“Mercifully grant that we ... may have the grace to take up our cross and follow him ...”
On the cover:
The cross hanging in the sanctuary of Christ Church, Bradenton. The words are from the collect for Holy Cross Day, Sept. 14. Photo by Jim DeLa

HIGHLIGHTS IN THIS ISSUE

3 From the Bishop

5 Celebration in Naples:
St. Monica’s new worship space is dedicated

6 D.R. project challenge:
Grant to help fund new mission on Haitian border

10 AIDS education:
Episcopal Relief & Development contributing in Belize

12 Convention preview:
Diocesan event right around the corner

18 Five years later:
Katrina leaves indelible mark on Gulf Coast

23 Events Calendar

Submission deadlines for upcoming issues:

November/December: October 1
January/February 2011: December 1
Our Episcopal Charities Fund is growing into its mission

As I write this there is much in the way of commemoration of the five-year anniversary of Hurricane Katrina. This anniversary reminds me personally and powerfully of the deep emotions and memories the storm and its aftermath caused.

The one statement I heard so consistently during that time was, “Thank God for the Church,” as the Church in all of its flavors was present in compassionate mission in the midst of the despair and discouragement.

Two years ago at our diocesan convention I called for the establishment of the Episcopal Charities Fund of Southwest Florida. Since its inception many individuals and congregations have responded in its establishment.

(The listing of all contributors since its formation are found in this issue of The Southern Cross.)

At last year’s convention I stated that I will continue to ask for contributions to increase the corpus of the Episcopal Charities Fund. Then this year, in January, the terrible earthquake in Haiti struck. We, as a diocese, had the particular honor of caring for Madam Duracin, the wife of the Episcopal bishop of Haiti, after her terrible injury sustained in that country’s January earthquake.

Through the careful reorganization of funds by Diocesan Council, Episcopal Charities of Southwest Florida has been strengthened both as an endowment and an active financial instrument for mission and ministry in the diocese. Its first need was in the care of Madam Duracin.

I am grateful that we have accomplished so much with it in such a short time. I realize, though, that we as a diocese need to continue our efforts in both building and utilizing the Episcopal Charities Fund of Southwest Florida.

I have asked the Rev. Chris Gray to serve our diocese as development officer to, as the title reveals, “develop” further Episcopal charities. He will also serve to develop the endowment and capital needs of DaySpring Conference Center and function as a diocesan resource to congregations in the development of their various stewardship programs.

Last year the convention was built upon the theme of “Honor our Tradition, Build for the Future, Mercy in Mission.” We continue those thematic efforts by building up and developing Episcopal Charities, DaySpring and our congregations.

A strong Church responds. Then people gladly say, “Thank God for the Church!”
Caring for the Earth, caring for ourselves

By The Rev. Kathy Gilpin

June 26, 2010

Friends,

I have been called to work on the oil spill and head for Pensacola, FL early tomorrow morning. I will be working with the interpretive staff of Gulf Islands National Seashore (one of my old parks) helping them develop visitor programs that incorporate information and messages about what is happening with the spill.

I’ve also been told that they need me to help the staff there come to grips with the feelings they are all experiencing since the oil started coming ashore. That is going to be very emotional for both them and me — all of this is dredging up the experiences that I had with the Exxon Valdez oil spill back in Alaska.

So, please pray for me if you will! I need all the help I can get.

Anne

This is a copy of the e-mail that I and many of Anne Castellina’s friends received this past June. Anne is a member of Christ Church, Bradenton, and until her retirement, Anne was a member of the National Park Service and had served as superintendent of a number of parks including the Kenai Fjords National Park and Gulf Islands National Seashore. I share this e-mail because for those of you who do not know Anne, this may help to put a more personal touch on this disaster.

Originally, I was asked to write an article highlighting the scriptural imperatives of ecology and decreasing our carbon footprint, but frankly, I’ve read many articles on this subject and “enough is enough!” I want to share with you some thoughts that have come to me in recent weeks about what one might call “green spirituality.”

Years ago, I was fortunate enough to participate in a weekend retreat whose theme was Indian Spirituality. One of the things that all of us came to appreciate was the Native Americans’ reverence for nature. Earth is their Mother, and the Great Spirit can be seen in all of nature. The Earth is not one’s — Deacon Kathy Gilpin is a member of the diocesan Green Team and is assistant to the chaplain at State College of Florida, Bradenton.

(Continued on page 21)

Haiti bishop thankful for diocese’s hospitality

Editor’s note: Bishop Dabney Smith received this letter July 1 from the bishop of Haiti after his wife, Edith, and son, James, were guests of the diocese as she recovered from injuries suffered in the Jan. 12 earthquake in that country.

My dear brother and sister,

Greetings from Haiti in the Name of our Lord Jesus Christ. I was traveling to [the Dominican Republic] when Edith and James left Southwest Florida for New York, and stay for a while with Edith’s sister there before coming back to Haiti.

I write to express our gratitude for all you have done for us on those occasions of great sufferings. We thank you for your hospitality, care and all kind of assistance Edith and James have received from you. I would ask you to please extend our thanks to all people of your diocese, clergy and spouses, women’s association, etc.

A special thanks for the gift I received from your clergy which has helped me so much.

I will keep in touch with you as I think sometime you may come to Haiti to see our church.

Hope this finds you well, may God continue to bless you and your ministry.

—The Rt. Rev. Zache Duracin
Bishop of Haiti

Letters to the editor and Reflections essays to The Southern Cross are appreciated and encouraged.

We ask that letters be as concise as possible — with a 300-word suggested limit — and stay on one topic. Authors should include their full name, parish affiliation or city of residence. Anonymous letters will not be published.

All submissions are subject to editing to improve clarity and to fit in the available space for each issue.

Please send correspondence to:

Letters to the Editor
The Southern Cross
Diocese of Southwest Florida
7313 Merchant Court
Sarasota, FL 34240

Or send letters by fax to (941) 556-0321; or by e-mail to jdela@episcopalswfl.org
**New worship space at St. Monica’s**

Members and friends of St. Monica’s Episcopal Church in Naples gathered with Bishop Dabney Smith Sept. 5 to consecrate the congregation’s new worship space.

St. Monica’s rector, the Rev. Kathryn Schillreff, said the journey to that day has been “long and ‘interesting’ — when the downturn in the economy hit, we did not have the funds to build the entire building — so we built half.”

She said they hope to finish this phase of the campus fairly soon.

The service began in the new parish hall, which was formerly the worship space. Participants then processed to the new space.

Once inside, Bishop Smith led the dedication of the space and furnishings.

The altar was vested by members of the parish — including the donor of the altar, Richard Hughes, and many of teh parish’s children and youth.

A reception was held in the parish hall after the service.

---

**Rays’ outing raises $2,700 for Fund**

The diocese’s second annual “Night with the Rays” on Aug. 27 raised about $2,700 for the Episcopal Charities Fund.

Bishop Dabney Smith told clergy and diocesan convention delegates at recent fall deanery convocations that 900 Episcopalians representing 29 congregations attended the Tampa Bay Rays game against the Boston Red Sox at Tropicana (Continued on page 8)
Plans to build a new house of worship in the Dominican Republic on the Haitian border has gotten a significant financial boost from a $20,000 challenge grant issued by St. John’s Episcopal Church in Naples.

During a recent meeting in Sarasota, a group of clergy and parishioners, including Bishop Dabney Smith, heard details about the challenge grant from St. John’s rector, the Rev. Joe Maiocco.

“There are some people [at St. John’s] who have always been passionate about outreach,” Maiocco said. “As we thought and prayed about this, one of the things that became clear to us was … the possibility of providing a challenge grant to the Episcopal Charities Fund, while at the same time, supporting the Dominican Republic,” he said.

The St. John’s grant came with no strings attached – it would be up to the Diocese of the Dominican Republic to choose a project to fund.

The Rev. Canon Juan Marquez, the vicar general of the Diocese of the Dominican Republic, outlined a short list of projects that were considered for the grant but saying the Espiritu Consolador Mission in the province of Dajabon was selected to be the recipient of the grant money.

Marquez said this would be the first diocesan project in that province, one of the poorest in the country. “It’s a wonderful mission opportunity there,” he said. The $40,000 raised will fund a significant portion of the project, Marquez said. “It will take more than that to finish the project but God will provide.”

Donations for the challenge grant will be collected by Southwest Florida’s Episcopal Charities Fund.

“We are presenting the money to the Fund enthusiastically, with joy and hope,” Maiocco said. “Our heartfelt sense was to step out in faith and to do this and to be a blessing in the diocese and to the Dominican Republic.”

Donations to this project may be made to the Diocese of Southwest Florida, with “Episcopal Charities Fund—Challenge Grant” in the memo line and sent to 7313 Merchant Court, Sarasota, FL 34240.
The purpose of the Episcopal Charities Fund is to generate revenue for outreach purposes both within and beyond our diocese.

The Diocese of Southwest Florida remains committed to the Millennium Development Goals. There also are creative and necessary congregational outreach ministries that seek funding, along with deanery-level outreach needs.

We will not run out of needs to address.

To date, the Episcopal Charities Fund has disbursed funds in one case and is actively collecting donations for two others.

ECF provided money to help pay for the extended stay of the wife of the Bishop of Haiti, who sustained major injuries in the Jan. 12 earthquake.

The fund is also collecting for the Dominican Republic challenge grant (see the facing page).

In 2009 diocesan convention our diocese has established the Episcopal Charities Fund with contributions totaling approximately $20,000. I am grateful to all who have participated thus far and am thankful for those who will help in months and years to come.

I recognize that we are in the midst of difficult economic conditions. I also know that these same conditions intensify the need for Episcopal Charities Fund in our diocesan community. I am asking us to faithfully build this fund for the life of the diocese for the next 10, 20, 50 years and more.

We can do this, and it will make a difference. I ask you to be one of the Southwest Florida Episcopalians to contribute to the Episcopal Charities Fund. The seed has already been planted and is growing. Please help it grow and make a difference.

Love your neighbor. Build a Legacy.

Give to the Episcopal Charities Fund.

Go to www.episcopalswfl.org/donate_now

Episcopal Charities Fund donors list

Charles Bennett
Charles Connelly
Chris Gray
Christopher Johnson
Dabney T. Smith
David Knecht
Debby Tripp
Dennis McManis
Dioc. SWFL Altar Guild
Dioc. SWFL Clergy Spouse Assoc.
Donald and Doris Jenkins
Dottie Hirvela
ECW - St. Michael’s and All Angels
Ed and Sherre Henley
Evelyn Turner
Fred Robinson
Fred/Margaret Bush
George McLaughlin
Good Samaritan ECW
Greg/Cynthia Gutkowski
H. David Kramer
Holy Innocents, Valrico
James/Kathleen Kelly
James/Marcela Robinson III
Jan Nothum
Janet Kipp
Joe/Kathy Gilpin
John/Brenda Hiers

Judith Stark
Larry Smellie
Martha Vaguener
Maureen Belote
Michael Branscombe
Michael Monthalvo
Pamela Hardy
Phyllis Truitt
Ray Bonoan
Raymond Kress
Redeemer
Robert Wagenseil
Rogers Harris
St. Anne of Grace
St. George
St. Giles
St. John StJC
St. Mark’s, Marco Island
St. Mark’s Venice
St. Mary’s Bonita Springs
St. Mary Magdalene, Bradenton
St. Thomas, St. Petersburg
Susan Guise
Susan H Chuuruti
Tampa Bay Rays Baseball LTD.
Ted Tripp
Vance & Marsha Wegner
William Dopp

Faithfully yours,

The Rt. Rev. Dabney T. Smith
In Brief
(Continued from page 5)

Field in St. Petersburg.
A portion of the $20 ticket price was donated by the Rays to the Charities Fund.

Naples parish gives grant for garden
Trinity-by-the-Cove Episcopal Church in Naples has given a $5,000 grant to help build a therapeutic garden at a substance abuse treatment center.

The garden is part of a renovation to the David Lawrence Center, which includes an adult services center and a children’s outpatient services center.

The garden area will create “a relaxing, soothing therapeutic environment in order to improve mental health, wellbeing and reduce or eliminate environmental stressors,” a news release said.

David Lawrence Center and Foundation has eight locations in Collier County and touches the lives of more than 20,000 clients a year.

DOK annual assembly to be held at DaySpring
The diocesan Daughters of the King will hold its annual assembly Saturday, Sept. 18 at DaySpring Conference Center in Parrish.

Registration of $25 per person will include morning coffee hour and lunch. Daughters choosing not to stay for lunch should register for $15.

All chapters are asked to bring a “card-table” display showing their activities and ministries. This might include pamphlets, flyers about up-coming events, photos and chapter banner.

Series to study the history of Christianity
Esther Miseroy will lead a study beginning Sept. 29 in Clearwater based on a new film series presented by Di-amid MacCulloch, an Oxford history professor.

Each session will begin with a short lecture of introduction, followed by a half hour DVD presentation and conclude with wrap-up details and discussion.

The session begin at 7 p.m. at the Episcopal Church of the Good Samaritan (St. Cecilia Room), 2165 N.E. Coachman Rd., in Clearwater.

For more information, call, (727) 461-1717

Marriage training seminar set for Oct. 21
A workshop to train trainers of “Marriage Prepare/Enrich Seminar” will be held Oct. 21, from 9 a.m. to 4 p.m. at St. Paul’s Episcopal Church, 3901 David Blvd., in Naples.

The cost of the seminar is $175. Register at www.prepare-enrich.com. Prepare/Enrich provides tools to help couples identify strengths and growth areas, explore personality traits, strengthen communication skills, re-solve conflicts and reduce stress, and establish personal, couple and family goals. For more information or a registration form via U.S. mail, please contact Gareth Sweatman at thsweat@comcast.net or at (561) 395-3129.

Churches to share bookkeepers sought
The diocesan office is aware of seven churches in need of bookkeeping resources and would like to explore the possibility of setting up a shared bookkeeping arrangement.

Congregations looking for a new bookkeeper or church bookkeepers with time and interest who could serve as an outsourced resource for congregations in their area are asked to contact Nora Ortiz, the diocese’s parish administration specialist, at (941) 556-0315.

(Continued on page 9)
Calvary Church computer classes resume
A yearlong renovation has been completed, new computers are installed, and the popular Computer Learning Center at Calvary Episcopal Church has opened to the community.
Classes began Sept. 7 and feature “Basic Internet” and “Basic Computer” courses. Each course will run for 3 weeks for only $20.

Parish theater group plans trip back in time
“The Vintage Years, Burlesque to Radio” will be performed by the St. Martin’s Theatre Group on Sept. 25, beginning at 7 p.m. at the Heritage Pines Country Club, 11524 Scenic Hills Blvd. in Hudson.
Call (352) 293-4882 to purchase tickets for the show and to obtain dinner tickets if you wish to dine before the show.

Reminisce with the Bickering Bickersons, Gracie Allen and George Burns, and songs like “Can’t Help Loving That Man of Mine,” “Ain’t Misbehavin’” and many more.

Spent an evening with C.S. Lewis
The Fort Myers Deanery is hosting “An Evening with C.S. Lewis,” featuring British actor David Payne, on Saturday, Nov. 13 at 7 p.m. at Iona-Hope Episcopal Church, 9650 Gladiolus Drive in Fort Myers.
Payne has won acclaim for his portrayal of the eminent writer, orator and scholar, who penned the “Narnia” series as well as many famous written works, including “The Screwtape Letters” and “Mere Christianity.”

“All evening with C.S. Lewis” takes you into the unique world of a man who lived a simple life in a modest house on the outskirts of the city of Oxford.
Tickets are $10 each and can be obtained in advance by calling Holy Innocents’ Church in Valrico at (239) 574-3200.

Concert and tea in Tampa Sept. 19
The Sanctuary Choir of St. Clement’s Episcopal Church, 706 West 113th St. in Tampa, will feature the work of Alfred V. Fedak in “The Gift of Music” on Sept. 19, beginning at 3 p.m.
Following the concert will be an afternoon tea hosted by the Episcopal Church Women. The suggested donation of $10 will help support the costs of a commissioned work to be performed early December in celebration of Advent.

All aboard for Valrico craft fair
Holy Innocents Episcopal Church, 604 N. Valrico Road in Valrico, will sponsor the Whistle Stop Craft Show on Oct. 16, from 9 a.m. to 3 p.m.
All proceeds will go toward outreach and mission programs.
For more information, phone Pat at (727) 365-2300 or check the website at www.hiepiscopal.org.
There were no computers, no smartphones, no overhead projectors or air conditioners.

Just a teacher, a blackboard, paper, pencils and crayons, and one incredible teacher, who, like her students, is deaf.

This remarkable woman of these 9-14-year-olds in Orange Park, Belize, was reviewing with her pupils what they had learned about how HIV/AIDS is transmitted and how it is not shared.

This lifesaving education is being carried out through a special program that Episcopal Relief & Development is supporting in the 27 Anglican schools through the Diocese of Belize. According to sources there, it seems to be making a positive difference.

The nation of Belize has the highest rate of HIV infection in Central America. The Diocese of Belize is struggling to respond to this situation through a number of different initiatives.

As Bishop Wright has remarked about the church’s involvement with HIV/AIDS victims, “We have this wonderful opportunity to have a tremendous impact. The church’s involvement should range from keeping people informed and helping them to make positive decisions, to the church never leaving to others the caring of people who need to be loved and to feel God’s presence.”

In collaboration with UNICEF, the diocese works in collaboration with COMFORTH (Committee for a Faith-Based Response to HIV/AIDS) to respond to the HIV/AIDS situation in our country.

One example of our work in “Empowerment for All,” an HIV/AIDS awareness program run in a number of our Anglican schools. Each class has an AIDS corner and discusses the issues involved in the HIV/AIDS situation in Belize.

At St. Andrew’s School in Cayo District, the program resulted in an HIV/AIDS awareness parade through the town of San Ignacio, with more than 400 students and teachers participating in the walk.

Objectives of the project include teaching teachers how to deliver age-appropriate information to and conduct life skills sessions with their students, encouraging environments that promote non-discriminatory practices in schools, and increasing the availability of information on HIV and AIDS, including availability of services, care and support.

The program also aims to increase students’ and parents’ knowledge of HIV and AIDS with necessary life skills to prevent HIV infection.

A group visiting the rural school in the Flowers Bank area were struck with the students’ folk dancing and lively classroom interaction.

“They were energetic and involved, despite the lack of running water or toilet facilities in their school,” said Judy Quick, the ERD coordinator in the Diocese of Alabama. “The water purification bottles were a subtle reminder of their difficult conditions.

“Yet, even more profound was the need for HIV/AIDS education so early in their precious lives. Also impressive was the cultural acceptance of this reality, that leaders embraced the curriculum, with courage to face the truth. They wanted their children to live full lives.”
Covering ground for a reason

Triathlon training is a spiritual journey and is raising money to boot

A desire to get into shape, some cold weather and a chance meeting converged to send the Rev. Kyle Bennett on a spiritual journey that will lead him to a grueling test of endurance in October.

Bennett will be raising money the hard way for Camp Able, a summer camp for people with special needs. He’s entered the Great Floridian Triathlon, set for Oct. 23 in Clermont. He’ll start with a 2.4-mile swim, followed by a 112-mile bike race and finishing with a 26.2-mile run. His trainer figures it will take him 14 and a half hours to finish.

He’s already raised more than $10,000 for Camp Able by running a half triathlon, (a “warm-up” as he calls it), and by swimming 12.5 miles around Key West, which he accomplished in a hair under six hours.

Bennett, the rector of St. Mark’s Episcopal Church in Marco Island, says his focus on fitness is due to what he called the “40s.” “I’m 47 … 8 … somewhere around there,” he told The Southern Cross.

Last January a cold snap disrupted his fitness routine so he joined the YMCA to exercise indoors. “I’m a warm weather guy,” he explained. “It was cold. I couldn’t do what I was normally doing. It was messing with my psyche.”

He met Rich Cameron at the Y, a Canadian who began coming to St. Mark’s. A fitness expert, Cameron trained Royal Canadian Mounted Police and military personnel. “Somewhere in the conversation, he said to me ‘ ‘I could train you to do an Ironman.’’” Bennett said.

A triathlon wasn’t something that had been on his “bucket list,” Bennett said. “I ran a marathon once — and then didn’t run again for eight years.”

He said the quest to compete in an Ironman became a spiritual journey. “What would it be like to put myself in someone else’s hands and let them try to mold me?” he asked.

Cameron gives Bennett a training schedule for the week that Bennett then tries to fit into his work schedule. “Today’s an off day,” he said during a recent interview. “Tomorrow, it’s 70 miles on the bike.”

Bonita Springs VBS had special focus

In keeping with the diocese’s commitment to expanding Hispanic mission and ministry across Southwest Florida, St. Mary’s Episcopal Church in Bonita Springs offered a one-week Vacation Bible School for children from the community with special emphasis on children from Hispanic and Latino families.

The program, under the direction of the Rev. Gary Wilde, Carol Wilde and Helen MacCallum, hosted more than 60 children, some from St. Mary’s own church school but mostly from two different campsites in Bonita.

Children participated in the “High Seas Expedition” which allowed children to take a voyage across some of the stories of the Bible and explore with their imaginations what these stories say to them through Sing ‘n Splash songs, Shipwreck Games, Snacks from the Galley, a “Sail Away Cinema,” art, dance, and crafts.

So far, he’s meeting his training goals. In last spring’s half-triathlon, a 1.2-mile swim, 56-mile bike and 13.1-mile run, he finished in the top half of his age group. And he didn’t walk during the run.

Shaping a ministry

Bennett has been struck with what he called the evangelical aspect of his training. “You meet people at the Y or on a run. Next thing you know they’re in the church,” he said.

The parish celebrated a “blessing of the bikes” that turned into a community-wide event, which in turn has led to plans to start a wellness center at St. Mark’s. The ministry would include diet and nutrition classes, some group fitness classes “and a lot of outsourcing,” referring people to gyms and massage therapists that will share proceeds with the church. “We think it will be a great evangelical tool,” he said.

All for the cause

Bennett insists the kids at Camp Able are his prime motivation to cross the finish line. “I can’t do it alone. I see these kids’ faces and know it’s for a larger cause. That’s the motivation I need to inspire me to do this.”

You can donate to Camp Able by visiting www.campable.org.

Also you can learn more about the big race at http://greatfloridian.com/.

— Jim DeLa
Diocese gathers Oct. 8-9 to catch up, move forward

By Jim DeLa
Editor, The Southern Cross

An event that is equal parts family reunion, business meeting, a celebration of ministry and learning opportunity, the 42nd convention of the Diocese of Southwest Florida will convene Oct. 8–9 at the Charlotte Harbor Event and Conference Center in Punta Gorda.

Friday will feature a day of workshops and worship, with the diocese’s special guest, Bishop Wayne Smith of the Diocese of Missouri, who will preach at Friday night’s opening Eucharist and lead Morning Prayer before the business of the day on Saturday.

On Saturday, the diocese will celebrate with St. Mary Magdalene Episcopal Church in Bradenton, as the mission congregation is officially welcomed as a self-sufficient parish.

The theme for this year’s convention is “Five Marks of Mission”:

- To proclaim the Good News of the Kingdom;
- To teach, baptize and nurture new believers;
- To respond to human need by loving service;
- To seek to transform unjust structures of society; and
- To strive to safeguard the integrity of creation, and sustain and renew the life of the earth.

Each of the 77 congregations in Southwest Florida sends its clergy and delegates to hear Bishop Dabney Smith’s convention address, approve a budget for the diocese for the coming year, elect representatives to various bodies, including four clergy and four lay people who will represent the diocese in 2012 at the Episcopal Church’s General Convention in Indianapolis.

The 2011 budget

The Diocesan Council on Aug. 21 approved a balanced $3.23 million budget proposal for 2011, which includes a return to the 10 percent apportionment rate for congregations, retooled diocesan staff responsibilities and funds for a new office building at DaySpring Conference Center.

The highlights of the proposed 2011 budget include:

**Diocesan Financial Management Overhaul:** “This budget reflects further work by Council during 2010 to overhaul the financial management structure of our financial statements,” wrote the diocese’s chief financial officer, Anne Vickers. She says the 11-page budget is also organized more...
clearly, to mirror the current life and mission of the diocese. **Capital apportionment funds earmarked:** The 2011 income from apportionment from building projects, $259,000, will be used for three projects: $100,000 to be added to the 2020 Fund, a 10-year grant stream to new churches; $100,000 for Day-Spring capital expenditures, including a new road surface, new air conditioners and improved wireless Internet coverage on the campus, and $52,000 depreciation on diocesan assets, which will be put into the capital fund for the new diocesan office at Day-Spring.

**Return to a 10 percent apportionment rate:** The diocese’s apportionment rate returns to 10 percent, after two years of lower rates. Diocesan convention voted in 1999 to fix the apportionment rate at 10 percent, where each congregation gives 10 percent of its revenue, based on figures from two years prior, to the diocese to pay for programs, ministry and staff costs.

As the recession hit Florida in 2009, Diocesan Council voted to give congregations some relief by temporarily lowering the apportionment rate that year to 8 percent. It was adjusted again in 2010 to 9 percent.

Even with the higher rate, the 2011 budget’s bottom line will roughly be the same as last year since the actual 2011 payments will be based on a congregation’s 2009 budget, when the recession was deeper than it is now. However, even at 10 percent, the diocese’s apportionment rate is one of the lowest in the Episcopal Church.

**Episcopal Church asking is reduced:** In 2011, the Episcopal Church will be asking for less money from its 109 dioceses than it has in previous years. The “asking” rate is dropping from 21 percent to 20 percent in 2011 and will drop again to 19 percent in 2012.

Coupled with the fact the amount is calculated based on diocesan income of 2009, when Southwest Florida collected 2 percent less from congregations, means the diocese will give $466,615 to the national church in 2011, which is $166,000 less than in 2010.

**Increased Congregational Support:** In addition to ongoing support of stewardship and evangelism efforts, as well as the Fresh Start program for new clergy, the 2011 budget includes new budgeted expense lines for congregational support. The money could include training, workshops,

(Continued on page 14)
consulting or other expertise-based assistance. Starting in 2011, individual churches receiving support for operations are meeting with the bishop regularly to discuss progress and goals.

**Personnel changes:** In 2010, the diocesan staff was reorganized in order to more efficiently provide support and leadership for diocesan ministries and congregational life.

Vickers told Diocesan Council at its Aug. 21 meeting that new structure adds three people to the diocesan staff while adding less than a 10 percent in total compensation.

The diocese's new parish administration specialist, Nora Ortiz, has expertise in benefits, audits and internal processes, and her full-time position is dedicated to supporting parish-level administration issues. The redefined canon for Christian formation position, filled by the Rev. Jim Williamson, plans to provide seamless leadership from youth programs through adulthood through the School for Ministry Development.

The Rev. Chris Gray also joins the staff in a part-time capacity as the diocesan development officer. His position, funded partly through the DaySpring budget, will work to fulfill the vision for the Episcopal Charities Fund and DaySpring, as well as serving as a resource in planned giving and stewardship for parishes (See more about these three new staffers on page 11).

The budget also allows for the possibility of involving the work of two retired bishops who plan to retire in Southwest Florida.

You can view and download the entire budget presentation by going to www.episcopalswfl.org/diocesan_convention.

---

### The ballot

The following people have agreed to stand for election at convention:

#### Standing Committee
Elect two clergy and two laypersons. One clergy position is for a full three-year term, the other is to fill an unexpired term.

**Lay nominees:**
Wayne Ford, St. George’s, Bradenton  
Sheree Graves, St. Peter’s Cathedral, St. Petersburg  
E. Jim Johnson, All Souls, North Fort Myers

**Clergy nominees:**
The Rev. Robert Hennagin, St. Hilary’s, Fort Myers  
The Rev. Fredrick Robinson, Redeemer, Sarasota  
The Very Rev. Michael G. Rowe, St. Mary’s, Bonita Springs  
The Rev. Kathryn M. Schillreff, St. Monica’s, Naples

#### Diocesan Council
Elect one clergy to fill an at-large seat for a two-year term.

**Clergy nominees:**
The Rev. Charles E. Connelly, St. John’s School, Tampa  
The Rev. Glad R. McCurtain, St. John’s, Clearwater

#### Diocesan Review Committee
Elect one clergy and one layperson to serve until July 1, 2011, when new Title IV canons take effect.

**Clergy nominees:**
The Rev. Douglas Remer, St. John’s, Tampa

**Lay nominees:**
Joan Kline, Ascension, Clearwater  
John Sites, St. Mary’s, Bonita Springs

#### Ecclesiastical Court
Elect one clergy and two laypersons to serve until July 1, 2011, when new Title IV canons take effect.

**Lay nominees:**
David McCallister, Grace Church, Tampa

---

### University of the South
Elect one presbyter for a three-year term on the Board of Trustees.

**Clergy nominees:**
The Rev. Kyle V. Bennett, St. Mark’s, Marco Island  
The Rev. Eric S. Cooter, St. David’s, Englewood  
The Rev. Canon Benjamin Twimaani, Grace, Tampa

### General Convention
Elect eight deputies, four clergy and four lay people, to represent the diocese at the 77th General Convention of the Episcopal Church, July 5 – 12, 2012, in Indianapolis.

**Clergy nominees:**
The Rev. Robert Hennagin, St. Hilary’s, Fort Myers  
The Rev. John D. Hiers, Ascension, Clearwater  
The Rev. Sharon Lewis, Amazing Love Healing Ministry  
The Rev. Joel Morsch, Christ Church, Bradenton  
The Rev. Cesar Olivero, St. James, Port Charlotte  
The Rev. Fredrick Robinson, Redeemer, Sarasota  
The Very Rev. Michael G. Rowe, St. Mary’s, Bonita Springs  
The Rev. Doug Scharf, Holy Innocents’, Yborico  
The Rev. Doug Zimmerman, St. Wilfred’s, Sarasota

**Lay nominees:**
Jay L. Crouse, Redeemer, Sarasota  
Navita Cumming James, Ph.D., St. James House of Prayer, Tampa  
Joan Kline, Ascension, Clearwater  
Knute E. (Gene) Malmburg, St. Matthew’s, St. Petersburg  
Karen Patterson, St. Mary’s, Dade City  
Roger D. Schwenke, Ascension, Clearwater  
John Sites, St. Mary’s, Bonita Springs  
Heather M. Whelan, Christ Church, Bradenton

**David Whip, St. Mary Magdalene, Bradenton**
Convention to vote on five resolutions

Voting clergy and delegates will be asked to consider five resolutions at convention.

Three resolutions are from the Committee on Constitution and Canons:
- One seeks to clarify and reorganize language in Canon I concerning which clergy have voting rights at convention. No substantive changes are intended.
- Another resolution makes sweeping revisions to canons dealing with clergy disciplinary procedures, in order to conform to changes made at the national level in 2009. These changes, which take effect July 1, 2011, eliminate the Diocesan Review Committee and Ecclesiastical Trial Court. See more on these changes on page 16.
- The third resolution provides for a smooth transition to the new clergy disciplinary canons by allowing the existing members of the Trial Court to populate the newly created Disciplinary Board, until elections at the 2011 diocesan convention.

Two resolutions submitted by the Church of the Redeemer in Sarasota urge endorsement of the latest version of a proposed Anglican Covenant. The idea for a covenant was first introduced in 2004 and has been suggested as a way for the Anglican Communion to maintain unity amid differing viewpoints, especially on human sexuality issues and biblical interpretation.

Appointed by the Archbishop of Canterbury on behalf of the primates, a Covenant Design Group has been meeting since January 2007 and has produced three drafts of the Anglican covenant to date.

The Episcopal Church’s Executive Council has said that only General Convention, which next meets in 2012, can formally endorse the Anglican Covenant and predicted that such approval could not come until at least 2015 should endorsement require changes to the Episcopal Church’s constitution.

- One resolution asked the diocese, through convention, to “endorse the Covenant in principle, seeking to order its actions accordingly;”
- The second resolution urges the bishop and the diocese’s deputation to the 2012 General Convention “to work toward the adoption of this covenant.”

The full text of the proposed Covenant can be found at: www.anglicancommunion.org/commission/covenant/ridley_cambridge/draft_text.cfm
By Roger Schwenke

The 76th General Convention in Anaheim in 2009 approved a complete overhaul of Title IV of the Canons of The Episcopal Church, which are the Episcopal Church’s ministry discipline canons. These were enacted as Resolution A185, which may be found at http://www.episcopalarchives.org/CnC_ToC_2009.html.

Unlike the proposal which was presented to the 2006 General Convention, the 2009 version does not expand ecclesiastical discipline from clergy persons to include lay leaders.

Nevertheless, in moving from a model of clergy discipline based on the Code of Military Justice to one based on professional disciplinary structures used in the legal and medical professions, the names and functions of diocesan officers and bodies involved in the disciplinary process have been extensively revised.

Since the new system takes effect on July 1, 2011, our diocesan convention in October will have to make changes to our own diocesan canons to be ready for the transition.

These new canons are being presented to the convention by the Committee on Constitution and Canons.

Under the current system, by number of pages, Title IV spans more than 25 percent of the Constitution and Canons of the Episcopal Church. Currently, Title IV was established in 1994 and set out what would constitute a breach of appropriate clergy conduct, or what would violate the church’s doctrine and discipline. It set out how the church responds when clergy are so accused.

The old system

Under these procedures a written charge alleging an offense would be delivered to a Diocesan Review Committee. If the Review Committee determined that the facts in the charge, if true, would constitute an offense, they would send the charge to the Church Attorney, who investigated. If the Review Committee believed that the information before it if proved would establish that an offense

(Continued on page 17)
Clergy discipline
(Continued from page 16)

was committed and that the respondent priest or deacon committed it, it then issued a written presentment.

The Trial Court then held a trial on any contested issues. If two-thirds of the Trial Court found that the respondent committed an offense, then another determination was made as to an appropriate sentence.

The bishop then pronounced and imposed a sentence (which may be less than the sentence adjudged by the Trial Court) upon the respondent.

Although investigations are confidential, in the Diocese of Southwest Florida past and current members of the Review Committee have acknowledged that charges have been filed and have had to be investigated by the Church Attorney.

Since I have been the presiding judge of the Trial Court for several years, I know that there has been one (and thankfully only one) complete trial conducted.

Although I have not polled members of either the Review Committee or of the Court, I suspect that most of them would agree with many of the criticisms of the current Title IV process.

It has been notoriously expensive to all involved — both to the diocese and to those charged with the commission of an offense. Moreover, with its military courtroom predicate and punitive focus, it has become overly legalistic with little opportunity for redemption, despite our call to that though the Gospel as outlined in our baptismal covenant.

The current Title IV has provided almost no opportunity for mutual reconciliation between accused clergy and those who make the charge against them.

The new system

Under the new Title IV canons, both the process and most of these elements are replaced. The goal of the new process and canons is to make the disciplinary process in the church as open, receptive, transparent and as theologically based as possible.

The Episcopal Church’s Standing Commission on Constitution and Canons and the Task Force that is assisting with the implementation of the new Title IV have plans for a detailed training course sometime in early 2011. It is likely that this will be held in conjunction with other dioceses.

At the upcoming diocesan convention there will be discussion and a vote on Title IV canon changes proposed by the diocesan Committee on Constitution and Canons. The diocese does not have the choice of keeping the old Title IV process. That decision was already made by the General Convention.

Instead, convention deputies will be voting on two resolutions drafted by the committee. One is a “transition” resolution that essentially — as of July 1, 2011 (when the new national church Title IV provisions go into effect) — converts the existing Ecclesiastical Court into the Disciplinary Board. New members of that Board will then be elected at the 2011 Diocesan Convention.

The other resolution sets up our diocesan rules for the creation and operation of the various new structures created by the new Title IV process.

Based on how ecclesiastical discipline rules have evolved, there probably will need to be future “fine-tuning” of both the national Episcopal Church and the diocesan canons. Perhaps at some point disciplinary matters in The Episcopal Church will be more settled.

Hopefully the new canons better help all the church confront the profound reality that discipline in the Body of Christ is at best a prayerful, relational process — not at all easily enshrined in legislation, canons or law. At root is the question of accountability between members of the body.

Roger Schwenke is a Tampa attorney who has served as presiding judge of the diocese’s Ecclesiastical Trial Court and, as a deputy to General Convention, had a major hand in crafting the new Title IV canons.

Building Fund changes loan policy to help congregations

Episcopal News Service

Saying that much of the financial strain facing struggling Episcopal Church congregations in United States can be directly attributed to their buildings, the Episcopal Church Building Fund recently announced what it called “strategic and focused changes to its offerings to benefit strapped congregations and prevent closures.”

To make loans more feasible for small congregations, the building fund said in a press release it has increased loan amounts to $500,000, and the term may now be extended up to 15 years.

“We know that smaller parishes struggle to pay off building loans over 10 years,” building fund President Julia Groom-Thompson said. “The added term is designed to make payments less financially stressful.”

“We realize today that building fund loans may serve as a piece of the total funding for a project, they are used as leverage to secure other types of financing,” she added. “Today, congregations often need more financial leverage than we had previously been able to provide. We hope that increasing our limit to half a million dollars will bring building projects, and additional financing, within reach.”

The loan application process has been streamlined and decisions are made quickly, the news release said.

The building fund also said it is developing new ways to support parishes struggling under the burden of old, difficult-to-maintain underutilized buildings. The organization helps parishes rethink their space and re-evaluate building usage and works with them to achieve financial sustainability.

Building fund officials are available to consult with dioceses and congregations about how to make their real estate assets financially self-sustainable.
Five years after Katrina: Parishes showing scars, but recovering

By Mary Frances Schjonberg
Episcopal News Service

If you live on the Gulf Coast, says the Very Rev. James “Bo” Roberts, it’s not a question of whether a natural disaster will strike, but rather when the next one will come.

Roberts knows what he’s taking about. He is the rector of St. Mark’s Episcopal Church in Gulfport, Miss., one of six churches along the Gulf Coast portion of the Diocese of Mississippi that Hurricane Katrina destroyed on Aug. 29, 2005.

He began his ministry at St. Mark’s in April 1969, “right before [Hurricane] Camille came and tore it all up in August of that year, so I have rebuilt completely twice,” along with making lots of repairs after other storms in between.

Nell Bolton, executive director of Episcopal Community Services of Louisiana, which grew out of the Diocese of Louisiana’s early post-storm disaster-relief efforts, recites the events of the last five years almost like a litany: “Katrina, Rita, Gustav, Ike, and the economic downturn and now the oil spill.”

Emotional scars remain

Five years after hurricanes Katrina and Rita raked the Gulf, followed two years ago by Gustav and Ike, the states that share its coast are poised and anxious as the worst oil spill in U.S. history threatens their natural resources and their people’s livelihoods. That worry will mute commemorations of the fifth anniversary of Katrina’s wrath.

Roberts said, “It’s kind of hard to start commemorating [recovery from the hurricanes] when, not only are large numbers of places not recovered, but with people sitting here waiting for no telling what may happen if we should get a storm that is going to take all the oil that fortunately for right now is still sitting out in the Gulf and all of a sudden washed it up on the Gulf beaches.”

Diocese of Louisiana Bishop Mark Thompson agrees. “There’s been very little conversation in [New Orleans] or among other people about remembering Katrina.” he told ENS. And, as Thompson said, “there’s still anxiety when a storm approaches … A lot of scars of Katrina are emotional.

“You can see how it’s made them a little jittery and of course the oil spill hasn’t helped out either,” he said.

On Aug. 29, the fifth anniversary of the storm, Episcopal Community Services of Louisiana sponsored work on wetlands restoration in New Orleans’ Lower Ninth Ward. It was followed by a community health fair at Episcopal Church of All Souls and Community Center, which was started in the Lower Ninth Ward after it was decimated by post-Katrina flooding.

Katrina was one of the most devastating hurricanes in U.S. history, according to the National Hurricane Center, and was responsible for approximately 1,000 deaths in Louisiana and 200 in Mississippi. Producing an estimated $75 billion in damages, Katrina also was the costliest U.S. hurricane on record.

Tourist areas stronger

Mississippi Bishop Duncan Gray III said that in his state, redevelopment has followed patterns that were set before Katrina hit. “The communities are in various stages of recovery,” he said in a telephone interview, with those on the eastern part of the coast recovering more quickly than the western side.

“It’s just the nature of the land. The eastern part, particularly Biloxi, is full of casinos and has that strong, strong tourist, casino, restaurant [base],” Gray said. “As you go west, you’re into more residential and more small businesses. Then you go further on down the beach down to Waveland [near the Louisiana border where] it was not much more than a line of houses along the beach.”

Thousands responded

The swath of destruction wreaked first by Katrina and then Hurricane Rita on Sept. 23, 2005, galvanized Episcopalians to join the thousands of volunteers who traveled to the Gulf Coast to help residents recover and rebuild. Thousands of others donated money to the efforts.

“That experience of solidarity and really understanding and living into our interconnectedness with one another is something that we share not just locally or even regionally, but by virtue of all of

(Continued on page 18)
After Katrina
(Continued from page 18)

the hundreds of thousands of volunteers that have come down here, nationally,” said Bolton.

“That’s been an incredible source of support and encouragement to us in Louisiana as we’ve recovered from all these disasters.”

Two million hours given
One focus of those efforts was Camp Coast Care, which later merged with two similar groups to become Mission on the Bay.

The Rev. Elizabeth Wheatley-Jones, MOB’s director and chaplain, recently cited the statistics for the Diocese of Mississippi’s newspaper, calling them a “gracious glimpse” at the work done through the agency: 60,000 volunteers who donated 2,400,000 service hours valued at $45 million, 3,500 homes mucked out and/or gutted, 550 homes rehabbed or built anew, 2,200 individuals or families whose needs were managed, 1,250,000 meals served, and $15 million cash injected into Gulf Coast economies.

“That is a creative response and a job well done: participation in the ways of God, the transformation of lives, one family and one home at a time, day in and day out for five years,” she told the Mississippi Episcopalian.

By the time the Aug. 29 anniversary arrived, Mission on the Bay, a stalwart of the post-Katrina recovery effort that began in part at Lutheran Episcopal Services of Mississippi’s Camp Coast Care, had shut down, succumbing to the reality that the economic downturn and other disasters, including the oil spill, have diverted money elsewhere.

Roberts said he wanted “everyone to know of the gratitude we have for the outreach that was made after that storm.”

“You know, it’s not just the dollars,” he added. “You get a check in a mail — it might be 10 bucks, it might be $10,000, but it’s also the support you have from that and the encouragement.”

Churches rebuilding
There are other examples of post-Katrina progress, among many. Five of the six Mississippi Episcopal Church buildings Katrina destroyed have been rebuilt (including St. Mark’s).

Three congregations have completely rebuilt their churches and associated buildings, and three have rebuilt their worship space with future plans for expansion. The sixth, Church of the Redeemer in Biloxi, will probably be dedicated before the end of the year, according to Gray.

In doing so, the diocese took a risk with the three churches whose members decided to relocate inland off the Gulf: St. Mark’s, Church of the Redeemer and St. Patrick’s in Long Beach.

“We made very intentional, philosophical decisions [that] it was not appropriate to lay on to these three churches the interest payment on these loans until the property sold,” Gray said in a telephone interview with ENS.

The intent was to sell the Gulf-front land to help cover the cost of the inland purchases, the bishop explained, “assuming within five years we would have had some movement on that property and [then] the recession hits us and … development has basically come to a standstill.”

The diocesan budget has been “paying a sizeable chunk of interest on those properties,” Gray said. “Eventually, they’re going to be very good investments, but just in the short term … we’ve got a cash flow problem.”

Still, Gray said, there has been little protest from the rest of the diocese. “The broader diocese has increasingly understood what it means to be connected one to another,” Gray said. “That was theoretical for several years until we dealt with it in Katrina.”

Rebuilt, but scarred
In the Louisiana diocese, Thompson said, the handful of New Orleans churches that incurred major damage have “all recovered physically but there are scars of missing members.”

Behind Christ Church Cathedral in New Orleans, the Jericho Road Episcopal Housing Initiative has transformed itself from a gutting and repairing operation aimed at bringing affordable housing to the Uptown area of the city into an organization creating community partnerships to rehabilitate neighborhoods, empower families and facilitate home ownership.

Recently, Episcopal Community Services of Louisiana raised more than $90,000 to complete work on homes, is beginning a service and leadership- and spiritual-development program for young adults, and is partnering with Bayou Grace Community Services.

Less than two months after Katrina, then-Diocese of Louisiana Bishop Charles Jenkins predicted such efforts.

Now retired, Jenkins said in a homily shortly after the storm, that the “old normal of being the Episcopal Church with our doors locked, being a church that existed for we who were in it, will be no more. That washed away with your refrigerator. Our new normal is a church engaged, a church that is a servant church and a church that lives not for itself alone but for all for whom Christ died.”

Photo courtesy of Eley Guild Hardy Architects

Now: The new St. Mark’s Church building is further inland from the site where Hurricane Katrina destroyed the previous sanctuary on Aug. 29, 2005.
Study of Covenant by congregations urged

Presiding Bishop Katharine Jefferts Schori, House of Deputies President Bonnie Anderson and Executive Council member Rosalie Simmonds Ballentine are calling on all Episcopal congregations to engage in discussion of the proposed Anglican Covenant at some time during the next two years.

The Episcopal Church leaders suggested in a Sept. 3 letter that congregations consider organizing a discussion group on the covenant during Advent (2010 or 2011) or Lent (2011 or 2012) or at another time before General Convention in 2012.

A covenant first was proposed in 2004 as a way for the Anglican Communion to maintain unity amid differing viewpoints, especially on issues of human sexuality and biblical interpretation.

Executive Council, at its June 2010 meeting, approved and commended the Anglican Covenant study guide, which can be downloaded in English and Spanish at http://generalconvention.org/ec.

The study guide suggests questions for congregations to consider, such as: In what ways does the covenant strengthen the corporate life of the Episcopal Church and the common life of the Anglican Communion; and what are the positive and negative consequences of signing on to and living into the covenant?

Randall Giles, noted composer, dies

Randall Giles, composer, ethnomusicologist and an Episcopal Church missionary in India, died Aug. 27 at a hospital in Pondicherry following a brief illness and a heart attack. He was 60.

Since July 2000, Giles had been serving as director of the Institute for Indian Christianity and the Arts, a center that he helped to found.

Based in Chennai, India, Giles “shared his love for music and liturgy in India and other parts of Asia” as a missionary of the Episcopal Church from the Diocese of Western Massachusetts for more than 10 years, explained the Rev. David Copley, mission personnel officer for the Episcopal Church.

Giles was involved in a project for the Episcopal Church’s former department of Anglican and Global Relations to record music from various provinces of the Anglican Communion.

As a composer, Giles worked in many styles and idioms. Among his published works are more than 40 carols, motets, anthems and other choral pieces. Other compositions include instrumental works and music for theater, film and television.

Pennsylvania leaders ask for bishop’s removal

The members of the Episcopal Diocese of Pennsylvania’s Standing Committee have asked the House of Bishops for their “support and assistance in constructing a way to go forward in this diocese and to secure Bishop [Charles] Bennison’s retirement or resignation.”

Bennison resumed his role as diocesan bishop Aug. 16, 11 days after the church’s Court of Review for the Trial of a Bishop overturned a lower church court’s finding that he ought to be deposed (removed) from ordained ministry because he had engaged in conduct unbecoming a member of the clergy.

The charges alleged that Bennison, 35 years ago when he was rector of St. Mark’s Episcopal Church in Upland, Calif., failed to respond properly after learning that his brother, John Bennison, was “engaged in a sexually abusive and sexually exploitive relationship” with a minor parishioner. At the time, John Bennison was a 24-year-old newly ordained deacon (later priest) whom Charles Bennison had hired as youth minister.

The Court of Review overturned the original ruling because it said the statute of limitations on the charges had expired.

The Standing Committee members said Bennison “does not have the trust of the clergy and lay leaders necessary for him to be an effective pastor and leader of the Diocese of Pennsylvania, nor that he can regain or rebuild the trust that he has lost or broken.”

Committee members also attributed their request to “the fact that the Court of Review has taken the position that its hands are tied,” adding that the diocese is now in an “untenable situation.”

Inclusion conference set Oct. 1-2 in Houston

Episcopal Church House of Deputies President Bonnie Anderson will be the featured speaker at an October conference about the inclusion of lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender Christians in the life and ministry of the Episcopal Church.

The “Moving Forward: Exploring a New Path to Full Inclusion” conference will be held at Christ Church Cathedral in downtown Houston Oct. 1–2.

The conference comes in response to what a news release called “long-standing calls from church leadership for deep theological conversation” about inclusion.

The free conference is sponsored by the cathedral and includes parishes that are “conversation partners” from across the Diocese of Texas who may, or may not, support full inclusion, but who do support conversation, according to the release.

“This conference will be an opportunity to affirm the ministry and contribution of all members of the Diocese of Texas as well as hear a perspective from the larger church,” the Very Rev. Joe Reynolds, dean of Christ Church Cathedral, said in the release.

More information on the conference is available at www.movingforwardtexas.com.
Reflections — Earth
(Continued from page 4)

to own, it is used but not abused. And Native Americans accept the reality that they are a part of nature — they come from the Earth, and upon their death they will return to it. Many indigenous cultures have customs such as the creation of Prayer Circles — with prayers to the four compass points and with stones collected during travel, one can create a sacred space anywhere one chooses.

Now compare that to the way our culture views the Earth. When many of our forbearers read that man was to have “dominion” over all creation, it is apparent that this was interpreted to mean that humans had the right to do whatever they wished with the Earth and all the living things found thereon. As one observer put it, “The Earth would be much better off if we honored it as we do our mothers.”

At the July 2010 Episcopal College Chaplains’ Conference we heard the Rev. Stan White speak on the subject, “The Art of Resurrection.”

On the first day he gave a litany of things that “dry up our souls.” A part of that litany was what he called “our urban culture.” Two points that struck me were the loss of our connection with nature and the disconnect with our food sources. Regarding the first point, Stan pointed out that, first and foremost, we have lost darkness, heat and cold, meaning that we have lost touch with the cycle of nature. Unless one is an avid gardener, one rarely comes into contact with nature. We live in buildings that keep us from contact with the natural world; if we have garages in which we can actually park a vehicle, we can move from our living space to the garage and from there into our car, which serves as a cocoon on wheels that keeps us from contact with nature.

I could go on, but I’m sure you have gotten the point. And oftentimes when one participates in a program or reads about developing one’s spirituality, inevitably it is suggested that you try to create a sacred space within your home where you can go to be quiet and commune with God. Why not take a page out of the Indians’ book and escape to nature where God’s handiwork completely surrounds you? As for teh second point, I am sure many of you are familiar with the story of a parent asking her child where his food comes from, and the child’s response was, “The grocery store.” At first one smiles, even chuckles at this, but the reality is that this story is a tragedy. And what is even sadder is that this story is not limited to young children; there are many college students who have only a glimmer of an idea as to where their food comes from. This disconnect from our food sources leads to a disconnect with the land, a disconnect with God’s creation.

During the past few decades many Episcopalians have been introduced to the New Zealand Prayer Book and to services coming out of the Iona Community. And many, like me, have been drawn to the spirituality found in these two sources. I can’t speak for others, but I am drawn to the prayers because they remind me of how sacred all of creation is, how much we owe to the Earth and how we are called upon to be stewards, not masters, of her.

There are prayers for those who work the land and provide us with the food we have to eat, there are prayers of thanksgiving for God’s gift of this beautiful planet, and there are even prayers begging God’s forgiveness for our selfish misuse of this gift.

We need to “escape” the world that we humans have made and once more become a part of the world that God created. When we care for the Earth we are also caring for ourselves, for others who share this planet with us and for future generations. When we strive to save the Earth, we also serve God who is the creator of all things.

When I first heard of the oil spill in the Gulf, Lord Byron’s poem “Apostrophe to the Ocean” came to mind, especially the following lines:

Man marks the earth with ruin, his control
Rests with the shore;... Time writes no wrinkle on thine azure brow;
Such as creation’s dawn beheld, thou rollest now.... Thou glorious mirror, where the Almighty’s form

Glasses itself in tempests;... The image of Eternity - the throne Of the Invisible;....

What would Byron do were he here today? My guess is that he would weep as many of us have. But we mustn’t simply wring our hands and bewail what has occurred. We must resolve to take whatever actions are necessary to save “this fragile Earth, our island home.” It is not enough to admit our personal culpability in this and other ecological disasters. We have to truly repent, which means that we each have to change our ways.

I leave you with this thought from J. Matthew Sleeth’s book Serve God, Save the Planet: A Christian Call to Action: “…the most important change is not the car you drive or the house you live in. What we need most is a change of heart.” (p. 193).

‘Flat pastors’ travel to promote literacy

Episcopal News Service

The two pastors of Indian Hill Episcopal-Presbyterian Church in the Diocese of Southern Ohio had quite a fun, but “flat” summer.

The Rev. Anne Wrider and the Rev. David Hawley took virtual vacations — and to take the church with them while they were away.

The flat pastors visited locales ranging from Myrtle Beach, S.C., to Paris and Florence, Italy.

A bulletin board was created so parishioners could add their photos when they returned from their summer vacations.

The project was based on the Flat Stanley Project, an international literacy and community building project, and was created as a way to have parishioners think about the church over the summer — and to take the church with them while they were away.

The flat pastors visited locales ranging from Myrtle Beach, S.C., to Paris and Florence, Italy.

A bulletin board was created so parishioners could add their photos when they returned from their summer vacations.

Aimed primarily at children this book uses the allegory of metamorphosis to assist in understanding death.

Looking for a meaningful way to explain the death of a 5-year-old friend to neighborhood children, Stickney adapted a graceful fable about a water bug that left its pond and was transformed into a dragonfly. The water bugs’ questions about their friend’s whereabouts are similar to those questions children ask when someone dies.

With the coloring book children can now interactively experience this wonderful story by coloring or painting the black-and-white illustrations that fill each page. Coupled with the Water Bugs and Dragonflies storybook, those who do ministry with children in grief will find this to be an invaluable tool.


A collection of positive, original stories and lessons with activities for clergy and lay leaders to use in preaching to children from kindergarten through upper-elementary school. The topics generally follow the church year beginning in September and ending with Pentecost. Among the sermon topics addressed: Going Out on a Limb, Your Little Light, Learning to be a Friend, Rolling out the Red Carpet, God’s Stamp of Approval and Are We Ever Alone?


Biblically based, action-oriented ideas that will encourage members to become disciples who give and give generously.

Each idea, which begins with a Bible passage, will invite reflection and discussion, igniting greater responsiveness to God’s generosity.


“Transition” is the word we use to describe the time following significant change. In congregations, that change might be the departure of the pastor, a catastrophe such as Hurricane Katrina or 9/11, or simply the changes caused by growth. Transition calls for clergy with special training to respond to the needs generated by the special time. “Task, training and time limit” are the hallmarks of transitional ministry. Trained intentional interim clergy must have the skill and experience to lead congregations during transition.

This book seeks to clear up misconceptions about transitional ministry and present an accurate and up-to-date picture of transitional ministry and to describe the various settings in which this specialized ministry can be helpful.

Chapter authors, all experts in transitional ministry in mainline Protestant denominations, include Robert Friedrich, John Keydel, George Martin, Loren Mead, Barry Miller, Nancy Miller, Ineke Mitchell, Ken Cornell, Molly Dale Smith and Rob Voyle.


In Governance and Ministry, Alban Institute senior consultant Dan Hotchkiss offers congregational leaders a road map and tools for changing the way boards and clergy work together to lead congregations. Hotchkiss demonstrates that the right governance model is the one that best enables a congregation to fulfill its mission — to achieve both the outward results and the inward quality of life to which it is called.

Resources on governance for the nonprofit sector have burgeoned over the past decade, and this book translates some of what is most helpful from that world for clergy and lay leaders. It also recognizes that in some ways congregations are unique and need governance structures and processes different from those that work in other organizations.


Through the eyes and ears of Peter Sipple and his church’s African Children’s Mission, children ages 7–10 see and learn about the lives of children in the African country of Malawi. Thanks to the illustrations from artist Carol Chew, they can visualize the conditions faced by the families of this stricken land.

Through Abwenzi Means Friends, children also learn firsthand of the eight United Nations Millennium Development Goals. Developed in 2000 by leaders from 189 countries, the goals aim to end poverty, hunger and disease in poor countries around the world by 2015.

To order any of these books, go to Episcopal Books and resources, online at www.episcopalbookstore.org, or call (800) 903-5544 — or visit your local Episcopal bookseller.
Special Events

Guatemalan Consulate Mobile Weekend. Sept. 18-19, 8 a.m. to 6 p.m. at St. Mary’s Episcopal Church, 9801 Bonita Beach Road in Bonita Springs. Representatives from the Guatemalan Consulate and FCAHT will assist nationals from Guatemala with visas, housing and access to basic services. For more information call the church office at (239) 992-4343.

Training/Workshops/Retreats

Happening #64. Sept. 17–19 at DaySpring Conference Center in Parrish. Participants: 9–10th graders. Contact Michelle Mercurio at (941) 556-0315, ext. 274 or mmercurio@episcopalswfl.org

Cursillo #120. Sept. 30 to Oct. 3. Contact Anna Haefner at anna@haefner.net or (941) 322-4093.

Healing School Basic Training Level I. Nov. 14–17 at DaySpring Conference Center in Parrish. An opportunity for training in inner healing prayer ministry. Teaching, small group ministry and mentoring will be part of this course. Each participant will receive a course book to work through and a certificate of completion. The cost of $300 covers all lodging, meals and instructional materials. Maximum enrollment of 40. Contact Pastor Sharon Lewis at pastorsharon@amazinglovehealing.com. For more information on this training go to www.amazinglovehealing.com.

New Beginnings #48. Oct. 22–24, at DaySpring Conference Center in Parrish. Participants: 6–8th graders. Team: 9–12th graders. Registration fee: $140. Contact Michelle Mercurio at (941) 556-0315, ext. 274 or mmercurio@episcopalswfl.org.

Fresh Start Meeting (Clergy and Lay). Dec. 4 from 9 a.m. to 3 p.m. at DaySpring Conference Center, 8411 25th Street East in Parrish. This workshop will explore the factors to consider in determining how decisions should be made and who should be involved to analyze the decision-making style of the congregation and explore its consequences, and to look at the impact of culture on decision-making styles. Contact Tana Sembiante at (941) 556-0315, ext. 271.

Marriage Prepare/Enrich Seminar. Oct. 21, 9 a.m. to 4:30 p.m. at St. Paul’s Episcopal Church, 3901 Davis Blvd. in Naples. Clergy and lay leaders have an opportunity to receive training in a well-established marriage preparation and marriage enrichment tool. The cost is $175. Register at www.prepare-enrich.com (under “Training” click on “Find a Workshop”). For information, contact Gareth Sweatman at thsweat@comcast.net or at (561) 395-3129.

Meetings

Daughters of the King Annual Assembly. Sept. 18, from 9 a.m. to noon at DaySpring Conference Center. The diocesan Daughters’ annual meeting. Registration is $25, which includes a welcoming morning coffee and lunch. Without lunch, the registration fee is $15. Forward registrations to: Gwendolyn Williams, 1031 Oakwood Drive, Dunedin, FL 34698. It is important that you include with your registration a list of those from your chapter who will attend and indicate whether they will stay for lunch. All chapters are highly encouraged to attend and to provide a small display representing their chapter activities/ministries. If your chapter has a banner, please feel free to bring that as well.

Standing Committee. Oct. 7, 1–3 p.m. in the Peace River Room of the Charlotte Harbor Events and Conference Center, 75 Taylor St., Punta Gorda.

Diocesan Council. Oct. 7, 3–5 p.m. in the Peace River Room of the Charlotte Harbor Events and Conference Center, 75 Taylor St., Punta Gorda.

The 42nd Convention of the Diocese of Southwest Florida. Oct. 8-9 at the Charlotte Harbor Event and Conference Center in Punta Gorda. Contact the diocese at (941) 556-0315.

Standing Committee. Nov. 16 at 10 a.m. at the diocesan office, 7313 Merchant Court, Sarasota. Regularly scheduled meeting of the committee.

Commission on Ministry. Nov. 16 at 1 p.m. at the diocesan office, 7313 Merchant Court, Sarasota. Regularly scheduled meeting.

Diocesan Council. Nov. 20, 9 a.m. at DaySpring Conference Center in Parrish. Regularly scheduled meeting.

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 website:

www.episcopalswfl.org