Hello from Diocese CPA! Welcome to the second issue of News From The Pews.

This online newsletter will be published four times a year and is meant to be a communication tool between all parishes throughout the Diocese of Central Pennsylvania.

Please send us your stories and join in the sharing of Diocesan ministry and glad tidings.

Email your stories to Linda Arguedas at larguedas@diocesecpa.org

Convention 2011 went "Live" from Bucknell University by Mr. Bill Graffiue

Missed Convention this year? Not everyone did! At least twenty-two "log-ins" were recorded during the business session on the Friday of Convention. That means at least twenty-two people watched the proceedings from the comfort of home or office. Maybe even more if anyone had a guest. A modest start but never the less a start!

Several notifications were sent prior to Convention inviting you two join us via special links. Did it work? Just ask Bishop McNutt. Bishop Charlie was with us at Convention not only in spirit but electronically as well. The Bishop was very positive about this first foray of ours into the realm of computer-based communications. Although Bishop Charlie could watch, but not verbally interact in the proceedings he was otherwise fully involved just as most of us were who attended.
On June 5, 2011, the parishes of GLEAM (Greater Lycoming Episcopal Area Ministry) celebrated Rogation Sunday. We gathered at 4PM for a service of evening prayer at The Church of the Good Shepherd in Upper Fairfield. People joined us from the Williamsport area. After Evening Prayer we went outside and blessed the fields, gardens, and those who farm, as we processed around the yard of Good Shepherd in Upper Fairfield. This service of blessing the things of creation ends with the long tradition of blessing wooden crosses for those who attend to take home and place in their gardens, as a way of spreading God's blessing. It was a beautiful day and a wonderful time to fellowship with the members of GLEAM together.

When you worship outside, the odds of unwelcomed guests always increase. This year was no exception. A small garden snake decided to start his dinner before anyone else. Following the service we gathered in the parish hall for a light supper. Throughout the year the parishes of GLEAM come together in fellowship. I look forward to the next gathering of the people of GLEAM, it is always a blessing for me to take part in these activities.

Mount Calvary’s church school donate layette kits by Mrs. Melanie Gurgiolo

On May 8, 2011, the children in Mount Calvary’s church school classes in Camp Hill celebrated Mother’s Day by preparing layette kits to be donated to new mothers who do not have the means to provide these items for their newborns. The kits consist of receiving blankets, onesies, pajamas, washcloths, and cloth diapers, put together by the children from among items donated by parishioners. Each complete kit was rolled up in the receiving blankets and fastened together with diaper pins. These kits were donated to Mission Central in Mechanicsburg to be distributed to those who need them. We hope that these layette kits will be a source of warmth and comfort to both the new babies and their mothers as they begin their very special journey together.
St. Thomas Youth Group off to Honduras by Ms. Liz Lennon

The youth group at St. Thomas Episcopal Church, Lancaster, has been busy raising funds to underwrite its mission trip to Honduras this summer. Included in their many efforts have been a baked potato luncheon with a myriad of toppings, and the sale of hand-dipped, chocolate covered strawberries, as well as soft pretzels. Leaving July 23 are Will Zechman, Jack Wege, Tom O'Brien, Bridget O'Brien, Bess Pearson, William Person and Ricky Beauchamp. Adults accompanying them: Don Pearson, Mike Wege, Pam Vnenchak, M.D. and Fr. Matt MacDougall (originally from St. Thomas parish). The congregation at St. Thomas has funded materials for a medical clinic, in cooperation with C.A.R.E and the Honduran government. While some members of the group will work on construction, others will be helping Dr. Vnenchak conduct medical and eye examinations.

WESTERN RIM OF THE LANCASTER CONVOCATION

JOINT OUTREACH IN MISSION AND MINISTRY

by The Rev. Canon Pete Greenfield

It's an old story. You've heard it. Jesus taught all day, and they had listened. Now it was evening, and they were hungry and tired. Where would they go? What would they eat? A little boy had brought his lunch - 5 loaves of bread and two small fish. He offered to share them with the others. "What are they among so many?" asked one dubious bystander. Amazingly, they were enough! It is said they fed 5,000 folk, and there were 12 baskets of leftovers. How was that possible? The key was not what the boy had, but what he did with it. The boy put his lunch in the hands of Jesus - along with his trust.

June 4th was a contemporary version of that old story. There are 5 small churches that are situated along the edge of the Lancaster Convocation. While they are actively involved in all the doings of the Convocation, they have come to the realization that they share the unique challenges that are part of the life of "small town" America. They have also learned that they can accomplish much more if they work together, if they put their resource in the hands of Jesus.

On June 4th, these 5 churches gathered together at 8:30 a.m. at St. John's, Marietta to join in the first part of the Eucharist. There were over 40 folks present, and they joined in the Liturgy of the Word and the Prayers. In addition to St. John's, there were men, women, and youth from St. Paul's, Columbia, St. Luke's, Mount Joy, St. Paul's, Manheim, and Hope Church, Mount Hope. Then, tools in hand and equipped with lunches provided by all 5 churches, they went to the homes of 6 elderly families in the area where the churches are located. Weeds were weeded, fences were repaired, debris cleaned, gutters and downspouts restored, bushes and trees trimmed, yards raked, mulch spread, culverts cleaned, beds dug, and so on. If one crew finished where they were, they joined others to assist them in their efforts. At 4:00 p.m., the workers returned to St. Luke's in Mount Joy to complete the day with worship and Agape. The Eucharist picked up at the Offertory where the offering was not only the bread and wine but the shared stories. A unique feature was that a symbol of the day was brought from every home - a dish, a cup, a rose, a branch, "fever few", a wall decoration. All the clergy were the celebrants, and for clergy and laity together, the celebration was truly that, one only suitable for a mountaintop.

The evening concluded with an Agape prepared by a crew of chefs from all the churches, who on that night were the hands of Jesus. In good diaconal spirit, the meal was shared with a family who had intended to participate in the "Work Mass" day, but due to illness, could not. Using the words of the feeding of the 5,000 as found in the Gospel according to St. Mark, "they all ate and were satisfied."
A Unique Model for Remodeling and Maintenance to Churches using Community Service Workers

This letter is in regard to a great accomplishment which benefited people working off their community service obligations for Adult Probation and helped Trinity Episcopal Church. It was led by Gus Wilson, who is Verger Emeritus at Trinity in Williamsport. It is an exemplary model that could well be used in other churches and our diocese and elsewhere. However, it took an extraordinary commitment of volunteer time and leadership.

For over twelve years, from 1998 to 2010, Gus Wilson supervised and coordinated three community service groups. Gus gathered together plumbers, electricians, carpenters and painters. Trinity's very large physical presence and its historic landmark require an immense amount of maintenance, and like many churches, had many areas which needed work. There were repairs done to entrances of the church including the huge historic doors. Outside work included sidewalk repair, landscaping, and repairs to the old fire escape. Flooring and other repairs were done in the pipe organ area, the vestibule and the Parish Hall. The gym was refurbished including refinishing the floors, painting the walls and upgrading the upper kitchen. A rear deck was built, outside walls were strengthened, and a handicap entrance was added to the Parish Hall. The main kitchen was extensively remodeled, upgrades were done to the Acolyte Room, Vesting Room and Colonial Room, and the stairway walls were repainted. The list could go on and on.

Gus estimates that in the past twelve years, he saved the church approximately $144,000 in labor, and it was hoped that the skilled workers benefited under his leadership.

This letter should have been written a long time ago due to the remarkable volunteer leadership of Gus Wilson. He was an active volunteer at Mary Slaughter Senior Home and Shiloh Baptist Church among other contributions. A lot of people do not realize that Gus is a retired Williamsport City Policeman. He worked in many roles as a Juvenile Officer, Homicide Officer, and Fire & Explosion Investigator. This emphasizes his extraordinary ability to take charge and lead. In 1984 he won the Governor's Award for his work volunteering and managing the Food Bank in Williamsport. In 2004 he was the Volunteer of the Year chosen by the Lycoming County Commissioners.

Most of the years Gus served at Trinity Church under the leadership of The Rev. Andrew France, who certainly deserves a great deal of credit for his work with Gus. Thank you W. Augustus Wilson, for your devotion and commitment to lead and positively influence community service workers who made a mistake with the law, erred in their judgment, and hopefully were "resurrected" through their community service work. Having worked in human services for twenty-five years as a practicing psychotherapist, this accomplishment by Gus is especially meaningful to me.