

Revising the Diocesan Communication Strategy

Beginning in 2018 the Diocese has begun devising and gradually implementing a new, comprehensive communications strategy under the leadership of the Communications Commission. Evolving methods of communication, the desire to reach younger generations, and the need to be even more cost-effective have motivated this shift.

This year will see an increasing reliance on the bi-weekly email alert to provide time-sensitive information. This is where you will find timely announcements about events and registration deadlines. Submitting your information as you have always done, you can expect to find it shared quickly and repeatedly via the Constant Contact email list already compiled. Increasing this email list will be an ongoing priority. That same information will frequently be shared on social media via the Diocesan Facebook page.

The *ALIVE!* becomes principally a features publication and will appear four or five times a year with a special edition published for Diocesan Convention matters. In the pages of the newsletter

you will read stories about diocesan events that have already occurred, congregational news, essays by the bishop, national Church news, and less time-sensitive announcements.

Social media will become increasingly important. While we have already moved in this direction, there are additional strategies for reaching not only members of our congregations but also unchurched people within our Diocese. While an attractive and informative website is important, most users seek out websites for resources and general information instead of breaking news. So, the website will continue on its current path with steady but minor improvements for now.

To help in these efforts, make certain to share your email address with Holly Davis at the Diocesan office. She will add the address to our mailing list. Additionally, like the official Diocesan Facebook page. For those who choose not to access electronic communications of this kind, be assured that we will still be connecting with you through the new *ALIVE!* format.

Healing Justice

When I say “Jonah,” I bet most people think about the story of a reluctant prophet. Balking at God’s call to go to Nineveh, Jonah took a boat as far as you can go in the opposite direction.



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

Famously, after a storm at sea threatens to swamp the boat he’s boarded, Jonah announces to the sailors that his disobedience has caused the storm. Despite their protests, Jonah insists on being tossed into the sea to appease God’s wrath.

As Jonah sinks, a fish swallows him. That same divinely inspired fish swims him back in the direction that God intended in the first place and barfs him up on Nineveh’s shore.

Quite a story! No wonder people think of it first when they hear Jonah’s name. For instance, the renowned psychologist Abraham Maslow named a neurotic condition after it: the Jonah Complex. Inspired by Jonah’s flight, Maslow says that many of us so fear success that

we block our own growth toward self-actualization.

While Maslow’s personality theory has its merits, his reading of Jonah’s motivations misses the mark entirely. He was narrowly focused on this fabulous episode. But Jonah is not afraid of his own greatness. He’s resistant to and even resentful of the wideness of God’s mercy. Let me explain.

God called Jonah to preach repentance to Nineveh. After Jonah finally makes his roundabout way to that huge city, he does a half-hearted job of urging them to repent. Basically, he walks through the street shouting, “You’re toast! God’s had it with you! Duck and cover!”

Despite Jonah’s puny, mean-spirited effort, the king and all the king’s subjects repent. Even the animals repent! Every Bichon Frise and Guernsey milk cow put on sack cloth and ashes. And God forgives the Ninevites.

Jonah went into an atomic sulk.

See Bishop Jake, page 11

Diocesan News

PRE-ORDER TODAY!

PERFECT FOR:

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"Bishop Owensby is one of the finest thinkers and writers on today's scene, religious or secular. I read everything he publishes, and I learn something, think deeply, and am moved every time I do. This book is no different. You'll learn, think, be moved, and live a bit differently."

—The Most Rev. Michael Curry, 27th Presiding Bishop and Primate of The Episcopal Church

ALIVE! PUBLICATION DATES

March 30, 2018
June 29, 2016
September 28, 2018
November 20, 2018

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

WLA
on the Web:

News and information on the Episcopal Diocese of Western Louisiana

www.diocesewla.org



Epiphany

Epiphany means "revealing" or "showing forth" and begins January 6. The season begins with the showing forth of Jesus to the Gentiles, specifically the wise men of Matthew's Gospel, who are the first to know his divinity. Epiphany proclaims Jesus as Savior of the whole world and that God's promise of salvation now applies to all the people of earth.



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Robert Harwell Editor

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March 10, 2018

On the Horizon



Upcoming Ordinations

February 3

The Rt. Rev. Jacob W. Owensby will ordain Andrew Christiansen to the Transitional Diaconate on behalf of the Diocese of Eastern Michigan at St. Mark's Cathedral. Starts at 11:00a.m.

March 1

The Rt. Rev. Jacob W. Owensby will ordain The Rev. Deacon André Bordelon to the Priesthood at St. Timothy's, Alexandria. Starts at 6:00 p.m.

March 15

The Rt. Rev. Jacob W. Owensby will ordain The Rev. Deacon Madge McLain to the Priesthood at St. Paul's, Abbeville. Starts at 6:00 p.m.

Growing in Christ: A Day of Spiritual Reflection with the Bishop

Saturday, February 17, from 10 a.m. to 3 p.m.
St. Timothy's Episcopal Church
2627 Horseshoe Dr., Alexandria, LA 71301

Begin your Lenten journey with a day of spiritual reflection led by Bishop Owensby. Using his new book, "Your Untold Story: Tales from a Child of God," the bishop will encourage participants to hear and tell how Jesus would express their story and the stories of others. All clergy and laity are encouraged to attend. Cost is \$15/person. Books will be available for purchase and signing by the bishop at the event.

Sponsored by the Commission for Congregational Vitality
Register now at the Diocesan Website (diocesewla.org)
Registration closes February 16



2018 Young Adult Retreat

Friday, February 23, 7 p.m.
to Sunday, February 25, 11 a.m.
Hardtner Camp and Conference Center

The church is not the same as it was when your parents were your age. From your perspective, what does the church look like today? What is its mission in the world? How do you envision your role in it? Join other millennials from our diocese to talk about these and other questions. Led by Fr. Sean Duncan and Fr. Michael Bordelon, this retreat promises to offer an opportunity to engage in meaningful conversations and enjoy time with your friends at Camp Hardtner.

Plan to arrive Friday evening for dinner at 7 p.m.
The weekend concludes before lunch on Sunday.

Accommodations will be in cabins, and all meals are also included in the \$50 fee.

This retreat is open to all young adults who are out of high school and between the ages of 18 and 25 (-ish).

Register Now at the Diocesan Website (diocesewla.org)
Registration closes February 19.

Questions, contact Joy Owensby, Episcopal Diocese of Western Louisiana
318-442-1304, jowensby@diocesewla.org



"Seeing God's Face in Each Other: A Beloved Community Workshop,"

Friday, March 16, noon-Saturday, March 17, 3 p.m. at Camp Hardtner

This workshop is offered by the Becoming Beloved Community Commission as our Diocese's participation in the Episcopal Church's fresh commitment to racial justice, reconciliation, and healing. Clergy and laity alike are encouraged to participate in an in-depth conversation that will move our Diocese toward the goal of being an inclusive, diverse Beloved Community.

More details, including the online registration link, will be available soon. In the meantime, please contact Fr. Brandt Montgomery (brandt@montgomerybrandt.com).

2nd Annual Clergy Spouse Retreat at Camp Hardtner

Friday, February 23 – Saturday, February 24, starts at 5:30 p.m.



Around the Diocese

Camp Hardtner Trustees challenged

by Bill Shearman

ALEXANDRIA — The Rt. Rev. Jacob Owensby challenged Camp Hardtner's (CH) board of trustees "To decide how to run this place," in a video ZOOM conference in mid-December.

The bishop, eight of Camp Hardtner's trustees and the camp's new director Daniel Chapman participated. They were: the Reverends André Bordelon, Bill Bryant, Ally Perry and Michael Bordelon.

Lay trustees included Robert Ratcliff, Wesley Johnson, Mike Endicott, Bill Shearman and Chapman.

Keen on hierarchy

The bishop explained early on that he is keen on hierarchy. He wants, in particular, the facilities and property committees to focus on the Camp Hardtner campus and for the whole board to note how it relates to the Camp Hardtner budget.

The budget drives everything

"I want every board meeting to focus on how we are doing (via the budget). The budget drives everything," said the bishop.

To that end, the bishop suggested that Camp Hardtner be audited annually, just as the diocese is. "It's an expense but it makes us all smarter and shows us what we are doing."

Budget goals, said the bishop, answer the rhetorical question: "How did we do?"

The most recent Camp Hardtner audit went through Dec. 31, 2016. It reflects a healthy balance but the bishop cautioned that the director and board need to project potential budget constraints.

"I like for our (CH) thinking to be three to five years ahead of the problem," said the bishop.



Camp Hardtner's endowment trust, which can only be used for camp repairs and maintenance, is valued at \$2,336,084 but of that amount, only \$26,514 is stipulated as operating income.

"Ideally, we can draw down about 4.5 percent of the endowment (annually). That is the upper end of what we can do, but we can't always see expensive problems.

"For instance, the (overall camp) sewer project was \$250,000. We covered it but that was a hit," said the bishop. Another expensive project was a total renovation of the Camp Hardtner pool, a focal point of summer camp, but a high maintenance feature of the Camp Hardtner campus.

The bishop's hierarchy

In the bishop's hierarchy structure, the

director reports to the board and the board sets policy and procedures. The director "is responsible for the day to day activity on campus," he said.

The bishop reminded that Summer Camp is "the valuable piece, the focal-point camp and for sure, the sweet spot.

"It is a very beautiful spot (SC) and is beloved throughout the diocese. What we do every summer is help people to be disciples of Christ," said the bishop.

The need for marketing

The bishop said Camp Hardtner needs to market itself to other diocesan groups and he envisions a camp of church vestry members, which he termed a "Vestry Formation Day."

He said he hoped Camp Hardtner would beckon to other Central Louisiana organi-

zations as well. "We have a lot to offer but I am looking for balance – I would love for scheduling to be a problem!"

Internet connectivity is a problem

A pressing problem on campus is the lack of internet connectivity anywhere except in the cafeteria. Ratcliff said he would have his information technology rep go to Hardtner and identify how expensive it will be to wire more of the campus.

The bishop agreed, noting that (more internet access) "needs to be on our radar. We need to provide more for our guests, to be more attractive."

The board agreed, in an earlier motion by Chapman, to let him purchase a new laptop computer for himself as well as update a computer outside the business office for counselors to use.

Chapman had to travel to Alexandria to stage the ZOOM conference because of the unreliability of Hardtner's internet capabilities.

The camp's auditors recommended that the board meet monthly, something the bishop said would be hard to accomplish. The bishop did suggest that the board try to meet quarterly.

The board of trustees will meet February 9 & 10 at Hardtner.

In closing the bishop said, the board's participation is "soul-building; we must share our spiritual habits and keep Hardtner in our heads – we need to be all about that."

(The bishop and board appreciated the participation and enthusiasm of Chapman's dog Boo during the video meeting. We think he concurred with most of the deliberations.)

St. James, Shreveport Stages a "BLUE CHRISTMAS" service

by Jnanne Zepeda

For the first time ever St. James parishioners shared a Blue Christmas Service. Recognizing that not every person feels cheerful during the holidays, Rector Margaret Ayers offered the parish a chance to participate in a service designed to provide validation of those feelings, comfort for grief during periods of grief or illness, and some healing of the soul. A flyer prepared to explain the event stated:

Blue? Yes, blue as in the blues.

As in, "I am feeling blue."

Not everyone is up and cheery for the Christmas holidays. Dealing with the death of a loved one, facing life after divorce or separation, coping with the loss of a job,



Candles are also sometimes lit as prayers or Scripture readings are recited during the Blue Christmas service.

living with cancer or some other disease that puts a question mark over the future, and a number of other human situations make parties and joviality painful for many people in our congregations and communities. This service creates a sacred and reflective space for people living through dark times; accepting where we really are, and holding out healing and hope.

This is a service of worship on the longest night of the year, which falls on or about December 21st, the Winter Solstice. There is an interesting convergence for this day as it is also the traditional feast day for Saint Thomas the Apostle. This linkage invites making some connections between Tho-

mas' struggle to believe the tale of Jesus' resurrection the long nights just before Christmas, and the struggle with darkness and grief faced by those living with loss.

Blue Christmas services include an emphasis on candles, with people in the congregation invited to come forward and light a candle in memory of someone or to mark an event in their lives. Some will say words out loud, others in silent prayer. Candles are also sometimes lit as prayers or Scripture readings are recited.

Everyone in the community was welcome to participate in the service.



At Camp Hardtner the focus is already on Summer!

Yes, it's cold outside, but warmer temps will soon be here, and summer will be on us.

Now is one of the more exciting times of the year when the Camp Hardtner staff really begins preparing for 2018 Summer Camp! It may be cold outside, but Hardtner's professionals are focused on those hot but fun-filled summer days that will soon be here.

Our 2018 Summer Camp dates and rates are a part of this ALIVE! article so you can now get Camp on your calendar. Camper registration is now open through our online system.

There have been a few changes that have been made in an effort to increase participation and better serve our campers. You'll notice that Hardtner has re-evaluated and shifted some grade groupings. This does a couple things that should enhance our programs.

First it means that the sessions offered will draw from three grades instead of two. This equates to more campers per session. Experience has shown that there is more excitement and energy generated when sessions are larger, and we are confident everyone is going to enjoy this boost.

It is normal for session offerings and grade groupings to fluctuate in step with cycles of attendance and our de-

mographics. This concentrates our resources into a more focused period. We expect to offer more sessions again as our numbers grow. Secondly, we are going to avoid conflicts with the beginning of school by ending our season earlier. This benefits our campers, volunteers, and counselor staff especially.

We hire young adults who exemplify extraordinary leadership. They often take on positions outside of Camp at school - as Resident Assistants, sorority/fraternity leaders, on research projects, etc. Ending earlier means more are going to be able to serve our campers for the entire summer.

We anticipate seeing the most positive effect on Camp Able as our pool of staff and volunteers will not have as many scheduling conflicts. Campers entering the 6th and 11th grade will notice that they will actually be able to attend Camp twice during the summer! Or, parents can consider which session better aligns with their camper's summer schedule or maturity.

Our 2018 counselor recruitment is already underway. You might also hear them referred to as the "permanent staff" for the summer. Twenty young adults will be employed to serve as cabin counselors, one head driver, and one head counselor. These young adults are the backbone of the camp program. They are on the "front lines"

working tirelessly to provide and facilitate an exceptional experience for our campers. In return, they gain valuable job and life skills (Note to Mom & Dad: this is a "real job" with valuable transferable skills) and most have a positive experience of a

lifetime.

Now that the holidays are past, go online and register your children, grandchildren, or a pal you've made at church, for the *experience* of summer camp at Hardtner.

2018 Summer Camp Dates & Rates			Grades are based off of the 2018-2019 school year
First Camp 2nd & 3rd grade's parent/guardian	June 1-3	\$200	
Sr. High Camp 11th, 12th, & 2018 HS grads	June 7-14	\$675	
Primary Camp 4th, 5th, & 6th grade	June 18-23	\$475	
Jr. High Camp 6th, 7th, & 8th grade	June 27-July 3	\$575	
Mid. High Camp 9th, 10th, & 11th grade	July 9-15	\$575	
Camp Able For special needs campers ages 9 and up	July 19-23	\$400	



Daughters of The King Diocesan Assembly February 24

Women of the Bible: Yesterday, Today & Tomorrow

Saturday, February 24, 2018 9:30 a.m.-2:00 p.m.

St. James Episcopal Church, Shreveport —

Hosted by the DOK Chapters of the Shreveport Convocation

Cost: \$25

Contact: Debbie Fitzpatrick -- fitzpatricktdbr@bellsouth.net

Registration Form

Name: Phone #

Email:

DOK Chapter & Church:

Dietary Restrictions:

Special Needs: Amount Pd: CK#

News of the Diocese

Confirmation at Church of the Redeemer, Ruston

On Sunday, December 10, 2017, the Rt. Rev. Jake Owensby, bishop of the Diocese of Western Louisiana, preached and administered the Sacraments of Holy Eucharist and Confirmation. Front Row L-R: Kenny Pepper, Confirmed; Lisa Pepper, Re-affirmed; MacKenzie Hedgepeth, Confirmed, and Dian Spence, Confirmed. Back Row L-R: The Rev. Bill Easterling, rector, Church of the Redeemer; Bishop Jake Owensby; and Devin Herbert, bishop's chaplain.



St. Patrick's, West Monroe 5K WALK/RUN on Saturday, March 17, 2018

Sanctioned by the Ouachita Valley Road Runners Association so the race will count for participants seeking to earn points in this system. Proceeds will benefit the DeSaird Street Shelter in Monroe.



CLEY is a fun-filled spiritual retreat at Camp Hardtner for youth in grades 9-12. It will be led by Brandi Doucet, Lisa Hightower, and Fr. Brandt Montgomery along with a staff of college-aged adults. Cost to participate is \$95.

**REGISTER BY FEBRUARY 25 TO ORDER A T-SHIRT.
REGISTRATION CLOSES MARCH 4.**



Episcopal Churchwomen gear up for 2018

The Episcopal Churchwomen (ECW) of the Diocese held their 2018 annual board meeting with Father John Bedingfield of St. Barnabas, Lafayette, and Father Wayne Fletcher of St. Michael's in Pineville on January 19 at St. Michael's. The highlight of the meeting was the installation of officers for the coming year.

Shown above are Rebecca and Kristen Jefferson Hill with ECW President Shetwan Roberison.



ESA's all-school Eucharist

Episcopal School of Acadiana (ESA) celebrated the holiday season with an all-school Eucharist. Lower School students visited the Cade campus for the service and a picnic snack with middle and upper school students.

In December, the Lower School Advent committee oversaw the lighting of the Advent candles. Each campus celebrated the Christmas

season with a traditional Lessons and Carols service. And both campuses made the holidays a little brighter for elderly residents of School Days in New Iberia with a Christmas party and gifts for all.



What would Christmas be without carolers?

The subject of countless Christmas cards and other Christmas material, the ancient art of Christmas Caroling is kept alive by hardy and dedicated souls like this group from Church of the Redeemer in Ruston who joyfully dedicated time during the Christmas season to chorally state, "We wish you a Merry Christmas" to neighbors and friends.



Deacon Fletcher ordained to the priesthood

At a special service of ordination held December 30 at St. Michael's, Pineville, the Rev. Deacon Wayne Fletcher was made a member of the sacred Order of Priests by the Rt. Rev. Jacob W. Owensby, Ph.D., D.D. Bishop Owensby ordained Deacon Fletcher for the Diocese of New Jersey. Father Fletcher will be the priest-in-charge of St. Michael's, Pineville.

Other voices

FROM TIME-TO-TIME BISHOP OWENSBY WILL INVITE OTHERS MEMBERS OF THE CLERGY TO SUBMIT ARTICLES OR SERMONS FOR PUBLICATION.

Contrasts

The Rev. Mary B. Richard
RECTOR OF CHURCH OF THE HOLY CROSS,
SHREVEPORT



The seventh chapter of the Second Book of Samuel is a pivotal story in Israel's history with Yahweh. Second Samuel Seven, scholars call this passage.

In about the year 1000 BCE David was king of the United Kingdom of Judah and Israel. He was on top of the world. The people of Yahweh were a force respected and feared among the nations of the Middle East. As their king and captain, David had conquered the impregnable city Jerusalem and made it his capital. Now he was thinking of building a temple to house the ark that held the sacred covenant God had made with the people. He confided in his advisor and prophet, Nathan. But that night Nathan received words from God, words to set another course for David.

The verses we read today contain the seed of Israel's expectation that the savior God would send to redeem Israel from her enemies would be a descendant of David. The promise was made, according to the story, at the height of Israel's strength among the nations. The promise of a savior would be forever tied to David's line.

Over the following centuries, as Israel's strength and importance in the Middle East declined, more and more of Israel's hope was placed in the promise. The stories of David and his accomplishments grew to mythic proportions. God would establish a dynasty, a "house," of David, from which a savior would come. He was expected to be a king like David, a warrior and a governor who would restore Israel to prominence among the nations, a messiah who would save God's people, Israel.

Four hundred years after David was king Babylonia captured Israel, all but destroyed Jerusalem and dragged the religious and political leaders off to Babylon to live in captivity for fifty years. When they returned to their ruined city, more than ever the people of Israel needed hope that God would redeem them and restore their nation. That's when this story was written down by Israel's historians. Probably, it had lived in Israel's lore for centuries. God had promised to redeem God's people, and the savior would be born in the line of David. Israel would again rise to power among the nations.

But there's another seed in this passage that's easily overlooked. This seed has to struggle to thrive as it gets entangled in the roots of the well known and loved promise to David. It's the seed of contrasts, the contrasts between human ambition and pride and the people God made us to be. Listen again to the words Yahweh speaks to Nathan, the king's prophet: "Are you the one to build me a house to live in? I have not lived in a house since the day I brought up the people of Israel from Egypt to this day, but I have been moving about in a tent and a tabernacle. Wherever I have moved about among all the people of Israel, did I ever speak a word with any of the tribal leaders of Israel, whom I com-

manded to shepherd my people Israel, saying, 'Why have you not built me a house of cedar?'"

Yahweh returns to Israel's early story: the years when the people lived in tents and moved about in the wilderness. Yahweh, too, had "tented" among the people. Whenever the people stopped moving for a while, the Ark of the Covenant, symbol of God's presence, was housed in a tent. This was Yahweh's order. God would not be contained in permanent housing.

Why, then, had David ever thought he could build a temple for Yahweh? A home for the Ark, a building of stone where the people would go and worship? No doubt, David did want to do something to honor Yahweh. Did God see in David's heart the temptations of pride? Is that why Nathan had to remind David that Yahweh had from the beginning insisted on a humble tent rather than a grand house?

Yahweh speaks to Nathan: Who is David to think he can do something for Yahweh? God has been with him from his days as a shepherd, had chosen him and tented with him wherever he went. Without the life God has given him, David would have nothing, no victories, no successes, no new capital city. Nothing really belongs to David. He is completely dependent on Yahweh for the life he has been given. A second contrast: David is so human to believe he really owns or accomplishes anything on his own, or that God needs him to do anything for God. He has to be reminded that his trust in God is his real strength. All that David does, success and failure, is to be measured by his faithfulness and his openness to God.

The final contrast comes with David's status as king and warrior, and this is the reason this story is important as we move today from Advent into Christmas. David has had much success. He's a talented and faithful man in many ways. He's also human. At this point he has strayed into pride. He's thinking big. The city he has captured will be known as the City of David. History will know the temple his son Solomon will build years later as King Solomon's Temple, a place of worship unrivaled by any in the ancient world in its wealth and grandeur. Did David imagine that he would build a temple for God with his own name on it?

The One who would be born in David's line to be known as King of the Jews, the Savior of the world, the Messiah of God's people, Son of David and Son of God, would not be born into a kingly family in a palace, attended by noble men and women. He would be born away from home, a traveler, just as his ancestors had traveled in the wilderness. His family would be unknown to all but their own family and community; his birth place would be a humble stable that might as well have been a tent. He would speak not of war and power but of peace and love. The birth and the life of the Promised One could not be in starker contrast to the visions David had had a thousand years before and the expectations Israel grew to have for their savior.

It's worth our time to pause and consider these contrasts: the tent and the temple; our motives – are they ultimately self-serving? Certainly, they are never completely pure; the temptations of pride and the holiness of humility.

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The Rt. Rev. D. Bruce MacPherson dies at 77

The Rt. Rev. D. Bruce MacPherson, the third Bishop of Western Louisiana, died Dec. 21. He was 77.

Only days earlier, after suffering a fall, Bishop MacPherson had heard a diagnosis of late-stage leukemia and began receiving hospice care.

Bishop MacPherson is survived by Susan, his wife of 59 years; daughters Bonnie and Heather; four granddaughters; and two great-grandsons.

MacPherson was born in Winnipeg, Manitoba, and his family moved to the United States when he was a teenager. He was a graduate of Cypress College and the Episcopal School of Theology at Claremont, and was a manager in the books division of the Times Mirror Co. before pursuing ordination.

MacPherson was ordained deacon and priest in 1980 in the Diocese of Los Angeles. After ordination, he continued his corporate work for a time and served as a hospital chaplain. He served as canon to the ordinary in Los Angeles from 1988 to 1993.

He became canon to the ordinary in the Diocese of Dallas in 1993. MacPherson was elected Suffragan Bishop of Dallas six years

later, and was elected as the third Bishop of Western Louisiana in 2002. He retired as bishop 10 years later.

He served as president of Province VII of the Episcopal Church (2005-09), chairman of the Presiding Bishop's Council of Advice (2002-09), and national chaplain of the Brotherhood of St. Andrew (2006-12). He also served as president of the Living Church Foundation's board of directors and trustees.

One demanding aspect of his time in the Diocese of Western Louisiana came from hurricanes, which are a frequent threat there.

"Hurricane Katrina affected our diocese quite seriously, and that was followed by Hurricane Rita," MacPherson told the monthly newspaper *Cenla Focus* as he was retiring. "At one point, we had 300 people — New Orleans refugees — housed at our camp and conference center."

The MacPhersons lived at Camp Hardtner during that time as he coordinated relief work.

While Bishop of Western Louisiana, Bishop MacPherson also oversaw restoration of Mount Olivet Chapel in Pineville, a Gothic



Revival structure built in 1858. The diocese's office is based in Mount Olivet's former parish house.

"Mount Olivet Chapel survived the war when Alexandria was burned down because the Northern troops used it as a hospital and field office," MacPherson said.

After retiring as Bishop of Western Louisiana, MacPherson served as an assisting

bishop in the Diocese of Oklahoma, based at All Souls' Church in Oklahoma City. He provided delegated Episcopal pastoral oversight to churches in Accokeek, Maryland, and Darien, Connecticut.

Two of MacPherson's fellow bishops paid tribute to him on the day of his death. "This news catches many of us off-guard," wrote the Rt. Rev. Jacob Owensby, who succeeded MacPherson in 2012. "The news of his death simply seems too soon. Even though we share his faith in eternal life and are grateful that his suffering was brief, we will miss our friend's good humor, unmistakable deep voice, and his tireless attention to the well-being of the people of God in his care."

"I am grateful ... for his friendship and all he contributed to our common life and ministry, especially over many years in our diocese," wrote the Rt. Rev. George Sumner, Bishop of Dallas. "Now he stands before the throne, where his Lord says, 'well done, good and faithful servant.'"

A requiem Mass was held December 30 at All Souls' Church, in Oklahoma City.

From the publication The Living Church.

Contrasts

continued from page 8

Even buildings can become idols and sources of pride. We honor them properly as the place where worship begins, the place where God strengthens us to go out of the building into the world in ministry. I wonder what God thinks of huge, beautiful buildings where the worship of God is left at the door on Sunday while the rest of the world waits the week long.

One more word about tenting: Jesus himself said, "The Son of Man has no place to lay his head." It's generally believed that Jesus had no permanent home of his own. We know he moved about, teaching, preaching and healing. While he worshiped in the synagogue and the temple, he had no house of wood or stucco. He tented with friends and followers wherever he found himself.

As we know Jesus to be the very image of God, we might hear God saying once again, "Are you the one to build me a house to live in? I have not lived in a house since the day I brought up the people of Israel from Egypt to this day, but I have been moving about in a tent and a taber-

nacle. Wherever I have moved about, have I ever said, 'Why have you not built me a house of cedar?'"

It's a question of resources and how and where we allocate them. It's a question, too, of knowing our motives and their sources and of knowing rightly who God calls us to be. The answers to these questions will mold our life as the Church.

There are no places that alone are truly God's home. We build houses of worship where we come together to worship God in community, to open ourselves to the Holy Spirit, to be forgiven and strengthened in bread and wine, body and blood, and then to go out and minister in the ways and among the people God calls us to tent with. Worship in the church is the beginning of ministry.

Second Samuel Seven is a story of contrasts for this day, the fourth Sunday of Advent and Christmas Eve. As we consider our response to the great gift of God's Son, we can't help but be reminded of Micah's words:

"...and what does the Lord require of you but to do justice, and to love kindness, and to walk humbly with your God?" (6:8)

South Dakota mission church wants stolen bell back, offers forgiveness to thieves

by David Paulson

[Episcopal News Service] A century-old bell was ripped from its tower at an Episcopal mission church in South Dakota sometime around the beginning of the year, and Rosebud Episcopal Mission has a message for the thieves: Bring the bell back, and all is forgiven.

"If the thief/thieves would like to return the bell, we would gladly accept it and offer forgiveness—because that's what we do in the Church," the Rev. Lauren Stanley said Jan. 9 in a Facebook post seeking help in solving the crime.

The bell was stolen from St. Paul's Episcopal Church, just north of Norris, South Dakota. It had been housed in a simple, wooden tower that was capped by a wooden cross. A member of the congregation discovered the tower toppled and the bell missing on Jan. 7 and notified Stanley. The cross also was damaged.

"Right now, the whole community is just in shock," Stanley said when reached by phone. "We are absolutely shocked that somebody would steal a bell from one of our oldest churches, and we are absolute appalled that anybody would attack a church in this way."

The church was founded in 1890, and the bell could be nearly as old. Decades ago it was used to summon worshipers to St. Paul's for the monthly service and a community gathering, which would stretch over multiple days, Stanley said. Church leaders also rang it to notify local residents of major news.

Its use as a communication tool eventually was eclipsed by modern technology, but the bell still is a cherished piece of local history for the community.



The church, which is served by the Rosebud Episcopal Mission, is on tribal land but outside the boundaries of the Rosebud Indian Reservation. During warmer months, services are scheduled every third Sunday, and attendance can range from a half dozen to as many as 85, if there is a baptism, Stanley said. St. Paul's typically closes for the winter, when the congregation worships instead at a church in Norris.

The bell was last seen on Dec. 30, after a funeral at St. Paul's. It was discovered missing by the congregation's senior warden on her way home from visiting the nearby cem-

etery the morning on Jan. 7. She called Stanley that night, and on Jan. 8, Stanley drove over to inspect the damage.

Stanley thinks this was more than a case of vandalism. "This was not a quick job," she told Episcopal News Service. The bell weighs at least 300 pounds—even more when adding its yoke, which also was stolen. The thieves appear to have cut the tower's posts with a hand saw and then pulled it down with rope and a truck.

She suspects it was taken before Jan. 3 because snow fell that day, covering up the tire tracks left by the thieves' truck. Stanley

contacted both the county sheriff's department and tribal police, who typically work together investigating crimes that happen on tribal land off the reservation.

The bell was stolen years ago, and members of the Sioux community back then were able to find it by sharing information with each other and convincing the thieves to bring it back. Stanley and investigators hope the same will happen this time.

"We believe that it's the community that is going to get it back for us," Stanley said. In the meantime, she is contacting scrap metal dealers from Rosebud to Rapid City asking them to let her know if someone tries selling the bell, though she doesn't think it's worth more than \$10 melted down.

Stanley's Facebook post had been shared 350 times as of midafternoon Jan. 9. Comments on the post have expressed shock, sadness and outrage.

"This theft has to be the saddest of all thefts!" said commenter Audrey Williamstead. "Why would anyone want to take the church bell which has been there forever?"

"I was baptized there," said another commenter, Rhonda Eagle Bear. "Please return our bell."

If the thieves bring the bell back, Stanley said, she not only will offer forgiveness, but "I'll probably end up buying them dinner. Because what would you take a church bell for?"

Stanley added: "And then I'll find some people to help me rebuild the bell tower, and the community will turn out for that."

— David Paulsen is an editor and reporter for the Episcopal News Service.

Stone by stone, repairs gain steam at Washington National Cathedral 6 years after earthquake

by David Paulsen

[Episcopal News Service] The earthquake that struck the Washington, D.C., area in August 2011 caused an estimated \$34 million in damage to Washington National Cathedral. More than six years later, less than half of those repairs are done, and the remaining work could take another decade to complete.

Progress is being made, however, and the Episcopal cathedral last month received a year-end donation from a foundation that will allow it to embark this spring on the next phase of repairs. This latest \$1.5 million project will focus on the structure around an interior courtyard, which is the last part of the cathedral still closed to the public.

"It took 83 years to build this place. We've had scaffolding on the outside of our building more than we have not. In some ways, we're kind of used to it," said Kevin Eckstrom, the cathedral's chief communications officer.

It remains a beautiful building and an iconic religious landmark in the U.S. capital, but Washington National Cathedral also is more than the stones that form it, Eckstrom said. "The staff and the leadership feel very strongly that what's really important about the building is what goes on inside."

The courtyard project is a prime example. Known as the garth, it features a fountain and a patio, and reopening it will allow it to be used for weddings, banquets and other

gatherings. There also are separate plans to add a columbarium and memorial garden to the space.

The walls surrounding the courtyard aren't the problem. It's the two pinnacles above that rotated during the earthquake, causing pieces to fall onto the courtyard below.

"It's just a lovely space, and it's another entry into different parts of the cathedral," said Joe Alonso, the cathedral's head stone mason. "The northeast end of the cathedral is kind of looming over you."

The work this spring is just one of nine projects, some completed and other pending, that make up the second phase of earthquake repairs. Phase 1, costing about \$10 million, was completed in 2015, and it fo-

cused on the interior of the cathedral and on the largest and oldest buttresses toward the rear. The cathedral was fully closed for just three months in 2011, as crews completed stabilization work in time to reopen that November to host the installation of Diocese of Washington Bishop Mariann Budde.

The rest of the work is being completed as the money is raised through private donations.

— David Paulsen is an editor and reporter for the Episcopal News Service.



Sitting in a heap, arms crossed over his chest, with lower lip protruding, Jonah said, "This is exactly why I didn't want to come here in the first place. I knew you would do this. You've made me look like a complete idiot!"

In other words, Jonah was really big on divine justice. God's mercy? Not so much. And to be fair, he was pretty consistent about it.

Remember what he did when the storm almost sank his boat? He demanded that the sailors toss him over the gunwales. He never for one moment sought God's mercy. He insisted on getting the punishment he deserved.

And speaking of deserved punishment, Nineveh really had it coming. At least, that's the way Jonah saw it.

The Book of the Prophet Jonah was written after the return from exile. The Babylonians had defeated Israel, destroyed Jerusalem, and force-marched thousands of Israelites into captivity in distant Babylonia. Eventually, the Persians conquered the Babylonians and continued to oppress their Israelite captives.

So, even though Nineveh was geographically speaking the capitol of Assyria, in the Jonah story it's probably a narrative stand-in for the Persians. The Persians had harshly oppressed the Israelites in captivity and then continued to treat them as a sort of vassal state or colonial outpost once they were allowed to go back to Jerusalem.

From Jonah's perspective, justice required that the cruelty of the Persians be punished. Mercy would be a kind of permissiveness that did nothing more than undermine the justice Jonah demanded of God.

If justice is retributive in its essence—if justice makes things right by issuing proportional punishments—then mercy must always be a failure of justice. Somebody's gotten away with murder. Literally.

But apparently God doesn't subscribe to retributive justice. You'll never make some-

thing broken whole again by breaking more stuff. And breaking stuff is just what punishment does. God's justice comes in the form of healing.

When God calls for repentance, God is urging us to submit to divine treatment. That treatment is the transforming power of love.

Take for instance the story of Scarlett Lewis and her son Jesse. Shortly before Christmas of 2012 Adam Lanza killed six-year-old Jesse along with 25 other people at Sandy Hook Elementary School.

Just a few years earlier, Scarlett had been reading an account of the Rwandan genocide while Jesse slept snuggled next to her in bed. A survivor recounted how thousands upon thousand of her fellow Tutsis were hacked and mutilated by Hutus in an orgy of ethnic cleansing.

The writer of the Jonah story used the title character to speak to the struggles of thousands of post-exilic Israelites. They too had experienced terror. They had seen their friends degraded, abused, and executed by the Persians. Forgive? Forget it!

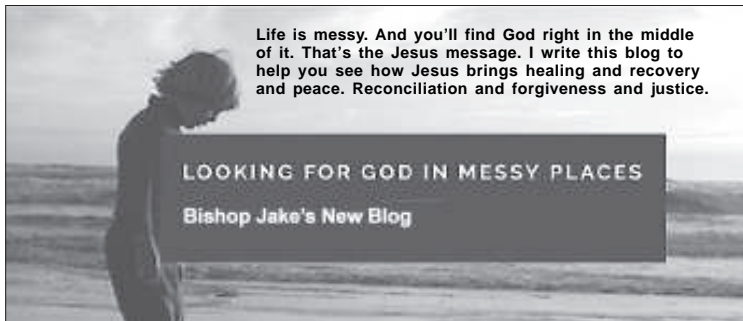
By contrast, the Tutsi survivor wrote that, against all odds, she had found her way to forgiveness. Not unlike Jonah, Scarlett thought something like, "If somebody did that to my family, I would never forgive them."

And then, three years later, Adam Lanza murdered her little boy. Poised to hate Adam Lanza, Scarlett found an alternative path—a healing path—in a note left by Jesse on the kitchen blackboard. "Nurturing Healing Love." It's not the sort of thing any six-year-old would write, including Jesse. But that's what he wrote. On his way out the door on the last day of his life.

Scarlett took it as a message. As a call. And she has devoted her life to teaching children compassion. Her dream is to save any future Jesses and any future Adams.

The Jonah story challenges us to pursue justice as healing. God calls us to the relentless pursuit of making things right by seeking wholeness for everyone. Even the ones who shattered our lives in the first place.

The Rt. Rev. Jacob Owensby, Ph.D., D.D., is the fourth bishop of the Episcopal Diocese of Western Louisiana.



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

February 2018

3 — Ordination of Andrew Christiansen to the Transitional Diaconate, *St. Mark's Cathedral, starts at 11:00 a.m.*
Bishop Owensby will ordain on behalf of the Diocese of Eastern Michigan.

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

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

17 — Growing in Christ: A Day of Spiritual Reflection with the Bishop, *St. Timothy's, Alexandria, starts at 10:00 a.m.*

18 — Bishop's Visitation, *Trinity, Natchitoches*

23-24 — Clergy Spouses Retreat, *Camp Hardtner*

23-25 — 2018 Young Adult Retreat, *Camp Hardtner, starts at 7:00 p.m.*

24 — Daughters of the King Diocesan Assembly, *St. James, Shreveport*

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

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

March 2018

1 — Ordination of The Rev. Deacon André Bordelon to the Priesthood, *St. Timothy's, Alexandria, starts at 6:00 p.m.*

2-4 — Hardtner Permanent Staff Reunion, *Camp Hardtner, starts at 3:00 p.m.*

4 — Bishop's Visitation, *Redeemer, Oak Ridge*

9-11 — CLEY Youth Retreat, *Camp Hardtner, starts at 7:00 p.m.*

15 — Ordination of The Rev. Deacon Madge McLain to the Priesthood, *St. Paul's, Abbeville, starts at 6:00 p.m.*

16-17 — "Seeing God's Face in Each Other: A Beloved Community Workshop," *Camp Hardtner, starts at noon Friday, March 16.*

17 — St. Patrick's Day 5K Run sponsored by St. Patrick's, West Monroe

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

April 2018

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

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

20-22 — Women's Time for Joy, *Camp Hardtner*

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

May 2018

4-6 — Cursillo Retreat Weekend, *Camp Hardtner*

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

13 — Bishop's Visitation, *Ascension, Lafayette*

15-18 — Spring Clergy Retreat, *Camp Hardtner, starts at 6:00 p.m.*

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*

June 2018

10 — Bishop's Visitation, *Trinity, DeRidder*

17 — Bishop's Visitation, *St. Andrew's, Moss Bluff*

24 — Bishop's Visitation, *Calvary, Bunkie*

August 2018

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

November 2018

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

Last Look!



Beautiful Celtic Cross graces St. Michael and All Angels courtyard

St. Michael and All Angels in Lake Charles has been upgrading its facilities of late. New playground equipment has been embraced by the children of the congregation.

A new courtyard is destined to become a favorite of older generations. This courtyard in the shape of a Celtic cross was recently completed on the south campus of St. Michael's and All Angels. The Celtic cross originated in the early Middle Ages in Ireland. Originally a Latin cross, a ring or nimbus surrounds the intersection of the arms and stem and the popularity of the cross continues today.

St. Michael's has the largest Alcoholics Anonymous (AA) meetings in Lake Charles and the attendees gather before and after the meetings at the courtyard. The courtyard was a gift from two St. Michael's donors.

Photo by Rick Hickman of *The American Press*.



St. Paul's new sign is as beautiful as downtown Abbeville

The old sign has served the congregation well, but its best days were past.

St. Paul's Episcopal Church in Beautiful Downtown Abbeville has been gifted a much needed new sign. Mr. George Putnam, a lifelong member of St. Paul's passed away several months ago. In his memory and from the generous hearts of the Frank and Charles Godchaux families, this new sign was made possible.