

Compassionate Generosity marked ministry in our diocesan community during 2005

By Bill Lewellis

“Although it was by no means our intended theme for this year of our common life,” Bishop Paul said at the beginning of his address to the 2005 Convention of the Diocese of Bethlehem, “it has turned out that what the Diocese of Bethlehem has been about this year is compassionate generosity.

The following are among many acts of care, mission, generosity and sweat equity.

Ten Lehigh Valley parishes provided \$50,000, labor, food and prayer to build a Habitat for Humanity house in Bethlehem for a woman and her three daughters

Bishop Paul and Diana went on a week-long mission trip to Kajo Keji. The Bishop ordained 37 Africans. He and Diana addressed 17 gatherings. At home, they made eight presentations on their visit. “It was a watershed in our own experience,” Bishop Paul said. “Some things I had held near to my heart, especially the establishment of a full-service conference center, simply cannot happen while the need of our companion diocese is so appallingly great... What lies ahead is the question

of what major effort we can undertake together. We have begun to explore that. Council hopes to have a plan before you in the spring.

Epiphany, Clarks Summit, sent a mission team to Uganda and a youth mission group to Belize.

Our diocesan Episcopal Church Women raised \$13,790 by selling Sudanese crafts to support the work of the Kajo Keji Mother’s Union with orphans and widows in addition to their continuing efforts to support needy children in Pennsylvania.

Trinity Church, Bethlehem, sent Nick Knisely and Ned Wallace on a mission to Swaziland.

In October, diocesan children’s ministries and the ECW launched *Cruising to Equity*, an easy-to-use advocacy action and prayer project to help parishes make a difference in



Bishop Paul ordained 34 deacons and three priests for the Diocese of Kajo Keji during a mission visit he and Diana made in early January. “It was a watershed in our own experience,” he said.

the lives of at-risk children in their communities. Some 20 congregations were on the boat by the end of the year.

We responded to one domestic and two foreign disasters – at levels of generosity unparalleled in our history.

Episcopal Relief and Development reported that individuals and parishes of our diocese gave more than \$80,000 for tsunami relief.

Generosity throughout our diocesan community to support the people on the Gulf Coast as they coped with the devastation of hurricanes Katrina and Rita was unprecedented: \$80,000 from Epiphany, Glenburn; \$7,000 from St. Stephen’s, Whitehall; more than \$15,000 from Grace, Kingston; some \$20,000 from the Cathedral; \$5,000 cash plus 14 floating pumps valued at \$24,000 from Barebo, Inc., through Charlie Barebo, parishioner at St. Anne’s, Trexlertown and chair of the diocesan Planned Giving Ministry.

The Cathedral Church of the Nativity once again gave away their entire Christmas (since 1999) and Easter offerings (since 2001). The total, over the years, has reached \$100,000. During those years, Cathedral has given more than \$340,000 away to



Jesus over the Waters in New Orleans (From www.dailyoffice.org)

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support outreach projects and ministries beyond its walls, near and far.

Support for the people of our partner Diocese of Kajo Keji in southern Sudan as they rebuild their church and their country continued in many ways. Since late 2002, we have given more than \$300,000.

Then there was so much more during 2005 that defies categorization. Here's a sampling.

Youth ministry, after some difficult years, was reborn and reshaped. Ten young people and five adults attended the week-long *Episcopal Youth Event* in Kentucky, a celebration to inspire deeper faith in Jesus Christ and a renewed commitment to mission and ministry. *Happening* and *Christophany* were revitalized with new emphases on worship and discipleship. A diocesan Youth Council began to emerge.

Our clergy roster reached a point of just about 50% women.

St. Peter's, Tunkhannock, after having suffered a devastating flood in the fall of 2004, stayed in mission

mode, occupying a store front in a strip mall.

Irish eyes smiled on St. Brigid's, Nazareth, as the congregation was admitted to full parish status. A handful of people, led by Canon Jane Teter, began to worship together ten years ago in a bank basement. Bishop Walton and Mrs. Louie Empey joined us to celebrate the event.

Bishop Paul named Jack Moulton of St. Paul's, Montrose, diocesan coordinator of Episcopal Relief and Development.

The Very Rev. William B. Lane retired as dean and rector of the Cathedral Church of the Nativity, Bethlehem. The Cathedral vestry called the Ven. Richard I. Cluett as interim dean and rector.

The Ven. Howard Stringfellow began his ministry as archdeacon for the Diocese of Bethlehem.

The *End of Day* after-school outreach ministry at St. Paul's, Montrose, received a \$16,000 grant from the United Thank Offering "to hire a Program Supervisor to develop and expand funding to open new sites."



The annual Bishop's Day for Youth took on a new, er, face this year as many became clowns or even superheroes through the magic of paint and costume.

The following clergy died: Kenneth Umbehocker, Paul Jenkins, John Harvard, Robert S. Fry, Sr., Charles Shreve *et alibi aliorum plurimorum...*

The following lay leaders died: Bill and Meg Van Velsor, George Bonekemper, Fred Avila, Kay Snyder. *Et alibi aliorum plurimorum...*

St. Stephen's, Wilkes-Barre, joined King's College in hosting the annual King's College Summer Choir Training Course of the Royal School of Church Music in America.

Grace Church, Allentown, partnered with the City of Allentown to house a Weed and Seed Employment Counselor program... in addition to its ongoing ministry through AIDS Outreach, Grace Montessori School and Grace Community Foundation.

Grace Montessori School welcomed 100 students in its new, purpose-built, state-of-the-art \$1.3 million City Center site. It has become a full member of the American Montessori Society and is one of fewer than 40 certified Montessori teacher-training sites in the U.S. The school provided scholarships to 26 of its 100 students whose names include Isaiah, Lucy,



Buttons from Bethlehem, created and distributed at the Episcopal Youth

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"It is time to her the vices of African women," Diana Marshall said as she laid the foundation stone of the Mothers' Union Training Center in Kajo Keji, southern Sudan. Mrs. Marshall observed that the church in the United States is grateful to have heard the wisdom of African men for some time now, but that the African witness will be fully present in Anglicanism when women's wisdom is celebrated and revered by all.

Chloe, Noah, Jalen, Sanskriti, Hani, Neha, Elian, Bhavna, Mustafa, Zia, Juan Pablo and Magdalena. Its new director, Debika Demazumder, is a Hindu woman whose mother was trained as a teacher by Maria Montessori.

St. Gabriel's, Douglassville, completed a \$1.5 million expansion, a 12,000 square foot Parish Life Center addition to their existing structure. It was the final piece of a three-phased plan. The first phase included renovation of the church worship space, completed in 2003. The second phase included the realization of a 30-year-old dream to build a community housing facility for seniors, the Villa at Morlatton, a privately-owned 108-unit apartment building on land owned by the parish. It opened in June 2005.

Canon Charles H. Morris retired after ten years as rector of Trinity Church, Pottsville.

Trinity Center for Children, Pottsville, received accreditation from the National Association for the Education of Young Children, the first program in Schuylkill County to achieve this status.

The Cathedral dean and vestry named Father Joe Leo canon associate at the Cathedral. Bishop Paul named Father Michael Piovane and Deacon George Loeffler canons of the diocese.

The Grace, Kingston, choir and friends recorded a CD and sold it to benefit the people of Kajo Keji.

The Church of the Good Shepherd and St. John the Evangelist, Milford, signed a loan agreement for \$200,000 toward the purchase of a \$350,000 Schantz Pipe Organ.

The Psalm (42) speaks of a thirst for God that dominates our being Few people in my experience have let go of those systems of defense and denial that keep us looking buttoned up, cool and secure, not particularly needing God. We get used to living without acknowledging our thirst for God. John was both too smart and too plain for that. He knew he craved God, and wasn't lazy about seeking God. Even in his last days, I never came away from a conversation with John without being enriched by what his mind and heart were doing in tandem. If ever there were a case of faith seeking understanding and relationship, it was his.

Bishop Paul Marshall, at the Funeral of Father John Harvard, March 30, 2005, St. Gabriel's, Douglassville:

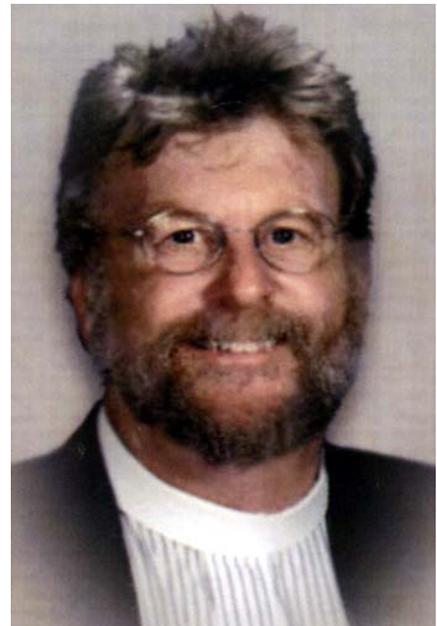
The Episcopal Church awarded grants to three Jubilee Ministry Centers in our diocese: Trinity, Bethlehem (\$2,000) for Trinity Soup Kitchen; Grace, Allentown (\$2,000) for Downtown Ministries AIDS Outreach Project; and New Bethany Ministries, Bethlehem (\$1,500) for an expanded hunger ministry program.

Bruce Bengtson celebrated his 50th anniversary as the distinguished organist at Christ Church, Reading.

The vestry of St. Gabriel's, Douglassville, approved the position of pastoral care missionary as a lay leadership position. Canon Cal Adams, rector, with vestry approval, appointed Sally Bosler to that position.

St. Elizabeth's, Schnecksville, closed on a barn and two acres of land on Route 309, north of their current storefront location, to renovate as their new church home.

St. Martin in the Fields, Mountaintop, extended their facilities to homeless men of Luzerne County. For the past five years, they have fed and sheltered as many as 40 men each day for one or two weeks at a time.



*The Rev. Dr. John Tyler Harvard
June 6, 1947 – March 27, 2005*

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It is fundamental to our personal survival and to the well-being of the parishes we serve that we maintain renew and celebrate our corporate and personal vision of how we follow Jesus Christ. One teacher recommends that twice a year we force ourselves to preach an "I have a dream" kind of sermon so that everybody is clear about what motivates and guides us – starting with ourselves. After all, it is the open statement of the truth that we are about, St. Paul says, that commends us to the conscience of others.



From the sermon of Bishop Paul Marshall at the Chrism Mass, 2005, St. Stephen's Pro-Cathedral, Wilkes-Barre

Priests and deacons of the diocese reaffirm their ordination vows during the Chrism Mass, Maundy Thursday morning, renewing their commitment to service and receiving the prayers and support of the people of God. Each clergy person was asked by Bishop Paul: "Do you here, in the presence of Christ and his Church, renew your commitment to your ministry under the pastoral direction of your bishop, reaffirm your promise to give yourself to prayer and study, reaffirm your promise so to minister the Word of God and the Sacraments of the New Covenant that the reconciling love of Christ may be known and received, reaffirm your promise to be a faithful servant of all those committed to your care, patterning your life in accordance with the teachings

The local branch of the NAACP gave St. Stephen's Interfaith Clinic, Wilkes-Barre, a community service award for the free medical services the clinic provides to uninsured and underinsured people.

Bishop Paul wrote the lead article for the Fall 2005 issue of *Anglican Theological Review*. An important collection of essays on the Windsor Report, the issue has been called a "must read" on the way to General Convention 2006 in June.

The annual *Kristallnacht* observance, jointly hosted in Reading by Christ Episcopal Church, Trinity Lutheran Church and three synagogues, was featured in an *Episcopal Life* cover story on ministries that draw Lutherans and Episcopalians into common mission.

Mother Laura Howell was named Foole to the Bishop and the Diocese.

Barbara Crafton spoke at the ECW annual meeting at Kirby House. "Don't make your prayer a job," she cautioned some 125 attendees. "It's a gift. Don't make it a grim ticket you must buy in order to gain admittance to the divine love – you're already there." Bishop Paul presided and preached at the Eucharist. "I have been deeply touched by being in contact with our diocesan Episcopal Church Women," he said. "There are some theologians I can't understand, but what I can understand is women collecting school supplies for poor children in Pennsylvania and collecting money for our starving sisters and brother in Kajo Keji. I am grateful to you for the part you play in my conversion."

Having overcome a major crisis a few years ago, New Bethany Ministries, Bethlehem, celebrated 20 years of service to poor, homeless, hungry and marginalized people.

Diocesan Convention approved a resolution on wide-ranging evangelism ministry: "This convention reaffirms the central responsibility of every congregation to nurture and equip the followers of Jesus Christ to proclaim in word and deed the Gospel through hospitality and welcome into our parishes and witness to our communities."

And so much more, perhaps even more noteworthy.... I'm sure I missed a lot. This, however, need not be the end. If you have noticed that I missed something, please provide a short paragraph and I will be sure to include it in the next draft. Please do let me know. Thanks.

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