Donors help thousands

By Ariel Miller
Interchange contributor

Like Jesus’s disciples nervously eyeing a mob of 5,000 hungry men, Southern Ohio Episcopalians have every reason to feel daunted by soaring hunger in their communities.

Ohio has 4.5 million households. Between April and June, 1.775 million Ohioans turned to emergency pantries in the struggle to feed their families.

“We’ve got just under 8,400 Episcopal households in this diocese.

Last year, our diocesan charity, Episcopal Community Services Foundation, sent $136,000 in grants to 45 community ministries across the diocese, most of which address hunger in some way, through pantries and community meals and summer sack lunches for children facing months without school meals.

What can so few possibly achieve in the face of so much need?

Last year, ECSF’s handful of grantees delivered more than 2.5 million meals worth of food to neighbors in need. More than 62,000 of the 81,000 people our grantees served were nourished.

Others received shelter, rent or utility assistance, prescriptions, vouchers for state ID’s, and uncounted blessings of fellowship, listening and encouragement.

Many of these meals were donated and cooked casserole by casserole by Episcopal volunteers. Churches that use food banks turn a grant dollar into four meals worth of groceries (echoes of the miracle at Cana!)

Thousands of the people fed were children, including the little girl in Zanesville who hadn’t eaten for two days before coming to St. James Friendship Dinner, and hundreds of homeless children in Cincinnati, Hillsboro, Springfield, and Xenia who were offered three square meals a day while their parents worked with skilled mentors to overcome the problems that caused them to lose the roof over their head.

And that’s just a fraction of what you accomplished, since your churches take part in hundreds of ministries in addition to the ones for which you’ve applied for grants. You are leaven! Thank God for your commitment, and keep up the miracles!

136th Convention
Perseverance for the Race:
Delight in new terrain

By Richelle Thompson
Interchange editor

Against a backdrop of an uncertain economy and fragile futures for some congregations, Bishop Thomas E. Breidenthal urged the diocese to embrace the journey.

“Exuberance and delight of unbridled motion over new terrain,” said the bishop in his address to delegates at the 136th Convention in Cambridge on Nov. 12-13.

“Find ‘perseverance for the Race,’” said the bishop in his address to delegates at the 136th Convention in Cambridge on Nov. 12-13.

Taking cues from Hebrews, convention explored the theme, “Perseverance for the Race.”

“As this year’s theme suggests, this adventure is, to some extent, a race: a race against the loss of a generation; a race against mere survivalism; a race against a spirit of hard-heartedness and suspicion abroad in our land. These are enemies we must outrun, and outrun them we will. But racing is not only about escape,” said Bishop Breidenthal. “It is about our fixed attention on a destination whose attainment is assured, if we will but put our trust in Christ, the pioneer and perfecter of our faith.”

As a roadmap for the race, the diocese unanimously claimed a statement of mission:

“As Episcopalians in the Diocese of Southern Ohio, we commit to: know the common story; proclaim our common faith; pray our common prayer; drink the common cup; serve the common good in the name of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ. This is our common ministry.”

Bishop Breidenthal shared in his address milestones of our common ministry. With the recommendations of a search committee, he called the Rev. Canon Anne Reed as the diocese’s canon for mission. The Procter Center is undergoing a

Please see Convention, page 4
Perseverance for the Race:
Bishop’s Address to the 136th Convention

Therefore, since we are surrounded by so great a cloud of witnesses, let us also lay aside every weight and the sin that clings so closely, and let us run with perseverance the race that is set before us, looking to Jesus the pioneer and perfecter of our faith, who for the sake of the joy that was set before him endured the cross, disregarding its shame, and has taken his seat at the right hand of the throne of God (Hebrews 12:1-2).

The Lord be with you.
And also with you.

Let us pray:
Almighty and merciful God, it is only by your gift that your faithful people offer you true and laudable service: Grant that we may run without stumbling to obtain your heavenly promises, through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.

First of all, I would like to thank the clergy and people of the Northeast Deanery for hosting this convention. You are the ones who always drive long distances to get to diocesan meetings; today, the rest of us are glad to return the favor. I am sure many delegates were relieved to find that it does not take six hours to drive here from all points west of Columbus. We cannot feel too sorry for your remoteness, however: it is utterly beautiful here, and I am sure I’m not the only one giving thanks for a convention center that offers us 360 degrees of Appalachian foothills to feast our eyes on.

Special thanks is also due, as always, to the Committee on Dispatch of Business, that has worked tirelessly since the 135th convention to ensure that the 136th convention comes off smoothly. I know they will not mind if I single out the Rev. Cricket Park for particular praise. For several years running she has secured a place to gather and coordinated the technical support, staff and creature comforts to ensure that the work we do here is our best work.

I would also be remiss if I didn’t express my heartfelt gratitude to Bishop Price, who, despite being swallowed up by the Diocese of Pittsburgh, has continued to chair the committee on dispatch and has once again made it possible for us to have an agenda that makes sense and allows plenty of time for fellowship and prayer. We all miss you and Mariann, and we are counting the days until you are back among us full-time. I would like to thank everyone who worked together to put together our wonderful Eucharist this morning and the massed choir who offered the beautiful music as well as the Appalachian music group.

Our theme this year is “perseverance for the race.” Not long ago I revisited my address to last year’s convention and was struck by how far we have run in a year. Let me share a few mileposts with you.

Last November, I called for the selection of a Canon for Mission who would help me focus, develop and oversee the work of this diocese in witnessing publicly to the Gospel of Jesus Christ through community empowerment and advocacy for the poor and those in need. Our national search process led us to the Rev. Anne Reed. I wish to thank the search committee that worked tirelessly, always with grace, humor and a profound appreciation for Southern Ohio’s noble history of mission work. They are the Rev. Paul Clever, the Rev. Alice Connor, the Rev. Leslie Flemming, the Rev. Lee Ann Reat, the Rev. Janice West and the Rev. Stephen Williamson.

Then there is our beloved Procter Camp and Conference Center, which I have taken to calling the Procter Farm. A year ago, I announced the creation of a task force to help me understand better how we might take this precious diocesan resource to the next level. By ‘next level,’ I mean a business model that will engender sufficient revenue to expand Procter’s reach as a place for gathering, learning and spiritual formation. I also mean exploring how we might best align the cultivation of our 1,200-acres of prime farmland with the mission of the diocese and how we might engage more actively in the life of the rural community that surrounds us in Madison County, to say nothing about how we might play a more constructive role in London, the county seat. This exploration has issued in change, some of it painful. The Procter Board has been reconstituted as a commission of the diocese, on the assumption that Procter is not a separate entity but is a vital and central mega-program of the diocese. With that in mind, I have folded the Procter staff into the diocesan staff. This has been a mutually enriching move. I also would like to take this opportunity to thank Penny and Leo Buckley in absentia for their years of service to Procter and the diocese. We are now in a period of transition to new executive leadership, and we are eagerly awaiting the arrival of Chris Tokarz, our new acting director. She will take up her duties on Dec. 1.

In my last convention address, I announced my intention to revise our policy on the blessing of same-gender unions. This decision was entirely mine, but a group of clergy and lay people graciously agreed to help me hammer out the details of a new policy. Their work went far beyond this charge. I have seldom encountered the depth of theological reflection and Christian witness that marked the meetings of this task force. I also would add that they were sensitive from beginning to end about the difficulty some members of our diocesan household would have with this policy. I am deeply grateful to them for their charity, their discretion and their courage. The fruit of their work is available for all to see on our website (go to “How we do things”), and I commend it to you. I would like the members of this task force who are present to stand, so that they may be acknowledged: the Rev. Douglas Argue, the Rev. Trevor Babb, the Rev. Bill Carroll, Joe Dehner, Esquire, the Rev. Pam Elwell, the Rev. George Hill, Ms. Nanci Koepeke, Dr. Gail Payne, the Rev. Eileen O’Reilly, Dr. Don Reed, Ms. Marti Rideout, Mr. A. J. Stack, and Lisa Wharton, Esquire.

I spoke briefly last year about the church’s need to reach out to young adults. This is a mission field of considerable proportions, roughly divided between 20 and 30-somethings who are attempting to establish households and gain credibility in their chosen field of expertise, and undergraduates and graduate students on our college campuses, who are exploring everything under the sun and trying to figure out who they are. Both these groups are high on my agenda.

And not on my agenda only. Southern Ohio has a long record of leadership in campus ministry, and this charism has emerged in powerful ways since we last gathered in convention. When the Episcopal Church, despite severe cuts to its budget, offered grants to support campus ministry initiatives, two of our congregations responded immediately. The Church of the Good Shepherd, literally on the campus of Ohio University in Athens, and Holy Trinity, within feet of Miami University in Oxford, successfully petitioned for funds to develop peer ministry programs. I am very proud of their efforts, which made us the only diocese in the Episcopal Church to receive two campus ministry grants this year. With the support of these grants, Good Shepherd and Holy Trinity are developing a corps of student leaders who are themselves rebuilding an Episcopal campus presence from the bottom up.

The same thing is happening at St. Stephen’s, Columbus, located on the campus of Ohio State University. St. Stephen’s has long had a strong ministry to the campus community, based on the raising up of peer ministers, that is, students who reach out to their peers and oversee the program. Just a few weeks ago, these young people hosted a gathering at St. Stephen’s for any and all Episcopalians on the OSU campus, wherever they go to church – or don’t. I was able to be present at this event, which brought together a lot of people who would not otherwise have known that they have the Episcopal Church in common. The Rev. Pam Elwell, who is a deacon based at St. Stephen’s, has been working over the past few months to identify all the people and places in our diocese that are engaged in campus ministry. Earlier this fall, all those people came together at Procter, and I was privileged to meet with them. It was amazing to see what’s going on, mostly with little or no monetary support. Besides OU, OSU and Miami, this group included people ministering at the University of Cincinnati, Dennison University and Capitol University. We will build on this beginning.

What about young adults who are not on campus or who have progressed to the next stage of their lives? For them, as for a host of potential followers of Jesus, it is imperative...
that the church rethink itself. I stated last year that young people are yearning for connection without coercion. Let me be clear about what I meant and what I mean. The generation that includes my own daughters does not have much faith in institutions or communities, since they see very clearly that even the most high-minded communities end up caring more about credentials for membership than availability to the world at large. Young adults want to serve, but they generally reject being co-opted into any organization that is exclusive or self-serving. The church is no exception. These young people also have a healthy respect for the ability of the most high-minded communities to become more interested in their own survival than the common good. On the other hand, they yearn for the opportunity to be part of something big. Can we be that big thing that is not ultimately just another interest group?

At its heart, this is surely what the Episcopal Church is all about. At our best, we have sought to be catholic without being denominational. As early as the 1880s, the Episcopal Church declared its solidarity with anyone who accepted the authority of Scripture, the sacraments of Baptism and Holy Eucharist, the Nicene Creed and the historic episcopate—that is, bishops in apostolic succession. Apart from those four things, we were willing to regard everything as negotiable. Would we be as ready to do that today? Can we distinguish between what is essential to our tradition and what is not? Can we part with elements of our identity that are precious to us but may be a stumbling-block to others? We need to recapture the adventuresome spirit that animated that general invitation, not only as it applies to our ecumenical partnerships but as it may speak to a rising generation that seeks a Christian home.

To that end, I am working with the Commission on Congregational Life to launch some new initiatives that are alive to what is sometimes called “the emergent church,” what a number of our younger Episcopalian sisters and brothers have dubbed “Anglimerger,” and what the Church of England is calling “fresh expressions.” These “fresh expressions” include more participation on the congregation’s part in the conduct and substance of worship, dialogical sermons, time for significant silence, increased emphasis on sensory elements (e.g. incense, chanting, drums), and effective incorporation of outsiders. My hope is that, within a tight budget—and respecting the terms of the proposed budget process, we may be able over the next year to redirect some COCL and Procter funds to the planting of one or more “fresh expression” worshiping communities. We also are planning a diocesan gathering at Procter on Saturday, Feb. 12, 2011, to introduce our congregations to the “fresh expressions” movement and to offer some tools for incorporating elements of that movement into our worship life. Mark your calendars now.

Above all, this last year has been characterized by a deep and diocesan-wide exploration of common ministry. Common ministry is nothing less than a total rethinking of how we function as church, one that takes the ministry of all the baptized with utmost seriousness and reimagines the work of bishops, priest and deacons within that larger framework. The time is past when we can picture the perfect parish as a largely passive flock gathered around its pastor or a group of clients supporting their priest in return for spiritual sustenance.

For some, this realization is the fruit of economic necessity — fewer and fewer congregations can afford to pay for a priest who will serve as their personal chaplain. But, as we are all learning, common ministry is not a way to save money. It is a recovery of the church’s original understanding of itself as the body of Christ, galvanized and electrified by the Holy Spirit to be a new kind of community, a community that can change the world through its witness to God’s reconciling love and through its modeling of that love. The work of bishops, priests and deacons derives its proper meaning from this vision and this reality alone. Our job is to insist on this vision and fan the flames of this reality, but our ministry is pointless if it does not empower God’s people to be a vibrant, restless, creative and courageous community of faith, doing the one thing the church is called to do, namely, to be a community that rejects privilege and embraces the stranger.

Whatever else it may turn out to be, this is the church of the future, and it is the church that is attracting a new generation of Episcopalians here and now. I am grateful to the six congregations that have helped us glimpse that future through their participation in the Common Ministry Pilot Project, developed and led by Canon John Johansen and Canon Karl Ruttan. Those congregations are St. Barnabas, Montgomery; Grace Church, Cincinnati; Trinity, Columbus; St. John’s, Worthington; Trinity, Newark; and Good Shepherd, Athens.

But common ministry is not simply about how we function at the congregational level. It is also about how we claim and live out our common life as a diocese. The budget process you will be voting on later today, and which I hope you will approve, will test our readiness to take our common life to a new level. As you all know, a projected reduction of $300,000 in mission share income has forced us to take a careful look at the diocesan budget. But this also gives us the opportunity to engage in a diocesan-wide conversation about our mission priorities — a process which will, I pray, bring us all to a renewed appreciation for what God can accomplish through our united efforts and to a fresh realization that the diocese is not an office in Cincinnati or a line item in a parish budget. The diocese is all of us together, knowing the common story, proclaiming our common faith, praying our common prayer, drinking the common cup, serving the common good.

That common work is the adventure we have been sharing now for quite some time. As this year’s theme suggests, this adventure is, to some extent, a race: a race against the loss of a generation; a race against mere survivalism; a race against a spirit of hard-heartedness and suspicion abroad in our land. These are enemies we must outrun, and outrun them we will. But racing is not only about escape. It is about the exuberance and delight of unbridled motion over new terrain. Most importantly, it is about our fixed attention on a destination whose attainment is assured, if we will but put our trust in Christ, the pioneer and perfecter of our faith.

Let us pray:

O God, you declare your almighty power chiefly in showing mercy and pity: Grant us the fullness of your grace, that we, running to obtain your promises, may become partakers of your heavenly treasure: through Jesus Christ our Lord, who lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit, one God, for ever and ever. Amen.
136th Convention: Claiming our mission

continued from page 1

major shift as it moves toward a business model that can “expand Procter’s reach as a place for gathering, learning and spiritual formation.” To that end, a new acting director, Chris Tokarz, begins work this month, with a focus on developing a strategic plan that includes new programming, marketing, sustainability and connection to the wider community.

The bishop also highlighted the work of several congregations in reaching out to young adults.

“This is a mission field of considerable proportions, roughly divided between 20 and 30-somethings who are attempting to establish households and gain credibility in their chosen field of expertise, and undergraduates and graduate students on our college campuses, who are exploring everything under the sun and trying to figure out who they are,” he said.

Building authentic communities that attract young people will require change, the bishop said.

“It is imperative that the church rethink itself,” he said. “Can we distinguish between what is essential to our tradition and what is not? Can we part with elements of our identity that are precious to us but may be a stumbling-block to others? We need to recapture the adventuresome spirit that animated that general invitation, not only as it applies to our ecumenical partnerships but as it may speak to a rising generation that seeks a Christian home.”

As part of that journey of change, the bishop shared his hope for a new initiative to plant “fresh expression” worshiping communities, places that “include more participation on the congregation’s part in the conduct and substance of worship, dialogical sermons, time for significant silence, increased emphasis on sensory elements and effective incorporation of outsiders.”

Convention delegates adopted a process for budgeting and establishing mission priorities that will help guide the journey. Vestry members and convention delegates, as well as anyone interested in participating, will gather for deanery-wide meetings, one in December and another in February. At these meetings, the stakeholders will discuss and prioritize ministry activities of the diocese – and how best to fund them. A Priorities Task Force made up primarily of representatives of Diocesan Council and the Trustees of the Diocese and chaired by Bishop Breidenthal, will assess the results and develop a report on priorities and funding sources, including recommendations for the 2012 budget, to be presented to a re-convened convention on May 7, 2011.

Delegates also approved resolutions that established diocesan support for ministry in Appalachia and reform in criminal justice policies. Another resolution calls upon the diocese to advocate for continued public funding for food and nutrition programs. After considerable discussion, delegates approved a resolution calling for immigration reform.

The diocese also will continue for another year its discernment of a possible companion relationship with the Episcopal Church of Liberia.

A keynote address by the Rev. Tom Ehrich, a consultant on congregational development, underscored the need for perseverance.

“Sometimes ‘endurance’ means changing direction. Leave the paralysis, get onto a new road, follow fresh advice, see new things, keep moving,” he said. “That’s what Jesus did. When a way forward seemed blocked, he took a new road. He abandoned one plan after another, until finally, at the moment of departing, he told his followers to feed the hungry, care for the sick, keep telling the story, don’t fight each other, and trust in God.”

Endurance also means letting go, said Ehrich, “letting go of even our dearest treasures and memories, so that we can live and move and have our being in God.”

Youth messages

So, you’re probably expecting me to stand up here and rattle off a bunch of youth ministry buzz words to tell you what I think of the Diocese of Southern Ohio’s Youth program – words like: love, acceptance, worship, peace. But I’m not going to do that, because if you know anything about our youth program, you know that those words are so inherent to our program, they’re not even worth mentioning. They’re implied.

Instead, I’m going to tell you a story. Once upon a time, there was a girl who spent seven summers skipping countless cross-country practices, days at work, and even a few concerts to spend a week stuck on a cornfield in Ohio with no access to a cell phone, a car, or, on occasion, hot water. Sounds like a teenage dream, right? Not exactly. So what keeps bringing me, the girl in question, back? Sure, it’s got a lot to do with the buzzwords I mentioned earlier, but it’s got a lot more to do with the quality of people that come together at 11235 State Route 38 and various churches throughout the diocese.

Never before have I been surrounded by a population of people like this – not only are they caring and kind, but they’re funny. That’s right, I just said religious people are funny. I love being an Episcopalian because it makes me laugh. Go figure.

Every time I’m at a youth event, I can’t help but overhear the titters of laughter that swell from every corner of the room, whether it’s over a shared memory, a joke so lame it’s impossible not to laugh at, or even something random, like reversing our usual Wednesday schedule and calling it “Yadsendew,” just for fun.

In his song “September,” musician Chris Daughtry vocalizes that “all that [he]’s after [is] a life full of laughter.” I think that applies to the youth of the diocese, too. Because for us, laughter is so much more than a funny sound that occasionally chirps from our mouths. Laughter is lifelong friendships being formed, worries being alleviated, people being loved. Laughter is God, the God we glorify through finding happiness in the silly things and realizing how blessed we are in our lives. Laughter is God smiling down on us when he sees our happiness. Laughter is God. And laughter is the Episcopal Diocese of Southern Ohio’s Youth Program. And by the way, that girl? Yeah, she lived happily ever after.

- Janie Simonton, St. Patrick’s, Lebanon

As I was thinking about what to say about the youth program, I reflected back on all the relationships I have made, all the retreats I have been a part of and all the years I have been coming to Procter summer camp (soon to be outnumbered by the years I have worked at Procter camp). I thought about why I kept coming back year after year.

It wasn’t that youth program events were the only places that I felt close to God. The diocesan youth program was where I learned that I could find God’s love anywhere. I learned to look for it in everyone I meet, and I have been able to find it, which has given me a joy in life that I never would have had otherwise.

That’s why I keep coming back to work at youth events every year, to help ensure that the kids I work with have the same experience I had.

I’ve been with the youth program through a lot of changes: a change from the Happening retreat to the Genesis/Exodus retreat programs. I’ve been a part of the youth program through two directors of youth ministry, six camp directors and a lot of changes in my own personal life – from a brace-faced high school freshman to a graduating senior at Ohio State University. I can assure you that the youth program is functioning at its highest level right now, and I know that when I eventually decide to retire from the camp and retreat programs, that they will continue to teach young people like me to seek and serve Christ in all people and to actively live out our Episcopal faith in our daily lives.

- Maggie Foster, Christ Church, Glendale
Perseverance for the race

Bishop Kenneth L. Price Jr. will join the wall of bishops—or at least, his portrait will.

The Standing Committee of the diocese commissioned artist Paul Hamilton, a member of St. Luke’s, Granville, to create the portrait.

After six months of work, the portrait was unveiled during the diocesan convention banquet. The piece, which captured the bishop’s personality, was received with a standing ovation from the audience.

A full-time painter, Paul Hamilton prefers landscapes. “I like to tell stories in my painting,” said Hamilton, 44. “In portraiture, the story is already there. It’s about bringing it to life. … about capturing the essence of the person, getting the features just right. It’s more critical to get all the details exactly right. In a landscape, if a tree goes off one way, it’s sort of OK. But you can’t do that with a portrait.”

Hamilton worked on Bishop Price’s portrait on and off for six months. Hamilton paints “the way the masters used to paint,” with hundreds of layers of colors on top of colors to get the skin tone exactly right.

Hamilton met with Bishop Price early in the process and took about 250 pictures. Then they settled on five or six that seemed to best capture him. Hamilton started with a pencil drawing.

Bishop Price “was great to work with,” said Hamilton. “He’s such a lovely guy.”

When he finished, Hamilton invited other artists to review the portrait. He also hung it in his house for a bit—to see how it looked, how it worked away from the studio.

“I feel really good about it,” said Hamilton. “I thought it came out well. When I looked at the portrait, it reminded me of him. Sometimes you see portraits that look like the person but they don’t remind you of the person. In the portrait, it looks like he’s just about to say something.”

Paul Hamilton and his wife, Amy, also an artist, have two children, Marcus and Lillie. They attend St. Luke’s, Granville. His artwork is on exhibit locally at the Hammond Harkins Art Gallery in Bexley or visit www.paulmhamilton.com.

– Richelle Thompson

Bishop Price: A note of thanks

It was great to be back for diocesan convention. It is a good thing I am a convention junkie, since this fall I was part of three of them (Pittsburgh, Northwestern Pennsylvania and Southern Ohio). I congratulate Bishop Breidenthal and all the delegates and visitors in Southern Ohio for an orderly and upbeat gathering, and the people of the Northeastern Deanery for being so hospitable.

As I stood watching all the vested clergy file in and out of the service on Saturday, I realize how blessed we are with the quality of our ordained clergy. Combine this with some of the finest laity in the church, and it is no secret why Southern Ohio has been a leading diocese for so many years.

That fact made me very proud when, on Friday night, the Standing Committee, under the Rev. Stephen Applegate’s leadership, presented my portrait to be added to the gallery of distinguished former bishops. It was a humbling moment for me. When my time in Pittsburgh is over and I can finally return fully to Southern Ohio to retire, I will have been your bishop suffragan for 18 years.

One could not ask for a richer or fuller ministry. That is why, if you look closely, you can detect a smile on my face in the portrait. Being able to serve with two fine bishops, countless archdeacons, canons and staff members, to say nothing of the wonderful clergy and people of our 80+ congregations, is enough to make even a painting smile.

And so thank you, people of Southern Ohio, for being the source of joy behind that painting, and thank you for allowing me, through it, to take my place with your other bishops on the wall of Diocesan House.

In closing, I would be remiss not to sing the praises of Paul Hamilton, the artist who painted my portrait. I believe he captured my true self in a way that communicates the joy I feel in life. I truly enjoyed working with him. He is indeed a master, and one whose work we should all be proud now graces our portrait gallery.

Once again thank you people of Southern Ohio. Were it not for you, none of this would have happened. You are a blessing to any bishop.
Convention decisions

Delegates to the 136th Diocesan Convention considered several resolutions, canonical changes and a revision to the budget process. They also elected new leaders from a robust slate of nominees and approved a second reading of a Constitutional change.

Canons & Constitution changes
Delegates approved two canonical changes:
• Deleted reference to the “National Church,” and instead referring to the “Episcopal Church” as a definitional matter. See changes
• A new Canon XVIII, which reflects a complete revision of Title IV proceedings (rules for clergy disciplinary matters)

In a vote by orders (with lay and clergy voting separately), delegates rejected proposed changes in how clergy vacancies are addressed.

Constitutional change: Delegates unanimously approved the second reading of a change to the Constitution that would allow for deacons to serve on the Standing Committee. With the second reading, this change now goes into effect.

Budget
As the Budget Committee began to draft a 2011 budget, they quickly realized that there would be a projected shortfall, based on available funding. This is not a budget out-of-balance because of expenditures. In fact, spending is down, staff salaries have been frozen for several years and all programs were cut 10 percent for the 2010 budget. However, funding has declined. By canon, convention cannot pass an unbalanced budget.

Convention approved a plan that:
• Adopts the same budget in 2011 as 2010.
• Sets deannery meetings for delegates, vestry leaders and guests to discuss mission priorities in December and funding methods in a second round of meetings in February.
• Calls upon a special committee to prepare different mission share formulas, with one to be approved by delegates in May.
• Calls upon a special committee to evaluate the data from the deannery meetings and prepare a 2012 budget based on the emerging mission priorities. Delegates will receive that budget at the May meeting and may commend it to the 137th Convention, which will meet at the normally scheduled time in November 2011. See more information on page 7.

Leaders elected:
Diocesan Council, Class of 2013
Lay: Jane Forrest Redfern
   Dolores Woodruffe
   David Thomson
   Scott Preston
Clergy: The Rev. Charles Wilson
        The Rev. Douglas Argue

Episcopal Community Services Foundation, Class of ‘13
The Rev. Joanna Leiserson
The Rev. Fred McGavran
Tom Cavill

Diocesan Council, Class of 2013
Lay: Mildred Volungis of St. Anne’s, West Chester, speaks during the Candidate Forum, a new feature of this year’s convention. Below, delegates and guests review the nominees.
Ministry priority meetings

The Diocese of Southern Ohio is engaging in a strategic visioning process to determine its ministry and mission priorities. In a series of deanery meetings in December and then another round in February, convention delegates and vestry members (and anyone interested in the process) will discuss and prioritize the ministries of the diocese.

The focus for these meetings will be on ministries that are best done at a diocesan level – rather than at the congregational level. Stakeholders also will be asked to prioritize the ministries based on what they feel is most important – and urgent – for the diocese to address in the next five years.

Three facilitators will guide the meetings. They are: the Rev. Douglas Argue, the Rev. Sallie Schisler and the Rev. David McCoy. Results of the meetings will be posted on the diocesan website and in upcoming issues of Interchange. A Priority Task Force comprised of leaders from key diocesan committees and staff will assess the results and develop a set of diocesan priorities and funding sources to be presented at the re-convened convention on May 7, 2011, at St. Mark’s, Columbus. If convention commends the report, it will become the foundation for the budget committee to craft the 2012 budget.

If you want your input to be a part of this process, attend the meetings. They will be structured to take two hours.

Questions: Please contact Bishop Breidenthal at 800.582.1712.

Schedule of deanery ministry priority meetings

Dayton-Northwest deaneries
Tuesday, Nov. 30, 6 p.m. (light dinner), meeting begins at 6:45 p.m.
St. Andrew, 100 Salem Ave., Dayton
937.278.7345

Miami River Valley
Thursday, Dec. 2, 7 p.m.
Ascension, 2709 McGee Ave., Middletown
513.424.1254

Cincinnati East, Cincinnati West, Ohio River
Tuesday, Dec. 7, 7 p.m.
St. Barnabas, 10345 Montgomery Road, Montgomery
513.984.8401

Hocking Valley – Northeast
Saturday, Dec. 11, noon
St. Paul, Main and Culver streets, Logan
740.385.1005

Scioto River Valley
Sunday, Dec. 12, 3 p.m.
All Saints, 610 Fourth Street, Portsmouth
740.353.7919

Columbus
Tuesday, Dec. 14, 7 p.m.
St. Mark’s, 2151 Dorset Road, Columbus
614.486.9452

At top, Bishop Breidenthal listens during discussion of the resolutions.
Middle right, the Rev. Abeosah Flemister leads convention in a Liberian song.
Middle left, the Rev. Robert Howell prepares to read the Gospel.

The Evangelism Commission offered a coffee bar for delegates and visitors in the exhibit hall as a way to stir up conversations about sharing the Gospel.

Photos by Julie Murray
**Take ‘bridges out of poverty’**

**By the Rev. Jeff Bunke**

**Interchange contributor**

How much of your life conforms to hidden rules? Some of the most potent determinants of our actions and decisions are unspoken rules and roles unquestioningly accepted from our families and communities of origin. Are they adequate? Are they just? Do they amplify or conflict with Gospel ethics?

St. Anne, West Chester, located in the suburbs of Cincinnati, has been blessed in recent years as lifestyles and assumptions were jolted from complacency by relationships and work among peoples who differ from us. God’s Holy Spirit has led us to seek intentional experiences on youth pilgrimages and in ministry with the peoples of Navajoland, Appalachia, inner-city Cincinnati and the homeless and persons in need within our own suburban communities. Each experience has confronted us with a disconnect that challenges our assumptions and provokes a desire to reach across social, educational, economic and cultural barriers.

Recent partnerships with the Northside summer reading camp and WhizKids (a tutoring and mentoring ministry of City Gospel Mission) has deepened our desire to understand the hidden rules and systems that foster educational disadvantages and poverty. How can we more ably respond to the Gospel call to build bridges across the divides that separate us?

Nationally known educator Ruby Payne provides a model that outlines the impact of poverty on students, families and communities and provides tools to better understand and support people from all economic backgrounds.

“Bridges out of Poverty,” a workshop based from Payne’s book of the same name, will be sponsored by Episcopal Community Services Foundation and St. Anne on Saturday, Jan. 8, from 9 a.m. to 1 p.m. There’s $10 registration fee. Join other Episcopalians, community workers and volunteers at St. Anne, West Chester, as we:

- Develop mental models of the environments of poverty, middle class and wealth.
- Examine the causes of poverty.
- Begin to understand how the differing environments can produce different hidden rules of class.
- Define resources that are necessary for a high quality of life and explore community action and policies that can enhance resources.
- Explore how the information can be used to create relationships between and among social classes.

Online registration available at www.diosohio.org.

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**St. Peter’s offers Trinity Institute**

St. Peter’s, Delaware will be a partner site for the 41st Trinity Institute National Theological Conference on Jan. 19-21, 2011. This year’s conference is titled *Reading Scripture Through Other Eyes*. In these changing times, many of us turn to Scripture to regain our grounding. But what we read, how we read and the conclusions and beliefs we come away with are often times different from our fellow believers.

The keynote speakers feature the Rev. Walter Brueggemann, a contemporary Biblical scholar and author; Mary Gordon, a prominent Roman Catholic novelist; Teresa Okure, SHC, Professor of New Testament and Gender Hermeneutics at the Catholic Institute of Kwazulu-Natal; and Gerald West, Professor in the School of Theology at the University of Kwazulu-Natal.

Each speaker will consider questions of how scholars read scriptures, what ordinary readers bring to scripture reading, how culture influences truths we find in scripture and how we read scripture together. Each address will be followed by a time for theological reflection by those present and by guest panelists at the site. The guest panel will have representatives of the next generation of Bible scholars such as the Mary Chilton Callaway of Fordham University.

The conference begins on the evening of Jan. 19 and continues through the afternoon of Jan. 21. The Faith In Life Commission is offering financial assistance with the presentation at St. Peter’s. For more information, the complete schedule or to register, contact Marilyn Sesler at mbs.1002@live.com.

**Ohio Ministries Convocation**

"Faith and Race: New Opportunities" will be addressed by the Ohio Ministries Convocation on Jan. 24-25, 2011 in Columbus.

The convocation will be devoted mainly to small-group conversation, where we will ask ourselves and each other such questions as: Does race continue to matter and, if so, how? How can we engage race constructively in diverse settings? In homogeneous settings? How can we make sense of race from a perspective of faith? The aim is to have participants always involved in dialogue.

Leaders of the convocation include:

- Andrew Grant-Thomas, deputy director of the Kirwan Institute. He directs the institute’s internal operations and oversees much of its US-based programming. His substantive interests include structural racism/racialization and systems thinking; implicit bias and racial communications; race and popular culture; multiracial alliance-building; and African-American males and gender dynamics within the African-American community.
- Frances Frazier provides organizing, training and facilitation on issues such as building strong neighborhoods, police/community relations, racism and youth. As a national consultant, Frazier provides training, facilitation, technical assistance, project implementation and management for nonprofit organizations. A special focus is her work with women of culturally diverse backgrounds who are interested in advocacy and community change.
- Nelson Hewitt has been with the Columbus Community Relations Commission as an Equal Opportunity Special Investigator since 2005. He is a trainer and organizational development consultant. He holds a master’s degree in Clinical Psychology. Hewitt is an ordained Christian minister in the Christian Methodist Episcopal Church.

Online registration: www.ohcouncilchs.org/register
‘O Tannenbaum':
Trinity donates city’s Christmas tree

Trinity, Troy, planted the seed of community involvement more than 45 years ago. In 1964, parishioners planted a conifer tree as part of the landscaping for the newly built facility. When Brian Feree, the foreman for Troy’s electrical department, began looking this year for the perfect Christmas tree for the city, Trinity parishioners agreed to put their tree forward for consideration.

Feree told the Troy Daily News that he selected the church’s conifer because it was “the nicest looking tree.”

It took five city workers about four hours to remove the 42-foot, 2,800-pound tree and place it in the heart of downtown Troy. The tree was decorated with about 15 strands – or 1,500 individual lights. The Rev. Melody Williams, rector of Trinity, Troy, told the Daily News that her congregation was pleased to be able to contribute to the city’s celebrations.

“It’s a symbol to us to be in the center of Troy, it’s part of our ministry,” said Williams. “We’re so very happy to share the light that has come into the world, and with the lights going up on the tree, this is an opportunity to symbolically share that with the community.”

Events: Worship, music
Ascension & Holy Trinity, Wyoming, presents the Sixth Annual Advent Carol Service on Dec. 12 at 5 p.m.

This beautiful liturgical exercise is a highlight of the Advent season of preparation. The candlelight service procession moves from west to east, from darkness to light, from Old Testament prophecy to Gospel fulfillment, through the use of unique carols and stirring hymns. Childcare is provided. Worshippers will be greeted by “Light Up Wyoming” as they depart the church, located at 334 Burns Ave. at Worthington, one block off Springfield Pike.

Learn more: www.ascensionholytrinity.com

Cathedral: Music Live at Lunch performances
Music Live at Lunch, Christ Church Cathedral’s weekly concert series, continues in December with free concerts presented on Tuesdays at 12:10 p.m. Patrons may bring their lunch or buy one at the cathedral for $5.

Christ Church Cathedral is located at 318 East Fourth Street, downtown Cincinnati. All performances are in the Centennial Chapel unless listed as being in the cathedral nave. For more information, call 513.621.1817.

Performers include:
Dec. 7: Chamber music of Georg Philipp Telemann
Dec. 14: Bertie Ray III, baritone (nave)
Dec. 21: Benjamin Britten’s Ceremony of Carols with the Cathedral Choir, sopranos & altos (nave)

Boar’s Head tickets available
Tickets for the 71st annual Boar’s Head and Yule Log Festival at Christ Church Cathedral will be available for congregations and individuals. Group tickets for congregations will be for the Jan. 1 (dress rehearsal) performance from 2 to 3:30 p.m. On church letterhead, mail a note requesting up to 15 tickets with a self-addressed, stamped envelope to: BH Groups, c/o Christ Church Cathedral, 318 E. 4th St., Cincinnati, OH 45202. Let us know in advance if you need handicap seating. Request must be received by Dec. 10 before all tickets go to the public. For individual tickets, come to Christ Church Cathedral on Dec. 11. Doors open at 8 a.m. Tickets start about 8:30 a.m. That morning we will give away the remaining tickets to the waiting public for all four performances. Jan. 1 at 2 and 5 p.m. and Jan. 2 at 2:30 and 5 p.m. Pickup limit of two tickets per adult, 18 and older. All attendees must have a ticket, including children who walk.

For festival information, visit www.boarsheadfestival.com.

St. Philip: Celebration of the Birth of Christ
St. Philip, Columbus, invites all to attend the fourth annual musical celebration of the Birth of Christ. The program will feature the Ambassadors for Christ dance ministry, Lee Savory on trumpet, the Paul Laurence Dunbar African-American concert choir, St. Paul A.M.E. male chorus and St. Philip’s dance troupe and male chorus. The event will be Dec. 12 at 5 p.m. at the church, 166 Woodland Ave. A freewill offering will be taken to benefit the building fund.

Information: Nannette Sanders Reynolds at 614.939.3456 or nannette@pobox.com or visit www.st-philips-columbus.diosohio.org

Concert: ‘Twas the Night
In what will be a wonderful segue from Advent to Christmas, St. Peter’s, Delaware, will host the Delaware Community Chorus, under the direction of Daniel Hursey on Dec. 19. The Chorus will give two performances of ‘Twas the Night at 3 and 5 p.m. in the church.

That day the parish also will host the five-octaves Handbell Choir of Zion United Church of Christ for a short seasonal program as a postlude at the 10:30 a.m. service. Information: delawarechorus.org or call St. Peter’s at 740.369.3175.

Art in Advent
Through the generosity of one of its parishioners, St. Peter’s, Delaware, will have on display nine examples of modern sacred artwork. The pieces will focus on the Incarnation with depictions of the Nativity. John Kohan, an artist and collector (see his collection and his work at www.sacredartpilgrim.com ), has graciously offered to loan these pieces to St. Peter’s for viewing during the season of Advent. A schedule is being created for viewing during the week for a small admission charge. There is no charge on Sunday mornings!

Information: 740.269.3175.

Awards
Latino Ministry receives city award
The Holy Spirit church campus, which is home to the Diocesan Latino Ministry, was selected for a landscape beautification award by the City of Forest Park. Holy Spirit received one of only 12 awards for churches and businesses across the City of Forest Park. Many thanks go to the members of the Holy Spirit Landscape Committee, including Jeanne Kalkbrenner, the Rev. Anne Warrington-Wilson and Carolyn Wilmesherr, as well as to Jerry Kalkbrenner and Bob Wilmesherr, for their hard work planting flowerbeds and spreading mulch.

Special thanks also goes to the de Leon family, including Don Carlos, Doña Gilda, and daughters Maria and Ana, who maintained the flowerbeds by watering them every three days throughout the hot and dry summer. The de Leon family is well known to volunteers in the Latino Ministry as active participants in the Homework Club and Conversational English for Adults offerings.

An award plaque was presented by city officials in October. The de Leon family was recognized for all of their hard work before the start of one of this fall’s Homework Club meetings. Don Carlos and daughter Ana, were present to pose with the award plaque. The 2010 award will be displayed in the Holy Spirit facilities alongside the similar landscape award of 1999.

9-year-old wins community service award
Madeline Queen, 9 of All Saints, Portsmouth, was honored with the Gold Barnum Award from the Ringling Bros. and Barnum & Bailey. The national award, which honors the spirit of P.T. Barnum and his contributions to society, recognizes children who are making a difference in their community. Madeline was honored in a pre-show ceremony Nov. 4 in Huntington, W.V. She received a gold medal, front-row seats and $1,000 to fund a future community project.

Madeline, the daughter of the Rev. Jeff Queen and Richelle Thompson, decided she wanted to make a difference to improve the church nursery. She marketed kids and adults in the congregation to make items for a bake sale. She organized the entire event, making signs, price tags and donation cups. Through the bake sale, Madeline raised nearly $500 to buy new toys and books for the nursery. A few months later, Madeline held a craft sale, raising another $300. The nursery has now undergone a complete renovation, with new flooring, a fantastic mural and fun toys.

Winners of The Barnum Award are chosen from a pool of nominees, by a panel of distinguished local luminaries, and receive medals and grants to fund future service projects. It is designed to reward children, ages six to 14, who have created social good and community through their own inventive and pioneering actions.
Commitments to ECSF top $100K

BY ARIEL MILLER
INTERCHANGE CONTRIBUTOR

As I lay down to sleep last night, I asked myself a question: Is it possible to raise $200,000, the highest sum in the memory of any of us currently serving on Episcopal Community Services Foundation’s board or staff?

The answer: It is possible.

At that point, we had just $27,000 in donations for 2011. Now it was up to us to try to raise the rest, with your help.

But we have a huge incentive: the joy of being able to help all of you who applied, who are determined to provide food, shelter and a whole lot of other vital aid to more than 100,000 Ohioans in need next year.

The board - several of whom are living on modest incomes and two under a vow of simplicity - made a huge collective pledge at their October meeting, adding another $21,400 in partnership with the bishops and staff. All of this comes from these dedicated leaders’ household budgets, including that of Bishop Thomas E. and Margaret Breidenthal.

In the next two weeks, to our amazement, the TriHealth Sponsorship Committee in Cincinnati and the Oswald Family Foundation in Minnesota invited us to submit grant proposals! That’s because we represent you, churches on the front line, who are holding the line as part of this state’s fraying safety net.

TriHealth, which includes Good Samaritan and Bethesda North Hospitals and a dynamic Parish Nurse team working in low-income communities, had sponsored ECSF’s 2010 Chocolate Fest and have earmarked this new gift for Greater Cincinnati grantees who provide good nutrition and foster the stability of the mentally ill.

Carolyn Workman Wacker of Trinity, Troy is a trustee of the Oswald Family Foundation and instructed the foundation to contact us.

Both funders swiftly approved the requested grants!

Very excited, we set a goal that seemed impossible Sept. 15: to raise $100,000 by diocesan convention. We got busy writing snail mail and e-mail and pestered a lot of generous donors by phone.

Your response has been magnificent.

By Nov. 10, donations and pledges from several churches and 28 families lifted us over $100,000! The donations range from $50 to four households giving $5,000. Every dollar matters and will be used for grants to churches to fuel community ministry in the new year.

Calls from the Sisters of the Transfiguration and the Northern Miami Episcopal Cluster Nov. 10 sent us soaring past the goal.

It was a joy to place a placard thanking these churches, individuals and philanthropic institutions on delegates’ tables at Convention Nov. 13.

Ask me how I felt standing in front of Diocesan Convention to report that this advance guard of loving Christians had already lifted us past 50% of the amount churches have asked, even before the start of our Advent annual fund campaign.

The answer: “ALLELUIA!”

Want to be a part of transforming lives? Give a gift of the spirit. Visit www.ecsfwerachio.org to learn more.

Donors and doers: Trinity Episcopal/McArthur Presbyterian is one of several mission congregations that give a huge annual donation to ECSF in proportion to their annual budget. One of two Episcopal-Presbyterian churches in the diocese, they apply for a small ECSF grant to help them buy food for their wonderful hunger ministry for Vinton County, but they also give every year to strengthen the impact of fellow Episcopalians elsewhere in the diocese. Trinity is extremely thrifty, great at raising local and regional support, and asked ECSF for less money for the coming year.

Want to be a part of transforming lives? Give a gift of the spirit. Visit www.ecsfwerachio.org to learn more.
Fun-raising: Events support youth in mission

Youth raise $1,600+

More than 60 young Episcopalians from Greater Cincinnati took part in the first-ever Mission Field Day Nov. 21 hosted by Ascension and Holy Trinity, Wyoming, to raise money for the National and World Mission’s Y2M scholarship fund for youth going on mission trips.

Teams from Ascension & Holy Trinity, St. Simon of Cyrene in Lincoln Heights, Christ Church, Glendale, and Calvary, St. James and Redeemer in Cincinnati, jumped with relish into a series of silly relays and sillier tests of skill. Despite being outnumbered by all the other teams, St. James, Westwood won the trophy! Youth from Ascension and Holy Trinity, St. Simon, Redeemer, and St. James spoke about their mission trips and community ministries. The event raised at least $1,600 for the scholarship fund, with more contributions expected. organized by games master Dee Damico of the host parish.

Legs-in-Motion raises funds for youth, mission

The Legs-In-Motion Move-a-Thon fundraising for the National and World Mission Commission’s Y2M scholarship fund was a great success, raising nearly $1,100 for youth mission events.

The walk/run/ride was held Oct. 24 at the Sharon Woods Metro Park near Westerville for the Columbus Deanery and hosted by St. Matthew Church. Twenty-one people came out to exercise for youth mission.

The organizing committee consisted of the Rev. Abby Flemister, the Rev. David Kendall-Sperry, the Rev. Stephen Smith, Emily Valintino, the Rev. Jennifer West and Jonathan Youngman, who coordinated, cajoled, prepared and helped out at this event. Thanks to all who supplied refreshments and assisted at setup and registration. A special thank you goes to the boys in the 4-5th grade Church School class at St. John’s, Worthington, who with their teacher, Sheryl Ellcer, created a full-color Episcopal Shield banner from a bed sheet to mark the shelter house where we gathered for registration and the starting line.

Teens in the diocece may apply for scholarships for 2011 for mission ministries locally and around the world. Basic grants begin at $50 and need-based grants are available up to $1,000. The deadlines for 2011 are Feb. 15 and April 15.

Churches tap into local, national grant resources

Churches and outreach ministries across the Diocese of Southern Ohio are tapping into an array of grants to support their mission.

St. Lucy’s Sober House for Women in partnership with All Saints, Portsmouth, received a $16,000 grant from the United Thank Offering. The UTO awarded only 43 grants in the United States -- St. Lucy’s was the only recipient in Ohio.

The home opened a year ago to help women in Southeast Ohio fight addictions to drugs and alcohol. The idea to establish such a home began during a brainstorming session in Portsmouth sponsored by the William Cooper Procter Fund. Stakeholders from across the region gathered to explore how to provide solutions for the area’s substance-abuse crisis.

St. Lucy’s is run by the Counseling Center, Inc., which provides treatment for substance abuse to men and women. With the addition of the Sober House for Women, the Counseling Center will be able to provide intensive outpatient treatment and supportive recovery services, including primary health care and case management for an additional 40 to 50 women per year.

All Saints is very involved in the recovery community, hosting numerous groups at the church including one of the oldest continuing Alcoholics Anonymous meetings in the state.

The church also hosts a Recovery Sunday, inviting people within the community to participate in a liturgy that incorporates the 12-step program. Parishioners provide a monthly meal for women at the Sober House and let the facility use its van for transportation.

And this summer, the congregation put a “green” spin on its yard sale. Proceeds were split between the church and the Sober House. The women were invited to shop for free at the sale, and then leftover items were donated so that they could host their own yard sale.

The Counseling Center also received a grant in 2009 for $25,000 from the Procter Fund.

– Richelle Thompson

United Thank Offering grants

The application process for the 2011 United Thank Offering grants is now open and available online.

The United Thank Offering grants are awarded for projects that address human needs and help alleviate poverty, both domestically and internationally within Anglican provinces, dioceses, and companion dioceses.

Applications are due Jan. 31, 2011. Funds will be available starting June 2011 for a one-year grant period. Complete instructions, application form, and additional information are available at www.episcopalchurch.org, search UTO.

Only one application may be submitted by each diocese of the Episcopal Church, with diocesan bishop approval. Contact the Rev. Canon Anne Reed at 800.582.1712 or areed@diosohio.org for information.

Three ministries receive EAM grants

Episcopal Appalachian Ministries recently awarded three ministries in the Diocese of Southern Ohio.

• The Counseling Center, Inc., Portsmouth: Grant will help purchase fitness equipment for a new wellness program. The Counseling Center is a non-profit, behavioral health provider that is supported by All Saints, Portsmouth. Information: Susan McComas at susanm@thecounselingcenter.org or visit www.thecounselingcenter.org.

• Christ Church, Springfield: Grant will fund a new reading camp that is to start in 2011. Modeled after the reading camps of other congregations in the diocese, the reading camp will target children who are struggling in school and are reluctant readers. The area of town that is being targeted is heavily Appalachian. Information: The Rev. Charlotte Collins Reed at charlotte.reed@cecsplfdoh.org.

• Good Earth Farm, Athens: Grant will fund the completion of a new retreat center located on the farm. The Good Earth Farm is run by the Common Friars, an intentional community that promotes sustainable living and spiritual disciplines. Information: Paul Clever at pclever2@yahoo.com.
Cincinnati East

Mark your calendars to be at St. Thomas, Terrace Park on Dec. 11 from 11 a.m. to 2 p.m. for the St. Thomas Cookie Caper – an early taste of Christmas that’s fun for the whole family! The day will include children’s activities, a model train display, hot cocoa & cider, live Christmas music and great cookies and candy. All proceeds will benefit local families in need through Inter Parish Ministry and the St. Thomas Discretionary Fund. St. Thomas is located at 100 Miami Ave. in Terrace Park. Call 513.831.2052 for more information.

Cincinnati West

The Soldiers Ministry Pack and Wrap held in November at Christ Church, Glendale, was a huge success. They prepared and mailed 31 large boxes overseas to soldiers. The ministry reports that this collection was the largest amount of donations they’ve received. The packages should arrive to the soldiers in plenty of time for Christmas.

Columbus

The Purls of Wisdom prayer shawl group at St. Patrick’s, Dublin, is holding its annual Advent Sale on Dec. 5, 12 and 19. Handmade knitted and crocheted items are available for sale. Proceeds from the sale will benefit parishioner Lissa Barker’s medical mission to Honduras, enabling her to purchase needed supplies. So if you’re looking for that special handmade gift for that “special someone,” be sure to check it out! Call the church at 614.766.2664 for more information.

The children’s Christmas pageant at All Saints, New Albany, will be held in two parts this year. On Dec. 19 during the 10 a.m. service, the children will act out the events of Advent prior to the birth of Christ. Then, on Christmas Eve, at the 7 p.m. service, the children will depict the events that took place in Bethlehem on Christmas. All are very excited about this new twist on the annual event.

Dayton

Mark your calendars for the St. George’s, Dayton, Spaghetti Dinner and Silent Auction to be held Sunday, Jan. 30 from 5 to 7 p.m. Great food and a great time are always on the menu for this annual event! All proceeds from the dinner benefit outreach to the community. For more information, call the church at 937.434.1781 or visit www.stgeorgeohio.org.

Holy Trinity, Oxford, parishioner Devin Rodgers has recently started a beginning band program at North College Hill Middle School in Cincinnati. Many of the students at NCH are not able to purchase their own instrument, so Rodgers is looking for those dusty band instruments that are taking up space in your closet. If you happen to have an old trombone, baritone, clarinet, trumpet or any other band instrument that you are no longer using, Rodgers has some students who could really use them. Additionally, Rodgers has set up a separate fund to work on raising money for instruments for NCH. Anyone interested in helping out can donate to the fund via the North College Hill Band Boosters. For more information, contact Rodgers at rodgers.d@nchcityschools.org.

Miami River

The competition between the Peanut Brittle teams at St. Andrew’s, Washington Court House, has been fierce this year as all teams are hard at work stirring, spreading, stretching and bagging the congregation’s famous treat. The Nutty Swingers meet twice a week and so far have made the most candy – 115 lbs. as of press time! The Brittle Bunch was in second place with 71 lbs., but the team has posted the record for the most brittle made in one session. The Nutty Buddies are the smallest team, but they have still produced an impressive 38 lbs. If you’ve never had St. Andrew’s peanut brittle you should put it on your list of things to try! The candy sells for $7 per pound but it goes fast, so call the church at 740.335.2129 to see if there is any available for purchase.

Scioto River

The Rev. Cricket Park, St. Patrick’s, Dublin, was noted as a planning pioneer in the November issue of Meetings and Conventions magazine. Park, former deputy director for the Association on Higher Education and Disability, was recognized as a leader in the meeting industry’s standards of applying the American Disabilities Act in event planning.

The Latino Ministry was recognized by the City of Forest Park at its annual Employee and Volunteer Recognition Dinner on October 7. The award was specifically in appreciation for the Conversational Spanish classes offered to employees of the city.

Jane Strohmeier, Grace Church, Cincinnati, recently won second place in the American Printing House for the Blind InSights Art competition. The international sculpture show in Louisville, KY, features art by both amateur and professional sight-impaired artists.

Anny Stevens-Gleason, director of youth ministries at Church of the Redeemer, Hyde Park and member of Ascension, Middletown, raised the baton as guest conductor of the Middletown Symphony Orchestra at the Conductor Pops concert in November. The Guest Conductor Pops fundraising concert was established to provide much needed support to maintain the symphony in the community. Stevens-Gleason held several fundraisers as part of the contest, including a spaghetti dinner at Ascension, to put her over the top to win the guest conductor spot.
December

2 – DioS Companions event, the Spirituality of T.S. Eliot, at St. Theresa Retreat Center in Columbus, 10 a.m. Register online at diosohio.org in the Events section.

2 – Diocesan mission priority meeting for Miami River Deanery at Ascension, Middletown, 7 p.m.

3-5 – School for Ministry meets at Procter Center. Diocanal formation: arrive after dinner Friday through to dinner time on Sunday. Classes on Saturday: New Testament class 11-2; Pastoral Care 2:30 to 4:30. Contact: Kay Sturm at 800.582.1712 ext 136.

3-5 – Exodus 8 at Procter Center.

4 – Anti-Racism training at the Procter Center, 9 a.m. to 4 p.m. Register online at diosohio.org. Contact: Debby Stokes at 614.933.8715.

7 – Diocesan mission priority meeting for Cincinnati East, Cincinnati West and Ohio River deaneries at St. Barnabas, Montgomery, 7 p.m.

8 – Faith in Life Commission discussion of one of Bishop Breidenthal’s DuBose lectures, entitled “The Blood of Abel: Atonement and the Neighbor,” at St. Thomas, Terrace Park., 7 p.m. Copies of the paper are available by request from the Rev. Bill Carroll, chair of the commission at gsrector@gmail.com.

9 – Fresh Start and Diocesan Residents meet at Diocesan House, 9:30 a.m. Contact: the Rev. Canon Anne Reed at 800.582.1712 ext 136.

10-11 – Common Ministry teams overnight at the Procter Center. Contact: the Rev. Canon Karl Ruttan at 800.582.1712 ext. 137.

11 – Lay Preacher training at Procter Center, 10 a.m. Contact: the Rev. Canon Karl Ruttan at 800.582.1712 ext. 137.

11 – Diocesan mission priority meeting for Scioto River Valley Deanery at All Saints, Portsmouth, 3 p.m.

14 – Full diocesan staff meeting at Diocesan House, 10 a.m. All diocesan offices closed.

14 – Diocesan mission priority meeting for Columbus Deanery at St. Mark, Columbus, 7 p.m.

15 – Commission on Congregational Life meets at Procter Center, 10 a.m. Contact: Janice West at 937.278.2249.

16 – Advisory Committee on Compensation and Resources meets at Diocesan House, 1:30 p.m. Contact: Jon Boss at 513.761.2630.

17-18 – Young adult retreat at Procter Center. Contact: Rob Konkol at 800.582.1712 ext. 160.

24-31 – All diocesan offices closed for Christmas and New Year holiday. Offices reopen Monday, Jan. 3.

January

6 – Executive staff meets at Diocesan House, 10 a.m.

7-9 – School for Ministry meets at Procter Center. Diocanal formation: arrive after dinner Friday through to dinner time on Sunday. Classes on Saturday: New Testament class 11-2; Pastoral Care 2:30 to 4:30. Contact: Kay Sturm at 800.582.1712 ext 136.

7 – Diocesan Council retreat at Procter Center, 6 p.m. Contact: the Rev. Leslie Flemming at leslieflemming@columbus.rr.com

8 – Lay Preacher training at Procter Center, 10 a.m. Contact: the Rev. Canon Karl Ruttan at 800.582.1712.

8 – Understanding Bridges out of Poverty seminar, St. Anne, West Chester, 10 a.m. Online registration available at www.diosohio.org.

13 – Fresh Start meets at Procter Center, 9:30 a.m. Contact: the Rev. Canon Anne Reed at 800.582.1712.

15 – Council of Deacons meeting at Procter Center, 10 a.m. Contact: the Rev. Douglas Argue at douglasargue@cohio.org.

17 – Diocesan offices closed for Martin Luther King Day holiday.

19 – Commission on Congregational Life meets at Procter Center, 10 a.m. Contact: Janice West at 937.278.2249.

20 – Residency supervisors meet at Procter Center, 1 p.m. Contact: the Rev. Charlotte Reed at 937.323.8651.

20 – Advisory Committee on Compensation and Resources meets at Diocesan House, 1:30 p.m. Contact: Jon Boss at 513.761.2630.

21-23 – SOLLI weekend at Procter Center. Contact: Kay Sturm at 800.582.1712 ext. 136.

21-22 – ECSF board retreat at Procter Center. Contact: Ariel Miller at 513.221.0547.

25 – Executive staff meets at Diocesan House, 10 a.m.

29 – Ministry Day: a conference for anyone “feeling a tug” and wanting assistance in discerning a call for ministry – a more specific/active lay ministry, religious orders, the diaconate or priesthood. Join us (and bring your clergy) for a day at Procter Center – Saturday, Jan. 29, 9:30 to 3:30 p.m. Cost is $59. More information in the January Interchange.

WELCOME
Christine Tokarz begins Dec. 1 as acting director of the Procter Center. Watch the January Interchange for an interview and introduction.

REST IN PEACE

The Rev. Dr. Arthur L. (“Dutch”) Savage, Jr., a retired deacon of the diocese, died Oct. 24. He was 82.

Born in Meridian, Miss., Dutch played baseball and football on an athletic scholarship at the University of Alabama. After serving during the Korean War, he completed graduate work at Michigan State University, earning his master’s and doctorate degrees. He taught at Ohio University from 1972 to 1992.

He was ordained to the diaconate in 1978 and assisted at Good Shepherd, Athens, Church of Epiphany, Nelsonville and Grace Church, Pomeroy.

Survivors include his wife, Bonnie; daughter, Leslie; son, Kent; and numerous family and friends.

Memorials may be made to the Church of The Good Shepherd Music Ministry or Food Ministry, 64 University Terrace, Athens, 45701.

Jim Edgy, a co-chair of the diocesan Stewardship Committee and member of Grace Church and Christ Church Cathedral, Cincinnati, died Nov. 15. He was 74.

Mr. Edgy was a fixture in the arts, both locally and nationally. He held several directorial roles, including deputy chairman of the National Endowment for the Arts, assistant director of the Cincinnati Art Museum, and executive director of the Kentucky Arts Commission, Ohio Arts Council, Pennsylvania Ballet, Cincinnati Ballet and, most recently, Cincinnati Chamber Orchestra.

Survivors include Robert Lee, his partner of 35 years; and a sister, Jane of Chattanooga, Tenn.

Bishop Thomas E. Breidenthal preached and presided at a Choral Evensong and memorial on Nov. 23 at Christ Church Cathedral.

Memorials may be made to Hospice of Cincinnati, P.O. Box 633597, Cincinnati 45263 or Friends of Music at Christ Church Cathedral, 318 E. Fourth St., Cincinnati 45202.

CLERGY CHANGES

The Rev. Steve Dominiek has accepted a call to St. Andrew’s, Madison, Conn., as priest-in-charge. He has been serving as a resident at Church of the Good Shepherd, Athens.

The Rev. Mary Slenski has been called as the part-time interim rector at St. Paul’s, New Albany, Ind. She will continue to maintain her canonical residence and home in the Diocese of Southern Ohio.

VISITATIONS

December

5  Bishop Breidenthal  Trinity, Troy
   Bishop Rivera  St. Simon of Cyrene, Lincoln Heights

12  Bishop Breidenthal  St. Mark’s, Dayton
    Bishop Rivera  Church of Our Saviour, Cincinnati

19  Bishop Breidenthal  Ascension, Middletown

January

2  Bishop Breidenthal  Grace Church, Cincinnati
9  Bishop Breidenthal  Christ Church, Glendale
16  Bishop Price  St. Patrick’s, Dublin
23  Bishop Price  Trinity, Columbus
30  Bishop Breidenthal  All Saints, Cincinnati
No one remembers how the wearing of the red socks began. Like many customs, it just came into being.

Sometime in the late 1940s, my father – Pop – and my Uncle Clarence – Monk – and I began to wear red socks on Christmas Eve. And we wore them in public. Late in the afternoon, we put on our socks and walked downtown to Lexington’s Main Street, which had about a mile of stores and was as busy on Christmas Eve as the malls are now on the day after Thanksgiving.

We did our tour systematically, starting at the far end of the business district and working our way, store by store, both sides of the street, back to the end nearer home. Along the way, we kidded with sales girls – they were, mostly, “girls,” and in the first years, my early teens, I practiced my flirting. We bought a last-minute present or two, stopped for a root beer, wished people along the way merry Christmas and ended up at the largest department store. There I had one last, lingering, lustful look at the great Lionel train layout that I had visited at the largest department store. There I had one last, lingering, lustful look at the great Lionel train layout that I had visited at the largest department store. There I had one last, lingering, lustful look at the great Lionel train layout that I had visited at the largest department store.

We sat near the tree, always a cedar with strings of lights that took turns failing, and we opened presents. Other family members and friends dropped by for Mom’s fruitcake and a cup of eggnog. Old stories were retold, and there was more singing. Late at night, we unplugged the tree, put out the candles and went to bed. I lay happily awake in what Dylan Thomas called the “close and holy darkness” until sleep overcame me.

I don’t remember when we stopped our annual walking tour. Sometimes as the years passed, Monk was absent, away in the Air Force. Then I was away in the Air Force. The last times we were together, my son Robert was big enough to go with us – wearing red socks. Then, little by little, there was no downtown.

Now on Christmas Eve, Robert, my daughter Ginny, their children and various in-laws carry on the socks tradition. And so do I, over the years giving countless acolytes moments of high glee when, as I knelt in the sanctuary, my alb slipped aside, revealing a flash of red.

There is no real point to this story – just red socks, a remembrance and a symbol of thanks for shared joy and love, then and now and to the ages of ages, all the legacy of Mary’s child.

The Rev. Bob Horine is a retired priest in the Diocese of Lexington and a former senior editor of Forward Movement Publications.
Calvary celebrates 1st anniversary of contemporary service

By Helene Ault
Interchange Contributor

Enthusiasm energizes Hannaford Hall as parishioners arrive. The fellowship hall is transformed into a worship space, with panels andulletin inserted into the service space. The service offers the fundamentals of Episcopal worship with elements of the Book of Common Prayer from New Zealand and the United States. Children light the Christ candle and ring a bell to call people to worship as well as sound a set of bells to accent the important points in the Eucharist. The liturgy allows children to experience the service, blending the joy and exuberance of worship with the urge of little ones to wiggle.

As the first song begins, led by Calvary’s priest, the Rev. Jason Leo, the music is supported by the singing of Judy Sauer and Sally Englebert on guitar. A rotating group of guitar players complete the band. Children join in on small drums, tambourines, maracas and other rhythm instruments. The joy of worship and singing are apparent. Praise songs fill the space.

The service is displayed on a large screen, making possible the first paperless service in Calvary’s history. The chairs are arranged in a semi-circle, presenting the liturgy and music to everyone. The service offers the fundamentals of Episcopal worship with elements of the Book of Common Prayer from New Zealand and the United States. Children light the Christ candle and ring a bell to call people to worship as well as sound a set of bells to accent the important points in the Eucharist. The liturgy allows children to experience the service, blending the joy and exuberance of worship with the urge of little ones to wiggle.

Incorporating the reappearance of a former Procter summer camp favorite, the puppet, Pierre the French Monkey, has joined the service. According to Leo, Pierre was discovered wandering the streets near the Cincinnati Zoo. Leo invited Pierre to come to Calvary. It was an uphill experience as Pierre adjusted to the constant hustle in the building— and established détente with the church cat, Elvis. The biggest transformation has been Pierre learning the ways of generosity and fellowship preached by Jesus.

With the support of Calvary’s associate priest, the Rev. Wilson Willard, the sometimes boisterous service takes on a contemplative air during the Eucharistic Prayer. All are drawn into this especially sacred part of the service. With the help of chalice bearers and deacons, Communion is served to those gather. The service concludes with an upbeat song, and all depart with the music ringing in their ears.

The month of October had a special focus. All were encouraged to wear pink throughout the month in support of those who are battling breast cancer. All proceeds were donated to the Susan B. Komen Foundation for breast cancer research.

Above: The Rev. Jason Leo blesses backpacks brought by the children.

Left: Even Pierre wears pink to support breast cancer survivors and research.
E-Free finds common ground in prison

BY THE REV. JACKIE BURNS
INTERCHANGE CONTRIBUTOR

If we indeed, as Episcopalians in the Diocese of Southern Ohio, commit to know the common story, proclaim our common faith, pray our common prayer, drink the common cup and serve the common good, then surely our cup of grace, mercy and compassion will overflow onto the common ground of social justice, and we will all be the better for it.

Nearly 30,000 people are released each year back into Ohio communities from prison. These people are more than lump sum statistics to quote when advocating or arguing an issue. They are individuals, many of whom are actively engaged in their own transformation process through remorse, repentance, redemption, recovery, reconciliation, and restoration. They are preparing to meet the expectations of the community in order to be connected.

On Nov. 4, the Episcopalians For Responsibly Empowering Ex-Offenders (E-Free) Task Force was privileged to bring 19 clergy and laypersons to meet with prison staff and inmates at the Marion Correctional Institution and the North Central Correctional Institution. This field was the common ground that created a sacred space for honest discussion and reflection beyond ideas of wrongdoing and right-doing. The clergy and laypersons engaged in open conversation interwoven into presentations by inmates at NCCI, Horizons Faith Based Dorm and with prison staff.

“It was fascinating being with inmates who moved freely with us in the MCI Horizon Dorm or at NCCI,” said Ariel Miller, executive director of Episcopal Community Services Foundation. “We looked freely into each other’s eyes, connected with dignity. Listening to panelists of inmates in both prisons was deeply moving as they shared the strengths they have built with the help of their faith. Hearing how men mentor each other, study, pray and develop new disciplines and focus was amazing.”

At the 136th Convention, Bishop Thomas E. Breidenthal offered a definition of salvation as “escape from danger” that speaks strongly of the incarcerated. Many inmates share that incarceration offered salvation of sorts – that without incarceration, they would be dead. They often share stories of rescue, particularly hopeless despair. With a renewed hope, they are listening, being open to receiving, by giving God a chance to speak to them, and ultimately accepting the salvation of the higher order. These are men ready to be sent, ready to embrace the other. This “other” is to be connected to that which they once had been dis-connected from: community.

If these men could find “circles of trust” within the religious, recovery, education, small group, individual guidance and mental health programs of a prison, could we as the church do no less? The success of the individual’s reintegration back into the community is more about acceptance and accountability by providing “circles of trust” than it is about functioning as providers of complex human services. What we have to offer is invaluable: companionship on their journey by being a Christ presence. This companionship would take on the attributes described by Quaker educator Rufus Jones, “I pin my hopes to quiet processes and small circles, in which vital and transforming events take place.”

Bishop Breidenthal urged convention delegates into “wild abandon of self to service of others.” He said, “we are called to be agents of change” and “open the doors of the church … called to community, but the community becomes the problem when it is a means to exclude others.” True enough, the bishop’s homily was largely directed as a call to embrace young adults, but what if we applied the same message to those returning to the community from prison? Could the church offer a continuation of their salvation through the redemption of community by establishing circles of trust? If each church in the diocese accepted the challenge to embrace even one person released from prison, then with God’s help, hearts would soften, minds would open and radical change could become the norm, reducing recidivism and changing lives.

Reflections

Participants in the field trip to Marion Correctional Institution and the North Central Correctional Institution offered their thoughts. Here are some excerpts:

“I came away from the day truly touched, moved and informed. The Spirit was ever present yesterday in the lives of these men and within the walls of those two institutions. My eyes and heart were opened in a marvelously new way. I am eager to see what God does with my new understanding.”

The Rev. Douglas Argue

“We as a society have a lot to learn from the incarcerated about their communal spirit coming from their faith in God.”

Kathy Foster

“There is a key word I kept hearing: connection. Dis-connection from society was the reason for their incarceration; yet now they were sharing a desire to re-connect with society. It is such a profound feeling to reconnect and want to do what is needed to re-connect.”

The Rev. Kenneth Clarke

“I think most of us have a very limited understanding, and oftentimes very negative attitude about the prison system and inmates. This negative attitude and perception is largely fueled by what we read and what we are fed by the media. I know, I’m one of those people. However, after what I had seen and heard in my visit that day in the presentation from the staff and inmates, my attitude had completely changed, and I felt very blessed and grateful for that. I was very deeply moved by the whole experience. There is no question in my mind that God wanted me to be there.”

Philip Conti

E-Free: Get involved

Many Episcopalians in this diocese already serve on team or support Kairos retreats for incarcerated men and women. During the E-Free field trip, prisoners, wardens, staff and chaplains identified many other ways that Christians can help prisoners achieve a constructive life after their release. These include:

• Serving as an “Outside Brother” who meets on Tuesday evenings with a Christian prisoner in the Horizon faith-based dorm in the prisons in Marion or Chillicothe.
• Visiting a prisoner connected to your church through family, friend or community by becoming their minister of record. The inmate must give permission to place you on the visiting list. Many inmates do not receive visits and would welcome your visits.
• Writing to an inmate who is connected to the church through family, friend or community. Many inmates do not receive mail and would welcome your letters.
• Developing church-wide projects, such as sending cards at Christmas, Easter, develop your own special occasion, i.e. an “Out of the Blue Day” and all card envelopes are blue.
• Contributing to scholarships for prisoners to study theology or to the Altar Project fund for NCCI organized by Episcopal deacons in Columbus.
• Becoming a mentor for a prisoner preparing for release.
• Providing vouchers to get state ID’s or a driver’s license after release.
• Participating in Citizens Circles community mentoring programs set up by the Ohio Department of Rehabilitation and Corrections.
• Helping the ex-offender find housing and a job.
• Offering character- and faith-based programs.
• Connecting the ex-offender to GED or other educational resources.

“Hold the ex-offender accountable,” said Christian inmate Chris Below, who trains therapy dogs at NCCI. “Am I seeking employment? Attending church?”

Christ-centered friendship and moral support can literally save and transform lives. To find out more about these roles, contact the Rev. Jackie Burns at jaslan@columbus.rr.com or 614.296.6321.
Inmates support mission trip

BY BARBARA GESSAMAN
INTERCHANGE CONTRIBUTOR

Inmates don’t have a lot of extra spending money.
But a group of men from the North Central Correctional Institution in Marion decided to pool their limited resources to help children and teachers in Honduras.

In August, a mission team comprised of 14 members from St. John’s, Worthington, St. John’s, Town Street, and St. Peter’s, Delaware, traveled to the El Hogar Mission, a school in Tegucigalpa, Honduras.

We discovered that “El Hogar is a piece of heaven,” as one of the mission trip members wrote. “For 99 children plus, it provides a respite from Honduras’ challenging living conditions, from begging, traffic jams and soaking downpours outside the guarded gates of the children’s home. The children at El Hogar receive a first-rate education. They are loved and their needs are met. For these 99+ children, it truly is their Home of Love and Hope, their Hogar de Amor y Esperanza.”

As you can imagine, creating – and maintaining – a Home of Love and Hope doesn’t just happen. In the midst of a global economic downturn, the school still needs funds to feed and clothe the children, support the teachers and provide health care. Mission groups that go to El Hogar raise money in order to help support the efforts of the mission. Our mission group was fortunate enough to raise more than $8,100. However, one donation surprised us all with its expression of true dedication, compassion and sacrifice.

Inmates at the correctional center donated $1,075 to El Hogar. They were very interested in supporting the mission trip.

Of the 2,300 men incarcerated at the North Central Correctional Institution (NCCI), about 10% are members of clubs that serve to promote social skills, community awareness, charitable causes and a sense of contributing to society in a positive manner. The benefactors of the El Hogar mission represent three of those clubs: The Toastmaster’s International, the NAACP and the NCCI Stamp Club. These clubs are allowed to conduct fundraisers in order to pay for membership fees to national organizations. They must contribute 25% of their raised funds to combined charities and then each club decides where the remainder goes. We know where much of that remaining money went this year.

In addition to the money, the men also circulated a prayer vigil list prior to our trip to pray for success for the El Hogar Mission Week and that the children would be blessed by our presence. There were a total of 172 pledged prayers for that special week.

When the mission team arrived at the prison to thank the men for their generosity and to share stories about the trip, we underwent extensive security. We were taken to the chapel where about 100 men were seated, quietly waiting for us to arrive. We sat at the panel presentation table and were offered cookies and coffee as the program began with a slide show of El Hogar. When the show ended, Appreciation Awards were presented by the Rev. David Kendall-Sperry to each club and accepted by the presidents of the three clubs.

We had a panel discussion where the men had an opportunity to ask us questions. One of the men commented about how nice it was to hear of an “upbeat and bright spot” in such a bleak environment. At the end of the session, the men asked for a list of missions that our churches support, particularly local missions. We were deeply impressed by their interest and sincerity.

These men may be down, but they are certainly not out.

The El Hogar Mission Team would like to thank the Rev. Jackie Burns, chaplain of the North Central Correctional Institution (NCCI) and mission team member, for her work with the inmates. She also organized the prison visit.

Lay theologian: The common cup

When Slocomb was still in diapers, he had a spill-free Tommy Tippee Sippy Cup. Because he never sucked his thumb, he took that cup everywhere. He would sometimes buy a Common Cup line of chalices available for purchase online.

There are Christian ministries by this name in west central Minnesota, southwest Ohio, and Spokane, Washington, and in Portland, Oregon, there is a Common Cup homeless shelter and a Common Cup cooperative four-congregation United Methodist youth ministry. There is also a Common Cup network of Christian radio stations.

Straying a bit farther from the theological and ecclesial, there are Common Cup coffeehouses in Chicago; Ann Arbor; Richmond, Virginia; and Morris, Minnesota. I admit that I was a bit surprised, though, to find a recipe for “Pimm’s Common Cup,” a fruit garnished, alcoholic lemonade, on food.com.

That morning at the Convention Eucharist, on the Saturday when delegates adopted the diocesan mission statement, there were six Communion stations and therefore not a common cup. I confess that, with this column in the works, I was laying in wait to catch this ironic deviation from our pledge of the Common Cup. On reflection, my online searches probably should have suggested to me that “common cup” is a deep running metaphor even when not practiced literally. The question I should have asked myself is, of what is the common cup a metaphor?

We don’t actually know the ritual for the Passover Seder that would have been observed in Jesus’ day, so we cannot say with complete confidence that Jesus intentionally innovated. We know, however, that the rite came to involve drinking four cups of wine taken at specific points before, during and after the Seder meal. These are small individual cups poured for each participating family member. The ritual was and is led in the home by the head of the family.

Right before his death, Jesus chose instead to eat this meal as a rabbi with his disciples rather than with his, and they with their, close kin. And at a specific point in the meal, he chose to bless and circulate a common cup rather than individual cups. They shared a cup as only kin would do, though most of them were not kin.

There is also a common cup in the Jewish and Eastern Orthodox marriage rites, specifically for the couple. In our Book of Common Prayer marriage service, the newlywed couple is allowed to take Communion prior to its being offered to the remainder of those assembled. The common cup is symbolic of their becoming close kin and sharing everything, for better and worse, in common.

When Slocomb was still a little tyke, we attended St. Michael’s in Lexington. He’d emerge from the nursery carrying his Tippee cup and take it to the altar rail for Communion. Our priest, Peter Casparian, wryly observed the theological issues raised by coming to the altar with your own cup. Slocomb was willing to share either cup.

To drink the common cup with non-kin symbolizes a radical intimacy across normal barriers of blood, station, and rank.

Don Collins Reed is a member of Christ Church, Springfield, and is professor of philosophy at Wittenberg University.

Contact him at dreed@wittenberg.edu.
The future facing young people in Appalachia is grim. “High poverty, dilapidated houses, a sea of drugs you would never believe,” said Dr. Rich Greenlee, dean of Ohio University’s Eastern Campus, during his keynote address for the seventh annual Mountain Grace Conference. “And in our Ohio River Valley, there are million-dollar Astroturf football fields. We’ve got a lot of people for whom the heyday of their lives was when they were an 18-year-old football star in a small high school.

“Never have we had a greater need for you to reach out and show someone you care, and be there for them,” he added.

Hosted by St. Luke’s, Marietta, and Washington State Community College, 60 people attended the gathering in October, to discuss the work of Christians in areas ranging from community organizing to energy conservation.

The Rt. Rev. Thomas Breidenthal welcomed participants and urged them to forge a truly regional perspective to effectively convey the strengths, needs and priorities of Appalachia at the next General Convention.

“You represent Appalachian congregations which have been here a long time – you must exercise leadership,” he said. “We have an obligation laid upon us by Christ to be a people of hope.”

Greenlee, whose family’s roots in Eastern Ohio go back two centuries, offered his own life as proof of the power of one. The first person in his family to graduate from high school, he was mocked in one of his first college classes by a professor amused by his Appalachian accent. Resolved to drop out, he was stopped only by a mentor’s refusal to let him.

He went on to earn his doctorate, writing his dissertation on the rural working poor. Greenlee has since become a vital link in the ladder that OU offers to Appalachian students striving to climb out of poverty.

His role as dean puts him in close contact with students trying to survive in “the foreign land of higher education.” And this is where churches can be life-savers.

Churches can be the bridge between students’ home culture and college, a place where they can be respected even if they’re poor or talk with accents.

“Many of our young people were left for dead by their school systems years ago,” he said. “And many people who grew up here don’t grow up proud of who we are.” Many young people respond to the social distress of poverty and high unemployment by dropping out of school, getting pregnant, using alcohol or drugs or dying violently, moved by “a reckless attitude that is a rational adaptation to a worsening economy.”

But churches – no matter how small – can change a young person’s outlook from cynicism to resilience and optimism, breaking through the “learned hopelessness.”

“I tell Appalachian students to know who your ancestors were, and make them proud,” Greenlee said. He encouraged congregations to “create a pre-matriculation program – a week or ten days – on the culture we came from,” and offered a moving testimony from one of the Appalachian students who received a full scholarship to OU. She described how a one-week program transformed her perspective on her childhood community, opening her eyes to its strengths and healing her shame. “Offer summer programs that are fun and educational.

Provide an after-school club. Kids are active in FFA and sports: build on that. Kids who don’t want to play sports need something else,” he added.

Engaging them in community service rescues them from “their own self-centeredness to discover who they are and what they can or want to become.

“Make it your goal to help them become loving, caring, kind children,” he added. “Reach out to them before they become alienated and cynical!”

The church can offer a powerful supportive structure on which children can climb out of helplessness to dignity. Greenlee listed the rungs of the ladder: “high expectations, discipline, clear rules and regulations, spiritual faith and opportunities to contribute to the family through chores and part-time work.”

Greenlee said: “Religion and faith can help people succeed against overwhelming odds.”

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**Cincinnati volunteers assist New Orleans**

Parishioners from Christ Church Glendale, Church of the Redeemer in Hyde Park and volunteers from People Working Cooperatively (PWC) recently returned from a week of work in New Orleans. This group partnered with Episcopal Community Services (ECS), a grass-roots organization affiliated with the Diocese of Louisiana.

The unique approach of ECS matches trained crew leaders, groups of volunteers from around the country and various funding sources to help move families back into their devastated homes.

During the first week of November, the 11-member crew installed and mudded drywall, painted walls and ceilings and installed trim in a home in the Lakeview section of New Orleans. They also completed small projects on two other homes in the area.

For information about ECS or to learn about ways to contribute financially to this work go to www.ecsla.org or contact Pete Nunnally, Mission and Volunteer Coordinator, at pete.nunnally@ecsla.org.
Reflection: Common ground for Common Good

All through the closing weeks of the election, as ads got nastier and the ideological gulf in this state yawned wider and wider, something very different was taking place every day in and around Ohio’s Episcopal churches.

Some signs of our times:
A member of St. Mark’s, Dayton, invites a friend from a nearby Roman Catholic church to join in tutoring children at Kemp Elementary in Dayton. Episcopalians at St. Peter’s, Gallipolis, hand out free diapers in the parking lot next to the Lutheran Social Service emergency food van. The Luthers get excited and start to stock baby food on the truck.

Barbara Tope of Trinity, London, climbs into my car two days after our votes surely cancelled each other’s out. Both of us talk non-stop, elated to be starting a day in each other’s company on a field trip to learn what churches can do to help ex-offenders start a productive life.

The media fills endless column inches with news of a few loud Episcopal squabbles, but what I keep witnessing, every day, is the opposite.

When we’re true to our calling, our churches are common ground for common good.

Church is where we’re practicing to become virtuous lovers, and the Episcopalians I meet coach all corners. Celeste Parsons of Epiphany, Nelsonville, has gotten everyone from potters to Brownies totally hooked on raising money and collecting cans to make sure the tiny Nelsonville Food Cupboard can continue to be the major source of emergency food for three rural counties. She’s won so many local converts that she no longer requests an ECSF grant for the pantry.

Fellow parishioner Tanya Howe invites nursing students at Hocking College – many of them poor and some malnourished – to help at Epiphany’s free community meal. They love doing it, and their professor gets such happiness from this gig that she hardly gave herself enough time to recover from a liver transplant before coming back to cook.

Then there’s tiny St. Andrew’s in Washington Court House, which has gotten everyone from the owner of the Fayette County McDonald’s franchise to dry cleaners caught up in the annual community celebration of SOCKS (Spirit of Christmas for Kids). This program enables parents going through hard times to pick new toys for their children at Christmas as well as zip them up in warm, clean winter coats.

As legislators squabble and procrastinate, Episcopalians are quietly, disarmingly inviting their neighbors to join them in getting their minds and hearts around serious problems and finding a way forward together. When we’re grounded in God- and neighbor-love, our churches embody a hospitable and useful faith that lives and breathes as a contrast to the divisive jeremiads that claim to represent Christianity in political warfare.

Ohiophians observing the behavior of Episcopalians and their fellow volunteers can see conviction put into action every day across the state.

There’s a prevailing philosophy among Episcopalians: No problem is too big for God. So roll up your sleeves and pitch in. And, if your faith and hope are strong, you won’t quit when the going gets tough.

Seven days a week, 365 days a year, congregations in Cincinnati are hosting homeless families in their Sunday school classrooms, serving them home-cooked meals and helping them fix breakfast and sack lunches for the next day’s struggle to regain stable housing.

Those tutors at Kemp Elementary will keep patiently working, week after week, with a panicky non-reader, until she exclaims, “Oh, I see!” and aces all the comprehension questions. Another tenet guides Episcopalians: seeing Christ in all people. All you have to do is seek and serve, to discover a new relative with surprising worth and grace. Thus, privileged children in an expensive private school and chronically mentally ill people share the joy of volunteering to comfort and feed hungry neighbors at the Church of the Advent’s Open Door in Cincinnati. Those children are learning to see past stigma to respect people with a terrible disability.

While a bunch of us were at Diocesan Convention, a very committed Catholic eyed my husband at a Rotary party and demanded to know whether Episcopalians believe in the Afterlife. Inspired by a cool Guinness, Huxley offered his vision of eschatological bliss. There will be golf and Jesus will have the tact to let Tiger Woods win (it wouldn’t be much fun for Tiger to have to say, “Way to go, Jesus! Way below par!”)

I would have said – like Mark Twain on infant baptism – “Sure, I believe in heaven! I’ve seen it with my own eyes. It’s everywhere: Peace Camp in Springfield, His Place in Columbus, the Friendship Dinner in Zanesville. Got any time next week? Come with me and see!”

Ariel Miller is the executive director of Episcopal Community Services Foundation. Contact her at ecs@eos.net.

A bishop and a dean: Speaking up for Haiti

BY MEREYLN B. BATES-MIMS
INTERCHANGE CONTRIBUTOR

In righteous and collaborative leadership, the bishop of the Diocese of Southern Ohio and interim dean of its cathedral recently spoke out in unity on behalf of the people of Haiti.

New calamities are barreling down on Haiti, including cholera and hurricane season, said the Rt. Rev. Thomas E. Breidenthal and the Very Rev. Ronald N. DeiBene, interim dean of Christ Church Cathedral, in a November letter sent to more than 300 corporations in the Ohio, Kentucky and Indiana region.

“We simultaneously recognize the devastation to our own national economy. Yet, we are still called to action,” they said.

Just how bad is the situation in Haiti?

Reports by the New York Times indicate that the cholera pandemic is worsening, with a death toll of more than 1,000 people – and still climbing. In the aftermath of Hurricane Tomas, water contamination continues and some United Nations officials have estimated that the death toll could exceed 250,000 in the next few years – on top of the 300,000 killed by the earthquake in January.

Despite pledges of $5 billion in aid from around the world, only 15 to 20 percent has actually been received, according to reports from former President Bill Clinton. The House of Representatives delayed payments of the U.S. government’s share.

This series of catastrophes would be daunting

Cholera is an avoidable disease – but spreads quickly, especially in areas with unsafe water. The disease is caused by bacteria that thrive in feces-contaminated water. Left untreated, vomiting and diarrhea can dehydrate and kill victims within hours.

Assuring prospective donors that 100 percent of every dollar raised goes toward purchase of medical and sun oven items, the letter specifies the unit costs of tools and supplies. It describes sun ovens as instruments with tremendous water sterilization and community and family feeding capacity. The letter asks for funds to purchase two additional sun ovens, which would help feed 500 students and provide income to people in rural Haiti. Though it is called an oven, the Villager can cook, boil, steam or bake enormous quantities of food at temperatures of 500°Fahrenheit – with no fuel costs. Already Christ Church Cathedral has donated a sun oven to the Foyer de Sion Orphanage and has developed an in-house program called the Nikah Project, in honor of one of the children in the orphanage.

“Thank you for your support in this urgent task,” said the bishop and the dean, on behalf of the people of imperiled Haiti.

How will you respond?

Mereyn Bates-Mims is founding chair of Christ Church Cathedral’s coalition on human rights. Dianne Ebbs is co-chair of Project Nikah – Haiti. Visit http://haiti.christchurchdarfur.org/

Mission Opportunity: Haiti

CHAP (Christian Haitian American Partnership) is a South Carolina corporation, formed in 2004, whose mission is to improve the quality of life for the people in Haiti. CHAP has three primary areas of focus:


2. Children’s Education. A scholarship program provides support for five schools operated by the Episcopal Church. It permits 550 impoverished children to attend class. Construction of a new school in Gornan will begin when funds are available.

3. Medical and Dental Care. Teams of physicians, dentists and volunteers with donated medications, conduct medical/dental clinics in the countryside.

Although CHAP is centered in the Myrtle Beach area of South Carolina, they receive support from all over the United States. Steve Hayden from St. Peter’s Church, Delaware, in the Diocese of Southern Ohio, has been on several mission teams to Haiti.

The next medical mission trip to Haiti under the leadership of Dr. Jeanne Fourier is set for March 5-13, 2011. This trip will include dentists and perhaps a physician and optometrist.

There is a spot available on this mission team for someone from Southern Ohio. No special skills are needed, only the desire to make miracles happen and let God change their lives. The cost of the trip will be about $1,000 to $1,200.

This is a fantastic opportunity to work directly with Pere Val, Carmel and fellow Christians in Haiti. Please pray on whether God is calling you to participate on this mission trip or to support someone else in attending.

The CHAP website is www.CHAPhaiti.org

Information: Contact Steve Hayden at shayden304@gmail.com or at 614.579.7495.
Prepare the way for Advent with a virtual calendar on the diocesan website, www.diosohio.org. The calendar is a collaboration between the communications office and Episcopal Community Services Foundation. Each day from Dec. 1-24, you can open a virtual window and see how a church in this diocese is meeting emergency needs or transforming lives. The daily offerings include a vignette, photographs, daily prayers and action items. A downloadable version of the calendar will be available as well. The online calendar will link to ECSF’s donation page where you can make a gift to fuel community ministry grants in 2012 and order ECSF Gifts of the Spirit (lovely cards) to be sent to friends or family. Each week of the Advent Calendar has a theme: Dec. 1-4 is prison and addiction ministry, Dec. 5-11 is education, Dec. 12-18 is hunger, and Dec. 19-24 is shelter, in honor of Jesus, born in a barn in winter. This is a great way to reinforce the daily discipline of knowing the Common Story, praying the Common Prayer, and serving the Common Good in the name of the Savior whose birth we celebrate Dec. 25. We wish you a blessed Advent and a merry Christmas!