It was a full and festive day

A special convention, deanery meetings, socializing and lunch, the seating of a newly elected provisional bishop, and expressions of gratefulness to the retiring bishop—all added up to a busy day Saturday, March 5. Holy Family Church in Fresno was the scene of the flurry of activity.

The seating of the Rt. Rev. Chester L. Talton as provisional bishop of the Episcopal Diocese of San Joaquin was the focus of the day. Delegates to the special convention had affirmed his election at the morning meeting, and also approved a new deanery structure.

After the convention was adjourned, separate meetings of the three deaneries were held. (See “Deaneries Corner” on page C.) Following are comments by a few of the 200-plus people who participated in the joyous day:

CHET TALTON, bishop of San Joaquin
Everyone’s been very enthusiastic and supportive of my becoming provisional bishop since I arrived. It [March 5] was a really good day.

CINDY SMITH, St. Brigid’s, Bakersfield, president of Standing Committee
We had a great turnout, over 200 people; the church was packed. We’ve got 19 congregations and everybody was there and accounted for, all the parishes and clergy. The resolution that the standing committee put forward passed unanimously. …Overall the gathering was jubilant. We are so...
Women’s retreat rescheduled for May
By the Rev. Kathryn Galicia

DUE TO A severe winter storm warning, the women’s retreat with the Rev. Barbara Crafton had to be postponed from the last weekend in February to the first weekend in May.

The director of Evergreen Conference Center in Oakhurst, Melva Hale, called me on Thursday morning, the day before we were scheduled to arrive for the retreat. She advised us not to come because travel in the foothills and mountains was going to be impacted by an approaching storm. We had to make a decision within the next couple of hours as to whether we wanted to take a chance on having decent weather for the weekend. After considering the risks to those who would be driving on snow-covered roads, we decided not to go ahead. We were also concerned about the predicted temperatures in the low 20s, and wondered how safe it would be for the retreatants to walk on icy paths from their housing to the chapel and the dining room.

Within a few days of the cancellation, we were able to reserve space at ECCO that also coincided with Barbara Crafton’s availability. So the retreat has been rescheduled for the afternoon of Friday, May 6, through Sunday morning, May 8. If you have already registered and paid for the original retreat in February, you will not need to re-register. We will have you on the list and we will contact you to confirm your attendance. If for some reason you are unable to attend May 6-8, just call or email Juanita Weber at the diocesan office (209-576-0104, jweber@diosanjoaquin.org) and you will receive a refund.

If you were not originally able to come, but now you would like to attend, there is still some space left and you are welcome to register. The registration form is still posted on the diocesan website.

As Juanita Weber wrote in a recent Friday Reflection, “Yes, that Sunday is Mother’s Day, but don’t you deserve a time to rest and relax, get renewed spiritually, and still come home on Sunday early enough to be with your family for the rest of the day?” You will be home in time to enjoy a Mother’s Day dinner, and to share with your loved ones the wonderful experiences you had at the retreat.

It was a full and festive day
FROM PAGE A

excited to have Bishop Chet leading us on this next phase of our life...the phase of rebuilding and growth. Bishop Jerry’s phase was healing and regrouping. He has said numerous times when we gathered that he wants us to look forward. We have had to be focused on ourselves and our healing and regrouping but now he wants us as a diocese to start to look outside again at the wider church and other things we can be involved in, in mission and ministry.

JANIE FISHER, Holy Family, Fresno

It was an uplifting day. I felt a great sense of hopefulness as the leadership of the diocese was passed from one pair of strong hands to another, from strength to strength.

SUSAN READ, All Souls’, Ridgecrest

A beautiful day and a very special occasion.

CAROL BOWER FOOTE, St. John’s, Lodi

The day had the tone of celebration for how far our diocese has come since the convention of 2008 and for the Norcal diocese and as individuals we can find work and projects that we can support, work and projects such as Habitat for Humanity, food pantries, clothes closets, shelters, the Diocese of Haiti, and the Diocese of Navajoland. Adopt a school, advocate for the needs of women and children and marginalized people, develop a community garden. How else might we serve?

Our reflection and contemplation then supports our being God’s people in the world.

† Chet Talton

Both bishops were presented with the gift of an icon created especially for the occasion by iconographer Joyce Tanner of Grace, Bakersfield.

victory of steadfast faith and devotion. One could observe the warm greetings as laity and clergy from different congregations were reunited.

Throughout the day, we could feel how much his time with us meant to Bishop Lamb and how ready he was to pass the torch; we could also feel the quiet conviction and passion in Bishop Talton and his readiness to take up that torch with us. For me, I sensed a rite of passage from a time of inward healing to a time when we could…reach outward to help heal a hurting world.

Remarks by Bishop Talton and Cindy Smith are from an Episcopal News Service story by the Rev. Pat McCaughan.

Be a part of Episcopal Life San Joaquin! Please send your stories, photos, information, letters, or announcements by the 5th day of each month for inclusion in the following month’s edition of Episcopal Life San Joaquin. Our mailing address is: Editor, Episcopal Life San Joaquin, 1528 Oakdale Rd., Modesto, CA 95355, or E-mail: dhall@diosanjoaquin.org

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Editor: Doris Hall, ddhhaal@aol.com; dhall@diosanjoaquin.org
Art Director: Molly Ruttan

Visit our website: www.diosanjoaquin.org

Be sure to check out the videos on our website.

SPOTLIGHT

Norwegian pianist to perform in Lodi

THE ARTS AT St. John’s and the Sons of Norway Lodge in Stockton present the Norwegian pianist Knut Erik Jensen in concert at St John’s Episcopal Church, Lodi, on Friday, May 20, at 7:00 P.M.

Jensen returns to tour the U.S. with a new program of music by Norwegian composers from the past two centuries. In this program, “Nordic Elegance,” Jensen presents works by composers Geir Tveitt, Harald Sæverud, David Monrad Johansen, and Edvard Grieg. These composers played an important role in showcasing and preserving traditional Norwegian folk music by unifying past traditions with present classical styles. Jensen provides his audiences with a deeper understanding of the compositions and their historical context by combining musical performance with information about the music and its significance.

Jensen has a rich background with various styles and instruments. His main focus has been the accordion. He is a much sought after accompanist, especially for singers and the opera. In 2007, he toured the US and Canada where he played close to 40 concerts for Scandinavian communities. His tour included performances at the Norsk Høfest in Minot, where he performed the Grieg A minor concerto with the Minot Symphony Orchestra. He has recorded two CDs with Norwegian piano music: “Edvard Grieg; Anniversary Collection” and “Nordic Elegance,” which presents Norwegian piano music introduced after Grieg.

Tickets are $15 general admission, $10 seniors and students. For more information visit artsatsaintjohns.com or Knut Erik Jensen’s official website: www.knuterikjensen.com.

St. John’s Episcopal Church is at 1055 S. Lower Sacramento Road, Lodi.
Canon Mark retires, will sail away

FROM PAGE A

Maine, he returned to the diocese in 1987 when he was appointed vicar of St. Alban’s, Los Banos. In 1991 he became rector of Trinity, Madera. From 1995 to 1999 he taught social studies full time at Madera High School. He moved to St. Anne’s in 2000 as interim rector, then became rector in 2002.

In 1990, Canon Mark married Susan and they combined their families with five children between them. They now have five grandchildren to enjoy in retirement: Riley, Mackenzie, and Zoey in Port Orchard, Washington, and Gwen and Nora in the San Luis Obispo area.

In 1964, Canon Mark attended the Coast Guard Academy in New London, Connecticut. He sailed for three years on the USCG Eagle, a 300-foot sailing bark, raced on the sailing team, and in the yacht yard. On the Coast Guard yacht Royono VII, he participated in the 1966 Newport to Bermuda Race. He had learned to sail with his father who was always thinking of sailing off to the South Pacific. Mark said, “For many years, and through at least three boats, my dad talked about it, but always something else came up. It is hard to be fancy for seven sons.”

In retirement, Canon Mark is striving to fulfill a lifelong desire to do some serious sailing. He and Susan have purchased a 34-foot, 10-ton schooner built in British Columbia, called the Del Viento (of the wind). This vessel is a veteran of the South Pacific and Mark and Susan plan to take it back there. He will be working to prepare for the voyage for the next year and a half, planning to start out after he serves as a deputy at General Convention 2012 in Indianapolis.

In the meantime, Canon Mark will continue to serve the diocese in a consulting capacity, and as a chaplain to the clergy on a very part time basis.

Top: The Del Viento under full sail not long after it was built. It will be re-rigged the same on commission this April in Stockton. Left: Canon to the Ordinary Mark Hall and Susan Hall with Vee Race of Holy Family on March 5.

All Souls’ considers subject of God and science

By Susan Read

DURING A SUNDAY service in February, the members of All Souls’ Episcopal Church in Ridgecrest discussed the concepts of God and science. Led by the Rev. Ruth Eller, the congregation looked at a variety of resources, including the Bible, to consider the compatibility of modern science and belief in our Creator.

This year, All Souls’ joined about 647 congregations of various denominations to affirm “both discoveries of modern science (the theory of evolution) and the basic tenets of Christianity,” based on the Clergy Letter Project introduced in 2004 by Michael Zimmerman, a professor of biology at Indiana’s Butler University.

“This is about opening our minds and deepening our faith,” Eller said. “Try not to be judgmental. Everyone approaches these concepts differently.” She referred to the Apostle Paul’s letters to the Corinthians, in which he says we are servants of Christ and stewards of God’s mighty power, including the mystery of Christ, the human expression of God’s divine love. That expression of God’s love is also found in the mysteries of the whole creation.

According to a 2005 study by the Episcopal Church’s Committee on Science, Technology and Faith titled “A Catechism of Creation: An Episcopal Understanding,” the Bible uses poetic and metaphorical language to convey creation. The study reports, “These majestic stories should not be understood as historical and scientific accounts of origins, but as proclamations of basic theological truths about creation…the relationship between God and all of God’s works.”

The catechism provides basic information about modern scientific discoveries and theories, and presents a biblical basis for the church’s commitment to an ethic of caring for creation. The study points out that the book of Genesis conveys that “creation has order and structure. It is transfigured and reveals God’s presence, yet it is natural, not divine.”

Eller shared advice given by the dean of seminary during a class in her first year: Do not be afraid of new knowledge.

New knowledge is revealed every day by modern science, Eller said, and we can take in the wonder of the world as it is, with all its beauty and mystery. God has given us this beautiful earth and we have the power to choose how to respect it, sustain it and preserve it.

The church study encourages the whole human family to have courage and confidence to “act with energy to make God’s good earth a fit dwelling place for all of God’s creatures, now and for the future.”

The three restructured deaneries of the diocese met following the special convention in Fresno on March 5. News from each will be published in the “Deaneries corner” every month.

North Deanery

The newly organized North Deanery met at Holy Family Episcopal Church in Fresno, March 5, 2010, during the time set aside after the meeting of the Special Convention of the Episcopal Diocese of San Joaquin. Beryl Simkins of St. Francis’, Turlock, was elected president and the Rev. Stan Collins was elected vice president.

The group discussed possibilities and actions that may be addressed in the future. Suggestions included organized fund raising for important mission efforts such as Episcopal Relief & Development medicated mosquito nets, and coordination of youth activities. There are plans to develop a website for the North Deanery and to assure that information about the group goes out regularly by electronic means, and on paper for those who do not have electronic access.

The next meeting of the group will be held Sunday, May 15, at 3:00 P.M. at St. Paul’s Episcopal Church in Modesto.

Central Deanery

The Rev. Michele Racusin of Holy Family, Fresno, was elected president of the Central Deanery. George Sitts of St. Raphaels’, Oakhurst, was elected vice president.

A barbecue and palm-cutting party was planned for the day before Palm Sunday.

South Deanery

Susan Read of All Souls’, Ridgecrest, was elected president of the South Deanery Council at the March 5 meeting, and the Rev. Linda Huggard was elected vice president. Susan led those present in planning future meetings and discussing how all the South Deanery churches might collaborate. Susan reports, “Everyone contributed to make it a lively first meeting.”

© Susan Read

Reflection

The scapegoat

By the Rev. Luis Rodriguez, Church of the Saviour, Hanford

SCAPEGOATING IS ONE OF the most powerful and destructive, as well as the most easily aroused and manipulated of human phenomena. The word itself comes the ancient Hebrew ceremony of ritualically casting the sins of the people upon a goat chosen by lot, and then chasing the goat into the wilderness, thus distancing the people from their sins.

Socially, scapegoating encourages people to locate society’s ills on others and then to persecute them for it, chase them to the margins of society. The anthropologist René Giraud sees the scapegoating mechanism as central to the formation of culture since, frightening as it may be, social cohesion is one of its by-products. It helps to create an us-against-them mentality which does undoubtedly build solidarity, but at a horrible cost. Governments have traditionally used scapegoating to create a feeling of “community” as well as to distract people from the government’s own failings and inadequacies. In order to create social cohesion, Nazi propaganda preached the country’s problems were caused by the Jews and other “undesirables.” Yet it did so with truly horrifying means and results.

As we approach Holy Week, we recognize the scapegoat as an image often used to make sense of Jesus’ passion and death. He is seen as the one who takes sins away, and thus a fulfillment of the type of the scapegoat in the Hebrew Scriptures. However, we can understand Jesus as scapegoat in a far more nuanced and challenging sense. In Jesus we see everyone, whether as an individual or as a member of a particular group, who has been ostracized, victimized, persecuted and killed in order to maintain...
Fellowship with a capital TEA

By Carol Bower Foote

ALL WOMEN ARE welcome at St. John’s Episcopal Church in Lodi on Saturday, May 14, for our 8th annual high tea. Sponsored by St. John’s fellowship ministry, this unique event brings community members together to celebrate the love of Christ by sharing joy in each other’s company and delight in the expression of our creative gifts.

A creative feast is offered in original, local artwork on display, stunning raffle baskets, beautifully set tables, and elegant sweet and savory treats served with tea and sherry by gracious men in tuxes.

A silent auction of home goods provides additional entertainment. Many enjoy “dressing up for tea” as part of the fun, including an intriguing variety of hats. Local artists are invited to display and/or sell original work (limit 2). If you wish to display, please contact the church office.

Tea tickets are available in advance from the church office through May 8 for a donation of $20 for adults and $10 for children. Doors open at 2:00 P.M. St. John’s is at 1055 S. Lower Sacramento Road in Lodi, phone 209-369-3381, e-mail stjohnslodi@sbcglobal.net net.net.

The scapegoat from page C

The perceived safety of the status quo. He is every person who has been a casualty of “community-building” because he or she did not fit in; every person about whom it has been said, as Caiphas said about him, “it [is] better to have one person die for the people.” (John 18:14)

At the same time, the scapegoating of Jesus proclaims a loud, resounding and sweet and savory treats served with tea and sherry by gracious men in tuxes.

Above: Tea guests enjoy wonderful food, art, fellowship, and the raffle.

Left: Guests at the 2010 high tea look for a winner among their raffle tickets.

and even divine “NO!” to the very dynamics of scapegoating. It says that, in fact, those who stay within the community formed through the persecution of the scapegoat are those furthest from the divine will, those furthest from understanding the call of building true Community.

Solidarity among people is crucial to building relationships among people. But, all too often these are built at the expense of someone or some group. The process produces casualties. As Christians we need to constantly remind ourselves that we worship one of those casualties, and then ask ourselves what we do realistically and practically to prevent them.

A program sponsored by the Order of the Holy Cross, an Episcopal monastic community, is designed for single men aged 20 to 48 who are interested in exploring Benedictine monastic life as a possible vocational path. The brothers of the Mount Calvary Community of St. Mary’s Retreat House in Santa Barbara offer three days of prayer, work, study, and conversation, Tuesday, July 19, to Friday, July 22, 2011. To register contact the retreat house at 805-682-4117. Registration is $50. For more information contact Br. Bernard at bernard@hcm.net.org.

Blood drive in Lodi is for a special child

People in the Lodi area are urged to be heroes for a little girl who needs a blood transfusion every couple of weeks, by donating blood and/or getting others to donate on her behalf. Beth Elwood of St. John’s, Lodi, is chairing the Annual Spring Replacement Blood Drive for Sofia Rose Conde, to be held at the church on Saturday, May 7, from 9 A.M. to 2 P.M. Sofia was diagnosed with Pyruvate Kinase Deficiency (PDK) shortly after birth. Her body does not produce the enzyme needed to support healthy red blood cells. Donors may make an appointment by calling St. John’s office at 209-369-3381. Walk-ins are also welcome.

Invitation to experience monastic living

The Rt. Rev. Chet Talton and his wife, April, check out a north valley tradition, St. Anne’s pub night, with the Rev. Lyn Morlan.

Each meal included an intriguing variety of hats. Local artists are invited to display and/or sell original work (limit 2). If you wish to display, please contact the church office.

Tea tickets are available in advance from the church office through May 8 for a donation of $20 for adults and $10 for children. Doors open at 2:00 P.M. St. John’s is at 1055 S. Lower Sacramento Road in Lodi, phone 209-369-3381, e-mail stjohnslodi@sbcglobal.net net.net.

News Briefs

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Above: Leslie Fox-Humphreys serves bangers and mash to Joyce Mudge, second from right, and three other pub patrons.

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