WELCOME TO
THE DIOCESE OF BETHLEHEM

FOR HE DOES NOT DESPISE NOR ABHOR
THE POOR IN THEIR POVERTY:

BUT WHEN THEY CRY TO HIM
HE HEARS THEM. ~PSALM 22:23

LENT 2009

The Bethlehem Tailors’ Training Center in Kajo Keji

The Mothers’ Union site in Kajo Keji in southern Sudan includes huts and sheds for storing lulu nuts for soap making, the Bethlehem Tailors’ Training Center (BTTC), a few huts for dormitories, an old latrine and a very large mango tree. The women have also begun to collect and sell honey at this site. Because there is no electricity, work such as fancy embroidery cannot be done.

Plants for the compound, mostly undeveloped except for the BTTC, include an adult literacy school, a guest house, a poultry farm, improved latrines and more and larger dormitories. Because the women who are trained often come from beyond walking distance and their training may last several weeks or months, the women (and their children) need temporary housing. Their dream of a poultry farm requires the obvious chickens and a fence to keep them close. The guest house will supply them with income of a farming country.

Women (and their children) need temporary housing. Their dream of a poultry farm requires the obvious chickens and a fence to keep them close. The guest house will supply them with income of a poultry farm. When women have been transferred to Sudan so that items can be purchased locally. Solar powered radios will be brought in from the United States in mid February by Kajo Keji’s next Bethlehem visitors: Trip Trepagnier, chair of the World Mission Committee, and The Rev. Daniel Gunn, rector of St. Stephen’s Church, Wilkes-Barre, and chair of the Northwestern PA portion of the New Hope Campaign.

The final count of gifts is: 15 Solar Lanterns, 118 Five-Gallon Water Jugs, 30 Radios, 19 Bikes, 164 Yards of Fabric, 120 Laying Hens, 26 Sewing Machines, 10 Tables, 20 Soccer Balls, 14 Jump Ropes, 20 Plastic Chairs, and 12 Basketballs. Thank you all for your support.

The World Mission Committee intends to continue this project next year with new items added with ongoing advice from our friends in Kajo Keji.

Thanks to the women of St. Bridgid’s Church in Nazareth and the diocesan Episcopal Church Women for their ideas and support, to Norma Meyers for her artwork and vision for the project, to Jenifer Gamber for her ongoing sage advice, to Charlie Barebo for ‘Keeping It Gangsta,’ and to the members of the World Mission Committee.

‘12 Days’ project raises $16,600 for Kajo Keji

BY JO TREPAGNIER

Families and friends of the Diocese of Bethlehem raised $16,600 toward purchases of gifts for our friends in the Diocese of Kajo Keji. This Christmas ingathering (based on the song The 12 Days of Christmas) allowed 150 U.S. families to buy items for Sudanese primary schools, the women’s training center, clergy, churches and the local college. Most of the funds have been transferred to Sudan so that items can be purchased locally. Solar powered radios will be brought in from the United States in mid-February in Kajo Keji’s next Bethlehem visitors: Trip Trepagnier, chair of the World Mission Committee, and The Rev. Daniel Gunn, rector of St. Stephen’s Church, Wilkes-Barre, and chair of the Northwestern PA portion of the New Hope Campaign.

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Finding room for the homeless in Bethlehem. See page A5.

Please keep Bishop Paul in your prayers

Bishop Paul underwent open-heart surgery on January 22 as part of his treatment for cardio-pulmonary issues. He remained in the coronary intensive care unit for four days, and was discharged from the hospital on February 2 to continue his recuperation at home. He has been advised by his doctors to discontinue diocesan activities until May 1. Those who want to express their wishes and be remembered to Bishop Paul and Diana may send cards to their home at 561 Fine Top Trail, Bethlehem, PA 18017.

NewSpin, the e-newsletter, is sent weekly (almost) to a large diocesan email addresses. It’s a jog, uploaded also to the newSpin blog. If you want your address added to the newSpin e-newsletter list, tell Bill Lewellis, blevellis@diobeth.org.

It’s a sprint.

Slow and steady ... The newSpin blog, www.diobeth.typepad.com. It’s a slow and steady walk during which you may catch up with the sprinters and the joggers.

INSIDE DIOCESAN LIFE

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Five deacons ordained for our
diocesan community [A8]

INSIDE EPISCOPAL LIFE

Anglican Communion Issues likely
to come up at General Convention
[1] ... Defining a buzzword: What do folks mean by the “emergent” church? [4] ... Fort Worth holds its reorganizing convention [3] ... Two contributors explain their attraction to the “virtual” church on the Internet [6] ... Church entities go green through the use of geothermal projects [15].
Save the world ... in an ordinary way

BY BISHOP PAUL V. MARSHALL

February 2005

Against the grain

I like Lent. I like slowing down, focusing, simplifying, reading and praying more while talking less. Lent never fails to bring me back questions, some acutely painful, that tune my soul for Easter’s shout of new reality.

Writing, preaching, or teaching about Lent; however, is a bigger task. Nothing is more damaging to the soul than a too intense concern with other people’s sins or even with their apparent need for what we tactfully call “good works.” To speak about what someone else should do in Lent may lead to forgetting that one is also from the dust and is most certainly headed back that way. We need to focus on the battle fought in one’s own soul. For me that means asking how I am doing with Jesus’ summary of the law (Matthew 22: 36-40). To me what that gets me in the way of loving God and loving my neighbor as myself?

Then there is the question of responsibility. In a culture that emphasizes rights and self-serving reasons and denials more than responsibilities, we might easily avoid looking hard at our motives and behavior. Many of us can point to how we have been deeply wounded or conditioned by circumstances not of our making. So how can any of this be my fault?

For all of us, life is made up of paradoxes. Chief among these is the reality that while each of us is the result of our parents’ genes and the upbringing they and others gave us, we make what of that background is our responsibility. There is a space between stimulus and response, Stephen Covey has said, where we can reinvent ourselves and our world by the choices we make. Each of us is beset by a different set of opportunities, challenges and temptations. It is not surprising that in the ashes I find it written that I may do certain very good deeds because they interest me. I may do some because I was taught to do them as a child. Some are downright fun; some even scratch an inner itch. Beyond that, I may find that I do not commit some sins because they do not interest me very much or because they have ceased to interest me. That is not a picture of virtue, nor is it license to raise an eyebrow at those who are drawn to those sins I do not commit or are not drawn to those good works I sometimes practice.

Lent builds virtue in the resistance to those sins my background and experience do incline me to commit, even if it is not my fault that I am shaped that way. Even more, Lent builds virtue as I put on and try out those acts and attitudes that do not interest me in the least.

I find it useful in Lent to do the hard work of exploring new territory, cultivating virtue against the grain. The death to self involved in leaving the bad or embracing the good draws me to Christ, in his agony and in his new life. The more I am aware of this, the more I am drawn to this 40-day journey that is perhaps why I like Lent so much in the first place.

March 2006

Accepting Consequences

There does seem to be something in the religious mind that seeks to suspend cause and effect, or at least to change the rules of the game, so to speak. In early Lent we read about Jesus being tempted. The last of those temptations is to jump off a tower to demonstrate that God really would take care of him. His response: you should not tempt the Lord your God. We often do, individually and corporately, tempt God or tempt fate, however one puts it. Then when the axe falls, we feel that God has let us down by not protecting us from the consequences of our behavior.

Philosophers and religious thinkers know that no system breaks in quite the same way. Nothing is more convincing than a man who is tempted in every way as we are, but did not sin.” Jesus did not presume on his status with God; he did not jump off the tower. Neither ought we to take foolish chances assuming that God will rescue us from our own behavior.

February 2007

Save the World in an Ordinary Way

Some are thinking about what they will give up during this Lenten season. Some are thinking about what they will take on. Some are thinking about going on a diet and getting religious credit for it. Others find it silly and will ignore it.

The concept of six weeks of focus on what one values most – deliberately pushing distractions aside – is useful, even for those who consider themselves “spiritual but not religious,” as the political party put it.

For those thinking about a constructive springtime for their interior life, I mention a few possibilities that involve the saving of money in a very ordinary sense. From Bono and U2 to interfaith groups like Care and Oxfam, there are many other ways to tune in to the United Nations itself, we have a heightened awareness that we have the means to address poverty, inequality, and the sustainability of the earth with a modicum of effort. The United Nations Millennium Development Goals (MDG) continue to gather momentum across the planet. You can study the specific goals at www.un.org/millenniumgoals. Whatever one practices a religion or not, undertaking a few simple spiritual disciplines in solidarity with the MDGs can give each of us personal depth and increased commitment to be of use to our planet.

The tradition of fasting has many uses – you meet the rough edges of your personality quickly when you are hungry. We might well do this for the next forty days.

What if one day a week we went without food, or did so at least for 12 hours? I suspect that would heighten our sense of connection with those for whom starvation is part of daily life. In a little money we might offer to feed them. It would help reconnect us with the 1.5 billion or so people on the planet who live on less than one dollar a day.

It is a discipline that offers us the opportunity to imagine a primary identity other than “consumer of goods and services” and to see if that does not direct us toward a way of being a consumer to child of God, whose dignity is located in who one is rather than what one has.

Such abstinence helps us realize that for most of the world, shopping for entertainment or stress relief is an unknown concept. It would drive us to more meaningful ways to scratch our itches and soothe our souls. What we do not spend we might divide between savings and charity.

There are many other ways to tune up one’s soul. The common element in those I suggest here is the one-two action of pulling away from the usual comfort zone in order to connect and care for the larger world. Lent means springtime, when things grow. I wish you much growth.
Saturday, March 28, at St. Stephen’s in Wilkes-Barre
Diocesan Training for Ministry

(1) Wardens/Vestry 101
Introduction for new wardens and vestry members or a refresher for experienced vestry members to the roles, responsibilities, and realities of parish leadership. [Led by Bishop Jack Cranerberge and Archdeacon Howard Stringfield] Morning

(2) Ministry of the Lay Eucharistic Visitor
Two-part course leading to licensing by the Bishop. Morning session - Biblical, theological, and historical background. Afternoon session - resources and practical considerations (e.g., HIPAA rules, safety, and health concerns) [Led by The Rev. Edward B. Erit] Morning and Afternoon

(3) Give and Live: Stewardship as a Way of Life
Examines the theology and practice of year-round stewardship in the parish. [Led by the Rev. Robert L. Tate, rector, Church of St. Martin-in-the-Fields, Philadelphia.] Morning or Afternoon

(4) Cooking up a Parish Website
Looking for a new church? Use the internet. A parish website is a basic communication and evangelism tool. This course will help you construct an actual parish website and how to maintain it. Also ingredients on how to cook up a delicious web page for your congregation. [Led by The Rev. Canon Andy Gerns, rector of Trinity Easton, chair of the Evangelism Commission, helper at Episcopal Cafe and creator of the AndrewPlus blog] Morning

(5) ChurchPost Training
ChurchPost has been purchased for you to use by the Diocese so there is no additional cost to the parish to use this communication tool. This is a web-based communication solution which will empower you to enhance communication with one another and your congregation. [Led by Debra Gerber, one of the owners of ChurchPost] Morning or Afternoon

(6) Christian Formation: One Size Does Not Fit All — How to Choose a Curriculum for Your Congregation
Use the lens of your church's mission statement as well as your programmatic framework, as you explore the various types of curricula: lectionary-based, scope & sequence, Montessori-type and Rotation Model, including a review of other tools for evaluating and assessing materials. [Led by Sharon Ely Pearson who became Church Publishing's first Christian Formation Specialist in November 2007 after ten years as Children's Ministries and Christian Education Coordinator for the Episcopal Diocese of Connecticut.] Morning

(7) Building a Youth Ministry Program with 6-12 graders
The Rev. Demery Bader-Saye shares ideas, curriculum and resources for building a youth ministry program in your parish. Morning

Christophany Goes Green!
The DioBeth Youth Council invites 6-12 graders in the Diocese of Bethlehem (and friends) to our spring retreat, April 24-26
Watson Homestead Retreat Center
Painted Post, NY
(just past the northern tip of our diocese)
rock wall climbing * creative worship services swimming * “green” rafts * hiking * yoga resrupt your old t-shirt * mini-golf * hay rides

Nightwatch at St. John the Divine in New York City

On the last Friday of January, 64 youth and 15 adults from the Diocese of Bethlehem boarded tour buses for the short journey to the Cathedral of St. John the Divine in New York City. The event, originally scheduled as Bishop’s Day with Youth, was held without Bishop Paul, who was recovering from surgery.

The group, however, found a special way to include Bishop Paul in the weekend; they travelled with a miniature Bishop Paul figure, documenting each weekend; they travelled with a miniature Bishop Paul figure, documenting each way to include Bishop Paul in the sanctuary, a demonstration of the newly restored Great Organ, a midnight candlelight Eucharist, and a complete tour of the sanctuary (including a history of the gorgeous stained glass windows and lovely side chapels).

Members of the group who attended Bishop’s Day in 2008 appreciated seeing the sanctuary in its entirety. The north transept, having been damaged in a devastating fire in 2001, was closed to the public last year.

Ready for a more frivolous kind of fun after Nightwatch, the group lunched at Dave & Buster’s in Times Square, enjoying an Italian Feast and some arcade time.

Participating parishes: St. Gabriel’s (Douglassville), Church of the Redeemer (Sayre), Trinity Church (Easton), Cathedral Church of the Nativity (Bethlehem), St. John’s (Palmetro), St. Brigid’s (Nazareth), St. Mark’s (Moscow), Trinity Church (Bethlehem), St. Anne’s (Tredelront), Christ Church (Stroudsburg), Church of the Epiphany (Glenburn), and Holy Apostles (St. Clair).

Many thanks to our adult chaperones and to the parishes and individuals who donated food for snacks and breakfast. [Mother Demery Bader-Saye]

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special guest: Tyler Edgar, Assistant Director of Climate Change and Energy for the National Council of Churches
Information and a link to online registration will be on the DioBeth youth website, www.lifeistasty.org, beginning March 6.

www.diobeth.org Live God’s love: tell what you have seen and heard www.diobeth.org

Register online at www.diobeth.org

A day set aside for learning about opportunities and resources for ministry in congregations, and for celebrating ministries we share

8:15 – 9:15 am Registration and Hospitality
8:30 Registration
9:15 Opening Prayer and Welcome
9:45 am – 11:15 Workshops
11:30 Eucharist
12:30 Lunch
1:15 Workshops
2:45 Commissioning and Departure

(8) Ministry of the Lay Eucharistic Visitor
Continuation of Workshop #2. Afternoon

(9) Give and Live: Stewardship as a Way of Life
Same as Workshop #3. Afternoon

(10) Treasurers’ Workshop
This workshop will focus on cash receipts, cash disbursements, internal controls, and audits. Also review of the balance sheet and income and expense statements. [Led by R. Bruce Reiner and Richard Guier] Afternoon

(11) Church Post Training
Same as Workshop #5. Afternoon

(12) Christian Formation: Develop an Engaging Lesson Plan
Planning Church School lessons so that the children under your care will be active participants in learning - wanting to come back for more! [Led by Sharon Ely Pearson. See #6 above.] Afternoon

(13) Grants and New Hope: New Opportunities for Ministry

(14) Practical tips for the part-time church organist
The most important aspects of leading singing from the organ. [Led by Mark Laubach, organist/choir master for St. Stephen’s Pro-Cathedral, Wilkes-Barre, and Canon Precentor for the Diocese of Bethlehem] Afternoon
The Bethlehem Tailors’ Training Center in Kajo Keji

This is a nine-month report (January 1 through September 30, 2008) prepared by Grace Basa Tomor of the Diocese of Kajo Keji in southern Sudan.

Introduction: Bethlehem Tailors’ Training Centre started as a simple project aiming at training young women to be able to acquire skills for self sufficiency and for them to be able to contribute to the development of the Diocese of Kajo Keji. The Diocese of Bethlehem came to the aid of the women and supported them in building the centre. Currently the centre is used for morning devotions and meetings for the diocesan staff and trainees, and Accelerated Learning Program classes.

The main activities in the centre include tailoring and dress making, tie and dye, knitting, hand craft, cake and bread baking.

Achievements: Since this centre started in September 2000, it had a break of three years without training when the women concentrated on building their centre. The actual period of training has resulted in 92 women trained, 22 women standing on their own or sewing in rented places. Forty-eight women are in the course this year.

Challenges: The greatest challenge currently felt is the cost of materials and accessories for the trainees. The current annual cost per student is US $200. This cost covers training material for the student, a contribution towards the operating costs for the centre, and needed accessories, e.g., needles, sewing threads, wool threads and buttons.

Plans: The women are now planning to build a dormitory in the centre for women from around the Diocese of Kajo Keji who will be trainers in their own archdeaconries. It is felt that this will then have a greater impact. We plan to admit 50 women in the coming year.
Finding room for the homeless in Bethlehem

BY DAVE HOWELL

The recent cold weather has been a burden for all of us. For the homeless of Bethlehem, it has been a threat to their survival.

Trinity Bethlehem’s Soup Kitchen is a five-day-a-week stopping point for many of Bethlehem’s poor. Since its beginnings twenty-five years ago, it has come to provide more than a hot lunch. Social coordinator Liz Miller has become a guide to providing socialization for the often isolated clients, as well as bus passes, over-the-counter medicine, baked goods, assistance with medical issues, and housing assistance. Since last fall, social worker Marcie Lightwood has also been helping the guests. Bethlehem Bishop Paul Marshall has been providing counseling twice a week.

A crisis arose this winter when the Allentown Rescue Mission and the Sixth Street Shelter for Women were filled, a situation typical for the winter months. In town, other agencies and faith communities who provide shelter found that they were having trouble finding a place to stay indoors. One homeless client without resources was suffering from cancer, while another had an injured foot. Word went around “Bethlehem of Pa.,” the interactive Internet list of the Diocese of Bethlehem, while Trinity rector Mother Laura Howell, Deacon Liz and Marcie Lightwood began many phone calls looking for places to help.

Alternatives to permanent shelters can be useful beyond emergency weather protection. Some of the clients resist established shelters even when vacant, preferring to stay on the streets and live in their own way. They are afraid of going to the police to get the necessary admittance voucher. There is no shelter space in Bethlehem, and many do not want to leave the area. And some people are too independent to conform to imposed rules.

The Soup Kitchen has given out survival packs which include a sleeping bag, a sleeping mat, a sleeping ground, portable food, a tarp, a clothesline, and a coffee can with candles and matches to use as a heater and stove. Everything can be rolled up and carried. Volunteers have made extra beds, bringing kerosene to build fires. These measures, however, are suitable only for less severe weather. “You can’t send somebody out with a sleeping bag in super-cold weather,” said Miller.

The search for emergency assistance was discouraging. “You would be surprised at some of the agencies that turned us down,” she said. “Otherwise we will do the same scrambling next year.” Volunteers have come from the Lehigh Valley Friends Meeting (Quakers), LEPOCO, the Obama campaign, the United Way, and Grace Episcopal in Allentown.

“This problem is too large and too complex for any one agency,” said Laura Howell. “There is no single solution. If we all work together, we can solve each other’s problems for the benefit of the folks on the streets. And for the sake of our own souls. It’s also good business for the city to provide a compassionate face to the public.”

Ironically, the churches and community groups which fear that the Sands Casino, so zealously promoted by the city may increase the size of the Trinity Soup Kitchen population and add to homelessness as well, including young people attracted to the aura of casino glamour, part-time workers without benefits, and tapped-out gamblers.

Free lance writer Dave Howell is a parishioner at Trinity Bethlehem.

Late developments on finding room

[Editor’s note] At press time, Diocesan Life learned of two developments in regard to the issue of homelessness and emergency shelter in Bethlehem.

The first is that seven Bethlehem faith communities have come forward to take one day a week during which they would offer overnight shelter when needed.

They are: (1) Holy Trinity Lutheran Church, 514 Third Avenue, (2) Church of the Manger, UCC, 1401 Greenview Drive, (3) St. Andrew’s Episcopal Church, 1900 Pennsylvania Avenue, (4) Cathedral Church of the Nativity, 321 Wyandotte Street, (5) Unitarian Universalist Church of the Lehigh Valley, 424 Center Street, (6) New Covenant Church, 23 East Broad Street, and (7) Christian Training Center/El Shaddai, 529 East Broad Street.

The second development is that several people who had taken the initiative on this issue were granted a meeting with Bethlehem Mayor John Callahan, Bethlehem Housing and Community Development planner Irene Woodward, and Bethlehem Health Bureau director Judith Maloney.

Trinity Bethlehem rector Laura Howell told Diocesan Life that candid discussion took place between the faith community advocates for the homeless and the city officials on the need for emergency shelter and on what the City of Bethlehem now does. Mayor Callahan named Ms. Woodward as the point person who would work with the faith community advocates to create a plan for dealing with both cold and hot weather crises. He also promised to have lunch at Trinity Bethlehem’s Soup Kitchen in the near future.
Falling into Holy Week

BY THE REV. ANNE E. KITCH

Three kids. Three days. The Triduum. In the midst of everyday parenting chaos, my friend fell deeply in love with God. All Lent long. Like every time we fall in love, she hadn’t planned on it. In fact she hadn’t planned on being that involved with Holy Week in the first place. It was definitely the kids’ fault. By the time Holy Week came around and anyone in the house actually took note of what was on the family calendar, they were committed. Maundy Thursday, Good Friday, the Easter Vigil.

At least one of the teens was involved each day, as an acolyte, choir member or a reader. Although she had grown up in the church, she had never attended all the services of Holy Week; she had not experienced the Triduum.

The three solemn days at the end of Lent are known as the Triduum Sacrum (three sacred days). Though the days, each day has its particular liturgical expression. On Maundy Thursday we celebrate the washing of feet. As the service ends, we venerate the cross. On Good Friday we intentionally express ourselves through the passion liturgy. On Easter Saturday, it is the veneration of the cross. On Easter Sunday, the resurrection of Jesus is celebrated. The energy, drama and emotion of the Triduum bring us to our knees and release us into the deep joy of resurrection. There is no resurrection without death. There is no Easter Sunday without Good Friday. This is what my friend experienced. Compelled to be in attendance at these sacred rituals throughout the Triduum by the participation of her children, she found herself drawn deeply into the Easter mystery. What began as an obligation became a profound spiritual experience. She entered into our most sacred story and emerged changed, reborn.

I remember once as a teenager objecting to attending the Maundy Thursday service. It was spring break from school and my friends had something wonderful planned for that evening. My mother was firm. Maundy Thursday was a holy day that could not be skipped. I resisted. A commitment to church on Good Friday I could understand. I told her I would never ask to skip Good Friday. But surely Maundy Thursday was expendable. Not to her it wasn’t.

Sow all went, me with some resentment. But having capitulated, I discovered that my mother was right. Returning to church three days in a row to participate in unique liturgies that came only once a year marked this time as distinct, set-apart, sacred. This practice was outside of the cultural rhythm and even outside of our usual church-going rhythm. At that time in my life, I was already drawn deeply to Good Friday. After that year, Maundy Thursday became part of my sacred rhythm as well. It was a practice of family discipline before it was ever a holy habit for me. But it was the discipline that brought me to the holy.

The efforts of so many in any congregation are directed toward creating powerful liturgies for Holy Week. They do this not only as a labor of love, but also to provide access for all to enter deep into our most sacred mystery. For both the intentional participant and the casual passer-by, the invitation is there. If you have never fully experienced being immersed in the Triduum, why not make it part of your spiritual discipline this Lent. You might just fall in love.

Resources for Holy Week and Easter

For Young Children
The Story of the Cross and On That Easter Morning by Mary Joslin
The Easter Story by Brian Wildsmith

For Older Children
Chicken Sunday by Patricia Polacco
Potter by Walter Wangerin, Jr.

For Adults
Descent by Phaidon Editors
A collection of artistic images of the Descent from the Cross
Christ’s Passion, Our Passions: Reflections on the Seven Last Words from the Cross by Margaret Bullitt-Jonas
Cross-Shattered Christ: Meditations on Seven Last Words by Stanley Hauerwas

Bach and Handel Chorale celebrates 25-year tradition in Jim Thorpe with April 25 concert

BY BARBARA LOEFFLER

It was the fall of 1984. The musical world was planning many special concerts and festivals for the following year to celebrate the 300th Birthdays of two of its giants: Johann Sebastian Bach was born on March 21, 1685, and George Frideric Handel was born on February 23. At the Episcopal Parish of St. Mark and St. John in Jim Thorpe, organist and director of music Randall D. Perry was inspired to organize a group of singers to participate in the festivities.

Perry had previously directed the Mauch Chunk Chorale. Choir members of St. Mark’s–St. John’s formed this group’s nucleus, augmented by singers from Jim Thorpe and surrounding communities. The Mauch Chunk Chorale had disbanded a year before, but Perry was able to call together many of its members to form a new organization, the Bach and Handel Chorale. Rehearsals began in May 1985.

The success of the Bach and Handel Tercentennial Concert encouraged Mr. Perry and the members of the chorale to continue in their mission of presenting the music of the two masters. And so they have, until now they prepare to perform Bach’s immortal Mass in B Minor at their 25th Anniversary Concert in April.

Through the quarter-century of its existence, the Bach and Handel Chorale has maintained close ties with St. Mark’s–St. John’s. Though rehearsal times are now held elsewhere, most of its concerts have been presented at St. Mark’s Church. When the organization incorporated a few years after its formation, its first president was the parish’s rector, The Rev. Robert Gildersleeve.

The chorale’s current president, Jennifer Sterner, is a lifelong member of St. Mark’s–St. John’s, though she was not a member of the Chorale since the age of 14. She describes the chorale’s music as “a spiritual outreach to the community. We also perform one or two benefit concerts per year and donate the proceeds to the local food pantries. Two years ago we performed a benefit concert for the building fund of a local Lutheran church that was destroyed by arson.”

The Bach and Handel Chorale’s 25th Anniversary Concert will be held on April 25 at St. Mark’s Church, 21 Race Street, Jim Thorpe. This performance of J. S. Bach’s Mass in B Minor will begin at 2:00 p.m.

Information may be found at www.bachandhandelchorale.org

A parishioner at St. Anne’s Trexlertown, Barbara Loeffler is a former member of the Bach and Handel Chorale.

Art & Prayer Lenten Workshop/Retreat

Taking time to listen within
Taking time to express ourselves

Saturday, March 7
9:00 to 3:00

Anyone with questions or for whom cost is a problem may speak with Cathy Constantin Reid at 484-547-1889
Nanticoke parish gives up church building

(Drawn from a report by Bob Wilkins, president, Standing Committee of the Diocese of Bethlehem and chair of the Parish Risk Committee for St. George’s Nanticoke)

The Committee met with the Congregation of St. George’s, Nanticoke, or its service, breakfast and annual meeting, January 26. Following thoughtful discussion and review of alternatives the congregation of about 23 adults and youth voted to give up the church building because of insufficient funds to maintain it and to deed the building to the Incorporated Trustees of the Diocese of Bethlehem.

Wishing to remain intact, the Congregation voted to accept an invitation from nearby St. John’s Evangelical Lutheran Church to worship at a separate service in St. John’s. The initial commitment is for three months, to determine if St. George’s can put together a viable budget and financial plan to sustain them for a longer period.

Deacon Lou Divis, who has been very conscientious and diligent in attempting to guide St. George’s through this difficult period, was asked and agreed to stay on.

St. George’s will obtain liability insurance and was assured that the contents of the church could remain in their possession.

The Committee offered its assistance and the services of the diocese to help the congregation during this transition period. The Archdeacon also offered to assist with Sunday services as his schedule permits.

The Parish will have access to the income from its trust account and bank account although the objective will be to maintain a bank balance of $5,000 by increasing plate and pledge income to cover current expenses. Control of the bank account and payment of bills has been transferred to Diocesan Controller Bruce Reiner. Building expenses will be for the account of the Incorporated Trustees.

There were many fond memories and sadness prevailed as the reality and finality of the occasion became apparent. However there was also a feeling of renewal as they planned a future in which they could remain together. St. John’s Lutheran is a church in transition, looking for a new pastor and discerning their future.

Diana Marshall seeks people interested in diocesan community health ministry activities

Many of you comment when you see me regarding articles I post on the diocesan Internet list from time to time as diocesan liaison to National Episcopal Health Ministries. I am grateful for your feedback.

Part of my responsibility as Diocesan Liaison to National Episcopal Health Ministries is to provide quarterly reports about the Health Ministry activities in the diocese. In order to be able to do this in a more coordinated manner, and to better support the Health Ministries activities in the diocese, I would like to re-organize a diocesan Health Ministries committee. Most of our work will be done by e-mail and phone conferences.

If you have an interest in Health Ministries and would like to further explore being a part of this vital ministry, please contact me directly at d.marshall@tcn.com.

Thanks you, [Diana Marshall]
We’re experiencing exciting progress on all fronts of the New Hope Campaign.

You may have read in the February issue of Diocesan Life the article outlining the progress made in northeastern Pennsylvania, in particular that 80% of the 2008 grant totals went for projects in churches north of the 476 “tunnel,” reminding us that one does not have to reside in the Lehigh Valley to be central to the body of Christ in the Diocese of Bethlehem.

Parishes were creative in crafting their outreach. Prison moms reading stories on tape for their children touches the heart. We hope soon to be able to provide pictures of New Hope outreach in northeastern Pennsylvania.

In spring of 2009 we will begin accepting new grant applications. Is your parish submitting an application?

Construction goes on in Kajo Keji. As I write, the finishing touches are being put on the first four buildings at the college. Our fifth and sixth buildings, a second dormitory and second block of four classrooms, are waiting for the roofs to be built. We are breaking ground on the seventh and eighth buildings which are the library and the second dorm for professors. Our first primary school at Romogi is being roofed. This school should open in May.

Quotes are currently in development for our second primary school, to be built in Gaderu. The Gaderu School is far removed from the center of Kajo Keji and offers New Hope to those isolated and in need.

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The Bethlehem Tailor’s Training Center

The second four-classroom block of the college in Kajo Keji

The primary school at Romogi is being roofed, and is scheduled to open in May.

Five deacons ordained for our diocesan community

Bishop Jack Croneberger ordained five deacons for the Diocese of Bethlehem on February 2 in the Cathedral Church of the Nativity.

Left to right: Timothy Scott Albright will continue at General Seminary until May; Christina Nord will serve her deacon internship at Grace Allentown; James Douglas Moyer, Jr., will continue at Nashotah House in Wisconsin until May; Bishop Jack, Assistant Bishop, Diocese of Bethlehem; Wayne Caleton Sherrer will serve his deacon internship at St. George’s Hellertown; and Rebecca Anne Parsons Cancelliere will serve her deacon internship at St. Mark’s/St. John’s Jim Thorpe. Four are transitional deacons. Rebecca is a vocational deacon.

Father, through Jesus Christ your Son, give your Holy Spirit to Christina; fill her with grace and power, and make her a deacon in your Church.

Ordination photos by Bill Lewellis

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New Hope is becoming a reality in Kajo Keji and in northeastern Pennsylvania

You may have seen the Presiding Bishop’s communiqué regarding the Lord’s Resistance Army and the isolated acts of terrorism they have perpetrated in southern Sudan. Bishop Anthony and Stephen Tomor assure us that there has been no activity by the LRA in Kajo Keji for over eleven months. They feel safe and New Hope has not been compromised. “Most of what has been reported is accurate.” Bishop Anthony wrote. “However the comments that the LRA activities are spreading may not be entirely true. So far there have been no reported incidences of LRA activities in Kajo Keji since March last year.”

I have been traveling throughout the Northern Tier of the Diocese on Sundays during January and February. Your welcome has been warm and filled with the Holy Spirit. New Hope is becoming a reality, bringing every parish in our Diocese together, walking in Christ’s footsteps.

I share this story with you because it touched my heart. Christ Church, Towanda donated $500 to New Hope in January. Times are tough in Towanda as they are everywhere in the Diocese. But this donation was special. It was special because $400 of that total was raised by the children of Christ Church. These young disciples collected 8,000 soda cans, transported them to New York and turned them in for a nickel a can. Talk about a win-win-win. Pennsylvanians got one over on New Yorkers; they cleaned up the environment and helped the poor at the same time.

I thank God for all of you who are giving generously to New Hope at a time when it is truly a sacrifice. God bless you. Charlie Barebo, CEO of Otterbine Barebo, Inc., is chair of the New Hope Campaign of the Diocese of Bethlehem.

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