

# *The Albany Episcopalian*

Volume 8

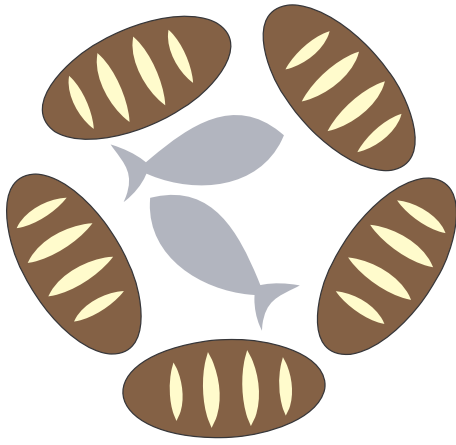
Issue 4

December 2011



## Highlighted this Issue:

- Ev + angel + ism: Good News to Share
- Partnerships Bring Hope to Haiti Communities
- It's the Most Wonderful Time of the Year
- Acolytes Honored at Cathedral of All Saints and more...



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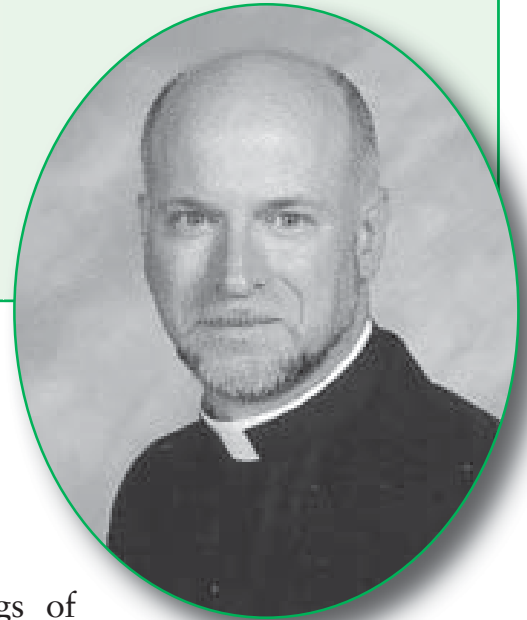
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# Help Save A Life – Share The Gospel!



## Dear Brothers and Sisters in Christ,

One hot Texas summer afternoon when I was 16, I went to a nearby lake to go swimming. Not being a very strong swimmer and having nearly drowned a few years earlier, I seldom ventured out much over my head.

On this particular afternoon, there was a teenage girl floating on an inflatable raft about 75 to 100 yards off shore. The wind and waves started to pick up, knocking her off into the water. As she fell, the raft blew further out into the lake. Unable to catch it, she tried to swim back to shore, but soon found herself in trouble. She began crying out in desperation. I very much wanted to help, but found myself unable to go to her, partly due to my limited swimming ability, but partly out of fear. Most of the people around me were either oblivious to what was going on, or like me, were unable to swim that far, or were afraid. By God's grace, one young man swam out and reached her just in time, safely bringing her back to shore. A great tragedy was averted and a life was saved because someone had the courage and skills to act.

As I look back on that incident some 38 years later, I am struck by the number of similarities between the young woman who nearly drowned in the lake that summer afternoon and all those who are spiritually drowning all around us every day. There are countless people going through life with a false sense of security relying

on the things of this world as they drift ever further out into the deep, unaware and unprepared for the storms of life.

As the storms blow in – failing health, broken marriages, mounting financial debt, job loss, home foreclosures, the death of a loved one... that which they thought was secure (their raft) is often stripped from them, leaving them struggling to keep their head above water, only to find themselves going under, much like a drowning victim – some for the first time, some the second, some for the third and final time.

Many people (especially those with no connection to our Lord and His Church) have no clue of where to turn in their time of trial. Others cry out for help, only to have their cries fall on deaf ears, or those who are too busy to help -- self absorbed in their own lives. There are some like the bystanders in the lake (mentioned above) who hear and want to help, but don't know what to do or where to start. They feel ill-equipped, over whelmed and afraid. Unfortunately, many in the Church fall into this category.

Whatever the reason, unless someone (like the brave young man who risked his life to swim out to the drowning girl) is willing and able to act, more and more people will drift farther and farther out into the deep water. Tragically many may be lost forever.

As Christians, we are called by our Lord to keep watch and to act – to reach out to the drifting and lost; to evangelize; to share the Gospel. We have received the “life vest” of faith – faith in Christ Jesus Lord and Savior. He calls us not only to wear our life vest of faith, but to share it, that others too may come to know Him and be saved. Jesus said, “I am the resurrection and the life. He who believes in me will live even though he dies; and whoever lives and believes in me will never die.” (John 11:25-26)

Contraire to what the world would have us believe, in the above passage from John, Jesus points out that ultimately it is not our physical life, but our spiritual life and relationship with Him that is of most importance. While our physical body is temporary, our soul is eternal.

God created us to be in relationship with Him, to share in His Heavenly Kingdom through faith in His Son the Lord Jesus Christ. When a person fails to enter into that relationship, he or she ultimately forfeits everything – being cast into eternal “darkness, where there will be weeping and gnashing of teeth.” (Matthew 25:30). There is no greater tragedy, no greater loss than to be separated eternally from God!

It is often asked, “How could a loving God allow such a thing?” God is a God of love and a God of justice. He cannot and will not ignore the sin in the world. The Good News (that we are called to share) is that out of God’s love for us, He has provided through His Son, a way for us to be washed clean of our sin and to inherit eternal life in His heavenly kingdom. As we read in the Gospel according to John, “For God so loved the world that He gave His only Son, that whoever believes in Him shall not perish, but have eternal life.” (John 3:16). Sadly, despite all the modern communications throughout the world, not everyone has heard of Jesus and his gift of salvation, and tragically, some who have heard, have turned away refusing to accept it.

Unfortunately, we live at a time in which talk about the “Day of Judgment” or faith in Jesus as the only way to salvation is not only unpopular, but regarded by many to be “politically incorrect,” mean-spirited, and judgmental. Some have gone so far as to denounce parts of the Gospel as “hate speech.”

To be a Christian evangelist in today’s society is not easy (it never has been), but it is absolutely essential if we are to be faithful to our Lord’s command in the Great Commission to “go out and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, and teaching them to obey everything I have commanded you...” (Matthew 28:19-20).

If we are to truly live out the Great Commission, we must become serious about evangelism. I know for some, just the very mention of the “E” word conjures up images of the street corner preacher preaching “hail fire and damnation,” causing people to cringe and run and hide. There are many ways to evangelize – some far more effective than others.

Evangelism, as defined by the Archbishop of Canterbury in 1918, “is to so present Christ Jesus in the power of the Holy Spirit, that men and women shall come to put their trust in God through Him, to accept Him as their Savior, and serve Him as their king in the fellowship of His church.” If we are to carry out the mission of the Church which as stated in the Catechism “is to restore all people to unity with God and each other in Christ,” (BCP 855) we have no choice, but to become evangelist.

Contraire to what many have been led to believe, it is possible to evangelize – sharing the Gospel of Jesus Christ, unapologetically, without coming across as being judgmental. God is the judge, we are not. Our job as Christian evangelists is to share the truth of the Gospel as best we understand it by the grace of God in the

*“Contraire to what many have been led to believe, it is possible to evangelize – sharing the Gospel of Jesus Christ, unapologetically, without coming across as being judgmental. God is the judge, we are not.”*

power of the Holy Spirit inviting people into a loving, life transforming relationship with Jesus Christ and His Church.

The purpose of evangelism is not to make new Episcopalians or Anglicans. It is not to bring more people into the Church to help pay the bills or build up the work force with new bodies, nor is it to bring younger families to offset an aging congregation. While each of these things may be desirable goals to achieve, if they are the underlying motivation behind our evangelism efforts, we have missed the point and most likely will have little to no success in bringing anyone to Christ. As stated above, true evangelism is all about sharing the Gospel (through a variety of means), inviting and bringing people into a saving relationship with Jesus Christ. In so doing, God will bless and provide for His Church in order that it may continue the mission of the Church.

In an effort to help each of us in the Diocese of Albany, learn more about what evangelism is and what it isn't, as well as how we might become more effective in living into the ministry the Lord is calling us into as evangelists in His Church, I have invited Pastor David Born, a very gifted and experienced evangelist to lead this year's Parish Leadership Conferences.

Pastor Born is a Missouri Synod Lutheran Pastor, currently living in Cooperstown and worshipping at Christ Church. In addition to his 31 years of parish ministry, he served as the Mission Executive for the Atlantic District from 1999 – 2004, during which time he helped plant 30 churches. From 2004 – 2009 he was the North East Director of Missions. In 2005, Pastor Born helped start the Transforming Churches Network (TCN) which has now become an ecumenical ministry and is working closely with several of our clergy and parishes primarily in the Susquehanna Deanery. I believe Pastor Born has much to offer and will be a

real blessing to all the lay leaders and clergy of the Diocese.

This year's Parish Leadership Conferences will be held on Saturday: January 21st in Malone; January 28th in Oneonta; and February 4th at the Cathedral of All Saints, Albany. More information on the PLC's will be coming out soon. As indicated, the primary focus will be on evangelism. Please -- don't let the "E" word scare you away.

I invite and encourage all clergy and lay leaders throughout the Diocese to make every effort to attend one of the three conferences. Everyone is welcome. Please come! It is my sincere hope and prayer this year's Parish Leadership Conference on evangelism will be a blessing to everyone -- helping us to become emboldened in our faith and better equipped to share it with others. Sharing your faith in Jesus Christ with someone who is in the midst of one of life's many storms, could very well save their life, bringing them into a saving relationship with our Lord. God Bless You!

Faithfully Yours in Christ,

+ *Bill*



*"... out of God's love for us, He has provided through His Son, a way for us to be washed clean of our sin and to inherit eternal life in His heavenly kingdom."*



# Ev + angel + ism

## Good News to Share

By The Venerable Doctor Christopher A. Brown

### Scene 1:

I was one among many. In the early seventies, there were always people standing along Massachusetts Avenue with their thumbs out. At the time, hitchhiking was as much a cultural statement as an alternative to the subway line into Boston. A van stopped to pick me up. The driver was a guy in his late twenties. By the time we reached Central Square, five minutes later, the traffic had slowed to a halt and he asked if he could draw me a diagram.



“Sure,” I replied, wondering what was coming next.

He drew a circle with a chair in the center. “This is the self-directed life,” he explained. “The chair is a throne; the ‘S’ represents the self, and the cross outside the circle represents Jesus Christ. The dots scattered within the circle depict the disorder which results when Christ is absent and we place ourselves at the center of our lives.”



He drew a second circle. “This,” he said, “is a Christ-directed life. With Christ at the center of your life, everything falls into place.”

I could see where this was going.

“Which circle represents your life? Would you like to invite Christ into your life?”

I am not sure what I said. But I was not convinced. I grew up in a secular household, and I was dubious about institutional religion. Yet, strangely, there was something about the exchange that made me feel as though I was valued. That was the first time someone shared the Gospel with me.

### “The power of God”

“Gospel” is derived from the Old English, “God-spell.” It translates the Greek term “**euangelion**.” It works like this:

**Angel** = a messenger

**Angel + ion** = a message

**Eu** (“good” or “well”) + **angelion** = a good message or “good news”

In his Epistle to the Romans, the Apostle Paul wrote, “I am not ashamed of the gospel, for it is the power of God for salvation to everyone who believes” (Romans 1:16). This has always struck me as a curious statement. Since a “gospel” is a sort of message, one would expect it to be a message *about* something — in this case, “the power of God.” Had I been writing to the Romans, I would have said, “the Gospel gives us important information *about* God’s power.”

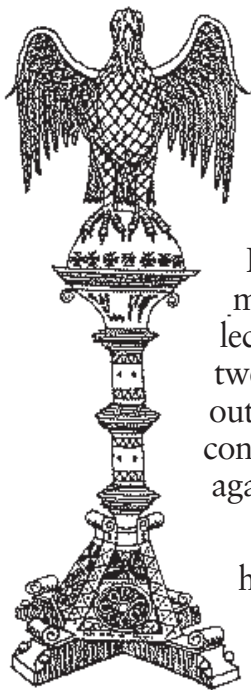
But Paul says something else. He says that the message is *itself* the power of God. It does not just convey information, it embodies power. It is a “performative utterance” — the very speaking of the Gospel accomplishes something. The Gospel is itself God at work.

## Scene 2:

Trinity Church in Boston's Copley Square is an architectural treasure. The American Institute of Architects has voted it one of the "Ten most Significant Buildings in the United States."



I attended high school two blocks away on Commonwealth Avenue. On the first day of Ninth Grade, our English assignment was to spend half an hour wandering about in its great expanse, and then write about it.



One morning, a year later, I cut class with a friend and wandered into Copley Square. On a whim we entered the church. At the front was an eagle-shaped lectern, molded in brass. Without premeditation, I walked up, unscrewed the microphone attached to the lectern, tucked it into my baggy tweed jacket and coolly walked out to the street. So far as I was concerned, it was just another blow against authority.

Three years later, when I was home from college for Christmas break, I found the microphone hidden in my room. At the time I was involved in a Hindu meditation sect called *Ananda Marga* (Path of Bliss). My immediate reaction was, "That's bad karma. I better fix this situation." So I took the microphone back.

The parish secretary was flustered. She said, "Perhaps you should talk to our youth minister."

He was an Episcopal Priest in his early thirties with long hair. I told him my story; I explained that I was on a spiritual journey, and apologized for my theft. He invited me to join him for coffee

the next day in Harvard Square at little French-style pastry shop. He was very low key – not like the guy in the van who drew circle diagrams as we waited for the traffic to move. But his message was unmistakable. He said, "There are some paths that a person explores for a while, and some that last a lifetime." He didn't even mention the name, "Jesus." But I knew perfectly well that he saying that my excursion into Hindu spirituality was just a phase; that eventually I would come home to the Christian faith. I thought, "yeah, right!" But it made an impression.

## The Three-fold Word of God

"For the word of God is living and active, sharper than any two-edged sword, piercing to the division of soul and of spirit, of joints and of marrow, and discerning the thoughts and intentions of the heart."  
(Hebrews 4:12-13)

Typically, we understand the phrase "Word of God" to be a reference to the Scriptures. Yet here, the author of Hebrews ascribes to the Word of God a dynamic character not normally associated with a written text; it is "living and active," it "pierces" and "discerns." Most readers intuitively – and rightly – grasp this as a reference to the compelling power of the Scripture. Yet there is more; the author goes a step further and seems to ascribe actual personhood to what the reader has assumed to be a written text: "No creature is hidden from his sight, but all are naked and exposed to the eyes of *him* to whom we must give account" (Hebrews 4:13).

The opening passage of John's Gospel also speaks in personal terms of "the Word that was with God and was God" (John 1:1). Says John, "all things were made through *him*" (v.3), and a few verses later, "the word became flesh and dwelt among" (v. 14), and it immediately becomes clear that we are talking about a historical person named Jesus of Nazareth.



There is a certain density to the notion of the Word of God. The Swiss Theologian, Karl Barth, speaks of the “three-fold Word of God” as:

1. *revealed* (in the event and person of Jesus Christ),
2. *written* (in the Bible),
3. *proclaimed* (in the preaching of the Church).

The Word of God is, in the first place, a person. We encounter this person in Scripture, but also in human testimony and proclamation. Together, the Word of God written and Word proclaimed mediate the incarnate Word, Jesus Christ. Both derive from the person of the Word, the word “revealed” – but all three are one Word of God, and one dynamic movement of God as He acts and reveals himself among men.

“There is no distinction of degree or value between these three forms. For to the extent that proclamation really rests on recollection of revelation attested in the Bible, it is no less the Word of God than revelation itself. As the Bible and proclamation become God’s word in virtue of the actuality of revelation, they are God’s Word: the one Word of God: within which there can be neither more nor less. Nor should we ever try to try to understand the three forms of God’s Word in isolation. The first, revelation, is the form which underlies the other two.”

The identification of Scripture as the Word of God is hardly novel, though seldom so integrally related to the Word made flesh. The third form of the Word as “proclaimed” is less conventional. It has nothing to do with the eloquence or effectiveness of the preacher. It extends beyond the formal activity of preaching in the liturgy to any human testimony to the Word of God. It is simply, says Barth, “man’s talk about God” in which God uses human speech to communicate the Gospel (which is “the power of God for salvation”). Says Barth,

“Real proclamation... means the Word of God preached and the Word of God preached means ... man’s talk about God on the basis of God’s own direction.”

It is “ev - angel - ism,” the communication of Good News that God impresses upon the heart of the listener.

## Scene Three:

Dave was my freshman roommate in college. Four years later I was still living in Western Massachusetts, where we had gone to school, and playing in a band, when he returned to college after a year off. I had always known Dave as a self-effacing and a somewhat depressive personality. But he had changed. He had shed his prior awkwardness, and projected a new lightness of being. “I have become a Christian!” he said. He didn’t draw me any diagrams, or quote the scriptures. He simply shared his joyful exuberance at having discovered Christ.

In the preceding five years a dozen people had shared their faith in Christ with me. Each made an impression; each proved fruitful in the end. But it was Dave who made me stop and think. One further development was necessary: I began to read the Bible. When I added the Word written to my experience of the Word proclaimed; Jesus Christ, the Word revealed, became real to me for the first time.

What if none of those people had wanted me to know about Jesus?

Everyone who calls on the name of the Lord will be saved. How then will they call on him in whom they have not believed? And how are they to believe in him of whom they have never heard? ... As it is written, “How beautiful are the feet of those who preach the good news!”

(Romans 10:13-15)

*The Ven. Dr. Christopher Brown is Rector of Trinity Church, Potsdam, and a regular contributor to The Albany Episcopalian*

**Editor's Note:**

In response to many requests from AE readers, we again print "The Twelve Days of Christmas" for your enjoyment.

## THE TWELVE DAYS OF CHRISTMAS

"The Twelve Days of Christmas," has several interpretations of its lyrics. Here is one favorite...

*My true love...* God, and the gifts from God

*The partridge...* Jesus

*Two turtledoves...* The Old and New Testaments

*Three French hens...* Faith, Hope and Charity

*Four calling birds...* The Gospels of Matthew, Mark, Luke and John

*Five golden rings...* The Torah (The first five books of the Bible): Genesis, Exodus, Leviticus, Numbers and Deuteronomy

*Six geese a-laying...* The six days of Creation (Genesis)

*Seven swans a-swimming...* The Seven Sacraments: Baptism, Eucharist, Reconciliation, Confirmation, Marriage, Holy Orders and Anointing the Sick

*Eight maids a-milking...* The eight Beatitudes in Sermon on the Mount - Blessed are: the poor in spirit; those who mourn; the meek; those who hunger and thirst for righteousness; the merciful; the pure in heart; the peace makers and the persecuted for the sake of righteousness. (Matthew 5:3-10)

*Nine ladies dancing...* Fruits of the Holy Spirit: Love, Joy, Peace, Patience, Kindness, Goodness, Faithfulness, Gentleness and Self Control (Galatians 5:22-23)

*Ten Lords a-leaping...* The Ten Commandments

*Eleven pipers piping...* The Apostles (not including Judas) who spread the Good News

*Twelve drummers drumming...* The Twelve Articles of Faith in the Apostles' Creed: "We believe... in God the Father; Creator; God the Son; Crucified, died, buried; raised from the dead; ascended into heaven; God the Holy Spirit; the holy catholic Church; communion of saints; forgiveness of sins; resurrection of the body; and life everlasting."

### CLERGY IN TRANSITION – Appointments

Mtr. Ginny Ogden - Church of the Good Shepherd, Canajoharie

Fr. Stephen Schlossberg - St. John's, Troy

Fr. Marshall Vang - Bethesda Church, Saratoga Springs - Interim

Dcn. Kino Vitet - St. Mark's, Brooklyn

# PARTNERSHIPS BRING HOPE TO HAITI COMMUNITIES

By Cindy Schmehl

*“Iron sharpens iron, and one man sharpens another.” Proverbs 27:17*

Six parishes in the Diocese have formed the Empire Haiti Coalition (EHC) to tackle larger challenges in Haiti. This joint effort will address solar power, clean water, education and nutrition with the goal of improving the lives of thousands on the Haiti Central Plateau.

St. John’s, Troy, St. Andrew’s, Albany, St. George’s, Clifton Park, St. Paul’s, Troy and The Cathedral of All Saints are all partnering with parishes in Haiti under the careful guidance of Father Jean Milor Medela. Father Milor’s home parish is in the city of Lascahobas and he oversees five mission churches in surrounding villages—most several hours away. Additional members of the EHC include non-profit To Love a Child, Inc., RPI-Engineers for a Sustainable World, AECOM and GE Energy. Together this diverse but dedicated group provides mutual support and expertise to produce life-changing results in Haiti.

“The Light of Hope” (affectionately named by the people of Haiti) shines brightly now in three of the parishes in Haiti, which also serve as schools. Lay Leaders conduct bible study and church services after dark thanks to lighting provided by solar power. Microphones, amplifiers and speakers bring the beautiful sound of music, singing and God’s word so it can be heard throughout the community drawing more and more people to church. Solar arrays will be installed in two additional churches/schools in 2012 under the direction of Tim Schmehl, a parishioner of St. John’s Church and engineer employed by GE Energy. Tim says

“It is hard for us, having lived with electricity all our lives, to comprehend how life changing it is for these communities to have lights in their churches and schools. It is an amazing miracle to see how life is transformed by something we take for granted.”

Clean water is high on the EHC’s list of projects. The World Health Organization states



that the number of cholera cases in Haiti is expected to reach 500,000 by the end of the year. In each of the EHC’s partnership locations cholera is a reality and plans are underway to fight this demon head-on by providing dependable potable drinking water. A team, led by Deacon Scott Underhill from St. George’s Church and a Project Engineer with AECOM, will travel to Haiti this coming January to complete the first phase of installing a water system in Corosse, the partnership parish for St. George’s Church. The plan is to install a half-mile line of flexible piping underground to transport water from a natural water seep to the school yard where a distribution station will allow students to wash hands and provide more convenient water to the residents of Corosse. The second phase of the project includes installation of a water purification system to remove bacteria

from the water. Each partnership site presents different challenges that must be overcome, but upon completion this essential project, will help thousands of people on the Central Plateau.

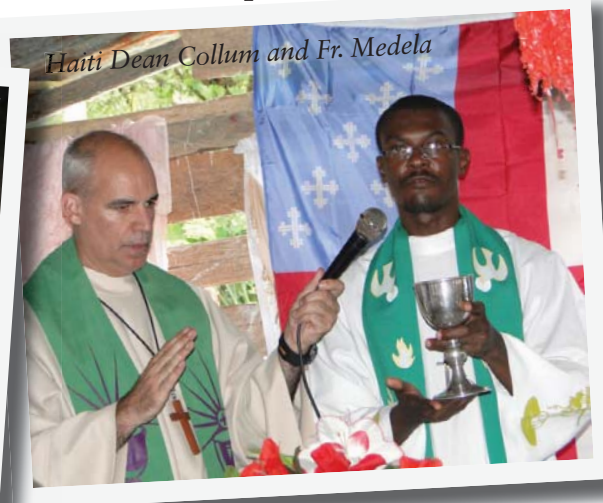
Partners travel to Haiti together sharing great experiences. Dean of Albany's Cathedral, David Collum, recently traveled to Haiti for the first time with Cindy Schmehl, a member of St. John's Church and Executive Director of To Love a Child. Their week-long journey included visiting two orphanages and three partnership sites. For Dean Collum the trip had several goals: to learn more about Haiti, to bring back information to help the Cathedral evaluate joining the coalition, and to bring the love of Jesus Christ to those visited. For Cindy this 8th mission trip

down her cheeks. Her little body was covered in talcum powder. Small insects swarmed around her. Daana suffers from an unknown skin rash that covers nearly all of her body. In many areas the rash resulted in open sores encircled by decaying skin. The child's mother left her in Rantlamouaie with the village nurse because she was no longer able to provide for the child's needs.

Women of the village cared for Daana, bathing her up to six times a day to keep the sores from getting infected. They covered her in talcum powder to keep the insects at bay. They fed and clothed her. They took her to local doctors, but Daana's condition improved only slightly. Cindy and Dean Collum stepped in to help. Arrangements were made for Daana to be taken to the Dominican Republic for advanced medical care. Several weeks after Daana's return to Rantlamouaie, Father Milor reported that Daana was improving day by day. Thank the Lord!



Cindy Schmehl



Haiti Dean Collum and Fr. Medela

to Haiti and Rantlamouaie was focused on maternal health care. Cindy said "All too often giving birth in poor countries like Haiti is not the happiest day of a woman's life but a day filled with pain, complications and uncertainty. To Love a Child, is taking small steps to help. By delivering pre-natal vitamins, "Bundles of Love" sterile home birthing kits and "Bundles of Joy" newborn baby kits pregnant women are given supplies they cannot afford to purchase."

Haiti partnership members often say they meet someone on their mission that touches their heart in a special way. That was the case with "Daana" an incredible 7 year old girl that Dean Collum and Cindy met during their stay in Rantlamouaie. They first spotted Daana sitting on a small wooden chair, her arms folded across her chest, trembling in pain with tears flowing

Upon his return from Haiti Dean Collum said, "I learned a great deal on the trip. It was an intense trip, I believe we can really help, and it is clear that the Lord is active in Haiti."

The Empire Haiti Coalition meets frequently to discuss projects and current issues facing Haiti, particularly the partnership sites under Father Milor's leadership. There is for more members and we encourage anyone who has an interest in the partnership to check us out!

"...What we are really sharing is an eternal Hope through Love. Praise God for this partnership and showing us deeper realities of the Kingdom of Heaven both present and to come" said Deacon Scott Underhill.

For more information contact: Cindy Schmehl at (518) 859-4424 or directoratTLC@aol.com



## “IT’S THE MOST WONDERFUL TIME OF THE YEAR”

By The Rev’d Steven A. Peay, Ph.D.

*“It’s The Most Wonderful Time Of The Year  
With the kids jingle belling*

*And everyone telling you “Be of good cheer”*

*It’s The Most Wonderful Time Of The Year!*

*It’s the hap -happiest season of all*

*With those holiday greetings and gay happy meetings*

*When friends come to call*

*It’s the hap - happiest season of all!”*

Over the course of the next several weeks we’ll hear this 1963 piece by Eddie Pola and George Wylie more than once! As I write this, the term here at Nashotah House is half complete and I marvel at how time seems to pass so quickly these days. I notice, too, that the older I get the more I mark the passing of time not by the calendar, but by the events and seasons that mark the year. For me Advent and Christmas may not be THE most wonderful time of the year (I give that designation to Easter and the celebration of the Resurrection), but there is no question that this is A most wonderful time of the year.

Advent is a season much misunderstood. Some just see it as the “run-up” to Christmas, but Christmas itself was only originally celebrated as the logical “run-up” to Easter. We know that there were celebrations of Advent as early as the fourth century and in the next two it would come into it’s own as a preparation for Christmas and a celebration of Christian hope. The teachers of the early Church, like Leo the

Great, linked the birth of the Lord in Bethlehem to his second coming in glory at the end of the time. Christmas, like Easter, is thus a celebration of God’s love expressed in the Christ and the hope that love and faith holds out to humanity.

The term adventus was borrowed from other religions of the Roman Empire and means “coming,” and over time has come to mean “expectation.” So the season takes us through the experience of Israel longing, waiting, and hoping for the promised Messiah. In Israel’s expectant waiting we should see our own. That’s why some of the music of Advent appears mournful and played in a minor key, because there are times where even our hope is a little subdued as the waiting goes on.

Our world is a sad place, it seems especially so now as the war in Afghanistan continues, the threat of terrorism is no less real, and we experience the uncertainty of economic and societal change. Sometimes it almost seems without hope precisely because we are in a crisis

of faith and love, but this crisis is nothing new – it's as old as humanity itself. When we read the Old Testament we see there the same drama of hope that we face, but what we read there can renew our hope and give us insight into this perennial problem.

What we read in the Old Testament is a record of God's care and compassion for creation and for the people he has called by name and with whom he has entered into covenant. Through the prophets God tells the people that a new heaven and a new earth, and even a new heart for humanity are on the way. And in those pages, many of which we read in the Advent Season, we see the gradual unfolding of God's saving actions as God seeks to renew creation. We wait with Israel, we long, we ache with hope for the time when we will know the Lord and the word written not on tablets, but on our hearts. We sing, "O Come, O Come, Emmanuel" (translated from the Latin for us by that important nineteenth century Anglican scholar John Mason Neale) and we wait for "God With Us."

Ah, but the pay-off is that we wait for what is already present! Yes! We wait for that which is already here – the infamous "already but not

yet" of God's Kingdom. We wait for the fullness, but it is already present to us. So we wait, we hope, we expect with the same gleam in our eyes of a child who knows for certain that he's getting the gift he wants; because he's already found it in the attic! God's compassionate love already embraces us and we're reminded again and again of this through the flesh and blood reality of the living community of faith – just as humanity was embraced by the Word becoming flesh. The Church, God's people, continues the Incarnation, because now we are the Body of Christ. We wait for what is already here, what we pray for in this season is that the Lord open our eyes to the reality that is.

The Church was led to develop this celebration to remember and to deepen in God's saving love. So, as the song says, "It's the most wonderful time of the year." An ancient song may speak the wonder far better, "O Come, All Ye Faithful, Joyful and Triumphant! Come and adore Him, born the King of Angels. O come, let us adore Him, Christ the Lord!"

*Fr. Peay is Associate Professor of Church History at Nashotah House Theological Seminary, Nashotah, Wisconsin, and a regular contributor to The Albany Episcopalian.*



## **EPISCOPAL CHARITIES OF ALBANY OFFERS EYE CARE GRANTS**

Episcopal Charities of Albany offers direct assistance in the form of grants to indigent persons regardless of faith, who are in need of eye care, or who otherwise suffer from eye disorders, and are unable to afford such eye care or necessary related services.

Grants are limited to eye examinations, purchase of eye glasses and special equipment or medication needed by an individual by reason of his or her suffering from eye disease and surgical procedures to restore or maintain normal vision.

Grant awards are limited to a maximum \$1,000 per grant and to those residing within 19 counties of the Episcopal Diocese of Albany (northeastern New York State.)

Those who feel they may qualify for an eye care grant can apply by contacting the Administrator at [ECA@albanydiocese.org](mailto:ECA@albanydiocese.org) or writing to ECA, 68 S. Swan Street Albany, NY 12210, or calling Lay Canon George Marshall at (518) 465-4737 ext. 211.

# ACOLYTES HONORED AT THE CATHEDRAL OF ALL SAINTS

On Saturday, November 19th, the Cathedral of All Saints hosted the 2nd consecutive Albany Diocesan Acolyte Festival. 109 Acolytes from parishes throughout the Diocese, ranging in age from the very young to the more “mature,” were honored for their dedicated service to the church. The long procession of white vestments, church banners, torches and thuribles made for a truly magnificent Grand Eucharist Procession – perceived by many as the beginning of another historic event in the Diocese of Albany.

Highlight of the day was the Presentation of Acolytes when the acolytes reaffirmed their dedication to the service of God. Those being honored for the first time received a newly minted brass pendant designed with the Historic All Saints Bishop’s Cathedra Emblem & the Albany Diocese Shield as a gift from Bishop Love. For those who attended and received a similar pendant at last year’s 2010 Acolyte Festival, a special pin was given them for their continued service.

Again, the Acolyte Festival brought a deep spiritual moment among all being honored this day, especially those who moved forward to receive Communion at the cathedral for their first time. Many appeared filled with awe at what they saw - the high altar, magnificent ceiling, stained glass windows, statues of the Apostles, paintings and sculpted fabric. All contributed to an even greater significance when receiving the Body and Blood of Our Lord and Savior this day.

*[The word acolyte is derived from the Greek word, acolytos, meaning companion, attendant, or helper. Its roots can be found in the Old Testament where the prophet Samuel is found assisting Eli, the Levite priest, and Elisha is seen assisting Elijah the Prophet. Fr. Egan reminded those present that in the early Eastern Orthodox and Catholic Churches, the acolyte was the altar server; even given the rank of minor clergy called the taper-bearer, responsible for bearing lights during processions and liturgical entrances.]*

Participating in the Eucharist was Bishop Love, Celebrant at the Eucharist, and assisted by Bishop Ball, the Cathedral’s Bishop-In-Residence. The Rev. Adam Egan, Rector of St. Stephen’s Church, Delmar, was its preacher. Fr. Egan’s sermon on his comparisons of acolyte service to holy ordination made a pronounced impact on anyone and everyone who ever had the privilege of serving at the Holy Altar.

The afternoon schedule included four workshops; “Holy Smoke”, “Cassock, Copes & Cinctures”, “FUNdamentals of the Eucharist” and “Cathedral Tour”. The Cathedral’s Dean Collum, Cathedral acolytes and staff provided support in making the day a flawless event.

For the many that were privileged to witness or participate in this day’s event, the ride home was certain to be a time for much reflection. We pray that the stories to be told by all who attended this year’s Acolyte Festival will inspire others to join in the service of Our Lord.

- *The Editor*

## Festival "through the Lens"



# REFLECTIONS OF A PARISH PRIEST THIS CHRISTMAS

By The Reverend Cn. A. William Cooper, Jr.

**A** primary issue in spiritual development is the tension between fear and trust. Fear leads to self preoccupation and eventuates in the greed which cannot consider the needs of others. It sees its world as a place of scarcity where one must acquire and possess one's security. Trust, on the other hand, sees its world as a place of abundance, and it experiences the joy of generosity.

This tension will reveal itself in the manner in which Christmas is lived out in one's life. Greed will view Christmas from a perspective of what one will receive. We all begin our spiritual walk as little children, "I hope I get this or that." As adults our quest to acquire may become more nuanced, "I hope you appreciate what I spent on your gift." On the other hand, a Christmas born of trust will experience the joy of generous giving in gratitude of the loving relationships God has developed in our lives.

The above has brought me to a joyful gratitude for the congregation I now serve. St. Thomas of Tupper Lake is the most secure and confident, not to mention happy, group of Christians I have ever known. It's not that we have loads of money, nor is our average Sunday attendance anything to brag about; it's just that we don't allow such things to preoccupy our attention. Why this is has brought to mind two tentative conclusions.

First; like many small and isolated Adirondack communities there had developed a sense that "we are in this together", as

contrasted with the "you're on your own" political and social climate in more populated areas. This is especially prevalent in Tupper Lake with its history of care for the developmentally disadvantaged. There is a compassion for the other that is resident in the DNA of this community. There is a security that if you are in need of help, it will be provided. For example, two years ago a fund had been created among the area villages to assist those who may need help in heating their homes during the winter. The people of Tupper Lake contributed four times as much as the other villages combined. People feel secure enough to be generous. Tupper Lake is a good place to be if you fall into trouble. St. Thomas folk participate in this generosity. Every Sunday we set out two plates for our offerings (St. Thomas' worshipers come forward to make their offering.) The smaller plate is for our parish budget support; always enough, seldom too much. The larger plate is for our weekly mission offering which supports the local Food Pantry, the Mudge's missionary ministry, our area Hospice, response to emergency appeals (i.e. droughts, floods, tornados, etc.), and the Parish Assistance Fund which is available to people in the church and community who have financial need. Likewise, we hold five benefit events, usually suppers, without charge, where donations may be offered for a local community need (Christmas toys for children, our local clothing and household depository for families of modest means, etc.).

Secondly; I believe that to be part of this congregation is to experience the security and power of Christ's resurrection. Like the number

of persons I have known who have had a “near death” experience and have come through to a life of confidence, trust, and deep faith in God, so too St. Thomas’ had a time when death was imminent. In the 1980’s St. Thomas dwindled to about a half dozen souls. The church building was sold and there was little hope to be had. Blessedly we are part of a larger diocesan family. The bishop requested the state chaplain to the developmentally disabled, an Episcopal priest to provide services for the remnant in a public facility. The tiny group met in the basement of the library for over a decade. Under the ministry of Fr. Edgar LaCombe it grew to a point that it could afford to provide a rectory and build a most attractive and practical worship and fellowship facility on land donated by a parishioner. When I arrived as priest in charge the congregation was debt free, confident, spiritually vibrant and secure enough in the provision of God to enjoy generosity. It’s a fun place to serve. Our vestry meetings are full of joy, levity and laughter. The memory of our Lord’s provision through the “valley of the shadow of death” has brought forth a faith that God will bring us through whatever challenges we may face tomorrow.

One of our seasonal parishioners is the Warden of a somewhat troubled and insecure parish in western New York. When he experienced the light, lively and joyous mood of our vestry he exclaimed, “I have to get this on video. My vestry will never believe me if I try to tell them how you are so full of delight!”

Because of St. Thomas’ confident and joyous generosity I have been enabled to live a less fearful and self-possessed life. God has ministered his love to me through the life of his people. The love of God and trust in His provision does indeed cast out fear (1 John 4:18) and enable a spirit of generosity to inhabit the life of a community.

Is Christmas a season which comes and goes, or is Christmas the celebration of what has become foundational in our life together?

The Body of Christ is here to release us from the fear of scarcity and empower in us the joy of confident generosity. Are we growing spiritually? One benchmark is: Are we growing in generosity as a congregation and, as such, enabling our parishioners to be released from worry and fear to find the joy of Christmas (Immanuel, God with us!) all year long?

*Fr. “Bill” Cooper is Vicar of St. Thomas’ Church, Tupper Lake*

## UPCOMING DIOCESAN EVENTS

### January, 2012

- 3-6 Ordination Exams – CTK SLC
- 7 Institution New Rector – Church of the Good Shepherd, Canajoharie (Mtr Ogden)
- 8 Institution New Rector – St. John’s, Troy (Fr Schlossberg)
- 10-11 Clergy Leadership Seminar – CTK SLC
- 21 Parish Leadership Conference – Malone
- 28 Parish Leadership Conference – Oneonta

### February, 2012

- 5 Parish Leadership Conference – Cathedral of All Saints, Albany
- 22 Ash Wednesday

### March, 2012

- 23-24 Lay Employee Planning for Tomorrow Conference – Albany
- 22-25 Men’s Cursillo Weekend

### SAVE THE DATE!

June 8-10, 2012  
The 144th Convention of the Diocese of Albany



# Christ the King

Christ the King  
Ministries for Youth

*“Train up a child in the way he should go;  
even when he is old he will not depart from it.”*



These words from Proverbs 22:6 speak to the Covenant God made with Abraham “that he may command his children and his household after him to keep the way of the Lord by doing righteousness and justice...” (Genesis 18:19) Brandii and I have three children under the age of ten and must admit that although we work prayerfully to teach them the way they should go, we often do not know if our efforts are or will be effective. Yet then we hear our seven year old singing parts of *Glory to God in the Highest* in the bathtub and know our Lord is at work!

In the joy and frustrations of raising children, it is easy to underestimate the Holy Spirit’s work in and through them. One of our tasks, whether parents or family or parishioners, is to teach our Lord’s righteousness to the children around us giving thanks to all the Holy Spirit is doing in and through their lives. Discipleship is a life-long endeavor, one we adults must encourage from birth.

The youth ministries at Christ the King are committed to helping disciple the young people of our diocese and beyond. I am pleased to announce that Father Tyler Slade and Windy Clark have worked collaboratively to refocus our youth ministries efforts from one themed *Building Community in Christ* to one themed ***Discipleship in Christ***. To this end, Windy will concentrate on the localized outreach of daycare, after school and Beaver Cross Day Camp, and Father Tyler will incorporate the Beaver Cross Overnight Camps into the comprehensive diocesan youth ministry initiative.

From the infants in our King’s Kids Childcare to the young adults engaged in our Youth Ministry Internships, the focus is Discipleship. Our outreach through the programs and ministry leaders at Christ the King and the parish youth ministry assistance offered by Father Tyler are invaluable resources for young people. They are eager to help our diocesan parishes. I encourage you to contact Father Tyler and take advantage of the resources God has provided through Christ the King for your parish. As we work together to train children in the *Way* they should go, I pray our Lord will use us to disciple every child that they may recognize the Holy Spirit working in their lives, grow to know Jesus as Lord and Savior, and like Abraham, one day pass this gift on to their children.

Faithfully,  
Matt Baker  
Canon Director of CtK

Christ the King  
Spiritual Life Center  
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Greenwich, NY 2834  
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Healing Center: ext 202  
Youth Ministry: ext 305  
Program Registration: ext 112

## Beaver Cross Overnight Camp

Program	Date	Grades	*Rates
Discipleship Camp	June 24-29	9-12	\$405
Beaver Bound	June 27-29	K-2	\$120
Community Camp 1	July 1-6	3-5	\$405
Community Camp 2	July 8-13	3-5	\$405
Community Camp 3	July 15-20	6-8	\$405
Community Camp 4	July 22-27	6-8	\$405
Community Camp 5	July 29- Aug 3	9-12	\$405
Community Camp 6	Aug 5-10	9-12	\$405

Dear Brothers and Sisters in Christ,

I am very excited for this opportunity to share with you what the Lord is doing with our youth in the Diocese. From Beaver Cross Camp, to diocesan retreats, to deanery wide gatherings, to weekly parish bible study, worship and prayer meetings, to a new internship program, there is a lot going on, and we would love for you to get involved! And so, with everything that follows in this article, if there is an announcement about which you would like more information or an upcoming event in which you would like to participate, please contact me through the information provided below. Additionally, if you would like your parish to hear more about Beaver Cross and our diocesan youth ministry, we would love to send a representative to your church. Until then, the Lord bless you and keep you.

Yours in Christ,  
Fr. Tyler Slade  
Diocesan Youth Director and  
Beaver Cross Overnight Camp Director

We are already looking ahead to the 2012 summer camp season! In this our 5<sup>th</sup> season of Day camp, Windy Clark will take the lead of the Day camp program once again this year. The goal is to help the children build a strong Christian faith along with self esteem, great memories and friendships that will last a lifetime. We do this through worship, team building and programming in a safe and fun environment.

Early bird special! Register by December 16<sup>th</sup> and receive a \$30 discount and a Beaver in a Can to put under the tree! We also have gift certificates available. Call to register today!

As written in Mark 10:13-16 "And they were bringing children to him that he might touch them, and the disciples rebuked them. But when Jesus saw it, he was indignant and said to them, "Let the children come to me; do not hinder them, for to such belongs the kingdom of God. Truly, I say to you, whoever does not receive the kingdom of God like a child shall not enter it." And he took them in his arms and blessed them, laying his hands on them."

### Beaver Cross Day Camp Schedule 2012

Program	Date	Grades	*Rates
Week 1	July 2-6	K-7	\$225
Week 2	July 9-13	K-7	\$225
Week 3	July 16-20	K-7	\$225
Week 4	July 23-27	K-7	\$225
Week 5	July 30- Aug 3	K-7	\$225
Week 6	Aug 6-10	K-7	\$225
Week 7	Aug 13-17	K-7	\$225
Week 8	Aug 20-24	K-7	\$225

### Christmas Special! -

Sign up for camp before December 25th and receive \$30 off each week (\$20 off Beaver Bound week) plus a great gift of your choosing to open Christmas morning.

What better gift to give a child than the chance to spend a fun-filled week of adventure at Beaver Cross and, Lord willing, to come to know their Lord and Savior in a new and/ or deeper way?

**Beaver Cross Summer Camp 2012-** This past summer we were privileged to host campers from all over the Diocese who came to Beaver Cross seeking fun, adventure, and a taste of life to the full, and the reports from parents and clergy alike are that they got just that, and more! Amidst all the fun and adventure, the Lord moved powerfully in the lives of our youth. Perhaps the greatest illustration of that work is the fact that among the young people that attended, the overwhelming majority committed or recommitted their lives to Jesus Christ to be their Lord and Savior.

With that being said, we have begun the search for our summer 2012 staff; overnight and day camp counselors, kitchen and dining staff, maintenance crew, etc. We are also very thankful to the clergy who faithfully gave a week of their lives to serve as Chaplains to bring salt and light to the camp last year, and are always eager to receive new clergy to share in the great work that the Lord is doing with our youth.

**Beaver Cross Open House,  
April 29<sup>th</sup> - Come tour the camp, get to know the staff and get a taste of Beaver Cross life for a day!**



*The Diocese of Albany is One Church fulfilling the Great Commandment and Great Commission, moving from membership to discipleship; equipping, emboldening and sending disciples to make disciples.*

*-Diocesan Vision*

### Schedule of Publication for The Albany Episcopalian

The Albany Episcopalian is printed four times a year. Publication is scheduled the months of March, May, September and December.

Submissions for consideration must be received prior to the first Monday of the month before publication. News items of diocesan interest are welcome, and should sent to the Diocesan Office at 68 S. Swan St., Albany, NY 12210, in care of Editor or transmitted via e-mail to: TAEeditor@albanydiocese.org.

### WEB NEWS

Visit the Diocesan website for the most current news, upcoming events, history, key contacts, constitution and canons, parish and clergy directories, and other subjects. Access may be made by logging on to: [www.albanyepiscopaldiocese.org](http://www.albanyepiscopaldiocese.org)



The Albany Episcopalian, Diocesan Office  
68 South Swan Street, Albany, NY 12210

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## BISHOP LOVE'S VISITATION SCHEDULE

### January, 2012

- 8 St. Stephen's Church, Delmar
- 15 St. Paul's Church, Keeseville
- 22 St. Mark's Church, Malone
- 29 St. Christopher's Church, Cobleskill

### February, 2012

- 5 All Saints Church, Round Lake
- 12 St. Paul's Church, Albany
- 26 Christ Church, Ballston Spa

### March, 2012

- 4 St. Augustine's Church, Ilion
- 14-22 House of Bishops Spring Meeting
- 25 St. John's Church, Cohoes