



Bp. Mike with Mr. & Mrs. Ben Hardesty of Clarksburg

Dear Brothers and Sisters in Christ:

As I write this, I am aware that I am writing about what is yet to come: Advent. At the same time, I know that you will receive this edition of the *Koinonia* around Christmas. So, what I write may be a bit out of sequence, but it is still a moment in time, for all of us.

Many years ago, while I was still serving in a parish, I went out to lunch with a colleague. It was early March - in the midst of Lent. As we talked, he was obviously dealing with something in his mind. Finally he looked at me and said, "I'm giving up Lent for Lent." I must have looked extremely

puzzled over this comment, because he looked back at me rather strangely. I finally asked him to explain himself. How (and why) would one give up Lent for Lent?

He explained that he had found that he was becoming depressed and was not finding himself in his usual jovial mood. He was having a difficult time focusing on the coming of Easter, and he was quite concerned about this.

So, he told me that he began to reflect on his life and what he had been doing for the past few months. He realized that he had officiated at more than fifteen funerals in the past three months. They were taking their toll on him, and he was finding himself too close to death, grief and grieving. He had already lived through Lent that year...and he had had enough. He was going to give up Lent for Lent, and begin to celebrate.

It was the following year that I found myself in the same situation...having done more than a funeral a week for three months. I found myself going through some of the same emotions and thoughts that my friend had encountered one year earlier. So, I decided at that time to give up Lent for Lent.

So, with that history, I found myself in the past couple of months talking with a different friend. We were talking about how little things were frustrating us. We talked about our impatience with minor annoyances: people cutting us off on the road; changing lanes without a signal; rude individuals; loud music and more. Each little thing by itself didn't seem to matter, but the fact that both of us were feeling annoyed and impatient meant that something was wrong.

So, we looked at each other, and at the same time said, "We need a little Christmas," and we laughed.

But later, as we were laughing about so many other small things, we realized that we didn't need 'Christmas.' What we needed was ADVENT! For Advent teaches us about God so much more than almost any other season of the year.

*Continued on page 3.....*

# News from Around the Diocese



Parishioners from **Trinity, Martinsburg**, walked and strolled in the Berkeley County CROP Walk on October 6, 2013. The 18 members of "Team Trinity" raised over \$1,200 in support of ending hunger at home and overseas. Front: Catherine Silver-Riddell, Braylen, Arabella and Brad Cole Middle: Pat McMillan, John H. Partington, Lynne Steptoe, Mary Maroney, Nancy McGrann, Maureen and Kiley Budka Back: Scott Hamilton, Joe Sullivan, Phil Steptoe, Colleen Tucker, Pam Wagoner, Tiffany Arnett.



The photos at left and right were taken by Canon Faith Perrizo at **"God in the Arts"** at Carnegie Hall in Lewisburg in August. The workshop, which was sponsored by **ConneXions**, offered such artistic endeavors as working with clay, weaving, quilting, writing and playing the harp.



**The Lawrencefield Parish, Wheeling**, hosted a neighborhood Halloween Party on October 27. Costumed revelers of all ages feasted on witch's brew, pizza, eyeballs and worms. Yum!



Bishop Klusmeyer attended the **St. Paul's, Williamson**, Homecoming on Saturday, November 9. He is shown above with the Venturino family at the celebration.



**Grace Church, St. Marys**, looks a lot more inviting these days, with new steps to welcome visitors.

## New Outreach Programs at Good Shepherd, Parkersburg

September saw the launch of two new programs at Good Shepherd, Parkersburg. The first is the



area's first **Little Free Library** ([www.littlefreelibrary.org](http://www.littlefreelibrary.org)). A City Council member was in conversation with the Rev. Marjorie Bevans about ways to build up a sense of community in the neighborhood. She asked if the church would like to host a Little Free Library. Within a week the Little Library was built and stocked with books for both children and adults. The library was dedicated on Sept. 29.



**Last Sunday Supper** is the second new program. A generous donation for outreach purposes led the Good Shepherd Outreach Committee to consider options and they decided on a meal for neighbors. With their experience with the Food Pantry and the Hot Dog Suppers, they knew that near the end of the month some people have run out of food stamps and money. When they found that the Sisters of St.



Joseph Charitable Foundation accepts grant applications to meet basic needs, they applied for a grant for new chairs and tables to accommodate a crowd and were awarded \$5,000! They are able to get some of the food from Mountaineer Food Bank at little or no cost, and so with the help of a new member with restaurant experience, the services of two inmates of a local correctional facility who had restaurant experience, and church members, they formed a crew ready, able and willing to serve. The program was launched on September 29, with a total of 70 people enjoying the first meal hosted by Last Sunday Supper.

### *....Bishop Klusmeyer continued*

In a world that detests waiting, in a world that wants instant gratification, in a world that longs for something that we don't have yet, in a world that hungers for justice, mercy, freedom, equality...and we want it all now...we are put face-to-face with our God who does not think as we do. Advent reminds us that our God is a God who waits. Our God is a God who waits a minute, an hour, a week, a month, a year, eternity...for one moment.

And suddenly, when we see our patient God...eagerly waiting...we see that we are called to wait as well. For all things will be well with God...but not all things will be NOW.

Advent is a time of patience...a time of waiting...a time of reflecting...a time of seeing God whose Grace is abundant...but whose gifts may not be immediate, in our eyes.

There is a lovely little story that I recall: A man had the opportunity to talk directly with God. So, he figured he would probe deep into God's mind. "God, what's it like to live a million years?" God replied, "It's like a second." The man thought, and asked, "God what's it like to have a million dollars?" God replied, "It's like having a dime." The man smiled and then asked, "God, can you spare a dime?" God replied, "Sure. Wait a second."

May we wait upon the Lord, and find the patience and love that is poured out upon us.

Faithfully,

The Rt. Rev. W. Michie Klusmeyer  
Bishop





## Eureka! The Silver Bullet!

By Canon Donald Vinson

Oh, sweet mystery of life, at last, I've found it: the secret to church growth. And it is so simple, involving no street corners or door-bells. Perfect for Episcopalians.

If you want your church to grow, be a growing church.

The costliest mistake made by the Protestant Reformation was to inculcate the notion that any Christian is ever "done." By baptism, by confirmation, by "accepting Jesus," or "getting saved," by dressing up and going to church on Sunday, or by any means whatsoever, our conversion as Christian disciples is never completely finished in this life, and likely into the next. We are transforming, rather than transformed. (Why else do we make our confession at least weekly?) We are saved from sin and death, but we are saved to a new life in Jesus Christ, a daily process.

Forget about inviting people to attend worship, for the present. In fact, inviting is optional even later, if you "testify" about what your church is doing for your life, instead. But first, the church does have to be doing something powerful for your life, besides giving you additional responsibilities, worries, and obligations. It has to be helping you GROW. The first purpose of all the practices of the Christian life is to change oneself!

If there is no adult formation offered in your congregation, start it, and support it. (By the way, Education for Ministry (EfM) is a good option, if possible.)

If there is an active intercessory prayer group or circle, join it, or start one. (Daughters of the King can be a good choice for women. Perhaps the Brotherhood of St. Andrew or a Men's Prayer Breakfast for men. Morning and Evening Prayer are intended for daily, not Sunday, use.)

Get hold of a good study Bible, and read it. In company with others is even better.

Undertake some form of service to persons in need of help. It truly is more blessed to give.

By whatever means, selfishly and single-mindedly focus on personal growth in Jesus' values. When enough in a congregation are doing so, a balance is tipped, and that congregation becomes a Church of Good News. Others are attracted to it, and it grows.

