down the arguments and pick up the gospel and move forward as the Church ... For me, I believe I too am at a turning point in my life. I have served as a bishop in the diocese for almost 13 years, and this is the 10th annual diocesan convention which I have chaired as diocesan."

Bishop Smith said the election will occur as part of the convention next

year. Bishop Smith said if all goes as planned, he will retire upon the consecration of his successor sometime in the spring of 2010.

The convention occurred two weeks after Connecticut's State Supreme Court mandated that the state begin recognizing homosexual marriages effective Oct. 28. A resolution approved 174-123 implored Bishop Smith to allow clergy "to exercise pastoral care in officiating at services of holy matrimony for same-sex couples."

In his address the day before the resolution passed, Bishop Smith said he would continue in place a policy requiring that priests of The Episcopal Church of the diocese be bound to respect the Book of Common Prayer and the canons of The Episcopal Church, both of which define marriage as the union of one man and one woman. Bishop Smith added that he and his two bishops suffragan, the Rt. Rev. Laura Ahrens and the Rt. Rev. James Curry, would be re-examining the existing policy in light of the court's ruling. Bishop Smith said he and the other bishops would consult the laity and clergy "whose lives are directly affected by the court's decision."

Among other business, a 2009 budget of \$5.8 million was approved, an increase of more than \$122,000 over the amount approved the previous year.

## Outward Focused

Guided by the theme, "The World in Christ," delegates to the convention of the Diocese of **Southern Ohio** spent Nov. 7-8 exploring how to make the love of Christ known to the world.

In addition to the traditional actions of convention — from passing resolutions and the budget to fellowship and Bible study, delegates spent a morning in mission. When the deacon entreated the congregation to "love and serve the world" at the convention Eucharist, the congregation divided into about 20 groups and spent two hours in mission projects, from cooking lunch for street church ministries to packing Christmas bags for the homeless. Other mission projects included knitting prayer



Julie Murray/Interchange photo

Bishop Breidenthal of Southern Ohio celebrates the Eucharist at convention Nov. 8.

shawls, conducting an energy audit at a local church, exploring advocacy technique for public policy issues, and sharing new ways to engage young adults in campus ministry.

The convention's outward focus was reinforced by addresses from Lutheran Bishop Cal Hollway of Southern Ohio and the Rt. Rev. Charles Jenkins, Bishop of Louisiana. Both called upon their listeners to continue to look beyond their own doors and forge relationships with those in need, such as in the Gulf Coast, and those in other denominations and faiths.

In his convention address, Bishop Thomas E. Breidenthal of Southern Ohio acknowledged the fear and anxiety of an uncertain economy and the transition in national leadership. But he said, "I am not worried about the church. We thrive when hardship forces us to remember who we are: a community that models acceptance without passing any kind of test, and emanates a steady and calm trust in God when the rest of the world is panicking."

Delegates adopted seven of eight resolutions, including measures calling for a commitment to local food resources, a Sunday offering for Episcopal Relief and Development, and principles for just and fair health insurance. In addition, delegates approved a \$4.1-million budget for 2009, which included the full apportionment asking to the program portion of the General Convention budget of nearly \$800,000.

*Richelle Thompson*

## Local Training

The Rt. Rev. Todd Ousley, Bishop of **Eastern Michigan**, announced a new initiative to train locally ordained clergy through a school for ministry, during his address to convention Oct. 17-18 at St. Paul's Church, Flint.

"Our diocese has reached a point where we can no longer afford to be hesitant, shortsighted or fearful," Bishop Ousley said.

The Coppage-Gordon School for Ministry — named for John Coppage, the first diocesan administrator, and the Rt. Rev. Bill Gordon, who was instrumental in the negotiations which led to the formation of the diocese in 1994 — as envisioned would also provide leadership training for vestries and other congregational leaders not seeking ordination, Bishop Ousley said.

## Departing Dioceses

No resolutions were debated during the convention. However, a courtesy resolution extended greetings, prayers and best wishes to "our brothers and sisters in the Episcopal dioceses of San Joaquin and Pittsburgh, thanking them for their courage and their witness of a God who is larger than mortal issues, and for making The Episcopal Church as a whole the stronger by their presence, their witness, their diversity and their commitment."

The convention began with three hours of anti-racism training designed to raise awareness of white privilege.

The convention theme was drawn from the Baptismal Covenant, "Will you persevere in resisting evil..." and the keynote address together with the sermon at the convention Eucharist addressed the evils of racism and white privilege.

The diocesan treasurer, Bob Meikle, reported that in 2007 the operating account showed a small surplus, and that for the 2008 fiscal year the diocese would likely show a \$9,500 surplus. Convention approved a budget for 2009 of \$887,971. Parish assessments for the coming year were set at 10 percent of net disposable budgeted income.

*(The Rev.) J. Thomas Downs*



## Life on the Edges

## A visit to Honduras and the ministry of El Hogar

By Carolyn S. Ellis

Next to the telephone on my desk there are two crisp *lempiras*, the paper currency of Honduras. Each bears an etched image of the Lenca war captain Lempira, "Lord of the Mountains," who died in 1537 resisting the Spanish, and another of the Mayan ruins at Copan near the Guatemalan border. The *lempira* is worth about five cents, U.S. equivalent.

My *lempiras* are a reminder of the children and staff of El Hogar, a residential school in Tegucigalpa, Honduras, where I spent a week in July with 14 others from my church. Our mission was to gain an appreciation for life at El Hogar and to assist with the construction of a concrete-block dormitory.

Children come to El Hogar orphaned and from families trapped in poverty. We were introduced to a boy whose parents were in jail for drug and gang activity and a little girl whose addicted mother could not protect her from an older step-brother. We met a little boy whose mother sent him to the streets to beg and forbade him to come home until he had collected 70 *lempiras*.

Born as a colonial mining town, Tegucigalpa, or "Silver Mountain," has a population of about 2.5 million. It has

townhouse neighborhoods with sidewalks and private backyards, a modern hardware store, and a new shopping mall.

But Tegucigalpa also has thousands of dwellings cobbled together with found materials on snatches of land. Residents cook in the same small space in which they sleep and live. The homes often have no utilities and are not weather-tight. During the rainy season, from May to September, it rains a lot and often. The hurricane months, September through November, can be perilous.

My group arrived in Tegucigalpa on a drizzly evening after five hours of travel on the national highway from San Pedro Sula. Hondurans walk along the road with children in hand. They ride horses, burros, and bicycles, and sell honey, limestone, fruit, and pottery. Their dwellings are perched at the lip of deep valleys, and their laundry dries on strung wire fences. Corn is planted in tiny plots between rock outcrops. "You don't see much idleness in Honduras," says the Rev. Richard Kunz, who drives one of our vans. He is executive director of El

Hogar Projects in Honduras.

According to the International Fund for Agricultural Development (IFAD), Honduras is the second poorest country in Central America and the third poorest in the Americas. The third-world nation receives financial aid



According to World Bank statistics, of the Honduran population of 7 million, half are poor and 24 percent extremely poor.



Children play in a courtyard at the heart of El Hogar's campus.

Carolyn S. Ellis photos

from the World Bank and the United Nations, but in the neighborhoods we visited, one wonders how much money trickles down.

Many Tegucigalpans endure illiteracy and unemployment. These families cannot feed, clothe or educate their children and have no way to get beyond their desperate circumstances. El Hogar was founded 30 years ago to break this cycle, to give the least of God's children a reason to live and to better their lives. "Our mission is to change the world one child at a time," says El Hogar director Claudia de Castro, "so we take the poorest of the poor into our school family."

Despite the cloudy skies on our arrival day, the steep, green mountains, alluvial valleys, and copper-colored soil were beautiful. However, when it began to rain we saw the danger and difficulty as amber runoff surged down the mountainsides. It turned everything to mud, that, according to Fr. Kunz, can bring down dwellings.

As our two vans entered Tegucigalpa, I was amazed by the array of soft lights that lay like a web over the hills and valleys. We arrived at a wide gate in a tall wall, and our driver, El Hogar work team coordinator Raul Castro, sounded the horn. The gate rolled open and we entered El Hogar de Amor y Esperanza, "The Home of Love and Hope." This would be our home for seven days, while we worked and witnessed. Mr. Castro's wife, Claudia, has been director of El Hogar for 18 years and a mother to each child who has come to El Hogar.

El Hogar was founded in 1979 with five little boys off the streets of Tegucigalpa. I learned about the project shortly after its inception when the outreach committee of my church, St. Peter's in Weston, Mass., proposed that we sponsor a boy. With the support of many churches, organizations, and individuals throughout North America, El Hogar has been able to flourish under its loving and committed leadership for three decades.

El Hogar Projects in Honduras comprises three residential schools for 230 boys, and, since January 2007, 10 girls. El Hogar, the elementary/middle school, is a three-acre oasis in Tegucigalpa.

For grades 7-9, boys can attend the Episcopal Agricultural School in the countryside, where they study sustainable agriculture and animal husbandry. Or they can study to become welders, carpenters and electricians at the Santa Maria Technical School. When they graduate

from Grade 9, the boys have a high school diploma and trade school certificate. Most find employment, and some go on to complete two years of private high school and then to university while working.

Our work assignments included mixing concrete by hand, moving concrete blocks, and de-nailing and moving piles of salvaged lumber. We observed math, science, and Spanish classes and watched the youngest children audition to represent El Hogar in a regional singing competition. On Lempira Day, we participated in a demonstration of tribal life at the technical school. Most important, we played with the children whenever their schedule permitted. Basketball, football toss, tag, hopscotch, coloring books, and "Uno" were favorites.

The children of El Hogar live complex lives. Many come malnourished and mistreated to this new home where they receive three meals a day and a clean bunk, clothing and shoes, showers and haircuts, medical and dental care, and schooling.

El Hogar is a mission of the Diocese of Honduras. Children are taught that this abundance comes from God and the generosity of people like their work team visitors. Work-team visits and contributions are coordinated by El Hogar Ministries, Inc., in Winchester, Mass. ([www.elhogar.org](http://www.elhogar.org)).

One child at a time, El Hogar equips children to take a place in the middle class of Honduras, to support their families, and to live with dignity. We left El Hogar one week after we arrived, rising before dawn but not before the neighborhood roosters. "I expected poverty like I had seen in inner-city Boston," said 15-year-old Nicky Packs, "but that is nothing like what we saw in Honduras. Our work helped, but the trip was about getting inspired to do more." □

*Carolyn S. Ellis is a member of St. Peter's Church, Weston, Mass.*



Volunteers de-rail salvaged lumber.



Thistle Farms provides a place to work and live in community.

Kristina Marie Krug photos

## Nashville's Community of Healing

A fresh start gives broken women wisdom and hope.

By John Schuessler

Detroit native Beverly Mandina always wanted to be a nurse. She graduated from high school in the 1970s ready to begin her nursing training in the fall. Meanwhile, summer was for having a good time, so she left Detroit for Daytona Beach. Unfortunately, she hooked up with an unhealthy crowd. She had begun experimenting with drugs as young as age 13, but in that summer, drugs pummeled her hopes and dreams. She never returned home.

Ms. Mandina married and had a son. Her marriage failed. When her son was older, he asked his mother to choose between him and drugs. She chose the latter. Living in Galveston, Texas, she carried on what might have appeared as a normal life — earning associate's degrees in computers and medical technology, holding a job, buying a house. But she was not only living on an island physically. Emotionally she was alone.

She was an addict for nearly four decades before seeking help. Cocaine was her drug of choice. She smoked crack for the last 22 years of addiction. The cost of drugs exceeded the money she could earn, so she prostituted herself. "I had men help me take care of my bills," she said by phone recently. "It wasn't like I didn't have a job or was homeless. In my demented thinking I thought no one knew. I was isolated. I isolated myself."

Her sister knew, however, and for 20 years she tried to get Beverly into rehab, but to no avail. Two years ago, Beverly made that decision on her own. With her sister's help, a bed had been waiting for her at a residential community in

Nashville, Tenn., called Magdalene. The community was started by an Episcopal priest, the Rev. Becca Stevens, in response to the needs of women with a history of prostitution and drug addiction.

Before deciding to move to Nashville, Beverly visited her father in Florida. A lifelong alcoholic, he had never acknowledged she had a drug problem. She asked him what he thought. He told her, "Well, you better do something or you're going to die."

The father's daughter got back on the waiting list at Magdalene. "In the meantime I packed up my belongings and sold everything," she said. "I waited five months and lived with my father, who was ill but still drinking. I stayed clean. I was just tired."

There are two ways to regard the thistle. The more common is to see it as an annoying weed that is best ignored, or pulled up and discarded. The other view is to consider the thistle's intrinsic beauty and appreciate its strength as it survives along the sidewalk or side of the road. Magdalene takes the latter view. Inspired by the thistle, a thriving, healing community has been developed, along with a bath and body products business called Thistle Farms that helps equip and sustain the women and the ministry.

Women join the community of Magdalene out of situations similar to Beverly Mandina's, although unlike her, many have literally been alongside the road and have a criminal history of prostitution and addiction. They enter Magdalene in need of healing from lifetimes of violence and abuse. They are supported by a staff that includes many vol-





Magdalene residents and staff together.



Residents celebrate their graduation with a song.

unteers from St. Augustine's Chapel at Vanderbilt University, where Mrs. Stevens is the chaplain.

At any time, about 30 women receive free housing, food, therapy, education, job training, and medical and dental care, all through private and organizational gifts. Two dozen women live in Magdalene's five Nashville homes, without resident staff. The model is Benedictine. Each day begins in a circle, "where we read a meditation, pray, and make sure everyone is all right," according to the introduction of a book they've just released, titled *Find Your Way Home: Words from the Street, Wisdom from the Heart* (Abingdon Press).

The book outlines 24 principles by which the women live in community. They range from "think of the stranger as God" to "laugh at yourself" and "lose gracefully." More than 100 people contributed to the writing, including the residents, staff, volunteers and interns.

"Our goal is help one another move from destructive relationships that tear up our bodies and spirits to healing relationships that build them up," Mrs. Stevens writes in the introduction, which says that after 11 years the "great lesson" of Magdalene "has been that love can heal." Seventy-five percent of the women who enter the program stay the entire time. They graduate after two years, but their commitment to each other as sisters does not end.

The ministry has grown not only in Nashville, but has spread to other places, including a program started through St. Stephen's Church, Charleston, S.C., also called Magdalene. And seven women from Thistle Farms visited Rwanda recently to learn about the lives of women on the streets in that country and to help these women start their own similar company.

When a woman arrives at Magdalene, she enters into intensive therapy. The women are taken by bus to outpatient facilities. They participate in regular group meetings at Magdalene's Lena House, named after the singer Lena Horne. Curfews are enforced, and where a woman goes and with whom are scrutinized.

Time and healing bring more freedom. Eventually the women work at Thistle Farms where they are able to gain skills, earn money to pay off outstanding debts and prepare for the rest of their lives.

When Ms. Mandina became a resident in April 2007, she began treatment for Hepatitis C, which she had contracted from IV drug use. The "very intense therapy" uses interferon, which can cause suicidal depression for which many women need to be hospitalized.

"I slept a lot and tried to do as much I could," Ms. Mandina said, but she never got depressed.

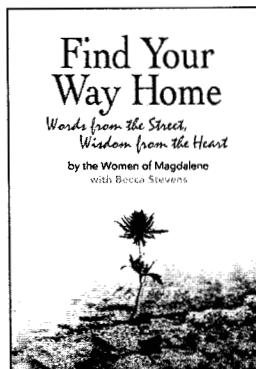
She reached her goals after 17 months, including payment of back taxes. She has been clean for two years, and although she won't graduate from the program until the spring, she has moved into an apartment offered by a member of her Seventh Day Adventist church, where she has become heavily involved in the women's ministry. She continues to work at Thistle Farms and is back in school, this time to finally earn her degree in nursing. She hopes to be a missionary overseas, perhaps to assist Magdalene's partnership in Rwanda.

As for her relationship with her son, who is 33 and recently engaged, they have reunited. "He doesn't want to talk about the past," she said. "He said to me, 'I forgive you, I love you, and that's all that matters'."

As for those she used to associate with, "until they want to live differently, there is nothing you can do that's going to get them to change. I think about these people, in Galveston, I wonder where they are now. But I don't want to go back there." □



Daniel Dubois photo



To read an interview with the Rev. Becca Stevens, and to find links to Magdalene and Thistle Farms, go to the Web Exclusives link on the home page of [www.livingchurch.org](http://www.livingchurch.org)

# New Province Raises Many Questions

*Did You Know...*  
**A building at the University of Utah was dedicated recently as the Carolyn Tanner Irish Humanities Building in honor of the Bishop of Utah.**

*Quote of the Week*  
**The Rt. Rev. Trevor Mwamba, Bishop of Botswana, on Anglican primates: "Some of our primates act like ecclesiastical Mugabes."**

The long-awaited formation of a new province for Anglicans in North America finally is taking place. A gathering in suburban Chicago on Dec. 3 was planned to organize the new entity, which is intended to be an alternative to The Episcopal Church [TEC] in this country, and to the Anglican Church of Canada. The announcement of this development has raised as many questions as it answers. Here are some attempts to provide answers:



**Just what is a province anyway?**

In this case, a province is an autonomous national church that is a member of the Anglican Communion. It is a member by virtue of an invitation of the Anglican Consultative Council [ACC], a group of clergy and lay Anglicans from all over the world.

**Don't we already have a province in this country?**

Yes, we do. It's The Episcopal Church.

**Then why do we need a second province?**

A sizable number of Episcopalians and former Episcopalians feel The Episcopal Church has strayed too far from its beliefs, and they're looking for a church in which they can continue to be Anglicans.

**Why do some people believe another province is necessary?**

They believe The Episcopal Church has erred in its still-unofficial recognition of same-sex blessings, its willingness to consecrate a non-celibate homosexual person as a bishop, and the interpretation of scripture by many of its leaders.

**Who determines whether a province is part of the Anglican Communion?**

This is a complicated matter. For example, under section 3 of its constitution, the ACC may add, remove, or alter the status of a province within the ACC with the concurrence of at least two thirds of the primates of the Anglican Communion.

**Is it likely that a second province in North America will be recognized officially?**

This is an important question, and the answer is anyone's guess. The ACC meets in May.

**What happens if recognition is not given to the new province?**

It probably will be able to function on its own, but not as a member church of the Anglican Communion.

**Who would belong to a new province?**

An eclectic group, ranging from members of the four dioceses that left TEC, to the Anglican Mission in the Americas [AMiA], Forward in Faith North America [FIFNA], the Reformed Episcopal Church, congregations that aligned with the churches of Nigeria, Uganda, and others, and other congrega-

tions waiting to see what's going to happen.

**Aren't most of these people evangelicals?**

Yes they are, but the dioceses of San Joaquin, Quincy and Fort Worth, along with FIFNA, are largely Anglo-Catholics.

**How is that going to work?**

For a while, it should be fine, but over time, watch for differences in matters of liturgy and theology to become more pronounced.

**How will a new province be any different from the current confusion involving Episcopalians and other Anglicans in this country?**

For one thing, there will be an opportunity to present a more unified church instead of, for example, having a church here aligned with Uganda and a church there attached to the Southern Cone. And if you believe there's strength in numbers, an alternate province could amass a sizable number of people, especially if it is able to attract some of the "continuing" churches that have divided among themselves.

**Is there a possibility that a second province could lead to competition between the two provinces?**

Absolutely. This would, of course, be an unfortunate situation, but the possibility of two churches in the same community competing to reach unchurched people or lapsed Episcopalians seems likely. And given the penchant for church growth shown by evangelical Episcopalians, the new province could pose a threat to TEC.

**Isn't there a concern that this new province would become another continuing church?**

Indeed there is. If the alternate province does not become part of the Communion, it could become the latest in the family of continuing Anglican churches, or, worse, simply a protestant church.

**What will be the structure of a new province?**

That is not yet known, but most likely it will be led by a primate who is an archbishop, and will be divided into dioceses in an arrangement similar to the current TEC.

**How will TLC report on developments in the new province?**

TLC would report on the news from both provinces.

These are difficult days for those who care about The Episcopal Church, and a time of hope for those who have left. The realignment of the Anglican Communion is moving full steam ahead, but at this stage no one should be surprised.

*David Kalvelage, executive editor*

## They Will be Missed

The decisions by the conventions of the dioceses of Quincy and Fort Worth to leave The Episcopal Church for the Anglican Province of the Southern Cone are discouraging, even though the actions were expected for months. The two dioceses will join Pittsburgh and San Joaquin in the South American Anglican province as they await the formation of a more permanent entity on this continent.

We share a kinship with the two dioceses, for they, like us, are largely Anglo-Catholic and represent a faith that seems to have fewer adherents each week. Neither of these dioceses had large numbers of members, but both have been blessed by high-quality clergy and strong leadership.

We offer good wishes to those who have felt they can no longer remain in The Episcopal Church and pray that they may be blessed in their new spiritual homes. They will be missed by those of us who remain.

## Official or Not?

The province being formed to accommodate disaffected North American Anglicans is the answer to the prayers for some readers of this magazine, and a schismatic act according to others. Regardless of one's views of the new province, it will have an effect on The Episcopal Church and its members. The province is likely to attract at least some members of an already dwindling Episcopal Church, along with dioceses and congregations that already have left.

It should be fascinating to watch during the next few months how the Anglican Communion reacts to the North American action. The opinion of the Archbishop of Canterbury will be sought, and important meetings of the primates of the Anglican Communion and the Anglican Consultative Council will address whether to recognize the new body. At issue will be whether the province will become an official member of the Anglican Communion, or whether its existence will be as the latest "continuing" Anglican church.

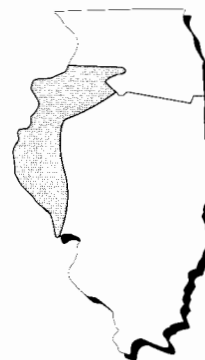
We send greetings and best wishes to the organizers of the province. May their efforts be fruitful and may those who align with it find it to be a place of peace.

## One Area of Growth

Reading the reports from the various diocesan conventions taking place this fall, it is encouraging to note that many legislative bodies have approved larger budgets for 2009. At a time when the economy has wreaked havoc on individuals, churches, and dioceses, and during a period when the church is becoming smaller, the larger budgets may be small signs of hope. We shouldn't be too optimistic about the budget increases, however, for larger amounts are not necessarily a good thing. There have been instances of endowments or various funds being used to augment diocesan budgets. Nevertheless, it is hopeful to see examples of budget growth at a time when they weren't expected.



The dioceses of Fort Worth and Quincy will be missed by those of us who remain.



# TREASURES of a Different Kind

## READER'S VIEWPOINT

By John D. Alexander

My guess is that in every church where the gospel for Nov. 16 was read, preachers pointed out its irony in our current economic crisis. Very few of us are seeing a two-for-one return on our investments such as described in the parable of the talents.

In any case, interpretations of this parable have historically gone in one of two directions. First is the economic interpretation, associated with what Max Weber called the protestant ethic. By this interpretation, the parable justifies the accumulation of wealth as a sign of God's favor. To those who have, more will be given; to those who have not, even what they have will be taken away. That's good news for the rich; not such good news for the poor.

Second is the moralizing interpretation. Even though the word "talent" in Greek means a huge sum of money, and has absolutely nothing to do with the ability to paint or to sing, innumerable sermons on this parable exhort us to use our God-given talents to the best of our ability. That may be good advice in itself, but it's not really the message of that gospel.

What we need to realize is how shocking and scandalous this parable most likely was to our Lord's original

audience. After all, they didn't understand economics the way we do. We're apt to admire the first two servants who invest their money and double their return for their good business sense. And we're apt to scorn the servant who buries his money in the ground just as we scorn people today who stuff their life savings in their mattresses. After all, money loses value over time with inflation and you've got to keep it wisely invested just to break even.

That's how we think. But people in the ancient world thought very differently. They didn't understand inflation, and they saw nothing wrong with burying treasure in the ground. In fact, the rabbis taught that when someone entrusted you with a large sum of money, burying it for safekeeping was the most morally responsible action you could take. Moreover, the operating assumption in the ancient world was that the supply of the world's goods was finite and limited. If you were born rich, that was fine; but if not then the only way you could get rich was by making someone else poor.

People who became wealthy through their business dealings were thus universally suspected of fraud, deceit, or theft. Financial success was not the badge of respectability that it is today — quite the opposite.

Our Lord's original audience proba-

bly regarded the first two servants, who double their money, as shady and dishonest characters — just like their master who reaps where he has not sown and gathers where he has not winnowed. And the great scandal of the parable is that these disreputable servants are the ones who end up being rewarded, while the honest servant, who's done the right thing by burying his money safely in the ground, is the one who ends up being punished. To make matters worse, the rewards and punishments themselves — entering into joy and being cast into outer darkness — suggest that our Lord is talking about entry into or exclusion from the kingdom of heaven.

What could our Lord possibly mean by telling such a shocking and scandalous story? I would propose that the parable challenged its original audience, just as it challenges us, to imagine a different kind of world, governed by different kinds of economic laws, with a different kind of treasure, denominated in a different kind of currency.

We live in an economic world governed by finitude and scarcity. In such a world, there are circumstances in which hoarding your treasure makes perfect sense. You'd better hold on to what you have or others might take it from you. But maybe the talents in the parable represent a different kind of treasure: not commodities to be hoarded, but rather gifts to be shared.

In his classic book, *The Three Ways of the Spiritual Life*, French theologian Reginald Garrigou-LaGrange speaks directly to this issue. He writes the following:

"Saint Augustine's saying is so clearly true, that 'material goods, unlike those of the spirit, cannot belong wholly and simultaneously to more than one person.' The same house, the same land, cannot belong to several people at once, nor the same territory to several nations. And herein lies the reason of that unhappy conflict of interests which arises from the feverish quest of these earthly possessions.

"On the other hand, as St. Augustine

Paradoxically, only by giving away these treasures do we get to keep them.

often reminds us, the same spiritual treasure can belong in its entirety to all, and at the same time to each, without any disturbance of the peace between them. Indeed, the more there are to enjoy them in common the more completely do we possess them. The same truth, the same virtue, the same God, can belong to us all in like manner, and yet none of us embarrasses his fellow possessors. Such are the inexhaustible riches of the spirit that they can be the property of all and yet satisfy the desires of each. Indeed, only then do we possess a truth completely when we teach it to others, when we make others share our contemplation; only then do we truly love a virtue when we wish others to love it also; only then do we wholly love God when we desire to make Him loved by all. Give money away, or spend it, and it is no longer yours. But give God to others, and you possess Him more fully for yourself. We may go even fur-

ther and say that, if we desired only one soul to be deprived of Him, if we excluded only one soul — even the soul of one who persecutes and calumniates us — from our own love, then God himself would be lost to us.”

Even though Garrigou-LaGrange is not commenting directly on the parable of the talents, nonetheless I think he supplies the key to its interpretation. Our Lord has entrusted into the care of his church great spiritual treasures — the gospel, the sacraments, the deposit of faith, and all the gifts of grace. He intends us to share these treasures and spread them abroad. But our great fear is that unless we put a fence around them and protect them, they’ll become corrupted by the world and we’ll lose them. So we’re tempted to hide these

treasures and keep them to ourselves, in effect burying them in the ground. In that case, however, contrary to our best intentions, we do end up losing them.

Paradoxically, only by giving away these treasures do we get to keep them. And when we do share them — freely, generously, and abundantly — we find that they keep on multiplying back to us until the day when the master returns and bids us enter into his joy. □

*The Rev. John D. Alexander, SSC, is the rector of St. Stephen’s Church, Providence, R.I.*

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

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
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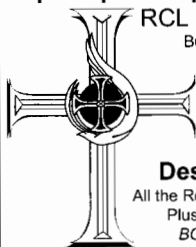
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## LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

### Apply to All

I have been a "liturgical guitarist" for more than 30 years. Therefore it was with great interest that I read the Rev. Doran Stambaugh's article, "The Challenge of Celebrity" [TLC, Oct. 26]. I agreed with many of the points made by the author. The beauty of holiness is indeed measured by the disposition of the artist's heart. However, to assume the disposition of one's heart based on the instrument used to offer sung praise or by whether the minister of music faces the holy people of God seems like a great overgeneralization.

It would be petty of me to point out that the tendency toward performance can be found in chancel choirs and organists along with guitarists. I would posit that the author's central positive point, "keeping our worship focused on God through constant prayer — before, after, as well as during worship..." needs to be applied to all of those who would serve the living God and his holy people in any liturgical ministry. Our sisters and brothers in gospel choirs in the pentecostal traditions offer praise to God while facing the congregation. Chancel choirs processing in robes to the front of the church offer praise to God, as does the well-trained liturgical guitarist who humbly offers heart and skill in service to the living God and the holy people of God.

I am grateful to God for giving me the ability to lead others in sung prayer by using a guitar. Like all of those who offer their gifts in a public way, I acknowledge that not everyone will accept or appreciate the beauty of this ministry. I hold the musical treasures of the church close to my heart while celebrating that the Holy Spirit is continuing to inspire musicians, contemporary and traditional, to add to that treasury.

*(The Very Rev.) Ted J. Monica  
St. John's Church  
Johnstown, N.Y.*

### Deal With It

Due notice is indeed short for the St. Andrew's Draft of a proposed covenant to be on the General Convention agenda [TLC, Nov. 16], but what are the implications if we delay? Does this not seem a bit arrogant and dismissive? Does this mean that we need three more years to read and discuss? Won't it come to the floor anyway, but less creatively? Can't there be some way to receive and respond without our Presiding Bishop's language of strong discouragement?

I am not fond of the idea of a covenant, which could become a regulatory confession of faith and litmus test for who is truly Anglican and who is not. Nonetheless, we need to deal sincerely with the prospect. It's not going to go away, and we are a literate body capable of necessary work. As I recall, some of the ecumenical councils dealt with weighty matters over several months.

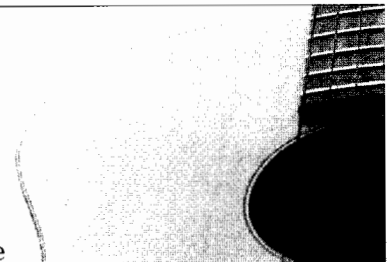
*(The Rev.) J. Blaney Pridgen III  
St. Mary's Church  
Columbia, S.C.*

### Other Blessings

As an Aussie who loves sport, I found the editor's column about the blessing of the Chicago Cubs' dugout [TLC, Oct. 26] interesting. I can provide an Australian equivalent.

Most Americans will not be familiar with Aussie Rules football. Like American football, it is unique and played mainly in that country. It is fast and exciting — the most popular in the world by percentage of population. In September, I was at the AFL Grand Final in Melbourne, attended by more than 100,000 spectators.

When I was rector of St Mark's, Fitzroy, in Australia, I was also a member of Australia's most famous football club, Collingwood. It has more than 40,000 members. Aussie football supporters usually show their allegiance by wearing scarves in the club colors. In 2002, I was asked if I would perform a "blessing of the scarves" at the club's preseason fans' day. I was glad to oblige, and blessed more than



To assume the disposition of one's heart based on the instrument used to offer sung praise seems like a great overgeneralization.

10,000 people's scarves with holy water.

The service register at St Mark's, Fitzroy, records this "service." It is the highest attended liturgy in the Diocese of Melbourne!

*(The Rev.) Tony Noble  
San Diego, Calif.*

## A Learning? Experience

The writer of the commentary on Sunday's Readings that referred to "entrapment" at a stop sign [TLC, Oct. 26] is a victim of victimhood.

Police enforce all laws that they can for our welfare. But the author thought no one was looking at that stop sign. What difference did it make whether the officer was hidden?

Some years ago, I learned the same "stop-sign" lesson. A policeman caught me cutting a corner. He was a parishioner and I was embarrassed enough to re-think and use better driving habits. Now I find myself more than 20 years later coming to a full stop no matter the time, place or circumstances.

Whatever relevance the author's analogy may have had to the propers, it was lost in his missing a golden opportunity to not resent, complain or be a victim, but to learn from the experience. I am 78 and still learning.

*(The Rev.) Thomas Foster  
Jesus Our Savior Anglican Church  
Modesto, Calif.*

## Remember the Good

After 130 years of publishing THE LIVING CHURCH, David Kalvelage dis-honors former editors and staff by listing 40 outrageous events that have taken place in TEC while he's been editor [TLC, Nov. 2]. Even on this anniversary he isn't able to uphold, uplift, honor and remember the great good done by this branch of Anglicanism in America reported by TLC before and during his editorship. Why not light a candle or two or 40 instead of cursing the darkness?

*(The Rev. Canon) John C. Powers  
St. Bede's Church  
Cleveland, Okla.*

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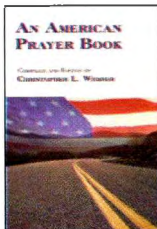
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## BOOKS

### An American Prayer Book

Compiled and edited by **Christopher L. Webber**. Church Publishing. Pp. 192. \$18. ISBN 978-0-8192-2332-6.



The Rev. Christopher L. Webber has skillfully compiled prayers and spiritual readings in previous books and this one is no exception. *An American Prayer Book* includes prayers for America

as a society, prayers used in this country during its history, and prayers for use on special occasions, such as federal holidays.

The prayers come from a wide variety of sources, including the Book of Common Prayer and from Webber himself. Readers will find prayers from Judaism and Islam as well as Christianity. There are litanies and thanksgivings, familiar prayers and unusual ones.

Among the contents are prayers used at inaugurations of presidents, a

prayer for use on Election Day, prayer for children of the street, and a prayer in remembrance of 9/11. There are several prayers for the nation.

These prayers could be used in corporate worship, in individual devotions, and even in civic settings. The book would make a nice gift for one who loves this country and its history.

*David Kalvelage*

### The Yellow Leaves

**A Miscellany**

By **Frederick Buechner**. Westminster John Knox. Pp. ix + 123. \$17.95. ISBN 978-0-664-23276-4.



In a literary life that began in 1950 with a widely acclaimed first novel, *A Long Day's Dying*, and that encompasses a number of modern classics of spirituality, such as *Telling the Truth*, *The Alphabet of Grace*, and *Wishful Thinking*, Frederick Buechner has been both entertaining and illumi-

nating us for almost 60 years.

*The Yellow Leaves* continues the tradition, though it is disheartening to read in his Introduction that he publishes this miscellany for want of a "proper" book; for the last several years the writing of books has, mysteriously, eluded him.

Still this collection bears his distinctive voice, and we should be grateful for it. Buechner observes life carefully, and never shies from the complexities that life throws in our path, or in our face. Buechner has known or run across some remarkable people in his long life, and they populate his prose, but never obtrusively.

Buechner dedicated this book to the memory of the late Michael Mayne (the former dean of Westminster Abbey) and his wife Alison, and this is a fitting tribute from one extraordinary person to two others.

*(The Very Rev.) Peter Eaton  
Denver, Colo.*

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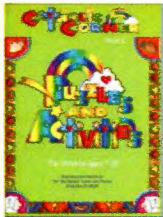
# Seasonal Gifts

**MORE PAGES FROM THE RED SUIT DIARIES.** By **Ed Butchart**. Revell. Pp. 208. \$15.99. ISBN 978-0-8007-1904-3.

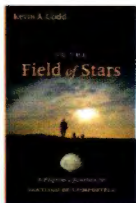
The founder and president of a ministry that provides wheelchairs and other medical equipment to the needy, Ed Butchart has used his resemblance to Santa Claus to spread the Christmas spirit to those in need of cheer. Filled with anecdotes both touching and hilarious, the book shows the patience, good humor, and faith that go into being a "Santa's helper."



**CATHOLIC CORNER PUZZLES & ACTIVITIES.** Year B. Puzzles by **Becky Radtke**. World Library Publications. Pp. 67 + CD-ROM. \$14.95. ISBN 978-1584-593737.



Simple puzzles, games, and coloring pages cover the themes of each Sunday, plus major feasts and solemnities, for ages 5-7. (There is also an edition for ages 7-10). Follows the Roman Catholic lectionary, but is easily adaptable to supplement a parish Sunday school curriculum or as a take-home handout sheet.



**TO THE FIELD OF STARS: A Pilgrim's Journey to Santiago de Compostela.** By **Kevin A. Codd**. Eerdmans. Pp. 287. \$18. ISBN 978-0-8028-2592-6.

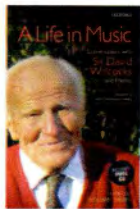
On a 35-day trek across Spain, a Roman Catholic priest walks in the footsteps of medieval pilgrims who sought out the traditional burial place of St. James the Greater, which attracts more than 100,000 visitors annually. He describes his journey, both literal and spiritual, as a life-changing experience.



**LINES & LYRICS BY LOIS ELLEN.** By **Lois Perkins Crewdson**. Mariner Publishing. Pp. 95. \$21.95. ISBN 978-0-9776841-6-8.

An anthology of more than 50 years of poems by an artist, writer, and wife of an Episcopal priest.

Quiet, charming meditations inspired by a lifetime of faith, illustrated with color plates of Mrs. Crewdson's original art.



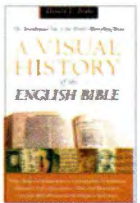
**A LIFE IN MUSIC: Conversations with Sir David Willcocks and Friends.** Edited by **William Owen**. Oxford University Press. Pp. 304 + CD. \$27.95. ISBN 978-0-19-336063-1.

This appreciation of the renowned organist, educator and conductor includes interviews with the subject and with many admirers and friends, including a foreword by the Prince of Wales. Special emphasis is placed on how his leadership and humanity have inspired generations of musicians. The CD packaged with the book includes many of his famous recordings.



**ERVIN BOSSANYI: Vision, Art and Exile.** Edited by **Jo Bossanyi** and **Sarah Brown**. Spire Books. Pp. 295. \$130. ISBN 978-1-904965-15-2.

Hungarian-born stained glass master Ervin Bossanyi's inspired use of color and skill as a draftsman is well represented in this richly illustrated volume, as are his lesser known creations in metal, sculpture, and paint.



**A VISUAL HISTORY OF THE ENGLISH BIBLE: The Tumultuous Tale of the World's Bestselling Book.** By **Donald L. Brake**. Baker Books. Pp. 352. \$29.95. ISBN 978-0-8010-1316-4.

Traces the history and stories, both harrowing and heroic, that have been a part of preserving and publishing the Bible in the English language. Includes many illustrations as well as explanations and comparisons of the many translations available today.

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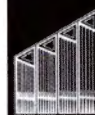


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Phone: 011-44-131 228 1066.

## BOOKS

**ANGLICAN BIBLIPOLE:** theological booksellers. Saratoga Springs, NY. (518) 587-7470.  
[AnglicanBk@aol.com](mailto:AnglicanBk@aol.com).

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Application deadline is December 31, 2008. Forward curriculum vitae and the names of three references to: **The Rev. Dr. William J. Danaher, Jr., Dean of Theology, Huron University College, 1349 Western Rd., London, Ontario, Canada, N6G 1H3.** For further information: (519) 438-7224 (x289); [wdanaher@huron.uwo.ca](mailto:wdanaher@huron.uwo.ca).

In accordance with Canadian immigration requirements, this advertisement is directed in the first instance to Canadian citizens and permanent residents of Canada. Huron values its place in an interconnected world and desires to create a diverse and equitable employment and educational environment that recognizes the inherent worth and dignity of every person.

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The ideal candidate will share our desire for traditional Anglican liturgy and music, offer Bible-based sermons, encourage efforts to enhance our Sunday school program, assist us in finding opportunities for adult education and special services, and support our community outreach endeavors. Our church building, constructed in the 1860s, is a little jewel in an urban setting. New Brunswick is conveniently located between New York City and Philadelphia, and only a short drive or train ride from Newark International Airport. Rutgers University, the State University of New Jersey, has several campuses in New Brunswick, Johnson & Johnson is headquartered in the city and there are two large hospitals, many restaurants and modest but excellent theaters.

Applicants are welcome to mail a letter of intent and a resume to: **The Church of St. John the Evangelist, Discernment Committee, 189 George St., New Brunswick, NJ 08901** or submit those documents by e-mail: [Stjohns9@verizon.net](mailto:Stjohns9@verizon.net).

**FULL-TIME RECTOR: *St. John the Evangelist, Hingham, MA.*** Ours is a thriving and growing suburban parish with members representing a wide range of interests, ages, and needs. Seeking a rector who will engage us in continuing to devote our time, talent, and treasure through an enthusiastic, intellectual and participative style of leadership. We use both Rites I and II, and have a strong traditional music program and large church school. Applicants should submit a letter of intent, resume and CDO profile to: [search@stjohns-hingham.org](mailto:search@stjohns-hingham.org).

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## PEOPLE & PLACES

### Appointments

The Rev. **James Reho** is deacon at Trinity Cathedral, 464 NE 16th St., Miami, FL 33132.

The Rev. **Keith J. Roberson** is rector of Good Shepherd, 200 W College, Terrell, TX 75160.

The Rev. **Jason Shelby** is assistant at St. Columba's, 550 Sunnybrook Rd., Ridgeland, MS 39157.

The Rev. **Dolores Wiens** is priest-in-charge of St. Barnabas', 601 Pottawatomi Trail, Gary, IN 46403.

The Rev. **Sarah D. Odderstol** is rector of St. Mary's, 306 S Prospect, Park Ridge, IL 60068.

### Ordinations

#### Priests

**Chicago—Sunny Lopez, Catherine Wright. Mississippi — Annie Cumberland, Peter Gray, Catherine Rickett.**

**New York — Stephanie Allen, Mark Collins, Lindsay Lunnum, Kathryn Reinhard, Candace Sandfort, Arianne Weeks.**

**Southeast Florida — Gwendolyn Tobias.**

#### Deacons

**Kentucky — Emily Schwartz.**

### Retirements

The Rev. **Frank Chun**, from active ministry, Diocese of Hawaii.

The Rev. **Larry Spannagel**, as rector of St. Peter's, Amarillo, TX.

### Resignations

The Rev. **Ollie Rencher**, as chaplain at the University of Mississippi and assistant rector at St. Peter's, Oxford, MS.

The Rev. Canon **Jenny Wallace**, as canon for spiritual life and ministry development, Diocese of Hawaii, Honolulu, HI.

### Deaths

The Rev. **Percy Archibald Jerkins**, 83, of Port Tobacco, MD, died Oct. 4 at Charlotte Hall Veterans Home following a long illness.

Fr. Jerkins was a native of Eau Gaillie, FL, and a graduate of Florida Southern College and the Church Divinity School of the Pacific. He was ordained in the Diocese of San Joaquin, as deacon in 1970 and priest in 1972. Fr. Jerkins was vicar of St. Mary's Church, Manteca, CA, 1972-83; assistant at St. Mark's, Upland, CA, 1983-87; and assistant at Our Savior, San Gabriel, CA, 1987-94. He also was a headmaster of church-related schools in Los Angeles and Visalia. Surviving are his wife, Peggie; a daughter, Pam Hamorsky; granddaughters, and a brother, Frank.

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The Rev. Vanessa Glass, honorary v  
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www.saint-raphaels.org info@saint-raphaels.org  
The Rev. Alice Marcrum, r  
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## STUART, FL

**ST. MARY'S** 623 E. Ocean Blvd. (772) 287-3244  
Website: www.stmarys-stuart.org  
The Rev. Thomas T. Pittenger, r; the Rev. David Francoeur, assoc r; the Rev. Jonathan Coffey, the Rev. Stephen Fregeau, the Rev. Canon Richard Hardman, the Rev. Peggy Sheldon, assisting; Dr. Allen Rosenberg, organist & choir dir  
Sun Eu 7:30, 9, 9 (contemporary), 11, 5. Tues H Eu 12:10; Thurs H Eu 10, Sat 5

## SAVANNAH, GA

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Sun MP 7:30, Ch S, 10:15; Masses 8, 9, 11:15 (Sol High); Mon-Fri, MP 9; Mass 12:15 (except Wed); EP 5:30; Wed, Mass 6; Sat, MP 8:30, Mass 9, C 9:30

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**GRACE CHURCH** 950 Broad St., at Federal Sq.  
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## WELLSBORO, PA

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**CHURCH OF THE HOLY COMMUNION** (843) 722-2024  
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Website: www.holycom.org  
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## CHURCH DIRECTORY KEY

Light face type denotes AM, bold face PM; add, address; anno, announced; A-C, Ante-Communion; appt., appointment; B, Benediction; C, Confessions; Cho, Choral; Ch S, Church School; CP, Contemplative/Centering Prayer; c, curate; d, deacon, d.r.e., director of religious education; EP, Evening Prayer; Eu, Eucharist; Ev, Evensong; ex, except; 1S, 1st Sunday; hol, holiday; HC, Holy Communion; HD, Holy Days; HS, Healing Service; HU, Holy Unction; Instr, Instructions; Int, Intercessions; LOH, Laying On of Hands; Lit, Litany; Mat, Matins; MP, Morning Prayer; P, Penance; r, rector; r-em, rector emeritus; Ser, Sermon; Sol, Solemn; SD, Spiritual Direction; Sta, Stations; V, Vespers; v, vicar; YA, Young Adult; YPF, Young People's Fellowship. A/C, air-conditioned; H/A, handicapped accessible.

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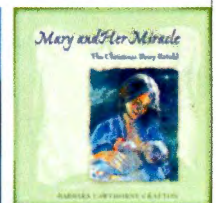
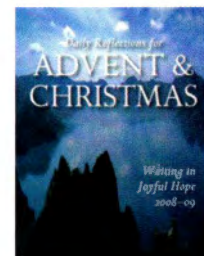
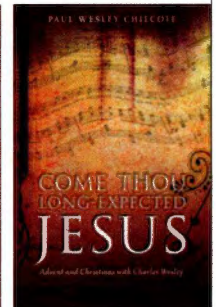
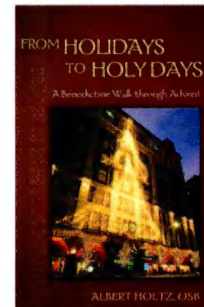
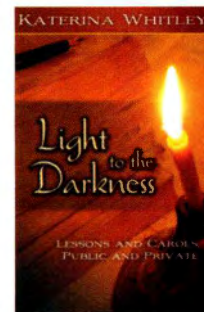
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