

# ALIVE!

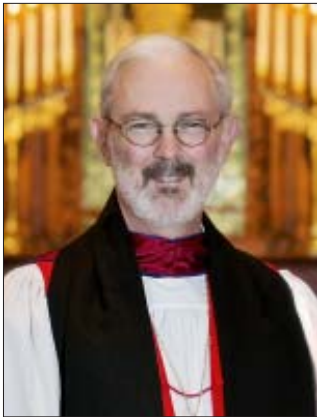
APRIL 2015

THE EPISCOPAL DIOCESE OF WESTERN LOUISIANA

VOLUME XXXVII, NUMBER 4

## EPISCOPAL SPEED DATING?

Christian Formation Conference attendees participated in an exercise entitled "Speed Dating." See page eight.



## Getting Nearsighted

The Rt. Rev. Jacob Owensby, Ph.D., D.D.

Strain as I might, my eyes cannot read normal-sized print without the aid of glasses. About a decade ago I could still make out words on a page by holding a book at arm's length. That strategy no longer works. Without help I can't see things clearly when they're up close.

Mary Magdalene seems to be having the spiritual version of the same problem. Jesus is standing right in front of her, and she can't recognize him. To

bring the risen Jesus into focus, she has to become spiritually nearsighted. And so do we all. That is because the risen Jesus is close to us in a way—in a more intimate and abiding way—than Jesus of Nazareth could ever have been. Let me explain what I mean.

Jesus and Mary Magdalene had grown very close.

Strictly speaking, no one could hide things from Jesus. He had a

way of seeing right through all your phony fronts and defensive shields. Your thoughts and your feelings, your dreams and your motives, your fear and your shame announced themselves to Jesus before you even opened your mouth.

Jesus started every relationship knowing everybody's stuff. And no matter what he saw, he reached out. He invited you to come closer. Some people pushed him away, hated him for it, and even plotted his ruin because of it.

Mary Magdalene loved him for it. She took him up on his invitation to get closer. Walking with him day after day, she began to be able to read Jesus. She understood the words he spoke but also the tone of his voice. Without a word from him, she knew when to let him be and when to tell him a joke.

Like all good friends, Mary Magdalene could read Jesus' outward words and actions as signs pointing to his inner life. She was as close to Jesus as she could be to any human being.

See *Bishop's Message*, page 7



## When in Our Music God is Glorified

the CVI offering in June at St. James, Alexandria

The Saturday, June 6 offering of the Convocational Vitality Institute, will be focused on Music. The program will focus on showing that music—which is a very important element of Anglican liturgical worship—can be missional in that it can be performed anywhere; with voices only, or with those voices accompanied with any portable musical instrument that is available.

We will emphasize that smaller congregations need not think only in the “large congregation/grand organ mode.” God can be glorified no matter how limited our resources may seem to be.

Bryan Mitnaul, of St. Mark’s in Shreveport is the presenter for this one-day session to be presented at St. James, Alexandria.

A one-time fee of \$25 covers attendance at all 2015 sessions of CVI. As is usual the presentation will begin at 10:00 a.m. and conclude at 3:00 p.m.



### The Season of Easter

The Season of Easter, the oldest and greatest feast in the church year, celebrates the feast of Christ's resurrection and is the central day in the liturgical year. Easter Day begins the Easter season, which lasts for fifty days, until the Feast of Pentecost. The readings for this season center on the events of the resurrection and the appearance of Jesus to his disciples.



April 2015, Volume XXXVII, Number 4

ALIVE! is published by the Episcopal Diocese of Western Louisiana, The Episcopal Church USA. The Rt. Rev. Jacob W. Owensby, Ph.D., D.D. is bishop of the diocese and publisher of ALIVE! Oversight of ALIVE! is the responsibility of the Diocesan Commission on Public Relations and Communications, chaired by the Rev. Whitfield Stodghill, III.

Robert Harwell ..... Editor

Graphic production of ALIVE! is performed by Harwell Productions, Inc. of Shreveport, Louisiana.

New manuscripts and photographs are solicited. All materials should be sent to ALIVE!, c/o Harwell Productions, Inc. 4321 Youre Drive, Suite 400, Shreveport, LA 71105

All materials are subject to editing and become the property of the diocese unless specified. If specified, a self-addressed, stamped envelope must be included. When this is done, a reasonable effort will be made to return the original materials to their source. All inquiries should be directed to: The Editor, 4321 Youre Drive, Suite 400, Shreveport, LA 71105. You may telephone 318-868-2303, or E-mail: [robertharwell39@att.net](mailto:robertharwell39@att.net)

ALIVE! (USPS 564-030)(ISSN 0273771X) is published monthly (except for July) by the Episcopal Diocese of Western Louisiana, 335 Main Street, Pineville, LA 71360. Periodical postage paid at Dallas, Texas, and additional mailing offices.

POSTMASTER: send address changes to "ALIVE!," P.O. Box 2031, Alexandria, LA 71309-2031

Copy deadline, next issue:  
Wednesday, April 22, 2015



## Daughters of the King Spring Assembly

### Daughters Care: taking care, receiving care, giving care

The Daughters of the King Spring Assembly was held March 7 at St. Timothy's Alexandria. The event was hosted by the Shreveport Convocation with fifty-five daughters from around the Diocese enjoying a spirit-filled day.

Holy Communion began the day, followed by Bishop Jake as our guest speaker. He gave us much to think about. The day continued with lunch, followed by a Shreveport Convocation presentation on Caring.

As Daughters we so often take on the role of care givers. We must always remember it is important not only to give help, but it is also important to let others help us. Trustworthy resources were given to help with this role. The day closed in prayer.

The annual business meeting was conducted by President Judy Bordelon. New officers were elected including: President Judy Bordelon of the Alexandria Convocation, who will serve a 2nd term; Vice-president Debbie Langlois of the Lake Charles Convocation; Secretary- Dara Antee of the Alexandria Convocation; Treasurer- Sharon Vercher of the Acadiana Convocation.

Rotating off as Secretary/Treasurer was Ruth Gayle, who served two terms, and Vice-President Denise Rox, who served one term.

There was been a great deal of activity in Daughters chapters around the diocese. A new chapter was installed in Vidalia at Good Shepherd, and new Daughters chapters were installed at St Timothy's, Alexandria; Good

Shepherd, Lake Charles and Epiphany, New Iberia.

#### Dates to remember

**April 10-11, 2015** – Province VII Spring Assembly - Albuquerque, New Mexico  
**June 19-23, 2015** – DOK Triennial, “Shining the Light of Christ,” Midway, Utah

**September 19, 2015** – Celebration and Installation of officers

**March 5, 2016** – Diocesan Spring Assembly, hosted by the Alexandria Convocation



## Around the Diocese



### Canterbury Cathedral Choir appeared at St. James, Alexandria as part of 2015 tour

The St. James Episcopal Church Concert Series concluded the 2014-2015 season with a choral concert performed by the Canterbury Cathedral Choir of Men and Boys, conducted by the Cathedral Director of Music, Dr. David Flood.

Canterbury Cathedral is the Mother Church of the worldwide Anglican Communion and is the seat of the Archbishop of Canterbury. Consisting of twenty boys and twelve men, this was the only Louisiana appearance on this tour of this world renowned choral group.

The concert was presented in the nave of St. James in Alexandria on Wednesday, April 8, 2015, at 7:30 p.m.

Through a grant from The McCormick-Smith Fund, Inc., admission was free and open to the public.

## Episcopal Church News

### Head of The Episcopal Church says it's 'sinful' to ignore climate change

by Antonia Blumberg

On March 25 the presiding bishop of the Episcopal Church had strong words this week for people who deny climate change based on "political interests" or "willful blindness."

"The Judeo-Christian tradition has always called those motivations sinful," Bishop Katherine Jefferts Schori said Tuesday at an event to raise awareness about climate change. "It's decidedly wrong to use resources that have been given into our collective care in ways that diminish the ability of others to share in abundant life."

Speaking at an Episcopal Church event in Los Angeles called The Climate Change Crisis, Jefferts Schori said that humanity has reached a "life and death" decision to change the tide of climate change and that the window of opportunity "will not last long."

"We are making war on the integrity of this planet," she said. "We were planted in this garden to care for it, literally to have dominion over its creatures. Dominion means caring for our island home."

Tuesday's event kicked off a 30-day challenge for people to learn about and advocate for environmental change. Over the course of the initiative, which ends on Earth Day, April 22, participants who sign up on the Episcopal Church's website will receive daily emails with information to help them reduce their carbon footprint and spread awareness about climate initiatives in their communities.

Climate protection is an issue of personal interest for Jefferts Schori, who has a doctorate in oceanography and worked as a marine biologist before entering the priesthood in 1994. The bishop is a backpacker and nature lover who has studied interconnected systems like the circulation of water, the atmosphere and marine geology.

The Episcopal Church as a whole has made environmental stewardship a top priority. The Episcopal Ecological Network was formed in 1986 to provide educational resources to Episcopal churches around the U.S. and build grassroots efforts to address environmental issues in communities.

In 2012 the church partnered with inter-



The Most Reverend Katherine Jefferts Schori, presiding bishop of The Episcopal Church

faith environmental nonprofit GreenFaith to launch a certification program for Episcopal churches around the country to make their worship and educational facilities more environmentally friendly.

"We are meant to love God and what God has created and to love our neighbors as ourselves," Jefferts Schori said

Tuesday. "Jesus insists that those who will enjoy abundant life are those who care for all neighbors, especially the 'least of these' — the hungry and thirsty, the imprisoned and sick — and that must include all the species that God has nurtured on this planet."

—From *The Huffington Post*

## Diocesan Notables

### Time for Joy Women's Retreat set for April 17-19 at Camp Hardtner

The Episcopal Church Women will sponsor their annual spring retreat, a Time for Joy, April 17-19, 2015 at Camp Hardtner. The Joy week-

**Bishop Owensby is an important part of the weekend, and he allocates quality time to the women in attendance.**



end is for women and promises to be fun, relaxing, and filled with fellowship along with opportunities that stress the importance of slowing down, enjoying life, and sharing a personal relationship with God.

Time for Joy was conceived by Bishop Hargrove several years ago as a time for young women to be away from the demands of work and family and as a time to renew or revive their relationship with Jesus Christ. Bishop Owensby is an important part of the weekend, and he allocates quality time to the women in attendance.



Time for Joy • April 17 - 19, 2015 • Camp Hardtner

The central concept of the Time for Joy (Jesus, Others, Yourself) weekend centers on providing young women with a time to get away from the pressures of an overly-busy life. Once at Camp Hardtner, the message of taking time for themselves and making time for a relationship with God is emphasized. The weekend is joyful and care-

free, with the message that life is our gift from God and that HE meant for us to enjoy it! It is a "stop and smell the roses" type of weekend.

Each woman will experience God's love and healing in different ways. Applications are sent to each parish in the diocese, with the request that they send one or two women who

will benefit from a weekend away from the stress and strain of their lives, to be nurtured and given the message that life is

**Applications were sent to each congregation in the diocese with the request that they send one or two women to this wonderful program. Speak to your priest about attending this unique weekend!**

our gift from God and that HE meant for us to enjoy it.

For more information please don't hesitate to email: Paula McLean, Chairman, [mcleanmanor@yahoo.com](mailto:mcleanmanor@yahoo.com), or Roxanne Meyers, Co-Chair, [roxannemyers6218@gmail.com](mailto:roxannemyers6218@gmail.com)



#### Lake Charles ECW Lenten Retreat

The Lake Charles convocation met at the St. Charles Catholic retreat center for a Lenten retreat on March 17, St. Patrick's Day.

Sponsored by St. Michael's, 40 women from the various convocation churches attended. The Rev. Deborah Heathcock, interim rector at St. Michael and All Angels, led the retreat on the topic of Celtic Spirituality.



#### Last curtain call taken by ESA senior, Jackson Beach

ESA Senior Jackson Beach, son of Sabrina and Bruce Beach of New Iberia, just took his final curtain call onstage in ESA's Henton Chapel, but it certainly won't be the last in his lifetime. Jackson played Corny Collins in *Hairspray the Musical* this year, one of many performances for Jackson in his seven years at ESA. Jackson came to ESA's Cade campus in sixth grade, after eight years at Epiphany Day School, and quickly earned a role in the spring musical, *Fame*. Though he'd participated in community theatre in New Iberia before, this first musical ignited his passion and he has been a part of ESA productions every year.

"I've delved deeper into singing and acting," he says. "My favorite was the 25<sup>th</sup> Annual Putnam County Spelling Bee. It's the most

unique thing I've ever done." Jackson plans to enter the theatre program at Trinity University in



Jackson Beach with other cast members of *Hairspray*.

San Antonio in the fall.

Outside of theatre, Jackson finds enrichment through the Episcopal

See ESA, page 8

*“Do not be conformed to this world, but be transformed by the renewal of your minds, so that you may discern what is the will of God — what is good and acceptable and perfect.”*

Romans 12:2

Do you think God might be asking something of you at this time, but are in a quandary as to what that might be? Are you considering a path to ordination?

Sign up now to attend this year’s Discernment Conference, “WHERE IS GOD TAKING ME NOW?” sponsored by the Diocesan Commission on Ministry.

St. James Episcopal Church, Alexandria  
Saturday, April 25, 9:00 a.m. -4:00 p.m.  
\$25 registration fee

Lunch and snacks provided

There will be talks on discernment, listening, and prayer given by our bishop and members of the Commission on Ministry. You will have an opportunity to visit with others who are seeking God’s will for them. Come, expecting to take a step out in faith. You may register for the Conference on-line at the diocesan website, [www.diocesewla.org](http://www.diocesewla.org).

*“A spirit glided past my face; the hair of my flesh bristled. It stood still, but I could not discern its appearance. A form was before my eyes; there was silence, then I heard a voice...”*

Job 4:15-16



### American Boychoir to sing during St. Mark’s Cathedral worship services

The American Boychoir, the country’s premier concert boys choir, will sing Sunday services at St. Mark’s Cathedral in Shreveport on April 19.

With a repertoire ranging from renaissance motets to spirituals

and twentieth-century song cycles, the American Boychoir performs nearly 100 concerts annually, and has appeared with most major symphony orchestras.

The choir will sing for the 10:30 a.m. service on Sunday, April 19, and, later Sunday, join the combined Cathedral Choirs for a special Choral Evensong at 6:00 p.m. For



## Around the Diocese

# Spring has finally arrived at Camp Hardtner

*The spring weather has finally arrived, flowers are in bloom, fire ants are building mounds, and the wasps are buzzing around! There is nothing like being at Camp Hardtner to enjoy all of God's creation. Easter season is upon us, and it is*

*time to rejoice! Rejoice in the risen Lord, rejoice for warmer weather, rejoice in the many blessings each of us receives, and bless this our summer camp and place of spiritual renewing and rejoicing.*

by Jason Ezell

### Camp Hardtner Work Day

We are quickly approaching the beginning of our summer camping season but still have many things left to do in preparation of our joyous campers. On Saturday, April 25 there will be a volunteer's workday at Hardtner. We will clean, rake, paint, scrub, mend, organize, and generally air things out from 9:00a.m. – 4:00p.m. Lunch will be served, but we must know if you will be attending so we can properly prepare. There is a link to a sign-up sheet on the homepage at [www.camphardtner.org](http://www.camphardtner.org). Come out and share in this ministry of community and service.

### Camper Scholarships are needed once more!

Now is also a great time to make a donation to the Annual Fund, the Fr. Joe Bordelon Scholarship Fund, or the Camp Able Fund. This can easily be done on the website or by mailing a check to the camp office with the designation of the funds noted. Under the **DONATE** link on our homepage there is also a wish list of items for the summer camping program. Please prayerfully consider supporting our youth!

### Calling all Volunteers!

If you are age 16 or older and would like to volunteer your time and talents this summer, we would love to hear from you. We have made it a bit simpler this year by adding a link to the homepage of our website for Summer Camp Volunteer Staff Application. By clicking the link and filling in

the information online, we will be able to contact you and know what session(s) you are interested in staffing. Not everyone who applies will be selected. We have a great need for staff members for Camp Able 1 & 2. These two camp sessions require more staff members than campers. Anyone age 16 or older may apply to staff Camp Able. Once applications are in, the camp session Deans will choose their staff members. All applications are due by May 15.

### Safeguarding at Camp

The safety of our children is always top priority at Camp Hardtner. In addition to conducting background checks on our staff and volunteers, it is required that all staff and volunteers complete Safeguarding Online: <http://www.diocesewla.org/getting-started-with-safeguarding-online/>. If you arrive to staff and have not completed Safeguarding Online since July 2014, you will not be allowed to stay on campgrounds.

### Camp Registration and Medical Info

Time is running out to get your child registered for Summer Camp 2015. Sessions are filling up at a pretty fast rate. After a crazy summer of 2014, we are ready to get back on track offering a full summer of worship, play, and love in God's beautiful creation. The link for registration can be found on our website at [www.camphardtner.org](http://www.camphardtner.org). If you have attended camp in the last 2 summers, your information is saved in the system. Please review Camper Grade, contact info, emergency contact info, child release info, and medical information to ensure accuracy. Each camper is required to have

a doctor's signed medical form completed and on file with camp prior to the camper's session. Please don't bring these to registration. Our medical staff requests this information in advance to help speed the processing on registration day. School or ath-

letic physicals are accepted as long as it has been within 12 months of the camper's session. For any questions, please contact the Camp Hardtner office at [office@camphardtner.org](mailto:office@camphardtner.org).

## Don't Delay!... Make your Camp Reservations NOW!

Camp Session	Campers Accepted	Camp Dates	Cost
First Camp	Grades 1&2 with parent/guardian	June 4, 4:00 p.m. June 6, 11:00 a.m.	\$175 per person
Camp Able 1	Grade 3+ & 9+ years old; special needs only	June 9, 2:00 p.m. June 13, 9:00 a.m.	\$450
Primary Camp	Grades 3&4	June 16, 2:00 p.m. June 20, 9:00 a.m.	\$460
Jr. High Camp 1	Grades 5&6	June 23, 2:00 p.m. June 28, 9:00 a.m.	\$575
Jr. High Camp 2	Grades 7&8	July 2, 2:00 p.m. July 7, 9:00 a.m.	\$575
Sr. High Camp	Grades 11&12	July 10, 2:00 p.m. July 16, 9:00 a.m.	\$690
Mid High Camp	Grades 9&10	July 19, 2:00 p.m. July 25, 9:00 a.m.	\$690
Camp Able 2	Grades 3+ & 9+ years old; special needs only	July 28, 2:00 p.m. Aug 1, 9:00 a.m.	\$460

## DIOCESAN DATES OF NOTE

### Planning an event in the diocese? **CONTACT JOY FIRST!**

After a great deal of planning and hard work, the Diocese has established and will maintain a central diocesan calendar of events to be held in the diocese.

The creation and maintenance of that calendar is the responsibility of Missioner for Children, Youth, and Young Adults, Joy Owensby. (JOwensby@diocesewla.org)

SO, if you are planning an event to be held in the diocese, your first move is to CONTACT JOY! Still in its infancy, this central calendar has already helped avoid overlapping events.

Remember, your first move is to CONTACT JOY! JOwensby@diocesewla.org

#### April 2015

- 14 — General Convention Deputation Meeting, *Diocesan House, 10:00 a.m.*
- 17-19 — Time for Joy Women's Retreat, *Camp Hardtner, starts at 6:00 p.m.*
- 19 — Bishop's Visitation, *St. Paul's, Abbeville*
- 21 — Meeting of the Diocesan Council, *St. James, Alexandria, 10:00 a.m.*
- 22 — Bishop's Midweek Visitation, *Polk Memorial, Leesville*
- 24-25 — Camp Hardtner Work Days, *all day, both days at the camp*
- 24-26 — Kairos Outside, *Camp Hardtner, starts at 6:00 p.m.*
- 25 — Discernment Conference, *St. James, Alexandria, 9:00 a.m. - 4:00 p.m.*
- 26 — Bishop's Visitation, *St. George's, Bossier City*

#### May 2015

- 3 — Bishop's Visitation, *Good Shepherd, Lake Charles*
- 5 — Meeting of the Standing Committee, *Diocesan House, 10:00 a.m.*
- 10 — Bishop's Visitation, *St. Mark's, Shreveport*
- 17 — Bishop's Visitation, *Ascension, Lafayette*
- 24 — Bishop's Visitation, *(Pentecost & Memorial Day weekend) Calvary, Bunkie*
- 27 — Summer Camp Permanent Staff assemblies, *Camp Hardtner*
- 29-31 — Taste of Hardtner, *Camp Hardtner, starts at 2:00 p.m., May 29*
- 31 — Bishop's Visitation, *Trinity, Cheneyville*
- 31-June 3 — Summer Camp Counselor Training, *Camp Hardtner, starts at 4:00 p.m.*

#### June 2015

- 2 — Meeting of the Standing Committee, *Diocesan House, 10:00 a.m.*
- 4-6 — First Camp, *Camp Hardtner, starts at 4:00 p.m.*
- 6 — Congregational Vitality Institute Presentation: When in Our Music God is Glorified, *St. James, Alexandria, 10:00 a.m. - 3:00 p.m.*
- 7 — Bishop's Visitation, *Trinity, DeRidder*
- 9-13 — Camp Able 1, *Camp Hardtner, starts at 2:00 p.m.*
- 14 — Bishop's Visitation, *St. Barnabas, Lafayette*
- 16-20 — Primary Camp, *Camp Hardtner, starts at 2:00 p.m.*
- 21 — Bishop's Visitation, *St. James, Shreveport*
- 23-28 — Junior High Camp 1, *Camp Hardtner, starts at 2:00 p.m.*

#### July 2015

- 2-7 — Junior High Camp 2, *Camp Hardtner, starts at 2:00 p.m.*
- 7 — Meeting of the Standing Committee, *Diocesan House, 10:00 a.m.*
- 10-16 — Senior High Camp, *Camp Hardtner, starts at 2:00 p.m.*
- 15 — Board of Trustees, *Diocesan House, 11:00 a.m.*
- 19-25 — Middle High Camp, *Camp Hardtner, starts at 2:00 p.m.*
- 28-August 1 — Camp Able 2, *Camp Hardtner, starts at 2:00 p.m.*

#### August 2015

- 4 — Meeting of the Standing Committee, *Diocesan House, 10:00 a.m.*
- 9 — Bishop's Visitation, *St. Luke's, Jennings*
- 16 — Bishop's Visitation, *St. Andrew's, Moss Bluff*
- 21-23 — Hardtner Alumni Retreat, *Camp Hardtner, starts at 6:00 p.m.*
- 23 — Bishop's Visitation, *St. David's, Rayville*
- 26 — Bishop's Midweek Visitation, *St. Andrew's, Mer Rouge*

#### September 2015

- 1 — Meeting of the Standing Committee, *Diocesan House, 10:00 a.m.*
- 5 — Diocesan Ultreya, *Camp Hardtner, starts at 9:00 a.m.*
- 6 — Bishop's Visitation, *Holy Trinity, Sulphur*
- 12 — Congregational Vitality Institute Presentation: "Why We Are Anglicans," *Hardtner Camp and Conference Center, 10:00 a.m. - 3:00 p.m.*

### Bishop's Message

*continued from page 1*

And not only did she understand Jesus, she had shaped her life around him. She arose when he awoke and laid her head down when he finished his day. They shared a common table and his feet directed her wandering through the Judean countryside. Home was wherever Jesus was. The world made sense because Jesus inhabited it.

When Jesus died, Mary Magdalene lost a friend and saw her universe disintegrate. Her sense of loss was real and there was nothing misplaced about her grief. What she had known with Jesus was gone forever.

But what Mary Magdalene did not initially grasp was that the closeness she knew was being replaced with an infinitely more intimate closeness, not a heartrending absence. And the world that had been shaken was giving way to a new heaven and a new earth with Jesus himself at its very center.

Now, Jesus is so close, she cannot see him at first. She never imagined that anyone could be so close. And strictly speaking, neither do we.

This helps us understand what for many of us is Jesus' puzzling response to Mary Magdalene. He chooses her to be the very first to see him risen from the dead. He tenderly speaks her name. And yet when she understandably reaches out to hold him, he says, "Don't cling to me."

Jesus' words sound at first like an uncharacteristic rebuff. But they are nothing of the sort. Jesus invites Mary Magdalene to let go of less so that she can take hold of more.

Mary reaches out to Jesus to recover the life they had known together. It was a lovely life. Filled with common purpose, heartfelt laughter, well-earned exhaustion, and mutual affection. No wonder Mary Magdalene wanted to pick up where they had left off.

Jesus didn't blame her. He just wants more for her. He is more for her. He is the crucified and risen Christ. He is not less than he once was, as if he were a mere ghost. He is not someone entirely different, as if their time together no longer shaped his sense of identity.

The risen Jesus is the fulfillment and completion of the Jesus she had known wandering the byways of Galilee. If she will let herself, she will see that who she had come to know—as winsome and loving and wonderful as he was—was but a mere suggestion of who he had now become.

Jesus came to embrace everything about our condition. Everything. The joys and the sorrows. The triumphs and the failures. The life and the death. On the cross, he embraced all that was dark and chaotic and destructive and thoroughly overcame it. Not only for himself, but for all who put their trust in him.

And the risen Jesus can be available to her, and to us, in a more intimate way than could Jesus of Nazareth. Yes, Mary Magdalene could embrace him. And eat fish with him. And hear his voice. And

see his eyes seeing her.

But now his touch is something more. He can permeate her. Saturate her. Dwell within her heart. Speak from within her own spirit. Adjust her view of the world by adjusting the focus of her eyes from within.

Here's what I mean. Later that same day, Jesus appeared to the remainder of the Twelve (minus Thomas, who was apparently making a Starbucks run). He breathed on them and said, "Receive the Holy Spirit." (John 20:22) Through the Holy Spirit, Jesus himself abides in each of us.

Earlier in his ministry, Jesus had said, "Out of the believer's heart shall flow rivers of living water." (John 7:38) He was referring to the Holy Spirit, and the Spirit's work is to make Jesus himself available to every believer.

Jesus saturates us from within. At least, that's what he offers. Like Mary Magdalene, we can have a powerful, ongoing experience of Jesus Christ himself. Today. Every day.

Let me outline two basic ways to have access to the living Jesus.

First, take time to be still. To listen. It's as if we are desperately thirsty and a clear, cool stream of water wells up right within our souls all the time. And yet we resist taking the time to stop, kneel down, and take a drink.

We are too busy with such important things. Sports. Homework. Projects at work. Leisure activities. In our over-scheduled world we slip into putting Jesus in the "to do later" slot.

And then we wonder why we feel so thirsty spiritually. People and things don't live up to our expectations. We get irritable and disappointed. We criticize others and even berate ourselves. This life never seems to measure up. No wonder, we're getting spiritually dehydrated.

The second way to have access to the living Jesus is to do. To act. To get out of ourselves by seeking to serve somebody else. Jesus slakes our thirst so that we can know him in doing his work. He inhabits our hearts in order to extend his kingdom through our hands and feet.

This certainly means that we can devote our normal, everyday routines to him. But he wants more from us. He teaches us to reach out in works of mercy. Feed the hungry, shelter the homeless, visit those in prison, and defend the powerless.

Jesus isn't just in church buildings or the heavenly courts. He is near. So near that we may struggle to recognize him. We just don't expect that God could love us so much that he would stand so close.

But he does love us that much. And wants us to know it and to live our lives as a response to that love. We just have to learn to be spiritually nearsighted. And he'll even help us with that.

*—This article is derived from a sermon preached on Easter Day in 2013.*

## Christian Formation Conference: “practical in nature” and “resource rich”



Lisa Kimbell, Ph.D. of Virginia Theology Seminary, pulled the cover back, exposing the richness of resources and the support of dedicated professional educators that is available to lay and clergy attempting to instill the framework of the faith in the young and not-so-young Episcopalians in the Diocese of Western Louisiana.

An experienced leader, Kimbell skillfully cast the struggle not as a “one-shot, classroom experience” in which the “learner” receives enough knowledge about Christianity to last them a lifetime, but as an engaging, introduction to a developmental process that will span the individual’s life-

time. The various stages of one’s faith development were highlighted and discussed and related to other facets of an individual’s development.

By using group exercises involving virtually all in attendance, Kimbell imparted both theory and practical assessment of one’s personal and organizational situation. Kimbell’s keynote address: *Wide-Angle Living: Discipleship and Mission in Everyday Life*, both revealed the nature of the life-long struggle and how educators must respond.

The first of the three following units was: 1) *Starting Where We (Really) Are: Mapping Our Resources*, followed by: 2) *Beyond Sunday School: What’s Working and Why?*, closely followed by: 3) *Speed Dating: Resources to Nurture Faith 24/7*.

Kimbell closed with a passionate invitation for all to make use of a rich trove of educational materials and curriculum available from Virginia Theological Seminary. ([www.keyhallonline.org](http://www.keyhallonline.org)) and ([www.buildfaith.org](http://www.buildfaith.org)).

An interested and spirited audience fully participated with Kimbell in this second Christian Education event staged by Commission on Christian Formation.

As is their hallmark, the people of St. James, Alexandria were gracious hosts.

### ESA continued from page 4

Church of the Epiphany choir, St. Barnabas Youth Group and community service. He has undertaken several summer mission trips,

working with Navajo children in New Mexico and rebuilding houses for tornado victims in Kentucky. At ESA, he has learned to balance school work with time spent on the musicals and with friends. “It’s taught me to pace myself,” he says. Seeing teachers find ways outside of the

school day to display their passions – such as ESA History Department Head, Garrett Rosen’s Pink Floyd concert – and having the opportunity to be a part of those activities, has been another highlight of Jackson’s ESA experience.

Jackson shared these words of encour-

agement with younger students, “Never be afraid to do what you want. You should never have to look back and say, ‘I wish I had...’”

## Looking for a way to reduce your tax bill and do the Lord’s work at the same time?

On February 26, 2015 CLECO Corporation announced that its shareholders had approved the merger agreement whereby CLECO will be acquired by a North American Investor group for \$55.37 per share. When all regulatory bells and whistles have been successfully negotiated, probably in the 3<sup>rd</sup> or 4<sup>th</sup> quarter of 2015, a shareholder

in the company will receive cash for his or her stock. If the stock was held outside of a retirement plan, there will most likely be a taxable gain on the transaction.

Fortunately, there is a way to avoid the tax and help do God’s work in our diocese. If you donate your stock to the Diocesan Endowment Fund prior to the closing transaction by CLECO, not only will you incur no tax on your gain, but you will possibly be able to

deduct the full market value of your donated stock on your tax return if you itemize deductions.

To take advantage of this opportunity to reduce your tax obligation while providing the diocese with an important legacy for many years to come through the Endow-

ment Fund, check with your Tax Attorney and/or Financial Advisor.

If you would like to discuss this with someone from the diocese, please contact The Rev. Liz Ratcliff, Canon for Generosity and Hospitality. She will be glad to answer any questions about how your donation can be used to further the Diocesan Vision, both now and for the future.

