

thrive!

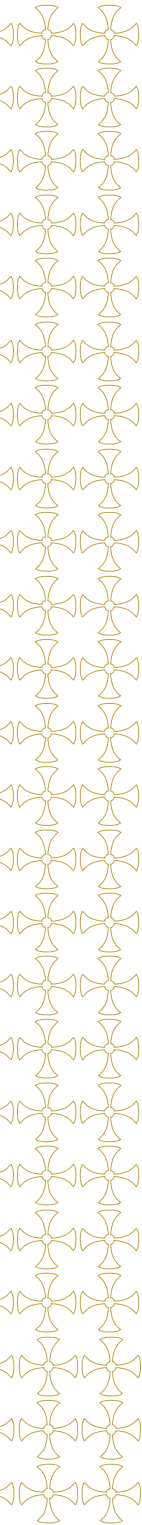


[AUTUMN 2012]

THE EPISCOPAL
DIOCESE
OF CHICAGO
MAGAZINE

Generation Next: Young Leaders on the Rise
Faithful Farmer: Feeding Bodies Feeds a Soul
Interfaith Allies: Solidarity Through Service





Letter from Bishop Lee



*Speaking the truth in love,
we must grow up in every
way...into Christ.*

{EPHESIANS 4:15}

*The conversation is the
relationship.*

{DAVID WHYTE}

Welcome to *Thrive!* This is the first issue of what I hope will be an important way of continuing the conversation I believe God longs to have with all of us. Thrive is the title we have chosen for both this publication and a new program aimed at promoting the health and vigor of congregations throughout the Diocese of Chicago. That’s not accidental.

I believe that God meets us first and foremost in human relationships and that relationships are what the congregations of the church are all about. I’m convinced that the church is essentially a grand conversation between us and the God who has created us in love and who wants nothing more than for the human community to flourish.

The institutional church is far from the only place where that conversation happens, but at its best it is a place where we can experience a relationship with God that will change us and equip us to change the world. At its heart, this is what Thrive the program is all about.

The world God has created teaches us, among other things, that thriving depends on diversity. The Bible uses the human body with its balance of complex physical systems as an image of the health and wholeness God wants for the church. The interdependence of ecosystems and species surely suggests that what God is up to in creation is an increasingly wonderful complexity and a wild diversity. Monocultures do not thrive for long. The Diocese of Chicago echoes that wild diversity in its people, languages spoken, and spectrum of age, class, race and economic backgrounds. What, then, aside from being followers of Jesus Christ, holds us together? The Letter to the Ephesians tells us that reverent communication, “speaking the truth in love,” is the key to keeping all this diversity moving toward a common goal, that of health and abundant life.

I hope you will enjoy the conversation that is *Thrive!*. Here are the stories of women and men and children who make the Diocese of Chicago what it is in all of its beautiful diversity. I hope you enjoy this issue of *Thrive!* and its accounts of the life-changing conversations that God is having with us today. Please share it with friends and neighbors, and may it spark the conversations God most wants us to have here and throughout the world.

In Christ,

+Jeffrey

thrive!

THE EPISCOPAL DIOCESE OF CHICAGO’S MAGAZINE [AUTUMN ‘12]



New Generation 02

The Very Rev. Dr. Fulton Porter, above, is among the cadre of young leaders, lay and ordained, who are bringing energy and fresh perspective to congregations, organizations and communities across the Diocese of Chicago.

table of contents

- 08 The Harvest is Plentiful**
A farmer and aspiring priest feeds people
- 12 Making Church Matter**
Diocese unveils vitality initiative
- 15 Learning What to Say**
Lay chaplains study delicate art
- 18 A Joyful Gathering**
Hispanic congregations celebrate
- 22 Interfaith Initiatives**
Partnerships promote common good
- 25 Diocese of Quincy**
Building relationships, considering reunion
- 26 A Place of Grace and Gladness**
Capital Campaign for St. James Commons
- 28 An Ecumenical Pilgrimage**
Bishop Epting looks back on long career
- 29 To Leave a Legacy, Begin Today**
Announcing the Society of Miriam

2012 Volume 1, No. 1

©2012 Episcopal Diocese of Chicago. All rights reserved.

Contact us

St. James Commons
65 E Huron Street
Chicago, IL 60611

(312) 751-4200

episcopalchicago.org

On our cover

Scott Lybrand, director of the Julian Year, outside Church of the Atonement, Chicago.
Photo by Adam Frieberg

SAVE THESE DATES [2013]

January 19

Outreach Summit, St. Mark’s, Glen Ellyn

An open conversation about the future of the diocese’s ministry for social justice, peace, local outreach and global mission

March 23 & 26

Clergy Quiet Days

Times for prayer and restoration of spirit in anticipation of Holy Week

May 16

Bishop’s Associates Luncheon, Union League Club, Chicago

The annual gathering of Bishop’s Associates and bestowing of the Bishop’s Awards

September 15

Block Party on the Plaza, St. James Commons

A party on the new plaza at St. James Commons. Come one, come all!

October 20-22

Clergy Conference, University of St. Mary of the Lake, Mundelein, IL

A time of fellowship and refreshment for the clergy of the diocese

November 22-23

Diocesan Convention, Westin Lombard Yorktown Center

Business meeting, workshops, children’s programs, exhibits. The family reunion of the Diocese of Chicago



Taking the Lead

YOUNG LEADERS BRING
PASSION AND FRESH PERSPECTIVE
TO MINISTRIES NEW AND OLD

By Jim Naughton, Photos by Adam Frieberg

“The point is to touch people.” The Rev. Heidi Haverkamp speaks that simple, declarative sentence in the midst of a conversation about Sunday morning Eucharists at The Episcopal Church of St. Benedict in Bolingbrook, but the words could easily serve as the motto for a cadre of young leaders, lay and ordained, who are transforming parishes, organizations and communities across the Diocese of Chicago.

At a time when the Episcopal Church is striving to raise up a new generation of leaders, and dioceses around the country are contemplating initiatives aimed at reaching out to young adults, the Diocese of Chicago is experiencing a renaissance of youthful leadership. These young leaders are active in congregations across the diocese, in the ministries of Episcopal Charities and Community Services, in the work of Episcopal Service Corps and on the staff of Bishop Jeffrey Lee. They also play key roles in schools, community development organizations and other nonprofits throughout northern Illinois.

“When I look around the diocese, I am very impressed with the people in my age cohort and what they have been doing,” says Haverkamp, 36. “There is this vibrancy, this commitment. There’s a can-do attitude.”

Though they have followed unique paths into their ministries and serve in distinctively different social and economic contexts, young leaders in the diocese tend to have several key experiences in common. Many were drawn to the Episcopal Church because it accepts people whom other churches have turned away. Most drew encouragement at an important moment from a particular parish, program or individual. To a person, they have known what it is like to identify their gifts and to put those gifts to God’s service. Now they are encouraging others to do the same.

They can speak as authoritatively as anyone in the church about what draws young leaders into ministry, what sustains them in their work and what obstacles stand in their way.



As vicar of St. Benedict’s, Heidi Haverkamp (left and above) has energized worship and brought a new emphasis to Christian formation.

“This is a passion of mine...to help them find out what their passion is, and to pull that out of them.”

— *Scott Lybrand*



Scott Lybrand, director of the Julian Year, sits on the steps of the Julian House in Rogers Park.

Scott Lybrand began attending an Episcopal Church after the traumatic experience of being driven from the church of his childhood after publicly disclosing that he is gay. A law student at the University of Chicago, he found solace and sustenance in the liturgy, but he also found it difficult to get more deeply involved in the parish community.

“As a young lay person with no collar who hadn’t been in that particular parish for 20 years, there was nothing for me to do,” he says. “I came with a lot of education and some training and some abilities and I hit a brick wall.”

He spent some time in a non-denominational church in which young leaders were “actively identified and folded into the congregation,” but non-denominational worship didn’t move him, and he brought these insights back to the Episcopal Church where he found a home at the Church of the Atonement and a job as director of the Julian Year.

Named for the medieval mystic Julian of Norwich, the Julian Year is a program of Episcopal Charities and Community Services and Episcopal Service Corps (ESC). Like the 22 other ESC programs nationwide, the Julian Year offers young adults, most of them recent college graduates, the opportunity to spend a year living in a Christian community, working for justice in their host communities and developing their spiritual lives.

“This is a passion of mine, to find those young leaders, to help them find out what their passion is, and to pull that out of them,” Lybrand says of his work with the 20 young people who are often referred to as “the Julians.” “It is not about making good little Episcopalians, although there is nothing wrong with that—I am

a good little Episcopalian—it’s a matter of meeting them where they are and helping them understand they have everything they need to do the work of justice, the work of the church.

“We are so afraid of scaring young people off that we are afraid of asking anything of them,” he says. “That’s something that, because of my experiences, I don’t have the patience for anymore.”

The Very Rev. Dr. Fulton Porter, rector of St. Thomas Episcopal Church, names two significant figures in the story of his vocation: The Rt. Rev. Dorsey Henderson, former bishop of the Diocese of Upper South Carolina, who told him the church had room for bivocational priests, and the Rev. Richard Tolliver, rector of St. Edmund’s Episcopal Church and a longtime leader of community development efforts on the city’s south side, who encouraged his interest in community development.

Porter and his mother became Episcopalians after his parents had divorced and his mother no longer felt comfortable in their Roman Catholic parish. He’d gone through medical school while in the Army, and worked in Army hospitals before graduating from Seabury Western Theological Seminary and settling in Chicago.

Porter brought his interest in community development to St. Thomas, a parish that was comfortable with a priest who worked part-time in the parish and full-time as a doctor, in 2005. “The initial thing for me, besides getting to know the people, was making sure the spiritual foundation was strong,” he says. “If the spiritual foundation isn’t strong, nothing else that you do will stand. We spent two or three years on that.”



“There is this vibrancy, this commitment. There’s a can-do attitude.”

— *Heidi Haverkamp*



Katy Knoer of Kenilworth invests her time in international, civic and educational activities, and at Christ Church, Winnetka.

The foundation is apparently plenty strong, because Porter and the people of St. Thomas support a number of vibrant ministries. “At different times we’ve had a legal referral clinic, food relief ministry and noon prayer,” Porter says. “We have a computer lab that is up and running.” St. Thomas is also involved with three other organizations in the Renaissance Collaborative, which provides housing and job training to formerly homeless people, and, through its Senior Village initiative, provides support to grandparents raising their grandchildren.

Lately, however, Porter has focused particular attention on the St. Thomas Community Development Corporation and its plan for a \$309 million Chicago Sports Village on the site of what would have been the Olympic Village had Chicago won its bid to hold the 2012 summer games. If all goes well it will include an indoor track and golf facilities, a skate park and a hockey rink.

Members of the congregation have been supportive of him, and he has been supportive of them.

“I tell them my job is to support you in your ministry,” Porter says. “God has implanted visions in your heads as well. Bring those to me and we will see what we can do to make those a reality.”

It is no accident that young leaders flourish in the Diocese of Chicago, says Heidi Haverkamp. “There is great support here.” She is in a position to know.

Haverkamp, who studied at Seabury and the University of Chicago’s Divinity School, became rector of St. Benedict’s, a parish that struggles to pay its mortgage, right after ordination.

“[Being a parish priest] can be very lonely work,” she says. “Anything that helps you feel not alone is great. Being able to share your experiences and know you are not

the only one going through something is important. And when you are in the middle of a crisis being able to call a more experienced priest and say, ‘Help! What do I do?’ is important, too.”

The diocese’s Making Excellent Disciples program provided her with an almost instant support system. The program, made possible by a grant from the Lilly Endowment, provides five years of pastoral leadership experience and mentoring for newly ordained clergy. By reducing participants’ anxiety, it allows them to focus on their work.

Haverkamp arrived at St. Benedict’s with a basic philosophy: “Have fun with what you are good at. Don’t focus on what you are not good at or what the congregation is not good at. When people are having a good time, good things happen. Things grow. Ground everyone in prayer and the ways that Jesus taught us to live.”

She has energized the worship at St. Benedict’s, and brought a new emphasis to Christian formation. She’s particularly proud of her racially diverse parish’s lay-led series on race, the church and society, called Grace and Race.

“I want to know what gifts other people have,” she says. “I want to help them to use them and share them...It is exciting for me to see them rise up and become leaders alongside me.”

The parish is not without its challenges, she says, but adds: “When you walk into St Benedict’s there is this sense that the Holy Spirit is present. There is a sense that people walk the talk in this place.”

Katy Knoer doesn’t walk the talk; she runs it. A member of Christ Church, Winnetka, where her husband, Dietrich, is senior warden and she served on the recent rector search committee, Knoer is raising five children between the ages of 5 and 14 and serving on more boards simultaneously



Fulton Porter, rector of St. Thomas Episcopal Church, is a medical doctor at Franciscan St. James Health.

than most people manage in a lifetime.

“A lot of the decisions that I make about what I will do with my time stem one hundred percent from my very, very deep-seated sense of gratitude for the blessings that I have received from God,” she says.

Currently she is serving on the board of Feed the Dream, a charity started by a friend who had seen the ravages of malnutrition among children under five and women of childbearing years in indigenous populations in rural parts of Guatemala; wrapping up a second term on the executive board of the parent volunteer association of the Cook County public school that four of her children attend; and doing the thankless work of a building review commissioner in the Village of Kenilworth.

“We review demolition applications and evaluate historical significance,” she says. “It can be a little contentious.”

Recently, because she isn’t busy, she agreed to serve on a grassroots citizens’ committee working on a ballot amendment that would bring home rule governance

to Kenilworth.

Like most lay people, Knoer ministers more in her community than in her church, but she says that her family’s deep involvement in Christ Church and the church’s excellent preaching and liturgy help to sustain her other efforts. Because she volunteers so widely, Knoer has particular insight into the difficulty that churches face in drawing young parents more deeply into ministry. The primary problem, she says, is that these parents already have so many demands on their time.

“People who have school-age children feed the kids, get them off to school, and then the first thing they turn to is fitness,” Knoer says. “Running. Yoga. Then there are volunteer activities at school that are incumbent on many families.”

“So the church has a unique struggle with young leaders because of the tremendous competition for the hours in their day. We need to offer a Gospel message that resonates with young people if we hope to make Christian service a higher priority in busy lives.” ✝



THE HARVEST IS PLENTIFUL

A Farmer & Aspiring Priest Feeds People

Story & photos by Jennifer Baskerville-Burrows



Nadia Stefko, a “city kid from Pittsburgh,” works on an organic farm while studying for the priesthood. She seeks the connection between the meals we eat at home and the meal we eat in church.

Most days, Nadia Stefko rises at 5 a.m., reads Morning Prayer with her husband and then sets off on her hour-long drive to work. She begins with a 7 a.m. meeting with her crew to review the day’s tasks and then is off to the fields to sow, harvest and tend the crops that will feed some three hundred families. Her days are filled with harvesting tomatoes, moving irrigation pipes, feeding pigs, washing chicken eggs and directing her crew. As it turns out, this is excellent training for work in the church.

Many things can be grown on a farm, and Nadia Stefko is proving that the next generation of church leadership is one of them. A thirty-year-old University of Chicago master of divinity student and aspirant to the priesthood, Nadia is a crew leader at Sandhill Organics, a farm located at an ecovillage in Grayslake, Illinois, called Prairie Crossing. Her vocation is rooted in the transformative connection between the hands that break bread at Eucharist and the hands that pull food from the earth.

At a time when knowing the source of our food, shopping at farmers’ markets and learning once again how to cook from scratch are gaining importance, Nadia found it disconcerting that the Episcopal Church, with its rich tradition of Eucharistic table fellowship, would be nearly silent

about the meals we eat at home. “Christianity is the only major tradition without dietary laws,” says Nadia. “My master’s thesis was all about exploring how the meals at church and the meals at home enhance each other.”

Though Nadia is equally at ease planting heirloom lettuces with a mechanical transplanter as she is acolyting at Grace Church, Oak Park, where she also serves on the vestry, her calling to be a “farmer priest” still comes as a surprise to her. “I grew up in Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania—I’m a city kid.” Like young adults often do, she even left the church for a few years after earning her undergraduate degree at Notre Dame. Thinking she could “save the world through justice work,” Nadia had a stint doing media relations and advocacy for workers’ rights in Washington, DC. When she returned to church, she began to see the connections between justice and faith. Nadia was brought to Chicago by her husband’s career (Steve Thorngate, who is an associate editor for *The Christian Century*) and an opportunity for her to earn a master of divinity degree at the University of Chicago. She took an internship at Salute Vineyard Farm in Woodstock as an interesting way to pass time for a few months before seminary started—and she loved it.

Her days at the divinity school did more than give her the time to study scripture, church history



and pastoral care. The experience ignited a call to ordained ministry and rekindled a desire to get back to the land. Nadia quickly honed in on the deep roots Christianity has in agriculture and notes that “this connection to the earth, the cycles of seasonality, and gathering together at table is what the church came out of, and in large parts of the world, it is still who we are.”

It wasn’t long before Nadia’s studies, experiences as a hospital chaplain intern, and longing to return to the farm led her to wondering if there was a place for her in church leadership. Could she be called to breaking bread and preaching the good news of Jesus, who understood that food was more than mere metaphor but the source of everlasting life? Could she be called to growing wholesome food for people’s tables Monday through Saturday and presiding at the Eucharistic table on Sunday?

These are important questions not only for Nadia but also for a church imagining new ways to be a community. Nadia is finding that sharing and talking about food can be a powerful entree to conversations about faith. “People know that eating has a lot to do with faithful living.” Her sermons about food and faith seem to give people permission to share stories about their grandparents growing food, canning, keeping chickens and cooking the old recipes. These are activities that

form communities, create traditions and help make us who we are, not unlike our faith lives.

But while many churches around the country and right here in the Diocese of Chicago have community gardens and are growing fruits and vegetables to feed the hungry, Nadia dreams of something even more radical. She imagines herself working full-time on a farm owned or supported by a parish and growing food for that community. She sees possibilities in farm-based, intentional living communities for young adults like the Abundant Table Project in California. Ever the advocate for worker justice, she also wants to address the economic issues and pastoral needs of those who work so hard to grow our food—people who are largely invisible to us but make it possible for us to live.

Watching Nadia troubleshoot personnel issues within her crew, prioritize farm duties in quickly changing weather and equipment situations, and seeing her delight in the washing of 800 heads of lettuce and the preparation of fields for the winter, it would appear that the skills of farm work would indeed transfer to leading a community of faith. Nadia admits that the hardest part of her work on the farm isn’t the physical labor but keeping the morale of her team up even when she isn’t feeling 100%. “My job is to help people stay in the game because this is



“People know that eating has a lot to do with faithful living.”

hard work, and not everyone is going to love it all of the time. I had no idea how much of what I do on this farm would be about leadership and management. It is turning out to be great ministry training.”

Presbyterian theologian Frederick Buechner described vocation as “the place where your deep gladness meets the world’s great need,” and that definition seems particularly apt for Nadia. Though still in the early stages of discerning a call to ordination, she hopes that as the church opens itself to new forms of ministry, she will have a place to offer her gifts to a hungry world. ✚



Diocese of Chicago Focuses on Church Vitality

MAKING CHURCH MATTER

BY LU STANTON LEÓN

*Coaching congregations
to offer “a gift beyond measure”
to a skeptical world*



Why go to church? More and more Americans can't come up with a good reason. According to a recent Pew Research Center study, the percentage of Americans who don't identify with any religion continues to grow, with one-fifth of the population—and a third of adults under 30—religiously unaffiliated. Among American adults who say religion is either very or somewhat important in their lives, two-thirds say they attend religious services at least once a month, while one-third report attending less often.

Bishop Jeffrey Lee and the Diocese of Chicago are working to change that scenario. In January the diocese will introduce Thrive, a congregational vitality initiative to help congregations become places of greater energy and joy. The two-year pilot-program is designed to strengthen and challenge clergy and lay leadership in ways that transform their ministries and the congregations they serve.

“I don't think we *haven't* been about the vitality of our congregations, but I'm not sure we've been strategically focused,” said Susan Czolgosz, associate for congregational vitality and transitions in the Diocese of Chicago. “With Bishop Lee's vision of the church and a total makeover of the bishop's staff, the vitality of our congregations is job number one. We are talking about a holistic, strategic and focused approach to

creating vital congregations in our diocese.”

Citing the Pew survey, Czolgosz said the decline in church affiliation isn't surprising.

“We should have been more focused on vitality a long time ago. We're kind of like that proverbial tale of the frog and a pot of water. If you put a frog into a pot of boiling water, it jumps out, but if you put the frog in a pot of cold water and slowly turn up the heat, the frog stays put and slowly cooks to death. We've been in the pot since the late 1950s or 60s, and we've finally recognized that the heat is being turned up.”

The Rev. Jim Steen, diocesan director of ministries, said, “There are some common denominators in vital congregations. People really deal with one another at more than a superficial level. There is a willingness to engage serious questions, both faith and leadership questions. I see them as places where people aren't making nice all the time. They are places that are full of joy. They are congregations that are focused outward and are more about who is not there than who is. They know who they are as a community and they can articulate their core values.”

Is there a possibility for vitality for every congregation? Maybe not.

“The truth is you can't force people to be vital,” Steen said. “There are places that don't want to change. In many congregations, the

biggest single factor is having a priest who understands the need for vitality and how to work collaboratively with leadership to achieve it. The Thrive program is geared to those congregations that have a serious hope for growth and who want to be part of a larger community of learning.”

With a focus on nurturing thriving communities of faith, the executive team of the bishop’s staff (the directors of ministries, operations and networking) is also thinking outside the box by getting outside the diocesan offices in downtown Chicago.

“A congregation recently held a Vitality Sunday at which the executive team spent the day worshipping, leading workshops and meeting with leaders,” Steen recounts. “I saw an excitement in that parish that shocked me. The bishop’s staff had worked with the leadership of this parish



articulated by our bishop,” Steen said, “which is to transform lives by fostering an encounter with the dying and rising of Jesus Christ. Anchored by this calling, we seek to further the New Testament witness to grow churches, form Christians, and change the world.”

“In a culture where many options compete for people’s time and commitment, it isn’t enough for us to be confident that what we offer is of ultimate value,” Steen said. “We must also develop tools that will enable us to meet people where they are and show others that they will find a gift beyond measure if they join us. As one priest of our diocese succinctly put it in a recent conversation, ‘In order to succeed in our mission, we must give people compelling reasons to be in church.’ Supporting forward-looking, outward-reaching communities of faith is a good place to start.” ✝



for a couple of years, but on Vitality Sunday I saw that they had slowly begun to have the conversations that they had avoided in the past. It showed me that it may take a long time to do it, but a congregation can change.”

Czolgosz added: “There are places that want to stay where they’ve been for a long, long time. We need those congregations that are vital to be a witness to others. We need to show that the church has something to offer people, something that meets their needs right now. It is about creating communities of deep spiritual exploration. All of this requires leadership that will take risks.”

To that end, Thrive aims to be not only a congregational development program but also an opportunity for personal and corporate transformation.

“Thrive is designed to support the mission of the church as



Learning what to say

At Bishop Anderson House, lay chaplains study “active listening”



By Lu Stanton León

I DON’T KNOW WHAT TO SAY. That feeling can be paralyzing, particularly when dealing with someone who is sick or facing the end of life. The problem is compounded when we also don’t know how to listen.

During the past 20-plus years, the Lay Chaplain Training Program at Bishop Anderson House has taught at least 300 people what to say *and* how to listen as they provide pastoral care to the sick in hospitals, nursing homes, congregations and hospice programs. Bishop Anderson House is an Episcopal ministry that annually serves more than 10,000 people from every religious tradition in the Chicago area.

“The lay chaplain’s program was an amazing experience. I found it transformative,” said Alison McIntire, who was a member of St. James Cathedral in Chicago when she took the course in 2009. “It helps people be more reflective and deepen their skills to make their ministry more effective. It’s a way to improve how to be with people so, when you are visiting, you can be most open to them and to God.”

Ann Ryba, project coordinator for Bishop Anderson House, agreed. She took the course in the spring of 2012.

“To me, the class with the most impact was a fantastic presentation

on active listening. To listen to someone and reflect back on what they are saying. It helps you be able to respond. Now that I’ve taken this course I’m a better listener,” Ryba said. “A lot of what we learned is it is not about me; it’s about the person I’m with. We learn about people with addiction, people at the end of life. I did my internship at Warren Barr Pavilion, an assisted living facility. It made a huge difference in how I communicate with people.”

Benefits of the program extend way beyond lay chaplain activities.

“I’m already a better friend, a better wife, a better mom, from going through the course and from meeting other people going through the course,” Ryba said. “What an inspiring group of people.”

The 12-week program offers a semester of basic training in pastoral care techniques and sensitivity training. It combines didactic classes taught by experts in their fields with opportunities for practical applications, which can be visits to hospitals, soup kitchens, home-bound/elderly congregants, nursing homes, or any setting agreed upon by the pastoral supervisor and the trainee. In addition to the two-hour weekly class sessions, participants must do a field placement and commit at least two hours per week in the practice of supervised ministry.



Drawing on the resources of the Illinois Medical District, course topics include the theological rationale for pastoral care, listening and counseling, a medical view of illness, older adults, cultural diversity, and loss and death.

Some of the program topics are similar to those taught in Clinical Pastoral Education, a graduate-level theological and professional training program. In fact, Ryba said many people who enter Bishop Anderson House's lay chaplaincy program use it as a way of discerning their call to ministry, whether lay or ordained. At least four people who completed the course went on to become priests, and 11 became deacons.

Ryba, a member of St. Michael's Episcopal Church in Barrington, said five people from her parish took the class.

"In our case, our rector wasn't able to do all the pastoral care," she said. "The five people who took the course became the pastoral care team at our parish. Two people went on to become deacons. The course is a huge gateway to discernment."

Lay chaplaincy classes are taught at Bishop Anderson House, a small, two-story building located

at Rush University Medical Center on the West Side of Chicago. Bishop Anderson House's mission is "provide pastoral care by comforting the sick and supporting the people who care for them." Staff includes two full-time chaplains, one part-time chaplain, and Ryba as a program coordinator. The lay chaplaincy program is one of the many unique ministries provided there. Others include sharing teddy bears with sick children and women in trauma, holding hands with the elderly, advocating for health care reform, and the ministry of the Rev. Trenton Pitcher with the All Angels Guild of the Deaf.

People who attend the Bishop Anderson House lay chaplaincy program are sponsored by their rector, who determines their field work. The program costs \$300, which is usually paid by the sponsoring parish or religious institution; scholarships are available. The intent is that graduates of the class go back into their parishes and visit shut-ins or make hospital visits.

When McIntire moved to Chicago in 2006 and began attending St. James Cathedral, she was intent on continuing her work as a lay Eucharistic minister. She

had completed one year of Education for Ministry (EfM) and been a lay Eucharistic minister at her former parish in Washington, D.C. (St. John's, Lafayette Square). At that time, she said, St. James had no such program. The Cathedral's vicar suggested Bishop Anderson House's lay chaplaincy program.

"Without a doubt, I felt more confident after taking the classes," McIntire said. "Thinking about the issue of not knowing what to say, one of my takeaways from the program is the need to 'get over myself.' By that I mean it is easy to get caught up in our own self-consciousness and worry about how we come across. But it's a ministry of presence, of being with people. Especially in a hospital setting, you need to be aware of the other person's needs. It's a good reminder not to go in and say, 'How are you?' Or 'How are you feeling?' There's a good chance they're not feeling well and they are tired of talking about it. When you walk into a room you should be very observant. What books have they been reading? What else is in the room? Pay attention to their response to you and know when it's time for you to go. It's important to recognize whose needs are being met."

After completing the lay chaplain training program, McIntire revived a pastoral care ministry at St. James Cathedral. She credits the lay chaplain training program with giving her the courage to do it.

"I was able to start a pastoral care ministry because of what I

"I've been talking about this program for years, but oh my gosh, the presentations are terrific and all of the presenters are top-notch in their field." Ryba said. "They make a two-hour presentation for a small stipend, and they are so passionate. They are fabulous."

The small classes — usually 10 to 15 students — lead to intimate discussions about all aspects of communication. Ryba said the session on non-combative, non-violent communication was particularly helpful, calling it "stunning."

"I'm not combative," she said, "but I usually shut down. I learned how to stay in conversation and to move forward."

McIntire said the non-combative communication class helps you discover "ways to communicate what you're feeling in a more loving way, in ways that help the other person hear what you are saying."

Bishop Anderson House's Lay Chaplain Training program is among only a handful of such programs in the country. Ryba is trying to expand the program by introducing it to member congregations of the Lutheran Synod of Metropolitan Chicago.

"The program has always been open to all, and those of many faith traditions have graduated from the class," Ryba said. "This new effort builds upon Called to Common Mission (the agreement that established full communion) between the Episcopal and Lutheran churches. It is a result of the close partnership of Diocese of Chicago Bishop Jeffrey Lee and Bishop Wayne Miller, bishop of the

"I'm already a better friend, a better wife, a better mom from going through the course."

learned in the Bishop Anderson lay chaplains program," McIntire said. "It had been dormant for some time, and Dean (Joy) Rogers asked me to start it. I would not have had the confidence without the courses and the knowledge I gained from Bishop Anderson House."

McIntire's enthusiasm for lay chaplain training is matched by Ryba, who has a long history with Bishop Anderson House. She has been actively involved there since 1988, helping with fundraising and serving as a member and president of the board of trustees. Her new, part-time job as project coordinator led her to sign up for the lay chaplains program.

Metropolitan Chicago Synod of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America. Bishop Anderson House Executive Director Jay Risk initiated dialogue with Bishop Miller to try to serve the Chicago Lutheran congregations as well as our Episcopal parishioners."

To that end, Ryba is cold-calling Lutheran congregations, trying to spread the word about the value of the lay chaplain training program.

McIntire, too, is spreading the word by trying to plant a program off-shoot in the Diocese of Washington.

"Our mission," she said, "is to equip people to carry out their ministry in the world." ✚



“Tenemos a Dios y uno y al otro”

Hispanic Congregations Celebrate

[Photos by Vincent Johnson]



n October 27, more than 600 members of five Hispanic communities in the Episcopal Diocese of Chicago gathered at St. James Cathedral to renew their baptismal vows and celebrate the confirmation of 26 new Episcopalians.

Bishop Jeffrey Lee and Bishop Victor Scantlebury, interim bishop of the Diocese of Central Ecuador and retired assistant bishop of the Diocese of Chicago, celebrated the Eucharist with the people of Cristo Rey Mission Hispania on Chicago’s West Side, Parroquia Episcopal de San Marcos en Glen Ellyn (a year-old mission of St. Mark’s Episcopal Church in Glen Ellyn), Nuestra Señora de las Americas on Chicago’s West Side, Santa Teresa de Avila on Chicago’s South Side and Nuestra Señora de Guadalupe in

Waukegan. The Rev. Liz Muñoz, the Bishop’s Preaching Fellow at St. James Cathedral, preached to a packed sanctuary (see page 20).

On October 28, the celebration continued at a service and feast commemorating the tenth anniversary of Nuestra Señora de Guadalupe in Waukegan. The Rt. Rev. George Cuncell, bishop of New Jersey and former rector of Nuestra Señora’s sister parish, the Church of Holy Spirit in Lake Forest, returned to preach at the festive occasion.

To learn more about Hispanic ministry in the Diocese of Chicago, please talk with the Rev. Alvaro Araica, associate for Hispanic ministries, at 773-443-8189. ✙





SERMÓN POR LA REVERENDA LIZ MUÑOZ {27 DE OCTUBRE, 2012}

“San Juan 14:15-21: Amándonos y no simplemente aguantándonos”

Al principio existía la Palabra y la Palabra estaba junto a Dios, y la Palabra era Dios.

Así comienza el evangelio de San Juan con el primer capítulo, primer versículo.

Los que profesamos ser Cristianos reconocemos que La Palabra encarnada entró a la historia humana hace unos dos

mil años en un pueblito de Nazaret. Y esta palabra encarnada la reconocemos en la persona divina de Jesucristo.

En el evangelio de hoy Jesús, el Verbo Encarnado, nos da una palabra muy importante para poder seguirlo como sus discípulos y como un pueblo consagrado a Dios. Yo sé que esta palabra es muy importante porque se repite cinco veces en los seis versículos que escuchamos hoy. Es una palabra que relacionamos con las emociones del corazón y esa palabra es “amar.”

Jesucristo comienza el discurso con sus discípulos con el verbo amar. Si me aman, seguirán mis mandamientos. En los evangelios

de San Marcos, Mateo y Lucas, Jesucristo una y otra vez nos ha dicho que los mandamientos de Dios, los mandamientos que el nos encomienda seguir, se pueden resumir en dos mandamientos: Amen a Dios sobre todas las cosas y amen a su prójimo como se aman a sí mismos.

Pero en el evangelio de San Juan, Jesús no encomienda algo más. Jesucristo dice amen se uno al otro como yo los he amado (Juan 13:34-35).

Esto es bastante importante y quiero tomar un poco de tiempo con esta palabra “amar” que Cristo requiere de sus discípulos porque es mucho más que un sentimiento o un acción. Es realmente como somos llamados a vivir nuestras vidas.

En inglés se usa mucho esta palabra amar o “love”, sea que nos estemos refiriendo a un ser querido o un objeto. I love my mother. I love my friend. I love chocolate. I love my new house. Puede ser un poco confuso entonces de lo que significa esta palabra.

En español nos limitamos a usar esa palabra sólo cuando estamos expresando nuestro cariño o afección para las personas. Amo a mi papa. Amo a mi amiga. Amo a mi esposo. Todo es amor pero no todo es lo mismo. El amor que uno expresa para su pareja es distinto al amor que uno expresa para sus padres y madre o hijas e hijos.

En el primer siglo, en el mundo de Jesús, cuando se hablaba de diferentes tipos de amor, se usaba diferentes palabras. Ἔρως (eros), era el amor físico que se expresa entre una pareja. στοργή (storgē) era el amor que se expresaba entre miembros de una familia, padres con sus hijos. φιλία (philia), indica una clase de amor global, utilizado como amor entre familia o amigos. Este amor incluye elementos como lealtad a amigos, familia y comunidad y requiere la virtud, la igualdad y la familiaridad.

Pero el amor que se consideraba hasta más profundo que este era ἀγάπη (agápē). En griego se refiere con frecuencia a un afecto más amplio que la atracción sugerido por “eros” y que se usa para expresar el amor verdadero. Ese amor donde uno está dispuesto a ligarse con otra persona hasta el final, sin condiciones. Comentaristas cristianos han ampliado la definición griega original para abarcar un total compromiso o amor de sacrificio por el bien de la persona amada.

Agape. Y esta es la palabra, ἀγάπη, es la que Jesús usa cinco veces en el texto del evangelio que escuchamos hoy. Este amor es la clase de amor que el demostró a todos en su ministerio, su muerte y resurrección. Es la clase de amor que nos manda a compartir a todos los que somos bautizados en su cuerpo.

Y la realidad es no es fácil. En mi última parroquia una de las feligreses compartió que uno de los momentos en la misa

que le causaba gran preocupación ocurría cuando yo daba la oración del ofertorio: “Anden en amor como Cristo nos amó, y se entrego a si mismo por nosotros, una ofrenda y sacrificio perfecto ante Dios.”

Ella dijo, “Es que hay días que apenas tolero a mi familia, y andar por el mundo con esa clase de amor, pues realmente se me hace bien difícil. Tal vez sería más fácil alcanzar la meta si dijera, “Aguántense unos a los otros como Cristo nos aguanto.”

Yo creo que Jesucristo bien conoce las debilidades de sus discípulos, así como conoces nuestras virtudes. Por eso nos prometió que iba mandar el Espíritu Santo. La palabra exacta que Jesús usa en este evangelio Paráclito. Paráclito significa más que defensor. Significa intercesor, abogado, consolador, un ser que camina al par de nosotros.

Este intercesor, abogado, consolador que nos mandó Jesucristo no llegó para defendernos de Dios sino de nosotros mismos cuando somos absorbidos por las ilusiones de este mundo quebrantado. El Espíritu Santo nos recuerda a quienes pertenecemos, quienes somos, y todo lo divino que podemos alcanzar. Como una palomita en susurrando en nuestro oído: Recuerda que tú estás creada en la imagen de Dios y llevas esa llama divina. Así también la lleva cada ser humano. No te olvides de los mandamientos de amar a Dios y a tu prójimo. Y si a veces si tú olvidas y fallas, no es una medida de lo que vales sino una oportunidad para aprender y crecer.

“Y tenemos pruebas en este mundo de la presencia de este Espíritu Santo. Mi confesor me dijo que sabemos cuándo se siente ese espíritu santo porque nuestros corazones crecen en lugar de hacerse pequeñitos y a la misma vez los deseos de nuestros egos disminuyen. Y sabemos cuándo se manifiesta porque como San Pablo nos dice “el Espíritu produce el amor, alegría, paz, paciencia, amabilidad, bondad, fidelidad, humildad y dominio propio.” (Galatas 22-23.)

Finalmente, el Espíritu Santo es para todos y llegó a una comunidad diversa. Y para recordarnos y alentarnos tenemos oportunidades sagradas como hoy de reunirnos y renovar nuestras promesas bautismales.

Y en especial para los que se van a confirmar hoy quiero remarcar que las promesas que van hacer hoy es cosa seria. Es cosa de toda la vida, y hoy nos reunimos con ustedes, renovando nuestras promesas bautismales que incluyen amarnos unos a los otros como a nosotros mismos y respetar la dignidad de cada ser humano. No somos huérfanos en esta vida. Tenemos a Dios y uno y al otro. A veces aguantándonos pero siempre amándonos unos a los otros para alcanzar el amor divino.

Amén.

Projects Across Diocese Unite Children of Abraham In Service, Mutual Support

By Jim Naughton

Around the Diocese of Chicago in the coming weeks, Episcopalians will be attending Thanksgiving services with Lutheran friends, harvesting produce and working in a temporary homeless shelter with Jewish colleagues, and supporting Muslim neighbors who needed help in getting permission to build a new mosque.

At a time when ideologies rooted in religion are sowing hatred and division, Episcopal clergy and lay people across northern Illinois are waging reconciliation, sometimes quite literally from the ground up.

“Working together, we can do things that we wouldn’t be able to do otherwise,” says Nancy Baughman, who helped organize the participation of St. Elisabeth’s Church in Glencoe and their neighbors at AM Shalom Synagogue in a rotating homeless shelter.

“The more that we can do as parishes to host and participate in interfaith gatherings, the more that we pick up fresh ideas from other communities,” says Jim Schaal, who coordinates the flourishing community garden at the Church of St. Paul & the Redeemer in Hyde Park. “And the better we know people, the easier it is to build those friendships and grow them into partnerships.”

* * *

Robert Neville of KAM Isaiah Israel Synagogue is the apostle of locally grown food in Hyde Park. The synagogue established a community garden to grow food for local soup kitchens and received a grant from the Chicago Community Trust to persuade other congregations to do the same. St. Paul & the Redeemer jumped at the opportunity.

“In February, we rented some equipment, took up

sod, built bed frames and brought in a truck load of compost and a truck load of wood chips and set up the whole garden,” Schaal says. “We dedicated the garden on Earth Day with a Rogation Day procession. By late April we were planting in earnest.”

The gardens are designed to make a statement about the congregations that support them, says the Rev. Peter Lane, rector at St. Paul & the Redeemer. “Ours is in the shape of our nave. There is an octagonal altar made of wood that is similar to the wood inside the church at one end, and the baptismal font from the old St. Paul’s Church [which burned down in 1956] at the other.”

In between is a 1,400-square-foot space that burgeoned this fall with Swiss chard, collards and kale, bordered by two rows of tomatoes and squash woven through trellises to create the feeling of an outdoor room.

Members of the two congregations have sown and reaped side by side. “We’ve had as many as 25 people out on a big work day to spread compost or to plant,” Schaal says. And the relationships aren’t confined to the garden. “I make an effort to go to special services like Rosh Hashanah. They joined us for that dedication Sunday and have joined us for bringing the harvest in at our liturgy.”

The garden has been a boon to local soup kitchens, which have received 1,000 pounds of food, and a blessing to St. Paul’s, which held a well-subscribed vacation Bible school amidst its vegetables.

“It has become a new way in which our parish is present in a public way,” Schaal says.

* * *

For more than 40 years the Islamic community in DeKalb met for prayer in a small bungalow so nondescript that neighbors didn’t realize there was a mosque in their midst. Last year, however, after nearby Northern Illinois University began recruiting more energetically in Islamic countries, the community outgrew its space, and that’s when Dr. Shakeel Ahmad called the Rev. Stacy Walker-Frontjes, rector at St. Paul’s Church.

“They were interested in meeting in our parish hall,” Walker-Frontjes says. “So their board met with our vestry. We had a very interesting talk with one another. Both communities were really struck by the experience. ‘Wow, we can really have this conversation with one another.’ It felt very holy, very sacred.”

The parish hall, as it turned out, was too small, but the conversation didn’t end there. The leaders of the mosque called back in a few months and told Walker-Frontjes that they wanted to replace their small bungalow with a larger one. Knowing how controversial the construction of mosques had been in other parts of the country, they wanted to solicit community support and hoped they could have public hearings at St. Paul’s.

Walker-Frontjes said yes, and so began the congregation’s involvement as friends and advocates for the new mosque. St. Paul’s hosted two public hearings on the plans. Walker-Frontjes testified before a zoning board and the city council on the mosque’s behalf, and paid a call on her alderman as well.

“We really have come to understand this interfaith friendship with our Islamic neighbors as loving our neighbors as ourselves,” she says. “We can share our space with these other people of faith and help them in their time of need. Also we were very excited that there was this potential for future relationship with one another.”

Though its construction occasioned a story in *USA Today*, the DeKalb mosque never encountered the impassioned resistance that has faced mosque construction in other parts of the country. Most of the concerns were typical to any construction project: Will it change the residential character of the neighborhood? Will construction damage existing structures?

St. Paul’s willingness to take a risk on behalf of its neighbors has paid dividends in the congregation. “I think the process of engaging and befriending people who are in many outward ways very different



“This isn’t simply giving money to a talked-about but unseen problem. It’s helping people on the most personal level possible.”



Building the interfaith garden. Photo courtesy of St. Paul & the Redeemer.

from us prepared the congregation to have more serious discussions about congregational life in general,” Walker-Frontjes says.

Not long after conversations about the mosque, the parish took up the sometimes divisive issue of whether to bless same-sex relationships and civil unions. After a thorough conversation, they decided to proceed.

* * *

Interfaith or ecumenical activities don’t often make news. Usually, they consist of the quiet but essential work of building relationships, worshipping together and collaborating in service. The Rev. George Smith and St. Mark’s Church in Glen Ellyn are hard at this work with their Lutheran neighbors.

“There is one church,” says Smith, who is rector at St. Mark’s. “We know that. But the reality is we have often made silos. There is a common mission. There are common interests. By working together we can really strengthen each other and our mission.”

St. Mark’s and St. Barnabas Episcopal Church have joined with three Lutheran churches in what is known as the OneChurch program. It started small with a pulpit swap in February. “We all enjoyed it,” says Smith, who preached at St. Luke Lutheran Church. “It was fun to be in each other’s churches.”

Later St. Mark’s vestry met with its counterparts from the four other churches in the program. “It was well attended and people got to

meet each other,” Smith says. “One of the comments was, ‘Why haven’t we done this sooner?’ ”

Next the churches collaborated, collecting canned goods for a local food bank by wheeling a shopping cart along the route of a local Fourth of July parade and working together on middle school and junior high programs. On October 20, the five churches cosponsored a “Pumpkinfest” that raised money for the Glen Ellyn Children’s Resource Center, which provides academic support for low-income children, and Public Action to Deliver Shelter, which works to end homelessness.

On Thanksgiving eve, the parishes will collaborate on a single service at which the offering will be shared among Episcopal Relief and Development and Lutheran World Service.

“We are just beginning,” Smith says. “We have the framework to do more.”

* * *

Family Promise operates rotating shelters for homeless families in churches, mosques and synagogues across the country. The congregations that belong to Family Promise’s Interfaith Hospitality Network play host to as many as four families or 14 people for a week at a time, several times a year.

The program is popular in North Shore communities. St. Elisabeth’s Church in Glencoe wanted to participate, but its building wasn’t up to code. Enter Temple AM Shalom, which has plenty of room but was happy to have St. Elisabeth’s help in offering hospitality.

While Family Promise provides beds, bedding and training for volunteers, St. Elisabeth’s and AM Shalom provided movers, room decorators, daytime hosts, overnight hosts, a menu coordinator and lots of folks who made food. “It was probably 30 people or more,” says Nancy Baughman, one of the three coordinators of the effort.

The families left AM Shalom at 7 a.m., the children to school and the adults to look for work or receive employment counseling. They returned before 6 p.m., and a small, temporary community coalesced around them. Parents of the parish brought their children to play with the children in the Family Promise program.

“This was acting out your Christianity in the most important way possible,” says Charles Chadd, another coordinator of the program. “This isn’t simply giving money to a talked-about but unseen problem. It’s helping people on the most personal level possible.”

“I have never seen our own congregation so moved by anything that they did,” Baughman says.

The two congregations enjoyed working together so much that they decided to do it again. Family Promise asked them to provide shelter earlier this month, during a week when AM Shalom’s building was in use. But the two congregations solved the problem by reaching out to yet another community of faith.

So, in mid-November, an Episcopal Church and a synagogue played host to a few homeless families in a Lutheran church in nearby Winnetka. ✚

Diocese of Quincy

We are committed to building relationships with each other, even as we explore the complex legal and structural ramifications of reunification.

If you set out to map the Episcopal genome, you’d quickly find the DNA sequences for voicing opinions and voting. Our church was born in the wake of the American Revolution, and the ways we Episcopalians answer God’s call are inextricably intertwined with our belief that laypeople, bishops and clergy share authority in the church.

In the last four years, however, a small group of Episcopalians just a short drive from Chicago have been struggling to regain these essential aspects of their Episcopal birthright. Since 2008, the Episcopal Diocese of Quincy, based in Peoria, has been forging a new identity and mission after its bishop and about 60% of its members broke away to become founders of the conservative Anglican Church of North America. The split had been brewing for some time; the diocese, which did not ordain women to the priesthood, had refused in 2006 to accept the authority of Presiding Bishop Katharine Jefferts Schori.

Today the nine congregations of the Episcopal Diocese of Quincy are experiencing new life in Christ. “We are answering God’s call by building a church for the 21st century in which everyone has a voice and a vote and everyone’s ideas are needed,” said Bishop John Buchanan, who was elected provisional bishop in 2009. “In our churches, people from all walks of life gather to worship, pray and learn together. Our differences are reconciled in Christ and our diversity is our strength.”

New life is just what both the leaders of Quincy and Chicago hope emerges from the reunification talks that the two dioceses have been holding since late 2011. First created by General Convention in 1835, the Diocese of Illinois

comprised the entire state until 1877, when its burgeoning membership merited forming three dioceses—Chicago, Springfield, and Quincy.

“Reunifying the Dioceses of Chicago and Quincy makes practical sense,” said Bishop Jeffrey Lee, “but this is not just a question of what works on paper. Both dioceses are discerning our calls for future ministry, and we are committed to building relationships with each other even as we explore the complex legal and structural ramifications of reunification.”

The Rev. Kristin Orr, dean of the Diocese of Chicago’s Joliet Deanery, which borders the Diocese of Quincy, is doing just that. “We pray for the people of the Diocese of Quincy each week,” says Orr, who is rector of St. John the Evangelist Episcopal Church in Flossmoor. “We are beginning to plan visits and other opportunities that will allow us to know each other better and share our ministry with one another.”

Although talks have been held regularly for nearly a year, their outcome is still not certain. “We don’t yet know if reunification with the Diocese of Quincy is what God has in store for us,” said Lee. “But our process of discernment and the relationships we are building are gifts of the Spirit no matter what. For years we had almost no contact with the people of Quincy, so to welcome them now as our sisters and brothers in Christ is richly fulfilling.”

In keeping with Episcopal polity, the question of reunification will be put to the people. This fall, the Quincy diocesan synod and the Chicago diocesan convention will each discuss the status of reunification talks. A final vote on reunification, which would have to be approved by both governing assemblies and a majority of diocesan bishops and standing committees in the Episcopal Church, could take place during 2013. ✚

THE RENOVATIONS & CAMPAIGN FOR St. James Commons

Next spring, thanks to the Campaign for St. James Commons, Episcopalians in the Diocese of Chicago will be able to gather from across the region at the newly renovated diocesan center in downtown Chicago.

St. James Commons, as the diocesan center and cathedral are now called, will be a place in which the people of the diocese can strengthen their ministry, celebrate their common life, and offer hospitality to their neighbors. It will include a garden and labyrinth on the corner of Wabash and East Huron, an accessible entrance, and a restored water barrier that will safeguard the structural integrity of the plaza for decades to come.

Inside, visitors will find a weather-tight Welcome Center that will connect diocesan offices with the cathedral and lead to a bright, art-filled, technologically sophisticated first floor gallery suitable for receptions, classes and other events. The Great Hall will be outfitted with new bathrooms, a new kitchen, a new elevator, and up-to-date technology. Here, the people of St. James Cathedral will welcome and feed the hungry, and leaders, dignitaries and those in need will find comfortable space in which to hold meetings.

Throughout the Commons, accessible entrances, passageways and meeting spaces will make it possible for all people, regardless of physical ability, to participate fully in the life of the diocese and in community events. Construction at St. James Commons, which began in the fall of 2011 and is expected to be complete in the spring of 2013, uses environmentally sustainable renovation practices, consistent with silver LEED standards, that ensure we steward the earth's resources responsibly.

Generous Episcopalians from across the diocese have made gifts and pledges of nearly \$7 million toward the project's \$8 million goal. To learn more about how to support the Campaign for St. James Commons, please talk with Director of Networking Jennifer Baskerville-Burrows at 312-751-3577 and visit episcopalchicago.org. ✙



THE GREAT HALL



ST. JAMES COMMONS



WELCOME CENTER





An Ecumenical Pilgrimage

By C. Christopher Epting

I have been on an ecumenical pilgrimage for as long as I can remember. I was confirmed in the Episcopal Church as an eleven-year-old, but only after my family and I had already completed a journey from the Baptist Church through the Presbyterian and Methodist churches. During college years, my religious quest took me through courses on “Judaism and Christianity” taught by a Roman Catholic priest who probably rescued me from agnosticism and despair. A course in “non-Western humanities” introduced me to the great religions of the East and began to open my eyes to the similarities and differences between these approaches to the Holy and that of the “Abrahamic siblings,” Judaism, Christianity and Islam.

I headed off to seminary in 1969 still on a religious quest. I would probably have never gotten through the ordination processes of today as I told my bishop that I wasn’t sure I would be ordained but felt drawn to seminary in search of more “answers.” These were the heady days of the ecumenical movement. The World and National Councils of Churches had been formed in the great internationalist spirit of the

post-World War II years which also saw the development of the United Nations and the World Bank.

At Seabury Western Theological Seminary, we read the early documents from “the Consultation on Church Union” (COCU) which was a noble attempt to respond to the challenge of the great Presbyterian divine, Eugene Carson Blake, to the major Protestant denominations in the United States to make one united witness. Eventually this multi-lateral dialogue included the African Methodist Episcopal Church, the African Methodist Episcopal Zion, the Christian Methodists, the Disciples of Christ, The Episcopal Church, the United Methodists, the Presbyterians, and the United Church of Christ.

Vatican II had catapulted the Roman Catholic Church from its initial skepticism about the ecumenical movement into a full-fledged participant and, as an Anglo Catholic, I followed closely the development of the bilateral dialogues known as the Anglican Roman Catholic International Commission (ARCIC) and the Anglican Roman Catholic Commission in the USA (ARCUSA). In our optimism and naivete, many of us thought we’d have this all buttoned-up by about 1980 and there would once again be one, united Christian church!

As a parish priest in the Diocese of Central Florida, I continued my ecumenical involvement by participating in local ecumenical events and ministerial associations. Later, as bishop of Iowa, I became fast friends with the three Iowa bishops of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America (ELCA) as well as the Roman Catholic bishops and other “judicatory heads” of the various communions. We had an annual retreat together and many of us participated in a monthly breakfast to pray together and to stand together on issues ranging from gambling to the death penalty. We lost the first, but beat back the governor’s attempt to reinstitute the death penalty three times in my twelve years in Iowa!

Because of this long-standing interest in ecumenism, I was asked to serve on the General Convention’s Standing Commission on Ecumenical Relations at just the time when the Concordat of Agreement with the ELCA was passed by our church but defeated by theirs in a narrow vote at their Churchwide Assembly. Many of us were devastated at this turn of events, and Presiding Bishop Ed Browning asked me to chair the Episcopal Church’s writing team to revise the implementing documents into what became, in the year 2000, “Called to Common Mission,” the accord that led to full communion between our churches. It was a humbling experience to work with such Lutheran luminaries as Martin Marty and Michael Root and Episcopalians like J. Robert Wright of the General Seminary and Bill Norgren, the ecumenical officer of our church.

During the years since then, with mainline Protestant churches moving in a more progressive direction theologically and the Roman Catholic and Orthodox churches seeming ever more conservative, some have described our time as an “ecumenical winter.” What does the future hold? Two scenarios are possible, it seems to me.

One, we will continue along the slow, patient path toward church unity that has led to such amazing breakthroughs over the last fifty years or, two, the “new reformation” some see foreshadowed in the so-called emergent church may lead to realignments that will result in a unity none of us could have predicted. Stay tuned! ✚

To Leave a Legacy, Begin Today

SOCIETY OF MIRIAM



“It’s not about the size of the gift,” Miriam says. “It is the fact that you gave from your heart to help those in need.”

Miriam Hoover is ninety-nine years old and thinks about the future all the time. Well known for her philanthropic leadership in the Diocese of Chicago, she says, “There will come a day that I will no longer be here. But the work [I have supported] must go on.”

To this end, she has made a charitable bequest to the diocese in her will, and by discussing her plans openly, she hopes to encourage others to do the same. “Life is short and precious. By taking time today to make an estate plan, not only can you care for your family and their needs, but you can provide for those who are less fortunate.”

This vision for the future was shaped by two important people in Miriam’s life, her husband and her mother. Growing up on a farm in Humboldt, Michigan, she says, “Mother encouraged us to give. We didn’t have much money, but she was always feeding people and taking care of people who were alone.” She remembers her mother dropping off food for two widows in the community and sending uncles to cut firewood for them.

As she grew older, her sense of community responsibility expanded. “My gifts have varied from organizations that provide for the less fortunate to educating the next generation to be aware of the needs in our world beyond their own. I’ve had many blessings, but there are many who go without and deserve to have better.”

It was her husband, the late Earl Hoover, who made the Episcopal Church part of Miriam’s community. Raised a Lutheran, she says laughingly, “I have several Lutheran ministers in my family!” Although she initially felt it was important to become an Episcopalian to join her husband, the Episcopal Church quickly earned its own place in her heart. “I enjoy the church for its openness and acceptance of all individuals. It truly reflects the message that everyone is a child of God.”

Throughout their married life, she and her husband supported many Episcopal institutions, including Bishop Anderson House, Seabury Western, Episcopal Charities, and their home parishes in Chicago, Palm Springs, California, and in Pointe Aux Pins, Michigan, where she spends summers. “We enjoyed giving gifts together,” she says. “We were best friends and did everything together.”

So together, they planned for the future. “We planned this gift together,” she says. “A legacy gives an organization the message that their work is still important and must continue on.” And it is this message that makes a legacy gift so important.

To young families making their own plans for the future, she says, “It’s not about the size of the gift; it is the fact that you gave from your heart to help those in need. You are doing the work that God would want you to take on during your lifetime and beyond. From this gift of love, you truly will earn your angel wings.” ✚

Presorted
STANDARD
U.S. Postage Paid
Beaver Dam, WI
Permit No. 577

EPISCOPAL DIOCESE
OF CHICAGO
ST. JAMES COMMONS
65 EAST HURON STREET
CHICAGO, IL 60611

