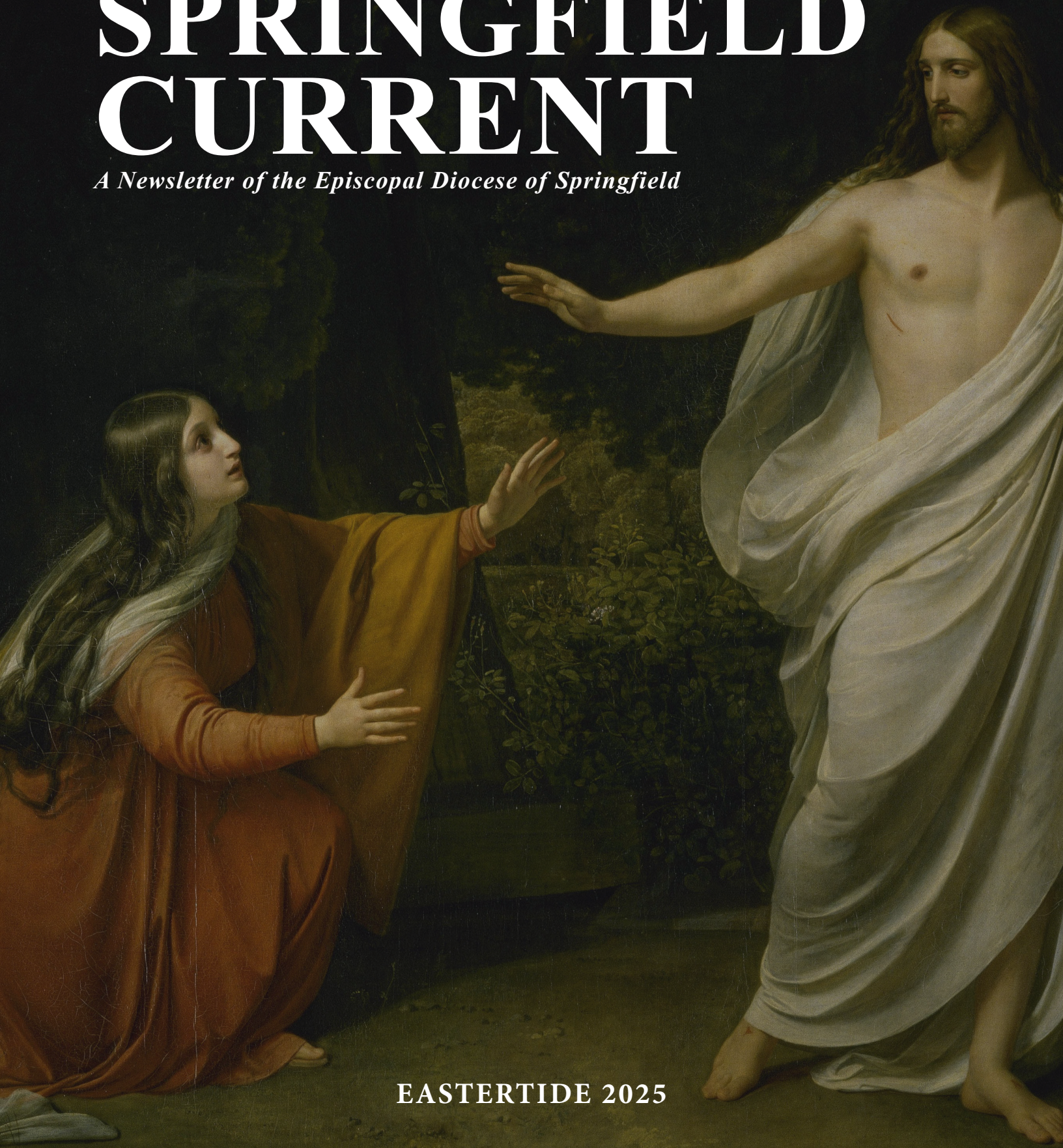
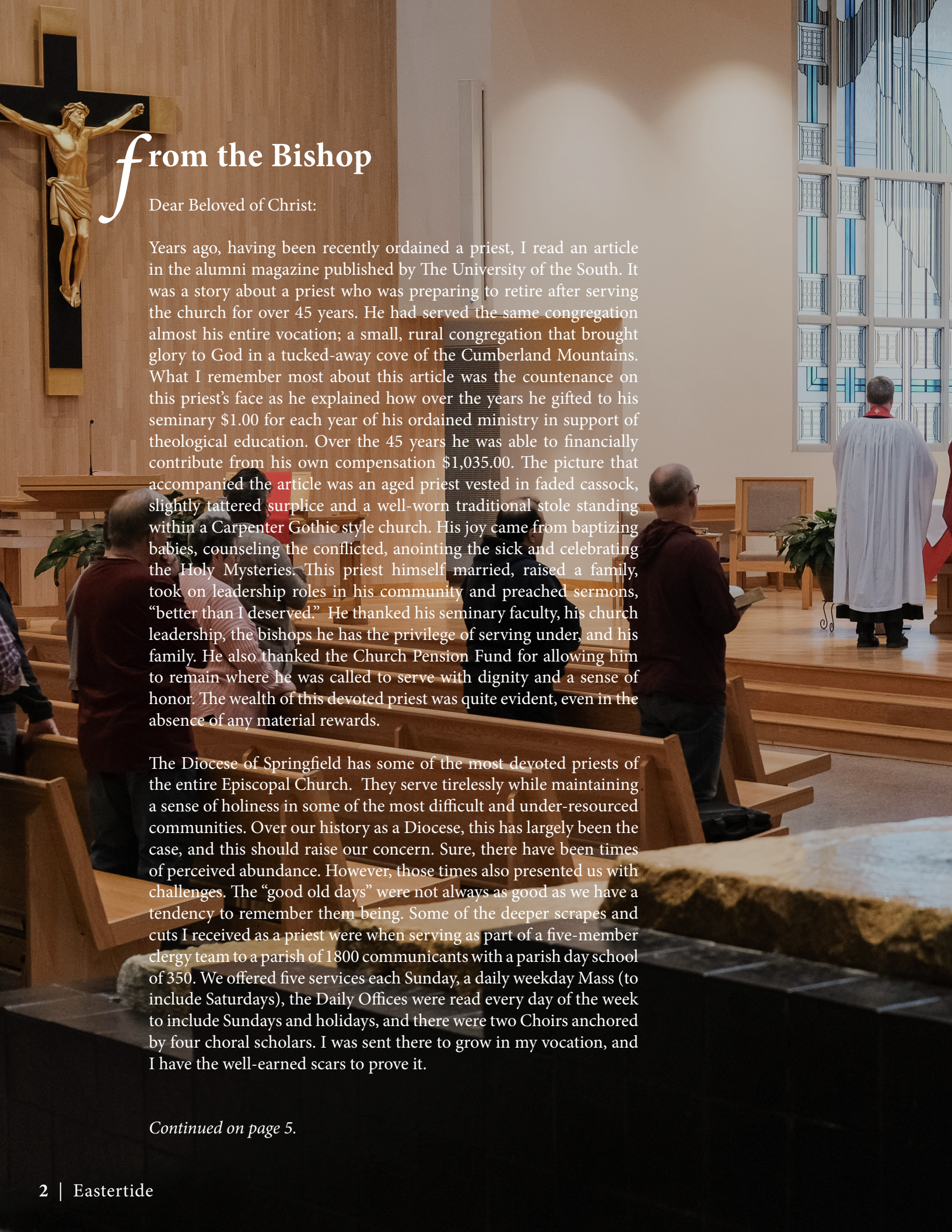


SPRINGFIELD CURRENT

A Newsletter of the Episcopal Diocese of Springfield



EASTERTIDE 2025



from the Bishop

Dear Beloved of Christ:

Years ago, having been recently ordained a priest, I read an article in the alumni magazine published by The University of the South. It was a story about a priest who was preparing to retire after serving the church for over 45 years. He had served the same congregation almost his entire vocation; a small, rural congregation that brought glory to God in a tucked-away cove of the Cumberland Mountains. What I remember most about this article was the countenance on this priest's face as he explained how over the years he gifted to his seminary \$1.00 for each year of his ordained ministry in support of theological education. Over the 45 years he was able to financially contribute from his own compensation \$1,035.00. The picture that accompanied the article was an aged priest vested in faded cassock, slightly tattered surplice and a well-worn traditional stole standing within a Carpenter Gothic style church. His joy came from baptizing babies, counseling the conflicted, anointing the sick and celebrating the Holy Mysteries. This priest himself married, raised a family, took on leadership roles in his community and preached sermons, "better than I deserved." He thanked his seminary faculty, his church leadership, the bishops he has the privilege of serving under, and his family. He also thanked the Church Pension Fund for allowing him to remain where he was called to serve with dignity and a sense of honor. The wealth of this devoted priest was quite evident, even in the absence of any material rewards.

The Diocese of Springfield has some of the most devoted priests of the entire Episcopal Church. They serve tirelessly while maintaining a sense of holiness in some of the most difficult and under-resourced communities. Over our history as a Diocese, this has largely been the case, and this should raise our concern. Sure, there have been times of perceived abundance. However, those times also presented us with challenges. The "good old days" were not always as good as we have a tendency to remember them being. Some of the deeper scrapes and cuts I received as a priest were when serving as part of a five-member clergy team to a parish of 1800 communicants with a parish day school of 350. We offered five services each Sunday, a daily weekday Mass (to include Saturdays), the Daily Offices were read every day of the week to include Sundays and holidays, and there were two Choirs anchored by four choral scholars. I was sent there to grow in my vocation, and I have the well-earned scars to prove it.

Continued on page 5.

SPRINGFIELD CURRENT

THE NEWSLETTER OF THE
EPISCOPAL DIOCESE OF SPRINGFIELD

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Cover art: Christ's Appearance to Mary
Magdalene after the Resurrection by
Alexander Ivanov, c, 1835
[Wikimedia Commons](#)

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Communication serves a crucial function in every ministry. Sharing information among congregations, committees, and individual members is no small task. Welcoming new members to our diocesan family also requires unique communication efforts at all levels.

Your contribution to this ministry of communication helps spread the word about what God is doing in our lives, in our congregations, in our diocese, and in the Episcopal Church at large. Please consider making a gift today.

We are committed to sending our diocesan publication to all members and friends of the Episcopal Diocese of Springfield. It is not necessary to contribute in order to receive *The Springfield Current*. Nevertheless, if you choose to support The Springfield Current, your contribution will be of great assistance in this ministry and is tax deductible. Thank you for your support!



DIOCESE OF SPRINGFIELD

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Photo by Fr. Parker Asplin

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FROM THE BISHOP

Continued

suffice it to say we have traversed high-tide and low-tide. Waiting for all things to turn out in our favor is not a viable option for the Church. We cannot stop being the Church nor can we cease proclaiming the resurrection of Jesus Christ when financial markets take a plunge, attendance plummets or social constructs press hard against us in interest of bringing about our own demise. Looking the other way is also not an option when it comes to caring for our priests in the right way. Quite a few priests of the Episcopal Church and this Diocese are struggling vocationally. While not to the level of crisis, the constant uphill struggle is sapping them of their attention when it comes to being faithful, true and bold. Taking care of our priests' emotional, spiritual, financial and psychological health is not something a parish or mission is especially equipped to do on a daily basis, nor are we resourced to address such complexities. We are all quite aware of the pressures

placed upon our clergy by the vocational ministry and we want to ensure the health and wellness of those God has given us to organize and lead the work of the Church today, which extends far beyond worship. To that priority, I invite us to support our priests of all ages in their attending a week-long CREDO conference offered by the Church Pension Group (CPG).

CREDO stands for Clergy Renewal and Enrichment Development Operation. It is intended to bring the cleric's own spiritual, financial, vocational, physical and psychological well-being into view. No one can (or should) take care of these priorities like the cleric themselves. It should come as no surprise that the decision to enter the deployment process is often accompanied by lack of financial planning, mounting debt, emotional fatigue or even exhaustion due to poor diet, socially acceptable addictions, and lack of attention to physical fitness; all the wrong reasons to "make a move" because the priest usually ends up taking the same malpractice to their new cure. Priests who sit at their computers on Easter Monday in search of open positions because they are disappointed with the attendance of Easter Sunday are entering the deployment



Photo by Zachary Buscher

process for all the wrong reasons. CREDO is a step in the right direction and it is a resource of faithful stewardship. To give a priest the tools that allow him or her to navigate a healthy and productive vocation is a matter of stewardship. It is how we take care of one of our most precious resources.

There are quite a few aspects of vocational ministry that "they don't teach you in seminary." One of these is how to prepare and organize yourself financially so that the stresses of being the CEO of a volunteer giving society does not overwhelm you and/or drive you into unmanageable debt. Too many of our priests have not explored the benefits of a 403B retirement savings plan, which intended to supplement their pension in a time that will be a great deal more financially complicated than it is today. Especially when clerics are entering their first or second cures, there ought to be a plan that brings the cleric and his/her family into a well-orchestrated retirement. The investment potential of even \$50.00 a month to start yields tremendous dividends over a 25 or 30 year vocation. Our concern for them is when they are in their 20s, their 40s, their 60s and well beyond their 80s as we live longer and longer and will most certainly have need for such financial resources. Other aspects are being in charge of one's own spiritual life and physical well-being. Or, to put it succinctly, how do you feed others when you



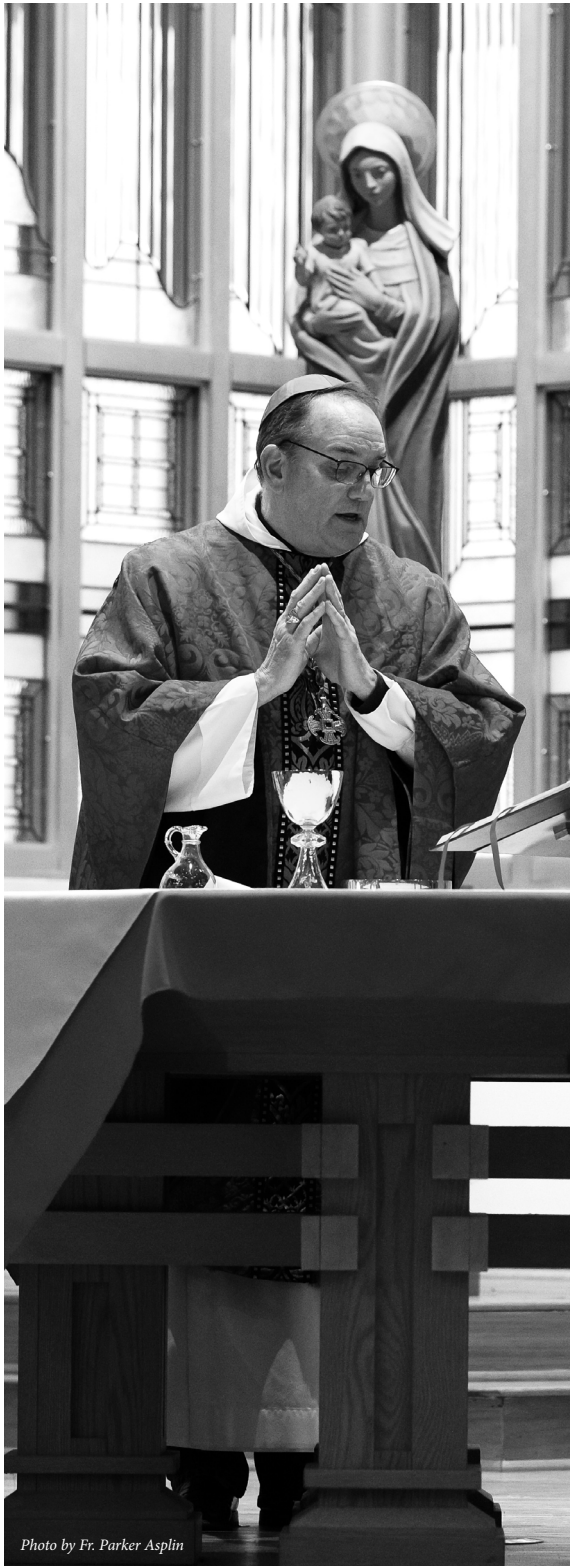


Photo by Fr. Parker Asplin

are not feeding yourself? How do you care for others when neglecting your own physical well-being? (we can all see it, can't we?).

From the CPG website: “CREDO began in the mid 1990s when The Church Pension Fund’s (CPF) Wellness Initiatives Advisory Committee—a group charged with exploring wellness options for plan participants—recommended a program to give clergy a chance to pause their busy, demanding lives and focus on health and well-being through a discernment and wellness conference.” CREDO is a week-long seminar of classes, break-out sessions, one-on-one coaching/counseling opportunities; opportunities for worship, fellowship, rest and renewal; and it intends to give the cleric the tools necessary for a successful vocation. When a cleric rids himself of addictions, financial debt, and unhealthy physical habits found in poor diet and lack of exercise, then deployment decisions are made for the right and good reasons, not because an oily smudge pot is burning deep inside the cleric driving them to seek happiness outside of themselves (which never really comes). The same is true for congregations. It was during my CREDO that I was told by one of the facilitators, “The vocation does not belong to you, it belongs to the Church. Be open to what it is the Church may need. Be open to your great passion meeting someone else’s great need.” When oriented in that way, one takes deployment opportunities not as what we may want in our disappointment, but as what God gets in his plan of salvation.

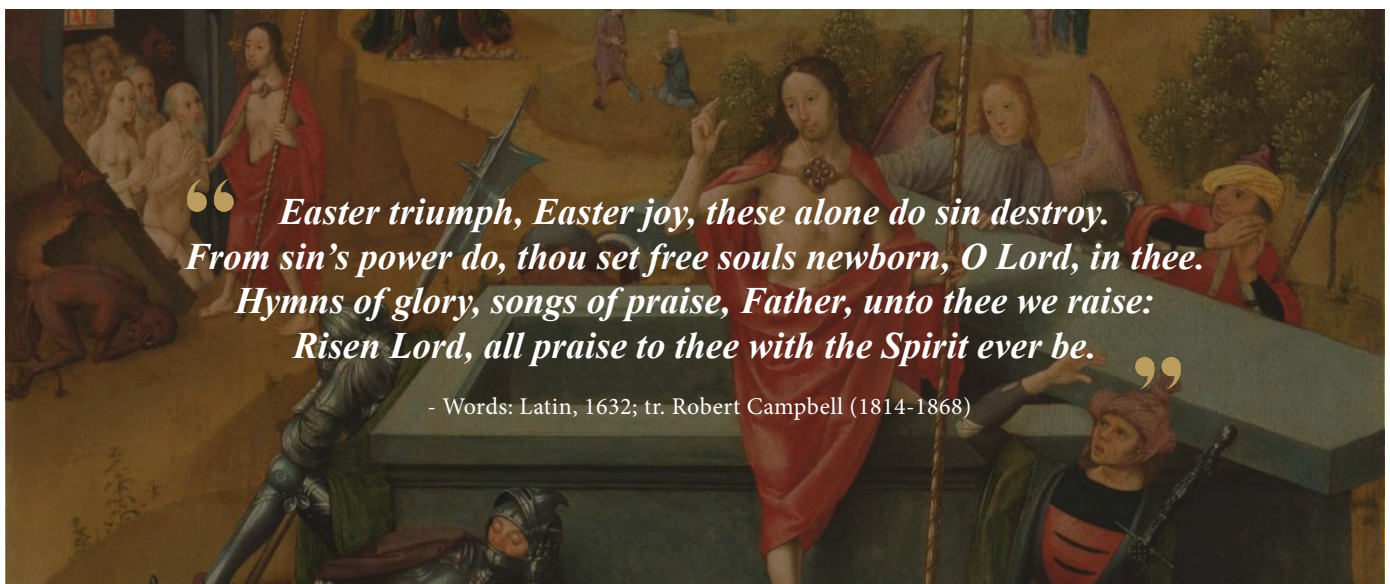
There are homework assignments that must be completed and turned in prior to arriving for your week-long conference. Highly respected professionals in each field are present to give directions, recommendations and permission for us not to wait until we have enough; or, worse yet, have had enough. It is intended to give each cleric the knowledge, tools and motivation for addressing the basic roadbed that supports a healthy and successful vocational journey. Sessions are offered generally; for seminarians, those newly ordained, for those within five-years of retirement, for bishops, and even for those under the age of 45. Does your priest know in their 30s when and how to approach a celebrated retirement? Why not? Imagine the sense of calm that comes over the cleric, and by extension the parish, when a well-orchestrated plan (subject to revision) is being addressed day after day without panic and without concern.

CREDO conferences are offered at some of our most celebrated camp and conference centers with full amenities such as walking paths, work-out centers and inviting chapels. I accepted an invitation to a CREDO conference while in only my second year of ordained ministry. It has proved invaluable and I attribute the wellness of our plan to that week of presentations and direct one-on-one counseling based on the financial, physical and vocational situation I was in at the time. I am saying “yes” to a great many more things today because I was encouraged by mentors and peers to say, “no” to what was fleeting and passing away at the time.

None of us will be at our priest’s retirement with an envelope stuffed with cash, a proclamation forgiving

all indebtedness, and a clean writ of health. Not only is that not our responsibility, it is feasibly impossible. Our responsibility today is to encourage, support and finance opportunities like this under the priority of continuing education expectations that all clerics of this Diocese live under so that what greets our clergy at their retirement is able to take them into their next celebrated phase of the vocation.

We are being made into the very image and likeness of Jesus Christ. This is “heavy lifting” as we seek to perfectly serve God’s will for us. Having these resources, in addition to the faith of the Church, is an expression of our living into Easter triumph and Easter Joy, as we sing;



In the peace of God, which passeth all understanding;

Bishop Brian K. Burgess
XII Springfield

+ 3-15-21

THE ROLE OF THE COMMISSION ON MINISTRY

By The Reverend Fr. Jonathan Butcher

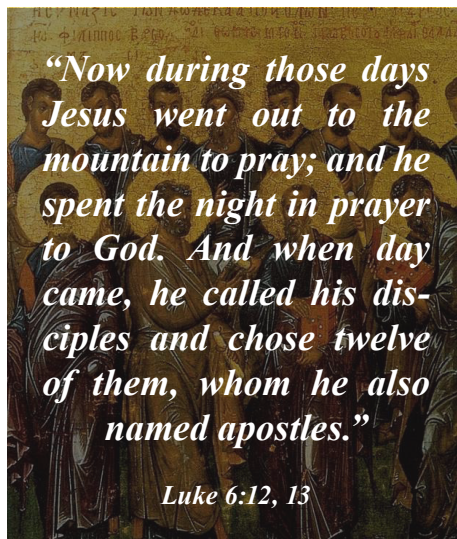
St. Paul's Episcopal Church, Pekin & All Saints' Episcopal Church, Morton

All Christians, by virtue of their baptism and the gift of the Holy Spirit, are called and equipped to proclaim the Gospel and spread the Kingdom of God. However, from the beginning of Jesus' ministry and its continuation by his Body, the Church, God has chosen some for a ministry of teaching, prayer, and service to the Church herself. Those ordained for such ministry came to be known as bishops, priests, and deacons, each with their particular work and calling for the nurture of God's people and the proclamation of the Gospel.

The ordained ministry is a vocation from God to serve his people and witness to the world. But the calling voice of the Holy

Spirit can be difficult to discern, especially in our modern day, where silence and solitude are regarded with contempt, an abdication of an imagined moral imperative to clanging noise and virtual connection. What is more, the Spirit speaks not only to each of us individually, but to the Body as a community. As such, the calling to ordained ministry can be heard as a word spoken individually, that we present to the Church for affirmation. Or alternatively, as my own calling was, as something the Church heard and which I (eventually) accepted as being true to where the Spirit was leading me.

Recognizing this, the Episcopal Church and the Diocese of Springfield have "established procedures to identify and select persons with evident gifts and fitness for ordination" (Title III, Canon 8.1 of the 2018 Canons of the Episcopal Church). The intention of these procedures is not to create an undue burden or barrier to fulfilling a call. Rather, it is to give plenty of opportunity to discern rightly the call of God, either affirming

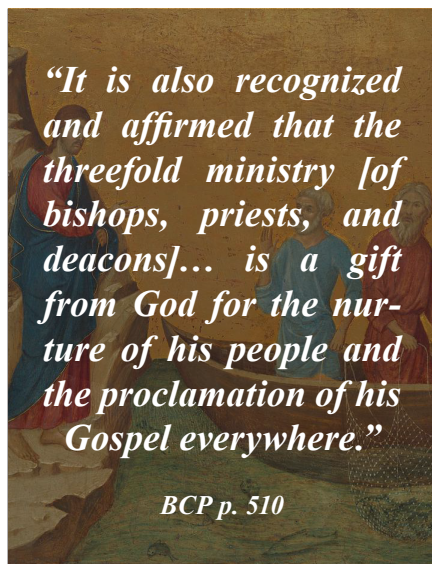


The Synaxis of the Twelve Apostles. Russian, 14th century, Moscow Museum

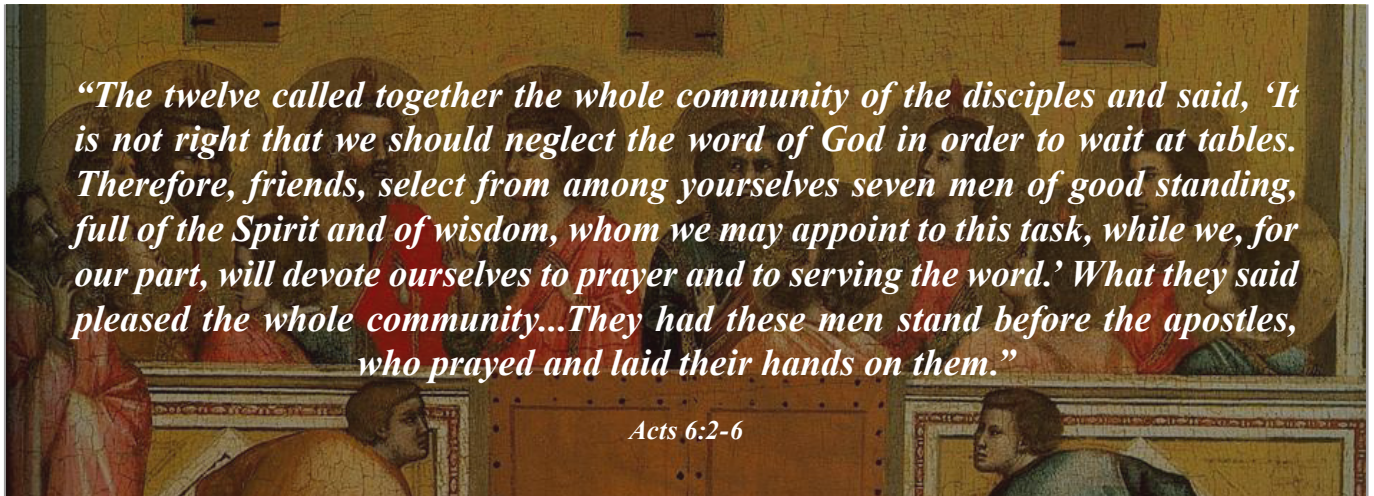
ordination or not, and then to equip and strengthen those whose call is affirmed.

The full process for both deacons and priests can be found on the Diocesan website. During the process, both the individual and the Church have several "checkpoints" to stop and listen to the Spirit speaking. And even if at one of these "checkpoints" the answer to ordination is "no", remember that the call to work, pray, and give for the spread of the Kingdom remains for all Christians.

The first step is to recognize that the Holy Spirit may be leading you to this vocation, or leading you to recognize that call in someone else. I would recommend setting aside



The Calling of the Apostles Peter and Andrew, Duccio Di Buoninsegna c. 1308-11



Pentecost, Giotto c. 1267-1276

time on an Ember Day (remaining in 2025, June 11, 13, 14, September 17, 19, 20, and December 17, 19, 20) to fast and pray in solitude and silence, listening to the Spirit. Then go to your parish

priest to discuss what your sense of the Holy Spirit’s prompting is. If your priest agrees that there could be such a call on your life, the formal process begins with an application to the Diocese due by January 1st

each year. After that, we trust that God works through us as we seek to faithfully listen to his Spirit as the Body of his Son.

*O God, who didst lead thy holy apostles to ordain ministers in every place:
Grant that thy Church, under the guidance of the Holy Spirit, may choose
suitable persons for the ministry of Word and Sacrament, and may uphold them
in their work for the extension of thy kingdom; through him who is the Shepherd
and Bishop of our souls, Jesus Christ our Lord, who liveth and reigneth with
thee and the Holy Spirit, one God, for ever and ever. Amen.*

SEAMEN'S CHURCH INSTITUTE

By Ron Sprague

Trinity, Lincoln

The Diocese of Springfield is about as far from the oceans that touch our country as is possible. Why then, should parishioners in the Springfield diocese take an interest in, or participate in some of Seamen’s Church Institute’s (SCI) ministries? The answer lies in our diocese’s geography and in SCI’s missions.

Although far from an ocean, our diocese touches three of our nation’s most important commercial inland waterways: the Mississippi, the Ohio, and the Illinois Rivers. The gigantic grain storage and transfer elevators in the parishes of such towns as Alton and Havana are visible testaments to the

economic importance of these waterways.

To explain SCI's missions, a brief history discussion is needed. SCI was founded in 1834 in New York harbor (lower Manhattan). Seamen coming ashore after a voyage were prey to robbers, con artists, and unscrupulous boarding houses. A group of ship owners and wealthy merchants formed SCI to provide for the safety and comfort of seamen. They were mostly Episcopalians. Their first project was to start a small church, built on a barge. The priest-in-charge was Episcopalian and was part of the Diocese of New York. Other ministries quickly followed. A boarding house was founded which over time became a seven-story building capable of providing room and board to almost 600 seamen while they were ashore. Help and comfort were provided to foreign as well as American seamen whose vessels had been sunk during World War 1.

In 1919 SCI was formed as a non-profit organization, no longer a formal part of the Episcopal Church, but still maintaining an "affiliation" with the church (the exact nature of the "affiliation" is one of the mysteries of the Church). The president of SCI is traditionally an ordained Episcopal priest. Its ministries continued to expand and multiply. During the 20th century, SCI started to provide services to mariners on our inland waters ("brown water") as well as seamen who work on the oceans ("blue water").



Today, SCI's ministries include providing legal help to seamen (it has a staff of maritime lawyers, training (it maintains centers in Houston, TX and Paducah, KY equipped with state-of-the-art wheel house simulators) as well as a cadre of chaplains who visit ocean going vessels and riverboats throughout the country.

Another ministry, of potential interest to many parishioners, is their "Christmas at Sea" project. Knitting groups (and individuals) throughout the country knit scarves, cowls and hats which, through the chaplains, are gifted to seamen and mariners. Each year (since the early 1900's) the knitters provide tens of thousands (over 60,000 in the last available count) of items as gifts. Additional individuals or groups are always welcome to participate and items are received throughout the year. There are some guidelines (since they will be worn around heavy machinery in a working environment, fringes and bobs are not allowed). Patterns and

instructions may be found at: <https://seamenschurch.org/programs-services/christmas-at-sea/patterns-publications/>

More information about SCI can be found at their excellent website: <https://seamenschurch.org/>



Knit works contributed to SCI's "Christmas at Sea" program by Anne Morris of Trinity, Lincoln in 2023

OUTREACH GRANTS

By Bethany Buscher

Communications Coordinator for the Episcopal Diocese of Springfield

At the end of 2024, an opportunity to submit applications for grants in support of local community ministries was extended to the parishes of the Diocese of Springfield. These funds, not exceeding \$500 per congregation, were to be distributed in “support of ministries in their geographic locations, including ministries supported by their congregations,” as stated by resolution of the Diocesan Council. The Bishop’s office received eight applications in total and granted the distribution of funds to each.

Many themes stood out between the varying applications submitted to the Diocesan office; most commonly, added support for community shelters and spaces for the at risk and needy. Among these was an application from St. Mark’s for The Night’s Shield in West Frankfort, a non-for-profit, private organization that offers a safe haven for children in need. This already well-established organization has provided more than 19,000 nights of care to over 1,400 children in the state of Illinois since their opening over 12 years ago.

The good people at St. Mark’s Episcopal Church have supported the efforts at The Night’s Shield for a while now, providing hot meals, clothing, and other necessities for the infants, children, and teenagers that regular the facility. The Church of the Holy Trinity in Danville had a similar idea, submitting a grant request on behalf of the Dwelling Place of Vermilion County Day Center; a daytime safe haven

available to all residence of the community, offering needed services, lunch through the weekdays, the opportunity to shower and do laundry, and a place to escape the winter cold and the summer heat. Since establishing a relationship with the Day Center (which is located



The Night's Shield, <https://www.thenightsshield.org/>

only four blocks from the parish), the people of The Church of the Holy Trinity have referred many individuals toward their doors.

While many grants will be serving already established programs, St. John’s in Centralia is hoping to support the efforts of a startup safe home. All Hours of Love is a cooling and warming refuge hoping to eventually serve homeless and marginalized people in their community. They have big plans for the future, to include meals, laundry services, showers, group prayer, weekly church services and Bible studies, as well as offering sponsorships and rehabilitation services, with the ultimate goal of providing an atmosphere that will help “to see people restored to being what God created them to be.”



The Dwelling Place of Vermilion County, <https://www.thedwelling-place2017.us/>



Daily Bread Soup Kitchen, <https://dailybreadsoupkitchen.com/>

Up in the northern part of our diocese, Emmanuel Memorial Champaign requested funds to support the Daily Bread Soup Kitchen just down the road. This parish has been in relationship with the soup kitchen for years, donating funds, volunteering, and directing those in need towards Daily Bread's services for hot meals and sack suppers, as well as the acquiring of bus passes, state IDs, and other essential services.

In Harrisburg, IL, The Christian Community Compassion Center (4C's) functions in many capacities to serve their community, and St. Stephen's Episcopal Church is continuing to increase their involvement with the organization in more ways than just financially. The 4C's functions as a homeless shelter, provides temporary financial assistance in times of crisis, stands as an affordable clothing store, and has operated as a food pantry three days a week since 1990, serving eligible families with needed essentials in a dignified manner. Many of these

services are run by the churches of Harrisburg, including our very own St. Stephens.

The saints at St. Thomas in Salem chose to apply on behalf of a unique organization in their community. Mission Salem is a program powered entirely by volunteers that

builds and installs wheelchair ramps for those that need it in the area of the Salem Community



Mission Salem, <https://www.facebook.com/missionsalemil/>

High School district that spreads from the city of Salem to parts of Marion County. Funded entirely by donations and grants, the good work of Mission Salem is known well in not only the parish or community of Salem, but in the surrounding communities as well, inspiring many similar projects to appear in neighboring towns. One of St. Thomas' own parishioners has been the recipient of a wheelchair ramp during the past several years that it has functioned.

While most of the applicants elected to request funding on behalf of an external organization in the

community, a couple were looking to fill the needs of services provided within their own parish walls. St. Thomas in Glen Carbon was among these, requesting funds to be used to make safety improvements to the playground of the Episcopal Childcare and Preschool operation next door. After receiving a "spotless review" from the State regulatory inspector, the only suggestion was a couple of safety enhancements for the playgrounds, which they have responsibly chosen to heed to "continue to cultivate [their] responsiveness to and relationship with [their] regulator." The people of St. Thomas have had a thriving relationship with the daycare for years through financial support and with many church members assisting both physically and administratively. And while the daycare itself is housed next door, the school uses the church building for several of their key events throughout the year, including a Christmas pageant,



St. Paul's Episcopal Church, The Episcopal Parish of Alton

graduation, and parent meetings.

The Episcopal Parish of Alton has directed their outreach efforts similarly close to home, looking to better cultivate the space where they host their AA meetings through the month. “Some [of the groups] have met here for decades and one in particular celebrated its 50 year anniversary of being at St. Paul’s.” The funds will allow them to fix their kitchenette space for the AA members, with hopes that a higher-quality meeting space might attract more recovery ministries to use the room. This is just one of many ways that the congregation is looking to get more involved in these recovery ministries.



St. Thomas Episcopal Parish in Glen Carbon, <https://madison-historical.siue.edu/archive/items/show/424>

It is clear to see that 2025 will be yet another year flourishing with good works within our Diocese. Our parishes have hearts deeply rooted in their communities and are not afraid to go out and be the Body to those that do life most closely with them. Be sure to keep your eyes trained to your own parish and those near to you to catch glimpses of the Kingdom in your very own neighborhood.



The Apostles Sent Out, Phillip Medhurst Collection c. 2008

“
*And now, Father,
send us out to do the work
you have given us to do,
to love and serve you
as faithful witnesses of
Christ our Lord.
To him, to you, and to the
Holy Spirit, be honor and
glory, now and for ever.
Amen.*

”

- BCP p. 366

INVITATION TO EPISCOPAL CHURCH CAMP

June 22nd - 28th, 2025

Hosted at Camp Wartburg, Waterloo, IL

As the bulbs in our gardens reach full bloom and daylight spills further into the evenings, we are reminded that summer is right around the corner, which means that the Episcopal Church Camp (ECC) of Illinois team is hard at work crafting a memorable week for the youths of the Diocese of Springfield and beyond. ECC will once again be hosted on the beautiful grounds at Camp Wartburg in Waterloo, IL, and will last from June 22nd through the 28th, 2025. Our students can expect hours of outdoor activities, crafting sessions, nature exploration, and more, while our parents and parishes can expect to receive their children home at the end of the week with grass-stained knees, thoroughly-filled stomachs, an endless supply of stories, and a deeper knowledge of what it means to walk and worship in the way of Christ and our Anglican tradition.

For those interested in sending or sponsoring a child to Church Camp this year, the early-bird discount is still available. Additionally, first-time campers receive a 50% discount off of their registration fees. Parents and sponsors should complete one registration form per child, which can be found by visiting the ECC page

on the Diocesan website at <https://episcopalspringfield.org/ministries/episcopal-church-camp>. Scholarships are available by request to be considered to your rector, priest-in-charge, deacon, or directly to Canon Wells at canon@episcopalspringfield.org. Those seeking scholarships are encouraged to invite a friend to join in the summer experience.

Last year's week of Church Camp had many children reminiscing through the winter months about warmer days and memories of new friends, young and old. As we begin to fill the summer schedules of our children with vacations and sports lessons, let us remember our ultimate priority of helping them grow into the full stature of Christ and set aside time for such things.



YOU DESERVE A CURSILLO WEEKEND

By Dawn Jung & Bob Vaughn

St. George's, Belleville



Ever feel like you are on a treadmill of work, family, and church? The pace is exhausting, the world may seem chaotic, and a question arises – does it all matter? In God's eyes, am I making a difference? Maybe it's time to take a break, get away, and spend time investing in your relationship with the Lord and explore his plans for your life. Is Cursillo an essential part of your spiritual growth plan? It could be. From Barbara Miller, a St George's parishioner who attended,

"I had a wonderful experience when I attended Cursillo. You get away for three days, sing together, worship together, share in a variety of activities, and learn more about how much God loves us and how to share God's love with others. This experience helped to strengthen my faith. It helped me to come out of my shell some in sharing my faith with others. I made many new friends and got to know some of my church friends better. I highly recommend Cursillo to anyone wanting to deepen their faith journey."

The Episcopal Diocese of Springfield will be sponsoring Cursillo XL (40) at Toddhall, Sep 25 - 28, 2025. Perhaps you've considered Cursillo before and this will be the year to say yes. Cursillo, for those that have never heard about it, is a 3 day retreat that provides an opportunity for spiritual awakening and growth. It's a chance to unplug, disconnect and consider your relationship with God, and your roles in life. Cursillo utilizes a time-proven process to deepen participants' relationship with God, and acts as a call to a deliberate way of living a Christian life.

For more information, talk to a member of your congregation that has made the Cursillo journey. If you can't find one, contact cursillo@episcopalspringfield.org and we'll help.

Eastertide | 15

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