

Koinonia

Episcopal Diocese of West Virginia

Winter 2013



Sandscrest: Nourishing the Soul, Body and Mind

Many of you have experienced the unique charms of Sandscrest at one or more of the Diocesan meetings that are held there each year. Entering Sandscrest is often described as walking into a mixture of old-world simplicity and modern conveniences...the best of both worlds.

Located in Wheeling, Sandscrest offers a lovely setting with gracious accommodations and comfortable rooms for workshops, retreats, conferences and celebrations. The property consists of 285 acres of rolling hills and beautiful lawns and is available to all religious denominations and non-profit organizations.

In addition to the beautiful home and grounds, Sandscrest offers an excellent dining experience. Sarah Lydick, the Director of Sandscrest, studied haute cuisine in Paris, and her delicious gourmet meals have become one of Sandscrest's biggest draws.

Harry and Helen Sands, the original owners of Sandscrest, were active in the Episcopal Church and wanted their beautiful and beloved home to be used by the Church to benefit all. Today, the Sandscrest Foundation remains dedicated to preserving and maintaining this singular wish of the Sands family.

While the Sands Trust has provided generous funds historically, we can no longer depend on it to sustain Sandscrest's financial needs. Thus, Bishop Klusmeyer recently sent a letter to many of you in which he asks for help in this area. We hope that you will prayerfully consider his request for donations, and that those of you who are involved in planning retreats and workshops will consider Sandscrest as a possible location.

To learn more about Sandscrest, visit their website at www.sandscrest.com or call Sarah Lydick at 304-277-3022. Schedule your visit soon and enjoy a relaxing and satisfying experience for your soul, body and mind.

News from Around the Diocese



Within the last year a new Children's Choir formed at **Trinity Church, Parkersburg**. Recently, the choir sang at the Christmas Eve family service, and are rehearsing for the 2013 Palm Sunday service, as well as other Holy Days that fall in May. The Choir is under the direction of Adult Choir members Barbara Full and Cathy Martin. The group of young singers marks the first time in nearly 50 years that Trinity has had a Children's Choir, so the congregation is excited and energy is high on the Sundays that they participate during worship.

Youth from around the Diocese met at **St. Stephen's Church, Beckley**, February 8-10 for a fun weekend at Winterplace Ski Resort. Not pictured in the photo is Stephen Day, who coordinated the outing with Jason Beschinski (front right).



Bishop Mike joined Mother Julie Murdoch and the congregation at **St. Thomas à Becket, Morgantown**, for the burning of the Christmas greens on Epiphany Sunday, January 6, 2013.



A Christmas Walk

Over 200 people from the community joined in *A Christmas Walk*, visiting seven historic churches in Hinton. They experienced the story, music and joy of the Christmas season. More than 700 luminaries lit the paths between the churches. The event was sponsored by *Just Christians*, a new ecumenical group in Summers County that was called together by The Rev. Nancy Martin of **Ascension Church, Hinton**.



Beckley Episcopalians and Lutherans Join for Lent Observance

Episcopalians and Lutherans in Beckley observed the season of Lent together with a series of programs exploring Christian spiritual practices.

Members of St. Luke Lutheran Church and St. Stephen's Episcopal Church, Beckley, began observing Lent with Ash Wednesday services and will continue to meet together on Wednesday evenings until Easter in March.

"Each Wednesday we will meet over supper, alternating between the two churches," said the Rev. Jon White of **St. Stephen's, Beckley**. "The program is designed to be interactive as well as informative. Following each program, there will be worship opportunities to enter into the night in peace and in the presence of God."

The program will explore practices such as Centering Prayer, Lectio Divina, the Ignatian Examen, Labryinths and more.

"We are happy once again to join with our other brothers and sisters as we examine the many ways we are similar and respect each other for our differences," said the Rev. Wanda Childs, pastor of St. Luke Lutheran.

"Lawrbucks", anyone???

The Lawrencefield Parish, Wheeling, has turned a corner of their undercroft into "Lawrbucks," a place for coffee, conversation and fellowship.



CHOOSING GOOD

By Canon Donald Vinson

Some Christians see life as one big test, pass or fail. "If you die today, where will you spend eternity?" I don't see it that way. I see life as first of all, a gift and blessing. Included in that gift is a whole series of opportunities to choose: to choose life over death, forgiveness over revenge, compassion over indifference—to choose God's way of love, or our own way of transient self-interest. Of course, there are consequences to our choices, and there are lessons to be carried forward from each one, if we will but attend to them.

Here end the theological ruminations.

Right here in West Virginia, God has presented us with a magnificent opportunity to choose, in the award of a \$24,000 Roanridge Fund grant, for expanding our Reading Camps program across our diocese. We will be able this year to multiply many times the number of children, hampered by slow reading progress, whose lives we can permanently impact for good, through literacy coaching and the priceless commodity of caring, supportive, encouraging, valuing personal attention and modeling.

I am not saying it will be totally without sacrifice on our part. The grant won't pay for everything, and each center will need to raise some funding of its own. The number of volunteers needed will be at least equal to the number of children served (up to about 18 per center). Many hours of planning and preparation will be required, not to mention the intensive week of direct work with the children. But this is the true origin of Sunday School, a movement within our own church to offer literacy tutoring to underprivileged children. The value of the service to each child we reach—priceless. (However, I am prepared to offer a bonus tiara of stars in their heavenly crown to each volunteer.)

Yes, we need teachers, trained and certified, or not. Don't stand back, though, if you don't feel called to teach. We also need administrators, cooks, drivers, teaching assistants, go-fers, activity leaders, and counselors. We need high school age mentors and role models, not only for teaching support in the morning, but also to help coordinate and supervise afternoon enrichment activities.

This is a great opportunity to work ecumenically and evangelically, inviting friends and relations to participate. We will be supporting literacy, not Episcopalianism. After all, our religion is not "Episcopal," but "Christian." We witness to our faith by acting as we believe our Lord would have us act, sharing, encouraging, and supporting others, especially children, in compassionate service.

Every day, we choose, many times over. Here is an opportunity to choose, by one decision, a whole set of happy, rewarding choices that will build the Kingdom of God and the State of West Virginia at the same time. Press the "EASY" button, and choose to participate in READING CAMPS-WEST VIRGINIA.



Canon Donald Vinson with volunteers at Reading Camp training in January 2013.

Koinonia, Diocese of WV, PO Box 5400, Charleston, WV 25361

Email: mbailey@wvdiocese.org; Phone: 304-344-3597; Fax: 304-343-3295

Read old issues online at <http://www.wvdiocese.org/pages/newsletters.html>