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DELAWARE Communion

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CARING FOR CREATION AT PARISH LIFE DAY 2008

Parish Life Day Grows in Numbers and Grace

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ON THE WEB

www.DioceesofDelaware.net
More articles are on our website, including vibrant education news from St. Anne's and St. Andrew's schools.

Diaconate Information and Discernment Day (DIADD) – Saturday, March 7, 2009

The next information and discernment day for lay persons exploring a call to be a deacon, with congregations willing to be "diaconal" congregations, will be held at Christ Church Dover, Saturday, March 7, 2009, from 9:30 a.m. to 1:00 p.m.

The DIADD is a morning of exploration of the diaconate program here in Delaware and an opportunity to learn about the ministry and to ask questions. Each deacon inquirer *must* attend a DIADD and be accompanied by his or her rector and a representative of the vestry. Lunch will be served. If you plan to attend please have your rector register your group with Cynde Bimbi (CyndeBimbi@DioceesofDelaware.net) by February 20th. Those who have already attended a previous DIADD need not attend again.

To get a feel for the life of a participant in the program, go to DioceesofDelaware.net and read the wonderful letter by Cecily Sawyer-Harmon, one of our six postulants.

With just over 200 participants, exhibitors, and presenters and 14 workshops, the Diocese of Delaware's "second convention," Parish Life Day 2008, was the most abundant and lively yet. This year's theme, "Go Green: Caring for Creation," was seen and felt throughout the day, as the intentional efforts of the event co-chairs, Cynde Bimbi of the bishop's staff and the Rev. Louise Howlett of St. Anne's School, to reduce waste and reuse materials were evident at every turn.

While nearly every workshop was filled to capacity, a few were particularly popular: Caring for Creation, Introduction to Islam, and We Got the Beat! (a drum circle experience). Personal reflections on each of these follow. The other portion of the event that continues to grow in participation and vibrant content is the children's program. This year 15 kids took part in the day, making a memorable presentation of their "going green" murals to the congregation at the closing worship.

See more pictures of PLD 2008 on our website: www.DioceesofDelaware.net



Participants make Earth-friendly cleaning supplies in the "Caring for Creation" workshop at Parish Life Day '08.

Going to "Green Class"

By Diane Dudderar, Chris Garrod, Lea Hutchins, and Jane Shetzler, St. Anne's, Middletown

Our experience at the "Caring for Creation" workshop at Parish Life Day was engaging. The diverse views on what it means to be green showed us that we all want to do the right

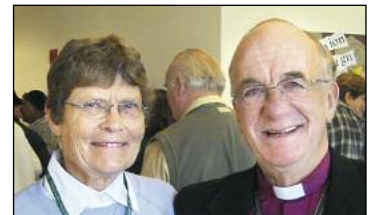
thing: curb the destruction of the world God created for us. We all agreed that teaching our children this same philosophy is key to making this transition successful.

One of the key points that we found in the class is that each congregation can make a difference. Just one church, Episcopal or otherwise, in a town can

be a starting point to show the community that being environmentally friendly is something we all can do. Maybe it is something as grand as solar panels on the roof of the nave or as basic as using ceramic mugs instead of Styrofoam, but each small step can be significant.

The participation portion of the class was hands-on proof that making the change only takes minutes. In 15 minutes we created non-toxic alternatives to house cleaning chemicals that we all use.

We all can make a difference in what we do. If we can make an individual change and get our congregation to do the same, the impact towards the community as a whole will be great. As we at St. Anne's Church begin our journey towards new facilities, we hope that our "greening" will show Middletown and the surrounding communities that everyone can make a difference.



Bishop Douglas Cameron and his wife, Pat at PLD 2008.

KATRINA MISSION NEWS

New Orleans Bound!

The Katrina Mission Project at Immanuel Church, Highlands has scheduled their third trip to New Orleans for March 14-21, 2009. We are pleased to announce that Linda and Ernest Jackson and members of Saints Andrew and Matthew's Youth Group will be joining us next year! (See article below.) This annual trip to New Orleans has changed the lives of the volunteers who've traveled to help the Diocese of Louisiana continue to rebuild their beloved city. We have a few openings if anyone is interested in experiencing New Orleans through community service. Please contact Vicki Anthos at 588-7607 for more information.

Preliminary plans are in place for a FUNraiser in Febru-

ary. Please look for this FUN announcement in the February issue. The volunteers would like to thank everyone in the diocese who has supported our efforts in New Orleans. We could not have done this volunteer work without your support.

Youth to Join New Orleans Mission Trip

Saints Andrew and Matthew (SsAM) is sending seven "SsAM Soul" members and chaperons to New Orleans, March 14-21, 2009, as members of the Delaware Katrina Mission Team to assist with the rebuilding efforts. They will become members of a group of 25 volunteers who have traveled to New Orleans over the last two years in response to the



"SsAM Soul" Youth group

continuing need for help as workers transform New Orleans, one house at a time.

While in New Orleans, the Episcopal Diocese of Louisiana Office of Disaster Response will match our group with an appropriate work project and provide housing in the Diocesan Urban Ministry Center Chalstrom House.

In preparation for the trip, there will be an information

session offered by the trip coordinator, Vicki Anthos, and various fund raising efforts. The Mission trip has been described as wonderful, surprising, educational, inspiring, fatiguing, and most of all transforming. The youth look forward to the challenge, and they ask for your prayers and support as they prepare for this life-changing experience.

What will our lives be like?

by Wayne Wright,
Bishop of the Diocese of Delaware

What will my life be like tomorrow? This is a question most people ask. It is certainly one people are asking these days. Things are changing. The world around us is unsettled. Newspaper headlines are bold. Television news is blaring. The internet is humming. A few months, or even years ago, it seemed easier to know what the future might hold. Today no one is as sure. There is anxiety in the air. It is tempting to be fearful.



Things weren't really that different 2,000 years ago in the era when Jesus was born. Daily life in the ancient world was challenging, chaotic, and capricious. So much of what modern folk take for granted simply didn't exist or was very undependable. Only the very wealthiest in ancient times were assured of enough to eat. Health care as we know it didn't exist. There were no satellite maps or five-day weather forecasts. Law enforcement was sporadic at very best. Invasion and conquest were facts of life. "Only the strong survive" was the truth, it wasn't simply a slogan.

This was the world that Mary and Joseph knew. For them life was hard, unpredictable, and dependent on factors well beyond their control. "What will our lives be like tomorrow?" Surely this was a question they must have asked. What answers did they discover? The Bible stories of Jesus' birth shed much light on what they believed and the faith that guided them. This message is a powerful witness – especially in these days.

First there is the message of the angel Gabriel. His appearance was surely a complete surprise. To Mary his words must have seemed almost incomprehensible. "You will bear a son, and you will name him Jesus. He will be great, and will be called the Son of the Most High." How did Mary respond? She cannot completely have understood the angel's message. Even so her response reveals a deep level of trust in God and a simple hope. "Here I am, a servant of the Lord; let it be to me according to your word." I want my life to be used for God's good and loving purposes.

Then there was the message of Caesar. He could not have been thinking about Mary and Joseph when he ordered the census of his great empire. Caesar needed extra funding to support

his armies and imperial administration. Before the people could be taxed, they had to be counted. "So," as the Bible says, "a decree went out from Caesar Augustus that all the world should be taxed." In ancient Rome this meant that every male head of a household had to return to his place of birth. A hard road lay ahead for Mary and Joseph.

We do not know exactly how the news of Caesar's decree traveled from Rome across the eastern Mediterranean Sea into the hill country of Galilee. We do know its impact it upon Mary and Joseph. Travel was difficult in ancient times. The terrain between Nazareth and Bethlehem is hilly. Bandits lurked beside the way. We only imagine that the pregnant Mary rode on a donkey. The Bible never mentions their means of transportation.

"What will our lives be like tomorrow?" Did Mary and Joseph ask this question? Were they annoyed by Caesar's insensitive decree? Were they afraid of what lay before them? We don't really know. We only know that they made the journey and arrived safely. There in Bethlehem Jesus was born.

The baby born so long ago in the midst of chaotic, uncontrollable circumstances is with us today in the power of the Spirit. The gift of Christmas is the simple but powerful witness of Mary and Joseph. In the midst of cares and challenges they were guided by the light. Putting one foot in front of the other they trusted in God's grace and followed God's guiding. At the end of their road stood a small stable. In that stable the life of the world was born. Out the surrounding fields the angels' message was heard, "Fear not: for, behold, I bring glad tidings of great joy!"

St. John, the great poet of faith describes this truth in another way: "In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God. He was in the beginning with God. All things came into being through him, and without him not one thing came into being. What has come into being in him was life, and the life was the light of all people. The light shines in the darkness, and the darkness did not overcome it."

Today as we turn on the television, open a newspaper, or explore the Internet searching for signs of the times, it is easy to become anxious and fearful. What will become of me? Will I have enough? Will I be "okay?" What will my life be like tomorrow? The answer was born in Bethlehem 2,000 years ago. "The light shines in the darkness, and the darkness has not overcome it."

It's Time for VBS Workshops

The Interfaith Resource Center (www.InterfaithResourceCenter.com) will offer three Vacation Bible School workshops this year, so mark your calendar for the big preview of all the 2009 VBS programs.

Madeline Beall of Cokesbury will join us with a complete VBS display and will provide order forms to take advantage of the money-saving 20% Value Days discounts.

Events scheduled include:

January 17 at St Albans Church, Wilmington from 9:30 a.m. – noon; and, **January 31** at Wesley United Methodist Church in Dover from 9:30 a.m. - noon.

(Easton will be our third venue, with details to be announced soon.)

The cost is \$5 per person or \$10 for 3 or more from the same church. To register, call (800) 336-6152 or 477-0910 or email at Resource.Ctr@dol.net.

Adventures Await You!

Has life gotten a little stale? Are your days needing a lift? Then join us at the Cathedral any Monday, Tuesday, Wednesday, or Thursday from 4:00–6:00 p.m. Children in the Choir School need homework buddies to help them with their schoolwork. These students are primarily in 2nd–5th grade so we write sentences with spelling words and practice multiplication tables. We also build skills with board games, books, puzzles, and more. Revisit your childhood with a game of Parcheesi or Scrabble! If you're a high school student, you can also earn community service hours. Our kids have lots of love to share. Join us one or more afternoons a month. It will bring a smile to your heart! Contact Leslie Acker-Rowe at 654-6279, ext. 118 or LACKER-Rowe@CathedralChoirSchoolDE.org to learn more.

THE BISHOP'S CALENDAR: JANUARY

- | | |
|--|--|
| 1 Thursday: New Year's Day, Bishop's Office Closed | 17 Saturday: Celebration of New Ministry, the Rev. Kim Capwell, Immanuel, Highlands |
| 6 January: Feast of the Epiphany | 18 Sunday: Morning Visitation, St. Luke's, Seaford |
| 11 Sunday: Morning Visitation, Grace Church, Wilmington | 19 Monday: Martin Luther King Day, Bishop's Office Closed |
| 13 Tuesday: St. Anne's Episcopal School Board Meeting, Middletown | 25 Sunday: Morning Visitation, St. Albans Church, Wilmington |
| 13 Tuesday: Standing Committee Meeting, St. Andrew's School, Middletown | 26 Monday – 28 Wednesday: Clergy Retreat, Pendle Hill, Swarthmore, PA |
| 15 Thursday: Trustees' Meeting, Cathedral Church of Saint John | |

**224th Convention
of the Episcopal
Diocese of Delaware**

**Christ Church
Christiana Hundred
March 27-28, 2009**

For details, contact Pat Hall
656-5441
PatHall@DioceseofDelaware.net

**More
Delaware
Articles**

can be found on
the back cover
and inside
back cover
(pages C & D).

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Volunteers Needed at Next-to-New Shop

The Next-to-New Shop in Wilmington needs help waiting on customers at the front counter. All it takes is a friendly smile and the ability to total up purchases and make change. Calculators provided! Your help is needed on Mondays and Wednesdays from 10:00 a.m. to 2:00 p.m., and Saturdays from 10:00 a.m. to 1:00 p.m. Even once a month would be a big help. To volunteer, please contact Leslie Acker-Rowe at LACKER-Rowe@CathedralChoirSchoolDE.org or 654-6279, ext. 118 today!



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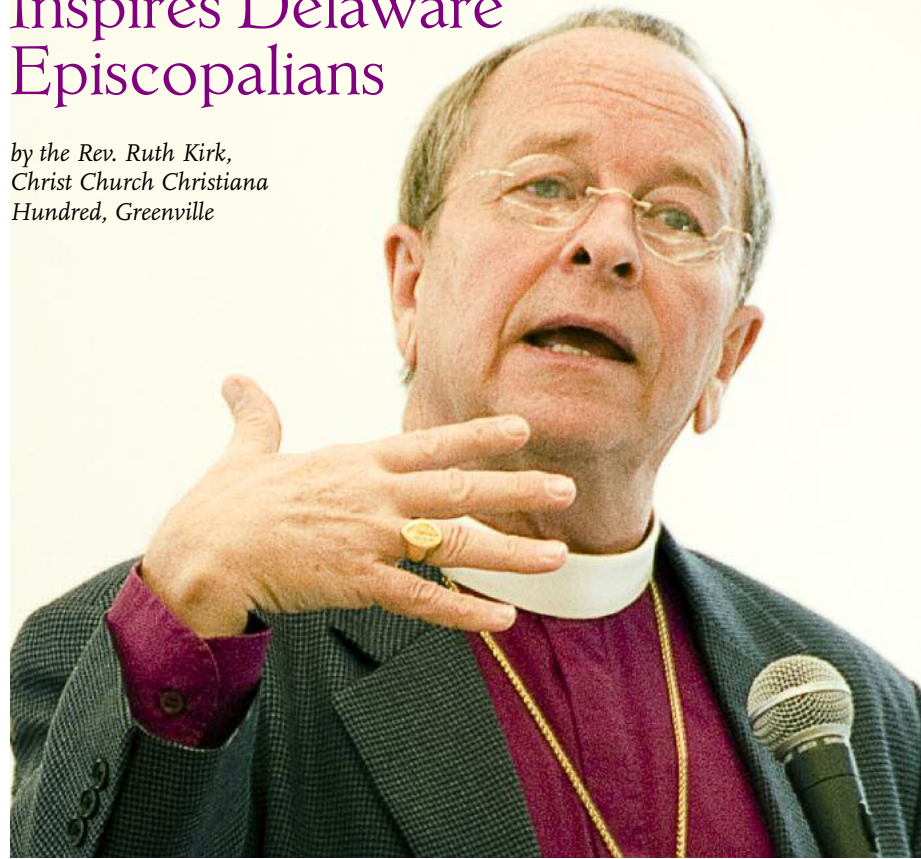
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Bishop Gene Robinson Inspires Delaware Episcopalians

by the Rev. Ruth Kirk,
Christ Church Christiana
Hundred, Greenville



The morning began like any other clergy day. Brothers and sisters from around the diocese greeted one another and chatted about our lives and our ministries while enjoying the hospitality of Christ Church in Dover. At the right time, Bishop Wright called for our attention and introduced his colleague and fellow bishop, the Right Reverend V. Gene Robinson, diocesan bishop of New Hampshire.

To provide a bit of background, you should know that Gene is my friend. The friendship was begun in 2003 in the Episcopal discernment process as candidates for bishop of New Hampshire and their spouses travelled in one van around the state for the “meet and greet” forums. After each session the group would retire to a restaurant and talk about the questions we’d been asked in various rooms. Gene lives his faith with a genuine joy, and it comes across whenever you are in his presence. I remember watching him speak

with youth at the 2003 General Convention. He truly listened and responded in ways that affirmed and blessed the young persons.

It was the same at the gathering in Dover. The confidence that rises up in Gene is a manifestation of his walk with Jesus. He told stories about the Lambeth Conference, admitting being excluded was harder than he thought it would be. Imagine not being permitted to visit your colleague and neighboring bishop because you are not allowed in the dormitory building. Imagine having your picture posted at all the security gates, as if you were a criminal, an offense. Yet even in the telling, the grace and power of God shine from Gene’s witness in Christ Jesus. It is his Christian faith, the same baptism with which I was (and you are) baptized, that keeps him grounded, swept to the center of the eye of the storm of controversy by the God in whom we trust. His message was a powerful reminder to the clergy and the people who joined us for the afternoon presentation.

The question that moved me as I left the event was: What am I, what are we all, willing to risk for the sake of the gospel of Jesus Christ?

OUTREACH

Christ Church, Milford, Makes Outreach Donations

The Outreach Committee of Christ Church, Milford designated \$3,000 to the Milford Community Pantry from the proceeds of their 2008 Craft Fair. This donation is in addition to the \$1,000 recently presented to the Milford Community Pantry from the general Outreach Funds. Other recipients from the proceeds of the 2008 Craft Fair are: Milford/Lincoln Ministerium, Calvary Cafe, the Salvation Army, Adopt-a-Family, Episcopal Relief & Development to purchase Nets for Life to help prevent Malaria, and The Gideon’s and John S. Charlton School in Camden. This is just one of the many ways that the people of Christ Church are finding to expand their local and global outreach. See more stories at www.DioceseofDelaware.net.

EVENTS

January

28 Saturday, 2:00 – 5:00 p.m.
Ecumenical Service for Absalom Jones and Richard Allen, Cathedral Church of St. John, Wilmington. Guest preacher, Bishop Eugene Sutton of Maryland. The service will be at the Cathedral on Saturday, February 28, from 2:00 to 5:00 p.m. For details call Cecily Sawyer-Harmon at 831-8307 or 530-3493 (cell).

Save the Date

224th Convention of the Episcopal Diocese of Delaware, March 27-28, 2009, at Christ Church Christiana Hundred, Greenville. For details, contact Pat Hall, 656-5441.

Learning the Fundamentals of Islam

by Elinor Knodel, St. James Mill Creek,
Wilmington

Sam Sabrin spoke as a practicing Muslim about his faith at the recent Parish Life Day. Egyptian by birth, he arrived in the U.S. as a boy, attended the University of Delaware, and currently lives and works in Philadelphia. He told us that there are 1.3 billion Muslims in the world, with only about 20% living in the Middle East. At 7 million, American Muslims are more than twice as prevalent as Episcopalians.

Mr. Sabrin traced the early history of Islam from 7th century Arabia, where tribal alliances were paramount, as the lifestyle evolved from semi-nomadic to that of commercial trade. In Mecca polytheistic religions worshipped many idols around a sacred stone called the Kabba. Muslims believe that the Kabba was built by Abraham and is the first house of worship on earth.

Articles of faith include the belief in one unique, infallible God, with whom Muslim believers have a direct relationship. Muslims, like Jews, view Jesus as a prophet and nothing more. Muslims also view Mohammed as the last and final prophet, but they do not worship

him. One of the most glaring differences between the Muslim and Christian faiths became apparent during a discussion of Judgment Day. Muslims have no concept of grace, God’s freely given, unmerited love and forgiveness of our sins through the sacrifice of His Son, Jesus Christ. Good Muslims must earn their way into heaven; it’s all up to the individual, based on good works done on earth. One may ask God’s forgiveness for shortcomings and pray for strength to do more good works.

A point of contention arose in the discussion, when Mr. Sabrin explained that Muslims believe in the ‘original message’ in the Bible, especially in the books of the Old Testament prophets. However, they believe that the Bible has changed over time, and its current translations do not represent the original, true teachings. According to Mr. Sabrin, this idea is included in the Quran, the Muslim holy book that was revealed to Mohammed by an angel, dictated to literate colleagues, and has not changed over time. Interestingly, Muslims circumvent the problems of translation by believing that only the Quran in the original Arabic contains the true teachings from Allah. That is why devout Muslims are expected to learn enough Arabic to read the Quran for themselves.

The presentation touched on many more practices and beliefs of modern day Muslims. I appreciated Mr. Sabrin’s willingness to share his faith with us and would like to see the dialogue continue at future Parish Life Days.



“Getting” the Beat

by Patricia Malcolm, Christ Church, Dover

The afternoon session I signed up for at Parish Life Day was “We Got the Beat.” Upon entering the auditorium/gym at St. Anne’s, drums of all shapes and sizes were majestically placed at the foot of the stage. Katy Gaughan our instructor/facilitator had placed on each one of our seats a hand held instrument (sleigh bells, shakers, gourd rattles, goat toes, and a cow bell). Katy took us through various exercises, all focusing on us keeping a steady beat. In the beginning the beat was not so steady. But with Katy’s expertise our instruments were singing together.

At one point we were asked to pick one of the drums at the foot of the stage - most of us chose one of the Djembe drums. Katy played what she called the mother drum, which kept the steady beat. We each had to pick two numbers

between one and eight, and as she called out our numbers we were to play our drum. As we mastered our different rhythmic patterns, Katy stood in the middle of the group cueing some to drop out while others continued playing. She pointed out that no one member (beat) of the group was unimportant, and as we listened we could hear how the drum singing changed when someone dropped out and then returned. I was reminded of I Corinthians 12:21: “And the eye cannot say to the hand, I have no need of you: nor again the head to the feet, I have no need of you.”

Katy taught us a new pattern, and although we were all playing the same pattern this time, there was an acute awareness that each drum had its own harmonic timbre. I closed my eyes while playing and felt an empowered connection as if in prayer. Our challenge, however, became the invitation to play for the afternoon service. As we played and the congregation sang, there was a new integration of the self with others: “We Got the Beat,” indeed.

Delaware Chapter of the Episcopal Peace Fellowship Remembers Noncombatant Innocents

by Jessica Clark, St. Paul's Georgetown

We honor all those, living and dead, who served in the U.S. armed forces with many parades and speeches across the United States on Veterans Day. Memorial Day remembers those who died in uniform serving our country. Of special significance is the annual ceremony where the president or his representative places a wreath at the Tomb of the Unknowns at Arlington National Cemetery in Arlington, Virginia.

In remembrance of the estimated 44 million non-combatant innocents who died in armed conflicts around the world in the last 50 years, the Delaware Chapter of the Episcopal Peace Fellowship (EPF) sponsored a special worship at St. Paul's, Georgetown. The service, titled "Witness for the Innocents," included participants lighting 44 candles, one for each million killed since World War II.

"Although it is not possible to determine with absolute precision the many costs of war, economic, human, or environmental, we have adopted this 'working estimate' from available recent research," explains the Rev. Earl Beshears, rector of St. Paul's.

One of the participants, Joe Holler, spoke about the innocent victims of war who died on the sidelines, the wounded, the orphaned, the widows, the children, and the countless families of different faiths and nations whose lives were forever changed. He also told of his experience traveling to Vietnam to visit the site where his best friend and

brother-in-law was killed in an ambush forty years ago. "My goals in traveling to Vietnam were: To honor our country's men and women who served, to honor the people of Vietnam and all who were touched by the war, to understand how Vietnam is developing, and to deepen my world view. What I experienced in Vietnam was beautiful, compelling, transforming, and enriching. It affirmed my optimistic view that the world is good because its people are good and that the problems of the world are the difficult pieces in a large puzzle. My view is hopeful even when the human capacity for evil explodes. I believe that the Human Spirit, expressed through our great wisdom traditions, is, fundamentally, an expression of what is or can be good," explained Mr. Holler, as he recalled the spirit of the Vietnamese people, their hospitality, and their continued suffering from munitions the United States left behind.

As a tangible reminder of the costs of war, church members began collecting 44 million pennies that eventually will be donated to agencies specializing in relieving civilian war suffering.

"My dream," continues Beshears, who is also EPF co-chair and a Vietnam veteran, "is that this annual worship will be adopted everywhere by all faith groups in order to help these innocent people and their families and to be visible reminders of the costs of war."

The Delaware Chapter of the Episcopal Peace Fellowship is one of 71 chapters across the United States con-



Reverend Earl Beshears lighting one of 44 candles, one for each million of the estimated 44 million non-combatant innocents who died in armed global conflicts in the last 50 years.

necting all who seek a deliberate response to local and global injustices and strive to be peacemakers. Chapters sponsor prayer and public witness events, organize and implement service projects to raise awareness, and take action for peace and justice. Although the principles of the Delaware chapter are based on the Christian faith, the chapter welcomes participation from people of all faiths.

The Delaware chapter, which includes members from Maryland,

meets the first Saturday of the month at 10:00 a.m. at St. Paul's, Georgetown. Several activities are planned for the next few months. For more information about the chapter, call the church at 856-2894 or find more information online at www.StPaulsGeorgetown.org. For more information about the national organization based in Chicago, Illinois, call (312) 922-8628 or go to www.EPFNational.org.

SERVING THE NATIONAL CHURCH

Don Matthews Honored for 55 Years of Service at National Cathedral

by Gordon Lewis, St. Peter's, Lewes



December 6 was the date for the annual Christmas party for the ushers at the Cathedral Church of Saints Peter and Paul (the National Cathedral). Don Matthews, a parishioner at Saint Peter's Church, Lewes, was one of those in attendance. This joyous occasion was enhanced for Don as he was honored for serving 55 years as an usher, docent, and occasionally as a vergier at the cathedral. This was his last "official" event at the cathedral.

Don was living in Arlington, Virginia, when he met the chief usher at the cathedral in 1953 and was asked to help usher at the Easter Day services. This event evolved into assisting with tours of the cathedral on Sunday afternoons and then to serving as a part time vergier.

A vergier is a lay person who assists the clergy in public worship. When seen on festival days on television or in larger parishes, the vergier is usually leading the procession of acolytes, choristers, and clergy. It is the vergier who directs the pageantry of the worship service. The vergier carries a staff called a "verge." Centuries ago the verge was used to clear the path for the clergy before public services. Today the position is more an honorary one. There are two full-time vergiers at the National Cathedral.

The National Cathedral serves an important role in the Episcopal Church and in the nation. Today the cathedral provides a Christian perspective in a political world; it also has a far-flung outreach commitment to the community.

Don served as a vergier at the funeral of President Eisenhower in 1969; Eisenhower lay in state in Bethlehem Chapel at the cathedral the night before his funeral. A vergier had to be on watch. Don has assisted at services for every president since Eisenhower. On state occasions such as funerals and other commemorative services such as the one after 9/11, vergiers and ushers play an important part. Because these public services attract so many statespersons and dignitaries, the secret service keeps an "approved list" of all of the staff and volunteers at the cathedral and "secures" the building beforehand. The cathedral ushers are assisted by "ushers" from the state department, and they are the ones who do the planning for the state occasions.

Don has also participated in many special events over the past few years: Christmas and Easter services, the installations of the last five Presiding Bishops—including witnessing that of the current Presiding Bishop, Katharine Jefferts Schori—and services attended by Queen Elizabeth II and Prince Charles. Don usually takes his position in the Great Choir; this puts him in the middle of the activity.

Among his favorite events are the six and ten o'clock Christmas Eve services; a dinner is provided in the bell tower for the ushers and vergiers between the two services.

What Don has enjoyed most over the past 55 years is watching the majestic cathedral being built and meeting all of the crafts persons who did the carving and then laid stone on stone (the roof beams are the only steel in the building).

There are currently 99 ushers and a waiting list at the cathedral. On December 6, Don's "retirement" was the occasion for another fortunate person to be able to participate in the excitement of the cathedral.

Don continues to serve in an honorary position as vergier at St. Peter's, but the schedule is less hectic. He can be seen participating in service for special occasions such as weddings, but he is usually working behind the scenes polishing the brass, and working with the altar guild. Don believes that worshipping God should be the best that people can offer, and that requires careful, knowledgeable and dedicated planning of the liturgy. Don has shown his dedication for 55 years, and we thank him for it.