



# CHURCHWORK

***Exploring the Second Mark of Mission:  
To teach, baptize, and nurture new believers***

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## IN THIS ISSUE:

### Send Us Out to Be Faithful Witnesses

**About this issue:** This year in *Churchwork* we are exploring how we in the Episcopal Diocese of Louisiana are living out the Second Mark of Mission: To teach, baptize, and nurture new believers.

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[Photograph by Karen Mackey] Baptismal font at the Chapel of the Holy Spirit, New Orleans.

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## CHURCHWORK

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#### Our Vision

The Episcopal 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.

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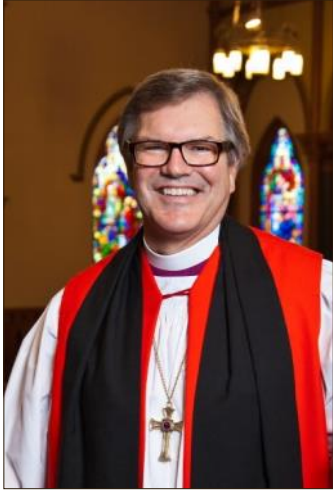
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#### Submissions

*Churchwork* provides news and information about the diocese and wider church; and is a medium of theological reflection. Please submit articles in Microsoft Word; photographs should have a resolution of 300. Letters to the editor will not be printed. Submissions should be sent by email to Karen Mackey at [kmackey@edola.org](mailto:kmackey@edola.org). We reserve the right to edit all material, and cannot guarantee that every submission will be published.

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*"The life that I touch for good or ill will touch another life, and that in turn another, until who knows where the trembling stops or in what far place and time my touch will be felt."*  
Frederick Buechner

My maternal grandfather owned a plumbing and electrical contracting company in the delta of Mississippi. At the height of his career, he had

several crews, heavy equipment, and a large shop of interesting tools and such with which any boy would be in heaven meddling. For me, nothing was more enjoyable than laying my hands on the electric grinder and watching the sparks fly off a piece of metal pipe, or melting a chunk of lead and pouring it into a mold. Being around my grandfather was pure joy and I always looked forward to my visits. I also looked forward to riding with James in his truck.

James was an African American man that worked many years for my grandfather. He was the foreman of one of his crews. If my grandfather was not able to go to the job site, I would ride with James. Part of the joy of being with James was that he let me ride in the bed of the truck. I'd stand up holding onto the rail that held all the ladders and let the wind blow in my face. Days in the delta were the best days. Another thing I liked about James was that he and my grandfather held mutual respect for each other. My grandfather never said this, but if he had a partner I think it would have been James. Whether black or white, no one held the place of authority the way James did. Theirs was a relationship built on trust and respect. From my early apprenticeship, my grandfather taught me the code of reverence for the other.

But like many families, there was another side. My paternal grandfather was not as generous towards people of color. While this grandfather was a kind man to us he was not so with others. His harsh words directed at someone working around the house or comments hurled at the TV were often the chatter around the dinner table. The topic always ended with the comment: "He's a product of his day."

On some level, I understood the "product of his day" spiel except that this grandfather was just as old as my other grandfather. Why wasn't my delta grandfather a product of his day? Where did he learn to respect all people regardless of the color of their skin?

My maternal grandfather was hard of hearing. In his elementary years, he realized he was deaf in one ear and hard of hearing in the other. This malady was an embarrassment to him. It was his burden to carry, so much so that he dropped out of school before the 5th grade. If I had to guess, this burden made him aware of others' burdens and he had compassion upon them as he might hope others might show compassion towards him. I understand this as the burdens of my own life have caused me to be more aware of others carrying theirs.

We are products of our families, broken and made whole or not by kindness. If we know kindness by gift, then we are more likely to pass this kindness to others. If, however, we only know embarrassment and ridicule we may return the likeness with vigor. The result is not pretty. Who wants to be made to feel ignorant, a nobody?

If we are products of our families, we are also products of choice. While we don't choose our parents, as we mature we do choose to be for someone or to be against. While we may be taught to fear others, as we grow we become aware that we can choose to engage in relationship or to ignore. When we discount the other our minds contrive things that are not true. Only in engagement can we truly know our brothers and sisters. I believe we are at the stage in our country's short life in which we need to choose to engage rather than ignore. Far too long we have lived out of fear of the other, choosing to believe something that never existed. Now we are of age to choose to be for rather than against.

Buechner is right, the life we touch for good or ill will touch another life. Let us choose to touch good. Let our understanding of our own brokenness be our guide in that we come to know not only our own need for healing and acceptance but that of our neighbor.

A handwritten signature in black ink, reading "Morris K. Thompson, Jr." with a stylized flourish at the end.

The Rt. Rev. Morris K. Thompson, Jr.  
Bishop of Louisiana



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## REFLECTIONS

### Encouraging and Empowering People to Connect and Engage

*by the Rev. William Miller, Rector of Christ Church, Covington*



*[Photograph courtesy of Christ Church, Covington] The Pentecost service at Christ Church*

Two years ago, Christ Church Covington made a very risky and unconventional decision. They hired me as rector! From the search committee to the vestry to the staff, the message I heard was consistent: "Things must change if we are going to grow and attract new people—and that's why we called you!" Over the last two years, our average Sunday attendance has increased by thirty percent, and we had our largest adult confirmation class in history. We continue to see new visitors every Sunday, and there is a positive buzz about Christ Church Covington in the community.

We started with worship. It's where everything must begin in the Episcopal Church. As my friend Bill Tully and parishioners of St. Bart's in New

York City (for years, the only Episcopal Church in NYC that was growing) used to tell others every chance they got: "Worship is at the heart of everything we do." In the Episcopal Church, worship is what we (could) do best. It's even how we, in our tradition, evangelize—we create an atmosphere in which people can fall in love with God. We "go to a lot of trouble" to create opportunities for people to experience this love in worship. Then we invite people, we welcome them (no, really, we do!), and we try our best to connect them. Services that work (well) are done with the highest standards (excellence in all we do), and with a deep awareness of our cultural context. We ask ourselves about our targeted audience, our demographic, our community, and

how we might best reach them, not what best suits our particular tastes.

After a parish survey that allowed folks to voice their opinions about worship options, I took the results, made some decisions, and started changing things. We had four services for years, but they were basically all the same, apart from time. We immediately invested in worship. We distinguished each of the four services to broaden our appeal and speak to a more diverse population. We enhanced each service with quality music. For our 7:30 a.m. Rite One Chapel service, we added traditional piano music, leaning toward standard hymns and classical selections. We tweaked our 6:15 p.m. service to become a jazz vespers communion (yes, we made that up!), adding a jazz pianist and candles. We wanted to offer a high-quality traditional service. Through our research, we learned that the 9 a.m. slot would work best for most folks, so we transformed our 9 a.m. family service into a traditional service by enhancing the choir, adding section leaders, and investing in more consistent guest instrumentalists.

The one service we radically altered was the one offered at 11:15 a.m. We changed the time to 11:30 a.m. and made it a gospel/jazz/contemporary service (blended) with an excellent group of musicians (piano, bass, drums, and a



*[Photograph courtesy of Christ Church, Covington] Greta Matassa performs during the first annual Jazz in January in 2016.*

female vocalist). We changed the liturgy to *Enriching Our Worship*. We were intentional about plugging in younger readers. We also made the service bulletin user-friendly by putting everything in there—hymns, readings, and responses—we do not require worshippers at this service to have six hands and an immediate knowledge of insider language and symbols!

Secondly, we paid a lot of attention to bridge events. That is, we began to think more intentionally (there's that word again) about how to build bridges that might better connect us to folks in the community. We started a Jazz Weekend with concerts, community service events, and two jazz masses that pulled out all the stops. We knew it could not just be a simple concert series that happened to be held in our building—we had been doing that (quite well) for 25 years, and that had not really connected many people to the community of Christ in terms of membership or worship. The Jazz Weekend brought things to a whole new level.

We began to put more effort into events like our animal blessing. We held it at Bogue Falaya Park (next door to the church), hired a band, started providing fun food (Hot-diggity dogs), invited community-based animal advocacy groups to bring their critters, created a kissing booth for our most loveable pets, and had photo ops with Pierre the Pelican. Most importantly (this is true



*[Photograph courtesy of Christ Church, Covington] The Rev. Morgan McIntire, associate rector, blesses pets in Bogue Falaya Park on St. Francis Day 2016*



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for all bridge events), we encouraged our parishioners to be out and about, meeting and mingling with visitors.

There were lots of other events that we have planned and executed that would certainly qualify as bridge events—we started a parade-viewing party at the rectory (it's on the parade route). We also started a Theology on Tap Men's Bible Study at a local pub. We began to ask ourselves which special worship services we might focus on in ways that would help people connect. We paid special attention to Passion Sunday and the story of the Passion, inviting actors to help us communicate the powerful drama that it is. During Holy Week, not only did we want to do all the traditional liturgies well, but we also added The Good Friday Project in which we invited performing artists to freely respond to the powerful themes of the day. We have not been afraid to experiment with liturgy or initiate whimsical themes for particular Sundays, encouraging participation and a sense of joy. Folks will be encouraged to wear their cowboy hats for Welcome Back Wili Sunday, and we will be the first church in the Diocese to offer a U2charist as well as a special presentation on "The Gospel According to U2" during the same week that they perform in New Orleans. Bridge events have definitively helped us cross-over and connect with our neighbors, and have truly encouraged and empowered them to connect and engage with us as well.

Thirdly, we focused on our Discovery Class and made sure we communicated how important it is, and how and why it is the vehicle by which one formally joins the church. We offered a lively mix of video, discussion and presentation, focusing on our Celtic roots, and even using the royal wedding as an example of Anglican worship at its finest. We offered alternatives for those who could not commit to Wednesday evenings by offering a Discovery Weekend as well. The result was our largest adult confirmation class in history, and for those who attended, a deeper understanding of what it means to be an Episcopalian and a member of Christ Church Covington.



*[Photograph courtesy of Christ Church, Covington] It was cowboy hat Sunday at Christ Church to welcome back Wili and Father Bill after their 16 city "Last Howlelujah Tour."*

In the midst of all these changes, we somehow managed to pull off a 1.75 million dollar Higher Ground Campaign to take care of 10 years of deferred maintenance and also fund several new ministry initiatives. Our growth has not been easy, and it has not been without challenges. We know that to sustain will require a true commitment to discipleship, stewardship, and evangelism. We are hopeful, and in the meantime, we have not forgotten to laugh, or to breathe.



*Christ Episcopal Church in Covington was established in 1846. The Rev. William Miller has served as rector since 2015. He is also the author of "The Gospel According to Sam" and "The Beer Drinkers Guide to God."*

## God Gave the Growth

by the Rev. Jerry Phillips, Priest-in-Charge of Church of the Nativity, Rosedale



[Photograph by Jane Baldwin-Kent, Church of the Nativity, Rosedale] The Rt. Rev. Charles Jenkins, Tenth Bishop of Louisiana, and the Rev. Jerry Phillips, priest-in-charge, pose with those being confirmed and received at Church of the Nativity, Rosedale, on Sunday, February 19.

I want to thank Editor Karen Mackey for the opportunity to extol the virtues of the Episcopal Church of the Nativity in Rosedale. It comes by invitation, apparently resulting from our having had thirteen respondents ready for Bishop Jenkins in our scheduled visitation in February while Bishop Thompson was on sabbatical. Both Bishop Jenkins and Karen were curious about how we managed to have prepared for one to be baptized, four confirmed, eight received, and one reaffirmed in such a small family of saints. If you're counting and trying to resolve thirteen respondents with fourteen responses, one fifteen-year-old female was both baptized and confirmed. They asked me how that all came

about.

As Tevye in *Fiddler on the Roof* answered decisively the question of how various Jewish traditions started, I replied to each of them separately: "I'll tell you. I don't know."

As you might suspect, that answer neither satisfied the former in pressing me further nor deterred the latter in asking me to share such information in *Churchwork*. It is, nevertheless, accurate. I know of nothing the members at large, the vestry, or I did in the months preceding that was so different from what we've always done during my nine-year tenure here. My best response to them both then and now is,



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"I planted, Apollos watered, but God gave the growth" (1 Corinthians 3:6).

Please be aware that I'm not trying to tone down my enthusiasm or diminish the significance of these events. I am truly surprised and thrilled by it all. However, so as not to disappoint my erudite inquisitors, especially Karen (who is counting on fifteen hundred words from me by the end of the day), I hereby offer the following oblations that may qualify in determining our uniqueness.

First of all, at Nativity we send our children cost-free to Camp Hardtner. Speaking as a former church camp counselor, I know of no greater investment in the spiritual lives of our youngsters and therefore the future of our church family than that offered by an annual, God-centered, camp experience away from home with peers from across two Louisiana dioceses. It is faith-building formation of the grandest sort. For eight straight years, now, we have sent each summer anywhere from three to six children to Camp Hardtner. The oldest, Caleb Kent, is our first graduating senior from that bunch and has just enrolled at LSU. He and his brother David, still in Brusly High School, are fresh off the final week at Camp Hardtner where they both served as



[Photograph by Jane Baldwin-Kent]

voluntary counselors for Camp Able: the designated week for disabled campers. I hereby proudly bequeath Caleb to Father Drew Rollins and St. Alban's Chapel.

There was a time when we could afford this significant expense by requesting a check from our church treasurer. In a belt-tightening move four years ago, we began a yearly campaign for donations, instead. So far we've been in the black. My annual letter heading is "Dear Member, Former Member, Prospective Member, or Friend of Nativity:." That's quite a cloud of witnesses. Bishop Thompson, I'm getting pretty good at hitting up Episcopalians for hard cash. If you need some pointers, let me know. Through Camp Hardtner we seek to empower our kids.

Second, at Nativity, not unlike the *Book of Common Prayer*, the Daily Office, and the Eucharistic Propers, we deliberately celebrate Scripture. We have two scheduled Wednesday Bible study classes, one in the morning for elderly folks who don't get out at night and one in the evening. That one, of course, also gives us an excuse to have one of our renowned meals together. At a recent gathering—while I was on vacation, no less—the evening class had a record attendance of fifteen. To put that in perspective,



[Photograph by Jane Baldwin-Kent]



that is the same number reported on our parochial report of 2016 for our average Sunday attendance. Six of these class members, one of them Jewish, don't attend Sunday services, which qualifies this effort as outreach.

The scholarly conclusions of form criticism and historical literary deconstruction certainly have their place in the examination of the written word. But that is not sufficient reason to deter us from respect for or study of what tradition has handed to us. A close examination of those last two sentences will reveal all three legs of the Episcopal stool. I consider it both-and, not either-or. As a high school and college instructor of British and American literature for forty-plus years, I find value in the written story itself and in the characters themselves. Never can I recall a student downcast over the arguments of authorship or historicity when we have lived by proxy both the foibles and triumphs of such characters as Atticus Finch (Harper Lee's *To Kill a Mockingbird*), Mama (Lorraine Hansberry's *A Raisin in the Sun*), Silas Marner (George Eliot's *Silas Marner*) and Lady Macbeth (William Shakespeare's *Macbeth*). Instead, I have seen self awareness enlightened, relationships enhanced, and, I think, lives transformed by



[Photograph by Jane Baldwin-Kent]

good literature.

The story of Scripture enhances one's understanding of many significant Gospel truths. Among them are the need for Jesus to fulfill a sacrificial role, the qualifications for sacrifice, his being a priest forever after the superior order of Melchizedek, the nature of his family-style miracles, his lineage, the manner of his death, the tearing of the Temple curtain that until his death limited access to the Most Holy Place, his function as Passover, the events of Pentecost, the spiritual nature of the already-but-not-yet kingdom, the once-for-all nature of his sacrifice, the role of the Holy Spirit, and the destruction of the Temple.

A former Old Testament professor of mine at Concordia Seminary in St. Louis, Dr. Norman Habel, was once asked by a student if the Tree of Life in the Garden of Eden was a literal tree: "What difference would it make," he said, "in your understanding of the nature of God?" He wasn't the first theologian to answer a question with a question. I consider his response a succinct axiom that at once acknowledges the value of textual criticism while liberating the sincere disciple who merely wants to know the narrative that God through the Holy Spirit has



[Photograph by Jane Baldwin-Kent]

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placed in the hands of the modern reader. That makes it sacred. And it has internal integrity, to boot. Dr. Habel's concise distillation is, in fact, the criterion which allows the greatest story ever told to remain current and maintain its place in the canon of good literature. We tell that story.

Third, at Nativity we believe in the power of hardcopy communication. I know all of the good arguments about the frugality and distributive superiority of electronic transmissions. And we do post all pertinent information on our webpage. But I also know human nature. We send out the monthly trifold edition of the *Nativity Newsletter* to all members, recent visitors (for a year), and selected interested parties. That means once a month we remind each recipient of the good news that the Kingdom of God is open for business, and the Episcopal Church of the Nativity is alive and well and currently occupying your hand. And there's a chance that that single sheet of paper will find its way into a pocket or a purse or onto a coffee table where emails never tread. We unapologetically assert ourselves into the lives of people who matter to us in hopes that we might in turn serve and matter to them.

There are, of course, more subtle, less tangible factors of corporate personality that every parish family can delineate. Nativity has its share.

So, do I believe the preceding points answer the aforementioned question? No. No, I don't. We've been doing all of that for nine years that I know of, during which we sometimes had no respondents for the bishop's visitations. If you were to pin me down on a possible *quid pro quo*, I would say honorable mention goes to the declining revenues crisis we faced in the summer of 2016. The vestry devoted itself to two successive meetings on the topic. There were difficult discussions and frank exchanges. But we ended the latter meeting with a prayer circle, during which one parishioner asked God for more

members. And they came. And they continue to come, along with some folks we haven't seen in some time. However, if answered prayer explains our thirteen respondents in February, that puts it right back in God's lap: not Nativity's, not the vestry's, and certainly not mine.

See? My Tevye answer was right all along. But now you at least know the rest of the story. Except, of course, the acknowledgments: "Now to him who by the power at work within us is able to accomplish abundantly far more than all we can ask or imagine, to him be glory in the church and in Christ Jesus to all generations, for ever and ever. Amen" (Ephesians 3:20, 21).



*Episcopal Church of the Nativity in Rosedale was established in 1858. The Rev. Jerry Phillip's has served as the priest-in-charge since 2009.*



## We Opened Our Doors to the World

by the Rev. Tommy Dillon, Priest-in-Charge, St. Margaret's, Baton Rouge



*[Photograph courtesy of St. Margaret's, Baton Rouge] St. Margaret's stepped out into the community during the kick-off of their Laundry Love ministry. The Laundry Love initiative consists of regular opportunities to help people who are struggling financially by assisting them with doing their laundry. Laundry Love partners with local laundromats in cleaning the clothes of those living in shelters, motels, cars, garages and on the streets.*

Can you minister to the world and serve God's people from behind closed doors? Until about six years ago, St. Margaret's sure tried. Attendance averaged just around 15-20 people every Sunday even though our faith home was the only Episcopal Church in a growing community in South Baton Rouge.

We were very nearly forced to close for good. Money dwindled just about as much as our spirit did. But the truth was, our doors were already locked up tight. We couldn't overcome our differences. We were not only aware of how painfully distant we were from our own community, but seemed determined to deepen that divide.

That wasn't the end of our story. On August 13 this year, Bishop Thompson confirmed and

received nine children of God into our congregation and more than 150 persons of our church family were in attendance. This miraculous transformation took place over half a decade, but it all started with one simple act: We opened our doors to the world.

Christ didn't call for us to remain inside the walls of the church. He commissioned His disciples to take the Word out into the world. And by connecting and serving the people in this community, we continue that Commission today.

Our renewal can be felt and seen. We have more neighbors, friends, and strangers coming into our parish than ever before. And, we have a new sanctuary where we regularly celebrate God's love.

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We haven't come this far because we all checked the boxes on what we, as a church, agree on. Rather than focusing on any one issue, we focused on the values that brought us all here. We recommitted ourselves to the mission of our church and our Lord - to love each other and serve all of God's people. In a way, we are all newcomers to the Faith.

We share our faith stories and express our commitment to God by embracing challenges together. Our adult faith formation classes allow us to challenge each other about what it means to walk with Christ. It's a space where we're not required to agree, but safely have courageous conversations about who we are and who we want to become. We've built a safe place where we're free to discuss the front-page issues of our world in a healthy way. We've committed to each other to have a conversation rather than speak from our own personal pulpits.

And we build our faith from the beginning - our children's faith formation prepares our young members to become members of our community. But this education happens more than once a week. We offer our home to KidCam, a space where as many as 80 children bring life to our church during the summer months and annual school holidays. Providing them a space doesn't just fill the building, it allows our mission to be taken up and spread into the community.

KidCam helped raise money and gather supplies for our new Laundry Love Ministry. I know - laundry may not seem like a radical or spiritual



*[Photograph by Karen Mackey] The St. Margaret's House Band performs after the service on August 13.*

act of love, but I think of it as a modern-day foot-washing. It allows us to meet our neighbors where they are in their own journey. And by partnering with a local business, we're helping our community prosper.

What we've declared here is that the baptismal waters of our Lord is open for all. That we are truly relearning to be a parish by responding to the needs of the world right outside our door and across the world. Through these activities - whether it's nurturing our neighbors through Laundry Love or providing meals through our SPIN Feeding Ministry - we've said that you don't need to be in a church building to feel God's love.

And people feel that love. Recently, we heard from 28 newcomers who testified about why they've come to St. Margaret's. There wasn't a



*[Photograph courtesy of St. Margaret's, Baton Rouge] Newcomers dinner at St. Margaret's on May 21.*



dry eye in the room as they recounted being neglected or outright rejected from their former faith communities. Many said they had felt unwelcome at the Lord's table.

At St. Margaret's, we believe Christ provided the table and invited all to come. That's our mission. It's not always comfortable and is often messy, but that's the work we have been called to do. We have genuinely and lovingly invited others to join in faith with us - no matter their past, their beliefs, or who they are.

When I was interviewed by the vestry of the church to possibly be their priest, I asked them what neighbors would say if St. Margaret disappeared. The vestry replied that our community probably wouldn't even notice.



*[Photograph courtesy of St. Margaret's, Baton Rouge] St. Margaret's collected over 1,000 pairs of shoes to donate to the Kiwanis Club of Baton Rouge to raise money for maternal neonatal tetanus shots in developing countries.*

Last week, I saw a business in our community - not a member of our church, but a neighbor - fundraising for our Laundry Love ministry. I think we can say that what the vestry said is no longer true.

This is not an end, but a grand beginning. Now we must continue to be present and visible in our community and provide for our neighbors. Through our activities - whether it's collecting more than 1,000 pairs of shoes or ministering through meals - we have more opportunities to see the face of God in each other and those we would otherwise never know.

The Lord's grace doesn't begin and end at the door of the church. We are called to be God's hands of nurturing to the world. And the past few years are an example of what happens when we recognize each other's humanity, unite in our values, and work toward our common mission.



*St. Margaret's Episcopal Church in Baton Rouge was established in 1973. The Rev. Tommy Dillon has served as priest-in-charge since August 2016. He was recently called as rector.*

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### Helping Children and Youth Encounter the Divine

by Lindsey Ardrey, Youth Director, St. George's, New Orleans



[Photograph courtesy of St. George's, New Orleans] Having fun at Vacation Bible School at St. George's, New Orleans, in August.

Lately, I've fallen in love with the idea that the Old Testament books named after the prophets were written by poets and creatives who used the imagery of language to enliven God's message. It's no surprise that I'm drawn to the prophets at a time when our country is screaming out for moral direction. Walter Brueggemann's idea of prophetic imagination invites us to step into the text and bravely consider parting with our old ways and visualizing new ways of being. Freer ways of being. Ways of being that were once close to us when we were children. So please, if only for a moment, give yourself permission to lose your mind from reasoned and rationalized thought and step into the text with me.

"Our bones are dried up, and our hope is lost; we are cut off completely." In Ezekiel 37:1-14, the poet vividly unfolds the story of dry bones filling an immense valley. One can imagine bone on top of bone, filling the abysmal and darkened

space. God leads the man through the valley and asks, "Can these bones live?" God instructs this Son of Man to prophesy to the bones by saying, "Hear the word of the LORD. Thus says the Lord GOD to these bones: I will cause breath to enter you and you shall live." The man does as God commands and in response, a distinct noise is heard throughout the valley. It's the rattling of bones coming together. Bone to bone, flesh on top of sinews, covered with skin. A sight to behold. But the newly formed bodies aren't yet breathing so God tells the man to prophesy to the breath so that they could truly live. The man prophesies to the four winds and God breathes life into the formerly slain. I bring this text to mind because it can be easy to throw in the towel when it feels like our own bones are dried up and it feels like all hope is lost. When every right action we take seems to be countered by three wrong and worse actions, when our energy has



been depleted and even righteous anger has dwindled. I find solace in this passage because God returns to the bones. God hears the cries of God's people and does not abandon them. Yet it isn't with the snap of fingers that God awakens the bones. God calls on the human to prophesy. The bodies in the valley were fully formed but they were not yet alive. It was the breath—God's breath—that brought them to life. Reading

Ezekiel, I know I've found the cure for dry bones. Children. Young people are our breath and God calls us to prophesy to them. Children wake us up and rattle our bones out of our daily monotony.

On Sunday mornings, I stand at our classroom door along with the other Sunday School leaders welcoming families with their children before parents whisk themselves upstairs to mass. Just outside of the classrooms, children are asked to provide an offering to God. We aren't shaking them down for their allowance money, but asking for something perhaps a little costlier. Children reflect on the past week or look towards the upcoming week by offering up a joy, hope, or worry and writing it on a small piece of paper. Once they've completed this, their entry into the room is granted and we begin our sacred space time. Inside, we complement this introspection with soft lighting, a comfy seating area with large pillows, and individual contemplative activities. Children can sit at the table and color, thumb through a book we have on hand, or read a book they've brought along. Next, we gather around the altar. Lighting a candle, we remind ourselves what the word *sacred* means and how we embody the concept of a Sabbath day. What symbols mark this space as sacred? How do we know that this day is different? We recall when Jacob woke from his dream and proclaimed, "Surely the LORD is in the place—and I didn't even know it!" We set an intention, then gather for the lesson. Without explicitly stating it, we underscore the notion that as children of God, they are sacred. If God can inhabit our physical spaces, surely God can dwell within us.

I started incorporating sacred space when I felt that all other measures had failed. We had a behavior problem with one age group and I realized that the children didn't know what to make of Sunday School. It isn't quite like regular school, and it's not as proper as church. It was merely an extension of their weekend. So I decided to throw out the old playbook and to start fresh by emphasizing the reason we gather, knowing that what we do on a consistent basis matters. It matters that we gather together, and it matters that children know they are loved and



*[Photograph courtesy of St. George's, New Orleans] Having fun at the Harry Potter themed Vacation Bible School at St. George's, New Orleans, in August.*

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## REFLECTIONS

treated as contributors to our world. Our sacred world—what a concept! A world where Jesus walks on water, turns water to wine, and heals sick people with his bare hands and sometimes only with a word. A world where a young king dances with fervor before the ark, plays musical instruments, and writes poetry. A world where a stuttering man's staff parts a large body of water. A world where a people habitually grumble, complain, and lose faith yet God continues to call them time and again. Children live in our long-forgotten space of the impossible. Children flirt with the fantastical and journey to worlds adults have rationalized away. For children, there is no impossible. In my first days as youth minister at St. George's in New Orleans, I worried that I wouldn't adequately teach them about God but it didn't take me long to realize that my anxiety was baseless. Children already navigate an

existence that operates on a higher spiritual realm than the rest of us, and they don't need adults explaining how God works. I've learned that what children and youth need are spaces and opportunities to encounter the Divine. And occasionally, maybe we help them define their language for such encounters. I think that if we do this, we are firmly laying the foundation for a lifelong practice of religious and spiritual curiosity that far exceeds rote church attendance based on blind obligation.

After scanning the news headlines, returning to the organized chaos of children's and youth ministry is refreshing. I know refreshing isn't a word often associated with children, but compared with the tumult outside, working with young people seems like a retreat. I'm not turning a blind eye to what's going on outside the church walls, but acknowledging that our next teachers, priests, healers, entrepreneurs, and public servants will grow from these young ones. We can have the courage to prophesy a world powered on the love that Jesus taught and the justice that God demands *alongside* of children. We can't leave children's ministry to the women, or the school teachers, or the enthusiastic extroverts. Every member of God's kingdom on earth is commissioned to raise up a generation not ashamed to proclaim the Gospel or divest themselves of moral ambiguity. God has presented children as a gift to renew and strengthen us. When our bones cry out, our hope is within them. Prophesy to the breath.



*[Photograph courtesy of St. George's, New Orleans] Having fun at the Harry Potter themed Vacation Bible School at St. George's, New Orleans, in August.*



*St. George's Episcopal Church in New Orleans was established in 1860. Lindsey Ardrey has served as the youth coordinator since 2014. She also serves as the co-chair of the Racial Reconciliation Commission of the Diocese of Louisiana.*



## Looking Back at the Flood Recovery in Louisiana

*by Meg Kendrick, Assistant to the Flood Recovery Coordinator*



*[Photograph by Karen Mackey] The Very Rev. Dr. Roman Roldan organized volunteers on a workday at St. Luke's in September following the August 2016 flood.*

From August 13 through the 15, Louisiana was inundated with rain – up to 4 trillion gallons of water fell during this period. This equates to filling over 6 million Olympic sized swimming pools! There was no warning or name for the storm that caused flood waters to rise to the tune of an estimated 146,000 damaged homes, the dislocation of thousands of people and billions of dollars in damages to property throughout Louisiana. Many of our parishioners in our diocese as well as churches such as St. Francis, Denham Springs, and St. Patrick's, Zachary, experienced damage and loss of their homes, businesses, and worship spaces.

In response to the devastating flooding, our diocese quickly organized a systematic response to help serve those affected. This response included shelter work at places such as Celtic Studios, emergency response, and the organization of volunteer teams from both in

Louisiana and out of state. We also provided emergency housing assistance and counseling services to ensure that we were caring for the mental and spiritual health of those affected by the flood waters.

This systematic response grew into a formalized long-term flood recovery effort that continued over the course of the next year. The diocesan team wrote several grants to Episcopal Relief & Development for both the initial emergency response and long-term recovery. The Episcopal Relief & Development grants totaled \$540,000 and helped to serve over 167 families, consisting of over 446 individuals. The grants served to help individuals rebuild their homes from insulation to flooring, replace lost appliances and furniture, as well as replace lost income. Our goal was to help our families get one step closer to recovery and a new sense of normal. Through word of mouth and referrals we began to meet numerous clients



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throughout the flood affected areas. We met with families from St. Francisville to Baton Rouge, Denham Springs to St. Amant, all struggling to rebuild and recover. In St. Amant, we met multiple members of one family all living on the same street. Each family member from the mother to her two sons and grandson received over four feet of water in their homes. Through the grant programs supported by Episcopal Relief & Development, we aided each family with their different needs. One of them received new furniture to replace what was lost, the other used their small grant funding to replace their air conditioning unit that was fried by the flood waters. Another used their grant award to purchase sheetrock, insulation, mud tape and nails. While many of the stories we heard through our interviews and meetings with clients were similar, the flexibility of the grant programs allowed us to meet each individual family's need. The grants and the flexibility from Episcopal Relief & Development ensured that we were meeting direct client needs.

Bishop Thompson also contributed generously to the flood recovery efforts through the Bishop Fund Grants providing \$120,000 for recovery. These grants assisted families with emergency housing, rental assistance, furniture and appliance replacement, household start up income and as well as lost income replacement. The generosity of our bishop helped many families to keep their homes or provide a new rental home for their family after losing their rental home to the flood damage.

One such family who received assistance from the Bishop's Fund was a young single mother and her 5-year-old son who were struggling to find a reliable contractor to finish her home. The client had inherited the home from her father who had passed away but could not find a contractor within her price range that would complete the work. She feared that she would lose the home her father had passed down to her. At the time we met her, the client had found a contractor who failed to rip out parts of the ceiling that had received water damage and thus began to mold. This caused the mold to spread to the walls that he had just replaced forcing our client to start all



*[Photograph by Karen Mackey] Gloria Hunter from St. John's, Thibodaux, works on mold abatement on a home in Denham Springs.*

over. Through the Bishop's fund, we helped this young mother and her son by helping to pay for a reliable, honest contractor who redid the previous work and completed the work in a timely manner for a reasonable price. With the aid of the Bishop's Fund, our client moved back into her home within a few months of hiring the new contractor and could finally provide a sense of normalcy and routine for her young son.

The flood recovery program was managed through the flood recovery coordinator, the Very Reverend Dr. Roman Roldan, myself as the assistant to the recovery coordinator, along with the assistance of the Reverend Dr. Peter Kang. Together, we interviewed each and every client that received a grant from either the Episcopal Relief & Development grant programs or the Bishop's Fund. We then met the clients to purchase materials, appliances, and/or furniture. We toured homes inspecting damage, worked

with the homeowners and renters to determine the best use of their funds and prayed with and for our clients as they recovered. We kept detailed records and spreadsheets tracking the grant data and allocation to ensure that we were being as transparent as possible and to ensure the accuracy of all grant reporting to Episcopal Relief & Development, the Bishop's office and the diocese's Executive Board. During the yearlong recovery effort, we also served the volunteer teams to ensure that the teams had everything they needed to complete their work efficiently and effectively. This included shopping trips for more supplies, fixing and maintaining shower trailers, organizing meals and prepping sleeping areas. We tried to ensure that one of us was there at the end of each day during a volunteer team's trip to do check-ins and share a meal with them. We wrote endless thank you letters to people who donated funds, food and time to the flood recovery effort.

Many of the families served through the Episcopal Relief & Development as well as the Bishop Fund's grants were already struggling to make ends meet prior to the floods. With the rise of the flood waters they were pushed over the brink of disaster and were lost at where to start. Through the volunteer program initiated by our diocese as well as numerous churches organizing their own volunteer groups – we guided some of these families from gutting their homes, salvaging beloved family treasures that could be saved, mold abatement and then through the rebuilding process.

Volunteers joined the effort by registering on the



*[Photograph by Karen Mackey] A group from Episcopal Relief & Development talks to a homeowner who at that time was in the middle of having her home rebuilt through the Flood Recovery Program.*

diocesan website created by the Karen Mackey. Trinity Church, New Orleans; the Church of the Annunciation, New Orleans; St. Luke's, Baton Rouge; and Grace Church graciously opened their doors to provide non-local volunteers with a place to rest their head after serving. St. Anna's, New Orleans, and St. Paul's, New Orleans, provided tools along with volunteers. These church congregations also served the volunteers through donating lunches and suppers.

The volunteer response was awe-inspiring and included numerous volunteer teams from within the borders of our great state; many of our diocese church communities as well as outside organizations such as University of New Orleans and Together Baton Rouge sent teams to help muck, gut, and serve the flooded areas. Teams also traveled from beyond our state borders, hailing from places such as Rhodes College in Memphis, Tennessee; St. John's Episcopal Church in Murray, Kentucky; St. Mark's Episcopal Church in Gulfport, Mississippi; St. Michael's in Battleboro, Vermont; Grace Church Cathedral in Charleston, South Carolina; Franklin and Marshall College in Lancaster, Pennsylvania; Christ Episcopal Church in Cedar Rapids, Iowa; Emmanuel Episcopal Church in San Angelo, Texas; Trinity Wall Street in New York, New York; St. Francis of Assisi in Indian Springs, Alabama; and the Diocese of Missouri in St. Louis, Missouri.



*[Photograph courtesy of Grace Church] Volunteers from Iowa and Texas work on a home in Baker, Louisiana.*



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*[Photograph courtesy of Grace Church, St. Francisville] A newly restored kitchen in Solitude, Louisiana.*

Since the flooding, our diocese has supported over two hundred volunteers to serve and minister to their neighbors. The team from Franklin & Marshall College included 22 college age students serving in their Catastrophic Relief Alliance club. They have traveled to Louisiana five times previously to serve in areas affected by Hurricane Katrina. Their trip back to Louisiana in January was the first time they served in the Baton Rouge capital area. The 22 students along with their three intrepid adult advisors worked in three homes to insulate, sheetrock, mud and tape the homes. The homeowners were in awe of the work ethic and skills of the students. Upon their return to Lancaster, we received a thank you note along with a request to help them find a similar location in the future – they just couldn't get enough of Baton Rouge, its people and serving those most in need.

The flood program was also supported by churches and dioceses across the country. The Episcopal Diocese of Texas donated a four-stall shower trailer that served volunteer groups staying at St. Luke's and Grace Church. The Episcopal Diocese of Alabama also donated a two-stall shower trailer that served volunteers staying at Grace Church. Both these shower trailers washed away the hard work and sweat of 73 volunteers in 2017 alone. The Diocese of

Mississippi and St. Peter's by the Sea in Gulfport, Mississippi, donated two tool trailers complete with tools to help the gutting and rebuilding process. Volunteers from all over the country used tools from these two generous places to gut and rebuild homes.

The works and recovery efforts could not have been accomplished without the help of the numerous people across our diocese. Christopher Speed, Canon Shannon Manning and Deacon Elaine Clements provided invaluable support through their guidance and availability in serving the recovery process. And finally, we could not have done any of this without the support of our Bishop, Morris K. Thompson, Jr. and the team at Episcopal Relief & Development. We give praise and thanks for all those who served the recovery efforts and pray for all families and people affected by the flood waters. May God continue to watch over them and guide them. Amen!



*Meg Kendrick has served as the assistant to the flood recovery coordinator since 2016. She also serves as the family ministry coordinator at Grace Church, St. Francisville.*



## Looking Toward the Future at St. Francis, Denham Springs

by Karen Mackey, Diocesan Communication Director



*[Photograph by Karen Mackey] Janie and Gerald Rainey discuss the flooding of St. Francis one year ago and the future plans for the church.*

"We are hoping to be in our new church building this time next year," proclaimed St. Francis Senior Warden Gerald Rainey as he and his wife Janie sat down to reflect on the flood that severely damaged the church on August 12 and 13, 2016. It is one year since the "Great Flood" that destroyed many communities across Louisiana. The flood hit hard in Denham Springs where St. Francis is located.

After three days of intense rain, 20 inches of water flooded the church grounds. Every building had to be gutted. The parishioners have been displaced from the church and are holding services at the First United Church of Denham Springs.

"We started off worshiping for two Sundays after the flood in the back parking lot of the church," stated Gerald Rainey. "I do a Bible study with the men of the United Methodist Church so I had some rapport with the pastor. With instruction from Father Mark Holland (priest-in-charge of St. Francis at the time), I asked if we could worship there. They have been a gracious host. They have been a godsend. We worship in-between their two services at 9:45 a.m. It has been good."

"Even though we have been displaced almost every week we see somebody coming back or

checking us out," stated Janie Rainey. "It is pretty amazing. There is signage but they still have to find the Episcopal Church at the Methodist Church." Gerald Rainey stated, "Every Sunday (before the flood) we had a hospitality hour. It was a full blown meal. When we went to the Methodist Church, we asked people to just bring a light snack. The people stayed. They still sit around for about an hour socializing."

The Rev. Dan Krutz, who has previously served for seven years as the priest-in-charge for St. Francis, has returned as a supply priest when the Rev. Mark Holland accepted a call to serve as a rector of a church in Tennessee. "We were glad to get him back even in just a supply capacity," stated Janie Rainey. "He knows us and we know him. He is a steady presence."

Fifty percent of the parishioners' homes flooded. Gerald Rainey stated, "Of the majority of people of our congregation that flooded, I can think of just two families that are back to normal with their house. There are a lot more families out of their homes than in their homes."

The Rainey's are still rebuilding their own home but are currently living in the house through the State of Louisiana's Shelter in Place program. Janie Rainey explains, "We are not the exception. The exception is the person living the way they did before the flood." Gerald Rainey went on to say, "We can see the light at the end of the tunnel. We are getting there."



*[Photograph by Karen Mackey] Signs of hope at St. Francis, Denham Springs.*

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"One thing we learned is how to prioritize," stated Gerald Rainey. "You still have to deal with all the things going on in your life. We had a slow start here (at the church) because for the first few months we were still trying to figure out where we were going to lay our head at night. You have to put your family first. When things got halfway normal we could start focusing on the church."

St. Francis is located on five acres of land on Maple Street. "We hired a local architecture firm to draw up a master plan for future use on how the entire campus will be layed out," stated Gerald Rainey. "Our old church will be our new parish hall and we will have a new church building. All our committees and groups will meet with the architect so he can see what their wishes and dreams are for the new church. God is there. We have a lot of people in the church praying for God to guide and make sure we are on the right track. This is His will and not ours."

"The parish hall will remain the same. The walls will stay the same but we will put in a commercial kitchen," stated Gerald Rainey. "The kitchen equipment was a gift from the diocese. They came out of All Souls Church."

"We also received stained glass windows as a gift from St. James. Those will go into the new church," stated Gerald Rainey. "The windows came out of Annunciation Church in Donaldsonville. St. James saved them when that church closed and donated them to us."

What was the parish hall, known as Founders Hall, is being reconceived as a possible outreach center for the community. For now, it is just a hope.

The administration building known as Cameron Hall has been rebuilt and is now being utilized once again as the church office and for Christian education programs. "We wanted to come up with a better plan. We think we are now utilizing every bit of this office. We are pleased."

The Sunday school buildings are being reconceived as well. Gerald Rainey stated, "We have a lot of youth and we are working on the future for them. If we give them an active place



*[Photograph courtesy of St. Francis] The ECW of St. Francis hold their first meeting back on the church grounds after the rebuilding of Cameron Hall.*

to come and worship and have fun, we will put our best foot forward."

"One thing we have learned is how helpful people have been, how generous they have been" stated Gerald Rainey. "People reached out just wanting to help. We are grateful for the generosity of the diocese, Bishop Thompson, Trinity Church (New Orleans), and people across the Episcopal Church." Janie Rainey went on to say, "Every time we turn around, people are doing something affirming what we are doing here. People have been so generous."

Gerald Rainey stated, "I am excited about where we are and the direction we are going because it is the way God wants us to. I am positive about that. He is showing us that each and every step we make is the right step. My main goal as the senior warden is when all of this rebuilding is done, I need to have a congregation sitting in the pews. We are going to come through this much better. We will be stronger. We are a family."



*St. Francis Episcopal Church in Denham Springs was established in 1953.*

*Karen Mackey has served as the communication director of the Diocese of Louisiana since 2014.*



The Clericus (June—August 2017)



[Photograph by Karen Mackey] Clergy gather after the ordination of the Rev. Jane-Allison Wiggin-Nettles to the Sacred Order of Priests.

### Transitions in the Diocese

*The Rev. Jane-Allison Wiggin-Nettles* was ordained to the Sacred Order of Priests on June 28 at Christ Church, Covington. She is serving as the chaplain at Christ Episcopal School in Covington and as the youth coordinator for the Diocese of Louisiana.

*The Rev. Edward Thompson* has been called to serve as the associate rector of Trinity Episcopal Church, Galveston, Texas beginning September 1. He has served as the priest-in-charge of All Souls and St. Luke's, New Orleans.

*The Rev. Peter Kang* will leave Grace Church, St. Francisville, in mid-September. For over two years he has served as the associate rector for youth and family ministries.

### New Clergy in the Diocese

*The Rev. Andrew R. Thayer* is serving as the 26th rector of Trinity Church, New Orleans, effective August 6. He previously served as the rector of Church of the Ascension, Montgomery, Alabama.

*The Rev. Robert Beazley* is serving as the associate rector and school chaplain of St. Andrew's, New Orleans. He is a 2016 graduate of the School of Theology at the University of the South, Sewanee. He and his wife, the Rev. Liz Embler-Beazley moved to New Orleans in May.



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## OUT AND ABOUT IN THE DIOCESE



### **Ringin' Bells for Peace (left)**

*[Photograph by Karen Mackey]* On July 10, bells throughout New Orleans rang to call people to pray for peace and end to violence in the city. St. Anna's rector, the Very Rev. Bill Terry, rang the bell outside the church following the ceremony with Holy Eucharist.

### **Chapel Blessing (right)**

*[Photographs by Karen Mackey]* After a year-long renovation, the Lewis Family Memorial Chapel of the Good Shepherd at Episcopal School of Baton Rouge was rededicated on Sunday, August 13. Renovation included the addition of a covered walkway, classroom, and office space with improvement to lighting, audio visual equipment, seating, and flooring. A newly installed stained glass window of St. Francis was dedicated in honor of the Rev. Ralph Howe.



### **The Rev. Andrew Thayer (left)**

*[Photograph by Karen Mackey]* On August 6, the Rev. Andrew Thayer preaches his first sermon as rector of Trinity Church, New Orleans.

### **Blessing of the Fleet in Bayou Dularge (right)**

*[Photograph by Karen Mackey]* The annual Blessing the Fleet on Bayou Large organized by St. Andrew's was held on Sunday, July 23. The weather did not permit the traditional parade of boats but it did not stop the Rt. Rev. James Brown from holding a bayou-side blessing. The church held a crab boil fundraiser to raise money for church ministry and insurance.



### **Celebrating the Partial Eclipse of the Sun (left)**

*[Photograph in left courtesy of St. Paul's, New Orleans]* On August 21 the entire country including churches and schools across the Episcopal Diocese of Louisiana stopped to watch the solar eclipse. It was just a partial eclipse here in Louisiana but it was the first in 26 years that a total solar eclipse has been viewable in the United States.



### **Planning Your Future & Legacy (right)**

*[Photograph by the Rev. Canon John Kellogg]* On August 17 at St. Margaret's, Baton Rouge, Becky Williams (left) talks to a participant in the Planning Your Future & Legacy Workshop offered by the Diocesan Congregational Consultants for Stewardship. Topics for the workshop included funeral planning; living wills, powers of attorney; financial preparations; Medicare; and caring for the elderly. The workshop was repeated at St. Martin's, Metairie, on August 24.



### **Grilling at Chapel of the Holy Spirit (left)**

*[Photograph by Karen Mackey]* Over the summer, the Rev. Watson Lamb grills burgers after the morning service. Graduate students of Tulane University, located across the street from the chapel, were invited to have lunch with the parishioners



### **Grow Dat Youth Farm Outreach Project (right)**

*[Photograph courtesy of St. Paul's, New Orleans]* On July 1, St. Paul's volunteered with Grow Dat Youth Farm. The mission of Grow Dat Youth Farm is to nurture a diverse group of young leaders through the meaningful work of growing food. On our farm we work collaboratively to produce healthy food for local residents and to inspire youth and adults to create personal, social and environmental change in their own communities. Grow Dat is a place where people from different backgrounds and disciplines come together in research and practice to support public health, local economies, and a sustainable food system in South Louisiana.



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## OUT AND ABOUT IN THE DIOCESE



### **Young Leaders Academy of Baton Rouge (left)**

*[Photograph courtesy of St. Luke's, Baton Rouge]* In June, St. Luke's, Baton Rouge, partnered with the Young Leaders Academy and hosted the summer program at the church. The Young Leaders' Academy of Baton Rouge exists to nurture the development of leadership abilities of young African-American males, empowering them to improve the quality of their lives and assist them in becoming productive citizens.



### **Patriotic Music Festival (right)**

*[Photograph courtesy of Trinity Church, New Orleans]* Trinity Church held the 17th annual Patriotic Music Festival on Sunday, July 2. The program includes military bands and local musicians.



### **Last Howlelujah Tour (left)**

*[Photograph by Karen Mackey]* On June 26 at the Abita Brew House, the Rev. William Miller launched his Last Howlelujah Tour with his best friend and best dog, Nawiliwili Nelson. They hit the road on a 16-city tour sharing stories of God, dogs, and love.



### **Camp Able Closing Talent Show (right)**

*[Photograph by Karen Mackey]* St. Andrew's, New Orleans partnered with Camp Able for a second year to bring the camp to the New Orleans area. Camp Able is a unique camping experience that provides a camping experience to persons with diverse abilities. Pictured above is a performance from the closing talent show.





### **St. Matthew's Fishing Rodeo (left)**

*[Photograph courtesy of St. Matthew's Episcopal School, Houma]* On August 19, St. Matthew's Episcopal School held its annual back to school fishing rodeo at Cocodrie, Louisiana. Youth and adults participated for fun and prizes.



### **The Rev. Edward Thompson's Last Sunday (middle)**

*[Photograph by Karen Mackey]* On Sunday, August 27, the Rev. Edward Thompson celebrated his last Holy Eucharist in the Diocese of Louisiana before departing on his new call as associate rector of Trinity Church, Galveston, Texas.



### **Feast of Corpus Christi (right)**

*[Photograph by Karen Mackey]* On June 15, the Confraternity of the Blessed Sacrament celebrated the Feast of the Corpus Christi. A service of Holy Eucharist was held at Christ Church Cathedral. After the service members of the Confraternity paraded down St. Charles Ave to St. George's.



### **EfM Mentor Training (left)**

*[Photograph provided by Laurie Bailey]* EfM Mentor Training was held at the Solomon Episcopal Conference Center at the end of July. Back row - Paul Rummage, Sue Nichols, Marsha Wade, Andy Atkinson (trainer), Laura Robert, Sherry Beale, Bill Forman; Front row - Minka Sprague, Laurie Bailey (Diocesan Coordinator), Jo Hynes. EfM classes are held throughout the diocese.



### **East Jefferson Clergy Speak Out Against White Supremacy and Anti-Semitism (right)**

*[Photograph by Karen Mackey]* On August 22 at Congregation Beth Israel in Metairie, many of the Jefferson Deanery clergy participated in the East Jefferson Interfaith Clergy Association Prayer Vigil and Speak Out Against White Supremacy and Anti-Semitism.

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## OUT AND ABOUT IN THE DIOCESE

### Bishop's Journal: April 1, 2017—July 31, 2017

April 2: I visited St. Matthew's, Houma, and it was a very nice way to re-enter. I recall that St. Matthew's was the first parish I visited after being ordained a bishop.

April 3: My day off. My hearing aids malfunctioned while on sabbatical so a visit to my doctor today for repair.

April 4: Caught up with the staff and all that happened while I was away. This morning I also had meetings with folks from Church of the Annunciation, New Orleans. I spent time returning phone calls and catching up.

April 5: I had a morning meeting with Tanja Wadsworth the new director at the Solomon Center. I drove to the Solomon Center for a Board retreat with St. Martin's School.

April 6: St. Martin's Board this morning and eye appointment in the afternoon. Eye dilation ceases all paper and computer work.

April 7: I spent the day working on my sermon and other catch up work.

April 8: The SECC board meeting was canceled and so I had Saturday off.

April 9: Palm Sunday I experienced something new. Rebecca and I drove to St. Andrew's, Clinton, and waited for two hours for someone to open the doors. Unknown to me, the church had changed its worship time to 4:00 pm. Who knew!?

April 10: It's Holy Week and it began with the yearly Chrism Mass with the clergy followed by a clergy luncheon. The Cathedral staff and volunteers were very helpful as were the Diocesan staff.

April 11: Staff meeting in the morning followed by several phone calls and two phone conferences.

April 12: I had a pastoral conversation with a parishioner in the morning followed by sermon work.

April 13: I had an early phone conference with my bishop coachee followed by a meeting with Fr. Ed Thompson for his annual visitation. The day ended with a meeting with leaders from Annunciation. I was at the Cathedral for Maundy Thursday service. This is one of my favorite services of the liturgical year.

April 14: It's Good Friday and the office is closed which gives me time to work on Easter Vigil and Easter day

sermons. Rebecca and I attend St. Mark's, Harvey, for the Good Friday liturgy. It was very moving and thought provoking.

April 15: Rebecca and I drove to St. Matthew's, Houma, for the Easter Vigil. I always look forward to the first fire of the vigil.

April 16: Easter Day. I'm at the Cathedral and it was a great day. The choir, the fullness of the pews and celebrating the resurrection was magnificent.

April 17: The office was closed so we could catch our breath.

April 18: The day began with staff meeting followed by communion in the chapel and lunch together.

April 19: I had several meetings with clergy throughout the day and a call with Morgan Stanley and Chris Speed.

April 20: Morning meeting with Lindsey Ardrey and Trevor David Bryan regarding UTO grant. That meeting was followed with Fr. Bill Miller's annual visitation. In the afternoon I had a conference call with Bishops Against Gun Violence.

April 21: The day began with a breakfast meeting with Fr. Rob Courtney and a prospective curate. The rest of the day was filled with writing and reading.

April 22: I drove to Morgan City to spend the night.

April 23: I drove to St. Mary's, Franklin, from Morgan City for my annual visitation. It was a good service followed by a crawfish boil. There is a wonderful spirit at St. Mary's. Fr. Crawford is leading with conviction.

April 24: I took my day off.

April 25: The day started with staff meeting then lunch with the two canons. That afternoon Dean Dunkle from General Seminary visited and then I preached and celebrated for the CODE convention at the cathedral.

April 26: The morning began with returning phone calls and then a meeting in Baton Rouge with a parishioner regarding a wedding. This was followed by a meeting with Fr. Bryan Owen of St. Luke's, Baton Rouge. That evening I drove to St. Francis, Denham Springs, to talk about the flood and answer questions concerning help. It was a fruitful meeting.



April 27: Canon Manning and I drove to Vicksburg for the annual meeting with All Saints property of which Louisiana is part owner. Today is the graduation of AmeriCorps. We were told that under the Trump presidency we are in jeopardy of losing our funding. This would devastate the program of AmeriCorps. Louisiana has greatly benefited from AmeriCorps people during floods and hurricanes.

April 28: I played in a golf scramble with my son to support his parish. Unfortunately, I was terrible. I've got to play more than once a year! I drove back to New Orleans after the match.

April 29: Saturday.

April 30: My visit is at St. Andrew's, Bayou LaLarue, and it was a great day. I was also supposed to bless the fleet but a storm came and the Coast Guard advised against it. The rain came down so hard that I couldn't hear myself preach. We confirmed many parishioners that day.

May 1: My day off but I have a hearing doctor appointment followed by a phone conference and a meeting with a parishioner.

May 2: The day began with staff meetings and followed with Fr. Jim Morrison's annual visitation. Canon Manning and I had lunch with Chancellor Cove Geary to catch up on several matters. After lunch, I drove to Baton Rouge and then on to Zachary for Fr. Ashley Freeman's new ministry service. It was a fantastic night for St. Patrick's. They presented me with a beautiful mosaic of St. Patrick which hangs in my office. I've never seen such high spirits at St. Patrick's. I drove back to New Orleans getting in very late.

May 3: The Cathedral hosted a teaching day for the clergy on pastoral care followed by lunch and then some announcements and discussion. I always enjoy being with the clergy.

May 4: I have lunch with Fr. AJ Heine and Fr. Richard Easterling. It was a nice meeting and they even picked up the tab.

May 5: I spent the morning working on my sermon.

May 6: Saturday and no meetings.

May 7: My visitation takes me to St. Paul's, New Orleans. I first had breakfast with the confirmands and then preached and celebrated. The day ended with a nice brunch.

May 8: I took my day off.

May 9: The day began with our staff meeting followed by my annual visitation with Canon Kellogg. He is performing well for the diocese and for St. Mark's, Harvey. The goal is to have St. Mark's up running with a full-time priest in a few years. I drove to Baton Rouge for Mother MaryAnn Garrett's annual visitation. I spend the night in Baton Rouge.

May 10: I officiated and preached at St. Luke's School's closing chapel. This was followed by my annual visitation with Fr. Ralph Howe and lunch. That afternoon I celebrated at Episcopal High's Baccalaureate. This is one of the highlights of the year. I then drive home.

May 11: In the morning I met with Dean duPlantier for his annual visitation. The Cathedral is undergoing structural renewal. In the afternoon I met with Fr. Gary Taylor for his annual consultation. Fr. Taylor is the Headmaster at Trinity School in New Orleans. This meeting was followed by our Trustee's meeting in New Orleans.

May 12: I spent the morning writing my sermon and then drove to Baton Rouge for the graduation service for Episcopal High then drove back to New Orleans.

May 13: The morning began with the Diocesan Executive Board meeting. My first since I've returned from sabbatical. It was a lengthy meeting but very productive.

May 14: It is Mother's Day and I'm at my annual visitation at Trinity, New Orleans, where I preached, celebrated, and confirmed. A delightful lunch after with Fr. Carlisle, his wife Doris, and Rebecca.

May 15: I took my day off.

May 16: The morning began with staff meeting followed by my annual visit with Fr. Roman Roldan from Grace Church, St. Francisville. Fr. Roldan's leadership was enormous during the flood.

May 17: The day began with an early phone conference with my bishop coachee followed by a meeting with Fr. Jerry Phillips annual visitation. At lunch, the staff went to Shaya's for lunch. It was nice being with them in a casual setting. In the afternoon, I had a meeting with Fr. Duane Nettles and then on to St. Augustine's, Metairie, for Bobby Hadzor's ordination.

May 18: I got up early and Canon Manning and I drove to Christ Church, Covington, for Baccalaureate. Afterwards, we drove back to New Orleans. I had a

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## OUT AND ABOUT IN THE DIOCESE

conference call in the afternoon.

May 19: I had to take my truck into the shop for a little work then drove to the Solomon Conference Center for the Deacon's retreat. That night the deacons put on a play mimicking me on official visits to parishes. I have to admit it was pretty funny.

May 20: Deacon's conference most of the day then drove home. Our deacons work very hard in the ministries. We need more deacons in the diocese.

May 21: My visitation took me to St. Martin's, Metairie, where I confirmed, celebrated and preached. It was a good day.

May 22: I took my day off.

May 23: The day began with staff meeting followed by a brief meeting with the canons. Fr. Fred Duvall came in for his annual visitation. In the afternoon I drove to Baton Rouge where I spent the night.

May 24: Today I had back-to-back meetings beginning with Fr. Chris Capaldo, the new rector at Holy Communion, Plaquemine. This was followed by a meeting with Fr. John Pitzer then Fr. Stephen Crawford closed out the early afternoon. I drove to Zachary for the evening service and then attended a dinner for St. Patrick's. Following this gathering, I drove back to New Orleans.

May 25: I'm a little slow getting into the office due to not getting home until late. In the afternoon, I had a meeting with Fr. Paul Bailey for his annual visitation. Fr. Bailey is followed by a meeting with a clergy person who wants to get married.

May 26: I drove to Jackson, Mississippi, for a long weekend and the Memorial Day holiday.

May 30: We didn't have a staff meeting today due to so many being out. Bishop Brown and I had a delightful lunch to catch up. In the afternoon I had a conference call with the Risk Management committee with Sewanee.

May 31: No appointments in the morning which gave me time to catch up. In the afternoon I had a Board meeting at St. Martin's school followed by Baccalaureate service.

June 1: In the morning Fr. Bill Terry came in for his annual visitation. This was followed by a meeting regarding the Canal Street property. The sale is going slower than everyone suspected.

June 2: I spent the morning working on sermons and the

evening participating in St. Martin's graduation. It was a very good night.

June 3: I attended the annual ECW meeting at St. Augustine's in Metairie where I gave the state of the diocese address followed by preaching and celebrating at the closing mass. This is always a highlight for me.

June 4: My Sunday visit was at St. James, Baton Rouge, where I preached, celebrated and confirmed. Following the service, Rebecca and I were treated to a nice lunch with the interim rector Fr. Jo Reynolds, his wife and Fr. John Pitzer.

June 5-8: My wedding anniversary and I spent it in the airport. I flew to Kanuga for a week of meetings with Province IV Bishops and deputies going to General Convention in 2018.

June 9: I flew back to New Orleans.

June 10: I drove to the Solomon Center for a Board meeting then returned to New Orleans.

June 11: I flew to Sewanee for the Regents meeting

June 12: Regents meeting

June 13: Regents meeting

June 14: I flew back to New Orleans

June 15: The morning began with signing paper work for Entergy and other matters. Fr. Watson Lamb the new chaplain at the Chapel of the Holy Spirit came for annual visitation. He had tremendous energy for this new beginning. I also met with Mr. Lazard regarding the slave ship endeavor.

June 16: I did some preparation for the Baptism of our granddaughter Liza

June 17: Saturday and I have no meetings.

June 18: Rebecca and I travel to Meridian for the Baptism of Liza where I preached and officiated the Baptism. Our son Morris, III celebrated the mass. It was an amazing moment to share the altar with our son. We drove back to New Orleans.

June 19: I took my day off.

June 20: John Kellogg and I drove to Camp Hardtner so I could see the place where so many of our youth go for camp.



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## OUT AND ABOUT IN THE DIOCESE

June 21: For the first time in a long time I didn't have any appointments. It's time to catch up.

June 22-24: I took a group of clergy fishing. We didn't catch much but we did enjoy each other's company.

June 25: I visited St. Mark's, Harvey, where I preached, celebrated, received and confirmed several members. Following the service was a nice reception.

June 26: I took my day off.

June 27: The day began with our regular staff meeting followed by a meeting with my two canons. Fr. Harry Jenkins came for his annual visitation followed by Fr. Jay Angerer. In the afternoon I had a phone conference with Fr. Spencer Lindsay regarding St. Andrew's Luling.

June 28: Mother Peggy Scott came for her annual visitation. Later in the morning Fr. Ed Thompson and I met with Canon Manning.

June 29: This morning I met with Mother Morgan MacIntire for her annual visitation. She is an assistant at Christ Church, Covington, and at the school. Later in the morning, I met with a parishioner sensing a call to ministry. In the afternoon, I had a phone conference with Fr. Doug Lassiter.

July 1: No meetings this Saturday.

July 2: I had an unscheduled visit to St. Andrew's, Luling.

July 3-4: The office is closed for the 4<sup>th</sup> of July

July 5: Fr. Carlisle and I drove to St. Francis, Denham Springs, where he presented a \$10,000 check to the Sr. Warden Gerald Rainey from Trinity, New Orleans. We were met by several parishioners and a local newspaper reporter. St. Francis is generating quite the talk about their expansion.

July 6: In the morning I met with Fr. Steven Roberts for his annual visitation. Fr Roberts does so much for the Cathedral. I met Fr. Rob Courtney for lunch and then returned for a meeting with St. Luke's, New Orleans, Senior Warden Charles Williams.

July 7: I did some writing and prepared for the Executive Board meeting tomorrow.

July 8: The Executive Board meeting went a bit long but it was a good meeting. I appreciate all they do for the diocese.

July 9: I have no visitation today.

July 10: Shannon, John and I meet for a brief retreat to plan for the next several months. We got a lot accomplished.

July 11: I spend the day in quiet reflection over the items we discussed yesterday.

July 12: I got up early and drove to Baton Rouge where I met with several young adults interested in VOCARE. After the meeting, I drove to New Orleans and met with Canon Manning for her annual visitation.

July 13: In the morning, I met with Mother Kit McLean for her annual visitation. In the afternoon, I met with Fr. Michael Kuhn for his annual visitation.

July 14: Fr. AJ Heine and I go fishing for red fish but come back empty. However, the day was beautiful and kayaking around the marsh was amazing.

July 15: Spent the day getting ready for our beach vacation.

July 16: Rebecca and I left for Destin, Florida to meet the entire family. I can't wait!

July 17-22: Beach.

July 23: I had no visitation to make.

July 24: I took the day off.

July 25: I officiated the noon service at Lambeth House then had a very nice lunch with the residents.

July 26: It is a light day with only one appointment which freed me up to do some work I've been putting off. In the afternoon, I met with Fr. Stephen Craft for his annual visitation.

July 27: Another light day with afternoon phone conferences.

July 28: I'm out of town until the 31<sup>st</sup>.

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## **CALENDAR OF UPCOMING DIOCESAN EVENTS**

**October 7-8** Senior High Youth Rally at Solomon Episcopal Conference Center

**October 18 at 6:00 p.m.** Pre-Convention Meeting at St. Augustine's, Metairie

**October 25 from 10 a.m.—2 p.m.** Clergy Day at All Saints, River Ridge

**November 3-4** 180th Annual Convention of the Episcopal Diocese of Louisiana: Teaching God's People: Christian Formation in a Changing World at St. James, Baton Rouge

## **BISHOP'S VISITATION SCHEDULE**

**October 8** St. Alban's, Baton Rouge

**October 15** St. Luke's, New Orleans

**October 22** St. Anna's, New Orleans

**October 29** All Saints, River Ridge

**November 12** Christ Church, Covington

**November 19** St. Stephen's, Innis

**December 3** St. Andrew's, New Orleans

**December 10** Grace Church, St. Francisville

**December 17** All Saints, Ponchatoula

**December 24 (Christmas Eve)** Christ Church Cathedral



**Visit: [www.edola.org/2017-convention](http://www.edola.org/2017-convention)**