Embracing Change
From Bishop Fisher...

Embracing Change is Embracing God

I want to think I have become pretty good at embracing change through the years. It was not always so. I remember when I was six years old, my best friend Rolf and I used to play “army” constantly. We would climb trees and spot the imaginary enemy approaching. We would “fire” at them with our toy guns from behind garbage cans and bushes. (Yes, this was how the anti-gun violence bishop started out.)

Then one day, my friend Rolf arrived at my house with a bat and a ball and a glove. He had just discovered this great game called baseball, and he said we should play that. But I didn’t want to. I wanted to keep playing army. But Rolf insisted, and he got all the other kids to play as well. So, I reluctantly went along with this “new” game, and I loved it. We played every day after school throughout the spring, every day all day during the summer and then back to every day after school in September. When we weren’t playing baseball, we were watching baseball. Then, one day in October, Rolf arrived at my house with a new ball—a football. He explained the game to me and said this is what we should play now. But I didn’t want to. I wanted to keep playing baseball. I didn’t want a new game. Reluctantly, I adjusted to football and then basketball.

Think about what I would have missed if I had stayed within my “comfort zone”? My experience is that churches often like to stay in their comfort zone. Although we are used to life changing constantly all around us, we want church to stay the same. We want the familiar music, an unchanging liturgy, and we want to talk to the same people every week at coffee hour.

But life is not like that and, dare I say, neither is God. We believe in a dynamic, multi-dimensional, ever-creating God. We see that in nature and in the Scriptures. The God we meet in the Bible is always on the move and longing for us to join in that movement. Our newly elected Presiding Bishop, Michael Curry, puts it so well in his sermons—makes the whole of Scripture simple and clear. God goes to Abraham and Sarah and says “Get up and GO!” Go to a NEW land where I will lead you. God goes to Moses and says take my people
and “GO.” The angel goes to Joseph and tells him to take Mary and the baby Jesus and “GO!” Jesus gathers the disciples and then says “GO!” and sends them out.

Remember when the disciples are in a boat at sea, and they see Jesus walking on the water? They think he is a ghost or he might be the Lord. Peter shouts out, “Lord, if it is you, command me to come out on the water.” How will Peter know it is Jesus? It won’t be Jesus if he says, “Peter, stay in the boat. Keep doing exactly what you are doing. Don’t go anywhere.” No! The Jesus who Peter knew was the one who calls his followers to risk, to embrace change, to accept new life.

Jesus says, “See, I make all things new.” Newness, dynamism, change seems to be at the heart of God. So maybe, just maybe, embracing change is embracing God. Embracing change might be a way to join the Spirit who is always on the move in this world.

By Canon Rich Simpson

A long time ago, in a galaxy far away, I was a young and upcoming priest in this diocese. Oh how the times, they have changed! Recently I attended my 30th college reunion at Georgetown University. (Hoya Saxa!) In less than a year, I’ll mark my 30th wedding anniversary. (Thank you, Hathy, for saying yes.) Our sons are now 24 and 21. There is nothing young or upcoming about me now, a few months into my 53rd trip around the sun. I work for the bishop—I’m part of the establishment. The times, they have indeed changed.

There is a dominant narrative we Episcopalians love to embrace about change. How many Episcopalians does it take to change a light bulb? (Insert your favorite joke here; they are legion.) We seem only to change the Prayerbook, that “wonderful and sacred mystery” (oh wait…that is the CHURCH, not The Book of Common Prayer!) about every 50 years or so. And even then, we wonder if we’ve been too rash.

So we Episcopalians are against change, right? That’s the joke. That’s our narrative.

Except for this: It’s not true. Change is the only constant in life. The absence of change is a delusion. Let me pick up where I began: I look at pictures of myself as a college senior or as a 23-year-old groom and sometimes I think, “Who is that guy?” I look at the thin 34 year-old priest who was called to serve as rector at St. Francis’, Holden, in 1998, when some people thought “Why on earth are we calling this boy to follow the man we just elected bishop?” And in such moments, I know to the core of my being that the only constant in life is change.

Find some old pictures of your church and you will discover it was not always as you remember it in your mind’s eye, anymore than you are as you remember yourself 20 or 30 years ago. Mostly change catches us unaware because it unfolds a little bit at a time.

We must learn to embrace change, because change is our friend, and because what is not changing is not alive. What is not changing is dead. The key is that we trust the Spirit to be leading us in the changes we embrace with courage and with hope.

The President of Georgetown, Jack Dejoia, made this very point quite succinctly to the alumni who gathered last month to hear his thoughts on the future of the university. He told us there are two key questions for a university to ask: what do we protect from the past and what do we
Decisional Training

Teaching skills in prison that change lives after release

By Karen Banta, SCHC

“Send Us Now Into the World in Peace.” That’s the headline my rector wrote for the article I wrote for my church newsletter about the jail teaching program I coordinate. Her words startled me into linking my work with incarcerated men with the liturgy I speak every Sunday.

Decisional Training (called “Thresholds” in some other correctional facilities) is an all-volunteer program at the Hampshire County Jail and House of Corrections in Northampton. Founded in Pennsylvania in the 1960s by an incarcerated man who later became a psychiatrist, Decisional Training has been running at the HCJHC since 1975. It teaches the men skills crucial to success: clarity of thought; setting goals and evaluating strategies to meet them; thinking through outcomes; and being intentional in attitudes, behavior and decisions.

Each volunteer meets with an inmate an hour a week for 10 weeks, using a manual. Then, we have a serious and fun graduation ceremony. That’s the essence of the program.

This program has no religious content. And yet, people of many faiths have always been drawn in. Rev. Donald Fonda and organist/choir director Janet Dahlberg co-founded the Northampton program, under the auspices of the now-disbanded Hampshire Interfaith Council. Its former member churches continue to provide generous financial support.

When Dr. Marian MacDonald of St. John’s, Northampton, heard about Decisional Training, she combined her desire to serve God with her professional work. A psychology professor at the University of Massachusetts, Amherst, Marian carefully chooses eight Five College seniors each semester to volunteer. Many other volunteers are also motivated by their life of faith. I carry out my vows of social justice and peacemaking, as a member of the Society of the Companions of the Holy Cross, behind these walls.

I feel lucky to be a small part of services at the Hampshire County Jail and House of Corrections. This facility stands out in our state for its commitment to rehabilitation. It is believed to be the first correctional facility in the U.S. to have a permanent outdoor labyrinth. Ask Bishop Fisher, the Rev. Canon Mott and Vicki Ix what they learned there on their April 9 pilgrimage.

The men themselves describe Decisional Training as a “step back and think” program. Many say that their lives are changed by what they learn. Volunteers, too, are transformed by their experience.

People often ask me about my “jail ministry.” I tell them, “It’s not a ministry—it’s a teaching program.” Yet, although it’s not a “Ministry with a capital M,” it is what I think of as a “small-m ministry.” Surely teaching prisoners who want to start new lives is consistent with our call to service, social justice and peacemaking.
Five Parishes Helping to ‘Change the Babies’

Just begun in 2015 “Change the Babies” gives parishes the option to collect spare change and fundraise for the “Mampong Babies Home” in Kumasi, Ghana. Established by the Rev. Betsy Fisher, “Change the Babies” makes helping user-friendly with its extra-large coin collection jar. Parishes are given the jar, a colorful label and these instructions when they commit:

Instructions for Participating Parishes

• When your jar arrives, place the designated sticker on it.
• Communicate the purpose of the jar via bulletin, pulpit or announcements.
• Designate someone on staff to collect the coins quarterly, if possible.
• Please convert coins to cash and deposit in the parish account.
• Please send a check to Diocesan House before January 1, 2016, with “Babies Home” in the memo.
• The parish may elect to do a fundraiser or bake sale in addition to the collection of spare change.
• Smaller coin collection cans are available at Diocesan House—while supplies last—if families wish to help at home.
• The goal is to support one child for five years—$1,500 annually—but no gift is too small.
• Our financial staff will see that the funds are sent directly to the Mampong Babies Home.

If your parish is interested, it’s never too late to help “Change the Babies.” Contact Victoria Ix in the Communications Office. (413) 737-4786, ext. 124.
Where Change Happens

The General Convention of the Episcopal Church

Note: The following is a Summary of Legislative Actions taken from “General Convention wrap-up: Historic actions, structural changes,” by Episcopal New Service staff, edited and used with permission

North Carolina Bishop Michael Curry elected presiding bishop. The House of Bishops elected Curry, 62, from a slate of four nominees on the first ballot. He received 121 votes of a total 174 cast.

Marriage equality. The House of Deputies concurred with the House of Bishops’ approval the day before of a canonical change eliminating language defining marriage as between a man and a woman (Resolution A036) and authorizing two new marriage rites with language allowing them to be used by same-sex or opposite-sex couples (Resolution A054).

Budget emphasizes racial reconciliation, evangelism. The General Convention adopted the 2016-2018 triennial budget July 2 after agreeing to add $2.8 million for evangelism work.

Mandatory assessment. General Convention made mandatory the current voluntary diocesan budgetary asking system for the 2019-2021 budget cycle and imposed penalties for noncompliance.

Divest from fossil fuels, reinvest in renewables. General Convention passed two resolutions aimed at environmentally responsible investing and creating a climate change advisory committee.

Agrees to major structural changes. Substitute Resolution A004 slightly expands Executive Council’s appointment power concerning three members of the Domestic and Foreign Missionary Society’s executive staff, including the chief operating officer, chief financial officer and chief legal officer (a position created in the resolution). Substitute Resolution A006 reduces the number of the church’s standing commissions from 14 to two. The two would be the Standing Commission on Structure, Governance, Constitution and Canons, and the Standing Commission on Liturgy and Music.

Divestment in Israel, Palestine. The House of Bishops sent a strong and clear message July 2 that divestment from companies and corporations engaged in certain business related to the State of Israel is not in the best interests of The Episcopal Church, its partners in the Holy Land, interreligious relations, and the lives of Palestinians on the ground.

Plans to be created for prayer book, hymnal revision. General Convention 2015 took a step toward revising the 1979 Book of Common Prayer and The Hymnal 1982, directing the Standing Commission on Liturgy and Music to prepare plans for revising each and to present them to the next convention in Austin, Texas, in 2018.

Convention takes a first step, admits: ‘Alcohol affects us all.’ General Convention passed three resolutions on the issue of alcohol and drug abuse. Resolution D014 recommends that ordinands should be questioned at the very beginning of the discernment process about addiction and substance use in their lives and family systems. The bishops also passed Resolution A159, which acknowledges the church’s role in the culture of alcohol and drug abuse. Resolution A158, to create a task force to review and revise policy on substance abuse, addiction and recovery, passed with one amendment.

Closer relations with Cuba. The U.S.-based Episcopal Church and the Episcopal Church of Cuba took a step toward closer relations during the 78th General Convention, meeting here June 25-July 3. Convention also passed a resolution calling for the U.S. government to lift its economic embargo against Cuba.

Bishops led a march against gun violence. About 1,500 General Convention participants joined a Bishops United Against Gun Violence procession in Salt Lake City the morning of June 28. The prayerful procession walked the half-mile from the Salt Palace Convention Center to Pioneer Park while marchers sang hymns and prayed. Members of Utah anti-gun violence groups and civil rights organizations joined in.

Greater solidarity for persecuted Christians. Convention agrees that Christians in Pakistan, Syria, Liberia, South Sudan and Sudan are among those for whom the church needs to step up its support and solidarity as many of them live in fear of death, starvation, and displacement in their war-ravaged or extremist-influenced countries.
Top, The Presiding Bishop-elect is presented to the House of Bishops; above, on doors of the center.

Bishops and 1,500 Episcopalians “Claiming Common Ground Against Gun Violence.” Below, our Western Massachusetts deputation (John Cheek missing) at the beginning of GC78.
Last Walk Brings Pilgrimage to a Close

Bishop Fisher walked the beautiful Berkshires at the end of May. From North Adams to Sheffield, it was an experience of hospitality as the people welcomed their bishop into their ministries and into their lives.

A blessing at the start from All Saints', North Adams. At right, Bishop Fisher and members of St. Stephen's bless the "Laundry Love" laundromat; below left, walking the streets of Pittsfield with the chief of police; and below right, praying for the fallen on Memorial Day.
Above, Bishop greets members of St. Helena's before walking the Meditation Meadow. At right, Evening Prayer at Trinity, Lenox.

Lots of sacred spaces… Above left, Bishop Fisher anointing residents at Kimball Farms in Lenox, and telling stories to the St. Paul’s pre-school in Stockbridge, right. Below, last stop: Sheffield!
Changing Things Up at the Cathedral

A tribute for the Dean ...

By Victoria Ix

The Cathedral in any diocese represents the heart of the Church. Its people, its leadership, often pave the way for great things to happen in many places. It is a beacon of welcome for the Episcopal Church and a place where real people gather weekly to be community—to share Word and wheat and the stories of their lives.

For 17 years, the Very Rev. James G. Munroe served the diocese as dean of our Cathedral. For 17 years, Dean Munroe gave his life’s energy to the mission of the Church and the pastoral care of its people in the city of Springfield. No single article can tell that story. But, the degree to which we are loved offers an insight into what we have contributed. By that standard, Dean Munroe was immensely successful!

Here are a few images of the celebration of ministry that took place in the Atrium of Classical High School Condominiums on June 13.

The Rev. Scott Seabury was emcee for the evening—bearing gifts and jokes!
The Rev. Tom Callard, former Cathedral canon and Missioner for Hispanic/Latino Ministries, has been named Priest-in-Charge of the Cathedral for a three-year term. For the Cathedral community, Tom’s appointment is a grace. He has served them faithfully for over two years. Now, he will shepherd the Cathedral into a new era.

Tom has many plans and dreams for Christ Church Cathedral. Deciding how to staff the Cathedral is first on the list. We can expect a new configuration of staff. Tom’s previous position will be split in two. The Cathedral will call an assisting priest and a lay pastoral assistant for Latino/Hispanic Ministry. (At the time of publication those calls may be public.)

Tom sees this three-year period as a time of discernment for Christ Church Cathedral. His hope is to unite the two communities that worship at the Cathedral. Building on the legacy of Dean Munroe is very important to Tom, too. Jim’s passion for outreach has become part of the fabric of life at the cathedral. Being present to the community of Springfield is paramount and part of a long-term commitment to evangelization.

Editor’s Note: We will introduce the new staff at Christ Church Cathedral in the fall issue of Abundant Times.
Our urban missioner, the Rev. Meredyth Ward, left, visits a young family in the park, right.

Changing Ministry to Meet Urban Needs

Meet the Rev. Meredyth Ward

By Victoria Ix

I asked our Urban Missioner for Worcester, the Rev. Meredyth Ward, if I could tag along for a day to see what her new ministry in the Main South neighborhood is all about. I met Meredyth in a local coffee shop—a place she often begins her day—knitting and sipping and waiting for the opportunity to meet someone new. That’s how this ministry works. Meredyth has no church, no office—just a trunk full of supplies for ministry and a heart open to the possibilities of each day.

The coffee shop, the laundromat, the park—Meredyth goes where young families are. Her ministry is to meet them and make a connection. Here’s what a day in her life looks like now:

8 a.m.: Acoustic Java
8:30 a.m.: Ecumenical Meeting with clergy in Main South re: new program to support young families

10 a.m.: The Laundromat
Meredyth had to finalize arrangements for the first “Laundry Love,” which was a huge success on July 10. Meredyth had made the laundromat a regular stop on her route. “One of the things that I discovered was that the kind of white noise that washers and dryers make means that you can have a relatively private conversation, that people were talking to me about things at the laundromat that they wouldn’t necessarily talk about at McDonald’s… That became an unexpected bonus in the midst of it.” Then, when she heard about the “Laundry Love” movement that began in California, she did the research, and her Board of Directors OK’d the project. (“Laundry Love” is already well-established at St. Stephen’s, Pittsfield.) “We talk about respecting the dignity of everyone in our Baptismal Covenant. What is more part of respecting people’s dignity than allowing them to be clean? There are people in this neighborhood who would run out of quarters long before they ran out of laundry.”

The neighborhood called Main South is in the heart of the city of Worcester. “Part of the joy of this neighborhood is the intersection of so many different elements. There are students; there are folks of very different ethnic and religious backgrounds so it’s a really rich place—rich in culture, rich in experience, not materially rich.” It is the young families, especially, to whom Meredyth directs her ministry, although the Spirit is in charge and she never knows how the day will unfold.

10:30 a.m.: The Park
We parked near Clark University and walked to the nearby park. I asked Meredyth what she does there. “I walk around and see who’s here. Usually I start by asking mom or...”

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dad or whoever is there if I can give bubbles or crayons or something to the little one. Sometimes they say “no,” but usually they say “yes.” That’s an opening. That’s a way to begin a conversation. Sometimes the conversation lasts two minutes and sometimes it lasts 20.” I watched from a respectful distance while Meredyth spoke with the adults and blew bubbles with the babies. In her big pink bag she has diapers, toys, various hygiene products, a BCP and some oil for anointing. The trunk of her car is filled to the brim with supplies. She is ready to color in the lines or bless a wounded soul—depending on the situation. “I have been dreaming about this way of being in ministry for a very long time. Getting to do this is just great fun.”

It’s nearly noon. Meredyth usually hits two 12-step meetings a week. She’s missing it to talk with me. The disease of addiction affects many families in Main South. “I’m in recovery myself. It’s part of the renewed DNA of who I am and recognizing that I am radically dependent on God in all sorts of ways, that’s part of what allows me to do this work is the recognition that—guess what—I’m not in charge. I can plan things, I can organize things, but it’s not ultimately my work.”

We sat on a park bench after her ministry to the family on the playground. I asked her if it was hard living out a car. “In a lot of ways it is a blessing to me. Because it is easy when you have a space…to wait for people to show up. When I’m out of the building, if nobody’s here, I’ll hang out for a little while and then I’ll go walk someplace else and find other people.”

“I’m on the move all the time…. We occasionally borrow a space…but it’s much more likely to be serendipitous connections right now. Me showing up at the same place around the same time.” Meredyth’s ministry is supervised by a Board of Directors: the Rev. Canon Rich Simpson, the Rev. Nancy Baillie Strong, the Rev. Matt James, campus minister at Trinity Lutheran, Holly Dolan Clark University/St. Andrew’s and Karen King, All Saints, Worcester. They meet with Meredyth monthly to approve projects and to compare the experience of being Urban Missioner with the grant proposal submitted to the Episcopal Church. This half-time ministry is funded by a TEC grant and by a matching contribution from the diocese. Those funds come from the sale of St. John’s. Meredyth sees it as a continuation the stewardship of St. John’s—a way in which their community continues to bless the people of Worcester.

The start of Meredyth’s ministry was delayed by the death of her husband, Matthew Ward. She was worried the grant would be taken away, but the Church gave Meredyth time to heal. Matt died in October of 2014. “By January 1, I was ready to be doing whatever was next, to have a space to put the heart and soul and love that had been expressed in other ways to a different kind of work now.”

Meredyth’s life experiences have prepared her well for Urban Ministry. She has no illusions about being the solution to very real personal problems. “I know I can’t fix it but I’m not afraid of it and I can stand in the middle of it. That’s what this ministry of presence is about. I can stand in the middle and say there is another piece, there is another possibility, there is something which can happen on the other side. If you can surrender to that possibility your life can change by the grace of God, or your “higher power” or whatever it is you name that as. It makes a difference in my life, makes a difference in lots of people’s lives. And so what I can say is, “You want to come along?”

We working the first “Laundry Love” event in Worcester with board members and volunteers from local churches.
The Changing Landscape of Community:
Lawrence House Service Corps

By Victoria Ix

It’s been almost a year since Bishop Fisher blessed the beginning of Lawrence House Service Corps—a joint ministry of All Saints’, South Hadley and the Diocese of Western Massachusetts. I caught up with the interns and the director, the Rev. Tanya Wallace, for dinner one evening in May. I wanted to experience a typical Tuesday—“community night”—and ask the group a few questions about life in Lawrence House.

The kitchen is upstairs in this wonderfully restored home. It was Q’s (Quanita’s) turn to make a simple supper. After grace we shared the meal and some informal conversation. After clean-up the group moved to the living room—a cozy space next door filled with donated furniture and the requisite TV.

I know a lot about Lawrence House. I’ve followed the project from its beginning as it went from work-in-progress to a bona fide program of the Episcopal Service Corps. I know that the purpose of this year of intentional community is to give young adults an opportunity to serve the Church and local community while processing the experience of shared life. Each of the four who finished out the year worked hard in their ministry and at living together. They are a very diverse group—black, white, Episcopalian and Baptist, straight, gay, lesbian and transgender. I asked them how the reality of living with strangers differed from their expectations and how their differences added to the equation of the common life.

ANDY: Each community is so different. I was part of an Episcopal Service Corps program before this one, and the intensity of the closeness was something that was completely foreign, which it just wasn’t there last year so I didn’t expect it, and it was here, and it was amazing. I think we’ve all seen each other cry at least once over the past year because we’ve all had those intense moments. We’ve been able to be there and pray with each other. That was totally unexpected and so amazing and so fulfilling.

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Q: It’s been a great experience. We been able to establish a closeness that I couldn’t have even imagined. I learned a lot.

KEVIN: Living in a community where people come and go is an important factor in being able to grow in emotional maturity when it comes to the fact that people come and go in your life all the time!

The greatest blessing of living at Lawrence House is that I have been able to grow with people of faith who challenge each other to be the best versions of ourselves, inspire each other to continue on the path of light, and pray with each other in the name of Christ Jesus.

I decided to go for another term at Lawrence House because of the transformative experience…

ED: I came at it with a hesitancy of…religious service corps. My Mom’s a priest, but I don’t wear my religion on my sleeve the way my Mother does… I’m comfortable in my own faith.

It was so happy about that it was so different from what I expected.

I’m in a room full of people that are different from me, that have a different viewpoint from what I grew up with. I need to take advantage of this and become a rounded person in thought. It completely exceeded my expectations.

ANDY: What amazed me was not just the diversity but the comfortableness with the diversity.

Q: I was able to be nurtured by someone who was open and affirming, and I didn’t have that at home, and I haven’t had that ever. It was nice to be in a church that has those values.

TANYA: I always had a vision that this could, at its best, become a glimpse of the kingdom of God. It’s actually happened. That’s what the diversity has meant to me. This is what the kingdom of God looks like—to have people from such different backgrounds and walks of life coming together as equals at a table, having conversation about things that deeply matter, disagreeing and loving each other through the best and worst of times. It doesn’t get any better than that.

Postscript: Ed has returned to his native Philadelphia. Q. is beginning her studies at Union Theological Seminary. Two of the interns, Kevin and Andy, have “re-upped” for another year at LHSC. They will be joined by four new companions in September. Stay tuned… The revolving door at Lawrence House means new life for our diocese and the continued example of how strangers can live together in love.
Changing Systems

Missionaries help bring living water

By Tom and Dianne Wilson

In the community of El Maizal, Dianne and I have finally witnessed the completion of the community’s potable water project. We do need to replace a water tower but that is minor. This is a good time for us to look back as to how this happened and share this story with you.

The idea started when Dianne and I visited the community of El Maizal for the first time in August 2012. We were discerning our call to serve God’s mission in El Salvador, and we had received the permission of the current Bishop of El Salvador, Martin Barahona. There was just one catch: Bishop Martin strongly recommended that before we make a decision we visit the community he intended us to serve in. It was the community of El Maizal (The Cornfield).

In August 2012, we spent two weeks in El Maizal. The Bishop and the community had a great plan for us to become acquainted with the people. Each day we ate all our meals with a different family. There was just one other minor catch: Dianne and I spoke very little Spanish, and they spoke no English. We brought this concern up with Bishop Martin, but he reminded us to not worry and said, “Tom and Dianne, many people speak the same language but they don’t communicate; just communicate with the people.” Truer words were never spoken. Leaning heavily on a translation application on my iPhone, a lot of pointing, gesturing, praying and a huge amount of patience by our hosts, we communicated. It wasn’t a Pentecost experience but close enough.

In those two weeks, we met with many families. We used that opportunity to share our lives and find out about theirs. We also asked them what they thought were the greatest needs of the community. The need for a consistent clean water supply was always the first or second answer. At that time, there was one well on the property that was hand-dug to a depth of 15 meters—not a sufficient depth for accessing the full aquifer. Because it was hand-dug with dirt walls, contamination was constant. This community—35 homes and approximately 150 people—had access to only six water faucets that ran down one side of their street. We also had a large agricultural project that requires water from this same well. This meant that contaminated water was only available to the people four days per week and sometimes for only few hours a day.

So as God’s mission for us developed in El Maizal, clean water was always on our minds, but how could we address it? We were kept very busy with many challenges and responsibilities in our first year and a half of service, but then God presented us with our water project opportunity. A community member introduced us to Living Waters International (Aguas Vivas). Living Waters has been drilling wells in El Salvador for years and had constructed over 450 of them. We met with the personnel of Living Waters, and after giving them census information about our community and our current water situation we were quickly approved. This well would have cost $20,000 for us to construct, but Living Waters installs them for free.

In December 2014, Living Waters came to our community and installed the new well and pump. Their crew was made up of Salvadoreños and a group from the New Song Methodist Church in Los Angeles. This church funded the project. What a wonderful group of people, led by Dr. Pastor Mark R. Martin. This was not just a handout to the community. They worked, too, and provided food for the workers. It only took three days to strike water, and we celebrated as...
In the U.S., water is merely a second thought, like taking a breath.

if we had struck oil. It was a geyser of water that had us cheering; people from the community came from their houses to be part of the happiness (alegria). It was a very emotional moment to realize that our friends and their children would now have access to a reliable source of clean water.

It’s a professionally constructed well with a depth of 150 feet. It’s made of perforated PVC pipe surrounded by gravel and sand for filtration. The top is sealed with cement and currently there is a manual pump. With an electrical pump, it will produce 47 gallons per minute. It’s truly a godsend as now there will be no shortage of potable water for the people or the agricultural project. It is our hope that in the near future, the people will be able to have water in their homes.

What is the impact of clean water? I feel the need to spell it out as in the U.S. water is merely a second thought, like taking a breath. In the world, 1.4 million people die from water-borne diseases. Clean water will reduce the amount of water-borne illnesses in El Maizal. Keep in mind of the 150 people living here, two thirds of the population are teenagers and younger—a demographic that is very susceptible to deadly water-borne diseases.

The project is finished except for one tower. The well and manual pump was the first step. After that, the existing system of plumbing had to be repaired to handle the additional water supply. Electrical work was also required in order for us to upgrade the system from a manual to an electrical pump. This additional work cost $8,500. We would like to thank the people whose generosity helped make this a reality; St. Francis’, Holden; St. Andrew’s, Edgartown; The Rotary Club of Edgartown; New Song Methodist Church of Prairieville, Louisiana; The Global Mission Committee of the Diocese of Western Mass; and Mr. and Mrs. Frank Pellegrino of Edgartown.

The project took six months. We had various stops and starts. As you can probably understand, bureaucracy took up a lot of that time. It took us two months just to get all the paperwork correct in order to receive electrical permits. Once that was cleared up, it took us only two weeks to finish the project.

So what is next before we leave? We have two more projects we’d like to see finished. The first is restoring the guesthouse for use. A repaired guesthouse will give the community a revenue source by renting it for weddings and other events. The guesthouse is also used to host visiting groups. Repairs will include replacing the roof, replacing the septic system and repairing the outside restrooms. We are trying to raise $13,000 to cover the cost of these projects.

The second project is creating a scholarship program in collaboration with an NGO offering this program in El Salvador. The cost of this program is in the development stage as it depends on the number of students interested. We are currently creating a census for that information.

If any churches or individuals are interested in financially helping us with these projects it would be greatly appreciated. For more information, email me at tomcaticus@hotmail.com.

Donations can be sent to St. Francis’, Holden, MA 01520. In the memo line or in an enclosed note, please write El Maizal Project Funds.

If you want to know more about our mission, we have kept an active blog since we arrived in March 2013. The link is http://tomcaticus426.blogspot.com/. We can host groups large or small.

We want to thank everyone for their prayers and financial support over the last two-plus years of our service in El Maizal. It’s incredible for us to think that in eight months we’ll be returning to our home in the U.S. and seeing family and friends again. It’s been our pleasure to share our mission with all of you and specifically this water project.

En la paz de Dios—In the peace of God.
embrace toward the future? If you think about it, every debate about change is about what goes in which category. Is it essential to our identity and wisdom to be passed along to the next generation? Or is it adiaphora? What do we need to let go of in order to embrace a new thing?

Dr. Dejoia was talking about the university, but we might ask the very same questions about the Church, about our diocese and about our congregations. He said the key to answering these questions is not about technical skills but a commitment to the hard work of formation, inquiry and to the common good. These are the skills necessary for faithful discernment.

I think we need to re-think our narrative as we learn to embrace change and find some new jokes. How many Episcopalians does it take to change a light bulb? I’m not clever enough to come up with a pithy response, but we need to find ways of telling new jokes that allow us not only to protect what has been, but to just as passionately embrace what will be. We Episcopalians love change because it is a sign of the Spirit’s work among us; because we are committed to living the baptismal covenant. We are called to be a people with inquiring and discerning hearts who are equipped to face change with both courage and hope.

By John Armstrong

An ecumenical group of Protestants gathered outside of Boston on April 17 and 18 to sing, worship, listen and talk about new perspectives on stewardship in today’s changing world of church.

In his keynote address, the Rt. Rev. Michael Curry, Bishop of the Episcopal Diocese of North Carolina, opened the conference agreeing that successful stewardship requires “radical discipleship.” He went on to preach the importance of recognizing that “Jesus is a game-changer”—everyone who follows him will become more than they could ever be on their own.

Organized by the Northeast Ecumenical Stewardship Council (NESC), the two-day conference drew 175 clergy and lay leaders from many denominations. The NESC includes in its membership American Baptists, Lutherans, United Methodists, Episcopalians, Presbyterians, United Church of Christ Congregationalists and members of the Christian Methodist Episcopal (CME) Church. The theme of the conference was “Stewardship in the Changing Church: Moving from Consumerism to Generosity.”

Ben Stroup, an advisor to churches on fundraising, offered practical
advise for the conferees. He pointed out that in the last decade total charitable giving has increased 4.6 percent while giving to churches has declined 1.6 percent. He attributed this disparity to churches remaining silent when it comes to money matters, “and they have been silent now for 30 years,” he said. Churches need to respond to the increased competition for charitable giving by talking openly about money with their congregations and the outside world.

Stroup noted that churches have a tremendous advantage over other nonprofits: they interact with their members every week. He recommended that churches focus on building a “culture of generosity” and noted that “giving is an outward sign of an inward commitment.” He also observed that “people give to organizations doing what they cannot do for themselves” and churches should think of members as investors supporting the church’s mission.

During the conference, in between the keynote presentations, workshops were offered on a variety of topics related to stewardship.

The Rev. Jim Thomas, a United Church of Christ minister, talked about narrative budgets—budgets that focus on a church’s mission and ministry rather than line items. The Rev. Molly Baskette, pastor of First Church Somerville UCC, outside Boston, told how she arrived at a failing church with less than 40 members and succeeded in bringing in many new young members and raising capital to restore a crumbling building.

Nancy Davidge, an associate with the Episcopal Church Foundation in New York, showed how small churches can tell their story year-round using low-cost technology and readily adaptable media techniques. Ben Yoshua-Davis, a former United Methodist church-planter, described stewardship in today’s emerging churches. His workshop told the story of how a church without walls in Haverhill that appeals to first-time churchgoers was able to succeed. Gary Melville, director of development for the United Methodist Foundation of New England, spoke on the “Freed-Up Financial Living” course which delivers financial planning concepts from a Christian perspective.

Patsy Bjorling, director of a ministry that supports four schools in Honduras for abandoned and impoverished children, explained how to transform “stewardship” into “a season of generosity.” “Joy-filled giving,” she explained, is not only possible but “transformational” for a congregation.

Elizabeth Grady-Harper and Christa Lee-Chuvula, directors of the Boston Faith & Justice Network, echoed Ben Stroup’s observation that conversations about money can be difficult. But they also explained in their workshop how conversations within faith communities can also be personally and collectively transformative. They described how meeting in small groups can cultivate a culture of generosity.

Besides the workshops on Saturday conferees heard short “TED” talks (a format offering “Ideas Worth Spreading” popularized by the TED conferences held in Canada). Where the workshops were designed to develop skills and knowledge, the “TED” talks offered inspiration. Eight speakers shared stories of how grit and imagination helped churches overcome adversity.

Thomas and Ingrid Faniel, residents of Windsor, Connecticut, and members of the Historic Metropolitan African Methodist Episcopal Zion Church in Hartford, Connecticut, offered music and led the conferees in song. Worship services took place at the end of the evening on Friday, and at the closing of the event on Saturday, when participants were commissioned to pray for newly-found prayer partners.

Bruce Rockwell, assistant to the bishop for stewardship in the Episcopal Diocese of Western Massachusetts, chaired the conference and summed it up saying, “Bishop Curry inspired us. Ben Stroup not only gave us information we needed to hear—he also suggested how important it is to break the conspiracy of silence around faith and money that exists in so many congregations.”

John Armstrong is a retired IT professional now working as a freelance journalist.
We are indeed grateful for the Legacy Gifts from 260 parishioners whose names appear on this list. It is a tribute to all of us in this diocese to have so many who have made gifts that will support the mission and ministry of so many parishes in the years to come. Of particular note 95 percent of all those who make a Legacy Gift do so directly to their parish. Gifts of all sizes are welcomed! If you have not yet made a legacy gift, please think about joining all those who have by becoming a member of the Bishops' Legacy Fellowship. If you have any questions, please feel free to contact:

**E. John White**  
Missioner for Legacy Stewardship

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St. David’s, Agawam
St. Francis’, Holden
St. John’s, Northampton *deceased
St. Paul’s, Stockbridge
Trinity, Lenox

*deceased

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The parishes to which people belonged at the time they became members of the Bishops’ Legacy Fellowship are listed unless otherwise requested. Please feel free to request changes any time. A legacy gift to any Episcopal entity, your congregation, the diocese, an Episcopal seminary, Episcopal Relief and Development, etc qualifies you for membership, no matter the amount.
Treasures from the Archives

_Canon Crockett’s scrapbook collection, 1967-1985_

By Karen Warren,  
Diocesan Archivist

In June 1967, Bishop Robert M. Hatch, the fourth bishop of the Episcopal Diocese of Western Massachusetts, appointed the Rev. William David Crockett (known mostly as David) as assistant to the bishop for program. Canon Crockett served the diocese under Bishops Hatch, Alexander Doig Stewart and Frederick Wissemann, and retired on the very last day of December, 1985 (seemingly characteristic of his loyalty and devotion). In this newly created position, Canon Crockett held the responsibilities of developing and administering a program of diocesan reorganization within the framework of a regional planning concept. The organization of the diocese was restructured during his tenure. He also served the ministry of stewardship during his tenure.

In the Diocesan Archives, there are eight large scrapbooks, dated from 1967 to 1985, likely put together by Canon Crockett during his years of service to the diocese. These chronicles contain newspaper clippings, handwritten notes, some photos and many programs from events he either attended or took part in. Clearly, he was a very active man, and this collection is but a snapshot of his life. Canon Crockett’s ministry as evidenced was much larger than the diocese. A few highlights of the scrapbook collection are: Position papers on the development of the Bement Camp and Conference Center (1971), and lay ministry (1972); his trip to the Holy Land (1973); an article on desegregation (1975-76); a visit to the House of Representatives regarding the issue of health care (1976-78); Holocaust memorial program (1979); visit of John Paul II to Boston, 1979; and a sermon preached in honor of the Rev. Canon Rush Smith, 1985.

Canon Crockett was born in Charlestown, Rhode Island, in 1919 and graduated from Westerly High School in 1937. He received a bachelor’s degree in literary interpretation from Emerson College in 1940. He also received a degree of master of education in 1950 from Tufts College, Medford. In 1955, he received a bachelor of sacred theology from the Episcopal Theological School in Cambridge, and, in 1965, he received an honorary degree of doctor of laws from Emerson. He also served in the U. S. Army during World War II and was a member of the Air Force Reserve from 1946 to 1963.

Canon Crockett’s accomplishments during his lifetime are much too numerous to incorporate here, but include serving as supervisor of oral English in the Westerly public schools and as speech instructor at the University of Massachusetts and Northeastern University. He served as rector of parishes in Rhode Island and Connecticut, and as president of the Stamford-Darien (Connecticut) Council of Churches. He was elected a trustee of Emerson College in 1962. During 1964-68, he served as executive secretary of the Province of New England. He also served as provincial secretary for College Work, Province I, and regional director of the Parish Training Program. At the time of the search for the fifth bishop of our diocese in 1970, Canon Crockett was among the 18 nominees for the positon. Despite an unsuccessful bid to become our bishop, he continued serving the diocese under the newly elected Bishop Stewart for another 15 years. Canon Crockett proved himself truly a winner in serving the Lord. Evidence of his sense of humor is revealed as he scrapbooked a placemat from the 1970 Election Convention’s breakfast—the placemat is titled “American Folklore” and contains cartoonish depictions of such folk legends as Annie Oakley, Paul Bunyan, Black Bart, Kit Carson, and of course, Davy Crockett.
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General Convention Final Walk Big Changes


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