

060809 newSpin

News with some Spin
Edited by Bill Lewellis

*Diocesan Blog: www.diobeth.typepad.com/diobeth_newspin
(Bookmark it on your browser.)

Hijacking fears and values

“When Samuel Johnson observed in 1775 that “patriotism is the last refuge of the scoundrel,” he was disapproving of scoundrels, not patriotism. What scoundrels did, and do, is hijack people’s values in order to amass power and wealth for themselves. It is not just patriotism that is used this way, but anything that evokes people’s fear of losing what is sacred to them. Family and moral values are recent examples of values being hijacked for ignoble purposes.”

That’s the beginning of Bishop Paul’s August column that has been published in several newspapers throughout our 14 counties. Read it all at our [diocesan blog](#).

Social Ministry Grant

The Social Ministries-Jubilee Committee of the Diocese of Bethlehem is accepting proposals for its annual Social Ministry Grant. Eligible applicants include all diocesan parishes and associate ministries. The amount of the award is \$1,000. Applications must be received at Diocesan House by September 18. A brochure contains detailed information about how to apply. Download it either as a publisher or pdf file at our [diocesan blog](#). Hard copy of the brochure has been mailed to rectors and priests-in-charge as well as to members and consultants of the Social Ministries-Jubilee Committee.

Conflict in the Middle East

There is an increasing humanitarian crisis in Lebanon as a result of the fighting. Read [here](#). Donate [here](#). Download a bulletin insert [here](#) for placement in service leaflets and newsletters.

Our Children at Risk Need Undies, Socks and Sweatpants

Because there continues to be a great need for these items, the diocesan Episcopal Church Women (ECW) seeks your help and support in continuing the *Undies Project* until Diocesan Convention, October 13-14. The ECW has asked each parish to continue to collect basic necessities (**new** undershirts, briefs, undies, undershirts and socks) as well as a new item, sweatpants, for Children at Risk, sizes 2-26 years. Diocesan Convention delegates have been asked to bring from each parish one packet (two-gallon ziplock bag) and to distribute the remainder of the collection locally to agencies of their choice. For additional information: Jane Nurse, nursejo@stny.rr.com, 570-965-2085 or Dorothy Shaw, flamingo@epix.net, 570-836-2049 or Marlene Hartshorne, mhartshorne@netcarrier.com, 610-395-2583.

Summer Festival at Stevensville

The diocesan ECW will sponsor a Summer Festival/Picnic at St. Matthew’s, Stevensville, Tuesday, August 15, beginning at 10:00 a.m. All are welcome to attend. Bring lunch and

a lawn chair. Beverages and desserts will be provided by ECW board members. Bishop Paul will celebrate Eucharist. Patricia Gaukler of the Church of the Mediator, Allentown, will make a presentation on “Women of India.”

Flood Relief for St. Mark’s, New Milford

St. Mark’s, New Milford, which sustained substantial damage to its three buildings, during the recent flooding, has received or will receive help from at least the following sources. The Church of the Epiphany, Clarks Summit, \$2,000. The Cathedral Church of the Nativity, Bethlehem, \$6,400. St. Paul’s, Montrose, may have been the first parish to assist in various ways. St Paul's in Troy and St Francis of Assisi in Gulfbreeze, Florida, plan to offer relief. St. Stephen's, Wilkes-Barre, raised \$1,200 from a recent benefit Evensong sponsored by the Royal School of Church Music, King’s College and St. Stephen’s. Prince of Peace, Dallas, began last Sunday and will continue through August to take a second offering. Trinity Church, Easton, has sent a gift. Former Presiding Bishop Ed Browning and his wife, Patti, have pledged their support. (They owned a cottage nearby while Bishop Browning served as Presiding Bishop and attended St. Mark’s when they were in New Milford.) Trinity Church, Mt. Pocono, has sent more than \$300. Whom have I missed? Those wishing to help may contact the wardens, [Jim Yeich](#) or [Wendy Keklak](#).

Bishop’s School

The Fall Semester of Bishop's School will be held over eleven Saturdays, September through December. The morning class on the Book of Common Prayer will be taught by Bishop Paul. The afternoon class, on Theology, will be taught by Canon Bill Lewellis. Download detailed information at our [diocesan blog](#).

HIPAA Misunderstanding

An item in the e-newsletter of the Northeastern PA Synod of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America, referring to inaccurate reports in some congregational newsletters said that HIPAA (the Health Insurance Portability and Accountability Act of 1996) does not prevent churches from listing hospitalized members in bulletins or newsletters. HIPAA applies only “to health care providers, not to churches. While we certainly want to respect the privacy of congregational members, there are no legal restrictions on including people on the prayer list. This confusion may have started with an article in *The Lutheran* magazine that reported this information incorrectly. It was retracted in the following issue. The Lutheran Church-Missouri Synod has a helpful article [here](#).”

Peach Festival/Yard Sale in Emmaus

The Second Annual Peach Festival and Yard Sale will be held at St. Margaret's Episcopal Church, Emmaus, Saturday, August 19, from 9:00 to 2:00. More info [here](#).

My Faith My Life

Jenifer Gamber, a parishioner at the Cathedral Church of the Nativity, wrote *My Faith My Life* for teens as a confirmation preparation book. It seems that adults as well have taken to it. See more at our [diocesan blog](#) and at [Jenifer’s website](#).

Stories from Episcopal News Service

Accessible at www.episcopalchurch.org/ens

Children’s Sabbath

Download Ten Steps for a Successful Children’s Sabbath and an order form for the 2006

Children's Sabbath manual [here](#).

Walk a Mile in Their Shoes

[Walk a Mile in their Shoes](#) is an advocacy and prayer vigil project sponsored by *AWE: Children's Ministries* that invites congregations throughout the Diocese of Bethlehem to join in a Sabbath Season of Prayer and Action for Children. It begins with the observance of the National Children's Sabbath (sponsored by the Children's Defense Fund, Washington, D.C.) and the Diocesan ECW's collection of Undies for Children at Risk at our Diocesan Convention. In the months that follow Diocesan Convention, congregations throughout the Diocese are invited to unite in witness for children through prayer, education, worship and action using this Walk a Mile in their Shoes guide below for suggestions. Following this simple Walk a Mile in their Shoes guide will challenge you take off your slippers and really try on children's shoes for size. You will likely find that the services afforded them don't fit their soles or feed their souls.

Children's Choir Festival

The Cathedral will host a Children's Choir Festival, Saturday, October 21, open to all youth choirs in the diocese, third grade and above. Greg Funfgeld, director of the Bethlehem Bach Choir, will be guest clinician for the day. Registration packets and repertoire list will be sent to parishes soon. Questions: Becky Berkenstock at (610) 798-9004.

30 Good Minutes

At the website of the Chicago Sunday Evening Club, www.csec.org, under the title *30 Good Minutes*, you will find a collection of professionally produced inspirational videos and text featuring insightful religious thinkers (e.g., Joan Chittister, Tony Campolo, Alan Jones, Barbara Crafton, Phyllis Tickle, John Killinger, Lawrence Kushner, Tex Sample), stories of personal faith and reflections on spiritual topics. These programs are excellent. Check this out and let me know what you think. You'll need RealPlayer which may be downloaded at no cost. Robert Black, an Episcopalian with whom I have occasionally worked, is CEO and executive producer of *30 Good Minutes*.

If your church has broadband wireless internet access, a laptop and a projector, this is a source you may never exhaust for professionally produced and free videos of various lengths that might be used effectively in adult and teen forums. I say you'll need wireless because these seem to me to be "streaming" video, i.e., able to be played only while you are connected online to the source. But that may not be so. Mother Laura Howell of Trinity, Bethlehem, tells me she uses a set of programs that allow you to capture most streaming audio and video. The two programs that work well for her, Windows Media Recorder and Real Media Recorder, are accessible at <http://applian.com/>.

Speaking of Faith

[The Spirituality of Addiction and Recovery](#): Alcoholics Anonymous co-founder Bill Wilson once said that the program he helped create is "utter simplicity which encases a complete mystery." This program explores the spiritual aspects of addiction and recovery with Susan Cheever, who's written a biography of Bill Wilson. Also, Lakota teacher and healer, Basil Brave Heart, describes how, in his own life and in native communities, the 12 Steps find resonance in indigenous spiritual practices. [Gay Marriage. Blessed or Broken? Two Evangelical Views](#): Our culture's acrimonious debate on the morality of gay marriage has been framed in religious — largely conservative Christian — terms. We go behind the rhetoric to explore the human confusion, hopes, and fears this subject arouses. We'll name hard questions that these religious people on both sides of the issue are asking themselves, and that they would like to ask of others. [A History](#)

[of Doubt](#): Poet and historian Jennifer Michael Hecht shows how non-belief, skepticism, and doubt have paralleled and at times shaped the world's great religious and secular belief systems. She suggests that only in modern time has doubt been narrowly equated with a complete rejection of faith, or a broader sense of mystery. [Evolution and Wonder – Understanding Charles Darwin](#): A fresh and thought-provoking look at Darwin's life and ideas. He did not argue against God but against a simple understanding of the world, its beauty, its brutality, and its unfolding creation. [The Tragedy of the Believer – a Conversation with Elie Wiesel](#): Exploring the literary and religious journey that unfolded after Night, his memoir of the Holocaust that has climbed to bestseller lists five decades after its publication. Hear passages of his varied writings of the last 50 years. Explore his thoughts on God and evil, youth in Jerusalem and Berlin, and prayer after the Holocaust. [Obedience and Action](#): In over 50 years as a Benedictine nun, Joan Chittister has emerged as a powerful and at times uncomfortable voice in Roman Catholicism and in global politics. If women were ordained in the Catholic Church in our lifetime, some say, she should be the first woman bishop.

Where the responsibility falls

Religion News Service recently published [an interview with Njongonkulu Ndungane](#), Archbishop of Cape Town, South Africa. He was asked if he thought the media “pay too much attention to certain statements by certain dioceses that threaten to take their hat and leave.” He replied: “I think the responsibility falls on those people who make such irresponsible statements, who inflame issues because they want to create this particular misconception that things are falling apart – when in fact that's not the case, really.”

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[*newSpin* is intended especially for leaders in our diocesan community... clergy, elected or appointed members of diocesan commissions or committees, wardens, vestry members anyone who has leadership responsibility for a specific ministry in a congregation, e.g., evangelism, communication, social advocacy and outreach, stewardship, child advocacy, children and youth, financial administration... The goal is for all of us to have easy access to the same information. Any interested parishioner may be added to the list at their request. If your colleagues or interested parishioners are not receiving newSpin, please ask them to send their email address to blewellis@diobeth.org. Thanks.]

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Be attentive. Be intelligent. Be reasonable. Be responsible.
Be in Love. And, if necessary, change. --Bernard Lonergan