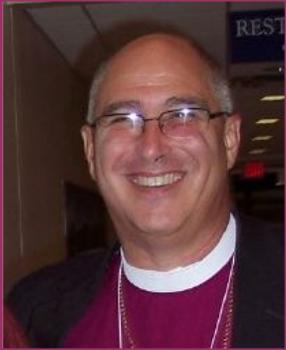


# Koinonia



Episcopal Diocese of West Virginia

November / December 2008



Dear Brothers and Sisters in Christ,

There once seemed to be a time when the Church took a pause from the busy-ness of Church work. I was originally told that 'we slowed down during the summer.' I never saw that happen, as the Summer was a time for preparing for the new program year.

I was then told that Advent was a time of 'slowing down,' as it was a time when the Church told her members to not get caught up in the Christmas rush. That never happened either. Rather it was a time for Stewardship 'follow up,' planning for the Christmas Liturgy, the Children's Pageant, and closing out the year-end reports. (Annual Meeting came right upon all of this, thus making it an even busier time.)

The times haven't changed.

As we look toward Christmas, we in the Church are reminded of so many other things that are taking place. We have the Stewardship/Every Member Canvass Campaign so that we can plan the budget for the coming year, our Advent programs and events that remind us all to slow down, and many other things that must be handled at this time.

In addition, with the current dismal economic climate, the needs and requests from more and more people are becoming known. Various soup kitchens and homeless shelters throughout West Virginia and the United States are already experiencing exponential increases in the demands for services. More and more people are stepping forward and asking for assistance, and the Church is one of the first places that people seek help.

It is such a time as now — when our focus is on welcoming the newborn Christ into our midst — that we are reminded to welcome the stranger into our midst as well, for it is in that welcome that we receive Christ. The Gospel of just a couple of weeks ago reminds us that when we 'do this (feed, visit, welcome or clothe) the least of these, we have done it to Christ Himself.'

It is normal for our society to look to the Church at times of crisis and at times of hope. Both of these times have converged during this season to provide us with the optimal opportunity to reach out our hands in love, to welcome the stranger, the lone traveler or the broken and disenfranchised. For it is in doing these things that we have welcomed our Lord Christ into our midst.

We as the Church are called to stretch beyond ourselves and to give all that we have so that others might share in the life of abundant grace.

May this Advent and Christmas Season be a time of growth and stretching for all.

In Christ,



The Rt. Rev. W. Michie Klusmeyer  
7th Bishop of West Virginia

# News Around the Diocese

## *Newsmakers and Events*

Mark your calendars now for the first **Disciples Net** Workshop of 2009. The theme is "Education, the bridge between Tradition and Reformation." This one day workshop is scheduled for April 18 at Christ Church in Clarksburg. Details will be available soon.

**Hollie Mitchell** encourages everyone interested in the **Altar Guild** to send suggestions and comments to her at [WMitch8315@aol.com](mailto:WMitch8315@aol.com). She is planning a meeting at St. Mark's, St. Albans, for Spring 2009 and welcomes your input. The date of the meeting will be announced soon.

**St. Paul's, Sistersville**, reports that in anticipation of the up-coming Holiday Season many exterior decorating plans are under-way. They want to extend special thanks and appreciation to the Wright siblings who most generously donated beautiful new white and green altar hangings, as well as a new Jacobean Frontal, in memory of their parents Bob and Emily Wright, long-standing and active members of our church.

Carol Foose and other volunteers organized a Baked Potato Bar to raise funds for the **Church Periodical Club** on CPC Sunday, October 12, at **St. Matthew's, Wheeling**. For a donation of any size, patrons received a baked potato and their choice of yummy toppings.



The members of **St. Stephen's, Romney**, celebrated All Hallow's Eve with the service from the Book of Occasional Services, followed by welcoming the students from the School for the Deaf and Blind to trick-or-treat. The service, conducted by Harry Garvin and Kelly Messick, was well attended and the treats were well received.



### **"Reduce, Reuse, Recycle"**

Here's a great way to contribute to cleaning up the environment and make a contribution to the Millennium Development Goals. Handy, recyclable shopping bags, complete with the Diocesan seal, are available for your next trip to the store. How about ordering some to sell at your next coffee hour? Suggested contribution is \$5.00 per bag, with the check made out to the Diocese of WV and 'MDG's' noted on the memo line. We will ship them to you free of charge. Please order in quantities of ten. Contact Marsha Klusmeyer at [canusign@aol.com](mailto:canusign@aol.com) or Mollie Bailey at [mabailley@wvdiocese.org](mailto:mabailley@wvdiocese.org).

Clergy Day: January 13  
Christ Church, Fairmont

### **A Winter Health Tip from the Health Ministries Commission**

FLU SEASON IS HERE. If you have not had your flu vaccine for this season, get it immediately! Generally, you can contact your County Health Department and obtain the vaccination there if your doctor does not have it available in his office.

Also, if you have never had a pneumonia vaccine and are over 65 get it as soon as possible. If you have had the pneumonia vaccine before age 65, when you turn 65 you need to have another injection. If you are 65 or older and have had the pneumonia vaccine since turning 65, you are in great shape and will not need another vaccine.

These two vaccines are the greatest thing that has happened to our population in a long time. With these we are less likely to contract some of the more serious illnesses that seem to hang around all winter. So take care of yourselves and see your physician at the first sign of illness this winter.

## Mountain Grace V

September 12-13, 2008



The Rev. Kent Higgins and Bishop Mike Klusmeyer; Jack and Anna Lou Sturgeon, Ann Burr and Jane Crist; Anna Lou Sturgeon

### Fr. Zach Visits Saint Matthews, Charleston

Saint Matthews transformed Mathes Hall into a Bistro for the evening of Saturday, November 15th, for its first On-site Progressive Dinner, with special guest Fr. Zachary Drennen attending. Around 50 parishioners enjoyed a restaurant quality five



course meal prepared by Saint Matthews' chefs. They pulled numbers to direct them to a new table between each course to enjoy the fellowship of new friends each time. The Youth Group, dressed in tux shirts and bow ties, waited on the tables and helped serve in return for tips, \$170 of which they presented to Fr. Zach.



The next morning before presiding over Children's Chapel, Father Zach preached to both congregations about his missionary work in Kenya. He delighted the children with a slide show before administering communion. He then socialized with parishioners during a potluck luncheon and met with the Youth Group to lay the foundation for a relationship that everyone hopes will develop and grow.

Fr. Bill blessed 36 gift filled shoe boxes as St. Matthews' offering to *Operation Christmas Child*.



### A Gift of Life

By: Lena G. Hoke, Lay Administrator  
Greenbrier-Monroe Episcopal Ministries

As most of you know, my son's father, Eddie, has been on the prayer list because he was in desperate need of a liver transplant. His liver had become damaged due to the Hepatitis C virus that he contracted thirty years ago through a blood transfusion.

On the 20<sup>th</sup> of October, we received some "God is awesome" news! He received a new liver and only had to stay in the hospital for a mere week before going home. He was very anxious to see his son again and make up for not being well enough to spend quality time with him over the past year.

If there is anyone out there who believes that God is not an awesome healer who still answers prayers, just remember this story. Eddie was not next in line for this liver, but he was given it because his doctor was given the choice as to whom he wanted to give the liver and he chose Eddie. For me that is more than enough proof that God has been listening to everyone's prayers for my young son's father to be healed.

I hope that everyone will continue to keep Eddie in their prayers as he continues to recover from this life-saving operation, as well as the family of the donor who lost his life to give Ted's dad a second chance at his.



## The Shift to Discipleship

By Canon Donald Vinson

We show up at church one day because we recognize that we have needs. We need God—to give thanks, to petition, to praise. We need the company of other Christian people—for friendship, for comfort, for encouragement. We need instruction, inspiration, and guidance. We need the church.

For many, that need motivates faithful participation for decades. They regularly attend worship, and maybe other activities as well, and contribute what they perceive to be a “fair share” for the support of the congregation, year after year. For others, once the need is assuaged, at least temporarily, they drift away, until the next period of need arises. Every congregation has members like these, and every congregation needs them.

But for another group, something else happens, a miraculous shift of perspective. These members begin to work toward meeting the needs of others. They sing in the choir, serve as Eucharistic ministers and lectors. They work as greeters and ushers, as teachers and youth leaders. They organize and lead Bible study, discussion, or prayer groups. They lead as vestry members, wardens, and treasurers. They organize outreach projects, rummage sales, work parties, supper groups, and church dinners. They host coffee hours and shepherd newcomers. They give generously, thankfully, and sacrificially. Not satisfied with being believers in Jesus only, they become his disciples. And at some point, they notice that as they serve, their own spiritual needs are being met, too.



### *Christmas Past*

**Olde St. John's, Colliers**, received a special Christmas gift last year. At the suggestion of two young ladies, it was decided to get a new nativity set for the church. Soon others joined the search for the perfect set, and a large (3' tall) set was found. At least twelve former acolytes, many of them now living far away, contributed to purchase this wonderful gift in memory of two special people, Ron Cross and Linda Haught, who had been very influential as mentors and role models for this group.



Happy Holidays!

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