The road approaching our home snakes up a steep ridge toward Kincaid Lake and the Kisatchie National Forest. Its two lanes are narrow. There is no shoulder. Drivers can’t see the oncoming traffic until it’s practically alongside you.

I have learned to take these curves slowly. Many of the trucks coming down from the lake have a boat in tow. The drivers are often in a hurry, and so they race toward home. Their speed forces them to cross the center line at the curves, and their boat trailers swing even further into my lane than the truck itself.

Initially, this struck me as a hazard and a nuisance. My ability to have charitable thoughts about my fellow drivers was sorely tested. But eventually I learned that slowing down and looking for what might be around the bend gave me a deeper, abiding appreciation for the richness of the world I inhabit.

Driving more slowly allows me to be more attentive to the forest on either side of the road. Tucked among the forest, deer, fox, and raccoons frequently watch me as I glide by. At this time of year, I’ve learned to anticipate the return of the cormorants, nesting in great colonies in the trees in the bayou.

It’s easy to let an entire commute pass us by without noticing a thing. We’ve been on automatic pilot, caught up in our busy thoughts and lulled into inattentiveness by our assumption that we’ve seen all of this before. Our cell phones and radios distract us. Our haste to get to our destination can make us resent the journey itself.

Advent reminds us that life is a winding road. Many things will come around the bend that we do not expect. Some will be dreadful. Some will be a sheer delight. But there is always something coming around the bend. And most importantly, there is always someone coming around the bend: Jesus.

Jesus is always coming around the bend toward us.

Slow down and give this world your attention. Jesus is coming around every bend. Learning to expect him is one of our spiritual challenges.

Staying up late helping our children with their homework can seem draining and even annoying. But all this effort shows us that our child is growing intellectually and spiritually.

Fixing a leaky faucet or patching a leaky roof can seem such a nuisance. But it means we have running, drinkable water and shelter from the elements.

Doing the laundry and washing the dishes can be tedious. But these simple tasks remind us that we are well clothed and well fed.

Jesus is coming. Every day. He is just around the bend. Slow down and look. You’ll be delighted by what you see.

Blessed Advent to you all!

Looking around the Bend
by The Rt. Rev. Jake Owensby, Ph.D, DD
The season of Advent

The season of Advent is a season of preparation for the coming of Christ. Advent is also the beginning of the Christian year.

The background of Advent is the kingdom of God, and the rule of God over his creation, which is said to be "at hand."

CVI

The first CVI presentation of 2016!

Presented by: The Rev. Dennis Campbell, vicar of St. James, Eureka Springs, Arkansas

Saturday, January 16, 2016

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 2016 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.

Sharon Vercher, DOK Diocesan Treasurer
112 West Magnolia Street, Abbeville, LA 70510

Name: ...............................................................................................................................   Contact:   ...........................................................

Church: ............................................................................................................................   Amount enclosed:   ..........................................................................................

.............. DOK member:   ....................   Non-DOK member:   ..........................................................
Those attending this conference can expect:

- Meditations
- Small group participation
- One-on-one counseling
- Nature walks in the beautiful Hardtner surroundings
- Meaningful worship

Happening

Happening is a spiritual retreat for high school youth held at Camp Hardtner. During the weekend, participants (called “candidates”) worship, play, sing, and talk about God’s place in their lives.

Attendees should arrive at 6:00 p.m., Friday, January 22. Happening concludes at 5:00 p.m., Sunday, January 24.

Last day of registration online is Friday, January 15, 2016.

From Four Square in the Pav to Seussical Prayers of The People, CLEY 2015 saw many young Christians from across the diocese and beyond the Episcopal tradition come through the doors of Camp Hardtner.

The 2015 retreat for high school students took on a Dr. Seuss theme under the direction of Lisa Hightower from Redeemer in Ruston. With the sacerdotal guidance of Mother Liz Ratcliff, these young members of the Church shared their thoughts and aspirations about God and their journeys with God.

For Lisa Hightower, youth events were instrumental in her journey with God. “Someone took the time to volunteer while I was growing up. It is time for me to do the same and give back to the church,” she said. “I have so many fond memories from youth events that I attended and want the same experiences for the youth of the diocese.”

That same zeal for guiding the youth of the diocese lives in the hearts of many of the staff of CLEY 2015.

Ivania Vallejo of Saint Alban’s in Monroe, has long been a part of the Hardtner family. And for her, it’s important that she gives back to a place that helped her on the road to an adult faith.

“The main reason I do retreats like CLEY is just to be able to give back to camp and be able to let the kids have great experiences like I did. It’s all about the kids,” she said. “That’s the reason I keep going.”

The retreat allowed students to poke and prod ideas about the relationship of God with the world. They grappled with living in a world of harsh realities, brokenness and fear. But at the end of the day, each was reminded and reminded each other of the loving and caring God they serve.

This youth event is just one of the many held at Camp Hardtner and other places throughout the year. The diocesan camp has a long history of teaching and guiding youngsters along their paths. And events like CLEY indicate that it has a bright future of continuing the tradition.

As the weekend retreat winded down and campers said goodbye until next time, there were many tearful hugs and well wishes.

The next diocesan youth event will be Winterfest at the end of the year and Happening applications are available now for the January retreat.
**Continued Good News from Christ Episcopal Church, Saint Joseph:**

The Saint Joseph After-School Program is underway for its second year!

The After-School Program is a mission effort initiated last year by the Servant Leadership Corps. This year 10 students are given one-on-one assistance. Teachers include two retired, certified teacher volunteers with over 40 years of combined classroom experience. Additional assistance is provided by other local volunteers and Rosine Bourba and Garrett Boyle of the SLC. The Program offers students help with homework, reading skills, mathematics, and preparation for tests. There is currently a waiting list for more students and additional qualified volunteer instructors are needed.

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**Upcoming**

**Save the Date**

**ANCIENT FAITH, MODERN TOOLS**

Being the Church in a Digital World

Camp Hardtner
Saturday, March 5, 2016
10:00 a.m. – 3:30 p.m.

Presented by the Christian Formation Commission and the Convocational Vitality Institute, this presentation features Randall Curtis, who terms himself “The Holy Geek.” The day will be a lively and fact-filled and you will profit if your interest is using contemporary electronic tools to teach and prosper our ancient faith.”

Randall Curtis works for the Episcopal Church in Arkansas, where he is the Ministry Developer for Young Adults and Youth. He is also president of Forma, a network of Christian formation leaders in The Episcopal Church.

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**Joint venture ministry helps Holy Trinity member celebrate his ninety-third birthday**

Al Khoury, a member of Holy Trinity, Sulphur, celebrated his 93rd birthday with his friends, at Stonebridge Place Assisted Living Facility. He invited the members of the Tuesday morning ministry from St. Andrew’s in Moss Bluff, friends from Holy Trinity, fellow residents, and even one of the guys he works out with at the Recreation center. (According to a source, Al lifts weights while the friend only walks.) Al even provided his own cake for the party, most likely driving over to Lake Charles to pick it up himself!

Al is one of the founding fathers of the ministry begun several years ago by the Rev. Mitzi George with members from St. Andrew’s, Moss Bluff. A member of that church moved into Stonebridge and was no longer able to attend services on Sundays. What started as a small group of two or three grew as “Mr. Al” scoured the halls, knocked on doors, and invited other residents to join in. Holy Eucharist is celebrated followed by coffee, home-baked goods and conversation in the snack area.

After Mother Mitzi relocated, Mr. Al invited the interim priests at Holy Trinity, the Rev. Robin Chance and later the Rev. Doris Westfall, to bring Communion to “his family.” The Stonebridge Ministry is now a joint venture of the two churches, led by the Rev. Ally Perry, the rector at Holy Trinity. Members from both churches serve as lay readers and Eucharistic ministers.

On any Tuesday just before 10 a.m., you will find Mr. Al waiting outside the chapel doors with Baptists, Lutherans, Methodists, non-denominationalists, Roman Catholics, or just about anybody joining the group for the service and fellowship which follows. (Suspiciously, it’s thought that some just come for the snacks!) Al’s daughter and her husband recently attended the group when they were visiting from out of town. When a priest is not available, Morning Prayer is held. During summer or holidays, children and grandchildren join the ministry.
Does your spiritual life seem to be stuck, or has the power gone out of your prayer life? Do you need your spiritual pilot-light rekindled?

Falling in Love with God!
A retreat for Women

February 19-21, 2016
Hardtner Camp & Conference Center, Pollock, LA

This is your opportunity to get away, pray and share so that you can fall back into the arms of God.

Enjoy a daily worship schedule, and group meditation from Sister Barbara Jean. There will also be time for spiritual direction; time to be quiet, to take walks, and to rest.

The retreat begins with supper on Friday, February 19, and concludes with lunch on Sunday, February 21.

Retreat costs:
Single occupancy room: $225 (all inclusive)
Double occupancy room: $185 (all inclusive)

Our retreat leader: Sister Barbara Jean, a nun of the Anamchara Fellowship, an Episcopal order of nuns and monks. Sister “BJ” is an established retreat leader and one-time member of the sisterhood of the Holy Nativity. She helped establish this American order of Celtic monastics.

About the Anamchara Fellowship: Founded in the tradition of the Episcopal Church, with a Celtic spirit, the Anamchara Fellowship has received canonical recognition by the House of Bishops’ Committee on the Religious Life. Members of the fellowship may live in their own homes or in groups as the ability for that arises. Each member must be self-supporting, and are bound to other members by common ideals and a commitment to prayer and service. A focus is maintained on retreats, quiet days, pastoral care, intercessory pray and spiritual direction.

Walking Three Days with Jesus

March 24-26, 2016
Hardtner Camp & Conference Center, Pollock, LA

• Beginning with Maundy Thursday super we will begin to walk the three days to the silence of the tomb.

• Included in the retreat will be the traditional Maundy Thursday liturgy; Good Friday Liturgy, Stations of the Cross, Holy Saturday Liturgy and a series of meditations. There will be time for silent meditation and reflection, walks and rest.

From Maundy Thursday to the Great Vigil of Easter, walk a sacred journey—Jesus sitting at table with his disciples, instituting the Eucharistic feast—the quiet time in the garden praying with Jesus—the journeys from garden to judgment to the cross and you’ll see Jesus crucified.

This is a retreat for anyone who would like to take these three days for retreat and meditation before the great feast of Easter. Enjoy quiet times as well as time when we can talk together. There will be space for spiritual direction.

Our retreat leader: The Very Rev. Ronald Clingenpeel, a priest associate with the Episcopal Diocese of Western Louisiana. Dean Clingenpeel has been a campus minister, diocesan administrator, dean of a cathedral and has led many retreats over the years. Dean Clingenpeel will lead retreatants in the Way of the Cross in living these three days with Jesus.

Retreat costs:
Single occupancy room: $225 (all inclusive)
Double occupancy room: $185 (all inclusive)
Some scholarship aid may be available.

Please submit this completed form and your booking fee to:
Hardtner Camp & Conference Center, 2393 Camp Hardtner Road, Pollock, LA 71467

Name: ........................................................................................................

Single: ...... Double: ...... (Roommate preference) .........................

Contact: Email: .................................. Phone: ..........................

Booking fee due at registration $40: Balance due February 17, 2016

Please submit this completed form and your booking fee to:
Hardtner Camp & Conference Center, 2393 Camp Hardtner Road, Pollock, LA 71467

Name: ........................................................................................................

Single: ...... Double: ...... (Roommate preference) .........................

Contact: Email: .................................. Phone: ..........................

Booking fee due at registration $40: Balance due March 17, 2016.

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Golden Roof
continued from page 8

less dramatic than that of the sanctuary, which was to be the last phase of the project. The bright copper panels did attract some attention from people passing on Southfield Road, which fronts the St. Paul’s church complex. The volume of attention the bright copper panel attracted increased greatly when work on the sanctuary roof began. St. Paul’s towers over its surroundings, clearly visible on Youree Drive, a main north/south artery. As the copper panels began to slowly march up the distinctive roof, traffic on Youree Drive and Southfield slowed, especially in afternoon drive, when late-day sun made the roof so bright, sunglasses were required. The panels were installed by “roof walkers,” men who rappelled up and down the steeply-pitched surface, attaching the panels, one-by-one. No mechanization here, strictly handwork done by workers hanging by ropes. (See the accompanying photos.) A second, rather unique, congregation developed for St. Paul’s. Mornings and afternoons, a steady stream of autos could be seen pulling into the Southfield Shopping Center parking lot, adjacent to St. Paul’s, parking for a few minutes or for longer, to watch the roofing action. People were fascinated by the copper panels and by the roof-walking installers. Few exited their cars, to watch the show in the 90+ heat of the summer. Some would roll down a window to snap a cell phone shot (Hey Harry, look at what happening at St. Paul’s). What a great free show it was, to witness, from the comfort of your air-conditioned Chevy. Think drive-in movie, with a live-action show. Finally, late in the summer, all the shiny panels were in place. Some of the first panels placed on the parlor/parish hall wing were already acquiring the slightly greenish patina, characteristic of copper. But the sanctuary roof seemed to “glow” in the afternoon sun well into fall.

Finally, in October, north Louisiana’s drought was broken and the new sanctuary roof was tested—leading to Father Martin’s celebratory “No leaks” comment. To show appreciation, St. Paul’s held a luncheon for those roofers who had braved the heat and the new roof. It was a celebration, with food being served and toasts being made. Some roofers brought up the distinctive roof, traffic on Youree Drive, and the attached parlor, parish hall and church office wing. Gene Young’s focus shifted from “Can we get this done?” to “How is this going to be done?” Young spent more than a year in negotiations with the insurer, searching for and finding a contractor equal to the job, and making a myriad of practical and financial decisions, ably assisted by junior warden, Mickey Quinlan and chancellor, Caldwell Roberts.

One of the most important decisions made was the selection of the material that would actually constitute the new roof. Because of the structure’s age, (60+ years) and the fact that the new roof would be installed on top of the original roof, the weight of the new roof was a big factor.

The final choice delighted the congregation! Eighteen-inch copper panels, affixed in a diamond pattern, would constitute the new roof. Talk about bright and shiny and attention-getting, nothing topped St. Paul’s new roof. Finally all details of the million dollar-plus roofing project were in place. In late spring of this year, materials and equipment began to appear and the contractor (Mandel’s Roofing Company of Mississippi). First up was the parlor/parish hall wing, with roof lines admittedly much

"Golden Roof continued from page 8"
**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

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**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
3 — Celebration of a new ministry, St. James, Alexandria, The Rev. Deborah Heathcock
4 — Happening Staff Application Due, Register online at the diocesan website.
5 — “Ancient Faith, Modern Tools” Seminar, Camp Hardtner, 10:00 a.m. – 3:00 p.m.
6 — Bishop’s Visitation, Grace, Monroe
7 — Bishop’s Visitation, St. James, Alexandria
8 — Bishop’s Visitation, St. Timothy’s, Alexandria
9 — Bishop’s Visitation, St. Mark’s Cathedral, Shreveport
10 — Bishop’s Ash Wednesday Visitation, St. James, Alexandria
11 — Bishop’s Visitation, St. Paul’s, Shreveport
12 — Bishop’s Visitation, Epiphany, New Iberia
13 — Bishop’s Visitation, Trinity, Tallulah
14 — Bishop’s Visitation, St. John’s, Minden
15 — Bishop’s Visitation, St. Matthias, Shreveport
16 — Bishop’s Visitation, Christ Memorial, Mansfield
17 — Bishop’s Visitation, St. Joseph’s, Shreveport
18 — Bishop’s Visitation, Christ Church, Bastrop
19 — Bishop’s Visitation, St. Mark’s Cathedral, Shreveport
20 — Bishop’s Visitation, Christ Memorial, Mansfield
21 — Bishop’s Visitation, Trinity, Tallulah
22 — Bishop’s Visitation, St. John’s, Minden
23 — Bishop’s Visitation, St. Joseph’s, Shreveport
24 — Bishop’s Visitation, St. Thomas, Monroe
25 — Bishop’s Visitation, St. Mark’s Cathedral, Shreveport
26 — Bishop’s Visitation, Christ Church, St. Joseph
27 — Bishop’s Visitation, St. James, Alexandria
28 — Bishop’s Visitation, St. Mark’s Cathedral, Shreveport
29 — Bishop’s Visitation, Christ Church, St. Joseph
30 — Bishop’s Visitation, St. Thomas, Monroe
31 — Presiding Bishop Curry addresses the Syrian refugee crisis:

**“Be not afraid!”**

The Most Rev. Michael B. Curry
Presiding Bishop and Primate
The Episcopal Church

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Presiding Bishop Curry addresses the Syrian refugee crisis:

**“Be not afraid!”**

Often in the gospels, fear grips the people of God, and time and again, either the angels, or Our Lord himself, respond with the same words of comfort: “Be not afraid.”

In times like this fear is real. And I share that fear with you. Our instinct tells us to be afraid. The fight-or-flight mental makeup holds. At the present moment, many across our Church and our world are grasped by fear in response to the terrorist attacks that unfolded in Paris last Friday. These fears are not unfounded. We can and should support law enforcement officials who are working hard and at great risk to protect us from crime and keep us safe. And yet, especially when we feel legitimate fear, our faith reminds us “Be not afraid.” The larger truth is that our ultimate security comes from God in Christ.

In the Book of Leviticus, God says to the people of Israel that, “the foreigner who resides with you shall be to you as the citizen among you; you shall love the foreigner as yourself, for you were foreigners in the land of Egypt.” Accordingly, we welcome the stranger. We love our neighbor. The Episcopal Church has long been committed to resettling refugees in our own communities fleeing violence and persecution.

The Episcopal Church has been engaged in this ministry for more than 75 years. We will not let the nightmare this world often is keep us from carrying out the words of Jesus who told us to be a neighbor to those in need. Refugees from places like Syria seek to escape the precise same ideological and religious extremism that gave birth to the attacks in Paris. They seek entry into our communities because their lives are imprisoned by daily fear for their existence. Just as Jesus bids us not to be afraid, we must, in turn, pass those words of comfort to those who turn to us for help.

But Jesus calls us to go even further: not just to love our neighbors and our kin, but to love our enemies. This is particularly difficult when we are afraid. But even in the midst of our fear we stand on the solid ground of our faith and proclaim the faith that Christ crucified and risen from the dead. In practical terms, this may mean finding strength in prayer, or in our neighbors, or in our churches, or in acts of solidarity with others who live in fear. This is the hope that casts out fear.

The fear is real. So we pray. We go to church. We remember who we are in Jesus. Our resurrection hope is larger than fear. Let nothing keep us from that hope, that faith, that security in Gods dream for all of humanity.

**“Be not afraid!”**

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**Contact**

Robert Harwell, ALIVE! editor
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It’s announcement time at a regular Sunday Eucharist at St. Paul’s in Shreveport in late October, and rector Father Paul Martin gets applause and a smattering of cheers with the comment, “During all the rain this past week, there was not one leak in the Church roof.”

Not an everyday comment, but one that was certainly appropriate, considering the circumstances at St. Paul’s.

Constructed in the early 1950’s in what had been a cotton field at the very edge of town, St. Paul’s became an instant landmark to travelers approaching the city up Highway 1 from the south. When travelers, searching the horizon ahead for signs of Shreveport, saw the distinctive St. Paul’s roof line, they knew “We’re there!”

What a definitive and classic statement the church’s soaring roof and contemporary architecture made. Designed by the architect William Evans, St. Paul’s was an instant landmark.

None appreciated the fabulous structure more than the actual “Family of St. Paul’s.” The beautiful sanctuary with its soaring roof, is still a call to deep and meaningful worship.

As the years passed, that roof with its radically sculpted contours, was increasingly viewed with concern by the wardens and vestry. “When that roof has to be replaced, it’s going to be a really big deal,” was a commonly held view.

Senior wardens at St. Paul’s are elected to three-year terms, and are mandated by the parishes’ constitution and by-laws with oversight of parish finances.

As the age of “the roof” reached 50, then 60 years, successive senior wardens increasingly asked themselves, “Am I going to be the one who oversees the re-roofing of the church?”

I certainly did when I was elected to the post in January 2010. I admit, I did inspect that roof carefully before accepting nomination to the position. But a “roofer” I was not to be. That task fell to my successor, Gene Young, who was certainly up to the task.

Violent hail, wind and rain which swept through the city in the spring of 2014, prompted a roof inspection by a representative of the Guide One Insurance, which was the parish’s insurer. Gene Young was right there during that inspection. The inspector did identify some damage, but cer-