My Father’s House brings New Hope to Lebanon

BY PAT WALTER

My Father’s House, a refurbished apartment attached to the former rectory of St. Luke’s Episcopal Church, 6th & Chestnut Streets, Lebanon, was recently dedicated for community service. For this project, St. Luke’s partnered with two county agencies, Community Action Partnership (CAP) and the Coalition to End Lebanon County Homelessness.

The apartment at the rear of 519 Chestnut Street will be used for transitional housing for folks in need in Lebanon County. This pilot project for the county received grant money from the Diocese of Bethlehem through a New Hope Campaign in which funds were solicited for a companion diocese in New Sudan, Africa, as well as the Needy in Pennsylvania.

On hand for the blessing were representatives from each of the agencies and the Lebanon Ministerium. In its history, St. Luke’s Church has given the community the Good Samaritan Hospital and Lebanon’s first library.

Father Terrence Wible, rector, led the dedication. This project was developed by the Outreach Committee of the church, Todd Snovel, Chairman. People in need of housing should contact the Community Action Partnership.

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INSIDE EPISCOPAL JOURNAL
Christians have become the victims of increasing violence in Iraq, Pakistan, Nigeria and now Egypt where 25 were killed and 90 others wounded as Coptic Christians left church on New Year’s Eve. Paul Gordon Chandler, an Episcopal priest in Cairo, reports on the latest conditions. Page 5.

As dioceses and historic parishes honor Black History Month in February, Bishop Eugene Sutton writes why the Diocese of Maryland has been one of the most faithful to respond to the church’s call to eradicate racism and to work toward reconciliation of all people. Page 6.

As Haitians start to rebuild churches destroyed in last year’s earthquake, they also must rebuild their personal lives to give strength to carry on. Herb Gunn writes about three conferences organized by CREDO to help Haitians do just that. Also a story on the launch of the Haiti Appeal. Page 8.

Lois Sibley and Linda Grenz offer readers a choice of books and resources appropriate for this year’s Lent that begins March 9. Page 10 and 11.

A closeup look at the current exhibit based on the baptismal covenant offered by members of the Episcopal Church & Visual Arts. Page 12.

Deidre Steinberg reports from Portland on the release of long-awaited biography of Edmond Browning by Sheryl Kujawa-Hallbrook, published by Forward Movement, and Dick Snyder talks with the retired presiding bishop from his farm in eastern Oregon. Page 6.

Presiding Bishop Katharine Jefferts Schori pays a pastoral call to the Florida Keys, Utah teens raise $1 million in cash and kind to help alleviate homelessness and a small Kansas church sees its outreach efforts grow – and grow. Pages 8 and 9.


When it is necessary to change

BY BISHOP PAUL V. MARSHALL

There are changes to report in the diocese and in our relationships nationally. Interestingly, as I write this, the stock market is at its highest point in two years, and we might hope that the constraints the economy has placed on church life may be lightened. We are trying, however, to operate responsibly on the basis of the best information at hand.

Not all of the changes are financial or particularly internal. On February 10th, we will have the breathing-taking privilege of acting as hosts, from the Episcopal side, of the national service where Episcopalians and Moravians will mark their entry into full communion. This historic event takes place just ten years after we inaugurated full communion with the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America. It will take place at Central Moravian Church, at six in the evening. Given the strong faith of the two groups, there is no snow date.

Conversations are well underway between the Moravian and Lutheran leaders and myself as to how we may better work together, including the sharing of ministries in places where there may be several congregations facing challenges—and opportunities.

We have made some adjustments at Diocesan House to align our staffing with financial realities. At the same time, I think that these changes will also increase our ability to respond to the challenges that confront the church.

We have done this primarily by consolidating responsibilities rather than reduction of services, although I hope you will understand that as individual staff members take on more responsibilities, there will be less time and energy available per task.

In the area of chaplaincies, I have been very grateful over the years for the clergy who have taken on specific ministries to help express my concern for various people in the diocese. In particular, I have been grateful to the Rev. Daniel Fitzsimmons for his care of clergy widows and Archdeacon Cluett for ministry to retired clergy. Now these and other related functions will be under the care of the Rev. Canon Teter. She will be increasing our attention to retired clergy, widows, and those among the clergy and their families who are ill or dying. She will be the primary advocate for Wellness Funds grants from the Widows Corporation.

Canon Teter has reached the mandatory retirement age for her previous work, and rather than find a new person for these tasks, the Archdeacon will be assuming responsibility for the ordination process and the deployment of clergy. During the winter and spring he and Canon Teter will be effecting that transition, with the partnership of the Commission on Ministry.

The spot left vacant by the retirement of Canon Bill Lewells as Minister for Communication has been somewhat reshaped, and most of the tasks have been assumed by Kat Lehman, who will now serve as Director of Communication. She has already convened a Communication Taskforce to assist her in some aspects of her work, and will continue as the designated information technology Genius of diocesan house. I am grateful to her for her willingness to expand the boundaries of her ministry.

There is one more change. You have no doubt noted that you received this newspaper with a new national section entitled Episcopal Journal. Although General Convention chose to continue a printed newspaper, the national leadership through Executive Council found that to be impossible, and the last printed news from the Episcopal Church appeared last year.

While the pattern of Presiding Bishops and Executive Council following a path other than that laid out by Convention is regrettable, it is not new or even surprising. It does exhibit a distinctly silver linings. Episcopal Journal is an independent paper, bringing us news from around the Anglican Communion and our own church in what we hope will be a balanced and broad perspective. Edited by trusted reporters of the Episcopal news scene, it promises to help us keep in touch with the work of our sisters and brothers throughout the world.

I am grateful to Diocesan Council for deciding that our staying in touch with the larger church is important. They could have realized very short-term savings by producing only diocesan-level reportage, but overwhelmingly decided that we will function at a higher level if we are aware of our connection to the worldwide Anglican Communion. I think this is very far-seeing of them.

Seldom do institutional concerns invade this column. They do so now because I want to share with you the practical ways in which we continue to search for ways to grow in our ability to tell what we have seen and heard in the Lord.

Prince of Peace receives grant for health ministries

BY DIANA MARSHALL

The Health Ministry initiative at Prince of Peace in Dallas has been gaining momentum since January 2010. With the support of a diocesan grant, Parish Nurse Training offered at Sacred Heart Hospital in Allentown.

The Parish Nurse has made home visits and consulted with members of the church regarding diet, medications, and blood pressure.

A “Health Information” area has been designated in the Parish Hall and handouts are available for parishioners and visitors. The information corresponds to national awareness topics and is changed six to eight times annually. Topics presented were: H1N1 flu prevention, where to obtain the vaccine locally and the cost, and choosing healthful foods and nutrition for all ages, along with recipes; Drug and Alcohol Awareness for all ages including school-age children, teens and adults; Sun Safety, including small packages of sunscreen; and Back to School Safety providing information on issues school-aged children and teens face at the beginning of a new school year such as managing homework, bullying and making healthful choices for lunches and snacks, along with tips for parents on easing the transition back to school.

In addition, resources have been made available on the Prince of Peace website under the new “Health Ministries” link http://www.princeofpeacedallaspa.org/healthministries.html

The Prince of Peace Health Ministries team applied for a grant from the diocesan Health Ministries Committee to continue providing health information and promoting health and wellness in their own congregation. The grant also allows for the parish to work together with other Episcopal congregations in the region to encourage the growth of health ministries. They will receive a grant in the amount of $868.60 with the expectation that a matching amount will be raised from other sources including but not limited to the parish budget, individuals, or community contacts.

As your parish works toward implementing the resolution passed at our 2010 convention urging “the congregations of The Episcopal Diocese of Bethlehem which have not already done so to explore and implement health ministry as an organizing concept or vital component of outreach and pastoral care of the congregations by 2012” be assured that the Health Ministry Committee stands ready to assist you.

For information and assistance, contact Diana Marshall, diocesan liaison to National Episcopal Health Ministries (NEHM) and chair of the Diocesan Health Ministries Committee, at d.marshall@rcn.com or 610-807-9281.
What prophecy guides you?

BY ARCHDEACON HOWARD STRINGFELLOW

On one of the Twelve Days of Christmas, I cracked a fortune cookie and read: “To truly find yourself you should play hide and seek alone.” The Wise Men weren’t seeking themselves.

The Gospel proclaimed on The Epiphany places us right in the midst of St Matthew’s evangelism, a proclamation that employs repeated formulas.

Often we hear something very like: “this took place to fulfill the words of the prophet…” The Wise Men themselves follow the star having learned about it in the Book of Numbers: “a star shall come out of Jacob, and a scepter shall rise out of Israel” (Numbers 24:17).

The Star of Bethlehem signifies God’s protection of God’s people and identifies that protection with Jesus. By following a star, by following a prophecy, the Wise Men find Jesus. What prophecy do you follow until it brings you to look upon his face?

My favorite is the one Jesus uses to disclose and to reveal himself. Shut up in prison, John the Baptist sends some of his followers to Jesus to ask him: “Are you the one who is to come, or are we to wait for another?” And Jesus tells them: “Go and tell John what you hear and see: the blind receive their sight, the lame walk, lepers are cleansed, the deaf hear, the dead are raised, and the poor have good news brought to them. Blessed is anyone who takes no offense at me.” (St Matthew 11:6).

Jesus refers to Isaiah 29, Isaiah 35, and Isaiah 61 in his answer, and those prophecies lead and draw John and his disciples to Jesus. The really important thing is that it really doesn’t matter which prophecy or which truth you follow or seek. They all lead to him.

You can be a bricklayer or an attorney, a machine-worker or a writer, trying to do it the best way or the cleanest way, the smartest way or the honest way, and your steps will lead you to him, for he knows the bricks, understands the laws and the machines, and comprehends the words. For they are his, and so are you.

Small groups respond to congregational renewal during convention

BY GINNY REX DAY

Something was stirring. As folks traveled from all over the diocese to participate in our annual convention last October, they knew this one would be different. With Bishop Paul’s leadership, “From Risk to Opportunity” (R2O) was being placed before us. Renewal, revitalization, and transformation - something was in the air.

We gathered at the Cathedral in Bethlehem and listened to Bishop Paul speak. After bringing us up to date on events, he told us this would be “more of a working convention than we usually have.”

Our assignment: gather in small groups of laity and clergy and begin conversing about congregational renewal using questions prepared for us by the Congregational Development Commission. We considered the following:

• What was the most useful part of Bishop Paul’s address for your parish?
• How does your parish live a life of prayer?
• How might you deepen that experience?
• How is the ‘management style’ in your parish marked by ‘openness to the Holy Spirit’?
• How does your parish presently maintain conversation with both its past and its future?

These small groups had common ground in location and in average Sunday attendance.

Before grappling with these questions, the groups had discussed how the best approach R2O with the leadership of facilitators trained to do the work.

The discussion groups indicated that some parishes remain focused on the past, either mourning what is no more or trying to recreate it. Others seek to bridge both the past and the future by celebrating the life of the congregation in a balanced way, in referencing the past to give perspective on the present, and by conversation about the future in which all are encouraged to participate.

If we are honest with ourselves about the present state of the church, we will not only hope for a future but also plan and work for it.

The prayer life in our parishes is founded on the Holy Eucharist. The experience of prayer is enhanced by lay and clergy leadership setting the example.

After celebrating at our banquet on Friday and during the convention Eucharist Saturday morning, the same groups gathered again for further discussion. Clergy were asked to complete the following:

• In my parish, I get the most energy and satisfaction when….

The following day attendance.

• When I feel stress and frustration, I….
• The thing that I yearn for most in the diocese is….

In response, the most energy and satisfaction for clergy is in celebrating the Eucharist; in seeing the Holy Spirit at work in the lives of parishioners, in the life of the community, in the participation and enthusiasm of children and youth; and in outreach. Regarding feelings of stress and frustration, the responses were in the categories of prayer, reflection, talking with someone, physical activity, and in going on retreat. Clergy should not take things too personally and should laugh more.

Laity were asked the following:

• What word most describes your parish?
• What role has your parish played in your faith journey?
• From what you have read and heard, how can R2O be of help to your parish?

For many people, the parish church is their home away from home. Being part of a family on a journey of faith characterized much of the discussion. Feelings of welcome and acceptance along with Bible study, clergy leadership, and lay participation in the ministry of the parish give meaning to membership, as well as the involvement of children and youth.

Most groups found R2O to be helpful and there is energy behind the renewal effort, balanced by a concern to move beyond talking to doing. Some participants indicated their parishes are already doing some of the things referred to in the report.

On the ride home clergy were asked to reflect on the question “What is God calling me to be at this time of my ministry?” Laity were asked to consider the following: “What three hopes do you have for your parish in the future; and how can R2O be of help to your parish?”

The words used to describe participants’ parishes ranged from stagnant to changing, from stubborn to innovative, from participating to not involved. People of every age are represented in these parishes. Diversity abounds, as does love and caring. Lots of change is taking place which is both negative and positive. Words like ‘welcoming’, ‘friendly’, ‘coffee hour’, ‘love’, ‘caring’, ‘resistant’, ‘open’, ‘complacent’ were found frequently in the responses.

Small groups responding to congregational renewal during convention.

The Gold Box: Discover the treasure within

BY JENNIFER GAMBER

The Cathedral Church of the Nativity is hosting its annual women’s retreat March 24-25. To fulfill the words of the prophet… The Wise Men themselves follow the star having learned about it in the Book of Numbers: “a star shall come out of Jacob, and a scepter shall rise out of Israel” (Numbers 24:17).

The Gold Box signifies God’s protection of God’s people and identifies that protection with Jesus. By following a star, by following a prophecy, the Wise Men find Jesus. What prophecy do you follow until it brings you to look upon his face?

My favorite is the one Jesus uses to disclose and to reveal himself. Shut up in prison, John the Baptist sends some of his followers to Jesus to ask him: “Are the one who is to come, or are we to wait for another?” And Jesus tells them: “Go and tell John what you hear and see: the blind receive their sight, the lame walk, lepers are cleansed, the deaf hear, the dead are raised, and the poor have good news brought to them. Blessed is anyone who takes no offense at me” (St Matthew 11:6).

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Small groups responding to congregational renewal during convention.

The Gold Box: Discover the treasure within

BY JENNIFER GAMBER

The Cathedral Church of the Nativity is hosting its annual women’s retreat March 11-13, 2011 open to all women in the Diocese of Bethlehem and surrounding dioceses. “The Gold Box: Discover the Treasure Within,” is an invitation to receive Jesus’ seemingly simple parables as gold boxes holding precious treasures. Together we will open these gold boxes to discover the meaning of parables for our lives today.

The weekend will also feature fellowship, art, prayer and worship.

Dr. Deirdre Good, professor of New Testament at The General Theological Seminary, specializing in the Synoptic Gospels, Christian origins, noncanonical writings and biblical languages, will lead the retreat. She is the author of many books including Jesus: Family Values and Studying the New Testament, with Bruce Chilton. Deirdre is a frequent contributor to Episcopal Cafe (www.episcopalcafe.org), a website where writers and artists “reflect upon contemporary life in a context informed by faith.”

For the complete announcement and registration form email Janet Kolepp at jcolepp@msn.com

Please prayerfully consider coming. If you have questions call Janet Kolepp at 484-241-1252 or The Rev. Canon Marilyn Paratte at 610-865-072.

www.diobeth.org

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


12 days of Christmas for Kajo Kekji

BY JO TREPAGNIER

We have transferred the first batch of gifts to Kajo Kekji from the Diocese of Bethlehem for Christmas 2010. These donations are from 85 families, parishes, Sunday school classes and choirs. The total amount received so far is just a little under $9,000.

Our gifts to Kajo Kekji are: 11 Solar Lanterns; five Scholarships; 50 Girls sports uniforms; ten sewing machines; eight classroom support packages ($1,315: for use in the primary schools); 60 goats; 115 fruit trees; 43 hoes; two Wooden Table/Chairs; 90 meters of material for school uniforms; 14 balls; and 11 bikes. God bless you all!
God has chosen you to come

BY CHARLIE BAREBO

Our November mission trip revealed a greatly changed Kajo Keji, a Kajo Keji that awaits the results of the referendum with anticipation. As the MAF flight passes over the dirt airstrip to insure it is clear of the ubiquitous goats and sheep, we see the addition of several new western-style buildings and two new cell towers. It has been an arduous day on the twin engine Cessna; eight hours in total with seven take offs and landings, a regular milk run. Stephen Tomor and Bishop Anthony, complete with his pose, greet us at the airport. The ride to Romogi is fast and smooth, a pleasure after 22 hours in the air.

Evidence of the economic recovery brought on by five years of peace is all around us. There is five times the livestock we have seen on previous trips and we no longer see protruding ribs on people or animals. No rags passing for clothes, but newer, more serviceable clothing. Flip-flops or shoes are now the norm. We pass five automobiles on the first ride to Romogi, more than we saw on the entire trip in January 2007. On Monday as we drive to the school opening in Sodogo we saw on the entire trip in January 2007. On Monday as we drive to the school opening in Sodogo we pass a car with a large sign on the roof marked “Kajo Keji Driving School.” Who ever would have thought…

Second level needs are now being fulfilled and we see sunglasses, radios, iPods, soccer balls and bikes. This place is no longer bleak, the feel is upbeat. We inspect the New Hope Schools at Romogi and Gaderu and officially open the Kitchen-Dining Hall at the college as well the New Hope Primary Schools in Lwulo and Sodogo. The Romogi School wins the Bishop Marshall prize for the best kept gardens and grounds. We meet with the college management team and the students. I want to share the story of opening the Trinity, Easton New Hope School in Sodogo. This school will always hold a special place in my heart as Trinity, Easton stepped forward and tithed their own capital campaign to New Hope. Before our very eyes, two dioceses witnessed God’s people in Christ’s church doing precisely what Christ asked us to do in the Great Command. School openings are always a joyous occasion, a day of fulfillment, both functionally and spiritually.

Sodogo is a long drive and you must take small all-wheel drive vehicles through a river. Boys play in the river; a mother does the family laundry. No crocodiles are in this shallow section. We are met two miles outside the village and led by a joyful throng, singing and dancing. A choir from the school give me this land. All these days, I have been waiting for this school like a bride waits for a groom. The fox

‘I am Wilson Rembe,’ he says.

“I am 84 years old. My ancestors gave me this land. All these days, I have been waiting for this school like a bride waits for a groom. The fox used to run on this road. When I was a boy my father and I built a bridge over the stream. I think he knew there would be a school built here one day. People used to make fun of us and say ‘did you build this bridge for fox or for people’? Now the little children are my foxes who will use this bridge to go to school. Who are these people from across the sea who give their money so our children can go to school? I tell you they are God’s people. Thank God for the people of Bethelhem. I am Wilson Rembe, landlord.’

Now there is feasting, singing, and dancing. A choir from the school sings a response song for us. There is so much going on it is hard to focus. The Holy Spirit cuts through me like a knife and I hear the words, “Thank you Bethlehem people, God has chosen you to come.”

Late at night when I have doubts about why God would let his people suffer so much or when my daughter or children who attend New Hope presentations at various parishes ask how a loving God would let His children suffer so much, I find my answers in that chorus. God’s people in Kajo Keji and the southern Sudan have suffered. But God always knew he would choose us. He chose us to help heal his wounded children. God chose us to give sight to the blind, to lift the yoke of oppression, to raise up the foundations of many generations. We have been given a once in a lifetime opportunity. We have been truly blessed. Amen.
By Charles Cesaretti

In a time of tight resources and economic uncertainty, how do people of faith exhibit a sense of hope and dynamism to strengthen congregations in order to meet their needs, as well as the needs of the broader community?

During the weekend of March 25 – 27, 2011, Luther Snow, author of The Power of Asset Mapping, and a national recognized leader of the asset-based community development (ABCD) movement, will address this question through a series of workshops for lay leaders, pastors, denominational staff, and leaders of faith-based organizations. The weekend is being co-sponsored by the Diocese of Bethlehem in partnership with Moravian Theological Seminary, and a number of denominations and agencies in Northeast Pennsylvania.

Luther Snow is a national speaker, facilitator, and consultant who specializes in empowering communities, groups, and networks to take positive action for the common good. Luther is the creator of asset mapping, the method for positive group collaboration, that has gone “viral” and spread to over 2.5 million users across the US, Canada, and overseas. A premier facilitator, Luther has worked with over 25,000 people and hundreds of organizations, giving him the nickname of the “Good Groups Guru.”

Sometimes called asset-based community development (ABCD), asset mapping seeks to discover strengths within communities rather than focusing on needs, deficiencies, and problems. Those discoveries empower churches to create positive and meaningful change in order to become stronger and more self-reliant. This approach also promotes relationships between individuals, between individuals and organizations, and between organizations and organizations.

Luther has 35 years’ experience in community and group leadership. He’s led grassroots social and economic development efforts in inner-city Chicago, and has sparked positive rural development approaches across the nation. He has published three bestselling books, including The Power of Asset Mapping and The Organization of Hope.

On Friday, March 25, Snow will work with pastors, judicatory staff, and faith-based agency staff. The focus of the full-day workshop will be: The Macro View: Building Partnerships.

On Saturday, March 26, at Moravian College/Theological Seminary, the focus will be: The Micro View: Strengthening Congregations. This full-day workshop (9:30 AM – 3:30 PM) is for the leadership of local congregations – lay and clergy leadership teams. The registration is $20, which includes lunch and snacks.

“Asset mapping is a significant part of the congregational renewal process in the Diocese of Bethlehem,” opines Charles Cesaretti of the Diocesan Renewal leadership team to the Saturday workshop.

Information and registration for the part of the workshop you wish to attend: http://www.moravianseminary.edu/content/Spring11/assetmapping.html

The call to prayer and discernment

BY CHARLES CESARETTI

The Renewal Assembly, “The Call to Prayer and Discernment,” sponsored by the Renewal Committee of the diocese, will be held on Saturday, February 19, 2011 from 9:00 AM to 1:00 PM, in six locations across the diocese.

Members of the Renewal Committee and the Lifelong Christian Formation Committee will present the program, which will focus on the call and practice of personal and corporate prayer, as well as Bible study. The assembly will begin with a DVD presentation hosted by Bishop Paul Marshall with Mo. Laura Howell and Fr. John Francis. A copy of the DVD will be presented to a representative of every parish.

The six sites will be: Christ Church, Towanda; Trinity Church, Carbondale; Trinity Church, West Pittston; Trinity Church, Pottsville; St. Anne’s, Treskльтown; and the Cathedral Church of the Nativity, Bethlehem. Lunch will be provided.

Registration is now available on www.diobeth.org Registrants will be assigned to the most appropriate site. Registration is found by clicking on the “Register for diocesan events” on the right column of the homepage. Registration closes on February 9.

A special renewal poster seen here, designed by Jennifer Gambar, will be available to every parish in the diocese.

Episcopal Journal launches

Readers of Diocesan Life will discover a new publication included in this issue.

Episcopal Journal, a newly-created independent publication, will accompany more than 14 other diocesan and local publications mailed into the homes of more than 45,000 Episcopalians across the country.

Editorial director Jerry Hames says the Journal’s mission statement is “to inform, involve and inspire Episcopalians in the United States and abroad by sharing the good news of our church’s life and ministry.”

Episcopal Journal will depend on news from Episcopal News Service, but readers will also see relevant news and features from other respected Episcopal, Anglican and ecumenical sources, said Hames, who served as editor of Episcopal Life from 1990 to 2007.

“We will also invite contributions from recognized names in the fields of religion, science and the arts, and offer columns and meditations appropriate for the church seasons,” he said.

The new publication will fill a vacuum caused by the decision to terminate the last national print publication at the Episcopal Church Center in New York, he said.

The Executive Council of the Episcopal Church voted in October to approve a budget that cut all funding for print publications. That followed an across-the-board budget reduction voted by the General Convention in 2009. As a result, Episcopal News Monthly, which succeeded Episcopal Life a year ago, ceased publication with the January 2011 issue.

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The neuroscience of sabbatical

BY ANNE KITCH

“So, what are you doing on your sabbatical?”

“I’m studying neuroscience.”

“Excuse me?”

Of course, there were other responses as well, such as “And how does that relate to your job exactly,” and “Wow,” and “And why?” There were silent puzzled looks, and outright laughter and the mentor who voiced concern that this didn’t sound much like rest.

I am grateful to my friend Joyce who responded, “How wonderful. I can see how that fits right in with your work.” Joyce writes, “I’m grateful for the Info/Tech person who fixes it when it doesn’t work. I’m grateful for the Tech people who work on the Blue Roadway, and all with its accompanying papers, lab reports, lectures and exams, would not be restful. Yet from the vantage point of now being back at my desk, in my office, back at work, I can say that I am rejuvenated. My excursion into the realm of the brain’s capacity to reorganize itself, and respond to new experiences. In recent years, scientists have been mapping the brain, trying to pinpoint which locations in the brain are responsible for which human functions. Some people still hold on to the belief that once the brain is mapped out, we will have a clear understanding of how the brain works and be done with it. But like so many things in life, the more people learn about our brains, the more complex and wonderful the project becomes. It turns out that the capacity for the human brain to change and adapt is lifelong. Life long. Well, as an advocate for lifelong Christian formation, I was hooked. I wanted to learn more.

And that is how I found myself in the middle of an undergraduate lecture hall last fall, filled with twenty something-year-old students enrolled in NSC 201-Mind and Brain. The course even came with a lab! As a graduate of a liberal arts college with a major in English Literature, the last time I was in any kind of science lab was high school biology. And now here I was taking in two lectures a week and spending another day in a laboratory full of high tech equipment where my classmates and I explored “systems of consciousness from a physiological and phenomenological perspective.” Way cool.

The classic definition of a sabbatical is a rest from work. I can understand my parents’ puzzlement that my plan of studying neuroscience, with all its accompanying papers, lab reports, lectures and exams, would not be restful. Yet from the vantage point of now being back at my desk, in my office, back at work, I can say that I am rejuvenated. My excursion into the realm of scientific inquiry was a time of spiritual pilgrimage. For a while now, I have held out a hope to travel to Iona, that sacred isle, to encounter the Holy. I envisioned a sabbatical that included a pilgrimage there, a journey taken as a spiritual discipline to visit sacred sights and deepen my life in Christ. As so many travelers before me have discovered, one does not need to travel to a far off exotic destination to accomplish this.

No pilgrimage would be complete without companions met along the road. I should have anticipated this, but I was somewhat surprised nevertheless when I discovered the joy of developing friendships with the undergraduates in my class. These young adults welcomed me into their midst without suspicion. As a somewhat jaded middle-aged professional, I admit I am not used to this. I am particularly grateful for my three lab partners: a senior theatre major, another senior woman doubling in English literature and French, and a sophomore neuroscience major.

I began my sabbatical and my study with a specific question in mind: how the development of our brains might relate to the development of our moral decision making and what implications this has for the religious education of children and adults. Perhaps I have one or two more ideas about this now than I did in September. More importantly, I have a deeper appreciation for the complexity of the brain and the mind. As is true of any pilgrimage, the implications of my study of neuroscience will continue to unfold in the weeks and months ahead. I am sure bits and pieces of what I have learned will crop up in sermons and retreats and theological reflections. After all, we are talking about neuroplasticity, my aging brain will continue to change to encompass new experiences.

And like any good neuroscientist, or woman of faith, I plan to continue to delve into the sacred mystery of who we are as human beings and strive to know God more deeply.

Becoming grateful, surprise upon surprise

BY BILL LEWELLS

When she was growing up in New England, a onetime colleague on the staff of Bethlehem Bishop Paul Marshall related that her doctor father would sit with her at bedtime until she remembered at least five things for which she was thankful. I suspect this grew easier when she discovered the hints in the Book of Common Prayer:

For the beauty and wonder of God’s creation, in earth and sky and sea, for the splendor of the whole creation, for the beauty of this world, for the wonder of creation, in earth and sky and sea, for the beauty and wonder of God’s creation.

For all valiant seekers after truth, liberty, and justice.

For the great mercies and promises given to us in Christ Jesus our Lord.

For the mercy and promises I’m thankful that lead us to acknowledge our dependence on God alone.

I thank you, Lord. I thank you, I thank you.

Studies show, according to a recent article in Christianity Today, that “grateful people are happier and more satisfied with their lives and social relationships, more forgiving and supportive than those who are ungrateful, less depressed, stressed, envious, and anxious.”

Near the southern end of the North-East Extension of the Pennsylvania Turnpike, when New Jersey by way of the Walt Whitman Bridge is my destination, I listen to a Philadelphia radio station at 2, 12, 22, 32, 42 and 52 minutes after the hour. KYW promotes this minute as Traffic on the Twos. Listening helps me determine whether the Blue Route or the I-95 might be the better or at least the least harrowing route to take.

My occasional Traffic on the Twos practice has suggested another practice to help with a daily journey. I give thanks for some happening or relationship of the preceding three hours as I reflect for a few seconds at 9:00 a.m., noon, and 3:00, 6:00 and 9:00 p.m.

Thanks on the Threes. It helps, often in unexpected ways.

If you’ve ever noticed how your eyes open a bit wider when we are surprised. Surprise is the beginning of living with wonder. Surprise is often the beginning of gratitude.

Be surprised, open your eyes a bit wider as you walk through a supermarket brimming with the gifts of God and the labor of people you’ll never know.

Be surprised — and grateful — when your car starts in the morning.

Computer technology has been part of my job and my life for many years, but I’m still surprised when my computer works. As a “high-use, low-tech” person, I’m grateful for the Info/Tech person who fixes it when it doesn’t.

I have been surprised when I’ve been able to connect so quickly with someone by email or post something on a blog, download a podcast, find a helpful web site, lay out a newspaper with a computer program and convert the page files to specs required by a distant printer. When I sit with my laptop to write a column or sermon, I’m surprised that words begin to appear on the screen.

Someday, the words will not come. I will not chance putting thoughts together for public scrutiny. Someday, my sight will not chance putting thoughts together for public scrutiny. Someday, my sight will not chance putting thoughts together for public scrutiny. Someday, my sight will not chance putting thoughts together for public scrutiny. Someday, my sight will not chance putting thoughts together for public scrutiny. Someday, my sight will not chance putting thoughts together for public scrutiny.

I have been surprised during the past year by how much I have enjoyed retirement, even though I have loved the work I had been doing at Diocesan House (Diocese of Bethlehem) for 24 years.

Moving into 2011 I want to remember how well I have felt since moving into 2010, after having experienced six months of ill health during 2009. Of course, I am grateful. In fact, one thing I find as I grow older is how much more grateful I have become.

[Canon Bill Lewells, bllewells@diobeth.org, retired last year and served on the Bishop’s staff of the Episcopal Diocese of Bethlehem for 24 years.]

This article originally appeared in the Morning Call on January 1, 2011.

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What's happening

Feb. 1: Diocesan Life deadline for April edition

Feb. 1: Clergy Bible Study 6, Holy Cross, Wilkes-Barre 2:00 P.M.
Feb. 1: Archdeacon Visit, St. Andrew's, Allentown 6:00 P.M.
Feb. 3: Clergy Bible Study 1, Nativity, Bethlehem 2:00 P.M.
Feb. 4: Hug and Episcopal Day
Feb. 5: Bishop's School, St. Peter's, Hazleton 10:00 A.M.
Feb. 6: Bishop Paul, Prince of Peace, Dallas
Feb. 7: Standing Committee Meeting, Diocesan House, Bethlehem 2:00 P.M.
Feb. 7: Evangelism Committee Meeting, Trinity, Easton 6:30 P.M.
Feb. 8: Clergy Bible Study 7, St. Mark's, Moscow 2:00 P.M.
Feb. 12: Commission on Ministry Meeting via Conference Call 10:00 A.M.
Feb. 13: Bishop Jack, St. Andrew's, Allentown
Feb. 13: Bishop Paul, St. Gabriel's, Douglassville
Feb. 15: Clergy Bible Study 8, Christ Towanda 4:00 P.M.
Feb. 17: Archdeacon Visit, St. Mark's, Moscow 6:00 P.M.
Feb. 17: Clergy Bible Study 2 & 4, St. Stephen's, Whitehall 2:00 P.M.
Feb. 19: Renewal Assembly, Various locations around the diocese, 9:00 A.M. Please register online to attend. Registration is now open at www.diobeth.org.
Feb. 19: Bishop's School, St. Peter's, Hazleton 10:00 A.M.
Feb. 22: Clergy Bible Study 3, St. Alban's, Spring 2:00 P.M.
Feb. 22: Archdeacon Visit, St. Clement and Peter, Wilkes-Barre 6:00 P.M.
Feb. 27: Bishop Paul, St. Mark's, Moscow
Feb. 27: Bishop Jack, Trinity, Bethlehem

MARCH

Mar. 1: Diocesan Life deadline for March edition

Mar. 1: Clergy Day, Good Shepherd, Scranton 9:00 A.M. to 1:00 P.M.
Mar. 3: Clergy Bible Study 1, Nativity, Bethlehem 2:00 P.M.
Mar. 5: Bishop's School, St. Peter's, Hazleton 10:00 A.M.
Mar. 6: Bishop Paul, St. Clement's and St. Peter's, Wilkes-Barre
Mar. 6: Community Choral Concert, Cathedral Classics, Cathedral Church of the Nativity, Bethlehem 4:00 P.M. Suggested donation $10.00. Choirs from Central Moravian Church, Trinity Episcopal Church and the Cathedral.
Mar. 8: Clergy Bible Study 7, St. Mark's, Moscow 2:00 P.M.
Mar. 9: Ash Wednesday
Mar. 9: Organ Recital by Dale Grandfield, St. Stephen's Pro-Cathedral, Wilkes-Barre 11:30 A.M.
Mar. 11-13: The Gold Box: Discover the Treasure Within, Nativity, Bethlehem. Annual retreat for women featuring Deirdre Good, Professor of New Testament at General Theological Seminary in New York. To register, please download the form here. If you have questions, call Janet Kolepp at 484-241-1252 or The Rev. Canon Margaret O'toole at 610-866-8772.
Mar. 12: Bishop's School, St. Peter's, Hazleton 10:00 A.M.
Mar. 12: Commission on Ministry Meeting via Conference Call 10:00 A.M.
Mar. 13: Daylight Savings Time Ends
Mar. 13: Bishop Jack, St. Stephen's, Whitehall
Mar. 13: Bishop Paul, St. Paul's, Troy
Mar. 14: Evangelism Committee Meeting, Trinity, Easton 6:30 P.M.
Mar. 15: Clergy Bible Study 8, Christ Towanda 4:00 P.M.
Mar. 15: Archdeacon Visit, Calvary, Tamaqua 6:00 P.M.
Mar. 16: Organ Recital by Gary Garlett, St. Stephen's Pro-Cathedral, Wilkes-Barre 11:30 A.M.
Mar. 17: Clergy Bible Study 2 & 4, St. Stephen's, Whitehall 2:00 P.M.
Mar. 19: Bishop's School, St. Peter's, Hazleton 10:00 A.M.
Mar. 20: Bishop Paul, Calvary, Tamaqua
Mar. 21: Liturgy and Renewal, Nativity, Bethlehem 6:00 P.M.
Mar. 22: Clergy Bible Study 3, St. Albans, Spring 2:00 P.M.
Mar. 22: Archdeacon Visit, Trinity, Bethlehem 6:00 P.M.
Mar. 23: Organ Recital by Kenneth Lowenberg, St. Stephen's Pro-Cathedral, Wilkes-Barre 11:30 A.M.
Mar. 23-27: Asset Mapping Weekend with the Arthur Snow, Moravian Theological Seminary, Bethlehem. Held in conjunction with the Moravian Church, Eastern District, Northern Province.
Mar. 25: Incorporated Trustees, Nativity, 10:00 A.M.
Mar. 26: NEPA Choral Society Children and Youth Ensembles, St. Stephen's Pro-Cathedral, Wilkes-Barre 7:00 P.M.
Mar. 27: Bishop Jack, St. Andrew's, Alden
Mar. 30: Organ Recital by Jane Bourdow, St. Stephen's Pro-Cathedral, Wilkes-Barre 11:30 A.M.

APRIL

Apr. 2: Training Day, St. Stephen's, Wilkes-Barre. Registration will open online January 28th at www.diobeth.org
Apr. 3: Bishop Paul, Trinity, Athens
Apr. 4: Standing Committee Meeting, Diocesan House, Bethlehem 2:00 P.M.
Apr. 5: Deadline for May Diocesan Life
Apr. 5: Clergy Bible Study 6, Holy Cross, Wilkes-Barre 2:00 P.M.
Apr. 5: Archdeacon Visit, Trinity, West Pittston 6:00 P.M.
Apr. 6: Organ Recital by Stephen Williams, St. Stephen's Pro-Cathedral, Wilkes-Barre 11:30 A.M.
Apr. 7: Clergy Bible Study 1, Nativity, Bethlehem 2:00 P.M.
Apr. 8-10: Christoxygen, Pocono Pines Retreat Center, Cresco, PA. Registration will open online February 4th at www.diobeth.org. Questions? Contact Kim Rowles, 610-751-3931
Apr. 9: Commission on Ministry Meeting, Trinity, Mt. Pocono 10:00 A.M.
Apr. 9: Bishop's School, St. Peter's, Hazleton 10:00 A.M.
Apr. 10: Bishop Paul, Trinity, West Pittston
Apr. 10: Gone with the Wizard, Cathedral Classics, Cathedral Church of the Nativity, Bethlehem 4:00 P.M. Suggested donation $10.00. Cathedral players fuse Scarlett O'Hara and Dorothy for an interesting journey.
Apr. 11: Evangelism Committee Meeting, Trinity, Easton 6:30 P.M.
Apr. 12: Clergy Bible Study 7, St. Mark's, Moscow 2:00 P.M.
Apr. 14: Christ Mass, Cathedral Church of the Nativity, Bethlehem, 11:00 A.M.
Apr. 14: Deacons' Meeting, Diocesan House, Bethlehem 2:15 P.M.
Apr. 15: Concert by the Choral Arts of Luzerne County, Mozart's Requiem, St. Stephen's Pro-Cathedral, Wilkes-Barre 7:30 P.M.
Apr. 16: Bishop's School, St. Peter's, Hazleton 10:00 A.M.
Apr. 17: Palm Sunday
Apr. 17: Bishop Paul, Grace, Allentown
Apr. 19: Clergy Bible Study 8, Christ Towanda 4:00 P.M.
Apr. 20: Organ Recital by Richard Spotts, St. Stephen's Pro-Cathedral, Wilkes-Barre 11:30 A.M.
Apr. 21: Maundy Thursday
Apr. 21: Bishop Paul, Nativity, Bethlehem
Apr. 22: Good Friday
Apr. 22: Bishop Paul, St. Stephen's, Wilkes-Barre
Apr. 23: Bishop Jack, Christ, Reading
Apr. 23: Bishop Paul, Trinity, Easton
Apr. 24: Easter
Apr. 24: Bishop Paul, Nativity, Bethlehem

MAY

May 1: Concert by Wilkes University Choirs, St. Stephen's Pro-Cathedral, Wilkes-Barre 7:00 P.M.
May 3: Diocesan Life deadline for May edition
Apr. 3: Bishop Bible Study 6, Holy Cross, Wilkes-Barre 2:00 P.M.
Apr. 3: Archdeacon Visit, Epiphany, Clarks Summit 6:00 P.M.

Diocese of Bethlehem

www.diobeth.org

February 13: Nativity, Bethlehem: The Very Rev. Anthony Pompa, Dean and Rector; The Rev. Canon Mariclair Partee, Assistant Priest; and The Ven. Richard I. Cluett, Archdeacon in Residence
February 20: Trinity, Bethlehem: The Rev. Laura M. Howell, Rector; The Rev. Hillary Raining, Assistant Priest and Curate; The Rev. Elizabeth MacMillan Miller, Deacon and Soup Kitchen Coordinator; The Rev. Canon Clifford B. Carr, Assistant Priest; The Rev. Canon Gwendolyn-Jane Romeril, Assistant Priest; and The Rev. Dr. Richard Ditterline, Assistant Priest
February 27: Trinity, Carbondale and Christ, Forest City: The Rev. Don Schiabio, Rector

Anglican Communion

www.anglicancommunion.org
February 6: Jerusalem, Middle East, Egypt, North Africa and Horn of Africa: The Most Rev. Dr. Mouneer Hanna Anis, President Bishop; The Rt. Rev. Andrew Poulos, Bishop of Egypt; and The Rt. Rev. Bill Mank, Bishop of the Middle East
February 27: South East Asia and Singapore: The Most Rev. Dr. John Chew, Archbishop and Bishop of Singapore and The Rt. Rev. Rennis Fontinial, Suffragan Bishop of Singapore

Diocese of Kajo Keji

www.kajokeji.anglican.org

February 13: Arjo: The Rev. Timothy Modu Mark
Kajo Keji Partners
February 20: St. Luke’s, Mundari: The Rev. Reida Kaku Soma
Mangalore Primary School: Teachers, Parents and Pupils
February 27: Lorudung: The Rev. Henry Kwanyi and The Rev. Daudi Musoke
Kajo Keji Partners
February 13: Arjo: The Rev. Timothy Modu Mark

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Live God's love: tell what you have seen and heard
MUSICare ministry makes holidays memorable

BY JANINE UNGVARSKY

Young families in Northeastern Pennsylvania recently had a chance to make music and holiday memories through Trinity Episcopal Church of West Pittston's MUSICare ministry.

The church hosted a pre-Christmas musical event, inviting families from the community to bring their pre-school children to a free demonstration of Music Together®. This internationally recognized program is built around the understanding that all children can learn to enjoy and appreciate music if they are exposed to rhythms and music in a supportive environment. Music Together fosters that support by guiding kids from infancy through age five and the grown-ups who love them, through interactive play, song and dance in a pressure-free, fun atmosphere.

Recognizing a need for positive family experiences in the area, Trinity became an accredited Music Together site and began offering classes in early 2010. Rector John C. Major said the program allows the church to respond to a community need, provide support for young families and also serves as a fundraising source for Trinity.

The early December event brought out a number of families; moms, dads and one or more kids, who gathered together in Trinity's undercroft to shake egg-shaped rattles, bang on rhythm instruments in Trinity's undercroft to shake egg-shaped rattles, bang on rhythm instruments in Trinity's undercroft to shake egg-shaped rattles, bang on rhythm instruments and to pose them to musical instruments and to sing along with them at home. Music Together provides the means to do that, and that's why it was important to bring the program to Trinity.

Trinity's MUSICare ministry will continue with other community demonstration events at libraries and book stores as well as regularly scheduled classes in the winter and spring semesters. For more information, visit trinityepiscopalchurchwestpittston.org or musictogether.com.

Episcopal Youth Event Information

What: Episcopal Youth Event (E.Y.E.) is a celebration to inspire our deeper faith in Jesus Christ, and a renewed commitment to mission and ministry; designed and led by a team of youth and adults who represent the rich diversity of the Episcopal Church.

Each diocese is invited to send a delegation to participate in the creative worship, music, program, and recreation that make this 6-day experience life-changing.

Who: young people who have completed grades 9 to 12 by spring 2011 and have not already attended college. All E.Y.E. participants, youth and adults, will live on campus and need to be resident for the entire event.

Youth who attend this event will have to have attended at least one youth event in the past 12 months.

Adults who attend will have to complete Safeguarding Training by May 1, 2011.

Where: Bethel University in St. Paul, Minnesota

When: Leaving June 20 returning June 28. More information is coming from Province III regarding transportation schedules.

Cost: Approximately $650.00 per person. The cost of E.Y.E. is $275 a person. The cost of Transportation is $260.00 a person. Additional costs will include food during travel, souvenirs, t-shirts. Some scholarships are available, however ask at your home parish before seeking scholarship from the Diocese of Bethlehem.

Applications are now available on www.dioebeth.org “register for events”. Deadline for applications on February 28, 2011.

Reflections on youth ministry

BY KIM ROWLEES

Happening 19 November 2010

“I believe everyone should get the pleasure, and the experience of going to Happening. I learned this week that I am more than just an individual. I am apart of something so much greater than just a “youth group”. I am part of a family that consists of many churches. Over the weekend I realized the real meaning behind the phrase “church family”. Contradictory to what I believed before I was a ‘Happener’, my church family does not strictly consist of my small home church of St. Andrew’s, Allentown. By the love and dedication the staff and all the people involved in Happening showed me, I truly believe that your church family is anybody you reach out to. I want to thank you again.” - Anna Jefferies, Happener

Middle School Mission Trip August 2010 “We are All in the Same Boat”

Youth and adults spent worship time in reflection on Biblical accounts of water and need: the great flood, the wise man who built his house upon a rock, Jesus feeding the 5,000, and Jesus calming the storm. We worked side by side at the Animal Food Bank of the Lehigh Valley and Trinity, Bethlehem Soup Kitchen. All the youth who came to the weekend said that they would come to another event in the coming year, and they would invite a friend.

Christophany April 2010

We had youth participate from all areas of the diocese. We included parishes who do not “have youth” in the weekend by involving them in the personal care kit collection portion. We donated 480 personal care kits and extra items to shelters in Scranton, Bethlehem and Reading. There were 17 parishes that donated to the mission. Nine parishes sent youth to the weekend. Our goal for Christophany 2011 is to have 30 parishes donate to our Lenten collection for victims of abuse in the northern reaches of our diocese and to train 75 youth in peaceful conflict resolution.

Bishop’s Bakery January 2010

Seventy youth and adults from around the diocese came together to show their talents and spend time with Bishop Paul on a cold January night in Scranton. They bowled and played games and stayed up late. A good time was had by all.

Packing Christophany Lenten collection kits

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