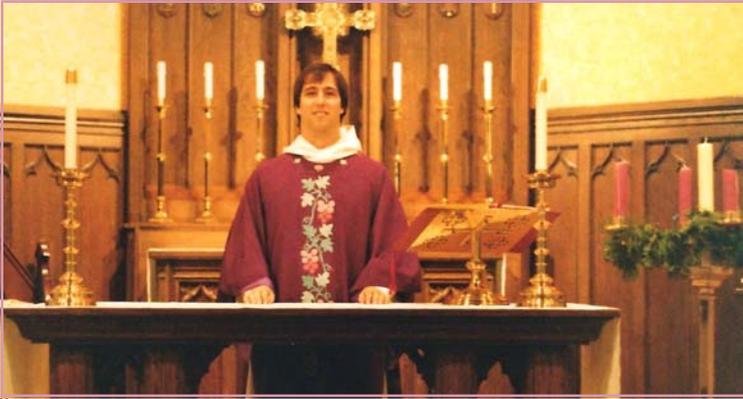


# Koinonia

Episcopal Diocese of West Virginia

Fall 2012



## Before he was Bishop

December 14, 1980: Father Mike Klusmeyer in his first parish. His ordination to the priesthood was the day before, being the Feast of Saint Lucy.

Dear Brothers and Sisters in Christ,

Many years ago, when I was in college, I continued my membership in my 'home' parish. It was a small, struggling Mission congregation that needed the help and support of everyone. I'm sure that someone along the way determined that the best way to raise money during the Every Member Canvass was to indeed contact every member...including college kids who were away at the time.

I remember that an impassioned appeal was made to help the Church, and I felt compelled to sign my pledge card and to support it. The pledge letter said that even the smallest of pledges was needed and appreciated!

Being a college student, with extremely limited resources, I understood that 'minimal amount stuff'. I pledged \$1.00 per week! I signed my pledge card and sent it back.

In the middle of April, the following year, I received my quarterly statement. It said that I had pledged \$1.00 a week, so my total pledge to date was \$13.00, of which I had given nothing. Total due: \$13.00.

I looked at my check book, and my other resources, and realized I didn't have \$13.00. So, I think I sent off a check for \$5.00, hoping to do better.

Three months later, I received my second quarterly statement, saying that I had pledged \$1.00 per week, I had given \$5.00, leaving a balance of \$21.00. I didn't have \$21.00, and no way to raise it or give it. So I tucked the statement away...hoping something would change.

It didn't.

Three months later, the statement came, saying that I owed \$34.00, and then the final statement came, saying that I owed \$47.00. I threw them all away, and prayed for forgiveness. (In full disclosure, I did contribute some to my local college parish...but it was sporadic and minimal, as well.)

I went off to seminary, and Marsha and I threw a bit of money in the plate when we could, but we were struggling to meet bills and pay tuition...so it was tight.

And then...

And then I got out of seminary, and came to my first parish as the Curate. Both my Rector and the Diocesan Stewardship Commission talked about commitments and about priorities. It was probably the first time I had heard those two words spoken so clearly with regard to my pledge to the Church. It wasn't about being 'an employee' of the Church. What I understood clearly was, if I believe in what the Church is doing...if I believe that God has truly blessed me with all that I have,

*Continued on page 3...*

## Youth Ministry News

by Stephen Day



The 2012 Safe Haven Retreat at Jackson's Mill Conference Center near Weston: Not included in the photo were Chris Dyer, the Rev. Josh Saxe, the Rev. Anne West and Stephen Day.

Youth ministry in the Diocese of WV recently celebrated a milestone with a new event called Safe Haven. This retreat was based on some elements of the popular Episcopal retreat program "Happening." A group of five young people and five adults designed the program for high school students based on experience of numerous youth events and attending a "Happening" retreat in the Diocese of Southern Virginia last year.

Safe Haven was held Nov. 9 – 11 at Jackson's Mill Conference Center and was a rousing success! We had 21 youth present from throughout the diocese and all had a great experience. Plans are beginning now for next year's Safe Haven Retreat.

There are a number of youth events planned for this coming winter and spring. The first two events will be follow-ups to successful events held in the past – regional diocesan ski retreats! The first ski retreat will be February 1 - 3 based at Trinity, Shepherdstown, with skiing at Whitetail Mountain Resort. The next weekend, February 8 – 10, there will be a ski trip based at St. Stephen's, Beckley, with skiing at Winterplace Ski Resort. Both of these retreats will be for middle and high school students and will run from Friday night after dinner until Sunday morning, when the participants will worship with their host congregations. More information will be published soon.

In March, we will be participating in the 2013 Provincial Youth Event (PYE). This is an exciting opportunity for high school students to come together with other youth from the 13 dioceses of Province III. PYE enables our youth to see how broad and diverse the Episcopal Church is while still sharing common core beliefs and worship. The 2013 PYE will be held at a unique facility in Maryland that offers rock walls, bouldering, zip lines, high and low ropes courses and more. You can learn more about the facility by visiting their website at [www.northbayweekend.com](http://www.northbayweekend.com). Details about the event will be available soon.

Another new event will be a middle school retreat that will take place on April 12 - 13 at Trinity, Parkersburg. This will be an opportunity for middle school students to get involved with diocesan youth ministry, make new friends and deepen their faith. We are very excited about this new event and will be sharing more information about it in the coming months.

So there is a lot of energy, with many exciting events being planned for our diocesan youth! Stay up-to-date with the diocesan website ([www.wvdiocese.org](http://www.wvdiocese.org)) and the WV Mission list serve. If you have questions about diocesan youth ministry, please contact our youth and young adult ministers: Jason Beschinski (304-541-7190 or [jbeschinski@wvdiocese.org](mailto:jbeschinski@wvdiocese.org)) and Stephen Day (304-633-6454 or [sd@wvdiocese.org](mailto:sd@wvdiocese.org)).

### Summary of Upcoming Youth Events

February 1 – 3	Northern/Eastern Ski Retreat at Trinity, Shepherdstown
February 8 – 10	Southern/Central Ski Retreat at St. Stephen's, Beckley
March (dates TBD)	Provincial Youth Event at North Bay Adventure Camp in North East, MD
April 12-13	Middle School Retreat Trinity, Parkersburg



## Small Employer Health Care Tax Credit for 2012: Is Your Church or Organization Eligible?

From David Ramkey, Diocesan CFO

**What is the Small Employer Health Care Tax Credit?** The legislation that we refer to as Healthcare Reform created a refundable tax credit as an incentive for small employers to provide health insurance coverage to their employees. The credit was available beginning in the 2010 tax year and will be available through 2016, although beginning in 2014, the credit will be available only to employers that purchase their coverage through the health insurance exchanges. We will keep you informed as that time approaches.

**Who is Eligible to Take Advantage of the Tax Credit for 2012?** In general, to take advantage of the tax credit for 2012, you must: 1) employ 25 or fewer full-time equivalent employees (FTE); 2) pay average annual wages of less than \$50,000 per employee; and 3) pay premiums or contributions for each employee enrolled in the healthcare plan in an amount equal to a uniform percentage (minimum 50%) of the cost of the coverage.

**What is the Amount of the Tax Credit?** For tax-exempt employers (such as churches), the credit is generally up to 25% of premiums or contributions paid, limited to the amount of certain payroll taxes paid and the average premium in the small group market in your state. The full amount of the credit is available only if you had 10 or fewer FTEs with average wages of less than \$25,000. The credit is phased out as your FTE count and average wages increase. IRS Form 8941 and the instructions will help you determine the amount of your tax credit.

**How do you Claim the Tax Credit?** After you have calculated the amount of your **refundable** tax credit, if any, on Form 8941, you can claim the credit by filing an IRS Form 990-T, Exempt Organization Business Income Tax Return. This form must be filed by May 15, 2013. You may request an extension of time to file the Form 990-T.

If you have questions regarding any aspect of this credit, please call David Ramkey at the Diocesan office (304) 344-3597 or email him at [dramkey@wvdiocese.org](mailto:dramkey@wvdiocese.org).



These photos are from 'Encountering God's Handiwork,' a weekend retreat presented by ConneXions in August. The Rev. John Rice led participants as they discovered new ways to meet God in the midst of life.

Check the ConneXions page of the Diocesan website ([www.wvdiocese.org](http://www.wvdiocese.org)) and WV Mission in 2013 for new Offerings from ConneXions.



*Bishop Klusmeyer, continued from page 1...*

then my first obligation is to give back. From the first paycheck that I received from Grace Church, I immediately realized that the first check - a check that I would notice was being written - would be to the Church, and to other outside sources of ministry that were important.

For 32 years now, it has always been the same.

The question is not about 'giving what you can afford,' but rather 'giving because you believe.'

At this time of the Church Year, stewardship sermons and programs are up and running...it is time to put the question to each and every person: "In what do you believe?" If we believe in the work and ministry of the Church of Christ, then our giving should reveal that.

May Christ guide you in your decisions.

Faithfully,

The Rt. Rev. W. Michie Klusmeyer  
Bishop



## FUEL THE MINISTRY ENGINE

By Canon Donald Vinson

Clergy work in and for their congregations. Pastoral care, sermon preparation, planning, meetings, study—all these things take time. Any day spent outside the parish traveling and meeting, at conferences or retreats, is time spent away from the business of the congregation, which, after all, is generally footing the clergy travel and salary bill. Therefore, such time away should be avoided! The congregation deserves its money's worth—who can argue against that?

Actually, I can, and I will. To give any congregation its money's worth in ordained ministry, every warden and vestry should be encouraging—even insisting on—proper clergy self-care, personally and professionally. That means clergy taking their appointed days off, and their time for vacation, with proper planning for emergency coverage in their absence. It also includes time and funding for stimulating continuing education experiences, and also for spiritual reflection, prayer, and study, not only in an annual spiritual retreat, but also as a part of daily, weekly, routine life-style. These things cannot be skipped without peril, and there is no making up lost opportunities.

For ministry (clergy or laity), deprivation of the spirit is hazardous, even fatal, to the enterprise. Actually DOING the work of ministry can be, in some ways, nurturing to the spirit. In other ways, however, it also uses up spiritual and emotional resources, which must be replenished somehow, for effective ministry to be maintained.

Some workers use their physical strength to do their work. These people need nutrition and rest to recoup before throwing themselves again into their labors. Some workers use their knowledge and their intellect. They need to rest their brains, and perhaps exercise their bodies, in order to restore their ability to think and remember again the next day. Clergy do use both physical and mental faculties (one hopes). But more importantly, the work of ministry runs off of emotional and spiritual resources. Being with people in times of either great joy or great sorrow carries great responsibility, and is stressful! Anyone who does that work must be refreshed in spirit and in emotional security in order to maintain the ability to function.

Support of spouse, family, friends, and congregation are all essential to that recovery. So is time with peers—the one group who certainly understand fully both the highs and lows of parish ministry. If those of you who are vestry members and wardens in our congregations want your clergy to be effective, stable, capable leaders for your congregation (and get the congregation's money's worth out of their endeavors), you would be well advised to support—even insist on—their participation in clergy days, clergy conferences, Fresh Start gatherings, ordinations, celebrations of new ministry, renewal of vows—all of the opportunities for collegial support and renewal that may seem so time-consuming, but which are, in fact, essential to the productive life of ministry.

We all have to feed the engine.



*Have a Blessed Christmas and New Year!*

Koinonia, Diocese of WV, PO Box 5400, Charleston, WV 25361  
Email: [mbailey@wvdiocese.org](mailto:mbailey@wvdiocese.org); Phone: 304-344-3597; Fax: 304-343-3295