

ALIVE!

NOVEMBER 2016

THE EPISCOPAL DIOCESE OF WESTERN LOUISIANA

VOLUME XXXVIII, NUMBER 10



Celebrating a Pearl of Great Value

CAMP HARDTNER – Some of the five generations of Camp Hardtner campers have answered the wonderful gospel song, “Will the Circle Be Unbroken.”

The answer is unequivocally “No.”

The Rev. Liz Ratcliff used the analogy during Mass October 9 as Camp Hardtner continued its 75th anniversary weekend in prayer.

The day before, approximately 160 people were in attendance for

lunch, silent and live auctions, and mostly, testimony from the clergy and campers since the camp opened in 1948. (The land was donated to the Episcopal Church of Louisiana in 1941 by the Hardtner family.)

A picture from the first camp session in 1948 showed at least 150 campers, staff and clergy amongst the pine trees. That session was termed Camp Jackson as camp sessions then were named after the presiding

continued on page 3

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

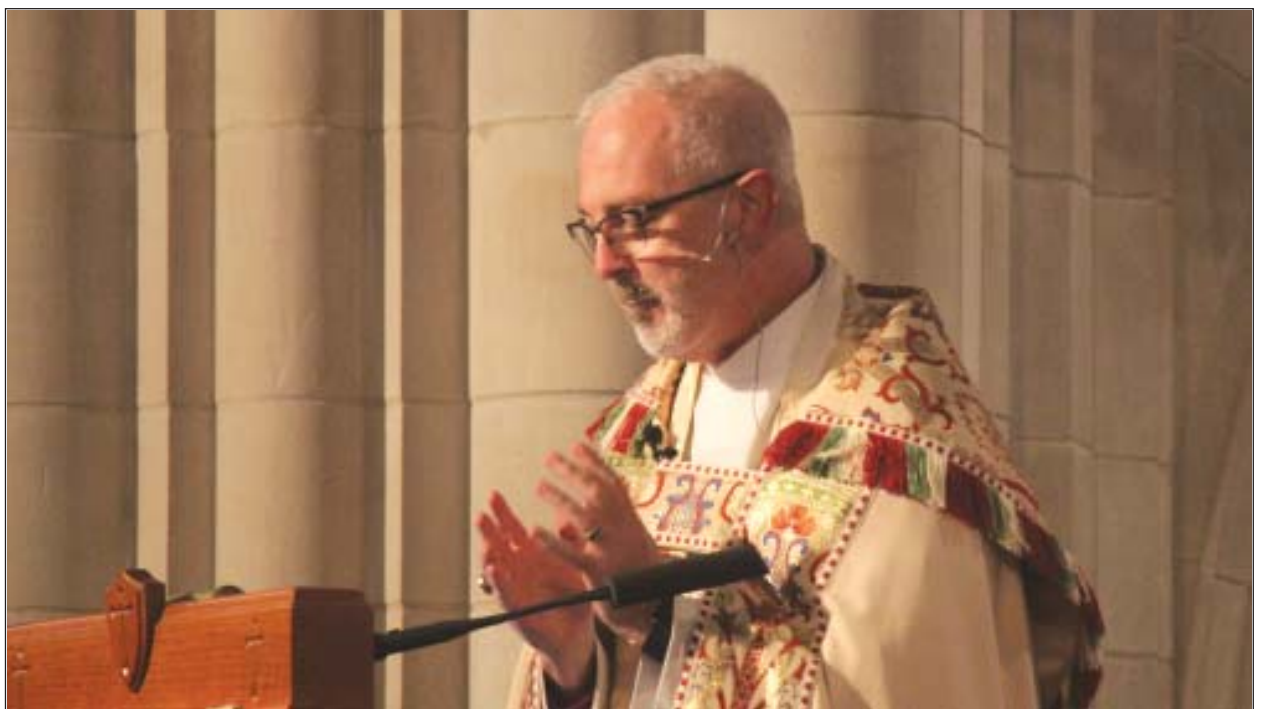
NOT THOSE PEOPLE

Read Luke 10:25-37

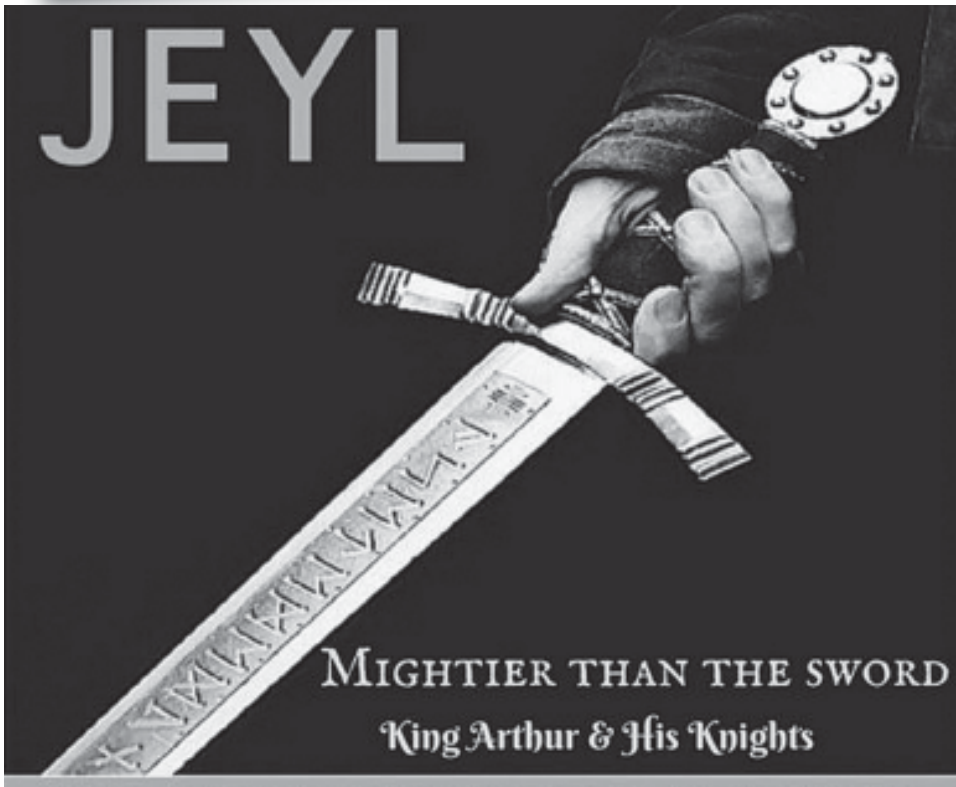
The bell marking the end of recess had rung ten minutes earlier. Most of our Fourth-Grade classmates had already clambered up the old metal fire escape that gave access from the playground to our second-story classroom.

A few of us routinely lagged behind. We squeezed every microsecond of play we could from the school day. This time we had lingered too long, and we knew it. We bolted up those rusty steps. But as I got to the landing by our doorway, I heard other kids on the playground.

See Not Those People, page 10



Diocesan News



November 18-20, Camp Hardtner

JEYL is a middle-school retreat held at Camp Hardtner! It is a fun, Christ-filled weekend where you can have a break from the school-year stress! Come join us for a weekend full of playing games, meeting new friends, and learning some lessons along the way.

The weekend will be staffed by high school students and adult staff. It will begin at 7:00 p.m. in the Camp Lounge at Camp Hardtner.

Questions? Please contact: corey@stpauls-shreveport.org

Camp Hardtner, 2393 Camp Hardtner Road, Pollock, LA 71467

Hurricane Relief

continued from page 5

continue in North Carolina, the Diocese of East Carolina is responding by reaching out and providing gift cards in hard-hit areas. In particular, support from Episcopal Relief & Development is helping to increase the response of the *Episcopal Farmworker Ministry* affiliated with *La Iglesia Episcopal de la Sagrada Familia*, a Spanish-language congregation in the town of Dunn. This ministry's nearly 30 distinct outreach programs offer assistance with food, clothing, housing, immigration and advocacy, and the additional funds will help provide storage space and replacement of household goods.

In Haiti, Episcopal Relief & Development is providing direct assistance for food, water and shelter to church partners and displaced families sheltering in Petit Trou de Nippes, Paillant-Jeanette, Miragoane, Torbeck, Beraud, Jeremie and Baintet. The organization's staff has received information on specific vulnerable families through the network of Episcopal priests and is on the ground providing support in each community. Approximately 520 families are currently receiving assistance through these efforts.

"The Haiti response is developing rapidly as transport and communications are restored to impacted areas," said Abigail Nelson, Episcopal Relief & Development's Senior Vice President of Programs. "The hurricane caused extensive flooding and mudslides, power outages and water shortages – compounding concerns about the possible spread of cholera. The Church is reaching out to the vulnerable in its midst."

Please continue to pray for communities affected by Hurricane Matthew, and donate to the Hurricane Matthew Response Fund to help Episcopal Relief & Development assist local partners in responding to critical needs.



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.



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Robert Harwell Editor

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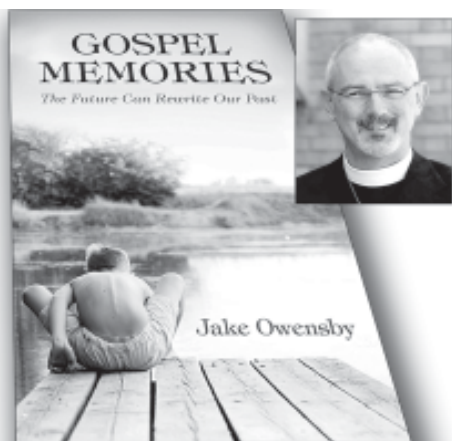
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Gospel Memories

The Future Can Rewrite Our Past

by the Rt. Rev. Jake Owensby

Gospel Memories The Future Can Rewrite Our Past, is available at Amazon.com, in Paperback or in the Kindle format.

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Around the Diocese



Continued from page One

Celebrating a Pearl of Great Value

Episcopal bishop.

Heath Hightower was master of ceremonies for the auctions and did a masterful job with a favorable audience. The silent auction raised \$1,650 while the live auction raised another \$6,000.

All of those funds will go towards camp maintenance.

Perhaps the funniest testimony came from Steve Flynn, who was a ten-year-old camper in 1972.

"My parents put me on a Continental Bus, me and my suitcase. At a place called Pollock, the bus driver announced that we were here and to get off the bus.

"There were about ten of us and we waited for what seemed to be an eternity but was probably five minutes.

"Suddenly, a white van showed up

with two long-haired guys in sunglasses. They pulled up to us, opened the doors, threw our luggage in and said, 'Get in.'"

"There were no seats in the van and so we bounced off the floor till we got to Camp Hardtner.

"That evening, I was going to take a shower when I noticed that the walls of the shower were yellow. I thought there was only one way those walls could be yellow and I turned the water off and didn't take a shower for a week.

"When I got home, my mother opened my suitcase and there were all my clothes just as neatly folded as they were when I left home," said Flynn to an uproar.

The Rev. Gedge Gayle was a bit more reverent in his comments. "There is no other place in any other diocese of our church that has a place like Camp Hardtner. 'Here is where you can live Christ,' said Gayle, who is retired.

Gayle and the retired Bishop of Louisiana Jim Brown also remembered the late Rev. Bob Dodwell, whom they thought brought his own unvarnished sense of spirituality to legions of campers.

"There we were, five priests and campers, at 7 a.m. conducting High Mass. I didn't think we could get it done but Dodwell led us all," said Gayle.

The Right Rev. Brown was elected Bishop of Louisiana in 1975 when Bishop Iverson Noland was killed in a tragic airplane accident. He is a fountainhead of knowledge, seemingly about every priest whose presence has touched Camp Hardtner.

Jonathan Hardtner said both of his sons were counselors during Hardtner's special needs session, Camp Able.

"Nothing has touched them like that. Camp Able is a spirit in a bubble here. Those kids (counselors) will never be ex-

posed to those special needs people any other way.

"It is (Camp Able) the very best use of Camp Hardtner," continued Hardtner.

The crowd diminished appreciably Saturday afternoon as a small group of hard core Hardtner's fished, napped and just walked around on a perfect fall day in a beautiful place.

The next morning at Mass, a young, blonde girl, no more than six, stood barefoot in the chapel, holding her mother's hand as the congregation awaited communion. It was a sing-along, led by guitars.

The circle will never be unbroken.

Around the Diocese

Blake Donation to support Hardtner's Camp Able

by Bill Shearman

CAMP HARDTNER – Henry Blake, a descendant of the family who established Camp Hardtner, has donated another \$75,000 to Hardtner's Camp Able session.

Camp Able is a special needs camp which the Western Diocese began in 2013.

Blake donated \$75,000 earlier this year with the stipulation that the money be used for scholarships for Camp Able. His second donation assures that virtually no needy Camp Able aspirant will be denied a camp session for years to come.

Blake said that portions of the gift's income can be used for maintenance at Camp Hardtner if it makes the camp more handicapped-accessible.

Blake made known his newest gift to a small circle of friends at Camp Hardtner's 75th anniversary party here. His brief comments were that Camp Able "has touched my heart and I want to be sure that it is viable for campers whom otherwise could not afford the session."

Blake's son Lyman has special needs. Blake said that he became enamored of Camp Able "Where, for years, there was no place for my son to go to camp."

Blake's maternal grandfather was Sen. Henry Hardtner, the Father of Louisiana Reforestation. The family's lumber company was Urania Lumber and it was this company that donated the 160 acres of land that became Camp Hardtner.

The donation was made in 1941. Because of the complexities of World War II, Camp Hardtner was not opened for summer camping until 1948. It has operated ever since as a retreat center as well as for summer youth camping.

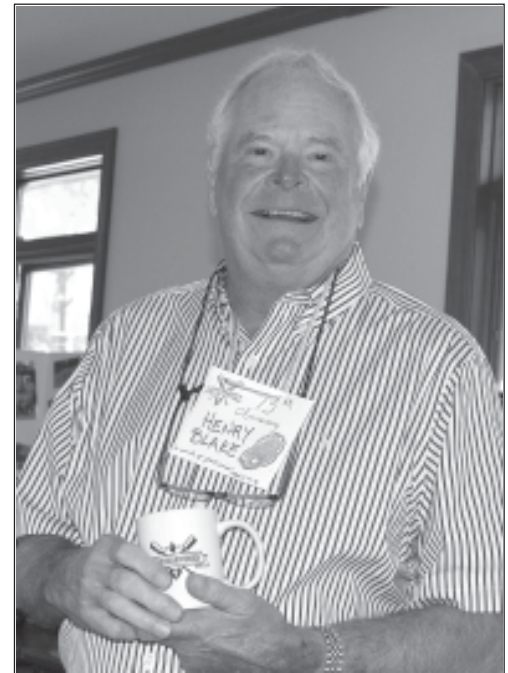
Sen. Hardtner was killed in an automobile/train collision in 1935. His wife and three daughters, Violet (later Blake and Howell), Juliette and Henrietta Hardtner were asleep in the automobile's back seat and were not injured in the collision.

Sen. Hardtner's brother, Quincy, assumed directorship of Urania following his brother's death. Quincy died in 1953 and his son, Quintin, assumed the directorship of Urania.

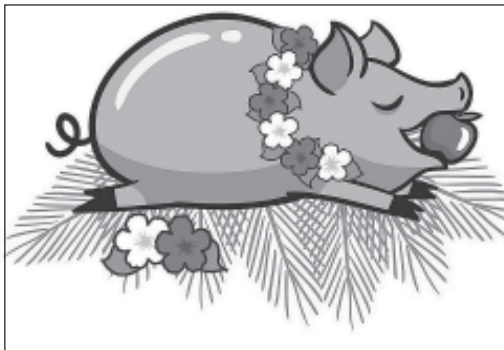
The company was sold in 1968.

Violet Howell was extremely passionate about Camp Hardtner throughout her life. Her sons were Henry, Billy and James Blake. Billy Blake died April 29, 2016.

There are three lakes on Camp Hardtner's west side that are named for the three Hardtner girls. There is a bust of Violet just outside of Hardtner's business office.



On a Louisiana Saturday Night, Bon jour, cher! You are invited to a



Fais Do-Do & Cochon de Lait

St. James, Shreveport
Saturday, November 19, 6 p.m.

Tickets: \$25
Join us for a Cajun feast and dance to the music of Keri Winters and Band.

Proceeds to support St. Francis Episcopal Church, Denham Springs with Eucharistic Robes, and St. James' parishioner Emilie Gibson in her journey at St. Jude's. See you there!
Reservations required: 318-686-1261



2017 Summer Camp Dates

First Camp	June 2-4
Primary	June 8-13
Senior High	June 17-24
Junior High 1	June 28-July 4
Junior High 2	July 11-17
Middle High	July 21-27
Camp Able	August 2-6

Complete information and prices on the 2017 camps will soon be posted at www.camphardtner.org.

CLERGY NEWS

The Rev'd Margaret Ayers of the Diocese of Mississippi has been called as rector of St. James, Shreveport.

The Rev'd George Genuso will become an urban missionary in Alexandria with ministry to the poor, addicted and recovering. He will remain at St. Michael's, Pineville, through Easter 2017.

Dr. Lemme Akoma, a faculty member at Grambling State University, has been appointed Lay Chaplain to GSU and St. Luke's, Grambling.

Around the Diocese

In the aftermath of the hurricane: “There will be famine”

by Mary Richardson

Good Shepherd Episcopal Church in Lake Charles has finally received word from the school it supports in Haiti – the Mission St. Matthieu Eglise Episcopale d’Haiti Ecole, an Episcopalian primary and secondary school in the little village of Bégin, deep in the mountains of southeastern Haiti.

“We are safe, thanks to God,” said the mission priest, Père Frédéric Ménélas, “but we have registered so much damage!”

The devastation is worse than anything experienced before, according to Ancy Fils Aimé, the church’s liaison in Haiti. Aimi recently returned to St. Matthias Parish, where he was born. “It is unbelievable,” he said. “Definitely, Matthew is the most severe storm in all Haiti’s history.”

Good Shepherd’s relationship with the school goes back 24 years when they first funded the building of the school. It was destroyed in the earthquake of 2010, but the church raised funds to rebuild it and the school reopened just this fall. Before the hurricane, 463 students attended, double the number before the repairs were made after the 2010 earthquake.

The newly rebuilt school not only withstood the hurricane, but was



Students at the Episcopal primary and secondary school in Bégin, Haiti survey the damage done to the kindergarten building during the passage of Hurricane Matthew.

used as a refuge for the populace. However, an adjacent building for kindergarten students lost its roof. Père Ménélas says he urgently wants to fix the roof because the children want to be back at school where they can receive care.

Finding enough food will be a continuing problem for everyone. Their goats and chickens drowned. Most people are subsistence farmers and their small vegetable

patches supplied the majority of their food. “There will be a famine,” said Aimé. “Everything in terms of garden is washed out... gone. These farms were considered as the farmer’s bank account. So now the storm cuts out their hands.”

Good Shepherd is now raising funds to both rebuild the school and send money to be used by the priest and principal to

purchase and distribute food. “A family of six people can be fed for less than \$2 a day,” said Glenda Williams, head of Good Shepherd’s Tend My Lamb committee, which oversees the Haitian mission. “We intend to act swiftly, lives are at stake.”

—**Mary Richardson** is a communicant of Good Shepherd, Lake Charles.



Episcopal Relief & Development is supporting disaster response efforts in Haiti and several Episcopal dioceses in the United States following Hurricane Matthew, which blasted through the Caribbean as a Category 4 storm before moving up the Atlantic coast and causing damage from Florida through southern Virginia.

Episcopal Relief & Development is providing direct support for food, water and shelter for approximately 520 families staying on church properties in Haiti’s southern peninsula, and is working with US dioceses to assess and respond to local needs after the storm. Churches in affected areas are leveraging their existing ministries and community relationships to provide spe-

cialized services and care for people who are displaced from their homes.

In Florida, diocesan leaders are responding to emergency needs and continuing community assessments. Currently, Episcopal Relief & Development support is expanding its ministry of providing food, water, clothing, bedding and sheltering ma-

terials for up to 300 homeless individuals in the area. *Church Without Walls* reaches people through weekly outdoor prayer and worship services that welcome all to share their unique gifts in community.

As flooding remains and evacuations con-

See **Hurricane Relief**, page 2



Elected to represent the Diocese at the 2018 General Convention of The Episcopal Church

Lay Order



Laurent De Prins



Andrea Rabalais Petrosch



John Robert



Nancy Barnes Shaw

Clerical Order



The Rev. Seth Donald



The Rev. Anne Brown Etheredge



The Rev. Deacon Lois Maberry



The Rev. Thomas T. Nsubuga

First Alternates Elected: Elected First Alternate in the Lay Order was Reece Middleton, and in the Clerical Order, the Rev. John Bedingfield.

Other elections held at Convention:

Diocesan Standing Committee: The Rev. Anne Brown Etheredge was elected Clergy Representative from the Acadiana Convocation, and Roxanne Myers was elected Lay Representative from the Lake Charles Convocation.

Disciplinary Board: The Rev. Dr. Wayne E. Carter, and the Rev. Brandt Montgomery were elected Clergy members, and Susan Sparks was elected as a Lay Member.

Lay Trustee of the University of the South: Andrea Rabalais Petrosch was re-elected Lay Trustee of the University of the South.

Episcopal bishop and busy, busy author

In addition to performing his round-the-clock duties as the diocesan in the Diocese of Western Louisiana, Bishop Jacob W.



Owensby is a prolific author whose work is increasingly appreciated by the religious community.

Here's a rundown of his recent and continuing work:

- Bishop Jake's book *Gospel Memories*, is on the market, and he continues to post

on his blog jakeowensby.com. He is well underway on a new book which has no firm title yet.

- Bishop Jake has an entry in the book *A Journey with John*, which is a part of the *50 Day Bible Challenge*, just out from the Forward Movement.

- He is the author of the *Advent 2017* edition of *Forward Day by Day*.

- The lectionary commentary *Sundays and Seasons* contains Bishop Jake's work for Year B, Advent, Christmas, and Epiphany from Church Publishing.



Clergy Spouses Gather – Attending the Clergy Spouse Luncheon at Convention were: Foreground, clockwise beginning center, Amy Donald, Hershel Richard, Adrienne McKee and daughter Olivia Norman, Lauren Bordelon, Harriet Woollett and Phyllis Clark. Back table, clockwise with Linda Echols in the floral top, Samantha Millard, Joy Owensby, Denise Flowers, Judy Bryant, and Martha Cooper. Not pictured because the photographer arrived early, Erinah Nsubuga, and Liza Johnson.

SCENES FROM "37"



Above: America's favorite pastime, The Selfie



Power Nap:
Not everyone made it through the Convention Address awake and alert.



Right: Holly Davis, Missioner for Administration and Communications, and Kathy Richey, Missioner for Administration and Finance are pictured in front of a portrait of "The Boss."



Left, Jean Pomeroy and Robert Brantley were members of the St. Matthias, Shreveport delegation at Convention.

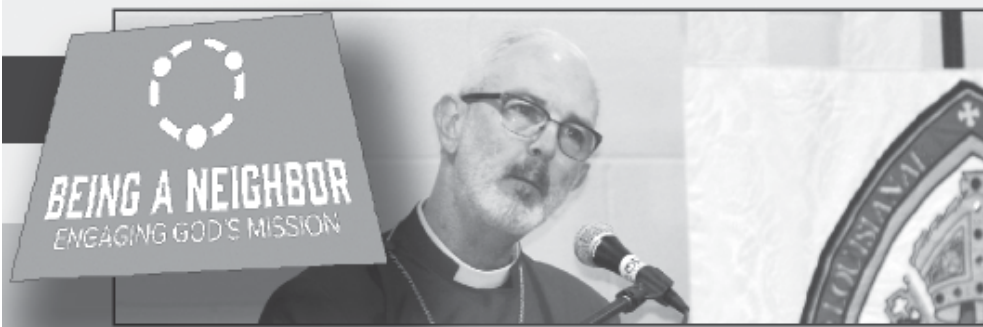


Middle photo: Clergy new to the diocese or in new Cures: Left-to-right, The Rev. Seth Donald, The Rev. Margaret Ayers, The Rev. Bill Phillips, The Rev. Michael Bordelon, The Rev. Deacon Frank Fuller, and The Rev. Deacon Lois Maberry.

The Rev. Hope Benko represented Seminary of the Southwest at Convention.



Above: Every mother would be proud, and Susan Rebecca Hall De Prins certainly is of son Laurent, right, who was elected Lay Deputy to the 2018 General Convention of the Episcopal Church.



BEING A NEIGHBOR

Bishop Jake's Convention Address

We are the Episcopal branch of the Jesus Movement. That's how our Presiding Bishop Michael Curry describes us.

Jesus came to start a movement. A movement of people animated by the Holy Spirit to continue the loving, life-giving, liberating work of Jesus.

Along the way we developed institutions and erected beautiful edifices to support the movement. But we have to keep in mind that our organizational structures and our buildings do not exist for their own sake.

Sometimes our focus narrows to keeping a specific program alive or maintaining a building and we don't ask why we're doing it. We live in a time of transition. The world changes. The Spirit moves in new ways.

We have to ask whether a ministry or a building supports the Jesus Movement or not. If not, we must be willing to let it go or to repurpose it.

The alternative is to practice a sort of idolatry. When it comes to our buildings, some people call this an Edifice Complex.

As the Jesus Movement, our energies have a single focus: to bring Jesus to the people.

The earth is wracked by want, tormented by violence, and held captive by addictions to drugs and power and consumerism and celebrity worship.

Only Jesus' love can quell the stomach's hunger and slake the soul's thirst.

Only Jesus' love will infuse the heart with tranquility and bring peace to mean streets and savage battlefields.

Only Jesus' love liberates both body and soul from the bondage of poverty, prejudice, ignorance, and exploitation.

As it turns out, Jesus' love always flows through a Body. And we are Jesus' loving, liberating, life-giving Body in Western Louisiana.



We are the Jesus Movement from Shreveport to Lake Charles, from Lafayette to Lake Providence, from Monroe to DeRidder.

Following the Presiding Bishop's example, I want to offer an image to help us take hold of what it means to be the Jesus Movement.

In the Parable of the Good Samaritan, Jesus calls us to be a neighbor.

Each congregation exists because Jesus has gathered you together in a particular place at a specific time. Jesus places us among all sorts of people.

They live in the houses and apartment buildings, work at the businesses, attend the schools, and huddle under the bridges all around us. Jesus sends us to be a neighbor to all of them.

Jesus did not put us where we are to look for people just like us.

Neither did he send us looking for people who fit comfortably into our established way of doing things.

And he didn't teach to screen people with questionnaires in order to identify the people who agree with us.

Jesus taught us to be a neighbor to everybody we meet. Period.

The key to being a neighbor is to make good use of our ears. Everybody we meet has a story. Develop a sense of curiosity about strangers. Ask them about themselves.

Neighbors don't foist ideas upon unwitting strangers. We are interested in another person as a child of God with a story we want to know. Each person we meet is a chapter in the Gospel that we haven't read yet.

Getting people to come to church is not our primary goal. But we are passionate about introducing people to Jesus.

And you know, helping people meet Jesus sometimes draws people to worship with us, serve the poor with us, study in a small group with us, or plant a community garden with us.

Telling people a list of doctrines they have to believe is an ineffective strategy for helping people make a Jesus-connection. Instead, listen to their story and we'll make a friend.

Remember, we are already a friend of Jesus. And Jesus tells each of us, "Any friend of yours is a friend of mine."

Jesus teaches us to be a friend, whether or not someone returns friendship. Whether or not someone agrees with us or acts like us or looks like us or even gives a fig about us.

And this leads me to ask you again a question I raised yesterday, the question posed to us by Mary Parmer:

Is your church a friendly congregation or a just a congregation of friends?

In other words, do you actively make new friends and draw them into the life of the congregation or do you gather with the people with whom you are already comfortable?

For the next few minutes, I will outline some strategies for helping us be neighbors. And I will begin with how our endowment is already supporting neighborly congregations.

As you may recall, the Diocesan Council decided two years ago to initiate the MAP grant program.

There are two kinds of grants for congregations.

One set of grants funds new missional projects. The second type of grant underwrites capital improvements that support mission. In other words, these grants fund congregational efforts at being a neighbor.

Originally, congregations were eligible to receive only a limited number of grants in successive years.

This summer the Council voted to lift this restriction. If you have a missional project, you are eligible to apply each year. Period. Every year, the endowment funds \$150,000 of such grants.

Take some risks! Don't hesitate to act because you're afraid you'll fail. There are no failures. Only first drafts of great works in the making.

The funds for these MAP grants are generated by the endowment annually. They do not reduce the size of the endowment.

After all, that is how endowments work. A corpus is left untouched to ensure that it will generate income for our children and grandchildren as they



BEING A NEIGHBOR

continue to pursue mission and ministry.

In fact, much of the support the Diocese provides for educating clergy, paying for college ministry, supporting Camp Hardtner, providing curacies for newly ordained clergy, and the various programs and support structures of the Diocese are funded by money generated by the endowment.

The endowment's role in our annual operating budget has grown increasingly crucial in an era in which 50 percent of our congregations find themselves unable to pay their asking.

Income from the endowment is replacing this shortfall from congregations in the operating budget. In other words, endowment income is already supporting struggling congregations every year.

An endowment is more than a rainy day fund to be spent in time of emergency. It is a trust given to the Diocese for the benefit not only of the present generation, but of the generations yet to come.

Our Canons direct the Board of Trustees to steward this gift in that way.

However, for about two years the Board has sought to determine how much we must maintain in the endowment to ensure funding at the current level.

After deliberation and research into restrictions placed upon gifts by original donors, the Board of Trustees informed the Diocesan Council that we can safely make a one-time draw on the endowment's corpus in the amount of roughly \$2 million.

This one-time draw will not endanger the ability of the endowment to continue its current level of support for congregations and for the programs and personnel that support congregations.

The Council has agreed with me that we should invest those resources in two major and timely ministry initiatives: the revitalization of distressed congregations and a significant redefinition of and growth in college campus ministries.

By distressed congregations I do not mean a congregation that is facing the

ordinary struggles to make budget and to increase membership. That's pretty much everybody.

Our endowment-funded budget already provides for annual programs to educate congregations in these areas as well as support



staff to offer consultation to individual congregations.

A distressed congregation is approaching death even though the demographics of the surrounding community suggest that it could be thriving.

Such congregations could turn around their declining attendance and dwindling resources, but they lack the funds to take the necessary steps.

The changes needed to revitalize distressed congregations are large in scale.

They may need a new, full-time clergy person trained in congregational redevelopment.

Some congregations will need to consider moving to a new location or radically repurposing the facilities they presently inhabit.

In almost every case, they must reexamine their mission with the question, "Who is my neighbor?"

Revitalizing distressed congregations usually takes at least a three-year commitment

and is very expensive. We have resources to fund a limited number of revitalization projects at this time.

And I want to be clear that we are not proposing to supplement the budget of congregations facing the usual struggles we all share. We are looking to identify congregations that can be turned from near death into sustainable vitality.

In addition to revitalizing distressed congregations, the Council agrees that we should make a significant commitment to college campus ministry.

By that, we mean much more than adding money to a line item in our diocesan budget. It is time to reconceive and to restructure our ministries at places of higher education.

Presently, all but one of our Canterbury ministries is the ministry of a parish located near a university. With the new canons passed at this convention, we seek to reconceive college ministry as an autonomous chapel with a chaplain.

Most of our chaplains will for now be lay, but in future we seek to make more of them ordained. All will report directly to the bishop.

And while we will continue to partner with local congregations for space and cooperative ministry, we will in some situations look to have separate physical plants for Canterbury Ministry.

This revised model of campus ministry is designed to reach increasing numbers of young adults and to raise them up in positions of both lay and ordained leadership.

It is time for us to stop losing membership through high school graduation as well as to recognize a significant evangelism and formational opportunity on college campuses.

The one-time draw on the endowment will allow us to kick start this new model of campus ministry in some places. However, we have to be mindful that campus ministry is never self-funding.

We will need income from endowment to pay for them. As a result, we will need a capital campaign to build a fund to sustain these ministries over time.

While we are talking about college minis-

try, let's talk deacons.

I have discussed with members of the Commission on Ministry as well as other leaders of our Diocese the idea that we should intentionally seek young ordinands to the diaconate. The minimum age for ordination to the Order of Deacons is 21.

I encourage all of us to invite young adults into conversation about serving as deacons.

We will be discussing at greater length what formation will look like, but it's time to recognize the leadership capacity, the energy, and the new ideas of a generation who has much to teach us. This is not to say that we are not seeking deacons at other places in the life cycle. On the contrary, we need many more deacons with a variety of life experiences and perspectives.

While our discernment process has yielded much fruit in raising up future priests, we still lag in addressing our shortage of deacons.

Deacons gather us to go into the world to be neighbors. The Spirit is moving us into the neighborhood, and we need to hear the Spirit raising up deacons to

See videos of
Bishop Jake's Diocesan
Convention Sermon
and Address on
YouTube.com and
Vimeo.com.

Search for: "Bishop Jake"
or "Diocese of Western
Louisiana"

lead us.

During the discernment process for electing the fourth bishop of this diocese, I was asked, "What do you need help doing?" I simply said, "Everything." And I meant it.

We are the diocese. I am nothing alone. Many people do remarkable work, give unflagging support, and much-appreci-

See *Being a Neighbor*, page 11



BEING A NEIGHBOR
ENGAGING GOD'S MISSION

NOT THOSE PEOPLE

BISHOP JAKE'S HOMILY
AT THE CONVENTION EUCHARIST



Not Those People *continued from page 1*

Turning around, I spotted boys and girls who seemed to belong to several different grade levels. There were grammar school kids and middle schoolers mixed in with high-schoolers. Some moved awkwardly. Others stood idly watching nothing in particular. There was lots of laughter and running about, much the same as you would have seen watching my class.

I said to the guy behind me, "Who are those kids?"

"Those are the retards," he said.

I didn't know what a retard was. And yet, I realized that my classmate had hurled that word like an insult. This was decades before I came to understand how disrespectful and offensive this word is. But even then I gathered that nobody wanted to be one and that we should consider ourselves better than those people. They were the outcasts. The underclass.

That's when I saw Tony playing with those people.

Three years earlier, on my first day of First Grade at Louisville Academy, my mother had brought me into the classroom. We were late. All the other kids were seated at their places in wooden chairs along the sides of wooden tables. I didn't know a soul, and the teacher honestly looked like the Wicked Witch of the West.

Despite every effort to keep it together, I broke into uncontrollable sobs.

From somewhere toward the back of the room, another boy got up and walked to the front. He put his arm around me. "I'll be your friend. Come sit next to me." That was Tony.

Midway through Second Grade, I spotted Tony cheating on our weekly spelling test. Our teacher had noticed

as well. She swept down the aisle, grabbed him by the hand, and disappeared with him for some time.

She returned alone with no explanation. I didn't see Tony again until that day on the fire escape two years later. Now he was no longer one of us. He was one of those people. They belonged over there. We belonged over here with our kind of people.

If you mixed with those people, your friends might start to think that you're one of them. Best to keep them at a distance.

Jesus talked a lot about those people. Or, more accurately, Jesus taught again and again that our tendency to divide people into us and them, higher and lower, insider and outsider bore absolutely no resemblance to the Kingdom of God.

The last will be first and the first will be last. Those who exalt themselves will be humbled and the humble will be exalted. The meek shall inherit the earth.

We see those people. We see the losers, the outsiders, the clueless, and the tacky. God doesn't see things that way. And that's a problem. So Jesus uses one of those people to teach us a lesson about being one of his people. He tells the parable of the Good Samaritan.

To get your head around Jesus' meaning, you have to understand that a Good Samaritan was like a healthy leper. In the Jewish mind of the day, there was no such thing.

Samaritans were no-good half-breeds. After the Assyrians had conquered the Northern Kingdom, they pursued a policy of cultural annihilation. They scattered the Northern Kingdom's inhabitants into foreign lands and forced intermarriage with non-Jews. The Samaritans were the product. For Southern Kingdom folk, the Samaritans were tainted. Inferior stock.

So it's no accident that Jesus chooses a Samaritan to teach a pious Talmud lawyer a lesson in what it means to love your neighbor as yourself.

To catch Jesus in blasphemy or some other form of heresy, the lawyer had asked, "How do I get eternal life?"

Quick on his feet, Jesus responded with a question that a self-proclaimed Bible expert couldn't resist. "What does Scripture say?"

Forgetting that the whole point of asking Jesus a question in the first place was to catch Jesus saying something incriminating, the lawyer blurted out the summary of the law. His desire to be the guy who knew the right answer got the best of him. "Love God right down to your gizzard and love your neighbor like your life depended on it."

That's when one of those moment-of-clarity things happened. The lawyer realized that he loved Jesus—and probably a long list of what he considered those people—slightly less than an ear ache. So, he quickly justified himself with another question. "Who is my neighbor?"

In other words, "Who really counts as my neighbor? Who do I have to love and who can I count as those people?"

And so Jesus tells this parable about a Samaritan who comes across a wounded Jew in a ditch. The Jew represented a whole class of people who had been condescending to and discriminating against the Samaritan for his whole life.

The Jew was no friend to the Samaritan. And yet the Samaritan showed him friendship. Instead of seeing one of those people, the Samaritan saw an equal.

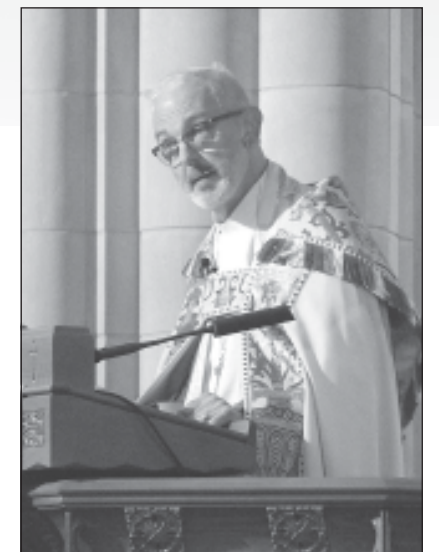
Please hear how I said that. He saw an equal. He did not condescend to someone less than himself. That's what it means to see someone as one of those people.

Instead, the Samaritan showed compassion. In compassion, we stand in solidarity with someone in their weakness and need. We can do that only when we recognize ourselves as weak and needy, and then listen to the stories that others have to tell.

Given what Jesus teaches about being a neighbor, I want each of us to take an honest look at how our congregation relates to the people in our surrounding community. Do we know who lives in the houses and works in the businesses in the three to five miles surrounding the church property? Do we know what their hopes and fears and needs are?

Each of our congregations defines itself as a friendly congregation. But consider what Mary Parmer has asked. Are you a friendly congregation or just a congregation of friends?

Being a neighbor means to listen. Not just to people like us. But to the people God has literally placed around us. If, because of their social class or race, we see them as



those people and keep a safe distance from them, we are refusing to be a neighbor.

Jesus doesn't instruct us to wait and see who qualifies as our neighbor. With the parable of the Good Samaritan, Jesus sends us into the world to be neighbors to everyone we meet.

That's what Tony did with me. He wouldn't allow me to remain a stranger, to be one of those people. He didn't worry about my race or my social class or my country of origin.

Tony saw my fear and my loneliness. He knew what that was like. So, he put his arm around me. And he said, "I'll be your friend." He treated me as his neighbor.

Being a Neighbor
continued from page 9

ated counsel. I could never name them all. However, I want to recognize and to thank a few.

I'll start with my staff: Kathy Richey, Holly Davis, Joy Owensby, Canon Bill Bryant, Dean Ron Clingenpeel, Mtr. Liz Ratcliff, and Bob Harwell keep the trains running on time, take our diocesan vision and run with it, and support our congregations in innumerable ways.

Our Treasurer Gray Easterling guides us in crafting our budget and overseeing it throughout the year.

Our Chancellor and Vice-Chancellor offer sage legal advice. And our able Secretary Nancy Shaw ensures that there is a record of our actions. I know you share my grati-

tude for them.

I am grateful to Dean Mary Richard and all the folks of the Shreveport Convocation who have made this Convention a reality.

Our liturgies were planned by Fr. Richard Norman, and for that I give thanks.

I am now well into my fifth year as your Bishop, and I am really having a blast. You are easy to love, and you love so generously.

We are doing exciting things together. Taking bold risks in the name of Jesus. Don't be afraid to write first, second, and third drafts.

The bottom line is this. Jesus loves us. And he is extending that love to the world by sending us out to be neighbors. Grace is on the move. Jesus calls us to roll with it.

Solar panels will help 1,000-year-old cathedral cut its power bill by 25 percent



Solar panels are so trendy right now that even historical structures are hopping onto the green-energy bandwagon. Gloucester Cathedral—a religious site since the 670s with existing architectural elements dating back nearly 1,000 years (and a Harry Potter filming location!)—will soon get up to 200 solar panels atop the roof of its south nave. Nearly 100 feet off the ground, the panels will be effectively hidden from view.

The commercially-sized panel system is projected to produce enough energy to cut the cathedral's power bill by 25 percent. According to the church, that's "enough to make 2,000 cups of tea every day of the year."

Roughly 90 percent of the project's funding has already been raised over the past year.

"The installation of solar panels on this remarkable building is a historic moment," said the Reverend Canon Celia Thomson at the recent installation of the inaugural panel. "We are thrilled that our vision to become a greener cathedral is being fulfilled and proud to make a valuable contribution to the Church of England's Shrinking the Footprint campaign."

Email **ALIVE!** at robertharwell39@att.net



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

November 2016

- 4-5 — Convention of the Diocese of Western Louisiana, *St. Mark's Cathedral in Shreveport*
- 8 — Meeting of the Commission on Ministry, *Diocesan House, starts at 10:00 a.m.*
- 12 — Summer Camp 2017 Head Counselor Interviews, *Camp Hardtner*
- 13 — Bishop's Visitation, *Epiphany, Opelousas*
- 18-20 — JEYL Youth Retreat Weekend, *Camp Hardtner*
- 19 — The Ordination of The Rev. Deacon Frank Fuller to the priesthood, *St. James, Alexandria, starts at 11:00 a.m. with reception following*
- 19 — Camp Hardtner Board Meeting, *Camp Hardtner, starts at 10:00 a.m.*
- 20 — Bishop's Visitation, *Holy Trinity, Sulphur*

December 2016

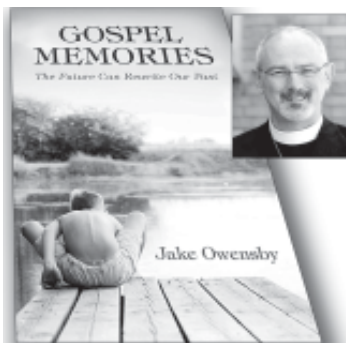
- 3 — Happening #55 Staff Training, *Camp Hardtner, starts at 10:00 a.m.*
- 4 — Bishop's Visitation, *Grace, Monroe*
- 11 — Bishop's Visitation, *Redeemer, Ruston*
- 17 — Happening #55 Staff Training, *Camp Hardtner, starts at 10:00 a.m.*
- 18 — Bishop's Visitation, *St. Thomas, Monroe*
- 24 — Bishop's Visitation, Christmas Eve: *Redeemer, Oak Ridge (early) St. James, Alexandria (late)*

January 2017

- 6-7 — Happening #55 Staff Overnight, *Camp Hardtner, starts at 7:00 p.m.*
- 8 — Bishop's Visitation, *St. James, Alexandria*
- 13-15 — Happening #55, *Camp Hardtner, starts at 7:00 p.m.*
- 14 — ECW Board Meeting and Installation of Officers, *St. Michael's, Pineville, starts at 11:30 a.m.*
- 15 — Bishop's Visitation, *St. Luke's, Grambling*
- 22 — Bishop's Visitation, *St. Timothy's, Alexandria*

February 2017

- 5 — Bishop's Visitation, *St. John's, Minden*
- 7-8 — Joint Preaching Conference (Dioceses of LA & WLA), *St. Barnabas, Lafayette, hosted by The Episcopal Preaching Foundation*
- 17-19 — College Student Retreat, *Camp Hardtner, starts at 7:00 p.m.*
- 19 — Bishop's Visitation, *Epiphany, New Iberia*



Gospel Memories

The Future Can Rewrite Our Past

by the Rt. Rev. Jake Owensby

Gospel Memories *The Future Can Rewrite Our Past*, is available at Amazon.com, in Paperback or in the Kindle format.

Last look



Cursillo #150 held at Camp Hardtner

Candidates and staff of Cursillo #150 gather for their official portrait at the conclusion of the three-day short course on the Christian faith held at Camp Hardtner the weekend of October 20-23.

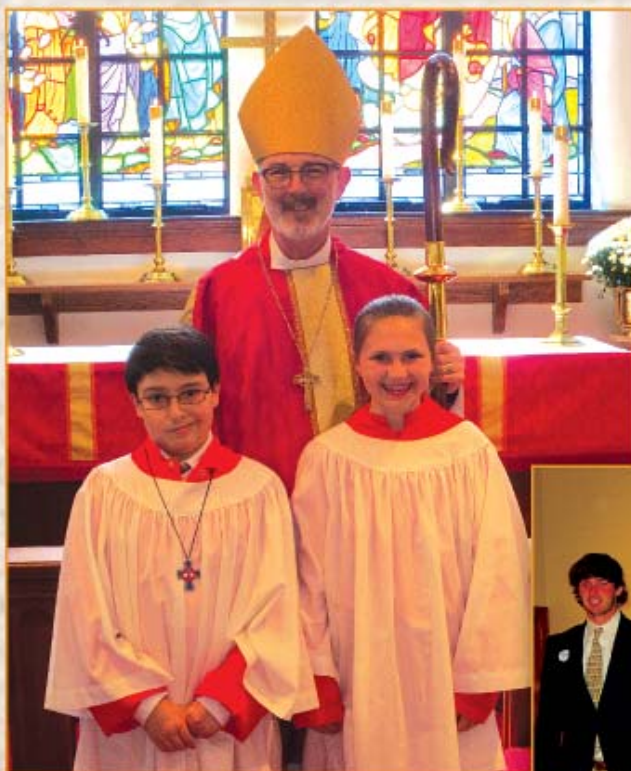
SATURDAY,
NOVEMBER 19, 2016



Saturday, November 19, 2016

The Ordination of The Rev. Deacon Frank Fuller to the priesthood

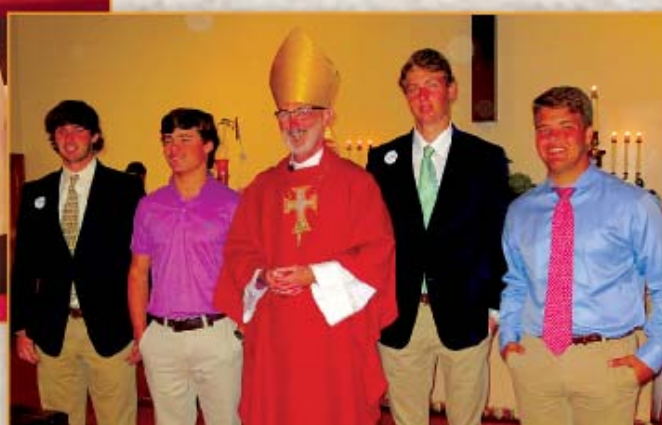
St. James, Alexandria, starts at 11:00 a.m. with reception following



Bishop Jake visits Trinity, Tallulah and Grace, Lake Providence

by the Rev. William Echols

Bishop Owensby visited Trinity Episcopal Church, Tallulah on October 16, 2016. He arrived at 8:00 a.m. for a potluck breakfast in honor of the Bishop and the Confirmands. One of the parishioners remembered the Bishop's birthday on October 30, and brought a cake for him.



At the Eucharist at 9:30 a.m., the Bishop confirmed: Michael Farmer Abendroth, Robert Hager Fortenberry, John Michael Parker, and Mason Keith Todd.

Following that service, the Bishop traveled to Grace Episcopal Church in Lake Providence. At the 11:30 Eucharist, Bishop Jake confirmed: Robert Eugene McIntyre, II, and Carol Ann Coody. Robert and Carol Ann also served as acolytes. Proving the point that Episcopalians always eat well, a pot-lunch honoring the Bishop and the Confirmands was held after the service.



St. Timothy's supports Manna House

St. Timothy's members Jenifer Matthews, Cynthia Delaney, Sherry Lawson present a check to the Manna House from the profits of a recent fundraiser. The Manna House feeds the hungry in Alexandria 365 days a year.



The Celebration of New Ministry at St. James, Shreveport

Bishop Jake will preside as new ministry commences at St. James Episcopal Church in Shreveport, when the Rev. Margaret Ayer is installed as rector of the parish. The Celebration service begins at 6:00 p.m., Thursday, December 15.