



CHURCHWORK

OUR VISION: The Diocese of Louisiana is one church, faithful to our Lord Jesus, united in mission, reaching out through service and proclamation to all for whom Christ died. We live in joyous expectation of God's transforming power, compassion and mercy in our lives. **OUR MISSION:** The Diocese of Louisiana is by grace, a vital community, reborn in the wake of tragedy, forging a new and prophetic environment of healing, trust and empowerment as servants of Jesus Christ

Bishop blesses new Mobile Loaves & Fishes at Trinity, New Orleans

Elizabeth Brady, Communications Team

Rain didn't dampen the spirit of excitement as Bishop Jenkins blessed a new catering truck delivered to Trinity Church, New Orleans, by Mobile Loaves & Fishes of Austin, Texas, on Jan. 17. The Rev. Dabney Smith, rector of Trinity Church; Dennis McManis, co-director of the diocesan Office of Disaster Response; Alan Graham, president of Mobile Loaves & Fishes and other guests were present for the blessing of this new direct service ministry earmarked for citizens in the blighted neighborhoods of the city as they return to rebuild their homes.

Graham, who is also founder of Mobile Loaves & Fishes, drove the truck to New Orleans from Texas. The vehicle will join in ministry with the diocese's RV Mobile Respite Unit now operating in the Ninth Ward.

Bishop Jenkins was able to secure the Mobile Loaves & Fishes truck with a grant from the Elizabeth Raymond Ambler Trust Foundation of Wilton, Connecticut.

The New Orleans chapter will be Mobile Loaves' first outside of Texas. The organization's board had just drafted and approved a disaster relief plan when Hurricane Katrina hit the Gulf Coast. Mobile Loaves & Fishes collected volunteers, food and supplies to take to the devastated areas, where they were among the first responders from out of state. The group made a total of four trips to the

area, ultimately providing more than 200,000 meals, tents, cash and other forms of relief to hundreds of people.

On one of those trips, Graham met Bishop Jenkins and parishioners from Trinity Church. Subsequently, several of the church's leaders came to Austin to see MLF's operation and explore the possibility of starting a new chapter at their own church.

"This is extraordinary for our organization," said Graham. "It's about building bridges between people and this is an awesome bridge. We have such high hopes and expectations for our new location."

Trinity's leaders are also enthusiastic about the new venture, which they see as a long-term strategy for dealing with the devastation they see all around them.

"We have a whole new breed of homelessness here in New Orleans," said Fr. Smith. "There is a thin veneer of normalcy here in the Garden District, but a quarter mile from us there is complete devastation. We'll use the truck to go in the neighborhoods where people have lost their homes, or in the process of salvaging what they can from their homes. This is a long-term issue for all of us here," he said.

Alice Wright, a member of Trinity, will be the coordinator for the new mobile ministry.

"We're very excited about running this program because it will be a tremendous help to our community," she said. "Mobile Loaves & Fishes was so wonderful in responding im-



[L-R] The Rev. Dabney Smith, Archdeacon Dennis McManis and Alan Graham listen to the prayer as Bishop Charles Jenkins blesses the new Mobile Loaves & Fishes catering truck delivered to Trinity Church, New Orleans, on Jan. 17.

[BEN JENKINS PHOTO]

mediately to the need on the Gulf Coast. We thought MLF would be a good fit with our community's needs."

In addition to the new catering truck, Mobile Loaves & Fishes will deliver three truckloads — about 60,000 pounds of donated books — collected by the Texas Library Association for

hurricane-devastated libraries in and around New Orleans. Libraries in Jefferson Parish alone lost more than a quarter of a million books as a result of the hurricane.

For more information about Mobile Loaves & Fishes, visit www.mlfnw.org or call 512-328-7299.

Dragon Café feeds 300 hungry souls per week at St. George's, New Orleans

Deacon Lydia Hopkins
St. George's, New Orleans

On Thursdays and Fridays from 4-6 p.m., the Dragon Café at St. George's Church in New Orleans offers food, fellowship and sometimes music for a growing number of community residents and visitors. The food ministry is part of St. George's "Rebuilding with Heart" program, and developed around the motto "You can't rebuild New Orleans on an empty stomach!"

With donations of food from departing

cruise ships and the diocesan Office of Disaster Response, financial assistance from partner churches, grants and individual donors, and the helping hands of volunteers from Episcopal churches around the city and around the country, the meals program has grown from serving 40 meals the first week to serving around 300 meals a week now.

"I wouldn't miss it for anything," says a young professional woman who rushes from her job every Thursday and Friday for dinner and fellowship. "I'm not an Episcopalian, but the Dragon Café has become my community. I feel like I have real friends here."

Like many others, she was evicted from her apartment and had all her possessions thrown away while she was an evacuee. She struggles to make ends meet while she looks for an affordable place to live.

Two sisters living in a hotel while waiting for a FEMA trailer at the site of their ruined home come in every week. At first they were shy, but now they greet everyone by name. They found the café when they were walking by after another frustrating day trying to get help from a FEMA center a few



The Panorama Band plays music welcoming guests to the Dragon Café at St. George's, New Orleans. [KAREN MACKAY PHOTOS]

blocks up the street.

Others have come in because of the signs on St. Charles Avenue, word-of-mouth, newspaper ads, flyers given out by the Episcopal RV Mobile Respite Unit in the Ninth Ward or distributed by volunteers in the neighborhood. Some have been attracted by the sound of the Panorama Jazz Band, which performs during meals most Thursdays.

On any given night, you can see parishioners from St. George's mingling with displaced New Orleans residents, Spanish-speaking construction workers, police officers, playful children, relief workers, local musicians and others.

The program is run by a group of dedicated volunteers from St. George's, with regular as-

sistance from several other Episcopal congregations, including: St. Philip's, St. Andrew's, and Chapel of the Holy Spirit in New Orleans.

Other volunteers have come from Florida and Wisconsin through the diocesan Office of Disaster Response. St. Matthew's Church in Wilton, Connecticut, has established a partnership relationship with St. George's and has provided tremendous assistance both with financing and teams of volunteers who have enthusiastically participated in the program.

For information about how you may help the Dragon Café, contact Deacon Lydia Hopkins at St. George's, 504.899.2811 or visit: www.sgec.org.



Volunteers from St. Matthew's Church, Wilton, Connecticut, serve food during St. George's feeding ministry at the Dragon Café.

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Hands-On Help: RVing in the Ninth Ward of New Orleans

Elizabeth Coleman
Holy Spirit, Baton Rouge

The two Marys are the second and third generations of their family to live in the flood-wracked house on North Rampart Street in New Orleans' Ninth Ward and they refuse to abandon it. Every day, Mary DeRouen and her daughter, Mary Hawkins, commute from Jefferson Parish to rehabilitate their house, which ceiling-high floodwater turned into a soggy, mold-infested mess. After days of work, the two have managed to remove ruined furniture, shovel out mud and debris, and strip away plaster down to the lathing.

Around the corner on LaManche, Connie and Happy Hathaway, the fifth generation to live in their house, are staying in a travel trailer across the street while they clean woodwork, refinish oak floors, and make plans for the restoration of their hundred-year-old cottage. The task at both homes is even more difficult because the area is still largely without electricity, natural gas, and running water.

These homeowners are among many who have sought help from the Mobile Respite Care Unit operated by the Episcopal Diocese of Louisiana. Monday through Thursday the RV, originally purchased by St. Luke's Baton Rouge, rolls away from the Church of the Annunciation on Claiborne Avenue and parks at the corner of St. Claude Avenue and Caffin Street in front of a deserted Popeye's. There, volunteers distribute cleaning and paper supplies, gloves and masks, brooms and mops, bottled water, a variety of snacks, personal hygiene products, and Bibles in both English and Spanish. Although Annunciation maintains a continuous relief center at the church, the RV expands the ministry to people struggling to restore their homes in the heart of the Ninth Ward.



Volunteers set up a table in the deserted Popeyes parking lot at the corner of St. Claude and Caffin avenues in the lower Ninth Ward to hand out cleaning supplies, snacks and household items from the Mobile Respite Unit to passersby in the neighborhood. (SHIRLEY DUNCAN PHOTO)

"We're trying to meet people's spiritual needs, not just their material ones," said Deacon Quin Bates who coordinates the project. "When we give them the bleach, the drinking water, and other supplies, we want them to know that it's the church of Jesus Christ doing this." The deacons of the diocese now supervise the ministry of the Mobile Respite Unit.

Annunciation parishioner Robert Perry drives the RV, which also serves as his temporary home. It's a job that comes easy for Perry, who for years drove a New Orleans city bus and joined the congregation at Annunciation as the result of an invitation from two of his regular

passengers. Perry will return to his regular job of driving a city bus in March.

Shirley Duncan, from St. Luke's, Baton Rouge, helped to staff the RV on a daily basis for many weeks, aided by volunteers from other churches.

Every Thursday, members of Holy Spirit Baton Rouge arrive to help, bringing a trailerload of supplies to distribute. Teams of students from other states have also offered aid.

A group of nine AmeriCorps students from Slippery Rock University in Pennsylvania devoted part of their semester break to work with the RV ministry, as did students from

Kenyon College in Ohio. "This ministry has grown immensely and it's wonderful to have such willing hands," Duncan said on one of her concluding days with the RV ministry. "I feel that God is among us, and there's real joy in the work. I love to think of joy as an acronym for Jesus Others-Yourself, and all these volunteers are living that."

When DeRouen and Hawkins, whose house was around the corner, first came to the RV for cleaning supplies, three of the students went back with the women to help strip plaster. "You have no idea of the enormous destruction that took place here until you go into the houses," said one hammer-wielding student. "TV doesn't begin to get it across. We're glad to be able to help, even just one family."

The RV ministry is direct and personal, and, along with supplies, volunteers offer prayers for strength and healing. "I'm grateful that somebody cares about what we're going through," said Mary DeRouen, surveying the piles of debris - the remnants of furniture broken toys, twisted picture frames, moldy clothing, and shattered dishes - yet to be removed from her backyard. "We have a lot of work ahead of us, and any support means a lot. All I know now is that we have our lives and we're determined to rebuild."

The Rev. Joe Rhodes of Holy Spirit, Baton Rouge, has appealed to a national network of churches and missions organizations for aid and relief funds and supplies roll in.

"The response from all over the country, even from Canadian churches, has been so generous. It's a privilege to be able to help people through the RV ministry. For the church to be on that corner every day to provide cleaning supplies, pray for them, and just listen to their stories gives them hope that they can restore their lives."

The Bach Around the Clock festival of Trinity, New Orleans, will feature The Choir of Men and Boys of St. Thomas Church, New York City

The annual festival at Trinity Church, New Orleans, celebrating the birthday of J.S. Bach begins on Friday night, March 24, at 7 p.m. and continues for 29 consecutive hours, ending on Saturday night, March 25, at midnight.

The musical programs are held in the church nave, with poetic and dramatic readings in the chapel. Over 300 of New Orleans' finest performers - instrumentalists, singers, choirs of all sorts, ensembles, dancers, yoga enthusiasts, actors and poetry readers - participate in this award-winning program.

Though centered on the musical works of Bach and the literary works of Shakespeare, many other composers, writers and artistic styles are represented, reflecting the diversity and vibrancy of the cultural life of the local community.

Some of the highlights include:

- The Choir of Men and Boys of St. Thomas Church, New York City, directed by John Scott;
- Dr. Quinn Peeper playing the famous Grieg Piano Concerto, with Albinas Prizgintas of Trinity, New Orleans, playing the orchestra part on the organ;
- Eva Legene, a noted baroque expert from Indiana University, playing the Baroque recorder;
- Michael Howard playing a Haydn Concerto with Prizgintas on the organ playing the orchestra part;
- The Xavier University Concert Choir performing the "Lord Nelson" Mass by Haydn, directed by John Ware;
- The Yellowdog Prophet Choir and Orchestra, gathered from the community, singing the Verdi Requiem in memory of those who



The Men and Boys Choir of St. Thomas Episcopal Church, New York City

died in the hurricanes, and performing other works of music;

- Delfeayo Marsalis, master trombonist playing various works;
- Albinas Prizgintas performing all of Bach's major organ works honoring Bach's 321st birthday;
- Sharing Katrina stories and readings from the works of Shakespeare as other authors continue in the chapel; while the music plays in the nave. This program is a past recipient of the Mayor's Arts Award.

We encourage all who may be interested in joining with the Trinity Choir, performing solo, reading from poetic or theatrical works, or sharing Katrina stories to call Albinas or Manon Prizgintas at 504.670.2520.

St. Thomas Choir to perform at 7 p.m.

The St. Thomas Choir of Men and Boys will perform their repertoire for Bach Around the Clock in Trinity's sanctuary on Friday, March 24, at 7 p.m. This will be the featured performance for this year's festival.

St. Thomas Church, located on Fifth Avenue at 53rd Street in New York City, has long been known for its splendid English-style sacred music and is the showcase for music in the Episcopal Church in the nation.

The St. Thomas choir will sing music by Taverner, Byrd, Purcell, Bach, Schubert and others. John Scott, the organist and choir master, previously directed the music at St. Paul's in London, and is a past winner of the Leipzig Competition in organ playing.



The Yellowdog Prophet Choir and Orchestra perform at Trinity's Bach Around the Clock 2005.

THE BISHOP'S LETTER

The heart and hands of Jesus in a region looking for signs of hope

Dear Diocesan Family,

"Thank you, Jesus," prayed the little lady as she climbed into my auto at the corner of North Dorgenois and Governor Nicholls in New Orleans. I was more than a bit taken aback that a Christian would see me (of all people) as an answer to prayer. Strangely, she was not surprised that she and I should encounter one another in her flooded and deserted neighborhood. So, there she sat in the car, praising God that I had been brought to her. Surely she must be mistaken, I thought, I have never been described as the answer to the prayers of anyone! Her needs were many: she had little left of her roof, one wall of her house was gone, she had no heat, no potable water in the tap and no electricity. Over the months, all of these needs and others have received a response through the ministries of various Christian people and institutions.



Bishop Jenkins

The church has consistently stood by this little lady, and many others, in a fashion that was not available to us before the storms. Indeed, many people who can't spell "Episcopal" know Christ's mercy, compassion and love because of the

acts of ministry done by Episcopalians in the name of Jesus. In the midst of disaster, we find opportunity to be the heart and hands of Jesus in a region looking hard for signs of hope and help. If anyone ever doubted that the mission field has gone local, surely there can be no doubt now. I am amazed at the many ministries of individuals and congregations that seek to fulfill this mercy-filled vocation.

I am humbled to see the sacrificial acts of ministry undertaken by so many. I am pleased that the diocese can partner with many in these ministries and enable ministry that would not be possible in isolation but only in community. Of course, it goes without saying, that the diocese would not be able to do this

were it not for the generosity of so many across the country and around the world who have given so generously to our needs. Our partnership with Episcopal Relief and Development continues to be a life-giving relationship in the larger communities of the Episcopal Church and the worldwide Anglican Communion.

I have for years prayed that by God's grace, the Episcopal Church in Louisiana might be transformed from "maintenance to mission." I never imagined that such transformation would occur in the aftermath of disaster, but such is the mission to which we are called by God. Let no one for one second suppose that I am suggesting that God visited this disaster upon us for the sake of mission. The fact remains, we have experienced three disasters in our diocese: that of the Northshore, that in Baton Rouge and the River Parishes, and that so well documented in New Orleans and down the river. Mission has become the manifestation of our attempt to faithfulness in the situation in which we live.

The journey upon which we have embarked is long and the opportunities before us are beyond measure. Even so, we know that God's grace is sufficient unto the day when with humble hearts we open ourselves to the work of mercy in Christ's name.

Yours in Christ,

+Charles

The Rt. Rev. Charles E. Jenkins
Bishop of Louisiana

FROM THE COMMUNICATIONS OFFICE

Two-fold ministry of direct aid and transformation

Ann M. Ball, editor

Bishop Charles Jenkins has remained steadfast in disaster response since Aug. 29. His work can be described as a two-fold ministry yet both lead to the same purpose. One is direct aid to people in need. The other is to transform the values of our churches, cities and communities to be in service to one another as patterned by our Lord Jesus Christ. The two ministries, one with a short-term focus, and the other with a long-term focus, have the same goal of servanthood.

With the tremendous influx of aid from around the world and the generous support of Episcopal Relief and Development (ERD), the diocese has been able to set up an effective Office of Disaster Response (ODR) in Baton Rouge and soon will open offices in the Glimmer Inn in New Orleans (see *Bishop's Journal*, pages 10-11.) ODR Co-directors Courtney Cowart and Archdeacon Dennis McManis will be based at the New Orleans ODR office along with other social service agencies.

The ODR provided for critical ongoing needs in the greater New Orleans area and on the Northshore immediately following Katrina and to the bayou region after Rita and it will continue its services as long as necessary.

ERD grants are funding four Compassion Centers where people outside of the metropolitan area will be able to access case workers for assistance. One will open soon in LaPlace in partnership with Grace Community Services, an affinity network that serves as a case management consultant to the diocese under the leadership of Ruama Camp.

The diocesan Executive Board recently gave its approval for the Jericho Episcopal Housing Initiative, a dynamic partnership between the diocese, Christ Church Cathedral, Trinity Church, New Orleans, Episcopal Relief and Development, and a local bank. The bishop chose the name Jericho for the project in reference to a Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. writing in which King noted we are called not only to play the Good Samaritan on life's roadside, but that we must come to see that the whole Jericho Road must be transformed so that men and women will not be constantly beaten and robbed as they make their journey on life's highway. (See *Bishop's Journal*, Jan. 20.)

In its first phase, the Jericho Housing Initiative will acquire property sites on which to build new homes to sell to low-income residents. This phase of a longer term housing initiative will help to break the cycle of poverty that is experienced by many of our citizens. It will give people access to home ownership so they can accumulate personal equity thereby becoming stakeholders in the community.

This issue of the newspaper features projects supported by the diocesan Hurricane Relief Fund that are underway in the New Orleans area. The stories reflect the people involved with these ministries. These devoted "workers in the vineyard" are on the front line every day, giving the most basic care to people who require emotional and spiritual support through their trying times. The Episcopal Church is meeting critical needs for hundreds of people in south Louisiana.

Our church has responded swiftly to the call to serve with the RV Mobile Respite Care Unit, Mobile Loaves and Fishes

feeding ministry, St. George's Dragon Café, Holy Comforter's Clean-up Days, a pediatrician at St. Thomas Clinic supervised by Trinity, New Orleans, and St. Andrew's Chalstrom House and Holy Spirit's Chapel House both of which serve as housing centers for visiting volunteer assistance crews.

Hurricane Relief funds have been earmarked by the Executive Board for a Mobile Medical Mission based at St. Anna's, New Orleans, to serve in that hard-hit part of the city as well as a legal resource center at the Chapel of the Holy Spirit, New Orleans, for the many people with problems resulting from matters dealing with insurance, mortgages, and lost documents.

St. Andrew's, New Orleans, hopes to open an early childhood program with Hurricane Relief funding. St. Paul's and the Church of the Annunciation, New Orleans, are slated for administrative support for mission and ministry through this fund. Canon Stevenson reports that an additional \$300,000 worth of grant requests have been submitted to the Executive Board for review.

Our church is not undertaking its ministries unilaterally. Bishop Jenkins joined with a score of other interfaith leaders in issuing a statement in early February responding to Mayor Nagin's Bring Back the City proposals. The statement called upon the city to uphold "a wholesome vision that unites us with justice and equality." It calls upon city officials to be accountable to the people and to do business in a new way.

The bishop embarked on an ambitious interfaith alliance targeting three areas of critical community need: citizen engagement, housing, and education. With a cadre of front line national social service agencies, the bishop hosted a networking meeting between the social service leaders and local interfaith leaders for a day-long collaborative planning session.

Clergy wellness has been part and parcel of the post-Katrina package too. In addition to the Clergy Day held in the diocese shortly after the storm, other opportunities have been made available for clergy to take time away from their duties for rest and recuperation. ERD, the Presiding Bishop's Office and the Bishop Suffragan for Chaplaincies provided a grant for a chaplain to our diocese for a year, the Rev. Ben Helmer. Several agencies of the church sponsored a four-day retreat in Orlando for diocesan clergy and families and diocesan staff from the affected Gulf Coast areas. The Diocese of Louisiana was well represented with over 100 participants.

The bishop has met with the New Orleans area clergy several times for their input on how their churches are doing and to gather information on how to meet unmet needs.

Lastly, at the initiation of Presiding Bishop Frank Griswold and with his assistance, Bishop Jenkins and Bishop Duncan Gray of Mississippi will begin a nationwide campaign, "From Darkness to Day: Restoring Hope in the Wake of Katrina," to raise additional funds for our two dioceses. As those of us in these disaster-laden areas know, the recovery is far from over. We will need support funds for a long time. The bishops will be touring the dioceses across the United States in the coming months in this fund raising endeavor. Keep them in your prayers for the sake of the many people of Louisiana and Mississippi who will directly benefit from their efforts.

Convention news at www.edola.org

For many years, this issue of Churchwork was the "pre-convention" issue with reports, financial data, resolutions and nominations. Katrina has struck again. With no Periodical delivery in most of the New Orleans area, it was decided that the internet was the wiser source for disseminating convention materials. All information pertaining to the 169th Diocesan Convention is located at the diocesan web site: www.edola.org.

And if you have not yet visited the newly designed diocesan web site, you are missing a rich vein of information. The Communications Team, which includes the bishop posts articles and photos on a daily basis of what is happening in the diocese. Explore its many areas and you'll find a host of interesting stories and links. Send us your stories or email us your comments to the addresses below.

Visit our web site: www.edola.org



DIOCESE OF LOUISIANA
Temporary offices
205 N. Fourth St.
(Mailing Address: P. O. Box 5026
Baton Rouge, LA 70821-0126
225.387.5141, ext.202)

1623 SEVENTH STREET
NEW ORLEANS, LA 70115-4411

CHURCHWORK

CHURCHWORK (ISSN NO. 0279-5132) is published monthly except January, July and August, by the Episcopal Diocese of Louisiana through the Office of Communication. Periodicals postage paid at the Post Office, New Orleans, LA 70113.

POSTMASTER SEND CHANGES OF ADDRESS TO:
CHURCHWORK, P. O. Box 5026, Baton Rouge, LA 70821.

Bishop Charles E. Jenkins . . . Bishop of Louisiana; Publisher
bishop@stjamesbr.org
Ann M. Ball Editor; Communications Team
annball@bellsouth.net or aball@stjamesbr.org
Kenn Elder Web master; Communications Team
kjelder@gmail.com or kelder@stjamesbr.org
Elizabeth Brady Public Relations; Communications Team
ebrady@unlikelymissionary.com
Ben Jenkins Public Relations; Communications Team
bjenkins@stjamesbr.org
John Massarini Northshore Deanery Correspondent
Judy Weber Southwest Deanery Correspondent
The Rev. William C. Morris Communications Advisor

CHURCHWORK supports the new vision and mission of the diocese as printed on the front page banner. Pertinent stories and photographs are welcome. Send your articles to the editor at the address given above. All submissions are subject to editing. Articles and photos are more readily received when emailed to the editor at one of the e-addresses above.

The editor's office hours are 9 a.m. - 5 p.m. Monday through Friday.
Telephone: 504.400.1217, 504.895.6636 or 225.387.5141.

CHURCHWORK is a member of Episcopal Communicators and Associated Church Press.

Annunciation's "Trailer Park" brings life to New Orleans' Broadmoor area

The Rev. Jerry Kramer, rector
Church of the Annunciation, New Orleans

"Double-Wide Sunday" at Annunciation

On Jan 16 we celebrated what may well be the most glorious Sunday in Annunciation's 162-year history. With our folks and volunteers from out of state working nearly around the clock, often by car headlights at night, we readied for the double-wide to serve as our new church and all-purpose building. We made it just in time for the 10:30 a.m. service.

Our bishop was on hand to preside and a local multi-racial Gospel choir, Shades of Praise, nearly blew the roof off. We crammed 100-plus—probably about 120 people inside—standing room only. I gave up my chair and had to stand throughout. There was not a spare inch anywhere.

A number of friends from around the diocese and community came to support us. It was all such a huge lift for our folks who've suffered so much. Definitely our best day since Aug. 28.

We wouldn't have made it without our new friends from Wisconsin who drove down to help us set up. And the Diocese of Quincy brought down a truck with a tabernacle and everything we needed to outfit the church.

May God be praised.

"Annunciation Acres Trailer Park" is now operational. We set up the first two trailers awaiting the arrival of additional trailers.

The City Planning Commission has designated our neighborhood a "green zone," meaning that if 60 percent of the residents don't return it will be completely re-developed. The church is in no danger, being a church, but our house would likely become part of a new park or green space. It was in the lowest lying part of the area.

We were without a kitchen in Kenner until February but the grill in the back worked fine and we washed dishes in the bathroom. Just like Africa! Kenner is a great place to be as all of the residents here are evacuees. I get to play soccer and football with the kids, visit with the parents, most of whom seem to be from St. Bernard Parish, which basically no longer exists. They've all been through a lot.

Annunciation in the Community

The Broadmoor Improvement Association moved in with our church in late January and we hosted a block-walking party. Residents canvassed the neighborhood with flyers and surveys. So far 99 percent of residents contacted wish to rebuild; we are most confident.

The area resident meetings began in various



"Shades of Praise" Gospel singers raise the roof at Annunciation's Double-Wide Sunday service on Jan. 16 formally welcoming the church community back. (BEN JENKINS PHC)

locations. On Feb. 15, the entire BIA community met at Loyola for a forum and rally. The Army Corps of Engineers were the guest speakers. Annunciation received a big round of applause for its work with the Broadmoor Improvement Association. Once the new office trailer is complete, Broadmoor will have a permanent office with us. They are as thrilled with this partnership as we are.

I've been asked to chair the BIA Church Group. We're going to organize the communities of faith. We're not looking at this as a "save the neighborhood" exercise—as there is no doubt in our having a future. Rather, the plan is for us to strive for the best possible future and use funds as we, the local community, see fit.

Annunciation Acres Trailer Park now boasts five trailers! We are able to host AA meetings, youth groups, church, office, and one for parishioner Robert Perry who retires Feb. 28 as the diocesan Mobile Respite Unit driver.

A red letter day came Feb. 17, when power came on at Annunciation! It had cost \$75 to \$100 a day to run generators for each of the trailers so we didn't always run all of them during the day. Now we have electricity. No doubt due to the meeting on the 15th.

With the help of the diocese and with its approval, Annunciation is going to buy four adjacent lots for expansion. The church will renovate one house for a parish office. When the church is restored for use, the doublewide will then become one of the diocese's Respite Centers, where returning families may come to relax and re-energize while they are rebuilding their homes in the city.

A new trailer will become a laundromat for the neighborhood. This project is underway

with funding from St. Luke's, Baton Rouge and Christ Church, Plano, Texas.

The other great need that was expressed was for a coffee shop in the neighborhood plan to turn the old rectory into "Heav Roasts" Broadmoor Café. The building already zoned for commercial use. We'd like the combination of a laundromat next to a coffee shop is a perfect match.

In terms of care-giving, our church is serving about 100-plus people daily. We host the "eighth sacrament"—bleach—every day along with other household cleaning supplies and personal hygiene supplies. We remain sensitive to the needs of this community and welcome donations such as bleach, water, clothes, toiletries and other necessities.

Visit Annunciation's web site to see photos and stories about the ministries at the church. www.annunciationinexile.homestead.com

Mobile Respite Care Unit needs driver

The Mobile Respite Care Unit (MRCU) is the recreational vehicle that takes volunteers and supplies into the Ninth Ward of New Orleans Monday through Thursday each week. The diocesan Office of Disaster Response is looking for an experienced time driver with a good driving record for MRCU. A regular driver's license is required for this job.

If you know someone who may be qualified and interested in this position, please contact Archdeacon Dennis McManis at dmcmanis@stjamesbr.org or 504.250.61



Robert Perry (center) hands out supplies to the many daily visitors at Annunciation's supply center in front of the church on Claiborne Avenue in the Broadmoor area of New Orleans. (SHIRLEY DUNCAN PHOTO)

North Carolina group seeks N. O. housing

The North Carolina School of Science and Math needs help finding accommodations for its volunteer team. The team has called churches in the area and has yet to secure accommodations. They need floor space for 35, shower facilities, and a kitchen. They

will be in New Orleans, April 4-11. Contact Justin Tye at 919.416.820 or 252.521.5342 or tye@ncssm.edu. The group is entirely self-sufficient except for a place to sleep, shower, and cook. They will follow up with any and all leads for a place to stay.

National speakers will keynote May 6 Diocesan Stewardship Conference in Baton Rouge

An Invitation

Dear Brothers and Sisters in Christ,

Our lives are filled with choices about how we spend our time. I hope that you will choose to attend this conference because it offers an opportunity to understand and experience stewardship in ways that will open your hearts to this life changing spiritual discipline. If you are nudged to attend, please don't talk yourself out of it; listen and be willing to say, "Yes, Lord" to God's call.

God's peace,
Debbie Hudson

Diocesan Stewardship Chair

Conference will feature expert speakers:
Terry Parsons and Tom Gossen

Terry Parsons is the staff officer for Stewardship in the Congregational Development unit of the Episcopal Church Center in New York. She has worked with scores of congregations of every size across the country. Her work has included annual giving, planned giving and

capital campaigns. She has led diocesan conferences and served as a keynote speaker in diocesan conventions.

In addition to her work in the Episcopal Church, she has led workshops for the Presbyterian Church of Canada, served as the theological leader for the annual retreat of the General Cabinet of the Christian Church, Disciples of Christ, and as a presenter for the North American Conference on Christian Philanthropy held in the United States and the North American Stewardship Conference in Canada. She also serves as vice-president of the Ecumenical Stewardship Center and has been a member of the Board of Directors



Terry Parsons

of The Episcopal Network for Stewardship since its creation.

Parsons believes that stewardship is best defined as "using the gifts God has given us to do the work God is calling us to do." She believes it is more important to study the Bible than budgets, to pray than to beg. She also believes the greatest challenge facing congregations today is overcoming our tendency to seek refuge in scarcity rather than risk claiming the abundance that God offers.

Tom Gossen serves as the executive director of TENS - The Episcopal Network for Stewardship which he helped to establish in 1996. He has extensive



Tom Gossen

experience in leading and developing programs for dioceses and congregations, including training of consultants/mentors.

His publications include *A Manual of Stewardship Development in the Congregation* and five different pledge program workbooks published by Morehouse. He is a three-deputy to General Convention from the Diocese of Kansas and from 1996 to 2003 served on the Standing Commission on Stewardship and Development. In 2003 he was elected to a six-year at-large term on the Executive Council.

Mark your calendar for Saturday, May 6. This is a conference you won't want to miss. Location: Episcopal School in Baton Rouge Alumni House. Time: 8:30 a.m. until 4 p.m. Registration is \$10 per person. Scholarships are available. Seating is limited.

For more information and registration contact Debbie Hudson, dedhudson@edola.org or call 225.752.7442.

169th Diocesan Convention host: Trinity, New Orleans, a social ministry saint

Nell Bolton, peace & justice ministry
Trinity Church, New Orleans

Trinity's Post-Katrina Ministry

Trinity Church has been a symbol of faith and a strong presence in the life of the community since its founding in 1847. The legacy of our strong partnerships with parishioners and neighbors may be found in lasting programs and institutions such as Kingsley House, Trinity Episcopal School, Trinity Educational Enrichment Program, St. Thomas Health Clinic, Trinity Counseling and Training Center, and Jackson Avenue Micro-Enterprise.

That our church buildings made it through Hurricane Katrina and the subsequent flooding with relatively little damage calls us now, more than ever, to share our blessings and resources with those in need across the city.

Through the following ministries, the church offers ongoing pastoral and material support to hurricane-displaced New Orleans citizens as they return to the city, put their lives back together, and respond to the challenges of rebuilding.

Trinity Social Services

The church is helping to bring people home: to get their utilities turned back on, to make initial rent payments, and to re-establish their households. Even a simple item like an iron has made a huge difference to someone trying to preserve dignity and self-respect, look for a new job, and start over from scratch. Since the hurricane, Trinity has already assisted hundreds of families financially and with food, clothing, and household goods, as well as hosted four FEMA job fairs. As we continue to offer Trinity as a place of hospitality and comfort for neighbors still facing the daunting task of finding housing, jobs and schools, we are also providing information about the fluid

availability of services in the city.

Mobile Loaves and Fishes

A new Mobile Loaves and Fishes ministry has begun based on a model founded in the late 1990s in Austin, Texas. The ministry was funded from a grant secured by the bishop from the Elizabeth Raymond Amber Trust Foundation of Wilton Connecticut in conjunction with the John Nuemann Roman Catholic Church. Using a catering truck and bulk-purchased supplies, Trinity volunteers are offering meals and companionship to people rebuilding their homes and our community. Trained Stephen Minister caregivers or counselors are accompanying the teams to offer a listening ear. We are serving lunches consisting of two sandwiches, milk/juice, chips, cookies and coffee or hot chocolate to residents, volunteers, and day laborers across the city. As the program grows, we hope to operate every day of the week, and to expand to other mealtimes.

Trinity Counseling and Training Center (Information from TCTC Director Debby Poitevent, LCSW, LMFT)

Trinity Counseling and Training Center is affectionately known as TCTC. It provides counseling services to adults, children, individuals, groups and families in the greater New Orleans area. The center stands ready to serve the diocese and the many parishioners who are struggling with the aftermath of the two hurricanes.

TCTC has a four-fold mission: to support the pastoral care of the church; to provide services, on a sliding fee basis, to folks who might otherwise not receive them; to provide training to graduate students in social work, counseling & marriage and family therapy programs at the local universities; and to demonstrate the integration of psychology

and spirituality.

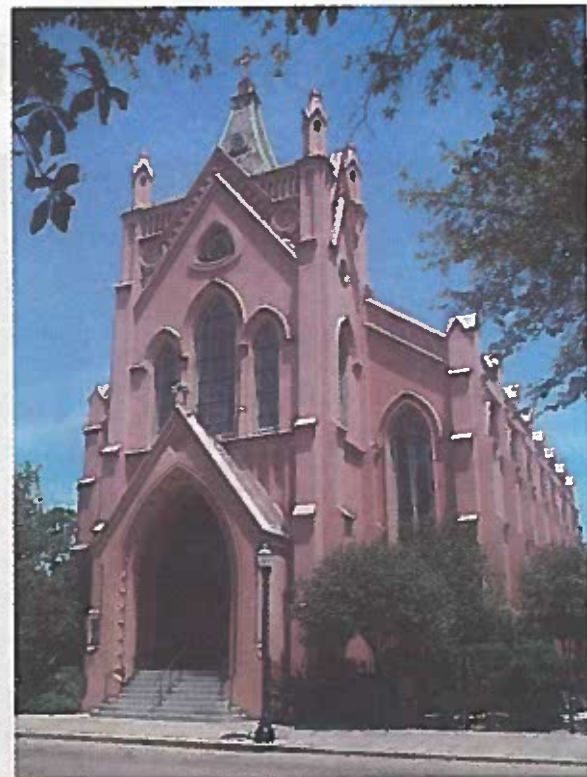
TCTC is ready to help. The hours are Monday through Thursday 9-5, and appointments are offered in the evening. Fees are agreed upon according to the ability of the client. No one is ever turned away for inability to pay. Additionally, TCTC is offering weekly open forums on Thursdays at noon at the church, 1329 Jackson Ave. We are available to clergy and their congregations at their churches or wherever we can be of assistance. The counseling center line is 504-522-7557 for anyone wishing an appointment.

St. Thomas Health Clinic

With health care needs far exceeding capacity in New Orleans, Trinity is helping the nearby St. Thomas Health Clinic, a longtime partner, to raise and leverage funds to expand its personnel and equipment capabilities. This joint effort has so far brought a \$120,000 Episcopal Relief and Development grant to the clinic, which is currently the only indigent care clinic operating in Orleans Parish and is seeing triple the number of patients seen before the storm. The initiative was spearheaded by the bishop's office and the funds provide the service of a pediatrician at the clinic. Pediatrician nurses will be joining the St. Thomas Health Clinic staff soon through the ERD grant funding.

Trinity Connects

With the addition of a Minister for Social Renewal to our staff, Trinity is developing a post-Katrina initiative that connects our history and experience in community outreach ministries with our city's efforts to rebuild a New Orleans filled with hope and opportunity



Trinity Church, New Orleans
(SANDY COURVOISIER PHOTO)

for all citizens. Trinity Connects is a program of reconciliation that helps us as individuals, and as a community in Christ, to use our gifts and resources to bring about a vision of God's Kingdom here in New Orleans. Trinity Connects seeks to do this by addressing the root causes of problems that plague our city and drive us apart as brothers and sisters.

Trinity Connects is stimulating partnerships and collaborations among religious and civic leaders that will address the tough issues of housing, education, jobs as well as basic human services, such as medical care and mental health care, so necessary for a healthy society.

As we redefine the political and social relationships that affect quality of life in New Orleans, we have the opportunity to make our city a better place to live – for all of God's children.

Bishop and ODR co-director work to build interfaith alliance to affect change

Ann Ball, Communications Team

Bishop Charles Jenkins invited a host of local and regional interfaith leaders – and national service organization leaders – to an ambitious-minded project at Trinity, New Orleans, Feb. 15 for a day of planning and sharing of ideas to begin building a faith alliance with the expectation of transforming the local community in positive ways.

"Meeting to Build an Alliance for United Leadership in Recovery and Renewal" was organized by Dr. Courtney Cowart, co-director of the diocese's Office of Disaster Response, and Erik Schwarz, director of Interfaith Works based in Washington DC. Betty Evans, the ODR office's new executive assistant worked with the planners to coordinate the day's events.

Trinity's rector, the Rev. Dabney Smith, began the meeting with a prayer and welcomed the nearly 70 guests to Trinity's chapel.

He introduced Bishop Charles Jenkins who gave his opening remarks to the assembly which included people from the Christian, Jewish, Muslim, Hindu, Sikh and Buddhist religions.

The bishop noted that the group was similar to the first Christian Pentecost – representing very different cultures, experiences and faiths. He called on the group to value those experiences and to speak from their faith traditions and to listen to one another. The Pentecost experience was one in which the people heard and understood each other in their own language. It was a unifying experience in which the people were open to what God was calling them to do together.

Because of past "imperialism" or dominance by some groups, the bishop continued, communication was blighted here. "The voices of the poor were not heard," the bishop said. "We want to hear those voices."

Cowart and Schwarz then introduced the



Adam Bronstone (left) asks a question of organizers Erik Schwarz and Dr. Courtney Cowart during the Meeting to Build and Alliance gathering at Trinity Chapel, New Orleans, Feb. 15

four working groups for the day:

- Direct Assistance – dealing with people's casework and unmet needs – presented by Ruama Camp, founder and director of GRACE Community Services and Lura Cayton, of Church World Service;
- National Faith and Service Movement – networking and funding for affected areas – presented by Mark Farr, senior director for outreach at Points of Light Foundation; David Caprara, founder and president of Empowerment Consultants International; and April Kunze, assistant executive director of Interfaith Youth Core;
- Citizen Engagement – modeling direct democracy – presented by Carolyn Lukensmeyer, founder and president of AmericaSpeaks;
- Building a City-Based Interfaith Coalition the Post 9/11 NYC model – presented by Peter Gudaitis, CEO of New York Disaster Interfaith Services.

Each of these speakers talked briefly of their specialties in order to provide enough data for those assembled to choose a working group in which to participate. The small working groups threaded their way to various rooms amid the sounds of Trinity's school children also coming and going to their classes.

The Hindu group Food for Life, which prepared hundreds of meals in the city immediately following Hurricane Katrina prepared a vegetarian lunch for the gathering, which was served *al fresco* in Trinity's Parish House courtyard.

After lunch, the groups reconvened for plenary session to hear the work of the small groups and to determine if main points had emerged for moving forward. Cowart and Schwarz recorded input from those who made comments. The two leaders agreed to circulate all the reported data to every participant by mail and by email as soon as possible.



Meeting groups dine and converse in the Trinity Parish House courtyard. (EDITOR PHOTOS)

Holy Comforter makes a clean sweep in Gentilly; tends UNO youngsters

[Editor's Note: the following is a report from the diocesan Chapel of the Holy Comforter serving the UNO and SUNO campuses]

The Rev. Roger Allen, chaplain
Holy Comforter, New Orleans

Communication to and from the Chapel of the Holy Comforter in New Orleans remains difficult. Our post office box was in a building that flooded. We received only last week mail that was postmarked early November. We still do not have regular telephone, fax or internet service. We are told telephone service will not be restored to our area until after February. Dare we hope for sometime in April?

The chapel building and grounds suffered only minor damage, but almost every other building and home in our surrounding area was damaged or seriously flooded. We communicate from the chapel when we can by cell phone, by a wireless broadband internet access card on a laptop computer, or in person.

Many therefore may not know of the wonderful assistance that the Episcopal Church, our diocese, and our friends from other Episcopal churches and dioceses are providing through the chapel to the severely damaged areas of New Orleans around and near the Chapel of the Holy Comforter.

These areas include Gentilly -- a very large area bounded by Lake Pontchartrain on the north, Interstate 10 on the south, City Park on the west and the Industrial Canal on the east -- and not only Gentilly but also New Orleans East, the Lakefront, Chalmette and the Ninth Ward.

As we have done since Sept. 17, the chapel is here to be a helpful presence and spiritual anchor for all in our area -- residents, relief workers, university personnel and community groups -- not to mention the far flung members of the Chapel of the Holy Comforter. The chapel offers a place of quiet, prayer, support and worship, as well as a place that attempts to meet physical needs such as water, clean bathrooms, food, cleaning supplies and first aid materials for people in our area.

Mayor Nagin comes to Clean-up Day

The chapel hosted the Second Great Gentilly Clean-up Day on Jan. 28 in cooperation with the Gentilly Civic Improvement Association. Our first Great Gentilly Clean-up, held in early December, involved an estimated 300 people. Before the end of the second clean-up day, over 425 people were counted at the chapel including Mayor Ray Nagin, Criminal Sheriff Marlin Gusman, Judge Benedict Willard and Councilwoman Cynthia Hedge-Morrell.

The Episcopal Diocese of Louisiana provided clean-up materials, rakes, shovels, brooms and water. Our good neighbors at FEMA's local headquarters, next door to the chapel, supplied a safety briefing and safety equipment, masks, gloves, high visibility vests and white coveralls affectionately known here as "bunny suits."

The owners of Country's Bar B Q in Columbus, Georgia, drove to New Orleans in two trucks with a mammoth smoker and all the makings of a wonderful meal. They cooked through the night and provided barbecue, Brunswick stew, coleslaw and other delicacies for over 500 people. The Coca-Cola Company provided soft drinks. Volunteers from the Diocese of Alabama led by the Rev. Robert Morpeth and Deacon Roland Ficken helped with the preparations for the event and in serving the meal. Second Harvest donated a

refrigerated truck to keep the food fresh.

Clean-up efforts were concentrated at several major intersections in the Gentilly area and around St. Raphael Roman Catholic Church. Workers in the neighborhoods were assisted by student volunteers from Xavier University, by lawyers from the Young Lawyers' Section of the Bar Association, by student volunteers from Americorps and by a group under Sheriff Gusman's direction. Throughout the day, area residents came to the chapel to obtain cleaning supplies, "flood buckets," mops, brooms, garbage bags and household cleaners for use in their own flooded homes.

Highlights of the day included the mayor's address to the assembled crowd, the reunions of many Gentilly neighbors who had not seen each other since before the storm and of course the re-building of our community with good food and fellowship. At the end of the day, our volunteers assembled and delivered 100 plates of food to the Ozanam Inn for the homeless in downtown New Orleans. We also returned the truck to Second Harvest with boxes of non-perishable food items donated by people attending services at the chapel.

Bishop's Visitation

On Sunday, Jan. 29, the chapel was pleased to host Bishop and Mrs. Charles Jenkins for the bishop's annual visit. Bishop Jenkins preached and celebrated, and was accompanied by Deacon John Holbert of St. Philip's, New Orleans. Our friends and volunteers from the Diocese of Alabama remained for the service, including Deacon Roland Ficken and Deacon Jane Mason, who together with other members of their team will be coordinating future volunteer efforts in our area by congregations and groups from the Diocese of Alabama. The congregation moreover included a number of non-Episcopalians -- relief workers, FEMA contractors, neighborhood residents and others -- who recently have found Holy Comforter to be a welcome place to worship.

UNO Child Care Center

On Jan. 30, the Bishop Girault Jones Student Center at the chapel became the temporary home of the UNO Child Care Center, a state licensed learning center for children of faculty, staff and students of nearby universities. As many as 50 children up to age five will be at the chapel from 7:30 a.m. to 5 p.m. Monday through Friday over the next two to three months depending on the pace of repairs to the center on the UNO campus.

The chapel meanwhile continues to host a variety of neighborhood meetings almost every evening of the week. The Gentilly Civic Improvement Association, its board of directors and committees and other neighborhood groups such as the Lake Oaks Neighborhood Association meet regularly at the chapel. Councilwoman Cynthia Hedge-Morrell and her staff have met no fewer than four times with neighborhood groups at the chapel. The music department of UNO has held events and auditions at the chapel, and the UNO Baroque Ensemble is expected to return soon for concerts.

On a recent Saturday, over 750 people from the Gentilly, Lakefront, Lakeview and New Orleans East areas collected information during a day-long presentation by the Couhig Group on rebuilding homes and neighborhoods in New Orleans. The presentation was scheduled to be held on the chapel grounds but was moved indoors at UNO because of inclement weather. On a previous Saturday, the chapel was the site of a "standing room only" meeting between over 300 neighborhood residents and a representative of the Corps of Engineers on the subject of the floodwall failures and rebuilding.

The chapel has reached out to flooded churches in the Gentilly, Ninth Ward and New Orleans East areas to offer meeting and worship



An array of mops, brooms and buckets line the walls of Holy Comforter on Clean-up Day set for the Gentilly area of New Orleans on Jan. 28. (BEN JENKINS PHOTO)

space, and continues to seek ways of providing an ecumenical presence in the area.

In connection with the opening of the universities, and the expected occupancy of some 400-plus trailers by university students and faculty on the UNO campus, the chapel is now offering Sunday evening Eucharist at 6 p.m. followed by a simple supper for university students, faculty, staff and families, with entertainment provided by UNO music majors.

At the request of workers in the area, the chapel has begun to offer a weekday Eucharist at noon on Wednesday each week. Daily Morning Prayer remains at 8:30 a.m. Monday through Friday. The principal Sunday service is at 10 a.m. with choir.

Our arrangement to host the Child Care Center of UNO includes the university's agreement to provide space for the chapel to place up to five semi-trailers in the parking area near

the chapel adjacent to Elysian Fields Avenue, and, as soon as UNO's housing difficulties are resolved, housing for as many as 40-50 volunteers working under the chapel's direction each week. The parking area will allow us to continue and expand the diocese's response operations in this area, while avoiding potential conflicts with the children's area and preserve a safe environment.

With the assistance of volunteers from Episcopal churches around the country, the chapel in the last

two months has helped many area residents salvage items from their homes and clean out houses. Under the direction of the chapel's Coordinator of Volunteers Katie Mears, volunteers have worked in houses in Gentilly, New Orleans East, and Chalmette. We have a growing list of the elderly, the needy, the infirm and the overwhelmed who have requested our assistance. The names of people needing assistance come to us through New Orleans Council District D offices, through neighborhood groups, through our diocese and through individuals in the area.

Every Saturday is Clean-up Day

To meet more of these requests for assistance, and while we wait for housing for volunteers at UNO and more volunteers from Episcopal churches around the country, the chapel has appealed for willing workers over the age of 18 to gather at the chapel any Saturday from 9:30 a.m.-2 p.m. over the next several months. Our Saturday Clean-up Days will include area residents and students from nearby universities, and our focus will be on pressing requests for assistance in homes in our area.

We continue to need, and appeal for, cleaning supplies and volunteers, which we ask be coordinated through the Diocese of Louisiana's

Office of Disaster Response. The chapel's response and the response of the Episcopal Church in our diocese will be much more effective and manageable if we coordinate our activities, needs and resources through our diocesan office. Things that we need at the chapel in particular at this time include rakes, shovels, wheelbarrows and first aid kits. For more information on specific needs call the diocesan Office of Disaster Response, 225.387.5141 or contact the chapel at the emails or phone at the end of this article.

Another growing need we have is for trained case managers, health workers and mental health professionals in the affected areas. The chapel is and has been trying to meet the needs of elderly people who have no place to live, of families who have little more than the clothes they took with them and of individuals of varying denominations and backgrounds who are simply stressed and overwhelmed by recent events. There is great frustration and confusion, as well as loss and grieving, but also hope, optimism and faith throughout the New Orleans area. The Episcopal Church and other faith-based organizations are sorely needed to meet these challenges.

If groups or individuals wish to donate items to help area residents and evacuees, the chapel encourages the sending of gift cards or money contributions to the church through the Diocese of Louisiana, or the chapel of the Holy Comforter. We do not have the resources, the storage space, or the ability to handle and process donations of clothing and bulky items at the chapel at present. We are also working with Episcopal congregations from outside Louisiana who are willing to "adopt" area families in need, whether those families are attempting to return to New Orleans or remain in the places to which they evacuated.

Gentilly informational tours

The chapel provides informed tours of the Gentilly, Lakeview and other affected areas for church groups and visitors. The purpose of these tours is to let people experience for themselves the extent and seriousness of the devastation in our area, and to understand firsthand what we say when we say, "No, New Orleans has not recovered; we are not all right here; and we will not be for some time." Our visitors usually remark that the news stories and videos and photographs all fail to depict the realities of our situation; Only being here and working to meet the needs here gives any sense of what we have experienced. Visitors who see for themselves Gentilly, Lakeview, New Orleans East, the Ninth Ward and St. Bernard Parish, and who experience and feel the faith, determination and hope of those who live here, all leave with a renewed commitment to provide more assistance and to educate and inform others.

The parameters of our mission and ministry at the chapel have changed considerably since Aug. 29. We strive, with God's help, to assist all in our community, to bring together needs and resources in this area and beyond. We are grateful for your prayers and support. For information, call us at 504.952.1844 or email: chpinholyc@bellsouth.net or kmears@gmail.com.



Volunteers register for Clean-up Day at Holy Comforter, New Orleans. (BEN JENKINS PHOTO)



Youngsters take their afternoon naps during Quiet Time at the UNO Child Care Center housed temporarily in the Bishop Jones Student Center at the Chapel of the Holy Comforter in New Orleans. (EDITOR PHOTO)