



PHOTOS: THE REV. DICK SNYDER



Left: San Joaquin visitors tour the church farm at Bluff, Utah: from left, the Rev. Paul Colbert, Michael Treut-Virga, Dr. Frank Virga, Sara Chan and Jerry Pettiford.

Above: A free vaccination clinic for dogs was announced before the visitors arrived and at least 50 dogs from the Navajo reservation were brought for inoculations, administered by veterinarian Frank Virga. Lillie Henderson, lay pastor at St. John's, Montezuma Creek, said it was the first time such a service had been available there.

Journey to *Navajoland*

In response to the resolution passed at the 2008 convention of the Episcopal Diocese of San Joaquin calling for providing assistance to the Episcopal Church in Navajoland, five visitors from San Joaquin went on a learning and listening trip to Navajoland in January. Michael Treut-Virga reports on the visit:

On New Year's Day four of us from Grace Episcopal — Sara Chan, Jerry Pettiford, and Michael and Dr. Frank Virga — and Fr. Paul Colbert from San Rafael, Oakhurst left Bakersfield at 6 a.m.

When we arrived at St. Christopher's Mission in Bluff, Utah, 12 hours later, the lights and heaters of the community building were blazing as the Rev. Dick Snyder and his wife, Debbie, welcomed us.

Friday we woke to greet the sunrise. Cathy Plummer met us with Fr. Dick to discuss Navajo culture and tradition and the wants and needs of the mission and the Diné (Navajo for "The People").

Later we toured the mission grounds and beautiful buildings that are registered as a National Historic Site. The landscape is desert, stark with awesome sandstone cliffs carved by God. That afternoon we visited Hovenweep National Monument, Native American ruins of ancestral Pueblos dated 500 to 1300 A.D.

To Page B

Second part of educational series offered by Remain Episcopal

By Beryl Simkins

A SPECIAL EDUCATIONAL event for all Episcopalians in the Diocese of San Joaquin is taking place at Christ the King in Riverbank on Sat., Feb. 21, 2009, sponsored by Remain Episcopal.

The Rev. Basil Matthews of St. John's, Lodi, and the Rev. Paul Colbert, of St. Raphael's, Oakhurst, are the designated leaders for this gathering.

The session is scheduled to begin at 9:30 a.m. with the Liturgy

of the Word. There will be time for collegiality and discussion throughout the day, culminating in the celebration of Holy Eucharist at 3 p.m.

A registration fee of \$15 covers lunch as well as snacks and drinks during the day. The planning committee would like reservations by Feb. 14. Registration forms are available on the diocesan website (www.diosanjoaquin.org), and at all churches.

This is an opportunity to come together once again to

To Page C

David Pina to be ordained priest — first in renewed diocese

ANOTHER FIRST FOR the Episcopal Diocese of San Joaquin takes place on Sat., Feb. 28, when the Rev. David Pina, whose ordination to the diaconate was the first ordination in the

newly reconstituted diocese, will be ordained a priest.

The Rt. Rev. Jerry Lamb, bishop of San Joaquin, will confer Holy Orders on David at a 10:30 a.m. service at St. Anne's Episcopal Church in Stockton.

All members of the diocesan family are invited to attend. The service will be followed by a reception. □



PHOTO: WILLIAM O. WOOLLEY, PH.D.

The Rev. David Pina and his wife, Cassandra, at his August 24 ordination to the diaconate.

Traveling with Eddy

By Lori Brown,
Grace Episcopal, Bakersfield

MEMBERS OF GRACE Episcopal Church, Bakersfield, are bidding a temporary farewell to member Eddy Laine, who began a special assignment in Honduras in January.

Sponsored by the South American Missionary Society (SAMS), Laine is teaching 7th and 8th grade English composition at the El Buen Episcopal School in San Pedro Sula, Honduras.

"This is an exciting opportunity to serve," he says.

"Without my involvement in Grace, I don't believe this opportunity would have developed. I ask for your prayerful support."

The pastor and English coordinator of El Buen Episcopal School is the Rev. Jack Lynch.

Laine's assignment is for six months.

If you would like more information about SAMS, visit its website at SAMSUSA.org. □



BACK PAGE

■ Episcopal Relief and Development and Al Ahli Arab Hospital work together to help the injured in Gaza City. **Page D**

California Supreme Court ruling establishes church property rights

ON JANUARY 5, 2009, the California Supreme Court issued a decision in favor of the Diocese of Los Angeles regarding the property of three parishes in the Diocese of Los Angeles that voted to disaffiliate themselves from the Episcopal Church. (See *In re Episcopal Church Cases* found at www.courtinfo.ca.gov/opinions/documents/S155094.PDF.)

The Supreme Court unanimously concluded that when congregations attempt to disaffiliate from the Episcopal Church, their title and rights to the property remain with the Episcopal Church. The ruling noted that in resolving such disputes, a court must examine "articles of incorporation, the general church's constitution, canons,

"... No court can interfere with or control such an exercise of conscience. The problem lies in defendants' efforts to take the church property with them. This they may not do."

and rules, and relevant statutes, including statutes specifically concerning religious property." (*In re Episcopal Church Cases* at pg. 19)

Additionally, the Court reiterated that if a court encounters a question of doctrine or polity while undertaking this analysis, "the court must defer to the position of the highest ecclesiastical authority that has decided the point" (*Id.* at pg. 19). The ruling concluded, "individual defendants are free to disassociate themselves from [the parish and the Episcopal Church] and to affiliate themselves with another religious denomination. No court can interfere with or control such an exercise of conscience. The problem lies in defendants' efforts to take the church property with them. This they may not do." (*Id.* at pg. 25)

The Supreme Court has now made plain that the law of the State of California unambiguously requires a court to respect and defer to the canons of the Episcopal Church concerning

property ownership. This decision also maintains an important and constitutionally required deference to the ecclesiastical decisions of our Church and all religious organizations.

"The Court's decision in this case is extremely helpful to the Diocese of San Joaquin's position in the present litigation with respect to the former bishop," according to diocesan chancellor Michael Glass, Esq. "It also clarifies beyond a doubt the rights of the Diocese regarding parish and mission properties occupied by groups that have disaffiliated from the Episcopal Church."

"It is my sincere desire," said the Rt. Rev. Jerry Lamb, Bishop of the Diocese of San Joaquin, "that the decision of the Supreme Court will prompt groups that have left the Episcopal Church to seriously consider and accept my invitations to conversations of reconciliation, and return to the Episcopal Church."

After the ruling, Bishop Lamb has sent a letter inviting all congregations who have not declared themselves within the diocese to return to the Episcopal Church. He also sent a letter to Episcopal congregations in the Diocese of San Joaquin. Both letters are printed below. The first letter, "Dear Friends," is addressed to congregations in the Episcopal Diocese of San Joaquin. The second letter, "Dear People of God," is addressed to congregations who have attempted to disaffiliate with the Episcopal Church.

January 14, 2009

Dear Friends,

Enclosed with this letter is a letter I am sending to clergy and congregations that attempted to remove parishes and missions from the Episcopal Church. I am once again inviting people to speak to me about their relationship to the Episcopal Church.

The decision by the California Supreme Court was very clear, and it may result in some people rethinking their decision to leave the church. I urge the laity and clergy of the Episcopal Diocese to engage their friends and acquaintances from the other group in personal conversations, and based on long-

BISHOP'S MESSAGE

Dear Friends,

I greet you in the name of our Lord Jesus as we begin the holy season of Lent.

I have always understood Lent to be a time of committing ourselves to the task of responding more fully to Christ's call to follow Him. Lent is the time to turn back to Christ and



PHOTO: WILLIAM O. WOOLLEY, PH.D.

to see Him as He is. We cannot turn to Him if we are preoccupied with things of the world that draw us away from Christ Jesus.

It is important that we take significant steps in our lives to turn to God. We may want to "give something up" or we may choose to do something extra. Given the condition of our economy and the world, it may be most beneficial to make a special point of alms giving and outreach ministry to those in need.

Whatever you choose to do, let this Lent be a time of turning toward God and doing God's will.

In peace,

† Jerry Lamb
Bishop of San Joaquin



standing friendships, move toward healing in the diocese.

Remember, I am ready and more than willing to speak to clergy, the laity, those in leadership, or congregations.

In peace,

† Jerry A. Lamb
Bishop of San Joaquin

January 14, 2009

Dear People of God,

I send you greetings during this season after Epiphany, a season that reminds us that we are called to proclaim the Gospel to all the peoples of the world.

I write to you to invite you into conversations with me regarding your relationship with the Episcopal Church in view of the January 5, 2009 California Supreme Court decision on property. I am, of course, not an

attorney, but the decision is clear that all property and assets of a parish are held in trust for the wider Episcopal Church, and upon any attempted disaffiliation from the Episcopal Church, such property must be returned to the Episcopal Church and its Diocese.

There has been enough pain and suffering on all sides of the issue of separation from the Episcopal Church. It is time for us to speak to one another face to face about returning to the fold of the Episcopal Church or setting forth a plan for gracious leave taking.

I remain ready to speak to clergy, the laity, those in leadership, or congregations. Please be in touch with me.

In peace,

† Jerry A. Lamb
Bishop of San Joaquin □

Journey to Navajoland

FROM PAGE A

On Saturday, veterinarian Dr. Virga, assisted by Sara Chan, held a free vaccine clinic for 50 dogs at St. John the Baptizer in nearby Montezuma Creek. Accessible veterinary care is clearly a need! In addition to the local canines, they also met St. John's lay pastor Lillie Henderson.

On Saturday afternoon, we surveyed the agricultural project, the main reason for this listening trip. With the sun setting, we drove through Monument Valley Navajo Tribal Park.

The people we visited are a community that blends native spirituality with the Christian spirituality of the Episcopal Church. Anglo Christians have been teaching them; now it is time for us to be taught. The impression we got was that "Anglo" church groups come to do projects they deem necessary.

Navajo agriculture is ancient; the Anasazi were dry farmers. Dry farming was used to grow the basics of corn, squash, and beans. The arrival of the Spanish and later the Anglos changed the balance between population and land use. These farmers know how to farm the land.

Where we come in is helping with water supply, soil productivity, and crop rotation. We just need to work with them to improve their already sound farming practices with a touch of technology.

The loss of Bishop Steven Plummer (the first Navajo elected as bishop of Navajoland) is still felt by the Navajo/Episcopal people. Cathy Plummer, the bishop's widow, and Jerry Pettiford discussed how teaching public speaking could give their youth leadership skills for use in the church and native community, which must also recognize traditions of their elders.

The infrastructure of the mission is deteriorating, with numerous building and repair projects needing attention on the Mission grounds. Church groups stay in the community building and use the utilities while looking at the leaky roof, peeling paint, and broken cupboards.

We must understand more before beginning to know the needs of the Diné and how we fit in. We need to work in conjunction with the Hooghan Learning Circle, a group of Navajos applying their culture and traditions to the mission of the church in Navajoland.

In the end, we will receive more than we give.

— The Rev. Dick Snyder contributed to this story. □

Write to us!

We welcome your comments.

Our mailing address is:
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LET'S GET ACQUAINTED ...

... with the Executive Council

THE EXECUTIVE COUNCIL of the Episcopal Church is an elected body representing the whole Church. In the course of the three years between convention, known as the "triennium," the Executive Council customarily meets once in each of the nine provinces of the Episcopal Church.

The Executive Council has the duty to carry out programs and policies adopted by General Convention. It is the job of Executive Council to oversee the ministry and mission of the Church. The Executive Council is comprised of twenty members elected by General Convention (four bishops, four priests or deacons and 12 laypersons) and 18 members elected by provincial synods.

The Executive Council held its most recent regular meeting Jan. 29 through 31, 2009, at the Stockton Grand Hotel in Stockton, CA. It was not the first time the council had come to this diocese

for a meeting. Nineteen years ago, when the Most Rev. Edmond L. Browning was presiding bishop of the Episcopal Church, the council met in Fresno at Smuggler's Inn. □



When the Executive Council met in Fresno in June 1990, Presiding Bishop Edmond L. Browning, far left, held a press conference with Barbara Braver, then information officer for the Episcopal Church Center in New York, Doris Hall, then editor of the *San Joaquin Star*, and Jerry Hames, then editor of *Episcopal Life*.

PHOTO: DON HALL

SPOTLIGHT

Saint Who?

By the Rev. Bob Woods,
St. Sherrian's, Kernville

NEVER HEARD OF St. Sherrian? You're not alone. Here's her story, some historical trivia and the reason we picked her.

St. Sherrian was born near Spoleto, Italy in the late 1300s. Being from a socially acceptable family, a marriage was arranged for her at an early age despite her desire to enter the Augustinian convent in nearby Cascia. Her husband was from a socially acceptable family despite being a drunken, abusive lout who made Sherrian's next 18 years miserable. They did have two sons, both of whom died early on.

After Sherrian's husband was killed in a bar fight, Sherrian returned to her dream of entering the convent. She was at first refused as she was no longer a virgin, but after a year or two she was admitted. She soon proved herself an able gardener. She was also possessed of a generously proportioned nose, whose bulk was exceeded only by its olfactory acuity.

Sherrian became ill and, during her struggle, had many visions. She was

credited with cures of many other people. She eventually succumbed and, in the bizarre, relic-crazy fashion of the time, her nose was preserved in a jar of olive oil and white wine and trotted around much of Europe to be venerated. Side altars were erected to her in Cascia, Florence and Notre Dame de Paris. Prayers were offered to her as a patron saint of the impossible.

The Rev. Canon Mark Hall has pointed out that the story of St. Sherrian is remarkably similar to St. Rita, also known in some places as St. Margarita. St. Rita is known as a patron saint of the impossible in Spain, but known as patron of lost causes (related to St. Jude?) in the rest of the world. Indeed, local variations on the same saint are hardly uncommon.

We chose St. Sherrian as our patron saint, recognizing the challenges that lie ahead in healing. Many say healing is impossible. St. Sherrian would hold otherwise, and so we pray our church, indeed the entire Church, will be healed and someday will be one as Christ is one with God.

We celebrate Holy Eucharist at 10 a.m. on Sunday mornings at the Odd Fellows Hall in Kernville. Please join us when you can. □

Have you ordered your subscription?

Don't miss an issue of *Episcopal Life/San Joaquin* (along with *Episcopal Life*) by failing to return the enclosed envelope with your subscription by February 12, 2009.

SINCE MARCH 2008 you have been receiving *Episcopal Life* wrapped with *Episcopal Life/San Joaquin*, provided to you at no charge by the Episcopal Church Center in support of the reorganization of the Diocese of San Joaquin.

With reorganization now fully underway, we are required to pay for these subscriptions. Please use the enclosed envelope to send us your mailing information and your check payable to the Diocese of San Joaquin. The cost of your subscription is

\$25 per year. We've also included an option for those members of the Episcopal Diocese of San Joaquin who wish to continue receiving this newspaper but who do not have the resources. And, we've included an option for those who can provide us with additional support. Please do not subscribe directly through *Episcopal Life* as you will receive the San Joaquin wrap only if you subscribe through the diocese.

Be sure to return the envelope today to ensure that you will not miss any issues. You may read *Episcopal Life/San Joaquin* on our website, www.diosanjoaquin.org. □

North Texas Episcopalians echo San Joaquin's history

By Katie Sherrod,
Communications Chair Steering Committee
North Texas Episcopalians

IN JANUARY 2008 Episcopalians representing groups ranging from conservative to progressive began meeting and eventually incorporated as the Steering Committee North Texas Episcopalians with the goal of representing Episcopalians who would remain with the continuing Episcopal Diocese of Fort Worth.

We promptly were dubbed "self-appointed vigilantes" by our former bishop, a name we wear proudly, since *vigilante* comes from the Spanish for "witness."

The Steering Committee set up a website at www.steeringcommittee.org where we posted information and resources. Members spoke at 42 events throughout the diocese to inform people about the issues. We placed several advertisements in area newspapers, published a Vestry Handbook, organized for the 2008 Diocesan Convention and maintained communication with and organized resources for the individuals and parishes in exile to continue to worship as Episcopalians.

Steering Committee representatives met several times with the presiding bishop and her advisors. Fort Worth Via Media, one of the constituent groups, brought in leaders from the Episcopal Church throughout 2008 for some truth telling about our church. Via Media also sponsored a diocesan-wide planning seminar for the reorganized diocese. We also consulted with friends from San Joaquin, including Nancy Key, who gave us invaluable advice.

The Most Rev. Katharine Jefferts Schori, presiding bishop of the Episcopal

We promptly were dubbed "self-appointed vigilantes" by our former bishop, a name we wear proudly, since *vigilante* comes from the Spanish for "witness."

Church, accepted Jack Iker's renunciation of orders in the Episcopal Church on December 5. On December 15 she informed the six former members of the Standing Committee that they were no longer recognized. Because we now have no ecclesiastical authority, she has called a special convention of the continuing Episcopal Diocese of Fort Worth for Feb. 7, 2009.

While we claim all the parishes and their property, there are five intact parishes [rector, vestries, buildings] and more than ten parishes that are worshipping in alternate locations (their buildings being occupied by non-Episcopalians at the moment) that are active participants in the continuing diocese. The website for the diocese is www.episcopaldiocesefortworth.org.

On Feb. 7, the presiding bishop will call our special convention to order and we will confirm the selection of a provisional bishop, elect a Standing Committee, and fill other vacancies caused by the departure of some clergy and lay people. We also will put our Constitution and Canons back into compliance with the national canons.

Then, the Episcopal Diocese of Fort Worth will get on with Gods work — here, in this place. □

Remain Episcopal
FROM PAGE A

learn more about those elements of the Episcopal faith that bind us. There will be time to discuss our unique and significant bond as Episcopalians. We all share in the one priesthood, each representing some different and vital aspect of priesthood. How is that to play out in our lives? What is the apostolic ministry that is the responsibility of each and every one of the faithful? What is our mission, our priesthood? And will we do it, as we professed we would in our baptismal vows?

Further information is available by calling the church office at Christ the King, 209-869-1075. □



The altar at Christ the King, Riverbank

Morehouse releases *The Episcopal Handbook*

ISBN: 978-0-8192-2329-6
\$15.00, 256 pp.

The Episcopal Handbook, a new book from Morehouse Publishing, delivers solid historical and theological information about the Episcopal Church, plus practical tips for being a churchgoing follower of Jesus Christ.

Designed for newcomers as well as lifelong Episcopalians and complete

with illustrations, the handbook combines an examination of vast truths and complex details with the lighter side of the Episcopal understanding of Christian life.

Chapters include: • How to be a Greeter (or Usher, or Acolyte, etc.) • How to tell the difference between a "Vocation" and a "Vacation" • How to Interpret "Controversial" Bible Passages and Remain Episcopalian, and more. □



PHOTO: SHELLEY LINDGREN

The Rev. John Shumaker, rector, follows the Way of the Cross at St. Matthew's Episcopal Church in San Andreas. The Stations of the Cross were given in loving memory of Clay Walker, who was senior warden at the time of his death a year ago. The parish will hold Lenten devotions every Friday throughout Lent at 6 p.m. with Stations of the Cross and Benediction of the Blessed Sacrament.

Camp San Joaquin is rustic but comfortable

By Peter Smith,
Camp San Joaquin Board of
Directors

THE "NEW" CAMP San Joaquin will be entering its sixth camping season this summer. The high mountain retreat is still rustic, but many improvements have been made so that campers do not have to "rough it" as much as they used to. As one adult leader said, "This isn't camping, this is the Hilton!"

Two youth camping programs will be offered during 2009. The Enrichment Camp, sponsored through St. Paul's school in Visalia, will be held Wed., July 29 to Sat., August 1. Designed for students from 10 to 14, the Enrichment Camp will explore many areas of the environment that can be seen and experienced first hand at camp. Lessons on the flora and fauna, astronomy and geology will be offered. Of course, there will be time for all the fun things, too, like swimming, biking, hiking and making new friends.

The second camp will be the Combined Camp. Running from Mon., August 3 to Sat., August 8, Combined Camp will offer young people ages 10 to 16 the opportunity to learn natural science, music and theatre production in a round-robin learning environment. The Combined Camp finishes on Camp San Joaquin Day (August 8) with a theatrical production by the



PHOTO: SUZETTE PETERS

Campers hike from Camp San Joaquin to the nearby creek during a break from music camp rehearsals. The High Sierra camp will open in June for another season.

campers, followed by a delicious tri-tip barbecue lunch.

Space is still available for family camps, reunions and retreats. Please contact Camp San Joaquin through the website www.CampSanJoaquin.org, or by calling 559-732-4821.

Applications for the Enrichment Camp and Combined Camp will be available in April at parish offices.

Camp San Joaquin is in the Giant Sequoia National Monument at an elevation of nearly 7,000 feet, deep in the forest of 200-foot-tall pine trees. The days are warm and the nights cool. Camp San Joaquin is non-denominational and some scholarships to pay for camp fees are available. We hope to see this summer! □

NEWS BRIEFS

■ Rector-lecture

Some fortunate students at an off-campus site of Stockton's Delta College (in Manteca) are taking a class taught by the Rev. John Shumaker, rector of St. Matthew's, San Andreas. The once a week, three-hour class is in the great religions of the Western world.

■ St. Clare of Assisi welcomes the bishop and Jane

The Rt. Rev. Jerry Lamb and his wife, Jane, were honored guests at St. Clare of Assisi in Avery on the last Sunday of Advent. Bishop Lamb and the Rev. Marlin Bowman, rector of St. Clare's, (right) are pictured in front of the altar and the mahogany carving of Christ in Majesty. The congregation presented the Lambs with a white orchid plant at the coffee hour following the service.



Bishop Lamb and the Rev. M. Bowman

■ Youth assist in Sunday service once a month

The young people of Holy Family Episcopal Church in Fresno are serving as lectors, intercessors, and ushers at the 10 o'clock service on the last Sunday of each month, and the youth choir also performs on that day. □

ERD sending emergency funds to Gaza hospital

By Eleanor Osborne, Diocesan Coordinator,
Episcopal Relief and Development

AS I WRITE this, war is still raging in the Middle East between factions from both the Palestinians in Gaza and the Israelis in Israel. The toll has been huge. Gaza City had a population of 1.5 million people. Since December 27, more than 900 Palestinians, mostly civilians, have died. About 4,000 people have been injured, and at least one-third of them are children.

Help is needed for the injured and the medical staff. In the center of Gaza City is Al Ahli Arab Hospital, which has been a partner with Episcopal Relief and Development for many years. Gaza City is in the Episcopal Diocese of Jerusalem. The Rt. Rev. Suheil Dawani, bishop of Jerusalem, points out that the hospital and the diocese have both been there for 100 years.

The staff at Al Ahli is not large enough to provide care for the daily influx of patients, but they continue to commit themselves to providing the

best care possible for the patients.

The most seriously needed items are food and clean water, for both patients and hospital staff, and medical supplies. We cannot realistically send any of these items, but our gifts to ERD enable money to be wired to the bank where the hospital has its accounts.

As they need to make a purchase, they can withdraw funds from the bank.

Please specify "Middle East Fund" on your check and send it to Episcopal Relief and Development, P.O. Box 7058, Merrifield, VA 22116-7058. Also please include the name of your parish and diocese. ERD tracks donations and sends each diocese an annual report. Your contributions to ERD are tax deductible.

We can continue to help needy people and provide them with a ray of hope. The Archbishop of Canterbury mentioned as much when he wrote in his statement of January 1: "Without such a sign of hope, the future for the Holy Land and the whole region is one of more fear, innocent suffering, and destruction." □



PHOTO: DIOCESE OF JERUSALEM

Mohan'nad, a nine-year-old boy who was badly injured when a building near his home was damaged, was treated by the doctors and staff at Al Ahli Arab Hospital who were able to save his leg.



Everyone is invited to visit our website
www.diosanjoaquin.org