“Create and make in us new and contrite hearts ...”
The Episcopal Diocese of Southwest Florida is a community of 34,000 Christians in 11 counties serving 77 congregations, 13 schools and the DaySpring Conference Center. Established in 1969.

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The Rt. Rev. Dabney T. Smith

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Haiti disaster reminds us of the importance of mission

Dear Saints of God,

There are two primary memory categories I have of New Orleans in the months after Hurricane Katrina.

The first category is expressed in the smell, the sights, the stillness. The smell of decay, block by block. The sight of debris piles larger than a collection of two story homes. The stillness in the air, which included the lack of the sound of birds and the ghost-town reality in former vibrant neighborhoods.

The second categorical memory was the sense (valid or not) that, as the weeks went by, people on the outside were forgetting about us and moving on with their lives.

This diocese now has the honor of hosting Madame Marie-Edith Duracin in her time of recovery from an injury sustained in the Jan. 12 earthquake in Haiti. Mrs. Duracin is the wife of the Episcopal bishop of Haiti.

She is a clear and personal reminder to me of the long-term caring, issues and concerns that confront our brothers and sisters in Haiti.

I know we have all seen the chilling and devastating media reports about the reality on the ground in Haiti. My own New Orleans memory reminds me to stay alert to not forgetting the continuously intense needs of the Haitian people in the aftermath of the earthquake disaster.

I am thankful that so many of the people and congregations of the Diocese of Southwest Florida have contributed to Episcopal Relief and Development and other charitable organizations. I pray that we will continue in ongoing efforts.

I have stated that one of my senses of diocesan purpose in ministry is “Mercy in Mission.” This expresses the need to continue to develop and begin to use as an instrument of mission the Episcopal Charities Fund of Southwest Florida. Mercy in Mission expresses the intentional development of, and acknowledgement of, existing congregationally based mission enterprises. There is more information in this issue of The Southern Cross about Mercy in Mission.

For the purpose of this letter though, I write with one imperative. Let us not forget! The people of Haiti will need our attention and care for years to come. I pray we will continue to have strengthened hearts of Mercy in Mission.

Faithfully Yours,

Dabney T. Smith
The Rt. Rev. Dabney T. Smith

The Rt. Rev. Dabney T. Smith

From the Bishop

The Southern Cross March/April 2010
Haiti: Beyond the end of the road

By Bonnie Anderson

The Episcopal Church has responded to the devastation caused by the magnitude 7 earthquake in Haiti with unexpected and astonishing generosity.

Building upon a partnership that began before the Jan. 12 earthquake,

—Canon Bonnie Anderson is president of the House of Deputies of The Episcopal Church.

Church should speak out on social, political issues

This is in response to a letter in the November/December issue, “Keep the Church out of national politics.” This issue may be resolved by the time my response is received, but I feel strongly this applies nonetheless.

To begin with, I believe in separation of church and state, but I am an advocate for education, knowledge and the right of expression. I must point out that those who advocate against a single-payer system for health care have used every falsehood, distortion and twisting of facts to obscure the intent of what the average individual would consider reasonable. Their dishonesty has been appalling, in many respects without conscience.

These are documented facts. In this case we are dealing with a principle, one that Jesus established through word and action.

We are dealing with moral and human values — we are dealing with right and wrong in our society.

The idea that some laws should be established to favor those “who have” at the expense of the “have-nots,” the poor and the oppressed — who speaks for them?

The House of Bishops and the House of Deputies made the public aware of issues and individual responsibilities. We have a situation where religion is working with government to create a better world for all of us.

Jesus equated helping the poor and the oppressed as his standard and said the greatest commandment was to love your neighbor. He admonished the rich and condemned the hypocrite, saying, “Blessed are the peacemakers.”

Maybe it’s time to take a second look at ourselves and think of caring and sharing.

—Sal J. DiMartino
St. Elizabeth’s, Zephyrhills

Episcopal Relief & Development has experienced a generosity of giving from Episcopalians that has enabled its relief effort to secure food, water, vehicles for supply deliveries, fuel and shelter.

Many congregations in the Episcopal Church have forged important and mutually supportive relationships with congregations and individuals in Haiti over the years. It is natural for these congregations in the Episcopal Church to want to do everything possible to assist their brothers and sisters in Haiti. However, Haiti Bishop Jean Zaché Duracin asked in a Jan. 21 letter that, unless the people who want to come and help are “certified professionals in relief and recovery, they must wait.”

In his letter to Robert Radtke, Episcopal Relief & Development president, Duracin added: “We will need them [people who want to come to Haiti] in months and years to come, but at this point, it is too dangerous and too much of a burden for our people to have mission teams here.”

Duracin has appointed a 15-member commission that is assisting him in coordination and organization of the diocese’s rebuilding effort as well as its response to current needs.

In addition to continued generous giving to Episcopal Relief & Development, we need to be advocates for Haiti. It is important to understand that, just as the relief and rebuilding effort will unfold in stages over the coming months and years, so will the advocacy effort, and that is where Episcopalians can assist best, right from home.

Even as Haiti stories recede from the front pages of our newspapers, we must be aware that the political and policy debates about how best to assist Haiti’s rebuilding will require our voices in the arena for the foreseeable future. We will need to rely on Duracin and the people of the Diocese of Haiti to tell us how they want to rebuild and how our advocacy can help them.

For the rebuilding of Haiti, it is evident that the involvement of the international community will be necessary, ensuring that rebuilding efforts are not piecemeal and left to the whims of individual donors, but rather are cohesive and coordinated with the wishes of the Haitian
The Southern Cross

March/April 2010

In Brief

Diocese selected to test new program

The Diocese of Southwest Florida has been invited to participate as a pilot diocese for a new effort called “New Dreams — New Visions.”

New Dreams — New Visions seeks to connect vital retired clergy and vibrant, small worshipping congregations for mission. This is a collaborative effort whose principal sponsors are the Church Pension Group, the Episcopal Church Center and the Episcopal Church Foundation. The Episcopal Church Foundation has agreed to be the coordinating agency.

Specific definitions of “vital” and “vibrant” are still in the works. Discussions so far have centered on identifying clergy skills specific to redevelopment and the best way to connect them to congregations.

Participation in Fresh Start is a key qualifying factor.

For more information, contact the Rev. Canon Michael Durning at (941) 556-0315.

Weekly healing services held at DaySpring

The Amazing Love Healing Ministry, led by Pastor Sharon Lewis, is now offering a healing service every Tuesday from 10 a.m. to noon at St. Thomas’ Chapel at DaySpring Conference Center in Parrish.

The services include worship, teaching on healing and healing prayer time.

For more information, visit www.amazinglovehealing.com

Naples thrift shop hits earnings milestone

In presenting a $50,900 check to St. John’s Episcopal Church in Naples, in December, the St. John’s Shoppe for Upscale Thrift passed a milestone, with total earnings of $2 million since the business was founded in 1982.

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(Continued on page 8)
A well-established food pantry program at St. George’s Episcopal Church in Bradenton is responding to its community’s needs by adding health screenings twice a month.

The parish is partnering with Manatee County Rural Health Services, a non-profit group of health care providers. Every two weeks, an hour before its food pantry opens, anyone can be screened for diabetes and high blood pressure.

The screenings began in January and focus on preventative care and education, according to Dr. Faye Goldman, a chiropractic physician who works with the MCRHS. “We’re blessed to be invited here to provide services.”

The screenings at St. George’s are averaging about 25 people per session, with several people being referred to doctors in the MCRHS system for follow-up treatment. The agency has about 20 centers in Manatee, Sarasota and DeSoto counties. The organization saw nearly 400,000 patients last year.

People wait inside the parish hall at St. George’s Episcopal Church in Bradenton before the food distribution and health screenings begin. The community’s need for food and other services has risen sharply in the past year.
Filling the gap
(Continued from page 6)

year, said spokeswoman Shawny Robey. “We don’t turn anyone away,” whether they have insurance or not, she said. Fees are assessed on a sliding scale, based on a patient’s ability to pay.

Demand is growing

The volunteers at St. George’s are deliberate about creating a welcoming environment. There are few lines to stand in. The parish hall is open during distribution hours. Clients can get coffee and sit at round tables to chat with others while paperwork is completed and bags are being readied. “Building the community is what’s needed here,” organizer Maggie Sullivan said, “to be sure people know we’re a church, not an agency.”

Since some of the food distributed is government-supplied surplus, there are rules about proselytizing, according to Pat Sircy, the co-coordinator of the pantry. “But people do occasionally ask if we can say prayers for them, or ask about the church,” she said.

St. George’s food pantry has been around since 2003 but demand has mushroomed in the last year. “Last December, we averaged 57 bags,” said Sullivan. “This past December, the average was 150 bags.”

St. George’s recently began offering “baby bags” filled with items including diapers, wipes and baby food. Smaller children can also get teething biscuits, pacifiers and a blanket.

The bags are made up for families who request them in advance. On a Thursday in late January, 45 baby bags were distributed.

“It really helps parents who have to leave their kids in day care so they can work,” said Sullivan, explaining that most day care centers require parents to provide diapers and accessories for their children.

Responding to needs

Health screening was simply a result of listening to the community, organizers say. “It was a recognition of what the needs in the community were, the national environment about health care and what was available and how it’s available,” said the Rev. Ted Edwards, rector of St. George’s.

When he was attending the Episcopal Church’s General Convention last year, Edwards saw a brochure on community outreach at St. Matthew’s Episcopal Church in Pacific Palisades, Calif. “I came back with this brochure of all these interesting things going on and just related to the notion of needy people and their health. One idea led to another and it lead to Manatee County Rural Health Services,” he said.

The parish is hoping to expand the services further, by being able to use vans to shuttle people to follow-up treatment after a health screening. They’ve also received a grant from the diocese to beef up their computer network in order to assist people apply for government aid programs.

Glucose testing is part of the free health screening now offered every two weeks.
During 2009, the shop generated $100,000 in earnings, all of which is used solely for the parish’s outreach ministries.

**Story concert set at Calvary Church**

Members of the Tampa Bay Storytellers’ Guild will present a “story concert” March 21 from 4–5 p.m. at Calvary Episcopal Church, 1615 1st Street in Indian Rocks Beach.

Deborah and Craig Frethem will give the inside story of lovers who haunt the Don Cesar Hotel. Gene Belote has a surprise ending to a story of love lost and found in Pascagoula, Miss. Have you ever had a pet follow you wherever you went? Ann Wilson of Indian Rocks Beach tells a story of an unusual pet. These talented performers will reacquaint the audience how much fun it is to let your imagination flow while listening to a well crafted story.

This is a concert given with an adult audience in mind, though school-age children are welcome as well. All stories are 5 to 10 minutes in length, with the concert lasting about one hour. The storytellers will accept a love donation. A reception will follow. For more information, contact the church at (727) 595-2374.

**Youth event reaches out to community**

During Advent, 44 youth and their adult sponsors gathered at St. Wilfred Episcopal Church in Sarasota for an overnight deanery youth event called “Seeking Servants,” a program designed to get youth together to reach out in their own communities.

Youth gathered for Eucharist, Bible study and a fellowship meal Friday night. Saturday morning they volunteered at various community outreach organizations in Sarasota.

Work sites included Habitat for Humanity, The Pines nursing home, Sarasota Animal Rescue and a work team at St. Wilfred’s.

Following a day of work, the youth returned to St. Wilfred for sharing and more fellowship time.

Churches sending participants included Church of Redeemer, Christ Church, St. Wilfred’s, St. Mary Magdalene, St. Margaret of Scotland, all in Sarasota, and St. Mark’s, Venice.

**Haydn requiem to be performed March 26**

The “Requiem in C minor” by Michael Haydn will be performed at Church of the Ascension in Clearwater on Friday, March 26 starting at 7:30 p.m.

This rarely performed 18th-century work is presented as the church’s Lenten devotion during its 2009-2010 concert series.

Directed by Lee Cobb, the Ascension Parish Choir will be joined by soloists and chamber orchestra. Michael Haydn was the younger brother of the more famous Joseph Haydn and preceded Mozart as the organist of the Cathedral in Salzburg, Austria.

Church of the Ascension is located at 701 Orange Ave, two blocks west of Fort Harrison between Turner St. and Druid Rd. The concert is free.

**April 18 designated as ‘Green Sunday’**

The Diocesan Council, at the request of the diocesan “Green Team,” has set aside Sunday, April 18 as “Green Sunday,” an occasion for congregations to point liturgy, teaching, preaching and fellowship toward what the Prayer Book calls “this fragile earth, our island home.”

April 22 is the 40th anniversary of the original Earth Day. Rectors and vicars are encouraged to use Eucharistic Prayer “C” on this day. The Green Team can help with planning. Here are some basic resources:

- Earth Day: http://www.earthday.net/
- Earth Day resources for Christians: www.thinkchristian.net/index.php/2006/04/18/earth-day-resources-for-christians-part-1/
- The National Religious Partnership for the Environment: www.nrpe.org/

**Diocese to celebrate confirmations April 10**

The annual diocesanwide confirmations are scheduled April 10, beginning at 11 a.m. at St. Peter’s Cathedral, 140 4th Street in downtown St. Petersburg.

Everyone is invited to participate and attend but RSVP is requested. Please contact Martha Goodwill at mgoodwill@spcathedral.com with the following information for seating and signs: parish name; clergy attending; number being confirmed, received or reaffirmed; and the number of guests you anticipate attending from your parish.

For certificates, please contact Jan Nothum at jnothum@episcopalswfl.org.

**Fashion show benefits Haitian relief**

Phil Beauchamp was the MC for the annual Inspirational Tea and Fashion Show that was held at Calvary Church, Indian Rocks Beach, on Jan. 31. More than 100 women enjoyed tea and scones, lunch, and dessert that were served by several men from the parish. The fashions were from Dress Barn in Largo Mall and a benefit auction concluded the afternoon’s activities. The proceeds of $2,000 were earmarked for Episcopal Relief and Development/Haiti Fund.
Clergy of the diocese gathered Feb. 18, the day after Ash Wednesday, for what has become a tradition in Southwest Florida—the blessing of chrism and oils of infirmatum.

The annual clergy day, held at St. Peter’s Cathedral in St. Petersburg, began with a Eucharist that included the blessing of oil used for sacramental purposes.

There were two distinct oils blessed by Bishop Dabney Smith. One, made from pure olive oil mixed with fragrant balsam, sanctum chrisma, abbreviated “SC,” is used for blessings, at events such as baptisms, confirmations and ordinations. The other, oleum infirmorum, or “OI,” is without scent and is used exclusively for anointing the sick.

After the oil was blessed, it was divided into small portions for clergy to take back to their parishes for use throughout the year.
Celebrating Christian unity

Five churches from Pinellas County came together Sunday, Jan. 24, to celebrate the Week of Prayer for Christian Unity.

The service, at Calvary Episcopal Church in Indian Rocks Beach, was the 10th annual ecumenical service that includes Calvary Episcopal Church, St. Jerome Roman Catholic Church, The Church of the Isles (United Church of Christ), St. Dunstan’s Episcopal Church and Prince of Peace Lutheran Church.

Traditionally celebrated in mid-January, the Week of Prayer is celebrated by congregations and parishes all over the world. Pulpits are exchanged, and special ecumenical worship services are arranged.

The idea for such a service dates back to 1908, when the Rev. Paul Wattson, a North American Anglican priest, founded the “Octave for unity.” The Faith and Order movement began publishing “Suggestions for an octave of prayer for Christian unity” in 1926.

In 1966, the World Council of Churches’ Commission on Faith and Order and the Roman Catholic Secretariat for Promoting Christian Unity (now known as the Pontifical Council for Promoting Christian Unity) began official joint preparation of materials for the Week of Prayer for Christian Unity.
In Brief (Continued from page 8)

org with the number of each type of certificate you will need. When completed, please bring these certificates April 10 for the bishop to sign.

Priests invited to discuss visioning, planning

The College for Presbyters will gather April 29 from 9 a.m. to 3 p.m. at DaySpring Conference Center. The presenter will be the Rev. Dan Hotchkiss, speaking on visioning and strategic planning.

Participants should RSVP via e-mail to Connie Salyers at csalyers@episcopalswfl.org.

Leadership conference planned in Orlando

A congregational leadership conference titled “Leadership Marks for Creating and Growing Vital Congregations” will be presented by the Province IV Congregational Development and Evangelism Network, April 29 to May 1 at Canterbury Conference Center near Orlando.

It will address creating a “leadership culture” by equipping clergy and laity with skills proven to be key to the guidance and development of ministries. Registration cost is $30 per person, with lodging and meals not included.

For additional information and to register go to www.marksofleadershipregistration.org.

St. Petersburg concert to celebrate spirituals

St. Augustine’s and St. Matthew’s Episcopal churches in St. Petersburg are sponsoring a concert “celebrating the Negro spiritual” by the renowned Spiritual Renaissance Singers on Sunday, March 7 at 4 p.m. at St. Matthew’s Episcopal Church, 738 Pinellas Point Dr. South in St. Petersburg.

This concert is free; an offering will be received to support St. Augustine’s youth ministries.

For more information, contact St. Augustine’s at (727) 867-6774.

April 7 symposium to tackle bricks-and-mortar dilemma

As parishes struggle with spiraling costs and shrinking budgets, the church’s most significant physical assets — the buildings — are falling down.

Crumbling buildings are, in many cases, the single biggest barrier to mission and ministry. According to the Church Insurance Company, every month more than three congregations close their doors for good.

This situation threatens the health and life of the Episcopal Church. The raft of complex financial, pastoral and historical issues surrounding our buildings has made this a problem easier to ignore than to address.

An upcoming symposium hosted by the Episcopal Church Building Fund will equip church leaders to solve this problem in ways that make both financial and pastoral sense, empowering the church to shift its focus to the vitality of its ministry.

The symposium will take place April 7 at St. Stephen’s Episcopal Church in Richmond, Va. To register for the symposium or see the agenda, visit www.ecbf.org.

Speakers include church leaders who are confronting and negotiating these struggles in their own dioceses and communities, and who will share creative and successful models. Topics include how and why to face the reality that a parish or diocese is in decline; how environmentally sensitive attention to church buildings can save money; and emergent church models that de-emphasize buildings.

The Building Fund is uniquely positioned to help dioceses to recast their physical assets by evaluating troubled situations, working with congregations on re-imagining their use of space, bringing them insight into collaborative initiatives, best practices, and a communitywide vision. The Building Fund is committed to good stewardship, sustainability and results.

The Episcopal Church Building Fund, an independent, self-funded 501 (c)3 founded in 1880 and guided by a board of trustees, is the only national organization supporting congregational building projects and overseeing a revolving loan fund. For more information, contact Sally O’Brien, vice president, at (804) 288-2867 or by e-mail at sobrien@ecbf.org.

Spring convocation dates set across the diocese

All deaneries of the diocese have now decided on dates and locations for spring convocations for clergy and congregational lay representatives. They are:

March 2: Manasota/Venice: 7 p.m. at St. Mark’s Episcopal Church, 513 Nassau St. South, in Venice. Contact the Rev. Harry I. Parsell at (941) 778-1638, or the Very Rev. James H. Puryear at (941) 488-7714.


March 9: Fort Myers: 7 p.m. at St. Hilary’s Episcopal Church, 5011 McGregor Blvd., in Fort Myers. Contact the Very Rev. Alan Kelmereit at (863) 675-0385.

March 11: Tampa: 7 p.m. at St. John’s Episcopal Church, 906 S. Orleans Ave., in Tampa. Contact the Very Rev. Randall Hehr at (813) 259-1570.

April 14: Naples: 7 p.m. at St. Paul’s Episcopal Church, 3901 Davis Blvd., in Naples. Contact the Very Rev. Michael Rowe at (239) 992-4343.
‘The church is alive’

A month after a killer earthquake, Haiti is digging out, looking ahead

By Mary Frances Schjonberg
Episcopal News Service

There may not be a single Episcopal church standing in Port-au-Prince today, but that lack of walls and roofs does not mean that the church in the Haitian capital is dead.

“As the largest diocese of the Episcopal Church until now, we are physically destroyed but the church is there because the church is the people,” Episcopal Diocese of Haiti Bishop Jean Zaché Duracin told Episcopal News Service Feb. 4. “Even though we have lost our buildings, the people continue to gather. The communities are there.”

Bishop Duracin spoke to ENS in both English and French as he described life in Haiti and the work of the diocese in caring for survivors of the magnitude 7.0 earthquake that hit just outside of Port-au-Prince in the later afternoon of Jan. 12.

The quake left an estimate 200,000 dead and made homeless hundreds of thousands of people. About a third of Haiti’s approximately 9 million people lived in Port-au-Prince before the quake.

Caring for survivors

The Episcopal Church of Haiti, known locally as L’Eglise Episcopale d’Haiti, is caring for about 25,000 Haitians in roughly 20 makeshift camps. Since the quake, many people have left the capital for the countryside.

While the exodus could eventually improve the country’s economy and its ability to sustain itself, the out-migration is reportedly straining the meager resources of rural communities.

Bishop Duracin said almost all Episcopal Church buildings — schools as well as churches and the Sisters of St. Margaret Convent — in Port-au-Prince “are gone,” but “every Sunday there are services, even at the cathedral … everything has been lost but … our communities are alive.”

For instance, the bishop said, a group gathers behind the ruins of Cathédrale Sainte Trinité (Holy Trinity Cathedral) “to continue to pray and to receive communion.”

“In spite of everything that happened to Haiti — that happened in Port-au-Prince — the church is alive and strong.”

“They look at the future and they see hope, and they are optimistic about the future,” Bishop Duracin said. “They invite all their brothers and sisters in the Episcopal Church and the Anglican Communion to help them physically to rebuild the church.”

Don’t come; give

However, Bishop Duracin warned that the diocese is not now prepared to welcome people. He said he understands that many people would like to come to Haiti and help in that

(Continued on page 15)
The Rev. Canon Willard Squire and I went to Haiti at the request of Bishop Holquin of the Dominican Republic to serve as a link between him and Bishop Jean Zache Duracin of Haiti.

The devastation we saw was beyond comprehension. Only when you see the eyes of the victims, smells the stench of death and witnesses the power of the Holy Spirit to motivate and sustain God’s people — both victims and survivors set up a tent city in the soccer field next to College St. Pierre.

I was able to travel to Port-au-Prince, Haiti, on Jan. 15, although since no one could fly into Haiti, I flew into Santo Domingo in the Dominican Republic. My friend and colleague, the Rev. Joe Diaz, accompanied me, as his diocese, the Diocese of Southwest Florida, has a companion relationship with the Episcopal Diocese of the Dominican Republic.

Joe had made the necessary arrangements for our trip through the

(Continued on page 14)
Southwest Florida has a big role in aid effort

By Jim DeLa
Editor, The Southern Cross

In Southwest Florida, pipelines have been established for short-term and long-term Haitian relief, as well as new plans to minister to the growing Haitian community in Collier and Lee counties.

The diocese has also been providing pastoral care to the wife of Haiti Bishop Jean Zaché Duracin, who was injured in the quake.

When the earthquake hit Jan. 12, Duracin’s house collapsed, trapping and injuring his wife, Marie-Edithe. After initial treatment at a hospital in Haiti, she was airlifted to the USNS Comfort hospital ship. On Feb. 9 she and son James were transported to Tampa General Hospital.

She was discharged from the hospital Feb. 24 but faces weeks of rehabilitation for injuries to her leg.

Deanery sends two to Haiti

Two men from St. Petersburg made a weeklong trip to Haiti to assess damage to a school founded by St. Matthew’s Episcopal Church.

Parishioner Jamie Bennett; the Rev. Joe Myrthil, one of the founders of the school and pastor of Redeemer Baptist Church, which worships in St. Matthew’s parish hall; and the Rev. John Kivuva Mwiya, an assisting priest at St. Bartholomew’s Episcopal Church, planned to spend a week at St. Francis School in Loiseau, about 30 miles from the earthquake’s epicenter. At the last minute, Bennett was not able to make the trip.

Actually getting to Loiseau was not an easy task, Myrthil told The Southern Cross after his return. No direct flights into Haiti were possible.

(Continued on page 5)

Diaz in Haiti

(Continued from page 5)

those seeking to help them — can you understand who we are truly called to be.

The need is great all over. The outlying towns are starving and dying of thirst as SUVs trundle past them to Port-au-Prince. Some vehicles have been stopped so as to provide food and water for those areas.

Based on what I saw, gifts to the Dominican Development Group and designated for “Haiti relief” will be of the most immediate help. The Episcopal Church in the D.R. is severely stressed as it works to bring relief to the Haitians. It has been on the job in an ad hoc fashion since day one, mainly through the efforts of Padre Jesus of Jimani, D.R. In fact, the clinic in Jimani cared for more than 3,500 wounded in just two days, and ran out of some supplies.

Gifts to Episcopal Relief and Development will be of help in the longer term. They, also, had people on the ground, and Kristen Muth and Katie Mears of ERD were on their way in as we were leaving.

Volunteers are discouraged at this time, and only those with special skills, such as nursing, are requested. Those who go must be self-sufficient in terms of food, first aid, etc. The infrastructure at this time can offer nothing, and anything given to volunteers is at the expense of the Haitian people.

Do not fall for the lie that we “do not need organized religion.” I saw “organized religion” deliver the goods while other agencies were gearing up to respond.

Moreover, our church, The Episcopal Church, has been serving people with special needs — including the blind, people born without arms or legs, and those with other disabilities — for almost a hundred years, both in Haiti and elsewhere. We are needed more than ever. You can be proud to be an Episcopalian, serving our Lord Jesus. The issues that divide us are nothing compared to the call we have been given to “Do it unto the least of these my brethren.”

Bishop Holquin reminded us that the need to care for the Haitian church is “not a burden, for she is our mother,” since the Haitian Church gave birth to the Dominican Church.

Thank you so much for your prayers and concern, for not only the victims of the tragedy but also for those seeking to help, included me.

— The Rev. Joe Diaz is rector of Holy Trinity Episcopal Church in Clearwater.
work, but “there is no way for the church to receive any visitors right now.”

Everyone, including himself, sleeps outside, the bishop said. Even at the few hotels that are still standing, guests must sleep outside for fear of aftershocks.

Thus, he said, the best way for Episcopalians to aid the diocese right now is to contribute to Episcopal Relief and Development.

“We are grateful to ERD. They are really helping,” Bishop Duracin said. “They have come here. They have started working with us in this emergency, but now we have to think about the future.”

Many people, including Bishop Duracin, are living in tents or make-shift shelters.

The bishop said he splits his days between the survivors’ camp on a rocky field at College Ste. Pierre, a diocesan school destroyed by the quake, and a room at the diocesan offices.

The building that housed the diocesan offices is the only Episcopal Church building in Port-au-Prince that survives relatively intact, according to Bishop Duracin.

At night, he said, he sleeps in a tent in the yard of a house that before the quake was being built for the Duracin family in Petionville, a suburb of Port-au-Prince.

‘You’ve had your Good Friday’

Presiding Bishop Katharine Jefferts Schori paid a poignant visit to Port-au-Prince Feb. 8 to survey the devastation with Bishop Duracin.

After climbing over the ruins of the diocese’s cathedral the presiding bishop turned to him and said “You should skip Lent this year; you have already had your Good Friday.”

While at the cathedral, Jefferts Schori and Duracin said prayers with those who were at what the Haitian bishop is calling the diocese’s “open-air cathedral,” which consists of some plastic sheeting stretched over a frame of two-by-fours that shelters some rescued pews.

Squire in Haiti

(Continued from page 5)

bishop’s office in the Dominican Republic. We were met at the airport by Deacon Bob Snow, and his wife, Ellen, appointed missionaries from the Episcopal Church to the Church in the Dominican Republic. They drove us to the diocesan center where we stayed in their dormitory for visitors. We left the next morning at 6 a.m. headed for the frontier.

Diocesan Bishop Julio Holquin and Assisting Bishop Bill Skilton headed up a convoy of three vehicles loaded with supplies for Haiti. Six hours later we arrived in the frontier town of Jimani, where we were met by the priest-in-charge, Padre Jesus. We were taken to a clinic near the border where it was reported about 3,500 Haitian patients had been seen over the past two days. It was chaos. We all were required to get an injection there (we were told it was a tetanus shot) before being allowed to enter Haiti.

We drove over the border with Padre Jesus and his driver now as our traveling companions. It took about three hours to get to Port-au-Prince. Padre Jesus had been taking essential materials into Haiti since the earthquake but had not known of a specific Episco-
frightening stories of the earthquake. I determined that no one really knew exactly how many children of St. Vincent’s were killed, or, in fact, how many people in the other Episcopal institutions in Port-au-Prince lost their lives in this terrible tragedy. It would seem that 6-10 children were lost at St. Vincent’s main campus, and 4-5 lost their lives at the Boy’s Foyer. I cannot confirm any of those numbers (every one I asked had a different number).

That evening we walked through Port-au-Prince to the Church of the Epiphany. Destruction was everywhere, and people were everywhere. Everyone wanted to live on the street; no one was chanceing sleeping in a building. When we returned to the campus of College St. Pierre, we were assigned a tent (it has been a long time since I slept on the ground). Joe and I shared a tent and I told him that Haitians, under normal circumstance, don’t get much sleep. By the next morning he understood; there was talking (and singing) until 1 a.m., and it all began again by 4 a.m.

I was not able to see Bishop Duracin on Saturday because he had a meeting that lasted well into the night with Haitian President Preval, his parliament, and other church and community leaders. He greeted me enthusiastically early Sunday morning.

Pere Sadoni, a Haitian priest, took us on a tour of the Episcopal institutions in the inner city. First we passed by the park areas that were teeming with people, then we went by the presidential palace, where there were hundreds more. As we entered the street where St. Vincent’s stood we could see the debris from St. Vincent’s actually lying in the street itself. When we got there we saw that several buildings were still standing but were seriously damaged, and I suspect they have all been rendered useless.

From there we went to the Boy’s Foyer, a home for homeless boys. Several young men who had been staying on the campus of College St. Pierre were there, using the available water at the foyer with which to bathe. One of them was in a wheelchair and had wheeled himself all that way so he could get clean. Again, all we found was destruction.

Next we went to the Holy Trinity Cathedral complex. Again, we found nothing but destruction. The cathedral itself, Holy Trinity School, the Convent of the Sisters of St. Margaret — all destroyed. The Professional School was in session at the time of the earthquake, and many teachers and students were killed — again the number is elusive, but the estimate is 200. We found the same type and level of destruction at the Episcopal University; the Art Museum; and the Foyer Notre Dame, a nursing home and home for aged women.

That afternoon there was a service of Holy Eucharist. The Rev. Canon Oge’ Beauvoir was the celebrant, and Pere Sadoni, Fr. Diaz and I concelebrated. It was a time of inspiration. I don’t think you had to understand a word of French or Creole to know that God was present in that moment, and in the words spoken.

Joe and I assisted in the distribution of water and other essential items the next day. At midmorning Padre Jesus arrived with another truckload of materials, which were distributed among those camping at College St. Pierre. We said our goodbyes (with lots of tears and hugs) and drove to the bishop’s house, where he had a crew attempting to retrieve some items from his destroyed home. Padre Jesus had been instructed by Bishop Holquin to meet with Bishop Duracin before returning home. During that meeting on the grounds of the bishop’s residence, Padre Jesus said to Bishop Duracin, “Your situation in Haiti has been engraved on the hearts of your brothers and sisters in the Dominican Republic.” It was a moving moment and difficult for Fr. Diaz, who was acting as the Spanish interpreter, to even say in English.

We drove back to Jimani and then on to Santo Domingo. When we arrived at the bishop’s office there was more water and other items that had been donated from throughout the diocese to pack into the vehicle that would be going back into Haiti the next day.

— The Rev. Canon Willard Squire also is chairman of the board of trustees of the Children’s Medical Mission of Haiti. CMMH supports the medical needs of children in Haiti, primarily the children at St. Vincent’s Center for Handicapped Children, an Episcopal institution of the Diocese of Haiti.
Southwest Florida sends aid
(Continued from page 14)

Haitians in U.S. need help, too

Meanwhile, efforts are underway to support the sizable Haitian community in Collier County. The Rev. Panel Guerrier is a Haitian priest ministering to an estimated 15,000 Haitian citizens, many of them undocumented workers in low-paying jobs. The scope of the disaster has touched nearly everyone, he said. The situation has been compounded by the inability to communicate with their families. “It’s very difficult for them. Most people have lost someone.”

Fr. Gurrier is working to assist Haitian nationals to apply for “temporary protected status” recently granted to Haitians who have been in the U.S. prior to the Jan. 12 earthquake. It will allow eligible Haitians to continue living and working in the U.S. for the next 18 months.

“This is the right thing to do,” Sen. Bill Nelson said of the Obama administration’s Jan. 15 announcement. “Haitian immigrants already in the U.S. will not only be able to make money to support themselves, but also to send remittances to their suffering families back in Haiti.”

However, Fr. Guerrier says word of the government’s decision is spreading slowly through the Haitian community. And the $430 needed to process an application is beyond the reach of many it is designed to help.

Gurrier and the Rev. Tara McGraw, rector of St. Paul’s Episcopal Church in Naples, recently met with Bishop Smith to discuss options to provide long-term help to the Haitian community. Some ideas included encouraging local parishes to develop “sister” relationships with churches and schools in Haiti so that direct, specific aid can begin to flow where it is needed most. Other possible efforts include literacy programs and job training.

D.R. to be staging area

The church in the Dominican Republic is preparing to provide long-term assistance to its neighbor by offering to be a staging area for relief efforts.

“There is no doubt in my mind that the Dominican Republic and our church have the responsibility of providing the pipeline to get the help that is needed into Haiti,” said Bishop William Skilton, the assisting bishop of the Dominican Episcopal Church.

According to the newsletter of the Dominican Development Group, an agency that coordinates ministry among nine U.S. dioceses with companion relationships with the Dominican church, shipments of food, water and other emergency supplies are being sent across the border in Haiti every other day.

The DDG is headquartered at Day-Spring Conference Center in Parrish.

It is expected that a good portion of relief efforts will go through the Dominican Republic, and much of it will be purchased there, the DDG reports. Dominican Bishop Julio Holguin has said he expects his diocese to play a major role in eventual efforts to rebuild the Haitian infrastructure.

ERD busy on the ground

Episcopal Relief and Development has been at work following the Jan. 12 earthquake. The agency is aiding the 25,000 survivors who are living in about 20 makeshift refugee camps being operated by the Diocese of Haiti.

Among its efforts to date; ERD has,

- Supplied more than five tons of food to diocesan camps.
- Provided tents for the diocesan camps.
- Delivered food by helicopter to 15,000 refugees living in camps not accessible by vehicle.
- Trained workers to install and maintain 20 water purification systems.
- Purchased three trucks in the Dominican Republic to transport supplies into Haiti, and bought fuel for the trips.

More information is available at www.er-d.org/HaitiCrisis.

How to help:

Relief agencies are discouraging groups from sending supplies or trying to organize work teams at this time. Money is the most-needed gift. The two most effective organizations involved in relief are:

Episcopal Relief & Development

Episcopal Relief & Development is the international relief and development agency of the Episcopal Church. It has already poured hundreds of thousands of dollars into relief efforts and more is needed. Donate by visiting http://www.er-d.org/.

Dominican Development Group

The Dominican Development Group (DDG) was founded in 1998 to provide self-sufficiency to the Dominican Episcopal Church. The Diocese of Southwest Florida is one of nine domestic dioceses that have a companion diocese relationship with the Dominican church. Please send your contributions to The Dominican Development Group, P.O. Box 661, Ellenton, FL 34222 and designate your gift for “Haitian Relief.”
Want your congregation to grow?
Then concentrate on things that work, expert says

By Mary Frances Schjonberg
Episcopal News Service

The Episcopal Church’s Executive Council heard Feb. 21 at their meeting in Omaha, Neb., that church membership and Sunday attendance continued to decline in 2008, but also heard a call for the church to promote knowledge of the characteristics of growing congregations.

During his statistic-laden hourlong report, Kirk Hadaway, the church’s program officer for congregational research, told the council that congregations grow when they are in growing communities, have a clear mission and purpose, follow up with visitors, have strong leadership, and are involved in outreach and evangelism.

Congregations decline, he said, when their membership is older and predominantly female, are in conflict, particularly over leadership, and where worship is “rote, predictable and uninspiring.”

The primary source of the statistics for Hadaway’s report is the canonically required (Canon 1.6.1) information filed annually with diocesan bishops by each congregation. The so-called parochial reports were due March 1.

Hadaway analyzed the data received to compile a variety of statistical reports and also cited a variety of surveys of church members that he and others have conducted.

The 2008 parochial reports show overall church membership at 2,225,682 people, with a total average Sunday attendance (ASA) at 747,376. Those totals compare with 2007 membership of 2,285,143 and total ASA at 768,476. The dioceses in the United States saw a 2.8 percent drop in membership and a 3.1 percent decrease in ASA. Overall church membership — including 10 non-U.S. dioceses — was down 2.6 percent, and attendance dropped 2.7 percent for the entire church.

Hadaway suggested that “if we’re going to turn this around — or at least turn around the decline — more attention needs to be paid to the things that result in growth, rather than to the broader cultural factors that are affecting our current patterns.” Those cultural factors include such things as an aging population with declining birthrates and an increase in the number of Americans who claim no religious affiliation.

In other action:

Other news of note from Executive Council:

- Pledged Feb. 22 to stand by the Diocese of Haiti as it continues to minister to earthquake survivors and plans its long-term rebuilding efforts, while challenging the church to raise at least $10 million to help pay for that rebuilding. Council members said they stand ready to receive Bishop Jean Zaché Duracin’s assessment of the diocese’s needs and will review the church’s support for the rebuilding effort at subsequent meetings.

- Approved a revised 2010 budget based on the 2010–2012 budget passed by General Convention in July 2009. The resulting revision includes a slight increase in anticipated revenue and an even smaller increase in budgeted expenses.

- Issued the church’s first statement on the war in Afghanistan. Resolution A&N004 remembers “with sorrow those on all sides of the hostilities in Afghanistan who have been wounded, traumatized or killed;” supports the goal of a just and lasting peace in Afghanistan; welcomes a timetable for withdrawal of foreign troops; urges the U.S. and its allies to use force judiciously and protect innocent people of Afghanistan; says that “an escalation in forces need not lead to an escalation in force;” calls on the Afghan government to end corruption and strengthen its security forces; encourages the U.S. and its allies to promote economic development and human rights in Afghanistan; prays for the safety and well-being of U.S. troops in Afghanistan, and for a swift and peaceful end to the war; urges Congress to provide for the needs of troops and their families; acknowledges pastoral challenges presented by multiple deployments and combat stress and commends the Episcopal Church’s federal ministries office.

- Passed a lengthy resolution (WM009) on Middle East peace-making efforts. Council said it welcomed the peace-making initiatives of President Barack Obama and his envoy to the region, George Mitchell, and urged them to re-double their efforts. The resolution called on the U.S. to pursue a fair and balanced approach to making peace and asserted that peace can be achieved only by a division of historic Palestine into two sovereign states, while affirming that a territorial division must include a shared Jerusalem. It also called for Israel to end its blockade of the Gaza Strip.

- Accepted a 2010-2012 strategic plan for itself and established an Executive Council Committee on Strategic Planning as called for in General Convention Resolution A061.

- Heard that its world mission committee had asked the Standing Commission on Constitution and Canons to review the fourth section of the proposed Anglican Covenant to see if any changes to the church’s constitution or canons would be needed if the Episcopal Church decided it wanted to adopt the covenant. Only the General Convention can approve such a document on behalf of the church.

- Elected the Rev. Dr. James B. Simons, seven-time General Convention deputy from the Diocese of Pittsburgh, to succeed Ian Douglas, who resigned effective at the end of the meeting.

Hadaway agreed with council member Brian Cole who suggested that “this is still ultimately a hopeful time for this way (Continued on page 19)
Growing churches
(Continued from page 18)

of being Christian” and said that the Episcopal Church ethos would seem to be appealing to those people who are wary of joining churches.

The problem, Hadaway said, is “we’re not necessarily inviting them.”

“We’re just hoping they’ll show up because of our lovely facilities, but then even when they’re in, we don’t really do anything necessarily to incorporate them,” he said. “If you’ve been to a coffee hour, you know what I mean.”

He added that very few congregations deliberately gather contact information from visitors and then follow up with them. He urged personal contact with newcomers, saying that parishes that deliberately follow up with visitors in a variety of ways are more likely to grow.

The median Episcopal Church congregation in 2008 had 164 active members (down four members from 2007) and 69 people in Sunday worship, the same as in the previous year. Membership declines in the Episcopal Church mirror a pattern seen in other Christian denominations.

Four domestic Episcopal Church dioceses grew during 2008 in both overall membership and average Sunday attendance: Alabama, Navajoland Area Mission, North Dakota and Wyoming.

In the dioceses outside the United States, membership in the Diocese of Ecuador-Litoral grew by 8.6 percent, the Dominican Republic by 5.5 percent, Colombia by 4 percent and Taiwan by 3 percent.

Council members had spent the afternoon of Feb. 19 and all day Feb. 20 in committee meetings.

The Executive Council carries out the programs and policies adopted by the General Convention. The council is composed of 38 members, 20 of whom (four bishops, four priests or deacons and 12 lay people) are elected by General Convention and 18 (one clergy and one lay) by provincial synods for six-year terms, plus the presiding bishop and the president of the House of Deputies.

Church of England won’t OK full communion with ACNA

The Church of England has said it recognizes and affirms the desire of the Anglican Church in North America to remain in the Anglican family, but it is not yet ready to be in full communion with the breakaway entity.

An amended resolution passed Feb. 10 by General Synod, the Church of England’s main governing body, said that ACNA’s desire required further exploration by the “relevant authorities” in the Anglican Communion.

Bishop Michael Hill of the Diocese of Bristol, who proposed the amendment, said the debate had been charitable. “While it leaned towards issues of human sexuality, the real issue is about the process of reception with groups like ACNA,” said Hill, a member of the Anglican Consultative Council, the communion’s main policy-making body.

The passing of the motion hasn’t resolved all the issues, he added. “It leaves the doors open but makes it clear that the church has to deal with these matters with due process and not in an ad hoc way.”

Hill’s amendment — which received 309 votes for, 69 against and 17 abstentions — also invites the archbishops of Canterbury and York to report further to synod in 2011.

The original motion submitted by Lorna Ashworth of Chichester had called on synod to “express the desire that the Church of England be in communion with the Anglican Church in North America.” Several further amendments were proposed, and all but one failed.

American Anglican Council President David Anderson said he was pleased with the outcome, even though he and other ACNA members had hoped for Ashworth’s motion to be carried. The AAC is a founding member of ACNA. Anderson, a former Episcopal priest, said he looked forward to furthering the conversation.

The ACNA is made up of individuals and groups that have left the Episcopal Church and the Anglican Church of Canada, as well as those that have never been members of those two provinces. It includes entities such as the Reformed Episcopal Church, formed in 1873, and the Anglican Mission in the Americas, founded by Rwandan Archbishop Emmanuel Kolini and Moses Tay, the now-retired primate of the province of South East Asia, in 2000.
Alabama bishop plans to retire in 2011

Bishop Henry N. Parsley Jr. said Feb. 12 that he plans to retire at the end of 2011.

Parsley, who has served the Diocese of Alabama since 1999 as its 10th bishop, made his announcement during the diocese’s 179th convention.

Parsley called for the election of his successor in early summer of 2011, with the new diocesan bishop taking office in fall 2011. He said he would then take the sabbatical time remaining to him and would retire at the end of the year.

“A little more than 15 years is a good, full, long tenure for a bishop, and I believe that such an orderly transition is in the fullness of time for us both,” Parsley told the convention at the end of his address.

New Orleans artist-in-residence wins Grammy

Irvin Mayfield and the New Orleans Jazz Orchestra received a Grammy for “Best Large Jazz Ensemble Album” for their debut album, Book One, at the 52nd Annual Grammy Awards Jan. 31.

Mayfield, 31, award-winning trumpeter, founder and artistic director of the 15-piece New Orleans Jazz Orchestra and artist-in-residence at the city’s Christ Church Cathedral, composed and arranged the music included in Book One for “‘All the Saints,’” a 2008 concert commissioned and hosted by the cathedral.

According to David duPlantier, dean of the cathedral, the concert was intended to communicate hope and celebration for the city’s wounded citizenry. Mayfield’s music explores post-Hurricane Katrina Katrina stagnation, the financial crisis and falling in love again.

San Joaquin property dispute back in court

The Episcopal Diocese of San Joaquin went back to court Feb. 8 in an attempt to regain parish property held by a breakaway congregation, according to a diocesan press release.

“Unfortunately, such litigation became necessary after the invitations of the diocesan bishop, the Rt. Rev. Jerry Lamb, to discuss the orderly return of the churches were largely ignored,” according to the Feb. 10 release.

The litigation is focused on returning the property for the mission and ministry of the Episcopal Church and the Episcopal Diocese of San Joaquin. The litigation does not initially seek monetary judgments against individual defendants (former vestry members) “unless it becomes evident that such defendants have diverted parish assets to other purposes or parties.”

The latest round of litigation is in addition to the pending lawsuit brought by the Episcopal Church and the diocese against former bishop John-David Schofield. That lawsuit is now before the Fifth District Court of Appeal for review.

Schofield was deposed as head of the Fresno-based diocese, and Lamb was elected provisional bishop at a March 29, 2008 special meeting of the diocesan convention.

Lamb filed corrected articles of incorporation with the California Secretary of State, which Schofield allegedly had altered by removing references to the Episcopal Church. The corrected articles clarify that “the name of the corporation sole is ‘The Protestant Episcopal Bishop of San Joaquin, a corporation sole.’”

Northern Michigan sets second election date

The Episcopal Diocese of Northern Michigan has chosen an 11-member committee to guide the search for its next bishop and laid out a timeline for the search, with an election set for November.

The diocese has been without a bishop since Bishop James Kelsey died in an automobile accident in June 2007. Bishop Tom Ray, who preceded Kelsey, now serves as assisting bishop.

The diocese’s previous search for a bishop ended in July 2009, when the Rev. Kevin Thew Forrester did not receive the necessary consents from the wider church after coming under intense scrutiny over whether his practice of Zen Buddhist meditation has diluted his commitment to the Christian faith, along with other concerns among some about his theology.

The Diocese of Northern Michigan, founded in 1895, comprises 27 congregations in the Upper Peninsula of Michigan.

Monks’ brew not popular with Scottish police

A small band of Benedictine monks in the south of England has come under fire for producing a fortified wine that critics describe as the “scourge of Scotland” for its high alcohol content.

The tipple, officially known as “Buckfast tonic wine” but nicknamed “commotion motion” or “wreck the hoose juice” by devotees in Britain’s far north, is turned out at Buckfast Abbey, a monastery in the Devonshire hills of southwest England, Religion News Service reports.

But “Buckie” has become a national favorite brew in Scotland — doubtless in part because it contains about 15 percent alcohol by volume. It packs a punch, the police report.

In one Scottish police constabulary, in Strathclyde, “Buckie” has been mentioned in some 5,000 crime reports, one of every 10 of them involving violence, over the past three years.

Police Superintendent Bob Hamilton said, “I think it’s clear from the figures that there is an association there.”

According to the BBC, the Buckfast Abbey monks steadfastly reject requests for interviews.

Faiths come together to discuss peace

Delegations consisting of leaders from Anglican, Shi’a, Sunni and Catholic faith traditions convened March 1-3 at Washington National Cathedral to discuss reconciliation between Islam and the West.

Four principals from each faith, along with five eminent religious leaders and experts from each of their respective religious communities, strategized on how to use their influence within their governments to promote peace efforts worldwide.

The summit is expected to result in a plan of action to achieve specific steps towards peace and reconciliation efforts worldwide.
Reflections: Haiti
(Continued from page 4)

people. Last summer, Haiti’s government produced a well-acclaimed development strategy brief for the World Bank and the International Monetary Fund. In the wake of the earthquake such a strategy is more important than ever. The long-term effort will require a concerted international effort to rebuild the Haitian government’s own capacity both to lead and to provide adequately for basic redevelopment needs such as social services, education and infrastructure.

The U.S. government should make this a diplomatic priority in the coming months and years. This is an area where every Episcopalian can be an advocate for our own government on behalf of our brothers and sisters in Haiti. The Episcopal Church’s Office of Government Relations in Washington, D.C., is equipped to assist us in our advocacy efforts.

Our continued support for Haiti is most important. By expanding our idea of what it means to be family, even those congregations that have long-term relationships with congregations and individuals in Haiti can see new ways to be involved in partnership that embraces and encourages a new and sustainable Haiti.

For now, let us all set aside our own personal needs to be of assistance and instead concentrate on hearing what is asked for and on praying for new and expanded visions of partnerships. Let Episcopal Relief & Development do the work it is so good at doing on our behalf. First relief, then development.

Sit tight. We don’t know yet what God will ask us to do, but let’s prepare ourselves for the long haul with Haiti.

Shared ministry
(Continued from page 5)

John’s were well aware that another approach was in order.

A history of shared ministry
Providentially, Lee County has a track record in the sharing of ministry. St. Joseph’s Episcopal Church and Lamb of God Lutheran Church used a “joint venture corporation” approach by agreeing to be members of a third corporation, Lamb of God Lutheran/Episcopal Church. Could this approach be used less formally in order to allow two Episcopal congregations to band together?

The shared ministry between Epiphany and St. John’s began with a series of conversations. One conversation was historical, noting that all the congregations of Lee County were started because people were willing to share ministry. Epiphany enjoyed the distinction of being the “mother” congregation of St. John’s while Epiphany was a still a mission.

A second conversation had to do with assisting priests and the role of deacons. Part of this conversation centered on two books of Joseph Cushman, A Goodly Heritage and The Sound of Bells. It was learned that several of our congregations, including Christ Church in Bradenton and St. Andrew’s in Tampa, had their beginnings due to the efforts of church-planting deacons.

A third conversation dealt with logistics — how to handle Sunday mornings, collections, hospital calls, etc. Two points governed these conversations:

1. What temptations are in the way when it came to competing vs. cooperating?

2. What benefits are there to be realized in the sharing ministry?

The name “TLC” (Together-in-Ministry Lee County) was chosen for the unincorporated body that would facilitate the sharing. The name “TLC” underscored the need for pastoral care of people drastically affected by economic collapse while negotiating a delicate transition in church life.

Both congregations agreed to combine under the umbrella of TLC for the purpose of calling a full-time priest. This priest would be the priest in charge of Epiphany as well as the vicar of St. John’s. Assisting priests or deacons would be assigned to TLC. Neither congregation would have an exclusive claim to any member of the clergy. Both congregations would retain their unique identity and name. The diocese was part of this sharing agreement and pledged its confidence to TLC with a three-year commitment of assistance.

Once assembled, it was time for TLC to find their priest. This process demanded the active participation of the bishop in order to recruit a priest who felt called to manage the risks as well as the unique rewards of a large turnaround. TLC called the Rev. Ryan Wright to serve in April of 2009.

It’s working
TLC is reporting a number of blessings. People are experiencing congregational vitality while living within an austere budget. Opportunities for fellowship are expanding. There is a wide diversity of voices from the pulpit. While still in its first year, TLC is showing great signs of life.

More opportunities for sharing are coming about. A pair of Lee County missions, Church of the Good Shepherd in LaBelle and All Souls’ Church in North Fort Myers, is sharing the ministry of the Rev. Alan Kelmereit. It is reported that attendance at All Souls’ has grown by 10 percent in a short period of time. Ash Wednesday services were notably larger.

The diocese is now completing its third shared ministry agreement of the year, this time between two parishes — a first. St. Martin’s Church in Hudson and St. Stephen’s Church in New Port Richey have formed Shared Ministry Pasco to call the Rev. Walcott Hunter to serve as their priest. He will begin in March.

While none of these efforts has reached maturity, there is a movement of the Spirit here that allows people to do more than merely have the ministry they can afford.

New forms of gathering are coming about, new friendships are being formed and new ways of pastoring have emerged. We are in the process of rediscovering an old way of doing Church in a new century.

In his global quest to find a possible prescription, Reid visits wealthy, free market, industrialized democracies like our own — including France, Germany, Japan, the U.K., and Canada — where he finds inspiration in example. Reid shares evidence from doctors, government officials, health care experts and patients the world over, finding that foreign health care systems give everybody quality care at an affordable cost. And that dreaded monster “socialized medicine” turns out to be a myth. Many developed countries provide universal coverage with private doctors, private hospitals and private insurance.

The Healing of America lays bare the moral question at the heart of our troubled system, dissecting the misleading rhetoric surrounding the health care debate. In the end, it is a good news book: It finds models around the world that Americans can borrow to guarantee health care for everybody who needs it.

50 Ways to Help Save the Earth — How You and Your Church Can Make a Difference, by Rebecca Barnes-Davies, from Westminster John Knox Press, 125 pages, paperback, c. 2009, $14.95.

This guide outlines fifty ways in which you, your congregation, and your local community can help fight global warming and enjoy participation in a vital part of Christian discipleship. 50 Ways to Help Save the Earth makes a clear connection, in a practical and unintimidating way, between stewardship of the earth and living one’s faith. This easy-to-follow book consists of seven chapters on topics related to global climate change: Water, Energy, Transportation, Food and Agriculture, People, Other Species, and Wilderness and Land Planning. Each chapter begins with a statement on how the content relates to global warming, followed by seven action items ranging from individual efforts to activities that encourage the involvement of the congregational and wider communities. With illustrations throughout, Rebecca Barnes-Davies’s book offers a lighthearted way to address global warming while teaching us to reshape our lives to honor rather than destroy God’s creation.


Wars have been fought in the name of religion since the beginning of time. Some would even argue Adam and Eve fought the first religious war by defying orders from God in an attempt to gain control of the Garden of Eden. The truth is no war should be fought in the name of religion. By definition religion is the belief in a greater being, and that belief is traditionally rooted in love and peace.

The new book, Evolution of Faith and Religion: An Exploration, by Ajit Randhawa explores the history of faith and explains why the common thread in all six major world religions revolves around spirituality, peace and love. Understanding the origin of religion is the first step in accepting our differences and solving the world’s conflicts.

—To order, please visit Episcopal Books and Resources online at www.episcopalbookstore.org, call (800) 903-5544, or visit your local Episcopal bookstore.
Special Events

Spring Deanery Convocations. All deaneries of the diocese have now decided on dates and locations for spring convocations for clergy and congregational lay representatives. They are:

March 2: Manasota/Venice: 7 p.m. at St. Mark’s Episcopal Church, 513 Nassau St. South, in Venice. Contact the Rev. Harry I. Parsell at (941) 778-1638, or the Very Rev. James H. Puryear at (941) 488-7714.


March 9: Fort Myers: 7 p.m. at St. Hilary’s Episcopal Church, 5011 McGregor Blvd., in Fort Myers. Contact the Very Rev. Alan Kelmerait at (863) 675-0385.

March 11: Tampa: 7 p.m. at St. John’s Episcopal Church, 906 S. Orleans Ave., in Tampa. Contact the Very Rev. Randall Hehr at (813) 259-1570.

April 14: Naples: 7 p.m. at St. Paul’s Episcopal Church, 3901 Davis Blvd., in Naples. Contact the Very Rev. Michael Rowe at (239) 992-4343.

2010 Summer Camp dates

Camp Staff Training. April 23–24 at DaySpring Conference Center in Parrish. Contact Michelle Mercurio at (941) 556-0315, ext. 274 or mmercurio@episcopalswfl.org

Camp Staff Training. June 12–13 at DaySpring Conference Center in Parrish. Contact Michelle Mercurio at (941) 556-0315, ext. 274 or mmercurio@episcopalswfl.org

Elementary Summer Camp. June 13–18 at DaySpring Conference Center in Parrish for rising 3rd–5th graders. Registration fee is $360. Contact Michelle Mercurio at (941) 556-0315, ext. 274 or mmercurio@episcopalswfl.org

Camp Staff Training. June 19-20 at DaySpring Conference Center in Parrish. Contact Michelle Mercurio at (941) 556-0315, ext. 274 or mmercurio@episcopalswfl.org

Youth Summer Camp. June 20-25 at DaySpring Conference Center in Parrish for rising 6th–8th graders. Registration fee is $360. Contact Michelle Mercurio at (941) 556-0315, ext. 274 or mmercurio@episcopalswfl.org

Camp Able. July 19–23 at DaySpring Conference Center in Parrish. For youth with special needs. Contact Michelle Mercurio at (941) 556-0315, ext. 274 or mmercurio@episcopalswfl.org

Training/Workshops/Retreats

Happening #63. March 19–21 at DaySpring Conference Center in Parrish. Participants: 9–10th graders. Registration fee: $140.

Vocare International Conference. April 15–18 in Atlanta. This weekend of renewal is for young adults ages 19–30. Its aim is to concentrate closely on the person and teachings of Jesus Christ. Faith is seriously examined in a relaxed, fun and informal, loving atmosphere. This experience gives those who attend the desire to understand and serve the church. It also provides a means to continue the Christian formation that is just begun in the three-day program.

New Beginnings #47. April 30 to May 2 at DaySpring Conference Center in Parrish. Participants: 6–8th graders. Team: 9–12th graders. Registration fee: $140.

Happening #64. Sept. 17–19 at DaySpring Conference Center in Parrish. Participants: 9–10th graders. Registration fee: $140.


If your group or congregation is planning an upcoming event of interest to the rest of the diocese, please send the information to:

The Southern Cross Calendar
7313 Merchant Court
Sarasota, FL 34240
or e-mail it to jdela@episcopalswfl.org

The diocesan events calendar is also available on our web site:
www.episcopalswfl.org