

Our diocese's response to Hurricane Harvey and Hurricane Irma

by the Rev. Deacon Lois Maberry

Hurricane Harvey made landfall on the south Texas coast on Aug 25th but ravaged the area as it was stalled by weather conditions that dumped close to 50 inches on the Houston, Beaumont, Orange and Lake Charles area. Winds did significant damage to the Rockport, Port Aransas area and the flooding in the Houston Beaumont area has crippled this area. Immediately the Episcopal Relief and Development agency were contacting and coordinating the efforts to get assistance to all these areas. As your Diocesan Relief person, I participated in multiple calls and conversations to begin the assistance efforts. My main concern needed to be our diocese, but also to support those areas close to us, the Diocese of Texas and

the Diocese of West Texas. All the clergy in our diocese were notified prior to the storm and after to assess damage and needs. Our situation was not as severe as areas in Texas so our role turned to support.

This disaster will take on a different approach from other recent flooding responses. Orange, a city in close geographic terms to Lake Charles sustained 40 inches of rain. There are parishioners from Lake Charles churches that sustained damage and need the support of our diocese. In the past people have asked how they can physically help in a disaster and not just send money or supplies. Our response this time will be to assist in the rebuilding of houses in the Orange area. To do this, we must be patient. There are steps to the recovery process. Currently, the houses must be mucked out, the mud and debris removed, and then they must dry. Sheet rock and flooring are removed and then the rebuilding begins. If your church

See Hurricanes, page 8

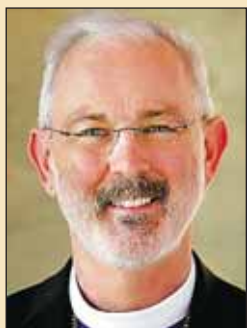


This August 30 view from space via a NASA satellite show now-tropical storm Harvey spreading across the southern United States. *Photo: NASA GOES project*

Learning How to Live

First century Jewish disciples learned by imitating their rabbis. Following a rabbi did not resemble sitting at a desk, taking notes, and passing exams about Torah, the Hebrew Bible.

Disciples devoted themselves to learning how to live. And you learned how to live by staying close to wise and holy rabbis and by copying their patterns of acting and talking in surprisingly minute detail.



Bishop Jake

How does the rabbi wash hands? Which sandal does the rabbi put on first? Does the rabbi travel on the Sabbath? How far and by what means?

I read somewhere that some disciples hid in the rabbi's bedroom to learn the proper expression of marital intimacy. Others peeked into the rabbi's bathroom to learn, well.... These stories may not be true, but they make the point.

Rabbis certainly taught Torah by discussing it. But most importantly, they imparted Torah to the next generation by embodying it. Their everyday actions, their common words, their habitual demeanor provided lessons in Torah. Studying the Torah is learning how to live. And disciples got the hang of how to live by emulating their rabbi. In all likelihood, watching the disciples struggle with their early lessons resembled listening to a beginning violin student. There were painful, awkward moments along the way.

When Peter, James, John, and the rest of the Twelve accepted Jesus' invitation to follow him, they dedicated themselves to patterning their lives on his. In ways they would understand more fully over time, Jesus is the embodiment of God's word. And they would struggle to take in the lesson of his life.

But struggling to follow Jesus' example doesn't make them losers or blockheads. On the contrary, their mistakes and missteps show us an important dimension of what it means to follow Jesus. And I think that may be why Matthew tells the story of Peter's attempt to walk on water.

Like Mark, Matthew shares the story of Jesus walking on water. In both Gospels, the disciples have gone ahead of Jesus in a boat. The weather gets rough. In the predawn hours the disciples spot Jesus strolling across the lake. If we stick with Mark and stop with that, the passage tells us only that Jesus is divine. That's an important message, and Matthew conveys it as well.

But then Matthew adds the bit about Peter getting out of the boat. And it's important to ask why he included it.

Scholars have concluded that he had a source that Mark lacked. But that still doesn't explain why Matthew decided to include the episode in the larger story he was telling. My hunch is that he wanted

See Bishop Jake, page 11

Adults who work with Children!



Safeguarding God's Children

Go online and update your Safeguarding God's Children certification. September is here, It's time to resume Sunday School and other youth programs.

<https://armatus2.praesidiuminc.com/armatusUser/login>

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Good Gifts

continued from page 10

well as with The Metropolitan Organization of Houston, a group of institutions dedicated to developing power and leadership among citizens in order to transform the city. St. Andrew's is also in communication with the Ven. Russ Oechsel, Jr., the Texas diocesan archdeacon in charge of relief who's working with Episcopal Relief & Development.

Working the phones

Verifying the best thing to do sometimes takes a lot of phone calls. When students, their families and other parishioners clamored for a way to help, the Rev. Robert Beazley, associate rector of St. Andrew's Episcopal Church & School in New Orleans, contacted the Rev. Lois Maberry, who is in charge of disaster response in the Diocese of Western Louisiana. She connected him with Rev. Jack Myers, rector of Church of the Good Shepherd in Lake Charles, Louisiana, who then connected him to a nearby Catholic Charities facility that could handle the delivery and sorting of supplies.

Beazley drove a 16-foot truck of supplies to the designated spot and after unloading, found he could be of more service: Volunteers asked to use his empty truck to move 300 cleaning kits for families from a nearby church to the places that needed them. Otherwise, they would've had to pack dozens of volunteers' vehicles.

"I kept hearing phrases like, 'You're a godsend!' But if it hadn't been for the students and parishioners stepping up and donating the original supplies, that truck would have never been there in the first place," Beazley said on Facebook.

— Amy Sowder is a special correspondent for the Episcopal News Service and is also a writer and editor living in Brooklyn.



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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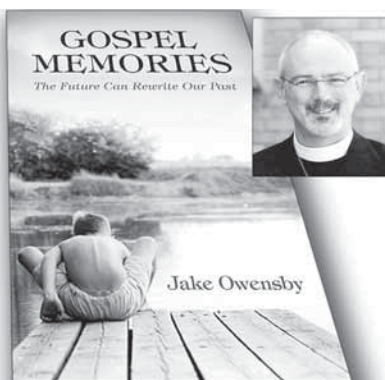
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Gospel Memories

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.

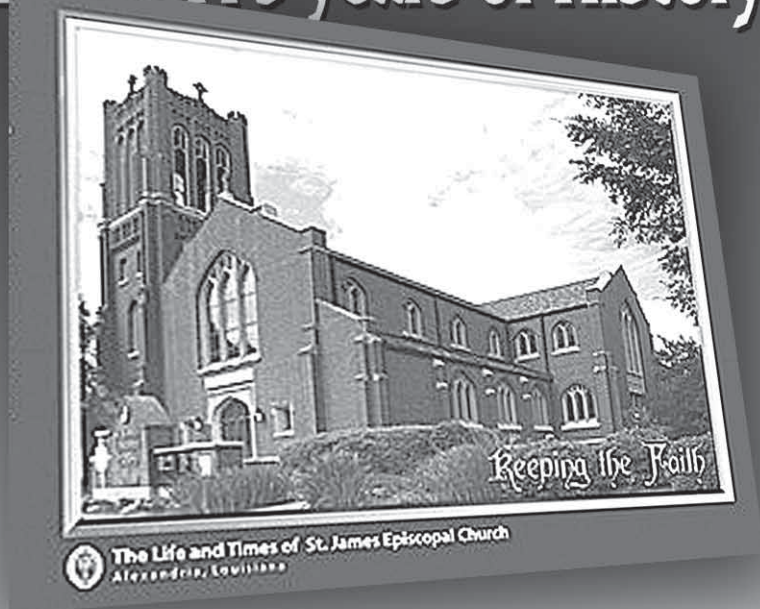
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www.diocesewla.org

Around the Diocese

Almost 175 years of History!



The Life and Times of St. James Episcopal Church

Almost 175 years of history, photos and remembrances of St. James Episcopal Church in Alexandria are included in "Keeping the Faith -- The Life and Times of St. James Episcopal Church," expected to be released in October.

Sponsored by the Memorial and Fine Arts Committee of the church, the book was authored by church member Melanie Torbett.

Available at Diocesan Convention



The 38th Annual Diocesan Convention

Alexandria, LA, November 3-4

Our convention theme this year is
"By Word and Example:
Engaging God's Mission"

Register online at the diocesan website
 (www.diocesewla.org)

Sign in and registration begins at 8:30 a.m. November 3.

MARK YOUR CALENDARS!

2017-2018 Diocesan Youth Events



JEYL (6th-8th grade): November 17-19, 2017

JEYL stands for Junior Episcopal Youth League. It is a spiritual retreat for middle school youth in a relaxed, fun environment. Open to all youth in grades 6-8, it takes place at Camp Hardtner.

HAPPENING #56 (9th-12th grade): January 12-14, 2018

Happening is a Christian experience presented by teenagers with the help of clergy and lay adult leadership. During the Happening retreat, there are activities designed for spiritual enrichment, fun and Christian community building among participants. Open to all youth in grades 9-12, it takes place at Camp Hardtner.

CLEY (9th-12th grade): March 9-11, 2018

CLEY stands for Christian League of Episcopal Youth. It is a fun-filled spiritual retreat led by college students with the help of clergy and other adult lay leadership. Open to all youth in grades 9-12, CLEY takes place at Camp Hardtner.

Around the Diocese

Open Table at St. James Receives Statewide Attention

St. James, Alexandria is excited that its involvement in Open Table is serving as a model for a newly developed partnership between Open Table and the Louisiana Department of Child and Family Services (DCFS). The focus of this relationship is to connect young people in or transitioning out of the foster care system with support systems in their



community.

Open Table trains congregations to form transformational relationships with Brothers and Sisters in poverty. Through the Open Table process, a group of volunteers makes a one-year commitment to build a community (called a Table) with a Brother or Sister to support, encourage, and advocate for him or her in the development and implementation of a life plan. The Table typically works with a community agency to identify someone who is ready for and interested in this process.

The Table at St. James is composed of seven members: Dana Brunson, Gay Coleman, Holly Dixon, Abbie DuBois, Susan Frey, Lynton Hester,

and Joy Owensby. Dana and Joy serve as Co-Mission Leaders. The Table members determined last fall that they wanted to work with a young person aging out of foster care, so they established a connection with their local DCFS office as a referral partner.

Meanwhile, unbeknownst to St. James, DCFS leaders in Baton Rouge and Open Table were forming a faith-government partnership with plans to pilot it in the Baton Rouge and Monroe areas. When state DCFS leaders learned that St. James already had a Table in Alexandria—the only Table in Louisiana—they were eager to support and learn from this local example of Open Table in action.

As Co-Mission Leader for Open Table at St. James, Joy Owensby was invited to participate in meetings between Open Table and state DCFS leaders in Baton Rouge. Also, she and Open Table founder and CEO Jon Katov, along with other foster care partner organizations, were presenters at a luncheon hosted by First Lady Donna Edwards at the Governor's Mansion on August 11. At this event, Mrs. Edwards unveiled her new initiative to link government, faith groups, nonprofit organizations, businesses and community members to create a united network of support for Louisiana's foster care system.



Open Table participants: l-r: Karla Venkataraman, Deputy Assistant Secretary of Child Welfare; Christy Tate, Transitioning Youth and Home Development Child Welfare Manager 1; Dr. Rhenda Hodnett, Assistant Secretary of Child Welfare; Joy Owensby, Episcopal Diocese of Western Louisiana; Tim Dale, Open Table National Field Director and Senior Model Trainer; Marketa Garner Walters, Secretary of the Department of Children and Family Services; Jon Katov, Open Table Founder and CEO; Terri Ricks, Deputy Secretary of the Department of Children and Family Services.

If you want to know more about Open Table, contact Joy Owensby (jowensby@diocesewla.org) or go to <http://www.theopentable.org>. For additional information on the First Lady's initiative in Louisiana, go to <http://gov.louisiana.gov/news/first-lady-donna-edwards-launches-initiative-connecting-foster-parents-with-community-supports>.



New building housing St. Mark's little school is dedicated

During ceremonies held Tuesday, August 15, Bishop Owensby dedicated and blessed the new building that will house the preschool of the St. Mark's Cathedral School in Shreveport.

The sparkling new facility of 14,000 square feet, roughly double the size of the old preschool, was designed to meet the physical requirements set forth by the National Association for the Education of Young Children.

"There are 10 classrooms, a chapel, secure indoor and outdoor

covered play areas, and convenient parking," said Chris Elbertson, the architect for the new building. The new building was designed to complement the Gothic Revival architecture of the Cathedral.

McInnis Brothers was the new structure's general contractor. Efforts were made to be harmonious with both the neighborhood and the existing campus in keeping with the church's listing on the National Register of Historic Places.

Left: The new preschool building at St. Mark's Cathedral. Right: A moment from the not-so-solemn ceremony of dedication and blessing.

Around the Diocese

The Bishop's Commission on Addiction & Recovery presents the 2017 Joy in the Journey

Save these dates!

The Joy of Living:
Action is the key word

**A three-day retreat presented by
John McAndrew, MA, MDiv**

**September 29–October 1, 2017
at Camp Hardtner**



Our presenter

John McAndrew, MA, MDiv

John McAndrew is a theologian, teacher, counselor, musician, hospice chaplain and poet. With a background in literature, theology, music, and counseling, he has worked in treatment settings, classrooms, corporate consultancy, parish communities, detention facilities, and hospice care.

During his tenure as Director of Spiritual Care at the *Betty Ford Center* in Rancho Mirage, CA, he began to incorporate these varied experiences into ideas which took shape in *SensibleSpirituality.org*, offering spiritual counseling and tools for recovery.

John currently provides Spiritual Care for *Wilshire Hospice* in San Luis Obispo, CA, continues to offer Retreats for people interested in recovery, and facilitates the *Spiritual Development Process* for those seeking deeper spiritual engagement.

The Joy of Living: Action is the Key Word registration includes food, lodging and retreat materials:

Single room—\$175.00

Double room—\$150.00

You may register online at the Diocesan Website (www.diocesewla.org) until September 15.



MAP grant makes possible new St. Michael and All Angels playground

St. Michael and All Angels, Lake Charles received a 2017 Capital Improvement Diocesan MAP grant for \$5,000 for safe and attractive playground equipment that's sure to furnish plenty of intense and enjoyable exercise for the children of a congregation that is on the grow and attracting younger families.

St. Michael's has also begun outreach efforts to its surrounding community, and this new child-attractive addition will certainly be helpful in those efforts.

Around the Diocese



St. Michael and All Angels hosts National Night Out gathering

To become more attuned to their surrounding community, St. Michael and All Angels, Lake Charles has become a host organization for National Night Out in Lake Charles.

National Night Out is an annual community-building campaign that promotes police-community partnerships and neighborhood camaraderie, components in the efforts to make our neighborhoods safer, more caring places to live. National Night Out enhances the relationship between neighbors and law enforcement while bringing back a true sense of community and fellowship. Furthermore, it provides a great opportunity to bring police and neighbors together under positive circumstances, not just at times of crisis.



Father Whit got it right

Father Whit Stodghill, rector of St. Alban's, Monroe's careful and successful display of the eclipse of the sun, was representative of the keen interest so many displayed in this once-in-a-lifetime event.

College Ministry Cranks Up once again

It's that time again. College ministry is cranking up and Redeemer, Ruston and Louisiana Tech University are included in the reboot.

On the last day of Tech Freshman Orientation, Louisiana Tech President, Dr. Les Guice, visited Redeemer and was promptly presented with a Canterbury Association fan! Dr. Guice is pictured here with Tracie Ellerman and Linda Griffin.

Canterbury will resume meeting at Redeemer on Wednesday nights with Holy Eucharist at 6 p.m. and with students gathering after for Fun, Food, and Fellowship. All Tech students are invited.





Top left: The newly ordained are presented to the congregation. Center: Vesters Rose Bordelon (left) and Grace Bordelon (right) place the Deacon's sash on André Bordelon. Right: The Rt. Rev. Jacob Owensby lays hands on Madge McLain.



André Alan Bordelon and Madge McLain are ordained to the Sacred Order of Deacons

At a special service of ordination held August 24 at St. James, Alexandria, the Rt. Rev. Jacob Owensby order André Bordelon of Trinity, Cheyenneville, and Madge McLain of St. Barnabas, Lafayette, to the Sacred Order of Deacons.



Above: left to right: Carly Long Counselor for FJCCL, Sheryl Anderson Event Chairman, Preston Mansour Executive Director of The Family Justice Center, Fr. Rich Snow and Coan Knight member of St. Timothy's outreach committee.

St. Timothy's, Alexandria Italian Gala benefits Family Justice Center

St. Timothy's, Alexandria held it's 4th annual Italian Gala and Silent Auction on August 12 with the proceeds benefiting The Family Justice Center of Central Louisiana. Over \$3400 was raised to benefit the center.

The mission of the Family Justice Center is to stop family violence, to make victims safe, and hold batterers accountable, and provide long-term support for victims and children through collaboration and coordinated services.

The Center provides a safe location for victims to speak to an advocate, develop a personal safety plan for going forward, provide a place where victims can communicate in privacy with law enforcement and navigate through civil legal services.



Diocesan News

Hurricane Harvey “Our response this time will be to assist in the rebuilding of houses”

Hurricanes

continued from page 1

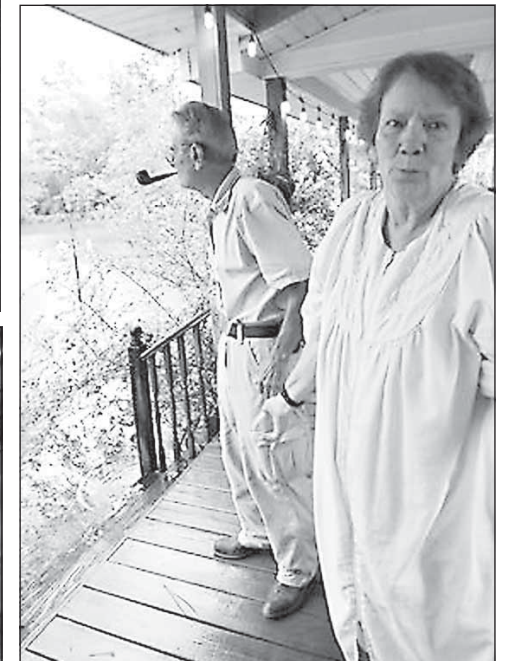
or group of churches would like to start forming teams with at least one person with good construction knowledge, begin doing so. Lake Charles and Sulfur churches are finding places to stay while teams come to work on houses. They are also identifying people who were severely flooded and need our help. In the next 4-6 weeks, we will be matching work teams with projects.

Your church could start forming a reconstruction team that can swing into action in 4 to 6 weeks.

Please contact me with a team coordinator and what skills you have to share. Please limit the teams to 4-6 people. Each team will come for 3-5 days to work. Each team will be responsible to supply their own tools for the work. If your church cannot supply a team but could possibly provide the needed materials for work, please let me know. We are not requesting Episcopal Relief and Development funds at this time. We would like to see if the churches of the diocese can find the money to support this effort. Homeowners will apply for FEMA funding and any other assistance that is available to them.

If you have ever participated in projects like this, please share your knowledge. I will be coordinating this effort but great minds need to work together. Patti Noel from St. Michael's in Pineville worked with UMCOR in the post flooding response to the floods of March 2016 and is helping to coordinate these efforts. I can be reached by phone 318-286-5414 or email Lrmha@bellsouth.net or lois@stmarksca-the-dral.net. I look forward to all sharing knowledge and skills in this effort to help those in need.

The Rev. Deacon Lois Maberry is the Disaster Relief Officer of the Diocese of Western Louisiana.



Around the Diocese

The Haiti Education Foundation, Inc. invites you to attend



HUG • 2017

Haiti United Gathering in Shreveport, Louisiana

St. Paul's, Shreveport, in cooperation with its mission partner, First Presbyterian Church in Shreveport will present "HUG • 2017," Friday, October 27 and Saturday, October 28, 2017.

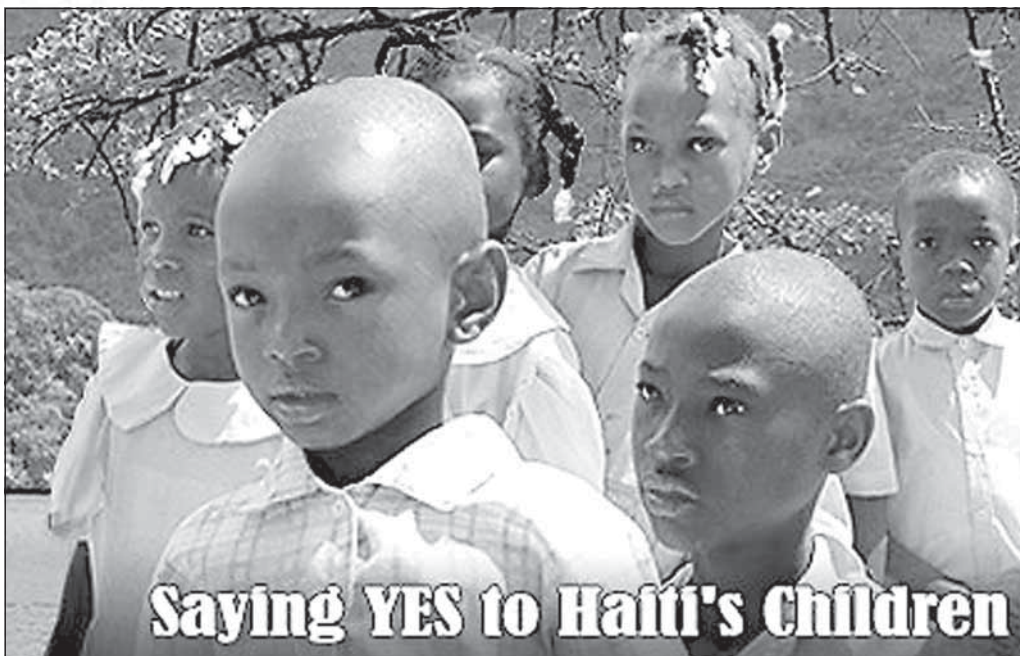
"HUG • 2017" is shorthand for "Haiti United Gathering" and for those who are interested in foreign mission, but don't know how to proceed to translate that yearning into reality, attendance at HUG • 2017 will illuminate the process and provide a practical step-by-step tutorial on effective and practical foreign mission work.

"Our goal is to bring current sponsors together to share experiences and give networking opportunities and to educate and inspire potential sponsors," said event spokesman Mickey Quinlan of St. Paul's.

Central to the mission opportunities to be presented is the Haiti Education Foundation (HEF), an El Dorado, Arkansas-based non-profit that supports 35 schools in the remote mountains of southern Haiti. The foundation's continuing efforts are to match each of these schools with an American partner.

A look at the Shreveport churches' involvement with aiding Haitian school children through HEF is a beautiful example to a congregation with an interest in foreign mission. Shreveport's First Presbyterian has had a relationship with HEF that dates back to the 1980's which was usually expressed in the form of grants to the foundation for specific needs. That changed in 2013 when the Presbyterian congregation sought to change their focus by building a relationship with one particular school and community.

A 2014 visit to an HEF sponsored school in Cherident, Haiti, led to the sponsorship of the elementary school of the St. Matthias Episcopal parish in Cherident. Another visit to Cherident in October 2014 was made with the intent of assessing how First Presbyterian could further assist the education



Friday, October 27, 6-8:30 p.m.

First Presbyterian Church, Shreveport
900 Jordan Street

Saturday, October 28, 9:00 a.m.-3:00 p.m.

St. Paul's Episcopal Church, Shreveport
275 Southfield Road

Saturday, October 28, 5:30-8:00 p.m.

St. Paul's Episcopal Church for a Red Beans & Rice Dinner and entertainment

and health of the children.

Open to becoming active in foreign mission, St. Paul's, Shreveport, accepted an invitation from First Presbyterian and traveled with them to Cherident in February 2015.

Following that trip St. Paul's agreed to sponsor the pre-school program at St. Matthias in Cherident and the two Shreveport churches formed a partnership to fund and maintain a lunch feeding program in all three schools of St. Matthias parish; to fund the construction of a library and computer lab, and to re-roof the parish church, which had stood useless since the

2010 earthquake which had devastated the Haitian countryside.

Further travel to Haiti is planned in late September 2017 by St. Paul's, and in November by First Presbyterian.

The two-day HUG • 2017 gathering will start at First Presbyterian Church in Shreveport at 6:00 p.m. on Friday, October 27 with HEF board president Mike Landers and Pere Frederic Menelas, who is the Episcopal priest-in-charge of St. Matthias parish in Haiti, which is now closely associated with the two Shreveport congregations.

The gathering continues at 9:00 a.m. Saturday at St. Paul's. Susan Turbeville,

Tend My Lambs a successful mission effort through HEF

HEF's efforts to find sponsors for Haitian schools have also borne fruit in other areas of Western Louisiana.

Good Shepherd, Lake Charles *Tend My Lambs* program has successfully educated Haitian students for many years.

HEF's executive director and Girbson Bijou, a young man who grew up in an HEF-supported school are both set for presentations.

Another big plus at both sessions will be the presence of representative partners from non-governmental organizations whose specialties are providing clean drinking water, solar power to the schools, health care for the children, and feeding programs in the schools. These services are provided through HEF once sponsors are found to fund these individual services.

Attendees will see how a congregation with a heart for mission can translate their dreams and wishes into reality through the formation of partnerships with others and the assistance of solid organizations with good records of achievement.

The gathering will conclude with a red beans and rice dinner and entertainment at 5:30 p.m. Saturday evening at St. Paul's.

Registrations will be accepted until October 1, 2017. The cost is \$20 per person, which includes Saturday lunch. (*Donations will be accepted for the red beans and rice Saturday evening dinner.*)

T-shirts are available for an additional \$15.

Register Online at
www.haitifoundation.org

The best ways to help hurricane survivors, now and later

Those inspired to help are advised to verify what specific donations are needed.

by Amy Sowder

[Episcopal News Service] Brett Covington didn't have any money to donate to people devastated by Hurricane Harvey. But she gave what she had: a steer.

Only in Texas, right?

Before accepting this gift, Christy Orman, the Diocese of Texas hurricane relief coordinator from Christ Church Cathedral in Houston, had to lock down a place that could use 400 pounds of meat. She immediately thought of The Abundant Harvest, a food truck that acts like a mobile food pantry. Once that end was secured, plus a butcher paid for, Orman decided to travel to Covington's ranch in Hutto, Texas.

"I told my husband, 'I have to meet this cow.' I want to honor this animal," said Orman, who named the steer "Walstan" after the patron saint of farmers and ranchers. "We thanked Walstan for giving to so many that are in need right now ... this was exactly where I needed to be, with this woman giving us a piece of her land, her living. The whole situation was just so surreal."

Standing a few feet from his shiny charcoal coat, Orman read aloud the "For stewardship of creation" prayer from the Book of Common Prayer. The meat will likely become a casserole to nourish those in need since Hurricane Harvey made its first landfall August 25, near Rockport, Texas, on the barrier islands beyond Corpus Christi. The Category 4 hurricane is responsible for at least 60 deaths, record flooding and the destruction or damage of thousands of homes.

What's best to send

Walstan is the exception to the rule repeated by everyone leading ground-zero hurricane relief efforts. For those who want to help, please give money and gift cards—not supplies, unless specifically requested, said Carol Barnwell, communications coordinator for the Diocese of Texas who's also organizing many of these efforts.

And most of all, don't donate clothes, especially used clothes.

"I know it's not as sexy to donate gift cards or funds, but it really is the best stewardship," Barnwell said.

The diocese's chaplains and mission groups bring the gift cards to families when they go to Episcopalians' homes and to their neighbors' homes. If the family needs dinner, they can buy dinner; if they need gas, they can buy gas. They can buy diapers that fit.

"One of the main things is the dignity of



Christy Orman (left) of Christ Church Cathedral in Houston drove with her husband, Alex (right), to the farm of Brett Covington (center) in Hutto, Texas, to say a prayer over Covington's steer, which she donated to feed people in need after Hurricane Harvey. Photo: Courtesy of Christy Orman

giving the person the ability to buy specifically what they need. It puts the money into the local economy, which is desperately needed," Barnwell said. And yes, stores are stocked enough.

The most useful gift cards are the general ones, such as Visa and MasterCard, rather than for specific grocery stores or other chains that might not have a location in the neighborhood where they land. Cards for the Home Depot and Lowe's are a pretty safe bet, too.

The best way for someone living outside the affected areas to help is by donating to the Hurricane Harvey Response Fund managed by Episcopal Relief & Development. Staff are coordinating with diocesan leaders to ensure that the gift cards they purchase with the donated funds are from stores located in or near the impacted community, said Katie Mears, Episcopal Relief & Development's U.S. Disaster Program director, in an email to Episcopal News Service.

"Donated goods coming from church groups and others within the impacted community can be helpful when they are based on the specific needs of local church partners and contacts. That said, transporting goods over large distances can make things more complicated and is rarely advisable," Mears said.

Skilled labor and other volunteers won't be needed from outside the area for a while, maybe even six months, she said. Episcopal Relief & Development's church partners

are still assessing needs and caring for those impacted. While volunteers aren't needed yet, it's certainly helpful to start planning for volunteers in the coming months and years, Mears said.

Trinity by the Sea Episcopal Church in Port Aransas, Texas, served as an early gathering point for the large amount of donated material that flooded the city after Harvey hit. By Sept. 1, however, the church had to stop accepting donations because there were

no more secure, clean places to put the supplies, said Jennifer Wickham, a volunteer whose husband is rector of All Saints' Episcopal Church in Corpus Christi, which is about 40 miles west of Port Aransas.

Wickham, who has worked in disaster relief for many years, said sometimes donations aren't useful or even useable. Food banks, for instance, often get opened, half-eaten food items such as peanut butter or pasta. It seems like some people are cleaning out their cabinets, Wickham said. Or the donations could be from someone who has the desire to give but not the financial ability to give any other way.

"Or, is it someone thinking 'let's give it to the poor people; they'll take anything'? That is a completely disrespectful way to look at the people we're helping," Wickham said. A fellow volunteer in Port Aransas told her the deluge of donations felt like "somebody's invited themselves to dinner at my house and they didn't ask if I wanted it; they didn't ask if it was helpful."

It can offend donors to be told their gifts can cause more harm than good when, for instance, the trucks bearing supplies block the roads for residents returning home. When businesses, people and organizations receive unsolicited donations of supplies, it can create what Wickham called a "secondary disaster." Rain destroys donations left outside, attracting rats and mosquitos.

Give from a list of needed items

One way to avoid the added effort caused

by unsolicited donations is to work within a specific network that publicizes what materials are needed, when and where, and coordinates delivery.

For those who live not too far away, make sure to gather only what is on the organizer's list of specific items needed, said the Rev. Nancy Springer, disaster relief coordinator from the Diocese of West Texas, in an online letter to the diocese's clergy and laypeople.

"Please don't think you know more than those on the ground or know of other products that would supplement your donation," Springer wrote. "For example, the people in the hardest hit communities are asking for vinegar, but this doesn't mean they need olive oil, too. Vinegar goes with hydrogen peroxide to help with mold clean-up."

This is the reason the Rev. Bill Miller of Christ Church in Covington, Louisiana, was meticulous about his church's collection for Hurricane Harvey.

"A big part of what we did was talking to the right people," Miller said. "You have to appreciate the good intentions of people, but we also have the responsibility to educate ourselves and stay informed. It really speaks to the power of partnerships."

Houston is Miller's hometown where he has a lot of family and friends and was ordained to begin his ministry. "Within 24 hours of the flooding, or less than that, I had people in shelters texting me what they needed," he said.

Besides those gift cards, the key word here is "requested" supplies. Miller learned what specifically to round up by doing his homework after people from a Covington construction company came to him and said they wanted to help. So, Miller talked to three people organizing relief efforts in the Diocese of Texas: the Rev. Jimmy Grace of St. Andrew's Episcopal Church in the Heights of Houston, a contact at Lord of the Streets Episcopal Church and an American Red Cross representative.

"So basically, we had three lists. The construction company waited for me to give them the list, and then they got the supplies in bulk, got the transportation—two trucks and drivers—donated," Miller said.

On Sept. 7, trucks filled with \$50,000 in requested supplies and \$10,000 in gift cards headed to a donated warehouse space with a forklift and pallet jack, overseen by Grace, rector of St. Andrew's Episcopal Church in the Heights of Houston, and the Rev. Carissa Baldwin-McGinnis, associate rector. That Houston church has a network with congregations in lower-income areas of Houston, San Pablo, and San Pedro, as

See **Good Gifts**, page 2

Bishop Jake

to show us what discipleship meant in light of what we had just learned about Jesus' identity.

Following an incarnate God means that we would be set what would seem like an impossible example to most ordinary people. Jesus is urging us to walk on water. And he knows what that will mean for us. Let's look more closely at the passage.

Peter says to Jesus, "If that's you, tell me to come out there with you." Peter climbs over the gunwales, takes a few steps, and then he sinks. Jesus grabs him up and hauls him into the boat. He says, "Oh you of little faith. Why did you doubt?"

You've probably heard lots of sermons about Peter's faith deficit. Me, too. If he had only had enough faith, preachers have said, he would never have sunk. Frequently we're harangued about our own puny faith and told to buck up.

Well, baloney!

For starters, remember that Peter was a disciple. He took the risk of imitating Jesus doing something impossible. It's what he had signed up for. Besides, Peter had already come to expect Jesus to do and say unthinkable things:

Turn the other cheek. Don't imagine that violence will solve anything.

Forgive the unrepentant. Repeatedly. How you feel about it isn't the point.

Love your enemy. Even the dangerous one who hates your guts.

Give your stuff away because someone else needs it. Don't even ask about who deserves it.

continued from page one

See everybody—simply everybody—as infinitely valuable in themselves. Nobody is here to serve your agenda, gratify your desires, or live up to your expectations.

Eat with sinners. Befriend outcasts. Get over yourself.

For Jesus, this is what it means to live. This is eternal life. This is love that resembles God. And, yes, at first it will be like walking on water. Impossible! You will sink. And that is where the growth begins. Once you've been brought back to the safety of the boat, will you step back out on the waves again?

When Jesus welcomed Peter out on the waves, he probably knew that Peter would sink. Who wouldn't!

Jesus wasn't setting a test for Peter, waiting to see if his faith measured up. At Peter's own request, Jesus encouraged his insanely risky behavior.

When Jesus talks about Peter's little faith, he's not saying "deficient faith." Sure, Peter's faith isn't where it will eventually be. But neither is he utterly faithless. His faith has room to grow. Just like ours.

Faith does not grow by spiritual strain. It grows when we stretch ourselves to walk on water again and again. To do those things that Jesus teaches us to do when everybody around tells us we're naive or just plain crazy.

In a word, we grow in faith when we love our neighbor as if our own life depended on it.

Well, actually, I suppose our own life does depend on it. As it turns out, learning how to live comes down to learning how to love.

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 2017

15/16—Celebration of Women's Ministries, Camp Hardtner, starts at 6:00 p.m.

29-31—Joy in the Journey Retreat, Camp Hardtner

October 2017

1—Bishop's Visitation, St. Michael & All Angels, Lake Charles

8—Bishop's Visitation, St. Michael's, Pineville

10—Meeting of the General Convention Deputation, starts at 11:00 a.m.

12—Clergy Gathering, St. James, Alexandria, starts at 10:00 a.m.

15—Bishop's Visitation, Trinity, Tallulah; Grace, Lake Providence

17—Meeting of the Diocesan Council, St. James, Alexandria, starts at 10:00 a.m.

22—Bishop's Visitation, Trinity, Crowley

November 2017

12—Bishop's Visitation, Epiphany, Opelousas

19—Bishop's Visitation, Holy Trinity, Sulphur

21—Commission on Ministry, Diocesan House, starts at 10:00 a.m.

December 2017

3—Bishop's Visitation, Grace, Monroe

12—Meeting of the Diocese Council, St. James, Alexandria, starts at 10:00 a.m.

16—Ordination of Deacon Christie Fleming to the priesthood,

Christ Church, Bastrop, starts at 11:00 a.m.

10—Bishop's Visitation, Redeemer, Ruston

12—Meeting of the Diocese Council, St. James, Alexandria, starts at 10:00 a.m.

**24—Bishop's Visitation, Christmas Eve: St. Mark's, Shreveport (early);
St. James, Alexandria (late)**

January 2018

7—Bishop's Visitation, St. James, Alexandria

14—Bishop's Visitation, Christ, Memorial, Mansfield

21—Bishop's Visitation, St. Matthias, Shreveport

February 2018

4—Bishop's Visitation, St. Thomas, Monroe

14—Bishop's Visitation, St. James, Alexandria (noonday)

18—Bishop's Visitation, Trinity, Natchitoches

25—Bishop's Visitation, St. Paul's, Shreveport

27—Commission on Ministry, Diocesan House, starts at 10:00 a.m.

March 2018

4—Bishop's Visitation, Redeemer, Oak Ridge

25—Bishop's Visitation, St. James, Alexandria

Holy Week: Holy Cross and Cathedral in Shreveport
(specifics to be announced)

April 2018

1—Bishop's Visitation, (Easter) St. Mark's Cathedral, Shreveport

15—Bishop's Visitation, St. Barnabas, Lafayette

22—Bishop's Visitation, Good Shepherd, Lake Charles

May 2018

6—Bishop's Visitation, Holy Spirit, Big Lake

13—Bishop's Visitation, Ascension, Lafayette

15-17—Spring Clergy Retreat, Camp Hardtner

20—Bishop's Visitation, St. Mark's Cathedral, Shreveport

22—Commission on Ministry, Diocesan House, starts at 10:00 a.m.

27—Bishop's Visitation, Polk Memorial, Leesville

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Life is messy. And you'll find God right in the middle of it. That's the Jesus message. I write this blog to help you see how Jesus brings healing and recovery and peace. Reconciliation and forgiveness and justice.

LOOKING FOR GOD IN MESSY PLACES

Bishop Jake's New Blog

<https://jakeowensby.com/>

Last Look!

Why St. Andrew's is truly my church "Home"

by Somer Brown

Pancakes and Pajama Day is a day my girls ask about all year—when will we do it again? It's an easy morning for getting ready, no doubt, but to me it symbolizes so much more. It's walking into God's House, hair in a messy bun, slippers on, sleep barely wiped out of our eyes and being fed. It's having our brothers in Christ in the kitchen, flipping pancakes; it's all the little ones sneaking extra chocolate chips and stealing last bites from each other; it's all my Christ-sisters catching up on our week while we refill milks and clean up spills. It's just like any other family meal because this is my family.

While we may not have the most elaborate sanctuary or the ability to sing most of the songs in the Hymnal on key, I think in many ways we have it figured out so much better. St. Andrew's is home. St. Andrew's is family. When I come in on a Wednesday evening for dinner and Compline, my family is there to greet me and help me shrug off a bad day at the office. Any given Sunday can have me stifling laughter or wiping away tears and no matter which it is, my St. Andrew's brothers and sisters are there with an arm around my shoulder – both literally and figuratively.

St. Andrew's—our little church in the Bluff—is the only place where I feel I can truly lay it all down at his feet. I feel that way because he is truly there—not in some ornate decoration, but in the flesh—in each and every one of my siblings in Christ who, when they see me burdened, like Simon of Cyrene, pick up the cross on my back and carry it part of the way for me.

Like any family, we play together, pray together, laugh together and work together. And while we may be small in numbers, I have seen miraculous things happen when we simply agree to all show up and give it a go. Vacation Bible School is the most recent example. We



didn't have rehearsed actors, we didn't have a fancy PA system or power point. What we had were families, families who were family, who came together, who broke bread, who made joyful noises, and who cared more about the fellowship and the joy of the worship, than what things were "supposed to be." It was less about the plan and more about the presence—of each other and of Christ.

In many ways I see our church as a microcosm of Jesus' own disciples. He surrounded himself with fishermen (we have a few of those), a tax collector, a doctor, and a zealot, among others. They were a rag-a-tag team, with no vision statement or

growth plan. They denied Jesus and ran when the going got tough; they sold him out; they questioned him. But, for the most part, what mattered about their ministry is they showed up. They didn't always (or usually ever) know how or why or when or even what—they only knew who and who was Jesus. So they showed up; and often against their own better judgment, they followed and in doing so they spread the Word of God and started the Christian church.

My St. Andrew's family has got "showing up" down. We are as rag-a-tag a team as Jesus had—we are his team. We are builders and bikers, teachers and tinkers, lawyers and artists and everything in between. I'm so thankful to have been embraced by this family, to have grown up as an adult there, and to be raising my own children there. I'm happy we have a Peace that doesn't end until every neck is hugged or hand is embraced. I'm so thankful to have a place I can go and just be—no expectations—and be met right where I am and fed just what I need (literally and figuratively). At St. Andrew's I am truly among the Saints of God and as the hymn goes, "I want to be one too."

—Somer Brown is member of the congregation of St. Andrew's, Moss Bluff.

