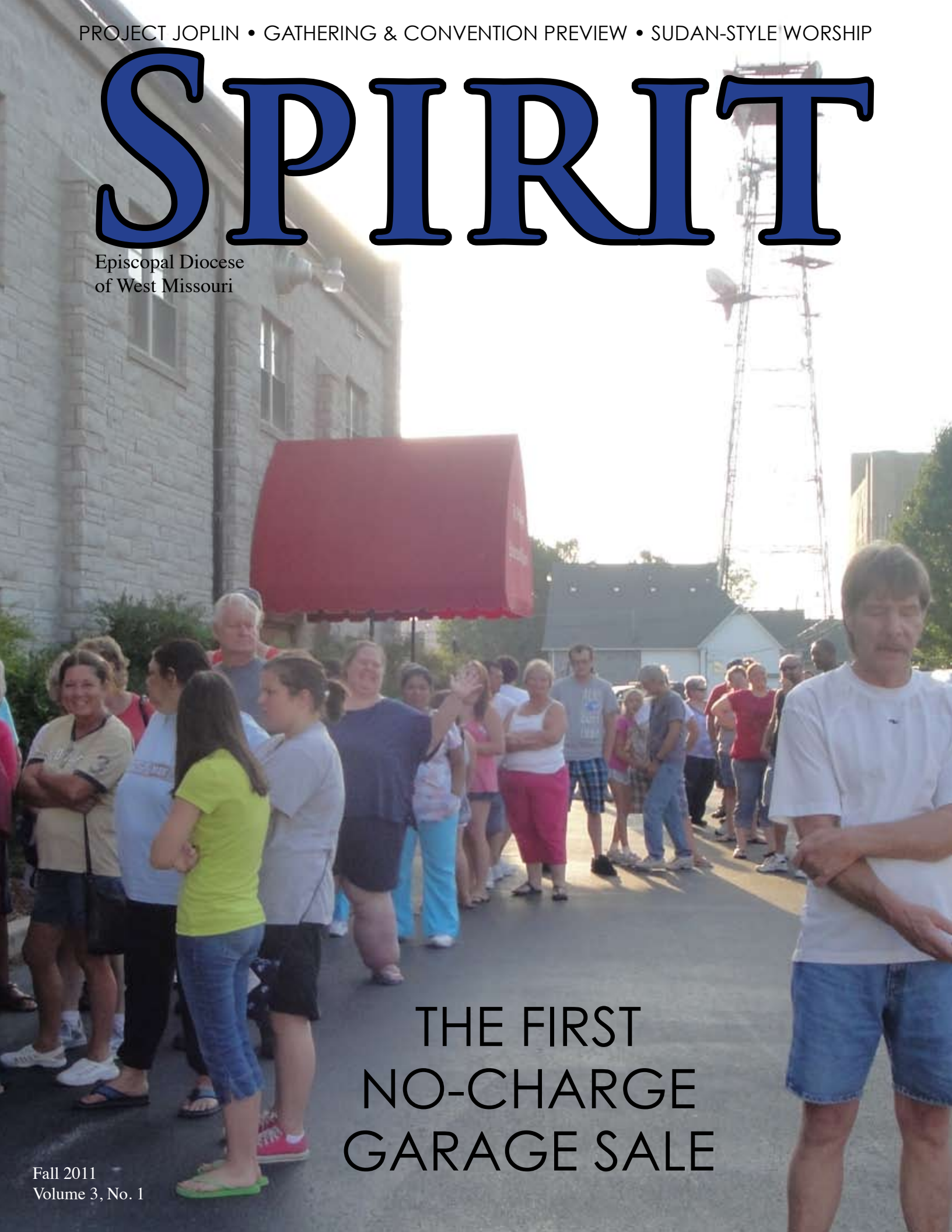


SPIRIT

Episcopal Diocese
of West Missouri



THE FIRST
NO-CHARGE
GARAGE SALE



SPIRIT



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ON THE COVER: An hour before the garage sale began, a line was forming at St. Philip's. Submitted photo.

4 Editor's Letter

My sister, Joannie Ericson, couldn't shake Fr. Jason Lewis' impression of the Haitian people and their medical needs, a story featured in the Spring 2011 edition of this magazine. She wanted to experience Haiti for herself and apply her skills as a nurse. This past August, through an organization called Go Haiti, Joannie spent five days in the country as part of a medical mission. "It was both humbling and inspirational," Joannie said.

By Hugh Welsh

5 Bishop Talk

Bishop Martin Field has learned through two House of Bishops meetings that our diocese has a lot of the same problems as others. Its courage is what sets this diocese apart. The turnout and input at the "Shaping Our Future" forums prove it.

6 Gathering & Convention Preview

This year's Gathering & Convention – held Friday, November 4 and Saturday, November 5 at Bartle Hall in Kansas City – will have something for everyone. A rundown of the presentations and resolutions.



8 Youth Ministry

July's Missionpalooza brought together the youth ministry from this diocese and the Diocese of Kansas to serve the urban community. A recap of the weeklong event in pictures as well as June's first-annual Camp WEMO. Also, a preview of the Diocesan Youth Event, held in conjunction with the diocese's convention.

FEATURES

FALL, 2011



Donations overflowed tables at St. Philip's in Joplin, where the diocese held its no-charge garage sale in August. A second giveaway is set for Saturday, October 22. Submitted photo

9 New Faces

Six clergy have joined the diocese in the past year or so. They are: The Rev. Edith (Edie) Bird, priest-in-charge at St. Thomas a Becket in Cassville; The Rev. Charles Caskey, interim rector at Christ Church in St. Joseph; The Rev. Greg Hoover, priest-in-charge at Shepherd of the Hills in Branson; The Rev. Dr. Steven Rottgers, priest-in-charge at St. Anne's in Lee's Summit; The Rev. Charles Uhlik, rector at St. James in Springfield and The Rev. Denise Vaughn, rector at Grace Church in Chillicothe. Who are they, and what resonates with them about their congregations?

10 Tornado Relief

The no-charge garage sale Saturday, August 6, was the first of four diocesan projects in Joplin. Debi Sierra, a St. Philip's parishioner, reflects on the sale: how it succeeded, and what can be improved for the next sale Saturday, October 22. Don Vasquez and the Strasburgs were among many who benefited from the sale – we tell their stories. Also, read details on the diocese's other plans for Joplin and Elizabeth Flanigan's account of the tornado and how it changed her as a Joplinite.

16 Beating a Different Drum

The 1 p.m. Sunday service is different than the others at St. Paul's in Kansas City. Its parishioners are Sudanese, many of them refugees. The Rev. John Deng views himself as more than their priest; he is their civic leader. Recently, when South Sudan won its independence, Deng was called to New York City to meet Presiding Bishop Katharine Jefferts Schori. Deng used the opportunity to inform her of Sudanese Christians in the Midwest who do not have a place of worship. Fortunately, Kansas City is the exception. *By Hugh Welsh*

20 One Church Engaging the World

Sandra Zarins, a former member of the Companion Diocese Committee and parishioner at St. Alban's in Bolivar, left for Botswana in July. She's planning an extended stay as a volunteer working closely with the Anglican Diocese of Botswana. Excerpts from her diary. *By Sandra Zarins*

22 Arts

Paul Tarro, a parishioner at Church of the Redeemer in Kansas City, examines martyrdom as depicted in the 2002 book *The Monks of Tibhirine: Faith, Love, and Terror in Algeria* and the 2010 film *Of Gods and Men*. *By Paul Tarro*

MY SISTER, JOANNIE, IS A REGISTERED NURSE at Kaiser Permanente Medical Center in San Francisco, California. When my dad finishes *Spirit*, he sets it on the desk in her bedroom for her to read when she's in town. A few months ago, Joannie read the Spring 2011 edition of *Spirit*; she was particularly touched by Fr. Jason Lewis' visit to Haiti, a place mired in poverty and natural calamity. Lewis said the two aspects of the visit that resonated the most for him were the people and the medical needs: many Haitians hadn't seen a doctor in years. Joannie learned about Go Haiti from a friend who shot a three-part series on Haiti for a Connecticut news station. The organization strives to aid "the lost and poor of Haiti at any cost." It was the opportunity she needed. Joannie was a part of a 10-member medical mission in Port-au-Prince that operates as an alternative to the nearby St. Mark's Hospital, where conditions are bleak; personnel lack the resources and know-how to provide adequate care. And service there comes at a cost most Haitians cannot afford.

Three of Joannie's five days in Haiti were spent at the mission, headed by Dr. Franco Jean-Louis, who was born in Haiti and raised in an orphanage. Each morning, before opening the clinic, Jean-Louis would pray in English and French. Joannie said she treated about 150 people with ailments ranging from cholera to AIDS to everyday cuts and scrapes worsened by neglect. Many of her patients were children. One 2 year old had a fever of 104 degrees from a respiratory infection. When Jeannie lay him in an ice bath, he cried like any child would. Joannie administered a Dum Dum and the crying stopped. "The people of Haiti are without a lot of the comforts we enjoy in America," she said. "But they have a happiness that's hard to describe."

One patient, at 79 a centarian by Haitian standards, walked an untold distance with his grandson on one arm and a stick in the other. Joannie assumed he needed assistance with a limp hand, the result of a stroke. He gestured at a leg. Joannie rolled up the pant leg to reveal the problem: a festuring wound. She cleaned the wound and fed him, his first meal in some while, he informed the translator. He was told he can get his bandage changed there once a week. Before departing, he approached Joannie and took her hand in his. "Merci," he said, a single tooth dangling from his smile. "Merci, beaucoup."



St. Philip's Garden

GOD'S GARDEN AT ST. PHILIP'S IN JOPLIN, conceived last year, produced more than 130 pounds of tomatoes and 180 pounds of cucumbers for needy Joplinites this summer.

The idea for a garden arose when when the parish discussed what to do with the lot it owned next door to the church. A house originally stood on the lot, but was torn down when it was determined the cost to refurbish it would be exorbitant. The woodwork, bricks and other items from the house were salvaged and sold to help finance the work. The ground was filled in, and water lines were run to accommodate the garden.

A very generous parishioner donated funds and a gardener's expertise to set up four 8'x24' raised beds. A donation was made to fence the garden. Fifteen or so volunteers stepped forward to prepare, plant and water the beds. Three of the beds were planted with several varieties of tomatoes, cucumbers and a few zucchini and pepper plants. The zucchini and peppers didn't make it through the 100 degree summer heat, but the tomatoes and cucumbers have thrived.

The church plans to make God's Garden a yearly outreach to the Joplin community.

— PAM ARTMAN



Bishop Talk

WE ARE NOT ALONE

By the Rt. Rev. Martin S. Field

What to write about? What to write about? There's always that nagging question when I am faced with the opportunity to convey a few thoughts and words to the diocese through our quarterly magazine, *The West Missouri Spirit*.

Actually, the problem (if it can rightly be called that) is not that I cannot think of anything to write; my problem is I can think of too many things that I need to write about. Topics absolutely abound!

"What did I do with my summer vacation?" was the classic topic from my years in school, but let's not go there. The topic "What happened at the recent House of Bishops' meeting in Ecuador?" is current. "What's up with our Futuring Task Group, our 'Shaping Our Future Forums', or our upcoming Gathering & Convention?" are all pressing topics. "What am I doing or thinking about doing to help small churches receive their communions on Sunday when they have only sporadic priestly leadership for their liturgies?" is a topic that's not going away.

Good and related topics are "What about the forming of new regional configurations such as N.E.R.M., and what about the expansion of N.E.R.M.?" Then there's topics like "What's the latest on our cooperative work with the dioceses of Kansas and Western Kansas to bring together our local schools of ministry preparation?" Or "Where's that conversation with the Lutherans about joint ventures in ministry going to go?"

My friends, these are just some of the topics - or should I say initiatives - I could and should write about, but I haven't the space or time in this issue.

Sorry. I'd love to do them all justice, but that would require a tome, not a magazine, and my typing fingers would be worn down to stubs!

So, what I am going to share is this: we aren't alone!

No, I'm not talking about whether humanity is alone in the universe or not. I'm not talking about extra-terrestrials or the like - though I think being befriended by Vulcans would be awfully cool.

I'm talking about our diocese not being alone in our

concerns, our struggles, our dilemmas, our aspirations, or our dreams. One of the things that has hit me squarely while attending each of my first two House of Bishops' meetings is the fact that so many of the dioceses of the Episcopal Church are just where we are. Their finances are a challenge. They want to leave more in the hands of congregations (where the real rubber of ministry hits the road). They want to have leaner, more efficient diocesan-level ministries and staffs that have the right skills to do the right jobs for the right missional reasons. And they want them hired at the right salaries. They feel the need to explore "outside-the-box" possibilities for their structure, their diocesan and/or provincial alignments, and their partnerships. In short, we are not alone.

But in some ways I am very proud and happy to be part of this diocese - the Diocese of West Missouri - and am glad I'm not part of some of the others. This diocese - our diocese - is making great headway in tackling some of the pressing questions that press so many of our dioceses. Some haven't even admitted the problems yet, preferring to play the ostrich with his head in the sand rather than admit they **MUST** face the realities of this new century and the challenges both to the Church and to our churchmanship in the 21st century *anno domini*.

I am proud because this diocese is being courageous.

Collectively, we have accepted the inherent challenge of "futuring" together, along with the accompanying uncomfortable but inevitable assumption that change comes next. The first two of the three "Shaping Our Future" forums are complete as I write this. Those who assembled in Lee's Summit and in Springfield on those two Sunday afternoons came with their thinking caps on. And their thinking was forward thinking, not the thinking of retrenchment or nostalgia. There wasn't a single person at either of the meetings (so far) who brought up the "good old days," "how we used to do things," or "why can't we just do what we've always done?" At least not in my hearing.

Instead, I've heard nothing except constructive ideas, passionate pleas for the advance of God's mission, and forthright sharing of the truth as each person has been given to see it. I haven't been bishop here very long, and I may find these days dwarfed someday, but right now I am as proud of the members of this diocese as I can be. Proud. Proud. PROUD.

Thanks for making me proud. And for giving me some bragging to do among my fellow bishops too!

COME ONE, COME ALL



DIOCESAN GATHERING & CONVENTION PREVIEW

It's not just about the delegates. This year's Diocesan Gathering and Convention — Friday, November 4 and Saturday, November 5 at Bartle Hall in Kansas City — offers an array of presentations suitable for all interests: cultural, theological or logical to any parish in need of useful ideas.

Presentations

Breakout Session 10:15 to 11:15 a.m.

Friday, November 4

The Roles of Deacons and Licensed Lay Ministers (Part 1)

Creating a Vision and Practical Planning in Youth Ministry: Whether you have one or one hundred youth, ministry to youth begins with a vision of where you want to go. From there, practical planning, together with the investment of time and talent, can empower both individuals and entire congregations to ministry.

Spiritual Knitting: Following the edict of “Hands to Work, Hearts to God” the presentation discusses knitting as a kinesthetic meditation and prayer process for the knitter, reviews knitting for charitable giving (including suggested projects and recipients) and concludes with suggestions for setting up parish knitting/needlework guilds.

Talking Like Leaders: Much as leaders may understand the complex nature of organizational management, they often overlook something pretty simple: the need to communicate with people. Although we are well into an Information Age, we are not exchanging meaningful knowledge. The Talking Like Leaders presentation will tap into the collective experiences of organization communication consultants and examine the leader's role in creating knowledge based organization. We will examine what is and is not effective communication. The Talk Like a Leader concept is built on the foundational belief that effective leaders value dialogue.

Breakout Session 11:30 a.m. to 12:30 p.m.

Friday, November 4

The Roles of Deacons and Licensed Lay Ministers (Part 2)

Challenges in Christian Formation: Participants will engage in conversation about the particular challenges of offering formation programs for all ages in their congregations. It will be an opportunity to network, gather resources, and work toward active and exciting Christian formation.

What You Need to Know About Hospice: A brief history of the hospice movement, the hospice philosophy and explanation of the general guidelines of how, why, and when someone should become a hospice patient.

An Extended Advent: Are four weeks of Advent really enough? In the secular world, Christmas decorations arrive in the stores shortly after the celebration of Halloween. Should not the Church also begin our preparation for Christ's coming at an earlier time as well? This session will explore the historical precedence for an extended season of Advent, current practices of other churches (Anglican, Lutheran, Orthodox), and discuss the experience of keeping a pre-Advent season at St. Mary's in Kansas City.

Breakout Session 1:30 to 2:30 p.m.

Friday, November 4

Best Practices in Social Media in Ministry: Facebook and Twitter are the new frontiers in ministry outreach, and any church, regardless of size or financial resources, can use these tools to better serve its own congregation and community. This presentation will show current practices in social-media ministry and easy, free resources to get you going.

The New Face of Racism/Bigotry (Part 1): Participants will explore the shifting paradigm of racism, its manifestations, its impact upon the nation and the church and how to combat its influence.

Liturgy & Music in Small Congregations (Especially Without Priests): Let us gather to discuss the needs and concerns in small congregations that involve liturgy and music, especially in small congregations without priests.

Ripe for the Harvest (Part 1): *Ripe for the Harvest* aligns local parish vision and mission around the Great Commandment and Great Commission. Its foundations are best business practices, statistical analysis, Trinitarian Theology, Scripture, and the life practices of Jethro, Moses, Jesus, St. Paul and modern business leaders of today.

Breakout Session 2:45 to 3:45 p.m.

Friday, November 4

Nature: Disaster or Docent? The Possibility of Creation as Teacher for Living a Holy, God-filled Life: Mother Earth is in dire distress. In this workshop, we will explore what we can learn from non-human creatures about prayer, ethics, peace, balance, freedom and relationship.

The New Face of Racism/Bigotry (Part 2)

Small but Mighty: How Our Small Churches can Thrive in the 21st Century: This is a forum for those in small churches that either cannot or will not be able to afford professional clergy leadership. The focus will be how to thrive rather than merely to survive.

Ripe for the Harvest (Part 2)

Breakout Session 9:30 to 10:30 a.m.

Saturday, November 5

Art and the Image of God – Uncovering Our Relationship (Part 1): This is a two-hour workshop with a short break in a small group setting (12 maximum) to explore your individual spiritual journey in relationship to God, both historically and developmentally. From our individual and collective journey spring various images of God and our own soul that cannot be perceived directly. As we long to deepen and express our love towards God and neighbor, we understand ourselves through images, symbols and language. We will spend time in dyads, writing, art exploration and pilgrimage. We are working with right brain function of creativity to balance the intellectual understanding of God, Christ and Spirit.

Milestones Ministry: Would this be helpful in your congregation? A faith milestone is a marker along life's journey that says, "This is something important and God is here, too." Milestone Ministry is a biblically-based spiritual practice in both home and congregation that helps all generations recognize God's presence in all of life.

Breakout Session 10:45 to 11:45 a.m.

Saturday, November 5

Art and the Image of God – Uncovering Our Relationship (Part 2)


Backpack Shepherds: One Church's Experience Feeding the Hungry: Find out how to feed hungry children and their families in your community through a backpack ministry. You'll learn how to set up a program, dos and don'ts and fundraising ideas. Veteran backpackers will be there to answer your questions.

Received Resolutions

Canon on Assessment Review

THE RESOLUTION WOULD CREATE A CANON for assessment notification and assessment review. The resolution establishes September 1 as the deadline in which the diocese's treasurer must notify congregations about their initial assessment. December 1 will be the deadline in which congregations must provide a signed response to their actual assessment. Congregations will have a mutual dialogue with the Diocesan Assessment Review Committee that either: 1.) do not accept the assessment calculated by the treasurer or 2.) notify the treasurer that it cannot meet its full assessment. The Assessment Review Committee will be appointed by the bishop with the consent of the Diocesan Council. Also, the authority to adjust assessments rests with the Diocesan Convention or, if not in session, the Diocesan Council.

Dissolution of Trinity Church in Marshall
TRINITY CHURCH IN MARSHALL HAS BEEN a mission congregation of the diocese since 1872. Trinity entered into a decline starting in the late 1980s, and it never recovered. When its matriarch, Jean Klein Horman, passed away in December of 2010, the active membership of Trinity shrank to just three members. It was obvious at that point that the church could no longer continue as an organized congregation of our diocese. Trinity Episcopal Preschool closed in June, and Trinity's last Sunday worship service was two weeks later. The diocese, through the Northeast Episcopal Regional Ministry, hopes to continue ministry in Marshall on an informal basis. Bishop Martin Field and the Standing Committee have given consent to the sale of the Marshall property "in the best interests of the diocese."



For more information on the
2011 Diocesan Gathering
and Convention
please visit
the diocesan website
www.episcopalwestmo.org

WEST MISSOURI YOUTH



Missionpalooza 2011

Held July 18 to 24, youth from the Diocese of Kansas and the Diocese of West Missouri joined forces to log more than 2,000 volunteer hours in the community. Work sites included Bishop Spencer Place, Don Bosco, Wayside Waifs, Habitat for Humanity, Harvesters, Operation Breakthrough and Kansas City Community Kitchen.



Camp WEMO

The first-ever Camp WEMO June 9 to 12 drew 80 youths in grades 6 through 12 to the Windemere Conference Center on the Lake of the Ozarks. The event included team-building activities, canoeing, swimming and scripture reflection.



DIOCESAN YOUTH EVENT

Diocesan youth of all ages are encouraged to participate in this year's Diocesan Youth Event, featuring the second-annual Youth Convention, 7 p.m. Friday, November 4, to 11:30 a.m. Sunday, November 6, at St. Paul's in Kansas City. Deadline for registration is Friday, October 28.

NEW FACES



*The Rev. Edith (Edie) Bird
(Priest-in-Charge at St. Thomas a Becket in Cassville)*

Start date:
April 2011

Recent Church work history:

Interim priest-in-charge at St. Andrew's (Rogers, Arkansas) and St. Martin's (Pryor, Oklahoma); vicar at St. James (Eureka Springs, Arkansas); Episcopal chaplain at the University of Arkansas

Describe your congregation.

"St. Thomas a Becket is very strong in its commitment to baptismal ministry and deeply respectful of the limited, but important, role of the priest in their community."



*The Rev. Charles Caskey
(Interim Rector at Christ Church, St. Joseph)*

Start date:
July 2011

Recent Church work history:

Interim rector at St. Andrew's (Fullerton, California) as well as churches in Illinois, Michigan and Wisconsin; Episcopal chaplain at Indiana, Providence and Johnson and Wales universities.

Describe your congregation.

"The congregation understands that this church won't survive unless they realize it's their ministry."



*The Rev. Greg Hoover
(Priest-in-Charge at Shepherd of the Hills in Branson)*

Start date:
June 2010

Recent Church work history:

Deacon-in-charge and pastoral assistant at Shepherd of the Hills

Describe your congregation.

"I think the most rewarding was watching the growth of the Adult Christian Education classes I teach. I remember my first class, which only had 5 or 6 people. Now, usually every seat is filled. It means that the material is really meaningful to those who attend."



*The Rev. Dr. Steven Rottgers
(Priest-in-Charge at St. Anne's Church in Lee's Summit)*

Start date:
July 2011

Recent Church work history:

Rector at Grace Church (Georgetown, Texas) and Church of the Holy Cross (Trussville, Alabama); helped create "Crosspointes," a leadership curriculum

Describe your congregation.

"The people of St. Anne's are fantastic and welcoming; in the interim, I am living in a basement apartment of a parish member until I can move my present household in Georgetown, Texas here to the Kansas City area."



*The Rev. Charles Uhlik
(Rector at St. James' in Springfield)*

Start date:
August 2010

Recent Church work history:

Rector at Christ Church (Red Wing, Minnesota)

Describe your congregation.

From Joseph Campbell: "A bit of advice given to a young Native American at the time of his initiation: As you go the way of life, you will see a great chasm. Jump. It is not as wide as you think."



*The Rev. Denise Vaughn
(Rector at Grace Church in Chillicothe)*

Start date:
May 2010

Recent Church work history:

Priest for Outreach and Pastoral Care at Church of the Good Shepherd (Austin, Texas)

Describe your congregation.

"In November, the vestry agreed to purchase the lot across the street in the hopes that, as we continue to grow, we will need more parking spaces. If we think of ourselves as a small congregation, we might just stay a small congregation. But what if we were to dream and work to enlarge our vision and mission to this community, for the future? The possibilities are endless, if we are committed to building God's kingdom here together."

Like a monster it came, chewing up everything in its path. Thirty-one minutes and almost fourteen miles later, it finally dispersed and people came out to see their world and lives changed forever. Two months later, the diocese held its no-charge garage sale, Saturday, August 6. In preparation, church members worked industriously for hours on end that Tuesday through Friday.

OF ALL THE GARAGE sales we've had at St. Philip's since Frank and I came, this was the biggest. When the semi-truck arrived from Kansas City on that Tuesday, unloading box after box after box, we knew we were in trouble. Suddenly, the parish hall seemed much too small, and we were only a few. We stood there in shock wondering how we were ever going to be ready on time, knowing this was only the beginning.

That's when my phone rang. I answered to a voice on the other end telling me he had a busload of 40 volunteers at our service. Forty angels, disguised as members of a youth group, from Green Bay, Wisconsin, along with their leader, Ross, and several adult sponsors. In a few hours, they had all those boxes, bags, and items emptied, sorted, and on tables with neatly arranged towels, washcloths, linens, bedding, kitchen supplies, clothing, toys, office supplies, school supplies, furniture and more. They truly saved us, and it is hard to say who felt more blessed, them or us. We made many new friends that Tuesday afternoon.

It would be a long and arduous week. How many times we saw one or more of us standing, overwhelmed, in the middle of piles of donations, hands on our heads wondering where we were going to put all...this...stuff? And, as we stood there Friday afternoon looking at the overcrowded parish hall, each of us wondered how on earth we were going to get rid of it all.

Oh, did we have clothing! Women and girls' clothes stretched from the parish hall to the sacristy. St. Margaret's Lounge exploded with men's and boys' clothing, and at least half a dozen tables in the parish hall were dedicated to toddlers and babies. Somehow we found space to put up just one more table for all

that clothing. I was totally convinced the clothes were multiplying in the night.

And the shoes! Dr. Suess would have had a field day writing about the shoes! "Oh, the shoes, shoes, shoes! Big shoes, small shoes, black and brown shoes! Shoes for moms, dads and little ones too. Shoes that made you want to hop, hop, hop! Shoes for jumping on top of Pop! Shoes for walking on beaches! Shoes for eating of peaches! So many, many shoes, shoes, shoes!"

We made new friends all week as more donations arrived every day; sometimes only a few. Sometimes more than a few. They came by mail, UPS and FedEx. They came by car, van and truck. Sometimes the people stayed and helped, sometimes not. There were times we felt so inundated, we weren't sure we could continue. Then, another angel or two would show up: the couple from Ohio bearing prayer shawls and blankets for tornado

survivors; boxes filled with children's books picked out by a teacher, each one tied to a stuffed animal; or the woman who drove three hours one way with her donation because she'd missed the truck. The week was full of surprises and blessings.

By Friday, we were worn out and weary. It seemed like we'd gone through mountains of items, shifting and sorting to make room for more until we had tables piled several feet high with bath towels, hand towels, washcloths and towel sets. Dish towels and cloths, placemats, napkins and curtains. Sheets and pillows and comforters, oh my! Toasters piled on toasters, coffee makers, microwave ovens, dishes, glasses, cups and cookware. Office supplies, gardening tools, knick-knacks, shop tools and more. And school supplies filled three tables, while backpacks filled the spaces beneath. Then the tables and chairs, beds,

A Giveaway with a Charge: Aiding Tornado Victims

Hours before the diocese's no-charge garage sale began at St. Philip's in Joplin, a line was forming at the church's side entrance. It would extend nearly to Seventh Street. No one in line, and no one in the hours to come, would leave emptyhanded; enough items were donated to fill a tractor trailer.

By Debi Sierra (St. Philip's, Joplin)



(Top): Misty Stone browses clothing at the diocese's no-charge garage sale. Stone's home was severely damaged by the tornado. (Bottom): A group browses books at the no-charge garage sale. Photos by Hugh Welsh.

couches and shelves. It seemed if you needed it, we had it.

Finally, exhausted, we arrived Saturday an hour ahead of time to a line of people snaking along the building, around the corner and down the block. We were reminded of Black Friday and almost afraid of opening the door at 8 a.m. But they came in calmly, orderly and shopped for their needs, leaving with many smiles and warm thank yous to us all. They came and came and came! Forty-five minutes after we'd opened the doors, I stood at the entrance to the parish hall and my jaw dropped. All of ours did. Tables that, less than an hour ago, had been crammed on top and below with donations were two thirds cleared off. What had taken us five long days to sort, arrange and rearrange was almost completely wiped out in less than an hour.

It truly was a long, hard, tiring week, and we were exhausted. Some had even taken ill. But, as we watched so many people finding items they so desperately needed,



Volunteers with a youth group from Green Bay, Wisconsin, arrive at St. Philip's on Tuesday, August 2. Forty adults and youth helped prepare for the sale. Submitted photo.

our hearts were full, and it was all worthwhile. We needn't have worried. As Gayle O'Hare said, "The need is so much greater than we realized."

To all who sent donations, all who came and helped, we are eternally grateful, and we thank you for the blessing you are to those who suffered losses in the tornado. Without your donations and help, this event would never have happened. However, as Jesus said, "The harvest is plentiful, but the workers are few. Ask the Lord of the harvest, therefore, to send out workers into his harvest field." We ask that more churches send people to help the week ahead as we prepare for the next no-charge garage sale, Saturday, October 22. If you personally bring donations, please plan to spend an hour or two helping us set up and, if you send a large amount of donations, we ask that you ensure extra people will be there to help unload and set up.

God bless us all.

Pretty in Pink

DON VASQUEZ STEPPED inside St. Philip's doorway and skimmed the layout. He'd heard about the garage sale from a friend who's a member of the church. Two hours into the sale, he hoped to find more than "just slim pickin'."

He stroked the bristle on his neck. Across the room, he saw pink and bolted for it. Once the pink teddy bear was his, he smiled. "Little gal likes pink," said Vasquez, a man whose face and hands are as timeworn as his pickup, which somehow survived the transpirings of May 22. He fished his billfold from a back pocket, producing a portrait of his granddaughter Marie, a wide-eyed five-year-old whose smile flaunts a missing front tooth. "She and her parents are living in a FEMA trailer," Vasquez said. "She needs a little somethin' to pick her up."

He, too, resides in a FEMA trailer after losing his home, the one his dad built. He wasn't there when the tornado struck but in Springfield visiting relatives with his wife in her car, "the fancy-dancy Honda." They'd just said their farewells when his son-in-law called. "He didn't make any sense," Vasquez said, "and this is a guy who's a circuit court judge." A tornado brought destruction to Joplin. Marie had a gash on her arm that might need stitches. (The wound, requiring 10 stitches, led to a fungal infection caused by mold spores in airborne debris. She had to be hospitalized for several days.)

In the hours after the tornado, Marie wasn't worried so much about the cut wrapped in one of her dad's shirts; she hugged her rabbit. It was scared, shivering. When she overheard her dad say a monster was coming, the rabbit was all she wanted, to keep it safe.

"She's crazy about that rabbit," Vasquez said. "The only thing she doesn't care about it is its color: she'd prefer it pink."

A few weeks before the garage sale, Vasquez saw his home razed, fodder for the landfill. "It was its own type of funeral," he said, "and Lord knows I've been to my share lately." Vasquez recounted each by extending a finger, eight in all. He said the funerals reminded him of how fleeting life can be. "A lot of good people died," he said. "It got me to thinking 'have I been a very good person?'"

He said his granddaughter doesn't know him all that well. "She knows I'm grandpa but not much else."

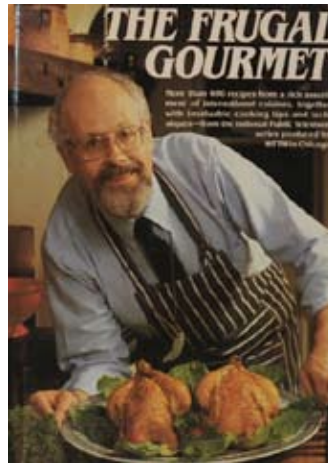
He withdrew his phone from its holster on his belt. "Excuse me, I got to call my wife." He needed to be certain some little pink outfits were the right size.

— HUGH WELSH

Books to Cook

AT ST. PHILIP'S AUGUST garage sale, Ariel Strasburg dropped a big hint into her dad, Paul's, hands: a column of cookbooks. "Got to cut out the microwave dinners, dad," she said.

Suzy, the wife and mother, is sidelined with a neck injury. "She's getting better, that's the good news. Lord knows, we had our doubts," Paul said. Vertebrae were crushed when the ceiling toppled in the bottom-level bathroom where she and her family sought refuge from the tornado. Neither Paul nor Ariel were hurt. The family is staying with Paul's sister, who lives in a three-bedroom house in a section of Joplin that escaped the tornado.



Ariel figured she could claim the couch as her own, since her parents inherited the guest bedroom. "I really didn't want to have to sleep in the same room as my cousin," Ariel said. "He's pretty gross." Grandma would get the couch. She was napping when the tornado hit, awaking to find the attic at her feet, the living

room littered with letters from her late husband while in the Middle East as a Peace Corpsman. Her house is salvageable, unlike the Strasburg's.

"My dad was an Episcopalian," Paul said, balancing a stack spanning from Jeff Smith's "Frugal Gourmet" to "Cheap and Easy Cooking." Paul and his daughter learned about the garage sale earlier that morning from a Target cashier. Paul told the cashier about his dad and the letters, most of which were saved. The cashier said he should do something with them. He agreed. "I might turn them into a book," Paul said.

A pair of eyes were on him. "First you got to learn how to cook, dad."

— HUGH WELSH

One Down, Three Diocesan Projects to Go in Joplin

No-Charge Garage Sale

8 a.m. to 2 p.m. Saturday, October 22 at St. Philip's

A VOLUNTEER HORDE from Green Bay, Wisconsin, was key to the success of the August no-charge garage sale. The donations were so many (from as far away as Cleveland, St. Louis and West Virginia) and the sorters so few that, until the arrival of the 40-member youth group, coordinator Gayle O'Hare had her concerns. "The more support we can get during the week and at the actual event, the better," O'Hare said.

Of the 15 St. Philip's parishioners who volunteered, most were 60 or older. "We were saved by the youth group." O'Hare asks that those who make a donation in person stay to unpack and organize the items.

All donations should be new or gently used. Clothing should be laundered or dry cleaned. The Ven. John McCann, diocese archdeacon, said, "this is not a traditional 'garage sale.' This is an offering to those in need from the 'first fruits' of our life and labor."

Limit donations to the following:

- Winter clothing including coats, hats, mittens, gloves, scarves, sweaters (sorted and labeled, e.g. boy/girl, men/women; S,M, L, XL, XXL).
- Blankets and quilts.
- Holiday items such as Halloween costumes and decorations for Halloween, Thanksgiving and Christmas.
- Household items such as small appliances (e.g. coffee makers, mixers and toaster ovens).
- Household tools such as hammers, saws, screwdriver sets, pliers and rakes and shovels.
- New toys in their original packaging.

Items can be taken to Grace and Holy Trinity Cathedral, 13th and Broadway in Kansas City, beginning the afternoon of Sunday, October 9. Collection times are 9 a.m. to 7 p.m. Monday, October 10, through Friday, October 14. Contact Cathedral Coordinator Charmaine Fowler at 816-509-3365 to make arrangements after hours or if you need assistance in transporting items to the Cathedral.

Volunteers are needed beginning at 8:30 a.m. Saturday, October 15, at Grace and Holy Trinity to load the items for transport and at approximately 2 p.m. at St. Philip's in Joplin. This would be an ideal project for youth groups and adult groups, but all volunteers will be welcome! Items can also be taken directly to St. Philip's.

If you would like to volunteer, please contact St. Philip's rector, the Rev. Frank Sierra, at stphiliprector@aol.com.



Lafayette House Project

Saturday, November 19

DOMESTIC ABUSE IS ON THE RISE IN POST-tornado Joplin. According to Alison Malinowski, director of Lafayette House, a crisis housing and support center for victims of domestic violence, enrollment at the shelter has grown from five women and six children to 11 women and 19 children in the twister's wake.

The diocese has purchased the land to build a three-bedroom and two-bath home for Lafayette House. Work teams will assemble on weekends to complete various projects such as hanging drywall, painting, etc. As soon as the construction plan is complete, a schedule of work days will be posted to the diocesan Web site, www.diowestmo.org. The project is financed through the Joplin Tornado Relief Fund.

On Saturday, November 19, Bishop Martin Field will bless the construction. Other activities may also be held.

'Relief Joplin'

Spring, 2012

"RELIEF JOPLIN" EFFORTS WILL BEGIN WITH planting trees in a park near St. John's Medical Center, dealt heavy damage by the tornado, and continue into residential areas. The date of the project is yet to be determined. Volunteers will be needed to buy trees and assist with the planting of trees.



NEW BEGINNINGS

Before, Elizabeth Flanigan (Grace Church, Carthage) was a college graduate transitioning from the dormitories to a house, where she would live with her longtime boyfriend, Jeb Cook. The Joplin tornado destroyed the home and a lot of memories, not yet unpacked. But not her resolve.
By Hugh Welsh



It was the first day of a new life. The night before, Elizabeth Flanigan (Grace Church, Carthage) had graduated from Missouri Southern State University. Sunday would be spent relocating her belongings from a dormitory to a house, where she would be living with her fiancé, Jeb Cook. She had borrowed his Jeep for the purpose.

When the sirens aired, she didn't panic. She unloaded the items from the Jeep into the house. Her fiancé called. "Weird weather," he said. "They're saying heavy thunderstorms. Possibly tornados." She needed to pick Cook up from work, anyway. Why not leave a little early and wait the storm out with him? "Probably nothing will happen," he assured her. While en route, the sirens wailed again. Flanigan observed people outside their homes, gesturing at something in pursuit of the Jeep. She parked in front of a vacant building next to Games N Things, where Cook guided her to the bathroom. They stayed there, along with a coworker of Cook's, until the lights dimmed and the winds swelled. Air blew in through the ventilation shaft rather than out of it. When it was over, five or ten minutes later, Flanigan and the others left the bathroom to find the store intact. "We thought maybe a big gust of wind had knocked out the power," she says.



Outside told a different story. Cook's Jeep entombed beneath an I-beam from the punched out facade next door; across the street, an auto dealership was recast as a junkyard. They hitched a ride from a passerby. "I thought once we got home, everything would be alright," Flanigan says. The trip turned more hellish by the minute: downed trees and utility poles, roofs torn from houses, the reek of natural gas stronger and stronger. A tire thumped flat. The driver continued onward, over curbs, over tree limbs and lawn until he could drive no farther. They were dropped downstream from their house.

THEY WERE GREETED not by their dogs, a Great Dane and a Pomeranian, but trees ghoulishly warped to nubs. Five steps led to a main floor sandwiched under a roof without any exterior walls to support it. “The top half of our house was gone,” Flanigan says. Cook clamored after the dogs but got no response. Flanigan was mute, disabled by what she witnessed. She heard a wimper. The Great Dane’s hind leg was snagged under the wood heap that was the garage, hurled 20 feet from where it should have been. Flanigan and Cook were able to free the leg, but there was a compound fracture and the dog was losing large quantities of blood. The dog needed medical attention soon, or it would die. She presumed the Pomeranian dead. Flanigan and Cook met up with first responders who told them their priority was saving human lives, so they set out on foot for a vet hospital they knew to be several blocks away. As they walked, the dog limping behind them (it was too heavy to carry), they saw people ambling along sobbing or shrieking pet names like Rover and Rusty. “It was *Zombieland*,” Flanigan says.

In the distance, a house fire raged. They saw a woman whose shoulder was wrapped in a towel stained red; a man in a pickup bed was screaming “hurry up,” the graying figure next to him motionless. Cook thought he saw human remains staked to treetops. He didn’t look long enough to be sure.

The vet hospital wasn’t spared. No one was there. They flagged a ride from a guy willing to surrender his shirt as a tourniquet for the dog. The next animal hospital was untouched and operating on reserve power. While the dog’s foot was amputated, they tried contacting family. It took several hours, as cell service was intermittent.

They stayed at their parents’ that night, Flanigan in Carthage and Cook in Joplin. Sleep came for neither of them. Beyond their bedrooms was the noise of a citywide crime scene, helicopters overhead and

convoy after convoy of emergency vehicles.

A haze descended over the days that followed. Flanigan says she didn’t do a whole lot. What was there to do? She salvaged what she could from the house and volunteered at a shelter established at Missouri Southern. Family that Flanigan would seldom see were mainstays, helping Flanigan’s grandmother, whose house was obliterated. She and her husband survived in a closet between the bedroom and garage, both of which were swept away. Rain was an around-the-clock occurrence. In the rubble, she found her high school class ring and shoes. Much of her clothing couldn’t be saved. Flanigan and Cook considered moving to Springfield or Tulsa, somewhere not tainted by hurt.

Four days after the tornado, Flanigan got a call.

Someone had found her Pomeranian, its dog tag giving Flanigan’s name and phone number. She received a donation: a suitcase full of clothing. Most of the clothing didn’t fit, but it was the gesture that mattered. The poor cell service in the weeks that followed gave her cause to meet with friends, exchanging stories of terror, courage and hope. Flanigan says the Joplin community is more attentive than before. “When you talk, people listen. They really listen,” she says.

Cook still works at Games N Things and is a student at

Missouri Southern while Flanigan works at the Cow Fairy deli. She is seeking a job in communications. They live in another house, rented to them by Cook’s mother. They are expecting twin boys in March. “Joplin is home,” Flanigan says.

Flanigan’s drive to and from work takes her through the bleakest area of Joplin, which, at night, is like “a remote part of Kansas,” she says. One time, while driving to work at daybreak, she noticed a tree lopped to a stump. Branches were sprouting from it, green leafed. She’ll persevere. And so will the town.



Jeb Cook’s Jeep was crushed by debris from the tornado but was still driveable before undergoing repairs.

Opposite page: (Top) Cook and Elizabeth Flanigan, who is pictured holding their injured Great Dane, found their home destroyed. (Middle) Cook and Flanigan’s neighbors’ house. (Bottom) As Cook and Flanigan seek a vet, a fire rages in the distance. Photos by Jeb Cook.

The Sudanese rely on drum beats when singing hymns.



BEATING A DIFFERENT DRUM

Ten years ago, Sudanese refugees were offered a home in the United States, many of them settling in Midwestern cities such as Omaha and Kansas City. Many, however, lack a spiritual home. Fr. John Deng, an Anglican priest whose family was stripped from him by civil war, wants to change all that. Thanks to St. Paul's in Kansas City, he has a place where his people can worship. At 1 p.m. each Sunday, a foreign language pervades St. Paul's, but the message is one all Christians can recognize.

STORY AND PHOTOGRAPHS BY HUGH WELSH

FR. JOHN DENG ISN'T IGNORANT OF HIS DREAMS, RED HOT in their vividness. Since he was a boy, Deng's dreams have proven prophetic. If he dreamt of someone dying, the person perished within a week. Sometimes it has been people neither old nor frail, whose death may arrive violently and without warning. His father, a casualty of Sudan's civil war in 1991, is an example. Deng summons his father often; he closes his eyes to reveal his father seated inside their mud-and-wattle home, staring lovingly at his son. Deng is among the "lost boys of Sudan," a group of 20,000 boys of Nuer and Dinka ethnicity orphaned when pro-Islamic government troops raided villages in southern Sudan, where most of the country's Christians are concentrated. The Lost Boys were nomads, migrating thousands of miles from one refugee camp to another. Death was an unwanted companion; more than half succumbed to starvation, dehydration and disease. Deng says God never abandoned him.

DENG'S DREAMS DETAILED a better future. He envisioned himself as a great grower of cabbage, the caregiver of row upon row of the vegetable, an African staple. The cabbage was the church, the body of Christ. A dream also told him of his exodus: a Dinka countryman would find him at a United States airport. The visions were a source of laughter among Deng's fellow Lost Boys until a couple of them fielded a phone call from Deng, newly arrived in Kansas City. (He was among the several thousand Lost Boys allowed to resettle in the U.S. in 2001 as agreed by the U.S. government and the United Nations.) Deng promptly handed the phone to his escort, who spoke the following words in Dinka: "I am Dinka, and I just picked up Mr. John Deng from an American airport." Lost Boys now make up part of his congregation, which meets at 1 p.m. each Sunday at St. Paul's in Kansas City.

Not much differentiates the 1 p.m. service from the ones that precede it, at least in the few minutes before it begins. The soft din of chatter. Children ducking and dashing through the pews as if coursing a maze. Clothing discerned for the occasion. It is in the clothing, however, that this service is different. The dark-skinned parishioners wear brilliant colors: the men sport them in their polo shirts tucked into khakis, their wrists glistening with golden watches; the women boast robes and headwraps in vibrant oranges and greens and patterns that stripe and zigzag. Then there is the instrument of choice. Not the organ, which will lie dormant for this service. A round drum several feet high is set before the pulpit. The drum is a yoking of African tribalism with Anglican tradition. It is to be the heartbeat of any hymn. Deng made the drum himself, starting from the rawest of materials: animal skins.

Deng went to Lenexa, Kansas, for the skins, one from a goat,

the other from a cow. "They ask me what you going to do with the leather?" Deng says, carefully articulating each syllable. "I tell them I'm going to make a drum. They look at me and say 'wow.' Deng learned the art of drum making with another Lost Boy. "We wanted to know how so we could worship in the church."

It's an arduous task in which the leather is cut, stretched and sunned. Strips of skin are twisted to make the rope that binds it. The drum's shape and sound are different from the one customary to traditional dance, which is slender and longer and drummed from the top instead of the side. Both drum types are used by the Sudanese congregation as well as various bells brought by parishioners.

The service is conducted entirely in Dinka, save the occasional word or two in English. Fifty-nine Anglican hymns have been translated into Dinka, a keepsake of so many Dinka Christians during the civil war. The books the parishioners carry has these and more than 600 other hymns in English; Deng has 500 of them memorized. The big drum as its pulse, each song is led by Deng, whose voice has an urgency like a sentinel that has spotted a threat to the village. For him, song is the story and the sermon is the postscript. Before Deng was a priest, he was a choir teacher.

Deng wasn't born into a Christian family. Growing up, a church down the road from his home always piqued his curiosity. What was it the people were doing that drew the ire of the government? (Only five percent of all Sudanese are Christian.) When he was nine years old, Deng entered the church. It was his calling. Eventually, he convinced both parents to join the faith. Deng's decision was a bold one; he was immediately at odds with many in the community, including



Women and children occupy one side of the aisle and men the other in accordance with Sudanese customs. Some of the women brought percussion instruments such as bells and rattles to the service.

teachers who presumed him less intelligent than his Islamic peers. His commitment to the faith never wavered, however. He never bent to his critics, not when he was made a refugee nor when he learned of his parents' death.

Dreams foretold his destiny. Before he left for the United States in July 2001, Deng was a choir teacher for six years before he was ordained an Anglican deacon. In 2003, Bishop Barry Howe ordained Deng as a deacon in the Episcopal Church. Two years ago, Deng became a priest assigned to a people rather than a parish. Deng's congregation met for a while at a vacant space owned by the Presbyterian Church until the building was condemned earlier this year and the congregation was left homeless.

More than 1,200 Sudanese live in the Kansas City area; Deng's Sunday congregation varies between 40 and 200, the approximate number that turned out to celebrate the independence of South Sudan. "If you give them a good location, a big number will come," Deng says. St. Paul's in Kansas City was willing to offer that location. The congregation is a parochial mission of St. Paul's. Whereas most mission work occurs outside the church, this one occurs inside it. "It fulfills the ethnic, language and cultural mission of the Church," says Stan Runnels, St. Paul's rector. "Everyone in the mission is also a member of St. Paul's." He says the arrival of the Sudanese congregation has been a welcome addition at St. Paul's.

Deng embraces his newfound role as a leader in the Sudanese community. "I am honored to do what I can," he says. Deng was part of a Sudanese delegation that visited Presiding Bishop Katharine Jefferts Schori in New York City shortly after South

Sudan declared its independence. To Deng, the trip wasn't for sightseeing and a meet-and-greet. He needed to deliver a message: "I wanted her to know that we appreciated what the Church has done for the people of the Republic of Sudan, but I also wanted her to know that so many Sudanese do not have a place to worship in places like Iowa and Nebraska." At 7,000, Omaha, Nebraska has the greatest number of Sudanese refugees in the country. Deng says Schori asked about the situation in Kansas City. "I told her that because of the Diocese of West Missouri, we are OK."

Deng's sermons always acknowledge the hurt branded on his people, many of whom have lost their families and friends to a civil war that persisted nearly a half century. When Deng gives his sermon, his long arms bend and sway, emphasizing key points; his vocal register drops. No one looks away. One Sunday, his sermon rested on the notion of forgiveness. How do you forgive someone who's spat on you as a lesser being, denied you your livelihood and stole away the lives of loved ones?

In the basement of Deng's North Kansas City home lie two paintings, each symbolic of a dream realized for so many Sudanese who now call themselves American. One reveals two scenarios involving the same young girl. In Sudan, she is married as a child to an old man whom she'll never love. In America, she is wed to her soul mate at a later age. Another painting, displayed prominently on the wall, centers on healing. According to traditional African belief, no ailment can be cured unless the blood of an innocent is shed, a sacrifice. The painting shows a father leading his daughter away from a doctor holding a lamb in her lap, a knife ready to slit its throat. A figure is aloft. It's Christ crucified.

The Rev. John Deng delivers a sermon centered on forgiveness.





ENGAGING



Sandra Zarins, a former member of the Companion Diocese Committee and parishioner at St. Alban's in Bolivar, left for Botswana in July. She plans to spend three to five years as a volunteer in the country working closely with the Anglican Diocese of Botswana. Her objective: to make Botswana "a place of hospitality, especially for women." She submits a weekly journal called "The Africa Ring" – including the people she has met, the places she has visited, the cultural experience – to family and friends. The following are excerpts. If you are interested in receiving Zarin's weekly reports, please contact her at sandrazarins@gmail.com. By Sandra Zarins

July

I HAVE A DEAR FRIEND, Carolyn, whom I have known for over 20 years and whose farm outside of Springfield was one of the last visits I made before leaving for Botswana. We visited for a while, and then she presented me with a gift – a silver chain-link ring that had been given to her by a longtime friend who was closing out her deceased parents' home in Scotland. She presented Carolyn with this ring several years ago as a remembrance of her parents, whom Carolyn knew well. Since then, Carolyn had read a book "The Pearl Necklace," which follows the journeys of a pearl necklace as it finds itself in the possession of various women: what they did with it, how they wore it, their individual lives, etc. So, Carolyn gave me this silver ring. I am the fourth person to wear it, with the caveat that I pass it on to someone else when my sojourn in Africa is finished. I am to pass it on to someone over here in Botswana, who would perhaps take it on a journey somewhere else. I was, and still am, quite taken with the idea, and the ring is worn on the index finger of my right hand. For now, for a season, it is "the Africa Ring."

Seven hundred Anglican women from Botswana (the majority), Zimbabwe, South Africa and Namibia came together in a four-day "conference" this weekend. I arrived with Simon, who was the principle guest

speaker, and I could hear the singing from the parking lot. Entering the building, I was met with multiple swarms of women in various uniforms of their own particular chapter, and in the main hall was an even larger swarm singing and dancing spontaneously. I was completely captivated listening to the strong African female singing unaccompanied except for a hand drum, somebody with a bell, somebody else with a whistle. The African dancing that I saw is more confined and at the same time more rhythmic bodily. Arm movements never extended beyond six inches from the body, hand movements were usually 6 inches in front of the chest and very small. And the entire body is moving in a gentle swaying back and forth, sometimes bent, never leaned backward. The head follows the direction of the body. I was delighted and moved closer to watch. Within seconds, somebody took my left and right hands and somebody else encircled my waist and I was IN, the only white woman in the conference, gently shown the footwork, and mouthed words so I could sing. It was frankly disappointing when the meeting was called to order but, of course, not unexpected. To my surprise, I was seated at the head table. And introduced, which met with a loud cheer and applause, and trilling (which I heard and learned to do in Arabia). This meeting of women was like no other meeting I have ever been to – even the Pentecostal/charismatic meetings/services never held a candle to this! Totally abandoned, real, authentic, expressive, these women were liberated in a way I had never seen before. And they remained that way throughout the day. It fostered love and acceptance that was astounding to me.

August

THERE ARE FOUR PROJECTS the diocese has requested I work as "Project Operations Coordinator," all concerning women and children's issues, something with which I am professionally and spiritually well

acquainted. The projects are St. Peter's Child Care Center for orphaned and vulnerable children run by Fr. Andrew and Gladys Modereri, in Mogoditshane; a similar project in Mahalapye run by the Mother's Union; another similar project in Gaborone run by Holy Cross Hospice, and a Women's and Youth Education and Development Project run by the Anglican Women's Fellowship in Gaborone. I requested that the Palapye project be given to me as well, and the Bishop's response was favorable. The difficulty with the projects is that the diocese has very little idea of each one's operations and infrastructure. Even financial reports are scant and, in some cases, non-existent. Each project is an entity unto itself and deliberately has no contact with the others. So my tasks are (a) to become very well informed with each project and their individual processes and then standardize and coordinate all the operations so that there is uniform quality and accountability and (b) to bring the projects together in mutual support and cooperation. I took it one step further and suggested that I (c) integrate them into a diocesan collaborative, eventually becoming part of both a larger community and a national collaborative on women and children's issues. We will develop those from scratch if need be.



An example of ostrich eggshell bead jewelry from Botswana. Submitted photo.

September

THE FIRST SKILLS-DEVELOPMENT class of the Anglican Women's Fellowship began Monday of this week. Five young women who had recently completed a self-selected educational program at the Gaborone Academy arrived for the first of ten classes that will train them in jewelry making. A bit of background: these five completed their secondary education by what is called "writing the exams" for either Form 3 (the equivalent of 8th grade in the U.S.) or Form 5 (the equivalent of 12th grade). Some of them didn't pass Form 3, and the rest didn't pass Form 5. In this educational system, there are no second chances. Failing to pass means a student is finished. Having no money to even attend a further training program, most of these girls were sitting at home doing nothing. None of them listed a parent on their enrollment form to call in case of emergency. One

we know is an orphan and the others may be as well.

The purpose of the class is to try and teach impoverished women and youth skills that they can use to generate income while they are looking for a job, and even continue once they are employed. If they have passed Form 5, but not with sufficient scores to qualify for university, or if they have failed Form 4 or 5, they will be interviewed for possible enrollment in Gaborone Academy. If not, as in the case of our 17 year old, she will at least have some skills to generate an income, meager as it may be. Women and children are the most destitute populations globally and I fervently join others who are convinced the world will be a far better place when they are lifted out of poverty, are safe, and are valued.

Still, I am uneasy about these five, to whom I have become a Motlalepula - mother. At the end of the WYSE classes, what happens to them? I know from my 20-year work with the Parenting Life Skills Centre that poverty is much more a mindset than an empty pocket. And to change a mindset takes years of involvement. I have seen it happen, but workers need to be like intensive midwives supporting the delivery and early months of a new life.

The project has no money to buy them bead starter kits, which I feel they must have. The remaining beads and equipment will stay in the project for the next group and, hopefully, these current students will train and mentor the new ones, thereby keeping their skills sharp. One thing I am going to do this weekend is explore the possibility of incorporating ostrich egg shell into the jewelry they are creating. Botswana is famous for this kind of egg-shell jewelry but, when I went to a well-known local Botswana craft store, I was surprised at the lack of artistry. I'm sure preparing the shells and cutting the pieces is artistry in itself but, beyond that, it looked like stringing them onto a wire and fitting the clasps. It might be that a necklace or bracelet could be taken apart and the pieces used in compositions the girls could create. These young women are meticulous enough that if it can work, they will do it.

ARTS



“ If it should happen one day – and it could be today – that I become a victim of the terrorism which now seems ready to engulf all the foreigners living in Algeria, I would like my community, my Church, my family, to remember that my life was given to God and to this country. I ask them to accept that the Sole Master of all life was not a stranger to this brutal departure...I should like, when the time comes, to have the moment of lucidity which would allow me to beg forgiveness of God and of all my fellow human beings, and at the same time to forgive with all my heart the one who would strike me down. I could not desire such a death. It seems to me important to state this...And also you, the friend of my final moment, who would not be aware of what you were doing. Yes, I also say this thank you and this “A-Dieu” to you in whom I see the face of God. And may we find each other, happy good thieves in Paradise, if it pleases God, the Father of us both. Amen! Insha ‘Allah !”

These poignant words were written by Dom Christian de Chergé, a Trappist monk who was beheaded by militant Islamists some two years later (1996) with six of his confrères, all monks of Our Lady of Atlas Monastery in Tibhirine, Algeria.

The pen of Fr. Christian’s testament presents many challenges to “post-9/11” Christians, two

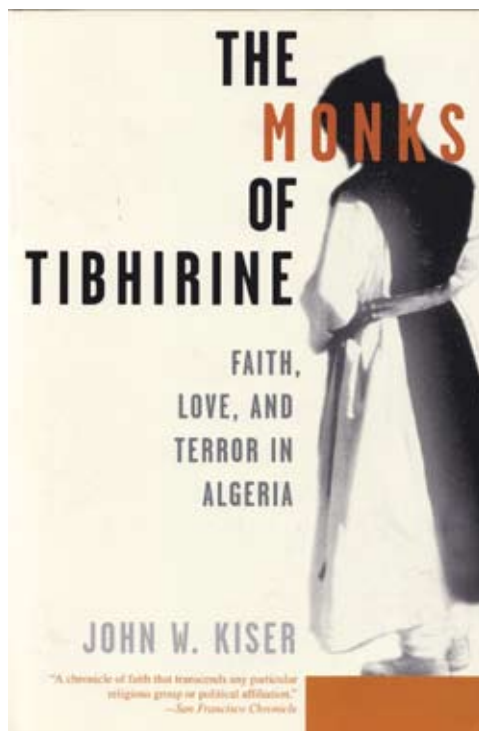
of which are sides of a coin: the recovery of the meaning of martyrdom as understood in the Church and the discovery of the meaning of the same word as used in Islam, particularly by Jihadists.

Rooted in the Greek *martyr*, which holds the meaning ‘witness’ in English, the New Testament use was for ‘a witness to the resurrection of Christ.’ Being such a witness

at that time meant being a witness through death, which became the accepted use through Church history. Martyrs are those whose lives were taken from them in a hostile manner because of their willing identification with the risen Christ. Christian martyrdom is integrally linked to the person and work of Christ. It is an act of innocence, in *imitatio Christi*, the same as that of Christ on the cross. And, in imitation of Christ, the executed forgives the executioner.

In Islam, martyr is the Arabic word *shahid*, also meaning

witness. It is a transactional word: those who live, struggle, fight and die for Allah will, as witnesses of the true faith, obtain salvation. Key to understanding Islamic martyrdom is the following: “You who believe, shall I show you a bargain that will save you from painful punishment? Have faith in God and His Messenger and struggle (jihad) for His cause





DEBRIEFED

WHAT ARE THEY?

The Monks of Tibhirine written by John Kiser
Of Gods and Men directed by Xavier Beauvois

IN A NUTSHELL

In the early morning hours of March 27, 1996 armed men, members of the Groupe Islamique Arme (GIA), entered the Cistercian monastery of Notre-Dame de l'Atlas in the Algerian desert and kidnapped seven of the nine monks. Several months later, the heads of the monks were found. *The Monks of Tibhirine* explores the history of the monastery, the lives of the monks, and the political unrest in Algeria that eventually resulted in their death. *Of Gods and Men* focuses on how the monks could have evaded their fate but elected not to.

with your possessions and your persons - that is better for you, if only you knew - and He will forgive your sins, admit you into gardens graced with flowing streams, into pleasant dwellings in the Gardens of Eternity. That is the supreme triumph." Sura 61:10-12. (M.A.S. Abdel Hallem, *The Qur'an*, Oxford University Press, 2004.)

The difference between the two understandings is marked, not the least by one's view of 'the other,' which brings us back to Fr. Christian and the monks of the Atlas Mountains. At the core of the work of Jihadist terrorists (so called 'Islamic martyrdom operations') is a hatred for and acts of destruction towards the enemy. For the martyred monks, the enemy is held by love, forgiveness and a hope for redemption.

Two important publications bring to us the story of the monk-martyrs of the Atlas Mountains. *The Monks of Tibhirine: Faith, Love, and Terror in Algeria* was written by author and journalist John Kiser. Kiser provides a thorough development of French colonial rule in Algeria, leading to revolution and the rise to power of Islamist groups. His presentations of the beliefs of various factions in the countryside lend an insight to which American audiences seldom have access. Of greater importance, though, is Kiser's work to present us with

the individual monks from Our Lady of Atlas Monastery. Meeting with families of those who died and with survivors and other major players in the story, Kiser richly develops the character of each man, particularly Fr. Christian, the abbot of the monastery, who was deeply involved in Christian-Muslim dialogue.

Perhaps more accessible and emotionally stimulating, though clearly not as informative, is the recent Cannes Film Festival Grand Prize winner, *Of Gods and Men*. Loosely based on the book and other source material, the film gives faces and voices to the names as it takes us through the drama of men coming to grips with the sincerity of their faith and its meaning in light of their certain deaths.

See the film, then read the book. And then quietly reflect on "what all of this means to me." How do I respond to intimidation? To violence? What is God's call on my life to be faithful to him in the various communities in which I live? What is my attitude towards my enemies? Love? Forgiveness? Hate? Retribution? How far am I willing to go with God?

By Paul Tarro
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