



Newsletter

Diocese of the West

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Bishop Win Mott: bpwinmott@gmail.com

DOW Assistant: Cherie Salmon-dowbishopassistant@gmail.com

Editor: Susan Peterson - smprrp@sbcglobal.net

Hello Brothers and Sisters in Christ

I pray this finds you all in good health and wish you all a Happy Thanksgiving. I would like to share a Thanksgiving prayer by Mary Fairchild:

Father, on Thanksgiving day,
 We bow our hearts to You and pray.
 We give You thanks for all You've done,
 Especially for the gift of Jesus, Your Son.
 For beauty in nature, Your glory we see.
 For joy and health, friends and family.
 For daily provision, Your mercy and care.
 These are the blessings You graciously share.
 So today we offer this response of praise,
 With a promise to follow You all of our days.

The Bishop's Corner

Tis the Season

Every year at about this time, city workers in Deming put up the banners on the main streets (both of them) announcing grandly, "Seasons Greetings." Who could object? Yet it is puzzling. Being around Thanksgiving, you could assume it is a season of eucharistic outpouring being

proclaimed, a grateful people greeting with gratitude to God for each other in municipal harmony. Of course, it is also hunting season and it is possible the city only wishes to welcome the hunters who have come to kill some of our beautiful, peaceful creatures and hope they will have a nice day as they track, shoot, gut and skin. And it might just be to celebrate the season of fall with its mellow, moderate weather and the smell of chilies roasting or Friday night football with the Deming Wildcats.

The wonderful politically correct point of the banners is, of course, that it is always a season of something and therefore the banners are at once always appropriate and never offensive. Since the banners are left up until Christmas Eve, some have even speculated they refer to Christmas. But there are eight or nine Buddhists, a Jew and a smattering of atheists, so apparently we can't just say that right out. The evangelistic impact in "season's greetings" is not overwhelming and there is no apparent rise in church attendance when the banners go up, which I guess is the idea of making something totally meaningless. It then makes me wonder what the point is of putting up something completely meaningless along your main streets.



The Bishop's Corner (continued)

I frequently hear the U.S. referred to as a "Christian nation." I am curious what the people who say this mean, because I don't see any evidence. It doesn't mean a country of believers worshipping God together on Sundays, because, as you may have noticed, there are more people out of church than in it on a Sunday. It doesn't mean a land dominated by the Christian ethics of love towards God and man. And, it seriously falls short even on the common Jewish-Moslem-Christian Old Testament legal heritage of the Ten Commandments, which begin with the mandate to serve and love God and end with forbidding false witness, avarice and envy.

The reality is we live among a people, many of whom have lost both faith and hope, who employ a mantra of religion to cover the embarrassment of what is in fact a spiritually empty way of life. In the weeks to come, they will engage in a blizzard of frantic consumer activity and pre-ordained festivities called the "Happy Holidays." During this time, cases of depression and loneliness soar, as expectations are not matched by results.

In our Diocese, we do live in a Christian nation. It is called "the Kingdom of God," in which we were naturalized through baptism. As those around us experience their frenzy and depression, we will enter into Advent, the beginning of the new Church year and observe the renewed beginnings of faith and hope. As I note the tinsel unhappiness and emptiness around us, I yearn to be able to take all of our neighbors on this annual journey of expectations that will be more than met. In preparation for a twelve day festival celebration, loneliness and despair ends as we anchor ourselves to the God of power and

lover of mankind. He reconciles us into the communion of the great host of faithful, of the eternal company of heaven, where we are never unloved or alien. Advent is an internal preparation of the heart, an inventory of that which is in the way of the love of God coming to us, a time to clear the road for that vehicle. And the arrival on Christmas of that gift of real peace, true salvation and thankful reunion with the source of all good togetherness, is cause for great rejoicing. Emmanuel, (God with us), means we don't have to wait for death to celebrate life, but the gift is given right now, as he has come to us right now.

At no time of the year are the two ways to live more distinct. Our Advent is introspective and outwardly quiet. Theirs is frenzied and hollow. On December 25, their Christmas is short and over by evening. Our celebration is just beginning, twelve days to rejoice in the God who loves so much, he has come among us. This year, may you not walk on the road with the "Season's Greetings" banners, but on the Advent road, the one with a destination in joy.

Clericus

The second annual Clericus (since we did it once before, it is now a tradition) of the Diocese will be February 10-12 at the same location as last year in Mesilla, New Mexico. This will be from Tuesday evening to Thursday noon, the week prior to Ash Wednesday. This is an event for all priests and deacons of the Diocese and for other interested people, as space permits. Further information will be available after Christmas, so save the dates on your calendar.



The Bishop's Corner (continued)

Synod

Again, a reminder that Synod will be in Reno this year, hosted by Christ Church of the Sierra, June 30-July 2.

And may your Advent be a time when the road for your Lord into your heart is made straight, and all the potholes and detours of sin and self-centeredness rooted out.

+Win,

Your Bishop



Parish in the Spotlight

St Luke's Chapel in the Hills

Submitted by Kim Vogel

Fifty years ago this Thanksgiving Day, the Episcopal Laymen's Group planted a church in Los Altos Hills, California, and God blessed them. Through prayer and hard work, they purchased and converted the Purissima Schoolhouse, a derelict wood-frame one-room schoolhouse originally built in 1901, into the Chapel in the Hills. In 1974, the congregation was able to pay for construction of a parish hall complete with a kitchen, restroom, and storage room.

God continues to bless this little community of Anglicans. The congregation, now known as St. Luke's Chapel in the Hills Anglican Church, has many varied outreach programs to share the peace and hope of God with our frenzied neighbors in the technology-focused San Jose area. We host a monthly Inter-parish Prayer Team to pray as a group for the needs

of our brothers and sisters in Christ and for the world at large. We share a joint Emergency Food Pantry ministry with Santa Teresa Hills Presbyterian Church in San Jose. We have an annual Blessing of the Bicycles for the neighborhood, and we have installed an outdoor drinking fountain so that cyclists, hikers, and horseback riders may stop in our gardens to refresh themselves along their way. Each Advent, we have a concert and sing-along for our neighbors, and we always bake Christmas cookies to thank our local firefighters. Our brothers and sisters from Santa Teresa Hills Presbyterian Church join us for our Pancake Luncheons just before Lent. We have a special British Day each spring and an International Day in late summer with themed potluck lunches in McNeely Hall. At the Feast of St. Francis, we invite our animal friends to worship with us and to receive a special blessing. Our newsletter, *The Hillside Messenger*, is distributed to 220 recipients across the United States.

The people of the Chapel make a special effort to welcome all who come to worship with us. We offer hearing aids to those who need them, and we have microphones at the lectern and pulpit to ensure that no one misses a word of the worship service. Large-print versions of the bulletin, the Sunday sermon, the newsletter, and the parish directory are available for anyone who appreciates easy-to-read text. A ramp makes entering the Chapel easier for those who have trouble with stairs, and a smooth, wide path with handrail allow everyone to access the parish hall. We even provide a handy Visitor's Bulletin for those new to Anglican liturgy. We have a weekly Sunday School, and the children of the parish are



Parish in the Spotlight (continued)

active participants in our 10:00 AM worship services.

We are known as “the place where the Bible is taught”. We are Biblical in teaching, liturgical in worship, and loving in practice, and we strive to live by the motto “Our service begins when we leave the Chapel”.

We are currently in a time of transition as our Rector, the Very Reverend Canon Michael A. Penfield, prepares to retire on December 31, 2014. Please pray for him as he moves into this new phase of ministry. Pray also for Deacon Peter Vogel as he ministers to the parish, without priestly oversight, until we call a new rector.

Please pray for guidance for the Rector Search Committee and for God’s blessing and equipping of our future rector. Finally, please pray for all the people of St. Luke’s, that we will daily grow in the knowledge and love of God and that we will continue to be a beacon of God’s peace, light, and truth on our little hillside amid the bustle and noise of Silicon Valley. May God continue to bless us, every one.



Happy Anniversary St Luke’s and God Bless you all.

Parish News

Anglican Holy Trinity Silver City, New Mexico

Submitted by Victoria Tester

Father Miguel Angel Ramirez Centeno and his wife Catherine, of San Jose de Anapra Mission in Juarez, visited the Anglican Church and Retreat House of the Holy Trinity on Saturday November 8th. Father Miguel Angel was a former Roman Catholic priest and Jesuit and a highly educated man who later taught law to future priests. He was accepted as a priest into the Mexican Anglican Church in 2013 and assigned the pastorship and administration of San Jose de Anapra.

San Jose deAnapra is a parish in the Diocese of the North of Mexico and forms part of La Iglesia Anglicana de Mexico, an independent province in the Anglican Communion since 1995. They are blessed with a large church building, a separate small building for Bible study, a field for soccer, a basketball court and a parish house.

Anapra, one of the Juarez’s more populous neighborhoods, with a current population of 25,000, the majority who are young people and children with unclear futures, began twenty years ago. Most of its inhabitants come from the central and southern part of Mexico. Many of them with a frustrated hope of migrating to the United States or as recruits for cheap labor in the maquiladora industry. Anapra is a neighbor to the Lomas de Poleo neighborhood, where many women who were victims of drug trafficking have been buried. Problems faced by residents there are poor housing conditions, overpopulation, street



Parish News (continued)

children, early sexual activity, clandestine commerce, gangs and drug trafficking.

Father Miguel Angel and Catherine Hudak's work not only serves those who regularly attend their religious services, but the general population. Their goal is to strengthen their efforts in the vital areas of health, recreation and child nutrition. Their hopes for the community are: to build a dispensary in order to offer alternative medical services such as reflexology and natural herbal remedies; create a recreational center with spaces for sporting activities and where their neighbors from Anapra can rest and relax; and to create a dining hall for the children, where they are offered nutritious food, six days a week.

The Sunday offering at San Jose de Anapra averages only eight dollars and Father Miguel Angel receives no salary. Yet in less than two years, this joyful priest has baptized 80 people, and has seen his congregation grow from a handful of souls to a steady 75 regular attendees.

Anglican Holy Trinity hosted a formal presentation about San Jose de Anapra by Father Miguel Angel and Catherine in the chapel on Saturday, November 8th, followed by a potluck celebration.

Father Henry J. Hoffman of Anglican Holy Trinity visited San Jose de Anapra last year, where he shared in a feast of traditional bean dishes prepared by the congregation. San Jose de Anapra is one of the programs served by the San Isidro Bean Project, a project of the Anglican Diocese of the West. The bean project has provided over 250,000 lbs. of beans

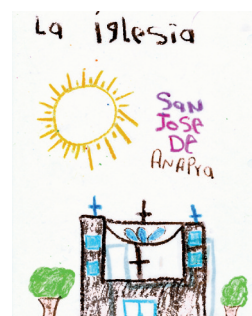
to hands-on entities with few resources, working among the very poor on the Mexican border.

Anglican Holy Trinity will joyfully accept funds on behalf of San Jose de Anapra Anglican Mission. Please make out any donations to: Anglican Church and Retreat House of the Holy Trinity, P.O. Box 1233 Silver City, New Mexico 88062, with a memo that they are for San Jose de Anapra Anglican Mission.

San Jose de Anapra Mission is in need of your ministerial support and visitors are very welcome. Feel free to contact the Mission by U.S. telephone in Spanish or English at: 720-401-8195 or by email at either 501@gmail.com or marcenteno59@gmail.com



Father Miguel Angel and his wife Catherine



Drawing by a child from San Jose Anapra Mission



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Reformed Episcopal Seminary has a long history of preparing and equipping servants for Christian ministry and leadership. June 2015 will mark our 125th Commencement since our founding in 1887! We are growing: student inquiries are increasing, we purchased the building and land next door to provide room to expand, and we continue to add new titles to the library. We also plan to purchase new technology that will enable us to broadcast lectures and courses to churches and people who are unable to come to Blue Bell for specific training.

Throughout our history, RES has relied on God and His promises to provide for our future as we labor to faithfully proclaim his truth and raise up the next generation of Christian leaders. Although the faculty, staff, and students work hard to keep operating costs low, this is still an expensive proposition, and with accreditation and growth, costs for materials, technology, maintenance, and up-keep also increase.

RES is committed to the mission of providing low-cost theological education and Bible training to those who want to serve God, their community, and the church. A seminary education is not just for those preparing for ordained ministry, it also serves those preparing for lay ministry and missionary endeavors as well as providing additional training for experienced pastors who want to enhance their education and skills.

Our outstanding faculty of dedicated priests and pastors are scholars who carefully study God's Word and their areas of specialization. Because they are pastors, they are able to give practical insight on how to apply the knowledge gained in the classroom to ministry and service to God.

The world of the 21st Century is a hostile place for Christianity that requires men and women who are able to keep the light of Christ shining. Your support through prayer, referrals, and financial gifts on this Seminary Sunday will enable RES to continue our long history of raising up servant-leaders who are ambitious to be well-pleasing unto him.

Prayer Requests

Pray for the family of The Reverend Dr. Milton C. Fisher, retired professor of Old Testament at Reformed Episcopal Seminary who went to be with our Lord on Tuesday, November 11, 2014. He is survived by his wife Marilyn, son Michael W. Fisher and daughter Marjie Huey.

Pray for our Brothers and Sister in Christ who are being persecuted in His name.

Pray for unity in both our country and in His Church.

Please remember to send your prayer requests to smprrp@sbcglobal.net so we can all be praying for those in your parish.

Prayer is much more than "gimme what I want." In the only prayer Jesus taught us, the opening petitions express the wideness of what prayer is. He teaches us we are talking to our Father, not to Santa Claus and not to some abstract ruler of the universe, but to a personal and loving Being who cares for us as a perfect parent would. Our first profession then is to praise and honor Him ("Hallowed be Thy Name"), to acknowledge we welcome His rule and kingdom, and then ask that His will be done. It is legitimate to express our needs, wants and desires as we see them, but keep in mind that what is paramount is not our needs but His will. As a child often does not understand why a parent, with greater wisdom, does not simply grant everything a child perceives him or herself as needing, so God's will is always our best option, even if we fail to understand it at the time.

(Winfield Mott)

Hint of Humor

