St. Brigid’s, Nazareth youth help local food bank

BY LORI BERNARDO

This summer the youth of St. Brigid’s, Nazareth will continue their commitment to support the Nazareth Area Food Bank. On Monday, July 11th, eight members of the youth group, along with two additional friends, met in the “wee hours of the morning” to help pack grocery bags. They spent the next two hours learning about the mission of the food bank and filling bags to be distributed to over 250 families that are currently being served through this ministry.

They did a fantastic job!! The food bank staff was impressed by their and enthusiasm and commitment to the task. They plan to continue their commitment in the upcoming months as well.

Youth fill grocery bags under the watchful eyes of the Nazareth Food Bank adult volunteers.
Learning the value of labor

BY BISHOP PAUL MARSHALL

As Labor Day approaches, I am reminded of the tour I took of the Lackawanna Coal Mine years ago. It changed my thinking. I have been back several times with friends and relatives, and once with the entire staff. I recall that first visit most vividly.

The coal mine tour guide’s father died of Black Lung, and his grandfather died in a cave-in, so he had a particular authority. When he turned out the lights and showed us the tiny beam of light that a carbide lamp (and later a slightly brighter electric lamp) on a helmet provided, and added that this was all the miners had from the opening of the mine in the 1850s until its close in 1966, I began to realize what a different world they inhabited.

Long days mining an eighteen-inch seam on your belly; child labor starting at age seven; water, dirt, and noise; not to mention health, safety, and economic perils. A miner’s life is not one anybody would want. I am not sure that I could have endured it. I understood why being sent to the mines in the ancient pre-industrial world was a death sentence for a convict. Starting life as a breaker boy or a door boy did not head one to college—or much other schooling. Having your husband’s corpse dumped on the front porch with a notice that you had to vacate the company-owned house in twenty-four hours added immeasurably to the horrors of widowhood.

The world we enjoy was built by the backbreaking labor of millions of people, supported by the unpaid labor of those who made what homes they could for themselves, with little hope for something better. We need to acknowledge our debt to them, not because they made some owners and investors wealthy, but because they helped build a country, and for a long time provided much of the economic backbone of our region.

The miners’ conditions became a little more humane, but not without cruel bloodshed perpetrated by mine owners whose sense of justice was self-serving. A drive along route 209 brings one to the memorial labor reformer Edward Jones, a woman well worth Googling after you read this.

Have we learned to value labor—ours or that of others? Our workplace is by and large safer and more rewarding than it was for those miners. Most of us have considerably more options about where and for whom we will work. Nonetheless, there are basic lessons that still apply.

The first is that we are social creatures. Most of what we do and enjoy depends on what other people do for us or with us. Because we need each other it is a matter of species survival to respect each other. People are not to be used, but valued for who they are as God’s creatures, and what they give to one another through their work. That gift is a continuing part of the Creator’s work. How do we teach that to our children so they will continue to build human respect and community? Having contempt for people in jobs that pay less than ours do betrays a seriously limited perspective.

We need to be clear in attitudes we model to our children, that while different kinds of work have different levels of responsibility, creativity, and reward, and while social conventions acknowledge this in many ways, everyone has the same personal worth. Our children need to hear us speaking of people from any walk of life with respect—whether they have more or less education, responsibility, or money than we. Teach children gratitude for and admiration of others where some people have envy or contempt.

Those of us who have shielded our children from doing volunteer work for the family or in community service may need to rethink that. How else will they learn that among those who follow Jesus, there are no little princes or princesses, but that we are members of another? How else can they learn that the more privileges one has earned or inherited, the more responsibility one has? Parents do their children a great favor by grounding their helicopters, which are really about themselves and not the kids.

Finally, work cannot be a god. Many species and some human groups simply kill or leave to starve those whose disabilities or age prevent them from doing physical work. We have learned to respect and care for them and to help them see that there are many ways to participate in the community’s life.

Labor Day is a time to value our own work and to value the work of others. It is above all other times, the day to remember that we were created to be in this together.

ECW annual meeting highlights

BY LAURA I. CHEGWIDDEN

The Diocesan Episcopal Church Women (ECW) held its annual meeting May 18th at Kirby House. The ECW Board planned a day filled with music and prayer, new ideas, the joy of learning, and installation of board members and fellowship. Dorothy Shaw, ECW President, welcomed Bishop Paul and Diana Marshall as well as others attending the meeting.

Shaw called upon a board member to speak about the ECW’s program for raising funds to purchase fabric for student uniforms used in Kajo Keji schools. The Bethlehem Tailors’ Training Center assembles the uniforms from material purchased regionally.

The Rev. Anne E. Kitch, Canon for Formation in the Christian Faith, developed and presented the program “Minding our Spiritual Life: Turning our Brains toward God”. Kitch addressed the topic of understanding the brain’s anatomy and changing brain chemistry to improve memory. The afternoon workshop applied what was learned to the study of scripture.

As part of the morning session, Dorothy Shaw participated as Bishop Paul installed the following officers: Martha Fox, ECW treasurer; Catherine Jeffery, registrar; and Audrey Collier, board member. Bishop Paul celebrated the Holy Eucharist with the assistance of the Rev. Canon Lena Shallcross, ECW Chaplain.

The afternoon session resumed following lunch. Canon Kitch completed a wonderful presentation that elicited meaningful impressions with spiritual and health implications.

The meeting concluded with hymns, prayers and thanksgiving for a wonderful day!
Interfaith September 11 service

BY CANON MARICLAIR PARTEE

“How good and pleasant it is when brothers live together in unity!” (Psalm 133:1)

On Sunday, September 11th. The Cathedral Church of the Nativity will host an Interfaith Service of Remembrance, Healing, and Hope to memorialize the tenth anniversary of the attacks on New York, Washington D.C., and Pennsylvania. Bishop Paul Marshall, Rabbi Allen Juda, of Congregation Beth Shalom, and Mr. Mohammed Rajmohammed, board member of the Al-Ahad Islamic Center and adjunct professor of religious studies at Cedar Crest College, will participate. Other representatives of Jewish, Muslim, and Christian communities in the area will also be attending.

The service will begin at 5:00 p.m. in the Cathedral and will include scripture, prayers, and meditations from the Abrahamic faiths. Highlights feature special musical guests including Cantor Ellen Sussman and soloist Nao-ko Cautler. Candles will be lit in memory of each victim of the attacks. Coordinators hope the candles will serve as beacons of peace for people of faith as they gather to remember our communal losses, pray for wisdom and guidance, and envision a future where many faiths live together in unity and brotherhood.

To receive updates of what’s going on, please use our “Get Connected” box located on the front page of this edition.

www.diobeth.org
Happy birthday, New Hope!

BY CHARLES BAREBO

September 15th marks the fourth anniversary of the New Hope Campaign. It has been a dynamic four years, full of challenges, growth and ministry. The campaign has been officially embraced by almost every parish and has become part of the very fabric of the cloth that makes up our Diocese. The recent “State of the Diocese” report shows that individual parishes have assumed ownership of the New Hope Campaign. New Hope is a big part of both our individual and corporate outreach. It has been exciting to watch the transformation on two continents, in thousands of hearts, and in the smiles of those who had no hope.

In the Sudan, while we have been helping to rebuild a community, a new nation has been created, emphasizing the importance of enlightenment and education. Bishop Anthony and the church played an important role in bringing awareness of the issues and getting out the vote. Arch-deacon Stringfellow and I were there to observe the initial referendum to determine if a vote of independence would be allowed. Just this summer, independence became a reality. Our work, the work of the Holy Spirit, comes at a critical time.

In Kajo Keji we have completed the college and four primary schools. We are scheduled to complete the Dwani-Star of Bethlehem Primary School in September and the Romoggi-Earl High School in November. In 2012, at any given moment, there will be over 1,800 students attending schools built and supported by the New Hope Campaign. We look forward to continuing to serve the poor through these difficult times and subsequent year’s grants.

As we move into our fifth year, many tasks still need to be accomplished. New Hope in Northeast Pennsylvania is ongoing and we depend on the creativity of the parishes to develop new outreach initiatives and make grant applications. In the Sudan, we have funded about half of the trust to supply long term support to the schools. We are in the process of fine tuning the budget and mechanics of the Micro Finance program to kick start small family businesses. Both the funding of the school education trusts and the Micro Finance program are dependent on fulfillment of our outstanding pledges. To date, we have received roughly $3,100,000. There is roughly $725,000 in outstanding pledges. Unfortunately, we have $275,000 in doubtful or non-performing pledges. Without these monies, we will not be able to fully fund the educational trust or start the micro-finance initiative.

So much revolves around our ability to fund these ministries. If you have not made a gift to New Hope, we ask that you consider joining us. If you have had difficulty paying your pledge, please contact me so we can work through it. If you have paid your pledge completely, we ask you prayerfully consider making an additional pledge. You won’t find a better way to change someone’s life. I give thanks to God for your ongoing support and continued sacrifices as we continue to give New Hope to those who had none!

Live God’s love: tell what you have seen and heard
“Connecting the dots” at Renewal Assembly II

BY DAVID HOWELL

On June 11 of this year, the diocese conducted its second round of renewal assemblies at eight churches. This session’s theme was “Connecting the Dots,” which asked parishes to explore ways that their various gifts complemented each other, and how their individual spiritual lives can work with the goals of their churches. Nearly two hundred of the laity and clergy participated.

Just like the first renewal assemblies, the meetings opened with a half hour video where Bishop Paul interviewed three parish members: eleven year old Lucy Kitch-Peck of Good Shepherd Scranton on the challenges and the blessings of serving food to the poor.

The DVD, made available for showing at all our churches, was meant to facilitate discussion about the works and the goals that each of our sixty-four parishes face.

Charles Cesaretti, convener of the The Congregational Renewal Committee, said that the renewal program, “Gives us time for pause and reflection, using prayer and Bible studies, as we seek God’s will and guidance in the time ahead.”

“In these days, we are attuned to consultants and other techniques for strategic planning. This process, with both lay people and clergy, lets us go back deep to our roots as we seek God’s advice and counsel. We can return to baptismal vows, do a bit of reflection, pause and review our traditions, and decide if these traditions are still viable for today. We can think about how we have built our diocese and ourselves.”

The renewal process is initially intended to run for five years, and will be evaluated at the end of that time. Assemblies are scheduled three times a year. The next two will be November 12 and February 11. The February meeting will be designed specifically to include vestry members along with the clergy and lay people.

Renewal has been discussed for some years. Plans were started by the Congregational Renewal Committee in 2009 at the Bethlehem Diocesan Conference. The planning took place over a year, as the committee did consultations with parishes to prepare a State of the Diocese report.

The committee assigned the various parishes to three different “Clusters”: those that were increasing in size, those that were marginal, and those that were at risk. They looked at the factors that worked for the ones that were growing. It found that in most cases they had strong leadership and a gift for long-range planning, anchored by a mission statement and a strong spiritual component.

It also found that many smaller congregations were very talented, and contributed tremendously to their communities—out of proportion to their size. There were rich lives going on in many areas.

This assembly was designed to bring parishes together to share talents, ideas, and assets to let each one discover gifts that may not be readily apparent. The idea was to focus on positive aspects and overcoming problems. It encouraged cooperation over competition between churches, letting us identify as a group rather than as individual congregations.

The hope is that parishes can work together with others in their immediate area.

Dioceses in other states have also had renewal programs, but Cesaretti notes, “Many of them have larger staffs. Our plan is for it to stay homegrown.” The idea here is to keep things on a local level with a horizontal approach that minimizes central control by diocesan committee or staff members.

“It’s not going to be a short or easy process,” says Cesaretti. “But I feel incredible encouragement from the positive responses I have received.” He reported a tremendous interest in the interviews about prayer, shown in the first assembly’s initial video. He remarked that it lead people to want to know more about prayer. And he noted that on the second video, Lucy Kitch-Peck’s articulate explanation of her feelings about Christianity was a positive sign to parishes who would like to see more participation by teenagers.

BY LAURA I. CHEGWIDDEN AND MARLENE HARTSHORNE

The Episcopal Church Women (ECW) have created a program that raises funds to purchase fabric for student uniforms used in Kajo-Keji schools. Currently, over 40% of students do not have uniforms. The Bethlehem Tailors’ Training Center (BTTC) assembles the uniforms from the material purchased regionally.

Ongoing contributions are necessary to assure that all students have uniforms made by BTTC. The cost of this material is $5 per yard. Two meters are required for each uniform. Please consider donating $10 for one uniform or $5 for one meter of fabric. Make checks payable to “Diocesan ECW”. Memo line: “Fabric for student uniforms/BTTC.” Send checks to: Martha Fox, Diocesan ECW Treasurer, 4465 Pine Drive, Allentown, PA 18104.

BTTC will install a generator for the sewing machines and train three people to use them. ECW received a one-time grant from our Scholarship Fund which covers 30% of the total cost. Your donations are very important for the children attending schools in Kajo-Keji. You are providing opportunities for education for these children with your generous donations. Our goal is for each child to have uniforms as they receive their education.

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Angel Food Ministries at St. Mary’s, Reading

BY SCOTT CHAMBERS

In response to current economic conditions and lengthy unemployment lines, St. Mary’s Church has realized there is a great need in the city of Reading for some kind of food ministry benefiting all members of the community. Angel Food Ministries is one example of a way to provide quality, affordable food, which is part of the core of Christian mission.

Angel Food provides individuals and families with fresh, brand name food for a fraction of the retail price. By purchasing food in bulk, directly from some of the top suppliers in the country, food is discounted by up to 50 percent of retail. Angel Food Ministries is now offering a new selection of pre-packaged boxes with more protein items. They contain top quality food staples from every food group, including chicken or beef, milk, eggs, vegetables and fruits. Each of the regular boxes of food feeds a family of four for about one week or a single individual for almost a month. The menu selections vary each month, and consist of both fresh and frozen items, saving Americans money with no sacrifice to quality.

Angel Food Ministries’ service is available to anyone wanting to stretch their food dollars. There are no income requirements or program qualifications. We accept Food Stamps. There are no limits to the quantity of boxes per individual, nor are there any applications or qualifications for eligibility.

Here’s a link for the August menu: http://www.angelfoodministries.com/menu/menu_2011-08_en.asp

Anyone who wishes to learn more may go to St. Mary’s website and click on the Angel Food Ministry tab. You may also call Scott Chambers directly at 484-333-8877.

25th anniversary of Canon Mark Laubach

BY SUZANNE FISHER STAPLES

Bishop Paul Marshall celebrated a Festival Evensong at St. Stephen’s Pro-Cathedral in Wilkes-Barre on Sunday, May 22, to mark the 25th anniversary of Canon Mark Laubach’s service to the church and the diocese. A high tea reception for 225 people followed the service, which included a choir of 47 voices.

In his sermon Bishop Paul praised Canon Laubach’s faithfulness and excellence as a church musician. He said the Anglican tradition’s unique musical offering that brings “profound and sensitive meaning in the scriptures” is “something we must never let go of.”

“In all the years of practice, of loving God, in a unique offering week in and week out,” said Bishop Paul in his moving tribute to Canon Laubach. “Thank you for how you touched my soul.”

Pennsylvania State Representative Phyllis Mundy, a parishioner at St. Stephen’s, presented Canon Laubach with a citation from the Pennsylvania State General Assembly. “You live your faith,” said Rep. Mundy. “You are an inspiration to all to love their neighbor.”

Laubach was named Minister of Music at St. Stephen’s on January 2, 1986. In 2009 the Bishop Paul Marshall named him Canon Precursor “to take the lead in efforts to coordinate, communicate, and further educate all the musicians of the [14-county] Diocese of Bethlehem. The title Canon is usually conferred upon a member of the clergy as an honorific title, much as a Roman Catholic priest might be named ‘monsignore.’ But awarded to a lay person, as in the case of Canon Laubach, it is in recognition of achievement and leadership.

In 1984 Canon Laubach won the American Guild of Organists’ National Young Artists’ Competition in Organ Performance. He was named a one-year Fellow in Church Music at the Washington National Cathedral in Washington, D.C., and shortly thereafter came to St. Stephen’s. Canon Laubach has performed in major venues all over the world, including the Kennedy Center; St. Thomas Church and Cathedral of St. John the Divine (both in New York); St. Paul’s Cathedral and Westminster Abbey (both in London); as well as the King’s Chapel in Cambridge.

In 2002, under his supervision, St. Stephen’s large pipe organ was rebuilt by the Berghaus Organ Company of Chicago. This instrument now stands among the finest of its type in the Mid-Atlantic region, having won high praise from organists and audiences.

Canon Laubach was awarded a bachelor’s degree in church music from Westminster Choir College in Princeton, New Jersey in 1982. He studied organ under the tutelage of George Markey and Donald McDonald. He earned a master’s degree in organ performance and literature from the Eastman School of Music at the University of Rochester, in Rochester, New York where he studied under David Craighead.

Laubach’s recordings include his first compact disc, Teutonic Titans, released in 1995 on the Pro Organo label, featuring works by Wagner, Reubke, and Liszt. A critique by Paul Hale in Organ’s Review magazine evaluates Laubach’s playing as “beyond reproach...his depth of feeling and passionate (yet controlled) declamation is completely satisfying.”

William Maddox, in Organ Alternatives writes, “…Only a performer of great musicality, insight and conviction (coupled with a fair degree of daring) can not only bring off a performance such as this, but also still do justice to the composer’s intentions.” Laubach’s second Pro Organo disc, French Fest, was recorded in 1997 on the Berghaus organ at Grace Lutheran Church in River Forest, Illinois, featuring works of Tournemire, Franck, Dupré, Dufuflé, Alain, and Vierne. In a review in the January 1998 edition of The Journal of the Association of Anglican Musicians, G. Donald Kaye writes that Laubach’s recording of Dupré’s Variations sur un Noël, Op. 20 “has to stand with the best - breathtaking!”

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Canon Laubach administers a busy liturgical, choral, concert, and broadcasting schedule at St. Stephen’s. He also teaches private organ students and organ and church music students at Marywood University.

In Scranton. He has served as a faculty member for Pipe Organ Encounters sponsored by the American Guild of Organists (AGO), and as an adjudicator for numerous organ competitions. He has presented master classes for AGO chapters, and is in frequent demand as a lecturer for workshops in church music, focusing on such topics as liturgical planning, hymnody, basic improvisation, pastoral skills, and service playing skills.

He is a past regional chairman of Association of Anglican Musicians, a past dean and executive board member of the Pennsylvania Northeast Chapter of the AGO, and a member of the Organ Historical Society. He is active in the Royal School of Church Music (RSCM) in America, having participated as an organism for its summer training courses at Valley Forge in 1993 and 1994. In 1995, this same course was moved to St. Stephen’s, Wilkes-Barre, and was managed by Laubach from 1996 through 1998. He continues to serve as host and organizer for this annual course, which attracts about 200 children and adults from across the country each year.

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PHOTO CREDITS: WILLIAM STAPLES

Canon Mark Laubach playing during the anniversary service.
Leadership Program for Musicians

BY HILLARY RAINING

Starting September 10th, the diocese will begin a new initiative called the Leadership Program for Musicians (LPM).

LPM is a national ecumenical teaching ministry giving church musicians an increased sense of vocational awareness and the tools to help congregations sing well and participate actively in worship. If your congregation is looking for a tool for renewal, this will help!

LPM is a national program for musicians, clergy, and everyone interested in congregational music. It is geared toward church musicians and choir members; worship, liturgy and music community; youth ministers; and leaders of congregations interested in church music and musicianship; and college level music students.

Nationally accredited, it is a two-year continuing education program in church music. Courses will be taught at various locations in both years. You may also choose to attend all classes in one topic. Courses for the 2011-2012 year are:

Resources for Effective Music Ministry
A nuts and bolts curriculum introducing students to important resources for music ministry in the church. Includes tools for finding future resources as student's ministries grow.

Liturgy and Music: Foundations for Worship
This wide-ranging course surveys the rich liturgical traditions of the member churches and explores the church year, lectionary, and theology of each service with practical applications for the participants.

Philosophy of Church Music I
(Offers both years) This course will help affirm or redefine your thinking about the nature and role of music in worship with candid and sometimes contrary readings across the ages to inspire lively discussion.

LPM is a national ecumenical project introducing students to important resources for music ministry in the church. Includes tools for finding future resources as student’s ministries grow.

To find out more about the national LPM program, check out their web site at www.lpm-online.org

Prepare to be misunderstood

BY CANON ANDREW G E R N S

The other day I was walking through the mall dressed in my “official” clerical garb. While I was at the kiosk for the cell phone people, another customer was treating me with a noticeable deference and even with good humor. As I walked out of the mall, I saw a group of young people. One of them made eye contact with me but it was not a friendly connection.

His t-shirt had a red circle and slash over a cross under the caption “no bad religion.” I wanted to stop and ask about the shirt. After all, if I am going to wear the symbol of the churches ordained ministry in public, I had better be able to take the brickbats as well as the bouquets.

My hunch is that if the two of us could compare our lists of what constituted “bad religion”, they’d be more alike than different. My list would start with violence and persecution perpetrated in God’s name. I would also add the many examples of hatred that some justify on religious grounds. I also think that “bad religion” is religion that is uncritical or reactive or which puts institutional life ahead of people’s well-being. Bad religion pits science and faith against one another as if they are enemies. Religion that doesn’t drive us to leave a world better than how we found it is to me “bad religion”. But we did not have that conversation. As a public representative of an old religious tradition, I have to say that I did not do a good job asking the question because he all would say to me is “no bad religion, man!” Whatever.

I’ll bet that the reason the young man refused to engage me was the same reason that the guy at the kiosk was so nice. They both made certain assumptions about me, what I believed, and what I represent based on the total package they saw: a fiftyish white guy wearing a black clerical collar. It’s not a uniform, it’s a projection screen.

But it’s not just religious professionals in funny clothes who get misunderstood. I think that the very idea of having religious faith can lead to misunderstanding. Take Mary Magdalene for example. Many churches recently celebrated her feast day. Mary of Magdala is perhaps the patron saint of projection and misunderstanding!

Depending on what books you read or films you see, Mary Magdalene was a person healed by Jesus, a prostitute who may or may not have repented, who may or may not have washed Jesus’ feet with her hair, and who may have been Jesus’ friend, companion, disciple, successor, lover, wife or mother of his children. Next to Jesus himself, it is hard to imagine a person on whom we have directed so many of our dreams, fears, hopes and hurts.

The only thing we know for sure is that she was a follower of Jesus, she was healed of some infirmity by him, and that she was one of the women who witnessed his crucifixion and knew where he was buried. We know from the Gospel of John that she went to the empty tomb and that she was the one who took the news of Jesus’ resurrection to the eleven remaining apostles.

History, popular culture and even the Church has deeply misunderstood Mary. They have either tried to denigrate her witness or adapt it for their own purpose. Mary teaches us that the important thing is not that we understand God so much as discovering how deeply God understands us. We may all be as misunderstood as she was, but at the moment of moments, at the border of life and death, Christ knew and understood Mary. If Mary knew nothing else except that God knew her to the deepest core and was loved, then nothing else matters.

There are lots of theories on why Mary Magdalene is so misunderstood, some of which border on the conspiratorial, but if the most important part of her story is that God knows and loves us, Mary also teaches us that to live a life of faith is to be misunderstood.

To practice peace in a world that values power is to be misunderstood. To seek to serve the poor in a world that values wealth will create misunderstanding. Advocating for people who have no voice, no vote, and no position in society is not comprehensible to many in our world. Bringing care for the sick even if is not profitable and to demand that society remembers the forgotten often invites labeling and name-calling. When a person of faith places love as the highest value, and lifts up the dignity of even the lowest among us, other people will misunderstand.

Frankly, there are days when I don’t understand the life of faith that even I have chosen to live. We human beings are such imperfect practitioners of the spiritual life, and yet we are drawn to grow and know more. We are drawn to create. We seek love and we crave to be known. We are called to change. Mary Magdalene reminds us of the truth of the old Franciscan prayer where we seek “not to be understood as to understand” that God knows us and loves us right down to our very core.

[Editor’s note, this article was previously published in the Morning Call]

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Live God’s love: tell what you have seen and heard
"What does a hero wear?" The common answer for this would be a cape, bright colors, and masks. We can easily forget that, in reality, an ordinary person can be a hero without the ridiculous costuming and superpowers. Too often, ordinary people overlook themselves as an option for being a hero. On July 9th, children from various churches in the Diocese and beyond gathered at Good Shepherd Church in Scranton for our annual Bishop’s Day with Kids, where they learned just what it takes for ordinary people to become heroes by following the teaching of Jesus and taking small steps to improve their life and the life of others around them.

According to Ellyn Sifatar, one of the creators of the theme, “Superheroes are included in so many forms of popular culture that kids are exposed to. The idea for the theme of ‘Called to be Heroes’ was put into action because we thought that the kids would really be able to connect with the concept of heroes and how they serve while at the same time making connections to their Christian beliefs.”

To kick off the day, Bible stories were shared that emphasized the importance of certain life-long lessons, told from both the adult and child’s perspective (with much thanks to Bishop Paul Marshall’s hat collection). Topics such as sharing, supporting, and identifying with other people were stressed upon as the day progressed through fun-filled activities.

“What do heroes do?” They protect. They serve their community. They shine light on subjects to reveal the truth. So with this in mind, the kids all made tool-belts that would help them gain their own sense of strength and power. Symbolic images such as shields, to protect, and a ‘TRUTH’ belt buckle were carried with them for the rest of the day.

Faster than a speeding bullet. More powerful than a locomotive. Able to leap tall buildings in a single bound. It’s a bird! It’s a plane! Actually, it was everyone running around outside showing off his or her super-speed. Thankfully, the weather was beautiful and the sun was shining bright so that the stories that were told could be implemented in exciting outdoor games. The true physical test was the extreme game of “Bread, Fish, Basket” an adaptation on the classic game “Rock, Paper, Scissors” that combined the aspect of chance with the athleticism of tag. But this was pleasantly surprising of how everyone seemed to be involved in the activities. Both the youngest and oldest of the kids were engaged everything going on. It was also great to have the kids from all of the different parishes get to interact and connect with people their own age,” said Ellyn.

So they may not be a Wonder-woman or a Superman. They may not be able to fly or move mountains with the touch of their little finger. We, as people of the twenty-first century, have this narrow-minded perception that only people that can fly or have super-strength can be heroes. Most people simply can’t do those things (at least without a radioactive spider biting them). It is up to ordinary, everyday people to step up and take the call to action. By the end of the exhausting, yet incredibly entertaining day, the children were excited and ready to follow Jesus and step forth to their own calling: to be a hero for the sake of the Gospel.
Giant yard sale brings community together

BY JANINE UNGVARSKY

After 40-plus years of marriage and a couple of kids, John and Theresa Maira found themselves with lots of odds and ends around the house that needed a new home. Four summers ago, they found a way to clean out some of those items, make a little bit of money and make some new friends, all in a couple hours a month.

The Mairas are regular participants in the Giant Neighborhood Yard Sales at Trinity, West Pittston. More than 30 vendors fill the church’s side yard on the first Saturday of each month from May through October and hundreds of shoppers come to hunt for bargains. The sale has become so popular and well-known that many nearby residents hold their own yard sales the same day, drawing even more people into the area and onto Trinity’s grounds.

This is the eighth year Trinity’s Parish Life Events Team has run the yard sales, and while they do serve as a fund-raiser for the church and a source of income for the vendors, most of those involved say one of the best things about the sale is the sense of community it builds.

“We never did anything like this before and we don’t go to other sales, only this one,” said Theresa Maira. “We enjoy talking to everyone and it’s just such a great atmosphere. The people are so nice, and it’s just such a great atmosphere for the LGBT community to come together to handle all aspects of the sale, from serving homemade wimpies, meatball and sausage sandwiches and hot dogs with homemade chili sauce to manning Trinity’s own yard sale table and the bake sale. The variety of tasks that need to be done means that parishioners of all ages, abilities and availability can pitch in to help, whether it’s baking in advance or helping on the grounds the day of the sale.”

The sales also provide an opportunity for Trinity’s parish community to come together to handle all aspects of the sale, from serving homemade wimpies, meatball and sausage sandwiches and hot dogs with homemade chili sauce to manning Trinity’s own yard sale table and the bake sale. The variety of tasks that need to be done means that parishioners of all ages, abilities and availability can pitch in to help, whether it’s baking in advance or helping on the grounds the day of the sale.

“Everyone knows everyone else and all the vendors and other people here are so nice,” she said. “It makes me feel good to come here and have people buying stuff that I made. It’s just a good little market for me.”

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“The Mairas are regular parishioners at Trinity and have been involved in the parish life events team since the sales began. Major said seeing his congregation and the larger community coming together is exactly what he hoped for when the yard sales began.

“These were started as a way of building community both inside and outside the church, which is part of our mission, and it’s done that,” Major said. “Many of the vendors and the volunteers come back month after month and they get to know each other. It’s just a positive event for our vendors, our customers, the neighborhood and our parish community.”

Fr. Daniel C. Gunn honored with Rainbow Award

BY JOHN DAWE (reprinted with permission)

Fr. Daniel Gunn, rector of St. Stephen’s Pro-cathedral, was the 2011 recipient of the Rainbow Alliance Outstanding Faith Community Supporter. Each year the Northeastern Pennsylvania Rainbow Alliance honors individuals and organizations that, through their tireless work and dedication to equality, have improved the quality of life in the Northeastern Pennsylvania region for lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender (LGBT) individuals, their families and their allies.

Recipients are nominated for demonstrating outstanding commitment and leadership in creating a welcoming and inviting atmosphere for the LGBT community to thrive and flourish.

Gunn has served as the faith and spirituality liaison for the NEPA Rainbow Alliance since 2008 and is frequently seen in print and broadcast media as a voice of support of LGBT equality from the faith-based community.

“When a local clergy person issued a release condemning LGBT parishioners, Rev. Gunn was right there to offer a gay-supportive view point,” recalls John Dawe, Rainbow Alliance executive director. “When WVIA Public Broadcasting called us to be part of a Gay in NEPA show, it was a no-brainer to have him represent supportive clergy. He and his wife Ada have been supporters of the organization since joining the community.”

Also in attendance was the Hon. Phyllis Mundy, the Rev. Peter D’Angio (rector of St. Luke’s, Scranton) and the Rev. John Hartman (rector of Grace, Kingston), lending a strong Episcopal presence to the evening. The award was presented by Anthony T. P. Brooks, Executive Director of the Luzerne County Historical Society and Verger for St. Stephen’s. Christopher A. Doherty, Mayor of Scranton, received the award for Outstanding Public Official. Martin Rothchild received the award for Outstanding Student Leaders. Garrett Bryant, Co-founder of Pride of NEPA, received the award for Outstanding Community Volunteer, and Shawn Killian and Jessica Rothchild received the award for Outstanding Student Leaders.

Fr. Daniel Gunn, second from left seated, and wife Ada, third from left surrounded by friends.

Live God’s love: tell what you have seen and heard
One step at a time

BY CANON ANNE KITCH

Some part of my house is perpetually in disarray. The laundry is done but the floors aren’t vacuumed. The bills have been paid (or at least sorted), but the car is past due for an oil change. I am often overwhelmed by this state of affairs. This morning, I do not have time to tackle the jungle in our backyard which is about to take over the patio…again. As I stoop to pull out one of many weeds, I almost stop, thinking, “why bother?” What difference will pulling out one weed on my way to work when I really need to devote an afternoon to clearing the entire flower bed? It takes a concerted effort for me to complete the motion and wrest the wild interloper from amid the cone flowers. After all, the only way to weed the garden is one weed at a time.

I find I am often seduced into inaction by the whisper, “why bother?” When I focus on all that needs to be done, I sometimes experience a kind of spiritual paralysis. My mind recites a litany of all that is left “undone.” Dust bunnies remain undiscovered under the bed, unfilled papers claim the top of the filing cabinet, and incomplete mending projects now have squatters’ rights to one end of the ironing board. The light-bulb in the downstairs bathroom has been out for three days; I haven’t completed “spring cleaning” the attic which I began in June, filled out the fall sports forms, called the contractor about the door repair, or removed the wax stain from a pair of dress pants. There is no end to this litany.

This seduction, like most seductions, misleads me with half-truths. It is true my house will never be perfectly in order; there are not enough hours in the day to get caught up on all my tasks. However, it is also true that pulling one weed is far from pointless.

Recently I discovered a disciple I call “one thing at a time.” I think of it as a spiritual discipline as well as a practical one. When I am confronted by endless tasks and sense the litany of my shortcomings beginning, I literally stop and take a breath. I choose one thing I can do and begin. I liken it to putting one foot in front of the other.

The gospel of John offers us the image of Jesus as the Good Shepherd, who calls his sheep by name, and who “goes out ahead of them, and the sheep follow him because they know his voice.” (John 10:4) The Good Shepherd walks ahead, leading the way, calling the others to follow. This shepherd makes a path, leaves footprints if you will, as a guide. The sheep do not see the entire path. Rather, they follow the path and yet still water the green pastures, one step at a time.

Being a follower of Christ does not mean discovering the path we are meant to be on and then walking it unerringly, hoping to not stray. Being a follower means following Christ, one step at a time. We cannot see the entire way ahead; the path is not set. If it were, we would hardly need a guide. Rather, the Shepherd is a trail blazer, finding the way when no way seems possible. We must

Welcome Ellyn Siftar to the staff

Please welcome Ellyn Siftar, the new Missioner for Youth and Young Adult Ministries. Ellyn is the former Director of Children and Youth Ministries at Trinity, Bethesda where she worked for five years. At Trinity, Ellyn oversaw the development of a strong Godly Play program and the growth of the middle and high school youth formation programs. Ellyn is a mother of four children, ages 3 to 16, and is married to Andrew McIntosh. Her best teen memory centers around a two week mission trip to the west coast and singing in Bethlehem’s First Presbyterian Church choir. Prior to her position at Trinity, Ellyn was employed by the River Valley Waldorf School. She has volunteered for diocesan youth events for the past six years.

Ellyn is delighted to join the diocesan staff. She stated, “I look forward to working with our diocesan youth and their leaders, walking together with Christ on a journey of ministry and discovery!” Presently she is working on a new blog, planning the youth presence at Diocesan Convention, Happening ’20, Bishop’s Days with Youth, Vocare and next summer’s Senior High Mission Trip.

Parishes awarded EAM grants

FROM EPISCOPAL APPALACHIAN MINISTRIES’ MOUNTAIN ECHOES

Good Shepherd & John the Evangelist Episcopal Church’s Food Pantry in Milford was awarded a grant to help with the purchase of picnic tables and benches for the waiting area of the food pantry. Good Shepherd and St. John the Evangelist Episcopal Church entered into a contract with the Ecumenical Food Pantry (EFP), that has been in existence for 25 years. It is the sole charitable dispenser of groceries for Pike County. Recipients come from Pike County and the surrounding area. On average, about 100 people each week, line up for hours to receive groceries from the food pantry. The project that the grant is helping to fund is to create a more comfortable area for the recipients of the food pantry to wait while they are being admitted into the food pantry. This same area will also serve the at times as an “outdoor classroom” for the Good Shepherd Child Care Center single parents. For more information about this ministry, please contact: The Rev. Dr. William J. McGinty, 570-491-5336; Email: williammcginty@hotmail.com.

Trinity Episcopal Church Outreach Ministry, West Pittston were granted funds to help with a certification of a music teacher for this outreach ministry. One area of great need and new advocacy support for children focuses on very young children of the Greater Pittston and surrounding areas who have little support or no opportunity at all to perform the music of their culture with accuracy.

In order to serve as an advocate for young children in a way that contributes to and fosters age-appropriate development while helping to preserve and enhance culture, Trinity Episcopal Church launched a new ministry named, “The Children’s MUSiCare Project” in the hope of successfully affording instructional, age-appropriate music environments that contribute to the best overall development of children with this need. With direction from the internationally established Center for Music and Young Children “The Children’s MUSiCare Project” has become further established as one of Trinity’s Good Neighbor Outreach Ministries.

Trinity Church received a grant from EAM in 2008 in the amount of $1,200 to train and certify teachers for this ministry and to provide families with limited resources the opportunity to participate in this program free of charge.

For more information about Music Care please contact: The Rev. John C. Major; Email: majort31@msn.com; Phone: 570-654-3261
What's happening...

September
Sept. 2: First Friday Art Walk, St. Luke’s, Lebanon Featured artist is Jerome Wright.
Sept. 3: First Saturday Giant Neighborhood Yard Sales, Trinity, West Pittston. 8:00 A.M. to 2:00 P.M. The Every First Saturday sales run from May–October with at least 30–40+ vendors and hundreds of the regions neighbors stopping to browse, shop and enjoy our “famous” chili dogs.
Sept. 3: St. John’s ECW Yard Sale, Ashland, 8:00 A.M. to noon.
Sept. 3: Bluegrass Mass, St. James’, Dundaff 6:30 P.M.
Sept. 4: Bishop Jack, Trinity and St. Philip’s, Lansford
Sept. 6: Deadline for October Diocesan Life
Sept. 10: Leadership Program for Musicians, 9:00 A.M. to 3:00 P.M. Registration required. Cost for full year course load is $500 plus materials. Individual courses are $200 each. Some scholarship funds are available. Register online now at www.diobeth.org. Deadline for Registration is September 5.
Sept. 10: COM Meeting/Retreat, Kirby House, Mountaintop 8:30 A.M.
Sept. 10: 4th Annual Prayer Shawl Gathering, Nativity, Bethlehem 9:30 A.M. to 12:30 P.M. Brunch will be served. RSVP to Sally Snyder via the church office at 610-865-0727 by August 27th.
Sept. 11: Bishop Paul, St. Paul’s, Montrose
Sept. 11: Interfaith Service of Remembrance and Hope, Trinity, Easton 2:00 P.M. Members of the Metropolitan Opera Chorus, a chamber orchestra and Easton Area High School’s Chorus will be providing the music under the direction of Dale Grandfield.
Sept. 11: Trinity Soup Kitchen Benefit Concert, Trinity, Bethlehem 4:00 P.M. Featuring Dave Fry, Dina Hall, Piper’s Request and The Drucken-millers. Cost is $25.00, please call 610-867-4741 to reserve your tickets. Reception to follow.
Sept. 11: 9/11 Service of Remembrance and Reconciliation, Nativity, Bethlehem 5:00 P.M. Bishop Paul will be the preacher.
Sept. 12: Evangelism Committee Meeting, Trinity, Easton 6:30 P.M.
Sept. 13: Archdeacon’s Visit, St. Paul’s, Troy 6:00 P.M.
Sept. 17: Trinity Book Sale, Trinity, Bethlehem 9:00 A.M. to 2:00 P.M.
Sept. 17: Bishop’s School, St. Stephen’s Pro-Cathedral, Wilkes-Barre 10:00 A.M.
Sept. 18: Bishop Jack, St. Paul’s, Troy
Sept. 18: Trinity Book Sale, Trinity, Bethlehem noon to 4:00 P.M.
Sept. 19: Standing Committee, Diocesan House, Bethlehem 2:00 P.M.
Sept. 20: New Hope Anniversary
Sept. 20: Archdeacon’s Visit, St. Mark’s, New Milford 6:00 P.M.
Sept. 21: Ember Day
Sept. 23: Incorporated Trustees, Nativity, 10:00 A.M.
Sept. 24: Leadership Program for Musicians, 9:00 A.M. to 3:00 P.M.
Sept. 24: Bishop’s School, St. Stephen’s Pro-Cathedral, Wilkes-Barre 10:00 A.M.
Sept. 25: Bishop Paul, Trinity, Pottsville
Sept. 25: Trinity Concert Series, Trinity, Pottsville 4:00 P.M. Features Jennifer Laubach, mezzo-soprano and Carol Comune, pianist
Sept. 25-27: Clergy Retreat, Jesuit Center, Wernersville 5:00 P.M. Sunday to Lunch on Tuesday
Sept. 26: Congregational Renewal Meeting, Grace, Kingston 7:00 P.M.
Sept. 27: Pre-Convention meeting, St. Alban’s, Sinking Spring 7:00 P.M.
Sept. 29: Pre-Convention meeting, Epiphany, Clarks Summit 7:00 P.M.
Sept. 29: Community Supper, Redeemer, Sayre 4:00 P.M. A silver anniversary celebration in honor of it’s 25 years of continuous outreach.

October
Oct. 1: Leadership Program for Musicians, 9:00 A.M. to 3:00 P.M.
Oct. 1: Bishop’s School, St. Stephen’s Pro-Cathedral, Wilkes-Barre 10:00 A.M.
Oct. 1: First Saturday Giant Neighborhood Yard Sales, Trinity, West Pittston. 8:00 A.M. to 2:00 P.M. The Every First Saturday sales run from May–October with at least 30–40+ vendors and hundreds of the regions neighbors stopping to browse, shop and enjoy our “famous” chili dogs.
Oct. 2: Bishop Paul, St. Mark’s, New Milford
Oct. 2: St. Francis Evensong and Blessing of Pets, Nativity, Bethlehem 5:00 P.M.
Oct. 3: Standing Committee Meeting, Diocesan House 2:00 P.M.
Oct. 4: Pre-Convention Meeting.

Diocesan Life

September 25: Christ, Reading: The Rev. John R. Francis, Rector and The Rev. Douglas Moyer, Assistant Priest
Ministry to Older Adults

Anglican Communion

www.anglicancommunion.org

Pray for

Diocese of Bethlehem www.diobeth.org
September 4: St. John’s, Palmerton: The Rev. Abraham Vallati, Priest-in-Charge
Health Ministries
September 11: St. Joseph’s, Pen Argyl and St. Mary's, Wind Gap: The Rev. Dr. Jane Gaeta, Priest-in-Charge
Incorporated Trustees
God the compassionate one, whose loving care extends to all the world, we remember this day your children of many nations and many faiths whose lives were cut short by the fierce flames of anger and hatred. Console those who continue to suffer and grieve, and give them comfort and hope as they look to the future. Out of what we have endured, give us the grace to examine our relationships with those who perceive us as the enemy, and show our leaders the way to use our power to serve the good of all for the healing of the nations. This we ask through Jesus Christ our Lord who, in reconciling love, was lifted up from the earth that he might draw all things to himself. Amen.
September 18: Trinity, Pottsville: The Rev. James Rinehart, Rector
Liturgy and Music Commission
September 25: Christ, Reading: The Rev. John R. Francis, Rector and The Rev. Douglas Moyer, Assistant Priest

Ministry to Older Adults

Anglican Communion

www.anglicancommunion.org

Diocese of Kajo Keji www.kajokeji.anglican.org
September 25: Southern Virginia: The Rt. Rev. Herman Hollerith

www.diobeth.org Live God’s love; tell what you have seen and heard
St. Peter’s, Tunkhannock dedicates new building

This summer has brought a number of changes in staff and position descriptions at Diocesan House. As many of you know, Canon Jane Teter, Canon for Ministries, formally retired in June. She is now the Honorary Canon Pastor and will be handling retired clergy issues among other duties for Bishop Paul. Archdeacon Howard Stringfellow will take over Jane’s duties for transition ministries and candidacy for ministry.

We welcome the Rev. Charles Cesaretti who will be working more formally on our expanding congregational renewal initiatives as a part-time staff member. As noted elsewhere, we also welcome Ellyn Siftar as Missioner of Youth and Young Adults. As you might note in this issue, we have also had a wonderful intern, Katherine Bortz, working with us this summer in our communication ministry.

On Sunday, July 31st, Assistant Bishop Jack Croneberger led the 10:15am Holy Eucharist and festive celebration of Bruce Bengtson’s fortieth anniversary as organist of Christ Church, Reading, upon the day of his retirement. Retired rector Walter Krieger joined current rector John Francis and assistant rector Doug Moyer in thanking Bruce and Ruth Anne Bengtson for their incredible talent, hard work, and joyful dedication to the mission and ministry of Christ Church. His son Keith represented Charles Sutton, Father Krieger’s predecessor. Bruce served under all three rectors during his tenure.

The service began with a congregational favorite prelude played by Bruce, Prelude on Brother James’ Air by Searle Wright, who was one of Bruce Bengtson’s professors at Union, and ended with a postlude favorite of the congregation played by Bruce, as only he could do, the Toccata from Organ Symphony V. Father Francis’ sermon reviewed the incredible blessing Bruce’s extensive and very generous ministry has been for Christ Church and for him personally and how much he will be missed. Bruce and Ruth Anne are looking forward to a well-earned and very enjoyable retirement together.

Following the service, the parish put on a delicious hors d’oeuvre reception in the parish hall for the entire congregation. At 1 pm, parish members and friends of Bruce and Ruth Anne at the Abraham Lincoln Hotel in Reading attended a lavish by invitation luncheon. Speakers included James Wilson, the newly appointed organist and choirmaster of Christ Church, choir member and extraordinary soprano soloist Runette Gabrielle, Bishop Jack, a colleague and fellow class member of Bruce and Ruth Anne at Union Theological Seminary, where the Bengtson’s first met, Dr. Francis Williamson, who taught at Albright College, and the Bengtson’s children Matt Bengtson and Sallie Mercer. Ruth Anne had put together a wonderful photographic presentation of Bruce’s career, which was presented on power point. The Christ Church Choir, led by Jim Wilson, offered a joyful rendition of, “We are the very Model of Today’s Episcopalian.”

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