

Bishop's School in the fall

The fall semester of Bishop's School will be held at St. Peter's Church in Hazleton from 10 to 3:30 on September 15, 22; October 6, 20, 27; November 10, 17 (24 is reserved for a snow day); December 1, 8, 15. The morning class, *Spirituality of Ministry*, will be led by The Rev. Geoffrey Howson; the afternoon class will be "Diaconate/Diakonia" led by Canon Michael Piovane, The Rev. Vivian Bennett and Canon George Loeffler.

Because the focus of Bishop's School is to prepare vocational deacons and locally licensed priests, the curriculum is designed to meet the canonical requirements for those ministries. The classes rotate on a four year cycle so that someone may enter at the beginning of any semester and continue through the four year program. People who are in the ordination process may miss only one session and still receive credit for the course.

Although the focus is on preparation for ordination, anyone is welcome to register and attend all or any of the courses. A \$75 fee per course is payable with registration. To register please email or snail mail the following information to Linda Shifter, lsifter@diobeth.org, (Diocesan House, 333 Wyandotte St., Bethlehem, PA 18015): Name, address, phone, email address. We need to be able to reach you in case of inclement weather or other schedule changes. Make checks payable to: The Diocese of Bethlehem, marked for Bishop's School. Questions: Email or call Canon Jane Teter, jteter@diobeth.org, 800-358-5655 x228. If materials are required for either course, that information will be provided soon.

Safeguarding Policies

[From the Archdeacon] During the spring of 2006, hearings were held at which members of the diocese spoke to members of Diocesan Council and the Bishop's staff about the current policies for *Safeguarding God's Children*. A committee of Council, The Rev. Canon Calvin C. Adams, now its vice-chair, and Jan Charney, has revised the policies and corrected that revision with comments made by other members of Council and members of the Bishop's staff including The Rev. Debra J. Kissinger, missionary to children and child advocate. The present draft is to be discussed by Council at its meeting on June 14. As Council asked, the draft revision has been placed on our website, www.diobeth.org.

Cathedral gives it all away

The Easter offering at the Cathedral Church of the Nativity, Bethlehem, came to some \$12,500. It will go to provide a well and pumping station at the Kajo Keji diocesan center in Romogi. The well will also serve the needs of the college when it relocates as well as the surrounding communities. The Cathedral has had an eight-year tradition of giving it all away at Easter and Christmas.

Bikes to Kajo Keji

The Church of the Mediator, Allentown, raised about \$2,000 from their Easter plate offering for bikes for Kajo Keji. They are hoping this will buy 21 bikes for a clergy person, Mother's Union representative and an educator in each archdeaconry.

St. Anne's, Trexlertown, seeks Administrative Assistant

The administrative assistant provides administrative support to the rector, priest associate, vestry, and parish team leaders. The position is approximately 30 hours a week, five six-hour days, Monday through Friday. For an application form and full description of the position, salary, and benefits please contact the parish office at 610-398-3321 or email administrator@stannesepiscopal.net.

At Kirby House

ECW Annual Meeting

"You continue to astound us with your breadth and depth of care for children here and in Kajo Keji," Bishop Paul told some 85 women at the annual meeting of our diocesan Episcopal Church Women, May 9 at Kirby House.

In the photo to the right, with the Bishop are ECW board members and program leaders: Martha Fox, Dorothy Shaw, Catherine Jeffery, Carole Guzzi, Carol Cottrell, Marlene Hartshorne, Jean Montgomery, Jane Nurse, Margot Bradbury and Laura Chegwiddden.

During the morning Bishop Paul spoke about *The Other Women of the Bible: Stories I Never Saw in the Movies – but Should Have*.

During the afternoon, he recruited the only two other men attending the event to take part along with him in an interactive reading with the women of the *Song of Songs*. At natural breaks in the text, he presented interpretations and reflections on that book, "unique among the sacred books of Judaism, Christianity and Islam because it is the only book where a woman speaks in her own voice, rather than having her words reported by a narrator, the only book to report anything of the inner life of a woman in love."

Jubilate

Hymnody for Pentecost 2007 (May 27 to November 25), published by the Diocese of Bethlehem for our diocesan community and for free distribution to the world, may be downloaded at our newSpin blog as an Acrobat or MSWord file. Go to the May archives. *Jubilate* is a service of our Liturgy and Music Commission, specifically Canon Cliff Carr who has been doing this for more than 20 years.

Golf with Brigid

St. Brigid's, Nazareth, is hosting its annual Golf Outing, June 16, at the Cherry Valley Golf Course in Stroudsburg. The proceeds will go toward the church's building and maintenance fund and community outreach programs. The Outing includes a buffet breakfast, a round of golf (with golf carts), a luncheon buffet and an awards ceremony. Golfers could win one of these Hole-in-One prizes: \$10,000, a Set of Hogan Irons, a Bose Wave Radio/CD or a Dell Computer System. Contests include a 50/50 drawing, Closest to Pin, Longest Drive, Straightest Drive, Pot O' Gold, Casino Hole, the Most Honest Foursome and First, Second and Third Place Winners. Prizes include drivers, fairway woods, putters, golf apparel, greens fees, gift certificates for golfing and restaurants and much more. Each golfer will receive a coupon for a free custom made Magique Rescue Wood valued at \$125.

Please contact Jack Jones at 610-759-7016 or the church office at 610-746-3910 for information and entry forms.

How \$43,000 became \$2 million in one year

Since the Weed and Seed Job Counselor program began about a year ago at Grace, Allentown, the director has placed 100 people from the designated Weed and Seed area of Allentown in the job market. The economic benefit to Allentown is approximately \$2 million in salaries for people who did not have jobs a year ago. The investment for this part of the program from the U.S. Justice Department was approximately \$43,000.

250 show up for Health Fair

About 250 people from the neighborhood showed up to get free health tests and information during a Saturday Health Fair hosted last month by Grace Church, Allentown.



Resignation of rector

[From Bishop Paul] Sisters and Brothers, I have accepted with regret the resignation of Father Frank Sefchick as rector at St. Martin's in Mountaintop. Father Frank resigned for personal reasons having to do with health. I know many, many of you join me in gratitude for the 12 years Father Frank devoted to St. Martin's. In addition to building the parish, he was instrumental in the expansion of the plant and developing model outreach ministries. He has been a caring pastor, a good colleague, and a friend to many. His devotion to the Franciscan mode of discipleship is an example to many. Please keep Father Frank and the people of St. Martin's in your prayers as they make their journeys of transition and healing. I met with the vestry this week and will return to meet with the parish in assessing their path, and would be especially glad of your prayers. Faithfully, +Paul

St. Stephen's, Wilkes-Barre to host Choir of Men and Boys of Winchester Cathedral, England

St. Stephen's will be one of a handful of hosts for a concert tour this fall by the Choir of Men and Boys of Winchester Cathedral in England, Sunday, October 28, at 4:00. Contact Mark Laubach, 570-825-6653, at the Music Office of St. Stephen's.

Following Jesus in a Culture of Fear

This new book by Scott Bader-Saye will be released June 1. A member of the Church of the Epiphany, Clarks Summit, Scott is a professor of theology at the University of Scranton and a member of our diocesan evangelism commission.

Through politics, marketing, news programming, and popular culture we are taught to fear, often in ways that profit others. But what does all this fear do to our moral lives as it forms (or deforms) our character and our judgment? Drawing on Christian scripture and tradition, *Following Jesus in a Culture of Fear* articulates a response to fear that resists an ethic of security in favor of fostering an ethic of risk. The Christian virtues of hospitality, peacefulness, and generosity are presented as the way to defeat

the counter-virtues of suspicion, preemption, and control. More info is available at www.amazon.com. Search for Scott Bader-Saye or the title of the book.

Episcopal Church Caps

Paul R. Doelp, a parishioner at Christ Church, Reading, and a cap (baseball type) collector, unable to purchase a cap with the Episcopal Church shield, decided to make his own (with the help of an embroidery company). He has them in red, blue, white and black, much like the colors in the shield. They are 100% cotton, adjustable to fit all sizes, and can be personalized with the name of any church, above the shield or on the back of the cap. They cost between \$15 and \$18. For a brochure/order form, send email to pdchurchclothing@cs.com or regular mail to PRD Church Clothing, 101 Wessex Court, Reading, PA 19606.

Healing Mission in Hamlin

Monday and Tuesday, June 18-19, at St. John's Church, Hamlin. A potluck supper will be held at 6:00 p.m.. The mission will begin at 7:00. All are welcome.

Led by The Rev. Canon Evangelist Gary Dalmasso and his wife Judith, the mission will focus on healing. Father Gary and Judith are the founders of *Renewal in Christ Ministries*, an ecumenical ministry based in East Moline, Illinois. RICM is a powerful yet gentle ministry used by God as an instrument for teaching, healing, prayer, and renewal in the Church.

The Delmasos have been actively involved in renewal in the church since 1976. Judith recently completed her Master's degree at Nashotah House Seminary and hopes to be ordained a deacon this summer. They both now work full-time in this faith ministry, leading renewal weekends, missions, and conferences throughout the world.

"We are honored to have them come to our little corner of the world," said a spokesperson for St. John's. "Treat yourself to one or both of these wonderful evenings and bring your adult family and friends. It is open to all faiths." A free will offering will be taken. St. John's is located on Route 191, south of Hamlin Corners in Wayne County. For more information: Bobbie Hraba, 570-698-7321.

The newSpin blog: www.diobeth.typepad.com/diobeth_newspin

A REPORT TO BISHOP PAUL BY CHAPLAIN MAJOR IRA HOUCK

Tears of humanity mingle with the blood of the Savior

[Military chaplains have been in the news. A Newsweek cover story, May 7, focused on "how chaplains and soldiers struggle to keep faith under fire." The Episcopal Life cover story last month, "In Harm's Way," focused on "two of 55 Episcopal chaplains who since 2001 have stood alongside men and women in the armed services in Bosnia, Kuwait, Afghanistan and Iraq." The Diocesan Life feature here is a slightly edited report from Chaplain Major Ira Houck, a priest of the Diocese of Bethlehem, to Bishop Paul.]

January 15, 2007

My dear Bishop Paul:

This is my annual report as a priest in your diocese. I faithfully serve as a priest in the Episcopal Church ensuring the religious needs of soldiers and their families on active duty. Thank you for the privilege and honor to serve God and this great nation as an Army Chaplain for another year.

The Houck family moved to Hawaii on 30 June 2006, or should I say partially moved. I am carrying on God's work here as a geographic bachelor in Hawaii until my beloved Margaret completes her contract as a professor at the University of South Carolina. Elizabeth, our eldest, was married October 21 in Columbia, SC, at the Cathedral Chapel. Our son, Cory, is a junior at VMI and Mary is a freshman at USC. Each member of the family has work to do in places of separate callings. God has hold of our hearts and minds while separated in service. It is not easy, but manageable. Our family remains steady and strong in the Lord.

Earlier in '06 I was in Iraq and Afghanistan conducting a very special mission for the Coalition Forces Land Combatant Commander and his Provost Marshall assessing religious support in detainee operations. I visited 17 different camps and met the young Americans in uniform guarding the facilities. A novel could be written about the experience, but one story will have to suffice.

A young MP approached me at a facility in Northern Iraq. He recently finished his night duty and asks if I am the Episcopal Chaplain he heard was visiting the facility. This is my third night in the remote and isolated location. It is a walled fortress and a very lonely place. It is Easter Monday and he asks me to perform an Easter service. I agree and encouraged him to invite anyone who can attend the next morning to come and celebrate God's presence with us at 0700. We hold Holy Communion in the Commander's Briefing Room, the only quiet and somewhat spacious place in the entire facility.

Is there ever a time when Holy Communion is an ordinary experience? This certainly was not an ordinary assembly. On this day, in this remote place, in the midst of enemies, young American soldiers assemble for worship. They are young, so young and brave. They are remotely located in a hostile place. They have one another and they guard dangerous men held as detainees not prisoners of war. They must endure rugged conditions, learn foreign cultures, listen to threats from Islamic militants and endure a range of extreme temperatures in a closed facility

built by the Russians in 1970 as a frontier post.

This facility looks like an old Crusader castle. It is complete with a large wooden entry, a thick oak gate. It is a fortress rising from granite stone with four looming circular towers. Three thousand detainees are held by our forces in this place. The detainees are hostile toward their caretakers and guards. This is difficult and dangerous duty, especially for young American men and women, ages 19-24 years old. I meet people who were in high school last year at this time. I meet people from my home town and one with my own last name (no direct relationship).

On this particular Easter Monday, I follow the lectionary and we worship the Risen Lord in a prison castle. Thirteen young guards from the Navy, the Army and the Air Force assemble around me. We stand beside a large wooden table in the Commander's office for the Ministry of the Word. It is a dark, dreary dawn. It is raining sleet and ice but the light of Easter Monday is approaching. The windows are open. The icy rain taps on the cement yard outside the office. Rain drops slap and tap the window pane. We are silent. They remove their weapons and combat gear. They rest awhile.

An eerie dawn struggles to illuminate and dispel the surrounding darkness. A solitary candle shines to slice the darkness. For this assembly it is Easter Morning. This service will be their Easter Communion. We introduce ourselves. I meet one young man, 19 years old. I do not remember where he called home, but he told me that his father was an Episcopal priest and that he had been an acolyte until joining the Army. He said, "Now, I stand with angels and guard dangerous men." I think of my own son and come back to this soldier believing that the father and mother of each one of these soldiers love them dearly and pray earnestly for their safety. Like so many other deployed chaplains, I am here to remind them of this love and even greater love of our heavenly Father.

Reminding the group that their families and churches hold them in prayer, we circle the table and begin the Eucharistic liturgy. I call upon the image of a family gathering around the dinner table and tell them that now God spreads out His feast for them. We come as honored guests to the feast of the Risen Lord. I do not remember everything that was said, but I remember making a connection when the image emerged of the family gathered around the table at Easter.

After exchanging the Peace, we begin the celebration of Holy Communion. They respond with spirited enthusiasm. Our hearts make melody without musical accompaniment in the joy of the Lord. The Eucharistic prayers come alive for me in this moment. It is unlike any other service I have ever known. The young men shine with the Light of the Risen One in this dreary, remote Russian castle five miles from Iran in the mountains of Iraq. Just a few feet away, enemies detained in war stand outside and listen to our melodies of prayer. I think of the 23rd Psalm, "Thou spreadest a table before me in the presence of mine enemies..." The prayers rise in

climax with the "Amen." The echoing sounds of the Great Amen pierce the quiet dawn.

The young Soldiers move toward me to receive the bread and wine brought to them in my portable chaplain's kit, delivered by Army helicopter pilots. God brings us His Word in many ways. This is no ordinary gathering of Christians on Easter. It is a feast of compassion and assurance. We gather in prayer in the midst of hostility and fear.

The soldiers form a semi-circle and open their hands to receive the bread. "Take and eat this..." I say and look into their eyes and they look back into mine. After the bread, I serve wine from a common stainless steel chalice. One can taste the cold steel when drinking from the cup but no one really objects. Soldiers learn to adapt. It is all we have and we are thankful for it.

"Take and drink this in remembrance that Christ died for thee..." the Blood of Christ is poured out for us in this place. One young man takes the cup. His eyes swell with tears and these tears run down the cheeks of his face and drop into the chalice as he drinks. I am struck with the image. It is a moment of personal revelation. This soldier's tears and the chalice filled with wine reveal the presence of Christ in the sacrament. Tears of humanity mingle with the blood of the Savior. The Incarnation leaps out at me. I am struck with the power of the moment. Through the eyes of faith I can see God mingling his blood with the cries of humanity. "Take this cup and drink in remembrance," this is the wine of a sacred union of God and man. I can hear an old folk song, "God and man at table have sat down."

I will always carry this image with me and I will tell the story of this event over and over again. It is the Spirit of Christ speaking to the church saying, "Go tell it on the mountain that Jesus Christ is Lord." God calls to the church in the world where Christ stands and waits for his church to join him in the world of men and women. Wherever we go, Christ is already there for us to join him in the mission.

I returned from Iraq and Afghanistan in May 2006. I left South Carolina for duty in Hawaii in June, and now serve as Brigade Chaplain for Intelligence Security Command (INSCOM). I have the responsibility to serve soldiers, DA civilians, sailors and marines in a secure top secret area. I have four battalions with unit ministry teams (UMT) in Japan, Hawaii, Texas and Arizona. I travel around the Pacific Rim to supervise these UMTs.

Bishop George Packard visited Hawaii in January and presented a terrific program of spiritual renewal for nine priests serving under his care in the Armed Forces. I am most grateful for our bishop's care and for his pastoral leadership among us. It is essential in these hard days to have the church come to us with love and understanding.

While in training with Bishop George, I learned of a fascinating historic connection with my current duty position and my posting once held at the Cathedral



Chaplain Ira C Houck, III

Church of Bethlehem. This connection pertains to the Reverend Kenneth Bray, an Episcopal priest. On September 15, 1929, Father Bray was appointed the assistant rector of the Cathedral Church of the Nativity in Bethlehem. His duties included supervision of the parish house and its activities and the role of pastor of St. Mary's Chapel.

One Hundred Years of Nativity, a history of the Bethlehem church, records that Fr. Bray's tendencies delighted all those associated with the church. It was his habit to contribute generously of both his time and money in undertaking projects which lay outside the strict performance of his clerical duties. He freely involved himself in the renovation of the church's Sayre Hall and minutes of the vestry meeting record, "Father Bray completed the work largely at his own expense, saving the parish several hundred dollars." During his two-year stay in Bethlehem he also helped coach the football team at Liberty High School. The school's yearbook for 1931 contains a picture of Father Bray in a parka, knee-length football pants and a baseball cap.

He was a man of faith and action. He left Bethlehem and came to Hawaii to teach, mentor and coach at the famous Iolani School in Honolulu, the place where Bishop Packard held his training conference in 2007. A large bronze statue stands on the school court yard as a memorial to the man who helped shape a generation of leaders. This same man once served in our diocese. It was a short stay, but highly significant. Father Bray is someone I am reading about in the book, *The Ol' Man*, by Don Johnson and Ronald Oba. This was a surprise to find such connection between Hawaii and Bethlehem through one priest, Father Bray.

I want to continue this honorable and priestly service to our soldiers for as long as possible. My current obligation carries me to 2010, but I can be extended if the needs of the Army require it. I am capable and fit so I hope to finish the race set before me.

Sincerely,

Chaplain Ira Houck