

Graham's Honored for Service to Youth



The Rev. Bill and Kathy Graham were honored during Annual Council for their more than 30 years of service to Camp Comeca and the youth of the diocese. They have been involved with camp in many ways, particularly with Kathy serving as crafts coordinator. They received a standing ovation in recognition of their valuable role in the success of camp and other youth programs.

Alleluia Fund Raffle at Annual Council



Among displays at Annual Council was the Alleluia Fund Dump Truck. Filled with candy to attract visitors, the dump truck represented an actual dump truck purchased for the Sudanese Mission more than one year ago. That truck was put to good use hauling not materials, but people. During an uprising between native tribes, the truck was used to take women and children away from the fighting to relatively safe ground. Visitors to the booth could answer some questions about the Alleluia Fund to enter into a raffle for the model dump truck. Drawn from the many hopeful entries was Katharina Schwidtal, Dean of the Central Deanery and member of St. Mark's Pro-Cathedral, Hastings. Richard Kauders, Alleluia Fund vice chairman, member of the Executive Commission and Senior Warden, St. Luke's, Kearney, makes the presentation.

Recycling Resolution is Adopted

Delegates to the 141st Annual Council of the Diocese of Nebraska adopted a resolution that the diocesan office and all parishes in the diocese adopt a practice of stewardship of the environment by promoting recycling efforts and conservation programs. The resolution calls for

staff and volunteers who organize church activities or manage church offices to ensure all materials purchased, used and expended are recycled when possible.

A similar resolution also was approved and will be forwarded to the 76th General Convention.



Resurrection House Interns

Four interns at Resurrection House, Omaha, attend Annual Council. From left, Joseph Farnes, Idaho, interning at Trinity Cathedral, Omaha; Andrew Harris, Alabama, interning at St. Augustine's, Elkhorn; John Adams, Virginia, interning at St. Andrew's, Omaha; and Clay Towles, Oklahoma, interning at All Saints, Omaha. Resurrection House is a nationally recognized program for young adult vocational discernment in Christian community.

Bishop Burnett Plans Sabbatical

Dear Sisters and Brothers in Christ,

It is hard to believe that I am now well into the sixth year of my consecration. In some ways moving to Nebraska in July of 2003 seems like a lifetime ago; in other ways it feels like I have been here only a few months! This past summer at Lambeth marked the fifth anniversary of my arrival and I also thereby became eligible for a sabbatical in keeping with the terms of our diocesan policy and guidelines.

Earlier this year I indicated to the Executive Commission, the Standing Committee, and the diocesan staff that I was seeking to plan a suitable time for this period of study, renewal, and rest. Due to the Lambeth Conference this summer, and the Provincial Synod and General Convention next summer, I sought a time frame that would work well for all concerned.

I have set aside a 12-week period—one week of which will be taken up with attendance at the Spring Meeting of the House of Bishops—beginning Thursday, Jan. 15, and concluding Thursday, April 15. I plan to be at home during much of that time, though I do have some travel plans, as well as hopes of pursuing some study and writing projects. I look forward especially to a concluding Holy Week retreat in a liturgical setting where I can participate primarily as a pilgrim. Since I am normally at Trinity Cathedral during Holy Week, I deeply appreciate Dean Hurley's willingness to schedule an alternate visitation time.

The next round of visitation request forms will reflect these sabbatical dates. I do plan to be present for the 2009 Presbyterian Retreat, which will take place Tuesday evening, April 21 through Friday morning, April 24, at the Benedictine Center in Schuyler. This later than usual date is also partly due to the interest expressed by many in having our retreat in the spring rather than immediately prior to Lent.

Though I will not be involved during my time away in the day-to-day affairs of the diocese, I will be available if there is some urgent matter that requires the bishop's presence or input. Insofar as possible, however, I hope to experience genuine "Sabbath time" that will nourish and enrich my mind, body and spirit. Therefore, I ask for your support and your prayers. I am confident that those of you who have taken advantage of our diocesan sabbatical program will readily understand and affirm its value for our lives and ministries.

Grace and peace,

Joe

Oct. 1. Morning meeting of Bishop and Trustees; brief visits with members afterwards. Drove to St. Andrew's, Omaha, where I celebrated the Eucharist for the Annual Fricke Food Pantry. Appreciated the good assistance of Grant Wiseman, Tom Jones, and Hank Austin. Luncheon and meeting followed in the parish hall, and then a brief appointment with Grant Wiseman. Afternoon meeting with Canon Judi Yeates in West Omaha.

Oct. 2. Morning at home dealing with insurance adjuster inspection of potential damage from recent storms. Afternoon meeting with Canon John Schaefer in West Omaha, then late afternoon work in Home Office.

Oct. 3. Study day, sermon preparation, pack for weekend trip upcoming.

Oct. 4. Drove to Ogallala, arriving late afternoon. Officiated at Saturday evening service at St. Paul's, celebrating Eucharist and confirmation. Enjoyed brief reception afterwards, then dinner with Mary Lou at a local restaurant.

Oct. 5. Picked up Mary Lou at St. Paul's, and together we drove along scenic highway 26 to Oshkosh, St. George's. An enthusiastic congregation joined in Eucharist and confirmation, assisted by Mary Lou and Deacon Barbara Nerud. Afterwards, we feasted at a delicious pot-luck lunch in the undercroft. We were joined by members from Good Shepherd, Bridgeport and St. Paul's for this morning's service. Following a brief meeting with Western Deanery Dean Glen Amateis, of Bridgeport, Mary Lou and I returned to Ogallala, stopping for a hospital visit with Senior Warden Burl Spencer in Ogallala. After taking Mary Lou home, I continued on to Lexington for an overnight stay and meetings tomorrow.

Oct. 6. Met Canon Judi Yeates for an early morning drive to Cozad and a 7 a.m. appointment with Aurilla Walker, who serves as priest in charge here. Later this morning we had individual appointments at St. Peter's in the Valley, Lexington, with Kay Knudson, priest; Tami Reynolds, Senior Warden, and Liz Montes, Missioner. Following a brief break in the afternoon, Judi and I had an evening meeting with

the wardens and vestry of St. Peter's. Overnight in Lexington.

Oct. 7. Drove to Omaha, arriving midday, and spent afternoon catching up with e-mail and accumulated mail, telephone calls.

Oct. 8. Home Office.

Oct. 9. Morning spent working on sermon and deanery presentation for upcoming weekend trip.

Oct. 10. Traveled west, making use of time for cell phone visits and conversations. Overnight en route.

Oct. 11. Early morning drive to Oshkosh, for quarterly meeting of the Western Deanery. I gave dvd and verbal presentation on the Lambeth Conference. I was impressed with the positive turnout and spirit for the deanery gathering. Had brief conference with Rae Whitney of Scottsbluff, who will be helping us with music for our upcoming annual council. Left Oshkosh mid-afternoon and drove on to Scottsbluff, where I finished work on sermons for tomorrow. Enjoyed dinner and visit tonight at a local restaurant with Carol Ann Bullard, Rector of Holy Apostles, Mitchell.

Oct. 12. Morning visitation at Holy Apostles, Mitchell. Celebrated, preached, and presided at confirmation and reception, assisted by Carol Ann Bullard and Deacon Angie Jones. Had great opportunity to visit parishioners at a trademark Holy Apostles pot-luck lunch following. Afternoon drive to Hyannis, where I presided at Sunday evening service and confirmation, assisted by Don Huber, Rector of St. Matthew's, Alliance and Calvary, Hyannis. We feasted on a delightful and hearty soup and sandwich dinner following. Drove in heavy rain as far as North Platte and stopped late for overnight stay.

Oct. 13. Drove home to Omaha, arriving early afternoon. Took the rest of Monday afternoon off.

Oct. 14. Home office in the morning. Early afternoon appointment with Dean Hurley in my office to discuss sabbatical plans. Appointment with Tim Anderson in preparation for afternoon meeting. Met late afternoon with the Clarkson Foundation to discuss present financial situation, as well as the developing plans for a Bishop Clarkson Legacy Society. All of the directors are enthusiastic about Canon Anderson's proposed plans.

Oct. 15. Morning telephone conference in office with Helen Gotti in Seward. Late morning appointment with new member of our diocesan family who has relocated here from the Diocese of Dallas and is interested in vocational discernment for the diaconate. Late afternoon meetings at home with contractors to discuss repair options and plans.

Oct. 16. In office late morning and early afternoon. Appointment with one of our vocational deacons. Afternoon appointment with contractor, and work in home office.

Oct. 17. Study day, working on sermon for Sunday, and preparations for Annual Council liturgies, and other Council matters.

Oct. 18. Met for a time this morning at Trinity Cathedral with the Standing Commission on National and International Concerns, a Commission of the Episcopal Church which is meeting this weekend in Omaha. Chancellor Woody Bradford is one of the members of this body. Following this meeting, I attended a splendid presentation in Gardner Hall of Trinity Cathedral by the Rev. Canon Gregory Howe, Custodian of the Standard Book of Common Prayer, who regaled members of the Cathedral and many visitors with stories of the making and revising of the Book of Common Prayer through the centuries. Afternoon spent finishing sermon and packing for upcoming trip.

Oct. 19. Drove early to Plattsmouth for 9 a.m. Eucharist, where I presided, preached, and celebrated confirmation and reception, assisted by Mavis Hall and Deacon Phil Chapman. A festive pot-luck lunch followed. A good crowd was present, and a very positive spirit prevailed—good work going on here in this "showcase" parish for Total Ministry! Quick drive back home in early afternoon, and then to Eppley Airport for flight to Pasadena, California. Arrived late evening after flight delays. Overnight at the Guest Center at Fuller Theological Seminary in Pasadena.

Oct. 20-21. Representing the Theology Committee of the House of Bishops, Professor Ellen Charry, of Princeton Theological Seminary, and I team up to convene and facilitate the first meeting of a distinguished panel of Episcopal theologians—including noted con-

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The Pastoral Staff



**The Gifts of God
for the People of God
Excerpts from the Bishop's Ad-
dress at the 141st Annual Council**

The Rt. Rev. Joe G. Burnett

"The Gifts of God for the people of God!"

At each and every celebration of the Holy Eucharist we hear this declaration of welcome to the Lord's Table. It is an invitation to receive the sacramental gifts of Christ's Body and Blood. But it is also a reminder that the God who gives us the sacred gifts of bread and wine also gives us gifts for the sacred ministry to which Christ calls us, and for which the Holy Spirit empowers us.

I am increasingly aware of and grateful for the many ordinary and extraordinary gifts and graces for ministry that "bubble up" all around our diocese. This often begins with a single person, and a seemingly small ministry, but can end up generating waves of energy for mission that reach far beyond our borders.

I think for example of a 12-year-old young man in a central Nebraska town, who saw a need in a third world country for wheelchairs. This has led him to build a network of partnerships through local schools, organizations and church youth groups to raise funds that will help get these chairs to people who need them.

Or I think of another central Nebraska youth who is the son of one of our priests. He has worked hard through the years to develop his gift for music. Soon he will travel as the only representative of our state to play in the Macy's Great American Marching Band as it ushers Santa Claus into Herald Square in the annual Macy's Thanksgiving Day Parade in New York City.

And then my thoughts turn to three older clergy—all of whom could easily have slipped into a quiet retirement. Each of them serves in a parish that has had in one way or other an experience of challenge, conflict, or adversity. At a point in their lives when many others are taking it easy, each of these priests has helped to bring new life to the congregation in which they minister.

This happens not only with individuals, but also in parishes.

Who would have thought five years ago that a rapidly dwindling parish in a small north central

Nebraska village would arrive at a point today where remodeling and expansion are necessary to accommodate new members?

Who would have thought that in O'Neill, Nebraska, there would be a growing community of Episcopalians, twenty-something strong, gathering on Saturday evenings in a nursing home for weekly Eucharist, and exploring possible locations for an established mission station?

Who would have thought some years ago that two very different and very proud western deanery congregations would put aside their pride in their local traditions and come together to form one strong parish, poised now to build for the future on prime real estate in a growing part of this community?

Who would have thought that in a small town near Lincoln, a sleepy little congregation—led by yet another retired priest—would suddenly be teeming with new life and growth to the point that they are building a new parish hall and office space as I speak?

Who would have thought that another small parish situated between North Platte and Kearney, with a heretofore small Sunday attendance, would now be poised for growth and on the verge of taking up the mantle of Latino ministry in their area?

We see this on the diocesan level as well. Deaneries are building strong partnerships between parishes that promote communication and share ministry and clergy development in regions throughout the diocese.

A new enthusiasm for campus ministry is leading to the creation of a College Ministry Commission to build a diocesan partnership with campus ministries throughout Nebraska—in Lincoln, Omaha, Kearney, Chadron, Hastings and so on.

The Alleluia Fund—thanks to the leadership of Joe Engle and Hank Austin—continues to engender projects of all shapes and sizes and is partnering with parishes across the diocese for expanding buildings and purchasing land for future growth and development.

And, of course, the Tri-Faith Initiative—remarkable on its very face—is a success story of three faith communities building a partnership for a shared vision of peace among religions as a model for peace among nations.

For more than five years I have been overwhelmed with the goodness of the land and people of the diocese of Nebraska. Our creative expressions of local ministry, our leadership in regional and national gatherings, our vision for the future, our remarkably talented parishes and people, our abundance of small but growing congregations, our courage in pursuing a Tri-Faith Initiative—all of these things and more testify to the good things God has done and is doing among us.

Here I must also say a word about the energetic and talented lay and clergy servants who share ministry with me in our diocesan office. They have given so much of themselves to strengthen this diocese. Overall I can say with confidence that the individual and corporate goal of the diocesan staff members is to serve you. We constantly seek to refine and reform our work so that we can be of more benefit to you, the people and parishes of Nebraska.

Finally I would suggest to you that the "Gifts of God" that are manifested in the "People of God" in Nebraska have a global reach. You will hear updates at this council from Deacon Bob and Ellen Snow, our representative missionaries in the Dominican Republic. You will also hear the story of our diocese's first mission trip to the Sudan and the vision of expanding our global mission partnership with the Dominican Republic to include the Diocese of Bor in the Sudan. And—who knows—maybe even with the Diocese of Swansea-Brecon, in Wales!

All of which brings me to the gift of building relationships with our Anglican brothers and sisters around the world. This past summer I was privileged to represent you at the Lambeth Conference in Canterbury, England. At this conference bishops from radically different social, religious, and political contexts came together to worship, to study scripture, and to share with one another in a spirit of mutual respect and love.

No matter what happens in the Anglican Communion in terms of ecclesiastical reorganization or renewal, we will all continue to be members of Christ's body, we will continue to be members of Christ's Church, and we will continue to be members one of another.

At the opening Eucharist of the Lambeth Conference in historic Christ Church Cathedral in

Canterbury, we sang one hymn in particular that brought me to tears. It did so not only because of the beauty of the text, but also because the vision articulated in that text was frankly not yet fully realized, either at Lambeth or in the church at large. I close by sharing part of it with you as my vision, and my hope, for us in the diocese of Nebraska, as well throughout our Anglican Communion:

Let us build a house where love can dwell and all can safely live,
A place where saints and children tell how hearts learn to forgive;
Built of hopes and dreams and visions, rock of faith and vault of grace;
Here the love of Christ shall end divisions:

All are welcome, all are welcome,
all are welcome in this place.

Let us build a house where hands will reach beyond the wood and stone

To heal and strengthen, serve and teach, and live the Word they've known.

Here the outcast and the stranger bear the image of God's face;
Let us bring an end to fear and danger:

All are welcome, all are welcome,
all are welcome in this place.

Let us build a house where all are named, their songs and visions heard

And loved and treasured, taught and claimed as words within the Word.

Built of tears and cries and laughter, prayers of faith and songs of grace,

Let this house proclaim from floor to rafter:

All are welcome, all are welcome,
all are welcome in this place.*

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Bishop Caldwell is Council Guest

The Rt. Rev. Bruce Caldwell, Bishop of Wyoming, was guest preacher at Annual Council. He led meditations at morning, noon and evening worship as well as the sermon at the Sunday Eucharist.

"You are the body of Christ," Caldwell told the more than 200 attendees. "The very being of Jesus in within each of us, empowering us to do His work in the church and in the world."

He noted that each person has at least one gift, if not many, and it is our duty to use them to build up the body of Christ. If each person can unleash their gifts

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Seven elected to serve on Standing Committee, Executive Commission

Annual Council Elections were held to fill openings on the Standing Committee and Executive Commission.

Elected to the Standing Committee were the Rev. Karen Anderson, St. Francis, Scottsbluff; Lucy Geib, St. Mary's, Bassett; and Deborah Hogue, St. Francis, Scottsbluff.

Anderson serves as the Executive Director of the Scottsbluff/Gering United Chamber of Commerce. Ordained in May 2007, St. Timothy's, Gering, called her as part of a Total Ministry team that merged with St. Andrew's, Scottsbluff, to create the new parish of St. Francis.

Geib serves on the vestry at St. Mary's. Evangelism chair, she also is newsletter editor. She has been a deputy to General Convention, representing Arizona, and including a role as Coordinator of Pages for the House of Bishops. She served a parish in San Diego as Senior Warden, Junior Warden and Sunday School Director.

Hogue is an existing member of Standing Committee, appointed in October 2007. A clergy spouse, she has served various ministries in many parishes, including vestry and treasurer. A four time deputy to General Convention, she is a teacher working with homeless youth throughout the Nebraska Panhandle. Her husband is the Rev. Kelsey Hogue, Rector, St. Francis, Scottsbluff.

Clergy elected to the Executive Commission are, the Rev. Mark Selvey, Rector, St. Augustine of Canterbury, Elkhorn/Omaha, and the Rev. Grant Wiseman,

Rector, St. Andrew's, Omaha.

Selvey spent much of his adult life working in health care management in Western Nebraska where he attended both parishes now combined into St. Francis, Scottsbluff. He served as a vestry member, youth leader and after more than 20 years, he became a candidate for Holy Orders and served his curacy at St. Martha's, Papillion.

Wiseman, a current member of the Executive Commission, will serve a second term. During his first term, he has been chair of the Alleluia Fund Projects Committee and commission vice president.

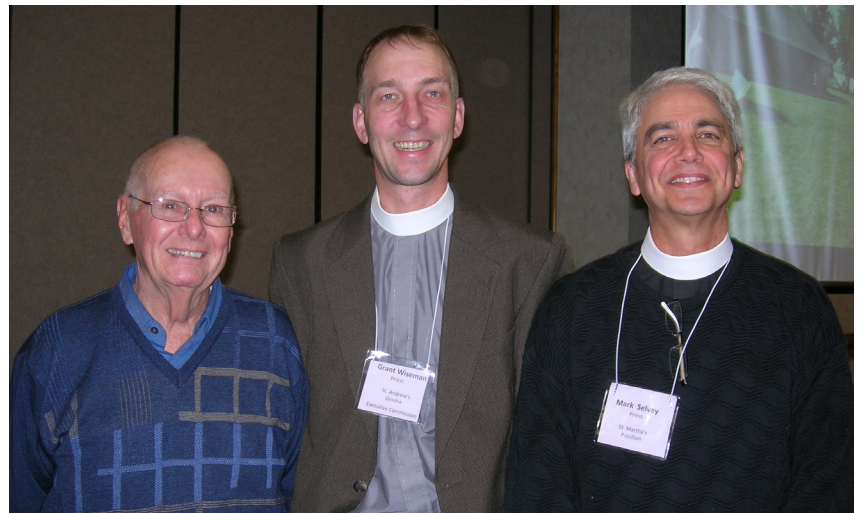
Lay members of Executive Commission are Gary Gray and Janice Seldon.

Gray was elected to his second term. A member of Church of the Holy Spirit, Bellevue, Gray served on the vestry, as chairman of the discernment committee and pastoral care volunteer. He has served two terms as chairman of the Commission on Ministry-Total Ministry. He is a member of the Strategic Planning Committee of the Tri-Faith Initiative in Omaha.

Active in the life of the Church of the Resurrection, Omaha, Seldon is president of the altar guild, treasurer of St. Teresa's Guild, member of the parish Search Committee, a former vestry member and Senior Warden. She serves on the Commission on Ministry and was chair of the election committee. The Executive Director of CORE Outreach Center, Inc., she has 34 years experience in banking.



Newly elected to the Standing committee of the Diocese are the Rev. Karen Anderson, St. Francis, Scottsbluff, left; Deborah Hogue, St. Francis, Scottsbluff; and Lucy Geib, St. Mary's, Bassett.



Selected to serve on the Executive Commission are Gary Gray, left, Church of the Holy Spirit, Bellevue; the Rev. Grant Wiseman, Rector, St. Andrew's, Omaha; and the Rev. Mark Selvy, Rector, St. Augustine of Canterbury, Elkhorn/Omaha. Janice Seldon, Church of the Resurrection, Omaha, was not present for the photo.

Snows receive check from St. Matthew's, Alliance, to begin street ministry in the Dominican Republic



Deacon Bob and Ellen Snow, missionaries to the Dominican Republic, are shown with the Rev. Cheryl Harris, center, Deacon at St. Matthew's, Alliance, who presented a check for \$2,000 to enable the start-up of a ministry to street people. The Snows began their missionary service 13 years ago and have recently become aware of the need for a new type of ministry to the displaced and homeless. Alliance parishioners are among those from churches in the western part of the Diocese of Nebraska who have traveled to the DR on mission trips in recent years. The Snows will remain in the United States through November, then return to their works of service in the DR.

Regional Office Staff At Annual Council



Visitors to Annual Council included the Rev. Laurel Johnston, left, Program Officer for Stewardship, and the Rev. Demi Prentiss, former rector, Emmanuel Episcopal Church, Houston, newly assigned to the Omaha Regional Office of the national church. The Rt. Rev. Christopher Epting, Presiding Bishop's Deputy for Ecumenical and Interfaith Relations was also in attendance. They each gave brief remarks to the assembly, then met individually with attendees throughout the weekend. Epting acknowledged that ecumenical and interfaith ministry is "all about hospitality" and that the Diocese of Nebraska is "fulfilling that mandate to the fullest" by welcoming the Church Center's regional office into Province VI and the Midwest.

More Than \$6,400 Raised In 16 Parishes By Sower's Fund Activities



Accepting the Sower's Fund traveling trophy are Marie Richards and Donnette McGee, St. James, Fremont. The trophy was presented by Dan Stramel, St. Alban's, McCook, last year's winner.

The Sower's Fund usually presents an unusual variety of fundraising activities and 2008 was no exception. The initial seed of \$2 helped 16 parishes to raise more than \$6,426.

Designated as recipient of the Sower's Fund this year is the Loki Light Academy in Kenya. Children from the neighboring Sudan will have an opportunity to gain an education, specifically in professions that will benefit their Sudanese communities.

As last year's winner, St. Alban's, McCook, had the pleasure of determining this year's winner.

The traveling trophy was presented to St. James, Fremont, who used the seed money to purchase materials for quilt blocks which were then sold. The finished blocks were returned and made into a beautiful quilt and raffle tickets were sold. The quilt project resulted in creating a positive sense of community and sharing. It also raised \$677 for the Sower's Fund.

St. Alban's used its seed money to enable the Junior Daughters of The King to produce and sell Advent wreaths, raising \$55.

Holy Apostles, Mitchell, paid a professional auctioneer \$2 to preside at a bake sale. They raised \$550 and the auctioneer returned his fee.

St. Paul's, Arapahoe, purchased lemons to make and sell lemonade during the annual rummage sale. They gave \$47.73 to the Sower's Fund.

Calvary Church, Hyannis, earned \$301.85 in proceeds from a bingo night.

St. Mark's on the Campus, Lincoln, held a soup supper and brought in \$88.54.

St. Augustine's, Elkhorn/Omaha, kept their \$2 seed and did not participate in the fund this year. They did, however, obtain a \$5,000 grant to help raise a total of \$15,000 to benefit a number of other groups in the diocese.

St. Mark's Pro-Cathedral, Hastings, and St. John's, Harvard, circulated a letter seeking a chairman for the Sower Fund in

the two parishes. If an individual wanted to remove their name from consideration, they were asked to donate another \$2 to the fund. As reported, the churches never got a chairman, but they did raise \$620.

St. Luke's, Plattsmouth, created a Blessing's Tree where people could attach things for which they felt blessed and make a monetary donation if they so wished. The congregation raised \$104 for the Sower's Fund.

Trinity Cathedral, Omaha, allowed the cathedral to be used in a film and also devised the sale of indulgences as a means of raising funds. A check for \$1,577 was given to the fund and more may be raised if further indulgences be sold.

St. Francis, Scottsbluff, has long used sale of items on e-bay to raise funds for its charitable activities. They obtained a valuable signed New York Knicks basketball but received no bids. The basketball was withdrawn and will be readvertised at a more appropriate time in the season. Instead, St. Francis purchased 50 "crazy Episcopalian" sweatshirts which, if all are sold, will net the Sower's Fund \$400.

St. George's, Oshkosh, used the seed money to begin filling a food basket that was passed from family to family. Each would add personal items for the next recipient. The parish raised \$70.

St. Hilda's, Kimball, displayed a special piggy bank during each coffee hour and accumulated \$200 for the fund.

St. David's, Lincoln, converted its \$2 bill into 200 pennies which they placed beside an "answered prayers" board. People were to take a penny whenever a prayer was answered, but could leave a penny, or more, if so desired. It raised \$157.

St. Mary's, Holly-Rushville, used its \$2 to buy a book of birdhouse plans. The men of the congregation, after much prodding, used scraps of lumber to build birdhouses. The women of the church sold the finished

products. Demand for the birdhouses was so great that 60 have been sold and more are wanted. The project raised \$1,220 for the Sower's Fund.

Holy Trinity, Lincoln, grew its \$2 by selling items to raise \$145.

Trinity Church, Norfolk, used the seed money to create individual prayer crosses that could be placed on a cherry tree branch symbolizing the Trinity or given to individuals for whom individual parishioners had prayed.

The 2009 \$2 seed money for the Sower's Fund will be given to the Senior Warden in each of the 58 parishes in the Diocese of Nebraska. Results will be revealed at the 2009 Annual Council in North Platte.

Caldwell meditation

(Continued From Page C)

to one another, all have the capacity to grow in service. If we are the "priesthood of all believers," then we must set free the gifts that are in each of us. Everybody has a gift, he said. Everyone is gifted, without exception.

Bishop Caldwell said Christians are a people with a mission.

"The Gospel is alive in our hands and we are to spread it abroad," he said. "How far do we go? To the very ends of the earth."

Free Wheelchair Mission is rolling along



Joe Prickett turned 13 on Nov. 13 and has already made a name for himself in demonstrating Christian service to others. He became involved with the Free Wheelchair Mission last summer and set out to create a diocesan-wide fundraising to purchase wheelchairs for deserving individuals in Third World countries across the globe. In just four months Joe, a member of St. Mark's Pro-Cathedral, Hastings, has raised \$6,400 with help from youth groups, parishes and individuals. His goal is to obtain funds to pack a shipping container with 5,500 wheelchairs. A number of volunteers from parishes throughout the diocese signed up to assist in the project but more are always welcome.

**Thank You
Clergy & Parishioners of
St. Francis, Scottsbluff, &
Holy Apostles, Mitchell,
for your hard work in making
the 141st Annual Council
informative and enjoyable.
Great music, Great food and
Great fellowship made it
a memorable event.**

Bishop's Annual Council Sunday Sermon

(On Nov. 9, the Sunday of Annual Council, the Rt. Rev. Joe G. Burnett provided this sermon to be read in parishes across the diocese. It is based on Matthew 25: 1-13 and is titled "On Being Wise or Being Foolish.")

"Then the kingdom of heaven will be like this..."

Jesus often began his teaching this way. What usually followed was a story that on first hearing seemed straightforward. This time it's a story about 10 bridesmaids who are preparing for a wedding feast. It is getting dark, so they take their lamps and wait for the bridegroom.

Only now there are a couple of complications. First we are told that five of them are foolish, and five are wise. When the foolish take their lamps they do not bring extra oil, while the wise take flasks that are full. Second, we learn that the bridegroom is delayed, so all of them become drowsy and fall asleep.

Then, all of a sudden, at midnight there comes a shout: "Look! Here is the bridegroom! Come out to meet him." And all the bridesmaids jump up and prepare their lamps—but the foolish ones don't have enough oil to keep their lamps burning. They beg for the others to give them some oil, but to no avail.

Then to make matters worse, while they are out trying to buy some more oil, the five wise bridesmaids go with the bridegroom into the wedding banquet, and the door is shut. For the five who are foolish, it is too late. The motto, according to Jesus, is simply this: "Keep awake...for you know neither the day nor the hour."

"Keep awake! Watch! Prepare! Be ready!" We hear these words from Jesus quite a bit in the gospels. They have to do with the urgent in-breaking of the kingdom of God. Jesus teaches that God's kingdom will be a realm of justice, mercy, and love that will overthrow the power of sin and death which human greed, self-centeredness, and pride have put on the throne.

Jesus is saying, in effect, "Here is change you can really believe in!" Only this change is going to do more than paper over the problems that have alienated and divided God's people. With this change, as the prophet Amos put it so sharply, justice will "roll down like waters, and righteousness like an everflowing stream." This change will reach from the pinnacle of the world's evil empires to the depths of every human heart.

Therefore, an urgent sense of preparedness is called for. We must be ready to embrace

the wave of God's cleansing and redeeming grace, ready to enlist and engage in the costly victory that God's love in Christ will win in the midst of the world's darkness. Anything less suggests that we are not willing to be recipients and agents of God's transformation. Anything less indicates that we would rather stand outside the door of God's banquet clutching our dark and bone dry lamps than be wise enough to keep them lit and ready.

My brothers and sisters, these are urgent words for us and for our church, whether on a parish level, or on a diocesan level, or on a global level. How and where we will invest our time and energy and resources during this intensely needy time in the history of our planet?

This past summer I was privileged to represent you at the Lambeth Conference in Canterbury, England. Bishops from radically different social, religious, and political contexts came together to at Lambeth to worship, to study scripture, and to share with one another in a spirit of mutual respect. We all agreed that the good news of Jesus Christ is desperately needed in our time.

Many bishops made impassioned pleas that we in the Anglican Communion need to focus our time and energy and resources on the great issues of the human family—the environment, poverty, disease, violent abuse of human rights, political and religious oppression. They believe that fighting the same old culture wars can only keep us from doing God's work in the world.

So I wonder: What would Jesus say to us right now as we stand at this pivotal point in our history? What would Jesus ask us, as members of the Episcopal Church, and members of the Anglican Communion? I believe he would say something like this: "Keep awake! Watch! Prepare! Be ready!" I believe he would say, "Our God is an urgent God, and an urgent kingdom is even now breaking into your world. Do not be left without oil for your lamps. Keep the lamp of justice, mercy, and love brightly lit and burning in the church that bears my name."

For more than five years now I have been overwhelmed with the goodness of the land and people of the diocese of Nebraska. Our creative expressions of local ministry, our leadership in regional and national gatherings, our vision for the future, our remarkably talented parishes and people, our abundance of small but growing congregations, our courage in pursuing a Tri-Faith Initiative—all

Bishop's Calendar & Diocesan Events

December 2008

- Dec. 2 Bishop and Trustees, Clarkson Center, 10:00 a.m.
- Dec 3 Bishop's Visitation – Trinity Church Norfolk, 6:30 p.m.
- Dec. 7 Bishop's Visitation, Holy Trinity, Lincoln
- Dec. 8-10 House of Bishops' Theology Committee, Washington National Cathedral
- Dec. 14 Bishop's Visitation, St. Augustine's, DeWitt
- Dec. 21 Bishop's Visitation, St. James, Fremont
- Dec. 24 Bishop in Residence, Trinity Cathedral, Omaha

Bishop's Journal (Continued from Page A)

servative and liberal members—who have agreed at the request of the bishops of the church to undertake a serious scholarly study of issues and questions related to issues of human sexuality—in particular the question of "same sex" relationships. The meetings are rich with insight and honesty, sometimes tense, but filled with a commitment by this very diverse panel of scholars to produce a study of depth, honesty, and clarity. It will be some two to three years in the works, and will be a contribution of the Episcopal Church to the "Listening Process" called for by the Anglican Communion.

Oct. 22. Early flight out of Pasadena, by way of Denver. Home to Omaha mid-afternoon.

Oct. 23. Day off.

Oct. 24. Brief medical appointment today; otherwise, spent day working on various preparations for upcoming Annual Council.

Oct. 25. Sermon preparation in the morning, then drive to Kearney for late afternoon reception with Rector Jerry Ness and the vestry and spouses of St. Luke's. A wonderful time with a great group of folks!

Oct. 26. Preached at 8 a.m. Eucharist at St. Luke's, while Jerry Ness was celebrant, assisted by Deacon Colleen Lewis. Led adult forum, presenting a program on the recent Lambeth Conference. At the 10:30 a.m. service, I celebrated and preached, and presided at confirmation and reception. Enjoyed a delicious lunch with the parish afterwards, and visits with many. Stopped on my way home for an appointment with Deacon Betsy Bennett in Grand Island to discuss her "Greenfaith" fellowship, and possible implications for our diocesan involvement with issues related to the environment. Arrived in Omaha late afternoon.

Oct. 27. Countdown to Council begins. This day spent in Council preparation, as well as preparation for pre-council meeting of Executive Commission.

Oct. 28. Awoke with chills and fever. Regrettably had to bail out on our morning staff meeting. Spent day resting at home.

Oct. 29. Council Preparation.

Oct. 30. Council Preparation. Hospital call on Fr. Larry Jaynes in the afternoon.

Oct. 31. Drove west through Norfolk, stopping for visit with Randy Goeke, priest in Bassett, at his variety store in Atkinson, then continued driving west, heading for meetings and visitation in Chadron this weekend.

of these things and more testify to the good things God has done and is doing among us. We have been a hidden treasure in the Episcopal Church, but recently this treasure has been discovered as the national Church Center has located satellite offices in our midst. They know a good thing, and a good place, when they see it!

Yet I believe we are called to do more. I believe the circum-

stances of our time and of our place are calling us to an urgent ministry of sharing with God in the re-claiming of the world around us. I believe we are being called to take our place in the great ministry of reconciliation which God in Christ has entrusted to us, and for which we as Episcopal and Anglican Christians are uniquely suited.

(Continued on Page G)

Sermon (Continued from Page F)

To put it in “kingdom” language, I believe a great feast of unprecedented proportions has been set for us, and we have received an engraved invitation.

Now is not the time for us to stand outside the door. Now is not the time for petty conflict, anxious chatter, derisive speech, or a lack of love, to distract us from our task. Now is not the time to forget the promises of our baptism, by which we once renounced Satan, and turned to Jesus Christ and accepted him as our Savior, and promised to follow and obey him as our Lord.

Now is an urgent time. Now is a time for trimming lamps. Now is a time for all of us in the church to learn wisdom, and forsake foolishness—in order to be ready for God’s banquet.

“The kingdom of heaven will be like this...” The table is set. The meal is about to begin. Won’t you light your lamps, and come in, and eat?

Ghosts costumed by St. Martin’s

(Story provided by the Rev. Ron Whitmer, Interim Rector, St. Martin of Tours, Omaha.)

It began as an idea shared with us by Robin Heller, Eastern Deanery youth coordinator. She suggested last Spring that we might gather “gently used” Halloween Costumes and distribute them free to the children of South Omaha. Between then and the actual event many hands from many places came together to make it all happen.

More than 80 costumes were collected from not only churches here in the Omaha area, particularly, St. Augustine’s, Elkhorn; St. Andrew’s; St. Martha’s, Papillion; and Holy Spirit, Bellevue, but also churches as far away as St. Francis, Scottsbluff and St. Stephen’s, Grand Island.

The Journey to Adulthood Youth of St. Luke’s, Plattsmouth, Holy Spirit, St. Martha’s and St. Martin’s helped organize and prepare the costumes that came from their churches. St. Andrew’s youth brought their costumes and all the youth sorted the costumes and put them in bins according to sex and age. Alex Culp, from Church of the Holy Spirit also helped. Robin had organized those that had come in from St. Augustine’s, and points further west.

There was some concern that we may not have any children show up. A poster had been put up at Spring Lake Elementary by Cathie Hughes, but there were no names expressing interest. Cookies were baked, punch was pre-

pared and poured.

The costumes were laid out by size, and three youths, Audrey, Samatha, and Emma and three adults waited. The distribution time was to be from 2 p.m. to 4 p.m. Oct. 25.

Whitmer took some of the smaller posters and taped them on either side of his car, drove the neighborhoods, and invited any children and families he might see to come to St. Martin’s and receive, free, a Halloween Costume.

Emma in the meantime had prepared on the large chalk board at the entry to the basement, the words “Welcome” within a well-drawn large spider web.

Jaimie Rivera and his daughter Rachel from Holy Spirit also helped. Jaimie, who is bilingual, helped those who came that could speak no English.

Children and parents began to arrive, and arrive, and arrive. All were greeted with welcoming smiles and assisted in finding their special costumes by the three youths, Emma, Samantha, and Audrey. Cathie Hughes, Kristi and Steve Smith, and Beth Mincer were the back-ups. One family from Iglesia Cristo del Rey Lutheran Church arrived early and offered to help in the final set up. We told them that they could help and then have first pick.

Whitmer reported that riding about the neighborhood, meeting our neighbors and letting them know about the costumes proved to be a very good thing to have done. Within the space of 45 minutes most of the 80 costumes had been gathered up and were now the happy possessions of the children of St. Martin’s neighborhood. Eighty or more children plus their parents walked down the stairs into St. Martin’s and received a costume, had cookies and punch. Many lingered to visit. It was a very special day.

We thank Robin and all who helped make this possible. We have been blessed in this opportunity to open our doors to the neighborhood.

Two neighbors a couple of blocks to our West, when learning what we were doing said to Fr. Ron, “Well, we don’t have children, but our neighbors on the second floor do. We will tell them.” Then one of them asked, “Are you going to do this annually? I hope you do. This is a wonderful thing your church is doing.”

Yes, let’s indeed do this again. Let’s begin the ingathering of “gently used” costumes following this Halloween. We have room to store them safely. Let us know if you have costumes to contribute and we will arrange for them to be picked up.

Bishop Clarkson Legacy Society introduced

The Bishop Clarkson Legacy Society, a cooperative effort of the Bishop Clarkson Foundation and the Diocese of Nebraska, was introduced at Annual Council. The Society was created to recognize, honor and thank those who have made their parish or the diocese the beneficiary of a financial gift in their estate planning.

The Society also will recognize gifts received since 1999, the year the Foundation was established. Those who have remembered their parish or the diocese through a bequest in their will or through a planned gift are asked to notify the Rev. Canon Tim Anderson at the Diocesan office. Everyone who is already a member of their church’s legacy group automatically becomes a member of the Bishop Clarkson Legacy Society.

Operating as an umbrella organization, the Society provides recognition, education and support for individual legacy societies in Episcopal churches throughout the Diocese.

A legacy society raises awareness of planned giving in the congregation and diocese and offers opportunities for individuals to witness to their good stewardship in supporting the future life and ministry of the church. It assists a parish in staying connected with its donors, some of whom may be less involved or do not attend church as regularly as they once did.

Among ways in which a legacy gift can be made are a bequest in a will, making the church a beneficiary of a life insurance policy, making the church a beneficiary of retirement plans and making a planned gift that provides income to the donor.

Montes to March in Macy’s Parade

Joel Montes, Lexington, son of the Rev. Elizabeth Montes, Multicultural Missioner in Lexington and priest at St. Christopher’s, Cozad, spent Thanksgiving Day in New York City marching in the 82nd Macy’s Thanksgiving Day Parade. He was the only Nebraskan playing in the Macy’s Great American Marching Band as it ushered Santa Claus into Herald Square.

Montes learned of the opportunity to audition for the band last spring. During the summer he spent about three hours a day practicing both the tenor drum and the snare drum.

The 17-year-old has played drums since sixth grade. His music teacher, Chad Scharff, called Montes’ achievement the biggest accomplishment of any music student in Lexington.

Montes and Scharff had to produce a video and submit it to judges who selected band members from a national pool of applicants. Students were selected based on their musical ability and past achievements.

A number of fundraising events helped Montes reach the \$2,000 he needed to cover transportation, meals, lodging and his uniform.

He was excited for the opportunity to perform with so many talented musicians and tried to learn as much as he could from others in the drum line.

Odds and Ends from Annual Council

- Approval was given to a 2009 Operating Budget of \$654,802.40 and a Growth and Development Budget of \$545,000. Funding for the G&D Budget will come from the Catlin Fund and the Clarkson Foundation. The Operating Budget comes from Pledge Askings of the 55 parishes in the Diocese.

- Dean Medina, Trinity Cathedral, learned about the Lord’s Prayer with help from “God” disguised as Deacon Ellen Ross.

- Mexican Cheese Enchiladas, German Garlic Sausage and Chinese Chicken, while contributing to the success of three ethnic buffets at the Saturday night banquet, should not be eaten together with any hope of a restful night of uninterrupted sleep.

- Clarkson College in Omaha is celebrating 120 years of operating as Nebraska’s only Episcopal College and has a record enrollment of more than 800 students.

- It is just as far from Omaha to Scottsbluff as it is from Scottsbluff to Omaha.

- It was hard to say which was more entertaining—the music of Rae and Ed, or the music and choreography of Father Mark. Both were probably unique to many of the attendees.

Bishop visits St. Luke's, Plattsmouth



Oct. 19, St. Luke's Feast Day, the congregation of St. Luke's, Plattsmouth, welcomed the Rt. Rev. Joe G. Burnett, Bishop of Nebraska, to confirm, preach and celebrate. Standing in front of the "Blessings Tree," St. Luke's Sower's Fund project, are the Rev. Phil Chapman, Deacon, left; Cindy Pekarek, reaffirmed; Burnett; and Mere and Rich Bradley, confirmands. (Photo Courtesy Nancy Nichols)

All Saints Has Successful Rummage Sale



St Mary's Guild, All Saints, Omaha, holds two rummage sales annually. Shown during preparations for the October event are Elizabeth Finn, left, Mary Gammell, Catherine Feeney and Marge Pullen. Sales are made possible by parishioners donating clothing and other items. The October sale brought nearly \$1,700 to the guild treasury. Proceeds are used for prayer books, brass urns for altar flowers, an altar cloth and other items for the church. (Photo Courtesy Betty White)

Youth of four churches in Wednesday's Journeys



The Rev. Mark Selvey, at St. Martha's, Papillion, shares in the celebration of his ministry with the youth during a Wednesday's Journeys meeting. Held every Wednesday from 6:30 to 8:30 p.m. in one of four churches, including Church of the Holy Spirit, Bellevue; St. Luke's, Plattsmouth; St. Martha's, Papillion; and St. Martin's, South Omaha, youth meet as a group. Adults lead them in the Journey to Adulthood curriculum. This curriculum is available for use by any church in the diocese. For more information and to set up a training to help you get started, just contact the Rev. Ruth Jaynes at rjaynes@episcopal-ne.org.



New Clergy Welcomed at Annual Council

Clergy new to the Diocese since the 2007 Annual Council include the Rev. Ryan Hall, left, St. Mark's on the Campus, Lincoln; Deacon Stephanie Ulrich, All Saints, Omaha; the Rev. Mary Hendricks, St. Alban's, McCook; and the Rev. Jerry Ness, St. Luke's, Kearney.

St. Luke's, Kearney, Pets Blessed



St. Luke's, Kearney celebrated the Feast of Saint Francis with their annual Blessing of the Animals. There were 51 humans who brought 38 four-legged animals and eight stuffed animals to be blessed by the Rev. Jerry Ness, Rector. Left photo, Ness blesses the animals with holy water. Right photo, Elizabeth McGraw waits for her stuffed animals to receive a blessing. (Photos Courtesy David Clark)

Wear a Hat to Lunch an annual event at All Saint's, Omaha



Episcopal Church Women of All Saints, Omaha, hold an annual "Hat Luncheon." ECW members look forward to the event throughout the year. Two attendees at the Oct. 19 luncheon are Nancy Wulf, left, and Pat Kanago. (Photo Courtesy Betty White)