



Task Force releases report on same-gender blessings

New uniform policy to cover Holy Matrimony and Holy Union

by Anne Clarke Brown

The Task Force on the Blessing of Persons Living in Same-Gender Relationships appointed by Bishop Thomas Ely last October presented its *Report to the Bishop and People of the Diocese of Vermont* in training day/workshops on June 18 at St. James', Arlington and on June 19 at Christ Church, Montpelier. Both days included a morning presentation—with opportunity for discussion—on the recommendations and supporting material in the report by task force co-chair Anne Brown and Bishop Ely.

Three afternoon workshops covered resources for working with congregations, resources (including liturgies) for working with couples, and a discussion of the theology section of the report. Stan Baker, chair of the Resources Committee of the task force, organized the training days and led the session on working with congregations.

Task Force recommendations

The task force's recommendations, which have been accepted by Bishop Ely, fall in three areas: policy, resources and evaluation. Beginning July 1, 2004, the Diocese of Vermont will have a uniform policy governing Holy Matrimony (the solemnization of a civil marriage) and Holy Union (the blessing of a civil union). The policy outlines requirements couples and clergy must meet in order for either service to take place in the church. The terms Holy Matrimony and Holy Union are intended to emphasize the covenantal aspect of sacred trust and commitment witnessed through the liturgy of the church.

Episcopalians are a people of "common prayer," and the task force offers liturgies *for trial use* that will bring the celebration of Holy Union into the life of common prayer in the Diocese of Vermont. In addition, the task force will provide resources to assist congregations in continuing



ACB photo

David Gram (left) of the Associated Press interviews Bishop Tom Ely and Stan Baker about the report from the Task Force on the Blessing of Persons Living in Same-Gender Relationships.

conversations about issues of human sexuality and intimacy, and it will provide resources for clergy and couples preparing for both Holy Matrimony and Holy Union.

To address the task force's recommendation that a process be put in place to evaluate the revised policy, the liturgical and other resources and the experience of congregations, couples and clergy, Bishop Ely has asked the Diocesan Council to establish a committee that will report to the Diocesan Conventions of 2004, 2005, and 2006. The task force and the bishop hope to offer the fruits of this experience to the wider church.

In addition to the recommendations, the full report includes an introductory letter from Bishop Ely; a back-

ground section that outlines the history of General Convention actions and discusses the current situation in the Anglican Communion and the Vermont context; a section on "Theological Considerations" that addresses Anglican theology and interpretation of scripture and their application to the question of blessing same-gender unions [A portion of this section is printed on page K in this issue of the Mountain Echo]; and a section on resources.

The full report may be obtained by contacting the diocesan office (see Page B for contact information), or it may be downloaded in PDF format from the diocesan website, www.dioceseofvermont.org. Several resources are also

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Bishop Tom Ely and a fellow pilgrim talk with their Israeli guide on the Palestinian side of the Israeli "security barrier." Graffiti behind Bishop Ely says, "Paid for by the U.S.A."

Barry R. Howe photo

Bishops visit Palestine and Israel

Group focuses on plight of children and youth

by Maureen Shea

[ENS] "No one is a child here." That was the poignant remark of a teenager in the Remember the Innocents Club in Bethlehem to a delegation of Episcopal bishops and spouses visiting Palestine and Israel May 6-14, 2004.

Vermont Bishop Tom Ely and five other bishops participated in the pilgrimage led by Bishop Thomas Shaw of Massachusetts to Jerusalem and the West Bank. Their goal was to learn more about the effects of the ongoing turmoil on children and young people in the Middle East and the response from the Episcopal and ecumenical community.

The Rt. Rev. Riah Abu Al-Assal, Bishop in Jerusalem, greeted the group upon their arrival. The diocese has thirty-one parishes and supports thirty-four institutions, which include hospitals, clinics, kindergartens, schools, and vocational training programs, as well as institutions for the deaf, the disabled and the elderly.

During the stay, the bishops met with a variety of people, including local clergy, school officials, non-profit leaders, students, and Palestinian and Israeli human rights advocates. The group was inspired by signs of hope in the work that is ongoing in a context of hardship and challenge posed by continued violent conflict.

Education

Despite interruptions because of the intifadas, over 60 Christian schools in Palestine continue to educate Muslims and the dwindling number of Christians. Access to schools has become an increasing problem as the Israelis build a "security barrier" in the West Bank. For some students, the barrier means long waits at checkpoints, and for girls in particular, it can mean an end to education, as their fathers may not want them to go alone but often cannot escort them.

Checkpoints at the barrier are not always near the schools and workplaces, and the

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The Holy Land's people of hope need our solidarity

by the Right Reverend Thomas Clark Ely, Bishop of Vermont

As we approached the checkpoint for our entrance into Bethlehem on the first full day of my recent pilgrimage to Israel/Palestine, I could feel the tightness growing in my stomach. I knew everything would be fine, and yet the thought of a young Israeli soldier with an automatic weapon boarding our bus to check our passports made me nervous and sad and angry all at the same time. Unlike those who live in Bethlehem, our passage through the checkpoint was relatively easy, but it gave me an initiation to an experience that I would hear described over and over again by the Palestinian people as intimidating, degrading, dehumanizing, frustrating and demoralizing. And, try as I might to understand the need for security and the right to self defense on the part of the Israeli government, I could not bring myself to accept that this was the best or only way to deal with the conflict, the fear, the anger, the suspicion, and the separation between people, all of whom have a connection and "claim" on the land.

This first trip to the Holy Land was a moving, troubling, educational and deeply spiritual experience for me. I was ever mindful of—and very grateful for—all the prayers that were being offered for our well-being. Vermonter Henry Carse, who teaches at Saint George's College, explained one of the interpretations of the Jerusalem Cross: the large cross represents the person on pilgrimage to the Holy sites, and the four small crosses represent the pilgrim's community as they support and pray for the pilgrim and the pilgrimage. That sense of community prayer and support was very strong for me, and I thank you for it.

Six more days of pilgrimage followed that first day in Bethlehem, and each was filled with rich and varied experi-

ences that I am still sorting out. Our day in Bethlehem included visits to the Azza Refugee Camp, the Church of the Holy Nativity, the Lutheran "Christmas" Church, and the Holy Land Trust, where we met with Christian and Muslim teenagers who are part of a program called "Remember the Innocents." The program assists young people to hope and work for peace through the practice of non-violence. I was particularly moved by the stories of these young people, who have really never known peace and yet who have hopes and ambitions for their lives that can only be fully realized when there is peace.

Some of the highlights from our other days included:

- A visit to Jacob's Well in Nablus, where we had the opportunity to greet the Patriarch of the Greek Orthodox Church and later met with the Governor of Nablus. The governor spoke about the effects of the Israeli "occupation" on the lives of Palestinians.
- A quick overnight in Nazareth, where we met with several Anglican clergy and heard about their ministries and the challenges they face. It was during this part of the journey, especially along the Jordan Valley Road, that I found myself thinking about the journeys of Jesus and the disciples.
- A visit to the Metzger Kibbutz, an intentional secular Jewish community "co-existing" with their Arab Muslim neighbors. The witness of these communities and their efforts at peaceful

coexistence and cooperation is stunning, especially following an incident in which an Israeli mother and her two children were murdered in an attack by a Palestinian "terrorist."

- A conversation with women who are part of the *Jerusalem Link*, an Israeli/Palestinian women's peace cooperative. The next day they participated in a peace demonstration at the construction site for a portion of the "security wall."

"This first trip to the Holy Land was a moving, troubling, educational and deeply spiritual experience for me."

- A moving conversation in the West Bank village of Beit Umar with Israeli and Palestinian members of a *Bereaved Parents Circle*, all of whom had lost children as a result of the violence and were now united in their efforts to work for peace.
- A pilgrimage to the Old City of Jerusalem, including prayers at the Western Wall and in the Church of the Resurrection.

Old City of Jerusalem, including prayers at the Western Wall and in the Church of the Resurrection.

- A visit to two Anglican-run schools in Ramallah, where we met some wonderful young people, some of whom will be in Maine this summer as part of the *Seeds for Peace* camp.

- A bus tour of the "Jerusalem Envelope" (the portion of the security barrier encircling Jerusalem), led by an Israeli Jew who talked openly about his support of the barrier for security reasons, but also of his opposition to the confiscation of additional Palestinian territory beyond the 1967 border known as the "Green Line."

- A visit and conversation with people involved with Sabeel, a religious grass roots peace organization, heading by the Reverend Naim Ateek, an Anglican priest.

There were many more encounters, many more experiences and powerful sto-



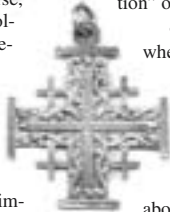
ries to recount from each day of our trip. The violence, the shrinking prospects for peace, the plight of people caught up in conflict, and the constant worry about the future of this land and its people is a troubling thing for me. The Christian population, presence and voice are diminishing in the Holy Land. The ministry of the Anglican Church in schools and hospitals is a vital mission that is under serious threat as a result of work visa restrictions. I know I need to learn and understand more. I need to find ways to share what I experienced and listen to voices from both sides. I plan to go back.

Everywhere we went, we encountered people of hope who asked for our prayers, our presence and our solidarity in the struggle for peace. I have taken their plea seriously, and I invite you to do the same. Learn all you can. Listen to all sides. Challenge assumptions. Urge the active reengagement of the United States in the Road Map for Peace. Visit if you can. Pray and work and give for peace.

Shalom,

+ Thomas

Editor's note: Thanks to Sharon Bartram of St. Mary's, Northfield, for the loan of the Jerusalem cross pictured here. She got it in Jerusalem when visiting her son, who was working on a Ph.D. project there.



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Barry R. Howe photo

Bishop Ely visits with Palestinian children.

Ask Sr. Bible Person

Do you have questions about the Bible?

If so, ask Sr. Bible Person and get the answers!

Dear Sr. Bible Person: Thank you so much for recommending Adam Nicolson's book about the making of the King James Bible. I am about halfway through *God's Secretaries* and am finding it a great way to begin my summer reading. Are there any other items I should be on the lookout for in this book? (By the way, your comments about the Pilgrims' possible objections to golf will not deter me from playing this summer!)

Summer Reader (and Golfer)

Dear Summer Reader: I'm glad you are enjoying the book and I certainly would not want to discourage you from playing golf. As the saying goes, "Some of my best friends are golfers."

One item I would alert you to is another incident involving the Pilgrim Fathers. One of the many ironies that Adam Nicolson elucidates in his book is the fact that the Pilgrims did not like the King James Bible. After several generations in this country, the descendants of the Pilgrims eventually became enamored with the King James Bible, and many Protestants today still consider it to be the "holy-of-holies" in terms of Bible translations. But, as Nicolson points out, the Pilgrim Fathers were adamantly opposed to the King James Version. It was way too royalist for their taste. They preferred the Calvinist translation done in Geneva, Switzerland and known as the "Geneva Bible." That's the Bible the Pilgrims brought with them on the Mayflower. Their anti-royalist hearts were especially warmed by the fact that the Geneva Bible translated "king" as "tyrant." Nice touch, they thought.

On this topic of royal authority, Adam Nicolson does a good job of describing King James as the monarch who strongly

objected to the biblical story of the Hebrew midwives' refusal to comply with Pharaoh's order to kill all male Hebrew babies. King James saw the midwives' refusal to obey the king as an act that encourages sedition—and James wanted none of that!

You might want to refresh your memory about the story that upset King James so much. Read Exodus 1:8-19 and you'll see why the midwives' behavior made James angry. When I get to the part about Shiphrah and Puah, two of the midwives, telling a "white lie" about why they can't kill the Hebrew babies, I think I can hear some of their sister midwives exclaiming, "You go, girl!" It's not surprising that James would see the midwives as being dangerous people. He thought kings should be obeyed unquestioningly—even if it means killing infants.

Of course, the Pilgrim Fathers loved the story about the midwives. It was right up their alley. Anyone who "cocks a snook" at a king is o.k. in their book. (Note: "cock a snook," which sometimes appears as "cock a snoot"—literally, "to thumb the nose or snout at someone"—is the gesture of putting a thumb to one's nose and spreading the five fingers, in order to insult one's opponent; it is also known as a "five finger salute.") I can easily imagine the Mayflower leaving English waters with some of the Pilgrim Fathers standing proudly in the stern of the ship, joyfully "cocking a snook" in the general direction of King James. Then they probably turned to one another and said, "Thou goest, old boy!"

Send questions to Sr. Bible Person in care of the editor [address on Page B].

Remembering Mac McClure

by Scott Perry

My fondest memory of J. Warren McClure—who died in April of this year—was of him in his baby blue Mercedes convertible, picking me up at the gateway to Ocean Reef on Key Largo. Mac was a man who loved his toys, and he loved that car. He took great delight in greeting me with "Chicago, Chicago," one of the 76 tunes his horn would play.

Another of his toys was a wood chipper that he had at his Cedar Beach home. Mac made his own mulch. And that pretty much sums up the man. Sure, he made his own millions, but one image that sticks with Lynn and me is of James Warren McClure cheerfully feeding twigs and ground clutter into his chipper one day when we came for a visit. Sometimes Mac was frugal.

Where it counted, he and Lois were not frugal. They were both strong believers in the "giving with warm hands" philosophy of philanthropy. Don't wait until you're dead. Give while you can still see the good you are accomplishing.

Burlington benefited. Universities and colleges benefited. Libraries and hospitals and the Red Cross benefited. Children benefited. And so did the Episcopal Diocese of Vermont.

Mac came to the Episcopal Church from a Methodist background. After he married Lois, he was confirmed, and he told this story on himself. When he was confirmed at St. Paul's Cathedral in the 1950s, he asked Father Don Woodward, "How high is this church, anyway?" "Oh, about 80 feet," Father Don replied.

Mac and Lois attended St. Paul's for a while (Mac was on the vestry there), but they looked to Trinity in Shelburne as their home church. Whenever Trinity

was offering an 8 o'clock service, that's where they were. Dick Al-drich of Trinity remembers Mac affectionately. "They were weather predictors," he says of Mac and Lois. "In the spring, when they came back from Ocean Reef, we knew it was time for spring clean-up at the church. They were there, side by side with the rest of us."

Mac and Lois helped in the polishing of the brass for the church. When the time came to clean the basement, Mac was there. Dick recalls, "A 6'4" man in a basement with a ceiling of 5'8"—well, Mac banged his head on these beams pretty regularly." At the Saturday morning Bible class with the rector, or later as facilitated by Ken Horseman, Mac and Lois were there. They took their turns cooking and serving breakfast right along with the rest of the members of the Bible class.

They didn't expect any special treatment. "Mac was someone who didn't just talk the talk, he walked the walk," Elaine Horseman remembers. "He was very humorous, and very outspoken about his faith."

Just regular members—except when needs became apparent, the two were in the forefront of those addressing the needs. Mac delighted in offering matching grants for renovating ceilings, replacing plaster, fixing a roof. And in 1998-1999 they provided the primary impetus for the

Continued on Page E



Glimpses

by Charlotte Gibson

Last fall I read the legend of an old wizard who stood on a cliff in a high wind and tried to persuade his followers to do the same. Finally they joined him one by one, and when they were all lined up, he pushed them...and they flew!

I loved the "and they flew" end of the story (not the "pushed them" that preceded it), but after thinking about it decided that a push may sometimes be necessary for flight. I thought of the events of September 11—how everybody rallied together afterwards to help humanity; how people (some in our own parish) have since tried their wings in new ministries.

If what we need now is the courage for sustained flight, we can look to Carole Wageman's powerful sermon. She described a man's conversation with a trapeze "flyer" in the circus, the flyer

insisting that he does nothing to save himself in mid-air—it's his "catcher" who does it all. Carole made the analogy that the sure promise of God's waiting hands is what enables people to fly the highest in life, and without fear.

In a book some of us have been reading together for Lent, Marcus Borg goes beyond these uplifting images of flight. He describes a loving God who is "not somewhere else" but within us and around us at all times, possibly *The God We Never Knew*. With this image of God in mind, we don't need to fly to Him. He is already here. And by means of God's vision and grace, we can help restore His Kingdom of Heaven on earth.

Alleluia.

Charlotte Gibson serves as spiritual growth coordinator at Christ Church, Montpelier. She occasionally writes on spirituality.



Echo wins awards

The Mountain Echo won two awards in the Episcopal Communicators' annual Polly Bond awards program in the "publications below 12,000 circulation" division. The awards were presented at the group's annual conference in early June.

The Ask Sr. Bible Person April 2003 column on the Cecil B. DeMille film, "The Ten Commandments," received an Award of Merit in the humor category, and the photograph of Bishop Barbara Harris from the cover of the December 2003 issue received an honorable mention in the single photo category.

MOUNTAIN ECHO

News of the Episcopal Diocese of Vermont

Anne Clarke Brown, Editor

Contributions of news and photographs are invited and encouraged

Please send such materials to the editor at

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Letters to the Editor (300 words or fewer) and *Opinion* articles are welcome and encouraged on any relevant topic. Did something in an article inspire you, aggravate you, or move you in some way? Share your reactions with other readers. **Letters must have a name and phone number or email address so I can check details, if necessary. Anonymous letters will not be printed, but names may be withheld upon request. Submissions may be edited for reasons of space.**

Anne Clarke Brown, Editor, Mountain Echo

Committee seeks nominees for Diocesan Convention elections

by Mary Lou Ashton

Elections will be held at Diocesan Convention in November for a variety of positions on diocesan committees and boards. We are publishing this information early in the hope of receiving more nominations and suggestions for the bishop's appointed positions [see position listings below].

Please prayerfully consider nominating candidates for these positions if you are a canonically resident clergy or a communicant in good standing—those “who for the previous year have been faithful in corporate worship...and...in working, praying and giving for the spread of the Kingdom of God” (Title 1, Canon 17.4). Also consider nominating yourself for a position that you may be qualified to fill.

Nomination forms are available at the Diocesan Center (863-3431 or 800-286-3437), and they have been sent to all delegates to convention, all parishes (senior wardens) and diocesan committee chairs. The form may also be downloaded from the diocesan website, www.dioceseofvermont.org. Click on “Diocesan Convention 2004” on the home page for the link.

Mail completed forms no later than September 9, to insure your nominee will appear in the Mountain Echo Convention Supplement, to Nominating Committee chair, Mary Lou Ashton, 1473 W. Lakeshore Drive, Colchester, VT 05446. Questions, call Mary Lou at 802-865-9912, or e-mail her at mlavt@aol.com. ❖

Positions to be filled by election at the 2004 Convention

The positions below are those for which the Nominating Committee is seeking nominees for election:

Brookhaven Trustees

Three members to be elected for three-year terms

The Board has full jurisdiction and authority over the management and operation of the Brookhaven Home and School, including the program, discipline and regulation, and the engagement or dismissal of faculty and staff. The Board meets the third Wednesday of the month at 3:30 P.M. Contact Person: The Rev. Diana Collins, President, dianacollins@valley.net.

Diocesan Council

Four at-large members to be elected for two-year terms and two youth representatives to be elected for one year terms

The Bishop and the Council exercise the executive powers of the Diocese between conventions and are responsible for the promotion of the mission of the church. The Council, in consultation with the Treasurer of the Diocese, prepares a comprehensive budget each year for submission to the annual Convention. Of the 26 elected members, 16 are elected by deaneries, 8 are at-large members and 2 are youth members. The Council meets five Saturdays per year at various locations from 10 A.M.–2 P.M. Contact person: Lynn Bates, Canon to the Ordinary (863-3431 or 800-286-3437).

Note: Each deanery should elect a lay or clergy representative to council by August 1, and send the name to the Secretary of Convention.

Ecclesiastical Court

One cleric to be elected to fill an unexpired term to 2005

The five-member court is responsible for conducting trials of cases relating to ecclesiastical discipline of clergy under Title IV of the canons of the national church. At least one member “shall be learned in the law.” There are no regularly scheduled meetings. Contact person: Lynn Bates, Canon to the Ordinary (863-3431 or 800-286-3437).

General Convention

Four clergy deputies and four lay deputies to be elected

The 2006 General Convention is scheduled for June 13-21, in Columbus, Ohio. Deputies are chosen at the diocesan convention not later than 12 months preceding the

opening date of the General Convention, and they serve until their successors are elected. Clerical Deputies must be priests or deacons canonically resident in Vermont. Lay Deputies must be communicants in good standing of a congregation in the diocese. Alternate Deputies will be elected at the 2005 Diocesan Convention.

Oversight and Audit Committee

Two members (1 cleric, 1 lay person) to be elected to three-year terms

The committee of three clergy and three lay persons is responsible for implementing and enforcing the audit, financial reporting, funds management and other requirements of diocesan and national canons relating to diocesan and parish financial management. They provide resources and consulting to parishes and diocesan organizations and are responsible for an annual audit of accounts of the Diocese and Trustees. The committee meets several times a year. Contact person: Jim Harder, Chair (802-775-4368).

Provincial Synod

Two deputies (1 cleric and 1 lay) and two alternates (1 cleric and 1 lay) to be elected

Provincial Synod is the oversight group for programs sponsored by the New England dioceses and also serves as a link between the Province and Executive Council and other national-church groups and activities. Synod consists of the Bishops of the Province plus one clergy and one lay person from each diocese. It generally meets once a year (the morning of Provincial Convocation—always the Friday before Thanksgiving) except in the year of General Convention, when a second meeting is held prior to the Provincial Pre-General-Convention gathering.

Rock Point Board

Three members to be elected to three-year terms and one to fill an unexpired term to 2005; one member to be appointed by the Bishop to a three-year term

The Board is responsible for administration and maintenance of the buildings and grounds of Rock Point. The duties include planning for the use, maintenance, management and security of the property and purchasing and contracting for all goods and services. The Board normally meets every third Wednesday of the month in Burlington. Contact person: Stephen Reyes, President (802-229-1900).

Alcoholism and drug dependency committee offers resources

In response to a resolution approved by the 2003 Diocesan Convention, a new diocesan committee has been formed to address the issues of alcohol and drug dependency among clergy, church staff and laypersons.

The committee initially met under the chairmanship of the Rev. Hugh Tudor-Foley, but with his call out of Vermont, Joe and Penny Hauser have agreed to serve as co-chairs. Joe was director of a substance abuse treatment program in Virginia prior to his retirement to Vermont, and Penny was a psychiatric nurse with extensive experience working with clients with dual diagnosis and women with substance abuse issues.

The primary focus of the committee is

to offer education and support to congregations, using a number of approaches. Workshops/conversations regarding prevention, treatment and recovery can be requested by pastoral care committees, clergy or interested parishioners. Consultation regarding specific questions or concerns can be addressed to the co-chairs at the phone and email listed below. Committee members are available as information and resource support also. Names and addresses will be listed in a future article.

Educational items, along with scripture-based meditations focusing on recovery, will be published periodically in the Mountain Echo. Additional recovery scripture-based meditations are available for congregation newsletters upon request. Contact Joe/Penny Hauser, pnnyhsr@earthlink.net, or 802-773-6404. ❖

Rock Point School Trustees

Four members to be elected to three-year terms

The Board of Trustees has full jurisdiction and authority over the management and operations of Rock Point School, including the curriculum, discipline, regulation and the engagement or dismissal of the faculty and staff. The Board meets quarterly (August, November, February, May), in Burlington. Contact person: John Rouleau, Headmaster (802-863-1104).

Standing Committee

Two members (1 cleric and 1 lay person) to be elected to terms of four years

The Standing Committee—four clergy and four lay persons—is an advisory committee to the bishop and acts in the absence of the bishop as the ecclesiastical authority of the diocese. The committee must consent to ordinations and to episcopal elections in other dioceses. The committee meets the third Tuesday of each month in Randolph, 2:00–4:00 P.M. Contact person: The Rev. John Morris, President (802-333-9725).

Trustees of the Diocese

One member to a term of seven years

The Board of Trustees is responsible for receiving, holding and properly disposing of all assets, real and personal, of the Diocese. In other words, the Board is owner of all diocesan property and is responsible for management of diocesan investments. The Board meets quarterly (January, April, July, October) in Burlington. Contact person: John Larson, President (802-234-5577). ❖

Appointments to be made by the Bishop

If you are interested in one of the ministries below, or know someone who is, please contact the Bishop's office (800-286-3437 or 802-863-3431).

Canons Committee

The Chancellor of the Diocese (ex officio) and at least five other persons for one-year terms.

Commission on Ministry Discernment Committee

Four members (3 clerics, 1 lay person) for three-year terms.

Credentials Committee

The Secretary of Convention and at least two other persons for one-year terms.

Dispatch of Business

The Secretary and Assistant Secretary of Convention, a member of the Credentials Committee and at least three other persons for one-year terms.

Nominating Committee

Eight members for one-year terms.

Resolutions Committee

Six members to be appointed by the Bishop to one-year terms.

Rock Point Summer Conferences Committee

Four members for three year terms; one member to fill an unexpired term to 2005. ❖

Discern your parish's hidden spirit

by Celia A. Hahn

When the woman next to me in the pew rose and exclaimed, "I don't want just to believe in God I want to know God!" she spoke for many people today. Four out of five Episcopalians in one survey said what they most needed from their church was food for their spiritual hunger. It's increasingly clear: today more people bring with them that longing for what is ultimately trustworthy as they venture through your church door.

What isn't so clear to church leaders is how we can do that spiritual work. The Mary/Martha split between spiritual searching and congregational daily life has existed for centuries (see Luke 10:38-42). But unless "Martha" churches can make room in their busyness to rediscover their spiritual center, they will keep losing energy and relevance.

So, realizing that yes, the congregation needs to be a good place to do spiritual work, but no, it often isn't, I felt impelled to find some ways around the "no." I valued the Alban Institute's practical tools for congregations, but felt more than "tools" are needed to find this path. And I appreciated the Shalem Institute's path to a deeper spiritual life, but felt it didn't "touch the ground" of ordinary church life.

I began the Congregational Spirituality research to discern how spirituality and congregational life might be rejoined. In the research, we knew we must take seriously God-at-work in the life of the congregation. We understood "spiritual" to mean anything that speaks about our yearning for or sense of connection with God within the common life of a congregation.

Among the five varied Episcopal churches I worked with to learn more about the spirituality of congregations was the Church of the Ascension in Silver Spring, MD. Reflecting the racial variety blooming in this suburb-becoming-city, Ascension has seen tough times. When committees long headed by the same people needed new leaders, suddenly the increasing variety of parishioners

emerged in leadership positions across the parish! Several retired leaders left. But interviewees said they experienced this diversity as "a sign of a healthy church."

It's "exciting" and "adds to life's beauty," believes Annie, an African-American interviewee at Ascension. Annie sees diversity as an important calling for Ascension—"a very inclusive church, respectful of differences as we try to be the one community. With the changes in the demographics of American society, where people are going to have to accept leadership from all kinds of folks, Ascension is a good example of how this can work."

Our research shows that, indeed, congregations as well as individuals can uncover their hidden spirit. Here are a few practical suggestions based on the results of our research at Alban Institute's Congregational Spirituality Project:

- Ponder the meaning of your church's history (including hard times) for hints about where God is leading you, where your story meets the Story, and how to listen through your liturgy.
- Uncover your church's lay spiritual leaders and let them conduct in-depth interviews of members.
- Reflect prayerfully on your congregation's spirit.
- Discern your congregation's unique gifts, possibly by describing the "angel" of your church (Revelation 2-3).
- Consider which ministries are rooted in your church's being? How do you nurture people to be where they need to be in the midst of the world?

The book narrating the our research, *Uncovering Your Church's Hidden Spirit*, can provide helpful guidance as you discover how to carry out those discernment tasks. The book, published by Alban Institute, can be ordered by calling 800-486-1318 ext 244.

Celia Allison Hahn is The Alban Institute's former editor-in-chief, as well as the director of Alban's Congregational Spirituality Project.

Vermonters train as *via media* leaders

by Lee Alison Crawford

"Were you the kid who got into trouble in Sunday School for asking too many questions? Come join the rest of us." Such is the invitation from Every Voice Network, the creators of a new education and evangelism series. *Via media*, the middle way—but also so-called because it comes to us "via media" in the form of DVDs—is an eight-part series that touches on the essential questions of our faith as Episcopalians, questions about God and creation, Jesus, the Holy Spirit, the Bible, sin, Christian hope, and an Anglican way of being Christian.

Fifty-three people, from churches as far-flung as Buffalo, Montreal, Valdosta, Georgia, and the various New England states, attended a one-day training session on leading the *via media* program at the Episcopal Divinity School in Cambridge on June 14. Almost a quarter of the participants were Vermonters—from Arlington, Bennington, Killington, Northfield, Randolph, Stowe and White River Junction.

Five people from St. John's, Randolph, including Rector Tim Eberhardt, got up at 5:00 A.M. to make the three-hour drive, but they were so enthusiastic about the program

that their early morning wake-up did not bother them. Noting that in their town of 5,000, there are eight churches, St. John's parishioners want to let people know what being an Episcopalian means to them.

Via media is based on the premise of radical hospitality, which invites all people, with their questions and doubts, to come ask questions and be fed. The two-hour format includes a simple supper, followed by watching a 20-minute video that consists of five people talking about one of the big faith topics, exemplifying what it means to "do theology through conversation." Small groups, ideally about eight people, then have 40 minutes to talk about what they have seen, answering guided questions, if they so desire. The evening closes with a short liturgy.

The Mountain Echo will publish dates and times that participating Vermont congregations will offer *via media* programs. For more information, visit the Every Voice Network website, www.EveryVoice.net/viamedia, or speak with the Rev. Tim Eberhardt at St. John's, 802-728-9910.

The Rev. Lee Alison Crawford is rector of St. Mary's, Northfield.

Council adopts stewardship statement Hears presentation by Prevent Child Abuse Vermont

by Anne Clarke Brown

Members of Diocesan Council, meeting at All Saints', South Burlington, June 12, unanimously adopted a revised version of the stewardship statement created at their April retreat. The statement [see box on this page] represents the Council's commitment to stewardship, and members hope it will be considered for adoption by the congregations of the Diocese.

Bishop Ely gave Council members the completed report of the Task Force on the Blessing of Persons living in Same-Gender Relationships. Council, which had received reports on earlier drafts of the Task Force's recommendations, agreed to Bishop Ely's request that they take on responsibility for creating a group to carry out the recommendation that use of the new policy and trial liturgies be evaluated on an annual basis. The Council will report the group's findings to Diocesan Convention each of the next three years.

The Council welcomed two new members appointed to fill unexpired terms: Don Scott from the Cathedral Church of St. Paul, Burlington, and Dorothy Wooten, a Northwest Deanery representative from St. Luke's, Alburg. They also thanked Hilary Cooke for her service as recording secretary. She will be married in August and is moving to Ithaca, NY. She will, however, continue to teach in the Diocesan Study Program, and, as a Candidate for Holy Orders, she will take the General Ordination Examination in January.

Preventing child abuse

Before beginning regular business, the

Council heard a presentation from Linda Johnson, Executive Director of Prevent Child Abuse Vermont (PCAVT) on the work of her organization. While children today live in a culture pervaded by violence—in the media, in their schools and sometimes in their homes—Johnson noted some significant improvements in recent years. "We have shifted the ground in the way people think about children and what is okay to do with children. Most people think now there are better ways than hitting to discipline a child."

Though Vermont now has dramatically fewer reports of child abuse than the national average, there are still too many children who suffer from physical or psychological abuse, and reports of sexual abuse have increased. Johnson stressed the importance of reporting actual or suspected incidents of abuse to the State Department of Social and Rehabilitative Services. Clergy and many others involved in church activities are mandated by state law to make such reports. "Reporting laws," she said, "have done more to prevent child abuse and neglect than anything else we've ever done." And she noted that, "I can count on one hand the times any of those who work with me have experienced the big explosive brush-off we all fear [from making a report]. Mostly people when confronted admit that they need help."

Johnson gave Council members copies of the *Vermont Parents' Home Companion and Resource Directory*. This helpful resource can be downloaded from the PCAVT website, www.pcavt.org. ❖

Diocesan Council Stewardship Statement

We believe that we are called to live in loving and intentional relationship with God and all creation, and that, as God provides abundantly for us, God expects us to respond with generosity; therefore

We commit to the Episcopal Church's teaching that the tithe is the minimum standard of giving; and to an increase in our proportioned giving until we can attain that standard;

and to a course of prayer, study, and action regarding stewardship, including sharing our stewardship stories with others; and

We invite all people of the Diocese of Vermont to join us in this commitment to increased giving, open discussion, and ongoing transformation through worship, study, and prayer.

Adopted June 12, 2004

Remembering Mac McClure Continued from Page C

McClure Center at Trinity, a fellowship and meeting place, with classrooms too.

Bishop Mary Adelia McLeod called on Mac and Lois to present a challenge to them that was exactly up their alley. She described the plight of smaller rural churches in the diocese and suggested the possibility of their funding an endowment that would permit these parishes to sponsor special membership-building and educational presentations and programs. The result was the J. Warren and Lois McClure Discipleship/Discovery 2000 Funds. Though that fund has several initiatives embedded within it, the one that appealed to Mac the most, Lois says, is the one about reaching out to smaller

parishes in the hinterlands of Vermont.

Mac put his money where his heart was. At his funeral, his son Joel quoted him: "Life is not a dress rehearsal. You only go around once, so you might as well do it right!" Anyone you talk to about Mac would have quotes and memories to share. These are my memories of a man who believed in "Do it now!" as an operating principle. This article is about the person I knew, the one who would say, "TNT—Today, Not Tomorrow" to move others to action. He was a great one for action, was J. Warren McClure, and he expected it first from himself. Mac did it right.

Scott Perry is a member of St. Mark's, Newport.

Walter Wink lectures at St. Paul's



ACB photo

by Anne Clarke Brown

"Churches have too often failed to continue Jesus' mission and instead just worship Jesus," biblical scholar and author Walter Wink told those gathered for his lecture on "Jesus the Human" at the Cathedral Church of St. Paul the evening of June 11. Wink said he is exploring a hypothesis that the identification of Jesus as "the son of man"—he believes the Greek should be translated "the human being"—can function as "a catalyst for human transformation."

Why this focus? Wink said, "We know next to nothing about what it means to be a human being. Our society seems to be losing the battle against disrespect, terror, environmental degradation and want." Wink's aim is to develop a Christology from below that addresses questions such as, "Before he was worshipped as God incarnate, how did Jesus the human being struggle to incarnate God? Before forgiveness became solely a function of his cross, how did he understand forgiveness?"

Ezekiel's vision of the glory of God (Ezekiel 1), in which God is revealed in "something like a human form," said Wink, "seems to say that only God is fully human. But as we are made in the image of God, we are capable of becoming fully human—but only with God's help." The goal of life, Wink said, "is to become what we truly are: human. We are not invited to become God."

Contending that, "We become what our desire beholds," Wink claimed that God offers us in Jesus the gift of our own humanity. And in turn, "Jesus calls us to incarnate God." But we can't become human by ourselves, Wink said. "We need the support of community" as we allow Jesus to be a catalyst for our transformation.

Sunday sermon

After his Friday lecture, Wink, with his wife, June Keener Wink, led a Saturday retreat on the same theme at the Bishop Booth Conference Center. He returned to the Cathedral Sunday to preach a sermon based on John's vision of the new Jerusalem in Revelation 21:1-7. In the face of apocalypse, John sees a new Jerusalem in which "the home of God is among mortals."

John offers a vision of doom and a vision of salvation. For Wink, such apocalyptic visions have the positive power of causing humanity to face enormous disasters and galvanizing us "to a superhuman effort

to stop the possibility of an apocalypse." He maintains that the aim of apocalyptic literature is not merely to predict doom but to energize people to prevent the vision of doom from becoming true.

"Apocalyptic is already seething underground, ready to explode catastrophically," Wink said. "At the core of our being there exists a spirit that transcends despair, and we can go the way of hope like John." Signs of hope not in the news include recent "successful non-violent revolutions involving 3/5 of the people of the world." ❖

Building partnerships is aim of interfaith study week

by Libby Hillhouse

"Building Abrahamic Partnerships" drew a group of thirty participants who are involved with local interfaith projects to Hartford Seminary June 6, for an intensive week of study of the three faith traditions that trace their heritage to the patriarch Abraham. The group, who came from Nigeria, the Virgin Islands, Turkey, Israel, Palestine, Canada and the US, included Muslim imams, Jewish rabbis, Episcopal priests, an Evangelical Christian pastor and various others, such as myself.

We began by exploring our preconceptions about one another. With two identical salt and pepper shakers and a tall vessel for vinegar as props, each of us tried to describe the two traditions we thought were the most similar and which seemed most different. It was not an easy exercise, and our respective ignorance was apparent.

We read aloud some of the most violent and most easily manipulated and misunderstood passages from each other's sacred texts. What did it mean to my new, gentle Muslim friend to have to read to me, "Take neither Jews nor Christians as friends?" What was it like for the Jews to hear the Passion story and hear how the Christians tried to talk about the role of Jews in the crucifixion? How did we, as Christians, respond to the Muslim belief that Christ was *not*, indeed, crucified, that it was an illusion that got Jesus directly and safely to Paradise?

A week of special gifts

I received several gifts during this week. One was to understand such a thing as "holy envy"—to see the treasures other Abraham-

Diocese hosts Executive Council

by Anne Clarke Brown

The thirty-eight member Executive Council of the Episcopal Church and members of the Church Center staff met June 11-14, at the Wyndham Hotel in Burlington. The Council, chaired by the Presiding Bishop, is responsible for overseeing the mission and ministry of the Church and for carrying out the programs and policies adopted by the General Convention.

A statement issued at the conclusion of the meeting noted that, "Particular attention was given to the funding process for young adults and youth, plans for a new Mission Funding effort, much needed renovation of the Church Center, and human rights issues in Sudan, Iraq and Haiti."

Bishop Ely hosted the group at Rock Point on Saturday evening for softball and a barbeque supper. They joined the Cathedral congregation for worship Sunday and then hosted a brunch at the Wyndham for approximately twenty representatives of various diocesan ministries. Bishop Ely's slide-illustrated report on the diocese and its ministries concluded:

"We don't always agree about everything, but there is a deep spirit of respect for one another

and for this place we call home—Vermont. We are neighbors to one another. We care passionately about 'our own' and we don't mind spending the time to help out another person—friend or stranger...."

"We are people who strive for a just and peaceful world...."

"We are people who honor those who have gone before us and worry about those who will come after us. We don't have billboards on our highways and we don't blow our car horns very often. We welcome tourists, stop for pedestrians crossing the street and we take time to watch the sunsets." ❖



ACB photo

Presiding Bishop Frank Griswold greets the congregation at St. Paul's Cathedral Sunday, June 13. Bishop Griswold presided and celebrated the Eucharist, and members of the Executive Council and Church Center staff joined the congregation.



Libby Hillhouse bids farewell to friends at the close of "Building Abrahamic Partnerships."

traditions have that mine does not share. Another was to learn that my name, Libby, may be read in Hebrew as "my heart." In Arabic, it means "my mind's heart." How do I live with this gift of name and heart? It is an invitation to go more deeply into an understanding of both Torah and Qur'an.

A third gift was the offering of Skipppy peanut butter and squishy white bread sandwiches at 9:00 one night by a Muslim imam. We had just returned, hungry, from class. I heard then his story of conversion at age 18 from the Anglican faith in Trinidad—and began to hear his tentative questions to me, as a Christian, about homosexuality. In the course of the week, I watched this man move from an absolute position about gender issues to questioning "what would I do if I found myself wanting to spend all my time with another man?" They were his questions, his topic, his struggle with elements of his own faith. I did not bring them up. My gift back to him was to listen.

My husband wanted me to ask about the 72 virgins in Paradise promised to terrorist suicide bombers. It was an important underlying tension in the group, this thing of terrorism, so I asked. The answer, as revealed in our day-long discussion about Islam, is that Paradise is something which eyes have never seen, words cannot describe, the mind cannot imagine. It is against the Qur'an to ascribe attributes to Paradise, as it is impossible, unlawful, to describe Allah. Thus, there are no virgins in Paradise and the terrorists are "crazies who have

done nothing but distort Islam." Coming from the Turkish Muslim representatives, gentle to a man, kind, aware, respectful, totally capable of engaging directly with women, quick to laugh, eager to share, passionate and committed, this is totally believable and important. Thus I received the gift of trust and intimacy.

Towards the end of our eight days together, we visited each other's places of worship. We women covered our heads and went to the mosque to pray, separated from the men by a room. I felt free, even invited, to join the prayer line, to kneel and touch my forehead to the floor, to follow the sequence, to be a Christian in their midst. Similarly, I went to an Orthodox Jewish service. Again, I covered my hair and sat separated by a rail from the men. And again, I was invited to participate fully in the prayer movements, to experience the kissing of the Torah, to experience my rooted faith as a Christian

Continued on Page 1

Bishops visit Palestine and Israel

Continued from Page A

hours that the gates are open can be irregular or non-existent. The separation of Palestinians from markets and fields results in economic dislocations for all, as well as dietary and nutritional problems that can have particularly harmful effects on children.

Yet at the Arab Episcopal Evangelical Home and School in Ramallah, which began with 22 students 50 years ago, there are now 560 students—Christian and Muslim—gaining a quality education and enjoying a recently dedicated new building. Just across the street is the Episcopal Technological & Vocational Training Center, where some of the 300 students learning electronics and mechanics proudly showed visitors their drawing and mechanical projects. They hope soon to include hotel and restaurant training.

General Director Hanna Abu El-Asal heads Christ Church High School in Nazareth, with its state-of-the-art science and computer labs. In Bethlehem, 240 children enjoy the Dar al-Kalima School at the Ecumenical International Center, where art and sports are an important part of helping traumatized children. The Rev. Mitri Raheb, the director, said, "We don't want the young to believe in a good life only after death."

During their day in Bethlehem, the bishops spent time at the Azza Refugee Camp where, for some, three generations of families have now grown up. With a population of 2,000, it is one of the smallest camps, and parents must send their children on walks they feel are dangerous to schools in other camps until 9th grade. As school vacations near, parents face the challenge of keeping young people positively occupied. Despite the fact that some 40% of the camp is under age 18, there is no soccer field and little for teenagers to do.

Christian organizations in the region continue creatively to find ways to engage young people. In Nablus, Episcopal priest Hosam Naoum gathers some 150 young Christians every Friday for social time together. A few of the young men met over lunch with the bishops' group. When asked what they dream of doing, one responded, "To visit Jerusalem." Jerusalem is only a short drive from Nablus, but an impossible distance away for a young male Arab who would not be permitted to pass a checkpoint.

Isolation and fear

At the Remember the Innocents Program of the Holy Land Trust, the bishops' group was treated to a lively exchange among



Barry R. Howe photo

Bishop Ely and the group met with teen participants in the Remember the Innocents Program. They asked that US youth remember them in these hard times.

teenagers who shared stories of classmates lost during the fighting as well as their own dreams for the future—including being a TV correspondent and a dress designer. They asked young people in the US to remember them in these hard times.

"There was much that was troubling in our visit, but perhaps most troubling of all was the lack of opportunity for young Palestinians and Israelis to meet," said Shaw.

In the village of Beit Umar, the group met with the Bereaved Parents Circle, an organization of Israelis and Palestinians who have lost a first degree family member and work together for mutual reconciliation among themselves and in schools. "One father shared with us this Arabic saying: 'What is away from your eye is away from your heart,'" Shaw recalled, which captured the isolation and fear that ensues when people sharing a small land cannot meet with one another.

Opportunities for young people to meet eye-to-eye are also rare. Remember the Innocents teens can no longer travel to Israel to meet other teens, and in Ramallah, a conflict resolution program for 10th graders no longer exists.

Fighting division

The bishops learned a great deal at Kibbutz Metzger, founded by Argentinean Jews in 1953 and one place where Arabs and Israelis do mix. The kibbutzim have learned to farm the rocky land and have taught the Arabs about modern agricultural techniques; they now share a water source. The kibbutz brought suit in an Israeli court to prevent their Arab neighbors in another village from being cut off from their olive groves and land by the "security barrier." A decision on the suit came at the same time as a tragedy within the kibbutz. Adults and children from the neighboring Arab village of Maisir were regular visitors, enabling an Arab gunman to enter without notice and murder five people in the kibbutz in 2000. Despite their loss, the kibbutz continued its suit on behalf of their neighbors in Qafin. While unsuccessful in court, the communities continue to struggle together against those who would divide them.

And there are others who work to heal the divisions. During the bishops' visit, renowned conductor Daniel Barenboim gave the \$100,000 from a humanitarian award he had just received to Israel and Ramallah for music programs, and he conducted the first performance of the Ramallah Youth Orchestra. "My way is music, and as a musician, I fight against two things; against loud noise, but also against silence," Barenboim said.

Vowing to fight against silence, the bishops have promised to meet with Members of Congress to talk about the trip and encourage other bishops to make a similar trip.

Maureen Shea is director of the Episcopal Church's Office of Government Relations.

Zion Church connects with Ugandan mission hospital

by Sue Bamford

In Southwestern Uganda, along the border with the Congo, lie the fabled Mountains of the Moon, now known as the Rwenzori. Tucked into a valley at their feet, is the Kagando Mission Hospital, with its surrounding community. Founded by the Anglican Church, Kagando's mission is to proclaim the love of God by engaging in activities to improve the physical and spiritual well-being of the poor and disadvantaged, who make up 90% of the people they serve.

Bishop Zebede Mazareka, of the Diocese of South Rwenzori, came to the U.S. three years ago and visited and preached at Zion Church, Manchester. He told of the crucial work he was doing to help AIDs orphans in the area. Six months later, the Rev. Uzziah Kiriaghe, one of his priests and a former director of the Kagando Hospital, also visited and preached at Zion, telling of the many trials and challenges in his work.

Physician Joe Bamford and his wife, Sue, parishioners of Zion, met with both men and expressed interest in helping Kagando. The Bamfords had worked in Kenya as volunteers, and hoped to return to East Africa. Thereafter, various terrorist incidents and threats kept them at home, but last fall, after many changes in plans, they were finally able to go.

Their plan was to visit Kagando for a week or so, talk to the staff, tour the hospital and surrounding area, and see what they might be able to do to help. During and after their stay, they decided the most effective way to work for the benefit of the hospital and its community was to raise money for them in the U.S. They have since set up a non-profit foundation in order to attract funds. A web-site at www.kagando.org is available with information for all who are interested.

Sue and Joe feel that the people of Kagando district deserve help from us not only



The Rev. Uzziah Kiriaghe (second from left) of the Diocese of South Rwenzori, Uganda, with Joe Bamford, the Rev. John Mitchell and Sue Bamford of Zion Church.

because they are needy, but also because they are willing to work hard themselves to achieve their goals. Although under supervision of the diocese, they receive no financial aid from the church.

They have established several community programs that will improve their lives. For example, a project to pipe pure water from the mountains into the villages will, with sufficient funding for completion, effect a great reduction in the numbers of people infected with worms and other parasites, cholera, and typhoid fever. The local people must walk some distance to obtain water, as they have none in their homes, but then, frequently it is from a polluted stream.

Other programs worthy of support include pediatric nutrition and community farming. Many babies and young children are brought to the hospital suffering from malnutrition. While being treated, their mothers now will be taught which crops to grow, and how best to prepare them. They will also learn about other important foods to give their children a healthy diet, so that they will not need to repeat hospital visits

for further treatment.

The people in the valley surrounding the hospital have been routed from their farms many times over the past years, due to uprisings and invading armies. This has resulted in the neglect and loss of their crops, reduction of income, and infection of the populace (especially with AIDs). They are working very hard, since peace came in 2002, to reestablish their homes, farms and, hopefully, some cash crops. Tobacco and cotton, formerly income-producing, now are not profitable in the world markets. At present, they are hoping to sell vanilla and various fruits. An experimental demonstration farm has been started at the hospital to help in growing crops. There is also an animal husbandry project. Funds are needed to help these projects get going, with the hope they will become self-sustaining.

The Bamfords would be happy to answer any questions you may have, at 802-867-5740, or by email at subam@sover.net. They also are available to speak to interested groups. Donations to the Kagando Foundation are most welcome: P.O. Box 723, Dorset, VT 05251. ❖

More Coming Events

Arts at the Cathedral Church of St. Paul

2 Cherry Street, Burlington, Vermont

Art Shows in the Church Nave

July: Oils by Jason Bodnar. **September:** "Whimsical Moments" by Katie Carleton. Playful, mischievous and thought-provoking creations in clay, cartoons, drawings and paintings. The Cathedral is open 9 A.M.-5 P.M., Monday through Friday, and between services on Sunday. Call for other times (802-864-0471).

80th Annual St. James' Church Fair

Thursday, July 8, 2004, 10 A.M.-3 P.M.

Church Green, Woodstock

St. James' annual fair will take place rain or shine on the Church Green opposite Town Hall. Bargains of all kinds: clothing for all ages (some nearly new), jewelry, books, fabrics and linens, white elephants (a great source for unusual gifts), toys, baked goods, rummage. Also plants and garden vegetables. Lunch is available. For more information, call 802-457-1727 (mornings).

Candlelit Sung Vespers

July 11 and August 22, 2004, 6:00 P.M.

Zion Episcopal Church, Manchester Center, Vermont

Led by Brother Gregory Norbet and Katherine Carrington, the service offers an opportunity to experience the peace of God, to uplift one's heart and deepen one's walk in faith. Hymns, chants, prayers, silence and candlelit icons. All are welcome.

St. Margaret's Day

Saturday July 17, 2004, 10:00 A.M.

Society of St. Margaret

17 Highland Park St., Boston, MA

Plan ahead to attend the St. Margaret's Day celebration with the Sisters of St. Margaret. The Right Reverend Gayle E. Harris, Bishop Suffragan of the Diocese of Massachusetts, will preach at the 10 A.M. Eucharist. Luncheon will follow. The Sisters are celebrating 100 years on their Roxbury site and welcome all their friends and associates to join them. Please reserve a spot in advance by calling 617-445-8961 X127, or emailing resbostonssm@yahoo.com. See the website, www.ssmbos.com, for a printable map with directions.

Fellowship of Reconciliation National Conference

Thursday, August 5 - Monday, August 9, 2004

Occidental College, Los Angeles, California

Join other peacemakers for five days of amazing speakers, dynamic workshops, and the launch of a year of peacemaking activities designed to "Organize the Real Superpower" and mark the FOR's 90th anniversary. Gain insight, knowledge and motivation through nonviolence trainings, youth programs, an interfaith peace walk, and great entertainment. To register online and for general information, go to www.forusa.org/conference2004/default.html, or call Anthony Marsh at 310-228-7759 or Lisa Lane at 845-358-4601 x39.

The Fellowship of Reconciliation is an interfaith organization committed to active nonviolence as a transforming way of life and as a means of radical change.

Rummage Sale

Saturday, August 14, 9:00 A.M.-3:00 P.M.

Cathedral Church of St. Paul

2 Cherry Street, Burlington

Clothing, books, toys, white elephants, baked goods, house plants, and more will be on sale in the nave, the parish hall and the rose garden. Lunch will also be available. St. Paul's will begin accepting donated items August 8. To volunteer, contact Edie Templin, 802-658-3306; templin@champlain.edu.

Solo Flight National Conference for Single Adults

Friday, September 3 - Monday, September 6, 2004

Kanuga Conference Center, Hendersonville, NC

Joan Medlicott, author of the Covington novels, will keynote the 14th annual Solo Flight at Kanuga conference Labor Day weekend. The author will be joined by plenary and workshop presenters who will speak to the conference theme, "Walking on the edge: the adventure of the Solo Flight." Topics for discussion will include internet relationships, levels of personal risk-taking, healthy adult relationships and singles sexuality, the spirituality of singularity and are planned for an intergenerational population of always single, divorced and widowed, post-formal education through post-retirement.

The conference begins at 5 P.M. on Friday and concludes at noon on Monday (Labor Day). The Asheville, NC, airport is a 30 minute van ride from Kanuga. Conference fee, room and board are \$375. For further information, contact kcollierm@diolex.org or davidwperk@aol.com, or log on <http://groups.yahoo.com/group/soloflightepis/>

Cathedral to "Celebrate Pride" Bishop Gene Robinson is guest preacher

The Cathedral Church of St. Paul will join the Vermont Gay-Lesbian-Bisexual-Transgender (GLBT) community in its Celebration of Pride on **Saturday July 10**, with a potluck brunch at 10:00 A.M., a booth at the afternoon Waterfront Festival, and a special 3:30 P.M. Pride Choral Evensong.

Bishop Ely will be the officiant at Evensong, and the Rt. Rev. V. Gene Robinson, Bishop of New Hampshire will preach. Music will include works of David Ashley

White, Sydney Nicholson, Glenn Sproul and Maurice Duruflé, with psalmody sung to traditional Anglican chant and congregational hymns. A reception will follow the service.

All events are open to everyone. Join in the festivities and share in St. Paul's proclamation of justice and love for *all* people! Contact the Rev. Tanya Wallace for more information: 802-864-0471; twallace@stpaulscathedralvt.org. ✦

Celebrate the Earth and learn about global warming at Rock Point event

"An Interfaith Response to Global Warming" is an Earth-based celebration planned for Sunday, August 15, from 2-6 P.M. at the Bishop Booth Conference Center, Rock Point, Burlington. The event is sponsored by Vermont Interfaith Power & Light (VIP&L), a new organization committed to educating members of Vermont's faith community about the threat of global warming. VIP&L also seeks to engage the faith community in promoting energy conservation, efficiency, and renewable energy as a solution. One expression of the Diocese of Vermont's commitment to VIP&L was the

donation of the 2003 Diocesan Convention offering as seed money for the endeavor.

The afternoon will begin with interfaith intergenerational activities. From 2-5 P.M. a panel of representative from several faith traditions (including Bishop Tom Ely) will discuss ways in which our respective faith traditions both inform us and ask that we respond to the sacred call to green our faith, our buildings, our liturgies and, ultimately, develop a cooperative VT Interfaith Power and Light Project.

Activities such as nature walks will be available for children and those not attending the panel discussion (children must be accompanied by an adult). Throughout the afternoon, locally produced organic food will be available for sale.

The event will close with a sacred circle of celebration.

For more information, contact Debi Paterson, Bishop Booth Conference Center, 802-658-6233; bishopbooth@dioceseofvermont.org. ✦

Safer Church Training

An extra training day may be scheduled for **August 7**, at St. Mark's, Newport. The next scheduled training is at Immanuel, Bellows Falls, Saturday, **September 25**. For information contact Anne Brown at 802-672-5250 or abrown@vermontel.net.

Quiet day to focus on "Circles of Blessing"

Join the Diocese of Vermont's Environmental Ministry Team (EMT) and other lovers of nature on Saturday, **October 9** at the Bishop Booth Conference Center for a day of quiet and spiritual exploration to experience God in nature and community. This one day silent retreat will be led by the Rev. Dr. Nancy Bloomer, chair of the EMT.

The meditations will reflect on circles and how this design found in nature links up with our own deepest consciousness. There will be opportunity to roam the grounds and trails of Rock Point or just to sit in a beauti-

ful woodland nook as we meditate on the many circles of blessing found in our lives. The day begins at 9:30 A.M. and ends at 3:30 P.M. A fee of \$20 includes a vegetarian lunch, snacks and use of all the facilities.

To register, please send your name, address, telephone or email address and check for \$20, made out to the Episcopal Diocese of Vermont, to Debi Paterson, Bishop Booth Conference Center, 20 Rock Point Circle, Burlington, VT 05401. For more information, call Debi at 802-658-6233. Overnight accommodations are available for an additional fee. ✦

Explore life in community with the Sisters of Saint Margaret

by Sr. Grace, SSM

The Sisters of St. Margaret will offer a weekend, **October 8-11, 2004**, for inquirers to come to the convent in Boston and experience our life and work. It will be a great opportunity for anyone interested in learning more about the religious life to come and be our guest, to explore what our life is really like and to be able to ask questions, to visit with the sisters, and to see us "in action"—at work, at play, in prayer and in worship.

If you are a woman, lay or ordained,

looking for a community in which to live out your faith in an intensive way, and are between the ages of 21 and 45, we invite you to join us for this fun and informative event. The weekend is offered at no cost and includes room and board. Guests are responsible for their own transportation to and from the convent. Space is limited, so apply now. For more information and an application, visit our website at www.ssmbos.com, email us at info@ssmbos.com, or call us at 617-445-8961. We look forward to meeting you!! ✦

John Morris offers program on history of marriage

by Anne Clarke Brown

In response to the current debates and discussions about marriage, the Rev. John Morris has put together an informational program for churches and community groups. The title of the program is "A Brief History of Marriage: an overview of 4,000 years of marriage traditions from Biblical times until the present."

Morris hopes that by helping people reflect on the long history of marriage traditions, they will be able to ground their own opinions and feelings about marriage in historical reality. The program begins with a quick "sprint" through the history of marriage and then provides time for participants to share their observations and reflect honestly—and maybe even a bit light-heartedly—on a topic that is vitally important to the church and our society. The program is designed to take about an hour-and-a-half, but can be adapted to particular situations.

When interviewed about the program, Morris said, "A lot of people are very concerned about marriage and what will happen to it in the future. This concern is often accompanied by strong emotions. I think this is a good time for us to have honest discussions about marriage, but I hope these discussions take place within a context of good historical information. If this program

Blessings report

Continued from Page A

available for download from the website.

Bishop Ely's response

In his written response introducing the report, and in his comments at the training days and to members of the press, Bishop Ely stresses that, "Above all, the report is clear that the question of blessing persons living in same-gender relationships is primarily a pastoral matter." He notes that Vermont has been living with the reality of civil unions for four years. "It is in that context of the church's pastoral ministry to and with couples that I requested this report," he writes.

With respect to the current controversy in the Anglican Communion, Bishop Ely says, "It is essential and central to our Anglican ethos that we respect and honor the local context in which each diocese and province within the Anglican Communion seeks to be faithful in praying the prayer, learning the mind, and doing the deeds of Christ. My hope is that our experience in Vermont will be of value to the larger church, and I pray that our discussions will be open, honest and respectful."

He invites people to read the report in its entirety, and he welcomes comments, noting, "The careful and thoughtful research, pastoral sensitivity and clear writing of the report will serve us well in the months to come as we make our way into the next chapter of our pastoral ministry with all couples seeking the ministry of the church in support of their sacred relationships."

The bishop thanked the task force, saying, "I applaud the hard work and dedication of the members of the Task Force and, in particular, the leadership of Anne Clarke Brown and the Very Reverend Kenneth Poppe, co-chairs of the committee, and Stan Baker, chair of the Resources subcommittee." ❖

can provide a place for those discussions to occur, it will be worthwhile."

Morris has been a priest in the Diocese of Vermont since 1971 and currently serves as Priest-in-Charge of St. Martin's Church in Fairlee, Vermont. He has been invited to many parishes in the Diocese in recent years to provide special programs on Scripture ("A Sprint Through the Bible" and "The Beatitudes") and on the church ("What is the Episcopal Church?" and "Advent: a season of hope"). He also has led retreats in the Diocese and has been on the volunteer staff for many Rock Point Summer Conferences. He currently serves as Dean of the Diocesan Study Program and is one of the instructors in the DSP class that meets each month in White River Junction.

Anyone interested in the program on marriage—or the other programs for parishes—can contact Morris at jcmvt@sover.net; 802-439-6599; or 37 Thompson Road, East Corinth, VT 05040. ❖

Bishop Ely represents presiding bishop in meeting with Secretary of State

by Maureen Shea

[ENS] A delegation of prominent national Christian, Jewish, and Muslim leaders met June 1 with Secretary of State Colin Powell to urge immediate U.S. action to pursue the Road Map to Peace in the Middle East, Bishop Thomas Ely of Vermont represented Presiding Bishop Frank Griswold.

In their appeal to Powell, the leaders expressed a united view that high level U.S. leadership on behalf of the Road Map must restart now and would have the support of majorities in their communities. They noted that there is strong support for their position not only among Arab, Muslim, and Jewish Americans but evangelical Christians as well. The delegation, members of the National Inter-religious Leadership Initiative for Peace in the Middle East, are united in their support of a two-state solution with a viable, independent and democratic Palestinian state alongside the

internationally recognized Jewish state of Israel, with enduring peace and security for both peoples.

At a press conference following the meeting, Bishop Ely drew on his recent trip to Palestine and Israel, noting that "at every point along the way, people expressed their deep hope that the United States would take an active role now to bring people together."

Griswold joined 32 prominent Christian, Jewish and Muslim leaders in a letter to President Bush in December of 2003 calling on the Administration to make Middle East peace the highest priority and urging support for "Twelve Urgent Steps for Peace." On June 1, the religious leaders recommitted themselves to working nationally and internationally, as well as at the grassroots level, to support immediate, active high level U.S. reengagement for peace. They are urging that inter-religious leadership groups be established at the local level to support the twelve steps and take action. More information on the initiative is available at www.walktheroadtopeace.org.

Maureen Shea is director of the Episcopal Church's Office of Government Relations.

Angels coming to St. Stephen's Peasant Market

Middlebury, July 10

An auction of handmade angels created in various media by gifted parishioners will be held at the Peasant Market at St. Stephen's at 1:00 P.M. There are soft sculpture, metal, wooden puzzle, tile, and wall hanging angels among the flight to be auctioned.

Other events include: rides and games for children; sales of books, white elephants, craft items and plants; and appearances by several musical groups on the village green from 9 A.M. until 3 P.M. Lunch will be served, as well as fresh lemonade and smoothies. St. Stephens works all year to produce a day of fun that benefits local non-profits. Last year \$18,000 was raised for local causes.



Drawing by Prindle Whistler-Mullin

Care-givers invited to explore formation of St. Barnabas Guild chapter

by Katherine Webster

The Guild of St. Barnabas for Nurses and Allied Healthcare Professionals is a professional organization for nurses and others engaged in a variety of care-giving vocations. Some of us are looking to start a chapter(s) here in Vermont, and we invite others who might be interested to join us for a three-hour retreat July 22, at the Diocesan Center in Burlington, 11 A.M. to 2 P.M.

The Rev. Jim Byrum, National Chaplain, and Nancy Armes, RN, National Chapter President will be present to talk about the guild and provide encouragement for starting a chapter. Health Care professionals from all denominations and others interested in supporting this organization are welcome as members—nurses, nursing students, LNAs, clergy, chaplains, LEMs,

pastoral care-givers and many more.

According to the Guild's website (www.gsbno.org), "The Guild is not concerned with the technical details of the nursing or healthcare professions." Rather, the purpose of the Guild "is to assist in the process of developing a deeper spirituality within the lives of the members in their vocational life, and to offer further enrichment through shared educational and fellowship opportunities."

If you wish to attend the July 22 retreat, please call Katherine Webster at 802-457-1435; kawebster@adelphia.net; or drop a note to Katherine at PO Box 721, Woodstock, VT 05091-0721. Please pass the word to others in your congregation.

Katherine Webster is a member of St. James', Woodstock.

Interfaith study week

Continued from Page E

within the Jewish tradition. Thus, I received the gift of inclusion.

And perhaps the most extravagant gift of all was to be in the presence of thirty people of faith, each one totally committed to the same God through Abraham. The power of the Spirit was palpable.

So, what next?

As we left Hartford, the call to peace and reconciliation was strong for all of us—and we had begun that work. A final exercise was to go to a person of a different tradition, look that person directly in the eyes, and speak whatever came from the heart. As we began, I happened to be holding Abdullah Antepli's new baby son. So, I began there, in a wonderful moment of holding a Muslim baby. Then I was surrounded by other Muslim men, each taking my hand, each offering words of hope and understanding, prayers for peace and friendship. And it was my peanut butter Muslim imam from the Virgin Islands who said, at the end, "I have been, as a Muslim, always ready to give up my life, to die if Allah wished—until I came to this event. Now I know there is too much work to be done."

For me, practicing my faith and studying my sacred text will no longer be an ethno-centric, Christocentric exercise. I will understand what it may be like to be non-Christian in what is presumed to be a Christian-centered society. I will read the Hebrew Bible as the root of my own practice and integral to it, not as the unfinished half of the Christian Bible. And in my own work for interfaith partnership here in Vermont, it is also abundantly clear to me that the spiritual path to God, "Eternal Spirit, Earth-maker, Pain-bearer, Life-giver, Source of all that is," is an illumination grown out of faith, tradition, custom, history and human desire. How we get there is precious. All the rest is mere commentary.

Libby Hillhouse is a member of St. Andrew's St. Johnsbury.

Northwest Deanery 1

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Representatives from four parishes attended the April 18 deanery meeting in Alburg. An informal group, including members from the Alburg, Enosburg, Richford and Sheldon churches, is meeting regularly to discuss shared ministry. This group may include churches in Canada if there is interest. This regional/shared ministry task group will carry forward an exploration of how the smaller parishes of this deanery can work together and share resources.

The Rev. **Howard VanDine** served at ST. LUKE'S, Alburg, from January through Easter. **Gina Logan**, a postulant for holy orders, is presently serving as a lay pastor as a "gift" from the diocese (and from St. Mary's, Northfield, where she is a member).

The Rev. **Thora Chadwick** will remain at ST. MATTHEW'S, Enosburg, until All Saints' Day.

ST. ANN'S, Richford, is presently not holding regular services.

ST. LUKE'S, St. Albans, held its annual art show May 8. The art show is open to anyone in the deanery to exhibit and/or sell their work. It is asked that 15% of anything sold be given to their home parish. The Rev. **Dennis Hayward** was married on June 19, in Connecticut.

Summer Music at GRACE, Sheldon, began May 27 with the return of **Mark Sustic** and friends. Audience donations went to benefit the **Tom Sustic** Scholarship Fund, awarded annually to a graduating senior intending to become a teacher of young children. **Village Harmony** will sing Sunday, July 18, at 3:00 P.M., followed by a potluck meal, and **Full Circle** will perform, Friday, Aug. 27 at 7 P.M.

Other events may be added to the calendar, and Summer Music at Grace will spill over into October this year with a special organ recital Oct. 9. Check www.gracechurchsheldon.org for updates to the summer music schedule.

The Rev. **Reid Farrell** began his ministry as rector of HOLY TRINITY, Swanton, June 6. Holy Trinity continues to hold a monthly "Open Door Dinner," open to the community at large. "Zoom Zone," a free summer day camp, is open to all community children in grades 1-6, from June 21 through July 16, under the direction of **Carole McCurdy**.

Otter Creek Deanery 2

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TRINITY, Rutland, bid a sad but fond farewell June 6, to **Hugh Tudor-Foley** their interim rector for the last 19 months, at a brunch hosted by the vestry and Ministry Discernment Committee. Hugh, who played percussion in the city band last summer, was presented with a Peter Huntoon painting of the gazebo where the band plays. He will be interim rector at All Saints' Memorial Church in Navesink, NJ, the parish of Trinity's new rector, the Rev. **Alan Gibson**. The Trinity congrega-

❖ deanery doings ❖

News of Parishes and People in the Diocese of Vermont
compiled and reported by the Mountain Echo "Deanery Bureau Chiefs"

gation warmly welcomed Gibson, who began his ministry June 27.

ST. STEPHEN'S, Middlebury, has been busy preparing for Peasant Market July 10 [see Page H]. Twenty members of St. Stephen's contributed to a successful dinner for foster parents and their children. St. Stephen's will again make lunches for a summer lunch program run by CVOEO. The Back to School Shop will be open from Aug. 19-21, to provide new school supplies for low-income students. Last year the program served nearly 200 students in grades 5-9. This year it will be expanded to serve grades 1-9, and there will be a shop in each of the area school districts. **Elizabeth Allison** has assumed the duties of Verger at St. Stephens'.

Southwest Deanery 3

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On June 21, **Sue Claro**, **Breana Claro** and Rev. **Brad Clark**, from ST JAMES', Arlington, joined ten others from Vermont, New Hampshire and Maryland for a trip to Honduras. "Feeding Friendship, Sustaining Solidarity" captures the spirit with which the trip was planned. A simple rice, bean and salsa dinner was held to raise money for the playground construction which is a focus of the trip. St. James' and the Federated Church of East Arlington offered a Vacation Bible School June 28-July 2, with activities structured around an animal theme. It will support the Heifer project and the Second Chance Animal Center.

ST. PETER'S, Bennington, held five June forums to aid the Ministry Discernment Committee in their work on a parish profile. The Christian education department is sponsoring a number of family pizza and film evenings throughout the summer on Fridays at six. July 23, Aug. 6 and 21 are the remaining dates. And finally, a message from the interim rector, the Rev. **Robert Miner**:

'Tis summer at Saint Peter's.
The annual parish fair is history,
The choir robes are tucked away 'til Fall.
Sunday School classes are suspended.
Camp's in session at Rock Point.
The church is a cool respite from summer's heat.
The church bell rings; the congregation sings;
We remember with elation that God takes no vacation.
'Tis summer at Saint Peter's.

Southeast Deanery 4

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The Southeast Deanery is exercising its bragging rights. It is with great pride that we inform you that this year's Camp

Director at Rock Point is "our" **Laura Hunter**, a belle from the banana belt as well as vestry person and adult Christian formation leader from ST. MARY'S IN THE MOUNTAINS, Wilmington.

ST. PAUL'S, Windsor, hosted the Annual Deanery Meeting June 24—a potluck picnic followed by a meeting, election of officers, and an ice cream social. We'll advise you of the new "regime" in the next issue. Thanks for your prayers—they have sustained the deanery through the reign of "yours truly."

The Rockingham Arts and Museum Project and IMMANUEL CHURCH, Bellows Falls, who hosted the event, held a benefit concert "Vermont Songbook—New Songs and Instrumentals" in early June. It featured Grammy winner **Eugene Friesen** (cello/voice) and lifelong collaborator **David Spear** (piano/voice) and the unveiling of new originals as well as some jazz and Broadway standards. Immanuel was the site of Friesen's latest recordings, including his CD, "In the Shade of Angels."

The Rev. **Paul Carling**, Associate Rector at ST. MICHAEL'S, Brattleboro, and his wife **Cherise**, bade farewell to the parish on the Feast of Pentecost. Cherise is starting a new position at Columbia University, and Paul will be on the staff of St. Luke's Church in Darien, CT. We wish them Godspeed. With the help of a loan from the Bishop Butterfield Loan Fund St. Mike's will exercise their option to purchase property adjacent to the church. This will allow them to expand their options for ministry and mission.

The Outreach Committee at ST. LUKE'S, Chester, in June initiated a weekly community supper, free to the public, with hopes that those who will most benefit will feel comfortable and attend. Their Discernment Group, with the help of **Connie Saeger-Proctor**, Diocesan Canon for Youth Ministry, will hold an all-day retreat, followed by an overnight in the church for the Youth Group plus a foray "off campus" for dinner and a swim.

This summer, work will begin at GETHSEMANE, Proctorsville, on making the church entranceway accessible to all. This will also include "leveling" the front walk. A cross, given several years ago in memory of **Ellen Parrish's** father will soon be remounted on the front of the building. These folks kicked-off their ministry discernment process with a meeting with the Rev. **Thad Bennett**, Canon for Ministry Development and Deployment and a pot-luck brunch on June 27.

Spontaneous combustion perhaps can best describe the planning and execution of a fantastic parish dinner at ST. MARK'S, Springfield on Pentecost. In less than two minutes during announcement time the week before, the idea was proposed, hands raised, and food offered. An overflowing Parish Hall, awash in a sea of red, enjoyed a leisurely dinner of BBQ chicken, salads, baked beans, watermelon, fine wine and dessert. Wow—when the Holy Spirit works, he works!

Three Rivers Deanery 5

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Young people have been the focus in outreach and education at CHRIST CHURCH, Bethel. The Church School youth invited the congregation to donate money instead of the jelly beans and candy eggs that made up the traditional Easter Egg Hunt. The young folks sent just over \$90 to Episcopal Relief and Development to provide support for children orphaned by AIDS in East Africa. Kudus, kids! In the fall, Christ Church children will join with the local UCC and Methodist churches for Sunday School.

From the newsletter of ST. MARTIN'S, Fairlee: "As part of the Pentecost celebration, parishioners heard the acclamation, 'God's deeds of power are amazing!' in the following languages: Spanish, Latin, Ukrainian, French, Mandarin Chinese, German, Russian, Old Scots Gaelic, Danish, Portuguese, Punjabi, Italian, Kurdish, Pohnpeian and Arabic. Wow!" Wow is right—that's 16 languages!

CHURCH OF OUR SAVIOUR, Killington, parishioners enjoyed a compost potluck supper in early June. No, compost wasn't consumed, but it was talked about in a workshop that is part of the congregation's series of land stewardship education, commitment and experience. The August schedule includes a Harvest Community Picnic. "Holy Conversations" are continuing into the summer, too. They've explored such issues as evil, spirituality in the movies, the meaning of prayer, and participants' own faith journeys.

ST. JOHN'S, Randolph, is not only exploring the merits of buying Fair Trade coffee in order to improve the environment and help small farmers around the world, but they also have adopted a new mission statement ("Wake up! We are all one with God and the whole world."), discerned the stewardship message of the movie "The Spitfire Grill" at a vestry retreat, and sent several folks off to Episcopal Divinity School for training in the "Via Media" series of community conversations about Christianity.

At the behest of the Outreach Committee, ST. PAUL'S, White River Junction, is exploring opportunities to participate in local Habitat for Humanity work. Learning about "castles" of the interior, contemplative variety was the focus of five sessions in June as **Leslie Black** and **Tanya Wallace** of the Cathedral's Meditation Center presented practices in "An Introduction to Christian Meditation."

Central Vermont Deanery 6

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The CHRIST CHURCH, Montpelier, memorial garden is now complete and runs the length of the church. The extended garden covers an area where two years ago one might find used syringes, discarded clothing and other debris. Many gifts of time, talent and resources have turned this problem urban space into a place of beauty and peace.

Continued on Page K

Anglican theology and same-gender unions: an excerpt from the blessings report

Printed below is a portion of the "Theological Considerations" section of the *Report of the Task Force on the Blessing of Persons Living in Same-Gender Relationships* (pp. 12-14). The complete report can be downloaded from the diocesan website, www.dioceseofvermont.org, or mailed from the Diocesan Center. Call or email Val Hennessey, 800-286-3437; vhennessey@dioceseofvermont.org. Address comments or questions about the report to Anne Brown (contact information is on Page C).

Incarnation, relation, sin and redemption

Anglican theology, as it has developed from its earliest expression in the first Book of Common Prayer, is deeply rooted in an incarnational image of God as known to us in Jesus Christ and in a trinitarian understanding of God as profoundly relational. Our prayers and collects speak of a deep intimacy with God through Jesus Christ and the sanctifying power of the Holy Spirit.

Key to this incarnational and relational theology is the belief that all humans are created in the image of God (Genesis 1:27) and that this gives humankind a potential for relationship with, participation in, or union with God. This claim, however, raises the question, for the writers of Genesis to those of the present day, of how to explain human imperfection, human sin. Genesis relates the story of "the fall" of the human creatures. St. Augustine's notion of "original sin" became a dominant theme, and subsequent explanations focused on the degree to which original sin affects the image of God in humankind.

The major theologians of the continental Reformation and their followers in England—represented today by the evangelical strand in Anglicanism—tended to see original sin as virtually obliterating the image of God in humans, making us sinners by nature and inheritance, as well as by our deeds. The trend flowing from Richard Hooker (late 16th C.) was to see original sin as an obstacle to full realization of the

image of God rather than the cause of its disappearance. And beginning with Whichcote in the seventeenth century, there is a shift away from the notion of original sin as historical fact and as something inherited through procreation. He saw the fall as symbolic. For some contemporary theologians, the explanation does not lie in an original sin—historical or symbolic—that separates humanity from divinity, but in the nature of creation itself, a creation that is finite and, in the case of humans, fallible, capable in their freedom of sin.

Regardless of where one falls on the theological spectrum, Jesus, as the incarnation of God in the world, is the true image of God, and he restores the divine image to humanity. For those of a more evangelical perspective, this restoration comes solely through Jesus' sacrificial act of atonement for human sin through his death on the cross. For Richard Hooker and much of the Anglican theological tradition, Jesus' incarnation is also a key aspect of redemption. Like the tradition of the Greek Church, this view sees the Incarnation itself as a primary act of salvation, a salvation available to and intended for all of humanity, because all are in God's image. James Carpenter notes in *Nature and Grace* (Crossroad, 1988, p. 18) how this inseparably ties the grace of creation to the grace and redemption that comes through the death and resurrection of Christ.

Why does this matter to the discussion of blessing same-gender couples?

We believe the differing conclusions about human sexuality in general, and homosexuality in particular, are closely related to differing views of human being, sin and redemption. Admittedly, the brief nature of this report leads to some oversimplification, but we hope also to some insight.

The strand of the tradition that emphasizes the predominance of original sin tends to see a radical separation between humanity and divinity, between creation

and redemption, to see God as wholly other and transcendent. It tends, in other words, towards the sort of dualism that separates embodiment from spirituality and locates sexuality in an embodiment that is the bearer of original sin. This strand is inclined to focus on issues of sexual purity and is most concerned to confine the expression of sexuality to the marital relationship, one it understands to be ordained by God. Procreation is understood as the primary purpose of marriage between a man and a woman, and any expression of sexuality outside the bond of marriage is considered sinful. This is the strand of Anglican theological tradition that has found a home in many non-western parts of the Anglican Communion.

We believe the trend in western Anglican theology—beginning with Richard Hooker—is away from dualisms and toward a theology that balances, and holds in unifying tension, notions of God as transcendent and God as immanent in the Incarnation, notions of creation and redemption, notions of body and spirit. The tendency is to describe the presence of the image of God in human beings less as a *quality* of being than as a *way* of being—in other words, in dynamic terms. F.D. Maurice, for example, saw it as the power of related love. For him, as well as many others, this capacity for loving relatedness is key to their theologies of humanity and divinity.

In this view, sexuality can be understood as gift, as one means of expressing profound connection between two human beings. If it is given, in the words of the marriage service, "for mutual joy," and not simply to permit procreation, then, we must ask, why should its expression be denied to two persons of the same gender who love one another?

We cannot in this report rehearse all the arguments surrounding questions of sexual identity and choice. Even within the diversity of the gay, lesbian, bisexual

and transgender community, the question of choice generates varied responses. We accept the experience of the many who identify themselves as gay or lesbian because, as stated above, they find their most essential, God-given identities fulfilled in an intimate relationship with a person of the same gender. We believe that for such persons, sexual expression is something entirely different from that condemned by a few verses of Holy Scripture.

How do we understand sin today?

Those who do accept scripture's apparent condemnation of same-gender sexual expression understand the action itself, the behavior, to be inherently sinful. We hear the phrase, "love the sinner [for we are all sinners], hate the sin." The sin, in this view, is not in a gay or lesbian sexual orientation, but rather in acting out that orientation. Sin has to do with a breach of right behavior. Because opposite-gender sexual behavior has an accepted place in marriage, opposite gender couples are not precluded from acting on their sexual orientation. Same-sex couples have no option but abstinence. They cannot live their identities but are counseled to seek change.

Finding this sort of dualism to be problematic, we follow a different trend in Anglican theology, one that understands sin as a breach of right relationship with God, with one's community, or with another individual. In this light, both opposite-gender and same-gender sex can be either life-giving or destructive of relationship. The sin lies not in the specific action but in the context and intention with which it is performed and received. This is not to diminish in any way the power of sin in human life and human sexual relationships, but to situate it in its effect on right relationship rather than in particular behaviors.

How are humans expected to relate to one another?

Our Baptismal Covenant calls us to "seek and serve Christ in all persons, loving your neighbor as yourself," and to "respect the dignity of every human person." For us, this does not mean placing any qualifiers on the dignity of persons who identify themselves as gay or lesbian. We believe, with the several General Conventions of the Episcopal Church, that "homosexual persons are children of God who have a full and equal claim with all others persons upon the love, acceptance, and pastoral concern and care of the Church."

In the Diocese of Vermont, we believe the "pastoral concern and care of the Church" should include the opportunity for all couples to enter into covenanted relationships that express the values of the church and to have those relationships receive the support and blessing of the faith community.

What are those values? Resolution D039sa of the 2000 General Convention outlined them as, "fidelity, monogamy, mutual affection and respect, careful, honest communication, and the holy love which enables those in such relationships to see in each other the image of God." The resolution denounced "promiscuity, exploitation and abusiveness in the relationships of any of our members," and it stated the intention that the church should "hold all its members accountable to these values, and will provide for them the prayerful support, encouragement and pastoral care necessary to live faithfully by them." ❖

deanery doings

Continued from Page J

The Christian Meditation program at Christ Church continues to meet Wednesdays at 5:00 P.M. in the chapel, using meditation as the homily in the Eucharist. All are welcome. The Sunday Adult Forum is reading *A New Christianity for a New World*, by John Spong, a challenging and thought-provoking book.

At CHURCH OF THE GOOD SHEPHERD, Barre, a Discernment Committee has written a congregational profile, and they hope to have a part-time priest in residence in the fall.

Northeast Deanery 7

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The deanery will meet on Sunday afternoon, Aug. 22, for the annual picnic at the Rev. **Robert Castle's** farm in Holland. Plans for a music program and other activities are underway.

On a blustery day in May, members of ST. JOHN THE BAPTIST, Hardwick, held an outdoor fair to help raise money for the current building program. In the

course of the morning, the local Memorial Day parade passed by half a block away with its bands, floats and costumed marchers. St. John's was represented by an imaginative float labeled, "The Peaceable Kingdom," which featured a variety of farm animals and several of the younger members happily juggling along.

After the service June 27, families of the church gathered outdoors to picnic together. Joining the year-round members were many of those who return to the area for the summer.

Champlain Deanery 8

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Education for Ministry (EFM) has openings for the coming year. It requires a year-long commitment and meets at the Cathedral on Thursdays from 5-7:30 P.M. Contact mentors **Ann Ely** or **Tanya Wal-**

lace (twallace@stpauls.cathedralvt.org) for information. Both Dean **Ken Poppe** and the Rev. **Craig Smith** are communicating with their congregations about their sabbatical activities.

Many attended the film, "The Lost Boys of Sudan," and also the dinner held at ST. JAMES', Essex Junction. These two successful gatherings raised a total of \$7,545 for the Sudanese Education fund.

The CATHEDRAL CHURCH OF ST. PAUL, Burlington, will "Celebrate Pride" with a potluck brunch and a Choral Evensong July 10 (see Page K). The Rummage Sale will be Saturday, Aug. 14, from 9-3.

ST. ANDREW'S, Colchester, will again participate in a fund raising at the July 4th celebration at Bayside Park, under **Deborah Bouchard's** leadership.

TRINITY, Shelburne's **Diane Rooney** has been accepted as a Postulant for Holy Orders. The Children's Ministry Steering Team is already planning family activities for next year and welcomes suggestions.

ALL SAINTS', South Burlington, had a newcomer breakfast Sunday, June 13. A special food shelf collection the week ending June 6 brought in 131 pounds of donated food. ❖

Diocesan Calendar

July 2004

- 1 Rock Point Board, BBCC, 11:30AM-2 PM
- 5 Diocesan Center closed for July 4 Holiday
- 7 Executive Committee, Christ Church, Montpelier, 1 PM
- 11 Bishop at St. Luke's, Alburg
- 17 Diocesan Study Program, St. Paul's, White River, 9 AM
- 21 Fresh Start, 9:30 AM-2:30 PM
- 29 Trustees, Diocesan Center, Burlington
- 31 Commission on Ministry, 9 AM

August 2004

- 1 Bishop at St. Mark's, Newport
- 4 Executive Committee, Diocesan Center, 1 PM
- 6 **Deadline, September Mountain Echo**
- 7 Safe Church Training, St. Mark's, Newport 8:45 AM
- 11 Dispatch of Business, Diocesan Center, 1 PM
- 15 Bishop at Slate Valley Ministry
- 18 Fresh Start 9:30 AM-2:30 PM
- 22 Bishop at Christ Church, Island Pond

September 2004

- 6 Diocesan Center closed for Labot Day holiday
- 7 **Deadline, October Mountain Echo**
- 8 Executive Committee, Christ Church, Montpelier, 1 PM

DYC 2004 Summer Camp Out

For youth entering 9th grade – youth graduated 12th grade

Saturday, July 17, 2:00 P.M. through the 9:30 A.M. Sunday service at Church of Our Savior, Killington

For information, contact Keri and Alden Franzoni, 802-644-8989, or visit www.dioceseofvermont.org

DYC

Diocesan Youth Calendar

For information about the activities of the Diocesan Youth Committee, contact Keri & Alden Franzoni, 802-644-8989

For information about other diocesan youth activities, contact Connie Saeger-Proctor, Canon for Youth Ministry 802-479-1246
clsproctor@dioceseofvermont.org

- Oct. 23 Acolyte Festival, Cathedral, Burlington
- Nov. 12-14 DYC High School Retreat
2005
- Feb. 11-12 Night Watch, St. John the Divine, NYC
- Apr. 1-3 DYC Junior High/Middle School Retreat
- Apr. 15-16 Province I Youth Event
- July 26-31 Episcopal Youth Event, Berea, KY

The J. Warren and Lois McClure Discipleship–Discovery 2000 Fund

Funds Available for Parish Use As of June 15, 2004

| | |
|---|-----------|
| Initiative I | |
| The Bishop Butterfield Revolving Loan Fund | \$ 65,516 |
| Initiative II | |
| The Talent and Resource Network | \$ 13,035 |
| Initiative III | |
| The Congregation Renewal and Emergency Assistance Fund | \$ - |
| Initiative IV | |
| The Diocesan Outreach Fund | \$ 16,095 |

Appropriate uses for each initiative, application forms and requirements may be found in the Diocesan Handbook. For further information, please call the Diocesan Office.

Ballard and Pellegrini are new deacons

The Rev. Catherine Cooke, Archdeacon of the Diocese (left) and the congregation applaud newly ordained deacons, Jim Ballard and Lucy Pellegrini. Bishop Thomas Ely ordained the two at the Cathedral Church of St. Paul on the afternoon of June 5, 2004. The Rev. David Hamilton preached.

Jim Ballard, sponsored by St. Paul's Cathedral, is an IBM employee who has been working with the congregation of St. Luke's, St. Albans.

Lucy Pellegrini, sponsored by St. Stephen's, Middlebury, is a chaplain at Helen Porter Healthcare and Rehabilitation Center in Middlebury. She has been working with St. Thomas', Brandon.

June Schulte photo



Reunion draws Women Growing Older group back to Rock Point

by Margaret Miller

We longed to see the friends we had made at the Women Growing Older Conferences in the 1990's, so we made it happen.

Sixteen of us, average age about 75 (maybe!) gathered on the Monday after Mother's Day at the Bishop Booth Conference Center to strengthen bonds made nearly a decade ago. We finished telling our stories on Wednesday morning, just in time to celebrate the beauty of the earth with our chaplain, the Rev. Nancy Bloomer, as celebrant.

It was a glorious forty-eight hours. Each of us had time to tell our story in whatever way we chose. Some brought pictures. Others told the highlights of the years since we'd parted. One brought a video of an interview she had done for the Coalition of Vermont Elders. Some brought quotations from books to help them speak; another brought poetry she had written.

We heard about aches and pains and joys and sorrows—all kinds of important passages. We talked of

love, loss, change and adventure. We shared moments of suffering—physical, emotional and spiritual. We spoke of how we had learned to live with that suffering. We talked of how our faith had helped us on the journey.

Loss loomed large...sight, hearing, mobility, homes, spouses and children. It was sustaining to be able to talk about it with people who understood.

We decided that we enjoy being old (most of the time) and celebrating that "oldness." Only our ministries change. We feasted on the beauty of Rock Point and the food from the conference center kitchen. We sat in the sun for a happy hour and visited the carpet of white trillium on the path to the parade ground. A wonder of the gathering was watching one of the visually impaired women knit.

There were a few tears as we said farewell, but there was strong agreement that we should be together again—and that someone younger should do the work!

Margaret "Maggie" Miller is a member of St. John the Baptist, Hardwick.



Photo courtesy of Doris Zappala

Front row: Kathryn Cornell, Edith Hazard, Virginia Bunning, Margaret "Maggie" Miller, the Rev. Nancy Bloomer. Back Row: Lois Hadd, Kate MacArthur, Pat Carruth, Joan Sabens, Louise Fowler, Marcie Kennedy, Doris Zappala, Faith Bartlett. Absent from photo: Edith Kent, Helen Sim, and Eleanor Van Vechtan.