



Comments on Camp Able II and what's ahead for Camp Hardtner

by Bill Shearman

Camp Able is a special needs camp. This summer's sessions were the third and fourth sessions since 2013 and the first time Hardtner had two sessions.

The first Able session, June 9–13, had 36 campers. The second, July 28–August 1, had 35 campers. Camper capacity for Able is 40 campers.

The first Able session was directed by the Rev. John Bedingfield. That camp had 71 volunteers at a ratio of about one camper to two volunteers, not counting Hardtner permanent staff.

Ezells are leaving Hardtner

The second Able session had 97 volunteer campers or about three volunteers to every camper. That is a much more accommodating ratio, said Jason Ezell, Hardtner executive director, who is leaving Hardtner to take a similar post in Mississippi.

Also leaving is Amie Ezell, Jason's wife who is a continuous source of jubilant leadership at Hardtner. The Rt. Rev. Jake Owensby, bishop of the Western Diocese, said recently that he hopes to fill the executive director's post by "The New Year."

Interim Director in place

The Bishop said that his Transition Consultant, the Very Rev. Ron Clingenpeel, is serving as an interim director for Hardtner as we prepare to search for a permanent director. "He is at Camp about three nights a week to review the camp's necessities and begin planning the Hardtner camping sessions for summer 2016."

For Able's second session, Hardtner had to turn down volunteers, a good problem to have. Ezell reminded, "Those volunteers



pay \$40 for the opportunity to serve this wonderful audience.

"They gain such valuable life skills and serve such an inclusive ministry," said Ezell.

The second Able session was directed by Joe Sabatier and the Rev. Chris Robinson.

Everyone out of the pool!

The pool at Camp Hardtner remains closed and the Bishop said that the pool will be replaced but that there is not yet a specific plan. In the meantime, the campers utilize one of the Sister's lakes on the

camp's western boundary for water sports.

A new and highly-popular camp activity this summer was two water slides on the slope from the cafeteria towards the girls' cabins. Long pieces of rubber were soaked and then two volunteers would accompany a camper down the ramp, usually with raucous shouts of delirium as they cascaded down.

It was easily the most popular activity during the second Able session. The first three days of the second session included one of the hottest days on record at Hardtner.

The last two days were marked by mid-afternoon thunderstorms, which cooled things off quite a bit.

Smokey and the magic show

Other second Able highlights were a visit from a local fire truck, complete with Smokey the Bear; a magic show, a snow cone truck and of course, the camp-ending talent show, a true testament to the camp's Permanent Staff and their leadership.



"Building" a better Hardtner

The Bishop said his mission for Hardtner is to increase the camping population and "build on our relationship with the Diocese of Louisiana, our sister diocese."

In the shorter term, the bishop will work with the Board to raise funds to renovate Henton Hall and invite congregations and groups to contribute to improvements in the units in the Holy Day Inn to better accommodate meetings at Hardtner.

He also hopes that Hardtner will always be able to have two Camp Able sessions every summer. "Those camps are the source of great spiritual renewal and great fellowship. I value that great ministry," said Bishop Owensby.

Later this Fall!

Cursillo #149 set for Camp Hardtner Oct. 29 – Nov. 1



Cursillo is a short, intense course in Christianity that has been formulated to build a foundation of leaders in the lay order of the Episcopal Church. Cursillo weekends are conducted by lay women and men with members of the clergy acting as spiritual advisors. It has been said many times that the only way to truly describe

Cursillo is to actually live it.

The three-day Cursillo weekend joins Episcopalians from different backgrounds from every area of the diocese to worship and share experiences while broadening their knowledge of the Church. What's expected is to build stronger Christians by stressing the concepts of piety, study and action. There is no charge to participate in a Cursillo weekend.

The next Cursillo weekend in the Diocese will be held October 29 – November 1, 2015 at the Hardtner Camp

and Conference Center at Pollock, Louisiana. This will be Cursillo #149 with a team from the Diocese of Western Louisiana staging it.

If you are interested in attending a Cursillo weekend, ask someone in your congregation who has attended Cursillo to sponsor you. Applications are available online at the Cursillo of Western Louisiana Web site, www.wlacursillo.com.



The Season of Pentecost

Not actually a season with a single common focus, the weeks between the Day of Pentecost and the First Sunday of Advent, are often referred to as "the long growing season," when we nourish the seeds planted at Easter and put down the roots of our faith.



Safeguarding Online™ has upgraded to a new platform

As of June 1, Safeguarding Online™ has upgraded to a new platform. As a result, there are two critical changes that will affect your ability to log in to an existing account or to establish a new account.

Logging in to an existing account: If in the past you bookmarked a URL for Safeguarding Online™, it will no longer work. (It will take you to the old URL that is no longer there.) Instead, type the URL fresh: <http://www.safeguardingonline.org>.

Establishing a new account: There is also a new URL for the location at which you register a new account: <http://armatus2.praesidiuminc.com/Armatus/security/anonymous/selfRegistration>

Our registration code for the diocese remains the same: diocesewla318. Also, usernames and passwords have not changed. For your information, a common error users make is that they forget to type the complete password—e.g., they type 1234 instead of 1234la. All of our passwords are 4-digit numbers followed by la.



Mark your calendars!



General Convention Overview Sessions

Bishop Jake Owensby has announced that two General Convention Overview Sessions will be held in the coming weeks, in both the northern and southern parts of the Diocese.

The events will take place at:
Church of the Holy Cross in Shreveport

Tuesday, September 15 at 6 p.m. in the evening

St. Barnabas Episcopal Church in Lafayette

Tuesday, September 22 at 6 p.m. in the evening

All are welcome to attend either or both of these gatherings.



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Robert Harwell Editor

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Monday, September 21, 2015

First Up this Fall!



Call to ALL Episcopal Church Women (ECW) for morning fellowship and fun with the Monroe Convocation.

Tea on the Bayou for all Episcopal Church Women members

Saturday, September 12, 2015

9:00 a.m. at St. Thomas' Episcopal Church, 3706 Bon Aire Drive in Monroe

This date is National Day of Encouragement and guest speakers include Cheryl Dunson, executive director of Habitat for Humanity of Ouachita and Ann Jeselink, owner of Gypsy Soul – a Monroe boutique. Their presentations will cover morning reflection and creative ideas in fashion, gardening and home décor.

We request that each church RSVP for their ECW congregation: Alexa Hokanson 318-307-2857 or Alexa.hokanson05@gmail.com.

Youth Leadership Training, Sept. 19

High school students have numerous opportunities to help lead various youth events in the diocese. All high school students interested in serving as staff for any diocesan program must attend a leadership workshop.

This one-day training will help the participant gain the skills and confidence needed to serve effectively as a staff member. There is no charge for the training, and lunch is included.

Two workshops are scheduled this year:

Saturday, September 19, 10 am-2 pm at Redeemer, Ruston (register online at diocesan website, <http://www.diocesewla.org>, by September 16)

Saturday, October 17, 10 am-2 pm at St. Barnabas, Lafayette (register online at diocesan website, <http://www.diocesewla.org>, by October 14)

You are only required to attend ONE of these workshops.

For additional information, contact Joy Owensby (jowensby@diocesewla.org) or Mtr. Mitzi George (mitzi@saintbarnabas.us).

All youth events are underwritten by the Episcopal Diocese of Western Louisiana. Thank you to our congregations who support diocesan ministries through their annual pledges.



CVI, Saturday, September 12

"Why We are Anglicans" to be presented at Camp Hardtner



Presented by: The Rev. Whitfield Stodghill, rector of St. Alban's, Monroe
This will be an all-day session at Camp Hardtner, from 10:00 a.m. – 3:00 p.m. 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.

CVI is a leadership training program focused on strengthening the spiritual and organizational life of the Western Louisiana congregations. The aim is to equip leaders to serve in their congregation in mutual ministry with their ordained clergy.

Register online for "Why We are Anglicans"
<https://events.r20.constantcontact.com/register/eventReg?oeidk=a07ebbndejj4f5b85a9c&oseq=c&c=c&h=>



First Up this Fall!



Living into its mission, St. Luke's Ministry will hold 11 clinics in September

St. Luke's Episcopal Mobile Medical Ministry, which is a mobile ministry of eight Episcopal churches of Northwest Louisiana, continues to live into its mission of providing health care to underserved and at-risk people. Using the ministry's mobile medical RV, free preventive health screening, basic health services, health education, and medical referrals are dispensed on a regular basis to the underserved in both rural and urban communities.

In the second quarter of the year, St. Luke's held 48 clinics in its service area providing services to 458 different people. In April, St. Luke's received a grant from Susan G. Komen to fund outreach in surrounding communities and enable the ministry to continue providing breast health education and clinical breast exams to women.

In September, St. Luke's will hold eleven clinics. For a complete listing of when and where clinics will be held, go to: <http://stlukesmedicalministry.org/clinics.html>.

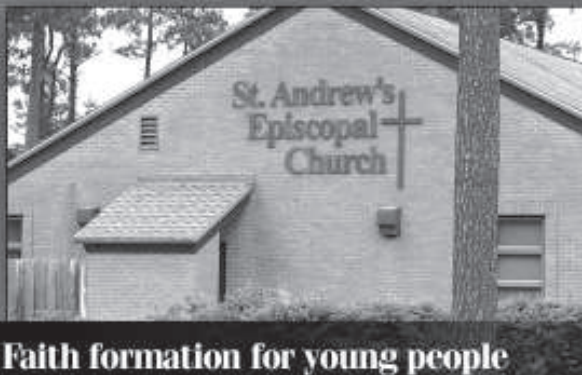
New Beginnings, Sept. 25-27

New Beginnings is a weekend retreat for 7th and 8th grade youth focusing on the two greatest commandments: loving God with all of our heart, mind, and strength, and loving our neighbors as ourselves. The event is a unique experience designed specifically to respond to the needs and concerns of 7th and 8th graders. It is led by a team of youth and adults from around the diocese.

The program begins on Friday evening at 6:00 p.m. when participants arrive and continues until Sunday morning at 11:00 a.m. There is a series of talks given by youth and adults, skits, songs and small group discussions and activities. These presentations focus on such subjects as self, friends, parents, siblings, school, God's love, prayer, the Church and "Who is Jesus?" In addition, there is time for fun, creating, and sharing. Participants not only learn and grow, but also have a wonderful time. Clergy are present to assist with spiritual direction.

This year's retreat will take place September 25-27, 2015. Registration is online at the diocesan website: <http://www.diocesewla.org>. Cost is \$85/participant. Participants must register by September 11 to receive a t-shirt. Registration closes September 18.

For additional information, contact Joy Owensby (jowensby@diocesewla.org) or Mtr. Mitzi George (mitzi@saintbarnabas.us).



Grants to Small Congregations in Support of Ministry to Children and Youth

St. Andrew's, Moss Bluff is recipient of diocesan grant

The Commission on Christian Formation is pleased to announce that St. Andrew's, Moss Bluff, received a diocesan grant to support its ministry to children and youth. St. Andrew's was awarded a grant to further the development of its EYC through youth-led missional activities in cooperation with the broader Moss Bluff community.

The Rev. Boo Kay, priest-in-charge, submitted a grant application to the Commission on Christian Formation, which in turn made a recommendation to Bishop Jake to fund this request. Congratulations to St. Andrew's for its commitment to the faith formation of young people!

Around the Diocese



CELEBRATION!

THE CELEBRATION OF WOMEN'S MINISTRIES

SEPTEMBER 18-19 CAMP HARDTNER

Make plans to be a part of a Celebration of Women's Ministries at Camp Hardtner, September 18-9, 2015.

This will be a time for numerous diverse groups to meet together and celebrate in the name of our Lord and Savior.

Featured will be the ministries of the Daughters of the King (DOK), the Episcopal Church Women (ECW), and members of the Altar Guild.

Our special guest, the Rev. Elizabeth Ratcliff, will speak on **Forgiveness**. Most of us know that we should forgive those who hurt us. Mother Liz will cover how we as Christians can stand up for our rights and be forgiving at the same time.

The Rev. Rowena White will be available for spiritual guidance and meditation.

Our Celebration begins Friday evening, September the 18, with registration and a "Meet and Greet" between 4-6:00 p.m. Mother Liz will share her first presentation and Mother Rowena will share details of the Labyrinth and on spiritual guidance.

Saturday, September 19 begins with breakfast and registration at 9:00 a.m. followed by the ECW annual meeting at 9:30 a.m. After a short break the DOK will meet, followed by the Altar Guild workshop on "Tricks of the Trade for Parishes of all Sizes." Saturday afternoon activities include: the second presentation by Mother Liz, and workshops on "Healing Oils for Daily Use," and "Chair Yoga for Christians." The day will close with a meditation by Mother Rowena who will also be available throughout the day for spiritual guidance.

Please come and see what's going on in other parishes. This is a sharing time for us to learn from each other. Feel free to bring scrapbooks or other items showing the work of the women of your parish.

Those with questions should contact Beverly Rasbeary, 1-337-583-2493.

OUR CELEBRATION THEME:

Shake it Off — FORGIVE!



Our guest speaker –
The Rev. Elizabeth Ratcliff
Mother Ratcliff will speak on Forgiveness. Most of us know that we should forgive those who hurt us. Mother Liz will cover how we as Christians can stand up for our rights and be forgiving at the same time.

Also, the Rev. Rowena White will be available for Spiritual Guidance and Meditation on Friday and Saturday.



At CELEBRATION! of Women's Ministries at Camp Hardtner **We will look at All Things Altar Guild.**

Have you wondered how long it takes to serve communion to 4,000+? Not so long when you have 120 chalices, 12 baskets of bread loaves and 48 liters of wine.

Learn about a parish of 10 members including the priest, a deacon, the organist and a devoted following.

The Diocese of Western LA is a member of the National Altar Guild Association of the Episcopal Church. The NAGA newsletter, *The Epistle*, has information useful to parishes large and small. Please contact GingerNorvell@hotmail.com if you would like a copy for your parish altar guild.

See you on September 19th at Camp Hardtner.

Celebration of Women's Ministries at Camp Hardtner


September 18-19, 2015, Camp Hardtner
Please fill out this registration blank completely.

Name:
Address: City: Zip:
Home Church:
Contact Number(s):
Any special needs for the weekend:

The cost of the weekend depends on the days you will attend (please circle):
• Friday night through Saturday (lodging, meals & activities)..... \$85.00
• Saturday only (meals, snacks & activities) \$35.00
Please note: Private lodging is \$17.50/night extra space permitting.

Total amount enclosed \$

Please make checks payable to Diocesan ECW and mail to:
Beverly Rasbeary, 2448 Walker Rd., Sulphur, LA 70665
For more information, please contact Beverly Rasbeary, (337) 583-2493
or Email: barasbeary@gmail.com. Hope to see you there as we study FORGIVENESS.



FRAN MCKENDREE IS COMING TO WESTERN LOUISIANA



Fran McKendree in Western Louisiana

Fran McKendree is a singer/songwriter, very well-known across the Episcopal Church for his concerts, his work as a conference leader and for his workshops for all ages. Fran is known for his engaging musical style which is deeply spiritual, yet often playful.

Diocesan Convention in Lake Charles, October 23-25

McKendree will be visiting Western Louisiana October 23-25, leading the music at all worship events during Diocesan Convention in Lake Charles, Friday and Saturday, October 23-24, as well as giving a concert after the Friday night Convention dinner. What a delightful addition Fran will be to our diocesan gathering.

Sunday, October 25 Holy Eucharist at St. Timothy's in Alexandria

On Sunday, October 25, Fran McKendree will lead all the music at the 9:00 a.m., Holy Eucharist of St. Timothy's Episcopal Church in Alexandria. St. Timothy's is located at 2627 Horseshoe Drive.

Sunday Afternoon Youth Concert at St. James Episcopal Church in Alexandria.

Since Fran's music appeals to a wide range of ages and musical tastes, Fran will lead a gathering of all our middle and high school youth as well as undergraduate college students. To be held at St. James, Alexandria, the concert is set for 2-5 p.m., Sunday, October 25. St. James is located at 1620 Murray Street.

For more information about Fran's life and music, go to his website (<http://www.franmckendree.com>) or check out this YouTube video: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=KWNfGfJTSJA>.



Episcopal School of Acadiana welcomes record number of students

Episcopal School of Acadiana students gathered in Henton Chapel on Wednesday, August 19 for the first Eucharistic Service of the 2015-2016 school year.

Father Matt Woollett, rector of Episcopal Church of the Epiphany in New Iberia, was the celebrant. Although inclement weather prohibited the Lower School students from joining the others in Cade, an alternative date for the traditional All School Eucharist will be set.

ESA opened the new academic year with 539 students between the two campuses - the most ever in the diocesan school's history!



The Rev. Thomas Timothy Nsubuga has accepted a call to become sub-dean of St. Mark's

Cathedral in Shreveport. Father Nsubuga was formerly vicar of St. Luke's, Grambling.



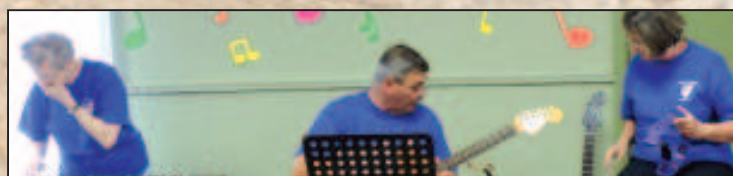
Epiphany, Opelousas summer series focuses on "God's Gifts"

The Episcopal Church of the Epiphany, Opelousas again hosted its summer educational series, "God's Gifts."

This year, the three evening sessions focused on Music, Nature and Art.

Presenters included Paulette Rawdon, Craig Hayden, Daniel LeBoeuf, Julia Battle and Margaret Quirk.

A light supper was provided each night thanks to members of the Epiphany's ECW.



Diocesan News



2015-2016 Youth Events in the Diocese of Western Louisiana

Mark your calendars now to make sure you don't miss any diocesan youth events for 2015-2016! All of the old favorites (CLEY, JEYL, Winterfest, Happening) are in the works PLUS there are a few new items that are highlighted below.

More information about all youth programs can be found on the diocesan website (<http://www.diocesewla.org/ministries/youth/>), or you can contact Joy Owensby (jowensby@diocesewla.org) or Mtr. Mitzi George (mitzi@saintbarnabas.us).

New Beginnings: a spiritual retreat for 7th and 8th graders September 25-27 at Camp Hardtner. New Beginnings focuses on the two greatest commandments: loving God with all of our heart, mind, and strength, and loving our neighbors as ourselves. The event is a unique experience designed specifically to respond to the needs and concerns of 7th and 8th graders. It is led by a team of youth and adults from around the diocese.

Leadership Training for Youth: required workshop for any high school youth who wants to serve as staff for diocesan youth events. This one-day training will help the participant gain the skills and confidence needed to serve effectively as a staff member. There is no charge for the training, and lunch is included.

You can attend either session—Saturday, September 19, in Ruston or Saturday, October 17, in Lafayette.

Diocesan Youth Rally: gathering of all diocesan middle and high school youth as well as undergraduate college students on Sunday, October 25, at St. James, Alexandria. Headlining this event will be special musical guest Fran McKendree. Fran is a singer/songwriter known across the Episcopal Church—doing concerts, as music leader and coordinator for conferences for youth and adults, keynote presenter, mentor, and workshop leader. You can check out his website here: <http://www.franmckendree.com>. Or watch a YouTube video from a youth event in Alabama here: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=KWNfGfJTSJA>.

Also please note: beginning this year, Happening will be open to students in grades 9-12 (not 10-12 as in the past).

Registration for all events will be online at the diocesan website: <http://www.diocesewla.org/ministries/youth/>. There you will also find detailed event descriptions and application procedures for those interested in serving as staff. If you have any questions, please contact Joy Owensby, Diocesan Missioner for Christian Formation, jowensby@diocesewla.org, 318-442-1304.

<i>Date and Time</i>	<i>Event</i>	<i>Other Details</i>	<i>Date and Time</i>	<i>Event</i>	<i>Other Details</i>
Saturday, Aug. 29, 2015 10 a.m. - 2 p.m.	Youth Sponsors Workshop: Leadership training for all ADULTS who work with youth or for other ADULTS who are interested in youth ministry.	•Free, held at St. Timothy's, Alexandria, Register by Aug. 26	Sunday, Nov. 20, 2015 6 p.m.-Sunday, Nov. 22, 2015, 11 a.m.	CLEY Retreat: CLEY stands for Christian League of Episcopal Youth. It is a spiritual retreat for high school youth in a relaxed, fun environment.	•\$85 at Camp Hardtner •Staff applications due Oct. 2 •Participants must register by Nov. 6 to receive t-shirt; registration closes Nov. 13
Saturday, Sept. 19, 2015	Leadership Training for Youth: Workshop for any high school youth who wants to staff.	• Free, held at Redeemer, Ruston, Register by Sept. 16	Tuesday, Dec. 29, 2015 6p.m.-Friday, January 1, 2016	Winterfest: Middle and high school youth mission project and retreat. Features a dance on one of the nights and fireworks on New Year's Eve. Each convocation should send at least 2 adults to assist with the event.	•\$85 at Camp Hardtner •Participants must register by December 22
Friday, Sept. 25, 2015 – 6p.m.-Sunday, Sept. 27	New Beginnings: Spiritual retreat for youth in grades 7-8. Through conversation, skits, worship, talks, games, and other activities, participants make discoveries about themselves, their families, and others as well as gain insights into living out their faith in their daily lives.	Cost is \$85, held at Camp Hardtner •Staff applications due Aug. 14	Friday, Jan. 22, 2016, 6 p.m.- Sunday, Jan. 24, 5 p.m.	Happening: Spiritual retreat for high school youth. During the weekend, participants (called "candidates") worship, play, sing, and talk about God's place in their lives.	•\$90 at Camp Hardtner •Staff applications due Dec. 4 •Candidates must register by Jan. 8 to receive a t-shirt; registration closes Jan. 15
Saturday, Oct. 17, 2015 10 a.m. - 2 p.m.	*Leadership Training for Youth: Workshop for any high school youth who wants to staff diocesan youth events.	•Free at St. Barnabas, Lafayette •Register by Oct. 14	Friday, March 11, 2016, 6 p.m.-Sunday, March 13, 11 a.m.	JEYL Retreat: JEYL stands for Junior Episcopal Youth League. It is a spiritual retreat for middle school youth in a relaxed, fun environments.	•\$85 at Camp Hardtner •Staff applications due January 22 •Participants must register by Feb. 26 to receive a t-shirt; registration closes March 4
Sunday, Oct. 25, 2015 2-5p.m.	Diocesan Youth Rally: Gathering of all middle & high school youth & undergraduate college students. Special musical guest Fran McKendree: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=KWNfGfJTSJA	•Free at St. James, Alexandria •Register by Oct 21			

**All youth events are underwritten by the Episcopal Diocese of Western Louisiana.
Thank you to our congregations who support diocesan ministries through their annual pledge.**

**36th Annual Convention
of the Diocese
October 23-24**



MAKING DISCIPLES

ENGAGING GOD'S MISSION



***Our convention theme:*
Making Disciples: Engaging God's Mission**

Mark your calendars for our thirty-sixth Annual Diocesan Convention.

The Lake Charles Convocation is hosting this year's convention at the Wet Cal Arena Events Center, 401 Arena Road, conveniently off Interstate 10 in Sulphur.

All convention events will occur at the center.

***Special musical guest
Fran McKendree will be with us
to lead worship music and provide
music during our Friday night
fellowship time.***



***•Our theme this year is "Making
Disciples: Engaging God's Mission."***

***•We will participate in workshops and
table conversations about Christian For-
mation and Evangelism.***

***• Elections will be held to fill vacancies
on the Disciplinary Board,
the Standing Committee and to
elect a diocesan representative to
the University of the South.***

***Convention registration is online
at the Diocesan website.***

Registration tips:

- When registering a congregation or other organization, make sure to include all convention attendees (clergy, delegates, alternates, clergy spouses or other visitors) on the same form.
- The first person registered in your group is called "1st Registrant"; all others should be added individually as "Add'l Registrant."
- Each registrant must have a unique email address.
- Easily make one payment for all registrants by credit card or check.
- Vendors/Exhibitors have two registration options: all meals included or no meals included. Table reservations are in a separate section.
- Retired clergy and spouses are guests of the Bishop but need to register for convention and make their own hotel reservations.
- For registration assistance, please call the diocesan office, 318-442-1304.



The 78th General Convention The Episcopal Church

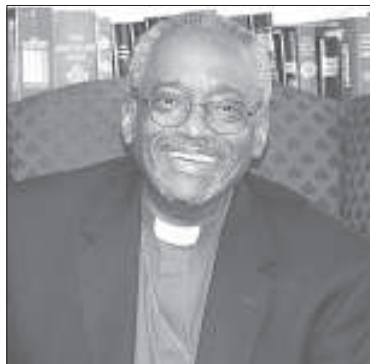
General Convention wrap-up: Historic actions, structural changes

First black presiding bishop, marriage equality approved, church governance revamped

[Episcopal News Service] The 78th General Convention, in a series of historic moments, elected the first African-American presiding bishop; approved marriage equality for all Episcopalians; adopted a budget that emphasizes racial reconciliation and evangelism; endorsed the study of fossil fuel divestment; opposed divestment in Israel, Palestine; and made some significant changes to the church's governance.

North Carolina Bishop Michael Curry elected presiding bishop

The Episcopal Church's General Convention made history June 27 when it chose Diocese of North Carolina Bishop Michael



Curry to be its 27th presiding bishop.

The House of Bishops elected Curry, 62, from a slate of four nominees on the first ballot. He received 121 votes of a total 174 cast. Diocese of Southwest Florida Bishop Dabney Smith received 21, Diocese of Southern Ohio Bishop Thomas Breidenthal, 19, and Diocese of Connecticut Bishop Ian Douglas, 13. The number of votes needed for election was 89.

Curry's election was confirmed an hour later by the House of Deputies, by a vote of 800 to 12.

Marriage equality

In the wake of the June 26 U.S. Supreme Court ruling legalizing same-sex marriage for all Americans, General Convention followed suit on July 1 with canonical and liturgical changes to provide marriage equality for Episcopalians.

The House of Deputies concurred with the House of Bishops' approval the day before of a canonical change eliminating language defining marriage as between a man and a woman (Resolution A036) and authorizing two new marriage rites with language allowing them to be used by same-sex or opposite-sex couples (Resolution A054).

Budget emphasizes racial reconciliation, evangelism

The General Convention adopted the 2016-2018 triennial budget July 2 after agreeing to add \$2.8 million for evangelism work.

While the addition passed with relatively little debate in the House of Deputies, it faced some opposition in the House of Bishops.

The 2016-2018 triennial budget is based on \$125,083,185 in revenue, compared to the forecasted \$118,243,102 for the triennium that ends Dec. 31 of this year. The expenses are projected to be \$125,057,351. The budget comes in with a negligible surplus of \$25,834. Its revenue projection is based in part on asking the church's dioceses and regional mission areas to give 18 percent of their income to fund the 2016 budget, 16.5 percent for the 2017 budget and 15 percent in 2018.

The version of the budget presented July 1 by the Joint Standing Committee on Program, Budget and Finance (PB&F) also included a major new \$2 million initiative on racial justice and reconciliation, even as it reduces the amount of money it asks dioceses to contribute to 15 percent by 2018.

Mandatory assessment

General Convention made mandatory the current voluntary diocesan budgetary asking system for the 2019-2021 budget cycle and imposed penalties for noncompliance.

The mandatory assessment will not apply to the upcoming 2016-2018 triennial budget, but becomes effective Jan. 1, 2019. Without getting a waiver, a diocese that does not pay the full assessment will be unable to get grants or loans from the Domestic and Foreign Missionary Society unless the Executive Council (<http://www.generalconvention.org/ec>) specifically approves disbursing the money. (*The Domestic and Foreign Missionary Society is the name under which The Episcopal Church is incorporated, conducts business, and carries out mission.*)

The resolution allows the council to begin granting waivers to dioceses that do not pay, based on financial hardship, beginning Jan. 1, 2016. Council agreed in January to create a so-called Diocesan Assessment Review Committee to work with dioceses that do not meet the full churchwide asking.

The resolution also agrees to study the issue of whether the House of Deputies president ought to receive a salary.

Divest from fossil fuels, reinvest in renewables

General Convention passed two resolu-

tions aimed at environmentally responsible investing and creating a climate change advisory committee.

Resolution C045 calls upon the Investment Committee of Executive Council, the Episcopal Church Endowment Fund and the Episcopal Church Foundation "to divest from fossil fuel companies and reinvest in clean renewable energy in a fiscally responsible manner."

Resolution A030 calls for the creation of a climate change advisory committee with one representative from each of The Episcopal Church's nine provinces. The resolution also calls on each province to create a Regional Consultative Group composed "of no fewer than five experts in areas of environmental sustainability appropriate to the demographic, ecological, cultural and geographic specifics of each region."

Agrees to major structural changes

The General Convention approved two resolutions making major changes to the structure of The Episcopal Church.

Substitute Resolution A004 slightly expands Executive Council's appointment power concerning three members of the Domestic and Foreign Missionary Society's executive staff, including the chief operating officer, chief financial officer and chief legal officer (a position created in the resolution).

Substitute Resolution A006 reduces the number of the church's standing commissions from 14 to two. The two would be the Standing Commission on Structure, Governance, Constitution and Canons, and the Standing Commission on Liturgy and Music. The presiding bishop and House of Deputies president would appoint study committees and task forces to complete the work called for by a meeting of General Convention, with council's approval. All of those bodies would expire at the start of the next General Convention unless they are renewed.

Oppose divestment in Israel, Palestine

The House of Bishops sent a strong and clear message July 2 that divestment from companies and corporations engaged in certain business related to the State of Israel is not in the best interests of The Episcopal Church, its partners in the Holy Land, interreligious relations, and the lives of Palestinians on the ground.

The bishops rejected Substitute Resolution D016, which would have called on the Executive Council's Committee on Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR) to develop a list of U.S. and foreign corporations that provide goods and services that

support the infrastructure of Israel's occupation "to monitor its investments and apply its CSR policy to any possible future investments" in such companies.

General Convention passed two resolutions on peacemaking. Substitute Resolution B013, proposed by Bishop Nicholas Knisely of Rhode Island, "reaffirms the vocation of the Church as an agent of reconciliation and restorative justice," and recognizes that "meaningful reconciliation can help to engender sustainable, long-lasting peace and that such reconciliation must incorporate both political action and locally driven grassroots efforts."

Resolution C018 expresses solidarity with and support for Christians in Israel and the Israeli-occupied territories; affirms the work of the Episcopal Diocese of Jerusalem in healing, education, and pastoral care; and affirms the work of Christians engaged in relationship building, interfaith dialogue, nonviolence training, and advocacy for the rights of Palestinians. The resolution also urges Episcopalians to demonstrate their solidarity by making pilgrimage to the Holy Land and learning from fellow Christians in the region.

Plans to be created for prayer book, hymnal revision

General Convention 2015 took a step toward revising the 1979 Book of Common Prayer and The Hymnal 1982, directing the Standing Commission on Liturgy and Music to prepare plans for revising each and to present them to the next convention in Austin, Texas, in 2018.

Among other liturgical issues, the convention directs bishops to find ways for congregations without clergy to receive Com-

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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! This central calendar is designed to help avoid overlapping events.

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

September 2015

- 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," *Camp Hardtner*, 10:00 a.m. – 3:00 p.m.
- 13 — Bishop's Visitation, *Holy Cross, Shreveport*
- 15 — Meeting of the Diocesan Council, *St. James, Alexandria*, 10:00 a.m.
- 16 — Registration Deadline for Leadership Training for Youth, *Register online at the diocesan website.*
- 18 — Last Day for New Beginnings Registration, *Register online at the diocesan website.*
- 18-20 — Celebration of Women's Ministries, *Camp Hardtner*, starts at 6:00 p.m.
- 19 — Leadership Training for Youth, Workshop for any high school youth who wants to staff diocesan youth events, *Redeemer, Ruston*, starts at 10 a.m.
- 20 — Bishop's Visitation, *St. Alban's, Monroe*
- 25-27 — New Beginnings Spiritual Retreat, grades 7-9, starts 6:00 p.m.
- 27 — Bishop's Visitation, *Trinity, Tallulah*

October 2015

- 2 — CLEY Staff Applications Due, *Register online at the diocesan website*
- 4 — Bishop's Visitation, *St. Michael & All Angels, Lake Charles*
- 6 — Meeting of the Standing Committee, *Diocesan House*, starts at 10:00 a.m.
- 11 — Bishop's Visitation, *St. Michael's, Pineville*
- 14 — Registration Deadline for Leadership Training for Youth, *Register online at the diocesan website*
- 14 — Meeting of the Board of Trustees, *Diocesan House*, starts at 11:00 a.m.
- 17 — Leadership Training for Youth, *St. Barnabas, Lafayette*, starts at 10:00 a.m.
- 21 — Last Day to Register for the Diocesan Youth Rally, *Register online at the diocesan website.*
- 23-24 — Diocesan Convention, *Lake Charles*
- 25 — Diocesan Youth Rally, With special musical guest Fran McKendree, 2-5:00 p.m., *St. James, Alexandria*, FREE! – *Register online at the diocesan website by October 21.*
- 28 — Cursillo Staff Overnight, *Camp Hardtner*, starts at 5:00 p.m.
- 29-11/1 — Cursillo #149, *Camp Hardtner*, starts at 6:00 p.m.

November 2015

- 1 — Bishop's Visitation, *Trinity, Natchitoches*
- 1 — Bishop Jake at the Cursillo Closing, *Camp Hardtner*
- 3 — Meeting of the Standing Committee, *Diocesan House*, starts at 10:00 a.m.
- 6 — CLEY Registration Deadline for t-shirt, *Register online at the diocesan website.*
- 7 — Congregational Vitality Institute Presentation: "Hospitality is so much more than 'We're here for you,'" 10:00 a.m. – 3:00 p.m., *Camp Hardtner*
- 8 — Bishop's Visitation, *Epiphany, Opelousas*
- 10 — Meeting of the Diocesan Council, *St. James, Alexandria*, starts at 10:00 a.m.
- 13 — Last Day for CLEY Registration, *Register online at the diocesan website.*
- 15 — Bishop's Visitation, *Good Shepherd, Vidalia*
- 18 — Bishop's Midweek Visitation, *St. Columba's, Winnsboro*
- 20-22 — CLEY High School Student Retreat, *Camp Hardtner*, starts at 6:00 p.m.
- 22 — Bishop's Visitation, *St. Luke's, Grambling*

December 2015

- 1 — Meeting of the Standing Committee, *Diocesan House*, starts at 10:00 a.m.
- 2 — Bishop's Midweek Visitation, *Christ Church, St. Joseph*
- 4 — Happening Staff Applications Due, *Register online at the diocesan website.*
- 4-6 — Joy in the Journey Recovery Retreat, *Camp Hardtner*, starts at 6:00 p.m.
- 6 — Bishop's Visitation, *Grace, Monroe*

General Convention

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munion, but the House of Bishops defeated proposals to allow unbaptized people to receive Holy Communion or to study the issue.

The convention approved making available a revised version of "Holy Women, Holy Men" with additional saints' commemorations but left "Lesser Feasts and Fasts" as the church authorized supplemental calendar of commemorations.

The revised "Holy Women, Holy Men," is called "A Great Cloud of Witnesses."

Convention takes a first step, admits: 'Alcohol affects us all'

General Convention passed three resolutions on the issue of alcohol and drug abuse. Resolution D014 recommends that ordinands should be questioned at the very beginning of the discernment process about addiction and substance use in their lives and family systems.

The bishops also passed Resolution A159, which acknowledges the church's role in the culture of alcohol and drug abuse.

Resolution A158, to create a task force to review and revise policy on substance abuse, addiction and recovery, passed with one amendment.

Closer relations with Cuba

The U.S.-based Episcopal Church and the Episcopal Church of Cuba took a step toward closer relations during the 78th General Convention, meeting here June 25-July 3. Convention also passed a resolution calling for the U.S. government to lift its economic embargo against Cuba.

Presiding Bishop-elect Michael Curry sat for a video interview

In an 18-minute interview with the Epis-

copal News Service, Presiding Bishop-elect Michael Curry speaks about his priorities for leadership and administration, the role of the church in engaging God's mission in the world, the state of race relations in the U.S., the importance of Anglican Communion partnerships, and his commitment to what he calls the Jesus Movement, to go out into the world "to bear witness to the good news of Jesus."

Bishops led a march against gun violence

About 1,500 General Convention participants joined a Bishops United Against Gun Violence procession in Salt Lake City the morning of June 28.

The prayerful procession walked the half-mile from the Salt Palace Convention Center to Pioneer Park while marchers sang hymns and prayed. Members of Utah anti-gun violence groups and civil rights organizations joined in.

Greater solidarity for persecuted Christians

Advocacy for Christians facing persecution and living in the context of civil war are the subject of several resolutions passed by the Episcopal Church's 78th General Convention, meeting here June 25-July 3.

Convention agrees that Christians in Pakistan, Syria, Liberia, South Sudan and Sudan are among those for whom the church needs to step up its support and solidarity as many of them live in fear of death, starvation, and displacement in their war-ravaged or extremist-influenced countries.



All Dogs

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God creates through the power of perfect, eternal love. When God loves, God loves for keeps. The Holy One creates nothing only to discard it and certainly not to destroy it.

God creates in order to be in eternal relationship. God creates to share the divine life with the beloved.

If I believed in only the immortality of the soul, I would write off the hope of seeing my pets after this life as a fond but childish wish. For that matter, if only my disembodied soul mattered from the perspective of eternity, I could easily turn my back on the sufferings and the sorrows of this world. They would, from that point of view, eventually be nothing but water under the bridge. Gone and forgotten.

But Jesus said that he came to give his flesh for the life of the world, to heal and to restore the entire creation. The prospect of seeing my dog Plato does not seem so implausible to me. Instead, it

alerts me to my calling to engage God's mission to make new what has grown old, to raise up what has been cast down.

I cannot remain indifferent to the weeping and the aching, the fear and the loneliness, the hunger and the despair in the world around me.

Jesus gives his flesh for the life of the world. He gives his Body. And because he loves you and me, we are part of the very Body that Jesus gives for the life of the world.



DO ALL DOGS GO TO HEAVEN?

by the Rt. Rev. Jake Owensby, Ph.D., DD

You can find this sermon along with all of Bishop Jake's sermons and essays at his blog Pelican Anglican (pelicananglican.blogspot.com). Subscribing by email is easy. All subscribers receive an email for each new post. Consider subscribing today!

I still miss Plato. Our golden retriever, that is, not the philosopher. He's been gone a while now, but the rest of us in the family still frequently reminisce about him.

When we open a jar of peanut butter, one of us will mention how he always assumed that he was getting a spoonful. He would retrieve our mislaid socks, Hoover the floor beneath the kitchen table during meals, and sleep curled underneath the Christmas tree.

Scores of ordinary things remind us of him. He was part of the family. We had a common language, shared our daily comings and goings, and showered each other with affection.

I know lots of other people feel the same way. So I am not surprised when people ask me if our pets will be in heaven.

Loving one of God's creatures as dearly as we do our pets—and experiencing their boundless affection for us—leaves us feeling a profound loss when they die. And it also stirs within us a hope that this love extends beyond the horizons of this life.

The way many of us think about life after life makes this hope seem implausible. That's because we are not listening carefully to what Jesus actually says about eternal life.

To put this a bit more bluntly, quite a number of us think about life after the death of the body in terms that are not especially Christian.

Please don't misunderstand me. I don't mean to say that good church goers have intentionally rejected Jesus' teaching.

Instead, I think that many people have picked up ideas from the surrounding culture by a kind of intellectual osmosis and have mistakenly attributed them to the Christian faith.

The central Christian doctrine about life after life is resurrection. And yet, Christians think about the afterlife in terms of the immortality of the soul.

When philosophers and theologians talk about whether or not the soul is immortal, they are usually considering a characteristic inherent in the soul. Whether a person believes in God or not, the soul survives the death of the body. That's just what souls do if they are immortal.

Christians who follow this line of thinking then reckon that God judges the disembodied soul. God's judgment takes

the form of deciding where that soul will reside.

God is like the cosmic usher who directs some souls to the blue door and others to the red door. Heaven awaits some. God sends others to hell.

Now let's face it, this cannot be the picture you have in mind of an eternal reunion with pets you have loved and see no longer. If you're like me, you think about scratching them behind the ear, playing catch, and taking walks together.

Disembodied souls don't have ears to scratch. For that matter, they don't have hands to scratch with or legs to walk with.

Most jarring of all, most people who focus on immortal souls think that Jesus saves only human beings. Their Gospel is limited to which people go to heaven and which go to hell once they die.

By contrast, Jesus says, "I am the living bread that came down from heaven. Whoever eats of this bread will live forever; and the bread that I will give for the life of the world is my flesh." (John 6:51)

In Jesus, God comes down from heaven for the life of the world. Jesus came to transform the entire creation, to infuse it with eternal life. To heal and to restore the world. The first step in that process is the risen Jesus himself.

On the third day, God raised Jesus. He didn't merely resuscitate him. Neither did Jesus' immortal but disembodied soul slip out of the tomb. Jesus is risen not only with a soul and a mind but also a body.

And his mind and soul and body are transformed. They are the same and yet they are infinitely more. Jesus will no longer suffer or die.

Those who knew him before the crucifixion could recognize him and even touch him, and yet they experienced him as inhabiting a new kind of life.

Jesus is the bread of this new life, the source from which this new life flows. Through Jesus, God is imparting new, eternal life to all that God created.

In our relationship with Jesus we begin to partake of this eternal life even now. We take the first few tentative steps on a journey in Christ that will stretch out into infinity.

The Eucharist shows us this very clearly. We hand to Jesus our bruised, flawed, and fragile selves and he gives us back to ourselves as the very Body of Christ.

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