



MECA

The Newsletter of the Massachusetts Episcopal Clergy Association

Mission of Service

By The Rev. Dr. Ted J. Gaiser

*MECA encourages clergy and congregations to consider ways of expanding their service beyond parish and diocesan boundaries. For more information about ways to serve, please contact Ted Gaiser at tgaiser@diomass.org. A version of this article first appeared in the summer 2006 issue of the *Episcopal Times*, Diocese of Massachusetts.*

I awake at daybreak, with a cough and a wheeze, to the smell of corn cob smoke permeating my sinuses, since that's the primary fuel for cooking in the countryside. I briefly stir on my straw mattress before reaching for my Levi's and Docksidiers. Convinced I have no choice but to arise, I dress and head for the front door. As I step into the daylight I'm consumed by the rolling hills and the rambling stream of the Nicaraguan countryside, with the knowledge that battle has been and battle will be again among the forests and hills that now envelop this tiny valley community of Santa Teresa. Before sitting to partake of a breakfast of rice and beans with warm tortillas, I reach into my pocket for my routine dose of Pepto-Bismol and acidophilus capsules, my defense against digestive disorder. As I pop them into my

mouth I'm reminded of my on-going struggle with whether I can ever really understand my Nicaraguan hosts or the world in which they live. War is not in my back yard. I have in my pocket more medicine than most Nicaraguans will have access to in a lifetime. I drink water that I've filtered ... the same water that will cost many of their children their lives because of the parasitic infections that will lead to dehydra-

Continued on page 2



Photos from the 2005 Youth Leadership Academy (YLA) trip to El Salvador.

Photos: Suzy Spressett or Rev. Rob Bacon

Not that we are competent of ourselves to claim anything coming from us; our competence is from God, who has made us competent ministers of a new covenant.

2 Corinthians 3: 5-6

Mission of Service

Continued from page 1

tion. And in a few weeks, I'll be back in Boston where I'll have access to quality healthcare, to name just a few of the benefits of life in a highly developed country such as the United States.

My dilemma is that I've traveled to join the people of Santa Teresa, thinking that I was choosing to ally myself with the poor. I believed I was choosing to move to the periphery of the world community, deliberately giving up my place of privilege in the world, to live with the marginalized. I want to learn to understand and know their world. I want to open myself to an experience of the holy ... to an experience of Christ.

During this experience, I've begun to wonder if I can ever really appreciate or understand the Nicaraguan perspective. I think the act of "choosing" to live among Nicaraguans, provides me an opportunity to see how my own behaviors can be

oppressive ... can reflect a dominant paradigm ... and I can see where I contribute to Christ's suffering in the world. By experiencing life in Nicaragua, on the terms of Nicaraguans, I am acquiring an experience that affords me the opportunity to develop a new lens through which I can perceive the world and my relation to it.

[The preceding is from a journal entry I wrote during a trip to Nicaragua in 1990, when I served as co-leader of a delegation to build a school.]

In many of the parish discussions in which I've participated, I'm often asked, "What can we do?" or "Do you have a list of projects for us to consider?" I try to respond candidly and directly with what other parishes around the Diocese are doing using examples such as Christ Church Needham's medical mission trips to Haiti, Trinity Boston's water cistern and latrine building projects in Honduras and the Church of Our Saviour Arlington's "Art for AIDS" fundraising program.

I also mention that engaging in mission is much more than volunteering to participate in a construction site. Parishes engaging in mission in Africa might sponsor orphans or a medical assistance program, such as St. Christopher Chatham's involvement in an orphan feeding program. If individuals travel, they might participate in a feeding program, help a community assess and organize for future assistance programs, and assist with training and support for home-based care for families dealing with AIDS.

In the preceding paragraphs I've offered a number of examples of what a church might do. Ultimately, though, I believe what people are understandably seeking when asking questions about what they might do is a vision for engaging in mission. I say, "understandably," because if you've never engaged in global missions, either through a long-distance relationship or in person, then you might not necessarily have a vision.

In some cases, we develop a vision by hearing about the experiences of others. Presenters from other churches come and give witness to their mission engagement and the sense of change in themselves that they experience by becoming a friend and neighbor to someone new. People can develop a vision from parish discussions and from hosting visitors from other Dioceses within the Anglican Communion. A vision can also emerge from listening to sermons and talking in small groups. But ultimately, a vision for engaging in God's mission involves community-specific discernment. What works for your church may not work for another since every church has its own unique assortment of gifts, skills, talents, and resources.

Discernment is a process by which we come to know or understand something. In this case, discernment is the work that ought to be done in preparation for formally engaging in mission ... in God's mission. Many of us have a sense of how to engage in discernment individually, but we may not always be sure how to apply discernment skills to a community. Specific ways in which communities might discern include



Photos: The Rev. Tom Barrington, All Saints', Chelmsford

prayer, engaging with scripture, learning more about mission, and engaging with others who share a global concern. A good place to start might be using The New Church's Teaching Series (vol. 11), *Horizons of Mission*, by The Very Rev. Dr. Titus Presler, as a study guide.

Whether you start by raising some funds and exchanging church school pictures with a community in Africa like St. Mark's Foxborough, or begin developing a more specific parish-to-parish partnership with a church in Nigeria, like Trinity Randolph, stepping out in mission involves a choice. While the choice doesn't necessarily involve choosing to sleep on a straw mattress, it does involve a willingness to step forth in a spirit of servanthood.

**Ted Gaiser is Deacon
for Congregational Partnerships**



Mission Leadership Program

**El Salvador (June 16-25, 2007) with Bishop Shaw
Tanzania (August 18-31, 2007) with Bishop Cederholm**

In support of the Diocesan Mission Strategy goal of every church being in partnership with another church or organization in the Anglican Communion, the Diocese is offering opportunities for clergy and lay leaders to participate in one of two mission trips to El Salvador (facilitated by The Rev. Ted Gaiser & Mark McKone-Sweet) or Tanzania (facilitated by The Rev. Maggie Geller and The Rev. Ted Gaiser).

Those interested in applying to participate in one of the service trips are requested to submit a letter of application describing why you want to participate, what you bring to the experience, what you hope to gain from this opportunity, and what you intend to do with your experience upon your return. As participants will be required to participate in monthly meetings prior to travel, you are encouraged to describe the ways in which you will make time to fully participate in the program. In addition, participants are encouraged to comment on the ways in which their church and its leadership support their involvement in the program.

Anticipated expense for the service trip to El Salvador is \$1350 and to Tanzania is \$3600. All participants will receive a scholarship from the Diocese covering one third of their anticipated costs (\$450 and \$1,200 respectively). Applicants will be expected to submit an initial deposit upon acceptance along with a signed letter of commitment (\$225 for El Salvador and \$600 for Tanzania).

Questions about the Mission Leadership Program can be directed to the Rev. Ted Gaiser at tgaiser@diomass.org or 617-782-1577. Application material should be mailed to the Rev. Maggie Geller, The Episcopal Diocese of Massachusetts, 138 Tremont St., Boston, MA 02111.

Letter

Dear Brothers and Sisters,

I'm writing to clergy in the Diocese of Massachusetts, asking if you would like some help preparing your income tax return this year.

I specialize in preparing clergy tax returns. I am in the ninth year of work as a tax professional and have worked for H & R Block for six years, and have been in business on my own for two. I am a priest of the Episcopal Diocese of Massachusetts.

If you prepare your own tax return, I will be happy to review it at no charge.

If you would like me to prepare your tax return, I will do so at a price that I'm sure would be lower than H & R Block or other tax services.

You can call me at 508-668-5055, or email clark-pease2@cs.com

Sincerely,
The Rev. Edwin Pease
2 Kennedy Lane, Walpole, MA 02081

MECA and the Episcopal Diocese of Massachusetts invite you to a workshop

The Stories We Live and the Lives We Story: *Narrative Therapy, a Generative Resource for Pastoral and Prophetic Ministry*

Led by The Rev. Dr. Allie Perry

TUESDAY, MARCH 20, 2007 • 9:00 am to 3:00 pm

Registration at 9:00 AM. Workshop begins at 9:30 AM

ST. PETER'S CHURCH, 320 BOSTON POST ROAD, WESTON, MA



The Rev. Dr. Allie Perry is an ordained United Church of Christ minister and adjunct faculty at Yale Divinity School in New Haven, CT and at Andover Newton Theological School in Newton, MA. She teaches courses in Narrative Therapy, Family Therapy and Systems Theory, and Nonviolence. She is also a Fellow with the American Association of Pastoral Therapists and does pastoral counseling at the Milford (CT) Pastoral Counseling Center.

In addition, Allie is on the steering committee of Reclaiming the Prophetic Voice, a CT statewide network of people of faith committed to nonviolence; the coordinating committee of the National Religious Campaign Against Torture; and a national council member of the Fellowship of Reconciliation. Now a resident of New Haven, Ct, her story began in Boston where she was baptized in King's Chapel, now a Unitarian congregation but once upon a time the Church of England.

OVERVIEW:

Theology, in a real way, is about story, the stories we learn and tell about the divine. Stories about Jesus are at the heart of Christian faith. Individuals have stories. Families have stories. Congregations, too, have stories. We are creatures who think in stories. Or as the poet Muriel Rukeyser writes, "The universe is made of stories not atoms." Some stories are vitalizing, some hopeful, some problematic, some constricting, some faithful, some painful, some promising. All are changing; none are static. Narrative Therapy offers valuable insights, approaches, and skills for engaging individuals, families, and congregations in (1) examining the stories we tell in our effort to make meaning; (2) evaluating the real effects of those story; and (3) where stories are problematic, helping to "re-write" them to be more liberating and generative.

This workshop will introduce participants to narrative approaches to therapy that translate seamlessly to the practice of pastoral care. The focus will be skill-based, using a combination of lecture, experiential exercises, Biblical stories, and case studies (including congregational case studies).

DIRECTIONS: **From Boston**, take the Mass Pike (90) West to the Weston toll exit (15 min. from Boston). Pay toll and follow the exit for Route 128 (95) North. **From Route 2**, east or west, exit onto Route 128 south. **From Route 128** (95), North or South, use Exit 26 (Rt. 20 Waltham - Weston). Follow the exit ramp carefully, taking the various forks toward Weston - Route 20 West. Once on Rt. 20 West, you'll see a Mobil station on your left. One mile past the Mobil station, you'll see St. Peter's facing you on the right. Take a right turn onto Boston Post Road before you reach the church, and enter the driveway on your left. Coming from the West on Rt. 20, once in Weston, turn left at the stop light at School Street. At the end of this short stretch of road, turn right at the stop sign onto Boston Post Road, travel east on Boston Post Road until you see the sign for St. Peter's and turn right into the driveway and parking lot.

"THE STORIES WE LIVE AND THE LIVES WE STORY"

Name _____ Telephone: _____

Organization: _____

Street Address: _____

City _____ State _____ Zip: _____

Fee of \$ _____ enclosed for _____ registrations. FEE: \$35 MECA members; \$50 Non-MECA members

Please make checks to MECA. Please register by March 6 by returning this form and your fee to: The Rev. David R. Milam, Church of our Saviour, P.O. Box 89, Middleborough, MA 02346-0089. For registration information, please contact Dave at 508-947-1900 or frdave@verizon.net

Interfaith Walk for Climate Rescue, March 16-24, Northampton to Boston

Dear friends,

By now you've heard about the latest report from the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change, with its grim predictions of the planet's future if we don't act quickly to address global warming. No doubt you've also heard about the effects of climate change already noticeable from just a single degree rise (so far) in worldwide average temperature - increasingly violent storms, protracted droughts in some areas and killing floods in others, melting ice caps, and rising seas. Of course it is the world's poorest citizens who are most vulnerable.

Scientists tell us that we don't have much time to take decisive action if we are to avert the most catastrophic effects of climate change. I hope that you will join me in the Interfaith Walk for Climate Rescue, March 16-24, Northampton to Boston.

You can walk for an hour, an afternoon, a weekend, or the whole nine days. You can walk as an individual or create a team from your congregation. The Walk is a great way to involve youth groups, and will also serve as powerful Lenten

pilgrimage.

We will call for swift, bold, and comprehensive political action to address global warming. By the time we get to Boston on Saturday March 24, we expect the largest global warming demonstration in the history of the United States.

Bishop Bud Cederholm plans to walk with us at least part of the way from Cambridge to Boston on Saturday, March 24, and to help lead a lively, spirited, interfaith service at 2:00 p.m. at Old South Church. An outdoor rally will follow in Copley Square at 3 p.m.

For more information and to register, please go to <http://climatewalk.org/>. You may also contact the staff organizer, Denise Frizzell (walk@religiouswitness.org) or the Rev. Margaret Bullitt-Jonas (mbj@gracechurchamherst.org). Please sign up to walk by Friday, March 5. Registration helps provide an accurate count of walkers so we can plan and prepare accordingly.

If you come, please do bring a banner from your church, and clergy are invited to wear clerical collars. I hope to see you there.

Gratefully,

Margaret Bullitt-Jonas,
Priest Associate, Grace Church, Amherst

PARISH SEARCH & CALL REPORT:

12Go to www.diomass.org for more information.

CHURCHES INITIATING PROCESS:

NANTUCKET, St. Paul's
READING, Good Shepherd
LYNNFIELD, St. Paul's

CHURCHES IN SELF-STUDY:

CAMBRIDGE, St. James
FALL RIVER, Ascension
FALL RIVER, St. John's & St. Stephen's
HARWICH PORT, Christ Church
NORTH ANDOVER, St. Paul's

CHURCHES COMPLETING PROFILE:

WAKEFIELD, Emmanuel

CHURCHES RECEIVING NAMES:

COHASSET, St. Stephen's
CHELSEA, St. Luke's/San Lucas
DOVER, St. Dunstan's
HYDE PARK, Christ Church/ Iglesia de San Juan

CHURCHES NO LONGER RECEIVING NAMES:

ARLINGTON, Our Saviour
DUXBURY, St. John the Evangelist
NEWBURYPORT, St. Paul's

OTHER POSITIONS:

Curate/Assistant Rector/Associate Rector

The Church of the Redeemer, a program-size parish in Chestnut Hill, is looking for a priest to assist the Rector in all

aspects of parish life, with particular emphasis on pastoral care, youth, family ministry development, and outreach. This is a part-time position.

The Redeemer is noted for its Cathedral-style liturgy and music, thriving church school and partnership with inner-city ministries. We are looking for a person with a big heart, lively intellect, and a deep commitment to Christ who is excited about helping us grow.

For more information, please contact the Rector, the Rev. Dorsey McConnell, at 617-566-7679 or dorsey@redeemerchestnuthill.org.

Curate/Assistant Rector, Christ Church, Andover

Christ Church, Andover, is a program-sized parish in a community of about 35,000 people with an active membership of roughly 500 people. We have a full spectrum of ministries serving the Christ Church community and our neighbors.

The Curate/Assistant Rector will be an ordained (or soon to be ordained) priest and will have a broad range of liturgical, pastoral, and spiritual formation responsibilities, with a special focus on youth and children's ministries, church growth and development, pastoral care, and leadership of worship.

Compensation and benefits will be set according to Diocese of Massachusetts guidelines for Curate/Assistant Rector.

Contact the Rev. Jeffrey Gill, Rector. Please send materials (including coverletter, resume, and CDO) to: jgill@christchurchandover.org.

Communication regarding deployment and parish transitions should be directed to the staff officers responsible for deployment, the Rev. Gregory Jacobs ([gjacob@diomass.org](mailto:gjacobs@diomass.org) or 617-482-4826, ext. 404) or the Rev. Cynthia Hubbard (chubbard@diomass.org or 617-482-4826, ext. 400).

The MECA Newsletter

Published four times a year, the MECA *Newsletter* is sent to all clergy of the Diocese of Massachusetts. The newsletter can also be accessed through our website: www.mecaclergy.org

Membership dues for calendar year January 1-December 31, 2007 are being received now. Please send your check (payable to MECA) to the Rev. Ranjit Mathews, MECA Membership Secretary, St. Michael's Church, 112 Randolph Avenue, Milton, MA 02186-3400. If you have any questions about your membership, please contact Ranjit at 617-698-1813 or ranjitmathews@gmail.com. Dues are \$100; \$70 for retired and part-time clergy. MECA members who pay the above dues receive ten issues of LEAVEN, the newsletter of the National Network of Episcopal Clergy Associations (NNECA). Membership dues (without LEAVEN) are \$40. There is no fee for clergy on disability retirement. Members are entitled to discounts at MECA-sponsored events; your dues promote communication among clergy through the website, newsletter, and continuing education events and enable MECA to be a voice for clergy in the diocese and larger church.

The MECA Newsletter thanks Ann Hanson of Group One Graphics (grouponegraphics@comcast.net) for design, James Reamer in the Diocesan Center for mailing labels, and Signal Graphics (sgp44@signalgraphics.net) for printing and mailing.

Articles and letters are welcome and subject to editing. Permission is given to copy this newsletter; please give appropriate credit.

Address changes: please send to James Reamer, Diocesan Center, 138 Tremont Street, Boston, MA 02108 or jreamer@diomass.org or 617-482-4826, ext 339.

MECA officers for 2006-2007 are:

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Zanetta Armstrong	Warren Radtke
Susan Esco Chandler	Timothy J. Rogers
David R. Milan	Natasha Stewart

NEW MECA WEBSITE: WWW.MECACLERGY.ORG

Please check the new MECA website for news of upcoming events and to access the newsletter. The April/May 2007 issue of the newsletter will contain reports on clergy and congregational actions to promote global partnerships. The editor also invites your reflections on clergy support groups, sabbaticals, efforts to preserve unity in the Anglican Communion, and other issues affecting clergy. Please send your articles to the editor at rectord@allsaintsbrookline.org with a copy to Ann Hanson at grouponegraphics@comcast.net

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MECA Newsletter
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1773 Beacon Street
Brookline, MA 02445-4299