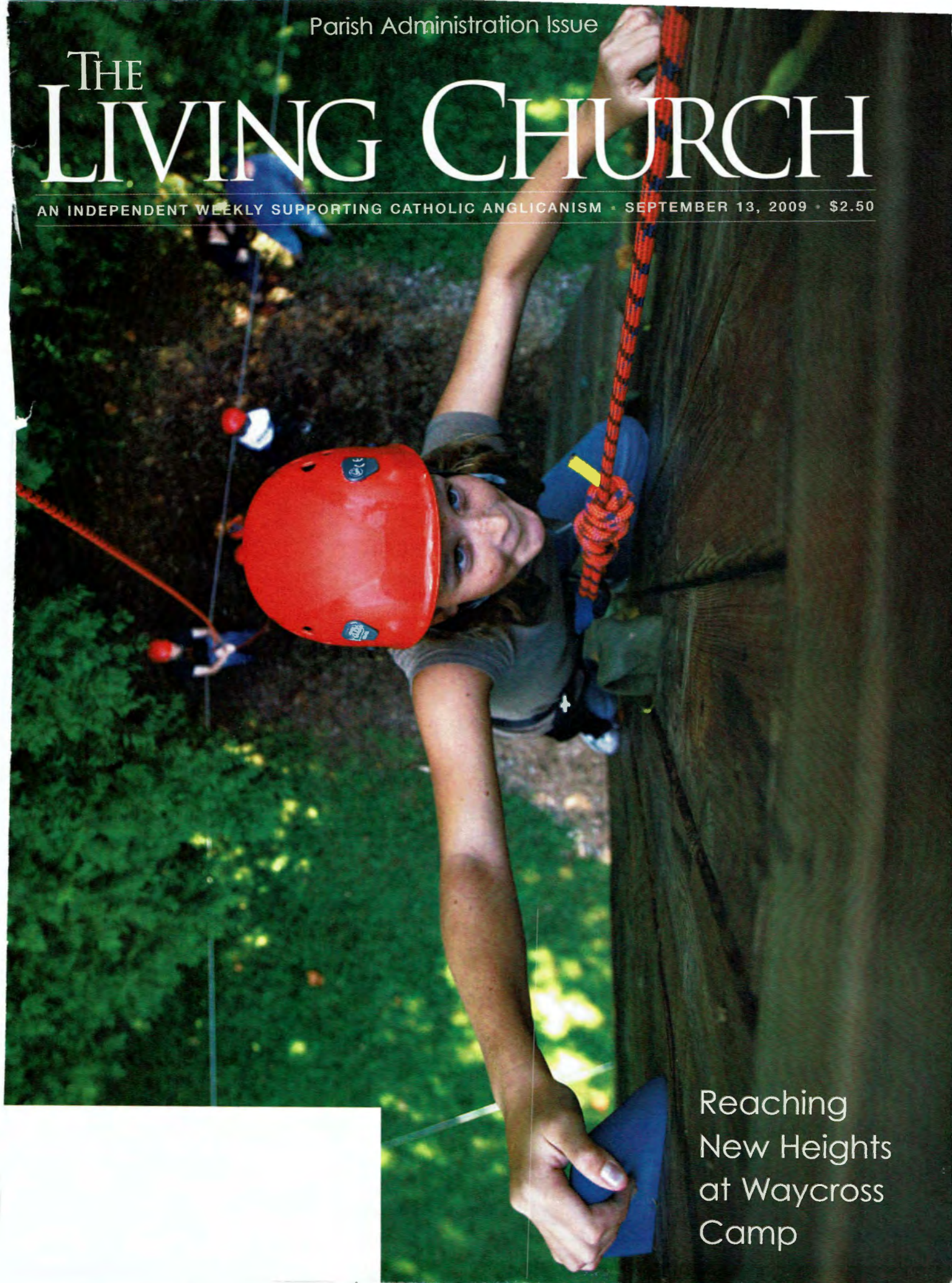


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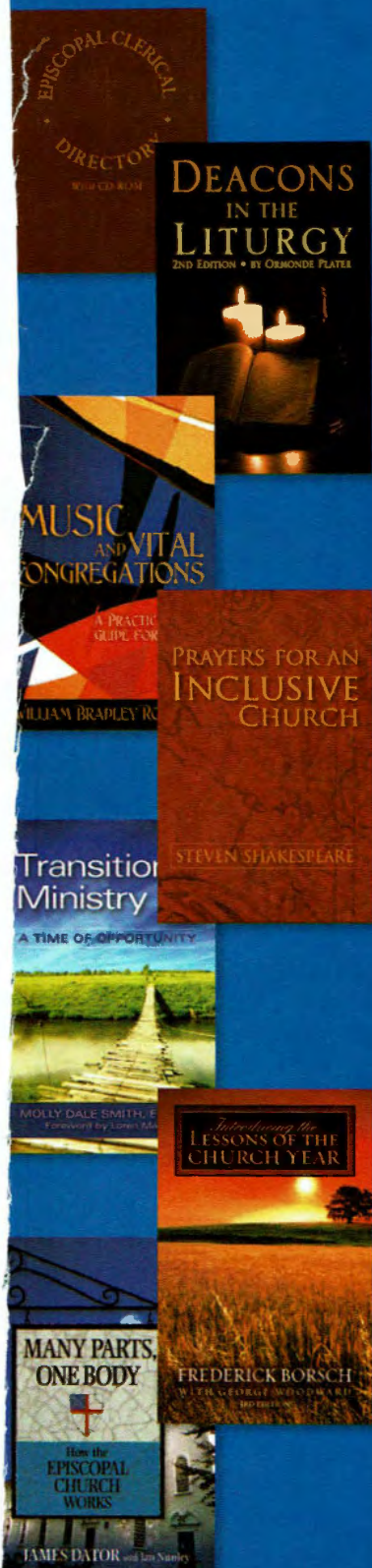
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Volume 239 Number 11

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THIS WEEK

Features

- 12 No Bed of Roses
BY CAROLYN S. ELLIS
- 20 Care in the Void
BY WILLY THORN
- 24 The Communion of Saints
BY WILLIAM SHULLENBERGER
- 26 Welcoming People with Disabilities
BY TIMOTHY M. DOMBEK
- 40 Making the Connection
BY MICHAEL O'LOUGHLIN
- 44 All that Twitters
BY TIM SCHENCK
- 47 Episcopal Schools Move Ahead With Less
BY WILLY THORN AND JOHN SCHUESSLER

Opinion

- 32 Guest Column
Feeding a Curious Flock
BY PATRICK GAHAN
- 33 Editorials
Rising to the Occasion
- 34 Viewpoint
4 Keys to Growing Your Parish Now
BY GREG METHVIN
- 37 Letters
A Legacy of Service

News

- 18 ELCA Approves Same-Sex Blessings, Partnered Gay Clergy

Other Departments

- 6 Sunday's Readings
- 7 Books
- 11 Short & Sharp
- 50 People & Places



24



26



ON THE COVER: Emily Betts from Trinity Church, Lawrenceburg, Ind., delights in conquering the climbing wall at Waycross Center. See page 16 for more on this camp. Rick Wood photo

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BOOKS

Baptism Today Understanding, Practice, Ecumenical Implications

Edited by Thomas Best. Liturgical Press. Pp. 464. \$39.95. ISBN 0814662218.

This publication of the World Council of Churches suggests that baptism is central to almost all Christian churches, yet the theologies and practices vary widely.



Roman Catholics and Orthodox have rich baptismal liturgies that intertwine spiritual reality, ritual and symbol based on well-articulated baptismal ecclesiology. At

the other end of the spectrum, Quakers and the Salvation Army forgo symbolism, rituals and water baptism completely.

Baptists, Mennonites, Disciples of Christ, Seventh-day Adventists, and pentecostals all practice believer's baptism — the baptizing of adults and older children who are able to profess faith. Baptism here is not so much transformative as a witness to what the grace of God has already done in a believer. By contrast, Lutheran churches put the emphasis on God's grace, and not on the faith of the recipient. The Lutheran doctrine of justification by grace alone is most illustrative at the baptism of an infant, since God takes the initiative to save a person.

Insightful Questions

Martha Moore-Keish's article, "Baptism in the Presbyterian and Reformed Tradition," gives us an insightful list of questions for the Church to ponder in developing a coherent baptismal practice: When is it permissible to refuse to baptize someone? Is every such refusal a denial of the generosity of God's grace? How much should we require of those preparing for baptism? Finally, how is baptism related to sanctification, the ongoing life of faith? These are excellent questions worth pondering in our own Episcopal Church.

Perhaps the most thought-provok-
(Continued on next page)

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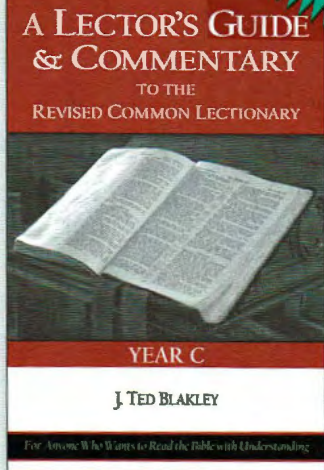
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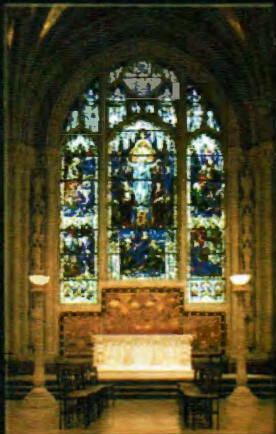
The Rev. Dr. John Goldingay

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SUNDAY'S READINGS

True Authority

'If any want to become my followers ...' (Mark 8:34)

15th Sunday after Pentecost (Proper 19B), Sept. 13, 2009

BCP: Isaiah 50:4-9; Psalm 116 or 116:1-8; James 2:1-5,8-10,14-18; Mark 8:27-38 or Mark 9:14-29

RCL: Prov. 1:20-33 and Psalm 19 or Wisdom 7:26-8:1; or Isaiah 50:4-9a and Psalm 116:1-8; James 3:1-12; Mark 8:27-38

Those who aggrandize themselves at the expense of others generally meet with a common end. Jean-Claude Duvalier, who at 19 inherited the Haitian presidency-for-life from his ruthless father, François, is said now to be living in poverty somewhere in France. Uganda's Idi Amin, who long maintained his rule through political repression, ethnic expulsions, and even murder, ended his days in obscurity in Saudi Arabia. And if this pattern holds true in the future, following the overthrow or death of Robert Mugabe, Zimbabweans will go to great lengths to expunge both him and his policies from their nation's memory.

Those who do good anonymously on the basis of their love for God, on the other hand, can exert unwitting influence that abides for centuries. Giovanni Bernardone, who in 1205 took the gospel at face value, selling what he had and giving the proceeds to the poor, still challenges Christians today as St. Francis of Assisi. Maximilian Kolbe, the Polish priest who in 1941 freely gave his life so that another prisoner at Auschwitz might live, calls on others today to be ready for martyrdom. And if this pattern holds, the selfless witness of a Macedonian nun named Teresa will speak to Christians

for many centuries to come.

Jesus was clearly aware of the difference between power for power's sake and the influence that often comes through quiet obedience to God. In today's gospel, we're told, "He called the crowd with his disciples, and said to them, 'If any want to become my followers, let them deny themselves and take up their cross and follow me. For those who want to save their life will lose it, and those who lose their life for my sake, and for the sake of the gospel, will save it'" (Mark 8:34-35).

In the church, rectors and bishops can hold onto their jobs with a death grip long after their ministries are clearly over. Secular CEOs can try to cling to their lofty positions despite the obvious failure of their leadership. And all of us tend to cling to our dominance over others regardless of the toll it takes on them or us.

How do we know if our exercise of power is merely feeding our own egos? If it breaks down relationships and harms other people, we've got some clues. And how can we know if our actions involve truly following Jesus? Perhaps when they're done out of love, and we have nothing to gain personally through doing them.

Look It Up

What recent news stories have shown power being exercised for its own sake? What stories have recounted acts of selflessness?

Think About It

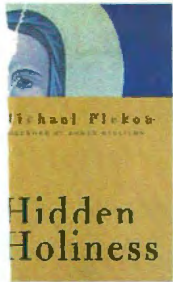
Which of today's Christian leaders might continue to influence the Church long after their deaths? Why?

Next Sunday

16th Sunday after Pentecost (Proper 20B), Sept. 20, 2009

BCP: Wisdom 1:16—2:1(6-11)12-22; Psalm 54; James 3:16—4:6; Mark 9:30-37

RCL: Prov. 31:10-31 and Psalm 1; or Wisdom 1:16-2:1, 12-22 or Jer. 11:18-20 and Psalm 54; James 3:13-4:3, 7-8a; Mark 9:30-37



Plekon includes are widely known: Dietrich Bonhoeffer, Dorothy Day, Thomas Merton. People from 20th-century Orthodoxy's Paris School are cited frequently. Other examples of holiness mentioned are as diverse as the Alaskan clergy spouse and mother Olga Arsamquq Michael (1916-79) who lived a life of "deliberate generosity," and Darcey Steinke, author of *Suicide Blonde* and *Easter Everywhere*, whose journey with God is ambivalent but never dull.

Fr. Plekon, an Orthodox priest and professor at City University of New York, seems uncomfortable with how holiness often gains notoriety. He rightly criticizes the ecclesiastical and popular domestication of saints. He offers the insightful observation that many holy people today "cannot

be easily placed in the older categories of saints, for they journeyed through many changes in their lives." In our time, a major aspect of obedience to God may be a willingness to change in ways consonant with grace.

Hidden Holiness is an important contribution to the current literature on Christian holiness. In particular, it merits the attention of anyone interested in the growth of the calendar of saints in various branches of the Church.

(The Rev.) Charles Hoffacker
Washington, D.C.

A Lector's Guide & Commentary to the Revised Common Lectionary

By J. Ted Blakley. St. Mark's Press. Pp. 359. \$20. ISBN 978-0-9618-1125-9.

The reading of sacred scripture is foundational to our worship. No other Christian group surpasses Anglicans with respect to the amount of scrip-

tures solemnly read in our worship. But while our liturgy is wonderfully rich in biblical readings, the reading itself can, on occasion, leave something to be desired.

St. Mark's Press and Dr. J. Ted Blakley have produced this guide to enable churches to raise their standards of liturgical lection — whether good or mediocre at present — to a new level of excellence.

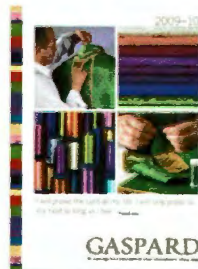
The book's introduction offers a primer on the art of liturgical reading with a lot of common-sense tips for novices as well as advanced guidance for the more adept. I am in hearty agreement with most of the author's suggestions, but demur slightly from his stern warning against over dramatization. The opposite — expressionless, monotone rendering of the text — has been much more the case from my observation. In fairness, the author does advocate a kind of *via media*

(Continued on next page)

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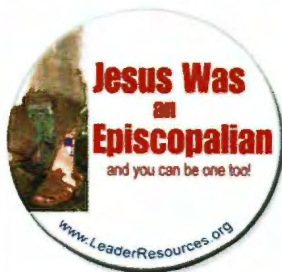
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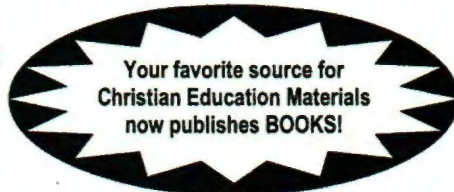
"It's an amazing time to be an Episcopalian! Our church has a renewed sense of vision and leadership focused on feeding the hungry and clothing the naked; welcoming everybody to the table, preaching repentance and accepting forgiveness. We hold together modern thought and an ancient faith firmly rooted in Jesus Christ. This book lets the world know who we are and who God is calling us to be. It's an uplifting, down-to-earth apologia for a new generation."



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BOOKS

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ing article is Bo Larsson's, "Baptism in a Post 'State-Church' Situation: The Case of the Church of Sweden." In a nation where 3 percent of the population attends church, 70 to 80 percent of the population is still baptized. People may not be sure about God or the

This book is a helpful resource ... especially as the Church struggles to be missional in a post-modern world.

church's dogmas, but they feel baptism means something. These people are not atheists. Indeed, they "are still open to the possibility that there might be a God, a God who cares about a newborn baby." So how should the church respond to these people in a way that maintains the integrity of baptism and takes seriously the missional role of the church?

Larsson believes this question is the most important contemporary challenge to the Church today. I agree. Baptism proclaims the reality of a non-judgmental God in our lives — a God not just for "religious" people but for everyone, "both those who long for God and those who despise God."

This book is a helpful resource for anyone seriously interested in exploring the meaning and practice of baptism, especially as the Church struggles to be missional in a post-modern world.

*(The Rev.) Gary Nicolosi
Victoria, B.C., Canada*

Hidden Holiness

By **Michael Plekon**. Foreword by **Rowan Williams**. University of Notre Dame Press. Pp. viii + 212. \$25. ISBN 987-0-268-03893-9.

This very readable book amounts to a verbal symphony on the theme of holiness: a holiness hidden and non-spectacular, contemporary and accessible, yet still beguiling and mysterious.

Some of the examples Michael

Bethlehem, Jerusalem, Nazareth, Galilee, the River Jordan.

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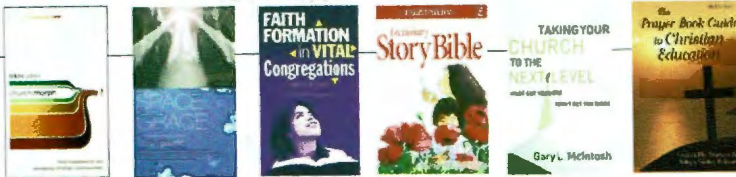


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Trends and Training



CHURCHMORPH: How Megatrends are Reshaping Christian Communities. By Eddie Gibbs. Baker Academic. Pp. 224. \$17.99. ISBN 978-0-8010-3762-7.

A senior professor at Fuller Theological Seminary looks at the trends that are shaping the Western church and culture, and considers how denominations and individual faith communities can, and in some cases must, respond. A thought-provoking, big-picture view, packed with information but very readable.

SPACE FOR GRACE: Creating Inclusive Churches. By Giles Goddard. Canterbury Press Norwich. Pp. 137. \$20.99. ISBN 978-1-85311-916-3. Inclusiveness is about more than sexuality, asserts the author, a parish rector in the Church of England. He examines how and why churches are changing to look more like their local communities, and the implications of those movements in such areas as leadership styles, setting boundaries and seeing beyond labels.

FAITH FORMATION IN VITAL CONGREGATIONS. By Marian R. Plant. Pilgrim Press. Pp. 128. \$12. ISBN 978-0-8298-1813-0.

The author asserts that “we can no longer depend on the culture to do Christian formation for us,” which is why parishes have to be intentional and creative in how they offer Christian education for adults and children. Offers helpful insights in such areas as group dynamics, biblical literacy, and best practices for today’s learners.

LECTIONARY STORY BIBLE (Year C). By Ralph Milton, illustrated by Margaret Kyle. Woodlake Publishing. Pp. 233. \$30. ISBN 978-1-55145-576-1.

This beautiful book, covering Year C with lessons and psalms appointed in the Revised Common Lectionary, completes the three-year liturgical cycle of collaboration between the author and artist. Two lessons and/or a psalm are included for almost every Sunday, with helpful indexes and additional information. A must for parish libraries and Sunday

school resource centers; also highly recommended for families with children.

TAKING YOUR CHURCH TO THE NEXT LEVEL. By Gary L. McIntosh. Baker Books. Pp. 215. \$16.99. ISBN 978-0-8010-9198-8.

A look at the “cycles of fruitfulness”—the ways a church’s age and size present barriers and opportunities for continued growth and vitality. Includes characteristics to watch for and keys to staying faithful to the church’s mission.

THE PRAYER BOOK GUIDE TO CHRISTIAN EDUCATION. Sharon E. Pearson and Robyn Szoke, Editors. Morehouse. Pp. 328. \$24. 978-0-8192-2337-1.

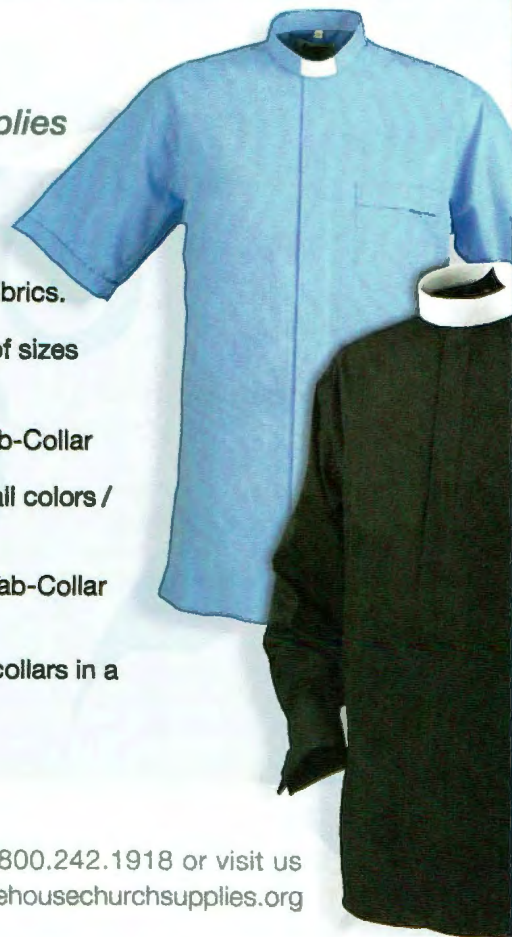
Following the Revised Common Lectionary, the third edition of this resource suggests lessons, activities, and discipleship focus areas for each week of the three-year liturgical cycle. The co-editors are a church formation specialist and the former Episcopal Church staff officer for lifelong Christian education and formation.

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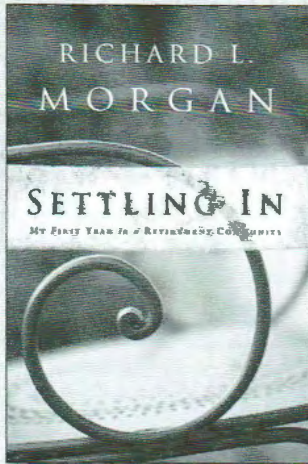
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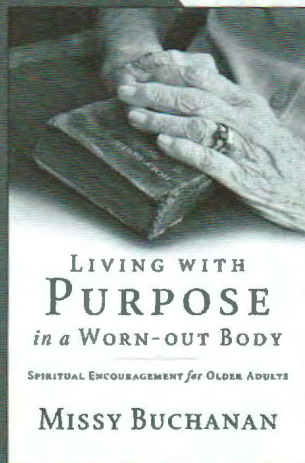
Living with Purpose in a Worn-Out Body

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Missy Buchanan

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(Continued from previous page)

between these two extremes.

The main body of this volume covers the RCL Year C. Unfortunately, All Saints' Day, the Annunciation and red letter saints' days are not included. Each set of propers comes with a commentary, suggestions for lectors, and a pronunciation guide. The suggestions give advice on the tone and pace most appropriate for each of the readings and how best to convey the meanings of the texts.

The thoughtful commentaries give substantial exegetical background and narrative exposition to the appointed texts. These commentaries make up the greater part of the book and constitute its most valuable element. They will be useful not only to lectors but to anyone (including preachers) who desires deeper biblical insight and appreciation for the Liturgy of the Word.

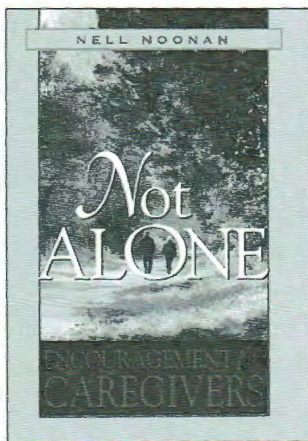
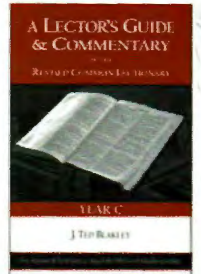
Difficult for Young Readers

My only reservation with regard to the commentaries is that they presuppose a level of education and sophistication on the part of the reader which might render them not wholly accessible to everyone. This would be particularly true for the very young readers encountered more and more often in Sunday worship.

A Lector's Guide and Commentary builds upon and expands the existing traditions of the guides published by St. Mark's Press for the BCP lectionary. The advent of the RCL presents the church with new challenges and opportunities for relating scripture and worship. This book is an admirable response to the challenge—at once highly practical and intellectually engaging. Its fine scholarship commends it not only to Episcopalians but Christians of other traditions as well.

The soundness of this volume leads one to await eagerly the publication of its projected companions for years A and B.

(The Rev.) *Kenneth D. Aldrich*
Huntingdon, Pa.



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favorite, 'Keep me as the apple of your eye,' we used apples of many colors where flowers would be." From the back of the church it looks like a lovely flower arrangement, but as people draw closer to the altar, they discover more meaning.

When she began staying home two years ago to care for her infant son, Karen Gray also took charge of the flower guild at St. David's, Ashburn, Va. Each member of the guild takes one week a month and Mrs. Gray does the fifth Sundays.

"My husband spends Saturday morning with our son, so it works out," she says. "During the week I can take my son to the flower wholesaler. He's fine with that, but he doesn't like going in the refrigerator." A self-described "creative type," she hopes to grow the guild by tapping into a mother-daughter group and capturing their youthful energy. But parents with children at home, like Mrs. Gray, are a rarity among most flower guilds. Oftentimes these parents are busy volunteering at school or for child-related ministries.

Nine years ago Victoria Swanson became head of flower guild at St. Matthias', Monument, Colo., at a time when half the congregation left The Episcopal Church. Those members who remained rebuilt the flower guild by offering a training workshop for interested parishioners.



Lilies are arranged on a monument at Emmanuel Church, New Castle, Del.

But now with a guild of three, all in their 50s, and no new volunteers, Mrs. Swanson worries that what she loves may be a dying art.

Flower guilds generally operate at break-even or better. Parishioners' donations cover the cost of flowers, supplies like floral foam, and containers. Dedications published in the Sunday bulletin communicate family news within the parish community.

"It's very meaningful to be arranging altar flowers for
(Continued on next page)



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A young parishioner assists with flower arrangement at St. Thomas' Church, Huntsville, Ala.

St. Thomas' Church photo

No Bed of Roses

Flower Guild Ministry Brings the Beauty of God's Creation Inside

By Carolyn S. Ellis

The ministry of flower guild gives those who worship a visual reminder of where we are in the liturgical year. Week by week, with flowers and foliage, the soft colors of Advent, the ruby reds of Christmas and Pentecost, the lilies of Easter, and the garden flowers and harvest shades in ordinary time appear by the altar. Even flowers' absence in Lent is a marker of time.

Whether a flower guild has four members or 50, the women and men who procure, arrange, and maintain these flowers are prayerful and committed.

"Some Sundays it's not the sermon that gets the message home; it's a line in a hymn or a view of the flowers," says Margy Walkington of St. Mark's Church, Geneva, Ill. "Any time you can offer something that has a chance of touching someone, that's what we're there for."

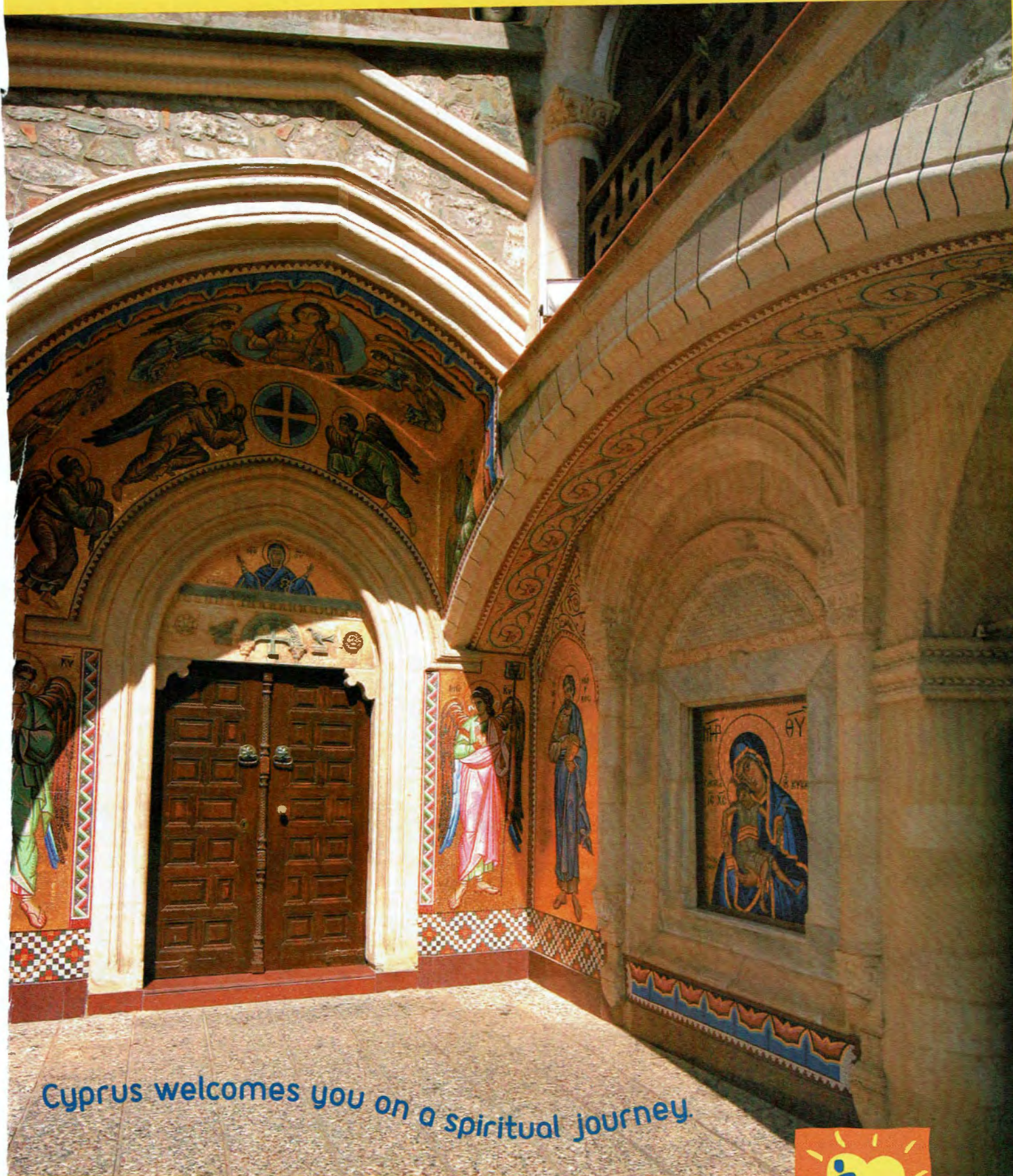
"About 20 years ago as I was coming off the vestry, I looked at the flowers the florist had sent and thought, 'We

can do better than that,'" Mrs. Walkington recalls. She and several parishioners who were gardeners got permission from their rector for a 90-day trial and dived in. Today they continue to arrange flowers for their historic 1840s chapel and the new parish church. Their aim is always to honor the cross.

Arranging flowers for church has its challenges. Placement of the cross, from the retablo to apse, and its design, from Latin to Jerusalem, set the parameters. Seen from a distance, the shape of the arrangement—circle, oval, or triangle—is most important. "Miss that, and your arrangement looks like oatmeal," Mrs. Walkington warns. Pale shades like white, pink and yellow show well from afar, but maroon and purple leave black holes.

At St. Mark's, guild members who design the flowers reflect on the liturgical readings for inspiration. It's not a formal Bible study, but individuals are given the lessons well ahead so there is time to read and ponder.

"If it's 'I am the bread of life,' we might use large loaves of bread as containers," Mrs. Walkington says. "Or for my



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No Bed of Roses



Mary O'Connell and Glorianne Campbell's "Bread of Life" arrangement at St. Mark's, Geneva, Ill., incorporates loaves of bread as containers.

(Continued from previous page)

an anniversary that are like those a couple had at their wedding," Mrs. Swanson says.

Many flower guilds follow the guidelines of Washington National Cathedral as outlined in the handbook *Flowers to the Glory of God*, published by the cathedral. But Linda Roeckelein, who serves as the cathedral's staff coordinator of its altar guild and flower guild ministries and has been a member since 1964, says the book is now somewhat outdated.

"Today we let the rules be a jumping-off point," she says. "Flowers can't go over the arms of the cross? They do now, to frame the cross and draw attention to it."

The National Cathedral has trained many members of flower guilds around the country. "Flower Arranging for Holy Spaces," a week-long seminar held each January, has been a popular immersion course for more than 25 years. Clara Fowler, head of flower guild at St. Mary's, Daytona Beach, Fla., has been involved since the seminar's founding. Mrs. Fowler began her flower ministry with a course at the National Cathedral in 1973. She served as team leader on the 100-member flower guild for eight years before moving to Florida.

Since the turn of the last century, when they began to appear in Episcopal churches, altar guilds have had responsibility for flowers. National Altar Guild Association (NAGA) triennial conferences have included flower workshops, many presented by Mrs. Fowler. She is an advocate for keeping flower guild a part of altar guild.

"There is no organization for flower guild in the dio-

cese or nationally," she says. "It's very casual. The larger organizations [like diocesan altar guilds and NAGA] provide education and fellowship. We share the same space, and we're preparing the same banquet. We should be on the same team."

But Mark Bacher, flower guild chairman at Immanuel Church, New Castle, Del., declares, "Never the twain shall meet." Altar and flower guilds at Immanuel have been separate for 40 years.

"We are in a historic area and our church is always open," Mr. Bacher says. "Visitors stop in and ask, 'Are you doing flowers for a wedding?' I explain that these flowers are part of our Sunday worship. That's a form of evangelism." Like the National Cathedral, Immanuel Church does not allow florists' flowers inside the church.

Styles of arrangements vary from formal to interpretive. There are regional differences in style and taste and in the abundance of local materials like palms and evergreens. The parish of St. Thomas in Huntsville, Ala., worships in a building just 20 years old, and Susy Thurber says being in a new church gives the flower guild latitude. For example, the Sunday before Lent, a member wrapped the glass container in Mardi Gras-style beads. When a deadly tornado struck the area, they arranged debris from a battered car with wheat from damaged fields and added one carnation from the Sunday before to signify that God was still present.

"If we were a downtown, Gothic church, we might feel limited to the tight triangle," Ms. Thurber says. "Our clergy assume we won't do anything too bizarre, and we wake the congregation up."

Meeting the rector's expectations is important to flower guild. In some parishes, flower guild is understood to be a ministry that just "chugs along" because the rector doesn't bother much with the accoutrements of worship. But the Rev. Claudia Nalven, assistant rector at St. Mark's, Geneva, understands the value of flowers.

"Anglican worship is sensual and visual," she says. "Some might see flowers as frivolous, but they remind me of the Garden of Eden. God's creation was called good, and the flowers are done with such love."

Flower guild is as unique as each parish that is fortunate enough to have such a ministry.

"Worship doesn't just happen on Sundays at 8 and 10 o'clock," says Mr. Bacher. "With flower arranging, choir rehearsal, and altar guild, worship is alive all week."

He encourages parishes that don't have a flower guild to start one, saying, "Our sense of connectedness [to worship] is enhanced the more we can do ourselves." □

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

Training and Resources

"Get training wherever you can," urges Clara Fowler, head of flower guild at St. Mary's, Daytona Beach, Fla. "The National Cathedral, flower festivals, your local recreation department or garden club, *Ikebana* classes, books and demonstrations by English and American designers...any training will do."

Some resources include:

"Flower Arranging for Holy Spaces," a five-day seminar offered by the Washington National Cathedral, is scheduled for Jan. 18-22, 2010. For information, contact Altar Guild/Flower Guild Coordinator Linda Roeckelein at 202-537-6215.

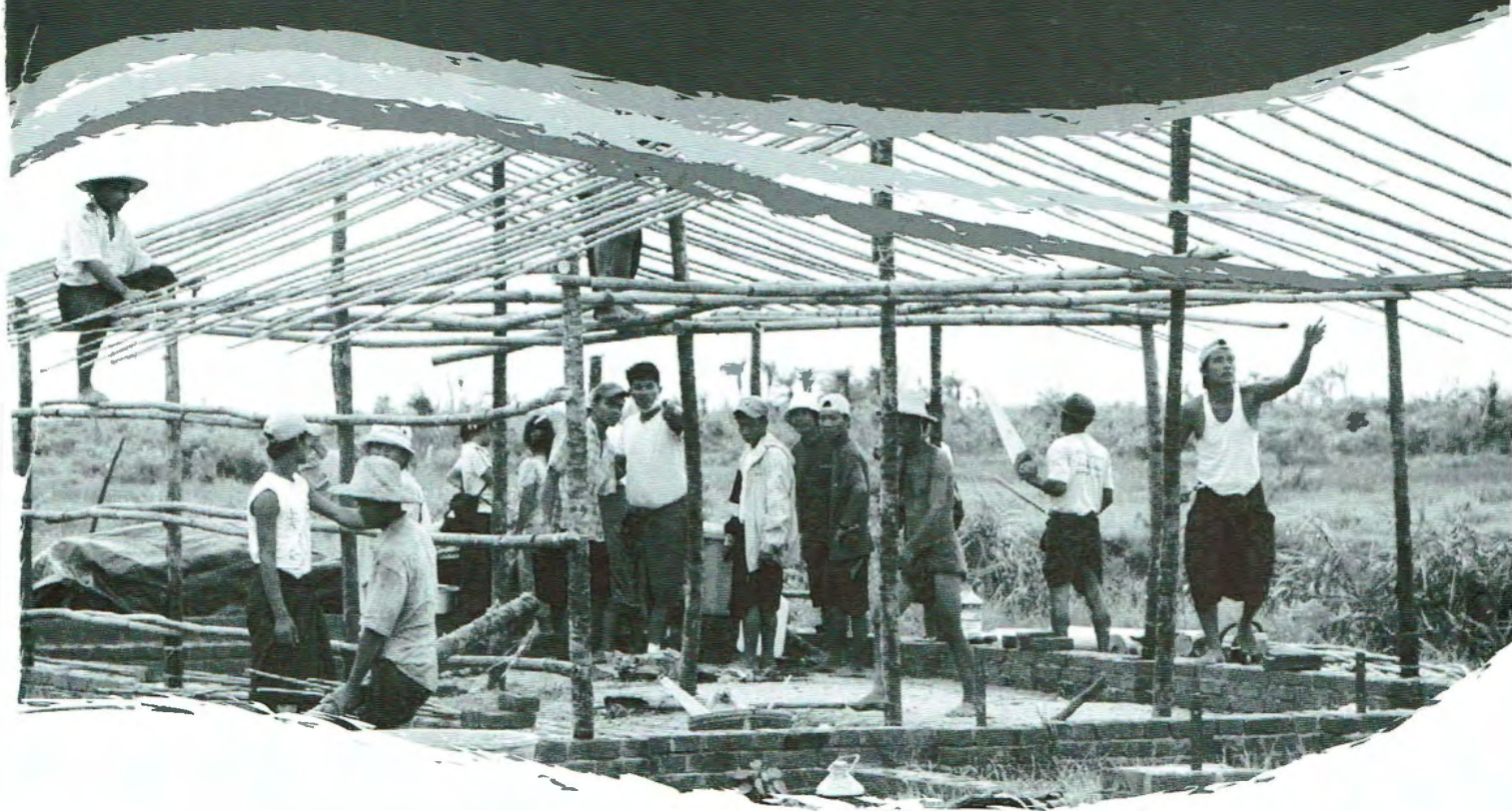
Harvest Festival at Grace Church, Charleston, S.C., will feature a presentation by a member of the National Association of Floral Arranging Societies of England, November 4-6, 2010. For information, call Carolyn Yarbrough at 843-884-3592.

Flowers to the Glory of God: A Handbook, by Sandra S. Hynson and the Washington National Cathedral Altar Guild, 1998.

Homage through Flowers: A Handbook, by Sandra S. Hynson and the Washington Cathedral Altar Guild, 1978.

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High Spirits in Hoosier Country

Enrollment was down and scholarship requests were up this summer for many Episcopal Church camps, according to Bill Slocumb, associate director of Episcopal Camps and Conference Centers, Inc. Waycross Episcopal Church Camp, located 40 miles south of Indianapolis in the Hoosier National Forest, was among those that anticipated lower attendance. But Van Beers, the camp's executive director, said the camp attracted even more attendees than last year. "Church camp provides key experiences for children and young adults to understand the gift of Christian community," Mr. Beers said.



Top left: A group hug on the Bear Creek Bridge, while other campers look for frogs with camp counselor Cameron Twarek. **Top right:** Animated conversation at the overnight campout. **Middle left:** The Rev. Kirsteen Wilkinson, vicar of St. Timothy's, Indianapolis, leads a Christian education activity at the outdoor chapel. **Middle right:** A camper takes flight from the 40-foot tower on a zip line. **Bottom left:** Camp provides the opportunity to make new friends. **Bottom right:** A cabin group, led by Mallory Willits and Alyson Donica, learns a new song at the outdoor chapel.

Rick Wood photos



Anaheim Statement Continues to Gain Supporters

The Anaheim Statement endorsed by 34 bishops at the close of the 76th General Convention in Anaheim, Calif., has added two more bishops to its list of supporters.

The Rt. Rev. Charles E. Jenkins, III, Bishop of Louisiana, and the Rt. Rev. Harry W. Shippo, retired Bishop of Georgia, have endorsed the letter affirming their loyalty to the Anglican Communion in the wake of the adoption of resolutions C056 and D025 ending the moratoria forbidding the consecration of partnered gay clergy as bishops and the authorization of rites for the blessing of same-sex unions.

However, Bishop Jenkins also was one of the bishops who voted against D025 but in favor of C056. He later said he voted for C056 because his colleagues had responded well to his plea for graciousness [TLC, Aug. 16]. "I felt I was honor-bound to vote for it because these bishops had done what I had asked them to do," he said. "I felt that the process was a ray of hope for The Episcopal Church."

In a series of letters to the Arch-

bishop of Canterbury and primates of the Anglican Communion written at the close of General Convention, Presiding Bishop Katharine Jefferts Schori and the President of the House of Deputies Bonnie Anderson have disputed the characterization of the adoption of the two resolutions as having ended the moratoria or a "walking apart" by The Episcopal Church from the Anglican Communion.

Speaking to the media on July 18 Bishop Jefferts Schori stated the votes were a "truthful attempt to deepen relationships" with the wider Anglican Communion. She added that in 2009, there are "more and deeper relationships with parts of the Episcopal Church and the Anglican Communion than five or 10 years ago."

Overseas Anglicans, however, have so far not been persuaded by the Presiding Bishop's explanation. On July 27, Archbishop of Canterbury Rowan Williams released his reflections on the General Convention, voicing a sharply critical view of the votes [TLC, Aug. 16]. Archbishop Williams also took note of the Anaheim Statement,

noting that a "significant minority of bishops" had "clearly expressed its intention to remain with the consensus of the Communion" on the issues of human sexuality and the moratoria.

Aides to the archbishop have also been noting the progress of the Communion Partners group of rectors in "loyal opposition" to the "current trajectory" of The Episcopal Church. The Rev. Russell Levenson, Jr., rector of St. Martin's Episcopal Church, said that as of mid-August, the fellowship included 66 parish rectors. Their congregations number nearly 60,000, ranging in size from his Houston parish of 8,500 members to the Church of the Incarnation in Lafayette, La., with 20 members.

On August 17, the Rev. R. Leigh Spruill, rector of St. George's, Nashville, Tenn., and the group's administrator, explained that the Communion Partners are not a protest group but rather a "missional fellowship committed to reviving classical Christianity" within The Episcopal Church.

(The Rev.) George Conger

TEC Joins Healthcare Lobbying Effort

In an effort to mobilize supporters of healthcare reform, representatives from The Episcopal Church and other faith-based groups organized an August 19 national call-in webcast that featured President Barack Obama.

The "40 Minutes for Health Reform" webcast was organized by the advocacy group Faith in Public Life. That group consists of representatives from The Episcopal Church, the Jewish Council for Public Affairs, Sojourners, the National Council of Churches in Christ, and Catholics in Alliance for the Common Good, according to a release on the event. Organizers estimated that 140,000 people tuned in to the event.

"We believe there is a silent majority that has seen family and friends struggle," said Kristin Williams, media relations associate for Faith in Public Life.

"Those people are not the loud protesters at town hall meetings."

Melody Barnes, the Obama administration's domestic policy director, answered callers' questions, including one from the Rev. Jo Glasser, a deacon in the Diocese of Eau Claire. Deacon Glasser said that people in her diocese are concerned that reform means a government takeover of health care, and others are concerned that without a strong public option Americans will be at the mercy of the insurance industry.

Prior to the event, Maureen Shea, director of government relations with the Episcopal Public Policy Network lobbying group, characterized the healthcare debate as being fraught with misinformation.

"Many people don't seem to understand that Medicare is a government

program," Ms. Shea said. "The two things that have ignited people are that they don't want government in their health care—which it already is—and misunderstanding and misinformation about the voluntary discussion with doctors of the end of life provisions."

Matthew Ellis, executive director of National Episcopal Health Ministries, agreed, saying "people are worked up about 'death panels,' based on perception. It's unfortunate that people are purposely playing on their fears.

"A loud voice is purposely skewing the argument so that a reasonable and informed discussion is not possible," Mr. Ellis continued. "Politics is still often a win-at-any-cost kind of game, and unfortunately people still view it that way."

Episcopal News Service contributed to this report.

ELCA Approves Same-Sex Blessings, Partnered Gay Clergy

After extended plenary sessions, the 11th Churchwide Assembly of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America (ELCA) approved resolutions that open their church's rostered clergy rolls to men and women in same-sex relationships, and to allow congregations to bless same-sex couples.

The assembly, which met in Minneapolis August 17-23, also approved a social statement on sexuality [TLC, Sept. 6]. The denomination and The Episcopal Church entered into full communion when both churches approved "Called to Common Mission." ELCA's Churchwide Assembly approved the agreement in 1999 and General Convention approved it in 2000.

After a long week of hearings and debates, some voting members of the ELCA assembly cried as they spoke, or choked back tears as they debated human sexuality issues on August 21.

The assembly first considered a resolution that permits congregations to "recognize, support, and hold publicly accountable life-long, monogamous, same-gender relationships."

Sarah Gross of the Oregon Synod said that voting against the resolution would send a message that not all people are welcome in the ELCA. But Pastor Ryan Mills of the Northern Texas-Northern Louisiana Synod said, "This assembly, as a child of the scriptures, does not have the right to vote on these resolutions."

Pastor Mills disputed an earlier claim that the authors of New Testament letters knew nothing of monogamous same-sex couples. "The Greeks knew plenty about these types of relationships, but Paul said no anyway," he contended.

"This resolution is simply about allowing some in our church to follow their conscience," rather than impos-



ELCA photo

ing a conscience on everyone, said Allison Guttu of the Metropolitan New York Synod.

The assembly approved the resolution on a vote of 619-402.

The assembly approved the resolution on a vote of 619-402.

Anglican Comparison

The assembly then began debating a resolution to permit "people in such publicly accountable, lifelong, monogamous, same-gender relationships to serve as rostered leaders of this church."

Assembly members referred to Anglicans more than once as they discussed the resolution.

"I live and serve in the Episcopal Diocese of Fort Worth, and I feel like I've seen this movie before," said Pastor Mills of the Northern Texas-Northern Louisiana Synod. He said changing ELCA's policy on rostered clergy would alienate the ELCA from Roman Catholics and would scandalize the church's ethnic ministries.

"Pastoral practice needs latitude, but the truth can never be compromised," he added.

Ms. Guttu of the Metropolitan New York Synod challenged comparisons of the Anglican Communion and the Lutheran World Federation. She said Anglicans are united by a historic connection to the Church of Eng-

land, but Lutherans are united by their belief that God's word alone, and the sacrament of baptism alone, are a sufficient basis of Christian unity. Word and sacrament have held Lutherans together for 500 years, she said, despite their differences about slaveholding, women's ordination or ethnic heritage, and they will continue to hold Lutherans together amid differences on sexuality.

Pastor Joel Benson of the Southwestern Pennsylvania Synod cited the Archbishop of Canterbury's reflections on General Convention. He paraphrased the archbishop's reflections as establishing a category of "second-class Christians" for those churches that bless same-sex couples or ordain openly gay clergy.

When discussion concluded, the resolution passed on a vote of 559-451. A final resolution enabled the church's leadership to develop "structured flexibility" that reflects the church's new standards regarding clergy in same-sex couples. That resolution passed on a vote of 667-307.

After the vote, Presiding Bishop Mark Hanson quietly cited passages of scripture for three different types of Lutherans gathered in Minneapolis. For conservatives who grieved the week's voting, he cited Romans 8, in which Paul asks what can separate Christians from the love of God. For gay, lesbian, bisexual and transgender Lutherans, he cited Ephesians 2, with its emphasis on becoming one in Christ. For Lutherans concerned about church unity, he cited Colossians 3, which urges Christians to clothe themselves with compassion, kindness, humility, gentleness and patience.

Bishop Hanson closed his remarks by repeating a statement he made during a report earlier in the week: "We meet one another finally, not in our agreements or our disagreements, but at the foot of the cross."

work for 12 people; 19 showed," she said. "The surprising thing is that since then, not a single week has passed without new patients."

Ms. Pazka said that with the state's economic struggles worsening, people's health problems have become more complicated.

"Early on, there was a little of everything: colds, scratches. Basic stuff. Lots of primary care. [Medication assistance] started out with pharmaceutical samples and prescription assistance programs, organized through companies," she said.

Since then, attendance has roughly tripled, and "people are much sicker, and need more medications. The top diagnoses are hypertension, asthma and depression. There's lots of situational depression; people losing jobs and homes."

The clinic has served 2,881 people in 15,000 patient encounters during its



St. Peter's Church photos

Patients line up outside St. Peter's Church for the free clinic services.

seven years, Ms. Pazka said. The retail value of distributed medications is \$4.25 million.

Hillsdale County is home to 40,000 and depends heavily on industries tied to the automotive sector. County residents have lost 2,000 jobs in the last five years.

"If people are on unemployment, they'll pay a doctor and take \$4 meds as long as they can," Ms. Pazka said. "But when that runs out, which we're seeing

a lot right now, they're without resources. A lot are too embarrassed to walk through these doors. So they put [medical care] off, break down and come in sicker. Or they use the hospital emergency room; so much so, the hospital is now discharging them here to the clinic. That's scary sometimes.

"Statistics clearly show the uninsured get sicker, and don't live as long," Ms. Pazka said. Complications compound

(Continued on next page)



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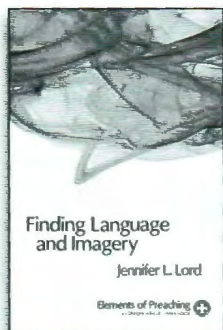
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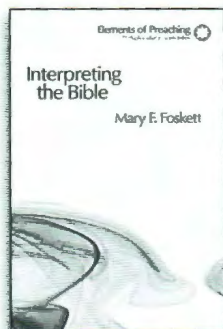
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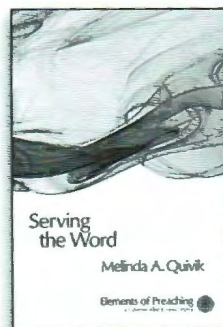
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CARE IN THE VOID

Michigan church's free clinic getting stretched in bad economy

By Willy Thorn

Seven years ago, St. Peter's Church, Hillsdale, Mich., opened a weekly community health clinic to provide basic health care. As Michigan's economy has tumbled, the clinic's outreach has tripled.

The Rev. Deborah Ann Semon-Scott led the church in opening the clinic in 2002, after she saw a free clinic in nearby Branch County. The 50-member congregation of St. Peter's included three physicians and four registered nurses. Jill Pazka, one of the nurses, was appointed director.

St. Peter's offered a \$600 memorial fund, cleared out unused basement space and connected a telephone line for the clinic. A parishioner donated a copy machine.

"As factories went out of business, we collected a lot of desks and file cabinets," Ms. Pazka said. "We got real good at begging. I started beating the bushes for more staff. I don't remember how we got all the providers and physicians we did. There was a whole lot of faith going on.

"We opened the doors on the first night hoping someone would show up. Being optimistic, we had enough paper-

her job at a Bose factory. Her health insurance ran out, just as she went through a divorce. She suffered a string of health problems: her gall bladder gave out, she developed water on the brain, four heart ventricles enlarged.

"I ended up in Kalamazoo hospital," she said. "But how could I afford medication? Some cost hundreds of dollars. How can I get insurance?" For a time, her two daughters, 13 and 15, used their insurance to garner prescriptions. "Somebody in my apartment building told me the clinic might be able to help."

The clinic provided the assistance and incentive Ms. Fitton needed to focus on her life again.

"I'm sitting there — 40, divorced, two teens. What to do?" she said. "I went back to school. I got funding through NAFTA. I always liked the medical field. It was always something I had in mind, to be a nurse. So I got a

two-year associate's degree in applied science, and became a certified medical assistant."

For the last year and a half, she's volunteered at the clinic.

"What better way to keep my skills sharp, and put to use what I went to school for," she said. "It's a way to give back. I know how much they help, and how much they helped me. I really enjoy putting time in there. Once you're a volunteer, you're like family. You come through the doors, and everybody loves to see your face. They're happy to see you.

"I take vital signs for patients. I sit and talk to people," she said. "I've always liked that personal interaction. A lot of the clients are desperate.

"Many people are depressed," she said. "They don't mean to get upset, but they'll start crying. I give them a hug. Sometimes people are just desperate for someone that cares."

"Remember the mission': The board members remind me of that continuously," Ms. Pazka said. "We can only do what we can do. It's so easy to want to care for all of everybody's needs. We want to care for people. That's why we do it. And it can be very hard to say, 'There's nothing we can offer for that.'"

"At the beginning, I saw this as a personal ministry," Ms. Pazka said. "Showing God's face to people is what I'm called to do, I thought, patting myself on the back.

"The truth is, the clients are the ones showing the face of God to me," she said. "We could all be there. It's just one day away. So every day is a huge blessing; being with people I might not have known otherwise. It's an amazing witness to what God can do with so very little."

Willy Thorn is a Milwaukee-based writer.

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CARE IN THE VOID

(Continued from previous page)

the problem, and diseases that must be closely monitored, like diabetes, often are not controlled, leading to high blood pressure and heart disease.

Many patients, she said, need special care the clinic cannot provide. "We're here one night a week. We are a Band-Aid."

But the clinic still does a great deal. All new patients are screened financially, and connected to available resources: neighboring food pantries; Medicaid enrollment; community doctors who take referrals from the clinic; and the state health department for tetanus shots, pregnancy tests and cancer screenings.

The clinic also makes medications affordable by purchasing generics through a consortium arranged by the Free Clinics of the Great Lakes. "One of my pharmacist volunteers told me we get cheaper meds than they can at the

drug store," Ms. Pazka said.

"Our monthly diabetic clinic was the volunteers' idea," she said. "You can't come unless you commit. We have doctors come in. We have meds and testing supplies we give them. It's like a support group, and they benefit from the education. If you don't know what a disease can do to you, and how to treat it, it can get dangerous fast."

Volunteer Support

The clinic does all this through an army of volunteers. Ms. Pazka is the clinic's only full-time staffer. She's joined by two part-time employees, a patient care coordinator and a volunteer coordinator.

"The clinic was actually very controversial in the congregation, which surprised me," Ms. Pazka said. "What is more surprising is how many members now volunteer. Some handle the kitchen

in the church basement. They feed the volunteers, and keep it a sanctuary for them. One 87-year-old parishioner is the greeter. Others pull charts from the medical records room, or register patients, or help clients with reading and writing and filling out paperwork.

"It takes two dozen volunteers every week," she continued. "We had to draw from a bigger pool; the Roman Catholic and Presbyterian churches volunteer. Methodist women adopted us as a mission. We have volunteer physicians and nurse practitioners, physician assistants, pharmacists, and pharmacist technicians. A Hillsdale native chairs our board and does the fundraising, normally \$30,000-\$35,000 annually. The community is incredibly generous: civic organizations, businesses, even the local radio station has shown us tremendous support. It's such a blessing."

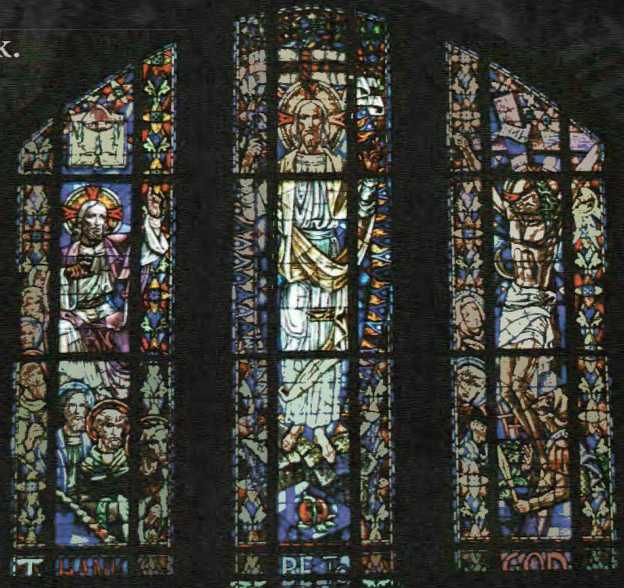
One volunteer is Trudy Fitton, a former clinic client. In 2004, Ms. Fitton lost

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ricane Katrina. Our church has grown from a tiny group meeting in a garage to our present location in a former Walgreens. We seek to grow the Kingdom of God in the Lower Ninth Ward through living into the gospel of the crucified and resurrected Jesus Christ; while offering joyful worship, faithful teaching, and loving service to God and neighbor." We figured this was the right church for us to visit on our first Sunday in New Orleans.

As we entered the improvised church a few minutes before the service, the clergy and acolytes were gathered in prayer, just about ready to begin the procession. The Rev.

Lonell Wright broke away from the group to welcome us. When Bonnie explained that she was a priest from the Diocese of New York, he asked if she would like to

vest and to celebrate the Eucharist.

Startled by the hospitality of this invitation, Bonnie caught her breath and said, "Well, Bishop Jenkins knows I am coming to serve in the diocese, so I expect he would approve." She followed Fr. Wright into the vestry, and within five minutes, the service was up and running. Here in the dimly lit, cavernous former pharmacy, with sheetrock and joint compound forming a strangely haunting reredos, with the faithful of all ages gathering out of the ruins of a destitute neighborhood and perched expectantly on folding chairs, Bonnie joined with the ministry team, and the Holy Spirit took over from there.

We know that every Eucharist celebrates the inbreaking and outpouring of God's superabundant grace, even though frequently we seem to be just going through the motions. I've often shared in Bonnie's celebration of the Eucharist, in many places in the world, but I've never sensed the fullness of God's mercy more profoundly than in that unexpected place of hope and renewal amid ruin; never sensed Bonnie more glad in her calling, more grateful for the hospitality of other clergy, more at home at the altar, more radiant. I've rarely felt that I was in so sacred a space, made sacred by God's grace and by the humility and charity and gratitude of the people gathered there.

The Holy Communion at All Souls that Sunday was to be Bonnie's final eucharistic celebration in her earthly life. A week later, she took a fall, shattered her arm, and went to the hospital for its surgical repair. Preparatory tests revealed severe problems with her blood. Although the trajectory for Bonnie's recovery was positive after the surgery, and there were signs of her improvement, she went into a sud-

den tailspin of pain and systemic crisis, and died in the late afternoon on February 9. As soon as we called him, Fr. Wright joined our daughter Shannon and me at the hospital for prayers and comfort that evening.

We Episcopalians talk evocatively of the "real presence" of Christ in the Eucharist. I'm gaining a stonger lived

sense of the meaning of "real presence" from my eucharistic experiences following Bonnie's death. She always seems to be there, right at the altar, right in the mix, concelebrating. Then, when I receive the consecrated host, I sometimes feel the light press of her hand on mine, look up and glimpse for an instant the flash of joy and love in her eye. And I know that my "imagining" of this draws on my recollection of her last eucharistic celebration on earth, at All Souls. But if her life is truly in Christ now, and Christ is "really present" in the eucharistic gifts, why should I think of her presence there with him and in him as only wishful thinking on my part?

I visited All Souls twice again after Bonnie's death. After the splendid sendoff of a Requiem Eucharist at Trinity Church in Ossining, N.Y., where she had served for a dozen years, I returned to New Orleans to pack up our apartment, pick up our dog Rufus from the kennel, and wander about the city where we last breathed the sweet air of this earth together. When I returned to All Souls, the worship space was packed with new people. A good 75 students from Marquette University in Wisconsin had just arrived to spend their spring break working on reconstruction in the Lower Ninth Ward. When I returned the following Sunday, the day before I was to leave town, Deacon Lydia Hopkins was presiding, and the music director, Darryl Durham, had vested a dozen children to form the choir. As an offertory anthem, the children, with their ethereally sweet voices, led the rest of us in the great spiritual, "I'll Fly Away": "I'll fly away, O Glory, I'll fly away! When I die, Alleluia, by and by, I'll fly away!" I thought, through my own tears, and singing my heart out, Bonnie would have loved this — indeed, was loving this. O Glory: the communion of saints. □

William Shullenberger teaches literature at Sarah Lawrence College, Bronxville, N.Y.



We Episcopalians talk evocatively of the "real presence" of Christ in the Eucharist.



THE COMMUNION OF SAINTS

A New Orleans Story

By William Shullenberger

This is a story about Holy Communion, about the communion of saints.

At the beginning of January, my wife Bonnie — a priest and a contributor to *THE LIVING CHURCH* — and I left the northeastern winter behind and drove to New Orleans. I had a sabbatical from my college, and Bonnie had a leave from her duties in the Diocese of New York, so we'd planned to come to New Orleans and offer what we could for the city's reconstruction efforts.

With gimpy shoulders and vulnerability to asthma, we figured we wouldn't do well in the drying out and rebuilding of the moldy old housing stock of the city, some of it still shuttered tight with its secrets, some of it stripped to skeletal rafters and joists, open to the winds and stars. But we knew that we could both teach, and that Bonnie could offer her services as a priest to the Diocese of Louisiana.

Bonnie contacted Bishop Charles Jenkins of Louisiana to see how she could serve in the diocese. I had contacted Danielle Taylor, dean of humanities at Dil-

lard University, to see if we could be of use as guest faculty there. Dillard is a historically black university with a distinguished history and roster of graduates. Dillard had suffered grievously from the breaching of the New Orleans levees, and struggled heroically and resourcefully to rebuild. We hoped we could make some contribution to the redevelopment of the university's curriculum. Dr. Taylor had arranged housing

and teaching assignments for us at Dillard, and Bonnie had arranged to meet with Bishop Jenkins's staff about possible assignments in the diocese.

We spent our first week in New Orleans settling into our apartment, meeting our Dillard colleagues, and making initial forays around the city. At the end of the week, we searched the diocesan website to find a local church to attend. We found this description of All Souls in the flood-battered Lower Ninth Ward: "All Souls grew out of mission trips from throughout the Diocese of Louisiana and the national church to provide relief to residents returning to the community in the aftermath of Hur-



The Rev. Bonnie Shullenberger

Welcoming People with Disabilities

Our Joy and Delight

Whoever welcomes one such child in my name welcomes me, and whoever welcomes me welcomes not me but the one who sent me (Mark 9:37).

By Timothy M. Dombek

Sixteen years ago this fall, our only child, Jonathan, was born with Down Syndrome. The gift of his birth into our lives has been nothing less than an epiphany, an eye-opening revelation of a population to whom many if not most of our churches are unprepared (or, more likely, inadequately prepared) to serve.

For a parent of a child with a permanent, lifelong disability, sometimes just getting basic services or simple approvals for your child's participation in "normal" activities can be arduous.

Social service agencies, schools, employers, and other organizations swing between being a champion of your rights — or your child's rights — and being the barrier to a better life, education or therapy — sometimes all in the same week. The last place where families like ours need to deal with resistance is in church. But even the church is not above resisting the changes needed to accommodate adults or children with disabilities.

How we welcome people into our congregations matters greatly. "The likelihood that people with disabilities and their families attend a congregation certainly is influenced by the extent to which they are welcomed and supported," writes Dr. Erik Carter, author of *Including People with Disabilities in Faith Communities*. Dr. Carter's landmark book on this topic features a virtual paint-by-numbers methodology for preparing people and congregations to be that kind of supportive, welcoming presence, and to have skill and grace in meeting the challenging needs presented by those families.

Last fall at our diocesan ministry fair, my wife Beth and



Acolytes Jonathan Dombek and Lillie Carlile assist at the Eucharist May 24.

I offered a workshop titled "Preparing for Children With Disabilities" as a way of bridging this gap in knowledge and practice for congregations wishing to be more welcoming. Ultimately, it takes individuals in our churches who want to learn how to do this, who want to welcome people with disabilities, to make it happen. That has been borne out in our experience time and time again. If you have a person or a committed group of people in your congregation who will say, "We can do this!" and are willing to learn and implement what it takes to pull it off, chances are your efforts will be successful.

As a model for how to begin welcoming children with disabilities in a congregation, we shared our experiences of success, and lessons from not-so-successful efforts we learned about during the past 15 years. When I was called as rector of St. James' Church, Greenville, S.C., in 2000, our son was 6 years old. During the interviews, when asked if we had any questions for the search committee and vestry, Beth asked point-blank: "Will my son,

(Continued on next page)



The Rev. Canon Timothy Dornbek and his son Jonathan prepare for the Eucharist at Trinity Cathedral, Phoenix.

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GUARD THE TREASURE

Welcoming People with Disabilities

(Continued from previous page)

Jonathan, be accepted here?" After an uncomfortable silence, one vestry person ventured, "I can't imagine that he wouldn't be accepted." Not exactly reassuring. But we discovered that people committed to making sure he was included stepped up to make it work.

When we needed a one-on-one aide for Jonathan in Sunday school, one person volunteered to help. Beth took the time to share with her all the pertinent information about Jonathan, his health and behavior, his communication level (Jonathan's biggest delay is his speech), and how to motivate, redirect or correct him, when needed. That information made it easier for this woman to be his aide and for him to have a positive Sunday school experience. Working with the teachers, Beth (a special education resource teacher herself) demonstrated how to adapt the curriculum in ways that could include Jonathan in their activities, which eased their comfort level and lessened any anxiety they might have had about having a child with disabilities in their class.

As Jonathan got older, we discovered he had celiac disease, which is a gluten intolerance (no wheat, barley or oats can be consumed). St. James' immediately added gluten-free wafers to the celebrations of the Eucharist, and we soon discovered other people who needed them.

When it came time for Jonathan to move up to the Episcopal Youth Community (EYC), the youth ministry coordinator created a method to ensure that all the kids had a chance to get to know him better. The entire EYC group made up the Ability Team — known as the A-Team — and each week, two kids were paired up with Jonathan to go to EYC with him, to ensure his inclusion in all the frenzied activity that youth group can be, and to provide redirection when needed. We provided his gluten-free pizza or pasta for dinner, and the kids wound up loving the chance to be Jonathan's "partner" at EYC. The A-Team proved a great success, and best of all, Jonathan made some lasting new

Families of children with disabilities are looking for faith communities that will accept them in the same way they accept others.



Jonathan recently began his acolyte duties at the cathedral, having previously served at St. James' Church, Greenville, S.C.

friendships. The young people of St. James' also had the valuable experience of accepting people with differences and learning from them.

During our seven years there, Jonathan, who eventually served as an acolyte, became such a beloved part of St. James' that when I announced my leaving, one parish-ioner said, "What are we going to do without Jonathan?" What a difference his presence made in their parish life! Jonathan continues to be an acolyte regularly, and is a member of the Rite-13 class (where he offers the closing benediction prayer each week) in our home parish in Arizona.

Families of children with disabilities are looking for faith communities that will accept them in the same way they accept others. Think about it: The community of persons with disabilities is an open community, perhaps the most open community in society. People join it every day — some through aging or as a result of an accident, an injury, or illness, or sometimes by genetic difference at birth. People with disabilities don't discriminate on who can join them, yet regularly they are discriminated against purposefully or unwittingly by a culture too busy to notice them. Sometimes the church also fails to notice or respond.

Since the conclusion of our ministry fair, one congregation in Arizona has called on the resources of our disability awareness program group to train members on including four children with autism into the life and routine of their Sunday school and congregation. The need for this kind of education and commitment in other con-

(Continued on page 30)

Prove all things; hold fast that which is good.

- 1 Thessalonians 5:21

Holy Baptism

Minister. Dost thou believe in Jesus the Christ, the Son of the Living God?

Answer. I do.

Minister. Dost thou accept him, and desire to follow him as thy Saviour and Lord?

Answer. I do.

Minister. Dost thou believe all the Articles of the Christian Faith, as contained in the Apostles' Creed?

Answer. I do.

Minister. Wilt thou be baptized in this Faith?

Answer. That is my desire.

Minister. Wilt thou then obediently keep God's holy will and commandments, and walk in the same all the days of thy life?

Answer. I will, by God's help.

¶ Then shall the Minister say,

O MERCIFUL God, grant that like as Christ died and rose again, so *this Child (this thy Servant)* may die to sin and rise to newness of life. *Amen.*

Grant that all sinful affections may die in *him*, and that all things belonging to the Spirit may live and grow in *him.* *Amen.*

Grant that *he* may have power and strength to have victory, and to triumph, against the devil, the world, and the flesh. *Amen.*

Grant that whosoever is here dedicated to thee by our office and ministry, may also be endued with heavenly virtues, and everlastingly rewarded, through thy mercy, O blessed Lord God, who dost live, and govern all things, world without end. *Amen.*

Minister. The Lord be with you.

Answer. And with thy spirit.

278

Holy Baptism

Minister. Lift up your hearts.

Answer. We lift them up unto the Lord.

Minister. Let us give thanks unto our Lord God.

Answer. It is meet and right so to do.

¶ Then the Minister shall say,

IT is very meet, right, and our bounden duty, that we should give thanks unto thee, O Lord, Holy Father, Almighty, Everlasting God, for that thy dearly beloved Son Jesus Christ, for the forgiveness of our sins, did shed out of his most precious side both water and blood; and gave commandment to his disciples, that they should go teach all nations, and baptize them In the Name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost. Regard, we beseech thee, the supplications of thy congregation; sanctify this Water to the mystical washing away of sin; and grant that *this Child (this thy Servant)*, now to be baptized therein, may receive the fulness of thy grace, and ever remain in the number of thy faithful children; through the same Jesus Christ our Lord, to whom, with thee, in the unity of the Holy Spirit, be all honour and glory, now and evermore. *Amen.*

¶ Then the Minister shall take the Child into his arms, and shall say to the Godfathers and Godmothers,

Name this Child.

¶ And then, naming the Child after them, he shall dip him in the Water discreetly, or shall pour Water upon him, saying,

NI baptize thee In the Name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost. *Amen.*

¶ But NOTE. That if the Person to be baptized be an Adult, the Minister shall take him by the hand, and shall ask the Witnesses the Name; and then shall dip him in the Water, or pour Water upon him, using the same form of words.

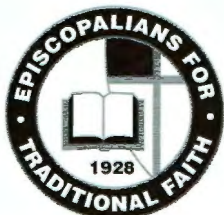
279

Holy Baptism releases us from sin and evil, and makes us Christ's own.

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Welcoming People with Disabilities

(Continued from page 28)

gregations in the diocese is increasing. We need to give people with disabilities access to society's most important place: our compassionate heart. In fact, if we each begin with opening our heart, access to our church buildings, programs and our lives will be a natural expression of welcoming all God's children into the community of Christ's body, freely and without prejudice. Our proactive inclusion of adults and children with disabilities into the full life of our churches then will become the living and best example of what our familiar blue-and-white signs proclaim to all: "The Episcopal Church Welcomes You." □

The Rev. Canon Timothy M. Dombek is canon to the ordinary in the Diocese of Arizona.

Resources to help welcome persons with disabilities:

Including People With Disabilities in Faith Communities: A Guide for Service Providers, Families and Congregations. By Erik W. Carter. Paul H. Brookes Publishing Co. ISBN-13:9781-55766-743-4

Accessibility Guidelines for Episcopal Churches, Revised Edition. Edited by Jean Forrey, Betty Moe, and the Rev. Barbara Ramnaraine. Episcopal Disability Network. www.disability99.org/id7.html

Vulnerable Communion: A Theology of Disability and Hospitality. By Thomas E. Reynolds. Brazos Press. ISBN: 978-1-58743-177-7.

www.disabilityisnatural.com

The mission of this website is to encourage new ways of thinking about developmental disabilities in the belief that changes in attitudes and actions can help create a society in which children and adults with developmental disabilities have opportunities to live the lives of their dreams.

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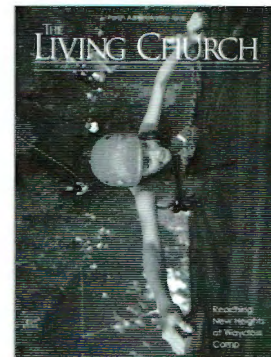
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Rising to the Occasion

Ministry in parishes of all sizes is a regular topic of articles and opinion pieces in THE LIVING CHURCH magazine. This is hardly surprising because for most Episcopalians, it is within their own congregation that they regularly experience the life and mission of the Church. While they may take an interest in national and international events and pronouncements, and also may feel a connection to their diocese, when it comes down to it, there's simply "no place like home."

Recognizing the importance of the local church, THE LIVING CHURCH publishes four issues each year that specifically focus on the theme of parish administration. In this issue, you'll find several articles that address the hurdles posed by the recession, and how faith communities can rise to meet those challenges. These include a Michigan parish that offers free healthcare services to meet a growing need in their community; Episcopal schools that are recommitting themselves to providing a quality education even as their enrollments shrink this fall; an Indiana camp that is growing in spite of the economy; and ideas for using both the latest technology and old-fashioned personal contact to welcome newcomers and grow your parish.

As part of our own commitment to encouraging thriving and vital parish ministry, we send more than 9,000 free copies of these quarterly issues to clergy who are not regular subscribers to the magazine. If you are receiving a complimentary copy of this issue, we hope that you will find it to be an interesting and informative resource. We also hope you will consider the ongoing value that a subscription to receive TLC weekly will bring to your ministry.



Recognizing the importance of the local church, THE LIVING CHURCH publishes four issues each year that specifically focus on the theme of parish administration.

Shaping the Future

Bishop Mark Lawrence's August 13 address to the clergy of the Diocese of South Carolina [TLC, Sept. 6] has received a great deal of attention for its clarity and courage. One of his predecessors, Bishop C. FitzSimons Allison, called it "the finest thing any living bishop could possibly have done." While that assessment is subject to debate, Bishop Lawrence has certainly provided both a cogent examination of the false teachings that threaten The Episcopal Church and a sense of direction for conservatives who choose to remain in the church.

While calling for the diocese to distance itself from "all bodies of governance" of The Episcopal Church that have assented to actions contrary to scripture and the received doctrine and discipline of the Church, Bishop Lawrence also challenged the diocese not to retreat from "a thorough engagement with this destructive 'new' gospel." He voiced his commitment to lead the diocese in the support of the faithful and to help "shape the emerging Anglicanism of the 21st century."

Because the historic mission of The Living Church Foundation is to promote and support Catholic Anglicanism within the Episcopal Church, we applaud Bishop Lawrence. He has offered a stalwart defense of an Anglicanism that upholds the historic teaching of the undivided Catholic Church. While the approach he outlined will not please all the clergy or laity of the diocese, he has shown thoughtful, prayerful leadership and is committed to the pastoral care of those that disagree with the stand he has taken.

Speaking of his diocese, Bishop Lawrence asserted that in these difficult times, "we need believers who are informed, engaged, missional and faithful." That is as true today for all who love The Episcopal Church as it is for the faithful of South Carolina.

Feeding a Curious Flock

The painted bunting arrives each May at our birdfeeders, famished from his long journey north. He is resplendent in his tropical apparel of red, green, yellow and blue. His consort is arrayed in silvery mint green feathers so transparent you wonder if you might see right through her. Embarrassed, the cardinals, usually so predictable at the feeders, stay away for a spell. Their bright reds and oranges are no match, they think, for their rainbow Latin cousins. But the cardinals return and set against the visitors, they become brighter still.

Each visit I make in and out of our kitchen, I pause to see who is taking their repast at the feeders. In the early spring, we are overrun with sparrows. Brown, messy, and greedy, these furious eaters appear so uniform that I cannot fathom how God keeps track of each one. The doves arrive in the late afternoon in pairs, eat quietly on the ground from the crumbs tossed from the feeders, and then sit together on a low limb, wing to wing, watching the others. Titmice and chickadees are fickle. They come to the feeders one day and not the next. The mockingbird wouldn't degrade himself by feasting on an artificial perch, so he defiantly sings out in protest.

When an itinerant Texas goldfinch or Mexican jay stop by, Kay creeps into the other room and summons me with a whisper. We both know they will not stay the night. Only the cardinals and the two sets of painted buntings remain at our feeders all through June and July when the heat beats down and the long grasses budge not an inch for want of a breeze.

I watch the feeders far more than I do the T.V. I know from experience what birds should be there and those who I hope will return soon. I know, too, the look of the brown squirrel when he is contemplating an attack on the feeder, and I know when it gets too dry the doe will rise up on her hind legs and lick out the seeds with her long, pink tongue. When I catch the thieves, I run them off. These seeds are for the birds.

"Look at the birds of the air," Jesus invites, "they neither sow nor reap nor gather into barns, and yet your heavenly Father feeds them. Are you not of more value than they?" (Matt. 6:26) Bird feeding is God-work, so I am only too glad to tag along and give him a hand. "Are not two sparrows sold for a penny?" Jesus asks, "Yet not one of them will fall to the ground apart from your Father" (Matt. 10:29). Bird watching is God-work, too.

The parish I serve is full of colorful birds. I love watch-

ing them. It did not take me long to recognize the peculiar songs each one sings and the places they like to perch. Each one is an interesting bird. Together, though, they take on the luster of one another and the church becomes a spectrum of iridescent color. For sure, the sparrows maintain their frenzy, the mockingbird makes lots of noise, and there are a few who would steal the joy right out of the room rather than leave it for others. But neither the noise, nor the busyness, nor anything else can despoil the multihued collage on Sunday morning.

I can tell you almost to a person who is present at worship and who is away. I couldn't do that in my first 12 years in the ministry. I spent more time eyeing myself in those days. It matters if we're together at church or not.

A friend approached me to say, "Pat, I can worship God just as well on a golf course as I can here on Sunday."

"But I can't," I replied.

I've made my peace with those who come once a month, those who take the summer off, and even those who fly in at Christmas and Easter. I'm glad to see them when I see them, like the titmice and chickadees who alight on the feeders when the spirit moves them.

When I first turn around in the chancel each Sunday, I am awestruck to see the curious flock of folks the Spirit has moved to worship. I'm a little scared, too, that I may not have the food to

relieve their hunger. I feel a little bit like the New York farmer I've read about who receives a box of chicks each spring, only to find that some do not even yet know how to drink:

My experience handling babies is invaluable. A farmer, usually adept at fitting and mending tractor implements and pounding stakes, must also learn to hold a fuzzy head the size of a thimble and dip its tiny beak into the water. I cannot be sure, but following the course of instruction I believe I have sensed gratitude in the bearing of certain Buff Orpingtons. (Scott Chaskey, This Common Ground: Seasons on an Organic Farm).

I, too, am adept at things — Bible reading, theology, liturgy, music, parish management, and church growth. But it is my time spent peering out my kitchen window that proves invaluable.

Our guest columnist is the Rev. Patrick Gahan, rector of St. Stephen's Church, Wimberley, Texas. This is the fourth in a series of personal reflections on the life of a priest.



The painted bunting

about their experience in these areas. Those who are honest with you are providing priceless insights.

Friendly greeters and a well stocked welcome center were once the basic tools required for a great welcome ministry. But these days, people may make up their mind about your church before they ever arrive. They do this by visiting your church's website. Since your true front door is your website, make sure that it is guest-friendly.

For example, remember that pictures of faces tell more about who you are than pictures of your building. Don't overlook the obvious information, such as service times, directions to and through your church, phone numbers and key contacts. Make your website easy to understand and use, not a mystery to solve or a novel to read.

3. Connect Personally and Repeatedly with your Guests

Churches that grow not only make a great first impression but work to make a lasting connection with guests. This leads us to consider how well you follow up with your first-time visitors. Many parishes assume that a welcome letter, a general e-mail, or kind call from a motivated lay person will do the trick, but effective follow-up requires personal contact from the highest level of leadership.

A close friend started his church from scratch in the shadow of one of the largest and most creative churches in our area. He decided early on that while he could not compete with their "show" or the size of their operation, he could distinguish his church

through hospitality. In seven years his church has grown from 25 to 1,200 members, largely through outstanding follow-up and community building.

That church's follow-up plan includes a personal call from lead staff members within three days of a guest's visit; an invitation to the pastor's house for a monthly welcome dinner; and a letter 14 days after the initial visit. In seven years, only three people have complained of feeling "over-contacted"; of those three, two joined the church and became key leaders.

4. Cultivate Leaders Who Will Help You

Another common characteristic of growing churches is that they cultivate new leaders who take on meaningful ministry. Reaching and

(Continued on next page)

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4

Keys to Growing Your Parish Now

Inviting the world to meet Jesus is our mission no matter how turbulent the times.

READER'S **VIEWPOINT** By Greg Methvin

While we continue to navigate the controversies in our Episcopal life, there is one important thing we can do while we wait for the wind and waves to cease. We can grow the church.

I'm not kidding! Church growth may sound like a luxury when compared to debating core doctrines and addressing the fears of our church members. Despite the turbulence, the mission of the church remains unchanged: Make disciples, and bring those who do not know Jesus to the knowledge and love of him.

Can we reasonably hope to add to our number in days like these? Not to oversimplify a solution, but if God is God, Jesus has risen, and the Holy Spirit still empowers and guides, I believe we can.

Knowing these core truths will not in itself spike church attendance. But knowing and believing these core truths is essential for the leader of a parish who wishes to grow the church. I'm not suggesting that every church can be a megachurch, or should even aspire to become one.

But a few key ministry practices will help a parish of any size and location plant gospel seeds that will yield a harvest, even in the midst of a storm.

1. Track Your Attendance

All growing churches first take stock of who is already present. Before devising clever ways to reach new people, strategic leaders study who they are already reaching. This important information will tell us what we are doing well and where we can improve.

Kerstin Hanson, business innovation manager for the Volvo Group, has said, "What gets measured gets done." So decide what counts (e.g., worship attendance, small group participation, Bible study attendance) and keep track of a few key statistics that will help you evaluate your effectiveness.

2. Welcome New Guests Effectively

With a clear picture of your life inside the church, you can turn your attention to welcoming first-time guests. Are you ready for guests when they show up? Are signs clear and greeters in place to help point the way through your facilities? Is your worship service accessible to the newcomer? Will your guests have the chance to identify themselves and connect with anyone while attending?

Make it a point when you follow up with guests to ask



LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

U.S. POSTAGE
PS METER

A Legacy of Service

The Episcopal Church will indeed miss the All Saints Sisters of the Poor [TLC, July 12]. We have benefited from the 137 years that they have been here in the United States.

Three sisters arrived in the U.S. from the mother house in England in 1872, in response to a request by the rector of Mount Calvary Church in Baltimore. Over the years they were involved in starting and serving at a mission house for the poor, schools for boys and girls, a home for the elderly, St. Barbara's Home for Girls, and St. Gabriel's Convalescent Home.

In recent years, the number of postulants became fewer. The sisters found that many of the parishes in which they had at one time taught weekly were no longer grounded in the faith that was taught and believed. The prayer book was changed, and many old familiar hymns were dropped from the Hymnal. As the sisters aged and were unable to do all that they had done previously, all but two of the remaining sisters decided, after much prayer and discussion, to "go to

The Episcopal Church will indeed miss the All Saints Sisters of the Poor.

Rome." They were received into the Roman Catholic Church on September 3.

The memories of their service remain with many of us, especially those of us who were closely related either to St. Gabriel's Home—where many have already passed on—or at St. Barbara's. These are memories of the trials and joys, the Christian precepts taught, our Confirmations, and the many things we enjoyed with the sisters that we were unable to receive at home, in many cases

(Continued on next page)



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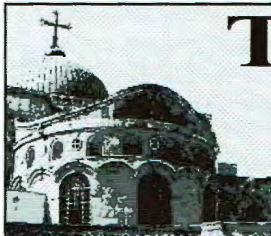
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foreword by DALLAS WILLARD

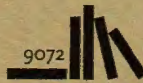
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4 Keys to Growing Your Parish Now READER'S VIEWPOINT

(Continued from previous page)

equipping disciples is too important to be left to only a few clergy and church staff. One of my mentors used to say repeatedly that "a church can only grow as wide as its leadership base allows."

If you build a church on one gifted leader, that leader may be able to reach 100 people (not including Facebook friends). If a church is to reach more people, then it needs as many people as possible working with it to invite and reach others.

I have learned this lesson anew in recent years. For the past five years, I have led 15 to 20 men at a time through a 10-month study on how to be a follower of Jesus Christ. Men learn about our group only by a personal invitation from me or someone who has completed the course.

The first year consisted of men I knew well and had invited. But an interesting trend developed with each successive year. I continued to include men who were in my circle, but I noticed that

the majority of participants were completely new to me. Graduates of our group became the source of most of the invitations, and because of their faithful hospitality, men I did not know and never would have met were able to experience God in ways that transformed their lives and relationships.

You can grow your church. To be sure, there are numerous causes and controversies that require our attention or engagement. But our primary mission is not to stamp out sin in the world. We are called to invite the world to meet and follow a Savior. By trying these basic practices, all of our churches can do that. □

Our primary mission is not to stamp out sin in the world.



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The Rev. Greg Methvin is vice-rector of Church of the Incarnation, Dallas, Texas.

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hang a cross in an auditorium if we do not also make decisions based upon these very orthodox and traditional Christian values? Perhaps he no longer believes that God's will is discerned in the midst of that assembly by the prayerful action of all believers and their leaders, not just those who seem to know exactly what God wants for everyone else. Justice and inclusion, even for sinners, is what God has called us to.

*(The Rev.) Peter Pearson
St. Philip's Church
New Hope, Pa.*

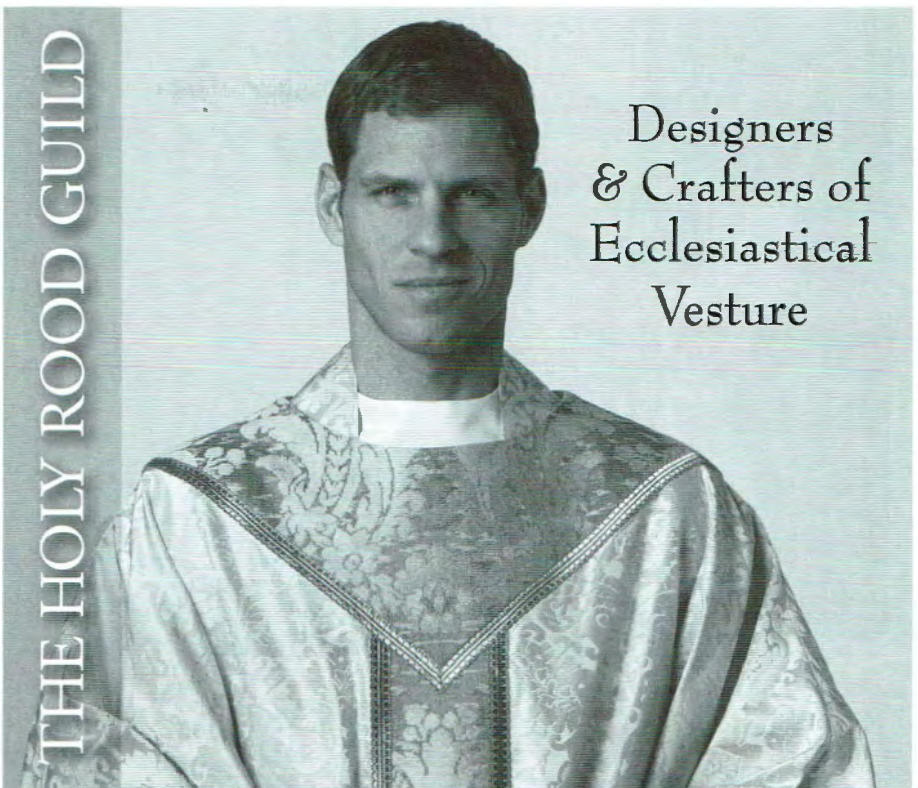
More Than Nostalgia

I read with interest and curiosity Joseph DeBragga's comment [TLC, Aug. 9] on the Rev. William Moorhead's question [TLC, July 25] as to why the Episcopalians for Traditional Faith advertisement suggested that the 1928 Prayer Book be used in services for July 4 and 5.

The first American Book of Common Prayer of 1789, which was based on the English prayer book of 1662, and its revision in 1892, offered prayers for Independence Day. However, it was in the 1928 Book of Common Prayer that actual propers for Independence Day were included for the Service of Holy Communion as well as the Offices of Daily Morning and Evening Prayer.

My guess would be that Episcopalians for Traditional Faith chose the 1928 prayer book because of this inclusion, and not only for the reasons of nostalgia as suggested by Mr. DeBragga.

*Judith Wood
Contoocook, N.H.*



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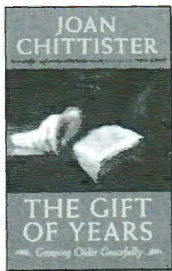
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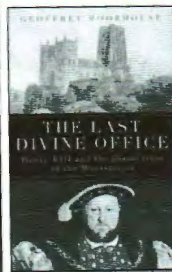
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LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

(Continued from previous page)

because our remaining parents were
unable to provide them. My prayer is
that this change will bring the sisters
much happiness and fulfillment.

Virginia Grigsby
Baltimore, Md.

The Struggle with Evil

I have received and read TLC for
many years, and find I agree with you
very rarely indeed. My view of church
is quite different from yours. However,
I do keep reading with as open a mind
(and heart) as I can summon. And
then, lo and behold, you absolutely
blow me away with the wise, wonder-
ful and profoundly insightful, timely
and prophetic Sunday's Readings
reflection in the August 23 issue — on
exorcism. I commend you and I thank
you — you do a superb service for the
church.

I consider myself to be on the more
progressive side of things, but I do not
in the slightest find it unfashionable or
inappropriate to speak of evil; to take
it most seriously; and, yes, to acknowl-
edge it can indeed be manifested in a
personified way. I struggle against evil

I do not in the slightest find it unfashionable
or inappropriate to speak of evil; to take it
most seriously; and, yes, to acknowledge it
can indeed be manifested in a personified way.

daily ... hourly, even, at times! "Cos-
mic powers of this present darkness":
In an hour, I'll be meeting with a group
of men struggling with hard-core
addictions, at a halfway house, to
speak with them about the role
spirituality can play in their recover-
ies. They are sometimes hostile, often
skeptical. But when they speak of the
power their addictions hold over
them, and things they have done as a
result of these addictions, I have no
trouble believing in cosmic powers of
present darkness, as well as in all the

other realms cited in this extraordi-
nary piece of writing.

(The Rev.) John Perry
Christ Church
Hudson N.Y.

God or Culture?

A throw-away line that THE LIVING
CHURCH often uses is that The Episco-
pal Church has a willingness to
accommodate to whatever direction
the culture may wish to take [Editori-
als, Aug. 23]. Any change can be made
in accordance to the perceived will of
God or as an accommodation to cul-
ture. We all choose how we wish to
decide.

Taking the message to the gentiles
and making it acceptable to them.
Caving in to Constantine. Revising the
BCP. Letting children receive the
sacrament before they are confirmed.
Doing away with customs like hats
and gloves for women in the church.
Were these according to the will of
God or caving in to culture? I think the
former.

(The Rev.) Richard Guy Belliss
Santa Clarita, Calif.

They're Biblical Values

I admit I was not at General Con-
vention, but the underlying assump-
tion in Bill Murchison's Viewpoint
titled "The Justice-Inclusion Church"
[TLC, Aug. 9] disturbs me. He implies
that justice and inclusion are not bibli-
cal values. Unless he's reading a dif-
ferent Bible, he's wrong. Justice,
mercy, compassion and yes, even
inclusion, are all over the writings of
the prophets and in the teachings and
actions of Jesus.

What difference does it make if we

Payroll Services Reduce Staff Stress

ers. But one thing that hasn't changed, as Fr. Chan also observed, is that whatever technology a parish uses, it should ultimately support the mission of the church.

Today's parish administration software offers even the smallest congregations features and speed that would have seemed like science fiction in 1983. Several leading software developers expressed their commitment to helping parishes adapt, but at the same time keep their focus on their core mission.

"The biggest change we've seen over the last five years has been in the need to access data remotely," said Anthony Coppedge, director of communications at Fellowship Technologies of Irving, Texas. In response, the company introduced software that permits church leaders to access church records through a secure, password-protected internet connection.

"A church leader shouldn't have to be at the church to get information, nor should he or she be burdened with trying to protect and secure the computers and servers on the premises," he said. "In addition, churches, especially smaller ones, don't have the people, time or money to manage their own database system, nor do they want the hassle of making backups of the data and storing those backups off-site."

"The main interest is with the overall organization of the church, and the ability to have everything in one place," said Trevor Gore of Cordova, Tenn.-based Micro System Design, developer of Excellerate church management software. "We also see significant interest in reporting features, and the ability to customize the software, making the program fit the particular needs of the parish."

Mike Cusick, vice president of marketing and sales at ParishSoft, Ann Arbor, Mich., agreed that customized reporting is increasingly in demand.

You don't have to be a megachurch to enjoy the convenience of a payroll service, says Linda Puckett, the Church Pension Group's vice president of retirement programs and services. CPG has negotiated a national contract with Paychex Inc., to provide payroll services to Episcopal congregations and institutions of all sizes. Episcopal Payroll Services currently processes payroll for over 14,000 Episcopal clergy and lay employees.

Why use a payroll service? "Congregations and institutions are looking for an accurate, efficient way to pay clergy and lay employees," Ms. Puckett said. "They want the peace of mind that comes with knowing that clergy and lay employees are paid accurately and taxes are paid in compliance with the tax laws."

"The needs have changed over the past few years as clergy and lay leaders are becoming better educated about the complexity of

clergy taxes, especially the housing allowance," she said. "Many volunteer treasurers, particularly in smaller congregations, are not familiar with payroll tax requirements and clergy taxes."

At a time when many parish budgets are tight and getting tighter, Ms. Puckett said that "using a payroll service that provides low group rates can reduce the processing and tax reporting costs."

"It also reduces the administrative burden for office staff and volunteers, and frees them to focus on other responsibilities," she continued. "A part-time employee or volunteer no longer has to devote time to tedious, routine payroll processing and tax reporting, or training in payroll tax requirements."

For full details on Episcopal Payroll Services, call Patricia Tucker, client services specialist, at 1-800-223-6602, ext. 6286, or visit www.cpg.org/productsservices.

"There has been a growth in requests for quick and accurate information so the church can better connect with their families," Mr. Cusick said. "This helps the church to become a better steward."

One example of this is in the area of tracking the effectiveness of communication with parishioners.

"A lot of parish communication is

(Continued on next page)

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Parishes use software
to build relationships

MAKING the Connection

By Michael O'Loughlin

A quarter century ago, an article in *THE LIVING CHURCH* extolled the relatively new benefits of "using a small mainframe computer" to track

church records.

"Large amounts of data can be stored on a diskette, also called a 'floppy disk,' which has the capacity of up to 200,000 characters of data," the Rev. Henry Chan wrote in 1983. He

went on to estimate that "a parish with approximately 300 communicants can obtain a home computer to satisfy its basic requirements for about \$2,500."

A lot has changed since the heyday of the early adopters of personal comput-



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How can parish leaders make the case for a software purchase in their 2010 budget?

becomes so complex that only one or two people know where to find anything," he said. "Once this happens, it's next to impossible to recruit other volunteers, and everything hangs on a few busy people.

"If you have a central program, however, anyone who learns that one program can find anything they need," he said. "This makes it much easier to get volunteers pooling their efforts, so you can easily get by with part-time or volunteer workers."

Software that permits remote access to the parish database offers staff and volunteers the convenience of being able to help the church as their schedule allows. "It gives parish leaders access to the system from anywhere, anytime, with appropriate

security," Mr. Cusick said.

"We believe that churches should focus on their core competencies: namely, reaching people for Jesus Christ," Mr. Coppedge concluded. "Therefore, we take the burden of needing technical expertise off of their hands so they can spend their time focusing on ministry instead of the technology." □

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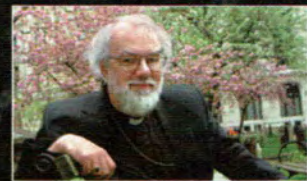
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MAKING the Connection

(Continued from previous page)

regularly sent out by email, but many churches don't realize how much of it is not being read, or even being delivered," Mr. Cusick said. In response, his company developed an interface with the Constant Contact email service so that campaigns can be seamlessly merged with information from the parish's database.

Is Now the Time?

While churches may recognize the benefits of parish administration software, they may be concerned about making this kind of investment during a recession. How can parish leaders make the case for a software purchase in their 2010 budget?

"If churches can't easily manage,

connect and communicate with people, they will struggle to grow a healthy community," Mr. Coppedge said. "We also know that people that aren't involved aren't committed. When a church can effectively communicate with its people, it makes it easy for members to plug in, grow and serve."

Mr. Coppedge said that this member involvement can then translate into a firmer commitment to the vision, and ultimately the financial support, of the church.

"When churches have the right tools and methods to connect those people with the life of the local church, it becomes easier for the church staff to manage," he said.

"The key to overcoming lean times is to make your parish spiritually strong," Mr. Gore said. "Software makes it easy to analyze things like your small group Bible studies and identify the most effective ways to nurture your members. Members will be more committed to the church, will sacrifice more to see it prosper, and will be more likely to invite friends to come and share in their joy.

"Software also benefits the parish because as you get more visitors, you can keep track of visitor follow-up," he said. "Fewer people will fall through the cracks. You can analyze questions like whether a follow-up phone call or a letter produces better retention. That makes for a church whose growth in numbers more than makes up for individuals who need to reduce the amount of their pledge."

Cash-strapped parishes also may rely more heavily on part-time staff and volunteers, some with limited experience and training, to handle office functions. Software developers are taking this into account, even as they strive to offer state-of-the-art functionality.

Mr. Gore suggested that centralizing records in a data management system makes it easier for volunteers to make the most of their individual efforts.

"If you keep member contact records in one place, and contribution data in another, and miscellaneous records somewhere else, the system

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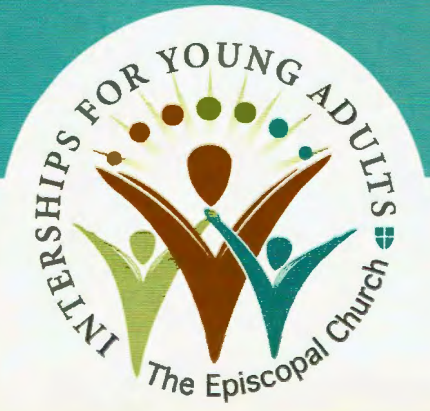
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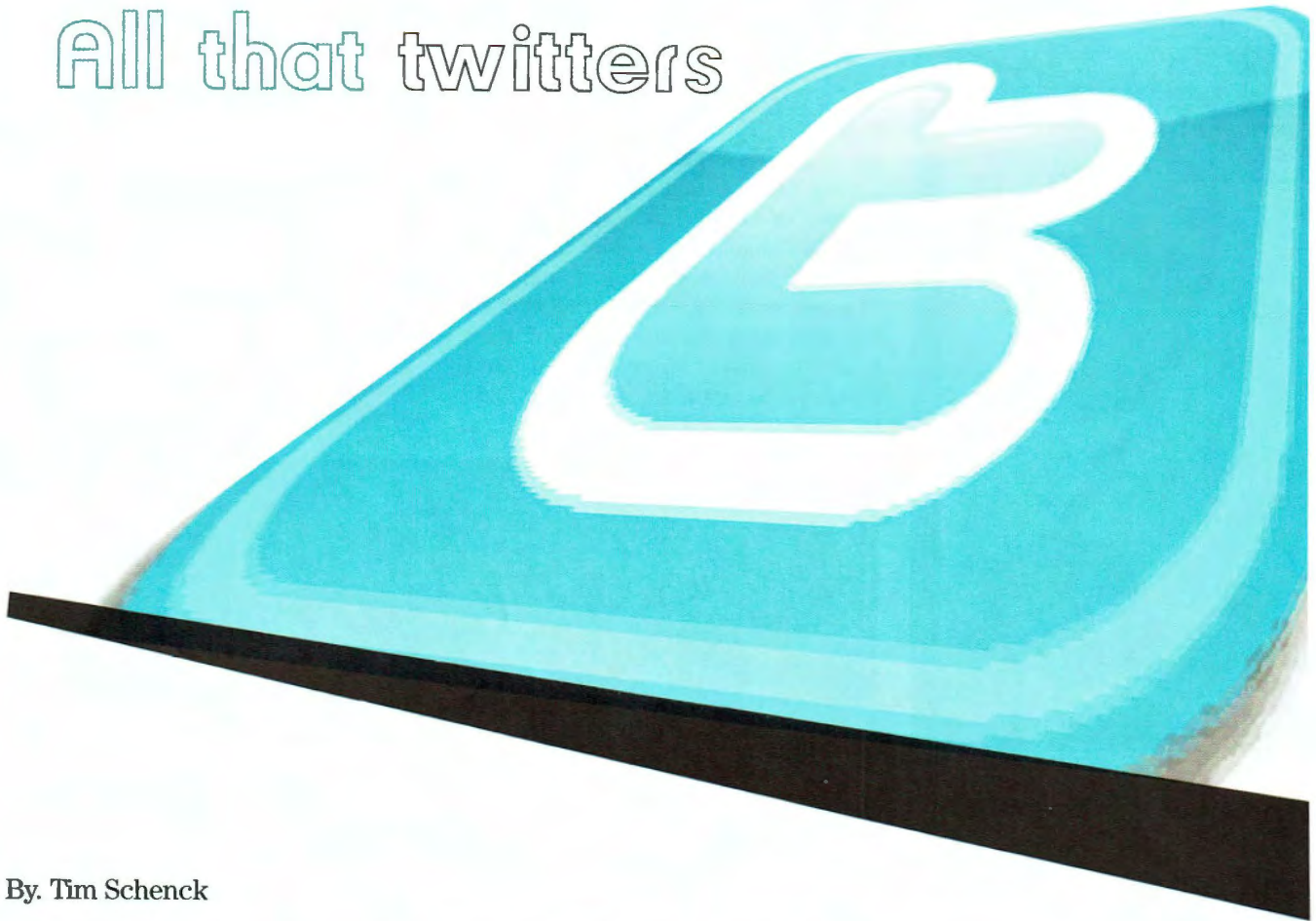
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All that twitters



By. Tim Schenck

I'm a terrible Twitterer. Granted I'm a novice, but so far I feel like the Mr. Magoo of Twitter: I have no idea what I'm doing. Blogs, Facebook, email, text and instant messages — these I know. But I always swore I wouldn't Twitter until I could figure out the grammar. I'm still somewhat confused but here's what I've learned: Twitter is the proper noun; tweet is a noun — you send a "tweet"; twitter is the verb (not to be confused with the proper noun "Twitter"). So you can use Twitter to twitter a tweet. I think. I may have to write a tongue twister.

What exactly is Twitter? It's a free social networking or "micro-blogging" website that allows users to answer the ubiquitous question, "What am I doing?" All within 140 characters. But the underlying question is, "Why Twitter?" Or blog or Facebook or MySpace or anything else for that matter? At one level, Twitter is the epitome of narcissism. It's all about *me* — what am *I* doing? Where am *I*? How am *I*? What am *I* thinking? Feeling? Observing? Sensing?

Conventional wisdom holds that the internet has revolutionized the world as much as Gutenberg's 15th-century printing press. It has certainly transformed the way we communicate with one another. We now expect instant communication via e-mail, text messages, Facebook, instant messaging, YouTube, and Twitter. Opinions are published via online news sites and blogs so quickly that many believe the daily newspaper is obsolete. All of these communications tools are collectively referred to as "new media," and congregations throughout the world are exploring ways to help them build community and spread the gospel of Christ.

The Rev. Scott Gunn, an online and offline friend who

used to work at IBM, is deeply immersed in church applications of new media. Behind his back I refer to him as Sir Blog-a-Lot. Scott's theory on Facebook and Twitter is that "it's the modern-day equivalent of going to a high school play. Fifty years ago, a parish priest would go to local social and school events as a way of staying connected to parishioners outside church. It was a way to show interest in people's lives and to reveal a bit of one's whole person to the parish. I don't go to things, but I blog and I'm on Facebook. It's clearly different in many important respects, but I think there are some similarities. I get to learn something about people I only see at church, usually. They get to learn some things about me."

So it's about connectivity, which is at the core of the Christian faith. Jesus called disciples into community, after all. And there's no reason to think he wouldn't use Facebook or Twitter if he came into the world 2,000 years later. Imagine the killer status updates: Jesus is "changing water into wine — the good stuff" or Jesus is "cranking out parables again."

Which brings me to admit that I'm conflicted by some of the Twitter language. Rather than having "friends" like on Facebook, you have "followers" — people who receive your status updates. At last count I have 10 (versus my nearly 200 "friends" on Facebook). I actually prefer to think of them as "Disciples" and am considering not accepting any more after I reach 12. How's that for a priestly Messiah complex?

Meredith Gould, author of *The Word Made Fresh: Communicating Church and Faith Today* and someone I've

(Continued on page 46)



All Saints' School photo

First graders at All Saints' School, Morristown, Tenn., on a walk to raise funds for the school.

Episcopal Schools Move Ahead with Less

By Willy Thorn
and John Schuessler

Episcopal schools faced especially difficult economic challenges at the beginning of the new academic year. Enrollment decreases are common and many families that remain are stressed financially. Some schools have limited their staff hours

while increasing scholarships.

Rock Point School, Burlington, Vt., saw its enrollment halved, said C.J. Spirito, dean of students. "It's been this low before, but not for a long while," he said. "We typically serve upwards of 40 kids; we've got 18. We'll

try to have it impact students as little as possible."

In response to the decrease in revenue, the school froze raises for upper salary brackets and is cutting back in other areas. "We probably also need to
(Continued on next page)

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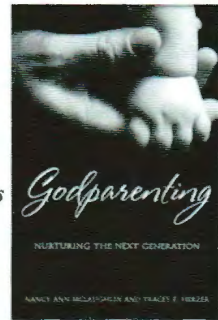
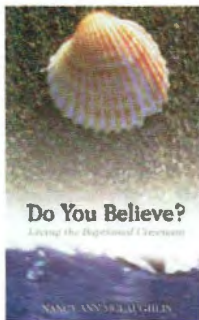
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Co-authored with Tracey Herzer

All that twitters

(Continued from page 44)

been privileged to get to know (mostly online), puts it this way:

"Before there was 'high tech,' there was 'high touch.' On the short list for high touch community building are: greeters and ushers; coffee-and-donut Sunday gatherings and the church picnic; Bible study and prayer groups; and newcomers groups. These high touch ministries help church become more than just a building. New media enhance high touch by extending and expanding social interaction. By the end of the 20th century, we added high tech to the mix, first in the form of individual and group e-mail, then in the form of websites. These high tech tools have become invaluable means to support high touch ministries. At this point, the church website is considered as essential as the weekly bulletin. Social media allows us to move beyond church business as usual."

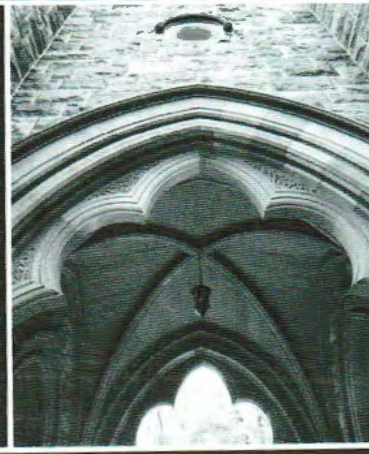
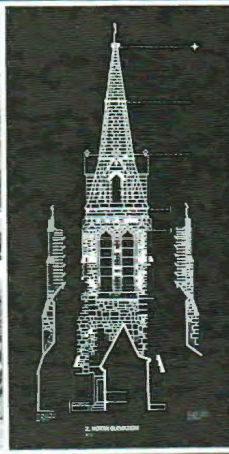
Therein lies the opportunity and the challenge. Moving beyond church business as usual means trying new things — Twitter in my case. For most of us — as individuals and congregations — this is all a work in progress. As with anything new, there is excitement about new possibilities mixed with anxiety about the loss of the familiar. This is also a great way to involve younger members of the congregation who live firmly in the electronic world. Heck, it's one of the reasons I had kids in the first place: at-home tech support.

If you take the leap and sign up for Twitter, you can "follow" me here: <http://twitter.com/FatherTim>. So far my tweets have been tentative and uneventful. But then, I'm probably doing it wrong. And about that tongue twister, how's this? "Tim the tweeter triumphantly twitters twisted tweets. How many twisted tweets did Tim the tweeter triumphantly twitter?" □

The Rev. Tim Schenck is the rector of All Saints' Church, Briarcliff Manor, N.Y., and the author of What Size are God's Shoes: Kids, Chaos & the Spiritual Life. Visit him on the web at www.frtim.com.

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impacted just because we're such a fabulous school."

Lake Charles, La., has weathered the economic storm well thanks to its diversified economy. Still, Bishop Noland Episcopal Day School has experienced some changes in enrollment due to the economy, said Frances Kay, school head.

"We did lose people to tuition and finances, as well as out-of-state job opportunities; or to public schools and cheaper private schools," she said. "But we're fine."

"Our focus this year is making the school environmentally aware. We're working with a lot of environmental initiatives. For example, we have a government coalition we're working with to plant the 1,000 cypress trees we grew last year. We're also putting together funding for a biomass generator, powered by recyclables. If all goes well, we're going to take the school off the grid."

All Saints' School, Morristown, Tenn., is located in a county with only one Episcopal church, so even in healthy economic times, support for the Episcopal school doesn't come easily, said the head of school, Henry G. Selby.

"Episcopalians are an oddity in this part of the world," Mr. Selby said. "There has never been strong support for independent education in East Tennessee. Therefore, with a bad economy, logic would dictate that our enrollment would drop."

He said that All Saints' opened the school year with 21 percent fewer students than at the beginning of last year. That is within the standard range of decrease (15-25 percent) that he's learned from heads of other Episcopal schools around the country.

"Do I see a turnaround? Yes," Mr. Selby said. "Just as in the for-profit world, we have learned to become leaner and do more with less."

"But, in any event, we believe we are doing God's will. And God will send the necessary students and families to carry out God's will. The truth of the matter is, if God wants the school to be there, it will be there. We need to be open to the Spirit's guidance." □

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Episcopal Schools Move Ahead with Less

(Continued from previous page)

borrow against the endowment to cover costs," Mr. Spirito said. "But we're pushing ahead with marketing and recruiting. We are tuition-driven, so we just need to get out there more, and get them here."

Feeling the pinch on the other side of the country is All Saints' Day School, Las Vegas, Nev.

"We've absolutely been affected," said school director Jackie Johns, as she prepared for school to open. "We have lost students to the economy, even though we're medium-priced, and have a niche middle-income market. We're opening school with a much scaled back student population — about two-thirds capacity.

"Teaching assistants and teachers' hours have been scaled back," she said. "I haven't ordered supplies yet, because we're inventorying what's left over from last year. We also sent out a parents' letter asking them to bring basic supplies like markers and boxes of tissues.

"But," she added, "we're glad to be here, and moving forward. We're going to open up with confidence, and smiles on our faces, and perform miracles. We want to make the parents who decided to bring their children here — through no small economic sacrifice — glad they made that decision."

At Church of the Redeemer Parish Day School in Baltimore, Md., the economy is taking a heavy toll on families.

"We see it with the troubles some of our families are having," said Rosalee Ritchie, school administrator. "It's harder to pay bills on time. More are applying for scholarships, which we account for in each budget.

"But it has not affected enrollment," she said. "Our tuition is pretty low. There's just a little more struggle for some families."

Other schools are counting their blessings, such as The Episcopal Academy in Newtown Square, Pa., which was fortunate to move into a new building just before the economy took a downturn, said Mike Letts, director of communications.

"Certainly we were concerned about the admission cycle when the stock market started taking its turn,"



Students celebrate the first day of school at Bishop Noland Episcopal Day School, Lake Charles, La.

he said. "And we're very concerned about the 2009-2010 year," he said. "But we're very fortunate in that applications have held, and we've even attracted new families. Enrollment has increased. We're very fortunate."

The academy has seen a slight increase in financial aid requests, he said, "but we were able to find those funds for the majority that qualified."

He continued, "the academy is in a strong community that takes great pride in supporting one another," Mr. Letts said. "We offer quality education and have the luxury of a very large metropolitan area [Philadelphia] to draw from, which smaller rural schools may not have.

"Having a new campus is an additional draw others don't have. Of course, I'd like to say we're not

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Olympia — **Samuel Torvend**, as a priest from the Roman Catholic Church; associate, St. Paul's, PO Box 9070, Seattle, WA 98109.

Resignations

The Rev. **Nancy J. Allison**, as associate at Christ Church, Raleigh.

The Rev. **Margaret Buerkel**, as assistant, St. Alban's, Davidson, NC, and chaplain at Davidson College.

The Rev. **Timothy W. Clayton**, as associate, St. John's, Charlotte, NC.

The Rev. **Jason Haddox**, as assistant at St. Peter's, Morristown, NJ.

The Rev. **Beverly Huck**, as rector of The Saviour, Denville, NJ.

The Rev. **Nathaniel LeRud**, as curate at Christ Church, Ridgewood, NJ.

The Rev. **Scot McComas**, as assistant at St. Peter's, Charlotte, NC.

The Rev. **Gerard Pisani**, as rector of Trinity,

Bayonne, NJ.

The Rev. **Ellen Sloan**, as chaplain at General Theological Seminary New York, NY.

Retirements

The Rev. **David Hall**, as rector of Christ Church, Montpelier, VT; he is part-time rector of St. Thomas', 35 School St., Auburn, MA 01501-2917.

The Rev. **Ruth Strang**, as priest at St. John's, Howell, MI.

Deaths

The Rev. Canon **Joseph N. Leo, Jr.**, who served the Cathedral Church of the Nativity in Bethlehem, Pa., for a quarter century, died June 9 in Chagrin Falls, Ohio. He was 80.

Born in Philadelphia, Canon Leo attended Trinity College and Bexley Hall. He was ordained deacon and priest in 1954 and began his ministry as a curate at Church of the Good Shepherd, Philadelphia. He was a curate and then assistant at Redeemer, Bryn Mawr, Pa., 1954-62; rector of Christ Church, Upper Merion, Pa., 1962-70; rector of Trinity Cathedral, Cleveland 1970-72; and served as canon associate at the Bethlehem cathedral from 1990-2005. His life of service also included working as a marriage counselor, justice of the peace, and district court judge in Easton, Pa. He is survived by his wife Martha Leo of Easton, Pa.; his son Joseph III of Maineville, Ohio.; daughters Liz Beekman, Charlotte, N.C., Sue Parry, Girdwood, Alaska, Mary Bourisseau, Bentleyville, Pa., and Ruth Mount, Chugiak, Alaska; a sister, Janice Davidson; a brother, the Very Rev. James Leo, retired dean of Christ Church Cathedral, Cincinnati; and 12 grandchildren.

Gay Batchelder Kramer, 105, who was active in ministry at St. Mark's, Evanston, Ill., for more than half a century, died June 30 at the Park Centre care facility in Newton, Iowa.

Born in Faribault, Minn., Mrs. Kramer was a graduate of St. Mary's Hall and went on to attend Bryn Mawr, Carlton College, and graduated from Northwestern University. She was active at St. Mark's from 1935-89, serving as director of Christian education and president of the Women's Guild. She moved to Newton in 1989 and attended St. Stephen's Church, where her son, the Rev. Canon Frederick Kramer, is rector emeritus. She was preceded in death by her husband, the Rev. Paul S. Kramer, longtime professor of theology at Seabury-Western Theological Seminary. In addition to her son and his wife, she is survived by two granddaughters and three great-grandchildren.

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POSITIONS OFFERED

DIRECTOR OF SCHOOL OF THEOLOGY COMMUNICATIONS AND CHURCH RELATIONS: *School of Theology at Sewanee: The University of the South* seeks a seasoned and discerning professional to direct marketing and communications activities for the School of Theology. Reporting to the Executive Director of Marketing and Communications, and working closely with the Dean of the School of Theology, the position is part of a collaborative team of professionals providing a full range of unified communications services to the University that support overarching institutional positioning strategies, including publications, graphic design, video and electronic communications, and events.

The director will be responsible for assisting in the development of marketing and communications strategies and for implementing a comprehensive program for the School of Theology in support of recruiting and fundraising objectives.

The successful candidate will demonstrate proven skills in managing and operating a complex marketing and communications program, including the proven capacity to

- interpret market research;
- devise and implement strategies to support recruitment and fundraising initiatives;
- write clear and compelling news and features, and admission and fundraising appeals;
- display sound editorial judgment;
- work successfully with the news media; and
- utilize website content and functionality in ways that advance the School's purpose and goals.

The successful candidate must be willing to advance the School of Theology's mission. Knowledge of the culture of mainline American churches, and particularly that of the Episcopal Church, will be a major advantage in carrying out the position's responsibilities.

Qualified candidates will possess 5-7 years experience in journalism and/or public relations (experience in higher education and particularly seminary education will be a plus); superlative written and oral communications skills; the ability to work successfully in teams; flexibility and creativity under deadline pressure; outstanding organization and responsiveness to client needs; and an appreciation and commitment to theological education.

Eligibility for employment is contingent upon successful completion of a background screening.

Applications will be accepted until the position is filled, and review of applications will begin immediately. Interested candidates should submit a letter of interest, a resume, and three published writing samples to: **Teresa Smlth, Human Resources Coordinator, 735 University Ave., Sewanee, TN 37383-1000.** Submission via e-mail is preferred; please send to: tersmith@sewanee.edu. Visit: www.sewanee.edu/Personnel/jobs.

The University of the South is an Equal Opportunity Employer. Minorities and women are encouraged to apply.

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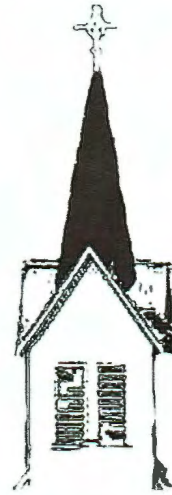
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ALL SAINTS' Sixth & Pennsylvania Ave.
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Sun 8 (Low), 10 (High); Daily Mass: Tues 12; Wed 9:30;
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Patrick Allen, assoc
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Sun Eu (BCP 1928) 10:30

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Wed EP 5:45, Mass 8

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CHURCH DIRECTORY KEY

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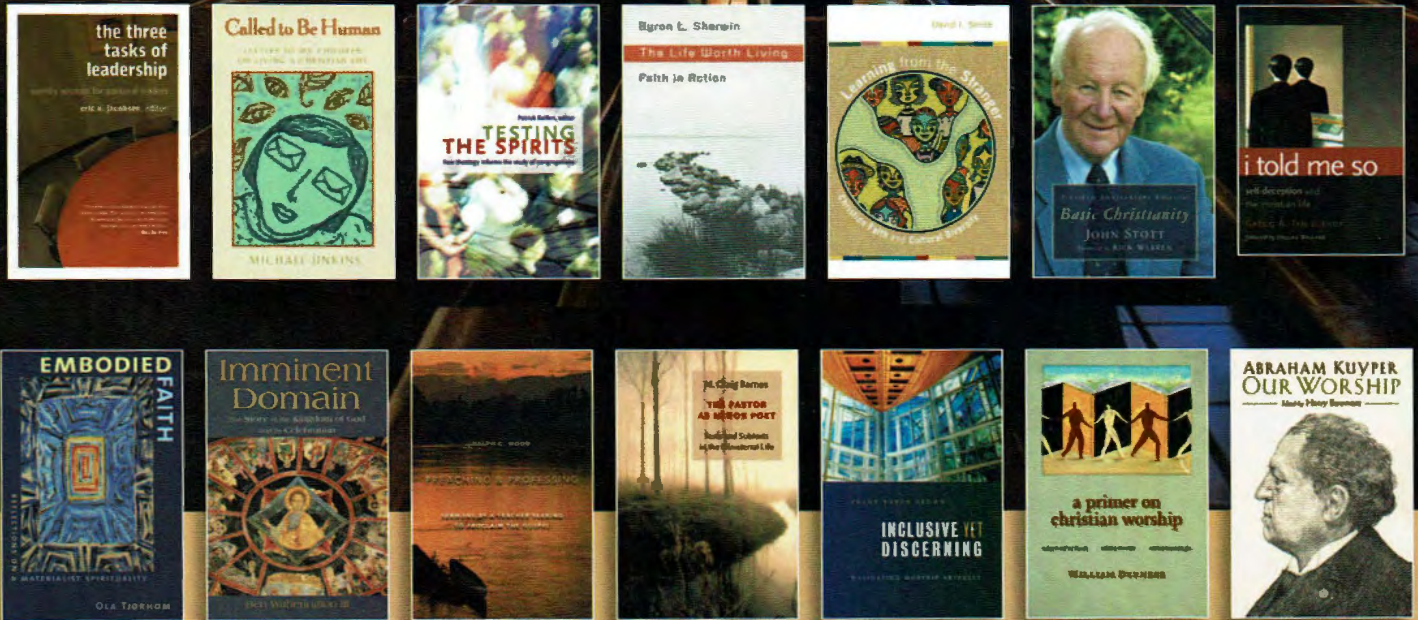
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